



Islands of Plunder:  
**RAID ON THE  
EMPEROR'S  
HAND**

By Matt Goodall with Joshua Root





ISLANDS OF PLUNDER:  
**RAID ON THE  
EMPEROR'S HAND**





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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

RAID ON THE EMPEROR'S HAND .....	2
BACKGROUND .....	2
SETUP .....	2
SHIP COMBAT .....	2
BOARDING STATIONS! .....	3
RANSACKING THE HAND .....	3
CONCLUSION .....	6
THE EMPERORS HAND .....	6
UPPER DECK .....	6
FORECASTLE AND STERNCASTLE INTERIOR .....	6
BATTLE DECK .....	9
BERTH DECK .....	9
ORLOP DECK .....	10
HOLD .....	10
BILGES .....	11
CAPTAIN OF THE EMPEROR'S HAND .....	11
FIRST MATE .....	12
SCALING .....	14
SHIP'S PRIESTS .....	14
SHIP'S SORCERER .....	14
RANSACKING SUMMARY .....	16

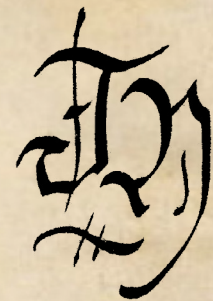


# WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE ISLANDS OF PLUNDER: RAID ON THE EMPEROR'S HAND

A richly laden imperial merchant ship caught on a sandbar presents a tempting target to a crew of daring pirates. Her hold may be bursting with swag, but it is also laden with soldiers and a cruel captain at the helm. At any moment the sails of her imperial escorts may appear on the horizon, but your scurvy scalawags have found her first (the story assumes you are playing seafarers of a questionable moral bent, pirates or privateers anyone?). A daring assault might bring you more plunder than you've seen in a year, but many pirates greedy for gold have lingered too long over a prize they thought safe, until an enemy fleet sent them to a watery grave. Can the PCs stage a lightning raid on the immobilized ship and get away with their ill-gotten gains? Dare they risk a *Raid on the Emperor's Hand*?

***Raid on the Emperor's Hand*** is a 5E adventure for 8th level characters and is the latest in our series of pirate-themed Islands of Plunder adventures for the 5th Edition of the world's most famous roleplaying game. This adventure is easily dropped into any ocean voyage or as part of a full-fledged seafaring pirate campaign, and it can be used on its own or with the companion adventures in this series like [Spices and Flesh](#), [Tarin's Crown](#), and [Scourge of the Steaming Isle](#)!

A life spent at sea is a life of adventure even in the real world, and in a fantasy campaign a voyage beyond the horizon brings dangers and wonders undreamed of by those that never venture out of sight of land. Of course, "Here there be monsters" is more than just a scrawled note on a fragment of map when you sail the seven seas. However, the beauty of a nautical campaign is also the way that every island you visit and every stretch of open water in between can become its own unique location for adventure. You're not camping out in town and heading down to the local dungeon; you are setting sail on the lookout for long-buried riches, with innovative encounters and exotic locales that will leave your players relishing the discovery of the next treasure map that might lead them onward toward the horizon. We hope they spice up your nautical campaign with the rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is the hallmark of Legendary Games. We hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!





## RAID ON THE EMPEROR'S HAND

This set piece encounter is designed to occur just after dawn as the PCs' ship is passing through an archipelago of sandy tropical isles.

*As your ship rounds the coast line of the latest islet, a remarkable scene comes into view. Ahead, sits an enormous five-masted merchant vessel run aground and caught on a partially submerged sandbar. She flies an Imperial flag and there are a large amount of figures milling about agitatedly on her main deck. One of your ship's lookouts gives a cry, alerting you to three other ships visible in the distance, also flying the same colors. These appear to be naval escort ships heading for the beached merchant ship, but which are still some way off. The stiff breeze is directly against these escorts, forcing them to tack sharply to make progress.*

The situation presents the PCs with a lucrative opportunity to attack and raid the *Emperor's Hand* while its escort ships are still out of range. Once the PCs defeat the *Hand's* leading officers, they have limited time to search and plunder the ship of its most expensive cargo before the PCs' ship and crew come under heavy fire from the escorts. The timing of the raid is critical, as is the PCs' ability to quickly identify the most valuable loot and then get it swiftly aboard their own vessel.

## BACKGROUND

The *Emperor's Hand* recently completed a trading run to the southern coast and is now returning home. While the ship is not fully laden, she still carries an impressive amount of cargo, although much of this is in bulky goods. Just before dawn this morning, the ship's captain, Alban Thekros, took over from the pilot at the helm. Alban had been drinking heavily the night before and he continued to ease his hangover with brandy from his hipflask while at the wheel. In spite of his rank, Captain Thekros only has a basic proficiency in steering a ship this size; he normally leaves tasks like this to his friend and first mate Marten Furey. In the dim predawn light Alban misjudged how close a small island was and ran the *Emperor's Hand* aground on a shallow sandbar. Fortunately, the ship wasn't moving at any great speed so the structural damage was minimal. Unfortunately in the confusion, neither Alban nor any of those on deck thought to immediately signal the navy warships that always accompany the *Emperor's Hand*. These heavily armed escorts have only just come about and are hastening to assist the ship and crew.

## SETUP

The sandbar's shallows extend for some distance around the stranded ship. However, the *Hand* is a deep-drafted ship and the water level nearby sufficient for the PCs' vessel to approach to within 50 feet, assuming their vessel is a typical sailing ship or smaller craft. The PCs can attempt a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception or Nature) check to identify this safe distance, or use an aquatic scout with a swim speed of at least 30 ft. to reconnoiter. The PCs can also take depth soundings as they approach, but the additional time needed to do this slows the attack. The *Hand* sits in about 8 feet of water, allowing the PCs and their crew to use their ship's longboats to row up to the *Hand*. Of course, high level PCs are likely to also have magical means to board the *Emperor's Hand*. The *Hand* tilts at a slight angle, but not enough to hamper movement on her decks. The tide is rising and the high tide will allow the *Hand* to float off the sand bar.

## DESIGNERS NOTE

### Lots of plunder!

The idea behind this encounter is to allow pirate PCs to take on a target that would normally be out of their league, but not have them acquire so much treasure that they would want to retire! The threat of the three escort ships should discourage the PCs from trying to pick the *Emperor's Hand* clean. If the PCs insist on trying to take on the escorts, give the PCs fair warning and have these ships start by seriously damaging the PCs' ship with catapult rocks and killing several of their crew with barrages of ballista bolts. Even if the PCs do somehow win this overwhelming encounter, chances are they are likely to lose both their ship and much of their crew in the process.

## SHIP COMBAT

When the *Emperor's Hand* becomes aware of the PCs' ship, the *Hand's* officers order gunners to their stations on the battle deck. However, unless the PCs choose to expose their ship to broadsides from the *Hand's* impressive ballista arsenal by sailing to the *Hand's* port side, they only face the two forward facing ballistae and the catapult mounted on the forecastle as the PCs' ship closes in on its prey. As the *Hand* is immobile, it makes an easy target: the ship has an effective Dexterity of 0 (–5 penalty to AC), and an additional –2 penalty to its AC.



## BOARDING STATIONS!

XP: 14,600

Depending on the PCs' tactics, the captain, first mate, and a contingent of ship's gunners make a stand against the PCs' boarding party on the main deck. If the *Hand* comes under significant ranged fire or damaging area effect spells, Captain Alban Thekros orders all hands below decks, planning to fight the enemy at close quarters between the decks before they can get to the valuables in the ship's hold.

**ALBAN THEKROS** CR 9  
XP 5,000  
hp 135 (see page 11)

**MARTEN FUREY** CR 8  
XP 4,800  
hp 152 (see page 12)

**GUNNERY VANGUARD** CR 8  
XP 4,800  
hp 130 (see page 12)

**Development:** When Captain Thekros is defeated, the *Hand's* crew nearby loses heart and surrenders. However, knowing that their compatriots are coming to rescue them, other small pockets of resistance still fight on in the lower decks, hampering the PCs' efforts to quickly plunder the ship. The PCs may think to take some of the *Hand's* officers captive for ransom, but both Alban and Marten have most of their personal wealth tied up in the *Hand* and her cargo. Only after much negotiation do the PCs receive a ransom of 500 gp each for Alban and Marten. Having Alban or Marten onboard the PCs' ship and making their presence known to the escorts does mean that while the escort furiously chase them, they hold off on attacks with their siege weapons. Throwing these hostages overboard while being pursued is a sure way to delay the escorts as the imperial ships are compelled to slow and pick their officers up.

## RANSACKING THE HAND

Rather than force the PCs to explore and search every nook and cranny of the *Hand* while counting out every combat round and every 5 foot square, have the PCs move through various areas of the vessel while you describe smashing open doors, grabbing handfuls of loot, and fighting the disorganized defenders.

Use the table below as a guide to determine how many areas

the PCs can search before the escort ships get too close. It's likely the PCs' crew are also plundering the *Emperor's Hand* at the same time but their crew might miss some of the less obvious but still portable treasures aboard.

CONDITION	NUMBER OF AREAS
PCs defeat the captain and 1 <sup>st</sup> mate in 3 rounds or less	8
PCs defeat the captain and 1 <sup>st</sup> mate in 5 rounds or less	7
PCs defeat the captain and 1 <sup>st</sup> mate in 8 rounds or less	6
PCs defeat the captain and 1 <sup>st</sup> mate in 10 rounds or more	5
PC slow their attack to take depth soundings	-1
For every 8 <i>Emperor's Hand</i> crew members the PCs defeat or capture before starting to ransack the ship (the gunnery vanguard troop counts as 16 crew members for this purpose)	+1


Allow for creative ideas and clever tactics the players come up with. Anything that allows the PCs to quickly rout the defenders or unusual ways to swiftly inspect an area could give the PCs the extra time needed to search an additional area or two. The PCs can retry a failed skill check in an area but this counts as searching the area again. Only some areas of the *Hand* have a Ransack section and a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check in an area with no Ransack section reveals that there is no hidden plunder to be had there.

**Note:** Even with their entire crew helping, the PCs cannot steal everything on the *Hand* in the time they have. It's already assumed that during the PCs' search of ship's areas that they, or their crew, are taking the obvious valuables. The checks the PCs can make in certain areas of the *Hand* represent the potential of finding hidden, yet easily transportable plunder that might otherwise be missed. Even if the PCs say, "we take everything" in an area, the time wasted taking low quality goods and furnishings simply counteracts any bonus they might gain by inadvertently taking an area's Ransacking bonus items as part of a blanket attempt to 'grab everything'.

### THE RANSACKING CHECK

A ransacking check determines how much booty the PCs are able to plunder in total and how valuable it is. Have





the PCs search through the calculated number of areas (referring to the *Emperor's Hand* section, page 6 below), where they can take a variety of actions and make skill checks to gain bonuses to the ransacking check. Then only when the PCs are safe and their ship is clear of the escort ships have them roll the ransacking check to see how much they got away with. This ransacking check also has the following modifiers:

AMOUNT OF CREW*	MODIFIER
The PCs have all or nearly all their crew searching and plundering (leaving at most only a couple of lookouts on their own ship)	+6
The PCs have around two-thirds of their crew searching and plundering (leaving a skeleton crew on their ship)	+4
The PCs have a boarding party of around a third of their crew searching and plundering	+0
The PCs are searching and plundering by themselves	-8

\* Use your discretion as GM with this. For example, if the PCs initially attack with only a small boarding party, but then order the rest of their crew to lower longboats and

row over (which takes some time and most likely requires several trips) you could treat this as the PCs having two-thirds of their crew plundering.

### EXTRADIMENSIONAL STORAGE

If the PCs have a magic item with extradimensional space to store and transport plunder, see the chart below for handling some options. This assumes that the storage item is initially empty and the PCs fill the item with booty and transfer it to their ship multiple times during the plundering. For example:

ITEM	MODIFIER*
<i>bag of holding</i>	+2
<i>handy haversack</i>	+1
<i>portable hole</i>	+5

\* A generous GM might allow the PCs to total all their extradimensional space items together before calculating the total bonus.

### MAGIC

If the PCs make use of spells that shrink their plunder or make it easier to transport, add a bonus to the ransacking check equal to half the spell's level. When calculating this



bonus, round up or round down depending on precisely how useful the spell is. For example:

SPELL	MODIFIER
<i>floating disk</i>	+1
<i>enlarge/reduce</i>	+2

**Note:** The *floating disk* spell is great for carrying items of plunder while moving through the decks of the *Hand*, but the spell's range limitation may make transporting the treasure on the disk over to the PCs' ship problematic.

## MOVING THE LOOT

After gathering plunder, the PCs and their crew need to quickly transport it across the gap between the *Hand* and their own ship. Using boats is slow and limits the amount of plunder that can be taken in each trip. However, as long as the PCs are using at least three boats (a combination of their own and those from the *Hand*) then the process is still relatively effective. For each boat less than three that is used, apply a -4 penalty to the PCs' ransacking check.

Setting up a rope line between the two ships and winching plunder across is possible, a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check can achieve this quickly enough to be useful. Add a +2 bonus to the ransacking check if the PCs implement this idea, providing the two ships remain a consistent distance apart throughout the process.

Flying or other magical forms of movement can help. A flying creature ferrying piles of plunder over to the PCs' ship gives a bonus equal to half the creature's Strength modifier to the ransacking check. Additionally, add a +1 bonus if the creature is a quadruped or otherwise suited to carrying heavy loads, and advantage if the creature is Large or larger.

MOVING THE LOOT	MODIFIER
For each ship's boat less than three used	-4
Using a rope line	+2
Flying Creature	+ 1/2 Str bonus
- is a quadruped	+1
- Large size or larger	+2
Swimming creature	1/2 flying creature

*Teleport or dimension door*

Swimming creatures can also be of some use, but the problem of getting the plunder down to a swimming creature and then back up on deck at the PCs' ship means that unless the swimming creature can also quickly

climb up and down from the upper deck level as well, their contribution is limited compared to that of a flying creature. Calculate a swimming creature bonus as a flying creature but then halve the result.

The PCs can use magic to fly or improve their carrying capacity and as long as these effects last 5 minutes or more they are effective, adding the increased bonuses and effects into the calculations above.

Teleportation magic is another way to quickly move from the *Hand* to the PCs' ship. Add a bonus equal to half the spell's level for effects that move the caster and at least 2 other Medium-sized creatures to the PCs' ship (such as a *dimension door* or a *teleport*). Give a smaller bonus (most likely only +1) for teleportation effects that only move a single creature.

Finally have one character, usually the captain of the PCs' ship, make the Ransacking check. This is an Intelligence check with up to three additional characters able to use the Help action on this check, each success granting the character making the check the normal +2 bonus. Use the following table to determine the value of the PCs' plunder from the *Emperor's Hand*:

RANSACKING CHECK RESULT	PLUNDER ACQUIRED
16 or less	1,000 gp
17-20	1,500 gp
21-24	2,000 gp
25-28	2,500 gp
29-32	3,000 gp
33-36	3,500 gp
37-40	4,000 gp
41-44	4,500 gp
45-48	6,000 gp
50 or more	7,000 gp <sup>x</sup>

<sup>x</sup> This assumes that the PCs' ship is filled to capacity with plunder from the *Emperor's Hand*.

**Story Award:** If the PCs are able to gain a +15 bonus to their Ransacking check from their actions while searching areas of the *Hand* award them 3,200 XP.

**Development:** Once the PCs run out of time searching the *Emperor's Hand*, they hear shouts from their crew as a catapult stone from one of the escorts splashes into the water close to their ship. The PCs can choose to search one more area, but start rolling attack rolls for the catapults



and ballistae on-board the escorts against the PCs' ship and crew. Any further delay after this is suicidal as the PCs' ship won't have time to get underway with enough speed to outrun the imperial escorts.

## CONCLUSION

Whether you choose to play out the ship-to-ship combat between the PCs' ship and the escorts using ship combat rules or resolve the PCs' escape with a series of opposed Wisdom (Survival) checks is up to you as GM. The PCs now certainly have something to brag about when they sell their plunder in their next port of call, being the only pirates ever who have successfully raided the *Emperor's Hand*!

## THE EMPERORS HAND

The construction of the massive ship named the *Emperor's Hand* was a measured risk by the crown of the decadent failing Empire, the cost considerably eroding the already low royal coffers. However, the ship quickly paid for itself, as it became a status symbol for those within the Empire who wish to quickly move large amounts of goods or transport extremely bulky objects. With the potential for so much cargo, the *Hand* has come under attack by pirates several times, but currently none have survived the encounter.

One of the largest ships afloat on the charted ocean, the *Emperor's Hand* has five masts allowing its square rigged sails to propel the *Hand* at great speed when running before the wind. From bow to stern, these masts are called: the fore mast, the main mast, the mizzen mast, the bonaventure mizzen, and the jigger mast. It counts as a sailing ship.

### UPPER DECK

**1. Main Deck:** The long main deck of this mighty ship easily has room for a 30-foot cutter secured upside down to protect it from the elements, in addition to six ship's boats. There is a massive cargo hatch between the main mast and mizzen mast, and another smaller hatch between the mizzen mast and the bonaventure mizzen. Both have crane-like contrivances next to them to aid in getting heavy cargo into and out of the ship's hold.

**Ransack:** The *Hand's* fire-resistant, magically-treated silk sails are valuable to any ship and easily saleable once any imperial emblems are removed. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check or *detect magic* spell reveals their value. It requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check utilizing at least one third of the PCs' crew to remove sufficient sail cloth from the *Hand's* masts to gain a +4 bonus to the Ransacking check. A successful DC 13 Intelligence check

enables the PCs to figure out how to use the cranes to get piles of plunder up on deck quickly. This grants a +3 bonus to the Ransacking check. The PCs can also make use of the *Hand's* boats to transport their loot to their own ship if they lack sufficient boats of their own.

**2. Bow:** This open area at the front of the ship allows access to the bowsprit and ship's figurehead, a carving of the Emperor wearing his full regalia with one arm dramatically outstretched. To either side of the ladders down from the forecastle are areas for storage of the ship's two anchors and anchor chains.

**3. Forecastle Deck:** This raised deck has a platform-mounted light catapult in the center of the deck that can be rotated and fired in any direction. (Although the *Hand's* masts and rigging are in the way of sternward shots.) There are capstans to either side of the catapult which raise the *Hand's* two anchors.

**4. Sterncastle Deck:** The ship's wheel is at the fore of this deck in front of the jigger mast. Similar to the forecastle, this deck has a platform-mounted light catapult similar to the one on the forecastle deck.

## FORECASTLE AND STERNCASTLE INTERIOR

These two sections have large cabins for guests and the higher ranking ship's officers.

**5. Forward Cabin:** This well-furnished room functions as a guest chamber for paying passengers or as servants' quarters when the forward stateroom is occupied by a powerful aristocrat.

**6. Forward Stateroom:** This opulent chamber serves as guest quarters for any high-ranking noble who wishes to travel aboard the *Hand*. Paintings of seascapes and noble imperial explorers decorate the walls and a long mahogany table takes up the center of the room. A large teak cabinet sits in one corner, and a lavish four-poster bed rests near a glass-framed window.

**Ransack:** Many of the smaller furnishings are valuable, but a DC 16 Intelligence (History) check or a character proficient with painter's supplies picks out one of the smaller, less extravagant paintings as being the work of an obscure imperial master; it is worth more than all the larger works combined. Taking this painting gives a +3 bonus to the Ransacking check.

**7. First Mate's Cabin:** This cabin belongs to Marten Furey, first mate of the *Emperor's Hand*. The place is militarily tidy and the desk has a few papers including a journal of Marten's journeys onboard the *Hand*. This journal provides details from the adventure background as well as

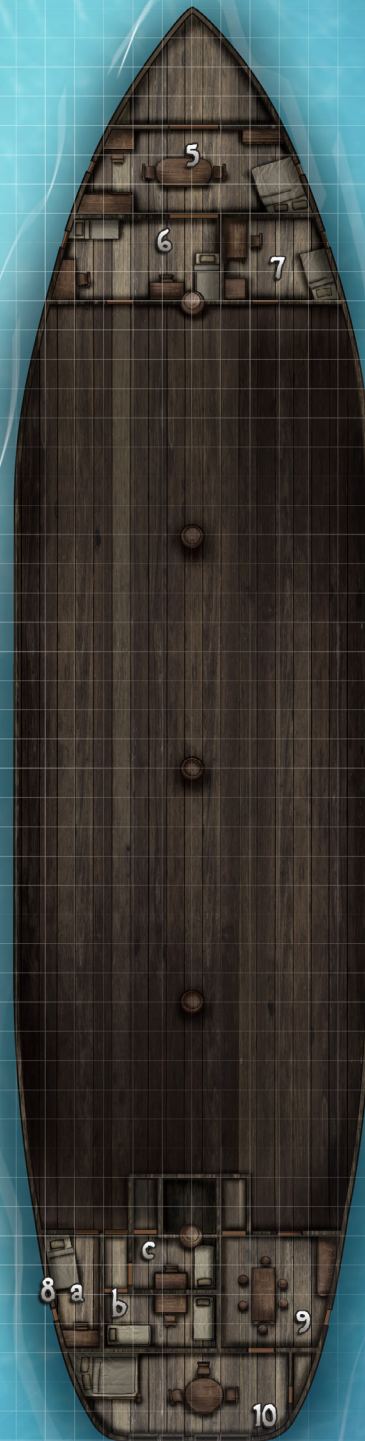
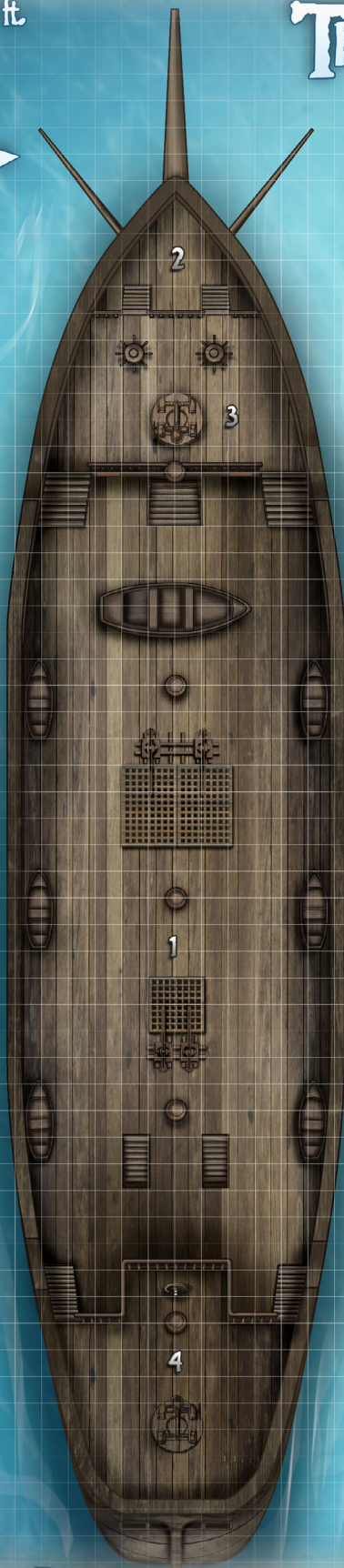


1 square = 5 ft.



# THE EMPEROR'S HAND

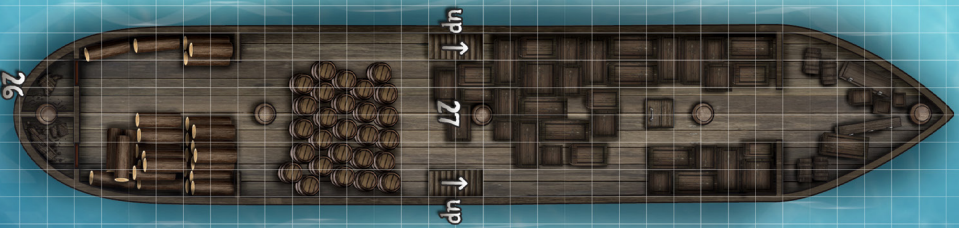
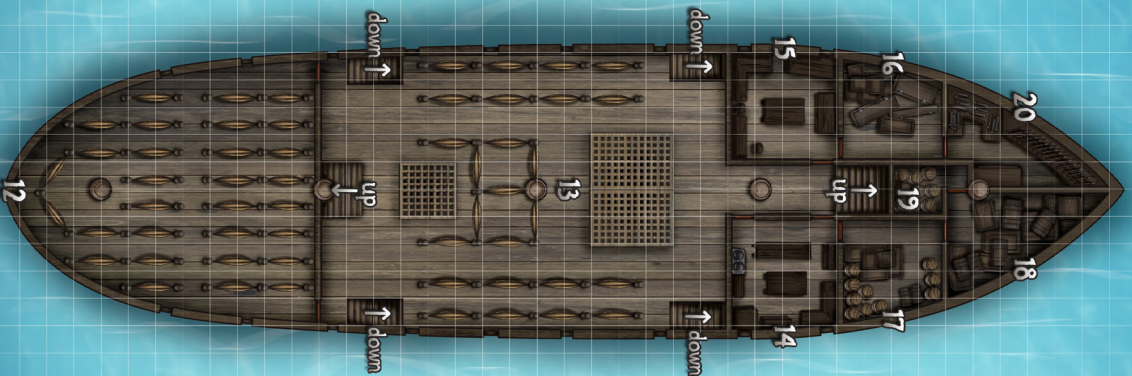
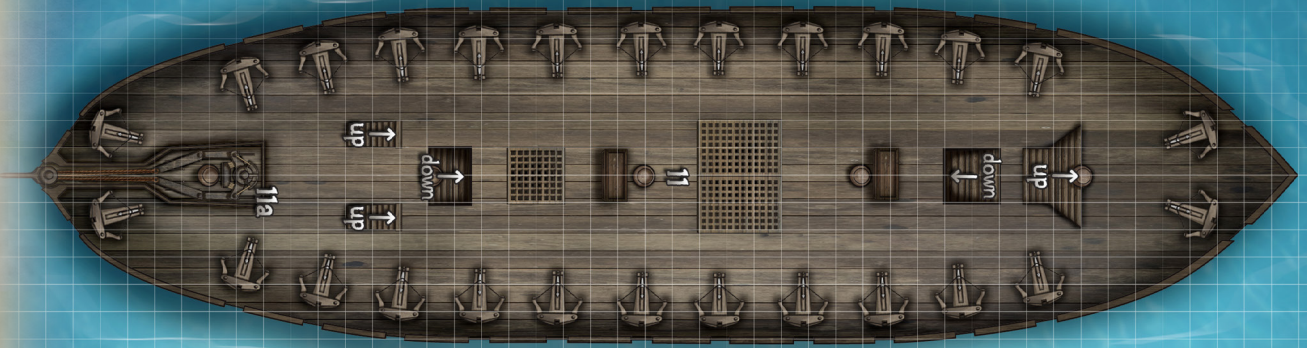
- Upper Deck -





# THE EMPEROR'S HAND

- Lower Decks -



1 square = 5 ft.





Marten's and Alban's personal backgrounds. At the GM's discretion, the journal could also contain valuable secrets such as details of Empirical shipping schedules that can be exploited by the PCs.

**8. Senior Officers' Quarters:** Each of these private quarters can be locked with a simple lock (AC 14, 10 hp, immune to poison & psychic damage) and has a bunk and a desk for storing personal effects. A character using thieves' tools can try to pick a lock, which requires 2 turns and a successful DC 18 Dexterity check.

**Ransack:** Searching all three officer's quarters only counts as searching one area. In the quartermaster's cabin (8a) there is a hidden cache of pearls worth a +3 bonus to the Ransacking check, which can be found with a DC 24 Wisdom (Perception) check.

**8a. Quartermaster's Cabin:** This cabin has the small luxury of a large porthole to let fresh air in. The quartermaster bunks here.

**8b. Masters' Quarters:** This cabin has two beds and the master gunner and sailing master bunk here.

**8c. Boatswain's Quarters:** These quarters have a little extra room in the form of a large closet. The *Hand's* current cabin boy (secretly the boatswain's cousin) has set up a sleep pallet in the closet.

**9. Captain's Lounge:** This sumptuous room is where the captain has dinner parties with guests, holds meetings with his senior officers, and performs much of the paperwork that comes with being an imperial ship's captain. A polished hardwood table dominates the center of the room and a cupboard holds fine porcelain dishes and silverware. A long closet stores a cluttered collection of trade ledgers, maps, paperwork, and a number of bottles of imperial brandy.

**Ransack:** Among the clutter in the closet there are many nautical charts, but a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check followed by a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check recognizes part of a detailed but unlabeled old and worn map as part of the coastline of the southern continent. Marked on it are several small islands and even a city unknown to modern sailors. Notes on the map claim it is a copy of a copy but even still, it can be sold for a substantial price giving the PCs a +3 bonus on the Ransacking check.

**10. Captain's Cabin:** This large luxuriously appointed cabin has a large double bed in the corner and four large glass windows offer views astern of the ship. A polished marble table sits in the middle of the room and a small door to one side reveals a sizable wardrobe of clothing.

**Ransack:** While most of the wealth here is openly on display, a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check notices a small bronze plaque with the imperial seal. Only the hand of the Emperor himself can give this mark of distinction

and even a stolen one is worth a significant amount: add a +1 bonus to the Ransacking check.

## BATTLE DECK

This deck holds much of the ship's armament.

**11. Battle Deck:** There are 26 ballistae here, 11 each side running the length of the ship for its powerful broadsides and pairs of ballistae facing both forward and aft as chasers. In between the masts are large trunks that hold reserves of ballista bolts and other ship's munitions.

**11a. Whipstaff Steerage Assembly:** Behind paneled partitions is a series of chains, fulcrums, and other apparatus designed to transfer the force from turn of the ship's wheel to the *Hand's* massive tiller.

## BERTH DECK

This deck contains the crew's quarters, ship's supplies, and quartermaster's store. It continues the series of hatches for getting heavy cargo to the reinforced hold below.

**12. Gunners' Quarters:** Lines of hammocks hang between support poles crowding this large crew quarters. The ship's gunners rest and sleep here.

**13. Main Crew Quarters:** The two cargo hatches take up the center of this area leaving only limited room for hammocks around the edges. Piles of sleeping pallets are stacked to either side of the stairs at the aft of the room.

**14. Galley:** A long bench between the two doorways on the port side of this cooking area allows for fast service of food to the large crew.

**15. Quartermaster's Workroom:** This workshop contains benches and shelves holding wood and metalworking tools used to repair the ship.

**16. Ships Stores:** This room contains spare seafaring equipment and raw materials to repair or manufacture replacements for lost or broken ship's gear.

**17. Larder:** Fruit, fresh food, water, and other perishables are stored here.

**18. Food Stores:** Barrels and sealed containers hold salted meat and other preserved foodstuffs here.

**Ransack:** A DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a stash of narcotics hidden in the bottom of a small cask of dried peppers. This adds a +4 bonus to the Ransacking check.

**19. Grog Storage:** This small space in the innards of the ship holds supplies of wine, rum, and other drink. The door is locked (AC 16 14 hp, immune to poison & psychic damage) but several of the ship's officers have the key. A character using thieves' tools can try to pick a lock, which



requires 3 turns and a successful DC 20 Dexterity check.

**Ransack:** Anyone proficient with the brewer's supplies or a DC 15 Intelligence check reveals bottles of potent and valuable liquor in one corner worth +2 to the Ransacking check.

**20: Armory:** Rows of well-oiled weapons and trunks of armament for the crew fill this curved room.

**Ransack:** A DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check or a character proficient with smith's tools turns up a stockpile of excellent weapons at the back of a weapon's locker. This adds +2 to the PCs' ransacking check.

## ORLOP DECK

This deck is half under the water line when the ship is unladen and beneath the water line when fully laden.

**21: Petty Officers' Quarters:** These quarters offer some privacy and slightly more room for the ship's junior officers. The hammocks are more comfortable and have more room between them.

**22: Surgeon and Carpenter's Quarters:** This cramped area holds bunks and sleeping pallets for the *Hand's* surgeon, healers, and master carpenter. The two ship's healers are non-combatant clerics (stats as a Commoner but with a Wisdom of 15) but can use their spells and channeling to heal some of the captain's or crew's wounds if they retreat here.

**Spellcasting.** The clerics are 3rd-level spellcasters. They're spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The clerics have the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, healing word, inflict wounds*

2nd level (2 slots): *hold person, silence*

**23: Infirmary:** Two cots and a table for treating patients furnish this room as well as a large cabinet of medical supplies.

**Ransack:** A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check identifies valuable healing herbs and medicines as well as sets of excellently made medical tools. This adds a +1 bonus to the Ransacking check. Also, a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check or detecting magic in this area reveals a hidden reserve of healing potions and alchemical antidotes worth a +2 bonus to the Ransacking check.

**24: Cargo Storage:** Bulkheads partition this large area giving the ship extra structural support and providing additional means of securing cargo to prevent slippage in rough seas. The area currently holds hides and furs from the tropical south, a huge shipment of fibrous jute, and a large quantity of grain. Buried in among these bulk goods are more valuable commodities, including several crates of ivory, reams of fine cloth, well-sealed containers of salt,

and cases of tobacco.

**Ransack:** PCs can make four DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) checks to find the valuable commodities, with each successful check adding a +1 bonus to the Ransacking check (maximum of a +4 bonus). A DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check also finds a selection of high-quality furs in the midst of some unexceptional hides giving a +3 bonus to the Ransacking check.

**25: Private Storeroom:** The cargo doors to this area are locked (AC 15, 20 hp, immune to poison & psychic damage). A character using thieves' tools can try to pick a lock, which requires 4 turns and a successful DC 25 Dexterity check. The only key is in the captain's cabin. This storeroom is used to transport important merchandise directly for the crown or for highly confidential cargoes, but is currently empty.

**Ransack:** If the PCs spend more than 1-1/2 minutes breaking into this area, then this counts toward the number of areas they can search. Otherwise, they search this area for free, but find nothing that helps with the Ransacking check.

## HOLD

This hold is under the water line, even when the ship is completely unladen.

**26: Brig/Secure Compartments:** These two small compartments in the bowels of the ship have reinforced doors set with heavy bars and solid locks leading into each of them. A small metal grille set in each door allows observation from the outside. Both doors are currently unlocked. Designed to hold prisoners or punish sailors, the compartments can also serve as secure storage areas. Both compartments have piles of rough bedding and the starboard one holds an impressive amount of broken furnishings, discarded empty boxes, and other junk.

**Ransack:** A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check turns up a heavy chest buried under the junk in the starboard compartment. This is the *Hand's* pay chest concealed here by one of the senior officers while the PCs' ship approached. It is worth a +6 bonus to the Ransacking check.

**27: Main Hold:** This area is reserved for ballast and the heaviest cargo which helps keep the ship stable in even the worst storms. Even when not carrying cargo, the sheer size of the ship makes it very difficult to capsize. The forward storage area holds spare ship's supplies and basic materials used to maintain the *Hand*. The cargo here consists of iron and copper ingots, lumber, stone bricks, and barrels of tar and pitch.

**Ransack:** A DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check can identify the rarer woods adding a +2 bonus to the Ransacking check and a character proficient with alchemist's supplies reveals high quality oils worth a +3 bonus to the Ransacking check.



## BILGES

Since the *Emperor's Hand* is still a new ship, the bilges are not yet as unpleasant as other ships. Having been properly built and sealed, there is very little leakage and the size of the ship means there is usually only a couple of inches of water. In the center of the bilges is a large pump next to stairs leading up to the cargo hold.

## CAPTAIN OF THE EMPEROR'S HAND

Born the illegitimate son of the head of a major noble house, Alban Thekros was raised at a cloister devoted to the goddess of valor. He found out his heritage while still a small child and dreamed while growing up of one day being acknowledged as a dignified and powerful aristocrat. He has ambitiously spent much of his youthful life seeking a way to obtain his own noble title to receive what he considers his birthright. Incredibly gifted at swordplay and with a passing fancy for sailing, Alban leapt at the opportunity when it was announced that the Emperor sought a talented sea captain for a new government-sponsored merchant vessel. He considers this position a significant step on the way to achieving his lifelong ambition as well as the lands and riches that go with it. A flamboyant fellow, Alban dresses in loose silk shirts accented with stylish jewelry while onboard ship.

### ALBAN THEKROS, SHIP'S CAPTAIN

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (+1 studded leather jacket)

**Hit Points** 135 (18d8 +54)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +8, Wisdom +4

**Tools** navigator's tools and water vehicles

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Deception +5, Perception +4

**Damage Resistances** poison

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Aquan

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**All in the Wrist.** Alban doubles his damage dice and Dexterity bonus to damage with his rapier or dagger (included in his attacks).

**Evasion.** If Alban is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.



**Riposte.** When a creature makes a melee attack against Alban, he can use his reaction to make his AC against the attack equal to 1d20+8. If this causes the attack to miss, Alban can immediately make a *Scimitar of Speed* attack against the creature.

**Sneak Attack.** Once per turn, Alban deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Alban that isn't incapacitated and Alban doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Walk the Plank.** As a bonus action Alban can Shove a creature.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Alban makes three attacks with his *Scimitar of Speed*, or twice with his dagger.

**Scimitar of Speed.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d8 + 10) slashing damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d4 + 8) piercing damage.

**Gear:** Potion of greater healing, masterful sextant (worth 250 gp), gold plated spyglass (worth 1,000 gp), family signet ring (worth 150 gp), personal jewelry worth 200 gp.





## FIRST MATE

A waif who never knew his parents, Marten Furey grew up in a cloister orphanage with Alban Thekros as his childhood playmate. When Marten and Alban reached adulthood, they each sought different paths, Marten joining the Imperial Army and then the Navy, learning the trades of guardian, marine, scout, and seafarer, but both young men remained very close friends. Now having rejoined forces to take command of the prestigious *Emperor's Hand*, Marten happily serves as Alban's first mate and bodyguard. An accomplished warrior in his own right, Marten tends to wear heavier armor and take blows aimed at his captain.

### MARTEN FUREY, FIRST MATE

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 18 (breastplate + shield)

**Hit Points** 152 (16d8 +80)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

**Tools** navigator's tools and water vehicles

**Skills** Athletics +7, Nature +4, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Bodyguard.** When a creature Marten can see attacks a target other than him that is within 5 feet of him, he can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. Marten must be wielding a shield.

**Loyal and Brave.** Marten has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Leg Sweep.** Marten does an extra die of damage on any weapon attack (included in the attacks). Marten can also force one creature he attacks make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone (whether or not the attack hits).

**Mobile.** Marten's speed increases by 10 feet (included in his speed), and when he makes a melee attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity from that creature for the rest of the turn.

**Tough.** Marten gains 2 extra hit points per hit die.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Marten makes three attacks, two with his greatsword and one with his shield.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

## GUNNERY "SWARM"

*Gargantuan swarm of Medium humanoids (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 16 (breastplate)

**Hit Points** 130 (20d8 +40)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +4

**Skills** Athletics +6, Survival +4

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Disciplined Rage.** The Gunnery Vanguard group launches a formidable offense. For one minute they are resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons (included in its stats) and deal double their Strength bonus in damage (also included in attacks).

**Swarm (Group).** The group can occupy another creature's



space and vice versa, and can move through any opening large enough for a Medium creature. The group can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The group makes two attacks with its saber flurry or one attack with saber flurry and one with its heavy crossbow volley.

**Saber Flurry.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) slashing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow Volley.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400, one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d0 + 2) piercing damage.

## SWARM OF SOLDIERS?!

Having the group of soldiers that fight with Captain Alban and Marten Furey statted up as a swarm alleviates some of the issues of having a large amount of low level NPCs in a higher level encounter. It speeds up combat because the GM doesn't have to make dozens of attack rolls every round and makes the gunnery vanguard group a more appropriately challenging opposition for high level PCs. Note that is using miniatures, the swarm can exist in any contiguous configuration, not just 4x4. The attacks represent a disciplined crew's many attacks during a round as swords slash and crossbow bolts fly overhead, not just one sword attack. However, as a GM you should be wary of having this group attack or interact with the PCs' crew of lower level NPCs. This is because the group is essentially the equivalent of a **CR 8 swarm** and can easily kill multiple lower level characters, which is unfair to the PCs' crew, unless you convert them into a swarm as well. Use the individual ship's gunner and sailors stat blocks (below) if you need to play out a fight between members of the two crews.

## SHIP'S GUNNERS (60)

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 15 (2d10 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Tools** choose two from gaming set, carpenter tools, musical instrument, navigator's tools, water vehicles or weaver's tools

**Skills** Athletics +4

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Blademaster.** When a ship's gunner engages in two-weapon fighting, it can add its ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

**Military Defense.** While wearing armor a ship's gunner has a +1 to AC.

**Worldlord Training.** A ship's gunner has a +1 to hit with longswords.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** A ship's gunner makes two attacks, one with its longsword and one with its dagger.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

## SAILORS (90)

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 12 (padded armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8+2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Tools** choose one from gaming set, carpenter tools, musical instrument, navigator's tools, water vehicles or weaver's tools

vehicles

**Skills** Athletics +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Sure Footed.** The sailor has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against attacks originating on other ships, and to Dexterity skill checks made while on deck.

## ACTIONS

**Cutlass.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.



# SCALING

While *Raid on the Emperor's Hand* is designed for 8th level characters, it can easily be scaled if the GM feels that the PCs will find the adventure too hard or too easy. Also, some groups of PCs are likely to want to have to fight their way down each deck in an extended series of battles to secure the *Emperor's Hand*, rather than simply forcing a surrender by defeating the ship's captain.

**Scale down:** Have Marten arrive on the top deck two rounds after the PCs start fighting the captain.

**Scale up:** Use the following NPCs to provide support for Alban and Marten during the initial battle on deck and have Alban and Marten retreat below deck when they are reduced below half hit points. Also, have a second gunnery troop assemble on the berth deck to defend the ship. If the troop has time, they make their way to the battle deck and reposition many of the ballistae to fire at the entranceways down from the top deck.

## SHIP'S PRIESTS

The two ship's priests, named Malthin and Cersia, both worship the god of cities and wealth, and they have received ample remuneration for their term of service onboard the *Hand*. Replace the two healers in area 22 with these two clerics.

## IMPERIAL PRIESTS (2)

*Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 19 (half plate and shield with shield of faith)

**Hit Points** 50 (9d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

**Skills** Medicine +6, Religion +3

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**War Priest (3/day).** When using the Attack action, the priest can make one weapon attack as a bonus action.

**Channel Divinity.** Once per day, the priest may choose to use the following ability: *Guided Strike*: add +10 to a single attack roll when making an attack.

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 5rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following spells prepared:



**Cantrips (at will):** *light, sacred flame, spare the dying, thaumaturgy*

**1st level (4 slots):** *cure wounds, healing word, inflict wounds, shield of faith\**

**2nd level (3 slots):** *hold person, lesser restoration, silence*

**3rd level (2 slots):** *dispel magic, mass healing word*

\*The priest casts this spell on itself before combat.

## ACTIONS

**Morningstar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.



**Light Crossbow.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

**Gear.** One each: *potion of invisibility*, scroll of *protection from poison*, scroll of *see invisibility*.

## SHIP'S SORCERER

Galtus Ossian serves as a Master on the *Emperor's Hand*. With the sea in his blood, Galtus expects to spend the rest of his career on the *Emperor's Hand*. He bunks in area 21.

### GALTUS OSSIAN

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

**Armor Class** 16 (coral armor)

**Hit Points** 108 (16d8 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

**Skills** Arcana +5, Nature +5, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, draconic

**Challenge** 5 (1,100 XP)

**Wind Lash (3/day).** As a reaction Galtus can whip up a

gust of wind causing all attacks against him to have disadvantage. This remains in effect until the end of his next turn.

**Wind Ritual.** While on deck, Galtus can cast *gust of wind* as a ritual, and can sustain it for up to 10 minutes.

**Spellcasting.** Galtus casts spells as a 8th level sorcerer (save DC 15, spell attack +7). His spellcasting ability is Charisma, and he has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips: *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

1st-level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *fog cloud*, *grease*, *shield*

2nd-level (3 slots): *flaming sphere*, *gust of wind*, *misty step*

3rd-level (3 slots): *lightning bolt*, *sleet storm*, *water breathing*

4<sup>th</sup>-level (2 slots): *blight*, *stoneskin*\*

\*Galtus casts this spell on himself before combat.

## ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

**Fire Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) fire damage, and a flammable object ignites if it isn't worn or carried.



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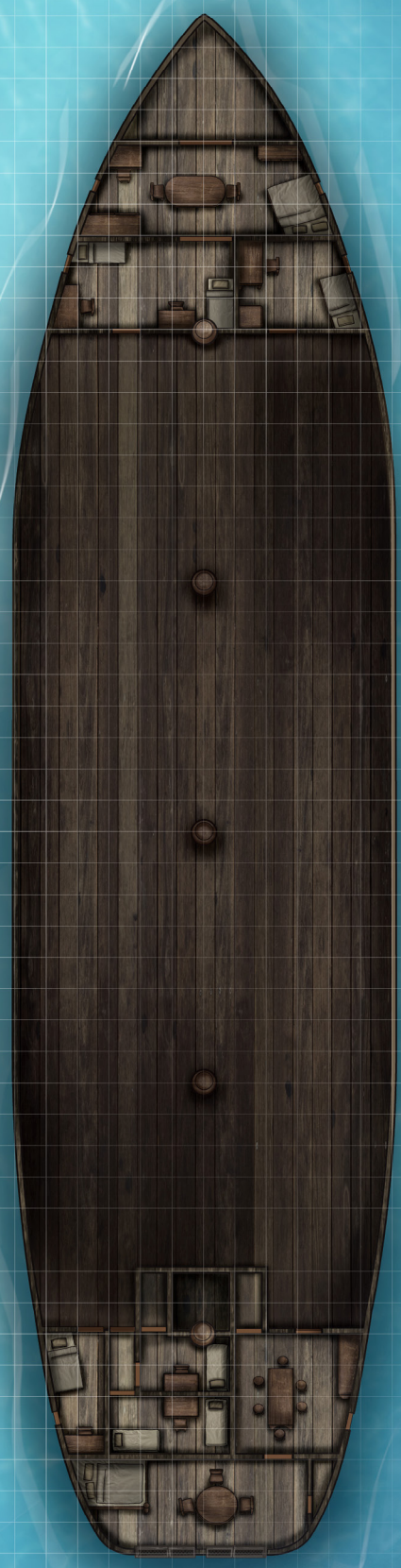
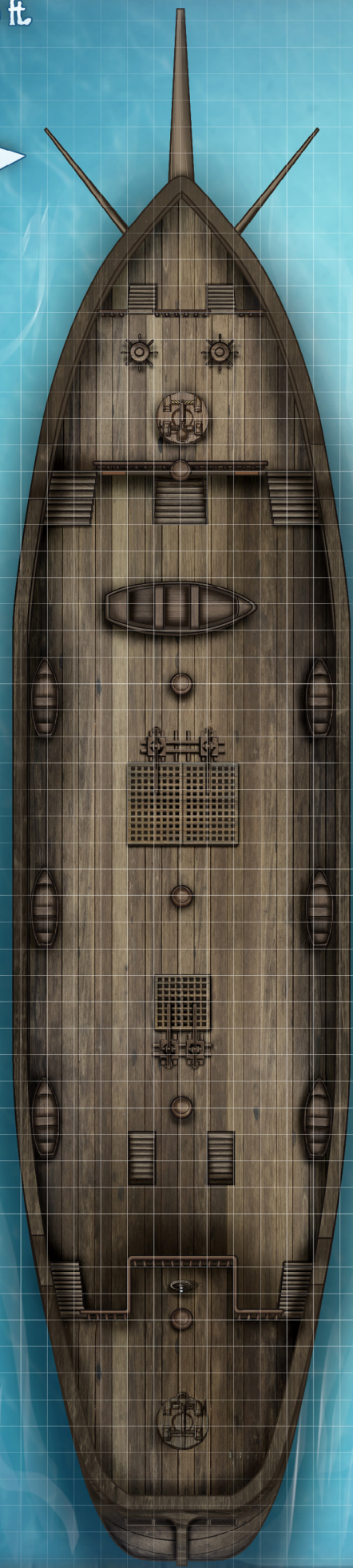
# RANSACKING SUMMARY

AMOUNT OF CREW	MODIFIER
The PCs have all or nearly all their crew searching and plundering (leaving at most only a couple of lookouts on their own ship)	+6
The PCs have around two-thirds of their crew searching and plundering (leaving a skeleton crew on their ship)	+4
The PCs have a boarding party of around a third of their crew searching and plundering	+0
The PCs are searching and plundering by themselves	-8
EXTRADIMENSIONAL STORAGE	MODIFIER
<i>bag of holding</i>	+2
<i>handy haversack</i>	+1
<i>portable hole</i>	+5
MAGICAL CARRYING CAPACITY	MODIFIER
<i>floating disk</i>	+1
<i>enlarge/reduce</i>	+2
MOVING THE LOOT	MODIFIER
For each ship's boat less than three used	-4
Using a rope line	+2
Flying Creature	+ ½ Str bonus
- is a quadruped	+1
- Large size or larger	+2
Swimming creature	
<i>Teleport or dimension door</i>	
SEARCHING	MODIFIER
Searching areas of the <i>Hand</i>	Total bonus from all areas searched

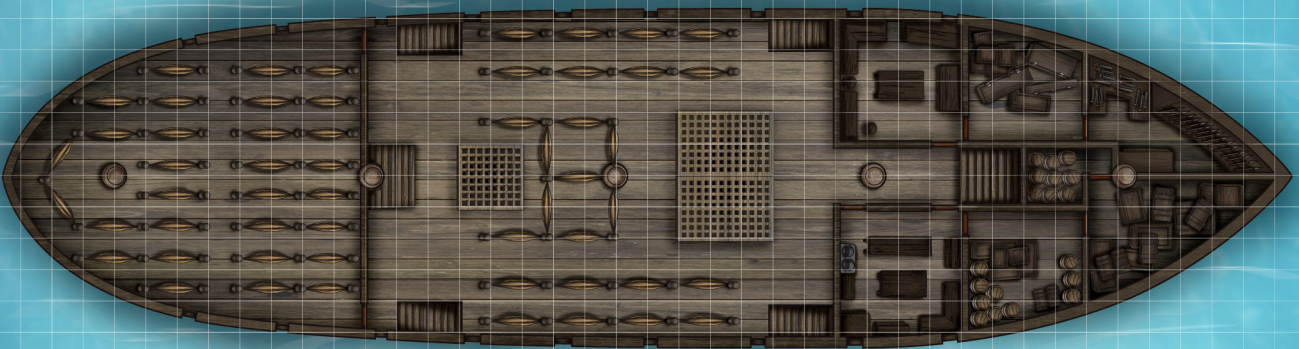
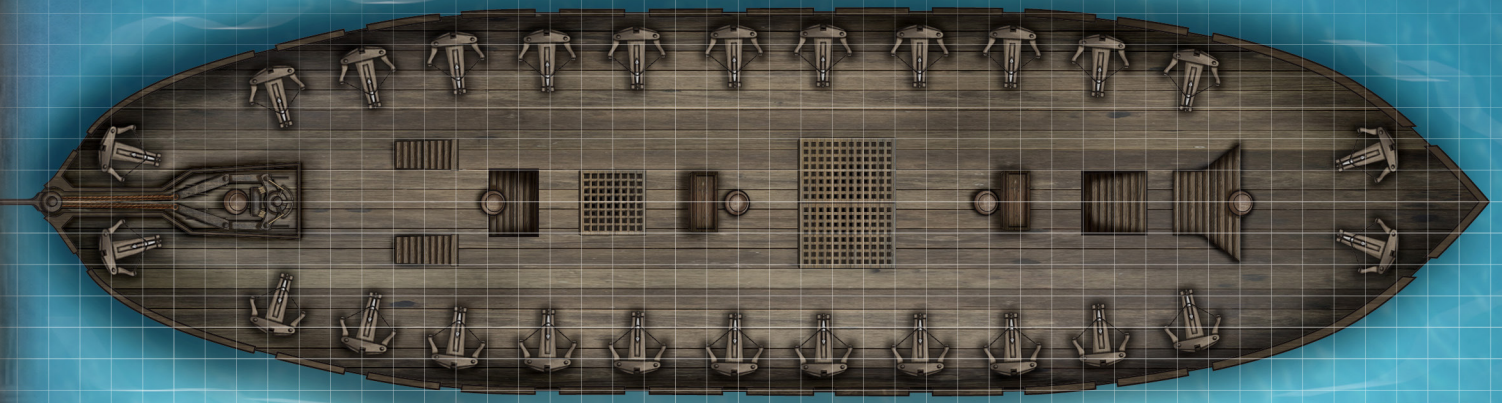
RANSACKING FINAL RESULT	PLUNDER ACQUIRED
16 or less	1,000 gp
17-20	1,500 gp
21-24	2,000 gp
25-28	2,500 gp
29-32	3,000 gp
33-36	3,500 gp
37-40	4,000 gp
41-44	4,500 gp
45-48	6,000 gp
50 or more	7,000 gp <sup>x</sup>



1 square = 5 ft.







1 square = 5 ft.





# LEGENDARY PLANET



**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

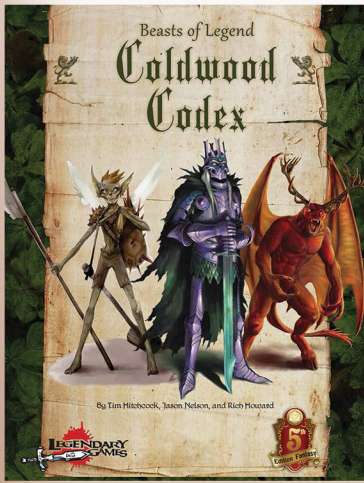


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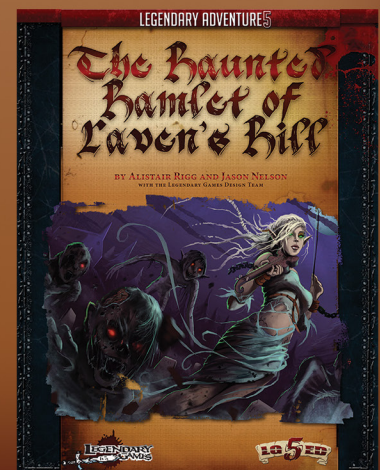
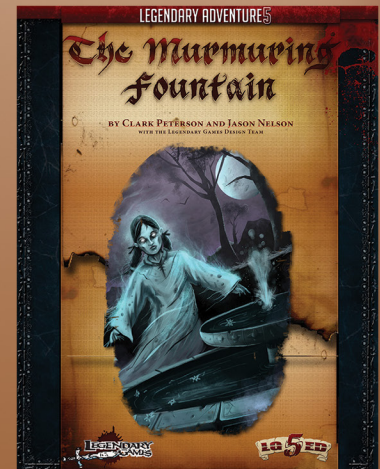
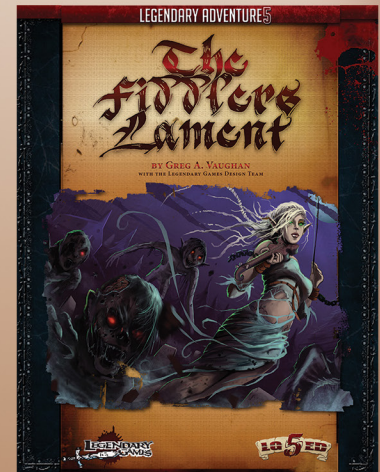
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