

ZEF6-07

# Into the Drink

## A One-Round D&D® Living Greyhawk™ Sultanate of Zeif Regional Adventure

By Jake Robins

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A summons from the Sultan has got adventurers meeting with friends from the past for a trip to a different world. The Gulf of Ghayar has long been a landmark in Zeif, but this trip is guaranteed to put a fresh new look on it. What trouble awaits these heroes when they venture into the drink? A one round regional undersea adventure set in the Gulf of Ghayar for character levels 1 to 10. (APLs 2-8); part two of the “Eternally Yours” arc. This adventure is geared towards members of the Royal Navy of Zeif, characters loyal to the Sultan, social-oriented characters, and characters particularly fond of all things watery.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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## RPGA® Sanctioned Play

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D® campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2007.

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## Players Read No Farther

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. **Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.**

## Preparing for Play

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1. For your convenience, that appendix is split by APL

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

## LIVING GREYHAWK Levels of Play

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

|                 | Mundane<br>Animals Effect on<br>APL | # of Animals |   |   |   |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---|---|---|
|                 |                                     | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| CR of<br>Animal | 1/4 & 1/6                           | 0            | 0 | 0 | 1 |
|                 | 1/3 & 1/2                           | 0            | 0 | 1 | 1 |
|                 | 1                                   | 1            | 1 | 2 | 3 |

|   |   |   |    |    |
|---|---|---|----|----|
| 2 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5  |
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 5  | 6  |
| 4 | 4 | 6 | 7  | 8  |
| 5 | 5 | 7 | 8  | 9  |
| 6 | 6 | 8 | 9  | 10 |
| 7 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 |

- Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round up to the nearest whole number.
- If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

- Enlist a sixth player.
- Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

## Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in the Sultanate of Zeif. Characters native to the Sultanate of Zeif pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check, the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

## Adventure Background

This adventure follows closely on the heels of **ZEF6-01** *Out of Water*. Some PCs were faced with a difficult choice in that adventure, but despite what may have arisen at individual tables, it is assumed that Shallah bint Sovorn did not end up a permanent fixture in the Sultan's harem, whether by actions on the PCs' parts or other figures.

To the west of Zeif, at the bottom of the Gulf of Ghayar, lies a frightening landmark called the Scar of Untold Depths. The scar is a deep crevasse cutting its way for miles across the otherwise shallow bed of the Gulf. While the rest of the Gulf may only be a couple hundred feet deep, the Scar descends beyond any reachable depth. It is reputed to house creatures of such unspeakable horror that not even the nearby inhabitants know of them.

Recently, trouble has arisen for Sovorn bin Regol, a Mer-Sheik in the Gulf, and it presumably comes from the Scar. His caravans have been attacked, looted of all their valuables. His men have all disappeared, leaving no witnesses to report what happened. While these assaults were infrequent at best to begin with, they have increased in number at an alarming rate. The truth behind these attacks lie in a group of undead, mysteriously banded together, who kill the merfolk and

return their bodies to be animated. Who these undead work for is unknown.

These problems are compounded with increasing tensions that Sovorn has been having with a neighboring kingdom of aquatic elves called Qessirstan. The tension arises from territorial disputes between Sovorn's demesne and the borders of Qessirstan, territory that holds valuable commodities that Sovorn and the elves deal with, most notable of which is the rare Elukian Clay infused with magic from the Elemental Plane of Water.

With the missing caravans, the two forces have been pointing fingers, and the region is tense. However, all these troubles will be temporarily forgotten, for Sovorn is expecting the return of his beloved daughter Shallah. Her journey will be long, but Sovorn is sure the Sultan will appoint a suitable escort. Enter the PCs.

## Adventure Summary

**Encounter 1, "A Whirlwind of Offers":** The adventure begins in a grand tavern in Zeir-i-Zeif, the Crimson Crescent. Tonight the PCs bear witness to the Dervishes of the Ghars Sheikdom, a group of Paynims who have brought the performance of their great dance to Zeir-i-Zeif. A messenger approaches the PCs with letters, all differing depending on allegiances and results of playing the last adventure in this series. Each asks for a morning meeting.

Shortly after, a woman approaches the PCs, and she knows of the mission. She works for the Matron Sultana, and expresses a desire for information on the merfolk's domain. She stresses the importance of secrecy and offers undefined rewards for excluding everyone else from the info.

**Encounter 2, "Don't Forget Me":** In the morning, an Albay Reis briefs the PCs on their mission. He also presents the last bid at information on the merfolk, this one coming from the Sultan and again stressing secrecy and reward.

**Encounter 3, "Graciously Gallivanting in the Gulf of Chayar":** The PCs sail to the Gulf of Ghayar, passing over the point of the Vaar and coasting down the Bakhoury Coastline. En route, PCs learn info about the area, the navy and other regional flavor from the captain and crew. Any members of the Royal Navy are secretly briefed for a side-mission.

**Encounter 4 "The fish was *this* big":** Once in the Gulf, the PCs enter the water with Shallah and begin to travel to Sovorn's Palace. Shallah is in good spirits and teaches

the PCs information about her underwater world. En route to the palace, the PCs encounter a creature of the deep looking for food or perhaps revenge. If in trouble, some of Sovorn's scouts arrive to lend a hand/flipper.

**Encounter 5, "It's a Merfolk party":** The PCs reach the palace and Shallah is welcomed with a parade. The PCs are shown a residence in a magical air-filled grotto, and retire for the night with an invitation to a party in Shallah's honor the next day. Sovorn gives them some formal attire but are expected to bring their mysterious land-born weaponry to show his honored guests.

On the morrow, PCs attend a ball and meet many notables of the merfolk world. They are bathed in merfolk customs and experience first hand the culture of the merfolk aristocracy. Old friends show up, and new friends are made, including a mysterious water nymph. They learn about the troubles plaguing the sheikdom, and the tensions with the neighboring aquatic elves.

**Encounter 6, "That's a *big* zombie":** Mid-party, the palace grounds are attacked by a horde of zombies and skeletons, the caravan raids finally escalating to all-out assault. Before anyone in the ballroom can mobilize, a force of giant zombies breaks through the windows and marauds through the party. The PCs must defeat it.

Once defeated, Sovorn reports that the entire palace is under siege. He requests aid from the Sultan by right of his tribute, and asks the PCs to be runners to send word of the attack. Emerging from the ballroom, the PCs discover a veritable blanket of undead surrounding the palace.

**Encounter 7: "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea":** The PCs must choose whether to charge the line and fight their way out or to sneak off through the sides where undead aren't as thick. If they charge the line, they fight alongside Sovorn's merfolk and escape through the fray. If they sneak off, they must use their skills and knowledge to decipher the least dangerous route, and if they aren't careful, may encounter some marauding undead.

**Encounter 8 "I *told* you it was that big":** Once they've escaped the grounds, they face one last encounter. The PCs run across the creature(s) they defeated on the way in, animated and ready for round 2.

**Encounter 9, "Back to the real world":** Once returned to the ship, the PCs send word to the Sultan by means of a cleric's *sending* spell, then sail to Beit Castan to summon naval assistance. The PCs will catch a ship back to Zeir-i-Zeif, where they will choose which

faction to meet with and deliver their precious information to. Here ends the adventure.

## Preparation for Play

DM's should familiarize themselves with the underwater combat rules found on page 92 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. A summary of these rules is included in **Appendix 3** for the DM's convenience.

DM's should read and familiarize themselves with **Appendix 3**, detailing the undersea world of the Gulf of Ghayar. It contains a lot of flavorful information, which will be of use when role-playing NPCs.

DM's should take an inventory of meta-org membership prior to the beginning of this module. It is important to note any members of the Royal Navy of Zeif as well as any PCs who have sworn Loyalty to the Sultan. These memberships become important later in the adventure. It might be useful to have a copy of the Royal Navy of Zeif meta-org document on hand to further clarify parts of the organization and to help the DM role-play NPCs.

Members of the Baklunish Pantheon can all claim free upkeep because shrines to every Baklunish god can be found in Zeir-i-Zeif.

There are a number of player handouts which need to be cut out so as to be handed to players. Review Encounter 1 to learn about the handouts.

DMs should also note which players at the table have played **ZEF6-01** *Out of Water* prior to this adventure using the character they wish to now use. Check each player's AR for the following items and take into account their effects on this scenario:

- **Enmity of Mer-Sheik Sovorn al-Ghayar:** PCs with this enmity suffer the -2 penalty on many social interactions during Encounter 5. DMs should role-play Sovorn's discontent with these PCs as he sees fits. Any skill checks in this module will have a reminder attached to them if this penalty applies.
- **Shallah's Token:** Shallah treats PCs who bear this token kindly throughout the adventure. This may provide some skill bonuses during this scenario, and if this is the case, a reminder will be attached to the skill check. Possessing this token also means that Shallah will translate communication between the PCs and the Nereid in Encounter 5.
- **Retainer of the Sultan:** Having this designation affects which handout the PC

receives in Encounter 1a. Because these PCs are "required" to serve the Sultan, refusing this mission incites an enmity on the AR.

- **Favor of the Mer-Sheik Sovorn al-Ghayar:** This favor applies in this adventure. Any PC possessing it takes free luxury upkeep in this adventure. The bonuses for luxury upkeep apply a lot during Encounter 5, and reminders will be attached to any skill check affects by it.
- **Retainer of the Ghayar Merfolk:** PCs with this favor will be asked in a very different manner to send for aid. Failing to help the Merfolk (and thus reneging on a promise) entails heftier penalties for PCs with this designation.

**A special note about Animal Companions, Domestic Animals, and Familiars:** Characters need to be responsible for their own animals in this adventure. The cleric of Mouqol in Encounter 3 will not divide up her *water breathing* spell for anyone but PCs; as far as the Sultan and the Navy are concerned, it's a waste of resources.

Familiars can only be brought along if their master can find some means of making it breathe underwater or to shield it from the effects of being submerged (familiar pockets, for example).

Domestic animals (mules, purchased mounts, attack dogs) cannot go underwater, even if they can breathe in it. Breathing water is one thing; diving beneath the waves and traveling undersea requires something more. However, there are some magic items which grant creatures like mounts means to swim and breathe; it is up to the DM's discretion on whether this should permit a domestic animal to travel undersea.

PCs with animal companions have the special ability to change their animal companions before adventures. For the purpose of this adventure, let any PC swap their animal companion for an aquatic version (such as a porpoise or crocodile) since they receive word of their mission and learn that it is underwater a day before they have to leave.

Paladin mounts, being intelligent, will travel underwater if they are taken care of in the breathing department. They have to make swim checks just like everyone else to move around, and players should note the amount of gear carried by the horse (including their own weight) to determine armor check penalties.

**A special note about preparation:** This adventure is a bit long and full of information and references to

further information outside of it. The role-playing encounters are rich with NPC information, and require a lot of preparation time, even more so than other LG adventure. **It is strongly recommended that this module not be run “cold”.** A DM needs at least two read-through of this adventure to do it justice.

**A special note about the encounter levels of this adventure:** Throughout this adventure, the PCs will be fighting underwater. Since *freedom of movement* and *swim* spells tend to be rare or expensive, PCs will be at a significant disadvantage while fighting. As such, all the encounters have an EL boost of +1 to account for this. This should balance the combats out. Even if PCs do end up with the means to even the playing field, they should be rewarded with easier combats because of the preparedness or expenditure of resources.

## Introduction

Once players are ready to begin, read the following text aloud.

*Late summer is still hot in Zeir-i-Zeif, and as the sun sets in the west, you finally feel reprieve. A cool breeze blows off the Dramidj Ocean, tossing your hair as you approach the Crimson Crescent, a massive inn and auditorium in one of the capital's richer quarters. While the inn itself caters to people with more coin than others, its taproom, complete with seating for hundreds and a massive stage centered amid the tables, is home to any who wish to come see the sights that the Crescent has to offer.*

*Tonight is no different than any other night. The tables are nearly full, and through the haze of incense and pipe smoke, you see maids bringing drinks to patrons enjoying tonight's performance. All eyes are centered to the stage, where a group of a dozen men and women dance to the sounds of drums, strings, and winds. These are the Ghars Dervishes, a group of Paynims who practice amazing whirling dances in homage to the spirits of the oerth and the heavens. Wearing garments of the purest white, these dancers enter spinning frenzies that they believe let them escape their mortal bodies and commune with the higher spirit of their self.*

*Finding one of the few tables left available, you seat yourselves together and get comfortable. It isn't long before a barmaid arrives to take your order.*

*“Good evening to you all; Istus blesses us with your presence. Might I fetch you a drink or perhaps a meal? Our specials tonight include poultry in a*

*butter sauce with spiced vegetable and rich seasoned lamb with saffron rice.”*

Let the PCs introduce each other and role-play their reactions to the dancing or the tavern, if they wish. Their food arrives quickly enough, considering the busy nature of the inn tonight.

*The twelve dancers move to a climactic point of the performance, arranging themselves in a circle, all the while still whirling about like a twister on the Zeifan plain. Together, they move clockwise, while the leader of the dancers spins to the center and draws a pair of scimitars. The circle closes in on him, the points of his scimitars coming deathly close to the outside dancers as the leader spins in a blade dance. Then, all of a sudden, the outer dancers draw blades, and in a clash of steel and sparks, the scimitars strike each other. The light from the sparks illuminates the inn, and the cacophony of steel on steel silences its patrons. The dancers remain in rotation.*

*Then it was over, and the Dervishes slow to a halt. They bow, and an applause befitting the Sultan erupts across the taproom. The Paynims then depart from the stage, and the inn returns to normal.*

Let the PCs finish their meals and discuss the dance among themselves for a time. Anyone interested in the performance can meet some of the dancers if they choose; use the information from the previous skill checks to teach the PCs a little about the dances if you like. Not long after, a messenger approaches their table with letters for each of them. Proceed to Encounter 1a.

## Encounter 1a: A Mission

A messenger approached the table soon after the dance is complete. Read the following:

*“Greetings, effendis,” says a man as he approaches your table, bows, and hands out a bundle of envelopes, marked with the seal of the Royal Navy of Zeif and the Sultanate of Zeif. “I bring word from the Kapudan Pasha.” Bowing again, the messenger departs before any questions can be had.*

If the PCs press for questioning, the messenger truthfully knows nothing more about the mission. He is only a hired messenger working for the Kapudan Pasha.

Each PC receives a letter, and which letter they receive depends on a few things. Consult the following list to determine which letter they receive. Multiple copies are available in the appendix to accommodate multiple players.

- Any PCs with the “Retainer of the Sultan” favor from **ZEF6-01** *Out of Water* receives **Player Handout 1**.
- Any PCs without the above favor but who have pledged “Loyalty to the Sultan” receives **Player Handout 2**.
- Any other PC receives **Player Handout 3**.

The PCs will have a chance to make some knowledge checks once they’ve read their letters.

#### **Knowledge (Local – VTF):**

*DC 8:* The “Kapudan Pasha” is the title of the High Admiral of the Royal Navy of Zeif, who oversees the entire fleet. **Members of the Royal Navy know this automatically.**

*DC 10:* “Tugamiral Reis” is the title of a commodore in the Royal Navy of Zeif, one who commands a number of ships and answers directly to the High Admiral. **Members of the Royal Navy know this automatically.**

#### **Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty):**

*DC 10:* Pandhar Reis, the Kapudan Pasha, is the High Admiral of the Royal Navy of Zeif, and oversees the entire fleet. **Members of the Royal Navy know this automatically.**

*DC 15:* Pandhar Reis is a close ally of the Sultan in the Diwan (the cabinet of viziers who run the nation). **Members of the Royal Navy know this automatically.**

*DC 20:* Hasan Reis ibn Hasbutan is a commodore in the Royal Navy of Zeif, and is a reputed officer amid the ranks. **Members of the Royal Navy know this automatically.**

Once the PCs have received their letters, read them, and discussed anything amongst themselves about them, move on to Encounter 1b.

## **Encounter 1b: Another Interest**

Read the following text out loud.

*The taproom had grown quieter when the music stopped, but the noise has steadily increased as the night blossoms. Drinks are flowing and pipes are being smoked.*

*Not long after you received your letters from the Royal messenger, another figure approaches your table. Her colors are black and violet, and she seems to have suddenly appeared from the crowd.*

Have the PCs make Spot checks here. Any check that beats a DC 18 or higher lets that PC notice that the woman carries a beautiful jeweled dagger under her cloak.

*“Greetings, subjects,” she says, her tone both assertive and harmonious. “I come from Her Matriarchy, Nara Kur, the Matron Sultana. My Mistress is very interested in the mission you have just now been summoned for, and there is reward in it for you if you can return from it with some information.” She seems to know a lot more about your journey than you do, and gracefully she takes a seat, speaking in hushed tones.*

*“Your mission will take you to an undersea domain of a Mer-Sheik, a place that few of us have the luxury of seeing. The Sultana wishes to know more of it. Bring back as much information about the domain as possible, whether military information, political information, or anything of that nature, and the Sultana will make it worth your while. Of course your discretion is needed”*

*At this point, the woman looks over her shoulder and stands from her seat. Turning back to you, she says, “Find me here when you return. As a show of her faith in your discretion she wishes you to have these.”*

*She drops enough vials on the table for each of you to have one. They have an ocean blue color to them and are viscous as you tip the vials. Unstoppering them you smell the aroma of fish and salt water.*

*With the final words, she spins and disappears into the crowds. The last you see of her is her black cloak dancing out the doorway.*

The messenger of the Matron Sultana desires no further conversation with the PCs. If followed outside, PCs notice that she has disappeared (use the Hide and Move Silently checks below to see if the PCs can spot her). If the PCs do spot her, they see her climbing up a building and heading away quickly.

The vials she has given them contain one dose of the *swim* Spell (see Appendix 2: New Rules Items)

**Sultana’s Messenger:** Female human (Baklunish)  
Rog 7; NE.

**Development:** There are no more encounters for the PCs after the messenger from the Sultana departs, at least not until they go to sleep. The Crimson Crescent has enough rooms for them should they choose to stay there. If not, there are plenty of other inns to stay at in town. Members of the Baklunish Pantheon might wish

to stay at a church in town (to receive their free upkeep), and other meta-organizational members may have their own means of acquiring free upkeep. Once everyone has bedded down for the night, proceed to Encounter 1C.

## Encounter 1c: Bad Dreams

In this encounter, the Grim Vizier of Zeif, who also wants a stake in the information to be had in the merfolk's domain, will contact PCs. His primary means of contact will be a *dream* spell. *You must choose a target of the spell because it can only affect one PC.*

Elves cannot be affected by the *dream* spell. Otherwise, the Vizier selects a PC who is least likely to have spell resistance (fighters or barbarians) or anyone he believes might be loyal to him. He definitely does not choose anyone who might abhor undead, such as followers of Azor-Alq or Pelor. He wants his message to reach the rest of the party. If the target does have spell resistance, the Grim Vizier's caster level check is +11 (he is using a scroll to cast the spell). If his check fails, he has a backup scroll and selects a different target. **There is no saving throw**, as per the spell.

In the unlikely event that the party is composed entirely of elves or that both his scrolls fail, the Grim Vizier will angrily have a letter delivered containing the same request. Have the letter under the door of one PC in the morning.

Once you have selected your *dream* target, give them **Player Handout Four**. Remember to read this yourself.

Once they are done reading the handout, continue with the following:

***You wake up from the dream. As promised, you see a golden necklace hanging from your dresser.***

If they decide to take the mission from the Grim Vizier, and don the necklace, this functions as a *necklace of adaptation*.

Any PC that is native to Zeif and is read the description will immediately know this is the Grim Vizier. For those that do not have out of game knowledge of who this figure is you can inform them of the information below:

The Grim Vizier is a former Grand Vizier who now has become a lich. He lives in Kabir Kafez, the heir apparent palace outside of Zeir-i-Zeif, watching over the prince before he takes the throne. The Grim Vizier is known to be one of the most powerful figures in Zeif.

Once the players are ready to move on, proceed to the morning and Encounter 2.

## Encounter 2: Don't Forget Me

Come morning, the PCs should have a chance to purchase equipment in Zeir-i-Zeif. Let them buy whatever they need knowing that they will be traveling at sea and then undersea. If they wonder what might need for undersea traveling, explain that heavy armor or gear is not wise. Also, you may explain that piercing weapons, ones with reach, may be best suited for underwater combat if the need arises.

Once they've purchased the necessary supplies, they should make their way to the Fortress of the Sea Lion, in the harbor of Zeir-i-Zeif. Read the following to the players out loud:

***Crossing from the docks across a long stone causeway, you enter the Fortress of the Sea Lion, and are greeted by some guards. Stating your business, it seems you are expected, and quickly ushered to a waiting room deeper inside the citadel. It isn't long before a naval officer greets you.***

***He is tall and fit, wearing white pantaloons and sturdy black boots. A black, double-breasted jacket denotes his officer rank, and his arm is striped with four gold bands.***

(Members of the Navy immediately recognize the four bands as a signature of his rank, Tugamiral Reis, or Commodore).

***"Greetings, effendi. I am Hasan Reis ibn Hasbutan. I've been asked by the Kapudan Pasha and the Sultan of Zeif to brief you on this important mission. I'll get straight to it."***

***"Some time ago, the Sultan received tribute from a Mer-Sheik by the name of Sovorn ibn Regol, a merfolk from the Gulf of Ghayar. This year, the tribute was in the form of the Mer-Sheiks' daughter, a Shallah bint Sovorn.***

***"By order of the Navy, the Sultan requests you as escorts for Shallah bint Sovorn. You will travel with her by ship to the Gulf of Ghayar, where you will be deposited into the sea. From there, you will travel underwater by virtue of magic, and ensure that Shallah returns to her palace unharmed."***

***"For this, you shall be paid a respectable sum of efrits. However, there is extra reward in it for you if you choose to accomplish a secondary objective."***

*"If you can return useful information regarding the merfolk's military or political conditions, there will be extra reward in it. However, this secondary reward hinges on secrecy. This information is valuable to competing interests, and if you do attain it, it is important that you tell no one else but us."*

*"Have you any questions?"*

The PCs may have questions about the mission. Consult the following information to help answer them. Also, some PCs might recognize some of the badges on Hasan's chest and there may be some knowledge checks in order. All of the badges are detailed in the Royal Navy of Zeif meta-org document, except for the Campaign Medal.

Questions:

#### **How much do we get paid?**

The pay depends on the APL. For APL 2, the pay is 150 gp + 100 for the information; 4 is 250 gp + 150 gp for the information; 6 is 350 gp + 200 gp for the information; 8 is 500 gp + 250 gp for the information.

#### **How far/long of a journey is it to the Gulf/the Palace?**

"The journey by sea from here to the drop off point is roughly 850 miles. We're sending you by one of our fastest galleys, and it should get you to the place in less than nine days, given a good lee. When you breach the water, it should be no more than a day of swimming to reach the palace."

#### **What kind of danger can we expect on the journey?**

"You'll be entering the Gulf of Ghayar, which is still ridden with pirates today, despite the efforts of the Royal Navy and His Glory, the Sultan Murad. Once you enter the water, though, you could face any kind of undersea danger that we're not familiar with. You're better off speaking with Shallah for that information."

#### **Will you be sailing with us?**

"Unfortunately, I won't be sailing with you, as I have other commitments here in the capital. You will be under the command of one of my finest Reis, a man by the name of Isfahan Reis ibn Ghazin."

#### **How will we navigate and operate under water?**

"Shallah will be your only guide once you go below the surface. She claims to know her way around the Gulf and can get you to the palace. As for how you'll operate, there will be a cleric on board who will be able to cast *water breathing* for an extended period of time to enable you to breathe. Otherwise, you'll have to deal with the hazards of the water. We do have a couple waterproof sacks that are on loan to us from the Order of Kwalish for you to use. We also have a small store of

items for sale which you can purchase to help you, but the goods are expensive."

#### **Where's Shallah?**

"Shallah is aboard the ship awaiting you. You'll meet here soon."

Once the PCs have finished asking questions, Hasan will show them the store of items he can sell to the PCs. He'll also give them the water-proof sacks from the Order of Kwalish (these function as the Sack from the *Player's Handbook*, though they can be sealed tight). Here is the list of what is available as well as what the price is.

- *Potions of water breathing* (750 gp) and *tongues* (750 gp)
- *Ring of swimming* (2500 gp)
- *Scrolls of water breathing* (375 gp) and *freedom of movement* (Arcane: 1000 gp, Divine: 700 gp)
- *Scrolls of swim* (150 gp), from the *Spell Compendium* (see Appendix 2: New Rules Items)
- *Scrolls of swim, mass* (700 gp), from the *Spell Compendium* (see Appendix 2: New Rules Items)

**Development:** Once the PCs have asked all the questions they want, have purchased the necessary equipment and are ready to go, proceed to Encounter 3.

## **Encounter 3: Graciously Gallivanting in the Gulf of Ghayar**

Hasan will escort the PCs to the ship they will be sailing on. Read the following out loud.

*Exiting the Fortress of the Sea Lion, Hasan Reis takes you down the private military dock, passing a few smaller ships before approaching a small cutter moored on an arm of the docks. She is called the Revenge, built for speed, not strength.*

*You are brought on board the ship and Hasan acquaints you to a man called Isfahan Albay Reis ibn Ghazin, captain of the Revenge. "Isfahan will answer any further questions you might have. May Istus watch over your journey, and may your service to His Magnificence be glorious. Farewell," says Hasan.*

*“Greetings,” says Isfahan. “I’ll have my astegmen show you your quarters. We set sail in half of a glass (hour). Please be ready by then. Lady Shallah is awaiting you in the mess.”*

An astegmen, which is an officer in training (see the Royal Navy of Zeif meta-org document for more information), shows the PCs to their rooms and escorts them to meet Shallah in the mess hall. When the PCs are ready to meet Shallah, read the following.

*Entering the mess hall, you lay your eyes on Shallah ibnt Sovorn, daughter of the Mer-Sheik. She is a beautiful woman with long jade-green hair. While her skin is pale and her features fair, most notable of her physique is the five-foot fish tail where a human’s legs might be.*

If any of the PCs have played **ZEF6-01 Out of Water** and possess “Shallah’s Token”, read the following:

*“Hello! You must be my escort. I am Shallah bint Sovorn al-Ghayar. I see some familiar faces among you,” she says, looking to those who bear the tiny token she once gifted. “It is so nice to see you all again. I am glad they appointed someone I know and trust. It makes my father and I that much more comfortable.*

If no one possesses the token, read the following:

*“Hello. You must be my escort. I am Shallah bint Sovorn al-Ghayar. It is a pleasure to meet you.”*

Allow the PCs a chance to socialize a little with Shallah. PCs that possess the Token from **ZEF6-01 Out of Water** get along wonderfully with her; she recounts her stories while on the surface world, asks what the PCs have been up to since they last met, and generally catches up.

Any PC without the token can meet and get to know Shallah. She’s genuinely interested in getting to know the PCs who will escort her to her homeland; she has to travel with them alone at one point, so it is best to be comfortable.

Once the meeting is over, read the following.

*Leaving the Zeir-i-Zeif harbor, you watch behind you as the shining jewel of Zeif, its magnificent capital, grows smaller and smaller. The golden rooftops reflect the morning sun as it rises from the eastern horizon. The city is truly beautiful from far away. It is not long before it disappears, however, and the Revenge takes to the seas of the Dramidj Ocean. It’s a beautiful day, and a great start to a long journey at sea.*

During the journey, the PCs can socialize with four parties. The first is the Captain, the second is Shallah, the third is the cleric of Mouqol on board, and the fourth is the general crew. Let the players know that the journey is long, and that if they wish to strike up conversations with members of the ship, they can probably garner some information. Also during the trip, any members of the Royal Navy of Zeif must be briefed for a secret side-mission while escorting Shallah (see Encounter 3b).

Gather Information Results:

DC 5: This is a fast ship, but is lightly armed. It is meant to be part of a larger fleet, not chasing pirates on its own (Crew or Captain)

DC 8: Shallah enjoyed her stay on land, despite its actual purpose. She enjoyed encountering such a drastically different culture and meeting the people she has met. (Shallah)

DC10: The Captain will be dropping the party off well away from the Mer-Sheik kingdom as not to attract the attention of pirates (Crew or Captain)

DC 12: Lots to know about the gulf! Let me tell you about it. (Shallah or Crew. Give players the Gulf of Ghayar Handout. **Player Handout 5**)

DC 15: There are two main underwater parties in the Gulf: The Merfolk and the Aquatic Elves (Shallah or the Cleric of Moqoul)

DC 17: The two parties have recently been rumored to be in conflict over some territory (Cleric of Moqoul)

DC 20: There is a large “scar” in the ocean. It is said to hold all manor of creatures. Sharks, Dinosaurs even Ocean Giants! (Shallah)

## Encounter 3b: A Secret Mission

This encounter is only to be used if a member in good standing of the Royal Navy of Zeif is present on board this mission in the party. At some point during the voyage, Isfahan Reis will take all members of the Navy aside to a secret briefing in his quarters. He does this inconspicuously as possible so as not to alert the rest of the party of anything fishy. If discovered or pressed, he claims that he was bringing in members of Navy for a drink among officers.

*Summoned by the Reis, you are taken into his quarters somewhere along the way to the Gulf of Ghayar. The captain seems intent and serious, and*

*sits you down, closing and locking the door behind you.*

*“Can I get you a drink?” he asks, drawing a decanter of what looks like spiced alcohol. He pours drinks for you if you like, and then one for himself. “As members of the Royal Navy, I have come to impart a secret mission upon you, direct from the Kapudan Pasha. I must first ask for a vow of secrecy from you. You must swear on the Banner of the Sea Lion and on your service to the Sultan that you never had this meeting, and no such mission exists. Do you swear?”*

Once the PCs swear the oath, the briefing continues. If they are not up for the task, the captain understands, and sends them back to their business. Hand them **Players Handout Six**. Remember to read this yourself. Once read, the PCs may ask a few questions. The captain can answer only a limited amount of questions, because he’s kept on a need to know basis.

#### **What reward is in it for us?**

“First and foremost, it is your duty to collect this information as members of the Navy. Glory of service should be enough. However, I’m sure that such important information will bring great rewards, though I am not privy to their specifics.”

#### **Who do I report to?**

“Bring the information back to Hasan Reis, who will be your acting officer in this mission.”

Once the briefing is over and the PCs have role-played enough with the various parties on board the *Revenge*, proceed to Encounter 4.

## **Encounter 4: The Fish was *this* Big!**

Once the PCs have role-played enough with the various parties on board the *Revenge*, read the following out loud:

*After a long journey, it seems you are finally at the drop off point. You had traveled for just over nine days, a little behind schedule because of a bad wind coming around the point of the Vaar. You traveled south down the Bakhoury Coast, stopping in Nafiq for restocking, and finally west to the middle of the Gulf of Ghayar.*

*Your things are gathered, and Shallah packages her small amount of belongings. Breathing in the air of the Gulf, she smiles and seems happy to be nearly home. On the deck of the ship are the captain and the Appraiser of Mouqol, Sarhana ibnt Turusan.*

*The cleric comes close to you and says, “I can prepare you with the ability to breathe underwater now, if you need it. I have three such spells memorized to divide amongst you as you see fit.*

The cleric is a seventh level caster and has prepared three *water breathing* spells. She also has a *lesser rod of extend spell*, meaning she can hand out 84 hours of water breathing. For a party of six PCs, this is 14 hours each. For five PCs, it is nearly 17 hours each. For four PCs, it is 21 hours each. They estimate that it should be no more than 8 hours to reach the palace, depending on where they chose to weigh anchor.

*The captain comes over and looks up at the sun. “It’s roughly noon now. We haul anchor tomorrow evening at sun down, giving you today and tomorrow to make it back. Good luck!”*

Once the PCs are ready and have magic cast on them to breathe, they can head into the waters and move on to Sovorn’s palace. Read the following out loud. *Note:* This is likely the first time the PCs will ever travel underwater. Try to be expressive with this boxed text undersea to impart a sense of wonder on the PCs.

*With your gear stowed and proofed, Shallah leads you over the ship’s edge and into the Gulf of Ghayar. Your skin is instantly cooled after moving from the sun’s rays to the refreshing waters. Immediately, you head west, descending into the depths.*

*Shallah finally seems at home, her body undulating gracefully as she swims with great speed through the water. She treads back to await you, and seems patient despite your slow pace. She is all smiles as she takes in the familiar sights of her homeland.*

The PCs need to make numerous DC 10 Swim checks in order to make progress through the Gulf. Because no threat is present, they can take 10, provided they have a Swim check modifier no less than +0. If armor or gear weighs them down, they’ll need to remove it until their Swim check modifier is appropriate, or they’ll have to sink to the bottom and walk the seabed. Both of these will significantly slow the party and likely leave them without air once the water breathing spell wears off. Shallah can assist one character to give him a +2 to his Swim check along the way. Alternatively, she can let any Small character “ride” her, so that their slower speed does not slow the party’s progress and so that the Small character does not have to make Swim checks.

*Make sure you get the PCs to give you a marching/swimming order, with Shallah clearly placed.*

The Palace is only three miles from the drop off point, but because PCs move at quarter speed while

swimming, it will take them a while to reach it. To figure out how long it will take them, consult the following table:

| Slowest Normal Speed | Hours of Swimming |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 30 feet              | 4 hours           |
| 20 feet              | 6 hours           |

Once the PCs are ready to move on, read the following:

*Shallah leads you deeper into the Gulf and the seabed descends slowly as you progress. At the point where the floor is nearly seventy feet below you, you cross over a large kelp forest. The strands of seaweed wave in the sea currents, and stretch up nearly fifteen feet.*

**Creatures:** Lurking in the kelp forest is a creature looking for food or revenge. It notices the PCs and seeks them as prey, hiding in the kelp and waiting for the best time to strike. Have the PCs make Spot checks opposed by the Hide checks of the monsters. Anyone who beats the opposed checks gets to act in the surprise round. Pertinent knowledge information is detailed for each creature.

At APLs 2 and 4, read the following boxed text:

*Suddenly, from the kelp comes a creature of the sea, hunger in its eyes. It swims with speed and agility, coming straight for you.*

For APLs 6 and 8, read the following boxed text:

*Suddenly, from the kelp comes a monster of the sea. Nearby, a similar creature lies dead in the kelp. The monster coming at you has revenge and anger in its eyes, and it seems ready to take out its frustrations on you.*

#### APL 2 (EL 3)

**Shark, Large:** hp 38; Hide -2, see *Monster Manual* page 279

**Tactics:** The shark is attracted to shiny objects, and will thus attack anyone with a metal shield or the most metal armor. His hunger is driving him to madness, and he viciously thrashes at his foe, fighting to the death. If it successfully knocks an opponent unconscious or kills it, it will defend itself from others before swimming off with its supper. It will move around even taking AoOs if there are several “shiny” targets in the area. It will concentrate on any bleeding opponents, attempting grapples (receiving AoOs) and then wanting to swim off with the catch (using another grapple check to “pin” the opponent in its jaws).

#### APL 4 (EL 5)

**Dire Barracuda:** hp 97; Hide -2; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** As Shark, Large, from APL 2

#### APL 6 (EL 7)

**Ichthyosaur:** hp 95; Hide -1; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The ichthyosaur will use hit and run tactics to avenge its slain mate, utilizing its high speed and Swim-By Attack feat. It will avoid entering and staying in a fray at all costs. It believes it can constantly hit and run its enemies until they perish.

#### APL 8 (EL 9)

**Sea Cat, Advanced:** hp 172; Hide -8; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The sea cat is a combat tank, and readily enters the fray aggressively, attacking the nearest foe. It tries its best to enable it to use Full Attack actions every round, hopefully hitting with both claws to enable its Rend ability. It is relentless and vicious, mowing down its enemies until they or it is dead.

Druids and Rangers can use their Wild Empathy ability with this encounter if they choose to. All of the creatures will stop to let the PC plead their case using the ability, should the druid or ranger beat it on initiative in the surprise round, and the ability takes 10 rounds (or 1 round at a -10 penalty). The APL determines the DC. At APL 2 and 4, the DC is 20 (for going from Unfriendly to Indifferent with a +5 modifier to the DC because the creature is hungry). At APL 6 and 8, the DC is 25 to go from Hostile to Indifferent. Remember that the sea cat at APL 8 is a Magical Beast, and all Wild Empathy checks suffer a -4 penalty against it.

Shallah will remain a non-combatant in the encounter. If the PCs are in trouble, a patrol of Sovorn’s merfolk will arrive to help the PCs. A patrol consists of four merfolk warriors and a merfolk sergeant. These warriors will fight for Shallah to the death and escort the PCs back to the palace.

#### All APLS (EL 4)

**Merfolk Sergeant:** Male Merfolk War3; see *Appendix One*

**Merfolk Warrior (4):** Male Merfolk War1; see *Monster Manual* page 185

Once the encounter is dealt with, Shallah will thank them graciously. Once everyone is ready, the PCs can move on to Encounter 5.

## Encounter 5: It's a Merfolk Party!

Once the previous encounter is complete, ready the following out loud.

*Not long after the attack in the kelp forest, Shallah leads you over a ridge leading into rocky valley. As you crest it, you lay your eyes on a magnificent sight. Built into a quintet of massive rock pillars jutting from the rocky bed are constructions of beautiful coral, clay and rock. The main pillar has dozens of circular windows illuminated with soft colored lights, standing out in the darker areas of this deeper sea, especially now that the sun was leaving the world above. It was amazing to see such civilization nearly a hundred feet below the surface world.*

*Coral causeways crossed between the pillars in a haphazard matrix of passages. Coral adornments decorated the length and breadth of the pillars, making them seem more like jewels than chunks of rock. Below, around the pillars, lie dozens of smaller rocks, big enough to house a small group of merfolk, and each with their own window, creating a carpet of lights and decorated homes around the palace. Around it all swim merfolk, traveling to and from houses, businesses and other merfolk constructions.*

*Shallah's eyes light up and a smile claims her face. "Welcome to the palace," she says, heading ahead to reach her home. "Come now, I can show you the sights."*

Any PC with the following skill checks has a chance to learn some extra information once they lay their eyes on the palace.

### Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering):

DC 15: The PC recognizes that the merfolk have constructed something that is equally defensible from all dimensions; from all sides and even from above. They recognize three building materials; the stone pillars that seem exaggerated by underwater clay, all interconnected by coral causeways.

DC 20: The architecture bears some resemblance to what Kwalish might have made when he did work for the merfolk all those years ago. Though it is apparent that it was probably not his work exclusively, his influence is clearly visible. PCs who are members of the Order of Kwalish receive a +2 circumstance bonus to this check.

### Knowledge (Geography or Nature)

DC 15: The stone pillars are likely not natural; they don't tend to form like that, even underwater.

### Knowledge (Arcana) or Spellcraft:

DC 23: The stone pillars are clearly the result of a *stone shape* spell, or multiple applications of it.

*You travel down the ridge and within minutes reach the palace grounds. It was more of a small town with hundreds of merfolk living around it for mutual protection. Shallah turns down a main avenue between some buildings.*

*Reaching the end of the street, Shallah leads you to a large group of merfolk. Surrounded with a troop of guards and a number of aristocratic-looking merfolk was a merman of great prestige. Dressed in a flowing gown of woven kelp and seashells, and wearing a crown of coral and pearls, the merman smiles wide and raises his arms as Shallah approaches.*

*"Merfolk al-Ghayar, our daughter has returned!" he calls, and there is a great cheer among the processions. Shallah moves forward and embraces many of the notable merfolk, her father first and foremost.*

*"Come now, inside. Let us talk and catch up," the merman says to his daughter. He is obviously Sovorn ibn Regol, Mer-Sheik al-Ghayar.*

If the PCs want to say anything here, let them take a break from the boxed text. Once they're ready, move on.

*They lead you out of the street and up through the water. You pass over and land on one of the outer causeways that create a cage around the palace. It's only now that you notice the defensive capabilities of the palace. Guards patrols between the causeways in a three-dimensional fashion, and mounted on the bridges are crossbows pointing out in every direction, the special merfolk crossbow that have limited range under the water. The most important of the structures, it seems, is deep in the core of the matrix of coral and stone. Despite the extra edge of having to defend from all sides, you are pretty sure that they could hold their own in a fight.*

*"Friends, I thank you for your service in bringing my daughter safely home to me," says Sovorn. "If you'll excuse us, we have much to speak of and catch up on. My guards will show you to some air filled grottos we've prepared for you to rest overnight in, and it is our hope that you can join us for a mid-morning gathering with family and friends of*

*Shallah. I would like to show you our culture and ways and thank you further for the invaluable service you have done for us. I will have a cleric sent to your room to renew your water breathing abilities should you need it."*

*"Also, if you are quick, the storefronts will be open for a bit longer, and you can probably reach the bazaars and shop our wares, which I'm sure you would be interested in seeing. Does this sound good for you?"*

If there are no further questions on part of the players, have some of Sovorn's men take them to their chambers, which are special rooms which have been magically sealed and filled with air. It is clear that in making the rooms, the merfolk have put as much effort as possible in recreating surface life as they know it and making the PCs comfortable.

Once they've stowed their gear, they are free to tour the palace on their own or head to the bazaar and see what the merfolk have to offer. Below is a list of what can be purchased. Anything on this list that is rare will appear on the AR for PCs to purchase later. Members of the Navy have a chance to get some weaponry or armor for their secret mission here.

- Bone dagger, rapier, and shortsword (and masterwork versions).
- Shortspears, spears and longswords that function as normal but are stylized with merfolk decorations (and masterwork versions).
- Merfolk heavy and light crossbows with merfolk bolts.
- Merfolk tridents (and masterwork versions).
- Shell (medium) armor (and masterwork versions)
- Coral holy symbols (function as silver holy symbols) available for Eadro and Mouqol.
- Merfolk clothing (Courtier's, Noble's, Peasant's, Entertainer's and Artisan's Outfits)
- Merfolk trinkets (coral and seashell versions of the following items from the *Player's Handbook*: bell, small mirror, signal whistle and signet ring)

PCs may also feel that this is an appropriate time to gather information about the political or military situation in the merfolk's domain, to bring back to one of the three masters who desire the info. While some

information can be had now, higher quality info will be found at the luncheon on the morrow. PCs have enough time for one check (though the party could split up and do one check for both military and political info). These checks do not cost the PCs any money; the merfolk are too enthralled with seeing surface dwellers that they give up the info for free.

#### **Military Information (Gather Information)**

*DC 10:* The guards around the palace have been on high alert because of some recent disappearances of caravans. No one knows what's going on.

*DC 15:* More soldiers have been brought in from the inner domain of the merfolk because of the disappearances and because Sovorn is worried about his daughter.

*DC 20:* At least two caravans have gone missing, probably meaning at least a score of merfolk are gone.

#### **Political Information (Gather Information)**

*DC 10:* The only neighboring nation, Qessirstan, is home to aquatic elves, and the two people have generally been peace loving, though of course disputes happen from time to time.

*DC 15:* Things might be getting a little tense with Qessirstan lately, but no one is entirely sure why. Some believe it's because of land disputes, while others believe it's due to trade deals gone sour.

*DC 20:* A Qessirstani emissary was here earlier this month to meet with Sovorn, though no one knows the outcome of the meeting.

Once the PCs have had their fun with the bazaar and the merfolk city, they can retire to their chambers for the evening and wait until morning. A cleric of Mouqol does come by to renew their *water breathing* spells, enough to get them through the night, where it will be renewed again in the morning. Appropriate courtly costume is provided for the PCs to wear, and they will be summoned when they are expected to be present. They are encouraged to bring their weaponry and armor, because the nobles will like to see them and learn about them. Let the PCs rest and in the morning, move on to Encounter 5b.

## **Encounter 5b: The Mid-Morning Luncheon**

Morning comes, and the PCs are summoned to the ballroom, where Shallah's "welcome home" party has begun. PCs should don their merfolk garb and head over. Read the following out loud:

*Heading to the ballroom, you pass through the wonderful halls once again. With the sun up again, the world outside is lit a little better, though the depth still clouds some of the light. Soon, you find the room, and are again amazed with what you see.*

*The room is large and spherical, and you enter at a mid point on its outer edge. Built from the walls in coral and stone are tables bearing seafood hors d'oeuvres and drinks specially sealed in leather sacks with straws. Around the top of the room are large windows with crystal glass of different colors, amplifying and cascading dazzling light about the room.*

*About the room are merfolk dressed in luxurious gowns and clothing, and they mill about one another, talking and laughing.*

*Shallah sees you immediately and pulls herself away from her father and another woman who could only be her mother. "Welcome, I'm glad you could make it. My parents were very excited about having you here, and many of the others in my father's court would love to meet you. Let me show you around."*

*The mermaid turns to the room and begins pointing out people. "That is my father and mother, of course, Sovorn bin Regol and Shalina bint Carvados. Next to them you can see a merman with long black hair tied in three braids; that's Mowvin ibn Vadan, my father's chief political advisor. He has been like a second father to me, serving my father since he became a sheik."*

*Turning again, she points to some others. Next to them is Kardolahan ibn Garador, the captain of the guard here in the palace."*

*"And there, across the room by herself near the band, that's a very special guest. Her name is Zellaveera, and as you can clearly see, she is not a merfolk. She's in fact a water nymph, a Nereid, and a recent friend of ours."*

*"Please, make yourself at home, have some food, and I'm sure everyone would love to hear stories from above. I'll be with my father."*

This is a large, freeform social encounter. PCs are free to mingle with any of the NPCs. Information is provided with for all the above-mentioned NPCs; some general information is attainable from other friends of friends who made it to the luncheon.

This encounter's purpose is for PCs to experience merfolk culture, learn about the palace and its goings on, and meet some NPCs. While there is a lot of fluff

and flavor to this encounter, some of the information is critical, as listed here:

- PCs should meet with the Nereid, Zellaveera. **(this is the most critical point in this adventure)**
- PCs should learn about the tensions with Qessirstan.
- PCs should learn about the missing caravans.
- Everyone should have fun!

As a DM, try and ensure that the above criteria are met before moving to the next encounter. Once these points are dealt with, and the players seemed to have played out the social interactions in this encounter, feel free to move on to Encounter 6. **If you are pressed for time, such as in a convention slot, please be wary of the amount of time spent here.** Players can learn a lot, and the right bunch can really have a blast speaking with the various NPCs.

Here is the relevant information for the various NPCs found at the party. DM's should use this information to answer questions the PCs might have, or to kick start lulls in the conversation. There should be enough here to provide rich interaction between the PCs and the NPCs. This information is skeletal and can be flowered up as the DM sees fit.

Most of the NPCs here will frown on speaking about others behind their backs, and if asked about other NPCs, will encourage the PCs to meet them on their own and make their own judgments. The exception is Shallah, who is willing to give PCs heads up on the various NPCs.

**Shallah ibnt Sovorn:** Female Merfolk Ari5 (Bluff +4, Diplomacy +14, Sense Motive +1)

Shallah is really happy to be home and to see all of her old friends and family again. She is cheery this whole encounter, but regrettably cannot spend too much time with any one person because she has to meet and catch up with everyone equally. While speaking with PCs, she'll constantly be nodding and sending out hellos mid conversation to passersby. Shallah is considered "friendly" (as per her mood; see the Diplomacy skill in the *Player's Handbook*) with all the PCs because they brought her here. Shallah is interested in the following subjects can relate information about them.

- Merfolk customs: Shallah can teach merfolk customs if PCs want to learn how to communicate better with the others at the party. Shallah is glad to teach the PCs a

merfolk greeting. The greeting involves holding each others hands while saying “*Gadru Gilltru ala Mindra*”, a phrase in Aquan meaning “of all the fish in the sea”, which implies “of all the fish in the sea, I am lucky enough to meet you”. Using this greeting with any other merfolk when they first meet them will grant the PCs a +2 to any Charisma-based skill check (as well as Sense Motive) for that merfolk throughout this encounter.

- Mowvin ibn Vadan: Shallah respect Mowvin, her father’s political advisor and close family friend, greatly. He was like a second father to her when she was growing up. She admits that he is a bit too serious (as far as merfolk go), but he means well. He’s a very knowledgeable fellow when it comes to politics, and has a keen sense of the goings on in the Gulf of Ghayar. He’s also very interested in politics of Zeif, and would probably like to hear about anything the PCs can tell him about the world up there.
- Kardolahan ibn Garador: Kardolahan is the captain of the guard, and Shallah has known him only a few years, when he replaced the former captain who retired. While young, he takes his duty seriously and will never compromise the safety of Shallah and her family for anything. He’s very knowledgeable about merfolk combat techniques and military information in general.
- Zellaveera: Shallah has befriended Zellaveera more than anyone else. The Nereid is shy and only speaks Aquan. Shallah offers to translate for anyone who has her Token from **ZEF6-01** *Out of Water*, or will do it with a DC 15 Diplomacy check (to convince her to tear herself away from the schmoozing with everyone else). Zellaveera lives outside the city on a patch of magical clay that Shallah knows little about. She knows that Zellaveera recently immigrated here from the Elemental Plane of Water.

**Sovorn ibn Regol, Mer-Sheik:** Male Merfolk Ari3/Brd6 (Bluff +15, Diplomacy +27, Sense Motive +15)

Sovorn ibn Regol is an outwardly happy fellow, but it doesn’t take much to realize that he is a politician, a man of business and action. There always seems to be an air of power about him, and while he is friendly, it’s hard not to be intimidated. **Remember to roleplay Sovorn**

#### **appropriately if PCs have his favor or his enmity**

**from ZEF6-01** *Out of Water*. Sovorn starts out indifferent to all the PCs in this encounter. Sovorn is interested in the following subjects and can relate information about them:

- Shallah: Sovorn is ecstatic that his daughter has returned home. He can’t stop singing her praises; notably, her profound beauty, her intelligence (she is a bit of a scholar) and her cheerfulness. He’ll speak worlds of her while she’s around and even while she isn’t.
- His Sheikdom and the Merfolk Realm: Sovorn is proud of his Sheikdom and the people who live in it. He can relate that over two thousand merfolk make their homes near his palace or in the outer areas. If PCs express interest in his Sheikdom, they can make a DC 15 Diplomacy check to increase his attitude to friendly and extract more detailed information. This check is modified by the +4 for having free luxury upkeep due to Sovorn’s favor, the –2 for having his enmity and a +2 if the PC used the merfolk greeting when they first met in this room.

If successful, he can relate that he makes most of his money off of commodities, including some pearls, coral, and clay to build with. He is especially excited about some magical clay recently discovered in the south, called Elukian clay. He explains that it was formed through seepage from the Elemental Plane of Water, and that they are still learning about its properties from their friend Zellaveera, who is from the plane and now lairs near the new clay. He recommends the PCs meet her if they are interested in the clay.

- Elukian Clay: Sovorn knows a little about this clay (as detailed in the previous bullet).
- The missing caravans: Sovorn has a sore spot for those gone missing, and it doesn’t take a skill check to figure it out. He greatly laments the loss of every soul and is doing everything in his power to find them and find the source. He can tell the PCs that three caravans have been attacked, and a total of 23 merfolk are gone, most of them merchants but some of them guardsmen from his own men.

**Shalina bint Carvados, Shallah’s Mother:** Female Merfolk Ari6 (Bluff +15, Diplomacy +19, Sense Motive +13)

Shalina bint Carvados is a dull-witted but genuinely kind and compassionate mermaid. She is outgoing, approachable and likeable, and she listens very well. It is only apparent after many minutes of conversation that she doesn't have a very sharp intellect, and often seems to just smile and nod. She doesn't have a stance on whether it was appropriate to send Shallah away; she's only happy she's come back. Because she often does whatever Sovorn tells her to, any favor or enmity with Sovorn applies to Shalina as well, including the +4 bonus from luxury upkeep due to his favor, and the -2 penalty from his enmity in **ZEF6-01** *Out of Water*. Shalina is interested in the following subjects and can relate information about them:

- Merfolk customs: she is willing to teach the same customs as her daughter would.
- Qessirstan and the tensions: Shalina is sure that everything will be solved eventually with Qessirstan. She reminds the PCs that friends always make amends, and then recounts how she has a really great relationship with a courtier in Qessirstan's court, a young elf named Kalaena. She goes into stories about her and Kalaena exploring the palace grounds together.
- The missing caravans: Shalina thinks that whoever is doing this is an awful lot and should be captured and put in prison.

**Mowvin bin Vadan, Chief Political Advisor:** Male Merfolk Ari10 (Bluff +3, Diplomacy +18, Sense Motive +18)

Mowvin bin Vadan is likely the most incredible mind in the palace. His keen awareness of the region, its people and its goings on are unmatched by any of the Mer-Sheik's advisors. He is older and a bit gruff in demeanor, but his language is polished and well spoken, and his intelligence is abundantly apparent in his words. Mowvin is interested in the following subjects and can relate information about them:

- Shallah: Mowvin is relieved to have the girl home and safe again. He always liked her and was sad to see her go.
- The Sheikdom and the Merfolk: Mowvin is pleased with the success of the Sheikdom. Trade is up, and recent expeditions to the surface world are only increasing it. The spread of Mouqol has really brought forth powerful mercantile brains, and every year the merfolk bring home more money. He feels

that quality of life is high and that Sovorn is doing a good job.

- Qessirstan and the tensions: Mowvin can relate that Qessirstan is a smaller nation than that of the merfolk, but that their presence is equally potent. The elves are somewhat extreme in their attitudes and have little room for compromise. Despite this, they are good at heart and he strives to increase diplomatic relations with them at all times.

The recent tensions over the territory are understandable. The land under dispute lies far south of here, outside of what is normally considered either nation's land, but inside what could technically be either. A trade route passes through it, however, and it has been the merfolk who have tended and patrolled the route, and Sovorn believes that grants the rights to its special commodity, which was also found by the merfolk. Mowvin is worried only because the elves had once pushed a diplomatic solution to the dispute, but have moved away from talks more and more over the weeks. They've threatened to move warriors into the territory, and the merfolk have threatened to cut off the supply line. While slow, tensions are escalating, and he's not sure how long such a "cold war" can last.

- Elukian Clay: Aside from what he knows about the tensions, Mowvin knows a little about the clay properties. He first says that Zellaveera will know the most but he can relate that it is formed in part by seepage from the Elemental Plane of Water. It can be shaped much like a sculpting project and hardened to form weapons and armor. The great part is that the armor made from it is naturally buoyant and doesn't impede with swimming at all.
- The Missing Caravans: Mowvin of course greatly regrets the loss of the merfolk, and still holds out hope that they can be found alive. He can report that three caravans have been attacked, and a total of 23 merfolk gone. Mowvin balks at the idea that the aquatic elves are behind it.

If pressed about more information, Mowvin explains that a lot of it is supposed to be kept under the radar for a time. It takes a DC 20 Diplomacy check to get him to relate some more details. This check is modified by the +4

for having free luxury upkeep due to Sovorn's favor and a +2 if the PC used the merfolk greeting when they first met in this room.

If successful, Mowvin will explain that he's positive that the elves aren't involved. The truth is, they found some putrid substance on the scene of one of the attacks, and brought it back for study. It turned out to be organic, but long dead. They suspect that some form of undead force is attacking these caravans. This knowledge makes him worry all the more about the missing merfolk. He asks the PCs not to spread that information around.

- The Sultan of Zeif or the Diwan: Being a politician and a scholar, Mowvin is very interested in learning anything more he can about the Sultan of Zeif and his cabinet. PCs with Knowledge (Nobility/Royalty) or Knowledge (Local) can really capture Mowvin's attention by making a check (DC 15). Success means getting his favor on the AR.

#### **Kardolahan bin Garador, Captain of the Guard:**

Male Merfolk Rng6 (Bluff +1, Diplomacy +1, Sense Motive +2)

Kardolahan is the captain of the palace guard and coordinates all military action in the palace and the town around it. He takes his duty seriously and considers the safety and well being of the Sheik and his family his top priority. Kardolahan is the best source of info for military information, and any members of the Navy can get the info they need for the special mission here. Kardolahan is interested in the following subjects and can relate information about them:

- Qessirstan and the tensions: It's not Kardolahan's duty to comment on the situation. All he can say is that he stands ready to deploy soldiers into the territory should the Mer-Sheik command.
- The missing merfolk: Kardolahan lost many merfolk in those attacks (8) and he has increased guard density on all caravans moving nearby. He's ordered extra alert through the grounds, and he hopes next time will be a victory for his men and not the brigands. Eventually, he is sure they will be brought to face justice.
- Kardolahan is a martial fellow, and any talk about weaponry and military equipment gets

him excited. Any martial character or member of a Zeif military who gets into conversation with him about such topics, and can show him surface weaponry or armor and makes a DC 15 Diplomacy check will get his attention. This check is modified by the +4 for having free luxury upkeep due to Sovorn's favor, a +2 if the PC used the merfolk greeting when they first met in this room, a +2 if the PC is a member of a military unit, and a +2 if they show him surface weaponry. He would love to learn about the surface world's military. If PCs gain his attention in this way, they can get him to tell them information about the military.

- The Merfolk Military: If asked, Kardolahan is happy to relate information about the military to **anyone who's gained his attention (see previous bullet)**.

Troop Size: Kardolahan currently commands 200 troops. Fifty have been brought in these times of need, so normally his levels lie at about 150. He can estimate about 1000-1200 troops throughout the nation.

Hierarchy: The military commander with the Sidi commands all the troops, dividing them up into regiments of 150-200 and dispersing them about the sheikdoms under command of a captain, which is what Kardolahan is. Each captain has a lieutenant who helps him oversee his men, and the men are divided into brigades of twenty, each under command of a sergeant.

Mobilization time: Kardolahan can have his troops armed and ready to attack in less than five minutes, but this is limited to the palace and its grounds. Any mobilization outside the grounds can take anywhere from 10-15 minutes plus traveling time.

**Zellaveera, Nereid:** Female Nereid (Bluff +3, Diplomacy +3, Sense Motive +1)

Zellaveera is a Nereid who lives in the disputed territory south of the palace. She came here from the Elemental Plane of Water over a year ago. Unknown to her, her arrival caused a small leak from the Elemental Plane of Water, and around her lair, energies from her home plane have created a great supply of Elukian clay. Sovorn befriended her in hopes of learning about her and her plane and eventually the clay. Shallah also became friends with her over this time.

Nereids are very shy creatures. Zellaveera looks like a translucent ripple of water and is very hard to detect. She only speaks Aquan, and unless PCs speak the language, will require a translator; otherwise, only simple messages will be conveyed. Zellaveera sticks to the shadows of the room, quietly watching and learning about the merfolk and the new surface dwellers which whom she's not comfortable with...yet.

Any PC who bears Shallah's Token and tries to speak with Zellaveera will find Shallah coming over to help translate for them. If no one possesses this token, Shallah can be convinced to translate with a DC 15 Diplomacy check.

Zellaveera should be role-played as very shy and introspective, but she's genuinely interested in the Material Plane. The conversation with her should progress slowly as she gets more comfortable and requires skill checks. Initially, Zellaveera will speak about the following:

- Shallah: Zellaveera will talk a bit about Shallah and how she's glad the mermaid has come home. She says that Shallah and she are good friends. If PCs are kind and express interest, they can make a DC 13 Diplomacy check to get her to the next level of friendship. This check is modified by a +4 if a PC possesses Shallah's Token.

Once Zellaveera has reached this second level of comfort, she'll talk a bit more about things:

- Elemental Plane of Water: Zellaveera can teach the PCs a little about her home plane. She tells them how it is an ocean of infinite depth, how its temperature varies between boiling and frozen, and how settlements are found built on pieces of flotsam and jetsam floating around in the endless currents.
- Material Plane: Zellaveera will ask about the material plane, specifically about the local seas. She expresses concern and confusion that the oceans end on the surface. However, she's genuinely curious about all things about the seas. If PCs are kind here and teach her information about this topic, they can make a DC 18 Diplomacy check to get her to the final stage of friendship. This check is modified by +4 if the PC has Shallah's token. Feel free to give ad hoc bonuses if the PCs role-play exceptionally well.

Once at this final friendship stage, Zellaveera will explain a little bit more. She also proclaims any PC who reaches this stage "her new best friend".

- Her Story: Zellaveera will tell PCs about her story and how she came to the Material Plane. Over a year ago, she lived in a floating rock in the Elemental Plane of Water, which soared about on a large circular current. She had a peaceful life, and was content enough to live there forever. However, one day, an evil sea dragon came by and claimed the whole area, forcing her out. She could not fight the dragon, so she ran away, lost in the plane without a home. In her search for a new living place, she stumbled across a portal to the Material Plane, and deciding she had had enough, moved in. The portal opens up onto her new lair, south of the palace. She's not sure if the portal works anymore, because she doesn't even want to try going back.
- PCs who are "her new best friend" receive the designation on the AR and receive a special benefit.

**General Merfolk Party Attendees:** Male and Female Merfolk Arii, Expi, and Wari.

Speaking with the general attendees of the party can gain the PCs a little bit of information. They can make Gather Information checks to learn the following information. They can make one such check during the party, though PCs can split up to each do their own. This check is modified by the +4 for having free luxury upkeep due to Sovorn's favor, and a +2 if the PCs know the merfolk greeting.

#### **Gather Information**

*DC 10:* People are happy to have Shallah home. Despite the necessity of gaining the Sultan's favor, they missed her.

*DC 15:* Sovorn has been feeling down ever since Shallah left, and sending her away must have been the hardest decision of his life.

*DC 20:* The people generally believe the tensions with Qessirstan will dissolve. They all hope so, because apparently the clay on the territory is pretty neat.

*DC 25:* There are rumors that someone in the government knows more about the attacks on the caravans then they're telling everyone.

Moving onto Encounter 6 should only happen when the following criteria are met:

- PCs have met Zellaveera.

- PCs have learned about the tensions with Qessirstan.
- PCs have learned about the missing merfolk.
- Players have had some fun socializing.

After this has been done, wait for an appropriate spot in the conversation, preferably mid-sentence for one of the players, so that you can elicit some surprise. While reading the following out loud, slam your fists on the table or yell or otherwise shock the players.

## Encounter 6: That's a *Big* Zombie

*An immense crash halts the music and silences the guests. Above the ballroom, where the large crystal windows once were, is now an open space to the sea above. Crystal shards drift slowly down to the room's floor and everyone is shocked. The sounds of screaming are heard outside, but worst of it are the bodies of dead soldiers who fall through the windows, limp merfolk leaving trails of blood as they drift through the room with gaping wounds.*

*Quickly after, you see the source of the murders: a massive creature, a giant, though his form is clearly undead in nature. Crawling through the window with crimsoned weapons, its lunges into the room, looking for blood.*

**Creatures:** The undead have attacked the palace. Coming through the window are undead giants ready to kill anyone they find.

### APL 2 (EL 3)

**Ogre (Marrow) Skeleton:** hp 26; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The ogre skeleton will mindlessly attack the nearest creature with its spear. It does not use any tactics worth mentioning. It does not move to flank, remove itself from a flank, or worry about attacks of opportunity. If disarmed, it begins clawing with its claws. It continues to attack until it or everyone in the room is dead.

### APL 4 (EL 5)

**Troll (Scrag) Zombie:** hp 81; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The troll zombie will mindlessly attack the nearest creature with its claws. It does not use any tactics worth mentioning. It does not move to flank, remove itself from a flank, or worry about attacks of opportunity. It continues to attack until it or everyone in the room is dead.

### APL 6 (EL 7)

**Troll (Scrag) Zombie (2):** hp 81; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The troll zombies will mindlessly attack the nearest creatures with their claws. They will not use any tactics worth mentioning. They will not move to flank, remove themselves from a flank, or worry about attacks of opportunity. The creatures continue to attack until they or everyone in the room is dead.

### APL 8 (EL 9)

**Ocean Giant Skeleton:** hp 117; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The ocean giant skeleton will mindlessly attack the nearest creature with its trident. If it can full attack, it will use its tail slap. It does not use any tactics worth mentioning. It does not move to flank, remove itself from a flank, or worry about attacks of opportunity. If disarmed, it begins clawing with its claws. It continues to attack until it or everyone in the room is dead. Remember that the giant keeps the cold subtype and is vulnerable to fire damage.

During the combat, the PCs should move to engage the undead giants while the merfolk mobilize an escape. Kardolahan will immediately take charge of the situation, and everyone is glad of it. He spends the combat rushing the guests out of the room, and primarily ensuring of Sovorn and his family's safety. Some of his guards nearby will help out with this task.

If the PCs are in trouble, have Kardolahan join the battle, but save it for the last possible moment. Stress that he is weighing a lot of responsibility and tearing himself away from his duty to get the Mer-Sheik to safety is tough on him.

**Treasure:** Around the neck of one of the giants, the PCs find a strange red gem. It appears to be worth about 50 gp. A *true seeing* spell reveals the gem to actually be a strange disembodied eye, but its origin cannot be determined by any other means. This item appears on the AR and does not need to be purchased, but only **one** PC may take it; all others cross it off the AR.

APL 2: Loot – 4 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0 gp

APL 4: Loot – 4 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0 gp

APL 6: Loot – 4 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0 gp

APL 8: Loot – 4 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – 0 gp

**Development:** The PCs should defeat the undead giants and then report to Sovorn, who waits outside the room, mobilizing guards and coordinating with Kardolahan on the battle plan. Proceed to Encounter 7.

## Encounter 7: Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

Once the undead giants have been dispatched, read the following:

*With the last of the undead giant destroyed, a sudden calm befalls the room, though the sound of more violence from outside the ballroom echoes through the broken windows. From behind you, a voice calls for you. It is Sovorn, poking his head back into the room. "Quickly, I must speak with you!" he cries.*

*Into the hallway, you find the Mer-Sheik with Kardolahan, the captain of the guard. Guards are rushing about, and the rest of the party guests seem to have been ushered away. The Mer-Sheik speaks with you.*

*"The entire palace is under siege. Undead have blanketed the area and are battling my men. We are in a dire situation and I need help."*

If a PC possesses the "Retainer of the Merfolk" designation from ZEF6-01 *Out of Water*, read the following:

*"You have sworn to help the merfolk in the past; it seems time to call upon this favor. You must take your friends out of the palace and return to the surface world. As a tribute-payer, I am entitled to military relief from the Sultanate of Zeif. Send word to the Zeif militaries that my palace is under siege from an undead army. You must make all haste. This is your duty as Retainer of the Ghayar Merfolk."*

If none of the PCs possess the "Retainer of the Merfolk" designation from ZEF6-01 *Out of Water*, instead read the following:

*"I know you have done a great service to me already and that your work is done, but I ask one more favor from you, as a friend. You must leave the palace and return to the surface world. As a tribute-payer, I am entitled to military relief from the Sultanate of Zeif. Send word to the Zeif militaries that my palace is under siege from an undead army. You must make all haste; the well-being of my people depends on it."*

If the PCs agree, Sovorn is grateful, thanks them quickly, and rushes off with Kardolahan to secure the palace defenses, leaving the PCs to their own devices.

If the PCs do not agree, Sovorn doesn't have time to convince them. He swears by Mouqol and departs from the PCs, calling for the services of a runner. PCs will

gain the Enmity of Sovorn al-Ghayar, and must escape on their own.

Whether they agree or not, they must escape the palace. The quickest exit from the main building is through the broken windows. Read the following:

*Passing through the broken windows of the ballroom, you enter the gulf's waters again. The palace seems much different than it was when you first arrived, however.*

*Looking up from the main structure, you see the lattice of bridges and causeways that encircle the palace. Merfolk are scrambling to man the crossbow turrets and organize walls of defense between the latticework, but their efforts are not flawless. The line has broken here and there, enabling the undead to break through and slay any they find.*

*Escaping looks to be a challenge. The line of undead is nearly unbroken, though you make out a small portion of the latticework that holds undead troops that seem thinner than the rest of the forces. Were you to rush the line and fight your way out, this would be the easiest route. However, you aren't sure whether to rush the line, or head deeper, to the bed of the gulf, where you think you can see a possible stealthy escape through the side streets passing out of the palace grounds.*

The PCs have to choose how to escape the grounds. Make it clear to the players that one path (rushing the line) entails more combat, while the other (escaping through the streets) seems a less violent but challenging route nonetheless. Parties with lots of combat capability will have no difficulty rushing the line, and parties with more stealth and skills might have a better chance taking to the streets. Also, as the APL goes up, parties will have a much easier time blasting through the static encounter that greets them when they rush the line, though they should not know this.

If the party chooses to rush the line, go to Encounter 7b. If they choose to take to the streets, go to Encounter 7c.

### Encounter 7b: Rushing the Line

Read the following to PCs who decide to rush the line of undead and fight their way out.

*Heading straight upward, you target a small gap in the undead blanket that covers most of the palace grounds. As you reach it, you are flanked by a platoon of merfolk guards who battle some undead.*

*For a moment, you think you can swim right by, but suddenly a quintet of undead moves right into your path. They are merfolk, raised as skeletons and zombies, and they engage you quickly. Beside you, other merfolk battle similar engagements, and you watch as blood is spilled into the water, creating clouds of crimson all around you.*

The PCs will face a small force of undead as they try to fight their way out. This remains the same at all APLs. While only five undead will directly engage the PCs, have a similar amount on each side of them engaged with a similar amount of merfolk warriors to make the battle seem more realistic. These extra undead are not part of the encounter, and will not break from the merfolk to attack them. However, if the PCs decide to stick around and help the merfolk, they might get more than they asked for.

#### All APLs (EL 3)

**Merfolk Skeletons (3+6):** hp 6; see *Appendix One*

**Merfolk Zombies (2+4):** hp 16; see *Appendix One*

**Merfolk Warriors (10):** hp 6; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The undead are mindless and attack the nearest creature to them. They do not use tactics such as flanking, nor do they try to out maneuver PCs. They fight to the death and never flee.

The PCs should focus on clearing a path and escaping the palace. Award full XP if they out maneuver the undead and escape. Some PCs might feel obliged to aid the merfolk in their plight nearby. This is entirely acceptable and possibly a noble cause. However, PCs should be escaping to seek aid, and delays might cost them. For every three rounds that the PCs spend attacking undead outside of the five undead assigned to them in this encounter, have an undead giant identical to that they faced in Encounter 6 arrive on scene to fight them. Also, continually replenish the undead merfolk as they fall. This should encourage the PCs to flee.

**Development:** Once the PCs have broken through and escaped through the line, proceed to Encounter 8.

## Encounter 7c: Taking to the Streets

Read the following out loud should PCs decide to try and escape through the streets and avoid conflict.

*Diving deeper into the palace lattice, you leave the fray above and around you, ducking out through a street. Using the buildings for cover, you navigate*

*the winding maze, wondering which way will take you out of sight of the undead army. Above you, battle rages.*

The PCs will have to navigate a route through the maze of a foreign city. Have one PC make a Survival check, which can be done untrained. All other PCs may use the Aid another action if they choose to. The result of this check determines whether they can find a safe route through the city and avoid undead forces.

The base chance to encounter an undead patrol is 80%. For every three points the Survival check exceeds 10, this chance is reduced by 10%. For example, a Survival check of 23 subtracts 40% from the chance to encounter a patrol. Once the chance of encounter is determined, roll to see whether the PCs encounter a patrol.

If the PCs do not encounter undead, they are successful in escaping the city, and can move on to Encounter 8.

If the PCs do encounter undead, read the following:

*As you travel down the streets, the battle continues above you, and you take cover from various overhangs and shadows lurking in the streets. Suddenly, up ahead, a scream is heard, and a merfolk is seen being torn to shreds by one of his own, though the aggressor has long since died and been raised again. Realizing the error in your route, you take cover behind a low wall and sort out your next path. Behind you, you see another group of undead emerge from an alley, smashing through some doors to hunt merfolk and blocking your escape route. You'll have to act, and you'll have to do it quickly.*

The PCs are blocked in a road by two groups of undead. They have a couple of options here.

They can choose to forgo their stealth and head upward, rushing the line. Take them to encounter 7b.

They can choose to charge the undead groups here in the street. If they choose to do this, the undead will gladly fight them. However, the fighting will bring the attention of more, and the PCs may find themselves overwhelmed. The undead will keep replenishing every three rounds, until the PCs are killed or flee.

#### All APLs (EL 3)

**Merfolk Skeletons (3):** hp 6; see *Appendix One*

**Merfolk Zombies (2):** hp 16; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The undead are mindless and attack the nearest creature to them. They do not use tactics such as flanking, nor do they try to out maneuver PCs. They fight to the death and never flee.

Finally, the PCs can choose to sneak by the undead. Up ahead, they are pre-occupied with killing some merfolk who have wandered away from shelter. The PCs can use this distraction to their advantage, sneaking along the opposite side of the street, using the darkness of the overhangs to hide their progress. Have the PCs make Hide and a Move Silently check opposed by the undead's collective Spot and Listen check (+0). Subtract 5 from the undead roll because they are distracted, and subtract an additional 2 because the road is twenty feet across.

If the PCs are caught by the undead, run the encounter as above. They'll have to fight their way out.

If the PCs are successful, they can escape the city. Proceed to Encounter 8.

## Encounter 8: I *told* you it was that big!

As the PCs escape the palace grounds, read the following to them.

*You quickly flee from the palace grounds, rushing upward and eastward post haste. Looking behind you, you leave the city streets and the coral palace covered with swarming undead. The merfolk seem to have erected some sort of defense which might hold; however, the undead outnumber them, and you aren't sure how long they can last. As you get further away, the cloud of undead ooze and merfolk blood blocks your line of sight, and the palace soon disappears.*

*Turning ahead again, you make for the ship. Unfortunately, it seems your battles are not over yet. From over a rise comes one last creature, one last denizen of the undead brigades bent on endless slaughter and mindless rage. This creature is special though; you've seen it before. As it flies in to engage you, you notice some very familiar wounds...*

**Creatures:** The undead have animated the creature slain in Encounter 4 and have sent it to attack the palace. Enroute, it runs across the PCs, perhaps to enact some revenge. At APLs 6 and 8, the creature's mate was also animated, creating a duo of undead sea monsters.

Have PCs make a Spot check at this point. Their success will determine the starting distance. The base distance is 30 feet. For every two points above 10 that the highest Spot check achieves, increase this distance by 10 feet. For example, a Spot check of 19 puts the encounter at 70 feet. There is no surprise round.

### APL 2 (EL 4)

**Shark, Large Skeleton:** hp 45; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The skeletal shark is mindless and charges the nearest foe, attacking with its bite attack until it or its enemies are slain. It uses no tactics worth mentioning; it does not flank, remove itself from flanks, or worry about attacks of opportunity.

### APL 4 (EL 6)

**Dire Barracuda Zombie:** hp 107; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The skeletal shark is mindless and charges the nearest foe, attacking with its bite attack until it or its enemies are slain. It uses no tactics worth mentioning; it does not flank, remove itself from flanks, or worry about attacks of opportunity.

### APL 6 (EL 8)

**Ichthyosaur, Skeletons (2):** hp 90; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The skeletal whales are mindless and charge the nearest foes, attacking with their bite attacks until they or their enemies are slain. They use no tactics worth mentioning; they do not flank, remove themselves from flanks, or worry about attacks of opportunity.

### APL 8 (EL 10)

**Sea Cat, Advanced Skeleton (2):** hp 97; see *Appendix One*

**Tactics:** The skeletal sea cats are mindless and charge the nearest foes, attacking with their bite attacks and claw attacks until they or their enemies are slain. They use no tactics worth mentioning; they do not flank, remove themselves from flanks, or worry about attacks of opportunity. They will charge on the first round and use full attacks when they can.

**Development:** Once the PCs defeat the undead sea monster, they are free from the battle and can head home. Proceed to Encounter 9.

## Encounter 9: Back to the Real World

Once the PCs have defeated the undead monster, read the following out loud:

*You leave the undead horrors behind you, racing eastward to where the ship left you. The journey is quicker than earlier; perhaps it was your haste and care which got you there quicker, or perhaps it was*

*Istus Herself willing your journey forward, but within a few hours you laid eyes on the keel of the ship bobbing up and down on the surface, and her anchor hanging down to the sea bed, keeping her still and steady. Racing upwards, you pop out of the water and are quickly hoisted on board by the Reis and his men. They see the worry on your face, and Isfahan himself approaches to see what the matter is.*

PCs should likely tell Isfahan of what occurred below, though it is their choice. If they decide not to tell him or conceal what has happened, he can make a Sense Motive check versus the PCs' Bluff checks. If they are successful, Isfahan takes them back to Zeir-i-Zeif without incident. PCs will gain a hefty amount of bad AR designations.

If the PCs tell Isfahan what has happened, read the following.

*Isfahan shakes his head, unbelieving of what has transpired. "All hands ready about! Weigh anchor and loose the sails!" the Reis cries, whirling his crew into motion.*

*Isfahan turns to you and asks, "Have you means to send word to the Sultan or the Kapudan Pasha from here?"*

If the PCs have access to magic that can send a message to Zeir-i-Zeif or some other means of quick communication, Isfahan encourages them to do so. If they do not, read the following:

*Just then, the cleric of Mouqol rushes on deck worried and concerned. She glances about, wondering what the matter is. Isfahan shouts at her, "We need to send word to Zeir-i-Zeif! Sovorn's palace is under siege by undead. We're making sail for Beit Castan to summon reinforcements. The Kapudan Pasha and the Sultan must be warned!"*

*Sarhana nods, taking it in and breathing deeply. Then, she begins to cast a spell. Within a few seconds, she speaks a quick few words bearing the important message, and Mouqol's magic sends them far from here, over land and sea to the capital of Zeif.*

*"The message is sent. The Sultan will be informed," she exclaims, rushing to see where she can help.*

Once the PCs are ready to move on, read the following.

*With stunning speed and proficiency, Isfahan Reis gets the ship moving quickly eastward. The destination is Beit Castan, where a formidable naval base exists from which to summon reinforcements. You watch over the stern across the waters as you*

*depart, the calm of the Gulf's surface masking the fierce pandemonium within.*

It takes roughly a day to reach Beit Castan. From there, the PCs are released from their duty while the Navy assumes control of the situation. The PCs make a long trek back to Zeir-i-Zeif where they finally can bring back news of their journey. Once in the capital, they must choose whom to deliver the information to. Also, members of the Royal Navy must report to Hasan for their special mission.

For their reward to be received, PCs must choose one of the three factions to deliver the information and not tell the others. Each faction has their means to discern if the PCs have kept the information secret. If more than one party is brought the knowledge, all rewards are forfeit and the PCs receive nothing. Hopefully for them, this was abundantly clear when they were first approached.

Regardless of whom they deliver the information to, the PCs receive a reward for delivering Shallah safely to Sovorn's palace.

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 200 gp, Magic – 0

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 325 gp, Magic – 0

APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 450 gp, Magic – 0

APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 575 gp, Magic – 0

If the PCs wish to return the information to the Matron Sultana, read **Conclusion 1** plus the ending that suits them (If they have told no others, read **Ending 1a**; if they have told others, read **Ending 1b**)

If the PCs wish to return the information to the Sultan of Zeif and the Royal Navy, read **Conclusion 2** plus the ending that suits them (If they have told no others, read **Ending 2a**; if they have told others, read **Ending 2b**)

If the PCs wish to deliver the news to the Grim Vizier, read **Conclusion 3** plus the ending that suits them (If they have told no others, read **Ending 3a**; if they have told others, read **Ending 3b**).

**Note:** *If any member of the Navy completes the special mission by letting the Navy know who has the information, this does not invalidate bringing the info exclusively to the other factions and will not net the party a negative reward. Only if the member explains the nature of the information to another will it ruin the chances for rewards.*

If the PCs decide to withhold their information, read **Conclusion 4**.

Members of the Royal Navy of Zeif who participate in the secret mission also get *Conclusion 5*.

## Conclusion 1:

*You sit comfortably again at the Crimson Crescent. Each of you glances about, wondering who might be watching. The information you hold is apparently valuable; why else would three of the most powerful figures in Zeif be questing after it?*

*Confidant in your choice, you wait. It is not long before the woman approaches. She sits in a chair and stares out from her cloaked and covered face, those beautiful eyes piercing you like lances.*

*"What information do you bring?" she asks. You begin to tell her of the things you saw, the merfolk, their military, their political station among themselves and their neighbors: everything. The woman nods, taking the information in and committing it to memory.*

### Ending 1a:

*Afterwards, she nods. "You have done well, friends." She reaches from her cloak, she draws a small pouch and tosses it in front of you. It jingles marvelously with coin, and possibly other trinkets.*

*"The Matron Sultana will not forget your loyalty. Remember; we never had this meeting."*

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 100 gp, Magic – ring of lockpicking-(375 gp)

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 150 gp, Magic – ring of lockpicking-(375 gp)

APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 200 gp, Magic – ring of lockpicking-(375 gp), ring of filcher's friend-(208 gp)

APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 250 gp, Magic – ring of lockpicking-(375 gp), ring of filcher's friend-(208 gp)

### Ending 1b:

*Afterwards, she nods. "You have done well." There is a pause, before her magnificent eyes reach yours with a piercing gaze. "Yet, do you think us lame? Do you think us groggy and dull like orcs? You have leaked this information, and it is useless to us now."*

*Rising, she turns once more before departing. "The Matron Sultana will not forget this insult." Then, she departs.*

## Conclusion 2:

*Back at the Fortress of the Sea Lion, you await audience with Hasan Reis Hasbutan of the Royal Navy of Zeif. It is not long before you are ushered in, and the proud commodore meets you again.*

*"Greetings, friends. I am glad to see you returned safely home after knowing what has happened in the Gulf. Know that we are sending aid immediately to help the merfolk any way we can," he says.*

### Ending 2a:

*"Now, I presume you are here because you wish to collect your pay. However, I wish to know; have you completed the secondary objective of the mission. Have you news to report?"*

*The Tugamiral Reis listens intently as you divulge the political and military machinations of the merfolk's domain, and he takes notes as you do so. Once completed, he nods approval.*

*"You have done well in retrieving this information and keeping it secret. The Navy and the Sultan will not forget your service. As promised, a reward for you," he says, drawing a pouch and handing it to you.*

*"Again, you've done great service. I wish you well, and all Glory to the Sultan."*

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 100 gp, Magic – circlet of persuasion (375 gp)

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 150 gp, Magic - circlet of persuasion (375 gp)

APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 200 gp, Magic – badge of valor (83 gp), circlet of persuasion (375 gp), medal of gallantry (91 gp).

APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 250 gp, Magic – badge of valor (83 gp), circlet of persuasion (375 gp), medal of gallantry (91 gp).

### Ending 2b:

*"Now, I presume you are here because you wish to collect your pay. This I have." He hands you a small pouch with some coin in it. "However, you'll notice it lacks the secondary objective bonus."*

*He pauses a moment before continuing. "The information you carry is already out there. Our sources have discovered it leaked somewhere in the city. It is useless now. I don't know whether it was you or not who leaked it, but I cannot reward you for it. You should have been more secretive."*

*"However, the Sultan and the Navy still recognize your service, and may your future be bright with Istus' blessings. All Glory to the Sultan."*

### Conclusion 3:

*Wandering the streets of Zeir-i-Zeif, you wonder how you might deliver information to the Grim Vizier. He isn't exactly the most accessible person, and after a few days, you wonder if it's just a better idea to hand the info to another for a quicker reward. However, the choice is soon made for you.*

*You push your way through a crowd in a stuffed bazaar near the docks. Looking around, you begin to feel strange. You feel eyes on you, and you spin, glancing everywhere. All around you, Zeifans dart about, buying bread and milk, trading wares for wares. The strong smell of fish from a Dramidjian fish-mart assaults your nostrils.*

*"Look to the east," a voice says, seemingly in your head. You spin right, catching the glimpse of a hooded figure in the darkness of a fruit stand's canopy. Then, he is gone. You look east, where an alley exits the bazaar into a darkened street. Another figure darts into the shadows down the alley.*

*Approaching the alley, you glance cautiously down it. Taking one last look at the bazaar, you enter slowly. Your skin crawls as you feel watched and checked upon. Getting deeper, you still see no one.*

*Then, you feel heavy weights on your mind. Spinning about, the world becomes dizzying, and you feel blackness take over. You think you fall, but you never feel the ground hitting you.*

*"Tell me everything you know about the Merfolk," a voice says, echoing in your brain. It's a voice of darkness, raspy and death-like. It stings your mind as it punctures your thoughts.*

*Quickly, you recount your information, everything you know, so as to stop the burning as the force procures its rightful treasure from your thoughts. As soon as it began, it was over.*

#### Ending 3a:

*"You have done well. Go forth knowing that the Grim Vizier will remember this day long after you have died and gone to whatever deity you serve."*

*Awaking, you lie in the alley, weak, empty, and alone. A small chest lies nearby, pleasantly awaiting you.*

APL 2: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 100 gp, Magic – wand of false life (375 gp)

APL 4: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 150 gp, Magic - wand of false life (375 gp)

APL 6: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 200 gp, Magic – lesser metamagic rod of substitution (cold) (225 gp), wand of false life (375 gp)

APL 8: Loot – 0 gp, Coin – 250 gp, Magic – lesser metamagic rod of substitution (cold) (225 gp), wand of false life (375 gp)

#### Ending 3b:

*"It is as I suspected. You have leaked the information, and it is useless to me now! You have angered one far above your means today." You feel the metal of the necklace heat up and the flesh of your neck burns! The necklace then drops off of your body, leaving a permanent scar upon you! The pain is unimaginably intolerable and you sink into unconsciousness.*

*Awaking, you find yourself weak, empty and alone. The stinging sensation lingers, plaguing you still to this day.*

### Conclusion 4:

*Zeir-i-Zeif lived on as usual even as you held the information you possessed secret. Who could you possibly entrust with such comprehensive intelligence? No one, that was for sure. For today, you decide to remove yourself from the petty squabbling among the various factions which rule over the lives of Zeifans everywhere. For today, you make your own marginal victory against the oppressors.*

*You just wonder how long you can hold out.*

### Conclusion 5:

PCs who are members of the Royal Navy of Zeif may have brought some special information and even some items back as part of their secret mission. The success of this mission is measured in points, and for each item returned with, the PC gains points towards their goal. The breakdown is as follows:

#### Information:

- For convincing the party to deliver the information from the adventure to the Sultan

and the Navy and not the Grim Vizier or Matron Sultana, the PC gains 20 points.

- For each piece of information about the military brought back (hierarchy, mobilization times, and troop size), the PC gains 20 points.
- For each merfolk weapon or armor returned, the PC gains 10 points.

If the PC reaches 75 points, he gains the Favor of the Royal Navy. If he reaches 100 points, he gains the Favor *and* the Honor of the Purple Sun, a campaign medal for intelligence and espionage service.

### The End

## Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus role-playing) to each character.

### Encounter Four

Defeat the sea creature

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| APL 2 | 90 xp  |
| APL 4 | 150 xp |
| APL 6 | 210 xp |
| APL 8 | 270 xp |

### Encounter Six

Defeat the Undead Giants

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| APL 2 | 90 xp  |
| APL 4 | 150 xp |
| APL 6 | 210 xp |
| APL 8 | 270 xp |

### Encounter Seven

Escape the Palace

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| APL 2 | 60 xp |
| APL 4 | 60 xp |
| APL 6 | 60 xp |
| APL 8 | 60 xp |

### Encounter Eight

Defeat the sea creature...again

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| APL 2 | 120 xp |
|-------|--------|

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| APL 4 | 180 xp |
| APL 6 | 240 xp |
| APL 8 | 300 xp |

### Discretionary role-playing award

Based on Encounter 5

|       |        |
|-------|--------|
| APL 2 | 90 xp  |
| APL 4 | 135 xp |
| APL 6 | 180 xp |
| APL 8 | 225 xp |

### Total possible experience:

|       |         |
|-------|---------|
| APL 2 | 450 xp  |
| APL 4 | 675 xp  |
| APL 6 | 900 xp  |
| APL 8 | 1,25 xp |

## Treasure Summary

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*,

*analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic Items.

### Encounter Two

For bringing back Shallah to the Palace safely.

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 150 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 350 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 500 gp; M: 0 gp

### Encounter Six

APL 2: L: 4 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 4: L: 4 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 4 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 4 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

### Conclusion 1a:

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 100 gp; M: 375 gp - *ring of lockpicking*-(375 gp)

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 150 gp; M: 375 gp - *ring of lockpicking*-(375 gp)

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 503 gp - *ring of lockpicking*-(375 gp), *ring of filcher's friend*-(208 gp)

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 503 gp - *ring of lockpicking*-(375 gp), *ring of filcher's friend*-(208 gp)

### Conclusion 2a:

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 100 gp; M: 375 gp - *circlet of persuasion* (375 gp)

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 150 gp; M: 375 gp - *circlet of persuasion* (375 gp)

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 549 gp - *badge of valor* (83 gp), *circlet of persuasion* (375 gp), *medal of gallantry* (91 gp).

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 549 gp - *badge of valor* (83 gp), *circlet of persuasion* (375 gp), *medal of gallantry* (91 gp).

**Total Possible Treasure (variable depending on Conclusion chosen – the max gold however is on the AR)**

APL 2: L: 4 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 375 gp - Total: 629 gp

APL 4: L: 4 gp; C: 400 gp; M: 375 gp - Total: 779 gp

APL 6: L: 4 gp; C: 550 gp; M: 503-600 gp - Total: 1057-1154 gp

APL 8: L: 4 gp; C: 750 gp; M: 503-600 gp - Total: 1257-1354 gp

# Appendix One – NPCs and Monsters

## All APLs

### Encounter 7

**Merfolk Warrior:** Male Merfolk War 1; CR ½; Medium Humanoid (Aquatic); HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 5 ft, swim 50 ft; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather), touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, trident) or +2 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, trident) or +2 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SQ Amphibious, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim +9; Alertness.

*Possessions:* trident, merfolk heavy crossbow, leather armor, 20 merfolk bolts

Languages: Common and Aquan

**Merfolk Skeleton:** Male Undead Merfolk; CR 1/3; Medium Undead (Aquatic); HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +6; Spd 5 ft, swim 50 ft; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +2 leather, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, trident) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, trident) or +1 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); SQ

Immunity to cold, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 15, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +9; Improved Initiative

*Possessions:* trident, merfolk heavy crossbow, leather armor, 20 merfolk bolts

**Merfolk Zombie:** Male Undead Merfolk; CR ½; Medium Undead (Aquatic); HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 5 ft, swim 50 ft; AC 14 (+2 leather, +2 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8+3, trident) or +3 melee (1d6+3, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+3, trident) or +3 melee (1d6+1, slam); SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 11, Con - Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +10; Toughness

**Single Actions Only (Ex):** Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

*Possessions:* trident, merfolk heavy crossbow, leather armor, 20 merfolk bolts

## Encounter 6

**Ogre Merrow Skeleton:** CR 2; Large Giant Undead (Aquatic); HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +0; Spd 30 ft, swim 40 ft; AC 11 (-1 size, +2 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp +10; Atk +6 melee (2d6+7, Large spear) or +6 melee (1d6+5, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (2d6+7, Large spear) or +6 melee (1d6+5, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft/10 ft.; SQ Immunity to cold, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 21, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +13; Improved Initiative

*Possessions:* Large spear

## Encounter 8

**Large Shark Skeleton:** CR 2; Large Undead (Aquatic); HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +7; Spd swim 60 ft; AC 14 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft; SQ Immunity to cold, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 17, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +11; Improved Initiative

## Encounter 4

**Dire Barracuda:** CR 4; Large Animal (Aquatic); HD 8d8+16; hp 52; Init +2; Spd swim 80 ft; AC 17 (-1 size, +2 dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft; SA Sprint; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +6, Jump +29, Spot +6, Swim +12; Alertness, Iron Will, Run

*Sprint (Ex):* A dire barracuda can move up to three times its speed (240 feet) when making a charge.

## Encounter 6

**Troll (Scrag) Zombie:** CR 4; Large Undead (Aquatic); HD 12d12+3; hp 81; Init +1; Spd 20 ft, swim 40 ft; AC 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (1d6+7, claw) or

+12 melee (1d8+7, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+7, claw) or +12 melee (1d8+7); Space/Reach 10 ft/10 ft; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 25, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +15; Toughness

## Encounter 8

**Dire Barracuda Zombie:** CR 5; Large Undead (Aquatic); HD 16d12+3; hp 107; Init +1; Spd swim 80 ft; AC 19 (-1 size, +1 dex, +9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (1d8+5, bite) or +12 melee (1d8+5, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+5, bite) or +12 melee (1d8+5 slam); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 21, Dex 13, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +13; Toughness

## APL 6

### Encounter 4

**Ichthyosaur:** CR 6; Large Animal; HD 10d8+50; hp 95; Init +3; Spd swim 50 ft; AC 18 (-1 size, +3 dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +16; Atk +11 melee (1d8+7, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+7, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft; SQ Hold breath, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +9, Spot +10, Swim +13; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Swim-By Attack

*Hold Breath (Ex):* An ichthyosaur can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning. For a typical ichthyosaur, this is 120 rounds, or 12 minutes.

### Encounter 6

**Troll (Scrag) Zombies (2):** CR 4; Large Undead (Aquatic); HD 12d12+3; hp 81; Init +1; Spd 20 ft, swim

40 ft; AC 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +17; Atk +12 melee 1d6+7, claw) or +12 melee (1d8+7, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+7, claw) or +12 melee (1d8+7); Space/Reach 10 ft/10 ft.; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 25, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +15; Toughness

### Encounter 8

**Ichthyosaur, Skeleton:** CR 5; Large Undead; HD 10d12; hp 90; Init +8; Spd swim 50 ft; AC 15 (-1 size, +4 dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+7, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+7, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft; SQ Immunity to cold, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 19, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +13; Improved Initiative

**Encounter 4**

**Sea Cat, Advanced:** CR 8; Huge Magical Beast; HD 15d10+90; hp 172; Init +0; Spd 10 ft., swim 40 ft; AC 19 (-2 size, +11 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +15; Grp +32; Atk +22 melee (2d6+9, claw); Full Atk +22 melee (2d6+9, 2 claws) and +20 melee (3d6+4, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft/10 ft; SA Rend 3d6+13; SQ Darkvision 60', hold breath, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 28, Dex 10, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +12, Spot +12, Swim +16; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Multiattack

**Hold Breath (Ex):** A sea cat can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

**Encounter 6**

**Ocean Giant Skeleton:** CR 8; Huge Undead (Aquatic, Cold); HD 18d12; hp 117; Init +7; Spd 40 ft, swim 80 ft; AC 14 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +9; Grp +31; Atk +19 melee (4d6+21, Gargantuan trident) or +16 melee (1d10+7, tail slap) or +16 melee (1d6+7, slam) or +21 melee (1d8+14, claw); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (4d6+21, Gargantuan trident) and +16 melee (1d10+7, tail slap); or +21 melee (1d8+14, 2 claws) and +16 melee (1d10+7, tail slap); or +16 melee (1d6+7, 2 slams) and +16 melee (1d10+7, tail slap); Space/Reach 15 ft/15 ft.; SQ Immunity to cold, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 39, Dex 17, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +22; Improved Initiative

*Possessions:* Gargantuan trident

**Encounter 8**

**Sea Cat, Advanced, Skeletons (2):** CR 7; Huge Undead; HD 15d12; hp 97; Init +5; Spd 10 ft., swim 40 ft; AC 12 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +7; Grp +24; Atk +14 melee (1d8+9, claw); Full Atk +14 melee (1d8+9, 2 claws) and +9 melee (2d6+4, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft/10 ft; SQ Immunity to cold, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 28, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Swim +16; Improved Initiative

## New Feats

### **Swim-By Attack [General]**

#### ***Stormwrack***

You can attack in the middle of a fast pass by your opponent.

**Prerequisite:** Swim speed.

**Benefit:** When swimming, you can take a move action and another standard action (such as an attack) at any point during the move. You cannot take a second move action during a round when you make a swim-by attack.

**Normal:** Without this feat, you take a standard action either before or after your move, but not in the middle of your move

## New Items

### **Shell Armor, Medium Armor *Arms and Equipment Guide***

**Cost:** 25 gp

**Armor Bonus:** +3

**Max Dex Bonus:** +3

**Armor Check Penalty:** -2

**Arcane Spell Failure:** 20%

**Speed:** 20 ft./15 ft.

**Weight:** 20 lbs

This armor is created out of specially treated tortoise shells and more exotic sea life. The armormaking process softens the shells, making them far more pliable and likely to bend instead of shatter when struck. Shell armor includes a breastplate, shoulder guards, and even gauntlets created from smaller and smaller shells. Druids can wear shell armor without losing access to their spells or class features.

### **Elukian Clay, Special Material *Arms and Equipment Guide***

Although barely malleable in its natural state, this rough, gray stone can be shaped into weapons and armor in a process similar to sculpting. Also known as sea-stone, elukian clay is formed in part by seepage from the Elemental Plane of Water. It has a strong affinity to water, so those traveling in or over large bodies of water value it greatly. Items made from elukian clay do not count against the wearer's weight total when calculating armor check penalties on Swim checks.

## **Appendix Two: New Rules Items**

Although it can be shaped into a point, elukian clay does not hold an edge very well. Only piercing and bludgeoning weapons can be made from elukian clay. Armor and shields made from elukian clay have their armor check penalties increased by 1.

Once formed, an item made from elukian clay takes three days to harden. Items used before the hardening is complete are easily ruined; such items have 0 hardness and only one-tenth their normal hit points. Once dried, elukian clay items have a hardness of 10 and 30 hit points per inch of thickness.

Shaping elukian clay requires the craft (sculpture) skill.

Light Armor +1000 gp

Medium Armor +2000 gp

Heavy Armor +4000 gp

Other items +200 gp/lb

## New Monsters

### **Giant, Ocean**

#### ***Monster Manual II* and the *Monster Manual II* 3.5 Update Book**

**Huge Giant (Cold, Aquatic)**

**Hit Dice:** 18d8+162 (243 hp)

**Initiative:** +6

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), swim 80 ft.

**Armor Class:** 26 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +16 natural), touch 10, flat footed 24

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +13/+35

**Attack:** Gargantuan trident +25 melee (4d6+21) or rock +14 ranged (2d8+14)

**Full Attack:** Gargantuan trident +25/+20/+15 melee (4d6+21) and tail slap +20 melee (1d10+7); or 2 slams +25 melee (1d6+14) and tail slap +20 melee (1d10+7)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rock throwing

**Special Qualities:** Amphibious, blunt weapon immunity, immunity to cold, vulnerability to fire, darkvision 60 feet, landform, rock catching

**Saves:** Fort +20, Ref +8, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 39, Ref 15, Con 28, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 18

**Skills:** Diplomacy +6, Listen +16, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Swim +22

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Shot on the Run

**Environment:** Any Aquatic

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or family (3-8 plus 1-4 noncombatants plus 1 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> level cleric or sorcerer)

and 2-8 sea lions)

**Challenge Rating:** 19

**Treasure:** Double Standard

**Alignment:** Usually good

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** –

The noble ocean giants are deep-sea dwellers who delight in tossing the waves and the rich life of the underwater world. These usually peaceful creatures are nevertheless quick to anger when anyone finds fault with their ways. Ocean giants frequently live to be 600 years old.

The barrel-chested body of an ocean giant is powerfully built, and the face has an almost leonine quality. Coppery skin is complemented by flowing white hair streams out in waves as the giant swims. In natural form, an ocean giant has a fish-like tail like that of a merfolk, though the landform ability (see below) provides an alternate form in which the tail is replaced by legs. An ocean giant of either gender measures 16 feet in length and weighs more than 4000 pounds. On land, the typical ocean giant wears light clothing that is unlikely to impede swimming should that become necessary. Underwater, clothing is spurned except for a belt pouch to carry personal effects.

### Combat

When fighting on the surface or underwater, an ocean giant usually wields a massive trident and slap with their tails.

**Amphibious (Ex):** Although ocean giants have gills for breathing underwater, they can also breathe air and can survive indefinitely on land.

**Blunt Weapon Immunity (Ex):** An ocean giant takes no damage from bludgeoning weapons.

**Landform (Su):** This ability allows an ocean giant to assume the form of a Huge humanoid-shaped giant or return to its natural form at will. An ocean giant in landform is able to walk on land, but it has no tail attack. A change wrought by landform cannot be dispelled, nor does an ocean giant revert to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell, however, reveals the ocean giant's natural shape if it is in landform.

**Skills:** An ocean giant has a +8 racial bonus to any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## Nereid

### *Stormwrack*

**Medium Fey (Aquatic, Extraplanar)**

**Hit Dice:** 3d6+3 (13 hp)

**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 40 ft.

**Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 deflection), touch 16, flat footed 13

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+0

**Attack:** Touch +4 melee (drown) or dagger +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20)

**Full Attack:** Touch +4 melee (drown) or dagger +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Drown, spell-like abilities, *summon water elemental*

**Special Qualities:** Deflection, displacement, low-light vision, resistance to cold 10 and fire 10, shawl, speak with animals

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 9, Ref 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16

**Skills:** Escape Artist +9, Handle Animal +9, Hide +9 (+17 in water), Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +7, Ride +5, Spot +7, Survival +1 (+3 on other planes), Swim +7, Use Magic Device +9, Use Rope +3 (+5 involving bindings)

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** Temperate Aquatic

**Organization:** Solitary or splash (2-4 plus 1-2 octopi, squid or porpoises)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** No coins; 50% goods (metal or stone only); 50% items (no scrolls)

**Alignment:** Usually Chaotic Neutral

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +3

A graceful, nymph-like being rises from the water, draped in a flowing white shawl reminiscent of a cresting wave.

Nereids are retiring fey native to the Elemental Plane of Water. They resemble tritons and share a common ancestry, but unlike their cousins they have never moved permanently to the Material Plane. Nereids occasionally leave their home plane to explore Material Plane seas.

Tales speak of nereids as beautiful women who drown men with a kiss, but in fact they are extremely shy. A nereid is nearly impossible to detect in its element, with a shimmering body that is almost transparent. On the rare occasions that a nereid leaves the water, it

takes on a more solid-looking appearance, resembling a pale elf wearing a distinctive shawl.

Nereids are often found in the company of sea creatures and water elementals. They speak Aquan with voices that sound like the soft hiss of surf.

### Combat

A nereid relies on concealment and camouflage to avoid danger, and it does not attack unless in the most desperate circumstances (such as retrieving a stolen shawl). Nereids use their water magic to hold back attackers and summon elemental allies to assist them in combat.

**Drown (Su):** A nereid can make a special touch attack to try to fill an opponent's lungs with water. The opponent can resist the effect with a DC 16 Fortitude save. On a failed save, the opponent begins to drown (see Drowning on page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At will—*air breathing*\* (DC 16); 3/day—*control currents*\*; 1/day—*control water* (DC 19), *wall of ice* (DC 17). Caster level 10<sup>th</sup>. The save DCs are Charisma-based. \*New spells described in Chapter 6 (Stormwrack).

**Summon Water Elemental (Sp):** Once per day a nereid can attempt to summon 1d3 Small water elementals or a single Medium water elemental. The summoned water elementals remain for 1 hour or until slain. This ability is the equivalent of a 5<sup>th</sup> level spell.

**Deflection (Ex):** A nereid adds a Deflection bonus to AC equal to its Charisma bonus.

**Displacement (Su):** A nereid's shimmering form makes its true location difficult to surmise. A melee or ranged attack directed against it has a 50% miss chance unless the attacker can locate the nereid by some means other than sight. A *true seeing* effect allows the user to see the nereid's position, but *see invisibility* has no effect.

**Shawl (Su):** Every nereid is wrapped in a delicate shawl of seafoam white, to which its essence is bound. A nereid whose shawl is destroyed quickly fades and dies within 1 hour. Cruel individuals coerce the service of nereids by stealing their shawls, and a nereid so deprived will do everything in its power to regain the item.

A nereid's shawl can be taken while it is worn by using the disarm action (see page 155 of the *Player's Handbook*), though this is a difficult task. Treat the

shawl as a well-secured item, which means you must first pin the nereid before you can use the disarm action (and even then, the nereid gets a +4 bonus on its roll to resist the attempt).

**Speak with Animals (Su):** Nereids can speak with animals, though only simple concepts can be communicated (as the *speak with animals* spell).

**Skills:** Nereids have a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks while underwater because of their near transparency while submerged.

A nereid has a +8 racial bonus to any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

### Swim

#### Stormwrack

Transmutation [Water]

**Level:** Druid 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** 10 minutes/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** Yes (Harmless)

This spell gives the recipient a swim speed of 30 feet (although not the ability to breathe water or hold one's breath beyond normal limits). As long as the creature isn't carrying more than a light load, it can swim without making Swim checks. It also gains a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special actions or avoid hazards, though it still takes the normal penalty for weight carried (-1 per 5 pounds). The recipient can choose to take 10 on Swim checks, even if rushed or threatened, and can use the run action while swimming if it swims in a straight line.

If the creature is carrying more than a light load, it must make Swim checks to move (taking the normal penalty for weight carried, but all other benefits apply).

*Material Component:* A goldfish scale.

#### Swim, Mass

#### Stormwrack

Transmutation [Water]

**Level:** Druid 4

**Targets:** One creature/level, no two of which are more than 30 ft. apart.

The spell functions like *swim*, except that it affects multiple creatures.

## Appendix Three: DM's Aids

### What PCs may know about the Gulf of Ghayar:

Use the following guidelines to determine what any particular PC may know about the gulf and the region beneath it:

#### Knowledge (Geography)

DC 15: The gulf is a long channel, nearly 800 miles long from its southernmost point to the Jansibs, which mark its entry into the Dramidj Ocean. It lies along Zeif's western coast (the Bakhoury Coast), and is, like the Dramidj, quite warm.

DC 20: The gulf is quite shallow, averaging maybe a hundred feet across its breadth. Its deepest point is likely 200 feet down.

DC 25: Scarring it for about 650 miles is the Scar of Untold Depths, a great chasm that is exceptionally deep.

#### Knowledge (nature)

DC 15: The gulf is home to a vast array of sea life due to its warm temperature. Many tropical fish, sharks, manta rays, sea lions and jellyfish make their homes there. Of course, merfolk and aquatic elves make homes here as well.

DC 20: Magical creatures native here include certain dinosaurs (like the plesiosaur or the ichthyosaur) as well as ramfish, sea cats, dragon turtles and even some rare kraken or true dragons.

#### Knowledge (Local – VTF)

DC 15: The Bakhoury Coast is home to many pirates and has a strong naval presence. Besides that, merfolk live in the sea and make trade with members of the Mouqollad Consortium in Beit Castan and Nafiq.

DC 20: The pirate problem is so bad on the coast that the Sultan has elevated two beys in the area to deys, giving them more power and executive control over military and policing. This happened sometime after the coast was subjugated.

DC 25: The merfolk of the area are only recently allies, but have made great progress with people on land. They are even joining the Mouqollad Consortium and living in special air-filled grottos built by the Worthys of Mouqol.

#### Knowledge (Arcana)

DC 20: It is generally known that the Dramidj and the Gulf of Ghayar are unnaturally warm; it is believed great earth magic continually keeps their temperature up. The origins of this magic are older than time and completely unknown.

#### Knowledge (religion)

DC 15: The chief deity of the merfolk is Eadro, whom they believed first created the merfolk. His holy symbol is a spiral with aquatic motifs.

DC 20: Eadro still dominates merfolk religion, though Mouqol has made a surprising entrance into their lives. Many merfolk have turned to his worship and now do trade with the surface world.

### Underwater Combat Rules

Land based creatures have difficulty fighting underwater. To determine a character's detriment, consult the following table.

| Condition                  | Attack/Damage           |               |                              |               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|---------------|
|                            | Slashing or Bludgeoning | Tail          | Movement                     | Off Balance?* |
| <i>Freedom of movement</i> | normal/normal           | normal/normal | normal                       | No            |
| Has a swim speed           | -2/half                 | Normal        | normal                       | No            |
| Successful Swim check      | -2/half <sup>f</sup>    | -2/half       | quarter or half <sup>e</sup> | No            |
| Firm Footing <sup>3</sup>  | -2/half                 | -2/half       | half                         | No            |
| None of the above          | -2/half                 | -2/half       | normal                       | Yes           |

1. A creature without *freedom of movement* effects or a swim speed makes grapple checks underwater at a –2 penalty, but deals damage normally when grappling.
2. A successful Swim check lets a creature move one-quarter its speed as a move action or one-half its speed as a full-round action.
3. Creatures have firm footing when walking along the bottom, braced against a ship's hull, or the like. A creature can only walk along the bottom if it wears or carries enough to weigh itself down – at least 16 pounds for medium creatures, twice that for each size category larger than Medium, and half that for each size category smaller than Medium.
4. Creatures flailing about in the water (usually because they failed their Swim checks) have a hard time fighting effectively. An off-balance creature loses its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, and opponents gain a +2 bonus on attacks against it.

It is also important to remember the following points:

- Thrown weapons are ineffective underwater. Attacks with other ranged weapons take a –2 penalty on attack rolls for every 5 feet of water they pass through, in addition to normal penalties for range.
- Nonmagical fire (including alchemist's fire) does not burn underwater.
- Spells or spell-like effects with the fire descriptor are ineffective underwater unless the caster makes a Spellcraft check (DC 20 + spell level). If the check succeeds, the spell creates a bubble of steam instead of its usual fiery effect, but otherwise the spell works as described.
- A supernatural fire effect is ineffective underwater unless its description states otherwise.

## Player Handout 1 Retainer of the Sultan:

Effendi,

By virtue of your retaining to the Lord King, Glory of the West, Mohg Sultan Murad the Proud, you are officially required to serve His Glory on a mission of utmost importance. You are to report to Hasan Tugamiral Reis ibn Hasbutan al-Bakhoura at the Fortress of the Sea Lion at dawn. Failure to comply with these orders and to serve His Magnificence will be taken as a renouncement of your retaining and an act of treason.

Good day, and May peace be with you.

Pandhar Reis, Kapudan Pasha of the Royal Navy of Zeif

PS: Come prepared for a two-week journey at and undersea. We will supply a means to breathe.

## Player Handout 2 Loyalty to the Sultan:

Effendi,

As a loyal and tribute paying subject of His Magnificence, the Glory of the West, Mohg Sultan Murad the Proud, you are hereby officially requested to serve at His pleasure in a mission of utmost importance. You are to report to Hasan Tugamiral Reis ibn Hasbutan al-Bakhoura at the Fortress of the Sea Lion at dawn. Accepting this mission is a sign of true loyalty; accept if you wish to prove your loyalty once more to His Glory.

Good day, and May peace be with you.

Pandhar Reis, Kapudan Pasha of the Royal Navy of Zeif

PS: Come prepared for a two-week journey at and undersea. We will supply a means to breathe.

## Player Handout 3 All others:

Effendi,

You have officially been chosen by His Magnificence, the Glory of the West, Mohg Sultan Murad the Proud of Zeif to serve at His pleasure in a mission of utmost importance. If such glory at the will of His Magnificence is your desire, report to Hasan Tugamiral Reis ibn Hasbutan al-Bakhoura at the Fortress of the Sea Lion at dawn. Your actions in this matter will not be overlooked when His Glory recognizes loyal service.

Good day, and May peace be with you.

Pandhar Reis, Kapudan Pasha of the Royal Navy of Zeif

PS: Come prepared for a two-week journey at and undersea. We will supply a means to breathe.

## Player Handout Four: The Dream

Your dreams are different tonight. They start out normally, fancying subjects which had affected your life in one way or another over the past few days as usual. Yet somewhere among them, the dream becomes more vivid, more real. Everything is clear and tangible, like thick ooze. You are in a dark room, with a single lantern hanging by a wicked looking chain in the center of the room. The smell of death and dust surrounds you, and even the air feels heavy. No moisture is present.

Hidden in the shadows ahead, you see a chair of some sort, a throne. Its tall back reaches nearly to the ten-foot ceiling. A figure sits quietly, hunched and silent. Not even its breathing can be heard.

You approach, cautiously. Fear grips at your soul, seeming to emanate from the figure, yet you press on. The fear is so strong that it squeezes your heart. Standing near to him, you feel compelled to drop to your knees, and you do so. You can barely raise your head enough to see two pinpoints of red where the figure's eyes should be.

"I am the Grim Vizier, and I know of your mission" it says at last, the voice seeming not to come from its throat or even its body, but echoing in your head.

"Seek out information for me, and I can reward you greatly. You will be traveling to a realm of merfolk. The merfolk's domain is a secretive place, and I must know of it. The information is invaluable. Bring me information on its political strengths, its military strengths, anything you deem important. Bring it to me and no other, and I will reward you. Make the right choice, and you will not regret it. I have tremendous powers, and will easily detect if you have leaked the information to others. To help you along the path, please accept this humble offering of my sincerity" With that he holds out a necklace. Your hand moves up to grab it and the Vizier speaks one last time. "If you choose to do this, beware that you have sealed a covenant with me."

At then, the throne seemed distant, far away, as if the room had elongated to immeasurable lengths. The light faded, and you awoke in sweat and fear...

..but the dream echoed perfectly in your memory.

## Player's Handout Five

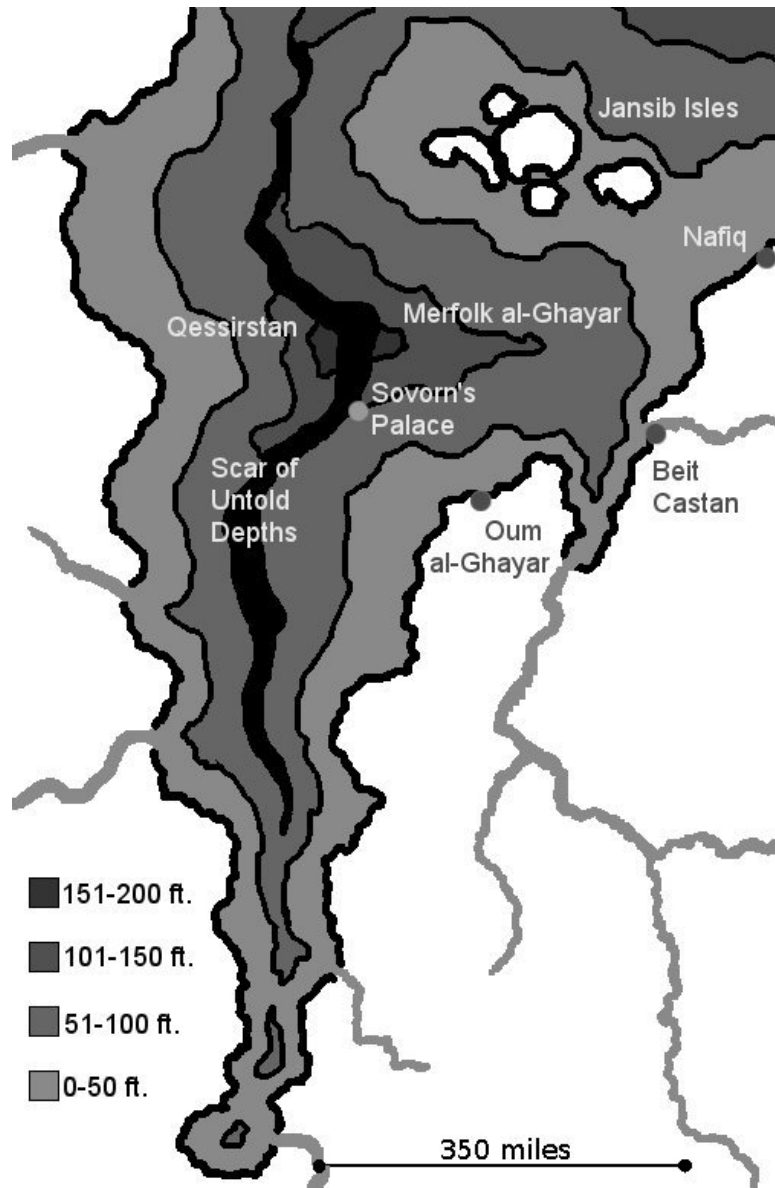
### Beneath the Gulf of Ghayar

West of Zeif lies the Gulf of Ghayar, a body of water dipping south from the Dramidj sea some eight hundred miles to its most southerly point. The gulf divides Zeif from its western neighbors, including the nations of Mur and Komal, and it is home to its own people as well, the Merfolk al-Ghayar and a nation of aquatic elves called Qessirstan. The gulf itself is roughly 400 miles wide at its greatest girth, and it is significantly shallower than the Dramidj Ocean, from which it extends. While it reaches depths of 200 feet at its deepest (save for the Scar of Untold Depths, see below), its average depth is generally only a hundred feet.

The Gulf is home to an abundance of aquatic life, including many species of fish, such as breeds of salmon, trout and sturgeon. The fishing trade would be prominent, but pirate activity and constant danger spewing from the Bakhoury Coast has limited its potential. Other notable fauna include dolphins, sea lions, sea cows, and sharks (tiger shark, great white, and even whale sharks). Some smaller whales make home in the Gulf during the summer, but most prefer the deeper ocean farther north. The warm waters help bring in many other creatures, including a host of crustaceans, tropical fish, as well as eels, stingrays and octopus. Magical creatures are present though rare, and some species include the chuul, ramfish and the odd dragon turtle. Some dinosaurs are even reputed to exist, but one has not been sighted or caught for years. Besides large forests of kelp and seaweed, the gulf is home to a vast number of coral reefs, making the world beneath it beautiful, colorful, and vibrant.

One of the biggest underwater landmarks of the Gulf is the Scar of Untold Depths, a six hundred foot long canyon dividing the seabed in two. The Scar descends further than even the merfolk and aquatic elves have bothered to chart, and dangerous creatures' lair below. Reported encounters with kraken and dragons strikes fear into aquatic society, but not so much as the reports of massive unidentified monsters that surface once a millennium to swallow underwater cities. The breadth of horror that lives in the Scar's deepest bowels remains unknown.

The merfolk of the Gulf are its largest society, inhabiting most of the larger (eastern) side of the Scar. The nation has a name in Aquan, though the surface dwellers simply refer to it collectively as Merfolk al-Ghayar (*the merfolk of Ghayar*), paying heed to the loose government and lack of rigid hierarchy, a stark contrast to the officiated lifestyle common in nations like Zeif. The merfolk live in an advanced tribal society, ruled over by a Sidi from a capital city in the depths of the Gulf, near the Scar. The grand Sidi of the merfolk divides his realm loosely among his Mer-Sheiks, a group of aristocrats numbering somewhere near a score. These sheiks build palaces from coral and bedrock to protect the



domain of the merfolk, though the race in general is quite content to co-exist with the life around them rather than rule over it. Were travelers to pass through the underwater domain frequently, many of them would not notice a society at all.

To the west lies the smaller nation of Qessirstan, a loose collective of three city-states of aquatic elves. Their population is low, though the elves are a well-known presence throughout the gulf, and they keep watch over a broad domain of land below the waves. The nation of Qessirstan is historically peaceful with the merfolk, though lately tensions have arisen due to some disputed territory to the south, which, among other things, holds some important resources. No act of forward aggression has occurred to date, though a silent threat has led both nations to quietly fear what might come next.

## Player Handout Six: Mission for the Royal Navy:

*"The Kapudan Pasha and the Sultan of Zeif are aware that there is more than one party interested in the information about the Merfolk's domain. It shall remain the choice of your party who to deliver the information to, should you find out any, though the Sultan laments any decision which does not bring the information to him and no other. We understand that though loyal to him, you work with free agents and we ask that you act as normal so as not to uncover this mission."*

*"First off, should your party choose to deliver information to someone other than the Sultan, we wish to know about it. If you bring word of who has this information back to Hasan Reis in Zeir-i-Zeif, the first part of your mission will be complete. However, there may be extra reward if you can convince the party to bring the Sultan this information exclusively."*

*"Second, the Navy wishes to gather more specific information on the Merfolk's military capabilities, so as better to understand our new allies. We ask that you bring back some extra information as well as some weaponry for us to study. What we need is as follows."*

- Military hierarchy of the merfolk, as in size of battalions, brigades, etc. and an ordering of ranks.
- Number of troops in Sovorn's palace, as well as estimates on total troops throughout the domain.
- Mobilization times for the troops.

*We wish to study the weaponry of the merfolk. Therefore we request that you bring us:*

- A merfolk trident.
- A merfolk crossbow (any type).
- A small handheld (light melee) weapon of any sort.
- Any merfolk light armor
- Any merfolk medium armor

*"Again, I must stress the secrecy of this mission. Your comrades cannot know of your goals. Depending on how much of the information and weaponry you bring home, there could be hefty rewards and recognition for your service. The Kapudan Pasha knows that you will serve the Navy and the Sultan well in this endeavor, and anxiously awaits your return. Do you have any questions?"*