

The background of the entire page is a dark, atmospheric scene of a stormy sea. In the distance, a large, multi-masted sailing ship is silhouetted against a cloudy, grey sky. In the foreground, a large, stylized wooden structure, resembling a ship's prow and mast with a scalloped sail, is rendered in a light brown, wood-like texture. The title 'Encounters in Saltmarsh' is written in a gothic, blackletter font across the middle of this structure. The word 'Saltmarsh' is significantly larger and more prominent than 'Encounters in'.

# Encounters in Saltmarsh

**BY JACK DUNCAN**

**EXPLORE SALTMARSH SEAS WITH THESE 12  
MINI-ADVENTURES AND REVAMPED MAPS!**





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# INTRODUCTION

## FULL TO THE GUNWALES

This supplement contains 12 encounters and 12 maps designed to enhance your *Ghosts of Saltmarsh (GoS)* experience. Some are expansions or alterations of the pre-existing quest encounters presented in the module, and are designed to add an extra wrinkle or sense of cohesiveness to the quest. Others are standalone encounters at sea or in one of Saltmarsh's various regions. Many of the standalone encounters would also be a great fit for any nautical-themed campaign or quest not based specifically in Saltmarsh.

## FORGOTTEN SHORES

This supplement assumes that your version of Saltmarsh is in the Forgotten Realms, midway between Waterdeep and Neverwinter. Some alterations are made to characters and factions to reflect life and politics in the Realms, but the themes from *GoS* are kept intact. But Saltmarsh, a relatively unknown backwater fishing community, can be easily placed in any setting of your choosing. At the start of each quest in *GoS* is specific advice for adapting each quest to various specific settings.

## USING MAPS

Some encounters will occur at sea, and for those you can use any of the maps in the "Sea" folder, along with any of the ship tokens. Each square on the sea maps represents 30 feet.









# ENCOUNTERS

## THE AFFAIRS OF WIZARDS

**Encounter Level:** 10–11

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social, Exploration

**Encounter Overview:** The characters stumble upon, or are sent to, the wreck of the *Curiosity*. There they encounter a powerful demon, bound by magic, who may be willing to strike a deal for her freedom.

### BACKGROUND

Several miles off Saltmarsh's coast lies the wreck of the *Curiosity*, a vessel that once belonged to the famed wizard Mordenkainen. It was sunk by a mysterious and unnatural storm, taking its treasures to the depths with it. Many treasure hunters have sought out this wreck, but none have ever returned due to the presence of a marilith, magically bound by the ship's owner to protect the *apparatus of Kwalish* in the ship's hold.

### THE ENCOUNTER

Characters may stumble upon this shipwreck randomly on the Azure Sea, or hear word of it from two different sources:

- The Faithful Quartermasters (agents of Szass Tam, the lich ruler of distant Thay) who regularly come to Saltmarsh to trade for salt fish, are desperately seeking an *apparatus of Kwalish* for some unknown purpose. If the characters have made a name for themselves in the area, their leader, Captain Xendros (CE female tiefling **priest**), may approach the characters and offer them any magical item she can provide if they will recover the apparatus for her. See "Buying and Selling Magic Items," *GoS*, chapter 1, for more information on the specific magical items that Xendros can offer.

- Wellgar Brinehanded (CG male human **priest**), Saltmarsh's resident priest of Valkur, may point the characters toward the wreck, either by telling the characters a largely embellished tale of the *Curiosity's* sinking or by directly asking them to seek the ship out to recover the remains of its crew for proper burial. Unlike Xendros, Wellgar is able to use his connection to Valkur to find the exact location of the *Curiosity* on a map. He is willing to trade a single casting of a 5th level cleric spell if the characters can recover the remains of at least half of the twelve-person crew, and an additional casting if they recover all twelve. He can only cast one such spell a day and must be given a day's notice to prepare the spell. The characters must also provide any material components that the spell consumes.

The wreck of the *Curiosity* is 100 feet below sea level and several miles from Saltmarsh, in the open sea. The wreck itself hangs, almost broken in two, precariously over a sea shelf that descends another 1000 feet. The *apparatus of Kwalish* is in the stern section, and most of the crew's remains are in the aft. The aft section is largely stable, resting comfortably on the shelf, while the stern is kept in place only by the 500 lb. weight of the *apparatus of Kwalish*. If the *apparatus of Kwalish* is removed, the aft will quickly plummet off the edge of the shelf, bringing the rest of the ship down with it.

Finding the remains is a relatively simple task. Have one of the characters roll an Intelligence (Investigation) check, presumably at advantage since the other characters will be helping them. The characters find the remains of five of the crew easily enough, and find one additional set of remains for every multiple of 2 above 10. For example, a roll of 16 would return 8 sets of remains. The process of searching takes an hour, and if the characters decide to search again, they find



additional remains only if their check exceeds their previous roll.

The **marilith** is not such a simple matter. She waits impatiently beside the *apparatus of Kwalish*, desperate to be freed from her monotonous magically compelled guard duty. She is not allowed to attack characters who do not either attack her first or touch the *apparatus of Kwalish*. She warns the characters of this fact via her telepathy when she sees them, in an extremely bored monotone. If the characters try to speak with her, she tells them that an enchanted rune stone within the *apparatus of Kwalish* compels her obedience, and she cannot return to her home plane unless slain while the rune stone sealed within the apparatus is intact. If the characters seem inclined to aid her, she promises great rewards and assures them that she will cease combat as soon as she is no longer compelled to do so and will return to the Abyss. This is partially a lie; the marilith will cease combat but lacks the motivation and the ability to return to the Abyss. She will instead seek out the wizard Modenkainen in an attempt to get revenge for her enslavement. The moment a character touches the *apparatus of Kwalish*, the marilith becomes hostile to that character and any characters who attempt to defend them. If the characters' initiative order is higher than the marilith's, it is entirely possible that they may find the *apparatus of Kwalish's* secret catch (see the *apparatus of Kwalish's* item description), and destroy the rune stone before the marilith can attack them. Looking for the catch and destroying the rune stone require an action, but triggering the catch is a free object interaction.

Removing the *apparatus of Kwalish* from the ship causes the vessel to teeter and begin to fall from the sea shelf. Have the characters roll initiative. The exit from the stern is a 10-foot wide hole in the hull and is 60 feet from where the *apparatus of Kwalish* is found. The opening is not quite large enough for the *apparatus of Kwalish* to exit through, and the characters will have to cause 25 points of damage to the hull surrounding it to widen the hole. Alternatively, they can deal 50 points of damage to any point on the hull and break through that way. On initiative count 20, losing initiative ties, of the second round of initiative, the ship begins to fall. It descends at a rate of 200 feet a round until it hits the bottom. Any creature or object still in the ship when it impacts is slammed against the hull, taking 10d6 bludgeoning damage. Characters must also make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take an additional 10d6 piercing damage from debris from the shattered hull.

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The *apparatus of Kwalish* is recovered.
- The marilith is defeated.
- The marilith is freed.
- The remains are recovered.

## REWARDS

If the *apparatus of Kwalish* is recovered, the characters may either keep it for themselves or exchange it with the Faithful Quartermasters. If the characters keep the *apparatus of Kwalish* and have not made a deal with the Faithful Quartermasters, they will likely be approached about such a deal as soon as the cultists hear of it. If the characters refuse to trade with the Faithful Quartermasters, whether they initially agreed to do so or not, Xendros will send increasingly more powerful groups of demons after the party, not stopping until she herself is slain. Word may reach Thay of the destruction of its servants, earning the characters a powerful enemy.

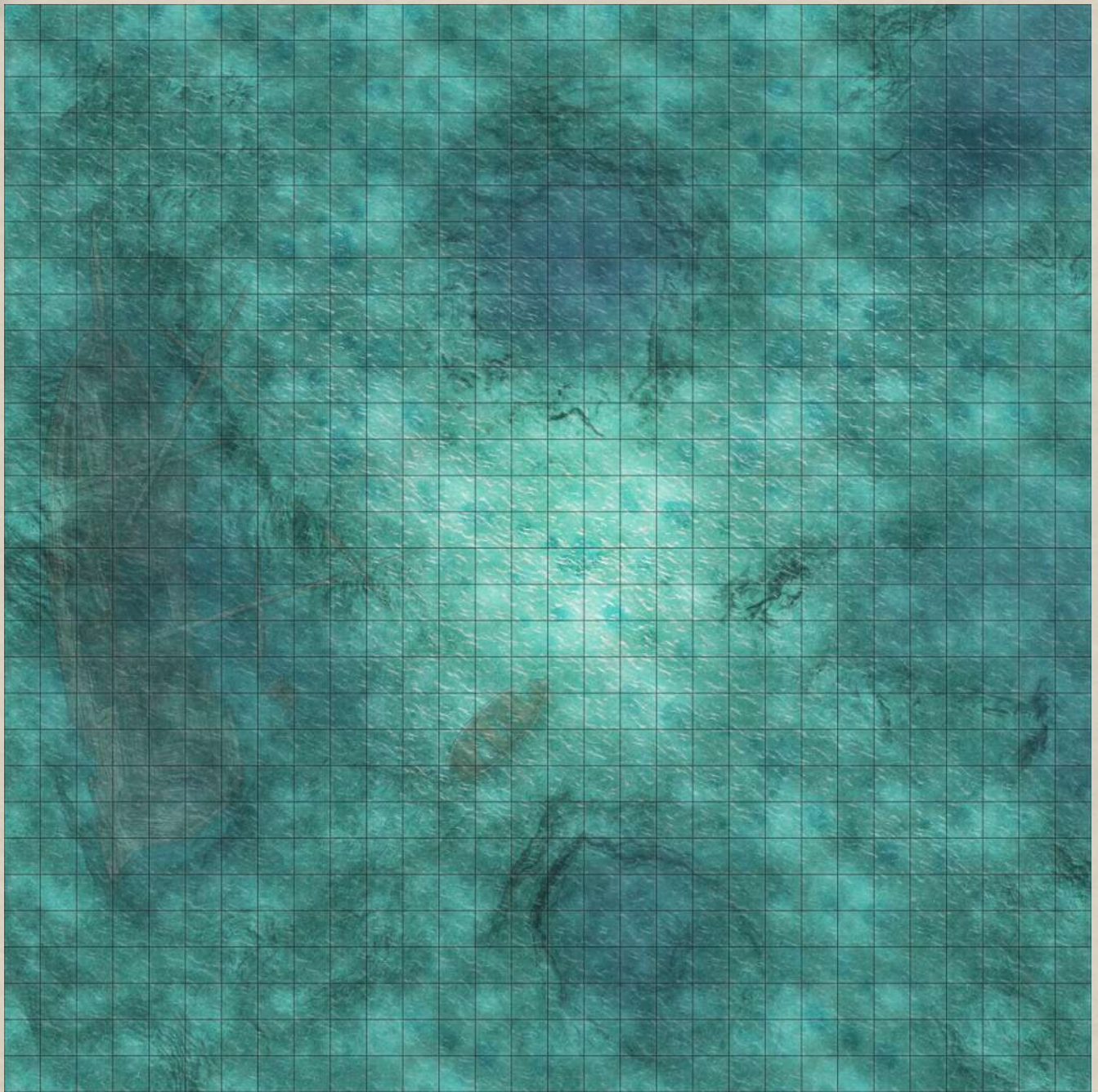
If the marilith is defeated, she drops her six longswords. Each functions as a +2 *longsword*, but is cursed so that whenever a creature reduces another creature to 0 hit points with one of these longswords, they must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or have their alignment change to chaotic evil. A *remove curse* or similar magic restores the creature's alignment.

If the marilith is freed, she ignores all attempts to hold her to whatever grandiose rewards she promised and uses her *Teleport* to leave as quickly as she can. The demon rampages along the coast, seeking word of Mordenkainen, for one month, before getting a lead and heading further inland. Mordenkainen will be most displeased if he discovers the characters are the ones who loosed a demon on him.

If the remains are recovered, the characters find Wellgar a quick and loyal friend. He upholds his end of the deal and even throws a 500 gp diamond into the bargain, offering to keep hold of it for them "just in case."







## THE BARON'S MASTER PLAN

**Encounter Level:** 7

**Encounter Type:** Combat

**Encounter Overview:** This encounter is a revamp of “The Baron’s Counterattack” section from the “Final Enemy” quest, to make it more climactic and possibly to drop a few hints toward “The Styes.”

### BACKGROUND

A point is made in the description of 19. Hall that the sahuagin are waiting until the area has been completed to their satisfaction before flooding the area, strongly implying that the sahuagin could flood the area if they wished.

This encounter assumes that the sahuagin forces

deploy this function of the structure strategically, keeping it as a last ditch defense to drive out land-based invaders.

This encounter also adds a layer of complexity onto the sahuagins’ motives: they wished to build this fortress and conquer not out of mere bloodlust and avarice, but to assemble an army of slaves to better resist the kraken they have learned is maturing in these waters.

### THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter replaces “The Baron’s Counterattack” in the “Assault Events” section of chapter 6, the “Final Enemy” quest.

Instead of describing a “shrill battle cry” when the characters defeat the defenders in 19. Hall and trigger the event, instead read or paraphrase the following:



A single low note of a horn, from deep underground, resonates throughout the chamber. Seconds later, sections of the tiled floor and walls pull back, revealing rusted iron grates. Sea water bursts forth into the chamber, flooding the room completely within seconds.

Every character in 19. Hall must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone when the water rushes into the chamber. It takes a single round to fully flood the chamber, the water being pumped up directly from the sea and flowing out the door in 1. North Entrance and Guard Post. While the water continues to pour into the chamber and rush toward 1. North Entrance and Guard Post, every character without a swim speed in the water must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be carried 10 feet in the direction the water is rushing.

The characters will quickly realize that this will make the planned allied land assault much more difficult or even impossible. The characters can either determine for themselves that the allied aquatic forces will be slaughtered without the land forces acting as a pincer, or if they return to the allied forces, they will be told the same thing. The allied forces will inform the characters that the aquatic assault has already begun and that they need to find a way to shut off the water quickly or they will all be lost.

If the characters fail, or refuse, to descend back into the fortress to turn off the water, the allied aquatic assault fails and the allied forces are forced to retreat.

The wheel that controls the water is hidden behind a panel of tiling in 20. Large Hall. Guarding the wheel is Baron Kepmak (**sahuagin baron**) himself, riding the **Maw of Sekolah** (if it still lives) or a **giant shark**. He is flanked by two **sahuagin champions** riding **shell**

**sharks**. The baron says, in Sahuagin, that they could have defeated the kraken together if the land-dwellers had just submitted, and then attacks.

If defeated, the baron mumbles in broken Common as he dies, “The kraken... kill you... all...”

If the baron and the Maw of Sekolah are slain, the remaining sahuagin in the room flee. Once the wheel is turned, the water level above drops and the sounds of boots announce the arrival of the allied land forces. The assault then proceeds as normal.

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters fail to turn off the water, and the assault fails, with the sahuagin likely conquering Saltmarsh shortly afterwards.
- The characters defeat the baron and turn off the water.

## REWARDS

For successfully defeating the baron, the characters receive all the normal rewards detailed in the quest. They can also claim the Baron’s *trident of warning*.

## BLACK SCALES AND NONE

**Encounter Level:** 3–4

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social, Exploration

**Encounter Overview:** The characters are tasked with hunting a Tharizdun-worshipping lizardfolk along the Dunwater River.

## BACKGROUND

During the adventure “Danger in Dunwater” in chapter 3, the characters are tasked with forging an alliance with the lizardfolk coalition forming against the sahuagin.

Recently the Scaleless, a **lizardfolk shaman**, turned to the worship of Tharizdun and attempted a coup against the lizardfolk queen.

If the characters anger the lizardfolk, or if the DM decides the adventure needs more combat, the lizardfolk queen demands the characters hunt down the Scaleless to secure the alliance/redeem themselves. Unbeknownst to the lizardfolk queen, the Scaleless is working together with Tythun, the lizardfolk’s **young black dragon**, whom they regard as their leader. Tythun, however, no longer believes the lizardfolk can keep him safe after their failures against the sahuagin, and is seeking other options.

The Scaleless appears as a lizardfolk with no scales and raw, perpetually bleeding skin. He has the symbol of Tharizdun carved between his eyes.

The Scaleless can also be encountered if the characters decide to explore the ruined alchemist’s tower rumored to be somewhere along the Dunwater.





## THE ENCOUNTER

After traveling along the Dunwater for 18 hours (see Hool Marshes in *GoS*), the ruined alchemist's tower where the Scaleless is hiding will come into view. Only a single floor of the once-grand tower remains standing above the surface.

### GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor contains little more than shattered stone bricks and charred wood from the explosion that toppled the tower. At the center of the floor is a black cauldron, 4 feet in diameter, its sides twisted and melted. Three gray oozes lie in wait on the floor around the cauldron, appearing as an incongruous patch of wet stone on the otherwise dry floor. If the characters step on the "wet floor" or physically interact with the cauldron, the **gray oozes** attack.

Cunningly concealed amongst the rubble is a trapdoor leading to the basement level of the tower; it can be discovered by a character who makes a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

### BASEMENT

The flooded basement of the alchemist's tower is a circular room 80 feet in diameter and 20 feet high. It is filled with 15 feet of murky water, reducing visibility in the water to 10 feet (see "Unusual Environments" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) and making all creatures that are fully submerged heavily obscured.

Beneath the water on the southwestern side is a 20-foot diameter tunnel that leads to a network of subterranean tunnels; these can be followed all the way back to the lizardfolk lair.

The Scaleless is in this chamber, perched on top of what appears to be a stone bookcase that barely breaks the surface of the water. He is conversing in Draconic with Tythun, who is fully in the water; only the dragon's head is visible. If the characters manage to sneak up on the pair, they will hear them discussing the Scaleless's plans to use Tythun to corrupt other lizardfolk to the cult of Tharizdun. Tythun is unconvinced, since he does not worship Tharizdun himself, and is frustrated with the Scaleless's failure to overthrow the queen.

If the Scaleless becomes aware the characters are coming, he assumes that they are lizardfolk coming to kill him and slides beneath the surface, waiting in ambush. Tythun retreats into the tunnel that leads to the lizardfolk lair. When he sees the characters, assuming all the characters aren't lizardfolk themselves, he cautiously reveals himself from a distance.

The Scaleless tells the characters that the lizardfolk queen is planning on betraying them and that she regularly uses and then kills "softskins"; these are lies. The Scaleless says that the true leader of the lizardfolk, the dragon Tythun, will support him as king if the characters can "dispose" of her; this is true. If Tythun has not revealed himself yet, he emerges from the tunnel now.

Tythun understands and can speak Common, but is rarely willing to lower himself to speak anything but Draconic. If any of the characters can speak Draconic they can converse with Tythun; otherwise the dragon ignores all other attempts at communication.

If the characters see through the Scaleless's lies and call him on it, Tythun laughs and withdraws into the tunnel, refusing to aid the Scaleless. Otherwise, if the characters attack the Scaleless, Tythun comes to his aid (see "Underwater Combat" in chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*).

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters slay the Scaleless.
- The characters slay the Scaleless and Tythun.
- The characters slay the lizardfolk queen, installing the Scaleless as the new king.

## REWARDS

If the characters kill the Scaleless as requested, the lizardfolk queen is pleased and agrees to an alliance with Saltmarsh. Additionally, she grants the characters a cloak of woven seaweed that functions as a *cloak of the manta ray*.

In the unlikely event that the characters manage to slay both the Scaleless and Tythun, the characters are initially welcomed back and given the same rewards as if they had only slain the Scaleless. If they mention that they slew Tythun, the lizardfolk turn hostile, enraged that the characters have killed their true leader.

If the characters kill the lizardfolk queen for the Scaleless, the shaman doesn't sit long on the throne. During his coronation he begins preaching about Tharizdun, which annoys Tythun. The black dragon emerges from hiding and kills the Scaleless with his breath attack. The dragon promises to aid the characters against the sahuagin, but demands that they not contact him again until the time comes to destroy the sahuagin. Tythun will honor this arrangement during the quest in "The Final Enemy" (chapter 6). His arrival massively damages the sahuagin forces, netting the characters 15 victory points.







## THE CORAL PALACE OF ALU

**Encounter Level:** 5–10

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social

**Encounter Overview:** The characters encounter the *Coral Palace*, a floating palace of coral and pearl. The *Coral Palace* is a slave barge, where the marid Alu keeps his prizes in gentle despair: well cared-for but utterly without freedom.

### BACKGROUND

Alu came to the Material Plane many centuries ago after a particularly brutal uprising against him on the Plane of Water. Since that day, he has wandered the oceans, gathering up whatever mortals he can find to display as trophies in the hopes of using the prestige this grants him to worm his way back into marid society.

### THE ENCOUNTER

The **marid** Alu lives upon a floating palace of coral and pearl. The palace functions as a **galley**, with the hull of the deeps upgrade (see below). It appears as a coral-encrusted galley, with an elegant pearl-topped spire at the galley's stern; its sails are of seaweed.

Alu lives only to collect impressive and prestigious humanoids for display in his palace, and will go to great lengths to acquire new “exhibits.”

The palace contains every imaginable pleasure and amenity to tend to Alu’s “guests” and the marid takes great pride in the comfort of those he has “collected.” The only luxury they lack is freedom.

Two **water elementals** travel with Alu at all times, holding him aloft on his coral throne as he travels the vessel, talking with his captives. A particularly hideous **sea hag**, who calls herself “Little Miss Gumdrop,” acts as the ship’s bosun, but is secretly plotting to sink the *Coral Palace* beneath the waves as vengeance for an incident in the distant past where Alu refused to add Little Miss Gumdrop to his collection.

If the characters have little to no reputation on the seas, the coral palace will just pass them by.

If the characters have a reputation that may have reached the covetous marid’s ears, Alu will almost certainly attempt to add them to his collection. If he is confident that the *Coral Palace* can easily overpower the characters’ ship, he will simply attack and seize the characters right there. If the characters seem too formidable for him, he will attempt to have the characters kidnapped while they are on dry land or send infiltrators to foment mutiny on their ship (see the “Mutiny” event). Alu may also be willing to trade with the party for one of their group, offering a *wish* in exchange for the characters selling one of their own to Alu. If successfully captured, the characters are kept in the lap of luxury but not allowed weapons, armor, or spell casting components. They may be successful in appealing to Alu’s vanity to have some of their





equipment returned, claiming that they cannot adequately show off their value as prizes without their adventuring gear.

Capture need not be a total disaster for the characters. There are others among Alu's "treasures" who may be willing to help them escape, including Milwena Lightbranch (female sun elf **archmage**) and Arax Oaksworn (female half-orc **gladiator**). If the characters can arm these fellow prisoners, they have a decent chance at seizing the ship and taking the Coral Palace for their own.

## OUTCOMES

If the characters manage to seize control of the vessel, they gain control of the *Coral Palace* and can do with it what they will. If Alu escapes, he uses whatever means are still at his disposal to retake the ship.

If the characters manage to escape the *Coral Palace*, Alu actively sends mercenaries and bounty hunters after the characters, viewing their escape as a huge blow to his prestige.

### HULL OF THE DEEPS

*Ship upgrade, hull*

The captain of this ship can activate the hull with an action, causing the entire vessel to sink beneath the waves. The ship's interiors are watertight, but creatures up on deck must have a means of breathing underwater or run the risk of drowning. The ship moves at half speed while underwater, magically propelled by the seaweed hanging from the hull, and cannot descend to a depth of greater than 50 feet. The ship may remain underwater for 1 hour before resurfacing; if it stays submerged for longer than an hour, the interior of the ship begins filling with water and the magical propulsion ceases to function. Once used in this way, this feature cannot be used until the next dawn.

Characters who seize the ship may do with it as they will. The ship has the hull of the deeps, which can only be extracted and added to a new ship if they first scuttle the *Coral Palace*.

Arax Oaksworn will agree to take a position on the character's crew, but Milwena Lightbranch will decline, citing "personal matters" she has to attend to.

## FIENDLY COMPETITION

**Encounter Level:** 7–8

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social, Exploration

**Encounter Overview:** The characters are tasked with investigating the secrets of the mysterious Captain Stetz. In doing so, they uncover Stetz's bargains with fiends and either drive the creatures off or turn the bargain in their favor.

## BACKGROUND

The characters are given a quest by Saltmarsh's mariners' guild to investigate one Captain Figram Stetz, a prosperous seaman who has repeatedly refused to affiliate with the guild. Captain Stetz is a recent human immigrant to Saltmarsh who has made an incredible fortune by bypassing the mariners' guild's trade routes by sailing through the Teeth of Xerbo in Azure Sea. The Teeth of Xerbo is an area of constant thick sea fog where jagged peaks of stone stick haphazardly from the water and below the surface. Sailing the Teeth is supposed to be impossible, and so the guild wants the characters to find out the secret to Stetz's consistent success in sailing through the region.

The truth of the matter is that Stetz is trapped in a bargain with a **merrenoloth** (see appendix A), tricked into accepting its ludicrously one-sided deal in a moment of desperation and despair. As part of this bargain, the merrenoloth and its yugoloth allies are



leaving Stetz with only “one coin in a thousand” and hoarding the rest to further their own plans on the lower planes.

## THE ENCOUNTER

Stetz’s ship, *Surety on Unsure Seas*, is docked at Saltmarsh’s port. It is a sailing ship (see *GoS*, appendix A) and appears to be in extremely poor repair. If the characters take the time to ask the locals about Stetz they may learn the following:

- Stetz’s crew are few in number and do not frequent the town’s taverns.
- Stetz’s crew only come ashore to pick up and drop off cargo.
- Stetz’s first mate is a soft-spoken human woman named Miral; she is well-liked around town but drives a hard bargain with merchants.
- The ship’s pilot is an eerie figure who never seems to leave his post at the ship’s wheel, even when it is docked.

The crew of the ship is made up of the following NPCs:

- 18 **commoners** of various races.
- Captain Stetz, a chaotic neutral human **veteran**.
- Mr. Hooman and Miss Normaal, two **mezzoloths** magically disguised as an incredibly plain-faced human man and woman, respectively.
- Yathex, the ship’s **merrenoloth** pilot.
- Quothuz, aka “Miral,” the ship’s first mate, who is actually a **nycaloth** disguised as a human woman.

If the characters attempt to confront Stetz directly, they are asked to wait outside the ship, whereupon Quothuz, in the guise of Miral, greets them. If asked about the ship’s secret trade routes, she declines to comment and refuses to even speak of them. She tells the characters that Stetz is far too busy to talk at the moment.

The characters can either attempt to storm the ship directly, or sneak on board while it is docked or at sea. Storming the ship while it is at port is unlikely to succeed, as such action will quickly draw the town’s guards—who will not look favorably on the characters for having instigated the violence. How the characters sneak on board is up to them, but consider drawing their attention to the large crates of sea biscuits that are waiting to be hauled onboard.

Once the ship is at sea, or if they enter combat, the yugoloths abandon their human disguises. Characters who reach Captain Stetz in his cabin may be able to convince him to aid them. The captain tells the characters about his foolish bargain, stating that he has tried to drive the yugoloths off in the past, but lost most of his crew in the attempt.

If the characters decide to leave after learning the truth, they will still receive their reward from the mariners’ guild. If they fight the yugoloths, Quothuz surrenders when reduced to half her hit points. She offers the characters 50 percent of the ship’s earnings in

exchange for leaving them to continue trading. Yathex takes no part in the combat, other than to avoid it, and teleports away if Quothuz is defeated. Without the merrenoloth, the ship begins sinking, disappearing beneath the sea over the course of 6 rounds.

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters successfully learn Captain Stetz’s secret and return to the mariners’ guild.
- The characters help Stetz drive off the yugoloths.
- The characters strike a new bargain with the yugoloths.

## REWARDS

For Captain Stetz’s secret, the mariners’ guild offers a 150 gp reward. If the *Surety on Unsure Seas* is still active, it is permanently barred from making port at Saltmarsh and a bounty of 100 gp is offered for Captain Stetz for consorting with fiends.

If the yugoloths are driven off, Captain Stetz offers the characters his *mariner’s armor*, of a type of the DM’s choosing, as thanks for saving him.

If a bargain is struck with the yugoloths, they regularly deposit what they claim is the party’s share of the funds in Saltmarsh every six months. This amount is equal to 4d100 gp. Diligent characters may notice that this amount does not even come close to half the ship’s earnings and may wish to take action against the duplicitous yugoloths.

## THE FLOATING ISLAND OF HENESTAY

**Encounter Level:** 5+

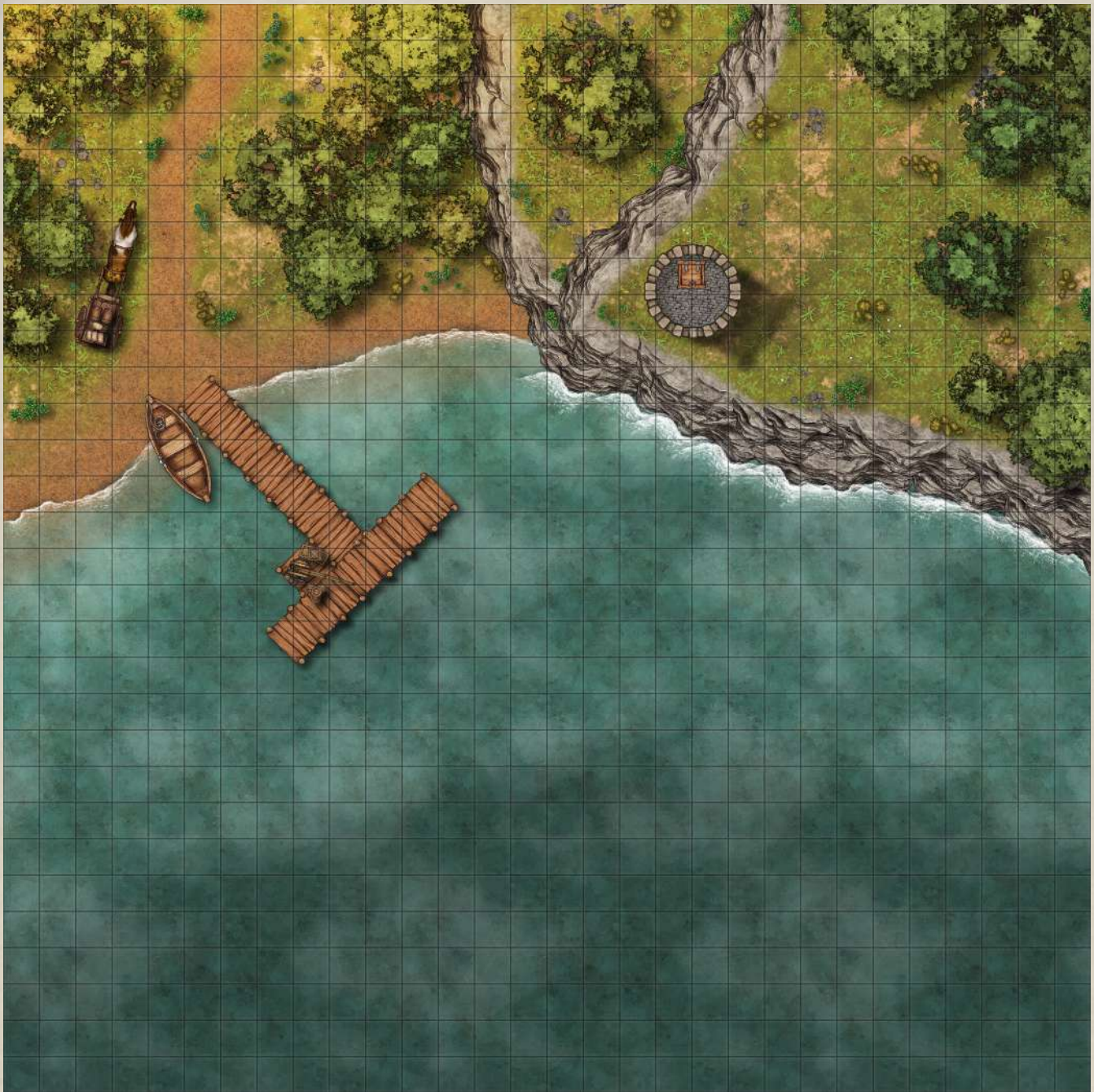
**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social, Exploration

**Encounter Overview:** The characters stumble across a strange floating island while traveling the seas. The island is inhabited by a group of cultists who worship the island, which is an unusually massive undead dragon turtle, kept animate by the cultists’ sacrifices.

## BACKGROUND

The **dragon turtle** Henestay was mortally wounded during a particularly brutal storm many generations ago. A galley full of passengers lost its sails in the same storm and, drifting through the ocean, collided with Henestay’s unconscious bulk. Henestay had been so covered in seaweed and debris that the sailors took the dragon turtle for an island and disembarked onto the “island’s” shores. Being a superstitious people, the sailors performed a human sacrifice to sanctify the island that rescued them. This profane ritual granted Henestay a form of necromantic healing that sustained the dragon turtle through its injuries. As it awakened, it demanded more sacrifices, finding that its hunger for food had faded but that a hunger for blood sacrifices was growing in its soul. It convinced its new islanders that it was a god, and they have worshipped it as such ever since.





## THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter can begin in place of a randomly generated mysterious island on the “Encounters at Sea” random encounters table in *GoS*, appendix A, or the DM can choose to have the characters encounter the island at any time while the party is out on the open sea.

From a distance, Henestay appears as a normal, lush island, but one that floats untethered through the water, leaving a noticeable wake in the water behind it. If the characters approach it, they will see a small wooden dock where the locals, people of many different races wearing clothing from many different nations and cultures, are smiling and waving to them.

The welcoming committee is composed of Sefra (CE female human **gladiator**), Alerea (CE female half-elf

**commoner**), Grim Blacktoes (CE male halfling **veteran**), Ceralia Brightbloom (CE female elf **druid**), and Marlan Brightaxe (CE male dwarf **priest**). Sefra leads the group and speaks for them if the characters come in to dock. She is a rough but affable woman in her middle-years, with a slightly scarred face; her jet-black hair flecked with gray, is worn in a single long braid. She congratulates the characters for finding paradise and offers to let the characters spend the night or “stay forever, if you wish!” If you have appointed a “spokesperson” on the ship, they suggest that it may be a good time for a night of shore leave; if the crew’s quality score (see “Crew Members,” *GoS*, appendix A) is 3 or lower, they will be particularly insistent.

If the characters decline the invitation, the islanders make no attempt to stop them beyond expressing disappointment.



If the characters choose to stay the night they are led to a large longhouse constructed in a patchwork fashion from parts of several ships. A single standing stone, overgrown and constructed of some strange material, stands before the long house. The standing stone is made from one of the rib bones of Henestay; a character who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check will notice that it is a single large, sculpted, and polished bone.

Sefra informs the characters that the islanders have decided to throw a dance in their honor, and asks that they pick one of their crew to be “Monarch of the Island” for the night. If you have appointed a spokesperson, (see “Additional Officer: Spokesperson,” p. 19) they suggest picking a non-officer member of the crew, as it might cause resentment if the crew were all overlooked in favor of the officers.

The “Monarch of the Island” is treated to every delight the island has to offer; that person is seated at the high table in the long house and fed with the island’s finest foods and drinks. The party in the long house is rowdy, full of music, and the drink flows freely. Insightful characters may wonder how the island gets such a varied selection of food and alcohol from such varied climates. Toward the end of the celebrations the “Monarch of the Island” is carried on a chair down to the bone standing stone. The islanders will then attempt to tie the selected monarch to the stone and sacrifice them to “Great Henestay Upon the Waves” via ritual disembowelment.

If the characters attempt to stop the sacrifice, Sefra explains that Henestay needs blood and souls to survive and will bestow a great gift on one of them if they allow the sacrifice. If the characters persist in stopping the ritual the islanders turn hostile and attack. Most, other than those already mentioned, use the **commoner** stat block and stay out of the fight.

If the characters allow the ritual to go forward, the “Monarch of the Island” is slain and has their soul consumed by Henestay; they cannot be restored to life by any means other than a *wish* or divine intervention while Henestay yet lives.

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters allow the sacrifice.
- The characters disrupt the sacrifice and escape.
- The characters disrupt the sacrifice and slay Henestay.

## REWARDS

If the characters allow the sacrifice, Sefra asks one character to step forward to receive the “bounty of Henestay.” That character is anointed with the blood of the sacrificed and they receive the *blessing of protection*; additionally, they will sometimes, but not always, appear as undead when viewed using magic and abilities that detect the undead. A character can receive

this effect only once. The crew’s quality score decreases by 5, most members horrified at seeing one of their number willingly offered up for sacrifice in this way.

If the characters disrupt the sacrifice and escape, Henestay lazily chases the ship for a few miles but not at any real speed. The characters’ ship can easily outpace it. The crew celebrates their officers for defending them; they gain the benefits of a day of shore leave and their quality increases by 3.

Battling the dragon turtle is likely beyond the characters when they first reach the island, but if they manage to overcome it or decide to return later to do so, they can harvest some of its mighty shell for their hull. Plates of dragon turtle shell do not count as a hull in their own right, but increase the AC of the ship’s hull by 2.

## LOOSE ENDS

**Encounter Level:** 4

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social

**Encounter Overview:** This is a revamp of the quest in “Salvage Operation” (chapter 4) to make it tie directly into other quests.

## BACKGROUND

The following alterations are made to the background of “Salvage Operation”:

- The *Emperor of the Waves* was not damaged by a storm, but instead by the juvenile **kraken** that appears in the “The Styes” (chapter 8).
- The island the cultists came from is the same island as the one featured in “Isle of the Abbey” (chapter 5). When you come to running that adventure, the cultists now worship Tharizdun rather than the other suggested deities.
- The fracturing of the cultists’ island is between the group who were turned to the worship of Tharizdun under the influence of the **aboleth** Sgothgah and those who still worship Lolth.
- The Tharizdun cultists enslaved those who kept to Lolth, forcing them to use the *Emperor of the Waves* to capture the juvenile kraken for Sgothgah. It was this battle, rather than an attack by a random elder octopus, that scuttled the ship.
- Having retrieved the kraken and successfully dominated its will, Sgothgah returns to finish off the *Emperor of the Waves* and any still aboard it, tie up loose ends, and test its new kraken thrall’s power.

## THE ENCOUNTER

The quest continues as normal until the characters reach 10. Unholy Shrine. When Krell Grohlg attacks the characters, he seems panicked, exclaiming, “Your mad god will not have me! It will not!” He also has an unhealed brand-mark in the shape of an asymmetrical spiral on his left arm; a character who makes a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Religion) check will







recognize it as the symbol of Tharizdun. The characters can stop the combat by assuring Krell that they're not being sent by a mad god and succeeding on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

If persuaded to stop combat, Krell tells them that something is coming to finish him off and begs the characters to take him away with them.

During this conversation, Sgothgah approaches the ship and telepathically commands any of Krell's remaining spiders to attack the characters and Krell. It can control these creatures because it targeted them with its Enslave feature when it last came to the ship. Its control over these creatures is absolute and is not broken by damage.

Krell panics, yelling, "He is here! He is here!" repeatedly during this battle. If the spiders are all slain, Sgothgah telekinetically opens the cells of the **ghasts** in 12. Cargo Hold and orders the kraken to attack the ship.

The kraken attack plays out in the same way as the Octopus Attack section in the book, but with the addition of Sgothgah using its Enslave feature on a random character each turn until it has used all three daily uses. If it succeeds at Enslaving a character, the aboleth commands that character to throw themselves into the sea, where it uses them as a hostage to exchange for Krell, if he still lives. If Krell is already dead, Sgothgah is pleased to simply observe the kraken's might from a distance, unseen from beneath the waves.

Either way, if the characters escape the ship, a shadow appears beneath their rowboat. Sgothgah either demands they hand over Krell, if he escaped, or asks them a random, meaningless question using telepathy, hoping that they will respond and allow it to use its Probing Telepathy. Sgothgah then allows the characters to return to their vessel without issue, not considering them a threat to its plans.

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters rescue Krell.
- The characters fail to rescue Krell.
- The characters are affected by Sgothgah's Probing Telepathy.

## REWARDS

If Krell is rescued, he can be a useful ally in "Isle of the Abbey" (chapter 5). He knows the island's defenses and layout, and details on the major players on the island. He does not know that the island has recently been attacked by pirates. He can also tell them the location of his secret cache in the Skull Dunes, (see "Isle of the Abbey"), buried in the sand at a location of the DM's choosing. It contains 66 gp, 66 sp, 66 cp and a pair of *slippers of spider climbing*. Krell can also be hired as a special crewmate, but he may try to convince other crewmates to begin worshipping Lolth.

## OF FESTIVALS AND FETTERS

**Encounter Level:** 3–5

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social

**Encounter Overview:** A grand festival is being thrown by Gellan Primewater in honor of the town's alliance with the lizardfolk. During the festival, several strangers to Saltmarsh arrive and accuse several prominent Traditionalist captains of involvement in the slave trade, prompting a tense standoff or even a riot.

## BACKGROUND

Saltmarsh has always lain within Waterdeep's sphere of influence, paying taxes to the Open Lord of that city and receiving its protection. Until recently that protection was extremely hands-off, but Waterdeep has lately begun taking a more direct role in Saltmarsh's affairs, sending more guards and officials to rule the town. The Traditionalist political faction opposes this, seeking more independence for Saltmarsh, while the Loyalists, many of whom are recent Waterdhavian settlers, support closer ties with the mother city.

Gellan Primewater has his fingers in many pies, always allowing his greed to lead his every choice and action. He has a long and sordid history of slave trading, a history kept hidden from Saltmarsh and its citizens, including his fellow Traditionalists. A few months ago, a Zhentarim agent purchased three slaves at an illicit black market in Waterdeep and offered them their freedom in exchange for traveling to Saltmarsh and accusing several Traditionalist captains of involvement in their enslavement. As an additional wrinkle, the Zhentarim agent is a dwarf and appeared to the slaves wearing a poorly disguised uniform of the Waterdeep City Watch. This way, the Zhentarim hopes to inflame tensions between the Traditionalists and Loyalists even if their deception is uncovered.

## THE ENCOUNTER

The festival begins a few hours before the evening meal. Both Anders Solmor and Gellan Primewater sponsor the festival, with Gellan fronting most of the expense for the entertainment and various exotic foods, while Anders provides the plainer and more traditional fare from his various fishing ships.

Present at this festival, as guests of honor, are small delegations of two or three lizardfolk, koalinth, merfolk, and locathah. The festival is held on Saltmarsh's docks to accommodate the merfolk and locathah delegations, who prefer to leave the water only briefly. If the characters were responsible for the forging of this alliance in "Danger at Dunwater," they are also treated as guests of honor and both Anders and Gellan clamber over one another to give speeches in their honor from a raised wooden dais placed on the docks.

The festival is an excellent opportunity to introduce





or flesh out the political leaders of Saltmarsh. Examples of interactions with these political leaders are as follows:

- Eda Oweland (CG female human **noble**), as the senior member of the council, formally greets the delegations with every courtesy one might expect of a diplomat. If the characters were involved in the creation of this alliance she asks them to join her in this greeting. Characters with a passive Insight of 18 or higher will notice that she is extremely uncomfortable dealing with these outsiders.
- Gellan Primewater (NE male human **noble**) moves from group to group at the event, pressing palms with the high and low alike, giving and receiving compliments like water. If the characters are guests of honor he pays them particular attention, offering to introduce them to his tailor and inviting them to dine with him at their earliest convenience.
- Eliander Fireborn (LN male human **gladiator**) spends most of the evening speaking with the lizardfolk delegation and acting as their translators. The lizardfolk speak a little Common, but Eliander speaks Draconic far better. He thanks the characters sincerely for their efforts, and likely tries to talk them into taking a tour of duty in Waterdeep's City Guard.
- Manistrad Copperlocks (LN female dwarf **veteran**) sticks close to Eliander and the lizardfolk, intensely interested in the bone armor and weapons worn by the lizardfolk. She quizzes them most of the night about their manufacture, finding common ground with the lizardfolk's industrious culture. She seems generally uninterested in the characters and does not

interact with them unless approached.

- Anders Solmor (LG male human **noble**) moves through the festival with an effortless charisma that many envy and admire. His interactions with both the characters are genuine and heartfelt. He expressed serious concern over the growing threat of the sahuagin and sincere gratitude to the characters if they helped organise this alliance. He speaks with each of the delegations with friendly curiosity. Skerrin Wavechaser (LE male human **assassin**) is Anders's shadow, as always, through the night. Characters with a passive Perception of 16 or higher may notice Skerrin's eyes flashing to them on several occasions, as the assassin works out whether the characters will be an asset or a hindrance to the Zhentarim's designs on Saltmarsh.

The night goes by relatively well, with maybe a few harmless misunderstandings between the lizardfolk and/or koalinth delegates and the people of Saltmarsh, until the arrival of the Zhentarim's slaves. The slaves are three human **commoners**, Lucia Blackford (CN female human), Hahra Dirsk (LN male human) and Bendohr Goldsong (LG male dwarf). Lucia Blackford is the most vocal of the three, and is their appointed spokesperson. The three make their way up onto the dais and loudly accuse Traditionalist ship captains Grindel Tallgloom (CE male human **bandit captain**) and Sevi Whitspell (LE female half-elf **knight**) of selling them into slavery. Both Tallgloom and Whitspell work for Gellan Primewater and he immediately jumps to their defense. Both Anders Solmor and Eliander Fireborn respond with outrage, demanding Tallgloom and Whitspell's immediate arrests and Eda Oweland backs up Gellan, her longtime political ally and friend. The mood of the festival immediately becomes extremely tense, with both sides quickly gathering supporters from the crowd and the celebration suddenly splits into two angry mobs. The characters can choose to intervene at this point, and may be prompted to do so by members of the delegations if they helped broker the alliance.

Calming the mobs requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check if the characters make a call for unity, or a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check if the characters use the threat of the sahuagin or if they brandish weapons. If the characters fail to calm the mobs, the situation quickly turns violent. If the characters choose to get involved, they can gain a great deal of respect from either the Traditionalists or Loyalists by fighting with them. If they do, most of Saltmarsh's residents use the **commoner** stat block, but many use *GoS*'s various pirate stat blocks. The combat is extremely unlikely to prove fatal for anyone, but can quickly escalate if the characters charge in with weapons drawn and spells flying. If the characters do not get involved, many people are injured but no one is killed. Neither faction thinks better or worse of the characters for their neutrality. Either way, Skerrin Wavechaser will use the distraction of the riot to quickly dispatch the



slaves, their task for the Zhentarim accomplished.

If the characters successfully calm the mob and combat does not erupt, Anders suggests that the characters be allowed to question the slaves, citing their neutrality in Saltmarsh politics and, if they brokered the alliance, their previous service to the town. The factions begrudgingly agree, and the slaves and the characters are led to the Council Hall, with the Traditionalist leanings of the town guard being cited as the reason for ruling out the Barracks and Jail. The characters are then left alone with the slaves. The interrogation is a difficult task. The two male slaves refuse to speak, looking to Lucia to speak for them. The slaves are all deathly afraid of breaking their bargain with the Zhentarim and losing their promised freedom, so all Charisma (Intimidation) checks are made at disadvantage. Attempts at Charisma (Persuasion) are more likely to succeed, but getting the full story out of the slaves will require more than just high rolls on a d20. The characters will have to accomplish the following three things over the course of the interrogation to get the true story from the slaves:

- Intuit that the slaves are lying with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check
- Convince the slaves that the characters will protect them with a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check
- Convince the slaves that they should care about innocent people suffering because of false accusations with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check

If all three of these things are accomplished, Bendohr Goldsong breaks ranks with the others and tells the characters what really happened. Remember to note that the Waterdeep uniform worn by the agent who bought them was very poorly disguised and ill-fitting, as this is something Bendohr specifically picked up on. From here, the characters must decide what to tell the people of Saltmarsh.

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The riot is not stopped. Tensions between the Traditionalists and Loyalists are at an all-time high and council meetings are temporarily suspended. The agenda of the Zhentarim is advanced.
- The characters tell the council that the slaves are telling the truth. A trial is held in the following days for Captains Blackford and Dirsk. Their ships are searched and secret cells for holding slaves are found in the cargo holds of both, as the two are truly slavers, just not of these particular slaves. Both are found guilty and they are executed at the Barracks and Jail. Tensions between the Traditionalists and Loyalists escalate, but not as much as if there had been a full blown riot, as Eda Oweland begrudgingly accepts the verdict.
- The characters tell the council that the slaves were

told to make false accusations by a Waterdeep agent. Without the direct intervention of the characters, the slaves are jailed and sent to Seaton for further interrogation. Tensions between the Traditionalists and Loyalists escalate, but not as much as if there had been a full blown riot, as Eliander Fireborn is glad that “innocent” people were not wrongfully executed.

- The characters tell the council that the slaves were told to make false accusations by someone pretending to be a Waterdeep agent. The council is horrified that someone is attempting to sow division among them, causing the council to pull together as they haven’t in many years. This is a serious setback to Skerrin Wavechaser’s plans and he may even mark the characters for death, sending Zhentarim **spies** and/or **assassins** to kill them or infiltrate their vessel.

## REWARDS

If the characters fail to prevent the riot and remain neutral, there are no rewards for this encounter.

Characters who support the Traditionalists, either in the riot or by exposing the slaves’ lies, are granted an extremely gaudy *ring of water walking*, inscribed with the Primewater family seal, by Gellan Primewater. The many gems encrusting this ring’s platinum band make it worth twice the normal value of an uncommon magical item.

Characters who supported the Loyalists, either in the riot or by accusing captains of practicing slavery, are granted a suit of *mariner’s armor* of either leather, a breastplate, or splint mail (their choice). This armor is emblazoned with the seal of Waterdeep.

Characters who expose the truth are granted both the above rewards as well as XP for a medium encounter at their level.

## MUTINY

**Encounter Level:** Any

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social, Exploration

**Encounter Overview:** The crew of the character’s ship mutiny against them, either because poor management has caused the crew quality to fall too low (see “Crew Members,” *GoS*, appendix A) or because the crew has been infiltrated by hostile forces.

## ADDITIONAL OFFICER: SPOKESPERSON

To more organically keep track of the crew’s quality, it is worthwhile for the DM to create a spokesperson NPC from amongst the crew. This individual doesn’t hold an official position among the crew, but they are the person who is a natural leader among the rank-and-file shipmates and the one who normally voices their concerns to the officers.

This spokesperson will warn the officers if the crew quality is getting low, but if the crew decides to mutiny, will actually lead the mutineers and be appointed the new captain.







## SPECIAL CREWMATES

Special crewmates are NPCs the characters may befriend or hire in the course of their adventures. Most of these NPCs act as normal members of the crew, albeit with a different stat block, but some may have the skills to fill a gap in the ship's officers.

It is up to the DM to decide whether these characters take part in the mutiny, try to stop it, or remain neutral. Although they may like the characters personally, they will also have been affected by the crew's low quality score. A friendly character on a very low quality crew will likely still become an active mutineer, albeit one who is advocating a non-lethal approach to the mutiny.

## INFILTRATION

If the characters have made a number of enemies in their time in Saltmarsh, those enemies may send infiltrators into their crew. Infiltrators generally use the **spy** or **assassin** stat blocks, depending on the party's level, but other stat blocks can be used at the DM's discretion.

Roll a Charisma (Deception) check for the infiltrators as a group each day, contested by the highest passive Insight score among the characters. If the infiltrators are spotted, they attempt to flee if they can.

If they are not spotted, the crew's quality decreases by 1 each day.

If the crew quality decreases to 0, triggering mutiny rolls by the captain, the roll is made at disadvantage due to the active instigation of the infiltrators.

## THE ENCOUNTER

As the characters are likely mighty adventurers and the majority of the crew will be using the **commoner** stat block, they will attempt to take the characters while they sleep. If they are successful they will tie the characters up and maroon them on a mysterious island, generated at random (see "Mysterious Islands," *GoS*, appendix A).

If the characters manage to avoid being taken in their sleep, they can attempt diplomacy with the crew. Generally only about a quarter of the crew takes an active role in the mutiny (see "Sample Ships," *GoS*, appendix A, for crew numbers by ship type), with the rest acting as uninvolved bystanders, willing to follow whoever emerges triumphant.

The characters can attempt a Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check against the mutineers to get them to stand down. This roll is made at disadvantage and its DC is 15 + however far below 0 the crew's quality is. The characters can also attempt a Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check against the non-mutineer crew to convince them to aid them against the mutineers. Its DC is 15 + however far below 0 the crew's quality is.

## OUTCOMES

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters are marooned.
- The characters convince the mutineers to stand down.
- The characters defeat the mutineers.

## REWARDS

If the characters are marooned, they will need to seek a way to leave their new mysterious island home. This can lead to the "The Coral Palace of Alu" or the "Floating Island of Henestay" encounters.

If the mutineers are convinced to stand down, the mutiny ends and the crew quality increases by 1d4. If there are infiltrators on board and they have not been unmasked, then crew quality continues to decrease by 1 each day they are not found.

If the mutineers are defeated, have one of the characters roll a Charisma (Intimidation) check. The crew quality increases by an amount equal to that skill check minus 10, to a minimum of 1.

## PARADISE

**Encounter Level:** 3-5

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Exploration

**Encounter Overview:** The characters spot a beautiful beach on an uncharted island while out at sea; feeling oddly drawn to the island, they run the risk of becoming lost in its fey magics forever.


## BACKGROUND

This uncharted island is known to the fey as Rayth'el Meer, or Joy's Grief. It was created in the distant past by a forgotten prince of the Seelie Court who fell in love with an angel of Mt. Celestia. In an attempt to entice the angel into visiting him, the fey prince used all of his magical arts to create Rayth'el Meer, a perfect paradise outside of the Outer Planes. The prince's love did indeed come down from the Seven Heavens to visit. But the prince worked his arts too well, creating an island of such overwhelming joy and contentment that all good-aligned creatures who dwell there are overwhelmed with contentment, falling into a deep, endless slumber. His love lost to joy, the prince too surrendered, and the two now sleep deep within the depths of the island's forest. Since then, evil fey have discovered the island. Immune to the island's effects, they live on the island, using it to draw in unsuspecting victims for their own twisted ends.

## THE ENCOUNTER

When the characters begin this encounter, they will see an idyllic beach on a small island in the middle of the ocean. All parts of the island except for the beach are shrouded in a multi-coloured mist that twinkles pleasantly in the sunlight. All characters, including the





crew, on the ship will start to hear the song from their childhood that was most pleasing to them. This could be a childhood lullaby, a religious hymn, or beloved folk tune, etc. The initial enchantment effect is extraordinarily strong, and only the most extraordinarily strong-willed characters will be able to resist it. Everyone on the ship must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or feel compelled to go to the island as fast as possible. You do not need to roll for each member of the crew as most are **commoners** and are incapable of succeeding on such a difficult saving throw. If the characters manage to succeed on this save, the ship's crew leaps overboard and swims toward the shore, likely leaving the characters stranded.

Arriving on the island, charmed NPCs begin scattering about the beach, relaxing on the sand or in the water, and generally frolicking. If all characters are charmed, they join in with this enjoyment for 2d8 hours, gaining exhaustion as normal if this continues for too long. A single sand castle, 2 feet square, sits at the center of the beach. Charmed creatures are compelled to stay away from the sand castle. If the sand castle is interacted with, a sand golem rises from beneath it, with the sand castle as its head, and attacks. A **sand golem** uses the statistics of a **clay golem**, but with half the hit points. At this point, the first of the NPCs falls asleep in the sand. A **sea hag** emerges from the mist shrouded forest around the beach and seizes the unconscious NPC by the ankles, dragging them toward the forest. Such an unpleasant sight is enough to wake characters from their charm; the characters may repeat the save against the island's charm, this time with a DC of 20. If they fail the save, the sea hag drags the sleeping NPC away into the mist, never to be

seen again. In 1d4 hours, another NPC will fall asleep and the sea hag will again emerge to take them. This will continue indefinitely, with the DC to resist the charm falling by 2 each time. The ship's crew quality (see "Crew Members," *GoS*, appendix A) also falls by 1 for every two members of the crew taken and not rescued. If the DC reaches 10, the enchantment ends on all creatures who witness the hag.

If the characters try to stop the hag, she turns hostile and the sand golem emerges and attacks. The hag attempts to flee if she loses any hit points. Once the hag is defeated or driven off the characters can either flee or try to save their crew by entering the mists. The characters must make a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check while trying to navigate the mists; on a success, it takes 1 hour to reach the center of the island, where the prince and the angel lie together in reverie; anyone failing the check takes an additional hour for every 2 points below 20 rolled (e.g., a character making an 18 on the check takes 2 hours, etc.).

Three sea hags, forming a coven, wait at the center of the island in a 60-foot diameter eye of visibility in the mist. At the center of this space, the prince and the angel lie together asleep. A scroll is clutched in the fey prince's hand. If the sea hag from the beach was slain, there are only two sea hags and they attempt to bargain. They demand that they keep the crew they have already taken, but offer to free all the others and the characters. In exchange they can offer:

- One character gains the ability to breathe underwater. They accomplish this by cutting gills into the character's neck with their nails.
- One character gains a swim speed equal to its walking speed. They accomplish this by cutting their





own hands and bathing the character's hands and feet in the blood. The blood congeals, forming webbing on the character's hands and feet.

If the coven is at full strength or the characters refuse the offer, the hags attack. Once the hags are defeated the characters may read the scroll in the fey prince's hand. It reads:

I sought to create a paradise for my love, so they would know a little of the paradise they have left behind. But I succeeded too well, and none may dwell here without falling into an endless reverie. Only my death may free us now, but I lack the strength to carry out the deed myself. So I shall sleep, and pray that others will have the fortitude I lack.

Slaying the fey prince causes the island to instantly evaporate into mist, dropping the characters and all their crew into the sea. The angel, a **deva**, sheds a single tear which crystallizes into a diamond and falls into the sea. They then fly off into the sky, leaving the characters and crew to swim back to their ship

## OUTCOMES

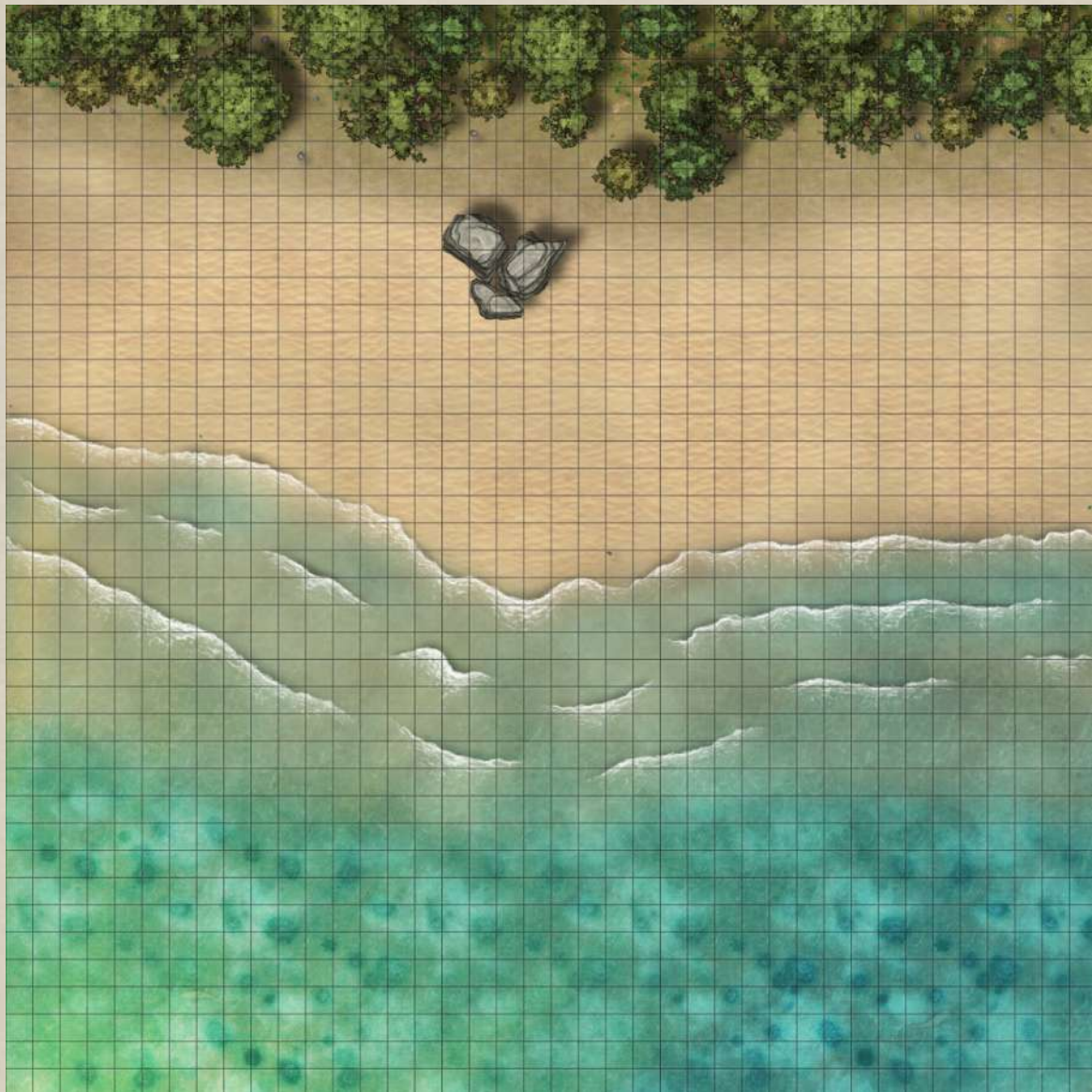
Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters make a deal with the hags, meaning they regain none of the crew-quality lost. If the crew discover the characters' deal, the crew quality falls by 5.
- The characters slay the hags and the fey prince, ending the island and its effects.
- The characters slay the hags but leave the prince and his love to their enchanted slumber.

## REWARDS

The characters keep any bargain made with the hags, but the hags are not pleased to have been forced to bargain. They will seek out the characters with their minions at the first opportunity, attempting to slay them and take revenge.

The angel's tear, if recovered, functions as a *gem of brightness*.





## SALTMARSH'S FATE

**Encounter Level:** 10–12

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social

**Encounter Overview:** Following the events of chapter 7, “Tammeraut's Fate,” the cultists of Orcus continue to plague the seas. This event expands on the “Extending the Adventure” section at the end of the quest.

### BACKGROUND

Following the defeat of Syrgaul and the sealing of the Pit of Hatred portal, the forces of Orcus begin to regroup. With captain Syrgaul out of the way, a **vampire** pirate captain styling himself The Dread Admiral Sufocan has begun terrorizing the seas with a small fleet of ships captained by his **vampire spawn**. Sufocan is still seeking the pearl heart of his lost love (see *Pale Prow*, *GoS*, p. 27), but has been brought under the thrall of Orcus by the promise that the lord of undeath will grant his love a second life as a vampire if Sufocan serves Orcus well. To better serve Orcus, Sufocan has created a large number of additional vampire spawn and used them to seize a small fleet of vessels, which he is now using to stifle all trade coming in and out of Saltmarsh. Soon, Sufocan will have the forces necessary to launch a direct assault on Saltmarsh to turn it into the base of operations for his mighty seaborn cult of undeath in hopes of finally receiving the promised reward from Orcus.

You will likely want to introduce this undead fleet before running this encounter. In general, the vessels that sail under Sufocan's banner use the same statistics as the *Pale Prow*, but Sufocan is replaced with a vampire spawn and the ship has a normal rudder instead of being controlled by six vampire spawn. Those six vampire spawn are replaced by **wights**.

If the characters encounter the *Pale Prow* itself, the ship has undergone several changes since Sufocan threw his lot in with Orcus after the events of “Tammeraut's Fate.” The ship is constantly surrounded by a ghost fog (see “Ocean Environs,” appendix A, *GoS*) for a 1-mile radius, and it is equipped with the bones of endless toil and death vessel (see “Superior Ship Upgrades,” appendix A, *GoS*). Its crew has also changed; its lookout is now a **shadow demon**, and a **glabrezu** serves as Sufocan's second-in-command. Sufocan is also able to trigger a necromancy magical storm (see “Magical Storms,” appendix A, *GoS*) as an action. He carries Nightfall, a black-bladed sun blade that deals necrotic instead of radiant damage.

It should be noted that as a demon lord, Orcus is not bound to keep this agreement he has made with Sufocan. Indeed, Orcus is neither in possession of Sufocan's love's soul or her body and so lacks both the means and the motives to fulfil his end of the bargain. Like all of Orcus's minions, the reward for success for Sufocan will be the consumption of his soul and the reanimation of his corpse as a mindless thrall.





## THE ENCOUNTER

While the characters are in Saltmarsh, a strange, unnatural mist descends on the town one night, rolling in off the sea, while red lightning crackles behind it. This mist is the ghost fog that surrounds the *Pale Prow* and the lightning is from a maelstrom of abyssal energy that Sufocan has created. Don't bother keeping track of the **specters** that the ghost fog spawns, as this encounter is extremely unlikely to last more than an hour in-game. If this encounter does last more than an hour, the specters spawn around the characters and attack them.

The bell begins ringing in the barracks, calling the town guards to assemble. If the characters head to the docks, they arrive in time to join in the defense of the docks against the first ship to arrive. The vessel docks and begins expelling its crew of twenty **zombies**, six **wights**, and one **vampire spawn**. five **skeletons** stay on deck, shooting arrows at people on the dock. There are several guards, including Eliander Fireborn (LN male human **gladiator**), if he still lives. If Fireborn is dead, he is replaced with Kraddock Stonehorn (LG male human **gladiator**). Fireborn is fighting the zombies, caught up within a hoard of them. He shouts to the characters to deal with the vampire spawn, and that he has the zombies "under control." As a gladiator, Fireborn is more than capable of looking after himself, but the vampire spawn and wights are slaughtering the guards fighting them. Treat the characters fighting the vampire spawn and wights as a separate battle from that of the guards, Fireborn, and the zombies.

After the fight with the vampire spawn, reinforcements arrive for both the undead and the defenders. If Stonehorn isn't already on the docks, he now arrives with the entirety of Saltmarsh's town guards and all willing citizens, as does Eda Oweland, Manistrad Copperlocks, Anders Solmor, Skerrin Wavechaser, and any other Saltmarsh NPCs you may wish to include. Don't get overwhelmed with trying to keep track of all of this; just treat it as flavor, like the battle in "The Final Enemy." The target for the characters should, and must, be Admiral Sufocan.

As the *Pale Prow* approaches, Sufocan triggers the necromancy magical storm as mentioned above, via a magical blessing that Orcus has granted him. His ship crashes directly into the docks, shattering the wood and crushing two small fishing ships. Sufocan jumps down from the deck and begins slaughtering guards. Those he slays rise as zombies a turn later, swelling the ranks of the invaders. If the characters don't intervene, he will quickly kill so many guards that the defenders will be overwhelmed and Saltmarsh will fall. If the characters are struggling with Sufocan, Eliander Fireborn may join them. He has been fighting hard and is reduced to half his hit points.

If Sufocan is defeated, his **glabrezu** first mate tries to sail the *Pale Prow* away while Sufocan travels in mist form to the maelstrom, which acts as his coffin. If the characters are quick, they can board the ship, fight past

the glabrezu and **shadow demon** and seize the *Pale Prow*. From there, the characters must slay Sufocan in the maelstrom. The maelstrom is 50 ft. wide and deep, is difficult terrain, deals 2d10 necrotic damage to all creatures and objects within it. and is guarded at all times by either the *Pale Prow* or two of Sufocan's vampire spawn's vessels. Sufocan's fleet is immune to the necrotic damage dealt by the maelstrom. When Sufocan is slain, his body reforms at the bottom of the maelstrom. Slaying him there kills him forever and seals the maelstrom.

## OUTCOMES

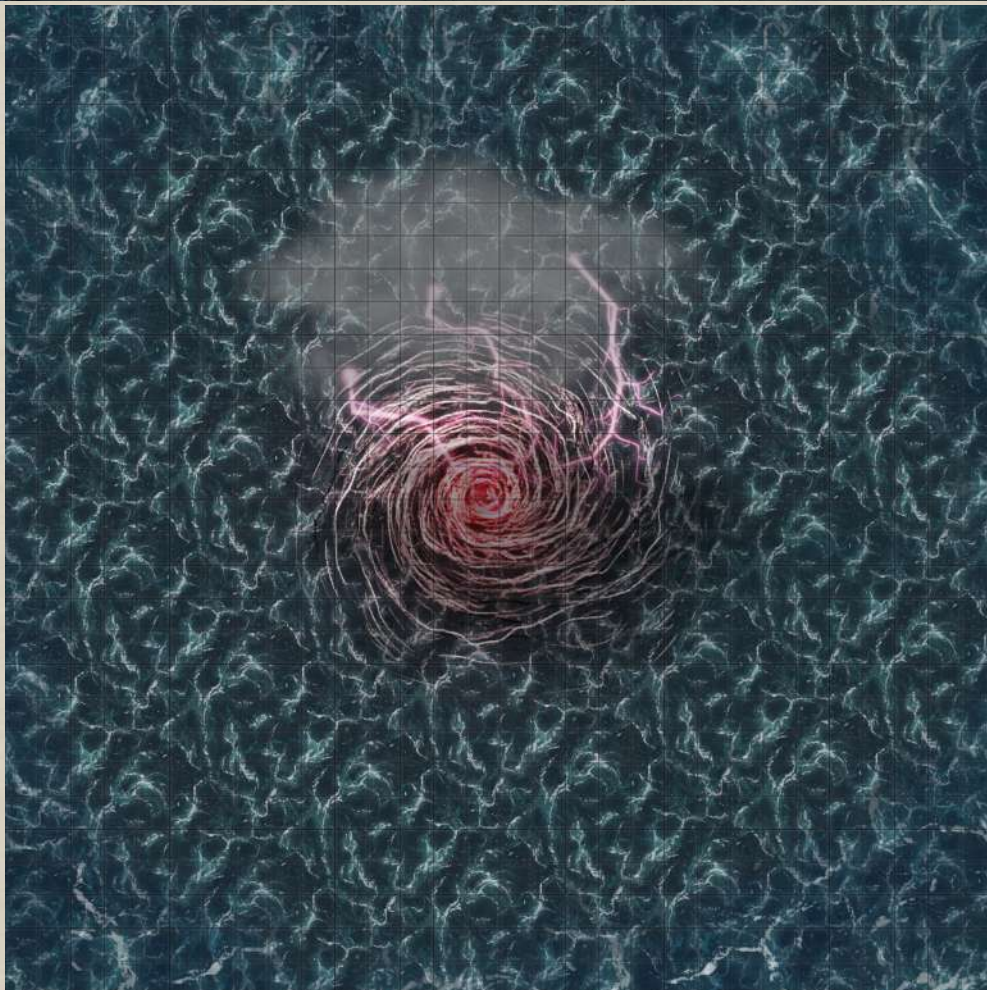
Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- If Sufocan is slain or driven off, the defenders of Saltmarsh drive off his fleet and win the day. There are many casualties on Saltmarsh's side, but the survivors celebrate their victory and hail the characters as heroes.
- If Sufocan forces the characters to retreat, Saltmarsh is lost to the undead horde; its people are put to the sword and raised as zombies. Over time, a small rift to Orcus's layer of the Abyss begins to form in Saltmarsh, allowing ever-more-powerful demons onto the Material Plane until Orcus himself is able to step through. The characters will have to rally quickly to have any hope of stopping this impending apocalypse.
- If Sufocan is completely destroyed, Orcus's designs on Saltmarsh are ruined and the undead fleet utterly disperses. Any vampire spawn that escaped may continue to plague the coast for years to come, but none will ever rival the power and threat that was the Dread Admiral.
- If Sufocan retreats successfully, he will bide his time and regather his strength. Before attacking Saltmarsh again, he will seek out the characters and attempt to





# Dagon's Maw





turn them into vampire spawn before tying them to cannon balls and throwing them overboard. He will never stop hunting the characters while he or they still live.

## REWARDS

If Saltmarsh is defended, the characters are hailed as heroes yet again. If they have not previously been granted the town's *silver raven figurine of wondrous power*, they are awarded it now, along with a purse of 1,500 gp. The characters are also asked to pick one of their number to join Saltmarsh's council.

If Sufocan is slain, the characters recover Nightfall and the *Pale Prow*. Both are considered by the people of Saltmarsh as well within the characters' rights to claim. The characters can choose what to do with *Pale Prow*, such as replacing their current ship with it, scuttling it to extract the bones of endless toil and death vessel upgrades, selling it for a cool 20,000 gp, or adding it to their fleet.

## THE SPIRAL SONG

**Encounter Level:** 11–13

**Encounter Type:** Combat, Social

**Encounter Overview:** The Temple of Tharizdun is presumed to be empty of cultists during the events of "The Styes." This encounter assumes the temple is full of cultists, details their behavior and combat with the characters, and introduces a new cult leader character: Binuth of the Spiral Song (maps are the end of the encounter).

## BACKGROUND

The cult of Tharizdun has existed in the Styes for some time before the arrival of "the Whisperer" to lead and manipulate them. In the text of the adventure they are leaderless before Sgothgah, even having an *instrument of the bards (Cli lyre)* in storage to serve as their long-awaited leader's badge of office. This encounter gives them such a mortal leader, a male halfling bard, long since driven to madness and evil by the "song of Tharizdun" he hears in his mind. This cult leader chafes at his loss of prestige to "the Whisperer," and may be willing to aid the characters if engaged in dialogue.

## THE ENCOUNTER

You may choose to include this encounter either when the characters first explore the Temple of Tharizdun, or have the characters return to the temple to clear out the cult after defeating Sgothgah. If Sgothgah has already been defeated, the characters have no reason to parlay with Binuth so use the combat element of this encounter as a standalone. The rest of this section assumes the encounter is taking part when the characters first arrive at the temple.

The approach to the temple is unchanged, with only the sound of the growing drone of the chanting cultists within the temple added to this encounter. The

adventure says the doors are unlocked if the temple is in use, but ignore this; Binuth doesn't want his rituals interrupted and Sgothgah is currently in hiding. It makes far more sense that he would lock the temple after his congregation has arrived.

As the characters approach T5. Dark God's Chapel, the incessant chanting and droning of the cultists grows ever louder and more arrhythmic. As the characters enter the chamber, many of the nearly 100 cultists fall to the ground, spasming and catatonic with the maddening ecstasy of the ritual. The others remain standing, but are equally catatonic. For the purposes of this encounter, the cultists are scenery, used only as set dressing for the battle with Binuth. They are all considered incapacitated for the next hour and will not take part in combat in any form. However, Binuth has a number of area of effect spells at his disposal and will callously cast spells that injure or kill his followers.

Binuth stands with his back to T6. and is the only person not incapacitated in the chamber. He holds the cult's *instrument of the bards (Cli lyre)*, which he uses to cast *wall of fire* the moment it appears the characters are not here to bargain. He greets the characters in a friendly enough manner, inquiring if they have come to "join the festivities." He strums on his lyre as he speaks, which strikes a discordant and unsettling note with every strum. If the characters have been anything other than completely stealthy, this individual is not Binuth, but an illusion created by the *mislead* spell. Binuth himself is invisible, also due to the *mislead* spell, and is hiding among the cultists.

Binuth is happy to speak with the characters as long as they don't attack him, confident in his ability to win them over. He quickly asks them if they want to hear a song, and uses his Spiral Song feature regardless of their answer. If the characters succeed on the save, combat will almost certainly begin. If the characters still decide not to attack, Binuth is impressed with their ability to resist him and asks if they will kill "the whispering usurper" for him. He informs the characters that the creature is downstairs. He doesn't join the characters.

If the characters claim that they have come to join the cult, Binuth tells them they are at capacity, but he giddily tells them that they are in luck because they can "make space" for themselves—all they have to do is to kill a number of the incapacitated cultists equal to the number of characters. If the characters comply, Binuth is overjoyed and asks the characters to complete one more task: "a little pest extermination in the basement."

If the characters attack Binuth or if at least one of them passes the saving throw against his Spiral Song, he casts *wall of fire* between himself and the characters, likely killing many cultists in the process, and combat begins.

In combat, Binuth uses his bonus action to Hide behind the cultists whenever possible, striking out with enchantment magic at first, then switching to brutal area of effect spells if the enchantments are not



working. If reduced below 20 hit points, Binuth attempts to flee the temple, using *polymorph* to turn into a **giant shark** as he jumps in the water and flees to safety.

## OUTCOMES & REWARDS

Some of the possible outcomes are listed below:

- The characters make a deal with Binuth, he does not aid them in the battle against Sgothgah but will offer them aid against the other aboleths and even the juvenile kraken. However, he will attempt to use *dominate monster* on the kraken at the earliest opportunity, turning it against the characters if he is successful.
- If the characters agree to join the cult and kill the cultists for Binuth, Tharizdun marks them as his, even if the characters were being deceitful. Each character gains a form of indefinite madness (see “Madness Effects” in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), and the symbol of Tharizdun appears on their body as a twisted, writhing brand.
- If the characters slay Binuth, they can claim his *instrument of the bards* (*Cli lyre*). This particular lyre, however, has been warped by Tharizdun's touch, and causes a form of indefinite madness (see “Madness Effects” in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) when attuned to.

## BINUTH OF THE SPIRAL LONG

*Small humanoid (halfling), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 99 (18d8 + 18)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Cha +9

**Skills** Deception +9, Performance +9, Persuasion +9, Stealth +11

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Halfling

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Halfling Nimbleness.** Binuth can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than his.

**Unnaturally Stealthy.** Binuth can attempt to hide even when he is obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than him. In addition he can hide as a bonus action.

**Spellcasting.** Binuth is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Binuth has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, shocking grasp

1st level (4 slots): charm person, cure wounds, dissonant whispers, Tasha's hideous laughter

2nd level (3 slots): crown of madness, hold person, mirror image

3rd level (3 slots): fear, hypnotic pattern, slow

4th level (3 slots): compulsion, confusion, dimension door

5th level (3 slots): animate objects, dominate person, mislead

6th level (1 slot): eyebite

7th level (1 slot): prismatic spray

8th level (1 slot): dominate monster

9th level (1 slot): true polymorph

## ACTIONS

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Spiral Song (Recharge 6).** Binuth plays a refrain from the Spiral Song of Tharizdun, the Chained God's unholy hymn. Any creature who can hear Binuth must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw; on a failure, that creature gains a form of short-term madness and becomes charmed by Binuth until the madness ends. Creatures that succeed on this saving throw are immune to the Spiral Song for 24 hours.



# Temple of Tharizdun



# Landgrave's Folly





Ground Floor

Second Floor

First Floor

# Dory's Warehouse

Ship Interior

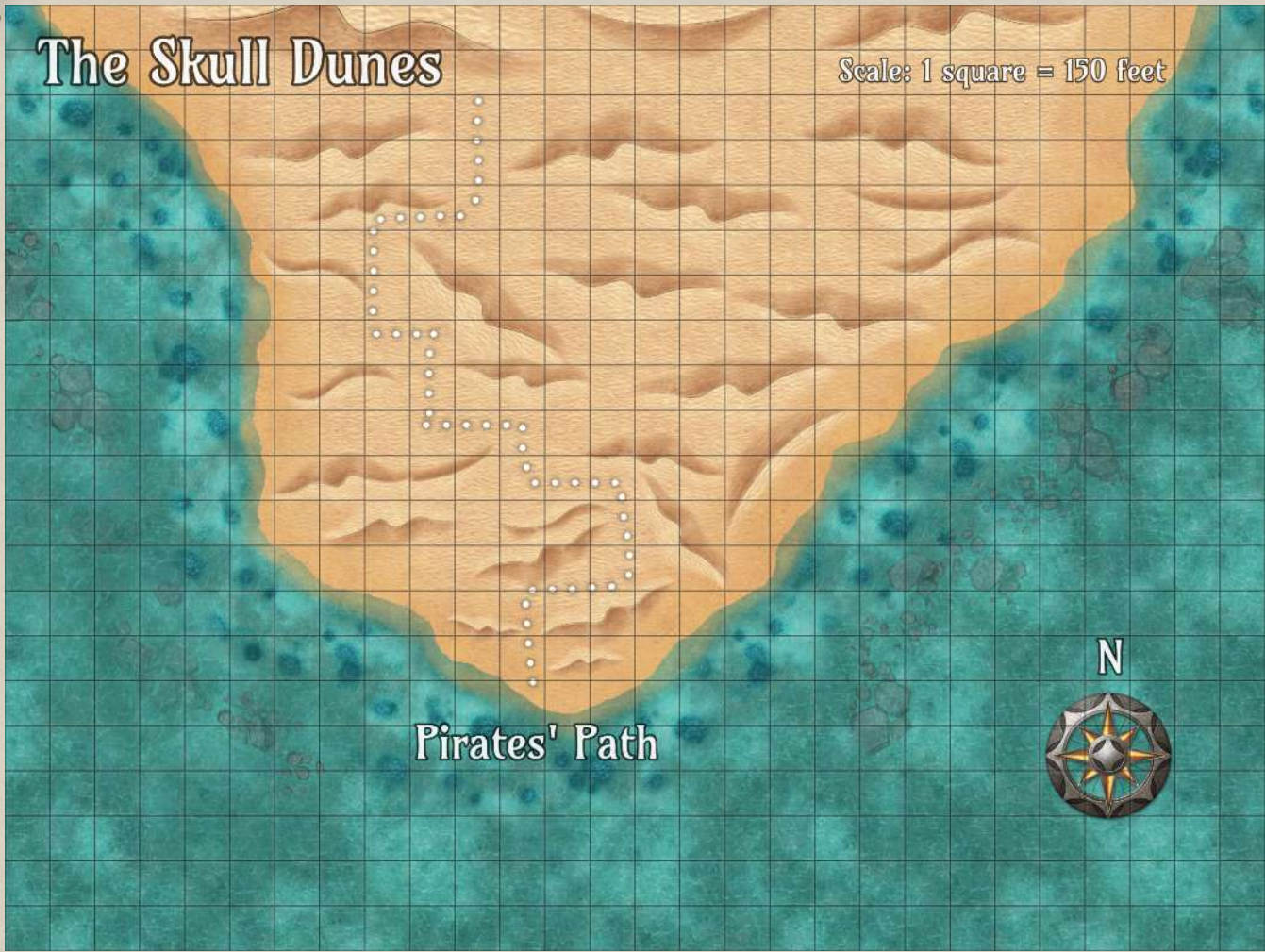


# ADDITIONAL MAPS



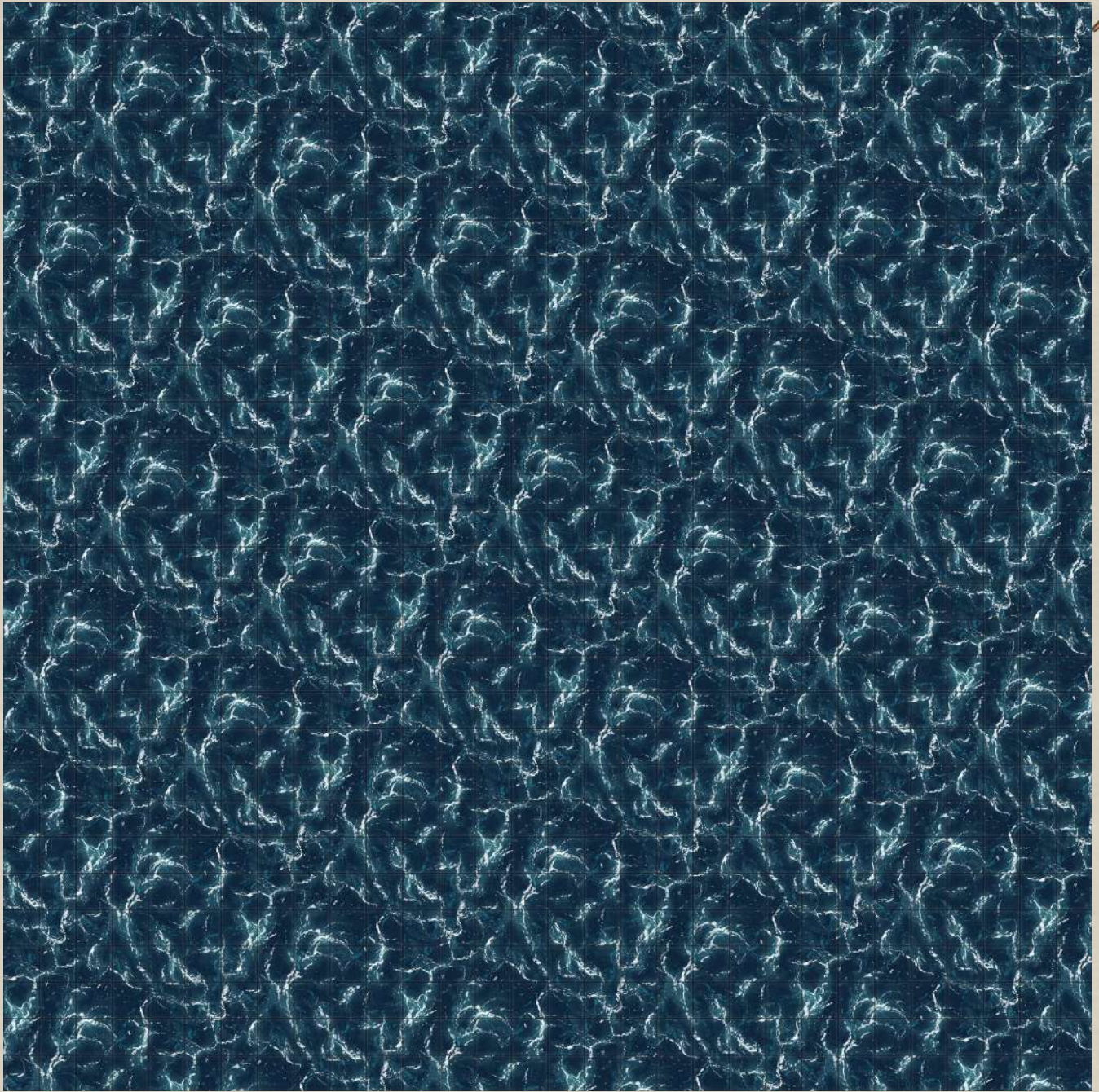
ARCHIPELAGO (1 SQ = 30 FT)





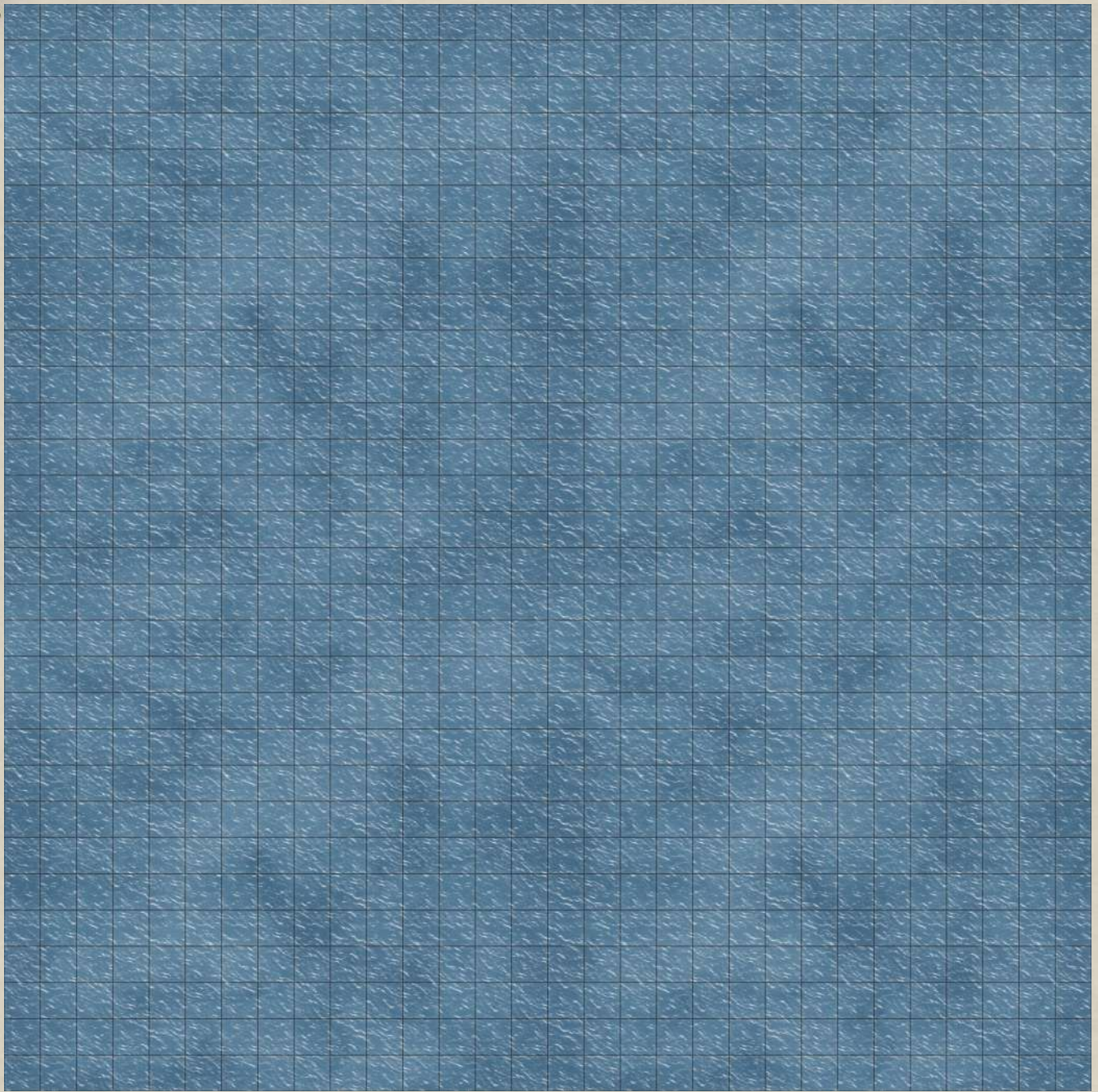
## THE SKULL DUNES





AGITATED SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)





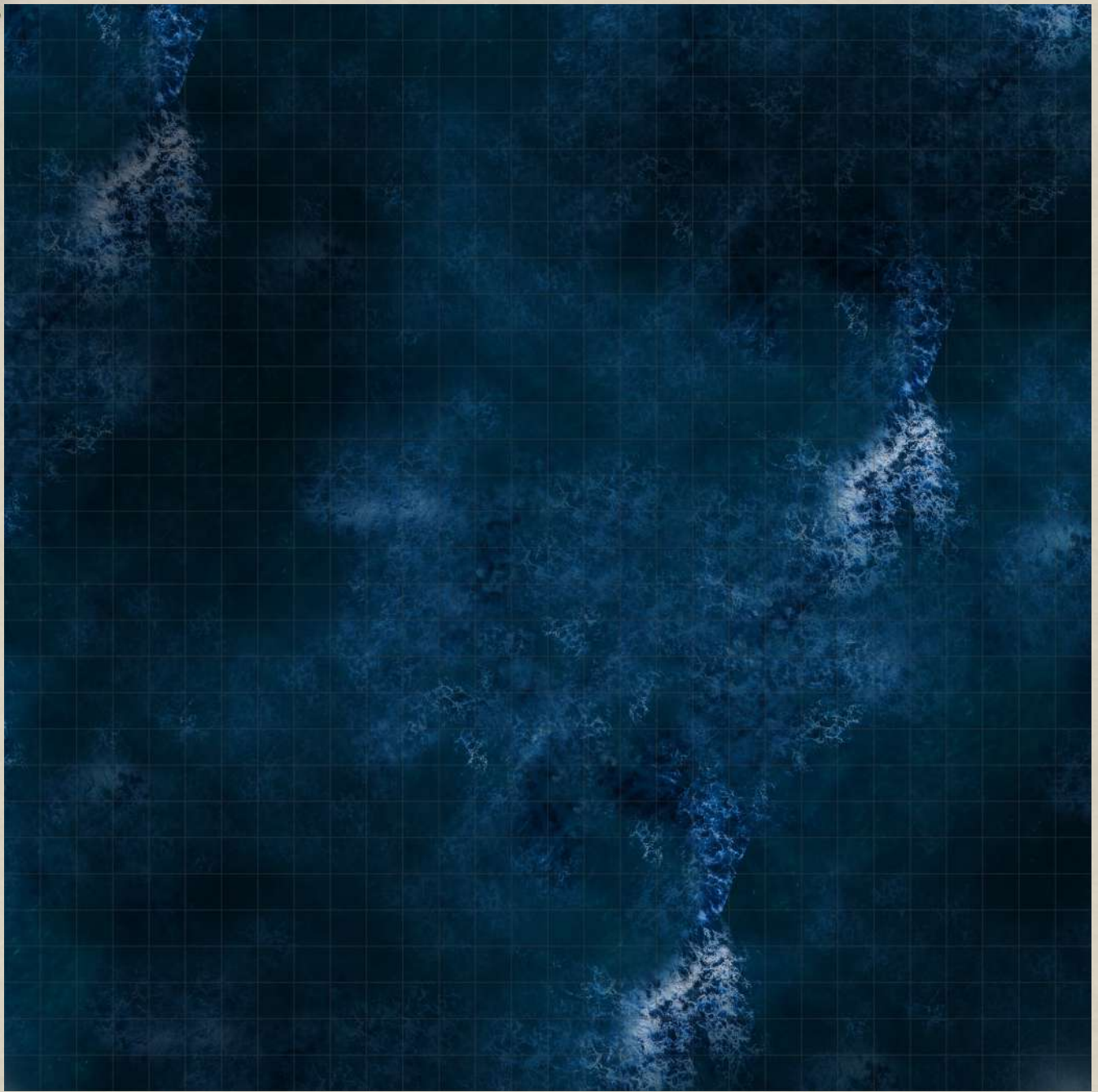
BLUE SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)





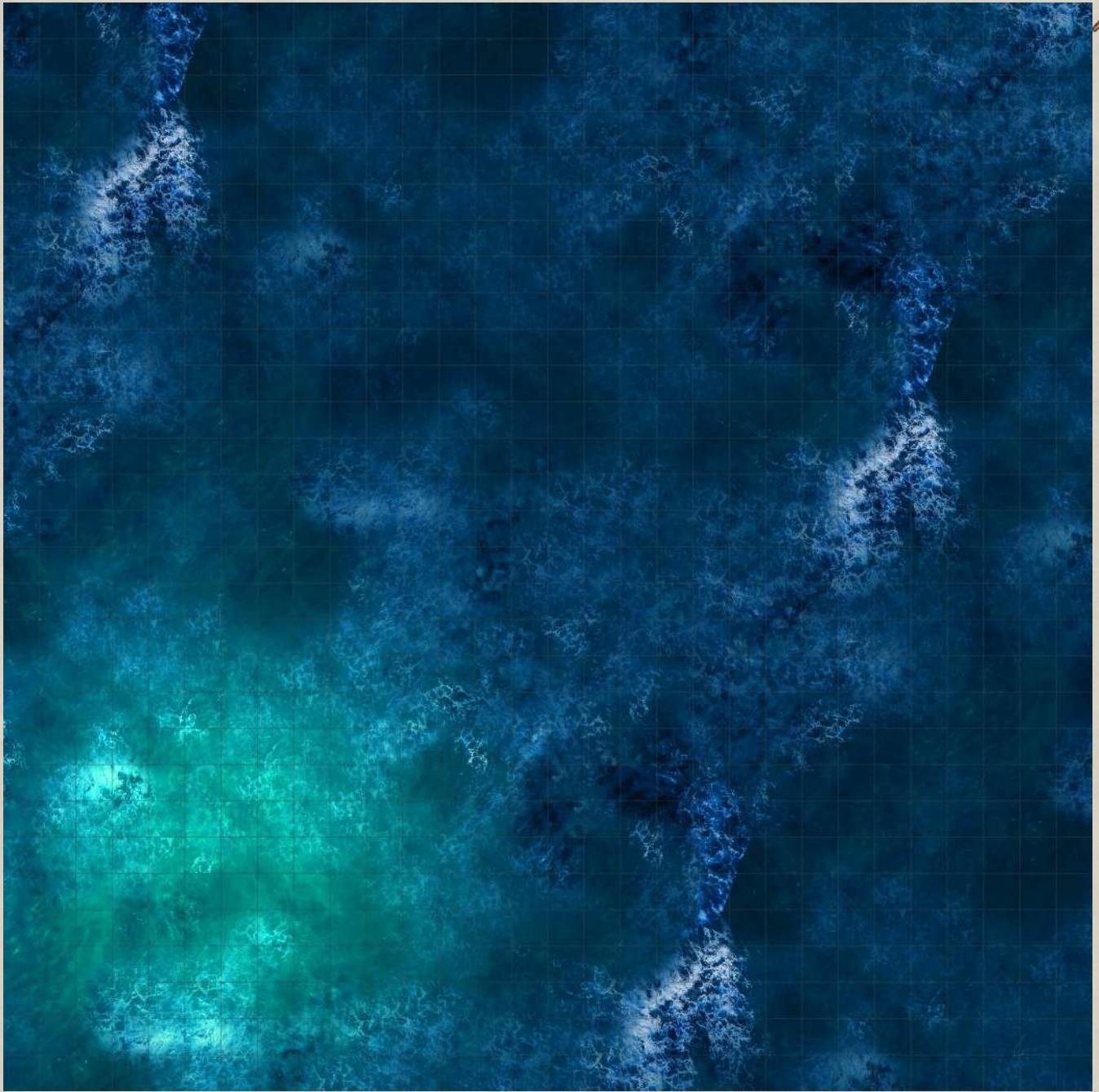
DARK BLUE SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)





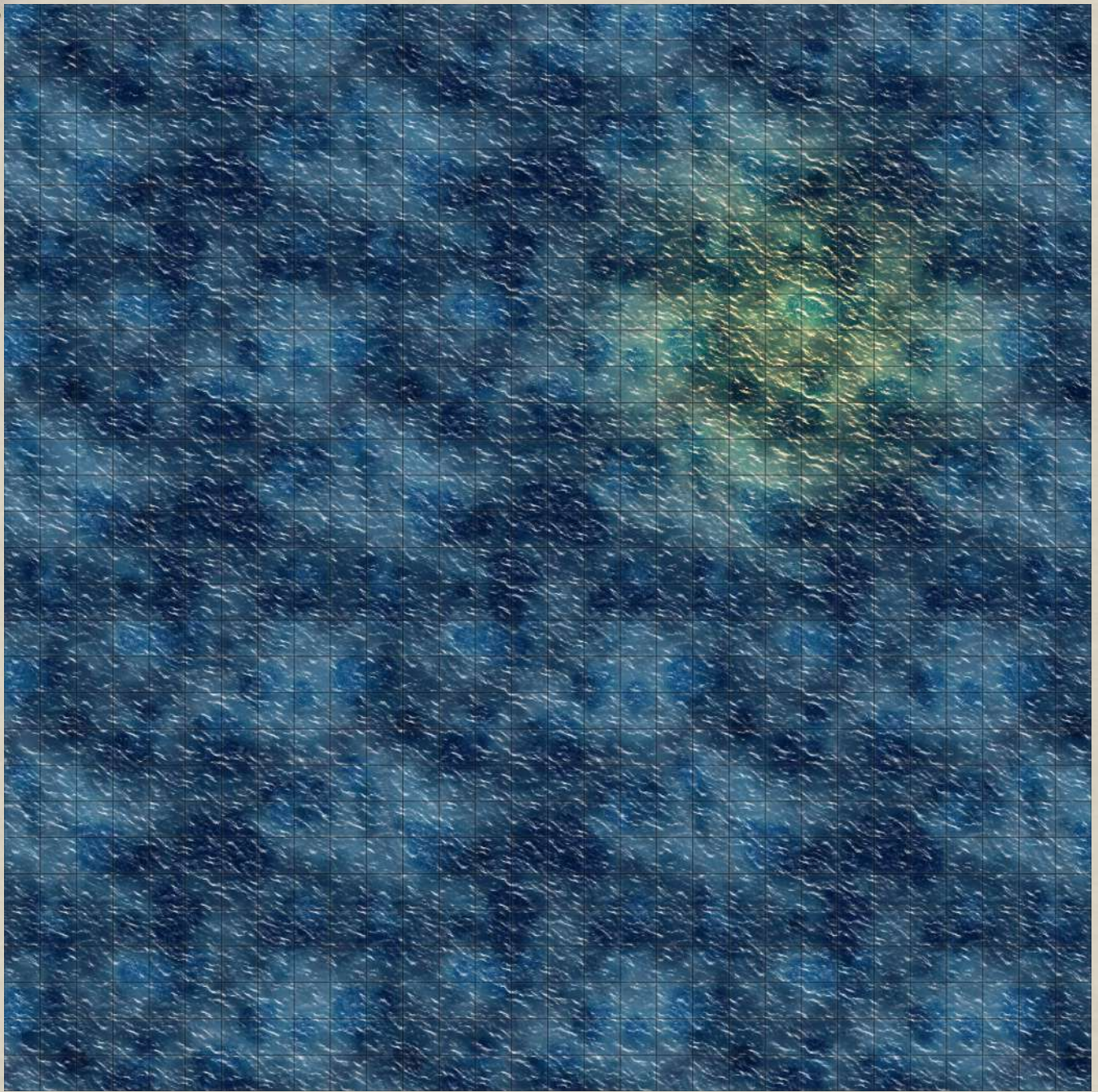
STORMY SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)





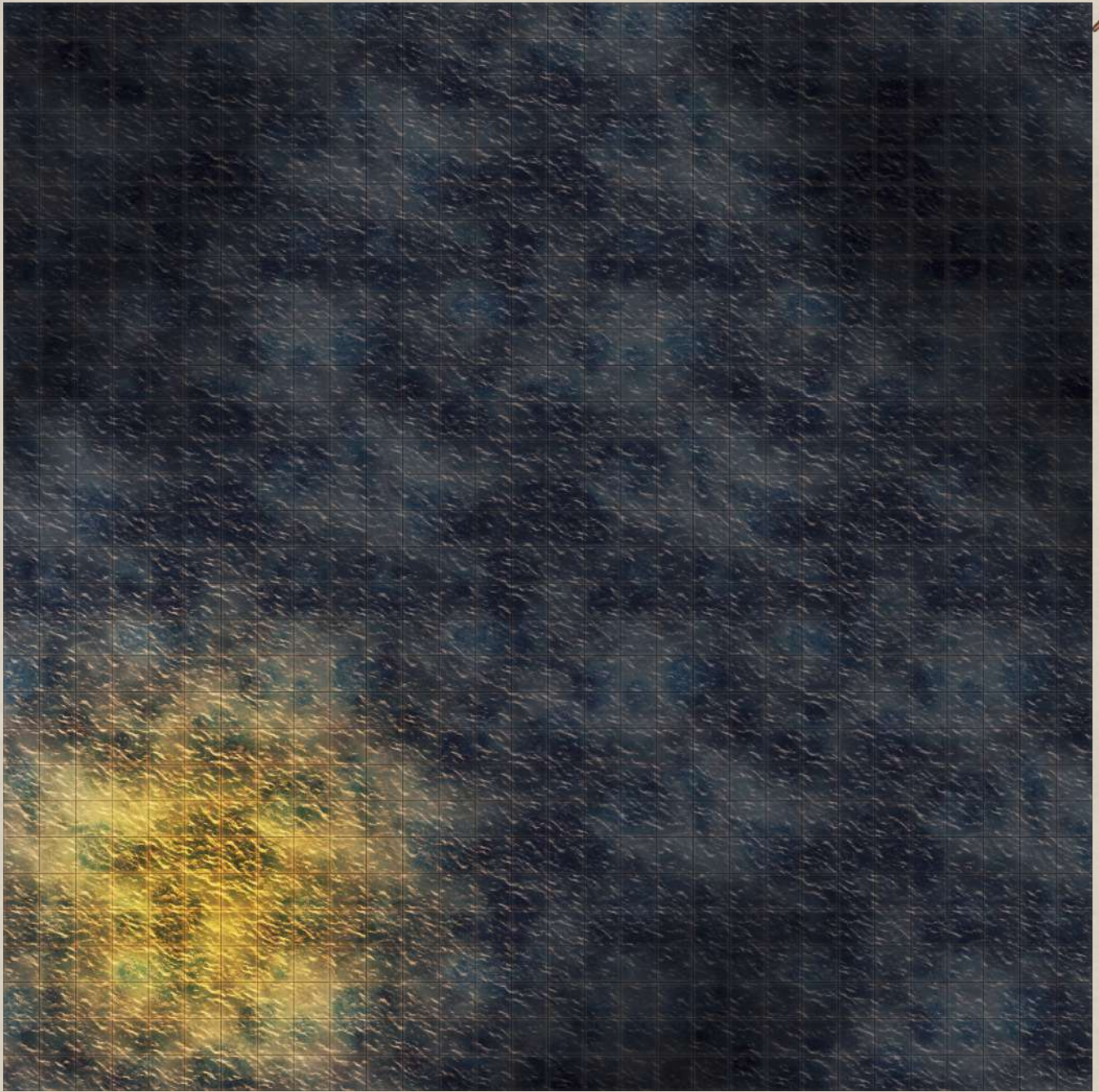
SUNNY DEEP BLUE SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)





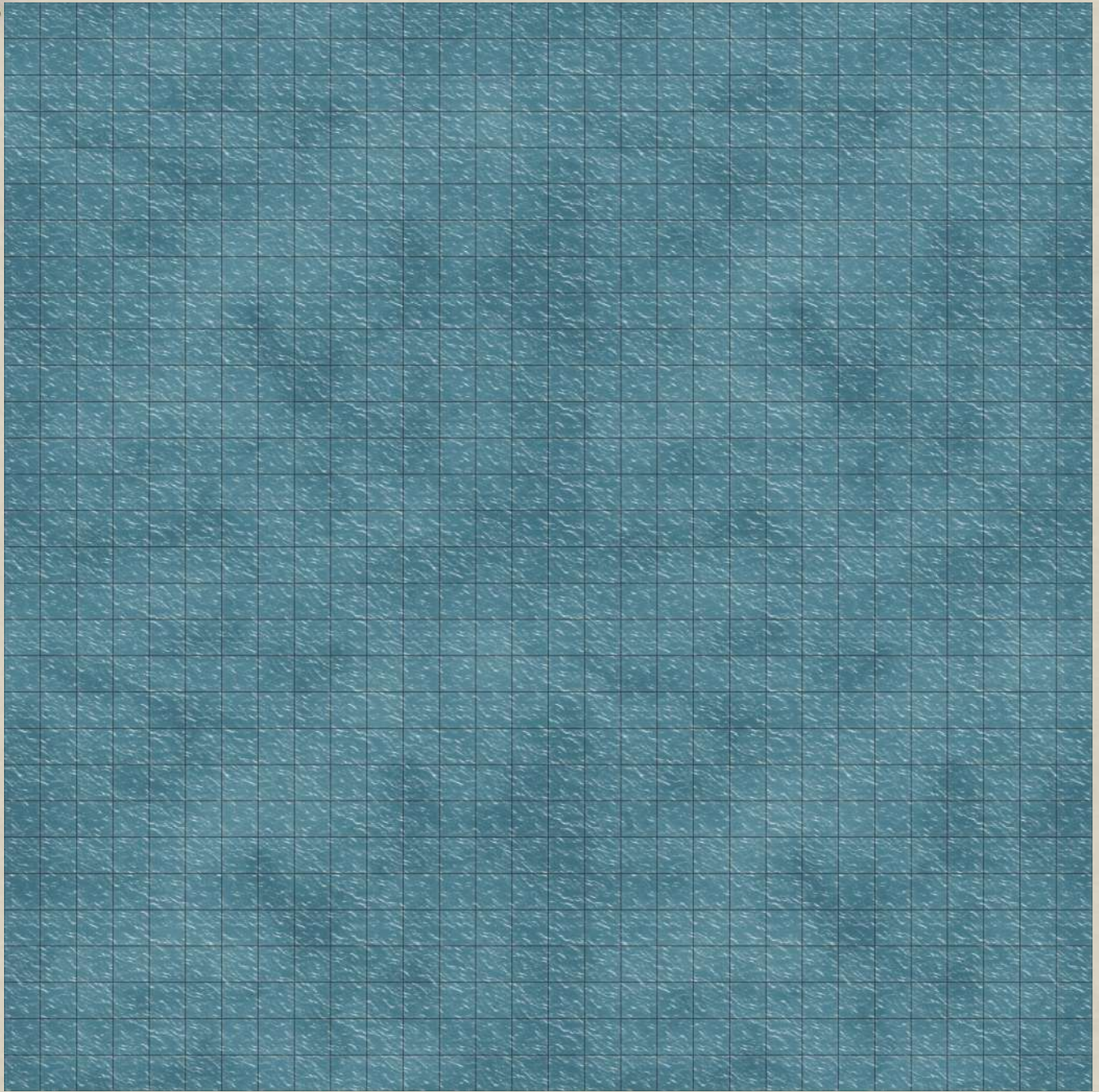
SUNNY SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)





SUNSET SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)

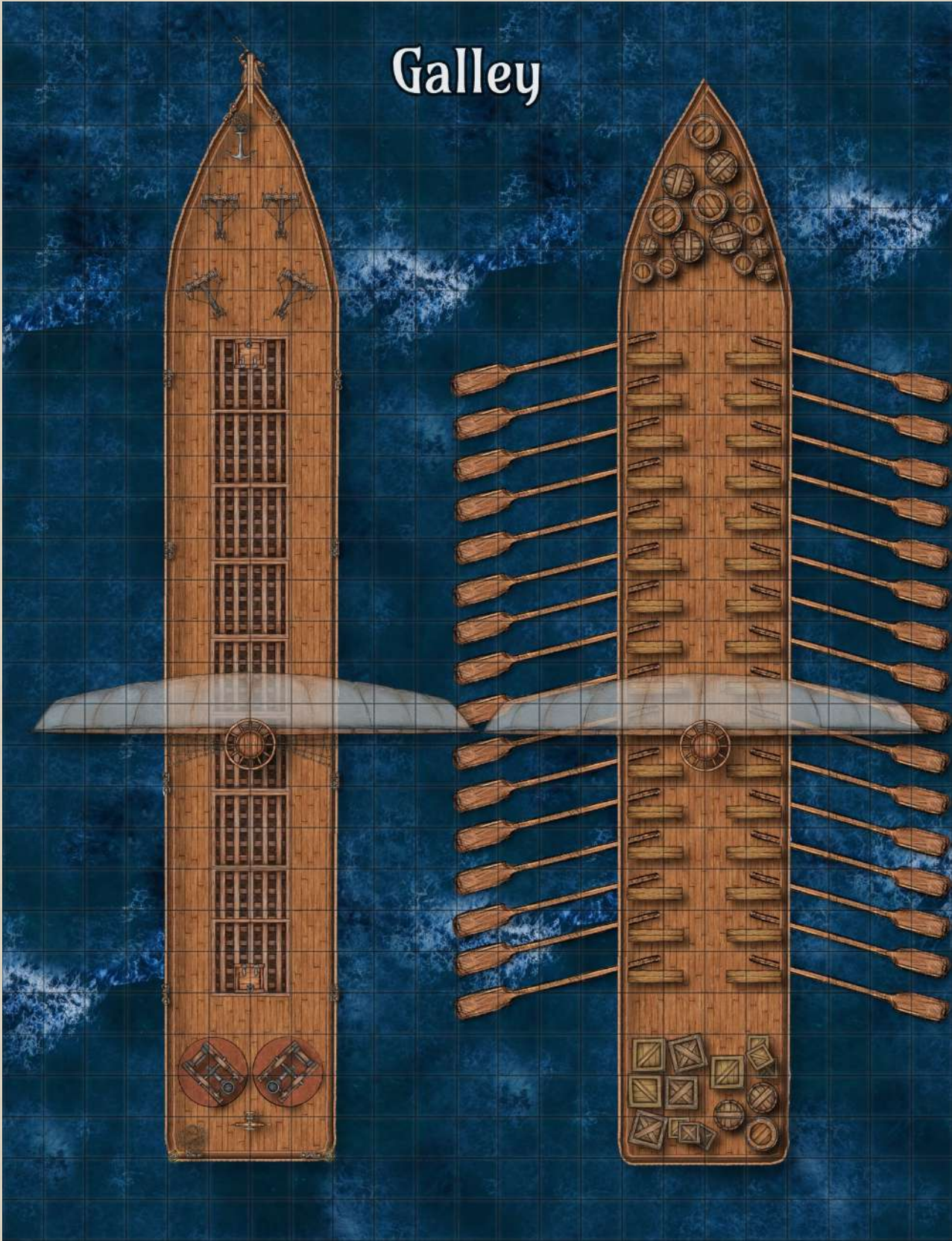




TEAL SEA (1 SQ = 30 FT)



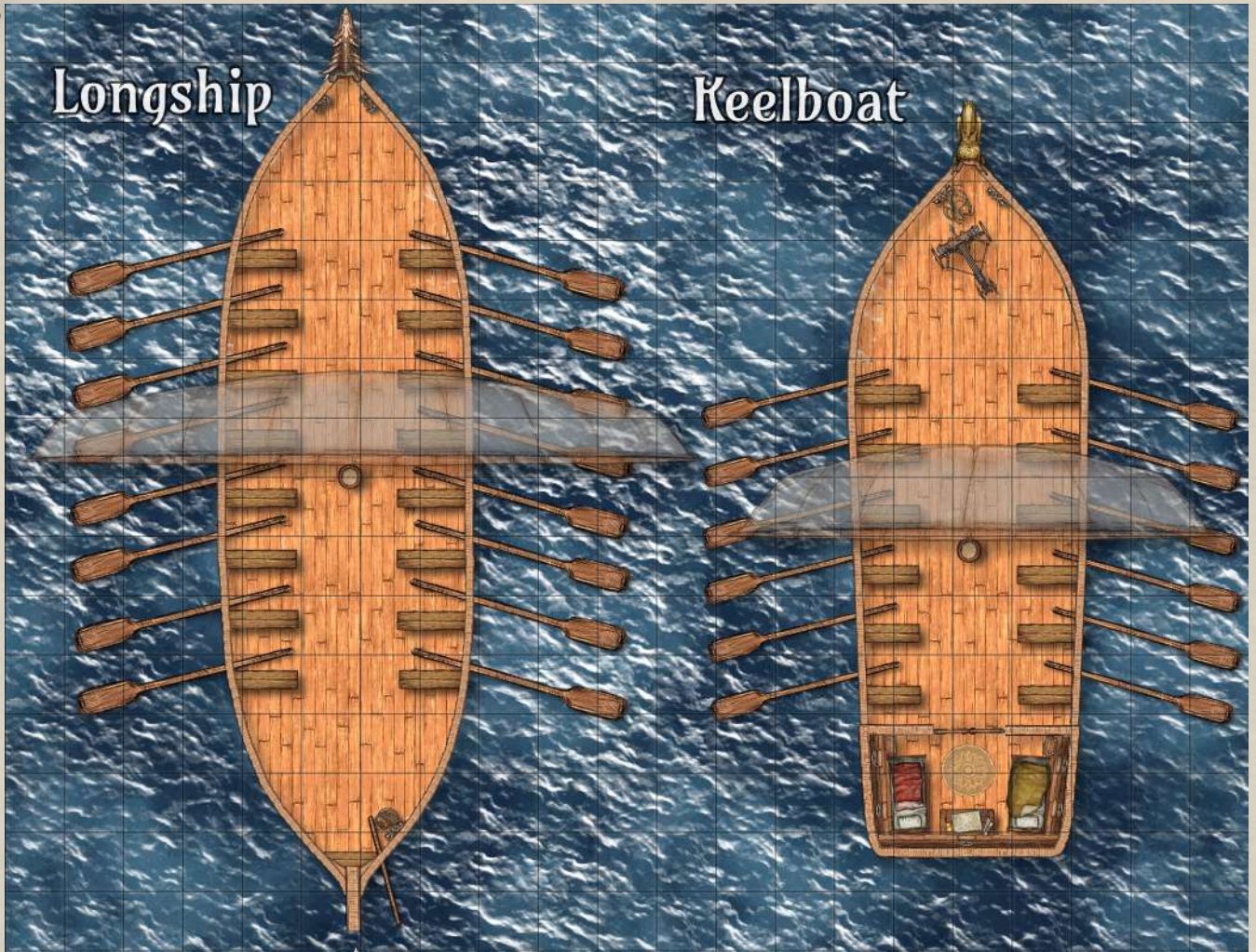
# Galley





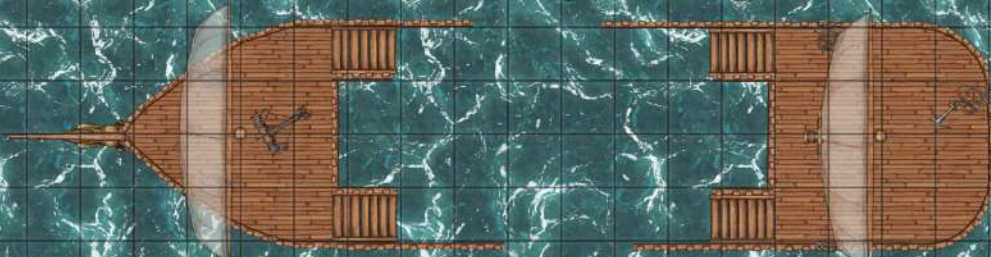
Longship

Keelboat



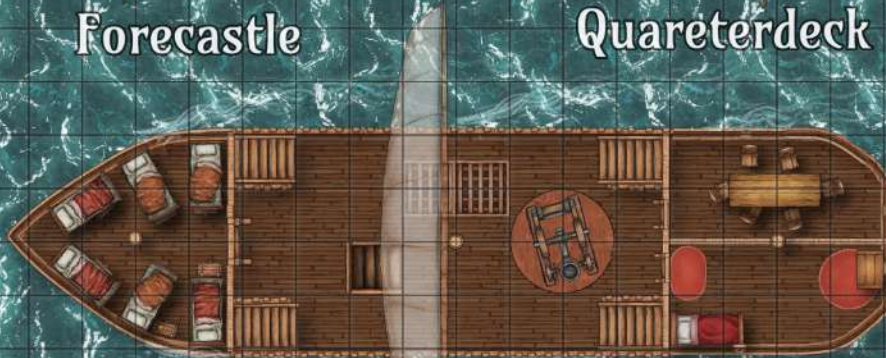


# Sailing Ship



Forecastle

Quareterdeck



Main Deck



Lower Deck



Hold

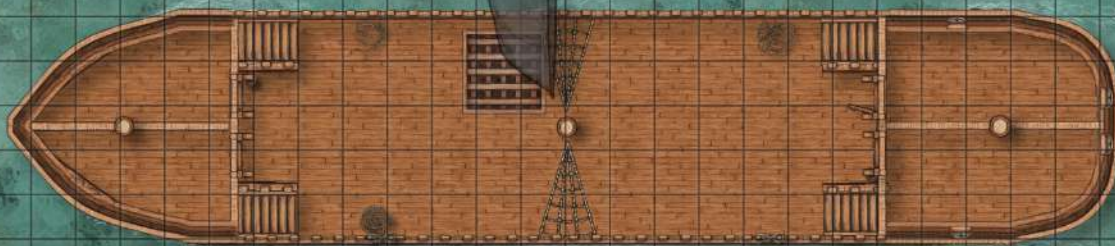


# Warship



Forecastle

Quarterdeck



Main Deck



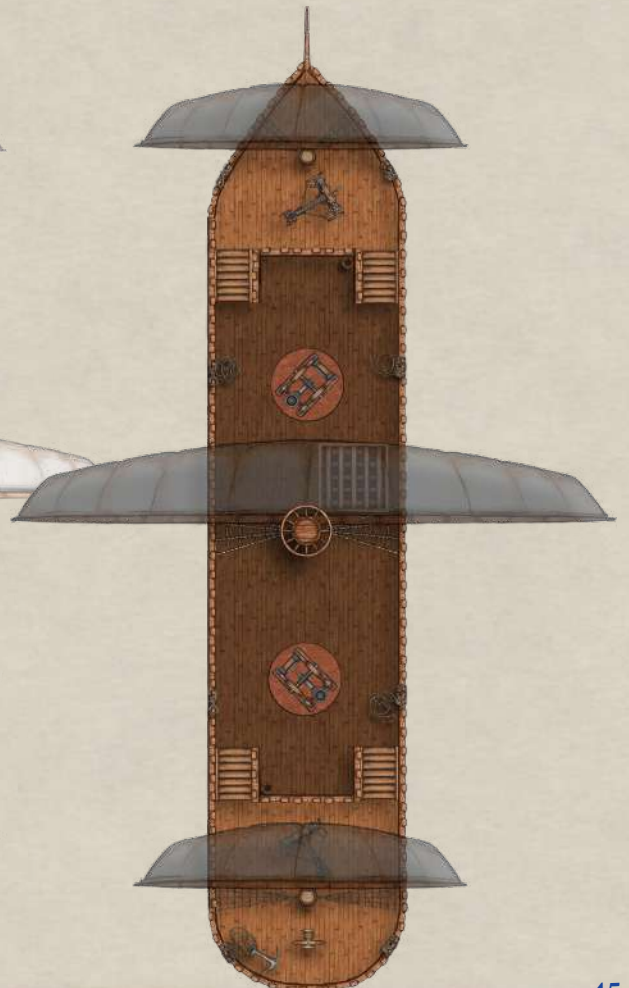
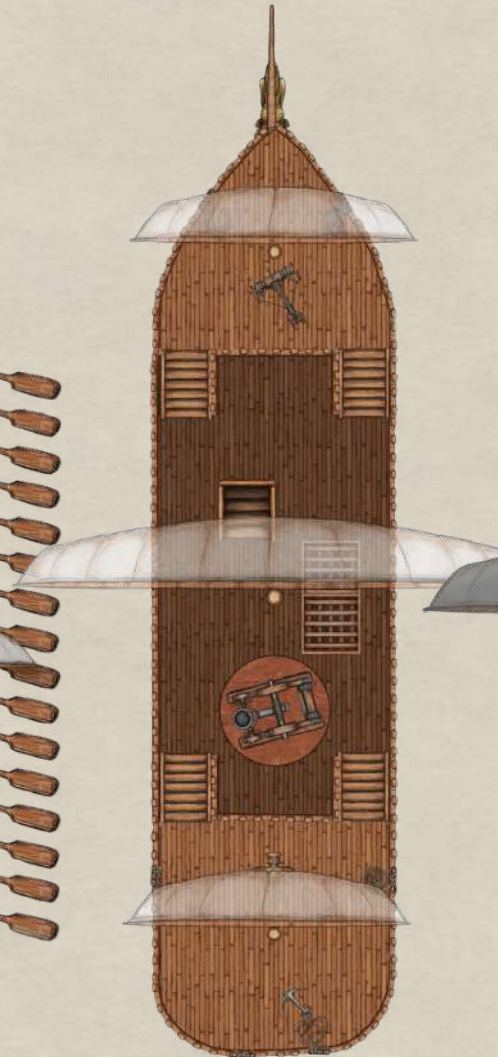
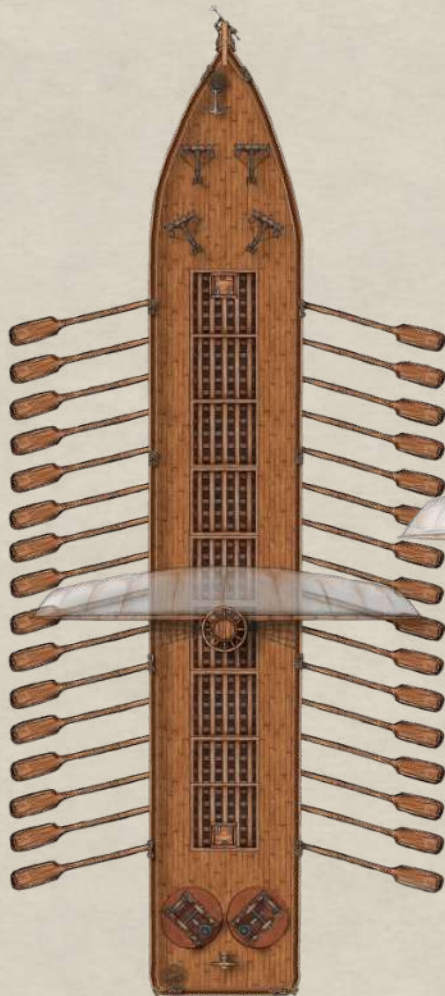
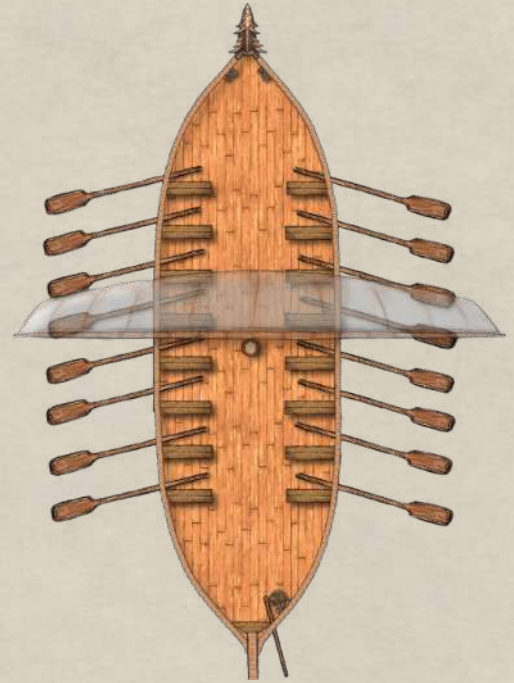
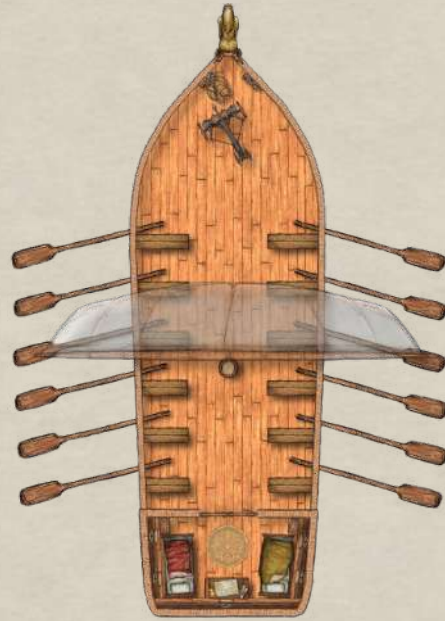
Lower Deck



Hold



# SHIP TOKENS





# WANT MORE ENCOUNTERS?



# LOOK NO FURTHER!

ENCOUNTERS IN BAROVIA



ENCOUNTERS WITH THE DARK POWERS



ENCOUNTERS IN CASTLE RAVENLOFT



ENCOUNTERS IN CANDLEKEEP



ENCOUNTERS IN ICEWIND DALE



DEEPER DESCENT INTO AVERNUS

