

# RAZOR CAST™

Heart of the Razor



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# RAZOR COAST

## HEART OF THE RAZOR

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# RAZOR COAST™

## HEART OF THE RAZOR TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Angry Waters</i> .....	1
by Richard Pett	
<i>The Black Spot</i> .....	39
by Gary McBride	
<i>Jungle Fever</i> .....	73
by Owen K. C. Stephens	
<i>Sinful Whispers</i> .....	103
by Tom Knauss	



HEART OF THE RAZOR  
CHAPTER ONE

# ANGRY WATERS

by Richard Pett

*The Tulita elders remember the reign of Lakano Mua—the Red Misery—through the old chants passed down from generation to generation. The red dragon’s wings blotted out the sun for a hundred years, and his fire—and those of his children—reduced entire tribes to cinders . . .*

*Angry Waters is a 5th-7th level Razor Coast treasure hunt for taboo riches, featuring mad admirals, beautiful treacherous captains, forbidden islands, dread beasts, and dark magics best left undisturbed.*

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

### Mercy's Plight

Have you ever had one of those weeks where nothing seems to go right? Captain Mercy started the week with her crew, her dignity, and her ship, but ended it with just two of her crew and *the corpse*. The corpse that knew a great secret. The corpse that had better be worth the sacrifice: losing almost everything to get him, and to making sure only she and the last of her crew knew what it knew. Ah, the miracles of speak with the dead! How glad she was that she'd kept up her tithes with the church and that the potions came so cheap.

The corpse spoke of an incredible place, a City of Gold that lay in the caldera of a volcano. Soon, her probing questions located the volcano, but in truth she knew in her heart of hearts where it was already—the sea kingdom of an old enemy, Admiral Uriah Tame. The last time Mercy met him, she took his hand with her as a keepsake. They didn't get along too well after that as a result. She'd not been back to his sea kingdom in the Turmoil since, nor set foot in his crooked ship town of Armada.

Now she **must** return, because without Tame's permission, no vessel safely sails those seas. The question is, how? Could she sneak in? Fight her way in – and back out again? Could she delay for even a second? The answer to all those questions was no, and what use was it knowing about a vast treasure without being able to get her hands on it? Then it struck her, the idea: strangers.

She'd messed with adventurers before, of course. Some were shift, some kind, some so self-righteous they made her sick. But tall or short, fat or thin, barbarian or monk, they all had the same love: the love of a good adventure.

### The Dragon Cauls

*In places, the jagged remnants of the reign of Lakano Mua can be found, dating back to when the Tulita waged their war against the Red Misery. But mortal flesh could not fight the fury of dragons—not Lakano Mua or his foul children, the Red Swarm. Yet wars are made of many battles, some won, some lost. There were some so wise in unspeakable secrets that they brought the battle to the dragons. These elders made the spawn of Lakano Mua suffer for their heritage. They dragged them into terrible prisons, waking hells that crippled the children of the Red Misery. They called them the Dragon Cauls.*

*The elders fashioned but a few such cauls before they themselves were burned to cinders by the wrath of Lakano Mua. The cauls were merciless, lightless sheaths into which the dragons were drawn and left, alive and raving to suffer for their sins. To be sure the dragons' miseries would continue, the elders banished these prisons into remote places, and bound them with ever-watchful guards to ensure that no rescue would come. No mortal thief would*

*ever take the gold that shrouded and bound these wakeful sepulchres, and in time, many sank below the waves or were embraced into the wakeful world's womb once more. And within them, the dragon's screams went unheard as the madness of centuries of torpor overtook them.*

### The Corpse, and Mercy's Plan

Gideon and his shipmates only went to the place at the behest of their blessed mad captain, who'd anchored at a little-known speck and promptly swum away, raving, into the jungle beyond the coral. The place he'd fled to didn't even have a name, so they called it the Veiled Isle on account of its choking volcanic mists. Pursuing the insane captain proved fruitless, but Gideon and a handful of others became the first to spot the City of Gold on the island. Abandoning their captain—who in truth had already been eaten by terrible *some things* native to the isle—they rushed back to their ship to find it gone, scuttled. The creature that caused the destruction soon returned, and the remaining crew scattered in terror. Gideon somehow escaped in a row boat, but eventually fell to starvation before his body was found by the crew of Obed the Liar. His ship's vicar spoke to the dead body and so the tale of the City of Gold was learned. Sadly, fate herself pursued Obed's crew at that time, and Captain Mercy caught them – a captain they had betrayed. The battle burned long and bloody, and by its end both ships sank. Mercy learned of the corpse and its tale, and took the body ashore with her and her dwindling crew.

Gideon was not the only survivor. Another man at the edge of starvation had been rescued...the secret, it seemed, would soon become common knowledge.

Mercy began her search that morning, and soon she had adventurers in her sight. She knew they had to be tough, because the corpse had told her what guarded the site: four-armed white apes. She knew their type from old.

The adventurers she spied seemed to fit the bill, and a few discreet questions gave her all the information she needed. They had reputations, but not too great that they couldn't be betrayed if she needed to, and not so powerful that she couldn't defend herself if need be. They'd do perfectly, and if the City of Gold was all it was cracked up to be, there might even be enough plunder to go around. This would be Captain Mercy's last great adventure, and by its end, she'd be rich enough to retire into a life of luxury on her own island paradise.

She knows the adventurers could betray her, but she knows they won't, because if they do, they'll never know the location of the city. She knows they could betray her when they get there, but she knows they won't, because if they try, then she knows she and her crew can handle them. She knows they could use magical trickery to get to the island, but she trusts no wizards—she's met their kind before, and learned long ago not to trust them. Besides, she can imagine a lot of gold, and in her mind, she'll need a ship to take it away.

She wants to slip straight by Tame, sack the island, and then vanish into the night. Then—and only then—she might send him a little letter about her experiences...

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

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The characters are approached by Captain Mercy who offers them a deal: a share in a great treasure from a city of gold. The problem is, the island is in the waters of a sea kingdom ruled by an old enemy of hers, Admiral Tame—a brute with a reputation for eating human flesh. Mercy has few enough friends that she can count them on the fingers of a one-handed pirate, and regrettably, none of those friends are anywhere close. She has a plan, however. She enlists the characters to act as a front in order to get her ship access to the waters around the Veiled Isle. On it stands the city which, she is sure, has enough gold for them all. If it doesn't, they can argue about that later. A terrible tribe of four-armed, albino gorillas—the fabled girallons—inhabits the island, and she feels in her bones that it may take a fight to sack the City of Gold. No matter. Just a small complication.

Joining her small crew, the characters enter the sea kingdom of the Turmoil. They must pay homage to its ruler, Admiral Tame, who has some devilish way of knowing which vessels pass his borders and has a nasty habit of sinking first and asking questions later.

The characters meet Tame on an island made of ships called the Armada. They find it difficult to obtain his permission to sail on and must impress the hard-to-reach, mad ruler to do so. Tame is no fool, however, and unless the characters tread carefully they may pique his interest *too* much, only to find later in the adventure that he is checking up on them.

They may also, of course, betray their guide to him.

Once past the ruler, the ship sails to its location, the Veiled Isle. This foreboding locale teems with girallons ruled by the Pale Queen, a girallon vampire who resents intruders greatly. The girallons are not the only inhabitants of the Veiled Isle, and the characters must battle many creatures before setting eyes upon the City of Gold.

Ransacking the isle, the characters learn that its heart holds an incredible treasure—four faces of solid gold that each weighs two hundred pounds. What they do not know is that removing the faces breaks the magic holding an insane child of Lakano Mua in its prison, an act that fractures the isle and unleashes a terror from ancient times.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

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This adventure has a very open start and could, in essence, commence at any port on the entire Razor Coast or

lands elsewhere. The adventure begins with the characters approached by an increasingly desperate Captain Mercy, who bears her potentially life-changing knowledge with a heavy heart. Who else might know the secret of the City of Gold? How can she enter the heavily patrolled waters of the Turmoil and risk being eaten by her old enemy Admiral Tame? And what of the creatures that her 'guide' Gideon has seen? Can she fit an entire city of gold into her hold and, if not, how long might sacking it take?

Mercy has lost her crew, her ship, and her muscle. She has not, however, lost her wits—and she intends to steal victory from the jaws of defeat, retire, and live a life of ease on an island somewhere.

## Introducing Captain Mercy

Captain Mercy leaves her crew and her trio of hounds on board her new ship, the *Capricious*, while she seeks out the characters. She can make her approach as you see fit; however, characters talking to her notice she is agitated.

Mercy's offer to the characters is simple: she is aware of a considerable treasure at a location in an area of the Razor Sea known as the Turmoil. Her problem is that the Turmoil is patrolled by ships loyal (if pirates can display loyalty – perhaps it is fear driving these dogs) to the local pirate lord Admiral Uriah Tame, a terrifying tyrant and dictator with a penchant for eating guests toward whom he is ill disposed. Sadly, the last time they met, Captain Mercy and the Admiral squabbled, during which the Admiral lost his left hand. Captain Mercy could risk venturing into the Turmoil without the Admiral's say so; however, the Admiral has some devilish way of communicating with his ships and that would involve fighting every ship she met.

As the ransacking of the treasure may take time, Mercy has hit upon another plan. The Admiral resides in a floating town made up of salvaged booty ships known as Armada. Admiral Tame has a notoriously short attention span, and is easily bored. Conversely, he is also easily amused—and amusing the Admiral is a sure way to allow safe and unhindered passage anywhere in the Turmoil.

As Captain Mercy has a new ship, she suggests that the characters and her remaining crew join forces and head to Armada. Once there, the characters—who by their reputation have led colorful lives—can secure the patronage of Admiral Tame while Mercy and her crew remain safely out of sight.

Once at liberty to explore the seas of the Turmoil they can head for the treasure (the location of which remains a mystery to any guests aboard), and as a reward for getting her safely into the area and making her rich, she offers to split any treasure 50/50.

Mercy has formulated her tactics as well as she can. She knows that the Veiled Isle is not even a name on the map and that to reach it, it is necessary to navigate a course



via other unnamed isles, an act only the best sailor could achieve. She knows the characters could try to force her hand, but if they do so the deal is at an end and she would have no choice but to violently dissolve the partnership. She knows tricky magic-users could cast *charm* spells, but she has a tricky wizard of her own and, again, any cast spell terminates the agreement. She also knows that the characters could vanish once they reach the isle—but they couldn't vanish far enough, and one day she'd catch them. She knows her plan is risky, but in her own mind she has no choice but to hire muscle that is suitably motivated to risk death to get at the treasure. If she must, she'll reveal that the treasure she is after is a city of gold, but she'll tell as little as she possibly can.

Mercy is in a hurry. She gives the characters 12 hours to make up their minds, otherwise she begins a search for other allies. In this situation, the adventure could take a further twist; perhaps the characters decide to follow Captain Mercy and her new allies, or betray her to Admiral Tame. This is an open-ended adventure with many possible ramifications. If your players surprise you, run with it if you can. The only certainty in the Razor Coast is that no one can be trusted...

### Captain Mercy Gossip

ROLL	INFORMATION
1-5	Mercy has a reputation for sticking to her word, whether that be a bargain or a threat.
6-9	A captain with many enemies, Mercy is known to treat her crew fairly but not be too fussy about their pasts.
10	Mercy's ship, the <i>Barnacled Claw</i> , was recently sunk in a sea battle with Captain Obed the Liar. Mercy has paid off the families of her crew the pension promised and rumor has it she has purchased a new ship, the <i>Capricious</i> , very recently.

Her stance betrays her confidence. Her features are a little too manly for beauty, but she bears herself with grace, strength, and wit. Her body has been hardened by work; her skin shows the subtle signs of a life at sea, her hands the scarring of countless storms. She's wrapped in a long wax coat, beneath which several weapons are visible. Her red hair is held in a ponytail, above which is a dark fur tricorne with a huge peacock feather pierced into it.

**Captain Mercy (Thf4/Ftr4):** HP 43; AC 7[12]; Atk +2 *scimitar* (1d6+2), +1 *punching dagger* (1d4+1) or heavy crossbow (1d6+1); **Move** 9; **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 9/1,100; **Special:** backstab (x2), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 88%, Traps/Tasks 30%, Hear 4 in 6, Hide 25%, Silent 35%, Locks 25%.

**Equipment:** heavy long wax coat (treat as leather armor), beaver fur tricorne hat worth 45gp with a peacock feather, +2 *scimitar*, +1 *punching dagger*, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, dagger held in soft leather sheath in coat pocket, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of extra-healing*, silver ring set with a small emerald worth 350gp, churchwarden pipe, pouch of foul smelling dark tobacco, flint and steel, key to cabin, 101 gp, 35pp, mummified male left hand in leather thong about neck (this is Admiral Tame's hand from their last meeting).

**Tactics:** Mercy has not lived this long by being reckless. She never enters combat blindly, and always tries to make sure she has a good way out. She prefers to stay at the edges of combat with her crossbow, but is not averse to entering the thick of things, provided her invisibility potion is at hand. She tries to flank whenever possible, never getting sucked into fighting two opponents and fleeing if

### TRICKY CUSTOMERS

Not every villain has a barbed tail, eats human flesh, or lusts for dominion over all life. Captain Mercy commences the adventure obsessed with finding the City of Gold. Her motives beyond that are merely practical; from what she has learned the characters are useful, but not beyond her talents. They are, in essence, the toughest mercenaries she is comfortable with. The use of mind-reading spells at this stage is not likely to reveal anything beyond the already-outlined plan of getting to the city and seeing just how much treasure there is.

In this adventure, duplicity is at the heart of events, and the characters themselves may be tempted by odds or offers to switch loyalties or go it alone. However, throughout the adventure are various opportunities for the characters to create a bond between themselves and Mercy's dubious crew. Each of these is marked in the **Bonding Points** section at the end of this adventure. Should the characters reach the climax of the adventure with 12 or more bonding points, Mercy does not betray them and honors her bargain. This gives the Referee an opportunity to develop her and her crew as allies of the characters in the future.

Assign other points as you see fit; for example, a character taking a blow to stop an attack upon Captain Mercy should receive a bonding point. You should also consider deducting such points as needed. If, for example, the characters frequently communicate and whisper in a group, clearly trying to make plans in secret, deduct a point. You may ultimately decide that the character's actions have automatically alienated Mercy (if they attack her openly for example) or earned her friendship (say by raising her or her crewmembers from the dead).

it happens. Mercy knows that it's smart to be a coward on occasion. If she's clearly overpowered she may back down from combat immediately, regroup, and attack again - even on another day if necessary. She is very loyal to her remaining crew, feeling responsible for the deaths of others. She never flees without them if she can possibly help it.

## The Capricious

The *Capricious* is a battered, aging, single-masted sailing ship Captain Mercy purchased only yesterday for 3,200 gp. Although seaworthy, she shows her travels; her hull is barnacle-encrusted and her sails a little ragged. Characters quickly realize that while structurally sound, the ship may struggle in heavy storms.

### C1. MAIN DECK

A mast rises 40 feet above the deck, and a ragged crimson sail depicting a masked woman hangs limply above. Two ballistae are mounted on the hull, one each to the port and starboard toward the bow. Next to each ballista is a wooden crate containing 24 bolts. The main deck has been scrubbed clean, her boards almost white with use of bleach. A metal hatch gives access to the hold below.

### C2. TOP DECK

Again, the boards of this deck are almost white. The ship's helm has been cleverly designed to represent a many-faced hydra. The space beneath is piled with ship's timbers, old tar, and coarse rope.

### C3. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Captain Mercy keeps her cabin locked during the day, and has gone to the trouble of purchasing a superior lock (-20% to open locks rolls) for the door. Beyond the door, a cramped but well-appointed cabin carved with angelic figures whispering into the ears of devils. There is a small cot and a kneehole desk. Incongruously, an iron maiden stands by the desk. The two stern windows are swollen shut.

### Setup

Captain Mercy's **hounds** are kept locked up during the day and allowed to wander the decks at night.

**Retch Hounds (3):** HD 3+2; HP 21; 12, 16; AC 5[14]; Atk bite (1d8); **Move** 18; **Save** 14; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** breath weapon (1/round, 10 ft. cone, 2d6 damage, save for half), stench (30 ft. radius). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**During Combat:** Though they have little loyalty to Mercy, they are aware that she feeds them and punishes them. They only betray her or her crew if they are very badly injured (hp reduced below 3). The hounds lead with their breath weapon and then rush into attack, trying to concentrate on single foes.

## The Iron Maiden

**Gideon Habb** is one of two sailors who have seen the City of Gold and "escaped" to tell the tale. In Gideon's case, the tale was told after he was dead. Gideon's story is detailed in the background of this adventure. He has seen the island (**Areas V4 and V4.1**), then walked along the ridge to **V13** and **V14** before crossing the Caldera Lake (**V15**) to the City of Gold (**V16**). These locations are detailed in **Part Two** of this adventure.

Presently, his bloated pale body is held in brine in the watertight iron maiden. The iron maiden itself depicts a bloated man held in the grip of a permanent wide-mouthed scream. A rusting metal hatch on top opens to allow torturers to speak to their victims, and Captain Mercy still uses this when she questions Gideon. She is indifferent to the fact that the corpse is kept in an iron maiden and does not believe he is suffering, although when questioned he does occasionally moan. Mercy obtained the maiden for a good price and it serves to keep the 'guide' in fair condition.

The iron maiden, salt water, and corpse weigh a combined 400 lbs.

Should the brine be drained, or the body removed, the stench of the corpse causes nausea in all those within the cabin (save or -1 to hit for 1 hour).

### Additional Treasure

The kneehole desk contains a set of accurate sea charts worth 200 gp, a small jar of saffron worth 100 gp, and 316 gp in a leather sack. The bed has a punching dagger hidden just behind the crude headboard.

### C4. HAPPY SILAS

Silas' cramped cabin is filled with jars, oils, and ointments.

**Silas** is more selfish than loyal, but admires Captain Mercy and some of her methods. She is not ruthless enough for him, but has saved him enough times to command his respect. He dresses to blend in and look unimportant.

**Happy Silas, Halfling (Assn6):** HP 23; AC 6[13]; Atk dagger (1d4 + poison); **Move** 12; **Save** 10; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 6/120; **Special:** backstab (x2), +2 save vs. traps, +4 save vs. magic, +1 to hit with missile weapons, thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 88%, Traps/Tasks 35%, Hear 4 in 6, Hide 35%, Silent 45%, Locks 35%.

**Equipment:** +1 leather armor, poacher's coat with hooks and many pockets, 4 poisoned daggers, 4 extra doses of poison (save or die), *potion of invisibility*, *potion of extra-healing*, lucky sloth toe, silver hunter's flask worth 75gp filled with rum, a few pieces of hard tack and ship's biscuit, 21 gp, three clay pipes, a bear testicle pouch of very dark tobacco, flint and tinder, 15 ft. of cord.

**Tactics:** Silas is a nasty bastard who always attempts to find cover before combat begins to enable a sneaky attack or backstab. The halfling tries to twist any fight to his own favor — using his small size, working with the other crew to gain an advantage, and not hesitating to use poison. No fool, Silas knows that it is better to be a live prisoner than a corpse. He attempts to flee when reduced to 10 hit points or less, and if subsequently injured always surrenders, knowing that revenge is a sweet dish that he has served cold before.

### Treasure

The jars contain two doses of normal poison, and a couple of Silas's own concoctions: six doses of blackadder venom (save at –1 or die), and a dose of nitharrit (save or fall asleep for 1 hour). He keeps six small centipedes and a trio of medium spiders in jars.

### C5. MORDECAI'S ROOM

This tiny chamber is almost completely filled by a small cot.

**Mordecai** is fiercely loyal to Mercy. Her friends are his friends, her enemies are his. Mordecai has very narrow, mean looking eyes. He likes to be mysterious, and is a man of few words.

**Mordecai Lucien Shortstone (Ftr1/MU7):** HP 31; AC 9[10]; Atk +1 *dagger* (1d4+1) or *dart* x3 (1d3); Move 12; Save 9; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** +2 vs. spells, spells (4/3/2/1).

**Spells:** 1st—*charm person*, *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *read magic*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *phantasmal force* x2; 3rd—*fireball*, *hold person*; 4th—*wall of fire*.

**Equipment:** red fez, bright blue cape fixed with a gold hasp worth 30gp, +1 *dagger*, 6 darts, *wand of fireballs*, *potion of healing*, 100 gp in a rather effeminate purse, ridiculously thick leather belt with skull buckle, lucky monkey's paw.

## A QUESTION OF CREW

Unless the characters have a sailing background, there isn't enough crew aboard the *Capricious* to sail her. A sailing vessel runs optimally with 20 crewmembers but can sail with less. Counting the three survivors, another 7 crewmembers are needed to sail the ship, although once below that number movement becomes challenging. Don't get too hung up on crew; their function here is as background figures. Crewmembers are easy to find if needed, but characters with sailing skills do add a further measure of desirability as allies.

**Tactics:** Once engaged in any fray, Mordecai leads with his most powerful spells, using *magic missile* or *charm person* on any fighters and *hold person* on any obvious spellcasters. He then adjusts his casting as appropriate. Mordecai knows his weaknesses, and always attempts to escape when he falls below 15 hit points, saving his *invisibility* for just such a purpose.

### C6. SPARE ROOM

This chamber is presently being used to store food and water; there is enough for a person to live for six months on both, if they aren't too fussy.

### C7. EMPTY CABIN

This cabin has berths for up to 8 additional crewmembers in extremely cramped quarters.

### C8. THE HOLD

The hold is fairly bare. Two old ballistae are propped near the door; they are damaged, but can be repaired. A rather mangy ship's cat lurks in the hold and has made a bed in a gap near the prow where it is about to give birth to kittens. A metal grill gives access to the deck, 10 feet above the hold.

## LOCATING THE CITY OF GOLD — THE DIY VERSION

The characters may try to charm Mercy, or use *speak with the dead* on her guest. Remember that the Veiled Isle actually has no name, and Mercy and Gideon are guessing its location based on a series of linking islands that are also little more than specks on even the most detailed charts. Without Mercy, finding the isle is none too easy.

Halgrin's Rest



Witch's  
Teeth



X Armada



Isle of  
Grey Whispers

Veiled Isle



N

W

E

S

Miles



## PART ONE

# THE TURMOIL

The triangle of seas that are formed between Halgrin's Rest, the Isle of Grey Mists, and the Witch's Teeth are a source of valuable plunder and is frequently the subject of battles to claim dominion. The area is known amongst pirates and depicted on some older sea charts as the Turmoil. Strange noises are heard from deep below the ocean, curious ochre lights occasionally dance beneath ships, and on rare occasions, whole shoals of fish and other creatures have been seen floating dead on the surface of the waters. Some attribute this to a creature said to protect the grave of Hairgrip known as the Forlorn, others espouse that the area is cursed. The more learned members of the Lodge put events down to deep-sea volcanoes throwing out poison gas and lava from far below.

The Lodge has little interest in such petty affairs and, so long as their ships pass unmolested, are happy to turn a blind eye to the occasional atrocity. The present master of the Turmoil is the self-styled Admiral Uriah Tame, who operates from a flotsam town known locally as the Armada.

The Turmoil is shown on the area map provided.

## UNSEEN

It is a well-known secret that Tame uses some form of invisible guardians to patrol his waters. Tame never reveals the true nature of this system, and the three people that have revealed it have been eaten in stews with cauliflower florets and carrots.

Admiral Tame patrols Turmoil not only with half a dozen sailing ships (one of which may appear near the end of this adventure and which is detailed further in **Part Three**) but also his Unseen. The Unseen are air elementals who are loaned to traders and who generally fly about the masts of those vessels. When another vessel approaches in the Turmoil, the Unseen fly over to investigate. If no elemental is found, the Unseen immediately flies back to the Armada to report it. A ship is dispatched and seeks out the enemy vessel, guided by the Unseen. If that ship is sunk, others are summoned from the Admiral's fleet as required.

Once a ship leaves the Turmoil, the Unseen return to the Armada. The Unseen are not curious, and simply remain with a ship unless specifically instructed otherwise by the Admiral or any of his followers (who are so few that the Unseen recognize them individually).

In this way, Admiral Tame is able to keep reasonable control over his sea kingdom. Lodge vessels are not subject to this control; their movements are noted and announced by Lodge agent Bartholomew Lickspittle who resides at the Armada.

## THE JOURNEY

As the adventure has a flexible starting point, details of the journey to the Armada are left for the Referee to decide. The written adventure continues as the characters approach the Armada. Remember, however, that the Razor Sea is a dangerous place, and an early combat may help to whet the players' appetites. It may also help to gauge the relative strengths of the NPCs.

As the town slips into view, Captain Mercy and her crew vanish below decks. She uses this time to remind the characters about the treasure, and that betraying her is a very bad idea as the characters will not only never learn the city's location, but also earn her enmity. She gives the characters as much information as they wish about the Admiral and his bizarre council, while emphasizing his notorious temper and short attention span. What you tell the players from the areas below is left for you to decide, Mercy wishes only to ensure that the *Capricious* is unmolested in the Turmoil and to move on quickly.

## ARMADA

Sagging in the ocean here is a floating town. The corpses of a score of vessels are lashed together to form a platform upon which grasps a series of buildings, which rise in timber cliffs from the sea below. Gulls call from this artificial stack, and figures can be seen going about their daily business high above. Half a dozen sailing ships are pulled up to this anarchic structure, which culminates high above in a timber steeple crowned with a great lantern.

In truth, this is not the original Armada, nor is it the second, nor even the third. It enjoys the dubious honor of being the fourth such settlement made of broken ships and booty, the previous three having been (in order) sunk, burnt to cinders, and sunk. Armada is a madhouse where almost a thousand souls are crammed together in claustrophobic perpetual motion as the seas outside slowly churn their susurrus rhythm.

The town has the atmosphere of perpetual party and hangover, and yet functions somehow in this remote location. Traders, fishermen, merchants and rogues trade side by side in the narrow and stifling timber streets within a town where space is literally at a premium. Trade works well in the place, as passing ships constantly feed Armada's hunger for goods. Prices within, however, are steep, with goods commanding quadruple their prices from the *Swords and Wizardry Complete* rulebook. Food, drink, and lodging come at an even higher price, with six to ten times the base price not unheard of.

The Council Chamber, where Admiral Tame passes

his law, is the distillation of all things Armada. Any local is happy to point out its location, with a warning not to draw attention. The walls are littered with those who drew attention to themselves, and lived—or more often died—regretting it. The chamber has more than a score of entrances, all of which are guarded by the **Admiral's Watch**, who are very quick to attack. They are, however, generally drunk, drugged, distracted, or a combination of all three, and do little to stop the heave of visitors moving in and out of the chaotic chamber.

**Admiral's Watch, Female Lizardmen:** HD 2+1; HP 12 each; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3) or +1 spear (1d6+1), bite (1d8); Move 6 (swim 12); Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** breathe underwater.

**Equipment:** +1 spear, bead and gold necklaces (50 gp).

As the characters approach the Council Chamber, the noise and activity increases. When the characters arrive at the chamber, read or paraphrase the following description:

Beyond the semi-naked lizardman guards, a crush of life wells inside a crowded chamber. The stench of sweat mingles with that of rum and cooking meat, and a feeling of carnival and perpetual, slightly dizzying motion intoxicates those within. A dozen naked female lizardman dancers writhe to the sounds of a beating drum and strange fluting pipes, hypnotizing several lecherous looking males of various races. At the chamber's far side a large tight crowd has gathered about someone, or something, that is clearly holding their rapt attention. Hanging just above the center of this crowd is the bloated, wan corpse of a man hung by his feet by wire. He is not the only victim, for the walls of this chamber have a revolting decoration. The bodies of many victims—some clearly very much alive—are gibbeted, hanged, and crucified from the walls and ceiling of this unsettling chamber. A truly enormous door stands firmly shut by the far wall.

## MEETING ADMIRAL URIAH TAME

The chaotic Council Chamber is a seething mass of visitors, many of whom seek the Admiral's attention. The patronage and admiration of the Admiral is useful, and necessary, to anyone who wishes to pass these waters unmolested. At any given time, at least a dozen people try to grab his attention. Sometimes this annoys him. The Admiral carouses in the chamber from dusk until dawn, after which time he is taken to his bedchamber on a bier by a dozen of his harem, watched by a further dozen of his guards, until he

sobers up and makes his way down again the day after.

Crushing through the throng, drawing the Admiral's attention, and being allowed to speak is not an easy thing to achieve, and the characters may initially struggle to try to do so. The chamber, however, has several perpetual guests who are all too eager to help, if the fee is right. The chamber also has many distractions, from drinking to gambling to fighting to copulating, all for the right price.

## Admiral Tame Gossip

CHECK	GATHERED INFORMATION
1-5	The Admiral knows every ship that passes through the Turmoil. Those who pass through without his permission are attacked, killed, sunk, and then brutally questioned.
6-10	Admiral Tame lost his hand to a cowardly, double-crossing no good pirate called Captain Mercy. He'd give his back teeth to anyone who brought Mercy to him, that and their weight in gold.
11-14	There are many tricks to getting the Admiral's attention. Some try to sneak through the crowd and then use their oratorical skills to do so; others have flown in using magic, or used other spells to appear magically by his side. Just don't make a fool of yourself, or you'll end up decorating the chamber.
15-17	The Admiral is partial to magic, and more easily amused by it. However, his present jester (the thirty-third) is a powerful spellcaster and the Admiral does get bored very easily by repetition.
18-19	Many have tried to lavish gifts upon the Admiral to curry his favor. He is partial to valuable gifts and both touched and amused by fine performances, but he loves magic items above all else. These he covets greatly.
20	Boring the Admiral is dangerous. He punishes boredom with his Chastener, a giant wielding a huge scythe.

**Admiral Uriah Tame** sits at the center of the crowd, surrounded by desperate merchants, dancers, his harem, and countless others. The general crush makes access to him difficult and occasionally dangerous, as those eager to talk are happy to fight for the privilege. The vast figure is swathed in unflattering silks and invariably either smokes various substances through a long pipe, imbibes rum from a huge 2-pint flagon, or is being pleased by one of his harem. The Admiral has lost his left hand, but makes no effort to conceal his ugly stump. He often curses the name of Captain Mercy, promising those who deliver her to him their weight in gold for doing so.

Tame has a taste for human flesh, extolling the virtues of human cracklings as the finest feast known to man. The unhinged Admiral is prone to bursts of violent temper, choking laughter, and strange poetry. He has a habit of often consulting his adviser **Brod**—the wan corpse hung up by his feet—asking if he is bored or not, and, where the answer is yes, punishing those responsible. Occasionally, Tame has been known to open and close Brod's mouth to mimic

talking, and to make him nod or shake his head.

**Admiral Uriah Tame (Ftr9):** HP 67; AC 8[11]; Atk 2 fists (1d3+1); Move 12; Save 6; AL N; CL/XP 9/1,100; **Special:** +1 to damage from high strength, +1 to AC from high dexterity.

**Equipment:** layers of filthy silk garments.

Gaining access to the hulking leader is a matter of stealth, strength, or cunning. However, such access is invariably short lived as others crush or push forward, fights break out, and the Admiral once again turns his attentions to a lizardly lovely. Each character should be allowed a chance roughly every hour to approach the Admiral. Attempts that are more frequent risk angering him, which causes him to react as detailed below.

Characters with thieving skills that make a successful Hide check should be able to duck and dodge through the crowd and access the Admiral for long enough to carry out a short conversation, proffer a gift or cast a spell. A character making an Open Doors check can also gain such access, as can anyone who flies, or uses spells such as *dimension door* or *teleport*. However, after the first such success, subsequent identical attempts fail as the bored Admiral ignores the repetitive action. You should also allow access automatically for excellent roleplaying—for example if the characters come up with a particularly cunning plan.

## BETRAYING MERCY

The adventure deliberately puts the characters in a position where betrayal could be tempting. Although their knowledge of the City of Gold may be sketchy, the characters may already have deduced what is in the iron maiden on board the ship, and they may even have communicated with it. Admiral Tame hates Captain Mercy and promises the weight in gold of anyone who brings her to him. He honors that promise (a pound of gold is equal to 50 gp, so a character weighing 180 lbs. would receive 9,000 gp). Weight is weight *naked*.

Betrayal is a complex thing, however, for Tame is certain to enjoy his prisoner, and soon learns what she knows about the City of Gold. 1d4+4 days after her capture, he learns about the City of Gold and dispatches three ships and the Chastener to secure it. One such ship is detailed in **Part Three** of the adventure; use this as a template for the others.

Betrayal also has other consequences. Does Captain Mercy have distant family, loyal friends, or cohorts? The adventure commences here assuming any such allies are far away—however, in time they may learn about the betrayal and come looking for vengeance. Furthermore, it is not long before word of the character's actions becomes common knowledge throughout the Razor Coast.

You may also wish to have the characters encounter aggressive NPCs or engage in games of skill, gambling, or strength while within the Council Chamber. If you and your players enjoy more roleplaying, enhance these details in the adventure; otherwise, keep the action to a level you enjoy.

Casting a spell at the Admiral is a very risky endeavor. If he succeeds a save against, for example, *charm person*, he immediately punishes the transgressor by calling the Chastener (see below) and then dismisses the character and her friends from the Council Chamber. Within 12 hours, Tame has forgotten who the characters are and has gone back to carousing, allowing a quick return.

## THE CHASTENER

Those who fail checks to impress the Admiral, repeat actions, or otherwise bore him are punished. Occasionally, transgressors are let off with a verbal lashing, a mocking laugh, or are dismissed from his sight for a day. Such mild punishments are rare, however, and left for you to decide when they are appropriate. His favorite and most common punishment involves calling the Chastener from a huge door at the back of the Council Chamber. If called for, the **Chastener**—a female sea giant—pulls open the great doors of the Council Chamber and enters, a huge scythe in each hand. A drummer within the chamber beats a steady rhythm which grows faster over the course of half a minute (5 rounds) before stopping, at which point (unless either protagonist is dead) the Admiral calls out, “Enough!” and dismisses the Chastener before turning his attention to another distraction.

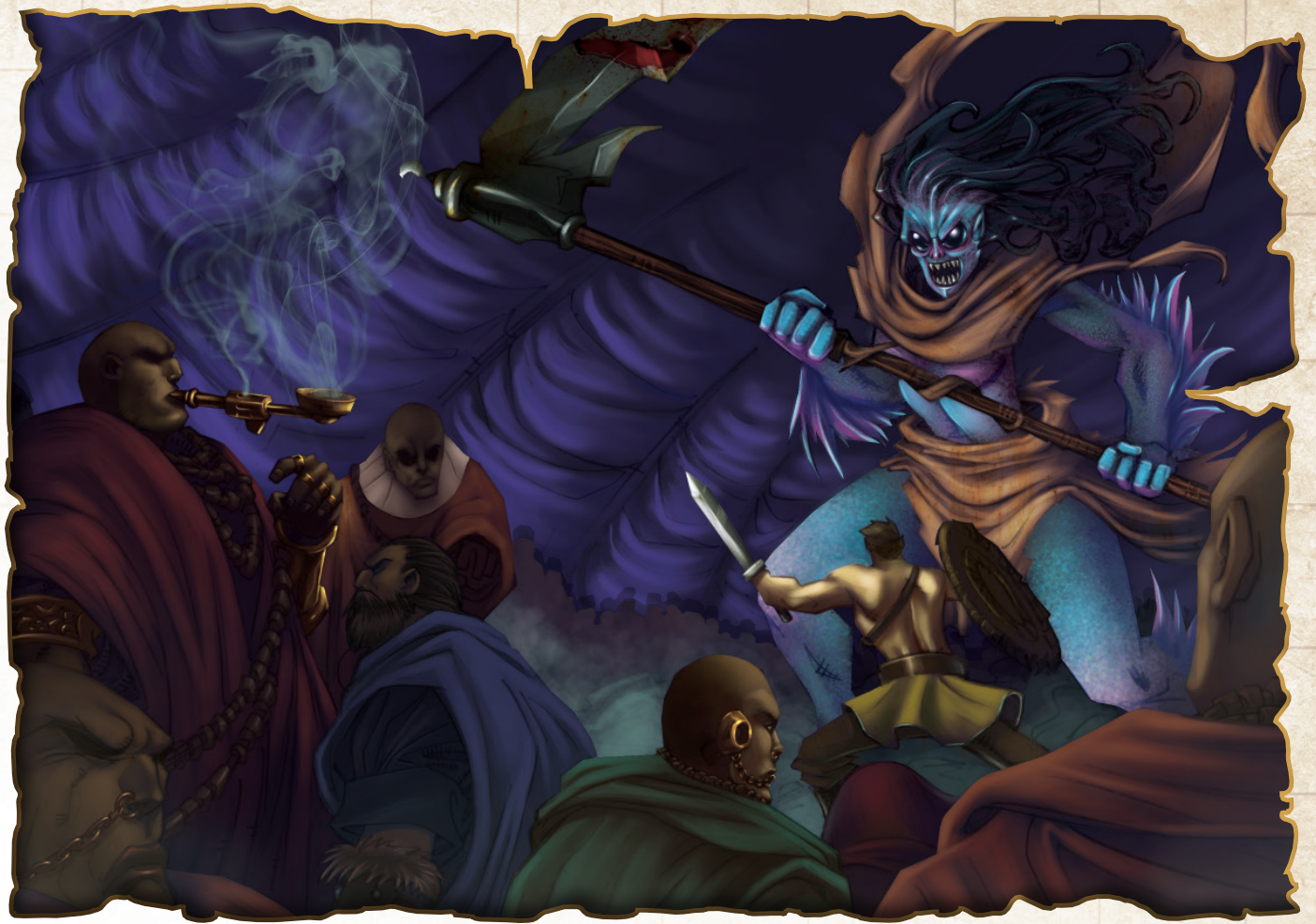
**The Chastener, Female Sea Giant:** HD 14 +1d6 points; HP 72; AC 2[17]; Atk scythe (6d6); Move 15; Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 15/2,300. **Special:** hurl boulders, magical abilities (*control water*–5/day; increase pressure 10 ft. radius for 5 rounds, opponents take 1d8 damage; move freely in water). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Equipment:** 2 scythes.

**Tactics:** The Chastener is not subtle; she swings her scythe with reckless abandon, a huge grin fixed upon her wide-eyed face. The Chastener returns to her lair behind the great door if reduced to half her hit points or less. If subsequently called to fight during the next 24 hours, she flees again when she takes a further 25 points of damage.

## Further Developments

Killing the Chastener is a dangerous move for the characters. Deprived of his beloved tormentor and slightly fearful of both his vulnerability and the characters, Admiral Tame broods upon his loss, falling into torpor for 1d4 days, after which time his grief turns to anger. If the characters are still within the Armada at this time, the Referee should handle a confrontation as seems appropriate; otherwise, Tame dispatches three ships brimming with pirates and weapons to avenge his loss.



## Befriending and Impressing Admiral Tame

If the characters succeed in impressing the Admiral, he gathers them together as his new best friends, dismissing the other rabble and indulging his new friends in whatever way he can. Having a friend like Tame may be more trouble than it's worth. However, if you and your players enjoy troubling roleplay then use this section as much as you wish, remembering that Tame is a violent, cannibalistic psychopath. The characters must also be careful not to pique his interest too much, or they may find themselves followed. Tame, however, happily grants the characters free passage through the Turmoil, instructing his operatives to loan the characters one of his Unseen to join the character's ship's mast immediately.

## SUSPICIOUS MINDS

Admiral Tame is no fool, and despite being inundated with flatterers, can spot an anxious face when he sees one.

If the characters are not too careful, they find themselves with a further unwanted encounter in the adventure as Tame dispatches a ship to 'check out' what the anxious visitors are up to. This ship, the *Stalker*, follows the characters ship just beyond the horizon using a trio of Unseen, who are dispatched at regular intervals to follow the characters' ship. The *Stalker* uses the air elementals to spy on the character's ship and, unless the characters take appropriate precautions, arrives at the Veiled Isle 5 days after the *Capricious*, or at a point the Referee deems appropriate.



## PART TWO:

# THE VEILED ISLE

How the characters reach the isle and whether or not that journey is interrupted by encounters is left to the Referee. This version of the adventure simply assumes the characters reach the place unhindered; they are, after all, going to have enough trouble once they get there. The Referee may wish to spice up the journey with encounters—with a sahuagin war-band, a roving dragon turtle, or some other menace with big pointy teeth.

As the characters approach the isle, they find it wreathed in the mists that give it its name. Read or paraphrase the following description when they are within sight:

Mists cling to the isle like a mother cradling her young babe, yet even from a mile or more away the unmistakable scent of brimstone carries on the breeze. Through the mist looms an impenetrable jungle, the tall trees gripped by thick undergrowth. In one place, a grey peak emerges; in another, a dark brooding line of smoke rises. Anchored at rest by the edge of the island is an unwelcome sight: a sailing ship.

The unwelcome sail belongs to the *Greedy Gull* (see Area V1), a second treasure seeker who has heard of the City of Gold.

## Veiled Isle Features

The Veiled Isle is a tropical volcanic island whose caldera houses the slowly rising fragment of the City of Gold (Area V16). Unless otherwise noted, the island is covered in thick jungle. Trees are massive, the undergrowth heavy, and visibility is poor. Unless noted in the text, the area is trackless (one-quarter movement). Where cliffs are indicated, these vary between 500 and 750 feet in height. Unless following the ridge (Area V6), cliff hexes require twice the amount of effort to cross (Movement 1/2). A failure doubles the time taken to cross the hex, and failure by 5 or more results in a fall (1d12x10 feet). The terrain setbacks are cumulative, so that characters climbing a jungle cliff hex move at an eighth their standard move (meaning those with Movement 12 hike 1.5 miles per day). A group with a character that fails a climb check by 4 therefore takes almost 6 hours to cross such a hex.

The isle's sulfurous mist is like fog. Spells such as control winds disperse this mist for a period of 1d6 hours. Although acrid and smelling heavily of brimstone, the fog is otherwise harmless. It is, however, ever-present.

Curious ruins lie shattered in some parts of the jungle, and in particular the Cliff Temple (Area V10). Characters examining these ruins identify them as Tulitan.

By day the jungle is noisy; by night it is a cacophony, as insects scream into the darkness, clouds of bats swoop, and the girallons emerge.

The isle has remained unexplored because of its inhabitants. A large group of girallons — grown more cruel and intelligent from proximity to the volcano's dark magics — infests the isle, and while several are detailed in this adventure, not all of them are accounted for in the text. You may use these other girallons as reinforcements if the characters are having an easy time, or a threat by proximity if they are having a tough adventure. Veiled Island girallon calls are particularly unsettling; they are a bestial mixture of animal cries mingled with barely discernible human words, almost all of which have been learnt from suffering people in the last moments of their lives. Use this chilling language as a tool as you wish.

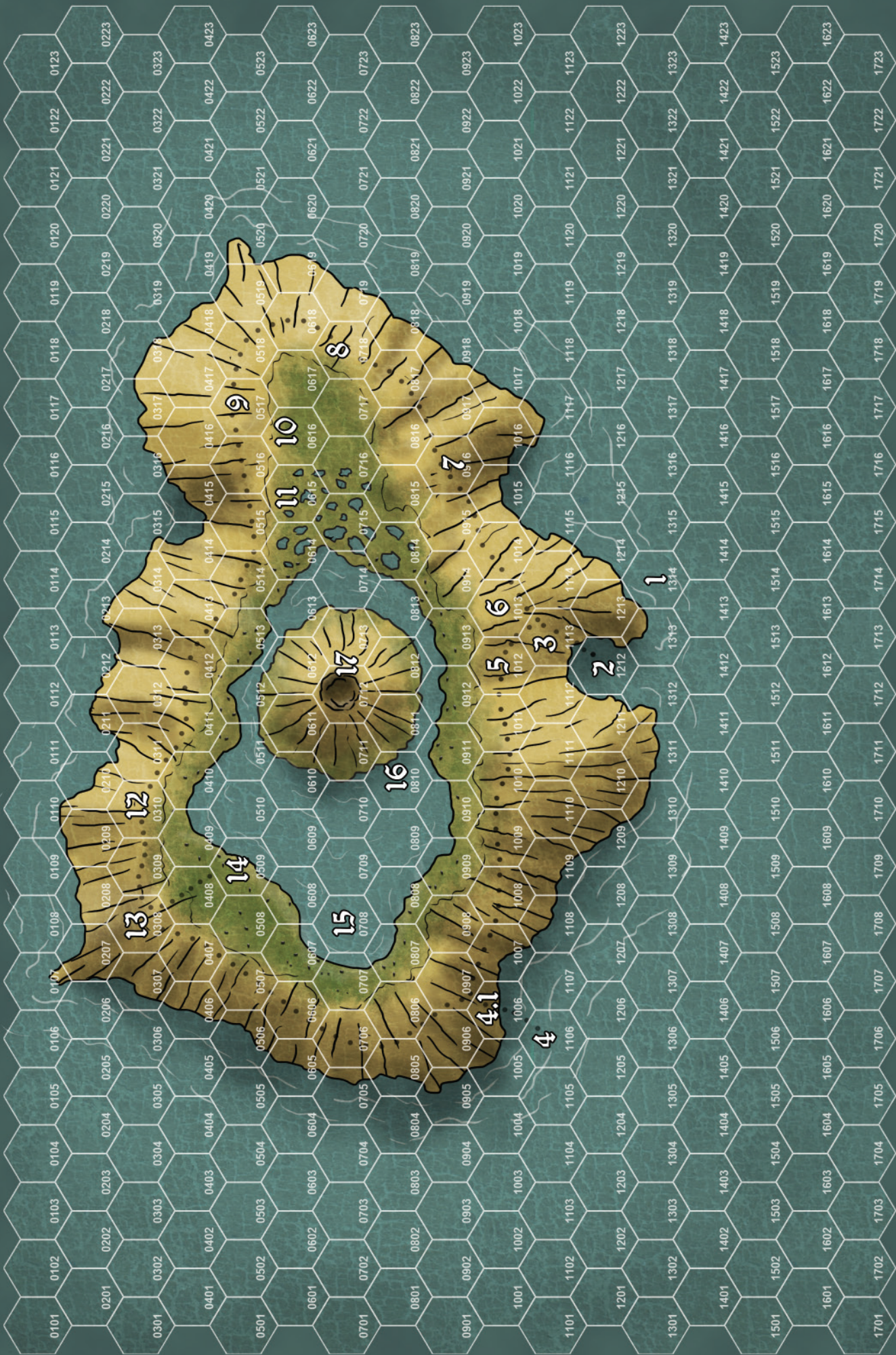
The girallons of the Veiled Island are more intelligent than the normal types of girallon, and this intelligence has manifested itself in three noticeable ways: Firstly, in cruelty; they are far crueler than their more aggressive kin and delight in pulling the arms and legs off prisoners before eating them, for example.

Secondly, the girallons have become rudimentarily self-sufficient; breeding greenskin orcs (see *The Tome of Horrors Complete*) for “food and fun”, fathering a bestial and twisted species of half-orc girallons as a result.

Finally, the Veiled Isle girallons have developed a rudimentary intelligence for construction; their edifices are crude, and generally consist of objects such as totems, carvings and arranged stones. In each case, the effect is always the same: to warn enemies of what happens to those who come to the isle—with references to suffering, people being eaten alive, and suffering unspeakable bestial sexual practices—and to pay homage to something—a shapeless white form they are terrified of.

**Girallon:** HD 5; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; ; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Tactics:** Unless otherwise noted, the girallons rush into combat screaming, always approaching by climbing any surrounding trees as both a means of securing cover and as an easy escape route. They tend to initially attack en masse for a single round and then flee back into the trees. The girallons like to swarm an enemy, injure it, and then rush back to lick their wounds before screaming again and coming in for more. With downed enemies, the girallons are unspeakably cruel, reverting to baser instincts and either pulling limbs from fallen foes or dragging them away to copulate with and/or further torment them. If more than a third are killed or more than half their number are seriously injured, (having taken 50% damage), the girallons rush back into the trees and head back to their lairs, or to the Tribal Grounds (V9) if their lair has been taken. The girallons can



# The Veiled Isle

1 Flex - 1 Mile

heal at twice their normal rate by feasting upon a curious fruit that is commonly found on the isle. They are cunningly aware of this fact, and that the shock and retreat tactic they use wears down opponents over a period of up to several days if necessary, but always ends in a feast. Druid or ranger characters may be able to identify its properties when seeing it, at the Referee's discretion; it requires 3 hours of searching to locate enough for 4 people for a day.

## The Pale Queen

The Veiled Isle girallons worship a 'living god' in their art and construction, the **Pale Queen**. Detailed further in this adventure, the Pale Queen is a girallon vampire who occasionally communicates with her brethren (particularly after the arrival of strangers, for example). Pay careful attention to the tactics listed in her stat block, as a cunning use of the Pale Queen can transform a simple exploration of the jungle into a memorable kill-or-be-killed adventure. The tactics listed are the author's recommendations, but each Referee should use their skills to tailor the war of attrition between the characters and the Pale Queen to the needs of their group.

## VI. THE UNWELCOME SAIL

Gideon wasn't the only survivor.

A second man escaped the girallons on the Veiled Isle via a simple raft. Exhausted and delirious, he was rescued by the crew of the *Greedy Gull*, a treasure hunter under the command of Captain H'ongr Hy'y'yth ii' Smiles, the Greed of the Razor Coast, a female lizardman who likes to eat live rats.

The survivor, Archibald Roxby, did not live long under the care of Captain Smiles, but before dying he revealed a few details about the Veiled Isle, including its location. Specifically, he shared that at its heart had risen a City of Gold, that it was haunted by some terrible white phantom that came screaming in the night, and that during a final confrontation their ship—the *Brine Breath*—caught fire and sank (see **Area V4** for further details). Smiles immediately set sail for the Armada, where she reacquainted herself with her old friend and lover Admiral Tame, who eagerly granted her passage throughout Turmoil after receiving very satisfactory payment.

Since arriving, however, things have gone bad for the crew of the *Greedy Gull*. Initially, they hacked a path through the jungle (**Area V2**), which took some time, before arriving at the ridge of the Caldera. Smiles took three of her crew with her to seek the City of Gold, but the landing party was harassed by girallons, who slew Smiles' three crewmembers. Lost, she staggered her way down into the caldera and somehow found her way onto the shore of the Caldera Lake (**Area V15**) where she glimpsed the City of Gold just as dusk fell. Smiles was assailed time and time again during the night by the Pale Queen but managed to keep her at bay. At dawn, she resolved to return to her ship and come back in force.

## AND SO, THE CHARACTERS ARRIVE...

A terrible enemy that — so far at least — they have been unable to match besets the *Greedy Gull*. Into this stormy situation arrive the characters, and in many ways the choices here are very open. Do the characters keep their arrival secret and spy on the *Greedy Gull* to see what is happening? Do they openly approach and either parley or attack?

Captain Smiles is neutral in the strictest sense of the word. She is keen to ensure that everything nice that can happen to Captain Smiles does—every little luxury, every indulgence, every whim. Everything else is irrelevant. Above all, however, she's not stupid, nor is she static. Leaving the characters to one side, the Captain intends to go back to the City of Gold and ransack it. If left to her own devices she takes Dubb and six of her crew and heads off into the isle. This option gives you several possibilities: does the crew simply vanish, to turn up in bits at some future point when the characters face the Pale Queen? Does a single demented member of the crew suddenly appear before the characters, raving about the Pale Queen, having seen all his crewmates torn limb from limb? Or does the crew return as vampire spawn, pale shadows of their former selves?

The Pale Queen by herself is more than a match for the crew, but if she suspects herself slightly at risk, she appears with four girallons to attack. The outcome is all too predictable. Captain Smiles and her crew simply do not have enough abilities to overcome the Pale Queen and, unless the characters intervene, they are destined to die horribly.

Smiles is suspicious of everyone, and the arrival of a second ship is likely to make her even more paranoid. However, she may try to appeal to the characters' sense of justice by asking for their help. In this event, the characters' arrival announces to the Pale Queen that more enemies are here to upset her, and she changes her tactics from open attack to stalking the ships and removing the crews one by one.

Open combat between the characters and Smiles and her crew is also possible. If Captain Mercy is around, she certainly does not intend to share her wealth with any other partners. Do not get too hung up with the details of the second ship. The *Greedy Gull* and its crew are here primarily—from the Referee's perspective—to show the players just how powerful an enemy they are dealing with, and are therefore expendable flotsam, to be dispensed with in as colorful and gruesome a way as you wish.

Her return was noticed by girallons, who were now busily setting up a watch on the Caldera Ridge (**Area V6**). They attacked the returning captain, who managed to wound three girallons and drive them away before returning to her ship and, in a frenzy of greed, prepare to return to the caldera. For the past three nights, however, Smiles and her crew have been beset by the Pale Queen. Intermittently the Queen makes off with a crewmember, whose screams echo across the isle all night. Once this took place at the Bay of Jeopardy (**V2**), and the rest of the time on board the *Greedy Gull* itself. Last night the Pale Queen came again, and this time tore one of the crew apart with her claws. The crew are now on the edge of mutiny, only kept from fleeing by Smiles' iron will and the presence of her fearful disciplinarian and number one, Demented Dubb, a crazed dwarf whose party trick is to stick knives into her skin for decoration.

## THE GREEDY GULL

This two-masted sailing ship has a broad hull and a high aft castle. Her sail depicts a monstrously bloated gull with an unpleasantly human expression of hunger on its face. Two rowboats are tied to the rear of the ship, and a trio of ballistae is visible on deck.

### GI. DECK

The ballistae are each loaded, and have a leather sheath with a dozen other bolts ready for use nearby. A large water butt containing 11 gallons of fresh(ish) water is lashed to the mast and a silver cup (worth 25 gp) is chained to the tap at its base for use. A sliding iron grill moves on rails to give access to both holds below from the deck (each deck is approximately 10 feet apart), with a metal hook fixing the grill in place during travel. The rowboats are twelve feet long and have small sails as well as oars. Each can hold 6 man-sized passengers at a push.

### Setup

The entire crew is detailed here for ease of use.

#### Captain Smiles

This lizardman has an elongated, almost crocodile mouth, which draws back in a wide grin. Several of her teeth are gold, while a platinum piercing of significant size sticks through her lower jaw. She wears a long dark cloak over elegant clothes, with high stiletto boots. Her hat is broad brimmed and dark blue, with a shark tooth thrust through it.

**Captain H'ongr Hy'y'yth ii' Smiles, the Greed of the Razor Coast, Lizardman Female (Ftr5):** HP 30; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 claws (1d3) or +1 *trident of fish command* (1d6+1) or jav-

elin (1d6), bite (1d8); **Move** 6 (swim 12); **Save** 16; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** breathe underwater.

**Equipment:** +2 *leather armor*, broad brimmed hat set with a shark tooth set in a silver mount worth 125gp, +1 *trident of fish command* (see the **Appendix**), 4 javelins, 3 *potions of healing*, *potion of invulnerability*, platinum jaw ring worth 300gp.

**Tactics:** The captain is careful to ensure that by night the ballistae are each crewed and loaded. Three of the crew take four hour watches to keep an eye out. In the event of other attacks, Smiles is careful to attack from cover, aware that her crew are quite good at ranged combat and have Dubb's fireballs to fall back on. In combat, Smiles prefers to use her javelins, and only enters melee combat against individuals. If surrounded, she flees to a safer position. If an opponent falls into the water, she commands the **giant gulper eel** (see below) that follows the vessel to attack. Very cautious, Smiles wants to parley, not die. If reduced to 15 hit points or less she flees to lick her wounds, if overpowered and caught she suggests to her attackers that she is worth more ransomed to her friends at Port Shaw than she is worth dead. How that plot develops is left to the Referee's discretion.

#### Demented Dubb

Naked save for a long kilt, this female dwarf has shaved all her body hair and replaced it with henna tattoos depicting dwarves mutilating sharks.

**Demented Dubb, Female Dwarf (Ftr6):** HP 41; AC 5[14]; **Atk** +1 *warhammer* (1d4+2) or heavy crossbow (1d6+1); **Move** 6; **Save** 10; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400. **Special:** darkvision, +4 on saves vs. magic, stone sense.

**Equipment:** *bracers of defense* 5[14], belt made from baboon tails, +1 *warhammer*, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *necklace of firebaubles*, mummified monkey head with seven silver hatpins thrust into it worth 25 gp each, sloth toe necklace.

**Tactics:** Dubb throws fireballs if it is even marginally safe to do so, or if ordered to by Captain Smiles. When engaged in melee combat, Dubb charges into the fray screaming furiously as soon as possible. Dubb does not wish to die and retreats if reduced to 15 hp, but if cornered she fights to the death, and she will protect her beloved Captain Smiles with her life.

**Crew Members, Pirates (12) (Ftr4):** HP 21 (x4), 17, 20, 15, 10, 9, 12 (x3); AC 7 [12]; **Atk** cutlass (1d6) or shortbow x2 (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 12; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 4/120. **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, cutlass, shortbow, 20 arrows, 2d6gp value in oddments, personal effects and coins.

**Tactics:** The crew of the *Greedy Gull* fights cautiously, preferring ballista combat or other ranged tactics over hand-to-hand engagement. They will act to save their own skin as often as possible, and will flee or surrender and beg

to join any conquering crew if reduced to 50% hp or fewer.

**Gulper Eel:** HD 6; HP 32; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (1d8); Move 0 (swim 9); Save 11; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** swallow whole. See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Notes:** The gulper eel follows the *Greedy Gull* by way of a combination of being *charmed* and fed. It is visible to anyone inspecting the waters near the boat.

**Tactics:** The gulper is a brutish opponent, and simply attacks anything that moves that falls into the water near it. It swims away when reduced to 10 hp or less, but remains within 100 feet of the *Gull*.

## G2. AFT CASTLE

Rising some fifteen feet above the deck below, the aft castle houses the ship's helm; a fine object set with a silver bloated gull. Immediately next to this is a fine mahogany desk. The castle has a dozen 50-foot lengths of rope with grapnels, a barrel of tar, a gangplank, and the controls for the anchor, which is presently lowered.

### Treasure

The silver gull set in the ship's helm is worth 100 gp, but must be carefully removed—a Traps/Tasks check is required to accomplish this without ruining it and halving its value. The mahogany desk is worth 50 gp and contains a spyglass and a fine set of nautical maps of the Razor Coast area worth 350 gp.

## G3. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

More of a boudoir than a cabin, this chamber is intoxicated in rich scents. A small cabin bed lies directly beneath the rear windows of the vessel.

**Trap:** The Captain's door is locked with an average lock, and only use of the correct key temporarily disables the trap. If the trap is sprung, a hail of arrows fires, striking everyone within 20ft for 2d6 damage (save for half).

### Treasure

The various perfumes within the chamber are worth 350 gp in total. The bed has a pair of cupboards built underneath, which have a fine array of noble clothing worth 100 gp. A false base conceals an unlocked chest containing a bag of platinum coins (129 pp), and a small foxtail purse containing 3 very fine golden yellow topazes worth 500 gp each.

## G4. ARMORY

This cramped chamber also contains Dubb's cramped dirty cot. The walls are lined with shelves and racks for weapons. There are twenty spears, four barrels of oil, a box containing three hundred arrows, a dozen torches, a coil of one hundred feet of rope, three suits of leather armor, six shields, and a cutlass bent into a knot.

## G5. HOLD

The crowded hold doubles as a sleeping area, with a dozen hammocks stowed away during the day. The hold contains a large pile of wood, a small iron stove, two 8-gallon barrels of fresh water, an 8 gallon barrel of spiced rum, 18 weeks of salt beef, flint and tinder, saws, hammers, crowbars and spare planks, a sewing kit, and a dozen metal plates and spoons.

## G6. LOW HOLD

The spacious low hold is dark and home to scores of large hairy spiders that, despite their colossal webs, are otherwise harmless.

## V2. JEOPARDY BAY

A huge pyre has been built here, a towering mass of scorched timber that blights an otherwise idyllic bay. Beyond, jungle-infested cliffs tower skyward.

The Pale Queen attacked Captain Smiles and half a dozen of her followers here a few days ago. The confrontation resulted in two of the crew being thrown onto the pyre and roasted alive, and a further three crew taken and slowly mangled—their remains litter the Cliff Path nearby (**Area V3**). Characters examining the remains of the pyre identify two discernible figures amongst the scorched remains. They are both man-sized and could be human.

At the northern edge of the bay, beneath the brooding jungle cliffs, a slender trail snakes its way into the gloom. See **Area V3** below for more details.

### Treasure

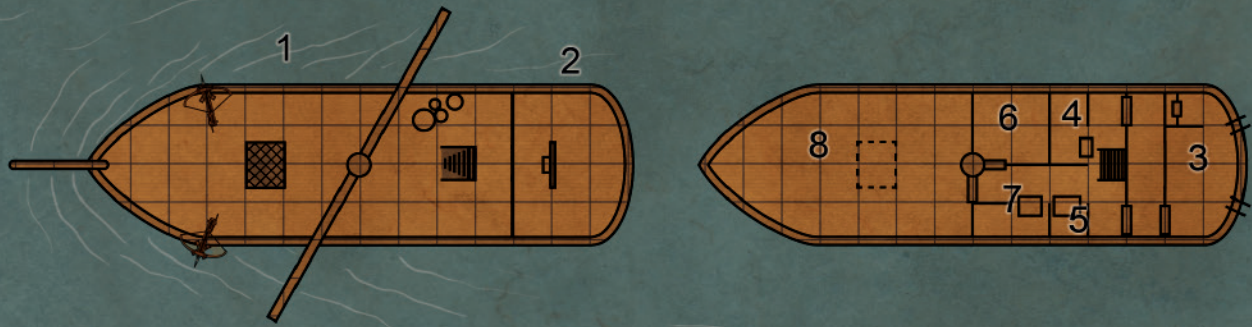
Flung near the fire is a crewmember's scimitar.

## V3. THE CLIMB

Captain Smiles and her crew have cut a pathway through the undergrowth here. The path is not wide (less than 5 feet in most places) and is touched by the wall of undergrowth on all sides.

The path climbs steeply upwards, but is clear enough to count as a trail. The Veiled Isle's girallons have hung the remains of two of the taken crew by the trail as a warning. The first, Jacob, is hung from a branch directly above the trail. His corpse is suspended 20 feet above the path. The body has been pulled apart, and only the torso and a single leg remain. The head has been mashed to a pulp. Characters closely examining the corpse notice the figure moving slightly (see **Setup**, below).

# The Capricious

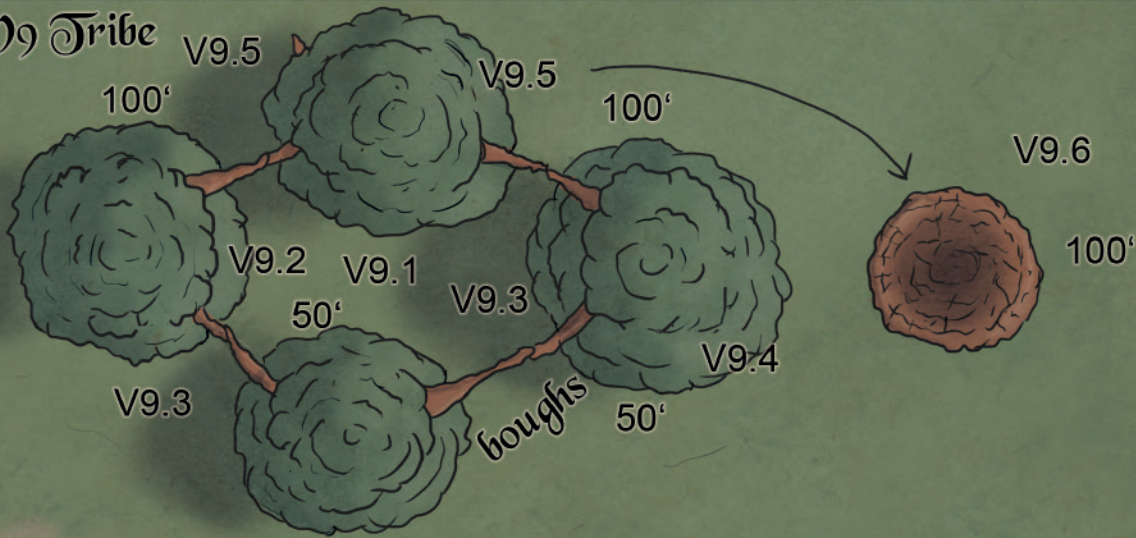


# V1 The Greedy Gull

1 square - 5'

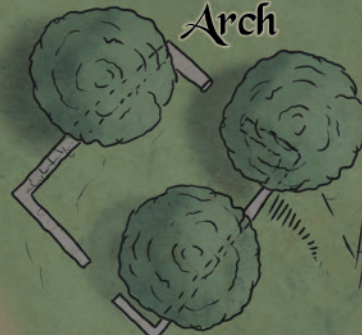


# V9 Tribe



# V18 Pocked Cathedral

# V10 Cliff Temple Arch



1 square - 20'

## Setup

The girallons stuffed the body with sweaty sweet fruit that acts as a draw for a local breed of hornet. **Three swarms** of these hornets now writhe in the body, feasting upon the fruit and flesh. If the body is moved or the hornets disturbed, they attack.

**Jungle Hornet Swarms (3):** HD 5; HP 30, 12, 18; AC 6[13]; Atk stings (1d6 + poison); Move 1 (fly 15); Save 12; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hornet venom (save +2 or 2d6 additional damage).

The second corpse is hung from a branch adjacent to the trail, a few hundred feet from the top. This unfortunate crewmember was peeled alive, his terror-stricken face still bearing his last scream.

The path eventually picks its way through to the caldera ridge at **Area V5**.

## V4. THE SUNKEN BRINE BREATH

The remains of the original ship to find the City of Gold, the *Brine Breath*, lie scuttled in the bay here. She lies in 15 fathoms of water (about 90 feet). The waters here are crystal clear, however, and anyone passing through the hex notices the charred remains without needing to make a check. Characters may also see it if passing through the adjacent hexes while in water. When characters first see the wreck, read or paraphrase the following:

The charred remains of a sailing ship lie in the clear waters here. She lies on her port side, and clearly sank after burning.

The crew of the *Brine Breath* set fire to their vessel in an attempt to kill the Pale Queen, who at that time was mutilating the crew in the hold. The waters hereabout are generally calm but thick with coral and weeds, which equate to light undergrowth in and around the ship.

The ship is mostly wrecked, the fire turning her hold into an inferno. The subsequent sinking left the hold as a dark open space some 20 feet across which is accessed via an old deck hatch that has been burnt away. A dozen bloated, charred corpses drift inside the hold; they seem ready to burst in their current condition.

## Setup

Some of the crew became **vampire spawn**. The Pale Queen created them and then left them here to lurk in the darkness.

**Vampire Spawn (3):** HD 4; HP 24, 17, 26; AC 5[14]; Atk bite (1d4 + level drain); Move 12 (swim 12); Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** drain 1 level with hit, gaseous form, immune to non-magic weapons and running water, regenerate (1/round). See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Notes:** Created while drowning and burning, these spawn do not take damage from running water and have a swim speed.

**Tactics:** The spawn attack anyone who enters the hold, keeping away from any light if attacked during the day. They attack from shadows if possible, trying to concentrate attacks upon individuals in the hope of overpowering them. If attacked at night, the spawn may attempt to flee in gaseous form if reduced to 10 hit points or less, however, unless they return to their ship by dawn they are destroyed. Such a tactic is therefore only used in a dire emergency and always precedes a return to the ship.

## Further Developments

The hull of the ship is badly weakened by fire, and can be holed relatively easily (15 hp damage creates a man-sized hole). If holed during the day, the vampire spawn are driven further and further away from the light. Four such breaches are enough to expose all three spawn to any daylight above.

## Treasure

The following items are scattered either in the ship or nearby: a *potion of invisibility* in a carved green glass bottle with platinum stopper worth 30 gp, a walnut traveling desk stand with silver inkwells worth 250 gp, a beautiful porcelain miniature of a castle worth 375 gp, three *+1 arrows*, a toby jug depicting a grinning sailor set with gold teeth worth 95 gp, and a solid gold raven figurine worth 750 gp. The figurine is clearly Tulita in origin and is from the City of Gold.

## V4.1. OLD TRAIL

There are remnants of an old trail and signs of a camp in this area. Although it has quickly become overgrown, the thicker vegetation has been cleared from the route up to the ridge here; movement is the same as on a trail.

The crew walked along the ridge and eventually made their way down the caldera at **Area V13**.

## V5. THE OSSUARY TREE

The path finally reaches its end. The cliffs suddenly level and reach a narrow broken ridge, itself crested with a wall of twisted ancient trees of great size. One tree in particular distinguishes itself; it is stripped of bark and stands like a skeleton in the jungle. This skeletal tree is festooned with bones, thousands upon thousands of them. Amongst the ossuary branches great ape-like skulls with thick sagittal crests and bristling with teeth, splintered shards of bones and entire rib cages, and an endless line of jawbones have been thrust into the trunk and rise into the canopy far above.

The ossuary tree is the girallons' burial ground, and is sacred to them. Destroying it is certain to bring girallons from across the island to avenge the outrage. The bones make the tree easy to climb, the dead tree rising almost 100 feet into the higher canopy. From the highest branches a clear view of the caldera lake and rising volcano can be seen, as well as—if you wish—a glimpse of the City of Gold (Area V16).

The ridge extends in both directions as a perilous path (Area V6).

### Setup

The exploits of Captain Smiles have drawn a watch of girallons to the trees hereabouts.

**Girallons (2):** HD 5; HP 15, 28; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

### Treasure

Amongst the bones are five gold teeth worth 5 gp each, a peg leg made of mahogany and set with a trio of pearls worth 125 gp in total, and a silver earring clipped to a mummified ear. The earring is actually a *ring of wizardry I* (see **Appendix**).

## V6. THE PERILOUS PATH

The ridge extends away from the Ossuary Tree (Area V5), falling sharply to both sides through the steaming jungle. The ridge is jagged, sometimes dropping by a hundred feet or more, or coming to a volcanic fist of stone that must be bypassed or climbed. However, the path is the equivalent of a trail.

Observant characters may notice that occasionally the ridge is used by unshod man-sized humanoids. These tracks are left by the cattle (greenskin orcs) while trying to escape, out hunting, or being hunted for sport by the girallons.

## V7. THE WAN TOTEM

Carved from a single dead tree and rising almost 90 feet in height, this huge totem depicts bestial faces gazing northwest. The animals are crocodiles, ravens, bats and monkeys as well as other, less obvious creatures.

The other animals are girallons, who are depicted eating men, and the Pale Queen, whose face tops the totem. She is carved as a white figure of terror with four arms ending in huge clawed hands.

The Pale Queen uses the totem as her place to call





girallons. Should she find herself in any kind of danger when facing intruders to the island, she flies here and cries out into the night, an action that draws all the males from the Tribal Grounds (**Area V9**) in 1 hour.

### Treasure

Various offerings have been left at the foot of the totem, including hundreds of carcasses and bones, some of which are clearly human but many of which are humanoid (greenskin orc). Often, these offerings have been bound to the totem and left to rot. Amongst the offerings are a solid gold crocodile figure (taken from the City of Gold) worth 600 gp, a jade vase set with silver handles worth 200 gp, a left boot (with the foot still in it), an oar, a clay pipe, and a purse containing 12 sp.

## V8. THE GOUGED TREE AND BULL GIRALLON

A **lone bull girallon** has staked a claim in the trees here. He may be encountered in any of the hexes adjacent, along with his **harem of females**. The bull has made its home in the high boughs of a great kapok tree some 160 feet tall. The upper third of this tree is decorated with thick-gouged scars, which are barely visible from the jungle floor.

The tree is very high, and relatively smooth sided. There are thick boughs every 40 feet, which require acute balance to cross (dexterity 13+ to cross safely). Each bough is approximately 50 feet in length.

**Rogue Bull Girallon:** HD 5; HP 38; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); **Move** 12; **Save** 12; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Female Girallons (3):** HD 5; HP 26, 19, 23; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); **Move** 12; **Save** 12; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Tactics:** This small group is nervous about an attack by the bigger bulls at the Tribal Grounds (**Area V9**) and uses their stealth to stalk anyone entering the area. Once satisfied that no bull girallons are present, the male moves in to attack assisted by the females, who attack prey at the edges of any groups. The girallons move in, attack for a round or two, and then head back into the safety of the canopy before regrouping and attacking again. If a female is killed or the bull loses 75% of his hit points, they flee into the upper reaches of the tree. If cornered there, they fight to the death.

## V9. TRIBAL GROUNDS

The main tribal home stands 200 feet above the forest floor in the upper boughs of a huge tree, itself one of four that are used by the Veiled Isle girallons as a lair. These trees have been frequently climbed by the girallons and are covered in deep scars (+5% to a thief's climb roll). Broad branches at 50 feet intervals connect the southern tree with the two to the north of it, and smaller boughs at 100 feet link the northern tree with the two south of it. The tribal

lair (**9.4**) lies some 70 feet above the upper boughs; again, the tree trunk here is scarred with frequent holds making the climb relatively easy (+10% to a thief's climb roll).

Greenskin orcs have made a path between the ridge and the ruined temple (**Area V10**). This path is regularly used by the orcs to bring food to the females and to return to the tribe to rest by night.

### Setup

A colony of girallons has used the quartet of trees as their tribal home for centuries. The girallons here are all males; females are not allowed onto the great trees here nor in their sacred nest high above. The largest male, a creature that possesses a terrible mask and the derivative title 'Father Mask' among the greenskin orcs, leads the girallons.

## V9.1. THE CATTLE

A quartet of huge kapok trees rises from the jungle floor here; even from below, hefty boughs clearly link the trees. Near the canopy of the easternmost and largest of the trees is a curious nest made of wrapped branches, bones, and fur.

### Setup

**Thirty-nine greenskin orcs** serve the girallons as breeding stock, sport and food. In addition to these are **4 girallon-sired orcs** whose girallon parentage is extremely obvious. Of the others, 26 are non-combatant females or young and 13 are combative greenskin males. The orcs live, eat, and work in the shadow of the trees.

**Girallon-Sired Greenskin Orcs (4):** HD 3; HP 10, 6 (x2); AC 7[12]; Atk spear (1d6) or short bow x2 (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 14; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 86%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 15%, Silent 25%.

**Equipment:** leathery-hide armor, spear, shortbow, 10 arrows. See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Tactics:** The girallon-sired orcs will instantly call an alarm as soon as they perceive intruders, alerting the greenskin orcs to the threat. They fight ferociously in battle, hoping to be rewarded by the girallons. They usually eschew their bows in favor of melee attacks. If reduced to 10 hp or fewer, they flee into the trees. They attempt to rejoin this or another fight later against isolated opponents.

**Greenskin Orcs (13):** HD 2; HP 11 (x2), 5 (x3), 12 (x12), 7, 6, 9; AC 7[12]; Atk spear (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 16; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 86%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 15%, Silent 25%.

**Equipment:** leathery-hide armor, spear. See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Tactics:** The orcs fight nervously, panicking and taking to the trees if injured or intimidated. They attempt to flee if they are wounded in order to survive.

## V9.2. THE SCAR

A deep scar, gouged in the trunk of the kapok tree, runs from ground level to its upper boughs.

The scar makes climbing easier, allowing climbers to brace.

## V9.3. THE LOWER WAY AND PLATFORM

Two thick boughs allow progress between trees here, some fifty feet above the ground.

The boughs are broad and strong, and require no special attention to cross.

### Setup

Two **girallons** loaf around the boughs, watching the orcs below and occasionally snatching one and tearing it apart almost playfully.

**Girallons (2):** HD 5; HP 24, 20; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

## V9.4. THE TRAP

The girallons created a cunning and deadly trap in this tree, which none of them use. A vine has been lashed to the trunk, which is attached to a hefty bough lashed above. This upper bough is bristling with rusty iron shards, barbs, and points. Anyone entering the 10 feet below the bough is struck by the spikes and suffers 3d6 points of damage (save for half)

## V 9.5. THE UPPER WAY

One hundred feet up, two more thick boughs allow access between the trees.

These boughs are narrower, and easily climbable.

### Setup

A pair of **girallons** are habitually groomed by a pair of **girallon-sired orcs** in this lofty perch.

**Girallons (2):** HD 5; HP 24, 21; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Girallon-Sired Greenskin Orcs (2):** HD 3; HP 17, 14; AC 7[12]; Atk spear (1d6); Move 12; Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 86%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 15%, Silent 25%.

**Equipment:** leathery-hide armor, spear. See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

## V9.6. THE GREAT NEST

Do not read this description until the characters have reached the level of the nest in the treetop. From the ground it just looks like some massive clump of branches and debris.

A circular opening gives access from the tallest kapok tree into the bottom of a strange, almost spherical nest of woven timbers, fur, and bones.

The entrance, which is some 6 feet in diameter, gives access to the chamber above, which has been used by the girallons for centuries as a place to eat and fight. Inside, the chamber is spherical and built around the narrow upper trunk of the tree. When characters first enter the chamber, read or paraphrase the following description:

A large space opens, into a spherical chamber covered in hundreds of objects, many of which are masks. The chamber's floor is not flat but the curved inside of the sphere. The tree trunk within is blanched and carved with obscene faces.

### Setup

The strongest 3 **girallons** rest here with their leader, **Father Mask**, an obscenely mangy creature that wears a terrible wooden mask depicting a human face missing the lower jaw.

**Girallons (3):** HD 5; HP 19, 22, 23; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details. **Father Mask, Voice of Old Times, High Girallon:** HD 7; HP 36; AC 5[14]; Atk 4 hands (1d6), bite (1d10); Move 12; Save 10; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Equipment:** *mask of the skull* (see **Appendix**), tribal fetishes.

**Tactics:** Father Mask knows the ability of his mask—a *mask of the skull*—and uses it if the Tribal Grounds are attacked or if he hears females in distress, an action that causes the entire group of males to leave this area and follow him to the Cliff Temple (**Area V10**). He hoots and grunts orders to his followers, instructing tactics of attack and withdraw, attempting to bring as many of the males here as possible into combat round after round, thus giving his enemy little chance to regroup or cast spells. Father Mask is a hulking brute who leads from the front. He knows little fear or subtlety, but does follow the tactics of his kind by attacking, withdrawing and then attacking again. Others of his kind would savage him if he fled the ancestral lair; he fights to the death as a result.

### Further Developments

The obscene figures represent the Pale Queen in her

terrible glory. Characters looking at the carvings notice several teeth carved of stone, cloven in two like a split hoof. The cleft is a depiction of the Cloven Hoof (**Area V18**). Any character seeing the geological feature can see the similarity with the carvings herein.

### Treasure

The chamber is packed with hundreds of items. While many of these are carved skulls and bones, putrefied creatures, and teeth, the following items of value are easily found: a solid gold owl figure worth 400 gp, a ship's wheel, the head and upper spine of a dire crocodile decorated with jagged uncut zircons worth 400 gp in total, a very fine garnet worth 600 gp, a human forearm bone with a single *bracer of defense* 6[13], a primitive wood shark figure with eyes made from rings—one gold, worth 200 gp, and one silver and set with a black pearl worth 300 gp, a conch bead necklace with obsidian chunks worth 150 gp, an ivory bracelet worth 30 gp, a crude bone rattle that functions as a chime of opening, and a huge carved dragon figurine of great age nailed into which are dozens of sharp gold teeth worth 600 gp in total.

### V10. THE CLIFF TEMPLE

The path from **Area V9** remains high on the lip of the caldera, following a ridge outwards. Eventually, the jungle thins as the ruins of the temple come into view. As the characters approach the edge of the hex, read or paraphrase the following description.

The jungle thins as the ridge narrows, forming a spectacular stone limb above the brooding caldera. The ruins of countless buildings cling to this lofty perch, their structures gripping the full length of the ridge until reaching an end at a huge stone building made of vast blocks of smooth stone, from which rises a trio of enormous kapok trees.

The ridge temple is a series of ruins of cyclopean stones. Many of the walls remain intact, despite being strangled by tree roots. In some places, the land falls in a series of incredibly narrow terraces. Each of these terraces was clearly once used for agriculture. The terraces are shown on the map and held back by 10-foot-high stone walls. Where terraces are not indicated, the land falls away 700 feet into the Brine Forest below (**Area V11**). The caldera walls in these locations are made up of very loose crumbling rock. A perilously exposed flagged stone stair descends from the temple area to the Brine Forest.

The girallon females use the temple area as a nursery and living space. They generally spend their time in the high kapok trees, which rise some 150 feet from the temple walls. These trees have smooth sides and are very difficult to climb. When the characters arrive at the temple, read or paraphrase the following description:

The remains of a huge building grip the end of the ridge. Three walls tower some thirty feet on the land side of this building, which ends at a wide stone yard surrounded on three sides by nothing but drops of several hundred feet. A huge arch made of a single piece of smooth stone marks the entrance to this structure. Three huge trees rise from the temple and tower into the sky above, arching outward over the jungle far below.

The temple arch depicts the sun being devoured by a huge shark. Characters examining the area around the arch may notice tracks can see that the girallons clearly spend much of their time on the eastern side of the arch. The checks also indicate that the girallons prostrate themselves towards the west in the direction of the volcano below. The girallons are actually bowing to the Pale Queen at the Cloven Hoof (**Area V18**). Characters looking in that direction can also clearly see the feature.

A narrow and sensationally exposed stone stair descends from the side of the temple into the caldera below. A save is required to use the stair successfully; those who fail by 5 or more must make another save (at -3) or fall.

### Setup

The girallon females dwell within the ruins of the temple. There are presently **5 female girallons**, 3 of whom have young. The young are non-combatants and may command a high price as menagerie specimens. For more information, see “Further Developments” below. One particularly aggressive and ugly female known as the brood mother leads the females.

**Girallons (5):** HD 5; HP 23 (x3), 16, 19; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Tactics:** The females know the males are relatively close by across the valley, and if they become aware of intruders, they cry out, hoping to alert the males. The females act much like the males, attacking and then withdrawing into the trees. While in combat, females with young leave their children in the trees, but if these young are attacked or injured the females rush back to help them, move them to better cover, and return to attack. The females try to use the drops on three sides of the temple to their advantage, pushing opponents that dare to stand too close to any drops. The females retreat to the trees if reduced to 10 hit points or less, and then only attack if they are themselves attacked. The brood mother, however, is particularly vicious, attacking and not retreating.

### Further Developments

The three young are nasty, but essentially non-combatative.

If they can be captured, each is worth 1,000 gp to the right buyer, but unless they are carefully tended they soon pine away, become sick, and die. A druid or ranger's skill, or some form of magic is required to ensure that young girallons survive any journey.

## VII. THE BRINE FOREST

Lurking in the dark recess of the caldera is a dense swampy jungle, thick with fallen trees.

The vegetation here is thick, and surrounded by a shallow bog. Pools of quicksand plague the area.

### Setup

A monstrous **saltwater giant crocodile** that found its way into the caldera via a tidal wave many years ago and has never escaped lives here. The dire crocodile wanders the swamp randomly. Either assign it a hex when the characters first enter this area and have it move into a random adjacent hex every 1d4 hours, or assign a 1 in 6 chance of encountering the creature for every hex travelled here.

**Giant Crocodile:** HD 6; HP 28; AC 3[16]; Atk bite (3d6), tail (1d6); Move 9 (swim 12); Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** none. See *Monstrosities* for more details.

## VI2. THE LIGHTNING TREE

Gripping the ridge here is a blasted tree, clearly one that has been struck and cleft by lightning. Characters note that the area around the tree is withered, and while the jungle is close, the trees immediately nearby brood over the tree without actually touching it.

### Setup

The tree is a **lightning treant**. The vicious creature attacks anything that it becomes aware of nearby.

**Treant, Lightning:** HD 8; HP 30; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 strikes (2d8); Move 12; Save 8; AL N; CL/XP 10/1,400; **Special:** electric healing, immune to electricity, magical powers, resists fire (1/2 damage). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Spells:** at will—*faerie fire*; 3/day—*lightning bolt*.

**Tactics:** As soon as the treant becomes aware of something nearby it casts *faerie fire* and staggers into combat. The creature uses its lightning bolts as the opportunity presents itself.

## VI3. THE OLD TRAIL

The route used by the crew of the *Brine Breath* (Area V4) descends into the caldera here, badly overgrown and barely visible. The worst vegetation has yet to grow back across the route, and travel is as though via a trail.

### Setup

A **flytrap shambler** has slithered to the trail and sits

nearby, awaiting the return of visitors long since dead. Anyone using the trail is certain to encounter the creature and be attacked.

**Flytrap Shambler:** HD 3; HP 14; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (2d6); Move 6; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** immune to piercing weapons. See *Monstrosities* for more details.

## VI4. THE MAIN CAMP

At the side of the misty caldera lake are the remains of a camp. The crew of the *Brine Breath* hastily erected a timber jetty and crude hut of logs and palm fronds nearby and cleared back the jungle. A raft lies in the shallow water by the jetty.

The raft is quite large and can accommodate eight man-sized creatures. The raft can be dragged from the water and re-floated using local materials. Four simple oars lie in the water nearby.

Characters searching the area notice the signs of hasty retreat and come upon the remains of recent habitation.

## VI5. THE CALDERA LAKE

Monoliths surround the caldera lake, crude stylized visages of stone that face outwards, away from the lake itself. The locations of the faces are not shown on the map, and while some have fallen and become lost in the jungle, many remain erect. Each face is the same, a long stone countenance around 20 feet high. Characters seeing the faces note that the expression on each face is one of anger.

The lake is a combination of sulphurous water and sea brine. A thick mist chokes the entire lake, which smells strongly of rotten eggs. Trees overhang the outer edges of the lake. The waters are slightly warm to the touch. Barely visible at the center of the lake is an old volcanic cone.

### Setup

**Four rogue girallons** lurk along the edge of the lake and have been tracking the characters' movements for some time. If the characters come close enough to the edge of the caldera, one or more may make an attack, hoping to toss or knock them into the lake.

**Girallons (4):** HD 5; HP 16, 23, 20, 11; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend. See the **Appendix** for more details.

The waters of the lake are home to something far more dangerous: a **scylla**. An ancient creature, this thing descended from the times of the Tulita. Its ancestors were harvested for their glands as a cruel way to dispatch slaves.

**Scylla:** HD 12; HP 73; AC 2[17]; Atk 6 bites (1d10+3); Move 6 (swim 18); Save 3; CL/XP 13/2,300; **Special:** boil water, scalding blast (3d6 damage, save for half). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Notes:** If still alive at the time the Dragon Caul is broken, the scylla lurks in the outer ruins of the City of Gold as the characters leave.

**Tactics:** The scylla rarely gets to feast on anything beyond fish, the occasional girallon, or the odd bat. Occasionally, it bumps into the dire crocodile in **Area V11** but has a healthy respect for the great beast, and the two avoid each other as much as possible. The creature lurks in the depths of the lake waiting for prey; large movements such as a raft on the lake, or loud noise, are certain to draw its attention. The scylla moves slowly below the surface toward any prey and begins to boil the waters around itself, waiting to drag foes in the water or attack using its scalding blast. The scylla can choose to make an attack against a boat to attempt to capsize the vessel. The scylla is a brute, but leads by rearing from the water and bellowing with its six heads, making an intimidating sight. It then uses its scalding blast and bite attacks against anyone in water. The scylla is essentially a coward, however. It flees if reduced to 50% hit points or less to fester and attack again a few minutes later until reduced to 25% hit points.

### Further Developments

The scylla shows signs of having fought the crew of the *Brine Breath*. An ugly gash lies below its eye on one head, a jagged cut has mostly healed on its spine, and the stump of a broken crossbow bolt is stuck in its torso.

## VI6. THE CITY OF GOLD

The City of Gold is detailed in **Part Three** of this adventure.

## VI7. THE VENT

A volcano emerges from the waters of the lake. It rises nearly a thousand feet to a glowering vent.

The volcano sides are warm but easily climbed. The vent at the top is active, and occasionally belches out lava bombs. The vent is 90 feet wide and the mouth of the volcano is another 50 feet below.

## VI8. THE CLOVEN HOOF

The ridge of the caldera reaches its zenith here, towering to an overhanging cliff of rock some nine hundred feet above the lake directly below. The top of the ridge ends at a broken tooth of rock that juts from the ridge and rises a further thirty feet, splitting in two and resembling a cloven hoof.

Directly below the hoof, some 50 feet down and 10 feet back in an overhanging cliff, is a narrow volcanic vent. The vent is used to access the lair of the living god of the Veiled Isle girallons – the Pale Queen.

## VI8.1. THE ASHEN OVERHANG

The cliff cannot be climbed from above. A character could be lowered on ropes or use magic to access the cave entrance. The aperture is a little over 5 feet round, and has a slightly exposed lip of stone jutting a couple of feet from the cliff, which falls 900 feet directly to the vent below. The cave narrows further until there is barely room enough to crawl for a Larger than man-sized creature. Small creatures can stand, but man-sized ones must stoop. The corridor continues 50 feet or so and ends at a large, open narrow shaft.

## VI8.2. THE SWALLOWING VENT

The shaft descends nearly 300 feet, and while near vertical, is so narrow that characters can brace themselves while descending as though in a chimney. The shaft ends at a wide entrance into an adjacent chamber.

## VI8.3. THE POKED CATHEDRAL

A sizeable cavern has been formed in the rock here, a volcanic throat that opens up into a cave sixty feet high and forty feet across. The upper roof is riddled with narrow caves, giving the impression of a pock-marked face leering down from above.

The caves are just big enough for a large creature to crawl along. There are six in all, which extend back into the rock a further 60 feet. The floor of the cave is littered with torn and broken bones. The cave walls are relatively easy to climb (+15% to a thief's climb roll).

### Setup

The **Pale Queen** lairs in the caves here, varying the cave she rests in from day to day.

**The Pale Queen, High Girallon Vampire:** HD 9; HP 70; AC 2[17]; **Atk** 4 hands (1d6+1), bite (1d10 + level drain); **Move** 12 (fly 18); **Save** 6; **CL/XP** 13/2,300; **Special:** charm (save at -2), cunning, gaseous form, hug and rend, level drain (2 levels), +1 or better weapon to hit, regenerate 3 hp/round, shape change, summon bat or rat swarm, vampire weaknesses. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Tactics:** The Pale Queen is no static foe. She ventures into the night looking for prey, usually leading by charming one opponent (often the strongest) to attack the others before moving in to attack herself, using claws and bite. In this situation, the Pale Queen is only driven away when reduced to 20 hit points or less, confident that she can escape using gaseous form if she must. If overpowered, she returns the night after with 1d3+1 girallons. The girallons enter the combat first, screaming, to be followed by the Pale Queen, who uses tactics as above. If encountered in her lair, the Queen is a different, more unstable foe. She enters combat as before, leading with charm, but summons bat swarms and launches relentless attacks upon individuals, raging and tearing them limb from limb as her kin do if

any are unlucky enough to be knocked unconscious. The Pale Queen attempts to level drain with a bite as often as she can, reserving her brute strength for the most capable fighters. In her lair, the Pale Queen slips into one of her caves when reduced to half her hit points, and awaits her foe to enter her parlor, not retreating from here again.

### Treasure

The Pocked Cathedral bones are littered with objects of value left scattered over the centuries. An ivory hookah pipe with platinum mouthpiece worth 450 gp, a walnut jewelry box carved in the likeness of a dancing bear (worth 35 gp) with a trio of fine diamonds inside worth 600 gp each, a beaten copper hunting horn with jagged obsidian band worth 125 gp, a single silver and electrum earring designed like a stork with ruby eyes worth 230 gp. A bone scroll case containing a scroll made of human skin with the spells *disintegrate*, *enchant item*, and *delayed blast fireball*. A *potion of treasure finding* in an iron flask, a glove with a hand still in it with a bronze bracelet worth 25 gp, an elongated tribal mask, a carved ivory headed cane depicting an owl and set in a gold mount worth 200 gp, and a small swallow figurine cast in solid gold worth 200 gp.

## PART THREE

# THE CITY OF GOLD

Read the following when the characters reach **Area V16**.

Stillness cloys at the sulphurous mists on the caldera lake. Momentarily, a shape looms. The shape takes form in the haze, a bestial thing rising on its hind legs, a great tooth-filled maw which towers into the air. The huge statue glints, its skin beaten gold. A spire rises behind this figure and beyond tower a set of steep steps. In the haze above, the glint of gold is everywhere.

Standing at the edge of the Caldera Lake is the City of Gold

## CITY OF GOLD FEATURES

### The Surface

The city is partially exposed from the caldera by a recent earthquake; the buildings are made up of massive, smooth stone blocks, some of which are 10 feet on a side. Several of the buildings have surfaces of beaten gold plating. The gold is given a value in weight only for these locations and others within this area. One pound of gold is worth 50 gp. Remember these weights, as—assuming the adventure reaches a logical climax—escaping with the booty will



require the characters to think on their feet. Characters can remove a pound of beaten gold from an object in 1 minute with an Open Doors check.

Partial remnants of agricultural terracing remain as do the broken shards of other buildings, which jut from the lake. You may wish to add the odd gold item nearby to draw characters back into the waters below. Characters might identify the ruins as Tulitan.

### C1. THE SPIRE OF GOLD

This stone edifice rises from the caldera lake. A great stair beyond rises to a large temple above. Four huge figures rise at each corner of the building, surrounding a central spire. The figures depict humanoid sharks with great open mouths bristling with teeth. Each is fifteen feet high. The spire rises twenty feet above the edifice; its beaten gold surface covers thick stone slabs. Beyond stand the ruins of other buildings glinting with gold.

The slabs of the spire beneath the beaten gold are 6-inch thick stone. The edifice walls are 5-foot-thick stone blocks. Characters examining the slab at the base of the great stair note that the stair does not quite fit flush with the slab. Clearly, the stair once continued beyond this point, downward into the building itself. The slab at the base of the stairs can be opened from the Outer Sun Temple (**Area C3**), with the slab sinking into the stairway base, revealing a 10-foot-wide opening through which the stairs continue to steeply descend into **Area C9** below.

#### Treasure

Each stone statue has 10 lbs. of gold beaten across its surface. The spire, which is 20 feet high, has 25 lbs. of gold. Only half the gold can be removed by man-size characters without climbing to access all the stone from the statues and spire.

### C2. THE GREAT STAIR

Rising almost vertically up the caldera face is a stair made of countless narrow steps. Each step is faced with several dull gold disks depicting bestial creatures.

The steps rise 100 feet in 50 feet and are near vertical. All Movement is halved on these steps.

#### Treasure

There are 1,209 animal figures; each is worth 25 gp and weighs a half pound. The creatures depicted have an odd sense of hunger about them, and each takes a full round to pry from its position in the step.

### C3. THE OUTER SUN TEMPLE

The steps rise to a huge stone building, a temple without walls and bearing a stone roof atop tall stone columns. The columns are twenty feet high and five wide. Each is covered with bestial animal figures, prevalent amongst which are great sharks. Within, the columns rise and meet to form arches, each depicting sharks devouring sharks. A huge carving occupies the center of the four arches in the middle of the structure. The rooftop hosts a dozen bird figures of gold, one immediately above each pillar.

The columns are easy to climb, but the roof overhangs the pillars at the edges. Characters climbing onto the roof can access the gold figures thereupon, but also draw the attention of the cockatrice in **Area C8**.

The carving depicts battles between dragons and figures holding staves and wearing long and somewhat repulsive masks. The sun is blotted from the sky by the largest of these dragons, which holds a mouth full of screaming women. Close examination of the carvings reveal four staves in all. Three staves are burning their holders alive, but one shoots fire from its end. Each figure stands adjacent to one of the four central columns. The fire-shooting carving acts as a key to open the sepulchre below. Characters may note that this staff has a seam between it and the surface of the carving and, in fact, can be easily removed. This small stone object is carved to resemble a staff wreathed in fire, but when removed resembles a key.

Each column has a tiny keyhole at its base, immediately facing the center of the temple. These holes are covered with dust and dirt.

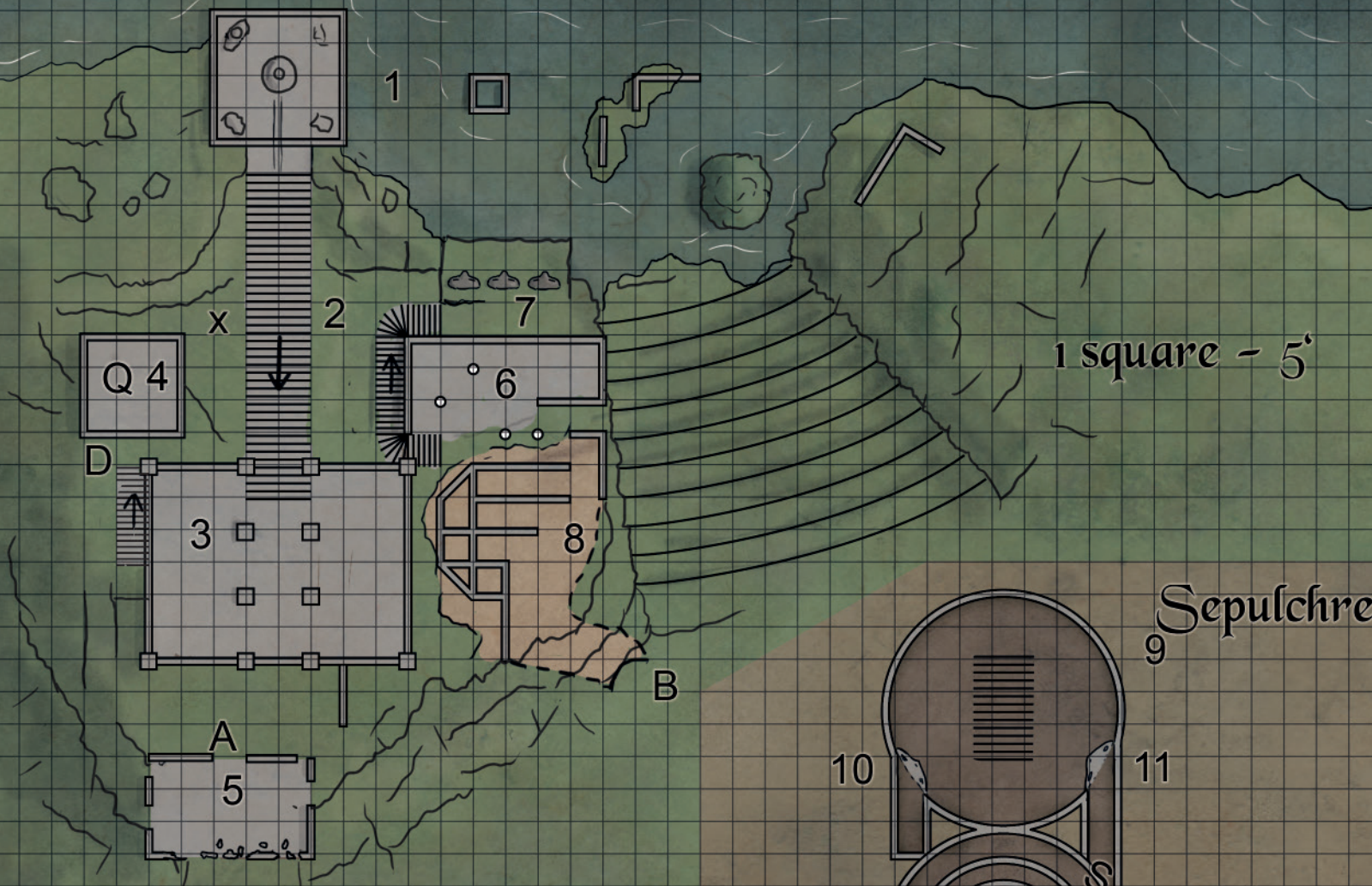
**Traps:** Three of the four keyholes are trapped. The southwestern key—the one immediately below the figure whose staff shoots fire outwards—provides access to the Sepulchre as detailed in “Further Developments” below. The others trigger traps. Keys inserted into any of the wrong keyholes each trigger fireball traps focused on the pillar in question (6d6 points of damage, save for half).

#### Setup

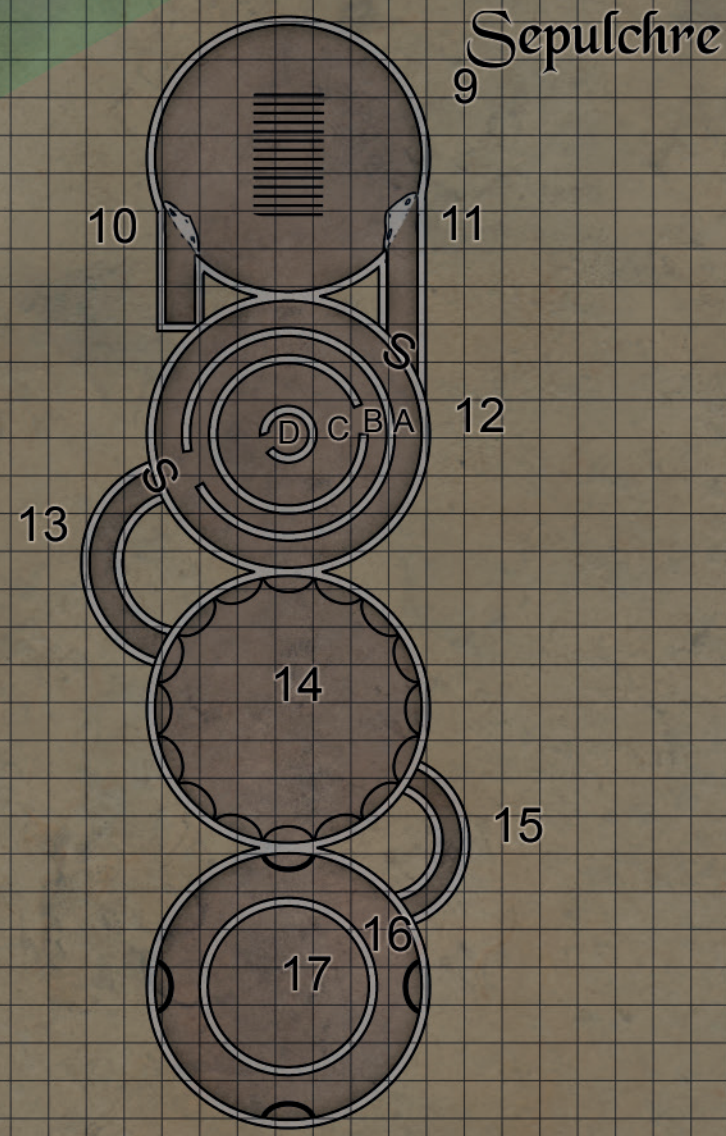
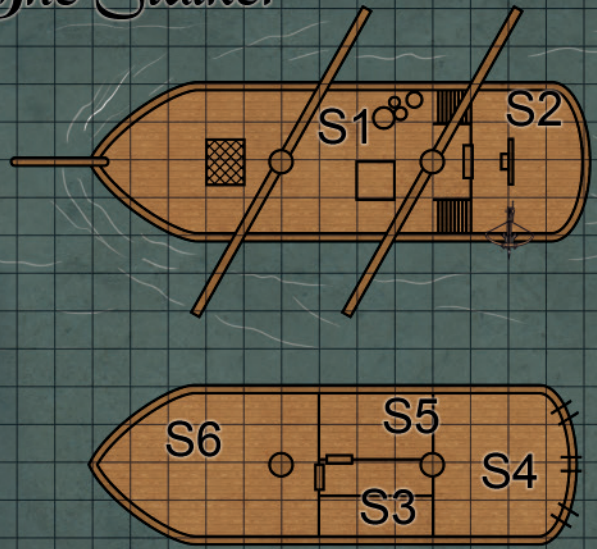
A **trio of sepulchral guardians** lurks within the temple, guarding the city from grave robbers. If they spot anyone defiling the buildings (stripping the gold off them, for example, or otherwise vandalizing them), one of the guardians moves to attack, while the other two remain here to guard the sepulchre key.

**Sepulchral Guardians (3):** HD 10; HP 49, 41, 29; AC 3[16]; Atk sword (1d8); Move 12; Save 5; CL/XP 11/1,270; **Special:** disease (save or 2d6 damage per hour), dread (as fear spell), immune to cold and fire, +1 magic weapons to hit, spell resistance (15%). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete*

# City of Gold - Surface



## The Stalker





for more details.

To further complicate matters, a large **basidiron** lurks near the center of the temple, gripped to the north eastern of the four center pillars.

**Giant Basidiron:** HD 8; AC 3[16]; Atk slam (1d8 + spores); Move 9; Save 8; CL/XP 10/1,400; **Special:** hallucination cloud, immune to cold, spores. See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

## Basidiron Hallucinations

### 1D6 HALLUCINATIONS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | You're sinking in quicksand! Fall prone and spend 1 round flailing your arms and legs as if trying to swim.      |
| 2 | Attacked by a swarm of spiders! Spend a full round action to attack the floor near you with your weapon.         |
| 3 | An item you hold has turned into a viper! Drop it and flee from the item at top speed for 1 round.               |
| 4 | You're suffocating! Stand in place, hold your breath, and clutch at your throat for 1 round.                     |
| 5 | You've shrunk to 1/10th your normal size! Take no actions for 1 round and monsters won't see you.                |
| 6 | You're melting! Grasp hold of yourself in an attempt to hold yourself together, and take no actions for 1 round. |

**Tactics:** When anyone comes within 20 feet, the basidiron unleashes its spores. Although unintelligent, it is aware of the guardians and that its spores do not affect them. In combat, it waits for them to move away or fall before attacking.

## Further Developments

If the characters unlock the Sepulchre below, read or paraphrase the following description:

There is a sound from deep below the earth of stone protesting as it grinds against stone. Dust falls from the temple roof and the stillness of the caldera lake echoes to the sound of grating stone. The grinding comes from the spire below, where a wall sinks slowly to the ground to reveal that the steps continue below into a chamber.

The opening lies between **Areas C2** and **C9** below. Returning the key, a feature embedded in each of the guardians during their creation.

## Treasure

The central carving has a dozen gold circlets within it, depicting stylized ravens. Each circlet is 6 lbs. of solid gold worth 300 gp. The figures on the roof are of stylized birds that look somehow disturbingly hungry. Each also weighs 6 lbs. and is made of solid gold worth 300gp each.

## C4. THE GREAT GONG

Upon this stone platform leans a stone face partially hidden by rubble. Nearby, a scrimshaw pole rises from the stone.

The stone face lies under a few feet of loose rubble. If uncovered, the face—which is 15 feet high—has a far more aggressive countenance than the ones outside the lake area. This figure is displaying extreme anger, and, as well as anger, the figure seems to be warning those it faces and seems afraid of something.

The scrimshaw pole is made from a single enormous mandible from a whale, and is carved in incredible detail. Although partially damaged, the scrimshaw clearly depicts masked figures creating something that seems to be made from the afterbirth of whales and a many-headed hydra like creature (the scylla).

## Treasure

The scrimshaw weighs 1,200 pounds and is worth 4,300 gp. Examining the scrimshaw reveals that clearly at one time something hung from beneath the curved edge of the scrimshaw. Buried at point **X** beneath ten feet of compacted rubble is the gong that originally hung here, weighing 70 lbs. The six-foot diameter gong is made of solid gold.

## C5. THE FRACTURED BATHS

A partially collapsed building lies beneath a wall of broken rubble.

A narrow crawlspace, just big enough for a small-sized character to crawl through, is at **Point A**. Man-sized characters must squeeze to crawl under the collapsed wall.

Beyond, it is possible to stand in the chamber, which lies 10 feet or so below rock. The room was clearly once a bathhouse. Wide carved-stone troughs big enough for a man to lie in line the south wall. Each trough is filled with brackish green water, collected from rain runoff over the years.

## Setup

An **ochre jelly** hides in the rubble immediately above the entrance crawlspace. It has subsisted on a diet of vermin, small birds, and the occasional monkey but gladly attacks more filling prey.

**Ochre Jelly:** HD 6; HP 22; AC 8[11]; Atk acid-laden strike (3d4); Move 3; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** lightning divides creature.

## Further Developments

The rubble above the bathhouse is unstable. Area effect spells that deal more than 25 hit points of damage—or other spells at the Referee's discretion—cause a collapse (save or take 6d6 points damage and buried; requires 4 unburied characters 10 minutes to dig buried characters out).

## C6. THE WORKER'S REDOUBT

Steps descend by the side of this low stone building, which has partially collapsed. The gables of this building hold aloft a roof of large stone slabs, and end at each of its four corners with a stylized owl figure made of solid gold.

The building clearly once housed workers; there are signs of tools, scraps of cloth, and remnants of cots and dried-reed bedding. The building is badly collapsed and climbing onto the roof is quite straightforward. Anyone climbing onto the roof will draw the attention of the cockatrice in **Area C8**.

### Treasure

The owl figures are solid gold and weigh 6 lbs. each—they are therefore worth 300 gp each. Searching the building discovers an ancient bone needle and thread, a stone pestle, and a large stone cooking bowl.

## C7. THE COLONNADE OF FROWNING, FEARFUL FACES

Three large stone faces glower across the misty caldera lake from a wide ledge here at the base of the settlement, just above the sulphurous waters.

These faces display terror. The platform they stand on is 10 feet above the waterline but is easy to climb to.

## C8. THE ARCANE MOLDS

This building rises to a shattered rooftop which is clearly on the point of collapse; narrow stone beams lean against each other precariously. The apex of the roof is made of gold and depicts a hideous monkey.

The building below was clearly used to make intricate gold castings of some kind; there are vats for smelting gold over stone cauldrons, channels for gold to go into molds, and several broken molds. These items were used to make the appropriate arcane symbols necessary to create the Dragon Caul.

### Setup

The narrow cliff-tops above serve as home for a flock of **6 cockatrices**, which are presently nesting in a shallow cave at **Point B**, which is some 90 feet above the building below. The rock hereabouts is very loose. The nest contains the broken remains of several victims, including two from the *Brine Breath*, as well as some young. The cockatrices are initially brave, but retreat to their cave if two or more of their number are slain.

**Cockatrices (6):** HD 5; HP 23, 30, 24, 19, 21; AC 6[13];

**Atk** bite (1d6 + turn to stone); **Move** 6 (fly 18); **Save** 12; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** bite turns to stone.

### Treasure

#### Inside

Clearly, gold was of lesser value to those who used the molds—there is 11 lbs. of gold flashing in the corners of molds, along channels, and in the mounds. It takes approximately half an hour to collect the spilled gold.

#### Outside

The monkey statue is grotesque and seems to have four dislocated limbs. From some angles it resembles a girallon. The statue weighs 22 lbs. but is presently holding the stone beams together. Removing the statue without securing the beams causes the beams to collapse. The entire building falls apart if the statue is removed, and everything within a 5-foot area of it is affected. This collapse triggers a further fall of the cliff higher above, bringing down material onto the entire city that causes 6d6 damage to all those not under cover in one of the buildings (save for half). There is no actual risk of being buried in this landslide (assuming that one survives the damage), but the time required for removing gold plating in the city are doubled.

### Cockatrice Cave

A careful search uncovers a *potion of extra-healing* in a clay flask, a narrow gold needle worth 10 gp, and a silver-hilted scimitar worth 125 gp in a dried leather scabbard. **Six young cockatrices** and **three unhatched eggs** lie in the nest. The young have their parent's petrification bite, but would be worth 300 gp each to the right buyer.

**Young Cockatrices (6):** HD 2; HP 9 (x3), 12 (x3); AC 6[13]; **Atk** bite (1d3 + turn to stone); **Move** 6 (fly 18); **Save** 12; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** bite turns to stone (+2 save).

### Further Ruins

The caldera wall hides many other buildings, but getting access to them is not easy. Cave-ins and collapses are common unless some magical means to prevent them are present. Characters may resort to summoning creatures able to burrow through rock, but again, such actions may not succeed as the valley sides are very loose. The characters may bury more than they uncover. Good roleplaying should be rewarded, though; there should certainly be more gold under the volcanic stone, but how much is left to the Referee.

### The Sepulchre

The entire dungeon complex has been shattered by volcanic activity and has broken, sloping floors partially flooded by the lake. The water is relatively still but occasionally minor collapses occur that stir the waters up. The water is warm and sulphurous seawater, identical to that of the caldera, which has leaked into this structure. The entire complex is made of huge, smooth-sided stones, all of which dance with countless carvings depicting bestial creatures with humanoid bodies.

This complex acts as a tomb for those who built it; each slave who worked here was subjected to an agonizing ritual at the end of the work. He or she was mummified in boiling rags and then drowned in a boiling elixir, which has had the effect of making undead of some of the slaves. The complex is completely infested by several hundred mummified humanoids, almost all of whom lean against each other to form a ghastly guard of honor to those who enter. Those slaves who became undead remain in a torpor until a trigger (listed for each chamber) occurs, at which point they attack intruders. Because of the sinking of the complex, several of the slaves have animated as bog mummies (See *The Tome of Horrors Complete*, “Bog Mummy”).

### C9. THE SEPULCHRE ANTEROOM

Steps from the great stair continue down sharply into dark waters. The water begins ten feet below the opening in the building. The walls of the dark chamber are lined with shelves, upon which are dozens of mummified figures, each leaning on one another. Hanging from the roof, around the opening of the spire, are six great iron bells, each about eight feet long and three feet wide.

The waters below are 20 feet deep; the stairs descend to the chamber floor. Ten feet of chamber is above the water level, and the hollow interior of the spire rises a further 20 feet. There are three shelves around the walls, each 8 feet apart vertically. In all, there are 128 mummified figures. Two large stone shark faces (**Areas C10** and **C11**) stand at floor level below the water. A stone lever rests at the foot of the stair; if pulled, this lever causes the bells within the chamber to strike for a full minute, deafening anyone within the chamber for five minutes unless they make a successful saving throw. The bells hang from thick iron chains and are struck by hefty stone and iron strikers.

#### Setup

A **devourer** has been left to guard the sepulchre entrance. The creature wears a mask identical in every way to that worn by the girallon Father Mask (**Area V9.6**). It is hideously twisted, its limbs emaciated to little more than threads of skin and bone, its biology wholly unnatural.

**Devourer:** HD 11; HP 54; AC 0[19]; Atk claw (1d8 + level drain); Move 12 (fly 12); Save 4; AL C; CL/XP 13/2,300; **Special:** darkvision, devourer soul, level drain (1 level), magical abilities, magic resistance (50% and special). See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Spells:** *animate dead* (level 5), *confusion* (level 4), *cause serious wounds* (level 4)

**Equipment:** *mask of the skull*

**Tactics:** The devourer lurks below the stairs waiting for an enemy to enter the water. It immediately uses its mask of the skull against the first person that enters the chamber,

then triggers the cloister bell lever and leaves the water to use its magical abilities. It has the desiccated and hideously crushed form of a girallon within its carapace. The girallon was a powerful druidic ancestor of those presently on the island. The devourer has 15 essence points available, and uses confusion as much as possible.

### C10. THE LEFT FACE OF DAJOBAS

This tunnel is completely submerged under water.

A grotesque shark statue here forms a five-foot wide circular opening. The shark's mouth is brimming with teeth, and the circular corridor beyond forms a ten-foot long throat infested with spikes of stone that slopes sharply upward through the murky water. The corridor ends at a stone door.

Both this shark face and the one at **C11** are identical in appearance. However, **Area C10** is purely a trap, the door at its far end false. **C11** gives actual access beyond.

**Trap:** The shark maw is a trap. A series of pressure plates exist along the throat of the shark. If stepped upon, the maw grinds its teeth as they suddenly begin spinning, and other jagged stone teeth thrust into the corridor causing 3d6 points of damage per round of activation (save for half). Only someone within the corridor can attempt to disarm the trap. Characters can either pass through the trap and face the effect, or try to disarm it while the trap is activated. The trap takes 3 rounds to complete its damage, at which point characters have a further 3 rounds before it resets. If characters swim down the corridor without touching the walls or the false door at the far end, however, they can avoid activating the trap entirely.

### C11. THE RIGHT ASPECT OF DAJOBAS

This maw is identical to that at **C10** except that the stone door at the end is not false. Anyone searching the door identifies that the door is a trick door that is only opened by centrally pivoting it. However, the weight of detritus and water beyond is such that an Open Doors check is required to move it far enough to allow a man-size character to pass through.

### C12. THE RINGS OF CONTEMPLATION

The slope of the floor from **Area C9** is such that there is only 5 feet of water on the floor in the northern half of this room as it slopes upward to the south.

This narrow circular corridor is lined with mummified corpses leaning one against the other.

The chamber is divided into four concentric rings, each of which is unadorned. There are fifty mummies leaning in the first ring, forty in the second, and thirty in the third. The final ring is bare. Each ring is linked to another by a low

archway around 5 feet high. The ceiling is 20 feet high.

The secret door is the result of a stone shape spell. Characters examining the wall notice the difference in stone. The stone is 1 foot thick and can only be opened by breaking through or the use of magic.

### Setup

Several of the mummies in this chamber have become undead through the foul Tulita process inflicted upon the builders. There are **5 bog mummies** in the first ring (A), **4 bog mummies** in the second ring (B), and **3 bog mummies** in the third ring (C). They do not leave their individual rings.

**Bog Mummies (12):** HD 8; HP 29, 22, 25, 49, 40, 35, 36 (x2), 46, 38, 42, 28; AC 2[17]; Atk slam (1d6 + bog rot); Move 9; Save 8; CL/XP 10/1,400; Special: bog rot, +1 or better to hit, resistance to fire (50%). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Tactics:** Once a character enters each ring, the mummies become aware of their presence; however, they only immediately attack if attacked, preferring to wait for a flanking position to develop.

**Trap:** The final ring (D) is a trap. A pressure plate on the floor outside the final entrance causes an adjacent mummy at the entrance to lift its arm and point at the central chamber before returning to rest. This animation is mechanical. Characters stepping into the central ring trigger the trap. The trap affects everyone within the central ring as its stone ceiling drops to crush anyone in the chamber (10d6 hit points of damage, save for half).

## C13. THE CHAMBER OF THE BECKONING FACE

A very narrow corridor curves around a corner up ahead.

The corridor is barely wide enough for a man-sized character to pass through. The door at the end of this corridor, like the one at the entrance, is the result of a *stone shape* spell. But this door is fashioned like a smiling welcome face; a narrow, almost snake-like tongue licks the stone lips. The stone is 3 feet thick and centrally pivots, linking to **Area C14**.

## C14. THE CHAMBER OF MANY ANGRY FACES AND THE SCRIMSHAW OF SUFFERING SLAVES

A wide, domed chamber looms ahead, featuring hundreds of carved faces with open mouths. The carved faces become smaller as they rise to a central face at the apex of the chamber some thirty feet above. This face has an almost impossibly wide mouth.

The chamber is 30 feet high with walls that are fairly

easy to climb due to the carved faces. Even the underside of the dome itself can be scaled due to the abundance of handholds. Waters from the caldera lake flood the floor to a few inches, but the southernmost area is free from the water. The secret door leading to the Crawl Hole (**Area C15**) is very well hidden; the trigger mechanism is hidden within the ceiling's apex mouth and is just inside its upper lip. This mechanism opens both secret doors in this room.

**Trap:** The entire chamber is an elaborate trap, designed to keep intruders at bay from the Dragon Caul beyond. When characters enter the chamber, dozens of magic mouth spells activate, shouting warnings in Tulita. Characters who do not speak Tulita can still translate the general meaning of these calls.

As the spells trigger, the doorway door to **C13** slams shut and locks, as a stone bar slots across the outer side of the door in **Area C13**. The mouths begin to spout a sickly-sweet smelling liquid, which fills the chamber at a rate of 1 foot per round until either the chamber is filled or the secret door mechanism is triggered, allowing the water to drain away to the south. The water is actually drained from vats behind the wall, and is filled with a form of the elixir used to kill the slaves and curse them with undeath. The elixir is weakened by the passage of time, though, and by mingling with the flooding herein. Characters exposed to the elixir must attempt a save or be paralyzed for 1 hour and possibly drowning. Characters exposed to the elixir at their time of death have a 20% chance of animating as a bog mummy (see **C12** above). Those brought back as undead can only be returned to life with a *resurrection* spell.

### A COMMENT FROM MATT ABOUT THE ELIXIR OF UNDEATH

One of the ways to play Swords & Wizardry is to use the 6th level magic-user spells and the 5th level cleric spells as maximums, eliminating the magic-user spells levels 7–9 and the cleric spell levels 6 and 7. In this case, when a *resurrection* spell is not available to bring back a character that was transformed by the elixir, require a combination of *raise dead* and *remove curse*.

### Setup

Three rounds after the elixir begins to flow, a huge wooden totem 5 feet in diameter and 15 feet long falls from the opening in the mouth above, stopping as its tip embeds in the center of the chamber floor. Characters immediately below the opening must attempt a save or be crushed, taking 5d6 points of damage. Characters that had climbed to the ceiling and were looking (or reaching) in the mouth must make a save or be struck by it for 3d6 damage and a new save to avoid falling 30 feet (3d6 damage) and being crushed by it below as well (5d6

damage). The totem is carved to depict how the slaves were killed.

**Six mummies** with desiccated crocodile faces stitched over their own are suspended from the totem with cruel hooks. Once the totem reaches the floor, the mummies pull themselves free from their hooks (taking 5 hp damage in the process) and attack. Three of the mummies conceal *scylla souls* (see the **Appendix**). These items enable the mummies to use a scylla's boil water attack (for more information, see the entry for the scylla in **Area V15**). The souls are hidden in the chest cavity of the mummies, who must be destroyed before the soul can be removed. Destroying the mummy also halts the boil water attack. Each mummy's bindings are treated to make them all immune to boiling water damage.

**Crocodile-Faced Mummy (6):** HD 5+1; HP 35, 21, 18 (x2), 14, 32; AC 3[16]; Atk fist (1d12); Move 6; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** boiling water attack, hit only by magic weapons, rot.

### Treasure

The scrimshaw is of very poor quality and worth only 500 gp despite its huge size.

## C15. THE CRAWL HOLE

Beyond the secret panel, a crawl hole barely two feet high curves back into the stone of the wall.

The rock in the claustrophobic space is wet with condensation from the waters of the lake above that trickle through.

The crawl hole is just big enough for a man-sized character to crawl along squeezing, but little else. If any of the characters have a particular fear of drowning or symptoms of claustrophobia, saves (at the Referee's discretion) might be in order to allow them to willingly enter this seeming death trap. This hole appears to dead end at the far end and is too small for a man-sized creature to turn around in requiring characters to crawl backwards if they fail to find the secret door at the end. It is a simple panel, hinged at its top.

## C16. THE SEPULCHRE GUARDIAN

This chamber is made of huge smooth stones. Four large gold masks hang within. Six huge bells hang from the outer edges of the ceiling forty feet above.

The floor of this chamber is free from flooding, and Characters may notice that the centermost 20 feet of it is surrounded by a circle of gold runes of magic inlaid into the stone of the floor and covered in centuries of grime. See **Area C17** below for details. The runes can be identified as symbols of warding and abjuration. If the characters spend 2 hours prying up all of the gold, it weighs 100 lbs. and is

worth 5,000 gp, but they also trigger the opening of the Caul as described below.

The bells hang at regular intervals. They are triggered by a keystone below the southernmost mask, an action that causes strikers within each to ring for 1 minute. The ringing of the bells requires a save from anyone within the room or they are stunned for 1 round and deafened for 5 minutes. While the bells are ringing, all spells have a 20% chance of failure due to the noise. The bells hang from thick iron chains and are struck by hefty stone and iron strikers set into the walls and mechanically activated.

The masks display intense anger, and each is made from solid gold. They each weigh 200 lbs. and are therefore worth 10,000 gp apiece. The masks are set within recesses, and are fixed with iron seals. An Open Doors roll is required to remove each mask from its stone housing.

The masks radiate strong magic, and the entire chamber likewise radiates magic in a lesser form. Removing even a single mask destroys the magic of the Dragon Caul below, an act that causes **Area C17** to rise from the floor. See the Dragon Caul (**Area C17**) below for more details.

### Setup

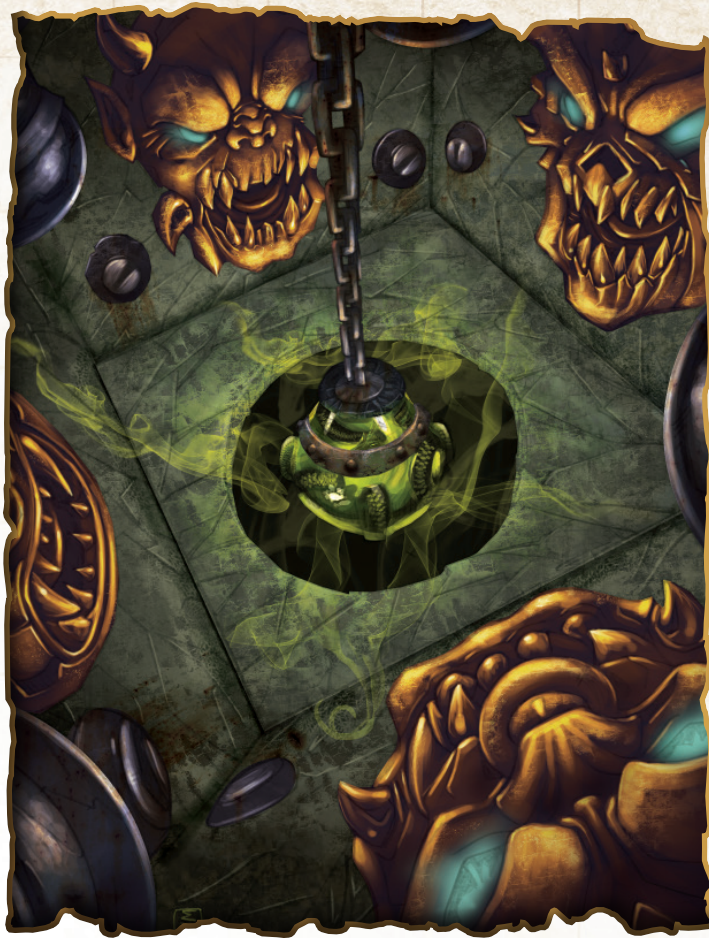
Guarding the caul is an **enormous clay golem** fashioned as an aspect of Dajobas. The golem has a huge tooth-filled, shark-like mouth that it can use as an attack in addition to its normal strike. The golem's first act is to trigger the bells (it is immune to their cacophony), after which it attacks.

**Idol of Dajobas, Large Clay Golem:** HD 12; HP 60; AC 7[12]; Atk fist (3d10+3), bite (4d10); Move 6; Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 16/3,200; **Special:** immune to slashing and piercing weapons, immune to most spells.

## C17. THE DRAGON CAUL

Removing any of the masks in **Area C16** triggers the Dragon Caul's demise. The Dragon Caul was created here many years ago using an unspeakable process long since forgotten. The caulk was fashioned from scylla flesh and the glands of huge whales and then overlaid with enchanted silver to bind it. They sealed the dragon that was drawn here in this complex and built a building up around it, including the defenses that the characters have encountered up to this point. After completing the structure, the Tulita concealed its secrets by the entombing of the servants who built it. In time, it was buried by a landslide, but the dragon lived on, aware but unable to act throughout the intervening centuries—time that has weighed heavily upon the creature's sanity.

If the characters breach the caul by removing the masks, the 20-foot-diameter section of floor in the center of the room slowly rises from below for a full minute. It rises a total of 20 feet into the chamber at which point the whole structure locks in place. If the bells are still intact they



strike again during this time as the chamber below—and its terrible, insane prisoner—rise. The breaking of the Caul has effects upon the island as a whole (see “Releasing the Dragon” below). Read or paraphrase the following description as the Caul rises:

The central floor section conceals something foul; held within the grip of four rising pillars is a sack of thick blistered flesh, a caul of huge size slung by sinews to the pillars. Within it, something begins to stir . . .

### Setup

The thing within the Dragon Caul is a slumbering **Child of Lakano Mua**, a young adult red dragon child of the great dragon, imprisoned by the Caul countless years ago and aware of its fate throughout that time. It is much reduced in power and size by its long, life-sapping imprisonment and, in that time, even the mighty dragon has lost its sanity. The magic of the Dragon Caul fully imprisons the dragon, but also fully protects it from any sort of attack until the floor section has completely risen on its pillars. Once the floor section has fully risen and locked in place, it cannot be moved again. The dragon is free to tear free the Caul, but the Caul continues to protect it from attacks until it chooses to do so. Once that occurs, the magic of the Caul is

forever broken. See below for the dragon’s tactics. Below the suspended Caul is a bare 20-foot-deep pit where the dragon had been held all these years.

**Slumbering Child of Lakano Mua, Adult Red Dragon:**  
**HD** 11; **HP** 44; **AC** 2 [17]; **Atk** 2 claws (1d8), bite (3d10);  
**Move** 9 (fly 24); **Save** 4; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 13/2,300; **Special:**  
 breathes fire, spells (2/1/1).

**Spells:** 1st—*charm person, magic missile*; 2nd—*mirror image*; 3rd—*hold person*.

**Tactics:** The Child can escape the caul the moment the magic is broken; however, if possible, it uses this time to cast spells before tearing itself free of its foul caul and breathing. It breathes fire as often as possible. The dragon is insane.

## RELEASING THE DRAGON: THE FIRESTORM

Tampering with the masks in **Area C16** is catastrophic, and breaks the magic holding one of the children of Lakano Mua. This not only presents the characters with a terrible foe, but also ruptures the island below, causing a calamitous chain of events. Immediately upon the Caul being destroyed, the island begins to shake. The buildings above ground collapse, leaving the spire of gold chamber in ruins, an act that allows the scylla (**Area V15**) to enter this area. Minor tremors slowly gather in strength until, after 4 hours, they become earthquakes as the vent area at **V17** erupts, spewing lava into the sky. Anyone still at (or below) **Areas V16, V17, or V18** at this point are utterly destroyed by the eruption.

For each hour spent on the main island after this point characters must make a saving throw or take 3d6 damage from falling debris or collapsed stone and trees. The eruption gathers strength and 24 hours after the magic is unmade, the island explodes causing the City of Gold to vanish beneath the waves and leaving only the ragged remnants of the Cloven Hoof (**Area V18**) above water. At this time anything left on the island is slain. A tidal wave tears from the destroyed island damaging shipping and coastlines for hundreds of miles in all directions.

You may wish to play out this encounter in detail, particularly if the characters are aboard ship. In this more basic version of events, the ship should survive the wave, but at a cost. Everyone aboard the ship must attempt a save or suffer 4d6 points of damage from the buffeting (including the ship). Those that fail the check by more than 5 are torn from the ship and tossed into the raging sea. Characters dragged from the ship are taken 1d6 x 10 feet away each round by the vicious riptide, for 10 rounds.

## BONDING POINTS

Bonding points are a quick, optional way for the Referee to decide the final question of this adventure – whether Captain Mercy is going to betray the characters, or become fast friends.

In this adventure, duplicity is at the heart of events, and the characters themselves may be tempted by odds or offers to switch loyalties or go it alone. Throughout the adventure are various opportunities for the characters to create a bond between themselves and Mercy’s dubious crew. These effects are expressed as bonding points. Should the characters reach the climax of the adventure with 12 or more bonding points, Mercy does not betray them and honors her bargain. This gives you an opportunity to develop her and her crew as allies of the characters in the future. Parts of the adventure are tough, particularly the Sepulchre, and having extra allies may be useful. They are by no means essential, but add a further potential aspect to this exploration adventure.

If Mercy betrays the characters, she does so when she is sure the odds are in her favor. This can be at the moment of the dragon’s release, when she and her crew match or outnumber the characters, or where Mercy arranges to attack characters either through guile or during a larger combat. Once she has betrayed the characters, Mercy does everything in her power to ensure they never leave the Veiled Isle. Conversely, if she is won over, she does everything in her power to aid them and ensure fair rewards. If subsequently betrayed, she reverts to the actions listed under her betrayal.

Cooperation rewards may be granted where the characters and Captain Mercy and her crew are present when an event occurs. Any member of either group can be present at the allotted event for the reward to be applicable.

<b>Cooperation</b> – Setting foot on the Veiled Isle	+1
<b>Cooperation</b> – Overcome Captain Smiles and her Crew, by force or diplomacy	+1
<b>Cooperation</b> – Overpower the Tribe	+3
<b>Cooperation</b> - At least one of each group crosses the Caldera Lake	+2
<b>Cooperation</b> – Killing the Scylla	+2
<b>Cooperation</b> – Destroying the Pale Queen	+5
<b>Seeing the City of Gold</b>	+2
<b>Each 5,000 gp in gold acquired</b>	-1
<b>Releasing the Dragon</b>	-3
<b>Cooperation</b> – Killing the Dragon	+5
<b>For each 20 levels of spells</b> cast upon Mercy or her crew to aid them	+1
<b>A PC takes a wound above 10 hit points</b> while directly helping Mercy or her crew	+1
<b>Each 20 hp of damage inflicted</b> on Mercy or her crew by PCs, deliberate or otherwise	-2
<b>Each member of Mercy’s crew slain</b>	-4

Points can be calculated at the end of the adventure. This can be either when the characters accidentally unleash the dragon, or when the adventure has reached a point where the Referee feels that it has logically concluded.

## EXTRA EVENTS

### Admiral Tame Follows Up

The characters may have aroused more than Admiral Tame’s goodwill and, if so, the curious ruler sends out a spy to check on the characters as detailed in the “Suspicious Minds” sidebar in **Part One** of the adventure.

### SUSPICIOUS MINDS REDUX

The *Stalker* is a small sailing vessel mastered by Lodge Servant Bartholomew Lickspittle, a longtime confidant and spy at Tame’s court. Stage the encounter with the *Stalker* at whatever time makes sense, possibly after the characters have had the opportunity to rest and regroup from their foray on the island. It is likely, however, to have its own damage from the tidal wave in addition to the damages received by the characters’ own ship and crew.

#### The Stalker

The crew of the *Stalker* is detailed here for ease of use, but they may be encountered at any location.

**Lodge Servant Bartholomew Lickspittle (Thf4/Ftr4):** HP 47; AC 2[17]; Atk +1 *battleaxe* (1d8+1); Move 9; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 9/1,100; **Special:** backstab (x2), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 88%, Traps/Tasks 30%, Hear 4 in 6, Hide 25%, Silent 35%, Locks 25%.

**Equipment:** +1 *chain mail*, +1 *battleaxe*, *ring of protection* +2, *potion of extra-healing*, *potion of invisibility*, silk cummerbund worth 35 gp, thieves tools, spyglass.

**Tactics:** Lickspittle is on a fact-finding mission. He prefers to operate from distant cover aboard his ship. He sends his devil (see below) to spy on those whom he suspects, the creature teleporting in and out. If he thinks an attack is warranted he moves in, using his crew and followers to attack while he stays back in good cover directing operations. Lickspittle has command of the three air elementals, which he also uses as fodder or spies as whim dictates. If he must fight, he prefers to fight from range and even then from behind cover. If drawn into combat he uses his axe and tries to avoid being surrounded, fleeing if he cannot do so. If reduced to 10 hit points or less he tries to bargain for his life, correctly claiming that he is worth 10,000 gp ransom to the Lodge. The details of this are left to the Referee to develop.

**The Anvil, Large Hammerhead Shark:** HD 8; HP 38; AC 6[13]; Atk bite (1d8+4); Move 0 (swim 24); Save 8; AL N; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** feeding frenzy.

**Lilin Devil:** HD 7; HP 27; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3); Move 12 (fly 18); Save 9; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** immune to fire, see in darkness, magic resistance (15%), magical abilities, +1 or better magic weapons to hit. See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Spells:** at will—*charm monster, charm person, ESP, teleport*; 3/day—*animate dead*

**Tactics:** The devil was part of a pact made by the Lodge and serves Lickspittle; the devil must obey his every instruction, up to and including self-destruction. In combat it leads with charm monster against groups, and uses her claws only as a last resort. If Lickspittle is killed, it will teleport away, freed of service.

**Air Elementals (3):** HD 8; HP 31, 34, 37; AC 2[17]; Atk strike (2d8); Move (fly 36); Save 8; AL N; CL/XP 9/1100; **Special:** immune to non-magic weapons, whirlwind.

**The Crew (Ftr4) (12):** HP 21 each; AC 7 [12]; Atk cutlass (1d6) or dagger (1d4); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 3/60. **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, cutlass, dagger, 2d12gp value in oddments, personal effects and coins.

## S1. MAIN DECK

The *Stalker* is a two-masted vessel designed for speed. A ballista and a crate of 100 bolts are adjacent to a small wooden crane used for loading items into the hold through an iron grate in the deck. A trapdoor gives access to the decks below.

## S2. TOP DECK

A second ballista and a crate of 100 bolts are near the ship's helm, which is designed like a many-headed medusa and set with a large pearl worth 500 gp.

## S3. CREW'S QUARTERS

A crowded crews' quarters crammed with personal effects, amongst which are 203 sp, 41 gp and a *potion of treasure finding* in a gourd.

## S4. MASTER'S CABIN

Locked with a good lock (–5% to a thief's Lock roll), this fine cabin has a small cot and a captain's desk.

### Treasure

The desk contains a bag of coins (209 sp, 123 gp, 54 pp).

## S5. GALLEY

A foul-smelling galley, there are several months of salted pork, two butts of water, and a barrel of weak, spiced red wine.

## S6. HOLD

The ship's hold is presently empty save for open barrels, coils of rope, and a small colony of very nervous mice.

## Alternative Ending

The adventure as written paints a rather cynical view of characters: that they stop at nothing to ransack ancient temples. Your players may discover what the Dragon Caul holds and choose to let it remain. This is a risky tactic as, once found, things tend to get found by others. However, you could continue events on the Veiled Isle as the characters slowly explore and uncover other remains, finding more gold and perhaps other dark secrets. Do they have free reign over the island, or are Admiral Tame and others bound to come calling sometime soon?

## THE FORLORN

If the characters have avoided releasing the red dragon but you feel the adventure needs a satisfying final battle, you may wish to provide an alternative “Big Bad Evil Guy” for the adventure. The Forlorn—the creature hinted at in earlier parts of the adventure—could make an appearance, driven by the number of ships, low tremors in the seabed, or the stench of so much blood.

The Forlorn is **sea serpent**. Its initial attack is to try to capsize the characters' ship and swallow those who fall into the sea.

**The Forlorn, Sea Serpent:** HD 15; HP 68; AC 6[13]; Atk bite (2d12); Move 0 (swim 20); Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 317/3,500; **Special:** swallow whole.

## CONCLUDING AND CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

*Angry Waters* throws out several threads and side-plots for your *Razor Coast* campaign. Depending how events play out, does the Lodge get to hear about the island and seek the last visitors? Do the characters learn more about Tulita treasures and other places of hidden gold? Does Admiral Tame learn of the characters sudden wealth, or their smuggling Mercy right under his nose?

All these events tease other potential adventure threads, be they at sea, in exploration, or on a political level. Perhaps the brother of Lickspittle comes seeking vengeance, or the Lodge learns of the death of their agent at the characters hands. As ever, use this story to create others as you wish.

## APPENDIX

### NEW MAGIC ITEMS

#### Mask of the Skull

This fearsome-looking mask of ivory, beaten copper, or pale wood is typically fashioned into the likeness of a human skull with a missing lower jaw, allowing the bottom



half of the wearer's face to remain visible when the mask is worn.

Once per day, after it has been worn for at least 1 hour, the mask can be loosed to fly from the wearer's face. It travels up to 50 feet away from the wearer and attacks a target assigned to it, as a 6 HD creature. If the attack succeeds, the target must make a save or die, as if affected by a *finger of death* spell. After attacking (whether successful or not), the mask flies back to its user.

### +1 Trident of Fish Command

This +1 *trident* with a 6-foot-long haft (1d6 points of damage) allows its bearer to *charm* up to 14 Hit Dice of normal aquatic animals within 30 ft, once per day. The bearer can communicate with the animals as if using a *speak with animals* spell. Animals that successfully make their save are free of control, but they will not approach within 10 feet of the trident.

### Rings of Wizardry

*Rings of wizardry* allow a magic-user to double the number of spells they can cast of a particular level. Only one *ring of wizardry* may be worn at a time; their interaction will be instantly perilous to the wearer, and the magic of each ring will counteract the other. The table below determines what type of ring it is:

1D4	TYPE OF RING
1	Doubles first level spells
2	Doubles second level spells
3	Doubles third level spells
4	Doubles first and second level spells

### Scylla Souls

These magic items are made from removing special glands from a scylla, and embalming them in a special liquid held within an iron flask. The iron and scrimshaw flask is small and curiously carved. The holder can replicate the boil water attack of a scylla (See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details) once per day; once activated the boil attack continues until the holder drops the item, ends the effect, or is slain or destroyed.

## NEW MONSTERS

### Devourer

**Hit Dice:** 11

**Armor Class:** 0 [19]

**Attacks:** claw (1d8 + level drain)

**Saving Throw:** 4

**Special:** darkvision, devour soul, level drain (1 level), magic resistance (50% and special), magical abilities

**Move:** 12 (fly 12)

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Number Encountered:** 1

**Challenge Level/XP:** 13/2,300

Devourers are the undead remnants of fiends or evil spellcasters. The remains return from the dead with warped bodies, alien sentience, and a hunger for life. Devourers threaten all souls with a terrifying, tormented annihilation. These withered corpses stand 10 feet tall but weigh a mere 200 pounds.

A devourer may draw the life force out of a fallen opponent. The soul of a creature slain by the devourer becomes trapped within its chest. The creature cannot be brought back to life until the devourer's destruction releases its soul. A devourer can hold only one soul at a time. The trapped essence provides a devourer with 1 essence point for each HD possessed by the soul. A devourer must expend essence points when it uses its magical abilities equal to the spell's level.

If a spell overcomes the devourer's magic resistance roll, there is a 25% chance the spell affects the trapped soul and not the devourer. Damaging spells destroy the trapped soul if they inflict 2 HP of damage per HD of the soul.

### Girallons of the Veiled Isle

**Hit Dice:** 5

**Armor Class:** 6 [13]

**Attacks:** 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8)

**Saving Throw:** 12

**Special:** hug and rend

**Move:** 12

**Alignment:** Neutrality

**Number Encountered:** One, 1d4, or 1d10+5

**Challenge Level/XP:** 6/400

Girallons are among the Veiled Island's most dangerous predators. They are aggressive, carnivorous, highly territorial, and incredibly strong. Their four muscular arms are capable of inflicting incredible damage. An adult girallon is 8 feet tall, broad-chested, and covered in thick, pure white fur. It weighs roughly 800 pounds.

If the girallon hits with two arms, it will crush and rend for an additional 1d8 points of damage. If the girallon hits

with all four arms, it will crush and rend for an additional 2d8 points of damage.

Girallons live in troops led by a dominant male. Solitary girallons are usually young males looking to start their own troop. Girallons are very territorial and tend to attack intruders without warning, including strangers of their own kind. Groups of girallons may attack in a line to drive prey toward a cliff or other hazard, or quietly form a ring around their target and suddenly close in.

While most girallons are little more than beasts, ancient carvings and the oral traditions of some island tribes hint that the girallon wasn't always the stupid creature it is today. According to these legends, the first girallons were men who called upon savage demon gods to gain great strength, yet in so doing abandoned their humanity. With each generation, these first girallons grew more and more savage and feral, and the same legends maintain that these intelligent girallons still dwell in the darkest part of the jungle. In addition to their cunning intellects, these girallons retain a vast appetite for cruelty.

**Girallon:** HD 5; AC 6[13]; Atk 4 hands (1d4), bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** hug and rend.

### *High Girallon*

**Hit Dice:** 7

**Armor Class:** 5 [14]

**Attacks:** 4 hands (1d6), bite (1d10)

**Saving Throw:** 10

**Special:** hug and rend

**Move:** 12

**Alignment:** Neutrality or Chaos

**Number Encountered:** One (rarely 1d4)

**Challenge Level/XP:** 8/800

High girallons are larger, more powerful versions of the common girallons found on Veiled Island. They stand 9 feet tall and weigh nearly a thousand pounds. They often dress in hides, and they fight with exotically shaped throwing axes or sacrificial knives.

If the high girallon hits with two arms, it will crush and rend for an additional 1d10 points of damage. If the high girallon hits with all four arms, it will crush and rend for an additional 2d10 points of damage.

The most dangerous thing about the high girallon is not their strength, but rather their cunning. Some High girallons have also been known to cast cleric spells, and pronounce themselves "Jungle Gods", in the language of any surrounding intelligent species.

Some primitive tribes worship these girallons as the agents of evil gods or demons, and a few high girallons have been known to breed with tribal orcs, inspiring legends of four-armed "white orcs."

**High Girallon:** HD 7; AC 5[14]; Atk 4 hands (1d6), bite (1d10); Move 12; Save 10; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** hug and rend.



HEART OF THE RAZOR  
CHAPTER TWO

# BLACK SPOT

by Gary McBride

“Gather round, lads, and listen close, or you’ll have the devil to pay! There are terrors upon the sea worse than breaking waves and lashing winds. Be wary in your wandering and wayfaring that you never travel with a man who bears the black spot upon his flesh, dark as the ace of spades. The tales you’ve been told are false, lads! The black spot does not spell doom to those who bear it. It brings terror and ruin upon whoever sails with the marked . . .”

—Last recorded words of Garis Mather before shipping out on *The Flying Fortune*

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

### The Tale of *The Flying Fortune*

*The Flying Fortune* sailed for Port Shaw with a hold full of common cargo and wine casks. A two-masted brig, shipshape and trim, she was a humble lady of the sea, crewed by a motley collection of sailors from a dozen kingdoms all united in the promise of profit and perhaps a modicum of adventure. However, as soon as the ship left port, bad omens accumulated. The captain brought his luggage aboard in black bags—black, the color of death. He chanced fate by leaving on a Friday, and as soon as the ship left its moorings, cormorants and ravens—death birds—flocked to her rigging. The men might have ignored one of these omens, but all together they heralded unavoidable disaster. Every night the old salts endlessly harangued the green recruits about their coming doom as the candles burned low.

Initially, the cruise defied the portents. The ship cut the waves without incident as her veteran captain, Colthyn Riggs, expertly navigated the Razor Sea. The weather blew fair, if blustery, and the ship made good speed. One day, a lookout even spotted a pod of spinner dolphins frolicking in the ship's wake. The crew took it as a good omen. Even the most determined of doomsayers began to believe their luck had shifted.

#### A Treasure Spotted

One night, with the moon barely a sliver in the sky, a sentry spotted strange glimmers of light off the port bow. Captain Riggs soon appeared on deck and surveyed the dark water with his spyglass. What he saw amazed him. He spied a distant sea ridge barely peeking above the waterline. A smashed sea chest surrounded by gold trade ingots lay atop it, sprayed by the breaking waves and glittering in the faint moonlight—a fortune ripe for the taking.

Captain Riggs beamed at the discovery, and ordered his men to bring the haul aboard their ship. The men cheered their good luck and toasted the captain's words with an extra ration of grog. All aboard were certain the gods smiled upon them—but they were wrong.

*The Flying Fortune* veered from its course and approached the treacherous extrusion. The captain quickly organized the ship's two longboats and personally led the party to collect the treasure. From the deck of the ship, the remaining crew waited anxiously. The ship's mate paced back and forth; he was uncertain about the entire venture, but his lot was to follow orders and await his captain's return. But his fears proved founded when a shout of alarm rang out from across the water proclaiming that the captain was injured, followed by the unmistakable sound of splintering wood. Then the lanterns of the longboats went dark.

The first mate rushed to the gunwales and used a

borrowed spyglass to peer into the night sea. He saw a broken boat, and a man floating face down in the dark water. He gave the order to bring the ship closer. The men hesitated, uncertain about approaching the mysterious reef. Much of it lay hidden beneath the waves at unknown depths—but still the ship's mate urged them forward.

#### Loyalty, Rescue Attempts, and Doom

*The Flying Fortune* approached slowly and cautiously. They dragged the man out of the water and found him horribly lacerated. He was already dead. Suddenly doubt filled the first mate. Something was out there, and both ship's boats were already launched. Years of nautical experience demanded he pull the ship back to a safe distance and wait for morning's light, but he could not bring himself to abandon the captain and his mates.

Hesitantly, the acting commander ordered the ship even closer to the exposed reef and then, with a thundering crash, the ship struck the hidden rocks beneath the water. The whole vessel shuttered and lurched. The brig grounded, and *The Flying Fortune's* fate was sealed. The sound of shattering hull planks followed by horrid screams resonated from below decks—more than merely the sounds of running aground. Something had broken into the ship and was attacking the crew below.

The first mate drew his blade and formed up what was left of the crew. They steeled their courage and waited for whatever nightmare that gave birth to the horrid noises below deck to emerge topside. When the creatures finally ventured into the moonlight, the men's courage broke. They had never seen such otherworldly monstrosities. The creatures ripped into their faltering ranks and slaughter reigned.

A young but literate sailor named Titus was clever enough to flee rather than fight to the last. He slipped into the smuggler's hold and bit his tongue. As death gurgled right outside his refuge, Titus made a panicked entry in his journal, recounting the terrors of that night.

Outside, the abominations spared no one and hauled what they wanted below the waves. They cared nothing for gold or treasure—only for the fresh flesh of sailors. The luckiest of the crew died swiftly, but a few survived to see the interior of a strange and alien ship. They were to be pitied above all others, as they were dragged to face the vivisectionist's knife.

Strangely, Captain Riggs survived, but he lost his crew that night—not to mention his eternal soul. An inhuman master now rules the captain. To ensure his loyalty, it placed the black spot on his left hand and returned him to the world of men, there to perform his master's grim bidding.

#### The Best Laid Plans of Extradimensional Invaders

No one in this age of humanity's power believed that creatures from another reality watched this world keenly

and closely. They lusted, envied, and desired what they saw. And in their avarice, they built a vessel with only one purpose—to punch a hole into the world of Lloeygr, and slip in enough arcane equipment to construct a great portal from where invasion could begin. The portal would not be constructed on dry land where men could easily see and thwart it. Instead, it would be built at the bottom of the ocean. And from there, the doom of this age would begin.

The neh-thalggu known as the Engineer came to Lloeygr as part of this dread errand. It travelled with a small crew tasked to create a foothold for invasion by countless more of its alien, merciless ilk. But perhaps the gods do care for mortal men, for the neh-thalggu miscalculated, and their ship materialized within the solid stone of a seamount rather than in open waters.

The alien ship shuddered and wrecked. The crash instantly killed all but one of the brain collector crew. The vessel would never travel again. It would seem the world was saved not by heroic deeds, but by sheer dumb luck. Or perhaps it is simply that everything—even otherworldly magic and mechanisms—runs afoul of the hidden shoals of the Razor Coast.

### ***Needs as Black as Hell***

The alien vessel's sole survivor was the only crewmember who could repair the ship and restore its weird machinery to functionality. Certain the ship was beyond repair, the Engineer could still accomplish its terrible mission, but it needed something to fix its bioarchanic devices—raw material. Living flesh and sentient brains; the more intelligent, the better!

The Engineer worked tirelessly towards its purpose, wasting nothing. Using the corpses of its fellow brain collectors, it constructed gruesome and murderous servants. Where it needed more flesh to complete the work, it captured the sea creatures that thrived among the warm and teeming waters of the seamount. The primitive nervous systems of sea life allowed for only the crudest of repairs. Using the still-functioning arcane technology of its craft, the Engineer created a nightmarish amalgam of sea-creature and neh-thalggu tissue—the vile slashers.

The Engineer also created the illusion that drew *The Flying Fortune* to its doom, and from that raid gained yet more servants and raw material with which to progress repairs. It replenished its own brain collection and even managed to create a new bioarchanic horror. It called this new creation the black leech, a control symbiote perfectly suited to enslaving human minds. It surgically implanted the black leech into the flesh of the captured Captain Riggs, leaving the telltale black spot upon his left hand at the point of incision.

The Engineer next gave Riggs a command: “BRING MORE!” Then it released the captain upon a makeshift raft with a few provisions and a small pouch of diamonds.

A passing vessel rescued Riggs and carried him to Port Shaw. Using this wealth, Captain Riggs built a new ship and christened it *The Sealord's Blessing*. *The Blessing* now plies its trade between Port Shaw and more distant coasts. It advertises itself as a humble merchantman, but the truth is far more sinister.

This ship is a passage of the damned. It is a vessel with only one purpose—to fulfill the Engineer's needs. And those needs are black as Hell.

## **ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS**

This is an adventure for four to six characters of 5th level characters compatible with the *Swords & Wizardry* rules. It is a tale told in four parts, and should provide sufficient adventure for multiple sessions. Though intended for use with *Razor Coast*, this excursion is set on an indeterminate point upon the high seas, so it could take place almost anywhere in the fantasy world of your choosing.

*The Black Spot* is an adventure of exploration and mystery. While traveling with Captain Riggs, the characters discover the wrecked ruin of *The Flying Fortune* and a hoard of gold. Using the allure of this tantalizing treasure, Captain Riggs convinces the characters to accompany him aboard *Fortune* to lay claim to its wealth. Once onboard, the Captain tries to steer the party towards his waiting master; however, characters can unmask his deception by piecing together the clues at hand. They may even deduce Riggs's true purpose. If not, Riggs leads the characters deeper into the bowels of *The Flying Fortune's* shattered hulk until they reach the deck linking the wrecked ship to the Engineer's other-dimensional craft.

## **STARTING THE ADVENTURE**

The adventure presumes that for some reason, the characters must travel by ship and then choose *The Sealord's Blessing*. Alternatively, the Referee might simply replace the *Blessing* with whichever ship they choose and have it captained by Riggs. Several possible hooks are provided below.

Once aboard and traveling, downplay the journey's beginning. This is just another voyage. At first, there is nothing remarkable about this cruise. Then, the strangeness mounts—odd fires at sea, a wrecked ship, an over-eager captain who is clearly lying about this ship, the missing corpses, signs of vicious attack, and a passage down into darkness. Here are several hooks that could be used to bring the characters aboard *The Sealord's Blessing* at the start of the adventure.

### **Hooks**

The characters' time aboard *The Sealord's Blessing* may begin as a business relationship. Experienced characters gain working passage as the ship's security contingent,

providing protection against buccaneers and sea beasts. Characters new to the Razor Sea and the *Blessing* may book passage aboard the vessel on their initial journey to Port Shaw. The characters must think themselves fortunate indeed to find a captain so worried about security that he would grant them free passage, board, and modest pay in exchange for a promise to help defend the ship.

Seasoned adventurers out of Port Shaw may book passage aboard the ship en route to perform another mission, perhaps espionage against the Pirate Confederacy or Armada. Maybe they acquired a treasure map to Garr Bloodbane's gold, and luck has it that the *Blessing's* course passes near their intended goal. What good fortune to find a captain so agreeable that he alters his ship's course to deliver them to the isle.

Perhaps this journey is merely a hop to another outpost or village to acquire new wares or seek employment in another locale. *The Sealord's Blessing* trades throughout the Razor Sea. How lucky the characters are to find such inexpensive berths aboard this merchant vessel! The captain seems unusually eager to take on adventurers. Could he be a retired adventurer himself, sympathetic to the wandering life?

Captain Riggs might hire the characters as guards for his merchant activities on and off shore. He weaves a tale of backstabbing trade partners, increasing piracy, and dangerous waters as justification for hiring the characters in this capacity. Without them, his ship is in danger as he conducts business throughout the Razor. The characters are perfect for this duty and will be handsomely paid at journey's end.

## Clues and Rumors

Cautious characters may seek information about the *Blessing* before voyaging aboard her. There is little to give a clue as to its awful purpose. *The Sealord's Blessing* also plies its trade without incident to reinforce its cover. Not every journey of the *Blessing* involves visiting the wreck of the *Fortune*. The brain collector's mission is slow, and there is time to conduct normal voyages to avoid attracting too much attention.

This journey will be the captain's third return to the wreck of *The Flying Fortune* since he received the spot. He is careful to completely change out his crew between each such journey so that no one aboard has ever seen the strange scenario that allows the captain to deliver bodies to the brain collector. Though the captain is a well-respected veteran of the sea, no crewmember has served aboard his ship for more than a few months. None of the rest of the crew is a party to this conspiracy.

### Clues

The most suspicious thing about the *Blessing* is the captain himself. Captain Riggs has not adapted well to alien

mind control. He is a moody ship's master and frequently flies into a fury at the gentlest of slights. His rages do not persist, however, and in a few moments he regains his senses. Then he inevitably sinks into one of his deep depressions and inescapable bouts of melancholy. He sits alone most nights in his cabin drinking large volumes of wine and watered whiskey. He gains a few passing moments of freedom from the relentless symbiote's control in the depths of drunkenness. At these times, all he can do is weep. Such is his sorrow and regret over what he has done and what he must yet do.

Captain Riggs does not wish to sacrifice his entire crew to the brain collector, nor does the brain collector need that many brains and bodies immediately. At this time, the aberration needs only as many as there are characters. The captain knows that the characters are adventurers and is fully aware that those who participate in so dangerous a profession arouse no suspicion when they go missing. In short, they are perfect for his master's needs.

Towards this end, when Captain Riggs first meets the characters he is overly accommodating. He agrees to let them travel free if they promise to serve as the ship's security or perform another duty onboard the ship. He is almost desperate to get them aboard his craft. The party may suspect that the Captain is unduly worried about pirate attack or perhaps hiding some other secret. It should not yet enter their darkest dreams what fate the captain truly plans for them.

### Rumors

Save for the idiosyncrasies mentioned above, Captain Riggs is a competent enough captain. *The Sealord's Blessing* is a fine vessel, shipshape and lovingly lorded. Captain Riggs has an impeccable reputation about the local ports as a fair and even-handed ship's master (which might arouse some suspicion when his behaviors mentioned above are observed at sea). Captain Riggs and *The Sealord's Blessing* are so nearly synonymous in these waters that few recall that he once commanded *The Flying Fortune*. If the characters choose to investigate the captain before taking passage aboard his ship or ask questions of the crew or fellow passengers while aboard, they may gather some useful information:

% ROLL	RUMOR
01-65	Captain Riggs is a fine and veteran captain with a good reputation.
66-94	A few dockworkers whisper darkly that the captain is troubled by some unknown affliction.  Whatever it is, no one is certain of its nature or true source.
95-00	Captain Riggs is known to have once captained a ship called <i>The Flying Fortune</i> . The ship mysteriously disappeared under unknown circumstances, and the captain alone survived. Since that tragedy, Captain Riggs has been a ghost of his former self.

## THE REAL “BLACK SPOT”

The black spot has its origin largely in literature rather than reality. Robert Louis Stevenson invented it for his seminal pirate novel *Treasure Island* (published as a book in 1883) as the symbol of a man marked for death by pirates.

However, some suggest that Stevenson based the black spot on the historical practice of Caribbean pirates giving the ace of spades to a traitor or informer. Since the card has only one black spot on it, it was meant to imply that the traitor was put “on the spot.”

## PART ONE: SHADOWS UPON A MOONLESS SEA

### SYNOPSIS

The first part encompasses the characters’ voyage on *The Sealord’s Blessing* en route to *The Flying Fortune*. This journey aboard the ship proves mostly uneventful. With little direct danger, you may wish to skip over this prologue and get quickly to the “meat” of this adventure. However, if your characters desire more roleplay or want to get to the bottom of the captain’s melancholy, this is the chance to indulge them.

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

If the characters wish to talk to the crew, there are a few colorful characters for them to meet aboard the *Blessing*. See below for details.

#### FIRST MATE BARTON “DANDY” HANDERLY

The first mate is the longest-serving member of the captain’s crew, which is not saying much. He has served just a few months aboard the *Blessing*. He is a genuinely friendly man by nature, particularly to any female members of the party. Though the captain barks and snaps at Handerly often, the first mate is the only other man aboard ship that Captain Riggs ever trusts with the wheel.

Mister Handerly has a peculiar fascination with fine clothes. He is always smartly dressed. Sailing is dirty work, and yet somehow Handerly is always finely attired and immaculately appointed. One of the reasons for this is that Handerly actually knows a tiny bit of magic. Before he became a sailor, he apprenticed under a wizard. Though he

has no real talent for magic he did learn a couple of magical means of making sure his clothes are always neat and in fine shape. He is careful to never cast a spell in sight of the crew for fear of inflaming their superstitions.

**Barton Handerly (Ftr4):** HP 28; AC 6 [13]; **Atk** long sword (1d8) or dagger (1d4) or heavy crossbow (1d6+1); **Move** 9; **Save** 11; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, shield, long sword, dagger, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, 2 *potions of healing*, silver holy symbol (of Quell, the Sea Lord), 24 gp

#### GUSTAV “GLOOMY GUS” EIDESPRECHER, ABLE SEAMAN

At first glance, Gustav must seem to be the unhappiest member of the crew. Gustav is a walking encyclopedia of portents and omens—all of them bad. Still, if one gets past his gloomy disposition, Gustav is a competent sailor and a stalwart friend to those to whom he takes a shine. Though relatively new to the *Blessing*, Gustav has been a sailor since he was a little boy more than 40 years ago!

Gustav is a thick, rough, balding man with enormous red mutton chop sideburns and a moustache. He always wears green and considers it a lucky color. If asked why, he matter-of-factly replies that it is the same color as the land. Though the superstition may sound ridiculous, in his 40 years at sea he shipwrecked twice and obviously survived both times.

**Gustav “Gloomy Gus” Eidespecher:** HP 4; AC 9 [10]; **Atk** dagger (1d4); **Save** 18; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** dagger, snuff box (shaped like a clam), 16 gp.

#### CARLTON “PREACH” RASKERS, QUARTERMASTER

At first glance, “Preach” looks like the ship’s resident parson. He dresses modestly and frequently quotes from the holy text of the sea god Quell, which he claims to have committed to memory. He always wears a humble, hand-carved wooden holy symbol. All these affectations only serve to obfuscate the fact that he is the most mercenary and amoral member of the crew.

“Preach” is a walking, talking black market. He does his shipboard job competently enough. The *Blessing* is well supplied and its crew well fed. However, “Preach” supplements his income by smuggling illegal goods from one port to the next and by selling vices to the crew. He keeps about a quarter of the *Blessing’s* complement well supplied with dragonsmoke.

If the characters try to use his services, “Preach” has a few potions and poisons he is willing to sell. He has six doses of sleep poison (save or fall unconscious for 2d4 hours; save negates) he is only too happy to relinquish for 80 gp a dose. He will not say exactly where it came from other than to claim that Quell’s bounty provides.



**Carlton “Preach” Raskers, Ship’s Quartermaster (Thf3):** HP 9; AC 9 [10]; **Atk** short sword (1d6) or dagger (1d4); **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** back stab (x2), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 87%, Traps/Tasks 25%, Hear 4 in 6, Hide 20%, Silent 30%, Locks 20.

**Equipment:** leather armor, short sword, 4 vials of sleep poison, thieves’ tools.

## PUNAWAI, ABLE SEAMAN

The first thing that strikes observers about Punawai is that he is big and blue. His fingers are webbed, and his eyes protruding and fishlike. His skin is lightly scaled and covered in jagged tribal iconography, the ink of the tattoos such a deep blue they appear to run black. He is strong and muscular, and wears little save for tattered pantaloons and a fine sharkskin hide shirt adorned with teeth, spines, and barbs from a dozen different types of sea beasts.

Punawai is an undine, an outcast Tulita whose human blood mingles with the children of the sea. By all appearances, he is a savage. His tribe expelled him for no crime other than his heritage. The “more civilized peoples” of the Razor treat him like a freak show escapee. He should be a monster, but Punawai is anything but. He is a stoic observer of the world, an old soul who hears the whispering wisdom of the sea with every wave. Only in battle, when the frenzy of the fight swirls all about him, does Punawai let go and become the monster he appears.

Punawai has little time for those who judge him because of his blood. If they annoy him greatly, he pushes the offenders overboard.

**Punawai (Ftr2):** HP 15; AC 6[13]; **Atk** +1 war club (1d6+2) or throwing axe (1d6+1); **Move** 12 (swim 9); **Save** 13; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** darkvision 60 ft., resist cold (+1 saves vs. cold).

**Equipment:** +1 war club, 3 throwing axes, 3 gp, lucky seashell

**Notes:** Punawai is a straightforward combatant. He attacks with his war club until his foes are smashed. He is a reckless warrior, and does not stop fighting until he is dead or victorious.

## ENCOUNTERS

### IN SEARCH OF THE FLYING FORTUNE

#### Background

The characters arrive on the docks of Port Shaw in preparation for their voyage aboard *The Sealord’s Blessing*. Captain Riggs is not available to greet them, but the other members of the crew—most notably First Mate Barton Handerly—are present to welcome them aboard and address the necessities: showing them to their quarters,

introducing them to life aboard ship, and other preliminary matters. After this brief indoctrination, the ship is prepared for the high seas.

#### Action

The captain is drunk, as described below, but if the party does nothing in response to being told that they are greeted by the first mate, then the ship will depart on schedule, with Barton Handerly at the wheel, and the captain privately drinking away the vestiges of his humanity:

The *Sealord’s Blessing* leaves port with the dawn tide. A fair breeze fills the mainsail and soon land is but a memory lost in the morning mist. First Mate Barton Handerly has the wheel but, with so constant a wind, finds little to do but make sure the morning shift does not slack their duties. A handsome sailor with a friendly smile—though perhaps a little overdressed in his fine burgundy waistcoat—Handerly seems a personable sort.

He even takes a moment to instruct some of the younger sailors on how to use the gunwales and rigging to maneuver the ship’s deck until they get their sea legs.

“It’s a fine day for sailing! The wind is good and steady. If this holds we’ll shave a day off our journey easy,” he says with a laugh.

The journey has begun . . .

#### Development

*The Sealord’s Blessing* is now on course for *The Flying Fortune*. The first leg of the journey is uneventful, as the characters get their bearings aboard the ship. During this portion of the journey, the characters are free to interact with the ship’s crew, as Captain Riggs remains in his quarters and laments the actions he is about to undertake. To numb his pain, Captain Riggs turns to his old friend, a nonjudgmental bottle of alcohol.

He keeps his cabin door locked and refuses to leave his quarters. Unlocking the cabin is an unwanted intrusion that elicits a fiery reaction from the melancholy captain. He rants and raves for several minutes about the sanctity of privacy before he finally calms down. Once he does, Captain Riggs profusely apologizes for his outburst and returns to his quarters where he remains until midday. When midday arrives, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following.

Captain Riggs emerges from his cabin at midday. He is a grim man dressed in a faded captain’s jacket

and heavy duelist's gloves with a rapier at his side. Despite the fair weather, he wears not even the hint of a smile. "Report, Handerly!" growls the captain.

"The cruise goes well, sir. We couldn't pray to the Sea Lord for better weather. A pity you missed the morning launch. I've rarely seen the sea so calm and . . ."

"Save your poetry for the whores back in port, Handerly!" the Captain snaps. "The Razor is no place to let your guard down, and we're a long way from home yet."

The first officer only nods. The Captain's mood seems to soften a bit. "Anyway," he continues, "you did a fine job getting us out of port. I'll take the helm for a while, Mister Handerly. You can relieve me in the evening."

The captain lets out a loud bark to his crew. "Trim the foresail to port, men! Let's see how much open water we can cover while the wind lasts!"

Soon, under the captain's expert hand, the *Blessing* splits the waves like an arrow through the wind. A fine salt spray mists over the forward decks, and sailors scamper to and fro to obey the captain's bellowed commands.

### Wrap-Up

Characters approaching Captain Riggs encounter a moody man whose demeanor changes at the drop of a hat. One minute, he is honest and forthcoming, and the next evasive and confrontational. He speaks in vague generalities and avoids answering questions, especially when they delve into sore topics such as *The Flying Fortune's* fate. If the characters press Captain Riggs about such matters, he feigns ignorance.

### FIRES IN THE FOG

Referees should run this encounter when they are ready to end the first part of the adventure.

### Synopsis

*The Sealord's Blessing* approaches *The Flying Fortune's* wreckage. It is important to remember that Captain Riggs is aware of what is about to transpire, but he is also



## ABOUT *THE SEALORD'S BLESSING*

*The Sealord's Blessing* is a 90-foot-long caravel with two masts and a complement of 45-plus sailors. The main sail is large and square. The mizzen is triangular (or lateen). Further, a foresail juts from the ship's bow off an angled foremast (or bowsprit as it is sometimes called). It is a fast ship, hampered only by a large hold, designed to carry as much cargo as possible for a vessel of this size. With an empty hold, her draft rides shallow and could theoretically navigate many rivers, though it has never been used for this purpose.

It has one weapon, a ballista, mounted on the quarter-deck near the rear of the ship. The ballista is intended as a defensive weapon and can fire flaming bolts designed to set the rigging of pursuers alight long enough for this fleet ship to escape. Notably, the custom-made ballista bolts have trident points.

The most unusual feature of the craft is its many distinctive adornments from which the ship draws its name. The ship is covered in carvings and holy etchings dedicated to Quell, God of the Seas. It is almost as if the ship's builder believed it would be less prone to mishap if every flat surface honored the Sea Lord.

The ship's figurehead is a nude mermaid reaching out as if to make an offering to the sea. The door to the captain's cabin is covered with a scene of a great bearded merman spearing a kraken that has its tentacles tangled in the ironwork hinges. The deck planks are studded with graven shells bearing reverent sea-elven inscriptions singing the praises of the King Beneath the Waves. Dolphins and tritons frolic along the length of the ship's gunwales. Even the humble belaying pins are adorned with stylized images of the mighty Sea Lord.

an unwilling participant. Captain Riggs is not feigning ignorance; he just wants to forget.

### Action

Midnight passes uneventfully on *The Sealord's Blessing*, but shortly thereafter, the ship's watch notices something strange in the distance. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following.

It is already after midnight when a thick fog rolls in and quickly shrouds the ship in mist. Visibility drops to nothing. Small gusts of wind stir and roil the mist and bring with them a slight chill unusual for these warm, tropical waters.

And then the peace and quiet of the ship shatters. The sentry calls out. "Fire! Fire on the starboard bow!" The call is loud enough to awaken even the deepest sleeper.

### Development

The sentry's alarm rouses the crew and most likely the characters too. It takes a sleeping characters a few rounds to make it on deck amid the confusion. The party can take precautions during the commotion or run headlong into the fray. Once up top, it quickly becomes apparent that there is no fire and that the sentry is actually calling out about a fire on the water some distance away. The Referee can read or paraphrase the following to describe the scene.

Sailors mill about topside, uncertain of what needs to be done. The captain is quickly on deck as well, still buttoning his faded jacket as he moves to see the cause of this alarm.

"Fire?! Where? I see no flame!" demands the Captain.

"Not on the ship, sir. Off the starboard bow!" explains the sailor.

"What? Where?" says the surprised Captain Riggs. The sailor points emphatically. The captain opens his spyglass, a finely made item adorned with a stylized golden eagle, and scans the horizon.

"I see nothing," he pronounces.

"It was there, Captain. I swear it! A fire in the mist, clear as morning," exclaims the agitated sentry.

"Calm down, my lad. I believe you. Well, whatever it was, it appears to be gone now . . ."

### *The Flying Fortune's Appearance*

At this point, characters have a 20% chance to spot the faint outline of the mist-shrouded *Fortune* stranded atop a reef some distance away. At this range, they can make out few details—it's a ship sitting high above the waterline, unmoving in the mist. If no one sees *The Flying Fortune*, then Captain Riggs claims to see it and points out the wreck. (Captain Riggs does not need to roll; he knows it's there.)

As *The Sealord's Blessing* moves in for a closer look, observers notice that the ship sits high on its the waterline, as if it ran aground against a jutting object. Signal lanterns and calls offering aid elicit no response from the wreck. No nameplate graces its bow. After some debate among the crew and perhaps the characters, Captain Riggs announces that he wants to draw alongside the ship to investigate the

strange nameless ship further. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following.

Captain Riggs assesses the situation and announces his intended course of action. “Hmmm . . . there may be survivors aboard. We should investigate. This is not part of the usual duty, men, so I’ll take volunteers. The volunteers will split any salvage we find. I’ll lead the party personally.

“I’ll not lie. This could be dangerous. Who knows what you’ll find aboard a wrecked ship here in the Razor? Mister Handerly, you’ll have command while I’m gone. So, who will join me, lads?”

The sailors look down at their shoes. An old salt everyone calls Gloomy Gus mutters something about bad omens. It seems that tonight the Captain is desperately short on volunteers . . .

Hopefully the mention of both a heroic rescue and the allure of treasure prompt the characters to eagerly volunteer for the mission. Certainly none of the superstitious sailors step forward. More cautious adventurers may try to convince the captain to wait until morning. Captain Riggs is hesitant to wait and makes a case for immediate action. He pleads that the morning tide may drag the ship beneath the surface, and any survivors will need immediate assistance. If these arguments fail to sway the characters, he even resorts to subtly questioning their courage.

## Wrap Up

The captain does not board the wreck alone. Ultimately, if the characters stand their ground and demand the delay, he acquiesces. He lets out a heavy sigh and acts as if he came around to their line of thinking. He invents a logical explanation for inaction and grudgingly waits. By morning, the fog grows thicker and the ship—once visible as a shadow—fades into utter obscurity. The overcast day appears to be doing little to burn off the fog, and it even begins to sprinkle a soft rain. At this juncture, Captain Riggs grows impatient and once again pleads his case for taking action. If the characters agreed to act as the ship’s security contingent, Captain Riggs appeals to their sense of honor and duty to defend their employer against danger—and he is heading over! Captain Riggs refuses to accept no for an answer, and he pulls out all stops to convince the characters to accompany him on a small dinghy and head out into the mist towards the shadowy wreck. Adventure waits!

## THE CAPTAIN’S TREACHERY

This adventure turns on the characters exploring the wreck with an unwilling traitor in their midst. Always keep

in mind that the captain is trying to lure them to their doom at the hands of the Engineer. The captain’s black spot is not visible—he always wears gloves. The Captain accompanies the characters through much of the ship, so the following encounter actually unfolds across the course of exploring *The Flying Fortune’s* wreckage.

## Set Up

At first, Captain Riggs tries to take command and lead the expedition to board the *Fortune*. He offers them equal shares of the salvage. Experienced sailors find the Captain’s offer rather odd. Traditionally, the Captain gets at least a double share of any salvage recovered by his vessel. If the characters question the Captain’s generosity, he concocts an explanation for his unusual offer by claiming that once they disembark from *The Sealord’s Blessing*, they are all equals.

As a rule, the Captain tries to deflect concern away from himself at every turn. He issues dire warnings to be prepared for anything, and implores the characters to keep their wits at all times. Captain Riggs pretends to be the characters’ ally as he lures them to their deaths or to enslavement at the hands of his alien master.

## Background

Riggs knows nothing of the current dangers aboard *The Flying Fortune*. He knows nothing about the gryphs who’ve made the crow’s nest their roost, or the rotting upper deck. And he certainly does not know that a sailor named Titus trapped himself in the smuggler’s hold that fateful day, long ago.

## Action

Captain Riggs desires to keep the actual search of *The Flying Fortune* to a minimum and get down to the lower hold as soon as possible. He is afraid that any amount of time spent searching the ship will lead to his ruse coming undone. He wants to get his victims onto the brain collector’s craft, so they can be captured and processed.

Wary or suspicious characters who carefully watch the Captain may get the feeling something is amiss. They may wonder why the Captain seems very familiar with the ship, despite his words about exploring this “strange vessel.” When called out on this discrepancy, the Captain lies by claiming that his first command was aboard a ship almost identical to this one. This is a blatant lie.

The captain is under alien mind control, but he is no fool. He realizes that the characters are dangerous, and would rather not face them all at once. Given the chance, he tries to arrange situations where the characters can be taken on one or two at a time. In his mind, the best solution would be to not face them at all and to let the Engineer dispose of them.

## Development

### A Time to Poison

The brain collector also provided the Captain with a very unusual poison that could come in handy. This powerful paralytic shuts down the body while leaving the mind active and undamaged. Captain Riggs has coated his blade with this poison. Ideally, the Captain waits until the characters are fighting either the strangle weeds in **Area P-2** or the vile slashers in the Engineer's craft. While the characters are absorbed with battle, he stabs his victim with his poisoned blade.

### Liar, Liar

Of course, there are numerous opportunities for the characters to realize that the Captain is lying to them. First, there are handkerchiefs monogrammed with the captain's initials within the captain's quarters (**Area 4**). He dismisses such evidence as a coincidence, but if the characters become belligerent or demand he disarm, he attacks instead.

Second, the characters can confront Captain Riggs if they find the smuggler's hold (**Area 19**) and discover Titus' journal that explicitly names the captain as the master of *The Flying Fortune*. Once again, Captain Riggs attacks once his story falls apart.

Third, the captain is not a perfect liar. He sometimes tells the characters a bald-faced, direct lie. They may become suspicious about his changing stories, or even believe that the captain is under an enchantment of some sort, although the enchantment blocks him from discussing this fact. In fact, the captain does nothing to encourage the suspicion that an alien mind controls him.

If the characters detect the mental control (the black leech, for example, is magical) and challenge him on these matters, he attacks. Similarly, attempts to free him from the brain collector's mental control—for example, by casting *remove curse* on him, see **Area C-8** for more detail—provoke Captain Riggs to attack.

If the Captain falls below 0 hit points, the black leech crawls out of his left hand, leaving behind a trail of black mucus and coagulated blood. Once the black leech leaves his body, Riggs is no longer under the Engineer's control. Before he dies, Captain Riggs immediately breaks into tears. He is almost mad from the terrible things he was forced to do and the horrors that he witnessed. He begs the characters to slay him and see that he gets a proper burial far away from this cursed place.

He can relate a few pieces of useful information before expiring. He shares the story of *The Flying Fortune* and how he came to be the Engineer's slave. He can also draw a crude sketch of the ship's layout. He knows that the brain collector is a bizarre and powerful abomination, though he is unsure of what it is. He also knows that the Engineer can cast convincing illusions. He has seen the vile slashers in action and knows how vicious they can be.

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

### WHAT ABOUT MAGIC?

#### Thought-Detection Magic

Reading Captain Riggs's mind will not differentiate the alien controller's voice from Riggs's own thoughts, but depending on what the outside circumstances are, the mind-reader might hear a monologue in which the thoughts jump around a lot. The important thing is that the mind-reader will not hear a voice giving orders to Riggs, he will hear Riggs thinking the orders himself, as if they stem from Riggs's own mind. The potential clue is that Riggs could appear to be changing his mind a lot, and without any reason behind it. His thoughts will seem to be disjointed and arbitrary if the alien mind-control is affecting him at the time.

Deciphering the Engineer's "voice" from the captain's own thoughts is an impossible task.

#### Breaking Enchantments

The black leech implanted in the captain's brain is the Engineer's masterpiece of bioarchaic mind control, inserted into his brain during a long and painful surgical procedure.

A *remove curse* spell has a 2% chance per caster level of killing the leech and severing the link between Captain Riggs' mind and the Engineer. *Dispel magic* and an *anti-magic field* stop the leech from receiving any of the Engineer's new commands, but these spells do not expel the leech, nor do they stop it from forcing the captain to obey those commands it already passed on to him.

**Captain Colthyn Riggs, Captain of The Sealord's Blessing (Thf6):** HD 6; HP 22 (6 current); AC 4 [15]; Atk +1 rapier (1d6+2 plus poison); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** back stab (x3), black leech implant (+2 bonus to saves, immune to ESP and charm-related spells), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 90%, Traps/Tasks 40%, Hear 4 in 6, Hide 35%, Silent 45%, Locks 35%.

**Equipment:** +1 leather armor, +1 rapier (named *Alessandra*), 2 potions of healing, ring of protection +2, two doses of neh-thalggu poison (save or paralysis for 2d4 hours; save avoids), bull's-eye lantern, spyglass (adorned with a golden eagle), thieves' tools, 22 gp, 1 diamond worth 400 gp.

Before emerging upon the deck of his ship to see the fire in the mist, the captain poisoned his rapier with the Engineer's toxin. The captain is a competent backstabber, and with his poisoned blade he believes he has a good chance of taking down an enemy with a sharp stroke. Therefore, his preferred method of dealing with the party

is to divide them, ambush a single character, and then drag the still-living victim down the hole to his master. If for any reason he is forced into a stand up fight, he strikes once and then flees, hoping to lure his pursuers down into the alien craft. He willingly engages in protracted battle only within the confines of the alien vessel. Remember that the captain's mind is not his own. The Engineer controls the captain, and would gladly sacrifice this servant to achieve its own ends.

### Wrap Up

If the characters are captured and processed, Captain Riggs returns to *The Sealord's Blessing* alone and in a panic. He spins wild stories of sea monsters (describing the monsters as being shark-men) and then orders the ship to flee. At the next few ports, he'll rotate out the crew. Once he has a fresh batch, he takes on new passengers and repeats the deadly ruse.

### HELP FROM THE SHIP?

It is possible that the characters, especially if they've been beaten back or had a party member captured, return to *The Sealord's Blessing* without Captain Riggs. Run this encounter with Barton Handerly in that eventuality.

### Action

First Mate Barton Handerly is suspicious but if persuaded (either through an impassioned plea or an outright lie) he may agree to send a party to accompany the characters back to the ship. He is particularly susceptible to pleas to aid the captain.

If persuaded, Mister Handerly handpicks a small contingent of six of the "stouter lads" led by Punawai (the undine warrior) to aid the party. These armed sailors accompany the adventurers into battle. Though brave, these sailors are not fanatics. If half of these sailors fall, the rest flee for their lives. First Mate Handerly refuses to go himself, unless magically compelled. No coward, but a man of responsibility, he was ordered to stay with the ship and he intends to follow that order. If the characters compel Handerly, he proves a competent enough combatant.

**Sailors (Ftr2) (6):** HD 2; HP 12 each; AC 7 [12]; Atk short sword (1d6) or short bow x2 (1d6); Move 12; Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, shield, short sword, short bow, 20 arrows.

## PART TWO:

# THE FLYING FORTUNE

This part covers the *Fortune* herself and is designed to be both a mystery to determine *The Flying Fortune's* fate and a scene of horror as it becomes all too evident that something monstrous happened aboard this ship. *The Flying Fortune* is devoid of much real danger. Instead, this section of the adventure should focus on establishing an eerie mood and foreshadowing the true horrors to come.

As the party explores the wreck of *The Flying Fortune*, play this up. Try to keep the players on edge. Doors squeak loudly when opened. Decks creak and bend. When a character reaches to investigate something a small crab leaps out and scuttles away. These small starts presage the true horrors that lurk in the lower hold and even further below.

## PEARLS OF THE SEAMOUNT

This sea-covered mount has no name amongst the terrestrial folk, but tribes of locathah once named the mount Zarna Vestria, which roughly translates to the Trident of the Sea King. The Trident is an accurate name, for the mount has not one peak but three, and together they form a dangerous navigational hazard.

Though dangerous to ships, sea life thrives here. Coral festoons the mountain slopes—stag horn, brain, and pillar—forming an atoll, a great ring that circles the peak and makes navigation even more treacherous. Fish teem in the millions—a riot of color and diversity schooling and shoaling all about the crusted seamount.

Rays, eels, squids, octopi, shrimp, crabs and mollusks of all sorts are also common sights amongst the reefs. Native to the Trident is a great population of blue clawless spiny lobsters. Almost unknown elsewhere, they infest the slopes of the mount. These lobsters are delicious and would fetch a high price in port (5 gp per lobster). But the true wealth of the Trident is not in lobster meat. Instead, at the base of the seamount lives a population of ancient giant oysters. Within their shells lie 30 of the finest black pearls in all the Razor Sea. These especially fine specimens are worth 300 gp each.

Alas, harvesting the pearls is dangerous indeed. The venerable oysters themselves are no threat, however, another common resident of the Trident is the ravenous **blood snapper**. These small, cantankerous fish congregate in vast swarms. Their preferred prey is other sea life, of course, but they also have grown accustomed to devouring sea birds that sometimes perch when the mount's peak is exposed. As a result, they have learned that when something falls in the water, it means food. Thus, anyone diving into the water has a 25% of attracting 1d6 swarms of these beasts.

**Blood Snapper School (1d6):** HD 4; HP 18 each; AC 7 [12]; Atk swarm (1d6); Move 0 (swim 24); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** none. See the **Appendix** for more details.

The characters have, in this adventure, no reason to pursue this trove or even a hint of its existence. A pearl diving expedition braving blood snappers, the Kane-moni (see below) and other aquatic terrors could make a fine side quest for Referees inclined to expand upon it.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER

### LORD OF THE MOUNT

#### Background

The largest hunter on the submerged mount is a massive sea predator that appears in a small number of Tulita legends as the **Kane-moni** (literally the “Man Swallower”). The locathah of the Coral Kingdom named it the Aranalima (the “King Snapper”). Whatever the preferred name, this creature is a massive predator greater than 30 feet long and weighing almost 4 tons.

This legendary fish is a great bony monster with a blunt head, a snapping jaw and tough armored scales as strong as plate mail. The beast is utterly fearless and attacks anything smaller than itself without hesitation. The armor of its massive ram-plate of a skull is covered with scars from the countless prey that have met their end in its maw.

#### Setup

During the day, the Lord of the Mount descends into the depths and haunts the lower reaches of the sea mount feeding on eel and squid. At night when the moon shines, it emerges from the depths to feed on the fish that swarm in the shallows. It does not purposefully seek out surface dwellers to consume, but it’s not picky. Anything in the path of this eating machine is fair game.

#### Action

If the characters row directly to the wreck of *The Flying Fortune* and never enter the water, it is unlikely they attract the attention of this prehistoric predator. However, an ill-fated path might send their boat directly into the side of the creature as it surfaces to feed. In that event, it immediately attacks the presumptuous offender. Alternately, the characters may spot it approaching slightly off a direct collision course. If they do nothing, it simply swims past, content to eat what flows into its mouth, though it comes within a few feet of their boat. However, what party traveling in a dinghy at night and faced with a monstrous fish on a near collision course simply does nothing? The Kane-moni attacks anyone who attacks it first.

**Kane-moni:** HD 10; HP 52; AC 0 [19]; Atk bite (2d8+2); Move 0 (swim 12); Save 5; AL N; CL/XP 12/2,000; **Special:** swallow whole. See the **Appendix** for more details.

### Development

There is only a 25% chance to encounter the giant fish over the course of the entire adventure, and if it is encountered, there is a 25% chance that it is hungry enough to have any immediate interest in the characters as food. However, once the giant predator has spotted a potential food source, it will lurk nearby for 1d3 days, looking for an opportunity and getting hungrier. On each of those 1d3 days, it has a 1in6 chance of getting the urge for a snack. If all of these die rolls result in no encounter, that’s fine. During the period of time when the fish is lurking, if it spots what it considers to be (in its fish brain) a significant weakness in its prey, it will attack regardless of the die rolls.

### THE SEAMOUNT

*The Flying Fortune* sits atop the tip of a seamount in the open waters. As the characters approach the wreck, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following. This description assumes that the characters approach at night. If the characters approach by day or have darkvision, Referees should modify the description to indicate there appear to be holes in the hull below the waterline. See **Area 20**, below, for additional information on this underwater way to enter and leave the ship.

When ready to describe the Seamount and *The Flying Fortune*, Referees may read or paraphrase the following:

The sea is calm and black, like a great dark mirror. All around, a dense fog swirls. Every stroke of the paddle stirs the mist, creating small wisps and eddies that tremble and die away in the all-enshrouding bank. Pushing through, the ship soon comes into view.

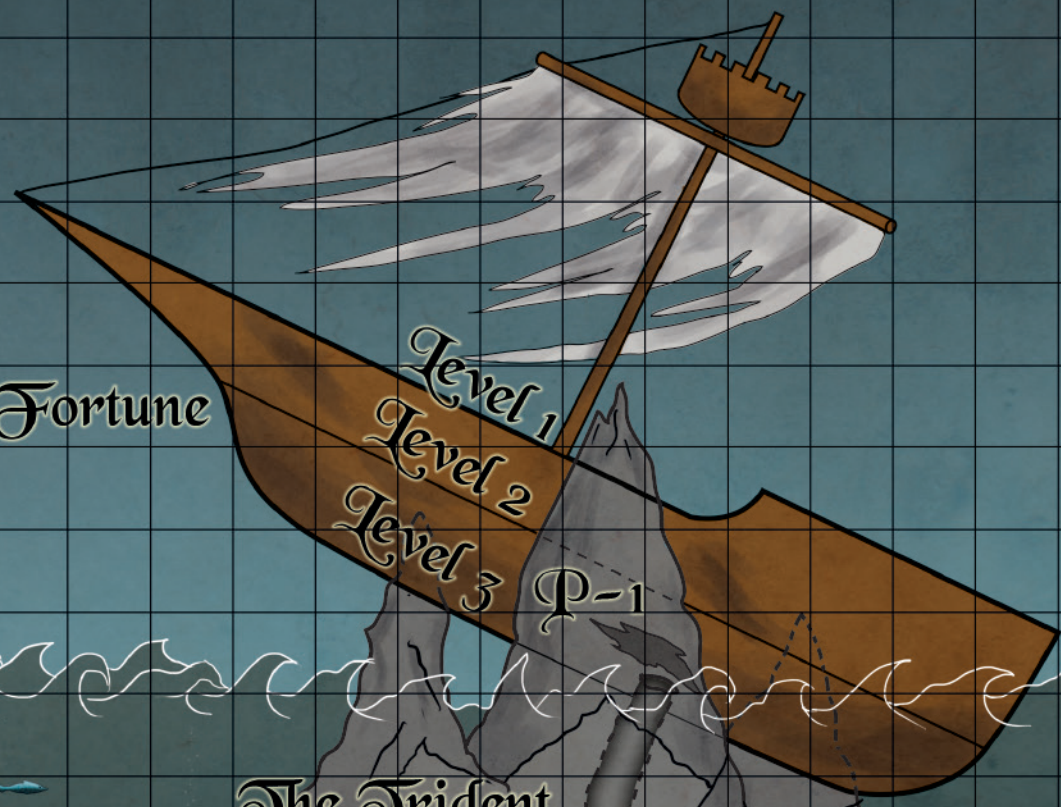
It’s a brig by the look of it, two hundred feet long at least, and in rough shape. The sails are so tattered and torn as to be scarcely there. The rigging is frayed and rotten. The main mast still stands straight and tall, bearing a rugged crow’s nest, but the mizzen has snapped and collapsed across the broken quarterdeck. The quarterdeck itself is obscured by the tangle of debris.

The summit of a great stone peak lifted the ship out of the water. Beneath it a seamount extends down into the black depths, almost as if some massive giant used the submerged mountaintop to impale the vessel.

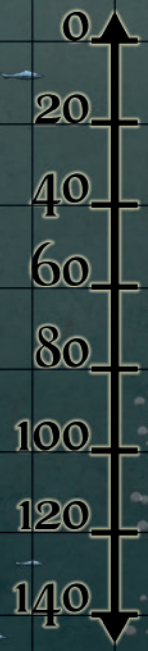
As the dinghy comes close enough to board her, there are no signs of life. There are not even corpses; it is as if the entire crew simply vanished.

Upon the bow, this doomed ship’s nameplate is

# The Flying Fortune



# The Trident



P-1

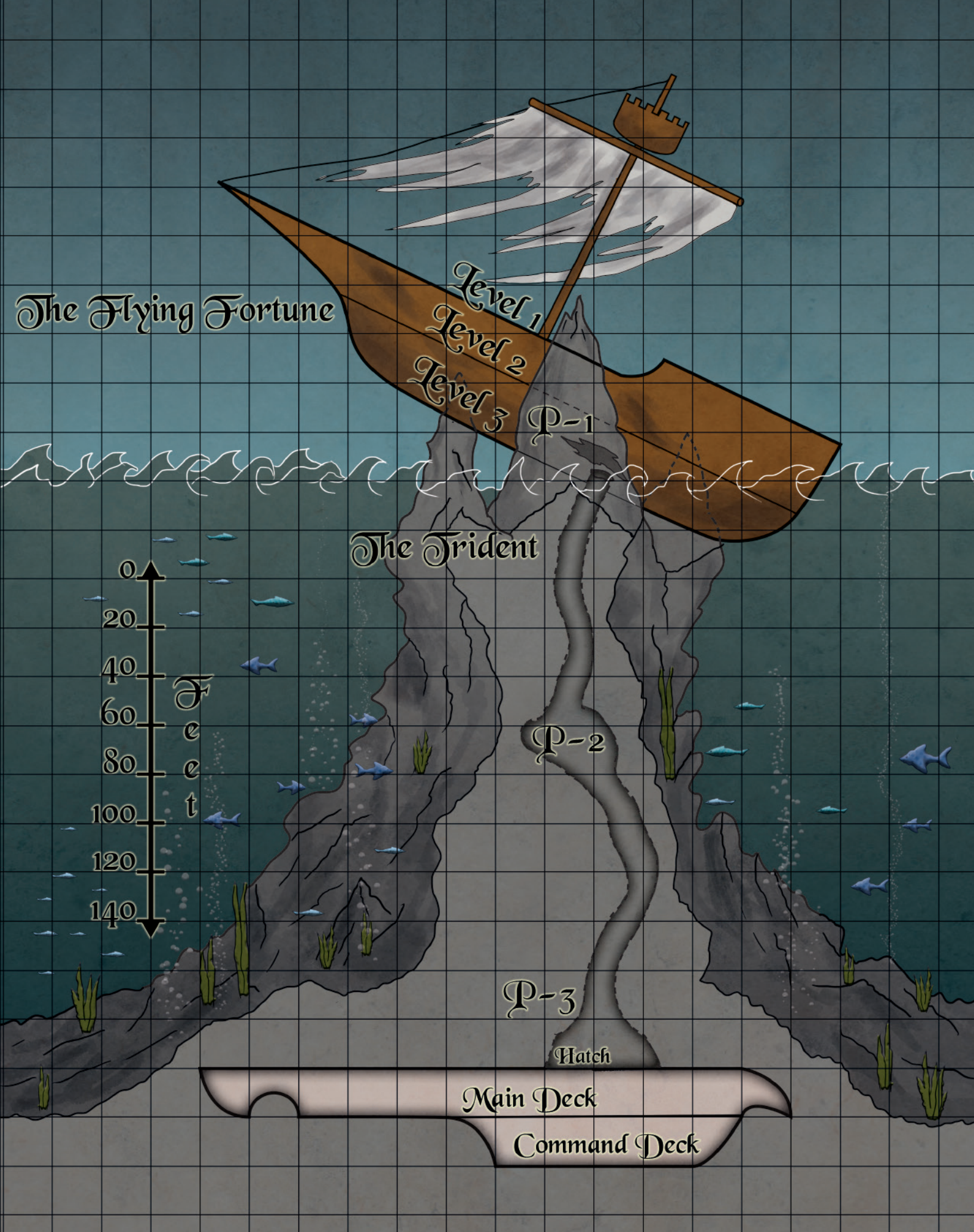
P-2

P-3

Hatch

Main Deck

Command Deck





# The Flying Fortune

1 square - 10 feet

## Level 1: Upper Decks



## Level 2: Amidships



## Level 3: Lower Holds



conspicuously absent—whether removed by the whims of nature or the intentions of others remains to be seen. Rocky protrusions brace her sides offering access to the top deck.

## THE FLYING FORTUNE LEVEL I: UPPER DECKS

The easiest way to get up onto the deck of the ship is to climb the small seamount peak—the central point of the Trident—where it emerges. The seamount's protruding summit is easy to reach from a dinghy. The seamount with its gentle slope and many handholds has become a natural ladder onto the upper decks.

Thanks to the wind, it is also surprisingly dry and devoid of slick algae. As long as the climbers move carefully, they reach *The Flying Fortune*. Once atop the summit, they emerge on the upper deck at **Area 1**.

Suspicious characters may try to board the ship some other way. There is nothing to stop them; however, the two lesser seamount peaks are much steeper and do not reach all the way to the deck. The ship's hull is fragile in places and may not support the full weight of climbers. The easiest alternate way is to somehow tie a line to the back of the quarterdeck (**Area 5**) and climb up. Of course, magical methods, such as *fly* or *levitate*, are an option for some parties. However, delaying the characters boarding the *Fortune* only delays the adventure, so this task works best if Referees grant access readily.

### AFFECTS OF WIND AND WAVES

Age, rot, and water have taken their toll on *The Flying Fortune's* infrastructure. The ship's doors are all simple wooden doors stuck from swelling.

#### 1. ENTRY POINT

Perched above the main deck in the crow's nest (**Area 3**), **4 gryphs** patrol for intruders or a meal. They have darkvision and keen eyes, and they likely spot intruders making their way onto the craft.

**Gryph (4):** HD 2; HP 11, 10, 8, 6; AC 7 [12]; Atk 2 claws (grab), bite (1d6); Move 9 (fly 15); Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** darkvision 60 ft., grab, implant eggs. See the **Appendix** for more details.

#### 2. MAIN DECK

The upper deck of *The Flying Fortune* is a shambles. Wind, rain, and salt corrosion have turned what was once a fine vessel into a debris-strewn wreck. Fallen and tangled

rigging, splintered masts, broken beams, and rotten wood create a natural obstacle course. The entire deck is difficult to cross easily.

#### Action

There is some peril to moving about the deck. A portion of wooden planking on *The Flying Fortune's* main deck is rotted through. (This is marked by dotted lines on the map.) It creaks and strains if any character walks upon it. It only collapses, however, if two characters walk upon the weakened wood. Once it gives way, anyone standing on it falls through the equally rotten middle deck and slams into the hull of the lower hold (**Area 18**), taking 3d6 points of damage from the fall (save for half).

#### Development

If any character falls through the rotten deck, the subsequent crash makes a tremendous amount of noise, alerting both the gryphs in the crow's nest and the jade bats within the lower passage (**Area P-3**). The gryphs eagerly attack, especially if the characters have been separated, wounded, or cast into disarray. On the other hand, the jade bats watch and record what they observe before reporting their findings to their master.

#### Wrap-Up

Keen observers can be garner additional information among the mess.

#### No Danger of Sinking

Characters moving about the decks can see that though the ship is in poor shape, it has not been submerged. The captain's voiced concerns about the ship being eventually submerged are unfounded. This wreck is stranded high and dry.

#### Nothing New

Characters should also realize quickly that this is not a recent shipwreck. This ship has been here at least a few years. The Trident is not exactly a common place to visit, but trade ships occasionally come near enough to see this phenomenon. Yet the blatantly obvious wreck has remained unexplored all this time. The answer to this enigma is actually quite simple: anyone who investigates this ship encounters its guardians—both above and below. So far, there have been no survivors.

#### A Great Battle was Fought Here

Characters may also discover that a savage battle took place here. There are crossbow bolt heads scattered about the debris. Wood shafts and feather fletching are largely rotted or blown away. There are a few broken blades and splintered spear hafts amongst the jumble as well.

#### Down Below

The tarp which once covered the cargo hold is long gone. From there, characters can look down and see **Area 12**. Anyone investigating the mainmast notices claw marks and impaled spearheads sunk deep into the wood. A ruined

ballista at **Area 5**, allows that character to deduce that the crew desperately fired a ballista bolt and pinned an enemy to the main mast with a single powerful blow. The pinned creature freed itself from the impalement and continued its brutal rampage. Whatever attacked this ship was monstrous.

## 2A. MIZZENMAST

This small stub of wood is all that remains of the ship's second sail. The bulk of the mast fell into the sea, partially crushing the railing of the quarterdeck, **Area 5**. If anyone bothers to closely examine the broken pole, they find that this mast was not cut down or collapsed from age, but was instead blasted apart by a lightning bolt. This was the Engineer's doing.

## 3. THE CROW'S NEST

A small family of **4 gryphs** roosts up in the crow's nest. These four-legged wicked avians resemble large black crows the size of eagles and have four legs instead of the usual two. They usually settle for fish, crabs, or whatever carrion the sea disgorges, but are particularly anxious to supplement their diet with the fresh, bleeding flesh of humanoids.

### Set Up

The crow's nest is a large wooden platform atop the main mast, surrounded by a wooden palisade. Two men could comfortably stand on this platform and keep watch over the ship and its surroundings. There used to be ladder up to the crow's nest, but it broke off some time ago and is nowhere to be seen.

Climbing up is therefore challenging without some sort of aid. The crow's nest is almost 60 feet off the deck.

### Action

Though they are only animals, the gryphs are cunning, and wait for the right moment to attack. They peek through breaks in the crow's nest fencing and remain perfectly still while spying on the characters.

If the characters separate, fall through the floor, or otherwise make a disturbance while investigating the upper decks, the gryphs seize that moment and attack. These hungry predators are impatient. If the characters spend ten minutes on deck without triggering any of the preceding conditions, they attack anyway. The taste of man-flesh is just too delicious to resist.

The gryphs are ambush predators. However, once battle is joined they employ only one tactic: swoop, attach and implant. If reduced to 5 hit points or less, a gryph flees back to the nest. If the nest is then assaulted, they flee from the ship and the seamount.

## 4. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

This massive compartment once served as the captain's private suite, the officer's dining room, and as weapon storage. At first glance, the large ransacked cabin seems empty of anything but broken furniture degraded by 7 years of exposure to the elements. There are signs of a great struggle everywhere—broken furniture, gouges in the wood, and stains of long-dried blood. There is a broken full-length mirror along with a busted sea chest and the tattered remains of what was once a fine wardrobe.

### Action

If the clothes are examined, there is still an intact set of monogrammed silk handkerchiefs. They are soiled and tattered in places, but the letters "C.R." are visibly embroidered on the handkerchiefs. Attentive characters may note that these are Captain Colthyn Riggs' initials. If confronted with this "evidence," the captain cocks an eyebrow and scoffs. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following:

"And what does that prove? C.R. are common enough initials. In fact, there is another sailor aboard the *Blessing*—Carlton Raskers—with the same initials. Christopher Robinson is no longer with the crew, alas. There was a fine sailor. He retired to Port Shaw. Perhaps he's missing his hankies . . ."

Scattered near the busted sea chest there is a pile of gold coins—312 gp altogether. Whoever or whatever raided this ship was not interested in gold.

## 5. QUARTER DECK

The quarterdeck of *The Flying Fortune* was once the heart of both defending and controlling the ship. There were two ballistae mounted on swivels as well as the great wheel that turned the rudder. Now the wheel is simply gone, slashed off its mount and rolled into the sea. Both ballistae are ruined—one destroyed so completely it is virtually unrecognizable. The second is simply wrecked and points down toward the main mast, where the evidence of its last fired missile still resides.

There are signs of battle everywhere, but what is completely lacking is even a single corpse. Perhaps that is understandable. Years of exposure, the carrion feeders, the beating sun, and the caustic salt could have reduced it all to nothing. It is, however, eerie to realize that the characters stand in the very spot where at least a dozen men died, and there are no traces of it save for the occasional crossbow head and a few links of battered chainmail.

## 6. CREW'S MESS

The battle seems to have been largely over before it got to this compartment of the ship. Further, the walls and

ceiling are comparatively intact. As a result, this room is not in terrible shape. A couple of tables are intact, and the chairs still sit upright. A few broken wine bottles and scattered cards reveal what at least some crewmembers were doing before something called them to battle. There are also 4d6 gold pieces scattered atop the tables and on the floor.

Two unlocked hatches in the floor of this chamber open to reveal stairs that connect the crew's mess to the crew quarters. The stairs are detailed below as **Areas 9** and **10**.

## 7. GALLEY

This was once the ship's galley. There are several breaks in the wall and deck boards above. Time, salt, and spray have not been kind to this abandoned kitchen and now it is in utter shambles. Any food that may have once been stored here has completely moldered away long ago.

### Setup

There remains one additional item of interest here. On a previous journey to the *Fortune*, the captain ambushed a victim and knocked the poor lad cold. The captain's victim now numbers among the brine zombies in the craft beneath. However, when the victim fell, he dropped a belaying pin he took from the *Blessing* to use as an improvised weapon. That belaying pin is still in the galley underneath the only intact table.

The belaying pin is one of the distinctive items from the *Blessing*. The handle is carved with a stylized version of the Sealord (a bearded elderly merman holding a trident). This small club is proof that someone from the *Blessing* has been aboard the *Fortune* before.

### Development

If confronted with this pin, the captain acts shocked. He disputes that the belaying pin originated on the *Blessing*. He attempts to dismiss it as a strange coincidence, or attributes the belaying pin to the *Blessing's* sister ship, which is a fabrication.

The Captain stammers for answers to this riddle, but the more he talks, the more likely he trips himself up. Should the characters catch him in a lie, the flustered captain shrugs his shoulders and provides no further commentary about the belaying pin. This item is not proof of treachery, but it should make alert characters suspicious that not all is as it seems. Likewise if they recognize the name of the ship as being the one he was previously captain of, he merely states that their information is faulty and remains tight-lipped about it even if caught in a lie.

## 8. FORE DECK

The top deck of the ship thrust high into the air after the wreck. The angle here is steep enough that debris has not

accumulated. However, there is nothing here of any interest, value, or danger.

# THE FLYING FORTUNE

## LEVEL II: AMIDSHIPS

A fair portion of this middle level of the ship has rotted away, and now lies in a great heap in the lower hold. Still, there are a few points of interest.

## 9. WATERLOGGED STAIRS

These stairs are rotted and waterlogged. Beneath them lies a shallow tide pool collected in a rock depression in the seamount, home to a great nest of spiny sea urchins. The urchins feed on the algae that grow in the pool.

The urchins have effectively created a **pit trap** onto poison spikes. There is no way to disable this trap. It is best avoided. Anyone falling through stairs takes 2d6 points of damage from the fall onto sea urchin spines (save or paralyzed for 1d4 hours; save avoids).

## 10. SAFE STAIRS

This sturdy set of stairs has mostly avoided the worst of the weather and is still stout enough to support several people at once. They groan and creak a little, but they hold.

## 11. CREW QUARTERS

This large compartment is empty save for a few tattered hammocks, deep gouges cut in the floor, and a few spots of old dried blood. Two stairs lead up to hatches in the overhead. (See **Areas 9** and **10** for more details.) A single door leads to the amidships hold. Though there was obviously a great slaughter here, there is surprisingly little remaining evidence. The location is sheltered enough from the rain and winds to expect at least some remains, but there is nothing—not even a single bone.

## 12. AMIDSHIPS HOLD

This large open space was once used to hold excess cargo that could not be stowed in the lower hold. It was also used for extra bunk space if that was ever needed. Now it is a rotten place. Untold amounts of seawater have seeped through. However, unlike the upper deck where the floor has grown treacherous, here the floor has given way. The map marks a large section of the floor that is simply gone. The cargo hatch to the lower decks is still present, but warped and rotten.

Two hatches in the deck lead to ladders that descend to the lower deck. The ladders are still sturdily mounted to the ship's hull.

### 13. SHIP'S STORES

There is actually a tarnished nameplate with the words "Ship's Stores" still held to the door by a single resolute nail. Something tore the door open, breaking the lock that once secured this chamber. It hangs only slightly open, still attached to the frame by its battered hinges.

Inside, this room is a jumble of boxes, hundreds of feet of rope, a spilt bag of nails, a leaking barrel of pitch and many less identifiable moldering items of uncertain age. Water has leaked through the battered hull and done a lot of damage. However, a sound 100-ft. rope still hangs in great coils from hooks on the wall.

#### Additional Treasure

There is a small crate pushed in the corner that contains a dozen still-sealed brown glass bottles without labels. The bottles hold high quality cognac shipped as a special order. Without labels, the liquor is still worth 10 gp a bottle. If the characters somehow identify the vintage, this is a case of collectible triple-distilled brandy worth 50 gp a bottle to the right buyer.

### 14. CABIN

This is a small cabin, empty save for a few broken pieces of barely recognizable furniture.

### 15. CABIN

This is another small cabin. There is a minor breach only a few inches across in the northern bulkhead that has allowed water to seep in and form a pool on the floor. The time spent moldering in this salt pool means that very little is left.

### 16. CABIN

This is the most intact of the three small cabins. The bunk in this cabin is completely intact, having been spared both weather and monster attack. It is tightly made and looks usable.

#### Additional Treasure

A passenger stashed a small bag of coins a passenger stashed under the bed. It contains 12 pp and a small silver butterfly pendant (value 120 gp) bearing the inscription "for Rutherin."

### 17. NAVIGATOR'S CABIN

The door to this cabin has been ripped from its hinges, and the frame splintered by something large and heavy. The navigator's cabin served as both his quarters and the ship's chart room. Like the rest of the ship, it is now a wreck. When the navigator heard the breach in the lower hold, he did not flee to the upper deck. Instead, he began to gather

his precious charts and prized golden sextant hoping to salvage them. That delay allowed a vile slasher to corner him in this cabin. A few telltale signs of that grisly struggle are all that remains today. The slasher ripped the door off its hinges demonstrating that an extremely strong and incredibly large creature several times wider than a man tore through this room.

#### Additional Treasure

The shredded charts are stained with gore and arterial spray. They have largely rotted away from the rain and weather that now leak through the broken portholes. However, the golden sextant (worth 520 gp) lies hidden among the refuse. The charts and writing would be valuable, but they have all been ruined by wind and exposure.

## THE FLYING FORTUNE

### LEVEL III: THE LOWER HOLDS

This part of the ship is wrack and ruin. The lower holds join *The Flying Fortune* to the Engineer's vile craft.

### 18. LOWER HOLD

When the vile slashers penetrated the vessel, they rampaged through this hold, destroying everything in their path. This hold was full of common trade goods and carefully wrapped wine bottles set in wooden racks. Now there is only devastation—bent metal and broken glass. However, one intact item of some value hides amidst the debris.

If the characters search through the rubble, they may find a small iron strongbox buried under the debris. It takes 6 minutes of work to reach the box. The loud racket may attract the interest of a jade bat (see **P-3** below) during one of its routine sweeps of the passage. The bat does not attack, but instead hides and records the characters' activities before reporting back to the Engineer.

If the box is recovered, the characters find it locked with a stout padlock. The padded strong box holds five carefully packed bottles of wine. They are a rare '75 Vyrathea vintage. The Vyrathea Vineyards are famed for including rare healing herbs in their wine. As a result, each full glass of this wine is treated as a *potion of healing*. However, given their age, the alcohol is more potent and one glass of Vyrathea counts as three for purposes of determining whether the imbiber becomes intoxicated (-1 to attacks for 1d4 hours; save avoids). There are four glasses of this healing wine per bottle and each bottle is worth 225 gp.

### 19. SMUGGLER'S HOLD

*The Flying Fortune* was not just an honest merchantman but also a part-time smuggling vessel. The hold is small, as

smuggling was never the *Fortune's* primary business. But if the duties on a few luxury or exotic items were deemed unreasonable, they could be stowed here away from the eyes of the harbormaster.

The smuggler's hold is not empty. It contains a skeleton dressed in tattered rags holding a short sword and a tied black leather book. It wears a gold ring on its bony finger adorned with a stylized eagle (worth 5 gp). A spilled bottle of ink, a melted candle, and a rotted feather quill sit beside him. This is all that remains of Titus Weatherby.

## Background

Titus was with the first officer on deck when the sailors made their last stand. By sheer luck, he survived the first rush of the vile slashers and managed to dive through the cargo netting. He didn't escape unscathed. One of the slashers gave him a nice gash along his leg. He limped to the lowest hold as he listened to the slaughter unfolding above him. He knew the secret of the hold and secured himself inside, intent on waiting out the monsters and then making a break for land.

He survived his immediate injuries, and stopped the bleeding by using his own shirt as a bandage. The sounds of combat died down, and there was no doubt in his mind who had won the day. He could hear the monsters prowling the ship looking for survivors. One of them even came close enough to scrape one of their blades across the wood of the hidden hold. They never found him, though, and after a few hours he was certain they had returned to the hell from whence they came.

Only then did Titus realize a terrible truth. There was no way to open the smuggler's hold from the inside. It was never intended to carry passengers. He tried to force it open, but his wounds and dehydration sapped his strength. After hours of vain effort, he passed out from exhaustion and died of thirst several days later. But at least he escaped the horrors of the brain collector's vessel.

## Setup

By design, these holds are not easy to find. A wooden knothole must be carefully pressed to open the panels and gain access. If one does not know what to look for, it can be tricky to locate the exact knothole.

## Action

A roll of 1 on 1d6 spots the knothole. It is a testament to how well the mechanism was made that even though time and moisture have taken their toll on the rest of the ship, it still functions perfectly.

If the characters discover the hold, they find the remains of Titus Weatherby, along with his journal. If they turn to the last entry in it, read or paraphrase the following:

It is certain then. After hours of trying, this hold is stuck fast, and I'm at the very end of my

strength. It was never made for passengers, only for smuggling. I was clever enough to hide from the foul beasts, but not clever enough to secure water and provisions. What are the chances that someone finds the *Fortune* before thirst and the bleeding from my opened leg claim me? Not good, I think.

It's a hard thing to look death in the face, but I reckon I must. My only regret is that my mother will never know my fate. If anyone finds this, please see that Caroline Weatherby in Sander's Landing receives this journal. She'll want it, and it's of no real value to anyone else.

I guess I should be angry at the captain. It was his greed that drew us to this place. When he spied the treasure through his eagle-glass, he went mad for it. But I can't. Old Riggs was a good man. Still is, I hope. And he was only doing what was right by us. The gold was a trap. Aye, I see it now. A trap to lure us into the arms of these devilish creatures.

I don't know what they are or where they came from. I don't know what they want. They didn't look entirely alive to me. They lumbered like I've heard that the walking dead do. Maybe that's what they were. But in those stories, the undead always have a master. I wonder who is the master of those vile slashers?

I'll never know, I guess. And in the end what does it matter? I can only pray to whatever gods may be listening that someday, in some manner, proper vengeance will answer the carnage brought upon the *Fortune's* crew today.

Keep me, Lords of the Sea.

— Titus Weatherby

## Development

### *Confront Captain Riggs with the Journal*

The journal reveals some interesting facts. A captain named Riggs, owner of a fine spyglass decorated with an eagle, commanded *The Flying Fortune*. The ship was lured onto the rocks by the sight of treasure, and boarded from below by beasts Titus dubs the vile slashers. This is fairly damning evidence that Captain Riggs is somehow involved in this conspiracy. If the characters confront Captain Riggs with this revelation and demand an explanation, the captain

has no answer. Instead, Riggs attacks with his poisoned blade and tries to make a break for the neh-thalggu ship hoping to lure the characters down to their deaths. See **Part One** for more details about the captain's treachery and how it might play out.

### Confront Captain Riggs with the Ring

If the characters are subtle, they can actually learn a thing or two from the captain. If they show him Titus' ring, the captain immediately recognizes it. Captain Riggs considered Titus to be almost like a son. He never saw his body amongst the dead, and always hoped that somehow against all odds the lad escaped. Even in his enthralled state, the captain is briefly visibly rattled if such definite proof of Titus' death is presented to him.

His emotions get the better of him. His eyes briefly mist with tears. His countenance grows more grim than usual, though a strange blankness quickly reasserts itself. No attentive character can miss the strangeness of the moment.

### Wrap-Up

#### Fulfill a Lost Boy's Dying Wish

Titus was an unusual sailor. He was literate, and the son of a successful merchant. His mother made him promise before he went to sea that he would practice his letters and keep a journal of all his travels so that he could tell her about them when he returned. In a frail and dying hand, Titus paused from trying to escape to keep his promise to the mother he would never again see. He made one last entry in his journal in the darkness of this hold using a scavenged candle and the ink and pen he always kept with him.

Titus wrote the entry hoping that it would someday make its way back to his mother. She still lives in a small fishing village on the mainland of Akados. She would be eternally grateful to learn the fate of her boy, though the stingy woman offers little in the way of reward.

### Become a Publisher

Anyone who takes the time to actually read the journal in full learns something else of interest. Titus was a very bright boy, and a competent writer. Detailed in this book is the tale of a young man's life of adventure on the high sea. It is a poignant story of coming of age upon the Razor Sea and the eventual tragedy of a death by matters utterly beyond his control. It would actually make a fine novel, if anyone were so inclined to expand upon it and publish it.

## 20. FLOODED HOLD

The back sixth of the lower hold is actually beneath the water line and flooded. This seawater wreaked destruction on the integrity of the ship, and a substantial portion of the hold's decking is missing. Therefore, this is another way to enter or exit *The Flying Fortune* if the characters don't mind a little swimming.

### Action

The flooded portion of the hold also holds a deadly surprise. A nearly intact, barnacle-encrusted sea chest sits in about five feet of water. In fact, this is one of the Engineer's more amusing projects. Using its dark sciences and the flesh of a polymorphous sea slug found in local reefs, the Engineer created an **aquatic mimic**. Worse, the tissues of the creatures the Engineer used regenerate with terrifying speed.

This unique aberration lurks in flooded hold and feeds off the crabs and small fish that seek refuge here. An adhesive pseudopod attacks anyone who approaches or tries to retrieve the sea chest. Once the killer sea chest grabs a victim it retreats to deeper water and tries to drown the hapless victim. The beast has nothing of value.

**Mimic (Aquatic):** HD 7; HP 35; AC 6[13]; Atk smash (2d6); Move 2; Save 9; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** glue, mimicry.

## 21. THE BREACH

This is a hole in the bottom of *The Flying Fortune*. It was made 7 years ago when the vile slashers burst up through the hull of the floundering ship and began their murderous work. It is not flooded and leads down into darkness within the seamount itself.

## PART THREE:

# DOWN INTO DARKNESS

## SYNOPSIS

This brief section covers the passage that connects the *Fortune* to the neh-thalggu craft. The dread and mystery of the wreck above start to be replaced with otherworldly strangeness and weird horror.

### P-1. TOP OF THE PASSAGE

The lowest hold of *The Flying Fortune* contains the breach where the so-called "vile slashers" first entered that doomed ship 7 years ago. Past the breach is a wide tunnel that leads down into the solid rock of the Trident. When the neh-thalggu ship materialized upon this plane, it did so within the solid stone of the seamount. Not only did this cause tremendous damage to the vessel, it also embedded the craft within the seamount. The Engineer jury-rigged a repair to a damaged *five-barbed stave* (a neh-thalggu wand capable of burrowing through stone). He used the device to burrow to the top and create the illusion that lured *The Flying Fortune* to its doom. That passage still remains and is the only way to access the neh-thalggu craft.

## Action

If Captain Riggs is still with the characters, he feigns ignorance about the tunnel. He claims that it looks like a lava tunnel and seems eager to convince the characters to venture down. The tunnel walls are relatively smooth and too precise to have been formed naturally. Captain Riggs is hiding something about his knowledge of the passage.

The passage at the top is completely lightless and very wet. Water seeps through the walls, making them quite slick. Fortunately, handholds are plentiful. There are plenty of anchor points at the top, and a secured rope makes the descent much easier. Algae and tangles of tough seaweed grow everywhere. If the characters are short of rope, there is some in the ship's stores amidships.

The passage descends about 220 feet into the very heart of the mountain.

## P-2. WELCOME GARDEN

Roughly in the middle of the passage is a wide spot choked with seaweed and other bizarre aquatic growth. This is no natural formation. The Engineer purposefully widened the passage here and cultivated **2 plots of alien strangle weed** to capture intruders. There are patches on either side of the tunnel.

## Action

The strangle weeds do not attack the captain since he bears the black spot. However, they eagerly entangle anyone else who enters their 20-foot reach. Once per day the Engineer sends his jade bats (see **Area P-3** for additional details) to see if the strangle weeds caught anything. Strangle weed is not a versatile combatant. It attacks and tries to constrict its foe to death. The weed has one oddity. When it reduces a victim to zero hit points, it wraps them in fronds and injects them with special spines keeping the victim alive. The strangle weed fights to the death, continuing to attack and take more prisoners until it is destroyed.

**Strangle Weeds (2):** HD 4; HP 17, 23; AC 5 [14]; Atk fronds (1d6); Save 13; Move 3; AL N; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** camouflage, constriction, surprise on roll of 1–4 on 1d6, resistance to fire (50%). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

## P-3. THE VIRIDIAN PORTAL

The passage terminates at a hemispherical cavern that is far too regular in shape to be natural. In the center of the cave, set into the floor, is a portal that looks as if it is made of jade or perhaps green glass. Though it seems like it should be quite fragile, the portal turns out to be as hard as steel.

## Setup

This is the hatch into the neh-thalggu craft. It has a very strange alien lock on it that can be picked by a thief at—15%

penalty. However, if Captain Riggs is with the party or if any of the jade bats have reported back, the door simply opens automatically at the party's approach. This is the Engineer's doing. The neh-thalggu has not gone to all the trouble to get these victims to its lair only to lock them out. It is only too eager to invite these "guests" inside its craft. In other words, the spider welcomes the flies.

When the portal opens, the entryway is still not entirely clear. A hazy green miasma covers the circular hatch. It is completely transparent and does nothing to harm the characters. In fact, anyone who passes through the miasma immediately benefits from having a *cure disease* cast upon them. This miasma has also been attuned so it blocks seawater from entering, thus preventing the craft from flooding. The miasma disappears if the portal is completely wrecked or the craft is powered down (see Room C-7 below).

Passing through the miasma gives the Engineer an exact count of the people who enter its vessel. Destroying the miasma lets it know that someone is at its door. Either way, it activates the trap in C-1 immediately.

## Action

If the characters haven't encountered them before, there are 3 strange constructs hanging from the hemispherical cavern. These bat-like beings appear to have been carved from fine jade. Strange writing covers their bodies, and instead of eyes they have one cyclopean lens crafted from faintly glowing green glass. The bats are almost completely transparent, and thus blend in beautifully with their surroundings. They can also fly through the viridian portal as though it is intangible, even when it is closed.

The **3 jade bats** hide and begin recording the moment the characters pass through the portal. Once the characters pass on, they fly to the Engineer and report. They attack only if discovered.

**Jade Bats (3):** HD 3; HP 13, 15, 10; AC 5 [14]; Atk bite (1d3 plus 1d6 electricity); Save 14; Move 9 (fly 12); AL N; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** acid spit, camouflage, darkvision 60 ft., holographic recording, self-destruct, resists cold and fire, vulnerable to electricity. See the **Appendix** for more details.



## PART FOUR

# NOT OF THIS WORLD

### SYNOPSIS

At last, the characters enter the brain collector's craft. In the upper levels, this adventure was a mystery requiring investigation. Uncertainty as to what foul fate befell *The Flying Fortune* drove the characters forward. As the characters take their first step into the neh-thalgu craft, matters shift into the realm of weird horror. Each chamber of the obviously otherworldly craft reveals new perils and new strangeness. Referees are encouraged to accentuate the weird. Remember that nothing aboard this craft was intended for use by any race native to this world. Even the doors, which unless sealed and locked by the Engineer, slide open on the approach of any sizable biomass, should seem strange and disturbing to the party. How much more so the Engineer's extradimensional technology...or the Engineer itself?

### LEVEL I: MAIN DECK ENCOUNTERS

#### C-1. COLLECTION CHAMBER

Located directly below the Viridian Portal (P-3), this ovoid chamber is nothing more than a trap. The chamber is 20 feet tall and a beam of light shines from the Viridian portal down to the floor below. The chamber itself is made of what looks like brass with regular braces that curve up towards the portal in the center of the ceiling. There is a circular door far larger than any human would need in the southwest portion of the chamber. In the center of the eastern wall, there is what looks like a column of liquid glass banded with clockwork brazen fittings.

#### Setup

The Engineer has rigged this chamber to be a non-lethal trap. After all, he wants to collect his specimens alive for unspeakable experiments. Anyone stepping into the beam of light floats gently to the floor.

#### Action

As soon as the first character lands on the floor, the column begins to hum with purpose and bubbles circulate through the liquid glass. One round later it begins leaking a thin gray poison gas that causes anyone failing a saving throw to fall unconscious for 1d3 hours. The poison does not affect jade bats, zombies, anyone implanted with a black leech—though the captain feigns being affected—or the neh-thalgu. The door to the southwest is sealed, but it unseals once the **trap** finishes discharging.

The trap's flaw stems from the Engineer's arrogance and

### THE MIND OF THE ENEMY

The Engineer is not a passive opponent. The neh-thalgu knows the characters are coming to visit thanks to a weak telepathic link to the characters through the black leech. While the range is limited, the Engineer has been in broken communication with the captain since the *Blessing* drew within a few miles of the seamount. It has prepared its bizarre vessel for intruders, positioning minions at key points throughout the ship.

The Engineer is not omniscient, however. It only knows exactly what the characters are doing if it has a jade bat recording their whereabouts. It also knows if a portal is opened or if any of its various sensors are activated. The text notes when the characters encounter sensors that feed information to the Engineer.

If the Engineer has a weakness, it is overconfidence. The characters are not the first group to be lured to the vessel. Between the strangle weeds, its jade bat spies, the enslaved captain, the collection chamber (**Area C-1**), and the so-called vile slashers, defeating visitors to its craft always proved easy. Until the characters defeat or bypass those measures, the Engineer observes, but only feels eager for new brains to enter its grasp.

However, once the adventurers enter **Area C-6**, the Engineer abruptly realizes things have gone horribly awry. Though the characters don't realize it, they now have access to the Engine room (**Area C-7**). If they smash the lightning columns in that chamber, the Engineer loses the ability to use its workshop—which requires power—and also loses its personal defenses, rendering it starkly vulnerable. It also means the Engineer is unable to complete its mission. If they smash the lightning columns in **Area C-7** then through random violence they may have accidentally saved the world from a brain collector invasion.

To avoid this catastrophe, the Engineer tries to lure the adventurers away from **C-7**. After the characters enter **Area C-6**, it seals the portal into that chamber and places a lightning field over it. These fields are costly. They drain massive amounts of energy and resources, but the Engineer has no choice. It must protect the engine room. It then orders the brine zombies in **Area C-9** to immediately attack the characters. It is also willing to sacrifice one of its precious jade bats to lure them into **Area C-8**, hoping to drop the party into the leech tanks.

If these ploys fail, the Engineer's game grows desperate. It is luring the characters deeper and deeper into the ship, closer to itself. Every piece of gear in this vessel is irreplaceable and precious, and yet it sacrifices them all one by one to destroy these invaders. After the characters defeat the vile slashers, tables turn and now the adventurers become the invaders. They are no longer victims being lured to their deaths, but have launched an assault that the Engineer must stop at all costs.

disdain for humans. The Engineer did nothing to hide or protect the trap. It sits on the eastern wall of the collection chamber, completely unconcealed. It clicks, whirrs, and bubbles as it begins to function, thus giving the characters a chance to disarm it. The Engineer did not bother to hide the device because it believes the inhabitants of this world are too stupid to be able to do anything about its powerful and advanced technology. The fact that there might be a thief in the party clever enough to simply shut it off did not occur to the Engineer's self-perceived superior intellect. Disarming the trap requires a thief to make a Traps/Tasks check with a –20% penalty. If the trap is defeated, the Engineer takes the characters' potential threat more seriously.

If the characters linger too long in this chamber after disabling or avoiding the trap, the vile slashers in **C-5** storm this chamber. From this point forward, the Engineer is no longer trying to take prisoners.

## Development

It is possible that the gas trap in the collection chamber actually works. If the characters fail to defuse it, everyone could fall unconscious. If so, the adventurers are in grave danger, and it becomes unlikely that all of them survive. The Engineer sends the vile slashers to collect the victims, strips them of all their possessions, and deposits the naked characters into individual holding cells in **Area C-16**. It waits until the characters regain consciousness (the knockout gas interferes with its tissue processing procedure) and then selects a random character 1 hour later. The vile slashers drag the chosen character into the vivisection laboratory and restrain him or her. The process of metabolizing the character into every component the Engineer requires takes hours, removing 2 points of constitution every hour. The screams echo throughout the craft. The processing ends when the victim dies (constitution reaches 0). After finishing off one character, the Engineer sends its lackey to fetch another until it "processes" them all.

## C-2. VAULT OF MANY DOORS

This is a curving hallway with four circular doors. It is made of the same brass material as **Area C-1**. There is nothing here of any danger or value. However, if the vile slashers from **Area C-5** are dispatched from the collection chamber, they must pass through here first.

## C-3. MEAT LOCKER

This chamber is a gallery of nightmares. The ceiling is adorned with several dozen bent iron hooks. Close examination reveals that they were manufactured from common items taken from *The Flying Fortune*. A corpse hangs from almost every hook. There are several dolphins, a tiger shark, a manta ray, and a large deep-water squid as tall as a man. Right alongside hang a merman, two tattooed Tulita fishermen, and what must be—judging from the

bones—a dwarf. There are less identifiable chunks of flesh, bone, and meat dangling alongside the identifiable bodies. All of these corpses show evidence of delicate surgery. All are missing their brains. Most of these creatures were vivisected—the surgery performed upon them while they were still alive.

This room is cold. Ichors from dozens of corpses coagulate on the brazen floor. In the back of the chamber, the room is twisted. Sharp jagged needles of stone and brass jut out, evidence of the devastation inflicted upon the ship when it materialized inside the seamount.

## C-4. SHOOTING GALLERY

This chamber is a wreck. The jagged stone ripping through the ship's brass superstructure that appeared in only one corner of the adjoining meat locker dominates the entire western wall (see **Area C-4** for identifying the ship's means of arrival). Debris covers the floor and minute, sharp spines of jagged stone pierce every flat surface. Traces of long-dried, blue-green ichor. This is neh-thalgu blood from where the Engineer's kin died. Any trace of what this chamber's original function was is no longer evident.

## C-5. CAVERN OF BLADES

This large, empty, cavernous compartment is a guardroom housing the reanimated remains of the Engineer's crewmates, now his personal shock troops, called the "vile slashers" in Titus' journal from **Area 19**. When not on duty, they sit motionless waiting for the Engineer's commands.

## Background

To create these **3 vile slashers**, amalgams of dead neh-thalgu tissue and sea creatures, the Engineer patched missing chunks of flesh with sharkskin and sea urchin spines. It replaced missing claws with the rending pincers of the giant crab. It drove a jade spike, which functions as the control rod, into each of their central heads. The spike animates them and makes them obedient to the Engineer. The technology of this rod is far beyond anything of this world and do not function beyond the confines of the ship, but each 8-inch-long piece is worth 300 gp for its precious stone and odd crafting.

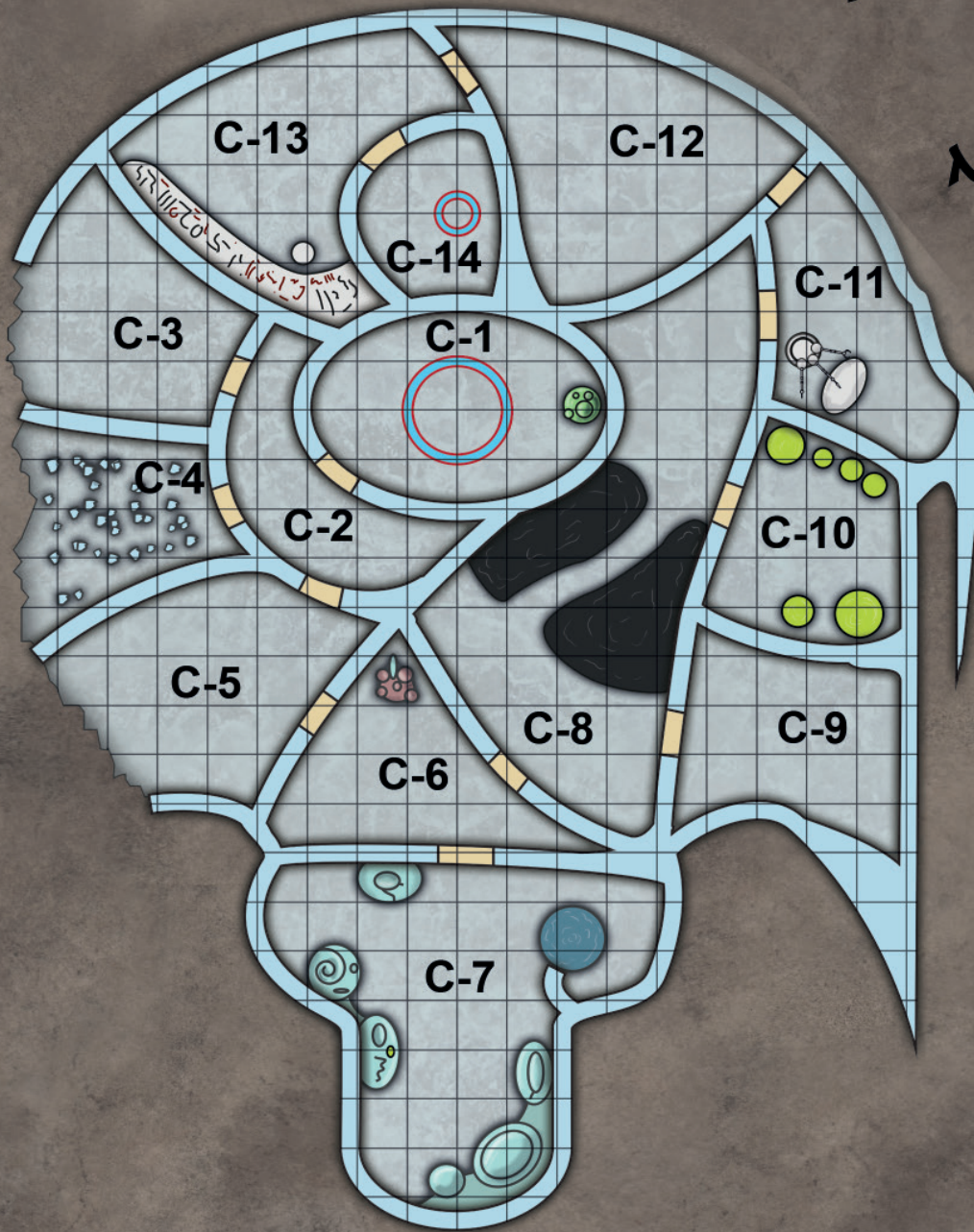
## Action

The spike allows the Engineer to see and speak through these monstrous vessels of dead flesh. If the characters have been particularly destructive and have already discovered that the captain is under alien control, the Engineer may use the slashers to speak with them. The slasher speaks in Common with a whispering raspy voice. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following statements made by the Engineer:

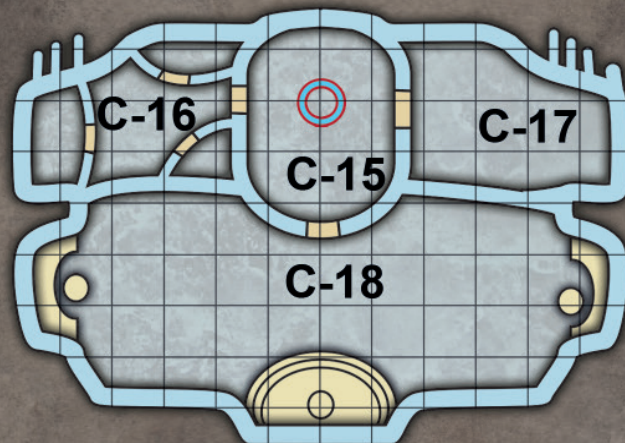
"Wait. I am the Engineer. This is my ship.

# The Neh-Thalggu Craft

1 square - 10 feet



Main Deck



Command Deck

There is no need for us to war. I was attacked by the outsiders without provocation. We are from different worlds, you and I, and so our ways are strange. I mean you no harm. Go and never return. Soon I will repair my ship and leave your world forever. Soon we will be only memories to each other. Please go.”

This statement is full of lies. If the characters read Titus’ journal, they know that the Engineer lured the *Fortune* onto the rocks without provocation. If they saw the corpses in the meat locker, they know this thing has no regard for human life. And from the horrid slaughter perpetrated upon the crew of the *Fortune* and subsequent visitors, they know this monster is not misunderstood.

The only reason the Engineer makes this statement is because it fears the adventurers may have the upper hand. If the characters go now, the Engineer lets them leave. But soon afterward, they hear more tales about ships disappearing near the Trident. The Engineer will never leave until its grim and disastrous work is completed—or until someone kills it.

If the characters confront the Engineer with these lies, the Engineer does not argue. The Referee may read or paraphrase the Engineer’s reply.

“If you will not leave, then you will die. And know this . . . I will use your still living flesh to craft my masterpiece. You will all be part of the gate. And as your mind boils away in slow agony, your last pain-mad thought will be the realization that you helped make your world mine forever . . .”

And with that, the **slashers** attack. They employ only one tactic, charge and kill. They fight to the bitter end. The monsters assault everything that enters this chamber except for the jade bats, the Engineer, and anyone implanted with a black leech.

**Vile Slashers (3):** HD 10; HP 36, 29, 51; AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (1d6+2), slam (1d8+2), bite (1d8+2); **Save** 5; **Move** 6 (fly 12); **AL** N; **CL/XP** 11/1,700; **Special:** immune to sleep and charm spells. See the **Appendix** for more details.

## C-6. ALTAR OF THE BRAIN GOD

This triangular chamber has three doors. The doors on the east and west wall are unlocked. However, the southern door buzzes and hums with a protective field. In the northern corner, a large brass column covered with strange writing and topped by a massive dome displays the image of a brain. There are strange projections and what looks like a small niche at the bottom of the column.

This area does not serve a religious function; however, characters may mistakenly come to the conclusion that this is an altar to the brain collector’s deity and that it places

offerings in the niche. The truth is that the ship’s vending machine has been unplugged for some time, and it is completely out of neh-thalggu snacks.

### Action

The southern exit from this chamber is locked, sealed, and electrified with a humming protective field. This alone should pique the characters’ interest. When a creature touches the entryway receives an electrical shock that does 4d6 points of damage (save for half).

Mounted on the wall to the left of the door, about 6 feet off the ground is a plain golden circle about a foot across. This object is not electrified. This bioarcanic lock lowers the field and opens the door. This lock can be opened with the *golden control stave* found in **Area C–11**.

### Development

As the characters breach this chamber, the Engineer grows genuinely worried. The intruders were never supposed to get this far into the craft. The time has come to take desperate measures. If the captain is still with the characters when they enter here, he tries to sneak attack a spellcaster with his poisoned blade while the characters are engaged in disarming the trap.

## C-7. CHAMBER OF THE CEASELESS STORM

When the characters gain access, they find a dazzling variety of incomprehensible alien machinery on the other side of the door. Great columns of glass and brass writhe with lightning that seems almost alive. The energy creeps up and down the columns like serpents of liquid energy. Strange crystals pulsate and move. Incomprehensible writing hovers in front of the columns like ghosts. Everything here is so strange and unfamiliar that it defies explanation or comprehension. To the characters’ eyes, this chamber must appear as the heart of a great lightning storm that never ceases.

However, the characters can easily understand one thing. At the very back of the chamber in a small glass cage sits a single blue sapphire (worth 5,000 gp) of remarkable size and purity. This is the entire chamber’s control crystal, and it ensures that this machinery functions.

### Action

Coursing through the weird machinery of this chamber are three balls of living lightning. These are the living embodiment of the quasi-sentient energy that powers this ship. If the characters attempt to touch, damage or steal anything here, the **3 living lightning** creatures attack.

**Lightning Quasi-Elemental (3):** HD 6; HP 29, 18, 32; AC 1[18]; Atk slam (1d6); **Move** 0 (fly 24); **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 9/1,100; **Special:** electricity, globe, immune to electricity, resists fire, vulnerable to water, weapon resistance (50%). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

## Wrap-Up

If the control crystal is removed, the ship powers down. Lights turn off. The circular levitation columns shut down. Portals no longer automatically open. A moment later pale green emergency lightning comes on bathing the entire place in a phosphorescent twilight.

Removing the control crystal only temporarily powers down the vessel. If the sapphire is returned, the power comes back on and the living lightning creatures spawn anew within 24 hours. However, once the sapphire is removed, the characters can smash the very fragile machinery without danger. Turning the machinery into a heap of scrap metal permanently destroys the power generator.

If a wand touches one of the glowing columns, it may recharge it. If this is done, the wand regains 2d12 charges. A wand cannot be overcharged this way, and only one wand can be recharged per day using this equipment. At the Referee's discretion, other magic items that use charges may also be recharged using this equipment.

## C-8. LEECH TANKS

The portal into this chamber is unlocked. This large compartment is dominated by a large vat of inky black liquid set into the floor. A curving path traverses over the liquid,

which roils as if is stirred by some unseen agent. It is in this path that the Engineer has bred thousands of black leeches in order to create an army of servants like Captain Riggs.

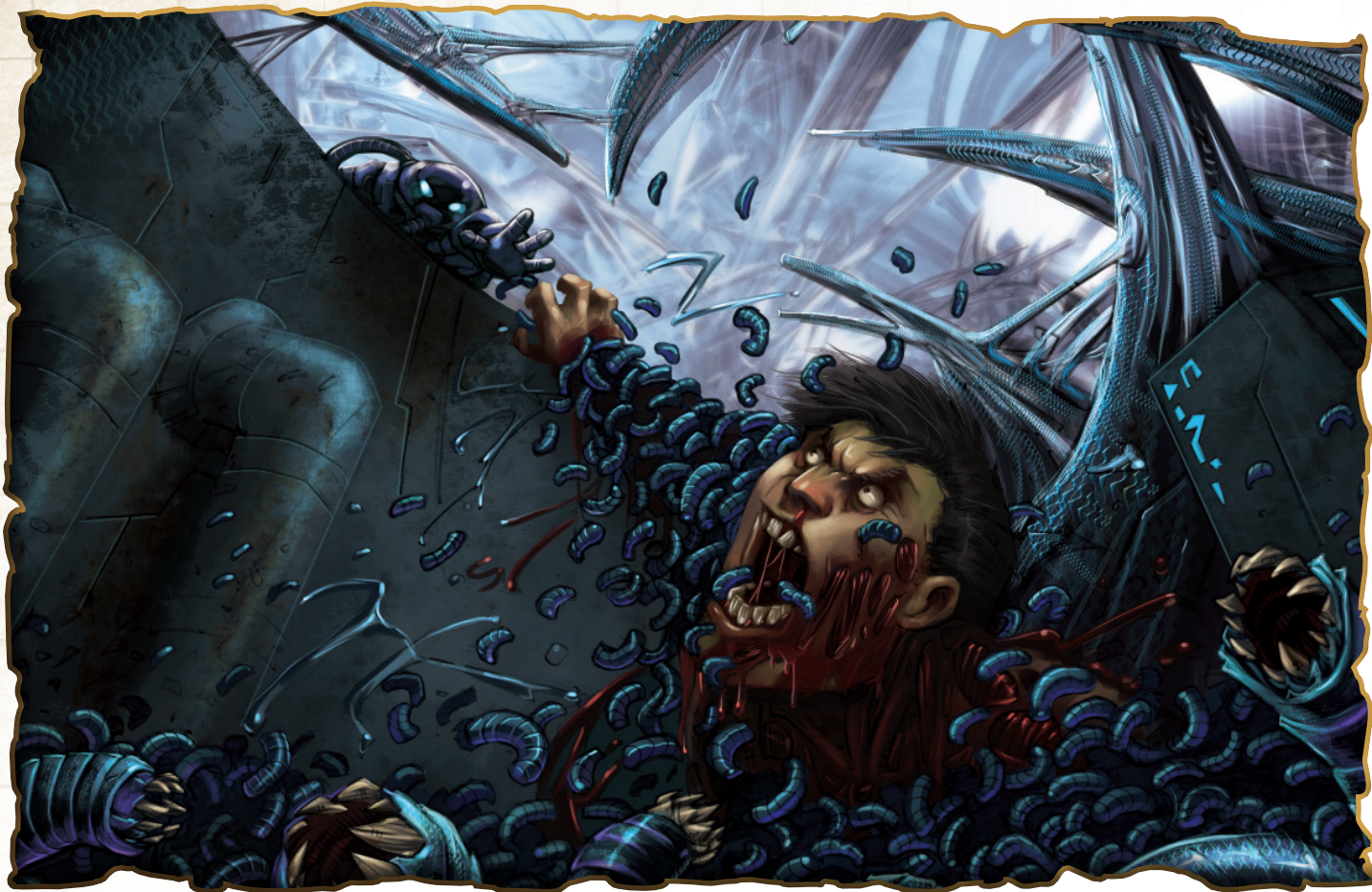
## Set Up

The Engineer monitors this chamber via a jade jewel-eye set in the northernmost corner of this irregular chamber. The jewel-eye resembles a small jade sphere mounted into the wall. The eye can be easily destroyed. There are also three portals in this room along the eastern wall. They are all unlocked.

## Action

As long as the jewel-eye is functional, the Engineer can cast phantasmal force through the sensor. After the brine zombies from **Area C-9** attack, the image of the Engineer appears on the other side of the vat. It emerges from the northernmost portal and begins to act, as if it is casting a spell. The hope is to draw its enemies into charging across the bridge.

As soon as a few characters are on the bridge, the Engineer activates the actual **trap** and the bridge suddenly melts away, dumping anyone on the structure into the leech tanks. **Two black leech swarms** within the viscous black fluid swarm the victims and begin to drain their life away. Anyone in the middle of the bridge gets no save to avoid taking a splash. Others can make a saving throw to jump to the nearest edge.



If more than one character ends up in the tank, the Engineer's illusion lets out a wicked rasping laugh and taunts their predicament.

"You should have fled when you had the chance."

This taunting hopefully causes the characters to attack the illusory Engineer with spells, thus wasting their resources.

**Black Leech Swarm (2):** HD 6; HP 31, 25; AC 5[14]; Atk swarm (2d6 plus poison); **Move** 6 (swim 9); **Save** 11; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** curse of the black spot, poison, vulnerable to salt.

### Development

If the Engineer does ever gain control of a character, the abomination's first priority will be to get as many of the invaders as possible out of its vessel. Once this is done or if this proves impossible, the controlled character immediately turns upon his comrades, attacking until slain or subdued.

### C-9. ENGINEER'S PROJECT

This storage chamber holds one of the Engineer's more charming side projects. It keeps **6 brine zombies** here created from the corpses of the crew of *The Flying Fortune*. The mindless undead immediately attack any who enter.

**Brine Zombies (6):** HD 4; HP 18, 11 (x2), 12, 20, 23; AC 6[13]; Atk cutlass (1d6) or fist (1d4); **Move** 12 (swim 12); **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** resist fire (50%). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

### C-10. GLOWING GROTTO

These are the ship's food banks—strange cylinders and tubes of brass and steel. It is here that the neh-thalggu transforms captured fish and algae into the nutrient paste it needs to survive. Raw protein is fed into the food banks and converted into **living bio-organic slime**.

Unfortunately for the characters, they too contain all the necessary food components the nutrient paste desires. If anyone steps within 5 feet of these glowing food banks, the slime leaps at them. The slime does no damage to neh-thalggu, the vile slashers, or the jade bats. It is more than happy to dissolve the captain into mush, however.

**Living Bio-organic Slime:** HD 4; HP 26; AC 7[12]; Atk slam (2d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 13; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 6/240; **Special:** devour flesh, immune to acid, leap, vulnerable to cold and fire. See the **Appendix** for more details.

### C-11. VIVISECTION LABORATORY

The portal into this chamber is unlocked, and weird machinery beyond the knowledge or science of this world fills the room. Here the Engineer reanimated its dead companions and implanted the black leech into Captain Riggs. He also processed the crew of *The Flying Fortune*

using the Vivisectionist, the cruel device that dominates this chamber.

The Vivisectionist looks like a strange sort of metal snake. This creature has three metal tails that form a tripod at its base. The snake then narrows, where it is covered with strange tubes and wires before finally reaching the head almost 10 feet above the ground. The head is more like a giant claw with two scything talons. It is a slow beast, ponderously lumbering about on its three short tails.

### Background

The **Vivisectionist** is an automaton that the Engineer uses to torture victims that fall into its clutches. With this machine and its own dark sciences, the neh-thalggu extracts living brains intact and places them within its own sacs. Victims are tied down on the great ovoid bed and dissected alive. It is as sure a torture as anything that the minds of the wicked have ever conceived.

The Vivisectionist is a precious and irreplaceable piece of technology to the Brain Collector. It never intended to use this as a combatant, but it may be the Engineer's last line of defense.

### Action

The Engineer orders the bizarre automaton to attack anyone who enters this chamber, and the automaton performs its duty with brutal precision.

**The Vivisectionist:** HD 5; HP 22; AC 1[18]; Atk 2 blades (1d8+2 plus persistent wounds); **Move** 6; **Save** 12; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** immune to cold, magic weapons required to hit, persistent wounds. See the **Appendix** for more details.

### Wrap-Up

In its haste to arrange for the characters' capture, the Engineer made a blundering mistake. The last time it used the Vivisectionist to create a brine zombie, the Engineer left its *golden control stave* sitting on one the side tables.

In addition, the characters can loot a small collection of onyx gems (worth 600 gp) from the Vivisectionist's body. These gems radiate a faint aura of necromancy magic, but this is residue from their use in the past; they are not magical.

### C-12. EMPTY CHAMBER

At first glance, this chamber seems entirely empty save for two doors. However, there is a small glowing pad with a ruby set into it. It is affixed to the wall near the western door.

Touching the ruby (value 135 gp) while the ship is powered prompts strange circular furniture to rise out of the floor. This was the ship's dining and meeting room. There are six twisted and bent seats around a large ovoid table. If anyone

tries to pry out the ruby while the ship's power is on, they take 4d6 points of electrical damage (save for half). The trap deals no damage if the ship's power is off, during which time the ruby can be removed with minimal effort.

### C-13. THE AMETHYST HARMONIUM

This strange chamber has two unsealed portals and a single great machine that spans the full length of the southern wall. The bizarre artifice looks like a great piano or harmonium adorned with countless crystalline keys made of amethyst.

#### Background

The Engineer spends a great deal of time here when it is not busy with its many projects. It sits in front of the Harmonium rapidly pressing buttons, as strange holographic images dance about and weird noises fill the room. The images' meaning is beyond the ken of humanity, but these strange sights and sounds soothe the Engineer.

#### Action

If anyone tries to smash the device while the ship's power is on, they receive a nasty shock. The machine is highly electrified, and any damage causes a savage backlash. The offender takes 4d6 electricity damage (save for half).

#### Wrap-Up

The extremely fragile Harmonium can be looted and smashed without danger once the power is off. The characters can collect 4,200 gp in amethysts and platinum wire. This, of course, irrevocably ruins the contraption and both sorrows and enrages the Engineer.

### C-14. PILLAR OF LIGHT

This chamber is locked. However, the bioarchanic lock can be defeated with an Open Locks roll at -20%. The squishy quasi-living material can also be bludgeoned to a pulp.

Normally, this shimmering beam of light levitates anyone stepping into it down to **C-15** on the command deck. However, the Engineer is watching the characters via a small jewel-eye in the southeastern corner of the compartment. As soon as anyone steps in the beam of light, the beam shuts off. Any creature in the beam abruptly plummets 20 feet down to the next level. The fall deals 2d6 points of damage. The Engineer knows that this nasty little trick won't stop the characters at this point, but anything to soften them up is welcome.

Once the Engineer extinguishes the beam, the characters must climb down to the next level through the open hole in the floor

#### Development

The jewel-eye resembles a small jade sphere mounted into the wall and can be easily smashed. If the characters

smash the eye before standing in the beam of light, the Engineer turns off the beam of light 2 rounds later hoping to catch a character using it.

The Engineer only reactivates the light pillar under special circumstances, as the pillar is a transport device, not a weapon. It is designed to be safe. The Engineer disabled the safeguards to turn it into a pit trap. It requires 5 rounds to reset the safeguards and return the light pillar to normal operation. However, if by chance the party abandons an unconscious character in the shaft, the the neh-thalggu will slowly repower the pillar, raise the victims back up, and repeatedly drop them again and again until they are quite dead.

## LEVEL II:

# COMMAND DECK

### C-15. LANDING PAD

This is where the pillar of light from **Area C-14** deposits its passengers. This room is empty save for three portals in the south, east and west walls. Unless the characters have shut down the power for the ship, the southern portal hums with a blue variation of a *wall of force*. This wall functions like the spell, however, the characters can destroy it with brute force (dealing 100 hp damage to the field negates it for 1d6 rounds). If the characters removed the control crystal from the engine room (**Area C-7**) and powered down the ship, this portal is deactivated when they arrive.

## WALL OF FORCE

**Spell Level:** Magic-user, 5th level

**Range:** 60 feet

**Duration:** 1 round/level

Creates an invisible wall of force up to 100 square feet in size. A wall of force is immune to all forms of damage save the *disintegrate* spell, which destroys it.

#### Development

There is another way to bypass the field, but it is dangerous. Anyone who wields the golden control stave (found in **Area C-11**) can phase through the portal. As a standard action, the character must touch the stave to the wall and hold it there to turn off the field. The door itself is not locked.

The danger here is that the Engineer can reactivate the field and possibly divide the party as they face the most dangerous opponent on the vessel.

See **Area C-18** for details on battling the Engineer.

## C-16. HOLDING CELLS

This unlocked portal opens into a chamber featuring three transparent walls with small doors. These are holding cells where the Engineer keeps living prisoners until they are ready to be experimented upon and vivisected. The cells are empty unless the Engineer captured a character or a crewmember. They can only be opened from the outside or can be battered open from within. There is a small jewel-eye in this room above the door. It is otherwise identical to the sensor in **Area C-14**.

## C-17. VARICOLORED GARDEN

This is the Engineer's workshop. The room is filled with tables full of strange tools and devices. There are several large clear tanks of water and countless jellyfish. The Engineer uses these tanks to grow various poisonous compounds, including the poison smeared on the captain's sword.

Among the other equipment is an unfinished fourth jade bat. A spell caster has a 2% chance per level to finish the jade bat and bind it to a new master (a 6th level Magic-User has a 12% chance of success, for example). Regardless, the construct's jade components are worth 400 gp.

## Action

There is a small jewel-eye in this room above the door. It is otherwise identical to the sensor in **Area C-14**. Using the jewel, the Engineer observes the characters and waits until they are in this chamber. It then seals the door. The tanks rupture and flood the chamber to a depth of about 3 feet. The deadly **jellyfish swarm** is now free and immediately attacks the characters.

This is the Engineer's last desperate attempt to slay the characters. It pains the neh-thalggu to damage its own workshop, but the sacrifice is worth it if the poisonous jellyfish slay these relentless intruders.

**Jellyfish Swarm:** HD 10; HP 47; AC 6[13]; Atk swarm (3d6 plus poison); Move 0 (swim 6); Save 5; AL N; CL/XP 11/240; **Special:** poison (lose 1d4 points of Dexterity; save avoids).

## C-18. THRONE OF THE ENGINEER

### Action

Inside the room is the only living neh-thalggu aboard this craft—the **Engineer**. It sits on a great rotating command chair on top of a raised dais. Strange crystalline controls surround it and hazy holographic images of any rooms that still have intact jewel-eyes float in the air around it.





There are two other command consoles on the ship where other crewmembers would normally sit when the craft pierced the veil of worlds. Those consoles are now shut down, and all control is routed to the Engineer's throne.

The neh-thalggu itself is a strange aberration. It possesses a large bulk of green flesh that scuttles around on six insectoid legs. Two surprisingly prehensile claws emerge from its central mass and a great ring of razor teeth hiss and rasp. It has countless eyes on the fore of its body, each black and pupil-less. Bulging semi-transparent brain sacs adorn the back of its bulk. Every one of them is currently occupied by a pulsing human brain vivisected from a sailor the Engineer lured to its doom on the rocks of the Trident. This neh-thalggu also has a small piece of jade surgically implanted within its own flesh along the crown of its central mass. This strange implant allows it to remotely control and receive messages from its jewel-eyes and black leeches.

It snarls at the characters as they enter the throne room and speaks in a raspy whisper that they should know well by now. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following:

“So this is what you want, eh? You seek the honor of being killed by me personally? You shall have it!”

And with that, the battle begins. If the captain is somehow still with the characters and under the Engineer's control, he also joins in, defending his true master to the last of his strength.

## Action

The Engineer sitting upon the throne is an illusion created by *phantasmal force*. The actual brain collector is invisible, in the northwestern corner of the room. It allows the characters to spend a round hopefully discharging their most powerful spells and magic items at its empty throne and then reveals itself by unleashing a *lightning bolt* that catches as many of them in its area as possible.

**The Engineer, Neh-Thalggu Crash Survivor:** HD 10; HP 72; AC 0 [19]; **Atk** bite (1d10 plus poison), 2 claws (1d8); **Move** 9; **Save** 5; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 14/2,600; **Special:** poison bite, spells (5/4/3/1), *telepathy* 100ft.

**Spells:** at will—*detect magic*, *read magic*; 1st—*magic missile* (3d4+3) (x3), *shield* (x2); 2nd—*invisibility* (x2), *phantasmal force* (x2); 3rd—*lightning bolt* (x3); 4th—*polymorph self*.

**Equipment:** *five-barbed stave* (13 charges, capable of burrowing through stone; usable by anyone), gill symbiote (allows the neh-thalggu to breathe underwater; does not function for anyone else)

Once the Engineer is revealed it does everything possible to keep from being flanked by these little insects. After its first lightning bolt, it will try to again become invisible, flying away to another corner of the chamber. However, if the Engineer realizes the characters can detect it, it abandons invisibility and instead focuses on damage output, burning through its *lightning bolts* with reckless abandon. Once they are expended, it will turn to its vicious, poisonous arsenal of melee attacks, rending its victims into a gory mess. It will pause from this violence only if it believes a *magic missile* might weaken a particularly effective melee combatant allow it to have hope against an otherwise overwhelming foe. The Engineer has nowhere else to run. Cornered, it fights to the death.

## PART FIVE: CONCLUSION

This act covers everything that happens after the Engineer's death. With its defeat, the Engineer tries to gain vengeance through one last act of desperation—it detonates the ship. As the characters flee, they realize that they have defeated a great evil and ensured that one small corner of the Razor Sea is no longer choked with nightmares.

### SELF DESTRUCT IN T-MINUS...

As the Engineer falls defeated, it speaks. The voice it projects is half in a distorted version of the Common tongue and half telepathic. It reverberates with raw, pure anger at this affront. It is laden with a driving need for revenge. The message is brief. It rasps:

“You have won . . . nothing.”

This is the Engineer's parting gift to a world it has worked tirelessly to destroy. It could not destroy all of civilization, so this alien terror must content itself with only blowing up the Trident. The Engineer has rigged a dead-man switch that if it is ever slain, the vessel would unleash its power core and explode with tremendous force. No matter what the characters destroyed onboard the ship, the power core remains intact. It lies deep beneath the deck surrounded by the seamount's stone.

Once activated, the Engineer's throne pulsates and glows. Angry violet light flashes as ear-splitting claxons ring out. The Engineer has initiated the process to unleash the living lightning in full. In just a few moments, this craft will vaporize. In the language of the beast bizarre warnings are given.

**Bio-fulminatory manumission countdown initiated. Manumission executed in seventy-seven meggon-fractals.**

The gist of this requires no understanding of the strange language of the control system. The Engineer has rigged the ship to blow. Clever players likely realize their peril and flee for the exit with no further prompting.

This event is not meant to result in a total party kill, and the particular countdown used by the neh-thalggu is slow enough (long enough to allow a crew of neh-thalggu to enter lifeboats) that the party will have time to escape unless they disregard or disbelieve the warning. So, as long as the characters flee the craft without delay, they have no difficulty escaping before the entire seamount erupts in a great plume of rock, coral, and boiling seawater.

However, the Referee should still convey the tension. Parts of the ship spew arcs of violet electricity near the

characters. Great beams of the hull's superstructure begin to collapse and buckle. Weird machinery is crushed and leaks out green and violet fluids, that begin to mix and bubble furiously. A strange modulated voice makes regular announcements in a language no one speaks and yet everyone understands.

Clearly, it is now time to leave.

### WRAP-UP

#### Alien Invasion Averted

With the Engineer's death, the characters have eradicated this threat to the Razor once and forever. The explosion is so titanic it even collapses a good portion of the upper seamount, which removes a navigational hazard. The tip of the Trident has been forever blunted. Of course, the shattered remains of *The Flying Fortune* also sink beneath the waves.

Even more importantly, with the loss of their scout, the aliens turn their attention to other worlds and other atrocities. The characters likely never know how close their home world came to calamity. Perhaps, if one of our accidental heroes is a devout follower of a deity, that person learns the truth in vague visions and portentous dreams. Perhaps it is enough that the adventures have slain these obviously alien aberrations and looted their craft.

#### Captain Handerly and *The Sealord's Blessing*

*The Sealord's Blessing* witnesses the fireworks and quickly appears on the scene to pick up survivors. The characters have no trouble convincing the first mate that Captain Riggs perished in the explosion. In fact, First Mate Handerly is amazed that anyone survived. He greets wild stories of submerged vessels and extradimensional horrors with a fair portion of initial skepticism and disbelief. But still, he is a superstitious sailor and can likely be convinced of almost anything given time and a modicum of proof.

Proof, of course, is something the characters almost certainly have if they care to show the first mate any strange collection of jewels they recovered from the craft. Handerly looks upon these items with wonder and inquires about them no further. He only remarks that the world is full of strange wonders beyond count.

Regardless of what the characters share, Handerly takes possession of *The Sealord's Blessing* in Captain Riggs' absence, becomes Captain Handerly, and perhaps gains a good measure of respect for the bravery of the characters. At the Referee's discretion, Captain Barton Handerly could become a useful contact and ally in Port Shaw. At the very least, he is a skilled sailor in possession of a fine ship. Since it is unlikely that the characters have their own ship by this point in their careers, this makes him a valuable friend indeed.

Whatever treasure the characters collected from the wreckage is theirs to keep. Neither Handerly nor any of the sailors want anything to do with such unusual and possibly cursed wealth. The only exception might be the captain's spyglass. If Handerly sees that our heroes possess that distinctive item, he asks for it so that he may return it to the captain's widow in Port Shaw—a lady by the name of Marlena.

If the characters refuse, Handerly does not fight them, but he loses a great deal of respect for them and considers them little better than petty thieves. If the characters give up the glass, he is impressed with their sense of honor. He may even allow the characters to return it to the widow Marlena themselves. The captain's widow has no use for the spyglass and so offers it to the characters, but only if they help her with this one errand...

### The Widow's Errand

The nature of the widow's errand is left entirely up to the Referee and may serve as a fitting way to entangle the characters in another adventure either in the Razor Coast saga.

### Captain Riggs and the Birth of a Legend

The voyage back to Port Shaw is uneventful, but one of the older sailors a few nights later shares tales of Captain Riggs. He ends with the following words, which the Referee may read or paraphrase.

"So here's to poor old Captain Riggs, as fine a sailor as you'll ever meet. He was a fine gentleman of fortune who, alas, the gods saw fit to consign to a terrible fate. Mourn him, lads, aye mourn him. But take some comfort in this. We were fortunate indeed not to share in his misfortune. For I saw it myself when I was delivering wine to his cabin during one of his binges. Upon his left hand—the black spot!"

### The Redemption of Captain Riggs

If the characters spare the captain, remove his black leech and do not honor his request for an easy death, Riggs may survive the adventure. If the characters deliver the captain back to his wife in Port Shaw, the Captain eventually recovers from the Black Spot. He rediscovers his sanity in time with the help of his beloved Marlena and eventually returns to command the *Blessing*.

In this possible set of events, Captain Riggs is forever in the debt of the brave heroes who spared his life and won his redemption. They always sail for free aboard the *Blessing*, and he even surrenders the use of the captain's cabin to them. But even more importantly, they find that they have

no more loyal friend in Port Shaw than the newly restored Captain Riggs. He knows that every breath he draws, every day he enjoys, it is because of the characters.

Captain Riggs can gather information and look out for characters in Port Shaw. Exactly how useful he is or what he discovers for our heroes is up to the Referee, but Riggs makes an excellent way to introduce new adventure hooks to the party.

Even more than Riggs himself, they also gain the friendship of his wife Marlena. Marlena has little use for boats and is a permanent resident of Port Shaw. Instead, she prefers to make her fortune as a brilliant alchemist. She has no interest in being an adventurer, but she is able to help the characters, creating potions for them from time to time at cost and providing valuable information in arcane matters and from her contacts among the alchemists of Port Shaw.

Marlena is particularly pleased to have the old Colthyn Riggs back. Since the wreck of *The Flying Fortune*, he's been cold and distant. But after losing the Black Spot, Captain Riggs is back to being the man Marlena fell in love with all those years ago. She heals his wounds and sets him once more about a fine course. And in all of Port Shaw, there is likely not a happier couple.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

There are always things that can go wrong in an adventure. Here are a few suggestions that might help resolve those problems.

*My characters figured out immediately that Captain Riggs is an infiltrator.*

This is not a problem. It simply means they are a clever or perhaps paranoid band of characters. After the captain is defeated—whether he is slain or not—the black leech can wriggle out of his glove and slither towards a new host. The fact that the captain was not a bandit, but somehow being controlled should appeal to character curiosity. What is going on here? What happened to *The Flying Fortune*? Use the mystery to move the adventure forward.

*My characters ended up with X piece of world changing alien technology.*

Not to worry; nothing works more than a few hundred feet outside the craft. The strange, semi-sentient energy force that surges through the neh-thalggu ship powers it all. Outside, the technology is simply a broken curiosity. A collector might pay a few gold for it, and a clever wizard or alchemist might be able to salvage a few useable parts. But other than that, it is junk.

*My characters have flooded the alien craft. Do all the monsters drown?*

No. Remember that the Viridian Portal (P-3 above) has a special field that keeps seawater from entering the craft in any substantial quantity. The monsters don't drown. If your characters somehow destroy or defeat this field, then fine—let them flood the craft. This can actually be a very unique way to explore the dungeon.

Still, none of the creatures in it drown. The Engineer dons his gill symbiote and now functions perfectly well underwater. The jellyfish and black leech swarms are now free to roam the ship. The zombies, the vile slashers, and the Vivisectionist never needed to breathe in the first place. And the engine room (the Chamber of Ceaseless Storms) has its own protective field that keeps sea water out.

*My characters somehow convinced the first mate to send lots of sailors instead of just a few.*

Perhaps, if charmed, Handerly could be coerced into sending as many as two dozen sailors and even himself. Ultimately, the sailors are more of a hindrance than they are an aid. Down in the tight quarters of the craft, they are slaughtered by strangle weed, poison gas, vile slashers, and worse. Mostly they make a lot of noise, get in the way and flee in terror when confronted by true monsters. Bringing a large compliment of sailors, honestly, does little to make the characters lives any easier.

*My characters refuse to take the hint and aren't fleeing the ship after the Engineer's death! Is this really a total party kill?*

The author has occasionally been accused of being a nice Referee. I would give them two more warnings. Have the ship lurch violently, doing 2d6 points of damage to

anyone who fails a saving throw. If they're still not running for the exit, then have the ship electrify as the reactor core is breached and semi-sentient lightning floods the vessel. Everyone must make another saving throw or take another 3d6 points of electrical damage.

After you warned them three times that the ship is about to explode and they still haven't fled ... yeah, even I am not that nice. This is a total party kill. Maybe the next adventurers are better able to take a hint.

*My characters want to take over The Sealord's Blessing. They forced the Captain to sign an order just before he died or plan to take it by force.*

There is always the option that if the characters come up with a clever way to take the ship, you should let them. Remember that they are stealing a ship. There are likely plenty of people in port who know who the rightful owner of the *Blessing* should be. That makes for a rich source of adventure and could even lead to the character's turning pirate. But if you feel it is yet too early for the characters to have their own vessel, there are ways to keep the ship out of their hands.

The crew of the ship does not stand for such a takeover. They have been well treated by Riggs and Handerly and have no desire to set sail under the command of reckless adventurers who are likely to get them all killed. They mutiny, and even if the characters win, this leaves them with a ship they likely have little ability to sail. *The Sealord's Blessing* most likely drifts at sea until it is hit by a freak storm that wrecks it upon a nearby island.

And what is on that island? That is up to you...



HEART OF THE RAZOR  
CHAPTER THREE

# JUNGLE FEVER

by Owen K.C. Stephens

“One day, Turtle did not answer the shamans. His children no longer came up on the shores. The sacrifices of nisha flowers rotted, as they were not carried into the ocean by the creatures of the sea...”

— *anonymous shaman of the Onu Tulita*

An island-hopping adventure of greed, betrayal, and undead vengeance for three to five characters of 7th–8th level.

## SYNOPSIS

Sandra DeLoure, a madam working the cargo pit of Sharkjaw Docks, approaches the characters for help when three of her workers contract a mysterious malady. The disease turns out to be the effect of an imandwa — an undead creature that is haunting the workers. The imandwa can be permanently killed only if tracked back to its place of birth or death. By investigation, the characters learn the workers themselves have done nothing to spur such supernatural attention. However, further investigation quickly reveals that all the victims of the disease are related to crewmembers of a ship commanded by Butcher Jill, an infamous and wealthy pirate.

No one has heard from Butcher Jill's crew for weeks, with the sole exception of Nattering Nam, a hunchbacked barber–alchemist who recently journeyed into the jungle on a solo safari. When the characters track down Nam, they encounter monstrous childlike creatures bent on revenge also hot on his trail. Once rescued, Nattering Nam reveals that Butcher Jill took over an entire island in order to control production of the flower nisha, an herb that allows her to turn dragonsmoke into a far more potent and extremely expensive new drug, dubbed dreamfog by its eager buyers.

Nam doesn't know exactly what went wrong on "Dreamfog Island" to cause the undead to hunt down the crewmembers of Butcher Jill's ships, though Nam is pretty sure it's retribution for the horrors the crew wrought among the indigenous Onu Tulita and the shaman, Hingu–Hingu. Nattering Nam won't go to Dreamfog Island, but he tells the characters where it lies, in the hopes they put down both evils: Hingu–Hingu and Butcher Jill.

Upon reaching Dreamfog Island, the characters find its volcano, Onopei, in the process of erupting. While avoiding the hazards created by the volcano, the characters must deal with the undead shaman Hingu–Hingu, his mutated dragon turtle ally, Gam Onisha, a flooded pit of undead called The Cauldron, and the pirate who started it all — Butcher Jill.

They find a single survivor on the island, Kamkamata, who can explain to them where the imandwa were created, including those born in The Cauldron and those arisen in the gut of the dragon turtle Gam Onisha. Kamkamata also shares a vision of Onopei sinking the island and burying its evil forever — once Butcher Jill, Hingu–Hingu, and Gam Onisha all receive a just punishment.

Faced with destruction, Hingu–Hingu tries a massive ceremony to create more imandwa. He even attempts to turn the dragon turtle Gam Onisha into an imandwa if the characters slew it earlier in the adventure. This pits the party against the undead shaman and provides an opportunity to break his hold over Dreamfog Island. If the party succeeds, the volcano gives a mighty heave and the characters must immediately rush out to sea or vanish themselves when Dreamfog Island sinks beneath the waves forever.

## CARGO PITS

On some islands, there exist small settlements run by natives seeking relative isolation or by the descendants of early explorers and pirates. These settlements run supply stores known as cargo pits that cater to the needs of passing ships. Generally, they consist of a few docks, a general store, and maybe a ramshackle tavern. Cargo pits cater to whoever wishes to do business, including pirates and other blackguards. Incoming ships purchase dock space, hull and rigging repairs, new sails, or provisions. Even when the descendants of explorers or pirates run these places, manual labor is predominantly performed by underpaid or outright exploited indigenous people. Cargo pits make great "neutral ground" for encounters with unfriendly captains, as generally, they constrain bad behavior. No one wishes to be denied supplies the next time they sail through.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND AND LORE

Because players begin "Jungle Fever" without a firm grasp of what's going on, it's important for the Referee to be familiar with a fair amount of background information and to be ready to answer questions as players try to gather some information. None of the following background is crucial to the characters finishing "Jungle Fever" — they can mostly plow from one lead to another with very little concern for why they encounter the threats they do — but players interested in unraveling mysteries are likely to search for answers anyway. Having a single resource for the Referee can refer to when characters interrogate NPCs makes the adventure run more smoothly, and avoids either the Referee or players getting frustrated.

### The History of Dragonsmoke

Dragonsmoke is the cheap drug of choice for most Razor Coast citizens who feel the need to seek alchemical assistance to escape the drudgery and misery of life on the lower rungs of the Razor. It's cheap, plentiful, and though certainly not good for the health of its patrons, it lacks the horrific transformative power of drugs like Granpappy Blackskull (Maht). Most dock rats and guttersnipes give no thought to where dragonsmoke comes from or why it's common on the Razor Sea — as long as the local dragonsmoke den is open, they don't feel an urge to ask questions.

Like many things found in the cargo pits and port towns on the Razor Coast, dragonsmoke is a perversion of something once sacred to the Tulita. In the days before the merchant cogs and warships first arrived, shamans used

many local herbs to achieve a state of meditation that let them speak directly to their patron spirits. Dragonsmoke was one of the substances used, but the shamans had more options than just crudely cramming the raw material into a pipe and inhaling the thick fumes.

Over many generations, they learned how to modify the effects of their vision-enhancing herbs, and many tribes own secret recipes on how to best use the flowers and leaves of various plants to flavor the smoke. As the Tulita tribes focused on desperate and futile wars against the merchants and slavers of “civilization,” the death of their elders and the regular burning of their sacred places led to the loss of most of these special recipes.

While most residents of the Razor Sea don’t care about dragonsmoke’s history, this information is not hard to get. Any player who asks about the origins of dragonsmoke or dreamfog will learn about it, as long as a few coppers get tossed into the right hands.

## The Onu and Nisha

A small Tulita tribe known as the Onu lived on an island the native people called A’in Akea. The Onu worshipped Turtle, and preferred a life of quiet and solitude. When forced to settle a conflict with violence, the Onu chose to build a strong defense, falling back to one of the many vast caves that dotted A’in Akea. They erected their defenses well in advance of an enemy canoe’s arrival, for the Onu learned to blend the small white nisha flower with dragonsmoke to give their shamans visions of true prophecy. The Onu also made sacrifices of nisha to Turtle, to please their totem spirit with gifts of divination and beauty.

The nisha flower grew only on A’in Akea, and the Onu felt no need to venture far from their home. When the first foreign ships came, called Floating Forests by the Onu who had never seen tall-masted vessels, the Onu chose to ignore them. A’in Akea is a small island guarded by many sharp reefs, so none of the Floating Forests came to their shores in the early years. Other local tribes came and tried to convince the Onu to join forces to fight the invaders, but the Onu, after consulting with Turtle, took his negative answer as a sign there was no point in fighting.

For years after other tribes succumbed to invasion, the Onu lived life much as they had before the Floating Forests came. They stayed on A’in Akea, hid in caves if an explorer found his way past their reefs and gathered nisha to honor Turtle and allow their shamans to hear his wisdom. There seemed to be no cause for worry.

The Onu’s insular nature makes information about them sketchy and vague, and no one knows the location of A’in Akea.

## Turtle’s Silence

One day, Turtle did not answer the shamans. His children no longer came up on the shores. The sacrifices of nisha flowers rotted, as they were not carried into the ocean by the creatures of the sea.

The Onu were confused and afraid. They performed more rituals, gathered more nisha, and anointed more shamans. Years passed, and Turtle still did not come. The Onu sent their wisest thinkers and bravest warriors to other islands, to seek a solution to the mystery of Turtle’s absence. Most did not return. Those who did spoke of Floating Forests circling all the islands the Onu thought of as the whole world and the defeat of mighty tribes who once come to the Onu for help. Worse, they brought whispers of Shark and perhaps other evils foreign and alien. And nowhere was there any sign of Turtle or any of the other great spirits. Turtle, it was said on other islands, was dead.

The Onu went a little mad and killed their wise men for insulting Turtle. New leaders emerged, suggesting that Turtle might have a taste for something bloodier than flowers, and the Onu turned to human sacrifice, dark rituals, and a total disdain for their own traditions. The lore weavers stopped braiding the history of the Onu into long grass belts, and their art was lost. The Council of Shells, a series of 51 turtle shells where all the Onu lore and knowledge was inscribed, were shattered and fought over as relics of ancient power.

Many of the Onu left to seek their fortunes among the people of the Floating Forests. Others brought the lore and habits of those invaders back and tried to lure Turtle back to them with new ways. Warring factions fought battles, families turned on their own, and blood was spilled in every corner of the island. Without a single foreigner setting foot on their hidden, protected home, the Onu destroyed themselves.

Turtle did not return, and the Onu people gave up all hope. Time passed on A’in Akea, though with no lore weavers, no one can say exactly how many years passed. Only the most aged Onu claimed to remember seeing Turtle, and most of the young tribesmen claimed those tales were more lies than memories. The Onu spent most of their days smoking nisha-laced dragonsmoke, and waited for Turtle or death to claim them. Only a few Onu still made any effort to learn any of their tribe’s old secrets or take a position of leadership. Players seeking knowledge about the Onu have a 10% chance of learning this information.

## Gam Onisha and the Rise of Hingu-Hingu

Among the remaining Onu lived a young man calling himself Hingu-Hingu. “Hingu” refers to the strength of Turtle’s shell, and the aspiring shaman believed taking the name twice would make him twice as likely to gain Turtle’s favor. Other Onu laughed, for the only thing harder than



turtle shell is a man's own stubbornness, so most thought Hingu-Hingu was closer to meaning "stone-headed" than "twice strong." No one took Hingu-Hingu seriously — until he found New Turtle.

The creature the Onu named Gam Onisha was not the reborn form of their guardian spirit, as Hingu-Hingu claimed. It was a dragon turtle, a creature from oceans far beyond the Razor Sea. Following the trail of easy snacks (offal and garbage) from sailing ships, it traveled to the waters near A'in Akea. Young and undersized, the horse-sized Gam Onisha became lost in a storm and slammed into one of the sharp reefs that surround A'in Akea. When Hingu-Hingu found it bleeding and weak on the island's beach, Gam Onisha feared the man would kill it. Instead Hingu-Hingu fed it nisha, bound its wounds, and treated it as a great spirit. When Hingu-Hingu brought other Onu to see Gam Onisha, the dragon turtle realized the people both feared and revered it. Smart enough to know a good situation when the Onu bowed before it, Gam Onisha took to the role of island god quickly and willingly.

Though the Onu knew in their hearts that this creature did not match their lore of how wise and gentle Turtle should look and act, they allowed their fear and desperation to convince them that Turtle had returned in a more warlike form to save them from the invaders of the Floating Forests. They accepted Gam Onisha as their Great Spirit and Hingu-Hingu as their head shaman. Hingu-Hingu set about making himself a near-god, taking the most comely Onu as his brides, having a great hut built for his leisure, and forcing those who spoke out against him to spend long days in the fields and jungles of A'in Akea, gathering nisha to feed the growing, addicted dragon turtle, Gam Onisha.

While many of the most influential Onu families accepted the rule of Hingu-Hingu, others rebelled. Gam Onisha quickly consumed any direct threat, but grumbling continued. Hingu-Hingu turned to darker and darker magics and learned to summon the spirits of the Onu ancestors to serve him. He made them his spies, and soon all feared to speak out against him. The spirits revealed those who plotted against him, so Hingu-Hingu gathered the conspirators together and ritualistically threw them into Moag Ghom — a rocky sinkhole on a cliff above the beach that flooded with seawater at high tide. In Moag Ghom he left them to die of their injuries or be consumed by crabs and seagulls. After a few such rituals, none dared speak out against Hingu-Hingu.

Outside of a few Onu who fled, and NPCs encountered in this adventure, almost no one has this level of information about the downfall of the Onu, and rise of Hingu-Hingu. Players have a 5% chance of learning this information, and even then, the details are sketchy and unbelievable. The story can only come from one of the Tulita, so if the characters are asking in the wrong places they will not learn any of this.

## Kamkamata's Flight

A few Onu decided Hingu-Hingu was an agent of Shark, and that Gam Onisha was Shark-in-Turtle's-Shell. Many of these fled A'in Akea to escape the cursed rule of Hingu-Hingu. Gam Onisha consumed most deserters within hours of setting their canoes in the water, but some escaped. One of these, a young, well-formed Onu known as Kamkamata, paddled away with woven baskets full of nisha flower hoping to buy the aid of a powerful shaman from another tribe. He successfully journeyed to Sharkjaw Docks, a cargo pit far from A'in Akea and began to tell his story to all who would listen.

It would have been better for all concerned if Kamkamata had drowned in the Razor Sea. Instead of finding a shaman able and willing to help, Kamkamata found himself belittled, bullied, and abused. In short order he owned nothing but his clothes and a few bundles of dried nisha flowers, and the young Onu fell to despair. Unable to think of any other way to find help, Kamkamata took his nisha flowers into a dragonsmoke den and imbibed the sacred combination in the hope Turtle would send him a vision of what to do next.

Players cannot discover this information unless they journey to Sharkjaw Docks and discover Nattering Nam. See the entry for Sharkjaw Docks for more information.

## Butcher Jill and Dreamfog

Kamkamata asked for a sign — what he got was Butcher Jill, the self-described She-Bitch of the Razor Sea. Butcher Jill was the worst kind of pirate captain — vicious, greedy, disloyal, deadly, and charismatic enough to keep a crew together despite her obvious ethical shortcomings. A dragonsmoke addict, Butcher Jill was present in the den Kamkamata selected to make his vision attempt, and she shared the visions of a pastel paradise while inhaling the Onu's smoke in addition to her own.

She immediately asked the dragonsmoke vendor about the nisha flowers Kamkamata used, only to discover that neither the den owner nor anyone else she asked in the cargo pit ever heard of a flower that could be added to dragonsmoke. Unable to think of any other way to get her hands on the "dreamfog" that spurred her visions, Butcher Jill set about earning Kamkamata's trust.

Butcher Jill wore down the young Onu's suspicions. Kamkamata knew the comely pirate captain was not interested in helping him expose Hingu-Hingu as a fraud, nor did she care at all for the fate of his people. But he was also young and impressionable, and Butcher Jill used her considerable influence to make his life in the cargo pit more comfortable. She paid for him to have a place to stay and had her crew beat any locals who harassed him. She gave him money to send messages to other docks looking for a native shaman he could hire to help. All the while,

Butcher Jill asked Kamkamata about nisha and sent her own messages across the Razor Sea to find out where nisha grew.

Both Kamkamata and Butcher Jill found their inquiries fruitless. If any shamans still existed with the power to take on the powerful Gam Onisha, they were too busy with other concerns to reply to the Onu's queries. And despite offering rewards to every alchemist and dragonsmoke monger she knew, the pirate captain found no one able to tell her where nisha grew, or how it was prepared for blending with dragonsmoke.

Once Kamkamata sank to the lowest depths of hopelessness, Butcher Jill offered a deal. She was cunning enough to admit she was only interested in the nisha, but also pointed out to Kamkamata she had no love for Hingu-Hingu, and every reason to want to shatter his grip on the only island she knew of where nisha grew. She promised him her ship, *The Salty Harlot*, would be able to destroy Gam Onisha. Then she would kill Hingu-Hingu herself, and put Kamkamata in charge of A'in Akea.

Kamkamata could have his people gather and prepare nisha flowers for her, and she would pay him handsomely for each shipment. And since she'd want an uninterrupted supply of the flowers, it would be in Butcher Jill's best interest to prevent any other invader from attacking the island. It might not solve the despair his people felt over being abandoned by their Turtle spirit, but surely with Hingu-Hingu gone and money flowing in from the sale of nisha, Kamkamata would have time and resources to deal with that problem later.

To his credit, Kamkamata did not agree immediately. He knew Butcher Jill was greedy and false, and worried he would regret striking a bargain with her. But her words made sense, and his hate for Gam Onisha and Hingu-Hingu had grown as he suffered in the cargo pit. He saw them as the ultimate source of his pain and blamed them for making him flee A'in Akea in the first place. The idea of destroying them with Butcher Jill's ship and men appealed to him greatly. Eventually, he agreed to show Butcher Jill how to sail *The Salty Harlot* to A'in Akea and avoid the reefs protecting his home island, and he also agreed to help convince his people to show her how to process the nisha (a secret that, to the best of his knowledge, only Hingu-Hingu still possessed).

Players may *only* gain this information within Sharkjaw Docks, but will also encounter a number of false rumors there (see the entry for **Sharkjaw Docks** for more information).

## **The Salty Harlot comes to Dreamfog Island**

Butcher Jill had big plans for nisha, and no intention of allowing the secret of the island's location or the method of processing the flowers to become common knowledge. She immediately moved Kamkamata to her quarters on the *Harlot* and hired a few extra crewmembers. In addition

to taking on a complement of mercenaries (to give her more manpower when she arrived on the island), she hired a number of alchemists and artificers to ensure that even if she couldn't pry the secret of nisha-processing from the Onu, someone in her employ could recreate it independently. The senior-most alchemist was Nattering Nam, a disgraced barber who fled his homeland after murdering his liege with a slash of the throat while shaving him with a straight-razor.

Butcher Jill borrowed heavily to finance the expedition and decided if it did not go well, she'd just as soon die than face her creditors. When *The Salty Harlot* sailed into the waters around A'in Akea, Gam Onisha attacked immediately. More powerful than Butcher Jill expected, the dragon turtle quickly capsized Butcher Jill's ship and ran it onto a reef 100 feet from A'in Akea's largest beach. Butcher Jill rallied her men and rushed onto the torn hull of her ship, trying to defeat Gam Onisha before her ship broke apart entirely. When that proved impossible, she had her men gather bodies of the dead and wounded and ordered her alchemists to strap vials of poison to them and wrap them in the diseased blankets she planned to give to troublesome Onu households as gifts.

She then threw the toxin-laden dead and dying men into the water for Gam Onisha to feed on. The monstrous dragon turtle consumed it all, and then began to scream and vomit steaming chunks of the infectious crew-meat back into the ocean. When it swam off beneath the waves a few minutes later, Butcher Jill concluded the monster had died. In truth, though feeling ill and in retreat, Gam Onisha simply withdrew to an underwater cave to recuperate in safety.

Though her ship was destroyed, Butcher Jill carried out her plan smoothly from there. She salvaged longboats and crafted rafts out of the hull of *The Salty Harlot* and brought her remaining crew to shore. In a nighttime raid she stole up, captured the overconfident Hingu-Hingu, and declared herself Queen of Dreamfog Island.

While it is unlikely she would have honored her deal with Kamkamata under any circumstances, with her ship wrecked on a reef, doing so was unthinkable. She told her erstwhile ally that he was welcome to rule over the Onu for her, but his people would have to become her slave labor force to plant and harvest nisha flowers. Kamkamata rebelled and fled into the interior of Dreamfog Island. Thinking the young man a coward and not a serious threat, Butcher Jill set about taking control of her new empire.

Hingu-Hingu tried to trade the secret of preparing nisha for use with dragonsmoke in return for being given back control of the island, but Butcher Jill betrayed him as soon as he told her alchemists how to dry and press the flowers for best effect. She immediately chained Hingu-Hingu to a post hammered into the back of a cave the Onu once used for rituals to honor Turtle and the island spirits.

The captain also began building comfortable huts for herself, her men, and the processing and storage of nisha. Her private compound quickly came to be known as the Butcher Block and soon spilled into and absorbed the native Onu village. She kept Hingu-Hingu as an object lesson, proof that she was more powerful than their most powerful shaman, to ensure the Onu would not rebel. She fed Hingu-Hingu scraps from her table and forced him to live in his own filth. Any other Onu who refused to work diligently to gather nisha or see to the pirates' needs, she bound and imprisoned in the cave overnight. After being exposed to Hingu-Hingu's stench and increasingly insane ranting, few Onu made trouble more than once.

No one alive knows all this except a few NPCs encountered in the course of the adventure. Gaining access to these details without talking to such an NPC should be impossible without potent divination magic.

## The Dreamfog Trade

It took time for Butcher Jill to recover from the loss of *The Salty Harlot*. Time for her alchemists to find the best way to blend nisha and dragonsmoke to focus the delirium effect and produce visions far stronger than in any formulation the Onu shamans ever considered. It took time to build a hybrid catamaran using local wood and three of her longships, and it took time to map out the reefs around Dreamfog Island, largely by sending Onu on rafts into the water and seeing where their craft broke up in the waves. By the time Butcher Jill returned to her favorite cargo pit with bales of new narcotics, most of her peers thought her dead.

The first shipment of Butcher Jill's new dreamfog sold at an outrageous price. Gold poured in and orders for as much dreamfog as she could grow. She paid her creditors and took out new loans, using the money to buy herself a new ship, *The Crusty Mermaid*, and to buy as many slaves as she could stuff onto it. When she returned to Dreamfog Island she wore a silk coat, a mithral shirt, and in her clenched fist held plans to clear the island's jungle and turn everything into nisha fields. She paid the survivors from her original crewmen well to buy their silence, fearful if she did not they would sell the secret of her island's location to a competitor. She made them foremen of work gangs and officers of local patrols — positions of authority for which they proved spectacularly ill-suited.

As her power grew, Butcher Jill let her darker side run rampant. She hired workers with promises of good lives, only to turn them into slaves when they arrived at Dreamfog Island. She rewarded only progress, demanding more nisha be harvested, more jungle cut back to make room for more fields, and more luxury goods brought to her on *The Crusty Mermaid*. Her original crew could do as they wished so long as quotas of nisha were met, and her pirates turned life into a living hell for anyone else on the island. Murder and rape were commonplace, slaves and workers forced to labor for hours on end to plant, harvest, and

process nisha flowers, and then to entertain the pirates with wine, song, dance, and brawls in fighting pits.

When workers refused to participate, spurned an advance, or collapsed from exhaustion, Butcher Jill's people tossed them into the sinkhole Moag Ghom to feed the crabs. Eventually this turned into just another form of amusement. The slaves new to the island came to call the corpse-filled pit of Moag Ghom "The Cauldron," and the name stuck among Butcher Jill's men too.

The demand for dreamfog grew throughout the Razor Sea, but supplies were simply too limited to make the drug common anywhere. Clearing the jungles of Dreamfog Island proved slow going under the best of circumstances, and the cruelty and incompetence of Butcher Jill's chosen foremen created more problems than they solved. The alchemists who worked on the dreamfog formulas tried to take cuttings and grow nisha on other islands, but the flower refused to take root anywhere but its native soil.

Butcher Jill's greed caused her to constantly seek new customers for her product and to sell it at ever-higher prices. She found herself with more and more orders for dreamfog, but no way to increase her supply to meet demand. She hired more alchemists, imported more workers, and even cut a deal with a group of macan gadungan (rakshasa-like shapeshifters native to the Razor Sea) to provide more muscle to control those living in the increasingly hellish conditions of Dreamfog Island.

No one alive knows all this except a few NPCs encountered in the course of the adventure. Gaining access to these details without talking to such an NPC should be impossible without potent divination magic.

## A Turn for the Worse

The situation was clearly becoming untenable, but most of her original crew were now so addicted to dreamfog that leaving the island was unthinkable. Of her surviving senior aides, only Nattering Nam was wise enough to leave before things collapsed, and Butcher Jill only allowed him to depart as he swore he was seeking new lands to grow nisha. Nattering Nam departed less than a week before the figurative hell on Dreamfog Island took a turn for the worse.

All but forgotten in his cave, living in his own filth and fed only sporadically, Hingu-Hingu caught a series of horrific diseases. His force of will was great, and he fought the ravages of fevers, chills, and boils for weeks. But eventually his body simply gave out, and he collapsed into a slick of festering waste. Butcher Jill took time to go observe his body and laughed at the sight of the "mighty" Onu shaman's corpse splayed on the cave floor. She ordered the cave sealed shut, and gave Hingu-Hingu no further thought. Hingu-Hingu, though dead, did not stop thinking about Butcher Jill.

His body lay in disgrace for a night and the entire next



day. When the sun set once more, Hingu-Hingu rose as an abomination. Twisted by his own hate, fueled by his rage at the injustices he had suffered, and powered by the defiled powers of the cave his people once deemed holy, Hingu-Hingu awoke as an undead imandwa — a spirit of disease and shadow bent on revenge.

Hingu-Hingu escaped the cave with ease and found the sullen Gam Onisha, who had hidden from Butcher Jill's ships. Gam Onisha did not care if Hingu-Hingu was alive or dead, he just wanted to be fed his bushels of nisha again. Directed by the imandwa, Gam Onisha attacked *The Crusty Mermaid*, sinking it and all other ships in the waters around Dreamfog Island. At the same time, Hingu-Hingu raised many of the dead in The Cauldron as lesser imandwa, subservient to his will. The undead attacked Butcher Jill's town, killing most of her crew and capturing the captain herself.

Hingu-Hingu and Gam Onisha once again rule over Dreamfog Island, but it is a very different rulership. Hingu-Hingu has chained the still-living Butcher Jill to the cave where he died and called forth new servants, the childlike but horrific achimayen, to grow from boils in Butcher Jill's skin. Outside the cave, the slaves and workers on Dreamfog Island found that little food now grew on the island, and with no new supplies being brought in, they faced starvation. The few surviving Onu banded together

to kill and eat the outsiders among the slaves and workers, and in doing so, cursed themselves to become flameteeth — cannibalistic undead. To add to these terrors, children of Gam Onisha have hatched from eggs buried in the sand, while macan gadungan prowl in packs seeking food and a way off the island. In response to the horrors the island has seen, the island's lone volcano began to belch smoke and shake the island randomly, threatening living and undead alike.

Unsatisfied with wreaking his vengeance upon crewmembers still living on Dreamfog Island, Hingu-Hingu has undertaken to sicken and kill everyone who even shares a bloodline with his tormentors. He gave this task to the imandwa he created from the spirits of The Cauldron, who now fly far and wide across the Razor Sea. Because imandwa can smell out bloodlines, anyone in the Razor Coast of any blood relation to anyone who served aboard *The Salty Harlot* or *The Crusty Mermaid* is at risk for being found by Hingu-Hingu's servants. Most targets are not so perceptive as to be able to spot an imandwa in shadow form, allowing the spirits to keep their targets within their disease aura until they eventually contract grindblight and die. He also actively seeks Nattering Nam, the only original crewmember to escape his wrath.

Again, no one alive knows all of this except a few NPCs encountered in the course of the adventure.

## PART ONE:

# SHARKJAW DOCKS

## SYNOPSIS

While the characters are resting and resupplying in the cargo pit of Sharkjaw Docks, a prosperous madam with a serious disease running through her house approaches them for help. A quick investigation reveals the source of the disease to be supernatural and results in a conflict with an undead spirit. Interrogation of the undead or investigation about the girls all point to them being related to crewmembers of the pirate ship, *The Salty Harlot*. No one has heard from that ship in weeks but a single member of its crew, Nattering Nam, recently returned and is known to have gone on safari alone into deep jungle.

## ENCOUNTER 1. MAGPIE IN THE MORNING

Sandra DeLoure, the best known madam in Sharkjaw Docks, dispatches her servant, **Magpie**, to contact the characters on her behalf.

**Magpie, Half-Elf (Ftr3/MU3):** HP 12; AC 7 [12]; Atk +1 rapier (1d6+1); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** darkvision 60 ft., 4-in-6 chance to find secret doors, spells (2/1).

**Spells:** 1st—*charm person, grease*; 2nd—*mirror image*

**Equipment:** +1 rapier, cloak of protection +2.

Magpie is unassuming and subservient; assuring the characters he is merely a messenger for Sandra DeLoure, and allowing himself to be cowed by the slightest show of force. (Mostly, this is an act. See **Encounter 6** for more details.)

When Magpie approaches the characters, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description of the encounter.

A handsome young man in silken clothes jogs up, clearly intent on getting noticed. He clears his throat as he approaches and speaks with a melodious voice. “If it pleases, my mistress desires to speak on a matter of dire importance and potential profit.”

Sandra has a reputation for being a straight dealer, though she is also well-known for slicing off important pieces of anyone who roughs up her working girls and boys. Magpie assures the characters her intentions are purely business, and while Sandra would prefer to meet in her place (The Pearl Beds), she agrees to any reasonable conditions the characters impose as long as she gets to see them.

## Development

If the characters go to The Pearl Beds, they find it to be a slightly above-average whorehouse. **Six half-orc warriors** stand boldly at the front and back doors and each corner of

## SHARKJAW DOCKS

Sharkjaw Docks (so named for a massive set of fake megalodon jaws hanging from the end of the longest pier) is a “typical” cargo pit, if such a term is even relevant for the rough-and-ready supply communities that dot the coasts of the Razor Sea.

It has two long docks, each capable of berthing two large sailing ships and numerous smaller docks appropriate only for longboats and smaller, single-masted ships. Though its population is that of a small town, the constant influx of trade and coin make it livelier than the usual fishing or crossroads community.

Any inquiry into Butcher Jill or her crew, including asking about Nattering Nam, inevitably leads to the Sharkjaw Docks. Both her original ship, *The Salty Harlot*, and her second ship, *The Crusty Mermaid*, used Sharkjaw as their main port of operation.

## ALTERNATE BEGINNINGS

While *Jungle Fever* assumes the characters first encounter the effects of Hingu-Hingu’s vengeance at Sharkjaw Docks, the Referee can easily make changes to the introduction to personalize it for a specific group of characters. The first victim of grindblight to attract the characters’ attention can easily be an ally or an ally’s friend, a crewmember of whatever ship the characters happen to be on, or an ally from a previous adventure. The exact starting point doesn’t matter, as long as the characters realize both that some supernatural force is causing the persistent illness, and that the first cases of this ailment appeared at Sharkjaw Docks. Since sailors gossip about things like potential plagues, a bystander who witnesses the characters wrestling with the mystery of the first grindblight victim could mention hearing about several similar cases at the cargo pit. Once the characters follow that first bread crumb, the Referee can pick up with Sandra DeLoure and her imandwa shadow. Similarly, the entire Sharkjaw Docks can be moved to some other Razor Sea locale if the characters have strong ties there.

If the characters are the type of selfless heroes who seek problems just to solve them for the greater good, the Referee could have them overhear rumors of an incurable disease lingering in Sharkjaw Docks that they investigate with no further prodding. If the characters are more profit-driven, an additional rumor suggesting that some ship captains are paying well for cures to new mysterious diseases may motivate them where ailing allies and charity do not.

the building. The structure is of sturdy wood construction and painted in pastel blues and greens, but with stout iron bars reinforcing the doors and covering all windows. It shows some signs of age — the paint is somewhat sun faded, and the roof needs repair — but is generally clean and well-appointed.

**Half-Orc Warriors (6):** HD 6; HP 13, 26, 23, 39, 21, 24; AC 6[13]; Atk scimitar (1d8); Move 9; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: none.

Magpie shows the characters into a waiting room, where a few bored-looking young men and women lounge about in revealing silk and linen robes, and tells them he'll inform Sandra they are present.

If a character shows any interest in the working consorts in the lounge, all of them perk up and become seductive and talkative, but for the moment, they assume the characters aren't potential customers. In less than 5 minutes, Magpie returns and ushers the characters in to see Sandra in her office.

## ENCOUNTER 2. A FIEND IN NEED

Sandra DeLoure is an attractive woman just past the prime of life, with a touch of grey creeping into her blond hair and crow's feet her cosmetics can't quite hide. She is called The Fiend of Pleasure in many of the darker corners of the Sharkjaw Docks and sees herself as a mortal succubus. She's made a fortune by offering any vice at a price and hopes she's just a few years from being able to retire and live like a queen someplace where no one dares leer at her.

The Referee may read or paraphrase the following description of the characters' initial encounter with Sandra DeLoure.

The attractive woman sits comfortably in a large, well-padded chair. Her hair and make-up are impeccable, but the lines of age are beginning to show at the corners of her mouth and eyes. A small table next to her is stacked with ledgers and locked journals. She is dressed more conservatively than the other women in The Pearl Bed, though her bodice shows off her décolletage to good effect. She has a practiced, haughty and amused expression on her expertly powdered face, but also looks like she hasn't slept well in a few days.

Sandra DeLoure meets the characters in her office. It's a sizeable and comfortable chamber (lacking any windows) in the center of the lower floor. **Sandra DeLoure** is a fairly experienced spellcaster and a fine negotiator. But now she has a serious problem. Three of her best workers — the dwarven sisters Brassy and Mithrille, and their younger

male cousin Steehle fell ill with an unexplainable sickness. She has more than one shaman and a decrepit priest of Tykee on retainer, and she treated the three at their own expense when they first got sick. They recovered — but within a few days, they fell ill again. A cleric and a witch passing through Sharkjaw treated them as well, yet in every case, within days they fell ill again. Sandra was prepared to just fire the three for doing something unsavory off the books, when word arrived that their uncle, a dwarven shipwright named Nargus Fain, died weeks earlier in the distant cargo pit of Brevic's Folly.

**Sandra DeLoure, Half-Elf (MU8):** HP 27; AC 9 [10]; Atk +1 dagger (1d4+1); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: darkvision 60 ft., 4-in-6 chance to find secret doors, spells (4/3/3/2)

**Spells:** 1st—*charm person, magic missile, read magic, sleep*; 2nd—*detect evil, mirror image, wizard lock*; 3rd—*clairvoyance, hold person, suggestion*; 4th—*confusion, polymorph self*.

**Equipment:** +1 dagger, medallion of ESP.

Sandra explains that if it was just these three dwarves, she'd get rid of them and assume the problem would go away. Since it also affected their uncle in a far-off port, she's now concerned the disease is the side effect of some kind of curse. If it's just targeting the dwarf family, she's not worried. But no cleric can detect any sort of curse on them, and if the disease is a side effect of some foul magic attached to The Pearl Beds or Sandra herself, she needs experienced, competent adventurers to find the source and eliminate it. Many sailors come through her parlor, and the characters' names were mentioned by more than one pair of lips. (The Referee should feel free to mention some of the public events the characters have gotten into during prior adventures).

Sandra is willing to offer the use of The Pearl Beds and its employees as a base of operation for the characters while they work on the issue — and in perpetuity if they solve her problem. She can also offer them 500 gp each, though she tries to push more free services first, including time with herself or Magpie — much to his obvious annoyance — if a character seems likely to take that bait. Whatever final price is agreed upon, she won't hand out more than 10% in advance. If the characters want to be paid, they need to prove to her the problem has been dealt with.

However, before they give her a final acceptance or refusal, Sandra would like them to see the sick dwarves. See **Encounter 3**.

## ENCOUNTER 3. LURKING ILLNESS

Fearful of an infection spreading, Sandra moved her three sick dwarves to the Dungeon of Delights, a sound-proofed stone basement decorated as a dungeon for customers who prefer to pay for "rougher seas," as Sandra explains to the characters. Neither she nor Magpie wishes

to go in, though will if the characters insist. These are friends as well as employees, Sandra claims, and seeing them like this is difficult.

### Setup

The dwarves are lightly restrained with silken cords, so they don't fall out of bed or hurt themselves. All three are normally quite attractive, especially to those who prefer a stouter aesthetic, but they are now ravaged by illness. There are buckets filled with bile by each bed, and both women have clearly vomited recently. All three look pale and weak, with their cheekbones visible in their faces, and limbs and ribs showing signs of poor nutrition. The two women's beds are near the front of the room, while Steehle's is 30 feet farther back against the rear wall.

All three dwarves have grindblight, and Steelhe is in the last stages. An imandwa spirit working for Hingu-Hingu haunts the three dwarves, who are all relatives of a dwarf crewman of *The Salty Harlot*, Gadrix Fain. Gadrix was Steehle's father (and the girls' uncle). The imandwa is annoyed that it has had to infect them so often, and it is lurking as a shadow in the back of the room near Steehle.

### Action

When the characters enter the room, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description of grindblight's ravages.

The smell of vomit and sweat assails the senses as the door opens into the room. It has all the trappings of a dungeon — stone walls, flickering torchlight, chains on the walls and floor — but the beds within are well made of oak with what were once fine silk sheets. Now they are stained with sweat and filth as their inhabitants — two young female dwarves and one male dwarf just barely sporting a beard — writhe in obvious misery. In addition to the long, low moans of the two pale, sick dwarf women, the room is filled with the chattering teeth of the male who seems to be chanting “Nam—nam—nam—nam” endlessly.

Steehle is in the last hours of life, as he'll die when he fails another saving throw against the grindblight. Anyone who gets within 30 feet of him also gets within 30 feet of the imandwa adjacent to him, and must attempt a saving throw to avoid being nauseated. Since the imandwa is adjacent to Steehle, the effect seems to radiate from the dwarf.

Steehle can't talk, and the **imandwa** lurking near the dwarf is determined to stay by his side until he dies. If anyone tries to heal the Steehle through magic, the imandwa attacks immediately. If the characters haven't spotted it yet, the imandwa tries to surprise them. It focuses

## GRINDBLIGHT

Grindblight is a supernatural ailment spread by undead spirits and fiends of disease. It causes fevers and powerful pains in the stomach. Grindblight compels the victim to constantly grind his teeth, making it difficult to speak (all communication takes twice as long, and spells are 50% likely to fail).

A victim of grindblight develops symptoms within a day of contracting the ailment through injury, breathing in the airborne disease or through a curse. A victim must make a saving throw (with a -4 penalty) or lose 1d4 points of constitution and 1d2 points of charisma immediately as the disease takes hold. After that, the victim loses 1 hp per day until cured (or the curse is removed), and has a 25% chance each day of losing another 1d4 points of constitution.

If a target's constitution falls below 4, speech is impossible and the victim utters a single word over and over. The word is something of importance to the undead that first spread the grindblight, often providing a clue that sharp adventurers may use to find the spirit originating the disease.

its attacks on anyone who looks likely to help Steehle, but after that, attacks whoever is the most lightly armored (so it can easily see the effect its attacks have on exposed flesh). The imandwa isn't afraid of fighting to the death — it's the spirit of a slave Butcher Jill bought in Sharkjaw Docks, born at the edge of town. If killed, it flees back to its birthplace and regenerates.

**Imandwa:** HD 9; HP 42; AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (2d6 plus disease), +1 spear (1d8+1); Move 9 (fly 15); Save 6; AL C; CL/XP 13/2,600; **Special:** darkvision 60 ft., disease, incorporeal, immune to acid and fire, immune to sleep, charm and hold, nauseating presence, only hit by magic or silver weapons, regenerate 4 hp/round, weakened by bright light.

### Development

So long as they do not attempt to magically cure Steehle, the imandwa is content to lurk until Steehle dies. The characters can interrogate Brassy and Mithrille without triggering an attack, and the two answer any questions the characters have, despite misery and fever. They have trouble forcing words out of their mouths as the disease keeps them grinding their teeth but can be understood most of the time. They have no idea how they got sick, or why their illness keeps returning. They do know that Steehle usually gets sick first, but they get sick within a few days even if they avoid him.

When questioned the trio reveal some bits of useful information. They have had no contact with their uncle Nargus Fain in years. He disowned the family when Brassy

## IMANDWA

**Hit Dice:** 9

**Armor Class:** 6 [13]

**Attacks:** 2 claws (2d6 plus disease), weapon (1d8)

**Saving Throw:** 6

**Special:** darkvision 60 ft., disease, incorporeal, immune to acid and fire, immune to sleep, charm and hold, nauseating presence, only hit by magic or silver weapons, regenerate 4 hp/round, weakened by bright light

**Move:** 9 (fly 15)

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 13/2,300

Imandwa are powerful undead created when a diseased body is disposed of without ceremony in a defiled place that was once holy. Usually a single powerful spellcaster is the first imandwa to be created in a place, but the evil often spreads from there as the imandwa kills and creates more of the creatures. While a master imandwa has no magical control over those it creates, normally it is able to command their obedience through sheer power. Usually, imandwa are humanoids, but other beasts and monstrous creatures can be turned into the shadowy undead.

Creatures within 30 ft. of an imandwa must make a saving throw or be sickened by the creature's presence for 2d4 rounds and suffer a -1 penalty to attacks and saving throws. A creature that rolls a natural 1 against this aura catches grindblight (see the **Appendix**).

Imandwa attack with two shadow arms that end in long talons. The claws are separate from the imandwa's

normal arms, allowing it an additional attack with a weapon or even if bound. The claws cannot be used in bright illumination. Anyone struck by an imandwa must make a saving throw or catch grindblight. Imandwa spread shadowy wings to fly. Imandwa have incorporeal shadowy forms, requiring magical weapons or spells to harm them.

Imandwa are immune to acid and fire, and regenerate 4 hp per round. If killed, an imandwa assumes a shadowy form and attempts to escape. It must reach the place of its birth or the place of its death within 2 hours and rest there or be utterly destroyed. An imandwa can travel up to nine miles in two hours. Once at rest, an imandwa is helpless until sundown. If killed while at rest, the creature is utterly destroyed. At sundown the imandwa gains 4 hp and is no longer helpless.

If an imandwa's place of birth or death is threatened, or another imandwa senses an impending threat to them, the imandwa instinctively knows it. Most imandwa rush back to defend the places where they can regenerate. If a creature holds a handful of earth from the place an imandwa was born or the place it died, it can command the imandwa to come forth, even into bright sunlight. The imandwa must heed the call for one hour from hearing it (moving toward the creature to the best of its ability, or staying within 60 feet of the creature once the imandwa arrives), but is then free to act normally. An imandwa need only obey the first such call it hears each day. Imandwas are dazzled in areas of bright sunlight (suffering a -1 penalty to attacks and saves).

and Mithrille went to work at The Pearl Beds, and gave them up entirely when Steehle joined them, and his father (Nargus's brother, Gadrix Fain) took a cooking job aboard *The Salty Harlot*, a ship that used to come to port regularly. Brassy, Mithrille, and Steehle are not their real names. Steehle just started the chanting a few hours ago.

If the imandwa attacks and the characters forced Sandra or Magpie to enter the room, they flee at the sight of the undead creature. Brassy, Mithrille, and Steehle are all too sick to do anything but scream in terror.

### Wrap-Up

If saved by the characters, **Brassy, Mithrille** and **Steehle** become loyal agents and spies for them, though they lack the nerve to leave their jobs at The Pearl Beds.

**Brassy and Mithrille, Female Dwarves:** HD 2; HP 6, 8; AC 9 [10]; Atk belaying pin (1d4, subdual); Move 6; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: detect attributes of stonework.

**Equipment:** belaying pin

**Steehle, Dwarf:** HD 2; HP 12; AC 5 [14]; Atk war hammer (1d4+1); Move 6; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; Special: detect attributes of stonework.

**Equipment:** chainmail, war hammer

### ENCOUNTER 4. LIFE AND DEATH IN THE SHARKJAW DOCKS

After facing the imandwa, it should be clear to the characters that something larger is going on here than just a threat to The Pearl Beds. The dwarves, Magpie, and Sandra DeLoure all honestly offer that they have no idea what the undead was or why it was lurking by Steehle and his family.

The characters have many ways to proceed, so Referees should prepare for a variety of investigative efforts. Any magical divination points to a man named Nattering Nam as the key to the disease and the imandwa (in fact what Steehle was chanting as a result of the grindblight was Nam's name over and over, though Steehle himself does not know that). Sandra happily suggests the undead might



be the agent of someone in Sharkjaw Docks with a grudge against her and her success. That's not the case, but she doesn't know that, and the suggestion might encourage the characters to start asking some questions in town.

When the characters head to town, read or paraphrase the following description of Sharkjaw Docks:

The cargo pit smells of smoke and too many citizens crammed into too small a space—with not enough bath-houses. The gloom of torch smoke makes it dark well before the sun goes down with glittering lights shining through paper windows like dirty jewels. There's the constant soft whispering of voices in the distance, sometimes punctuated by a drunken laugh or broken sob. The brightest lights are on the docks themselves where lookouts watch over ships in port, and in the taverns near the docks where those lookouts lose their money as soon as they're off duty. But the dark alleys and dim corners far outnumber the few bright points.

### Setup

Any investigation to gather information in Sharkjaw Docks is also going to make the current power-base in town nervous. Right now, Master Scuttler Khoren runs the docks themselves, Maurgafen the Smoke Monger controls most of the rest of the cargo pit, and Baruka Ball-Breaker runs a protection racket with the blessing of the other two. Sandra DeLoure is the person most likely to challenge them for at least partial control of the cargo pit, so having a group of dangerous and competent adventurers working for Sandra worries them.

### Action

Depending on how the characters go about gathering information, they may be in Sharkjaw Docks for a few days, which gives them plenty of time to experience its particular "culture." While the Referee should always be pointing the characters toward Nattering Nam as the next major step of the adventure, any of the following events or rumors — many connected to the powers-that-be in the cargo pit — help fill in their time at Sharkjaw Docks.

### Events

As the characters investigate the Sharkjaw Docks, the Referee may insert some or all of the following episodes to give them a better flavor for the area.

1. A dirty homeless child named **Mathe** runs up to a character and yells "Sandra is the Fiend of Pleasure!" before running off. Scuttler Khoran paid him to do it in the hopes of spooking the characters out of working for Sandra.
2. **Sateen**, a barmaid who spends her nights as a

streetwalker, sidles up to a character and whispers "I have the solution to all your problems." This is just a come-on line, and the woman is surprised if the character doesn't realize that.

**Sateen:** HD 1d6; HP 2; AC 9[10]; Atk dagger (1d4); Move 12; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** dagger

3. **Thindol**, a pickpocket, attempts to lift a character's purse. He knows it was a stupid risk, but he's convinced the Dragon's Den has a secret stash of better dragonsmoke drugs, and if he has enough money he can get some.

**Thindol (Thf1):** HP 3; AC 7 [12]; Atk short sword (1d6); Move 9; Save 15; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** back stab (x2), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 85%, Traps/Tasks 15%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 10%, Silent 20%, Locks 10%.

**Equipment:** leather armor, shortsword

4. The characters notice activity in a nearby alley, as **2 giant rats** fight over a bloody tidbit. If investigated it turns out to be a severed human hand. The hand's ex-owner is dead, further down the alley. Though his body was picked clean by thieves and gnawed on by vermin, *speak with the dead* can reveal he is Jolmes Welock, a bounty hunter who came to Sharkjaw Docks a few days ago looking for Butcher Jill. He believed that she sold infected drugs to a friend of his whose brother was a member of her crew. He began applying pressure to the locals to force them to talk, and Baruka Ball-Breaker killed him for it.

**Giant Rats (2):** HD 1d4hp; HP 2; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (1d3); Move 12; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP A/5; **Special:** Neither of these rats is diseased.

5. **Gunthol**, a local tough and turnkey wanders through town screaming "Dreams! Gimme tha dreams!" He's a dreamfog addict, going through withdrawal. If followed, he ends up outside the Dragon's Den until Baruka Ball-Breaker comes and hauls him away to sleep it off.

**Gunthol, Half-Orc (Ftr5):** HP 33; AC 7 [12]; Atk flail (1d8+1); Move 9; Save 10; AL N; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, flail

6. **Morlose**, a rather dim moneylender and street thug, methodically beats the ribs and gut of **Lansa**, a surprisingly attractive female beggar. Morlose loaned Lansa 25 gp, but Lansa now owes him 100 gp as a result of interest.

**Morlose (Ftr1/Thf1):** HP 7; AC 7 [12]; Atk short sword (1d6); Move 9; Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** backstab (x2), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 85%, Traps/Tasks 15%,

Hear 3 in 6, Hide 10%, Silent 20%, Locks 10%.

**Equipment:** leather armor, shortsword

**Lansa (Thf1):** HP 2; AC 9 [10]; Atk 2 fists (1 hp); Move 12; Save 15; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** backstab (x2), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 85%, Traps/Tasks 15%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 10%, Silent 20%, Locks 10%.

**Equipment:** none.

## Rumors

During their interaction with Sharkjaw Docks' residents and visitors alike, the characters may learn the following rumors from the town's gossip mill. A character can hear 1d2 rumors for each hour spent poking about town.

1. A large number of cases of the teeth-grinding disease sprouted across the Razor Sea in recent weeks, most recurring and fatal. People have taken to calling it grindblight. A few locals blame the pirate captain Butcher Jill for bringing dreamfog (a strange competitor for dragonsmoke) to port for months but missing a shipment just before the grindblight started. (If the characters ask more questions about Butcher Jill or dreamfog, see the first five sections of the **Adventure Background and Lore** section for more information and how hard it is to find).
2. One of the people Sandra DeLoure tried to hire to cure her dwarf employees was Nattering Nam, a hunchbacked barber who cured several members of *The Salty Harlot's* crew of crotch-barnacles when first hired onto the ship. He hasn't been seen in a few weeks. (This rumor is true, though his curing of the unfortunate infection on *The Salty Harlot* was a coincidence.)
3. Sandra DeLoure hates dwarves and infected hers intentionally. Only Magpie's care for the workers keeps The Pearl Beds open. (This rumor is false in pretty much every respect.)
4. Butcher Jill became so rich peddling dreamfog that she retired as a queen on some distant island, and Magpie is faking the illnesses so he can sell workers from The Pearl Beds to her as slaves. (This is also entirely false.)
5. The sick Pearl Beds' workers smoked too much dreamfog at The Dragon's Den, and that's why they're dying. (This is false, although it might point the characters to The Dragon's Den).
6. Sharkjaw Docks' very name offends a local Tulita shaman, and he's cursed the town to die of festering boils. (The name did offend some local Tulita, but they gave up that dispute years ago. Otherwise, it's entirely false.)
7. Sandra DeLoure, the Fiend of Pleasure, is a succubus, and her workers are sick because she feeds on their

souls. (Once again entirely false, though Sandra encourages rumors she's a succubus. It's good for business and makes potential enemies more cautious.)

8. Whatever is going on, Magpie is clearly behind it, since he arranges for nearly everything in Sharkjaw Docks. (As it happens Magpie has nothing to do with it, but he does make a number of arrangements in town, including arranging for Nattering Nam's safari.)
9. General information. Any player who asks about the origins of dragonsmoke or dreamfog will learn more about the drugs provided that a bit of money changes hands.
10. General information. A player who wants to know more about the Onu has a 25% chance of knowing anything about the location of A'in Akea. See "The Onu and Nisha" in the **Adventure Background and Lore** section.
11. General information. A player who wants to know about Turtle's silence has a 10% chance of learning this information.
12. General information. Outside of a few Onu who fled, and NPCs encountered in this adventure, almost no one has information about the downfall of the Onu, and rise of Hingu-Hingu. Players have a 5% chance of learning this information, and even then, the details are sketchy and unbelievable.

## ENCOUNTER 5. INTO THE DRAGON'S DEN

The Dragon's Den is the largest dragonsmoke den in Sharkjaw Docks, and not coincidentally, is run by one of the three secret masters of town, **Maugafen the Smoke Monger**.

**Maugafen the Smoke Monger (Thf7):** HP 23; AC 3 [16]; Atk dagger (1d4) or +1 *light crossbow* (1d4+2); Move 9; Save 7; AL N; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** backstab (x3), +2 save vs. traps, thieving skills.

**Thieving Skills:** Climb 91%, Traps/Tasks 45%, Hear 5 in 6, Hide 40%, Silent 50%, Locks 40%.

**Equipment:** +2 *leather armor*, *cloak of protection* +2, dagger, +1 *light crossbow*, 10 bolts, *bag of holding*, *gem of seeing*, disguise kit, thieves' tools

Butcher Jill sold dreamfog through the Dragon's Den. Though there's no guarantee the characters go to the smoke den as part of their investigation, both dreamfog and The Dragon's Den itself are likely to come up often enough in rumors to make it as least one likely destination.

The room smells strongly of Granpappy Blackskull, and smoky stains cover every inch of the wooden walls and low ceiling. Several people are sprawled haphazardly on cushions across the floor of the large main room, inhaling smoke from

complex hookahs or smaller brass pipes. Curtained alcoves line the sides of the room, and flickering lights show that dragonsmoke is being enjoyed in these as well, though some grunts and moans suggest other pleasures are also available. A few children wander through the room, collecting coins in return for small blocks of dragonsmoke ready to be lit, and checking the breathing of the most deeply unconscious patrons with small polished brass mirrors. At the far end of the room sits an obese man with hangdog ears and small, beady eyes. He wears clothes that might have been finery before they too became stained with smoke.

### Setup

Maugafen runs the main room of his den personally, and his grandchildren and great-grandchildren work in the room as smoke-tenders, seeing to the needs of the customers and gathering money in return. Maugafen is the only visible adult, though **4 guards** rest in one of the curtained alcoves ready to aid him if he calls, and the back rooms have a few courtesans of both genders ready for a patron with the money.

**Guards (4):** HD 1; HP 4, 4, 5, 7; AC 7 [12]; Atk longsword (1d8); Move 12; Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, longsword.

Maugafen is unhappy to see powerful adventurers in the dragon's den, as experience has taught him such folk tend to be more trouble than they are worth. He certainly offers them a private room at no extra cost if they want to enjoy some dragonsmoke, but takes them to his back room if they insist on talking.

The smoke monger has no interest in getting into a fight — he has no stake in the fate of Sandra's workers, Magpie, Butcher Jill, or Nattering Nam and sees no reason not to tell the truth. He doesn't like being bullied, but mostly he just wants adventurers out of his place of business and, if possible, out of the Sharkjaw Docks.

### What Maugafen Knows

Maugafen doesn't know a great deal about Butcher Jill or dreamfog, but he grudgingly agrees to tell the characters what he does know. He describes the pirate captain herself as beautiful, but with a soul blacker than two-week-old hookah water. She'd sell her own mother to a slaver for a silver coin, and help rent the old bag out for an extra silver. She ruled through fear and greed, though she could sweeten her tongue and talk a Tulita into wearing a sharkfin hat if she turned on the charm. He mostly dealt with her head alchemist, a halfling called Nattering Nam, who brought in shipments of dreamfog — dragonsmoke laced with something that made it more potent.

Dreamfog was popular, despite the high price Butcher Jill charged him for it (along with Maugafen's markup) but he could never get enough of it. Nattering Nam made regular trips, every two or three weeks, for many months. Each time he promised there'd be more product next time, but there never was. The last shipment was nearly two months ago, and Nattering Nam was more agitated than usual.

Maugafen describes Nattering Nam as twitchy at the best of times, constantly talking and apparently unaware he was doing so. He was also a fairly regular user of dragonsmoke, so Maugafen often got to hear more from him than most folks. He always talked about his past — complaining that he warned his liege that his hands were shaky that day, and questioning who needs a straight-razor shaving at dawn anyway. But in the months he was making dreamfog deliveries his mutterings grew darker. He spoke of filthy caves, the "mad shaman's fever," talking tigers eating people, and the price that would have to be paid. Then two months ago he kept saying "Butcher's coming to a bad end, don't wanna' be no part of it anymore, don't wanna' be trapped in the Shell when Hell comes due."

The next morning, Nattering Nam asked Maugafen who could arrange a ship to take him to a small, densely-forested island for a few weeks' safari. Maugafen directed him to Magpie, who arranges such things off the books and without Sandra's knowledge or approval. And that's all Maugafen knows.

## ENCOUNTER 6. THE MAGPIE'S CALL

Magpie played a small role in the tale of Butcher Jill and Nattering Nam, and if he were less ambitious, chances are he'd come through the adventure fine. Sadly for him his reach exceeds his grasp, and he's probably about to get himself killed.

### Background

Magpie hates Sandra DeLoure, largely because he has strongly misogynistic leanings, feeling women should be subservient to men, and instead Sandra rents him out like any other worker in her employ. Sandra raised him from a youth after finding him starving and rooting through her garbage. She trusts him totally, while he wants to kill her and take control of The Pearl Beds. He's also convinced she knows this, and her "trust" is actually a ruse to get him to tip his hand and openly attack her so she could sell him into slavery. Truth be told, if Magpie did attack Sandra, he'd likely win out of sheer surprise.

Magpie has searched for allies and opportunities for most of his life. A few years ago he found allies in the form of a group of cloaklers who have adopted Magpie and work with him. Magpie uses their stealth and slyness to make various back-alley deals for years, specifically dealing in the kind of dangerous, high-end smuggling and stolen-goods fencing Sandra wants to keep far away from her already-profitable Pearl Beds.

Now, he sees the dwarves' illness as his opportunity. If Sandra can't fix the problem, Magpie believes he can blame her and get the other workers to rally with him and against the "Fiend of Pleasure" and her infected cohorts. With a group, he can drive out Sandra without risking her wrath directly (or alone), and take over The Pearl Beds. Of course for that to work the characters can't be allowed to fix the problem for Sandra and so, Magpie has decided, they must die.

## Setup

Magpie is still a coward at heart, so he has no intention of facing the characters in a fair fight. If they contact him to ask about Nattering Nam, he sends a message telling them his information is too dangerous to repeat in public and asks them to meet him in a nearby alley. If the characters don't contact him within a couple of days, he sends a similar message suggesting he has information but, again, it's too dangerous to repeat anywhere but in a hidden alley.

His chosen alley is 10 feet wide, 60 feet long, has no lights, and is between two 20-foot-tall wooden buildings with no windows or doors opening onto the alley. A single cloaker hangs from his back, and the rest are hidden in shadows hanging from eaves just below the roofs of the buildings.

When Magpie lures the characters into his ambush, read or paraphrase the following description of the scene.

The alley is long and dark, wedged between two of the few buildings in town with more than a single floor. A tall fence of wooden pickets closes the far end. Magpie stands a dozen paces into the dim alley, wearing a heavy black cloak that makes him just barely visible in the shadows. He looks about furtively then waves his hand in a gesture to come closer.

## Action

Magpie and the 5 cloakers know the characters are tough and attempt a ruse to lure them into an ambush. Magpie plans to cast *grease* (new spell; see sidebox) on the ground between him and the characters in a surprise round (if he manages surprise), then *mirror image*. After that, he casts *charm person* on warriors.

## GREASE

**Spell Level:** Magic-User 1st Level

**Range:** 60 ft.

**Duration:** 1 round/level

A grease spell covers a solid surface with a fine layer of slippery grease. Anyone trying to pass through the grease can move at half their normal Movement, or they risk falling (saving throw to negate).

All the cloakers already have mirror images in effect. A cloaker attacks anyone who looks like a spellcaster with its enfurl attack. The cloakers will avoid moaning until they can avoid catching Magpie in it.

Any cloaker dropped to 9 or fewer hit points flees if it can safely do so. If 4 or more cloakers are dead, captured, or fled, the remaining cloaker flees. Magpie knows Sandra DeLoure will turn him into a eunuch if he fails his coup here, and fights to the death.

**Cloakers (5):** HD 6; HP 27, 32, 21, 34 (x2); AC 4[15]; Atk tail (1d8), bite (1d6), enfurl; **Save** 11; **Move** 9 (fly 12); **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** darkness, enfurl, mirror image, moan.

**Magpie, Half-Elf (Ftr3/MU3):** HP 12; AC 7 [12]; Atk +1 rapier (1d6+1); **Move** 12; **Save** 12; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** darkvision 60 ft., 4-in-6 chance to find secret doors, spells (2/1).

**Spells:** 1st—*charm person, grease*; 2nd—*mirror image*

**Equipment:** +1 rapier, cloak of protection +2.

## Wrap-Up

If Magpie is taken alive, he happily tells what little he knows about Nattering Nam in the hopes the characters either let him go, or at least not turn him over to Sandra. Two weeks ago, Nattering Nam came and offered payment in gold to be taken to a small uncharted island with dense jungle and no known major predators and to then picked up again in three months. The alchemist was clearly nervous, and specified that if Butcher Jill or anyone working for her came asking questions, Magpie should tell them that he bought passage on a ship leaving the Razor Sea entirely. Magpie arranged for the alchemist to be taken to Big Mossrock, a small island a day's journey away with dense jungle and nothing of value known to be on it, promising to have him picked up a season later. Magpie admits that he originally planned to follow through on the pick-up, since he didn't want to risk losing access to the up-and-coming dreamfog trade. Since dreamfog dried up, however, he decided to let the hunchback rot.

If the characters kill Magpie, they can discover the same information in a journal in his room, which Sandra DeLoure happily gives them access to after learning of Magpie's ambush. Sandra is unlikely to assume Magpie betrayed her unless given pretty convincing proof, but she won't blame the characters for her aide's death. She knew Magpie was taking risks for months, and was afraid he'd come to a bad end. If any cloakers survive, they simply flee to the shadowy jungles beyond the cargo pit.

## ENCOUNTER 7.

### THE TALE OF NATTERING NAM

Once it is clear to the characters that Nattering Nam is their best potential source of information about Butcher Jill and Dreamfog Island, they have to set about finding him on Big Mossrock. Even if the characters don't get the

information they need from Magpie (see **Encounter 6**), it should be possible to gather enough information to find someone who knows where he was taken, if not exactly where he is on that island. Similarly, clever use of magic efforts to speak to demons, deities or other such beings, or to divine Nam's rough location with a *crystal ball* (one of these might be for hire in Sharkjaw Docks) will also be successful.

Since Nattering Nam is specifically trying to get himself lost until Butcher Jill forgets about him, he's gone into the deepest jungle he can find. While the adventure assumes that's the tiny island of Big Mossrock, with not much native life on it beyond dense vegetation and 1–2 HD animals, the Referee should feel free to relocate his journey to any location that works well. In particular, if the characters have already explored some other densely-vegetated area prior to beginning *Jungle Fever* it can be a nice call-back to have them return to find and rescue Nam.

When the characters arrive off the island's shore, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

The small island looms in the misty seas, no more than a mile across and surprisingly flat. A thin beach is visible at the southern end, but all the rest of the island is covered in dense greenery. A thin column of smoke, as from a camp fire, trails up from a point only a few hundred feet in from the beach. The still air is rent by a horrific shriek, combining the worst elements of a jaguar's call and a child's wail, and birds take flight in a panicked frenzy throughout the jungle at the sound.

### Setup

Most likely the characters are going to know only that Nattering Nam was dropped off on the south end of Big Mossrock near a small bay—a thin crescent of beach on an island covered in thick, dark jungle. As it happens the characters are not the only creatures seeking the hunchback barber. Hingu-Hingu sent his servants, both the undead imandwa and his horrific achimayen throughout the Razor Sea seeking the last living member of Butcher Jill's crew. A pack of achimayen have caught the alchemist's scent and tracked him back to his camp here on Big Mossrock just as the characters arrive.

### Action

The camp is 200 feet from the beach, and the trail of smoke marks its location. The **4 achimayen** reach Nattering Nam 6 rounds after the characters' boat hits the beach. Their howls grow louder in 7 rounds, and then the sounds of combat reach the characters.

**Nattering Nam, Human (MU7):** HP 22; AC 5 [14]; Atk staff (1d6), sling (1d4); Move 9; Save 7; AL C; CL/XP 10/1,400;

## ACHIMAYEN

**Hit Dice:** 10

**Armor Class:** 3 [16]

**Attacks:** bite (1d4+2 plus poison)

**Saving Throw:** 5

**Special:** immune to disease, maddening cry, poison

**Move:** 12 (fly 12, climb 12)

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 12/2,000

This twisted, distorted creature is the size of a halfling, but has the features of an infant, with long, gangly limbs extending from a tiny body with a distended belly. Its mouth is full of short, jagged teeth, and its skin is covered in oozing boils.

Achimayen are horrific aberrations spawned by supernatural disease and an accursed vengeance wreaked on some mortal agent. The creatures grow in the boils of a cursed host, who can produce as many as 3 achimayen a day, though the total number of achimayen in existence at any one time can't exceed the host's Hit Dice. The achimayen serve whoever their host wronged, though they also seek to spread chaos and misery where they can. If the brood's host is destroyed, all members of the brood also die.

An achimayen can unleash a terrible, piercing cry that is a mockery of the wailing of a true child. Creatures within 60 feet that can hear the cry must make a saving throw or be permanently deafened and confused for 1 round. A creature that succeeds on its save cannot be affected by the same achimayen's maddening cry for 24 hours.

An achimayen's bite delivers poisonous venom that cripples a foe (saving throw resists) for 1d6 rounds. The poisoned victim attacks and saves with a –4 penalty.

**Special:** +2 on saves vs. magic, +1 bonus missile weapons, spells (4/3/2/2).

**Spells:** 1st—*light, magic missile (x2), shield*; 2nd—*invisibility, levitate, mirror image*; 3rd—*fireball, slow*; 4th—*dimension door*.

**Equipment:** sling, staff, 5 potions of healing, 5 potions of extra healing, jug of alchemy.

Unless the characters arrive to save him, the achimayen kills Nattering Nam, although his *fireball* will damage the creatures and 2 of them will be *slowed*. If the characters arrive before Nam's death, the achimayen leave off Nattering Nam and attack the greater threat, the party. One of the achimayen uses its wail each round, and the horrors change targets often, trying to disable as many foes as possible with their bite.

**Achimayen (4):** HD 10; HP 56, 45, 55, 39; AC 3[16]; Atk bite (1d4+2 plus poison); Save 5; Move 12 (climb 12, fly 12); AL C; CL/XP 12/2,000; **Special:** immune to disease, maddening cry, poison.

### Wrap-Up

Nattering Nam is grateful for being rescued, and offers what healing he has to any injured characters. If asked about his past he refuses to talk much about it, as he was exiled after he killed his liege by shaving him while drunk.

More importantly, he relates the true history of what befell the Onu and Ain Akea up to the time he left, less than a week before Hingu-Hingu arose as an imandwa (see **Adventure Background and Lore** for details). He doesn't know that Hingu-Hingu died or that the mad shaman became undead, but he is sure any evil that seems to be attached to the relatives of Butcher Jill's crews is a consequence of her cruelty, greed, and merciless, short-sighted search for wealth and power.

Most importantly, he can tell the party the location of Dreamfog Island from a chart where he has it marked, and owns a smaller-scale map showing the safe route through its protective reefs. Dreamfog Island is not so much secret as it is just generally ignored. It is a small island with a volcano, surrounded by reefs, and often clouded in fog. Many sea charts mark it as a navigational hazard. Efforts to reach the island almost always result in a ship's damaging or destroying itself on the reefs.

Nam is as helpful as he can be, though he refuses to go back to Dreamfog Island. He'd much rather take his chances on Big Mossrock, or a ship sailing further way, than face Butcher Jill or whatever supernatural horrors she unleashed.

If the characters don't save Nam, they will still find the maps in his possession (with an "X" beside the island on the larger chart), although they won't get the additional information he could have told them.

## PART TWO:

### DREAMFOG ISLAND

After gaining the location of Dreamfog Island and the route through its reefs from Nattering Nam (or finding them on his corpse), the characters finally face the source of the grindblight plague and the ultimate author of their troubles, Hingu-Hingu.

When the characters come within visual range of Dreamfog Island, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

A massive volcano dominates this island, its fiery red mouth actively trailing black smoke and grumbling like some sleeping god. Sparks periodically fly from its gullet, hurtling down into the lush jungle of the island's body. Most of the coastline is sheer cliff, with only a single crescent of beach offering a landing point on the western side of the rocky mass. A thin plume of bluish smoke, bright against the red, black and green of the volcano, rises from the north slope of the central peak.

The characters have a natural destination to head for (the column of smoke on Fire Slope visible from the ocean — **Encounters 9 and 10**), but the island itself is an open location. The characters could choose to go anywhere at any time. The adventure assumes they land on Crescent Beach and then move to Fire Slope, but the Referee should be ready for everything the characters might choose to do. For example, they might skip the initial beach encounter by flying or teleporting to another point on the island. Use random encounters (see **Appendix A**) to fill in any destination the characters may focus on that doesn't have its own numbered encounter.

### D1. REEFS

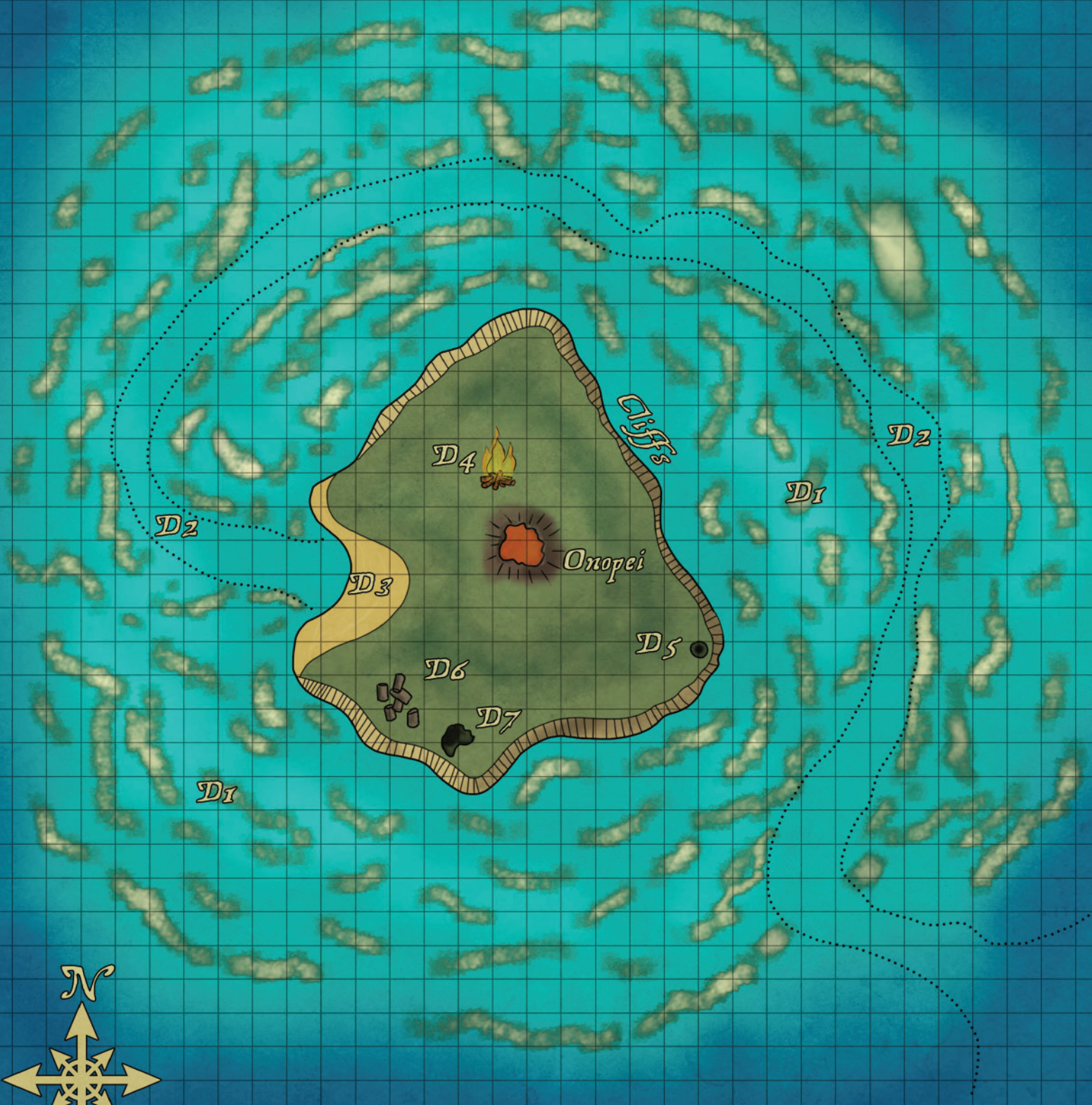
Surrounding Dreamfog Island is a vast field of ship-chewing reefs. The channel (**D2**) is not visible from the surface, so anyone sailing into the waters around the island without knowing the location of the channel in anything larger than a ship's longboat has a cumulative 25% chance per mile traveled of running aground on a reef. If this occurs, consult the table below for the results.

### Striking the Reef

ROLL D4	RESULT
1	Ship Holed
2	Stranded
3	Sprung a Leak
4	Breaking Up

# Dreamfog Island

1 square = 1 mile



**Ship Holed:** The ship has run aground and breached the hull upon the reef. Anyone aboard takes 2d6 damage from the impact (save for half), and the ship begins to take on water. If not repaired by magic, the ship sinks in 1d10 rounds.

**Stranded:** The ship has run aground on a reef and is stuck until it can be floated off at high tide.

**Sprung a Leak:** The ship has run aground and cracked the hull upon the reef. Anyone aboard takes 1d6 damage from the impact (save for half), and the ship begins to take on water though at a slow rate. The ship will sink in 1d3 days if not repaired by magic. The ship is still seaworthy and is not stuck on the reef.

**Breaking Up:** The ship has run aground upon the reef with such force that the hull has begun to break up. Anyone aboard takes 6d6 damage from the impact and sharp coral (save for half), and the ship sinks in 1d4 rounds.

In each of these cases, unless the ship is destroyed, if the characters are able to keep it afloat, they can continue to press on through the reefs towards the island (with the cumulative 25% chance of running ground beginning again) or they can backtrack along their own route in without mishap.

If a ship's longboat or raft is taken into the reefs, the chance of running aground is reduced to a cumulative 10% per mile traveled. If that occurs only the events "Stranded" or "Sprung a Leak" can occur (50% chance of either).

## D2. HIDDEN CHANNEL

This winding course is the only safe way for a ship to navigate through the reefs surrounding Dreamfog Island. Unless a ship's pilot has a map of the channel or intimate knowledge of the waters, the entrance to the channel can only be discovered by luck (10% chance), or by magic. If necessary, consult the "Striking the Reef" table in **D1** above. Once the channel is discovered by someone without a map, there is still a 10% chance for each mile traveled to avoid accidentally sailing beyond its safe confines and into the treacherous reef waters as described under **D1** above. The Referee may, of course, use any sensible modifier to the die roll that makes sense. For example, reefs are fairly visible from overhead, so an aerial scout will virtually eliminate chances of an accident (reduce to 2%).

## D3. CRESCENT BEACH

When the characters come within visual range of the beach, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description:

The beach is scattered with jetsam — shattered planks, cracked masts, smashed chests and long strips of tattered sailcloth. The ruined prow of a ship sits well above the high-tide mark, its masthead a wooden mermaid with both arms broken off. The name "The Crusty Mermaid" can be made out on

the ruined hulk.

With a splash, creatures begin to emerge from the water. The size of a large horse, they mix the features of a snapping turtle with the keen eyes and fangs of dragonkind. Another one moves out from the beached ships' prow, as six of the creatures approach from all directions.

### Action

Though Gam Onisha herself only risks coming to the island when Hingu-Hingu calls her, the spawn of the false Turtle, the **6 tagu egam**, have claimed the Crescent Beach as their own. If anyone approaches the beach, the young dragon turtles attack. The tagu egam see this territory as their lair and fight to the death to defend it. However, if at least half of them have lost more than half their hit points, they don't chase foes that flee the beach. The tagu egam are fairly straight-forward opponents, attacking the nearest foe they see. They do not hesitate to attack ships sailing into the bay.

**Tagu Egam (6):** HD 7; HP 21, 27, 31, 42, 22, 36; AC 3 [16]; Atk 2 claws (1d8) and bite (2d10); Save 9; Move 9 (swim 12); AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: breathe steam.

### Wrap-Up

Any treasure possessed by the 12 tagu egam is buried on the beach. For every hour spent searching the long beach a successful DC 15 Perception check turns up one of the 12 caches (roll d12). Every hour that the PCS remain on the beach, roll for a random encounter (see **Appendix A**), and any remaining tagu egam arrive within an hour of any battle here.

## TAGU EGAM (YOUNG DRAGON TURTLE)

**Hit Dice:** 7

**Armor Class:** 3 [16]

**Attacks:** 2 claws (1d8) and bite (2d10)

**Saving Throw:** 9

**Special:** breathe steam

**Move:** 9 (swim 12)

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 8/800

This long-tailed aquatic beast resembles a sizable snapping turtle with a dragon-like head. Tagu egam are the offspring of Gam Onisha, mutated dragon turtles affected by their parent's exposure to nisha. They are extremely territorial, but also work together to protect their lair. The tagu egam can breathe a 15-ft. wide cloud of steam up to 20 feet once every 1d4 rounds, dealing 4d6 points of damage (save for half).



There are a total of 12 tagu egam on Dreamfog Island. As long as 6 are still alive, there are always 6 here within an hour of a battle on the beach (until **Encounter 8 — see Part Two**). As the characters kill the creatures here and in random encounters (see **Appendix A**), the Referee should keep track of the number remaining. When there are 5 or fewer left they are no longer encountered randomly, and are found only on the beach.

### Treasure

**CACHE #1:** 160 sp, 7 gp, a chrysoprase (55 gp), platemail armor (slightly rusty but functional), a quarterstaff, a *potion of treasure finding*, a *potion of invisibility*, and two scrolls (one *scroll of magic missile*, and one of *shield*).

**CACHE #2:** 1,203 gp

**CACHE #3:** 527 gp, an opal (500 gp), and a black pearl (600 gp)

**CACHE #4:** 518 gp, 5 gold scarabs (75 gp each), a gold bowl with dragon engravings (400 gp each), and a platinum scepter with gold inlay (1,200 gp)

**CACHE #5:** 8,000 cp, 270 sp, 35 gp, 17 pp, and a suit of +1 *plate mail*

**CACHE #6:** 1,700 sp, 380 gp

**CACHE #7:** 7 sp and a brilliant green emerald (1,000 gp)

**CACHE #8:** 3,200 cp, 400 sp, 178 gp, a +1 *light crossbow* with a quiver of 20 silver crossbow bolts, and a topaz (500 gp)

**CACHE #9:** a scroll (*speak with the dead*), and 2 gold plates (350 gp each)

**CACHE #10:** 1,075 sp and 153 gp

**CACHE #11:** 20 gp, 19 pp, a *ring of protection +1* and a scroll (*charm monster*)

**CACHE #12:** 5,800 cp, 380 sp, 14 gp, and a packet of *dust of disappearance* (3 applications)

### D4. FIRE SLOPE

Here on Fire Slope the last living Onu, **Kamkamata**, works to burn every bit of nisha flower he can find to put it forever beyond the reach of madmen like Hingu-Hingu and Butcher Jill. The smoke attracted 4 **macan gadungan** (a form of Razor Sea rakshasa that Butcher Jill hired to motivate her slaves). The four are addicted to dreamfog and are trying to convince Kamkamata to tell them where he keeps his stash. Kamkamata is taunting them, claiming to have hidden piles of raw nisha that he'll never let them see. In fact, as far as Kamkamata knows, there is no nisha left on the whole island.

### Setup

The bonfire is 20 feet in diameter, and its smoke conceals any creature within 30 feet of it (20% any attack misses). The macan gadungan stay just out of the smoke, trying to lure Kamkamata closer so they can grab him before he leaps into the fire (which he threatens to do if they approach). Kamkamata is nearly mad, and the macan gadungan are desperate to find his imaginary nisha reserves, so this standoff can last for hours if the characters don't interfere.

In addition to the bonfire, a single 10-foot-wide stream of lava runs along the slope 90 feet away. Neither Kamkamata nor the macan gadungan move toward it intentionally.

When the characters happen upon Kamkamata's stalemate, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

Among the ribbons of bright red lava slowly making their way down the volcano's north face is a single figure, dancing wildly around a huge bonfire. Thick, blue smoke rises from the fire, making a column easily visible for miles. The figure seems to be a native Tulita, though gaunt and shaky, clad only in a simple loincloth. Four creatures pace around the human and bonfire — three huge tigers, and one lithe elven woman who seems to reach out to the human and gesture for him to join her away from the fire and smoke.

### Action

Kamkamata doesn't get involved in any ensuing fight at all, and the 4 macan gadungan ignore him as long as a more immediate threat is obvious. The macan gadungan are beyond complex tactics, and if threatened or attacked simply try to kill any new threat. They are fearless and crazed enough to fight to the death. If a macan gadungan seems outmatched by a foe, it is likely to try a new beast shape to see if it can gain some advantage (tiger, boa constrictor, and gorilla are favorites). If a macan gadungan is incapacitated but can still talk, it takes an attractive humanoid shape and claims to be an innocent slave possessed by a malevolent spirit that forces it to shape shift and fight. Such a bluff is unlikely to work, but the macan gadungan may buy itself time to find an opening to betray anyone that shows compassion towards it.

**Macan Gadungan (Rakshasa-like Creature) (4):** HD 7; HP 34, 19, 37, 32; AC 2 [17]; Atk 2 claws (1d3) and bite (1d6); Save 9; Move 15; AL C; CL/XP 12/2,000; **Special:** immune to 4th-level and lower spells, magical weapons required to hit, shape shift (gorilla, boa constrictor, tiger, and other jungle creatures), spells (Clr 1; MU 3/2/1).

**Spells:** 1st—*cure light wounds*, *magic missile* (x3); 2nd—*mirror image*, *web*; 3rd—*fly*

## Encounter 10 - The Sacrifice of Kamkamata

The Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

Though clearly malnourished and suffering from exposure, the dark-haired man smiles broadly. He glances over at a slow-moving river of lava, and jogs over to bask in the warm, red glow of its heat.

Kamkamata is no longer entirely sane. After Butcher Jill began enslaving the Onu, Kamkamata hid in the deepest island jungle, where her crew could not follow. When Hingu-Hingu arose and slaughtered the pirates, Kamkamata knew the undead shaman posed just as much of a threat to his continued survival as Butcher Jill had. The young Onu was resolved to die, when a vision struck him—a woman of fire who said she was the spirit of Onopei, the island's central volcano—and promised to keep him safe if he would come live on the volcano's slope. Kamkamata believes the vision to be a dream sent by Pele working through the island's volcano spirit, and he has become a worshiper of Pele. He fled to the fiery volcano-side, and through divine intervention or sheer luck the lava flows have kept both the predators of the island and Hingu-Hingu's agents at bay. Until the macan gadungan found him, he'd been entirely unbothered on the slope of the volcano.

Kamkamata insists on moving close to the lava, explaining that it was the lava that saved him, and he only feels safe near it. He won't cooperate with the characters willingly unless they allow him to crouch 30 or so feet from the lava's edge (where it is hot, but not damagingly so).

**Kamkamata (Clr6):** HP 27; AC 9 [10]; Atk 2 fists (1 hp); Move 12; Save 10; AL N; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** +2 vs. poison and petrification, spells (2/2/2/2).

**Spells:** 1st—*cure light wounds* (x2); 2nd—*find traps, hold person*; 3rd—*cure disease, prayer*; 4th—*cure serious wounds, neutralize poison*.

Kamkamata can answer a lot of the characters' questions, if they think to ask him. He knows most of the events of the **Adventure Background and Lore** section, only lacking details about Nattering Nam and the specifics of Hingu-Hingu's plans for vengeance. He happily goes over the events that led up to the current state of Dreamfog Island, making no effort to conceal his role in the evil history. Indeed, he seems to revel in telling someone what he did. He also has some information he gathered from talking to escaped slaves before they were killed or turned to cannibalism and became flameteeth.

### Information to Share

Kamkamata knows Hingu-Hingu is an imandwa with other imandwa working for him. If specifically asked about imandwa weaknesses, he details the call home weakness.

He knows Hingu-Hingu was born in an Onu village, later

## IS PELE HELPING?

Kamkamata believes the goddess Pele is keeping him alive so he can help the characters set right what his actions have caused. He hopes that she accepts his sacrifice and makes him one of her immortal agents. The adventure certainly assumes the island sinks after the characters wreak vengeance on Hingu-Hingu, Gam Onisha, and Butcher Jill, but it's not explicit whether that's a supernatural force or a coincidence. If the characters don't look into the question it's perfectly acceptable to leave it unanswered — the modern Razor Sea is the kind of place where miracles are rare and hard to verify. Pele has not walked the land openly in a long time, and many doubt she exists.

reduced to the ruins of the Butcher's Block (**Area D6**). After Butcher Jill razed the original village to the ground, her slaves cleared off the village's topsoil and dumped it into the ocean. The only remnant of the old village's earth is a gem that an alchemist made from the ruins. Ironically, Jill had the gem set into skinflenser, her saber. Kamkamata believes skinflenser lies somewhere in the ruins of Butcher Block.

He knows Butcher Jill is no longer truly alive, and her flesh is animated only by the cursed powers that have turned her into an incubator for the achimayen. He knows she is still chained in the Festering Cave (**Area D7**), and Hingu-Hingu often visits her there.

He knows Gam Onsiha is not dead, as he has seen the great dragon turtle. He also knows the monster birthed exactly 12 offspring, as he saw the eggs on the beach when they hatched.

He knows that, according to his dream, if someone punishes Hingu-Hingu, Gam Onsiha, and Butcher Jill, the goddess Pele will destroy the island. But, he warns, this won't destroy the imandwa Hingu-Hingu raised from the dead spirits in The Cauldron. If the characters want to end the spread of disease, they must first face the undead in the bottom of that watery pit.

### Suicide to Commit

After answering all the characters' questions and checking to make sure they have no others, Kamkamata says he is glad they have come and given him a chance to tell someone what he did. Now, he must begin to set right what his actions made so wrong. Then, he leaps up and throws himself into the lava.

Assuming Kamkamata acts first in a round, he drops into the lava flow and takes 20d6 points of fire damage per round, immediately incinerating him. If the characters stop him, he argues strenuously to be allowed to sacrifice himself

in this way. All the pain and evil that came from Dreamfog Island is the direct result of his trusting Butcher Jill, a terrible sin he knew was wrong at the time. He is the last living Onu, and his actions destroyed both his home and his people. If the lady of fire accepts him he hopes to spend eternity as her agent, fighting against the Hingu-Hingus and Butcher Jills of the world.

Kamkamata lacks the power to escape the characters if they insist on keeping him around, but he won't provide any assistance beyond lore. Even if characters keep him alive for now, he throws himself to a fiery death as soon as he can arrange it.

## D5. THE CAULDRON OF LOST SOULS

Hingu-Hingu created as many imandwa as he dared, putting six spirits under his control. The characters have already faced and hopefully destroyed one of them in **Encounter 3**. That leaves five undead serving him, and all five died in The Cauldron.

### Setup

The Cauldron is a kind of sinkhole, a shaft 30 feet in diameter that runs from the top of a cliff down 100 feet into sea caves below the water's surface. Though tiny creatures can get from the sea into the bottom of The Cauldron, the only access for anything larger is the open-air shaft. The sides of The Cauldron are covered in moss and lichen and worn smooth with exposure to the weather. It is nearly impossible to climb up The Cauldron's walls, as the smooth rock walls are greased with wet mosses and slimes.

The bottom of The Cauldron is flooded with 3 feet of water — enough for an unconscious creature to drown in, but not enough to cushion a fall. Worse, the bottom beneath the waves is strewn with shattered bones, broken bits of armor and weapons, and wood and metal shrapnel from when Butcher Jill's crew used it as a refuse pit. Anyone falling to the bottom of The Cauldron takes 1d8 hp per 10 feet fallen rather than the normal 1d6 per 10 feet. Crabs, cuttlefish, and other scavengers gnaw on anything that dies in The Cauldron, but do not do so quickly enough to be a threat during the encounter. Even at noon, the inside of the Cauldron is shadowy and dim.

When the characters reach the top and peer down into The Cauldron, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description.

The sound of waves echo up from the bottom of the vast, rocky pit. Farther than ten paces across and many times that deep, the pit is smooth stone covered in thick, green moss and slimes, though a few rotting skulls and bones caught in nooks and crannies are visible. Light does not reach the bottom, and only a few glints suggest what may be jutting out of the water at the end of the long, dark shaft.

### Action

Concealed in darkness, 4 imandwa currently lurk within The Cauldron, waiting for orders from Hingu-Hingu. One minute after these imandwa notice the characters, another imandwa arrives to defend its home, bringing the total number to **5 imandwa**. If the imandwa are killed, they immediately flee to their place of death — either at the bottom of or along the sides of The Cauldron. To end this threat once and for all, the characters must destroy the imandwa in combat, then destroy their bodies where they lie within The Cauldron. The location of the exact death spot of each imandwa is marked on the side-view map of The Cauldron.

**Imandwa (5):** HD 9; HP 43, 34, 39, 53, 50; AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (2d6 plus disease) and +1 spear (1d8+1); Move 9 (fly 15); Save 6; AL C; CL/XP 13/2,600; **Special:** darkvision 60 ft., disease, incorporeal, immune to acid and fire, immune to sleep, charm and hold, nauseating presence, only hit by magic or silver weapons, regenerate 5 hp/round, weakened by bright light.

### Wrap-Up

Though not much of value was ever thrown down into The Cauldron a few victims concealed valuables on their bodies before being thrown to their deaths. For every 10 minutes a character spends searching the bottom of The Cauldron he has a 15% chance of finding something of note. In general these should be random items worth no more than 500 gp each, and the total treasure gathered should not exceed 5,000 gp.

Some examples of possible treasure include the following items: a leather bag of 10 gemstones (50 gp each) within the bowels of a rotting corpse, a silver locket with ivory cameo of young, attractive women and the name "Everethe" worth 450 gp, a dented silver metal hip flask with 2 doses of healing potion, manacles with no key and a gold tooth worth 5 gp.

## D6. BUTCHER'S BLOCK

This is what is left of Butcher's Block, the town Butcher Jill built atop the ruins of the original Onu village. A single dwelling, 30 feet square, sits atop 10-foot stilts in the center of the town. The blackened bones are what is left of most of the pirate crew and many of the slaves, having been devoured by those escaped slaves who turned to cannibalism and became flameteeth. Because this was the very last place on Dreamfog Island to have a decent amount of food (even if it was long pig), random encounters should be rolled here every 10 minutes (see **Appendix A**).

When the characters arrive here, read or paraphrase the following description of the ruins:

In what was once a large town of wooden buildings and a few stone structures, only part of

# The Cauldron

## Cutaway Side View

1 square  $\approx$  5 feet

Death site 1

Death site 2

Death site 3

Water Level

Death sites 4 + 5



one building remains standing, the central room of a wooden hut that was once a sprawling compound of numerous rooms. It stands on thick stilts of wood ten feet above the ground and is clearly built from the remains of a ship, as the name “The Crusty Harlot” is still visible on a plank above the door.

Everything else is ruin. Smashed buildings, upended cookery, broken barrels, and scattered drying racks cover every inch of the ground. Scattered among them are burned, blackened bones, obviously charred and gnawed upon.

### Action

Within the last standing structure, **4 flameteeth** crouch, waiting to hear something else come along that they might eat. If they hear the characters they rush out with no attempt to conceal themselves and try to eat the interlopers.

**Flameteeth (4):** HD 10; HP 51, 44, 41, 48; AC 5 [14]; Atk bite (1d8 plus 2d6 fire); Save 5; Move 9; AL C; CL/XP 11/1,700; **Special:** burning bite, darkvision 60 ft., double movement (1/day), roasting.

### Wrap-Up

Hanging on a peg in the wooden hut standing in Butcher’s Block is *skinflenser*, Butcher Jill’s saber, containing the last remaining bit of the soil that was once the Onu village. An alchemist crafted its blood-red pommel gem from the last clumps of topsoil before Butcher Jill dumped the rest in the ocean—her effort to destroy all memory of the Onu and their culture. The characters may learn about this from Nattering Nam (**Encounter 7**), or Kamkamata (**Area D4**). It can be used to force Hingu-Hingu to come to the bearer of the blade.

## SKINFLENSER

This +1 *scimitar* grants an extra attack once per day. It has additional gemstones worth 500 gp worked into its hilt. It also counts as the birthplace of the imandwa Hingu-Hingu, for purposes of the weakness of that undead.

### D7. FESTERING CAVE

The cave is 60 feet in diameter and unlit. Months of filth, waste, disease, pus, and rotting corpses cover the floor. Any character who is injured and ends up prone on the floor is exposed to grindblight (see **Appendix A**).

## FLAMETEETH

**Hit Dice:** 10

**Armor Class:** 5 [14]

**Attacks:** bite (1d8 plus 2d6 fire)

**Saving Throw:** 5

**Special:** burning bite, darkvision 60 ft., double movement (1/day), roasting

**Move:** 9

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 11/1,700

Dark-skinned and gaunt, this filthy, nearly naked humanoid’s distended belly and loose skin is well illuminated by the flames licking out from its oversized, chattering mouth full of gnashing, burning teeth. Flameteeth (both singular and plural) are the product of humanoids that turned to ritual cannibalism in direct contravention of their own religious laws and taboos. After consuming the undercooked flesh of their fellows, those who grew sick and die are likely to rise within 1–4 days as flameteeth. Flameteeth are powered by their shame at having broken their food taboos, coupled with an unending hunger for the flesh of living humanoids.

The flameteeth’s teeth are long, yellow, and significantly larger than they were in the creature’s life. They are also constantly aflame, automatically cooking anything the flameteeth bites into. A flameteeth rushes any humanoid it sees in an effort to consume the creature’s flesh. Their constant gnawing hunger drives them to move with great speed, often allowing them to close with potential meals before their foes are prepared (double their Movement once per day). Flameteeth prefer to attack lightly armored targets (to more easily access their flesh).

A flameteeth is corrupted and cursed by the cannibalistic acts of depravity that led to its creation. A purify food and drink spell or similar magic stuns a flameteeth for 1 round.

Flameteeth are not immune to fire damage—indeed they often show signs of burns where they have attempted to gnaw on themselves and each other. But when one does take fire damage, its flesh emits a powerful scent of spiced and roasted pig for 1 round. Any creatures near the flameteeth that can see and smell it must make a saving throw or be nauseated for 1 round by the conflict between the delicious smell and the horrific reality. The victims attacks and saves with a –1 penalty.

## Background

The Festering Cave is the once-holy site of the Onu that was the death place of Hingu-Hingu, and now the prison of what is left of Butcher Jill. She has become an incubator of achimayen, creating more of the monsters as the existing brood suffers losses. Her body is not truly alive, as her life energy has long since been replaced with a festering curse of malignant energy that will not let her to die. Though not stitched together from separate corpses, the malignancy of the festering cave turned her into a horrific thing that can be treated, for purposes of combat, as a flesh golem. Her consciousness still clings to the body in a crude way and she can curse, cry, moan, and spit out insults much as she did in life, but it is a parody of a mind. The true Butcher Jill is long since gone on to her eternal punishments, and this is just her fleshy shadow in the mortal world.

When the characters enter the cave and behold Butcher Jill, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description of the grotesque creature she has become.

The stench of the cave is unbelievable, a mixture of human waste and rotting flesh. A thick paste covers every inch of the floor, squelching like a crushed slug when stepped on. Two horrific parodies of children with long, clawed limbs, distended bellies, and boils crawling across their skin hover in the middle of the cave. They orbit a moaning, bloated sack of flesh that might once have been a woman. While her face is still quite fair, her body is covered in filth, sores, and boils. One of the boils jiggles, heaves, and then bursts. The scent within the cave worsens significantly, as a third horrific child-creature pulls itself free of the woman's oozing, exploded sore.

## Setup

Butcher Jill is chained by the neck to a stout pole in the center of the room. The neck ring is bolted on — there is no lock. She cannot move more than 15 feet from the center of the room unless someone breaks her chain (which she only attempts herself if she goes berserk). Butcher Jill is still able to use melee weapons, unlike a normal flesh golem. She always goes berserk if she sees skinflenser (see **Encounter 12—On the Butcher's Block**), but does not go berserk for any other reason.

If the characters have not yet dealt with Hingu-Hingu, there is a 1-in-6 chance he is in the cave, taunting the thing that was once Butcher Jill. If this is the case, the achimayen and Hingu-Hingu work together to defeat the characters, and Butcher Jill attacks whoever is nearest her.

## Action

The 3 **achimayen** have no feelings for **Butcher Jill**, but do defend her. Butcher Jill does not attack the achimayen, but otherwise attacks anything within her reach. She can talk, but nothing she says is actually in response to questions or statements by the characters. She just spouts the kind of salty curses she was used to in life in response to hearing any language.

**Achimayen (3):** HD 10; HP 47, 45, 56; AC 3[16]; Atk bite (1d4+2 plus poison); Save 5; Move 12 (climb 12, fly 12); AL C; CL/XP 12/2,000; **Special:** immune to disease, maddening cry, poison.

**Body of Butcher Jill, (treat as Flesh Golem):** HD 10; HP 45; AC 9[10]; Atk 2 fists (2d8) or weapon (2d8); Move 8; Save 5; CL/XP 12/2,000; **Special:** able to use melee weapons, healed by lightning, hit only by magic weapons, immune to most spells, slowed by fire and cold.

## ENCOUNTER 8 — THE LAST DEFILING

If Butcher Jill is killed, and the characters did not encounter Hingu-Hingu randomly or at the Festering Cave, the imandwa shaman decides he must create another powerful imandwa to have the strength to face the characters before they find him. This requires a ceremony at a holy place, and the last one he knows of is Crescent Beach (**Area D3**). Exactly who and what are present as he creates more imandwa depends on what the characters have already dealt with. The ritual takes time and causes a storm to develop just around the beach. Flashes of green light and howls of angry spirits being called back to the mortal world make it easy to determine where the ritual is happening, and the characters can arrive before it is accomplished as long as they don't dawdle.

When the characters arrive on the scene, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following description of the scene at Crescent Beach. Please review the Setup below and adjust the description accordingly.

A storm can be seen rolling in, as lightning and thunder smash against the waves in the distance. Green lights swirl about a lone figure on the beach, a thin-limbed, ragged creature with a long gnarled rod in one clawed hand as it chants and dances around several corpses lying in the sand. A small mountain seems to lumber out of the ocean toward it, a massive turtle-like creature covered in the wreckage of sailing ships. It moves toward the chanting figure and moves its head to be above the ritual, protecting the thin-limbed humanoid. The howl of the winds slowly changes, and takes on the tone of screams of pain from far, far away.

## Setup

If **Gam Onisha** is alive and **Hingu-Hingu** active, the dragon turtle guards the imandwa as Hingu-Hingu tries to defile the bones of past Onu shamans to create more spellcasting imandwa, even though he may be unable to control the new undead. If Gam Onisha is dead and Hingu-Hingu still active, the imandwa decides to raise the dragon turtle as a monstrous imandwa. Since he can't move the gargantuan corpse, he must perform the ceremony wherever the characters killed the dragon turtle. (If they killed Gam Onisha at sea, the body washes ashore at the Crescent Beach.) In this case, Hingu-Hingu has 6 flameteeth surrounding him, having bought the obedience of the undead with a promise of vast feasts of flesh. If Hingu-Hingu is dead but Gam Onisha survives, the monstrous dragon turtle rampages about the island with all its young, seeking out whoever or whatever killed its only friend in all existence — starting with any ship or camp left on the beach.

If the characters have the sword *Skinflenser* (see **Area D6**) the characters can force Hingu-Hingu to come to them and he does — with Gam Onisha in tow. The scene plays out in much the same way, with Hingu-Hingu and Gam

Onisha fighting together to destroy the characters.

Of course if the characters don't attempt to stop Hingu-Hingu, he begins to create one additional imandwa each day. The limit is 12 total — there just aren't enough corpses of noteworthy people for him to get ahold of near Dreamfog Island — and they won't be as tightly under his control. But all such creatures surely see the characters to be a threat worthy of destruction, because the characters know where the creatures died.

## Action

Hingu-Hingu uses a blade barrier to defend himself, and sends his allies (Gam Onisha or the flameteeth) to destroy anything that can affect him from afar. He uses his *staff of beguiling* on the strongest fighters. If his allies weaken, he uses *cure serious wounds* to heal them. He targets spell casting foes with *finger of death*.

His allies tend to attack the nearest foe and hammer it until one or the other dies, though they also move to defend Hingu-Hingu if he is in danger of being overwhelmed.

**Hingu-Hingu, Imandwa:** HD 12; HP 87; AC 2 [17]; Atk 2 claws (2d6 plus disease) and +1 war hammer (1d4+2);



**Move** 9 (fly 15); **Save** 3; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 14/2,600; **Special:** darkvision 60 ft., disease (grindblight), immune to acid and fire, immune to sleep, charm and hold, incorporeal, life leech (drain 5d6 hp, save for half, gain as temporary hp; 2/day), nauseating presence, only hit by magic or silver weapons, regenerate 4 hp/round, spells (4/4/4/4/1), weakened by bright light,

**Spells:** 1st—*cure light wounds* (x3), *detect magic*; 2nd—*hold person* (x3), *silence* 15 ft. radius; 3rd—*cure disease*, *remove curse*, *speak with the dead* (x2); 4th—*cure serious wounds* (x3), *sticks to snakes*; 5th—*commune*, *finger of death* (x2), *insect plague*; 6th—*blade barrier*.

**Equipment:** +1 war hammer, staff of beguiling (67 charges),

**Flameteeth (6):** **HD** 10; **HP** 52 (x2), 45, 40, 29, 59; **AC** 5 [14]; **Atk** bite (1d8 plus 2d6 fire); **Save** 5; **Move** 9; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 11/1,700; **Special:** burning bite, darkvision 60 ft., double movement (1/day), roasting. See **Appendix** for details.

**Gam Onisha (Dragon Turtle):** **HD** 14; **HP** 72; **AC** 2[17]; **Atk** 2 claws (1d8), bite (3d10); **Save** 3; **Move** 3 (swim 9); **AL** C; **CL/XP** 16/2,000; **Special:** break ships, breathe steam (72 hp damage, 90-ft. cone 30-ft. wide).

This massive turtle like monstrosity is the size of a small ship. Jagged scars run deeply through its leathery face, and tattered fishing nets and cracked harpoon shafts dot its massive, spiked shell.

Use the stats below if Hingu-Hingu raises Gam Onisha as an imandwa:

**Gam Onisha (Dragon Turtle, Imandwa):** **HD** 14; **HP** 72; **AC** 2[17]; **Atk** 2 claws (1d8 plus disease), bite (3d10); **Save** 3; **Move** 3 (fly 15, swim 9); **AL** C; **CL/XP** 16/2,000; **Special:** break ships, breathe steam (72 hp damage, 90-ft. cone 30-ft. wide), disease (grindblight), incorporeal, immune to acid and fire, immune to sleep, charm and hold, nauseating presence, only hit by magic or silver weapons, regenerate 4 hp/round, weakened by bright light.

## ADVENTURE AFTERMATH

Once Butcher Jill, Hingu-Hingu, and Gam Onisha are all killed, the volcano at the center of Dreamfog Island erupts. Anyone on the island must make a saving throw or be thrown prone. Lava peaks at the top of the volcano, and begins to slowly burn away the entire jungle. At the same time, water begins to move further along the beach and up to the cliffs as the island begins to sink. Anyone and anything still on it will be drowned, burned, or buried in molten rock in about 6 hours.

Dreamfog Island is going down, but it's not a quick process. Any reasonable effort the characters make to escape or survive should work. Twelve hours after the island sinks beneath the waves, the reefs collapse into the ocean and are no longer a threat to ships. A week later, a new island of volcanic rock is pushed up.

If the island goes down, any imandwa that survive give up their vendetta against surviving members of Butcher Jill's crew, as that was Hingu-Hingu's obsession, not their own. They begin to work their own evil plots, especially since their burial place is now entombed in porous, volcanic rock, but they cannot travel far from the new island. Even so, word of new cases of grindblight might reach the characters' ears, and the pattern would show that *something* survived the destruction of Dreamfog Island...

Nisha grows nowhere else, and none of the dreamfog-laced dragonsmoke still exists.



## APPENDIX A:

# NEW MATERIAL

“Jungle Fever” introduces new random encounter charts, new environmental hazards, and a new disease.

## DREAMFOG ISLAND RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

These random encounters are divided into land and sea, depending on where characters spend most of their time prior to a random encounter. This means, for example, that if characters spend most of that time at sea, then move to land just before the encounter roll, they may well see a random encounter in the area they just left. If the creature has a land speed (such as with shark-eating crabs) it may move onto shore to attack. If not, it likely paces the characters for as long as they are visible from the water, only swimming off after the characters are inland for 10 minutes or more.

These charts represent Dreamfog Island as it exists during the time of the campaign — a ravaged and unholy land where undead walk the jungles, carrion sits festering in the sun, and an erupting volcano forms rifts to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Major aquatic predators from nearby islands have moved in to feed on the corpses floating in the water (and to enjoy the largely untouched waters that Gam Onisha controlled until he went into hiding), and creatures from the deep jungle forced to move by lack of prey and clouds of toxic volcano gasses.

### LAND ENCOUNTERS

% Roll	Result
01–07	1 roc <sup>1</sup>
08–15	2 giant komodo dragon <sup>1</sup>
16–25	1d2 giant crocodiles <sup>1</sup>
26–30	2d4 giant ticks <sup>1</sup>
31–45	Volcanic lava bomb
46–55	1d4+1 flameteeth <sup>3</sup>
56–65	1 giant anaconda <sup>1</sup>
66–70	1d4 giant tuatara <sup>2</sup>
71–75	1 heat swarm <sup>2</sup>
76–85	Volcanic gasses (see below)
86–90	1d4+2 fire crabs <sup>2</sup>
91–94	1d2 magmoid <sup>2</sup>
95–97	1 thessalydra <sup>2</sup>
98–99	Roll again, and add a lava bomb or volcanic gasses to the encounter
100	Hingu-Hingu (see Encounter 8) <sup>3</sup>

### WATER ENCOUNTERS

% Roll	Result
01–15	1d4 turtle-sharks <sup>2</sup>
16–25	1 giant squid <sup>1</sup>
26–40	Acid waters (see below)
41–55	1d4+1 monstrous jellyfish <sup>2</sup>
56–65	1d4+2 chuuls <sup>3</sup>
66–70	1d4+2 giant crabs <sup>1</sup>
71–80	1 elasmosaurus <sup>1</sup>
81–90	1 hypnotic jellyfish <sup>1</sup>
91–99	Roll again, and add a lava bomb or volcanic gasses to the encounter
100	Gam Onisha (see <b>Encounter 8</b> ) <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>: Indicates a creature found in **Monstrosities**

<sup>2</sup>: Indicates a creature found in the **The Tome of Horrors Complete**

<sup>3</sup>: Indicates a creature found in the **Appendix**

**Chuul:** HD 10; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 pincers (1d6), bite (1d8), paralytic tentacles; Move 15 (swim 12); Save 5; AL C; CL/XP 11/1700; **Special:** immune to poison, tentacle grab.

**Constrictor Snake (Anaconda):** HD 6; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (1d3), constrict (2d4); Move 12; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** constriction.

**Crab, Giant:** HD 3; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 pincers (1d6+2); Move 9; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** none.

**Crocodile, Giant:** HD 6; AC 3[16]; Atk bite (3d6), tail (1d6); Move 9 (swim 12); Save 11; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** none.

**Elasmosaurus:** HD 15; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (4d6); Move 1 (swim 18); Save 3; CL/XP 15/2900; **Special:** aquatic.

**Fire Crab:** HD 4; AC 5 [14]; Atk 2 claws (1d6 plus 1d6 fire); Save 13; Move 9 (swim 12); AL N; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** heat, immune to fire

**Flameteeth:** HD 10; AC 5 [14]; Atk bite (1d8 plus 2d6 fire); Save 5; Move 9; AL C; CL/XP 11/1,700; **Special:** burning bite, darkvision 60 ft., double movement (1/day), roasting.

**Jellyfish, Hypnotic:** HD 3; AC 8[11]; Atk sting (1d8 plus poison); Move 0 (swim 3); Save 14; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** hypnotic colors, poison (save or die).

**Jellyfish, Monstrous:** HD 3; AC 7[12]; Atk tentacles (1d6 plus poison); Move 0 (swim 6); Save 14; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** poison, transparent (surprise on roll of 1–2 on 1d6).

**Komodo Dragon, Giant:** HD 5; AC 4[15]; **Atk** bite (2d6 plus poison); **Move** 9; **Save** 12; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** poison bite.

**Magmoid:** HD 8; AC 2[17]; **Atk** flaming slam (2d6); **Move** 9; **Save** 8; **CL/XP** 9/1100; **Special:** immune to fire, sleep and poison, melt normal weapons, magma blast.

**Roc:** HD 12; AC 4[15]; **Atk** bite (3d12), 2 claws (3d6); **Move** 3 (fly 30); **Save** 3; **CL/XP** 12/2,000; **Special:** none.

**Squid, Giant:** HD 12; AC 7[12] head and tentacles; 3[16] body; **Atk** 8 tentacles (1d8+1), beak (5d4); **Move** 0 (swim 9, jet 27); **Save** 3; **CL/XP** 14/2600; **Special:** constrict, jet, ink.

**Swarm, Heat:** HD 12; AC 2[17]; **Atk** engulf (3d6); **Move** 12 (fly 14); **Save** 3; **CL/XP** 13/2300; **Special:** heat, immunity to fire.

**Tuatara, Giant:** HD 5; AC 7[12]; **Atk** bite (1d8); **Move** 6 (burrow 3); **Save** 12; **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** none.

**Thessalhydra:** HD 12; AC 2[17]; **Atk** 8 serpentine bites (2d6 plus 1d6 acid) and tail slash (2d6); **Move** 15 (swim 9); **Save** 3; **CL/XP** 13/2,300; **Special:** spit acid, heal 2 hp/round, immune to acid.

**Tick, Giant:** HD 3; AC 4[15]; **Atk** bite (1d4); **Move** 3; **Save** 14; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** drain blood.

**Turtle-Shark:** HD 6; AC 3[16]; **Atk** bite (2d6); **Move** 8 (swim 14); **Save** 11; AL N; **CL/XP** 6/400; **Special:** capsize boat, shell, swallow whole.

## Environmental Encounters

Three of the random encounters characters may be forced to deal with on Dreamfog Island are environmental hazards created by Onopei's activity that are described below.

### VOLCANIC LAVA BOMB

Since the volcano Onopei is in the process of erupting, there's always a random chance of a lava-bomb landing in the midst of the characters anytime they are on Dreamfog Island. If they are in a cave, describe the lava bomb landing at its entrance. A lava bomb is a mass of lava ejected from Onopei at high speed that slams into a target or area and explodes. Being hit by a lava bomb is worse than exposure to stationary lava, though not as bad as total immersion.

For this encounter, randomly select one character and make an attack as a 4 HD creature. On a direct hit the character takes 8d6 points of fire damage and catches on fire. On a miss, the lava bomb lands nearby, dealing 4d6

points of damage as it splashes lava on the character (save for half). If the character fails the save, he also catches on fire.

If any character helped clean the cave where the Onu once honored the island spirits (see **Area D7**), that character gains a +4 bonus to their AC and saves against lava bombs.

### VOLCANIC GASSES

As Onopei heaves and creates fissures throughout Dreamfog Island, it periodically releases clouds of toxic gas. While the air always has a thick caustic scent, this encounter represents a sudden, massive increase in the density of the gas around the characters.

A volcanic gas encounter covers a 60-foot radius, limits visibility to 20 feet, and grants all creatures concealment (20% chance an attack misses). As this smoke is significantly more acidic than common smoke, each round creatures in the area must make a saving throw for each round they have spent in the smoke. On a failed save they take 1d6 points of acid damage.

### ACID WATERS

Acid waters indicate the toxic venting of Onopei turning an area of the ocean around Dreamfog Island into churning acid. This works as the volcanic gasses random encounter (see above), but the area is a column of water 120 feet in radius running from the ocean floor to the surface. Anything floating or swimming in the water is exposed to the acid and takes 1d2 points of damage per round and another 1 point per round for 1d6 rounds after getting out. Creatures flying above the water take no damage.



HEART OF THE RAZOR  
CHAPTER FOUR

# SINFUL WHISPER

by Tom Knauss

They tell of a lonely island that bears Great Pele's footprints. An isle seared by a mother's vengeance for the evil wrought on Her beloved children - and where gods smite the earth, only fools dare tread. On the Razor, 'tis folly, indeed, to walk any ground She condemned.

Yet still, mortals come. Legends of a secret magic hoard, the fate of a missing whaler, and the strange tale of a lone survivor beckon to shores grown as lush and inviting as a siren's irresistible song.

"This way", encourages a sly whisper adrift on the wind. "Come, and I shall make you mine."

From ruins where once She trod in wrath, the temptations of an ageless evil speak after centuries of silence.

Sinful Whisper is a 5th-level adventure of supernatural and psychological horror set on a mysterious island on the Razor Coast grown verdant with time. Here the characters must overcome both their deepest fears and most banal desires to combat a depravity so deep it survived the retribution of a goddess.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

### Demonic Piggyback

When the sea was young and the Razor newborn, the great fiend Demogorgon came and fouled the pristine waters with his cruelty and malice. From an unspeakable act of violence, Demogorgon soiled the Razor forever with his wretched seed, the Krakenfiend Harthagoa. But, unbeknownst to the mighty demon, a tiny qliphoth attached itself to Demogorgon, just as a remora clings to a shark. During the act of fathering Harthagoa, the qliphoth loosed its bonds and drifted in the Razor's pure waters until it landed on Dolentla Island, or as the Tulita called it, the Whispering Shores. The Tulitas native to the island fell under the qliphoth's sway and worshipped it as a god. They called it Hawanapoki, or "The Whispering Liar." There, aided by the plentiful maht fields, it feasted on their minds and souls. To appease Hawanapoki, the Tulitas sacrificed every other child born to the tribe. Appalled by these ghastly rites, the other Tulita tribes shunned Dolentla Island and its inhabitants.

### The Elf-Tulita Wars

Then, an age ago, the elves came from across the sea from the green realms of Akados and aspired to claim the Razor as their own. To further their ambitions, they defeated the Tulitas and built their mighty stronghold of Sammerlock Sails and a secret, magical laboratory on Dolentla Island. At first, Hawanapoki welcomed the arrival of fresh minds, but the monster also found someone it did not expect – Urthlan the Fiendbinder, a legendary elf magic-user with a talent for binding magic. Urthlan crafted enchanted stone totems and gossamer mithral nets that imprisoned Hawanapoki. He and his apprentices attempted to control the qliphoth and use the fiend as a weapon against the Tulitas, but Hawanapoki's mind refused to bend, even to the mighty Urthlan. As the months passed and the war between the elves and Tulitas dragged on, Hawanapoki resisted and grew stronger. Then, an angry goddess changed Hawanapoki's fortunes.

The Tulitas beseeched Pele for aid, and the wrathful goddess answered their prayers. She laid waste to Sammerlock Sails, leveling the fortress' battlements and silver spires into smoldering lava and molten metal and transforming its lush courtyards and gardens into scorched earth.

Dolentla Island did not escape Mother Pele's ire. The elven magic-users there attempted to battle against her, but to no avail. She slew every last elf on the island, as Hawanapoki feasted on their accursed souls. Unlike Sammerlock Sails, Pele did not turn the island into a smoldering wasteland, allowing Hawanapoki to survive. The Tulitas avoided the island, and for decades the fiend brooded and waited for fresh mortals to wander into its proverbial web. And once again, fate intervened.

## The Fate of Colonial Thieves

When the invaders' tall ships appeared on the horizon, the wisest Tulitas knew that the world was about to change forever. They came to these shores searching for the fruits of the land and those of the sea. The Whale, the Tulita's benefactor for countless generations, was their prized jewel. As they depleted their numbers by the hundreds, the Tulita watched and wept in silent reverence.

When the thief Delano Amborose defiled a Tulita shrine and stole a jar of sacred ambergris from Whale itself, the great Tulita druid, Qualmaga, decided it was time for Whale to reclaim what it had lost. Using his potent magic, he imbued a whale with intelligence and charged it with a primary task—to find Whale's ambergris and punish the one who stole it.

After a long search, Qualmaga's whale found its quarry. The whale located Captain Delano Amborose and his whaling ship, the *Lashed Harpoon*. The cunning whale lured the ship near the shores of Dolentla Island and rammed the ship, smashing its hull into splinters. Those who drowned turned out to be fortunate, as a crueler fate awaited the survivors who made it to shore. The uninhabited island seemed peaceful and beautiful, but its appearance belied its sinister nature. A primeval villain waited, eager to corrupt fresh souls with vile nightmares of barbarism and brutality.

In short order, Hawanapoki bent the survivors to his will. Even Qualmaga's whale became its unwitting servant. Tormented by dark dreams, the men and women of the *Lashed Harpoon* forsook their humanity and succumbed to the beasts within them, urged on by a tempting whisper to indulge their banal desires and engage in unspeakable acts of depravity. Their unearthly host warped their minds into twisted masses of impulsive delight, depriving them of reason, logic, and compassion. All the while, the insidious being grew stronger and dreamt of escaping its bonds and claiming the world of men.

As the years passed, the fate of the *Lashed Harpoon* became an enduring legend. Intrepid explorers tried their luck at finding the missing ship, but every attempt failed.

### History Repeats Itself

Two weeks ago, Jacinth Deepwarder, an elf and the niece of Viscount Senegar Deepwarder, led a new expedition to find Dolentla Island; however, for a reason other than locating the *Lashed Harpoon*. Over the past few months, the bored noblewoman had taken a keen interest in her ancestry, scouring through weathered tomes and dusty ledgers. As her research progressed, she came to believe that Dolentla Island concealed a great mystery in regards to her quest. The expert dilettante—but novice archaeologist and sailor - helmed her pleasure vessel, the *Dulcimer*, in search of her prize.

Accompanied by her “crew” of Port Shaw’s most decadent elite, she set sail for Dolentla Island. Jacinth’s intuition proved greater than her seamanship or wisdom. As the ship neared the coast, Qualmaga’s whale sprang into action and destroyed the vessel along Dolentla Island’s western shore. Alerted by the racket, the *Lashed Harpoon’s* monstrous castaways entered the water and dragged the *Dulcimer’s* crew kicking and screaming back to the cove on Dolentla Island. That is, all except for its terrified captain, Jacinth, who drank a *potion of invisibility* and slipped away into the darkness. The cowardly Jacinth paddled away from the island and was returned to Port Shaw by a passing ship that later found her adrift upon the sea.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

In Port Shaw, the player characters are recruited to venture to Dolentla Island and rescue the *Dulcimer’s* marooned crew and/or investigate the disappearance of the *Lashed Harpoon*, which also vanished in the same waters 20 years earlier. After some preliminary inquiries within the city, the player characters set sail for Dolentla Island. On the high seas, the journey proves difficult and the characters encounter everything from monstrous assault to stowaways and slave ships in rebellion.

The characters continue on their journey and arrive off the shores of Dolentla Island, where Qualmaga’s whale – now under Hawanapoki’s sway – attacks their boat as part of his plan to bring more castaways to the island. The malevolent qliphoth feeds on life energy, which he uses to attenuate the strength of his magical prison.

The characters discover the sad fate of the *Lashed Harpoon’s* survivors when they arrive on Dolentla Island. Known as hawanis, the ship’s men and women are now monstrous creations filled with rage and wanton lust. The same fate awaits the characters and the *Dulcimer’s* crew, unless they can stop it.

As the party makes its way through the jungle in search of answers, the characters may explore the island’s five keyed locations, including the *Lashed Harpoon’s* wreckage, a maht field, and an ancient Tulita shrine to Hawanapoki where the characters engage in their first telepathic contact with the island’s conniving overlord.

The ancient Tulita shrine stands atop the elves’ secret laboratory, which serves as Hawanapoki’s prison. As the characters make their way within the laboratory, the manipulative fiend fills their minds with empty promises and pointed warnings in an effort to convince the characters to leave, including revealing the location of the elves’ secret treasure vault.

If Hawanapoki’s efforts to dissuade the characters fail, it prepares for battle. Depending upon the characters’ actions at the ancient Tulita shrine, Hawanapoki may be very close

to freedom or still firmly confined by its magical bonds. Here, the characters face a choice. They can leave the island in exchange for Dolentla Island’s secret treasures, or they can rid Dolentla Island of its malevolent master once and for all.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

### Hooks

The adventure begins in Port Shaw, the only permanent colonial bastion on the Razor Coast. If the characters are new to Port Shaw, allow them some time to take in its many sights, sounds and attractions before setting the adventure’s chain of events into motion. Characters from Port Shaw may dispense with a full scale introduction to the bustling city and engage in a few encounters that yield a few useful bits of information for their upcoming excursion.

As the characters’ extracurricular activities wind down, a buzz pulses through the city. Rumors swirl about the mysterious disappearance of several noteworthy scions to Port Shaw’s wealthiest families. The city’s gossip mill goes into full gear. Was it a deliberately staged disappearance or a murderous love triangle at sea? Was it a high seas robbery or a drunken night of excess gone terribly wrong? Only a few loyal friends and family members believe Jacinth’s story about a murderous whale. Whatever the cause, Port Shaw’s elite demand answers, and someone has to get to the bottom of the sordid affair.

### Hook 1 — *The Irritated Elven Diplomat*

There are several ways to get the characters involved in the matter. Viscount Senegard Deepwarder wants to put the scandal to bed as quickly as possible, so he seeks the characters’ assistance in the matter, especially if they have already performed a service for him in the past. The Viscount is displeased with his niece’s recklessness and lack of honor, but he puts his family’s reputation ahead of his personal ire. The viscount may also contact the characters if they have made a name of themselves within the city, or if they frequent his favorite watering hole, the Kraken’s Gullet. The viscount offers 5,000 gp to the characters if they accompany his niece Jacinth to Dolentla Island, rescue the *Dulcimer’s* crew, and absolve him of any role in the incident.

### Hook 2 — *Concerned Parents*

There is no shortage of coin offered by Port Shaw’s rich and famous to locate the men and women abducted from the *Dulcimer*. Kurt Tolcrist and Lady Tolcrist offer a generous reward of 4,000 gp to any brave adventurer who returns their socialite daughter, Genevieve Tolcrist, to Port Shaw. Other families issue rewards, but the Tolcrist’s reward is the most lucrative. As high-browed aristocrats, Kurt and Lady Tolcrist are insufferably smug and condescending about their wealth. However, they care deeply for Genevieve and are willing to increase the reward

to 6,000 gp if the characters make a strong impression upon them. The Tolcrist and the other families blame Jacinth for the disappearances and do not believe her “killer whale” story, but those opinions are kept private rather than aired in public.

### Hook 3 — *The Guild Takes Notice*

The Cartographers and Explorers Guild also takes an interest in the matter for more selfish reasons. They believe Jacinth’s story about the whale, and they also share her opinion that Dolentla Island hides a lucrative and possibly historically valuable secret. The group speculates that the whale may have attacked the *Lashed Harpoon* all those years ago, and its remains may have washed onshore onto Dolentla Island. Current members and potential members are asked to venture to Dolentla Island and discover the truth.

### Rumors

Characters may learn the following information while in Port Shaw.

**1-2:** Jacinth Deepwarder is the niece of Viscount Senegar Deepwarder. She is a spoiled playgirl and a marginal sailor. It was a fool’s errand for her uncle to purchase the *Dulcimer* to accommodate her wild pleasure cruises.

**3:** The *Dulcimer* entered dangerous waters near Sammerlock Sails, a ruined island fortress. Pele herself destroyed the elven stronghold. Experienced captains steer a wide berth around the main island and the nearby Dolentla Island. Even from a distance, crewmen report seeing eerie lights and hearing unearthly sounds from the islands.

**4:** Jacinth claims that a whale attacked the ship and destroyed it. That’s complete nonsense. She probably got drunk and ran the ship aground on Dolentla Island.

**5:** Mariners reported seeing the *Lashed Harpoon* enter the area of Sammerlock Sails twenty-odd years ago, but the ship and its crew disappeared without a trace. Explorers have spent nearly as much time searching for the ship, but no one has ever located any trace of the missing vessel. Of course, none ever landed on Sammerlock Sails or Dolentla Island looking for the ship.

**6:** The elves concealed something on Dolentla Island near Sammerlock Sails.

Speculation includes a magnificent armory, a cache of experimental weapons, a treasure trove, or an artifact belonging to Pele.

**7:** The *Lashed Harpoon* was more than a whaler. Its captain, Delano Amborose, was also a reputed smuggler who stored ambergris and other valuable oils in a secret

cargo compartment.

**8:** The Tulita of his day loathed Delano Amborose. Reputedly, they refuse to deal with his descendants to this day.

## PART ONE:

# LEARNING THE FACTS AND SETTING SAIL

During their stay in Port Shaw, the characters may gather supplemental background information from a variety of sources, but all investigative roads ultimately lead to Jacinth Deepwarder, the lost ship’s only known survivor. After meeting Jacinth and deciding whether or not the spoiled elf will join them or not, the party secures a ship and heads for Dolentla Island.

## MEETING JACINTH

### Set Up

Selfish and haughty are the two words that best describe Jacinth Deepwarder. Jacinth treats other people as if they were actors flitting about a stage just for her amusement.

Characters working for the viscount are escorted immediately to meet Jacinth to get her side of the story. Characters in the employ of the Tolcrist, another family, or the Cartographers and Explorers Guild must go through the viscount to speak with Jacinth. A polite, written request or an eloquent statement is enough for the viscount to grant an audience with Jacinth. The viscount is wary of subjecting his niece to an interrogation that may potentially embarrass his reputation, but a cover-up could make the situation even worse. Indiscretions are one thing, but a rude gesture to a fellow aristocrat is ruinous for business and one’s social calendar.

If granted an audience, the characters meet Jacinth in a private suite on the third floor in the Kraken’s Gullet. The viscount is also present for the meeting. When the characters meet Jacinth, read or paraphrase the following.

A wiry, well-coiffed young elven woman in a noblewoman’s finery sits at an ornate table in a resplendent suite. She nurses a glass of expensive wine, but her facial expressions and darting eyes betray that something else occupies her mind. Her hand trembles gently as she sips the drink and struggles to maintain her composure. She glances pensively towards the viscount, who reassures her with a firm nod.

## Action

For the first time in her life, Jacinth faces a predicament that cannot be solved with a coin purse or a flash of charm. This realization frightens her, but it does not make her any less aloof. Jacinth reveals information casting her in a favorable light, but she omits details that are not flattering to her. Jacinth volunteers the following account without coaxing. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following.

Two weeks ago, my friends and I set out on an expedition to Sammerlock Sails to contribute to the scientific and historical community of Port Shaw. As we approached the western shore of Dolentla Island five miles away from our final destination, a monstrous whale crashed into the ship and sundered it in half. Everyone went overboard and swam towards the nearby island. As we made our way closer to the beach, humanoid monsters leapt into the water and attacked us. The creatures looked human, but they also seemed feral, as if they were mad. I tried to fight, but the monsters knocked me unconscious. They must have thought I died, because when I came to, the creatures were gone. I looked for my friends, but I could not find them in the darkness. I then found a large piece of driftwood and paddled towards the shipping lanes. A passing ship rescued me a few days later and returned me to Port Shaw.

Jacinth's friends on the expedition consisted of the scions of many of the finest families in Port Shaw: Genevieve Tolcris, Maximilian Sidrow, Joshua Bonedeuce (a distant cousin of Gregory Bonedeuce), Lenora Duhamel, Tordell Rivery, Susanna Bellstead, and Elizabeth Stansport. When asked about the scientific and historical significance of the expedition, she becomes very vague and evasive. If asked about any injuries she sustained in the wreck or the battle, she reassures the characters that she has made a full recovery.

Of course, Jacinth lies about the trip's purpose, its destination, and about fighting off the monsters. She was actually headed to Dolentla Island to investigate its hidden treasure. When she fell into the water, she drank a *potion of invisibility* and left her friends to die. Characters can detect her lies with intuition or by magical means. Jacinth has no physical injuries or resultant scarring, but refuses any request for an examination unless the viscount or a character forces her to allow one. Jacinth stands by her story; however, characters can extract the truth by intimidating her or magically compelling her to speak the truth.



## Development

The viscount interjects if he feels that the characters are too aggressive. He is particularly sensitive to the characters' insinuations if someone else employs them. When the characters cross the line, the viscount ends the interview. He denies any requests for a second interview unless the characters make an exceptional effort to placate him. If the characters persist in their rudeness, he threatens to have the Municipal Dragoons arrest them if they do not leave him and his niece alone.

Jacinth, however, wants badly to return to Dolentla Island to unlock the island's buried secret, and the characters provide the ideal opportunity for her to accomplish this goal. Even if things go badly during their interview, Jacinth later seeks out the characters anyway and volunteers to head another expedition back to Dolentla Island as a means of setting things right.

Part of her genuinely wants to atone, but her primary mission is to find and acquire the island's lucrative treasures. To get back into the characters' good graces, she admits to quaffing the *potion of invisibility*. She is ashamed of what she did, but she also believes that fighting the monsters would have been futile. It is not



altogether necessary for Jacinth to accompany the party on their expedition, but her inclusion will provide good opportunities for roleplaying throughout the adventure.

**Jacinth Deepwarder (Ftr3):** HP 21; AC 7 [12]; Atk +1 *dagger* (1d4+1) or +2 *longbow* x2 (1d6+1); Move 12; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 4/120. **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, fine noble's clothing, +1 *dagger*, +2 *longbow*, 4 +1 *arrows*, 20 *arrows*, *potion of extra-healing*, Deepwarder signet ring (250 gp value), four pearls (50 gp value each), pouch filled with 42 gp, bronze ring (25 gp value), soap, perfume, crude nautical map of the Razor Coast and Sammerlock Sails.

**Tactics:** Not renowned for her bravery, Jacinth Deepwarder relies upon her longbow and the courage of others to keep far away from danger. Jacinth then snipes enemies from afar. In a pinch, Jacinth calls upon her speed to escape a sticky situation. Above all else, she is most concerned with keeping out of harm's way. Her battle motto is minimal risk and maximum reward.

**Notes:** Throughout the adventure, Jacinth's opinions and insights on specific matters are addressed in the "Jacinth's Take" sideboxes.

Even if the characters do not meet with Jacinth Deepwarder, they should have enough information to deduce that the *Dulcimer* sank near Dolentla Island. For example, the characters might interview more of the missing persons' family members who mention that their loved one made an offhand comment about sailing to an island near Sammerlock Sails. Alternatively, a visit to Port Shaw's docks uncovers a few ship captains who remember Jacinth bragging about plotting a course to Dolentla Island.

## SECURING A TALL SHIP AND A CAPTAIN TO SAIL HER

For those running a *Razor Coast* campaign, **Chapter 5** details the ships and captains that are available for hire in Port Shaw, if the characters decide to forego Jacinth's services. In addition to those listed in that resource, the characters can also explore the following options:

### The Winking Dolphin

Barron Tanislaws, a cantankerous old miser, owned this sleek, fast moving caravel until his death 6 months ago. Barron left no will or other written statement of his intentions, so two alleged relatives with dubious lineage claim joint ownership of the vessel. Because of their cloudy title, Jeremiah Winship and Hezekiah Winship, the two brothers who lay claim to the caravel, jump at any chance to sell the caravel and take the first ship out of Port Shaw with their ill-gotten proceeds. Jeremiah and Hezekiah are more akin to carnival barkers than men of noble descent. Characters purchasing the boat run the risk of legitimate

## JACINTH WANTS TO WHAA?

While Jacinth Deepwarder insists she is the obvious choice to captain a vessel to Dolentla Island, would you want her for your captain? With the *Dulcimer* so much sea wrack, Jacinth and characters must find another ship on which to sail. Arrogant and greedy to the last, Jacinth insists that she captain any boat the characters hire – even explaining this "obvious fact" to the characters as if the actual captain of the ship was not standing right there!

Jacinth knows she is stuck with the adventurers, but the thought of sharing treasure with a less deserving ship's captain leaves her decidedly put out. Jacinth eventually backs down on the issue, but not without a fuss. While at sea, Jacinth hawks the real captain's every move, and shakes her head in disapproval whenever the captain does something differently than she would (which is practically all the time). The captain is likely to reach his boiling point soon enough, but Jacinth slinks away from any physical confrontation and goes to a safe location until the situation subsides. She then sulks for several hours and resumes her irritating behavior at the earliest opportunity.

heirs coming forward and making a claim on the vessel.

**Cost: 7,500 gp but negotiable.**

### The Line of the Deep

This well-maintained, medium-sized fishing trawler belongs to a fisherman, Len Argoth, who just lost his arm to a shark bite. He's heard that other people recently bitten all fell ill and died. Len frantically paces the docks, worried about contracting an illness and the possible repercussions to his family if he were to perish. He constantly asks passersby to feel his head for a fever or to tell him if he's going to die. Len's fears are misplaced. He is not ill, but there is no convincing him otherwise. Having a cleric of Quell pretend to cast *restoration* on him is the only thing that placates his fear. If the characters accomplish this, Len sells the boat for 3,200 gp. If they do not, Len starts his bargaining at 8,000 gp and goes from there. **Cost: 4,000 gp.**

In addition to the vessels for sale, the characters may hire an independent ship captain to sail them to Dolentla Island. **Sig Phillips** (N Thf5) is a skilled navigator and pilot, but he's also addicted to dragonsmoke, which he tries to hide to no avail. **Jayne Kellmoor** (N female half-elf Ftr3) is another option. She is not as experienced as Sig, but she also does not come with his baggage.

## PART TWO

# SAILING TO DOLENTLA ISLAND

### A PRAYER FOR THE DEPARTING

With their provisions intact and a ship at the ready, the characters set sail for Dolentla Island. Referees may read or paraphrase the following as the characters leave port.

The mooring rope is untied, the sails unfurl, and the captain takes the helm with an eye towards distant shores. In the background, the jagged rocks and sinister reefs guarding the beaches and peeking through the water remind everyone that the Razor Coast is, above all else, aptly named. The ship lurches forward, and in a last wayward glance towards shore, there's a brief glimpse of a Tulita native clutching a seashell necklace and mumbling a brief prayer under his breath. The scene repeats itself on nearly every pier, as spouses, children, friends, and family bid farewell and offer prayers for a safe return for the seafaring men and women of the Razor Coast. After witnessing these touching scenes, all eyes slowly return to the seemingly endless canvas of blue that lies ahead. The peaceful azure landscape holds many surprises for those who sail across her. The serious and worried expression on everyone's face reinforces this cruel fact.

Sailing along the Razor Coast and across the open seas is a dangerous proposition even for an experienced captain and crew. Life at sea is harsh, and the conditions should remind characters that no sea voyage is an easy one. Storms, rough waves, and the ocean's denizens present unique challenges.

These encounters do not need to be run in order, but the adventure works best if the Referee runs **Encounter 4** near Dolentla Island rather than on the open waters.

### ENCOUNTER 1: THE IRON BASTION

#### Set Up

Slave ships are too common on the high seas, but the *Iron Bastion* is not the typical slave ship. A few hours ago, the *Iron Bastion* set sail with a fresh delivery of slaves, including — unbeknownst to them — a native sorcerer named Ko'oku'wa who disguised himself as a personal valet. Shortly after arriving on the vessel, Ko'oku'wa magically

*charmed* the ship's captain, Barnabas Hazeltree. Ko'oku'wa then cajoled the Captain to release the slaves from their shackles and have them perform menial tasks onboard the ship as a means of testing their worth and boosting morale.

Although the crew is grateful that they have been relieved of their mundane chores, Ko'oku'wa's friendliness with the captain irks DeMasso Guillard, the ship's first mate and his two direct subordinates. The mates suspect that Barnabas is suffering from fever or an illness, which they believe accounts for his odd behavior. Barnabas' attitude towards them is unchanged, but Barnabas also trusts the advice of a slave, which the racist mates find utterly deplorable. They do not want to risk a mutiny charge, so they walk a fine line by interpreting his orders in the most liberal manner possible. For instance, the crew obeyed Barnabas' order to release the slaves from their shackles and allow them to move freely about the ship, however, the mates did not wholly obey a subsequent order to disarm. They interpreted the order to mean that the regular crew should disarm (not the officers as well), so they locked the crews' light crossbows and ammunition in the ship's hold. The slavers still wield clubs, however, which they monotonously beat against the palm of their free hand while waiting for any excuse to use them against the slaves.

When the characters come within visual range of the *Iron Bastion*, its first mate, DeMasso Guillard, waves towards the characters' ship in an effort to gain their attention and invites them aboard his ship for parley that he says may be to their financial benefit. He is accompanied by Buckley Culmaster and Flint Brannid, the second and third mates respectively. The characters present the perfect solution to his dilemma. DeMasso cannot directly challenge the captain's orders, but the strangers can act as his proxy. Ko'oku'wa also faces a problem. If Ko'oku'wa cannot charm Barnabas again when the spell expires, the slavers are going to beat him and his fellow slaves into submission or even kill them for an attempted rebellion. If he gains the characters' sympathy, they would be useful allies against the slavers.

### JACINTH'S TAKE

Besides being haughty and arrogant, Jacinth Deepwarder despises the Tulita people. She demands that the characters restore order to the slavers' ship. Of course, she is unwilling to risk her own neck in the process, but if the characters aid Ko'oku'wa, she expresses her opinion as to how foolhardy and illegal the act is at every opportunity for the remainder of the journey.

## Action

DeMasso greets the characters when they board the *Iron Bastion*. He explains that the ship's captain is unwell, and the crew would appreciate if the characters would speak to him on their behalf. For their efforts, DeMasso offers the characters a valuable family heirloom, a brass mariner's astrolabe (500 gp value). The first mate has an ulterior motive for his proposition. If the characters restore order on the ship, he plans to report Barnabas to his superiors, which may result in DeMasso being promoted to captain.

On the other hand, Ko'oku'wa has an agenda as well. His *charm person* spell expires within the next 15 minutes, so he needs to convince the characters to intervene on his behalf. Ko'oku'wa waits for DeMasso to make his move, and he then accompanies Barnabas to meet with the characters.

Ko'oku'wa and Barnabas arrange to meet with the characters in the captain's quarters. Ko'oku'wa never strays more than a few feet from the captain's side, and he sometimes whispers into Barnabas' ear as he converses with the characters. The characters can sense that Barnabas is under the influence of something. During the meeting, Ko'oku'wa serves dinner to Barnabas, cutting his food with a knife and then using the knife to place the morsels into the captain's mouth. The characters may interpret this as the ultimate act of servitude, however, Ko'oku'wa is doing it as a contingency plan just in case the *charm person* spell wears off mid-sentence. Ko'oku'wa gauges where the characters' sympathies rest. If he believes they are willing to aid him and his fellow slaves, he explains the situation and asks for their help. Otherwise, he abruptly ends the dinner and demands that the characters leave immediately and return to their ship.

**Ko'oku'wa (MU3):** HP 8; AC 9[10]; Atk dagger (1d4); Move 12; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 3/60. **Special:** +2 saves vs. magic, spells (2/1).

**Spells:** 1st—*charm person, sleep*; 2nd—*ESP*.

**Equipment:** simple kappa clothing, sandals, dagger.

**Notes:** Ko'oku'wa has already cast *charm person* today, so he has only 1 1st-level spell left for the day. Ko'oku'wa tries to cast a *sleep* spell on Barnabas if his current spell runs out during his interaction with the characters.

## Development

The characters are forced to decide whether they wish to aid Ko'oku'wa to free the slaves, or assist DeMasso and suppress the rebellion. To complicate matters even further, the captain of the characters' ship, if it is not Jacinth, may interject his or her opinion on the matter. There is little time to formulate a plan. Ko'oku'wa's *charm* spell expires 15 minutes after the characters board the vessel, at which point the characters cannot help but get involved for one side or the other.

It is presumed that the characters either aid the slavers in putting down the rebellion or assist the slaves in gaining

their freedom. In either case, the slaves and the slavers engage each other in a chaotic combat that spills across the entire deck of the ship. Slaves and slavers engage in a bloody hand-to-hand struggle where men from both sides are thrown overboard and the combatants use every piece of equipment and dirty trick in the book to gain the advantage. The deck is quickly awash in blood and corpses.

If they side with the slaves, the characters should square off against **Captain Hazeltree** and his **3 mates**. Should the characters aid Captain Hazeltree, they battle against **Ko'oku'wa** and five of his fellow slaves. In this case, the Referee should include **25 slaves** in the battle, rather than 16. The extra 9 slaves fight against Captain Hazeltree and the 3 mates.

If the characters seek information about Dolentla Island or the Sammerlock Sails area in general, Ko'oku'wa and the Tulita slaves describe it as a "bad place". If positively disposed to the adventurers, Ko'oku'wa admits that in ancient times, the Tultas who lived on Dolentla Island turned their backs on the old gods and made blood sacrifices to a dark entity.

Questioning the crew reveals that they did see a whale in the island's general vicinity. They were at sea when the whale attacked Jacinth, so they know nothing of her ordeal.

There are **20 slavers** excluding Barnabas and the three mates. In contrast, there are 53 Tulita slaves including women, children and the elderly. Ko'oku'wa and 16 or 25 of his fellow slaves are the only individuals capable of fighting, and they are currently unarmed.

**Slavers (Ftr1) (20):** HP 5 each; AC 7 [12]; Atk weapon (1d6); Move 12; Save 14; AL N; CL/XP 1/15. **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, various weapons (clubs, cutlasses, gaff hooks, etc.)

**Notes:** The light crossbows and 90 bolts are locked in the hold, and DeMasso has the key.

**Mates (Ftr3) (3):** HP 17, 14, 19; AC 7 [12]; Atk longsword (1d8) or light crossbow (1d4+1); Move 12; Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 3/60. **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** leather armor, heavy cotton tunic and leather breeches, boots, woolen cloak, longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

**Captain Barnabas Hazeltree (Ftr4):** HP 23; AC 6 [13]; Atk +1 longsword (1d8+1) or light crossbow (1d4+1); Move 12; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 4/120. **Special:** None.

**Equipment:** +1 leather armor, heavy cotton tunic and leather breeches, boots, woolen cloak, +1 longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, astrolabe, 60 gp

**Tulita Slaves (16 or 25):** HD 1d6hp; AC 9[10]; Atk 2 fists (1 hp) or weapon (1d6); Move 12; Save 17; AL N; CL/XP B/10; **Special:** none.

**Equipment:** simple kappa clothing, sandals

## Wrap-Up

Characters who aid the slavers and suppress the uprising may receive a reward upon their return to Port Shaw; however, if there is any notoriety about the event, the Tultitas henceforth treat the characters as pariahs.

On the other hand, characters who assist Ko'oku'wa and the Tultitas earn their gratitude. In this event, the *Iron Bastion's* owners do not echo their sentiments. When the characters return to Port Shaw, the owners of the *Iron Bastion* may seek recompense for the loss of their cargo and the fate of their crew. Characters working for Viscount Senegar Deepwarder or one of the other noble families might earn enough clout among Port Shaw's elite to reach an amicable settlement on the matter. Otherwise, the characters may have a future encounter with the *Iron Bastion's* angry owners and/or their hired thugs.

For Referees using this adventure to supplement the published *Razor Coast* campaign, failure to assist Ko'oku'wa and the Tultitas results in Milliauka and Mokoli Ali'i viewing the characters in a hostile light and refusing to aid them in any way unless the characters perform an act worthy of redemption, such as freeing Milliauka from prison or defeating Dajobas' minions. Alternately, characters who assisted Ko'oku'wa earn Milliauka and Mokoli Ali'i's gratitude as well.

## Treasure

If the characters search the crew and the ship, they locate a scrimshaw whistle (100 gp), a pouch with 4 pearls (50 gp each), a gold ring with an image of a dolphin (50 gp), an amethyst brooch (25 gp), 8 gold bars (100 gp each) and 589 gp.

## ENCOUNTER 2: STOWAWAY

### Set Up

A week ago, a shark bit John "Filthy Jack" Lyverly, a member of the Tide District's Salty Dogs gang (see **Chapter 3** of *Razor Coast*) and general ne'er-do-well, on the leg. The wound was superficial, so Filthy Jack thought nothing of it. However, over the last few days, the local tough has been plagued by terrible nightmares and an unceasing hunger. Filthy Jack handled this problem just like he deals with any situation that he cannot beat to a bloody pulp; he inhaled dragonsmoke. But for once, dragonsmoke failed to numb his mind or sate his appetite. In fact, it just made things worse.

Unbeknownst to the characters, Filthy Jack snuck onboard their ship and hid in the cargo hold where he took yet more dragonsmoke, which ultimately rendered him unconscious. Fearful of discovery or someone else stealing his precious dragonsmoke, Jack took considerable time squeezing into a hard-to-find location, which makes it very difficult to find him. He remains

in that state for at least several hours and possibly even a few days before he regains his senses. Characters successfully searching the ship find him involuntarily shaking and curled in the fetal position covered by a thick lather of cold sweat. He cannot be roused from his stupor, absent using an effect that could negate dragonsmoke's intoxicating properties, such as *neutralize poison* or some other ability to treat poison.

If the characters revive Filthy Jack, he is extremely agitated. Not only did the characters wake him from his deep slumber, but the gnawing hunger eats at his belly once again. Filthy Jack doubles over and writhes in pain as he rants and raves about his thirst for blood and taste for flesh. If the characters restrain or attack him, the stress causes Filthy Jack to assume wereshark hybrid form, which increases his size. Filthy Jack can make an Open Doors roll to snap any restraints, or he can lash out at his attacker if unrestrained.

If the characters do not find or otherwise disturb him, Filthy Jack regains consciousness at some point during the journey to Dolentla Island. This turn of events finds him in a dreadful state. The dreams have tortured his weary mind, and the pangs gnawing at his belly are unbearable. He turns again to dragonsmoke, but the potent narcotic accelerates his transformation into Dajobas' minion.

Twelve hours after awakening, the already psychopathic criminal bursts from his hiding spot looking for someone to devour. He charges onto the deck in hybrid form and attacks the closest living creature with reckless abandon. Even in this form, a cursory glance reveals his identity. All the while, he rants about the Shark God and the insatiable hunger eating him alive.

**Filthy Jack, Wereshark human form (Ftr3):** HD 8; HP 40; AC 9[10]; Atk 2 fists (2 hp); Move 12; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1,100; **Special:** hit only by magic or silver weapons, lycanthropy, +1 to hit and damage strength bonus;

**Filthy Jack, Wereshark hybrid form (Ftr3):** HD 8; HP 40; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 fists (2 hp), bite (1d6+2); Move 12 (swim 18); Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1,100; **Special:** control sharks (75% normal, 50% giant), hit only by magic or silver weapons, lycanthropy, +1 to hit and damage strength bonus;

**Filthy Jack, Wereshark animal form (Ftr3):** HD 8; HP 40; AC 2[17]; Atk bite (1d6+2); Move 0 (swim 24); Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1,100; **Special:** control sharks (75% normal, 50% giant), hit only by magic or silver weapons, lycanthropy, +1 to hit and damage strength bonus.

**Equipment:** 2 doses of dragonsmoke

If faced with imminent defeat, Filthy Jack retreats into the ocean, seeking others like himself.

### ENCOUNTER 3: THE DEVIL'S FISH

Spawned from fiendish origins, a **devilfish** lurks nearby, scanning the surface of the water in search of prey. The aquatic beast is a spy in Harthagoa's service, but that does not prevent the wily creature from killing first and serving Harthagoa later. The devilfish's surface vision is poor, except at night, so it remains underwater and approaches the ship from beneath. The devilfish is large enough to capsize a small rowboat or raft, but it lacks the strength and size to damage a larger vessel. When confronted with such a craft, the devilfish comes up alongside the hull and uses its reach to grab a creature off the deck and pull it below the surface. If it succeeds, it drags the creature underwater and jets out a cloud of its "unholy blood" to conceal its escape. If that fails, the devilfish shoots its blood on deck and tries again. The devilfish is most concerned with self-preservation so if it is close to being defeated, the devilfish flees underwater and jets away at maximum speed.

It is possible to detect the devilfish prior to its attack; however, doing so requires a save at -2. Success reveals the presence of a large creature swimming rapidly towards the surface.

**Devilfish:** HD 4; HP 24; AC 5[14]; Atk bite (1d6 plus strength); Move 6 (swim 12); Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** target of bite must make a save vs. poison or lose 1 point of strength, unholy blood.

#### DEVILFISH

**Hit Dice:** 4

**Armor Class:** 5[14]

**Attack:** bite (1d6), target of bite must make a save vs. poison or lose 1 point of strength

**Saving Throw:** 13

**Special:** unholy blood

**Move:** 6 (swim 12)

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Rating/XP:** 6/400

The loathsome devilfish appears as a large, purple squid-like creature with seven arms ending in hook-lined tentacles and heartless, blue eyes. Its body is as large a typical shark's, but its arms have a 15-foot reach.

Once per day, the devilfish may loose its internal fluids at a target. The devilfish can emit a 20-foot radius cloud of its unholy blood. Underwater this cloud completely obscures everything in the radius to everything except the devilfish. On land, this cloud makes the ground slippery and everyone within the radius must make a save or lose their footing and fall.

The devilfish may be found on land or underwater, but can only survive out of water for 2 hours before needing to return.

### ENCOUNTER 4: CASTAWAYS

Ever the opportunists, a coven of sea hags is using the *Dulcimer* tragedy to their benefit. The **3 sea hags** saw the aftermath of the attack from afar, so they crafted a makeshift raft from the wreckage and are pretending to be castaways in need of rescue. They lie on the raft beneath a torn sail that shields them from the sun and conceals their identities until would-be rescuers come within range of their gaze abilities.

The sea hags do not respond to any verbal cues from the characters or their shipmates; however, something is moving underneath the torn shroud. Once the ship draws close to the sea hags, they leap out from beneath the sail. Anyone who witnesses this spectacle is subjected to the hags' gaze attack. After the initial shock, the hags target apparent leaders using the evil eye, and attempt to grab any the ropes and makeshift ladders draping the ship to clamber aboard the vessel and kill the crew. The hags forego melee attacks and attempt to debilitate the strongest opponents with repeated uses of their evil eye for as many times as possible. If the characters ignore the raft, the sea hags abandon it and swim after the characters' vessel to attempt a night assault against the crew. In either case, if the battle goes poorly, the sea hags jump overboard and swim away to safety.

**Sea Hags (3):** HD 3; HP 14, 10, 16; AC 6[13]; Atk bite (1d4); Move 6 (swim 18); Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** death gaze, weakness gaze. See *Monstrosities* for more details.

## PART THREE

### DOLENTLA ISLAND

#### APPROACHING THE ISLAND

After navigating the treacherous journey to Dolentla Island, the characters spy their first glimpse of their intended destination from a mile away. From this distance, only the waters around the island and its general features are visible. At this point, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following.

In the distance, a small, lush tropical island, only about a mile across, comes into view. Even from afar, it is clear that the shoreline is well-guarded by natural obstacles. Razor sharp rocks and coral reefs protrude above the water line or lurk just beneath the water's surface. These dangers are most heavily concentrated around the eastern and southern beaches, making it impossible to navigate a ship close to shore from either direction. Although still treacherous,

the western and northern approaches appear more feasible. Rock formations and small coral reefs are still in the way, but they are not as dense as the other approaches. An uneasy feeling hangs like a dense fog over the deck as the island looms ever closer.

The water surrounding the island is not very deep. At the characters' current location, the ocean reaches a maximum depth of 30 feet. The ocean is relatively still, and the island's beaches are gently tickled by small waves that roll across its sand before harmlessly washing back out to sea. There are no overt signs of danger, but the ocean bears the evidence of past tragedies. The characters notice a plank of wood, an item of clothing or another personal effect floating on the surface occasionally. These items are predominantly found in the waters west of the island, with a lesser concentration on the north and south sides of Dolentla Island. Strangely, there is no evidence of human remains anywhere in the vicinity.

### ENCOUNTER 5: QUALMAGA'S WHALE

Beneath the serene waters, **Qualmaga's whale**, the same beast that destroyed the *Lashed Harpoon* and the *Dulcimer*, awaits its latest prey. Decades ago, Qualmaga, a Tulita druid, imbued the whale with enhanced intelligence;

however, its newfound intelligence could not resist the dreadful whispers and empty promises of an ungodly evil. Qualmaga's whale abandoned its former purpose, and now serves Hawanapoki.

The whale lies in wait beneath the surface, endlessly circling the island searching for another ship to ram and destroy. Hawanapoki needs survivors to fuel its escape plan; therefore, the whale waits until the ship is less than 500 feet from shore before it attacks. It makes every effort to ram ships north or west of the island, because the waters on those sides of the island are less treacherous. When the whale begins its attack, read or paraphrase the following.

### JACINTH'S TAKE

Jacinth is animated and apprehensive about arriving at Dolentla Island. She is closer to her desired goal, but the traumatic ordeal has scarred her. Jacinth reiterates that the whale attacked the *Dulcimer* off the island's western shore, and the monsters attacked them on the western beach while they were still in the water. Jacinth can identify debris or personal effects from the *Dulcimer* or its crew should the characters locate them.



The water ripples as if a mighty earthquake opened the ground beneath the ship. A huge whale hurtles towards the ship at breakneck speed, almost literally parting the sea in two as it churns through the open water. The creature seems intent on crashing headlong into the ship.

**Qualmaga's Whale:** HD 36; HP 129; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (4d10), tail (4d10); Move 0 (swim 18); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 37/7,400; **Special:** enhanced intelligence, swallow whole.

**Tactics:** When the whale spots the ship, it charges towards the vessel in an effort to capsize it. If the whale cannot capsize it, it uses its tail slap or bite to strike the boat and destroy it. The whale does not attack individual creatures. Hawanapoki charged the whale with the specific task of destroying or capsizing ships. Once the whale accomplishes that mission, it leaves as suddenly as it appeared.

### Development

If the whale succeeds at capsizing or destroying the ship, the characters find themselves adrift at sea. The characters must swim to safety or find another means of staying afloat and getting to shore. The waters are calm, so swimming towards the shore requires minimal effort. If the whale destroyed the ship, the characters can grab debris from the ship and use it as a rudimentary floatation device. How difficult the trek to shore is depends upon the characters' location when the ship went down. Of course, these issues are moot if the ship survives the whale's attack intact, in which case the characters can attempt to land onshore by boat. However, the characters face another problem as Dolentla Island's insane inhabitants greet the newfound arrivals.

## MAKING LANDFALL

After the whale attacks, the characters are closer to the island and can see additional details of the island. The Referee may read or paraphrase the following.

Thick, green grass and tropical trees cover most of Dolentla Island's predominately flat landscape. The dense vegetation makes it difficult to see beyond the coastal boundaries, but crudely hacked trails blaze a path into the island's interior. The palpable sense of dread deepens, as eerie sounds and strange sights emanate from every corner of the island. A groan, a flash of light reflecting off feral pupils, macabre wind chimes, ear piercing screams, and the stench of burning maht add to the pall of doom hanging in the air.

As mentioned earlier, the eastern and southern beaches

are virtually inaccessible by ship. The reefs and jagged rock formations stretch more than 200 feet from shore forming narrow chutes and dangerous rip currents. Even a small rowboat is nearly incapable of navigating a path through these hazardous waters; however, if the characters insist on attempting to row ashore in such a conveyance, they must make a saving throw at -2 every round to weave their way through the treacherous waters. Failure indicates that the boat strikes an obstacle and is either lodged on a natural barrier (50%) or sustains damage from the impact and begins sinking (50%), which may destroy the boat. It is possible to swim to shore, but is difficult in the choppy water flowing through the reefs. Even creatures with swim speeds must make saves because they are attempting to avoid a hazard. See **Encounter 6** below for details on what the characters encounter here.

The western and northern shores are far more hospitable, but also present their own obstacles. Even at a distance of 150 feet from shore, the water reaches a maximum depth of 5 feet along these coasts, requiring that the characters take a smaller craft ashore from at least that far out or even allowing taller characters to walk to shore. Characters that must still swim to the beach can do so. See **Encounter 7** below for what awaits the characters here.

## ENCOUNTER 6: SOULS OF THE DROWNED

This encounter occurs when the characters approach the island from the east or the south.

Hawanapoki is unprepared for creatures coming ashore via these less hospitable approaches; however, the way is not unguarded. Undead sailors who perished in the perilous waters prowl the rocks and reefs seeking to kill those who enter their territory. Through the millennia, the shores of Dolentla Island have seen their share of tragic shipwrecks, murderous mutinies, and pirate melees. The unfortunate souls who lost their lives in these events haunt the island's shores seeking to spread their miserable hate to the living.

### Background

The horde of undead sailors is led by Wily Roger, a vindictive captain marooned here ages ago by his mutinous crew. Set adrift in a small rowboat, the captain died in the treacherous rocks and rip currents guarding the eastern shore. Wily Roger has slowly gained control of the other undead who lurk in the waves here, and his new "crew" has haunted the waters around Dolentla Island ever since. Although they are immune to Hawanapoki's mental influence, they avoid its minions and flee from them on sight. For that reason, they usually troll the eastern and southern shores, where the hawani are less prevalent.

### Set Up

The draug cannot drown, and make their attack from beneath the water; they prefer ambushing creatures near rock formations, coral reefs and rip currents. If possible,



they attempt to capsize a passing boat or pull its occupants over the side and into the water. **Wily Roger** wears a waterlogged gentleman's coat and rotting leather boots and has burning red eyes. Accompanying him are **2 brine zombies**, **4 sea-ghouls**, and **10 zombies**. These undead monsters emit a nauseating stench and appear as gaunt corpses with wrinkled, leathery skin coated by a thick layer of barnacles. Streams of water drip from their appendages and torso.

**Wily Roger, Draug Captain:** HD 6; HP 35; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 claws (1d4); Move 12 (swim 12); Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** call storm, control ship, resistance to fire (50%). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Brine Zombies (2):** HD 4; HP 14, 12; AC 6[13]; Atk cutlass (1d6) or 2 fists (1d4); Move 12 (swim 12); Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** resistance to fire (50%). See *The Tome of Horrors Complete* for more details.

**Equipment:** cutlass

**Sea-ghouls (4):** HD 2; HP 7, 11, 11, 8; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), bite (1d4); Move 9; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** immunities, paralyzing touch.

**Zombies (10):** HD 2; HP 9, 11, 12, 12, 13, 13, 10, 9, 5, 3; AC 7[12]; Atk cutlass (1d8); Move 6; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** immune to sleep and charm.

**Equipment:** cutlass

## ENCOUNTER 7: UNWELCOMING PARTY

This occurs regardless of which beach the characters land upon. A welcome sandy beach is now in sight, but whales and rough seas are not the island's most formidable defense. Any characters struggling to reach land must contend with the madmen and women who survived the trek before them. Hawanapoki's servants, the hawanis, take concealed positions in the foliage, waiting to leap from their hiding spots and attack their victims until they fall unconscious before dragging them away to their master.

### Background

The *Lashed Harpoon's* unfortunate survivors now roam Dolentla Island as Hawanapoki's obedient minions. Known as the hawanis, they are monstrous caricatures of their former selves. Although still physically human, their minds are filled with savage, lustful thoughts. When the characters encounter these wild creatures, the hawanis are charged with one task—to bring Hawanapoki fresh minds to control.



## Set Up

When Qualmaga's whale attacks the characters' ship, a group of 3 **hawanis** conceals themselves on the western shore, and another group hides on the northern shore as they await the arrival of more survivors. The hawanis take up positions amid the shrubs and brambles that line the narrow beach. This allows them to leap from their hiding spots and enter the water in a single round.

Hawanapoki directs the hawanis to move to the eastern and southern shores if Qualmaga's whale capsized or destroyed the ship on those sides of the island. In that event, the hawanis race to that location and hide. Only the closest group of hawanis can make it to that side of the island under normal circumstances. Characters spending an inordinate amount of time in the water or on the beach may encounter two groups of hawanis.

**Hawanis (3):** HD 5; HP 25, 19, 30; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6 plus dark dream); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** blind rage, dark dream. See the **Appendix** for more details.

## Action

When the hawanis spot the characters, they rush forward and dive into the water. The hawanis are accomplished swimmers, giving them a decisive advantage in water. The hawanis begin melee by relying exclusively on their bite attack, which may cause the creature bitten to fall asleep. The hawanis do not abandon this strategy even in the face of imminent death.

## Development

Because the hawanis are extremely rare, non-native characters have no way to identify the hawanis and their special powers. After death, the characters can examine the bodies in greater detail. The characters may confirm their human origins, and a closer look determines that they are at least middle-aged with a few older group members. (The hawanis wear no clothing, so it is obvious that the group is exclusively male.)

## Wrap Up

The group of hawanis not involved in the attack remains in hiding for another 10 minutes. Afterward, they resume searching the island for prey, return to the *Lashed Harpoon's* wreckage, travel to the maht field, or pursue the characters.

## EXPLORING THE MYSTERIES OF DOLENTLA ISLAND

After braving the hazards at sea and offshore, the characters realize that the *Dulcimer's* survivors are now in the hands of the hawanis. The characters must track down more of the mysterious creatures to have any chance of

rescuing the *Dulcimer's* survivors.

This proves easy, because the only prudent way to traverse the jungle's unbelievably thick foliage is along the trails left by the hawanis. These crudely hacked paths allow the characters to travel through the foliage without impediment. Characters straying from these thoroughfares encounter heavy undergrowth (Movement is one-third normal).

Because of the lush tree canopy, most of the jungle is considered dimly lit even during daylight hours. Although Hawanapoki and the hawanis dominate the island, numerous indigenous small animals and birds live in the untracked jungle. Presented below are two encounters the Referee may use during the characters trek through the jungle covering Dolentla Island. Moreover, the hawanis move exclusively along these trails, which function like deer trails or rudimentary roads. The characters are much more likely to encounter hawani bands on and around these travel arteries than in the uncharted jungle.

In the aftermath of the hawani attack, characters can easily follow the hawanis' trail back into the dimly lit jungle. The Referee is free to decide if the particular hawanis the characters are tracking came from any of the key locations along the trail. The hawanis may visit any of these areas in pursuit of a meal.

On the trail, Referees should read or paraphrase the following:

A meandering trail is the only unobstructed path through a maze of trees, undergrowth, and tangled vines. The jungle beyond is dimly lit with the exception of an occasional beam of light piercing the canopy and illuminating the jungle floor. In the distance, the occasional sounds of snapping branches and bloodcurdling screams echo through the untamed vegetation.

Because it was a secret magical laboratory, the elves built traps around the island to ensnare Tulita spies and other unwelcome visitors. As the characters move through the jungle they have a chance to encounter one of the elves' hidden surprises if they leave the trails or stray beyond the confines of an encounter area. Presented below are several examples of traps the characters may encounter in the jungle. There is a cumulative 20% chance of encountering such a trap for every 10 minutes the characters spend in the jungle (select from below or roll d4).

1. A 20 ft. deep spiked pit that causes 2d6 points of damage from the fall; in addition, the target is struck by 1d4 spikes for 1d4+1 damage each.
2. A 30 ft. deep camouflaged pit that causes 3d6 points of damage. A character has a 1 in 6 chance to notice the pit.

3. A hidden snare trap. The snare causes 1d6 points of damage and hoists the character 15 ft. in the air. Characters may attempt an Open Doors check to break free of the snare. A character has a 1 in 6 chance to notice the snare.

4. A giant javelin that causes 2d6+3 points of damage, and attacks as a 6 HD creature.

In addition to elfmade dangers, natural hazards also abound off the beaten track. The most unpleasant of these is the toxic pollen of the colorful but sinister magenta wailer vine. Often found wrapped around the trunks of trees or clinging to high branches, the vine's vibrant flowers are home to its mind-altering pollen. This pollen robs the target of his mental faculties, draining 1–2 points of Intelligence per minute for each minute spent in the pollen cloud unless a save is made. Magic-users and thieves can identify the flower's distinctive coloring by making a save at –1, which also reveals its hidden danger. The airborne pollen floats on even the gentlest of breezes, exposing anyone within 50 ft. of the plant to its effects. A magenta wailer is encountered with a cumulative 10% chance for each 10 minutes spent off the beaten path in the jungle.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTER 1: THE HAWANI WARPATH

Hawanapoki commanded the hawanis on the beach to bring him fresh minds to control; however, any hawanis encountered in the island's interior dispense with such restraint. These vicious predators are on the hunt for food or on the characters' trail. The hawanis have little to fear on the island, so they move across the roads with no regard for stealth until they detect the first sign of their quarry. The hawanis then attempt to ambush their target. Like the hawani parties found on the beach, this group is entirely male.

**Hawanis (4):** HD 5; HP 29, 19, 24, 22; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6 plus dark dream); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** blind rage, dark dream. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Tactics:** The hawanis immediately fly into a blind rage and savagely attack with their claws and bite attack. These hawanis do not take captives; they go for the kill.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTER 2: IT'S ALIVE!

The hawanis do not know fear, but they have just enough sense to avoid the island's largest predators, the indigenous shambling mounds. These walking carnivorous plants thrived during the elves' heyday on Dolentla Island, but Pele's destruction of the elves nearly resulted in their extinction as well. The survivors have rebounded nicely, and have even developed a taste for hawani flesh. Their immunity to Hawanapoki's and the hawanis' mind-affecting abilities have contributed greatly to their resurgence.

The shambling mounds hunt alone and blend in with

the surrounding jungle. They prefer ambushing prey from a concealed position. If undetected by the characters, the shambling mound surprises the victim and lashes out with its fists. Shambling mounds are also attracted to the sound of battle, so any combat with the hawanis may attract the attention of a nearby shambling mound (1 in 6 chance).

**Shambling Mound (12HD):** HD 12; HP 58; AC 1[18]; Atk 2 fists (2d8); Move 6; Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 15/2,900; **Special:** damage immunities, enfold and suffocate victims. See **Monstrosities** for more details.

## LOCATIONS CONNECTED BY HAWANI TRAILS

### DI. WESTERN COVE

Qualmaga's whale attacked the *Lashed Harpoon* and the *Dulcimer* in the island's western waters. As a result, the survivors and any associated wreckage came ashore at this location. Characters searching the area for clues have a 1 in 6 chance to spot any item of significance. Success uncovers personal items belonging to the *Dulcimer's* crew, such as a torn shred of women's clothing, part of a woman's shoe, a shred of fine linen from a man's pants and several buttons. The characters may locate a silver brooch with an amber inset. If the characters continue to actively search the area, another roll of 1 on d6 unearths a rusted harpoon tip buried beneath a few inches of sand. This artifact came from the *Lashed Harpoon*.

### Background

Qualmaga's whale broke the *Dulcimer* into pieces, but much of the *Lashed Harpoon's* forward section survived intact and ran aground on the beach. In a herculean effort, the *Lashed Harpoon's* survivors hacked a trail through the forest and dragged the whaler's remains more than a quarter mile through the undergrowth and labyrinth of trees to a muddy clearing, where it remains to this day. They undertook this monumental task not only to procure shelter, but also to preserve its precious cargo. Although the passage of more than two decades has erased any discernible trail, a druid or ranger (or other nature-oriented character) notices a subtle difference in the flora along the *Lashed Harpoon's* route into the wilderness. Characters actively searching this patch of ground will automatically locate a faint trail. The trail leads directly to the *Lashed Harpoon's* wreckage (see **Area D2** for details.) The remains of the trail are normal jungle and have the same chances of encounters as wandering elsewhere off the path (see "Exploring the Mysteries of Dolentla Island" above).

### JACINTH'S TAKE

Jacinth can identify the silver brooch as belonging to Elizabeth Stansport, one of the *Dulcimer's* passengers.

## Set Up

One of the *Dulcimer's* passengers survived the ordeal with the hawanis. Maximilian Sidrow was knocked unconscious and was left for dead. When he regained consciousness, badly injured, Maximilian dragged himself into the jungle to apparent safety. However, the exhausted and weakened victim fell into one of the elves' many camouflaged pits, left over from their days as Dolentla Island's rulers. Maximilian died at the bottom of the insidious trap. However, his spirit does not rest in peace.

## Action

Maximilian's violent and untimely death left his angry soul searching for vengeance. Rather than the hawanis who attached him, he directs his hatred toward the woman he holds responsible for his earthly demise, Jacinth Deepwarder. Maximilian's **ghost** attacks anyone he encounters, demanding in an unearthly howl that his foes "Bring me Jacinth! Bring me the coward! Jacinth! Jaaaciiiiitthhhh!"

**Maximilian Sidrow's Ghost, strangling ghost:** HD 5; HP 22; AC 0[19]; **Atk** strangulation (save or die in 14+1 rounds); **Move** 0 (fly 12); **Save** 12; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 7/600; **Special:** magic or silver weapon required to hit, magic resistance (50%), strangles (if hit, save or die in 1d4+1 rounds). See **Monstrosities** for more details.

**Tactics:** Maximilian singles out Jacinth if she accompanied the characters to shore; otherwise, he attacks the closest target. He calls Jacinth a coward, a traitor, and a commoner (the worst insult he can think of) throughout the combat. If Jacinth is not there, he demands to know where she is so he can exact his revenge. In any given round of combat, there is a 20% chance that Maximilian pleads for the characters to bring his body back home for proper burial even as he continues fighting them.

## Development

Before he died, Maximilian saw Jacinth quaff a potion and suddenly vanish into the night, leaving him to fend for himself. His burial in what is essentially an unmarked grave proved the last straw for the proud aristocrat. Maximilian longs to confront his former friend, Jacinth Deepwarder, and receive proper burial in his family's mausoleum. Accomplishing these goals gives Maximilian's restless spirit peace, otherwise his ghost restores itself 2d4 days after its destruction and resumes haunting. Maximilian's ghost disappears forever if he confronts Jacinth and his body is returned to Port Shaw for interment in his family's burial vault.

## Treasure

Maximilian's body still bears the following items: fine leather armor (worth 100 gp and still serviceable), a family heirloom opal ring (100 gp), a gold necklace worth 500gp, a pouch with an ivory comb (20 gp), 5 agates (10 gp each), and 68 gp. Taking his family heirloom without permanently

## JACINTH'S TAKE

Jacinth is truly frightened and horrified by Maximilian's fate. In a surprise move, the selfish aristocrat begs Maximilian for forgiveness and breaks down in tears. If she did not admit to drinking the *potion of invisibility* earlier, she finally acknowledges doing so. After this confrontation, Jacinth changes for the better. She realizes that her actions had real consequences, and she is more determined than ever to save the other passengers. She becomes less haughty and much more cooperative with the characters, contributing when and how she can.

destroying his ghost also earns Maximilian's enmity. The ghost, tied to the missing items, searches for them and seeks vengeance against the thief. Once stolen, returning the item to him or his family becomes an additional condition to his ghost's permanent destruction.

## D2. WRECK OF THE LASHED HARPOON

Two decades ago, Qualmaga's whale struck the *Lashed Harpoon* and broke the ship in two. The aft section tore apart and sank to the bottom of the sea, while the forward section ran aground on Dolentla Island's western beach.

## Background

Before madness fully gripped Captain Delano Ambrose, skipper of the *Lashed Harpoon*, he ordered the castaways to heave the ship's forward section into a muddy clearing atop a hill more than four hundred yards from shore. The new location prevented the ship from washing back into the sea but, more importantly for Captain Ambrose, the site offered an unobstructed view of the surrounding area. The strategic position allowed him to better defend his ill-gotten booty from would-be thieves. Prior to setting sail, the whaler and smuggler secretly loaded a hidden compartment in his cargo hold with a jar of ambergris (2,500 gp), 10 jars of aboleth oil (50 gp each) and 5 jars of kraken ink (250 gp each) that he had stolen from an ancient Tulita holy site dedicated to Whale.

What Captain Ambrose did not know was that the first jar contained sacred ambergris from Whale itself. When the great Tulita druid, Qualmaga, learned of the theft, it was the final straw. He charged his whale with a primary task—to return the ambergris to its sacred temple and punish the transgressor who stole it. Qualmaga's whale partly accomplished its task, having sentenced the offender to a fate far worse than any Qualmaga could have imagined.

## Set Up

Greed clings tenaciously to the soul, even in the face of madness and evil. Absent a direct command from

Hawanapoki, the elderly captain never strays far from his treasure. **Captain Amborose** is always encountered here, lurking within the wreck, but he may be accompanied by the group of **3 hawanis** previously stationed at **Area D1** if they have not already been encountered.

### Action

Captain Amborose is the only hawani who still wears clothing. His waterlogged captain's waistcoat hangs from his bony shoulders, and his tattered trousers tenuously wrap around his gaunt hips as he attacks any who threaten his treasures.

**Hawanis (1 or 4):** HD 5; HP 26 (or 26, 15, 19, 22); AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6 plus dark dream); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** blind rage, dark dream. See the **Appendix** for more details.

### Development

The hidden smuggler's hold has long since been exposed by the elements and jungle so that a search of the wreckage finds it with a roll of 1 on d8. Within, the jar of ambergris and the jars of oil and ink are the only items of any value aboard the dilapidated husk of warped wooden planks and rusted nautical gear.

Once freed from Hawanapoki's corrupting influence, Qualmaga's whale resumes its quest to recover the stolen ambergris and punish the offender who took it — or any who in turn steal it from Captain Amborose. The rare shamanic markings on the ambergris jars identify its significance as an ancient holy Tulita relic. Tulita characters recognize the symbols as such. The ambergris radiates a powerful magical aura, and spells such as *legend lore* provide insight to the ambergris' origin and its religious significance.

### Wrap-Up

For those running a *Razor Coast* campaign, returning the ambergris to Qualmaga or to the sacred shrine on

## CREATOR'S NOTE: ADULT THEMES AHEAD

Hawanapoki despises its bonds and longs to escape. Hawanapoki needs life energy to sever the magical tethers confining it to Dolenta Island, and no entity gives the abomination more life energy than sacrificed newborns. For this reason, the hawanis are creatures that exhibit sexuality, and they are molding the *Dulcimer's* castaways in their image. Because of this, the sections detailing the ancient Tulita shrine and Hawanapoki's Prison contain some adult themes. Referees with a younger audience may want to omit or tone down the descriptive text.

the Bonedown of the Ancients earns the gratitude of the Tulitas, especially Moloki Ali'i and Milliauka, as well as Qualmaga's whale. The noble beast might assist the party as they travel in the Pearl Eye Atoll or even join the adventurers in their final battle with the Krakenfiend later.

### D3. Maht Field

Previously believed to be confined exclusively to the island that bears its name, a small patch of the narcotic black root known as maht or Granpappy Blackskull grows in an isolated clearing not far from the *Lashed Harpoon's* wreckage. Hawanapoki's Tulita worshippers brought the addictive plant with them and cultivated it in this massive field. Since the Tulitas' departure, the indigenous flora has reclaimed much of the field and reduced the maht crop to a mere fraction of its former yield. Over the decades, the hawanis have acquired a taste for smoking the narcotic root even though they are immune to its mind-altering properties. This begs the question as to whether or not maht plays a role in the transformation from human to hawani. The usage of maht by the hawanis also serves to illustrate its powerfully addictive physical properties. There is no set encounter at this location, but the characters may encounter hawanis who traveled here for a quick smoke.

## MAHT AKA "GRANPAPPY BLACKSKULL"

A thick black root, named for the island of its origin, Maht may be dried then chewed like jerky or smoked. Burning maht smells like anise.

Unlike most addictions, an addiction to maht is both a disease and a curse. The addiction itself can be cured as normal, either through spells such as *remove disease* or simply making the appropriate Fortitude saves.

However, if the curse aspect is not removed then 72 hours after the addiction is cured — or 72 hours after an addict last consumed maht — the afflicted character's addiction to the drug resurges, accompanied by deep, soul-rending cravings.

While craving the drug, the addict suffers a –2 penalty to all six ability scores until he gets a new fix of maht. The penalties accumulate daily (–4 on the second day, –6 on the third day, etc.) and cannot be cured by any means other than breaking the addiction completely or consuming more maht.

#### D4. ANCIENT TULITA SHRINE

In the days before the elves arrived on Dolentla Island, the native Tulitas worshipped Hawanapoki as a god and dedicated a shrine in the qlipphoth's honor.

##### Background

The shrine is the focal point of hawani "life," as it sits above the chamber where Hawanapoki is imprisoned and serves as the focal point for the transformation ceremony from human to hawani. The unholy site's physical features have eroded with age, but the immortal being's potency remains intact. The shrine is at the center of a clearing atop the highest point of Dolentla Island. It consists of a badly damaged stone statue of a squid-like creature standing in front of a sickening, crimson-stained coral altar. An unearthly gasping moan that sounds like a fish struggling for breath emanates from beneath the altar, however, the eerie sound pales in comparison to the ongoing spectacle. At this point, the Referee may read or paraphrase the following.

The pungent aroma of burning maht and the sickening sound of bone crunching against bone to the rhythm of a pulsating drumbeat fuel a frenetic atmosphere as two men and four women mindlessly cavort around a blood-stained coral altar. This unholy shrine sits in the shadow of a weathered statue depicting a squid-like creature.

Three naked females of the feral species you have seen are gathered in a semi-circle before a roaring campfire, smashing humanoid femur bones against each other and pounding crude drums fashioned from hollow coconut shells and flayed skin as they howl in salacious delight at the lewd spectacle before them. These three creatures appear to be well beyond their childbearing years, yet all of them are in various stages of pregnancy.

Around them, the filthy human men and women feverishly dance to the frantic rhythm, even though they appear utterly exhausted. They wear what once were fine clothes, now reduced to rags, and engage in a suggestive performance that would make Port Shaw's most adventurous prostitutes blush.

##### Set Up

The men and women are the survivors from the *Dulcimer*, part way through the transformation process into hawanis but still human. Since their marooning two weeks ago, they have been charmed multiple times, suffered significant mental damage, inhaled maht smoke and



developed deep psychosis. Even after the music stops, the *Dulcimer's* men and women continue to frolic around the altar, completely oblivious to the presence of newcomers.

The **3 hawanis** themselves are intoxicated by reveling in the sensual spectacle of the ongoing ceremony, and do not immediately notice another creature's presence.

##### Action

If the characters intrude or interject in their activities, the crewmembers literally jump into the characters' arms and do everything in their power to seduce the characters, regardless of gender. If the characters rebuff the castaways' advances (easy enough in their current odorous and filth-stained state), the encounter may escalate to physical violence. It is impossible to reason with or rationalize with Jacinth's former companions at this point.

When the characters interfere with the ceremony or after they attack the first hawani drummer, the rest howl for the adventurers' blood and launch themselves into the fray.

**Hawanis (3):** HD 5; HP 15, 20, 22; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6 plus dark dream); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** blind rage, dark dream. See the **Appendix** for more details.

## JACINTH'S TAKE

Her friends' sad fate proves too much for Jacinth to bear. She breaks down and confesses that she took her friends along on an expedition to Dolentla Island to discover a secret elven magical laboratory. She also believes that the laboratory plays some role in what happened to the *Dulcimer's* passengers.

### Development

Hawanapoki's stone statue can be recognized as a shoggti qliploth by any magic-user or cleric higher than 5th level. It has no magical properties or other significance, but the coral altar is a different matter. The party can identify the altar's crimson stains as blood. A roll of 1 on 1d8 uncovers an even more chilling discovery about the altar. The altar rotates 90 degrees in a clockwise direction, which reveals a hole filled with tiny, humanoid bones: infants sacrificed to weaken Hawanapoki's temporal bonds. This fact should be driven home by the fact that all three hawani women are pregnant, yet there are no children on the island.

The surviving members of the *Dulcimer's* crew are present and are Genevieve Tolcrist, Joshua Bonedeuce, Lenora Duhamel, Tordell Rivery, Susanna Bellstead, and Elizabeth Stansport. They all suffer from severe mental illness. Hawanapoki has repeatedly charmed them, and they have witnessed what they believed were the deaths two friends and the hawanis' barbarity. The malevolent fiend telepathically communicates with them in their sleep, reinforcing the horrors they have seen or heard. They are now creatures of pure instinct that lack any inhibitions whatsoever. Restoring their humanity is not a simple matter of casting a spell or healing their Wisdom damage.

At this point, they all suffer from severe psychological scars that can only be repaired by curing their mental disease, healing their mental damage, and then ridding them of Hawanapoki's influence altogether. Their only saving grace is that they did not inhale enough maht to permanently affect them.

### Wrap Up

When Hawanapoki came to the Razor long ago, it did so by clinging onto Demogorgon, dropping away only when it was convenient for him to do so. This long-ago proximity to Demogorgon has left Hawanapoki with one unique attribute: its telepathy ability is not restricted to communication with other qlipthos only. Being within Hawanapoki's telepathy range brings the characters into contact with its powerful mind, and once they have defeated the hawanis in this area, they come to its attention.

Hawanapoki cannot charm the characters, but that does

not stop it from filling their minds with erotic thoughts, frightening images, and empty promises. Hawanapoki's arrogance and haughtiness always filter through in its communications with the characters, but it is not a fool, either. It offers the characters the opportunity to leave the island unharmed, with one condition—to leave one man and one woman from the *Dulcimer* behind and never return. However, the qliploth has perhaps made a fatal error in its taunting of the party, because by its very communications it gives the party an important clue: the sense that whatever it is that has contacted them lies somewhere under their very feet.

Should the party agree and depart, the moment they are at sea, Hawanapoki reneges and commands the whale to attack their ship. This time, Hawanapoki wants to destroy the ship and kill everyone onboard.

If the characters choose to stay and try to find what sort of foul creature has control of the island, they can locate the path to Hawanapoki's Prison with a roll of 1 on d6 (per character). Also, a character can spot a rudimentary side trail leading down the south side of the elevated promontory with a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6. Following this trail leads to **Area D5** below.

### D5. HAWANAPOKI'S PRISON

This area is detailed in Part Four below.

## PART FOUR

### HAWANAPOKI'S PRISON

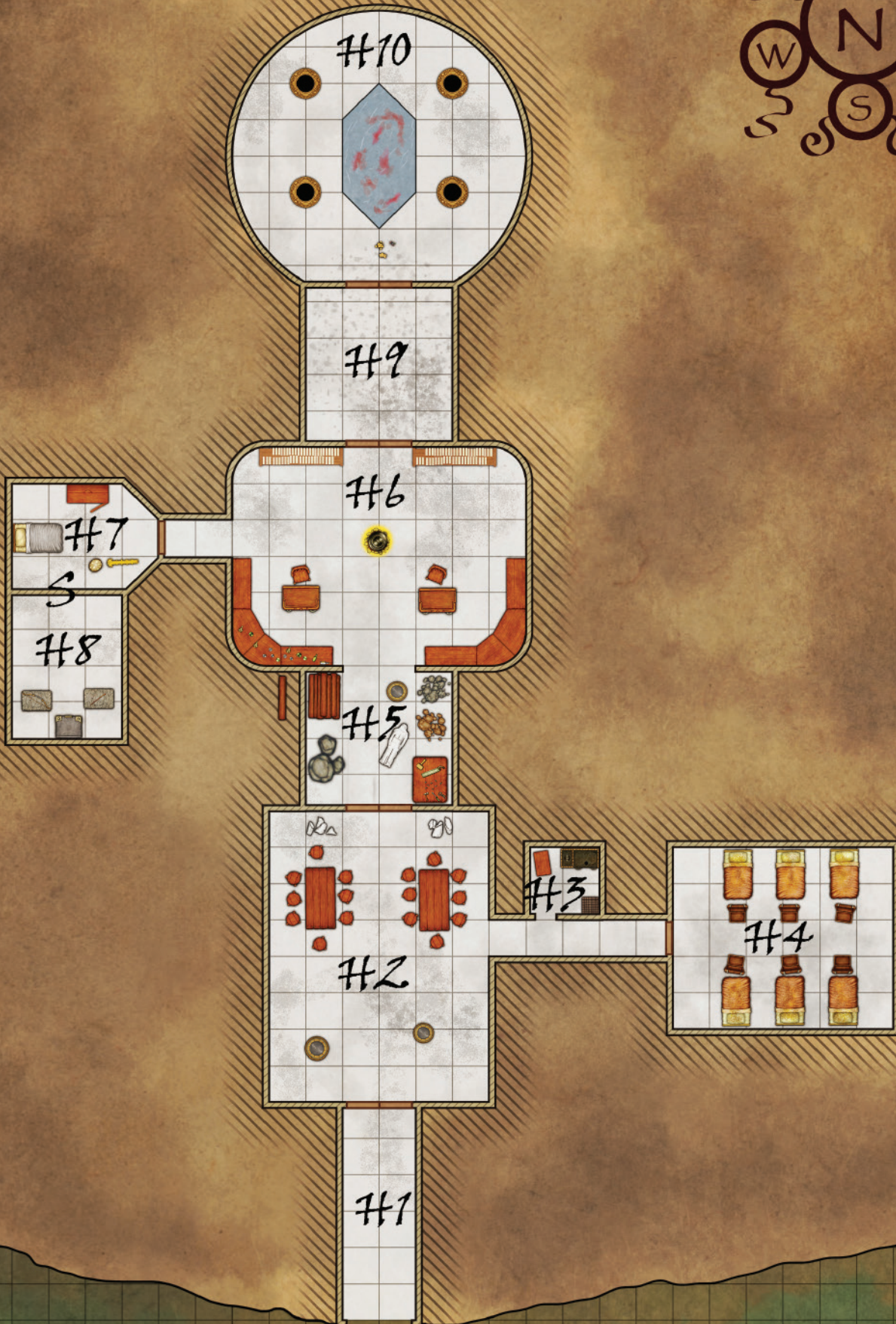
Hawanapoki's complex is a unique combination of Tullita and elven architecture. The Tullitas constructed the shrine atop the hill and Hawanapoki's inner sanctum. When the elves came, they painted over the gruesome images of death and sacrifice that adorned the walls. The elves added the living quarters and bed chamber. More importantly, Urthlan built the air-sculpted basalt totems and gossamer mithral bindings that trap Hawanapoki in this location. The elves then concealed the laboratory's entrance with powerful illusion spells, but since their demise, the entrance is plainly visible and frequently used by the hawanis and the *Dulcimer's* crew, which allows the evil qliploth to see and charm his guests.

### SET UP

The entrance is built directly into the south side of the hill that supports the shrine at **D4**. The earthen passageways and chambers are reinforced by stone blocks quarried from the shoreline centuries ago. The ceilings are 10 feet high unless otherwise specified. The doors are strong wooden

# Map of Hawanaponi's Prison

1 square - 5 feet



doors that open at the slightest exertion. The elves also cast *continual light* spells on numerous, small quartz stones that they embedded into the ceilings. The light emitted by the stones bathes the complex in varying degrees of bright light and dim light. Creatures with darkvision can see clearly throughout the complex.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The conniving qliphoth continues his telepathic chatter with the characters, taunting them by telling them that they face an eternity as his thralls. When he senses the characters drawing near, he casts *protection from good* and alerts the hawanis in **H9** to the intruders' imminent arrival.

### H1. COMPLEX ENTRANCE

A finely polished stone corridor bores into the side of the hill and descends twenty feet before ending in a pair of closed, wooden doors.

Once protected by illusory magic, the passage granting access to the elves' secret laboratory now stands unguarded. Over the centuries, the paint has degraded, partially revealing the graphic images of sacrifice and blood that decorated the corridor during the Tultitas' era. The faint images depict a squid-like being bathing in a pool of blood.

### H2. COMMON ROOM

Two long, warped wooden tables surrounded by eight stools dominate the far end of the room. The ruins of two stone statues are strewn about the floor. An archway on the east wall opens into an adjoining corridor, and two barrels of stagnant, brackish water are near the entrance.

The statues are made from limestone, and each depicts Urthlan the Fiendbinder. The water is foul tasting and malodorous. Any creature that drinks the water is sickened for 1d4 minutes unless the creature makes a saving throw.

### H3. KITCHEN

Thick grime covers nearly every inch of this kitchen. There is an iron grill filled with ashes, a serviceable hearth, and a preparation area with rusty iron knives and other utensils.

The hawanis have no need for food preparation, so the kitchen has remained unused for centuries. The preparation materials here are useless and irreparable, but the grill and hearth are functional once they are properly cleaned.

### H4. GENERAL LIVING QUARTERS

Six beds line the walls. Each is covered with a moldy fur that emits a foul odor. Open wooden chests sit in front of each bed.

The elves assisting Urthlan in his magical research shared this common bedchamber. The chests contain an assortment of elf clothing ravaged by dry rot, and other sundry items. The hawanis stripped the area of any valuables two decades ago and offered them to Hawanapoki as tribute. There are currently **2 hawanis** lurking about in here that immediately attack when the characters enter.

**Hawanis (2):** HD 5; HP 21, 16; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6 plus dark dream); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** blind rage, dark dream. See the **Appendix** for more details.

### H5. WORKSHOP

An assortment of metallurgic, stonecutting, and woodworking tools and equipment fill an impressive workshop. Raw materials needed for each craft rest on the floor near the appropriate work area. There are three large blocks of stone and a partially completed stone statue, a pile of surprisingly viable timber, and two mounds of metallic ore. An archway built into the far wall leads into an impressive adjoining laboratory.

Elven artisans plied their craft in this workshop. Currently a **giant rock-horned lizard** has taken up residence in here and is munching on the bloody remains of a small peccary that is killed in the jungle outside. It is 8 feet long with reddish-brown scales, and small horns protruding from its head. It is something of a mascot to the hawanis who occasionally bring it fresh meat, and as a result it leaves them alone. It attacks the characters on sight, however.

**Giant Rock-Horned Lizard:** HD 4; HP 20; AC 2[17]; Atk bite (1d8); Move 12 (swim 9); Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; **Special:** spit blood, surprise on roll of 1–2 on 1d6. See **The Tome of Horrors Complete** for more details.

The three stone blocks include sandstone, basalt and a block of quartz. The unfinished stone statue was intended as a sandstone bust, but it was only in the early stages of completion. A set of artisans' tools (value 50 gp) can be gathered from this corner of the room. The elves used basalt infused with ruby dust to create the stone totems that comprise Hawanapoki's prison.

The large pieces of timber include pine, alder, teak and mahogany (100 gp each but each weighs 200 lbs.). Similarly, carpenters tools (worth 25 gp) are found on the workbench in the near corner.



The metallurgy portion of the workshop includes a furnace, anvil, and raw metal ores. Most of the ore consists of iron and tin, but there are seven large deposits of mithral (100 gp each) scattered in the pile. A character can spot the shiny metal by making a saving throw at  $-1$ , and dwarves will automatically notice it. Dwarves can also easily identify the deposits as mithral. The elves fashioned the mithral into gossamer mithral, which is the second physical component of Hawanapoki's prison.

## H6. MAGICAL LABORATORY

Despite the apparent passage of centuries since its usage, a faint whiff of dried resin and other pungent, organic materials hangs in the air of this laboratory, particularly in the vicinity of an iron cauldron that rests atop an elevated fire pit surrounded by the vague, circular outline of charred incense etched into the floor. There are two large bookcases on the far wall that are stuffed with dusty tomes and dog-eared ledgers. Hundreds of clay, ceramic, and glass jars and vials rest on two rows of shelving that line the near walls. There are also two intricately carved wooden desks and chairs.

Urthlan's laboratory was at the cutting edge of magical research in its day, and in this spacious room, the masterful wizard concocted potions, scribed scrolls, and created wondrous magic items, armor, and weapons. The jars

### URTHLAN THE FIENDBINDER'S GUIDE TO THE DIABOLIC

This leather bound book features the image of a screaming demon on its front cover. Its pages are scribed in elven. Any creature that spends at least 24 hours reading the book must make a saving throw at  $-4$ . Success means that the reader understands how to use the book as a scroll of protection, one time. Using the book in this way grants the reader a  $+10$  on any saving throw against the magic of extra-planar creatures (demons, devils, elementals, etc.), and a  $-4$  on their attacks against the reader for  $1d6+6$  rounds. This benefit can only be invoked once. A character can make only one attempt to read the book. The book also contains the following spells: *conjunction of demons*, *conjunction of elementals* and *contact other plane*.

The book is only usable by magic-users and clerics (clerics cannot learn the spells, of course, but can invoke the book's protective magic).

and vials on the shelves once contained an assortment of potions and magical components, but the overwhelming majority evaporated long ago. Three *potions* have survived—*flying*, *haste*, and *invisibility*. There are 214 tomes and ledgers in the bookcase, and they are all written in elven. Each is valued at  $2d6$  gp with a few noteworthy exceptions: *A Study in Planar Travel* and *Inquiries of Planar Origins* are two rare and unique works worth 250 gp each. The magic tome, *Urthlan the Fiendbinder's Guide to the Diabolic* (see sidebar), stands at the forefront.

The cauldron is empty except for a pungent, sticky residue coating its rim. A magic-user may identify the substance as *sovereign glue*, a substance that was used to bind Hawanapoki's mithral chains to the stone totems imprisoning it. The desks have an unlocked drawer each, but both desks are empty.

### SOVEREIGN GLUE

This pale amber substance is thick and viscous. One ounce of this adhesive covers 1 square foot of surface, bonding virtually any two substances together in a permanent union. The glue takes 1 round to set. If the objects are pulled apart before that time has elapsed, that application of the glue loses its stickiness and is worthless. If the glue is allowed to set, then attempting to separate the two bonded objects has no effect.

## H7. URTHLAN'S QUARTERS

Urthlan spent his free time here and kept his most valuable belongings in a secret vault adjoining this chamber. When the party enters, read or paraphrase the following:

This elegant bedroom exudes quiet magnificence in its decor. An expertly crafted four poster canopy bed covered by an exotic fur rests against the far wall. A nearby armoire is partially open and contains a variety of fine clothes and a wooden stool shaped in the form of a mushroom sits in front of a golden harp.

The golden harp is not only a wondrous musical instrument; it is also the mechanism for opening the room's secret door. Characters must locate the secret door as normal, but the mechanism for opening the door is not immediately apparent. The door is reinforced with a permanent *wizard lock* spell. Characters who intently examine the harp notice an inscription on its neck. The language is the common tongue, and the inscription says "a foolish elf found a clever elf when he looked up high." The inscription is a riddle Urthlan engraved onto the harp in

the event that he should somehow forget the sequence of notes that open the secret door. In order to open the secret door, the harpist must play the notes A, F, E, F, A, C, and then high E in sequence. Regardless of whether the riddle is solved, playing random notes on the harp for a full minute will eventually result in the correct combination and the opening of the door.

The bed is carved from alder and covered by a winter wolf pelt (175 gp). The armoire's two drawers are partially open. The armoire contains 16 men's outfits including nobleman's clothing, wizard robes, and less formal attire—all fitted for an elf. The five most impressive outfits are worth a combined 350 gp, while the remaining outfits are worth 2d6 gp each.

## H8. URTHLAN'S VAULT

Urthlan used this guarded vault to store items he could not or did not want to carry.

An exquisite longbow of remarkable quality and a wand each rest on two stone pedestals. There is a closed iron chest on the floor behind the pedestals.

### Action

Urthlan charged a **crypt thing** with protecting his vault. The crypt thing is surprised by the intrusion and welcomes the characters' arrival. The crypt thing attacks only if the characters enter the room or attack him, otherwise he engages the characters in polite conversation through the doorway.

If the characters ask him about Hawanapoki, he refers to the qliphoth as "oh, that thing." He mentions that Urthlan seemed fascinated with the fiend, but he never understood his obsession with the creature. He wryly remarks that in the end, he and Hawanapoki share one thing. They were the only ones Pele spared.

**Crypt Thing:** HD 6; HP 24; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 claws (1d6); Move 12; Save 11; AL N; CL/XP 9/1,100; **Special:** +1 or better weapons to hit, teleport other, turn as 10 HD monster. See **Monstrosities** for more details.

### Wrap-Up

The bow is a +1, +2 vs. *undead longbow*, while the wand is a *wand of magic missiles* (24 charges). The iron chest is closed, but unlocked. There are 4 scrolls, one each of *fireball*, *haste*, *monster summoning III*, and *strength*, a *ring of protection +1*, six pearls (50 gp each) and 2,509 gp.

## H9. HAWANAPOKI'S ANTECHAMBER

The Tultias used this antechamber to deliver blood sacrifices to Hawanapoki. Since the elves imprisoned the qliphoth, this room serves as an antechamber to Hawanapoki's prison.

Despite someone's efforts, no amount of paint or perfume could remove the copious blood splatters on the walls, ceiling, and floor or the stench of death in this chamber.

### Action

**Three hawanis** are Hawanapoki's last line of defense against invaders. They lunge into combat using their claw and bite attacks.

**Hawanis (3):** HD 5; HP 18, 26, 20; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6 plus dark dream); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** blind rage, dark dream. See the **Appendix** for more details.

## H10. HAWANAPOKI'S PRISON

Four eight-foot-tall sculpted basalt totems covered with intricately carved runes stand bound to one another with gossamer strands of mithral. These monoliths surround a diamond-shaped pool of disgusting, stagnant water laced with streams of fresh blood. Blood droplets rhythmically fall from the ceiling and splash into the water below. Coins and other personal belongings are heaped into a pile in front of the pool. Crudely drawn images of horrific violence and deviant behavior painted in what appears to be blood cover the surrounding walls.

The disgusting sketches that cover the walls are in fact painted in blood. The coins and personal belongings heaped in front of the pool belonged to the *Dulcimer's* crew, however, they also include other items Hawanapoki accumulated over the years.

### Action

**Hawanapoki**, a shoggti qliphoth, awaits the characters here. The basalt totems and gossamer mithral are enchanted with a unique combination of the spells *hold monster* and *protection from evil*, although the prison does not duplicate the exact effects of either spell. They radiate strong magic. When Urthlan first constructed the prison, Hawanapoki could not move beyond any of the totems. As Hawanapoki's power grew and the strength of Urthlan's magic waned, it has pushed the boundaries even further. Hawanapoki can now move anywhere within this chamber. In addition, Hawanapoki can *dimension door* out of the room, though the magical tethers return it to its prison 2d4 rounds later at the beginning of his turn. Hawanapoki can act normally immediately afterward.

**Hawanapoki, Qliphoth Shoggti:** HD 5; HP; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (1d8), 4 tentacles (1d6); Move 12; Save 12; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; **Special:** mind cloud (on the first touch of a tentacle the target must make a saving throw or lose 1 point

of wisdom permanently), horrific appearance (those seeing it must make a saving throw or be frozen in fear for 1d6 rounds), magic resistance (60%), +1 or better weapon to hit, spell-like abilities. See the **Appendix** for more details.

**Spell-like abilities:** 3/day—*charm person, protection from good*; 1/day—*charm monster, dimension door*

**Tactics:** Hawanapoki's favorite tactic is to grab its enemies and attempt to drown them in the water, which is 5 feet deep. On subsequent rounds, Hawanapoki resorts to its mind-clouding ability, focusing its attacks against a single combatant in an effort to render that foe powerless to resist his *charm person* and *charm monster* abilities in later rounds. Hawanapoki relies heavily upon its resistances to avoid the damage from spells physical damage dealt to it. If a character possesses an item or attack form that bypasses its resistances, it uses its tentacles to attack the creature with its mind-cloud ability and its bite. If Hawanapoki senses that escape is near, it attempts to kill the youngest creature, hoping that the death weakens its bonds enough to free it. Once freed, Hawanapoki uses his *dimension door* ability to escape to the furthest point possible. When it leaves the complex, Hawanapoki heads for the western shore and contacts Qualmaga's whale to meet it so that it can leave the island. When escape and victory seem unlikely, Hawanapoki resorts to bargaining and threats. It tells the characters about Urthlan's secret treasure vault and Whale's sacred ambergris. It offers these items and safe passage off the island in return for its life.

## Development

### *Hawanapoki Released*

Depending on what transpired at **Area D4**, Hawanapoki may be very close to slipping his bonds. If all three pregnant hawanis died in that combat, the deaths of two more hawani fetuses liberate it from its prison. Should the characters leave Hawanapoki alive with a single hawani female also alive, the qlipthoth frees itself within a season. Should the party abandon a female humanoid on the island — Jacinth for instance — the qlipthoth frees itself in six months.

## Wrap-Up

In addition to clothing and other personal effects, the items belonging to the *Dulcimer's* crew found within Hawanapoki's prison include 189 gp, an ivory cameo (50 gp), a bronze and sapphire necklace (100 gp), the Duhamel family signet ring (250 gp), a bronze bracelet (25 gp), and one amethyst (10 gp). Naturally, the *Dulcimer's* crew expects the characters to return these items to them rather than keep them for themselves. The items beneath those belonging to the *Dulcimer's* crew are unclaimed. They include 6 +1 arrows, a *ring of protection +1*, a +1 longsword, *sovereign glue* (2oz), a *decanter of endless water*, a suit of +1 chain armor, *boots of elvenkind*, a *cloak of elvenkind*, and 1,906 gp.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Hawanapoki's destruction frees Dolentla Island from its oppressive grip. However, the creatures that suffered under its insufferable yoke do not experience immediate relief. The hawanis are too broken and twisted to restore back to humanity. Deprived of their master, the remaining hawanis become beings of raw anger and rage. Their unnatural fertility also ends, dooming the hawanis on Dolentla Island to eventual extinction. The *Dulcimer's* crew no longer hear Hawanapoki's wicked voice in their minds, but they face a long and grueling recovery from their physical and psychological injuries.

It is possible that the characters themselves are stranded on the island if their own vessel was sunk by Qualmaga's whale. If so, and they are unable to affect repairs to their own vessel, then another ship dispatched by the viscount will arrive 2–3 weeks later. Choose one of the vessels-for-hire in this adventure, the *Razor Coast* campaign, or one of your own design. This one will not make landfall but rather was sent to scout out the situation to see what became of the characters. If Jacinth was not already with the characters, then she is certainly aboard this ship. If the characters can signal the ship from the island, they will send a longboat to pick them up. As long as the qlipthoth is dead, then the whale will not make any aggressive moves towards this ship...at least initially.

The characters have several additional matters to address before returning to Port Shaw. There remain the issues of Maximilian Sidrow's ghost, Captain Delano Ambrose's stolen sacred ambergris, and the fate of Qualmaga's whale, which is linked to the pilfered ambergris. With Hawanapoki dead, Qualmaga's whale resumes its original task—to punish the thief who stole Whale's ambergris. The characters can solve both of these dilemmas by returning Whale's ambergris to its sacred temple at the Bonedown of the Ancients, to Tulita priests who still practice the old ways, or to the whale itself. If the party leaves the island without somehow informing Qualmaga's whale of their intent or with the express intent of keeping or selling the ambergris, then Qualmaga's whale hunts them.

The more delicate problem is how to handle Jacinth Deepwarder's role in the whole affair if she did not accompany the characters to Dolentla Island. The information gathered from Maximilian Sidrow's ghost and the *Dulcimer's* crew (should they recover a portion of their senses) is not favorable for Jacinth.

Jacinth's rescued friends eventually corroborate Maximilian's story that Jacinth drank a potion and disappeared. Viscount Senegar Deepwarder expresses outrage at the suggestion that his niece behaved in a cowardly fashion. He demands that the characters keep the allegations to themselves, and he goes as far as to offer them an additional 1,000 gp for their silence.

## JACINTH'S TAKE

Denial has always served Jacinth well. An excellent coping mechanism, she turns it on full flow and begins to babble aloud and repetitively how her friends deserve their fates for failing to act more intelligently or to hide better or for being easily persuaded or... Unless a character intervenes with a passionate in-game speech, Jacinth soon convinces herself she holds no fault in events and grows beyond any redemption.

However, should the characters successfully intervene in her desperate attempt to deny culpability, the formerly obnoxious Jacinth accepts responsibility for what she has done and vows to make things right. She does everything she can to help her friends recover from the ordeal and offers recompense to Maximilian's family for their loss. She takes this opportunity to change as a person, and pledges undying friendship to the adventurers — a commitment which she'd rather die than fail to uphold.

The families of the other members of the *Dulcimer's* expedition also express outrage, directed squarely at Jacinth Deepwarder. The families consider taking the matter to the Municipal Dragoons for proper justice; however, the viscount and the families detest scandals so much that the parties discreetly settle the sordid affair with monetary recompense. Nonetheless, Jacinth becomes a pariah, making her a virtual exile among Port Shaw's elite.

Port Shaw's elite welcome the characters as heroes for rescuing the *Dulcimer's* crew and destroying the malevolent being that poisoned Dolentla Island. Depending upon their actions on Dolentla Island and in dealing with the *Iron Bastion*, the characters have gained valuable allies or made powerful enemies. For those running a *Razor Coast* campaign, these NPCs may appear on one side or the other in the party's battles against the minions of Dajobah and the Krakenfiend. For the moment, though, the characters bask in the adulation they deserve for saving lives and ridding the Razor Coast of an ancient menace.

## NEW MONSTER

### HAWANI — FORSAKEN OF HAWANAPOKI

*This gaunt, feral humanoid has blood red eyes, leathery skin and wicked claws. It moves with a simian gait and has a mouth full of oversized, pointed teeth. Despite its monstrous appearance, it is not unimaginable that the creature may have been human at one time.*

#### HAWANI

**Hit Dice:** 5

**Armor Class:** 6 [13]

**Attacks:** 2 claws (1d4), bite (1d6 plus see below)

**Saving Throw:** 12

**Special:** blind rage, dark dream

**Move:** 9

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 7/600

The oppressive yoke of a qliploth's mental domination transforms humanoids into monstrous creatures devoid of inhibition and possessing only the weakest self-determination. In simplest terms, a hawani is an impulsive being of pure violence and id. Hawanis are created when a qliploth deals enough damage to reduce a creature's wisdom score to 0 or lower. When the victim regains consciousness, it rises as a monstrous thrall under the qliploth's complete domination.

The hawanis attack with unbridled ferocity, inflicting as much damage as possible with their claw and bite attacks. They fight to the death, as their own demise feeds their insidious master.

Stripped of reason and rational thought, hawanis that fail their save fly into an animalistic blind rage, gaining a +2 to their strength and a -1 to their AC for the remainder of the combat. Opponents bitten by a Hawani must make a save or fall into a deep, magical sleep for 24 hours during which the target is plagued by horrible, mind-rending dreams. After awaking from Hawanponi's dark dream, the target must make another save or be at -1 to their wisdom for another 24 hours.

Unfortunately, the hawanis retain enough of their humanity to breed. Hawanis typically give birth to broods of three to five young at a time, and they reproduce at a remarkable rate, giving birth to two or even three broods per year. Hawanis remain fertile until they die. Their offspring mature rapidly, reaching adulthood in six years, though few survive to that age. The hawanis' dark master feasts on the life force of the living and the very young its hawanis produce give it the most of the energy it needs.

Hawanis lack any societal structure or political hierarchy other than performing their master's bidding. In the absence of a qliploth master, the hawanis devolve into beasts of mindless rage with a tendency to tear each other apart and, oddly, lose their ability to reproduce.

## HAWANIPOKI — QLIPPOTH SHOGGTI

*This pale creature has four suckered arms that end in pincers. A gnashing maw gapes in its head between two staring eyes.*

The qliploth have endured longer than most other forms of life—perhaps longer than any form of life in the Abyss of the outer planes. Doubtless, those that exist today in the deeper parts of the outer reaches are different than those that existed before the Abyss became infested with demons, who served so well to strip the plane of its previous dominant race and turn back the qliploth tide. Yet still, in the varied shapes and shades of their forms and the tremendous monstrosity of their hunger, the qliploth endure. They long to reclaim control of the Abyss, to realize revenge against the demons, and to extinguish all demonic life, yet their primary goal is nothing less than the destruction of all mortals. For without mortality, sin itself will die, and the demon host will starve to death and be no more.

The qliploth shoggti, repulsive, tentacled slavers, specialize in the use of demons and mortals alike to serve in their war for control over the Abyss. They consume their slaves' intellect, keeping them nearly mindless and thus easy to control.

### HAWANAPOKI, QLIPPOTH SHOGGTI

**Hit Dice:** 5

**Armor Class:** 4 [15]

**Attacks:** 4 tentacles (1d6), bite (1d8)

**Saving Throw:** 12

**Special:** mind-cloud (on the first touch of a tentacle the target must make a saving throw or lose 1 point of wisdom permanently), horrific appearance (those seeing it must make a saving throw or be frozen in fear for 1d6 rounds), magic resistance (60%), +1 or better weapon to hit, spell-like abilities: (3/day—*charm person, protection from good*; 1/day—*charm monster, dimension door*)

**Move:** 12

**Alignment:** Chaos

**Challenge Level/XP:** 8/800

The shoggti are masters of mind manipulation, capable of seizing control of the thoughts of others and charming them into docile allies. They invade other realms in slaver bands, seeking out creatures to capture alive and return to the Abyss as *charmed* slaves—the fates of these poor souls is unknown, but likely has something to do with the qliploth drive to reclaim the Abyss as their own.

Although a shoggti lacks proper hands, it is capable of performing incredibly dextrous manipulations with the pincers at the tips of its tentacles. It cannot wield weapons in these pincers, but it can utilize magic items like wands, rods, staves, and the like. Shoggti are fond of wands in particular, particularly those that create mind-affecting effects that are

easy to inflict on victims of their mind-cloud ability.

A shoggti's body is an egg-shaped mass about 8 feet long—its tentacles are about 8 feet long as well. The whole creature weighs 900 pounds.

### Qliploth History

Before the Abyss was taught how to process and transform larvae into demons—indeed, before larvae even existed or the idea of mortal life had been conceived—it was rife with foul life. These creatures exist still, yet in drastically reduced numbers and often only in the deepest pits of the plane. Known as the qliploth (the singular and plural are identical), these fiends may well be the oldest form of life in the planar realm. Some believe that the qliploth come from an unknowable realm on what might be described as the “outside shell” of the outer planes, but if the qliploth are to be taken as indicative of what order of existence rules in such a realm, it is a good thing indeed that this outer realm is so impossibly distant.

The qliploth do not possess in their forms anything approximating the human shape except by cosmic fluke or sinister mockery. In their twitching, squirming visages, the mad might make comparisons to life's most primeval shapes—spiders and cephalopods, insects and worms, and even baser forms of life. What this might imply about these lower forms of life has disturbed philosophers for ages, and is not a train of thought that many enjoy lingering upon.

Since the rise of mortal sin, the rule of the Abyss has passed from the qliploth to the much more fecund demons. When the Abyss first “learned” how to transform mortal souls into demons, the resulting explosion of demonic life culminated in a violent and destructive war with the then-rulers of the Abyss—the qliploth. For unguessed millennia this war raged across the countless layers of the Abyss. The qliploth had the advantage of knowing their ancient realm and, as a general rule, were individually more powerful than most demons, but the demons had numbers on their side. And as the demons continued to win battle after battle, new powers among their kind rose—balors, nascent demon lords, and eventually demon lords themselves. Over time, the qliploth were hunted nearly to extinction on the upper layers of the Abyss, and were forced to retreat deep into that realm's darkest and most remote realms, to places even the demons feared to tread.

Here, the qliploth have festered and lurked for ages. None can say how many qliploth survived that ancient war, for none can know how deep the Abyss goes. The qliploth dwell in these darkest pits, periodically emerging to do battle against their hated demonic foes, yet their wrath is not limited to the demonic host. Yet as the eons have worn on, the qliploth have come to realize that the true enemy is not a fiendish race—it is mortal life itself. For as long as mortal life continues to sin and die, the Abyss can continue to birth demons into its pits and rifts. The destruction of sin, by changing the way mortals live, would halt demonic

growth, yet the qliphoth have no concept of how this goal might be achieved—to the qliphoth, only the murder of all mortality can suffice.

As a result, all qliphoth possess within their minds a burning hatred of mortal life, particularly humanoids, whom they know to be the primary seeds of sin. When a qliphoth is conjured to the material plane, it seeks any way to escape control in order to maul and destroy humans—they have a particular hatred of children and pregnant women, and if given a choice between harming someone already dying or close to death and someone with a full life ahead of them, they always choose to attack the latter, save for the rare case where the death of an elder or a dying loved one might result in a chain reaction of death among the young.

When a qliphoth shakes off the shackles of a conjuration, it attempts to remain on the material plane as long as possible, and during that time tries to murder as many mortals as it can, doing its part to deprive the Abyss of possible future sinful souls to build demons from.

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