

The Dawn Chasers

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INTRODUCTION

The Dawn Chasers is a Dungeons & Dragons adventure designed to be completed in about 4-6 hours of play. The combat encounters have been calculated to present a tough challenge to four 3rd level characters. They will present a less difficult, though still enjoyable, challenge to higher level characters or larger parties.

Not every loose end is tied up in the following text, nor every possible reaction accounted for. Be ready to improvise, and do so with confidence! Unless stated otherwise, assume NPCs have the stats of a **commoner**.

The adventure is separated into 4 chapters.

Chapter 1: Meeting Moonlight. The adventure begins with the PCs meeting Araveene Moonlight, captain of the *Dawn*

Chaser. She needs some brave adventurers to supply protection for an upcoming voyage. The captain is a shrewd negotiator, so an intense round of negotiations begins.

Chapter 2: All Aboard! After leaving the docks of Waterdeep, the *Dawn Chaser* encounters trouble in the Sea of Swords, including an attack from goblin pirates and a terrible storm.

Chapter 3: Land Ho! After weathering the storm but getting lost at sea, the ship finally locates land. A mysterious ship in the harbor may provide a clue as to getting home, as well as some information that will change the life of Captain Moonlight forever.

Chapter 4: The Temple. After uncovering the true origin of the storm, the party must set right the misdeeds of a prior crew.

CHAPTER 1: MEETING MOONLIGHT

The adventure begins with the PCs visiting a disreputable tavern in Waterdeep.

THE BROKEN LANCE

You are drinking at the seedy dockside tavern known as *The Broken Lance*. The big news today concerns Cory McMaddock, a local fisherman who has pulled in an enormous striped bass. Cory is currently being plied with round after round of ale as the local fishermen crowd around to congratulate him. The whole tavern is in a jovial mood this evening, and even the normally beleaguered staff seem to be having a good time.

As the evening moves on and the drinks flow faster, you notice a young human woman enter the tavern. She has the look of a ship's captain, complete with a long blue frock coat and the unmistakable aura of command.

Many of the sailors and dockworkers either nod hello or divert their gaze as she walks past. She glances at your table momentarily before taking a seat with two large men.

The woman is **Araveene Moonlight**, an ambitious young sea captain looking for some muscle to accompany her as she plies the dangerous trade routes to the south.

Allow the players some time to mingle in the tavern if they wish – you may want to prepare a few stock NPCs just in case. After a short while, Captain Moonlight will approach the party –

The young woman stands and makes her way towards your table, then grabs a chair and slides it right up beside you.

“You don’t look like the sort to be impressed by fish tales! I’m Araveene Moonlight, captain of the *Dawn Chaser*. I don’t know that you are the seafaring type - but I wouldn’t be talking to ya if you were! I have a strong crew and a strong ship - I just need to fill out a few positions under the *other duties as required* billet. What about it - you up for a new adventure?”

If the party seem interested she lets out a hearty laugh and orders a round of ale. If they are hesitant, she’ll spend some time buttering them up before proposing the job again. The truth is that she’s a little desperate – word has spread that she is reckless, and so the regular men-at-arms are avoiding her ship.

THE JOB

Once the party show some interest, Captain Moonlight will tell them a little more about the job -

“What I need from ya is protection. What I can offer ya is gold.

“You will be my first line of defense. There may be trouble on the open waters with pirates, monsters, and all the other things that sailors lose sleep over. But I also need ya to accompany me off-ship, to protect me during any shore excursions.

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“My immediate plans are to head over to the Moonshae Isles with a few bolts of silk for trade, and then voyage down to Baldur’s Gate. After that, we head to the deep south – and the real adventure begins!

“If ya decide the seafaring life is not for you, ya can disembark at Baldur’s Gate and I’ll pay ya off – no harm done.”

“One more thing - ya can ask any of my crew and they’ll tell you I’m good for whatever I’m offering. Hold up your end of the deal you’ll get paid. Leave me high and dry and you’ll soon regret it.

“Now, are ya ready to bargain?”

Captain Moonlight will answer any general questions they have, but she is keen to get down to business -

“My typical contract with hired swords has four parts. First is your actual day rate. Next is your “signing bonus”. Third is your cut from any salvage we find. Finally - your share of any loot that we find.”

You may choose to fully roleplay out these negotiations. Alternatively, you can use the following “mini game” to determine the outcome.

THE NEGOTIATION GAME

The below list contains each “item” of the negotiation alongside three values – a default value, a maximum value and a minimum value. For example - (30gp/60gp/15gp).

Have the party choose one member to act as the negotiator. That PC must make a **DC 14 Persuasion** check for each negotiation item. If they succeed, then Captain Moonlight and the party agree on the *maximum value*. If the PC fails the check by less than 5 then they agree on the *default value*. If the PC fails by more than 5, they agree on the *minimum value*.

Araveene Moonlight

Araveene is the captain of a caravel named the *Dawn Chaser*. She is in her early 20’s but has the street smarts of someone twice her age. She is very charismatic, and has dark hair (usually tied back) and green eyes. She is of medium height, with a lean and strong build.

Araveene was orphaned at a very early age – her mother died in childbirth and her father, **Tobias Moonlight**, was lost at sea. Tobias was a renowned sailor and cartographer, and created many of the maps in use up and down the Sword Coast.

His best friend was a privateer known as **Yaro the Blue**, who took Araveene onboard as an apprentice after her father died. Araveene inherited a small amount of money from her father’s estate, and bought her own ship as soon as she had finished her apprenticeship.

Araveene is an expert at reading people, and typically knows exactly what to say to get her desired response. She seldom takes no for an answer, and seldom must. She is not afraid to use every weapon in her arsenal to get her way.

Her crew have good things to say about her, though they are wary of her temper. She works them hard, but treats them well and pays them fairly. She tries to be more relaxed and fun-loving when on shore leave, but often the role of captain takes over.

She insists on being called Captain Moonlight by everyone.

Ideal: She wants to be remembered as one of the great sailors of the age.

Bond: She is extremely loyal to both the *Dawn Chaser* and her crew.

Flaw: She has a fierce temper, especially when crossed.

She has the stats of a **Scout**, though she is armed with a *rapier* and a *crossbow* instead of a *shortsword* and a *longbow*.

- 1) **Day Rate** – Captain Moonlight is willing to pay (5sp/1gp/4sp) per day to each PC while they are in her employ.
- 2) **Signing Bonus** – she is willing to pay (20gp/50gp/10gp) up front to each PC immediately for “signing on”.
- 3) **Salvage** –For the salvage of any vessels she will pay the party a total bounty of (250gp/500gp/100gp).
- 4) **Loot** – She offers the party (30%/50%/20%) of any loot found on pirates or monsters. She is nervous

around magic and is happy for the party to claim any magic items they find.

Captain Moonlight likes negotiation nearly as much as sailing, and her enjoyment should be obvious. You may wish to “spice up” the *Negotiation Game* with some roleplaying - remember to award *inspiration* to players that roleplay well.

Once negotiations are over, Captain Moonlight tells the party they are leaving first thing in the morning. She also ensures that their signing bonus is delivered within the hour.

CHAPTER 2: ALL ABOARD!

After boarding the *Dawn Chaser*, they set sail for the Sea of Swords.

THE DAWN CHASER

There is a map of the main deck at the end of this document.

The *Dawn Chaser* is a caravel capable of travelling about 80 miles per day under her capable crew. She is roughly 55’ long and 18’ across the beam. The ship has a main deck with a sterncastle and forecastle, and a single large cargo hold below decks. There are two small cabins beneath the sterncastle.

The *Dawn Chaser* is kept in good shape, although anyone with naval experience will note that she is quite old.

Read the following -

The *Dawn Chaser* is easy to spot in the Waterdeep docks - the large mainsail is dyed blue with a crescent-moon design in the center.

The ship is buzzing with activity as the crewmembers prepare for departure. As you approach, Captain Moonlight greets you.

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“Hope ya slept well, for the sea does odd things to those used to sleeping on dry land. On the bright side, you’ll get drunk a whole lot faster!” She roars with laughter at her own joke.

The captain calls out and is soon joined by a young girl. Her name is **Paige**, and she is one of the “cabin boys”; the captain informs Paige that her new job is to look after the party.

Paige is a little shy, but is desperate to please the PCs. She gets them a bed roll each, shows them around the ship, and answers any questions they might have. While onboard, she is at the beck and call of the party, and will always be popping up, asking if she can help in some way.

Once the party have finished talking to Paige, read the following -



The ship sets sail soon after you're shown onboard. The crew is very busy for the first few hours, but after reaching open waters a pleasant rhythm settles over the ship.

"Here's to fair winds and followings seas!" cries Captain Moonlight from behind the helm.

The ship sails without incident for the remainder of the first day (it will take about 6 days to reach the Moonshae Isles). The captain will visit the party at least once during the day to ensure they're settling in properly. If they've not met Darsh or Gregor (see "The Crew"), she will introduce them.

A Surprising Revelation

Captain Moonlight will invite the party to share a hot meal with her in the galley on the third night at sea. The meal is just pork stew, but is a welcome treat after cold rations.

Over dinner, she will make small talk to learn more about the party. She is very interested in understanding their strengths and abilities. If the party are friendly, she may tell them a little bit about her background (see "Araveene Moonlight", above).

At some point, she will become serious, and say the following -

"Friends, I haven't been entirely straight with ya. Couldn't be helped, as there are too many unfriendly ears around Waterdeep.

"A ship called the *Fortunate Son* was lost at sea in this area a month or two back, and a little birdie tells me she was carrying some valuable cargo. She was part of a merchant fleet sailing up from Amn. The fleet hit a terrible storm and was split up.

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The Crew

There are 20 crew members, including the captain. Specialist crew include the first mate, the bosun, the pilot and the carpenter. There are also 8 sailors, 4 apprentice sailors, and 3 cabin boys.

Following are a few key members -

Gregor Stormcall, First Mate

LN Human Male

Gregor is the disciplinarian of the ship, and is second only to the captain in authority. The heavy tattoos on his body hide scars collected from many years of slavery – a slavery which was ended by the captain.

Darsh Ironthorn, Bosun

NG Male Dwarf

Darsh is an old sea dog and oversees the actual sailing of the ship. He is very meticulous, and ensures all the equipment onboard is kept in excellent condition.

Secna Mistwind, Sailor

CN Female Elf

Secna is very solitary, seldom seen outside of the crow's nest while on duty. She hides a shameful secret, having been exiled from her clan when young.

Tog, Sailor

N Male Orc

Tog is the strongest member of the crew - and the most easily amused. He loves to hear any good tale, and often laughs inappropriately due to his poor grasp of common.

Paige, Cabin Boy

CG Female Human

Paige is a 12-year-old orphan from Baldurs Gate, and has only been with the ship for a few months. She is rather shy, and is still trying to find her place amongst the crew.

“Some of the *Fortunate Son*’s crew were picked up in open water a few days later, and said they had abandoned ship just before she ran aground on a small island just north of Mintarn – that’s about fifty leagues south of here.

“I reckon I can guess where *the Fortunate Son* was wrecked – a place called **Storm Island** that almost no-one knows about. I’ve never landed there myself - the weather’s always foul, and there’s a nasty reef. But I think we’ll find the ship there.

“Now, it happens that I have a connection to the *Fortunate Son* – my pappy used to pilot her back in his sailing days, long time ago now. I want to see what became of her, and if she can be salvaged, for pappy’s sake.

“I also reckon that gives me as much right to the loot as anyone - and if ya don’t agree, you’ll kindly keep your opinions to yourselves!”

The captain won’t answer any more questions on this matter. She is quite unapologetic about lying to them, simply saying “it was necessary”.

THE RAIDERS ATTACK

This encounter will take place on their fourth day at sea. Shortly after dawn, a cry is heard overhead as **Secna** spots another ship.

As the sun begins to rise over the ocean, a vessel can be seen cutting through the morning fog. It appears to be on an intercept course with the *Dawn Chaser*!

Captain Moonlight orders the party to prepare for an attack, even as the crew rush about and make their own preparations.

Life Aboard Ship

The sailors are divided into two “watches” and work alternating shifts of 4 hours each while the ship is at sea. Typical jobs include tending the sails and rigging, swabbing the deck, manning the bilge pump and serving as lookout in the crow’s nest. All this activity is carried out under the watchful eye of Darsh the bosun, who rarely seems to sleep.

The PCs may be asked to assist the sailors at certain times, but will otherwise be left alone.

Daily rations consist of 2 pounds of sea biscuit washed down with 4 pints of ale. Everyone also receives a pound of salted pork alternating daily with half a pound of cheese. Every few days, the apprentices prepare a hot breakfast of porridge in the tiny galley. Captain Moonlight has a small cask of sour lime juice, and insists everyone take a daily dose to keep scurvy at bay.

The crew usually sleep on straw pallets on the main deck. If there is room in the cargo hold, some of the sailors will occasionally string up hammocks below deck.

When not working, the crew members sleep, tell stories, drink, sing, gamble and (occasionally) fight.

Sea Sickness

Any character that does not have the *Sailor* background may suffer from sea sickness. At the end of every day at sea, have the characters make a **DC 10 Constitution** save. If they fail, they receive one level of exhaustion that carries over to the next day to a maximum of two exhaustion levels. If they make the save two days in a row, they have gotten their sea legs and no longer need to make sea sickness checks.

The ship that is approaching is a long carrack, with three tall masts and square, full sails. As it gets closer, you can see it's crewed by small green humanoids. They are jumping around the deck excitedly, while preparing long planks and ropes. One of the creatures stands on the bow of the ship, wearing a ragged red coat and barking orders.

The nameless ship contains **24 goblins** and a **goblin boss**. It has the wind on its side, and will come within 600' of the *Dawn Chaser* after about 5 minutes. From that point, it will close on the *Dawn Chaser* at the rate of 150' per round. At the end of round 4 the ships collide side-to-side, with the goblins launching grappling hooks and dropping boarding planks.

Keep track of the goblins killed by range attacks upon approach and subtract that from the total number that eventually board. While on their ship, the goblins have *half cover*. The goblin boss ducks down below deck at the first sign of ranged attacks and does not reappear until they board.

Boarding Party

At the start of the 5th round, the goblins launch their attack. **1d6+3** goblins cross the planks and attack. Each round thereafter, **1d6+1** goblins cross over to join the fray until all are aboard. The goblin boss crosses over on the second round of melee combat.

Captain Moonlight and the crew do not sit idly as their ship is boarded. On each round, the captain kills one goblin and the crew kill **1d4** goblins. Whenever a 1 is rolled on this dice, a crew member (other than the captain) is also killed.

While this is happening, you should break off some goblins from the main group to engage the party in regular combat. Paige will pop up at some point, desperately asking how she can help.

Combat Chaos

Some PCs will seek to exploit the unusual terrain this battle affords – for example, a PC might choose to swing across to the carrack on some rigging, to flank the goblins. You should be prepared to improvise rulings on such matters. We recommend you reward imaginative play.

Attacking the Ship

Some parties may try to sink the goblin vessel, but this will be very difficult without heavy weaponry. Fire-based attacks will burn up the rigging and sails, but will not catch on the hull. If they do insist on attacking the vessel, use the statistics for a **sailing ship** [DMG p119].

The Loot

After the combat is over, the party can recover a total of **231sp** and **75gp** from the goblin bodies. The captain will ensure she takes her cut. The goblins have crude weapons, mostly rusted from the harsh conditions at sea.

The goblin ship is in bad shape. Anyone with a sailing background will deduce that the ship has recently been through a terrible storm, and was poorly cared for before then.

If the party board the goblin ship, read the following text -

The goblin ship is lucky to even be afloat. The masts are cracked, the sails are torn, and important ropes have been snapped in two. A hatch leads to the lower deck, and the stench wafting up through the rotted planks suggests that the goblin sailors aren't especially interested in hygiene.

The only thing that is not in bad condition is a large crate that has been tied down to the deck - undoubtedly pillaged from some other vessel.

If the party choose not to go, the captain will send some crew over to investigate and they will return with the crate described above.

The crate is nailed shut, but can be easily opened. Inside is some cutlery, a few navigational instruments, and an assortment of ship supplies. There is also one peculiar item – a hunk of silvery metal in the shape of a jagged triangle. Anyone casting *detect magic* will see that it is deeply imbued with elemental magic, but its purpose is unclear.

When the captain examines the crate, she will curse aloud, saying, “These instruments are from the *Fortunate Son* – those wretched goblins beat us to it!” Still, she is determined to press on to Storm Island.

The captain says that the crude ship isn’t worth salvaging, but she determines the crate of loot is worth **100gp**, and pays out the party their share.

She takes a liking for the metallic triangle (even if she discovers it to be magical), and puts it in her room as a trophy. Little does she realise that she has placed herself and her crew in grave danger.

Thunderchild

Thunderchild is a cursed idol consecrated to a powerful storm elemental. This idol, made of a strange silver alloy and shaped like a jagged triangle, amplifies any storm it encounters to destructive levels - with the wind always blowing toward Storm Island.

In addition, exposure to the idol changes anyone nearby. Within a few days, tempers start to flare and violence begins to break out. The violent urges eventually take over, causing the host to go into a murderous rampage. When those exposed are killed, the primal storm energy returns their spirit to their body, creating **storm zombies** (see chapter 3).

DARK SKIES

A few hours after encountering the goblin ship, the *Dawn Chaser* is overtaken by a storm -

The skies begin to darken as the ship sails on through morning. By the time lunch is gone, the winds have picked up and the waves have begun to batter the ship’s hull. The crew prepare for stormy weather as a crack of thunder is heard overhead.

The captain begins barking orders. She warns the party that the storm approaching is a bad one, and she’ll need all hands on deck.

Within minutes, the storm breaks over the *Dawn Chaser*. Rain begins to fall in sheets, and lightning courses through low clouds that seem barely higher than the mainmast. The ship is tossed between the waves as torrents of salt water wash over the main deck. The captain yells out orders to the crew as she calls you over.

“We’re taking a beating – we need your help!” she cries through the torrent of rain. “Gregor’s shortening the sails and he needs some muscle to finish before the mast snaps! Tog is trying to get all the rigging tied off, so a few of you need to lend him a hand as well!”

The PCs each need to decide where they will help – either tying up the rigging or shortening the sails. Each task requires an extended skill check to complete. There is only time for each PC to help with one or the other task.

Shortening the Sails

Gregor needs help holding down the thrashing sails while he takes them in. The PCs need to make a **DC 13 Athletics** group check [PHB p175] each round to help. If the group check succeeds **three times** before it fails **twice**, the sails are taken in with only minor damage. If the skill check is failed, as they are bringing in

the sail it breaks free and knocks a crew member into the turbulent water, never to be seen again.

Tying off the Rigging

Tog is frantically trying to tie off all the ropes and rigging to keep the masts secure. The PCs should make a **DC 13 Sleight of Hand** group check [PHB p175] each round to help. If the group check succeeds **three times** before it fails **twice**, the rigging is secure. If the skill check is failed, the rigging breaks free and

dances wildly across the deck, knocking one of the crew into the sea and certain death.

Aftermath

Fighting the storm is quite exhausting, with each character taking at least one *exhaustion* level. If they *failed* their extended skill check, they take two *exhaustion* levels. If both extended skill checks were failed, the party will learn that **Paige** was one of the crew members washed overboard.

CHAPTER 3: LAND HO!

The worst of the storm is over within the hour, though the strong winds and lightning carry on throughout the rest of the day. The rocking and thrashing of the ship doesn't allow for much rest.

The influence of *Thunderchild* starts to be seen on the crew as well, with tempers being very short and fights breaking out.

As the light fades through the dark clouds, the storm dies down to a dull roar. The ship is battered and damaged, but still afloat. The captain gives orders to make repair and set sail. You notice some worried looks before she finally finds time to address the crew.

"I don't know what in Shaundakul's name that was! I've never seen a storm come on so quick or hit so hard in these waters. There is something not right about all of this..."

"If it's a clear night, we should be able to figure out where we are. Until then, I'm bearing south and east, back toward the coast."

Unbeknownst to the captain, *Thunderchild* has used the storm to blow the ship closer to its home - Storm Island!

Storm Island

The island does not have an official name, and it does not appear on many maps. It was nicknamed "Storm Island" by a pirate crew that sheltered there many years ago.

The island lays at the nexus of certain primal ley lines, and became inhabited by powerful elemental creatures in eons past. Most of these are quiescent, though some are more active. The most powerful and aware elemental lord on the island is Storm.

The Weather

The weather on Storm Island is very bad, with boiling dark clouds constantly overhead, frequent downpours and the occasional thunderstorm. The weather off the coast looks even worse, and the captain is very reluctant to sail into it after landing.

The Fortunate Son

The *Fortunate Son* was a profitable merchant carrack owned by the **Athkatlan Mercantile Company**. It primarily traded between Athkatla, the Moonshae Islands and Waterdeep. Tobias Moonlight served first as a sailor and then a pilot on this ship, prior to becoming a full-time cartographer.

The *Dawn Chaser* sails silently into the evening. The peace is broken shortly after midnight as **Secna** cries out, "Land ho!"

Wreck and Reef

The full moon hidden behind thick clouds offers a dim glow across the horizon. Soon, the unmistakable outline of land can be seen. It's a small island, with a low mountain peak in the center.

As the *Dawn Chaser* gets closer, another ship can be seen. It is a *carrack* that has been stranded on a large reef. Even from a distance you can see the ship is in bad shape - though it is still upright and mostly intact. No light can be seen on the main deck, but you can just make out a faint, flickering blue light coming from a gash in the hull.

You notice Captain Moonlight staring at the shipwreck and gripping the railing hard. "The *Fortunate Son*..." she mutters.

The captain knows it is too great a coincidence that the *Dawn Chaser* was blown toward Storm Island, and she is beginning to suspect that they are caught in a web of dark magic.

The *Dawn Chaser* is equipped with a single longboat that will carry 8 persons. If the PCs don't suggest it, the captain will tell the party they are taking the boat ashore to investigate the shipwreck (even though it is still night).

The captain will lead the expedition, but she commands the rest of the crew to remain and defend the ship. If the party seem hesitant to investigate, she will sternly remind them of their contract. If the PCs insist, she will reluctantly agree to wait until the morning. On land, the captain will tend to defer to the party as they are "the experts".

If Paige is still alive, she will beg to accompany them.

Assuming the PCs head over to the island, read the following -

As you row closer toward the ship, you see no immediate sign of anyone onboard, although the high sides of the carrack offer meager visibility from the water.

The *Fortunate Son* is in poor condition. It appears that someone commenced making repairs and then abandoned the effort. The main mast is being held up with large timbers, while the mizzenmast has broken off, crushing the entire sterncastle beneath it.

Now that you are closer, you see that the slash in the hull is very long, and that the foremast is also badly cracked. This ship will not sail again without a great deal of work.

The PCs can land easily on the beach. If they take time to examine the beach, they will find some dark stains in the sand, broken weapons and scraps of armor – there was clearly a battle here recently. A **DC 12 Survival** check will determine that the battle took place between humans and goblins. They will also find an overgrown track leading to the Temple (see **chapter 4**).

From the beach, the party can carefully walk out on the reef to the stranded carrack.

MAIN DECK

No map has been provided of the main deck.

The most direct way to get to the main deck is via a knotted rope hanging over the side. This requires a **DC 10 Athletics** check – on failure the PC falls **1d12** feet. Only 2 characters per round can attempt the climb, which will affect the number able to participate in the encounter below.

When the first character makes it to the top of the rope, read the following:

As you step onto the main deck, you see that the crew attempted to gather supplies from the island to complete the repairs. Cut timbers, lengths of vine, and large thick leaves are scattered around haphazardly.

An especially large pile of leaves begins to move, and suddenly explodes outward. Standing up from it are several crewmen, their eyes no more than pools of inky dark, their faces decaying, and small threads of lightning arcing across their bodies.

There are **four storm zombies** on the top deck - they move to attack as soon as the first PC climbs over the railing.

Storm Zombie

Storm zombies are identical to regular **zombies** with the following exceptions –

- Their *slam* attack is replaced by a *touch* attack that does **1d6+1** lightning damage
- They are immune to lightning damage
- They have an ability called *Feedback* – when hit with a metal melee weapon, lightning arcs up the weapon causing 2 points of lightning damage to the wielder

Storm Zombie Captain

The storm zombie captain is identical to an **ogre zombie**, with the following exceptions –

- Its *slam* attack is replaced by a *touch* attack that does **2d8+4** lightning damage
- It is immune to lightning damage
- It has an ability called *Feedback* – when hit with a metal melee weapon, lightning arcs up the weapon causing 3 points of lightning damage to the wielder
- It is of medium size

Once the zombies are dispatched, the characters can look about the deck. Repairs

have been started on the ship, but the repairs vary from being very well done to completely ineffectual.

A **DC 15 Medicine** check will determine that the bodies are still quite “fresh”, and have probably only been zombies for a few tendays. These crewmembers pocketed some trinkets, jewelry, and carvings from the local island which will fetch **35gp** in total. There is nothing else of value on the deck.

Wooden stairs on the port side lead to the lower deck.

LOWER DECK

There is a map of the lower deck at the end of this document.

1. Cargo Hold

The wooden steps lead down into the ship’s cargo hold. It is largely empty aside from a few old barrels and crates. There is also a small oak table sitting on one side. Silver coins and playing cards have been scattered across the table and around the hold.

A door leading to the bow of the ship looks as if someone tried frantically to break it down. Chips have been taken out of the door and the frame, and the iron bands holding the door together have nearly been pulled completely out.

You also notice two closed doors leading to the stern.

There are **43sp** in total scattered around the hold. Many of the barrels and crates are empty, though some are filled with rotting foodstuffs.

A **DC 15 Perception** check will hear a shuffling noise from the storage room in the bow of the ship.

2. Storage Room

The door to this room has been blocked from the inside. Read the following –

As you begin to examine the door, you hear something wooden falling behind it. You then hear something being dragged away from the door before, and then another loud “thud”.

This cabin is inhabited by **Pukka**, a large spider monkey infused with the primal spirit of the earth. He barricaded himself in this room to escape the crew about five days ago.

Pukka has been listening to the party, trying to determine if they are zombies, and he is now convinced they are normal. If the PCs wait, Pukka will clear the barricade and then open the door from the side.

He will then immediately *hide* (Stealth +7) behind a crate to observe the PCs when they enter. Read the following -

The door opens to a smaller storage hold. You see that crates and boxes have been pulled away from the door from what seemed to be a makeshift barrier. The room smells of oranges and stale beer, and you can see a few old hammocks slung near the bow.

If the characters do not seem violent or aggressive, Pukka will cry out -

“Ee-ee Heeey!”

A small high pitched voice calls out. Peeking from behind a crate is a large black monkey with long spindly arms and a tuft of wild grey hair on its head. The monkey manages to pull off a suspicious glare as it looks over the party.

“Not ee-crazy yet, no? oo-not taken by Old Man Storm no? Pukka knows! oo-Pukka knows!”

If the party talk to him, Pukka will relay the following information:

- In terms of identity, he thinks of himself as just *Pukka*, and only knows he’s smarter than the rest of the monkeys on the island.
- There are “powerful spirits” on the island, though most are quiescent if not disturbed.
- The most powerful and aggressive spirit is “Old Man Storm”, who has wrecked many ships on the reef over the years.
- Pukka is closest with “Father Earth”, who used to talk to him often, but has been very quiet for a long time now.
- Over a month ago the *Fortunate Son* was blown onto the reef. The crew began to make repairs, but found and pillaged “the Temple”, taking *Thunderchild* (the idol) with them.
- He knows that the idol must be returned to the Temple because “Old Man Storm is angry” and a curse follows the idol around.
- After taking the idol, the crew began fighting amongst themselves, and there were several fatalities. The dead crew soon rose again as storm zombies. The cycle repeated and soon the entire crew had been either destroyed or risen as undead.
- About a tenday ago, a goblin pirate ship was blown into the bay, but managed to avoid the reef. They fought a pitched battle with some storm zombies on the beach before retreating with some loot.
- After the goblins left, Pukka crept aboard the *Fortunate Son* to see if the idol was there. He did not realise there were some storm zombies left on the ship, and so he was forced to barricade himself in the room.

If the PCs tell Pukka that they have the idol, he will not be surprised, saying, “Old Man Storm is powerful and calls his child back”. He will push the party to return the idol quickly, but he will reluctantly accompany them if they wish to explore the rest of the ship. Captain Moonlight will insist they search the entire lower deck for anything of value.

Pukka

Pukka is large for a spider-monkey due to his supernatural status; he weighs about **40lbs** and is nearly **4ft** tall. Although he is not aware of it, Pukka began life as a normal animal, but was transformed after spending a night sleeping near an ancient cairn sanctified to a powerful earth elemental. He does not track time, but he is very old – hundreds of years.

Pukka has the same stats as a **dust mephit**, with the following additional ability –

- **Earth Step** – Pukka can dissolve into a piece of exposed earth and emerge from another piece of exposed earth that he has visited before. There is no range limit on this ability. He must take a short rest before using this ability again.

3. Storage Room

This room contains a few old barrels and boxes, mostly filled with rotting foodstuffs. There is nothing of value here.

4. Captain's Cabin

This room is lined with maps and charts, with a large wooden table bolted to the floor, and a small cot against one wall.

There are five crew members here who turn and begin moving your way. Their decaying faces are frozen in screams of anger, and tendrils of lightning ripple over their bodies. One of the creatures wears the hat and coat of an officer.

Four storm zombies and the **storm zombie captain** are in this room, and they attack as soon as the door is opened. Once the zombies are dealt with, Captain Moonlight begins to look over the maps.

Captain Moonlight glances over a few maps and drawings, mumbling to herself. After picking up a very intricate map of the Sword Coast, she freezes.

Frantically, she begins to sift through the other maps on the table, throwing some aside and looking closely at others. As she rolls up the large map, she glances at the party with tears in her eyes.

“These maps were made by my father! Now, I’m not some sentimental school girl tearing up over his work - I already have many of his maps on my ship.

“No, here’s the problem. My father was lost at sea twenty years back - *but this map was made just two years ago!* There’s half a dozen of his maps on this table - all made within the past five years.

“I-I don’t even know what to make of this right now. It’s not going to matter if we can’t get back home, so I’ll figure it out later.”

She gathers a few more papers and pushes past you towards the door. There she pauses, and turns back toward you.

“Oh, and if ya tell the crew you saw me cry, I’ll throw ya overboard.”

If they search the cabin, they will also find the captain’s journal. The early pages contain uninteresting information about wind direction, headings and navigational readings.

The last few pages describe the terrible storm that drove the ship onto the reef. They also tell of how they began repairing the ship, while a large party explored the island interior. These crew returned bearing *Thunderchild*, and told of a strange temple they had found carved into a cliff face. They claimed to have been chased

from the temple by “a living storm” – several of the crew did not escape.

The journal then notes the descent of the crew into madness, and the horrific discovery that the dead were rising to life again. The captain quickly surmises that the curse is being caused by the idol dislocated from the strange temple.

CHAPTER 4: THE TEMPLE

If the party have spoken to Pukka or read the captain’s journal, they will know they need to return the idol back to the Temple – a structure carved from the living rock by a forgotten, antediluvian race. Pukka can show them the way – otherwise, they will discover an old and overgrown path leading from the beach to the Temple.

The journey to the Temple takes a few hours, but aside from extravagant plants and interesting animals, it is uneventful. If the party stray from the path, there is a strong chance they will come across the **storm zombies** now wandering around the island.

Assuming they stick to the path, they will come to the Temple -

Rising ahead of you is a great, gray cliff. You soon spot a tall opening, elaborately carved with pillars and a portico. The wind suddenly rises to a roar, battering the trees and bushes. An ominous howl seems to emanate from the entrance.

If Pukka is with them, he says -

“Eeoo-that’s it! The-ee Temple! Careful, Careful, oo-the guardians!”

The path leading up to the Temple is overgrown, but not too difficult to pass through. A **DC 12 Survival** check will reveal

The journal ends with the captain and several of the sailors locking themselves in his cabin to escape the rest of the crew. With supplies running low and the sailors slowly being consumed by madness, the last journal entry reads “There is no hope– we can but wait for the end – there is no hope.”

that there are a dozen sets of humanoid tracks going in and out of the entrance.

1. Antechamber

Once the party enters antechamber, read the following -

This rectangular chamber has tall, square pillars carved in each corner, and a lofty ceiling. Scores of small indentions are chiseled into the smoothly dressed walls, and are filled with all manner of small trinkets. Most are natural, such as small shells or interesting rocks, but some are artificial, such as old rusted coins and a few small sculptures. There is dust and rubble on the floor, and it all feels indescribably ancient.

The body of a sailor lies in a broken heap at the mouth of a tunnel. A dark mass of swirling cloud clings to the ceiling, nearly 50’ above. As you watch, the cloud teases apart into five small humanoid shapes, each with white-blue lightning arcing over their bodies. They stream toward you, trailing wreathes of dark cloud behind them.

These **five storm mephits** attack immediately. They fight until destroyed, but will not follow the PCs outside the mouth of the cave if they retreat. The mephits will be magically regenerated one full day after being killed.

The body is that of a sailor who fell to these elemental guardians. Any loot he possessed was taken by the other sailors.

None of the trinkets in the room are magical, however some of the old coins and other items are worth **150gp** in total. Pukka will warn the party that the curse of the storm will follow them if they remove anything. It's only a threat, and there is no real curse on these items. Probably.

Storm Mephit

A storm mephit is identical to a **magma mephit**, with the following exceptions –

- It can *fly* at the rate of 60'
- It has damage immunities to both *lightning* and *poison*
- The *Death Burst* inflicts *lightning* damage
- It does not have the *False Appearance* ability
- It has *Lightning Breath* rather than *Fire Breath*

Storm Elemental

The storm elemental is identical to a **fire elemental**, with the following exceptions –

- It can *fly* at the rate of 60'
- It has the *Lightning Form* ability. This is identical to *Fire Form*, except that it inflicts lightning damage
- It does not suffer from *Water Susceptibility*
- It's touch attack inflicts *lightning* damage

Note that this creature is not "Old Man Storm" himself – rather it is a kind of guardian avatar.

2. Reliquary

Read the following -

The corridor leads to a much larger chamber. The wind howls through the tunnel behind you, swirling about the room and causing small dust devils to dance across the floor. The same wall indentations are present in this room, although there are many more of them. In the center of the room there is a great stone column, with an alcove hollowed out.

If Pukka is present, he says -

"Oo-there! That's where the-ee statue goes!! Quickly!"

Read the following -

As you look at the impressive column, the hairs begin to stand up all over your body. High, high above you is a mass of dark, boiling cloud. You stare in horror as it billows into the shape of a giant, with blue-white lightning crackling from its extremities. It gives a thunderous roar and plunges toward you.

This is a **storm elemental** and it immediately attacks, focusing on whoever has the idol. It will continue to attack until the party is defeated, they retreat or they replace the idol. It will pursue them to the antechamber, but cannot leave the Temple.

If the idol is replaced, the storm elemental will funnel up to the ceiling and then disappear with a deafening crack. If by the second round of combat the party has not thought to return the idol, Pukka will suggest it to them with a desperate shout!

Much like the antechamber, there are a few valuable items in this room - they would be worth **220gp** total if sold to the proper vendors. Pukka again issues his warning if the party seem intent on plundering the Temple.

There are seven dead sailors in this room, all burned badly and apparently killed by the storm elemental. Two carry **potions of healing** that they did not have time to use, and one carries a *magic rapier* with the name '**Water's Edge**' inscribed on the blade (See **Magic Items**, below). Additionally, the sailors have **165sp** between them. Pukka has no objections to taking items from these bodies.

Once the storm elemental is defeated and the idol returned, the storm outside immediately begins to recede. Any storm zombies on the island immediately revert to corpses.

As the party leaves, Pukka gives his thanks -

"Oo-thank you for quelling Old Man Storm! Back to peace! Oo-back to quiet! Pukka like quiet! B-but Pukka also like new friends, I-I be back!"

Pukka leaps into the trees and quickly scurries away. Within a few minutes, he returns carrying a red conch shell.

"You-oo have a friend with Pukka, with the ee-earth! You oo-have trouble, blow horn! Pukka hear! For now, Pukka must return, like oo-you! Safe ee-travels!"

Pukka sets down the shell and smiles a big toothy grin as he waves goodbye to everyone. As he waves, his body begins to dissolve into streams of dirt. Within a few moments, Pukka's entire body is gone, leaving only a swirling mass of dust where he once stood.

The captain doesn't quite know what to make of the whole situation. She's delighted to know that the storm is gone and she'll be able to get her ship out of the harbor in one piece, but she is still very torn about her father's maps. Are they forgeries, or could he possibly be still alive? She intends to go to the Athkatlan Mercantile Company to find out.

EPILOGUE

Once everyone is safely aboard the *Dawn Chaser*, the captain decides to head to **Mintarn** to make repairs. She tells the crew that they will then head for **Athkatla**, capital of **Amn**, where she has "certain enquiries" to make. After that, things will get interesting as they head toward the **Shining Sea** and the deep south.

Captain Moonlight tells the PCs that she will still drop them at Baldurs Gate if they wish, but that there is a place on the *Dawn Chaser* for them on the coming great voyage – that is, if they have the stomach for a *real* adventure...

MAGIC ITEMS

Water's Edge

Weapon (Rapier), very rare (requires attunement)

You have a **+1 bonus** to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

Additionally, while carrying this weapon you have *advantage* on **Athletics** checks, and you can hold your breath twice the regular duration.

Pukka's Conch Shell

Wondrous Item, Rare

Blowing this shell will magically summon Pukka, who will rise out of the nearest patch of exposed earth. If there is no exposed earth within sight of the blower, Pukka will not be summoned.

Pukka will remain while the blower *concentrates* (as if concentrating on a spell), to a maximum of 1 minute or until he is killed. Pukka then returns to Storm Island – if he is killed, he cannot be summoned again.

While summoned, Pukka is friendly to the blower and his companions. Pukka does not like combat, but will fight if asked.

After Pukka departs, he can't be summoned again for a full day. If he was involved in combat, he can't be summoned again for a full tending day.

CREDITS & LEGALS

Design: Anthony Lesink & M.T. Black.

Cartography: Daniel Walthall.

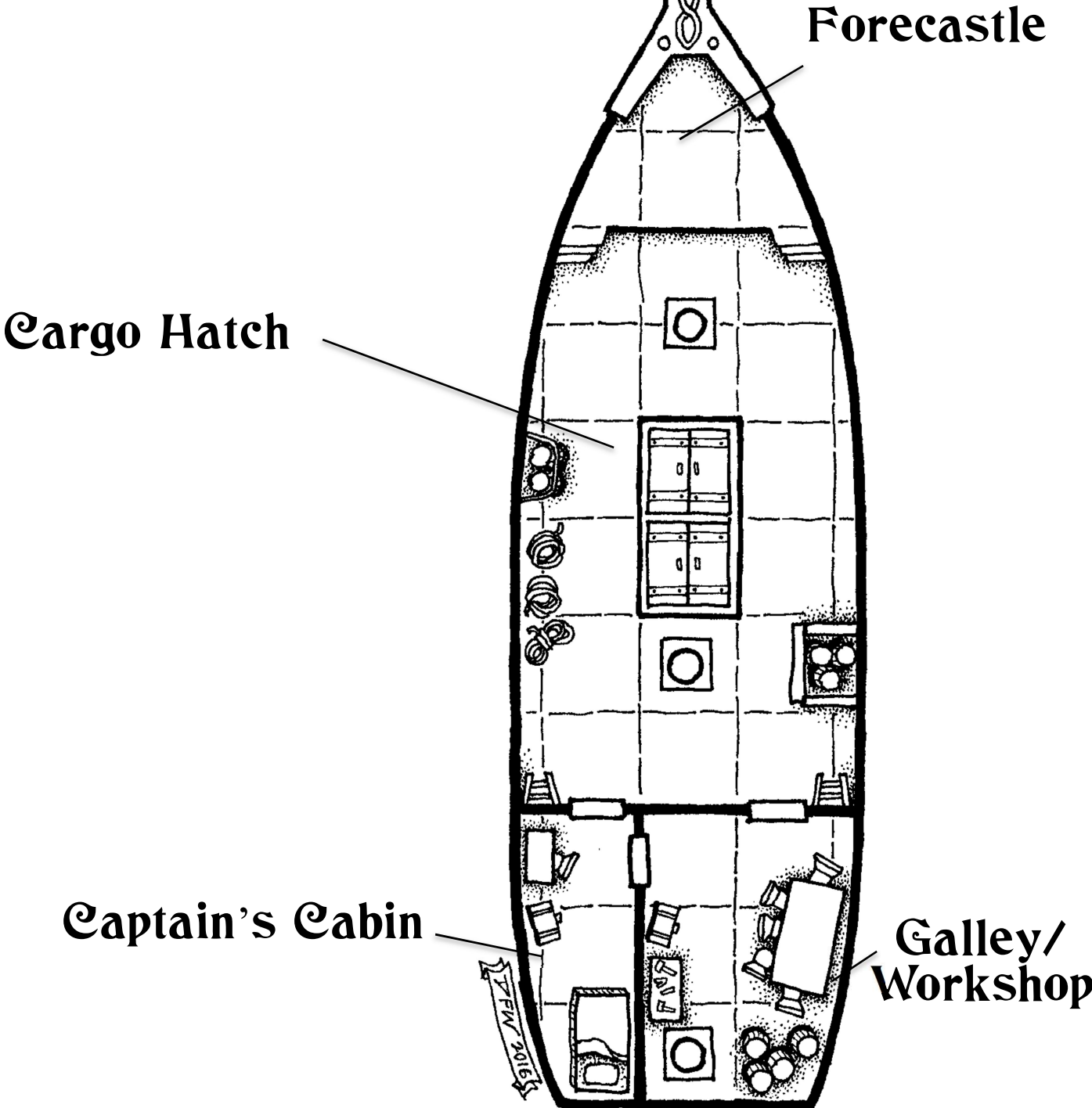
Proofing: Ken Carcas.

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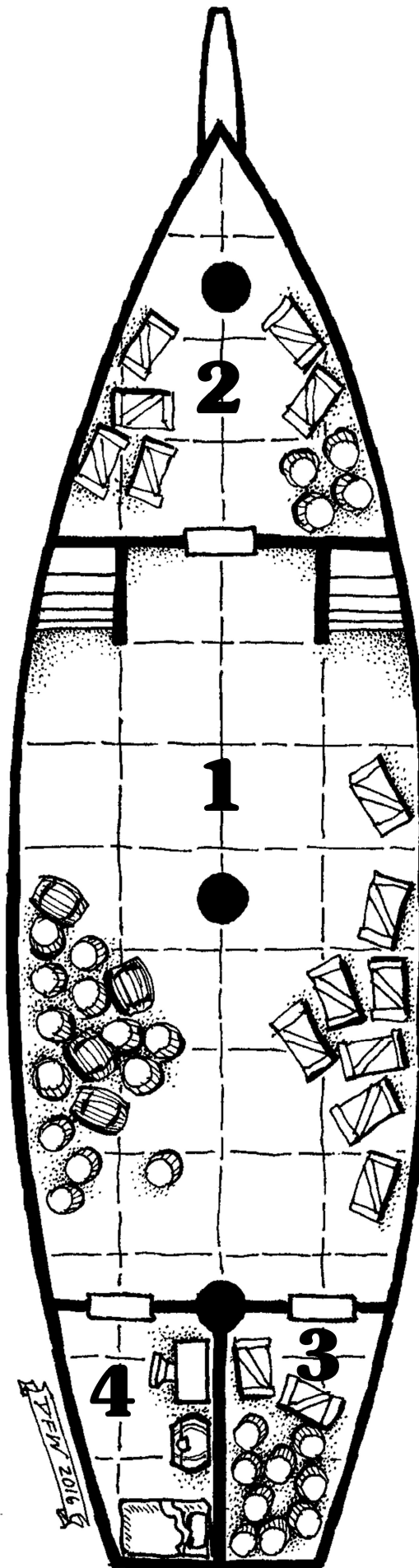
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Dawn Chaser Main Deck



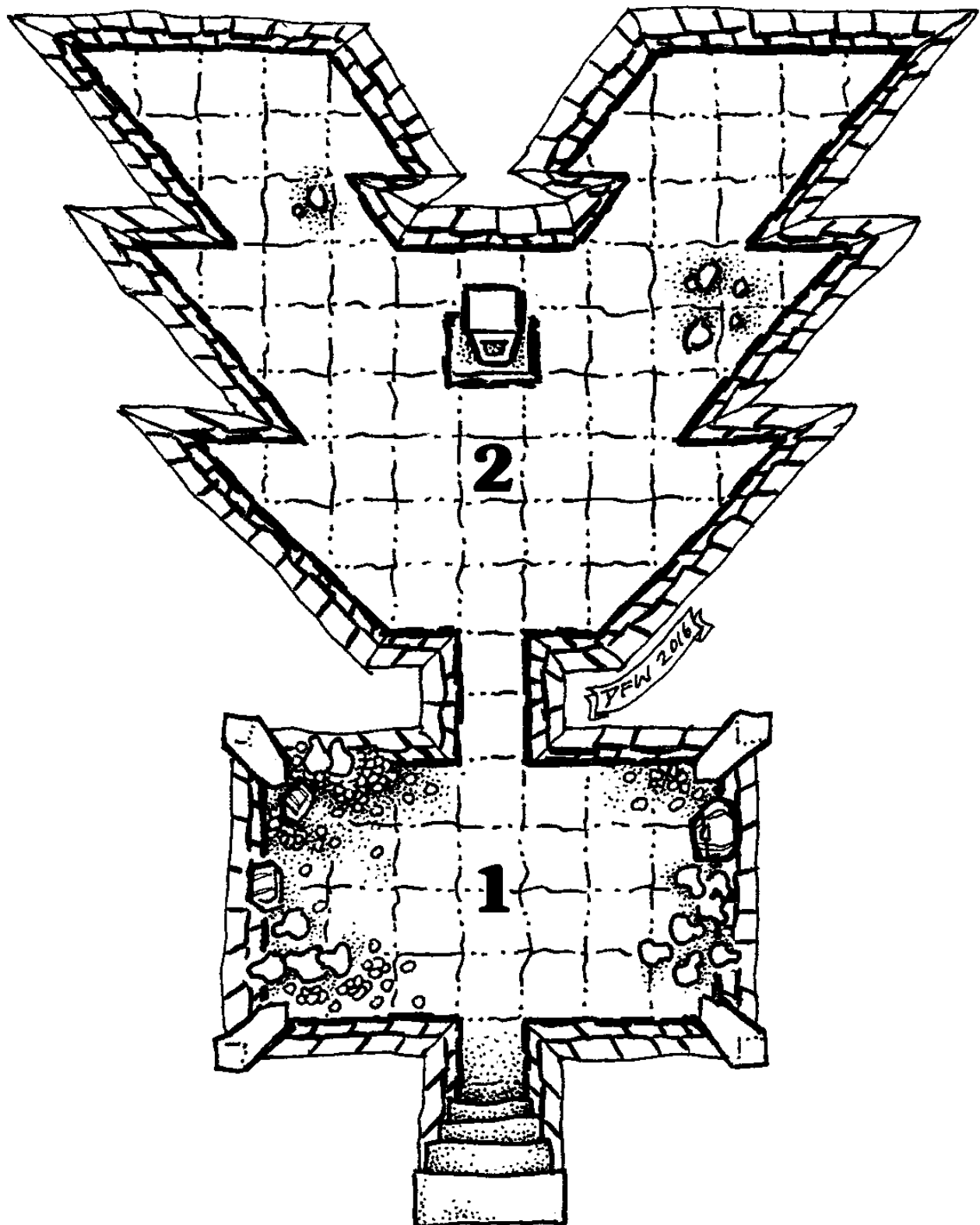
1 square = 5'

Fortunate Son Lower Deck



1 square = 5'

The Temple



1 square = 10'