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SKULL &

SHACKLES

TEMPEST RISING

By Matthew Goodall

THE SHACKLES



Fever Sea

Fever Sea



X = Rumored Treasure

Crystal Dodo X

Voidsticks X

The Howling Urn X

The Skeleton Ball Gown X

Cauldron Rock

Tempest Cay

Drenchport

Hell Harbor

Devils Arches

Jeopardy Bay

Port Peril

Slithering Coast

Rampore Isles

Savage Shipwreckers

Bag Island

Beachcomber

Quent

Motaku Isle

Sarfif's Pool

The Smoker

Shark Island

Raptor Island

Ollio

Wreck of the Brine Banshee X

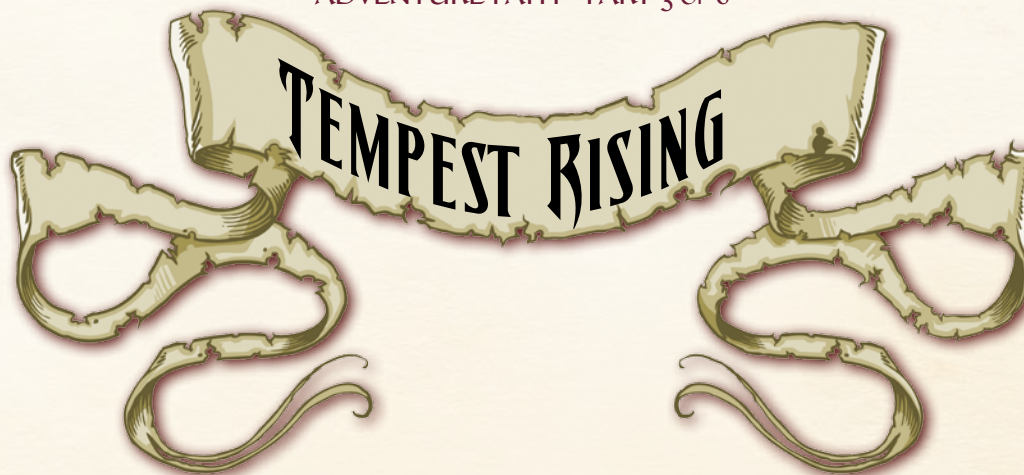
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Contributing Authors
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Redmond, WA 98052-0577
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SHIP AHOY!

One thing the staff here at Paizo always makes an effort to do is to actually play Pathfinder every once in awhile. It sounds like a no-brainer, but with things being as busy as they always are at the office, getting a few people to sit down and play a game instead of working on it is not always an easy proposition. Nevertheless, by the time I finished developing Rich Pett's "The Wormwood Mutiny," I wanted to run a Skull & Shackles campaign, come hell or high water.

When running a game, I have a tendency (as most GMs do) to go overboard with my preparations. Running a published adventure right out of the book is never enough for me. I have to tweak it, add in bits from other adventures, create new characters and plot lines—all the things that make being a GM fun. The problem, of course, is actually having the time to do all of the preparation and extra work necessary to keep up with the campaign. Most recently, I

tried to run a Kingmaker game, but I decided to set it in Iobaria rather than in the River Kingdoms as written, and ran it for 7 players as well, all the while mixing in elements from other adventures. The end result, unsurprisingly, was that Kingmaker: Iobaria died an ignominious death before it even got to the second adventure.

With Skull & Shackles, I was determined to keep it as simple as possible. After all, an Adventure Path is a fully written campaign. I could run it for just four people, right out of the book, with no extra work needed. It would be a campaign that would practically run itself. With *Flip-Mat: Pirate Ship* and *Map Pack: Ship's Cabins*, I wouldn't even need to draw any maps for the first several sessions! After careful consideration, I chose James Jacobs, Mark Moreland, Andrew Vallas, and my wife Marta as my four players, and I was ready to run my easiest campaign ever.

Then I discovered the *Maiden of the High Seas*. All my plans (or lack thereof) immediately fell overboard, for I had just found the perfect prop for my game—though unknown to me at the time, it was a prop that would take hours upon hours of my time before it was ready for use by my players.

The *Maiden of the High Seas* is a complete miniatures-scale model of a ship, crafted entirely out of cardstock and foam core, and handily packaged in a single downloadable PDF you can print and assemble yourself. Published by WorldWorksGames (and available on paizo.com), the *Maiden* is truly a thing of beauty. It has decks that lift off to reveal the rooms beneath, removable masts with crow's nests and ratlines, detachable sails, modular walls, a selection of different figureheads, and even additional fan-created content available for download from WorldWorksGames' website that transforms the *Maiden* from a respectable armed merchantman into a notorious pirate ship.

Although I was able to download the PDF onto my computer with just one click, I soon began to think that maybe I had bitten off a bit more than I could chew. Make no mistake, the *Maiden* is a lot of work. The ship is well designed, and comes with detailed instructions, but you still have to print out everything on cardstock, carefully cut it out, glue it together, wait for it to dry, cut out some more, glue pieces to other pieces, wait for those to dry, and so on, all while fitting parts together like a three-dimensional puzzle. I spent at least a month of evenings and weekends assembling the thing, used up an entire bottle of glue and part of another, and lost track of how much cardstock and how many printer ink cartridges I went through.

Building a cardstock model of this complexity might not be for everyone—it takes attention to detail, fine manipulation of sharp tools and sticky glue, and a lot of patience—but if you have the time and the obsessive attitude necessary to complete it, the *Maiden of the High Seas* is well worth the effort—as were the looks on my players' faces when I brought out the ship as their PCs came on the deck of the *Wormwood* for the first time.

Fortunately, the time invested in building the ship was all up-front, so I still have hopes that my Skull & Shackles campaign can proceed without too much further effort on my part. So far, the game is going swimmingly. The four PCs are: Sasha "Firetop" Dractus, a.k.a. Lady Vermillion, a human rogue (with the pirate archetype from *Ultimate Combat*) played by James Jacobs; Klarg, a half-orc fighter and former longshoreman, played by Mark Moreland; Slivikin, a human cleric of Besmara played by Andrew Vallas; and Madrid Dieu-le-Mer, an undine marid-bloodline sorcerer played by my wife. Of course, the ship's cruel officers have their own nicknames for the PCs. Aboard the *Wormwood*, Sasha is better known as "Carrot Top," Klarg is "Underbite," Slivikin (the cook's mate) is called "Flapjack," and Madrid has acquired the moniker "Fishlips."

ON THE COVER

Tessa Fairwind, pirate lord, captain of the *Luck of the Draw*, and Mistress of Quent, graces the cover of this month's Skull & Shackles Adventure Path installment, "Tempest Rising." Tessa is a major player in the fractious power politics of the Shackles, and as the PCs seek to cement their reputations as infamous Free Captains, Tessa is on hand to mentor and guide them—though she has a little task for them to complete first.

After their initial shock at finding themselves press-ganged on a pirate ship, the four PCs have almost settled into their lives as pirates aboard the *Wormwood* (WARNING: spoilers ahead!). Slivikin volunteered to be cook's mate, while Klarg was assigned to the rigging, leaving Sasha and Madrid as common swabs. They've explored the ship and scrounged for gear, sung sea chanteys and gambled, fought giant rats in the bilges and rival pirates in the hold, and survived a major storm, even managing to save one of their crewmates who was washed overboard. They've also started making friends, and more than a few enemies as well. Klarg, in particular, has begun to earn the enmity of the ship's officers Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge. He's racked up the most lashes of any of the four PCs and has even been keelhauled for knocking another member of the crew from the mainmast, resulting in a fatal fall to the deck below. Fortunately, the doughty half-orc survived this latest punishment, if only just (earning his newest nickname, "Barnacle Back"), but it remains to be seen whether he'll last long enough to take part in any eventual mutiny. Meanwhile, the players are having fun interacting with all of the NPCs on the ship, and painstakingly keeping track of the insults and degradations heaped upon them by Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge.

A few of the players have been keeping journals, so we'll see if we can get a campaign journal started on the paizo.com messageboards so you can follow all of the action. And once the PCs take control of the ship (provided they all survive, of course), I can simply make a few cosmetic changes to the *Maiden of the High Seas* to turn the *Wormwood* into the *Man's Promise*, so it should see full use for the entire Skull & Shackles Adventure Path!

ROB

Rob McCreary
Developer
rob@paizo.com



TEMPEST RISING

PART ONE: PERILOUS WATERS

The PCs sail to Port Peril, where they must present themselves to the Hurricane King and prove themselves worthy to gain official recognition as Free Captains of the Shackles.

PAGE 7

PART TWO: AT A LADY'S REQUEST

On behalf of pirate lord Tessa Fairwind, the PCs sail throughout the Shackles, tracking down evidence of a widespread spy ring in the pirate isles.

PAGE 15

PART THREE: THE FREE CAPTAINS' REGATTA

The PCs enter the grueling annual race called the Free Captains' Regatta in hopes of gaining a seat on the Pirate Council and their own island.

PAGE 45

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Tempest Rising" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

7

The PCs begin this adventure at 7th level.

8

The PCs should be well into 8th level by the time they venture into the Jasperleaf Apothecary and enter their ship into the Free Captains' Regatta.

The PCs should be 9th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Empire of Cheliox has many spies spread throughout Avistan and Garund, including within the Shackles, though the fractious pirate isles have always proved a difficult region in which to gather intelligence and recruit secret agents. After the Chelish navy's capture of Captain Barnabas Harrigan and their subsequent plans to invade the pirate confederacy, however, Cheliox has stepped up its espionage operations in the Shackles under the leadership of spymaster Zarskia Galembar.

Hailing originally from Thuvia, Zarskia is a widely traveled alchemist who operates under the cover of the Jasperleaf Apothecary, a well-known supplier of alchemical products, herbal remedies, and less savory concoctions in Port Peril. Highly organized, obsessive, and unhindered by morality, Zarskia is an ideal controller for the Chelish spy network in the Shackles. Zarskia hired a wide variety of contacts for her espionage ring, including a beachcomber and part-time smuggler in Drenchport named Haddon Pike, a former ship captain in Quent named Elliece Farhaven, and a quartermaster in Hell Harbor named Roweena Kellet. She also used a tengu smuggler named Corlan to carry messages between her spies. With these agents, Zarskia has been funneling information through Nidalese intermediaries to Cheliox, though she is unaware of her true employers.

With the Chelish invasion imminent, however, Zarskia was ordered to liquidate her primary agents and depart the Shackles. To that end, she hired a Sargavan assassin named Giles Halmis to eliminate these "loose ends," and is only awaiting confirmation of the assassinations before she leaves Port Peril.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs sail to Port Peril to gain official recognition as Free Captains of the Shackles. They must complete a series of challenging "pirate tests" and entertain the Hurricane King's court to receive a letter of marque from the Hurricane King. While on shore leave in Port Peril, the PCs run into one of their former crewmates from the *Wormwood*, as well as a potential new ally, and get caught up in a huge bar brawl. Before they leave port, the PCs are approached by the powerful pirate lord Tessa Fairwind, who asks them to investigate recent rumors of a Chelish invasion of the Shackles.

Tessa's clues take the PCs from one port to another throughout the Shackles. The PCs negotiate with Calistrian sacred prostitutes and Norgorberite assassins, and face water nagas, a crew of barbarous wreckers, and the denizens of a sunken ship, only to discover that most of their clues are, literally, dead ends—those whom they sought to question are now dead or gone. Eventually, the PCs interrupt an assassination attempt against one of the

ADDITIONAL RULES

The Skull & Shackles Adventure Path makes use of several new rules sub-systems.

Plunder, Disrepute, and Infamy: The rules for plunder, Disrepute, and Infamy may be found in "The Life of a Pirate" in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #55: The Wormwood Mutiny*.

Ship-to-Ship Combat: Sample ship stat blocks, as well as detailed rules for handling combat between ships, are presented in the *Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*, available for free from paizo.com.

few leads who is still alive, enabling the PCs to learn vital information about the head of the spy ring. The PCs enter the spy ring's headquarters, facing guards, traps, and the mastermind behind the conspiracy, an alchemist named Zarskia Galembar. Defeating Zarskia, the PCs discover important coded messages and evidence of espionage that Tessa Fairwind can present to the Pirate Council.

The adventure concludes with the Free Captains' Regatta, where the PCs face treacherous weather, currents, obstacles, and monsters in a nautical race along the periphery of the Eye of Abendego. The race's finish is neck-and-neck with the PCs' old nemesis Captain Barnabas Harrigan of the *Wormwood*, who does everything in his power to surreptitiously snatch victory from the PCs. If they win the regatta, however, the PCs receive their very own island, as well as a seat on the Pirate Council.

PART ONE: PERILOUS WATERS

By the conclusion of "Raiders of the Fever Sea," the PCs should have acquired considerable plunder and Infamy and begun making a name for themselves as pirates of particular disrepute. But in order to gain official recognition as Free Captains of the Shackles, they must travel to Port Peril and present themselves to the Hurricane King of the Shackles, Kerdak Bonefist. To prove themselves worthy of a meeting with the Hurricane King, however, the PCs must have at least 10 points of plunder in their hold and an Infamy score of 20 or higher. If the PCs have not yet accumulated enough plunder or Infamy, you should present them with additional opportunities for piracy until they have acquired the requisite amounts. The encounters with monsters and pirate vessels detailed in the opener to this volume's Bestiary can help in this regard (see page 81).

The PCs will likely begin this adventure somewhere in the Fever Sea south of the Shackles, or perhaps at Mancatcher Cove or Tidewater Rock. Wherever they might be, they will need to chart a course through the many islands of the Shackles to reach Jeopardy Bay and Port Peril.

FIREARMS IN TEMPEST RISING

Firearms are rare on Golarion, and as a result, except for a brief appearance in this adventure, firearms do not appear in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path until the final adventure. If firearms play a more prominent role in your campaign, however, you can use the following suggestions to modify “Tempest Rising” to incorporate them. See *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* for details on all of these firearms and more.

Caulky Tarroon (**Event 3**) might carry a concealed coat pistol in addition to her daggers, and Vakarla and her wreckers (see pages 21–22) could be armed with blunderbusses or dragon pistols. The arrow springal and catapults on the *Dryad’s Grave* (see page 23) can be replaced with a rocket springal and cannons or light bombard, respectively, while the Screaming Satyr might wield a culverin, double hackbut, or even a cannon instead of a ballista. Damaged cannons might also be found on the wreck of the *Brine Banshee* (areas **A6** and **B9**) instead of ballistae. The assassin Giles Halmis (see page 35) would make a perfect gunslinger, replacing his heavy crossbow with a musket, and lastly, the pirate guards in the Jasperleaf Apothecary (area **C2**) might be armed with pistols or buckler guns instead of bows.

WELCOME TO PORT PERIL

Arriving at Port Peril’s harbor, the PCs can find mooring and arrange for provisioning, and if necessary, repairs to their ship. Their crew is eager to receive their pay and take shore leave. Before the PCs can relax and enjoy the port, however, they must petition for an audience with Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist to receive a letter of marque and thereby become “legitimate” pirates—at least in the eyes of other Free Captains. As long as the PCs’ Infamy score is 20 or higher, gaining an audience is relatively straightforward. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to know the traditional procedure: The PCs simply need to send a messenger to Fort Hazard, the Hurricane King’s seat, along with a bribe of at least 4 points of plunder. Bonefist won’t even deign to respond to so-called “pirates” who have not reached an Infamy threshold of Despicable. As long as the PCs pay the requisite bribe, the Hurricane King agrees to grant them an audience the following evening.

EVENT 1: THE TESTING

The morning after the PCs successfully arrange an audience, Kerdak Bonefist’s first mate **Tsadok Goldtooth** (CE male half-orc barbarian 15) publicly meets the PCs at the docks. Tsadok arrives with an entourage of cronies, and many spectators gather to see the entertainment as well.

Tsadok starts with introductions, declaring he’s there as the Hurricane King’s formal representative. He plays to the crowd as he explains the situation. It’s unusual for a new, successful, but relatively unknown ship to request a letter of marque without the sponsorship of a recognized Free Captain. In this case, the Pirate Code requires the ship’s captain and officers to undergo “Testing” to determine whether they’re worthy of becoming Free Captains themselves. While this Testing is often merely a formality, Bonefist has sent Tsadok to make a show of it. Even if the PCs somehow manage to get the sponsorship of an existing Free Captain, Tsadok still requires the Testing—unless the PCs don’t want the Hurricane King’s letter of marque, of course.

Tsadok is callous and rude to the PCs, making jokes at their expense and hinting that they’re just playing at being pirates. Some among the crowd laugh at his gibes, but others scowl or remain silent, hinting that many aren’t fond of Tsadok. Eventually, he announces the first of three tests the PCs must face.

While Tsadok doesn’t waste time giving a detailed explanation of each test’s rules, the PCs should choose one of their number to compete in each test, who must perform without help or hindrance from others (the third test is the exception to this rule—all of the PCs are allowed to compete). These are piratical challenges, so bending a rule or two is expected. The crowd cheers in appreciation of clever tricks and boos at crude or unoriginal ruses. Casting obvious spells on a contestant is extremely unsporting, and Tsadok demands the spells’ removal, but a PC might be able to subtly cast a spell on the competing PC and remain unnoticed with a DC 20 Stealth check. Because of the challenges’ stressful competitive nature, contestants can’t take 10 on skill checks while competing. If the PCs accuse their opponents of cheating, they are met with laughter from Tsadok and his cronies. “We’re pirates—did you really expect us to play fair?” he says with a smirk.

THE FIRST TEST: A CLIMB IN THE RIGGING

Tsadok’s first test is to see whether the PCs are passable sailors, not just “fancy jackets” who found themselves in command of a pirate crew. One PC must swiftly climb to the top of a nearby ship’s foremast and complete the tricky task of unfurling and setting the sail from the top yard without assistance, before one of Tsadok’s crew does the same on the mizzenmast. Flight magic is illegal, and the contestants must unfurl the sails themselves, not conjure creatures to do it.

The ship used for the challenge is the *Stingray*, a brig with two tall square-rigged masts. Competitors must climb 60 feet up the mast’s rigging to the top spar. Climbing the mast requires a DC 10 Climb check for the lower 45 feet and a DC 15 Climb check for the upper 15 feet.

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Contestants must then make their way along the yard, which extends 30 feet out from both sides of the mast, untying sail as they go. Contestants can use accelerated climbing (–5 penalty on the check) to increase their climbing speed from one-quarter speed to half speed. Moving along the yard requires a DC 10 Climb check, or a contestant can walk along the yard at half speed with a DC 15 Acrobatics check (or move at full speed with a DC 25 Acrobatics check). Climbing or balancing requires one skill check per move action.

The sail is tied to the yard at four locations, 15 feet from the mast and 30 feet from the mast on both sides. Correctly unfurling each of the four areas of sail without it snagging or tangling requires a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check and takes a standard action. A contestant who succeeds at a DC 18 Profession (sailor) check realizes that untying all of the sail on one side of the yard will cause loose sailcloth to flap about in the breeze, making the job of setting the remaining sail more challenging. To avoid this problem, the sail should be released in stages on one side of the mast and then the other. If one side of the sail is completely unfurled first, the DC of the Profession (sailor) checks to unfurl the remaining sail increases by 5.

The sailor from Tsadok's crew competing in this test is **Haines Boyne** (N male human fighter 4/rogue [swashbuckler] 3; Init +3; Climb +12, Profession [sailor] +10; use the stats for a pirate guard on page 38 if necessary). He's efficient and doesn't take unnecessary risks. Haines uses accelerated climbing only when the DC is 10 and unties the two points of his sail closest to the mast before releasing the outer points.

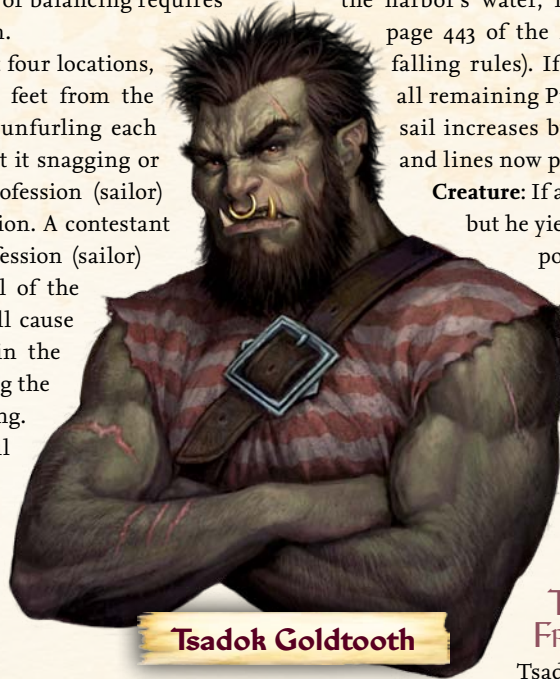
Shenanigans: Many spectators watch the test from the *Stingray's* deck, including one of Tsadok's crew, "Bilgerat" Jacobi, who "accidentally" unties (or cuts) the line securing the *Stingray's* forestay boom when the competing PC is at the end of the yard.

Those PCs who are not competing can spot Bilgerat before he begins his sabotage. A DC 22 Perception check picks out the bald sailor on the *Stingray's* foredeck, while a DC 20 Sense Motive check notices him acting suspiciously. If the PCs fail these checks, they can have another chance to make them just as Bilgerat strikes, but with a –5 penalty due to the crowd's distraction. PCs who succeed at both checks can act in the round Bilgerat starts his sabotage. It takes Bilgerat a standard action to untie the knot securing the line, and a full-round action to unwrap the line from

the rail. If he realizes the PCs are on to him, Bilgerat draws a dagger and cuts the rope instead.

If Bilgerat succeeds, the boom swings around and crashes into the foremast's rigging. The PC contestant must succeed at a DC 20 Acrobatics check to keep his balance. Failure means that the PC slips and must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save to catch the rigging or fall. If the PC was at the end of the yard, the fall is into the harbor's water, not onto the *Stingray's* deck (see page 443 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for falling rules). If the PC does not fall, the DC of all remaining Profession (sailor) checks to set the sail increases by +2 because of the tangle of sail and lines now pressed against the foresail.

Creature: If attacked, Bilgerat defends himself, but he yields if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, or if he is unable to complete his dirty work.



Tsadok Goldtooth

"BILGERAT" JACOBI CR 6
XP 2,400
Pirate guard (see page 38)
hp 57

Story Award: Award the PCs 3,200 XP for winning this test.

THE SECOND TEST: A FRIENDLY GAME OF CARDS

Tsadok's wants to see how much talent and luck the PCs possess in his second test. A small table is set up on the aft deck of the PCs' ship, and one of the PCs must gamble against Tsadok in a card game called *Bastard's Fool*. *Bastard's Fool* is a popular game on pirate ships, and is played using a deck cobbled together from several partial decks. Even a down-on-his-luck sailor who doesn't even have a full deck of cards can play *Bastard's Fool*, as each player brings whatever cards she has, and combines them with other players' cards to create a new deck. *Bastard's Fool* is a bluffing game similar to poker, but Tsadok adds an additional "Port Peril" rule to the game: the winner of each hand must drink a ration cup of Gutburn rum.

Each player starts with a stake of 100 platinum pieces. The PCs must supply their own stake; Tsadok has brought along a moneychanger to exchange currency or plunder if needed. Each hand, gamblers receive a starting hand and place their initial bets. They may then discard some of their cards and draw more to improve their hand, and bet again. Once all bets are matched, the gamblers reveal their cards and the best hand wins. Rather than play out every hand, you can ask the competing player to describe his or her basic strategy, make several checks

(as described below), and then give a quick narrative describing how the game initially progresses.

To simulate an actual game of *Bastard's Fool*, each player rolls dice, trying to get a score as close to 20 as possible without going over. At the beginning of the hand, each player pays an ante of 1 pp and secretly rolls a d20, representing her starting hand. A round of betting ensues (minimum bet is 1 pp; maximum bet is a player's entire stake, called "all in"). To represent the discard and draw, each player may then secretly roll another die of her choice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, or d20) to improve her score (the larger the die, the more cards drawn). This is followed by another round of betting. A player can fold at any time instead of betting—in this case, the opposing player wins the hand. If the total of both dice is 20 or less, that is the gambler's score. If the total is over 20, the gambler's score is only the highest number on a single die (representing a poor draw). The highest score wins the hand. On a tie, no one wins. The pot remains on the table, and a new hand begins, with bets added to the existing pot.

Participants may improve their position using expertise, insight, misdirection, or even legerdemain. A gambler can make one of the following checks each hand (all DC 15): Bluff, Profession (gambler), or Sense Motive. A successful check adds +1 to the gambler's score, with an additional +1 for every 5 points over the DC (even if this pushes the gambler's final score over 20). A failed check reduces the gambler's score by 1, with an additional -1 for every 5 points under the DC.

The gambling PC can also make a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to cheat and increase her score by 4 points, but failing this check means Tsadok notices the attempt. The first failure costs the PC her stake for that hand. If the PC is caught cheating a second time, the game ends and the PC fails the entire test.

Each time the PC wins a hand, she must drink a shot of rum. Each drink after the first requires a DC 10 Fortitude save (the DC increases by +1 for each additional drink). The PC takes a -1 penalty on all skill checks for each failed saving throw. Once the PC has consumed a number of drinks equal to 1 plus double her Constitution modifier, she is sickened (taking an additional -2 penalty on skill checks) for 1 hour for each drink beyond this maximum. Tsadok drinks when he wins as well, but the

alcohol seems to have almost no effect except to increase his toothy sneer.

The poop deck is empty except for the dealer, Tsadok, and the participating PC, limiting the assistance other PCs can provide. The dealer announces the revealed cards and wagers to the crowd who cheer and shout advice. Tsadok sits with his back to the harbor, making it difficult to spy on his cards, but creative PCs might be able to find a way to observe Tsadok's cards and relay that information to the gambling PC. If you're playing out each hand, this allows the PC to know Tsadok's score before betting. Alternatively, or for faster play, you can simply subtract 4 points from Tsadok's score to represent this foreknowledge.

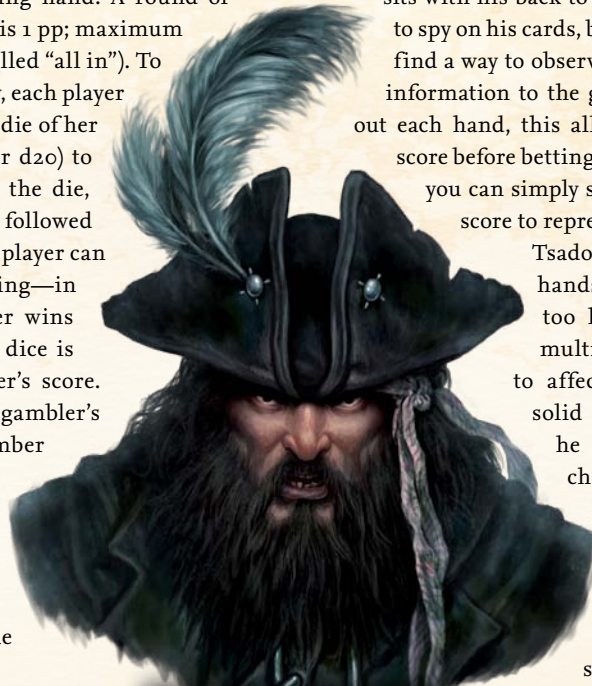
Tsadok bets small for the first dozen hands, folding if the stakes rise too high (over 5 pp), hoping that multiple drinks of rum will start to affect his opponent. Tsadok is a solid but unimaginative gambler; he doesn't bother making skill checks to increase his score, and only rolls a second die with a maximum number that won't put him over 20.

Stacking the Deck: As the game proceeds, the dealer secretly arranges the cards to favor Tsadok. This assistance allows Tsadok to add up to 4 points to his score (to a maximum score of 20) in any hand where

he bets 10 pp or more. The gambling PC can make a DC 25 Perception check and a DC 18 Profession (gambler) check. If either check is successful, she notices the dealer subtly manipulating the deck as he shuffles. The PC can use this knowledge to her advantage, evaluating what cards are on top of the deck and drawing them before the dealer can rearrange them. This removes Tsadok's advantage and subtracts 6 points from Tsadok's score for a single hand. After this happens, Tsadok takes over dealing himself, cursing the dealer for being bad luck.

Eventually, Tsadok or the PC goes "all in," betting the remainder of his stake on a single hand. If the crooked dealer is still dealing at this point, Tsadok "gets lucky" with a natural 20 hand; otherwise, roll for Tsadok's hand normally. If the PC wins this hand, the PC wins the challenge. If Tsadok wins, he keeps the PC's coins; if he loses, he grudgingly congratulates the winner and tries to retrieve his own coins, stating that it was just a friendly game for show, not for real stakes. If pressed, Tsadok relents and lets the PCs keep their winnings.

Story Award: If the PC wins the game, award the group 3,200 XP for completing the challenge.

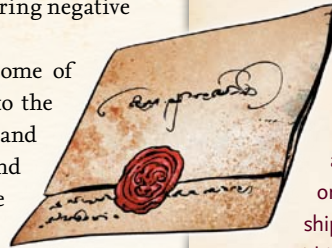


Kerdak Bonefist

THE THIRD TEST: REPELLING BOARDERS (CR 8)

A pirate needs to be able to fight, so Tsadok's third challenge tests the PCs' combat abilities. This test takes place on the PCs' ship—any damage to their ship or property as a result of this test is their own problem. All of the PCs can compete in this test, in which they must defend their ship from one very large, very dangerous boarder. The PCs can position themselves anywhere on their ship that they choose, but any crew must go ashore for the duration of the test—the PCs must prove that they alone can defend their ship. There are no other prohibitions on their actions, but remember that some PCs might still be suffering negative effects from earlier tests.

Creature: Once the PCs are in position, some of Tsadok's crew wheel a large, covered cage onto the dock adjacent to the PCs' ship. Tsadok uncovers and opens the cage, revealing a hideously ugly and obese marsh giant called Fishpork—a favorite at several of Port Peril's fighting arenas. Tsadok orders the brute to attack the PCs, and retreats back to the mainland to watch. Tsadok cares nothing for Fishpork—either the giant kills the PCs, or they kill him.



FISHPORK

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male marsh giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 129)

hp 102

TACTICS

During Combat Fishpork casts *fog cloud* over any PCs gathered together, then throws rocks (which Tsadok thoughtfully placed in the cage with him) at any PCs outside of the fog. Once the majority of the PCs leave the fog, Fishpork scales the side of the PCs ship and attacks the closest PC. He pauses in his attacks only to cast *bestow curse* on any particularly difficult opponents.

Morale Fishpork hasn't lost a bout yet, and fights to the death attempting to prove that he is the best and the strongest.

Development: Once the Testing is concluded, Tsadok has a quiet discussion with the PCs. If they passed two or more of the tests, he acts with false magnanimity, heartily thanking them for being "good sorts." If they failed two or more tests, Tsadok gives a broad predatory grin and states that he's still willing to announce they've passed the Testing, for a price—a portion of the plunder in the PCs' hold. Tsadok wants 40% of their plunder if they didn't pass any tests, or 20% of their plunder if they passed one test. Once Tsadok finishes haggling with the PCs over the exact amount, he steps in front of the crowd and proclaims the PCs are indeed deserving of becoming Free Pirates of the Shackles, which receives boisterous cheers from the crowd. Tsadok further announces that Hurricane King Kerdak

SHACKLES LETTER OF MARQUE

Scribed with a firm hand in blood-red ink and emblazoned with an elaborate seal of crimson wax, this thick, waxed paper grants its bearer license to attack and capture ships of enemy nations as a privateer. It is not an uncommon practice for nations of the Inner Sea to issue letters of marque and reprisal to their ships, but those issued in the pirate confederacy of the Shackles grant permission to engage in egregious acts of pillage and prize-taking, which can only be described as piracy by more lawful nations.

Lawful letters of marque are issued to specific ships, not individuals, but in the Shackles, they are granted to a specific captain and his or her officers. A Shackles letter of marque accords its bearer the authority to seize or destroy cargo, incarcerate or slay crew and passengers, and sink or capture ships from other nations, mercantile or otherwise.

Within the territorial bounds of the Shackles, these manifold privileges also apply against any ships or captains who haven't sworn loyalty to a known Free Captain or who doesn't carry their own letter of marque (though bearing a letter of marque is no guarantee of safety from other pirates, who frequently strike first and ask questions later).

Possession of a Shackles letter of marque is a crime in most civilized nations and regularly carries a penalty of death by hanging. As a result, a Shackles letter of marque is protected by a *secret page* spell, enabling its bearer to speak a secret command word to alter the text to something more innocuous, such as a cargo manifest, nautical chart, or page from a ship's log.

It's common knowledge within the Shackles who has been granted letters of marque, and most Free Captains keep accounts of which ships and captains have them, making it extraordinarily difficult to forge these documents or steal them to perpetrate a deception.

A Shackles letter of marque radiates faint transmutation magic.

Bonefist himself will grant the PCs their letter of marque this very evening. This announcement receives significantly less applause, suggesting that the current Hurricane King may not be as popular as many outsiders believe.

EVENT 2: LETTER OF MARQUE

After the PCs finish the Testing, they are invited to attend a feast that evening at the Hurricane King's fortress, Fort Hazard. When the PCs arrive, the revelry is already in full swing: tables are laden with roast meat and flagons of ale,

THE FREE CAPTAINS' REGATTA

While in Port Peril, the PCs should hear plenty about the upcoming Free Captains' Regatta, the grueling annual race in which independent Free Captains can win fame and fortune, as well as lordship of an island and a seat on the Pirate Council. Many NPCs ask the PCs whether they are entering, and in every Shackles port there's much excited gossip and betting on which ships are likely favorites. For the first time in years, the field is wide open, as the infamous pirate lord called the Master of the Gales is judging the race instead of participating. The Regatta is certainly the swiftest way to power and influence in the Shackles, though it is far from the easiest or safest route. See Part Three for details on the Free Captains' Regatta.

mead, and rum, and loud, drunken buccaneers swagger and stagger around the main hall.

Hurricane King **Kerdak Bonefist** (NE male human fighter 8/Inner Sea pirate 10) presides over the revelry from his gold-chased, teakwood throne. A blustery man with long black hair and beard, Bonefist looks more pirate than king, forgoing his crown and royal regalia for the long coat and tricorne hat of a sea captain. A tankard of rum rarely leaves his hand, but his most noteworthy features are his magic pistol and his skeletal right hand, the source of his sobriquet. Already well into his cups, the Hurricane King blearily stares down at the PCs as they are brought forth for introductions.

Bonefist repeatedly roars for silence, only to be ignored, so he finally resorts to firing his pistol into the air to establish a deathly silence after its thunderous echo fades. He glares fierily about the hall until, with an apparent change of mood, he smiles and speaks in a calm voice. "This fresh catch of scallywags want to add their fine ship to our brethren o' the sea," he says, erratically waving his still smoking pistol toward the PCs. "But before I award their letter of marque and make them Free Captains right and true, I say we hear from them." Bonefist turns his dark gaze upon the PCs. "What say you tell us all a tale or two of how you came by the plunder in your hold?" The inebriated pirates draw closer to hear the PCs speak.

The PCs need to successfully entertain the assembled rowdy throng. This functions as a normal Infamy check (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #55 63) with a DC equal to 15 + twice the party's average party level, and plunder can be spent as normal to influence the result. At your discretion, the PCs might receive a bonus of +1 to +3 on the Infamy check as a reward for good roleplaying. Since the PCs are boasting in the court of the Hurricane King

himself, the maximum Infamy and Disrepute they can gain from a successful check increases to 5.

Hecklers: When the PCs are partway through their tale, several unruly listeners start heckling, shouting abuse and taunts. Some of these hecklers have orders from Tsadok to yell derisive comments, but others simply make their dislike of a poor performance loudly known. There are three hecklers who try to derail the PCs' story. Any PC can deal with a heckler by shouting him down with a successful DC 20 Intimidate check, engaging a heckler in diverting banter with a DC 22 Diplomacy check, or counter-heckling with a DC 15 Perform (comedy) check. The PCs can also use violent or magical means to remove hecklers, but this is likely to distract and detract from the storytelling, resulting in at least a -2 penalty on the Infamy check (this penalty increases to a -5 penalty if the PCs do anything particularly shocking or offensive). Each heckler who the PCs don't deal with imposes a -2 penalty on the PCs' Infamy check.

At the end of the PCs' tale, Bonefist calls for a show of approval, with the crowd shouting "aye" or "nay" to decide. Assuming the PCs succeed at their Infamy check, the gathering hollers in the PCs favor, and Bonefist officially presents them with their letter of marque in front of the approving assembly. See the sidebar on page 11 for details on this valuable document.

If the PCs fail their Infamy check, the crowd boos them out of the hall for their poor performance, but Bonefist summons them to a private meeting later. Since the PCs passed the Testing, Bonefist tells them that they still earned their letter of marque, and hands it over, but gossip of the PCs' embarrassment filters out to the inhabitants of Port Peril, imposing a -2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks with city residents, and a -2 penalty on all Infamy checks made in Port Peril until the PCs reach a new Infamy threshold.

Story Award: Award the PCs 3,200 XP for successfully entertaining the Hurricane King's court.

SHORE LEAVE

Now officially recognized as Free Captains of the Shackles, the PCs are free to explore Port Peril and enjoy the sights and entertainments of the pirate capital. They can sell plunder, recruit additional crew, refit their ship, purchase magic items or other gear, and increase their Infamy and Disrepute scores (although any Infamy gained in Event 3 counts toward the maximum amount that can be won in Port Peril for each Infamy threshold). See the Port Peril gazetteer on page 12 for more details on this notorious pirate port.

EVENT 3: BARROOM BRAWL (CR VARIES)

The following event takes place during the PCs' stay in Port Peril. At some point, they likely find themselves wanting to enjoy some of the entertainments the notorious port has

RIPTIDE ALEHOUSE

1 square = 5 feet



to offer, and visit a tavern called the Riptide Alehouse. The Riptide is a boisterous and rowdy establishment, full of pirates and freebooters of all stripes, though most of the activity seems friendly enough.

The PCs can order drinks or food, join in a gambling game or two, and generally enjoy their time there. At some point during the evening, have the PCs make Perception checks. Whoever gets the highest result notices a familiar face in the unruly crowd in the bar: “Caulky” Tarroon, Captain Barnabas Harrigan’s cabin girl on the *Wormwood*. The PC who spots her (or any other PCs, if the first PC draws their attention to her) can make a DC 15 Sense Motive check to notice her suspicious behavior. She seems to be surreptitiously adding something to a few sailors’ drinks—an activity suspiciously similar to the way oil of taggit was added to the PCs’ drinks when they were initially press-ganged at the beginning of “The Wormwood Mutiny.”

Before the PCs can take any action, however, they are approached by Captain Pierce Jerrell, a charming rogue of a Free Captain with an eye patch and a winning smile. One of the PCs (choose one) has caught his eye and his fancy, and he smoothly sits down at the PCs’ table, offering to buy them all a round of drinks while he

attempts to charm and flatter the object of his affection. See page 54 for a complete description of Pierce Jerrell.

Regardless of how the PCs respond to Pierce, the activity at their table draws the attention of Caulky. Unless the PCs have all thoroughly disguised themselves, she recognizes them from their time on the *Wormwood* and attempts to slip away to inform Captain Harrigan of their presence in Port Peril.

At the same time, one of the sailors who Caulky was attempting to poison notices that her drink was tampered with. She loudly proclaims that someone is trying to drug her, and throws her drink over her shoulder, square on the head of a rough-looking buccaneer. The bruiser stands up, roaring in rage, and throws a punch, which connects with yet another bystander, and the situation in the tavern soon devolves into an all-out barroom brawl.

Exactly what triggers the melee is relatively unimportant and depends on the current situation—the PCs might get into a fight with Pierce Jerrell, who blocks their way to Caulky; Caulky could bump into someone as she tries to leave; or the events outlined above transpire exactly as written. That the PCs find themselves in the middle of the free-for-all is all that matters.

Creatures: Most of the tavern's patrons opportunistically join in the brawl or find themselves dragged into the swirling melee. Rather than roll every attack of every participant, keep the focus on the PCs and their opponents while describing the overall fight happening around them. Once the brawl begins, the mass of people in the tavern makes the entire area difficult terrain. Agile PCs can move swiftly through the mayhem by leaping from table to table above the heads of the brawlers with Acrobatics checks (DC varies based on the distance between tables). The tavern's wooden chandeliers hang 10 feet above the floor. PCs can also leap up from atop a bench or table to catch one and swing athletically over the fight with a DC 20 Acrobatics check.

Drunken Brawlers: Although the bar is full of drunken brawlers, four of them take swings at the PCs with their fists. Depending on how the fight develops, more drunken brawlers could engage the PCs if the opportunity presents itself, especially if the PCs escalate the friendly brawl into a deadly fight with weapons or lethal spells.

"Caulky" Tarroon: When Barnabas Harrigan transferred half of his crew to the *Man's Promise*, those remaining on the *Wormwood* were put through the wringer. Harrigan's cabin girl, Caulky Tarroon, was no exception. She lost her relatively cushy job on the ship and had to work as hard as any common swab. Without the personal protection of the captain, she quickly had to learn to defend herself, and became an accomplished knife fighter.

Nevertheless, Caulky wants nothing to do with the PCs. She seeks to get out of the tavern as soon as possible, but the PCs are between her and the front door, and the back door behind the bar is locked. As the fight breaks out, Caulky tries to blend into the crowd and sneak up the stairs (DC 25 Perception check to spot), making her way along the balcony to the room at its southern end, where she hopes to find another way out.

The balcony is 15 feet above the main floor. Several barrels of ale are stacked above the stairs at the northern end of the balcony. Caulky gets up the stairs just before they become packed with drunken, brawling pirates (making the stairs difficult terrain as well). If the PCs try to follow Caulky up the stairs, she pushes the barrels down the stairs to further hinder them. Anyone on the stairs must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the barrels. Those who fails the saving throw take 1d6 points of damage as they are pushed to the bottom of the stairs and knocked prone.

If the PCs don't want to fight through the brawlers on the stairs, they can climb the carved wall beneath the balcony

with a successful DC 15 Climb check. Alternatively, a PC can clamber onto a table and jump to catch the balcony railing with a successful DC 16 Acrobatics check.

Caulky frantically tries to get away from the PCs and escape through the window in the southernmost room off the balcony. It takes her a move action to open the window and another to climb out; then she swarms up to the roof to make her getaway across the rooftops of Port Peril.

Pierce Jerrell: Pierce Jerrell eagerly joins in the brawl as well, though how the PCs responded to his initial contact with them determines his tactics. If they were at least civil to him and they're within range, Pierce casts *haste* right after the fight starts, targeting the PCs as well as himself. If the PCs rebuffed him or started the fight with him, he returns the favor, perhaps attempting to charm the object of his affection with *charm person*. Pierce uses his brass knuckles and nonlethal spells such as *color spray* in the fight until deadly weapons enter the fray, at which point he draws his longsword.



Caulky Tarroon

"CAULKY" TARROON CR 4

XP 1,200

Female human commoner 3/rogue (knife master)

2 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 72)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 39 (5 HD; 2d8+3d6+17)

Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +0

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +8 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +8 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak stab* +1d8

TACTICS

During Combat Caulky does her best to avoid combat with the PCs and escape out the window. If cornered and unable to flee, she uses her Improved Feint feat to feint as a move action, and makes a sneak attack against the flat-footed opponent with her dagger.

Morale Caulky fights like a cornered rat, but if the opportunity to escape presents itself, she takes it and flees.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12

Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 16

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +9, Climb +7, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Sleight of Hand +10 (+11 to conceal light blades), Stealth +10, Swim +5

TEMPEST RISING

Languages Common, Polyglot
SQ hidden blade*, rogue talents (weapon training)
Other Gear studded leather, masterwork daggers (2), 29 gp
 * See *Ultimate Combat*.

DRUNKEN BRAWLERS (4) CR 3

XP 800 each

Human fighter (cad) 3/rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 45)
 CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 32 each (4 HD; 3d10+1d8+7)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +6 (1d3+3) or
 improvised weapon +6 (1d8+3)

Ranged dagger +6 (1d4+3/19–20)

Special Attacks dirty maneuvers*, sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat These drunken brawlers are just looking for a friendly fight, and fight with unarmed strikes and Power Attack. If any of the PCs pull out weapons or deal lethal damage with their attacks, the brawlers snatch up tankards of ale and smash chairs to use as improvised weapons. The brawlers flank with each other to make sneak attacks, and use combat maneuvers to disarm foes or dirty trick maneuvers to blind opponents for a round or 2 (possibly by throwing ale in their faces) and sneak attack those opponents.

Morale A drunken brawler attempts to flee if he takes 20 or more points of lethal damage.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+7 disarm, dirty trick, or steal); **CMD** 19
 (20 vs. disarm, dirty trick, or steal)

Feats Catch Off-Guard^B, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Stand Still

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +5, Climb +9, Intimidate +5, Profession (sailor) +7, Swim +9

Languages Common

SQ catch off guard*, trapfinding +1

Gear leather armor, dagger, improvised weapon, 2d20 gp each
 * See *Ultimate Combat*.

PIERCE JERRELL CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 69 (page 54)

Development: Soon after the PCs defeat their opponents, the Port Peril militia arrives to break up the brawl and arrest the instigators, including the PCs. Assuming he is still alive and conscious, Pierce Jerrell quixotically offers

to show the PCs a back way out of the tavern, leading them behind the bar area and away down a side street. Regardless of how the fight started or turned out, as long as the PCs didn't try to kill him, Pierce harbors no ill will toward the PCs and is happy to forgive any "accidental" injuries. If the PCs befriend Pierce, he becomes another ally they can call upon for aid later in the Adventure Path.

If Caulky Tarroon managed to escape the PCs, there are no immediate consequences, but the PCs can be sure that Barnabas Harrigan now knows the mutinous PCs have survived and are present in the Shackles. If the PCs caught Caulky, she tells them that she was only trying to curry favor with Harrigan by reporting their whereabouts to their former captain. She knows nothing of importance, and holds no great loyalty to Harrigan—in fact, she offers to join the PCs' crew if they spare her life (though her loyalty to the PCs is one of convenience and nothing more). Although Caulky knows where the *Wormwood* is berthed, you should discourage the PCs from visiting their former ship, as both Harrigan and the *Wormwood* have more roles to play, both later in this adventure and in the Adventure Path. In any case, the *Wormwood* leaves Port Peril the following morning, whether Caulky is on board or not.

Story Award: If the PCs befriend Pierce Jerrell, award them 3,200 XP, as if they had defeated him in combat.

PART TWO: AT A LADY'S REQUEST

A day after the PCs receive their letter of marque from the Hurricane King, a messenger delivers a letter from Tessa Fairwind, Mistress of the city of Quent on Motaku Isle, inviting them to dinner at her townhouse in Port Peril the following evening. Tales of the PCs' exploits have impressed Tessa, and she wishes to recruit them for a sensitive task. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (local) check recognizes Tessa as captain of the sloop-of-war *Luck of the Draw* and one of the most powerful and popular pirate lords on the Pirate Council of the Shackles. A result of 15 or higher on the check also reveals the common rumor that Tessa is next in line for the Hurricane Crown—either by the acclaim of the Free Captains, or by taking it from Kerdak Bonefist herself. A full description of Tessa Fairwind appears on page 56.

When the PCs arrive at Tessa's townhouse, her retainers show them into a windowed dining hall with a view overlooking Port Peril's harbor. Tessa introduces herself and congratulates the PCs on being named Free Captains. She asks them what they know of the current political situation in the Shackles, and hints that Kerdak Bonefist's hold over the fractious pirate lords is perhaps not as strong as it might appear. If her own possible candidacy for the position is mentioned, Tessa explains just how reticent she is to become the next Hurricane King. Nevertheless, she recognizes that Bonefist's days



NAVIGATING THE SHACKLES

Throughout this adventure, and the rest of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, the PCs will be sailing their ship to a variety of destinations. In order to do so, they must successfully plot a course and follow it to their destination. Navigating a ship requires a successful DC 18 Profession (sailor) or Survival check. Characters with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) gain a +2 bonus on the check. Attempts to navigate without proper navigational tools (such as an astrolabe, charts, compass, or sextant) take a -4 penalty on the check. Success means the ship reaches its destination as planned in the normal time. A failure means the ship gets lost, following the rules for getting lost on pages 424–425 of the *Core Rulebook*. Each failed check adds 1d4 days to the ship's travel time.

are likely numbered, and hints that the time is ripe for those with ambition to start gathering allies.

Tessa also mentions the recent whispers she's been hearing about Chelixa's designs on the Shackles. Chelixa's hatred of the pirate isles is nothing new, of course, but lately the rumors have been hinting at another Chelish invasion, which, if successful, could result in the Shackles being annexed into the empire—a horrific outcome to any Free Captain, regardless of who wears the Hurricane Crown. Tessa is convinced that there is some truth behind these rumors, but she needs solid proof to put before the Hurricane King and the Pirate Council to force them to take united action. However, she can't investigate these rumors herself—she's too well known for such subtle work, and she needs to remain in Port Peril to maintain her influence over certain factions within the council.

Instead, Tessa requests that the PCs investigate the rumors. As resourceful newcomers, independent of any pirate lord, they have the best chance of uncovering information. Seeing the PCs as free agents with no preexisting loyalties, Tessa secretly hopes to ally with them and groom them for leadership roles in the Shackles—if not to eventually claim the Hurricane Crown for themselves, then to gain prominent places on the Pirate Council at the very least. Tessa offers the PCs the chance to ally with her and join her fleet, though in truth, they will pretty much be left to their own devices. Indeed, Tessa doesn't want it known that she is investigating these rumors, and her alliance with the PCs should be kept quiet for now.

If the PCs turn down Tessa's offer to join her fleet, she isn't surprised, but still asks that they investigate the rumors. She points out that if they agree, the PCs will have her gratitude and friendship—a valuable commodity, for as Mistress of

Quent and one of the principal lords on the Pirate Council, she possesses considerable influence. If she feels that it might help seal the deal, Tessa even hints at the possibility of a romance with one of the PCs, seductively adding that her favors are a reward many are extremely eager for. If all else fails, Tessa offers the PCs wealth to investigate, promising a reward equivalent to 5 points of plunder should they return with solid proof she can place before the council.

Once the PCs agree, Tessa gives them two leads to follow.

"I am convinced that Chelixa has spies and informants working in the Shackles, and I can think of only two places that might have some knowledge of these traitorous informers in our midst. The first is the House of Stolen Kisses in Quent, a temple of Calistria and one of the best information brokerages in the Shackles. Use this note to obtain an audience with the temple's high priestess, Dindreann.

"The second is the Temple of the Hidden Name, a secret temple of Norgorber said to operate in the town of Beachcomber on Bag Island. If anyone knows of these spies, it would be the followers of the Reaper of Reputation. I have no contacts with the priests of that temple, so I hope you can convince them to reveal what they know."

Tessa then unfurls several beautifully drawn, highly detailed nautical charts of the Shackles. These are *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58), and Tessa points out the locations of Quent and Beachcomber to the PCs on the charts. She gives the charts to the PCs, presenting them in an expertly crafted watertight case as the PCs depart. If the PCs agreed to join Tessa's fleet, she also gives them a pennant to fly from their masthead signifying their allegiance to her. If she flirted with one of the PCs, she adds a farewell kiss before they set sail as well.

The PCs can follow Tessa's initial leads in any order, traveling either to Motaku Isle to visit the House of Stolen Kisses or to Bag Island to find the Temple of the Hidden Name. The steps that the PCs will follow as they investigate the spy ring are presented below in the most likely order for their investigation, but the actual order in which these events and encounters occur should be based on the PCs' actions and investigations.

STEP 1: HOUSE OF STOLEN KISSES

Following Tessa's lead, the PCs journey to the lively seaport of Quent on the northern coast of Motaku Isle, making their way to the House of Stolen Kisses, both a holy temple to Calistria and a brothel. When the PCs present Tessa's note, scantily clad acolytes escort them through sensually decorated corridors to the chambers of the temple's high priestess, **Dindreann** (CN female human cleric of Calistria 9). Dindreann pleasantly greets the PCs, offers them comfortable seating and stimulating refreshment. When



the PCs are seated and refreshed, she asks what service she can render to associates of her “dearest friend Tessa.”

Spies: If the PCs mention that they’re seeking spies in the Shackles, Dindreann confirms that the House of Stolen Kisses has leads on such information, as many people share their secrets with the temple’s sacred prostitutes in the heat of passion. But these secrets are shared in confidence, and the temple cannot simply give them away for free. If the PCs were to perform a service for the temple, however, they could expect such knowledge as payment.

Dindreann tells the PCs that a ship owned by the temple, the *Lady’s Sting*, recently went missing. Divinations have revealed that the ship was attacked by a group of pirates who deliberately lure ships into danger so that they can salvage the cargoes of the resulting wrecked ships. Piracy is a fact of life in the Shackles, of course, but the *Lady’s Sting* was carrying a relic sacred to the faith—a gold-plated wasp statue known as the Golden Vespal. The temple seeks revenge on these wreckers who would dare attack one of the faith’s holy vessels, as well as the return of the Golden Vespal, but they have so far been unable to locate the wreckers that attacked the *Lady’s Sting*. If the PCs can find the wreckers, enact the goddess’s revenge upon them, and recover the Golden Vespal, Dindreann will give them a lead on the spies they are seeking.

A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check is enough to realize that wreckers are a not uncommon hazard in the Shackles, and finding the specific crew that attacked the *Lady’s Sting* will be a difficult task. However, it’s possible that the Temple of the Hidden Name in Beachcomber might have some information that could lead to the wreckers.

Brine Banshee: If the PCs ask Dindreann about the *Brine Banshee*, she tells them that she knows of someone with information about the lost ship. If the PCs have already defeated the wreckers and returned the Golden Vespal to the temple, Dindreann gives them this information for free. Otherwise, they must succeed at a DC 18 Diplomacy check to convince her to share her information. Dindreann accepts bribes with a smile but these don’t affect her decision, unless the bribes are less than 50 gp, in which case she is quietly affronted, adding +5 to the DC of the check. While Dindreann doesn’t accept offers of a carnal nature at this point, she appreciates the thought, and such an offer grants a +2 circumstance bonus

on the Diplomacy check. Once the PCs convince Dindreann to share her information, she tells them that a retired ship’s doctor in the port of Ollo named Haneilius Fitch claims to have a means to locate the *Brine Banshee*, but is looking for someone to bankroll his expedition. Go to **Step 4** if the PCs go in search of Haneilius Fitch and the *Brine Banshee*.

Development: If the PCs return the Golden Vespal to the House of Stolen Kisses as proof of their revenge against Vakarla’s wreckers, Dindreann lives up to her end of the bargain, and tells the PCs that one of the temple’s patrons, a half-elf scrimshander in Drenchport named Jaymiss Keft, claimed to have knowledge of a spy operating in the Shackles. The PCs should seek him out to learn the name of this spy. Go to **Step 5** for the PCs’ meeting with Jaymiss Keft.

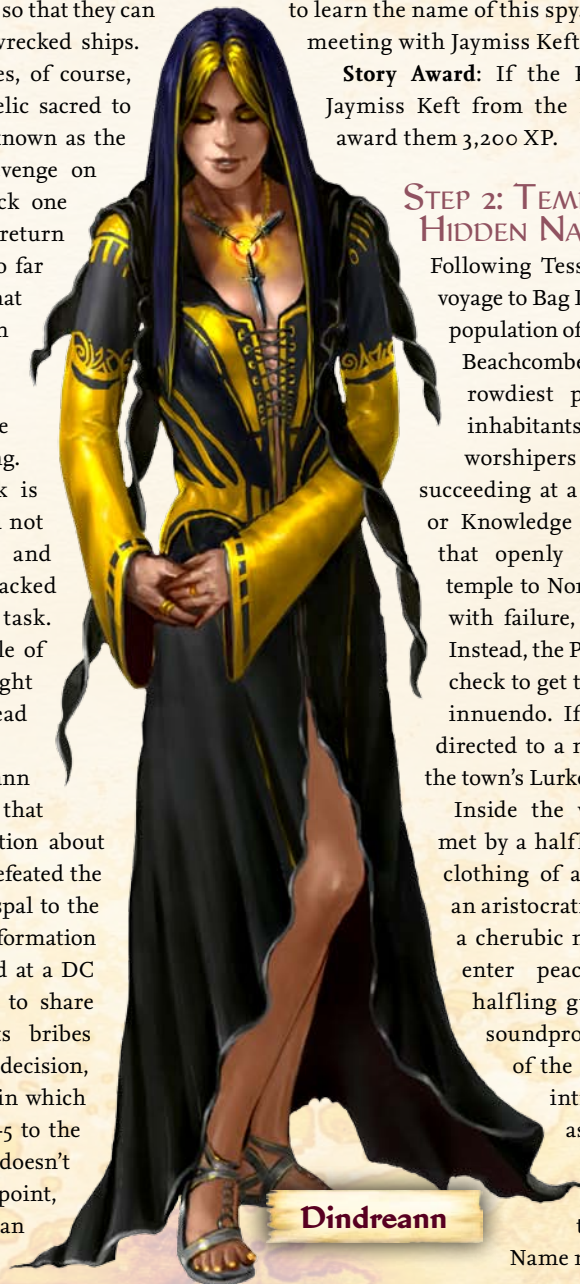
Story Award: If the PCs learn the name of Jaymiss Keft from the House of Stolen Kisses, award them 3,200 XP.

STEP 2: TEMPLE OF THE HIDDEN NAME

Following Tessa’s second lead, the PCs voyage to Bag Island, home to the largest population of halflings in the Shackles.

Beachcomber is one of Bag Island’s rowdiest ports, and many of its inhabitants are rumored to be secret worshipers of Norgorber. Anyone succeeding at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (religion) check realizes that openly asking about a hidden temple to Norgorber would likely meet with failure, if not outright hostility. Instead, the PCs can make a DC 15 Bluff check to get their meaning across with innuendo. If successful, the PCs are directed to a nondescript warehouse in the town’s Lurker District.

Inside the warehouse, the PCs are met by a halfling dressed in the black clothing of an indentured servant of an aristocratic household and wearing a cherubic mask. As long as the PCs enter peacefully, the obsequious halfling guides them to a discreet soundproofed room in the back of the warehouse. The halfling introduces himself simply as “Slip” (NE male halfling cleric of Norgorber 3/rogue 3) and asks how the Temple of the Hidden Name may be of service.



Dindreann

Spies: If the PCs explain that they're searching for spies in the Shackles, Slip nods and states that the Reaper of Reputation knows much that is hidden, but that secrets always have a price. He goes on to explain that the Temple of the Hidden Name deals in information, using secrets as currency. To learn one of the temple's secrets, the PCs must pay with another secret of equal value. Fortunately, there is information that the temple wants.

Slip tells the PCs that a famous ship called the *Brine Banshee* mysteriously disappeared several months ago. The *Brine Banshee* was said to have been one of the fastest ships in the Shackles, with unparalleled handling for a vessel its size, which many believed were the result of several potent spells woven into the ship. If the PCs can find what happened to the *Brine Banshee*, and discover the secret of its unprecedented speed and maneuverability, they can trade this knowledge for the information they seek.

A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to recall tales of the ill-fated *Brine Banshee*, which disappeared west of Shark Island after leaving the port of Ollo. What happened after remains a mystery, but the ship did visit Quent on its way to Ollo, so perhaps the House of Stolen Kisses has a lead on the *Brine Banshee's* fate.

Wreckers/Lady's Sting: If the PCs ask Slip about wreckers operating in the Shackles or the fate of the *Lady's Sting*, Slip says that it is no secret that many such groups operate in the Shackles, but he has knowledge of one crew that claimed to have successfully attacked a Calistrian vessel. If the PCs have already discovered the wreck of the *Brine Banshee*, Slip parts with this knowledge for a "donation" of 750 gp to the temple. Otherwise, he demands another secret from the PCs in exchange. The exact nature of what sort of secret Slip accepts as payment is up to you. Possible examples include the true identity of the PCs' ship and how they acquired it, the fate of the *Infernus* from *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #55, or the location of Mancatcher Cove from *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #56. Alternatively, Slip accepts the promise of a future secret as payment. In this case, it is up to you to ensure that the PCs make good on their promise, keeping in mind that the church of Norgorber is not in the habit of giving away its secrets for free. Once the PCs have negotiated the payment with Slip, the halfling tells them that the wreckers they seek are led by a half-orc wizard named Vakarla, and operate from a hidden island base southeast of the Rampore Isles. Go to **Step 3** for the PCs' encounter with Vakarla and her wreckers.

Development: If the PCs return to the Temple of the Hidden Name with the location of the wreck of the *Brine Banshee* and the secret of its speed, Slip accepts that information in trade for details on spies in the Shackles. He informs the PCs that he knows of a water naga named Sarlis who claims to know the location of a smuggler and spy for a foreign power. Sarlis resides in a shallow cove on

the Slithering Coast at this time of year, the location of which Slip marks on the PCs' charts. He tells the PCs to look for a hillock with a lone tree at the top on the western side of the river flowing into the cove. Nearby is a pool where the PCs should wait for Sarlis, which could take several days. The nagas of the Slithering Coast are aggressive and territorial, but Sarlis is more "social" than most of her ilk. Still, they might have to wait several days for the naga to deign to meet with them. The PCs' encounter with the nagas of the Slithering Coast is detailed in **Step 7**.

Story Award: If the PCs learn about Sarlis from the Temple of the Hidden Name, award them 3,200 XP.

STEP 3: SAVAGE SHIPWRECKERS

This side quest is detailed starting on page 20.

STEP 4: THE BRINE BANSHEE

This side quest is detailed starting on page 23.

STEP 5: JAYMISS KEFT

In search of the half-elf scrimshander Jaymiss Keft, the PCs sail to the damp and gloomy city of Drenchport on Tempest Cay, making their way ashore as heavy rain washes the streets. Jaymiss is well known in Drenchport both as an expert scrimshaw carver and a shameless rumormonger. A successful DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information reveals that the gray-haired old half-elf spends most of his time by the fire in the Carvers' Hall, a communal building where Drenchport's scrimshanders work together on larger projects and sell their finished works.

Jaymiss Keft (N male middle-aged half-elf expert 4) has an initial attitude of indifferent, but he can be made friendly with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. Purchasing one of Jaymiss's scrimshaws (at a cost of 2d10 gp) and getting him a warm drink of black kelp beer, or offering a bribe of at least 10 gp grants a +5 circumstance bonus on the check. Once made friendly, Jaymiss reveals that he has suspicions about a man named Haddon Pike, a beachcomber, fisherman, and occasional smuggler. The thing is, many of Haddon's supposed smuggling trips down south in a hired boat don't actually involve moving goods. Jaymiss knows the black market in Drenchport pretty well, and he's noticed that Haddon seldom buys or sells any contraband goods before or after these trips. Jaymiss can provide the PCs with directions to Haddon's cottage (see **Step 6**).

STEP 6: HADDON PIKE

Haddon Pike was hired by Zarskia Galeambar to spy on the Master of Gales, and his "smuggling" trips south (noted by Jaymiss Keft) were actually to deliver intelligence to his contact Roweena Kellet in Hell Harbor. Unfortunately for Haddon, he was Giles Halmis's first target.



Haddon's residence is a small driftwood cottage perched on the rugged coast just outside of Drenchport. Haddon's neighbors haven't seen him recently, though he tends to keep his own company. The front door has a simple lock (DC 20 Disable Device check to open), and there's an open window at the back. Haddon's dead body lies inside the cottage. Two crossbow bolts protrude from his back, and his head is submerged in a fish tank. The tank holds Haddon's pet, "Grinner," a piranha-like creature with frilled spines, huge eyes, and lots of teeth, which has consumed most of its master's exposed flesh. Clutched in Haddon's hand is a piece of driftwood carved to resemble a birdlike humanoid with a narrow beak, recognizable as a tengu with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) check.

If the PCs examine the body, a successful DC 15 Heal check confirms that Haddon has been dead for around a week, while a successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) or Heal check identifies faint traces of poison on the crossbow bolts. The angle of the bolts suggests that Haddon was shot through the window. A DC 20 Perception check made while searching outside discovers a discarded glass vial near a rocky outcropping about 80 feet away with a good view of Haddon's window. Rain has washed away tracks and any residue from the vial.

Treasure: While the cottage has been thoroughly ransacked, a successful DC 25 Perception check finds a concealed compartment in the fish tank's heavily carved wooden base. Inside is a waterproofed bag containing 40 pp, 259 gp, and a scrimshaw walrus tusk scroll case (worth 50 gp). Inside the case are several rolled up scrolls of sheet music and lyrics, part of an old Chelish opera written in Infernal. Besides the obvious incongruity of finding a Chelish opera in the possession of a beachcomber, a DC 15 Knowledge (history) check recognizes that Infernal would not have been used at the time the opera was written, a hint that the opera may hold a clue. In fact, the opera contains a series of instructions that have been encoded in a complicated cipher. Cracking the code requires a successful DC 30 Linguistics check. A character who speaks Infernal, has 5 or more ranks in Perform (sing), or succeeds at a DC 25 Perform (any category) check gains a +2 bonus on the check. The decoded instructions order Haddon to report on the movement of ships visiting Drenchport, especially those belonging to the Master of the Gales. The instructions also identify Haddon's main contact, a woman named Roweena Kellet in Hell Harbor on Devil's Arches (see **Step 9**).

Development: If the PCs are unable to decipher the encoded opera, they can take it to a large settlement such as Port Peril or Quent and hire someone to decode it, or take it to the Temple of the Hidden Name, where Slip is only too happy to learn the secrets contained within it for himself.

If the PCs show Jaymiss Keft the tengu carving they found at Haddon's cottage, or question him about Haddon's associates, Jaymiss explains that Haddon had a

regular shipmate and accomplice: a tengu named Corlan. The carving could represent Corlan, who lives in Hell Harbor (see **Step 10**).

Story Award: If the PCs successfully find and decipher the clues that lead to Roweena Kellet, award them 3,200 XP.

STEP 7: NAGAS OF THE SLITHERING COAST

This encounter is detailed starting on page 33.

STEP 8: ELLIECE FARHAVEN

Captain Elliece Farhaven and her ship the *Diamond Star* carried messages, intelligence, and sensitive and contraband materials for Zarskia Galeambar's spy ring. The *Diamond Star* was captured by the Rahadoumi navy shortly after her retirement, but Elliece continued to send intelligence on Tessa Fairwind's fleet to Roweena Kellet in Hell Harbor.

After traveling back to Motaku Isle, the PCs can easily find the mooring in Quent's harbor that holds Elliece's small boat, an unnamed craft with a single tiny cabin. Inside lies the bludgeoned body of a tiny winged devil, identifiable as an imp with a DC 12 Knowledge (planes) check, well and truly beaten to death with the ichor-stained anchor lying nearby. Zarskia sent the imp (supplied by Cheliox through her Nidalese contacts) to "retire" Captain Farhaven, but Elliece's sixth sense for danger saved her when the invisible imp entered the cabin. Elliece grabbed the anchor and knocked out the imp with a couple of lucky blows, then frantically bludgeoned the imp for several minutes to be sure it was dead. Certain that her mysterious employer was behind the assassination attempt, Elliece fled the Shackles, buying passage on the swiftest trading vessel she could find rather than attempting the perilous ocean voyage in her tiny boat.

A DC 10 Perception check notices a sealed glass bottle containing a rolled-up scrap of parchment thrown on the cabin's single bunk. While the page inside the bottle is blank and isn't magical, it does hold a message written in invisible ink (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Adventurer's Armory* 10). Because the page has been sealed inside the bottle for some time, the PCs can notice the chemical aroma about it with a successful DC 20 Perception check, hinting at the nature of the message's concealment. The message can be revealed using either heat or vinegar (both a lamp and a bottle of vinegar may be found in the cabin), or with a successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check that takes 1 hour. When revealed, the message details Elliece's last orders: a simple instruction to report to an address in Hell Harbor—the warehouse of Roweena Kellet (see **Step 9**).

Story Award: If the PCs find and decipher the clue that leads to Roweena Kellet, award them 3,200 XP.

STEP 9: ROWEENA KELLET

Following the leads from either Haddon Pike's cottage or Elliece Farhaven's boat, the PCs journey to the island

of Devil's Arches and the town of Hell Harbor in search of Roweena Kellet. A DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information around town identifies Roweena as a harbor quartermaster in the employ of Arronax Endymion, lord of Hell Harbor and a former admiral in the Chelish navy. Roweena manages two of Endymion's smaller trade warehouses, but she's recently gone missing.

In fact, Roweena was a major player in Zarskia Galembar's spy ring, passing along orders to and receiving information from Haddon Pike and Elliece Farhaven (usually through the tengu smuggler Corlan), while providing her own intelligence on Arronax Endymion to Zarskia. No longer needed after Zarskia was ordered to liquidate the spy ring, Roweena was the second target of the assassin Giles Halmis, who slew her and dumped her body at sea.

Since Roweena's disappearance, the goods in the warehouses she managed have been transferred to other holdings, leaving both warehouses empty, but the PCs can easily learn her home address with another DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information. The front door of Roweena's house has been broken open, and the place has been ransacked. Hell Harbor guards have been through the place looking for her, but at the moment, they're merely concerned that one of Endymion's employees has met with foul play.

None of the many shipping and mercantile papers scattered about Roweena's office implicate her as a spy or informer, but a successful DC 30 Perception check finds a ledger listing the names of numerous major pirate lords of the Shackles, each with a large number beside it. A successful DC 20 Appraise or Linguistics check allows a PC to recognize the numbers as estimated bribes, either to have the named pirates lord turn traitor, or to have their followers overthrow them. Of these names, one stands out: Arronax Endymion, whose entry has only a dash, rather than a number, after to his name. The meaning of this entry is that to the Chelish government, his only acceptable fate is capture, trial, torture, and public execution, but the PCs might misinterpret the entry and assume that Endymion has already turned traitor. Scribbled at the bottom of one page is a single line: "Send with Corlan."

Development: If the PCs ask around Hell Harbor about Corlan, or about Roweena's known associates, a successful DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information reveals that Corlan is a tengu smuggler who frequently works as an agent for Roweena. The PCs can find out Corlan's address in Hell Harbor with a DC 15 check. Go to **Step 10** if the PCs go in search of Corlan.

STEP 10: A CROW'S MURDER

This encounter is detailed starting on page 34.

STEP 11: JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY

This site is detailed starting on page 36.

SAVAGE SHIPWRECKERS (CR 9)

Following the lead gained at the Temple of the Hidden Name, the PCs sail to the Rampore Isles in search of the wreckers who attacked the *Lady's Sting*. With no way of knowing the wreckers' exact location, the PCs must sail around until they stumble upon the wreckers, or the wreckers find them first. If the PCs didn't learn about the wreckers at the temple, this encounter can occur at any time during the PCs' travels through the Shackles.

The wreckers have set up their operation in dangerous shoals southeast of the Rampore Isles, 2 days' travel away from any major port. The leader of this crew of barbarous half-orc reavers is an accomplished illusionist named Vakarla. Renegades from the Terwa Uplands, Vakarla and her wreckers take the perfidious and risky gamble of preying on Shackles pirates. The wreckers sail from a nearby island in the early evening and moor their small, leaky lugger near the barren outcroppings of a reef that rise a few feet above the waterline here, returning to their island base just before dawn.

Vakarla used *hallucinatory terrain* and a *scroll of mirage arcana* to disguise the reef and the wreckers' boat as an ordinary stretch of ocean, hoping to lure unsuspecting victims onto the uncharted reef. Vakarla and her wrecker cutthroats hide in the extra-dimensional space provided by a *rope trick* spell, while the rest of her crew hides belowdecks in their illusion-cloaked ship. A lookout keeps watch through the *rope trick*'s window and alerts the rest of the crew once a ship is sighted.

Ship Combat: As the PCs' ship approaches the concealed reef, they are spotted by the wreckers' lookout. As it's unlikely that the PCs are heading straight for the reef, Vakarla casts *invisibility* on herself and leaves the *rope trick*. She then casts *major image* to create a detailed illusion of a small merchant sailing ship with its sails lowered and flying a Rahadoumi flag. The figment even has a nameplate that reads *Shining Star*. When the PCs get closer, Vakarla concentrates on the illusion, making the *Shining Star* appear to frantically try to raise sails and get underway, as if fleeing the PCs' ship. The illusory ship floats safely through the glamor-cloaked reef, luring the PCs' ship into the wreckers' trap.

If the PCs pursue the *Shining Star*, they can make opposed Profession (sailor) checks against Vakarla's check. If successful, a character notices discrepancies in how the ship sits in the water and how its crew sails it, allowing that character to make a DC 18 Will save to disbelieve the illusion. If the PCs attack the *Shining Star* with missile weapons or siege engines, Vakarla causes the illusion to react appropriately, but the interaction allows that PCs another chance to disbelieve the illusion.

Likewise, when the PCs' ship enters the *hallucinatory terrain* (usually the same round it strikes the reef), those on deck

TEMPEST RISING

can make a DC 20 Profession (sailor) or Survival check to notice subtle irregularities in the ocean, such as the height and frequency of waves, or the coloring of the nearby sea. Those who succeed at the check can make a DC 19 Will save to see through the *hallucinatory terrain*. Characters directly interacting with the terrain, such as those swimming in the ocean, can also attempt to disbelieve the illusion.

If the pilot of the PC's ship successfully disbelieves the *hallucinatory terrain*, she can attempt a last-ditch DC 20 sailing check to heave to and lessen the impact of the collision. If the ship moves 60 feet or more, it strikes the reef, taking normal ramming damage (usually 8d8 point of damage for a sailing ship), and runs aground, reducing its speed to 0. If the pilot's sailing check was successful, the damage is halved (though the ship still runs aground). The PCs each take 4d6 points of damage from being thrown about by the sudden grinding halt and must make DC 20 Reflex saves or be knocked prone.

The PCs can avoid the wreckers if they ignore the illusory ship or try to steer clear of it. However, if the PCs see through Vakarla's ruse, or start to follow the *Shining Star* then suddenly break off, she knows she can't let them get away to report her presence in the area. Vakarla flies to the PCs' ship and casts a *wall of force* from a scroll directly ahead of the ship, causing it to plow straight into the wall, dealing normal ramming damage as above and halting the ship; those aboard take damage and must make Reflex saves as previously noted. Meanwhile, Vakarla's crew swims out and clamber aboard to fight the PCs and their crew.

If necessary, you can use the statistics for a keelboat (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 24) for Vakarla's lugger, though the PCs are unlikely to engage the vessel in ship-to-ship combat.

Creatures: When it seems inevitable the PCs' ship will strike the reef, Vakarla re-enters the *rope trick* to cast her preparatory spells, including *invisibility sphere*. She and her four wrecker cutthroats exit the *rope trick* together as the rest of her crew climbs from their hiding places aboard their vessel, and rush to the site of the PCs' grounded ship, where Vakarla uses her *rope of climbing* to let her crew quickly swarm onto the deck of the ship.

VAKARLA

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female half-orc illusionist 9

CE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 shield)

hp 84 (9d6+50)

Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +9

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee mwk falchion +5 (2d4/18–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +7 (1d8/19–20)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +13)

At will—*invisibility field* (9 rounds/day)

7/day—*blinding ray*

Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +13)

5th—*mirage arcana* (DC 20), *overland flight*

4th—*fear* (DC 18), *hallucinatory terrain* (DC 19), *phantasmal killer* (DC 19), *wall of fire*

3rd—*haste*, *invisibility sphere*, *major image* (DC 18), *stinking cloud* (DC 17), *vampiric touch*



Vakarla



2nd—*false life*, *fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *rope trick*, *scorching ray*

1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *color spray* (DC 16), *grease*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15)

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *open/close*

Opposition Schools Abjuration, Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat Vakarla casts *false life*, *mage armor*, and *overland flight* every day. When the PCs' ship is about to crash into the reef, she casts *mirror image* and *shield* from her wand.

During Combat Vakarla casts *fog cloud* over the PCs' ship, then casts *haste* on herself and her cutthroats just before her crew board the PCs' ship. She uses her flight to keep out of melee combat and starts by casting *fear* on a large group of foes, then casts her attack spells against those resisting her crew, using her invisibility field to stay invisible. She saves *phantasmal killer* for use against the ship's captain. Vakarla's monkey familiar, Mister Swabb, clings to her shoulder flinging droppings and screeching at anyone who attacks her.

Morale Vakarla expects a quick and easy victory, so if her cutthroats are slain, or if she is reduced to fewer than 25 hit points, she flees combat, flying back to her island base (see Development below).

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Alertness^B, Brew Potion, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion), Toughness

Skills Fly +20, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Perception +10, Profession (sailor) +9, Sense Motive +1, Spellcraft +16, Swim +4

Languages Common, Giant, Goblin, Orc, Osiriani, Polyglot
SQ arcane bond (monkey named Mister Swabb), extended illusions +4 rounds, orc blood, weapon familiarity

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of invisibility*, *scroll of knock*, *scroll of wall of force*, *scroll of water breathing*, *wand of shield* (20 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork falchion, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +2, *rope of climbing*, bicorn hat, periscope, watertight engraved bronze scroll case (worth 75 gp), spell component pouch, spyglass

WRECKER CUTTHROATS (4)**CR 2****XP 600 each**

Half-orc barbarian (sea reaver) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 29)

CE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, -2 rage)

hp 40 each (3d12+15)

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee falchion +8 (2d4+7/18-20)

Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks rage (10 rounds/day), rage powers (no escape)

TACTICS

During Combat The wrecker cutthroats wait for Vakarla to cast *haste* on them, then rage and leap in among the ship's crew to prevent an organized defense. They gang up on opponents, flanking when possible and slaying everyone aboard, even those who surrender.

Morale The bloodthirsty cutthroats fight to the death.

Base Statistics When not raging, a wrecker cutthroat's statistics are **AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; **hp** 34; **Fort** +5, **Will** +2; **Melee** falchion +6 (2d4+4/18-20); **Str** 17, **Con** 14; **CMB** +6; **Skills** Climb +7, Swim +7.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 17

Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +5 (+6 in aquatic terrain), Climb +9 (+10 in aquatic terrain), Intimidate +6, Perception +6, Survival +6 (+7 in aquatic terrain), Swim +10

SQ eyes of the storm*, marine terror*, orc blood, savage sailor*, weapon familiarity

Gear studded leather, falchion, light crossbow with 10 bolts, 15 gp

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

Development: If the PCs see through the illusions cloaking the area, they can see the shattered remains of two sunken ships in the shallows. Both wrecks are recent, sunk within the last couple of months. One of them is the lost *Lady's Sting*. Both ships have been thoroughly broken up and picked clean.

If the PCs' ship strikes the reef, its pilot must succeed at a DC 20 Profession (sailor) check to free the ship. If the PCs capture Vakarla or any of her crew and question them, they can learn the location of the wreckers' base, concealed on a small rocky island several miles away. Hidden from the shoreline, the base is a ramshackle series of thatched huts surrounded by a flimsy wooden palisade. If Vakarla fled combat, she flies back here, loads supplies and her sea chest (see Treasure below) into a longboat, and flees the Shackles.

Treasure: The wreckers' base contains cargo and supplies worth 6 points of plunder, primarily consisting of leather, spices, timber, and various ships' equipment. The base also contains three longboats and a crude alchemist's laboratory in one hut.

Vakarla's sea chest lies buried under a thin layer of sand beneath her bunk, and can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check (the chest is missing if Vakarla

fled through here). The unlocked trunk holds a mithral dagger set with aquamarine gemstones worth 900 gp, a *Shackles ensign* (see page 58), 320 gp in mixed coins, and Vakarla's spellbook. The spellbook contains all of Vakarla's prepared spells, all cantrips, *knock*, *wall of force*, and *water breathing*, plus additional spells of your choice from 1st to 5th level, with a focus on illusion spells.

A DC 25 Perception check discovers a golden statue of a wasp wrapped in oilcloth and stuffed in an empty barrel—the Golden Vespal, stolen from the *Lady's Sting*. The statue could be worth up to 5,000 gp to the right buyer, but the priests of Calistria at the House of Stolen Kisses would likely seek to gain their revenge on the PCs for not returning the sacred relic.

THE BRINE BANSHEE

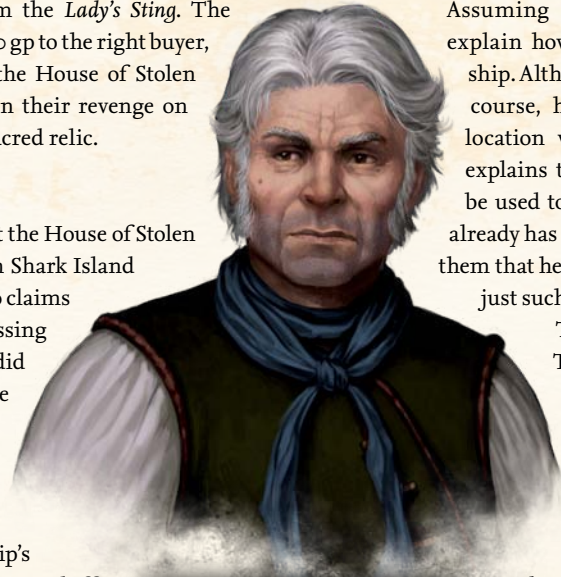
With the information gleaned at the House of Stolen Kisses, the PCs travel to Ollo on Shark Island in search of Haneilius Fitch, who claims to know something of the missing ship *Brine Banshee*. If the PCs did not learn about Fitch from the priests of Calistria, they can still encounter Haneilius Fitch in any port in the Shackles. In this case, Fitch approaches them about serving as ship's surgeon aboard their vessel, using Bluff to convey a secret message indicating that he has information about the *Brine Banshee*.

The port of Ollo is a foul and wretched place, and its miserable residents are sullenly close-mouthed. They've as much to fear from their bestial pirate lord Avimar Sorrinash as from sahuagin raids, and questions from outsiders are often met with anxious and suspicious silence. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check made to gather information is necessary to learn the address of Haneilius Fitch's surgical offices.

Haneilius Fitch (LN male old human expert 6) is a gray haired gentleman with a Taldan accent, who introduces himself as a retired ship's physician. If the PCs ask him about the *Brine Banshee*, Fitch claims to know nothing about the ship, but a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that the old man is not telling the truth. Fitch's initial attitude is indifferent, but if the PCs make him friendly with successful a DC 16 Diplomacy check, or succeed at a DC 20 Bluff check to imply that they can help him find the missing ship, Fitch reveals what he knows. He holds up a glass tube containing a human leg bone suspended in preservative solution.

"This tibia previously belonged to Vargus Brack, one of my old shipmates. Vargus was grateful to be rid of it—he'd have died of gangrene if I hadn't amputated his leg. It's a good

thing I kept it as a specimen, since he was an officer aboard the *Brine Banshee* when she last sailed. Vargus and I were good friends—he came to visit me the last time the *Brine Banshee* was in Ollo, as he always did when he was in port. He mentioned in passing the course the *Brine Banshee* would be taking, and said he wouldn't be back for some time. The *Brine Banshee* had an abundance of riches aboard her, and together I believe we can salvage them. Are you interested?"



Haneilius Fitch

Assuming the PCs agree, Fitch goes on to explain how they can track down the missing ship. Although Fitch knows the *Brine Banshee*'s course, he needs magic to find the exact location where the ship went down. Fitch explains that there's a magical ring that can be used to find a corpse, provided the wearer already has a piece of the body. He goes on to tell them that he knows of a pirate captain who wears just such a ring, called the *ring of the iron skull*.

This is where the PCs come in. They have a ship of their own, and are strong enough to take the *ring of the iron skull* from its current owner. Fitch has Vargus's leg bone and knows the route the *Brine Banshee* took. Fitch tries to barter a deal with the PCs:

he wants an equal share of the *Brine Banshee*'s treasure. He doesn't care about magic items; he just wants enough money

to live the rest of his life in modest comfort. In exchange, he'll tell them who has the ring and guide them along the *Brine Banshee*'s course until they find the ship.

Once he reaches an agreement with the PCs, Fitch tells them that the *ring of the iron skull* is in the possession of a pirate named "Milksop" Morton, who regularly sails his sloop *Dryad's Grave* between the Smoker and Shark Island. Fortunately for the PCs, the *Dryad's Grave* is due in Ollo within the next week. If they can accost the ship before it makes port, the PCs can acquire the *ring of the iron skull* and find the *Brine Banshee*.

THE DRYAD'S GRAVE (CR 10)

Assuming the PCs decide to lie in wait for the *Dryad's Grave*, they encounter the pirate sloop a day's sail southeast of Ollo. The *Dryad's Grave*'s greedy captain, Milksop Morton, is an independent, unaligned pirate who does not hold a Shackles letter of marque. He seeks to make a name for himself and earn quick profits by extorting the hard-won plunder of other independent pirates not sworn to powerful pirate lords. Captain Morton is a conjurer who has used ancient rituals powered by his own blood to magically animate several weapons on his ship.



The *Dryad's Grave's* appears on the horizon off the PCs' port bow around midday. The *Dryad's Grave* spots the PCs' ship at the same time and closes in, signaling that it wishes to parley. Not recognizing the PCs' ship, Captain Morton assumes that the PCs and their ship will be easy pickings. If the PCs don't immediately attack, Morton waits until the two ships are within hailing range (100 feet), to yell his introductions and ask what destination the PCs are bound for. He also questions the PCs about their allegiances to the Free Captains and whose fleet they serve. Regardless of the PCs' answers to his questions, Morton assumes they are bluffing, and demands a toll (equivalent to at least 5 points of plunder) for sailing through "his" territory. If the PCs refuse, the *Dryad's Grave* attacks. If they capitulate, Morton sails off, once the PCs transfer the booty to his ship by ship's boat.

Ship Combat: Assuming the PCs resist, the *Dryad's Grave* attempts to close and grapple the PCs' ship for boarding as soon as it gets within 50 feet of the PCs' ship. The *Dryad's Grave's* figurehead is carved in the likeness of a bare-chested, goat-horned satyr with muscular arms thrust forward as if diving into the ocean, its mouth open in a silent scream of anger and pain. As the two ships close, the figurehead, called the Screaming Satyr, comes to life—it is actually a magical construct called a ship sentinel (see Creatures below). The Screaming Satyr picks up a ballista from the ship's deck and fires a bolt attached to a long chain into the hull of the PCs' ship (the attack is made with a –4 penalty because of the weight of the chain). The figurehead then proceeds to reel in the PCs' ship to grapple and board (see below).

At the same time, Morton's crew fires its springal and catapults at the PCs' ship. The springal crew targets the helm of the PCs' ship, hoping to hit the PCs and other officers. The catapults are loaded with living grapnels, animated constructs that scuttle around like spiders (see Creatures below). The catapult crews aim at the center of the PCs' deck, maximizing the grapnels' chance of landing on the deck even if they miss their targeted square. The grapnels are connected to the *Dryad's Grave* by long chains. When the grapnels land on the PCs' ship, the belowdecks crew of the *Dryad's Grave* turns large capstans to haul on the chains, drawing the two ships together. Once all three grapnels have been fired, Morton orders the catapults to stop firing, as he wants the PCs' ship intact as a prize.

Morton attempts to grapple the PCs' ship as soon as possible. Provided they successfully hit the PCs' ship, the Screaming Satyr and the living grapnels each grant a cumulative +2 bonus on Morton's combat maneuver check to grapple the PCs' ship (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 14).

If the PCs attempt to escape combat, Morton casts *summon monster III* to conjure small air elementals to tangle their rigging and harass sailors.

DRYAD'S GRAVE

CR 7

Shackles sloop (sailing ship) (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 25)

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 2; **Hardness** 5

hp 1,620 (sails 240)

Save +12

OFFENSE

Ranged arrow springal +10 (3d8/x3), 2 mwk light catapults +11 (4d6)

CMB +20; **CMD** 30

Ramming Damage 8d8

CREW

Captain "Milksop" Morton (NE male human conjurer 8;

Profession [sailor] +12)

3 living grapnels (N animated objects)

Screaming Satyr (N ship sentinel)

Xicorax (N air mephit familiar)

27 sailors (minimum 20)

EQUIPMENT

Gear arrow springal with 10 uses of ammunition (aft), 2 masterwork light catapults with 20 stones (fore), magically treated sails, 30 squares of sails (1 mast)

Cargo 2 points of plunder (ships' arsenal and stores, various personal possessions)

Creatures: Once the two ships are grappled, the Screaming Satyr detaches itself from the *Dryad's Grave* to board the PCs' ship, striking enemies with its two slam attacks. The Screaming Satyr only fires its ballista again if Morton orders it to do so. The Screaming Satyr fights until destroyed.

The living grapnels grab onto masts or railings on the PCs' ship, which gives them the grappled condition. They strike back violently against attempts to pry them off, attempting to constrict attackers with their chains. They only let go if someone severs the chains connecting them to the *Dryad's Grave* (hardness 10, hp 5, Break DC 26), at which point they attack any creature within reach. The grapnels fight until destroyed, but they also cease functioning if the Screaming Satyr is destroyed.

Milksop Morton is a broad-framed man with a large combed-over bald spot and a craggy face. His familiar Xicorax, a foul-mouthed air mephit, flies around his master's head shouting curses.

SCREAMING SATYR

CR 7

XP 3,200

Ballista marksman (variant ship sentinel; see page 89)

hp 68

LIVING GRAPNELS (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)

TEMPEST RISING

N Medium construct

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception –5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 natural)

hp 36 each (3d10+20)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** –4

Defensive Abilities hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +5 (1d6+3 plus grab)

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+3)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5 (+9 grapple); **CMD** 15

SQ construction points (constrict, grab, metal)

“MILKSOP” MORTON

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human conjurer 8

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 54 (8d6+24)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk club +4 (1d6–1)

Arcane School Spell-Like

Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)

At will—dimensional steps (240 feet/day)

7/day—acid dart (1d6+4 acid)

Conjurer Spells Prepared

(CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*confusion* (DC 18), *resilient sphere* (DC 18), *solid fog*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*fireball* (DC 17), *slow* (DC 17), *stinking cloud* (DC 18), *summon monster III*, *tiny hut*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *scorching ray* (2), *summon monster II*

1st—*grease* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *shield*, *summon monster I*

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *flare* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *message*

Opposition Schools Divination, Illusion

TACTICS

Before Combat Morton casts *mage armor* daily, and casts *shield* before confronting the PCs.

During Combat Once combat begins, Morton casts *tiny hut* to provide one-way concealment around the helm of the

Dryad's Grave. As his ship closes in, Morton casts *solid fog* to slow the PCs' ship, followed by *confusion*, *fireball*, or *stinking cloud* on large groups of enemies. When close enough, Morton casts *resilient sphere* to neutralize enemy spellcasters, then summons groups of fire elementals or a fiendish crocodile aboard the PC's ship. Once the two ships are grappled, Morton uses his dimensional steps ability to board the PCs' ship with his familiar Xicorax.

Morale If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, or if it's clear that the PCs have the upper hand, Morton calls for parley and begs for mercy. He is loath to lose his ship, but he freely offers the *ring of the iron skull* in exchange for freedom for himself and the *Dryad's Grave*. If given no other choice, he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16



Screaming Satyr

Feats Alertness^B, Augment Summoning, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Familiar, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration)

Skills Appraise +11, Craft (ships) +15, Fly +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +3, Profession (sailor) +12, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +15, Swim +5

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran

SQ arcane bond (air mephit familiar named Xicorax), summoner's charm (4 rounds)

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potions of invisibility*, *scrolls of dispel magic* (2), *scroll of fly*; **Other Gear** masterwork club, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of the iron skull* (see page 58), *ring of protection* +1, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, all 0-level spells, plus four additional spells of each level from 1st to 4th)

XICORAX

CR —

Air mephit familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 202)

N Small outsider (air)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, +1 size)

hp 27 (8 HD); fast healing 2 (gusty and windy areas only)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **DR** 5/magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +6 (1d3+1)

Special Attacks breath weapon (15-ft. cone, 1d8 slashing damage, DC 13 Reflex half, usable every 4 rounds), deliver touch spells

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)

1/hour—*blur*

1/day—*gust of wind* (DC 14), *summon* (level 2, 1 air mephit 25%)

TACTICS

During Combat Xicorax casts *blur* and attempts to summon another air mephit. He stays near Morton, using his breath weapon and claws against any attackers. The open air and decks of both the *Dryad's Grave* and the PCs' ship counts as gusty areas for the purposes of Xicorax's fast healing.

Morale Xicorax flees back to the *Dryad's Grave* if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points. If Morton is slain, Xicorax flies into the sky, never to return.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Bluff +8, Fly +23, Perception +6, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Auran

SQ empathic link, share spells, speak with master

LAST KNOWN COURSE

Once the PCs have acquired the *ring of the iron skull*, Haneilius Fitch tells them that the *Brine Banshee* began her last voyage in Port Peril, then headed to Quent for resupply and shore leave. From Quent she sailed to Ollo, stopping briefly to sell cargo before journeying northwest around Shark Island's coastline. Fitch suggests the PCs begin their voyage in Ollo as well to follow the *Brine Banshee's* last course. Once their ship clears the strait between Shark Island and Raptor Island, however, Fitch announces to the PCs that the *Brine Banshee's* last course wasn't northwest as many in Ollo believed, but north-northeast—the captain intended to skim the fringes of the Eye of Abendego to raid merchant ships in the waters near Botosani. The *Brine Banshee's* course followed a line from the two islands north of Shark Island to the Eye's edge, cutting between the Eye and the eastern coast of Mediogalti Island and into Rahadoumi waters.

The *ring of the iron skull* has a limited range, but provided the PCs can hold their ship on a true course, it should be possible to find the *Brine Banshee*. The PCs must succeed at a DC 18 Profession (sailor) or Survival check to follow the *Brine Banshee's* course. Assuming the PCs maintain an accurate course, the *ring of the iron skull* indicates the presence of Vargus Brack's corpse only a few hours after the two islands drop out of sight below the southern horizon.

WRECK OF THE BRINE BANSHEE

Once the PCs reach the location where the *Brine Banshee* went down, they can search for the sunken wreck. The ocean is just over 60 feet deep here. Stony outcrops rise out of the sandy sea floor, and small sea plants grow in scattered clusters. Locating the *Brine Banshee* is relatively easy. The shipwreck lies on its side on the ocean floor. Only half the ship is visible, however; the *Brine Banshee's* bow section rests next to a rift in the ocean floor. Insightful PCs can notice the wreck's angle, with its prow pointed away from the fissure, suggesting that the ship split in two when she sank, and the vessel's stern section dropped into the murky depths of the underwater trench. The *ring of the iron skull* points to the rift as the location of Vargus's corpse.

BLOOD IN THE WATER (CR 8)

Creatures: The region around the wreck is the hunting territory of a vicious merfolk druid named Ormandar, a heavily muscled, dark-skinned merman with disturbingly sharklike teeth. Venerating the deadly killing instincts of sharks, Ormandar and his animal companion Galieus, a sleekly powerful hammerhead shark, lead a school of remorseless bull sharks and seek out exotic quarry to satisfy their degenerate bloodlust. As the PCs approach the wreck

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of the *Brine Banshee*, the sharks pick up their scent and alert Ormandar. He swiftly prepares for the hunt, and he and his shark pack home in on the PCs' position and attack.

ORMANDAR

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male merfolk druid (shark shaman) 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 204, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 40)

NE Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 79 (8d8+40)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

Defensive Abilities resist nature's lure

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee +2 *trident* +13/+8 (1d8+7), bite +8 (1d6+4)

Ranged +2 *trident* +10 (1d8+7)

Special Attacks totem transformation* (move action, 8 minutes/day), totemic summons*, wild shape as 6th-level druid 3/day (shark form as 10th-level druid)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +9)

At will—*Speak with animals* (fish only)

Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +10)

4th—*dispel magic* (2)

3rd—*dominate animal* (DC 15), *greater magic fang* (2)

2nd—*barkskin*, *bull's strength* (2), *chill metal* (DC 14)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 13), *cure light wounds* (2), *entangle* (2, DC 13)

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*

TACTICS

Before Combat Ormandar casts *greater magic fang* on himself and his shark companion Galieus every day and uses his totem transformation ability to give himself a shark's bite attack. When he becomes aware of intruders near the wreck, Ormandar casts *barkskin* and *bull's strength* on himself and *bull's strength* on Galieus.

During Combat Ormandar orders Galieus and the bull sharks to attack while he stays back and casts *dispel magic* on air-breathers that are using magic to breathe underwater, forcing those opponents to hold their breath or dash to the surface for air. If Galieus or the two bull sharks are slain, Ormandar wildshapes into a Large great white shark and rushes into melee.

Morale Once he tastes blood, Ormandar loses control and fights to the death in a gory frenzy.

Base Statistics Without his spells, Ormandar's statistics are

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; **Melee** +2 *trident* +11/+6

(1d8+5), bite +4 (1d6+1); **Ranged** +2 *trident* +10 (1d8+5);

Str 16; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21; **Skills** Swim +20.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23 (can't be tripped)

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (trident), Natural Spell, Toughness

Skills Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +13, Survival +10, Swim +22

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ amphibious, nature bond (shark animal companion named Galieus), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +9, (+13 with fish), woodland stride

Gear +2 *trident*, *bracers of armor* +2

* See *Ultimate Magic*.



GALIEUS CR —

XP 135

Shark animal companion

N Medium animal (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 59 (7d8+28)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3 (+7 vs. enchantment)

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +14 (1d8+11)

TACTICS

Base Statistics Without Ormandar's spells, Galieus's statistics are **Melee** bite +10 (1d8+6); **Str** 19; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21; **Skills** Swim +16.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23

Feats Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +7, Swim +18

SQ link, share spells

BULL SHARKS (2) CR 3

XP 800 each

Advanced shark (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 247, 294)

hp 30 each

Treasure: Ormandar's lair lies in a small, rocky grotto north of the wreck. The grotto is filled with a large number of bones and other remains, mostly fish and marine animals, but also the carcasses of over a dozen humanoids. Mixed in with these bones are a masterwork longspear carved from whalebone and a swordfish jaw, crafted coral jewelry and ornaments worth 120 gp, polished decorative shells worth 75 gp, and a disintegrating pouch containing 95 gp in strange hexagonal coins.

THE BRINE BANSHEE'S BOW

The bow of the *Brine Banshee* lies on its side, resting at a slight angle in the sand covering the seafloor. There's plenty of debris and wreckage in the bow, but no corpses—Ormandar and other ocean denizens have disposed of the remains of any sailors not consumed when the *Brine Banshee* went down. The following locations compose the bow section of the *Brine Banshee*.

A1. Forecastle: Many of the ship's railings are smashed, hinting at the violence of the *Brine Banshee*'s sinking. A rusting anchor chain hangs from a battered capstan, trailing down to the ship's anchor buried in the sand

nearby. The foremast is snapped off 25 feet above the deck.

A2. Main Deck: A jumble of tangled rigging and shattered beams from the foremast rests against the steps leading up to the forecabin, concealing and blocking the entryway into the port cabin. The main cargo hatch is still fastened shut, but the PCs can simply swim around through the tremendous opening where the *Brine Banshee* split in two. The mainmast is shorn away just above the deck, and no sign of it remains.

A3. Stairwell: This spiral stairway twists counterclockwise down from the main deck (area A2) to the gun deck (area A6).

A4. Starboard Cabin: Unsecured furnishings and equipment lie strewn against what was the portside wall and is now the "floor" of this cabin, formerly the quarters of the first mate and navigator. A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a secret door in the "floor" that opens into the port cabin (area A5). The swollen timbers of the good wooden door can be pried open with a successful DC 16 Strength check. Almost everything of value has been destroyed by seawater, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds an expertly crafted sextant inlaid with silver (worth 1,000 gp) in a box inside the top drawer of a locker and an *oil of slipstream* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 244) in a battered case lying among other debris.

A5. Port Cabin: Rigging and much of the fallen foresail block the doorway into this cabin. It takes 5 man-hours of work to clear this wreckage sufficiently to gain access to the door. The cabin's porthole lies buried under several feet of sand. This was the quartermaster's berth; the smashed remains of writing equipment are scattered along the curving hull at the bottom of this area. Other remnants of furniture lie clustered near the porthole. The secret door in the "ceiling" opens into the starboard cabin (area A4) and may be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check. Hidden under the rotten fragments of a mattress is a large iron-banded sea chest. The chest has two good locks, further warded with an *arcane lock*, on opposite sides that must be opened simultaneously (hardness 5, hp 30, Break DC 33, Disable Device DC 40). Inside is the undistributed portion of the ship's payroll: 156 pp, 1,486 gp, 3,172 sp, and 781 cp.

A6. Gun Deck: This deck held a formidable array of ballistae behind rows of external hatches. What's left of these siege engines rests at the base of this area amid piles of moldering rope and rusting chain. At the forward end of this deck, a spiral stairway exits out to the main deck and two sets of steps lead into the bow cargo hold (area A8).

A7. Main Cargo Hold: This area holds piles of rubble made up of decaying sailcloth, shattered water casks, and other broken ship supplies.

A8. Bow Cargo Hold: This area is detailed below.

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A8. BOW CARGO HOLD (CR 7)

Rows of shelves follow the hull's curving slope in this large storage area, but the crates they once held now lie in a large, jumbled heap at the bottom of the hold. Rotting remnants of food and other ship's stores float near the top of the chamber, and tiny fish dart through the water, feeding on the decay.

Creature: A giant box jellyfish has chosen the sheltered waters of this hold as a spawning site. It hungrily stings intruders that enter its lair.

GIANT JELLYFISH CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 94 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 170)

Treasure: The seawater has ruined the ship's cargo of furs and cloth, but several small, sturdy metal drums containing fine oils have survived, and are worth a total of 2 points of plunder. In addition, a number of carefully padded packing cases holding sealed bottles of potent liquor have also survived intact, and are worth 1 point of plunder.

INTO THE RIFT

While the *Brine Banshee's* bow holds some treasure, it provides no clues as to the secret of the ship's speed and maneuverability. In addition, the *ring of the iron skull* indicates that Vargus's remains lie within the rift in the seafloor. The PCs must journey down into the rift, which plummets to a depth of 180 feet. The water temperature drops as they venture deeper, light from the surface far above fades away into darkness, and the weight of the water above crushes against the PCs' bodies—the lightless depths are a hostile and alien environment. At the bottom of the chasm, the rift's walls narrow and slope inwards, forming a ravine of pitch-black freezing water. The floor drops away at the northwest end into a vast sinkhole that continues even deeper underwater.

At depths below 100 feet, the temperature and pressure of the water deal damage to unprotected characters. The pressure deals 1d6 points of damage per minute to creatures unused to the depth, and the water is very cold, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute to those without *endure elements* or some other magical protection from cold. *Freedom of movement*, or magic items such as a *pearl of the sirines* or *plate armor of the deep*



can help mitigate these effects. See page 445 of the *Core Rulebook* for more details on deep water dangers.

THE BRINE BANSHEE'S GRAVE (CR 8)

The stern of the *Brine Banshee* rests at the bottom of the underwater rift 180 feet down, a lost ship that will never sail the waves again.

Creature: A gruesome blackwater charda stalks this forbidding area. Normally a solitary inhabitant of the rift, the charda has recently fallen under the control of Uthiggmaru, the aboleth in area **B13**. The aboleth dominated the charda, compelling the creature to guard the wreck and keep anything from disturbing the aboleth in its mysterious activities. While the blackwater charda is already twice the size of normal chardas, Uthiggmaru cast *veil* on the charda to make it seem even larger to further dissuade interlopers. The charda now appears almost 16 feet tall. Even if the PCs don't have light, the charda's superior darkvision makes it highly likely to notice them before they see it. Once it detects the PCs, the charda immediately attacks, obeying its master's orders

and defending its territory. The water in the rift is cold enough for the charda to make use of its cold vigor ability.

BLACKWATER CHARDA

CR 8

XP 4,800

Giant charda (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 55, 293)

hp 103

TACTICS

During Combat The charda starts by charging a PC, bull rushing that character away from the others. The charda focuses on this opponent, but also uses its cone of black bile if able to catch most foes in it.

Morale While dominated, the charda fights to the death. If the enchantment is removed or suppressed, the charda keeps furiously attacking but retreats when reduced below 20 hit points.

THE BRINE BANSHEE'S STERN

The *Brine Banshee*'s stern rests upright at the bottom of the rift, wedged against a shelf of dark rock. All of the corpses remaining aboard the wreck are too decayed

for *Speak with Dead* spells. The stern section of the *Brine Banshee* comprises the following locations.

B1. Poop Deck: This area is described below.

B2. Quarterdeck: The mizzenmast juts up forlornly at the center of this deck. Its moldering sails hang lifelessly in the chill, dark water.

B3. Captain's Cabin: Double doors open into an opulently appointed master cabin. Three curtained windows at the stern hold shattered panes of glass. A large desk remains bolted to the floor; the other expensive fittings have been thrown about. The captain's charts and papers are illegible, despite being inside waterproofed pouches. In a side cupboard, crystal glassware and fine porcelain plates are completely smashed, but underneath rests a tray of Taldan silverware worth 450 gp as a set. Lying under the large bed is a teak *wand of gust of wind* with 6 charges left.

B4. Main Deck: The main deck has been swept clean and the railing is smashed in several places. Only broken stays and snapped ropes remain to indicate that two longboats were stored next to the steps to the quarterdeck.

B5. Workroom and Ship's Stores: Tools, casks of pitch, workbenches, and spare ship's supplies clutter this small and messy work area.

B6. Larder: Stores of salted rations, barrels of fruit, and other provisions fester in this pantry.

B7. Galley: The good wooden door to this compartment is wedged shut by cooking gear and garbage (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 16). Inside is a galley with a stove and shelves of pots and pans. A thick layer of oil congeals near the ceiling. The putrid corpse of the cook lies facedown here, his legs trapped under a heavy bench.

B8. Crew Quarters: A crowd of suspended hammocks obscures vision in these quarters, along with overturned chairs and scattered clothing. A successful DC 15 Perception check and a thorough search turns up 77 gp in assorted coins and other personal items, as well as a board game called *Wyvern's Race* with pieces finely crafted from citrine and bloodstone (worth 175 gp for the set).

B9. Gun Deck: This area is detailed below.

B10. Armory: The good wooden door to this section of the ship is locked with a corroded good lock (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18, Disable Device DC 27). Inside are stores of ammunition and weapons. Most of the wooden weapons here are sodden and warped, and only six ballista bolts are undamaged. These are +1 *distance adamantine light ballista bolts*. There are also spare weapons—cutlasses, handaxes, and daggers—for the crew, but all are corroded by seawater.

B11. Officers' Quarters: This cabin was the private quarters for three of the ship's officers. Sea chests and wooden furniture lie scattered about. The putrefying mortal remains of Vargus Brack (still recognizable due because of his peg leg) rest on the floor. Despite the

THE BRINE BANSHEE MYSTERY

The PCs are unlikely to discover how the *Brine Banshee* was lost from a simple search of the wreck. However, curious PCs may decide to make a detailed examination or use divination magic. The truth is a cantankerous dragon turtle named Hirgenzosc smashed the *Brine Banshee* apart during a fierce squall and devoured the surviving crew. The PCs will encounter Hirgenzosc themselves during the Free Captains' Regatta (see Part Three).

corpse's advanced state of decomposition, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Heal check notices he sustained extensive scalding burns around the time of death. Vargus was struck by the dragon turtle's breath weapon and almost passed out from pain, but managed to stagger belowdecks to his quarters where one of his fellow officers kept a spare *potion of cure moderate wounds*. Vargus lost his balance as the ship lurched wildly, striking his head and falling unconscious just as the *Brine Banshee* started to sink. The potion, still unused, lies on the floor, and the sea chests contain stashes of coins worth 168 gp in total.

B12. Passenger's Cabin: An upturned sea trunk lies in the corner of this sparsely furnished passenger's cabin. The trunk contains ten female noble's outfits and other feminine garments, but all are severely water damaged. At the bottom is a jewelry case holding necklaces and other jewelry worth 700 gp.

B13. Main Cargo Hold: This area is detailed below.

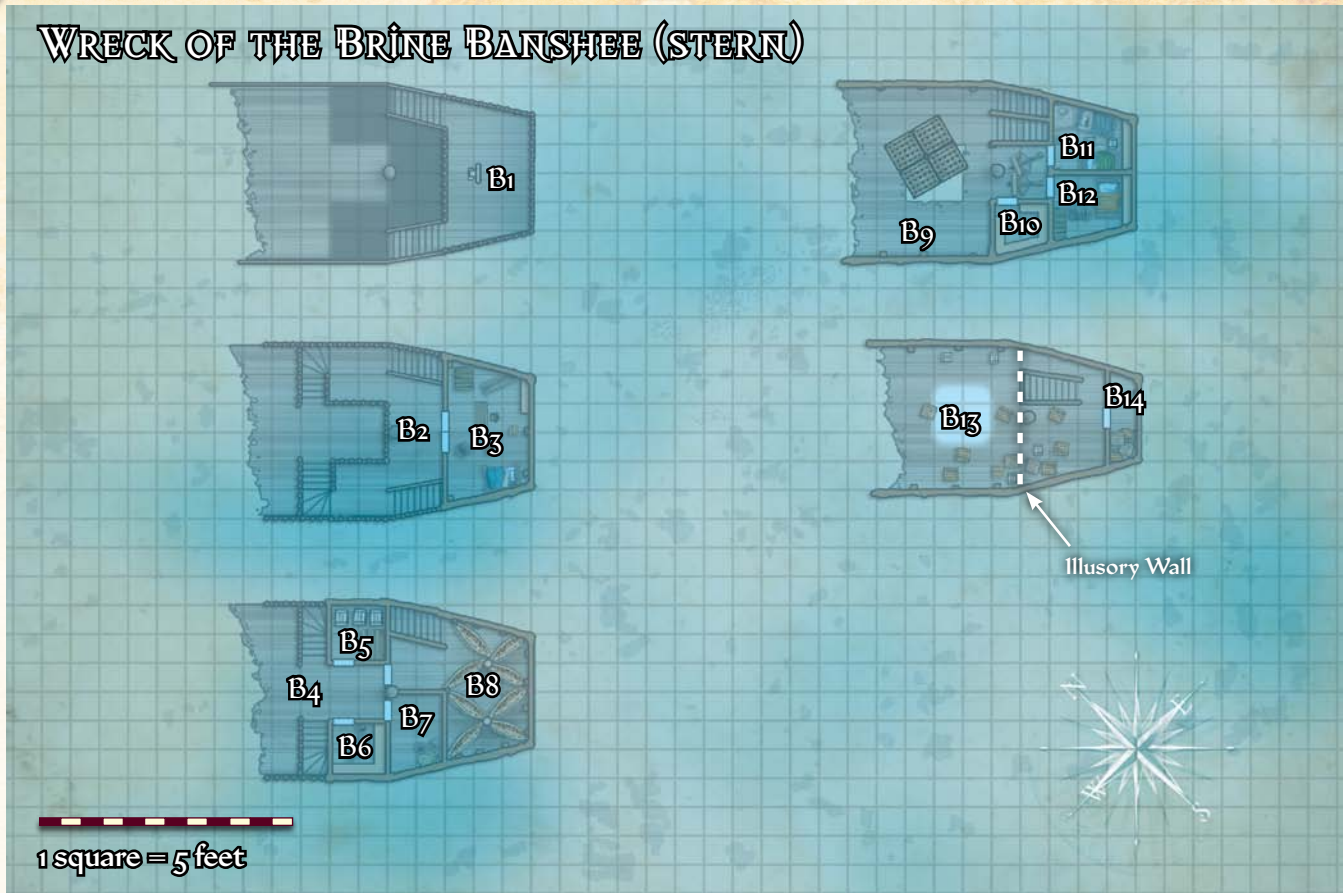
B14. Brig: The solid door to this cramped space is outfitted with a metal grille, hinting at the chamber's function as a brig for securing prisoners or punishing crew members. The damage to the ship's stern has snapped the door off its hinges, allowing entry, though a thick chain and large corroded padlock (Disable Device DC 32) still secure the other edge of the door. Stacked in the brig are plain wooden crates bound with iron and stamped with a merchant house seal. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) identifies the seal as that of the DeepTreasure Mining Company in Sargava. The crates are nailed shut (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 23) and contain gold and silver ingots worth 12 points of plunder.

B1. POOP DECK

The ship's helm still stands atop this deck, a moldering corpse lashed to the wheel.

The *Brine Banshee's* captain, Xiribal Jalhazar, lashed himself to the ship's wheel as the ship went down, and

WRECK OF THE BRINE BANSHEE (STERN)



his decomposing corpse still stands watch at the helm. Captain Jalhazar's spirit is currently at peace, and untying his body from the wheel or removing his earthly possessions doesn't disturb him. If his remains are treated disrespectfully or his corpse is removed from his ship, however, he curses those who do so from beyond the grave.

JALHAZAR'S CURSE

Type curse; **Save** Will DC 18 negates

Effect target takes a -4 penalty on all saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks while onboard any ship; **Cure** returning Jalhazar's body to the *Brine Banshee's* helm or captain's cabin and reciting Besmaran funeral prayers over the corpse automatically lifts the curse

Treasure: The seawater has ruined much of Captain Jalhazar's gear, but a corroded masterwork cold iron rapier bejeweled with precious stones (worth 450 gp) still hangs sheathed at his side, he still wears an amber ring of *force shield* on a bony finger, and a platinum-plated compass (worth 250 gp) hangs around his neck. The most valuable treasure here, however, is the ship's wheel. *Jalhazar's wheel* (see page 58) is the source of much of the *Brine Banshee's* reputation.

B9. GUN DECK (CR 6)

Bones and partial humanoid skeletons litter this deck. Unusual, pallid crustaceans cling to the ship's timbers near the gaping hole outside.

This deck once held rows of ballistae, several of which form a broken pile of debris at the aft end of the deck, partially blocking the doors there. The cargo hatch down to the hold (area B13) is askew. The pale crustaceans infesting the deck are harmless.

Creature: A monstrous deepwater scavenger has consumed many of the corpses and provisions in the ship and now lairs on this deck. The anemone lurks just forward of the mizzenmast, having attached itself to the ceiling. It hungrily attacks anything it senses close by.

DARKFOREST ANEMONE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Variant giant sea anemone (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 238)

N Huge vermin (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size)



hp 76 (9d8+36)

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +3

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **Immune** gaze attacks, mind-affecting effects, poison, vision-based effects

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.

Melee tentacles +9 (2d8+7 plus grab and poison)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (2d8+7), poison, swallow whole (2d6+7 bludgeoning damage, AC 14, 7 hp)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 25 (can't be tripped)

Skills Stealth +2

SQ anchored, camouflage, sightless

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex) When at rest, a darkforest anemone looks like a bed of kelp or seaweed. As a result, a DC 20 Perception check is required to notice it before it attacks for the first time. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use either of those skills instead of Perception to notice the anemone.

Poison (Ex) Tentacles—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dex; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Treasure: Among the crew's bones are their inedible possessions: jewelry, coins, and other belongings worth a total of 327 gp.

B13. MAIN CARGO HOLD (CR 7)

Broken timber and smashed boxes litter the floor of this cargo hold. Clusters of barnacles and slimy marine growths infest the walls and other exposed surfaces.

Creature: An aboleth named Uthiggmaru has taken up residence in the *Brine Banshee's* cargo hold. Normally a denizen of the darkest depths of the ocean, Uthiggmaru is scouting upward, and has been carefully studying the wreck for its own inscrutable reasons. Currently the aboleth lurks in the aft section of the hold behind an *illusory wall*. When it notices the PCs at the wreck, it observes their behavior while using its illusions to toy with them. Uthiggmaru has already cast a *programmed image* that is triggered if any intelligent creatures enter the hold. The *programmed image* is a huge shark that swims out of the depths and into the gaping open end of the hold.

UTHIGGMARU

CR 7

XP 3,200

Aboleth (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 8)

hp 84

TACTICS

During Combat As the PCs deal with its *programmed image*, Uthiggmaru casts *dominate monster* on one of the PCs and telepathically orders that character to attack the “shark,” thus adding to its believability. Uthiggmaru then casts *persistent image* to create the illusion of a school of pale, eyeless fish glowing with luminescence, and combines this with *hypnotic pattern*, making the shimmering fish swirl about in mesmerizing formations. Once the true nature of the *programmed image* is discovered, Uthiggmaru casts *project image* to appear at the opposite end of the hold and dominate more foes. Only if the PCs pierce the illusory wall does Uthiggmaru explode into activity, lashing out with its tentacles at any attackers.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, Uthiggmaru attempts to flee, escaping down the sinkhole northwest of the wreck with any newly acquired dominated slaves.

Treasure: Most of the shop's cargo and provisions remaining here disintegrate when touched, but several timber boxes hold ivory worth 3 points of plunder.

NAGAS OF THE SLITHERING COAST

Following Slip's directions, the PCs sail to the shallow cove on the Slithering Coast where the water naga Sarlis resides. The lone tree atop the hillock is an old jukamis plant, its enormous leaves clearly visible from the shoreline. The PCs must venture into the marshy jungle near the mouth of the stream that empties into the cove to find the meeting pool, a deep rocky basin reached by climbing up a series of muddy rises.

Sarlis (N female water naga) shows herself a short time after the PCs reach the pool. She rises from the center of the pool, swaying vigorously and hissing. The naga is very agitated; her initial attitude is unfriendly, and in her current state, Sarlis bites anyone who comes within range. Characters who succeed at a DC 20 Sense Motive check get the impression that Sarlis's annoyance isn't entirely at them. The PCs must improve her attitude to at least friendly with a DC 29 Diplomacy check before she deigns to speak to speak with them. Speaking Aquan grants a +2 bonus on the check, and the PCs can gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus on the check if they ask Sarlis what's troubling her and offer to help. If the PCs attack Sarlis or make her hostile, she withdraws underwater, casts *invisibility*, and retreats upstream.

Once Sarlis is willing to speak, she haughtily questions the PCs about why they have intruded in her domain. If the PCs tell her they are looking for a spy, Sarlis narrows her eyes and hisses, and demands that the PCs complete a task for her before she'll consider helping them. Sarlis tells the PCs that one of her ex-partners, a naga named Munarei, has taken over one of her nearby lairs. If the PCs

want her help, they must drive off Munarei. She doesn't care if they hurt him, so long as they don't kill him. Sarlis won't admit this to herself, let alone to non-serpentine outsiders, but she still has feelings for Munarei.

SERPENT'S ENMITY (CR 7)

If the PCs agree to her terms, Sarlis guides them upriver to a large riverside mound situated where a tributary stream joins the main waterway. Sarlis retires back into the jungle while the PCs approach the earthen mound.

Creature: Sarlis's former mate Munarei resides in the mound. Unless the PCs are very stealthy, he quickly appears to confront intruders, swimming up from an underwater tunnel into the middle of the stream. Munarei dislikes and avoids humanoids. His starting attitude is hostile, and he orders the PCs to leave his territory or face his wrath. Unless the PCs can change his attitude to at least indifferent with a successful DC 34 Diplomacy check, he attacks. The PCs gain a +2 bonus on the check if they make appropriate offerings of food or gifts, but they take a –2 penalty if they mention Sarlis. If the PCs make Munarei at least indifferent, they can request him to leave Sarlis's lair without a fight with a DC 19 Diplomacy check. Munarei has no knowledge of spies or traitors in the Shackles.

MUNAREI CR 7
XP 3,200

Male water naga (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 199)

hp 76

TACTICS

Before Combat Munarei casts *shield* and *protection from energy* (fire) before a confrontation.

During Combat Munarei remains in the water and uses his damaging spells. He casts *mirror image* if wounded by missile fire or if attackers get within melee range. Against a serious threat, he casts *suggestion* against the PCs' apparent leader, ordering that character to "return to your ship and sail back where you came from."

Morale Munarei flees if reduced to 25 hit points or fewer, using *invisibility* if needed.

Development: If the PCs kill Munarei, Sarlis hisses in anger and swims away, refusing to help them. If the PCs drive Munarei away, Sarlis repays them by guiding them through the muddy wilderness to a small clearing over a mile away. In the clearing is a corpse wearing the rusting remnants of a chain shirt and a backpack. "This one came to ask questions," Sarlis says with a sneer, "unwise questions, which only ones like those you seek would ask, and which made plain the intentions of those who sent him. He also tried to barter for naga venom, but one of my neighbors gave him far more than he wanted. Do what you like with the body." The corpse, the remains of a Sargavan smuggler

named Varad (once in Zarskia Galembar's employ), has been dead over a year and little of his equipment has survived the humid jungle, other than 27 gp in a rotting pouch and 60 feet of moldy rope tied in an elaborate series of knots in his pack. Sarlis believes the knots are a code but doesn't know what it means. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history) or Linguistics check identifies the knots as Sargavan naval code used before the colony's independence from Cheliox. A PC can unravel the code with a DC 30 Linguistics check, or the PCs can take the rope to any major port in the Shackles and find a knowledgeable specialist who can translate the code. The code outlines Varad's orders: "Go to nagas, collect poison and information. Deliver both to the captain of the *Diamond Star*." A DC 10 Knowledge (history) check, DC 15 Knowledge (local) check, or DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information in any Shackles port reveals that the *Diamond Star* was captured by the Rahadoumi navy 6 months ago. Several months before that, however, the *Diamond Star*'s captain, Elliece Farhaven, retired—an unusual occurrence, considering her relatively young age. With a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information in any Shackles port, the PC can identify Captain Farhaven's current place of residence, a small fishing boat moored in the harbor of Quent (see **Step 8**).

Story Award: If the PCs convince Munarei to leave without fighting him, award them 3,200 XP, as if they had defeated him in combat.

A CROW'S MURDER (CR 9)

The PCs can try to find the tengu smuggler Corlan at his apartment house on the edge of Hell Harbor's tengu rookery. Corlan's house sits at a crossroads where two wide streets intersect in a "T." If the PCs knock on the front door, Corlan comes to the door, but any interaction with the PCs is cut short, as a barbed crossbow bolt embeds itself in his chest.

Creature: Zarskia Galembar has sent the assassin Giles Halmis to take care of the last remaining link in her spy ring—Corlan. Giles is a racist ex-Sargavan Guard turned mercenary and contract killer. Disillusioned with what he saw as his nation's weakness and pandering to filthy Mwangi natives, Giles abandoned his homeland to sell his finely honed killing skills to those who could pay. Giles doesn't care who is ultimately behind the contracts he has accepted, so long as he gets payment for his kills.

Giles has staked out Corlan's residence, positioning himself on the roof of a two-story factory across the street, 100 feet away. From his vantage point 30 feet above, Giles has cover from those on street level. He's been waiting several hours for Corlan to make an appearance, and has readied an action to shoot the tengu as soon as he appears. Watching through a spyglass, Giles sights Corlan, and unwilling to risk losing his elusive prey, opens fire with

TEMPEST RISING

his crossbow. Unless the PCs somehow spotted him before approaching Corlan, Giles gets off a shot in the surprise round with a poisoned bolt. Using Deadly Aim and his improved deadshot ability, Giles takes a -3 penalty on his attack roll and gains an additional $+8$ bonus to his damage, almost certainly dropping Corlan in the first round.

CORLAN CR 1/2

XP 200

Male tengu rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 263)

hp 9

GILES HALMIS CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human fighter (crossbowman) 7/ranger 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 104)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 86 (10d10+27)

Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +5; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *sharpshooter's blade* +15/+10
(1d6+7/19–20)

Ranged +1 *human bane heavy crossbow* +17/+12
(1d10+4/17–20 plus poison)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2), improved deadshot*

TACTICS

Before Combat Giles coats two crossbow bolts with deathblade poison, but since he risks poisoning himself if he rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll with a poisoned weapon, he drinks a vial of antitoxin as a precaution beforehand.

During Combat Being a consummate professional, Giles makes sure of his kill by firing at least one more crossbow bolt at Corlan, even if the tengu fell in the surprise round. Giles shoots at anyone moving toward his position, and at those who try to help Corlan. If a PC wounds him, he uses his second poisoned bolt on that PC. Giles targets humans, especially those of native Mwangi ethnicity, as a priority. He always uses his Deadly Aim feat (taking a -3 penalty on attack rolls, but gaining a $+6$ bonus to damage). If forced into melee combat, Giles spends a move action to affix his *sharpshooter's blade* to his crossbow, then attacks with the bayonet.

Morale Once he is convinced that Corlan is dead and has ensured that no one can use magic to save the tengu, Giles backs off to the rooftop's far side, climbs down the rope he secured earlier, and disappears into an alleyway. If the PCs prevent his

escape, he fights to the death rather than face the ignominy of a murder trial and execution.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +10; CMB +12; CMD 26

Feats Crossbow Mastery*, Deadly Aim, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (heavy crossbow), Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow), Weapon Specialization (heavy crossbow)

Skills Climb +17, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +13, Stealth +22, Survival +13, Swim +15

Languages Common, Polyglot

SQ combat style (crossbow)*, crossbow expert*, favored terrain (urban +2), track +1, wild empathy +2



Giles Halmis



Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), antitoxin (2), deathblade poison (2 doses); **Other Gear** +1 shadow studded leather, +1 human bane heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, sharpshooter's blade (bayonet*; see page 59), backpack, climber's kit, spyglass, 50-ft. silk rope with grappling hook
* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Development: If the PCs capture and question Giles, he can be coerced into divulging what he knows. Giles reveals his current contract is to eliminate Haddon Pike, Roweena Kellet, and Corlan. His main contact is a Mwangi woman named Zarskia Galembur at the Jasperleaf Apothecary in Port Peril, who gives him his contracts and payments. Giles also admits that asking for "two pounds of powdered thileu bark" at the apothecary is a code phrase to quickly obtain admittance into a secluded meeting room.

If Giles is killed, a search of his body turns up a missive with three names: Haddon Pike, Roweena Kellet, and Corlan. The first two names have been crossed out. The note also contains brief instructions: "Use the supplied dosage on each. When done, return to the apothecary in Port Peril. I can provide more toxin along with your payment if needed. Destroy this after reading." The note is signed simply "Z." As he dislikes taking orders from a Mwangi woman (Zarskia), Giles perversely chose not to destroy the note.

If Corlan somehow survives, or if the PCs use *speak with dead* or other magic, the tengu reveals that he's a messenger for the spy ring. He knows little about its operations or other members besides Haddon Pike, Elliece Farhaven, or Roweena Kellet, but he receives almost all of his instructions from Zarskia Galembur at the Jasperleaf Apothecary in Port Peril. See **Step 11** for details on the Jasperleaf Apothecary.

JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY

Eventually, the trail of espionage leads back to Zarskia Galembur and the Jasperleaf Apothecary in Port Peril. If the PCs have not yet learned Zarskia's name, a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information identifies the likely identity of the "Z" in Giles Halmis's letter as Zarskia Galembur, the proprietor of the Jasperleaf Apothecary. Further Diplomacy checks made to gather information reveal the following information:

DC 10: "You can find the place on the corner of Fiddler's Lane and Anchor Way."

DC 14: "Zarskia Galembur runs the apothecary; she bought the old mansion and set up shop about three years ago. It's been closed the last couple of times I've gone past."

DC 16: "The apothecary employs a number of ex-pirates as guards and sells more than just poultices and medicinal remedies. They say you can buy poison and other contraband goods there as well."

DC 18: "The shop has been closed to the public recently, but I hear you can still get in if you know the right people."

DC 20: "Zarskia's been selling her poisons for bargain prices recently; you should get a good price if she's still got any left."

DC 22: "Just bang on the door and say you want to buy 'three jugs of terrap sap' and they'll let you in."

FEATURES OF THE JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY

Situated at the corner of Fiddler's Lane and Anchor Way, two streets close to the center of Port Peril, the Jasperleaf Apothecary is a large three-story building among several other shops and businesses. Behind the humble storefront lies the faded grandeur of a decaying manor built a century ago. The first and second floors' exterior walls are clay brick 1-1/2 feet thick, and the third floor walls are timber 6 inches thick (all requiring DC 25 Climb checks to scale). Stone tiles 1 inch thick cover the roof, and unless noted otherwise, the windows are shuttered and nailed shut (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18). The building has one large chimney, which narrows at the top to an opening 1 foot square, protected by a reinforced iron grille (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 25). During the day, only dim light shines through the shutters in rooms with exterior windows. Unless otherwise noted, rooms without windows, and all areas at night, are considered dark.

SCHEDULE

Zarskia has hired eight pirates to guard the apothecary. During daylight hours, the guards' positions are as listed below (two guards are absent during the day, enjoying their time off in the city). The guards have orders not to enter the kitchen (area C11), Zarskia's laboratory (area C15), or the entire third story without permission. The guards are also unwilling to enter Shimerae's lair (areas C12 through C14) unless ordered to. All of the guards have keys that unlock all doors on the ground floor except the kitchen door (area C11).

At night, only two guards are posted in the rear hall (area C8) and the door in area C7 is locked. The remaining six guards are asleep in the dormitory (area C10). When the watch changes every 3 hours, a pair of guards quickly patrols the shop rooms (areas C1 through C7).

C1. STOREFRONT

The shop's strong wooden front door is kept locked at all times (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30). During the day, the guards in area C2 respond to knocks on the door by yelling back that the shop is closed. Their instructions are to turn away anyone wishing to only buy simple herbs or poultices, but to let in those wanting poisons or who give one of several passwords (including requests for either "two pounds of powdered thileu bark" or "three jugs of terrap sap"). If the PCs give a valid password, the guards show them through to the private meeting room (area C9).



JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY



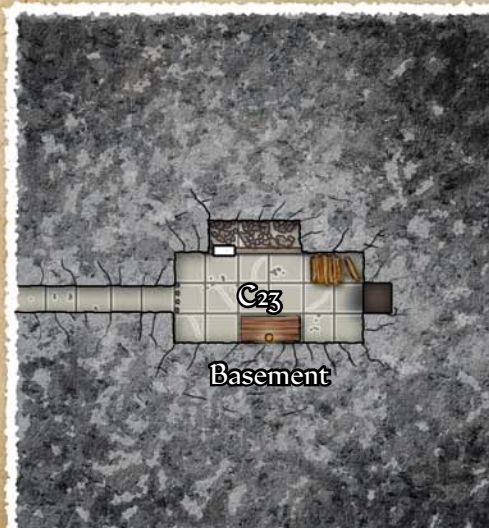
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Basement

1 square = 5 feet

If the PCs don't have a password, they can convince the guards to let them in as potentially lucrative customers with a successful Bluff check (the guards have a Sense Motive modifier of +1). Every 5 gp in bribes the PCs slip under the door adds a +1 bonus on the check. If successful, the guards escort the PCs to the waiting room (area C5), unless the PCs' Bluff check exceeded the guards' Sense Motive check by 10 or more, in which case the guards show them through to area C9.

Once the PCs are inside, read or paraphrase the following:

This neatly ordered shop has a long counter with a tall stool behind it, and display shelves stocked with containers and jars.

Samples of plants, tubers, and roots hang from hooks up on the walls and the scented fragrance of herbs suffuses the store.

The goods on display are common plants and herbs, and there's nothing valuable or incriminating in the counter drawers.

Development: After admitting the PCs, one guard waits outside the door to the room where the PCs are waiting, while the other goes to fetch Zarskia from area C15. Both guards wait outside the door while Zarskia sees visitors.

C2. GUARD ROOM (CR 8)

This plain room contains three wooden chairs and a small table. A set of six bone dice rests on the table, which the guards often use to while away the time.

Creatures: During the day, two pirate guards maintain a watch here. All of Zarskia's guards were part of a ship's crew who lost their vessel and captain to a succession of misfortunes, including shipwreck and bankruptcy. They agreed to band together until they could all sign with another captain, but had little luck because of their jinxed reputation. They contracted with Zarskia as bodyguards to raise capital to buy their own ship.



Pirate Guard

PIRATE GUARDS (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Human fighter 4/rogue (swashbuckler) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 57 each (7 HD; 4d10+3d8+18)

Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +5; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 cutlass* +11/+6 (1d6+6/18-20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +10/+5 (1d8+3/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat The guards fight as a pair, tumbling into flanking positions to deliver sneak attacks. If caught in the apothecary's narrow passageways, they back off into a wider area where they can gang up on intruders or call on reinforcements.

Morale The guards fight until reduced to 10 hit points or fewer before retreating or calling for quarter.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +6; CMB +9; CMD 23

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Step Up,



Toughness, Weapon Focus (cutlass*), Weapon Specialization (cutlass*)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Climb +12, Intimidate +8, Perception +10, Profession (sailor) +10, Stealth +12, Swim +9

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, daring** +1, martial training**, rogue talents (combat trick)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, +1 cutlass*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, keys to doors on first floor

* See *Pirates of the Inner Sea*.

** See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

C3. CONTAINER STORAGE

The shelves of this small storeroom are stacked with flasks, vials, ampoules, and bottles of various shapes and sizes. Arranged systematically into groups, these containers, fashioned from porcelain, metal, glazed pottery, and glass, appear both clean and empty.

Treasure: Zarskia keeps empty containers for her alchemical creations and poisons here. They are bulky and fragile but worth 150 gp in total.

C4. HERBAL PHARMACY

This crowded workroom holds a stone bench along the wall opposite the door and cupboards on both ends. Weighing scales, a mortar and pestle, and other pharmaceutical paraphernalia are tidily arranged about the room.

Zarskia produces herbal remedies and legitimate medical supplies here, often grinding and mixing fresh batches of herbal medicines while customers wait. Since Zarskia closed the shop to the public, this area is unused.

C5. WAITING ROOM

This plain room holds a simple table and two wooden chairs. A small oil lamp sits on the table.

The apothecary's guards often show clients wishing to purchase remedies into this room, where they can wait in privacy while their medications are prepared.

C6. HERB DRYING ROOM

Rows of wooden shelving line this chamber. The shelves contain trays and containers of roots, cuttings, twigs, mosses, and unprocessed herbs. The fragrance of dried aromatic flora fills the room.

Treasure: As Zarskia hasn't stocked up on pharmaceutical supplies recently, some of the herbs here have lost their potency, but there is still 110 gp worth of herbalist supplies (weighing roughly 50 pounds) stored here.

C7. FRONT HALL

This hall connects the apothecary's storefront with the rest of the mansion. A small lavatory containing only a chair with a hole in the center and a covered bucket sits just south of the pharmacy (area C4). The strong wooden door (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25) leading to the rear hall (area C8) is open during the day, but locked at night (Disable Device DC 25).

C8. REAR HALL (CR 8)

A set of stairs leads up to the second story in the northeast corner. A balustraded gallery winds around the edge of the upper hall, overlooking the area below.

An everburning torch mounted in a sconce on the stair landing illuminates this hall.

Creatures: Two pirate guards keep watch here at all times. One guard is usually posted on the ground floor here while the other keeps watch on the gallery above. The guards know Zarskia never invites anyone any further than the meeting room (area C9), so if they spot strangers, they shout an alarm and attack.

PIRATE GUARDS (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 57 each (see page 38)

C9. PRIVATE MEETING ROOM

Two padded reclining chairs and a well-upholstered divan are set around a low table here. To one side, a cabinet holds crystal glasses and wine bottles. The large mantled fireplace set with a bronze fire screen in the corner and the wooden paneling on the walls add to the room's cozy atmosphere.

Zarskia uses this room to meet with affluent customers who wish to acquire dangerous elixirs, illegal drugs, or poisons, as well as with contacts in her spy network. The walls here are thick enough to make it difficult for people outside the room to overhear the details of a quiet conversation, but the guards can still hear Zarskia if she yells loudly for aid.

Behind the fire screen, the fireplace has been bricked up. Zarskia had this opening, as well as the one on the second floor, sealed over. Behind the bricks, the chimney shaft leads all the way down from Zarskia's bedroom (area C22) on the third floor to her secret basement retreat (area C23).



Treasure: The crystal glasses are high quality, worth 300 gp for the set, and the wines are excellent vintages of Corentyn reds and whites worth 50 gp for each of the five unopened bottles.

C10. GUARD DORMITORY (CR 8)

Eight simple beds crowd this room, which is untidy with used plates, flagons, and clothing strewn around. A bricked-up fireplace stands in the west wall, and the room smells strongly of grog and sour sweat.

Creatures: Two pirate guards can normally be found drinking, gambling, or sleeping here during the day. If the guards hear the sounds of combat outside, they spend 2 rounds readying their weapons and bucklers before investigating. At night, six guards sleep here. If surprised, they are unarmored, though they take a move action to snatch up their bucklers. If alerted, the guards spend 5 rounds to hastily don their chain shirts before exiting the room.

PIRATE GUARDS (2) CR 6
XP 2,400 each
hp 57 each (see page 38)

Treasure: The guards keep their communal pay in a sea chest behind the door. One guard is the group's quartermaster, who keeps a detailed register of accounts and crew's shares. The chest is unlocked and holds this register as well as a large leather purse containing 760 gp and 975 sp.

C11. KITCHEN (CR 9)

A small rusty stove stands against the north wall of this dank and otherwise unfurnished room. A blackened metal chimney pipe runs diagonally up the wall from the stove into the ceiling.

This was once a kitchen but has been disused for many years. The chimney pipe used to provide ventilation for smoke, but the outside vent was covered over when new roof tiles were laid, and the pipe now ends inside the roof cavity. Behind the east door is a damp pantry (area C11a), its moldy shelves bare. Behind the locked strong wooden door to the south (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25) is the mechanism for the trap detailed below. Stairs used to lead down to the basement (area C23) from here, but Zarskia filled the stairway with rubble, making it impassable without hours of work.

Trap: Zarskia has placed a trap in the kitchen to deal with unauthorized intruders. If anyone steps into either of the two squares directly in front of the south door or attempts to open the door, the trap activates, launching a tanglefoot bag from a concealed panel in the door. At

the same time, the kitchen door slams shut and locks (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25) and sleeping gas fills the room. When this happens, a creature adjacent to the kitchen door can make a DC 15 Reflex save to catch the door before it swings shut, followed by a DC 10 Strength check to hold the door open. A resourceful PC caught inside the kitchen could breathe through the chimney pipe to avoid inhaling the poison gas.

ANESTHETIZING FOG SNARE TRAP CR 9
XP 6,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** repair

Effect Atk +15 ranged touch (tanglefoot bag) plus poison gas (sleep gas [poison—inhaled; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect unconscious for 1d3 hours; cure 1 save]; never miss; onset delay (1 round); duration 1 minute; multiple targets (all targets in area C11)

C12. DINING ROOM (CR 6)

This lengthy bare room might once have been a dining hall, given the long, dusty table standing in its center. Aside from the double doors exiting from the hall's eastern end, there are two giant holes, large enough to push a chariot through, jaggedly knocked through the southern wall, revealing a chamber beyond. On the northern wall, windows let in light from the street.

North of the double doors leading into this room, a flight of stairs leads up to the third floor. The windows in this room are unshuttered, letting in a substantial amount of light from outside.

Creature: Most of the second story is the demesne of Zarskia's beloved pet, a dusk kamadan named Shimerae. Zarskia originally acquired the poisonous feline as a source of venom several years ago from a hunter of exotic beasts in Bloodcove. In spite of Shimerae's aloof and vindictive nature, however, Zarskia found herself growing attached to the malicious creature. Shimerae has grown to tolerate Zarskia's attention, which means she doesn't often bite Zarskia, and occasionally even follows commands, when it suits her. Shimerae immediately attacks anyone except Zarskia who intrudes in her domain. The guards have a healthy respect for the "unholy devil-cat" and unless directly ordered by Zarskia, they leave her lair well alone, even if they hear sounds of fighting from inside. The holes in the walls provide Shimerae with easy access to the other parts of her lair. If unaware of intruders, Shimerae spends most of her day sleeping and watching the street from the windows. At night, she prowls around the three rooms of her lair (areas C12, C13, and C14), or sleeps in area C14.

TEMPEST RISING

SHIMERAЕ

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female advanced dusk kamadan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 158, 290)

NE Large magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +11 (1d6+5), 2 claws +11 (1d3+5), snakes +9 (1d4+2 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with snakes)

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-ft. cone, sleep, Fortitude DC 17 negates, usable every 1d4 rounds), poison, pounce

TACTICS

During Combat Shimerae sneaks up on intruders and uses her breath weapon on as many opponents as possible. She pounces on any creatures still awake, spitting and hissing.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, Shimerae retreats to the door in area C14, hoping that Zarskia has heard the fight. If unable to flee, she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 19, **Con** 18, **Int** 9, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack

Skills Acrobatics +9 (+13 when jumping), Perception +10, Stealth +8

Languages Aklo

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Snakes—injury; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

C13. LIBRARY

Empty bookshelves line the walls of this large decaying chamber. The place is partially demolished; several walls have huge holes smashed in them, revealing other rooms beyond. Tattered scraps of yellowing parchment are scattered over the floor, and long rows of scratches mar the central bookshelf. A large wooden tray filled with sand sits in the southwest corner.

The scraps of parchment are the remains of books once stored in the library that Shimerae has thoroughly shredded. The tray in the corner is her litter box.

C14. DEN

Inlaid wooden paneling lines the walls of this snug room, but the walls in the northwest are broken through into another chamber. In the southeast corner, a pile of sheepskin blankets lies next to a bricked-up fireplace.

At night, Shimerae sleeps on the pile of sheepskins here. Unless tending the kamadan, Zarskia keeps the strong wooden door to the south locked (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25).

Treasure: Shimerae sometimes plays with a collection of colored stones scattered in the middle of the room. While these pretty baubles are only colored pieces of agate, quartz, zircon, and other low-value stones, they're worth 290 gp in total.



Shimerae



C15. ZARSKIA'S LABORATORY (CR 8 AND 10)

Benches and worktables hold alembics, crucibles, glass tubing, and other assorted alchemical accoutrements. Bubbling reagents, colorful chemicals, and jars of powders cover the worktop areas. In the middle of the north wall is an old hearth, its opening bricked up with mortared stones. The astringent odor of disinfectant hangs in the air.

Once the manor's lounge, this room is now Zarskia's main laboratory, where she refines venomous components, crafts deadly toxins, and researches new discoveries in alchemical poisoning. An everburning torch mounted on the corner of the fireplace illuminates the room.

The strong wooden door to the northeast that leads to the second floor landing is locked and barred on the southern side (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 30, Disable Device DC 25), as well as trapped.

Trap: A corrosive chemical compound of concentrated babau slime and terinav root coats the inward side of the door's stone handle, affecting anyone who attempts to open the door. If the creature triggering the trap is wearing gloves or gauntlets, these take damage from the corrosive babau slime first. If this damage penetrates the item's hardness, it gains the broken condition and the wearer takes half damage from the slime. If the damage destroys the item, the wearer takes full damage. A creature that takes any amount of acid damage is also exposed to the terinav root. Once detected, the trap can be easily bypassed by only touching the front part of the handle.

TOXIC DOOR HANDLE DC 8
XP 4,800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 15

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** repair

Effect babau slime (2d8 acid damage for 2 rounds); never miss; poison (terinav root)

Creature: The leader of the spy ring, Zarskia Galembar, can be found here during the day, working on some last minute experiments. If she hears combat outside the lab, she drinks her extracts (as described in her tactics below) and waits to see whether her guards defeat the invaders. If intruders break into the lab, Zarskia fights a running battle as she retreats through areas C16 and C17 to her bedroom (area C22), then down the chimney to the basement (area C23). See the descriptions of those area for her tactics as she retreats through these rooms. As she fights, the splash damage from her bombs might hit the alchemical equipment here. Doing so shatters glass and ignites materials on the tables, but has no adverse game effect during the battle. However, it reduces the equipment's value (see Treasure below).

ZARSKIA GALEMBAR

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female human alchemist 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +5 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 90 (11d8+37)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk butterfly sword** +12/+7 (1d4/19–20 plus poison) and mwk butterfly sword** +12/+7 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)

Ranged bomb +14/+9 (6d6+3 fire)

Special Attacks bomb 14/day (6d6+3 fire and catch fire, DC 18, 10 ft. radius)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 11th)

4th—*greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *displacement*, *fly*, *haste*, *protection from energy*

2nd—*barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *false life*, *fire breath** (DC 15), *see invisibility*

1st—*bomber's eye**, *crafter's fortune**, *cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*

TACTICS

Before Combat Zarskia drinks an extract of *false life* every day and consumes her mutagen and extracts of *barkskin* and *stoneskin* as soon as she becomes aware of visitors or trouble at the apothecary. If she knows intruders are close, she drinks extracts of *fly*, *protection from energy* (fire), *expeditious retreat*, and *bear's endurance* before a confrontation (not included in her stats).

During Combat Zarskia drinks an extract of *greater invisibility*, followed by extracts of *bomber's eye* and *haste* at the beginning of combat. She throws force bombs against fire-resistant foes or to knock swift enemies prone. If cornered or if she runs out of bombs, Zarskia drinks her extract of *displacement* and poisons her swords using her swift poisoning ability.

Morale Zarskia is fully aware that espionage carries a painful death sentence in the Shackles, so unless it's possible to successfully flee, she fights to the last breath.

Base Statistics Without her extracts and mutagen, Zarskia's statistics are **Init** +3; **AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; **hp** 75; **Ref** +12, **Will** +7; **Melee** mwk butterfly sword** +10/+5 (1d4/19–20 plus poison) and mwk butterfly sword** +10/+5 (1d4/19–20 plus poison); **Ranged** bomb +12/+7 (6d6+3 fire); **Dex** 17, **Wis** 14; **CMD** 21; **Skills** Acrobatics +14, Disable Device +14, Fly +11, Perception +16, Sense Motive +11.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 21, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

Feats Brew Potion, Cosmopolitan* (Bluff, Sense Motive), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Martial Weapon Proficiency (butterfly sword**), Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +13, Craft (alchemy) +17, Craft (traps) +17, Disable Device +16, Fly +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +15, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +11

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Infernal, Osiriani, Polyglot
SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +11, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 110 minutes), discoveries (concentrate poison, explosive bomb, fast bombs, force bomb [6d4+3 force plus knock prone], sticky poison [3 strikes]), poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

Combat Gear Large scorpion venom (2 doses), purple worm poison (2 doses), shadow essence (2 doses);

Other Gear +1 mithral chain shirt, masterwork butterfly swords** (2), cloak of resistance +2, headband of vast intelligence +2 (Acrobatics), alchemist's kit, masterwork thieves' tools, tindertwigs (3), keys to all locks in the apothecary, formula book (contains all prepared extracts plus *alchemical allocation**, *alter self*, *discern lies*, *dragon's breath**, *invisibility*, *keen senses**, *perceive clues**, *shield*, *spider climb*, *undetachable alignment*, and *water breathing*), diamond dust worth 500 gp

* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

** See *Ultimate Combat*.

Treasure: The alchemical components and comprehensive alchemist's lab here are worth a total of 1,000 gp but weigh 125 pounds in total. Whenever a damaging area effect (such as a spell or one of Zarskia's bombs) affects a bench square, reduce this gear's value by 75 gp. In preparation for leaving the Shackles, Zarskia has sold off almost all of her stocks of poison aside from her personal supplies.

Stored in a sealed chest with many now-empty partitions are 3 doses of id moss and a pouch of dried sassone leaves (which can be turned into 4 doses of sassone leaf residue with successful DC 16 Craft [alchemy] checks). A latched iron strongbox under the westernmost

bench holds six flasks of acid, four flasks of alchemist's fire, two vials of antitoxin, three smokesticks, two tanglefoot bags, and four thunderstones. In a reinforced brass tin are a vial of *salve of slipperiness*, a small sealed bottle holding an ounce of *sovereign glue*, three flasks of *unguent of timelessness*, and a jar holding 5 uses of *universal solvent*. Inside a steel box is a journal containing notes and observations about Zarskia's alchemical experiments. The last entry describes her work cultivating mandragoras (see area C19).

C16. STOREROOM

An enormous pile of old, broken furniture and other debris fills the center of this room. A ladder rests against the wall in the northwest corner, leading up to a roughly-cut hole in the ceiling.

Zarskia discarded excess furniture from other parts of the house in this room. The ladder leads up to area C17. If Zarskia has time when she retreats through here, she pulls the ladder up after her, or knocks it over. From the room above she can also destroy the ladder (hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 13) with a well-placed bomb, hopefully while a PC is climbing. Without the ladder, a DC 20 Climb check is required to scale the wall to reach the room above.

C17. MAID'S ROOM

This room is unfurnished and dark. A door to the north wall leads into a passageway, and a jagged hole has been hewn through the floor, opening into the room below.

If Zarskia withdraws through here, she may pause here to drink healing extracts or bombard the PCs as they follow her.

C18. BATHROOM

Pale tiles line the walls and floor of this clean bathroom. A luxurious bath adorns the floor's center and an ornate stone basin, an inset cabinet, and several mirrors are affixed to the walls.

Treasure: The cabinet holds expensive perfumes and cosmetics worth 240 gp.



Zarskia Galembar



C19. GUEST BEDROOM (CR 7)

The stink of foulest rot and miasmatic decay clog the air in this chamber. Along the west wall rests a heaped morass of mulch and slimy mud, and five open barrels stand in an alcove on the room's southern side.

The strong wooden door leading into this room is locked and barred from the outside (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25 [DC 30 from inside the room], Disable Device DC 25).

In the center of the room center lies the putrefying remains of an eviscerated, almost skeletal humanoid creature with a long tail, sharp claws, elongated skull, and needlelike teeth. The corpse can be identified as a babau demon with a successful DC 21 Knowledge (planes) check. A successful DC 15 Heal check reveals the surgical removal of many of its internal organs not long after death. A DC 20 Heal check also notices two huge suppurated abscesses in the chest cavity are from something actually burrowing out of the body. The barrels to the south are half full of scummy water.

Creatures: Two months ago, Zarskia obtained the remains of a freshly slain babau demon at a bargain price from one of her black-market contacts. Aware of the carcass's potential, she immediately set about experimenting on the demon's slime and ichor. Zarskia's attempt to cultivate a mandragora plant from the demon's corpse succeeded far better than she hoped. Her periodic application of distilled demonic essences to the mandrake roots implanted within the cadaver resulted in two hardy mandragoras.

As the malignant beings grew, Zarskia prepared this room by leaving sufficient nourishment for several months and then sealed them in. She has been hoping for a last-minute client interested in mandragora sap-blood before she harvests them and drains their precious fluids. The demon-tainted plant creatures feel secure in the only environment they've ever known, but attack creatures intruding into their domain. The mandragoras begin combat with their shrieks and fight until destroyed.

ADVANCED MANDRAGORAS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 47 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 185, 292)

C20. UPSTAIRS HALL (CR 9)

Trap: This upstairs hall is trapped. When anyone steps on the marked section of corridor, a blade stabs out from the eastern wall, also ringing an alarm bell loud enough to alert the whole house. The trap's mechanism is in area C21.

WYVERN BLADE TRAP

CR 9

XP 6,400

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden switch

Effect Atk +20 melee (1d8+6 plus wyvern poison /19–20)

C21. BEDROOM

A bed frame lacking mattresses and a dusty armoire in a recess on the southern wall are the only furniture in this disused but once fine bedchamber. A mechanical apparatus similar to a small arbalest is pointed against the west wall. The apparatus is the mechanism for the trap at area C20. It's easy to reset or disable the trap from here.

C22. MASTER BEDROOM

A pair of inlaid sconces holding dancing flames illuminates this well-appointed bedchamber. The room is furnished with a canopied four-poster bed, two large wardrobes, a polished circular table, and a mirrored dresser near the door. A grand carved fireplace stands in the southeast corner.

This is Zarskia's bedchamber. The strong wooden door is kept locked (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25), and Zarskia bars the door (Break DC 30) before going to sleep at night. The sconces hold *continual flames*.

The fireplace is 4 feet tall and has no floor—the chimney forms a shaft that drops straight down to the basement 35 feet below (area C23). Zarskia usually flies down the chimney, but the shaft can also be climbed with a successful DC 15 Climb check.

Treasure: A stylish purse in the north wardrobe holds Zarskia's day-to-day spending money: 10 pp, 47 gp, and 29 sp. Fashionable outfits and dresses in the wardrobes are worth a total of 360 gp. A jewelry box in the dresser holds high-quality imitation lady's jewelry worth 215 gp (but appears far more valuable to the undiscerning eye). Under the dresser is a slim case containing a fully stocked disguise kit.

C23. SECRET BASEMENT

A pile of old unused firewood is stacked near a wide brick fireplace in this dingy cellar. Opposite the fireplace, a corroded iron gate secured with a padlock blocks the entrance to a tunnel beyond. To the north, stony rubble and overflowing dirt completely fill a flight of stairs leading upward, and a plain table holding scattered papers stands to the south.

Zarskia's escape route leads through this basement. An everburning torch in a sconce on the south wall illuminates the room. The fireplace is the bottom of a shaft that leads all the way up to the master bedroom on the third floor (area C22), requiring a DC 15 Climb



check to scale. The rubble-filled stairway once led to the kitchen above (area C11).

While rust and decay have weakened the gate's bars (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 22), the untarnished padlock is of outstanding quality (DC 35 Disable Device check to unlock). The escape tunnel runs for 200 feet before ending at a secret door that opens near a drainage tunnel exit. If Zarskia flees here, she grabs the bandolier and money pouch from the table and unlocks the gate. If she has time, she then destroys the papers on the table with a bomb or tindertwig, which takes her at least 1 round.

Treasure: The majority of Zarskia's espionage payments are already stored safely inside Abadaran vaults in Avistan, but she keeps an emergency fund of 50 pp and 100 gp in a cloth pouch on the table. A leather bandolier on the table holds an *elixir of hiding*, *elixir of tumbling*, and *elixir of vision*, as well as a *feather token* (swan boat). Among the papers on the table are writing equipment and a large vial holding 4 uses of superior invisible ink (*Adventurer's Armory* 10), along with a smaller vial of the triggering substance that reveals this particular ink.

The papers and missives on the table were originally written using invisible ink, but Zarskia has already revealed the hidden messages. Many of the papers are encrypted or use ambiguous code words, but they nevertheless expose the identities of a widespread network of spies throughout the Shackles. The papers also detail the primary players in the spy ring—Corlan, Elliece Farhaven, Haddon Pike, and Roweena Kellet, as well as their ordered assassinations (by an imp in the case of Elliece, and by Giles Halmis in the case of the others).

If Zarskia was able to burn the papers, most of the documents are destroyed, but recent instructions stored in a waterproof satchel survive with only slight charring around the edges. Dated 3 weeks ago and written in Infernal, they read, "Silence is now key. Our plans will go into full force once our agent finishes his preparations. Destroy any remaining evidence and discreetly sell your business. Report to Nisroch for your next assignment."

Development: If the PCs capture Zarskia alive, they can also coerce her into revealing the information contained in the papers. Zarskia knows that her handlers are scions of a noble house serving the Umbral Court in Nidal, but she doesn't know which house, nor is she aware that her reports quickly make their way to Egorian, capital of Chelixa.

Even if only the satchel of recent communications survives, there's enough evidence to satisfy Tessa, and deeply worry her as well. While the papers contain no irrefutable link to Chelixa, the use of imp assassins, messages in the Infernal tongue, and hints of Nidal's involvement all provide clues to Chelish backing of the plot. If nothing else, she can present the clues gathered by

the PCs to the Pirate Council to alert them that someone somewhere has new designs upon the Shackles.

Tessa thanks the PCs for the information and rewards them with trade goods and booty worth 3 points of plunder (if she already promised them a monetary reward, she pays that instead). More importantly, she promises them her support and her vote in the Pirate Council, should they ever need to call on her. If Tessa found one of the PCs to her liking, she may give that character a more personal "reward."

Story Award: If the PCs recover the information detailing Zarskia's spy network and hand over the proof to Tessa Fairwind, award them 6,400 XP.

PART THREE: THE FREE CAPTAINS' REGATTA

The annual Free Captains' Regatta is a time-honored tradition in the Shackles, and one of the few opportunities that lesser, independent captains have to increase their station and status among the pirates of the Shackles. The Free Captains' Regatta is a grueling nautical race held among the hazardous sandbars and reefs north of the Shackles among the dangerous currents and winds at the southern fringes of the giant hurricane called the Eye of Abendego. The race is open to any Free Captain with a ship, and while many captains and ships do not finish the race (or even survive it), the regatta has no shortage of competitors each year, for the rewards are truly worth the risk—a hefty prize purse, lordship of a small island, and a seat on the Pirate Council of the Shackles.

If the PCs have not expressed interest in competing in the regatta, Tessa Fairwind strongly recommends that they enter the race, particularly after they have proved themselves in tracking down the Chelish spy network. Tessa seeks more allies on the Pirate Council, and if the PCs can win the competition, they'll gain a seat on the council, not to mention the boost to their reputations and infamy.

Furthermore, common wisdom holds that this year's regatta will truly be an open race. The druid-captain known as the Master of the Gales has won the regatta for the last 5 years, but this year he is officiating the race instead of competing, leaving its outcome in doubt.

To enter the regatta, a competitor must be the captain of his own ship and pay an entry fee of 500 gp. Of course, the other PCs who are not captains can still take part in the race as officers or sailors aboard the vessel. If the PCs are unwilling or unable to pay the entry fee, Tessa happily stakes them the fee in thanks for their help.

As the race date draws close and the last competitors arrive at Port Peril, the city's populace buzzes with speculation about the course for this year's race. A week before race day, the announcement flies through the city that the Master of the Gales has declared Cauldron Rock, the northernmost island large enough to be marked on



most maps of the Shackles, as the race's starting point. A huge flotilla of racers and spectators sets sail northward out of Jeopardy Bay.

Arriving at Cauldron Rock, the race fleet anchors northeast of the island. The captains of most of the competing ships disallow shore leave for their crews, but numerous spectators (including many of the PCs' friends and allies, such as Tessa Fairwind and possibly Pierce Jerrell, Merrill Pegsworth, or others) make merry on their ships or on a small sandy beach nearby, in spite of intermittent rain and wind from the giant hurricane to the north.

The afternoon before the race, the Master of the Gales calls a meeting of all competing ships' captains and their senior officers aboard his xebec, the *Kraken*. An imposing man with tanned and weather-beaten skin and long, windblown hair and beard, the Master of the Gales outlines the course of the race to the competitors and supplies a simple route map to each participant. Designed to test even the most rugged crew, the regatta will take ships along the fringes of the Eye of Abendego and even into the storm itself, ending at a small islet called Coaming Point. Fixing each contestant with a icy blue stare, the Master of the Gales reminds everyone that the Free Captains' Regatta is a nautical race, not a battle or an opportunity to avenge past slights. He announces that he will be monitoring the race, and any ship caught attacking or unduly interfering with another competing vessel will be disqualified, or if necessary, sunk. Nature itself will be the most dangerous enemy the contenders will face, a fact the gathered captains would be wise to remember if they hope to complete, much less win, the regatta. See page 52 for a full description of the Master of the Gales.

Now that they know the general route of the race, the PCs should plot their initial course away from Cauldron Rock in preparation for the race the following morning. They can use the *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58) to do so, but nearly all of the race will occur outside the area detailed on the charts, so they will only be of use for the race's start.

THE COMPETITORS

This year's Free Captain's Regatta attracts far more entries than the last few years. A wide variety of ships are taking part, from barques, brigs, caravels, clippers, and galleons, to galleys, junks, longships, and triremes. The following ships comprise the PCs' main opposition in the Regatta: the *Albatross*, *Barnacled Bitch*, *Bonny Witch*, *Chimera's Teeth*, *Darcy's Pillage*, *Kelizandri's Favor*, *Pharasma's Price*, *Promise's Bounty*, *Redcap*, *Sea's Largess*, *Skullduggery*, *Stormrunner*, *Sullied Strumpet*, *Wave Wraith*, and lastly, the *Wormwood*—captained by the PCs' old nemesis, Barnabas Harrigan.

See pages 218–219 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* for lists of captains, sailors, and ships if you wish to further detail these competitors.

RACE MECHANICS

During the regatta, the PCs will track their Race score, measuring their placement relative to the other competitors using this score. A positive score means the PCs are ahead of the average contender, while a negative score means the PCs are trailing behind the pack. The PCs start with a Race score of 0. The players should keep track of their Race score throughout the race so that they can see how they're doing. At the end of the race, the PCs' total Race score will determine whether the PCs win the race or not.

As the PCs make their way through the race, they will need to make numerous skill checks to successfully plot a course and maneuver around the obstacles along the race course. Most of these checks can be made by any PC on the ship. Failing these checks can have negative consequences for the PCs' Race score, as detailed in the specific encounter locations.

In addition, the pilot of the PCs' ship has the opportunity to make additional sailing checks (usually Profession [sailor] checks, if the PCs' vessel is a sailing ship) during the race. Because of the extreme nature of the elements and the regatta itself, the DCs of these checks vary throughout the competition, unlike the static DCs of normal sailing checks (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 10). For every 5 by which a sailing check result exceeds the DC, the PCs' Race score increases by 1. For every 5 by which a check fails, the PCs' Race score decreases by 1.

Up to three additional characters can aid another on any of these checks, each granting the character making the check the normal +2 bonus on the check if successful.

Hazards of the Eye: The extreme weather patterns and currents surrounding the Eye of Abendego add an additional hazard to the race beyond those obstacles that are part of the course itself. Each time the PCs enter a new encounter location during the race, roll on the Stormbound Hazards table on page 73 to generate an additional hazard that the PCs must contend with as they race along the fringes of the Eye.

MAGIC

The use of magic is permitted during the regatta, but whether it will be useful or not is another matter. *Control weather* might seem like an ideal spell to use during the race, but all competitors in the spell's area gain the same benefit, resulting in little change in relative position. In addition, the Master of the Gales uses his own *control weather* spells to negate any weather that unfairly aids a competitor or hinders other contestants.

The winds affected by a *control winds* spell do not move with a ship, but it can be used to circumvent appropriate obstacles, adding a +5 circumstance bonus on one appropriate skill check for each casting.

Spells with limited durations, or that affect small or immobile areas, may add a bonus on a single appropriate skill check equal to the spell's level, at the GM's discretion. Examples include *alter winds**, *control water*, *gust of wind*, *river of wind**, or spells cast to summon appropriate creatures (such as air elementals). Spells marked with an asterisk (*) can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*.

D. RACE START

The race begins first thing in the morning, under leaden skies and sudden squalls of driving rain. Tessa Fairwind comes aboard the PCs' ship to wish them smooth sailing and good luck, as do other friends and allies of the PCs. If Pierce Jerrell is romantically involved with a PC, he loans his *ioun stone* "eye" (see page 54) to his sweetheart with a parting embrace.

After over an hour of shouting, cursing, and jostling for position, the contenders arrange themselves in rough formation behind the starting line drawn between the *Kraken* and another ship, the *Ocean's Revenge*. All eyes look to the Master of the Gales, who stands atop a rocky promontory on Cauldron Rock. He raises both arms to the sky and unleashes a flashing bolt of lightning down into the surf, signaling the start of the race.

As the Master of the Gales transforms into an albatross and flies over the participants, the wind shifts sharply and unnaturally from northerly to easterly, throwing the competitors into chaos. The PCs must pilot their way clear of the milling ships by making two successful DC 25 sailing checks. If the PCs plotted their initial course using the *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58), they gain a +3 bonus on these checks. Using *Jalhazar's wheel* (see page 58) as a full-round action to combine a hard to port or hard to starboard action with a full ahead action grants an additional +5 bonus on one check. Successful checks add to the PCs' Race score as normal. Failing a sailing check by 5 or more results in a collision with another ship, treated as an accidental ramming maneuver (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 14). Roll percentile dice. On a result of 01–50, the PCs' ship rams another vessel, and the PCs' ship takes half its normal ramming damage (no damage if the PCs' ship is equipped with a ram). On a result of 51–75, the PCs' ship is rammed, taking 8d8 points of damage. On a result of 76–00, the PCs' ship is rammed at takes 16d8 points of damage from the collision. Each such collision reduces the PCs' Race score by 1.

E. THE SILTED SHROUDS

The Silted Shrouds are an extensive series of shallow sandbars formed by the continuous action of the Eye of Abendego. There are no up-to-date charts of the Silted Shrouds, as new channels and sandbars continuously form and wash away. The PCs must make four successful DC 25 Survival checks to navigate their way through. Characters with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) gain a +2 bonus on the checks. Alternatively, the PCs can use aerial reconnaissance or underwater reconnaissance (provided the scout has a fly speed or swim speed of 50 feet or more) to make Perception checks instead. Failing a check subtracts 1 from the PCs' Race score as they backtrack. Failing a check by 5 or more means the PCs' ship runs aground, subtracting an additional 2 from their Race score, unless they have an underwater scout moving ahead of the ship.



Casting *commune with nature* or *find the path* eliminates the need for any navigation checks. The PCs can avoid making any navigation checks by sailing around the Shroud, but this subtracts 5 from their Race score.

Sailing checks: The PCs can make three DC 25 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

F. RAKER SHOALS

The low-lying coral reefs known as Raker Shoals are a well-known hazard to ships in this region. The PCs must quickly chart a course through the shoals with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check. Using the *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58) grants a +2 circumstance bonus on the check. Failing this check subtracts 1 from the PCs' Race score. For every 5 by which the check result exceeds the DC, reduce the number of uncharted reef encounters by one. At the same time, the PCs should decide the speed at which they are traveling through the shoals.

Uncharted Reefs: The PCs encounter five uncharted reefs while sailing through Raker Shoals. Allow the PCs to make Perception checks to spot a reef before encountering it. The base DC of this check is 5, modified by +1 for every 10 feet of distance. The result of this check determines the distance of the reef from the PCs' ship when it is spotted. For example, a result of 23 on the Perception check spots the reef 180 feet away.

Once a reef is spotted, the pilot of the PCs' ship must take a hard to port or hard to starboard action (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 13) with a successful sailing check to avoid the reef. The ship's speed is critical; if a character spots a reef at a distance of four times the ship's speed, no check is required to steer the ship to avoid the reef. If a reef is spotted at a distance of twice the ship's speed, the sailing check has a base DC of 5. If a reef is spotted at a distance of the ship's speed, the base DC is 20. The normal penalties on the sailing checks for the ship's speed still apply.

For example, if the ship is traveling at a speed of 90 feet, a DC 41 Perception check is required to spot a reef 360 feet away, and no sailing check is required at that distance. A DC 23 Perception check spots the reef 180 feet away, and a DC 5 sailing check (with a -10 penalty on the check for the ship's speed) is enough to avoid the reef. A DC 14 Perception check spots the reef 90 feet away, and a DC 20 sailing check (with the -10 penalty) is required to avoid the reef.

On a failed sailing check, the PCs' ship grates against the reef, taking half the ship's normal ramming damage (a ship equipped with a ram takes no damage). If the sailing check fails by 5 or more, or the PCs fail to spot the reef at all, the ship takes 8d8 points of damage and runs aground. This delay subtracts 1d4+1 from the PCs' Race score.

Average the PCs' speed through the shoals and divide by 30, then subtract 2; this is the change in their Race score after this leg. For example, if a ship traveled at an average speed of 90 feet through the shoals, its Race score would increase by 1. The PCs can avoid all of the dangers of the shoals (and all checks) by sailing wide around the shoals, but doing so subtracts 7 from their Race score.

G. GOZREH'S FLOW

Sometimes called Gozreh's Piss by the less reverent, the swirling wash of powerful ocean currents called Gozreh's Flow sweeps out of the Sodden Lands along the southern fringes of the Eye. Competitors must tack into the strong wind while navigating the treacherous currents. The PCs must make three successful DC 25 Knowledge (nature) or DC 30 Survival checks during this leg to avoid the strong easterly currents dragging them back. Each failed check subtracts 1 from their Race score. Casting *commune with nature* or *find the path* eliminates the need for any checks. There is no way to avoid Gozreh's Flow.

Sailing checks: The PCs can make three DC 20 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

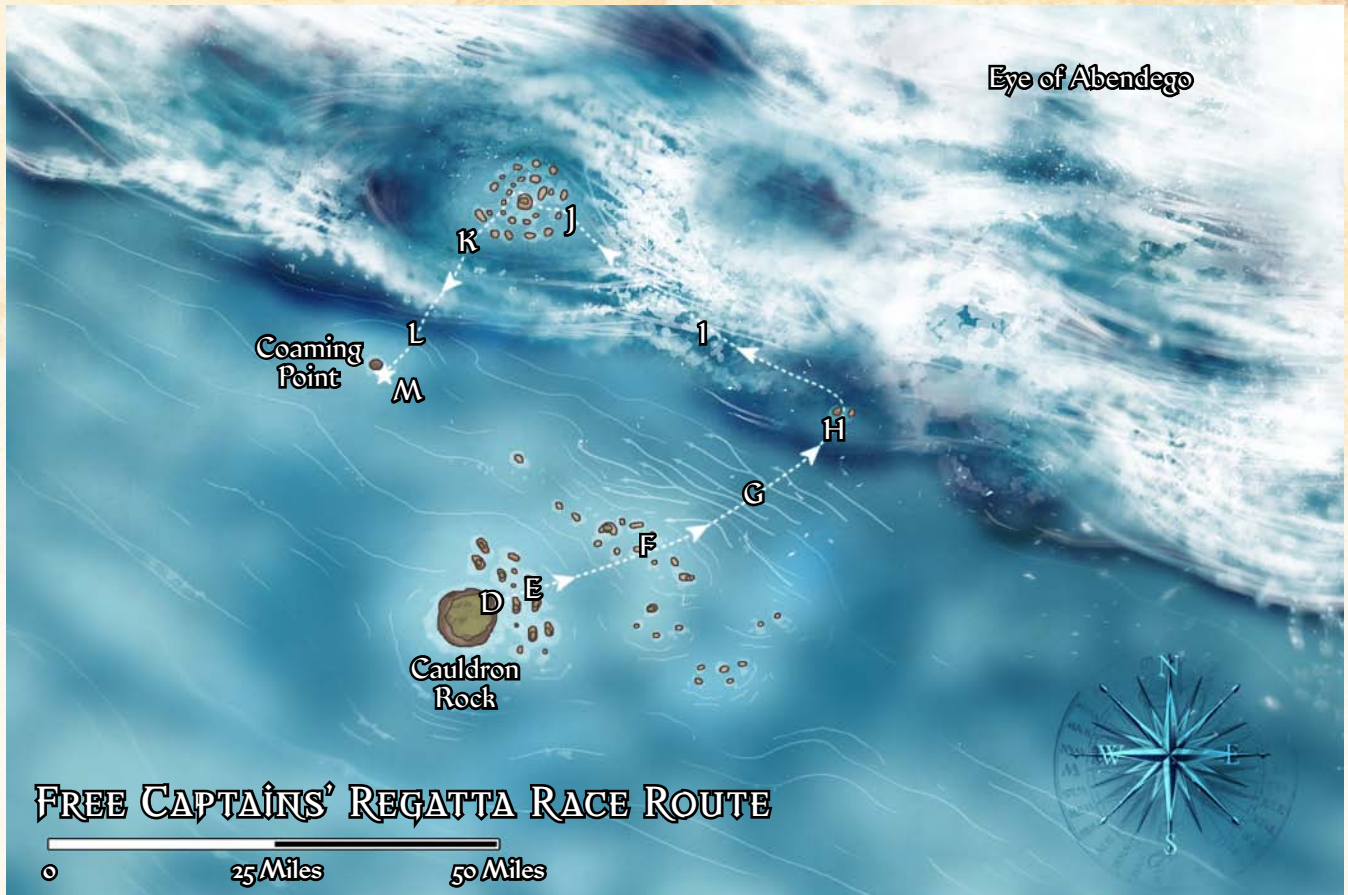
H. IRIS'S SPLINTERS (CR 10)

Two jagged shafts of rock, called the Iris's Splinters, rise out of the ocean here, forming a narrow 100 foot gap between them. Competitors must "thread the Iris" and sail between these splinters.

Creature: As the PCs approach the rocks, a gigantic turtlelike behemoth surfaces ahead of them. As they watch, the beast smashes into the *Sullied Strumpet* with a bellow, capsizing the light sloop. This malicious giant dragon turtle, named Hirgenzosc, was responsible for the sinking of the *Brine Banshee* (see page 31) and now finds itself in the midst a veritable smorgasbord of ships and fresh food.

Hirgenzosc desires humanoid food (both humanoids and their edible cargo), and hungrily attacks any ships within reach. The dragon turtle's slow swim speed gives the PCs the opportunity to outmaneuver it and dart through the Iris with three successful DC 25 sailing checks. If the PCs wait for another ship to draw Hirgenzosc's attention, only one sailing check is required, but this subtracts 1d3 from the PCs' Race score. Using *Jalhazar's wheel* (see page 58) as a full-round action to combine a hard to port or hard to starboard action with a full ahead action grants an additional +5 bonus on one check.

Failing a check means that the PCs must hold off Hirgenzosc for at least 3 rounds while their ship threads the Iris. Fighting from onboard their ship can be deadly for the PCs' crew, as Hirgenzosc tries to capsize the ship and uses its breath weapon as often as possible. Flying or swimming PCs can keep Hirgenzosc away from the ship while it gets through.



Sailing checks: The PCs can make two DC 25 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

HIRGENZOSK **CR 10**

XP 9,600

NE giant dragon turtle (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 112, 295)

hp 150

TACTICS

During Combat Hirgenzosc attempts to capsize smaller ships and uses its breath weapon repeatedly on larger vessels. If there's no prey in range, the dragon turtle cunningly remains out of sight just below the surface.

Morale Hirgenzosc fights until reduced to 60 hit points or fewer, then plunges down into ocean's depths.

Story Award: If the PCs outmaneuver Hirgenzosc, award them 9,600 XP as if they had defeated it in battle.

I. INTO THE STORM

The PCs must now skim through the outer edge of the titanic maelstrom that is the Eye of Abendego, tacking against the powerful northwesterly storm winds created by the cyclone's counter-clockwise rotation. Navigating through the hurricane requires a successful DC 25

Profession (sailor) or Survival check. Characters with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) gain a +2 bonus on the checks. Failing this check subtracts 3 from the PCs' Race score.

Once inside the hurricane, the PCs encounter additional hazards. Roll three times on the Stormbound Hazards table on page 73 to generate the dangers the PCs must face. In addition, the following encounter takes place during this leg of the race.

Lightning: A sheet of lightning strikes the foremast of the PCs' ship, dealing 10d8 points of electricity damage to the sails. If this reduces the sails to fewer than half their total hit points, the sails gain the broken condition, halving the ship's maximum speed (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 11). Using magic (such as *fabricate* or *make whole*) to repair the sails is difficult with the violent motion of the storm, requiring Climb checks to get aloft and concentration checks (DC 15 + the level of the spell) to cast the spells successfully. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Craft (sails) or Craft (ships) check can also jury-rig the sails, suppressing the broken condition until the sails take more damage. Failing to repair the sails subtracts 5 from the PCs' Race score.

Skirting around the outside of the storm's edge eliminates the need for the navigation check, and means



the PCs encounter only one stormbound hazard, but this subtracts 10 from the PCs' Race score.

Sailing checks: The PCs can make five DC 30 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race. Failing a check by 5 or more means the wind deals 6d6 points of damage to the ship's sails. If the PCs skirt around the storm, the DC for these checks is reduced to 20.

J. SHARKSKIN REEF AND PINNACLE ATOLL

The PCs must sail through the two concentric rings of Sharkskin Reef and around the towering spire of rock called Pinnacle Atoll. Steering the ship through both rings of the razor-sharp reefs requires four successful DC 30 sailing checks. Failing any of these checks results in 8d8 points of damage to the PCs' ship as waves smash the vessel against the reefs. The PCs can pass through only the outer ring of reefs, which requires only two checks, but the extra distance subtracts 2 from their Race score. Sailing wide around the outer ring to avoid all of the reefs eliminates the need for any sailing checks, but subtracts 6 from the PCs' Race score.

Sailing checks: The PCs can make two DC 25 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

K. LIGHTNING STORM (CR 9)

As the PCs head out of the Eye of Abendego, an unnatural electrical squall strikes and a corona of baleful green lightning limns their ship's mainmast. A successful DC 19 Knowledge (planes) check identifies the dangerous nature of the glowing nimbus.

Creature: The PCs have 3 rounds to act before the energy coalesces into a lightning elemental. The elemental remains near the top of the mast, using Flyby Attack to attack those on deck. It focuses its attacks on those creatures wearing metal armor or wielding metal weapons, using its spark leap ability to knock them overboard. The elemental fights until destroyed.

GREATER LIGHTNING ELEMENTAL CR 9
XP 6,400
hp 110 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 117)

L. THE HOME STRETCH (CR 9)

The PCs emerge from the depths of the storm and discover that the majority of the other contenders have not yet made it out of the Eye. In fact, the only other ship in contention is Captain Harrigan's *Wormwood*! To the west, the *Kraken* cruises in the distance, the Master of the Gales on deck observing the race's finish.

Creature: Spotting the PCs' ship as his sole competition for the victory, Captain Harrigan attempts a last-ditch effort to slow them, but in a way that won't be noticed by the Master of the Gales. Harrigan's sailing master,

Peppery Longfarthing (CN female human sorcerer 8), uses a *scroll of summon monster VII* (caster level 13th) to attempt to surreptitiously summon two invisible stalkers. Peppery must succeed at a DC 14 caster level check to cast the spell. If successful, she sends the two invisible stalkers to attack the PCs' pilot. The invisible stalkers remain for 13 rounds; it takes them 3 rounds to cover the distance between the *Wormwood* and the PCs' ship. The PCs can notice the invisible stalkers flying toward their ship with a DC 42 Perception check. If they are not detected, the invisible stalkers surprise the PCs. The invisible stalkers focus their attacks on the PCs' pilot. As long as the pilot at minimum uses a move action each round to take the stay the course action (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 13), the PCs' ship does not lose any ground. If the pilot does not take this action each round, the ship takes the uncontrolled action. Each round that the PCs' ship takes the uncontrolled action reduces the PCs' Race score by 1. The invisible stalkers fight until destroyed or until the spell duration expires.

INVISIBLE STALKERS (2) CR 7
XP 3,200 each
hp 80 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 181)

Sailing checks: The PCs can make two DC 20 sailing checks to improve their Race score during the final leg of the race.

M. FINISH LINE

The finish line of the regatta lies at a tiny island called Coaming Point, about 25 miles northwest of Cauldron Rock. The first ship to sail past the island wins the regatta. At this point, as the PCs and the *Wormwood* streak toward the finish line, total up the PCs' Race score to determine the winner of the race.

Race Score	Result
0 or less	The <i>Wormwood</i> is too far ahead. The PCs are unable to catch up, and the <i>Wormwood</i> reaches the finish line first.
1–10	The PCs and the <i>Wormwood</i> are neck-and-neck. At the last second, the PCs' ship noses ahead, and the PCs cross the finish line first.
11 or more	The PCs lead the <i>Wormwood</i> by a considerable margin. Harrigan makes a determined effort to catch up, but he has no chance of winning. The PCs are victorious, crossing the finish line as the clear winners.

Development: If the *Wormwood* crosses the finish line first, the Master of the Gales proclaims Captain Harrigan the winner of the Regatta. Harrigan's victory is short-lived,



however, as less than an hour later, the *Pharasma's Price* sails out of the Eye and limps to the finish. On board the ship is one of the crew of the *Barnacled Bitch*, which was lost just past Pinnacle Atoll. The survivor, Zarena Visk, tells a harrowing tale of how the *Wormwood* maliciously ramméd and sunk the *Bitch*, losing all hands other than Zarena. It was only sheer luck that the *Price* saw Zarena in the storm-tossed waters and picked her up. Even more damning, Zarena has solid proof of her story—a piece of the *Wormwood's* dragon figurehead that broke off during the attack, to which Zarena clung to stay afloat. With this proof and Zarena's testimony, the Master of the Gales disqualifies Harrigan and declares the PCs the winners of the Free Captains' Regatta.

Story Award: If the PCs completed the Free Captain's Regatta but did not win (Race score of 0 or less), award them 4,800 XP and 1 point of Disrepute and Infamy. If the PCs won the race by a nose (Race score of 1–10), award them 9,600 XP and 2 points of Disrepute and Infamy. If the PCs won the regatta with an overwhelming victory (Race score of 11 or more), award them 19,200 XP and 4 points of Disrepute and Infamy.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Whether they won the regatta by their own luck and skill or through the *Wormwood's* disqualification, the PCs have now more than ever earned the undying enmity of Captain Barnabas Harrigan. As winners of the Free Captains' Regatta, the PCs receive the regatta's rich prize purse—with 16 entrants, including themselves, the purse totals 8,000 gp. More importantly, the PCs gain a seat on the Pirate Council of the Shackles. The Master of the Gales ceremonially attaches a broken, silver-plated manacle on one of the PCs' wrists as a symbol of this honor, representing the PCs' freedom from the constraints of other nations' laws and authority, but also the responsibility that now binds them to the welfare of the Shackles and its people, whom they now represent. Finally, the Master of the Gales presents the PCs with a deed granting them lordship over a small island in the north of the Shackles. But a deed is only a piece of paper; in order to truly claim dominion over this island, the PCs must explore it and deal with any monsters or other inhabitants there. The efforts of the PCs to claim the isle for themselves are detailed in the next volume of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, "Island of Empty Eyes."



MASTER OF THE GALES

The ruler of Drenchport and captain of the xebec *Kraken*, the mysterious Master of the Gales is one of the Shackles' most powerful pirate lords.

MASTER OF THE GALES

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male middle-aged human druid (storm druid) 15 (*Pathfinder*

RPG Ultimate Magic 40)

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** eyes of the storm*, *true seeing*; **Perception** +25

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+3 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 161 (15d8+90)

Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +18; +2 vs. sonic effects

Defensive Abilities storm lord*; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** deafness, wind effects; **Resist** electricity 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *staff of weather*** +13/+8/+3 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks lightning lord (15 bolts/day), storm burst (1d6+7 nonlethal damage, 10/day), wild shape 6/day, wind blast** (CMB +22, 10/day)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +22)

8th—*summon nature's ally VIII*, *whirlwind*^D (DC 25)

7th—*control weather*^D, *heal*, *summon nature's ally VII*, *true seeing*

6th—*find the path*, *fire seeds*, *greater dispel magic*, *repel wood*, *wind walk*^D

5th—*animal growth* (DC 22), *baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *call lightning storm* (DC 22), *commune with nature*, *control winds*^D (DC 22), *stoneskin*

4th—*air walk*^D, extended *call lightning*, *control water*, *freedom of movement*, *ice storm*, *rusting grasp*

3rd—extended *bear's endurance*, extended *bull's strength*, extended *cat's grace*, *dominate animal* (DC 20), *gaseous form*^D, *greater magic fang*, *water breathing*

2nd—*barkskin*, *chill metal* (DC 19), *flaming sphere* (DC 19), *gust of wind* (DC 19), *resist energy*, *warp wood*, *wind wall*^D

1st—*cure light wounds* (DC 18), *endure elements*, *faerie fire*, *obscuring mist*, *produce flame*, *speak with animals*, *whispering wind*^D

0 (at will)—*create water*, *flare* (DC 17), *guidance*, *mending*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Air (Wind subdomain**), Weather

TACTICS

Before Combat The Master of Gales casts *greater magic fang* on his giant squid cohort every day, imbuing all of

its natural attacks with a +1 enhancement bonus. He casts *endure elements* and *water breathing* on himself every day, and casts *air walk*, *barkskin*, extended *bear's endurance*, extended *bull's strength*, extended *cat's grace*, *freedom of movement*, *stoneskin*, and *true seeing* before combat. He also casts *animal growth* on his giant squid cohort before battle.

During Combat The Master of Gales uses wild shape to assume the form of a giant squid, killer whale, Huge air elemental, or Huge water elemental for combat. He often combines *call lightning storm* and *whirlwind* to good effect and reserves his *baleful polymorph* spell to transform a difficult opponent into a sea slug. In the water, he casts *summon monster VII* or *VIII* to summon elder elementals, fiendish giant squids, or fiendish dire sharks to assist him in combat.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, the Master of the Gales uses *word of recall* stored in his *spellstaff* to retreat to his sanctuary in Drenchport.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 26

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Natural Spell, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Toughness

Skills Fly +15, Handle Animal +15, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Perception +25, Profession (sailor) +31, Spellcraft +10, Survival +20, Swim +19

Languages Aquan, Auran, Common, Druidic

SQ nature bond (Air and Weather domains), nature sense, spontaneous domain casting*, stormvoice*, timeless body, wild empathy +14, windlord*, windwalker*

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, cloak of resistance +2, headband of inspired wisdom +4, ring of protection +2, *staff of weather*** (*spellstaff*: *word of recall*), holly and mistletoe, spell component pouch

* See *Ultimate Magic*.

** See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

GIANT SQUID COHORT

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 102 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 259)

The Master of the Gales is an aged man with a lean, bronzed frame and leathery skin—the product of a lifetime of hard work under the open sky. The years have not worn away the grizzled captain, but condensed and distilled him, making him tougher, more tenacious, with an unyielding manner and bearing. A wild mane of dark gray hair and a long, flowing beard swirl around his head and shoulders like an imminent storm cloud, and his sweeping, iron-blue gaze feels like stiff icy wind blowing off a roiling ocean.

Many legends surround the man known as the Master of the Gales, but all seem to agree on two points—that he was born in the Sodden Lands, and that his birth occurred in the midst of one of the freakish hell-storms that bombard the perpetually waterlogged landscape. His original name is now lost to time; some say it has even been forgotten by the man himself, but only when well out of his exceptionally keen hearing. Little is known of his childhood, but many believe he was raised among the cannibalistic Koboto tribe of the lost nation of Yamasa. While the Master of the Gales never speaks of his past, he has been known to show uncharacteristic moments of unbridled anger at the merest mention of the Koboto, and local Drenchport superstition holds that appearing in the Master of the Gales' presence with one of the *goz masks* favored by that tribe is an exceedingly foolhardy deed.

A prominent member of the Shackles' Pirate Council, the Master of the Gales rules the town of Drenchport on Tempest Cay with a loose hand, preferring to spend most of his time on his flagship, the xebec *Kraken*.

A few veteran sailors can remember when the Master of the Gales first returned from a lone pilgrimage to the south with a giant squid gliding behind his catboat. The crew of the *Kraken* simply call it “the Squid” or “the Master’s Hand.” Whether the inscrutable creature regards the Master as a friend, parent, sibling, or mate is unknown, but its loyalty is unquestioned. When the *Kraken* is at anchor and the Master of the Gales is on deck, the squid often surfaces, staring at the Master with its unblinking, inhuman eye. On rare occasions, it has even been seen to lift a rubbery tentacle over the *Kraken's* rail and delicately brush it against the Master’s side.

The Master of the Gales sees piracy at sea as a simple extension of the hunter-prey relationship in nature, and he’s an apex predator in this realm. Those ships that see the *Kraken* bearing down on them find their masts split by lightning, their sails shredded by howling winds, and their crews flung into the heavens or swept overboard by malevolent whirlwinds and living waves.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The Master of the Gales serves as the judge of the Free Captains' Regatta in this adventure. He takes this role seriously, not only because he has won the race for the past 5 years, but also because he sees it as a solemn test for the winners to demonstrate that they deserve a seat on the Pirate Council. The Master takes a balanced position on the Council, seeing it as similar in structure to a wolf pack—there needs to be an alpha, but the leader must be able to withstand challenges from up-and-coming contenders. The Master of Gales is loyal to the Shackles, but he knows that in any conflict of rivals, only the strong survive. Only those who can prove their strength in all aspects of leadership earn his support.





PIERCE JERRELL

Pierce Jerrell, captain of the schooner *Salty Flagon*, wants nothing more than to live life to its fullest. He loves the adventure and excitement piracy brings, and enjoys spending his plunder on the finer things in life.

PIERCE JERRELL CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human fighter 1/sorcerer 7

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 62 (8 HD; 1d10+7d6+28)

Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 longsword +9 (1d8+4/19–20) or
mwk brass knuckles* +8 (1d3+3)

Ranged mwk dagger +7 (1d4+3/19–20)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10)
6/day—touch of destiny (+3)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)
3rd (5/day)—*haste* (DC 16), *heroism*, *protection from energy*
2nd (7/day)—*blur*, *bull's strength*, *false life*, *scorching ray*
1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 14), *color spray* (DC 14),
mage armor, *magic missile*, *shield*
o (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*,
mending, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

Bloodline Destined

TACTICS

Before Combat Pierce casts *false life* and *mage armor* every morning, renewing them as needed. If expecting combat, he casts *blur*, *bull's strength*, *heroism*, *protection from energy*, and *shield* (not included in his stats).

During Combat Pierce casts *haste* at the beginning of combat, then wades into the fray with longsword drawn. He attacks with Power Attack and Furious Focus, alternating with spells such as *scorching ray* and *magic missile* if he can cast them safely.

Morale Brash and impetuous, Pierce only retreats if severely outnumbered or reduced to fewer than 15 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16

Base Atk +4; CMB +7; CMD 21

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Furious Focus*, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness,

Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +10, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Perception +3, Profession (sailor) +11, Spellcraft +4, Swim +10

Languages Common

SQ bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus to saves when casting personal-range spells), fated (+2)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of fly*, *scroll of invisibility*, *scroll of pyrotechnics*; **Other Gear** +1 longsword, masterwork brass knuckles*, masterwork dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, *cracked incandescent blue sphere ioun stone* (+1 competence bonus on Profession [sailor] checks; *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Seekers of Secrets* 47), *ring of protection* +1, eye patch, spyglass, diamond studded earring (worth 250 gp), inlaid silver hip flask (worth 50 gp), 57 gp

* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Pierce Jerrell is a dashing young man with a handsome, square-jawed face and finely muscled frame. He wears an unadorned black patch over his left eye and dresses in a loose, flowing shirt and high boots. His self-assured manner and easy smile radiate self-confidence. Pierce moves with an understated swagger that suggests he's well accustomed to standing astride the swaying deck of a ship at sea. Under his eye patch, Pierce wears a blue *ioun stone* in his damaged left eye socket, which complements his naturally blue right eye. The *ioun stone* improves his skill at sailing and also endows him a particularly striking appearance if he chooses to reveal his left eye.

Pierce grew up in the Drumish port city of Detmer watching the shipyards turn out caravels and navy frigates and daydreaming of one day sailing on one. Both of Pierce's parents served in the upper echelons of Druma's infamous Mercenary League, and made sure that Pierce received strict military training to follow in their footsteps and become a cadet in the Mercenary League. As he matured, however, Pierce came to appreciate the finer luxuries of life and realized that a long and arduous career in the Mercenary League wouldn't give him even a fraction of the wealth of a successful Drumish merchant. He also came to loathe the regimented and dehumanizing schooling he was enduring, and became estranged from

his authoritarian parents. When his sorcerous talents manifested at the age of 16, Pierce was struck by the ultimate realization he was destined for a different fate.

Pierce stowed away on a Nirmathi trading ship bound for Tamran and quickly learned the ropes of sailing ships on Lake Encarthan. Eventually, he made his way to Korvosa where, short on funds, he signed on with a crew of Riddleport pirates. Pierce found that this was the life for him, sailing the open sea with the chance of riches just over the horizon, but before he could enjoy more than a brief taste of the pirate's life, his ship was attacked by a Chelish man-o'-war. Pierce lost his eye to a rain of crossbow bolts, and woke in the hold as a prisoner, sentenced to hard labor on a Chelish slave galley.

Fortunately for Pierce, dissident priests of Cayden Cailean broke into the jail where he was being held and unlocked the holding cells. Pierce escaped in the chaos, and joined the dissidents for a short time, becoming an enthusiastic worshiper of the Drunken Hero. After some time, Pierce found his way to the Shackles, where he won his current ship, a schooner called the *Salty Flagon*, in a high-stakes dice game.

Pierce has had modest success as a pirate captain, though he has recently had to hire new crew after barely escaping a Rahadoumi naval ambush. Pierce views captaining a ship as similar to commanding a mercenary company and organizes his crew in a similar fashion. Captain Jerrell's primary motivation is to make enough money to live the good life. After a successful series of raids, he carouses and celebrates wildly, with copious amounts of wine, gambling, companionship, and merriment.

Pierce is a charming and likeable rapsallion. He learned enough etiquette growing up in Druma to show a level of well-mannered decorum and suave demeanor that makes him stand out from other raucous buccaneers in the Shackles. Pierce also has a chivalrous streak—he honorably accepts a challenge or agreement, eagerly fights a foe fair and square in single combat, and doesn't abuse prisoners or sell them into slavery. He does have a temper, however, and when angry, Pierce can become belligerent and ferocious.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Pierce Jerrell has the potential to become an ally of the PCs who can aid them later in the Adventure Path. As a fellow pirate whose fortunes are on the rise, Pierce could also become a friendly rival, though depending on the PCs' actions, the rivalry could quickly become hostile. Even if Pierce and the PCs become good friends, he is a spirited fellow who enjoys a competitive camaraderie. He often makes informal bets to liven things up, such as a quick race to a nearby island, a challenge to be the first one to board a fleeing merchant ship, or a wager to

see who can fill their hold with the greatest amount of plunder in a month.

A pretty face can easily turn Pierce's head, and one of the PCs may also attract his romantic interest. Pierce ardently pursues a potential romantic companion, wooing the PC with flamboyant demonstrations of his devotion, showers of presents, cleverly planned dates, and extensive intimate conversations. He isn't looking to settle down with a lover, but to have a "partner in crime" with whom to celebrate the party of life. Just before the Free Captains' Regatta, Pierce may loan his *ioun stone* to a PC he is romantically involved with.

Pierce makes a tempestuous romantic partner, and any relationship with him is likely to be full of emotional ups and downs—stormy fights and smashing of furnishings, long silences, extravagant begging for forgiveness, and passionate reunions. Pierce has an explosive personality, as well as a jealous streak, so if a PC lover scorns him, he could become a bitter enemy.





TESSA FAIRWIND

A popular figure throughout the Shackles, Tessa Fairwind is Mistress of Quent and captain of the sloop-of-war *Luck of the Draw*. Widespread rumor holds that she will be the next Hurricane King, either by acclaim or by force.

TESSA FAIRWIND

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female half-elf bard (daredevil) 10/duelist 3 (*Pathfinder RPG*)

Ultimate Combat 32)

CN Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 19, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 76 (13 HD; 10d8+3d10+13)

Fort +7, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9; +2 vs. enchantments, +3 vs. fear and mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities canny defense +3, dauntless*, parry

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +2 rapier +16/+11 (1d6+2/18–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +14 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 26 rounds/day (move action, countersong, derring-do* +2/+4, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +3, inspire greatness, suggestion), canny foe* (dirty trick, disarm, trip), precise strike +3

Bard Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +14)

4th (2/day)—*dimension door*, *freedom of movement*

3rd (4/day)—*charm monster* (DC 17), *crushing despair* (DC 17), *good hope*, *haste*

2nd (5/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *suggestion* (DC 16)

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 15), *hideous laughter* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

TACTICS

During Combat Tessa begins combat by casting *freedom of movement*, *good hope*, *haste*, and *mirror image*, and uses inspire greatness on herself. She casts *crushing despair* on large groups of foes, or *charm monster* or *suggestion* against a single powerful opponent. When fighting hand-to-hand, she stays mobile with her Spring Attack feat and uses her precise strike ability with her rapier, or attempts to disarm foes. When making a full attack, she often forgoes her primary attack so she can use her parry ability to block incoming melee strikes.

Morale If a sea battle turns against her, Tessa attempts to disengage and save her crew. In personal combat, Tessa retreats using *dimension door* when reduced to fewer than 25 hit points. When defending her ship, however, she fights to the bitter end.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +10 (+12 dirty trick and trip, +14 disarm);

CMD 26 (28 vs. dirty trick and trip, 30 vs. disarm)

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +21 (+26 when jumping), Appraise +11, Bluff +25, Climb +16, Diplomacy +26, Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (local) +16, Perception +17, Perform (dance) +12, Perform (oratory) +20, Perform (sing) +12, Profession (sailor) +15, Sense Motive +15, Swim +8

Languages Celestial, Common, Elven, Osiriani, Polyglot

SQ agile*, elf blood, enhanced mobility, improved reaction +2, scoundrel's fortune* (2/day), jack-of-all-trades (use any skill)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*, *scroll of silence*; **Other Gear** +2 *glamered mithral chain shirt*, +2 rapier, masterwork light crossbow with 15 bolts, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *boots of striding and springing*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2 (Sense Motive), *ring of protection* +2, lucky ivory dice, platinum holy symbol of Calistria (worth 100 gp), spell component pouch, tricorne hat

* See *Ultimate Combat*.

Tessa Fairwind is a slender woman with long red hair worn in a no-nonsense braid. She wears a figure-hugging combination of fashionable finery and practical sailor's clothes with a tricorne hat at a jaunty angle. Her fine features and delicately pointed ears accent her exquisite looks, and she moves with lithe fluidity and graceful efficiency evident in her every motion.

While the exact details of Tessa's past are the subject of much speculation and several tragic ballads among the islands of the Shackles, the truth is that she was born on the open sea, from a spur-of-the-moment union of a seductive human merchant sailor and an elven priest at the Pleasure Salon of Calistria in Absalom. Tessa spent

her childhood years with her mother aboard countless ships and on the docks of numerous Inner Sea ports. She grew up listening to sea chanteys and tales of exotic ports and fabulous voyages. Her career as a pirate began as a young adolescent when she stole a yacht from Cassomir's docks and used it to burglarize a smuggler's secret stash. By the age of 15, Tessa was captaining her first ship, sailing it up the Junira River to lead an audacious midnight robbery of a Thuvian pleasure barge.

Within 3 years, the price on her head had become so high that Tessa sailed through the Arch of Aroden and into the Arcadian Ocean to avoid capture by bounty hunters. Her successful raids on Chelish shipping near Khari as she voyaged westward were an indication that the young pirate had no intention of changing her wild ways. Sailing down the Garundi coast, Tessa attacked Rahadoumi trading vessels and coastal villages until she arrived in the Shackles, finding the pirate isles much to her liking.

Tessa soon set about making a name for herself and carving out a place in the dangerous pirate confederacy, which quickly put her into conflict with several Free Captains and pirate lords. Through all the skullduggery and treachery, those who underestimated Tessa Fairwind soon learned that meddling with the half-elf captain was an exceedingly painful mistake, and often a fatal one. Over time, she became a powerful pirate Free Captain, gathering a loyal following of scoundrels and a large fleet of ships under her banner, including her personal ship, the sloop-of-war *Luck of the Draw*.

Tessa Fairwind is now Mistress of Quent on Motaku Isle—one of the Shackles' most important ports—and one of the leading lords of the Pirate Council. She is a shrewd player in the game of politics, but her rebellious and carefree attitude has won her popular acclaim in the Shackles. Tessa has no wish at all to claim the Hurricane Crown, however. She much prefers the freedom of the open sea, with the wind in her hair and the sway of a good ship beneath her. Most of all, she loves the thrill of the hunt when seeking merchant ships to plunder, though she views wealth as simply a means of keeping score.

Tessa is an unconventional worshiper of Calistria, for while she truly believes in the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure and the freedom to live as she pleases,

she finds seeking revenge for petty slights a waste of time, and games of trivial intrigue a distraction from the joys of living. Nevertheless, bawdy songs of Tessa's exploits are known throughout the Shackles, though Tessa herself neither confirms nor denies the veracity of these tales.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Tessa sees herself as a mentor and guide to the PCs as they commence their journey through the treacherous political waters of the Shackles and its Pirate Council.

She looks on the PCs as a gust of fresh wind that can stir things up for the good of the pirate isles. While Tessa herself doesn't want to rule the Shackles, she wants a deciding say in who does. Tessa's motives aren't altruistic; she simply wants the freedom to do as she pleases, with a strong Hurricane King who sees things her way.

Tessa prefers to take a light hand with the PCs; she doesn't want irresolute allies who need her to make all the decisions. If the PCs want to chart their own course, she happily helps them while delicately manipulating circumstances to their mutual benefit. If the PCs somehow come to view her as a potential rival, Tessa may attempt a token resistance before graciously conceding to the PCs, hopefully bolstering their long-term influence with the council.

Tessa may see one or more of the PCs as suitable paramours. Although she is more than happy to entertain flirtatious PCs, she keeps her affections on a strictly physical level. Past heartbreak has resulted in a preference to avoid emotional attachment—though she took her due revenge against the lover who spurned her, it left her unwilling to risk her heart again. However, a patient, affectionate, and loyal lover might convince her to change her mind.





SKULL & SHACKLES TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “Tempest Rising.” Player-appropriate handouts appear in the GameMastery Skull & Shackles item card set.

CHARTS OF THE FAIR WINDS

Aura moderate divination; **CL** 9th

Slot none; **Price** 3,200 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

These aged charts of thick, yellowed parchment display rough representations of the Shackles’ major islands and the sea lanes between them. The detailed markings on these charts grant a +2 circumstance bonus on Profession (sailor) or Survival checks to navigate within the Shackles.

In addition, a multitude of wrinkles, stains, and blemishes mar the charts’ surfaces. Anyone meticulously studying the charts notices that these markings shift over time. The creases, smudges, and blotches on the map represent real weather conditions (such as clouds, rain, and wind) in the region, allowing an informed observer to determine the current weather patterns over the islands of the Shackles. The charts grant a +4 competence bonus on Survival checks made to predict future weather conditions and a +2 competence bonus on Survival checks to gain a bonus on Fortitude saves against severe weather.

Finally, the pilot of a wind-propelled ship can make a DC 20 Profession (sailor) check to plot a course within the Shackles using the charts. If the check is successful, the charts grant the ship a +10% enhancement bonus to its waterborne speed as long as it follows the plotted course.

All of the charts’ benefits only apply within the geographic region of the Shackles. GMs with access to the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Skull & Shackles Map Folio* might use the elaborate player map of the Shackles included therein to represent this item.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *commune with nature*, creator must have 10 ranks in Survival; **Cost** 1,600 gp

JALHAZAR’S WHEEL

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 11th

Slot none; **Price** 7,500 gp; **Weight** 15 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Handles of polished bone and grim skulls decorate this ornately carved ship’s wheel. When grasped, the wheel’s handles feel comfortably smooth. Those who stand watch at the wheel claim to hear the whispered guidance of Captain

Xiribal Jalhazar, and occasionally feel ghostly hands holding the ship’s course true. When fitted to the helm of a ship, *Jalhazar’s wheel* grants a +5 competence bonus on sailing checks to turn the ship with the hard to port or hard to starboard actions (*Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide* 13). The wheel also halves the penalty on sailing checks made when turning the ship while traveling at three or more times the ship’s acceleration. In addition, the ship’s pilot can combine a hard to port or hard to starboard action with a full ahead or heave to action as a full-round action up to three times per day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*, *haste*, creator must have 10 ranks in Profession (sailor); **Cost** 3,750 gp

RING OF THE IRON SKULL

Aura faint divination; **CL** 5th

Slot ring; **Price** 10,800 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Crudely cut amethysts and a single engraved skull decorate the band of this thick iron ring. The ring grants its wearer a +5 competence bonus on Appraise checks to determine the most valuable item in a treasure hoard and a +5 competence bonus on Heal checks to ascertain details of a dead creature’s demise. Once per day as a standard action, the wearer can touch the ring to a corpse or piece of a corpse to learn the dead creature’s name, gender, race, and profession or role, as well as the manner of the creature’s death. The wearer also becomes aware of the location of other pieces of the corpse if they’re within 1,200 feet. If the body part comes from a creature that’s still alive or undead, the wearer gains no information. The *ring of the iron skull* must be worn for 24 hours before it starts to function for the wearer.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Forge Ring, *blood biography* (*Advanced Player’s Guide* 206), *locate object*; **Cost** 5,400 gp

SHACKLES ENSIGN

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 10th

Slot none; **Price** 10,800 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This red-and-black naval ensign displays the grinning skull and

SKULL & SHACKLES TREASURES



Shackles Ensign

Charts of the Fair Winds



Sharpshooter's Blade



Jalhazar's Wheel

Ring of the Iron Skull



crossed manacles of the Shackles. While the flag feels as sleek as silk, the material is stronger than the toughest sail canvas. Openly flying a *Shackles ensign* improves the initial attitude of most hostile or unfriendly pirates by one step, and worsens the starting attitude of those opposed to piracy by one step. The ensign has no effect when not properly mounted on a ship.

Once per day, a *Shackles ensign* can be hoisted and unfurled on a ship to impose a sinister sense of doom upon an opposing ship's crew. It takes two full-round actions to raise the flag. All non-pirate creatures (defined at the GM's discretion) within 300 feet who are able to see the flag take a -1 penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for 1 minute. This is a visual mind-affecting effect. In addition, all allied creatures aboard the ship flying the *Shackles ensign* gain a $+1$ luck bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for 1 minute.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *prayer*; **Cost** 5,400 gp

SHARPSHOOTER'S BLADE

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 10th
Slot none; **Price** 7,305 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

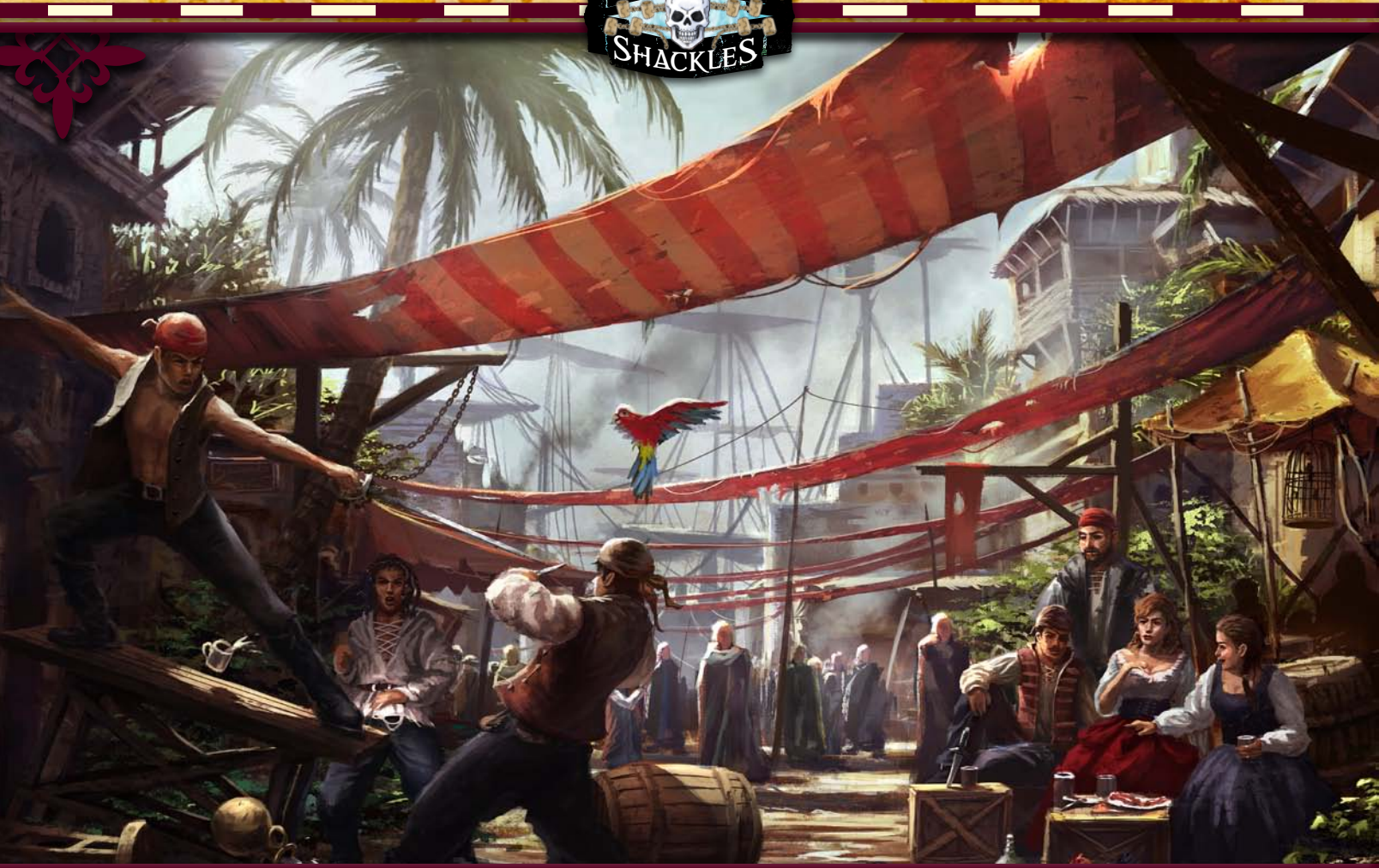
This bloodstained, skull-bedecked bayonet (*Advanced Player's*

Guide 176) has thin blood gutters running along both sides of its 14-inch blade. When attached to a magic crossbow or firearm, a *sharpshooter's blade* gains the enhancement bonus and other weapon special abilities of the ranged weapon it is attached to, and feats, spells, and abilities that enhance or improve attacks with the ranged weapon can be used with the *sharpshooter's blade*, provided these would work with a weapon of the bayonet's type (a two-handed piercing melee weapon). These bonuses and benefits don't stack with bonuses or benefits of the same type or from the same source. For example, a character with both Weapon Focus (bayonet) and Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow) would only gain the benefits of one of those feats when attacking with a *sharpshooter's blade* attached to a heavy crossbow. Use-activated abilities of the ranged weapon can be triggered through the *sharpshooter's blade* but count toward the usage limitations of the ranged weapon.

When not attached to a magic crossbow or firearm, a *sharpshooter's blade* has no enhancement bonus, but is still of masterwork quality and counts as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *greater magic weapon*, *versatile weapon* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 254); **Cost** 3,805 gp



PORT PERIL

If you yearn for the smell of the clean salt air and the sour stench of boiling tar, and desire the opportunity to fulfill sailors' every vice, then you need look no further than Port Peril. By the nine layers of Hell, I think they've invented some vices of their own, so best take caution—you can't trust anyone in that port, and any word given by the Free Captains only goes so far. Between the thieves of Pike Street, the perfumed doxies of Scrimshaw, and thirsty sailors looking for the nearest cask of rum, you can find yourself battered, shirtless, and broke before you've even left sight of the quay.

—Xavi Narcis, first mate of
the *Serpent's Curse* (retired)

PORT PERIL

Just as likely to offer a hand out on a stormy sea as to stab you over a single gold piece, every rough-and-tumble resident of the Shackles lives life to the fullest. A stout heart, steady sea legs, keen eyes, a healthy respect for the sea—the freedom-loving denizens of the Shackles admire these traits even in their hated foes. A driven personality with a love of profit doesn't hurt either, and in the misfit collection of isles that make up the realm sandwiched between the Arcadian Ocean and the jungles of southern Garund, such behavior goes far. In Port Peril, the drive to amass wealth, admiration of the power of the wind and waves, and skill at commanding a sailing vessel all characterize those that call the Shackles their home.

PORT PERIL

CN metropolis

Corruption +4; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +6; **Law** +7; **Lore** +6;
Society +3

Qualities holy site (Berth of the Sea Wraith), notorious, prosperous, rumormongering citizens, strategic location, superstitious

Danger +20

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 43,270 (27,636 humans; 3,891 half-elves; 3,496 half-orcs; 2,663 gnomes; 2,230 halflings; 1,798 elves; 1,357 dwarves; 199 other)

NOTABLE NPCS

Captain Kerdak Bonefist, the Hurricane King (NE male human fighter 8/Inner Sea pirate 10)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 29,744 gp; **Purchase Limit** 225,000 gp;

Spellcasting 8th

Minor Items all; **Medium Items** 4d4; **Major Items** 3d4

PORT PERIL GAZETTEER

South of Jeopardy Bay, Port Peril sits on the mainland outside the frenzied grasp of the Eye of Abendego and west of the mountainous Terwa Uplands. The rocky escarpments and bluffs cup a deep harbor capable of handling heavily laden merchants' barques and galleys. Convenient access to the jungles of the Terwa Uplands and the Slithering Coast means prospecting teams can easily move inland in search of precious lumber, spices, and exotic fauna for trade in distant ports. Neutral merchants berth here before making the treacherous journey north, but the port's militia forces ships bearing the flags of Inner Sea nations away. Merchants looking to turn a fast profit have their pick of commandeered goods in the markets of Port Peril, though the wise ones do well to check the provenance before attempting to sell them in northern ports.

The following locations are among the most infamous and exciting spots in Port Peril.

Beggarbriar: Hard-luck cases, addicts, and those whom not even pirates can tolerate end up here, outside of the natural stone bluffs that form the protective wall for Crescent Harbor, Eastwind, and Merchant Marina. The stink of boiling tar permeates all of Beggarbriar, as does the reek of the tanneries. The creation and sale of ropes, sails, and supplies (neither the best nor freshest) employ the residents of Beggarbriar, and others operate the dry docks to repair and scrape ship hulls. Ironically, for all its poor reputation and lingering stench, Beggarbriar holds some of the finest shipwrights in the Shackles—every one of them irascible, ill-tempered, and prone to drink. The most well known of them, **Callindra Raines** (CN female human expert 9), once served as a shipwright in Augustana, lured to the Shackles by the promise of wealth. With the secrets of the Andoren navy ships in her head, she has a phenomenally large bounty in her homeland, but doesn't care—the Free Captains pay her five times what she received in Augustana.

Bekyar Headman's Lodge: Simple wooden shacks and huts form a wall against the jungle along the western half of Beggarbriar. Numerous members of Mwangi tribes live in this area, particularly of the Bonuwat and Bekyar peoples, who come to trade with the pirates of the port. The Bekyar of the area consider **Goat Tongue** (CE male human witch 6), a worshiper of Angazhan, their headman and leader while in the city and obey his ritual-inspired visions that so often demand sacrifice and slave-taking.

Berth of the Sea Wraith: This is one of the few holy sites dedicated to Besmara. Before the temple rise arching fingers of petrified wood that form the hull of an immense ship, twice as long as the Hurricane King's flagship, the *Filthy Lucre*. Many believe Besmara built this nameless vessel as a prototype for the *Sea Wraith* long before Port Peril existed, then sailed off into the eternal oceans of the Maelstrom.

Bloodpools: Pools filled with strange urchins partially fill a cave within the Knotworks. Supposedly, these pools provide passage to the sea east of the city, possibly explaining sightings of merfolk and strange creatures amid these waters.

Captain's Crawl: Said to be the pit where half-orc Captain Jolb Manyfingers hid a career's worth of plunder, this reeking pit descends deep beneath the Knotworks' caves—some say even into the Darklands themselves. None can truly say how far, though, as old Jolb himself disappeared down the pit more than 20 years ago.

The Cup and Rudder: Few realize that **Kennewik Masi's** (CG male human cleric 4) popular and sizable tavern is also Port Peril's unofficial temple to Cayden Cailean. Most take the building's size and the holy symbol on the building's tarnished bronze dome to be an elaborate theme.

Crescent Harbor: When visitors think of Port Peril's confusing streets, bloody alleys, and smoky taverns, they're really thinking of its bow-shaped harbor island. Crescent

Harbor's docks are filled with rowdy sailors and swindlers ready to separate any visitor from his coin with drink, gambling, whores, and cons. By standing order of the Hurricane King, all ships must dock at Crescent Harbor first, where their cargo is examined by dockworkers and quarantined for at least a week before crossing over to the main docks, an order that the **Harbormaster Tsojmin Kreidoros** (LE male dwarf wizard 7) adheres to with gravitas and efficiency.

Dead Man's Dance Hall: Carved by wind and wave over the centuries, this natural stone arch serves as a gruesome landmark. Spinning in the breezes off Jeopardy Bay, iron cages hang from chains, and scavengers pick away at the corpses within as they rot in the humid tropical air. Local assassins use this place to display their kills, as does the Hurricane King.

Eastwind: This district is split into two distinct wards, High and Low, and citizens of both quickly get used to the sound of wind and rain. Built on tidal silt, Low Eastwind loses bits and pieces of land to the sea yearly, and the tops of old houses that slipped into the sea along with portions of the bluff remain visible during the calm waters of summer. The threat of waking up several inches lower than yesterday gives many Low Eastwinders a dour, pragmatic outlook on life. High Eastwind sits a hundred feet above Low Eastwind, its stone houses safe and secure on their promontory. Merchants build manors here, fat on the gold they make shipping Sargavan treasures north or Chelish luxuries south for colonists and explorers. The spectacular views, easy access to the entertainments and docks of Merchant Marina, and the distance from rowdy Crescent Harbor put High Eastwind second only to the Lucrehold in terms of wealth.

F & M's Exotic Meats: A shop located in Low Eastwind, this building houses an unusual pair of shopkeepers. **Festerscale** (CN male kobold rogue 3) and **Mizrah** (N female half-elf cleric of Brigh 3) seek to purvey fresh meat to the many races of Port Peril. With their magically fashioned storerooms that keep their wares from rotting, they do a brisk business. Here, one can acquire the best-trimmed beef roast for Oathday dinner, a day-to-day sausage, or fare rare and exotic. For an extra bit of coin, these butchers will also quietly dispose of bodies, generally by making them someone else's lunch.

Freedom Hole: Few know that a tunnel cuts into the rock behind **Goli Mor's** (N male human ranger 5) Brinery, a cave that leads to a cracked wall separating the captives of the Saltfish Camp from freedom. The cracks in the wall are big enough to slip coins, a message, or anything else about the size of a coconut through, providing those in the slave camp with a tantalizing taste of freedom. Once a week Mor comes to the hole, and reliably takes and delivers messages from those in the camp, but only for a price in silver or desperate secrets.

Harborhorn: The squat tower of Harbormaster Kreidoros rises from a spit of land jutting from Crescent Harbor. Little passes within sight of the tower that the stern dwarf and his toughs are not aware of.

The Knotworks: Beneath the bluffs of Port Peril lie a series of labyrinthine tunnels packed with merchants who dream of leaving the caverns for a shop in High Eastwind. Most people here have little more than one lean-to or carved niche of rock to live in and sell their handiworks from, but merchants from the Viridian Cartel stake out whole caverns within the bluffs, protected by a small army of the cartel's guards. The constant temperature and humidity of the Knotworks make such caverns excellent warehouses. Despite the seclusion from wind and rain, many people seek to avoid living here, as horrifying stories tell of creatures emerging from some of these tunnels, ravenous for the taste of blood.

Latchmin's Folly: This squat sea fort was constructed by pirate lord Lukain Latchmin, who over a hundred years ago sought to take the title of Hurricane King by force—and failed miserably, as the fort's fire scars still attest. The fortress is now owned by **Zeru Faizel** (LN female human aristocrat 3/expert 4), a Katapeshi merchant who made her fortune in the Shackles, and has converted much of the keep to a stylish manor surrounded by gardens at the top of the incline from High Eastwind. Her alliance of merchants, the Viridian Cartel, deals directly with the Hurricane King, negotiating tax rates on cargo and safe escorts around the Eye. Faizel aims to make money for herself and her business partners, and often uses methods illegal in the Inner Sea—perfect for any seeking to invest in the cutthroat world of the Port Peril mercantile business.

The Locker: Law and order exist in Port Peril, though in a curious and misshapen form. More often than not, mob rule holds true, but some crimes, such as attempted mutiny, earn a front-row seat at the Locker. A low, two-story stone edifice covered with lichen, seabird nests, and shellfish, and built over the water's edge, this jail faces the Dead Man's Dance Hall. A single watchtower sits by the perpetually open front gates, and also serves as a signal tower. Narrow slit windows allow in light and fresh air, but the Locker's reputation has nothing to do with its amenities. Large holding cells on the upper level collect minor criminals who end up as laborers or slaves, but the lower level's Tidal Cells prey upon every sailor's worst nightmares. These cells sit below the high tide line, and water all but fills these 5-foot-square rooms when the tide comes in. Waste from the upper levels flows down, making these damp and cold cells even more unpleasant. Secured to the ceiling with thick iron chains, prisoners have to balance on iron crossbeams or risk falling into the water below. The head gaoler, a grizzled half-orc by the name of **Xue Bonebleeder** (NE female half-orc fighter 5), takes a perverse delight in putting unruly citizens or

mutineers in the Tidal Cells, then chumming the waters with bait to lure in the black-tipped jigsaw sharks that inhabit Port Peril's harbor.

Lubber's Lurk: The only way to enter Port Peril by land is through these twisting, poorly lit, and even more poorly marked sea caves. Rumors of growls in the dark, stealthy brigands, and cave fishers make catching a barge from Beggarbriar into the city far preferable to most folks.

Lucrehold: The island hold of the Hurricane King, this island serves as the seat of Port Peril's limited government. Upon the sea cliffs rises Fort Hazard—the home of the Hurricane King, Captain Kerdak Bonefist—and the tower lighthouse called Besmara's Beacon. The light of Fort Hazard has long symbolized safety for sailors coming home after a long voyage, but also the opposite. Tales tell of how the Hurricane King, watchful for those who have gained his ire, snuffs the light of the Beacon and watches as the ships impale themselves upon the shoals. Pirate captains within sight of Lucrehold often tally up their actions before approaching, checking to make sure they have not crossed the Hurricane King.

Marg's Emporium: Situated within a narrow gap between two caverns in the Knotworks—forcing traffic through the long shack—the shop of “Mangey” Marg Martols (N female human bard 2) has a reputation as a place where a sailor can sell nearly anything. Marg's collection of junk from around the Inner Sea is second to none, and has become something of an attraction for both visitors and seekers of the bizarre—as has Marg herself, with her penchant for fast-talking and impromptu storytelling.

Merchant Marina: Everybody who sells something in Port Peril has business in Merchant Marina. At this assortment of docks on the eastern shores of mainland-side Port Peril, dock hands offload merchants' cargo—commonly fabric, lumber, spices, or wines—for sale and transport elsewhere. Captains pay their fees, fines, and taxes to Merchant Master Pherias Jakar (LE male elf wizard 7), earning the marina the epithets Miser's Wharf and Pennypincher Pier. A friendly rivalry between Master Jakar and Master Kreidoros has existed for decades, and each has been known to arrange for a bit of excitement to break up the tedium.

Mermaid's Bucket: Numerous mermaid statues, fish masks, and other paraphernalia with a nautical theme festoon the taproom of this rowdy tavern, barely 10 strides from the main docks of Crescent Harbor. A mermaid mosaic with scales of a red resinous substance covers the wall over the main bar, and is clearly visible from outside. The lanky proprietor, Nefti Unweshā (CN female human expert 3), supplies rum to every drinkhouse and brothel in the city, buying out smaller crafters with unusually marked silver coins, or encouraging them to take their business to other cities.

Mystic's Redoubt: The only public arcane library in Port Peril, this six-winged circular tower stands in Crescent Harbor and charges steep fees for its use. Visitors must pay a yearly fee of 1,000 gold pieces or donate an unusual arcane item worth at least 500 gp—a scroll, potion, other magical item, or text on magic or planar theory—to enter the Redoubt. High entrance fees mean the tower does not get many newcomers, but a small number of apprentice hopefuls arrive each year, along with academicians wishing to study the relics in the Redoubt's antiquities hall. Rare natural components are grown in the well-tended grove next to the Redoubt, available for sale to any spellcasters stopping in Port Peril.

New Eleder: The tunnels leading into this cavern of Sargavan expatriates inexplicably collapsed more than a year ago. As no one cared enough about the occupants to dig them out, the cavern remains blocked—though some claim scrambling and scratching can still be heard within.

Saltfish Camp: In Port Peril, fortune sometimes runs out, and slavery is often the end result of poor decisions or sheer bad luck. Out of sight of most of Port Peril's citizens, this rickety collection of shacks barely keeps the rain out, and the slaves within must huddle together for warmth on cooler nights. Captains and foremen looking for cheap labor come to Firoj (CE male human expert 4), whose keen eye picks out just what they're looking for, and at bargain rates. Firoj keeps a firm hand on his property, aided by the whispers of Talsetus (CN male human commoner 5). Talsetus acts like a friend to the other slaves, showing new slaves how to take care of blisters and lashes, which



Nefti Unweshā



PORT PERIL

guards to stay on the good side of, and how to stay dry in the rainy season. Careful layers of lies and deception allow him to keep up the facade even as he feeds Firoj information about escape plans and mutinies. He knows that he has as good a life as a slave gets, as Firoj rewards him quite well for his duplicity, and if others must pay for his privileges with their suffering, so be it.

Scrimshaw: Compared to the refined pleasure-houses of High Eastwind, the low-rent brothels and bars of these whitewashed tenements have little more than their decorations to separate them from the other ramshackle buildings in this district. The carved ivory sculptures that adorn many of the buildings contain code and symbols, a hidden language indicating the availability of certain vices—three gulls for flayleaf, a shark for an assassin, or a whale for a fence of stolen items. Many sculptors have homes in Scrimshaw, making use of the ivory imported from the Mwangi Expanse and whalebones from the North Tack.

Sea Wrack Chapel: Most seaports hold a small shrine to Gozreh, master of the winds and waves, who holds dominion over the livelihood of every sailor that dares to roam the open seas. Not much different from that of any fishing village, Port Peril's hall has walls made of driftwood and netting to serve as a place of refuge for those seeking Gozreh's guidance. **Father Ignalus** (N male venerable halfling adept 5) tends this hall and welcomes those who follow his god, no matter the form it may take, including veneration of the dual form of Shimye-Migalla often worshiped in the Mwangi Expanse. A studious record-keeper since he arrived in Port Peril, Ignalus has kept an accurate, though morbid, account of all the shipwrecks around the pirate haven.

Sminsilver House: Constructed by retired captain Lucio Sminsilver over 40 years ago, this richly decorated manor overlooks Scrimshaw and stands as the most desirable address in mainland Port Peril. Few of the mansion's more than a dozen owners have managed to hold it for longer than 3 years, though, and the house has been gambled away, taken by rivals, or abandoned numerous times.

Siren's Lash: The denizens of Port Peril love the pleasures of the flesh, and plentiful adherents to the goddess of lust, Calistria, live here to attend to their every need. Regularly requested by the Hurricane King when he entertains in Lucrehold, the attractive and attentive courtesans of the temple serve as excellent informants for a bit of extra coin. Once a temple to Shelyn, Siren's Lash still bears marks of that goddess's influence in its furnishings. Exotic birds roost in intricate gardens, topiary sculptures intertwine with fragrant orchids, and bright silken curtains catch even the slightest breeze. **Mistress Livdana Giedrence** (CN female half-elf cleric of Calistria 6), a curvaceous, dark-skinned woman with deep purple eyes, loves goods imported from Kyonin, and such gifts all but ensure an audience with this leader of the Savored Sting's faithful.

PORT PERIL LOCATIONS

1. Crescent Harbor
2. Mermaid's Bucket
3. Harborhorn
4. Mystic's Redoubt
5. Lucrehold
6. Latchmin's Folly
7. F & M's Exotic Meats
8. Merchant Marina
9. Sea Wrack Chapel
10. Siren's Lash
11. Eastwind
12. The Bloodpools
13. Sminsilver House
14. Dead Man's Dance Hall
15. The Locker
16. The Cup and Rudder
17. Scrimshaw
18. Marg's Emporium
19. The Knotworks
20. Bekyar Headman's Lodge
21. Beggarbriar
22. Berth of the Sea Wraith
23. Sunken Plaza
24. Captain's Crawl
25. Lubber's Lurk
26. Saltfish Camp
27. Freedom Hole
28. New Eleder

Sunken Plaza: A confusing maze of ladders, rickety stairs, multicolored lanterns, and the occasional flicker of eldritch lights, this multilevel market holds the most diverse and affordable shops in Port Peril. While the rich make most of their purchases in Merchant Marina, citizens looking for the uncommon, very cheap, or very specific come here. Poisons from Nidal, Mwangi juju fetishes, questionable artifacts with unknown provenance, magic items of every caliber, exotic beasts, and countless petty criminals with sharp blades and light fingers can all be found here. The plaza is built upon the crumbled layers of a collapsed mausoleum, and residents constantly find bits and pieces of frescoes, urns, and tiled floor mosaics. To the delight of the sages of Mystic's Redoubt, entire ancient homes remain intact, their belongings and furnishings untouched by time. The Pathfinder Society has yet to delve into Port Peril's ruins, a fact not lost on the Hurricane King, and he waits for an offer from the Decemvirate or a representative to whom he can sell exclusive access.



SCOURGES OF THE SHACKLES

Them dirty devil-worshipping Chelaxians are always claimin' the Shackles is dangerous because of the Eye. Them greedy bilge-drinking merchants'll tell you the Shackles is dangerous on account of all the pirates. Those backstabbing bastard pirates'll claim the real danger's in them toothy beasts that snatch you off o' deck and drag you under the bloody waves, but they're all wrong, and they're all right—the Shackles is dangerous 'cos o' the whole bloody lot, I'll tell you! You can keep your precious 'freedom of the sea,' and you can keep your blasted Shackles. That whole damn'd place wants you dead, and if the Shackles seeks to claim you, not even ol' Bes can keep you safe."

—Daenfar Hornbelly, former helmsman of the *Dreaming Dog*

SCOURGES OF THE SHACKLES

In a region where violent death and ancient evils cling to the rocks like barnacles to a bow, a sea voyage is fraught with perils beyond the hosts of pirates hungry for loot and thirsty for blood. In the Shackles, many with the luck (or the coin) to avoid the cutlass still fall prey to strange, silent aberrations, flora and fauna tempered by endless storms, and a weather system so brutal it seems almost sentient. With one stray breath from the Eye of Abendego, the Shackles' seas become angry mountains—an unstoppable fury in which only the most skilled sailors can keep their vessel, let alone their crew, intact.

Presented here is an overview of some of the greatest dangers of the Shackles, specifically the pirate lords of that deadly region and a host of stormbound hazards—with new rules to bring such meteorological chaos to life.

PIRATE LORDS OF THE SHACKLES

While Kerdak Bonefist reigns as overlord of the Shackles, he does not rule alone. Beneath the Hurricane King, a council of pirate lords exercise dominance over their own island holdings and often whole fleets of semi-loyal pirate vessels. The most popular and infamous of the Shackles' pirate lords are listed here, along with their areas of operation, the name of their flagship, and brewing plots. More details on many of these NPCs and their holdings appear in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Isles of the Shackles*.

ALAHANDRA BOISICH

LN female human bard 6/fighter 3

Area of Operation Chalk Harbor (Whyrlis Rock)

Vessel *Cloudbuster's Dream*

More than 5 bitter years on the wind-battered Whyrlis Rock have given the mysterious and beautiful Alahandra Boisich the graying aspect of a much older woman. Nevertheless, she remains keen as ever, running an elaborate slaving operation based out of Chalk Harbor, where she forces any victims she captures at sea to work in the mines for a minimum of 2 years before releasing them. Despite her questionable means of acquiring workers, Alahandra proves to be a relatively kind overseer, and makes sure her enslaved miners are fed and watered. None know what the pirate lord hopes to find in her excavations of the rugged stone that makes up most of Whyrlis Rock, though in recent months she has become increasingly excited at her project's progress, leading her allies to believe they may be close to uncovering whatever it is she's seeking.

ARRONAX ENDYMION

NE male human aristocrat 6/fighter 6

Area of Operation Hell Harbor (Devil's Arches)

Vessel *Tyrannous*

Endymion seems to always be carrying the weight of great troubles on his imposing shoulders. His dark eyes

peer out from under his great, jet-black eyebrows, and a sullen mouth pouts beneath a wiry, waxed mustache. As the admiral's crippling paranoia of long overdue reprisal from Cheliox grows, so too does his sense of isolation. He longs for a genuine taste of the complicated social convention that brought his exile from Cheliox, and any wishing an audience with the lord of Hells Harbor would do well to present themselves as they would in Egorian—with deference, respect, and insincere flattery.

AVIMAR SORRINASH

CE male human wereshark rogue 5

Area of Operation Ollo (Shark Island)

Vessel *Blood Moon*

Able and deadly in his human form, Sorrinash is a brutal tempest when transformed. While the rest of Shark Island fends off the razor teeth of the sahuagin, Ollo loses only a few souls a year thanks to the acts of bloody underwater carnage and shows of subaquatic strength of their lycanthropic pirate lord. Sorrinash has persuaded the sahuagin that he deserves not only their alliance, but their worship.

BEDU HANJI

LE male rakshasa magus 6

Area of Operation Rampore Isles

Vessel *Semudarogah*

Attired in vibrant silks that offset his cobalt and crimson mandrill features, Bedu's sharp, simian teeth betray the brutality the rakshasa pirate lord is known for. The massacre of innocents aside, no pirate lord has a greater appreciation for song than Hanji, and he intends to entice Golarion's finest performers to the Shackles with a lavishly funded music competition. Rumor has it he is also considering a special event for household slaves to enter, with the winner receiving not only a generous financial reward, but also her freedom.

BRADESMAR WACHE OF MEDIOGALTI

CN male middle-aged human fighter 6/rogue 2

Area of Operation Maidenspool (Tempest Cay)

Vessel —

Some sailors can muster a brave face even in the greatest of troubles, but Bradesmar is not one of these. His threadbare clothing, unkempt gray hair, and sallow skin tell of many hours sitting in silence and darkness, cursing his very existence. He has become even more withdrawn over the last year since a series of deaths occurred around his unfinished home. Locals whisper that the overwhelming power of his grief has dragged the spirit of Ella, his beloved wife, back to Maidenspool against her will. Bradesmar is as terrified of this prospect as the rumored ghost is furious, and he attempts to ignore the problem by denying its very existence.



LADY CERISE BLOODMOURN

CN female human aristocrat 2/fighter 7/rogue 5

Area of Operation Quent (Motaku Island)

Vessel *Come What May*

Once of Galt's proud Vauxtiere family, Lady Bloodmourn left her exiled family's home in Taldor after a childhood of ridicule for her foreign birth. Seeking freedom and an escape from the expectations of nobility, Cerise seduced a pirate captain and convinced him to help her steal a ship and her inheritance. Since then, Lady Bloodmourn has quickly turned from a debutant to a true pirate, joining the ranks of Tessa Fairwind's fleet and recently even claiming a place on the Shackles' Pirate Council for herself.

CHAN AI-HUAO, JIEH HUI, AND LO SHEI WEN

CN female half-elf fighter 5, CN male old human rogue 5,
and NE male human ninja 4

Area of Operation Shenchu Bay

Vessels *Minkai's Grace*, *Black Night*, and *Serpent's Tongue*

These three Tian pirate lords make up the current Wise Council of Three of Shenchu Bay, a usually functional form of government that has proven tumultuous with this combination of councilors. The warm wisdom of elderly Jieh Hui often finds itself at odds with the cold cunning of raven-haired Lo Shei Wen during debates. Chan Ai-Huo has proven to be the only real voice for the laity of the island, but her support has dwindled in recent years, thanks in no small part to Shei Wen's public beratings of Ai-Huo as a "half-blooded mongrel."

DELEMONA BURIE AND LITTLE SHAGGARD

CG female human bard 6 and CG male human rogue 5

Area of Operation Lilywhite (Motaku Isle)

Vessels *Winsom Lass* and *Mollusk*

Upon first encountering the duo, one might think the spindly Delemona is the rogue and the good-looking Little Shaggard the bard, but when either opens her or his mouth, it quickly becomes clear which is which. Delemona wins over friends and foes alike with her fantastic storytelling and beautiful music, and her warm, treacherous voice seems completely at odds with her twiggy frame. Little Shaggard, in contrast, has a tongue as sharp as his blade, and little time for pleasantries despite his approachable and handsome visage. Both are devout followers of Cayden Cailean, and jointly rule over the town of Lilywhite since Shaggard's father passed 20 years ago. In keeping with the Lucky Drunk's attitude toward slavery, the pair of swashbucklers has taken up arms in the anti-slavery movement throughout the Shackles as Jolis Raffles's own campaign against the practice loses momentum, often attributing their own deeds to the halfling in hopes of rekindling fervor for his cause in the archipelago.

HARDLUCK MASSEY

CN male human fighter 5

Area of Operation Pex (Devil's Arches)

Vessel —

Hardluck's love of cigars can be detected by his yellowed fingers and the thick odor of tobacco smoke that perpetually drifts from his clothes. He doesn't walk so much as swagger, and the pirate lord's unpredictable temper is legendary throughout the Shackles. Many believe that what Hardluck needs is the calming influence of a good partner, but few realize he already has his eyes set on one. **Kiyano Remsteel** (CN male human rogue 3) is the object of his affections, and the young ex-deckhand can count himself among the few who benefit from the good side of Hardluck's turbulent nature. Kiyano encourages Hardluck's advances to a certain extent, but many believe (quite rightly) that the lad is only humoring the old salt until he admits where he has squirreled away his wealth. Afterward, the young pirate plans to leave the island altogether in his search for the fabled treasure.

HAVALAS GRUDD

CN male human rogue 6

Area of Operation Oyster Cay (mainland)

Vessel *Scylla*

Havalas cuts a fine figure at the helm of the *Scylla* with a rugged charm and thick, curly locks. His bloody feud with his former lover, Wide Olga, is a source of great amusement for the rest of the pirate lords, but a matter of grave peril for the residents of Oyster Cay. What was a simple lover's slight has turned into a dramatic battle, thanks in part to the work of both captains' first mates, who deem it necessary to fuel the violent conflict for their own purposes. The *Scylla*'s wily first mate **Sea-spit** (NE male half-orc barbarian 1/rogue 2) has designs on the captaincy, and hopes that by fanning the flames of his captain's rivalry with Olga he can bring about the position's vacancy.

HEMDAK WAVEBAITER

CN male human fighter 3/rogue 2

Area of Operation Colvass Gibbet (mainland)

Vessel *Strange Mercy*

Despite a rebellious past, Hemdak has started to see the benefits of standing in good stead with coalitions. To the dismay of the many malcontents who slink around Colvass Gibbet, the pirate lord has been seeking ways to curry favor with the Hurricane King himself. Most recently, he put out a call for adventurers to investigate the Temple of the Ravenous Moon in a bid to succeed where Bonefist's own expeditions failed, hoping to present the Hurricane King with a portion of the spoils in an act of good faith and garner Bonefist as a powerful—if only tentative—ally.

SCOURGES OF THE SHACKLES

IOLANDRA AND PETRINA MAXEME

CN female human aristocrat 2/summoner 6 and N female human aristocrat 3/fighter 5

Area of Operation Little Oppara (Taldas Isle)

Vessel *Lion's Reach* and *Fearless Steed*

These two granddaughters of a minor Taldan noble run Taldas Isle now, though few can say how long their turbulent reign will last. Petrina performs the majority of the work, while her capricious sister is always off on some new bold exploit. Rumors say Petrina is tired of losing money to these adventures and some even say she has designs to get rid of Iolandra for good.

JOLIS RAFFLES

CN male halfling fighter 7/rogue 2

Area of Operation Slipcove (Bag Island)

Vessel *Chains of Freedom*

A former slave turned freedom fighter, Jolis Raffles has become a little too comfortable in his wealth and position as lord of Bag Island, and his once-ardent campaign against slavery in the Shackles has dwindled to little more than a drizzle. No longer as nimble as he once was, even a clumsy blade might find its mark should any see fit to assassinate the lax halfling. In an effort to secure many more years of self-indulgence, he has taken to ceding a portion of his fortune to the temple of Norgorber in the town of Beachcomber, a fact unknown to all but his closest advisors.

KERDAK BONEFIST, THE HURRICANE KING

NE male human fighter 8/Inner Sea pirate 10

Area of Operation Port Peril (mainland)

Vessel *Filthy Lucre*

Among the most notorious and best-armed pirates in the Shackles, Kerdak Bonefist owns the title of Hurricane King, commands the largest fleet, and holds Port Peril—the largest city in the region. Although not well liked by many of the region's Free Captains, none dare oppose him alone and few can tolerate one another long enough to rally against him. From Fort Hazard on the island of Lucrehold in Port Peril's harbor, Bonefist indulges in his vast wealth and the endless tribute of lesser pirates, while regularly shooting those who offend him full of holes with his magical pistol or scarring them with a touch from his skeletal hand.

LONGBEARD

CN male human fighter 6

Area of Operation Mezdrubal (Devil's Arches)

Vessel —

Longbeard's unusual height is a bane for one so keen on sartorial finery. With few high quality tailors available in the Shackles, the pretentious pirate lord must force his

HAZARDS OF THE SHACKLES

Brutal storms are not the only hazards at sea in the Shackles, and wary captains know to keep on the alert for a number of strange dangers.

Leucoch or "Hanspur's Ballast" (CR 2): This tenacious breed of echinoderm is often found in deep water, where it attaches itself to the hull of a vessel in order to feed on the sewage and garbage tossed overboard by a busy crew. Nourished in this way, a leucoch grows at an alarming rate, and increases at a rate of one size category per week. Its bulk eventually starts to drastically affect a ship's navigation and speed. A Medium leucoch weighs 350 pounds, a Large one weighs 2,800 pounds, and a Huge leucoch weighs up to 25,000 pounds. A Medium leucoch reduces a ship's maximum speed and acceleration by 10 feet, further reducing these traits by an additional 10 feet for each size category larger than Medium. These urchinlike creatures can be removed from a ship either by dealing it 10 points of damage (+10 for each size category above Medium) with a slashing weapon, or by starving it (ejecting no organic materials overboard for 5 days).

Phantom Fog (CR 2): Fog is common enough in the Shackles, but occasionally sailors find themselves drifting through a bank of what is known as phantom fog. Seafaring scholars believe the eerie substance was originally drawn from the Plane of Shadow, perhaps in some magical mishap at Whyrlis Rock. The effects of phantom fog are myriad and unpredictable, though affected crew members inevitably begin to see their own twisted shadows as dangerous assailants. In addition to taking the effects of mundane fog, all creatures caught inside a bank of phantom fog must succeed at a DC 13 Will save or become convinced the fog has brought with it a host of attackers or strange souls from the deep, becoming frightened while the ship remains fog-bound. Those affected can make an additional save to disbelieve the terrifying illusion once per minute or if they attack one of their perceived antagonists. This is a mind-affecting fear effect of the illusion (phantasm) subschool.

6-foot-5-inch frame into velvet suits and lambskin jackets made for much smaller men, often giving him the look of a boy who grew up too suddenly. He makes up for his shortfall in sleeve-length with a host of jewelry, and perhaps the only thing he appreciates more than fashion is flattery.

Despite his profound indifference to the music and pronounced hatred for the patrons, Longbeard often visits the Three-Horned Hall opera house in Hell Harbor, as his fascination with the finery of the costume is enough to see him through hours of unintelligible noise. His greatest



wish is to find someone cunning and daring enough to rob the theater of its wardrobe, an act that would not only furnish him with many beautiful clothes, but would also deal a solid blow to the repute of the paranoid Endymion, whose taxes on Mezdrubal have long been a thorn in Longbeard's side.

MASE DARIMAR

CN male half-elf druid of Gozreh 8/fighter 4
Area of Operation Drenchport (Tempest Cay)
Vessel *Wavecrest*

Mase's father was an aquatic elf and his mother a member of the Mwangi Expanse's Bonuwat tribe, but his capture by Chelish slavers sentenced him to a life at sea. When pirates attacked the slave galleon, he found himself press-ganged into a pirate crew and eventually joined the service of the Master of Gales. His deep connection with the sea and respect for the Master of Gales led him to become a druid and eventually reconnect with his aquatic elf brethren. His skill as a captain and power over the waves have propelled his career as a pirate, eventually winning him a place on the Pirate Council of the Shackles.

MASTER OF THE GALES

CN male middle-aged human druid 15
Area of Operation Drenchport (Tempest Cay)
Vessel *Kraken*

While there is not a captain in the Shackles who could oppose this mysterious man of the sea, the eerie Master of the Gales appears content to hold only the battered town of Drenchport. Rumors abound of his links to the Cult of the Eye, and many believe that his allegiances lie not with the Pirate Council, but with the incredible power of the Eye of Abendego itself.

MAURIL BREAKWATER AND "BARON" VENIGO PALPATHE

CE female human rogue 6 and CN male human sorcerer 6
Area of Operation Raketooth (Shark Island)
Vessels *Banshee's Wail* and *Water Nymph*

This unusual pair of pirate lords rules over the decrepit port town of Raketooth, and visitors seeking their favor know to watch their back while dealing with the treacherous duo. Their distasteful dealings with the nearby sahuagin tribes have ensured their town relative safety from the monsters' depredations, but they have also given Raketooth an ugly reputation even among the rest of Shark Island. Not long ago, a young noble woman from Ustalav arrived in town, claiming to have been drawn by tales of Palpathe's achievements. While Palpathe has been entirely captivated by her flattery and heavy purse, Breakwater remains skeptical of the stranger's intentions, and is keeping a close eye on her pirate lord partner's budding relationship.

MAXEVALE JANIS

CN male human bard 4/cleric of Besmara 4
Area of Operation Rapier Bay (Motaku Isle)
Vessel *Motaku Maiden*

Intimidation has been the key to Janis's control of Rapier Bay, but not the kind dealt out with a clenched fist. Maxevale possesses a gaze that bores into a rival's heart and sniffs out her darkest secrets. Whether or not he can actually read people as well as some claim is up for debate, but many a would-be troublemaker has sweated out her secrets under Maxevale's silent, indecipherable stare. He is a short, mousey man of few words at the best of times, his stony silence proving to be his most powerful investigatory tool.

Despite his commendable control over his rowdy port city, Janis lacks direction. His support for Tessa Fairwind on the Pirate Council is fueled by a desire for change in his own life, which he hopes will come from change on the council. Even his dedication to Besmara stems from a need for purpose rather than any religious bent, and if one day the right offer should come along, he would abandon Rapier Bay to its chaos in favor of a wild adventure—the sort that both makes and claims a true pirate.

NISIA GBELE

CN female human barbarian 5
Area of Operation Vilelock (Shark Island)
Vessel *Bloody Cudgel*

A barbarian by choice as much as by instinct, Nisia Gbele violently disdains the civilized. She has managed to keep a stranglehold on what passes for power in Vilelock longer than most of her predecessors thanks in part to her unpredictable behavior. This dusky-skinned maniac is impossible to read, and the safest approach when dealing with her is to lead with a punch; some days she will laud a visitor's fighting spirit, others she will beat him to a pulp for it.

PANEWA OALA

CN male human fighter 3/rogue 4
Area of Operation Queen Bes (Besmara's Throne)
Vessel *Desperation*

While always willing to pass the time with strangers, Panewa can never seem to keep his mind on the task at hand. A tall, imposing portreeve with a shiny, shaved head and a blood-red eye patch, he constantly chews his thick fingernails, though whether from nervousness or anticipation few can say for certain. Once a pirate of great skill and renown, Panewa has run Queen Bes for almost a decade now, and he secretly longs for the open sea once more. Even though he is truly devoted to Besmara and knows the importance of his position on her favored island, Panewa has grown increasingly resentful of the landlubber he's become in recent years.

SCOURGES OF THE SHACKLES

TESSA FAIRWIND

CN female half-elf bard 10/duelist 3

Area of Operation Quent (Motaku Isle)

Vessel *Luck of the Draw*

A willingness to use her feminine wiles when her reason or rapier fail to hit home has made Tessa Fairwind one of the most influential pirate lords in the Shackles. Her well-known stubbornness is matched only by her reputation for fairness and for her guile, influence, and usually personable nature. Those seeking to make their homes in the Shackles could do much worse for an ally.

WIDE OLGA

CN female human bard 6

Area of Operation Oyster Cay (mainland)

Vessel *Beckoning Nereid*

Wide Olga is so named not only for her girth but also for her enormous, toothy grin. Her full build and tight-cropped hair give her the appearance of a stocky cabin boy, but even in silhouette her athleticism and physical confidence mark her as captain. Her fury at her former lover Havalas Grudd has had no chance to cool, as her first mate **Sinserra** (CE female human rogue 2) continues to fan the flames of their fallout. Like her counterpart on Grudd's vessel, the *Scylla*, Sinserra seeks to fill Wide Olga's boots, and the two first mates have formed a tentative truce in order to ensure one another's promotions. Without Sinserra's goading, Olga's mood toward her paramour would likely soften, and after a good few ales she has even been known to call for a message of truce to be sent to the *Scylla*. Unfortunately for Oyster Cay, such orders are always intercepted by Sinserra and forgotten by Olga in the morning.

WEATHER AND STORMBOUND HAZARDS OF THE SHACKLES

More than terrible pirates and vicious sea monsters menace those who sail the deadly seas of the Shackles. The endless hurricane of the Eye of Abendego spins off lesser—but still violent—storms, any of which could spell the destruction of a vessel and its unprepared crew. Such deadly weather has become a fact of life for most who regularly sail along the western coast of Garund, and daring mariners do all they can to gauge and predict these tempests, but acknowledge that if the sea and sky desires a ship's doom, there's little even a skilled sailor can do about it.

The Verses: While accurate measurements of weather severity are difficult to come by in

the Shackles, seafarers living there have developed a kind of eyeball scale by which to judge and describe incoming storms. They call this scale “the Verses,” a term originating from one of the songs from *Hymns to the Wind and the Waves*, the holy text of Gozreh. The scale ascribes an increasing number of verses to increasingly dangerous weather fronts, from one verse for a minor gale all the way to nine verses for the most powerful and deadliest of storms. In the very worst of weather, when the wind and the sea tear life and livelihood from the coast, battered residents are even sometimes known to wail of the “tenth verse,” but it is considered bad luck to invoke the term at sea, where even the eighth can easily claim any vessel. The Verses are used to measure storms throughout the rest of the Inner Sea region, but it is rare for any to speak of weather that exceeds the sixth. The final three are uttered almost exclusively in the Shackles, where only the mighty blasts of the Eye of Abendego can do them proper justice.

Using the Verses: Included in the Shackles Random Weather table on page 72 is a verse rating for each kind of weather.





Pirates of the Shackles often speak of the Verses in both casual conversation and in their salty yarns. A minor squall might be described as “a single verse,” or the “first verse.” A tropical depression might fall between three and four verses, and tropical storms can be described as anywhere from the fifth verse and above. The crew of any sailing vessel, Shackles or otherwise, knows to hold on for their lives if the captain starts yelling about “the whole bloody hymn!”

DETERMINING THE WEATHER

The ever-whirling Eye of Abendego largely determines both the frequency and potency of storms in the Shackles, making the area what it is today. Proximity to the Eye affects the likelihood of difficult weather, but with enough skill, seafarers still have a chance to avoid storms. To reflect these factors, random weather rolls are modified by a vessel's proximity to the center of the Eye (as per the Eye of Abendego Weather Modifiers table), and captains from the Shackles should be allowed the chance to navigate around storm fronts. Treat the random weather table presented here as a Shackles-specific version of Table 13–9: Random Weather on page 439 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. Once a weather roll (a d% roll) is made and adjusted for proximity to the Eye, allow a ship's captain to make either a Profession (sailor) or Survival check, subtracting the result from the total—this represents the captain's ability to predict and avoid turbulent weather. When, despite the captain's best efforts, a vessel finds itself in a storm, use the Stormbound Hazards table on page 73 to determine how the ship is affected by the storm.

SHACKLES RANDOM WEATHER

PCs with the Survival skill can determine the weather days in advance. The accompanying Shackles Random Weather table can be used to keep track of the current conditions, from calm seas to deadly tornadoes, as well as to help create a smooth transition from one type of weather to the next. For a lengthy voyage, a GM might want to roll for the weather 3 or more days in advance, then use the steps on the Shackles Random Weather table to determine the appropriate conditions for the days building up to a significant storm. This helps to make meteorological transitions smoother and more realistic, so one day's clear skies don't turn into a hurricane in just a few short hours.

The following entries detail some of the most common types of weather in the Shackles and correspond to the Shackles Random Weather chart. In addition to the usual environmental hazards, several of the wilder storms can also have dangerous effects on seabound vessels. Each entry lists how long the weather typically lasts, as well as how often a GM should roll for a stormbound hazard on the Stormbound Hazards table on page 73 and what sort of modifier (if any) to apply to that roll.

Normal: The weather proves calm and relatively clear—perfect weather for sailing.

Precipitation: Roll d% to determine whether the precipitation is fog (01–40) or rain (41–100).

Tropical Depression: This dense, humid weather front is common in tropical seas and lasts 2d4 hours. Combining strong winds and rain, a tropical depression rarely deters the Shackles' seafaring population, but can be a nuisance for those not used to rough seas.

Stormbound Hazards: frequency 1/hour, d20 modifier –10.

Tropical Storm: This is a more extreme relative of the tropical depression; only foolhardy or experienced captains set sail in tropical storms, which typically last up to 5d4 hours.

Stormbound Hazards: frequency 1/hour, d20 modifier —.

Severe Tropical Storm: Storms of this size have claimed many unskilled captains. Wind drives sheets of rain, and the roiling sea finds its way into every corner of an unprepared vessel. Otherwise acting like windstorms (*Core Rulebook* 438), these storms last 3d6 hours.

Stormbound Hazards: frequency 1/10 minutes, d20 modifier +10.

Hurricane: This whirling maelstrom of death is rarely escapable by any but the most veteran captains. While a hurricane can last for many days, its inexorable journey will typically pass the storm over ships in 4d6 minutes, during which period they will need to roll on the Stormbound Hazards table each minute. Almost no one has the pirate luck to survive an encounter with this epic force.

Stormbound Hazards: frequency 1/minute, d20 modifier +15.

Tornado: No natural force at sea is deadlier than the tornado or waterspout, and few can sail through one and live to tell the tale. A tornado lasts 1d6 minutes.

Stormbound Hazards: frequency 1/round, d20 modifier +15.

EYE OF ABENDEGO WEATHER MODIFIERS

Proximity to the Eye	Weather Roll Modifier
Within 300 miles	+4
Within 250 miles	+8
Within 200 miles	+12
Within 100 miles	+36
Within 50 miles	+60

SHACKLES RANDOM WEATHER

d%	Weather	Features*	Verses
1–55	Normal	Normal	0
56–65	Precipitation	Fog or rain	1–2
66–80	Tropical depression	Strong winds and rain	3–4
81–93	Tropical storm	Severe winds and rain	5–6
94–97	Severe tropical storm	Windstorm	7–8
98–99	Hurricane	Hurricane	9
100	Tornado	Tornado	9+

* Details on weather features can be found on pages 437–440 of the *Core Rulebook*.

SCOURGES OF THE SHACKLES

STORMBOUND HAZARDS

These events illustrate the effects of a typical storm on tropical waters, and can be used in conjunction with combat encounters to create exciting and memorable fights or used on their own to show PCs the relentless brutality of the sea. The PCs can mitigate their chances of encountering such disasters with a Profession (sailor) or Survival check or, when disaster does strike, deal with the problems using their unique skills and abilities.

To use the following hazards, refer to the weather descriptions in the Shackles Random Weather section on page 72—the frequency of these events and roll modifiers for the Stormbound Hazards table are listed in each weather type's entry. Then roll a d% and add the modifier associated with the particular type of weather, if any. Whoever is piloting the ship (usually the captain) then makes a Profession (sailor) or Survival check and subtracts that result from the modified d% roll to determine the final result of the roll. Once a result is determined, consult the Stormbound Hazards table to determine what peril the ship faces. A result of 20 or lower means the crew proved able enough to avoid any danger, while higher results have increasingly more dangerous or costly repercussions.

STORMBOUND HAZARDS

d%	Hazard	Effect
20 or lower	No Hazard	
21–35	Slippery Deck:	A rush of water over the deck makes it more slippery than usual for 1d4 rounds. Creatures must succeed at a DC 10 Acrobatics check to move safely; failure means they fall prone.
36–40	Dragged Anchor:	The ship travels 100 feet in a random direction in 1 round and is no longer considered anchored. This hazard only affects anchored ships; otherwise, treat as the Slippery Deck hazard.
41–45	Jammed Rudder:	Steering becomes extremely difficult. All Profession (sailor) checks are made with a –10 penalty until the rudder is unjammed, either via a successful DC 15 Craft (carpentry) check or by casting <i>warp wood</i> or a similar spell.
46–55	Violent Swell:	A single violent wave strikes the vessel. All creatures on deck must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or fall prone.
56–60	Lashing Rigging:	A rope comes loose, whipping across deck. Creatures in a random 20-foot line on deck must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage.
61–65	Wind against Tide:	The sea becomes a mass of steep waves, reducing the ship's movement speed by half for 1 hour.

66–68	Torn Sail:	Strong winds tear a sail in twain. If sails have been reefed or lowered already, treat this as Lashing Rigging.
69–71	Loose Cargo:	Poorly secured items on deck break free. Creatures in a random 20-foot square take 3d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 15 half).
72–74	Crew Member Overboard:	Starting with the creature on deck closest to the stern, 1d3 creatures adjacent to the side must make DC 16 Reflex saves in turn. If one creature fails, it falls overboard and the others need not make further saves.
75–77	Sprung a Leak:	The vessel springs a minor leak at a random location.
78–80	Spoiled Stores:	Saltwater ruins 1d4 weeks of dry stores or plunder (50% chance of either).
81–83	Lost Lifeboat:	A lifeboat or small vessel stowed or in tow falls overboard or breaks free.
84–86	Lightning Strike:	Roll a d%. A bolt of lightning strikes the vessel (01–60) or the character at the highest point on deck (61–100). If more than one character is at the same elevation, the bolt hits the one wearing or carrying the most metal. The bolt deals 4d6 points of electricity damage on creatures struck (Reflex DC 18 half).
87–88	Broken Mast:	One of the vessel's masts snaps in the wind. The mast falls overboard and, unless cut free from all rigging and allowed to float away, it pierces the hull in 2d6 rounds (see Serious Hull Breach below).
89–90	Broached:	The vessel is blown over, flat against the sea. The vessel rights itself in 1d4 rounds, but creatures on deck must succeed at a DC 22 Reflex save each round or fall overboard. Unsecured cargo and equipment falls overboard.
91–92	Submarined:	The ship plunges down by the bow under a huge oncoming wave. Treat this as a bull rush with a CMB of +30 against all creatures on deck. Those who fail are swept overboard.
93–94	Pooped:	A massive wave engulfs the vessel unexpectedly from the stern. Treat as a bull rush with a CMB of +30 against all characters on deck, running stern to bow. Those who fail are swept overboard. For the purposes of this bull rush attempt, treat creatures as flat-footed.
95–99	Two Hazards:	Roll twice on this table with the same Profession (sailor) check included in this roll. Both of these hazards occur simultaneously.
100+	Serious Hull Breach:	The vessel's hull is punctured and it immediately begins to sink.



LEAGUE OF DROWNED GHOSTS

Pathfinder's Journal: The Treasure of Far Thallai 3 of 6

Still groggy from a blow to the head, I rushed to the edge of the rocky shelf, from which Otondo had pulled the cyclops Megeus. He'd plummeted with him more than a hundred feet to the coral shore of Butcher's Rock. My first thought was of suicide: Otondo had freed himself from his magical indenture by taking his life. Not to mention that of Megeus, whom we had come merely to speak with. Another addendum, I saw, would have to be added to the lengthening terms of the geas.

Although it was a sound idea, I realized as soon as I looked down that Otondo had maneuvered toward a less permanent conclusion. He lay sprawled in the gravel below, dazed and groaning. He'd let Megeus wrap him in his arms, then pushed off, so that he landed on the cyclops. It was only his opponent his rash move had killed.

Then I saw Megeus briefly stir, before slumping again. He might breathe, even now.

I remembered Megeus's ally, a younger cyclops. As I wheeled on him, he held up his arms in supplication. "What's your name?" I demanded.

"Phagon." Singed welts, marks of the wizardly lightning bolt he'd taken during the scrap, were rising across his body.

"Is Twill Ninefingers here, Phagon?"

"The human?" He shook his one-eyed head.

"You didn't eat him, did you?" Aspodell asked.

"Some of us argued for it."

"Then what happened to him?"

"Ask Megeus. If you haven't murdered him." He slumped sulkily against the limestone cliff face.

"Aspodell," I managed. "Take Seagrave with you and search these ledges. Make sure he's telling the truth."

Phagon produced an affronted grunt. Though he took imputations of cannibalism in stride, it was apparently a more serious matter to suggest he might tell a lie.

Aspodell pointed his rapier tip at Phagon. "You lead us to Megeus's tent. Wouldn't want to step in any traps, would we?" "You've no cause to trouble us," Phagon complained.

"We fly the black flag. You have no cause to deny us your loot."

Rira led the way as we climbed down. By the time we reached the shore, a group of twenty or so cyclopes had gathered around Megeus and Otondo. I braced, ready for them to rush us; they stepped away as we approached. Why they gave us this freedom, I could not tell. I guessed that Megeus had been their strongest champion, and that they feared us because we'd bested him. Other explanations stood as equally likely: that they deemed him unpopular and not worth fighting for, or that they would wait until they knew more about us before staging a true assault. I kept on guard against abrupt alterations in the crowd's demeanor.

Otondo pulled himself to a sitting position. Kneeling beside Megeus, I saw that the cyclops's chest still rose and fell. Aware of the risk of leaving myself alone with the cyclopes, I instructed Rira to take the boat to the ship and come back with healers. Equally aware that I might get myself killed, Rira complied, her equanimity swift.

That both ogre and cyclops had survived a drop that would have ended any man was a wonder, but scarcely inexplicable. The old saw tells us that the bigger they are, the harder they fall; however, in my previous life as a cloistered scholar, I learned that the larger and denser the skeletal structure, the more evenly the impact of a fall is dispersed through the body.

Megeus recovered consciousness before the healers even arrived. Our expenditure of salves and prayers on him seemed to sway the crowd in our favor. I still could not divine their full attitude toward Megeus. Perhaps, after dispatching a thousand and one higher priorities, I will one day dispatch a junior Pathfinder to research a treatise on cyclops politics.

"You got pigs aboard your ship?" Megeus asked, as our salves ebbed his bruises away.

He would take some easing before we reached the subject of Twill Ninefingers. "Pork, but no pigs."

"I reckon it's heavily brined."

"How else to preserve it?"

"You humans and your salt. You spoil everything. What else you got to eat?"

"Megeus, you should be grateful for the repairs we've done to your accursed carcass."

He caressed his throbbing skull. "Not when it was you who made the need for them."

"A not unreasonable point. Tell us what you did with Twill and perhaps I'll find a morsel or two for you."

Megeus stared wistfully at the blue horizon. "I traded 'im."

"Explain."

"Twill came here to hide out from someone who was chasing 'im. He brought two barrels of pickled eggs, a cask of jerky, a—"

"Skip the inventory part."

"Then let's say we ate what he brung us, and then he let slip exactly who he was fleeing from."

"Kered Firsk the Flayer, the Monster Captain."

Megeus blanched. "We had no wish for a fight with the likes of that."

"So you traded him to Kered Firsk?"

"We would've, but we got another offer first. Ghosts. Their isle, Drowningtide, arose from the depths in the wake of a blistering storm. They came at night, all green and see-through. They offered us shark meat, deep-water oysters, and a family of merfolk. It seemed a worthy trade, so I put Twill in a sack and handed 'im over."

"They sensed you had a human with you?"

"They called 'im by name."

"And how can you be sure they weren't in cahoots with Kered Firsk?"

He shrugged, then winced at the effort. "Maybe they were. I cared not about their intent, but the quality of their provender. Those merfolk were firm and fresh."

Aspodell and Seagrave returned from their search of the hills, hauling sacks of loot. "Wait now!" Megeus rose in protest, then wobbled, seized by dizziness.

"The man we seek? You sold him to ghosts. When we came to talk, you attacked and tried to kill us. If you'd won, you'd have drunk our blood and chewed our flesh. All of these offenses warrant punitive action. You're lucky we only care to confiscate your goods, and not those of your neighbors." I spoke this last part clearly, for the benefit of the crowd. One by one, Megeus's neighbors slunk off to their caves and tents. They proved themselves ready to defend their own hoards, but not to form a united front.

As we left for the boat, Otondo leaned down and grinned. "I'd never eat a merman," he said.

"Stop talking now, Otondo."

"Too fishy."

Once back on the ship, I met with my adjutants in the captain's quarters.

Aspodell lounged with his bony backside in one chair and his long legs slung over the arms of another. He drank port from a tiny crystal glass. It was among the liquors we'd confiscated from the confiscators back in Moonplum.

Otondo paced like a caged bear, as he did when no better distraction presented itself.

Seagrave and Rira sorted through the bag of treasure we had taken from the cyclops. Seagrave stacked coins and counted pearls. Rira poked through potion bottles and assorted gewgaws. Among them she identified a magic ring, which one of our sailors could use in place of armor. The bottles, she said, contained doses of water-lung. They would prove themselves useful, likely sooner than not. Many of the Shackles' predicaments grow easier when one can breathe underwater.

I knew of Drowningtide from accounts in books, none of whose authors had set foot on any isle of the Shackles. "What can we say for certain about this ghost isle, Seagrave?"

He answered without slowing his counting. "Never been there, ma'am. It moves around, perhaps in keeping with the moontides. It's an isle of drowned men."

"You've not been?"

"Thank the sea fates, no." Like several of the crew—who may well have picked it up from him—Seagrave subscribed to a peculiar sort of faith. It held that pirates and sailors were more tightly bound by the forces of destiny than land-dwellers. These forces he personified as sodden hags called the sea fates. After long years sailing together, I still had no idea whether he regarded the sea fates as genuine entities, or only metaphor. Perhaps one day I will learn the truth, and write it in another journal like this one. "And how does one wind up on this ghost isle?" I asked him.

"Gozreh the ocean-god is a possessive deity. When the waters of the Shackles claim a man's life, Gozreh cleaves to him and does not let him go. When the sailor's soul swims to the surface from its watery grave, he sometimes finds himself on Drowningtide's misty shores. That's as close to land, life, or celestial rest as he'll ever get."

"And what can we expect when we get there?"

Otondo stopped his pacing long enough to shudder. Seeing that I observed him, he went on as before, pretending to be untroubled.

"Hard to separate guess from truth, as them what lands there never comes back, even if they still breathed when they arrived. Safe to say only that it's a melancholy place, more of the sea than the land. They say that drowning is contagious there."

"What does that mean?"

"Hanged if I know."

"And what would they want with Twill? Why would a ghost want a lock broken?"

"I would not care to guess, ma'am."

Rira spoke up. "It won't be that, Challys Argent. The possessions ghosts carry with them are only memories, as half-substantial as the stray souls themselves. A flesh-and-blood man could no more open a ghostly lock than wield a ghostly sword."

"I have seen that said," I allowed. I recalled the fact from the tattered copy of Maleg's *Realms of the Dead* once housed

in the archive of my youth. "But let's not decide ahead of time what ghosts can and cannot do."

Rira slowly nodded her mask at me, admitting the point. "So then how do we find Drowningtide?"

From the pile of assorted loot she plucked a tool consisting of a flat handle and a long, thin spike. The spike terminated in a small circular form.

"A lock pick," said Aspodell.

"Yes," said Rira, "One item from a matched kit. Well-kept. Not encrusted with dirt and mildew like the rest of Megeus's hoard."

"And therefore Twill's, mostly likely," I said.

Rira rose from her chair. "If we are lucky, I can focus on it and behold its mates." She withdrew from beneath my bunk a copper cask I required her to store with me. Through her months of magical captivity, I kept to my promise to leave it unmolested. I suspected that it would not open if I tried.

We retreated from my cabin. Seagrave lingered at the threshold long enough to jab meaningfully at the stacks of counted coins. Rira's mask muffled a contemptuous snort.

I closed the door; we stood close by and waited. A low clattering sound marked Rira's unpacking of items from her cask. Arcane chanting followed, in her sharp and husky voice. At length a vapor curled over the doorjamb. It smelled of seaweed and cinnamon. We heard the bang of a small gong, after which the incantation ended. After a few moments to repack her oracular implements, Rira opened the door. "Southwest," she said. "Two hundred degrees."

For ten hours we sailed. Rira repeated her magic, whatever it was, twice more. After her last divination, she announced that we'd reached our destination. I climbed to the aft deck to survey a placid ocean. Sunset threw flecks of gold- and salmon-colored light onto the Fever Sea. By the charts we were on the northern edge of the island cluster we call the Shackles. The closest land was a large island about twenty miles to the south.

"There?" I asked Rira, pointing to it.

"No, there," she said, indicating the empty ocean just ahead. "Not yet, but there. Drop anchor. We'll have time to fortify ourselves. It's always best to be well fed—and more important still, halfway drunk—when rubbing shoulders with ghosts."

We did as Rira said. I ordered the anchor dropped and joined my adjutants at table. We ate oysters and conch with pickled cabbage. From my cabinet I withdrew a bottle of muscat I'd been saving. We finished it and another lesser bottle besides. Otondo, for his part, turned up his nose at the wine, sticking to his usual ghastly rum. It was strange, to drink with them as might a friend. Under the influence of the vine, Rira and Seagrave softened, seeming to despise me less. Aspodell and the ogre balanced the equation with ever more vicious snarls and glares.

A shaft of moonlight speared through a porthole.

“Now,” said Rira. We rose on just slightly unsteady feet and strode to starboard. Above, the moon had slipped from behind a bank of clouds. It shone down on the waters, illuminating a floating city of the dead.

Indistinct and contradictory, Drowningtide shimmered, a place from an ever-shifting dream. Luminous spires rose up from a coral base to fill the sky. They recalled, in hazy detail, the styles of a dozen towns. A looming bulwark styled itself like a fortress of Mendev. Turrets evoked a Brevic keep. Beside them jostled a Qadiran minaret, a bronze mantis dome of Mediogalti, and an echo of Fortress Fangspire. Amid them thrust assortments of masts and sails. Loops of rotting rigging, festooned with seaweed, hung between them. There were more towers and roofs than foundations; many of the structures, as if left unfinished by a distracted painter, faded out where their foundations ought to have been.

Portals appeared in these uncertain structures. Figures issued forth, translucent, their edges overlapping. Phantasmal water streamed from them to pool around their hazy feet. Their forms testified to the grotesqueries of death by drowning. Some were bloated and blackened, swollen heads lolling on overwhelmed necks. The incorporeal flesh of others bore the bite marks of scavenging fish. Gobbets of skin and flesh floated from them as if they were still underwater. A few appeared relatively intact; I imagined that they’d been pulled from the water shortly after dying. Ghostly costumes varied from the pirate motley of the Shackles to those affected by the merchant and naval fleets of Rahadoum, Cheliox, Varisia, and Absalom.

In a mass, the ghosts milled toward a point on the shore closest to the *Aspidochelone*. They stood silently, arms at their sides, expressions at once woebegone and expectant.

“We’re taking a boat,” I told my adjutants.

“Are you certain?” asked Aspodell.

“You don’t want to invite them here, do you?”

“On second thought, no.”

The five of us clambered down to a boat.

Otondo hesitated by the rail. “And men who drown in the Shackles ends up here?”

Seagrave had climbed only a few feet onto the rope ladder. “So it is said.”

“This will be bad.”

“Why is that?”

“How many men have you had drowned, Seagrave?”

They exchanged trepidatious looks, shrugged, and joined us in the boat.

As the two of them rowed us toward the shore, a chill suffused the tropical air. By the time its nose touched the ephemeral island, my arms were a landscape of goosebumps. Seagrave tested the island’s solidity. To our collective surprise, it held his weight unyieldingly. Otondo hopped out, great cutlass in hand.

“Stow that,” I said, my lips unmoving.

After the standard show of reluctance, the ogre complied. The rest of us stepped from the boat; he and Seagrave pulled it farther up onto the eerie shore.

I took a central position, flanked by the others.

A gaunt, shirtless ghost in a whaler’s cap separated himself from the pack and bowed to greet us. His left arm was missing, along with a good chunk of shoulder. The adjoining portion of his torso showed the slashing scars of a shark attack. In his extant hand he carried a long harpoon. He held it with dignity, as one might a ceremonial staff.

I was glad of the wine coursing through my veins. Middling drunkenness lent a leavening absurdity to the proceedings.

By emphasizing the unreality of the situation, it somewhat blunted the horror. “I am Challys Argent, of the *Aspidochelone*,” I said, bowing in return. “We have no wish to disturb your rest, but—”

“You cannot disturb what we do not have, pirate.” The ghost’s voice reverberated, out of synch with the movement of its lips. “This existence is far from restful.”

“I sympathize with your plight.”

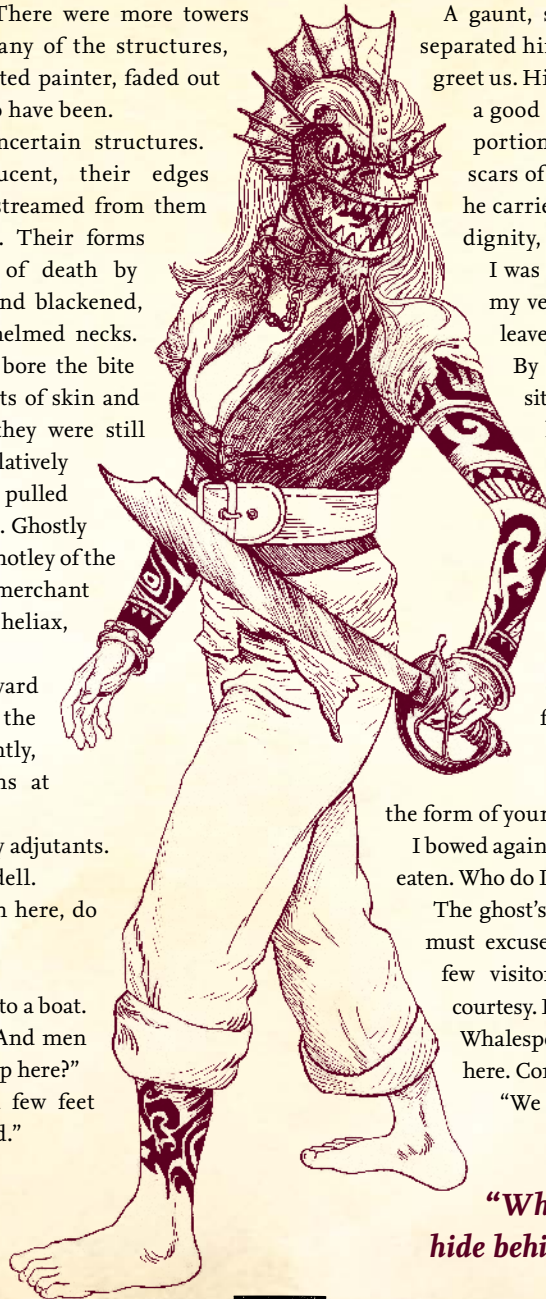
“Then you will grant us solace, in the form of your company. We shall lay on a feast.”

I bowed again. “There is no need, for we have just eaten. Who do I have the honor of addressing, sir?”

The ghost’s pale brow knitted in dismay. “You must excuse my lapse. Drowningtide receives few visitors. We have lost the knack for courtesy. I am Geor. Known in my day as Geor Whalespotter. Though that name is not used here. Come with us to our banquet hall.”

“We do not wish to trouble you.”

“Who knows what thoughts hide behind Rira’s iron mask?”



Crimson undertones pulsed through his transparent frame. "We insist."

I gave him a third bow and trooped after him. "We come in search of someone."

"Let us spend frivolous time at table first, and speak of weighty matters when the port is served."

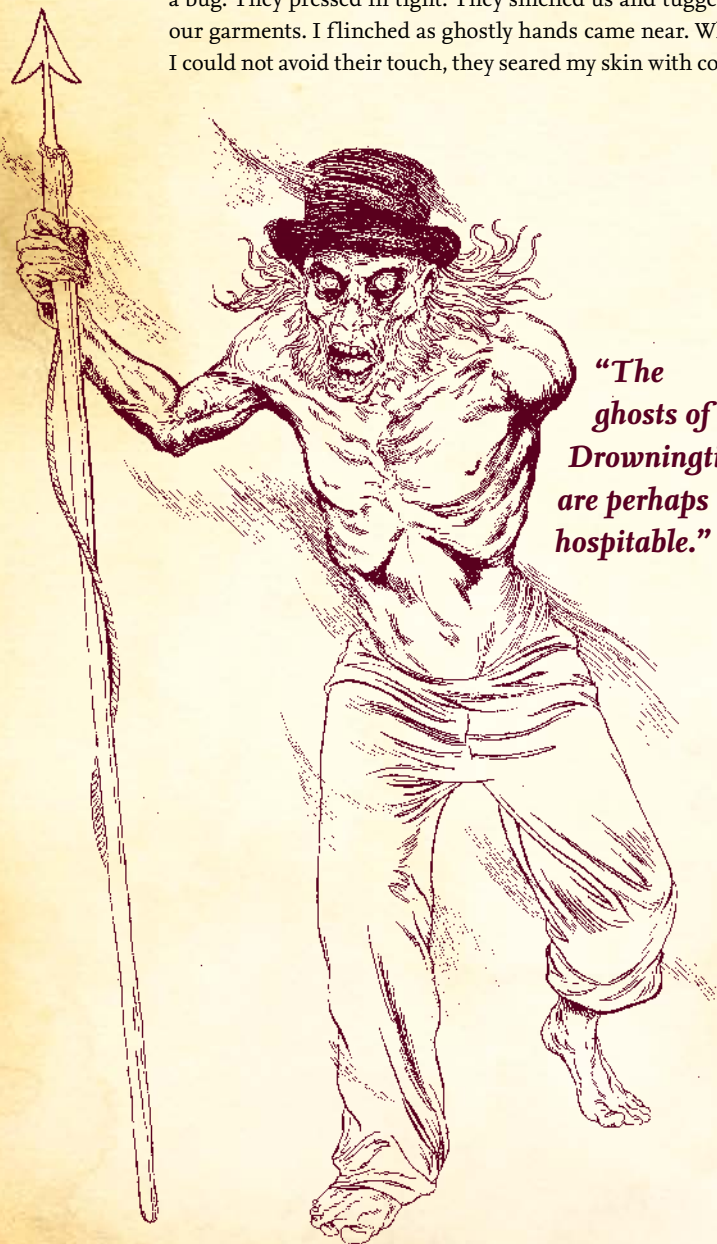
"His name is Twill Ninefingers."

A gout of seawater dribbled down Geor's lips. "That name may hold significance. Reward us with your fellowship, and I'll say more."

"Is he here, then?"

"Come along."

The ghosts thronged around us, whispering and chattering. The sound crawled across the back of my neck like a bug. They pressed in tight. They smelled us and tugged at our garments. I flinched as ghostly hands came near. When I could not avoid their touch, they seared my skin with cold.



*"The
ghosts of
Drowningtide
are perhaps too
hospitable."*

We proceeded to a weird building I had not seen from the shore. It was a keep constructed from the remains of wrecked ships, fused together by some unknowable undead process. A trio of prows jutted from the asymmetrical structure, two to the left and one to the right. An assortment of crow's nests competed for supremacy atop its gabled roof. Chalky barnacles dotted its surface. The front doors, which now swung open, were fashioned from rudders sized for seafaring giants.

They opened into a vast hall composed of several decks, laid on top of one another. Rope ladders connected the levels. We walked on sodden velvet carpet to the nearest ladder. The ghosts floated up; we climbed, fearing for the structure's solidity. On the highest deck, a long table stretched before us. Tarnished silver cutlery flanked chipped and mismatched plates. Nautilus-shell goblets awaited the pouring of wine.

A good four dozen places had been set, with chairs to match. On the decks below, more ghosts gathered, faces forlornly upraised. I found myself wondering what protocol they used to award the coveted spots at the head table. Then I reminded myself that the social strata of phantasmal society was the least of the questions I ought to be asking.

The pushing ghosts separated us from one another, surrounding us to enact a bizarre parody of a grand soiree. They herded me toward a railing. Each of my adjutants they buttonholed in like fashion. I saw Otondo baring his teeth, Seagrave clutching his stomach, and Aspodell disguising his discomfiture behind a barracuda grin. Rira alone, hidden behind her mask, maintained a semblance of composure.

In hissing tones, the Drowningtiders barraged us with questions:

"Does Naleno Long-Tress still dance at the Red Dolphin?"

"What year is it?"

"My name is Komak Kos Sab. Do any now sing of my deeds?"

"I beg you to take a message to my mother at Maquino. It is a small village on the northern—"

"Are there any of the old faith still left in the Cinderlands?"

Geor appeared at my shoulder. "Those four. They stand beside you, but not freely."

"No."

"You have enslaved them?"

"I prefer to say that they are imprisoned, and furloughed to my care. My sword—"

The ghost waved an impatient, blurry hand. "Ghosts find many subjects uninteresting. The mechanics of your dominance over them would be an example. You may care to know that you have dulled our days in Drowningtide."

"How so?"

"We depend on new drownings to swell our ranks. Few flesh-folk visit our lonely home. With a flow of newcomers comes fresh experience, no matter how vicarious."

“What has that to do with me?”

“No one sent more sailors to the sea’s damp embrace than those four. You prevent them from pirating now?”

“I bend their savagery toward positive ends.”

Geor’s inner light flickered. “You deprive us of fresh souls.”

I backed into the railing, conscious of how far I would topple if I lost my balance. “If fewer are dying than would have otherwise, I find it hard to reproach myself.” A curious elation added itself to my fear and disorientation. The dead man had confirmed my greatest hope. By collecting my band of adjutants, I’d saved lives, and many of them. Whatever happened to me when the final toll came due would be worth it.

Geor pushed himself closer. “You shine with a lovely madness.”

I slid along the railing, evading him. A witty retort nearly came to mind. I have never been as good with them as I would like.

“You could be my bride,” he said.

“I refuse all such proposals, from the living and the dead alike.”

Geor slid through a mass of ghosts to ring a ship’s bell suspended near the table. The clang cut through me like a blade. I checked my adjutants; they too winced in pain.

“It is time to sit with our guests, and eat, and drink,” Geor announced.

The ghosts shoved us until we sat, arranging us so that none were near any of the others. Geor took his spot at the head of the table. The drowned whaler positioned me to his right. Clay amphorae appeared, borne by phantom cabin boys. They poured a red liquid into the goblets. It was the red of wine on the verge of turning to vinegar, and smelled like brackish water. Geor raised his goblet. “To a cessation from our solitude, no matter how brief.”

As the ghosts consumed the ethereal liquid, a compensating quantity of water poured from their noses and ears.

I raised my goblet, but did not drink. “There are hundreds of you. How can you call yourselves alone?”

Geor’s ghost-form wavered. “Without the spark of life, it is not the same.”

“Again, I express my sorrow at your plight. It is not right that souls should be kept on Golarion, simply because they have the misfortune to drown. Now, if I might ask you about Twill Ninefingers...”

“He and I have much in common,” said Geor. “And much to settle, between us.”

“Why did he not join us at this feast?”

Geor edged toward me, his ghost-vapors fading through those of the table. “You did not drink.”

I adjusted my position, ensuring an unimpeded draw if I needed my sword. “As I said from the outset, we have come here neither thirsty nor hungry. Please do not consider it a slight against your hospitality.”

An angry groan hissed from the drowned host.

“You will drink, Challys Argent, and you will command your slaves to do the same.”

I wrapped my fingers around the goblet. “I am sorry to say it, Geor Whalespotter, but I suspect that this is a drowning potion, and that if we partake, we’ll be with you here forever.”

Geor swarmed at me through a suddenly dispersing table. Ghosts clawed my arms and back, the chill of their touch now multiplied tenfold. I swept my cutlass free. It slashed through them, its magic granting it at least some purchase against their soul-stuff.

My adjutants, like any pirate captains worthy of the title, also wielded weapons of some enchantment. These slashed through ephemeral bodies, which dispersed and then reformed, somewhat diminished.

Despite these swipes, the ghosts swarmed in. They struck back at us not with fist or blade, but with solitude. It weighed me down, buckling my knees, pushing me to the deck. The others folded, too. Aspodell dropped his rapier, hands clawed and teeth clenched. Rira went limp against a railing. Otondo gibbered, weaving on his feet like a drunken man who has forgotten how to fall. Seagrave I could not see at all.

With each gelid touch their bitterness invaded me. Dead and thwarted aspirations cracked through my certitude. My own thoughts turned traitor. *Yes, they said, this island of ghosts is where you belong. You killed yourself the moment you enslaved the first of your adjutants. One day one of them will get you. But if you let yourself die here, on your own terms.... At least then it will not be one of them that slays you.*

In a vision, I beheld myself as a ghost, among the legion here, dining at their table, forever drinking their wine of drowning. The four of them would sit at my side, prevented forever—more decisively than by the geases of Siren Call—from wreaking murder in the lands of the living. If I wished to sacrifice myself, I could do it now and here and permanently.

I fought these false thoughts. They were not my own, and only felt as the result of ghostly trickery. The enthrallment of the four captains, I reminded myself, was only a means toward the true goal, the quest for lost and stolen lore. In an eternity on Drowningtide, I’d recover not a scroll, not a scrap of a footnote...

The ghosts subsumed themselves into a single suffocating mass. The fortress of ships lost substance. The ghosts had fashioned it from their unslaked desires. Now they shifted its essence to their foremost wish: our demises.

I’d stopped breathing, I realized, and wondered if my last breath had already been taken in and exhaled.

My fingers spread out on the deck. I could see through them. They withered and flickered.

I was becoming a ghost.



BESTIARY

“Full sails, captains! Fulfill your oaths to me!” Mad Captain Yspane’s manic bellow reverberated off the timbers of the curio-crammed cabin. My cutlass still leveled at his chest, I started to repeat my demand for surrender when something struck the blade’s length, ricocheting with a sound clang. About me, more than a dozen miniature, bottle-bound vessels—knickknacks I’d taken for another of the madman’s obsessions—had sailed from their shelves, plying invisible waves of open air. Upon each, tiny figures scampered across timbers like toothpicks, training toy weapons upon me, loosing volleys of stinging bolts in time with the mad captain’s mocking laughter.”

—Confession of the Rabid Gull

All manner of unnatural beings and storied sea creatures fill this month's entry into the Pathfinder Bestiary.

SHIPS, SAILORS, AND OTHER VICTIMS

Numerous vessels might cross the PCs' path as they ply the Fever Sea, some easy prey for piracy, others death ships in disguise. GMs seeking an appropriately nautical random encounter might have any of the following vessels appear on the horizon. Each of the ship entries below lists where GMs can find the stats for their crews, whether they be monsters from various Bestiaries or repurposed NPC stat blocks from the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*. GMs looking for more tools to help them conduct their boarding raids and shipboard battles should also be sure to check out *GameMastery Flip-Map: Pirate Ship* or *GameMastery Map Pack: Ship's Cabins*.

Curio: Less a pirate ship than a floating emporium, the *Curio* stays anchored on the western edge of the Eye of Abendego. This ex-cargo vessel acts as the hub for a small cadre of buccaneers who specialize in well-coordinated nautical heists rather than the typical smash-and-grab jobs favored by most of their compatriots. The otherworldly mercane who captains the *Curio* is a reliable and well-paying fence for all manner of stolen magical items, making him a popular figure among sagacious privateers. Known simply as Big Blue, this outsider is more of an extralegal entrepreneur than a pirate. Guarded only by a few mephit servants and the abjurations granted by his inventory, the strange mercane relies predominantly on his girth and mysterious reputation to deter would-be assailants. If attacked, Big Blue (*Bestiary* 2 188) and 1d4 water mephits (*Bestiary* 203) defend the *Curio*—a CR 7 encounter.

Red Wish: Once a small-time operation with a poor reputation, the crew of the *Red Wish* has recently enjoyed a significant run of luck in the Shackles. The catalyst was little more than an accident, though the upstart crew may boast otherwise. While out on the Arcadian Ocean, preying on their usual diet of whaling ships and hard-luck merchant vessels, the crew of the *Red Wish* happened upon a well-equipped ship named the *Cockatrice* floundering in the aftermath of a brine dragon attack. The pirate crew eagerly seized the opportunity for an easy score, and quickly overwhelmed the still-reeling sailors. Among the contents of the *Cockatrice's* cargo was an incredible find for the pirates: a set of four strange Azlanti statues, discovered upon some nameless ruin-littered island. The crew of the *Red Wish* have sequestered these metallic sculptures in their hold and are on their way to Corentyn to sell them. If attacked, the *Red Wish* fields 2d4 shipmates (*GameMastery Guide* 294) as well as the captain (use the stats for a guard on page 260 of the *GameMastery Guide*). During the battle, though, something awakens 1d4 of

PORT PERIL RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1 raider	5	GMG* 280
6–10	1 barkeep, 1d4 drunkards	5	GMG 303
11–13	2d4 wererats	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 197
14–20	2d6 rabid riding dogs	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 87
21–24	2 turnkeys, 1d6 prisoners	7	GMG 271, 270
25–29	1d10 cockroach swarms	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 58
30–35	1 sellsword	7	GMG 283
36–38	1 soucouyant	8	<i>Isles of the Shackles</i> 61
39–45	1d6 traveling merchants	8	GMG 285
46–51	1 priest	8	GMG 305
52–57	1d4 tupilaqs	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 275
58–63	1 merchant prince	9	GMG 285
64–68	1 alchemical golem	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 135
69–73	1 coral golem	9	<i>Isles of the Shackles</i> 47
74–80	2 first mates	10	GMG 295
81–85	1d6 duppies	10	<i>Isles of the Shackles</i> 48
86–90	1 guild master	10	GMG 267
91–95	1 pirate captain	11	GMG 281
96–99	1 bandit lord	11	GMG 259
100	1 athach	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 33

* *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*

statues, which function as clockwork servants (*Bestiary* 3 56). This is a CR 6 encounter.

Sea Jackal: Most other pirates gladly avoid the *Sea Jackal*, which is well-known throughout the Shackles for its gruesomely disfigured and fanatically sadistic crew. Scuttlebutt has it that the ship's captain, Kassim ibn Sayyir, was a prosperous Ketapeshi slaver who left his home port one day with a ship full of slaves and never returned. He resurfaced over a year later, having repurposed his ship as a raiding vessel and his former slaves as buccaneers. Worshipers of Lamashtu, the pirates aboard the *Jackal* are known to practice elaborate forms of self-mutilation, and inflict the same upon their captives. Lamashtu's blessings for the crew's grisly perversions are evidenced by the yeth hound padding constantly at its captain's side. Captain ibn Sayyir (use the stats for a torturer on page 278 of the *GameMastery Guide*), his yeth hound (*Bestiary* 286), and 1d4 cultists (*GameMastery Guide* 271) eagerly attack any ship they encounter, demanding flesh-bound tributes to Lamashtu, while the less zealous crew members hang back. The crew of the *Sea Jackal* is a CR 7 encounter.

COMOZANT WYRD

COMOZANT WYRD

CR 4



XP 1,200

N Small outsider (air, elemental, extraplanar, incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+4 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 size)

hp 27 (5d10)

Fort +1, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, plasma form; **Immune** cold, electricity, elemental traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (good)

Special Attacks lightning lash

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

2/day—*control weather* (standard action; intensify or dispel storm only)



STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 8, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Diplomacy +12, Fly +13, Knowledge (nature) +3,

Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +13, Sense Motive +13

Languages Auran, illuminating flames

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean (during storms)

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Illuminating Flames (Su) As a standard action, a comozant wyrd may shroud the upper halves of any Small or larger creatures it can see within 30 feet in cold, buzzing flames similar to the wyrd's own. Any degree of electricity resistance blocks this effect, unless the target willingly submits. Otherwise the flames persist until the wyrd is out of range. Because of the flames' glow and buzz, targets of this effect take a –10 penalty on Stealth checks.

A comozant wyrd can communicate empathically with creatures subject to this effect, gaining a +4 racial bonus on Sense Motive checks when doing so. Interacting with a wyrd in this way still uses standard social skills and rules. While communicating in this fashion, a comozant wyrd can confer unexpected insight or information equivalent to the result of a *divination* spell.

Lightning Lash (Su) As a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, a comozant wyrd can shock any creature or object within 30 feet to which it has line of effect, dealing 2d8 points of electricity damage. The wyrd can choose for this damage to be nonlethal. If the target is currently affected by the wyrd's illuminating flames, the target is stunned for a round and the flames are dispelled. A creature affected by the combination can resist being stunned with a successful DC 16 Fortitude save. The DC is Charisma-based.

Plasma Form (Ex) Although incorporeal, a comozant wyrd cannot hide inside solid objects. It must start its turn attached to the outside of something solid and of Small size or larger, or it takes 5 points of damage. Anyone attacking the wyrd must take a –4 penalty on the attack roll, or resolve the attack against whatever the wyrd is attached to as well.

A comozant wyrd appears to be approximately 3 feet of heatless blue or violet plasma jutting from solid, protruding objects (usually a mast or spar of a ship). It flickers like flame, and its only static features resemble those of a humanoid face. Manifested on the Material Plane, the creature emits an uncanny buzzing, hissing noise, but does not consume creatures or objects it touches. Creatures adjacent to it or to targets of its illuminating flames often find their hair literally standing on end and their bodies crawling with harmless but unnerving sparks.

ECOLOGY

Comozant wyrds are most often encountered in the hearts of Golarion's greatest storms, particularly the Eye of Abendego and the smaller storms it spawns. They are incredibly rare, and almost always solitary; no sightings on land have ever been reported.

Because they are so rare and their natural environment makes detached study improbable, few creatures on Golarion even know of comozant wyrds, let alone understand their nature. Citing their command of storms, some speculate that the wyrds are infant forms of an unknown breed of storm elementals, but others say they are fey spirits, born in the moment they appear and existing only for the brief time they shine.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Comozant wyrds have no society as such. Seafarers regard them with considerable awe for the danger and mystery that attend them, but few are brave enough to attempt conversation with living plasma on a wooden ship, especially mid-tempest. Displaying such mettle is a sure way to earn considerable respect from any ordinary sailor—persuading a wyrd to abate its storm could inspire outright awe.

Comozant wyrds rarely speak even to those fluent in Auran, preferring to communicate in a more primal way, using their illuminating flames. Those who have “conversed” with a wyrd in this way describe an alien mode of communication that is as much raw emotion and image as it is concept and word, and a mysterious mixture of knowledge and ignorance. For instance, when first encountered, a wyrd apparently does not understand how different from itself mortals are, or how dangerous storms are to mortal creatures. Overlying everything is an unsettlingly alien but somehow childlike inquisitiveness, mixed with rage or fear if the wyrd feels threatened.

The form this interest takes can vary widely. One report describes spending half an hour in communion with a wyrd, exchanging detailed mental images of elemental and humanoid creatures' anatomies and behaviors while the storm raged unheeded around them. Another speaks of a wyrd chasing the entire crew of a pirate schooner around the deck of the ship with electrical attacks, punishing those who slowed, and stopping only when half the crew was dead. A third author writes of being flooded with comprehension of the nature of the cosmos in a single ecstatic instant, only for the wyrd to banish its own storm and disappear.

Such vanishing is a reasonably common occurrence in non-hostile encounters with comozant wyrds. Several accounts agree that once wyrds understand the peril in which storms place mortals, they use their command of the weather to end the storm, even though this apparently forces them to either leave or vanish altogether. To some, this suggests that comozant wyrds possess at least some

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

St. Elmo's fire (also known by the obscure English word “comozant,” among others) is a pale, flamelike glow, typically blue or violet and often accompanied by an electrical buzzing or drone. A harmless natural phenomenon caused by atmospheric imbalances in electrical charge, similar to the aurora borealis and the insides of plasma globes, it appears around protrusions such as masts, chimneys, spear tips, or horns, and occasionally on people as well. It usually, but not always, appears during storms. Like the wyrd's illuminating flames, it sheds light as a candle, and characters and items it touches take a –10 penalty on Stealth checks, but there are no directly harmful effects. Its dim illumination has no special effect on creatures vulnerable to light, and can be quelled by any spell that creates darkness or provides resistance to electricity.

respect for life, and that what seems like cruelty may simply be uncomprehending curiosity, even playfulness. Naturally, those who have suffered at a wyrd's whim are unsympathetic to this view.

One of the few things almost all accounts agree on is that the touch of a comozant wyrd's illuminating flames seems to confer sudden insight. Judging by images glimpsed in wyrds' minds, they appear to know, but not always understand, things that they glimpse in the thoughts, pasts, and entanglements of those with whom they converse. On one occasion, this has led to a traveler learning that one of her companions was in the pay of a hated rival. Other authors recount glimpses of scenes relevant to them that were happening at that precise moment halfway around the world, scenes of which nobody on board could possibly be aware. One way or another, very few of the available reports fail to mention the author glimpsing a secret she could not otherwise learn, an answer—or at least a hint—to a puzzle she had been attempting to solve, or a flash of inspiration that enabled her to complete some great work. These tales lead some desperate souls to seek out storms to sail into, hoping for answers they can find nowhere else.




Comozant wyrds themselves do not seem to have a discernible agenda from moment to moment, or indeed to place very much weight on past experience. They will attack—or, conversely, stop fighting and “parley”—without hesitation, based purely on whether they feel their immediate situation warrants it. This is not to say that they forget past behavior, but they seem to bear few grudges. They react badly when they detect deception, however, seemingly regarding it as only a short step down from outright violence.



SHARK

ANGUSTIDEN

This majestic beast glides through the water with murderous intent. Its thick-toothed maw is wide enough for a human to stand in, and its body stretches back more than 20 feet.

ANGUSTIDEN CR 7   
XP 3,200

N Gargantuan animal (aquatic)
Init +1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., keen scent; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 7, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +9 natural, -4 size)
hp 105 (10d8+60)
Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed swim 90 ft.
Melee bite +13 (2d8+15/18-20 plus grab)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Special Attacks grab, powerful jaws

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 12, **Con** 23, **Int** 3, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 4
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +21 (+25 grapple, +23 sunder); **CMD** 32 (+34 grapple)
Feats Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Sunder, Lunge, Skill Focus (Perception)
Skills Perception +19, Swim +18

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean
Organization solitary
Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Powerful Jaws (Ex) The teeth of the angustiden are so sharp and tough that they make light work of almost any material. When the angustiden makes a successful grapple attempt following the use of its grab ability, it automatically makes a sunder attempt against the armor worn by the creature grappled as a free action. Each round the grapple is maintained it makes another sunder attempt against its victim's armor.

The angustiden is a gargantuan hunter of the deep sea. The size and ferocity of this behemoth are matched only by those of the megalodon, and it counts even the great white shark among its prey. Its foot-long, dense, and jagged teeth tear through anything they choose to clamp down on, and very few creatures manage to leave such an embrace with all of their body parts.

GREAT WHITE SHARK

This immense silvery beast oozes strength, power, and speed. Its gigantic maw is lined with rows of ragged-looking teeth, and its pitch-black, emotionless eyes give nothing away.

GREAT WHITE SHARK CR 4   

XP 1,200
N Huge animal (aquatic)
Init +6; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., keen scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +9 natural, -2 size)
hp 38 (4d8+20)
Fort +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed swim 90 ft.
Melee bite +8 (2d6+10)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 14, **Con** 21, **Int** 1, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative
Skills Perception +10, Swim +15

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean
Organization solitary, pair, school (3-6), or pack (7-13)
Treasure none

Among the largest of predatory fish, great white sharks speed through the world's oceans, perpetually hunting.

HAMMERHEAD SHARK

Beneath this sleek gray shark's unusually shaped head, a disproportionately small mouth flashes with razor-sharp teeth.

HAMMERHEAD SHARK CR 3   

XP 800
N Large animal (aquatic)
Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., keen scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)
hp 30 (4d8+12)
Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed swim 60 ft.
Melee bite +7 (1d8+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 1, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative
Skills Perception +10, Swim +13

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean
Organization solitary, pair, school (3-6), or pack (7-13)
Treasure none

Hammerheads' heads give them a wider field of vision and allow them to pin prey to the seafloor before devouring it.

HELICOPRION

This creature resembles an ordinary shark from tail to mouth, but the unusual shape of its lower jaw marks it as something else. A whorl of teeth spirals inward, tiny at the centre, but long and brutal farther out.

HELICOPRION

CR 6



XP 2,400

N Large animal (aquatic)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., keen scent; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 68 (8d8+32)

Fort +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +12 (1d8+10 plus 1d4 bleed)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks bleed (1d4), whorled jaw

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 18, **Con** 19, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 28

Feats Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Perception +12, Swim +15

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate oceans

Organization solitary, pair, school (3–5)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Whorled Jaw (Ex) When a helicoprion hits a Medium or smaller creature with its bite it can, as a free action, attempt to grapple and then pin that creature should the initial grapple be successful. Once the target is pinned, the helicoprion continues to do its bite damage (including bleed) for as long as it maintains the pin.

The helicoprion is a bizarre beast to behold. The remarkable physiology of its mouth allows it to flick out its bottom jaw, unrolling the whorl of teeth and snaring prey along its length. As its powerful muscles roll its jaw, the prey becomes trapped in a spiral of ragged, brutal incisors. Once it has captured a hearty meal, the helicoprion retreats in a thickening cloud of its victim's blood to patiently await the slowing of struggles and the imminent demise of its dinner.

JIGSAW SHARK

Jagged markings decorate the body of this human-sized shark. A multitude of stains on its large teeth tell of the frequency and ferocity with which it uses its bite.

JIGSAW SHARK

CR 1



XP 400



N Medium animal (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., keen scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 11 (2d8+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d6+3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Perception +6, Swim +10

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean

Organization solitary, pair, school (3–6)

Treasure none

The fact that these sharks dwell in shallow coastal waters places them in direct contact with those making a living from the sea. It's not uncommon to hear stories of jigsaw sharks leaping from the water and taking out dockworkers or fishermen in small boats. Their patchwork coloration of browns and blue-grays partly inspires their name.

SHIP IN A BOTTLE

A model sailing ship in a display bottle the size of a boot sails the air on vaporous waves. Speckles of water move about the deck like a crew, arming a miniature ballista and preparing to take aim.

SHIP IN A BOTTLE

CR 2



XP 600

N Tiny construct

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+1 armor, +2 Dex, +2 size)

hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities DR 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee ram +6 (1d3)

Ranged ballista +7 (1d6)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 5, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14 (can't be tripped)

Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative

Skills Fly +20

Languages understands Aquan and Common

SQ shatter spray

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, fleet (2–5)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shatter Spray (Ex) The first time a ship in a bottle fires its ballista, rams a creature, or is dealt weapon damage, the bottle containing it shatters, spraying glass in a circle around it. All creatures in a 5-foot radius take 1d6 points of piercing damage. A successful DC 12 Reflex save halves this additional damage.

BOTTLED ARMADA

A fleet of miniature ships, each secure in a glass bottle, flies through the air. The ships move as one, coordinating their attacks.

BOTTLED ARMADA

CR 6



XP 2,400

N Tiny construct (swarm)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +2 size)

hp 64 (8d10+20)

Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities DR 5/—; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee swarm (2d6+4 plus distraction)

Special Attacks distraction (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 5, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +10; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Fly +20, Perception +13, Sense Motive +4

Languages understands Aquan and Common

SQ shatter swarm

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, fleet (2–5)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shatter Swarm (Ex) Whenever a bottled armada fires its ballistae, swarms a creature, or is dealt weapon damage, one of the containing bottles shatters, spraying glass in a circle around it. All creatures in a 5-foot radius take 1d6 points of piercing damage. A successful DC 13 Reflex save (DC 13) halves the damage.

A ship in a bottle signifies patience and devotion. Parts are assembled through an obstinate hole to create the illusion of something impossible. The average model maker devotes months of delicate handling and blinding eyestrain to its creation. Most ships in bottles are built by sea captains and modeled after their vessels. As the devotion of a captain to his ship compares to that of a marriage, a ship in a bottle could be seen as the offspring of that relationship. This devotion is palpable well beyond the Material Plane.

Water sprites, tiny elemental spirits from the Plane of Water, see boats as perversions enabling landlubbers' insistence on venturing where they do not belong. These water spirits commandeer ships in bottles and sail them through the air to chase off the sailors who invade the high seas. Even if the ship in a bottle is destroyed, the water spirit at the helm claims victory, having effectively forced a captain to destroy his offspring.

A ship in a bottle is about 1 foot long and weighs about 5 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Model ships in bottles stand prominently on shelves in the quarters of captains and admirals, usually made to perfectly replicate their creators' ships. Once brought to life by a water spirit, a ship in a bottle maneuvers through the air on waves of mist. The strings of its miniature ballistae winch with enough tension to fire, and the water spirit turns a tribute into something that is both a weapon and a parody at once.

Not all ships in bottles are captained willingly. Captains or admirals who desire more dramatic tributes to the ships they have commanded sometimes have mundane ships

in bottles seemingly brought to life via magic. Through either great devotion or greater gold, they gain access to the magic necessary to bind water spirits to their model ships. The magic binding a water spirit to a ship in a bottle also enchants the elemental spirit into believing it is the captain and crew of a typical vessel. Magically bound water spirits follow the orders of either the caster who bound them or the maker of the ship in a bottle, treating him or her as their admiral.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

A ship in a bottle's life is on the high seas, and its water spirit captain sets sail toward the nearest body of water. Its mission is to seek and destroy land creatures on the seas, and tales of ships in bottles' voyages rarely speak of glory. When a ship in a bottle manages to survive long enough to log journeys, what can be extrapolated from its miniscule logbook makes for fascinating insight into the elemental mind. The ways in which the water spirit captain justifies the world as seen from its viewpoint reads like a mix of mythology and a child's bathtime story.

The spirit inhabiting this construct determines the nature of the crew and replicates tiny sailors on deck. These are solely to unnerve onlookers, as the spirit operates the ship in a bottle's sails and weaponry hydraulically. A water spirit magically bound to a ship in a bottle against its will often crews the vessel with manifested sailors based on the bottle's owner, or his descriptions of the original ship's crew.

A ship in a bottle sails alone only when it has no other choice, and usually welcomes the opportunity to join, form, or lead a fleet with other water spirits, flying tiny flags designed seemingly at random. Usually unbound water spirits captain all the ships in a bottled armada, although sometimes an unbound water spirit takes advantage of naive bound water spirits.

A chance meeting between individual ships in bottles is not the only manner in which fleets form. Water spirits sometimes conspire to commandeer multiple ships in bottles together, and nautical museums have reported dozens of ships in bottles flying off shelves and out to sea.

CONSTRUCTION

A ship in a bottle can be created through a binding ritual undertaken by a powerful spellcaster. The ritual requires a masterwork model ship in a bottle that must be built from materials worth 100 gp, and DC 30 Craft (woodworking) skill checks made over 2 consecutive weeks. Alternatively, a masterwork model ship in a bottle can instead be purchased for the ritual, but it must be worth at least 600 gp.

SHIP IN A BOTTLE

CL 9th; Price 5,100 gp (5,600 gp)



CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate object*, *magic jar*, suitable spirit of a living creature, 2 ranks in Craft (woodworking); **Cost** 2,600 gp (3,100 gp)

SHIP IN A BOTTLE AS A HAUNT

GMs can also use a ship in a bottle as a more psychological threat by substituting the soul of a drowned sailor for the water spirit and running it as a haunt.

This lost soul has never accepted the sinking of its ship in life. It uses models of ships in bottles to make up for the failure that betrayed its ship, its fellow crew members, and its captain.

BOTTLED SHIPYARD

CR 7

XP 3,600

LE persistent haunt (35-ft.-radius cabin on a vessel or room near docks)

Caster Level 10th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to spot ethereal crew)

hp 31; **Weakness** tricked by Diplomacy; **Trigger** proximity;

Reset 1 day

Effect The haunt settles in areas with enough ships in bottles to animate a small fleet. When the area of a bottled shipyard is entered, the haunt animates a ship in a bottle (using the stats on the facing page) each round for as many rounds as there are ships in bottles to animate (usually 1d6+1). Although any ship in a bottle that the haunt animates can be attacked and destroyed as a creature, only positive energy used against the constructs damages the haunt.

Destruction A model ship animated by the haunt but not destroyed must be caught, brought to a large body of water, and released to sail the seas.

SHIP SENTINEL

A larger-than-life wooden carving of a mermaid holding a spear clammers forward, the vibrant paint coating her frame encrusted in years' worth of sea salt.

SHIP SENTINEL

CR 7



XP 3,200

N Large construct

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, ship sight; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 68 (7d10+30)

Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

DR 5/slashing or piercing; **Immune** construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee mwk spear +11/+6 (2d6+6 plus salted wound/x3) or 2 slams +10 (1d6+4 plus salted wound)

Ranged mwk spear +12 (2d6+4 plus salted wound/x3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

Feats Improved Initiative^B

ECOLOGY

Environment any water

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Salted Wound (Su) Any living creature damaged by a ship sentinel must make a successful DC 16 Fortitude save or take a -1 penalty on attack and damage rolls for 1 round as salty brine drips painfully onto the wound. On a successful critical hit, the target takes an additional 3d6 points of damage as its flesh cracks and withers from dehydration. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ship Sight (Su) A ship sentinel is treated as having tremorsense out to 100 feet while onboard a ship, as its senses permeate the vessel's timbers. It can only detect creatures in contact with the vessel or on objects in contact with the vessel. It cannot use this ability to detect creatures not in contact with the ship, even if they are within the ability's 100-foot radius.

Ship sentinels are animated constructs that are bound to a specific vessel and to that ship's captain. Crafted to resemble a humanoid figurehead, a ship sentinel normally rests at the prow of its ship, granting good fortune and protection to the crew. But in times of dire need, the captain can also activate the ship sentinel, causing it to spring to life and fight alongside the vessel's

crew. Although individual features of ship sentinels may vary, all ship sentinels are made of wood and have the same general statistics.

A ship sentinel stands roughly 6 feet tall and weighs 400 pounds.

ECOLOGY

A ship sentinel's form is carved and shaped by skilled woodworkers, but cannot truly be brought to "life" without offerings from the sea. Most spellcasters who endeavor to create these guardians crush a mixture of sand, shells, and valuable pearls and mix it with saltwater and oils, creating a grainy varnish. The carved figure is coated with the solution and then brought to the shores of the sea and affixed to the bowsprit of the craft it will protect. Only then is the construct's creation finally complete. Unlike with most constructs, however, control of the creature does not fall to the creator, but rather to the captain of the ship to which it is affixed. If the captain of the ship changes, control of the construct passes to the new captain.

Although resistant to most hazards of sea and storm, all ship sentinels eventually wear down after a time and require polishing, cleaning, and recoating with the specially prepared varnish used during the construct's creation. If maintained in this fashion, however, a single ship sentinel can guard a ship—passing from captain to captain—for decades or even centuries.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Ship sentinels are solitary creations, and a single construct is capable of defending even the largest of ships. Their presence is an undisputed boon to all aboard—though most captains prefer not to speak of their crafts' guardians, preferring to keep the constructs as secret weapons. When the sentinel is needed, the captain must shout a word or short phrase to bring the construct to life. An awakened ship sentinel is able to recognize loyal members of its crew, placing them under its protective wards, and directs its attacks against any living targets that it does not ward, though the construct's master can point it toward specific targets.

In combat, ship sentinels can pulverize flesh and bone with their heavy wooden hands, but normally wield a weapon of some kind—usually a spear, rapier, shortsword, or other light weapon. Stories even exist of elven vessels that armed their ship sentinels with huge bows, or of daring Brevic sea captains who gave their constructs the fabled Aldori dueling swords of their homeland. Regardless of these variations, most weapons used in a ship sentinel's construction draw upon the construct's inherent nimbleness, an agility belied by the figurehead's wooden form. But whether their weapons are forged or natural, all ship sentinels can infuse the

sting of seawater and salt air into their blows, wracking their foes with crippling pain.

Ship sentinels are resilient foes, their wooden bodies capable of turning aside most attacks that cannot pierce or gouge them. Unfortunately their construction also makes them vulnerable to fire—their greatest weakness—and any magical fire quickly dries a ship sentinel's body to a nearly immobile brittleness.

VARIANT SHIP SENTINELS

Ship sentinels can be crafted in a wide variety of forms and are often embellished and customized similarly to mundane figureheads. The following are some of these constructs' most common customizations.

Ballista Marksman: Some ship sentinels have a light ballista built into their forms; these sentinels are usually designed to look like an archer with an oversized bow, a beautiful lillend, or a cruel erinyes. Such ship sentinels rarely have a melee weapon, resorting instead to slams if unable to use their ballistae to make ranged attacks. Statistics for ballista marksmen are modified as follows:
Ranged light ballista +12 (3d8 plus salted wound /19–20). See Chapter 3 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* for additional details on siege engines.

Mariner's Muse: Sculpted to resemble harp-playing angels or armored heralds, a mariner's muse ship sentinel can use the inspire courage effect of a bard's bardic performance once per day for 5 rounds as if it were a 5th-level bard. It always uses all 5 rounds of its performance at the same time and can never use the performance multiple times in 1 day for any duration.

Sea Sorcerer: These ship sentinels are often crafted to resemble wizards, sea serpents, or abstract orrery-like sculptures, and possess limited spell-like abilities. They can only use these abilities while onboard a sailing vessel. These spell-like abilities can each be used 3 times per day, and include *animate objects*, *grease*, and *obscuring mist*.

CONSTRUCTION

A ship sentinel is built from 400 pounds of wood. The creator or a hired artisan must then shape the creature into the desired likeness, usually after a fashion common to the nautical vessels of the region. Afterward, a special varnish is made from a mixture of sand, seawater, crushed pearls and shells, and magically treated oils—the varnish is worth a total of 250 gp and is applied to the entire form. If the creator intends for the ship sentinel

to wield a weapon, a masterwork or better version of that weapon must also be supplied.

SHIP SENTINEL

CL 9th; **Price** 21,250 gp; 21,750 gp (ballista marksman); 23,250 gp (mariner's muse); 25,250 gp (sea sorcerer)

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate object*, *limited wish*, creator must be caster level 9th; Craft (woodworking) check DC 25; **Cost** 10,750 gp; 11,000 gp (ballista marksman); 11,750 gp (mariner's muse); 12,750 gp (sea sorcerer)



VOIDSTICK ZOMBIE

This shambling humanoid's taut gray skin shows signs of arcane symbols now faded with age and decay. Long, darkwood spikes riddle its body; every inch of flesh is staked and violated. A palpable aura of entropy and despair hangs over the sorry, perforated creature.

VOIDSTICK ZOMBIE CR 12   
XP 19,200

CE Medium undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense 60 ft; Perception +10

Aura sacrilegious aura

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 26 (+12 natural, +4 profane)

hp 157 (15d8+90); fast healing 3

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 melee touch +13 (1d8 negative energy)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 22, 8d6)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** 7, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 26

Feats Channel Smite, Great Fortitude, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness

Skills Climb +5, Perception +10, Stealth +11

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or plague (3–9)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Channel Energy (Su) The voidstick zombie can channel negative energy as a 15th-level cleric.

Sacrilegious Aura (Sp) The overwhelming entropic energies and the sheer number of *voidsticks* animating the voidstick zombie warp and augment negative and positive energy around the creature. As with all *voidsticks*, an aura of intense negative energy extends in a 30-foot radius from the zombie functioning as the spell *desecrate*. Undead within this aura receive a +1 profane bonus on attack and damage rolls and the DC to resist channeled negative energy increases by +3. The voidstick zombie constantly gains the benefits of this effect (the attack and damage bonuses are already incorporated into its statistics).

In addition, this miasma of void energies also interferes with wielding positive energy. Any creature attempting to use positive energy in this area—such as through a cleric's channel energy ability, a paladin's lay on hands, or any spell with the healing descriptor—must make a DC 25 concentration check. If this check fails, the

effect is blocked, consuming one use of the ability, or the spell is lost.

The voidstick zombie is the hateful creation of wicked shamans and necromancers, who use *voidsticks* to animate the dead. One *voidstick* is required for every Hit Die possessed by the base creature. These vile devices, each of which is 6 to 10 inches in length, are pierced through the living or dead body of a creature, pumping the dark energy of the void into its form. Packed with the bitter entropy of negative energy, the creature rises, seeking out the life force of others with endless sadness and insane determination. Its single goal is to extinguish life and smother any source of positive energy. Multiple *voidsticks* in a creature's form feed one another, augmenting their standard abilities and imbuing the touch of the voidstick zombie with the power to drain life from anything it touches. The zombie becomes almost a sliver of the void itself, existing in a state of such negative power that its very proximity can tamper with other creatures' abilities to summon the powers of the Positive Energy Plane, and with the perpetual sadness that numbs its own intellect it gains the power to enhance and influence other creatures that depend on negative energy.

These sad creatures, wracked with soulless negative energy, constantly hunger for destruction, delighted at every chance they get to snuff the spark of life from the living. They hunt the islands throughout the Shackles, especially the Cannibal Isles, where their creation began long before its current inhabitants made their home there.

As the brutal and savage kuru people of the Cannibal Isles explored the ruins of Ghol-Gan, they discovered the foul magic involved with the *voidsticks*, and as they turned to barbarism and cannibalism, their shamans carved these devices and created the first voidstick zombie seen on Golarion in thousands of years. The kuru use voidstick zombies for war against each other and to serve as ruthless hunters, culling humanoids who wander too close to their blood-drenched islands. Kuru shamans create the vile *voidsticks* in order to enhance their own necromantic strength as well as to animate voidstick zombies. In some tribes it is seen as a great honor to be transformed into one of these powerful creatures, and some aged shamans on the eve of their death elect to undergo this transformation instead of becoming a ritual meal for their tribes.

Since the rediscovery of *voidsticks*, those interested in necromancy and the creation of new undead have sent emissaries to the Shackles eager to buy them. These enterprising necromancers experiment with the devices and unleash voidstick zombies into Avistan and Garund to fulfill their murderous intent.

VOIDSTICKS

In remote parts of the world, it is not always practical for the faithful to visit holy places with any regularity. In particular, the weak, the sick, and the dying may be in no position to trek across plains or risk dangerous water crossings to see their spiritual leaders. In response to this, the *godstick* was born—a crafted rod that serves as a portable shrine, carried by shamans and witchdoctors and pushed into the ground to focus devotion at any location. Ingenuity is not just the way of the benign, however, and just as often it is the way of evil. Before long, shamans who worshiped more hateful deities corrupted this notion; they created the *voidsticks* and drove them into bodies, living or dead, charging those bodies with the power of the endless void and creating rattling, hungry abominations.

VOIDSTICK

Aura faint necromancy [evil]; CL 5

Slot special; **Price** 2,500 gp, **Weights** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Each *voidstick* is 6 to 10 inches long, with a diameter of about an inch. Carved from single pieces of polished darkwood, they often display markings or symbols sacred to the deity of their creator, but can just as easily be plain and smooth. Planting a *voidstick* into the ground with an appropriate prayer is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The device floods the area with negative energy, producing an effect identical to the *desecrate* spell in a 20-foot radius. In addition, any evil divine caster within 20 feet of the *voidstick* may cast her spells without the need for any material component with a value of 10 gp or less, or any focus item with a value of 50 gp or less. This ability functions only for the individual planting the *voidstick* and persists until the stick is uprooted.

While this is a useful tool for shamans in locations poorly serviced by trade in magical goods, it pales in comparison to the *voidstick's* most potent function: the creation of undead. Creating a voidstick zombie requires an hour-long ritual during which foul symbols are drawn across a corpse's flesh. At the end of the hour, the creator must make a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check before driving the first *voidstick* into the victim's heart. If this check succeeds, the victim is transformed into a voidstick zombie. To fully animate the creature, one *voidstick* must be used for each Hit Die the base creature has. In 12 rounds, the creature rises under its own power, eager to spread its negative energy and snuff out life nearby. Undead created using *voidsticks* are not under the control of their creator but can be commanded using channeled negative energy, spells, or similar effects.

Voidsticks can also be driven into a living body to slay the creature and transition it to undeath. If a living body is used, the creature must be pinned or otherwise helpless for the duration of the entire ritual. When the ritual is complete and

the first *voidstick* is inserted, the creature must make a DC 18 Fortitude save. If this save succeeds, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points and is dying, but the magic of the *voidstick* and the ritual are wasted and the ritual must be performed again, using another *voidstick*. If the save fails, the creature dies and the ritual is successful, transforming the base creature into a voidstick zombie.

Undead that contain such an item benefit from the +2 bonus hit points per Hit Die for having been created in the area of an enhanced *desecrate* spell.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate dead*, *desecrate*;

Creator must have 5 ranks in Knowledge (religion). **Cost** 1,750 gp



ISLAND OF EMPTY EYES

by Neil Spicer

Having won the Free Captain's Regatta, the adventurers must now claim their grand prize: the uninhabited and dangerous Island of Empty Eyes. After exploring strange ruins and fighting the island's myriad monstrous denizens, the PCs must host a feast for their new peers on the Pirate Council—but a mysterious saboteur threatens to disrupt the party. Can the heroes tame their island wilderness and protect their influential guests? Or will they lose the respect of their fellow pirate lords and fade into obscurity?

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Learn the truth behind the wildest claims of lost plunder and lurking evil spread by pirates throughout the Shackles. Any of these taproom tales have the potential to lead their listeners to either the heights of fame and fortune or their catastrophic dooms.

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Discover the secrets hidden by the cyclopes of the Shackles, savage prophets and bitter scions of a fallen empire.

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The dangers of dealing with ghosts and harpies in the fourth chapter of Robin D. Laws's *Pathfinder's Journal*, "The Treasure of Far Thallai." Also, cursed constructs seethe in the *Pathfinder Bestiary*.

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Crystal Dodo

Considered a lucky treasure, this crudely carved statue gains value each time it is stolen or sold. Some captains claim that as long as this prize was on their vessels, the ships were never successfully boarded, but seeing how its current owner stole the thing from a rival captain's quarters, that can't be true.



The Skeleton Ball Gown

On the new moon of Neth, wealthy citizens of Port Peril hold an elaborate festival in which they dress up in their best finery and disguise themselves as skeletons. Chosen each year, the Skeleton Queen is bequeathed an expensive glamered ball gown and the honor of naming next year's Skeleton Queen.



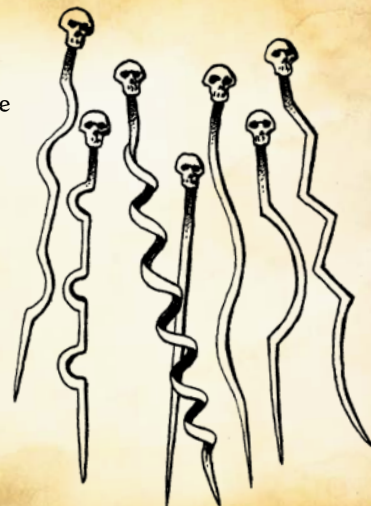
The Howling Urn

Grinning Jalad, a strange vanara pirate known for his jokes as much as for his courage, sailed into the Shackles with a hold full of plunder, eager to trade it all for a lost relic called the Howling Urn. He was tight-lipped about why the urn was so valuable to him, but immediately sailed off to Raugsmauda's Reach following a lead, and none have seen him since.



Voidsticks

Corrupted devices of a divine nature, these sticks are fashioned by shamans of the kuru people living in the dreaded Cannibal Isles, who infuse them with negative energy. Those pierced by such creations become shambling horrors, wandering their islands or spreading destruction to neighboring isles. Landlubbing necromancers often venture to the isles for samples of these wicked spikes.



RACE THE STORM

The time has come for the heroes to take their places as true pirate lords. But doing so will require more than a ship, a scallywag crew, and a hold full of plunder—they'll need to win the esteem of the Hurricane King himself. If they succeed, they'll earn the right to claim even greater glory by participating in the Free Captains' Regatta, a grueling race along the fringes of the mighty hurricane called the Eye of Abendego. The winners receive a fat prize purse, their own private island, and a seat on the Pirate Council of the Shackles. Will the adventurers triumph against fierce competitors, old rivals, and the treacherous winds and currents of the Eye? Or will their ship be claimed by the storm, a doom that's befallen so many before them?

This volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* includes:

- "Tempest Rising," a Pathfinder RPG adventure for 7th-level characters, by Matthew Goodall.
- Details on the infamous pirate lords of the Shackles and new rules for storms at sea, by Tork Shaw.
- A gazetteer of the infamous pirate city of Port Peril, by Liz Courts.
- Ghosts and cylopes in the Pathfinder's Journal, by Robin D. Laws.
- Five new monsters, by Jesse Benner, Ryan Costello, Philip Minchin, and Tork Shaw.



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