

# U1

FOR ADVANCED  
D&D™ GAME

9076

## Dungeon Module U1

# The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh

PREMIERE ADVENTURE FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

by Dave J. Browne with Don Turnbull

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-3



*Desolate and abandoned, the evil alchemist's mansion stands alone on the hill, looking out towards the sea. Mysterious lights and ghostly hauntings have kept away the people of Saltmarsh, despite rumors of a fabulous forgotten treasure. What is its sinister secret?*

*The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh is the first installment in a series of three modules designed and developed in the United Kingdom, for beginning adventures with the AD&D™ rules. The adventure can be played by 5-10 characters of level 1-3. This module contains large-scale maps, full background information and detailed encounter descriptions for the players and DM.*

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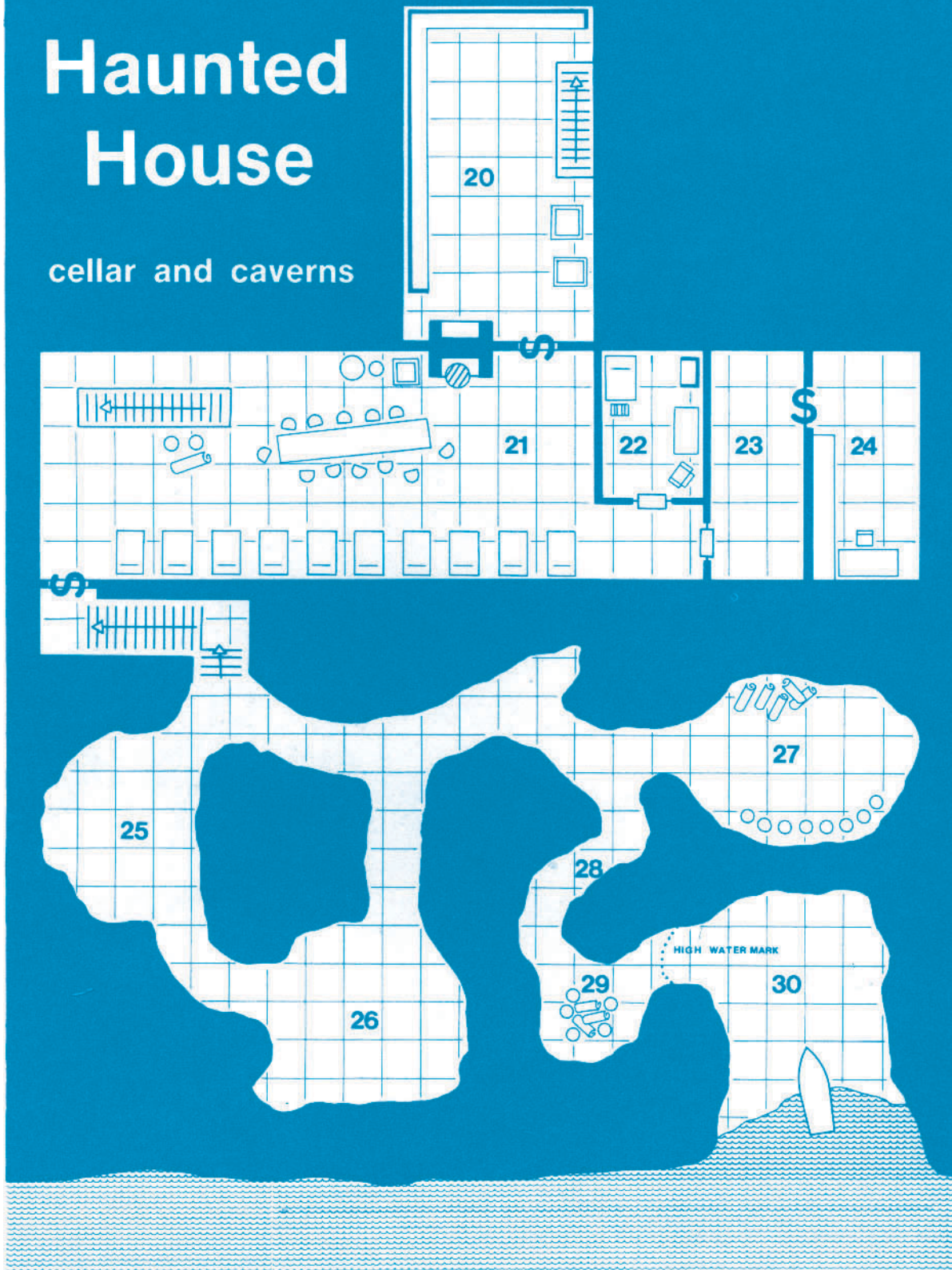
TSR Hobbies (UK) Ltd.  
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9062

# Haunted House

cellar and caverns



-  hammock
-  sink
-  cage
-  stove

-  coil of rope
-  roll of cloth
-  cask
-  curtain

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THE SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH

PREFACE

It is with a great deal of pride that I introduce this module, not simply because it is partially my own work but also because it is the first AD&D™ module to have been written in the United Kingdom. In the Epilogue to the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome I said that TSR Hobbies (UK) Limited had plans, and this module represents the first fruit of those plans. We sincerely hope you like it and the others which will follow.

There is, I suppose inevitably, one drawback. Though at TSR-UK we know how popular the AD&D™ game has become and have a pretty good idea of how much more popular it will become in the next year or so, the fact remains that the majority of readers of this module, and 'our' others to follow, will not be UK citizens; most will be Americans and there will be others who live elsewhere, in non-English-speaking countries or otherwise. Which raises the problem of varying usage of English language. It came as something of a surprise to me to discover that the English language - theoretically the same in both countries - enjoys far wider deviations in usage than I had realised between the UK and the USA. The differences are not solely products of differing slang and jargon; there are much more subtle differences in emphasis, in the recognition of what is 'correct' use of the language, in the nuance of the meanings of certain words.

Now this module is written in the English which I use and may therefore appear slightly different in flavour from the language to which the majority of its readers will be accustomed. In one sense I make no apologies for this; it is an English module and it would be less than representative if it did not carry something of that atmosphere. In another sense, I am aware that some readers might therefore find the reading slightly unfamiliar, and if this in any way detracts from their enjoyment of the module, then my apologies are due.

So, American readers — if you find the text too flowery and florid or too plain and stilted, the structure of the language slightly unusual, the use of certain words apparently slightly off-beat, these are the reasons. Perhaps you will take solace in knowing that UK readers of all the other TSR™ modules have the same reaction in reverse!

I sincerely hope you enjoy it.

Don Turnbull

Managing Director, TSR Hobbies (UK) Limited

THE SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH is the first module in a three-part series. It is itself divided into two separate adventures, THE HAUNTED HOUSE and SEA GHOST, each of which is, in likely playing time, relatively short.

The series is primarily designed to be played as a *series* — characters start with little or no experience and work successively through the three parts, accumulating experience as they succeed in each endeavour. By the time they embark on the adventure in **U2, DANGER AT DUNWATER**, those characters who began **U1** as fledgling adventurers should have accumulated enough experience points to advance to second level. Similarly, those same characters should be well established at the second experience level if they cope with **U2** and pursue their adventures to their logical conclusion in **U3, THE FINAL ENEMY**. Indeed, if really good fortune smiles on them, they may leave Saltmarsh at the start of **U3** as third level characters.

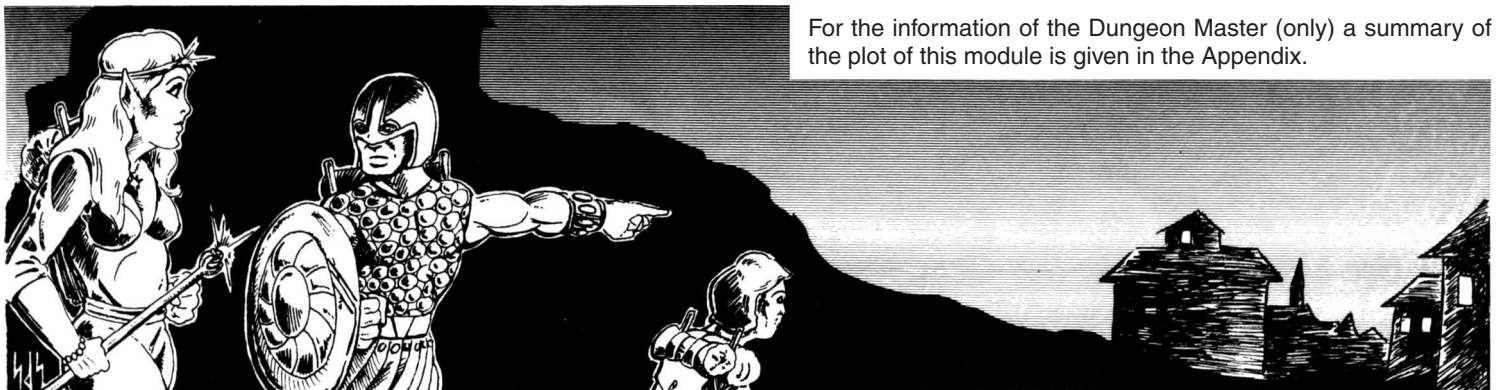
This module is designed for 5-10 characters of experience levels 1-3. Particularly if the series is to be played in its entirety, it will be important for characters to gain higher experience levels before they tackle the dangers of **U3** (otherwise it will be too tough for them!). The Dungeon Master should take careful note of the section in the **Dungeon Masters Guide** (page 86) regarding 'Gaining Experience Levels,' particularly the time to be spent in training. The Dungeon Master should feel free to waive or modify some of these training requirements to avoid unrealistically long inter-adventure training periods.

The series is therefore ideal for the experienced AD&D player who wishes to develop a low-level character as well as for the novice player who is experiencing AD&D adventure gaming for the first time.

It is perfectly feasible for this module, and indeed for only **THE HAUNTED HOUSE** scenario, to be played as a single adventure. Though progression to **U2** and hence to **U3** would be logical, it is not vital — this adventure can satisfactorily finish at the end of **U1** (or even at the end of **THE HAUNTED HOUSE** if players then prefer their characters to explore elsewhere). However, to play **SEA GHOST** requires either previous experience in **THE HAUNTED HOUSE** or an explanatory preface by the Dungeon Master to acquaint players with necessary elements of what they would have experienced. Similarly, **U2** and **U3** cannot really be played satisfactorily without experience from or an explanation of the earlier part(s) of the series. **U2** and **U3** include a summary of previous 'events' to aid the Dungeon Master in this respect.

At this point those readers who wish to play in this adventure should **stop reading**. The subsequent paragraphs are for the information of the Dungeon Master **ONLY!**

For the information of the Dungeon Master (only) a summary of the plot of this module is given in the Appendix.





### THE TOWN OF SALTMARSH

The little town of Saltmarsh plays a pivotal role in all four adventures — the two presented here and those presented in **U2** and **U3**. The ‘secret’ of Saltmarsh derives from the nature of the town and its surroundings. The Town Council of Saltmarsh will encourage the party to undertake the various adventures (and, to a limited extent, support it financially). It is to Saltmarsh that the party will repair between adventures; it is within the town, and with its people, that the characters will spend several weeks or even months of their adventuring careers. Furthermore, there is a web of intrigue in the town, woven long before the adventures begin, which will only become apparent to the players as the series develops. Indeed, if the players are particularly obtuse, they may not be aware of this at all, until too late.....

Therefore, if there is to be an adequate background to the series, the DM is recommended to ‘prepare’ the town quite thoroughly, using the guidelines presented in this module as the basis for that preparation. The DM’s own style and preferences will govern just how much preparation is done and in how much detail, but it is suggested that attention be given to at least some of the following:

1. The Town Council. Name the members; determine their trades/occupations and something of their backgrounds; decide how powerful and wealthy each member is, relative to the local community.
2. Treat other prominent local citizens who are not members of the Council in a way similar to Council members (in particular the merchant-receiver whose part in the plot is explained in the description of room 15).
3. Draw a map of the town, locating prominent buildings and the places where Council members and other important people carry on their business.
4. Decide where the characters could stay when resting in the town between adventures (the best inn? the only inn?); draw up a tariff (list of expenditures) for their accommodation and food.
5. Decide where to locate the town’s place(s) of worship and which deity is worshipped there.

The AD&D hardback books, particularly the relevant sections of the **Dungeon Masters Guide**, should prove helpful in these tasks. Don’t skimp them, for in this series of modules the events that take place between adventures are nearly as important as the adventures themselves. Your players’ characters will spend a lot of time in Saltmarsh, so do it—and them—justice!

The Town is a small, respectable fishing town. The inhabitants are relatively sober, hard working and amiable. There are adequate facilities for justice and law-enforcement—debtors and bankrupts are dealt with particularly harshly. Fishing is the main industry but there are some tiny farms in the neighbouring countryside. The town boasts a small weekly market to which traders are attracted from two larger towns, Burle and Seaton, each some twenty miles away (Burle inland to the northwest, Seaton along the coast to the east). In general, be guided by any small south-coast English fishing town of the 14th Century and with population about 2,000. On the **WORLD OF GREYHAWK™** map, Saltmarsh is placed in the southernmost part of Keoland, at the western edge of hex U4/123.

### THE LEGEND

Four miles east of Saltmarsh, just inland of the old coast road and looking out to sea, stands the Haunted House. Until twenty years ago it had been the residence of an aged alchemist/magician of sinister reputation, and even then had been shunned by reason of its owner’s mysterious occupations. Now, two decades after the sudden and unexplained disappearance of its occupant, the house has acquired an even greater air of evil and mystery with the passing years.

Dilapidated and now long-abandoned, the house presents an unwholesome appearance to the eye. Those hardy souls who have on infrequent occasion sought entry to it (for rumours of a secret hoard of alchemical gold have persisted since the old man’s disappearance) have all returned with naught save grim tales of decay presided over by monstrous perils. In more recent years there have been reports of fearsome hauntings - ghastly shrieks and eerie lights emanating from within the dismal place. Now not even the bravest dare so much as to approach the house, leave alone enter it. Indeed, such is the reputation of the house that the fields around it, though prime agricultural land, remain untended and rank with weeds.

Should the adventurers, after learning about the house, seek anyone in the town who has been in the place, they will initially find no one. Persistent questioning of the town’s inhabitants will tend to make them frightened and apprehensive, but will not yield any concrete information. If the party pursue their questioning, characters may (DM’s discretion) find an aged poacher who will, after suitable inducement (money and/or ale), confess to having wandered into the back door of the house a couple of years before, hoping to ‘acquire’ some food. Diverted by the prospect of free wine in the cellar, he started to descend the stairs, heard ghastly shrieks and piercing wails — and ran, frightened out of his wits.

He knows where the back door is and will have noticed the well. He will be able to describe, roughly, the kitchen and scullery and the passage that leads to them from the back door, but he knows nothing else of the layout of the place. Furthermore, his memory of what frightened him has become elaborated over the years, so he is as likely as not to tell the party of a horde of ghosts coming up the stairs to the scullery or a vampire with many rats.

He discovered soon after his escapade that the telling of his tale, in lurid and exaggerated detail, was a simple means of obtaining

free ale, plied upon him by eager listeners, but there have been none recently who have asked him to tell and, once his tongue is loosened, he will be eager to restore some lost prestige. Apart from alerting adventurers to sinister and grave dangers (which don't in fact exist) and telling them a little about the layout of the house, he will provide no useful information.

## GENERAL NOTES

The secret of the Haunted House is that the house is not in fact haunted but is the shore base for a band of smugglers whose leader is an Illusionist of the fourth experience level. The eerie lights seen at night by residents of Saltmarsh are the smugglers' signals to a ship out at sea. The unearthly shrieks and other sounds are caused by **magic mouth** spells appropriately placed within the building. This is why, in recent times, the House's reputation for evil has increased; the smugglers, in about three years of successful operations, have by these means completely frightened away all local investigation, official and unofficial. It is paramount that the players are given no obvious clues that would lead them to believe the house is not haunted; they must deduce the truth for themselves or simply stumble upon it. They might even wander around the house, finding a little treasure but never discovering what actually takes place there.

This module and the other two in the series are designed for thinking players. Those who tackle the adventures imaginatively and thoughtfully will not only obtain good rewards for their characters but will derive the satisfaction of seeing the various layers of the plot peel away as the real meaning of each clue is discovered. On the other hand, those who regard the House as nothing but monster-slaying territory will not only fail to unravel the secrets but will find their adventure dull and unsatisfactory; they may even lose their characters, for the smugglers, in the hands of a competent DM, should be more than a match for an unwary, careless party.



The Dungeon Master should also be careful, for similar reasons. If the adventures are prepared casually and laconically, the party could easily become impatient or bored. The DM should prepare the ground thoroughly and 'supervise' the play inventively, sustaining some tension in the atmosphere without giving away any secrets. In particular, the assassin (see part 1, room 15) should be handled very carefully; premature discovery of his real nature as a result of lack of caution on the DM's part might make the entire smuggling operation transparent to the party, and hence vulnerable.

It is recommended that the DM read both parts of the module thoroughly before play starts, making notes in the margin and/or the **Dungeon Masters Adventure Log** (available as a TSR publication) where an aide memoir would be useful. Even if only **THE HAUNTED HOUSE** is to be played immediately, read **SEA GHOST** too, for this will give an important perspective.

It will be noticed that encounter descriptions are divided into 'boxed' and 'open' sections. The information in the 'boxed' sections should be read to the players together with approximate dimensions of the area (these can be given more accurately if the party is willing to take time in measurement). Even if not specifically mentioned in the 'boxed' text, describe other features of the area (steps,

pillars, etc.) that would be seen without difficulty. Initially the party can act only on this information — hints are sometimes provided in this text, and the DM should only provide vague supporting information if requested. The remaining 'open' sections and all the introductory paragraphs are for the DM alone and should not be conveyed to the players until they discover the facts for themselves.

Where monsters are mentioned in the text, abbreviated statistics are included for quick reference. For full details, consult the **Monster Manual** or the **Fiend Folio™** tome as appropriate.

Don't forget the house has the reputation of being haunted, and the people of Saltmarsh have good reason for this belief. Until the adventurers find the smugglers, try to make their experience an eerie one, using the room descriptions as the bare bones on which to work. Try to scare them!

In both adventures, there will be activity at the location of the adventure when the party arrives. Neither the smugglers nor the crew should simply be left at their original starting locations until discovered by party members, unless of course the party is fortunate enough to take unawares and in turn each small group before significant activity has taken place. Even then it should be remembered that the smugglers and crew are in 'motion'; for instance, surprising the group of smugglers in cavern area 27 will soon be common knowledge to the other smugglers as they bring contraband up from the lower caves. The DM must use imagination and discretion to have them react in a manner fitting the prevailing circumstances and not regard them simply as fixtures in their separate areas.

The DM should also note that the smugglers are quite intelligent, well organised and conversant with the House, caverns and surroundings, except for secret area 24 of which they know nothing. Consequently, if they should become aware of the party's intrusion they will react in a co-operative and efficient manner to locate and destroy the intruders.

In a similar vein, even after the adventurers have discovered the smugglers, they should be given no clues other than those they find for themselves, either about the nature of the seagoing side of the smugglers' organisation or about the weapon-running aspect of the Sea Ghost's operation.

Thus, have the smugglers and crew go about their normal business until such time as they realise their activities have been discovered; then have them react in co-ordinated fashion to deal with the menace and to preserve their illicit secret. Sanbalet, the smuggler chief, is intelligent and shrewd enough to have prepared an emergency plan in the event of discovery and to train his men in carrying it out; the DM would be well advised to follow his example.

Should the party elect to leave the House before completing the adventure and then seek to return at a later time, there are two possibilities and it is for the DM to decide which should apply. Obviously, the smugglers will realise fairly soon that there have been intruders in the House. If they have no reason to suspect their activities have been discovered, they will continue about their business, perhaps posting extra guards for a short time. Alternatively, if they have good reason to believe their activities have been discovered, they will flee the locale, taking all their contraband and possessions with them, so that on return the party will find no trace of them.

It is unlikely that the same will apply to the Sea Ghost. Once a party has bearded the ship, it is almost inconceivable that they will leave without discovering something. In this extremely unlikely event the DM will have to decide how to deal with such an obviously dense, unadventurous party of characters!



## PART ONE — THE HAUNTED HOUSE

...wherein the party discovers the first part of **THE SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH...**

### PREAMBLE

It is suggested that the Dungeon Master should introduce the players to the adventure in the following way:

- A. Have the party meet at Saltmarsh as a result of vague rumours that there is worthy work for adventurers in the neighborhood.
- B. Describe the town — provide the players with maps and other information you have prepared, such as they could reasonably be expected to observe for themselves on arriving.
- C. Have them lodge at an inn, but do not let them hear of the Haunted House yet.
- D. Let them stay in town, vainly pursuing information and spending their money (according to the list of expenses you have prepared) for a day or two before you arrange for them to hear of the legend of the House — perhaps in casual conversation with the landlord of the inn, with whom they should by then have struck up an affable relationship.
- E. Tell them the Legend and perhaps let the poacher talk to them if you feel this to be appropriate.
- F. Once they have decided to visit the House, have the inn keeper introduce them to a prominent member of the Town Council so that this august body will be aware of the imminent attempt to stamp out the local menace. The Council will not in any way sponsor the quest at this stage, though there will be hints of rewards if the party accomplishes the task.

Note: at this time one of the leading personalities of Saltmarsh (who is secretly a 'receiver' for the smugglers) will learn of

the party's intent from a casual remark in conversation with a Council member and the assassin will be hurriedly planted (see particularly the notes to part 1, room 15).

- G. Have the party equip themselves by dealing with local traders, then let them set out along the old coast road. For part of the way they will be accompanied by encouraging and admiring townsfolk and hero-worshipping children, though the followers will retire to the town as the house looms in view.....

### THE HOUSE

The Haunted House stands on the cliff top 70 feet above sea level and about 80 feet from the cliff edge. The 6' high stone wall surrounding the garden has partially collapsed in a number of places, so access to any part of the garden is simple even if the main gate on the cliff road is ignored. This gate, of a heavy and ornate metal construction, is still functional and stands open. The garden itself is overgrown and shows no sign of any care for years. However, any part of the garden and the main earth driveway can be easily traversed.

The well to the east of the rear of the House is 5' in diameter and 15' deep with 3' of water at the bottom and a rocky floor. A poisonous snake (AC 7; HD 2; hp 12; #AT 1; D 1-3 plus mild poison) lives in a hole in the well side about 2' above the floor and will attack anyone who reaches the water level. Characters bitten must save vs. Poison, adding a +3 bonus to the saving throw, or be infected with a mild disease from the poison, causing the victim to feel progressively more drowsy and after 2-8 turns fall into a deep sleep for 4-16 turns. A victim, once asleep, cannot be awoken by normal means (though remedies such as **cure disease** will be effective); however, no ill effects are felt and the victim will be quite normal when the period of sleep has ended.

The house is 35' high from ground level to roof ridge; the roof is peak-pointed and gabled, with several holes from missing slates. The interior is very dilapidated, damp and with patches of harmless mould everywhere. Cobwebs festoon the place; the woodwork is generally rotten, while dust and dirt are thick and rubbish is scattered about in profusion. Plaster, fallen from ceilings and walls, lies on the floor in several places; many floorboards are loose and some are missing entirely, while there is liberal evidence of rodent and insect infestation. Many rooms have fireplaces and chimneys which show no signs of recent use. The chimneys are too narrow and twisting for anyone to climb.

All house corridors are 5' wide and 10' high; all rooms are 10' high except for the attic level where, because of the sloping roof, the height ranges from 1' at the sides to 15' in the centre. All doors are 5' wide and 7' high, of normal wood construction; all are closed but unlocked (exception — see room 15) and easy to open. Most of the windows have panes broken and all are easy to open.

The passages in the cavern complex are generally about 7-8' wide and 8' high and have a marked, but not precipitous, downward incline. All caverns are roughly 12' high. All walls, ceilings and floors in the caverns and their connecting passages are slimy, wet and discoloured.

Light is excellent on the ground and first floors of the House. In the attic, due to sundry holes in the roof, the illumination is dim but adequate though leaving plenty of dark shadows in corners. In areas 20, 23, 24, 25 and 26 there is no light at all. In areas 21, 22, 27, 28 and 29 the light is good since there are torches set in crude brackets on the walls.

### WANDERING MONSTERS

No wandering monsters will be encountered in the garden though there will be numerous small and harmless animals — mice, voles, rabbits and the like. Nor are there any wandering monsters in the cellar, caverns and passages below the House.

In the House proper an encounter takes place 1 chance in 12, checking each turn. For each encounter roll d4 and use the listing below:

Die Roll	Encounter
1.	4 Goblins (AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 4; #AT 1; D by weapon type) .
2.	2 giant rats (AC 7; HD 1/2; hp 4; #AT 1; D 1-3 plus 5% chance per wound of disease, save vs. Poison) with 3 young (AC 7; HD 1/2; hp 2; #AT 1; D as adults).
3.	1 giant weasel (AC 6; HD 3+3; hp 20; #AT 1; D 2-12 plus blood drain).
4.	6 giant ants (workers — AC 3; HD 2; hp 5; #AT 1; D 1-6).

goblins: a small independent group passing through the locality who have decided to break their journey for a brief treasure hunt; they know nothing about the smugglers. They will be encountered in the house, if at all, but not in the basement area. They are armed with short swords and slings but attack at -1 in bright light. Each has 1-8 sp in a pouch and one of them has a 25 gp ruby in a secret compartment in his sword hilt.

giant rats: these creatures will surprise 4 chances in 6. They are disease carriers: any character bitten by a giant rat has a 5% chance of being infected by disease. If an infected character then fails a saving throw vs. Poison and does not receive a **cure disease** spell by the third turn after being bitten, the

wound will swell and fill with pus; the character will lapse into delirium and will need constant attention by another member of the party. After 1-4 days the character will die if cure disease has still not been given.

giant weasel: a vicious creature which will attack in all circumstances. On the melee round after it successfully bites a victim it does not release its jaws but instead sucks blood at the rate of 2-12 hit points of damage each round. The creature's pet is worth 2,000 gp.

giant ants: these are worker ants foraging for food.



## KEY TO THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE HOUSE

### 1. ENTRANCE HALL

The front door opens onto a musty, dirty entrance hall. To your left a corridor leads into the west wing of the house. On either side of the corridor opening the walls are bare but some pieces of wood in the corner near the window indicate that a small wooden table or chair once stood there. Ahead of you, another corridor leads towards the rear of the house.

To your right a staircase climbs to the next storey, reaching it at a balcony which overlooks the hall along its north and west sides; the stairs appear safe to climb though the balcony rail is broken in several places. Under the stairs at the rear of the hall a third corridor leads east.

So long as it is done before the party move into the hall proper, a careful examination of the floor by a ranger (10% chance of success per experience level) or a member of another character class (5% chance of success irrespective of level) will reveal two 'paths' along which there has been occasional and recent human movement — one from the foot of the stairs to the corridor towards the kitchen, the other from the foot of the stairs to the western corridor. These have been made by the smugglers when moving between the cellar and their signalling point in room 14.

Should the tracks be discovered here and followed in any of the three directions (upstairs to room 14 or to the cellar via either route), a ranger will have a 50% chance per turn of losing the track, while members of other character classes who were fortunate enough to find an initial track in the hall will be unable to follow it more than a few yards. Should the party, now or later, ascend the stairs....

The stairs creak ominously as you ascend but they are safe enough. At the top you reach the gallery which is on the north and west walls of the hall. To east and west the corridor appears to stretch the full width of the house, doors leading off it to the south. Opposite the western portion of the gallery is another corridor leading north.

The stairs will not collapse under the party's weight but at a point on the gallery 10' to the west of the head of the stairs the floorboards are so rotten that they will collapse if any party member steps on them (the fall causing 1-6 hit points of damage) leaving a gap stretching from the wall clear to the gallery edge and 7' across.



## 2. LIBRARY

You can tell that this room was once a library, with bookshelves around the walls. Most of the bookshelves are broken now and in many places have come away from the wall altogether. Those few shelves still intact are empty but there is a pile of books in the southwest corner.

There are 14 books in the pile untidily thrown into the corner and now covered with cobwebs, vermin droppings and harmless mould. All have been partially spoiled by damp, mould and mice but are still legible. Only three are of any interest, the other eleven being of a routine nature (histories, collections of romantic poems and so forth). These three are clearly titled on the spine:  
*The Magical Properties of Gemstones* by Mage Tenser  
*The Magical Properties of Herbs and Flowers* by Mage Tenser  
*The Metaphysics of Mathematics* by Mage Nystul  
These three books can be sold for 150 gp each (though not in Saltmarsh — the vendor will have to seek a larger community if a purchaser is to be found).

If the players want their characters to read the books and demand to know something of their contents, the Dungeon Master's imagination may be stretched! Sections of the Dungeon Masters Guide will be helpful (e.g. page 126). However reading the books will convey no special advantage to the characters and most of their contents will be too obscure for comprehension.

Inside the third volume can be found a sheet of parchment obviously torn from a larger sheet, on which are a few lines of handwritten text in the common tongue. It has been spoiled by damp so that only two words are still legible:  
“.....beyond skeletons.....”

## 3. STUDY

This room was once a writing room or study. Against the wall under the windows is a large wooden writing desk partially broken and riddled with damp rot. There are three drawers in each pedestal and a large central drawer; the latter is closed but the others are all open — two obviously broken open forcibly.

The central drawer (which is locked — the key has been lost for years) contains nothing but valueless documents, all written in the common tongue — receipts for payments on the purchase of various chemicals and laboratory equipment. A careful search of the cavity in which the central drawer fits will reveal a small secret compartment. Inside, wrapped in cloth, is a glass phial containing a watery, rose-coloured liquid with a spicy aroma (potion of **neutralise poison**, two doses).

The other drawers are all empty.

## 4. LIVING AREA I

A door in the north wall leads onto a small paved patio, the paving now cracked and over-run with weeds. There is a pile of refuse in the south east corner. Otherwise, the room is bare.

The secret trap-door in the floor at **S** (detect as secret door) leads via a staircase down into cellar area 21. A **magic mouth** spell is placed so as to be triggered by anyone coming within 5' of the trapdoor; a voice, coming from the ceiling above, will say “Welcome, fools — welcome to your deaths!” followed by a prolonged burst of insane and fiendish laughter. (DM's option: have each party member save vs. Spell, failure affecting them as would a fear spell. Subsequently each character failing

the original save has a 40% chance of being too frightened to re-enter the room.)

The pile of refuse contains nothing of value except a single large gold ear-ring, value 20 gp.

Should the party manage to follow the tracks from the entrance hall, they will lead to the trap-door.

## 5. LIVING AREA II

The only thing of any note in the room is a clump of tiny red mushrooms apparently growing out of the floor all around the fireplace in a roughly semicircular formation. Otherwise the room is bare.

The mushrooms are perfectly harmless though their presence may cause any adventurer wishing to step into the fireplace to do so carefully to avoid touching them.

Up the chimney, about 3' above the top of the fireplace, is a loose stone concealing a small cavity. Inside the cavity is a small leather pouch containing an amethyst, value 120 gp.

## 6. LIVING AREA III

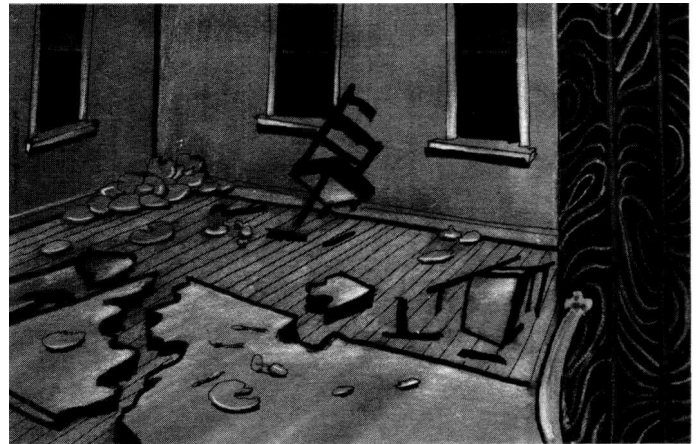
This room is empty. The only matter of interest is that the quantity of fallen plaster on the floor is significantly greater than elsewhere.

The floors in the two rooms above (see rooms 14 and 15) are considerably weaker than elsewhere. There is nothing else of interest and nothing of value here.

## 7. DINING ROOM

At one time a long table stood in the centre of this room; now it lies broken — though still recognisable — on the floor. A broken chair stands against the wall between the windows and there is a heap of broken china in the northwest corner.

There is nothing of interest or value here.



## 8. WITHDRAWING ROOM

Two stuffed armchairs stand near the fireplace of this room. The covers of both have been torn or cut and the stuffing has been pulled out; however, the wooden frames are still intact. The pieces of a broken table lie on the floor near the north wall.

In the chimney, about 3' above the top of the fireplace, is a loose stone, easily discernable. The cavity behind the stone contains a small metal box; this is locked but the key is nowhere to be found. The box contains a ring (**ring of protection +1**).

A large spider (AC 8; HD 1+1; hp 6; #AT 1; D 1 hit point plus poison) lives inside the chimney and will attack anyone investigating the loose stone. A character who is bitten must save vs. Poison, adding a bonus of +2 to the saving throw, or suffer enfeeblement (as the spell, 25%) for 1-4 days, the effect beginning 1-6 turns after the bite.

## 9. KITCHEN

This was obviously the kitchen. It is dirty and damp, with patches of grey mould and a few cobwebs on the floor, walls and ceiling. In the corner to your left is some iron cooking equipment with a chimney above. Next to it, under the window, is a cracked and discoloured stone sink.

To the right of the sink a small, closed wooden cupboard is fixed to the wall about 5' above floor level.

Against the far wall a flight of wooden stairs leads upwards from left to right; even from the door it is obvious that the woodwork is decayed and a few of the treads are missing.

A family of 5 giant centipedes (AC 9; HD 1/4, hp 1; #AT 1 D 0 plus poison) lives in a nest under the floor below the sink, with access to the room via a hole at floor level. They will attack any character coming close to the sink or investigating the cupboard. Anyone bitten by a centipede must save vs. Poison, adding a bonus of +4 to the saving throw, or suffer **enfeeblement** (as the spell, 25%) for 1-4 days, the effects beginning 1-6 turns after the bite. The mould is harmless.

The stairs are passable — see the notes relating to area 18. The cupboard is empty.



## 10. SCULLERY

This room has suffered the effects of damp and decay more than most in the house. Mould grows in patches on the floor, walls and ceiling; there are many cobwebs, though even these appear to be decaying. A large copper boiler, dented, split, discoloured and empty, stands under the window; a small heap of crockery shards is on the floor beside it. Stairs lead down into the darkness of what is presumably a cellar.

A **magic mouth** spell has been cast on the stairs and will be triggered when anyone treads on the top step. If the spell is set off, hideous screams — as if of a soul in torment — will rise from the cellar area below. (DM's option: treat as a **fear** spell as in **Living Area I**, room 4).

## KEY TO THE UPPER PART OF THE HOUSE

When and if the characters climb the main stairs, refer to the second part of the description of the **Entrance Hall**, ground floor, room 1.

## 11. BEDROOM

What was once a fine master bed room now stands dirty and decayed. Some of the floorboards are missing and there is rubbish scattered around. A tall wooden cupboard stands against the wall opposite the fireplace, its door closed.

The cupboard contains two items: a pair of old, cracked leather boots with no value or special properties, and a dirty, ragged, stained cloak hanging on a peg. The cloak appears harmless but the inner folds are covered with yellow mould (AC 9; HD nil; hp nil; #AT 1; D 1-8 plus poison spores) which examination of the cloak will disturb.

There is nothing of value in the room.

## 12. BEDROOM

Once perhaps a fine guest bedroom, this is now decayed like the rest of the house. Rubbish is scattered around; there is some evidence of rodent infestation and some webs hang torpid in the corners. A four-poster bed, once a grand piece of furniture, is against the wall opposite the fireplace. Its woodwork is worm-ridden and the curtains which once screened the bed are torn and stained. There is no bed linen, but the carcass of the bed is relatively intact.

There is nothing of interest or value here.

## 13. BEDROOM

This bedroom is dirty and decayed; the floorboards appear intact but rubbish is scattered everywhere and webs are profuse on the walls and ceiling. From the doorway, you can see a glint of light in the fireplace from what appears to be a small, highly reflective object. There is no furniture in here.

The object in the fireplace is simply a fist-sized chunk of crystal. It has no value though it is superficially attractive.

In the webs live two large spiders (AC 8; HD 1+1; hp 7 each; #AT 1; D 1 hit point plus poison) which are 90% likely to attack (check each round anyone is in the room).

The spiders' poison is relatively weak — saving throws against poison are at a bonus of +2 and the effects of a bite are less severe than most. Thus the poisonous bite will not kill the victim though he/she will be incapacitated and completely helpless for 1-6 hours.

## 14. BEDROOM

Another dirty, decaying bedroom without furniture. From the doorway the floor in here does not look particularly safe; some floorboards are missing while others appear to have suffered partial collapse.

The 'safe area' is a 3-5' wide strip from the door down the west wall and across to the window. Adventurers may stand in this area without danger but anyone moving into another part of the room may (60% base chance for a light character, increase incrementally to 100% chance for a very heavy character) precipitate a collapse of the floor, the character falling into room 6 below and taking normal falling damage (1-6 hit points). Refer to **Dungeon Masters Guide** p. 102 for determination of character weight.

If the party has been able to follow the tracks leading upstairs from the entrance hall (room 1) they will be found to lead into this room, around the safe area and to the window. A combination of the position of the house and the topography of the cliff results in this room providing the best view of the sea from any part of the house, and it is from here that the smugglers signal to their colleagues out at sea. Careful examination of the window area will give small clues to this fact — fresh scratches on the sill where the lantern has been placed, scuffing of the floor dust immediately by the window and so forth. However, these signs cannot be seen from the door; they require close observation for discovery.

## 15. BEDROOM

The door to this room appears to be locked or held by some means.

The lock is a normal one and the key can be found quite easily on the sill of the window at the eastern end of the corridor. The key turns very smoothly and an alert party may deduce that the lock has been oiled recently.

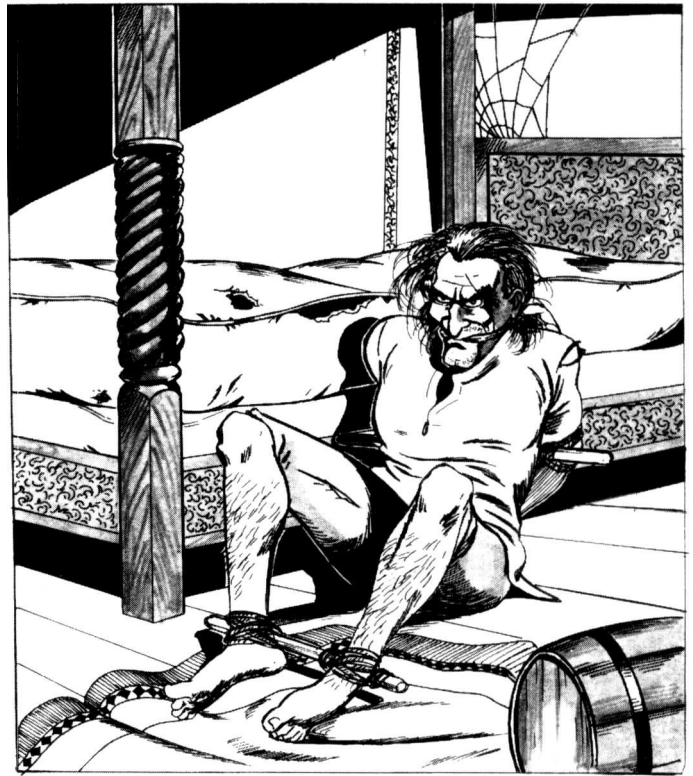
This is a dirty, decayed bedroom and the floor looks rather unsafe.

The 'safe area' in here is a 4' strip from the door to the east wall and along that wall to the front of the house.

In the far corner lies a man; he is obviously alive, though bound and gagged. He is clad only in undergarments and appears to have no weapons or equipment.

The 'prisoner' is called Ned Shakeshaft and he is a 3rd level assassin, though he will announce himself as a 2nd level thief if questioned. (See the Appendix for a full listing of his characteristics).

Ned has been 'planted' here, at short notice, by a prominent merchant in Saltmarsh who is secretly a receiver of the smugglers' contraband (see **PREAMBLE** note F). Ned's task is simply to do his utmost to prevent the party from learning about the smuggling operation and generally so to weaken the party — by promoting dissent, causing 'accidents' while not appearing to do so, and so forth — as to lead them to abandon their mission. However, his fear for his own skin is such that he will not attempt an assassination except in the last resort and in circumstances which give him an excellent chance of escaping and/or avoiding detection. Unfortunately for the merchant, he does not know how to contact the smugglers at short notice — Sanbalet (the smugglers' leader) always initiates their infrequent meetings and never arranges for them to take place in the House. Thus the merchant knows the smugglers' base is somewhere in the



House but has never been able to find it. Planting the assassin in one of the upstairs rooms was the best plan he could conceive at short notice.

Ned's 'story' is simply that he is a thief from Seaton who entered the House under cover of darkness the previous night to find a place to sleep during his journey to Saltmarsh where, he had heard, there was possible work for adventurers. He entered through the back door and had only reached the kitchen when he was attacked from behind, overcome and knocked unconscious. He awoke some hours ago — bound, gagged and stripped of his possessions — in this room. He did not see his attackers nor, until the party came along, had he heard any sounds in the House. Now he would like to be released and to join the party in their adventure.

Neither Ned nor his merchant-mentor are fools and they will have given some rapid thought to preparing this story — it will not be possible for the party to unmask Ned simply. Indeed, to add verisimilitude to the story, Ned will have a lump on the back of his head, inflicted (with some sadistic delight) by the merchant.

An alert party may, however, realise fairly soon that Ned is not what he appears to be. For one thing, he cannot speak Thieves' Cant (he will have to say that the blow on his head has temporarily destroyed his memory of the language). Again, his hasty preparations have led the merchant to overlook the fact that Ned's 'imprisonment' will actually draw the party's attention to the probable presence of other people in the house, whereas they might otherwise have found no clue to the smugglers at all.

The DM must play Ned carefully. Obvious attempts to sow discord or to lead the party into unnecessary danger will 'give the game away' quickly. On the other hand, Ned's instructions are clear, and the more the party make deductions about the presence of the smugglers, the greater will be Ned's efforts to prevent them. If in the final analysis discovery of the smugglers is inevitable, have Ned attempt to assassinate a party member and make good his escape.

Before leaving the room Ned will ask for the loan of clothing and a dagger from the party. As soon as he has the dagger he will exchange it for an envenomed dagger he has hidden in the fireplace. If he cannot borrow a dagger, he will retrieve the envenomed blade in any case and do his best to conceal it about his person.

## 16. BEDROOM

A large bedroom, now decaying and dirty. Damp mould covers portions of the walls and ceiling and rubbish is strewn liberally round the floor. In the centre is a single mattress which has been badly torn and from which the stuffing protrudes. Under the window is a large wooden chest, the timbers split, its lid closed.

The mattress contains nothing but stuffing.

The chest is not locked and will open easily. Inside is a pile of mouldy ragged clothing — nothing of value — and a bundle of documents, mostly mouldy and stained.

Most of these documents are old letters which appear to relate to the original purchase of the house; details are unclear, though their general tenor can be deduced. One sheet, towards the bottom of the bundle, is a clerical scroll of **hold person**. Under the chest is a loose floorboard which conceals a small cavity in the floor. Within the cavity is a small leather bag containing 4 small diamonds, value 25 gp each.

## 17. BOX ROOM

This room appears to have been used for storage. A large oak chest stands under the window, its lid closed. Elsewhere in the room are three wooden chairs, all broken, two splintered wooden buckets and a mildewed sack. Just inside the door is a bundle of what looks like clothing; this bundle carries no dust and appears to have been put here recently.

The chest is empty, while the sack contains old, rotted clothing.

The bundle of clothes (which also contains some non-incriminating personal effects, including 11 gp) is the property of the assassin Ned Shakeshaft, supposedly imprisoned in room 15.

## 18. LANDING

Along the north wall of this area a staircase descends to ground floor of the rear of the house. The treads appear to be insecure.

Another staircase along the east wall climbs to the upper level. This has mostly collapsed — only the lowest six steps are still intact and there is no easy access to the hole in the ceiling to where the staircase used to lead. A heap of rotten timber lies in the northeast corner

Closer examination of the staircase down to the kitchen reveals that a few of the treads are missing. These stairs are, however, passable with difficulty, whereas the party will have to find other ways of ascending to the attic if they wish to do so.

## 19. ATTIC

The attic is not shown in the house plan on the inside of the module folder. It occupies the entire area under the roof of the House and is thus a large, T-shaped area.

As the party enters from area 18....

A gaping hole in the floor shows where the top of the staircase used to lead before its collapse. There are grimy cobwebs on the walls and ceiling and the floor is liberally strewn with dust and rubbish.

Several holes in the roof allow dim light to enter this large, dirty room which appears to extend from the back to the front of the House. There are pieces of broken furniture here and there, and rubbish is heaped about the floor. There are two large sacks in the northwest corner. Otherwise there appears to be nothing of interest here.

The sacks contain old clothing and rags. There is nothing of interest or value in this area.

The entry of the party into the attic will alert the stirges in the southern area, but they will not attack in the northern section; instead they will wait for potential victims to reach the southern area, where they will have more freedom for attack.

As you approach the southern part of the attic you can see that it appears to extend over the whole of the front portion of the house. It is a storage room where the bric-a-brac of many years has been left. There are more broken pieces of furniture, a few sacks and piles of old clothes, but in general the room appears to contain nothing of interest.

In the southeast corner, up in the rafters, is a nest of 4 stirges (AC 8; HD 1+1; hp 5; #AT 1; D 1-3 plus blood drain). Note that each Stirge attacks as if it had 4 HD rather than 1+1. The creatures will wait until their victims reach the open area before attacking, though their need for blood is such that they will pursue fleeing victims into the northern area if necessary later.

In the stirges' nest can be found an old, cracked leather purse containing a ring (**ring of protection +1**).

## KEY TO THE CELLAR AND CAVERN AREAS

Note the lighting in these areas — see **THE HOUSE**.

## 20. WINECELLAR

This was obviously a wine cellar. Wooden bottle racks — mostly broken — line the north and west walls to a height of 6'. There appear to be no intact bottles left in the racks though there are several with broken necks. Broken bottles cover the floor beneath and near the racks.

Against the east wall, at the foot of the stairs, are two large metal storage bins which appear to be empty.

In the centre of the room lies a human corpse clad in plate mail; a long sword lies by the corpse's right hand and a large shield lies across the legs.

The wine and contents of the storage bins have long since been appropriated by the smugglers. One of the bins now contains some refuse which will prove to be foul-smelling if disturbed. In this refuse lives a colony of 18 rot grubs (see below for statistics).

The corpse is that of a fighting man, dead about 3 weeks. His sword and shield are non-magical but his armour is **plate mail +1**. His belt pouch has been cut open and is empty, but there is an emerald worth 250 gp in the hollow heel of his right boot. His body also carries other normal, non-magical items such as a dagger, a backpack containing provisions and so forth.

The corpse is infested with rot grubs (AC 9; HD 1 hit point; #AT nil; special attack and damage). There are 7 of them and they

will be activated by any search of the body and associated items. Rot grubs attack by burrowing into living flesh. The victim must apply flame to the wound immediately (1-6 hit points of damage per application) or have a **cure disease** spell cast on him. Otherwise the rot grubs will burrow to the heart and kill their host in 1-3 turns.

Obviously the smugglers have found this body — witness the cut purse. Equally obviously they have decided not to move it but to leave it here in the hope that its presence will deter further exploration by any inquisitive visitor.

Should the party have been successful in following the tracks from the entrance hall, they will lead to the secret door on the south wall.

## 21. CELLAR

If the party penetrates to this area it will be of crucial importance for the DM to determine whether the smuggler in this room (no. 1 on the roster) is aware of the intrusion. Since his position (see below) is such that he is partially turned away both from the stairs to room 4 and from the secret door to room 20, and since a long period of easy crime has made him careless, the smuggler will not notice a quiet, cautious intrusion from either quarter. He cannot, however, fail to notice a noisy entrance and indeed is certain to hear noisy activity either in the lounge or in the wine cellar (including burning away rot grubs, if they attack).

Between these extremes, the DM should make a rational judgement.



If the smuggler is alerted, and if he has time to do so, he will immediately go through the secret door to the cavern area to warn his colleagues. This means that adventurers entering this room might find it empty — whatever Sanbalet's plans to deal with intruders, they will take a little time to initiate.

It is at this stage that Ned will, in desperation, attempt an assassination in the conviction that the smugglers are about to be discovered.

You have entered a room which is so unlike anything else you have seen in the House that for a moment you pause, somewhat taken aback. The illumination here is good since several lighted torches are held in shoulder-high brackets around the walls. This was obviously a cellar, but equally obviously it is now used for an entirely different purpose; your first impression is that it is the living quarters for about ten people.

If the smuggler is present, indicate his presence and position (seated at the north side of the central table, engaged in carving

a model boat from a hunk of wood) to the party, together with any immediate actions he takes. If the smuggler is absent, or after he has been dealt with, read the full description of this area.

Ten single beds (crude affairs — little more than thin mattresses on boards) stand with heads to the south wall, each with a small wooden locker at its foot. In the centre of the flagged floor is a long wooden trestle table on which there is a variety of cheap metal cutlery and earthenware crockery together with a large jug about half full of a light brown liquid. There are a dozen wooden stools round the table. Against the north wall are two casks, one larger than the other and both broached. The larger one is nearly full of a clear liquid, the smaller one about half full of a light brown liquid. A metal dipper hangs on the outside of the rim of the larger cask.

Next to the casks is a large wooden bin. Above it, hanging on hooks on the wall, are a large ham, a long string of sausages and a small side of meat. Next to the bin is what appears to be a crude, metal wood-fired stove standing in a fireplace. Above the stove, on a shelf, are some iron and earthenware cooking utensils, while next to it is a small pile of logs.

Near the foot of the stairs are two small, unbroached casks; next to them is a bolt of cloth.

The contents of the room are mostly innocuous. The jug and small broached cask contain cheap ale, the large cask water. The side of meat is salted mutton. The unbroached casks both contain brandy (value 50 gp each) and the bolt is of fine silk (value 100 gp). The lockers, all unlocked, contain only clothing and small personal effects of no value, beyond indicating that all the residents of this room are male and probably human. The stove is cool and unlit. The wooden bin contains a considerable food supply — black bread, dried beans, flour, dried fruit, animal fats, salt and a small amount of honey.

See the Appendix for details of the smuggler guard (no. 1 on the roster).

If and when the party looks towards the door to room 23, read the following:

The door to your left appears normal but the one ahead of you has a strong wooden bar across it, carried in brackets on the frame and the door itself. On the door has been written the single word 'DANGER' in the common tongue; this has been inscribed in large letters using chalk.

## 22. SANBALET'S PRIVATE QUARTERS

This small room is clearly the quarters of a person senior to those who live in the 'barracks' main room, since the furnishing is less crude and the place is clean and tidy, as if cared for by a servant. There is a comfortable-looking bed in the northwest corner with a wooden locker at its foot. A small wooden table stands against the east wall, and beside it is a padded leather chair. On the table is a brass 9-branch candlestick and in it burn 3 candles, giving the room good illumination. The candles, though not fresh, are far from spent.

Under the table is a small wooden box and a bullseye lantern with a moveable shutter over the lens; the lantern is unlit.

On a shelf above the table are stacked three books.

In the northeast corner is a wooden cupboard with the door closed.

The wooden locker contains clothing and personal effects—nothing of value or of particular interest.

The wooden box under the table contains 3 flasks of oil, a tinderbox with flint and steel, 8 new candles and a piece of parchment; this has some curious marks on it which represent the code used by the smugglers to signal to their colleagues out at sea. (For a facsimile and an explanation see the Appendix).

The books are

1. a volume of erotic poetry, fully illustrated;
2. a naval almanac listing tide times for the area of coast containing Saltmarsh (a total of 100 miles of coastline is covered); and
3. a learned volume concerning mesmerism and its effects. Inside this book is a sheet of parchment carrying some simple words and phrases in the common tongue and their equivalents in the gnoll language. Note that unless one of the characters speaks Gnoll it will not be identified as such, but will be “some foreign language.”

The first two items can be sold locally for 10 gp each. The third item is more specialised; it will sell for up to 20 gp but customers are most unlikely to be found in Saltmarsh or any other small town. The sheet of parchment has no monetary value, though it is a curiosity. Examples of the words it carries ‘in translation’ are “Stop!,” “Fight,” “Lift” and so forth — clearly key words used by Sanbalet in instructing his gnoll slaves.

The cupboard contains only an oilskin coat hanging on a hook.

There is a secret cavity in the underside of the table-top in which is hidden Sanbalet’s spell book. This contains the following illusionist spells:

**First level: colour spray, hypnotism, detect illusion, wall of fog**

**Second level: invisibility, magic mouth**

Under the bed there is a loose flagstone (detect as concealed portal) above a small cavity. In the cavity there is a small iron box, locked and needle-trapped (the key is in Sanbalet’s belt pouch). In the box are five glass phials bedded in wood shavings and a small leather purse containing 11 pp. The phials each contain one draught of a potion: — three potions of **healing** (pale yellow), a potion of **delusion** (light blue) and a potion of **speed** (deep green).

The needle of the trap is discoloured, having been tipped with a blue dye. It is not poisonous and has no other harmful effects, but the dye will spread under the skin, forming an obvious blue patch (Sanbalet does not entirely trust his henchmen where such valuables are concerned).

## 23. SKELETONS’ ROOM

The door to this room is barred (see the last paragraph of the description of room 21). If players ask about the barring, tell them the wooden bar appears to have been in place a long time. The smugglers explored here when they first took over the house as a base, but were frightened by the skeletons and have not ventured to release the bar since.

This room is dark. Light from the large room behind you spills faintly to show that the room is only about 12’ across, but to your left there is only darkness. What little you can see is dingy and dirty.

Six skeletons (AC 7; HD 1; hp 4; #AT 1; D 1-6) occupy this room, placed here by the alchemist to guard his private laboratory. It is some time since they were aroused so they will be a little

sluggish to make their initial reaction to intrusion, but they will attack after a short pause.

## 24. LABORATORY

Assuming some illumination is provided by the party when they open the secret door:

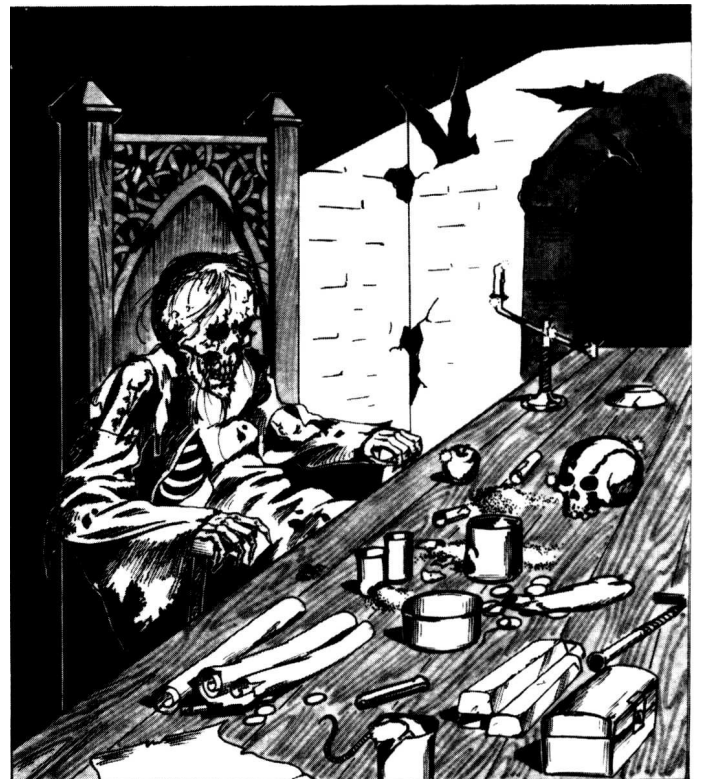
The secret door opens towards you to reveal, piled on the floor of this room, a clutter of old and broken glass and earthenware. There are three small copper pots amidst the debris and these appear to be intact.

There is nothing of value in this debris piled by the north wall of the laboratory. As the party gets a view of the rest of the room....

A bench runs down the west wall of what was obviously a laboratory. On the bench are various jars of powders and liquids and several pieces of chemical apparatus, some stained in different colours as the liquids they contained dried up long ago.

There is a table against the south wall, forming an L-shape with the bench. In the chair before the table sits a human figure with its back to you, apparently studying a book which is open on the table. The figure wears a robe, embroidered with a variety of mystic symbols, and a pointed hat. On the table is a candlestick, a tiny stump of unlit candle remaining in it, and a variety of other items which, even in the dim light, shine with the warmth of pure gold. One of these objects looks like a human skull.

The figure is the skeleton of the alchemist and original owner of the House struck dead during his work by a heart attack. Before the alchemist died he was reading the book which lies open on the table. Its title is **Ye Secret of Ye Philosopher’s Stone**, no author acknowledged. The book is very valuable and any alchemist will gladly pay 500 gp for it (though the party will have to travel to a larger centre of population than Saltmarsh to find a customer). In the main, the book is too profound and



recondite a work to be understood by anyone other than the appropriate specialist (and even that specialist would have to be very learned), but the party will be able to deduce the general subject matter. Broadly, the book instructs on the making of a 'Philosopher's Stone', then describes how that stone can be used to convert base metal into gold. Words like 'stone,' 'gold,' 'transmuting' and so forth will be recognisable and will recur frequently — the DM must decide how quickly and how accurately the party can deduce the tenor of the book's contents.

The golden objects are in fact of pure gold. So far as the party is aware, these objects are the results of several successful experiments. They are

1. a human skull, value 750 gp
2. an apple, value 150 gp
3. a rose, value 150 gp
4. a set of five small discs (actually balance weights), value 50 gp in total.

A secret drawer in the table contains the alchemist's spell book (he was a genuine magic-user), but the book has been badly damaged at some time and the only spells still legible are

**First level: affect normal fires, find familiar, message**

**Second level: fools gold**

**Fifth level: animate dead**

The skeleton wears a leather belt pouch in which there are 47 gp.

In the clenched left fist of the skeleton can be found a smooth, ovoid pebble about 4 ounces in weight and having a lustrous pale gold colour. It emits a faint glow (as well as dweomer) if **detect magic** is cast on it. Though the party might assume it is the Philosopher's Stone, it is in fact a *cursed luckstone* which will elect as its 'owner' the first character to handle it. It cannot be thrown or given away as it will always, within the hour, return magically to the owner without his or her knowledge, turning up in a pocket, belt pouch or whatever. No type of physical blow will harm it; nor will cold, heat, electricity or acid. The owner will suffer a penalty of -1 from all 'to hit' rolls, damage rolls and saving throws while the stone is possessed (even if it is temporarily absent).

A **remove curse** spell on the stone will cause it to vanish absolutely and forever. An alchemist will recognise that this is not the Philosopher's Stone but will know nothing else of it, nor will the luckless owner be able to persuade anyone to buy it.

The chemical apparatus and materials on the bench are of no particular interest or value.

## THE PASSAGES AND CAVERNS

The passages and caverns beyond the secret door in the south wall of room 21 all decline perceptibly towards the sea. The main passage plus areas 27, 28 and 29 are all well lit by torches set into crude brackets on the walls. Areas 25 and 26 are dark. Area 30 is open to daylight (when working there at night, the smugglers take care to conceal their lights). The passage and cavern walls are wet and slimy and the floors are moist, though the smugglers have laid coarse matting in various places along the main passage to the sea in an effort to make it more easily passable.

All these passages and caverns are natural, though there are signs of human working here and there — the stairs immediately by the secret door, for instance, and in places where an inconveniently narrow passage has been widened.

The DM should remember that Sanbalet is acutely conscious of the need to keep the secret door in the south wall of area 21 secret. The smugglers therefore take great care to clean up all tracks inside the room. However, when the party reaches the foot of the stairs it will be obvious that the passages to areas 25 and 26 are not much used.

Note that if smugglers are unaware of intrusion, they will be found in the approximate positions stated in the text which follows. However if they have been alerted, their positions will change as they execute Sanbalet's orders.

### 25. NATURAL CAVERN

Your lights show a natural cavern, roughly circular and about 20-25' in diameter. There appears to be nothing of interest here.

At a point on the ceiling roughly halfway between the two passage mouths is a large green slime (AC 9; HD 2; hp 11; special attack only) which will almost certainly (95% chance) drop on the party if they pass below. Green slime attaches itself to living flesh and in 1-4 melee rounds turns the victim into green slime (no resurrection possible). It can be scraped off quickly, excised, frozen or burned. A cure disease spell kills green slime. Other spells and physical attacks do it no harm.

### 26. NATURAL CAVERN

Your lights show a natural cavern, roughly circular and 25-30' in diameter. There appears to be nothing of interest here.

The appearance is accurate — there is nothing of interest in the cavern.

### 27. NATURAL CAVERN

This cavern, like the passage leading to it, is well lit by torches held in brackets round the walls. Stacked against the wall to your left, as you enter, you can see five small bolts of cloth, while to your right are eight small casks in a neat row.

Unless they have previously been alerted, there will be two humans and two gnolls in this cavern.

The first human is Sanbalet, the smuggler chief and a 4th level Illusionist. He carries three daggers and wears a belt pouch containing 7 gp, 5 sp, 3 ep, the key to the chest under his bed, a set of 'loaded' gaming dice and three gems worth 250 gp each. Assisted by the other smuggler, he is checking a manifest of contraband received the previous night as it is carried up from the sea by his assistants.

His memorised spells are

**First level: colour spray, hypnotism, wall of fog**

**Second level: invisibility**

A human smuggler (no. 2 on the roster) is assisting his chief in checking inventory. For full characteristics of Sanbalet and the smuggler see the Appendix.

Gnolls: AC 5; HD 2; hp 12; #AT 1 ; D 2-8 or by weapon type. Both are armed with battle axes. These creatures are under Sanbalet's hypnotic influence; they will unquestioningly obey him as their master, and they cannot be coerced or charmed into betraying him. (Note that the hypnotism is not the result of the spell of the same name. Sanbalet has some mastery of non-magical mesmerism as a result of reading his book (in room 22.)



W4H



If the smugglers, alerted to the party's intrusion earlier, stage an attack, the gnolls will be at the front. One gnoll has a gold bracelet on its arm (value 75 gp).

Each bolt is of silk and valued at 100 gp. Each cask contains brandy and is valued at 50 gp.

## 28. SLOPING PASSAGE

The incline of the passage is perceptibly greater in this and coarse matting has been laid in various places on the floor. The passage narrows to 5-6' in places.

If the smugglers are unaware of the party's intrusion, three of them will be found in this area, each carrying contraband up the slope to area 27.

The first (no. 3 on the roster) just north of the right-angle bend, carries a small cask of brandy (value 50 gp).

The third (no. 5 on the roster) is some 20' behind the second and carries a small cask of brandy (value 50 gp).

See the Appendix for details of the smugglers.

## 29. NATURAL CAVERN

The passage widens to the south at this point to form a small cavern. There are three bolts of cloth and five small casks in the middle of the floor, resting on a piece of coarse matting

The bolts and casks are, as before, worth 100 gp and 50 gp each respectively. The other three human smugglers are here taking a rest before continuing the transportation of the contraband. One (no. 6 on the roster) is about to lift one of the bolts of silk. The others (nos. 7 and 8 on the roster) are obviously reluctant to continue their work for a few moments and are squatting with their backs to the east wall.

## 30. SEA CAVE

The passage leads into a cave which opens directly to the sea. The tide is out at present and there is little water in the cave, but there is an obvious high water mark which in places is 3' above the floor. Pulled up onto the sloping cave floor is a small boat — perhaps large enough for eight men — with oars, a step-down mast and a neatly furled sail. A rope tied to the bow has been weighed down by a large boulder which serves as an anchor.

There is nothing of value here apart from the jolly boat which might fetch as much as 90 gp in Saltmarsh. The boat has two hull points (see the **Dungeon Masters Guide**, p. 54). There is nothing aboard apart from the normal tackle. Since bolts of silk and casks of brandy are cumbersome as well as heavy, the party may well use this boat to transport the contraband to Saltmarsh.

## CONCLUDING NOTES

Should the party succeed in wiping out the smuggling ring, a grateful Saltmarsh Town Council will vote them a reward of 500 gp per surviving party member. Should they also succeed in killing or capturing Sanbalet, the reward will be doubled. They will be allowed to keep any treasure they find but will not get full value for silk and brandy in Saltmarsh — they will be asked, politely but firmly, to pay 25% excise duty on the value of any contraband, thus retaining only 75% for themselves. (The DM should note behaviour of the characters at this point — lawful characters should pay without hesitation!)

The party will need to rest and recuperate for a while before they can pursue the second part of this module. Again, ensure they pay for their food, accommodation and other living expenses before they are invited by the Town Council to the meeting which starts the next adventure.

THIS CONCLUDES THE FIRST PART OF THE SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH.

## PART TWO — THE SEA GHOST

wherein the plot is unravelled...and thickens.

### PREAMBLE

A few days after their triumphant return from the destruction of the smugglers' ring at the Haunted House, the party is hastily summoned to an emergency meeting of the Saltmarsh Town Council. Here it is explained to them that, though the land-based operation of the smuggling ring has been quashed, there must be a seagoing vessel by which the contraband was originally conveyed and this is still at large. The City Fathers, fearful that any surviving smugglers may seek to re-establish their operation from some other base, wish to apprehend this vessel and so put an end, once and for all, to the smuggling. (If, for whatever reason, the party actually failed to return from the Haunted House, this second adventure is suitable for a medium-sized party (5-10 characters) of 1-3 experience levels each.

The party is asked to undertake this task and, as an inducement, a reward of 500 gp is offered to each member of the party for the successful conclusion of the mission (they may of course keep whatever other loot they find).

It is reasoned by the Council that the surviving smugglers on the vessel will, as yet, be unaware of the capture and/or death of their land based colleagues, and a return visit by them with a further cargo of contraband may well be expected. As the last consignment was off-loaded only a short while ago, the next is not reasonably to be expected for some time, probably during the next 'dark of the moon' which begins in about two weeks time. The Council will arrange for two local men from a part-time corps of 'excise officers' to patrol the potential rendezvous points each night for the next two weeks in case the smugglers return earlier than expected. However, their resources are slight and the Council is unwilling to risk the lives of volunteers by ordering them to take the ship and its crew by force — they anticipate the smugglers would put up a fight to protect themselves and their cargo, and could easily overpower a couple of local men.

The proposal is therefore that the excise men will undertake a patrol each night but that as soon as an approaching vessel is spotted, the party should perform the actual task of boarding, the excise men going with them for added support.

Note: if you wish to play in this adventure, read no further! What follows is for the eyes of the **Dungeon Master only!**

For the information of the Dungeon Master (only) a summary of the plot of this module is given in the Appendix.

### PREPARATIONS

The Dungeon Master should allow intelligent participation by party members in the Council meeting and reward it appropriately. For example, if they have deduced or inferred that there is normally a signalling arrangement between the two groups of smugglers, they may wish to arrange for a prompt response from the House to any light signal from the ship; if so, experience points should

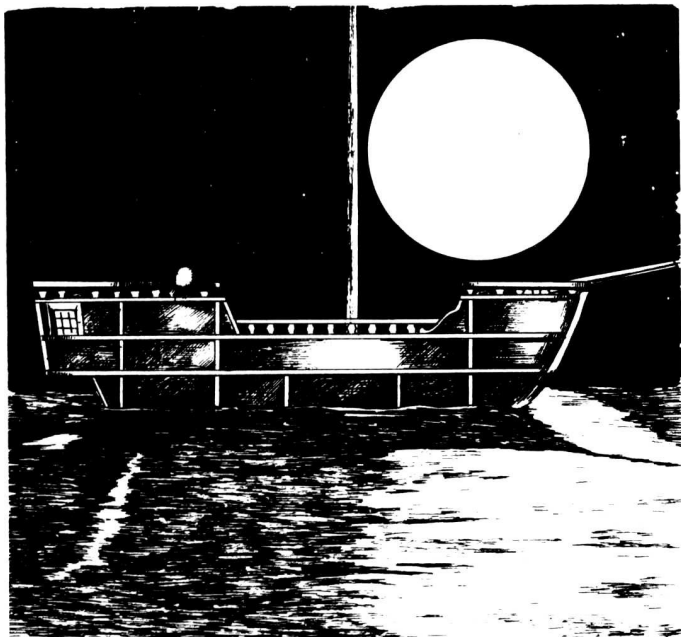
be awarded to the player making the suggestion, and the reward should be proportionately greater if correct deductions are made about the code on the parchment in Sanbalet's room. The Dungeon Master must exercise considerable discretion in this. Too small a reward, or none at all, could inhibit creative thinking by the party, while overgenerous rewards quickly become self-defeating.

Once the party accepts the undertaking, the Council will put a small fishing boat at their disposal and provide them with any reasonable amount of non-magical equipment that they feel they may require. The boat is large enough to accommodate the entire party plus the two local volunteers. The Council will also provide the services of two of their excise men, a corporal and a private, to accompany the party and sail the boat for them. The characteristics of these men and of the cutter are fully detailed in the Appendix.

The local men will fight hard and courageously and, though they will not undertake actions of a suicidal nature at the behest of party members, they will carry out their nightly patrols efficiently and regularly and will advise members of the party of the approach of the ship. Presumably the party members will make prior arrangements for a suitable course of action at this time - how the men are to signal the ship's arrival, where they are to pick up the party in the boat and so forth; if they fail to make such advance plans, the corporal will (respectfully) suggest they do so!

Again, the party may determine the general area within which the nightly patrols are to be carried out, but if not the corporal will offer his opinion on the matter (which will be correct) - that the general area to be patrolled should be about half a mile or so out to sea and in line of sight of the old Haunted House.

Clever party members will seek beforehand to see plans and designs of typical sea-going vessels of this time and place in order to obtain some prior understanding of the type of 'dungeon' they will be entering. Though the Dungeon Master must *never* volunteer this information a rough description should be provided at the party's request. However, the DM should include a number of differences from the Sea Ghost's actual layout — different cabin arrangements, variations in dimensions, doors and hatches in different places etc. After all, ships of this kind are not made to a rigidly prescribed design! On no account should the presence of the secret doors/cabins be revealed or even hinted at.



## SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

Much of what has already been said in relation to the first part of this module should apply equally to the adventure aboard the Sea Ghost. In particular, remember that the crew on the ship - with the exception of those who are on deck signalling and watching for the return signal — do not have fixed posts but are mobile, going about their routine preparations for off-loading cargo. If the party's presence aboard the vessel goes undetected by those below-decks, the adventurers should find it quite a simple task to take the smugglers unaware, either singly or in small groups as they go about their business. On the other hand, if the alarm is raised don't forget that the smugglers know the ship's layout intimately and will be able to organise a swift and perhaps unexpected reprisal.

During the time spent on patrol the weather will be fine and clear although when there is no moon, light will be poor and normal vision obscured beyond twenty feet. The ship will arrive, as predicted, during the dark moon period. The party is to receive the benefit of favourable winds, tides and currents as the objective is to get them aboard the smugglers' ship and not involve them in a complicated exercise involving the finer points of seamanship and navigation. Besides, the local men are in fact a fisherman and his brother (both experienced sailors) and quite capable of dealing with these matters expeditiously.

On no account is the Dungeon Master to inform the players that the smugglers are running arms to the lizard men (see THE PLOT in the Appendix) as well as dealing in contraband. They must discover this for themselves as they play through the module, by the presence of the lizard men aboard the ship, by finding the Aquatic Elf prisoner and learning what he knows, by deciphering the special chart and letter in the captain's cabin, by finding the secret cache of weapons and by putting all these clues together to come up with the correct conclusions.

Additionally, captured smugglers can be bribed or threatened for information (watch alignment behaviour if coercion is suggested or actually used!). Should all this fail to trigger the correct conclusions then the Dungeon Master may, at the end of the adventure, be forced to 'give away' the arms-running information, if only to ensure that the party is tempted to continue adventuring in modules **U2** and **U3**. The method of revealing this information must be left at the discretion of the DM who is luckless enough to be dealing with an obtuse bunch of players!

## THE SIGNALLING SYSTEM

The signalling system is simple but effective (see Appendix for the signals). The arrangement is for someone aboard the ship to flash the first signal (which takes about four seconds) up to three times within a period of one minute. The shore party would reply with the second signal and would flash this twice, whereupon the third signal would be flashed once only from the ship, and the unloading operation would begin. A pair of smugglers would row the jolly boat out from shore to the ship at the same time as a ship's boat is dropped, and these two vessels would alternate in carrying the contraband ashore, one of them remaining in the shore cave at the end of the operation.

It has been arranged (though this does not appear on the parchment) that the first signal should be repeated at intervals of 10 minutes (three times in each case) for an hour. If there is no response from the shore, it will be assumed that there is some problem ashore and the Sea Ghost will sail away, returning the next night to repeat the procedure. If the response from the shore is not the agreed one, the first signal will be repeated after

the requisite 10 minutes, and if the response is again incorrect the Sea Ghost will depart, again returning the next night to repeat the procedure.

The local men in the fishing boat will each have an automatic 20% chance per signal burst to see the first signal; party members, whether in the house, on the cliff or in the cave, must first indicate to the Dungeon Master, by their words and/or behaviour, that they are indeed actively looking for the vessel. If any players are being inattentive during play, then these players' characters will have no chance at all to see the signal light; others will have a 15% chance each per signal burst of making a sighting.

## BOARDING THE SEA GHOST

How long it takes the party to reach the ship depends on what arrangements they have made beforehand with the excise men. If, for example, it is arranged that the excise men, once they have seen the ship, will row ashore and pick the party up (say in the cave below the Haunted House), that will take about 15-20 minutes. The party would then board the fishing boat that would be rowed out towards the ship. The journey direct to the ship would take about 30-40 minutes (20-30 minutes with more than two rowing), but if the boat is to approach the Sea Ghost from the seaward side another five minutes should be added. The ship will be lying broadside to the coastline, the starboard side facing landwards and if the characters approach her from this side they will automatically be seen when within 20', even if they approach silently and without light.

If the party approaches darkly and silently from the port side they will be totally unobserved - the smugglers on deck are watching the coast from the starboard side, and will not see or hear intruders unless there is a light in the boat or noise from it.

Thus, whether the alarm is raised or not will depend on a number of factors: from which direction the boat approaches the ship, whether the watchers on the ship are alerted to possible danger (an incorrect response to the signal or no response at all) and whether the party has taken precautions to conceal its approach (no lights, muffled rowlocks, a **silence** spell, etc.). Between the extremes outlined above (automatic detection of a direct approach, no detection of a silent and dark approach from the seaward side) the DM must judge the circumstances, decide on the probability of detection and determine the outcome by rolling dice against that probability.

If the party makes a direct approach, they may try to bluff their way aboard once they have been detected. For instance, they may say they are a party from the Haunted House base, that the lamp has been accidentally smashed, that a new recruit to the gang, unused to the codes, has made a mistake with the signalling, or something of a similar nature. If the story is reasonably convincing, allow them a 65% or greater chance of being believed up to the point when the first three members of the party actually get aboard via a rope ladder which will be lowered for them. Once these three are aboard, the deception will automatically be discovered — the smugglers will take alarm and will attempt to repel the boarders while at the same time getting their vessel under way. A detected approach will mean that the entire crew will attempt to repel boarders with the utmost vigour.

Even if the party's approach is not detected, they must still get aboard. The most obvious method is to climb the anchor chain that will be easy for relatively unencumbered characters (no chance of slipping and falling) while for characters with heavy gear there will be a 10%-25% chance (depending on the encumbrance) of slipping and falling into the sea (in which case the character must be pulled to safety within one melee round or sink and drown in four rounds). The noise of a character falling



into the sea will be heard by the watchers on deck unless it is covered by (for instance) a **silence** spell.

Other means of boarding may be attempted. The DM must determine the outcome according to the circumstances. Characters may, if they so elect, try to climb onto any of the three deck areas, through either or both of the open portholes in the stern, or even onto the bowsprit, but note that anyone climbing up the rigging will probably (70% chance) be noticed (and fired on!) by the smuggler in the crow's nest (see below).

Of course, if the party gains undetected access to the ship and the requisite signalling period passes, then the anchor will be raised and the Sea Ghost will sail away. The fishing boat is not as fast as the Sea Ghost so attempts to pursue by anyone left in the boat will be fruitless.

## FEATURES OF THE SMUGGLERS' SHIP

The name of the vessel, 'Sea Ghost', is painted on both sides of the prow. She has a length of nearly 90', a beam of 26', a draught of 8' and stands 9' above the waterline to the top of her main deck rails and 17' above the waterline to the top of both her forecandle and poop rails.

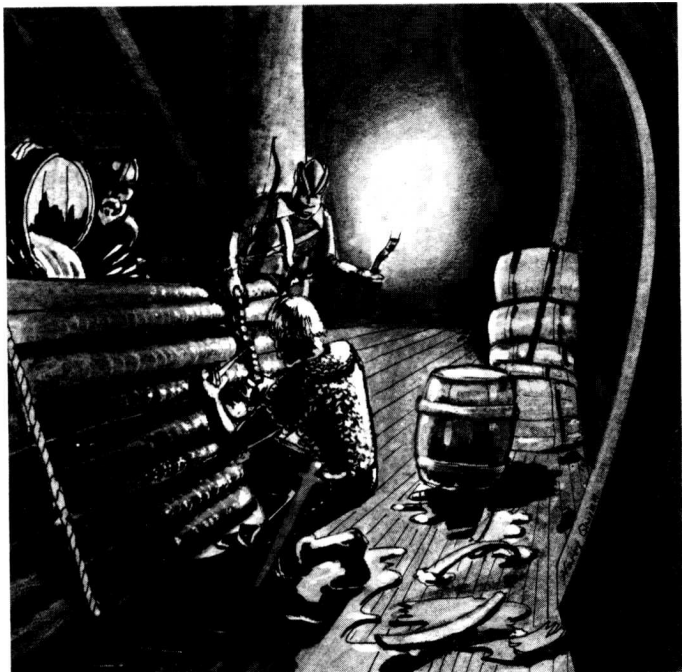
All doors are 6' high, 4' wide and of stout wood construction; all are normally shut but none are locked and all can be readily opened without die rolling. All secret doors may be detected in the same way as normal secret doors. All portholes are 2' square and have no glass, being simply square openings cut into the ship's timbers which can be closed and fastened from the inside by hinged and bolted wooden hatches; all are closed and bolted except for the two in the ship's stern which give onto areas 8 and 9.

Crawling through the stern portholes can be managed by all creatures of sizes S and M, but only gnomes and halflings may do so freely; all other races must rid themselves of their shields and extraneous gear and contrive to either push or pull these items ahead or after them.

The stairways leading down from area 1 to areas 12 and 13 are separated from each other by a stout wood partition and take the form of wood-enclosed companionways so that they are completely sealed off from areas 8 and 9, while the stairway from area 1 to area 10 is likewise enclosed in wood partitions and sealed off from area 6. All enclosed areas have a height of 8' except for the bilge (area 16) that is 4' high. The cargo hold hatch in area 1 is closed but not fastened. The bilge hatch in area 11 is closed and bolted from the hold side only. Above decks (when the party arrives) the light is poor and normal vision is obscured to within a 20' range; below decks there is no light at all except for area 11 where a single lit lantern, hanging from the centre ceiling, provides normal illumination. Smugglers moving around below decks will carry a lantern each.

The Sea Ghost is mainly of wood construction so that fire is always something of a hazard. She could, with some difficulty, be set ablaze and burnt down to the waterline. However, it is not to be imagined that the vessel will burn readily for her hull, rigging, spars and sails are all in varying degrees of dampness. Deliberate attempts to set her ablaze may only be undertaken while aboard her. This will involve the use of at least two flasks of oil to two cubic feet of dry combustible materials such as sacking, cloth, wool or wood kindling and still has only a 60% chance of successfully creating a blaze. Additional flasks of oil and combustibles will increase the chances by 10% for each extra flask of oil plus a further cubic foot of combustibles. Brandy-soaked silk bolts make excellent combustibles and do not require the addition of oil to ignite.

It will take a full turn before the fire takes hold, during which period it may be extinguished with a 15% chance for every person helping in the attempt. On the second turn after ignition the chance of successfully extinguishing the fire goes down to 10% per person involved; on the third turn the fire will be out of control and will burn the ship down to the waterline in a further turn. In the event of successful extinguishment the Dungeon Master has discretion to decide the extent of damage to the ship, cargo and, possibly, other treasures, and reduce their



values accordingly.

Spells of third level and above which involve the creation of fire have a 25% chance per use of creating a blaze; the chances of extinguishing it remain the same as those for a normal fire.

Fire spells below third level will not create a fire hazard to the ship, nor will attempts with normal fire if undertaken by characters not aboard her. Throwing torches and lanterns onto the ship from the fishing boat will serve no useful purpose and will certainly alert the smugglers.

Attempts to hole the ship and so sink her will require the use of axes and/or similar implements applied with force and vigour. The time necessary to complete this undertaking will be four rounds and the noise will be sufficient to alert the smugglers. Two of them will be sent to investigate and will raise the alarm at the end of the second melee round; the rest of the crew will then rapidly converge to that area and attack any intruders there by the end of the fourth melee round.

Successful sinking or firing of the ship will, of course, mean the total loss of any valuables aboard her at the time, including the

value of the vessel herself.

The fishermen and smugglers, but not the lizard men or the magic-user Punketah, can climb the rigging and move along the spars and yards with complete success and mobility; all others must roll dice for their success each melee and their movement rate is reduced by 25%. Those with 'climb walls' ability must roll their percentage score or less to succeed, lizard men must roll 90% or less on percentile dice to succeed and others must roll their Dexterity or less on 3d6 to succeed. Party members who have seamanship as a secondary skill will not be required to roll for success when aloft and they and those characters having 'climb walls' ability will move at their normal rate. Failure means a fall with a 50% chance of going either into the sea (those wearing armour or otherwise encumbered sink within one melee round and drown in four) or onto the deck (roll 1d6 for damage per 10' fallen).

Fighting, when aloft, will be as normal for all excise men, lizard men, smugglers and party members with 'climb walls' ability and/or seamanship skills. Others, including the magic-user Punketah, will have -2 on their 'to hit' die rolls and their armour class will deteriorate by one factor, though not beyond AC 10. All missile attacks aloft will, due to the poor light, be at a basic -1 'to hit' for characters with normal vision (-2 if the character lacks 'climb walls' ability or seamanship skills). It will not be possible for any character to employ both shield and weapon (or any two-handed weapon) at the same time while aloft; nor will it be possible to cast spells other than those with a verbal component only.

Note the presence of the crow's nest (area 17) and its occupant. The main rigging is shown in the rigging diagram.

### **SURRENDER BY THE SMUGGLERS**

If and when the ship's Captain, the Mate, the Bosun and the magic-user are all dead or have fled, and if the party then outnumber the surviving crewmen and lizard men combined, then the human smugglers will offer to surrender the ship to the party. They will seek the most advantageous terms they can get, but their minimum requirements will be their lives and liberty and the ship's jolly boat in which to flee. If the party refuses these minimum conditions then the smugglers will offer to trade information in exchange for treasure. Again, they will seek the most advantageous terms they can obtain and their minimum requirements, in this case, will be 100 gp to disclose the whereabouts of the secret cache of weapons and the fact they were to deliver these arms to the lizard men. They do not know the exact location of the rendezvous point for their arms running, only that it is about ten miles or so along the coast and west of the Haunted House, near the mouth of a small river. For a further minimum amount of 50 gp they will reveal the presence of the Aquatic Elf prisoner in area 14.

If the party refuses to meet any of these minimum demands, the smugglers will refuse the related information. They know nothing of importance other than stated above.

The smugglers' leaders and the lizard men will not surrender or sell information; they will either fight to the death or, if things are going very badly for them, seek to escape either in the jolly boat or by diving overboard and swimming to the shore (shedding armour and equipment as necessary).

### **RANDOM ENCOUNTERS ABOARD THE SEA GHOST**

There will be no random encounters other than aboard the ship. No sea monsters, etc., will plague the excise officers on patrol or the party on its way to the boarding attempt.

The Dungeon Master must keep in mind that the smugglers are a successful band of organised and intelligent criminals, and their



## KEY TO THE SEA GHOST

behaviour must reflect this at all times. Once they become aware of the presence of intruders aboard their ship, they will react in an aggressive, efficient and organised manner to seek out and subdue or slay the intruders. They will not be content to simply remain in their respective starting areas, but will rouse their comrades, band together and actively seek out party members. In this event the Random Encounters table should no longer be used.

Random encounters aboard the ship will be with persons and /or creatures also based in specific encounter areas. Thus if a smuggler is killed or captured as a 'wanderer' he will not be found in his normal encounter area, nor may he occur again as a 'random encounter'. Conversely if a smuggler is killed or captured in his encounter area he cannot later be involved in a random encounter.

Because of the small size and restricted nature of the ship, there is one chance in eight each turn of a random encounter. If a random encounter is indicated, roll d6 and check the following table to show who has been encountered.

Die	Encounter	Normal area
1-2	Mate, Smuggler 1	both in area 1
3-4	Bosun, Smuggler 2, Smuggler 3	all in area 11
5-6	Magic-User, lizard man 2	area 3, area 7

See the Appendix for complete details of these characters and creatures.

If an encounter rolled at random makes obvious nonsense in the prevailing circumstances ignore it and treat it as no encounter. If, for instance, the DM has judged that the party has managed to board the forecastle (area 2) without being detected, then a random encounter is indicated with the mate and smuggler on the main deck, who are still in fact looking landward to await a signal, then ignore it and treat it as 'no encounter.'

### 1. MAIN DECK

Though the light is not good, you can see that this is the ship's main deck. In the centre, forward of the mast, is a jolly boat apparently lashed to the deck with ropes.

Aft of the mast is a raised area — perhaps something lying on the deck or a hatchway to the below-decks area. In the corners formed by the forward upper deck and the port rail, and by the aft upper deck and the starboard rail there appear to be smallish objects lying on the deck. Aft of the area provisionally identified as a hatchway you can see a diagonal line going upwards — presumably a rope ladder to a crow's nest above.

Leaning against the rail, about midway along this deck, are two human figures. They appear to be staring towards the coast. Between them and at deck level is what appears to be perhaps a roll of cloth, canvas or rope.

To fore and aft, below the upper decks, are vague outlines of doors. You can also see ladders which lead to the upper decks, the aft one on the port side, the forward one on the starboard.

The raised area to stern of the mast is indeed the hatch which leads to the hold (area 11) below. The smallish objects on the deck are 25' lengths of rope, neatly coiled. The object between the two men is a rope ladder, 25' long, at present neatly coiled but ready to be thrown over the side.

The two men (who, unless they are aware of the party's intrusion, will be looking towards the House, waiting for a signal) are the ship's Mate 'Bloody' Bjorn and smuggler no. 1 (see the Appendix for full details of these two men). See also the note below the description of area 3.

## 2. FORECASTLE

The deck area is dominated by a massive shape in the centre which you can identify as the ship's capstan. From it, the anchor chain runs down the chain vent to port of the prow.

Standing just to starboard of the prow and leaning against the bowsprit is a human figure. He appears to be scanning to starboard.

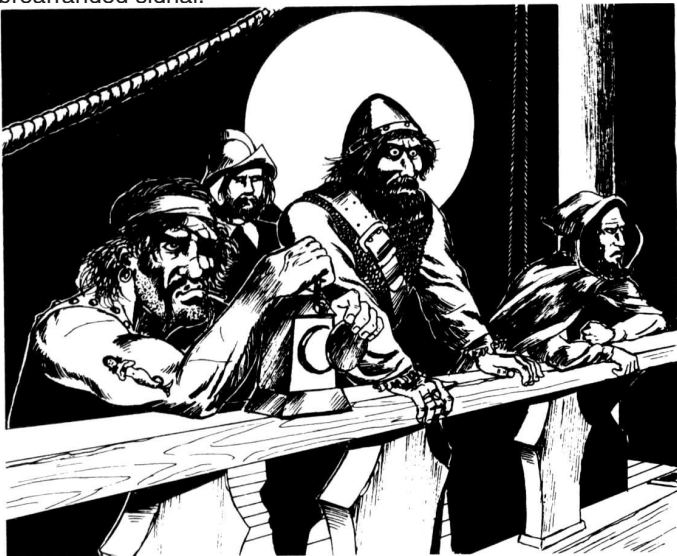
The man in view is smuggler no. 4 (see the Appendix for full details). Depending on the exact position of the observer it may be possible to discern details of area 1 (q.v.). See also the note below the description of area 3. Note that the capstan arms can be removed and might be used as clubs. They have been left in the capstan by express orders of the Captain who wants to be able to make a quick get-away if this should prove necessary.

## 3. POOP DECK

The tiller is the most obvious feature of this area, rising from the deck about 6' from the stern and having a horizontal arm some 6' long. Against this arm, on the starboard side and apparently looking coastwards, leans a human figure.

Leaning on the starboard rail and looking towards the coast are three human figures. The one nearest the stern seems to be holding something in his hand at shoulder level; occasionally he seems to adjust it in some way.

The man leaning against the tiller bar is smuggler no. 6. The others, from fore to aft, are the magic-user Punketah, the ship's captain Sigurd 'Snake Eyes' and smuggler no. 5. The latter holds a bullseye lantern which has a signalling shutter over its lens; from time to time he moves the shutter as he gives the prearranged signal.



NOTE: if the agreed period of signalling is over by the time an invading party observes areas 1, 2 or 3, the positions of the smugglers will have changed. The captain (having given orders to set sail) and the magic-user will have returned to their respective cabins, while the mate will be organising smugglers nos. 1, 4, 5 and 6 in their tasks preparatory to sailing. Smugglers 2, 3 and 7, with the bosun, will be on their way to the main deck from area 11 via area 10. In extreme circumstances the party may not arrive and be in a position to observe until the ship is on the point of getting under way, in which case all the smugglers plus the mate and bosun will be on deck and going about their various tasks.



## 4. GALLEY STORES

From iron hooks set into the ceiling hang three long strings of sausages, a large ham and a hunk of meat. Against the hull are three sacks. Set against the bulkhead beside the door are a cask and a ceramic jar. Against the other bulkhead are set a large and a small cask and another ceramic jar. There is an opening in the latter bulkhead about 3' square and with its lower edge about 3' above the deck. There seems to be nothing of value here and the area is apparently unoccupied.

The meat is salt beef, the sacks contain dried beans, the casks contain flour, salt and ale respectively. The jars contain honey and olive oil respectively.

## 5. SHIPS STORES

Two coiled lengths of rope and three rolls of sailcloth lie on the deck alongside a large box. A large wooden cask stands next to six lengths of wood planking. Set into a wooden rack, fastened to the bulkhead by the door are two metal-headed hammers, two wooden mallets, two saws and an adze. There is an opening, about 3' square and with its lower edge about 3' above the deck, in the other bulkhead. There seems to be nothing of value here and the area is apparently unoccupied.

Each rope is 100' long. The box contains copper nails and the cask is three quarters full of hard, dry tar.

## 6. SHIP'S GALLEY

You have obviously entered the galley.

There is a crude metal stove (unlit) against the hull beneath the porthole. It has an adjustable metal chimney which can be placed through the porthole when this is opened. Beside the stove is an open metal bin containing sticks of wood kindling, and beside this is a large wood table, bolted firmly to the deck with a thick top criss-crossed with score marks. The table has a large drawer.

Hanging from hooks set into the hull above the table are two iron frying pans, two saucepans and a skillet. Set against the bulkhead opposite is a large cask which seems to be full of a clear liquid. Beside this stands a wooden cupboard. Against the bulkhead beside the forward door is a wooden upright chair, while hanging from the centre of the deck above is an unlit, hooded lantern.

Again there is nothing of significant value and the area is unoccupied. The drawer, which is unlocked, holds an assortment of butcher's knives, saws and choppers. The cask contains water while the cupboard contains a miscellany of tin mugs, small and large tin plates, wooden platters and a metal dipper.

## 7. LIZARD MEN'S QUARTERS

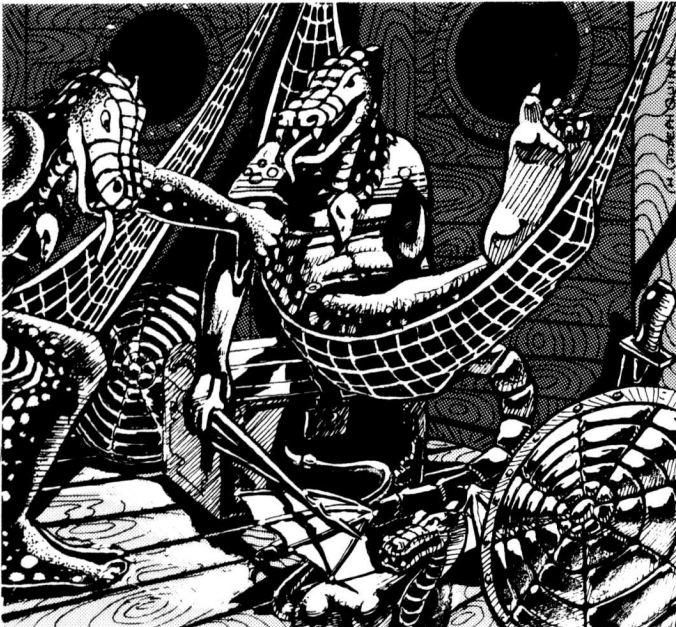
There is a distinct odour about this room which reminds you of a marsh or swamp — not fetid, not oppressive, but certainly noticeable. In the centre of the area is a wood table, bolted to the deck. On the table is a silver jug half full of a red liquid; with it are three pewter mugs. Round the table are set three wooden, upright chairs while an unlit, hooded lantern hangs from the deck above.

In the gloom you can see that there are three hammocks — one at each end of the cabin (slung between the bulkhead and one of the ship's ribs), the third across the corner of the cabin from next to the aft door to the central bulkhead. Each hammock appears to be 'occupied'.

A small chest or box of some sort is lying under the most forward hammock. There appear to be weapons under each of the hammocks.

The silver jug on the table contains wine and is worth 100 gp but the pewter mugs are of no value.

A lizard man is asleep in each hammock (AC 5; HD 2+1; hp 12; #AT 3 or 1; DM 1-2/1-2/1-8 or by weapon type; see the Appendix for full statistics). If there has been little or no noise on the main deck and adjacent rooms, and if the party enters quietly, the lizard men will not be aroused (but the pseudo-dragon will alert one of them — see below).



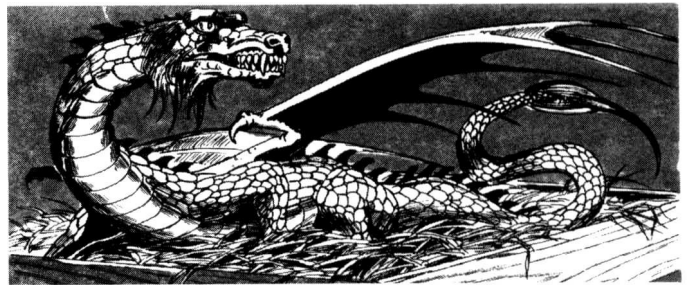
Under the hammocks are arms and armour:

Large shield and broadsword — under hammock by aft door (lizard man no. 2)

Three javelins — under hammock in corner (lizard man no. 3)

Large shield and broadsword — under forward hammock (lizard man no. 1)

There is also a chest — wooden with iron bands — under the third hammock. The chest is locked and the lock is trapped with a poisoned needle (type A insinuating poison). The chest contains 1,000 ep (this is the second part-payment for the consignment of weapons, to be handed over on completion of delivery). The key to the chest is fastened to the inside of the shield under the same hammock.



Lying in a small, special nest in the corner behind the chest is a pseudo-dragon (AC 2; HD 2; hp 13; #AT 2; DM 1-3 and poison sting). This is the companion and pet of lizard man no. 1. Because of the chameleon-like powers of this creature, it is 80% undetectable to characters unable to see invisible objects (though it can see invisible objects and persons itself).

Due to the presence of this little creature, it will be impossible for anyone to enter this area unnoticed, and as long as its companion lizard man is alive it will fight to defend him and his treasure from all his enemies. Once the lizard man is dead the pseudo-dragon will only fight if attacked first and only for as long as an attack is sustained on it.

Note that the pseudo-dragon will normally fight independently — it will not be in contact with its lizard man companion and will therefore not confer its magic resistance on him.

Once lizard man no. 1 is dead, there is a basic 50% chance that the pseudo-dragon will select one human/humanoid party member as its new companion. This member must be one who has not actually attacked lizard man no. 1 or the pseudo-dragon itself, and the little creature's order of preference from among the party members will be (1) a druid (2) a ranger (3) any character of neutral good alignment (4) any character having neutral in his alignment but not evil (5) any magic-user having good in his alignment.

Where there is a parity among party members as regards the listed preferences, then these will be cumulative in effect. For example, the pseudo-dragon will give preference to a neutral good magic-user over a neutral good cleric. Where two or more party members have equally valid claims to preference then the Dungeon Master must decide the issue. *There will only be one chance for the entire party and not one for each eligible party member.* Should there be no eligible party member present, or should the percentage die roll be a failure, then the pseudo-dragon will seek to escape by flying away at the earliest opportunity.

If the charisma score of the individual concerned is 15 or above it enhances the basic 50% chance by a further 5% for each point of charisma over 14. Non-player characters are not eligible for selection by the pseudo-dragon.

**Note:** the DM may query how long it takes the pseudo-dragon to awaken and alert its lizard man companion, assuming the latter is not alerted by the party's entry. It will communicate the warning rapidly — in one segment — and the warning will appear as a dream to the lizard man. However, it will take him the rest of that round to waken and become aware of the actuality. At the end of one round he will be fully awake and alert (though not, of course, carrying his sword and shield).

**Note on Melee:** this room has dimensions of 10' x 10' and contains three lizard men, three hammocks, a chest, a table and chairs. It will also, in the event of melee, contain some party members. Melee with weapons longer than 3' will normally be impossible and the DM should enforce this strictly. If a character insists on using a weapon which would, in the circumstances, be virtually impossible to wield properly, penalise that character's 'to hit' roll severely. The lizard men will not even attempt to use their javelins, broadswords or shields, instead relying on teeth and claws.

## 8. PUNKETAH'S QUARTERS

This seems to be one of the 'master' cabins. The furnishings and fittings are of good quality and the place is clean and tidy.

A single bunk, made-up with bed linen, has its head against the bulkhead running along the centre-line of the ship next to what appears to be a wooden partition squaring off the corner near the main deck.

In the centre of the room is a polished wood table, apparently bolted to the deck. On the table is a silver bowl containing an assortment of fruit, a silver carafe half full of a light red liquid and a silver goblet. Against the table are set two upright, wooden chairs and a padded, leather chair.

On the deck under the porthole in the stern is a wooden, brass bound chest. Beside it is a pair of highly-polished black leather boots.

From the centre of the deck above, over the table, hangs a hooded lantern (unlit).

The cabin appears to be unoccupied.

This cabin is the private cabin of Punketah, the magic user (see Appendix).

The values of the 'obvious' items are:

Silver bowl	-	150 gp
Silver carafe	-	150 gp
Silver goblet	-	100 gp

The carafe contains a pleasant wine, very mild in its effects. On a peg behind the door hangs a robe, maroon in colour but of no particular value.

The chest is locked and trapped (poison gas cloud — save vs. Poison or sleep for 1-6 hours). It contains various items of clothing, none of any value, and a leather purse holding 50 gp.

In a secret compartment in the lid of the chest (detect as secret door) is Punketah's spell book, contents:

**First level: read magic, magic missile, sleep, mending, spider climb**

**Second level: web**

On the last page of the book there is written, in the common tongue, the word 'ABRACAPHAGIC' which is the command word

for his wand of magic detection. With the spell book there is also a hollow metal tube, sealed with a cap at one end, which contains a magic-user's scroll of gust of wind.

The left boot has a hollow swivel heel inside which is the key to the chest. Using the key to open the chest will set off the trap unless the latter is detected and disarmed.

In normal circumstances Punketah will not be in his cabin, but if events are such that the DM decides he has returned from the poop deck, he will be sitting at the table, apparently deep in thought (probably considering research of new spells). Note the secret door connecting this cabin to the captain's.

## 9. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

This seems to be one of the 'master' cabins. The furnishing and fittings are of good quality and the place is clean, though somewhat untidy.

A single bunk, made-up with bed linen, has its head against the bulkhead running along the centre-line of the ship next to what appears to be a wooden partition squaring off the corner near the main deck.

A writing desk is set against the hull below the stern porthole; it has a drawer on each side and three trays on the top. Also on the desk top, just in front of the trays, there is an inkpot, two quill pens, a small knife and a pewter, pepper-pot-like container. Against the desk is set a wooden, upright chair, while beside the desk is set a wooden, brass bound chest.

Against the hull, on the starboard side, is a padded leather couch. In front of it a bearskin rug lies on the deck while beneath the couch can be seen a fairly large metal box. An unlit hooded lantern hangs from the centre of the deck above.

The cabin appears to be unoccupied.

Of the trays on the desk top next to the pepper-pot container (which is nearly full of fine sand), one is empty, another pertains bills and receipts for various items of marine supply. The last contains several letters of a personal and alarmingly intimate nature from three different ladies in three different ports (each of whom is under the common misapprehension that she is Mrs. Sigurd 'Snake Eyes') and a curious, semi-literate document requesting a further supply of ironware "as per previous consignments and at the agreed terms." The signature here is in the form of a pictoglyph and shows a lizard with forked tongue extended.





The last item is of course a request from the lizard men for further weapons to be supplied. The DM must exercise caution here in not making the document too explicit — the lizard men would not want the document to fall into the wrong hands and will have concealed as much of the real meaning of the request as possible consistent with making the request clear to the Captain. Use words like 'goods' — on no account 'weapons'.

The two desk drawers are locked and the key for them is in Sigurd's belt pouch. The first drawer contains four small, crystal phials containing potions, two of **healing**, one of **cure disease** and one of **neutralise poison**. These are labelled in the common tongue. The drawer also contains four dirty glass tumblers, a half empty bottle of brandy and the key that unlocks the chains holding the Aquatic Elf prisoner (see room 14).

The second drawer contains a number of charts of various sea and coastal localities, all obviously prepared by professional cartographers, but behind these there is a last and crudely drawn chart (see the Appendix).

This chart indicates that the rendezvous point with the lizard men is at a small promontory beside a river in the tidal marshes, 10 miles south-south-west of the town of Saltmarsh.

The bearskin rug covers the hatch in the floor which provides access to area 13.

A grey cloak (no special properties) hangs on a peg on the back of the door. The wooden chest beside the desk is unlocked and untrapped. It contains items of clothing including a well-worn but comfortable pair of carpet slippers.

The iron box under the couch is trapped — scything blade for 1-6 hit points of damage. The key is in Sigurd's belt pouch, but opening the box with the key will set off the trap unless the latter is detected and disarmed. The box contains 1,000 ep — the first half of the payment from the lizard men for the weapons.

Note the possibilities afforded by the secret door to cabin 8.

## 10. CREW'S QUARTERS

Various unpleasant odours of human occupation compete for recognition here, stale perspiration emerging as (just) dominant. This is obviously the crew's quarters and appears to fill the entire forward part of this deck.

There is a companion-way staircase leading upwards from a point about 6' from the bulkhead. Near it, more to starboard, is a door.

Around the perimeter of the cabin, slung between hooks on the bulkhead and on supporting poles, are eight hammocks. To judge from the slack way in which they hang, the hammocks appear to be unoccupied at present. Beneath each hammock is a brass-bound wooden sea chest — most are closed but two have open lids, and appear to contain clothes.

In the centre of the cabin is a long plain wooden table with a bench along each of its long sides. These items appear to be bolted to the deck. The table is stained and dirty and has an untidy pile of dirty tin plates and cups roughly stacked in a large tin bucket below it. Over the table, hanging from the deck above, is an unlit hooded lantern.

Against the starboard side, adjoining the porthole, is an area which appears to have been closed off by cheap, dirty cloth hangings extending from ceiling to floor.

The cabin appears to be unoccupied at present. It is smelly, dirty and untidy and most unpleasant to be in.

There is nothing of value and little of interest here. The curtained area contains two large tin buckets standing side by side on the floor. Both are empty but they are stained and dirty and emit a foul smell. Perhaps this section should be given no further explanation....

The sea chests all contain clothes and other personal effects. The garments are all stained, grubby and in poor condition. Of minor interest among the remaining items to be found are the following (the chests are not numbered in any particular order):

In chest 1 — a pack of well-used, greasy playing cards examination will reveal two identical aces of spades).

In chest 5 — two sets of dice, one set being 'loaded.

In chest 7 — a book of addresses and names of ladies in various parts of the local area; a number of these have brief comments by them concerning the 'merits' of the ladies in question.



## 11. CARGO HOLD

There is some source of light in here which shows that this is a cargo hold. Through the centre runs a section of the main mast; beside it, narrow wooden stairs lead up to the hatch above. Against the aft bulkhead are stacked bolts of cloth, lashed by ropes to brackets bolted to the deck so they are secure. On each side there are stacked a large number of small casks, again secured by ropes to the deck. In places the walking-space between stacks of merchandise is restricted, but the place is obviously well organised.

The light source is a lantern hanging from the deck above just forward of the main mast.

The bolts are of silk; there are 90 of them, each 3' long by 1' diameter and each worth 100 gp. The casks are each 1' 6" high by 1' diameter; there are 304 casks in total, of which 81 contain brandy, 219 fine wine, three scented soaps and one salt. These casks are worth 50 gp, 10 gp, 75 gp and 15 gp each respectively. All this contraband is securely stowed.

(Note that, though the total value of the contraband is 15,480 gp, a 25% excise duty will be levied on this merchandise by the people of Saltmarsh, making the haul worth 11,610 gp to the party.)

The map of the hold shows barrel shapes which are intended to illustrate the area of deck taken up by these casks. They do not represent the actual sizes of the casks.

Unless the alarm has been raised on deck, there will be four smugglers in the hold when the party arrives (See the Appendix for full statistics). Leaning on the stack of casks immediately to port of the main mast, clutching some documents, is the ship's Bosun — 'Foul' Frithoff. Near him, aft of the main mast and talking raucously to each other about their female 'conquests' are smugglers nos. 2 and 3. Just inside the forward door, apparently counting the casks on the starboard side, is smuggler no. 7.

Note what has been said in the section **FEATURES OF THE SMUGGLERS' SHIP** about the combustibility of some of the contraband. The party must be careful in this area if naked flames are employed for any reason.

Note also that the party will probably see the hatch covering the access to the bilge. forward of the mast; a plain wooden hatch cover.

## 12. BOSUN'S CABIN

This cabin appears to fill half the stern section of this deck, with one bulkhead running along the centre line of the ship. Along this bulkhead, leading upwards and forward, is an enclosed companion way. At its foot, a door in the central bulkhead seems to lead to the other half of the stern section.

In the centre of the cabin there is a plain wood table on which stands a pewter flagon and a pewter mug. Beside the table is a wooden chair and over the table, hanging from the deck above, is an unlit hooded lantern. Also hanging from the deck above, at the aft end of the cabin, is a large cage in which there is a parrot, apparently asleep. Next to the porthole hangs a hammock, apparently unoccupied. Beneath it is a brass-bound, wooden sea chest.

The cabin appears to be unoccupied (except for the parrot).

The sea chest is neither locked nor trapped. It contains only some garments — grubby and of no value. Concealed by the garments is a locked (but not trapped) iron box which contains 200 sp, a spear, a dagger and a crossbow (the Aquatic Elf's weapons — see Appendix). The crossbow is damaged beyond repair. The key is in the bosun's belt pouch.

The flagon is almost full of rough cider — a strong brew which is classified as a strong intoxicant.

When anyone enters the cabin, the parrot will immediately wake, squawk, say "Pieces of Eight — Pieces of Eight", squawk again and then go back to sleep. Its cries will in no way alert or alarm the smugglers — they are accustomed to it and most regard it as a nuisance.

Note the secret door to area 14. It is possible that the prisoner in that area (see below) will hear the party in the Bosun's cabin. Whether he shouts to try to attract their attention in these circumstances depends a great deal on what he hears, and the DM must judge according to the circumstances. As guidelines, amongst the things he might overhear which would encourage him to shout are:

- generally, matters which are consistent with his Neutral Good alignment;
- an Elven voice;
- the Elven tongue;
- a clear indication that the party is anxious to put a stop to the smuggler's activities;

while some of the things which would discourage him are:

- generally, anything contrary to the basic precepts of his Neutral Good alignment;
- anything apparently hostile to the Elven race or to non-humans in general;

- talk of murder or other violent brutality;
- anything apparently hostile to aquatic creatures.

However, it should be noted that *the prisoner speaks and understands the elvish tongue only*.

## 13. MATE'S CABIN

This cabin appears to occupy half the stern section of this deck, with one bulkhead running along the centre line of the ship. Along this bulkhead, leading upwards in the direction of the bow, is an enclosed companion way. At its foot a door in the central bulkhead seems to lead to the other part of the stern section. On a peg on this door hangs a dark blue cloak.

A single bunk, the bed-linen heaped in an untidy pile, is set against the hull under the porthole. At its foot is a brass-bound wooden sea chest, its lid closed. Under the bunk is a brass box, also closed.

In the centre of the cabin is a plain wooden table apparently bolted to the deck. On it are two books, one open and propped up against the other. Beside the table is a wooden chair. Hanging from the centre of the deck above, over the table, is an unlit, hooded lantern.

Just aft of the hook which carries the lantern is an obvious hatch, 3' square.

The cabin appears to be unoccupied.

The sea chest is neither locked nor trapped and contains some garments and a pair of boots — mostly quite old but reasonably clean.

The brass box under the bed is locked but not trapped. The key is in the Mate's belt pouch. The box contains 500 sp.

The books on the table are:

- **Principles of Navigation** by Da Korma (open) and
- **Legal Distinctions in Letters of Marque** by Tazaar (closed).

Each book can be sold for 10 gp in any port or fishing town/village — it will be simple to find a purchaser in Saltmarsh.

The cloak has no special properties and no significant value.

## 14. SECRET PRISON CELL

A small, dark, oppressively cramped area only 4' wide at the most, squeezed in between the ship's stern and the adjacent cabin, this appears to be used as a cell, for there is a slim, human-like figure cowering in the far corner. The prisoner appears to be chained to the hull.

The figure is that of an Aquatic Elf who is chained to the hull; the key to unlock his chains is the one in the Captain's writing desk drawer. If the characters demonstrate friendship and release him, this Elf will have an interesting story to relate and will, furthermore, assist the party to the best of his ability in their undertaking.

However, he speaks and understands only the elvish tongue, and the following must be kept from the party unless/until communication is possible.

His name is Oceanus and he is a member of the tribe of Manaen who inhabit the coastal waters about 15 miles southwest of Saltmarsh. He is a 3rd/3rd level fighter/thief and his abilities are S 17; 1 11; W 10; D 18; C 13; Ch 12; hp 22. He was stripped of his weapons and armour when imprisoned, but though bruised and hungry, he has suffered no great injury and his spirit is undaunted



(see the Appendix for further details).

His tribe has noted, from a distance, the periodic arrival of the Sea Ghost at night at a supposedly deserted, coastal area. Suspicious of this mysterious behaviour, the tribal chief detailed Oceanus to follow the ship back to her port of origin and to discover what he could of these strange proceedings. This Oceanus did, and at the vessel's home port witnessed the purchase and stowing aboard of a large amount of weaponry.

The same night, Oceanus slipped aboard the ship to investigate things further, but he was no sooner on deck than he was surprised and stunned, to awaken some time later chained to this very spot.

He is uncertain as to how long he has been a prisoner or what his ultimate fate would have been, but if asked he will surmise about 48 hours for the former and unpleasant for the latter. He has no knowledge of the lizard men aboard (he has not seen them) nor does he or any member of his tribe know of the colony of lizard men for whom the arms are intended, as this colony is a new one only recently reoccupied and the lizard men there have taken pains to ensure that their presence is unnoticed by any of the local inhabitants.

During his imprisonment he has been brought rather unpleasant food three times and a cup of brackish, stale water about six times. On each occasion the bearer has been a large bully of a person with a hook instead of a left hand (the Bosun, though Oceanus does not know this) accompanied by another member of the ship's crew (actually smuggler no. 7) who has done nothing but hover uncertainly in the background. These visitations apart, he has been left to his own devices.

If invited to do so, he will join the party with enthusiasm and will stay with them throughout their remaining adventures, only then — and reluctantly — leaving them to return home, for he has

been fired with the spirit of adventure.

Indeed he will, if requested to do so, remain with the party for the adventures in modules **U2** and **U3**, in which circumstances the DM should ask one of the players to 'run' Oceanus for the rest of the adventure(s). At all times he will be as co-operative and as helpful as possible, playing a full role in the party's undertakings (he will, of course, expect a normal proportion of treasure).

## 15. THE SECRET CACHE

This cramped area, only 4' wide at the widest, is sandwiched between the adjacent cabin and the ship's stern. It contains a number of large, irregularly shaped bundles, wrapped in oilskins and bound with light rope. These are piled apparently at random on the deck, as though thrown in casually from the door.

This is the place in which the weapons are housed during their journey to the customers (the lizard men). There are eight bundles here at the moment:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | - | contains five morning stars  |
| 2 | - | contains five broad swords   |
| 3 | - | contains five small shields  |
| 4 | - | contains 10 javelins   |
| 5 | - | contains 10 javelins   |
| 6 | - | contains five broad swords   |
| 7 | - | contains five morning stars  |
| 8 | - | contains four small shields and a large shield; this latter is emblazoned on the front with the design of a lizard, with forked tongue extended. |

There is no identification of any sort on any of the bundles, nor is there anything else in this area.

## 16. THE BILGE

From the hatchway you can see a little in the gloom below. The area seems to stretch the full width of the ship and, for all you can see, the full length, for no bulkheads are in view. What must be the bottom of the ship is covered with a thick layer of wet sand (presumably the ballast) on top of which is an inch or so of greenish, greasy water. A scuttling noise towards the stern indicates there is some life here — perhaps living off the garbage thrown in occasionally by lazy crew, for there are heaps of garbage near the area immediately below the hatch, which have formed small 'islands' in the 'sea,' a particularly large one having formed at the base of the main mast. As you move your light source back and forward, you catch a yellowish reflection some 15' forward and to port of your position, in one of the garbage piles.

A number of rats eke out a precarious existence here, but they are of the normal variety and harmless.

The yellowish glint comes from two gold pieces partially embedded in a garbage 'island'. However, this particular islet also contains six rot grubs (AC 9; HD 1 hit point; #AT 0; DM Special Attack: burrow into flesh) which will attack any character incautious enough to rummage through the garbage. Simply picking out the two exposed coins will not render the character vulnerable.

Note that there is only 2' headroom in the bilge.

There is nothing else of interest or value in this area.

## 17. CROW'S NEST

This is not shown on the main plans, but is — predictably enough — high up the mast, 40' above the main deck. Access to it is achieved by the rope ladder whose foot is by the hatch on the main deck. It is an all-wood open platform, 10' square with wooden 'walls' 3' high and having a 2' square hatch which lets onto the rope ladder which in turn descends to the main deck.

The single occupant of this dangerous area at the start of the adventure (when the 'invading party' first approaches the ship) is smuggler no. 8. He, like his colleagues on the deck below, is looking towards the Haunted House and awaiting a signal. There is no chance that he will detect the party's approach to, or boarding of the ship if his colleagues below fail to do so — his gaze is fixed at a higher level. If those on the deck below detect the party's intrusion, his attention will be attracted (even if his colleagues forget to alert him) and he will descend with all speed to the deck to assist his mates. Otherwise he will be oblivious to the party's intrusion unless and until someone climbs the rope ladder or the rigging towards his position; he will always detect such an approach when the climber is 11'-16' below him, and will investigate — attacking if circumstances demand it with his shortbow.

Attacks made from outside the crow's nest on characters inside it are made at -3 'to hit' in addition to any other penalties that may also be in effect. This reflects the defensive bonus the 3' high walls of the crow's nest impart to any occupants.

## TREASURE FROM THE SEA GHOST

Note what has been said in the DM's descriptive section relating to area 11 about the value of the contraband and how much the party can expect to realise for it. With that exception, all treasure may be collected in full by the party members — the



Saltmarsh authorities will gladly give the reward in addition. The prize money value of the Sea Ghost herself (assuming she is not damaged) is 5,000 gp. There will be no excise duty levied on this amount.

The two fishermen (should they survive) should be given equal shares of all treasure collected, the calculation for them being the same as for any other member of the party (they cannot make any claim for magical items of any kind, however). Should one be slain in the course of the adventure, his surviving colleague will claim the deceased man's share on behalf of the bereaved dependents, and it may be a test of alignment within the party as to whether this claim is allowed. If both are killed, it will be for the party (failing them, the Town Council) to make the claim on behalf of both sets of dependents; the Council members will fight (orally only, of course) for this and again this could prove a test of the alignment of party members.

## CONCLUSION

That completes the description of the **SEA GHOST** adventure. If the party has successfully completed its mission, the seagoing side of the smuggling operation will have been rendered inoperative, and in addition the party will have gained some or all of the following information:

- a) in addition to smuggling contraband of the more conventional sort, the smugglers are running weapons to a colony of lizard men, for reasons which are at present obscure;
- b) the location of the lizard men's colony; and
- c) the fact that this weapon smuggling appears to have been going on for some months.

If they have enough information, the party should be able to deduce that the lizard men are planning either an attack on Saltmarsh (the only human habitation within miles of the lizard men's lair) or on some other place, location at present unknown.

The possibility, at least, of the former should provoke the party into warning the Saltmarsh Council (if they do not, the excise men will certainly do so if they are still alive) and this should lead directly to the adventure described in module **U2, DANGER AT DUNWATER**.

If the party fails to gain enough information, or makes the wrong deductions (or no deductions at all) then the DM must decide whether the party should be coaxed towards the **U2** adventure. If not, then adventuring in the Saltmarsh area would appear to be at an end! If the DM wishes to coax the party towards module **U2** and further adventuring, this must be done craftily without 'giving the game away' too much, for a party with too much information will probably have an unsatisfactory adventure. Rather, the DM must slyly bend the conversation this way and that amongst the players until at least a vestige of the right train of thought appears.

Remember that **U1** is a 'thinking players module' — neither the smugglers in the Haunted House nor their colleagues aboard the Sea Ghost should present a serious challenge to a well organised, intelligent party, though deductions of the truth (or at least as much of it as is exposed here) from the scraps of evidence will pose a greater challenge, as will the formulation of the correct policy to pursue for the next stage of this series of adventures.

## APPENDIX

### THE PLOT (precis for the Dungeon Master)

A gang of smugglers are running contraband (brandy, silk and such) on the ship Sea Ghost to a sleepy coastal area from where it can be distributed to a wider market. They have chosen an old house, locally reputed to be haunted, on the cliff near the small fishing town of Saltmarsh as their landing-point for they can obtain easy and secret access to the cellars without attracting local attention via a sea cave. To further cover their activities, they have taken steps to encourage the sinister reputation of the house and the leader of the shore-based part of the gang, being an illusionist, has used his spell powers to make the house a frightening place to visit, so the locals shun it completely. One of the 'receivers' of the contraband is a prominent merchant in Saltmarsh.

The smugglers are, additionally, running arms to a colony of lizard men for reasons which are explained in module **U2, DANGER AT DUNWATER**. The frequent visits of the ship have gone unnoticed by the people of Saltmarsh but they have aroused the curiosity of a tribe of Aquatic Elves nearby and a member of the tribe has been sent to investigate.

Though they are too frightened to do anything themselves about the Haunted House, the people of Saltmarsh would be very grateful if its menace were removed!

## DESCRIPTIONS OF HUMANS AND MONSTERS

### THE HAUNTED HOUSE — Roster of Smugglers

**SANBALET** — the smugglers' leader, a Master Trickster (4th level illusionist). S 9; 1 15; W 10; D 16; C 10; Ch 14. hp 11; AC 8 including dexterity bonus. Armed with a normal dagger and carries two other daggers on his person. Alignment CE. Memorised spells:

**First level: colour spray, hypnotism, wall of fog**

**Second level: invisibility**

(He has previously employed his **magic mouth** spell to reinforce one of the 'traps' in the house.)

Sanbalet wears an old, faded robe and soft shoes. An old leather belt round his waist carries two daggers (the one he normally uses is in a sheath strapped to his left forearm, concealed by the sleeve of his robe) and a belt pouch containing 7 gp, 5 sp, 3 ep, the key to his chest, a set of 'loaded' dice and three gems each worth 250 gp. A second, smaller, belt pouch contains the material components for his memorised spells.

**HUMAN SMUGGLERS** — there are eight human smugglers, all 1 st level fighters with 8 hp each. Each wears leather armour (AC 8 - no dexterity bonus) and is armed with broadsword and dagger. All are of CN alignment.

Each smuggler carries a small amount of personal wealth about his person:

No. 1: large gold ear-ring in right ear-lobe (15 gp); belt pouch containing 3 gp, 13 sp, 7 cp and a gem worth 200 gp.

No. 2: gold chain with 'lucky charm' round neck (60 gp); large gold ear-ring in right ear-lobe (15 gp); belt pouch containing 23 sp.

No. 3: pair of large gold ear-rings (50 gp the pair); belt pouch containing 15 sp.

No. 4: gold ring on finger (75 gp); belt pouch containing 6 sp.

No. 5: Gold bracelet (75 gp) on right forearm; belt pouch containing 3 gp.

No. 6: Large gold ear-ring (25 gp) in right ear-lobe; belt pouch containing 9 sp.

No. 7: 'Lucky charm' on chain round neck (60 gp); belt pouch containing 2 sp.

No. 8: 'Lucky charm' on chain round neck (60 gp); no other treasure.

**TWO GNOLLS** — see key to area 30.





### The Assassin

NED SHAKESHAFT — supposedly imprisoned in area 15, he is a Waghalter (3rd level assassin) pretending to be a 2nd level thief.

S 12; 1 11; W 10; D 14; C 15; Ch 12. hp 15 (including constitution bonus); AC 10. Alignment NE

No weapons (but see key to area 15).

### Sanbalet's Parchment and the Signalling System

Interpretation:

- = long flash (1-2 seconds)

x = short flash (1/4 second approx)

- x x x (line 1)— initial signal from ship to shore, this means roughly "We are here with another load — is it safe?"; it is flashed three times per hour (see **SEA GHOST — SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE**).

x - x - (line 2) — reply from shore to ship, meaning "Everything safe". To be flashed twice.

- - - (line 3) — confirmatory signal from ship meaning "We are beginning the unloading — come out to the ship".

### SEA GHOST — Excise Men and fishing boat

Corporal — Will Stoutly — 2nd level fighter. S 17; 1 10; W 9; D 15; C 12; Ch 9; hp 16. Alignment NG. Wears chain mail with a small helmet, no shield, effective armour class 4; armed with broadsword and dagger.

Private — Tom Stoutly — 1 st level fighter. S 17; 1 9; W 8; D 17; C 11; Ch 9; hp 8. Alignment NG. Wears leather armour with small helmet, no shield, effective armour class 5; armed with broadsword, dagger and light crossbow with eight bolts.

The fishing boat is a small craft but still large enough to transport the entire party with both the fishermen. It has four sets of oars and a single, step-down mast; the oars and rowlocks are muffled with sacking and the sail is of a dark coloured material. There are on board several lengths of rope (about 25' long) with a grappling hook, also muffled with sacking, at one end of each.

The boat has three hull points.

### SEA GHOST — Officers, Smugglers and 'Companions'

CAPTAIN — Sigurd 'Snake Eyes' is a Swashbuckler (5th level fighter). S 17; 1 11; W 10; D 15; C 15; Ch 7; hp 41. Wears chain mail and small helmet (no shield) for effective AC 4. Alignment NE. Armed with **long sword +1** (non-aligned) and normal dagger. He wears a gold ring set with small gems (50 gp). Belt pouch contains 5 gp, 3 sp, 2 cp, a gem worth 100 gp and two keys (one for his desk drawers, the other for his iron treasure chest).

MATE — 'Bloody' Bjorn is a Swordsman (3rd level fighter). S 17; 1 10; W 11; D 15; C 15; Ch 8; hp 21 including constitution bonus. Wears chain mail and small helmet (no shield) for effective AC 4. Alignment NE. Armed with **broadsword +1** (non-aligned) and normal dagger. He wears a gold finger ring (15 gp); belt pouch contains 5 sp, 7 cp and the key to his brass treasure chest.

BOSUN — 'Foul' Frithoff is a Swordsman (3rd level fighter). S 17; 1 8; W 10; D 15; C 13; Ch 7; hp 19. Wears chain mail and small helmet (no shield) for effective AC 4. Alignment NE. Armed with normal broadsword and dagger. His left hand is missing and has been replaced with an iron hook; he can attack with this hook (1-3 damage) at the same time as attacking with a weapon in his right hand, though the hook attack is at -2 to hit. He wears a gold ear-ring in his left ear-lobe (10 gp); his belt pouch contains 3 gp, 5 sp, 7 cp and the key to his small iron treasure chest.

HUMAN SMUGGLERS — there are eight human smugglers, all 1st level fighters with 8 hit points each. Each wears leather armour (AC 8 — no dexterity bonus) and is armed with short sword and dagger. In addition, smuggler no. 4 (on the forecastle) carries a light crossbow and eight bolts. Smuggler no. 8 has a shortbow and eight arrows. All are of CN alignment.

Each smuggler carries a small amount of personal wealth about his person:

No. 1: gold arm-band round left fore-arm (20 gp); belt pouch containing 3 sp, 7 cp.

No. 2: gold chain with 'lucky charm' round neck (10 gp); belt pouch containing 1 gp, 7 sp.

No. 3: gold finger-ring (5 gp); belt pouch contains 9 sp.

No. 4: gold chain with 'lucky charm' round neck (10 gp); belt pouch containing 50 gp gem.

No. 5: gold ear-ring in right ear-lobe (5 gp); belt pouch containing 11sp.

No. 6: gold arm-band round left fore-arm (20 gp); belt pouch containing 11sp.

No. 7: belt pouch containing 4 gp, 8 sp.

No. 8: gold finger-ring with small gems (75 gp); no belt pouch.

MAGIC-USER — Puketah is a Conjurer (3rd level Magic User). S 8; 1 17; W 9; D 18; C 11; Ch 9; hp 8. Wears a cloak and a magical **ring of protection +1** for effective AC 5. Alignment NE. He is armed with four darts and carries a **wand of magic detection** (37 charges); the command word (which he has memorised) is written in the back of his spell book — see the key to area 8. His memorised spells are:

**First level: magic missile, sleep**

**Second level: web**

His belt pouch contains 2 gp, 5 sp and two gems (200 gp and 75 gp) plus the material components for his memorised spells.

LIZARD MEN — there are three lizard men with identical characteristics: AC 5 (4 with shield); HD 2+1; hp 12; #AT 3 or 1; DM 1-2/1-2/1-8 or by weapon type. Lizard man no. 2 does not have a shield, but the other two have shields under their hammocks. They will only use their shields and weapons if meleeing outside their own quarters (area 7). When fighting in area 7 they will rely on their teeth and claws.

Lizard man no. 1 (sleeping in the hammock furthest from the main deck) is obviously the leader of this group. He wears a silver collar around his neck, value 5 gp; on it is a crudely engraved emblem of a lizard with forked tongue extended (cf. the pictoglyph on the document in the captain's cabin and the large shield in area 15).

**PSEUDO-DRAGON** — this creature, normally to be found in area 7, has the statistics noted in the key to that area. However, the DM should note the special abilities of this creature (consult the Monster Manual), particularly the effects of its 'special relationship' on its companions in terms of communication and magic resistance.

**AQUATIC ELF** — Oceanus, a 3rd/3rd level fighter/thief, is imprisoned in area 14. S 17; 1 11; W 10; D 18; C 13; Ch 12; hp 22. Alignment CG. He has been stripped of all equipment but is proficient with spear, dagger and heavy crossbow (the latter item is a special one designed by his tribe for underwater use;

in the context of the adventure series he will only be able to use spear and dagger). Note that he speaks and understands only Elvish.

## CREDITS

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 Development: Don Turnbull  
 Editing and Production: Tom Kirby, Sally Meadows, Graeme Morris, Don Turnbull  
 Art: Jim Holloway, Dave de Leuw, Harry Quinn, Stephen D. Sullivan  
 Play Testing: Jim Bamba, Michael W. Brunton, Chris Hall, Bill Howard, Steve Mote, Allan Ovens, Martin Pickering, Chris Rick, Dave Tant, Patrick Thompson, Don Turnbull, Mark Valentine, Pat Whitehead  
 Cartography: Graeme Morris

## CHARACTER ROSTER

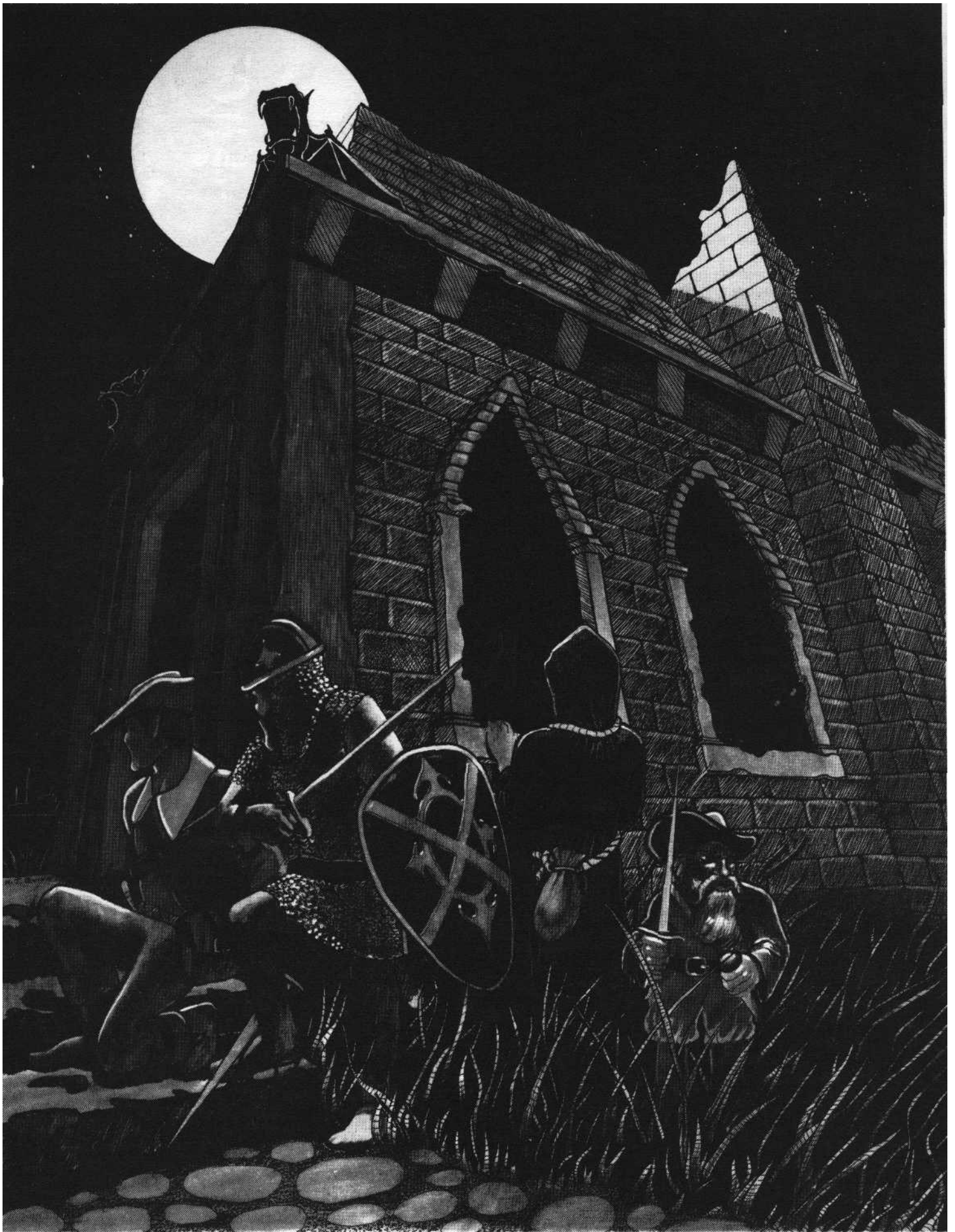
The tables on this page list 20 characters and suggested magic items for those characters. Players may use these characters rather than create their own, or they may be used by the DM as NPCs to round out the party. Players should be permitted to outfit their characters as usual, and choose their own alignment. All listed characters are 1st level. All listed armour classes are without shields.

### Characters

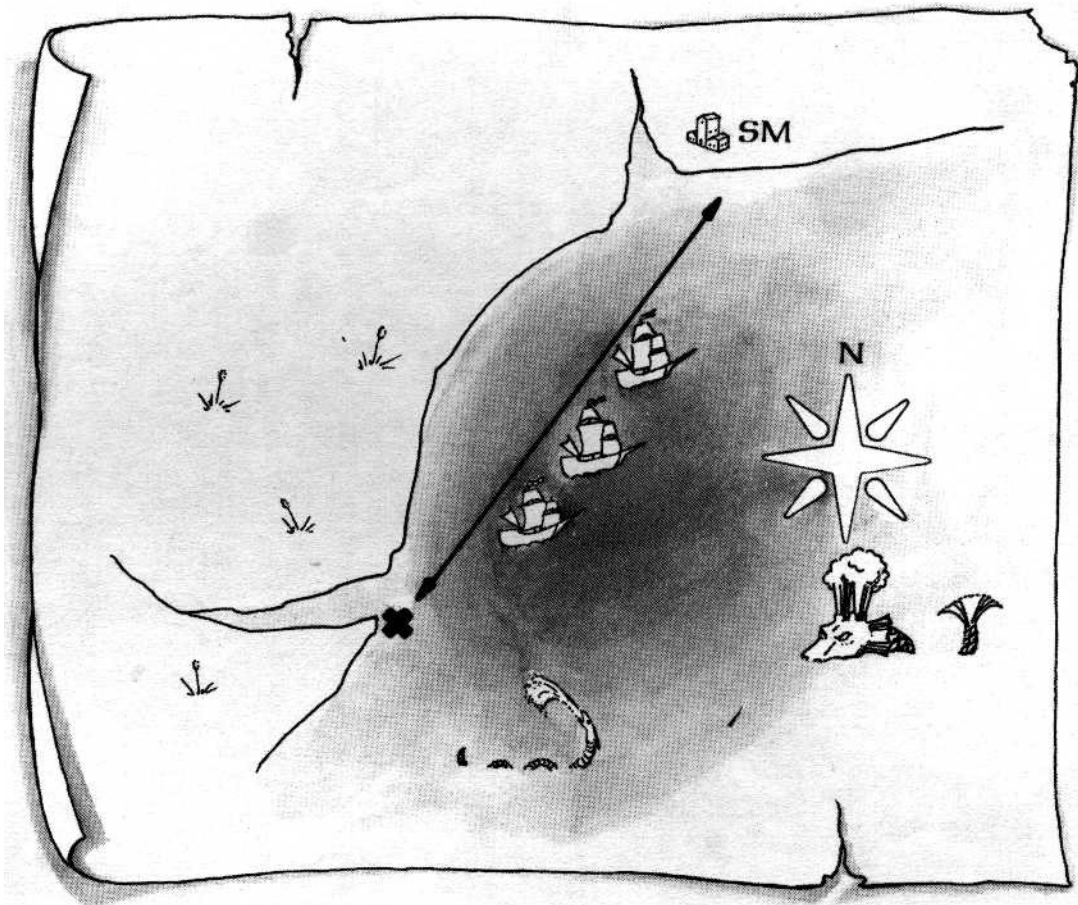
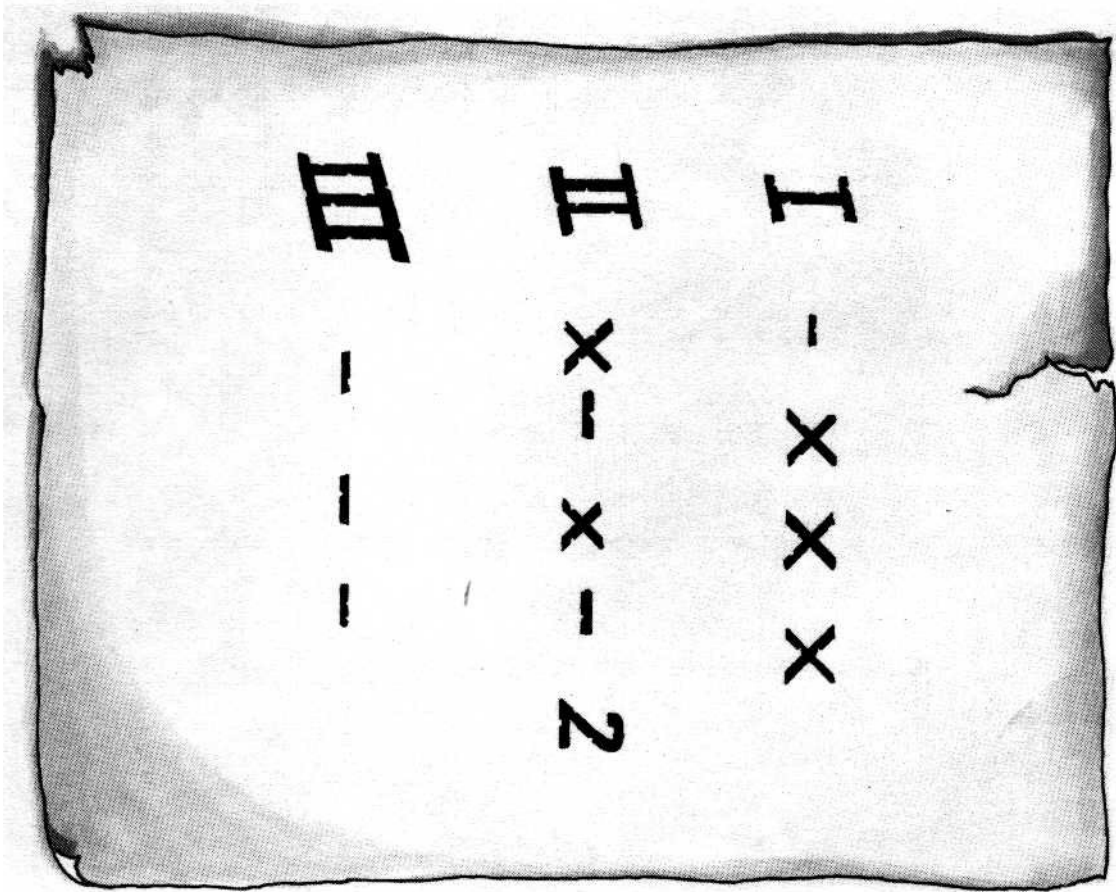
Name	Race	Sex	Class	hp	AC	S	I	W	D	C	Ch
1. Elaine	H	F	F	6	3	16	11	12	15	14	10
2. Geolin	D	F	F	6	4	16	10	8	11	15	9
3. Megaron the Bold	H	M	F	8	2	16	9	12	15	14	13
4. Leif Sternson	H	M	F	7	2	17	8	7	16	13	8
5. Tenbar	D	M	F	9	3	17	11	12	12	18	10
6. Griff	H	M	P	7	4	17	9	13	10	12	17
7. Arborius	H	M	R	10	5	15	13	14	13	14	10
8. Kellin	E	M	F/Mu	5	2	13	15	8	16	12	15
9. Elmorth	E	F	Mu	3	10	9	15	12	12	15	14
10. Hilgaarde	H	F	Mu	3	10	9	17	15	11	14	12
11. Mylor	H	M	Mu	3	10	9	16	10	12	11	15
12. Astenon	H	M	I	4	7	13	15	8	17	9	7
13. Caine the Despised	1/2E	M	C/MU	4	6	17	10	15	14	14	7
14. Gerald the Seeker	H	M	C	5	5	12	13	17	11	10	15
15. Lida the Holy	H	F	C	6	5	8	10	18	13	15	9
16. Nestor	H	M	C	5	5	15	11	17	9	13	13
17. Caledon	H	M	D	5	8	11	10	16	12	13	15
18. Radric	D	M	F/T	5	5	13	9	8	17	15	10
19. Theodore Dobbins	1/2	M	T	4	5	8	14	7	18	10	15
20. Grummash	1/2O	M	T	6	7	15	13	10	14	17	8

### Magic Items

1.	potion of <b>extra healing</b>	11.	scroll with <b>magic missile</b>
2.	<b>hand axe +1</b>	12.	<b>wand of enemy detection</b> , 2d6 + 5 charges
3.	<b>spear +1</b>	13.	scroll with <b>slow poison</b>
4.	<b>broadsword +1</b>	14.	potion of <b>fire resistance</b>
5.	<b>footman's pick +1</b>	15.	no magic items
6.	<b>broadsword +1</b>	16.	<b>mace +1</b>
7.	<b>10 arrows +1</b>	17.	potion of <b>invulnerability</b>
8.	Elfin chainmail, scroll with <b>knock</b>	18.	no magic items
9.	scroll with <b>read magic, unseen servant</b>	19.	<b>ring of feather falling</b>
10.	scroll with <b>dancing lights, shield</b>	20.	<b>leather armor +1</b>



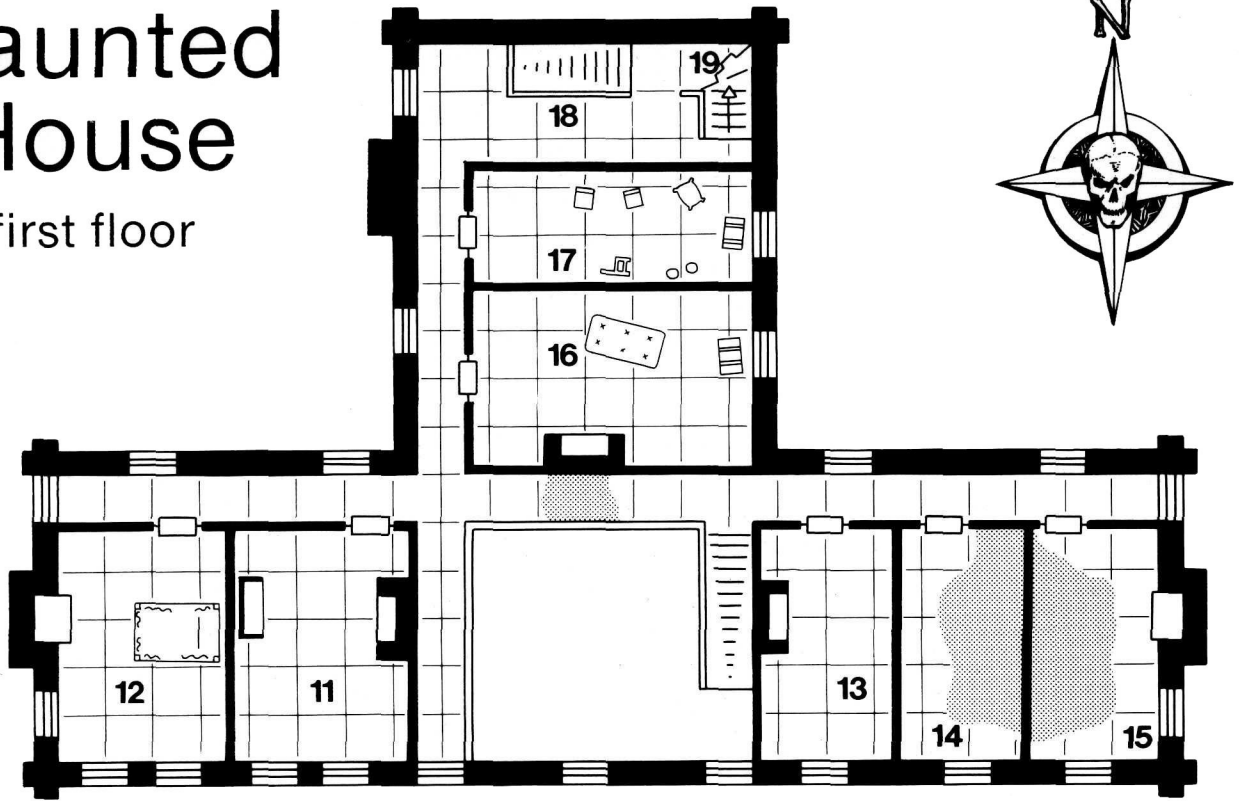




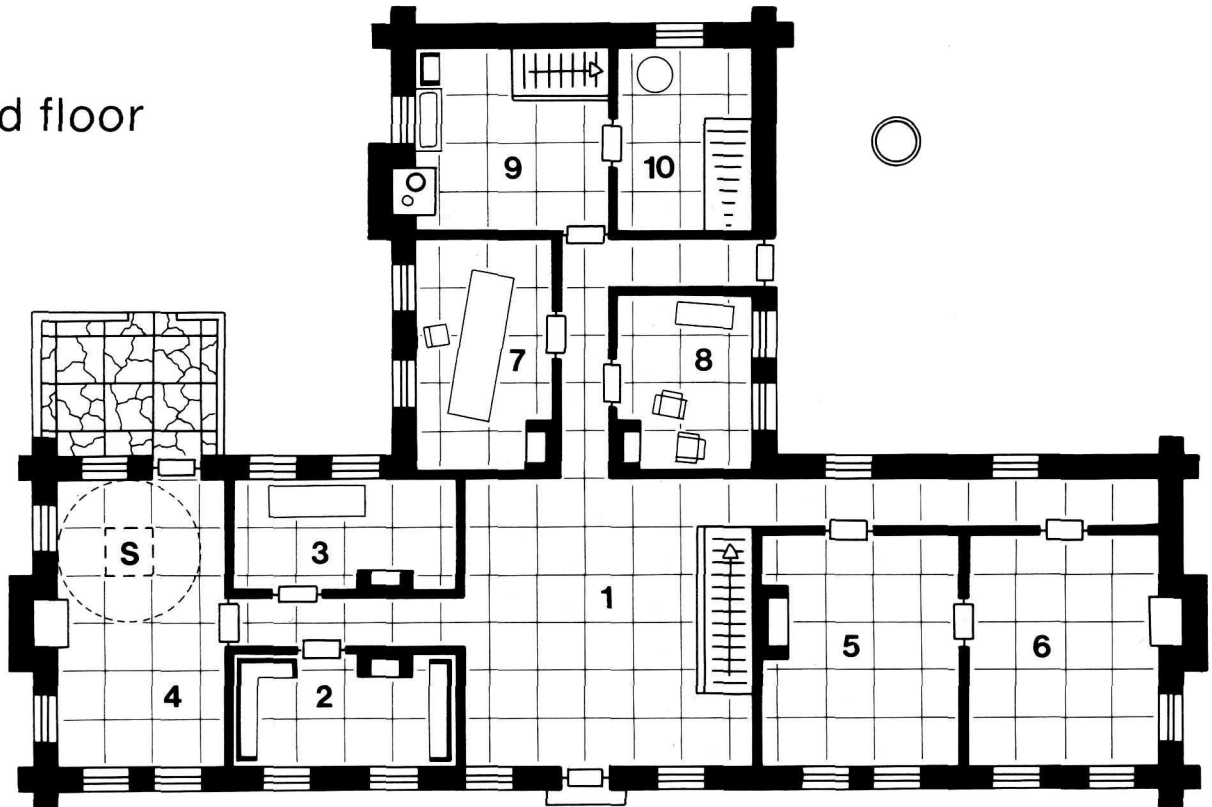










# Haunted House

first floor

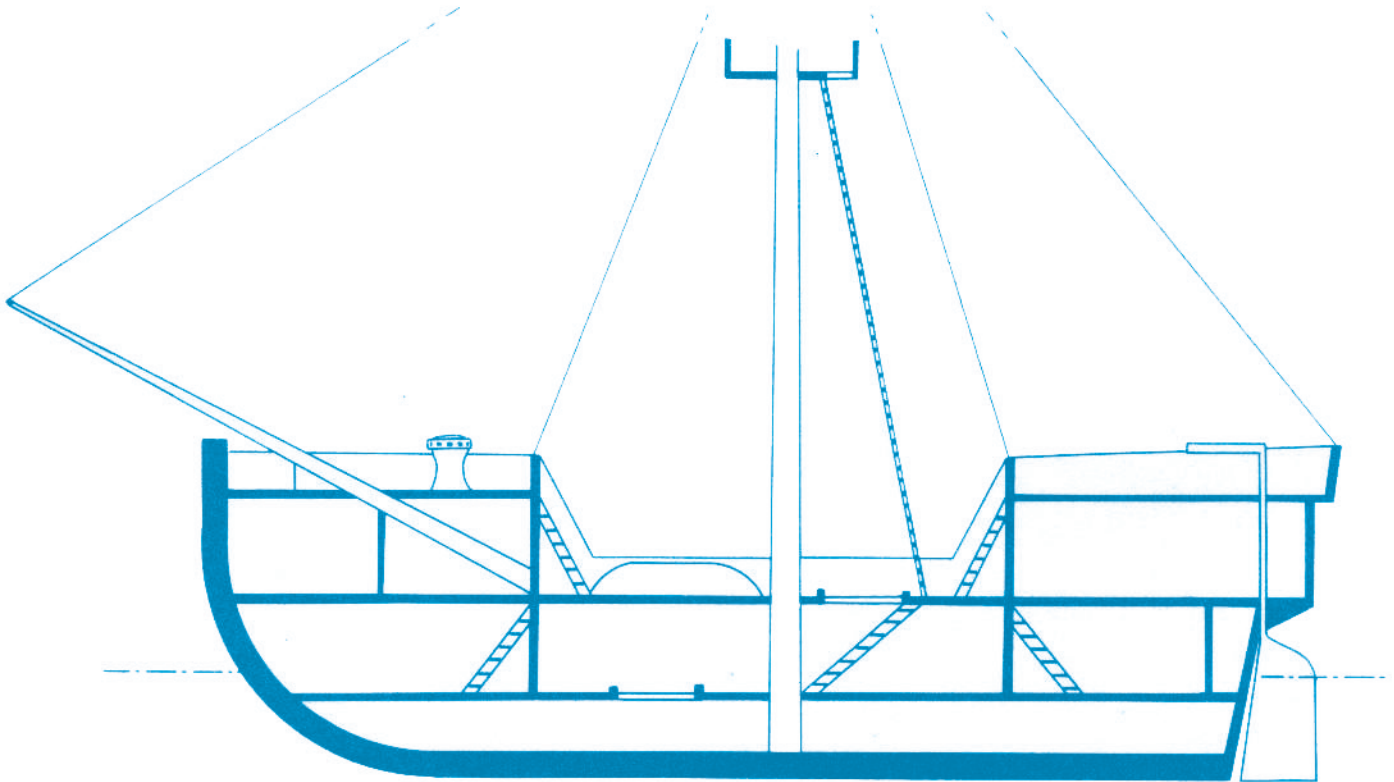
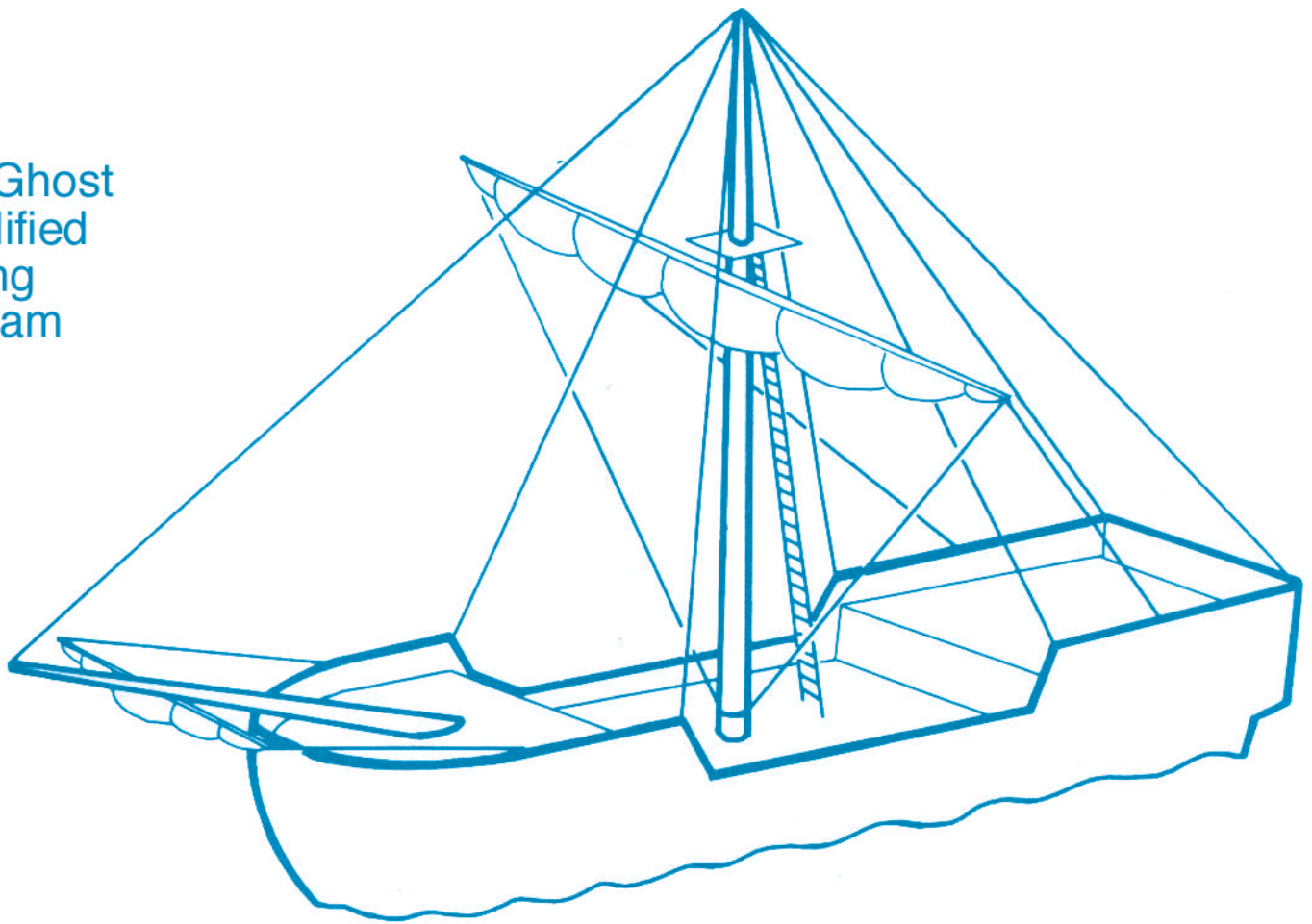


ground floor



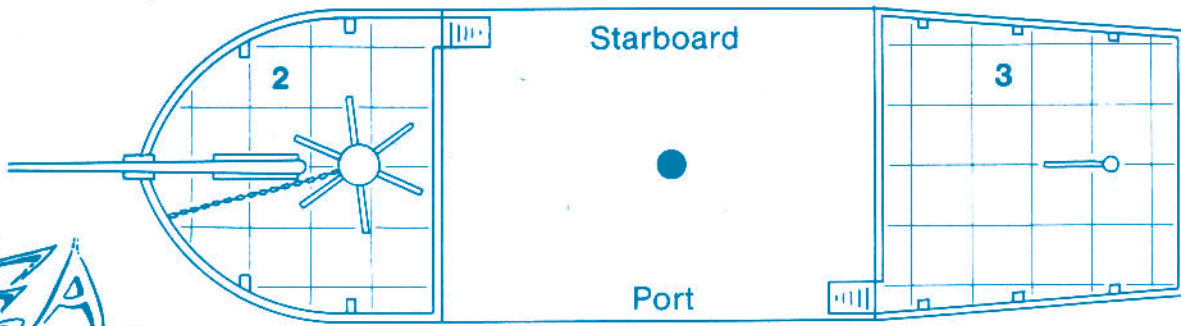
- |   |                                     |   |                 |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | cupboard, wine rack, bookcase, etc. |  | bench and stool |
|  | bin, box                            |  | sack            |
|  | cask, bucket, jar                   |  | chest           |
|  | well                                |  | bed             |

Sea Ghost  
simplified  
rigging  
diagram

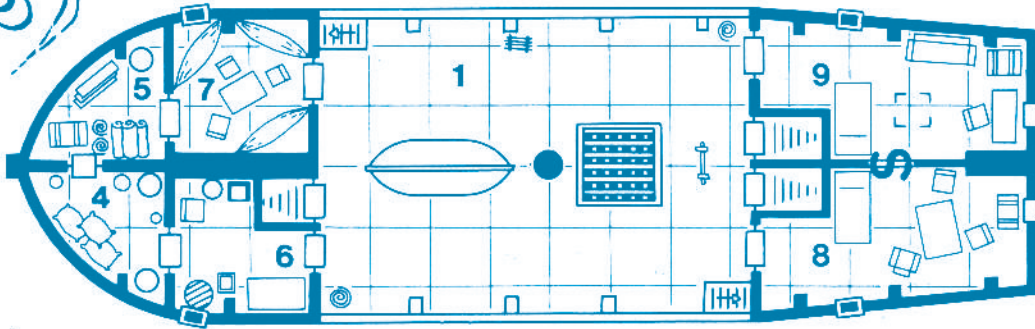


Sea Ghost  
longitudinal section

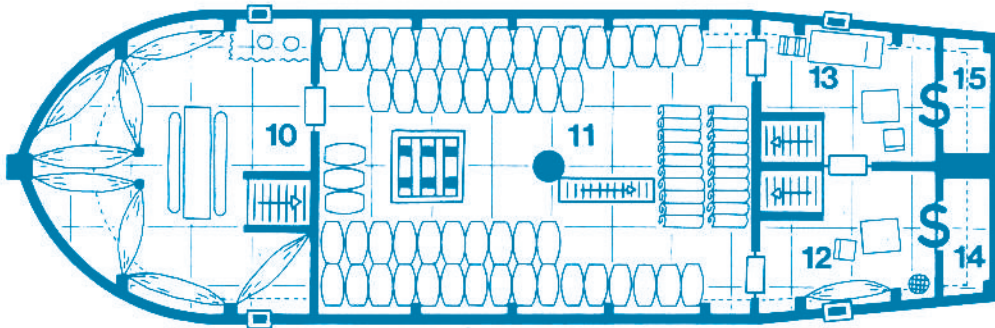
# SEA GHOST



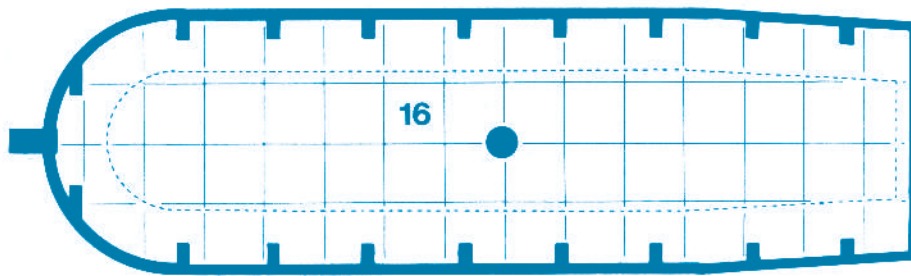
Upper Deck Level











Main Deck Level

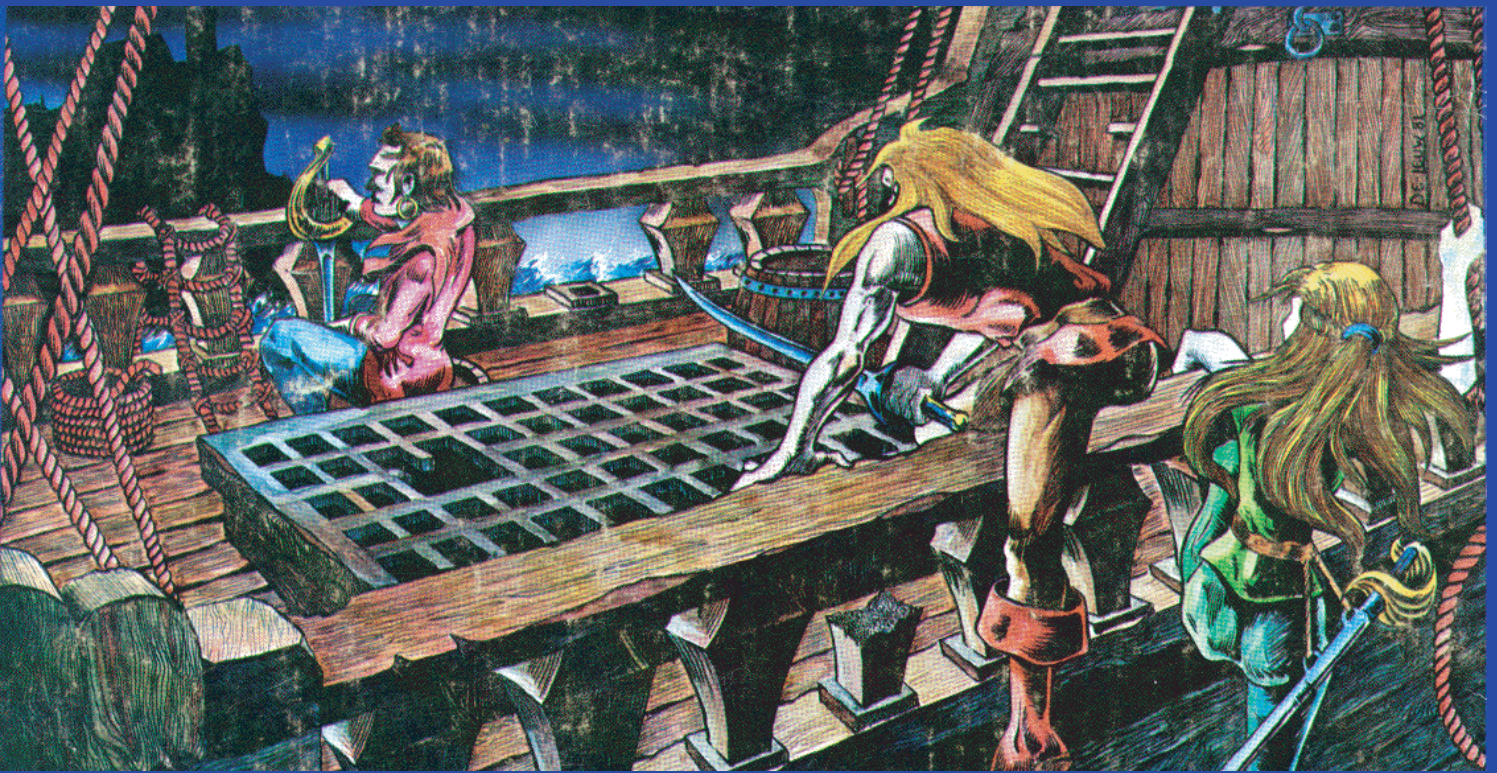


Hold Level



Bilges

-  door
  -  window
  -  secret door (double-sided)
  -  secret door (single-sided)
  -  open porthole
  -  closed porthole
  -  stairs up
  -  stairs down
  -  unsafe floor
  -  deck edge/curving hull
  -  table
  -  upright chair
  -  padded chair
- 1 square = 5 feet



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