

SAILING ABOARD
— THE —
WIDOW

A RAGING SWAN PRESS EVENTURE



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SAILING ABOARD THE WIDOW

A single mast thrusts skyward like a proud lance, assailing the grey heavens as the good ship Widow ploughs through the waves. The storm-blasted sail billows in the wind, dragging the ship across the seething sea which readily cleaves before its grim figurehead. Standing at the helm is sullen-faced Saamo Hilhaarja, captain of Widow and master of the sea. Despite their advanced age and a reputation far from untarnished, there are no mariners more accomplished than Saamo and his crew. No matter the weather or the dangers of the journey, Widow always sails.

CREDITS

Design: Bart Wynants

Development: Creighton Broadhurst

Art: William McAusland and Bart Wynants. Some artwork copyright William McAusland, used with permission.

Cartography: Dyson Logos and Bart Wynants

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WHAT'S AN EVENTURE?

An eventure is akin to a normal adventure, but does not (normally) feature violence or physical challenges. Instead, an eventure focuses on the use of social skills and role-play to resolve the challenges, or events, therein. Most eventures take place in a settlement or on the road. Few occur in traditional adventure locales such as dungeons, ruined castles and so on.

Eventures are an excellent change of pace and can be used as filler between adventures or as situations in which PCs who have invested in social skills can shine. They are also perfect for players who enjoy role-playing.

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THE EVENTURE BEGINS

Seventeen years ago, Malakias Salo, a wizard and Gloamhold historian, came into possession of a green opal egg recovered from the Twilight City.

Despite his vast knowledge, Salo could not uncover the secrets held by the wondrous iridescent stone—the so-called *Ovum Viridia* (see “The Oveum Viridia” sidebar overleaf). He decided to present the opal to his former mentor, an expert on ancient artefacts, and booked passage aboard the good ship *Widow* to his mentor’s home.

Before long, however, the opal’s memory-devouring effects took hold of the crew and passengers. Unable to retain new memories, these damned souls forever believe themselves to be making the same journey aboard the ship, unaware seventeen years have passed. To make matters worse, Malakias hid the stone to prevent it from being stolen and can no longer remember where it is...

RUNNING THE EVENTURE

Sailing Aboard the Widow presents the characters with a mystery at sea and has them investigate a strange curse which has taken hold of *Widow* and its crew. This book presents a toolbox, rather than a script. You should read it in its entirety before running the game and use the material herein as a base to allow situations to develop organically during play.

After selecting a suitable hook, refer to “Widow Sets Sail” and start the characters off at Event 1: All Aboard! The remaining events should be spread out more or less evenly across the journey’s duration. A table containing minor dynamic events is included near the end of the section and can be used whenever you think it appropriate.

Between events, introduce the ship’s crew and passengers as outlined in the “Cursed Crew” and “Peculiar Passengers” sections.

“A Lurching Timber World” provides a map of *Widow* and details locations pertinent to the mystery.

Finally, “The Eventure Continues” offers a list of loose ends and story hooks with which to continue the events started herein.

OLAV’S COMPASS

This whalebone disc is five inches across and topped with a dome of smoky quartz. Etched into the bone is the image of a nine-pointed star, lending it the appearance of a compass although no needle is present. Characters using *detect magic* discover a faint aura of divination emanating from the compass.

When the proper command—Nosta Verho—is spoken, a needle of shimmering blue fire appears inside the crystal, pointing towards some distant, but unknown location. The needle remains visible for 2d10 minutes before disappearing.

An elf or other character wise in history or elves realises the compass is of elven make, and at least half a millennia old.

HOOKS

If the characters need a ship to carry them to their next adventure, *Widow* stands ready in spite of the journey’s potential dangers (which may include pirates, sea monsters, inclement weather, or all of the above!) Indeed, Saamo Hilhaarja is the only captain brave (or mad) enough to sail under some circumstances.

Characters could find themselves aboard *Widow* booking a passage for several reasons. These reasons could include:

- **Lost at Sea:** The characters are approached by Ana Laine (NG female human) whose husband, Niko, has been missing for seven months. Supposedly, Niko travelled aboard *Widow*, but the captain and crew deny ever having seen him. Suspecting foul play, Ana hired another party of adventurers to pose as travellers and journey aboard the ship in order to investigate, but the deal fell through. She offers the characters 20 gp each to find out what happened to Niko.
- **The Languard Falcon:** Antero Virtanen (N male human) is a wealthy merchant who owes a substantial debt to the wrong kind of people. Pressed by his creditors, Antero has arranged to fence a stolen art object and ship it on *Widow* to a mysterious contact known only as “Amanite”. Introducing himself as an art dealer, he requests the characters accompany the sealed chest containing his precious cargo and safeguard it during the journey. The job pays a flat 100 gp, and Antero has already booked a cabin for them.
- **Dead Men Tell No Tales:** As the inn clears after a night of heavy drinking, the characters discover one of the patrons is stone-cold dead. The dead man’s attire marks him as a sailor, although his advanced age—also the apparent cause of death—makes this unlikely. Rifling his pockets yields 2d6 silver pennies, an old, broken compass and a folded letter identifying the man as Olav Makela, a crewman on *Widow*. The letter is addressed to Olav’s brother and mentions a magical compass which Olav believes leads to buried treasure. The innkeeper offers the characters 5 gp to quietly and discretely return the body to the ship. For details, see “Olav’s Compass” below.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Sailing Aboard the Widow is easily adapted to almost any campaign setting. The ship’s point of departure and its destination have been left deliberately vague so the GM can freely choose these locations within the chosen setting. Likewise, the flexible timeline of events allows much freedom in pacing the eventure.

While designed for use with the Gloamhold setting and the Duchy of Ashlar, the pirate-ridden Picaroon Peninsula is another well-suited setting. In this example, the seedy pirate enclave of Deksport provides an excellent starting location for *Sailing Aboard the Widow*.

Finally, *20 Things #22: Ocean Voyage*, presents characters, dressing and minor events to add to your eventure.

CURSED CREWMEN

Find below a brief description of *Widow's* notable crew members.

SAAMO HILHAARJA, CAPTAIN

LN old male human fighter 3/thief 2

From beneath a weather-beaten brow, Saamo's sullen blue eyes cast their unblinking gaze across the dark waters, like icy gems set into aged leather. His long ashen braids lash about his face as he turns to meet you. After a moment of silence, he runs a rough hand through his sparse grey beard and spits an oily black stream of tobacco juice over the side. "Help ye?" he asks in a hoarse voice.

Background: Saamo's real name is Hylata. Twenty years ago, he was a naval officer in the duke's fleet but forsook his post to marry a girl from Longbridge named Janna Makinen. Desertion being punishable by death, Saamo fled town, changed his name, and became captain of the trading vessel *Widow*. He planned to remain at sea only for a few years—just long enough for his identity and crime to be forgotten.

Personality: Saamo keeps his doubts and fears to himself. Alone in his cabin, he often pines for his beloved Janna, who he believes still waits for him in Longbridge. He is ill at ease with strangers, ever thinking they might betray him to the duke.

Secret: Arjan is the only one who knows about Janna. No-one on board knows of Saamo's past as a deserter. He keeps this secret from Arjan especially, fearing it would cost him the proud veteran's friendship.

ARJAN BARDO, FIRST MATE

LN old male human fighter 3

A horrible hacking cough draws attention to a broad-shouldered man wearing a faded sleeveless soldier's uniform. A pale, jagged scar runs diagonally from his brow to his clean shaven square jaw and across one milky eye. He greets you with what could be either a grin or a scowl, his hand never leaving the head of the notched axe at his belt.

Background: Arjan is an army veteran who sustained horrible injuries leading a battle-winning charge. He was honourably discharged and granted a small plot of farmland near Dunstone in recognition of his loyal service. Not wanting to die in bed, Arjan promptly sold his farm and founded the Sea Wolves, a mercenary company earning their pay by escorting trading vessels through the pirate-infested waters of the Bitter Sea. When their ship was sunk in a pirate attack by Mervos Bloth, Arjan was rescued by *Widow* and he and Saamo became fast friends.

Personality: Quick to anger and slow to forgive, Arjan is difficult to reason with. Once his respect is earned, however, he remains a friend for life.

Secret: Arjan's injuries left him suffering from terrible migraines, contributing to his already infamous moods. He hides a stash of Black Lotus in his quarters—a powerful narcotic which he takes to in an effort to alleviate the pain. He is now hopelessly addicted to the plant.

TUOMAS GALLEN, COOK

NG old male human thief 1

Strands of greasy copper-coloured hair ring a bald pate marred with scars and scabs. Glancing sideways to meet your eyes, the fat man's face cracks into a gap-toothed smile. With visible effort, he rises to his feet and limps towards you, extending a greasy black hand. "Tuomas, pleased to meet ya." He exclaims. The stink of rum and stale sweat hanging over him is almost tangible.

Background: In spite of his haggard appearance and drinking habit, Tuomas is a capable sailor and an accomplished cook. Originally a fisherman hailing from the village of Hard Bay, he has served aboard *Widow* for the past eighteen years; of course, he believes it has been only six months.

Personality: Good-natured, jovial and trusting to a fault, Tuomas Gallen is Arjan Bardo's polar opposite, and the two often butt heads. Tuomas is always the first to back down and seek reconciliation afterwards.

Secret: Tuomas' limp is not only due to his considerable girth, but also because of a large cancerous growth on his inner thigh. The tumour is about the size of a child's head. Pale and spongy, it continuously weeps a translucent pink ooze. Not wanting to cause a fuss, Tuomas keeps it hidden with the help of his pot belly and a pair of wide trousers. He fully intends to seek a surgeon's aid after the journey. Due to the *Ovum's* effect, however, his journey never ends.

UKKO, DECKHAND

CN middle-aged male human

*A young man wearing ill-fitting clothes is busy sloshing a dirty mop back and forth across the deck in broad, sweeping strokes. His tousled, straw-blond hair and sparkling green eyes mark him as the youngest member of *Widow's* crew; perhaps thirty years of age. Humming a playful ditty, he seems to be in good spirits.*

Background: Ukko first came aboard *Widow* as a twelve-year-old boy. A plague had claimed his parents, forcing young Ukko to beg for food on the streets of Languard. Arjan Bardo took pity on the boy, offering Ukko the position of deckhand on *Widow*. While Ukko's physical form has matured normally over the past seventeen years, the effects of the *Ovum Viridia* have severely stunted his mental development. Mentally, Ukko remains a twelve-year old boy.

Personality: Ukko is usually friendly, curious, playful, somewhat naive and prone to the occasional tantrum. He's quite shy around women, whose mere proximity leaves him literally speechless. The death of his parents instilled in him a terrible fear of disease and death.

Secret: Ukko has adopted a pet rat, called "Mister Nibbles", which he keeps hidden from the other crew members (since they would kill a rat on sight). Recently, however, Mister Nibbles gave birth to a litter of eight baby rats. Ukko has hidden their nest in the hold and feeds them scraps from the galley twice a day.

PECULIAR PASSENGERS

Two travellers are also on *Widow*; neither is who they seem.

MALAKIAS SALO, ITINERANT WIZARD

N venerable male human wizard 4

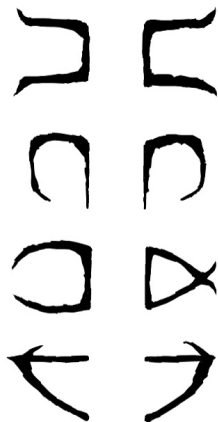
Gold-rimmed spectacles with cracked lenses sit precariously perched upon a bulbous nose, evidently broken and set many times. The owner, a wizened man with a drooping grey moustache, removes the spectacles with a trembling hand and vigorously polishes them on his frayed blue woollen sleeve. Holding the spectacles against the light for inspection, his face darkens into a disapproving frown.

Background: While Malakias claims to be a simple travelling scholar intent on visiting his old mentor, his actions brought the curse affecting *Widow* and its crew. Although he suspects the *Ovum Viridia* possesses mind-affecting properties, he mistakenly believes the effects are only mild. During the past seventeen years, Malakias has realised several times the *Ovum Viridia* has been devouring his memories and those of the crew. The first time he realised this, he hid the precious artefact to prevent the crew from taking it from him. He promptly forgot where he put it. The *Ovum* was never found, and its continued proximity erased the memories of these events time and again. Eventually, the ageing wizard's mind gave out, descending into senility. Although his lucid moments are few and far between, Malakias uses them to tattoo the fragments of his fading knowledge onto his own skin. This includes the location of the *Ovum*, encrypted on his legs.

Personality: Old age and the *Ovum's* influence have taken a heavy toll on Malakias' mind, rendering him almost completely senile. Nevertheless, he still believes himself a powerful wizard, despite being unable to memorise all but the simplest spells. Unable to fully comprehend the extent of the harm he's done, Malakias staunchly maintains his charade for as long as possible. Only when confronted with irrefutable proof of the *Ovum's* dire effects does he confess the truth.

Secret: Although Malakias cannot recall where he hid the *Ovum*, cryptic clues to its location are tattooed on his skin, hidden amid the mad ravings of a wizard losing his mind. Salo covers his tattoos in ragged, oversized robes. Characters spending time with Malakias who make a successful find secret doors roll catch a fleeting glimpse of these strange markings.

If Malakias is forced to expose the tattoos they reveal the true nature of the *Ovum* scattered across a score of crudely inked phrases inked upon Salo's pale waxen skin. Most intriguing is a string of arcane symbols scrawled along both shins. When both legs are pressed together, it plainly reads "HEAD", referring to the ship's head, where Malakias hid the *Ovum Viridia*.



YSARA ULVESKAAD, LONE WOLF

CG female human ranger 4

A predatory gaze bores into your skull as a woman watches you from beneath the hood of her grey woollen cloak. Without glancing down, she runs her hands along the crossbow laid out across her lap, applying oil to the mechanism with practiced ease. Six silvered daggers hang from a trio of belts slung across her battle-worn leather cuirass. A red clay urn, sealed with wax and bound with twine, sits between her feet.

Background: Ysara is a fellow first-time traveller aboard *Widow* and—for now—remains unaffected by the *Ovum Viridia*. The red clay urn contains the ashes of her family, killed in a vicious werewolf attack four years ago. She has dedicated her life to hunting the creatures ever since.

Personality: Initially, Ysara remains aloof and secretive. Mid-way through the journey, she realises all is not right aboard *Widow* and reluctantly approaches the characters. If they agree, she offers to help them uncover what is going on.

Secret: Ysara is afflicted with lycanthropy. Thus far, she has been able to suppress the change using a tincture of wolfsbane, which nevertheless leaves her sickened during a full moon. She is looking for a more permanent cure, and hoping to find it at *Widow's* port of destination.

THE OVUM VIRIDIA

This lustrous green opal is the size and shape of an ostrich egg. It was recovered at great cost from a crumbling fane within the Twilight City beneath Gloamhold by the doom-haunted party of adventurers known as The Blades Three. Malakias Salo thereafter acquired it for a princely sum.

The *Ovum Viridia* is no ordinary stone. Gestating inside this iridescent green egg is the larval spawn of an ancient, nameless evil. While the larva remains dormant (at least for now), its mere presence assails the minds of mortals within a 100 ft. radius, destroying their capacity for memory. Complete memory loss manifests only after an extended period of exposure and the characters do not immediately risk the same fate. A character steeped in arcane or historical lore may know some or all of the following facts:

- From time to time, similar stones are recovered from the depths of Gloamhold.
- Opals like these were prized by the ancient troglodytes dwelling in the Twilight City. It is theorised the stones are magical, despite lacking an aura.
- Clusters of these stones are found in the Daemonic Maw. Some evidence suggests prolonged exposure erodes the memories of mortals.

If destroyed or simply moved far enough away, the *Ovum's* memory destroying effects wear off after 1d10 hours. Lost memories are not regained, however.

A LURCHING TIMBER WORLD

Ship locations important to this event are highlighted on the map. Improvise the descriptions and contents for the remaining areas of *Widow*, as necessary.

THE MAIN DECK

Widow's main deck is where most events happen during the day.

I. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Six stools surround a sturdy oaken table displaying a nautical map. A moth-eaten curtain hides a small portion of the cabin.

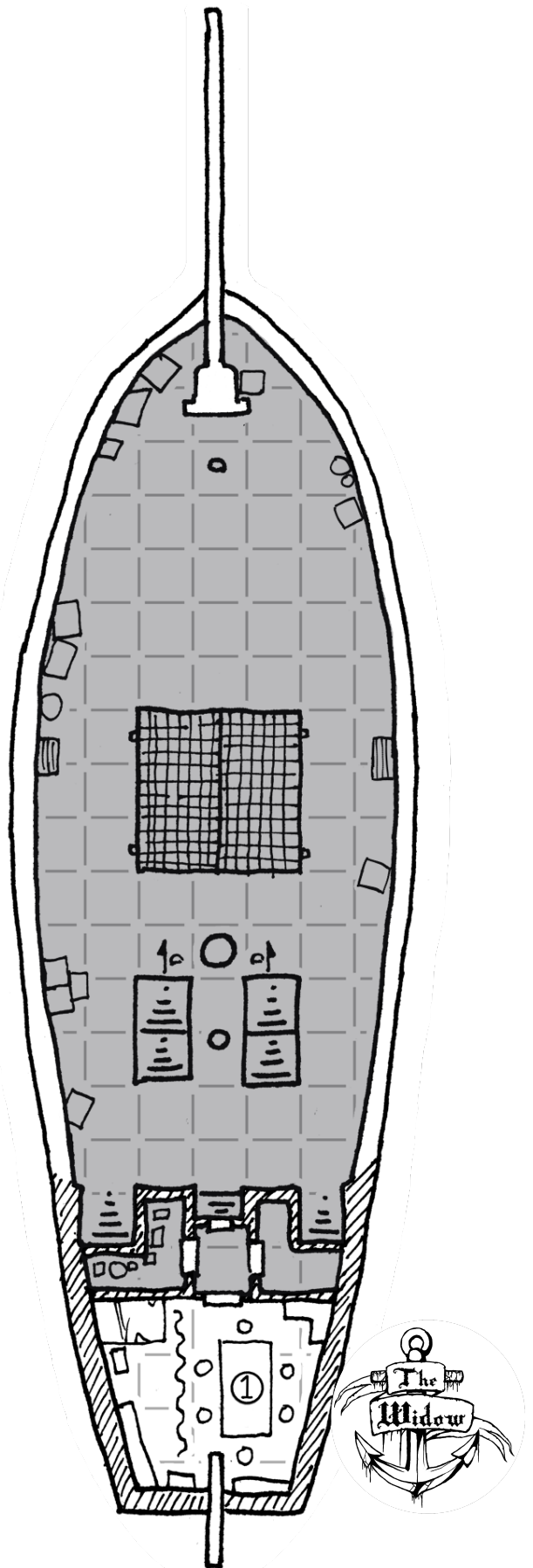
Map: A character closely studying the map realises it is outdated, missing certain features discovered in the past decade.

Behind the Curtain: This section of the cabin contains Saamo's bed, as well as a cupboard and chest holding the ship's log and the captain's personal effects.

- **Bed:** Saamo's personal diary (A) lies beneath the musty pillow. Anyone searching the bed finds it automatically.
- **Chest:** Saamo's chest is locked, and a character can obtain the key by picking Saamo's pocket. The chest holds 6d10 gp and a golden locket worth 50 gp containing the faded image of a pretty young girl.
- **Cupboard:** Resting on the dusty shelves are several old books, including the *Widow's* logs (B) and cargo manifest (C). The drawers contain Saamo's neatly folded clothes, now long out of style.

IMPORTANT CLUES

- A. Saamo's Diary:** The earliest entries are dated seventeen years ago and reveal Saamo's true name (Hylata), his desertion and subsequent betrothal to Janna Makinen from Longbridge (see Saamo's background for details). Following these entries, many pages have been torn from the book. The diary concludes with a final note, revealing Saamo's fear of losing his mind, as well as vivid nightmares of being on a journey without end. He expresses his desire to return to Janna and adds he must remain strong before the crew. This last entry is dated seventeen years ago.
- B. Ship's Logs:** Scores of pages have been torn from this book. Just before the torn out section, an entry dated seventeen years ago, notes the boarding of Malakias Salo, a travelling scholar who booked a one-way passage and paid for a private cabin. After the torn-out section, all events since the characters boarded are properly logged, though the dates follow the day of Malakias' boarding, seventeen years ago.
- C. Cargo Manifest:** The cargo manifest is a complete mess of hastily-added and crossed out entries and dates, all marked seventeen years ago. A character closely perusing the manifest spots a brief note about a "special object" carried by Malakias, though the note lacks further details.



THE LOWER DECK

The crew and passengers have their quarters on the lower deck.

2. HEAD

A wide wooden bench squats low against the hull, just above the waterline. Five round holes are cut into the seat and are worn smooth by years of use.

Bench: Seating up to five sailors at a time, this bench functions as the ship's toilet. Vertical slots are cut into the hull beneath, allowing normal wave action to wash out the facility.

Malakias hid the *Ovum Viridia* here, using a powerful alchemical adhesive to glue it underneath the bench. It can only be found by a character looking under the seat.

The Ovum Viridia: As the *Ovum* is firmly attached to the underside of the bench, a character must roll equal or under their Strength on 4d6 to pry it loose.

3. MALAKIAS' CABIN

Blue smoke lazily snakes from eight sticks of incense, smouldering inside a sand-filled bedpan sitting on a chest. Stained pages from a hundred different books are scattered across the cabin, covering almost every inch of the floor.

Parchments: With 1d4+1 hours of searching a character finds a torn page from Malakias' old journal (D).

Chest: Inside are a dozen dried-up inkwells, a pen knife and an assortment of sharpened quills (E).

4. CREW'S QUARTERS

This cabin reeks of sweat and mould. Several chests and lockers belonging to the crew sit on the dirty floor beneath four canvas hammocks suspended from iron rings overhead.

Chests and Lockers: These contain only the crew's clothes and meagre belongings. A character making a successful find secret doors roll locates Arjan's stash of 2d10 doses of Black Lotus. (Each dose of this powerful narcotic is worth 20 gp).

5. PASSENGER'S QUARTERS

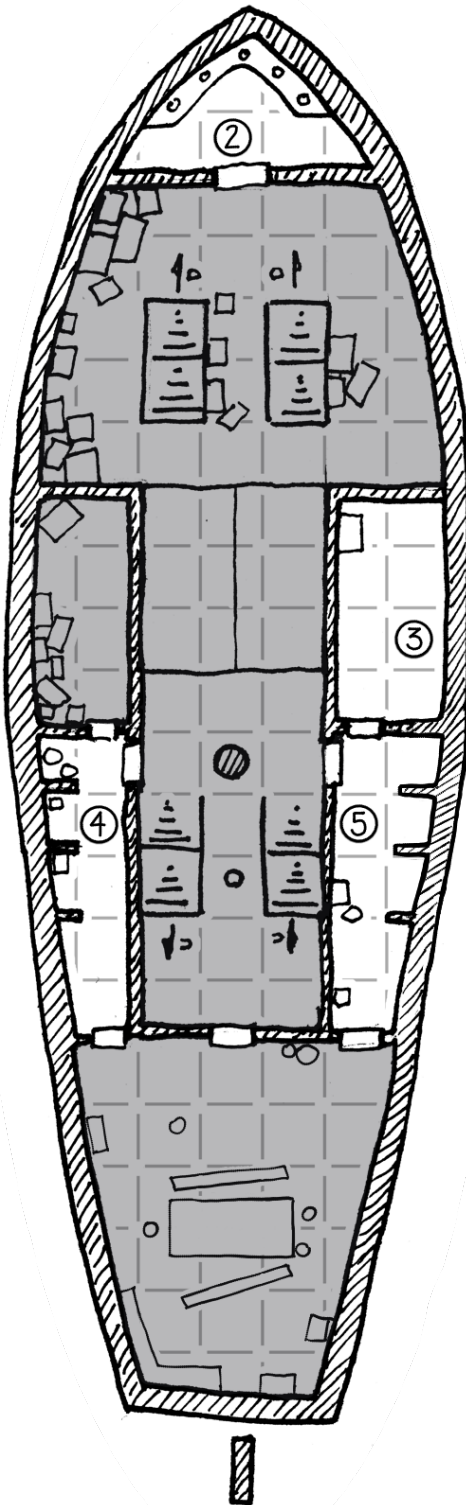
Six dusty hammocks stretch from wall to wall in this narrow cabin. A bedroll and backpack are stashed beneath the nearest one.

Backpack: Belonging to Ysara, the pack contains the ranger's adventuring gear.

IMPORTANT CLUES

D. Old Journal Page: Dated seventeen years ago, the text explains how Malakias came into possession of the *Ovum Viridia* and reveals all details found in Malakias' background.

E. Sharpened Quills: A character examining the quills realises they are too sharp for use on parchment, and a close examination detects minute traces of blood mixed with black ink on the tips. Keen-minded characters can deduce Malakias uses the quills to tattoo himself.



THE HOLD

The hold is where *Widow's* cargo and food stores are kept.

6. CARGO STORAGE

Swinging lanterns conjure up a mad dance of shadows, swaying back and forth across a maze of barrels and crates. The damp air smells strongly of seawater and mouldy hay.

Barrels and Crates: These contain an assortment of preserved foods (though most have spoiled), as well as various common cargo types such as linen, furs, wines, lumber and metal ingots.

Iron Chest: This chest is locked and sealed with Antero Virtanen's personal sigil (see the Languard Falcon hook). On the lid, the words, "TO: AMANITE" are written in chalk. Inside lies the Languard Falcon—a priceless, but tremendously recognisable possession of the ducal family, golden statuette stolen from Castle Languard forty years ago.

Pine Casket: Nailed together by Ukko from planks salvaged from empty crates, this simple wooden casket contains Olav Makela's body (see the Dead Men Tell no Tales hook). After Event 2: Burial at Sea, the casket is empty.

Olav's Belongings: Olav's earthly possessions sit in an unlocked chest near his casket. They include clothes, a pair of worn boots, four bottles of rum and a leather-bound journal in near pristine condition. Written across the pages, over and over again, are the words "*Nosta Verho*", which means "Lift the veil" in Elven. If the characters do not have it already, the chest also contains Olav's compass (see the Olav's Compass sidebar).

Rat's Nest: A character making a successful find secret doors roll uncovers a carefully hidden nest inside an empty barrel. It contains a large brown rat and its litter of eight baby rats. Scraps of yesterday's supper lie next to a dish of fresh water nearby. This is Mr. Nibbles and her family. (See "Ukko's Secret" for details).

7. BRIG

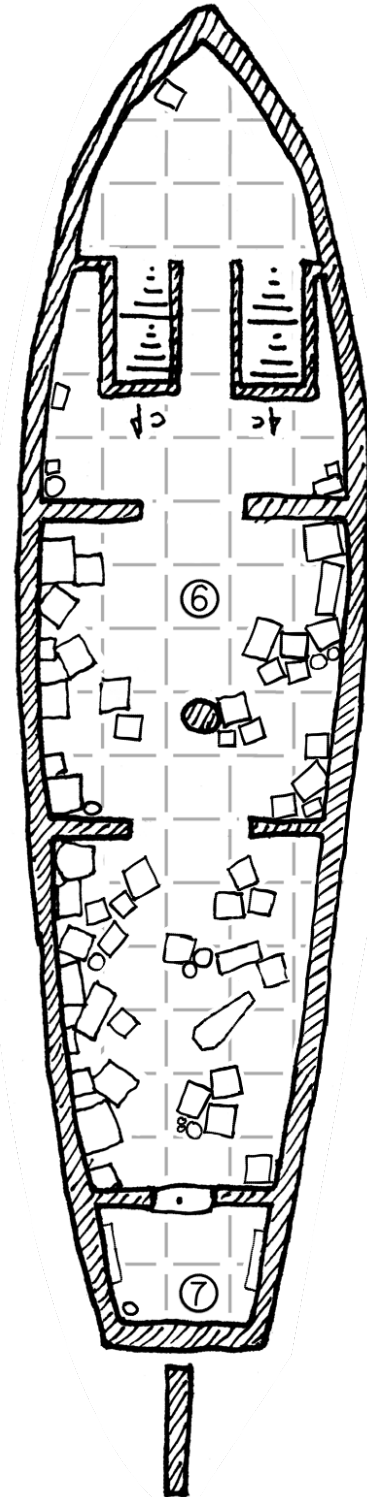
This sparsely furnished cabin contains a pair of wooden cots, a chamber pot and a jug of brackish water. A small, trellised window pierces the iron-bound door.

Iron-bound Door: Captain Saamo carries the only key to this locked door.

Graffiti: Shallow scratchings filled with dried blood and bits of fingernail spell out a message on the wooden wall:

YOU ARE NIKO LAINE
FIND TITUS REHN AT THE FOUR MAIDENS
PASSWORD GREYFLAME
DO NOT TRUST CREW

If the characters recognise the name of Niko Laine (see the Lost at Sea hook), this message proves he was a passenger on *Widow*. A character with good local knowledge of the ship's destination knows The Four Maidens is a well-known tavern at *Widow's* port of destination. Due to the *Ovum's* effects, the crew have no memory of Niko Laine.



WIDOW SETS SAIL

This section presents a timeline of events; spread them out during the character journey as desired.

I. ALL ABOARD!

When the characters first approach *Widow*, the crew are preparing to set sail within the hour. Most of the crew are busy preparing the ship or hauling cargo, but the characters are able to find the captain, Saamo Hilhaarja, on deck and willing to talk.

Use Saamo's description (see "Cursed Crewmen") as a guide for roleplaying the conversation. Depending on your chosen hook, Saamo tells the characters the following:

- **Lost at Sea:** Saamo has no recollection of meeting Niko Laine and claims never to have lost a man at sea. A perceptive character knows Saamo believes this to be true. If the characters openly distrust him, Saamo takes offence, but nevertheless agrees to take them aboard.
- **The Languard Falcon:** Saamo has been expecting the characters. He gives them a short tour of the ship, showing them their quarters (location 5) and the hold (location 6), where Antero's sealed chest is stored.
- **Dead Men Tell No Tales:** The news of Olav's death leaves Saamo visibly saddened. After gathering himself, he arranges for Tuomas and Ukko to collect Olav's body and prepare for his burial at sea. Saamo remarks Olav's weak heart and drinking habit likely led to his death. He knows nothing about the compass but can confirm Olav has a brother at *Widow's* port of destination. Since the crew is a man short, Saamo offers the characters free passage, provided they lend a helping hand, if they wish to investigate the matter further.

2. BURIAL AT SEA

Widow's bell strikes six times, heralding a sombre, grey-cloaked dawn. In the hold, Arjan and Tuomas are sewing the body of Olav Makela into a makeshift sailcloth shroud and weighing it down with several feet of iron chain. Saamo stands on deck, his hands clutching a small prayer book bound in cracked brown leather. Mouthing the words over and over, Saamo tries to memorise the right prayer, but his thoughts are lost like whispers on the wind.

Several moments later, the anchor is dropped and the ship comes to a lurching halt. Olav's body is brought on deck and the crew solemnly assemble. Ukko produces a carved wooden figurine of a woman surrounded by cresting waves and tearfully hangs it around Olav's neck. A character with religious knowledge can identify the carving as a votive gift representing Serat; this is a customary offering to the Mistress of Storms.

Squinting at his prayer book, the captain haltingly recites "*Unto the Crystal City*", commonly read during burials at sea. After a moment of silence, Saamo calls for all hands to bury the dead. The crew lift Olav's body and solemnly cast it overboard, where it quickly sinks into the crushing black abyss. As the anchor is weighed, it begins to rain.

3. THAR SHE BLOWS CHUNKS

After midday, Tuomas Gallen enters the hold to gather ingredients for supper and cracks open a barrel of salted pork he believes to be no more than a week old. In truth, it has been sitting in the hold for six years, and the contents have spoiled.

A character entering the hold between lunch and supper may notice a faint odour of decay, which can be traced to the barrel with 2d10 minutes of searching (the herbs and spices in the brine help mask the smell). Unless the matter is brought to Tuomas' attention, the pork finds its way into the stew, where Tuomas' secret spice mix makes the spoilage even harder to detect (a character rolling equal or under their Wisdom on 4d6 succeeds). Anyone eating the stew must make a saving throw against poison. Those who fail become violently ill and spend the next 3d10 minutes noisily evacuating their stomachs over the railing.

Tuomas swears his food is not to blame, until confronted with the evidence sitting in the hold. Since everyone recalls the barrel was bought quite recently, the "unnatural spoilage" is blamed on witchcraft, curses and other superstitions.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While on land, a character can use Diplomacy to gather information about *Widow* and its crew. This takes 1d4 hours and 4 gp in bribes, drinks and so on. The character's effort yields one rumour for every 4 gp spent. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the character learns.

1. *Widow* is a cursed ship. Its captain and crew are naught but undead spirits fated to sail the seas of Ashlar for all eternity. This is a punishment from Serat, because the captain invoked the Sea Mistress' wrath. (False rumour).
2. Saamo Hilhaarja, captain of *Widow*, and the notorious pirate Mervos Bloth are the same person. Bloth faked his own death and adopted the name Saamo to escape the noose. (False rumour).
3. I feel for those men on *Widow*. Don't know what terrible debt would force them to work on a barque at such old age. They only ever sail between the same two locations, so don't imagine they get much business either.
4. There's a ship sitting at the docks—*Widow*, bearer of ill omens. It wouldn't be the first time a traveller went missing on board. There's been an investigation before, but no conclusive proof was found and the crew deny ever having lost a passenger. Still, something strange is going on.
5. Without a doubt, those men from *Widow* are the most trustworthy sailors I've ever known. A bit old, perhaps, but with age comes experience. You can always count on *Widow* to ship your goods. Come hell or high water, *Widow* always sails!
6. Those crewmen on *Widow* may look like a sad old bunch, but the truth is they're drunk all day long! Seriously, talk to one. Chances are he won't be able to give you today's date! Must be some strong rum in the hold, eh?

DYNAMIC EVENTS

Effects preceded by "II" only occur when a result is rolled a second time. If the same result comes up a third time, re-roll.

1. A black albatross circles *Widow*. Arjan thinks it a bad omen and prepares to kill it, but Saamo commands him to stand down, believing the bird sacred to the sea goddess, Serat. The jet-black albatross continues following the ship.
 - II. Arjan snaps and shoots the albatross with a crossbow. The bird's death casts a pall over the crew who become convinced they are doomed.
2. Ukko's cries summon the crew on deck, where the outline of a colossal monster can be seen following the ship. Saamo orders the sails adjusted and *Widow* picks up speed, eventually losing the creature after 1d4 miles.
 - II. A bone-jarring impact rocks the ship at night. The monster has returned and rams *Widow* for 2d10 minutes before returning to the deep. *Widow* springs a lark and Arjan succeeds in repairing the hull breach, but the incident adds 1d4 days to the journey.
3. Dark clouds herald a coming storm. For the next 2d6 hours, *Widow* is scourged by howling winds and lashed with freezing rain. The sails suffer significant damage and it is unlikely they would survive another similar ordeal.
 - II. A squall batters *Widow's* weakened sail, tearing it at the seams. Despite Ukko's skilled repairs, the ship's speed is reduced, adding 1d4 days to the journey.
4. A heated argument erupts between Arjan and Malakias. The veteran accuses the old wizard of using magic to mess with everyone's mind. Saamo arrives to restore order just before things get physical. Perceptive characters get the impression the other sailors share Arjan's concerns even if they won't speak of them.
 - II. Arjan catches Malakias rifling the crew's belongings and punches the wizard square in the face, breaking his nose and knocking him out. Saamo sends Arjan to cool off in the brig for a day and requests the characters carry the unconscious Malakias to his cabin.
5. Pained groans draw a character to the hold, where they find Tuomas Gallen changing the filthy bandages on his leg. He begs them not to reveal his condition to the others, and promises to visit a surgeon at the first opportunity. If Tuomas' illness is revealed, panic erupts as the crew assumes it's the plague. Saamo has Tuomas locked up in the brig, and his clothes and possessions burned.
 - II. Unless cured, Tuomas' tumour develops an acute infection, resulting in his agonising death in 1d4 days.
6. As dawn breaks, each character must make a saving throw against spells or forget everything which occurred since the last timeline event. The lost memories resurface in one day.
 - II. Each character must make a saving throw against spells with a -2 penalty or forget all events which took place since they boarded *Widow*. These lost memories resurface in 1d4 days

4. DEAD IN THE WATER

One windless, mist-veiled morning, one of the characters spots the body of a man floating face-down on the grey waves. Using a rope and billhook, the crew drag him on board and confirm he is dead. The man's colourful seafaring garb identifies him as a sailor, or perhaps a pirate. While there are no apparent wounds or lesions on the body, the face is frozen in a ghastly mask of terror. The mouth is agape, spread almost unnaturally wide, and a slick oily film covers the skin, leaving a sticky grey residue when rubbed between one's fingers. The eyes and tongue are missing, but a character wise in nature's ways such as an elf, druid or ranger confirms this to be the work of sea birds feeding on the body.

The wind refuses to pick up, and *Widow* spends several long hours sailing silently through the fog, until the shrill cries of seagulls are heard ahead. Surrounding the ship are dozens of corpses similar to the one encountered before, floating amid the wreckage of some nameless vessel. Gulls flit in and out of the fog like phantoms, landing on the dead and feasting upon their exposed flesh. With milky eyeballs, swollen tongues and scraps of torn skin clutched in their crimson-flecked beaks, the gulls perch upon *Widow's* railings, eying the crew with beady black eyes. A salvo of curses from Arjan Bardo scares them off, causing several to drop their grisly meals mid-flight and staining *Widow's* sails with a scarlet rain of flesh. It takes another 1d4 hours before the wind finally picks up again and *Widow* exits the charnel waters, leaving the gull-haunted fog bank behind.

5. LAND AHOY!

The red sun hangs low over the horizon when Arjan bellows the news across the deck. Approximately three miles ahead, the silhouette of the destination's known landmarks can be seen. Assuming a normal sailing speed, it takes *Widow* about half an hour to reach land.

This final event marks the end of the eventure. If the characters discovered the source of *Widow's* curse and got rid of the *Ovum Viridia*, Malakias and the crew retain all memories since the eventure began. Tearfully, they express their undying thanks to the characters and intend to pick up the thread of their lives—or what's left of it—once they set foot on land.

If the characters did not learn of the *Ovum*, or neglected to dispose of it, the memory-devouring effects of the stone take hold of the crew and passengers once more. Their past journey already largely forgotten, the ship prepares to depart anew, continuing the endless cycle.

YSARA'S SUSPICIONS

Halfway through the voyage, Ysara approaches the characters and voices her suspicions that all is not as it seems on *Widow*. This event can happen at a time of your choosing.

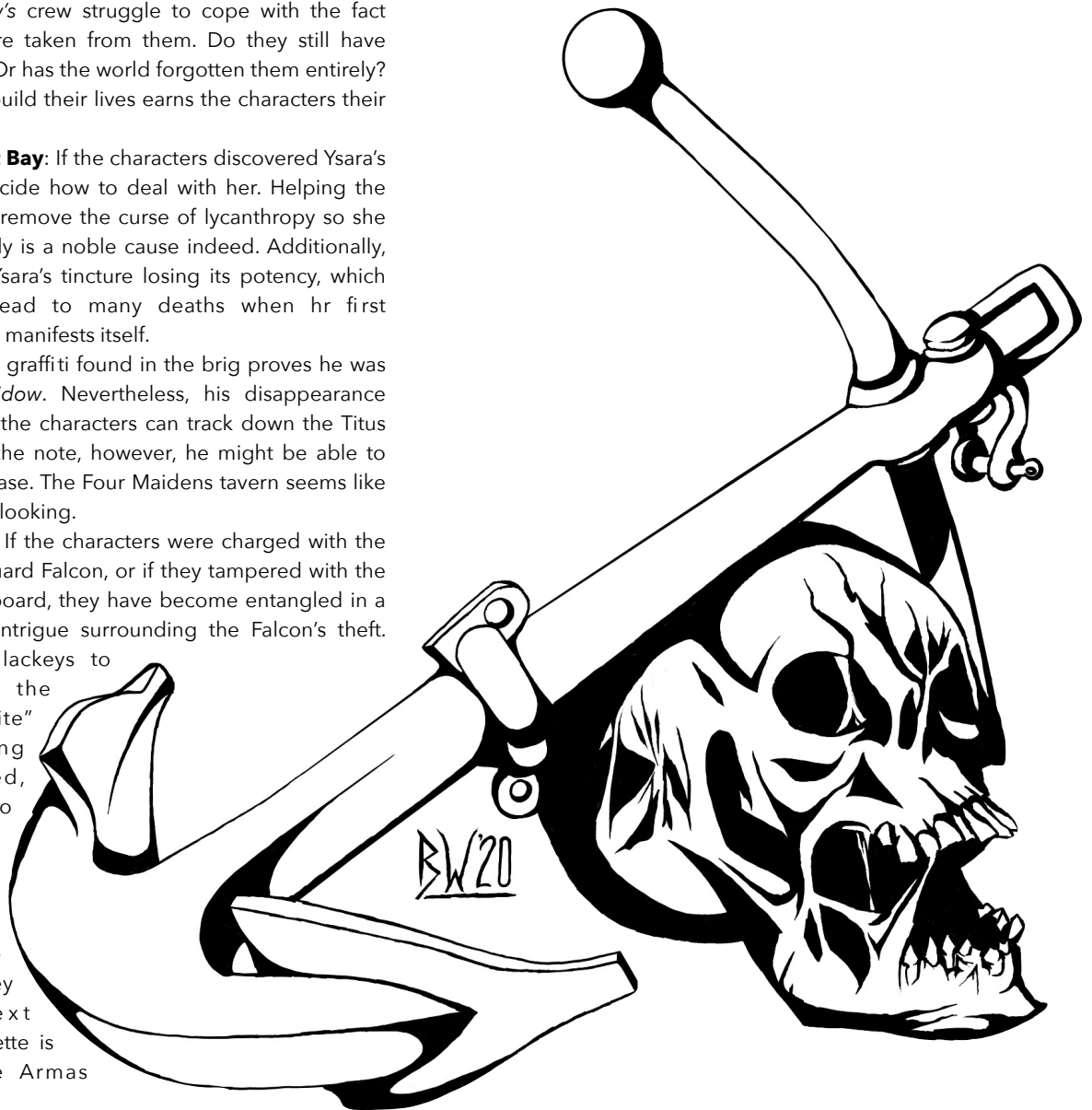
THE EVENTURE CONTINUES

The characters' voyage on *Widow* may be behind them, but the characters' adventures have only just begun! Below, find several suggestions on how to continue the story after the characters debark *Widow*:

- **A Curate's Egg:** Locked within the green ovoid stone is a veritable trove of knowledge, comprising centuries worth of stolen memories. If one were able to suppress the opal's abilities long enough to study it, who knows what ancient secrets it might unveil? In the wrong hands, however, the *Ovum's* powers could be used to steal the minds of paupers and kings alike. If the characters choose to keep the stone, they must find a way to suppress its memory-devouring powers. And should they decide to simply dispose of the *Ovum*, the thing gestating inside could very well hatch...
- **Time Waits for No Man:** Freed from the *Ovum's* influence, Malakias and *Widow's* crew struggle to cope with the fact seventeen years were taken from them. Do they still have homes to return to? Or has the world forgotten them entirely? Helping the crew rebuild their lives earns the characters their undying gratitude.
- **Keeping the Wolf at Bay:** If the characters discovered Ysara's secret, they must decide how to deal with her. Helping the grief-stricken ranger remove the curse of lycanthropy so she can avenge her family is a noble cause indeed. Additionally, there is the risk of Ysara's tincture losing its potency, which would no doubt lead to many deaths when her first transformation finally manifests itself.
- **Finding Niko:** Niko's graffiti found in the brig proves he was a passenger on *Widow*. Nevertheless, his disappearance remains unsolved. If the characters can track down the Titus Rehn mentioned in the note, however, he might be able to shed a light on the case. The Four Maidens tavern seems like a good place to start looking.
- **Fencing the Falcon:** If the characters were charged with the delivery of the Languard Falcon, or if they tampered with the iron chest while on board, they have become entangled in a dangerous web of intrigue surrounding the Falcon's theft. After sending his lackeys to collect the chest, the mysterious "Amanite" begins eliminating everyone involved, starting with Antero Virtanen (see the Languard Falcon hook). Can the characters discover Amanite's true identity before they become his next victims? If the statuette is returned to Duke Armas

Nenonen, Ashlar's ruler is sure to offer a generous reward.

- **Sea of Sorrows:** Soon after disembarking *Widow*, the characters learn of another ship, *Waverider*, who left port several days ago, yet disappeared without a trace. From its description and date of departure, it's likely the characters encountered the *Waverider's* wreckage near the end of their journey (see Event 4: Dead in the Water). Any merchants whose cargo was lost along with the ship would certainly pay the characters a few gold coins to hear their story—and much more if they were to investigate further.
- **Hex Marks the Spot:** If the characters kept Olav's magical compass and know how to activate it, they can follow the needle to its destination. Although whether it leads to buried treasure, as Olav Makela believed, remains to be seen. The characters may consider tracking down Olav's brother, who might know more about the compass. Of course, this would mean cutting him in for an extra share of any treasure found.



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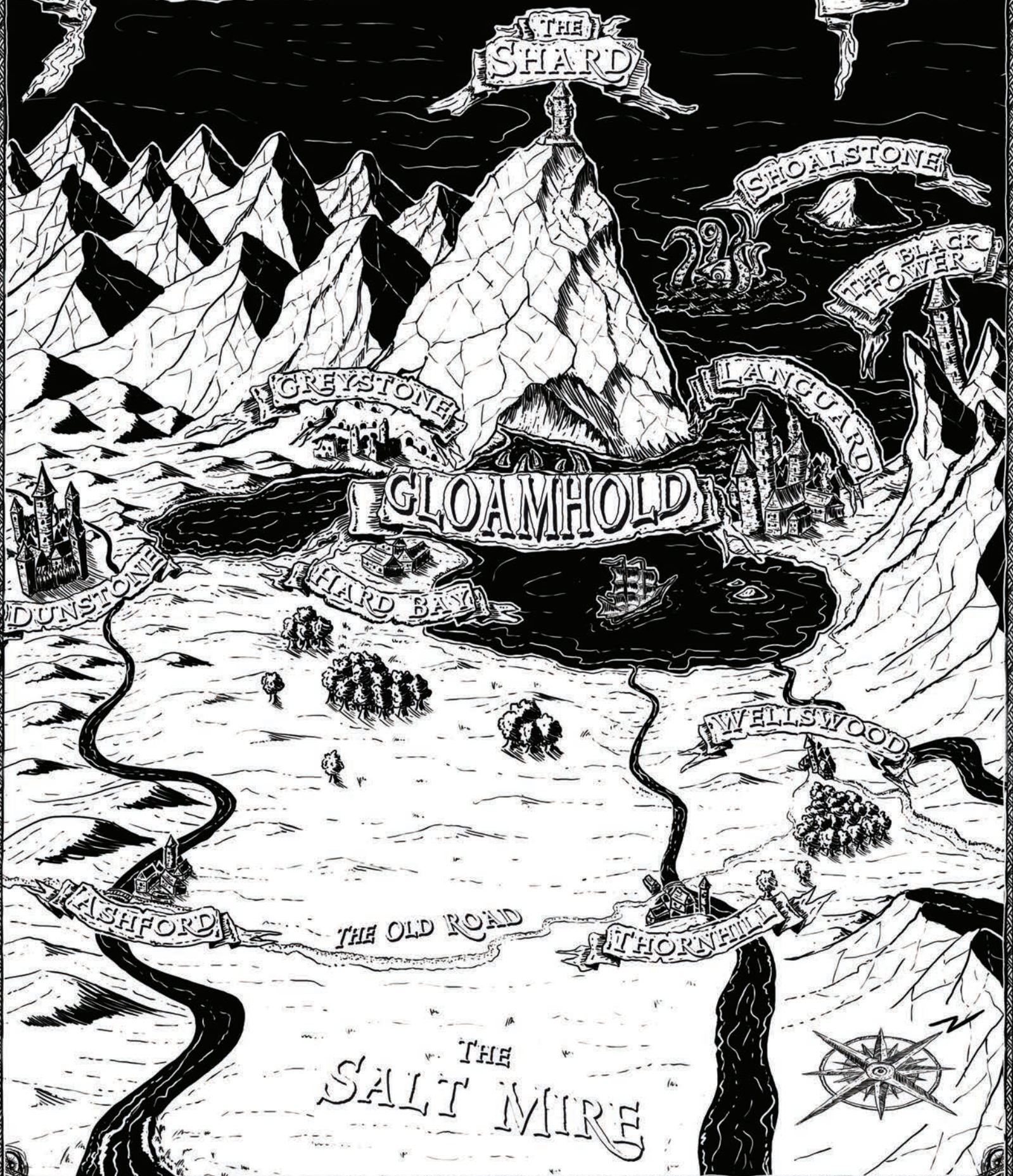
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