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KRAKEN



ANDREW BOSWELL

The Slayer's Guide To Kraken

Andrew Boswell

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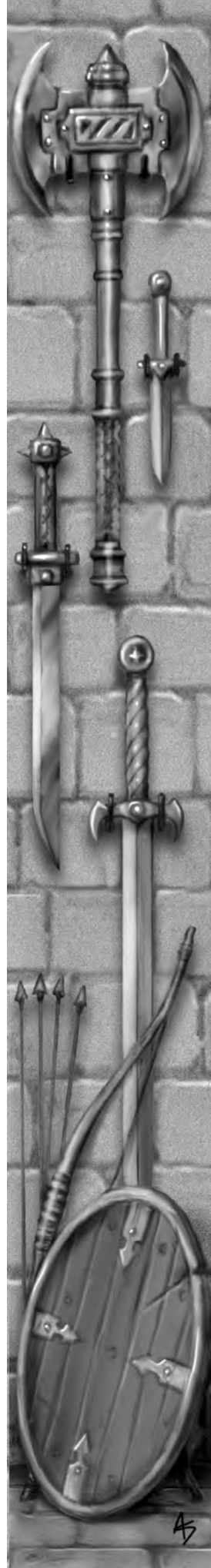
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INTRODUCTION

Nearly all monsters are shrouded in some mystery. Even the so-called ‘common’ beasts that plague the intelligent races are in some ways unknown despite efforts to probe their secrets. Many become increasingly familiar to us as we constantly ask of our friends and allies, and from this information we piece together what we can. However, there are some creatures that will forever resist our attempts. Those that live beyond the material world are, by definition, inexplicable: anything we can learn is so otherworldly as to defy interpretation. However, even here on this plane there are creatures that we cannot hope to gather much information on. Of these creatures, the kraken stands in the forefront as the most mysterious.

These behemoths, which dwarf all except the largest ships, dwell in the depths of the ocean with near-unimaginable pressure bearing down on them. They live for millennia, have the strength to drag whole ships beneath the waves, and possess powers and intellect that make them formidable foes. While no kraken ever encountered has been passive or friendly, neither have they been mindlessly destructive or stupidly evil, though to our eyes it may seem so. Their brain capacity likely exceeds our own and they rule a domain so different from ours that we cannot even begin to understand what motivates them. Even the habitats of coastal marine humanoids are so different from the ocean depths that these creatures can only guess at the mind of the kraken.

Yet even the darkest mystery may be solved by the application of logic. This manual represents the greatest gathering of information available concerning these beasts of the deep. Great personal expense, and no small investment by my patron, who has an unfettered interest in preserving free trade on the waves, has resulted in this: the first, most authoritative guide to the kraken. Disregard it at your peril, for herein lies everything that is currently known about these beasts, and therefore it may well contain the very instrument of your deliverance when the titanic tentacles enclose your ship in the dead of night...

THE SLAYER’S GUIDES

Each of the Slayer’s Guides deals with a specific species that may have been neglected, or is in need of attention to make them more ‘real’ for the hard-pressed Games Master. *The Slayer’s Guide to Kraken* presents, not a common foe that parties of all sizes might encounter and best, but a monster that only the very powerful would ever dream of tackling. In this manual you will learn about their mysterious origins, meet their god – the one true Kraken, discover how they were cast out onto this plane in shame, learn about their astounding physiology and their perverse societies.

KRAKEN – FALSE GOD OF THE DEEP

The kraken is a solitary beast of enormous power and age. Formed in the elemental plane of water but then cast out, each one is a demented, often insane, representative of their own religion. They are the unloved avatars of a god that rejected them. Now they seek to found religions in their own name, or to return to their home and wreak revenge.

Encounters with a kraken, for no mortal would ever wish to meet more than one, will seldom be to the adventurer’s advantage. In the deep sea, the kraken has *all* the advantages. On land, where a kraken may have created slave or subject societies, that society at large will resist assaults on their god. In the elemental plane of water, where more of their kind and indeed the patron deity of many non-humanoids dwell, they assume even more awesome powers. A kraken is not merely a monstrous foe – it is the core around which an entire campaign may be based.

KRAKEN

PHYSIOLOGY

The kraken, distinct from ordinary giant squid, which 'only' reach some 50 feet, are not native to this plane. They share many of the characteristics of those creatures, and this has led many to suppose that they are a product of natural evolution; however, the differences are quite marked. First and foremost is their enormous size, with kraken growing to be up to 200 feet long. Well over half of this length is tentacles, of which they have only eight, in comparison to the normal ten of other squid. Nestled at the base of the tentacles is the beak. Any unfortunate victim brought to the beak has little chance of escaping intact as its size, and the musculature powering it, is quite capable of biting through the hull of a ship.

Critical Hits Against Kraken

When attacking a kraken, a critical hit may have the additional effect of striking a specific location, such as an eye or tentacle. Whenever a critical threat is scored against a kraken, roll on the following table.

Critical Hit Location (roll 1d20)

- 1 Left Eye
- 2 Right Eye
- 3-10 Tentacle
- 11+ Body

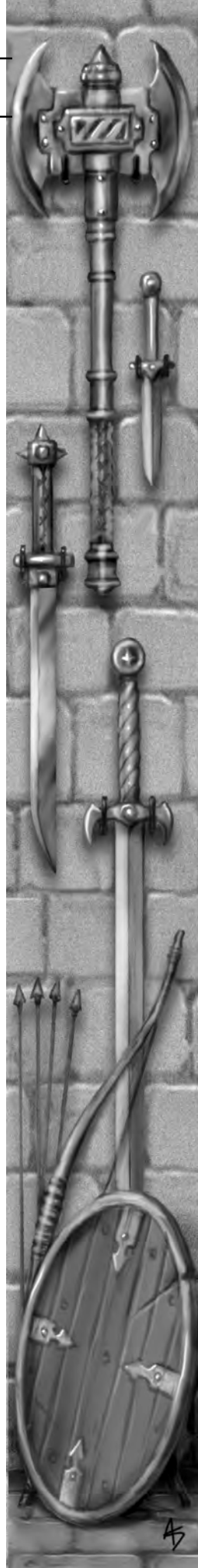
In addition to causing normal damage, any hit to an eye that causes 10 or more points of damage blinds that eye and will cause the kraken to disengage and flee. Kraken position themselves when attacking, so that their eyes are either below the surface of the water, or as far away as possible from the action. Any blow dealing 25 or more points of damage to a tentacle will sever it. If three or more tentacles are severed the beast will similarly flee.

If injured in this way, the kraken will recover from its wounds at a rate of five hit points a month, with eyes or tentacles growing back over the appropriate period. Even if the damage is magically healed, a new tentacle will still take five months to fully grow back, unless specific regenerative magic, such as a *regenerate* spell, or a *ring of regeneration* is used.

Their eyes are, quite simply, the largest of any living creature, being over two feet in diameter, capable of distinguishing colour and movement over long distances even in the lightless environment of the deep sea. Like the ordinary squid they are expert, though comparatively slow, swimmers who, through chemically controlled swim bladders, can descend to remarkable depths. It is speculated that they alone, of all the sea dwellers, can actually descend to the ocean's floor and return to the surface without imploding or exploding respectively. Movement and respiration are controlled in the same fashion as ordinary squids; that is, by sucking water into spaces around its head cavity and then expelling it out again. This fans water through the paired gills, each of which is easily as large as a rowing boat. There are no free air compartments in its body which allow it to withstand the compressive forces of the deep sea without rupturing, though of course its size diminishes as it moves further down in the water column. Movement up through the sea from great depths is undertaken slowly, not to avoid the bends (they do not breathe air and thus have no nitrogen to bubble), but to prevent the explosive expansion of the tissue itself.

To control its movement, the kraken has a large water jet that sits below the axis of the tentacles projecting out from the hood of the head. This is a very dexterous organ and can direct the flow of water in any direction, allowing the kraken to move freely. The fastest motion is attained when the jet is directed straight backwards (towards the creature's tentacles), which is what most people would expect.

Kraken eggs are laid in open waters. They are buoyancy-neutral and float at about the 2,000-foot mark. Each egg is laid from a batch of roughly two-dozen, with at least a mile or two separating it from its nearest sibling. They are approximately four feet long and distinctly oval, with only the enormity of the sea protecting them from predators, such as giant squid. After only thirteen or fourteen days the eggs hatch out into giant squid, differing from their natural cousins only in that they have eight tentacles, like their parents. However, from the moment of their birth they behave in exactly the same way as their giant-sized relatives. Perhaps the only interesting thing about the offspring of the kraken is that they instinctively recognise genuine kraken, becoming docile and submissive in their presence. It has been speculated that some form of communication may be taking place and we suspect





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that the offspring treat their elders with a religious awe but the truth is, we simply do not know.

Kraken Offspring

For all kraken offspring born in the material world use the giant squid presented in *Core Rulebook III*, with the exception that they have only eight tentacle rake attacks.

Bodily products useful to apothecaries such as the pen, ink, chromatophore cells, nerve fibres and skin are still valuable, but attract only half the value described later in this chapter, and are only half as effective.

Internally they have a single rigid structure: the so-called 'pen', which runs the length of the head and is consequently up to 65 feet in length. It is primarily a shell-like material and is used to give some rigidity as well as to anchor the musculature. Though rarely acquired, shipwrights prize this structure for its length, strength and workability. It can be cut and sawn to any shape required, and is occasionally seen in magnificent elven ships in the form of spars and sometimes even full masts.

Externally, most are covered with what are known as chromatophores. These are pigmented cells that can change colour on command and, while less expressive than those of the cuttlefish, are fully capable of transmitting a wide range of emotional information and putting on a magnificent show. A rare few are covered instead with cells that are bioluminescent, meaning that they glow from an internal source under the complete control of the kraken. In the upper depths of the sea where light can penetrate, these rare beasts have the typical uninteresting squid-like colouration. However, at the greater depths where there is no natural light, they are every bit as spectacular and expressive as their coloured counterparts. This colour control can be changed or cycled many times a second allowing complex patterns to be created. Clearly it is part of a language, presumably for communicating with others of its kind as well as other squid. This language has never been successfully translated.

Like the octopus, the kraken can expel a large quantity of ink from glands within the hood of its head. This is to provide a cover screen to allow escape if a combat is going poorly or to deter predators. Chemically the ink has a number of elements that are specifically distasteful to fish, but it is not poisonous. In fact, many sea-going cultures

consider the ink from an octopus to be a spicy delicacy: doubly so for kraken ink, though it would probably have to be the scarcest and most expensive of all the spices. Scarcer still is the ink that comes from the bioluminescent kraken. These beasts can squirt out a cloud of luminous ink in the same quantities as the more common black ink. At shallower depths this appears as a milky substance and is less effective as a screen. At greater depths, where black ink is similarly less effective, it creates a dazzling cloud that shocks darkness-acclimatised eyes and easily allows the escape of the producer. In both cases the ink is a valued component in magical scribing. Good money is paid the world over for genuine kraken ink of high purity and concentration.

Kraken Ink

At depths of less than 400 feet, the luminous ink cloud provides only one-half concealment, and creatures within the cloud suffer the effects of dense fog. At depths greater than 400 feet, the luminous cloud is fully effective, providing the full benefits as detailed in *Core Rulebook III*. Conversely, at depths greater than 400 feet, the black ink cloud of normal kraken is only half as effective, as detailed above.

A kraken does not have eyelids and does not sleep in any way that we would understand. However, every few days it falls into a torpor, floating at a steady depth or wallowing on the surface. This torpor lasts only a few hours, and is a kind of meditative trance: once alerted to any threats nearby the beast regains full mental faculties instantly.

Torpor

During torpor the kraken loses its Alertness feat, and its Spot and Listen checks are reduced to +7. There is a 20% chance that any encountered, stationery kraken will be in a state of torpor.

KRAKEN ALCHEMICAL REAGENTS

The kraken is a mythical beast, and a great many of its body parts are sought after by alchemists, apothecaries and other experimenters in the magical arts. The following is a list of these components, their uses and the values that they might command to the right buyer.

Pen

The pen is a long shell-like structure resembling mother of pearl in colour. Its strength and rigidity make it useful for a number of uses, such as strong-yet-light spars and masts for ships, as well as a multitude of smaller objects about ship, such as pins, hull ribbing, projecting walkways, and so on. It has twice the strength of wood when used for these purposes. Additionally, it can be worked into elements of armour, such as banded or splint mail, by splitting and sanding it to shape. In addition to being masterwork, kraken pen armour has a non-magical +1 enhancement bonus to AC and a 10 pound reduction in weight. Kraken pen is sold at a cost of 500 gp per foot, with two feet being enough to make one suit of banded or splint armour.

Ink

Wizards use black kraken ink as a preferred ingredient for penning magical scrolls and recording spells in spellbooks. What is less well known, but can be deduced, is that 'pure' kraken ink is exceedingly rare. By definition ink collected from a location where a kraken has been combatted is mixed with seawater, often diluting it so much that it looks more like smoky tea than ink. The real cost in the purchase of most kraken ink is in the purification of it: the removal of the salt water is a lengthy and expensive process. An experienced wizard can taste how pure the kraken ink that he is being sold is. Pure kraken ink must be collected as close to the ink gland as possible, as it is being expelled. The further away, and the longer a collector waits, the more expensive the purification process becomes, and the lower the profit margin. To simulate this, treat ink collected within 10 feet of the ink gland to be 90% pure, and for every ten feet 'downstream' reduce the purity by 10%. Even though the cloud will appear to extend beyond what this calculation would allow, the reality is that, over 100 feet away from the ink gland, the purification processes required simply doesn't make the effort worth it. The price for one ounce of black kraken ink is 2 gp for every percentage point of purity.

Luminous kraken ink has the same uses and follows the same general principals for purity and

collection as the black variety. It is used in more obscure preparations, and is particularly effective when used to scribe spells from the school of illusion. Due to its rarity each ounce commands 5 gp for every percentage point of purity.

As a final note: production of ink is a vital process that the kraken does spontaneously. Only small amounts are stored in the body so killing the beast and extracting the gland will yield only 3d20 ounces of 100% pure ink.

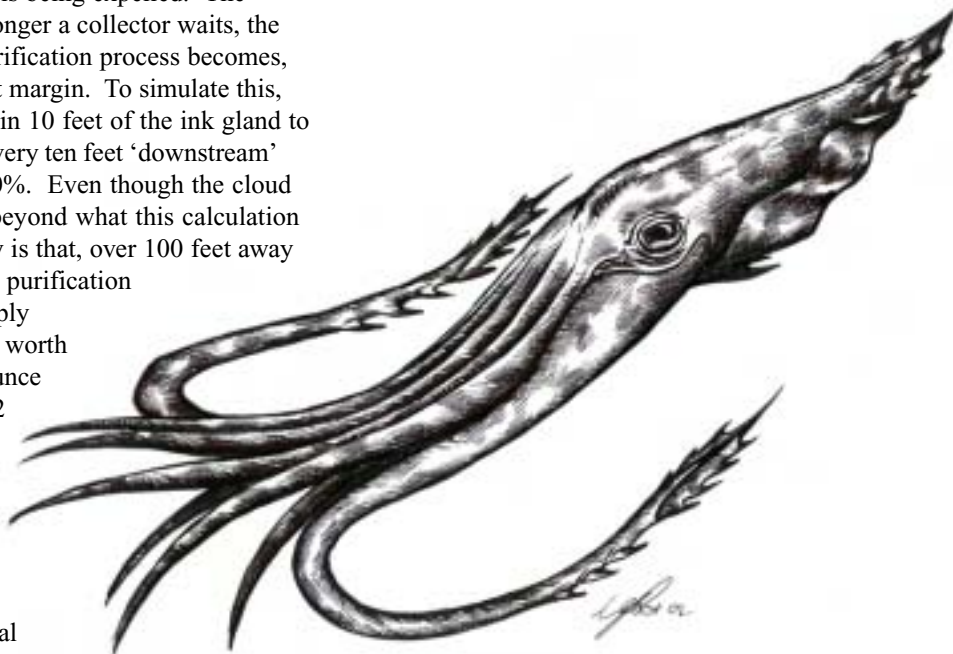
Kraken Ink Scrolls

While kraken ink is not required for the penning of magical writings such as scrolls and spellbooks, it is preferred by some spellcasters due to its potency.

Any scroll penned using kraken ink has the saving throw DC increased by one. Scrolls that contain water-based spells gain +2 DC when standard kraken ink is used and scrolls of illusion gain +2 DC from the use of luminous kraken ink.

Chromatophores/Hide

Both coloured and bioluminescent chromatophore cells are sought for their brilliant display effects. These cells, scraped from the skin of a dead kraken, are used in potions and ointments such as *vision*, *blur*, *charisma*, *darkvision*, *remove blindness*, etc. Each four square feet (a square, two feet per side) of kraken hide will yield enough scrapings to make





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one such potion (along with the other preparations that must be added).

Additionally, a section of kraken hide, before scraping, that is at least five feet square, can be tailored and enchanted to make a medium wondrous item called the *cloak of the kraken*. See boxed text for details.

New Magic Item: Cloak of the Kraken

This garment appears to be an ordinary leather cloak. However, on command the wearer can cause either a dazzling hypnotic pattern to play across its surface, as per the spell *hypnotic pattern*, or can cause a disruptive pattern to appear that confuses his opponents during melee, as per the *blur* spell. Both effects occur as if cast by a 9th level Sorcerer, and the cloak can be utilised for a total of ten minutes per day.

Caster Level: 9th; *Prerequisites* – Craft wondrous item, *blur*, *hypnotic pattern*;

Market Price: 11,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

Raw kraken hide that has been freshly cut from a recently killed beast (within one hour) is worth 250 gp per square foot. Once acquired, the hide can be preserved for an additional eight hours by fully immersing it in fine alcohol. After an hour, if it has not been preserved, the hide is useless for any magical purposes. Even in this denatured form it can still be used in the fashion industry, where each square foot of hide will fetch 100 gp.

Eye nerve fibres

The resolving power of the kraken's eyes is sought for many magical preparations. They may be used in potions, as an alternative to chromatophore cells, though they may not be combined with them, in hopes of increasing the efficacy of the draught. Usually, they are added to preparations when creating wondrous items, and are always consumed by the process. For the most part experimenters from the school of illusion seek them, and these people will pay anything up to 500 gp per inch of kraken eye nerve fibre. Each kraken corpse will yield up to five feet of nerve fibre suitable for these purposes.

Eggs

Close to the top of the list of incredibly rare delicacies are kraken eggs. Because of their rareness, the four-foot long eggs command prices of anything up to 3,000 gp each. A lucky character might find one washed up on the shore, but this

would only happen after titanic storms at sea that have stirred up the currents at tremendous depths. More likely, though the probability is still infinitesimal, is the discovery of an egg floating at its assigned depth, possibly after the characters have been tracking an adult kraken. Recovery of the egg poses no particular problem once the characters have managed to achieve that depth in the first place. They are not overly heavy and there is nothing inherently dangerous or magical about them. The only thing that might cause the characters concern is the short incubation period of the egg, resulting in the hatching of an aggressive squid anything up to ten feet long.

Meat

Lastly, the kraken is a squid and, as such, its flesh is edible. If consumed within an hour of being killed (it may be cooked) it affects the diner as if he had consumed a mild dose of a *heroism* potion. For the next hour he gains a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks. However, associated with this increased competence, they are also inflated with their own self-importance, and their confidence increases. If the effect is seen in a Non-Player Character, they will be cocksure and unwilling to back down if challenged. Games Masters should remind players who have feasted on kraken flesh, during the next game hour, that they feel very confident of their own abilities, possibly even forcing a Will save (DC 20 -1 for each full 10 minutes that has passed since the character ate the flesh) if they display excessive caution.

An hour after death, or if the flesh is in any way preserved, the magical side effects no longer occur. None-the-less, the meat is still edible, and sellable (as much as any seafood), and its novelty ensures a ready market. Fresh meat will sell for 100 gp per pound, preserved or 'aged' meat will sell for 10 gp per pound. Note, however, that even if a whole kraken corpse could be brought to shore within an hour of its demise, no fishmonger would dream of buying the whole thing at premium prices (several thousand pounds worth), because they would have no chance of selling it all in time to maximise the investment. The best an entrepreneurial character could hope for is to have a deal pre-arranged with dockside middlemen who supply local highbrow restaurants. In this case they could move up to 200 pounds of meat at the premium price, but would have to negotiate the sale of the remainder.

HABITAT

The open sea can be roughly divided into four 'layers'; the sublittoral zone near the surface is where nearly all creatures that we would recognise live. Below this is the bathyal zone that effectively covers the continental shelf. Below this is the abyssal zone which stretches from the edge of continental plates down into the dark and inaccessible depths. Even this is not the end though. In places the sea floor dips away into incredibly deep trenches, which are anywhere up to 35,000 feet deep. This is the hadal zone. At the abyssal and hadal depths, the temperature is as low as 3° Celsius and the salinity levels are close to 100% (in comparison to the surface of the sea that averages 35%). It is here that the kraken is most comfortable, where nightmare creatures with jaws that seem too big for their bodies hunt and eerie bioluminescent displays give a hellish counterpoint to the otherwise unremitting blackness.

Where the sea reaches these extreme depths, an iron ball would take roughly an hour to sink to the bottom. To gain a perspective on the kinds of extreme pressures down there, an egg dropped into the sea would implode at far less than one thousandth of that depth. Life exists everywhere and there are countless creatures of kinds that have never been seen by us that live in perfect comfort, though they are constrained to live at their own depth. The kraken, however, can traverse the distances from top to bottom, making such a journey in a little over three hours. They graze the sea indiscriminately, eating anything and everything, unaffected by the poisons and spines of their victims. They prowl through this vast domain only rarely meeting another of their kind, constantly plotting how to gain power and inflict discomfort on others.

The hadal and abyssal plains are, contrary to popular opinion, far from being desolate and boring fields. They are rich in life and structure, and are home to many species and societies that we have no name for. The thousands of feet of water above them provide food in abundance as everything eventually finds its way down. There the remains add to the immensely deep silt which is in turn eaten and used by plants and animals that live in this lightless zone. When not trying to master the world around them, the kraken descend to these unimaginable depths to further their other driving goal. Down on the hadal

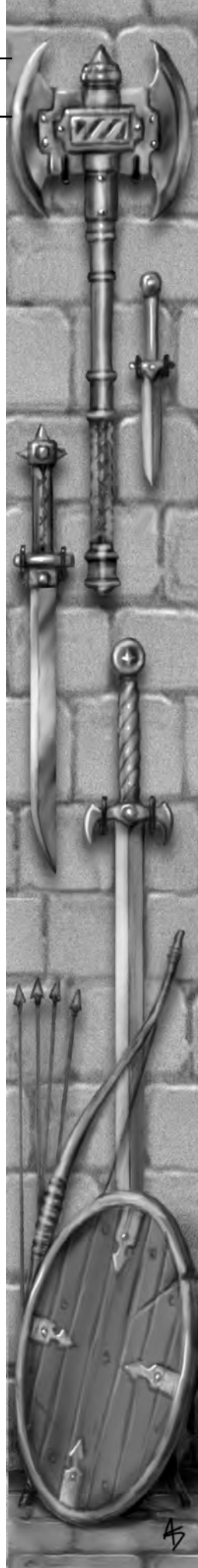
and abyssal plains they search the landscape, rich from the raining corpses, moving and sifting through the silt to find the mythical gate that links to the elemental plane of water. No one knows what the gate might look like, however there is speculation that it is no more than an enchanted patch of water (which would naturally make it exceedingly difficult to find), or alternately an enormous structure surrounded by solid material native to that plane. This gate is operated by specific passwords spoken in aquan and it is through here that visitors make their way to the material world. Should a kraken ever find and operate the gate, their central goal would be to wage war on the divine beings there and to pervert others to their cause.

No air-breathing bard knows the tales concerning this gate; for that information, one must ask the marine races. What we do know is that the kraken do not enter our world by this great gate. Instead, they are thrust here through a temporary gate in the open sea which is then promptly closed before the dazed monster can recover. Sailors sometimes report hearing great booms or seeing flashes of light from well below their hulls. This is probably such a gate in operation. The rareness of these reports can give us comfort, because it indicates that the expulsion of these evil creatures into our world is also rare. Were there ever to be an increase in these events it would indicate not only that our world was in for serious trouble, but that major disruptions, possibly even civil war, had broken out on the elemental plane of water.

TYPICAL LAIR

The lair described here is one that a kraken might typically inhabit, and is distinctly different from the more political lair described in the Antangil chapter.

The lair lies 3 miles offshore and 1,000 feet below the surface. The original structure was formed by an overhanging piece of the continental shelf that has been gradually filled with air by natural out-gassing in the surrounding coral. The kraken populated it with captive's centuries ago by simply carrying them down and then curing their wounds. Occasionally new captives are added to build up the stock but most of the 300 inhabitants are the descendants of the original captives. These people, predominantly and originally human, but with many races introduced over the long and bitter years, are totally adapted to the atmospheric pressure of their environment. Even if they could be brought to the



We know, of course, that the kraken can never walk on land. He is a creature of the deep, and we would no more expect him to enter into our towns than we would an octopus. But I tell you now of a legend that was related to me by my master, some forty years ago. There was a kraken of immense age and power. He had lived in the sea, building his petty empires and molesting ships for centuries. He grew in magical knowledge until, at last, he mastered the art of shape-changing. Can you imagine the intellect, age and sheer brute power that it must have had to achieve such a thing?

This kraken, calling himself 'The Emperor of Life and Death', travelled as a human among the coastal towns. At first he did not settle, but his power was obvious. The vain, the evil and the needy were all attracted to his following, and soon he had an entourage whenever he appeared, even while yet damp from the ocean waves. He had the population around there worship him in his aspect as the gigantic sea beast, and a great temple was erected in his name. Wealth flowed in and death flowed out. Terrible tales of sacrifices and profane rites escaped the region. He surrounded himself with luxury and opulence. He fathered many cursed offspring, and he cast his gaze on the cities inland, and dreamed of a continental empire.

In time, the king of that land felt the need to take action. Auditors were dispatched but never returned. Champions followed, but fared little better. Mercenary bands caught wind of the festering boil on the coast and they tried their luck, few survived to tell the tale. In desperation the king called on his barons to provide troops. Strong sorcerers from neighbouring lands were offered rich rewards to join in the extermination effort. This war started in the spring, and ended two years later, resulting in vast stretches of that once-fertile coast being laid bare, and with the loss of several thousand lives. The temple was pulled down stone by stone, the surviving captured worshippers were sold into slavery on the galleys, as they were good for nothing else, and the victorious troops were issued awards that even now adorn their regimental banners. Thus the kraken was defeated, destroyed, and his remains cremated.

But that is not the end of this cautionary tale. Of the offspring of that creature, most were born hideously deformed. They lived out their squalid lives lying in foetid pools, lashing out with their tentacles and bellowing at passers by, fed on the remains of profane sacrifices. The conquering forces dispatched them, skewering them where they lay. But a tiny few were not so obviously afflicted; they could live on both land and in the sea, half man and half squid, they slapped into the waves to feed, but then returned to continue their depredations on anyone they found. Many were captured and released from their curse at the point of a sword. Others, however, and no one knows how many there were, escaped. A few may not have even known that they were such monstrosities – appearing normal at birth, spirited away by their mothers, perhaps only realising their curse later in life.

It is a brave party that camps on that stretch of shore even today. Especially when the tide is running high, and the nights are dark.

– Excerpt from a lecture given in the Academy of Sages, Bhangphôt.

surface without suffering the bends they would probably not survive the in the 'thin' atmosphere.

These inhabitants live in a state of perpetual barbarism; they are clothed in whatever rags have survived the trip down, whatever the kraken delivers to them, and bits and pieces they have fashioned from sea plants. King Jujumann, a fifth generation slave, rules the others with an iron fist. He achieved his role by killing his predecessor and, with his strong-arm supporters, keeps the others in line with brutality and vigilance. For food they have whatever the kraken brings them and a species of fungi that grows profusely on the dung they indiscriminately deposit. Light is provided by bioluminescent fungi, as is heat. Anyone showing any sign of magical ability is immediately killed by the kraken. Their language is an argot that would defy any interpretation without months of study or a *comprehend languages* spell. Any visitors to the complex will be attacked instantly: the kraken has warned them of 'demons'.

The slaves have enlarged the original cave over the centuries using the few hand tools that the kraken salvaged from shipwrecks. It now comprises 36 caverns connected by short passages. The largest of

these is the first overhanging cave, which is over 70 feet in diameter, with the others ranging in size down to a mere 10 feet in diameter. Despite having very few hand tools and no dedicated weapons at all, the inhabitants are comparatively rich. It is here that the kraken stores its treasure even though it personally has no use for it. In every chamber of the complex are chests of gold and jewels that have been taken from ships. Such wealth is meaningless to the slaves, as they have no way to spend it, and have only dim memories of what it is. The kraken, for its part, stores all this wealth for unknown reasons; it too has no way to spend it.

At least once a month the kraken surfaces in the main cavern and summons all of the slaves into its presence. As soon as they enter the cavern and see their master they fall to their knees and start a mournful song of worship. This song is composed of words from a hundred different languages and means, essentially, 'you are the greatest, you are the only god, you are everything, we are nothing without you, don't ever leave'. This is the sole purpose of the society; the captives can live their pathetic little lives any way they like, as far as the kraken is concerned for, as long as they recognise it as a god, it is satisfied.

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AFTER THE FALL

When found on the material plane, kraken themselves have little in the way of society. They live solitary lives, only coming together every few decades to reproduce, although such meetings more often than not resulting in combat to the death. Occasionally however, after potentially months of negotiation, the male and female will produce a few eggs. There is little to differentiate between male and female kraken, physically or behaviourally. Kraken communicate with each other using mixtures of their chromatophore displays and aquan. It seems likely that their conversations revolve around deciding which is the true divine being, and therefore which is the subservient one. For males and females who are willing to mate, an uneasy conclusion is reached where neither admits the dominance of the other, but concedes that the other may be deluded in their beliefs. This truce lasts only as long as the mating activity, which may be several days. After this, old antagonisms resurface and the female typically withdraws to another part of the sea to lay her precious eggs in peace.

The real societies associated with kraken are those that they create. These take one of two forms. The least imaginative one entails capturing humanoids and transporting them to submarine cave complexes, where they live out their horrid existences dependent on the beast to furnish they're every need. Dank and stuffy, these slave societies exist only to serve the ego of the kraken, labouring to enlarge the cave complex and subsisting on the marine offal that it serves up. Such societies worship the kraken because they have no choice, rebellion means death and escape is next to impossible. In a hostage situation like this, many succumb to the madness of captivity and fall under the kraken's perverse charisma, believing it to be a genuine god. Children born into these dungeons know no better, and even if they could be rescued would likely die of shock if released.

The other form of society, and this counts as the kraken's art, is where a sea-going people (usually an island tribe) finds over time that if they sacrifice to the monster that lurks in their waters, they gain

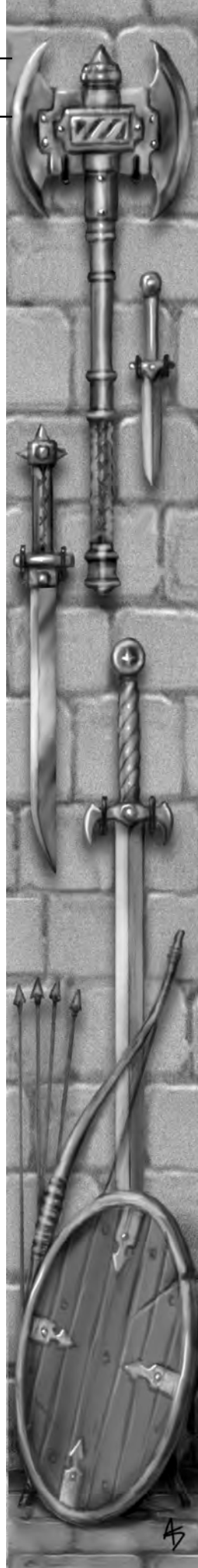
protection. Sacrifices, naturally, are living humanoids cast into the deep. As the months and years progress the kraken gradually shows more of itself and delivers salutary punishments by sinking ships for transgressions. The owners and operators of the ships learn through bitter experience that the kraken can strangle their civilisation by strangling their ships. They protect themselves by offering sacrifices and by further experimentation learn what pleases it. In time it supplants whatever local religion was in force simply by being present and active. This process may take many years, though at the end of it the beast is firmly entrenched in the population's mind as their patron god.

Both of these created societies exist for only one purpose – to flatter the god. If they ever grow tired of their flock, or feel that they are not being treated as befits their status, they have no hesitation in wiping them out. This they do by using their natural abilities to control the weather or simply flooding the submarine caves of the slave civilisations.

STILL BATHED IN DIVINE LIGHT

The beast that we know as the kraken rarely appears on the material plane, and this is a good thing. Though they can reproduce here, their offspring achieve only a shadow of their parents' power, intelligence and size. For centuries the question of why these creatures should act unlike any other plagued scholars who studied the seas and the life in them. However, the recent interest in maritime technology, and with it the resurgence of research into aquatic species, has shed new light on the matter.

The kraken is not native to this plane. Each and every genuine kraken, and no one knows how many of these beasts lurk in the deep, was formed as an avatar with a divine spark by a deity known as the Kraken. The Kraken swims in the infinite seas of the elemental plane of water, wallowing in the warmth of its own divinity and spawning countless young of all types of creature. Though it has the senses and intelligence of a god, it is often seen as blind and insensate. It takes no interest in the affairs of the life it creates, the politics of the material world, or the effects of weather, war, or other destruction. Its only interest is the production of life in all its wondrous forms.



KRAKEN SOCIETY

The Kraken is known and revered by many sea-dwelling species, though it is virtually unheard of by air breathers. Most often perceived as being female (because of the great abundance of life that it produces from its own body), male, neuter and hermaphrodite aspects are also known, representing the variety of sea life that lie within its domain. Even its perceived form may be different from species to species. This is due no doubt to the biases of the viewing populations, but also because of the variety of forms that sea life can take.

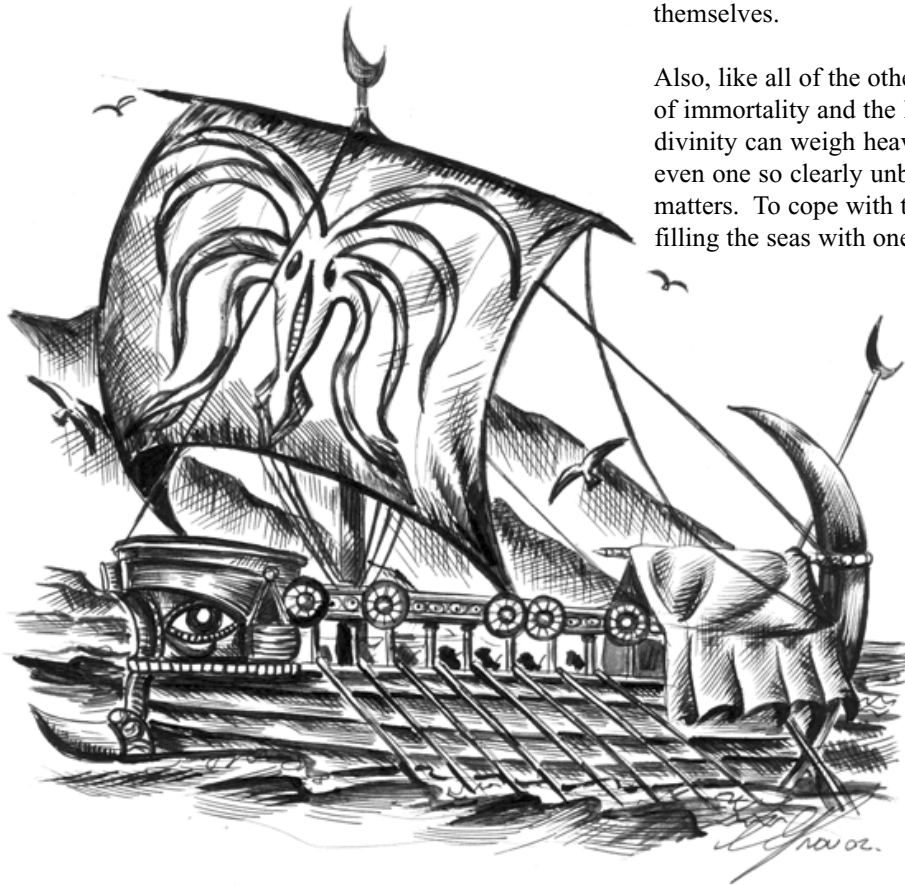
In its leisurely, eternal swim through the elemental plane of water, the Kraken leaves behind it a wake of new life. These spill out from its limitless ovaries then speed, wobble or float off to fulfil their own (sometimes short) lives. Death follows the Kraken as surely as life issues from it. Sharks and other predators, created along with all the rest, circle it and gorge themselves on the smorgasbord of fledgling life. Periodically the Kraken puts on a burst of speed to make distance between itself and its progeny, and in an infinite space it is certain that the god never revisits a location. It avoids other gods that also

swim in the waters, for no other reason than there is little to be gained from the meeting. The other gods, or even supplicants from other planes, have little to say to a gigantic mother whose only love is the wonder of continual birth. It, in this context, radiates abundance and contentment.

All of the life that the Kraken manufactures is cast out from the moment of birth. It has no interest in them and they, for the most part, have insufficient intelligence to recognise it. This endless production line of creation is not entirely pointless, however. Though the Kraken seldom, if ever, interferes in the affairs of the mortals in the material world, it is dimly aware of the goings on there. While the Kraken has not seen fit to take action against over-fishing, mass extinctions due to poisoning or deep-sea volcanoes, or any other sort of death-dealing event, it does experience a sense of loss by the events. To compensate for this, and in an attempt to correct the imbalance, the Kraken periodically, and regularly, opens gates from its own plane to the material world, through which it expels the latest batch of creatures. Thus, local stocks of fish and other creatures are assisted in replenishing themselves.

Also, like all of the other gods, the weight of immortality and the loneliness of divinity can weigh heavy on the mind – even one so clearly unbiased by temporal matters. To cope with the lonely vigil of filling the seas with one's own children the

Kraken maintains a large retinue of avatars. These creatures, each representing a small portion of the god's own divine force, swim along with it and sing songs telling it how boundless, fertile and wonderful it is. Each avatar is a duplicate in miniature of the god and produces offspring in



great quantities. Sometimes these avatars are sent as ambassadors to other deities, at other times they are sent away to different parts of the plane altogether and advised to fill that area with life. These avatars have powers much reduced from that of their god, and effectively have very little real personality. They are, for all intents and purposes, clones.

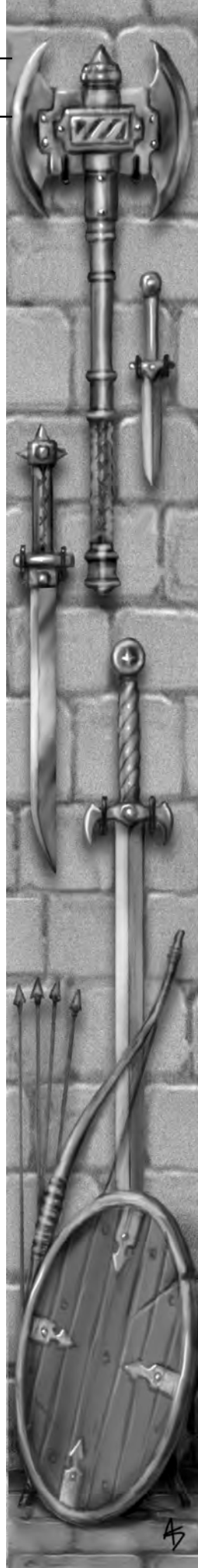
One of the powers that these first-rank avatars carry over from the Kraken is the power to create avatars of their own. These second-rank avatars share many of the qualities of their relatives. They can produce life in vast quantities, know all of the languages spoken by the dwellers of the sea and can use magical effects to enhance, change or destroy the life around them. However these powers are vastly reduced from those of their betters. They have the divine spark, to be sure, but they are as distant from the Kraken as a grandchild is from grandparent. This is the light in which the Kraken views the second-rank avatars. It takes an indulgent interest in them, takes pride in their creations, and shares in their joy of life. This is doubly so in one way, because the second-rank avatars have something that the first-rank do not. Because they are twice removed from the deity, they have the rudiments of true, individual personalities. They experience the environment around them in ways that the first rank cannot. To the first-rank avatars, the comprehension of their creations is limited, and therefore not really worthy of much attention. To the Kraken, however, these perceptions are as entertaining as the antics of cherished children. The Kraken takes great delight in watching them discussing and arguing with each other over matters that, to it, are transparent and obvious.

This gift, or perhaps curse, of individuality has many benefits. It tempers the disinterest that the mighty god has for the goings on in the mortal world and in the politics of the immortal realms. Second-rank avatars are often sent on spying missions, and their reports take on a special quality for the god because they are coloured with emotion. However, since every one of these creatures experiences life in its own way, the meaning of what is observed is often interpreted differently. The Kraken is a truly neutral deity; it sees balance in all things. It understands that life and death, justice and injustice, society and the individual, are all equally important. The first-rank avatars are unswerving in this view of observation and non-interference; the second rank do not, and cannot, see the world in this light. They form their own ethical opinions, and advocate all

forms of action in response to external events. Some, particularly those physically close to the god, remain true to the outlook of non-interference. Others find that they sway to different outlooks, finding solace in lawful, chaotic, good, or evil ethics.

It is this divergence from the path of neutrality that is the downfall of what we call the kraken, those monsters of the deep in our own oceans. These second-rank avatars are partisan and vital: they form groups to discuss weighty matters, they entertain themselves by producing batches of certain types of life to see how they grow and interact, they attempt to create new forms of life if they perceive that an ecological niche is unfilled, and they may even attempt to influence affairs in other planes. The Kraken indulges these activities as long as the interference is slight, and the ethical viewpoints espoused are not too widely different from its own. When these guidelines are breached, the offending avatar is brought before the god to answer. In most cases, the avatars are sufficiently awed by the presence of the god that they mend their ways and are sent off again, happy and content to have been shown the true path. Some do not react in this way. Some rebel so violently against what they see as indifference, stupidity, laziness, and a thousand other abusive terms that they are considered irredeemable. Many are eaten there and then, reunited with their creator. A few others fight their way to freedom and attempt to make good their escape. Escape from a god in its own realm is impossible, of course. While a few may live for a while as guerrillas, attacking other avatars of the first and second rank and attempting to band together to overthrow the despotic rule of the Kraken, all are eventually located. Once located they are banished.

Banishment from the elemental plane of water entails the opening of a gate between that plane and the material world. The second-rank avatar, and the volume of water that surrounds it, is magically grasped and thrust out, creating enormous light and sound effects in the process. This fall from the divine realm strips the avatar of its divinity, robbing it of the power to create new life and the ability to speak all of the languages it once knew. A kraken, as we know it, is born into this world at that moment. They arrive disoriented, weak, angry and almost certainly evilly-aligned. From that moment forth they experience the horror of being parted from the divine, yet knowing they were once more than they are now. Their corrupt and bitter minds conclude





KRAKEN SOCIETY

that previously they were indeed divine: a god that was warred upon and expelled unjustly. Krakens know only hatred for their past life and the traitors that cast them out. They strive to recover their divinity and to exact revenge.

KRAKEN

Mother of the Waves, The Great Provider, Queen of All That Swims, Boundless Source of All Life Whose Eggs Sacs Are Never Empty, It That Is Eaten.

Intermediate God

Symbol: An egg.

Home Plane: Elemental plane of water.

Alignment: Neutral.

Portfolio: Abundance, fertility, contentment, life, the sea.

Worshippers: Aquatic creatures.

Cleric/Worshiper Alignment: Any.

Domains: Animal, birth, death, luck, protection and water.

Favoured Weapon: Tentacle (whip, net).

The Kraken appears as a colossal squid with only eight tentacles. He, she, or it, is the deity of plenty, representing the boundless life and vitality of the sea. It is forever giving birth to new life that it expels into the waters around it and sends to the material plane to restock the seas there.

Dogma: The sea provides everything. Richness of life is all around, from tiny plankton right up to mighty whales, all are one in the beautiful symphony of life. Worshippers believe that, were the Kraken ever killed, overthrown, or otherwise

incapacitated, the seas would become barren and all life would cease. The Kraken teaches its followers to respect all life in the sea. Eat of it, certainly, but revere it in all its forms. Be resigned and calm if you are vanquished, and be humble if you are the vanquisher.

Everything is connected to everything else in the sea, from the smallest flora to the largest fauna. The Kraken loves all the life of the sea, and is particularly close to fertile females.

Clergy and Temples: The clergy of the Kraken are usually, but not exclusively, female. The emphasis is on birth, growth, balance and life. Clerics attend to females who are in the agonies of birth, oversee coming-of-age ceremonies and bless hunting parties. They tend to be non-judgemental of the activities of their people, because they believe that the sea washes away all small variations. What does it matter if massacres occur in one spot, or famine occurs somewhere else? As long as the sea endures, and all of life remains fertile, everything turns out for the best.

As a non-human deity it may be worshipped along with several others in a pantheon without fear of conflict. The very nature of the religion makes it a passive, accepting one, usually only rising to action if major threats to life occur. Alternatively this religion could be used in a monotheistic non-human society.

Birth Domain

Deities: The Kraken, any others whose portfolio includes birth or fertility.

Granted power: You gain a +5 divine bonus to all skill and ability checks dealing with birth and the after effects thereof.

Birth Domain Spells:

1. **Bless water.** Makes holy water.
2. **Calm Animals.** Calms 2d4 +1/level HD of animals, beasts and magical beasts.
3. **Calm Emotions.** Calms 1d6 subjects/level, negating emotion effects.
4. **Sleep.** Put 2d4 HD of creatures into comatose slumber.
5. **Goodberry.** 2d4 berries each cure 1 hp (max 8 hp/24 hours).
6. **Consecrate.** Fills area with positive energy, making undead weaker.
7. **Cure Serious Wounds.** Cures 3d8 +1/level damage (max +15).
8. **Endurance.** Gain 1d4+1 Con for 1 hr./level.
9. **Heal.** Cures all damage, diseases and mental conditions.

METHODS OF WARFARE

It must be emphasised at the outset that the kraken never attack sea going vessels, or indeed anything from the realm of air, out of hunger or necessity. The sea provides more riches in terms of nutrition than an army of such behemoths could eat. Instead their attacks seem to form a pattern composed of either furtherance of some complex plot, or just for the sheer fun of it. No one has ever established what kind of sense of humour they have, or indeed what form their plots for world domination may take, but the evidence is clear that both of these higher mental characteristics lie within their minds.

They are known to lie still on the surface of the water, feigning death until something comes near to investigate. They then spring into action, sending their strong tentacles to envelope the startled prey. Naturally, the only things worthy of note near the surface would be dolphins, sharks, whales and, of course, ships. In this mode they often resemble small islands or sandbars. This particular style of attack is strange in that the kraken certainly does not *need* to do it. It could just as easily lurk in the depths and then dart up to grasp the helpless victim. The only plausible reason is that they enjoy doing it. It entertains them to bask in the sunlight until something ignorantly comes to investigate, and then they gain malicious glee in attacking. The commonality of this attack is well attested in literature and the cautious sailor treats any floating object with the respect it deserves. None-the-less, ships are often lost to this attack and the low survival rate of the crew of these unfortunate vessels means that word of this devious and evil assault are more often than not written off as apocryphal.

The more common, and terrifying, attack mode of the kraken is to ascend below the hull of a passing ship, pass its gigantic tentacles around either side, and slowly but inexorably draw the whole ship beneath the surface. Usually the first anyone is aware of this attack is when the mighty limbs burst from the water and start to fold over the decks, snapping rigging and downing masts in the process. Such attacks occur only in deep water, usually where the depth below the hull is at least 2,000 feet. Even though the kraken can successfully operate in depths as shallow as 100 feet, it seems that their

classical attacks only take place directly over or near their preferred travelling and living zones. The reason for this appears to be that should, by chance, an attack be repelled it would generally mean that significant harm has been inflicted on the beast. In such circumstances it naturally wants to be in a position where it can descend to safety in the most direct manner. An alternative interpretation is that, out of these deep-sea zones, the kraken feels no particular need to exert its dominance over the pathetic creatures of the atmosphere.

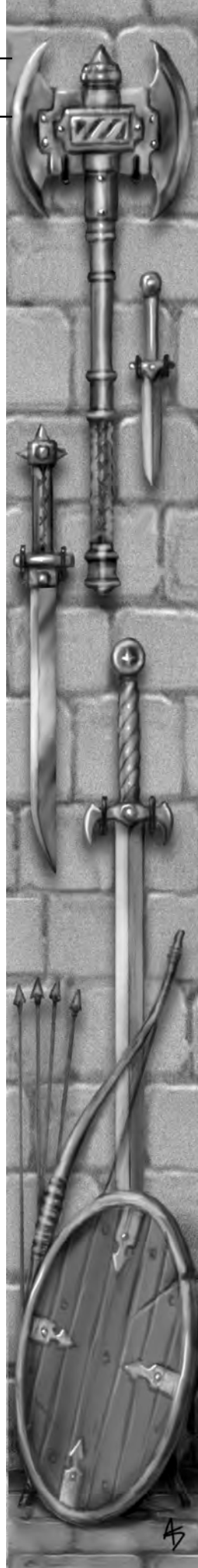
In this attack, the kraken seizes the ship and starts to rotate, spinning the helpless vessel. This serves two functions. Firstly, it throws the crew off balance so that they are less effective at hacking at the smothering tentacles. Secondly, it creates a whirlpool effect, increasing in strength the longer the kraken continues it, that eases the ship below the surface. The knock-on effect of this is that other ships close by may be captured in this vortex and drawn down with the stricken vessel.

New Feat: Whirlpool (kraken)

A kraken can use its size and power to spin a captured surface ship to assist in dragging it below the surface.

Benefit: The kraken must spend one minute for every structure point of the captive vessel, spinning it around on its axis, to cause a whirlpool sufficient to suck it beneath the waves. Without this feat, the kraken must spend two minutes for every structure point spinning the ship. The constricting tentacles of a kraken will cause damage to a ship in standard fashion, with every ten hit points counting as one structural point. Note: any damage done to the captured ship by the crushing tentacles, or the biting beak, reduces the time needed to pull it under. Additionally, any ship within 300 feet of the doomed vessel is pulled toward the growing whirlpool and will be sucked down along with it unless they have more structure points than the target.

Characters fighting a kraken aboard a ship that is being spun in a whirlpool suffer a -1 attack penalty for every full minute that the spinning occurs.



ROLEPLAYING KRAKEN

The kraken view themselves, and are sometimes viewed by others, as gods. They do not worship anything except themselves and they create disgusting slave societies so that they might be worshipped. Individual kraken do not recognise any other member of their species as being as powerful or exalted as themselves and consequently, except for the rare moments when they come together to mate, they avoid each other. A kraken views any other kraken as a heretic, a false god, a pretender.

The reason for this lies in their origin. They are native to the elemental plane of water, wherein resides the Kraken, the ultimate

god of the deep sea. It lives an immortal, and predominantly neutral, existence counting the tides and maintaining the enormously long food chain. There, helpers surround the Kraken and live fulfilling existences caring for all things great and small, husbanding the complex politics of the realm. However, not all of the helpers are satisfied with this lot. Even though they have immortality, comfort and power, they are brought to life harbouring resentment, and a craving for power and cruelty. They are, in short, evil. The Kraken banishes these few from the elemental plane of water to the material world. In the fall they are stripped of their immortality and thrust into a world where they must fend for themselves.

Driving each kraken is the desire for revenge, an overwhelming repentance, or a terrible fear. All most want is to return to their home, seeking to find the legendary gate, hidden somewhere on the sea floor, that will transport them back. In their fall they are less than they were. They know this, but they also sense that they are more powerful than anything else in the sea. In this knowledge each and every one concludes that it is a god, albeit a wronged one that will do anything to make others suffer and to find a way to achieve power either here or back home.

Were any kraken ever to achieve this return they would without doubt create mischief.

They would attempt to recruit creatures in their home realm to overthrow the Kraken and establish their own rule.

The inhabitants actively fear civil wars of this nature and precautions are taken to patrol, report on and muster to defeat any such incursion. The ongoing policy of expelling kraken that have evil tendencies perhaps indicates the mercurial nature of the inhabitants of the elemental plane of water and the lengths that they will go to control these tendencies.

Each and every kraken is a self-proclaimed deity. As such they are beyond such considerations of law or chaos: neither the group, nor the individual, is important. Only they have value and they believe that only the strong around them may lay claim to life. Societies of their creation, or under their protection, will exist, prosper, or fail through



| The Shepherd of the Sea | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| Class Level | Base Attack | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Spells per Day/Spells Known |
| 1 | +0 | +2 | +2 | +0 | <i>Healing Circle</i> (1d8+1) | +1 level of existing class |
| 2 | +1 | +3 | +3 | +0 | <i>Animal Growth</i> 1/day | |
| 3 | +2 | +3 | +3 | +1 | <i>Healing Circle</i> (2d8+2), <i>Alter Life</i> (+1 HD) | +1 level of existing class |
| 4 | +3 | +4 | +4 | +1 | <i>Animal Growth</i> 2/day | |
| 5 | +3 | +4 | +4 | +1 | <i>Healing Circle</i> (3d8+3), Companions (10 HD) | +1 level of existing class |
| 6 | +4 | +5 | +5 | +2 | <i>Animal Growth</i> 3/day, <i>Alter Life</i> (+1 HD) | |
| 7 | +5 | +5 | +5 | +2 | <i>Healing Circle</i> (4d8+4) | +1 level of existing class |
| 8 | +6 | +6 | +6 | +2 | <i>Animal Growth</i> 4/day | |
| 9 | +6 | +6 | +6 | +3 | <i>Healing Circle</i> (5d8+5), <i>Alter Life</i> (+1 HD) | +1 level of existing class |
| 10 | +7 | +7 | +7 | +3 | <i>Animal Growth</i> 5/day, Companions (20 HD) | |

whim alone as the kraken does not attach any particular value to them. This realm is petty and insignificant in comparison to the one they came from.

Contact with kraken is always guided by these beliefs. To them all other life is inferior and worthy only to serve it, worship it, or entertain it by dying. Negotiations with a kraken can take place, but they are always from a position of god to insignificant creature. A deal that has the kraken agree to not molest ships that fly a certain flag will only be bought at the cost of that entire population regarding that kraken as their god. They must adorn their clothes, flags and other works of art with it. They must regularly worship it. They must cast sacrifices to it. The kraken gains no spiritual or power benefit from this attention: it is all for vanity. Similarly, the worshippers will never gain divine powers from their deity. But if defied, that petty and evil god will not hesitate to destroy them.

KRAKEN PRESTIGE CLASSES

Particularly powerful kraken are able to take levels in one of the core character classes or a prestige class. Presented below are two prestige classes, one for the kraken itself and one for a devout follower of the kraken. These are designed to add flavour to any encounter with either a kraken or one of its communities and, as such, should be used sparingly.

Shepherd of the Sea

The shepherd of the sea is somewhat of an oddity amongst the kraken, a regression of beliefs to something resembling the neutrality and outlook of the Kraken. While still undeniably evil, these kraken have allowed their nurturing side to develop, albeit with selfish intent. They are perhaps the closest to neutrality that any fallen kraken can be.

A shepherd of the sea cultivates a collection of animal companions in a spirit of mutual protection. Even though the shepherd believes itself to be far more important than any of its followers, and most likely would not hesitate to sacrifice one if it meant the kraken's survival, it shows an almost maternal instinct towards them.

Over time the shepherd's animal companions become as twisted and evil as their master – such is the effect of associating with a creature of this nature.

Hit Die: d10.

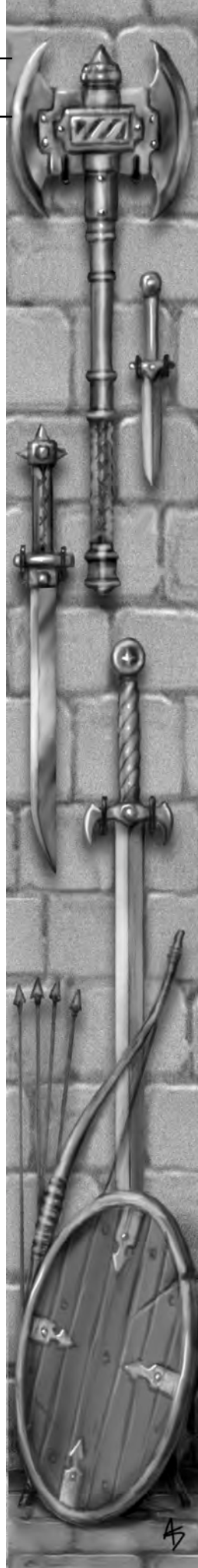
Requirements

To qualify to become a shepherd of the sea, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Race: Kraken.

Skills: Animal Empathy as a class skill.

Spells: Able to cast 3rd level divine spells.



Class Skills

The shepherd's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Concentration (Con), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Swim (Str), and Wilderness Lore (Wis). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the shepherd of the sea prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Shepherds gain no proficiency with any weapons or armour.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: For every other level gained in the shepherd class, the kraken gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if it had also gained a level in a spellcasting class it belonged to before adding the prestige class. It does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (additional *wild shape* options, metamagic or item creation feats, or the like). If the kraken had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a shepherd of the sea, it must decide to which class to add each level for determining spells per day and spells known.

Companions (Ex): A shepherd's class levels stack with those of its spellcasting class for the purpose of determining the maximum number of hit dice of animal companions it is allowed to attain with the *animal friendship* spell. Beginning at 5th level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the shepherd gains a +10 bonus to this figure (thus a 6th level druid/5th level shepherd can have a total of 21 HD of animal companions, a 10th level druid/10th level shepherd can have a total of 40 HD of animal companions, etc.).

Healing Circle (Sp): Beginning at 1st level, a shepherd of the sea can cast an improved version of the *healing circle* spell. This ability functions in all ways as the spell detailed in *Core Rulebook I*, save that it heals the damage listed below and affects only animals, beasts and magical beasts. The shepherd can use this ability once per day per class level they possess.

Animal Growth (Sp): Beginning at 2nd level, a shepherd of the sea can cast an *animal growth* spell once per day, exactly as detailed in *Core Rulebook I*.

A shepherd gains an additional use per day of this ability at each even level they attain (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th).

Alter Life (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, the shepherd's influence and presence has a warping effect on its companions. This grants all of the shepherd's companions one bonus Hit Dice for every three full levels the shepherd has attained (+1 HD at 3rd level, +2 HD at 6th level, +3 HD at 9th level). These bonus Hit Dice do not count against the shepherd's maximum allowance and are not applied retroactively. (Thus, a companion who is with the shepherd from 1st through 6th level will have two extra Hit Dice, however if the shepherd picks up a new companion at 4th level, that companion will only receive the extra Hit Dice gained at 6th level.) A shepherd's animal companions alignment will gradually shift towards neutral evil over time, represented by a change of one step for each bonus Hit Dice gained.

True Disciple

The true disciple is one who has given himself totally to the kraken. He actively worships the kraken not out of fear, as most do, but out of genuine adoration. The disciple truly believes the kraken to be a god. This devotion allows the kraken to grant him some small boon, although it is not even close to that granted by true gods. The disciple, however, is more than satisfied with his god's generosity.

True disciples are the kraken's eyes and ears in its slave communities, acting as judge, jury *and* executioner when dissidents are found. They are feared by the general populace of these communities, or perhaps held in a small amount of awe by those who have started to believe the kraken's claims of godhood.

Irredeemably evil and fiercely loyal, disciples are the select few who are allowed to swim and converse with their patron god.

Hit Die: d10.

Requirements

To qualify to become a true disciple, a character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Neutral evil.

Skills: Swim 10 ranks.

| The True Disciple | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| Class Level | Base Attack | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Natural Armour | Special |
| 1 | +1 | +2 | +2 | +0 | +1 | Natural Swimmer |
| 2 | +2 | +3 | +3 | +0 | +2 | Empathic Link |
| 3 | +3 | +3 | +3 | +1 | +3 | |
| 4 | +4 | +4 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Speak With Master |
| 5 | +5 | +4 | +4 | +1 | +5 | Tentacle Arms |

Feats: Endurance, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (swim).
Special: Must live in a kraken-created slave society.

Class Skills

The true disciple's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the true disciple prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: True disciples gain no proficiency with any weapons or armour.

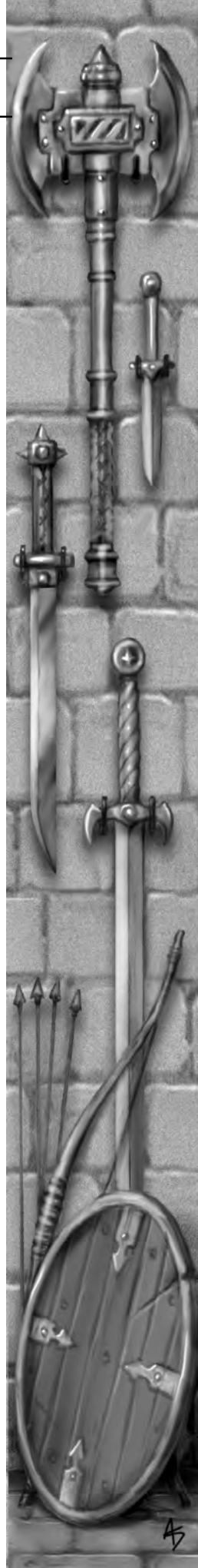
Natural Swimmer (Ex): At 1st level, the disciple develops gills on the sides of his neck, allowing him to breathe water as well as air. The character also gains the ability to swim at his normal, unencumbered, land speed. Note that this ability allows the character to move at this rate without making Swim checks, and grants him a +8 competence bonus to checks made to avoid hazards and perform special manoeuvres. The character can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if rushed or threatened, and can use the run action while swimming provided he moves in a straight line.

Empathic Link (Su): This link is similar to that shared by a sorcerer and his familiar. The kraken has an empathic link with the disciple out to a range of 500 miles, allowing it to see through the disciple's eyes and allowing both to communicate with each other telepathically.

Speak With Master (Su): The disciple can communicate verbally with the kraken as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do

not understand the language without magical help, since it is more in-depth than a simple conversation in aquan.

Tentacle Arms (Ex): At 5th level, the true disciple's arms become incredibly flexible, moving more like tentacles than normal human limbs. The tentacle arms can be stretched up to five additional feet, effectively giving the disciple five more feet of reach.



SCENARIO HOOKS AND IDEAS

Kraken are best used as a driving force behind an adventure, most often as the main antagonist. With their high challenge rating, they should only be faced directly in combat by parties of at least 12th level, higher in the case of most naval combats where the kraken has a distinct advantage. The kraken's innate ability to control the weather allows it to harass the characters without them even realising what is going on. In fact, unless the party includes a druid, ranger, or otherwise nature-savvy character, the players may not realise what is happening until it is much too late and the kraken already has them in its tentacles.

The Games Master can use the following scenario hooks and ideas to bring kraken into his game. Note that not all of these ideas are suitable for mid-level parties.

RELIGIOUS WAR

Two sea-going nations are at war. Both worship the kraken and seek its protection. Both call on the beast to attack the shipping of the other, but unknown to the humanoid populations of both nations, rival kraken have taken residence in their waters. The people have unwittingly become involved in a personal religious war between the two beasts, each one using their human populations to destroy the other. Characters introduced into this plot will discover the remarkable similarities between the two societies and how they are manipulated. Their goal is to ultimately rescue *both* nations from their gods, before both are devastated.

DIVINE CIVIL WAR

In an introduction to a truly epic scenario, mysterious flashes and explosions are heard out to sea, with steadily growing regularity. Ships have been going down with no adequate explanation, though the few survivors scream about 'tentacles in the night'. Once, the corpse of what appeared to be a gigantic squid washed up on the shore. Sages later

claimed that it was a kraken, killed (by the look of the wounds) by one of its own kind. There is but one possible reason for all this – civil war has broken out on the Elemental Plane of Water. Banishments are coming thick and fast, and those second-rank avatars that have been expelled are mad, demented, and seeking revenge. Players introduced into this plot may quest for the submarine gate to join the fray, or perhaps negotiate a settlement. Alternatively, they may discover some way of communicating with exiled kraken here, and then assist them in their return home. This may be further complicated by one or more kraken using spells on themselves and coming ashore to seek magical assistance. Entire magical academies may be turned over to finding the answers that these beasts want. Nations, values and economic systems might be turned on their heads, as these beasts attempt to further the war.

GLORIOUS COMMERCE

The characters are hired to capture or kill a notorious pirate and/or slave trader who has been pillaging villages up and down the coast. However, this villain has an arrangement with a kraken: abducting people for the kraken's colony. In return the kraken provides him with information on the location of wrecked treasure ships. The kraken will give the pirate a certain amount of protection and assistance. However, if the characters do kill or capture the pirate, the kraken offers the players the same deal it offered the pirate, thus creating a moral dilemma. Greater than the moral dilemma is the battle for survival that the characters will face if they turn down such a generous offer from the beast.

ROYAL SACRIFICE

The characters are approached by a disguised agent of the crown who employs their services to 'defeat a great menace to the kingdom and rescue the princess who is set to be its latest sacrifice'. All the agent is able to tell the characters about the menace is that it is a 'great beast of the sea', as the kraken has been careful to ensure that no one sees it, even going so far as to use its weather control abilities to conceal its acceptance of the sacrifices. Alternately, the princess may have been kidnapped by a cult of kraken worshipers who are intent on appeasing their god's cry for the blood of royals.



GUARD DUTY

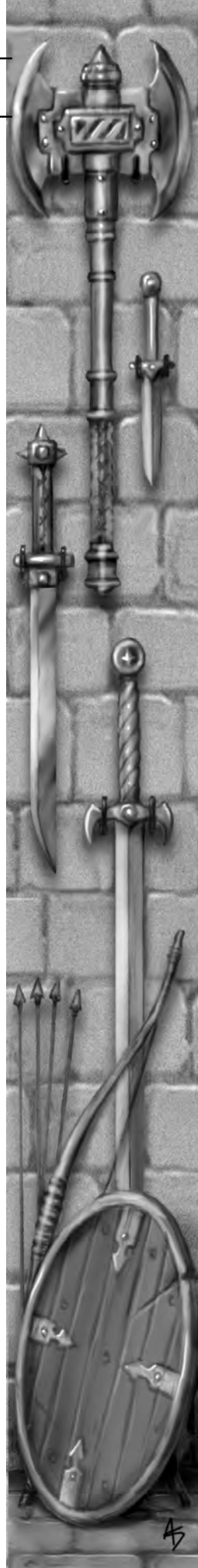
The characters are hired as guards on a merchant vessel which is to set out with a valuable cargo. Before they board, a haggard old man approaches them and attempts to bribe them into ‘looking the other way’ when his associates accost the vessel on the high seas. Ideally the characters will turn down the bribes and warn the merchant captain about the planned attack. Regardless of the characters’ actions, the merchant refuses to be intimidated into changing his plans – he has too much riding on this cargo run. When the attack inevitably comes, it becomes immediately apparent that the old man’s associates were actually a kraken and it’s followers. Alternately, the old man could be portrayed as a mad old hermit who attempts to warn the characters about the kraken with babblings about ‘arms in the dark’.

A PROFITABLE ARRANGEMENT

A noted local alchemist or wizard hires the characters to bring him the components he needs to complete his research. When the characters agree to fetch these items, he reveals that he needs the ink, blood and hide of a freshly-slain kraken. He offers to pay the characters 150% of the standard market price for such items (as detailed on pages five and six of this guide), as well as covering the cost of any healing and/or raising the party may require. As a twist, the alchemist could actually be the kraken in question, using its established cover identity to lure in a fresh meal.

UNSUITABLE LIAISON

A nobleman approaches the party to retrieve his daughter from the clutches of a kidnapper. All he knows is that she was last seen heading out of town towards the coast a couple of days past, and has not been seen or heard from since. He assumes it has something to do with a youth his daughter was involved with, as he also has not been seen since he was thrown out of the town a week prior. When the party investigates, they find that she is in the ‘clutches’ of a kraken; however, not is all as they might first assume. The kraken did not, in fact, kidnap the girl. Instead she came willingly, having fallen in love with the kraken when it was in human form, who surprisingly found that it had genuine feelings for her as well. This scenario presents the players with a true challenge, since the kraken appears to have forsaken its evil nature and fallen in love with a human girl. If the players do choose to attack the kraken, the noble girl will do her best to try and stop the fighting, however the players will find that the kraken is a powerful druid, or perhaps sorcerer, as well as possessing its standard array of abilities. Similarly, the only way to convince the girl to return to her family is through force, which will result in the kraken attacking. Perhaps the best solution to this is to find a way of allowing the lovers to remain together, while convincing the nobleman that his daughter is beyond anyone’s reach. This scenario allows for some interesting and challenging roleplaying on the part of the players.



ANTANGIL

The island state of Antangil had, for centuries, been a respectable link in a chain of trading nations that carried exotic goods around the world. Their fine ships were well built and crewed, and their banner was recognised and welcomed. They had long ago deposed their hereditary rulers, and in their place installed a republic, administered by the powerful trading guild. With a good education system and a liberal attitude to religion, they were a travelled and worldly people who could often be found in almost any trading capital or port.

However, over eighty years ago, a kraken took residence in a vast submarine cave beneath the island and gradually began to seize control. It started with the sinking of ships, apparently at random. Local and foreign vessels went down with all hands while in Antangil's waters. Rumours went out that a sea monster was stalking the area. In time the kraken allowed itself to be seen by local ships, but it refrained from attacking them, turning instead on foreign ships. Soon the merchant navies of the world began to shun the waters where the kraken was known to lurk. Fearing an economic collapse the administration of Antangil hired adventurers to kill the kraken. They were unsuccessful, terminally so, and in revenge the kraken sank a few local ships and buffeted the island with magical storms. In desperation the administration cast treasure, food, books, anything it could think of, into the sea, in an attempt to placate the beast. Nothing worked until, egged on by a local prophet, a band of vigilantes threw a living sacrifice into the waving tentacles of the lurking monster. Immediately the storms ceased. Seizing on this, the trading guild ordered that convicted criminals be taken from the harbour and cast into the briny deep.

Little by little a routine developed. Monthly at least one live person was cast into the sea. If this sacrifice was not made, a ship was sunk; with this sacrifice, the ships of Antangil passed freely in and out. With this protection they alone, of all the trading nations, have grown enormously in wealth and power. In recognition of this, the official emblem of the republic of Antangil has been changed to a kraken, and very large banners with this motif are flown prominently on all its ships. The government is fiercely protective of this arrangement, as it has, after all, made them extremely rich. Antangillians are now not a welcomed people along the coast,

however; they are viewed with distrust and envy, though no one dares to try and sail to their island to 'sort them out'.

For the people the shift from the traditional gods to this new protector was not always easy. Clerics, who pursued the perceived wishes of the old gods, where these wishes involved challenging the kraken, were attacked and banished for bringing disaster when the kraken retaliated. Now there is only one official religion on the island. Others may exist but they are practiced only in secret. This state religion of the kraken has a ministry and hierarchy like any other, and these are the people who push the unfortunate victims of trumped-up charges down the plank. Naturally these 'clerics' do not have any clerical powers, as the kraken can grant none. Instead they are usually lawful neutral, or lawful evil, fighters.

The government, the clergy, the sailing community and most of the population (because they are related to the aforementioned) will resist any action that upsets their 'god'. Other trading principedoms are very likely to finance expeditions to kill the beast, but they will be cautious to fund only high-level parties that have a very good chance of success. Bitter experience has taught them that the god of Antangil is vengeful, and they will not want to lose any more ships and men.

NATURAL FEATURES

Antangil is an island occupying about 50 square miles, surrounded by open sea. At its widest point it is only slightly over eight miles long. The highest peak is Anelgauhat, reaching to a lofty 850 feet. Numerous caves dot the hillsides, and are home to the wandering goats, foxes and other small animals that inhabit the island. Only a couple of mildly poisonous spiders and a small viper are dangerous: there are no 'monstrous' creatures to speak of. Generally the country is green and fertile, giving rise to a perfectly adequate agricultural economy based on goat's meat, wool and milk products.

Below Antangil lies a vast submarine cave that can only be accessed from one deep-sea entrance and a long, descending passage from the hillside. The former of these was discovered quite by accident by the kraken, which now resides in the cave when not out roaming the seas searching for the mythical gate or sinking foreign ships for malicious pleasure. The passage from the hillside was revealed at the same time as the appearance of the kraken. Now the High

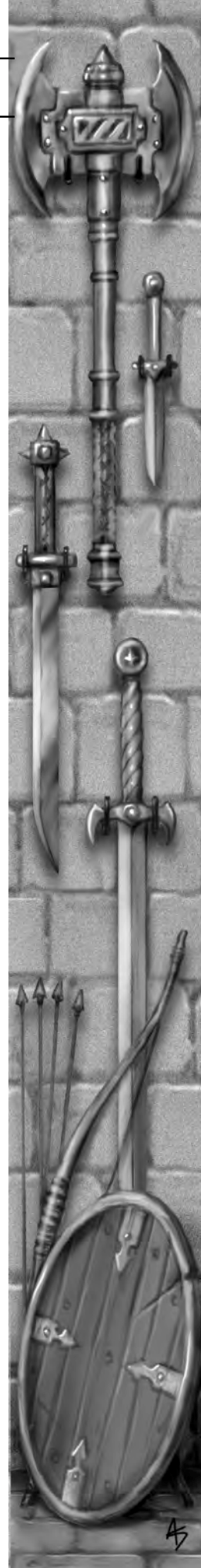
Approaching the island of Antangil by sea, the visitor is immediately impressed by the large and well-protected natural harbour. Prevailing winds carry shipping past the island at most times of the year and it is only a short diversion to make this gentle port. Clearing the heads at Punta Baja moves the ship into the calm bay, where fifty ships could easily ride at anchor, and at least five will be doing so at any given time. Rising behind the docks is the city of Avarua, which straddles the relatively gentle slopes up Mount Anelgauhat. From the perspective of the sea however, the modest tree-covered peak seems mighty and imposing. Half way up the slope, directly above the city, the visitor cannot miss seeing the mighty temple of the kraken. This structure stands several storeys high and appears to grow out of the hillside itself. Eight broad, winding staircases lead down from its single main portcullis, and each of these staircases reminds the viewer of the tentacles of a mighty squid. In fact, the entire structure looks very reminiscent of a gigantic sculpture of a squid, half sticking out of the rock, the main gate resembling a toothed mouth, the upper works taking the shape of an extended, bulbous head. Each tentacle-staircase leads into a different section of town.

The architecture of the city can be clearly divided into three styles. The first are the simple wooden cottages, which still reach to the foreshores of the bay and are ubiquitous in this part of the world. The second are the more impressive, two-storey wooden mansions of the trading families, which again can be seen gracing the overlooking hillsides of any maritime nation. The third type is clearly recognisable, and is reflective of a society that has recently gained much in the way of material wealth, but little in the way of taste. These nouveau riche monstrosities are composed of imported stone and exotic wood, and occupy large tracts of land. Each is designed to be more ostentatious than it's neighbour, consuming an entire acre with little regard to garden or harmony with nature. Inside, one supposes, they are the very models of refinement, comfort and modern convenience. But to this humble travel chronicler, they are monuments to gauche excess.

On reaching dock, the traveller is accosted by the numerous guards who seem to swarm about the place, all heavily armed. They pry into one's business and demand to see papers, if you have any, even though you could only have arrived on an Antangillian ship. To say that security is tight is not too much of an overstatement, though as long as you carry yourself as a person of some importance, and have some clear task on the island, you are generally allowed to move on without more than a 15 minute delay. The visitor at this point onwards is well advised to make himself meticulously familiar with the labyrinthine laws that apply nowadays in the republic. The slightest infraction of these complex, and sometimes bizarre, statutes will land you in jail, and there is no shortage of 'good citizens' who will happily inform the authorities of your offence. No fear need attend incarceration concerning being maltreated, as apparently the spacious cells are comfortable and prisoners are well treated. Of much greater concern is that many who are thus imprisoned are simply never seen again.

One cannot help but be impressed by the apparent richness of the city and of its inhabitants. All appear well dressed and fed, and the streets are wide and well maintained. Buildings are clean and in superb repair, and the discerning shopper can find virtually anything they might want from sources across the world, though the prices are considerably higher than on the mainland. Lodgings can be found, every bit the equal of the best inns and hostels of the mainland, and the service is second to none, as long as one is prepared to tip generously. Only one note of discord can be detected in this otherwise cosmopolitan city, nearly everyone appears sombre, distracted and nervous. They are wary of striking up animated conversations with visitors, and constantly look over their shoulders (metaphorically speaking), as if they fear that they are being eaves-dropped upon. Despite this uneasiness, the seasoned traveller can still find the kinds of establishments that enthusiastically provide the type of 'entertainments' that the lonely and adventuresome seek. Outside of the city, the country folk still maintain that kind of easy friendliness which the island used to be noted for.

– Extract from *The Observer's Guide to the Sea Nations*.



Priest and his cronies guard the entrance to this passage and have built a temple to their god over it. Descending through the hillside into a natural amphitheatre, the inward part of the cavern is enormous. Termed 'the cathedral', it is known only as a rumour to the rest of the population. Here, it is believed, the kraken surfaces to slumber, though no-one save the High Priest has ever descended to see. The temple is under guard night and day by foreign mercenaries and local toughs.

GOVERNMENT

Following the revolution that overthrew the hereditary monarchy, the country became a republic, ruled by a council of 11 members. First and foremost of these are the five patriarchs and matriarchs of the trading families, hereditary roles filled by the eldest member of the leading families. In past times these people fulfilled the posts of close advisers to the king. Consequently, little has changed for them. Second is the seat of Royal High Judge. This learned member of the council is chosen by a vote of the other members once every seven years, and is concerned with civil law. Next is the President of the Banking Guild, selected from the commercial and financial elite, to represent the fiscal and other economic interests of the republic. Next come the roles of Chief Stewards of the Shipbuilders and Stevedores Unions, who represent the interests of the practical maritime constituency. Then comes the Secretary to the Administration. In times past this was the premier role in the council, having the casting vote in all matters, and was the default leader of the council; he still officially 'chairs' all council sessions, but his actual power has waned with the coming of the kraken. Now responsibility is primarily limited to infrastructure matters, such as the construction of roads and maintenance of public works. Finally, and this is a relatively new post, is the High Priest of the Cult of the Kraken. The same man has held this post for the entire eighty years since the coming of the kraken, and it is believed that divine favour is what keeps his looks untouched by time. The High Priest now wields enormous power in the council, intimidating all of the other members with threats if they do not comply with their god's commands. More details on this last Non-Player Character can be found later in this chapter.

The council meets every few days to discuss matters of policy, and to set in motion any decisions that need to be made; citizens of the republic are only

called to the session when directives are made. For example, the chief constable may be called and advised to provide guards for certain shipments, or to give an account of the state of the military. Leading members of the various guilds may be called in to pass on instructions on the optimum level of output that they should target for the coming quarter, and so on. In most ways the government of Antangil is perfectly representative of any commercially-focussed ruling body. One thing sets it apart though, and that is the overhanging shadow of the kraken. Nearly every decision is considered in light of what their god might feel about the action. In this the High Priest of the Cult of the Kraken is its official spokesman, and he is not shy about expressing what he believes to be the correct action in any matter of concern.

Corruption is not perhaps as rife as might be expected of an elite oligarchy that has a monopoly on trade. In the intervening years nearly everyone has become immensely rich, so day-to-day hardships of life are no longer of primary concern. Certainly, the wise members of the council have many millions of gold coins stashed away, but this is only natural. Where there is corruption it is of a moral form. Since they have become more or less isolated from the rest of the world, and their method of dominance is essentially evil, they have become a petty and paranoid government. Spies are sent amongst the people to root out dissenters, who rapidly become sacrifices to the kraken when found. Members and families plot against each other and feuds that should have been forgotten long ago continue to simmer. A kind of organic evil has overcome the body politic of the republic, starting from these public figures downwards; revenge and pettiness have become national pastimes.

DEMOGRAPHICS

At the last census, 10,912 people could claim to be Antangillian citizens. Of these, most are associated with the maritime trade, being ship builders, stevedores, deck hands, or simple fishermen. Many of the remainder continue to live the simple pastoral lives they always have: tending their goats, producing distinctive-patterned woolly jumpers, and making remarkably pungent cheese. The rest are all part of the growing commercial enterprises that make the economy hum. Ninety percent of the population is human, with some elf and gnome representatives present. Their language is an

accented version of common recognisable anywhere along the coast.

Additionally, some 500 foreigners are on the island at any given time, excluding any mercenaries. These people are traders, financiers and other workers who have come across on an Antangillian ship to earn good money, act as business go-betweens, or sew up lucrative deals.

ECONOMY

Trade drives the economy of Antangil. Its position along a trade route, and monopoly of its section of the coast, due to the intervention of the kraken, means that it has become a crossroads for shipping. Ships of foreign powers deliver cargo to nearby ports, where they are loaded onto Antangillian vessels for shipping to the other side of the island. This taxi service has generated vast profits and the have been used to import luxury goods into the republic, along with holds full of raw cash. The export of cheese, wool and fish, once the islands chief source of income, creates an insignificant injection into this system. Additionally, many foreign powers have recognised the security of the isolated island, and have started to use it as a banking facility. Fear of being unable to retrieve the money seems, thus far, to have been offset by the apparent honesty and security of the banking firms involved. This is a slowly growing business, but one that the Guild of Bankers is actively pursuing.

The only export of note from the republic now is kraken ink. This is collected in secret from the cathedral, and brought to the surface for bottling. Having upwards of 85% purity, this ink is highly sought after in the neighbouring cities of the mainland and premium prices have been paid in the past. Over time the price is being eroded as the good quality, and fairly regular supply, over-fulfil demand. None-the-less, sale of this product has had two vital effects. The first is that it has put the name of Antangil on the map once more, for apothecaries and wizards frequent it as a major source for one of magic's most prized components. Antangil ink is now synonymous with high quality, and the product is spreading far and wide, though naturally becoming more diluted the further it travels, to maximise middle-man profits. The second is that it has cemented in the mainland countries' minds the fact that an active alliance is in place with the kraken. Where once it was considered only as a horrible possibility, there now remains little doubt

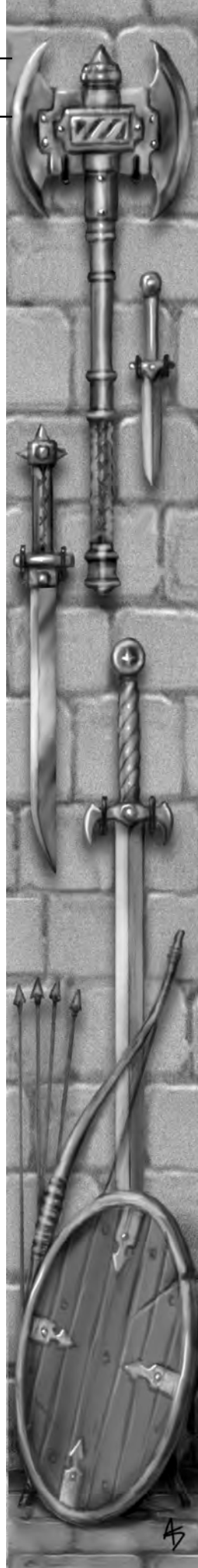
that close association with the sea monster, in some way, maintains Antangil's stranglehold on this portion of the sea. Those who wish to challenge the republic's growing supremacy know that they must kill the kraken to do so. Despairing of the loss of life and treasure that this would entail, most are content to find ways to profit economically, and seek ways to outmanoeuvre them in the marketplace.

There are three banks on the island: Anelgauhat Rock, the Farmers Credit Union and the Royal United Bank of the Kraken. Each has cash reserves on hand of at least 150 million gold pieces. All are powerful establishments and see themselves as the saviours and administrators of the republic's well-being. This wealth is liberally injected into the local economy and Antangil can boast good roads, excellent buildings and plumbing and a well-paid and trained professional navy and military. What the flood of money cannot do is buy intellectual freedom or peace of mind for the citizens, but this has always been a secondary concern when accounting focuses on numbers. In all, the financial masters of the island are completely satisfied in their alliance with the kraken and would be actively opposed to even a hint of changing anything.

The only financial group to suffer from the presence of the kraken is the formerly-powerful Seafarers Cooperative Society, an insurance vendor that underwrote all shipping and cargoes through the island. Since the 'protection' of the 'god' began, fewer and fewer ship owners and transportation management firms have bothered to insure their goods. Even great institutions like the Coffee House on Queen Street, where the old families used to gather and wager on departing ships, effectively putting up the stake underwriting money, have fallen into disuse. Now that noble building, once a hotbed of financial and political power, is little more than a smoke-and-coffee-begrimed seafront tavern. From the elite of the population it is here, if anywhere, that grumbling about the current situation can be heard.

ARMY AND CONSTABULARY

Traditionally the army of Antangil was a citizen militia that was raised from every able-bodied person in times of need. Now it has become semi-professional with a uniform, training regime and pay. The army undertakes policing, guarding and, in



theory, defensive actions against invasion. That this last duty is maintained, despite an invasion being highly unlikely to reach the shores of the island, due to the kraken's presence, is evidence of the paranoia that the administration feels. This indigenous army is a company strong, divided into four 'quintets' of roughly fifty swords each, and one quintet of somewhere between forty and fifty staff officers, armourers, administrators, commissary agents and so on. All are on foot and each quintet is recognisable by its own distinctive badges and colours. Each quintet is rotated through the roles of constabulary (patrolling the city and country roads, and apprehending law-breakers), shipboard guards (where they are parcelled out to protect not necessarily the ships at sea, but the ship, cargo and crew when they reach foreign ports), training (where they are run through exercises generally given by foreign mercenaries) and, finally, leave, when they are theoretically able to be with their families. Each of these duties entails a posting of three months. Part of the role of the staff quintet is to know exactly where everyone in the company is at any given moment, so that they can be mustered if any emergency should arise.

The Army of Antangil

The army of Antangil is composed entirely of Non-Player Characters with the warrior class. Each quintet is comprised of forty 1st level warriors, with eight 2nd level warriors providing close leadership to groups of five each, and is led by a 3rd level warrior. In command of the whole army is a 6th level warrior, the chief constable. Six 5th level and nine 4th level staff officers support him.

Supplementing the local company is a mercenary company recruited by the paranoid government. This follows continental patterning, and is composed of two 'centuries' of roughly eighty swords and twenty administrative staff each. Each century is further divided into ten 'tent groups' of eight swords, led by a more experienced character. It is the tent group that is the functional unit of the mercenary army, and these bunk together (often imposing themselves on local houses), do duty together and fight together. Tent groups are sent to bolster local quintets in whatever duty they are performing and provide the majority of the training they receive. These mercenaries are not popular with the local civilian population, even though they are outrageously well paid, and know how to spend. They are, however, hardened soldiers of fortune and

their tastes in 'good clean fun' are often far more robust than many would be comfortable with.

Mercenary Company

The mercenary army is a more diverse entity than the army of Antangil. Each tent group of eight combatants may be composed of almost any kind of class and typically represents an adventuring band. In general, it is reasonable to say that, of a tent group, four will be 1st or 2nd level, three will be 3rd or 4th level and the last person will be 5th or greater level, and in the leadership role. Commanding each century is an 8th level character who is supported by a separate tent group of similarly high-level Non-Player Characters. The overall commander of the mercenary company is a 9th level fighter. Use the tables presented in *Core Rulebook II* for generating these Non-Player Characters.

Both mercenary and local companies wear the kraken as a symbol on their uniform; bearing in mind that, for the mercenary unit, the sign of the kraken may be the only token of uniformity that they show at all. Resisting the activities of the soldiers, speaking ill of the soldiers, fomenting civil disobedience, conspiring with foreign agents to undermine the security and well being of the republic of Antangil, as well as many other activities, are all capital crimes for which there is only one obvious penalty...

NAVY

The original navy of the republic consisted of a few coastal traders, many small fishing vessels and a frigate to protect them all. Now its fleet is quite extensive, built with the wealth of its evilly-protected trade and crewed predominantly by paid foreign deckhands. The following is an *Observer's* list of the vessels currently registered in Antangil.

- † 15 coastal traders. These have a variety of names dependant on the whims of the captains, unlike the larger ships that have been given names consistent with a theme when they were bought or commissioned.
- † 10 trading ships. *Ogden, Chagall, Poussin, Phidias, Himachal, Heyerdahl, Dinesen, Blanqui, Mitford, and Rothko.*
- † 3 mercantile ships. *Bishkek, Lenekal, and Ronkiti.*

Protecting these are the following:

† 4 frigates. *Might of the Waves*, *Glorious Commerce*, *Horned Tentacle*, and *Black Night*.

† 1 heavy frigate. *Architeutis*.

Detailing the Navy

If you are using the *Seas of Blood* accessory by Mongoose Publishing, the ships listed above are of the *Fleur*, *Orca*, *High Seas*, *Voyager* and *Typhoon* classes, respectively.

To accommodate the increased traffic the docks have been enlarged several times, ten ships can now be serviced simultaneously. Slipways similarly have sprung up and the skeletons of new ships are slowly but surely taking form.

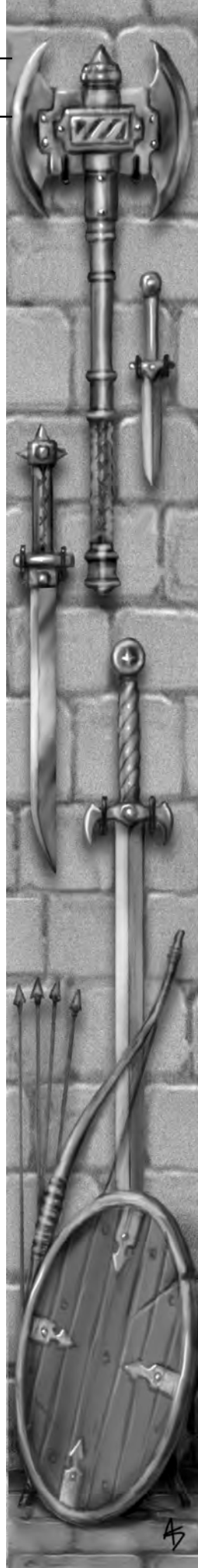
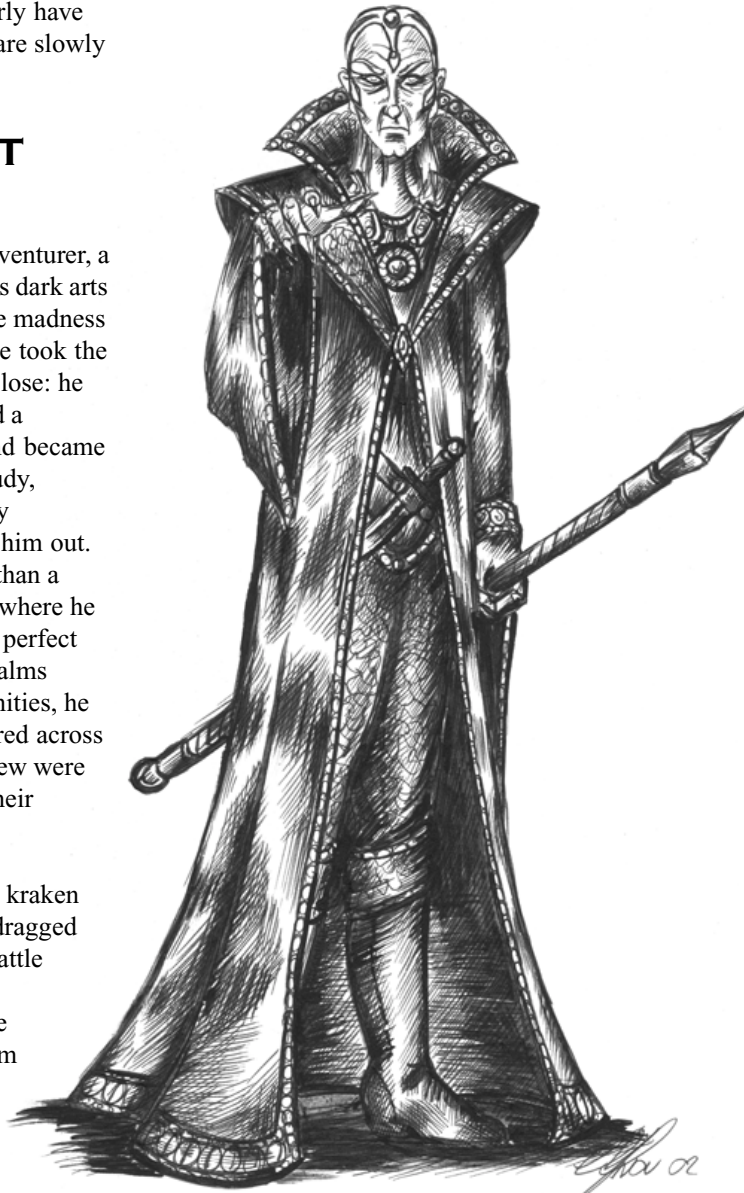
THE TERRIBLE TWIST REVEALED

300 years ago, Xardan Darkfyre was an adventurer, a sorcerer and a necromancer. He studied his dark arts well and grew in power, succumbing to the madness of that particular discipline. Eventually he took the ultimate step as his natural life drew to a close: he secluded himself in his forest keep, crafted a phylactery, concocted the lethal potion and became a lich. For many years he continued to study, preying upon the local kingdom until they eventually rose up and conspired to drive him out. In secret he abandoned his home of more than a century and set out to find a new territory where he could carry out his master plan, creating a perfect kingdom of his own. Thinking that the realms across the sea might offer greater opportunities, he bought and crewed a stout ship and ventured across uncharted waters. Soon all of that fated crew were zombies and troubled him no more with their hateful singing and banter.

But all of his plans were undone when the kraken seized the vessel, crushed it, spun it, and dragged it beneath the surface. Even though the battle was fierce, Xardan was ripped apart and consumed, his precious phylactery, a stone bound into a necklace, was parted from him and lodged in the beast's gut. He later reformed on the sea bottom, and it took him the next six months to walk to shore. For roughly twenty years he

laboured to rebuild his power and locate the kraken - the holder of his priceless phylactery. When he had done so he again set out: this time to find and slaughter the monster. Again his ship was crewed by zombies, but it was a stouter vessel, and he was confident of victory. Yet again, the ship was destroyed, and Xardan reformed without the prize he sought. Many more decades passed and several more attempts failed.

Finally, out of frustration with this never-ending duel, the kraken surfaced in its lair (the submarine cave beneath Antangil), disgorged the remains of Xardan on the beach and waited in the darkness. When the lich reformed the kraken spoke to him. The patience of both was immense and they talked



for many years of what was to be done. Eventually, a pact was formed. Xardan thirsted for the power to make a kingdom and the kraken thirsted to be recognised in its true divinity. Together they would further both these goals, entwined into one exquisite plan. To ensure that Xardan would never double-cross him, the kraken kept the phylactery, but in compensation he provided the lich with corpses to animate and ink to sell.

With a newly-risen army of skeleton workers the lich tunnelled out of the cave, now renamed the cathedral, into the sunlight air of the unsuspecting island republic. Meanwhile, the kraken had been sinking ships that bore the Antangillian banner on the high seas and buffeting the island with storms. Disguised by enchantments and the clothes from uncounted victims, Xardan entered the city as an eccentric hermit, the prophet of a new god. Every sinking he foretold, and for every one he proposed the same solution: Placate the beast by making it a god, worship it, cast into its tentacles live sacrifices. For a long time his council was studiously ignored, but eventually an outraged community took matters into their own hands and cast a bound criminal into the sea, resulting in an immediate cessation of the evils that had beset the island. The rest, as they say, is history.

Now the lich sits, as High Priest of the Cult of the Kraken, on the council of the republic as its most dominant member. He guides their every decision and, since he can conspire with the kraken to have rapid proof of his threats of divine retribution, he is gradually becoming the only voice. In time, of course, he plans to do away with them all and their endless petty questions and concerns. When Antangil is the greatest sea empire in the world, when its banners are flown in every port, when stately death hulks ply the waves unmolested, when the pathetic contagion of mortal life is removed from his borders, then will Xardan Darkfyre have the perfect kingdom, and then he will cut his phylactery from that rubbery false god.

Xardan knew he had to cover the obvious appearance of his undeath. Over the years before he and the kraken unleashed their master plan, he had the beast wreck ships and bring him all the books, items and scrolls that it found. Eventually he found what he was looking for: a scroll that allowed him to alter his appearance and another that made the enchantment permanent. Reading these scrolls he took the appearance of a non-descript, aged human

Xardan Darkfyre, High Priest of the Cult of the Kraken

Male lich Sor12; CR 14; Medium-size undead; HD 12d12; hp 84; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +7/+2 melee touch (1d8+5 and paralysis, touch) or +8/+3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork scimitar), or +8/+3 ranged (1d4+1, dagger); SA Damaging touch, fear aura, paralyzing touch, spells; SQ +4 turn resistance, damage reduction 15/+1, immunities, undead; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 15, Con –, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +16, Concentration +16, Craft (engraving) +13, Knowledge (arcane) +5, Knowledge (necromancy) +9, Scry +13, Spellcraft +18; Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Silent Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration.

Spells Known: (6/7/7/7/5/4/3): 0 – *arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound, open/close, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st – *cause fear, chill touch, mage armour, ray of enfeeblement, spider climb*; 2nd – *darkness, ghoul touch, hideous laughter, scare, spectral hand*; 3rd – *dispel magic, halt undead, hold person, vampiric touch*; 4th – *contagion, enervation, fear*; 5th – *animate dead, cone of cold*; 6th – *circle of death*.

Possessions: Masterwork scimitar, ceremonial robes, 3 daggers, 2 potions (randomly determined), 2 minor magic items (randomly determined) and 1 medium magic item (randomly determined).

For details of Xardan's abilities refer to the appropriate sections of *Core Rulebooks I* and *III*.

male. To cover the smell of his hideous true form, he has produced a number of masking potions in his cathedral laboratory. Each of these potions lasts 8 hours after he ingests it, and totally masks his undead aroma.

His phylactery is a flattened stone of black obsidian, roughly three inches in diameter, on which are meticulously engraved incantations that preserve his existence, and bound with a leather thong so it can be worn as a necklace. Purely by accident it lodged within the kraken's gut during their first encounter, where it has remained, perfectly safe, but irretrievable by the lich.

THE CULT AND THE CATHEDRAL

The central goal of the Cult of the Kraken is collect victims for sacrifice to the 'god'. To that end, an ever-increasing range of complex laws has been enacted, 'in the interests of public safety and order'. Those who break these laws are incarcerated in the temple on the hillside, released only if the citizen is of sufficient public stature that their presence would be missed, or if substantial bribes are paid to the guards. Otherwise they are publicly cast into the harbour, or simply spirited away, down the winding steps to the cavern below, by the high priest. In both cases the sentence is terminal.

Priests of the cult have no clerical powers; they are, in actuality, predominantly lawful evil fighters and rogues of varying levels. They see their task as one of creating an ordered society and are happy performing their assigned ministrations. These members of the clergy regularly hold public services to give glory to the god, though these are just mumbo-jumbo made up on the spot to terrify and impress the locals. In all there are 20 priests in these roles, the highest being a 6th level human fighter.

Secreted behind the main alter in the temple is the secret door that leads to the steps down to the cathedral. No-one apart from Xardan, High Priest of the Cult of the Kraken, knows of its existence, and he uses every means at his disposal to keep it this way.

The cathedral of the kraken is at least 500 feet in diameter. A large lake occupies most of this area, with the rest being a sandy shore that circles most of the perimeter. The lake itself is very deep and leads out, though a 100 foot-diameter, 1,500 foot-long tunnel, into the open sea at a depth of 600 feet. Xardan has had his zombies and skeletons stack goods from destroyed ships that the kraken has brought to him against the walls of the cathedral. There are priceless goods of all descriptions, Xardan having carefully placed them, more out of a sense of orderliness than care for their value. To one side of the cavern, a quarter of the distance around the lake, away from the single staircase that ascends to the temple entrance, Xardan has set up his laboratory. Here the section of beach is 45 feet wide and a large number of benches and other furniture have been set up, along with many racks and shelves. All of this has been salvaged over the years from wrecked

ships. Here Xardan continues his alchemical research, ostensibly to create powerful potions that will poison the water supply of every local port and create a zombie army under his control but, in reality, mostly concerned with producing the scent-masking potion that he so desperately needs.

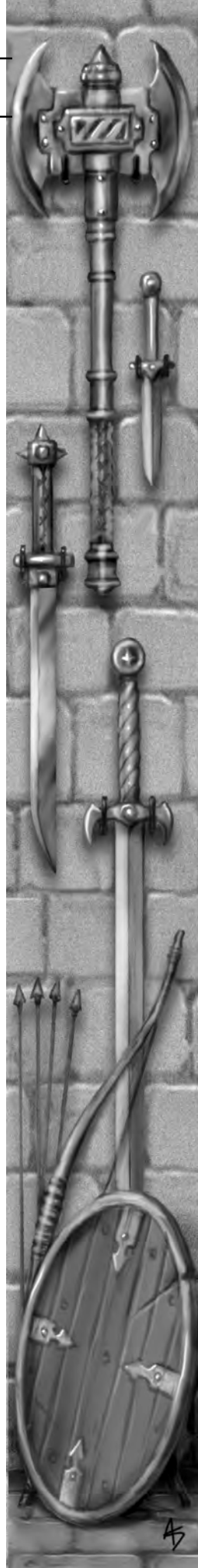
Strewn about on the beach are the bones and corpses of the countless victims of the kraken's attacks, brought here for Xardan to animate, which he does whenever he needs someone to do some manual work. If anyone descends into the cathedral from the staircase without Xardan with them, 1d10 skeletons and 1d6 zombies will animate per round to attack the intruders. This will continue for 1d20+10 rounds, after which no more skeletons or zombies will animate, unless specifically commanded to by Xardan. At his disposal there are 1d10x100 skeletons, and 1d10x50 corpses suitable for zombification. The undead guardians will not automatically attack anyone entering the cathedral from the sea tunnel.

The Antangil Kraken

Male advanced kraken; CR 19; Colossal magical beast (aquatic); HD 33d10+363; hp 478; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd swim 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 2, flat-footed 21); Atk +41/+36/+36 (4d6+16 19-20/x2, 2 tentacle rake; 1d8+8 19-20/x2, 6 arm; 4d8+8 19-20/x2, bite); Face/Reach 40 ft. by 80 ft./15 ft. (150 ft. with tentacle); SA Improved grab, constrict 4d6+16 or 1d8+8; SQ Ink cloud, jet, spell-like abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +29, Ref +18, Will +18; Str 42, Dex 10, Con 33, Int 21, Wis 20, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +24, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (politics) +10, Listen +15, Search +15, Spot +15; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Expertise, Improved Critical (arm, bite, tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Whirlpool.

For details of the krakens special abilities refer to *Core Rulebook III*. The Whirlpool feat is detailed on page 13 of this guide.



KRAKEN REFERENCE LIST

The following statistics are presented here to give the Games Master an instant reference for the various types of kraken and their special followers that are presented in this guide. They can be immediately dropped into a scenario, simply rename them as required. Possessions listed are only a suggestion, but their effects have been factored into the rest of the statistics. You are free to replace or add possessions, so they might better fit your situation, however it is recommended that you do not remove an item without replacing it with one of similar or greater value.

KRAKEN

CR 12; Gargantuan magical beast (aquatic); HD 20d10+180; hp 290; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 6, flat-footed 14); Atk +28/+23/+23 (2d8+12/19-20/x2, 2 tentacle rake; 1d6+6, 6 arm; 4d6+6, bite); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 40 ft./10 ft. (100 ft. with tentacle); SA Improved grab, constrict 2d8+12 or 1d6+6; SQ Ink cloud, jet, spell-like abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +21, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 34, Dex 10, Con 29, Int 21, Wis 20, Cha 10.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +19, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10 Listen +15, Search +15, Spot +15; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will.

Special Attacks/Qualities: Details of the kraken's special attacks/qualities can be found in *Core Rulebook III*.

KRAKEN OFFSPRING

CR 9; Huge animal (aquatic); HD 12d8+12; hp 66; Init +3 (Dex); Spd swim 80 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 14); Atk +15/+10 (1d6+8, 8 tentacle rake; 2d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20ft./10 ft. (40 ft. with tentacle); SA Improved grab, constrict; SQ Ink cloud, jet; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +5; Str 26, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills & Feats: Listen +8, Spot +8.

Special Attacks/Qualities: Details of the kraken offsprings special attacks/qualities can be found in *Core Rulebook III*.

SHEPHERD OF THE SEA

Kraken Drd6/Shp3; CR 21; Gargantuan magical beast (aquatic); HD 23d10+6d8+261; hp 400; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 6, flat-footed 14); Atk +34/+29/+29 (2d8+12/19-20/x2, 2 tentacle rake; 1d6+6, 6 arm; 4d6+6, bite); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 40 ft./10 ft. (100 ft. with tentacle); SA Improved grab, constrict 2d8+12 or 1d6+6; SQ Ink cloud, jet, spell-like abilities, nature sense, animal companion, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lore, *wild shape* 2/day, *healing circle* (2d8+2) 3/day, *animal growth* 1/day, alter life; AL NE; SV Fort +29, Ref +17, Will +19; Str 34, Dex 10, Con 29, Int 21, Wis 20, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Animal Empathy +13, Concentration +19, Handle Animal +13, Heal +17, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10 Listen +15, Search +15, Spot +15, Wilderness Lore +17; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will.

Special Attacks/Qualities: Details of the shepherd's special attacks and qualities can be found in *Core Rulebook I*, *Core Rulebook III* and this guide.

Spells Prepared (6/5/4/4/3): 0 – *Cure minor wounds* x6; 1st – *Animal friendship*, *calm animals*, *cure light wounds*, *entangle*, *obscuring mist* x2; 2nd – *Hold animal* x2, *speak with animals*, *summon nature's ally II* x2; 3rd – *Cure moderate wounds*, *remove disease*, *summon nature's ally III* x2; 4th – *Freedom of movement*, *sleet storm*, *summon nature's ally IV*.

Animal Companions: Randomly determined up to a maximum of 18 HD. All of these creatures will have +1 bonus HD which does not count against this total and their alignment will be one step shifted towards neutral evil.

TRUE DISCIPLE

Gurter; Human Ftr7/Dcp2; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d10+18; hp 72; Init +5; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 22; Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+6, +1 *bastard sword*), +11/+6 ranged (1d8+3, mighty masterwork composite longbow); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Bonus feats, weapon specialization, natural swimmer, empathic link; AL NE; SV Fort

+11, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +12, Jump +12, Swim +22; Cleave, Endurance, Exotic Weapon (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Skill Focus (swim), Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Special Qualities: Details of Gurtur's special qualities can be found in *Core Rulebook I* and this guide.

Possessions: Large metal shield, +1 full plate, +1 bastard sword, mighty (Str 16) masterwork composite longbow, 20 arrows, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of endurance*, *cloak of resistance +1*.

HALF-KRAKEN

Kraken are highly magical creatures that are constantly plotting bigger and better ways to achieve their goals. Sometimes, in the case of particularly powerful kraken, this can involve a dalliance with a surface creature while under the effects of shape-changing magic. This union rarely results in offspring, however, when it does bear fruit, the young are evil, twisted versions of their non-kraken parents, although there is a hint of the kraken in their features. Their eyes appear abnormally large, their skin has a slightly rubbery texture to it and, upon careful examination, a set of gills can be found on the sides of their neck.

All half-kraken revere their parent as the god they believe themselves to be, and act as spies and ambassadors to coastal civilizations on behalf of the kraken.

Creating a Half-kraken

'Half-kraken' is a template that can be added to any humanoid, giant or monstrous humanoid (referred to hereafter as the 'base creature'). The creature's type changes based on its original type: humanoid creatures become 'monstrous humanoid (aquatic)', while all other types simply gain the aquatic subtype. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted below.

Speed: In addition to the base creature's normal movement rate, the half-kraken can swim at the full, unencumbered, land speed of the base creature.

AC: Natural armour improves by +7.

Damage: A half-kraken's arms are malleable and incredibly flexible, granting them two slam attacks with a reach of up to five feet farther than the base creature. If the base creature does not already have this attack form, use the damage values in the table below. Otherwise, use the values below or the base creature's damage, whichever is greater.

| Size | Slam Damage |
|-------------|-------------|
| Fine | 1 |
| Diminutive | 1d2 |
| Tiny | 1d3 |
| Small | 1d4 |
| Medium-size | 1d6 |
| Large | 1d8 |
| Huge | 2d6 |
| Gargantuan | 2d8 |
| Colossal | 4d6 |

Special Attacks: A half-kraken retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the Improved Grab and Constrict abilities with its arms. These abilities function exactly as described in *Core Rulebook III*, allowing the half-kraken to deal automatic slam damage each round to a grappled foe.

Special Qualities: A half-kraken retains all of the special qualities of the base creature and can breathe both air and water freely.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +6, Dex +0, Con +4, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +0.

Skills: A half-kraken has four skill points, plus its Intelligence modifier, per Hit Die. Treat skills from the base creature's list as class skills and other skills as cross-class. If the creature has a class, it gains skills for class levels normally.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Same as the base creature or any aquatic.

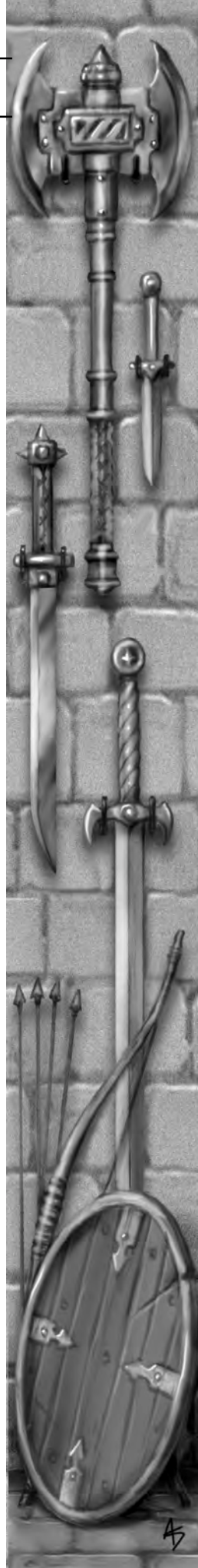
Organization: Same as the base creature.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: Same as the base creature.

Alignment: Usually neutral evil.

Advancement: Same as the base creature.



Half-Kraken Characters

Half-kraken often have a character class, favouring barbarian, druid, fighter and ranger. Half-kraken clerics and paladins are extremely rare.

Sample Half-Kraken

Half-Kraken/Half-Ogre

Large Giant (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 4d8+16 (34 hp)

Initiative: -1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

AC: 23 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +12 natural, +3 hide)

Attacks: Huge greatclub +11 melee, or 2 slam +10 melee; or Huge longspear +1 ranged

Damage: Huge greatclub 2d6+12, or slam 1d8+8; or Huge longspear 2d6+8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./15 ft. (20-25 ft. with longspear)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, constrict 1d8+8

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +2

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 7

Skills: Climb +8, Listen +5, Spot +5

Feats: Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Climate/Terrain: Any land, aquatic, and underground

Organization: Solitary, pair, gang (2 – 4), or band (5 – 8)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

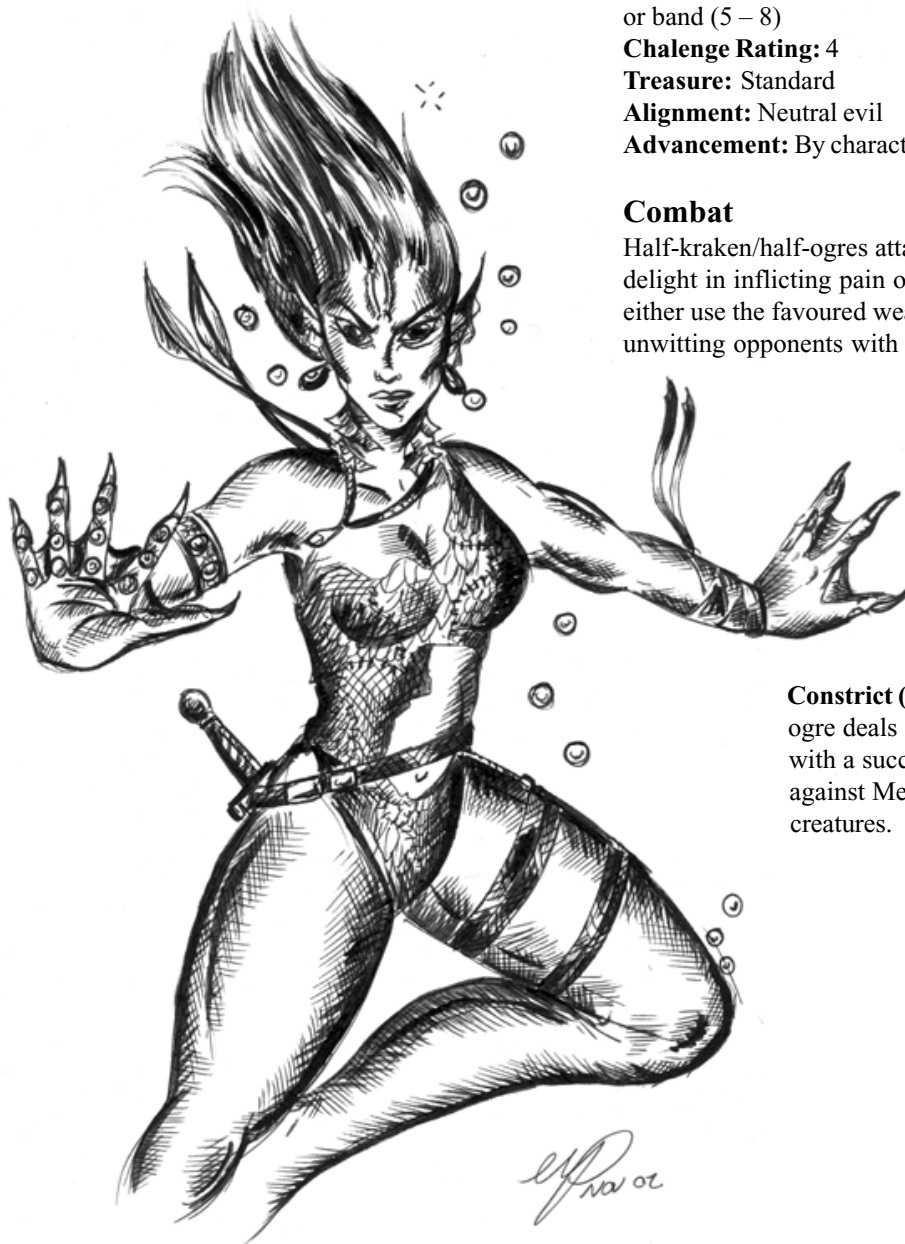
Combat

Half-kraken/half-ogres attack for no reason, taking delight in inflicting pain on others. In combat they either use the favoured weapons of their race, or slam unwitting opponents with their thick arms.

Improved Grab (Ex):

To use this ability, the half-kraken/half-ogre must hit an opponent of up to Medium-size with a slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A half-kraken/half-ogre deals automatic slam damage with a successful grapple check against Medium-size or smaller creatures.



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