

LAMENTATIONS  
*of the*  
FLAME PRINCESS  
ADVENTURES

# MENAGERIE OF EXILES

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# INTRODUCTION

Here is a gang of Barbary Coast pirates that can show up whenever, and just about wherever, it is useful to you as the Referee. You can add them to wandering encounter or rumor tables, or use this as a setup for a one-shot or short adventure with some body-horror elements.

The pirates of the brig *Sultan's Pleasure* are scouring the seas! Captained by one Hizir Reis, they are privateers working for the Bey of Tunis, Halq al-Hasan. They are hunting the approaches to the Straits of Gibraltar in search of vulnerable merchant ships, to collect tribute in exchange for safe passage into the Mediterranean Sea, or to capture their cargo and take their crew and passengers as slaves. They avoid warships by having a fast ship with as few spare supplies as possible or, if necessary, being able to quickly hoist the flag of a neutral nation from the ship's handy chest of flags.

Recently Reis and his crew heard rumors that Antonio Puga, a Venetian merchant, was looking for an ancient and immensely valuable treasure. A tipoff led them to Puga's supposed hiding place, a small fishing village on the north coast of Africa named Chambi, whose inhabitants still followed the Berber religion and were therefore pagans to both Muslims and Christians. Reis had no qualms about sacking the village and taking anyone who could be sold as a slave captive. Since then, some of the crew and officers have been struck by an unusual illness, and a few of the crew have died under unusual circumstances. As for the treasure, Captain Reis, who chased Puga down and killed him personally, claims he

found a map on the merchant's body that leads to an ancient ruin on an island off the north coast of Africa (or some similar location convenient for the campaign).

Your challenge as the Referee is to get the player characters onto the pirate ship. If the player characters are on land, the pirates can be raiding a coastal town looking for captives, food, or water, or simply looking to sell the captives or goods they have already plundered. If the player characters are at sea, then the pirates might capture the merchant ship they are aboard, they might be aboard another pirate ship making a rendezvous with the *Sultan's Pleasure*, or perhaps the pirates rescue the player characters after they have been marooned. From there, you can decide how long to keep them onboard the *Sultan's Pleasure*. Maybe these pirates are just local flavor, or a way to get the player characters from Point A to B, or the beginning of a piratical turn to your campaign, as the Player Characters take to the high seas in search of plunder and adventure. The pirates could even be used as means to introduce the player characters to North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, perhaps serving as a gateway to adventures in Istanbul or Rafael Chandler's *World of the Lost*. By whatever means you decide to use the pirates, they will be very eager to enlist the player characters' help in rooting out the dangers of a ruined temple which they claim holds a great treasure.



# THE SULTAN'S PLEASURE

The pirates' ship is a two-masted, square-rigged ship with a shallow draft, allowing the ship to sail extremely close to the shore and even sail into rivers. (Use the stats for the brig on page 43 of the core book.) By the 17th century, European pirates who had 'turned Turk' had given European shipbuilding and ship-handling skills to the Barbary Coast. The old oared galleys and lateen-sailed ships bristling with archers of the region had long been replaced by square-rigged ships sporting cannon and capable of raiding as far away as Iceland and Ireland.

## THE PIRATES

There are 82 pirates remaining in the crew. Most are from Tunis or other ports on the Barbary Coast, but about 20 are Europeans who have converted to Islam. The rest can be from wherever the Referee desires.

**PIRATE CREW:** *Armor 14, Move 30', 1st Level Fighter, 6hp, scimitar 1d8 or arquebus 1d8, Morale 8. 1d12sp.*

**PIRATE OFFICERS:** *Armor 16, Move 30', 2nd Level Fighter, 10hp, scimitar 1d8 or pistol 1d8, Morale 10. 3d6sp.*



## THE CAPTAIN

Hizir Reis is a swarthy man, with brown hair, a lean body, and the long, clever fingers of an artist or pickpocket. When distracted or deep in thought, he has a habit of humming or whistling a strange little tune. During the sacking of Cham-bi, Reis chased Antonio Puga back to his rooms and killed him, then shut himself away to look for spoils while the crew spread throughout the town and rounded up the best surviving men, women, and children for sale into slavery. “No one was around to hear Reis cry out for help, and then again in agonizing pain, or to hear the terrible slobbering sound that followed. When he finally emerged from Puga’s rooms, he seemed himself, though the second mate thought he looked unusually well for having taken as many slashes and bruises in the battle as he had. In fact, the mother symbiote (referred to hereafter

as the Mother) that is now in control of Captain Reis had healed his body, not only of the wounds from the earlier battle, but also those caused by its own violent means of entering the captain’s body.

In combat, the now-infected Reis will fight seemingly without regard to thoughts of injury or death. The Mother can heal Reis completely of any wounds, diseases, or poisons after a four-hour rest. If Reis dies, the Mother may erupt from his body to grapple the nearest foe or, if the Referee prefers, sneak out later and hunt for a new host when their guard is down.

**HIZIR REIS:** *Armor 16, Move 30’, 5th Level Fighter, 30hp, scimitar 1d8 or pistol 1d8, Morale 10. A pair of pistols and various rings, necklaces, earrings, and similar jewelry worth a total of 60sp.*



The mother symbiote is an extradimensional being. In their home dimension, the Mother and her fellow exiles are beings of pure light. In our world, they have been clothed in flesh, a cruel punishment with consequences unforeseen by those who exiled them.

Outside of a host, the Mother is a red slug-like creature, 3" in length with no apparent sensory organs except for several thin, extraordinarily strong tendrils. These tendrils can extend up to 6' and be used as a crude means of movement, but are more often used to grasp hold of a new host body until implantation is complete. Said implantation can take place anywhere on an animal or human body, as the tendrils can also penetrate and tear flesh, but Mother will attempt to use an orifice for speed of access. Once she has gained access, she makes her way to the host's stomach, where she implants herself in the stomach lining and extends one tendril through the stomach wall to connect with the host's nervous system. She then learns about the host's various hormones and chemical processes that control bodily functions, behavior, pain control, and healing. This information is stored in patterns in the Mother's own nervous system.

She is extremely difficult to kill; any successful attack with mundane weapons does only 1 point of damage and she is immune to acid. Anyone touching her with their bare skin takes

1d4 damage from the acid that coats her body. She will attempt to grapple (page 62 of the core book) the nearest foe. If she succeeds, her target must make a saving throw versus Paralyzation. Passing the save means the player character takes 1d6 damage from her acid. Failing means the player character takes 2d6 points of damage as the Mother burrows into their flesh! The player characters have one round to prevent the Mother from crawling inside her target through the nearest available orifice, or, failing that, tearing her way in. This will do another 1d6 points of damage, but will not take the player character below 0 hit points (a dead host being no good to the Mother). Failure to prevent the Mother from entering the body results in the Mother taking control of the player character.

**THE MOTHER:** *Armor 16, Move 20', 7 Hit Dice, 35hp, acid-covered tentacle 1d6, Morale 10.*





## THE INFECTED

Like all of her kind, the Mother can clone herself in the stomach acid of her host's body. The pups are initially barely visible to the human eye. The Mother infects a host by purposefully regurgitating a pup into spittle or vomit, and passing them to another host via shared food or drink, kissing, oral sex, or other contact with the mucous membranes of a host. The pups cannot make other pups for their first year of life, and rely on controlling their host through changes to their gut bacteria and its effect on the brain and nervous system. The pups act independently, and communicate with each other through both the language of the host and through smells emitted on the breath. They have a respect for, and fear of, the Mother and will generally do her bidding.

The signs of incubation start appearing in a human host by the end of the first day: a body rash that lasts a couple of days as the new pup quells the body's immune system; an accompanying on-again, off-again fever; feeling hungry and sated by turns; a tendency to burp; and heartburn. Most of these symptoms are gone by the end of the week, though the burping continues, and the breath always smells sour. They also seem just a little off to anyone who knows them well, but that could be put down to being at sea for extended periods of time.

Captain Reis never demonstrated the first week's symptoms, as he was invaded by a fully adult Mother. But shortly after the Sultan's Pleasure left the smoking village behind, three minor crewmembers showed signs of sickness. One methodically immolated himself. One seemingly went insane and was thrown overboard when he

began to sing nothing but childhood songs non-stop. The third was imprisoned briefly with the prisoners when the rash began, but it didn't spread to them. He quietly refused to eat and starved to death. Each of the three were victims of the Mother's experiments with the limits of the human body. She has plans, violent plans, for the ones she keeps.

Initially, the crew thought that the dead crewmembers had been driven mad by an outbreak of syphilis, but they came to believe that they and the Sultan's Pleasure had been cursed by the survivors of Chambi. Since then, the crew has tortured several of the prisoners and even thrown an unfortunate number of souls overboard before the captain ordered them to stop.

Currently, the helmsman/quartermaster Selak, the doctor/carpenter Youssef, and the captain's parrot Basi are infected with pups.

# FORECASTLE DECK

Located at the ship's bow, the forecandle deck sits just forward of the first of the ship's two masts, the foremast. Two cannons are positioned on the forecandle deck, each pointing to a different side, and are covered in oiled tarps when not in use.

## CROW'S NEST

The crow's nest is on top of the mainmast. There is only room for two people in the crow's nest itself, which is reached by climbing 40' of rigging. A successful Climb check is needed to reach the crow's nest in rough seas.

Charismatic or friendly characters may get the principle lookout, Aziz, to admit that he is worried about the changes he has

seen in some of the crew since the sacking of the last town. Since a few died suddenly and horribly, he has seen nothing overt, but he has sailed with some of these men for over a year, and he can tell that the ones who went through the 'illness' (Selak and Youssef) no longer act quite the same as they did before. They do not crack jokes the way they used to, they defer to the captain almost as if Reis was a god or guru when he speaks, and they seem to have lost some of what made them individuals. Extreme efforts (saving his life, doing him a huge favor) will get him to admit that he has considered mutinying against the Captain and even talked to a few of the other crewmembers about it.

***AZIZ:** Armor 14, Move 30', 1st Level Fighter, 6hp, scimitar 1d8, Morale 8. 6sp and a gold earring worth another 12sp.*



# QUARTER-DECK

The quarterdeck is at the stern of the ship over the captain's quarters. The ship's direction is controlled from here by the ship's wheel, which is used to turn her rudder. Selak is here if he is not on the upper deck during daylight hours. 25% chance the captain is here at any time. At night, there is a 50% chance the wheel has been tied off and no one is here. Otherwise, there will be a pirate standing duty. 70% chance the lookout can see what happens on the quarterdeck in the daytime, 30% chance at night.

A Bushcraft check will show they are heading in the direction of Gumma (wherever the Referee decides that is). Of course, it is doubtful that the player characters will know the name of the place or its exact location unless they have had the opportunity to look at the Captain's charts.

**SELAK:** *Armor 16, Move 30', 4th Level Fighter, 20hp, scimitar 1d8 or pistol 1d8, Morale 10. 18sp, an earring worth 20sp, spyglass, and a gold-and-garnet decorated scimitar and scabbard worth 70sp.*

Selak is an experienced sailor. While he will ask all about the characters' adventures, he will mostly talk their ears off about the privateering adventures of the Sultan's Pleasure. About half of it is mostly true. A successful Languages check will reveal that the story he is relating is actually a retelling of some sailor's legend. Those who pay careful attention will learn that he never says anything derogatory about the captain. Originally from Tunis, Selak is second cousin to Captain Reis. The first story is the one Selak is most likely to tell, but he will happily relate any of the other tales (some of which can be developed into possible further adventures).



How they came to acquire the Sultan's Pleasure: The glorious sultan Halq al-Hasan had five ships built and held a contest to see who was the most loyal, the bravest, and the craftiest to pilot them. Captain Reis won a placement on one of the sultan's ships by stealing a jewel back from al-Hasan's guest who had stolen it from the sultan. He had to sneak past 80

1 guards and a sleeping lion (this changes every time he tells it). Reis brought it back to the sultan, who killed the guest, and gave the captain part of the loot and the best of the ships. (In reality, the sultan said it was gone, had the captain say he found it and where, and the sultan got the excuse he needed to murder the guest.)

Selak overheard the prisoners talking about a fountain rumored to be just off the Gulf of Hammamet, in the meeting place of three mountains on a rocky isle (or wherever the Referee wants the ruined temple to be). It is supposed to be able to heal those who make an offering of blood before drinking from it. (This rumor originally came from the merchant Antonio Puga.)

2

Once in a while, ships up and down the Barbary coast will come upon a fog that causes their compasses to stop working and an odd breeze to blow. The fog does not lift until the morning, and the ship finds itself off course, sometimes drastically so. These are the ghost winds, the spirits of those who starved at sea. It is known that if you throw a live person into the sea as soon as the ghost winds are detected, in the morning the ghost winds will have left you where you began. (This is a legend, but many pirates believe it and act accordingly.)

3

A strange variation on the War in Heaven, but told from the point of view of the fallen angels and their burning need to return to Heaven, and the possibility of smashing "the crystal palaces of haughty and cruel" with "the unstoppable physicality of mortal flesh!" Selak almost seems like someone else when he tells this story.

4

Captain Reis is famously devout, and no one is allowed to touch the shrine in his cabin upon pain of having their hand cut off. (This is true and can be confirmed with other pirates.)

5

It is said that the place where Antonio Puga's treasure lies is a remote and ancient place, full of dangers and guarded by an unspeakable horror that can only be killed by luring it away from its lair. (This is also true.)

6

Selak is held in a great deal of respect by the crew. Orders from him are regarded as coming from the captain himself. He comes from a family of blacksmiths and is capable of demonstrating great skill with both horses and metal should the need arise.

# MAIN DECK

The main deck is between the forecandle and the captain's quarters. At the bow, two staircases lead up to the forecandle deck, and another staircase leads down to the galley. In the stern, two more staircases lead up to the quarterdeck while a third leads down to the magazine. The main deck contains the main mast, atop which is the crow's nest. At the center is the beginning of the cargo hatch. The ship's cargo hatch and capstan can be found on the main deck.

During the daytime, the quartermaster/helmsman Selak, 60 pirates (the rest either sleeping for night watches or busy with other duties), and 1d6 prisoners pressed into labor can be found here, performing maintenance. At night, at least one sailor will be here to assist the helmsman and act as lookout. There is a 30% chance that the captain is here.

## ROLL MAINTENANCE BEING DONE THAT DAY

**01-20** Patch hull with tar and spare timber. Pirates will be scattered across the ship. No chance of doing anything unseen; good chance of getting a pirate alone for a conversation.

**21-35** Patch sails. Pirates will all be on main deck or forecandle deck.

**36-45** Repair/rebuild ropes in the rigging. Pirates and all prisoners will be on main deck.

**46-65** Swab the decks. Pirates and all prisoners will be scattered across the ship. No chance of doing anything unseen; good chance of getting a pirate or prisoner alone for a conversation.

**66-70** Oil the cannons and all metal fittings and equipment. Half of pirates and prisoners will be on the lower deck tending to the cannons, cannonballs, chains, and other items. The other half is scattered throughout the ship. There is a 20% chance of being unseen for five minutes; good chance of getting a pirate or prisoner alone for conversation on the main deck or in the rigging or cargo hold.

**71-80** Clean all quarters. This includes throwing away bad food in the galley, cleaning what few windows there are, washing linens and clothes, etc. Captain has others clean his cabin, with the stern warning of punishment if anything is found missing or if the shrine has been touched. Everyone else tends to their own sleeping spaces.

**81-90** Top to bottom check of all working parts. Everyone is on one deck at a time, moving from top to bottom.

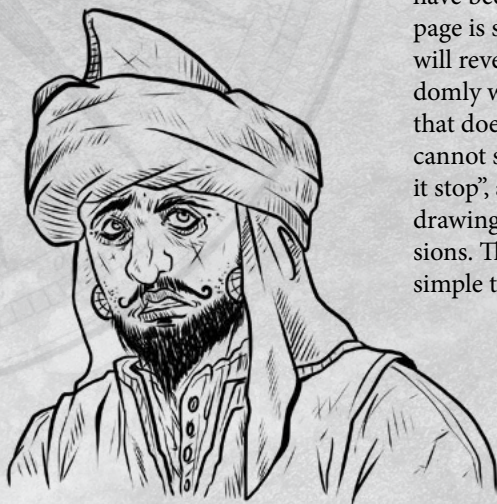
**91-95** 'Careening' (landing on an uninhabited island, unloading everything of weight, pulling the ship onto the beach, and scraping barnacles and shipworms off the hull). Takes five days. Everyone except the captain and the cook is involved during the daylight hours, with both prisoners and crew split into two groups: one group is working, the other is either resting, eating, or foraging for fresh water and food.

No maintenance – pirate court instead. All of the pirates will be on the main deck and all prisoners will be locked up below. Court lasts 3d10 minutes. Some member of the crew will be censured for bad behavior (usually resulting in a fine to be taken from their shares of the booty unless they've been caught stealing from their comrades, in which case they are likely to be marooned). If the player characters are taken on as crew, they will made to sign the ship's Articles in front of everyone. Every court ends with the Quartermaster exhorting the importance of everyone pulling their weight and keeping the ship and their weapons clean and ready for use at a moment's notice.

96-97

Day off! Half of the pirates are drunk and will not be in the bow of the ship or in the rigging for safety reasons. 25% will be asleep. The rest will be scattered throughout the ship. There is a 20% chance of being able to act unseen in the center and stern of the ship, 80% chance in the bow.

98-100



## FORECASTLE

The forecandle contains the quarters of the ship doctor/lead carpenter Youssef, the cook, and the navigator. They all occupy a single room, shaped by the curve of the ship's bow. The room contains a blood-stained table (which sometimes serves as the doctor's operating table), five chairs, the sea chests of the occupants (holding personal items and clothing), and hammocks which are hung up when the pirates sleep. Youssef is infected, and occasionally hums three notes from the middle of the strange tune that the Captain is heard humming or whistling. There is an 80% chance Youssef is here at night, 20% chance during the day.

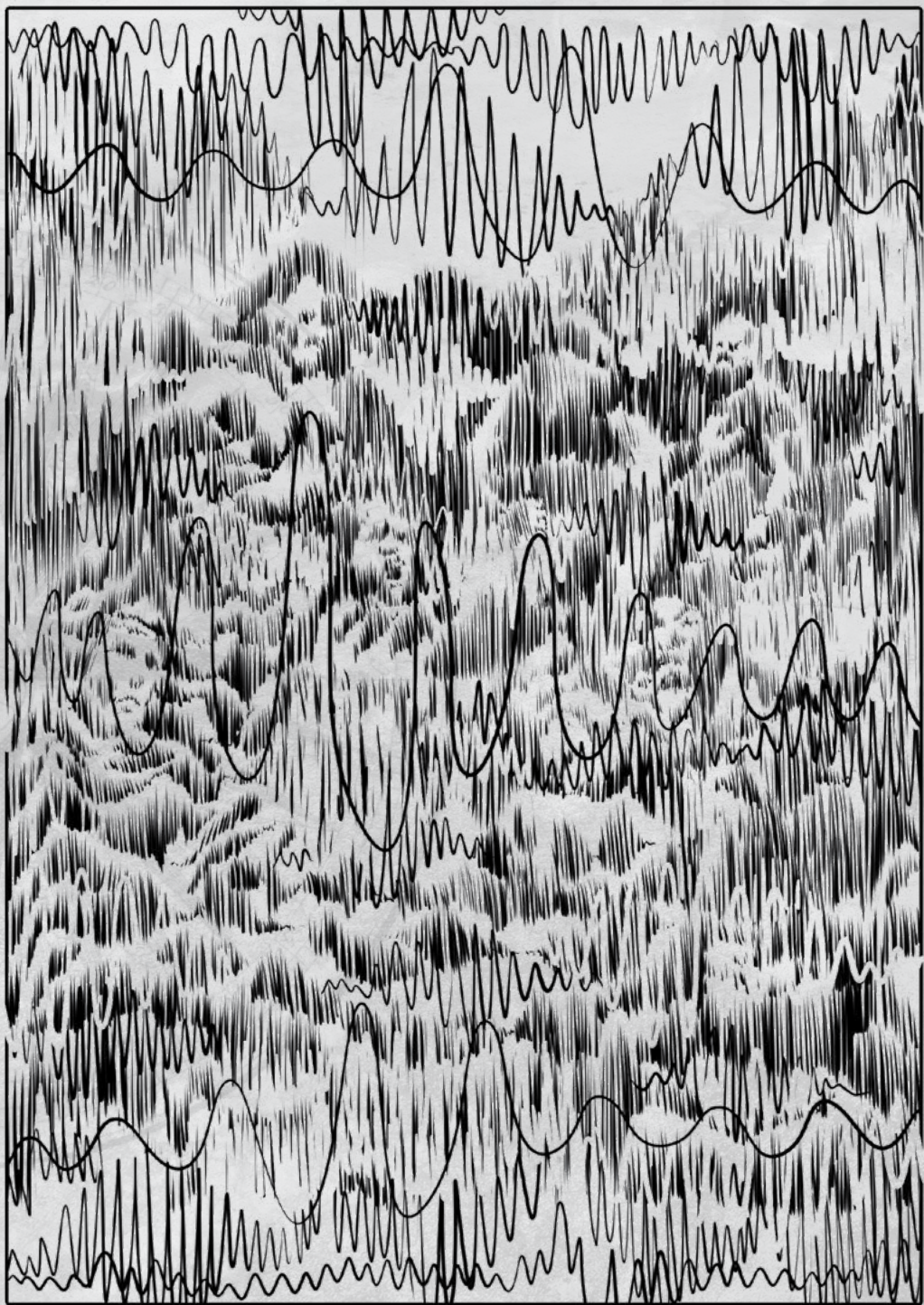
**YOUSSEF:** *Armor 12, Move 40', 4th Level Specialist, 14hp, dagger 1d4, Morale 8. 24sp and a heavy gold bracelet set with a turquoise worth 100sp.*

The doctor keeps a diary hidden beneath a false bottom in his sea chest. A few pages have been torn out. If the following blank page is shaded with a pencil or similar, it will reveal various words and phrases randomly written on the page, in handwriting that does not match the rest of the diary: "I cannot stand this any longer!", "please let it stop", and "please stop," accompanied by drawings of different human facial expressions. The drawings range from extremely simple to the incredibly complex.

## CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The captain's quarters consist of a large cabin which takes up the whole of the deck below the quarterdeck. In comparison to the crew's quarters, it is furnished and almost opulent. The cabin contains the following:

- ❖ A bed with drawers underneath (contains several changes of underclothing). The bedsheets smell distinctly odd, almost like vomit, though they appear clean.
- ❖ A table (three chairs, map with the position of Gumma added recently, magnetic compass, sextant, hourglass)
- ❖ Several more maps of the Mediterranean found in scroll cases on shelves, along with a medium spyglass
- ❖ A clothes wardrobe (contains odd pieces of used fine clothing worth roughly 50sp)
- ❖ Hookah with a small amount of potent hash worth 20sp (it has not been used in months)
- ❖ A brass washbasin with small mirror, worth 4sp
- ❖ A locked chest contains 3d100 silver pieces, a locket containing a lock of reddish blonde hair, a small bottle of scented ointment (perfume, no medicinal qualities), a violet silk sash, three left shoes (for a man, a woman, and a toddler), the nose off a marble statue, dried flowers, a grasshopper leg, and a book of raunchy poetry with illustrations
- ❖ An Islamic shrine, containing a nice but weathered copy of the Koran, the Captain's silk prayer rug (slightly worn, but worth 60sp), and a human fingerbone inside a wooden box inlaid with ivory (worth 200sp)
- ❖ A small (and alien) rock, in a secret compartment underneath the wooden box with the fingerbone. The rock appears to be an unusual hue of gray, but otherwise unremarkable. Holding the rock will make someone slightly dizzy and lose some awareness of their physical surroundings. Holding it while sounding out the strange tune the Captain hums or whistles gives the holder an extreme form of synesthesia, where, for the next twelve hours, sounds are interpreted as patterns. They will be able to discern spoken lies as untruths during this time, but will be unable to tell a lie themselves. If this stone is removed from the shrine, the Captain will notice its absence within 1d4 hours and will all but literally tear the ship apart to recover it. If an infected person touches it, they become calm, calculating, and less human in their mannerisms for 24 hours.





# LOWER DECK

The lower deck contains the galley, the gun deck and magazine, and the officers' quarters. The cargo hatch continues from the main deck, through here and into the cargo deck below. The lower hatch is partially blocked by square bales of oil-skin-covered cargo which are piled high enough to extend up into the lower deck area. There is a 5' wide walkway around the hatch below.

## GALLEY

The galley is where the meals aboard ship are prepared. It is one of the few places where a fire is allowed. All of the ship's food stores and half of its fresh water are kept here. The cook and 15% of the sailors will be here at any time during the day. A set of steps leads up onto the main deck.

## GUN DECK

The gun deck contains eight cannons, four on each side of the ship.

## MAGAZINE/ARMORY

The magazine contains the powder kegs, fuses, and cannonballs necessary for the ship's cannons, while the armory contains weapons for the crew – short, sturdy mêlée weapons and several arquebuses, including powder and shot for them. Located next to the officers' quarters, its door is kept locked (the ship's officers hold the key). Steps lead up from here to the main deck.

## OFFICERS' QUARTERS

These are the sleeping quarters of Salek, boatswain/cooper Kahlil, and master gunner Omar. Khalil is scared out of his

mind and will beg for the player characters' help to cleanse the ship of its demon infestation, if they get him alone and out of earshot from the rest of the crew.

**KAHLIL:** *Armor 16, Move 30', 2nd Level Fighter, 10hp, hand axe 1d6, Morale 8. 12sp, an earring worth 8sp, and a trio of silver rings each worth 15sp.*

**OMAR:** *Armor 14, Move 30', 3rd Level Fighter, 18hp, scimitar 1d8 or pistol 1d8, Morale 10. 28sp, a heavy gold earring worth 20sp, six rings worth a total of 115sp, and a spyglass.*

## CARGO HOLD

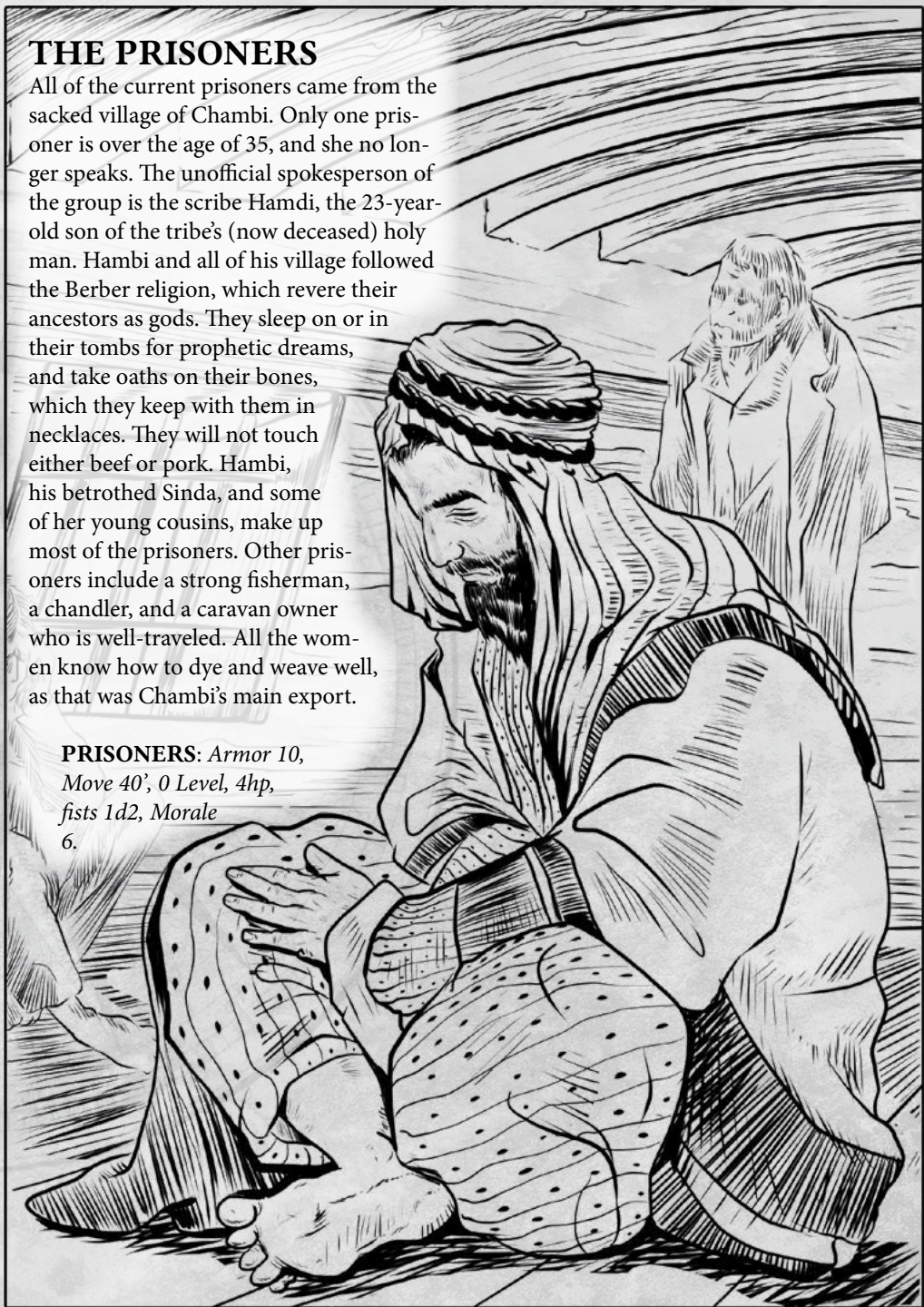
This is where the bulk of the crew bunk in hammocks, alongside whatever cargo the ship is carrying and half the remaining fresh water (used as additional ballast). The cargo deck is also where the prisoners' quarters are located. They hold 1d20 people at any one time.

ROLL	CURRENT CARGO (# OF BARRELS/BUNDLES/CAGES FOR LIVE ANIMALS)
01-10	20 grain that is quickly going moldy
11-30	4 cheap wine, 8 ale, 3 various silverware
31-50	25 sugar, 15 tobacco, 2 rum
51-70	3 muskets, 15 wool, 10 preserved fish, 5 velvet cloth, 1 exotic birds
71-80	20 spices, 10 silk cloth, a pregnant lioness, 10 pigs
81-90	2 semi-precious gems, 20 preserved fish
91-100	Nothing

## THE PRISONERS

All of the current prisoners came from the sacked village of Chambi. Only one prisoner is over the age of 35, and she no longer speaks. The unofficial spokesperson of the group is the scribe Hamdi, the 23-year-old son of the tribe's (now deceased) holy man. Hamdi and all of his village followed the Berber religion, which revere their ancestors as gods. They sleep on or in their tombs for prophetic dreams, and take oaths on their bones, which they keep with them in necklaces. They will not touch either beef or pork. Hamdi, his betrothed Sinda, and some of her young cousins, make up most of the prisoners. Other prisoners include a strong fisherman, a chandler, and a caravan owner who is well-traveled. All the women know how to dye and weave well, as that was Chambi's main export.

**PRISONERS:** *Armor 10, Move 40', 0 Level, 4hp, fists 1d2, Morale 6.*



What the prisoners have heard or believe:

- ❖ The captain is a demon and plans to eat them all.
- ❖ The captain is planning to sacrifice them all to gain untold magical power.
- ❖ They are journeying to Tunis or Alexandria, and there to be sold.
- ❖ Their venerated ancestors watch over them, because the ship's crew put one of the sick/possessed men in with them for several days and they have not suffered the same fate.
- ❖ The helmsman was overheard to say that they are going somewhere to heal those who are sick.
- ❖ The doctor has gone mad.
- ❖ The merchant killed by the Captain had been shipwrecked almost two weeks before and was found perilously close to death. He had recovered with surprisingly speed, but did not leave Chambi immediately. Shortly after he recovered, a few of the villagers had fallen oddly sick, very much as the pirates did, and died due to self-inflicted harms. They were considering throwing him out of the village, but the custom of hosting guests forbade it unless he was observed breaking one of their laws.

**ROLL WHAT HAPPENS THAT DAY**

01-10	Storm or high wind making it unsafe on deck, 10% chance that any character on deck will be washed overboard. The prisoners are queasy if not seasick.
11-20	Doldrums – no wind, no waves; the ship's boat is launched with the prisoners being made to work in shifts to tow the ship.
21-25	Come across a European merchant ship.
26-28	Come across a European warship.
29-35	Come across a local fisherman.
36-40	Come across another pirate.
41-45	Monster encounter with giant whale, squid, or kraken.
46-55	Food is running low, forcing the crew to either anchor and go ashore in search of supplies, or to chase a school of fish or similar.
56-60	Mysterious fog causes the crew to halve the ship's speed.
61-90	Absolutely nothing – normal sailing day.
91-100	Perfect winds and calm seas enable the ship to travel at double speed.

## WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS KNOW (OR COULD PROBABLY FIGURE OUT)

Here is what the player characters can learn aboard the ship:

- ❖ Some sort of malady or infection or something is going around that has affected either ship's officers (still alive) or some of the common sailors (all now dead).
- ❖ The people who have been sick spend about a week with a fever, a skin rash, and have craved food that needs little chewing. Once these symptoms have passed, the preference for soft food continues, and their breath is very acidic. They otherwise appear to be in excellent physical health.
- ❖ None of the prisoners have been affected to date.
- ❖ The infection does not follow a regular pattern as it does not seem to have spread among people in close quarters, or who ate or drank anything differently from everyone else, or suspected sexual partners.
- ❖ Several people will attest that the Captain was wounded during the sacking of the village, but showed no real signs of being hurt afterwards.
- ❖ The people who had been sick just stop and listen when the captain says something important, the same way dogs will fixate on the voice of their master.

### COMMON MALE NAMES

Oussama, Radiz, Anis, Ajani, Haroun, Qusay, Belkacem, Fadi, Anwar, Bassem

### COMMON FEMALE NAMES

Chaima, Nadia, Anja, Rihab, Amani, Ava, Anissa, Salwa, Dalinda, Hiba

## THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PIRATES WHEN PLAYING THEM

- \* They ate a lot of fermented foods. Common foods included sauerkraut, salted meat, sea biscuits/hard tack, beans, bone soup. If they could keep livestock on board, then they had fresh eggs or milk, and then there was the animal when things got really tough. Surprisingly, they did not fish a lot.
- \* Scurvy and dysentery were common causes of illness and death, along with malaria, yellow fever, and other local diseases. The crowded conditions on a pirate ship made infection difficult to contain. Storms and shipwrecks were also common causes for death for a pirate.
- \* Hoop earrings were popular because it was thought that pressure to the earlobes prevented seasickness, and gold jewelry could be made to pay for a funeral.
- \* Pirate crews had articles that spelled out fire safety, punishment for cowardice and cheating your crewmates, and social rules (this varied by ship, but might include things like no gambling, no women on board, no whistling or singing after dark, etc.). It also defined shares of booty. Being a member of the crew was like being a member of a co-operative: if you did your part, you got a share of the profits. If you went above and beyond, you got a better share that time. Limbs lost in battle and higher ranking meant more shares.
- \* Pirates typically served aboard a ship for two years. If you lived that long and had enough money, you returned to civilian life.
- \* Most merchant ships surrendered when overhauled by pirates; rarely was there a fight.
- \* Officers and the captain had their own chamber pots that they emptied themselves. Everyone else used a platform with a hole in it off the side of the ship.
- \* Eyepatches were used to keep one eye adjusted for darkness, which could be useful in battle or just going below deck.
- \* The position of captain and quartermasters were voted upon democratically.
- \* Parrots were common for captains because they provided company, they didn't eat much, and they could be sold in lean times.

# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

*The Sultan's Pleasure* will eventually anchor off some desolate shore or scrubby island, home to the village of Gumma. The description below assumes Gumma is somewhere in the Mediterranean, most likely off the coast of North Africa. However, the Referee may want it to set it elsewhere; if the pirates captured the player characters somewhere in Northern Europe, the Referee might prefer to place it in the Outer Hebrides, among the Canary Islands, or in a Scandinavian fjord. Anywhere that is secluded is a viable location. Adjust names and descriptions to suit.

## VILLAGE OF GUMMA

The village of Gumma is home to roughly 200 inhabitants who live outside an ancient temple. While they make a show of their Muslim or Christian orthodoxy to outsiders, they each have an alien symbiote inside them. Roughly a third of the symbiotes are fully grown, adults like Mother. These are the exiles, cast out of their home dimension into our world, and they have been experimenting with form. Each has at least one bestial feature: the eyes of an eagle, gills, claws, or a long canine muzzle for a stronger sense of smell and the ability to bite.

These exiles banded together to craft a gate back to their home world. The gate is hidden in a nearby ruin. But where one of the exiles, known as the Fallen, wanted to beg forgiveness, the Mother seeks to wreak havoc with the exiles' new physical forms. The Fallen now guards the gate, preventing its completion.

If the player characters show up without

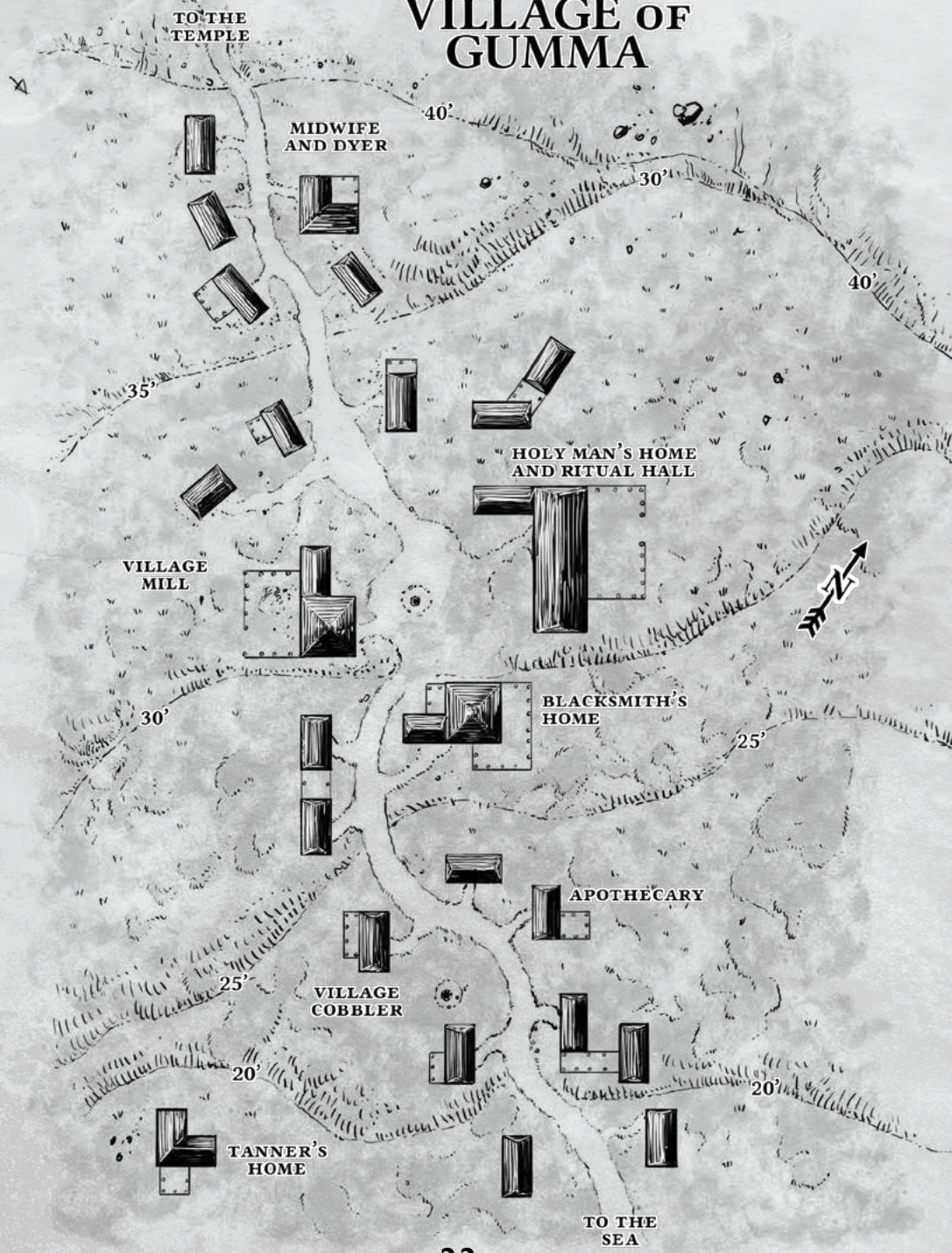
the Captain, the villagers will attempt to hide their 'deformities' behind voluminous robes, hoods, and bandages. They will warn the player characters that they are a leper colony and will try to scare the player characters away. If that fails, they will point them towards the ruins in hopes that they will kill the Fallen or it will kill them.

Those arriving with the Captain, which will be all the members of the crew infected with a pup and the player characters if they've agreed to help explore the ruins, will be welcomed with a feast by the village.

Anyone showing eagerness to get into the ruins will be approached by a villager, who looks more human than most, named Hope. She will try to talk to as many of the player characters as she can where the other villagers will not overhear her. Initially swathed in robes that cover her face, she will openly reveal her transformations: the eyes and fangs of a cat. She will tell the player characters that the villagers are now hosts for a race of beings from a realm of pure light, trapped in crude and simple physical forms in this world. They were exiled for heretical notions on the nature of life in their world (they insisted that there is a physical component to light, which is why they were exiled to this world and these forms). Hope will beg the player characters to talk with the Fallen and join with it to prevent the opening of the gate.

**VILLAGERS:** *Armor 12, Move 40', 2nd Level Fighter, 10hp, farming tool 1d6 or claws and teeth 1d4, Morale 7.*

# VILLAGE OF GUMMA



## VILLAGE LIFE

The village is half a mile from the shore. While some of the villagers fish for their livelihoods, most tend fields of barley and olive groves, or raise goats for clothing, meat, and milk. A meal in the village will be hearty, if rough-grained barley-bread dipped in olive oil, and kebabs of goat meat and root vegetables. A big feast (like the one welcoming the pirates to the village) will include mussels and eels from the sea.

The village has two wells, a blacksmith, a midwife, a tanner, a cobbler, a miller (the mill is powered by the village's only small herd of oxen), and a holy man who can pretend to be either Muslim or Christian as needed. The villagers are poor folk who live in single-room huts fashioned out of mud bricks. Most of their farming tools and knives are iron worked by the blacksmith, but they do own the odd steel tool or knife. These are highly valued by the villagers. Between them, the villagers also have a collection of jewelry and silver coins worth 120sp. This is ignored by the symbiotes currenting possessing the villagers' bodies, as their goal is to get home rather than amassing wealth which has little value in a realm inhabited by beings of light.





# THE TEMPLE

- ❖ An old wall surrounds the temple. While it has seen better days, it is 40' high at its lowest and the gate is obviously in good condition. A successful Architecture check will reveal that with the outside walls sloped, the inner walls sheer, and the placement of the gate, et cetera, that this place is designed to keep something in, not out.
- ❖ The outer courtyard is a maze of cells, outbuildings, graves, etc.

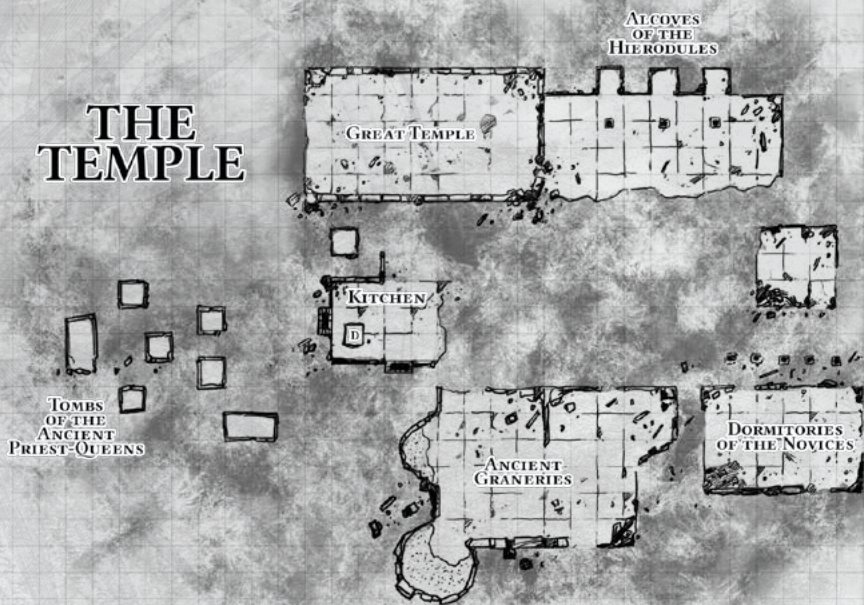
- ❖ The inner building is a maze of corridors, vaults, dormitories, kitchens, offices, and, of course, the holy-of-holies.

## ENTRANCE

- ❖ The upper level of the temple is a ruin of thick stone walls, none higher than 6' high. A large open hatch in the ground here grants access to the underground portion of the temple. The hatch is 10' square and descends nearly 3' before it opens up into the space below. The chamber underneath is 12' high. It is carved out of the stone, with the tunnels and chambers supported by wooden timbers. A successful Architecture check will reveal these timbers were likely cannibalized from ships that were wrecked on the nearby shore.



# THE TEMPLE



## THE HOLY OF HOLIES (I.E. THE WORMHOLE)

- ✿ This is a 50' square chamber with a ceiling roughly 16' above the floor. The walls were painted once, centuries ago, but all that remains are some patches and streaks of pale red and splotches of blue.
- ✿ Sprawled before the obsidian disk and tube of the exiles' gate device,, surrounded by the cracked bones of humans and beasts, is **the Fallen**. Its form is constantly shifting, growing, and reabsorbing limbs, mouths, and eyes from mammals, reptiles, and insects.

**THE FALLEN:** *Armor 17, Move 40', 6 Hit Dice, 30hp, claws and teeth 1d6, Morale 12. Regenerates 1d4 hit points every round while in the Holy of Holies.*

So long as the alien stone is not inserted into its clamp (see below) and the Fallen remains in the Holy of Holies, the Fallen regenerates 1d4 hit points per round. (This is why the Fallen has not simply destroyed the gate device; so long as it exists, the Fallen has an advantage over the other exiles. Yet it dare not move too far from the gate device for fear of losing this advantage.)

The Fallen will attempt to talk with the player characters in hopes of enlisting their aid in slaying the Mother, or failing that, at least walking away and leaving the gate incomplete. If pushed, it will offer a pair of opals worth 300sp which are buried in the dirt next to the gate (though it is loath to do so as the light shining on the opals reminds it of home). It will fight to the death to keep the player characters from finishing the gate.



- ❖ Behind the Fallen stands a massive wheel of obsidian, a dozen feet end-to-end and nearly a foot thick, standing upright on one edge. The disk is haloed in rainbow auroras. The disk hums like a swarm of angry bees and the air stinks of ozone. Stretching out from the middle of the disk into the room is a long tube of brass divided into five even sections by disks of brass pierced by small windows filled with colored glass. The disks' upper halves cut up into the tube, and each disk has six windows, each a different color: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. At the end of the tube is a clamp which can hold the Captain's strange grey stone. If the stone is placed in the clamp it will turn a translucent yellow color and shed light bright enough to read by.

When the player characters enter the room, the disks are turned so that none of the colored windows are in the tube. The wheels turn with a modest amount of force applied to them.

- If all of the wheels are turned so that the yellow window is inside the tube while the stone is in the clamp, an intense beam of yellow light will shoot from the stone into the wall and will soon start to scorch the wall at that spot. Anyone passing into this beam will be burned for 1d12 points of damage. Mirrors can be used to redirect this beam, though after three rounds any non-magical mirror will melt.

- A gate to the exiled aliens' home dimension can be opened by turning the wheels to place the following colored windows inside the tube in this order: stone, orange, red,
- purple, blue, green, obsidian wheel. This will cause a shifting rainbow beam to shoot out from the stone. Anyone stepping into the beam will be transported, along with all they are wearing or carrying, to the home world of the exiles.

- The place the player characters will arrive with have thin, bitter air. They will be in what appears to be a desert with pearlescent skies, white sands, and a forest of strange, clear crystalline shapes ranging from ant-sized to as large as a cathedral.

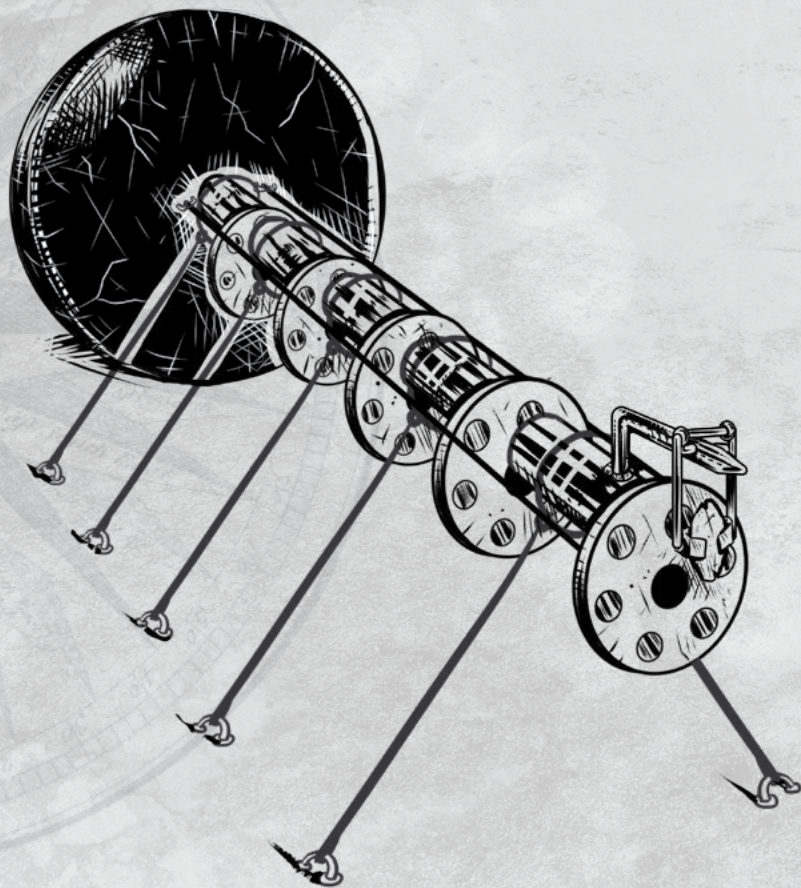
- The player characters can easily break off chunks of these crystals (which are the analog of homes and buildings to the beings of light) with a bit of effort and the use of stone or metal tools or weapons.

- The locals exist as pure light. While they will be horrified by the player characters even before they start breaking things, they are incapable of harming them. They can, however, create illusions through which they can communicate with the player characters.

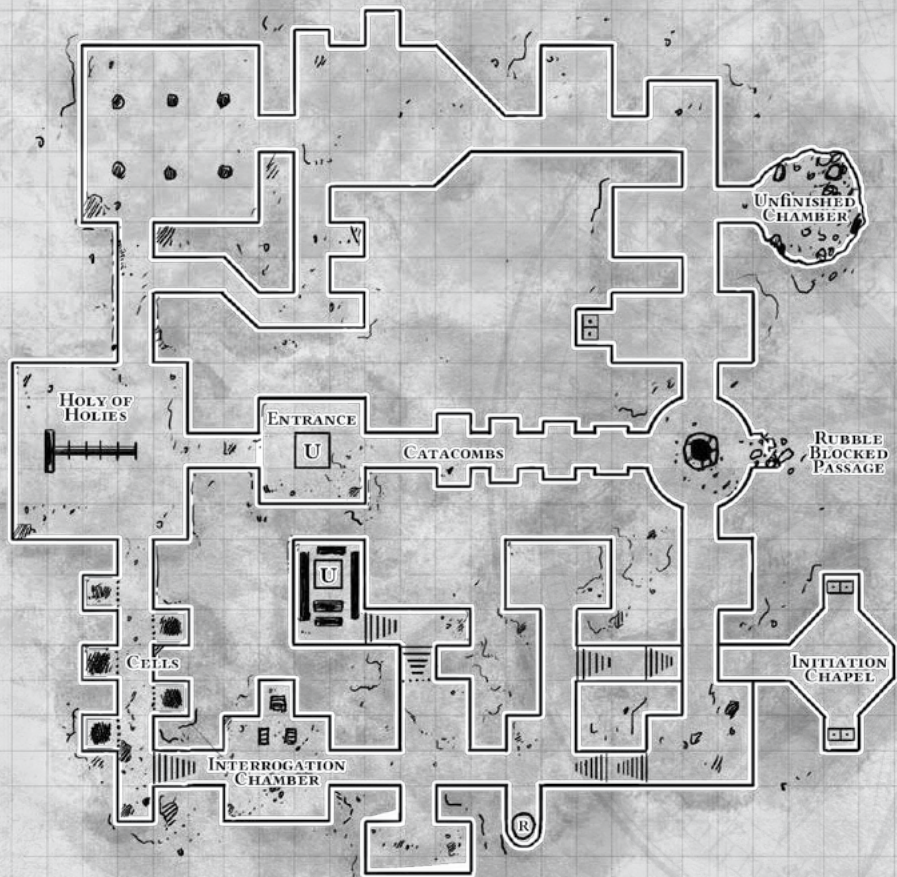
- Without dimension-hopping magic, the player characters will be trapped in this alien world. They will need the help of the locals to return home. The locals will be happy to get rid of the player characters, but will only do so after having made the player characters promise to destroy the device that transported them here.

- Any crystals the player characters take from this world will be valuable to those skilled in the arcane and esoteric back home. Each pound of crystals is worth 100sp, but each pound of delicate and sharp crystals adds a point of encumbrance.

If the wheels are all turned so all the green windows are in the tube, a beam of emerald light will shoot from the stone at the end. The first time anyone steps into it, they will be healed fully, and any diseases or poisons in their system neutralized. The second time, their skin will turn a translucent green and they will permanently lose half their hit points, but heal 1 hit point per minute spent in direct sunlight. The third time they step into the beam, they will dissolve into a puddle of green goo. Dead creatures placed into the beam will be brought back to life. (Whether putting the puddle of green goo in the beam will resurrect the dead or not, we leave up to the Referee to decide.) Inanimate objects put into the beam will corrode or grow a lair of moss or mold on them.



# THE TUNNELS



## THE TUNNELS

- ✿ These are all a dozen feet tall, supported every 10' or so by timbers looted from ships. The ground is covered in a thick layer of dust that hasn't been disturbed in at least a year.
- ✿ Each 10'×10' square may be searched once. If the search is unsuccessful, nothing will ever be found in that square. (See pp. 40-41 of the Rules & Magic book for rules on searching.) A successful search of any square reveals the following (roll a d20):

- 1 3d10 Roman silver sestertii. May have three times their raw coinage value to a collector.
- 2 Ancient Roman glass d20.
- 3 Badly corroded Carthaginian belt-buckle.
- 4 “2d12 glass beads holding traces of the corroded necklace they were strung on.  
Fragment of papyrus scroll. Touching it will cause it to crumble to dust. If the player characters manage to preserve it somehow, it will contain a random 1st Level Magic-User spell written in ancient Phoenician.
- 5 Bones of a rat sans skull.
- 6 Tiny clay votive figurine, badly abused and missing its head.
- 7 Badly corroded remains of a sandal.
- 8 Lead sling-bullet, blunted on one end from impact with a wall.
- 10 2d6 bronze arrowheads.
- 11 An opal worth 500sp.
- 12 Ancient Punic graffiti scratched into the stone wall: “Hasdrubal loves it in his ass!”
- 13 Badly corroded brass Roman brothel token.
- 14 Small alabaster winged phallus (fascinus) with hole through it to be worn as an amulet.
- 15 Tarnished silver cross (worth 14sp).
- 16 Rat droppings.
- 17 Pile of debris with rats in it. The rats will flee, but there is a 1 in 6 chance the searcher will have picked up a disease from their fleas.
- 18 Tiny crystal vial that once held perfume. All that is left is an ugly yellow residue.
- 19 Koumiya (curved North African dagger) with silvered blade. Worth 20sp.
- 20 Bronze Punic spear head, badly corroded, but can serve as a dagger.



# GOING HOME

If the player characters successfully place the stone in the device and get rid of the Fallen, the Captain/Mother will thank the player characters profusely. They will immediately prepare their assault on their home world. The villagers will give the player characters whatever they want from the village, taking little more than their tools with them through the portal. Indeed, they will happily surrender whatever silver they have in thanks to the player characters.

## FINAL NOTES

The 17th century was the heyday of the Barbary Pirate. The adoption of European naval technology allowed the pirates to raid wherever they desired throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. Tunis was a rich but ravenous machine that ran on the steady flow of slaves, and Europe had no idea yet how to counter these raiders who could show up anywhere and abduct entire villages.

## SUGGESTED READING

*The Stolen Village: Baltimore and the Barbary Pirates* by Des Ekin

*The Travels of Reverend Ólafur Egilsson – The story of the Barbary corsair raid on Iceland in 1627* translated by Karl Smári Hreinsson and Adam Nichols

POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT SPELLS	DETAILS	EFFECT
Cure Disease		It would reset the human back to normal body chemistry, but does not kill a symbiote. Symbiote must start all over in establishing control over the host, with the accompanying physical symptoms. It will not lose any of the Mother's knowledge.
ESP	Allows a saving throw versus Magic. Captain Only: the caster must make a saving throw versus Magic or suffer 2d6 damage.	Detects thoughts of the infected crew just fine, but the thoughts are more basic than usual – more eat/fuck/kill/fulfill than you would expect from most humans, all under a haze of unexplained well-being and contentment. Targeting the captain means exposing the caster to an extraplanar being's thoughts. The pups are not formed enough to really count as sentient until they have infected the host for at least three months.
Dispel Evil	Allows a saving throw versus Magic.	Banishes all extraplanar beings within 30', including the Mother and the pups.
Detect Evil	Line of sight	Only works if they are directly looking at the open stomach of an infected or the spittle of the Captain if the Mother was actively in the act of impregnation.
Holy Word	No Save	Banishes everyone to their native dimension.

# MENAGERIE OF EXILES

The pirates speak of a rich treasure hidden in an ancient and ruined temple guarded by some fell beast. They even speak of giving you a share of the booty and slaves they've already taken aboard if you help them rid the world of the monster guarding the treasure. There's silver to be won here.

Their ship, the Sultan's Pleasure, is swift and sturdy, a proper predator hunting the fat merchantmen of Europe, but spend a few days with the crew and you'll soon notice things are not quite right. Talk of a strange disease among the crew, the Captain's obsession with a map he refuses to show anyone, and the wild tales of demons and madness from the captives begin to draw a picture of larger stakes than mere treasure and threats greater than a lone monster lurking in the wilderness. Shifting personalities lead to shifting alliances. Who can you trust? And what secrets are the pirates keeping from you?

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