



GHOSTS OF SALT MARSH™

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Explore the waves above and the fathoms below in these watery adventures for the world's greatest roleplaying game

GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH™



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ON THE COVER

A group of desperate adventurers confronts a deadly sahuagin warrior on rough seas. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the heroes, a monstrosity from the deep breaks the surface to assault their ship. This piece marks Grzegorz Rutkowski's debut as a cover artist for D&D.

Disclaimer: After battling dragons, elemental cultists, vampires, demons, and giants, you deserve a relaxing ocean cruise. Please keep all vital limbs well within the ship's confines. We are not responsible for valuables, hit points, or lives lost during your voyage. In fact, perhaps you'd prefer a more relaxing vacation option. Can we suggest a trip to the Nine Hells? They're quite balmy this time of year.

620C6297000001 EN
ISBN: 978-0-7869-6675-2
First Printing: May 2019

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO *GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH*. THIS book collects seven D&D adventures, each famous for their unique challenges, for their deadly threats, and for embracing the danger and wonder of the high seas. Some of these adventures initially charted their courses in the earliest days of D&D's history, while others set sail in more recent years. In each case, these tales of plunder and peril have been updated for the current edition of the game, revealing deadly shores for brave crews to explore anew.

Along with these adventures returns one of D&D's most famous seaside settings: the port town of Saltmarsh. The original backdrop of three of this collection's tales (*The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*, *Danger at Dunwater*, and *The Final Enemy*), this fishing community has a tradition of being a starting point for incredible adventures. Historically, Saltmarsh and the dangers facing its people provided a widening sphere of adventure, with increasingly dire threats drawing heroes to explore more of the coast of the Azure Sea. *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* continues that tradition, presenting a portion of the coastal lands of Keoland, a kingdom in the Greyhawk setting. Each adventure notes where that story might unfold in the region around Saltmarsh, providing a shared setting for them all. Although these seven adventures weren't designed to create a single overarching narrative, the tools provided herein make it easy to link these stories into a wider Saltmarsh campaign.

In addition to the adventures themselves, chapter 1, "Saltmarsh," provides an in-depth look at the town, its various inhabitants, the nearby coasts, and what dangers threaten the region. A variety of new backgrounds also help make new characters part of the Saltmarsh community, giving them personal stakes in the town's opportunities and hardships.

The sea and its threats aren't unique to Saltmarsh. To help launch explorations across the wild waves, appendix A, "Of Ships and the Sea," presents a toolbox for ocean-bound adventures. New rules for various ships, how to crew and captain them, and how to pit them against each other provide adventurers with new modes of exploration. Beyond this, details on a variety of nautical dangers and oceanic hazards—from magical storms to whirlpools—make the seas even deadlier than ever before. A spectrum of tables also helps generate encounters upon the waves, be they deadly sea monsters; random vessels, their crews, and cargo; or islands brimming with untold mysteries. Concluding the appendix are a variety of underwater locations—like deadly reefs and sunken ruins—ready to be customized and explored as your campaign demands.

The book's remaining appendices present magical treasures perfectly suited to seafarers and a robust collection of fearsome aquatic foes.

New horizons of adventure now lie before you. What wonders and terrors will you discover across the waves? Set sail and find out!



USING THIS BOOK

Ghosts of Saltmarsh features seven tales of adventure that take place upon the waves, on brine-battered shores, and in the sea's deadliest depths. Each of these adventures comes from across the tides of D&D history, returning to test heroes grown used to the predictable threats and reliable footing of dry land.

Along with each adventure appear notes for setting the adventure in the Saltmarsh region or adapting it to a variety of D&D settings. Use that information to place it in your campaign or on the shores of your choice.

These adventures make perfect side quests for ongoing campaigns. If you run published D&D campaigns, like *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, the higher-level adventures presented here are an ideal way to extend the campaign.

The adventures in *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* also perfectly complement those in *Tales from the Yawning Portal*—which collects another seven famous (albeit landlocked) adventures. By picking and choosing your favorite entireties in each compilation, you'll be on your way to creating a customized campaign all your own.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURES

To run each of these adventures, you need the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*. Before you sit down with your players, read the text of the adventure and familiarize yourself with the maps as well, perhaps making notes about complex areas or places where the characters are certain to go, so you're well prepared before the action starts.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

The *Monster Manual* contains stat blocks for most of the monsters and NPCs found in this book. When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in appendix C or in the *Monster Manual*. If a stat block appears in appendix C of this book, the text tells you so.

Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the book are described in the *Player's Handbook*. Magic items are described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in appendix B.



CREDITS FROM THE ORIGINALS

As every Dungeon Master knows, considerable work goes into the creation of a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure. Presented below are the credits from the classic adventures that inspired the updated tales found in this book. For more on each adventure's origin and its place in D&D history, see the "About the Original" section featured near the beginning of each adventure.

The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh (1981)

Design: Dave J. Browne

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Editing and Production: Tom Kirby, Sally Meadows, Graeme Morris, Don Turnbull

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Playtesting: Jim Bambra, Michael W. Brunton, Chris Hall, Bill Howard, Steve Mote, Allen Ovens, Martin Pickering, Chris Rick, Dave Tant, Patrick Thompson, Don Turnbull, Mark Valentine, Pat Whitehead

Cartography: Graeme Morris

Danger at Dunwater (1982)

Design: Dave J. Browne

Development: Don Turnbull

Editing and Production: Penny Bogg, Tom Kirby, Carole Morris, Graeme Morris, Don Turnbull

Art: Dave de Leuw, Jim Holloway, Harry Quinn, Tim Truman

Playtesting: Jackie Apps, Steve Buckalow, Mike Ferguson, Bill Francis, Andrew Geer, Bill Jones, Tom Kirby, Martin Pickering, Matt Quartermain, Tony Ross, Phil Spivey, Dave Tant, Nick Thornley, Simon Thornley, Jim Ward, Guy Williamson

Cartography: Graeme Morris

Salvage Operation (2005)

Design: Mike Mearls

Editing and Production: Sean Glenn, James Jacobs, Erik Mona, Sarah Robinson, Mike Schley, Jeremy Walker

Artwork: Attila Adorjany

Cartography: Kyle Hunter

Isle of the Abbey (1992)

Design: Randy Maxwell

Editing and Production: Wolfgang H. Baur, Dale A. Donovan, Roger E. Moore, Larry W. Smith, Barbara G. Young

Artwork: Peter Clarke

Cartography: Diesel

The Final Enemy (1983)

Story: Dave J. Browne

Development: Don Turnbull

Editing and Production: Paul Cockburn, Tom Kirby, Graeme Morris, Don Turnbull

Cover Art: Dave de Leuw

Cartography: Graeme Morris, Philip Kaye

Playtesting: Bill Black, Bob Collman, Thomas Haas, Bill Howard, Allan Owens, Dawn Poole, Gina Poole, Chris Rick, Dave Tant, Mark Valentine

Tammeraut's Fate (2004)

Design: Greg A. Vaughn

Editing and Production: Sean Glenn, James Jacobs, Erik Mona

Artwork: Peter Bergting

Cartography: Rob Lazzaretti

The Styes (2005)

Design: Richard Pett

Editing and Production: Sean Glenn, James Jacobs, Erik Mona, Sarah Robinson, Mike Schley, Jeremy Walker

Artwork: Joachim Barrum

Cartography: Jason Engle



CHAPTER 1: SALTMARSH



SALTMARSH IS A NONDESCRIPT FISHING VILLAGE tucked away on the southern coast of the Kingdom of Keoland. For several generations, Keoland was a formidable military power. Its superior cavalry and bold knights pushed the kingdom's borders outward to the north, west, and east. Each successful campaign increased both the crown's wealth and power, and each one in turn drew the kingdom's attention even farther north. The southern coastal regions of Keoland remained a backwater.

The crown's benign neglect allowed piracy and banditry to flourish. Saltmarsh and similar towns kept to fishing, content to maintain a low profile and avoid governmental entanglements. Decades ago, the pirates who prowled the waters off Saltmarsh grew strong enough to create their own realm, a loose confederacy known as the Hold of the Sea Princes. With the rise of that nation came increased raids on Saltmarsh and its neighbors. The Sea Princes' raiding ships pillaged the coast for more slaves to support their growing realm, and Saltmarsh suffered heavily. The memories of those times loom heavily over the area, and the locals' hatred of the Sea Princes runs deep.

In time, Keoland's victories in the north gave way to a string of defeats in which its neighbors pushed the kingdom back to its original boundaries. With the world closing in, King Kimbertos Skotti looked to the south and saw unchecked banditry and a rising pirate nation. The crown struck peace treaties with its former foes to the north, raised a navy, and dealt a sharp check to the ambitions of the Sea Princes—but the conflict is by no means over.

King Skotti has decreed that the pirates must be put down, the sea lanes secured, and trade cultivated. If Keoland cannot prosper as a military force, it must grow mightier as a center of trade.

Saltmarsh, remote though it might be from the center of power in Keoland, is entering a new phase of its life as it reacts to the king's plans. The crown's agents want to expand the village's port and make it a prime location for trade with the world beyond. In another recent development, a band of dwarves—bearing a decree from the king himself—have arrived and begun to excavate the hills and seaside cliffs near town, looking for precious metals. If their work bears fruit as expected, the mine stands to become a major factor in the village's—and, indeed, the entire region's—prosperity.

Naturally, not all of Saltmarsh's residents feel the same way about the recent developments in and around their community, which is the key issue that affects their lives and livelihood. Although the recent changes stand to bring new prosperity to the area, many locals don't want to see their home changed. At the same time, as an undercurrent through all the goings-on, agents of the secretive and mysterious Scarlet Brotherhood work to thwart Keoland's ambitions while advancing their own.

POLITICS AND FACTIONS

Saltmarsh's future rests in the hands of three factions that compete for supremacy. Two of the factions represent the opposing sentiments that have grown in town in recent years. The third is a secret group that seeks to undermine Saltmarsh and seize control of the region. These factions' struggles play out in the day-to-day lives of the townsfolk and the political maneuvering of Saltmarsh's town council.

TRADITIONALISTS

The traditionalist faction is an alliance of the prominent fishing families and merchants in town, along with the workers who rely on those industries for a living. The traditionalists remember the terrible times during the Sea Princes' raids and have no desire to see the crown's ambitions lead to open war. The smugglers who operate in the area tend to be traditionalists. Most pose as merchants and rely on their local contacts to move goods through the region without interference from the town guard or royal agents. Smuggling has long been an easy way to make money in Saltmarsh, and locals generally look the other way, seeing it as a victimless crime.

The traditionalists would like to see the dwarves' mining efforts fail and interest from the north wane, so that Saltmarsh's dependable fishing trade can thrive and the smugglers in the area are left alone. They resent the intrusion of outsiders seeking to transform Saltmarsh and undoubtedly drain power from the fishing families to give to dwarves and merchants.

This faction relies on two council members for representation. Eda Oweland leads the faction and can count on Gellan Primewater to back her up. Anders Solmor is young and unpredictable, but he has supported the traditionalists' viewpoint on most issues.

At their best, traditionalists are community-minded folk who want Saltmarsh to return to its old way of doing things, arguing that the town has survived for a century by sticking to its original priorities. They suffered mightily due to the Sea Princes' depredations and remember the days when the crown turned a blind eye to their troubles. Their loyalty to the king runs second to their desire for peace and quiet.

EDA OWELAND

Eda (CG female human **noble**) is the current senior member of the town council, as well as the owner of three large fishing boats. She has lived in Saltmarsh all her life and has been elected to the council three times. She is a gruff, pragmatic woman whose graying hair is cut short and whose face bears the marks of a life lived outdoors. Eda is keenly interested in expanding Saltmarsh's fishing industry, her sights set on a wild section of the coast where she hopes to build a new dock. She is suspicious of the dwarves' mining enterprise and doubts it will amount to much.

Personality Traits. Eda swears like a sailor when she is frustrated or angry, and the folk in town who support her appreciate her willingness to stick up for them. Despite her temper, she respects those who keep their cool. Anyone who stands up to her wins her respect. Those who try to flatter her earn her contempt.

Ideal. If anyone in town needs help, Eda is the first to volunteer. She believes community binds people together and allows them to ride out the fiercest storm.

Bond. Saltmarsh is Eda's home. She would protect it to her dying breath and wants its people to prosper.

Flaw. Eda is suspicious of outsiders, and she is too quick to trust those familiar to her.

GELLAN PRIMEWATER

Gellan (NE male human **noble**) is a well-spoken, dapper older gentleman with a neatly trimmed beard and a fancy wardrobe. With his cunning instincts, he has positioned his family to become the most prominent merchants in town, but he now faces an intractable problem. Gellan made his fortune through smuggling, his textile and lumber exports serving as a cover for his illegal activities. When Saltmarsh was a sleepy backwater, he could operate with impunity. Now that Saltmarsh has attracted attention from the outside world, he sees business growing more difficult and less profitable.

Over the years, Gellan has cultivated relationships with a number of contacts among the Sea Princes. His ships move illicit goods, including slaves, between their realm and Keoland. Gellan takes care to keep this side of his business quiet, since any hint of involvement with slave traders would mean the end of his days in Saltmarsh, if not his life.

Gellan seeks to keep his smuggling cartel functioning with as little interference as possible. Having a seat on the council puts him in a perfect position to maintain his business while supporting all aspects of the traditionalists' agenda. His popularity in the faction is second only to that of Eda Oweland.

Because Gellan is the wealthiest man in town, he garners a great deal of popular support from the many feasts, entertainments, and other diversions he supports with expenditures and donations. He pretends to care little for the daily functions of the council, defaulting to throw his support behind Eda's position. In truth, this deference is a ruse he uses to mask his efforts to shield his smuggling operation.

Personality Traits. Gellan loves to play the role of the foppish dandy. He enjoys fine wine, good food, and the latest fashions. He is a patron of the arts and spends lavishly to support festivals, plays, and concerts.

Ideal. For Gellan, beauty and elegance are everything. He derives great enjoyment from watching the town enjoy his events.

Bond. Gellan values his reputation above all else. He wants to be admired by the people of Saltmarsh.

Flaw. Greed colors every action Gellan takes. He can't turn down a chance to turn a profit, even if it means breaking the law. Gellan secretly believes that even if he is caught, he can spend his way back into the town's good graces by throwing the biggest, most extravagant festival Saltmarsh has ever seen.

THE TRADITIONALISTS IN PLAY

The traditionalists simply want things to remain the same. If they had their way, the dwarves would go home, the guard would stick to dealing with monsters rather than hassling honest traders, and the crown would go back to dreaming of conquests in the north. The more things change, the more this faction resorts to open protest and resistance.

TRADITIONALIST SAMPLE EVENTS

d20	Event
1–6	A group of fishers accosts dwarves and other outsiders, demanding they leave town or else.
7–10	Gellan Primewater imports a variety of exotic flowers that he uses to decorate the town, while also distributing fresh tropical fruit free of charge to the townsfolk.
11–12	A fire breaks out in town, and Eda Oweland raises funds to support those who lost their homes.
13–14	A fishing boat goes missing with its crew. They were smuggling a haul of black pearls, and Gellan wants his treasure back without risking his cover.
15–16	A bountiful catch leads to a day of feasting and reconciliation, giving the factions a chance to make amends.
17–18	A bungled smuggling operation lands a few respected people in jail, leading to near riots as fishers gather in a huge mob to effect a breakout.
19	A horrible sea creature has been sighted, keeping many crews at the docks until it disappears. Anyone who tracks it down and slays it would be a hero. Gellan pledges a magic weapon to its slayer.
20	Several fishing crews have gone missing. The locals demand that Keoland dispatch a squadron of ships to track down the slavers from the Sea Princes who surely kidnapped them.

LOYALISTS

The loyalists consist of newcomers who arrived from the northern reaches of Keoland, loyal to King Kimbertos Skotti. They feel that the town should focus on becoming a useful asset to the crown and value the good of the kingdom before the good of the region. The town guard, the dwarves, and the local farmers are generally loyalists.

The loyalists care about security. They want to keep Keoland's enemies at bay while ensuring law and order. They see smuggling as a key problem, as it enriches the Sea Princes at the cost of the royal treasury and the efforts of honest merchants.

Above all else, the members of this faction put their faith in law. They exert influence through the town guard, though they remain within their legal authority.

At their best, the loyalists want to grow Saltmarsh into a trading hub with a higher standard of living and improved security. If the Sea Princes are held in check and the sea lanes cleared of threats, Saltmarsh can grow to become the envy of the world.



At their worst, the loyalists see the people of Saltmarsh as a barrier to growth. The locals are little more than allies of the Sea Princes, traitors who for too long have evaded the crown's notice. If they were to do as the loyalists tell them, then perhaps this fish-reeking pile of a town could become something respectable.

ELIANDER FIREBORN

Eliander (LN male human **gladiator**) fought in the royal army of Keoland, where he earned a name driving the wild things of the Dreadwood away from the settled lands. Eliander suffered a tremendous injury to his leg in a battle against an owlbear and now walks upon a finely carved wooden peg. Despite his injury and advancing age, the burly captain of the Saltmarsh town guard remains an imposing figure. Eliander is a local celebrity thanks to his facility with languages, and he is often called upon by the town's various organizations to assist with translations. He is fully literate in Common, Dwarvish, Gnomish, Elvish, and Halfling; he can also speak and understand Orc and Draconic.

In a crisis, Eliander Fireborn might put the good of the crown above local rule. He possesses a royal writ that allows him to seize authority over the town guard in case of an emergency. He is loath to use it, as the locals might react to his seizure of power with an open revolt.

Personality Traits. Caution guides Eliander's thoughts and his every action. He recognizes that Saltmarsh is on the verge of tremendous growth, but he sees the influence of the Sea Princes behind every stroke of misfortune. Slow and steady wins the day, as he likes to say.

Ideal. Eliander is a faithful servant of the crown. The law must be obeyed, as faithful service and iron discipline are the surest ways to maintain peace and order.

Bond. Once he gives his word, Eliander keeps it to the death. Honor is his life, and treachery earns his wrath.

Flaw. Eliander is stubborn to a fault. Once he sets his mind to a belief or a course of action, little can dissuade him.

MANISTRAD COPPERLOCKS

The leader of the newly established mining operation in Saltmarsh is an iron-willed dwarven woman named Manistrad (LN female dwarf **veteran**). She runs the mining outfit from a small office near the edge of town. Manistrad is a competent leader, as well as a savvy miner with a knack for pulling off impossible jobs. She's convinced that the veins of silver found in the cliffs near Saltmarsh are indicative of more valuable stones deeper in the rock. She was once a fearsome warrior, and she's not above delivering a few well-placed blows to ensure her orders are followed.

Manistrad occupies an awkward place on the council. She was placed in her position by royal decree; the crown decided that if Saltmarsh is to support a mining operation, the miners would need a political voice. A more diplomatic figure might have smoothed over the tension, but Manistrad has little patience and sees the rest of the council, save for Eliander, as rustic dullards.

Personality Traits. Manistrad is a woman of few words. She is curt and quick, yet she gives every person who comes before the council a fair accounting. She's nobody's fool.

Ideal. Curiosity and hard work mark everything Manistrad does. Once she is interested in a topic, she is relentless in learning about it. Obstacles don't slow her down.

Bond. Manistrad is intensely loyal to her kinfolk and the mining operation her clan seeks to establish here. Threats to the livelihood of the dwarves earn her wrath.

Flaw. Manistrad has little patience; she tends to push for quick results over a more measured approach.

THE LOYALISTS IN PLAY

The loyalists are focused on two things: ensuring that the dwarven mine is a success, and clamping down on smuggling to keep the Sea Princes in check. The mine is the most precious commodity in the region for this faction, and its members do everything they can to support it. If word of any Sea Prince activity reaches the loyalists, they are quick to meet the threat.

LOYALIST SAMPLE EVENTS

d20	Event
1–6	The town guard cracks down on smuggling, going house to house in search of contraband.
7–10	A tribe of marauders (gnolls, orcs, or goblins) moves into the area, putting the town on alert and forcing Eliander to call out the militia. The traditionalists chafe under his orders.
11–12	A mass breakout allows a crew of smugglers to escape the dungeons, increasing tension in town.
13–14	The dwarves make a spectacular find in the mine, sparking plans to expand their presence and the docks.
15–16	Eliander and the town guard are called away to help deal with a threat from the Dreadwood, leaving behind only a skeleton crew to keep the peace and watch the mine.
17–18	A new wave of immigrants from the north arrives in town, tilting the population such that the loyalists might win a majority in the next town council election.
19	A bloody battle against pirates leaves a Keoish naval squadron undermanned. The squadron comes to town to press local sailors into service. Eliander secretly passes along the names of hotheaded traditionalists for the press gangs to target.
20	Having found enough evidence to charge him, Eliander seizes Gellan and ships him to Seaton to face charges of smuggling. Riots break out in town.

SCARLET BROTHERHOOD

The Scarlet Brotherhood claims that the bloodline of its followers traces back to an ancient empire, the Suel Imperium, and their goal is to restore the old Suloise noble houses to prominence in the world. As scions of a realm that once enjoyed unmatched arcane power and a vast dominion, its members see themselves as superior to all other folk and the only ones fit to rule.

For decades, this group has been concocting a conspiracy to spread fear, chaos, and uncertainty across the

land. When the time is right, the Brotherhood will strike to seize the reins in kingdoms all across the world. Already its assassins have slain those who might oppose their sinister plans. In almost every court in the land, from the most remote backwater barony to the imperial courts of world powers, the Brotherhood's agents have quietly assumed positions of influence.

In Saltmarsh, the Brotherhood supports councilman Anders Solmor and his family's trade cartel. They hope to use Anders to destabilize the region, weaken the crown, and clear the way for the Scarlet Brotherhood to seize control. The Brotherhood arranges for the Solmor ships to meet with eager merchants in distant ports who pay well above market value for his goods, ensuring his popularity and dependence on Brotherhood contacts. The Brotherhood plans to surround him with their advisers and functionaries to ensure that Saltmarsh develops under their control. They intend to ignite open war between Keoland and the Sea Princes, leaving both realms battered and weakened while the Brotherhood moves in.

Unlike the other factions in Saltmarsh, there is no good side to the Scarlet Brotherhood. As unrepentant megalomaniacs, they are villains through and through.

ANDERS SOLMOR

Young Anders (LG male human **noble**) recently inherited his family's fleet of fishing boats after the untimely death of his mother, Petra. He's the youngest person ever to be elected to the council. Brash and inexperienced, Anders is a slight man with sharp features and a toothy smile. His recent forays into trade have made him a local celebrity. Since Anders owns both a fishing fleet and several trading vessels, he can sell his catch at a highly competitive price. And he can offer better prices for the other fishers in town to sell to him, since his catch brings in so much more profit.

Everyone involved in the town's fishing industry supports Anders, and his energy and ambition have made him something of a folk hero on the docks. On the other hand, his open opposition to smuggling and his hatred of the Sea Princes' practice of slavery makes him a thorn in the smugglers' side.

Unbeknownst to Anders, his butler, Skerrin Wave-chaser, is an agent for the Scarlet Brotherhood. He engineered the death of Anders' mother and has placed a number of Brotherhood agents in key positions in the Solmor fleet.

Personality Traits. Anders is sunny and optimistic. He sees the potential for profit and opportunity in every challenge. Unfortunately, he is too young to temper his views with a realistic assessment of the risks.

Ideal. Anders believes that freedom is the root of happiness. He pays his employees well and wants to help Saltmarsh grow into a prosperous town. Above all else, he hates the Sea Princes and wants to see their realm and its slave trade scoured from the earth.

Bond. Anders's mother Petra was the center of his life, and his sense of responsibility stems from her example. Every important decision he makes is guided by his desire to live up to her standards. If Skerrin is implicated in her murder, his hold over Anders would be

shattered. For now, Skerrin uses Petra's memory to fan Anders's antipathy toward the Sea Princes.

Flaw. Due to a combination of his youth and his somewhat sheltered upbringing, Anders is naïve. He relied on his mother's expertise in most matters, which has allowed Skerrin to worm his way into Anders's confidence.

SKERRIN WAVECHASER

Skerrin (LE male human **assassin**) is secretly the head Brotherhood agent in town. Tall, lean, tan, with short silver hair, he speaks in precise, measured statements of a man who has a keen eye for detail. He is dispassionate and takes a protective stance toward Anders. To observers, he is nothing more than a faithful and trusted butler.

Skerrin was renowned for his patience during his days as an assassin for the Brotherhood. Once, he hid himself in the attic above a noble's bedroom, waiting in a trance-like state for three days and nights until his target was positioned just below a small crack in the room's ceiling. Skerrin squeezed a single drop from a vial of poison he carried on to the noble's bald scalp. He waited in his hiding place for another full day until the contact poison killed the man.

Personality Traits. Skerrin is literally a man of two personalities. He appears to be a concerned, fatherly figure, a loyal retainer who worries about his young master. With a few moments of focus, however, he can shift to become a cold-blooded, patient killer.

Ideal. When operating as Anders' servant, Skerrin believes that it is the duty of those with experience and wisdom to advise the young. As an assassin, he holds that those strong enough to survive flourish only by culling the weak.

Bond. Skerring's bond alternates between Anders and the Scarlet Brotherhood. He sees both as the best bets to bring order and security to the world.

Flaw. Arrogance. Skerrin genuinely believes that if he had to, he could murder everyone of consequence in town in a single night and secure the place for the Scarlet Brotherhood. Sometimes he is tempted to do so, if only to prove himself right.

THE SCARLET BROTHERHOOD IN PLAY

The Scarlet Brotherhood is an opportunistic faction. It seeks to cause the maximum amount of disruption with the least amount of risk.

The Brotherhood wants to tilt the town council in its favor and install Anders as the most prominent member. Their first goal is to find evidence of Gellan Primewater's involvement with the Sea Princes and implicate his participation in the slave trade. Such evidence is not hard to find once Gellan's dealings with the Sea Princes are revealed.

The Brotherhood plans to use such accusations to increase tension in town between the traditionalists and the loyalists, ignite a civil war, assassinate leaders on both sides, and then use Anders as a peacemaker. Then the Brotherhood plans to assassinate Anders, frame the Sea Princes, and install Skerrin as his replacement as the town's foremost leader. Finally, Skerrin will agitate

for war and continue to help Brotherhood agents infiltrate Keoland's towns in the south.

If war does erupt, Brotherhood agents will work to ensure a long, drawn-out stalemate that grinds down both sides. Ideally, assassinations will pave the way for Brotherhood agents to assume high positions in both realms, but if necessary, the Brotherhood will engage armies of mercenaries, humanoid tribes, and fanatics it has gathered to finish the job. They hope that the Sea Princes can then be transformed into a puppet state, allowing the Brotherhood to turn their attention to the rest of Keoland.

SCARLET BROTHERHOOD SAMPLE EVENTS

d20	Event
1–6	The Brotherhood slips evidence of smuggling to the guard, causing several popular fishing boat owners to be arrested.
7–10	The Brotherhood's agents spread rumors that the mine is on the verge of failure and the crown plans to award the dwarves rulership of Saltmarsh as compensation.
11–12	The Brotherhood blackmails Ingo the Drover and Keledrek the Unspoken, two people in town with dark pasts, into their service, turning them into useful agents.
13–14	Tainted grain delivered by a merchant in league with the Brotherhood leads to an outbreak of plague.
15–16	The Brotherhood uses kidnapping, blackmail, or other sinister means to turn an important member of another faction into an ally.
17–18	A small band of escaped slaves arrives in town. They claim that several sailors at the docks once worked as slave traders, prompting outraged calls for justice from Anders.
19	Pirate activity increases, bearing the unmistakable mark of the Sea Princes. The Brotherhood's ships adopt Sea Prince regalia to confuse the issue.
20	Skerrin, growing bored and overconfident, assassinates a prominent member of a faction and tries to frame the Sea Princes for the deed.

SALTMARSH OVERVIEW

Saltmarsh's roughly five thousand residents are predominantly human, with the dwarven mining contingent of about two hundred workers the largest non-human faction in town. Elves and halflings draw no special notice, since the Silverstand hosts a wood elf enclave and a few halfling villages are tucked in the hills around town. The residents react to other visitors, especially tieflings and dragonborn, with a mixture of curiosity and fear.

LAW AND ORDER

Saltmarsh is a bastion of civilization in the midst of an untamed region. Without its stout defenders, it might have long ago fallen to the depredations of outsiders.

MILITIA AND DEFENSE

One hundred trained warriors serve in the town guard. Each of them wears studded leather armor marked with a town guard's badge—the green reed of Saltmarsh—and is armed with a club while patrolling in town. The guards work in pairs, operating from two guardhouses built near the road into Saltmarsh. A smaller station at the docks quells the fights that break out there nightly. The captain of the town guard is Eliander Fireborn.

The guard also patrols the area around Saltmarsh on horseback. Groups assigned to this duty are more heavily armed and armored; they wear chain mail and wield longswords and heavy crossbows.

A militia of five hundred residents can be mustered to take up the defense of the town if it comes under attack. The militia members have undergone minimal training, since they are expected only to keep an enemy at bay until the king's forces arrive.

A small force of marines watches over the docks and, if needed, can take to sea to meet the threat of a pirate ship or sahuagin incursion. The marines are hardened veterans of several battles against the Sea Princes. They are led by a married couple, Tom and Will Stoutly, veterans who have fought dozens of engagements against pirates, raiders, and monsters.

The guard is seen as something of a meddlesome force, since most of its members are drawn from the military veterans who migrated here with the crown's blessing. Townsfolk tend to see them as brutish thugs, though they are quick to call them when trouble arises.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The town guard arrests lawbreakers and imprisons them in the town jail. In most cases, criminals pay a fine and are let go. Those who cannot pay are required to work off their debt, usually put to work sweeping streets or helping with construction projects. If a crime requires a trial, the town council hears evidence and renders a verdict. Crime breaks down into three basic categories in Saltmarsh.

Petty Crime. Public unarmed brawling, pickpocketing, and other crimes that cause up to 50 gp in property damages are classified as petty crimes. The accused pays a fine of 2d6 gp, or one day of hard labor per gold piece owed.

Minor Crime. Armed assault, defined as any nonfatal attack made with a weapon, along with any other assault or property crimes that cause more than 50 gp in damages, but less than 250 gp, are minor crimes. The perpetrator must pay a fine of 100 gp and serve 1d4 years in prison or at forced labor.

Major Crime. Crimes more severe than those outlined above, including murder, are major crimes. The criminal faces 2d10 years of imprisonment, though serious cases earn the death penalty. In most instances, these crimes are dealt with in Seaton, the provincial capital located east of Saltmarsh.

COMMERCE

Saltmarsh might be encrusted in sea salt and reek of rotting fish guts, but there is gold aplenty in the coffers of its citizens. For more than a century, the ships of Saltmarsh have worked the rich fishing grounds along the coast. Trade ships from near and far have been using the docks to unload their goods, and lately more ships have come to call as the dwarven mining operation grows. Smuggling has also long been a profitable business here.

The dwarven mining operation promises to bring about a rapid growth in Saltmarsh's fortunes. Whether that's a good or a bad thing depends on who you ask. The merchants look forward to more business, but the fishers don't see how the mines will do anything to enrich their coffers. If anything, they fear that competition for fish will become more ferocious as the town grows.

FISHING

More folk in town work in the fishing industry than any other, and it has been the backbone of Saltmarsh for generations. The wealthier families own their own boats, while less well-to-do folk hire out to work as deckhands. The work is difficult and dangerous, but a smart deckhand can save money for several years and eventually buy their own boat. That promise of earned prosperity is important to the townsfolk, and they see newcomers as a threat to it.

TRADING

The wealthiest families in town own large trading vessels that they use to ship goods across the Azure Sea. Saltmarsh exports other foodstuffs from the farms around town. Most manufactured goods, except for rope, nets, and other items created locally to support the fishing industry, are imported into town.

SMUGGLING

As a sleepy backwater town, Saltmarsh has long been an ideal market for illegal goods. Pirates, agents of the Sea Princes, and Keoish nobles looking to evade the king's taxes have all helped fuel a bustling local black market. Some fishing boats meet ships at sea to load and unload illegal goods, while other cartels conduct business at isolated points along the shore near town. The locals see smuggling as a victimless crime and resent the crown's growing insistence on cracking down on it.

MINING

The mine outside town is a new development. Despite the skepticism of the locals, the mine has started to yield silver in growing quantities, and the dwarves are convinced that the nearby cliffs are rich with gold. If the mine takes off, Saltmarsh could transform into a sprawling boomtown overnight.

DOCKS

The docks of Saltmarsh are the beating heart of the town. The fishing trade and related commerce that keep the town alive are based here.

The docks have recently undergone a series of expansions intended to lure larger merchant vessels into the port. Two primary piers are used to load and unload large ships, while a series of smaller ones accommodate humbler vessels.

This part of Saltmarsh is almost constantly busy; it's rare to see the large piers unoccupied. Guarded warehouses are a common sight in this district, and it is considered suspicious behavior to walk near those places at night.

The docks are a hotbed of rumors and gossip. The sailors and laborers who frequent this area are bored, eager for news, and inclined to share what they have heard. A character who spends a few hours asking for news can learn the current scuttlebutt. The "Dock Rumors" table below can be an inspiration for the sort of whispers characters might hear.

DOCK RUMORS

d10 Rumor

- 1 The crown dispatched a caravan with enough gold to commission six new warships. It went missing near the Hool Marshes.
- 2 Drow traders posing as surface elves have been doing business in town.
- 3 Someone's sabotaging fishing boats. It's those dwarves—they want to take over!
- 4 The king's agents have infiltrated town. It's only a matter of time before they remove the council and replace them with foppish nobles.
- 5 That tiefling who's looking to buy crocodile skulls can't be up to anything good.
- 6 A couple of fishing boats have gone missing. If the sea devils aren't behind it, I'm a merman.
- 7 A big critter's been going through everyone's trash at night. Something from the swamp, I'd reckon—maybe a troll.
- 8 Sometimes on a moonless night, you can meet the ghost of a drowned sailor trying to get home. Lead one to their home, and you'll get a wish. Fail, and they'll strangle you.
- 9 If you see someone at the docks wearing a red cloak after dark, slip them a copper piece and they'll connect you with smugglers from beyond this world who can sell you anything you've dreamed of.
- 10 It's only a matter of time before the dwarves dig too deep and unleash something horrible.

MOOD OF THE TOWN

Saltmarsh is a place of constant energy. Few of the common folk are so affluent that they can afford to sit idle. At sunrise, the docks bustle with fishers preparing to venture out for the day. When they return, they spend time unloading their catch, mending nets, and repairing their vessels. The merchants move their ships into the docks once the fishing fleet is out for the day, and dock workers rush to load and unload goods before the boats return.

The daily energy and bustle carries over into rowdy nights. The fishers chug ale and swap stories, each seek-

ing to outdo the other with their tales of the sea. Fights erupt as rival crews cross paths, and the town guard keeps a high profile in hopes of maintaining the peace.

The quantity and quality of the catch in recent days goes a long way toward determining the town's mood and general atmosphere. A bountiful catch for a few days in a row puts all the fishers in a celebratory mood, while a poor harvest that lasts more than a couple of days leads to frayed tempers and brawling.

Use the following table to determine the mood around the village, rolling once every few days or choosing as you see fit.

SALTMARSH MOOD

d20	Result
1–6	Poor Catch. The townsfolk are frustrated and prone to bickering; everyone is in a bad mood.
7–12	Bountiful Catch. Music and merriment echo through town as everyone celebrates.
13–20	Typical Catch. Overall, the fishers are content with their recent results. Here and there, crews boast of good pickings or bemoan their poor haul.

LOCATIONS IN SALTMARSH

Here is a summary of the notable places in Saltmarsh, as depicted on map 1.1.

1. CITY GATE

Saltmarsh was built on the ruins of a much older settlement, sometimes called Old Saltmarsh or the Old Harbor. One sign of this is that the town has a small stretch of wall and a single town gate secured by two or three guards. The wall is old, crumbling, and badly worn by centuries of rain and wind coming in from the Azure Sea.

The garrison at the gate consists of older guards, those nearing retirement and unwilling or unable to walk patrols. Their eyes are sharp, and they are prone to gossip. A pull from a flask of whiskey or a few silver pieces can persuade them to provide information on recent visitors.

2. BARRACKS AND JAIL

Built on a low hill, the Saltmarsh barracks are also its jail. It is one of the few structures in Saltmarsh with an underground level. The jailer, Kraddock Stonehorn (LG male human **gladiator**), is an old comrade of Eliander. He is a stickler for the rules, and Eliander trusts him with his life.

The jail in the cellar consists of two sections. A single large chamber holds drunks, brawling fishers, and other troublemakers who need to cool off for a few nights. The lock is high quality (requiring a successful DC 20 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick), and the door is built of stout wood with a small window to allow guards to check in on their charges.

A side passage holds six individual cells with higher-quality locks (each requiring a successful DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick) and solid doors that lack windows. One cell was long ago warded against both teleportation and divination magic. Spell-

casters are kept here, blindfolded and manacled. Occasionally Eliander uses this cell to conduct meetings that require the utmost secrecy.

The jail is used to hold prisoners with sentences of up to a year, but those facing longer terms or sentenced to hard labor are transferred to the prison at Seaton, a larger, heavily fortified port to the east.

At any given time, 2d4 **guards**, led by a **veteran**, keep watch here.

3. THE WICKER GOAT

Bearing the dubious honor of being the oldest tavern in town, the Wicker Goat is owned by Lankus Kurrid (NG male human **guard**), a retired officer of the Keoish army who caters to the dwarven miners and town guard. The two-story building has sleeping quarters for rent on the upper floor, usually sufficient to accommodate the slow stream of travelers making their way through Saltmarsh on the way to somewhere else.

Those who seek an audience with Manistrad can find her here when she's not working at the mine. She sometimes has need for adventurers to help keep the mining operation secure. Roll a d6 and consult the table below to determine the nature of an available task.

d6	Task
1	Guard a mining shaft that was recently attacked by duergar from the Underdark.
2	Escort supply wagons moving to and from Saltmarsh.
3	Explore a tunnel discovered in the mines that bears signs of troglodyte infestation.
4	Find a group of miners who went missing underground and may have been snatched by slavers.
5	Track down a thief who stole a shipment of expensive mining gear in Saltmarsh.
6	Locate the source of zombies and skeletons that have been sighted in the mines recently.

4. ELIANDER'S HOUSE

Tucked at the edge of town and overlooking the sea, Eliander's home provides him with a relaxing sanctuary away from the bustle of Saltmarsh. Eliander maintains the largest library in town; during his days of military service, he made a hobby of collecting rare books. If the characters need information on the history of Saltmarsh, they might find it in Eliander's archives.

5. MINING COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

Once a mansion owned by a local noble family, this building was purchased by the crown and serves as the dwarven mining company's headquarters in Saltmarsh. Manistrad Copperlocks stays here when she must do business in town; otherwise, several dwarf clerks work here during the day, logging deliveries at the docks to be transported to the mine and arranging for the processed ore to be loaded on trade ships bound for distant ports.

Rumors abound of a vault hidden beneath the building. In the cellar, the dwarves have dug a chamber in the earth that is sealed with a heavy iron door and a fine lock (requiring a successful DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to pick). The dwarves keep their funds here—about 1,000 gp in coins and gems, guarded by

four suits of **animated armor** and a **rug of smothering** left in the vault. The constructs do not attack dwarves and can be disabled for 10 minutes if the command word "Tatalot" is spoken to them. Manistrad and her close advisors know the command word.

6. KELEDEK TOWER

This three-story tower is home to the town's resident sage and wizard, Keledek the Unspoken (LE male human **mage**). Keledek's dusky skin, bald head, and bright red silk turban—not to mention his height of nearly 7 feet—make him an unmistakable figure in town.

Keledek came to town years ago from Ket, a distant kingdom held in a mix of contempt, mistrust, and fear by the locals. Rumor around town claims that speaking his name aloud allows Keledek to eavesdrop on a conversation for a short time. In truth, Keledek relies on his familiar, an **imp** named Zivmal, to spy on the townsfolk.

Keledek is a close associate of Gellan Primewater. He uses his magic to help a gang of smugglers based out of the nearby Tower of Zenopus in exchange for rare spell components and magic items.

7. FAITHFUL QUARTERMASTERS OF IUZ

A trade delegation led by Captain Xendros (CE female tiefling **priest**) has come to Saltmarsh to acquire large quantities of fish (salted and preserved for transport) in the name of Iuz, a mighty cambion and demigod who rules much of the distant north. Iuz's realm does not produce enough food to feed all its citizens, so it relies on imports for the rest, and Saltmarsh is one of its major suppliers.

The minions of Iuz have only rarely come into direct conflict with Keoland, and its ongoing war with Keoland's rivals makes the nation an acceptable trade partner in the eyes of the king. The emissaries from Iuz pay on time and they buy shiploads of fish at once, so no one inquires too closely into the captain's sepulchral voice or her penchant for wearing gold jewelry etched with grim designs.

Xendros sometimes has need for adventurers. She is particularly interested in tracking down an *apparatus of Kwalish*. If news of one reaches her, she offers magic items to those willing to recover it for her (short of an artifact, she can supply anything if given enough time to send word to Iuz). If her offer is rebuked, agents of Iuz conjure a team of demonic assassins to take the device and spirit it back to Iuz's realm.

8. EMPTY NET

Partially supported by stilts driven into the harbor waters, this rickety tavern is purportedly a haven for smugglers, mercenaries, assassins and even pirates. The owner, Krieb Shenker (NE male human **thug**), takes coin from anyone and asks no questions. Troublemakers are thrown out the door, over the railing, and into the reeking harbor. Characters looking to carouse find this the best place for a rowdy night of drinking and brawling. The town guard comes here only if called.

Krieb works with Gellan Primewater to screen prospective buyers and sellers for smuggled wares. He also recruits local toughs and sailors for Gellan's ventures, but he prefers those who are business-minded and less likely to cause trouble.

SALTMARSH



9. GREEN MARKET

A strip of open land that is the place for everything that isn't fish, salt, or nautical wares, this market stretches among a dozen stalls down to the bridge. A few goats, eggs, cloth, marsh plants, and pots are available, as well as the occasional mule or ox for hauling carts.

10. SHARKFIN BRIDGE

This single large bridge spans the river, with shops and homes along its length. The bridge predates the village and is large enough for laden carts to pass two abreast. Elves and fey folk feel vaguely nauseated when they cross the bridge, owing to an ancient curse placed on it long before Keoland rose to existence.

11. KESTER'S LEATHER GOODS

Kiorna Kester (LN female human **commoner**) runs this tannery, where she produces smooth, colorful leather for every purpose and sells both the cured hides and items she fashions from it. Kiorna is keenly interested in acquiring hides from exotic creatures to craft into expensive leather. She pays a fee in gold pieces equal to 100 times a creature's challenge rating for the intact hide of any beast or monstrosity of challenge rating 3 or higher. Harvesting the hide from such a creature requires an intact carcass, an hour of work, and a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Wisdom (Survival) check to preserve it in top condition for Kiorna's purposes. On a failed check, the hide does not meet Kiorna's standards but can still be sold for a lesser price.

12. HOOLWATCH TOWER

This 60-foot-tall tower was the first defensive building of Saltmarsh, and it still serves as an armory and lookout as well as the official base of the town guard. Eliander spends most of his time here in his duties as commander of the guard. He sometimes has need for adventurers, and at such times he posts jobs on a board hanging by the tower's entrance. Roll a d6 and consult the table below to determine the nature of an available task.

d6	Goal	Foes	Location
1	Recover stolen goods	Goblins	Hool Marshes
2	Apprehend a wanted criminal	Wild beasts	Hool Marshes
3	Rescue a captive	Bandits	Dreadwood
4	Defeat a threat	Cultists	Dreadwood
5	Find a lost patrol	Bullywugs	Drowned Forest
6	Scout a dangerous area	Undead	Azure Sea

13. THE SNAPPING LINE

This popular inn and tavern is built from the planks and hulls of half a dozen decommissioned fishing ships. Its decor is predictably nautical in theme, and its sleeping rooms are plain but comfortable renditions of a ship's cabins. The smell of fish has never been scrubbed from its walls, and those who stay the night find their belongings steeped in the scent, which lasts for several days. Sailors and fishers gather here to trade stories and drink into the night.

The Snapping Line is run by a young woman named Hanna Rist (NG female human **commoner**), who comes from a family of well-known lobster catchers. The Rist family also makes a spirit from lobster meat and potatoes called claw wine; it is, to put it mildly, an acquired taste. Hanna employs several former dockhands to keep peace in her bar.

14. COUNCIL HALL

This large brick building contains the offices of the town council and the chamber where they meet to discuss the town business. The hall is built from sturdy stone from the nearby cliffs and a variety of hardwood from the nearby Hool Marshes. A wooden sign depicting a net filled with fish hangs above the double doors leading into the hall. A small tower rises from the building, housing a horn at the top, which is blown to announce the beginning of a council session or other significant events.

The town has a sturdy but weatherbeaten platform and gallows in front of the hall for use in the event of an execution. Such punishments are rare, but when they do occur, they draw a large crowd. In any given week, there is a 2 percent chance of an execution, usually of some bandit or other non-native ne'er-do-well.

15. WEEKLY MARKET

Built around the first well dug for the fishers in the town's early days is a large market square where merchants of all descriptions gather on the first day of each week to sell their wares. Initially established to sell fish, the market has grown to include a wide variety of goods. The center area of the square contains a dozen long tables where shoppers can eat communally. Items from the *Player's Handbook* costing up to 150 gp are available for purchase here.

16. PRIMEWATER MANSION

Gellan Primewater maintains a large mansion right on the docks, allowing him to oversee his ships from his upstairs window. He sometimes leans out to shout orders or answer questions for his captains and crews, his booming voice echoing over the docks. The location of his house also makes it convenient for his smugglers; the crews slip goods through a secret entrance that leads to his mansion's cellar.

The mansion's most notable feature is its grand entryway and feast hall. Gellan hosts at least one extravagant feast per week, headlined by food and drink bought in distant ports. His cook, a young gnome named Feliza, sometimes hires adventurers to find rare herbs, meats, and other ingredients for her dishes.

17. THE DWARVEN ANVIL

The blacksmith's forge has a single anvil with a clear sign of dwarven origins, and a backlog of orders ten miles long. The human smiths make hooks, nails, harpoons, knives, fishing weights, and much more all day. Their master smith is an elderly, dark-skinned woman named Mafera (LG female human **commoner**); her son, Jasker (LG male human **commoner**), is her best journeyman. A small shrine to Moradin can be found under the eaves as well, though it is somewhat neglected.

Some of the dwarves associated with the new mining operation would like to know how a human came into ownership of such fine dwarven tools. A few suspect treachery and might hire the characters to break into this place and make off with anything that “rightfully” belongs to the dwarves.

18. FISHMONGERS’ PLANTS

The large fish-processing buildings in this area reek of prosperity (and fish). All are engaged in salting or brining the catch brought in by the fleet. Most of the time these places are busy, and the workers have little time for chatter.

19. OWELAND HOUSE

The Oweland family has owned this sprawling mansion for generations. Despite the family’s wealth, the building is a sprawling collection of new construction, expansions, and additions. Each generation of the family has added to the building to accommodate the clan’s growth. The family takes in fishers who have fallen on hard times, sharing their wealth with others until they can recover.

The sprawling, mazelike interior of the Oweland house has spawned rumors of hidden passages and secret chambers within it. The family once engaged in smuggling, and several hidden tunnels run from the cellars beneath the mansion to points out of town. Skerrin Wavechaser has discovered a few that are unknown even to the family.

20. SOLMOR HOUSE

The Solmor family owns several buildings in this modest complex. The largest is the personal mansion of the Solmor family. Three smaller buildings house servants, employees of the family’s trading fleet, and secure storage for expensive goods.

The Solmor family maintains a cadre of a dozen **guards** led by four **veterans** (all LE humans). These mercenaries report to Skerrin, and though they outwardly serve the Solmors, their loyalty is to the Scarlet Brotherhood.

Despite the Brotherhood’s infiltration of this place, Skerrin takes pains to avoid leaving any incriminating evidence lying about. His eidetic memory allows him to burn any notices and reports he receives after reading them, though at times he can be careless and leave partially burned scraps of paper in his garbage.

21. MARINERS’ GUILDHALL

The mariners’ guild serves all the towns along the coast, providing a bunk and a meal for sailors passing through. Sea captains in search of a crew stop here, as do others seeking news from afar. The guildhall is an excellent place to discuss seafaring, as well as the various threats to navigation along the coast.

22. INGO THE DROVER’S HOUSE

General Illinar the Fifth is a disgraced human general of the Great Kingdom, currently living in Saltmarsh and trying to stay one step ahead of the Overking’s assassins after he supported an unsuccessful bid to usurp the throne. He goes by the name Ingo the Drover here and is slowly building a reputation as a good source for guards,

marines, and muscle when sailing through difficult waters. His only link to his prior life is his campaign medals—souvenirs that remind him of his former glories even if their discovery would reveal his past. He keeps a **shield guardian** in his home, a last, hidden resort to foil any attempts on his life.

Ingo (LN male human **gladiator**) tries to keep a low profile. He avoids taking sides in any conflict, but if his cover comes under pressure, he can be compelled to throw in with one faction or the other. He has a good friendship with Eliander. The two sometimes meet for a drink and share stories of their experiences in the military. Although Ingo tries to keep his stories vague enough to maintain his cover, Eliander suspects his true origin.

23. CARPENTERS’ GUILDHALL

Run by a snobby gnome named Jilar Kanklesten (N female gnome **commoner**), the carpenters’ guild has plenty of work building houses, assembling fish barrels, repairing docks, and much more. The whole building is a marvel of workmanship, made without a single nail. Jilar is obsessed with rare woods; she pays handsomely for adventurers to make expeditions in search of specific trees in the Hool Marshes, the Drowned Forest, and the Dreadwood. Roll a d8 and consult the table below if the characters seek work from her.

d8	Object
1	The branch of a tree used to hang a murderer
2	Splinters from a tree struck by lightning
3	A shard of a treant’s bark, given freely
4	A wooden stake used to impale a vampire
5	Tendrils harvested from a shambling mound
6	Deck planks stolen from a pirate ship
7	Log taken from the Hool Marshes, transported in swamp water
8	Wood from a shipwreck

24. CRABBER’S COVE

Just east of the docks, built along the shores of a secluded bay, are a handful of buildings known collectively as Crabber’s Cove. The buildings are weathered, abandoned by the residents of Saltmarsh years ago. Since then, thousands of crabs have taken up residence in the crumbling remains. Crabbers from Saltmarsh are cautious about the cove, as more than one overeager fisher has disappeared into the clacking darkness, never to be seen again. Unknown to the folk of Saltmarsh, a **vampire** named Xolec is trapped in a hidden cellar beneath one of the old cabins. Xolec was buried in an ancient tomb, unleashed on Saltmarsh decades ago when his sealed coffin was brought to town by a trader and opened. A cleric of St. Cuthbert confronted him, but she wasn’t able to destroy him. Instead, she trapped him here by means of a powerful curse: Xolec can leave the cellar only if someone pure of heart carries him from it.

Xolec is best left trapped, except for one detail: by a stroke of fate, agents of the Scarlet Brotherhood use the cabin above him for clandestine meetings. He knows the full details of their operation and Skerrin’s role in it. He trades this information for his freedom if confronted by adventurers.

PROCAN, SAILOR OF SEA AND SKY

Procan is a chaotic neutral deity of the sea and weather. He offers his clerics access to the Tempest domain. He is embodied in the sudden storm that overtakes a ship, battering it with monstrous waves and howling winds that give way to peaceful waters and calm weather in the space of a moment.

Procan's domain is the sea, and whatever the oceans touch, he bears witness to. His mood shifts to darkness as he witnesses a brutal murder on the docks of a squalid port, then lifts in pride as he watches a brave mariner leap into the sea and save a drowning child. Every story of the oceans courses through his mind, and he in each moment curses and blesses mortals for their endless follies, heroism, and hatreds.

When the sea reaches its limit at the shore, so too does Procan's power. His clerics and priests rarely venture inland, and he cares little for what happens beyond his waters. At sea, he expects sacrifices in the form of fine food, potent alcohol, or valuable treasures thrown overboard at the start of a voyage. Due to this ritual, Procan holds all treasures lost at sea as part of his domain. He curses those who plunder shipwrecks without the blessings of his clerics, dogging their steps with wretched weather until his attention is drawn elsewhere.

Procan's clerics reflect their deity's chaotic nature. They seek omens of his moods in the weather and sky, and mirror their own demeanor to match their deity's.

25. THE LEAP

The Leap is an outcropping of rock nearly a hundred feet above the churning water below. Several stone benches stand near this precipitous edge, and a few stone markers sit in the tall grass nearby.

Traditionally, the people of Saltmarsh leap from the cliffs into the water below when a loved one drowns at sea. The jump is usually not fatal; the water below the Leap is free of rocks, and it is a short swim back to dry land.

26. TEMPLE OF PROCAN

Services at this long-standing sea god's temple are well attended. The congregation is led by a one-legged former whaler: Wellgar Brinehanded (CG male human **priest**), an older human man with a sharp memory for every storm, lost ship, and enormous catch ever brought into Saltmarsh harbor. He knows many fanciful stories of shipwrecks, lucky escapes, and famous captains. Matters ashore rarely interest him, but the temple and its bell tower are also served by a half-dozen novitiates and laypeople who keep things running smoothly.

Wellgar uses the blessings of Procan to seek out shipwrecks in order to recover the remains of sailors for a proper burial. He is willing to trade cleric spells of up to 5th level, including *raise dead*, in return for recovery of the remains he seeks.

27. SALTMARSH CEMETERY

The town's cemetery is well-kept, but many of its graves are little more than memorial stones laid for those who died at sea. Krag (NG male half-orc **commoner**) is the town gravedigger, as well as something of a town historian and local loremaster. He has conducted extensive research into the folk buried here and events in the re-

gion. He can be an invaluable resource for adventurers seeking information and is especially helpful to those who can help him with his research.

In his spare time, Krag helps organize and translate Eliander's library. He keeps a room in the guard commander's home, and the two are close friends.

28. WINSTON'S STORE

The owner of this establishment, a retired rogue, knows a great deal about the Hool Marshes. Winston (N male halfling **bandit**) spent years as an outlaw lurking in the marshes before a raid on an army payroll caravan netted him enough loot to open a business. The increased presence of law enforcement in Saltmarsh has him on edge, and he is concerned that his involvement in the heist will emerge. In the meantime, he does business with sailors, adventurers, and those who need "solid goods at honest prices," as he often says. Winston has a few maps of the marshes, and those who intend to explore that area often consult with him for guidance.

29. SEA GROVE OF OBAD-HAI

Open to the air and set in a grove outside town, the sea-grove is a gathering place for seagulls, sailors, and swamp folk, as well as an information market for traders and trappers. Ferrin Kastilar (NG male halfling **druid**), a somewhat melancholy individual of middle years, tends the shrine with his bullfrog companion, Lorys.

Ferrin usually keeps an eye out for rumors of aberrations in the wild. He also has contacts with the elves of the Dreadwood, and they send word to him if a monster escapes that forest and heads in the direction of Saltmarsh. If news of an aberration reaches him, he hires adventurers to stalk and kill the creature.

30. STANDING STONES

Two enormous runestones stand on this island. In ages past, a siren was chained to the stones here and sacrificed by an evil human tribe as an offering to the sea. Since then, the fishing in the region has flourished. The siren's spirit was captured in the stones, and her captivating song continues to echo through the weave and draw fish to the area. The siren's sisters and allies, among them a powerful djinn, have scoured the planes in search of her spirit for centuries.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

Saltmarsh provides a haven for adventurers between expeditions, and the characters can spend that time engaged in various tasks around town. The following options build on the downtime activities discussed in chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*. Characters can pursue them to make some additional money or strengthen their ties to Saltmarsh.

The activities given here are based on the ones presented in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*. If you have that supplement, consider using the guidelines for rivals and the complications attached to some of the activities given in that book. You can also offer other activities as you see fit. The ones detailed below are specific to Saltmarsh.

BUYING AND SELLING MAGIC ITEMS

Captain Xendros of the Faithful Quartermasters of luz has magic items for sale and can also broker the sale of magic items. Any such item comes with a mild curse, however. Anyone attuned to the item can be targeted by a *detect thoughts* spell cast by Xendros, with no limit on range; any saving throws triggered by the spell automatically fail; and the target has no knowledge of the casting. This curse can be detected by casting an *identify* spell on the item and succeeding on a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check. The check can be attempted once per casting.

BUYING ITEMS

Xendros asks for a 50 gp retainer to engage her services as an item broker each week, and the process consumes a character's effort for a week as it involves multiple meetings to haggle over prices, specific desired features, and so on. If the characters pay the retainer, roll twice on Magic Item Table F and once each on tables A, B, C, D, and E in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine which magic items Xendros has on offer in any given week. (Unsold items are shipped elsewhere and regularly replaced with new options.)

If the characters want a specific item, Xendros can fulfill a request for an item from Table F or Table G with 1d4 weeks of work. Her asking price is based on the item's rarity, as given in the table below, but she might also be willing to part with an item in return for a favor. She especially wants to see Keoland's ambitions for Saltmarsh foiled, and she might try to enlist the characters in a plot to ruin the mining efforts.

Rarity	Asking Price
Common	75 gp
Uncommon	300 gp
Rare	2,500 gp
Very rare	25,000 gp
Legendary	50,000 gp

SELLING ITEMS

Xendros is always on the lookout for items she can buy for resale. Since she must make a profit on any item she buys, she offers half of her standard asking price for any items offered by a character. Completing the transaction takes a week of effort from the character; before the deal can be made final, Xendros uses her magic to ensure that the item is authentic and arranges for a ship in port to transport the item to the distant land of luz.

CAROUSING

Saltmarsh has several taverns that provide plenty of opportunities for adventurers to spend their money on fine food and strong drink. Carousing gives the characters a chance to make contacts in town.

A week of carousing costs 2d10 gp as you lavish money on food and drink for yourself and others. When carousing, pick a single tavern in town to frequent. At the end of the week, you earn a contact in town. You can have a maximum number of contacts in town equal to 1 + your Charisma bonus (minimum of 1). The nature



CAPTAIN XENDROS

of the contacts depends on the chosen tavern. The DM creates a specific contact, such as the bartender at the appropriate tavern or a specific person you have connected with. Optionally, the DM can instead allow you to declare an NPC as a contact when you meet them, provided that the individual fits the contact type. In this case, you recognize the NPC as a pal from your time spent carousing. In either case, that individual acts as a trusted friend and offers help as necessary, though they are unwilling to risk their life or possessions.

CAROUSING CONTACTS

Tavern	Contact Type
The Snapping Line	Fishers, sailors, laborers
The Empty Net	Smugglers, criminals
The Wicker Goat	Dwarves, town guard

RESEARCH

Krag is always open to recruiting someone to help organize Eliander's library and take care of things in the graveyard. In return for help with his day job, Krag grants access to the library and can help conduct research. His expert command of local history makes him a useful contact. He has no shortage of semi-interesting tales about notorious fish and monstrous pirates.

WAGES AND RESEARCH

You can spend a week working with Krag, helping tend the graveyard during the day and organizing Eliander's library in the evenings. You earn enough money to afford a modest lifestyle. You also learn one piece of lore regarding the region around Saltmarsh. That lore is the equivalent of one true statement about a person, place, or thing found within 25 miles of town. The DM is the final arbiter on the exact information learned, but it is likely something that helps you solve a problem or make progress with a task.

EMPLOYMENT

Characters who are interested in making a fair wage for little risk can find jobs around town. Having a job can also enable a character to come to the attention of one of Saltmarsh's leaders. The employment opportunities below are tailored to each of those individuals, including:

- Hiring on with the Oweland family to work on a fishing boat
- Joining the guard and report to Eliander Fireborn
- Taking short-term work in Gellan Primewater's smuggling operation
- Mining or other forms of manual labor with the dwarves led by Manistrad Copperlocks
- Laboring on the docks, loading and unloading ships for Anders Solmor's trading company

For each week of employment, you earn the coin needed to sustain a modest lifestyle. There is also a chance that you attract the notice of the prominent person associated with your job. At the end of each week, make a DC 15 Charisma check. On a success, you earn the opportunity to request an audience with that person.

MERCENARY WORK

Ingo the Drover is always on the lookout for skilled mercenaries to fulfill the contracts offered to him. He has a particular need for those who can serve as caravan guards, personal protection for merchants, and sentries aboard docked ships.

For each week of mercenary work, you earn the coin needed to sustain a modest lifestyle and an extra 2d10 gp. Additionally, roll a d20 at the end of each week. On a 19 or higher, you earn a bonus of 3d20 gp due to the unexpectedly dangerous nature of your most recent assignment.

SALTMARSH REGION

The land near Saltmarsh is safe for travelers, as are the roads that cut through the region. Small farms and manor houses dot the area, many maintained by army veterans who were granted land by royal decree. A number of small halfling villages are scattered around the area, located just off the main roads. Such locations consist of several farmhouses clustered around a pub that provides a warm welcome to visitors who come in peace. Once one journeys off the beaten path, however, a variety of threats emerge from the swampy wilderness.

Map 1.2 shows Saltmarsh and the surrounding area, where all of the following sites and features are located.

ROADS AND PATHWAYS

The roads around Saltmarsh are heavily patrolled, part of the crown's effort to make its influence felt in the region. Travel along these thoroughfares is usually safe, with most encounters involving merchant caravans, guard patrols, and fellow travelers. Small farms and manors cluster near the roads, relying on passing guard patrols for their safety. Where these settlements grow more widely spaced, bandit raids become more likely. Travelers on the road meet 1d4 caravans per day and have a 5 percent chance of being the target of an ambush by 2d4 **bandits** led by a **bandit captain**. In addition, each day on the road a party passes 1d3 small villages or manors. There is a 25 percent chance that any such location is inhabited by halflings. Otherwise, the location is a human enclave.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Beyond Saltmarsh are a number of locations that characters can visit. Providing in-depth detail in for all of them is beyond the scope of this book, but enough information is provided to create a foundation for further development.

ABBAY ISLE

This island south of Saltmarsh is the featured location in the adventure *Isle of the Abbey*.

The island is the site of a small abbey that was long ago abandoned by the order of monks that built it. Since then, various outlaw gangs and monsters have claimed it as a lair.

BURLE

Burle is a fortified outpost that is always on guard for monsters emerging from the Dreadwood. It serves as a key stopover point for travelers venturing inland from the southern coastal region. The community is dominated by a small keep set atop a hill that overlooks the forest it borders. A few farms cluster around it, the locals relying on the royal garrison to keep them safe from marauders.

Burle's most distinctive feature is the small copse of trees that grows in the middle of the keep. An ancient **treant** named Wander Root dwells in the keep and acts as an informal ambassador between the humans of Keoland and the wood elves and good-aligned fey of the Dreadwood. Years ago, the knights of Keoland helped the denizens of the forest defeat an incursion by cultists worshipping elemental evil fire. Since then, the elves, the treants, and the crown of Keoland have observed the Wild Flame Pact—a treaty that calls for mutual defense against the Dreadwood's horrors.

The outpost is commanded by its castellan, Kiara Shadowbreaker (LG female half-elf **knight**), who has led many successful raids into the Dreadwood. Kiara is a grim figure, always cognizant of the threat posed by the forest's denizens. She sees trouble behind every piece of news, and she keeps the warriors and rangers headquartered here ready to fight at a moment's notice. She is especially keen to hear news about the Scarlet Brotherhood. Kiara is convinced that the organization poses



a dire threat to the region but has failed to uncover concrete evidence of its meddling. She suspects that Duke Feldren of Seaton has been compromised by Scarlet Brotherhood agents, and she surreptitiously seeks to hire spies who could investigate him in search of proof.

Burle provides a safe resting place before and during expeditions into the Hool Marshes or the Dreadwood. Kiara offers a bounty equal to 5 gp per Hit Die for any aberration, elemental, or outlaw slain in the region. She keeps a bounty board just outside Burle's gates, which occasionally offers larger rewards for the capture or killing of specific monsters or criminals.

DWARVEN MINE

Dwarven prospectors have toiled in this new mine for the past three years. Soldiers from Keoland's royal army are stationed here for security alongside dwarf fighters from the Copperlocks clan. Travelers in need of shelter can rest on cots in the guard towers that surround the place, but only those with business related to the mine are allowed inside the gates without supervision.

The mine is a broad shaft dug into a steep hillside near the shore. Stone walls encompass it, with two guard towers overlooking the main gate and three other towers spaced evenly around the perimeter. The inner area contains a small village with warehouses, workshops, and houses, all erected during the time when the excavation was beginning and enormous amounts of stone became available for building.

The laborers also took the time to build a tavern, the Miner's Respite, and spend their off hours there drinking, swapping tales, and gambling. The game of darts has become an obsession among the bored miners and soldiers, and anyone with real skill at the game has a chance of talking their way past the guard at the door to engage in a match.

HAUNTED HOUSE

This abandoned house is the center of the action in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*. Use the description from that adventure for this place.

The haunted house can be a useful location for smugglers who operate in the Saltmarsh area. Gellen Primewater relies on this drop point to conduct much of his business.

LIZARDFOLK LAIR

This location is featured in *Danger at Dunwater*. Use the description from that adventure for this place.

The lizardfolk here view the area around the swamp as their domain. They threaten intruders to warn them off, attacking only those who insist on remaining in the area. The lizardfolk are not only guarding their territory, they are protecting a **young black dragon**. It has ordered them to keep its existence secret while it seeks to build an army of followers and one day emerge to conquer the surrounding area.

SAHUAGIN FORTRESS

This rocky outcropping sits atop a submerged fortress occupied by the fearsome sahuagin. This place is fully detailed in *The Final Enemy*.

This lair is an underwater stronghold maintained by the sahuagin. From here, they prey on passing ships and plot to grow in strength to the point that they can lay waste to Saltmarsh. A total of thirty **sahuagin**, a **sahuagin priestess**, and a **sahuagin baron** lair here.

SEATON

The folk of Saltmarsh point to Seaton as an example of the fate they want to avoid. For years, Seaton was about twice as large as Saltmarsh and enjoyed prosperous fishing and shipping industries. When King Kimbertos Skotti turned his attention south to deal with the Sea Princes, his admirals chose Seaton as the location for an important military port. Today, Seaton has been transformed from a robust fishing town into a drab fortress. Seaton's harbor is heavily fortified, and a large garrison of naval ships, infantry, and cavalry serves as the primary defense point for the region.

Duke Marik Feldren (CN male human **knight**) rules over the town in his capacity of governor of the southern province that includes Seaton. King Skotti actually granted Marik's older brother, the war hero Obertus Feldren, governorship of the province. But the affable duke's reign was short-lived, for he fell ill and died a year later. The title fell to Marik, a sheltered hothead eager to surpass his brother's legend. He considers the natives of the region as cowards who hid away in their isolated villages while the north suffered its losses. He further believes that his brother, who had a genuine fondness for the local fishers and traders, was laid low by traitors in service to the Sea Princes.

Duke Feldren intends to raise taxes to fund an aggressive expansion of the royal navy and launch raids against the Sea Princes' domain. The Scarlet Brotherhood, for its part, is delighted by Duke Feldren's plans to keep the pot stirred. If the opportunity arises, the Brotherhood might plant evidence of plots against him to feed the duke's suspicion of the locals and, with luck, spark civil unrest that tempts the Sea Princes into making incursions into the area.

TOWER OF ZENOPUS

The wizard Zenopus once dwelled in this tower on the cliffs outside Saltmarsh. He built his lair next to the remains of an ancient graveyard rumored to be haunted.

One night, the tower was engulfed in a fiery green aura. A few brave folks from town investigated the tower and found it abandoned. The door at the base of the cellar stairs was covered with strange symbols and wrapped in silver chains. An explorer tried to open the door, but a jolt of lightning from the door's runes nearly killed her. Shortly afterward, strange spirits and capering fey were seen atop the tower. After a few travelers went missing nearby, the town council asked a Keoish galleon to bombard the structure with catapult fire until it was battered into rubble.

Since then, the ruins have been largely forgotten. The exception is Keleddek the Unspoken, the town wizard, who used magic to open the cellar door and found that the passages led to a hidden sea cave. He uses the cave as a meeting point for smugglers. He has recruited several **goblins** to keep watch over the place, along with a trained **giant constrictor snake** he raised from a hatchling. The goblins barricaded several passages leading deeper into the dungeons after losing several of their number to **ghouls** and **giant rats** that emerged from the depths.

Keleddek is loath to tell anyone about his secret stronghold, but he can't shake the idea of following the deeper passages for the chance of unearthing Zenopus's lost secrets. If the characters earn his trust, he might take them into his confidence. The details of the deep dungeons are left to the DM's invention.

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The lands around Saltmarsh are filled with peril, since much of the region is untamed wilderness. Even though the Kingdom of Keoland has grand ambitions, its focus in the south remains on the sea. The crown does its best to make sure the roads are safe, but otherwise it is generally content to leave the monsters and vicious tribes of the wilds alone as long as they remain in their habitats.

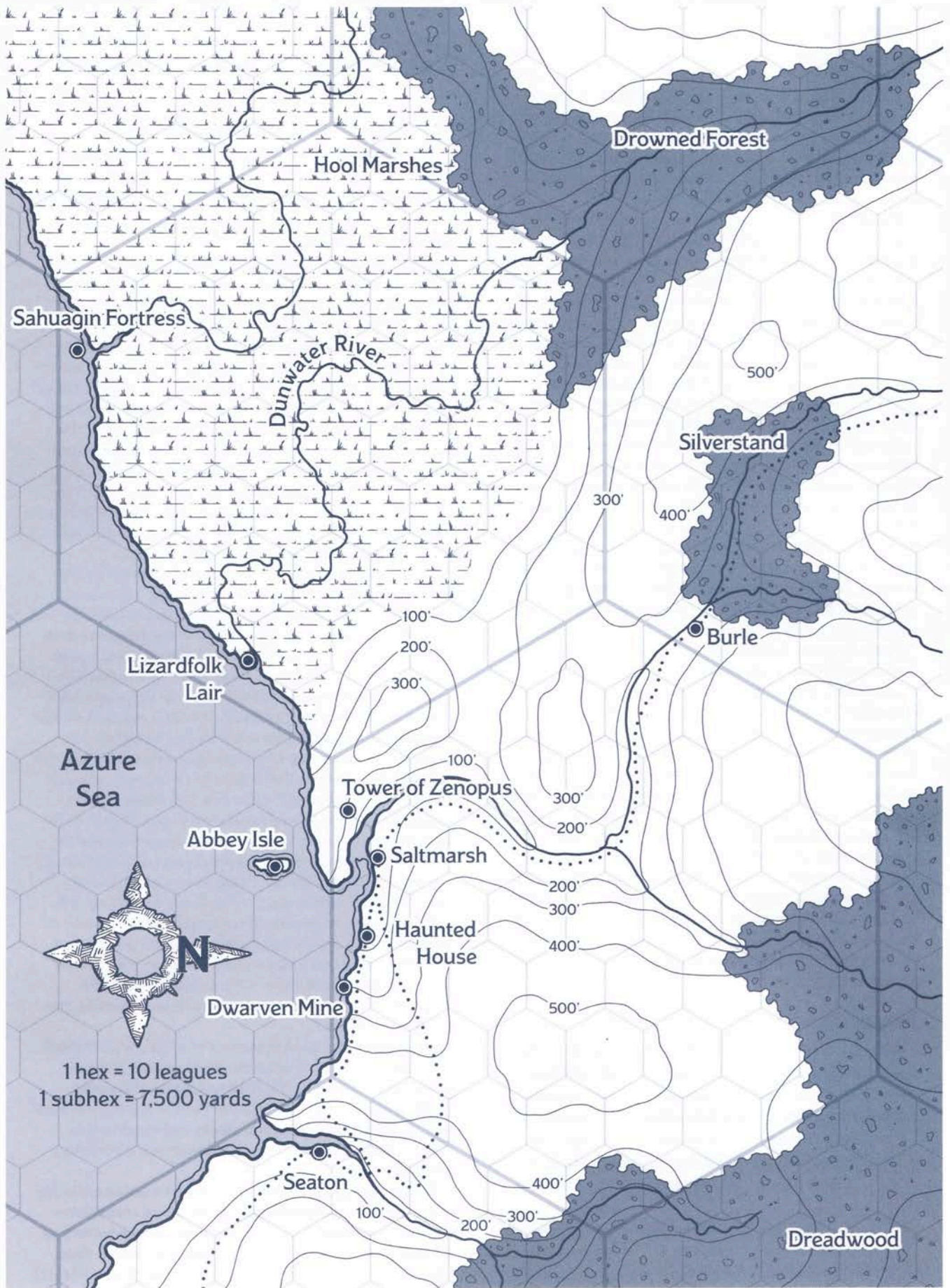
THE DREADWOOD

Long a home of horrid monsters and vicious raiders, the Dreadwood hides within its borders a multitude of terrors. Keoland maintains ranger patrols that sweep through the outer reaches of the forest periodically, while several wood elf clans dwell at its edge. The two forces are generally successful at keeping the monsters of the Dreadwood in check, but at times a threat that avoids them or overcomes them emerges to wreak havoc across the land.

The inner depths of the Dreadwood are a place where the planar bindings between Oerth and the Shadowfell are thin. Undead creatures and villainous monsters that seek to tap into the essence of the Shadowfell thrive deep in the forest. Its innermost reaches mingle with that dark realm, forming a warped mirror version of the Dreadwood that extends into that plane.

One of the Dreadwood's most powerful denizens is a truly ancient **night hag** named Granny Nightshade, who dwells in the deepest depths of the forest. She commands magic as well as a mighty wizard does and has struck bargains with several dukes of the Nine Hells. Her twisted fortress, Castle Spiral, stands at the nexus point between the Shadowfell and Oerth, and from its gates emerge **skeletons**, **zombies**, **shadows**, and other horrors to threaten the land.

Granny Nightshade counts **jackalweres** as her foremost minions, and she has also acquired the services of **goblins**, **orcs**, **hobgoblins**, **ogres**, and **trolls** over the years. **Green hags** bound to her service act as baronesses who enforce her will over their section of the forest, and an elite guard of twenty-three **oni** acts as her personal messengers and enforcers. She keeps three consorts, powerful **vampires** that struggle among themselves for her favor.



MAP 1.2: SALTMARSH AND ENVIRONS

Outer Fringe. The outermost reaches of the Dreadwood are as lightly wooded as those of any other forest and extend five to ten miles into the woods. This part of the forest is as safe as any other woodland, thanks to frequent ranger and elf patrols that keep the denizens of the deeper forest at bay if they try to encroach here. **Owlbears, wolves,** and a few **bandit** gangs that elude the notice of the patrols represent the most common threats to explorers or travelers.

Middle Reaches. Inside the outer fringe, the forest takes on an increasingly sinister character. Even on the brightest days, the thick canopy of greenery threatens to devour the sunlight. Throughout this middle area, bright light extends no more than 20 feet from any source of illumination, with the normal area of bright light beyond that range reduced to dim light and dim light turned to darkness. Those who travel without a source of light during the day find that the thick canopy casts everything in dim light, and in some areas the growth overhead is so thick that the area below is dark.

Dreaded Deeps. In the heart of the forest, natural light is unknown. Each step a traveler takes when moving through the middle reaches toward the center seems to dim the sun's light a little more, until one enters the dreaded deeps, where the forest growth is so heavy that it blots out the sky. Sources of bright light shine out to only a 10-foot radius, with any normally bright illumination beyond that turned to dim light and dim light made dark. Even darkvision suffers, since it functions here at a maximum range of 30 feet.

Dark Dreams. Taking a long rest anywhere in the Dreadwood carries with it the risk of drawing Granny Nightshade's attention. Each resting character must roll a d20. On a roll of 1, the character suffers horrible dreams that leave them marked by the forest. Creatures of the Dreadwood gain advantage on all attacks against them for the next day and know the character's name and personal details, calling to them to journey deeper into the forest and serve beside their mistress.

Random Encounters. The Dreadwood Random Encounters table provides ideas for the sort of encounters that can take place here. Check for an encounter once per day by rolling a d20. On an 18 or higher, the characters have an encounter at some point during the day or night (equal chance of each). The nature of the encounter depends on which region of the forest the characters are located in.

DREADWOOD RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Outer Fringe	Middle Reaches	Dreaded Deeps
1–3	2d6 goblins	2d6 skeletons	4d6 skeletons
4–5	2d6 elf veterans	1d10 zombies	3d10 zombies
6–7	3d6 bandits	2d6 hobgoblins	3d4 ghouls
8–9	2d4 jackalweres	1d6 bugbears	2d6 specters
10	3d6 stirges	2d4 ghouls	2d4 wights
11	1d3 vine blights	1d6 specters	1d6 vampire spawn
12	2d4 hobgoblins	1d4 green hags	1d6 wraiths
13	1d3 dire wolves	1 banshee	2d6 mummies
14	1d4 green hags	1 night hag	2d4 + 2 shadows
15	1d3 treants	1 lamia	1d3 vampires

d20	Outer Fringe	Middle Reaches	Dreaded Deeps
16	2d4 kobolds	1d3 wraiths	1d3 night hags
17	1 unicorn	1d3 gorgons	2d4 shambling mounds
18	1 troll	1d3 mummies	1d4 oni
19	2d6 hobgoblins	1d4 + 1 shadows	1 adult green dragon
20	1d3 ogres	1 vampire	1 death knight

DROWNED FOREST

Perched at the edge of the Hool Marshes, the Drowned Forest was once a verdant region. A few decades ago, the marsh began to encroach on this area. As the water level rose, the forest was transformed into a more foreboding place. **Shambling mounds** and **blights** appeared in the forest in increasing numbers while the water rotted away the trees themselves. In time, strange mushrooms and fungus sprouted throughout the woods.

Today, the Drowned Forest is perhaps the most dangerous location in the region. The trees remain standing, but they long ago lost their foliage and are little more than dead, rotting timbers projecting out of the mud. Mushrooms and other fungi sprout everywhere. A thick cloud of spores fills the air and blots out the sun, allowing the unnatural growths to flourish.

Abyssal Incursion. The Drowned Forest is the site of an ongoing Abyssal assault. Years ago, a group of cultists dedicated to Zuggtmoy shambled into the forest. They had long ago succumbed to the fungal spores that made them into thralls, and Zuggtmoy had a plan in mind for them. The cultists possessed a twisted *decanter of endless water* that tapped into the seas of the Abyss. By shattering the vessel, they created an unstable portal to that awful realm. Luckily for the folk of the region, Zuggtmoy was imprisoned in the ruins of the Temple of Elemental Evil before her plan was complete. Without their mistress's direction, the cultists fell to infighting. Today, Abyssal portals still sometimes draw demons to the world, and the fungal spores spread by the cult have transformed the forest into a deadly realm.

Fungal Spores. The air in the forest is thick with sickly-colored fungal spores that make breathing difficult at times. Characters who expend Hit Dice while in the forest regain only half their normal hit points, and after each long rest a character's maximum hit points decrease by 1 per Hit Die. This reduction ends the next time a character completes a long rest outside the Drowned Forest.

Malevolent Fungi. A variety of strange, twisted fungi grow among the rotting trees of this region. If a fight breaks out, roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, 1d6 **violet fungi** erupt from where they are hidden around the area among debris and mundane plants and mushrooms. The perpetually soggy fungi tend to attack the loudest interlopers.

Shriekers' Call. It's difficult to travel unnoticed in this place because of **shriekers** that are found throughout the forest. Rather than check for random encounters as normal, once per day have each character make their choice of a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Nature) check. If any character's check total is 20 or higher, the

group's journey passes safely. Otherwise, if more of the party's check totals are less than 10 than greater than 10, the party accidentally stumbles across and awakens a stand of shriekers. Their keening wail draws monsters to the area.

Forest Oddities. The Abyssal influence on this region is responsible for a variety of strange effects and weird events. You can use the Drowned Forest Oddities table to inject a sense of the surreal as characters travel through the region. Roll a d20 or pick from the table once per day of travel, and add new elements of your own invention if you use up the table's entries.

DROWNED FOREST ODDITIES

d10	Encounter
1	A human zombie is chained to a wooden stake driven into the ground. The remains of many other zombies lie nearby. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check reveals evidence that the zombie is being used as target practice.
2	A 20-foot-diameter hut made from animal bones and dry branches looms out of the swamp. The floor of the hut is covered with humanoid teeth.
3	Visible from half a mile away, smoke rises from a shrine built on large stones and dedicated to Semuanya, god of the lizardfolk.
4	A hunter's shack has been overtaken by slimy moss. Inside the shack, a humanoid skeleton lies on the earthen floor; its exploded chest is, mysteriously, the source of the moss.
5	A 20-foot-diameter pit is filled with fetid seawater. Zombified starfish, anemones, and other tiny, harmless aquatic beasts dwell in the stinking pond.
6	A pile of rusted farm tools sits in the center of a 20-foot-diameter clearing.
7	An abandoned carriage is home to a black pudding . A variety of fancy but acid-scorched clothing lies gummed within the cab.
8	An intact sailing ship sits in the branches of a low-growing grove of trees. The branches move in the wind and emulate the motion of the sea.
9	A 40-foot-tall sculpture of a toad made from animal waste emits a foul smell discernible from up to a mile away. Five swarms of insects gather around it.
10	A 50-foot-diameter pool of pure clean drinking water calls out to creatures who are within 100 feet of it. Those who understand at least one language hear their names being called.

Random Encounters. The Drowned Forest Random Encounters table provides ideas for the sorts of encounters that can take place here. Check for an encounter once per day by rolling a d20 (if the characters do not already attract monsters by stumbling across shriekers). On an 18 or higher, the characters have an encounter at some point during the day or night (equal chance of each); roll a d20 again and consult the table.

DROWNED FOREST RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Encounter
1–3	1d4 awakened trees
4–5	2d6 zombies
6–7	1d3 shambling mounds
8–9	2d4 myconid adults and 1 myconid sovereign
10	3d6 stirges
11	1d3 trolls
12	2d4 gnolls and 1 gnoll pack lord
13	1 water elemental
14	1 vrock
15	2d6 manes
16	2d4 dretches
17	1d8 bullywugs
18	1d4 vine blights
19	2d8 twig blights
20	2d4 needle blights

HOOL MARSHES

The treacherous Hool Marshes are notorious for pools of water that seem easy to cross but hide deep wells and layers of mud. The area is full of tall, sickly trees and great swarms of biting insects. None but the desperate venture into this place, making it the ideal hiding place for outlaws or raiders.

Stinging Insects. The vast number of mosquitoes and other pests in the marshes makes camping difficult. If the party tries to take a short or long rest, one character must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a successful check, the group gains the benefit of the rest. On a failed check, the insects prove too bothersome and the group gains no benefit from the rest.

Random Encounters. The Hool Marshes Random Encounters table provides ideas for the sort of encounters that can take place here. Check for an encounter once per day by rolling a d20. On an 18 or higher, the characters have an encounter at some point during the day or night (equal chance of each); roll a d20 again and consult the table.

HOOL MARSHES RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Result
1–3	2d10 bullywugs
4–5	2d6 bandits
6–7	2d4 vine blights with 1d6 needle blights
8–9	1d4 poisonous snakes
10	3d6 rats
11	1d6 giant toads
12	1d4 crocodiles
13	2d6 kobolds
14	2d6 lizardfolk
15	1 hydra
16	1 shambling mound
17	1 green hag and 1d3 will-o'-wisps
18	1d3 trolls
19	1d4 ochre jellies
20	1 young black dragon

DUNWATER RIVER

The Dunwater River meanders its way into the Azure Sea. It is a broad, slow-moving body of water, choked with reeds and too shallow in many spots to allow boats other than rafts to traverse it.

The Dunwater's nature makes it an ideal stalking ground for bandits. Outlaws and evil humanoids build temporary forts along the river, keeping a watch out for anyone trying to make their way along its length. Some gangs stretch chains across the water to impede the path of a boat or raft, leaving it vulnerable to an attack.

Somewhere along the river (accounts vary as to the exact location) stand the overgrown ruins of a tower that once housed an order of alchemists. The alchemists came to an explosive end when an experiment caused the tower's upper level to explode and several vats of chemicals to burst and flood the tower's basement. The resulting mixture attained a vague sentience, transforming into a great number of oozes that now plague the river. The oozes encountered in the river have swimming speeds equal to their normal speeds and can breathe both air and water.

Random Encounters. The Dunwater River Random Encounters table provides ideas for the sort of encounters that can take place here. Check for an encounter once per day by rolling a d20. On an 18 or higher, the characters have an encounter at some point during the day or night (equal chance of each); roll a d20 again and consult the table.

DUNWATER RIVER RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Result
1–3	2d6 bandits
4	1d4 gray oozes
5	1d6 ogres
6–7	1d3 crocodiles
8–10	2d6 bullywugs
11–12	1 black pudding
13	1 gelatinous cube
14–15	2d4 lizardfolk
16	1 shambling mound
17–19	1d3 ochre jellies
20	1 young black dragon

SILVERSTAND

This forest got its name from the silvery sheen that marks the leaves and bark of its trees. Long ago, elves from the Feywild crossed the planar boundaries to settle here. Today, several wood elf clans dwell in elegant, wooden structures built among the forest canopy. Not a single creature enters or leaves the forest's boundaries without the knowledge of the elves.

The elves of the Silverstand periodically send war parties to patrol the outer reaches of the Dreadwood. The Wild Flame Pact—an alliance struck between the elves, the kingdom of Keoland, and the treants of the region—commits all three groups to repelling the monsters that emerge from the forest. At rare times, the elves organize patrols into the deepest, deadliest regions of the Dreadwood in hopes of defeating threats in their nascent state.

AZURE SEA

The Azure Sea has long been a turbulent body of water in every sense. Its storms have sent countless ships to their doom, and warfare of one sort or another is conducted across its surface all the time. Pirates affiliated with the Sea Princes, along with independent marauders, prey on ships that attempt to cross the ocean. Strange monsters, including vicious dinosaurs from the Amedio Jungle in the far south, emerge from below from time to time.

Despite all these actual and potential dangers, several realms rely on the sea for waterborne trade. By tracing a route in and through the Azure Sea, merchant vessels can reach almost every important trading realm in the world of Greyhawk.

SHIPWRECKS

The waters of the Azure Sea have claimed many ships, whether through natural causes or as the result of naval combat. Some shipwrecks, such as the ones described below, are notable for the treasures they hold. Located in shallow, coastal waters, these wrecks are accessible to those who have the magic, cunning, and courage needed to loot them. (The sites are not marked on the map, giving you the flexibility to place them where you want and change any of their particulars.)

Sinker. Located in just 15 feet of water, this small fishing boat is named for the exquisite, silvered fishing pole its prior owner once possessed. The fishing pole, worth 200 gp, rests with the wreck. Unfortunately for treasure seekers, a **giant crab** makes its lair in the boat's remains.

Escape. This sailing ship was a renowned blockade runner before it was run down and destroyed by ships of the Sea Princes. Its wreckage is scattered at a depth of 30 feet. A waterproofed treasure chest inside the broken hull bears the lion rampant emblem of Keoland and holds 500 gp. Two **swarms of quippers** prowl the area in search of a meal.

Curiosity. This galleon belonged to the mage Mordenkainen, who dispatched it to a distant shore in search of treasure. The ship sank in a mysterious and especially ferocious storm. A convincingly crab-like *apparatus of Kwalish* being transported in its hold remains at the sea bottom, but a **marilith** bound to guard it remains and attempts to slay anyone other than Mordenkainen who lays a hand on it. The ship sits approximately 100 feet below the waves.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The Coast Random Encounters table and the Azure Sea Random Encounters table provide ideas for the sort of encounters that can take place along the seashore or on the surface of the water. Check for an encounter once per day by rolling a d20. On an 18 or higher, the characters have an encounter at some point during the day or night (equal chance of each); roll a d20 again and consult the appropriate table.

The Azure Sea table includes entries for several of the most notorious pirate vessels that are active in the region. These pirate ships are detailed following the table.

COAST RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Result
1–3	2d6 blood hawks
4	2d6 stirges
5	1d6 giant crabs
6–7	1d3 perytons
8–10	1d3 giant lizards
11–12	2d8 giant rats
13	2d6 sahuagin
14–15	2d4 lizardfolk
16	1d3 merrow
17–19	1 cyclops
20	1d3 chuuls

AZURE SEA RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Result
1–2	1d3 giant octopi
3–4	1 plesiosaurus
5–6	1d3 perytons
7	1d3 water elementals
8–10	2d4 reef sharks
11–12	2d8 sahuagin
13	1d4+1 merrow
14–15	2d6 pteranodons
16	1 adult bronze dragon
17	Pirate ship, <i>Gnasher</i>
18	Pirate ship, <i>Pale Prow</i>
19	Pirate ship, <i>Salted Glade</i>
20	Pirate ship, <i>Dreadnaught</i>

GNASHER

Thereax Guldeer (LE **half-red dragon veteran**) took command of the warship, *Gnasher*, several years ago when her father was slain in a duel with an admiral in the Keoland Navy. The young half-dragon is merciless, and her greed is as strong as that of any red dragon. She alone can sound the dragon's horn, a monstrous instrument mounted to the prow of her ship. When blown, it roars like a massive dragon.

Gnasher is crewed by uncouth humanoids who fear and admire Thereax, amounting to twenty-three **orcs**, forty **goblins**, four **hobgoblins**, twelve **kobolds**, and two **bugbears**. An **ogre** named Yem serves as the ship's first mate, and Yem's method of discipline tends to be fatal. A red dragon's wing emblazoned on a black background flies from the mast of *Gnasher*.

PALE PROW

An old ship whose faded hull and rat-gnawed sails belie its speed and the ferocity of its crew, *Pale Prow* is a ramshackle warship with an ornate rudder made from bone and wood. The rudder is not attached to the ship's wheel and is instead operated by a team of six **vampire spawn**, who turn it at the command of its dread captain. *Pale Prow* doesn't sail under the sun, and its appearance is always preceded by a heavy fog that appears without warning. It is said that *Pale Prow* has never been touched by a shipwright, despite its many injuries. By what means the ship is repaired, none can say.

Pale Prow is commanded by Captain Ineca Sufocan (LE male elf **vampire**), who sails from an island hidden by fog, where his harbor and mansion have fallen into disrepair. Ineca searches for a heart made of pearl, which contains drops of dried blood from his true love. This pearl heart has exchanged hands for decades, and the undead captain desires it above all things.

The remainder of the crew of *Pale Prow* is composed of undead servants, both corporeal and ghostly. Necromancers are drawn to *Pale Prow* whenever it nears land, and it is common for them to take up residence in the dark cabins below deck. A **specter** serves as lookout in the crow's nest.

A silver skull embroidered on a white field and trimmed with silver fangs flies from the tall mast of *Pale Prow*.

DREADNAUGHT

Dreadnaught is a heavy warship covered in scorched iron plates laid over coal-colored wood. No portholes or oar slits mar the perfect surface of its riveted hull; no mast can be seen to rise from its sooty deck. A cabin, reinforced with steel bars, sits toward the aft, a dull red glow pulsing from within.

Dreadnaught's captain is a mad tinkerer and wizard named Vigr Thrass (CE male human **mage**). Vigr's madness arose from his discovery of a dark tome that described rituals used to animate constructs. The wizard now sails the Azure Sea, stealing wealth and arms from merchant and navy vessels alike. Vigr wears a suit of magic plate armor, granting him supernatural strength and speed while allowing him to cast his spells unhindered. He is known to mingle in the seaside communities, where he pretends to be a kind-hearted merchant in need of a few crew members. In reality, the captain is looking for suitable slaves to clean and repair his magic automatons.

Dreadnaught's crew includes twelve automatons (**animated armor**) brought to life by Vigr's magic. Various tools, weapons, and implements (**flying swords**) flit about the ship performing tasks. A dozen humanoid slaves are kept aboard to accomplish the tasks Vigr's automatons cannot perform.

ADVENTURES IN SALTMARSH

The factions in Saltmarsh see adventurers as a useful resource for achieving their goals. Their plans can be integrated with the plots of the adventures featured in *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* and *Tales from the Yawning Portal*.

GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH

The adventures in this book are meant to interact with Saltmarsh. They were designed as stand-alone adventures but can be adapted to reflect the ambitions of the town's factions. If you want to make Saltmarsh and the machinations of the Scarlet Brotherhood the center of a campaign, use the following information to help you determine the direction of your story.

SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH

Tipped off by his Scarlet Brotherhood handlers, Anders Solmor seeks adventurers to explore the abandoned mansion outside town. He has information that slavers from the Sea Princes are using it as a base to kidnap local travelers and sell them into bondage.

In this version of the adventure, the characters find navigational charts and logs aboard the *Sea Ghost* that implicate its crew as slavers. Ned Shakeshaft is a Scarlet Brotherhood agent. He makes an attempt to foil the characters, but his true intent is to surrender and implicate Gellan Primewater as a key villain. The distraction afforded by the lizardfolk and the looming sahuagin threat gives the Scarlet Brotherhood the opportunity to bring more agents into town, posing as mercenaries brought in by Anders to protect the town. If Gellan can be removed from the council, Solmor might ask one of the characters to take his place.

DANGER AT DUNWATER

Anders Solmor hires the characters to investigate the lizardfolk lair and possibly drive away or exterminate the lizardfolk, which he sees as a dire threat after being fed tales by his Brotherhood handlers of the lizardfolk's preference for eating humans. If presented evidence of their peaceful intentions, he switches gears to pledge Saltmarsh's assistance in destroying the sahuagin.

SALVAGE OPERATION

Emperor of the Waves is a lost ship belonging to the Scarlet Brotherhood. Solmor receives information about it and hires the characters to recover the treasure aboard the ship. He is led to believe that the ship was once owned by his family, but characters who research the town's history can uncover its ties to the Sea Princes and the slave trade. If Anders is confronted with this information, he professes ignorance, and his Brotherhood handlers add the characters to their list of enemies.

ISLE OF THE ABBEY

With hostility toward the Sea Princes running high, Eliander sponsors an expedition to clear Abbey Isle and establish a base there. Its location makes it an ideal lookout point for any sea-based threats.

THE FINAL ENEMY

The three competing factions in Saltmarsh unite in an effort to defeat the sahuagin threat. Both the traditionalists and the loyalists want the town to remain safe, and the Scarlet Brotherhood deems the sea devils a threat to their plans. If the characters accomplish their mission and enable the alliance to destroy the sahuagin, they are hailed as heroes and gain tremendous political power. Any character who has not yet become associated with a faction is courted by all three.

TAMMERAUT'S FATE

Wellgar Brinehanded, a cleric of Procan, approaches the characters in hopes of recruiting them. He has long maintained ties to the inhabitants of the island hermitage in this adventure. When he loses contact with them, he asks the party to investigate.

THE STYES

This adventure can be placed in an isolated harbor city located on an island in the Azure Sea. Once a bustling port town, it fell into ruin due to the depredations of the Sea Princes. When the characters visit the port to stock up on supplies, they become involved in the intrigue.

TALES FROM THE YAWNING PORTAL

The adventures in this book consist of classic dungeons, which you can use to expand the possibilities for adventuring in the Dreadwood and the Hool Marshes.

THE SUNLESS CITADEL

This ruined castle could easily be located in the Dreadwood. It makes a good side trek for low-level characters.

THE FORGE OF FURY

This fallen dwarven citadel can be placed on an island in the Azure Sea. Reclaiming it would be a priority of the dwarves in Saltmarsh as a point of pride.

THE HIDDEN SHRINE OF TAMOACHAN

The dungeon described in this adventure could be located on a tropical continent in the Azure Sea. The magic items found here would be particularly interesting to the Scarlet Brotherhood, who might use Solmor to recruit the characters for a treasure hunt.

WHITE PLUME MOUNTAIN

The magic items claimed by Keraptis could have been stolen from the Saltmarsh area and spirited away to that mage's hidden volcanic island far to the south.

DEAD IN THAY

Consider adapting this adventure to represent a hidden stronghold of luz tucked away in the Dreadwood. Perhaps luz is seeking to extend his reach into this region and orders the wizards in his service to establish a base here. All three factions in Saltmarsh would seek to end such an incursion before it grows into a serious threat.

AGAINST THE GIANTS

As the characters gain renown, King Kimbertos Skotti hears of their prowess and recruits them to lead an expedition to defeat giants that are despoiling realms in the western mountains. If the characters succeed, they become trusted allies of the crown.

THE TOMB OF HORRORS

This deadly tomb might be hidden away in the Hool Marshes. The lure of valuable magic items can be enough to tempt many characters to enter the place, but perhaps one of the items hidden in the Tomb is essential to a local faction's plans.

SALTMARSH BACKGROUNDS

Part of the fun of a Saltmarsh campaign lies in playing characters who have ties to the town and the area around it. This section presents new backgrounds suitable for creating such characters, along with notes on adapting characters who have backgrounds drawn from the *Player's Handbook*.

This material is meant to be a tool for DMs. Once players have decided on their characters' backgrounds, review the material here and decide which additional elements of their backgrounds you want to share with them. A connection to a Saltmarsh NPC or a clue to the Scarlet Brotherhood's presence is provided for each of the backgrounds in the *Player's Handbook*. For the new backgrounds described in full here, this information is presented in the Saltmarsh Ties section of each entry.

ACOLYTE

A character with this background might be a follower of Procan or a missionary of some other god sent to establish a new temple in town. Saltmarsh has never been an overly religious place, but its prospects for growth make it an ideal target for expansion.

ACOLYTE OF PROCAN

If you are a follower of Procan, your Shelter of the Faithful feature applies to the temple of Procan in Saltmarsh. Wellgar Brinehanded is your friend and mentor. He expects you to represent the temple in all you do.

MISSIONARY

If you revere a different deity, you own a small building in Saltmarsh and have been charged by the elders of your faith with establishing a shrine here. You live in the building and have a staff of 1d4 locals who have already been recruited to your faith. Your Shelter of the Faithful feature applies to a temple located in Seaton, the provincial capital east of Saltmarsh.

CHARLATAN

As Saltmarsh grows more prosperous, it becomes a more attractive place for grifters such as yourself. If you want to do business in town, you're going to cross tracks with Winston, the eponymous owner of Winston's Store. The halfling merchant is always looking for new wares to add to his offerings. He knows the people of Saltmarsh well and gives you advice on how to walk the line between making a profit and angering the locals.

CRIMINAL

Saltmarsh might be a sleepy town, but many see it as the ideal place to enter Keoland without drawing notice. As a criminal in town, you are likely involved in smuggling and have done business with Kneb Shenker at the Empty Net. He hires crews to manage pickups on the coast for the smuggling kingpins in town.

ENTERTAINER

Bards and performers are always in demand in Saltmarsh. You can use your By Popular Demand feature

to find work at the Wicker Goat or the Snapping Line. The Wicker Goat is popular with the town guard and the dwarves who work the mine outside town, while The Snapping Line is frequented by fishers, sailors, and laborers who work the docks. Choose one of those taverns as your preferred venue. The staff, owner, and regulars there treat you as a friend.

FISHER

You have spent your life aboard fishing vessels or combing the shallows for the bounty of the ocean. Perhaps you were born into a family of fisher folk, working with your kin to feed your village. Maybe the job was a means to an end—a way out of an undesirable circumstance that forced you to take up life aboard a ship. Regardless of how you began, you soon fell in love with the sea, the art of fishing, and the promise of the eternal horizon.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Survival

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Fishing tackle, a net, a favorite fishing lure or oiled leather wading boots, a set of traveler's clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: HARVEST THE WATER

You gain advantage on ability checks made using fishing tackle. If you have access to a body of water that sustains marine life, you can maintain a moderate lifestyle while working as a fisher, and you can catch enough food to feed yourself and up to ten other people each day.

FISHING TALE

You can tell a compelling tale, whether tall or true, to impress and entertain others. Once a day, you can tell your story to willing listeners. At the DM's discretion, a number of those listeners become friendly toward you; this is not a magical effect, and continued amicability on their part depends on your actions. You can roll on the following table to help determine the theme of your tale or choose one that best fits your character. Alternatively, work with your DM to create your own fishing tale.

d8 Tale

- 1 **Lobster Wrestling.** You fought in hand-to-hand combat with an immense lobster.
- 2 **It Dragged the Boat.** You nearly caught a fish of monstrous size that pulled your boat for miles.
- 3 **Fins of Pure Gold.** You caught a sea animal whose fins were made of pure gold, but another fisher stole it.
- 4 **Ghost Fish.** You are haunted by a ghostly fish that only you can see.
- 5 **Nemesis Clam.** A large clam containing a pearl the size of your head claimed one of your fingers before jetting away; one day, you'll find that clam.
- 6 **It Swallowed the Sun.** You once saw a fish leap from the water and turn day into night.
- 7 **Dive into the Abyss.** You found yourself in an underwater cave leading to the Abyss, and your luck has been sour ever since.
- 8 **Love Story.** You fell in love with a creature of pure water, but your brief romance ended tragically.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Fishers succeed only if they spend time at their jobs. As such, most fishers have a strong work ethic, and they admire others who earn their living honestly. Fishers tend to be superstitious, forming attachments to particular fishing lures or special fishing spots. They have a connection to the bodies of water in which they fish, and they think poorly of those whose actions adversely affect their livelihood.

FISHER PERSONALITY TRAITS

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am unmoved by the wrath of nature.
- 2 My friends are my crew; we sink or float together.
- 3 I need long stretches of quiet to clear my head.
- 4 Rich folk don't know the satisfaction of hard work.
- 5 I laugh heartily, feel deeply, and fear nothing.
- 6 I work hard; nature offers no handouts.
- 7 I dislike bargaining; state your price and mean it.
- 8 Luck favors me, and I take risks others might not.

FISHER IDEALS

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Camaraderie.** Good people make even the longest voyage bearable. (Good)
- 2 **Luck.** Our luck depends on respecting its rules—now throw this salt over your shoulder. (Lawful)
- 3 **Daring.** The richest bounty goes to those who risk everything. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Plunder.** Take all that you can and leave nothing for the scavengers. (Evil)
- 5 **Balance.** Do not fish the same spot twice in a row; suppress your greed, and nature will reward you. (Neutral)
- 6 **Hard Work.** No wave can move a soul hard at work. (Any)

FISHER BONDS

d6 Bond

- 1 I lost something important in the deep sea, and I intend to find it.
- 2 Someone else's greed destroyed my livelihood, and I will be compensated.
- 3 I will fish the many famous waters of this land.
- 4 The gods saved me during a terrible storm, and I will honor their gift.
- 5 My destiny awaits me at the bottom of a particular pond in the Feywild.
- 6 I must repay my village's debt.

FISHER FLAWS

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am judgmental, especially of those I deem homebodies or otherwise lazy.
- 2 I become depressed and anxious if I'm away from the sea too long.

d6 Flaw

- 3 I have lived a hard life and find it difficult to empathize with others.
- 4 I am inclined to tell long-winded stories at inopportune times.
- 5 I work hard, but I play harder.
- 6 I am obsessed with catching an elusive aquatic beast, often to the detriment of other pursuits.

SALTMARSH TIES

Eda Oweland and her family are the informal leaders of the fishing industry in Saltmarsh. You can always count on the Owelands for minor aid and can gain access to Eda if the need is obvious and imminent.

FOLK HERO

Saltmarsh has long relied on its local people to rise up and deal with threats to the village. Only recently has the king taken more than passing notice of the area. You are beloved by the local sailors and fishers for your heroics, though the newcomers to the region (primarily members of the town guard and the dwarves working the mine) know little about you.

Create an event that prompted your rise to heroic status or use the table below to tie your background to events in Saltmarsh. Use this table in place of the Defining Event table in the *Player's Handbook*.

SALTMARSH DEFINING EVENT

d4 Defining Event

- 1 You snuck aboard a Sea Princes raiding ship and freed a number of captured fishers doomed to slavery in that realm. Anders Solmor, a prominent person in town, has been a friend ever since.
- 2 A terrible accident almost caused a fire that would have destroyed the docks, if not for your heroics. You still bear a few scars from the incident and have yet to pay for a meal or drink in town since. Eda Oweland, owner of several fishing boats in town, held a feast in your honor.
- 3 When goblins emerged from the Dreadwood to raid the area, you distracted them long enough for the militia to prepare an ambush that sent them fleeing back to the forest. The captain of the guard, Eliander Fireborn, has given you a commission as an officer of the watch.
- 4 A pirate crew crept into town one night to raid the dockside warehouses. You raised the alarm and led the defense. Gellan Primewater, an important merchant in town, owes you a big favor for saving his business.

GUILD ARTISAN

Because of its size and its focus on fishing, Saltmarsh has never had many artisans. If you have this background, you can choose one of the following options.

MARINERS' GUILD

You work with the mariners' guild, providing sailors with rope, sails, tools, and other goods. You have a workshop attached to the guildhall and can draw support from similar guilds found in ports across the world. You have done a lot of business with Eda Oweland's family and are on good terms with her.

DWARVEN ARTISANS

You arrived in town as part of a mercantile concern associated with the Copperlocks dwarves. Currently the dwarves rely on your guild to provide supplies for their work at the mine outside town. You are friends with several of the miners, have access to their work site, and are on good terms with the clan's leader, Manistrad.

HERMIT

The wilds around Saltmarsh might seem like the ideal place to find peace and quiet, though the monsters that lurk in the region can make isolation a dangerous practice. If your character has this background, the table below gives you some options for the nature of the secret that prompted you to return to civilization.

d4 Secret

- 1 You stumbled across a clandestine meeting outside town. A wealthy-looking fellow named Skerrin met with someone and discussed bringing slaves to Saltmarsh. You suspect trouble is afoot and came to town to investigate.
- 2 The anguished ghost of an elf haunts your dreams, insisting that you tear down the standing stones just outside Saltmarsh. The elf claims that dark magic is behind the bountiful fishing in the region.
- 3 You have been plagued by visions of a massive wave, carrying a swarm of toothy sharks, crashing over the land and tearing apart everything in its path. Maybe someone in town can help.
- 4 The land around town is too dangerous to remain out in it alone. The lizardfolk of the swamps were once your friends, but they disappeared not too long ago. You came to Saltmarsh out of necessity.

MARINE

You were trained for battle on sandy beaches and rocky shores. You have launched midnight raids from swift ships whose names evoke terror in the hearts of your adversaries. The water is your second home, the rain your shelter, and the crashing waves your battle cry.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Vehicles (water, land)

Equipment: A dagger that belonged to a fallen comrade, a folded flag emblazoned with the symbol of your ship or company, a set of traveler's clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: STEADY

You can move twice the normal amount of time (up to 16 hours) each day before being subject to the effect of a forced march (see "Travel Pace" in chapter 8 of the

Player's Handbook). Additionally, you can automatically find a safe route to land a boat on shore, provided such a route exists.

HARDSHIP ENDURED

Hardship in your past has forged you into an unstoppable living weapon. This hardship is essential to you and is at the heart of a personal philosophy or ethos that often guides your actions. You can roll on the following table to determine this hardship or choose one that best fits your character.

d6 Hardship

- 1 **Nearly Drowned.** You hid underwater to avoid detection by enemies and held your breath for an extremely long time. Just before you would have died, you had a revelation about your existence.
- 2 **Captured.** You spent months enduring thirst, starvation, and torture at the hands of your enemy, but you never broke.
- 3 **Sacrifice.** You enabled the escape of your fellow soldiers, but at great cost to yourself. Some of your past comrades may think you're dead.
- 4 **Juggernaut.** No reasonable explanation can explain how you survived a particular battle. Every arrow and bolt missed you. You slew scores of enemies single-handedly and led your comrades to victory.
- 5 **Stowaway.** For days, you hid in the bilge of an enemy ship, surviving on brackish water and foolhardy rats. At the right moment, you crept up to the deck and took over the ship on your own.
- 6 **Leave None Behind.** You carried an injured marine for miles to avoid capture and death.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Marines are looked up to by other soldiers and respected by their superiors. They are veteran warriors who rarely lose composure on the battlefield. Marines who leave the service tend to work as mercenaries, but their combat experience also makes them excellent adventurers. Though they are self-reliant, marines tend to operate best in groups, valuing camaraderie and the companionship of like-minded individuals.

MARINE PERSONALITY TRAITS

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I speak rarely but mean every word I say.
- 2 I laugh loudly and see the humor in stressful situations.
- 3 I prefer to solve problems without violence, but I finish fights decisively.
- 4 I enjoy being out in nature; poor weather never sours my mood.
- 5 I am dependable.
- 6 I am always working on some project or other.
- 7 I become cantankerous and quiet in the rain.
- 8 When the sea is within my sight, my mood is jovial and optimistic.

MARINE IDEALS

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Teamwork.** Success depends on cooperation and communication. (Good)
- 2 **Code.** The marines' code provides a solution for every problem, and following it is imperative. (Lawful)
- 3 **Embracing.** Life is messy. Throwing yourself into the worst of it is necessary to get the job done. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Might.** The strong train so that they might rule those who are weak. (Evil)
- 5 **Bravery.** To act when others quake in fear—this is the essence of the warrior. (Any)
- 6 **Perseverance.** No injury or obstacle can turn me from my goal. (Any)

MARINE BONDS

d6 Bond

- 1 I face danger and evil to offset an unredeemable act in my past.
- 2 I. Will. Finish. The. Job.
- 3 I must set an example of hope for those who have given up.
- 4 I'm searching for a fellow marine captured by an elusive enemy.
- 5 Fear leads to tyranny, and both must be eradicated.
- 6 My commander betrayed my unit, and I will have revenge.

MARINE FLAWS

d6 Flaw

- 1 I grow combative and unpredictable when I drink.
- 2 I find civilian life difficult and struggle to say the right thing in social situations.
- 3 My intensity can drive others away.
- 4 I hold grudges and have difficulty forgiving others.
- 5 I become irrational when innocent people are hurt.
- 6 I sometimes stay up all night listening to the ghosts of my fallen enemies.

SALTMARSH TIES

As a former member of Saltmarsh's elite marine contingent, you are friends of Tom and Will Stoutly and can turn to them for help and support. Eliander Fireborn, captain of the guard, also makes time to listen to your concerns.

NOBLE

The folk of Saltmarsh care little for nobles and their titles. Although the king technically rules the land, the south has long been left to its own devices. Are you a local noble turning to a life of adventure, or did you come here in search of fame and fortune? Regardless of your origin, your Position of Privilege feature allows you to request an audience with any official in town, including members of the town council. They typically take 1d6 + 1 days to fulfill such a request. The table below includes suggestions for how you came to arrive in Saltmarsh.

d6 Origin

- 1–2 You were sent here by King Skotti himself. You are expected to keep your ties to the crown secret, the better to gain a clear insight into the region. If folk know that you represent the king, they'll put their best faces forward and hide the issues you've been sent to uncover. Above all else, the king fears the emergence of a secretive group called the Scarlet Brotherhood. Learn about their dealings here if you can.
- 3–4 Your family owns a small manor outside town. Your siblings are in line to inherit your family's land, leaving you with few prospects. Perhaps with several successful adventures under your belt, you can achieve fame in Saltmarsh.
- 5–6 Your family lost their holdings when Keoland's enemies pushed back the realm's borders. In compensation, you have been given a writ by the crown to found a new barony. The trouble is, the land you were ceded has been swallowed by the Drowned Forest.

OUTLANDER

Outlanders are a common sight in ports such as Saltmarsh. Even a small port attracts folk from across the world, though how they end up in a place like Saltmarsh varies greatly. The table below provides some ideas for how your character came to town.

d6 Origin

- 1–2 You spent years shipwrecked on a deserted isle. Finally, you were recently picked up by a passing ship on its way to Saltmarsh. You were stranded after pirates attacked the ship you were aboard and killed everyone else. You survived by leaping overboard and swimming for hours.
- 3–4 For years your people survived in an isolated village in the Hool Marshes. Last year, lizardfolk fell upon your home. You escaped in the confusion, became lost, and ended up here. If anyone wants to go bash those scaly murderers, you're ready to leap into action.
- 5–6 You were part of a tribe in a distant land, when one day red-sailed ships appeared off shore. The sailors were friendly at first and shared their food and drink. You woke up hours later in the hold of a Sea Princes slaving ship, having been drugged into a stupor. A Keoish ship ran down and boarded the vessel, saving you from a terrible fate. You owe your life to Eliander Fireborn and the marines Tom and Will Stoutly. They were the ones who received word of the ship and dispatched a squadron to intercept it.

SAGE

Though Saltmarsh is by no means a center of learning, the lack of ongoing examination and investigation of its environs make it an ideal place to conduct research. The mystery of the Tower of Zenopus might also attract the attention of an academic. Consider the following options for your character.

HISTORICAL RESEARCHER

The graveyard keeper, Krag, and the captain of the guard, Eliander, are both experts in local history. You might have arrived in town to conduct research and have made their acquaintance. Eliander grants you access to his personal library and uses his considerable knowledge of languages to translate documents you find, while Krag works with you to catalog the library's contents.

ARCANE SEEKER

The wizard Keledok hired you to help him with a few of his projects. He was not a kind master, but he paid well enough. You helped him organize a set of ancient books, identify potions, and verify the authenticity of several alchemical recipes. He has since discharged you from his service. Keledok was always cool toward you, but he had some business dealings with the charismatic merchant Gellan Primewater. You have dined in Gellan's mansion a few times, and he has mentioned that he sometimes needs help identifying some of the odds and ends his crews bring back to port.

SAILOR

Countless sailors have walked the streets of Saltmarsh. If you select this background, decide whether you are a local who took to the seafaring life or a foreigner who arrived here from a distant port.

LOCAL SEA DOG

As a sailor native to town, you know plenty of people down by the docks. You have friends in the Oweland family who can get you access to Eda, a prominent local leader, as needed. You also have friends among the sailing crews and know the best and worst of the businesses that cater to them.

TRAVELER FROM AFAR

You are new in town and are unfamiliar to most locals. You know the ways of the sea, however, and you blend in at the docks with ease. You can mingle with foreign crews, learn news from them, and strike up easy friendships. Some of them have contacts with local smugglers, and you have heard that there are hidden sea caves outside town where the wizard Keledok trades in arcane goods.

SHIPWRIGHT

You have sailed into war on the decks of great ships, patching their hulls with soup bowls and prayers. You once helped build a fishing vessel that single-handedly saved a town from starvation. You have seen a majestic prow in your dreams that you have not been able to replicate in wood. Since childhood, you have loved the water and have been captivated by the many vessels that travel on it.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Carpenter's tools, vehicles (water)

Equipment: A set of well-loved carpenter's tools, a blank book, 1 ounce of ink, an ink pen, a set of traveler's clothes, and a leather pouch with 10 gp

FEATURE: I'LL PATCH IT!

Provided you have carpenter's tools and wood, you can perform repairs on a water vehicle. When you use this ability, you restore a number of hit points to the hull of a water vehicle equal to $5 \times$ your proficiency modifier. A vehicle cannot be patched by you in this way again until after it has been pulled ashore and fully repaired.

LIFE AT SEA

Your life at sea and in port has shaped you; you can roll on the following table to determine its impact or choose an element that best fits your character.

d6 Sea's Influence

- 1 **Grand Designs.** You are working on plans and schematics for a new, very fast ship. You must examine as many different kinds of vessels as possible to help ensure the success of your design.
- 2 **Solid and Sound.** You patched up a war galley and prevented it from sinking. The local navy regards you as a friend.
- 3 **Favored.** You insisted on thicker planking for a merchant vessel's hull, which saved it from sinking when it smashed against a reef. You have a standing invitation to visit the merchant's distant mansion.
- 4 **Master of Armaments.** You specialized in designing and mounting defenses for the navy. You easily recognize and determine the quality of such items.
- 5 **Low Places.** You have contacts in the smuggling outfits along the coast; you occasionally repair the criminals' ships in exchange for coin and favors.
- 6 **Mysteries of the Deep.** You experienced an encounter with a possibly divine being while sailing alone. Work with your DM to determine the secret about the deep waters of the sea that this entity revealed to you.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Shipwrights are resourceful carpenters and designers. They often have a dedicated spot at the local tavern, since shipwrights are invaluable to coastal communities. Some travel with naval fleets and might serve as officers if their temperament suits it. Shipwrights have an affinity for working with their hands and often perform feats of carpentry that others might deem miraculous.

SHIPWRIGHT PERSONALITY TRAITS

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I love talking and being heard more than I like to listen.
- 2 I'm extremely fond of puzzles.
- 3 I thrive under pressure.
- 4 I love sketching and designing objects, especially boats.
- 5 I'm not afraid of hard work—in fact, I prefer it.
- 6 A pipe, an ale, and the smell of the sea: paradise.
- 7 I have an endless supply of cautionary tales related to the sea.
- 8 I don't mind getting my hands dirty.

SHIPWRIGHT IDEALS

- d6 Ideal**
- 1 **Crew.** If everyone on deck pitches in, we'll never sink. (Good)
 - 2 **Careful Lines.** A ship must be balanced according to the laws of the universe. (Lawful)
 - 3 **Invention.** Make what you need out of whatever is at hand. (Chaotic)
 - 4 **Perfection.** To measure a being and find it lacking is the greatest disappointment. (Evil)
 - 5 **Reflection.** Muddied water always clears in time. (Any)
 - 6 **Hope.** The horizon at sea holds the greatest promise. (Any)

SHIPWRIGHT BONDS

- d6 Bond**
- 1 I must visit all the oceans of the world and behold the ships that sail there.
 - 2 Much of the treasure I claim will be used to enrich my community.
 - 3 I must find a kind of wood rumored to possess magical qualities.
 - 4 I repair broken things to redeem what's broken in myself.
 - 5 I will craft a boat capable of sailing through the most dangerous of storms.
 - 6 A kraken destroyed my masterpiece; its teeth shall adorn my hearth.

SHIPWRIGHT FLAWS

- d6 Flaw**
- 1 I don't know when to throw something away. You never know when it might be useful again.
 - 2 I get frustrated to the point of distraction by shoddy craftsmanship.
 - 3 Though I am an excellent crafter, my work tends to look as though it belongs on a ship.
 - 4 I am so obsessed with sketching my ideas for elaborate inventions that I sometimes forget little things like eating and sleeping.
 - 5 I'm judgmental of those who are not skilled with tools of some kind.
 - 6 I sometimes take things that don't belong to me, especially if they are very well made.

SALTMARSH TIES

Ships make Saltmarsh's economy run. You have contacts with one of the following leaders in town. Choose or roll on the table.

- d6 Contact**
- 1–2 Eda Oweland
 - 3–4 Gellan Primewater
 - 5–6 Anders Solmor

SMUGGLER

On a rickety barge, you carried a hundred longswords in fish barrels right past the dock master's oblivious lackeys. You have paddled a riverboat filled with stolen elven wine under the gaze of the moon and sold it for twice its value in the morning. In your more charitable times, you have transported innocents out of war zones or helped guide herd animals to safety on the banks of a burning river.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Deception

Tool Proficiencies: Vehicles (water)

Equipment: A fancy leather vest or a pair of leather boots, a set of common clothes, and a leather pouch with 15 gp

FEATURE: DOWN LOW

You are acquainted with a network of smugglers who are willing to help you out of tight situations. While in a particular town, city, or other similarly sized community (DM's discretion), you and your companions can stay for free in safe houses. Safe houses provide a poor lifestyle. While staying at a safe house, you can choose to keep your presence (and that of your companions) a secret.

CLAIM TO FAME

Every smuggler has that one tale that sets them apart from common criminals. By wits, sailing skill, or a silver tongue, you lived to tell the story—and you tell it often. You can roll on the following table to determine your claim or choose one that best fits your character.

d6 Accomplishment

- 1 **Spirit of the Whale.** You smuggled stolen dwarven spirits in the body of a dead whale being pulled behind a fishing boat. When you delivered the goods, the corpse suddenly exploded, sending whale meat and whiskey bottles for half a mile.
- 2 **Cart and Sword.** You drove a cart filled with stolen art through the middle of a battlefield while singing sea shanties to confuse the combatants.
- 3 **The Recruit.** You enlisted in another nation's navy for the purpose of smuggling stolen jewels to a distant port. You attained a minor rank before disappearing from the navy and making your way here.
- 4 **River of Shadows.** Your riverboat accidentally slipped through the veil into the Shadowfell for several hours. While you were there, you sold some stolen dragonborn artifacts before returning to this plane and paddling home.
- 5 **Gold-Hearted.** You agreed to transport a family escaping a war. The baby began to cry at a checkpoint, and you gave the guards all your gold to let you pass. The family never found out about this gesture.
- 6 **Playing Both Sides.** You once smuggled crates of crossbow bolts and bundles of arrows, each destined for an opposing side in a regional war, at the same time. The buyers arrived within moments of each other but did not discover your trickery.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

In general, smugglers value survival, and then profit, above other things. One could be a part of a larger organization, or might run a small smuggling vessel of their own. Smugglers live the lies they have told, and they have a natural ability to recall all the falsehoods and half-truths they have ever spouted.

SMUGGLER PERSONALITY TRAITS

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I love being on the water but hate fishing.
- 2 I think of everything in terms of monetary value.
- 3 I never stop smiling.
- 4 Nothing rattles me; I have a lie for every occasion.
- 5 I love gold but won't cheat a friend.
- 6 I enjoy doing things others believe to be impossible.
- 7 I become wistful when I see the sun rise over the ocean.
- 8 I am no common criminal; I am a mastermind.

SMUGGLER IDEALS

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Wealth.** Heaps of coins in a secure vault is all I dream of. (Any)
- 2 **Smuggler's Code.** I uphold the unwritten rules of the smugglers, who do not cheat one another or directly harm innocents. (Lawful)
- 3 **All for a Coin.** I'll do nearly anything if it means I turn a profit. (Evil)
- 4 **Peace and Prosperity.** I smuggle only to achieve a greater goal that benefits my community. (Good)
- 5 **People.** For all my many lies, I place a high value on friendship. (Any)
- 6 **Daring.** I am most happy when risking everything. (Any)

SMUGGLER BONDS

d6 Bond

- 1 My vessel was stolen from me, and I burn with the desire to recover it.
- 2 I intend to become the leader of the network of smugglers that I belong to.
- 3 I owe a debt that cannot be repaid in gold.
- 4 After one last job, I will retire from the business.
- 5 I was tricked by a fellow smuggler who stole something precious from me. I will find that thief.
- 6 I give most of my profits to a charitable cause, and I don't like to brag about it.

SMUGGLER FLAWS

d6 Flaw

- 1 Lying is reflexive, and I sometimes engage in it without realizing.
- 2 I tend to assess my relationships in terms of profit and loss.

d6 Flaw

- 3 I believe everyone has a price and am cynical toward those who present themselves as virtuous.
- 4 I struggle to trust the words of others.
- 5 Few people know the real me.
- 6 Though I act charming, I feel nothing for others and don't know what friendship is.

SALTMARSH TIES

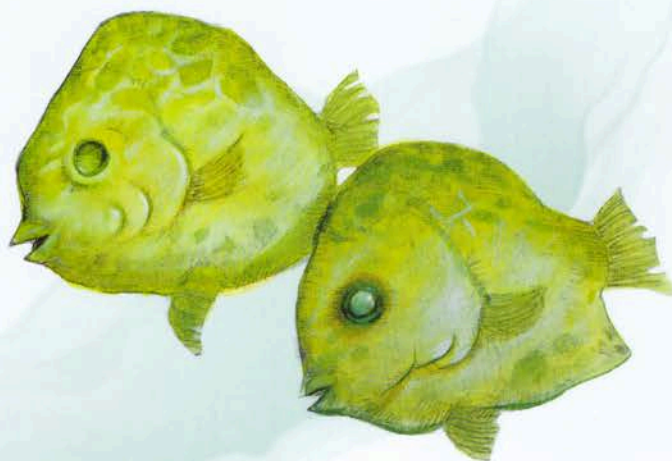
It's an open secret, at least among the old-timers in town, that Gellan Primewater runs the biggest smuggling operation in this section of the coast. You have contacts with him and his organization, enabling you to request an audience with him as necessary.

SOLDIER

Many retired soldiers of the Keoish army make their home in the southern reaches, and you are no different. You might have served some time as a member of the town guard. Regardless of whether you did so, you have several friends among their ranks. The captain of the guard, Eliander Fireborn, is friendly toward fellow veterans and is willing to make time to meet with you if the need is urgent. At your option, you can also own a small plot of land and a farm outside town.

URCHIN

At a young age, you lost one or both of your parents to a tragedy at sea. Afterward, you grew up relying on the kindness of others. More important, the years you spent living on the streets have imparted to you the skill to sneak unobtrusively, overhearing gossip and witnessing scenes that others would prefer to keep secret. Pick one member of the Saltmarsh town council. The DM will share with you either a secret about that person or give you the option to create the details of a favor you did for them that leaves them in your debt. For instance, you might have overheard thieves making plans to steal from Gellan Primewater.





CHAPTER 2: THE SINISTER SECRET OF SALTMARSH

FOUR MILES EAST OF SALTMARSH, JUST INLAND of the old coast road, stands a haunted house. Until twenty years ago, it had been the residence of an aged alchemist of sinister reputation. Even then, locals avoided the house because of its owner's mysterious activities. Now, two decades after the unexplained disappearance of its occupant, the house has taken on an even greater air of evil and mystery.

Dilapidated and long abandoned, the house presents an unwholesome appearance. Those hardy souls who have infrequently sought entry (pursuing rumors of a secret hoard of alchemical gold) all returned with naught save grim tales of decaying chambers presided over by monstrous perils. Indeed, such is the reputation of the house that the fields around it, though prime agricultural land, remain untended and rank with weeds.

This adventure is designed for four to six 1st-level characters. If the characters complete both portions, "The Haunted House" and "The Sea Ghost," they are likely to reach 3rd level.

BACKGROUND

In recent times, there have been reports of fearsome hauntings, horrible shrieks, and eerie lights emanating from the dismal place. Now, not even the bravest of the area's denizens dare to approach the house, let alone enter it. If the characters seek anyone in Saltmarsh who has been in the place, they initially find no one. Persistent questioning of the town's inhabitants makes them frightened and apprehensive but does not yield any concrete information.

If the characters pursue their questioning, they might (at your discretion) find an aged poacher who, after suitable inducement (money, ale, or both), confesses to having wandered in the back door of the house a couple of years before, hoping to acquire some food. Encouraged by the prospect of free wine in the cellar, he started to descend the stairs, heard ghostly shrieks and piercing wails, and ran, frightened out of his wits. He knows where the back door is and also noticed a nearby well. He can vaguely describe the kitchen, the scullery, and the passage that leads to them from the back door, but he knows nothing else about the layout of the place.

Furthermore, his memory of what frightened him has become exaggerated over the months, so he is likely to tell the party that a horde of ghosts came up the stairs to the scullery, or maybe it was a vampire with a swarm of rats. He discovered soon after his escapade that the telling of his tale, in ever more lurid detail, was an easy means of obtaining free ale foisted on him by appreciative listeners. Recently, however, none have asked him to tell the tale, so once his tongue is loosened, he is eager to restore some of his lost prestige. Apart from alerting adventurers to sinister and grave dangers of his own invention and telling them a little about the layout of the house, he provides no accurate or useful information.

THE SECRET

The secret of the haunted house is that it is not, in fact, haunted. It is the shore base for a band of smugglers led by a wizard named Sanbalet. The eerie lights seen at night by onlookers are the smugglers' signals to a ship out at sea. The unearthly shrieks and other sounds are caused by *magic mouth* spells strategically placed in the building. The smugglers, during their three years of successful operation, have through these tactics frightened away all local attempts at investigating their hideout.

It is paramount that the characters are given no obvious clues that would lead them to believe the house is not haunted; they must deduce the truth for themselves or simply stumble upon it.

THE SEA GHOST

A contingent of smugglers glides through the waters near Saltmarsh on their ship, the *Sea Ghost*. The ship is away from the house when the characters explore it, though evidence of its moorings can be discovered in the secret caverns below. The ship comes into play in the second part of this adventure.

SANBALET'S GANG

The smugglers are familiar with the house, caverns, and surrounding area, except for the secret lab at area 24. If they become aware of the characters' intrusion, they cooperate to locate and destroy the invaders.

The following members of the gang are currently in the house, skulking about in the cellar and the adjoining caverns: **Sanbalet** (see appendix C), two **hobgoblins**, four **bandits**, and four **scouts**. All the bandits and scouts are humans of neutral evil alignment. Before being alerted to the characters' incursion the smugglers are dispersed in the cellar and caverns beneath the house (as indicated in the area descriptions).

Smugglers on Alert. In the likely event that the characters betray their presence (likely by triggering one of the *magic mouth* spells in areas 4 and 10), the smugglers become aware of the party before encountering them. Sanbalet and three of his gang (a hobgoblin, a bandit, and a scout) immediately retreat to areas 27 and 28 to protect the smuggled goods.

The others break into two groups. Two bandits and a scout wait in area 21 to ambush intruders. The second hobgoblin keeps watch at area 30, but runs to reinforce Sanbalet in area 27 if a fight breaks out there. The remaining members of the gang, two scouts and a bandit, try to ambush intruders. They make Dexterity (Stealth) checks to close in on the party. If two of them are slain, the survivor tries to flee back to area 21.

PORTENTS OF WAR

Sanbalet and his smugglers have little interest in the larger goings-on of the region. They most highly value gold, drink, and the freedom that comes with pursuing a

life of crime. They have no concern for the implications of their actions, which could be a precursor to war.

The smugglers currently run weapons for a clan of lizardfolk living near Saltmarsh whose queen, Othokent, is preparing her clan for battle against a terrible enemy: the sahuagin.

The peaceful town of Saltmarsh knows nothing of the coming war, or the fact that a sahuagin invasion threatens them as much as the lizardfolk do.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure is divided into two parts, “The Haunted House” and “The Sea Ghost.”

“The Haunted House” likely plays out in the following sequence.

The characters arrive in the town of Saltmarsh and begin to hear tales of the haunted house, after which they might seek more information about the house and its current state. If you decide so, they can speak to the poacher mentioned in the “Background” section.

The characters set out to explore the house, where they meet its crawling and hissing residents. Awaiting them is Ned, a deceptive NPC who tries to prevent the characters from uncovering the smuggling operation. Whether the characters discover the smugglers or the smugglers initiate an attack on the party, a confrontation with the gang is inevitable, especially if the characters are thorough in their exploration. Ned reveals his true colors at an opportune moment.

The caverns and contraband below the house wait to be discovered. Access to the sea suggests the use of a large ship, though such a vessel is not to be found. The first part of the adventure concludes when the characters return to Saltmarsh with the truth and are rewarded for their work.

The town elders offer to hire the party to board and commandeer the smugglers’ ship when it returns to its secret port. That event sets in motion “The Sea Ghost,” which likely unfolds in the following sequence.

The characters discover a document that explains the signaling system used by the smugglers to indicate the ship has arrived; by deciphering and sending the proper return signal, they can put the crew at ease. By force or deception, the party boards the *Sea Ghost* and attempts to seize control. During this raid, the party encounters a

captured sea elf named Oceanus and a trio of lizardfolk warriors. The adventure concludes with signs that the lizardfolk are preparing for a raid, presumably on the town of Saltmarsh—though the truth, as outlined in the “Portents of War” section, is far more ominous.

A MAN ON THE INSIDE

A merchant in Saltmarsh who profits from the illegal activities of Sanbalet has taken desperate action to ensure that the smuggling operation continues. The merchant sent a local thug, Ned Shakeshaft, to the house to await the characters in a remote bedroom on the first floor.

Ned pretends to have been knocked out, gagged, bound, and left to die by unseen attackers. After being “rescued” by the characters, he aims to sow dissent, cause accidents, and otherwise make trouble as they explore the house.

More information on Ned and how to incorporate him into the adventure can be found in area 15.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

For two decades, the haunted house near Saltmarsh has sat, its ill reputation festering. Characters who have backgrounds related to Saltmarsh have heard of the house. Use any of the following hooks to capture the attention of the players.

HIDDEN HOARD

For years, the tales of the haunted house near Saltmarsh have circulated through the region. Though most of the stories are rightfully taken as warnings to avoid the place, rumors persist of a great treasure hidden in its walls. What relics and other valuables did that old alchemist keep in the creaking floorboards and cracked plaster walls of his home?

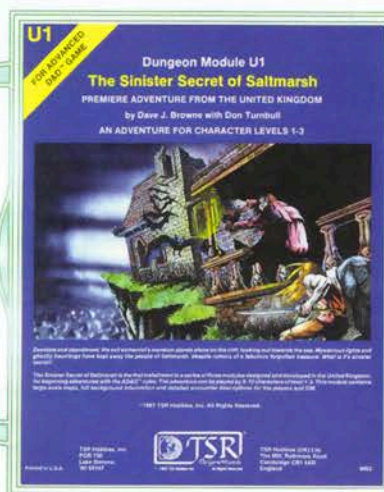
KNOWLEDGE UNLIMITED

The alchemist lived a hermit’s life, with few visitors and fewer friends. But a young messenger once emerged from the house with a story of a grand library containing countless tomes. Retellings of the messenger’s tale have varied over the years, with the most popular versions suggesting that the alchemist had discovered a method of transforming base metals into gold.

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL

Produced by the UK branch of TSR in 1981, *Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* was designed by Dave J. Brown and Don Turnbull. It was a revelation at the time, marking the first appearance in a D&D adventure of a haunted house and a raid on a sailing ship. It also set the tone

for TSR UK’s subsequent output, which often featured strong, central narratives that challenged players to take a creative approach to problem solving. They usually included multiple, smaller locations to explore, lending a sense of variety to a single adventure.



PLACING THE ADVENTURE

The town of Saltmarsh is a small, respectable fishing town located in the Greyhawk campaign setting, in the southernmost part of Keoland. It is situated some twenty miles from two larger towns: Burle, to the northwest, and Seaton, along the coast to the east.

Here are suggestions for where you can place this adventure in other campaign settings.

Eberron. Even to the pioneering folk of Q'barra, Saltmarsh is a frontier town. The lean-tos and shanties sprawl in the steaming eastern deltas of the Basura Swamp, and their inhabitants do their best to keep out of the affairs of the lizardfolk in the interior. An elf illusionist bearing the Mark of House Phiarlan leads the smugglers and seems bent on stirring up trouble.

Forgotten Realms. Midway between Waterdeep and Neverwinter, the town of Saltmarsh and its hardy inhabitants endure both winter storms and the Mere of Dead Men to the south. Because of the politics churning in Thornhold on the far side of the marsh, help is often slow to come, and so the townsfolk have become quite self-reliant. The smugglers could be from Luskan, and their selling weapons to lizardfolk could be connected to deeper goals than simply lining their pockets.

Mystara. Saltmarsh stands on the border between the Grand Duchy of Karameikos and the Five Shires, just inside the edge of the Blight Marsh. The smugglers who use the haunted house as their base might be hin pirates, or at the very least count some halflings among the crew, keen to avoid the authorities at Rollstone Keep up the coast.

IT MUST BE CLEANSED

It cannot stand! An unholy place so close to civilization. These accounts of wailing and flashing lights disturb the mind and heart. Let any abandoned edifice rot in obscurity so long as the dead leave it alone. But how can one let stand a harbor for evil? The house must be cleansed of its otherworldly occupants.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

After gleaning what “facts” they can from the townsfolk and equipping themselves at the local shops, the characters set out to explore the fabled haunted house.

TRAVELING TO THE HOUSE

The road to the house winds through the rocky coastal terrain, often offering a view of the sea below. Low clouds press upon you; occasional patches of sunlight appear out over the water. A stiff wind blows in off the waves, carrying the briny stink of churning salt water.

The house is located four miles up the coast from Saltmarsh and is accessible by an old road. Curious townsfolk might follow the party for part of their journey. These escorts engage the characters in conversation, ask about their intentions, and repeat the same rumors and stories heard in town. As soon as the house comes into view, the townsfolk grow grim-faced and retreat toward Saltmarsh.

HOUSE EXTERIOR

The decrepit house sits on the highest ground in the area. Around it, a stone wall has crumbled in many places, exposing the interior grounds. An ornate metal gate lies open at the end of the road, swaying slightly in the wind. Wild flora grows throughout the inner yard, but all the years cannot hide the evidence of a well-tended garden that once sat here. Near the house, the rotted wooden roof of a water well rises out of the tall grass.

The house is 35 feet tall from ground level to roof peak; the roof is gabled and has several holes where the slate shingles are missing.

THE WALL

The stone wall is 6 feet tall and more or less encloses the garden. It has partially collapsed in several places, so access to any part of the garden is simple even if characters decide not to enter through the main gate.

THE GARDEN

The alchemist kept a vegetable garden around the house, which was used as a retreat from the stress of work and as a supply of fresh food. Now, a few broken gardening tools and a tangle of weeds are all that remain. A single rosebush near the gate has overgrown the wall and choked out most of the other plants. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check discovers that something large has made a burrow under the rosebush.

A family of four **giant weasels** resides in the thorny mass, having dug out a home under the wall. The weasels are highly aggressive and try to ambush the characters as they investigate the garden. Given the opportunity, they'll try to grapple the smallest character and drag them toward their den.

THE WELL

A character who makes a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check while viewing the well from a distance notices a cluster of small mammal remains in the tall grass around the well (primarily mice, squirrels, and the like).

The well shaft, which descends 20 feet, still contains clean water. Fed by an aquifer, the well offers no access to the house nor the caverns below it. If the characters illuminate the shaft while looking down, they see the glint of coins through the shallow water at the bottom. A Medium or smaller creature can climb down the well, using the rocky walls as natural handholds.

Two **giant poisonous snakes** make their homes in the crumbled and crevice-ridden walls of the well shaft. They emerge and strike at anything that descends into the well. They also emerge if the characters linger near the well while investigating it.

Treasure. There are 14 sp to be had at the bottom of the well.

HOUSE INTERIOR

The house's interior is dilapidated and damp, with patches of harmless mold everywhere. The woodwork is generally rotten, cobwebs and dust are thick, and rubbish is scattered everywhere. Plaster fallen from the walls and ceiling lies strewn across the floor, along with the shattered remains of vandalized furniture. Fireplaces (with chimneys too narrow to climb) show no signs of recent use.

All house corridors are 5 feet wide and 10 feet high; all ceilings are 10 feet high except for the attic level where, because of the sloping roof, the height ranges from 1 foot at the sides to 15 feet in the center.

All doors are 5 feet wide and 7 feet high, of normal wood construction; all are closed but unlocked (with the exception of area 15) and easy to open. Most of the window panes are broken, and all are easy to open.

Unless otherwise noted, illumination is bright during the day on the ground floor and the floor above it. In the attic, due to various holes in the roof, the light is dim but adequate, leaving plenty of dark shadows in corners.

GROUND FLOOR

The following locations are identified on map 2.1.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

The front door opens onto a musty, dirty entrance hall. To your left, a corridor leads into the west wing of the house. The walls are bare and bits of smashed furniture lie upon the floor. Ahead of you, another corridor leads toward the rear of the house.

A staircase on the eastern wall climbs to the next story, reaching it at a balcony that overlooks the entrance hall along its north and west sides; the stairs appear safe to climb, though the balcony rail is broken in several places. Under the stairs at the north end of the hall, a third corridor leads east.

The stairs show considerable wear and creak ominously when tread upon but remain strong enough to support anyone climbing to the second floor.

A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check finds two sets of recently made humanoid tracks. One set of tracks travels from the entryway toward area 9. The second leads away from the foot of the stairs and along the western corridor toward area 4.

Balcony. About 10 feet west of the top of the stairs, a section of the balcony (the shaded area on the map) collapses under the weight of any creature attempting to cross it. The creature that causes the floor to collapse must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall 10 feet to the floor below. The collapsed section of the balcony leaves a 7-foot-wide gap that must be crossed to reach the rest of the first floor.

2. LIBRARY

This room was once a library, with bookshelves around the walls. Most of the shelves are broken, and in many places they have come away from the wall. The few shelves still intact are empty, but a pile of books rests in the southwest corner.

The fourteen books in the heap untidily thrown into the corner are covered with cobwebs, vermin droppings, and harmless mold. All are partially ruined but are still legible. Most of the books are dull (histories, collections of romantic poems, and so forth), but three are quite noteworthy. These three books bear clear titles on their spines:

The Magical Properties of Gemstones by the archmage Tenser

The Magical Properties of Herbs and Flowers by the archmage Tenser

The Metaphysics of Mathematics by the mage Nystul

Inside the third volume lies a piece of parchment torn from a larger sheet, containing a few lines of handwritten text in the Common tongue. Dampness has spoiled it so that only two words are legible: "beyond skeletons."

The books can be sold for 7 gp each, though finding a buyer for such tomes might require the party to look beyond Saltmarsh.

3. STUDY

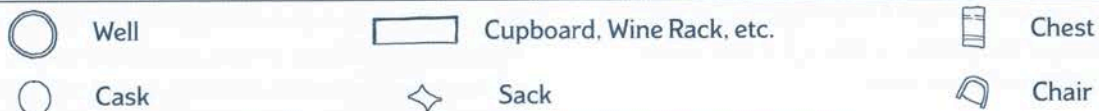
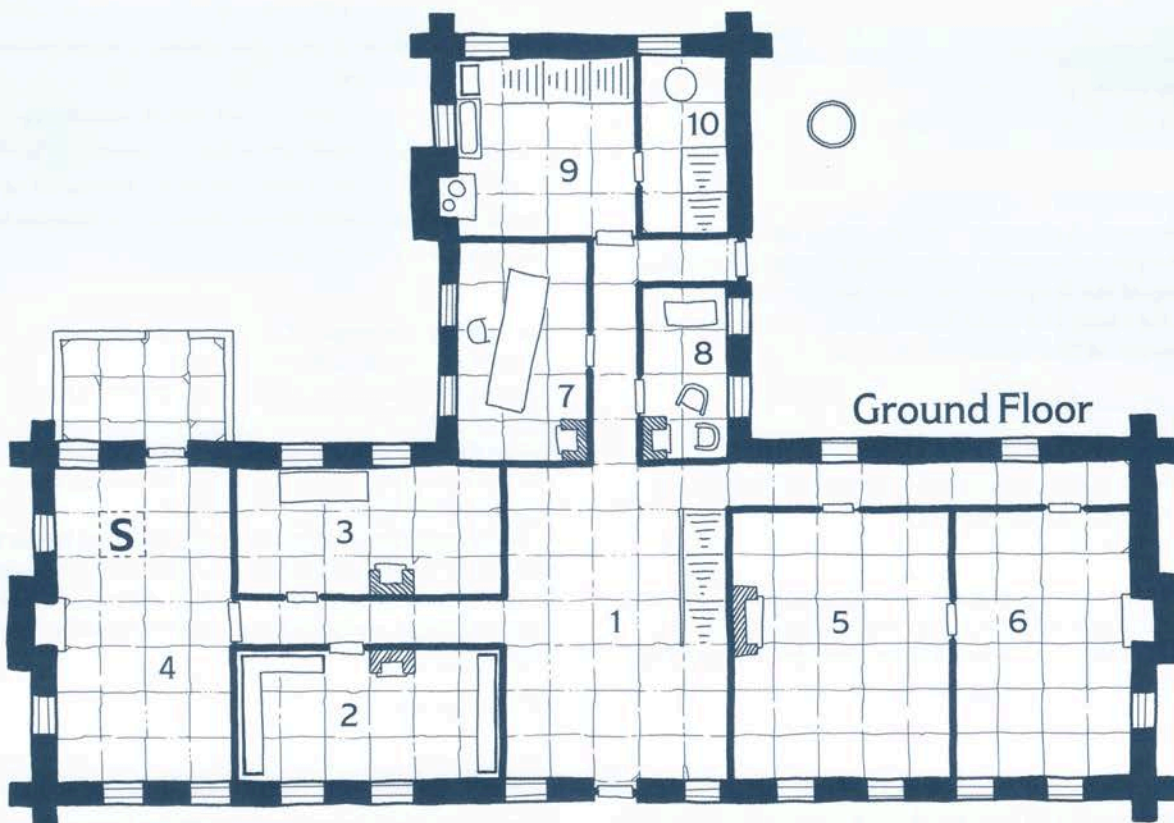
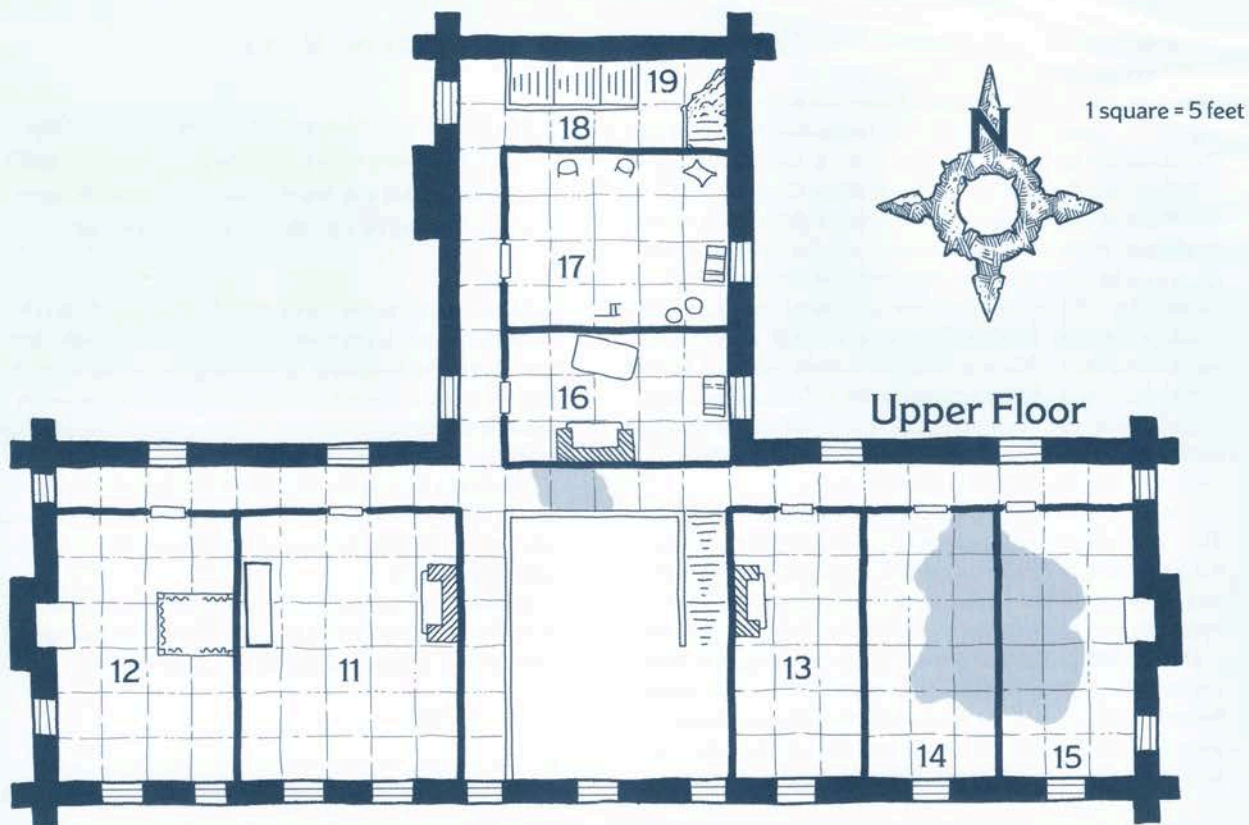
This room was once a writing room or study. Against the wall under the windows sits a large wooden writing desk, partially broken and riddled with damp rot. There are three drawers in each side of the desk and a large central drawer; the latter is closed, but the others are all open—and two of them have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

The central drawer is locked and can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The drawer contains nothing but old, valueless documents, all written in Common—receipts for purchases of various chemicals and laboratory equipment. A character who makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers a small secret compartment.

Treasure. Inside the secret compartment, wrapped in cloth, is a glass vial containing two doses of *potion of healing*.

4. LIVING AREA

A door in the north wall leads onto a small patio, the paving cracked and overrun with weeds. Other than a pile of refuse in the southeast corner, the room is bare.



MAP 2.1: HAUNTED HOUSE

A secret trapdoor in the northern half of the room leads to the cellar (area 21). One of the sets of tracks found in area 1 leads to the trapdoor; if the characters are following those tracks, the trapdoor is immediately noticeable (because the tracks go right up to it). If the characters didn't notice the tracks in area 1, allow them a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check to pick up the trail in this room. If all else fails, the trapdoor can be spotted by a character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Magic Mouth. Sanbalet has cast a *magic mouth* spell on the trapdoor. When a creature comes within 5 feet of it, the spell is triggered, causing the following message to be spoken in a loud and malevolent voice: "Welcome, fools—welcome to your deaths!" Booming, fiendish laughter follows the spoken message.

Each creature that hears the message must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature has disadvantage on all ability checks for 1 hour unless it is immune to the frightened condition. The creature can repeat the saving throw every 15 minutes.

Development. At your discretion, the smuggler in the cellar below the trapdoor might notice the *magic mouth* being triggered. In this case, the smugglers become aware of the characters and investigate or prepare themselves for the intruders; see "The Smugglers" above.

5. LIVING AREA

The only thing of note in the room is a clump of tiny red mushrooms growing around a fireplace in a semicircular formation. Otherwise, the room is bare.

The mushrooms are harmless.

Treasure. A character who searches the chimney of the fireplace discovers a loose stone about 3 feet above the top of the fireplace that conceals a small cavity. Inside the cavity is a small leather pouch containing two cut pieces of blue quartz (10 gp each).

6. LIVING AREA

Aside from a large amount of plaster that has fallen from the ceiling, this room is bare.

The floor in the room above (see area 14) is considerably weaker than elsewhere, a fact visible to any who look up and make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. There is nothing else of note here.

7. DINING ROOM

At one time a long table stood in the center of this room; now it lies broken on the floor. A broken chair sits against the wall between the windows, and there is a heap of broken dishes in the northwest corner.

There is nothing else of note here.

8. WITHDRAWING ROOM

Two stuffed armchairs stand near the fireplace of this room. The covers of both have been torn and the stuffing has been pulled out, but the wooden frames are intact. A broken table lies on the floor near the north wall.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check finds a stone out of place on the chimney above the fireplace. Removing the stone reveals a hidden compartment. Additionally, characters who approach the fireplace notice a collection of mouse bones spilling out from the hearth.

A **swarm of insects (spiders)** lurks in the crevices of the fireplace and chimney. The spiders flood forth with obvious irritation if any creatures move to within 5 feet of the fireplace.

Treasure. The hidden compartment contains a wooden box. Inside the box are 30 cp and two small pouches of alchemical powders (5 gp each).

9. KITCHEN

This kitchen is dirty and damp, with patches of gray mold and cobwebs on the floor, walls, and ceiling. In the southwest corner is some iron cooking equipment with a chimney above. Next to it, under the window, is a cracked and discolored stone sink.

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

Against the far wall, a flight of wooden stairs leads upward from west to east; the woodwork of the staircase is decayed, and a few of the treads are missing.

The cupboard is empty. The stairs lead to area 18; they are in poor condition but still usable.

If the characters found the tracks in area 1 that lead here, they discover that the tracks continue into area 10. If they failed to find the tracks earlier, they can pick up the trail here with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check.

Four **giant centipedes** nest under the floor below the sink. They come and go through a hole in the foundation beneath the kitchen. The centipedes skitter up the drain, enter the room, and attack anyone investigating the cupboard or the sink.

10. SCULLERY

This room displays the effects of damp and decay more than most. Mold grows in patches on the floor, walls, and ceiling. A large copper cask, split, discolored and empty, stands under the window, with a small heap of crockery shards on the floor beside it. Stairs lead down into what is presumably a cellar.

Anyone who inspects the cask can tell from the staining on its interior that it was used to boil water.

If the characters found the tracks in area 9 that lead here, they discover that they descend the stairs into area 20 below. If they failed to find the tracks earlier, they can pick up the trail here with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check.

Magic Mouth. Sanbalet has cast a *magic mouth* spell on the stairs, which is triggered when anyone treads on the top step. If the spell is set off, hideous screams—as if of a soul in torment—rise from the cellar below.

Each creature that hears the screams must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature has disadvantage on all ability checks for 1 hour unless it is immune to the frightened condition. The creature can repeat the saving throw every 15 minutes.

UPPER FLOOR

The following locations are identified on map 2.1. Review the information regarding the balcony in area 1 before the characters ascend to this floor.

11. MOLDERING BEDROOM

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

The wardrobe contains two items: a pair of old, cracked leather boots with no value or special properties, and a ragged, stained cloak hanging on a peg. The cloak is tooled with a design of coiling ivy leaves and appears harmless but the inner folds are covered in yellow mold (see “Dungeon Hazards” in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

12. DECREPIT BEDROOM

Rubbish is scattered around what was once a fine guest bedroom; there is evidence of rodent infestation, and webs hang in the corners. A four-poster bed stands against the wall opposite the fireplace. Its woodwork is worm-ridden, and the curtains that once screened the bed are torn and stained. There is no bed linen, but the bed is mostly intact.

While some smugglers have slipped away to nap here in recent months, there is nothing of particular note here.

13. GUEST BEDROOM

This bedroom has no furniture, but rubbish is scattered everywhere, and webs cover the walls and ceiling. From the doorway, you can see a glint of light in the fireplace from a small, highly reflective object.

Two **swarms of insects (spiders)** infest this room. One swarm descends on anyone who approaches the fireplace, and the other descends from the webs above the door a moment later. Both wash down the walls with the muffled clatter of thousands of tiny legs.

Fireplace. The glint inside the fireplace comes from a small crystal bauble (5 sp) that once belonged to the alchemist. The flat-bottomed crystal orb is pleasant to look at and tactilely satisfying to hold, but ultimately neither particularly valuable nor useful. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check while examining the bauble realizes it might be a part of a set of similar crystals used as counterweights in alchemical work.

14. CRUMBLING BEDROOM

This room appears to be another dirty, decaying bedroom without furniture. Even viewed from the doorway, it's evident that the floor in here does not look safe; some of the floorboards are missing, and others are partially dislodged.

Anyone who enters the room with reasonable care can avoid moving into the part of the floor that is sagging and damaged, looking perhaps not strong enough to support significant weight. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check enables a character to detect recent tracks that lead from the door to the window, and back again, along the west edge of the room.

Clues at the Window. A combination of the position of the house and the topography of the cliff results in this room providing the best view of the sea from any part of the house, and it is from here that the smugglers signal to their colleagues out at sea. A character who carefully examines the window area and makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers small clues to this fact: fresh scratches on the sill where the signaling lantern has been placed, scuffing of the floor dust immediately near the window, and so forth. These signs cannot be seen from the door; they require up-close observation to be discovered.

Falling Through the Floor. The tracks left on the floor by the smugglers represent the only safe places to walk in the room. Each time a Medium or larger creature moves off this safe trail into the shaded area on the map, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall 10 feet through the floor, landing in area 6.

15. NED'S BEDROOM

The door to this room is locked. The key to the room has been left rather obviously in the hallway outside the room and can be spotted by someone who makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. Alternatively, the door can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Any character who opens the lock discovers that it was recently oiled.

Once the door is opened, read the following text:

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

As with area 14, anyone who enters the room with reasonable care can avoid moving into the part of the floor that is sagging and damaged, looking perhaps not strong enough to support significant weight.

Falling Through the Floor. Each time a Medium or larger creature moves into the shaded area on the map, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall 10 feet through the floor, landing in area 6.

Ned, Bound and Gagged. The man on the floor is Ned Shakeshaft (**spy**) (see “A Man on the Inside” in the Adventure Summary and the “Snake in the Grass” sidebar), who does a convincing job of wanting to be rescued. He has a pretty good idea where his clothes are, and will ask to be escorted to area 17 to retrieve them. Ned has no other possessions, except for a single dose of basic poison (see chapter 5 of the *Player’s Handbook*) that he has concealed in the waistband of his undergarments. He can apply it to any slashing or piercing weapon as a bonus action.

16. ALCHEMIST’S BEDROOM

Damp mold covers portions of the walls and ceiling in this large bedroom, and rubbish is strewn liberally around the floor. In the center is a single mattress that has been badly torn, from which stuffing protrudes. Under the window sits a large wooden chest, the timbers split and its lid closed.

The chest is not locked and opens easily. Inside is a pile of moldy, ragged clothing in styles that were never in fashion—nothing of value—and a bundle of documents. These pages are rotted and stained, their meaning lost long ago.

17. BOX ROOM

This room appears to have been used for storage. A large, ill-made oak chest stands under the window, its lid closed. Elsewhere in the room lie three broken wooden chairs, two splintered wooden buckets, and a mildewed sack. Just inside the door is a heap of clothing; these garments have collected little dust, appearing to have been placed here only recently.

The chest is empty and the sack contains drab, rotted clothing—laundry soiled long ago by the house’s former owner. Those who untangle the balled contents find an inordinate number of wool socks.

The clothes on the floor belong to Ned Shakeshaft, the occupant of area 15.

SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Ned tells the characters he is a traveler from Seaton who entered the house the previous night to find a place to sleep during his journey to Saltmarsh where he hoped to find work as an adventurer. He entered through the back door and had only reached the kitchen when he was attacked from behind and knocked unconscious. He awoke some hours ago—bound, gagged, and stripped of his possessions—in this room. He did not see his attackers nor has he heard any sounds in the house. Now he would like to be released and to join the characters in their mission.

Neither Ned nor his merchant mentor are fools, and they have given some thought to preparing this story—it is not possible for the characters to discern Ned’s true motives. Indeed, to add verisimilitude to the story, Ned has a lump on the back of his head (inflicted, with sadistic delight, by the merchant before Ned left his company).

What Ned Wants. Ned wants to manipulate the characters into abandoning their mission. He tries to achieve this by playing up the dangers of the place and causing accidents as they explore. The closer the characters get to discovering the truth about the smugglers, the more desperate he becomes. When it becomes clear he can’t warn the characters off, he’ll try to ambush them with a poisoned weapon during a fight against other creatures.

18. LANDING

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

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

The stairs into the attic are not usable, and the characters must find another way to ascend into the topmost level of the house.

19. ATTIC

A gaping hole in the floor shows where the top of the staircase used to lead before it collapsed. There are grimy cobwebs on the walls and ceiling, and the floor is covered with broken furniture and other rubbish.

Several holes in the roof allow dim light to enter this large room that extends the length of the house. Two large sacks lie heaped in the northwest corner.

The sacks contain old clothing and rags.

A group of six **stirges** nests in the rafters of the attic. They descend on the party at an opportune moment, revealing themselves after the characters enter the attic.

Treasure. A character who sifts through the rubbish discovers a porcelain doll costumed to look like a sailor. The doll’s eyes are made from two pieces of jade worth 10 gp each.

THE CELLAR

The following locations are identified on map 2.2.

20. WINE CELLAR

Shoulder-height wooden bottle racks line the north and west walls here. There appear to be no intact bottles left in the racks and shattered bottles cover the floor.

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

In the center of the room lies a human corpse clad in plate mail; a longsword lies by the corpse's right side, and a large shield covers its legs.

If the characters are following the tracks that lead from area 1, through area 10, and down the stairs into this room, they discover that the tracks continue to the south wall of this chamber and stop abruptly at the secret door. If they failed to find the tracks earlier, they can pick up the trail here with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check.

The secret door can be discovered by someone who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. This check is made with advantage if the characters followed the tracks that lead to the door.

Bottle Racks. The smugglers emptied the wine cellar a long time ago, though one full bottle remains, having rolled under a rack after it was jostled loose. Someone who examines the floor around the racks and succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check can spot the bottle, its label bearing the image of a jauntily dressed unicorn. The contents are drinkable, and a character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check ascertains that it is a rare vintage worth 50 gp to the proper buyer. Anyone who samples the wine, though, finds it cloyingly sweet, the vintage's value clearly owing more to rarity than actual quality.

Corpse. The remains are those of an adventurer who set out to explore the house several weeks ago. The smugglers slew the heavily armored intruder and left the remains in place to scare off other visitors.

The corpse is infested with two **swarms of rot grubs** (see appendix C). Any creature that touches the body comes under attack by the swarms as they spill out of gaps in the armor. At a glance, the grubs' appearance looks unnervingly similar to curdled milk being squeezed from a bladder.

Treasure. The plate mail is banged up—the result of brutal clubbing and kicking—but serviceable and fits a Medium creature. The longsword and the shield are in good condition. An explorer's pack, lacking the rations and water, is under the corpse.

Development. The smuggler in area 21 is likely to hear the characters if they engage in combat in this area or are otherwise noisy. Unless the characters are purposefully quiet and stealthy, the single smuggler beyond the northern secret door hears them and retreats through the southern secret door, which connects area 21 with the caverns.

21. CELLAR

If the party makes a lot of noise while exploring area 20, the smuggler here has already vanished through the secret door.

This torchlit chamber was once a large cellar, but it has since been converted into living quarters. Ten crude beds stand along the south wall, each with a wooden locker at its foot.

A long wooden trestle table ringed by rickety stools dominates the center of the room. Metal cutlery, cups, and dirty plates sit atop the table.

A cookstove is installed near the table, and evidence of recently cooked meals sits in pots atop it. A large ham hangs from a loop of twine near the stove.

A sturdy set of stairs leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling above. There are two wooden doors in the east side of the room.

If the characters avoided making undue noise in area 20, a single smuggler (**bandit**) is scrubbing pots in a washbasin near the stove. He tries to flee through the secret door as soon as the characters appear. Otherwise, if the smugglers have been alerted to the party's presence, two **bandits** and a **scout** are here and ready to fight.

Without a smuggler to point the way, someone must make a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find the secret door. The door is hidden behind some shelves that slide away to reveal the opening, which leads to the caverns.

When the party approaches the doors in the east end of the room, read:

The door to your left appears normal, but the one ahead has a wooden bar across it, held in brackets on the frame and the door itself. The word "DANGER" is scrawled on that door in the Common tongue using chalk.

The left door, leading to area 22, is unlocked.

Barred Door. Characters who examine the bar can see that it is damaged and bent, as if something has tried to push the door open from the other side.

Treasure. The ten wooden footlockers are locked. One can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A locker can also be pried open by a character who uses a crowbar and makes a successful DC 12 Strength check. The lockers contain personal effects; each also has a coin purse that holds 7 gp and 15 sp.

22. SANBALET'S PRIVATE QUARTERS

Unlike the barracks, this small room holds comfortable furnishings and appears to be well cared for.

A comfortable-looking bed in the northwest corner has a wooden locker at its foot.

A small wooden table stands against the east wall, with a padded leather chair beside it. On the table, a brass three-branch candlestick with three burning candles provides the room with bright light. The candles, though not fresh, are far from spent.

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

On a shelf above the table sit three books. In the northeast corner is a closed wooden wardrobe.

If the characters have avoided alerting the smugglers to their presence, **Sanbalet** (see appendix C) is in his quarters. Otherwise, this room is vacant.

Sanbalet's books consists of the following volumes:

- A volume of erotic poetry, fully illustrated
- A naval almanac listing tide times for the area of coast around Saltmarsh (a total of one hundred miles of coastline is covered)
- A treatise concerning the demigod Iuz and its minions

Inside the third book is a sheet of parchment featuring a few simple words and phrases in the Common tongue and their equivalents in Goblin. The words include "stop," "fight," "lift," "come," and so forth—key words used by Sanbalet to instruct his hobgoblin mercenaries.

Bullseye Lantern. The lantern is used to signal the *Sea Ghost*. Someone who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes that the lantern is used only infrequently.

Treasure. The three books are worth 10 gp each. A fancy floor-length oilskin coat (5 gp) hangs in the wardrobe. Its sleeves contain numerous pockets (empty), and it is trimmed in iridescent green silk.

A character who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a hidden compartment under the table that holds Sanbalet's spellbook. The book contains all the spells Sanbalet has prepared.

The small wooden box holds twelve candles, flint and steel, and a piece of parchment that details Sanbalet's method of communicating with the ship. See "The Signaling System" in the second part of this adventure for more information.

23. SKELETONS' ROOM

The bar securing the door is easily lifted. The smugglers sealed this room after discovering the undead within.

Light spilling in from the large room behind you barely shows that the chamber is only about twelve feet across and the corners are filled with shadow. What little you can see is dingy and dirty.

Six old **skeletons** lurk in the shadows here. They rise and attack as soon as the characters enter the room. They have disadvantage on initiative checks owing to the length of their dormancy. The skeletons are reinforced by compounds applied to their bones years ago. The first time they take damage from a melee attack, that damage is reduced by half. If the skeletons are vulnerable to that damage, they instead ignore that vulnerability for this attack.

Development. If the characters spend more than a few moments here, a faint blue light appears at the seam of the secret door to area 24. The light gradually grows brighter as the alchemist's remains reanimate after long decades. At a time of your choosing, the alchemist (**skeletal alchemist**; see appendix C) emerges through the secret door to assist the skeletons.

When the alchemist enters the scene, read:

A hunched corpse wearing a pointed hat and dressed in a robe embroidered with mystic symbols crosses through the hidden door. Thin wisps of beard float from its bony jaw. It raises a finger, tracing arcane symbols in the air. In a hoarse voice, it speaks: "Secrets found and lost then found again. Your paltry minds cannot fathom ..."

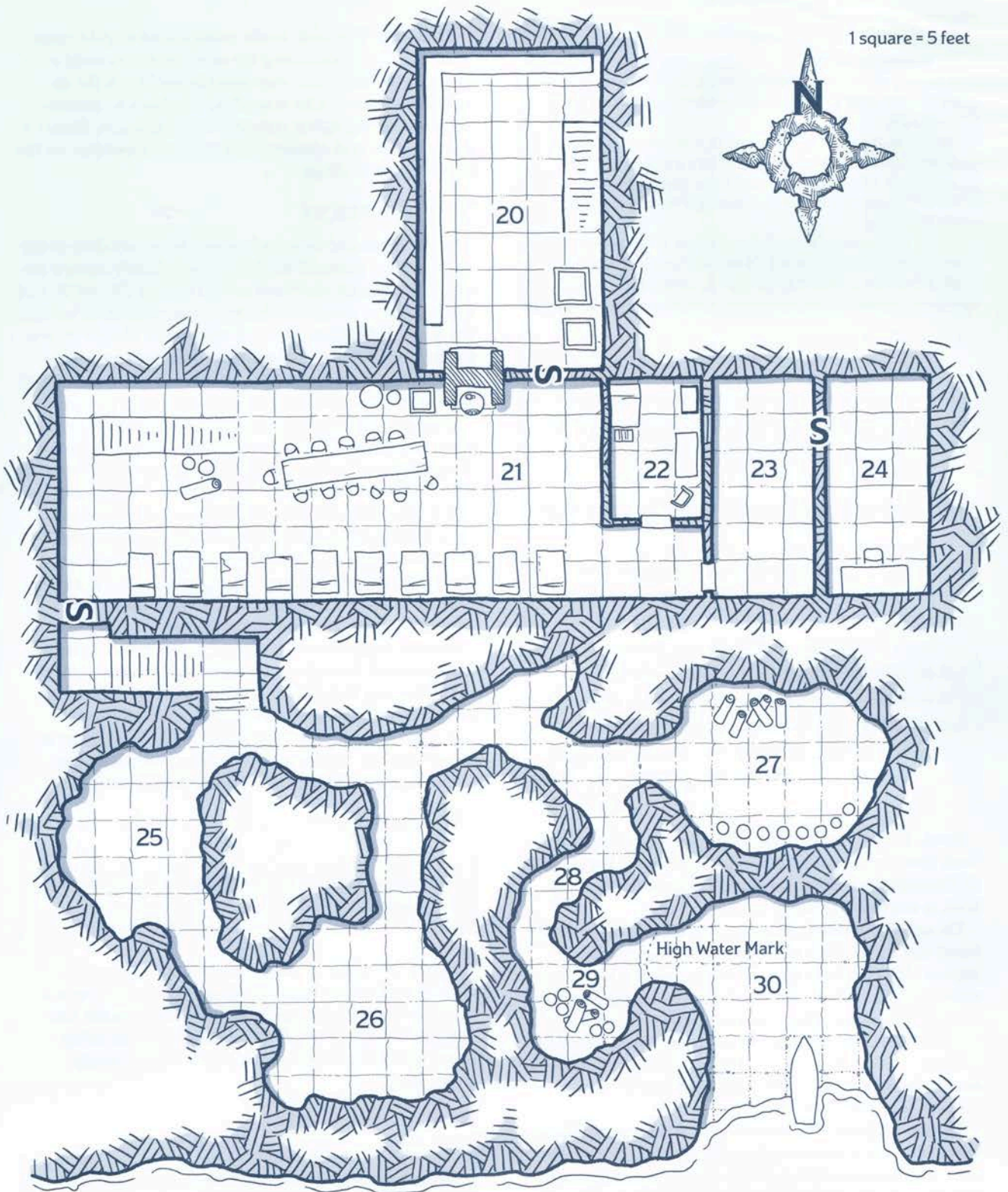
Treasure. The alchemist wears an empty *bag of holding* at the waist. One rib bone on each of the skeletons is dipped in gold and is worth 5 gp. The alchemist also carries a *cursed luckstone* (see appendix B).



SKELETAL ALCHEMIST

LEESHA HANNIGAN

1 square = 5 feet



	Sink		Cask		Roll of Cloth		Chair
	Stove		Bed		Cupboard, Wine Rack, Bookcase, etc.		

MAP 2.2: HAUNTED HOUSE CELLAR AND CAVERNS

THE CURSED LUCKSTONE

Do nothing to prevent the characters from being misled regarding the stone carried by the alchemist in area 23, as well as the book and the golden objects found in his lab in area 24.

In truth, there is no such thing as a philosopher's stone, although the characters might put two and two together and decide otherwise if they claim the stone from the alchemist, see the unlikely golden objects, and also decipher the book.

They might become excited at the idea of possessing an actual philosopher's stone! Of course, once a character attunes to the stone, the sad truth is revealed.

24. LABORATORY

The secret door opens toward you to reveal a clutter of broken glass and earthenware piled on the floor beyond. Three small copper pots lie amid the debris.

As the party enters and sees the rest of the room, read:

A bench runs down the west wall of what seems to be a laboratory. On the bench are jars of powders and liquids and several pieces of chemical apparatus.

There is a table against the south wall, forming an L-shape with the bench. A book is open on the table.

Also on the table is a candlestick, with a tiny stump of unlit candle still in it, and a variety of other items that, even in the dim light, shine with the warmth of pure gold. One of these objects looks like a human skull.

Book. Before the alchemist died, he was reading the book that lies open on the table. Its title is *Ye Secret of Ye Philosopher's Stone*, no author acknowledged. The book is worth 50 gp to the right buyer.

Though it is written in Common, the book is too profound and recondite a work to be fully understood by anyone other than the appropriate specialist, but a character might be able to deduce the general subject matter. Gaining that knowledge requires 8 hours of study and a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check. The book contains instructions for the creation of a "philosopher's stone," then describes how that object can be used to convert base metal into gold.

Golden Objects. The objects on the table are made of pure gold—but were manufactured this way, not magically transformed. Although the characters might infer that they are the results of successful experiments with the philosopher's stone, the truth is that the alchemist had them crafted to deceive a potential buyer into believing that the stone was real. The collection includes the following items:

- A human skull (20 gp)
- An apple (5 gp)
- A rose (5 gp)
- A set of five small discs (balance weights, 5 gp each)

Treasure. The table holds small stacks of gold coins totaling 47 gp. Examining the table closely reveals a concealed drawer that contains the spellbook the alchemist used when he was alive. The book's contents include *dancing lights*, *comprehend languages*, *Tenser's floating disk*, and *shatter*. The chemical apparatus on the bench is worth 20 gp.

THE CAVERNS

The passages and caverns beyond the secret door in the south wall of room 21 all decline perceptibly toward the sea. The passage that runs north of areas 25 and 26 and the interior of areas 27, 28, and 29 are well-lit by torches set in crude brackets on the walls. Areas 25 and 26 are dark. Area 30 is open to daylight. The walls are slimy and the floors are moist, though the smugglers have laid matting in places to make them more easily passable.

All these passages and caverns are natural, though there are signs of worked stone here and there; such evidence is found on the stairs leading from the secret door and in places where narrow passages were widened.

It is likely that the characters have dealt with members of Sanbalet's gang before entering the caverns. The following area descriptions assume that the smugglers have responded (see "Smugglers on Alert" in the "Background" section), so that Sanbalet and a few of the smugglers await the characters in area 27 and 28.

If the smugglers are caught off guard, most of them are scattered throughout the caverns. Be sure to place them in a way that does not overwhelm the characters, but once combat begins in the caverns, it likely won't stop until the gang is entirely dealt with. If Sanbalet is slain, consider having any remaining smugglers flee.

The following locations are identified on map 2.2.

25. SLIMY CAVERN

This uneven, naturally formed cavern is about twenty feet in diameter.

Two patches of green slime (see "Dungeon Hazards" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) hang at a point on the ceiling roughly halfway between the two passage mouths. They drop on characters (or smugglers) who pass below, landing with a distinctively soggy slap.

26. NATURAL CAVERN

This roughly circular, naturally formed cavern is about twenty-five feet in diameter.

If the smugglers are not yet aware of the characters' presence, three **scouts** are resting here while they await instructions. There is nothing else of note in this area.



27. STORAGE CAVERN

This cavern, like the passage leading to it, is well lit by torches held in simple iron brackets around the walls. You can see five small bolts of cloth stacked against the wall to your left, and to your right are eight small casks in a neat row.

This is the primary storage chamber for Sanbalet's smuggling operation, and the likely place from which he and his gang mount a defense.

If an alarm has not been raised, two **bandits** and a **scout** are here, stealing drinks from the store of brandy.

If the smugglers have been alerted, **Sanbalet** (see appendix C and the following sidebar), one **hobgoblin**, one **scout**, and one **bandit** defend this room. Sanbalet stays clear of the melee, taking cover behind the casks in the southeast corner. The hobgoblin and the bandit try to prevent the characters from entering the room, while the scout hangs back to fire its ranged weapon.

Treasure. The five bolts of silk are worth 50 gp each, and the eight casks of brandy are worth 10 gp apiece at market, though the merchants of Saltmarsh recognize the goods as stolen if the characters try to sell them there.

Sanbalet carries a *pipe of remembrance* (see appendix B) and a set of masterfully crafted loaded gaming dice (20 gp). The hobgoblin wears a suit of *mariner's armor* (scale mail).

28. SLOPING PASSAGE

The incline of the passage is perceptibly greater in this area. Coarse matting has been laid in places on the floor, negating some of the slope's slipperiness.

Smugglers who fled from earlier encounters with the characters wait at the end of this passage, firing ranged weapons at the intruders as they attempt to navigate the narrow spots.

SANBALET

A tall man with a shaved head and piercing green eyes, the leader of the smugglers is as charismatic as he is cunning. Sanbalet is a plotting nemesis who prefers manipulation to direct action. It is no accident that his gang occupies the old house, since the promise of hidden knowledge initially drew him here.

Despite the disappointment of never finding the alchemist's secret chamber or other legendary arcane discoveries, the clever wizard saw opportunity in the house's ruined walls and shattered windows.

What He Wants. The smuggler wants to expand his operation and eventually inhabit a more secure location to better pursue his magical studies. He'd sacrifice every one of his companions to achieve these ends.

Confidence Aplenty. Sanbalet's success stems from confidence in his abilities. He delights in criminal behavior and considers himself a great villain. He speaks of himself in the third person and exhibits narcissistic tendencies.

29. STOCK CAVERN

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

A lone **bandit** is here if the smugglers aren't on alert.

If either of the *magic mouth* spells has been triggered, a lone **hobgoblin** keeps watch here (guarding against an approach by sea) and joins the fray in area 27 if it hears sounds of combat.

The bolts and casks have the same value and conditions as those found in area 27.

30. SEA CAVE

The passage leads into a cave that opens directly to the sea. The tide is out at present, and there is little water in the cave, but there is an obvious high-water mark three feet above the floor. Pulled up onto the sloping cave floor is a small boat, perhaps large enough for eight people, with oars, a step-down mast, and a neatly furled sail. A rope tied to the bow is being held down by a large boulder that serves as an anchor.

If the characters have avoided triggering either of the *magic mouth* spells, the two **hobgoblin** smugglers are standing guard here.

There are no items of value in this area except the jolly boat, which might fetch as much as 100 gp. Since bolts of silk and casks of brandy are cumbersome, the characters can use this boat to transport the contraband to Saltmarsh.

CONCLUSION

The town council of Saltmarsh gratefully rewards the characters 200 gp for uncovering and shutting down the smuggling operation.

Several days after the characters' return, or shortly before they depart town, they are invited to a meeting with the town council. This meeting begins the second part of the adventure.

THE SEA GHOST

In the next part of the adventure, the council asks the characters to take the fight to the remaining smugglers.

A few days after their triumphant return from the destruction of the smugglers' ring at the haunted house, the characters are hastily summoned to an emergency meeting of the Saltmarsh Town Council. Here it is explained to them that, though the land-based operation of the smuggling ring has been quashed, there must be a seagoing vessel by which the contraband was originally conveyed, and this is still at large. The council, fearful that any surviving smugglers could seek to reestablish their operation from some other base, asks the charac-

ters to apprehend this vessel and put an end, once and for all, to the smuggling.

A reward of 400 gp is offered to the characters for the successful conclusion of the mission.

THE PLAN

The council reasons that the smugglers on the vessel are, as yet, unaware of the capture or death of their land-based colleagues, and a return visit by them might well be expected. Since the last consignment was offloaded only a short while ago, another one is not expected for some time—perhaps during the next new moon, which begins in about two weeks' time.

The council arranges for members of the town guard to patrol the potential rendezvous points each night for the next two weeks in case the smugglers return earlier than expected. If the ship is sighted, the council is unwilling to risk the lives of volunteers by ordering them to take the ship and its crew by force. As soon as an approaching vessel is spotted, the council expects the characters to perform the actual task of boarding.

Once the characters accept the undertaking, the council puts a small fishing boat at their disposal and provides them with any reasonable amount of nonmagical equipment that they feel they require. The boat is large enough to accommodate the entire party plus two. The council also provides the services of two members of the guard to sail the boat for them when needed. They are not willing to board the *Sea Ghost* with the characters, though they defend themselves and the fishing boat if it is attacked.

THE SIGNALING SYSTEM

If the characters discovered the bullseye lantern and the parchment in area 22 of the haunted house, they have a big clue to how the smugglers communicate. You might require the characters to make a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to determine how the system works—although certain facts are not written on the parchment. Alternatively, you can allow the characters to experiment with sending signals when the ship comes back.

The signaling system utilizes the bullseye lantern to communicate the following messages by combining long and short flashes:

Long-short-short-short: "Is it safe?" (The ship initiates the exchange with this signal.)

Short-long-short-long: "Everything safe." (The smugglers respond with this signal.)

Long-long-long: "Ready to unload; come to the ship." (The ship confirms a reply with this signal.)

The arrangement calls for someone aboard the ship to flash the first signal. The shore party replies by flashing the second signal, after which the third signal flashes from the ship. It drops anchor and waits for the arrival of a boat from shore. A small group of smugglers approaches the ship in a rowboat. When it arrives, the ship sends a boat in the other direction. These two vessels alternate in transferring contraband between the ship and the shore, with one of them remaining in the shore cave at the end of the operation.



It has been arranged (though this does not appear on the parchment) for the first signal to be repeated every 10 minutes for an hour. If the ship gets no response, it is assumed that there is some delay and the *Sea Ghost* sails away, returning the next night.

The smugglers will drop anchor if the characters send any kind of return signal to the ship—not necessarily the correct one. The crew of the *Sea Ghost* is accustomed to seeing an improper signal from time to time, because the gang on the shore often operates the lantern clumsily. Just in case something has gone awry, however, the ship's crew will be on alert when the characters make their approach.

BOARDING THE SEA GHOST

How long it takes the characters to reach the ship depends on what arrangements they have made beforehand. If, for example, it is arranged that the guard members, once they have seen the ship, row ashore and pick the characters up (say in the cave below the haunted house), that takes 15 or 20 minutes. The characters then board the fishing boat, which is rowed out toward the ship. The journey to the ship takes 30 minutes (20 minutes with more than two rowing), but if the boat is to approach the *Sea Ghost* from the seaward side, another 5 minutes should be added. The ship is lying broadside to the coastline, the starboard side facing landward. If the characters approach it from this side, they are automatically seen when within 20 feet, even if they approach silently and without light.

If the characters approach silently from the port side, without using light sources, they will be totally unobserved—the smugglers on deck are watching the coast from the starboard side and do not see or hear intruders who don't give themselves away. Thus, whether the alarm is raised or not depends on a number of factors: from which direction the boat approaches the ship, whether the watchers on the ship are alerted to possible danger (a previous incorrect response to the signal), and whether the characters have taken all precautions to conceal their approach.

Between the extremes outlined above (automatic detection of a direct approach or no detection of a silent and dark approach from the seaward side), you must judge the circumstances, decide on the probability of detection, and determine the outcome.

CROW'S NEST

This area is not shown on the map but is—predictably—atop the mast, 40 feet above the main deck. Access to it is provided by a rope ladder whose lower end drops near the hatch on the main deck. The crow's nest is an open, wooden platform, 10 feet square with 3-foot-high wooden walls. Opening a 2-foot-square hatch in the floor lets out the rope ladder that descends to the main deck.

A single crew member (**bandit**) occupies this area when the party approaches the ship. The crew member looks toward the house and awaits a signal. There is no chance that he detects the characters' approach to the ship or their boarding of the ship if the others on board below fail to do so—his gaze is fixed at a higher level.

BURNING OR HOLING THE SEA GHOST

Though it is possible for the characters to capture the *Sea Ghost*, they also might choose to destroy it.

Burning. The *Sea Ghost* is mainly of wooden construction, so fire always presents a hazard. The ship could, with some difficulty, be set ablaze and burned down to the waterline. The vessel will not ignite readily, for its hull, rigging, spars, and sails are all damp with sea water.

Deliberate attempts to set the ship ablaze can be undertaken only while aboard it. This involves the use of at least two flasks of oil applied to 2 cubic feet of dry, combustible material such as sacking, cloth, wool, or wood kindling, which is then set aflame. Bolts of silk soaked in brandy make excellent combustibles and do not require oil to be ignited. Use your discretion if the ship catches fire, but assume it burns to the waterline within 20 minutes.

Holing. Attempts to hole the ship and sink it require the use of axes or similar implements applied with vigor. This undertaking takes 5 minutes, but the noise alerts the smugglers. Two of them are sent to investigate and raise the alarm. The rest of the crew rapidly converge on the area and attack any intruders. If the hole is completed, the ship takes on water and sinks after an hour if the hole remains unrepaired.

If those on the deck below detect the characters' intrusion, the crew member's attention is attracted (even if his colleagues forget to alert him), and he descends with all speed to the deck to assist his mates. Otherwise, he is oblivious to the characters' intrusion unless someone climbs the rope ladder or the rigging to approach his position; he always detects such an approach when the climber is 15 feet below him, investigating and attacking if circumstances warrant it.

BLUFFING THEIR WAY ON

If the characters make a direct approach, they can try to bluff their way aboard once they have been detected. For instance, they might say they are new recruits to the smuggling gang, unaccustomed to the codes and thus made a mistake with the signaling, or something of a similar nature.

If the story is reasonably convincing, allow the characters to make a DC 14 Charisma (Deception) check. If the check is successful, they are believed up to the point when the first three characters get aboard by means of a rope ladder lowered for them. Once the characters' approach is detected, the entire crew attempts to repel the characters with the utmost vigor while getting their vessel under way.

CLIMBING ABOARD

Climbing aboard the *Sea Ghost* undetected is no small feat. Keep in mind the following as the characters attempt to board:

- Perception checks that rely on hearing are made with disadvantage on the ship because of the sound of the waves and sea.
- The hull of the ship provides many handholds for climbing but is also very slippery. Climbing the hull without a rope or other device requires a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the climber falls into the water.

THE CREW OF THE SEA GHOST

Aside from Captain Sigurd "Snake Eyes" (**pirate captain**; see appendix C), the crew of the *Sea Ghost* consists of the following members:

- Bloody Bjorn, a **pirate first mate** (see appendix C)
- Foul Frithoff, a **pirate bosun** (see appendix C)
- Punketah, a **pirate deck wizard** (see appendix C)
- 7 crew members (**bandits**)
- 3 **lizardfolk**

The position of the crew aboard ship depends on two possible scenarios.

Correct Signal. If the characters sent a correct signal, the crew is relaxed. Two bandits await the characters in area 1. The rest of the crew can be found in their respective quarters (area 8 for the deck wizard, area 9 for the captain, area 13 for the first mate, area 14 for the bosun). The remaining five bandits occupy area 10.

Incorrect Signal. If the characters did not send the proper signal, the crew members are in the positions described in the text that follows.

The lizardfolk in area 7 do not help defend the ship unless they are directly threatened by the actions of the characters.

IN CASE OF SURRENDER

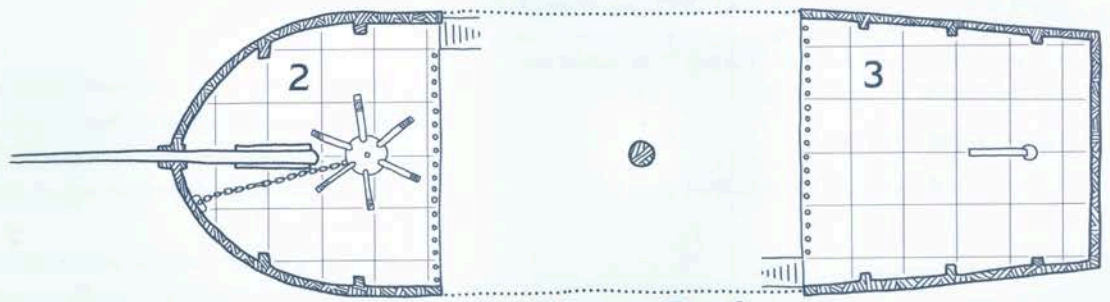
If the ship's captain, the first mate, the bosun, and the deck wizard are all killed or have fled, and if the characters then outnumber the surviving crew and lizardfolk combined, the smugglers offer to surrender the ship to the characters. They seek the most advantageous terms they can get, but their minimum requirements will be their lives and liberty, and the ship's jolly boat in which to flee. If the characters refuse these terms, the smugglers offer to trade information in exchange for treasure. Their minimum requirement, in this case, is 100 gp to disclose the whereabouts of the secret cache of weapons and the fact they were to deliver these arms to the lizardfolk. They do not know the exact location of the rendezvous point, only that it is about ten miles or so along the coast west of the haunted house, near the mouth of a small river. For a further amount of 50 gp, they reveal the presence of the sea elf prisoner in area 14.

THE SMUGGLERS' SHIP

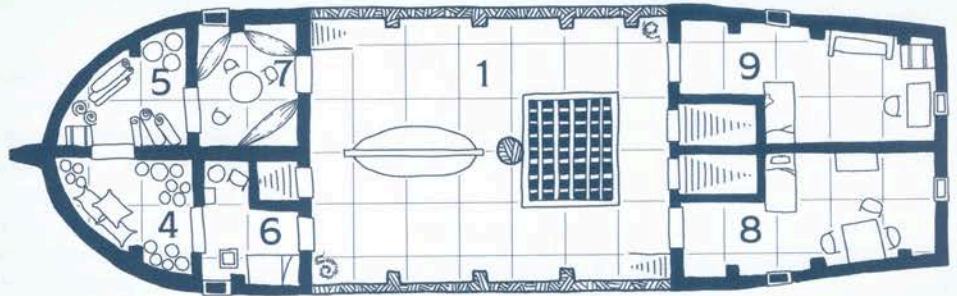
The name of the vessel, *Sea Ghost*, is painted on both sides of the prow. It has a length of nearly 90 feet, a beam of 26 feet, a draft of 8 feet, and stands 9 feet above the waterline to the top of its main deck rails and 17 feet above the waterline to the top of both its forecastle and poop deck. A jolly boat is lashed upside down on the main deck.

Normal doors are 6 feet high, 4 feet wide, and of stout wood construction. All are typically shut but unlocked, and all can be readily opened without special effort.

The stairways leading down from area 1 to areas 12 and 13 are separated from each other by a stout wood partition and form wood-enclosed companionways sealing them off from areas 8 and 9. The stairway from area 1 to area 10 is likewise enclosed in wood partitions and sealed off from area 6. All enclosed areas have a ceiling

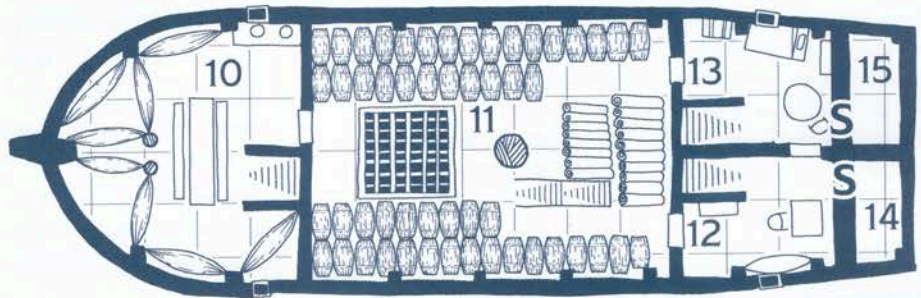
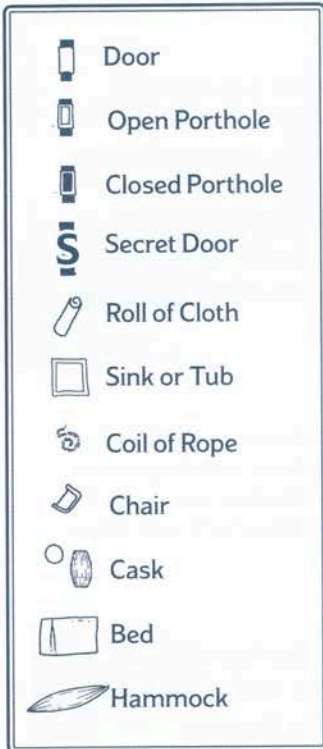


Upper Deck

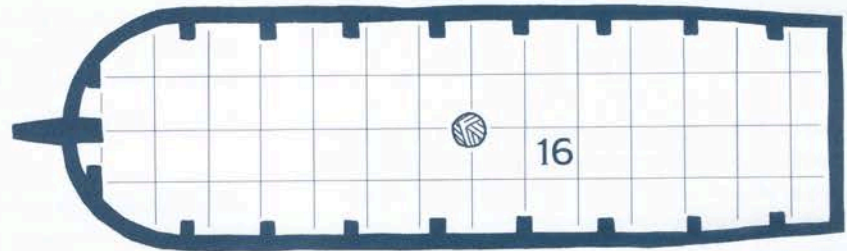


Main Deck

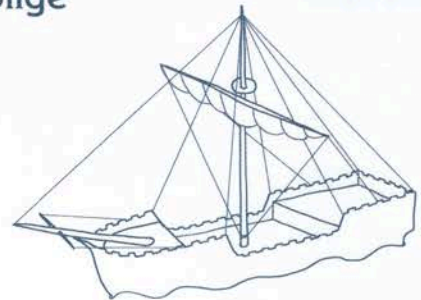
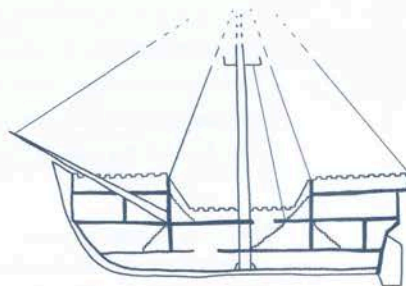
1 square = 5 feet



Hold



Bilge



Rigging Diagrams

height of 8 feet except for the bilge (area 16), which is 4 feet high. The cargo hold hatch in area 1 is closed but not fastened. The bilge hatch in area 11 is closed and bolted from the hold side only.

SHIP LOCATIONS

The following areas are identified on map 2.3.

1. MAIN DECK

Though the light is dim at best, you can see details of the ship's main deck. In the center, forward of the mast, a jolly boat is lashed to the deck with ropes.

Aft of the mast is a hatch to the belowdecks area and a rope ladder climbing to a crow's nest above.

Two human figures lean against the rail mid-deck, staring toward the coast. Between them at deck level is a roll of canvas or rope.

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

The hatch leads to the hold (area 11) below. Between the two figures waits a 25-foot-long rope ladder, ready to be thrown over the side. Two 25-foot lengths of rope also lie neatly coiled at opposite edges of the deck.

The two figures are Bloody Bjorn (**pirate first mate**; see appendix C) and a crew member (**bandit**).

2. FORECASTLE

A massive shape in the center of the deck area must be the ship's capstan. From it, the anchor chain runs down the chain vent to port of the prow.

Standing near the bowsprit is a human figure. He appears to be scanning to starboard.

The capstan arms can be removed and used as clubs. They have been left in the capstan by express orders of the captain, who wants to be able to make a quick getaway if such proves necessary.

The figure is a single crew member (**bandit**) watching for any signals from shore.

3. POOP DECK

The tiller is the most prominent feature of this area, rising from the deck about six feet from the stern and having a horizontal arm some six feet long. Against this arm, on the starboard side and looking coastward, stands a human figure.

Leaning on the starboard rail and looking toward the coast are three human figures. The one nearest the stern holds something in his hand at shoulder level; occasionally he adjusts it in some way.

The figure leaning against the tiller is a crew member (**bandit**). The others, from fore to aft, are Punketah (**pirate deck wizard**; see appendix C), the ship's captain Sigurd "Snake Eyes" (**pirate captain**; see appendix C) and another crew member (**bandit**). The last holds a bullseye lantern that has a shutter over its lens; from time to time the crew member moves the shutter and sends out the prearranged signal.

4. GALLEY STORES

From iron hooks set into the ceiling hang three long strings of sausages, a large ham, and a hunk of meat. Against the hull are three sacks. Set against the bulkhead beside the door are a cask and a ceramic jar. Against the other bulkhead are set a large and a small cask and another ceramic jar. There is an opening in the latter bulkhead about three feet square and with its lower edge about three feet above the deck.

The area is unoccupied.

The meat is salt beef; the sacks contain dried beans; the casks contain flour, salt, and ale; and the jars contain honey and olive oil. The ship's food stores are relatively fresh, though nothing is particularly appetizing.

5. SHIP'S STORES

Two coiled lengths of rope and three rolls of sailcloth lie on the deck alongside a large box. A large wooden cask stands next to six lengths of wood planking. Set into a wooden rack, fastened to the bulkhead by the door, are two metal-headed hammers, two wooden mallets, two saws, and an adze. There is an opening, about three feet square and with its lower edge about seven feet above the deck, in the other bulkhead.

The area is unoccupied.

Each rope is 100 feet long. The box contains copper nails, and the cask is three-quarters full of hard, dry tar. These supplies are used to make regular repairs about the ship.

6. SHIP'S GALLEY

A crude metal stove, not lit, leans against the hull. It has an adjustable metal chimney that can be placed through a vent hole when it is opened. Next to the stove is an open metal bin containing sticks of wood kindling, and beside this is a large wood table, bolted firmly to the deck, with a thick top crisscrossed with score marks. The table has a large drawer.

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

There is nothing of significant value here, and the area is unoccupied.

The drawer, which is unlocked, holds an assortment of butcher's knives, saws, and choppers. The cask contains water, while the cupboard holds a miscellany of tin mugs, small and large tin plates, wooden platters, and a metal dipper.

7. LIZARDFOLK QUARTERS

A distinct odor about this room reminds you of a marsh or a swamp—not fetid, not oppressive, but certainly noticeable.

In the center of the area is a wood table, bolted to the deck. On the table sits a silver jug half full of a red liquid; with it are three pewter mugs. Around the table are set three upright wooden chairs, and an unlit hooded lantern hangs from the ceiling above.

In the gloom, you can see three hammocks—one at each end of the cabin slung between the bulkhead and one of the ship's ribs, and the third hanging across the corner of the cabin from next to the aft door to the central bulkhead. Each hammock is occupied by a scaled figure.

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

Three **lizardfolk** warriors occupy the hammocks. The chest and its contents are their property. The lizardfolk were provided by the chieftain of their clan to help ensure that the smuggled weapons in area 15 make it to their lair. When they become aware of the characters, they initially assume they are smugglers and treat them as such, demanding in a combination of Draconic and broken Common to know when the weapons will be delivered to their kinfolk.

A **pseudodragon** named Bimz sleeps in a small nest behind the chest. It is the companion of one of the lizardfolk and joins in the combat to defend its master.

Combat in this small room is hampered by its size and low ceilings. Melee attacks made with two-handed weapons have disadvantage in this room.

Development. If Bimz is still alive when its master dies, it stops attacking and retreats to its nest. It continues to fight only if pursued. After the remaining lizardfolk are dealt with, Bimz chooses one character and bonds with that individual. Bimz prefers to bond with a party member that did not directly attack it, is good-aligned, and also did not directly attack its lizardfolk master. If no character meets all those conditions, the one who met the most conditions will suffice. Alternatively, the characters can engage in a contest of Charisma checks (highest wins) to determine whom Bimz bonds with.

Treasure. A silver jug on the table contains wine and is worth 25 gp.

The chest is locked and can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The key to the chest lies under a hammock; it can be noticed by someone who succeeds on DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check or by a character who closely examines the hammock.

The chest is also trapped with a poison needle. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When triggered, the trap fires a small poisoned dart from the lock. Any creature standing in front of the lock is automatically struck by the needle, taking 1 piercing damage and 4 (1d4 + 2) poison damage.

The chest contains ten electrum ingots worth 100 ep each. These ingots are another part of the payment for the consignment of weapons, to be handed over on completion of delivery.

8. PUNKETAH'S QUARTERS

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

A single bunk, made up with bed linen, has its head against a bulkhead running along the centerline of the ship.

A polished wood table stands in the center of the room, bolted to the deck. On the table is a silver bowl containing an assortment of fruit, a silver carafe half full of a light red liquid, and a silver goblet. Set at the table are two upright wooden chairs and a padded leather chair.

On the deck toward the stern is a wooden, brass-bound chest. Beside it is a pair of highly polished black leather boots. From the center of the ceiling, over the table, hangs an unlit hooded lantern.

This cabin is the private quarters of Punketah, the deck wizard. On a peg behind the door hangs a maroon robe, of no particular value.

Examining the boots in combination with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a small hidden compartment in one of the heels. The compartment contains the key to the chest.

Treasure. The chest is locked and can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The chest is also trapped with poisonous gas. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When it is triggered, the trap releases a cloud of noxious gas in a 5-foot radius around the chest. Creatures caught in the cloud must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious for 1d4 minutes.

The chest holds items of clothing, a leather purse containing 50 gp, and a *spell scroll of gust of wind*. It also holds Punketah's spellbook, which has all the spells he has prepared recorded on its pages.

9. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

This cabin is clean, and its furniture in good repair.

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

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

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

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

Writing Desk. Of the trays on the desktop next to the pewter container (which is nearly full of fine sand), one is empty and another contains bills and receipts for various items of marine supply. The last contains several letters of a personal and intimate nature from three different women in three different ports (each of whom is under the misapprehension that she is Mrs. Sigurd "Snake Eyes"), and a curious, semiliterate document requesting a further supply of ironware "as per previous

consignments and at the agreed terms." The signature here is in the form of a pictograph and shows a lizard with forked tongue extended.

This last document is a request from the lizardfolk for more weapons. You should exercise caution here in not making the document too explicit—the lizardfolk would not want the document to fall into the wrong hands and have concealed as much of the real meaning of the request as possible—for instance, using words like "goods" instead of "weapons."

The two desk drawers are locked; a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can open one drawer. The key to both drawers is in Captain Sigurd's belt pouch.

The first drawer contains two *potions of healing*, a dose of antitoxin, and the key that unlocks the chains holding Oceanus in area 14.

The second drawer contains seven maps of various sea and coastal localities, prepared by professional cartographers. Beneath these is another map, crudely drawn. This map indicates that the rendezvous point with the lizardfolk is at a small promontory beside a river in the tidal marshes, ten miles southwest of the town of Saltmarsh.

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

Treasure. The chest under the couch is locked and can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The chest is trapped with a swinging blade trap. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When triggered, the trap swings a short scything blade from its bottom, threatening any creature within 5 feet of the front of the chest. Such creatures must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) slashing damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

The chest contains ten electrum ingots worth 100 ep each. This is part of the payment made by the lizardfolk for the smuggled weapons in area 15.

10. CREW QUARTERS

Various unpleasant odors of humanoid occupation compete for recognition here. These crew quarters fill the entire forward part of this deck.

A companionway staircase leads up from a point about six feet from the bulkhead. Near it, more to starboard, is a door.

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



In the center of the cabin stands a long, plain wooden table with a bench along each of its longer sides. They all appear to be bolted to the deck in an attempt to keep everything in place.

The table is stained and cluttered and has an untidy pile of dirty tin plates and cups roughly stacked in a large tin bucket below it. Over the table, hanging from the ceiling, is an unlit hooded lantern.

Against the starboard side, an area has been curtained off by cheap, dirty cloth hangings.

The curtained area contains two large tin buckets standing side by side on the floor. Both are empty, but they are stained and dirty and emit a foul smell.

The sea chests contain clothes and other personal effects. The garments are all stained, grubby, and in poor condition. Of minor interest among the remaining items are the following:

- A pack of well-used, greasy playing cards (examination reveals the deck has two aces of spades)
- Two sets of dice, one of them loaded
- A book titled *Grog Hovels*, which describes taverns and inns along the coastline suitable for patronage by a pirate

II. CARGO HOLD

Lantern light reveals an orderly cargo hold. Through the center runs the base of the main mast; beside it, narrow wooden stairs lead up to the hatch above. Against the aft bulkhead are stacked bolts of cloth, lashed by ropes to brackets bolted to the deck so they are secure. On each side are stacked a large number of small casks, also secured by ropes to the deck.

A lantern hanging from the ceiling, positioned just forward of the main mast, provides bright illumination. The characters can see the plain wooden hatch that allows access to the bilge, forward of the mast.

Four crew members (**bandits**) under the supervision of Foul Frithoff (**pirate bosun**; see appendix C) are wandering about the hold, securing the cargo and taking inventory. They chat about all manner of depraved conquests as they do. Once they become aware of the party, they attack immediately.

Treasure. The hold contains the following cargo:

- 50 bolts of silk (50 gp each)
- 40 casks of brandy (10 gp each)
- 40 casks of fine wine (7 gp each)
- 1 large crate of high-quality mining tools (200 gp)

12. BOSUN'S CABIN

In the center of the cabin sits a plain wood table on which stand a pewter flagon and a pewter mug. Beside the table is a wooden chair, and hanging over the table is an unlit hooded lantern.

Also hanging from the ceiling, at the aft end of the cabin, is a large cage that holds a parrot, apparently asleep. Next to the hull hangs an unoccupied hammock. Beneath it is a brass-bound wooden sea chest.

The flagon is full of a rough, high-proof cider.

Finding the secret door into area 14 requires a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Cuppa the Parrot. When anyone enters the cabin, the parrot immediately wakes, squawks, repeats "Pieces of eight" several times, squawks again, and then falls quiet. Its cries do not alert or alarm the smugglers, who are used to the noisy bird.

Development. The prisoner in area 14 might hear the characters in the bosun's cabin. Oceanus shouts to attract their attention if he overhears someone speaking Aquan or Elvish.

Treasure. The sea chest is unlocked and contains, grubby garments of no value. Concealed by the garments is a locked (but not trapped) iron box. The key to the box is in Foul Frithoff's belt pouch. The box can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It contains 200 sp, a spear, a dagger, and the remains of a crossbow. The weapons belong to Oceanus, the sea elf who is imprisoned in area 14. The crossbow is damaged beyond repair.

13. FIRST MATE'S CABIN

This cabin occupies half the stern section on this deck, with one bulkhead running along the centerline of the ship. Along this bulkhead, leading up in the direction of the bow, is an enclosed companionway. At its foot, a door in the central bulkhead leads to the other part of the stern. On this door hangs a dark blue cloak.

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

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

Just aft of the hook that holds the lantern is a hatch measuring three feet on a side.

The cloak has no special properties and no significant value.

Finding the secret door into area 15 requires a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Books. The table has the following books (worth 10 gp apiece) lying on it:

Principles of Navigation by Da Korma (open)

Legal Distinctions in Letters of Marque by Tazaar (closed)

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

The brass box under the bed is locked. The key to the box is in Bloody Bjorn's belt pouch. It can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The box contains 500 sp.

14. SECRET PRISON CELL

A dark, cramped area only four feet wide at most, squeezed in between the ship's stern and the adjacent cabin, appears to be a holding cell. A slim humanoid figure cowers in the far corner, chained to the hull.

The figure is that of a sea elf; the key to unlock his chains can be found in the captain's writing desk drawer (see area 9). If the characters demonstrate friendship and release him, **Oceanus** (see appendix C) has an interesting story to relate and will assist the characters to the best of his ability in their undertaking. Oceanus speaks Aquan as well as Elvish.

A PRISONER FROM THE DEEP

Assuming that the characters befriend Oceanus and have a way to communicate with him, the elf provides the following information.

How He Became Imprisoned. Oceanus is a member of the tribe of Mana'an, which inhabits an undersea settlement about twenty miles southeast of Saltmarsh. He was stripped of his weapons and armor when imprisoned, but though bruised and hungry, he has suffered no great injury and his spirit is undaunted.

His tribe has noted, from a distance, the periodic travels of the *Sea Ghost* at night along a supposedly deserted coastal area. Suspicious of this behavior, the tribal chief ordered Oceanus to keep watch on this area, slip aboard when the ship arrived, and follow the ship back to its port of origin to discover what he could of these strange proceedings. This Oceanus did, and at the vessel's home port he witnessed the stowing aboard of a small arsenal of weaponry. He was then discovered, knocked out, and taken prisoner. He awakened some time later, chained to the ship's hull in this compartment.

Since His Imprisonment. He is uncertain how long he has been a prisoner or what his ultimate fate would have been. He has no knowledge of the lizardfolk aboard (he has not seen them), nor does he or any member of his tribe know for whom the arms are intended.

During his imprisonment he has been brought unpleasant food three times and a cup of brackish, stale water about six times. On each occasion the bearer has been a large bully of a person with a hook instead of a left hand (the bosun, though Oceanus does not know this). These visitations aside, he has been left to his own devices.

If invited to do so, he joins the characters with enthusiasm and stays with them throughout the conclusion of this adventure. He will, if requested to do so, remain with the characters for further adventures (assuming that they continue with *Danger at Dunwater* and possibly also *The Final Enemy*), in which circumstances you could ask one of the players to play Oceanus. At all times he will be as cooperative as possible, playing a full role as an NPC in the party's undertakings (he will, of course, expect a normal portion of treasure). Afterward, he reluctantly leaves them to return home.

15. THE SECRET CACHE

This cramped area, only four feet wide at the widest, is sandwiched between the adjacent cabin and the ship's stern. It contains eight large, irregularly shaped bundles wrapped in oilskin and bound with light rope. These are piled at random on the deck, as though thrown in casually from the doorway.

This is the place in which the weapons are housed during their journey to the customers (the lizardfolk). The eight bundles here contain the following equipment:

- 10 morningstars
- 10 longswords
- 10 shields
- 20 javelins
- 1 shield emblazoned on the front with the design of a lizard with forked tongue extended

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

16. BILGE

From the hatchway, you can see a little of what lies in the gloom below. This area stretches the full width of the ship and, for all you can see, the full length, for no bulkheads are in view. What must be the bottom of the ship is covered with a thick layer of wet sand (presumably ballast) on top of which is an inch or so of green, greasy water.

A scuttling noise toward the stern indicates there is some life down here—perhaps living off the garbage thrown in occasionally by the lazy crew, for there are heaps of trash immediately below the hatch that have formed small islands in the fetid water. A particularly large one has accumulated at the base of the mast.

As you move your light back and forth, you catch a yellow reflection in one of the garbage piles.

A number of rats eke out a precarious existence here, but they are of the normal variety and harmless. The bilge offers only 4 feet of headroom.

Two **swarms of rot grubs** (see appendix C) live in the garbage island around the mast. A gold coin among the trash is the source of the reflection. The rot grubs attack anyone who comes near.

Treasure. A paltry 2 gp can be found inside the garbage island with the rot grubs.

CONCLUSION

If the characters have successfully completed their mission, the seagoing side of the smuggling operation has been rendered inoperative. The ramifications of that are discussed in the following section, "Smuggled Goods."

In addition, the characters have gained some or all the following information:

- In addition to contraband, the smugglers are providing weapons to a colony of lizardfolk.
- The lizardfolk colony is located within ten miles of Saltmarsh.
- This weapon smuggling appears to have been going on for some months.

If they have enough information, the characters should be able to deduce that the lizardfolk are planning an attack, either on Saltmarsh or on some other unknown location. Presented with this information, the town council is sure to have further need of the party.

Of course, the characters do not know the truth behind the lizardfolk's need to purchase weapons. To learn the truth, more of the story must unfold. See chapter 3, *Danger at Dunwater*.

SMUGGLED GOODS

The smugglers are very successful. Their main source of income is the sale of stolen goods, especially those marked with a royal seal or similar identifier that would make dealing with legitimate merchants impossible. They also take in goods from ships they have waylaid, usually spices, weapons, poisons, and other contraband that is either illegal or heavily taxed in this region. Currently, the ship's hold is crowded with mining equipment and kegs of brandy stolen from a royal shipment meant for a crown-sponsored mining operation in this region, along with silks that were originally destined for a royal trade mission.

If the characters break the smuggling ring, they are free to keep whatever other treasure they find without consequence, but the current contents of the hold must be handled carefully.

Representatives of the crown in Saltmarsh will pay 200 gp for the return of the silk and brandy stored under the house (in area 27) and 500 gp for the merchandise aboard the *Sea Ghost* (the goods in area 11 and the weapons in area 15).

Royal agents might also claim the smugglers' ship, but at your option, if the characters have proven eager to aid the crown, they are given the ship and pledged the service of a contingent of sailors to man it for one year.

If the characters keep the merchandise and try to sell it openly in the region, they find no buyers. Such an attempt earns them a poor reputation, the effect of which is up to you.



CHAPTER 3: DANGER AT DUNWATER

THE DISCOVERY THAT A COLONY OF LIZARDFOLK lies near the small fishing town of Saltmarsh and is purchasing weaponry considered sophisticated by lizardfolk standards has alarmed the Saltmarsh Town Council. Greatly troubled and filled with apprehension, the councillors call an emergency meeting.

This adventure is designed for a group of four to six 3rd-level characters.

BACKGROUND

The characters are not required to have finished *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* before playing *Danger at Dunwater*. If they arrive in Saltmarsh after the events of the prior adventure, they learn the following information from the townsfolk:

- A smuggling ring operating out of an abandoned house has been disbanded.
- The smugglers were slain or jailed.
- The smugglers were supplying weapons to a tribe of lizardfolk that have established a colony near Saltmarsh.

When the councillors discover that a seasoned group of adventurers has arrived in town, they send a message to the characters inviting them to a meeting. The council hopes to hire them to investigate the lizardfolk lair and learn why the creatures are arming themselves. The council's main priority in the context of this adventure is to keep the town safe from a possible lizardfolk attack.

Judging from a crude map found aboard the smugglers' vessel and from information provided by the sea elf Oceanus, it seems likely that the lizardfolk are preparing for war. The council members hope that the townspeople are not the intended target, but they greatly fear this possibility.

ADVENTURERS NEEDED

The site of the lizardfolk colony has been tentatively identified as a coastal promontory adjacent to a small river, the Dunwater, some ten miles southwest of Saltmarsh. The council considers it essential that a scouting party be sent to reconnoiter the area and ascertain the strength and size of this colony, as well as the intentions of the lizardfolk. The characters (whether or not they are veterans of the previous adventure) are approached to undertake this mission.

The leader of the council impresses upon the characters that they are not required to act with hostile intent—in fact, quite the opposite. Their assignment is one of information gathering, with the additional hope that they can return with knowledge of what the lizardfolk are up to. A reward of 700 gp is offered for the successful completion of the mission.

THE TRUE THREAT

The people of Saltmarsh, and of course the characters, are unaware of the true situation as the adventure gets under way. The lizardfolk are not preparing for war against Saltmarsh, but against a much more sinister presence: the sahuagin.

Just over a year ago, a colony of lizardfolk were driven from their home by an invasion of sahuagin. Forced to find a temporary home, they restored an old lizardfolk stronghold that had been abandoned for decades.

Determined to recapture their home, the lizardfolk have been busily purchasing arms and negotiating an alliance with other nearby aquatic races. The lizardfolk's main purpose is to form an army to expel the sahuagin from the area. In so doing, they hope to discourage the sahuagin from ever again intruding on the region.

The lizardfolk have not approached Saltmarsh with an offer to join the alliance because Othokent, their queen, considers humans and other land-dwelling races as of little use in a battle to be fought largely underwater.

Ambassadors from the koalinth, the locathah, and the merfolk are present in the lizardfolk lair. The sea elves were not invited to join the alliance because of long-standing disputes between them and the koalinth—even in the face of the sahuagin threat, no cooperation is possible between these two peoples. The lizardfolk, concluding that the koalinth are the stronger tribe, invited them to participate rather than the elves.

Members of these four races have come together, overlooking their previous rivalries and differences, to negotiate an agreement of cooperation. But even as the lizardfolk strive to hold their alliance together in the face of a common foe, the bonds are beginning to fray.

How the characters perform their mission, and what sort of relationship they establish with the lizardfolk on behalf of Saltmarsh, will determine if the coalition has any chance of success.

FRIEND FROM THE DEEP

If the characters freed Oceanus from his cell aboard the *Sea Ghost* in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*, the elf offers to join them in their expedition to the lizardfolk lair. His skills in combat and knowledge of the seas and the dark things that dwell there might prove invaluable to the party. He recognizes and identifies the sahuagin remains in the lair. He takes an equal share of both treasure and experience points.

Alternatively, Oceanus might have allied with the town council previously and offers to join the characters as they embark for the lizardfolk lair.

What He Wants. Oceanus wants to discover the truth behind the lizardfolk's purchase of smuggled weapons and armor. Like the town council, he initially sees the lizardfolk as a potential threat.

POLITICS AMONG THE LIZARDFOLK

Two political groups operate in the social structure of the lizardfolk lair. On the one hand are the dominant progressives led by the queen, Othokent, who is supported by a subchief named Ihrtos, several officers, and many warriors. Her progressive stance is inspired and driven by wisdom of the aged lizardfolk minister, Sauriv.

Opposing that group (mostly covertly, for the rule of the queen remains absolute) are the traditionalists, led by the shamans. The shamans believe that allying and intermingling with other races is contrary to the divine will of their god, Semuanya, and that no good can come of it. Consequently, the shamans hate and distrust the minister, Sauriv, whom they consider to be the prime instigator of these efforts that go against nature. They dare not move openly against him, however, since he enjoys the trust and favor of the queen.

If the lizardfolk queen is killed in the course of this adventure, she is succeeded by the subchief. If the subchief is also killed, the succession goes to one of the warrior officers. If all of these are slain, then succession falls to the most senior surviving shaman. In this event, the shaman denounces the alliance, pulls the lizardfolk out of it, sacrifices the aged lizardfolk minister to the lizardfolk deity Semuanya, and leads the remainder of the tribe into the depths of the marsh beyond the reach of the sahuagin. If all the lizardfolk notables are slain, surviving members of the tribe simply drift away into the marsh, taking all their possessions with them. There will then be no chance of an alliance against the sahuagin that involves the lizardfolk.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Ideally, when the characters learn the truth about the lizardfolk and the sahuagin, they have done so before causing irreparable harm to the occupants of the lair and the lizardfolk's plans for the alliance against the sahuagin. For their mission to have any chance of succeeding, the characters must eventually gain—or be forcibly prodded into—an audience with the queen. Even if her initial reaction is not a friendly one, the characters might still have a chance of winning over the lizardfolk and making them receptive (if the characters suggest as much) to admitting Saltmarsh into the alliance.

Handling the interaction between the two sides against the backdrop of the first contact between the lizardfolk and potentially friendly humans can be difficult. Though it's always possible to let roleplaying take its course, particularly if the characters refrain from combat and make a good first impression, things might not play out quite that simply. Here are some guidelines on how to handle this aspect of the adventure.

PROCEDURE

The lizardfolk start out indifferent toward the characters and, by extension, Saltmarsh. To track the attitude of the lizardfolk, use points to record the characters' progress toward sealing an alliance. The characters begin the adventure with 0 points. That score is adjusted every time they interact with lizardfolk, but the results only become apparent when the characters meet the lizardfolk queen. They can then earn more points through diplomacy and by improving the tribe's strength and safety.

The alliance is sealed if the characters reach or exceed 50 points, at which point the lizardfolk become friendly to them. They are invited to see the queen a second time, and during this session the groundwork for Saltmarsh's inclusion in the alliance can be laid.

The lizardfolk become irrevocably hostile if the characters' total number of points drops to 0 or lower even after the queen offers them chances at diplomacy and ways to improve their standing. If this happens, after the lizardfolk give them a second chance, the characters' mission ends in failure.

MEETING THE QUEEN

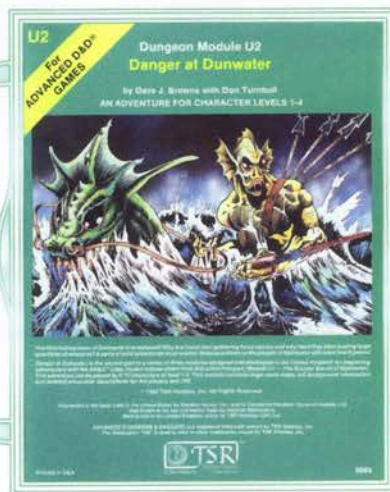
The point system starts working when the adventure begins, but its ramifications aren't apparent until the PCs meet the queen for the first time. This most likely occurs after they engage a group of lizardfolk without fighting them, whereupon they are put in custody and taken to her. When this happens, determine the characters' current point total by using the Initial Attitude table, giving them benefits and penalties according to what they have done so far. The characters might have a negative score at this point if they were hostile toward the lizardfolk prior to their audience.

Othokent is worldly for a lizardfolk. In her youth, she spent several years exploring the nearby marshes. She

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL

Dave J. Brown and Don Turnbull continued the Saltmarsh series in this classic. Doubling down on TSR UK's penchant for exploration and interaction in their work, this scenario challenges the characters to act as ambassadors to a colony of lizardfolk.

While such roleplay-focused adventures are the norm today, at the time of its publication (in 1982) this adventure was the first to make interaction an absolute requirement for success, rather than one option among many.



found human society interesting and observed caravans and villages in secret. She knows about the outside world but feigns ignorance in an attempt to catch the characters in a lie. She respects those who show her respect and treat her people as their equals, rather than as primitive fools to be mocked or patronized. Her experience with humans tells her that they can be useful allies, but she also knows that they can be duplicitous.

During this meeting, the queen makes it clear how she feels about the characters' behavior so far. She gives them a lot of credit for not killing any lizardfolk (if that's the case), or she chastises them for taking the lives of lizardfolk unnecessarily. If hatchlings are among the characters' victims, the queen is close to outrage and makes no secret of it. Conversely, if the characters arrive with hatchlings in tow, her estimation of them rises steeply.

If the characters have accumulated any treasure while in the lair, either from victims or from unoccupied areas, the queen demands its return. She doesn't hold a grudge as long as the characters give it back.

If the mission isn't ruined by how they conduct themselves prior to this first audience, the queen allows the characters to circulate through the lair for a brief time to give all the occupants a chance to pass their own judgment. Beyond this point, the only ways the characters can improve their score hereafter are by succeeding on Charisma checks (see "Goodwill Tour" below) and perhaps tipping the scales by offering the queen some of their valuables or the use of their services.

INITIAL ATTITUDE

Characters Have ...	Penalty or Benefit
Killed lizardfolk adults	-1 per victim
Killed hatchlings	-10 per victim
Taken treasure from lizardfolk	-1 per gp of value unless returned
Been apprehended trying to enter by sea (see area 49)	-5
Killed no lizardfolk	+15
Arrived accompanied by hatchlings	+10

GOODWILL TOUR

After the characters meet the queen, she gives them 24 hours to prove their worth and win the lizardfolk's trust by visiting and interacting with occupants of the lair. Successful Charisma checks during this activity can add to the characters' points and help sway the lizardfolk into an alliance with Saltmarsh. For the best possible outcome, the characters must win over most or all the occupants of the lair, including its two most important individuals.

To earn the trust of an NPC (Sauriv or Othokent) or a group (commoners, shamans, other lizardfolk, locathah, or merfolk), one or more characters must display their good intentions to that individual or group consistently for at least 3 hours. At the end of that time, a character can then attempt a Charisma (Persuasion) check against a DC that depends on the group or individual in question (see the table below). On a successful check, the charac-

ters earn progress toward achieving the alliance. On a failed check, they don't lose any ground, but the character who made that check, along with any who helped on the check, cannot try to gain that group's or individual's trust again.

CHARISMA CHECK BENEFITS

Accomplishment	DC	Benefit
Earn trust of commoners	10	+5
Earn trust of other lizardfolk	15	+5
Earn trust of shamans	20	+10
Earn trust of locathah	15	+5
Earn trust of merfolk	15	+5
Earn trust of Sauriv	10	+10
Earn trust of Othokent	15	+15

If the characters can raise their score to 50 points with a sufficient number of successful checks, relations with the lizardfolk become amicable and an alliance can be formalized. If they fall short at the end of the 24 hours, there are a couple of other ways (see below) that they can get to the required number.

BRIBERY

If the characters have exhausted their opportunities to impress the lizardfolk but don't have the needed 50 points, Othokent might be willing to cooperate if the characters offer her tribute from their personal treasures (not including loot from the lair). For every 10 gp in coins, gems, and other valuables they offer, the characters gain 1 point. Consumable magic items earn 5 points and permanent ones 10 points, provided that the items have direct application for battling the sahuagin.

KILL THE CROCODILE

Another way the characters can earn points is by defeating monsters in the marsh that threaten the lizardfolk, demonstrating both their skill and their good intentions.

In particular, the great crocodile called Thousand Teeth is an ongoing problem for the tribe. If the characters are shy of 50 points and out of options, you can have the queen bring up this opportunity. See "Epilogue: Croc Hunt" at the end of the adventure. Slaying the crocodile earns the characters 10 points.

The lizardfolk have other enemies in the swamp as well. If the characters are earnest in their attempt to succeed on the mission but have fallen victim to some bad luck (low die rolls), you can arrange for them to gain some last-ditch points by seeking out and defeating some of these other creatures. Stage encounters in the marsh as you see fit, involving trolls, ogres, or bullywugs. The characters earn 2d6 points for every troll slain, 1d6 for each ogre, and 1d6 for every three bullywugs.

DEAL BREAKERS

Regardless of how they otherwise conduct themselves, the characters will see their mission end in failure, or at least be seriously compromised, if they perform any of these deeds.

Free the Sahuagin. If any lizardfolk see the sahuagin (from the cell at area 43a) in the company of the characters at any time, they conclude that the characters have allied with, or been misled by, their enemies. The lizardfolk attack the sahuagin without hesitation (and the characters would be well advised to stand aside).

The characters take an immediate penalty of $-2d6$ points if this occurs, and all the DCs for Charisma checks in the “Goodwill Tour” section are increased by 2. Afterward, the lizardfolk treat the characters with cold hostility. Even if the characters own up to their mistake, the lizardfolk and their allies remain suspicious of the characters. Building an alliance becomes much more difficult.

Kill Queen Othokent. No amount of recompense can atone for their actions if the characters kill the queen. Every other surviving lizardfolk in the lair mobilizes to overwhelm and cut down the interlopers—and even if they do escape, their mission is an unmitigated failure. The alliance between Saltmarsh and the lizardfolk will likely never happen, regardless of what reparations the community offers.

Kill Minister Sauriv. The influence of the aged lizardfolk minister has kept the tribe from fracturing because of ideological differences (see “Politics Among the Lizardfolk” above). If the characters kill him instead of trying to communicate with him, they are set upon by the rest of the tribe just as if they had killed the queen. After the intruders are put down or chased off, the tribe succumbs to infighting as the shamans try to muster more support for their point of view. There is no longer a chance of Saltmarsh becoming allied with the lizardfolk, and if the shamans succeed in their takeover they will withdraw the tribe from any discussions of alliance with other races as well.

ROLEPLAYING LIZARDFOLK

This adventure provides the characters with opportunities for extensive interaction with a variety of lizardfolk. The lizardfolk are generally wary of strangers, but are of neutral alignment and are far from dimwitted or bloodthirsty. Here are a few resources you can use to add flavor to the party's experiences with the lizardfolk by giving depth and dimension to the occupants of the lair. They are designed to help you with adventure preparation and to enable you to create distinctive lizardfolk NPCs on the spot.

PERSONALITIES

To customize the lizardfolk in the lair, use the personality traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws from the character backgrounds in chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* as a starting point. The acolyte background is ideal for shamans, the soldier background for warriors, and the hermit and outlander backgrounds for commoners. If the result of a die roll seems inappropriate, such as the “Raised by wolves” trait in the outlander background, roll again.

In addition, you can use the Lizardfolk Quirks table below to determine a personality quirk for a lizardfolk character or to inspire a unique mannerism.

LIZARDFOLK QUIRKS

d8	Quirk
1	You hate waste and see no reason not to scavenge fallen enemies. Fingers are tasty and portable!
2	You sleep best while mostly submerged in water—particularly warm, stagnant water.
3	Money is meaningless to you.
4	You think there are only two species of humanoid: lizardfolk and meat.
5	You have learned to laugh. You use this talent in response to all emotional situations, to better fit in with your comrades.
6	You still don't understand how metaphors work. This doesn't stop you from trying to use them at every opportunity.
7	You appreciate the soft humanoids who realize they need chain mail and swords to match the gifts you were born with.
8	You enjoy eating your food while it's still raw and wriggling.

LIZARDFOLK NAMES

Lizardfolk take their names from the Draconic language. They use simple descriptives granted by the tribe based on an individual's notable deeds or actions. For example, Garurt translates as “axe,” a name given to a lizardfolk warrior who defeated an orc and claimed his foe's weapon. A lizardfolk who likes to hide in a stand of reeds before ambushing an animal might be called Ach-uak, which means “green,” to describe how she blends into the foliage. Young lizardfolk are often given a name by one of the community's elders, but take an adult name not long after reaching their first decade.

Lizardfolk make no distinction between male and female in their naming conventions, and any number of individuals can have the same name. The Lizardfolk Names table includes a number of examples, all of which are used for either gender.

Because each name has meaning beyond its use as an identifier, you can use an individual's name as a starting point for its description. (Each name's meaning in Common is given in parentheses.) Someone named Kosj might be exceptionally scrawny, while a lizardfolk dubbed Usk might wear scraps of plate armor scavenged from a foe.

LIZARDFOLK NAMES

d20	Name	d20	Name
1	Achuak (green)	11	Kothar (demon)
2	Aryte (war)	12	Litrix (armor)
3	Baeshra (animal)	13	Mirik (song)
4	Darastrix (dragon)	14	Throden (many)
5	Garurt (axe)	15	Thurkear (night)
6	Jhank (hammer)	16	Usk (iron)
7	Kepesk (storm)	17	Valignat (burn)
8	Kethend (gem)	18	Vargach (battle)
9	Korth (danger)	19	Vutha (black)
10	Kosj (small)	20	Vyth (steel)

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure likely unfolds in the following way.

The characters meet with the Saltmarsh Town Council, which hires them to investigate the lizardfolk lair. By sea or by land, the characters travel to the promontory to reach the lizardfolk lair. The characters enter the lair and explore it.

Through interaction with the lizardfolk or their guests, the characters can earn either the lizardfolk's enmity or their respect. If they proceed cautiously and without violent intent, they will likely be taken to an audience with the queen, Othokent. Depending on how they have conducted themselves to that point, the characters might be able to improve their reputation with the tribe by using their diplomatic skills.

The best possible outcome is for the characters to befriend the lizardfolk and for Othokent to invite them (and Saltmarsh) to join the alliance. If the characters can't accomplish this through acts of contrition and persuasion, they might be able to salvage the situation by offering the lizardfolk treasure. In addition, the tribe has a big problem out in the marsh, and the characters might be able to prove themselves by taking care of things, thus earning Othokent's gratitude.

TRUE MOTIVES

Be sure not to prematurely reveal to the characters that the lizardfolk do not constitute a real threat to Saltmarsh or its inhabitants, or that the newly purchased weaponry is not for use against humanity and its allies. The characters are expected to discover the real intentions of the lizardfolk from the various clues in the adventure as they play through it. Unless their mission turns into an utter failure, they must eventually become aware that there is a war brewing between the lizardfolk (and their allies) and the sahuagin.

Unless indicated otherwise in a particular encounter area, the characters must not be informed about the name or nature of the sahuagin. Rather, you should provide only a general physical description of these creatures when an encounter occurs. If Oceanus is with the party, on the other hand, he recognizes any sahuagin on sight. He has general (biased) knowledge as to their nature, and he readily identifies such creatures to the characters.

TRAVELING TO THE LAIR

The inset on map 3.1 shows the location of the lizardfolk colony and features in the vicinity. (Even if the characters have not been through *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*, they still receive the map—it was given over to the town council by the individuals who defeated the smugglers.)

The party can choose between two methods of traveling to the lair.

BY SEA

The distance from Saltmarsh to the lair is about ten miles as the crow flies, and a sea journey would take about three hours in normal conditions.

PLACING THE ADVENTURE

In the Greyhawk campaign setting, where the town of Saltmarsh is located, the lizardfolk lair is a coastal promontory adjacent to the Dunwater River.

Here are suggestions for where you can place this adventure in other campaign settings.

Eberron. The appearance of lizardfolk near Saltmarsh in the Basura Swamp endangers the town's access to profitable masthins and dragonshards. The uneasy peace threatens to break down, renewing the conflict between settlers and lizardfolk. An alliance in Q'barra can involve disparate factions, as complex agendas bring together the Cyran diaspora, dragonmarked houses, and even the Inspired.

Forgotten Realms. A lizardfolk lair has been discovered close to the town of Saltmarsh, threatening the town and traffic on the High Road. The dwarves of Thornhold at the southern end of the Mere of Dead Men might be concerned allies or remain distant and cautious, more wary of the machinations of the Margaster family in Waterdeep than of a few lizardfolk in the swamps. A marsh encounter with the undead of the Mere of Dead Men could replace the bullywug ambush. As an alternative location, Daggerford to the south of Waterdeep works because it already has a history with the lizardfolk.

Mystara. Lizardfolk have been discovered in the Blight Marsh of Karameikos. Because the marsh sits on the border of the Five Shires, the halfling folk might play a larger role in the alliance. Baron von Hendriks of Fort Doom might be aware of the lizardfolk, even indirectly supporting them. As an alternative, set the adventures in Darokin's other port. Port Tenobar is larger than Saltmarsh but a good deal seedier, and the vast Malpheggi Swamp is an excellent location for lizardfolk and other creatures to hide.

If the characters want to travel by sea, the council places at their disposal a modified keelboat with two pairs of oars and a step-down mast, large enough to accommodate the characters and any reasonable amount of equipment they want to take with them. Navigation and propulsion of the craft is handled by two members of the town guard (**guards**), who are assigned by the council to sail or row the boat. The guards do not disembark when the characters reach their destination, instead staying with the boat to keep it under their control and guard the party's return trip.

While they are at sea, as their boat approaches the promontory, the characters see a well-traveled and relatively dry track (at the point marked *A* on the map) leading from the coast. It disappears into the marshland interior.

Once they are within 40 feet of the promontory's northern coastline, the party spies another track running up to the middle elevations of the promontory, where it disappears behind a clump of tall grasses and brightly flowering shrubs (leading to the hidden entrance marked *D* on the map).

They also note, as they approach by sea, a 15-foot wide, 6-foot high sea cave entrance on the northeastern tip of the promontory (marked *E* on the map). A careful approach to the sea cave goes unnoticed until after the characters disembark and enter the entrance tunnel. Once inside area 49, they are likely to be discovered immediately.

BY LAND

The overland journey is longer because of the difficult terrain. Dozens of trails follow a route roughly parallel to the coast and 100 to 400 yards away from it. Because of the terrain, it will take the party about 12 hours to travel from Saltmarsh to the ford over the Dunwater River (marked *B* on the map). This time does not account for resting but does allow for slow movement at times when the mist inhibits visibility. As long as the characters move at this rate, the route is easily followed—there is no risk of straying in a wrong direction.

From the ford, the characters can see in the distance the entrance to the cave of the giant lizards (marked *C* on the map, area 22 of the lair).

THE BULLYWUG AMBUSH

If the characters' route takes them through the marsh, they eventually pass close to the temporary lair of a band of bullywugs. Bullywug scouts patrol the area and, unless spotted, return to the larger group after identifying the adventurers to organize an ambush.

Bullywug Transients. The bullywugs are a roving band but they have set up a defensive camp here because they have happened upon a considerable treasure. Rather than risk traveling through the swamp with their discovery, thus making themselves vulnerable to bandits or brigands, they made camp to guard the treasure until their great king could travel here from their lair ten miles away, deep in the swamp. The bullywugs dared make no move regarding the items they have found until he gives his decision on the matter.

Bullywug King. The king, Gulpa'Gor, arrived the night before the party struck out into the marsh. He and his advisor, Arrp, inspected the treasure. When the king learns of the party's presence, he and Arrp stage a competition to see who can waylay the tasty interlopers.

Frog Waves. The party is assaulted by three waves of bullywugs:

Wave 1. Six **bullywugs** attempt to surprise the characters, leaping from the muddy water to attack.

Wave 2. Arrp (**bullywug croaker**; see appendix C) and two **bullywugs** arrive shortly after the first wave is defeated. They make a grand show of battling the characters, and Arrp grins at the king whenever he is effective in combat.

Wave 3. Gulpa'Gor (**bullywug royal**; see appendix C) arrives mounted on a **giant toad** shortly after Arrp and his guards are slain.

The king tries to communicate with the party with harsh croaks and aggressive gestures, boasting of his prowess in battle. A dozen more bullywugs appear at the edge of the battlefield but do not approach. An equally aggressive response from the characters, verbally or through gestures, and a successful DC 16 Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces the king to retreat and take his remaining warriors with him.

If the king is attacked or goaded into battle (on a failed check), the other bullywugs do not interfere. His steed is trained in combat, and when allowed to act independently, it attacks the nearest enemy. Gulpa'Gor tries

to skewer the characters from astride the toad's back, commanding it to move when necessary, but mostly letting it do as it pleases. The remaining bullywugs flee into the marsh if their leader dies.

Treasure. The bullywugs' treasure consists of 325 pp and a *helm of underwater action* (see appendix B) in which the loose coins are contained. It can be easily discovered nearby after all the bullywugs are dealt with.

LIZARDFOLK LAIR

The lizardfolk in this colony are more developed than others of their kind, as demonstrated by their ability to use sophisticated weaponry and their readiness to ally with other races when necessity dictates. They still lag behind more intelligent races, however. The construction of their lair is simplistic, employing only basic materials; most floors, walls, and ceilings are of rammed earth, and the furnishings are spartan.

GENERAL FEATURES

In the lair, all corridors are 10 feet wide with 12-foot-high ceilings. All rooms have 12-foot ceilings, except for areas 10, 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 36, and 40, which are 15 feet high. For the height of the sea caves (areas 49, 50, 51, and 52), see the area descriptions.

The doors in the lair are closed and not locked, except where otherwise noted. All gates and doors (except those in areas 42 and 43, which are made of iron-bound solid wood) are of stout wooden construction, 5 feet wide by 8 feet high (unless otherwise specified). The 10-foot-wide pathways through areas 22, 49, 50, 51 and 52 are of stone construction; they stand 1 foot above the surface of the water in those areas.

All pillars are of wood, 3 feet in diameter, and are mounted on stone pedestals to support wooden ceiling crossbeams.

All the chambers in the lair are brightly illuminated by torches set in iron brackets on the walls, except for areas 22, 26, and 47, which are unlit and dark. The corridors that run between rooms are not illuminated, however, with the exception of the stone pathway that skirts the perimeter of areas 49 through 52.

HAZARDS IN THE MARSH

In addition to the bullywug ambush and any random encounters the party meets while traveling overland, the following wilderness hazards can be used at your discretion:

Bog Pit. A bog pit is a 10-foot-square hole, 10 feet deep, covered by a thin mat of dried mud and leaves. Noticing a bog pit requires a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check; characters trained in Survival gain advantage on this check. Creatures who fail to notice the pit fall in and take normal falling damage. They must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become restrained by the mud in the pit. A restrained creature can free itself by using an action.

Green Slime. Patches of green slime (see "Dungeon Hazards" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) coat the overhead branches of dead trees. The slime falls on creatures passing below.

Quicksand. See "Wilderness Hazards" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

LIZARDFOLK ROSTER

Area	Occupants at Start	Notes
2	5 lizardfolk	These guards are alerted by noise in 1. If they are challenged, one of the guards tries to escape to 3 for help.
3	3 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk scaleshield*	If a guard from 2 escaped, these guards go to 2. If not, they remain here until alerted by noise nearby.
5	1 lizardfolk scaleshield*	This officer is alerted by noise in 3. The guards in 2 and 3, if they are still present, join the officer in this room when they hear sounds of battle.
7	5 lizardfolk commoners*	The kitchen workers escape to 9 if allowed to do so.
9	4 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk scaleshield,* 1 lizardfolk shaman	These guards go to 7 if a commoner escapes to warn them of the characters in that room. Otherwise they remain here.
10	5 lizardfolk commoners*	The banquet workers escape to 29 if allowed to do so. The characters might accompany them.
11	2 hatchlings	Friendly hatchlings (noncombatants) latch onto the characters if they're not discouraged from doing so.
12	2 amphisbaenae,* 1 lizardfolk shaman	The shaman tries to flee to the west. If it does so, it races to 20 looking for help.
20	2 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk shaman	These lizardfolk go to 12, responding to the threat if alerted by the shaman that escaped from that area.
22	6 giant lizards	The giant lizards remain here until encountered. No amount of noise or disruption will coax the reptiles elsewhere.
23	3 lizardfolk	These lizardfolk go to 22 if alerted by sounds of combat there. They go to 24 if a commoner escapes from that room and arrives here.
24	20 lizardfolk commoners,* 13 hatchlings	These lizardfolk protect hatchlings (noncombatants) and guard the entrance to 25. If combat starts, two commoners try to flee to 23 and get help.
25	3 hatchlings	The hatchlings (noncombatants) remain here.
26	5 giant poisonous snakes	The snakes remain here.
27	1 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk render*	These lizardfolk move toward the gate if alerted by noise in that area. Otherwise they remain here.
29	4 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk render,* 1 lizardfolk scaleshield*	These lizardfolk go to 10 if a commoner escapes to warn them of the characters in that room. Otherwise they remain here.
32	3 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk scaleshield*	These lizardfolk remain here until encountered.
35	2 lizardfolk commoners*	These commoners try to flee to 36 if attacked.
38	Sauriv (lizardfolk noble)	The minister (noncombatant) remains here unless the characters fail to win his favor. If that happens, he tries to flee to 40.
40	1 lizard queen, 1 lizardfolk subchief,* 2 lizardfolk scaleshields,* 1 lizardfolk ren- der,* 8 lizardfolk	These lizardfolk remain here until encountered, unwilling to jeopardize the queen's defense by leaving.
42	3 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk scaleshield*	These guards go to the gate at 41 (north) in response to noise there. Otherwise they remain here until encountered. If that happens, one tries to flee to 44 to get reinforcements.
43a	1 sahuagin	The sahuagin remains here unless the characters release it.
43e	1 lizardfolk commoner	The commoner remains here unless the characters release it. If that happens, it tries to flee to 44.
44	2 lizardfolk, 1 lizardfolk scaleshield*	These guards go to 42, 48, or 52 if alerted to the presence of characters in those areas. Otherwise they remain here until encountered.
48	4 lizardfolk	These guards go to the gate at 41 (south) in response to noise there. If they hear sounds of combat in 52, three go there and one goes to 44 for added help.
49	4 lizardfolk	If these lizardfolk become aware of intruders, one goes to 42 and elsewhere looking for reinforcements. Another one goes to 50, 51, and 52 in succession to alert the occupants there.
50	3 koalinh,* 1 koalinh sergeant*	The koalinh go to 49 if alerted to the presence of intruders there, eager to support their lizardfolk allies.
51	4 locathah,* 1 locathah hunter,* 5 giant sea eels*	The locathah and their eels go to 49 if alerted to the presence of intruders there.
52	3 merfolk, 1 merfolk salvager*	The merfolk go to 49 if alerted to the presence of intruders there, cooperating with their allies.

*See appendix C

COMMON-SPEAKING LIZARDFOLK

Some lizardfolk can learn how to understand and speak Common. This adventure includes many of these individuals, which offers the potential for the party to communicate without needing magical assistance (assuming none of the characters knows Draconic).

When the queen or another lizardfolk talks to the characters, keep in mind that Common is not a native language for the race, and their but their mindset results in a speech pattern distinct from that of other Common-speaking humanoids.

Lizardfolk rarely use metaphors or complex sentences. Their speech is almost always literal—halting, but not primitive. They might pick up the meaning of an idiom, but only with some difficulty.

Names confuse them, unless the names are descriptive. They tend to apply their own naming conventions to other creatures using Common words.

Lizardfolk use active verbs to describe the world. A lizardfolk in cold weather might say, “This wind brings cold” rather than “I feel cold.” Lizardfolk tend to express concepts in terms of actions, rather than effects.

COMMUNICATION AND DISPOSITION

In this adventure, the queen, the subchief Irhtos, the shamans, and the scaleshields can speak and understand the Common tongue. The aged lizardfolk minister, Sauriv, is fluent and literate in Common. All other lizardfolk speak only Draconic and are illiterate.

The lizardfolk in this colony are nervous and on edge, fearful of an imminent sahuagin invasion. In addition, a few weeks before this adventure began, the lair was raided by a party of humans and half-ogres who were all defeated, but at the cost of many lizardfolk lives.

With the exception of the minister in area 38, all the lizardfolk are initially mildly suspicious of the characters (though the intruders are obviously not sahuagin). They do not attack at first sight unless the characters have been seen committing an act that provokes their hostility. But the characters are curtly challenged and—unless they think up a suitable story—ordered to leave or surrender by word or gesture. Their refusal to do so automatically prompts an attack.

In such an attack, the lizardfolk’s first priority is the expulsion, rather than the death, of the intruders, but they fight to the death if provoked. Once the characters are identified as a threat, the only way to calm the lizardfolk’s aggression is to call for a truce and parley with the queen. See “Parley and Surrender” below.

If the entire lair were to mount a mass attack against the party, the characters would be quickly overwhelmed. Your job here is to find a balance and respond to the party’s actions accordingly. If the characters try to communicate with the lizardfolk, even during battle, consider halting the combat and allowing the characters to exercise their social skills. The queen needs allies in the coming war and prefers to avoid violence, especially if doing so helps her ally with strong warriors.

PARLEY AND SURRENDER

The lizardfolk are not welcoming toward intruders. Unless someone in the party speaks Draconic or the characters meet one of the occupants who speak Common, the lizardfolk don’t waste time wondering what the characters are doing in their lair. They jab their weapons toward the characters threateningly and attack within 2 rounds unless the characters can convey their nonhostile intentions. If the characters can’t communicate verbally, they might accomplish this with placating gestures, such as sheathing their weapons. They will certainly get their point across if they throw down their weapons in a convincing gesture of submission. In that case, the characters are bound and taken as prisoners, to await an audience with the queen.

INHABITANTS

The lizardfolk lair is a dynamic and living place, filled with warriors, commoners, and leaders. The characters’ actions while exploring the lair impact the state of the place. Do not hesitate to respond to their aggressiveness with substantial difficulties as a consequence of their acting rashly and without thought.

Conversely, reward the characters for careful planning, consideration, and attempts to engage in actions that don’t involve combat. The lizardfolk’s greatest fear is the sahuagin, and the sooner the characters realize this fact, the better.

The lizardfolk population is summarized on the Lizardfolk Roster table, which also provides information on how the occupants of various areas might react as the adventure unfolds.

PATROLS IN THE LAIR

The lizardfolk patrol the corridors of their lair routinely. Unless the characters are extremely stealthy and careful, they are bound to encounter a patrol at some point. A guard patrol consists of two **lizardfolk**, one of which carries a torch (because the corridors are normally unlit), and one **lizardfolk scaleshield** (see appendix C).

For every 10 minutes the characters spend traveling the corridors, roll a d12. On a 12, the characters come upon a guard patrol.

One member of each guard patrol carries a key that unlocks either of the gates at area 41.

LAIR LOCATIONS

The following locations are identified on map 3.1.

1. NORTH ENTRANCE

Tracks leading through the marsh to the door can be followed with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. Following the tracks allows the party to discover the door automatically. Otherwise, spotting the door requires a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Once the door is spotted, read:

Shrubs and tall grasses conceal a large, stout wooden door.

The door is unlocked. Simply opening the door, without making any other noise, does not attract the attention of the guards in area 2.

2. GUARD ROOM

If the party has not alerted the guards here, lizardfolk are lounging on benches and talking among themselves. Modify the description below as needed.

This room is bare except for two wooden benches, set opposite each other against the longer walls. A handful of lizardfolk stand at attention, ready to move into action.

Five **lizardfolk** are always on duty here. If the characters make any noise in the nearby corridor, one of the guards comes out to investigate. On seeing intruders, he shouts to his comrades and then challenges the characters, demanding in Draconic that they retreat. The other guards join him immediately.

Development. If a fight breaks out, one of the guards tries to run back to the barracks (area 3). If the guard gets away, refer to the “Development” section in area 3.

3. BARRACKS

The lizardfolk here likely join the guards in area 2 during any disturbance. If they are not alerted, the four of them are performing a final check on their gear before departing on patrol. Modify the description below as needed.

Thirteen straw mattresses are set around the room against the walls. Beside each is a closed wooden chest. In the center of the room is a long wooden table with two wooden benches beside it.

Four lizardfolk appear to be gathering their weapons and readying to leave this area.

There are three **lizardfolk** in this room forming up under one officer (**lizardfolk scaleshield**; see appendix C) to go on patrol in the lair.

Development. If the lizardfolk in this room have been alerted, they exit south into the hallway and circle around, hoping to trap the characters in area 2.

If a fight occurs in this room, the lizardfolk officer in area 5 hears the battle and joins the fray as soon as possible.

Treasure. The chests are unlocked and contain personal effects. A thorough search turns up the following items: 100 sp, a dagger in a bone scabbard, a wooden mallet, a crude reed flute, and a crude pewter mug with Semuanya's symbol (a reptilian egg) scratched into the side.

The officer carries the key to the chest in area 4 in a belt pouch.

4. OFFICER'S QUARTERS

A wooden table with two wooden chairs stands in the center of the room. A wooden bowl containing apples sits on the table. Against the west wall, a brass-bound wooden chest rests at the foot of a single bed.

This room serves as quarters for the officer in area 3.

Treasure. The chest is locked and can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or who has the key. It contains personal possessions, a morningstar, a leather purse containing 50 ep, and a chunk of violet-colored crystal. The last item appears valuable but is in fact worthless.

5. OFFICER'S QUARTERS

A wooden table against the north wall is set with an earthenware jug of cider and a wooden cup. A wooden chair stands by the table. A bed stands against the west wall with a brass-bound, wooden chest against its foot. A lizardfolk warrior in scale armor sits on the bed, facing the door, as he sharpens his sword with a whetstone.

The officer (**lizardfolk scaleshield**; see appendix C) leaps up, ready to fight, as soon as the characters enter.

Development. If the characters have avoided combat to this point, the lizardfolk in areas 2 and 3 join the officer in this room when they hear sounds of combat.

Treasure. The chest is locked and can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or who has the key. It contains personal possessions, a purse containing 25 ep, a dagger in a scabbard, and a leather whip. The officer carries the key to the chest and he wears a silver collar (15 gp).

6. ARMORY

Shields of all sizes hang on the walls here, with javelins stacked in wooden racks against the north wall. Three large wooden chests, all closed, line the east wall.

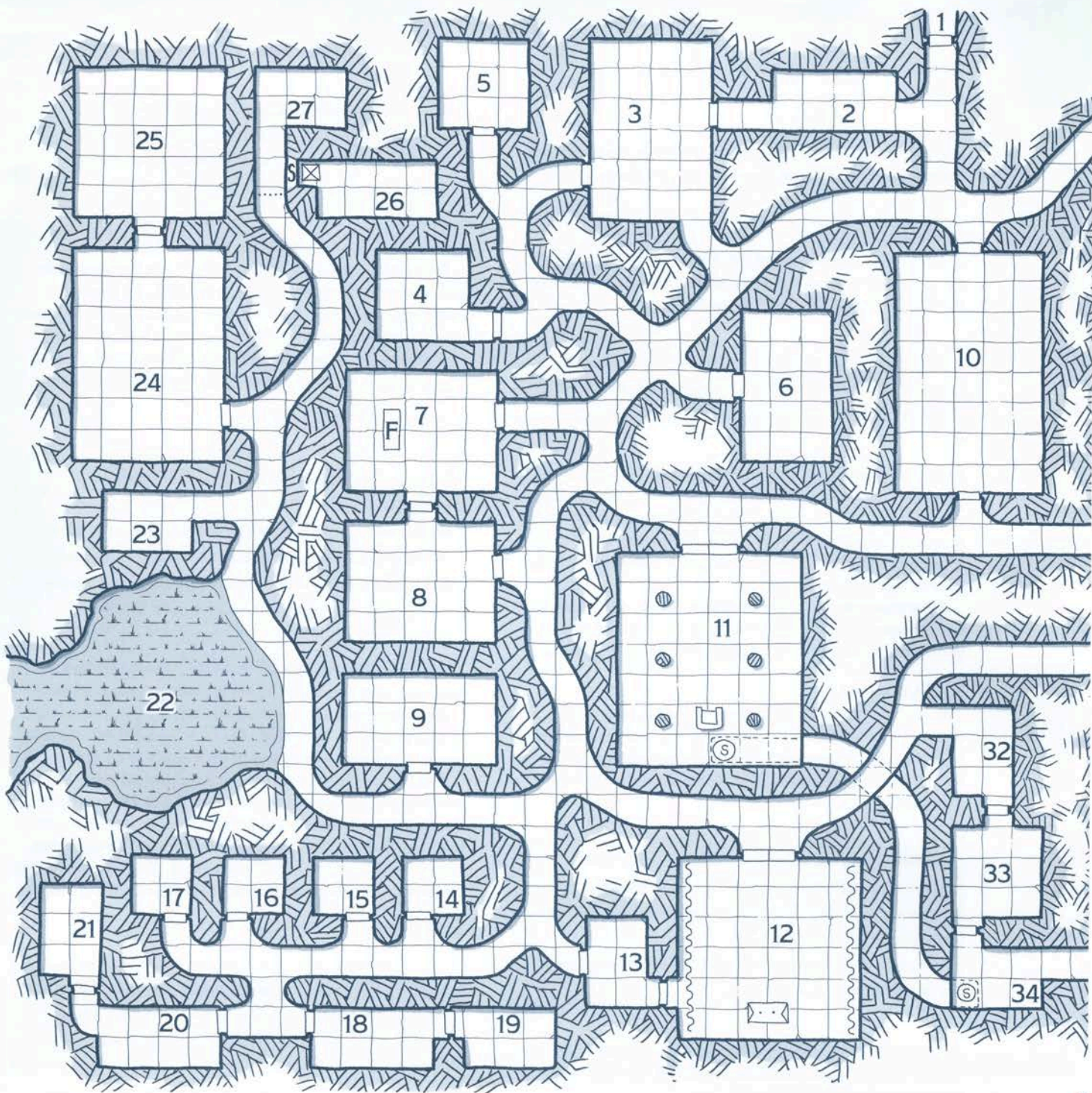
The unlocked chests contain the following weapons:

10 clubs
10 longswords
10 morningstars

7. KITCHEN

If the characters pause in the corridor near the door to this room, they detect a smell in the air; it reminds them of cooking meat, though with an acrid tang to it. This odor is being emitted by the roasting carcasses. Similarly, even if they do not pause specifically to listen, they hear chattering, muffled clanking as the lizardfolk turn the spits and otherwise go about their business.

When the characters open the door, read:



1 square = 10 feet



Door



Double Door



Secret Door



Stairs



Water



Swamp



Firepit



Pillar



Throne



Secret Trapdoor



Altar



Curtains



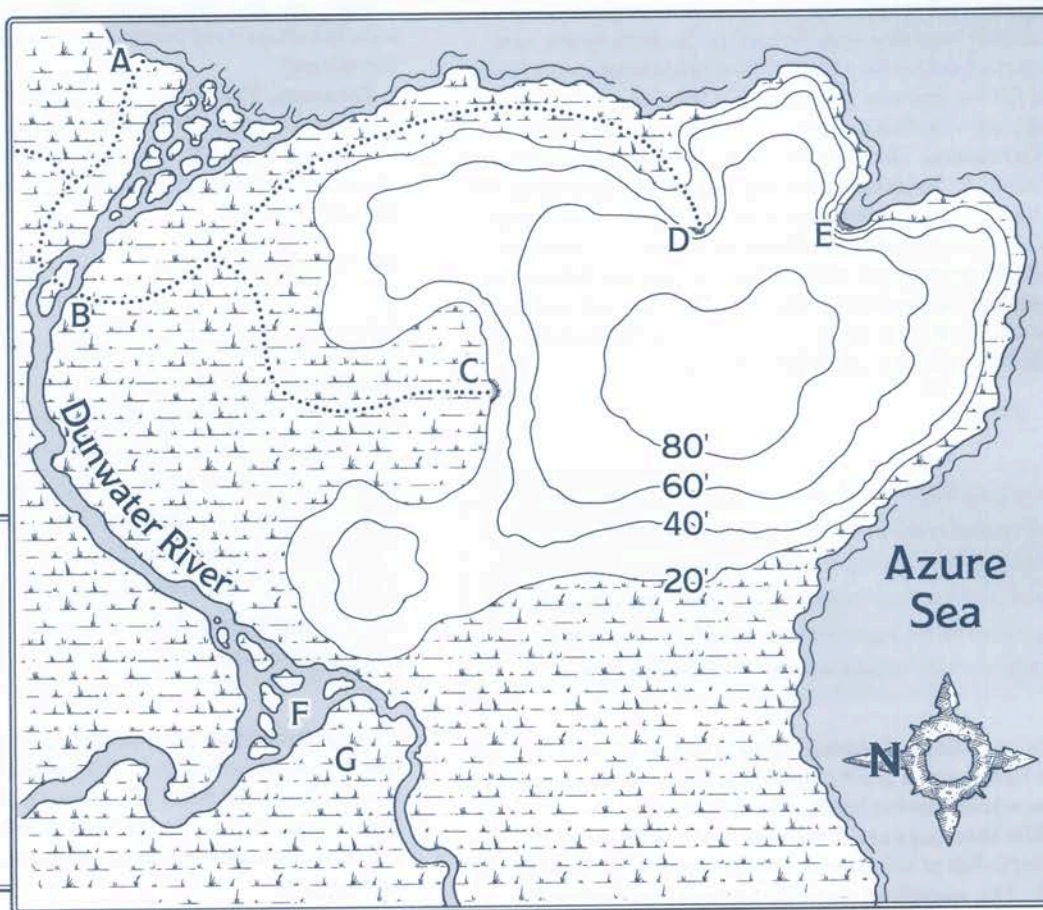
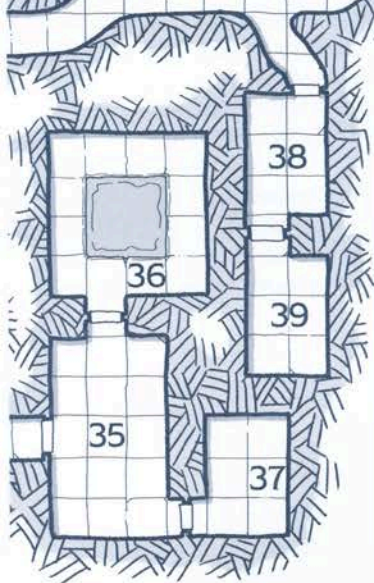
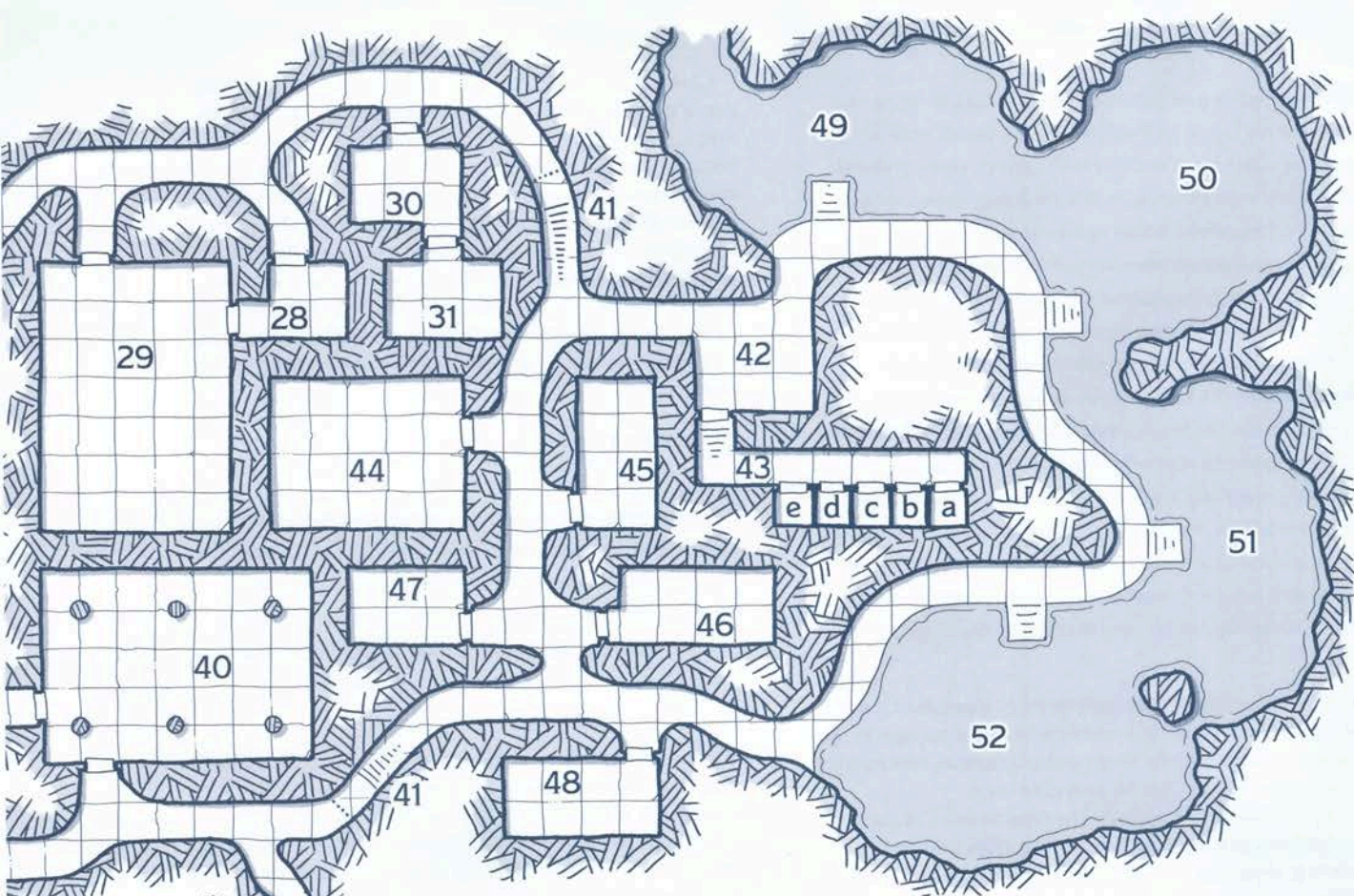
Gate



Pit Trap



MAP 3.1: LIZARFOLK LAIR



Warm air wafts gently through the doorway. At one end of the room is a large firepit in which a bed of coals is burning. Over it are multiple half-cooked, skinned animal carcasses impaled on spits that are being turned by four unarmed lizardfolk. A fifth worker bastes the carcasses with liquid spooned from a wooden bucket. In the center of the room is a long wooden table cluttered with an assortment of knives, raw meat, and splinters of bone.

On the floor beneath the table are some uncured hides; beside the table are two large wooden buckets.

Against the south wall rests a large wooden cabinet; its shelves are piled high with clay pots, bowls, basins, and drinking mugs. Against the west wall stand three large wooden barrels. Against the east wall is an open wooden cask containing a white crystalline substance, and three wooden buckets. A large iron cauldron, currently empty, hangs from the ceiling, suspended over the firepit.

The five **lizardfolk commoners** (see appendix C) fight only if they are cornered. Otherwise, they escape to the nearest barracks (area 9), whose occupants return to the kitchen in the shortest possible time.

If the characters convince the commoners of their good intentions, such as by offering gifts and by not drawing weapons, the lizardfolk lead them to area 9.

The basting liquid is a spiced oil. Two of the barrels contain fresh water, and the third is half full of brine. The cask contains salt. Two of the buckets by the east wall contain herbs, and the third holds rendered animal fat. All the items in this room are normal for the place—none are valuable or of more than passing interest.

Carcasses. The carcasses are those of a sahuagin and a shark. If Oceanus is with the party, he can identify the sahuagin carcass for what it is. Otherwise, a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature) check enables a character to deduce that the carcass belongs to some sort of humanoid sea creature. The hides under the table are from those creatures, and the buckets contain their entrails and edible organs.

8. STORES

Hanging from hooks set into the ceiling are six carcasses of various shapes and sizes. Against the south wall are four open barrels and a lidless wicker basket. Against the west wall are three large clay jars, a wooden chest, and a sealed barrel. Against the east wall is a large wooden cage in which squawk a dozen irritable waterfowl.

The open barrels contain apples, pears, mixed nuts, and the carcass of a giant constrictor snake pickled in brine. The wicker basket holds wild cherries.

The three jars are filled with light, edible oil. The chest is full of wild herbs, and the sealed barrel is full of salt. The waterfowl are ordinary and pose no threat.

Carcasses. The carcasses include those of a manta ray, a giant frog, an adult male hobgoblin, two sharks, and a giant crayfish. One of the sharks has a mostly smashed armor plate embedded in its side. The plate is made from coral and wood and appears to have been driven into the creature. If Oceanus is with the party, he identifies the shark's armor as of sahuagin manufacture and relates that animals like this serve the sahuagin as war beasts (see the "Shell Shark" entry in appendix C). In his absence, a character can glean the same information with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check.

9. BARRACKS

Fifteen straw mattresses are placed around the room, each with a small wooden chest at its foot. A long table is in the center of the room, with benches to each side.

Four lizardfolk warriors receive orders from a heavily armored officer. Another lizardfolk dressed in a robe stands to one side, observing the assembly.

If they have not been called elsewhere, four **lizardfolk**, one **lizardfolk scaleshield** (see appendix C), and one **lizardfolk shaman** prepare for patrol in this room.

If the party arrives here accompanied by friendly lizardfolk, the shaman initially urges the guards to attack. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check by a character prevents a fight, and instead the lizardfolk take the characters in custody and take them to meet the queen.

Treasure. The chests are unlocked and contain personal possessions. Five of the chests each contain a purse with 6 sp. Three of the other chests hold a whetstone, a dagger in a scabbard, and a crude wooden carving of a crocodile.

10. BANQUET HALL

Five unarmed lizardfolk are preparing this area for a feast, setting tables with wood and stone utensils.

Several long wooden tables are placed end to end in the center of the hall, with wooden benches running along each side. At the south end of the tables is a large wooden chair; four slightly smaller chairs flank it, two on each side facing the table. Placed on the tables are earthenware pots, jars, plates and cups, five drinking mugs, and woven baskets. Against the west and east walls are tall wooden cupboards.

The five **lizardfolk commoners** (see appendix C) fight only if they are cornered. Otherwise, they escape to the nearest barracks (area 29), whose occupants return to the banquet hall in the shortest possible time.

The cupboards contain extra mugs, platters, bowls, and so forth.



11. THRONE ROOM

Two sets of three pillars flank a central area where two lizardfolk hatchlings are playing. At the far end of the room, a wooden throne stands on a low, stone dais. Carvings of reptiles decorate the throne, and glints of reflected light hint at the presence of inset gemstones.

The heads of several creatures hang on the walls, mounted on plaques of wood for display as trophies.

The hatchlings, one male and one female, wandered here from area 24. They have no treasure and are fearless and quite harmless. On encountering the characters, they exhibit great curiosity about these strange beings. Unless firmly discouraged, they attach themselves to the characters and follow them wherever they go, making strangely adorable nuisances of themselves.

Reptilian Throne. The throne is carved with images of snakes and lizards. Twenty translucent blue-green stones of have been inset to represent the eyes of these creatures. These are of worthless quartz, though to the unskilled eye they appear reasonably valuable. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes their true nature.

A hidden space under the throne can be discovered by someone who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. The compartment contains the key to the chest in area 26.

Behind the throne, a secret trapdoor in the floor opens onto a vertical shaft, 5 feet square and 20 feet deep. The door requires a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check to be noticed. Iron handrails are set into one side of the shaft. It descends to a tunnel, 10 feet wide by 10 feet high, that leads to another identical vertical shaft that ascends into area 34. The tunnel and the shafts have neither light nor occupants.

Trophy Heads. The trophy heads are as follows, from north to south:

West wall: giant crayfish, carrion crawler, hippopotamus, hobgoblin, sahuagin

East wall: brown bear, lion, shark, giant frog, another shark

You can elect not to name the creatures but simply give detailed physical descriptions, leaving the players to make the identifications. If Oceanus accompanies the party, he can identify the sharks, the giant frog, the giant crayfish, and the sahuagin.

VALUABLE NUISANCES

The presence of the two lizardfolk hatchlings in the company of the characters might create problems, but it can also be helpful to the mission's success—because it causes the lizardfolk in the lair to pause instead of immediately attacking. During that time, the characters can take an opportunity to engage the lizardfolk in dialogue so that hostilities might be avoided.

12. TEMPLE

Sweet perfume hangs in the air of this place of worship. At the far end, a lizardfolk crouches before a stone altar. To each side of the altar are small lit burners while, at its center, a candelabrum holds four lit candles.

Above the altar, the south wall is decorated with a marine fresco of a lizardfolk warrior brandishing a club.

Blue and green drapes cover the east and west walls.

The mural depicts Semuanya, the lizardfolk deity. The club in the mural has sharp-looking seashells embedded in it.

A single **lizardfolk shaman** worships at the altar in this room. Two **amphisbaenae** (see appendix C) serve as guardians here, and live within the hollow altar.

Development. Only the shamans, the queen, and the subchief know about the amphisbaenae. The serpentine monsters attack anything within 10 feet of the altar, with the exception of the aforementioned individuals.

When the characters enter, the shaman is meditating. He is roused by the sound of combat or any direct attempts to contact him. Unless cornered, he flees to area 20 and returns with the occupants of that room. If they are gone or slain, he flees, never to be seen again. If he cannot escape, he fights alongside the amphisbaenae.

Treasure. Two tridents and two folded nets are offerings and war trophies taken from the sahuagin, given to Semuanya. The candelabrum is worth 25 gp. The silver incense burners on the altar are worth 10 gp each.

13. VESTRY

Seven carved wooden masks representing crocodile and serpent faces hang from the walls of this room.

The masks are decorated with blue and green feathers.

Against the west wall stands an iron chest, its lid closed.

Hidden inside one of the masks is the key to the chest in area 18. It is found by any character inspecting the masks who makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Chest. The chest is unlocked but trapped with a poison gas trap. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When triggered, the trap fills the entire room with noxious green gas. Creatures caught in the gas must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or cough and choke loudly for 1d4 minutes; those affected by the gas are far more likely to attract the attention of wandering patrols and nearby inhabitants of the lair.

Treasure. The chest contains the following items: a silver gong and striker (25 gp), five silver bells (5 gp each), a large silver chalice (50 gp), and a curved wooden horn.

14–17. SHAMAN'S QUARTERS

These rooms, though not identical, are very similar. The following description serves for any one of them.

This bare, cell-like room contains a plain wooden table and chair, a straw mattress, and a small wooden chest.

The furniture varies slightly from room to room. All the chests are unlocked. Each contains personal effects and a small ivory statuette of Semuanya. These are of no value but are regarded as very valuable by the shamans.

Treasure. The chests in these rooms contain a variety of items. One chest has a wooden club and a leather purse containing 10 ep. Another holds a silver belt buckle (5 gp), a leather purse containing 20 sp, and a long, brilliantly colored bird feather (no value). A third chest has a leather purse containing 7 ep, and the final one holds a bolt of blue-green cloth (no value) and a pouch containing 25 sp.

18. SENIOR SHAMAN'S LIVING QUARTERS

A wooden table with two chairs is set against the south wall. On the table are a carafe, a cup, and a wicker basket. A smaller table stands against the north wall; on it sits an unlit incense burner.

The key to the chest here lies inside a mask in area 13.

Examining the incense burner reveals a small key that unlocks the chest in area 19.

Treasure. The carafe, cup, and incense burner are silver, worth 10 gp, 3 gp, and 5 gp respectively. The chest contains 20 gp and a *potion of water breathing*.

19. SENIOR SHAMAN'S SLEEPING QUARTERS

A single cot rests by the south wall, an iron chest set at its foot. A large wooden carving of a lizardfolk brandishing a club hangs on the east wall.

The key to the chest in this room is hidden in area 18.

The wooden carving on the wall is of no value.

Chest. The chest is locked and can be opened by the key found in area 18 or by a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The chest is trapped with a poison needle. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When triggered, the trap fires a small poisoned dart from the lock. Any creature standing in front of the lock is automatically struck by the needle, taking 1 piercing damage and 4 (1d4 + 2) poison damage.

Treasure. The chest contains the personal wealth of the senior shaman: a silver figure of Semuanya (25 gp), a leather bag containing 50 ep, and a *pearl of power*.

20. CHIEF SHAMAN'S LIVING QUARTERS

If the shaman in area 12 escaped and alerted the shamans here, the room is unoccupied. Otherwise, use the description below.

A wooden table set against the south wall features a wooden bowl of fruit. A wooden bench is against the north wall, and in the center of the room a wooden chair faces the bench.

Three lizardfolk in robes are reciting a sibilant chant.

A **lizardfolk shaman** is leading two disciples (**lizardfolk**) in a short prayer to Semuanya.

If the party arrives here accompanied by friendly lizardfolk, the shaman initially urges the guards to attack. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check by a character prevents a fight, and instead the lizardfolk take the characters in custody and take them to meet the queen.

Treasure. The shaman wears a gold necklace adorned with polished pearls (100 gp).

21. CHIEF SHAMAN'S SLEEPING QUARTERS

A single cot is set against the west wall, an iron chest at its foot. Opposite, against the east wall, stands a small wooden table. On it are two items made of silver, a statuette of a lizardfolk and an incense burner.

The key to the chest in this room is affixed to the underside of the table with a blob of gummy resin.

Chest. The chest is locked and can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The chest is trapped with a swinging blade trap. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When the trap is triggered, a scything blade swings up, striking at any creature within 5 feet of the front of the chest. Affected creatures must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) slashing damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

Treasure. The incense burner is worth 5 gp, and the silver statue is worth 50 gp. The chest contains the following items: a bolt of green velvet cloth (5 gp), a large leather sack holding 200 gp, an ivory figurine depicting Semuanya (25 gp), and a small, padded wooden box containing two doses of antitoxin (100 gp).

22. CAVE OF THE GIANT LIZARDS

If the party arrives here directly from the marsh, read:

A cave entrance yawns thirty feet wide and fifteen feet high. The marshy ground turns to mud near the cave,

and tracks from large creatures pass in and out. Inside the cave, the floor consists of thick mud, and you find it impossible to move at normal speed.

The cave reaches a height of about forty feet. At the far side of the cave, a narrow stone pathway connects two arched entrances that lead deeper into the hillside, one in the northeast corner of the cave and the other in the southeast corner. A sudden movement in the mud is all the warning you get before six forms leap forth.

If the party arrives from inside the lizardfolk lair, read:

You have entered a huge cave on a narrow stone pathway that runs along the eastern portion of the south wall. The pathway connects two tunnel entrances—one in the southeast corner, the other in the northeast. At the far side of the cave is a gaping hole thirty feet wide and fifteen feet high that leads out into the marsh and the open air.

Apart from the stone pathway, the floor is covered with thick mud; tracks indicate that some large creatures have passed back and forth. There is sudden movement in the mud, and six large reptilian forms rush toward you.

With the exception of the edge of the pit to the west, this area is difficult terrain. The mud here is 15 inches deep.

Six **giant lizards** lair in this mud-filled cave. They have been trained to serve as guards by the lizardfolk and attack intruders immediately. Any adult lizardfolk can call off the lizards. The giant lizards can (and will) pass through the cave entrance to pursue characters out into the marsh.

Development. Combat in this area alerts the lizardfolk in area 23.

Treasure. About 5 feet north of the center of the southern wall, partially buried in the mud, is a breastplate—much battered and twisted and now detached from the full suit of plate armor it once belonged to. Beneath the breastplate, buried in mud, is a longsword.

These items were the property of a member of a band of inexperienced adventurers who tried to penetrate the lair on their own some weeks ago and were killed in the attempt. The breastplate is too battered to perform any useful function, but the weapon is a +1 *longsword*.

23. GUARD ROOM

Unless the sounds of combat in area 22 are magically silenced, the lizardfolk in this room rush there immediately to assist the giant lizards. Adjust the description below if they have not moved to that area.

This bare room features only a wooden bench set against the west wall.

Three **lizardfolk** keep guard in this room, alert for unusual sounds coming from the north or south. If the guards have not moved elsewhere, they are sitting on the bench, talking and keeping their weapons near.

24. NURSERY

A bustle of activity fills this room, and it is fairly noisy—over a dozen lizardfolk adults and hatchlings mingle and play here. This appears to be a large nursery, with adult lizardfolk and hatchlings distributed throughout the area in small groups. The young play or sleep while the adults chat, drink, and oil their bodies.

Straw mattresses are scattered around the floor. Wooden tables hold earthenware cups, mugs, pitchers, and clay bowls filled with wild flowers. Chairs sit beside the tables, with wooden stools here and there.

There are twenty **lizardfolk commoners** (see appendix C) and thirteen lizardfolk hatchlings here. The hatchlings do not fight and pose no threat to the party.

If the lizardfolk hatchlings from area 11 are following the characters, they abandon the party and rush to play with the other hatchlings when the group arrives here.

The characters' arrival is unlikely to be noticed because of the general hubbub, but their presence will certainly be detected if they move into the room.

Even when their intrusion is noticed, the characters will not be greeted with hostility unless they take offensive action. The lizardfolk adults defend their hatchlings and their property, doing their utmost to prevent the

characters from entering area 25. If a fight breaks out, two lizardfolk adults try to leave through the east door to find the guards in area 23.

If the characters leave without taking action other than observing, the adults do not pursue them. But if the characters take aggressive action (fighting, looting, or even merely threatening) and any adults are alive when the characters depart, one or two adults try to sneak undetected to the nearest room that contains warriors.

25. HATCHERY

It is discernibly warmer here and a slightly fetid odor wafts from within. The floor of the room is mud, smooth and unbroken except near the door where three tiny reptilian shapes crawl among what look like egg fragments.

More than two hundred lizardfolk eggs are buried in the mud in this room. Three near the door have hatched very recently. Any blow will kill these hatchlings—even picking them up carelessly could do them considerable harm. There is nothing else of note here.

26. GATE AND TREASURE ROOM

As the characters move along the hallway toward areas 26 and 27, read:

A stout wooden gate bars your way, reaching from floor to ceiling. It is hinged at the walls and locked in the center.



The gate that allows access to this area and area 27 is normally closed and locked. The gate's lock can be opened with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or the gate can be broken (AC 15, 18 hit points, damage threshold 10). Guards from area 27 rush forward to attack any intruders that make noise at the gate.

Area 26 is accessed by a secret door in the east side of the corridor. Noticing the door requires a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. If someone opens the door and is able to see what lies beyond, read:

A ten-foot-square entrance expands to the east to form a room of considerable size.

The short corridor that leads into area 26 is the site of a pit trap. The trap is well concealed by a false floor and requires a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to be noticed. Creatures that step on the false floor fall through into a bog pit (see the "Hazards in the Marsh" sidebar), taking normal falling damage.

Inside the pit are five **giant poisonous snakes**, which attack anything that falls in.

As soon as a character occupies the space to the east of the bog pit and can see farther into the room, read:

At the far end of the chamber ahead, you see some sacks and a large chest.

The chest is trapped with a poison needle. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When the trap is triggered, a small poisoned dart is ejected from the lock. Any creature standing in front of the lock is automatically struck by the needle, taking 1 piercing and 4 (1d4 + 2) poison damage.

Treasure. The chest and sacks contain the lair's wealth. The chest holds 1,700 ep, a gold-banded ivory scepter (100 gp), and a gold crown in the shape of a coiled serpent (250 gp). Inside the sacks are various silks and hides (100 gp total).

27. GUARD ROOM

Thirty feet beyond the gate is a bare room with a wooden bench set against the east wall.

A **lizardfolk render** (see appendix C) and a **lizardfolk** occupy this area, ordered to stand guard over the lair's treasure (area 26). They do not open the gate unless commanded to do so by the queen or the subchief.

The guards in this area keep a watch on the gate and the secret door that leads to area 26. They defend the gate if they hear anyone trying to attack it, but a successful attempt at unlocking it does not draw their attention.

28. OFFICER'S QUARTERS

A plain wooden table and a wooden chair are set against the south wall of this room. On the table sits a wooden bowl. A single bed stands against the east wall, a wooden chest at its foot.

The chest contains personal possessions, a dagger in a scabbard, and a purse with 25 ep.

29. BARRACKS

Adjust the description depending on the number of lizardfolk found here, as detailed below.

About a dozen straw mattresses lie scattered around the floor, each with a wooden chest at its foot. At the south end of the room, a long table is set centrally, wooden benches to either side. A few lizardfolk are seated on benches or mattresses, talking and tending to their weapons.

Four **lizardfolk**, one **lizardfolk render** (see appendix C), and one **lizardfolk scaleshield** (see appendix C) are in this chamber, awaiting their turn at patrol duty, if they have not been called elsewhere.

If the party arrives here accompanied by friendly lizardfolk, the scaleshield initially urges the guards to attack. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check by a character prevents a fight, and instead the lizardfolk take the characters in custody and take them to meet the queen.

Treasure. Some of the chests contain personal possessions and the following items, distributed randomly:

- In each of five chests, a purse containing 5 sp
- A seashell necklace (no value)
- A pewter mug (no value)
- A lump of pink coral (10 gp)
- A leather bag containing five irregularly shaped stones (no value)

30. SUBCHIEF'S LIVING QUARTERS

The furniture in this pleasant chamber is of high quality. A wooden table stands in the center of the room with four chairs around it. On the table sits a gleaming bowl. In the southeast corner stands a small closed cask on which stand an unlit lantern and a goblet.

The bowl is made of pure electrum and is worth 50 gp. The cask contains wine—quite pleasant to the human palate. The goblet is made of silver and is worth 7 gp, and the lantern is a normal hooded lantern.

31. SUBCHIEF'S SLEEPING QUARTERS

A single cot, set against the east wall, features a rug beneath it made of a lion's skin. In the southwest corner of the room is a brass-bound wooden chest, its lid closed and secured with a heavy metal padlock.

The lock on the chest can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The chest bears a paralyzing gas trap. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers it.

When triggered, the trap fills the room with paralyzing gas. Creatures caught in the gas must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1d4 minutes. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each minute.

Treasure. The chest contains these items: five leather belts with electrum buckles set with pearls (10 gp each), an electrum armband (20 gp), a leather purse containing 50 sp, and a prismatic kaleidoscope (no value).

32. GUARD ROOM

Four lizardfolk in this chamber stand on guard, ready to challenge intruders. This area is bare of furniture except for a wooden bench set against the east wall.

Three **lizardfolk** and one **lizardfolk scaleshield** (see appendix C) stand guard here. The guards immediately challenge any approaching characters. They have been selected specifically to guard the approach to their queen's quarters. Charisma (Intimidation) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks against these guards are made with disadvantage. The characters must present a convincing story to get access to area 33 and beyond; otherwise they must leave the area immediately.

33. QUEEN'S LIVING QUARTERS

Though hardly sumptuous, this room appears more comfortably furnished than any others you have seen in the lair. A circular table of polished wood with four chairs set around it sits in the center of the room. On the table are arranged three decorative items with a metallic sheen—a platter, a carafe, and a goblet.

In the southeast corner is an armchair that has been crudely upholstered.

The items on the table are made of silver. The platter and the carafe are worth 10 gp each, while the goblet is worth 5 gp. All three are engraved with a simple pictograph showing a lizard standing proudly with its forked tongue extended.

34. QUEEN'S SLEEPING QUARTERS

A large ornate bed with its head against the center of the south wall dominates this chamber; some rugs and cushions lie scattered atop it. Next to the bed on the east side is a small table, featuring a crudely framed drawing of a powerful-looking lizardfolk queen.

In the southeast corner sits an iron chest, closed and padlocked. Next to it is a large, elegantly carved wooden wardrobe.

The secret door in the southwest corner requires a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice. It leads to area 11.

The chest is trapped with a needle. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 12 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the chest without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When triggered, the trap fires a small needle from the lock. Any creature standing in front of the lock is automatically struck by the needle. The needle deals no damage and is not poisoned. An anxious character might assume otherwise; feel free to describe vague pains, brief numbness, and so on to set a character on edge, but a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals the truth of the matter.

Treasure. The chest holds these items: a set of leather straps and belts with gold buckles and adorned with pearls (100 gp), a gold-banded dagger and scabbard (25 gp), a leather bag containing 25 gp, a flask of perfumed oil (5 gp), and a jade figurine of Semuanya (25 gp).

The wardrobe contains a fine brocade robe in rich red cloth, decorated with gold thread. The robe is worth 100 gp and serves as the queen's mark of royalty.

35. QUEEN'S LOUNGE

In the center of the room stands a circular table of polished wood with two wooden chairs set to either side. A lizardfolk sits in each chair, hunched over the table. The table holds a square gaming board with alternating black and white squares, a silver bowl, a decanter, and two goblets.

A brocade upholstered couch sits against the south wall, with a large glass mirror in a wooden frame hanging on the wall above it. The couch is flanked by two wooden chests.

Unless extreme circumstances prevail (for example, the guards in area 32 have beaten a fighting retreat here), two **lizardfolk commoners** (see appendix C) reside here, playing a game at the table.

These lizardfolk try to avoid a fight, preferring to flee and take refuge in the pool in area 36. They fight if they are cornered or if they see the intruding party attempt to enter area 37.

Treasure. One chest holds the following items: a set of leather straps and belts with silver buckles and adorned with coral (10 gp), a flask of perfumed oil (5 gp), a silk scarf (3 gp), and a purse containing 50 ep.

The second chest holds the following items: a silver mirror (10 gp), a flask of perfumed oil (5 gp), a bolt of velvet cloth (20 gp), and a purse containing 50 ep.

The bowl, the decanter, and the two goblets are made of silver and are worth 10 gp, 5 gp, and 3 gp each, respectively.

36. ROYAL BATH

This bare, stone-flagged room features a twenty-foot-square pool of clear water at its center. The floor of the pool is stepped to provide easy access.

The steps into the pool are between 2 and 6 inches high. Clear, warm water fills the pool, though it is not possible for the characters to see to the bottom at the center, where the water is 15 feet deep. The lizardfolk commoners, if they fled from area 35, are hiding in that location.

37. ROYAL HATCHERY

It is noticeably warmer in this area. The walls and ceiling of the room are unremarkable, and the floor is covered in mud.

The warm mud on the floor is 6 inches deep. Buried in the mud are twelve lizardfolk eggs (not visible above the surface). These are the queen's eggs, which are very valuable to her. Unlike with the eggs in the hatchery (area 25), the characters might succeed if they attempt to use these eggs as bargaining tools.

38. MINISTER'S QUARTERS

This is a small, comfortable room. In the center is a circular wooden table on which lies a closed book. To one side of the table, an aged lizardfolk occupies a crudely upholstered armchair. To the other side, a plain wooden chair sits empty. In the northwest corner, a brass tripod supports a brass bowl filled with hot coals. The room is warm and smoky.

Seated in the armchair, reading a papyrus scroll, is the queen's leading advisor and by far the most intelligent lizardfolk in the lair: the aged minister, Sauriv. The minister does not fight, even in self-defense, and can be slain without undue effort. His first reaction to intruders, assuming he is not immediately attacked, will be one of mild surprise, asking them who they are, where they come from, who sent them, and so forth. He knows they are not ambassadors, for he has made no arrangements with humans. Nevertheless, he is amiable and willing to talk.

Sauriv has the statistics of a lizardfolk **noble**, with these changes:

- Sauriv is lawful neutral.
- His Armor Class is 13 (natural armor).
- He has a swimming speed of 30 feet, and he can hold his breath for 15 minutes.
- He has a Wisdom score of 18 (+4).
- His skills are Deception +7, Insight +6, Persuasion +7.
- His passive Perception score is 14, and he has disadvantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks.
- He speaks Draconic and Common.

Sauriv is extremely wise, and it is due to his inspiration that the strategy of forging an alliance against the sahuagin was devised. He arranged for the purchase of the weapons the *Sea Ghost* has been transporting (as related in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*).

His appearance betrays his age. His teeth and claws are stained and blunted, his eyesight is fading, and his senses of hearing and smell have lost their acuity. He wears a large gold chain (200 gp) around his neck.

Development. Before any conversation about the alliance or the sahuagin can occur, the minister must be satisfied that the characters are not allied with the sahuagin. As long as the characters haven't been unnecessarily brutal in their treatment of other lizardfolk, he reaches this conclusion if any character makes a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. But if they have slain any lizardfolk, the DC of this check increases by 2 for each victim.

On a successful check, the minister is satisfied that the characters are not in league with the sahuagin, and gives them information about the planned attack on the sahuagin lair. Further, he offers to arrange an immediate meeting between the characters and the queen, with the purpose of bringing humans into the alliance.

On a failed check, or if the characters are noncommittal about their relationship with sahuagin (or if they pretend they are friendly with them), the minister makes no mention of the alliance or the impending assault. Instead, he excuses himself and goes to area 40 to warn the queen of the presence of intruders. Guards return to area 38 to accompany the characters to the drill hall.

In this event, if the characters do not cooperate and resist attempts to take them into custody, their mission ends in failure. The queen immediately orders her followers to hunt down and kill or capture the party—the chance of encountering a patrol in the corridors of the lair increases from 1 in 12 every 10 minutes (see "Patrols in the Lair") to 1 in 2 every 5 minutes.

Reading Materials. The scroll the old lizardfolk minister peruses is written in Common and was sent by the local locathah chief to the lizardfolk queen. It identifies the locathah currently present in the lair as the chief's ambassadors and authorizes them to act on his behalf in all matters pertaining to the alliance. It has no specifics regarding the nature of the alliance or those against whom the alliance is directed; the word "sahuagin" is never used.

The book on the table, *Power Politics* by Abel Mackie, is written in Common. It discusses the trickier and more devious side of political life. It can be sold for 5 gp.



THE COOPERATIVE MINISTER

Sauriv, the lizardfolk minister, offers the characters the most direct route to gaining a peaceful audience with the queen and a positive resolution for both Saltmarsh and the lizardfolk. In conversation with the characters, he should immediately inform them that it's the sahuagin that pose the true threat to the region.

What He Wants. The minister wants what the queen wants: a strong alliance, united for the purpose of driving the sahuagin back into the deeps.

39. MINISTER'S SLEEPING QUARTERS

A single bed is set against the east wall. A small wooden bookcase containing five books stands against the south wall; beside it is an old leather chair. Against the west wall of the room is an iron chest, with a closed padlock in the hasp. On top of the lid rests a single glove. Next to the bed stands a tall wardrobe, its door partially open. It appears to be empty.

Any character who inspects the chest notices that its key is adhered to the rear exterior panel of the chest with a blob of sticky resin. The blob is poisonous to the touch, and any creature that touches it with bare skin must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw every 15 minutes. The glove atop the chest has traces of the poison resin on its fingertips—a fact obvious to anyone inspecting the glove.

The five books are among the minister's favorites:

The Politics of Power by Lucia Domici (5 gp), another rather obscure work dealing with the shifter side of politics.

The Triumph of Diplomacy by Tyrons Scroot (5 gp), a history of the author's successes in the field of diplomacy.

The Occult Properties of Gemstones by Archmage Tenser (10 gp). This book is another of Tenser's tomes on his favorite subject (wealth) and follows on from his earlier book, *The Magical Properties of Gemstones* (found in area 2 of the house in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*). If the players want their characters to read this book and ask to know something of its contents, your imagination might be stretched! Reading the book conveys no special advantage to the characters, and most of the contents are too obscure for full comprehension.

A Lizard Language and Common Tongue Grammar written by an anonymous author (10 gp), although the introduction describes him as a druid. Intensive study of this book allows the reader to learn Draconic, the native language of the lizardfolk. You decide the time required to acquire this new language. (The downtime rules in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* provide some guidelines.)

The Nature of the Sahuagin by Professor Gaxm (15 gp). This slim volume contains a detailed account of the nature of sahuagin. If players want their characters to read it and ask to know something of its contents, summarize the passages that deal with the sahuagin in the *Monster Manual*, omitting statistical details such as Armor Class, Hit Dice, and so forth, and inform the players that the rest follows in the same vein.

Treasure. The chest is locked and can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It holds these items: a leather bag containing 50 ep, a flask of perfumed oil (5 gp), a velvet bag containing five pearls (3 gp each), and a small vial of basic poison (see chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*).

40. DRILL HALL

This open area features six floor-to-ceiling pillars that demarcate a central area bare of furniture. In this central area, the earth floor has been packed closer than elsewhere, as if by the passage of many feet. Several wooden benches stand near the north and south walls.

A large mattress has been fixed to the center of the east wall. Attached to it is a large target dummy with the head of a fish-like creature atop it.

Several lizardfolk are practicing combat against one another or throwing javelins at the dummy. A powerfully built and tall lizardfolk female stands with several of the heavily armored warriors. She observes the training through narrowed eyes. Another lizardfolk stands near the leader, dressed in a kelp-colored robe and holding a long, polished tooth.

Othokent, Irhtos (**lizardfolk subchief**), and two **lizardfolk scaleshields** observe eight **lizardfolk** and one **lizardfolk render** as they train for battle (see appendix C for all but the **lizardfolk**).

Othokent is a **lizard queen**, with these changes:

- Her alignment is lawful neutral.
- She speaks Common as well as Abyssal and Draconic.

If the characters enter this area with weapons drawn or otherwise behave threateningly, they are attacked without hesitation. The lizardfolk in the drill hall aggressively protect the queen. If the characters refrain from attacking and call out to the queen to parley, she holds her warriors back and enters discussions with them.

Target Practice. The object lashed to the mattress is a training dummy assembled from cloth, wood, and straw. A rotting sahuagin head is affixed to the makeshift body, which is approximately the size of a real sahuagin.

Treasure. None of the lizardfolk here have valuables. The queen and the subchief carry the keys to the chests located in their quarters.

41. THICK GATE

A wooden gate bars your way, reaching from floor to ceiling. It is hinged at the walls and locked in the center.

One of these gates is located on each end of the corridor that allows access to the eastern section of the lair. A gate's lock can be opened with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or the gate can be broken (AC 15, 18 hit points, damage threshold 10).

If a gate is opened or broken, the view ahead shows a steep flight of stairs leading down.

Under normal circumstances, if any occupants of the lair want to pass through either of these gates into the area the gates enclose, they must wait for a guard patrol to appear and unlock the gate. If the characters knock at one of these gates or otherwise attract attention from those on the other side, the lizardfolk at the nearest guard post (area 42 or area 48) will come to investigate within 1d6 rounds.

Conversely, any lizardfolk that want to pass into the western part of the lair are accompanied to the gate by a guard patrol, and the gate is locked behind them after they depart.

42. GUARD POST

Four lizardfolk are on guard here. An iron-bound wooden door stands in the southwest corner of this area. A rough wooden bench sits next to it, set against the south wall.

Three **lizardfolk** and one **lizardfolk scaleshield** (see appendix C) stand guard here. Melee in this area is not heard by the occupants of area 44, but if one of the guards escapes, it goes there and calls for help.

Treasure. The guards carry no valuables. The scaleshield keeps the keys to the cells in area 43 on her belt.

43. PRISONER CELL ENTRY HALL

A short flight of steep, rough steps leads to a narrow east-west passage that ends in a blank wall some sixty feet away. To your right are five iron-bound doors, all closed. The doors have no exterior features except for a keyhole midway up the left side of each one.

The cell doors are locked, and the keys are in the possession of the lizardfolk scaleshield in area 42. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can open a lock. Each of the doors can be forced open with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check, or it can be broken (AC 15, 18 hit points, damage threshold 10).

Communication through a closed door is muffled at best, and it will be difficult to carry on more than a very fragmentary conversation between any prisoner and a would-be rescuer. A character must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check whenever meaningful communication with a prisoner is attempted.

43A. SAHUAGIN WATER CELL

Where you would expect to see a floor, there is instead a watery surface. Halfway across the room, a metal grill extends across the space.

Though the water is not particularly clear, you can see a shape swimming around below the surface beyond the grill.

Above the water, the cell is bare.

The cell is divided into two parts: a shallow area and a deep area, separated vertically by a metal grill. The grill is hinged and locked. It can be opened with the key to the cell, or by a character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Before the grill is accessed, any character who forces open the door must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the water from the forward momentum. The grill prevents anyone who falls into the shallow portion of the water cell from tumbling into the depths.

A **sahuagin** captive is kept in the deep area of this cell. This creature speaks Common (from its background as a scout and spy) and is extremely cunning and subtle. If the characters do not realize its true nature, the sahuagin tells them that it is a triton held captive by the evil lizardfolk, and it offers to assist the characters against their "mutual enemies" if they release it. Even if the characters correctly identify it (perhaps because they have seen one before), it still tries to persuade them to take it along, offering help against the lizardfolk in exchange for its freedom. It is very persuasive in its arguments, not hesitating to lie about its abilities in order to enhance its potential as a possible ally. If the characters accept the sahuagin's offer, it deserts them at the first opportunity and returns to its tribe. (The sahuagin must

return to water every 4 hours, and it uses that fact as its excuse for an attempt to escape, if needed.) While it is with the party, it fights any hostile creature they encounter with great ferocity.

If the characters decline the sahuagin's offer of an alliance, it attacks them and tries to force its way past them to escape by way of the sea cave at area 49. It has no weapons or treasure.

Oceanus. If the sea elf is with the party, he recognizes the sahuagin on sight and immediately identifies it for the characters. Oceanus advises strongly against allying with it and accepting its assistance. If the rest of the characters overrule him, he tries to kill the sahuagin then and there. If unassisted and uninterrupted, Oceanus kills the weakened sahuagin in 2 rounds.

43B. EMPTY WATER CELL

This cell is identical to 43a but is empty, and its vertical grill is open.

43C–43D. EMPTY CELL

This cell is empty.

43E. LIZARDFOLK CELL

A single lizardfolk is confined in this otherwise bare cell.

A **lizardfolk commoner** (see appendix C) has been kept here for a few days as a disciplinary measure. It hisses and cowers in the corner if approached. It escapes to area 44 if it can.

Development. If the sahuagin is with the party, the lizardfolk commoner attacks it immediately.

44. BARRACKS

Three lizardfolk are seated at benches around a plain wooden table in the center of this room. Eleven straw mattresses, with a wooden chest beside each, lie along the walls.

Two **lizardfolk** and one **lizardfolk scaleshield** (see appendix C) are seated at the table, playing a dice game for copper pieces.

Treasure. The lizardfolk scaleshield wears a silvered necklace (10 gp). The pot for the dice game consists of 20 cp.

The chests are unlocked. They contain a variety of leather belts and straps, personal possessions, and the following items distributed randomly:

- Four purses containing 6 sp each
- Three flasks of oil (3 sp each)
- A bag of seashells (no value)
- A solid quartz sphere (no value)
- A dagger in a scabbard (2 gp)

45–46. OFFICERS' QUARTERS

These rooms are very similar; the following description serves for each, though the positions of the furniture can be varied if desired.

A plain wooden table and two wooden chairs stand near the wall farthest from the door. To one side of the room is a single bed, just a rough mattress set on a wooden frame. At the foot of the bed rests a wooden chest.

The table in area 45 holds a wooden dish, and the table in area 46 has a ceramic pitcher and mug.

Treasure. The chests are unlocked and contain personal possessions. The chest in area 45 contains a dagger in a scabbard (2 gp) and a purse with 20 sp. The chest in area 46 contains a purse that holds 15 sp and a chunk of raw amber (10 gp).

47. GARBAGE ROOM

Unlike most of the lair, this area is not illuminated. If the characters use a light source or have some other way of seeing in the dark, read:

The room smells of decay. Scattered on the floor are broken and rusted weapons, rotted leather straps, a pile of moldy sacks, dirty and torn cloths of various colors, and pieces of wood that might once have been furniture.

In the southwest corner, amid a heap of moldy sacks, lies a worn leather backpack that belonged to one of the adventurers who took part in the earlier unsuccessful raid. When his comrades were slain, though he was mortally wounded, he broke free from the fight and fled here, where he subsequently died. The lizardfolk removed the corpse but overlooked the gear.

Treasure. The backpack can be discovered by a character who rifles around in the heap of cloth and makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. It contains 5 gp, 11 sp, a topaz (10 gp), and an explorer's pack that has all its contents except the rations and water.

48. GUARD POST

If combat elsewhere has drawn these creatures away, adjust the description below.

Four lizardfolk stand guard here. A wooden bench along the south wall is the only furniture.

Four **lizardfolk** are stationed here. These guards hear any sounds of melee in area 52. If this happens, three of them go immediately to that area, and the fourth goes to area 44 to summon reinforcements.

49. GUARDS' POOL

This pool and the three to the south (areas 50, 51, and 52) are partly illuminated by torches set in sconces on the wall next to the pathway. If the characters enter this area from the north, they are initially in darkness but soon come into view if they near the shore.

Use portions or the entirety of the following description, depending on which direction the characters approach from:

This large, water-filled cave, roughly circular and about seventy feet in diameter, connects to the sea through a passage. The passage is fifteen feet across at its widest point, and its roof is at most five feet above sea level. The cave also connects to another cave through a thirty-foot-wide passage in the southeast corner; the roof here is also only five feet above the water.

The main cave has a high roof, extending twenty-five feet above the water. Most of the cave appears natural, except for a rough ledge that has been cut into the rock running along the southern edge, connecting with the adjacent cave. At the western edge of the ledge, an opening has been cut into the rock wall to permit access to a passage beyond. Near this, a flight of rough stone steps leads down into the water.

The water is clear. Tall seaweed, its fronds swaying lazily, covers the bottom.

Four **lizardfolk** hide in the seaweed of the pool.

Development. The lizardfolk most fear an attack by sahuagin at this sea cave, so the guards are alert and have been rigorously drilled in a defensive procedure. The procedure follows these steps:

- One guard swims to the stairs and goes to alert the occupants of areas 42, 44, 45, 46, and 48, returning with them as quickly as possible.
- A second guard swims to area 50 to alert the koalinth, to area 51 to alert the locathah, and to area 52 to alert the merfolk. Each of these groups of creatures immediately swims to area 49 to confront the intruders, arriving there in quick succession.
- The other two guards hide in the seaweed, hoping for an opportunity to attack the intruders from the rear.

50. KOALINTH POOL

Describe the passages leading to and from this area depending on where the party approaches from.

This flooded cavern is roughly circular and about sixty feet in diameter. The water is murky, but the top of a weed bed can be seen just under the surface. A stone path follows the west wall a few feet above the waterline. From it, stone stairs descend into the water.

One **koalinth sergeant** and three **koalinth** rest in the weeds as they prepare to take their leave (see appendix C for each). A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice them. Unless the party is accompanied by lizardfolk, the koalinth attack the characters if they spot them.

Development. The koalinth have recently declined the queen's offer of an alliance against the sahuagin. They feel great enmity for elves of all types and make attacking them a priority.

Treasure. The koalinth sergeant wears a silver armband (25 gp).

A ROUGH START

If the characters approach from the sea and enter the lair by way of area 49, they face serious opposition from the outset. Luckily for them, the lizardfolk have prepared special (nonlethal) measures against a sahuagin attack. The lizardfolk's reaction to intrusions by other creatures is to try incapacitating them with their clubs, rather than killing them outright, then take the suspicious strangers to the queen for questioning.

51. LOCATHAH POOL

Describe the passages leading to and from this area depending on where the party approaches from.

This flooded natural rock cavern is roughly circular and about seventy feet in diameter. The water is clear, but the bottom is covered with a mass of weeds so that the depth cannot be judged.

A stone path has been carved into the west wall a few feet above the waterline. Narrow stone stairs descend into the water from this path.

One **locathah hunter**, four **locathah**, and their five **giant sea eels** occupy this pool (see appendix C for each).

Development. The locathah do not attack the characters unless they see the sahuagin prisoner traveling with them. If they hear combat in either area 50 or area 52, they respond and help defend their potential allies. In this case, they leave their eel mounts behind.

Treasure. The locathah hunter carries a leather purse containing 20 gp.



KOALINTH
SERGEANT

52. MERFOLK POOL

This pool and the three to the north (areas 49, 50, and 51) are partly illuminated by torches set in sconces.

Describe the passages leading to and from this area depending on where the party approaches from.

This flooded natural rock cavern is roughly circular and about seventy feet in diameter.

A bloom of colorful blue and green algae covers the surface of the water, obscuring its depths.

From a stone path, narrow stairs descend into the water from this path.

One **merfolk salvager** (see appendix C) and three **merfolk** are beneath the algae.

Development. The merfolk defend themselves if attacked but otherwise leave the characters alone. They are willing to discuss their reason for being in the lair (which is to negotiate an alliance) only if the characters are traveling with friendly lizardfolk, or if a character makes a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If they hear combat in either area 50 or area 51, they respond and help defend their potential allies.

Treasure. The merfolk salvager carries a leather purse containing 20 gp.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the adventure, there are two possible primary outcomes. Use one of the following scenarios to determine what happens next.

XP Awards. If the characters succeeded in their mission and an alliance is forged between Saltmarsh and the lizardfolk, the characters receive 1,600 XP.

If they made an earnest effort to impress the lizardfolk but fell short, their award is instead 1,200 XP.

FORMALIZING THE ALLIANCE

If the characters succeed in impressing the lizardfolk, Queen Othokent reconsiders her previous assumption regarding the inability of the humans to render worthwhile assistance. An alliance with Saltmarsh is agreed to, which the characters can report to the town council.

The lizardfolk dispatch two Common-speaking scaleshield officers named Garurt and Vyth to Saltmarsh to accompany the characters as ambassadors. The lizardfolk, impressed by the characters' actions and their attempts at righting any wrongs they committed in the lair, invite the town to join in the attack on the sahuagin fortress. They are well received by the council, and the alliance is quickly agreed to when the council members learn of the situation regarding the sahuagin.

The town council recognizes the characters' role in this negotiation and rewards them with the gold they were promised in the initial meeting.

Now, the council might look to hire the characters one more time—to launch an attack on the sahuagin forces and explore their fortress. Refer to chapter 6, *The Final Enemy*, to embark on this adventure.

MISSION GONE WRONG?

Lacking any evidence to the contrary, the people of Saltmarsh initially hail the returning characters as heroes for weakening or eliminating the (supposed) threat posed by the lizardfolk. Even though any information the characters might bring back is truly of little value, the council is pleased with whatever report they provide and promises to make good on their reward.

In the meantime, while the characters are recuperating, a contingent of merfolk arrives in Saltmarsh and asks for a meeting with the council. During that session, they relate that they have just come from the lizardfolk lair, which is in a state ranging from distress to utter destruction. They explain about the impending threat of the sahuagin and the attempt by the lizardfolk to arm themselves and form an alliance against the sea devils.

The council members realize that the characters' mission was not as successful as it first seemed. As a show of good faith, they share the essential facts of the characters' mission and an explanation of how their actions were misinterpreted when they returned. They also express interest in joining the alliance.

The merfolk, after recovering from their consternation, decide to consider the characters' actions an honest—if uncivilized—mistake. They agree to accept the town's help in the looming conflict. Then they call upon the council to again enlist the aid of the adventurers. The alliance has a need for a team to pull off a mission that could give the allies the upper hand even before full-scale war breaks out, and the adventurers have proven themselves potentially capable of succeeding.

The next steps in the story are presented in chapter 6, *The Final Enemy*.

EPILOGUE: CROC HUNT

Either as a way of apologizing for making a bad first impression on the lizardfolk, or to provide some extra excitement for combat-loving characters, this encounter pits the party against a terrible foe that dwells in the deepest muck of the swamps. Queen Othokent details the threat, telling the characters a story about a creature the lizardfolk call Thousand Teeth the Devourer. Role-play a conversation with the queen, or summarize the conversation using the following information:

- When the lizardfolk returned to this long-abandoned lair, they soon discovered that a giant crocodile prowled in the marsh nearby.
- Crocodiles are sacred to this tribe and they regarded its presence as a good omen. The lizardfolk have much experience with crocodiles and thus perceived it as not dangerous.
- Their complacency was shattered when the giant crocodile attacked and devoured three members of a lizardfolk patrol that had paused near its lair.
- The difficulty facing the lizardfolk is that they cannot attack the crocodile, for its kind are sacred to them.
- Since the first attack, matters have grown worse. The giant crocodile has attacked lizardfolk engaged in routine patrols of the marsh, killing and eating many.

- Because the crocodile's lair lies close to a possible route of approach of a sahuagin attack, the lizardfolk dare not leave the area unpatrolled.
- There would be no violation of sacred taboo if the adventurers were to kill the giant crocodile on the queen's behalf. In fact, the queen demands the head of Thousand Teeth be brought to her so that she might add it to her collection.

If the party agrees to solve the tribe's crocodile problem, Queen Othokent offers them a vile-tasting flask of swamp water mashed with various roots (a *potion of superior healing*).

LAIR OF THE DEVOURER

Thousand Teeth's pool is located along the Dunwater River, about twelve miles inland from the lizardfolk lair.

TRAVELING TO THE POOL

Traveling through the marsh is a dangerous proposition. The characters can choose between a direct overland route or a winding route that follows the banks of the Dunwater River.

Trudging Through the Marsh. The marsh is difficult terrain, which turns the 12-mile trek into an 8-hour journey (assuming a normal pace). For each hour the characters travel this way, they have a 50 percent chance of facing a random encounter (see the Marsh Random Encounters table).

MARSH RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d8	Result
1	6 hungry giant frogs
2	1 troll eating crabs
3	2 cult fanatics performing a ritual
4	3 swarms of insects (wasps) defending their nest
5	1 druid (evil-aligned) and two swarms of rats
6	4 lizardfolk (not from the queen's lair)
7	1 injured (half hit points) treant beset by 6 swarms of rats
8	2 ogres , lost in the marsh

While traveling through the marsh, the characters also likely encounter one or more of the hazards presented in the "Hazards in the Marsh" sidebar at the beginning of this adventure.

Following the Riverbank. The river snakes through the marsh for nearly twenty miles before arriving at Thousand Teeth's pool. The riverbank is difficult terrain, and following it from the lizardfolk lair to the pool takes 13 hours (at normal pace). The riverbank route offers a better chance of avoiding random encounters. For every 3 hours the characters travel along the riverbank, they have a 50 percent chance of facing a random encounter.

POLLUTED POOL

The ground slopes downward into a tangle of marsh trees and a blanket of mist. Squishing your way into the



THOUSAND TEETH

shallow valley, you arrive at a large pool of brackish water. The pool is sixty feet in diameter and shaded by a canopy of vines and twisting branches. A gurgling stream at its northern edge feeds the pool.

A few yellowed bones are visible in the shallows, and you see a great muddy mound rising from the pool's center.

The pool is 8 feet deep at its center. The water is polluted from the rotting remains of Thousand Teeth's meals, and any creature that ingests more than a spoonful must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

In addition to **Thousand Teeth** (see appendix C) in its muddy mound, two **giant constrictor snakes** lurk in the canopy of vines and drop down on unsuspecting creatures that linger too long at the pool's edge. A character who has a passive Perception score of 15 or more notices the snakes before they attack.

Development. Thousand Teeth currently sleeps in its muddy mound. Its nose is nearly invisible where it pokes above the water. If any creature enters its pool, or if loud sounds are made near the pool's edge (such as combat with giant snakes), the crocodile awakens and slides through the water to investigate. If it does interrupt combat with the canopy-dwelling serpents, the snakes flee into the trees to escape.



CHAPTER 4: SALVAGE OPERATION



WHEN A SHIP MISSING FOR YEARS IS SPOTTED adrift at sea, its one-time owner sees a final chance to recover a lost fortune. But what the former owner cannot know is that the ship has a new master—a wretched druid, driven mad by cannibalism and attended by a horde of venomous pets.

Salvage Operation is a D&D adventure designed for four to six 4th-level characters.

BACKGROUND

The merchant prince Aubreck Drallion once counted himself among the richest folk of his city. His trade fleet was one of the largest and most prosperous of its kind, with hundreds of ships under his banner dodging storms, pirate raids, and aquatic monsters to carry goods across the world.

Yet Aubreck's success perhaps came too fast and too easily; although his profits eventually stabilized, his ambition kept expanding. Years ago, his contacts in the southern jungles reported that he could monopolize trade in rare spices and herbs by making heavy investments in the area. Aubreck took the opportunity as a sure thing and leaped at the chance to get even richer. He sold off many of his assets and converted the proceeds to property deeds and promissory notes, then secured that portable wealth aboard *Emperor of the Waves*, the foremost ship in his fleet.

Aubreck's plan was to convert these notes back into cash when the ship reached its destination in the south, but fate introduced a cruel twist, and *Emperor of the Waves* disappeared. A storm separated the ship from its escort, and it was never heard from again. Devastated by the financial loss, Aubreck was reduced to the lifestyle of an ordinary merchant.

The true fate of *Emperor of the Waves* is known only to a few. The ship was nearly sunk in the storm that drove it off course, but it remained seaworthy. After the storm subsided, its surviving crew members dropped anchor near an uncharted island. When they came ashore to look for food and water, they discovered the island was inhabited by tribes of primitive humans, orcs, and goblins, ruled by cruel druids who worshiped Lolth in her aspect as the Queen of Spiders. The druids promptly had the few remaining sailors dispatched by their underlings and claimed the ship as a sign of favor from their dark goddess.

In time, the island's population became fractured into two factions, each of which tried to exterminate the other. One group claimed custody of the ship and used it as a headquarters, stocking it with supplies and defending it from assaults by the enemy group. When the war entered its final throes, the ship was in danger of being overrun by the land-based forces. In response, rather than staying and fighting it out, the cultists aboard the

ship pulled up anchor—and thanks to an offshore wind, they rode the waves and left the island far behind.

Fifteen days ago, Aubreck received word that *Emperor of the Waves* had been spotted adrift in the southern sea, apparently a ghost ship. The noble promptly used a sizable chunk of his savings to hire a ship and crew to sail to the derelict. Aubreck believes he can restore his standing if he recovers the deeds and documents that sailed with the ship. Now, all he needs are a few brave souls able to deal with whatever threats might present themselves aboard the *Emperor* and bring back his fortune.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Salvage Operation starts as an investigation adventure, in which the characters board *Emperor of the Waves* and explore its upper decks. As they venture into the ship's lower decks, this scenario becomes more of a dungeon crawl in cramped, dangerous spaces, with vermin attacking in close quarters. Characters who survive those threats and push on find the lowest holds flooded with seawater and infested with undead.

As the characters fight their way forward in search of Aubreck's goal, the perils of the sea finally take their delayed claim on the *Emperor*, in the form of a hungry elder octopus. This creature first assaulted the ship several days before the characters arrive. Its previous rampage failed to scuttle the ship, though the octopus succeeded in devouring or drowning almost all of its living occupants.

To say that the *Emperor* now has a skeleton crew would be an overstatement. Of all the cultists who escaped the island, only a single evil druid remains alive aboard ship. The half-orc Krell Grohlg still practices his worship of Lolth at a shrine inside the ship and is aided in his defense of the vessel by various kinds of spiders, swarms of vermin, and other monstrosities.

The climax of the adventure is a race against time as the octopus returns for a final onslaught, with decks flooding, the ship sinking, and characters scrambling through the disintegrating hull in a race for their lives. If Krell or his minions are still alive, they present an additional obstacle because they also don't want to go down with the ship.

In order for the characters to receive their payment from Aubreck, they must bring back a heavy box from the cargo hold—potentially forcing them to choose between making a quick escape and accomplishing their mission.

PLACING THE ADVENTURE

Salvage Operation was written to take place in a coastal region of any campaign setting. Aubreck's history as a once-powerful merchant makes a port city or a large port town the best starting place for the adventure.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Pulling the characters into this adventure is relatively simple. Aubreck is desperate for help, yet not quite ready to tip his hand. He fears that if he spreads the news of the expedition too widely, other treasure seekers might beat him to the *Emperor*.

For additional incentive, consider inserting a legend into your campaign that links *Emperor of the Waves* to a magic item or some other object sought by the characters. That item might be included in the cache sought by Aubreck, or it could be stashed away somewhere on board.

SALVAGERS WANTED

Aubreck has charged his half-orc butler Vertheg with finding a suitable band of adventurers for his urgent mission. Tall, lanky, and awkward, the butler is notable for the single tusk that juts out from his lower jaw, and for the way his warty skin contrasts with his fine, neat clothing. Vertheg is often responsible for carrying out quasi-legal dealings for Aubreck, so he is well acquainted with the sorts of taverns and inns the characters might be found in.

When the characters are brought to Aubreck (a male human **noble**), they quickly note that he has seen better days. His mansion is large but run down, and his clothes haven't been fashionable for at least a year. He keeps his iron-gray hair pulled back in a short ponytail, and his mustache is neatly tended.

Aubreck explains that the ship holds a magic box containing promissory notes and property deeds worth a total of 100,000 gp. He offers the characters a fee of 10 percent (10,000 gp) to recover it. As a gesture of good faith, he offers them an advance payment of 200 gp. (Even if they try their best but still fail to recover the box, Aubreck cannot afford to pay them anything more.) He says that the ship was recently spotted adrift, approximately five days out from land.

The noble is worried that someone else might claim the ship's goods as salvage if he doesn't act quickly. He has already hired a ship, *Soul of Winter*, and a crew to mount a mission to the derelict. Now he needs adventurers to go along and board the *Emperor* once they reach it, then find the box and bring it back.

TROUBLE ALONG THE WAY

The journey to the derelict takes 1d4 + 3 days. If you want to spice up the trip, then about halfway through it a group of sahuagin stumble upon *Soul of Winter* and attempt to board it.

A band of 18 sahuagin, led by a sahuagin priestess and a sahuagin baron, wait until late at night to slip aboard the ship by swimming alongside and climbing to reach the deck. They try to slay the crew and passengers using stealth, hoping to avoid raising an alarm. Their plan is to clear out the ship, then lurk nearby to ambush anyone who comes to investigate the derelict.

The sahuagin strike first at any sentries. Typically, 1d4 + 4 dwarves from the crew are stationed on the deck at night as lookouts. If they are slain, the sahuagin then split up to attack the cabins below. If you don't have access to a sample deck plan, assume the characters are divided between two cabins on the lower deck.

The sahuagin fight until six or more of their group are slain. When that occurs, the survivors retreat to the water and flee.

Aubreck describes the box as made of shiny blue metal. It is packed inside a wooden crate branded with a large letter A. The crate can easily be pried or broken open, but the box can't be opened except with a password known only to Aubreck. It contains all of Aubreck's deeds and promissory notes, still sealed in waterproof wrappings. The notes are drawn from a lawful good temple that will pay them out only after the original owner of the assets gives permission, and their value will enable Aubreck to rebuild his business once he redeems them for himself.

SOUL OF WINTER

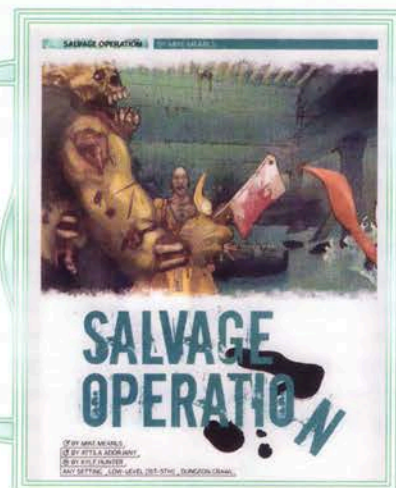
Manned by a crew of sturdy dwarves, *Soul of Winter* is a sailing ship run by her captain, Wolgar Windrune (LN male dwarf **veteran**). To keep the characters from impeding his crew, he insists that they remain in their quarters, a cramped chamber below deck, during the voyage. The crew consists of thirty dwarf **guards**, all of whom remain aboard *Soul of Winter* during the adventure, since they have not been paid for anything other than transport.

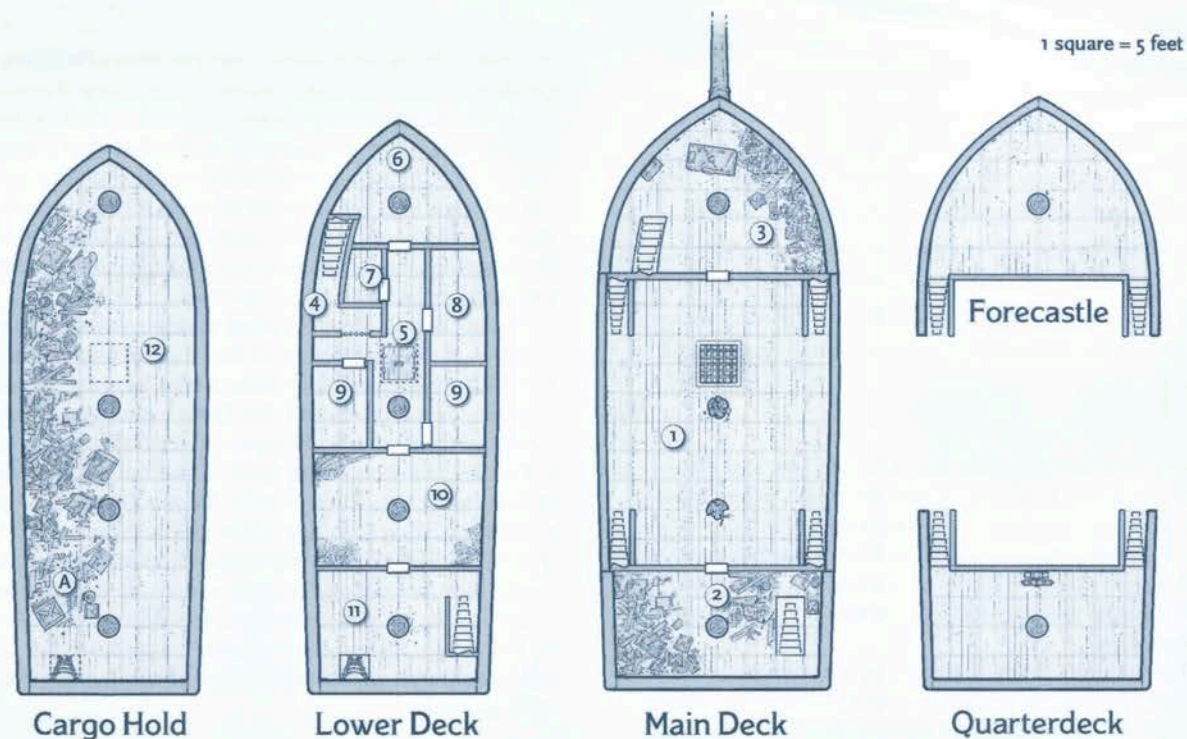
Aubreck has purchased supplies for the characters' mission aboard the derelict. This gear, already aboard, includes: studded leather armor for any character who

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL

Drawn from *Dungeon* 123, Mike Mearls's 2005 adventure "Salvage Operation" is a rare tale that takes place entirely at sea. This grim story features an epic assault by a titanic octopus and a race to escape a sinking, monster-infested ship.

Decrepitude and decay (along with a bit of demon worship) persist throughout this unusual dungeon crawl, with the characters' courage being tested just as much as the seaworthiness of the *Emperor of the Waves*!





MAP 4.1: EMPEROR OF THE WAVES

wants it, two light crossbows with twenty bolts each, five 50-foot coils of rope, two grappling hooks, twelve torches, two healer's kits, six vials of antitoxin, two *potions of healing*, and two sacks for carrying treasure out of the ship.

STATE OF THE SHIP

After several days at sea, *Soul of Winter* comes in sight of the looming, shattered hull of the derelict *Emperor of the Waves*. Wolgar Windrune brings *Soul of Winter* within 500 feet of the derelict along its starboard side, close enough to make out its major external features. Its masts have been shorn off, but the upper deck appears clear of debris, as if whatever hit the ship was strong enough to carry off the masts, sails, and rigging. Its figurehead, once a majestic angel in flight, has been hacked and disfigured.

Captain Wolgar and the sailors aboard *Soul of Winter* express amazement that the *Emperor* is still afloat. Any character who has the sailor background or proficiency with water vehicles notes that the ship has suffered heavy damage across its upper decks, consistent with the effect of a typhoon or tidal wave. The vessel lists noticeably to port, evidence that the *Emperor's* ballast has shifted, though the incline doesn't appear severe enough to make moving around on deck hazardous. The ship rides low in the water, implying that the bilge and possibly even the lowest deck are flooded. If no characters have the appropriate background or proficiency, Wolgar can point these facts out. The captain also makes it clear that he suspects the ship is likely to sink during the ten days it would take to tow it back to port.

Not all of the ship's visible damage is due to time and weather. With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check, a character can spot impact damage to the ship's

hull that indicates it recently came under attack from a seagoing creature.

The captain orders two sailors to ferry the characters to the *Emperor* in a rowboat. The sailors bring ropes and grappling hooks to give the characters easy access to the main deck. Scaling the algae-slick hull of the ship without a rope requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. There are no portholes or large openings in the hull of the ship, making the main deck or quarterdeck the only way inside. All locations on the ship are identified on map 4.1.

Soul of Winter comes no closer than 500 feet to the derelict. After taking the characters up to the ship, the sailors move 200 feet away from the *Emperor* and hold their position, waiting for the characters to reappear on the upper deck with the treasure from below.

UPPER DECK

The main deck of *Emperor of the Waves* is likely the first part of the ship the characters explore—and will be the last stage of their desperate escape.

WEBS ABOARD SHIP

Except where otherwise noted, the lower deck of the *Emperor* is filled with sheets of webbing. Areas filled with webbing are lightly obscured. Ranged attacks made against creatures in areas filled with webbing are made with disadvantage. In addition, the creatures found aboard the ship are adept at hiding among the webs. As an action, any such creature can attempt Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide from any character that it is more than 5 feet away from. Many of these creatures begin encounters having already tried to hide; make checks as appropriate to determine each creature's success at evading detection.

1. MAIN DECK

The *Emperor's* upper decks slope gently down toward the ship's port side. The forecastle and quarterdeck are empty, and short wooden stumps are all that remain of the ship's masts. The double doors leading to cabins fore and aft appear intact, as does the metal grate in the deck that offers access to the lower decks. Aside from the rhythmic creak of the ship's badly weathered timbers, all seems quiet.

This area is unoccupied. The doors to fore and aft are not locked (but see area 3), and the ship's wheel turns easily and freely. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence check determines that the wheel is no longer connected to the ship's rudder, and it can't be used to steer the ship until the vessel undergoes extensive repairs.

The deck is marred in places by bloodstains, noticeable to someone who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check thereafter reveals that the stains are about three days old.

Through the grate set into the deck can be seen a ladder extending down to area 5, but the grate is rusted shut. It can be wrenched open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or smashed apart (AC 15; 10 hit points; immunity to fire, poison, and psychic damage). Anyone who peers down into area 5 after the grate is removed and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check spots several fist-sized spiders crawling along the walls of the passage below. The spiders immediately scuttle away from any noise or light.

2. ALTAR TO LOLTH

A rough stone altar dominates this cabin. Strange markings cover its surface, dried mud cakes the floor around it, and humanoid skulls ring the wall above, each mounted on a wooden spike. The corners of this room are piled with garbage and debris—crudely cut wooden logs, smashed furniture, torn sacks, shattered crates, and small piles of dried palm fronds. A staircase descends from the southeast corner, and an acrid odor fills the air.

This chamber was once the captain's cabin. Now it's a shrine to Lolth, the demon queen of spiders. The skulls are cracked, weathered, and obviously old.

Lurking under the garbage and debris is a host of vermin held sacred by the cultists of Lolth—spiders of every size and type. If anyone other than the druid Krell spends more than a few moments in this room, one **giant spider** bursts from the webs on the port side, while an **ettercap** emerges from the starboard side of

the room. At the same time, four **swarms of insects (spiders)** crawl through the deck from below. Any character who has a passive Perception score of 14 or lower is surprised. (In tight quarters, remember that a swarm can occupy the same space as another creature.)

Captain's Log. A character who searches through the debris in the room and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the ship's ledger and the captain's log, both written in Common.

The log details the ship's last voyage, including an account of the terrible storm that threw *Emperor of the Waves* off course and separated it from its escort. Running low on food and drinkable water, the ship was forced to drop anchor off an uncharted island. The last entry describes an attack by orcs that fought alongside goblins and monstrous vermin. Though the crew fended off this initial attack, they suffered heavy casualties. The final entry records the captain's fear that this attack might have been the precursor to an even larger assault.

Treasure. A minor offering to Lolth is concealed by the mud and litter on the deck. A search of the cabin uncovers a small sack containing ten red rubies (100 gp each).

3. NAVIGATOR'S ROOM

The door into this room from the main deck is held shut by a thick mass of webbing behind it. It can be forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or broken through (AC 15, 18 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage, resistance to piercing and slashing damage).

Sheets of webbing fill this room, such that anything more than 10 feet from the entrance appears as little more than a vague shape. Hidden in the webs are a narrow staircase down and, near the bow, a table and four chairs.

The weathered furniture here is worthless, but the table is still covered with charts and maps.

A **giant spider** and an **ettercap** lurk near the ceiling above the table, completely hidden in webbing and shadow. They attack the first creature to examine the charts and maps, gaining surprise unless the creature has a passive Perception score of 17 or higher.

Combat in this area arouses the hungry vermin in the decks below. Beginning 1d4 rounds after the giant spider's initial attack, one **swarm of insects (spiders)** boils up the stairs from area 4 each round, using the same initiative count as the giant spider. The swarms keep coming until four have entered the fight, unless the passage from area 4 is blocked somehow. Each swarm attacks the nearest creature.

LOWER DECK AND CARGO HOLD

The cabins beneath the main deck are home to the druid Krell—and to the murderous creatures under his control.

4. WEBBED DOORWAY

This area is not shrouded in sheets of webs, unlike most of the lower deck (see the "Webs Aboard Ship" sidebar). A web of a different sort stretches across the doorway

between this small chamber and the west end of area 5 (at the point marked with a dotted line). This freshly spun web is difficult to spot. A character who probes ahead with a pole or a weapon, or who has a passive Perception score of 17 or higher, can spot the web. Otherwise, the first character through the doorway blunders into it and is restrained, as if they had been hit by a giant spider's Web attack.

If any creature is caught in the web, the occupants of area 5 are drawn into this area and attack immediately.

Treasure. A fine silver bracelet (250 gp) can be found on the floor against the wall in the northeast corner of this area.

5. SPIDER NEST

The north-south section of this hallway is filled with sheets of webbing (see the sidebar).

An **ettercap** lurks in here, latching onto the ceiling over the door to area 6. Two **giant wolf spiders** are perched on either side of the doorway from area 4. They attack, gaining surprise over any creature with a passive Perception score of 16 or lower, when any creature is caught by the web in the doorway leading from area 4 or when any creature enters area 5 after that web is removed. Six **swarms of insects (spiders)** lie elsewhere in this area, with two swarms joining the fight each round.

If the characters enter this passageway from area 10 instead of from area 4, the spiders wait until the characters' attention is focused on the deck grate (see below) before attacking.

Cargo Hold Access. A wooden grate covers a hole in the deck that leads down to area 12. The grate is badly rotted and covered in webs, and its unsafe nature can be noticed only by a character who probes the floor ahead with a pole or who has a passive Perception score of 14 or higher. A character who puts their full weight on the grate breaks through and falls into the cargo hold (area 12). The fall into the water filling the hold deals no damage, but it catches the attention of the ghouls in the hold. The grate can be opened or broken through easily by anyone who recognizes its condition before moving onto it.

6. FOOD STORAGE

Thick webbing chokes this room, partially covering strung-up bones, shriveled limbs of humanoids and animals, and other gruesome remains. Four human-sized bundles hang within the mass of webbing, a little less than ten feet into the room, while small spiders scurry everywhere.

A character who watches the webbed bundles for a few moments and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that they occasionally shudder and twitch in a way not caused by the motion of the *Emperor*. Within are four **maw demons** (see appendix C), servitors drawn from the Abyss by the fiendish magic coursing through the webs here. Krell and the other

cultists spent many hours here sanctifying the webs and offering rites to Lolth, and the goddess has rewarded them with these servitors. Krell has yet to free them, because he worries he is not currently strong enough to command them.

Each cocoon can be torn open with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, or it can be attacked (AC 10; 10 hit points; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage). When the first demon is set loose, the others become agitated and can use an action to tear their way out of the webbing.

Treasure. A few bones and skulls of sacrificial victims are hidden in the webbing. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a pair of gold earrings (200 gp) and a vine necklace set with an amethyst (250 gp) hidden among the webs.

7. KRELL'S CABIN

Palm fronds are piled up in one corner of this room to make a crude bed. Nearby, a stone-tipped wooden spear and an oblong shield lean against the wall. The shield bears the symbol of a humanoid skull with spiders crawling from its eye sockets. Two weathered humanoid skulls hang from wooden pegs on the wall.

This room serves as Krell Grohlg's personal chamber. Unlike most of the lower deck, it is not covered in sheets of webs. Ever since the attack by the octopus killed the other cultists a few days ago, he has abandoned this room and spends most of his time praying in area 10.

Any character who inspects the bed finds several well-gnawed humanoid bones mixed in with the palm fronds.

8. FIRST MATE'S CABIN

The smashed wreckage of a bed, dresser, and desk covers the floor of this room. Thick webs extend from floor to ceiling, making it impossible to clearly see the walls beyond. Hundreds of tiny spiders move through the webs.

All parts of this room are engulfed in sheets of webs. The cabin contains nothing of interest, and the spiders pose no threat.

9. SPIDER CHAMBERS

This room is filled with smashed furniture, crushed wooden boxes, and other debris, all covered with thick layers of spiderwebs.

When the door to either of these web-filled rooms is opened, hundreds of tiny spiders scuttle for cover. These areas contain nothing of interest.



10. UNHOLY SHRINE

The floor of this chamber is covered with runes written in blood. A circle has been carved into the floor's wooden planks and spiderwebs cover the walls and ceiling. Two humanoid-sized bundles attached to the ceiling writhe as hundreds of tiny spiders swarm over them.

Krell Grohlg, the last survivor of the cultists who escaped the island, sequestered himself here after the first octopus attack. He attacks at the first sign of intruders—if dying for Lolth is to be his fate, he seeks to slay as many characters as possible.

Krell is a male half-orc **druid**, with these changes:

- Krell is chaotic evil.
- He has these racial traits: When reduced to 0 hit points, he drops to 1 hit point instead (but can't do this again until he finishes a long rest). He has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. He speaks Common and Orc.
- He has a Strength score of 18, which gives him a +4 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with his quarterstaff.
- He has the *flaming sphere* spell prepared rather than *animal messenger*.

In addition to Krell, this cabin also contains two **giant spiders** lurking in a far corner, and Krell's pet **phase spider** (named Roil). Unless the characters were unusually quiet while making their way through the ship, Krell has heard them moving and fighting monsters in other areas. Before the fight begins, he has time to cast *shillelagh* on the quarterstaff he wields, *barkskin* for defense, and *produce flame* in preparation for a confrontation.

The phase spider spends its time in the Border Ethereal. It attempts to ambush Krell's foes, moving through walls unnoticed before entering the Material Plane to attack a wizard, sorcerer, or similarly vulnerable character. The two giant spiders try to protect Krell. One fights from the ground, while the other clings to the ceiling and attacks downward, enabling both Large creatures to remain in the fray.

Ending Hostilities. Krell knows that the *Emperor* won't stay afloat forever. He can be persuaded to leave with the characters instead of fighting them if someone in the party succeeds on a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check to win the druid's confidence. An orc or half-orc character makes this check with advantage. Once Krell is safe he slips away to continue his foul worship.

Treasure. All the cultists' ceremonial objects and treasure are stored in a wooden box along the port wall. The box contains *spell scrolls* of *gust of wind* and *protection from poison*, a *potion of heroism*, a *potion of water breathing*, a *cloak of protection*, 507 gp, and 199 sp.

11. GALLEY

The door here is damaged and held shut by rusty iron spikes. It must be forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or chopped apart (AC 15, 12 hit points, immunity to psychic and poison damage).

Judging from the stove along one wall of this room, this was once the galley. Now the area is cluttered with bones and debris. Badly damaged metal knives and other cookware hang from hooks in the ceiling, while the choking stench of rotting flesh fills the air. A stairway leads up near the stern. Tiny spiders crawl over everything.

The cultists kept this area free of webs and used it for food storage. Then, after their supplies ran low, several of them barricaded themselves in this room to seize control of the remaining supplies. In response, the rest of the cultists stormed the area, slew the rebels, and added their corpses to the ship's larder. All that's left now of all the rebels are scraps, as the lone survivor (Krell) has consumed the last of them.

Trapdoor. A moldy trapdoor in this area leads down into the cargo hold. It can be easily spotted (no check required). A bar has been inserted through a set of rusted brackets to keep it shut. The cultists used this door to deliver sacrifices to the ghosts below, and they kept it barred between those times to prevent the undead from escaping.

12. CARGO HOLD

This deck runs the length of the ship and features no bulkheads or walls. Dark, murky seawater fills it to a depth of three feet, sloshing against old, moldering crates piled against the ship's port hull.

The water that fills this area is difficult terrain for Medium characters. Small characters must swim while in the cargo hold.

This deck is a prison for four **ghosts**—formerly a group of thieves who stowed away in the hold before the *Emperor* last left port. When the ship was waylaid by the storm, they could not escape from the hold and eventually starved to death. The cultists found the undead when they took control of the ship but viewed them as emissaries of their dark god and fed them with offerings of living sacrifices.

The ghosts currently hide in the bow of the hold, beneath the water. They won't reveal themselves until characters enter this area and approach their position, whereupon the undead surge out of the water. Any character whose passive Perception score is 11 or lower is surprised by the ghosts when they attack. A creature paralyzed by a ghost's claws holds its breath automatically if it collapses into the water, but is at risk of drowning unless it is pulled out again. See "Suffocating" in chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Treasure. One of the ghosts wears a silver bracelet sculpted to look like a twisted tongue (75 gp), and another one wears a gem-studded belt (400 gp). The crates and boxes are rotted, and the goods in them are worthless—with one exception.

Aubreck's Box. As an action, a character can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot a crate marked with a stylized letter A. Another action is required to open it, revealing the box inside.

The blue metal box is made from magically enhanced iron that is impervious to rust and has invulnerability to all damage. It has no lock or latch, and it can't be opened by any normal means. See "Moving Aubreck's Treasure" for details on carrying the box after the elder octopus attacks, and for getting the treasure safely off *Emperor of the Waves*.

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

Shortly after *Emperor of the Waves* was spotted drifting on the open sea, an enormous elder octopus began to stalk the ship. It has already attacked the vessel once, and that assault worsened the *Emperor's* condition, opening up a few leaks that are now causing the hold to flood. Believing that if it waits long enough, the wreck will eventually sink beneath the surface, the octopus has remained in the area, lurking in the water a hundred feet below. (The creature is fixated on bringing down the *Emperor* and pays no heed to *Soul of Winter* or the rowboat that waits for the characters 200 feet away from the derelict.)

When it hears noise from the characters' fight against the ghouls in area 12, the creature comes back for another attack. (For best dramatic effect, you should time the octopus's reappearance to coincide with the characters' discovery of Aubreck's box.)

The octopus represents a real threat to the characters. As the creature attacks, emphasize the chaos that ensues in the ship. Swarms of spiders scramble across the walls and decks in a panic, assembling into ever larger masses. The ship creaks and lists more severely as something assaults it from the outside, its timbers snapping and water pouring through the widening cracks in the hull. Within moments, the characters can see the octopus's arms snaking through breaches in the hull, grasping for anything they can wrap around. From that point on, don't give the players the luxury of pondering their characters' next moves. Push them to make fast decisions and do everything you can to reinforce the idea that they're caught in a panicked flight from a sinking ship.

OCTOPUS ATTACK

The octopus's attack shakes and tilts the ship so violently that moving around the ship becomes difficult. Any surviving monsters panic and seek to escape the ship, attacking the characters if they cross paths. If the characters make it to the upper deck, they must hail the sailors aboard the rowboat from *Soul of Winter* and wait for the boat to reach them.

MOVEMENT

Movement is tricky as the ship rocks back and forth. Treat the floor as difficult terrain.

Climbing stairs or a ladder requires a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, unless a character has a climbing speed. On a failed check, a character falls prone in the space where the climb began.

RESCUE

Once the characters reach area 1 and call for help, the sailors in the rowboat try to rescue them. It takes 10 rounds for the rowboat to reach the *Emperor*.

Observant players might realize that the octopus is focusing its efforts on the ship. Anyone who leaps overboard or gets into the rowboat is safe from the octopus, though monsters aboard the ship that see characters in the water follow suit and might attempt to swarm the rowboat (see "Other Enemies" below).

THRASHING TENTACLES

The octopus batters the ship, trying to smash holes and tearing away at any creatures it touches. The tentacles strike quickly, spearing through sides of the ship. Only luck can save the characters from being hit by them.

At the start of each character's turn, that player makes a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, that character takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the tentacles' frantic thrashing.

This effect also applies to the monsters aboard the ship. To keep things simple, rather than roll saving throws for them assume they take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage at the start of their turns.

ATTACKING THE OCTOPUS

A character can attempt to drive off the octopus by dealing damage to it. A character can use an action to make a ranged attack or melee attack, or to cast a spell. Assume that any attack rolls hit but are not critical hits, and disregard any effect of the attack or spell for this purpose other than the damage it deals.

If the total damage from all the attacks or spells used on the character's turn is 20 or higher, the octopus is momentarily slowed: each character does not need to make saving throws against the thrashing of the tentacles until the end of that character's next turn.

OTHER MONSTERS

If the characters left any of the monsters aboard the ship alive, those creatures try to escape the *Emperor* before it goes under. Krell and the ettercaps are intelligent enough to seek safety. They rush to the top deck and jump into the water; then, once the rowboat arrives, they try to seize it and flee.

The maw demons in area 6 break free on round 2 and rush to the upper deck. They attack other creatures indiscriminately, caring only about spreading chaos. Each one assaults the closest creature that is not a demon.

The vermin aboard ship flee to the upper decks, reaching area 1 by round 3. They attack the characters on sight and fight to the death.

MOVING AUBRECK'S TREASURE

The metal treasure box is bulky and hard to handle. Once the elder octopus attacks, and the ship is pitching and flooding, the box becomes difficult to move.

One or two characters can try to carry the box. A character can use an action to pick up the box or pass it to someone else with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the character drops the box.

How fast someone moves with the box is based on their Strength score, as shown on the table below.

If two characters carry the box, the total of their Strength scores determines how fast they can move.

Strength (Total)	Speed Penalty
18 or higher	-10 ft.
12 to 17	-20 ft.
8 to 11	-30 ft.
7 or lower	Cannot move the box

The character with the higher initiative does not move on their turn and uses an action to assist the other carrier. On the second character's turn, both characters can move the box a distance equal to the lower of their two speeds.

If the two carriers are ever separated by more than 5 feet, or if one or both are knocked prone, both of them drop the box. The size of the box prevents more than two characters from trying to carry it at the same time.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Following is a round-by-round summary of how events progress as the octopus brings down the ship.

ROUND 1

The octopus begins its attack, wrapping itself around the ship and flailing away at the creatures inside with its tentacles, as described above in "Thrashing Tentacles."

ROUND 2

The octopus's weight and writhing tentacles cause the ship to list 30 degrees to port. At the start of this round, every character must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, falling prone and sliding 10 feet toward the port side on a failed save. Creatures climbing on the walls or ceiling do not need to make this saving throw.

From this time on, a character who falls prone slides 10 feet toward the port side.

ROUND 3

As the octopus crushes the ship, water pours through the hull and fills area 12. Monsters found in areas 4 through 11 have fled to area 1 by this time, unless stopped by the characters. If engaged in combat, they attempt to disengage and flee.

Any surviving ghosts in area 12 move to area 1. Unlike the other creatures aboard the ship, they stop to fight any characters they encounter but ignore spiders, Krell, and other creatures found aboard the ship.

Monsters in area 1 attempt to avoid the seawater. In their frenzy, they attack any characters who emerge from below. If Krell is present, he spots the rowboat heading for the ship and attempts to seize it once it arrives. He tries to swim beneath it, hide, and then emerge to ambush the sailors aboard it.

ROUND 4

Even if the characters have not yet signaled for the rowboat to pick them up, the sailors start rowing toward the ship to stage a rescue. The rowboat approaches on the starboard side of the ship, hoping to avoid the monsters that have gathered in area 1.

ROUND 5

Areas 4 through 11 fill with water as the ship begins to slide under the waves. The port side of area 1 is level with the water, while the tilted deck keeps the starboard edge 10 feet above it.

ROUNDS 6 THROUGH 13

Starting on round 6, the waves begin to break over the ship. The port half of area 1 is 3 feet below water, while the starboard edge remains 5 feet above it.



ROUND 14

If the rowboat began its approach on round 4, it arrives at the start of this round. If Krell is present, as detailed above, he attempts to launch his ambush at this point.

ROUNDS 15 THROUGH 19

At the start of round 15, the ship rolls over on its port side. Everyone in area 1 is thrown into the sea, 2d20 feet in a random direction away from the capsized hull. The rowboat moves 20 feet away from the hull in a bid to avoid any monsters. Any creature that ends up in the water within 20 feet of the rowboat tries to swim toward it and board, attacking anyone who offers resistance.

ROUND 20

At the start of round 20, the ship sinks. Anyone aboard must swim to safety. The ship descends 3d20 feet at the start of each subsequent round until it hits bottom.

GETTING OFF THE EMPEROR

Once the rowboat reaches *Emperor of the Waves* on round 14 (or perhaps sooner), the blue steel box can be handed down from the deck of the *Emperor* into the rowboat as an action. The rowboat remains in place long enough for the box to be offloaded and for the characters to clamber aboard. Because the octopus focuses on *Emperor of the Waves*, the rowboat is not in imminent danger from the creature.

A lone character trying to swim with the treasure box must succeed on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check at

the start of their turn or sink 20 feet. Two characters working together to swim and support the box take their turns simultaneously on the lower of their two initiative rolls. One character must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check at the start of the shared turn while the other character uses the Help action, or both characters sink 20 feet. The two characters must remain within 5 feet of each other, or both of them drop the box.

If the box is dropped in the ocean, it sinks 30 feet per round, which should quickly put it beyond the reach of most characters. The ocean in the area where the *Emperor* drifts is two miles deep.

CONCLUSION

If the characters return Aubreck's box to him, the merchant is overjoyed. By redeeming the deeds and notes, he can reestablish himself in his city. He pays the characters the promised fee and gladly replaces any mundane items they lost in the adventure.

In point of fact, the box is not impenetrable, but it is sealed with extremely powerful magic, requiring a successful DC 30 check to overcome with *dispel magic*. It can also be opened by speaking the password "Tildivarias," the name of Aubreck's dog from his childhood. (Aubreck does not share this information with anyone.)

Aubreck could become a well-connected ally, and a continuing source of adventure for the party, if his fortune is restored—that is, if he doesn't become too greedy and eventually betray the characters.



CHAPTER 5: ISLE OF THE ABBEY

A LOCAL MARINERS' GUILD WOULD LIKE TO CLAIM a small, strategically located island and build a lighthouse there. But so far, its representatives have not been able to land safely on the island—every attempt to come ashore has been met by a horde of undead.

The guild posts a lucrative contract offer in nearby coastal communities, seeking adventurers willing to secure the island and its burned-out abbey. When the characters come across this information and decide to investigate the opportunity, the adventure officially gets under way.

Isle of the Abbey is designed for a party of four to six 5th-level characters.

BACKGROUND

Over the past three months, the evil clerics of Abbey Isle have quarreled violently with a large band of local pirates. Their struggle seems to have left the island uninhabited. The pirates burned the abbey to the ground, but they suffered so many casualties that they were destroyed in turn by the local mariners' guild.

Unknown to the mariners' guild, a small number of evil clerics and their minions survived the pirate assaults by taking refuge in the cellars of the ruined abbey. Hidden halls, dangerous guardians, and shining treasures await those who dare to explore the depths of the abbey.

THE JOB AT HAND

The posted contract explains that any interested parties are to meet with Guildmaster Tabeth at the local guild house. When the characters follow up, Tabeth provides them with the following summary of what he knows:

- Pirates recently ransacked Abbey Isle, an island just off the coast populated by evil clerics and their followers. Much to the guild's delight, the battle between the two factions weakened them both.
- The mariners' guild then sent a force ashore, and the remaining pirates were killed or driven off by the guild's soldiers.
- The island, though now apparently abandoned, remains a danger due to undead guarding the only safe approach: a beach called the Skull Dunes.
- The mariners' guild is willing to pay 2,000 gp to the characters if they can land, explore the island, and clear it entirely of threats so that the guild can construct a lighthouse on the site. Payment is made upon completion of the job, which will be verified by guild members.
- The mariners' guild contact in the region is Major Ursa, who keeps a lighthouse on an island nearby. He will provide additional information to any group that takes on the assignment. Anyone who accepts the contract will be provided with a large, sturdy rowboat for transportation to Major Ursa's location.

The guild does not know that there are survivors on the island. In addition to other hazards they encounter, the characters must deal with the remaining clerics and their followers, whether through conflict or negotiation, before collecting their payment. For more on the inhabitants, see "The Survivors" on page 102.

SUPPLIES

The mariners' guild can supply the characters with any of the equipment listed in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook* except for holy symbols, holy water, thieves' tools, weapons, and armor. The price of any equipment used by the characters must be deposited with the guild and will be refunded when it is returned in good condition or after the successful completion of the mission.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The isle has long been a source of trouble for the region's mariners' guild. The clerics who inhabited the island's abbey proved to be capable defenders of their territory—until the pirates' recent success, all of the guild's attempts to evict the clerics from the island had failed. Use either of the following additional hooks to strengthen the characters' motivation to succeed.

GILDED RUMORS

The clerics of the abbey would not build such a defense to guard musty tomes and simple acolytes. Something precious rests in the belly of that place: a golden statue, a staff made from rubies, or a fountain lined with pearls and rare stones. Those hapless pirates cleared a path but failed to discover any treasure. With both pirates and clerics out of the picture, only a few undead stand in the way of untold riches.

FOR THE PEOPLE

The stretch of water near Abbey Isle is treacherous. The thick fog that rolls through this region sends even the most steadily steered ships veering off course. The sandy floor near the island is littered with broken hulls and lost souls. A lighthouse built at the tip of the island would secure the nearby seas for all. If the characters are well intentioned and civic-minded, helping to make the lighthouse possible can serve as additional incentive.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure likely unfolds in the following sequence.

The characters meet with the mariners' guild and accept the contract to make Abbey Isle safe for the construction of a new lighthouse.

The characters travel to a nearby island by boat and meet their contact for the job, Major Ursa. The major shares what he knows about the situation on the island and offers advice before sending them on their way.

PLACING THE ADVENTURE

Abbey Isle offers a perfect adventure site to place just offshore from a coastal location or a short voyage away from seaside locales. Here are some suggestions for placing it in a few classic D&D settings.

Eberron. On Khorvaire the isle is located on the north coast of Karrnath. The local mariners are keen to have a bastion against Lhazaar pirates, but the gold they offer comes, indirectly and deniably, from the coffers of King Kaius. The king is keen to rid his land of the influence of the Blood of Vol. Destruction of the cult on the island certainly draws the attention of the Crimson Covenant and perhaps even Erandis d'Vol herself. Entanglement with the Order of the Emerald Claw will surely follow.

Forgotten Realms. Abbey Isle lies off the west coast of the Dragon Reach, and a mariners' guild from the Dalelands would like to control the island to help them defend against raiders from Pirate Isle in the Sea of Fallen Stars. A cult devoted to Shar, an isolated remnant of the Netherese occupation, has lived on the island for some time. If the cult is routed from the island, the characters might gain unwanted attention from what remains of Netheril.

Mystara. The Minrothad Guilds are always interested in consolidating their power on the sea and would be glad to wrest control of the island away from the cult that holds it. Due to interference from the Thieves' Guild, the scholars of North Isle have had little luck convincing the guilds to help. As a result, they have hired mercenaries to remove the threat on the Abbey Isle, located between North Isle and Fire Island. The cult could be followers of Alphaks, inspiring Thyatian privateers to set out from Terentias and brave Minrothad territory to wipe out the renegade cult.

The characters explore the island, dealing with horrifying undead, surviving clergy, brutal mercenaries, and living constructs in trapped tunnels. Once they have cleared the isle, they can return to the mariners' guild headquarters and collect the reward from Guildmaster Tabeth.

TRAVELING TO THE ISLE

The actual jumping-off point for the mission is an island located up the coast. Getting there in the rowboat takes about six hours. This island has a lighthouse that the characters can use as a safe place when they want to rest, reequip, or regroup. Abbey Isle is another two hours beyond the lighthouse.

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL

"Isle of the Abbey" was designer Randy Maxwell's contribution to 1992's *Dungeon* 34.

In designing this adventure, Maxwell reached back to his early days as a Dungeon Master, restricting

himself to using only monsters found in the rulebook he started with. The result is a scenario that shows how restraints breed creativity.

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER

The lighthouse where the characters begin the adventure is manned by a retired officer named Major Ursa. The major (LG male human **veteran**) is a huge, barrel-chested man with a bright red beard and a circlet of thin red-gray hair on his balding head. His usual garb is a gaudy red and yellow kilt with his warhammer and dagger hanging from a broad leather belt.

The major now lives, and enjoys, the solitary life of a lighthouse keeper. He is a respected member of the mariners' guild. If the major is attacked by the party, the local citizenry rallies to his defense. The mariners' guild quickly places a bounty on the party, and the adventurers become hunted criminals. The major does not have the guild's reward money or anything of value (other than food, drink, and nautical equipment) at the lighthouse.

ROLEPLAYING MAJOR URSA

Major Ursa is not a mercenary and will not spontaneously join the party. He accompanies the characters only if they have made at least one attempt to land on the island. He remains on their boat, refusing to take part in combat but willing to observe and offer advice.

WHAT HE KNOWS

Major Ursa, as a member of the mariners' guild, is invested in the party's success. He offers the following information freely:

- "The only safe place to get ashore on the reef-ringed, rocky little island is a large sandy beach known as the Skull Dunes. The dunes are full of undead, because the clerics of the abbey created an army of skeletons to guard the beach. The skeletons lie under the sand and attack anyone who comes near."
- "The pirates got ashore somehow. There's probably a path through the undead, but finding it's the problem. We didn't catch up with the pirates till after they'd left the island. They'd taken as good as they gave. They were a miserable, sorry lot when we attacked and routed what was left of them. One shipload escaped, but we sank the others. The sea and the sharks got the survivors, so we never got a firsthand account of what happened on the island or of how the pirates got through the dunes."



- “As for the abbey, who knows for sure? We never got anywhere near the place. Smoke rose from the island for days after the pirates attacked. Maybe that means the island’s been abandoned, or maybe the abbey burned and the clerics are waiting to rebuild. I don’t know. That’s what you’ve been hired to find out.”

WHAT HE MIGHT KNOW

Major Ursa serves as a conduit when you want to give information to the players, particularly if they retreat from the Skull Dunes and return to the lighthouse. The major can offer suggestions and occasional helpful hints. These hints should not be given on demand, and the major might not have advice on every subject. The major’s suggestions concerning the tactical situation on the island depend on how much information the party gives him about the island, its inhabitants, and its traps and monsters.

For example, questions such as “How do we get through the tunnels underneath the ruins?” are inappropriate because the major has no way of knowing about the tunnels under the abbey. The party must first describe the tunnels (see “The Winding Way”) and the situation there before the major can help them.

THE ISLAND

Abbey Isle is a small island about a mile wide and two miles long. An overview of the island, including its major areas and features, can be found on map 5.1.

GENERAL FEATURES

The island is little more than a slab of rock rising from the ocean. The sea has battered its crumbling cliffs so that almost the entire island is surrounded by dangerous rocky shoals. The waves crashing and splashing over the jagged rocks make it obvious, even to landlubbers, that any attempt to navigate the shoals can only end in disaster.

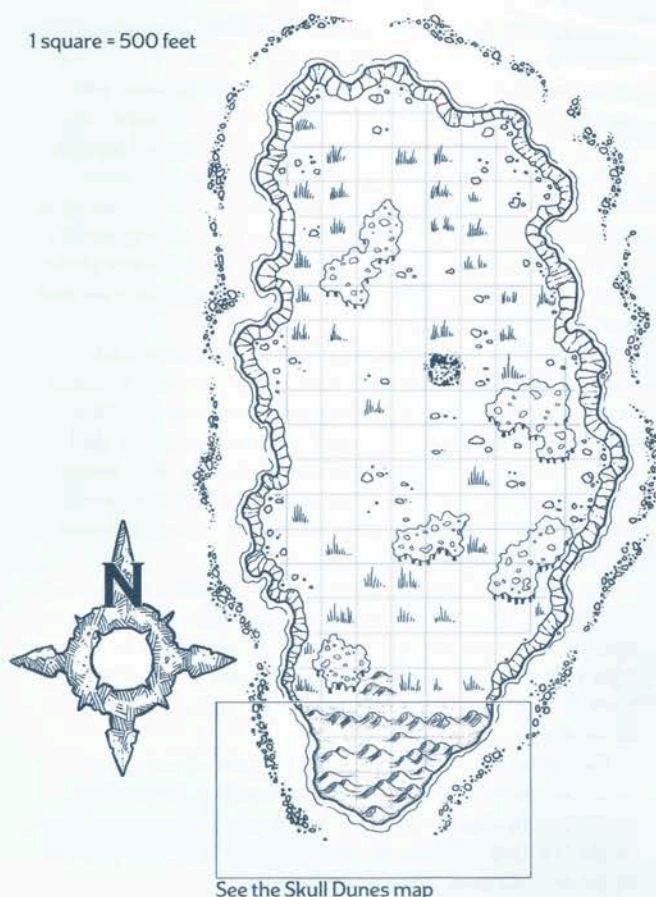
In fact, there is no reason to pass through the dangerous rocks, because the granite cliffs beyond them rise directly out of the water, offering no place to land or come ashore. Only the sandy area at the southernmost tip of the island offers a safe place to land a boat (see “The Skull Dunes”).

The island has little wildlife but is covered in grass, small flowering plants, and a few gnarled, stunted trees and shrubs. What few animals there are on the island were imported by the clerics, either deliberately or accidentally, when they arrived and built the abbey. Some other more dangerous creatures have also come ashore recently.

THE SKULL DUNES

The Skull Dunes (see map 5.2) lie beyond a beach of coarse brown sand at the southern end of the island. The dunes are desolate; only an occasional bit of scraggly grass grows here and there in the sandy hollows. When the abbey was built, the evil clerics populated the dunes with hundreds of skeletons brought from the mainland for the defense of the island. The overlord of the abbey carried a special scepter that allowed its

1 square = 500 feet



MAP 5.1: ABBEY ISLE

holder to safely pass through the dunes, but this scepter was destroyed in the fire that razed the abbey.

The skeletons now form an uncontrolled minefield of undead. When anyone passes near, the undead rush up out of the sand and attack. The skeletons are impossible to avoid by stealth because they can detect intruders by noise, vibrations caused by movement, and pressure on the sand. When the pirates landed here, the skeletons made them pay dearly, but the pirates eventually cleared a path through the undead and pushed on to the abbey.

When the characters enter the dunes, use the map to keep track of their location. Assume that the party lands at the southernmost tip of the dunes (in the square south of the number 12) unless the characters decide otherwise. When the characters first come ashore, the hills of sand are smooth and trackless, and the loose sand counts as difficult terrain. As the characters soon discover, the dunes are filled with skeletons that awaken and attack when anything treads on the sand above them.

ENCOUNTER PROCEDURE

Use the following rules to play out the Skull Dunes encounter with the help of the map, using a single token or miniature to represent the characters in the square they occupy. Each square is 150 feet on a side. Moving between squares can be done only across sides and not on a diagonal path.

Pirates’ Path. Before they start moving, the characters can attempt to find the clear path. The party must

select one character to lead the way. That character makes a single Wisdom (Perception) check. The check result is the number of squares along the pirates' path that the characters travel. After that many squares, the characters stumble into a randomly determined square with skeletons in it. Choose a random, skeleton-occupied square that has a side in common with the last safe square the characters entered. If the party navigates its way across the dunes and slays fewer than twenty skeletons while doing so, the adventurers arrive safely on the north edge of the map.

Phase One. If the characters enter an unmarked square, nothing happens. If they enter a square marked with a number, they are immediately attacked by that number of **skeletons**. To begin an encounter, the skeletons rise from the sand, expending half of their movement on their first turn. They are encrusted with sand but unhindered by it, so they retain their normal speed while in the dunes.

For example: The characters enter a numbered square marked "7." Seven skeletons rise and defend that square until they are destroyed. Once all the skeletons in a square have been destroyed, that square is cleared of buried skeletons (but other skeletons could still pursue the party into that square).

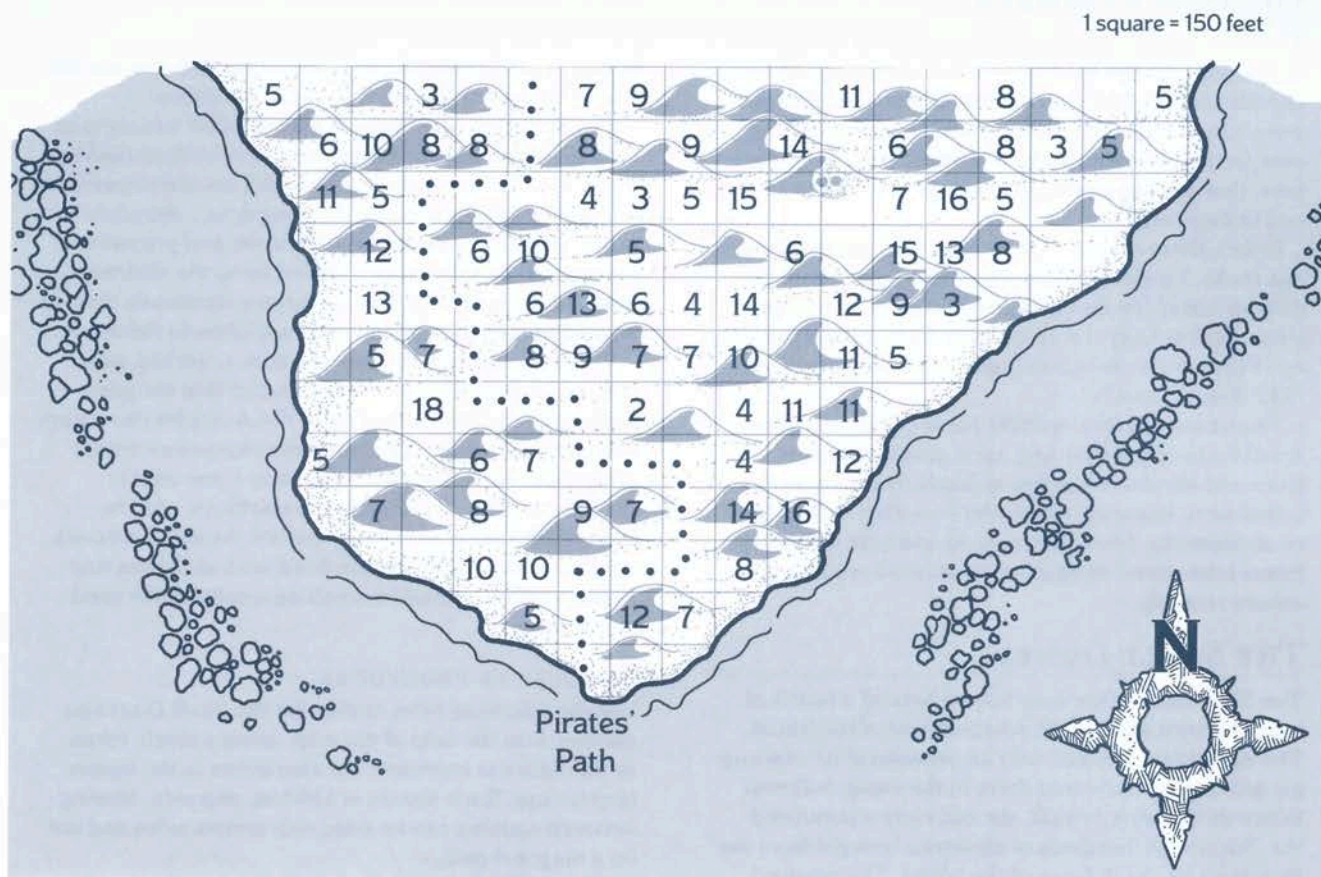
The characters continue to move, one square at a time, awakening skeletons and defending themselves until they navigate their way across the dunes to safety, or slay twenty or more skeletons. Once they slay twenty or more skeletons, phase two begins.

Phase Two. All the skeletons within 2 squares of the party animate and attack. Rather than assail the characters individually, half the risen skeletons form three **skeletal swarms** (see appendix C), while the other half coalesce into a **skeletal juggernaut** (see appendix C). The swarms begin combat within 60 feet of the party, while the juggernaut begins combat 240 feet from the party. Once the skeletons are defeated, the Skull Dunes pose no further threat to the characters.

AVOIDING THE SKULL DUNES

The skeletal guardians of the Skull Dunes do not pursue characters into water deeper than 3 feet. Seawater does them no harm—they have simply not been ordered to defend that area. Thus, characters who decide to come ashore and then wade around the shore in the area of the dunes might be able to avoid the skeletons, or at least minimize their contact with them.

Climbing the Cliffs. If the characters try to circumvent the Skull Dunes altogether by scaling the cliffs, they find plenty of natural footholds and handholds that climbers can use when making their ascent. The danger comes from the slick mixture of water and algae coating the face of the cliff. The top of the cliffs is 45 feet from the water. Climbing a 15-foot section of the cliff requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check; a failed check means a creature falls into the jagged rocks along the shore, taking falling damage as normal, and additional slashing damage from the sharp rocks equal to the falling damage.





COMPLICATIONS ON THE DUNES

The skeletons of the Skull Dunes wait for the characters to make the first aggressive move. If you see fit, use the table below to introduce additional menace.

SKULL DUNES COMPLICATIONS

d6 Event

- 1 Three **manticores** that lair on a nearby coast swoop down to attack. They use the skeletons to help finish off land-based prey by landing in a square infested with them, then flying off as they emerge.
- 2 The surge of necromantic energy caused by the skeletons' awakening draws 4d10 **zombies** of slain pirates out of the waters and toward the beach.
- 3 3d6 swarms of **quippers** infest the waters around the island. Having feasted on those who fell during the battle, they are eager for more fresh meat.
- 4 A sudden squall kicks up! The sudden driving rain causes **skeletons** to arise in three random squares.
- 5 A pirate, Knife-Catcher Skeen (NE male human **bandit**), has hidden in a clear square in the dunes. Left for dead by his comrades, he begs the characters for help.
- 6 A keelboat with a full crew and carrying five rival treasure hunters (LE human **veterans**) arrives at the island. The group scouted the beach earlier and now plans on luring the skeletons out of the dunes and killing them with ranged attacks. They come ashore while the characters are crossing the dunes, and then attack.

THE ABBEY RUINS

The ruins of the abbey are located near the center of Abbey Isle, as shown on map 5.1.

RECENT EVENTS

The pirate attack on the abbey came as a complete surprise to the clerics, since the pirates and clerics were previously in league with each other. The pirates fenced much of their booty through the clerics, who shipped the goods to distant temples where they could be sold without being recognized as stolen merchandise.

The Abbey Isle clerics often cheated the pirates on these clandestine deals. The pirates grumbled about the poor treatment they received, but they issued no ultimatums to alter the arrangements. Although the two groups had their differences, the clerics never expected the pirates to rebel, confident in their undead defenses even if they did.

Unfortunately for the clerics, the pirates had enough numbers to barely make it through the skeleton horde. After suffering considerable losses against the undead, they proved to be in such a vengeful mood that they set fire to the abbey. With the structure aflame, they didn't bother looting the building or searching for the cellars being buried by the burning debris.

After the battle, the pirates gathered what loot they could and abandoned the ruins, unaware that they were leaving survivors behind. When the smoldering wreckage cooled, the survivors made their way out through the rubble.

THE SURVIVORS

A few of the abbey's clerics and guards survived the pirate attack and now live a spartan life in the ruins. They made rough accommodations in the abbey's cellars. The abbey's vegetable garden and a few barrels of salted pork also survived the pirate attack. The survivors fish from the lower cliffs and raise buckets of seawater up the cliffs by rope. By casting *purify food and water* on the seawater, the abbey's clerics create enough water for their drinking, cooking, washing, and gardening needs.

The survivors have no boat and no means of building one. The island's few stunted trees and gnarled bushes are incapable of supplying the wood for even a crude canoe or raft. The survivors have no control over the undead of the Skull Dunes and would have to fight their way through the skeletons to launch a boat (they are unaware of the path made by the pirates).

The survivors keep a low profile. They stay close to the ruins of the abbey and keep out of sight of passing boats. They do not hail ships or light signal fires. Trapped on the island since the pirate attack, they are unaware that the pirates have been destroyed. They are therefore hesitant to make their presence known for fear the pirates will return and finish them off.

Even though the survivors desperately want to leave the island, their superiors would not approve of their abandoning the island to the mariners. The clerics and the surviving guards would be severely punished (perhaps by death) if they left. Therefore, they have resolved to capture or kill anyone coming to the island. If any of the characters are captured, they are kept alive only if they can be used in negotiations to extract a ransom. Ransom demands are likely to include a boat or at least transportation to the mainland.

The survivors' main goal is to get word to their superiors while still retaining possession of the island. They have sent missives by means of *sending* and *animal messenger* spells (using seagulls), but they have received no response. Nonetheless, they still hope to be sent reinforcements, laborers, and material for rebuilding the abbey.

They typically keep watch on the Skull Dunes during the day, but have grown lax in that duty as boredom and hunger overtake them. Therefore, there is a 50 percent chance that the characters will land unseen at the Skull Dunes during the day. The survivors do not keep watch at night, meaning that the party has a 100 percent chance of landing unnoticed when it's dark.

During the day, the survivors might be above ground getting water, fishing, or gardening, or they might be in area 2 of the ruins. At night they stay in their rooms.

The major personalities among the survivors are detailed below.

OZYMANDIAS

Ozymandias (NE male human **priest**) barely survived the battle against the pirates because he tried to rescue important books and scrolls from the burning abbey, and a collapsing hall closed a doorway behind him. He was forced to abandon the written works, and he escaped only after a wall collapsed and provided him with an escape route.

GOLDEN MEDALLION

This medallion is a golden disk inscribed with complex geometric designs, worth 30 gp. It is not magical, but undead of the Winding Way recognize it and allow anyone who possesses the medallion, plus their companions, to pass safely unless the undead are attacked. Only the undead guardians recognize the medallion, and it cannot be used for safe passage past traps or other guardians in the Winding Way, or for protection from any other undead on or off the island. The undead do not obey orders from a character who wears the medallion.

Ozymandias is now the highest-ranking cleric and the leader of the survivors. He is a capable administrator, but he does not inspire loyalty or trust in those under him. Underlings obey him because of the hierarchical structure of the abbey's chain of command, not because he shows any strong leadership. If attacked, he defends himself to the best of his abilities. If the characters attempt to negotiate, Ozymandias is treacherous and unlikely to keep any agreement (except at sword point). He wants to get word of the abbey's destruction to the mainland, and he hopes to hold the island until help arrives.

Ozymandias wears a special golden medallion (see the sidebar) that allows safe passage through the undead guardians of the Winding Way (the tunnels below the abbey ruin). As the highest-ranking cleric on the island, Ozymandias wears the medallion as a symbol of his faith, but he doesn't know about its special property or about the dangers of the Winding Way.

ODIUM

Odium (NE male human **cult fanatic**) was visiting the abbey on business when the pirates attacked. He gave a brave account of himself during the battle, though he survived by sheer chance. He ran through the burning building to save his spell scrolls and other valuables. As the flames mounted, Odium was forced to retreat to the cellars with his rescued goods.

He is a grumbler and annoys everyone with his constant griping. Odium and Ozymandias dislike each other intensely. If one gets into trouble, the other will do nothing to help.

Odium desperately wants to leave the island and get on with his life. If the characters do not attack Odium immediately, they might be able to strike a deal with him. He will draw a rough map of the abbey ruins in return for 200 gp and safe passage off the island. (If this occurs, you should provide only a rough map of the cellars without including the Winding Way.) Odium refuses to join the party in a fight against the other survivors.

BAYLEAF

Bayleaf (LE male elf **bard**; see appendix C) is a mercenary who works for the highest bidder. He was hired by the abbey as a training instructor for the guards. If the party does not attack him immediately, negotiation is possible. Bayleaf can be bought off for 500 gp and safe passage off the island. He does not draw a map for the party or help them attack his former employers, but he does tell them there are treasure-filled tunnels beneath the abbey. If pressed, Bayleaf admits that the treasure is guarded (true) and claims it is worth 10,000 gp (false).

Bayleaf is an excellent swordsman and an above-average tactician in small skirmishes. Ozymandias placed him in charge of defending the cellars. If Bayleaf is captured, killed, or bribed, defense of the cellars becomes a hectic, haphazard affair.

OGMUND

Ogmund (CE male human **gladiator**) is a huge, stupid, mean-spirited fighter. In battle he is awesome, wielding his spear untiringly. During the battle with the pirates, a blow from a warhammer knocked him unconscious. He was left for dead and later dragged to safety by clerics retreating to the cellars. He is embarrassed that he did not die in the battle and will not make that mistake twice.

There is no negotiating with Ogmund. His demands are simple: surrender or fight. As a tactician, Ogmund is wholly wanting. He is likely to overlook the simplest of ambush opportunities, and his only offensive tactic is a headlong frontal attack. Ogmund believes he should oversee the defense of the island and resents Bayleaf's presence. He gladly leaves the elf in the lurch if the chance to do so arises.

DISCIPLES

The remnants of the abbey's faithful (two **acolytes** and two **cultists**) are not a particularly spirited lot. After the devastating loss to the pirates, they are not eager to join battle with anyone. These low-level clerks and helpers survived the battle and the burning of the abbey by hiding in the cellars. Although the heat, smoke, and lack of fresh air might have killed the disciples in a well-sealed room, the cellars of the abbey are riddled with small rat passages and ventilation shafts that pulled air in from the outside, keeping the heat and smoke radiating upward and permitting the disciples and their guards to survive the flames.

The disciples perform only the functions needed for the survival of the group. They fight only if necessary and surrender at the first opportunity if any fight turns against them. If questioned, they know very little about the island and the abbey.

GUARDS

These three disciplined warriors (**veterans**) are the last of the abbey guards. All were dying of their wounds when they were found and healed by the clerics. Ozymandias has ordered them to obey Bayleaf, but the guards prefer Ogmund as their leader because he is one of them and not a hired sword. They will fight to the death to save the clerics.

THE SURVIVORS' RESPONSE

The survivors in the abbey provide many potential social interactions and combat encounters. Use the following guidelines to decide how the survivors react to the characters' actions.

HOSTILE

If the characters enter the abbey with swords drawn and spells blazing, the survivors believe the pirates have returned and mount a solid defense.

Once combat begins, the survivors fight to the death except for Bayleaf. He fights hard, but as the lone nonbeliever he is not ready to die for his employer.

Ogmund, the acolyte, and the cultist call for help and attempt to delay the PCs.

The rest of the cultists rush to attack. They all rush forward, open the door to their chambers, and join in the fray.

The cultists try to attack the characters from multiple directions. The acolytes and cultists throw themselves into the fight without regard for their safety. All of the cultists target clerics, wizards, and other casters in the group first, since they know well that a spell or two can offset their numerical advantage.

Ozymandius and Odium try to remain in their rooms while casting spells through the doorway. Odium uses *hold person* to shut down potent warriors, while Ozymandius relies on *spirit guardians* and *spiritual weapon* to wear down the characters.

The veterans try to keep Ozymandius safe, possibly by standing in the doorway to his chamber. Odium shrinks back in his room, trying to stay clear of the fight. The rest of the cultists don't particularly like him, and none rush to defend him. If a character moves into his room, however, the cultists might try to corner that character.

Bayleaf cares only about survival. He uses his short-bow to fire from his room, and employs his magic and abilities to hinder the characters. He keeps one 2nd-level slot in reserve for *invisibility* to disappear from view as the fight winds down. Once invisible, he sneaks away if the characters seem treacherous, or offers to negotiate if they seem honorable and willing to uphold any bargains they make with him.

CONVERSATIONAL

Parleying with the survivors is difficult, because Ogmund is one of the first occupants the characters meet. He is spoiling for a fight, but might be willing to talk as a delaying tactic while the other survivors mobilize.

Ogmund keeps the characters talking until the rest of the survivors enter the room. He then attacks, unless Ozymandius orders him to stand down.

Ozymandius is the first named NPC to arrive, followed by the veterans from areas 5, 7, and 8, and the acolyte from area 6. If the characters appear to offer a way of getting off the island, Ozymandius orders Ogmund to keep his hands off his weapons.

Odium, Bayleaf, and the cultist from area 10 arrive next. Odium begs the characters to take him with them, even offering to join them in battle against the characters. Bayleaf keeps an eye on the situation. If the party appears powerful and confident, he turns invisible as soon as he can and slips away to escape.

Ozymandius drives the negotiation. He settles for nothing less than passage to the mainland for him and two of the veterans so that he can get help to fortify the island and rebuild. He offers the characters a place of honor in the cult.

The characters might try to trick the survivors into splitting their numbers. Ozymandius refuses to abandon the island, because doing so is deserving of a death sentence in the eyes of his superiors. The rest of the

residents can be persuaded to leave peacefully, however, especially if the characters create a ruse to make it appear that Ozymandius or the cult leaders have given permission for them to do so.

If a fight does break out after negotiation, most of the survivors are not eager to die. If Ozymandius and Ogmund are defeated, the veterans will surrender if Bayleaf is alive and capable of counseling them to do so. He also throws down his weapons or attempts to flee.

TREASURES UNTOLD

The Winding Way, a series of trapped passages leading to the abbey's treasure chamber, is a well-kept secret. The senior clerics were slain by the pirates, and with them went knowledge of the abbey's riches. Now only Bayleaf knows about the Winding Way. He was informed of the tunnels by the overlord who led the abbey, who wanted him ready to defend them if needs arose. The elf does not know the actual layout of the place, nor does he know about its guardians. He uses his knowledge of the place's existence as a bargaining chip for getting off the island. Bayleaf has not told any of the other survivors about the Winding Way.

LOCATIONS IN THE RUINS

The following locations are identified on map 5.3. Areas 1–10 represent the ruined cellar, and areas 11–14 represent the Winding Way. Access between the two is found in area 6.

THE RUINED CELLAR

The abbey's remaining clerics and guards spend their days here in charred, uncomfortable quarters.

1. RUBBLE AND CELLAR ENTRANCE

All that remains of the abbey is a great square of stones filled with burned and blackened rubble. As you approach the sooty stones, it is obvious someone has been sorting through the debris. Assorted oddments are piled inside the scorched square of the foundation stones. Ruined cooking utensils, crushed pots and pans, mangled kettles, and less identifiable metal objects lie in one pile. Broken crockery, platters, plates, porcelain, and pottery are heaped in another.

A great deal of wood has been sorted into one large mound of badly burned scraps. In the center of the ruins is an opening, and as you move nearer, you see a stone staircase leading down into darkness.

If the characters investigate the piles of rubbish, they find nothing of value. The survivors have sorted through the remains of the abbey, and all valuable or usable objects have been removed. The pile of charcoal is used as fuel for cooking and heating. The stairs lead down to a charred wooden door (AC 15, 30 hit points, damage threshold 5), which can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 14 Strength check.

2. COMMON AREA

This combination dining hall and gambling den reeks of greasy, soured food. The main feature of the room is a makeshift table made of burned planks supported at either end by upended barrels. Beneath the table are several small kegs that serve as chairs. Scraps of food are strewn across the table and on the floor nearby.

Three weary-looking humans look up, startled, as you appear.

Ogmund (**gladiator**) and two disciples (one **acolyte**, one **cultist**) sit at the table gambling.

This is the dining and recreation area for the survivors. The guards and clerics have a standing argument over who should keep the area clean. As a result, no one is willing to clean the place.

Development. The moment the characters are spotted, Ogmund takes a defensive posture and questions why they are there. The commotion is certainly heard by the rest of the survivors, who soon poke their heads out of their quarters. See "The Survivors' Response" for guidance on the party's initial encounter with the survivors.

3. KITCHEN

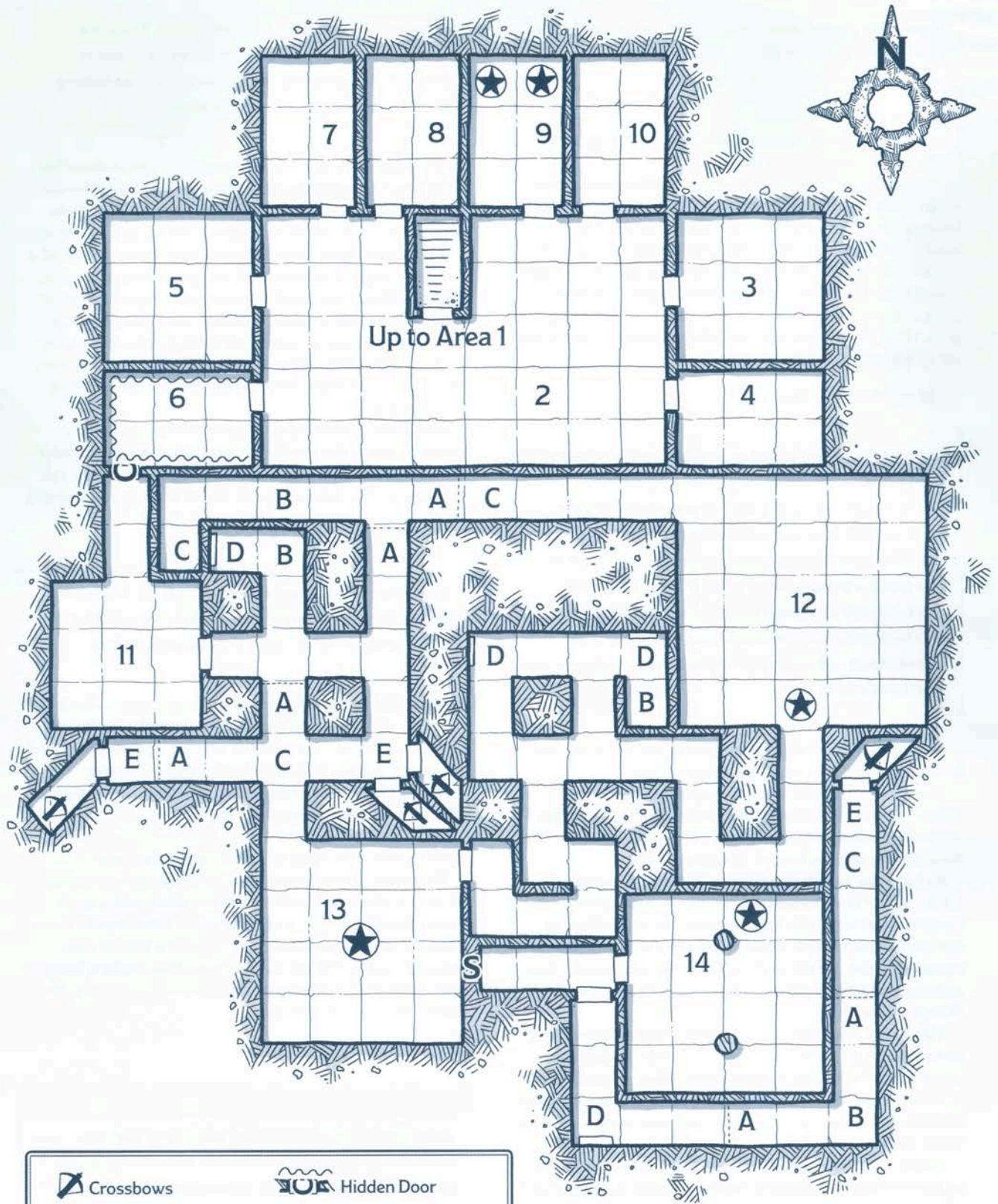
A large cauldron filled with smoldering charcoal burns in the center of the room. Assorted cookware and seasonings rest on the floor and on shelves. There is also an ornate scroll tube on the shelf. The room is fairly clean, but the air is humid and greasy. A large tub of dirty water stands in the corner, surrounded by dirty dishes.

The cauldron was originally used in the abbey laundry, but the survivors rescued it from the ruins and now use it for cooking. Meals prepared here consist of boiled vegetables and fried meat. Characters can find little of value here except three large butcher knives (treat as daggers). The scroll tube on the spice shelf contains a scroll of simple recipes (flatbread, fish stew, and seagull loaf).

4. OGMUND'S QUARTERS

This chamber reeks of wine. Small kegs are scattered everywhere. A floor-to-ceiling wine rack filled with bottles dominates the southern wall. A crudely made pallet of rags and sacks covers the center of the room.

The old wine cellar serves as Ogmund's private quarters. All the kegs and bottles are empty. A careful search of Ogmund's foul-smelling pallet reveals a pouch containing 25 gp and a dagger with a laminated whalebone handle and scabbard, worth 50 gp. Ogmund has also stashed a backup high-quality suit of studded leather armor and a pair of sturdy leather boots in one of the kegs.



Crossbows

Hidden Door

Statues

1 square = 10 feet

MAP 5.3: ABBEY RUINS

5. BARRACKS

Three crude pallets lie on the floor, and a large iron kettle stands in the center of the chamber. In the northeast corner is a jumbled pile of broken lumber.

Unless alerted by a commotion in area 2, one guard (**veteran**) is napping on a pallet.

The pallets hold nothing but rags stuffed inside flour sacks to make crude mattresses. The kettle, used for heating the room, contains ash and charcoal. The lumber in the corner fuels the kettle. If the characters search through the lumber, they find the guards' weapon hoard hidden behind it: five spears, a shortbow and quiver of twenty arrows, two shortswords, three daggers, two shields, and one suit of chain mail armor sized for a Medium creature.

6. MEDITATION ROOM

This room has been cleared of all debris and is currently being scrubbed clean by a single robed figure. Three walls are heavily curtained with draperies of thick black velvet, and the east wall is decorated with a horrible mural depicting a red dragon devouring sheep. Near the west wall is a stone table on which a large iron brazier burns. The table has been scrubbed and scoured, but it has many odd discolorations and scorch marks. A half-melted statue and two badly damaged candlesticks sit beside the brazier.

If not drawn into area 2 by intruders, one disciple (**acolyte**) is cleaning the table and floors here.

This was a meditation and study room before the abbey burned. The clerics still perform what few rites and ceremonies they can, given the circumstances. The furnishings were salvaged from the rubble.

A character who has a passive Perception score of 13 or higher and examines the floor in front of the curtains notices some abrasions on the stone floor in the southwest corner. If the characters pull back the curtains in the corner and examine the south wall, they automatically notice the hidden door that leads to the Winding Way.

The abbey residents do not tamper with the curtains, seeing them as sacred objects. Thus they do not know about the hidden door behind them. They consider any attempt to move or tear down the curtains blasphemous attacking the perpetrators if they witness such an act or learn of it.

Table. The table, discolored by fire and heat, serves as the ceremonial platform where incense is burned and where larger sacrifices are made by burning rich, costly items in the brazier.

Treasure. The candlesticks are gold and worth 10 gp each. The statue was badly damaged in the fire but is made of pure silver and is worth 20 gp.

7. OZYMANDIAS'S QUARTERS

This room is full of kegs, bags, and boxes. There is a rough cot in one corner and a great deal of clutter everywhere. Except for the cot, this appears to be nothing more than a disorganized storage room.

Until unknown voices or the sounds of battle draw his attention, Ozymandias (**priest**) is in this room discussing survival tactics with a guard (**veteran**). The room serves as Ozymandias's bedroom, office, and storeroom.

If the characters search the jumbled mess, they find a couple of kegs of corned beef and pork; bags of beans, rice, and flour; and two boxes of fresh vegetables from the abbey's garden. They also find gardening tools, a keg of nails, a box of carpentry tools (saws, hammers, planes, and so on), three lanterns, ten flasks of oil, two 50-foot coils of rope, twenty torches, and two 10-foot wooden poles.

Treasure. Ozymandius wears the special golden medallion (see the sidebar). Carefully searching under the cot reveals four *potions of healing* in fancy crystal decanters. The decanters are worth 20 gp each if empty.

8. BAYLEAF'S QUARTERS

Empty weapon racks and several empty bins and shelves line the walls of this room. On the floor is a bedroll of three blankets next to a pair of shiny leather boots.

Bayleaf (**bard**) is in this room exchanging war stories with one of the guards (**veteran**) unless they hear a disturbance outside. This former armory of the clerics and the abbey guards is now devoid of such contents.

Bayleaf has hidden his personal wealth and collection of scrolls under a loose stone in the floor. A character who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the room spots the loose stone.

Treasure. Bayleaf's *boots of striding and springing* sit next to the bed. Under the loose stone are a *spell scroll of silent image*, a *spell scroll of phantasmal force*, a leather pouch containing 75 gp, and a pair of ruby earrings worth 150 gp. If the characters make a bargain with Bayleaf and convince him to leave peacefully, he takes his treasure with him.

9. ODIUM'S QUARTERS

This room contains small statues and figurines. There are statues of dogs and horses, monks and pilgrims, footmen and knights on horseback, and several garden gnomes. All the statues are between one and three feet tall. Standing against the northern wall are two life-size statues. One is a robed skeleton holding a large scythe, and the other is a medusa. On the floor in front of these statues is a pallet of several blankets.

Odium (**cult fanatic**) now lives in this storage area and is plotting his escape. He emerges hoping that the visitors will provide an opportunity.

Statues. The small statues and figurines are all made of glazed clay and poorly fashioned. The two large statues are made of stone, and each stands on a square base. They were used as scarecrows in the garden. The island's birds stopped being frightened by them and began roosting on the figures, so they were removed to the cellars. Bits of old birds' nests can still be found in the medusa's snaky hair and between the skeleton's ribs. The characters can remove the statuary if they want. The statues weigh 700 pounds each. The mariners' guild charges a stiff fee for transporting them, and the characters soon discover that no one wants to buy an ugly statue of Death or a medusa.

A character who has a passive Perception score of 14 or higher notices that the floor by the statue of the medusa shows evidence of wear. Looking under the statue, a character can discover a hidden compartment in the statue's base.

Treasure. The hollow base of the medusa statue contains several items that Odium has hidden here: a *spell scroll of command*, a *spell scroll of hold person*, a gilded tome of dark ritual incantations written in Aquan and Infernal (25 gp), and a large silver holy symbol (50 gp).

10. DISCIPLES' QUARTERS

Several large bookcases lean against the walls in this cold room, and a high chair and a scribe's desk sit to the right of the door. The bookcases are loaded with books and scrolls. Four bedrolls are stacked neatly in the corner.

The four disciples make this room their home. A single **cultist** is here most of the time, scribing a scroll. Overly cautious, the disciples dare not heat the room for fear of setting their precious books and scrolls alight. The bedrolls are made of scratchy blankets and hold nothing of interest or value.

Bookshelves. The majority of the books and scrolls are merely bookkeeping documents. One set of five books, bound in sky-blue leather and trimmed in copper, is of a more sinister nature. These five tomes have old, fragile pages; if the characters examine them, they discover that the ancient books describe procedures and details for several evil rites and ceremonies. The books make grim and harrowing reading for any character.

The tomes can be turned over to any non-evil-aligned temple for destruction (adding to the characters' reputation as upstanding adventurers) or sold in shady markets for 20 gp each. Selling such rare items is sure to attract attention from sources as dark as the tomes themselves.

Treasure. The desk is locked. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can open the desk. Inside the desk are two vials of rare ink worth 25 gp each. The ink smells faintly of copper. Amid the papers and dusty ledgers on the bookshelves are a *spell scroll of light* and a *spell scroll of bless*.

THE WINDING WAY

When the abbey was constructed, the cultists dug these tunnels for treasure storage. Only the abbey's overlord was privy to all the passage's secrets, and he died in the pirates' assault. The tunnels are well made, with smooth walls, floors, and 10-foot ceilings. The Winding Way contains an abundance of traps and guardians meant to protect the abbey's treasure.

Traps in the Winding Way are denoted by letters on the map. Each type is described below.

A. TRIP WIRE

A wire stretches across the floor at ankle height. A character who has a passive Perception score of 16 or higher notices the trip wire and the stone block in the ceiling above it that is poised to fall when it is triggered. A character who searches carefully and who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check also finds the trap. A character can disarm the trap by making a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The trap triggers if a character walks through the trip wire, or if an attempt to disarm it fails. When the trap triggers, the ceiling stone falls onto the creature. That creature must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage.

B. OPEN PIT AND ILLUSION

The builders placed several open pits throughout the Winding Way, each measuring 6 feet by 6 feet and with a depth of 10 feet. Covering each pit is an illusory section of floor (*major image* cast at 6th level). A character who has a passive Perception score of 19 or higher notices the illusory floor shimmering slightly. A creature that falls into the pit takes 22 (4d10) acid damage from the pool of corrosive slime at the bottom. A character who remains in the pit at the end of their turn takes this damage again. A character must make a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to climb out of the pit because of the slick slime and moss growing on its sides.

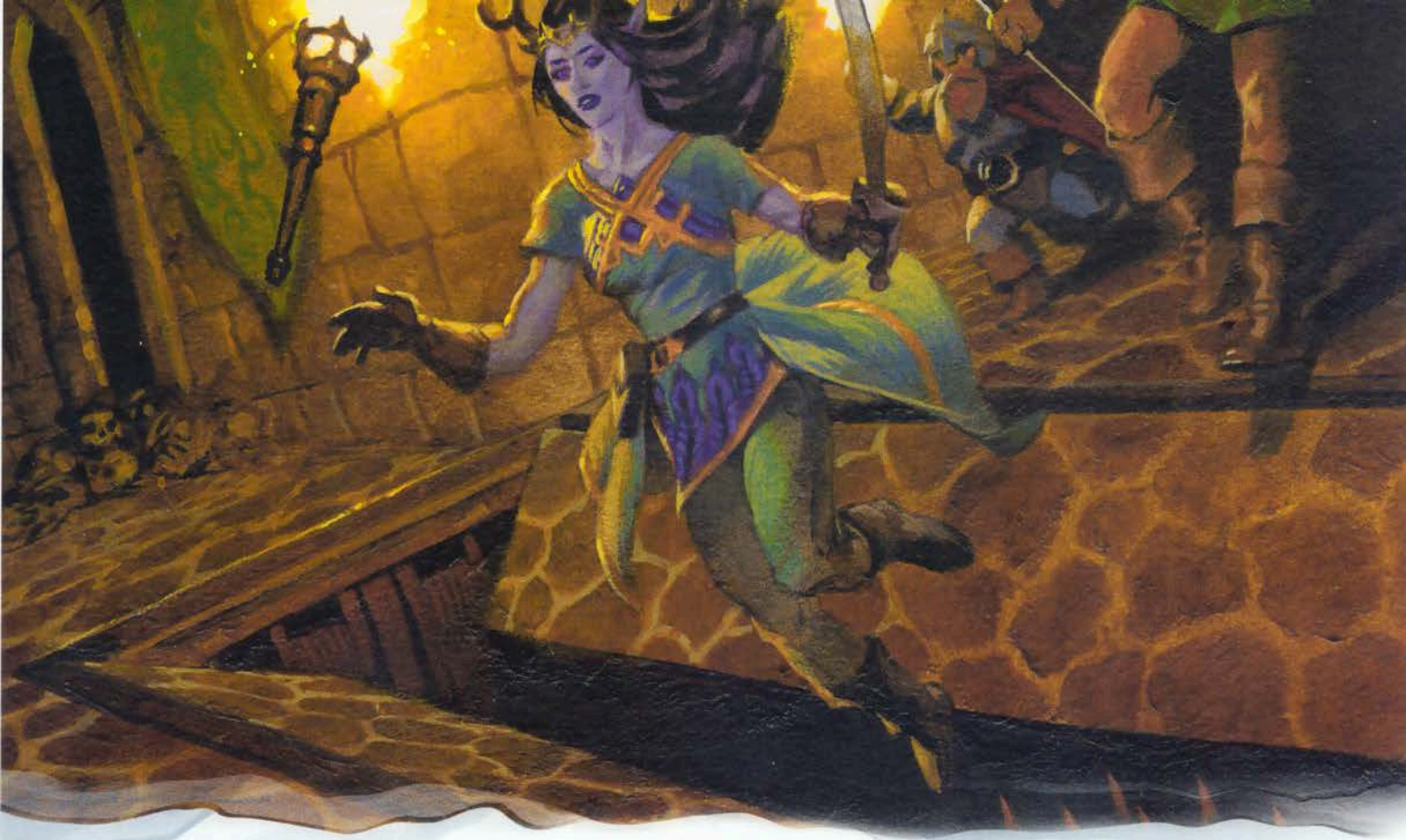
C. SPIKED PIT TRAP

Each of these pits, measuring 6 feet by 6 feet and with a depth of 10 feet, has long wooden spikes affixed to the bottom. The opening is covered by a wooden trapdoor painted to blend into the stone of the tunnel. A character who has a passive Perception score of 16 or higher notices the trapdoor. A character who is searching carefully and who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check also finds the trapdoor.

The trapdoor opens when a weight greater than 50 pounds is placed on it. Any creatures on the trapdoor when it opens fall into the pit, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and 9 (2d8) piercing damage from the spikes. A character must make a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to climb out of the pit because of the slick slime and moss growing on its sides.

D. FALSE DOOR WITH OVERHEAD BLOCK

A false door is installed in the wall in these locations. The handle of the door is connected to a hidden wire that releases a large stone above the door onto anyone who tries to open it. A character who has a passive



Perception score of 16 or higher notices the wire. A character who is searching carefully and who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check also finds the wire. A character can disarm the trap by making a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The trap triggers if a character tries to open the door, or if an attempt to disarm it fails. When the trap triggers, a large stone falls onto the creature standing next to the door. That creature must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 36 (8d8) bludgeoning damage.

E. DOOR WITH CROSSBOW

A loaded ballista is trained on the doorway, and it fires on anyone who opens the door. The ballista makes an attack (+6 bonus to hit) with advantage against that individual. The attack deals 16 (3d10) piercing damage on a hit.

11. ENTRANCE GUARDROOM

A short tunnel widens into an unfurnished and undecorated thirty-foot-square chamber. Standing next to one another in the center of the room are two enormous skeletal guardians; their heads feature prominent horns, and each wields a massive, rusted axe.

Five corpse-like figures stand shoulder to shoulder, guarding a door in the eastern wall. Their faces have been painted in gruesome colors.

Unless a character in the party is prominently wearing the special golden medallion (see the sidebar), all the creatures in this area attack the party.

Two **minotaur skeletons**, two **specters**, and a **bodak** (see appendix C) guard this area. The undead attack until they are destroyed or the intruders have been driven away. They pursue intruders throughout the tunnels but do not leave the Winding Way. Once any intruders have been killed or driven back through the door of the room, the undead return to their original positions.

The specters hang back from the fight, and if the characters appear on the verge of victory, they move through the door to the east. They use hit-and-run tactics to harass the characters and try to lure them into triggering the traps in the Winding Way.

12. HALLWAY GUARDROOM

The hallway widens out into a bare fifty-foot-square chamber. Three enormous, rotting ogres stand close to the southern wall. They clutch large morningstars, which drag on the stone floor.

Standing directly in the exit on the southern wall, effectively blocking it, is a large crystal statue of a minotaur.

One **ogre zombie**, two **ghasts**, and one **minotaur living crystal statue** (see appendix C) guard this area.

Unless a character in the party is prominently wearing the special golden medallion (see the sidebar), all the undead in this area attack the party. The crystal

statue does not move until the undead have been turned or have joined battle against the intruders. The statue then attacks the nearest trespasser. Like the undead, the statue attacks until all intruders have been killed or driven from the complex. The statue does not pursue any targets beyond area 11 and returns to its original position once intruders have been dealt with.

13. FALSE TREASURE ROOM

The door leading to this room is trapped with a vial of poisonous gas hidden above the door. A thin wire connects it to the latch of the door. A character who has a passive Perception score of 16 or higher notices the wire. A character who is searching carefully and who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check also finds the trap. A character can disarm the trap by making a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The trap triggers if a character opens the door, or if an attempt to disarm it fails. When the trap triggers, a vial of poisonous gas falls to the floor and releases gas in a 10-foot-by-10-foot area. Creatures caught in the gas's area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. Creatures that fail this saving throw are poisoned for 1 minute.

When the party enters the room, read:

Chests, urns, and a large strongbox stand in alcoves set uniformly along this chamber's walls. Some chests are open, and you see jewelry and coins spilling out. Colored flashes of light sparkle with the promise of gems and jewels. In the center of the room is a green stone statue of a beautiful elf.

The statue is actually a **vampiric jade statue** (see appendix C). Its face becomes a dreadful fanged mask when it attacks. If the characters attack the statue or touch a chest, an urn, or the strongbox, the statue attacks and pursues them ceaselessly until either it is destroyed or the party is driven from the Winding Way. It will not pursue beyond area 11.

Trapped Strongbox. The strongbox is locked and trapped. A character who studies the chest carefully before trying to open it and who makes a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the trap. A character can disarm the trap by making a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A character who makes a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can open the strongbox, whether or not the trap is disarmed.

The trap triggers if it is not disarmed before the strongbox is opened or if an attempt to disarm it fails. When the trap triggers, a poisoned needle fires out. A creature standing in front of the chest's locking mechanism when the needle fires must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) poison damage.

The strongbox contains nothing but old rags, bits of metal, and a small piece of paper with the message: "Dear thief: A lot of work for nothing, wasn't it?"

A character who has a passive Perception score of 16 or higher notices the secret door behind the strongbox. A character who searches the room carefully and who makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check also finds the door.

False Treasure. The shining contents of the treasure chests and urns are deceptive. They consist of nothing more than gold-painted wooden coins, iron rings painted silver, and bits of colored glass.

14. TREASURE ROOM

This room is a large square whose ceiling is held up by two massive gray granite pillars. The walls, floor, and ceiling are made of shiny black iron, and several bags, chests, and urns lie scattered about. You notice a shimmer in the air, like heat rising from a fire.

Suddenly, the shimmering passes between you and one of the pillars, and you see two humanoid forms made of the same iron as the walls.

The walls in this area are under the effects of a *major image* spell (cast at 6th level) and appear to be made of solid iron.

Two **living iron statues** (see appendix C) guard this area. They immediately attack anyone entering the room who is not a resident of the abbey.

The statues have been constructed purely as fighting machines. Their heads are smooth, featureless iron balls. Their torsos are short and broad, and their legs are thick and stumpy. The right forearm of each one is a razor-sharp sword blade, and the left arm ends in a hammer head instead of a hand.

Treasure. If the characters overcome the statues and search the bags, chests, and urns, they find 480 gp and 1,200 sp. Another 1,000 gp in gems and jewelry can be found in the urns. A large chest in the northwest corner contains five bolts of rare silk worth 100 gp each, two *potions of healing*, a *bag of holding*, and a suit of Medium *mithral armor* (your choice of type).

CONCLUSION

If the characters cannot reach the abbey and are forced to retreat, they receive nothing from the mariners' guild other than the return of deposits on borrowed equipment. If the characters clear or find a path through the Skull Dunes but do not remove the abbey's occupants, they receive a 100 gp reward.

The characters are given the full reward if they clear a path through the Skull Dunes and kill, deport, or capture the abbey's survivors. Captured survivors are held by the mariners' guild until it has secured the island and the construction of the lighthouse is well underway.

Once the mariners take control of the island, it is unlikely that the cult that built the abbey tries to retake it. Doing that would require a much larger force than they are capable of mustering at present. The cult will certainly not forget about the island or the characters, though.



CHAPTER 6: THE FINAL ENEMY

THIS ADVENTURE BUILDS ON THE EVENTS OF two previous adventures, *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* and *Danger at Dunwater*. The following section provides a summary of those adventures for characters who did not participate in the missions.

The Final Enemy is designed for four to six characters of 7th level. If you want to use story-based character advancement (see chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), the characters gain a level for completing this adventure.

BACKGROUND

Some weeks ago, the town council of Saltmarsh hired a party of adventurers to investigate mysterious goings-on in the decaying, supposedly haunted mansion on the cliff top near the town. These adventurers discovered that the alleged haunting of the house was a ruse devised by a gang of smugglers importing contraband. The adventurers overcame the smugglers in the house, then boarded their ship and routed the rest of the gang. The smuggling operation quashed, the adventurers were rewarded by the grateful Saltmarsh authorities.

But even after the smugglers were routed, a danger remained. The adventurers told the town council that they discovered evidence that the smugglers had been selling weapons to a nearby colony of lizardfolk. Their deduction was corroborated by Oceanus, a sea elf who was being held prisoner aboard the smugglers' ship when the adventurers made their assault.

Now fearful that the lizardfolk planned to assault Saltmarsh, the town council asked the adventurers to seek out the lizardfolk lair and deal with the threat. The adventurers journeyed to the lair, but they discovered that there was no threat to Saltmarsh—at least not from the lizardfolk. In fact, the lizardfolk were preparing to go to war against a tribe of sahuagin, a brutal horde that a year ago drove the lizardfolk from their original home. Determined to regain their ancestral home, the lizardfolk had begun purchasing weapons and were negotiating alliances against the sahuagin with the merfolk and the locathah in the region; the koalinh were also approached but refused to join the alliance. The lizardfolk hoped not only to expel the sahuagin and regain their home, but also to deal the sahuagin enough of a blow to discourage them from further aggression.

After discovering the intentions of the lizardfolk and realizing that the sahuagin were the true threat to Saltmarsh, the adventurers escorted two lizardfolk officers back to meet with the town council and ask the aid of the humans of Saltmarsh in the battle to come.

Now, with the sahuagin threat revealed and new alliances formed, the town council of Saltmarsh once again needs heroes—those accomplished enough to infiltrate the sahuagin stronghold and return with knowledge that will bring about the downfall of the final enemy.

COUNCIL OF WAR

The Saltmarsh Town Council calls a meeting with the adventurers who have been approached to undertake the next mission, in the presence of as many townsfolk as can fit in the modest town hall.

The meeting is also attended by several members of each faction that has allied with Saltmarsh against the sahuagin. Unless the party's actions in the previous adventure drove away any potential allies, the following representatives are present (with others in the vicinity).

Lizardfolk. Two **lizardfolk scaleshields** (see appendix C) named Garurt and Vyth represent their queen's interests. They are severe, no-nonsense soldiers. The lizardfolk have set up a camp outside Saltmarsh where a dozen warriors are quartered, with the prospect of more to come. Assuming the lizardfolk are present at the meeting, they provide precious information to the council about their former lair (see "A Great Gift").

Merfolk. A single **merfolk salvager** (see appendix C) named Aryn represents her colony in the meeting. She dislikes being on land and has trouble moving across the cobbled streets of Saltmarsh. Aryn is one of six merfolk occupying a kelp bed near the docks of Saltmarsh.

Locathah. Sakith, a **locathah hunter** (see appendix C), joins the meeting as the representative for his tribe. A dozen **locathah** and their **giant sea eel** steeds swim in the waters near Saltmarsh (see appendix C for both).

THE MASTER PLAN

At the meeting, the head of the council explains that a combined force from all the allied species is being assembled to strike the sahuagin fortress. Before this attack can be correctly planned and executed, a small group is needed to make a preliminary excursion into the fortress. The information gained by this reconnaissance team (see "The Mission") will allow the allies to plan a proper attack. The full assault will be launched fourteen days after the reconnaissance team returns, assuming the mission succeeds at least in part. The council's hope is that the characters will accept this assignment.

LAY OF THE LAND

Assuming the lizardfolk, Garurt and Vyth, are present at the meeting, they produce a crude map that identifies the location of the sahuagin stronghold. It occupies an island in the estuary of the Javan River, some fifty miles west and south of Saltmarsh. A coastal headland covers one flank of the island, which is connected to the mainland by a stone causeway.

The lizardfolk explain that this site is their former lair, and it consists of a series of natural passages and caves honeycombing the interior of the island. You should give players information about the former lizardfolk lair and the surrounding area, including but not limited to the following details:

- The lair is a three-level cave system inside a rocky island. Remarkably, the island seems to have sunk into the surrounding sea, leaving only the top one-third visible from above the water.
- The main entrance is now a large cave that faces the seacoast.
- The lizardfolk made few changes to the place, only adding stairs to connect the levels.

The sahuagin have made drastic changes to their former lair, beyond submerging the two lower levels beneath the water. All the alterations to the lair made by the sahuagin are described in the “Sahuagin Stronghold” section below.

If the lizardfolk are not present at the meeting, the map and the related information are provided by scouts who have explored the area without attracting any attention from the sahuagin.

MISSION GOALS

The objectives of the mission, which must be accomplished if the reward is to be gained, are fourfold:

1. Determine the strength of the sahuagin force: how many warriors, lieutenants, and other battle-ready troops are present.
2. Locate important areas within the fortress: where are the warriors barracked, the officers quartered, and the leaders housed.
3. Discover any significant defensive measures: traps, areas readied specifically for defense, and other dangers the attacking force must avoid or overcome.
4. Discover how advanced the sahuagin preparations are and when they might mount their first attack.

APPROACH BY SEA

If the characters want to travel by sea, the council provides them with a modified keelboat with two pairs of oars, two rowboats, and a step-down mast, large enough to accommodate the characters and any reasonable amount of equipment. Navigation and propulsion of the craft is handled by two members of the town guard (**guards**), who pilot the boat but do not disembark when the characters reach their destination. (If the characters experienced *Danger at Dunwater*, this boat is of the same sort as the one they used in that adventure.)

COMBAT NOT REQUIRED

The characters are considered an elite team that can bring back the needed information. They will likely need to fight some of the sahuagin, but must remain quiet as often as possible to avoid becoming overwhelmed. If they can achieve the mission goals without combat, they're playing smart and well. The intent is to get the players to think tactically and avoid unnecessary fights against a superior foe. Reward the characters' efforts to move past areas filled with sahuagin undetected, but do not hesitate to have the sahuagin react if the characters behave carelessly.

Upon arriving near the stronghold, the characters must decide where to disembark and how best to approach the fortress itself. If the lizardfolk are present, they recommend a daylight landing at the river mouth. In any event, the keelboat will not come ashore or drop anchor anywhere near the island. The characters are expected to use the rowboats to get to shore while the keelboat sails well out of view of the fortress for the duration of the party's mission. At a predetermined signal or after some period of time, the keelboat will return to see if the characters are ready to be collected.

SAHUAGIN STRONGHOLD

The fortress and former home to the lizardfolk is a rocky island located at the mouth of the Javan River. When the lizardfolk laired there, the island was almost entirely above sea level. Thadrah, the sahuagin high priestess of Sekolah, worked ritual magic that sank the island by lowering the seabed.

The cave entrance that once provided the lizardfolk access to the lowest level of the island caves has been submerged in 80 feet of water. The stone causeway that previously led from the shore to the cave entrance now leads to a new set of stone doors built by the sahuagin.

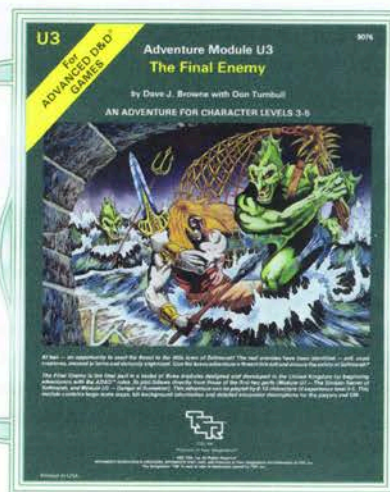
The fortress depicted in this adventure is not a typical sahuagin settlement. This is a singular situation—an experimental, fortified base in coastal waters from which sahuagin forces can exert an iron hand of domination over all races inhabiting the adjacent waters and coastal region. If this experiment proves successful, the sahuagin plan to construct more bases of this sort until their control over all waters and coasts is complete, and maritime commerce is at their mercy.

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL

Dave J. Brown and Don Turnbull bring the Saltmarsh trilogy to a conclusion in this 1983 adventure. As befits TSR UK's talent for creating unique scenarios, *The Final Enemy* challenges players to plan and carry

out reconnaissance on a dangerous sahuagin lair.

We've added an epic final battle where the characters have a chance to lead a final, decisive assault on the sahuagin fortress.





The sahuagin have renovated the fortress to conform with their plans. The two lower levels of the fortress have been completed, with work on the uppermost level still in process. A further lowering of the seabed and a final internal reorganization will complete the preparations. Twenty or thirty days after the adventure takes place, the sahuagin plan to mount their first offensive—and Saltmarsh is indeed their target.

If the characters enter the fortress through area 1 (and if they deal with the guards in areas 1 and 2 without drawing attention), they find most of the upper level empty and bare. Construction is still going on in area 19, and the noise of that work echoes through some of the level. Anywhere between area 19 and the points marked with a † symbol in the corridors on the map, the characters can hear faint chinking, banging, and tapping noises if they stop to listen, and these noises become progressively louder as the listeners approach area 19.

The other two levels of the fortress are underwater. To achieve their objectives, the adventurers must use magical means to navigate these areas.

GENERAL FEATURES

The work carried out by the sahuagin and their slaves on the fortress interior shows expert craftsmanship. The rock is clean and dressed; all surfaces are smooth, all corners are near-perfect right angles, and all floors are level (except in the cave portion of cave 60, which has been left natural, and parts of area 19). The uppermost dry level has an eerie, clinical air.

DECORATIVE TILES

The walls and floors of rooms occupied by sahuagin of higher rank are tiled in various colors (see the individual room descriptions). The tiles are made from polished stone and colored with plant dyes and octopus ink.

CORRIDORS AND ROOMS

All corridors are 10 feet wide and 15 feet high. All the rooms are 20 feet high except for areas 37, 41, and 42 (30 feet high), area 53 (about 60 feet high), and area 60 (45 feet high in the cave proper, 30 feet high over the area at the top of the steps). All walls separating adjacent areas are 3 feet thick. Unless otherwise noted, construction consists of plain dressed stone.

DOORS

All doors are 4-inch-thick double doors made of dressed stone, 5 feet wide and 10 feet tall. Except where otherwise noted, each door has a handle consisting of a horizontal bronze bar set into the stone on each side of the door, about 4 feet above the floor. All doors open into the areas they border on metal casters that move along grooves cut into the stone floor.

GATES AND PILLARS

All gates consist of bronze construction and are 10 feet wide by 10 feet high, except for the gate in the cave mouth of area 60, which is 20 feet wide by 20 feet high.

All pillars are made of smooth dressed stone, 3 feet in diameter, supporting the roof above. All archways are 10 feet wide and 10 feet high.

MALEVOLENT DWELLERS OF THE DEEP

The sahuagin are cruel and vicious in equal measure. Although they are humanoid in form, they have a mindset closer to that of predatory sharks than the outlook of humans or other land dwellers.

Like sharks, sahuagin are at their most aggressive when their prey spills blood in the water. Their Blood Frenzy trait represents this increased ferocity. Though it can prove a significant edge in a fight, it also saddles them with a critical tactical challenge. Sahuagin affected by Blood Frenzy are at best reluctant to disengage from combat. Rather than withdraw in the face of defeat and find reinforcements, they might instead press the attack.

As an optional rule to reflect this ferocity, a sahuagin that comes within 30 feet of a hostile creature that doesn't have all its hit points must use an action to make a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the sahuagin's Blood Frenzy takes over as normal, and the creature either stands its ground or advances to attack in melee. On a successful save, the sahuagin retreats or escapes if possible, temporarily fighting off the influence of the trait. If the sahuagin's move takes it farther than 30 feet from all hostile creatures, the situation resets, and another saving throw is called for whenever it again comes within 30 feet of an injured enemy.

ILLUMINATION

No permanent light sources exist inside the stronghold, since the sahuagin have no need of them. In areas where slaves work, light is often necessary for their sake. If an area must be illuminated temporarily, the sahuagin fasten torches to the walls that produce light throughout the room. When the adventure begins, area 19 and area 37 are the only places in the fortress not shrouded in darkness.

FURNITURE AND SEAWEED BEDS

Items of furniture in the fortress are made of smooth, dressed stone unless otherwise specified. Coffers are 3 feet long by 2 feet wide and stand 2 feet high; they are used to store personal possessions.

Many of the area descriptions in levels 2 and 3 contain references to seaweed beds. These beds consist 10-foot-square patches of seaweed, growing from the floor and rising through the water to a height of 7 feet or more. An area occupied by a seaweed bed is heavily obscured.

Remember that the three-dimensional space in which a seaweed bed appears extends from floor to ceiling, and the seaweed occupies only the bottom half of that space. Thus, it's possible for a creature to be in the same space as the seaweed without being inside the seaweed.

THOSE WHO RULE

The following sahuagin rule the fortress, oversee its armed forces, and direct its worship of Sekolah.

BARONESS SEKLAZ

The initial attack against the lizardfolk and the subsequent occupation of the fortress were the baroness's doing. She is a cunning war strategist and has a measure of patience that serves her well. She has an excellent relationship with the high priestess, with whom she shares an unwavering devotion to Sekolah.

BARON KEPMAK

The baron (spouse of the baroness) is a young and ambitious sahuagin who has worked to increase his reputation in sahuagin society. He is clever but hasty, and prone to sulking when things do not go his way. The fortress and the forthcoming sahuagin invasion on the coastal area represent his opportunity to make history.

HIGH PRIESTESS THADRAH

Through the high priestess, Sekolah's will is done in the fortress. She is a tested disciple who recently performed the great ritual that lowered the seabed under the fortress. She and her priestesses have summoned an avatar of their god, who swims inside the temple.

BLADEMASTER MAKHAHT

Makaht is a hulking brute responsible for leading the sahuagin army in the impending campaign. He takes orders directly from the baroness and the baron, though he prefers the former over the latter.

INHABITANTS

The sahuagin fortress is not full to capacity. A sparse crew of slaves labors on the topmost level, which contains several chambers being prepared for occupation. The submerged levels are home to many sahuagin and several of the armored sharks they use as war beasts. The sahuagin force and the other denizens of the fortress are summarized on the Sahuagin Roster table, which also provides information on how the occupants of various areas might react as the mission unfolds. On this table, sahuagin is abbreviated as "sah."

PATROLS IN THE FORTRESS

The sahuagin routinely send patrols out on level 2 of the fortress as a security measure. Unless the characters are extremely stealthy and careful, they are bound to encounter a patrol at some point. A guard patrol attacks on sight, unless the characters are disguised or have some other way to make it appear they deserve to be here.

A patrol consists of five **sahuagin**, one **sahuagin coral smasher** (see appendix C), and one **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C) drawn from the roster in area 24. If that area is depleted of sahuagin, no more patrols are sent out.

For every 10 minutes the characters spend traveling the corridors on level 2, roll a d12. On a 12, the characters come upon a guard patrol.

THE MISSION BEGINS

Once the characters are ready to depart, be sure to take a moment to prepare your notes. Since this adventure provides plenty of chances for stealthy infiltration, note the characters' Dexterity (Stealth) check modifiers and their passive Perception scores. When a fight breaks out, check the Sahuagin Roster table to determine if the noise of combat in an area attracts reinforcements.

ARRIVAL AT THE ISLAND

When the characters' transportation first arrives within sight of the island fortress, read:

SAHUAGIN ROSTER, LEVEL 1

Area	Occupants at Start	Notes
1	6 sahuagin, 2 sah. coral smashers,* 1 sah. champion*	These guards are alerted by intruders they become aware of. If one of them rings the gong three times, sahuagin in 2 and 12 rush to their aid.
2	2 sahuagin	These guards go to 1 if they hear combat or if the gong is rung three times.
12	5 sahuagin, 2 sah. coral smashers,* 2 sah. priestesses	These sahuagin go to 1 if the gong is rung three times or if they are alerted by a guard from 2.
13	Elmo the slave (commoner)	Elmo is near death and cannot be moved.
19	2 sahuagin, 4 sah. coral smashers,* 1 sah. champion,* 1 sah. priestess, 10 slaves	These sahuagin go to 12 if they hear sounds of combat from that area. The slaves remain here.

SAHUAGIN ROSTER, LEVEL 2

Area	Occupants at Start	Notes
23	2 sah. champions,* 2 sah. priestesses	These sahuagin remain here until encountered.
24	25 sahuagin, 5 sah. coral smashers,* 5 sah. champions*	Guard patrols are drawn from this area until all the occupants are defeated.
25	3 sah. hatchling swarms*	If the swarms emerge, 5 sahuagin and 1 coral smasher come here from 24.
26	2 sah. priestesses, 2 sah. hatchling swarms*	The swarms emerge if the priestesses are alerted. The priestesses try to flee to 24; if one does so, it returns with 5 sahuagin and 1 coral smasher.
27	1 sah. champion,* 12 sahuagin, 12 sah. coral smashers*	These sahuagin remain here until encountered.
28	1 sah. wave shaper*	The wave shaper goes to 27 if alerted by sounds of combat there, arriving on the third round.
29	1 sah. champion,* 10 sahuagin, 6 sah. coral smashers,* 4 sah. deep divers,* 4 shell sharks*	These sahuagin remain here until encountered.
30	1 sah. champion*	The champion goes to 29 if alerted by sounds of combat there.
34	1 sah. priestess, 4 shell sharks*	These creatures remain here until encountered.
37	Maw of Sekolah,* 3 sah. priestesses	These creatures remain here until encountered.
39	10 shell sharks*	These creatures remain here until encountered.
42	Kepmak (sah. baron), Thadrah (sah. high priestess*), 2 sah. champions,* 1 sahuagin, 2 shell sharks*	These creatures remain here until encountered.
45	Seklaz (sah. baron), 1 sahuagin, 1 sah. wave shaper*	If combat occurs, the sahuagin tries to escape. If it does so, it returns with 5 sahuagin and 1 coral smasher in 5 rounds.

SAHUAGIN ROSTER, LEVEL 3

Area	Occupants at Start	Notes
48	1 sah. champion,* 4 sah. coral smashers,* 1 sah. wave shaper,* 2 sah. deep divers*	The wave shaper escapes to level 2 if possible. If it does so, it returns with a patrol in 3d6 + 6 rounds.
50	3 sah. champions,* 1 locathah* (captive)	These sahuagin go to 52 if alerted by sounds of combat there.
50b	Sea lion*	The sea lion attacks if released, unless Kysh the triton is present.
50d	Kysh*	Kysh offers to join the party if he is released.
51	5 shell sharks*	These creatures remain here until encountered.
52	—	If the stone slab is shattered, the sound brings the sahuagin from 50 plus 12 sahuagin and 2 coral smashers from 60, arriving 5 minutes later.
53	Makaht (sah. blademaker*), 49 sahuagin, 5 sah. champions*	These sahuagin remain here until encountered.
54	20 sahuagin	These sahuagin remain here until encountered.
55	2 sah. champions*	These sahuagin go to 54 if alerted by sounds of combat there.
56	2 sah. wave shapers,* 6 sahuagin, 2 shell sharks*	These creatures remain here until encountered.
57	1 sah. wave shaper*	The wave shaper goes to 56 if alerted by sounds of combat there.
58	2 sah. champions,* 6 sahuagin	These sahuagin go to 54 if alerted by sounds there, arriving in 3 rounds.
59	1 sah. champion,* 1 sahuagin	These sahuagin remain here until encountered.
60	45 sahuagin, 10 sah. coral smashers,* 7 sah. champions,* 4 sah. deep divers,* 2 sah. wave shapers,* 6 shell sharks*	Twelve sahuagin and 2 coral smashers go to 52 if the stone slab there is shattered. Otherwise these creatures remain here until encountered.

*See appendix C

A rock outcropping thrusts up from the sea to form an island here, just offshore. It reckons to be five hundred feet in diameter and is separated from the shoreline by a span of about two hundred feet.

The guards who are rowing or sailing the keelboat won't come anywhere within several hundred feet of the island. They prefer to drop off the characters (in their rowboats) on the eastern edge of the area, but if the characters ask, they will sail around the south side of the island—always giving it a wide berth—so the characters can disembark somewhere else along the perimeter.

After the characters take to their boats, they can decide to come ashore on the mainland and approach the fortress on foot, or they might row around the island to look for clues about what lies inside. When the characters come close enough to the island to see details of the exterior or the causeway, read:

The island is bare of vegetation other than mosses, lichens, seaweed, and the occasional clump of coarse grass. No wildlife appears present, but for a few clouds of insects and small mollusks. In stark contrast to other sites along the coast, no seabirds can be seen near the island.

As reported by the scouts, a long stone causeway leads southward from the marshy coastline, crossing the entire span just above the waterline. By looking south from the coast, you can see that it ends at a ledge with a set of large stone doors just beyond.

Allow the characters to plan and execute their approach, using the following information.

ENTRANCES

The fortress has three entrances, though only one is visible from the surface. The first is a set of double doors at the end of the causeway that leads southward to area 1. The second is a small cave 80 feet below the double doors that leads to area 61. The third is a wide opening on the south side of the island, 80 feet below the surface, that leads to area 60.

Deeper than 20 feet below the surface, the water is heavily obscured without the aid of a light source.

ROCKY EXTERIOR

The island fortress's rocky exterior features many handholds. Characters who want to climb the exterior can do so with no difficulty. Such activity attracts no attention from within, nor does it produce any useful results.

THE CAUSEWAY

The stone causeway extends for 190 feet from the coast to the ledge of area 1. It is 10 feet wide and 10 to 15 feet thick, allowing it to safely bear the weight of the characters if they choose to walk on it.

FORTRESS LEVEL 1

The following locations are identified on map 6.1. Modify the read-aloud text as necessary to account for the movement of the sahuagin around the fortress.

1. NORTH ENTRANCE AND GUARD POST

You stand on a rock ledge about thirty feet wide. Ahead, set into the vertical rock surface, is a pair of large stone doors, each ten feet high and five feet wide. The surface of the doors is featureless, with no visible handles, except for a rectangular aperture six inches wide by four inches high cut in the center of the left-hand door, about six feet above ground level. A flat metal plate covers this aperture from the inside.

During the day, the doors are barred on the inside. At night, the doors are unbarred, since sahuagin use the doors to access the causeway and enter the marsh. The sahuagin guards in area 1 are overconfident; they don't keep a close eye on the causeway.

As long as the characters approach the doors quietly, they do not alert the guards beyond. Tampering with the doors will alert the guards, who demand (in Sahuagin) to know who is trying to enter.

The guards can be tricked into opening the doors, but since sahuagin intelligence is high, this will not be an easy task. A character who can communicate with the sahuagin, and who makes a successful DC 18 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check, convinces the guards to open the doors for the party.

The doors are not magically locked and can be opened with appropriate spells or enough brawn. The doors (AC 16, 45 hit points, damage threshold 12) can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

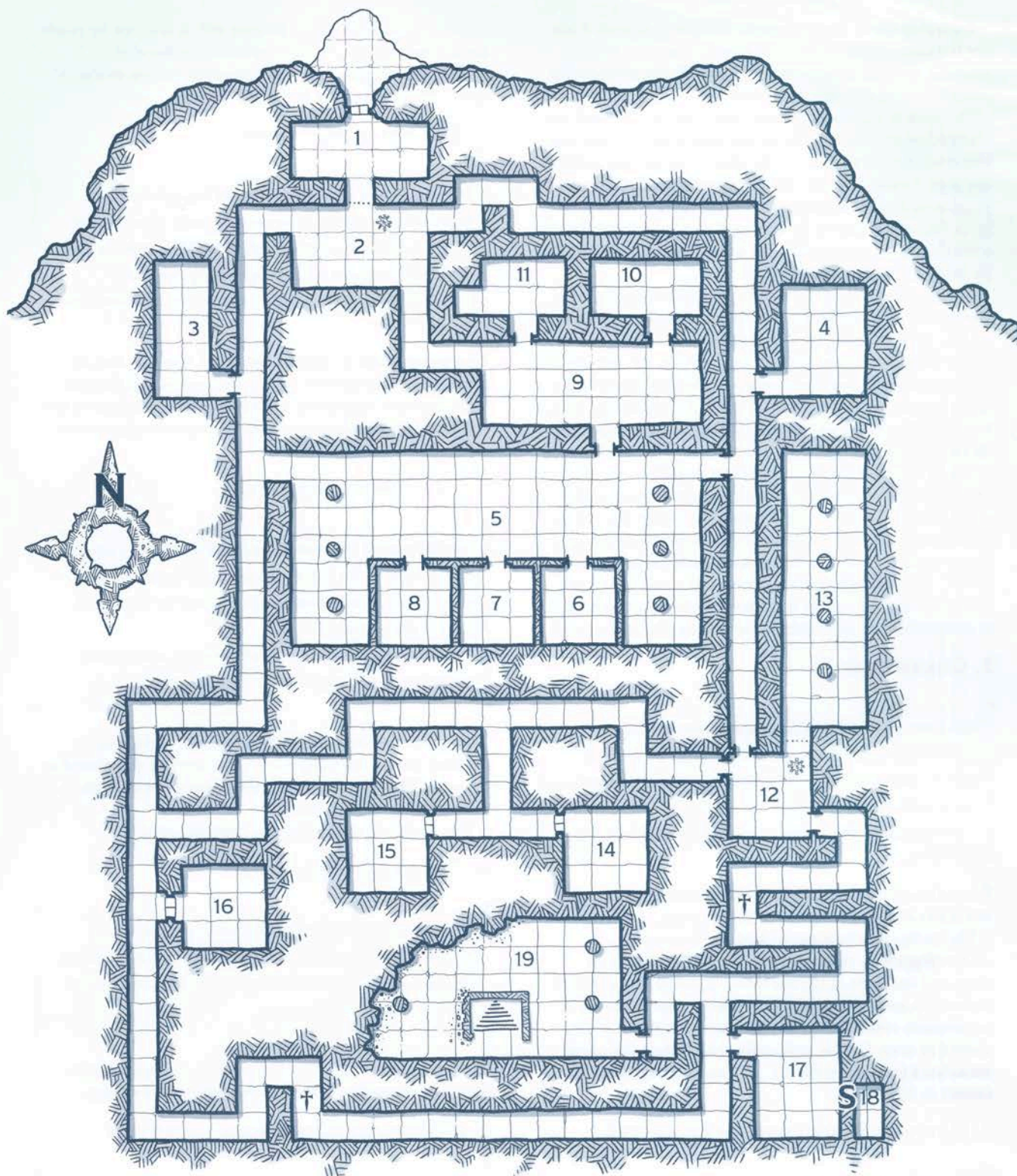
Once the characters are inside, read the following:

You see a bare, spartan room. Ahead, a short corridor off the room ends in a closed bronze gate. To your left, a single stone bench runs along the east wall. To your right on the opposite wall hangs a large metal gong; a short metal bar leans against the wall below it.

Several sahuagin glare at you as they move to attack.

Six **sahuagin**, two **sahuagin coral smashers** (see appendix C), and one **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C) guard the entrance. If the door is forced open, one of the sahuagin immediately moves toward the west wall to ring the gong, while the remaining guards defend the entrance. If this creature is slain or otherwise prevented from ringing the gong, no other defender takes its place.

A sahuagin can use its action to ring the gong. If the gong is rung three times, the sahuagin in areas 2 and 12 recognize the alert signal and rush to the scene as quickly as possible. The gong cannot be heard on any other level of the fortress.



1 square = 10 feet



Double Door



Secret Door



Gate Opening Mechanism



Stairs Down



Archway



Gate



Points beyond which sounds of working in room 19 may be heard

MAP G.1: SAHUAGIN LAIR LEVEL 1

Guarded Gate. Two sahuagin stationed in area 2 are not initially visible to the characters. They are responsible for keeping guard over the gate that separates the entrance from the rest of the lair.

The gate is normally closed and down. It is raised and lowered by means of a chain and pulley mechanism fastened on the north wall inside area 2, on the east side of the gate. Under normal circumstances, it takes 3 rounds to raise or lower the gate, but an emergency device allows the raised gate to be dropped in a split second with a muffled clang (not audible in any of the occupied areas on this level other than area 1).

The gate (AC 18, 50 hit points, damage threshold 14) can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

Net Trap. A large net trap is installed in the ceiling of the corridor leading from area 1 to the gate that blocks entry into area 2. The net falls when a creature in area 2 releases the rope that holds it in place. The net can easily be spotted by anyone who looks toward the ceiling.

When a creature releases the net, a 10-foot-square net falls from the ceiling, covering the area in front of the gate in area 1. Each creature standing under the net as it falls must make a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained. A creature must make a successful DC 14 Strength check to free itself or another creature from the net. If the net takes 30 slashing damage, it is destroyed and all creatures restrained by it are freed.

2. GUARD POST

This bare, spartan room has a stone bench along the south wall that continues around the angle to the west wall. A chain-and-pulley mechanism is mounted on the north wall, next to the exit to the north.

The sahuagin here prepare to defend themselves.

Two **sahuagin** stand guard in this room. They attack intruders attempting to enter the fortress.

The pulley mechanism is described in area 1.

Development. If the gong in area 1 has not been rung and the fight at the entrance is going badly for the defenders, one of the sahuagin tries to flee to area 12 to summon reinforcements. It returns with the guards posted in area 12 (five **sahuagin**, two **sahuagin coral smashers** [see appendix C], and two **sahuagin priestesses**) in 10 rounds.

3. UNFINISHED CHAMPION'S QUARTERS

Dark blue tiles cover the walls and floor of this room. In the center of the room sits a table with a small bench beside it. A coffer is propped in the northeast corner, its open lid leaning against the wall.

A miner's pick lies on the floor in the southwest corner.

Like most of the rooms on this level, this one has been allocated to an eventual occupant (in this case, a cham-

pion currently quartered in area 60). It will not be ready for occupation until this level has been flooded.

The miner's pick is one of the construction workers' tools. The open coffer is empty.

4. CHAMPION'S QUARTERS

Dark green tiles cover the walls and floor of this room. Many lidless coffers rest against the walls, though there are none near the northern wall west of the archway. One of the coffers glows, its blue light filling the room.

A sledgehammer is propped against the northern wall.

Like most of the rooms on this level, this one has already been allocated to an eventual occupant (in this case, another champion currently quartered in area 60).

The sledgehammer is one of the construction workers' tools.

5. UNFINISHED BARRACKS

This unfinished area seems intended for use as a barracks. Many lidless coffers are arranged around the walls of the room, though there are none near the north wall west of the archway.

Propped against the center of the north wall are dozens of stone-working tools.

This barracks area will eventually, when the level is flooded, house the sixty warriors currently quartered in area 60. The sixty coffers, if the characters care to examine them, are all empty.

The tools are well used and have no value.

6. CHAMPIONS' QUARTERS

This austere room holds a small table with two chairs beside it. A stone coffer, its lid open and propped against the wall, stands in the northeast corner, and an identical one is in the northwest corner.

This room has been allocated to two champions currently quartered in area 60. The coffers are empty.

7. UNFINISHED CHAMPIONS' QUARTERS

The ceiling of this austere room appears rough and unfinished. A stone coffer stands in the northeast corner, and an identical one is in the northwest corner. The lids to these coffers lie shattered on the floor.

This room has been allocated to two champions currently quartered in area 60. The lids were dropped by slaves during construction and have not been cleared away or replaced.

8. MAKESHIFT STOREROOM

This is an austere room, like other similar chambers. A stone coffer stands in the northeast corner, and an identical one rests in the northwest corner. The lids to these coffers lie on the floor between piles of stone-working tools, chunks of chiseled stone, and debris.

The slaves are using this room to store tools and the unwanted stone from their work.

9. ARMORY

This room has a plain stone floor, walls, and ceiling. Two rows of metal racks run almost the entire length of the room from east to west; they are set parallel and about six feet apart, leaving a passage between them. A large number of spears, tridents, and other weapons are arrayed on these racks.

Two large closed coffers sit to either side of the southern archway.

This room is used to store weapons for the sahuagin troops currently in area 60. The armory contains the following items:

- Sixty spears
- Thirty tridents
- Ten glaives
- Twenty warhammers

The coffers are not locked. They contain seventy-five daggers with scabbards.

10. DISORGANIZED STOREROOM

This room of plain stone construction contains coils of rope and heaps of animal hides scattered on the floor. A few metal nails lie between the piles.

This room contains unsorted supplies for the construction of the upper level. None of it has any value except to the slaves.

11. TIDY STOREROOM

This room of plain stone construction contains organized heaps of metal nails, hooks, and buckles, along with some leather belts and straps on the floor.

This room holds additional supplies for the improvement of the fortress.

12. GUARD POST

This chamber is accessed by three archways leading into it from the north, east, and west. A stone bench runs along the south wall. Set in the north wall, opposite the west archway, is a metal gate that closes off an opening to the north. A mechanism consisting of a wheel, chains, and various pulleys is attached to the east wall.

Unless they were called to help in areas 1 and 2, five **sahuagin**, two **sahuagin coral smashers** (see appendix C), and two **sahuagin priestesses** occupy this room.

From this chamber, the characters can hear faint hammering sounds arising from the southeast, unless work has been stopped and the slaves working in area 19 have been confined there.

Development. The sahuagin in area 19 hear sounds of battle that come from this area, investigating within 5 minutes (see area 19 for more information).

Metal Gate. A bronze gate is currently closed (down). It can be raised and lowered by a pulley mechanism fastened to the east wall. Under normal circumstances, it takes 3 rounds to raise or lower the gate, but an emergency device can drop the raised gate in a split second (not audible in any of the occupied areas on this level).

The gate (AC 18, 50 hit points, damage threshold 14) can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

13. SLAVE PEN

If the characters look into this room from the other side of the gate, read:

A long, narrow room stretches beyond the gate, with four pillars equally spaced north to south.

If they pass through the gate, continue with:

To your right, along the east wall runs a shallow trough cut into the stone floor. This channel is stained and traces of a brown liquid shine wetly.

To your left, along the west wall, dozens of manacles hang from the wall at waist height.

The slaves that have been toiling to enlarge and alter the fortress for their sahuagin captors spend their few hours of rest in here. At one time, forty slaves served in the stronghold, as attested to by the forty pairs of chains equally spaced along the wall. As the construction work nears its end, the sahuagin have disposed of all but a few workers. Most of the slaves were sacrificed in the summoning ritual performed by high priestess Thadrah.

Food for the slaves, in the form of a light brown, watery gruel, is poured into the trough from time to time, though the slaves are not given utensils of any sort and must do their best with their hands.

SLAVES OF THE SAHUAGIN

The slaves are all unarmed and in a weakened state (half hit points, disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks). They do not attack the party and flee the fortress at the first opportunity. The slaves do not join or otherwise aid the characters; they cower and yell if threatened or restrained. They have no useful information, and their minds are scattered from abuse. They defend themselves if attacked, but they have escape foremost on their minds.

The trough stops 10 feet from the northern wall. In the northeast corner of the room, the sahuagin have installed very rudimentary sanitary facilities which, however crude, are kept surprisingly clean.

One human slave (**commoner**) named Elmo lies dying in the northwest corner of this room. Elmo is too weak to call out to the characters, though he can speak with them if they approach.

ELMO THE EMACIATED

Elmo is the sole survivor of a party of adventurers that penetrated the lair weeks ago. In a weak and raspy voice, he tells his story. Relate the following details:

- He is a wizard and the leader of a party of adventurers from the Hold of the Sea Princes, sent by the Prince of Monmurg to investigate the strange goings-on in the former lizardfolk lair.
- He and his companions were equipped to explore underwater but never got that far. As soon as they gained entry (at area 1), they were immediately attacked by large numbers of sahuagin.
- All his comrades were killed in the battle that followed. He was taken prisoner. Since then, he has worked as a slave, laboring on the building efforts.
- He and his companions had several magic items to aid them with underwater exploration, but these items were confiscated by the sahuagin (see area 18). He does not believe the sahuagin know of their magical properties.
- He recently witnessed the performance of a terrible ritual in which many slaves were sacrificed.

Close to death, Elmo can no longer work or even walk. The sahuagin have not even bothered to kill him for food, considering his sparse frame not worth the effort.

Elmo's mind is too damaged to recall any useful information about the layout of the lower levels. He does remember a tremendous earthquake occurring some time ago. (The earthquake was caused by the high priestess's ritual, though Elmo does not know this.)

Elmo's Secret. If the word "secret" is used in conversation, it triggers a memory and Elmo relates that he helped build a secret door (leading to area 18). He remembers that concealing the door required great skill. He describes where the room is and how to access it.

Healing Elmo. Elmo's body and spirit have suffered terribly. Spells, potions, and medicine ease his pain but do little to reverse his body's deterioration.

Elmo's Death. Elmo dies as the conversation concludes. Just before he passes, he recalls the summoning of the avatar of Sekolah in the temple below.

The man's eyes suddenly widen, and he grasps at the air. He turns away from some imagined horror. "The teeth ... teeth in the temple," he wails, before collapsing dead on the stone floor.

Elmo's mind is as clouded in death as it was in life, and any attempts to communicate with him magically reveal nothing new.

14. UNFINISHED GUEST ROOM

Dark green tiles cover the floor and ceiling of this room, forming an incomplete mosaic that depicts sahuagin warriors defending an underwater city from a tentacled monster. A table stands in the center of the room, with small, ornately carved benches to either side. Two coffer are propped against the north wall, their lids closed.

This room and its completed twin (area 15) will serve as guest quarters for sahuagin notables once this level is complete and flooded.

The coffer are empty.

15. GUEST ROOM

Pale blue tiles cover the floor and ceiling of this room. Mosaics on the wall depict sahuagin warriors sinking large sailing ships. A table in the center of the room is flanked by two ornate benches. Two coffer stand against the north wall, their lids leaning against their sides.

This room and its incomplete twin (area 14) will serve as guest quarters for sahuagin notables once this level is complete and flooded.

The coffer are empty.

16. LARDER

The air is distinctly colder than outside. This room contains no furniture, but around the walls hang various carcasses. Some spare hooks attached to the wall are unoccupied. White bones lie heaped in the northeast corner.

Unless work has been stopped and the slaves that were working in area 19 have been confined in that area, the characters hear hammering coming from the east.

By instinct or observation, the sahuagin have selected the coldest part of level 1 in which to construct their larder. The natural temperature here allows dead creatures to be stored for extended periods of time without risk of significant decomposition.

Carcasses. The carcasses include a normal octopus, two giant eels, a male dwarf, a male human, and eight lizardfolk. All are fresh or reasonably well preserved.



The dwarf and the human were part of Elmo's adventuring party; their bodies have been stripped of gear.

A character who makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check while examining the adventurers' bodies deduces that the organs of the pair were carefully removed. A further successful DC 14 Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that sahuagin rituals often involve the use of freshly harvested organs.

If the adventurers' corpses are targeted by *speak with dead* or similar magic, they answer the caster's questions truthfully. They know nothing of the lower levels of the fortress but are aware the place has recently been sunk.

Bones. The bones in the corner belong to the final two members of Elmo's party. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check discerns that the remains are those of a female human and a male half-elf.

17. LARGE STOREROOM

This room contains neat piles of hammers, chisels, mining picks, sledgehammers, crowbars, spades, wicker baskets, sacks, and coils of rope. There is also a pile of light blue tiles. Otherwise, the place is empty.

A character who makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the secret door to room 18. The door is protected by a *glyph of warding* spell.

The glyph can be spotted by a character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while studying the door. The glyph triggers if the door is opened before the glyph is dispelled. If that happens, all creatures within 20 feet of the door must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

18. SECRET ROOM

This plain room contains several items of interest.

A leather cloak hangs on a peg on the wall to your right. Opposite the cloak, propped against the east wall, stands a full suit of human-sized plate armor. A heap of chain mail lies at the foot of the armor. Farther into the room, three shields are piled on the floor. Finally, a coffer lies at the far end of the room, its lid closed.

The sahuagin are uncertain of the magical items' properties and stored them in a secret place on the dry level for fear that immersion in saltwater will ruin them.

The sahuagin have removed for storage or use elsewhere all the nonmagical gear found on Elmo's and his companions' bodies.

Coffer. The locked coffer can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It is also trapped with a thrusting blade trap. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful

DC 15 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the coffer without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap. Once triggered, a short blade thrusts from the coffer, stabbing any creature next to the coffer's lock. The creature must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) piercing damage.

Treasure. The leather cloak hanging here is a *cloak of the manta ray*. The armor is a suit of *mithral armor (plate)* and a suit of normal chain mail. The three shields, all usable, bear the insignia of Prince Monmurg—a spire rising against a blue ocean sky.

The coffer contains twelve *potions of water breathing*.

19. HALL

If the sahuagin in this area have been alerted to the presence of intruders, this area is vacant. Read:

To the west of a large archway stretches an area of plain stone construction. Three pillars extend to the tiled ceiling. In the center of this chamber, a wide staircase leads down. An unfinished half-wall surrounds three sides of the staircase. Piles of colored tiles sit near the wall, awaiting placement. The sound of water lapping against stone can be heard coming up from the bottom of the stairs.

If the sahuagin in this area have not been alerted when the party enters, continue with:

Ten slaves, working by torchlight, smooth and dress the unfinished exterior walls of the hall. Each slave is shackled at the ankles with a length of chain and wears a metal collar. Several sahuagin oversee the slaves as they work, while others rest and chat near the top of the stairs.

This area of the fortress remains to be finished to the satisfaction of the sahuagin before the level is flooded.

There are ten slaves in this area: four **orcs**, four **hobgoblins**, and two **lizardfolk**. See the "Slaves of the Sahuagin" sidebar for more information.

Four **sahuagin coral smashers** (see appendix C), one **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C), one **sahuagin priestess**, and two **sahuagin** oversee the work of the slaves. The sahuagin attack any intruders on sight.

Development. If the sahuagin here are alerted by the sounds of combat in area 12, they gather the slaves and chain them to the pillars in this room before proceeding, which delays their arrival accordingly—it takes 5 minutes for them to get to the scene.

Stairs. The stairs descend into area 20. Water from the flooded levels laps at the second step from the top of the stairs. Descending the stairs submerges the party in cold (but not frigid) seawater.

Treasure. The sahuagin champion wears a pair of gold and silver armbands (25 gp each). Intricate designs depicting shark teeth encircle the armbands.

FORTRESS LEVEL 2

This level is entirely submerged in cold (but not frigid) seawater. The characters must make appropriate preparations before descending the stairs into area 20.

The following locations are identified on map 6.2.

20. LARGE HALL

After descending the stairs, you find yourselves in a large open area. Stone pillars rise from floor to ceiling, two each to your left and your right.

This area is empty, quiet, and peaceful.

21. BLADEMASTER'S QUARTERS

Dark green tiles cover the walls and floor of this room, and the ceiling is tiled in white. A table in the center of the room has a small bench beside it. In the southwest corner is a coffer, its lid closed. A mass of seaweed rises in the northwest corner to a height of about seven feet; the seaweed covers an area about ten feet square.

Blademaster Makaht resides here. At present he can be found in area 53, watching the so-called sport in the arena during his short recreation period.

Coffer. The locked coffer can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Makaht keeps the key on his person.

The coffer contains the following treasure:

- Six leather harnesses with gold buckles (10 gp each)
- A leather bag containing two cut rubies (100 gp each)
- A small silver mirror (25 gp)

22. CHAMPION'S QUARTERS

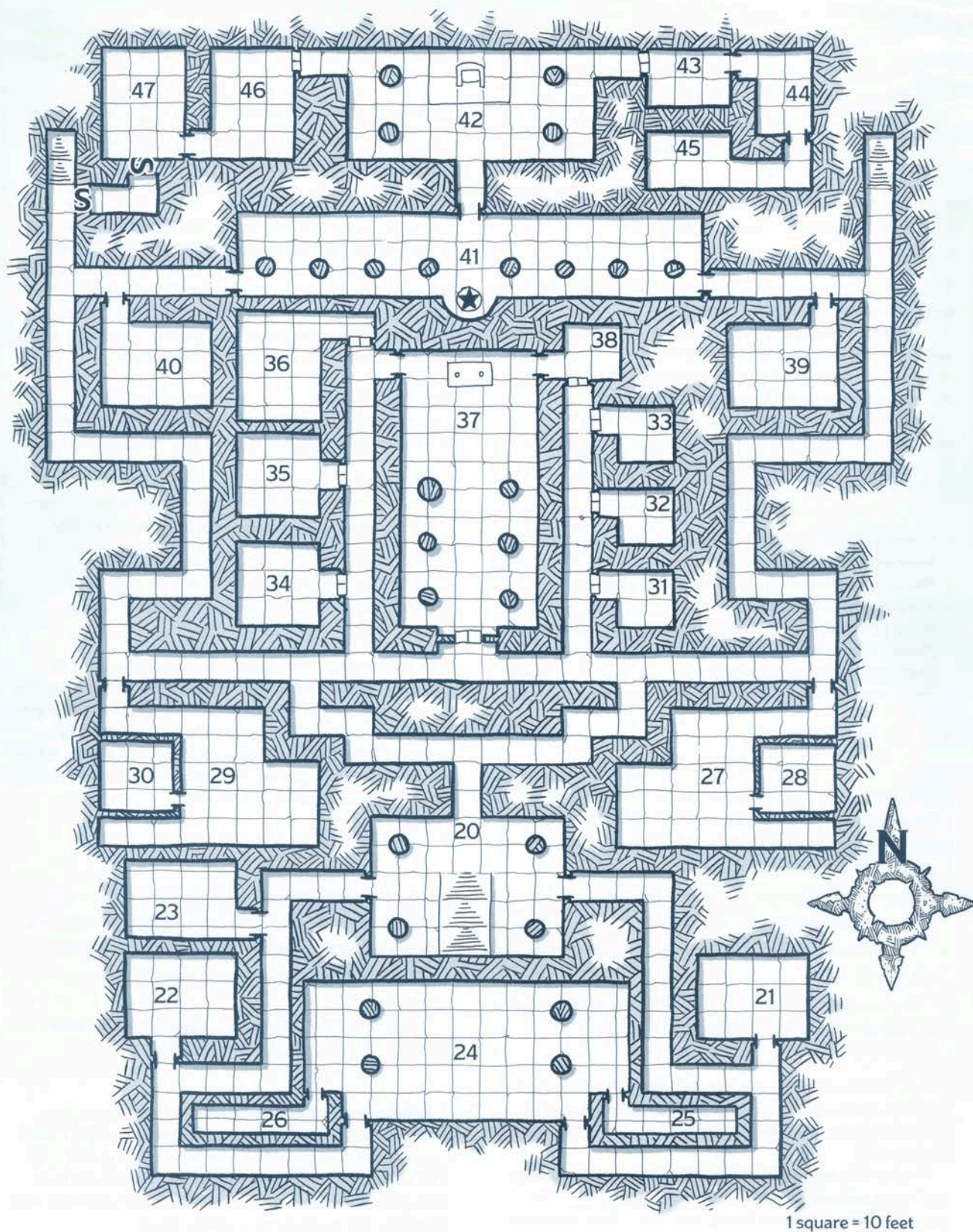
The walls and floor of this chamber are tiled in a dark green color, and the ceiling is tiled light green. A seaweed bed fills the northeast corner. In the center of the room stands a small table with a small bench beside it. Against the east wall rests a coffer, its lid closed.

The occupant of this room is presently in the throne room (area 42).

Coffer. The locked coffer can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The key to the coffer is held by one of the sahuagin champions in area 42.

The coffer contains:

- Six leather harnesses with silver buckles (5 gp each)
- A small gold locket on a fine chain (50 gp); if the locket is opened, it is seen to contain a miniature portrait of a human girl and a lock of blonde hair, which floats away into the surrounding water
- A leather bag containing 25 gp



1 square = 10 feet



Double Door



Secret Door



Throne



Stairs



Archway



Altar



Statue

23. CHAMPIONS' QUARTERS

The walls and floor of this room are tiled in deep blue, and the ceiling is light blue. In the center of the room is a table with a small bench beside it. A closed coffer leans against the south wall, and a seaweed bed fills the south-west corner.

A small group of sahuagin in this room are vocalizing what seem like raucous sounds of merriment.

The sahuagin are socializing and celebrating the forthcoming completion of the fortress.

Two **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C) and two **sahuagin priestesses** occupy this room. Their revelry grants them disadvantage on Perception checks to detect the characters as they approach the chamber.

Coffer. The locked coffer can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The key to the coffer is held by one of the sahuagin champions in this room.

The following treasure lie within the coffer:

- A small leather pouch that holds a fine set of thieves' tools with ivory handles (200 gp)
- 340 sp scattered loosely inside the container
- A silver goblet (50 gp) with the insignia of Prince Monmurg pressed into the bottom (see the "Insignia of Prince Monmurg" sidebar); stylized lightning bolts are engraved on the sides, and the words "Jupiter," "Maximus," and "Optimus" are written underneath the bolts

24. LIVING QUARTERS

This large area is tiled throughout—the floor in indigo, the walls in dark blue, and the ceiling in light blue. Four stone pillars support the ceiling. The room has a bed of seaweed all around the walls, rising about seven feet off the floor and perhaps ten feet wide. A number of coffers, their lids closed, lie around the room.

Three long tables, benches to either side, are set in the central area.

Dozens of sahuagin here are gathered in small groups or floating in the seaweed beds.

Although the sahuagin are not anticipating invaders, if the characters enter the room without taking steps to conceal themselves, the residents pick up their weapons and attack.

Twenty-five **sahuagin**, five **sahuagin coral smashers**, and three **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C) occupy this large common living quarters. Their weapons are close at hand.

Treasure. The coffers are all unlocked. A thorough search of the coffers reveals the following items:

- A total of 500 gp
- Twenty large pearls (10 gp each)
- Forty harnesses with silver buckles (10 gp each)

25. HATCHERY

The characters might be able to enter this area undetected by the occupants of area 24. If they do so, read:

This long, narrow area contains no furniture, but clusters of what look like large fish eggs float against the walls, five or six feet above the floor.

The eggs are unhatched sahuagin. Disturbing the eggs in any way, including coming within 3 feet of them, causes dozens of them to break open. Three **sahuagin hatchling swarms** (see appendix C) form and rush to attack warm-blooded characters. The sound of their offspring being threatened attracts the sahuagin in area 24, if they have not already been defeated.

26. HATCHERY

The characters might be able to enter this area undetected by the occupants of area 24. If they do so, read:

This long, narrow area contains no furniture, but clusters of what look like large fish eggs float against the walls, five or six feet above the floor.

Two sahuagin wearing coral-colored headbands and silver bracelets are performing a ritual over the eggs.

Two **sahuagin priestesses** are conducting rites to Sekolah over the unhatched eggs. If the priestesses notice the party, they immediately awaken two **sahuagin hatchling swarms** (see appendix C) from the eggs around them. The swarms attack the characters, while the priestesses try to flee, returning promptly with any surviving sahuagin from area 24.

27. BARRACKS

A short passage leading west beyond the archway opens after about twenty feet into a large room. A seaweed bed covers the entire south wall. Several coffers, their lids closed, stand at regular intervals around the unoccupied walls.

A large, powerful sahuagin is addressing more than twenty sahuagin guards.

A **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C) prepares a squad of twelve **sahuagin** and twelve **sahuagin coral smashers** (see appendix C) for patrol and guard duty. The sahuagin are armed and about to move out to relieve guards currently on active duty. They move to slay intruders the moment they notice them.

Development. The **sahuagin wave shaper** (see appendix C) in area 28 joins the battle in this area on the third round of combat.

Treasure. The unlocked coffers contain a total of 300 gp and twenty leather harnesses with silver buckles (10 gp each).



28. WAVE SHAPER'S QUARTERS

This room is adorned with a colorful mosaic of a sahuagin with a twisted body creating a whirlpool to drag down a ship. A table stands in the center, a small bench to either side. Seaweed beds sway in the northeast and southeast corners. Two coffers, their lids closed, stand against the north wall.

A hunched-over sahuagin at the table looks up, startled, as you appear. Its sudden motion causes one of several stacks of coins to topple with a clatter.

A single **sahuagin wave shaper** (see appendix C) sits at the table, counting small stacks of gold coins.

Treasure. There are 276 gp stacked on the table and on adjacent unoccupied benches. The coffers contain another 400 gp in loose piles (200 gp each). The wave shaper wears a silver bracelet set with turquoise beads (100 gp).

29. BARRACKS

A short passage beyond the archway opens after about twenty feet into a large room. A seaweed bed covers the entire south wall. Several coffers, their lids closed, stand at regular intervals around the unoccupied walls.

A commanding sahuagin is addressing a group of sahuagin guards and sharks.

A **sahuagin champion** prepares a squad of six **sahuagin**, six **sahuagin coral smashers**, four **sahuagin deep divers**, and four **shell sharks** for patrol and guard duty (see appendix C for all but the **sahuagin**). The sahuagin are armed and about to move out to relieve guards currently on duty. They treat intruders as hostile.

Four **sahuagin** that are not part of the patrol are gambling on two lobsters fighting in a small net arena.

Development. The **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C) in area 30 joins the battle, arriving on the third round of combat.

Treasure. The unlocked coffers contain a total of 300 gp and twenty leather harnesses with silver buckles (10 gp each). Each of the battling lobsters is adorned with a silver and pearl band (25 gp).

30. CHAMPION'S QUARTERS

This is a spartan room. A few broken bits of pottery lie scattered on the floor. A table stands in the center, with a small bench to either side. Seaweed beds sway in the northeast and southeast corners. Two coffers, their lids closed, stand against the north wall.

The light in this room flickers slightly, illuminating a sleeping sahuagin in the northeast corner bed.

A single **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C) lies in a seaweed bed. It recently lost a large sum of gold to the sahuagin wave shaper in area 28.

Treasure. The coffers, which are unlocked, contain a total of 12 gp.



31. PRIESTESS'S QUARTERS

The floor and walls of this room are tiled in medium gray, and the ceiling has white tiles. A small table in the center of the room is neatly set with a silver bowl and cup in the center. A small bench stands beside the table.

A seaweed bed covers the southeast corner. A coffer, its lid closed, stands in the southwest corner.

The occupant of this room is currently in the temple assisting with the ceremony.

Treasure. The unlocked coffers contain 70 gp and an ivory-handled dagger in a plain scabbard (20 gp). The silver bowl and cup are worth 5 gp each.

32. PRIESTESS'S QUARTERS

The floor and walls of this room are tiled a medium gray, while the ceiling has white tiles. There is a table in the center of the room with a small bench beside it. A single four-inch-long shark tooth sits on the table.

A seaweed bed covers the southeast corner. A coffer, its lid closed, stands in the southwest corner.

The occupant of this room is currently in the temple assisting with the ceremony.

Treasure. The unlocked coffers contain 40 gp and a silver hand mirror (15 gp).

33. PRIESTESS'S QUARTERS

Gray tiles cover the floor and walls of this room, while the ceiling has white tiles. A small table and bench sit in the center of the room. Colorful shells adorn the walls.

A seaweed bed covers the southeast corner. A closed coffer stands in the southwest corner. Near the bed stands a one-foot-tall wooden statuette of a shark.

The occupant of this room is currently in the temple assisting with the ceremony. The statuette is a *Sekolahian worshiping statuette* (see appendix B).

Treasure. The unlocked coffer contains 40 gp and a silver hand mirror (15 gp).

RAPTURE WEED

These rare plants grow along isolated stony shelves in underwater trenches. A creature that consumes the fronds of rapture weed becomes poisoned for 6 hours, during which time it experiences occasional hallucinations and a feeling of euphoria. Sahuagin priests often use rapture weed in their worship (as does the priestess in area 36).

Any creature that consumes rapture weed has a 1 percent chance of instead becoming incapacitated for the duration of the plant's effect. During this time it experiences terrifying visions of an enormous shark devouring great amounts of prey.

When the effect wears off or is negated, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted with a form of long-term madness (see "Madness" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

34. PRIESTESS'S QUARTERS

The floor and walls of this room are tiled a medium gray, while the ceiling has white tiles. There is a small table in the center of the room with a small, matching bench beside it.

A seaweed bed covers the southeast corner. A coffer, its lid closed, stands in the southwest corner. A hollow space by the bed contains a ceremonial dagger with a bone handle.

A sahuagin and several armored sharks occupy this chamber.

A **sahuagin priestess** is tending to the armored plates of four **shell sharks** (see appendix C) in this room. She is startled to discover intruders have made it this far. She and the sharks attack all intruders.

Treasure. The unlocked coffer contains 113 gp and six humanoid skulls with uncut chunks of turquoise forced into the eye sockets. These twelve pieces of turquoise are worth 10 gp each.

35. Prayer Room

This room has walls and ceiling tiled in dark green. A mosaic on the northern wall depicts a huge two-headed shark leading countless sahuagin toward the surface of the water.

An altar on the west wall is made of a massive shark jaw and teeth mounted on a stone base. The base is surrounded by small skulls and living sea creatures.

The priestesses use this area to pray to Sekolah. It is currently unoccupied.

A character who searches the altar and makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers a hidden compartment under the stone base of the shark jaws. The compartment contains twelve portions of rapture weed that the priestesses use in rituals (see the "Rapture Weed" sidebar).



36. HIGH PRIESTESS'S QUARTERS

The floor and walls of this room are tiled in gray, the ceiling in white. In the center of the room stands a white stone table, the top surface covered in gold-colored engravings. Three small ornately carved benches stand near the table, and a seaweed bed fills the southeast corner.

This is the chamber of high priestess Thadrah. She is currently in area 42 with the baron.

A character who searches the seaweed bed discovers a hidden, unlocked coffer.

Trapped Table. A character who examines the table and makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers a secret compartment in its underside. The compartment is locked and can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The compartment is trapped with a thrusting blade trap. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the coffer without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When the trap is triggered, a short blade thrusts from the coffer, stabbing any creature next to the coffer's lock. The creature must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) piercing damage.

Treasure. The hidden compartment contains four portions of rapture weed and a gold flask filled with three doses of a restorative draught (*potions of healing*).

The coffer contains the following items:

- A leather harness with platinum buckles (50 gp)
- A canvas bag filled with 50 pp
- A gold bracelet set with pearls (200 gp)

37. TEMPLE

This large room features walls and floor covered in gray tiles, the ceiling covered in white. Tiled pillars support the ceiling and run down the length of the area on either side of the center.

An altar is built against the northern wall of this chamber. Its stone base is covered in carved shark eyes that stare out in all directions. The startlingly realistic eyes are inset with dark stones that reflect the chamber's dim blue light.

If the characters look into the chamber without interrupting the ritual taking place, read:

Glowing symbols and strange designs are engraved into the walls of this place, casting an eerie light throughout the chamber. Three chanting sahuagin dressed in ceremonial robes float near the altar, their arms raised toward the ceiling, which is some thirty feet above. Carvings of shark's eyes adorn the altar's front, each varied in shape and size. The gory remains of unidentified creatures rest

atop the altar; blood rises like smoke upward past the sahuagin. Two large and squirming sacks flank the altar.

A massive two-headed shark, its fins adorned with bands of pearl and gold, swims in circles above the altar.

Noise of combat in this area does not attract attention from any other occupied area. Even if a sahuagin patrol passes near the temple during combat inside, it is not at all surprised to hear such noises. The priestesses are a strange bunch, in the average warrior's opinion, and conduct some very noisy ceremonies in their temple—this must just be another one. It is a different matter, of course, if a patrol sees combat occurring.

Three **sahuagin priestesses** are performing the ritual at the altar. Each sack contains ten sahuagin hatchlings that are no threat and are automatically slain if attacked. The **Maw of Sekolah** (see appendix C) swims menacingly overhead. The priestesses have disadvantage on any Perception checks to detect the characters. While the ritual is being maintained, the Maw of Sekolah does not attack the characters, even if it becomes aware of them. Interrupting the ritual, however, has dire consequences for everyone in the temple.

Glowing Symbols. The wall designs glow with dim illumination because of an application of luminescent algae salvaged from the ocean bottom. They are not magical.

Interrupting the Ritual. The ritual serves to placate and feed the Maw of Sekolah. It must be performed for another hour before it is considered complete. Every 10 minutes, one of the priestesses sacrifices a sahuagin hatchling, whose blood rises and feeds the avatar.

The priestesses stop chanting only if they are attacked. They know the ritual must be maintained, or their lives are forfeit.

If the characters cause any of the three priestesses to stop chanting, the Maw of Sekolah descends and devours two of the priestesses immediately before attacking the party. The remaining priestess fights alongside the shark.

Note: The Maw of Sekolah and a single sahuagin priestess make for a hard fight for a party of four 7th-level characters. For each additional character in the party, allow one more priestess to survive to maintain the same degree of difficulty.

Dark Words in the Deep. Non-sahuagin humanoid creatures who can hear the chanting of the priestesses must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is frightened for 1d4 rounds.

Treasure. The two pearl-and-gold bands on the Maw of Sekolah are worth 125 gp each. One of the priestesses carries the key to the coffer in area 38.

38. VESTRY

This austere room has gray-tiled floor and walls, and a white ceiling. A large coffer, its lid closed, stands against the east wall in this otherwise empty room.

This room is used to store the religious objects and regalia of the priestesses. The coffer is twice as large as others found throughout the fortress and features the same shark-eye carvings as the altar in area 37 (though these are not magical). The key to the coffer is found on one of the priestesses in area 37.

Coffer. The coffer is locked and can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It is also trapped with a thrusting blade trap. Noticing the trap requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap. Opening the coffer without disarming the trap, or failing to disarm it, triggers the trap.

When the trap is triggered, a short blade thrusts from the coffer, stabbing any creature next to the coffer's lock. The creature must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) piercing damage.

The coffer contains fourteen precious items worn by the sahuagin priestesses during their most important and holy festivals:

- Six silver masks, all in the shape of a shark's head (50 gp each)
- Four golden gongs, each with a gold striker (75 gp for each set)
- Four gold necklaces set with coral beads (175 gp each)

39. OCCUPIED SHARK PEN

This ceiling and floor of this large room are unfinished stone. Light green tiles cover the walls. Seaweed grows freely throughout this chamber, and anemones and starfish crawl over the natural rocky surfaces.

Several large sharks with armored plates driven into their flanks swim freely here.

This is one of two large shark pens on the second level of the fortress. Because of the ubiquitous seaweed, the number of animals housed here is difficult to discern.

Ten **shell sharks** (see appendix C) swim through the water in this room. They are always hungry, and they attack creatures that enter the room other than sahuagin.

In the far west corner of the room, hidden behind some seaweed, a stack of armor plates made from shell and coral rests against the wall. One side of each plate has barbs used to affix it to an animal.

40. NEARLY EMPTY SHARK PEN

This ceiling and floor of this large room are unfinished stone. Light green tiles cover the walls. Seaweed grows freely throughout this chamber. Anemones, starfish, and a lone lobster crawl over the natural rocky surfaces.

This is one of two large shark pens built on the second level of the fortress. The sharks housed here are out on patrol, away from the stronghold, with their sahuagin masters.

SHERN: LOBSTER, TELEPATH, FRIEND

Until it escaped, Shern was used by the sahuagin in their makeshift lobster fighting arenas. It managed to escape its fate as a gladiator, in part due to its strangely high level of intelligence.

The lobster has limited telepathy, though it cannot explain how it came to have this ability. It can communicate with any other living creature within 10 feet. The lobster has named itself Shern, and it desperately wants to escape the fortress.

If Shern becomes aware of the characters, it attempts to communicate with one of them despite not being able to convey language. It knows the following information, which it communicates through feelings and projected images:

- A terrible monster lives in the temple.
- Two four-armed sahuagin rule this fortress.
- The bulk of the sahuagin forces are on the fortress's lowest level.
- If the party frees Shern by returning it to the ocean, it can lead the characters to a sunken treasure (of your design) a few miles south of the fortress.

Shern knows the layout of the two lowest levels of the fortress, including areas where large number of sahuagin gather. The lobster accompanies the characters if it senses they will help it escape. Shern hopes to hide in a backpack, a cloak pocket, or a hood while the characters explore the rest of the fortress.

A seemingly ordinary lobster scuttles along the floor. This is Shern, an unassuming but most remarkable lobster (see the "Shern: Lobster, Telepath, Friend" sidebar). The lobster has no effective attacks and is killed automatically by any attack.

41. BANQUET HALL

The corridor leads to a great hall, its floor tiled in black, the walls in coral pink, and the ceiling in white. Black-tiled pillars are regularly placed in a line slightly south of the east-west axis. To the north of the pillars, long tables have been placed end to end, with benches to either side. At the midpoint of the north wall, an archway opens onto a passage. This ornate archway is decorated with elegant black and gold designs evocative of waves and monstrous sea creatures.

This is the sahuagin banquet hall. Since sahuagin prefer to eat informally when individuals feel hunger, this hall is used only for important functions, such as to celebrate a great victory or entertain visiting nobles. The ceiling is 30 feet high.

The tables and benches can accommodate two hundred sahuagin with space to spare, but at present the area is empty.

The stone head in the semicircular niche in the center of the south wall is not clearly visible to characters standing under the western or eastern arch. As soon as a character moves to a position from which they can be observed, read the following:

A semicircular niche has been hollowed into the center of the south wall. The floor of the niche sits seven feet off the ground. On the shelf formed there stands a large carved stone head, visibly battered and disfigured. The features can still be recognized as those of a lizardfolk. The head is about twice as large as life size.

When the lizardfolk lived here, one of their proudest possessions was a 10-foot-high statue of Semuanya, their deity. When the sahuagin took over the fortress, they destroyed the statue, breaking it into stone fragments and leaving only the head, before the baron intervened. Instead of allowing them to destroy the head, the baron decided to keep it as a memento of his triumph—not only over the lizardfolk, but over their very way of life. He had his warriors remove it to the banquet hall and place it so that it faced him as he sat on his throne. It is an object of scorn and derision among the sahuagin—rarely does a sahuagin pass it without making a malicious, usually obscene, gesture.

Development. From this room, the characters can hear fragments of the discussion taking place in the throne room (area 42). Conversely, the baron and those with him in area 42 can hear any noisy activity in the banquet hall.

42. THRONE ROOM

At the end of a short stretch of corridor, another archway opens into a larger area. Here, the floor is tiled indigo and the walls dark blue. On the north side, a massive, ornately carved throne rises from a pale blue dais.

Pale blue marble pillars stand to the east and west. The dais is of the same pale blue marble, while the throne is black coral. The ceiling is tiled in pale blue.

Assuming the occupants have not left, read:

On the throne sits an oversized sahuagin. This creature has four arms. In his right upper hand, he holds a large trident. His two lower hands grip the arms of his throne.

Floating next to the throne, on the creature's right-hand side, is an adult female sahuagin holding a long staff tipped with a jumble of shark jaws and teeth.

In front of the throne and at the foot of the dais, three adult sahuagin float with their backs to you. Two float with bodies held rigid, while the third pleads before the throne.

The sahuagin speaking to the baron is complaining about offensive remarks made by another sahuagin. The sahuagin wants the baron to punish the offender. The baron is growing impatient with the pettiness and is close to feeding all involved parties to the Maw of Sekolah in area 37.

Baron Kepmak (**sahuagin baron**) sits on his throne, while high priestess Thadrah (**sahuagin high priestess**; see appendix C) stands at his side. The complainant is a **sahuagin**, while the two floating at attention are **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C). Two **shell sharks** (see appendix C) swim high above the throne; they are the pets of the baron and defend him if he is attacked.

If the characters observe the interaction for 10 minutes, they witness the baron rise and issue an angry judgment before turning to consult with the priestess on other matters. The two sahuagin champions and the sahuagin complainant leave through the main entrance in the south and travel to their respective posts.

Development. Combat in the throne room attracts the attention of a wandering patrol, which arrives in 1d6 + 1 rounds. A direct attack is likely to wipe out a party that tries to kill the entire royal group; the characters' mission was designed as a reconnaissance effort for good reason.

A character who searches around the throne discovers a single gold drop earring worth 30 gp on the floor between the throne and the north wall. The earring belongs to the baroness, who is currently in area 45 accusing a servant of stealing it.

Treasure. The baron wears a platinum armband (200 gp). He also carries the key to the coffer in area 52.

43. ROYAL SERVANT'S CHAMBERS

This blue-tiled room features a bench that runs along the south wall and a seaweed bed that floats in the southeast corner. A coffer, its lid lying nearby on the floor, is propped against the west wall. An archway to the east leads to another room, more brightly decorated.

From here, the characters can hear an argument taking place in area 45.

Treasure. The contents of the coffer are partially spilled on the floor, as though they had been rummaged through recently. The coffer contains a sack holding 50 ep. A cheap mirror and several decorative but worthless stones lie on the floor near the coffer.

44. LIVING QUARTERS OF THE BARONESS

Pale green tiles decorate the floor and ceiling here, while the walls are tiled in coral pink. A table stands in the center of the room, a small bench to either side. On the table is a silver statuette that depicts a squid locked in combat with a shark.

From here, the sounds of the argument taking place in area 45 are louder.

Treasure. The statuette (500 gp) is made of electrum.

45. SLEEPING QUARTERS OF THE BARONESS

As the party approaches the area, presuming the occupants have not previously left, read:

Two female sahuagin, their voices raised, appear to be arguing in the room ahead. Though the words might be incomprehensible, the sense is quite clear—one berates the other, and that one pleads for mercy.

When the characters can see into the room, read:

The room is tiled in light blue, and frescoes on the ceiling depict various forms of marine life. A large and opulent seaweed bed fills the southwest corner. In the center of the north wall hangs a large mirror with a filigree metal frame. Below the mirror lies a coffer, its lid off and propped against the wall. A key is in the lock of the coffer.

A large and intimidating female sahuagin warrior looms above a normal-sized sahuagin who swims submissively before her. The large one has four arms, and one of its hands holds a single gold earring, which she shakes at the cowering sahuagin. A third sahuagin in dark robes floats near the doorway, looking bored.

Baroness Seklaz (**sahuagin baron**) looms over her servant (**sahuagin**), accusing it of stealing one of her earrings. The earring is, in fact, lost behind the throne in area 42, where the baroness dropped it days ago. A single **sahuagin wave shaper** (see appendix C) waits by the entryway. It was summoned to dispose of the servant and waits for the baroness's command to do so. If the characters enter combat with these three, the sahuagin servant slips away to find a nearby patrol (see "Patrols in the Lair") and returns with reinforcements in 5 rounds.

Treasure. The baroness wears a platinum armband (500 gp).

The coffer contains the following treasure:

- A leather harness with platinum buckles (50 gp)
- A gold ring set with coral (50 gp)
- A canvas bag containing 125 pp
- A pearl-handled dagger (20 gp)

46. BARON'S LIVING QUARTERS

This room is tiled in coral pink. The walls show scenes of sahuagin in victorious combat against whales, groups of squid, and a great tentacled beast whose identity is not obvious. A large table in the center of the room has benches on all four sides. A small silver object lies on the table.

The object on the table is a silver medallion, about 2 inches in diameter, on a fine silver chain. One side of the medallion carries an engraving of a shark. The other side's engraving depicts a dozen tridents offset in a circle to form the shape of a star; this symbol is the baron's personal seal. The medallion is worth 30 gp and is also the key to the coffer in room 47.

47. BARON'S SLEEPING QUARTERS

This room is tiled in a rich, deep green. The walls are frescoed with representations of marine plant life. A large seaweed bed fills the northwest corner. There is a spear propped against the wall in the southwest corner. In the center of the east wall hangs a mirror with a filigree metal frame. Below it is a large coffer, its lid closed.

A character who makes a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the secret door in this room.

Baron's Coffin. The coffer has a keyhole meant to trick would-be thieves. There is no lock behind the keyhole—the actual locking mechanism is a slot hidden under the lid of the coffer. This slot cannot be opened by using thieves' tools. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices the slot and realizes that the coffer is trapped. The trap can be disarmed by a character who makes a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Also, sliding the medallion found in area 46 into the slot disarms the trap and opens the coffer.

Attempting to pick the keyhole or opening the chest without disarming the trap triggers the trap. If the trap is triggered, a large blade swings out, slicing anyone within 5 feet of the coffer. Creatures caught in the blade's path must make a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) slashing damage on a failed save or half the damage on a successful one.

The coffer contains the following items:

- A leather harness adorned with small rubies and platinum buckles (75 gp)
- A canvas bag with 20 pp
- An ornately carved stone box containing six portions of rapture weed (see the sidebar)
- A silver frame (25 gp) holding a portrait of the baroness painted in oil
- A statuette of a shark made from gold (200 gp)

FORTRESS LEVEL 3

This level is submerged in cold (but not frigid) seawater. The following locations are identified on map 6.3.

48. BARRACKS

Unless the characters conceal their arrival, they are noticed before they reach the foot of the stairs.

The stairs descend into a barracks. At the foot of the stairs, an archway leads out of the area to your right. A swaying mass of seaweed fills the eastern side of the room. Many coffers are set against the north and west walls, their lids closed.

A large group of sahuagin warriors gather near the center of the chamber. A hunched sahuagin floats near the bottom of the stairs, its dark green robes waving gently in the water.

A **sahuagin champion** is preparing four **sahuagin coral smashers** for patrol duty (see appendix C for both). A **sahuagin wave shaper** watches the formation from near the foot of the stairs, and two **sahuagin deep divers** are nearby (see appendix C for both). The group attacks the characters when they become aware of them.

Development. Once the sahuagin spot the party, the wave shaper tries to flee up the stairs to find help. The characters farthest into the room can prevent its escape if the players state their intentions quickly enough. Exercise care, for even if the two upper levels have been completely cleared of sahuagin, there are enough sahuagin in various parts of this level to devastate the party.

If the wave shaper gets away, it returns to join the fight along with a guard patrol (see "Patrols in the Lair"). These forces arrive in this area 3d6 + 6 rounds after the wave shaper makes its escape.

Treasure. There are thirty-six coffers in this room. A long search of all the coffers turns up a total of 390 ep, three dozen leather harnesses with simple copper buckles (1 gp each), and an anemone stuck in a glass bottle.

49. CHAMPIONS' ARMORY

Two stone racks run the length of this room, forming aisles. The racks hold spears, tridents, and warhammers.

This armory contains the following equipment:

- Six ornately carved spears
- Six tridents, each with a pearl (10 gp) set into the grip end
- Eight warhammers with a shark motif carved into the head

On the floor at the end of one of the racks is a small metal cage divided into two chambers. One chamber contains a gold-colored fighting-fish. In the second chamber, a bright silver fighting-fish bobs leisurely. The fish swim away if released.

50. TORTURE CHAMBER AND DUNGEON

The characters hear muted noise at the crossroads of areas 50 and 53. From the south come the sounds of spectators in the arena urging the combatants as they fight. From the north they hear an occasional scream from the locathah undergoing torture and the raucous noise of the torturers enjoying their pastime.

This long room has five doors spaced evenly along the north wall, secured from this side with metal bars.

To your right, by the east wall, rests an untidy pile of chains and manacles, leg irons, and bunches of keys.

To your left, you see several instruments of torture—a wheel, a metal boot with catches and screws, a press, and a rack. Three sahuagin with their backs to you attend to their task, stretching a fish-like humanoid on the rack. As you watch, a wheel is turned, the victim emits another shriek, and the torturers hiss with pleasure.

Three **sahuagin champions** are torturing a **locathah** here (see appendix C for both). If the sahuagin become aware of the party, they abandon their work and attack.

Victim. The locathah on the rack is named Borgas. He can speak Common as well as Aquan. He has no possessions. He is very grateful to the characters if they rescue him and eager to accompany them for the rest of the adventure (after which he returns to his tribe).

He and his giant eel were captured by sahuagin while on a hunting trip. He knows little of the fortress but can describe areas 58 and 60, as well as the corridors leading from those areas to the torture chamber.

Borgas is particularly concerned about the fate of his giant eel companion, which he saw forced into cell 50c by the sahuagin. He asks the characters to help him in going to the eel's aid without delay.

Cell Doors. Each cell door can be opened easily by lifting the bronze bar off its brackets. Borgas had been kept in cell 50e since his capture.

50A. EMPTY CELL

The unfinished stone of this cell is not illuminated in any way. A rough platform carved into one wall serves as a bed.

This cell is unoccupied.

50B. SEA LION CELL

Angry snarls arise from this cell. Inside, an angered sea lion roars and thrashes in the confined space.

A **sea lion** (see appendix C) was captured by the sahuagin along with its triton master (see cell 50d) and is now being caged until a suitable opponent can be found to pit against it in the arena. If the triton is not with the characters when this door is opened, the sea lion attacks with extreme ferocity. If the triton is with the characters, he can calm and control the sea lion.

50C. DECAY-FILLED CELL

The water in this cell is fouled by the rotting corpse of a large sea serpent of some kind. A stone slab along the north wall lies askew and partially broken on the unfinished floor.

The characters experience some difficulty in opening this door, even with the bar removed. This is because the giant eel (Borgas's companion) died in the confined space, and its body partially blocks the door. Continued pressure and a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check eventually opens the door sufficiently for a character or Borgas to squeeze inside.

Dead Eel. The cell is only 20 feet square, like the others, and a giant eel more than 20 feet long could not

be expected to survive long in such confinement. In fact, the eel hastened its own death by vainly battering at the walls and door. Now it hangs, bloated and distended, in the water and occupies most of the available space.

Corridor. When the sahuagin first took over the fortress, this area was much smaller, though a passage led north to the second entrance to the fortress on this level.

The sahuagin decided they no longer needed this entrance, so they blocked off the passage by leaning a stone slab up against the north wall of this cell.

The thrashings of the giant eel in its death throes have partially dislodged this slab, so if a character enters the room, a small opening is discovered in the north wall. Now that the slab has been moved, it is easy to open the passage up completely. Beyond, the passage and the guard room still exist in their original dimensions, though the entrance is now under 70 feet of water.

Borgas is noticeably upset to discover the death of his companion, and this discovery makes him even more determined to get revenge on the sahuagin.

50D. TRITON CELL

A humanoid figure is being held in this sparse cell of unfinished stone.

The figure is **Kysh** (see appendix C), who was captured by the sahuagin along with his sea lion companion (see cell 50b). He is being held until a suitable opponent can be found for him to fight in the arena. He has been stripped of his possessions.

He is more than willing to go along with the characters on their adventure, then returns to his own tribe after leaving the fortress.

Kysh was unconscious when he was brought into the fortress, so he has no idea of its layout, nor does he know what has happened to his sea lion companion.

50E. EMPTY CELL

This cell of unfinished stone is not illuminated in any way. A rough platform carved into one wall serves as a bed.

This cell was occupied by Borgas before he was removed to be tortured.

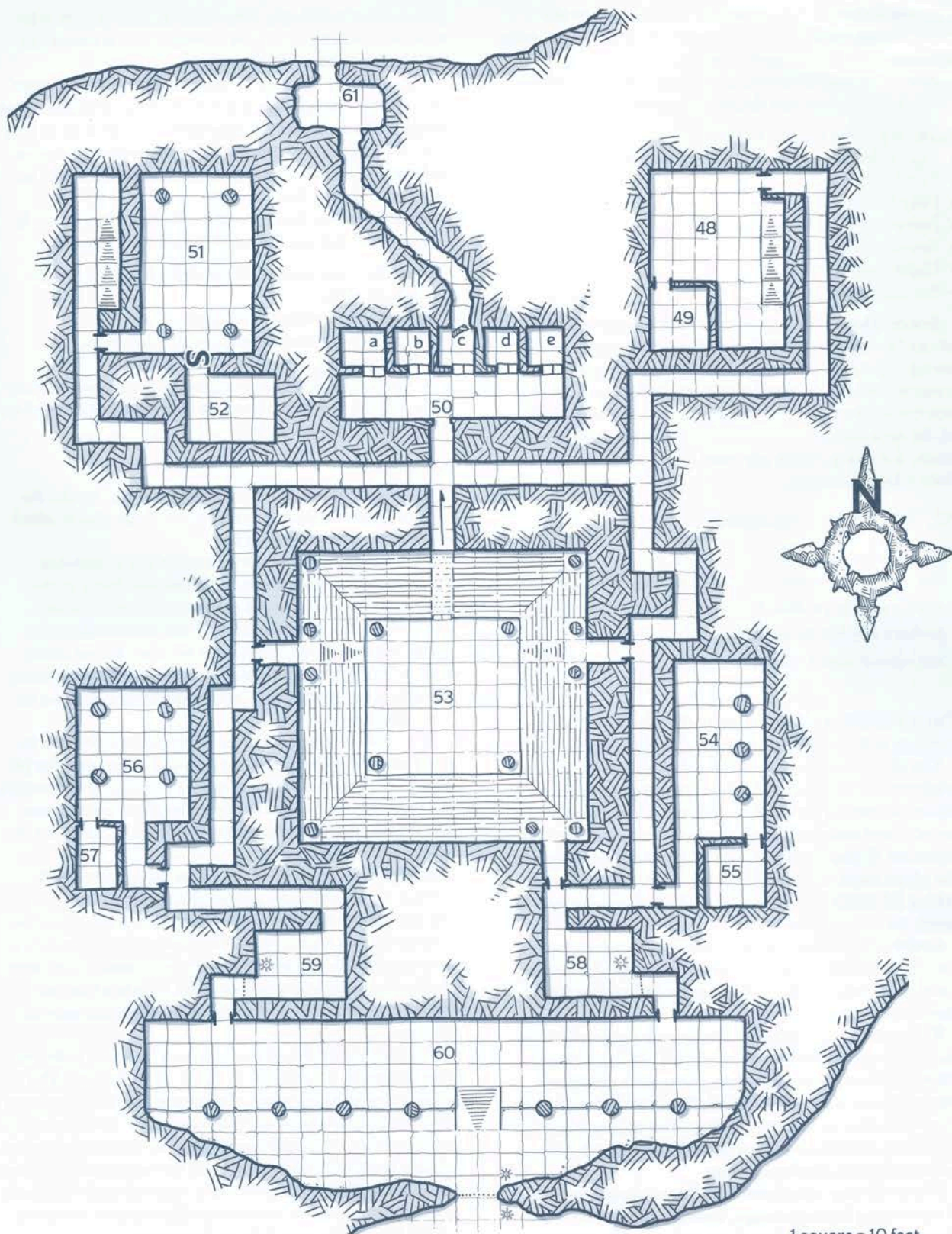
51. LARGE ARMORY AND STORES

This storage area seems orderly but neglected. On the floor near the south wall, lay coils of rope, piles of hides neatly lashed with cords, a heap of nails, and more.

The north wall has two rows of racks, one above the other, on which hang a number of warhammers and daggers. Below, on the floor, are three open coffer.

The east wall is also racked, with many spears hanging in an orderly manner.

Several sharks eye you hungrily as you enter.



1 square = 10 feet



Double Door



Secret Door



Gate Opening Mechanism



Stairs



Archway



Gate



Sloping Corridor Up

Five **shell sharks** (see appendix C) swim above the racks in this room. They have not been fed in some time and attack the characters on sight.

Stored Items. If the characters want to count all the items in here, they find the following supplies:

- Twenty-three lengths of rope
- Fifty hides of various sizes (2 gp each)
- Two hundred nails
- Fifty hooks and buckles
- Forty-eight warhammers
- Seventy daggers
- Eighty-four spears
- Seventy tridents

Secret Door. The secret door in the south wall consists of a slab of stone hinged along its top edge that swings open toward area 52. Noticing the door requires a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. A character who examines the two tridents at the south end of the rack along the east wall notices that the tines are blunt, not sharp; these are used to prop up the secret door when it is open.

52. TREASURE CHAMBER

The secret door opens into a short passage that leads south into a larger area. At the far end of that open area, perhaps fifty feet away, stands a closed coffer with canvas sacks propped against it.

The threshold of the chamber at the south end of the passage is trapped with a *glyph of warding* spell.

The glyph can be spotted by a character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check while examining the floor in this area. The glyph is triggered if any creature passes from the corridor into the chamber. If that occurs, each creature within 20 feet of the glyph must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Coffer. The coffer is locked; the key to open it is carried by Baron Kepmak in area 42. It can be opened by a character who makes a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The coffer is also trapped. A character who searches the coffer and makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the trap. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can disarm the trap. The trap is triggered if a character fails to disarm it, or if the coffer is opened without first disarming the trap.

When the trap is triggered, a stone slab springs out of the ceiling in the passage, knocking the secret door closed (and with sufficient force to break the tridents if they are being used to support the secret door). Any creatures standing near the door must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage from the door as it closes.

Trapped Inside. The slab is badly damaged, riddled with cracks after crashing into the doorway. The party can spend a few minutes clearing the rubble away to

gain access to the exit. Alternatively, a character who makes a successful DC 18 Strength check clears the rubble in a matter of moments.

The sound of the slab being smashed rings through the nearby rooms, drawing the attention of the three **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C) in area 50, if they are still alive. They arrive 5 minutes later with twelve **sahuagin** and two **sahuagin coral smashers** (see appendix C) drawn from area 60.

Treasure. The four canvas sacks hold 500 gp each. The coffer contains the baron's personal treasure:

- Two platinum and pearl coronets of sea elf design (700 gp each)
- A fine pearl necklace (500 gp)
- Two gold wristbands inlaid with diamonds (250 gp each)
- A silver ring bearing the signet of the Prince of Monmurg (see the "Insignia of Prince Monmurg" sidebar)
- 200 gp scattered loosely

53. ARENA

This area consists of two distinct sections, so the description of what the characters see depends on which section the party enters from.

Central Arena. The arena proper lies somewhat lower than the rest of this level. Double doors at the south end of a downward-sloping passage running south from the crossroads near the torture chamber (area 50) provide access to this section. These doors can be barred from the outside with bronze bars set in brackets, preventing any combatant from escaping in that direction.

The walls of the arena rise 30 feet from the floor to the lower edge of the gallery, which is supported by pillars at each corner. A clear quartz dome, slightly convex, rests on the four edges of the gallery and arches over the arena, so that at its center the dome is about 40 feet above the arena floor.

Gallery. The gallery is tiered on three levels, with 10 feet between levels, so that the uppermost tier is 50 feet above the floor of the combatants' area and the ceiling 10 feet higher than that. Access to the gallery is provided by short passages in the east, south, and west walls. Each tier has a row of stone benches that surround the area, except for flights of steps that provide access to the benches.

On the lowest tier, in the center of its south side, the row of benches is broken by three special seats. The center and western seats, the largest and most ornately decorated, are reserved for the baroness and baron, and the eastern seat, larger and better decorated than an ordinary bench but not so finely as the baroness's and baron's, is for Blademaster Makaht. Any sahuagin of lesser rank caught in these seats immediately goes to the top of the list for the next fight in the arena.

On important occasions, more than two hundred sahuagin fill the arena to watch the sport, but at present fifty-five are here: forty-nine **sahuagin**, five **sahuagin champions**, and Blademaster Makaht (**sahuagin blademaster**, see appendix C), who sits apart from the rest in his special seat. The warriors and lieutenants are scattered around the area. All the sahuagin in the gallery have their usual weapons and equipment.



In the arena proper, two sahuagin are locked in mortal combat, each unarmed and tearing at the other with vicious claws and bone-crushing bites. They are settling a major grievance in the traditional sahuagin manner: a duel to the death, using only nature's weapons. They have no possessions.

Observing the Action. If the characters enter any part of the arena, what they can see depends on their point of entry and the extent of their precautions and concealment. Anyone entering the arena floor draws immediate attention, unless they are invisible or otherwise cloaked from view. If the sahuagin spot intruders, the crowd erupts into chaos. The five champions rush forward to attack, while $1d6 + 4$ sahuagin swim down to block the exit. The rest watch the fight with glee, rushing to join the fight if three or more champions are slain or the characters rush past the sahuagin guarding the exit.

An intrusion into the gallery is not as dangerous, since the sahuagin are absorbed by the battle taking place below. A successful DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check allows a character to avoid drawing attention so long as they don't attempt to interact with the sahuagin. Otherwise, use the sahuagin's passive Perception as normal to see if activity attracts their attention. If characters are spotted in the gallery, assume that $2d6 + 2$ sahuagin and $1d3$ sahuagin champions (see appendix C) are within 30 feet and rush to attack. The rest watch and cheer the fight, joining in if more than half the original attackers are slain. If the characters flee, the original attackers pursue them, but the rest return to watching the entertainment.

54. BARRACKS

This pillared area has a vast seaweed bed at the north end and a considerable number of coffers, their lids closed, set neatly against the east and west walls.

Many sahuagin relax in this chamber.

There are twenty off-duty **sahuagin** here. They talk, check their equipment, sharpen their weapons, or simply swim lazily around. Most of their weapons have been laid aside, though within easy reach.

Treasure. The unlocked coffers here are empty. Each sahuagin carries a pouch with 12 sp.

Development. Noise of melee here will certainly be heard at the guard post (area 58), bringing two **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C) and six **sahuagin** to this area to investigate 3 rounds later. The two **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C) in area 55 also hear the combat and arrive on the round after it starts.

55. CHAMPIONS' QUARTERS

This austere area has a large seaweed bed along the south wall. In the center is a table with four small benches beside it. There are four coffers, their lids closed, against the west wall.

Two sahuagin sit at the table.

Two **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C) talk idly. The other two who bunk here are at the arena (area 53).

Treasure. The unlocked coffer each contain two harnesses with silver buckles (10 gp each) and a canvas bag holding 40 ep. One coffer contains a set of game pieces carved from coral (10 gp).

56. CHAMBER OF THE WAVE SHAPERS

This pillared area has a vast seaweed bed filling the north end and a considerable number of coffer, their lids closed, set neatly against the east and west walls.

Several sahuagin float around the area, along with a pair of sharks.

Though originally built to house more than twenty sahuagin, this area has recently been reserved for the sahuagin wave shapers. Currently, two **sahuagin wave shapers** (see appendix C), six **sahuagin**, and two **shell sharks** (see appendix C) occupy this area.

Development. Sounds of combat in this area are heard by the sahuagin wave shaper in area 57, who joins the battle immediately.

Treasure. The unlocked coffer are empty. Each sahuagin carries a pouch with 12 sp.

57. WAVE SHAPER'S QUARTERS

This austere room has a large seaweed bed along the south wall. In the center is a table with four small benches beside it. A small pillar of undissolved salt stands on the table. Two coffer, their lids closed, sit against the west wall.

A single sahuagin floats beside the table, fiddling with the pillar of salt.

One **sahuagin wave shaper** (see appendix C) magically assembles and disassembles the salt on the table.

Treasure. One coffer is empty; the other contains a small coral carving of a shark (20 gp) and 75 gp, scattered across the bottom.

58. GUARD POST

This spartan area is furnished only with a long bench set against the west wall. At the south end of the east wall, a bronze gate bars the exit to the east. Beside it, on the north wall, is a bronze mechanism of chains, wheels, and pulleys. Next to the mechanism, a wooden peg has been driven into a crack in the wall. A rope, descending through a hole in the ceiling, is lashed to the peg.

Several well-armed sahuagin occupy this room.

Two **sahuagin champions** (see appendix C) and six **sahuagin** keep watch in this area.

The bronze gate is normally closed (down). It can be raised and lowered by a chain and pulley mechanism on the north wall next to the gate. Under normal circumstances, it takes 3 rounds to raise or lower the gate, but an emergency device allows the gate to be dropped in a split second with a muffled clang (not audible outside this area except for in area 60).

The gate (AC 18, 50 hit points, damage threshold 14) can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

Net Trap. Installed in the ceiling of the short corridor leading south from area 58 to area 60 is a large net trap. The net falls when a creature in area 58 releases the rope holding it in place. The net is not hidden.

When a creature releases the net, a 10-foot-by-20-foot net falls from the ceiling. Each creature standing under the net as it falls must make a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained by the net. A creature trying to free itself or another creature from the net must make a successful DC 14 Strength check. If the net takes 30 slashing damage, it is destroyed, and all creatures restrained by it are freed.

59. ABANDONED GUARD POST

This is a spartan area, furnished only with a long bench set against the east wall. At the south end of the west wall, a bronze gate bars the exit to the west. Beside it, on the north wall, is a bronze mechanism of chains, wheels, and pulleys. Next to the mechanism, a wooden peg has been driven into a crack in the wall. A rope, descending through a hole in the ceiling, is lashed to the peg.

Two sahuagin occupy this area.

Most of the guards stationed here have slipped away to watch the fight in area 53. A **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C) and one **sahuagin** are left behind.

The bronze gate is normally closed (down). It can be raised and lowered by a chain and pulley mechanism fastened onto the east wall. Under normal circumstances, it takes 3 rounds to raise or lower the gate, but there is an emergency device which, if activated when the gate is raised, allows the gate to be dropped in a split second with a muffled clang (outside this area except for in area 60).

The gate (AC 18, 50 hit points, damage threshold 14) can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

Net Trap. Installed in the ceiling of the short corridor leading south from area 59 to area 60 is a large net trap. The net falls when a creature in area 59 releases the rope holding it in place. The net is not hidden.

When a creature releases the net, a 10-foot-by-20-foot net falls from the ceiling. Each creature standing under the net as it falls must make a successful DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained by the net. A creature trying to free itself or another creature from the net must make a successful DC 14 Strength check. If the net takes 30 slashing damage, it is destroyed, and all creatures restrained by it are freed.

60. TEMPORARY BARRACKS

North of the entrance, this vast cavern immediately opens into an area bounded to the south by a ledge along which plain pillars support the roof high above. Beyond that ledge, the area becomes a natural sea cave. Thick beds of seaweed grow along nearly every part of the south wall. The walls and roof arch high above.

In the center of the worked area, a flight of steps leads down to the south. Beyond, in the center of the cave's south wall, a metal gate lies across a cave mouth.

Many bulging canvas sacks lie along the north wall.

An enormous force of sahuagin occupies this cavern.

This area will eventually house the drill hall and assembly area for the fortress, but at present sixty-eight sahuagin are barracked here, awaiting the completion and flooding of their accommodations on level 1.

The occupants include forty-five **sahuagin**, ten **sahuagin coral smashers**, seven **sahuagin champions**, four **sahuagin deep divers**, and two **sahuagin wave shapers** (see appendix C for all but the **sahuagin**). The sahuagin in this area are socializing, performing drills, or resting in the seaweed beds. Six **shell sharks** (see appendix C) also swim in the cavern, close to the roof of the natural area to the south. Shoals of tiny silver fish dart about here and there, obstructing vision in places.

Gate. The gate barring the cave mouth is an extra-large device, 20 feet wide by 20 feet high. Its mechanism is correspondingly larger than others elsewhere. The bronze gate is normally closed (down), though it can be raised and lowered by one of two chain and pulley mechanisms. One is fastened to the wall on the inside of the cavern, to the east of the cave mouth. The other is outside the cavern, also to the east of the cave mouth. Under normal circumstances, it takes 3 rounds to raise or lower the gate, but an emergency device can drop the gate in a split second with a muffled clang (not audible on this level other than in areas 58 and 59).

The gate (AC 18, 100 hit points, damage threshold 14) can be forced open by a character who makes a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Treasure. Each sahuagin has a leather pouch containing 12 sp. Ten canvas sacks contain the personal possessions of the champions: a total of 860 ep, twelve uncut gems of various sorts (10 gp each), and a variety of personal items with no monetary value.

61. OLD GUARD ROOM

The passage opens into a small chamber. On the opposite side, another passage leads out of the room.

This room and the nearby passages have not been altered by the sahuagin. They are roughly hewn from the rock and display none of the precision that characterizes sahuagin construction.

CONCLUSION

If the adventurers achieve their objectives and return safely to Saltmarsh, they receive a hero's welcome. They are granted Saltmarsh citizenship, and a house is set aside for them to use, rent-free, whenever they wish.

If you want to continue the story, proceed with the "The Assault." That information assumes that the characters take on a role in the upcoming invasion of the stronghold and provides guidance on how to play out those events. If you and the group want to move on to other challenges instead, a full-scale assault on the fortress takes place about fourteen days after they return to Saltmarsh. The sahuagin are wiped out and their plans destroyed, thus removing the threat to the town and the races living in the area. The lizardfolk return to their home and, though the Saltmarsh militia suffers losses, the area settles down to its former peaceful ways.

THE ASSAULT

Because of the characters' familiarity with the sahuagin fortress and their obvious skill at staying alive, the Saltmarsh council involves them in the their battle plans.

THE PLAN

The allied forces have devised a simple but effective plan. They begin with an attack by Saltmarsh's militia against the entrance (area 1). Once the sahuagin commit troops to the defense of the gate, the aquatic factions of the alliance will attack through the entrances on level 3. The humans will then keep the sahuagin busy on level 1 while their allies sweep through the lower levels and eventually crush the defenders in a pincer attack.

The Saltmarsh council explains that the characters' role is to serve as a strike force, disrupting the sahuagin defenses and slaying as many foes as possible before the main force engages the enemy. A cunning party should have the chance to take out numerous defenders, open the gate in area 1, and slay sahuagin leaders, possibly without ever raising an alert. It's a daunting task, but the party has their allies' full confidence.

RESOURCES

Before being ferried from to a landing point near the sahuagin fortress, the Saltmarsh council provides the characters with 1 potion of invisibility and 1 potion of gaseous form for each party member. The council makes it clear that these items are on loan to the party and that they expect the return of any unused items.

THE ATTACK

The allied forces are destined for victory, but their degree of success is yet to be determined. Success in the battle is determined by how many victory points the characters accrue during their infiltration. Every time the party defeats a foe or achieves a strategic goal, they gain victory points, as detailed on the following table. Keep a running total of how many victory points the party earns during their incursion. If the group caused particular damage to the sahuagin fortress on their first visit, feel free to grant them a discretionary 5 to 15 victory points based on the scope of the destruction.

VICTORY POINTS

Defender	Point Value
Sahuagin	1
Sahuagin champion	3
Sahuagin coral smasher	5
Blademaster Makaht	10
Opening the gate at area 1	15
Baron Kepmak	25
Raising no alert	25

THE DEFENSE

By the time the party returns to the fortress, the sahuagin have reinforced their numbers. Every area of level 1 now holds sahuagin defenders preparing for battle, acting as reserves, or otherwise planning the fortress's defense. Areas 1, 5, and 19 have particular encounters associated with them (see "Assault Encounters"). For every other area, consult the following table to determine what sahuagin forces linger there.

The sahuagin throughout the fortress fight to the death, though the last surviving sahuagin of every group will attempt to escape to raise the alert (see "On Alert").

SAHUAGIN DEFENDERS

Area	Defenders
1–4	2d6 sahuagin
5–11	3d6 sahuagin and 1 sahuagin champion*
12–18	3d6 sahuagin, 2 sahuagin champions,* and 1 sahuagin coral smasher*

*See appendix C

TIMING

The party doesn't have forever to conduct their assault. Saltmarsh and its allies only give the characters a brief period to weaken the sahuagin forces. While you should encourage the party to be hasty, keep the exact time before their allies' attack nebulous. This allows you to have troops from Saltmarsh show up in the party's defense should they get into trouble.

For you, though, the party has 30 rounds.

After the characters enter the fortress, start a tally of how many rounds they've spent inside, encouraging them to act fast before they're discovered. After set periods of time the sahuagin begin to notice that something is not as it should be and raise their alert level (see "On Alert").

At the end of this period, check the party's victory points. If their number of victory points meets or exceeds 75, "The Baron's Counterattack" occurs (see below). The party has unlimited time to face Baron Kepmak, but at the end of this encounter, the characters' allies appear and the assault draws to a close.

ON ALERT

Prepared for attack, the sahuagin forces readily charge into battle once they know the assault has begun. The fortress rings with the sounds of sahuagin preparing for battle, echoing with clanging weapons and Sahuagin shouting. If the party is wily, they might use the din to their favor and catch their foes unaware.

The general combat readiness of the sahuagin is summarized by whether or not they are on alert. When the party reaches the fortress, the sahuagin are not alert. This can change quickly, though. If any of the following circumstances occur, the alert is raised—the sahuagin know the enemy is among them!

- When noted in an encounter area.
- A sahuagin flees battle and reaches Blademaster Makaht in area 10 or Baron Kepmak via area 19.
- The party makes any sort of noise greater than angry shouting and clashing arms—particularly noisy magical effects like *fireball* or *thunderous smite*.

Reinforcements. As soon as the fortress goes on alert, sahuagin reinforcements begin roaming the halls. These reinforcements only appear once the characters have already engaged with an area's defenders. Every 2d4 rounds after combat begins in an area, 3d6 **sahuagin** and 1 **sahuagin champion** (see appendix C) arrive. If the PCs manage to defeat all the sahuagin in a room (plus reinforcements) no further defenders appear.

During these encounters, it's possible that the party could be overwhelmed by foes. Consult the "Handling Mobs" section in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to help deal with large numbers of enemies.

CONCLUDING THE ASSAULT

Ultimately, the assault ends with one of three possibilities. If the PCs retreat, they meet Saltmarsh's human attackers as they launch their offensive. The attack force thanks the characters for their efforts and charges into battle.

If the PCs are defeated, Saltmarsh's forces arrive just in the nick of time. While some troops pull the characters to safety, the remainder overwhelm the remaining sahuagin forces. The characters are ferried back to Saltmarsh, all the while being hailed as heroes willing to sacrifice everything for the cause.

Alternatively, if the characters confront Baron Kepmak, they might decapitate the sahuagin forces, practically ending the offensive before it begins.

In any of these cases, refer to the Triumph or Failure sections afterward.

ASSAULT ENCOUNTERS

Level 1 of the fortress teems with defenders. While most sahuagin are clustered as described in "The Defense," a few locations prove central to the fortress's security.

1. NORTH ENTRANCE AND GUARD POST

The sahuagin have tightened their defenses at the north entrance. Expecting an attack, they no longer use the causeway and keep this gate sealed at all times of day. As the gate provides the only access to level 1 of the fortress, the party's first challenge will be getting in.

How the character's infiltrate the fortress is up to them, but might include the following strategies:

- The party can sneak in magically by using the potions the Saltmarsh council provided.
- The party might try to talk their way in, but the challenge of deceiving the sahuagin guards has increased, requiring a DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persua-

sion) check. If the party previously tricked their way into the area this way, they have disadvantage on these checks.

- The party might want to try sneaking into the fortress elsewhere, but they'll find even tighter security underwater. The success of whatever clever infiltration methods the party proposes is left to your discretion.

However the party gains access to the fortress, they find the north entrance under heavy guard. A sizable force of ten **sahuagin**, two **sahuagin champions**, and two **sahuagin coral smashers** hold ranks here, prepared to face whatever attack might come. Any conflict here that lasts for more than 5 rounds puts the entire fortress on alert.

The room's other features are the same as detailed earlier in the adventure, though the net trap has been disabled. The gate functions the same, though, which is of especial note as the party's allies would be greatly aided if it were open when they attack.

5. UNFINISHED BARRACKS

The sahuagin are using these barracks as a forward command post. Thirty **sahuagin**, three **sahuagin champions**, five **sahuagin coral smashers**, and Blademaster Makaht (**sahuagin blademaster**, see appendix C), if he survived, are now stationed here.

If the party engages the sahuagin in combat here, the defenders' numbers and central location on the level instantly raise the alert.

Treasure. Amid mundane supplies rests a box made from tightly grown pink coral. Inside is a necklace of adaptation and 4 potions of healing.

19. HALL

The sahuagin mount a desperate defense here, determined to protect their leaders below. An elite force of six **sahuagin champions** and four **sahuagin coral smashers** maintain a guard post here.

If the defenders are slain, a shrill battle cry rises from the level below. Regardless of how long the party has spent in the fortress, Baron Kepmak and his honor guard join the fray. Begin the following encounter.

THE BARON'S COUNTERATTACK

Incensed by his forces' slaughter, Baron Kepmak, leader of the sahuagin forces, takes the field. This is your chance to add a dramatic finale to the assault, as the baron leads eight **sahuagin champions** into battle. The baron roars as he launches into battle, attacking the largest character and cursing them in Sahuagin (calling them ichor-less tide pool dwellers and the like).

If the party wishes to flee, the baron's gargling guffaws follow them down the hall, but he and his retinue do not pursue. The party soon encounters the Saltmarsh forces, which appreciatively spirit them to safety.

However, if the party stands and defeats the baron, all sahuagin in the room stop attacking when he falls, their shock turning to terror. In the momentary silence, the sound of booted feet precedes the appearance of Saltmarsh's forces. The sahuagin swiftly retreat. The bulk of Saltmarsh's troops take up pursuit, with a few remaining to escort the characters away. The party has done enough. It's time for them to claim their reward.

FAILURE

It'd be challenging for the characters to achieve no victory point during the attack, but if they flee at the first sign of opposition or don't participate after agreeing to do so, they face a chilly welcome upon returning to Saltmarsh. The assault went on without them, but the allied forces took heavy losses, only barely managing to defeat the sahuagin. The characters are asked, politely but firmly, to leave the Saltmarsh area. The town councillors wish them a safe journey, as long as it is one way.

TRIUMPH

Regardless of how the party's strike unfolded, the characters are sent to the rear of the attacking force for rest, healing, and eventual escort back to Saltmarsh. The characters' degree of success depends on how many victory points they achieved during the assault. Several hours after returning to Saltmarsh, the town council informs the party of the attack's success and presents them with their reward:

Pyrrhic Victory (Less than 50 victory points). The alliance was victorious, but with heavy casualties. The sahuagin relinquish their lair and escape, perhaps returning later for revenge. The Saltmarsh council rewards the party for their effort, granting them 700 gp and a favor: free passage aboard a ship headed to any seaport within a week's travel of town. This favor can be called in whenever the characters please.

Victory (51 to 125 victory points). The alliance carries the day with expected casualties. The Saltmarsh council rewards the party with 1,000 gp and one random item from Magic Item Table F in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (alternatively, you might just grant them a +1 weapon of their choice, +1 shield, +1 wand of the war mage, or a tan bag of tricks). Additionally, the council grants them a favor, as noted above, but to any destination within a month's travel of town.

Total Victory (126 or more victory points). The characters effectively gained control of the entire first level of the fortress. This caused the remaining sahuagin to panic before Saltmarsh's forces crashed into their defenses. Any sahuagin fortunate enough to escape are unlikely to ever be heard from again. The Saltmarsh council rewards the party with 1,400 gp, three random items from Magic Item Table F in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (or, you might just grant them one or more of the following: a +1 weapon of their choice, +1 shield, +1 wand of the war mage, or a tan bag of tricks). They also grant the characters a favor, as noted above, but to wherever the characters please.

Bonus (Baron Kepmak Defeated). If the characters managed to defeat Baron Kepmak, Saltmarsh's forces find the sahuagin in utter chaos, the strong ineffectually trying to force panicked, weaker troops into the fray. In addition to their other rewards, the Saltmarsh council rewards the party with an additional 1,000 gp and a treasure long held in the town vault, a silver raven figurine of wondrous power. In the aftermath, the characters are hailed as heroes by the allied forces. They never have to pay for a drink in Saltmarsh again.



CHAPTER 7: TAMMERAUT'S FATE

FIVE YEARS AGO, A HERMITAGE DEVOTED TO the contemplation of nature was established in an abandoned island fortress, once the site of a beacon meant to warn against invasion from the sea. The folk of the hermitage opened the island to people of all faiths, promising a place for those seeking solitude and peace. But that peace has now been shattered, and the characters must determine what force of evil has slain the residents of Firewatch Island almost to the last—and how to prevent the even greater tragedy to come.

Tammeraut's Fate is an adventure designed for four to six 9th-level characters.

BACKGROUND

Several years ago, a fearsome pirate named Syrgaul sailed the sea aboard his war galley, *Tammeraut*. Syrgaul and his crew showed no mercy to those who crossed their path, killing the crews of those ships that fell prey to him.

Syrgaul was a mighty sorcerer, and his crew was bloodthirsty and skilled in both sailing and killing. Worse still, Syrgaul claimed allegiance to Orcus, the demon lord of the undead.

Orcus did indeed seem to favor Syrgaul, who often benefited from strong winds in his sails and swirling currents that prevented his prey from escaping. In return, the pirate captain made sacrifices to the demon lord.

Syrgaul eventually met his end just over ten years ago. As he and his crew approached a naval post called Firewatch Island to plunder it, a priest garrisoned at the outpost implored the sea god, Procan, for mercy. Whether because of luck or because the cleric's prayers were answered, a sudden storm swept through the area, capsizing *Tammeraut* and sending the ship to the bottom of the sea.

TAMMERAUT'S SECRET

The sinking of *Tammeraut* did not spell the end for Syrgaul and his band of pirates. As his ship plunged into the sea, he called out to his fiendish patron. Orcus heeded his call and imbued Syrgaul and his crew with undeath, the twisted form of immortality he offers his followers.

The pirates, now fully under Orcus's thrall, emerged from the wreckage and marched across the seabed to Firewatch Island. They overran the garrison and carried the remains back to their wrecked ship. There, with Orcus's instruction, they began the laborious process of opening the Pit of Hatred, a rift to the Abyss that can transform corpses into drowned ones.

DEATH IN THE NIGHT

After the raid by Syrgaul's undead minions, the garrison at Firewatch Island remained empty for several years. The undead were careful to leave behind no sign of their

presence, such that the next ship to drop anchor there found the place abandoned, its defenders seemingly vanished. The place was considered cursed for some time thereafter and remained abandoned until five years ago.

At that time, a minor order of monks, hermits, and contemplatives moved in and claimed the island as their home. The old garrison fort has been repaired and rebuilt as a place of peaceful living.

Unfortunately for the island's latest residents, their peaceful reverie has been ruined. Syrgaul's crew has finally completed the work of preparing the Pit of Hatred. Now, they need humanoid corpses to feed into the pit and spawn more drowned ones like themselves. The hermits of Firewatch Island make the perfect first recruits.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins with the characters traveling along the coast and arriving in the nearby village of Uskarn, they learn that the villagers are concerned about the hermitage that stands on an island in the adjacent bay. The village druid, Vortanim, asks the characters to investigate and make sure the hermitage is safe.

When they arrive at Firewatch Island, the characters discover a grisly scene. Evidence of a fatal battle and the presence of dangerous scavengers gives little hope of finding anyone alive. But when a handful of survivors are discovered hidden in a bolt-hole, the characters learn about the dark fate of the hermitage and its people. More important, they come to understand that after the drowned ones have finished hunting the last residents of Firewatch Island, the undead will turn their attention to the settlements of the coast—becoming an unstoppable army of undead.

As darkness falls, the drowned ones that attacked the hermitage the previous night return to finish the job. The characters must defend themselves and the survivors, using the assault as an opportunity to destroy the drowned ones before their threat can spread. After doing so, the characters learn of the island's history and how it connects to the undead attacks. They then have a chance to destroy the underwater source of evil—the twisted undead captain Syrgaul. Seeking the undead in his watery lair, they discover the damaged magical seal that once kept the portal inside the Pit of Hatred closed. Only by resealing the rift can they end its corruption for good.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You can use this adventure at any point in your campaign when the characters are traveling on a remote coastal road. You might have them drawn into the mystery by chance, trusting the players to want to explore the devastated hermitage, rescue the survivors, and learn what happened. Alternatively, consider either of the following hooks to get the characters to the hermitage.

PLACING THE ADVENTURE

Here are suggestions for where you can place this adventure in particular campaign settings.

Eberron. Built by Aundair during the Last War, the fort on Firewatch Island once guarded the mouth of Scions Sound against threats from Karrnath, but it has since become a place of meditation and retreat. Ten years before the end of the war, the fort was attacked by the Order of the Emerald Claw. In desperation, the defenders called upon the Traveler for divine aid that seemingly saved the fort. But in the end, the god's fickle whim saw Syrgaul and his crew transformed, and ultimately doomed the garrison.

Forgotten Realms. On Faerûn, Firewatch Island rises out of the Wyvernwater in Cormyr. It was once the site of a Purple Dragon outpost north of Wheloon, intended to keep watch over that prison city. When a Sembian raiding force was sent to take the outpost and gain access to Wheloon, the garrison's Northlander cleric called on Valkur for aid. The Sembian boats were sent to the bottom of the lake, where Netherese magic carried by the raiders wrought a terrible transformation on the drowned crew.

Mystara. Concerned by growing evidence of a Thyatian attack, Duke Stefan of Karamaikos saw a need to establish an outpost on an island near Rugalov. As tensions faded and concern waned, Duke von Hendricks of the Black Eagle Barony saw an opportunity, and dispatched agents of the Iron Ring to seize Firewatch Island as a naval base. In the Known World, Nyx or Orcus could be Syrgaul's patron, and Janore Stormswake could be a follower of Protius.

DELAYED DELIVERY

While visiting a town along the coast near Firewatch Island, the party received a seemingly easy mission: to deliver a message to a town farther down the coast. Doing so takes the characters through the village of Uskarn where they learn that something is wrong on Firewatch Island. The mission they are on is not time-sensitive, leaving the characters a free day or two to investigate. The contents of the message and the NPC who gave them the mission can be designed to fit your campaign.

MORLEY'S DEBT

In a settlement somewhere close to Uskarn, a merchant named Davus Raal (LN male half-elf **noble**) contacts the party with an offer of employment. Raal offers a bounty if the characters can track down Morley Tobe, a dwarf who absconded after failing to repay a 8,000 gp debt

owed to Raal. The merchant found out that Morley fled to Firewatch Island (where he's hiding in area 25) and is posing as a pious hermit to dodge his debts. Raal hires the characters to reclaim the money he is owed or, failing that, to bring Morley to him (after which the dwarf will be sold to pirates to recoup Raal's losses). If they take the job, Raal tells them how to get to Uskarn, which is the closest mainland community to the island.

HARPY ATTACK

Regardless of what brings the characters to the area, the adventure begins with a chance encounter as they travel along the coast near the village of Uskarn.

The road is little more than a gravel track hugging the coastline. The day is hot, and the air is thick with the scent and sound of the sea. Suddenly, you hear harsh cries and the sounds of a scuffle from up ahead. Rounding a curve, you see a woman kneeling next to a body, sobbing as she hunches protectively over the remains. Circling in the air a few feet above her, eight harpies screech and flail at each other.

The sobbing woman is actually a **harpy matriarch** (see appendix C), which has used its magic to disguise itself as a middle-aged human female. The eight **harpies** that serve the matriarch circle above. Any character who makes a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check sees through her ruse and realizes she is not human.

If the characters approach to assist the woman or attack the harpies, they witness the harpy matriarch's transformation:

The woman stands suddenly, turning to reveal a gore-caked mouth and hollow black eyes. In an instant, she is surrounded by a cloud of flapping skeletal birds and her own shape shifts to that of a gray-feathered harpy.

The harpies and their matriarch attack the characters in the hope of claiming another easy meal.

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL

Prolific adventure writer Greg Vaughn spun this tale of horror on the high seas for *Dungeon* 106 in 2004. Like much of Vaughn's work, this scenario builds a chilling scenario that requires the players

to peel through several layers of mystery, decipher the truth of the matter, and face down supernatural horrors to end a threat before it can grow to its full power.



UNFORTUNATE SWIMMER

The corpse on the beach was once an older human male, with a scraggly gray beard and short gray hair balding at the crown. His left ear is missing, though it is obviously an old wound. He wears only a pair of homespun, water-soaked breeches, and his skin is wrinkled from having spent time in the water. A character who succeeds on a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that the man died of exhaustion.

This was Philpert, a member of the Firewatch Island hermitage who escaped the drowned ones' attack by swimming three miles of open sea. Sadly, his exhausted body gave out just a short distance from land, and his corpse washed up on the beach with the next tide.

If *Speak with dead* is used to communicate with the body, it initially produces incoherent rambling about terror in the dark and the sea being the only escape. A careful questioner might be able to extract further information depending on the questions asked.

In his former life, Philpert spent much of his time slumming in the village of Uskarn, living off the charity of its citizens. Joining the Firewatch Island hermitage allowed him to finally find peace. But the horror of the drowned ones' attack shattered his sanity, so that at best he can recount only that the attackers came from the sea, were humanoid in appearance, and had glowing eyes and rotting flesh.

THE VILLAGE OF USKARN

Uskarn is a small fishing village of nine hundred souls. Though the place is primarily a human settlement, a handful of elves, dwarves, and gnomes have also made their homes here.

Most of Uskarn's inhabitants earn a living fishing in the shallows of the adjacent bay or venturing farther out to sea if they're after more impressive catches. The village boasts an unusually large port for its size, used both for its own fishing boats and for the trading vessels and naval ships that frequently stop here on their way through the area.

STAYING IN USKARN

An extended stay in the village isn't required to complete this adventure, but the characters are likely to visit—if only to secure passage to Firewatch Island by way of the small ferry that runs from the village.

Characters who do spend time in the village might be drawn to the popular tavern known as the Fog and Frog, a large warehouse converted into a drinking establishment with a dozen modest rooms to rent in the back. The tavern is run by council member Skeldruff Plenk, who brews a much-lauded lager called Plenk's Plenk.

If the characters ask about Philpert in Uskarn, the villagers know him by description. Anyone can tell the characters about Philpert's history in the village, and most residents know he had been living at the Firewatch Island hermitage for the past several months. The people of Uskarn are understandably concerned if one of the peaceful hermits of the island has turned up dead. Though they have no money to offer as incentive, the villagers are quick to ask the characters to check on the hermitage to make sure everything is all right.

If the characters spend any time in Uskarn other than the minimum required to use it as a jumping-off point for the adventure, the following details about prominent people and other background information might come in handy.





USKARN COUNCIL

A village council of six respected merchants guides general policy for Uskarn. The council consists of the following members:

- Vortanim (NG male human **druid**), an elderly and good-natured sage and bookseller
- Bellis Bellweather (CG female halfling **commoner**), a bright-spirited cheese shop owner
- Mirria Delvane (N female human **guard**), a retired soldier turned blacksmith
- Valissia Arrowen (CN female elf **spy**), an elf guide and scout who runs a fur and leather shop
- Skeldruff Plenk (LN male gnome **commoner**), a beer maker and proprietor of the Fog and Frog tavern
- Marius Golpin (NE male human **thug**), the unscrupulous owner of a general store

LAW AND ORDER

Although the council steers the village's economy, the true power in Uskarn lies in the hands of Feldrin Kane (LN male human **knight**), an intimidating bailiff who ensures that the independent-minded natives don't stray too far from his own vision of good government. His taciturn agent Merrick (N male halfling **veteran**) commands a small force of deputies and officers who maintain order in the village, and who look poorly on foreign troublemakers. Visitors are likely to receive a visit from Merrick or one of his officers soon after arriving, the official offering a cool welcome along with questions about their business in town and intended length of stay.

INTRIGUE

Though the village is small and unassuming overall, it's also the site of a smuggling operation run out of Uskarn's large port district. Several of Merrick's deputies are in the pocket of Griff Talsin (CE male human **bandit captain**), ostensibly a maritime merchant who trades in fine cloth and dry goods. Talsin is actually a black-hearted privateer who gets most of his wares from illegal raids against coastal villages across the bay. Any trouble with Talsin attracts the attention of his more powerful pirate allies, which could lead to or connect with further adventures.

FIREWATCH ISLAND

Firewatch Island is a small island set between a populous peninsula and the mouth of a broad river. Its only feature of note is the hermitage built on the site of the abandoned ruin of its old fortress.

The tiny island, 800 feet long by 400 feet wide, is a mixture of scrubby woodland and rocky hills. Three stony peaks rise above the grass and shrubs. The tallest stands more than 400 feet high along the southern coast of the island, while the other two are 300 and 100 feet high respectively.

Aside from the hermits, the island is normally home to only vermin, rats, a variety of noisy birds, and various tide pool creatures. But now the stink of corpses in area 14 has drawn additional scavengers from the surrounding waters and the mainland—including a dangerous monster.

LOOK OUT ABOVE

Chief among the creatures drawn to the scent of death on the island is a **monstrous peryton** (see appendix C) known as Rasp. This creature has long hunted across the region, searching for fishing boats or passenger ships to attack. The locals watch for and fear Rasp, and they know that it has several lairs along the coast. None who have tried to hunt the creature have returned.

The peryton makes frequent passes over the island nowadays, hoping to spot survivors of the recent attack that it can devour. If the characters arrive by day, Rasp welcomes them with its claws and beak. It is smart enough to not fight to the death, though, and it leaves the island to return to one of its mainland lairs if reduced to half its hit points or fewer.

If Rasp reduces a character to 0 hit points, it attempts to pick the character up and fly back to its newly claimed lair in area 24.

Rasp's recent predations have prompted other creatures on the island to stay out of sight. The native fauna do not wander freely, nor do the remaining residents.

TRAVELING TO FIREWATCH ISLAND

A small keelboat makes the three-mile journey south from Uskarn to Firewatch Island at first light each day, delivering supplies and bringing passengers back and forth from the hermitage. A one-way trip costs 5 sp. The ferry is mastered by Ulder Raserhill (LN male half-orc **commoner**), a short-tempered individual who begrudges

his fate as a backwater sailor. If the characters request him to wait for them (or if he thinks the characters are rich), he asks for an extra payment of as much as 50 gp.

To give the characters a way to explore on their own or to leave the island independently, the Uskarn council arranges for their use of a large rowboat, which Underhill tows to the island when he transports his passengers.

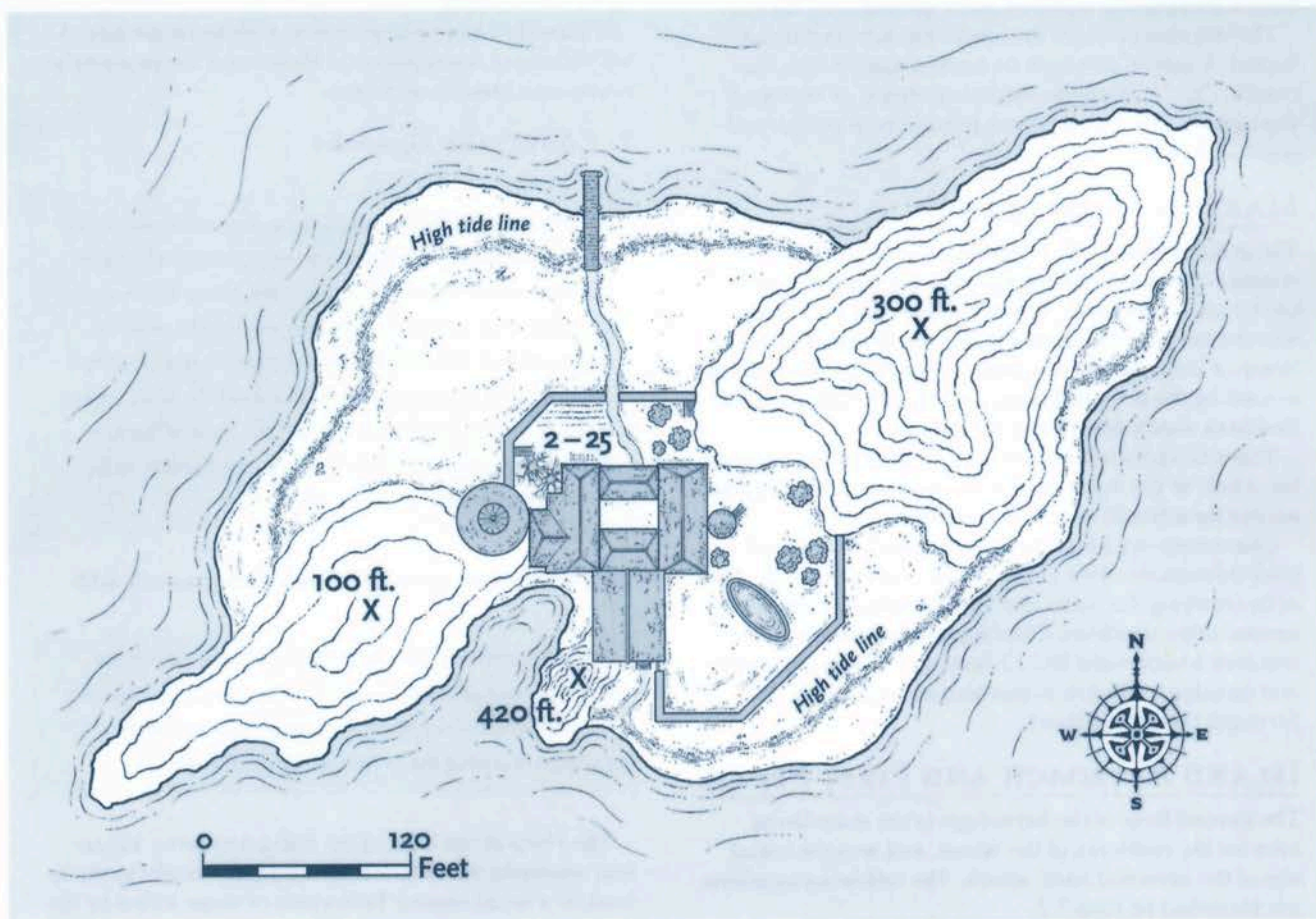
If the characters have their own ship it's easy for them to reach Firewatch Island. Keep in mind that having access to their own ship makes escaping the island easy, but if the characters flee, then they might have no way of tracking the undead back to the Pit of Hatred.

Characters who make their own way to the island can start the adventure by landing at any point along its shore. If they use the ferry, Raserhill puts in only at the pier near the hermitage on the north shore of the island. He drops off his passengers and the rowboat, then promptly heads back to the mainland.

END OF THE JOURNEY

In good weather, the journey to Firewatch Island takes an hour. As the characters approach, they can hear the faint sound of a large bell being rung, seemingly coming from the island. But the sound fades quickly and is not heard again. (One of the survivors at the hermitage rang the bell when he saw the characters' vessel approaching, but he was waylaid thereafter; see area 24 for more information.)

When the characters come within sight of the island, read:



MAP 7.1: FIREWATCH ISLAND

The sun makes the waves sparkle as Firewatch Island comes fully into view. Three barren hills are its most noticeable landmarks, rising above narrow, rocky beaches and small wiry shrubs on an otherwise sparse landscape. In between those high points, a small fortress and beacon tower can be seen. The building is made of stone and looks to have two floors. A bell tower rises an additional two stories above the rest of the building, and a low stone wall surrounds part of the complex.

If the characters approach the pier that serves the hermitage, see area 1 for more information.

THE HERMITAGE

The fortress on Firewatch Island was hastily built when first established, and the residents of the garrison were still working on it when they disappeared. The folk of the hermitage have since completed and renovated the place in their own way, compromising some of the site's defensive capabilities in the process.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the walls of the hermitage are made of mortared masonry. The interior ceilings are 10 feet high, and the floors are paved with flagstones. The roof is covered in slate tiles except in places where those tiles have fallen or broken, and those areas have been subsequently repaired and replaced with thatch.

The wooden doors in the hermitage are usually unlocked. A locked door can be bashed open with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, or smashed through (AC 15, 18 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage).

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

The ground floor of the hermitage can be entered in a number of ways, including through the main doors (between area 2 and area 4), and through the back doors into the hermit cells (area 11) and the kitchen (area 12). Some of these doors have been secured against another assault by the drowned ones, and must be forced open. See each area's description for details.

There are no windows on the first floor of the fortress, but a hole in the north wall of the midden (area 5) allows access for a Small or smaller creature.

Characters can enter the hermitage on the second level through the door of the guard tower (area 21), or by climbing the walls and forcing open one of the second-story windows. Climbing the hermitage walls requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, and opening a window requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

ISLAND APPROACH AND FIRST FLOOR

The ground floor of the hermitage is the main living area for the residents of the island, and was the initial site of the drowned ones' attack. The following locations are identified on map 7.2.

1. PIER AND BEACH

A short wooden pier extends out into the water, connected by a path to an open archway in the fortress wall. The pier is in good shape, with wooden pilings raising it well above the high tide line of the rocky beach. The area is deserted, with no other boats or people in sight. The call of gulls, the shrieking of crows, and the crashing of the waves are the only sounds.

If the characters took the ferry to the island, Raserhill quickly offloads a shipment of dried beans and apples, several barrels of water, and a few crates of other supplies before he casts off and returns to Uskarn. If he has any concerns about not being met by folk from the hermitage, he makes no sign that he cares. Unless the characters have made other arrangements, the ferry returns shortly after sunrise the next day.

A character who makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices humanoid tracks leading from the waterline to the hermitage. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check also notes distinct tracks returning to the waterline (the trail left by the drowned ones as they departed the island).

Within a few minutes of arriving on the island, the characters are attacked by the **monstrous peryton**, Rasp. See the "Look Out Above" section (page 145) for more information.

If Raserhill has been paid to stay close by the island with his ferry, his reaction to Rasp—and the monster's reaction to him—is up to you.

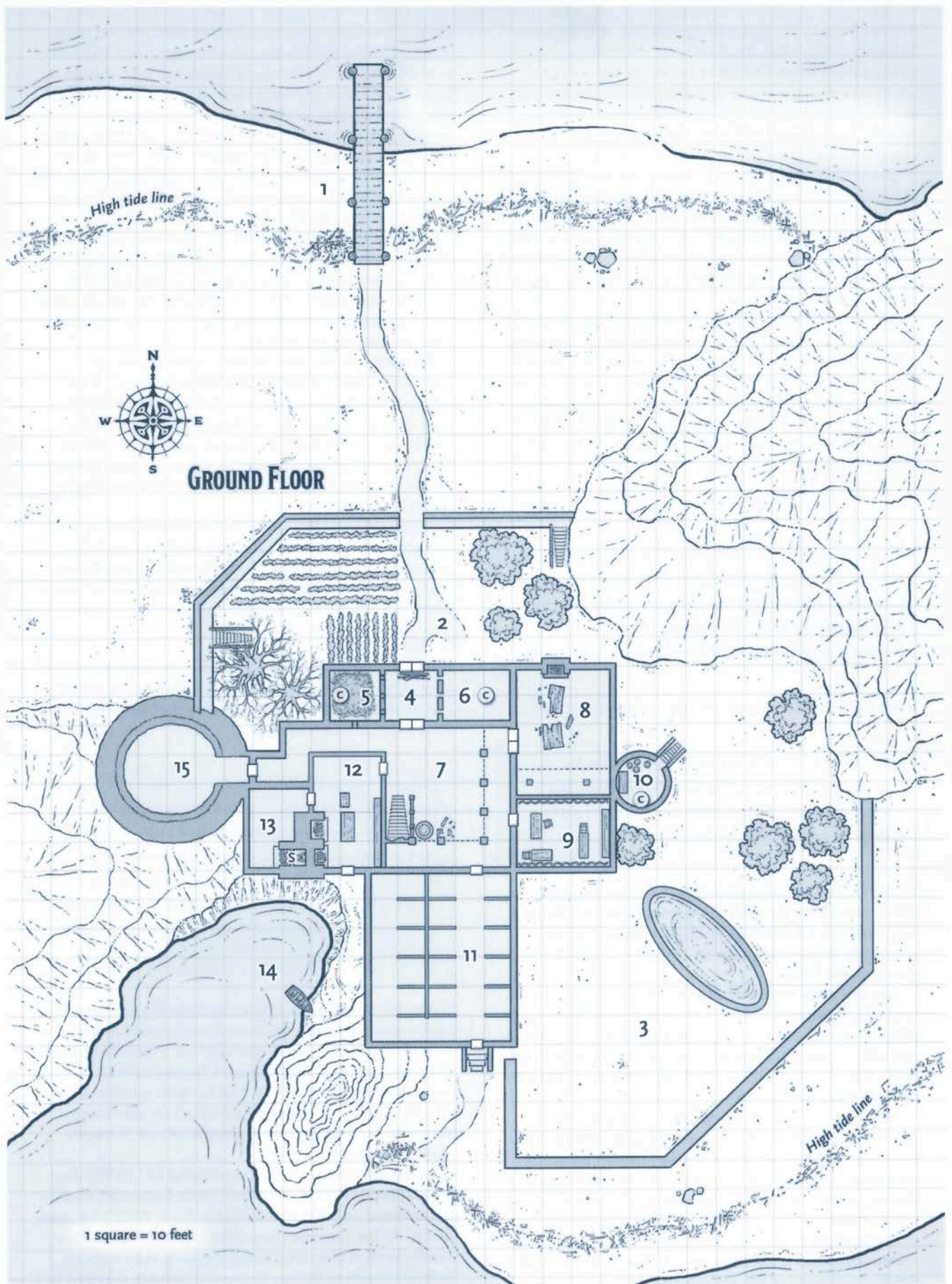
2. COURTYARD GARDENS

An archway in the fortress's outer wall provides access to a large courtyard, now filled with vegetable gardens and a small orchard of stunted apple trees. Stairs to the east and west lead up to walkways overlooking the yard. To the southwest, the base of the bell tower is obscured by thick growths of vines, which also shroud the west stairs. A set of double doors stands along the front of the hermitage on the far side of the garden, and appears to be the only way inside.

If the characters have not already visited area 3, add:

Along the eastern side of the courtyard, the wall of the fortress once abutted the larger of the island's rocky hills. But that hillside has since been hewn away to create a passage rounding the corner of the hermitage.

The vines at the base of the bell tower (area 15) are four **assassin vines** (see appendix C). Brought to the island by a druid named Tallos (one of those killed by the



MAP 7.2: HERMITAGE FIRST FLOOR

drowned ones), the vines are rooted in large clay pots. Tallos grew the vines for their fruit, which he fermented into a unique wine. The other residents knew to give a wide berth to the vines, which attack anyone (except the now-dead druid) that comes within their reach. Anyone who ascends the west stairs is in reach of the vines' attacks.

Outer Wall. The wall surrounding the courtyard is 15 feet high and has a 3-foot-wide walkway along its top, accessed by the stairs to the east and west. The wall has no parapets and provides no cover to those atop it. A pile of gardening tools lies at the base of the east stairs, next to wooden buckets used to carry water from the cistern in area 3 to the garden.

Barricaded Doors. Any close inspection of the double doors leading into the hermitage reveals that they were recently broken open and have been jammed shut again. The doors were smashed by the drowned ones, but the survivors of the attack have repaired and barred them with broken planking from the dining hall. The doors can be forced open with a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check.

3. YARD AND CISTERN

A low, unfinished stone wall encloses a broad, sandy yard abutting an open vista of beach and sea. A small tower accessible by an external stair rises against the hermitage's eastern wall. Several scrubby bushes stand to the north of a large oval pool at the center of the yard.

If the characters have not already visited area 2, add:

Along the north edge of the yard, the wall of the fortress once abutted the larger of the island's rocky hills. But that hillside has since been hewn away to create a passage rounding the corner of the hermitage.

When the fortress was abandoned, the garrison soldiers were in the process of enclosing this yard behind a 3-foot-wide, 15-foot-high wall identical to the one protecting the courtyard (area 2). The unfinished wall stands 3 feet high.

Two **sea hags** were drawn to the island during the recent attack, when they heard the screams of the victims of the drowned ones. While prowling around the hermitage with an **invisible stalker** they summoned, the hags spotted the characters approaching and have hidden in the scrub nearest the wall.

The hags can be noticed only by a creature who succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. The invisible stalker is in the cistern and cannot normally be seen. If anyone spots any of the three monsters or moves within 5 feet of the cistern's edge, these creatures attack.

The hags try to flee into the sea if the stalker is slain.

Development. If the hags are captured, they provide detailed accounts of the assault on the island, and

cackle in delight when speaking of the drowned ones. The hags have lived in the area for years, and they witnessed the first drowned one attack ten years before. They refer to the drowned ones as "walkers," because the creatures plod along the floor of the bay, never swimming. They did not see the shipwreck during the storm, and know only that the walkers came from the general direction of the Pit of Hatred. They eagerly give the characters directions to the rift, trading predictions of party members' deaths all the while.

Cistern. The central cistern is 7 feet deep, lined with flagstones, and has a lip 1 foot wide and 1 foot high. It collects rainwater for drinking and washing, but the hermits often augment that supply with barrels of fresh water shipped in from the mainland. Recent rains have filled the cistern to capacity.

Treasure. Since their arrival on the island, the hags were able to enter the hermit cells (area 11) to gather some treasure, but they haven't yet advanced past the barricaded door in that area. The loot now lies hidden in silt at the bottom of the cistern. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check while looking in the cistern spots something beneath the muck.

Anyone who swims to the bottom can recover a leather sack containing 125 gp, a gold paperweight in the shape of a tortoise (100 gp), a silver candelabra stamped with the symbol of the sea god Procan (50 gp), and two *potions of greater healing*.

4. MAIN ENTRY

If the characters enter the hermitage through this area, they must break through the barricaded doors with a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. Adjust the read-aloud text accordingly.

Pieces of broken planking and debris reinforce the damaged north doors of this room, whose floor and walls are spattered by bloodstains. A twisted padlock lies at the foot of the north doors, and the south doors have been nearly ripped from their hinges. Arrow slits are visible in the east wall, shrouded by cobwebs. The west wall displays patches where similar arrow slits have been bricked over.

When the drowned ones assaulted the hermitage, they broke down the main doors here and caught its residents by surprise. The arrow slits are 3 feet above the floor and 6 inches wide; the area beyond cannot be seen because of the spiderwebs. The hermits' patchwork is of poor quality, and the bricked-up arrow slits can be smashed through with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

A character who makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices numerous humanoid tracks in the blood and dirt streaking the floor. With a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check, a character discerns more than a dozen individual sets of tracks, some of which are outlined by a thick crust of salt.

5. MIDDEN

A foul stench permeates this dark room, which holds a pile of filth beneath a trapdoor in the ceiling. A ladder is bolted to the west wall below the trapdoor. The bricked-over outlines of three arrow slits line the east wall, and an entire doorway has been bricked up to the south.

The inhabitants of the hermitage use this room as a dump and privy, dropping their refuse through the trapdoor above. They bricked over the arrow slits and the door to contain the smell. A hole in the north wall allows creatures of Small size or smaller to come and go freely.

Five **giant rats** slither and skitter through the pile of waste. They instinctively attack any intruders.

Ladder. A rung at the top of the ladder has rotted, and it breaks if more than 50 pounds of weight are placed on it. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the weak rung. Any character who breaks the rung while climbing falls 10 feet and has a 50 percent chance of landing in the waste pile.

Pile of Waste. Any character who makes substantial contact with the pile of waste (searching through it, falling into it, and so forth) must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract sewer plague. See “Diseases” in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Treasure. A character who searches the waste pile discovers a *brooch of shielding* dropped here years ago.

6. ARCHER'S POST

Cobwebs shroud this apparently abandoned room, obscuring three arrow slits on the west wall. A ladder bolted to the east wall leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling.

This room can make a defensible hideout later in the adventure when the drowned ones return.

7. SCULLERY

Stairs rise to a railed balcony that covers two walls of this large, vaulted chamber. The balcony stands ten feet above the floor, with heavy crossbeams above reinforcing the twenty-foot-high, slate-tiled ceiling. Here and there, missing ceiling tiles have been covered over with thatch.

A large, rusty metal tub and a broken wooden frame stand near the staircase. The floor shows spatters of blood and obvious signs of a recent scuffle.

This area was once a gallery, but the hermitage residents have turned it into a scullery. The tub formerly served as the oil receptacle for the beacon in the tower above (see area 24), but it now holds dirty water and shattered crockery. The wooden frame is a drying rack for laundry. Behind the tub sits a bucket of lye with a copper scoop, and several pumice stones for scrubbing.

The drowned ones killed several hermits here, then hauled the bodies to area 14. The door from this area to area 11 has since been barricaded from this side.

A character who studies the blood spatters in the room and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check determines that several people were recently slain here—including one who was drowned in the tub. The blood spatters on the floor are a day old at most. The character also notices a few more recent tracks, suggesting that at least one person survived the onslaught. It's not clear in which direction the survivor fled.

Bricked-Up Door. Characters who pass along the hallway between this area and area 15 can see that a doorway in the north wall has been bricked over. The sloppy brickwork can be smashed through with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

Treasure. One of the hermits owned a well-made set of false teeth carved of elephant ivory. These teeth, worth 150 gp, can be found by anyone who searches the tub, where they ended up after their prior owner was drowned by an undead attacker.

8. DINING HALL

This large hall has a vaulted ceiling that rises to nearly thirty feet high at its center. The area is dominated by a flagstone hearth at the north end and a twenty-foot-high wooden balcony to the south, supported by rickety-looking posts. High windows are set into the east and west walls, which also have door-sized holes smashed through them at either end of the balcony.

The shattered remnants of a large trestle table and a pair of benches litter the center of the room. Broken crockery is scattered about, along with chunks of food.

The great hall of the fortress once served as a defensive position as well as a gathering place.

Windows. The east windows open to the outside and allow light into the hall during the day. The west windows allowed archers on the second level to fire down on any intruders in this area.

Hermit Alterations. The hermits have made several structural alterations to the hall, including widening arrow slits in the guard tower and the entry hall balcony to create doorways on the second level. They then built the crude wooden balcony to connect the upper floor of the watchtower with the inside of the main building.

The balcony's construction is shabby, and the wooden poles that precariously support it look unsafe. It can support up to 200 pounds of weight before collapsing. Anyone on the balcony when it collapses falls 20 feet to the floor below, taking normal falling damage.

Smashed Table. Two of the hermits were enjoying a late repast here when the drowned ones attacked. They went to area 7 to investigate sounds of a scuffle and were slain there. The survivors of the assault later broke up the table and benches so they the pieces could be to bar the entrances to the hermitage.

9. LIBRARY

Faded tapestries showing maritime scenes and dramatic storms at sea hang from the north and south walls of this cozy room. The floor is carpeted in a ragged green shag woven to depict a crashing wave. A low set of book-laden shelves sits against the east wall, and three wooden tables and several chairs fill the rest of the room. Books are strewn about the tables and the floor.

This chamber once served as a chapel devoted to the god of the sea for the members of the fortress garrison. It was here that Oloran, the chaplain of the fortress, prayed to Procan for divine intervention against the approaching *Tammeraut*. The residents of the hermitage, who generally espouse no particular religion, have converted the chamber into a library. Any character who has an appropriate background or who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (History or Religion) check recognizes that the carpet depicts the symbol of Procan, the sea god.

Books. A few of the works on the shelves deal with the worship of the sea god and date back to the original garrison, but most are later acquisitions brought by the hermits. By and large, these tomes deal with common philosophical quandaries and the passive contemplation of nature. The books are old and impressive-looking but have no monetary value.

If the characters search the library, one of them discovers a handwritten poem scrawled into the open cover of a book. The fragment was composed by Oloran, the chaplain of the garrison, the morning after *Tammeraut* sank. It was intended as a paean to Procan, also known as the Storm Lord, and a warning to the god's foes.

*Beware the sea and its scarlet harbinger.
Beware the sword and death that await.
For guidance, we beseech almighty Storm Lord;
Consign to our foes Tammeraut's fate.*

The beginning of the verse will look familiar to characters who visit the belfry (area 24). See that area for more information.

A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check recognizes "Tammeraut" as a family name, and recalls that it was a noble clan that faded from history years ago.

Treasure. Lying atop the bookshelf are four *spell scrolls*: *gust of wind*, *speaking with animals*, *speaking with plants*, and *control water*. These were created by Tallos the druid, who misplaced them here and forgot about them.

10. DISTILLERY

Although this area is on the first level, it is accessible only from outside and through the trapdoor in area 21 on the second level.

The heady scent of fermentation fills this dark, windowless hole. Its walls are rough masonry and its floor hard-packed earth. No ladder rises to the trapdoor in the ceiling. A table along the west wall holds a collection of copper tubing and vats. Next to it are several casks.

This space beneath the watchtower of area 21 was once a holding cell for prisoners. Tallos the druid converted the space into a distillery. Berries harvested from his assassin vines were brought here for fermentation, and the tubing and vats make up a functioning distillery.

Casks. The four casks hold a rotgut vintage of Tallos's assassin-berry wine. Anyone who drinks this concoction must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1d4 hours. The saving throw to overcome the wine's nauseating effects can be repeated every 15 minutes.

11. HERMIT CELLS

The door into this area from outside is damaged and opens freely. The door into area 7 is barricaded from the opposite side. It can be forced open with a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

What was apparently once the main barracks of the stronghold has been turned into individual meditation cells by the residents of the hermitage. Numerous wooden poles have been crudely lashed together and hung with curtains to create eight-foot-high partitions throughout the room. The ceiling peaks twenty feet overhead, where a thatched roof is reinforced with wooden poles.

The entire room is a shambles, with many of the partitions damaged and the curtains torn apart. Debris and the broken remains of simple furnishings are strewn about, while pools of drying blood and gore fill the room with a metallic stink.

The drowned ones' main assault on the hermitage took place here. Most of the residents were sleeping in their cells and died in the first minutes of the attack. The hermitage's only real hope of fighting off the invaders, the druid Tallos, died in his cot. All the bodies were dragged away by the drowned ones, after which the sea hags found in area 3 did some looting here.

Rats attracted by the slaughter are skulking in this room. Because the drowned ones removed the corpses, the rat swarms have found little to eat. They stream from beneath broken furniture and from behind partitions and curtains to attack anyone entering the room.

Every round, three **swarms of rats** appear in one of the cells (your choice) and pour out to devour the characters. A total of twelve swarms can appear in this way.

Treasure. The partition walls of one cell (Tallos's) are held up by a pole containing a hollowed-out hidden space within, which can be found with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The disturbed

druid was more than a little dependent on his assassin-berry wine (see area 10), and hid two flasks of the stuff inside the pole. The cache also contains a *charm of plant command* (see appendix B) and a set of bronzed orc teeth strung as a necklace (no monetary value).

12. KITCHEN

The door into this area from outside is barricaded from within the room. It can be forced open with a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

This kitchen shows signs of recent use and is fairly clean. A kettle is suspended above a large fireplace, and a brick oven stands nearby. A cutting block bearing half a loaf of bread stands in the center of the room, next to an empty table. Shelves for holding dishes and utensils line the east wall.

The kettle contains cold vegetable soup, and the bread is growing stale.

Locked Door. The west door is locked from the other side, but can be opened with a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Treasure. A character who searches the kitchen and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a flask of *oil of slipperiness* hidden in a cupboard.

13. LARDER

The walls of this room were once covered with row upon row of wooden shelving holding boxes of foodstuffs, but most of those supplies have been strewn across the floor. A few sausages still hang from hooks in the ceiling rafters, and an undisturbed bin of potatoes is scooted up against the rear face of the kitchen's brick hearth.

This larder once held enough provisions to feed two dozen people for three days.

Ruined Map. Any search of the larder turns up a single piece of damp, crumpled parchment showing barely legible lines and writing. This is a map dropped here by one of the drowned ones that ransacked this area, formerly a navigator on *Tammeraut*. (See area 25 for more information about what happened here.)

The map shows Firewatch Island and the nearby coast, and has diagrams that convey the invaders' original plans for using the island as a staging ground for a full-on assault against the mainland. Though the sailors' map was waterproofed, long years in the depths have made it all but illegible, and it takes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to understand its markings.

Secret Door. A character who searches the larder and succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that the back slats of the potato bin are built into the brick of the hearth's rear face. These slats can be removed to reveal a hollow behind the kitchen fireplace.

A ladder within leads down to a secret cellar (area 25), where the survivors of the prior attack have hidden. The drowned ones that ransacked the shelves could sense the nearness of the cleric of the sea god, but the undead could not find the entrance to the cellar.

14. GROTTA

The stone peaks of the island rise alongside the walls of the hermitage to create a sheltered grotto, overlooked by a rampart walkway along the west side of the former fortress. A steep path ascends ten feet from a short strand of beach up to an exterior door. A boat is pulled halfway up on the beach, its stern riding low in the water.

This partially concealed grotto served as an escape route for the Firewatch Island garrison.

A large mass of corpses is barely visible below the water's surface near the boat. A character must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check or approach within 5 feet of the water to spot the bodies, which are bound together in a fishing net.

The bodies are being stored here by the drowned ones until they can all be transported to the Pit of Hatred, where they will be turned into more undead to swell the ranks of Syrgaul's minions. It is Syrgaul's ultimate plan to create an army of drowned ones that can lay waste to populated coastal areas—which, of course, leads to even more creatures coming under his sway (see "Conclusion" for more information).

Three **chuuls** hide beneath the mass of corpses. These creatures were attracted by blood in the water, and have been feeding idly on the bodies below the surface. They are quick to notice anyone on the shore or entering the water, lunging out to attack.

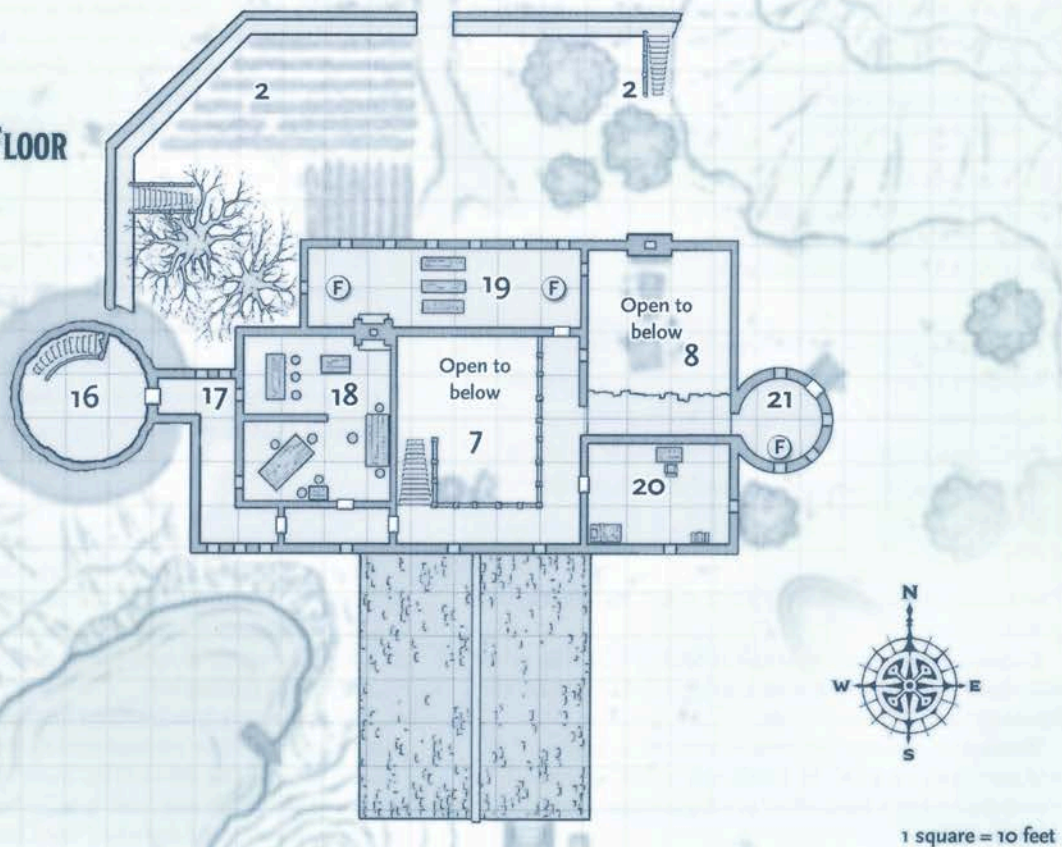
Boat. The hermits kept a large rowboat in this area for fishing and occasional trips to the mainland. It holds up to eight Medium humanoids and is propelled by oars and a small sail. When the drowned ones arrived, they damaged the boat by smashing its hull with rocks to prevent the hermits from escaping. Anyone approaching can see that the boat is half submerged and that its hull has several holes.

Grim Haul. After slaughtering the hermitage's inhabitants, the drowned ones gathered the corpses into a large fishing net they found in the boat, weighted the net with rocks, and dumped it in the water. After they return by night to search for other survivors, the undead intend to drag their load of corpses back to the Pit of Hatred as a sacrifice to its foul essence.

The thirteen corpses are mostly humans and half-elves, along with one dwarf. All show signs of vicious stabbing and slashing wounds, broken bones, and blunt trauma. The bodies have been dead for about a day and submerged since dawn.

These corpses can be interrogated with a *speak with dead* spell. None of the dead hermits understands why the hermitage was attacked, but they can provide luridly detailed information about the nature of their undead attackers.

SECOND FLOOR



MAP 7.3: HERMITAGE SECOND FLOOR

15. OLD STOREROOM

The door to this area is locked but can be opened with a successful DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

This damp, dark tower room smells of rot and mildew. The floor glistens with puddles of water, and trickles of moisture dribble down the wall to the west and south. What once might have been barrels and crates stacked against the walls have decayed into nearly unidentifiable heaps of mold.

This room served as a storeroom for mundane materials for the original garrison but has not seen any use since then. The contents of the barrels and crates mostly consist of ruined linens and brackish water. The containers themselves are rotted and untrustworthy as well.

Green Slime. The hermits discovered deadly green slime in this area shortly after taking over the fortress. Rather than risk exposing themselves to it, they chose to lock the door and throw away the key. A 10-foot-by-10-foot patch of green slime lurks on the ceiling in the western portion of the room. Any character who succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the slime before stepping under it. Otherwise, the slime falls on any creature passing below it. See "Dungeon Hazards" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for information on green slime.

SECOND FLOOR

The second level was once a key defensive point for the fortress, but it was put to a different purpose by the hermits. The following locations are identified on map 7.3.

16. JUNK ROOM

Bundles, barrels, and boxes are piled haphazardly across this tower room. A narrow path leads through the clutter to a staircase curving along the chamber's inner wall. The stairs rise to an open trapdoor in the ceiling.

Formerly an armory, this room has stored ever-accumulating masses of junk since the hermitage's founding. All kinds of mundane equipment is stored here, most of it having no value. This includes such things as a 1-foot length of hempen rope, a harp with only one string, a single left boot, a bucket with no bottom, and so forth.

Still, a number of items are of potential help in fortifying the hermitage against another attack. These include a 10-pound cask of iron nails, a bent crowbar, three clay planters for the garden, a hammer, a rusty hand saw, a hooded lantern, a few 10-foot lengths of hempen rope, and a stack of firewood.

Treasure. A careful search of this area reveals a case of twelve +2 bolts left behind by the garrison and overlooked by the inhabitants of the hermitage.

17. BATTLEMENT

A walkway open to the sky overlooks a grotto formed by the island's rocky peak and the hermitage's walls, leading from the hermitage to the large tower along its west side. A crenellated battlement blocks the walkway in and is set with arrow slits.

This battlement served as the main point of defense for the fortress's postern entrance from the grotto, allowing the garrison to fire arrows or hurl rocks at invaders. It remains an excellent defensive position.

The door from the open battlement into the corridor that leads to area 18 and the interior of the second level is barricaded from the inside. Breaking through it from outside requires a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

Development. Unless the characters are moving quietly, the three snakes in area 18 detect them and slither through the arrow slits to attack.

18. SCRIPTORIUM

A partial wall divides this chamber into two sections. Two arrow slits are set into the west wall, and a small fireplace stands to the north. Several tables crowd the room, all covered with sheaves of paper, quills, ink pots, candles, and a few bound books. Numerous uncomfortable-looking stools stand around them. One of the ink pots has been overturned, resulting in a large black stain on one tabletop.

This chamber served as the officers' quarters for the original garrison. After the hermits moved in, they converted it to a scriptorium where they compose philosophical tracts, illuminate other texts, or copy manuscripts. Completed works are moved downstairs to the library.

Three **giant coral snakes** (see appendix C) lurk in this chamber. The snakes originally lived in a cave on the east side of the isle, where they fed on rats. When the rats were drawn to the fortress by the smell of death, the snakes followed, entering this area through the arrow slits. The snakes are currently coiled up in the north section of the room, and emerge to attack anyone who trespasses in their new lair.

19. DEFENSIVE OVERLOOK

Arrow slits set along the walls of this chamber make it a bit drafty. Murder holes open up in the center of the floor, overlooking the entryway into the level below. A fireplace is set into the south wall, with a dusty iron kettle close by. A trapdoor is set into the floor at either end of this chamber.

This area was a key defensive point for protecting the main entrance (area 4) against incursion. The kettle was once used to boil oil for the murder holes. This chamber is rarely visited by the residents of the hermitage, except to use the trapdoor into area 5 as a dump and a privy.

20. PRIOR'S QUARTERS

The door to this chamber hangs open, with the detached head of a mace on the floor acting as a doorstep. The room is modestly furnished with a cot, a table, a chest, and a chair. An oddly shaped basin rests on the table, with a small piece of mirror hanging from the wall above it.

When the fortress was occupied, this area was the quarters of the chaplain Oloran. The leader of the hermitage moved in here after his sect took over the island five years before. Old Prior Borisanth had little interaction with the other residents, due to his having taken a vow of silence. On the night of the attack, he was awakened by the noise and slain by a drowned one as he opened his door. The broken handle of his mace rolled under his cot.

Treasure. The unlocked chest next to the cot contains a selection of threadbare garments and worn sandals. It also holds a religious icon set with fourteen small diamonds (100 gp each), two blocks of amber (50 gp each), and a *Quaal's feather token (anchor)*.

The metal basin on the table holds water, and a bronze straight razor lies next to it. Closer inspection of the basin reveals that it is an upturned helmet bearing images of cavorting dolphins—a *helm of underwater action* (see appendix B) whose magic went undetected by Borisanth and the other hermits.

21. GUARD TOWER

The door into the tower is barricaded shut from the inside. Forcing it open requires a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

Where this small guard tower once abutted the east side of the fortress, part of the fortress wall has been knocked out to create an open doorway into the interior, with a rickety-looking balcony beyond. Arrow slits around the tower give a view of the area outside the fortress and the stairs that access the tower door. A wooden trapdoor is set into the floor, with a cloying odor rising from it. A ten-foot ladder lies next to the trapdoor.

The smell comes from the distillery in area 10 below.

UPPER LEVELS AND CELLAR

The belfry tower rises above the main levels of the hermitage, and a secret cellar below the kitchen has become a refuge for the survivors of the undead assault. The following locations are identified on map 7.4.

22. ABANDONED QUARTERS

A cast-iron potbelly stove squats to the north of the upper level of the fortress's main tower, its stovepipe extending out the arrow slit to the north. The wooden frame and slats of an old bed are pushed up against a spiral staircase that rises to a trapdoor in the ceiling, leading to the open belfry above. Under an arrow slit looking toward the island's western peak, a dusty desk is covered in debris and fresh bird droppings. Hinges hang on either side of each arrow slit, indicating that at one time they had shutters to keep out the elements.

A section of the wall to the southwest has collapsed inward, opening up to the rocky slope of the island's smaller hill ten feet below. The pile of rubble covers the smashed remains of a chair.

Archais, the wizard of the old Firewatch Island garrison, once resided in this chamber. It was he who first gave the warning of the approaching *Tammeraut*, resulting in Oloran's desperate prayer to Procan and the ship's resulting demise. The wizard's gull familiar spied the ship at sea and brought word back to him. Archais was slain with the rest of the garrison during the drowned ones' initial attack.

The weathering of storms and the salty air has eroded the mortar in part of the wall, causing the collapse. The room is still secure, but the hermits deemed this area uninhabitable due to the damage.

The pile of rubble in the southwest corner conceals a secret compartment in part of the surviving wall, just south of the west arrow slit. A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check while searching the room discovers the compartment. If the characters clear the rubble, they automatically find the compartment.

Treasure. One of Archais's hobbies was the underwater exploration of sunken ships, and this compartment contains some of the items he used in that pursuit: a *ring of free action*, three ounces of *oil of slipperiness*, three *potions of water breathing*, an *immovable rod*, a *folding boat*, a *bag of holding* containing several fishing nets and 500 feet of weighted hempen rope, a small metal baton the size of a torch with *continual flame* cast on it, and a small metal container holding six *pressure capsules* (see appendix B).

The compartment also contains a leather backpack where Archais kept his spellbook and his journal. His spellbook is long lost, but the journal remains inside.

Archais's journal relates his numerous assignments and duty stations while a member of the military. It also includes notes about the different sunken ships he has explored in the surrounding bay and its tributary rivers. The final entry on this list gives the location of the sunken *Tammeraut*.

Most of the journal is moldy and illegible. The last few pages are intact, and they relate the events surrounding the coming of *Tammeraut*:

Our worst fears are confirmed. Virgil has brought word of disaster. A war galley fully loaded with pirates approaches from the southwest. It flies the flag of the raiders and bears the name of the cursed ship Tammeraut. We must prepare what feeble defense we can muster. Woe to the folk of the coast at the approach of this bloody tide.

Miracle of miracles! The storm lord has answered the prayers of our illustrious chaplain. A furious storm blew in from the open sea and swept the war galley to its doom. But I believe that the vessel went down near the Pit of Hatred, an ill-starred undersea chasm two miles south of Firewatch Isle. This does not bode well, for the rift is said to be a passage to a source of interminable evil that was long ago sealed away. If the wreckage should rupture the wards, terrible darkness might be unleashed. I must mount an expedition to the sunken hulk and make sure all is well.

A fell wind blows this evening. I fear the wards on the rift have been broken. I must set out first thing in the morning to inspect the wreckage.

A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (History) check connects the journal's reference to "raiders" to the pirate captain Syrgaul, a notorious sorcerer who forged an unholy pact with the demon lord Orcus. He and his crew never left survivors of their attacks, and his ship, *Tammeraut*, was the scourge of the seas.

23. ROOF

Heavy, overlapping slate tiles cover the roof of the hermitage. In many spots, the mortar holding the tiles in place has crumbled, and the slates have slid off to shatter on the ground below. The roof is patched with thatching in those areas, creating a hodgepodge appearance. A flat area in the center of the roof provides a platform for defense, with the surrounding roof peaks providing cover.

The slate tiles are strong enough to support the weight of a Large creature, but the scattered areas of thatch can support only Small creatures. A Medium or larger creature that attempts to cross a portion of the thatched roof must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall through into the area below.

24. BELFRY

This open belfry offers a breathtaking view of the open sea and the distant coast. Four stone corner posts support the belfry's conical slate roof where it peaks twenty feet above, with a crenellated battlement running between them.

A human body is sprawled in a depression at the center of the stone floor, its torso torn open and its heart missing. The base of what was once a metal framework surrounds the depression. Above the body, a large bronze bell engraved with symbols of peace and serenity hangs from a crossbeam, with a pull rope dangling from the rigging above. Across the floor next to the body, a message is scrawled in chalk: "BEWARE THE SEA KILLERS."

The belfry was originally Firewatch Island's signal beacon. The depression in the floor once held the large oil receptacle that fueled the beacon (this now sits in area 7). The metal framework extended above this receptacle and held the lenses that focused the light of the beacon's flame. The hermitage disassembled the beacon and installed the bell for sounding at mealtime and to signal the start of meditation sessions.

Aaron's Last Message. A surviving hermit named Aaron spotted the characters approaching the island and ran here to ring the bell and call for aid. Unfortunately for him, the ringing bell attracted Rasp back to the belfry. Aaron saw the monster's approach and quickly scrawled his message on the floor before attempting to flee back downstairs, but he wasn't quick enough. It is his body that now adorns the center of the room.

Rasp, the **monstrous peryton** (see appendix C), has established a temporary lair in the belfry while it scours the island to feed. The creature is present here only if

the characters have not already faced it, or if it is feeding on one of the party members after besting that character in combat (see "Look Out Above" on page 145).

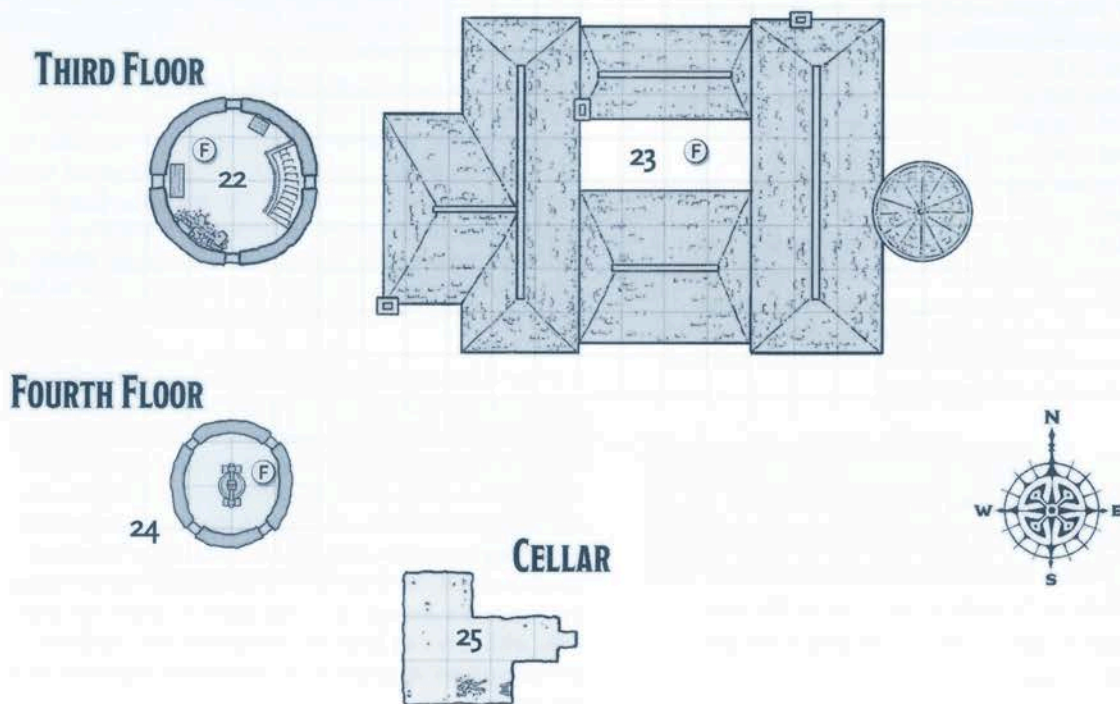
25. BOLT-HOLE

A rickety ladder leads down from the larder into a musty subterranean chamber enclosed by rough masonry walls. Three trembling figures are huddled against the far wall, sharing the chamber with the dusty, deteriorated remains of an armored corpse. The body's sightless eye sockets stare up blankly, and a small silver disk is clutched in one of its skeletal hands. A horizontal crevice between two blocks in the south wall glows with faint daylight, marking a narrow opening that leads outside the fortress.

The builders of the fortress created this hidden cellar as a refuge. Only the officers, the chaplain, and the resident wizard knew of its existence. The crevice served as both an arrow slit and as a method for those with access to spells such as *gaseous form* to escape the room.

Survivors. The three surviving residents of the hermitage have taken refuge in this chamber:

- Janore Stormswake (**priest**), a human female cleric of Procan
- Barret Gloffrin (**commoner**), a very ill male human
- Morley Tobe (**commoner**), a slightly ill and heavily indebted male dwarf (see the "Morley's Debt" adventure hook)



MAP 7.4: HERMITAGE UPPER FLOORS AND CELLAR

1 square = 10 feet

All three survivors have been traumatized by the recent attacks, which were unknowingly triggered by Janore Stormswake's arrival at the hermitage.

A fourth hermit, Aaron Kelderman, also survived the initial undead attack, but he was recently slain by Rasp in the belfry (see area 24). Since Aaron has not returned after leaving to scout the island, the other survivors have been too terrified to leave this room.

Sickness in the Bolt-Hole. The hermits initially remained hidden for fear that the silence above was a ploy by the lurking undead to draw them from their hiding place. But it quickly became obvious that the wounds Morley and Barret suffered have caused a horrible disease.

Both Barret and Morley have contracted the disease called bluerot from the drowned ones (see appendix C). Barret is very ill and has lost 4 points of Constitution and Charisma from the disease. Unless he is cured, one hour after the characters discover him, Barret must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. A failed save likely kills him.

Morley fared better and has lost only 1 point of Constitution and Charisma. He must make his first DC 12 Constitution saving throw against the disease in roughly 20 hours. This means that he is alive for the drowned ones' second assault.

Treasure. The dead chaplain wears a +1 breastplate.

Development. All three of the survivors are in shock from their recent ordeal, and they are desperate to escape the island. Unfortunately, Barret is in no condition to travel. Janore Stormswake can give the most detailed account of recent events, but she asks first if the characters have seen Aaron. She can recount how he slipped out from the bolt-hole to see if the fortress was safe, but never returned. If the characters haven't already discovered Aaron's body, Janore tells of having heard the bell ringing, then silence.

Survivors' Tale. Janore relates that she was reading in the library when a sudden premonition of danger came to her from her god, Procan. She heard whispers in her mind that led her to this place, and her intuition told her that the skeleton found here was the remains of a fellow priest of Procan. (The skeleton is indeed the remains of the priest whose plea for help led to the sinking of *Tammeraut*.)

Acting quickly, she found Aaron in the kitchen and grabbed him just as he heard the dormitory door splintering. Morley and Barret staggered into the larder soon after, wounded and in need of help. Janore says she dragged them inside and was about to seal the entrance when the larder door banged open:

"I saw a corpse, dripping wet, shriveled and discolored as if by long immersion in the sea. It stalked into the room and began to search, so I sealed the door. Miraculously, it missed our hiding place, though it kept scrabbling at the floor as if it could sense us below. But then as the first glow of dawn showed at the cleft in the wall there, it suddenly fled."

By peering through the crevice to the south, the survivors witnessed the undead gathering the slain residents into nets. The monsters walked back into the sea, dragging several of the nets behind them. More than a dozen corpses remain to be salvaged from the grotto, waiting for the undead to return.

At dawn, Aaron went up and out to search for survivors. Finding none, he remained outside to keep watch for passing ships. He planned on ringing the bell to draw their attention. In the meantime, he tried to fortify the place as well as he could.

Having witnessed the undead at their work, the survivors are convinced they will be back—perhaps as early as tonight, after the sun sets.

Drowned Ones' Threat. If the characters haven't identified the ruined map found in area 13, Janore can confirm that it shows Firewatch Island, the local coastline, nearby settlements, and the invaders' plans for an assault against those settlements. If the characters haven't already done so, she guesses that the undead are still following the orders they were under when *Tammeraut* was sunk. They intend to seize the hermitage and destroy its last defenders, then use the island as a staging ground for attacks against the settlements of the coast.

LAST STAND

With both Morley and Barret sickened, Janore doesn't know what to do. Aaron was supposed to check on the status of the boat kept in area 14, and since he failed to return Janore has been afraid to investigate further. Until the characters appeared, the survivors believed that they had been abandoned, and that the only way off the island is the ferry. But even if the characters have the means of leaving the island immediately, or they can repair the hermitage's boat with *mending*, the knowledge that the drowned ones mean to use Firewatch Island as a base from which to launch further mayhem across the region should give them pause.

An undead assault against the coast could come at any number of locations and be all but impossible to defend against. Because the drowned ones are able to add to their undead ranks, each successful attack would increase the size of their army. But knowing that the undead likely plan to return to Firewatch Island to destroy its last survivors gives the characters a single chance for a controlled fight. Destroying the drowned ones before they capture the hermitage might be the only way to end their threat.

If the characters decide to stay and await the fall of night, Janore and the others insist on remaining in the bolt-hole—it's been safe so far and they're not eager to risk compromising their sanctuary. None of the survivors know exactly how many drowned ones there are, but they believe that securing all the entrances to the hermitage would be beneficial. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check calms the survivors enough that they agree to leave the bolt-hole, and they can help the characters barricade the hermitage, set up traps, and otherwise prepare to face the undead.

PREPARING FOR THE DROWNED ONES

The hermitage offers an abundance of tactical opportunities to defend against the coming attack. Invite the players to concoct a plan to reinforce the old fortress, and to decide on a course of action for when the drowned ones breach the defenses.

The survivors do not participate in combat against the drowned ones. Even if they aid in the defensive preparations, come nightfall they retreat to area 25.

DEFENDING THE FORTRESS

Among the tactics the players might come up with, you can help steer them toward the following options.

ARROW SLITS

The second level of the hermitage features numerous arrow slits looking onto the exterior of the building. Characters who specialize in ranged attacks and magic can use the arrow slits to launch arrows, bolts, and spells at the drowned ones as they approach.

FLORAL ASSAULT

The assassin vines growing near area 15 can be moved elsewhere in their pots, as long as their murderous nature is temporarily quelled. The *charm of plant command* found in area 11 can help in this effort.

RAT PACK

If the characters did not kill all the rats in area 11, they serve as excellent guards and alarms. The rats attack any drowned ones that enter through that area.

REINFORCING THE DOORS

There are five entrances into the hermitage—the double doors at the front (area 4), two doors at the back of the fortress (areas 11 and 12), the door leading in from the rampart (area 17), and the watchtower door (area 21).

Enough wood and nails can be found inside the hermitage to reinforce all the doors. The main obstacle is time. It takes a character 1 hour to gather the required materials and reinforce one door. The time is cut in half if another character (including one of the survivors) helps.

A reinforced door cannot be broken through with a Strength check, but must be battered down (AC 15, 30 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage). This fact helps slow the undead, since they are forced to fight their way through doors.

RIGGING THE ROOF

The aging slate tiles on the roof can be easily rigged to collapse. This tactic is especially useful if the victim falls some distance into an area where the characters have open space to make attacks (area 7, for example).

OIL OF SLIPPERINESS

If the characters have discovered this magic oil in area 12 or area 22, it can be applied in front of entry points, on stairs, or anywhere they want to slow the undead down.

DEATH FROM THE DEEP

As soon as the sun sets, the drowned ones begin their underwater trek from the Pit of Hatred to the shores of Firewatch Island. They arrive at the island about an hour after sundown. If the characters are still on the island at sundown and are observing the shoreline, you can foreshadow the undead assault:

As the last rays of the evening sun slant across the dark waters of the bay, you catch movement from the corner of your eye along the beach—a dark humanoid form standing silently in the surf. You are positive it wasn't there a moment ago. With the next crashing breaker, you lose sight of the intruder in the deepening darkness. When the spray clears, the figure is gone. Night has fallen.

The undead assault against the hermitage can be played out in two broad scenarios. Both offer roughly the same challenge but provide different experiences for the players and characters. Choose the experience you think your players will enjoy the most, or create your own, incorporating any of the following elements and information you desire.

The **drowned ascetics**, **drowned assassins**, and **drowned blades** that make up the ranks of the undead are all described in appendix C.

SCENARIO 1: UNDEAD HORDE

Use this scenario if the characters have prepared well for the onslaught. If the undead arrive and are not slowed by reinforced doors, traps, and attacks made against them through arrow slits, the characters have little chance of survival.

The drowned ones arrive as a single mass, trying to overwhelm the defenders with sheer numbers. The intention with this scenario is to make the players and the characters feel as though the island teems with undead. An epic battle ensues, and if that battle is won, no further attacks come.

When the undead arrive, they attempt to batter down the doors of the hermitage, intent on entering and slaying any mortal defenders. Have the drowned ones assault the doors leading into the different areas of the fortress using the following guidelines.

Area	Creatures
4	5 zombies, 3 drowned blades, 1 drowned ascetic
11	5 zombies, 2 drowned blades, 1 drowned ascetic
12	1 drowned ascetic
17	1 drowned assassin
21	1 drowned blade

The zombies amble near the indicated doors but do not attack them. They enter the hermitage only after the doors are breached by the drowned ones.

The drowned assassin that tries to enter through area 17 climbs onto the battlements from area 14 first.

REST AND RESOURCES

Having explored the hermitage and taken on its varied threats, the characters have had a busy day. Thanks to the hags, rats, giant snakes, and the monstrous peryton, their resources might be depleted. The challenge of the drowned ones' attack is thus amplified by the fact that the characters can take only a short rest before the assault begins. Adjust the difficulty of the attack as you see fit, depending on the party's available resources and the measure of your mercy.

SCENARIO 2: WAVES OF UNDEAD

Use this scenario if the characters' preparations for the attack are only minimal, or to create a tense and wearying night of encounters.

The drowned ones arrive in three waves, each increasing in difficulty. If the characters aren't sufficiently challenged by a particular wave, add more monsters to that part of the fight in the form of late reinforcements to help make a wave into a greater threat.

Each new wave arrives approximately 30 minutes after the previous wave. In any area where the undead break through a door, the characters must reinforce that door again when the current fight is over, or subsequent waves will move through it freely. Alternatively, you might decide that a door is too damaged to be repaired.

WAVE 1

Six **drowned blades** rush to assault the door into area 4. If they cannot break down the door within 3 rounds, any survivors of the characters' defensive efforts switch their attention to the door that leads into area 21.

WAVE 2

Five **drowned blades** and two **drowned ascetics** assault the hermitage. The drowned blades arrive at the door that leads into area 11 and attempt to enter. The drowned ascetics enter through any previously opened door that hasn't been reinforced again. If no doors are open, they try to batter down the door into area 12.

WAVE 3

Three **drowned blades**, two **drowned ascetics**, and one **drowned assassin** attack the fortress. The drowned blades and ascetics enter through any previously open door, or if none are open, they attack the doors that lead into areas 4 and 21. The drowned assassin arrives from area 14 and climbs onto area 17, trying to enter the fortress through the door in that area.

SAFE BY DAY

Once the undead are dealt with, the coming of the dawn's first light means that the characters can finally rest with no fear of another assault. Raserhill's ferry returns about an hour after sunrise, on its normal schedule, but the craft carries no new passengers and departs again quickly unless the characters hail it. (If Raserhill stuck around the island and was driven off or killed by the monstrous peryton, another boat from Uskarn will set out eventually to investigate the characters' fate.)

At some time during the day, when a character is awake and outside or near a window, read:

The sultry day is silent except for the sounds of the sea. A lone bird circles in lazy loops in the sky overhead. Eventually it descends and alights on a nearby rock. It's a gull, and an old one at that, with a chipped beak and patches missing from its thinning feathers. It waddles closer, gazing intelligently at you with weak, rheumy eyes.

This ancient gull is Virgil, formerly the familiar of Archais, Firewatch Island's wizard. Virgil survived the slaughter of the garrison ten years before and has lived on the island ever since, nesting in the wizard's tower room. It has avoided the hermitage residents and was largely ignored by them.

Virgil fled the island the previous night when the drowned ones attacked, but now that the characters have seemingly defeated them, the gull has returned to its home. It continues to watch the party despite any attempts to shoo it away. Having observed the characters' actions against the drowned ones, the ex-familiar believes that they might be the sort of heroes who could finish Archais's work and end the undead menace.

VIRGIL'S MISSION

If a character is able to speak with animals, Virgil is friendly. (The scroll found in area 9 will be useful in that regard if none of the characters have this ability.) The gull relates the events of the "Background" section to the best of its knowledge. It does not know the specifics about *Tammeraut's* crew, but it does know that the drowned ones are victims of that fateful sinking.

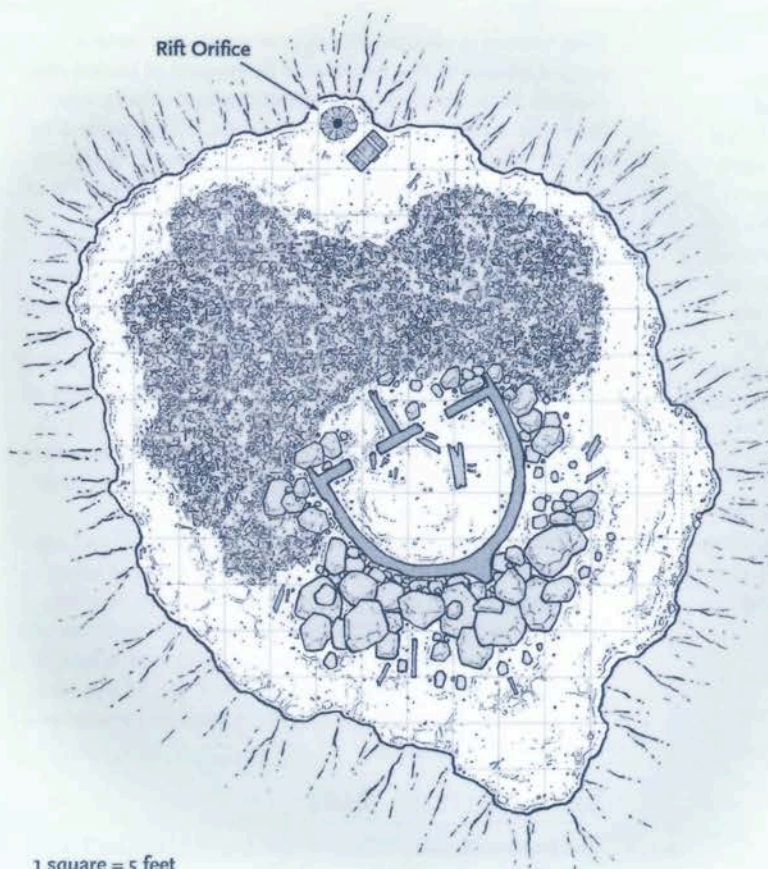
Virgil knows the location of the *Tammeraut* and can guide the characters there. Based on the attack tonight, the gull correctly deduces that *Tammeraut's* crew is active once more and must be stopped.

THE WRECK

If the characters decide to seek out the sunken *Tammeraut*, they must first find out where the rift is located. The charts in Archais's journal give the exact location in nautical coordinates. Alternatively, a character who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (History) check discerns the likely spot where the ship sunk.

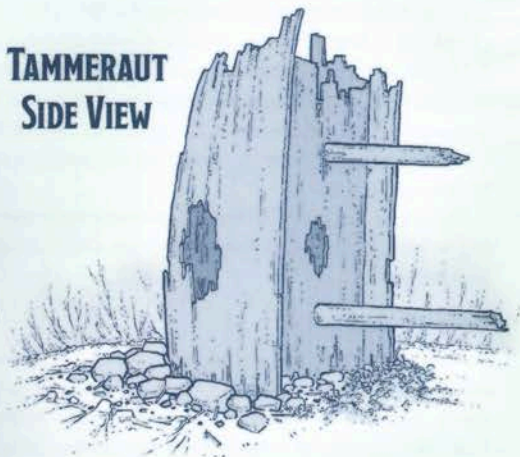
Virgil also knows the location of the Pit of Hatred, having accompanied Archais there several times while the wizard was alive. If all else fails, he can guide the characters to the proper location—flying ahead and circling the site. The Pit of Hatred is two miles south of Firewatch Island and can be rowed or sailed to in about half an hour.

The bay is 300 feet deep above the Pit of Hatred, and characters won't be able to anchor a boat there unless they brought along quite a lot of rope. Certain items in that treasure are invaluable to a party that plans to investigate the wreck, but the characters might also require and seek out additional resources before they do so. See "Unusual Environments" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for information on underwater environments, and see "Underwater Combat" in chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*.



MAP 7.5: THE PIT OF HATRED

TAMMERAUT SIDE VIEW



THE REMAINS OF TAMMERAUT

Map 7.5 shows the seafloor in the vicinity of the sunken hull, including the spot where the rift that seals the Pit of Hatred has been disturbed. When the characters descend to the wreck and approach the Pit of Hatred, read:

The rotting skeleton of a war galley's stern looms up from the ocean bottom ahead. The sinking ship broke in half during its descent, its bow section gone missing but its stern plunged backward into the seafloor like a spike.

The sandy bed around the wreckage is scattered with partially buried bones and debris. As you approach the wreck, the water becomes unnaturally cold, and the schools of fish that swarmed in the waters above are conspicuously absent.

UNHALLOWED GROUND

The evil energy seeping from the rift has suffused a 300-foot-radius hemisphere with magic similar to that of a *hallow* spell. The effect acts as a spell cast at 9th level, and it requires a successful DC 19 check to be neutralized using *dispel magic*. If the effect is dispelled, it returns in 24 hours.

While the effect is active, celestials cannot enter the area. Each time another sort of non-undead creature enters the area, it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving

throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The creature must also make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw when it enters the area, gaining vulnerability to necrotic damage on a failed save. This vulnerability ends when the creature leaves the area.

RESTORING VIRGIL

Any character who can cast *find familiar* can attempt to restore Virgil to its former role, taking the gull as their own familiar. To accomplish this, the character must earn Virgil's trust, contemplate the nature of conjuration magic, and finally cast *find familiar*.

Virgil's Trust. For Virgil to consider becoming a character's familiar, that character must reseal the Pit of Hatred.

Research. The character must spend time researching the nature of familiars that have bonded with new masters. When the character feels ready, they must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. The DC for this check is reduced by 1 (to a minimum DC of 10) for each day the character spent in research beforehand.

Casting the Spell. The character must have Virgil present for the casting of *find familiar*. They must burn twice the normal amount of material components to complete the restoration of the gull.

Success. If the characters end the threat posed by the drowned ones, Virgil is indebted to them for avenging his former master. The bird follows the group and does what it can to help. It can warn of danger, carry notes or messages, and so forth. Use the stat block for a **hawk**, but increase its Intelligence to 9.

ANCIENT WARNING

If the characters search the sand around the ship, they discover the tip of a stone slab sticking up above the muck and ooze. The rest of the slab is buried. If it is pulled out (requiring a successful DC 15 Strength check), it is found to be inscribed with ancient runes. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduces that the slab is the product of magic. A subsequent successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check confirms it was made using a *stone shape* spell.

The runes are in Elvish. They communicate a warning to stay away from the sealed rift and the horror that lies below.

INSIDE THE SHIP

Numerous breaches in the hull and openings on the rowing decks allow entry into the ruined ship. Alternatively, characters can swim down into the stern's interior from the top of the ship, where the bow is missing.

The interior of the sunken ship is a ruin. The decks have all but collapsed, creating a tangled maze where ooze and muck cling to sundered timbers and beams. An eerie, many-colored light pulses from the depths of the hull.

The rotten tangles of timbers and bulkheads are weak after ten years underwater and can be pushed through with relative ease.

A large hole in the buried stern of the wreck allows easy access to a darkened cavern that opens up beneath broken slabs of stone—the remains of the seals that once blocked the opening of the pit.

As the characters enter the wreck, a number of drowned ones that stayed behind from the most recent assault on Firewatch Island take notice. Three **drowned blades**, one **drowned ascetic**, and one **drowned assassin** lurk inside the ruined *Tammeraut* and attack as soon as the characters enter. The undead do not pursue fleeing characters beyond the 300-foot hemisphere of dark energy that surrounds the rift.

THE RIFT

A pulsating light composed of unnatural colors permeates this underwater cavern. The stern of the ship has broken through the cavern's fifteen-foot-high ceiling near the center of the area. The nauseating light reveals a hideous array of piled bones, many of which clearly once belonged to humanoid—far more bones than could be accounted for by the crew of a single sunken ship.

A shallow alcove opens up to the north, with a rotting sea chest set before it, leaning against the rough stone wall. Within the alcove, a funnel-shaped hollow in the cavern floor terminates at a narrow hole in the bedrock below. The pulsing light emanates from this hole.

This cavern is all that remains of what was once a jagged chasm in the seafloor. The mound of bones represents both the crew of *Tammeraut* and others who have succumbed to the ocean's perils, all preserved by the rift's dark magic. The hollow to the north is the access point to the ancient evil that has imbued the Pit of Hatred with its sinister aura.

Tammeraut's captain, Syrgaul Tammeraut, resides in this chamber—transformed into a twisted monster known as a **drowned master** (see appendix C). Syrgaul is the conduit through which the pit's evil essence once again spreads its dark influence into the world. Feeding off the captain's rage and hate as he died, the energy of the rift animated *Tammeraut*'s crew and turned them into drowned ones. Though the drowned ones can range abroad, Syrgaul is forever trapped within the rift near the source of his dark unlife.

As the characters explore this area, Syrgaul and one **drowned blade** rise from the pile of bones and attack.

Treasure. The treasure carried on *Tammeraut* has been placed in front of the north alcove by the drowned ones, as an offering to the great sleeping evil below. A rotting sea chest holds 5,000 sp, 1,850 gp, 75 pp, and ten masterfully cut pieces of jade depicting various sea animals (100 gp each).

SEALING THE RIFT

The funnel-shaped hollow to the north of the hull is 3 feet in diameter and descends 2 feet to a 1-inch-wide vent at the bottom. In addition to being the source of the pulsating light, the vent is the center and source of the area's dark *hallow* effect. This narrow opening continues down for hundreds of feet beneath the ocean bottom, never widening.

Sealing this vent is the only way to lay Syrgaul's spirit to rest. Doing so also prevents the evil from further corrupting those who drown in the area. One easy method of sealing it is to use the flask of *sovereign glue* from the hermitage to affix a plug over the opening (the substance hardens even underwater). Spells such as *stone shape* can also seal off the vent. When the vent is sealed, the *hallow* effect surrounding the rift immediately ends.

CONCLUSION

If the characters accomplish all their objectives—rescuing the surviving hermits, destroying the drowned ones and their leader, and sealing the opening in the Pit of Hatred—things soon return to normal on Firewatch Island and the communities of the nearby coast. The surviving hermits abandon the island, but a new group settles there before long. Or, Feldrin Kane, the Uskarn bailiff, might deed the island and fortress to the characters as a reward for ending the threat of the drowned ones. Of course, such a reward comes with the expectation that the characters would use the place to protect and defend the settlements of the nearby coast.

If the characters depart Firewatch Island before nightfall and the drowned ones' second attack, the undead become a greater threat. Now that they've exhausted the nearby prey, the undead make it to the mainland in their nightly wanderings. Attacks on coastal roads and

villages become more common—with the drowned ones adding all their victims to their growing horde—and unless they are somehow checked, Syrgaul's forces become the scourge of both land and sea in the entire region.

Even if the characters turn back the drowned ones' assault but fail to close the rift, the evil influence of the pit strengthens and begins to extend outward. All those who have drowned in the bay are gradually harvested by the remaining drowned ones and transformed into undead, until Syrgaul has an army of drowned corpses at his command. What terrible atrocities the undead captain might visit upon the nearby settlements are up to you.

Even with the rift closed off, the Pit of Hatred might continue to be a lurking threat. With the seal restored, the evil beyond is left to fester—frustrated and perhaps seeking ways to break free, stronger and more deliberate than before.

Above all, the question remains: what is the source of the rift's evil? Perhaps the characters will return to the pit as more accomplished adventurers, seeking some way to descend the vent, find out what presence is down there, and destroy it once and for all.

EXTENDING THE ADVENTURE

Tammeraut's Fate gives the characters a chance to foil an incursion by Orcus and his minions before it can take root. The deep regions of the sea are fertile ground for those demons and cultists who can take advantage of it. Far from the blinding light of the sun and overlooked by many of the demons' traditional foes, a deep-sea portal to the Abyss can spawn many demons and warp the world around it to an irreparable degree before it is discovered.

Pirates and similar outlaws are fertile ground for worshipers, and those captains who achieve success and infamy might draw the eye of any number of Abyssal patrons. As befits their chaotic nature, demon lords tend to offer power and impart blessings as the opportunity presents itself rather than create a comprehensive, long-term plan.

If you want to extend the concept presented in this adventure to cast a longer shadow over your campaign, the following notes provide some guidance and ideas for what might come next.

ORCUS AND THE SEA

The capacity for undead creatures to survive deep underwater makes Orcus and his cult well suited for plaguing the seas. Orcus offers undeath to his mortal followers as a lure to bring them deeper into his power while unleashing them as a terror of the waves.

The scheme showcased in *Tammeraut's Fate* is a good example of how Orcus and his minions take advantage of the sea. They march along the seabed to strike at coastal villages and recruit more living dead to their legions. Although the characters might have slain Syrgaul and destroyed the Pit of Hatred, Orcus and his followers continue to plot and plan.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

The events of *Tammeraut's Fate* can serve as the flash point for a major event in your campaign. In the years that Syrgaul's crew spent toiling at the ocean's floor, they might have been directed by Orcus or Syrgaul to launch other sinister plans. A search of the location of the wrecked ship can turn up clues to further plots.

The following adventures seeds form a story arc that you might use as individual episodes or as the outline of a grand plot to overwhelm the region with undead and call Orcus into the world.

DEATH FLEET

All pirate captains know that greed and ambition among their crews pose a constant threat. Cultists of Orcus can offer the unswerving loyalty of undead crews in return for allegiance to their foul lord.

In this continuation of the story, a powerful priest of Orcus forms a network of allied pirate captains. The ship crews are augmented by zombies and skeletons, and, unknown to the pirates, the priest can spy through the undead. Captains who prove treacherous are quickly slain and replaced with more amenable allies.

As the pirates gain control of the seas, the priest is free to establish a domain of Orcus with a great portal to the Abyss at its center. It's up to the characters to track down and defeat the pirate fleet.

THE DEVOURING GYRE

The Pit of Hatred is but one example of the planar sigils that followers of Orcus can use to bolster their power. Off the coast, near heavily trafficked sea lanes, cultists of Orcus create a gateway on the seabed that links to the Abyss. The water above swirls and plunges downward, creating a whirlpool that devours ships and sea life.

Living creatures pulled to the bottom of the whirlpool are slain, warped with Abyssal energy, and unleashed into the sea as undead creatures. Unless someone finds the gate, slips through it into the Abyss, and destroys the unhallowed site found on the other side, the whirlpool will unleash a horde of undead sailors and sea creatures that can transform the region around it into a dead zone.

ISLAND OF BONES

Far out to sea, a mass of bones culled from the seabed rises and coalesces into a new island—a sinister place cloaked in necrotic energy. This place, the Island of Bones, serves as a port of call for pirates serving Orcus.

The island swarms with undead creatures that perform repairs on ships, unload loot, and protect the place from attack. More important, it serves as the center of an unholy theocracy founded by priests of Orcus and dedicated to calling their master to the Material Plane.

As the island grows, a massive palace fit for the Lord of the Undead himself arises from the bones. Within its depths, a portal to the Abyss slowly forms as more and more mortal sacrifices are made to Orcus.

With a fleet of pirate captains at their call and the devouring gyre cutting off sea travel, the priests of Orcus threaten to overwhelm the region with their undead hordes. Their efforts, of course, are resisted by the characters and whatever forces the locales can muster.



CHAPTER 8: THE STYES

A SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS MURDERS SHAKES THE downtrodden folk of the Styes—a decaying port fallen on hard times and slowly being reclaimed by the sea. Even after the so-called Lantern Ghost killer is caught and executed, some in the district believe that the true killer is still out there. It's left to the adventurers to follow the clues that the local militia ignores, exposing corruption, the clandestine activities of a dark cult—and the alien presence whose evil lurks beneath it all.

The Styes is an adventure designed for four to six 11th-level characters.

BACKGROUND

There exists an underwater abyss known as the Endless Nadir—a haunted place shunned by the aquatic races of the region, for this realm is the site of a submerged city of aboleths. For the most part, the alien denizens of this city are content to plot and lurk in the depths of the ocean trench. But a few of them are cursed with curiosity. One such creature is Sgothgah, a scholar, crafter, and explorer—and an outcast among its kind.

Sgothgah's life changed forever when it encountered and consumed a cult of lunatics who worshiped Tharizdun, an ancient deity of darkness. As it read the minds of its victims as it devoured them, some of what it gleaned of Tharizdun—between their screams and their unheeded pleas for mercy—found purchase in Sgothgah's mind. For centuries, the aboleth mulled over the concept of Tharizdun in idle moments, and eventually those thoughts flowered into something alien and repulsive to most aboleths: religious faith.

THE MARK OF THARIZDUN

To hide its burgeoning devotion to a non-abolethic entity from the prying telepathic abilities of its kind, Sgothgah relocated its lair to the edge of the Endless Nadir. There, in the solitude of the inky deep, the aboleth made a second astounding discovery: a juvenile kraken with an unlikely, circular scar on its head, a wound earned in battle against a giant shark years ago. Even such a strange scar would normally be little more than a curiosity, but Sgothgah saw a pattern in this one that evoked thoughts of Tharizdun's dark madness. The aboleth took this event as a sign that Tharizdun had gifted it with the task of nurturing the kraken until it was fully grown.

Sgothgah knew the kraken could never be raised to maturity in the Endless Nadir—even in Sgothgah's remote corner of it—without risking discovery by the other aboleths. So Sgothgah fled the abyss, taking with it the juvenile kraken and a number of loyal aquatic minions. It headed for coastal waters that the aboleths avoided because of the humanoids that dwelled there, trusting that other aboleths wouldn't follow it or even care that it had left.

Purely by chance, the oceanic immigrants came to a stretch of water where the once-notable port district of a minor city had fallen into decay and corruption. Known as the Styes, the district was only a wretched shadow of what it had once been. But the aboleth found a perfect location to hide the kraken—a sunken temple to the west of the district, known to the locals as Landgrave's Folly. Sgothgah quickly established mind control over a local cadre of fishers and sailors, sending them to infiltrate every corner of the ruined district. And to the aboleth's surprise and unnatural delight, it discovered an active cult of Tharizdun in the Styes.

Led secretly by one of the Styes' own ruling councillors—an inhuman creature that calls itself "Mr. Dory"—this cult of Tharizdun has thrived in the decay of the Styes for decades. Through enslavement and telepathy, Sgothgah forged an alliance with the cultists, always taking care to conceal its true identity. The cultists knew Sgothgah only as "the Whisperer," and they quickly came to regard their hidden ally as a powerful messenger of Tharizdun. To this day, only Mr. Dory suspects the truth.

THE LANTERN GHOST MURDERS

To feed the growing kraken's ravenous hunger, Sgothgah has coerced its cultist allies into supplying the beast with beggars, drunks, urchins, and other sweepings from the alleys of the Styes that no one will miss. At the same time, the aboleth transformed the underwater pit where the kraken rests into a conduit for dark magic, fashioned to capture the plentiful negative emotions of the residents of the Styes. For months now, all their fear, sadness, despair, hatred, and anger has been focused into the pit to enhance and accelerate the kraken's growth.

To maximize the effect of that emotional darkness, the aboleth chose a local human fisher named Jarne Loveage to be an instrument of murder and fear. Sgothgah enslaved the young man and has compelled him to commit brutal murders, fueling dread in the district. Jarne carries a lantern on all his grisly nocturnal harvests, and his horrible work has long been attributed to a faceless terror called "the Lantern Ghost."

As the killings mounted, residents of the Styes grew increasingly frightened. Jarne retained little knowledge of his foul work. He awoke exhausted, haunted by vague memories of horrible nightmares, but hasn't connected the vague horrors of his sleep with the very real horror occurring in the shadowy, mist-drenched alleys of his home.

Seven days ago, Jarne was captured by a nighttime patrol with a bloody knife in his hands. The confused fisher professed his innocence, but his dreams became suddenly clear. In his mind, he saw ravenous, tentacled creatures devouring the Styes and the city beyond, and he scrawled these images onto the walls of his cell in

With Jarne's death, the Styes breathed a collective sigh of relief—but that relief is destined to be short-lived. The kraken is nearing maturity, and the Whisperer is preparing the final stage of its dreadful plan.

The adventure text consists of five parts. In part 1, “A Dying District,” basic information is provided about the geography, atmosphere, and major personages in the Styes, as a backdrop for use when characters move around town.

During their investigation, the characters visit Hopene'er, the asylum where Jarne was held. They learn that Mr. Dory, a prominent member of the community, has some odd connections to Jarne's case, and might find clues hinting to broader connections to the recent murders. In part 3, "Hemlock Pit," the characters seek the councillor out at his warehouse and the home he keeps behind it—a ship held aloft by a crane over a muddy flat. A confrontation takes place, and it's discovered that Mr. Dory is a devotee of Tharizdun blessed with power granted by Sgothgah. After defeating the aberration, the characters discover manic drawings of a gargantuan squid-like demon of the deep, just like those seen in Jarne's cell.

In part 4, "The Lamp's Shadow," these clues lead the characters to a hidden temple to Tharizdun, where they are attacked by chuuls that dwell there. At the climax of this battle, the Whisperer appears from the polluted sea

In the aftermath of that battle, the characters learn of how the Whisperer has used the gloom and despair of the Styes as an incubator for the juvenile kraken it keeps to the west of the district. Part 5, “Tharizdun’s Progeny,” takes place in the partially collapsed husk of the temple housing the kraken, where the heroes face a pair of aboleths that were sent to kill Sgothgah—and then must destroy the kraken before it can escape into the world.

This adventure assumes that the characters have recently arrived in the Styes or the city it's a part of. If the characters aren't based locally, they might be traveling to the city to obtain a rare ingredient from the Alchemists' Quarter, or to speak to someone who retired or fled to the Styes to hide from their enemies. Alternatively, the characters might simply be passing through the Styes when one of the following occurrences attracts their attention.

The characters' arrival in the environs does not go unnoticed—far from it. Any adult townsfolk recognize the party as a group of seasoned adventurers. By engaging the residents in conversation, the characters can quickly find out that the Styes is a place in turmoil—a murderer was caught and executed just the previous day, yet another citizen was found dead from foul play when the sun rose today.

The adventure hooks described below represent three different ways of getting the characters involved in the story. All hooks lead to a session with Master Refrum at his workshop in part 2, "Murder Mystery," which kicks off the action.

Shortly after their arrival in town, the characters come upon a dozen children chasing and tormenting an elderly male human—Master Refrum. The victim feebly brandishes a holy symbol of good at them, but the children and onlookers alike simply taunt him. They then turn to pelting Refrum with stones as they accuse him of being a friend to murderers.

Richard Pett conjured this ghastly sea port for *Dungeon* 121 in 2005. "The Styes" feels like it was pulled straight from the mind of H. P. Lovecraft, but in Richard Pett's capable hand we're treated to perhaps the most memorable depiction of both a cunning aboleth plot and

a sinister cult of Tharizdun. Many adventures are set aboard a ship at sea. Can you name another that challenges you to infiltrate a moldering ship held aloft by a crane, above the streets of a slowly dying city?



PLACING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure presents the Styes as an old district in a port city or large port town. Making the Styes part of a larger, thriving settlement gives the characters plenty of potential reasons to visit the area, with the overall settlement ideally located in a nation that's fallen on hard times. Alternatively, the district could be part of a free city that has fallen into despair and decay. In the world of Greyhawk, the city of Prymp in Ahlissa is an excellent choice. In the Forgotten Realms, the Styes fits nicely into the city of Marsember. In Eberron, the Styes could be a district in Rekkenmark or any of the other coastal settlements that haven't fully recovered from the ravages of the Last War.

Alternatively, you could set the Styes up as a small, stand-alone port town. This approach has the advantage of limiting characters to the Styes' squalid confines. They can't retreat to a nicer part of the city when they want a clean inn, a healthy place to eat, or a wholesome temple for healing or other aid. As a stand-alone town, the Styes can be added to your campaign world at the mouth of any river. You might have a hard time attracting the characters to such a dismal location, however, without drawing on the Styes' reputation for its alchemists and potion factories.

If the characters step in, the children run away and the onlookers rapidly lose interest. Master Refrum (LG male human **priest**) introduces himself, thanks the characters for saving him from a humiliating fate, and asks them to escort him back to his home. He provides the basic facts about the recent murders if the characters haven't learned them from a passerby before now.

If the characters don't intervene, Master Refrum protects himself by casting *sanctuary*, then using *thaumaturgy* to frighten away the children and any onlookers with terrifying roars and ground tremors. He still speaks to the characters afterward, recognizing them as adventurers as he asks for help clearing Jarne's name. He pleads for the characters to accompany him to his workshop to get the details of the situation.

ELEANOR'S LOSS

It might be that something one of the characters did in the past impressed a local female human by the name of Eleanor Loveage (N female human **commoner**). She could be the relative of someone a party member saved in a previous adventure, or she might have heard of the characters' prior good deeds. She is also Jarne's sister, and she can't believe that her brother could have done the terrible deeds for which he was executed.

In her desperation, she approaches the characters for help (explaining the situation if need be) and asks them to meet her at Master Refrum's workshop in the Alchemists' Quarter of the Styes, where she promises they will learn more.

THORNWELL'S OFFER

If the characters are less likely to get involved in the adventure out of altruism, they can be approached by a mysterious, handsome, well-groomed human female dressed in black-and-red leather armor. She declines to give the characters her name, but asks whether they're interested in a well-paying job. If the characters haven't learned about the murders yet, she provides them a

summary of those events. She then goes on to say that she believes Jarne Loveage was innocent, and that the real killer is still out there. She recommends that they meet with Master Refrum, who has much more information about Loveage and the murders, and offers the characters a reward of 500 pp if they can find the real murderer and bring the culprit to justice.

The mysterious contact is one of the councillors of the Styes, named Thornwell (LE female human **mage**). She has discovered hints of Mr. Dory's association with the cult of Tharizdun, which she suspects is also involved in the murders. Thornwell has wanted to be rid of Dory ever since she came to believe that her fellow councillor was responsible for the death of one of her allies. But she doesn't want to jeopardize her standing on the council by taking direct action against Dory, so she has decided to try using the characters as her tool.

Thornwell suspects that Dory is the actual murderer (though she hasn't an inkling of Mr. Dory's true nature), and she secretly hopes the characters end up killing him. She never mentions her fellow councillor by name, though, instead making cryptic statements such as: "You must follow the facts wherever they lead, even if that includes the halls of power."

PART 1: A DYING DISTRICT

Even before they spend a lot of time in the Styes, the characters are quick to note its visible squalor. The haze of smoke hanging over the district is visible for miles, and its stench travels far downwind. Water flowing out the river mouth carries reeking sewage, streaks of dye, and islands of floating garbage far out to sea.

As the characters enter the district, the view only gets worse. All of the Styes appears to have one foot in the grave.

This is the Styes, the decaying remains of a once-notable port district. Under bent gables, the carcasses of its houses lean against each other—languid, broken, and awaiting the peace of collapse. Door frames sag, dislocated from sod walls heavy with mildew, while splintering timbers support rotting boardwalks like broken limbs, disappearing into the thick, rancid water of the harbor below. In numerous places, sections of the boardwalks have fallen away completely, leaving broad holes that expose polluted water.

HISTORY AND DECAY

Once, the Styes was a marvelous port district. Its magnificent buildings crowned an artificial island that was the centerpiece of a broad bay, held aloft on great oak pilings. Those huge beams supported great facades of marble grandeur, connected by boardwalks that thronged with richly clothed merchants, exotic travelers, and the passing palanquins of nobility. Known as the Island of Pleasures, the site was a destination for rich and decadent folk up and down the coast.

Time can be cruel, however. Warfare, corruption, famine, and natural disaster ruined many who loved the Island of Pleasures, and as their resources dwindled, so did this once-magnificent district. But even as fortune turned and the region rebuilt from devastation, the Island of Pleasures became an unneeded luxury. New people called the district home: poor, desperate folk crowded beneath fallen gables in hovels tattooed by mildew and damp rot. On their heels came folk whose trade was scorned elsewhere. Alchemists fouled the air and water with poisonous concoctions from failed experiments. Sweat-shop manufactories set up in the Styes and all but enslaved their desperate workers. Tanners and millers and dyers and butchers invaded the district, scraping every penny out of their businesses with no concern over the impact their toxic operations had on their neighbors or the environment. The district bears little evidence of its former glory as it daily sinks deeper into the muck.

RESIDENTS AND POLITICS

The current population of the Styes is a little under twelve thousand residents, but they're packed into an area that might house half that number in a more prosperous settlement. Four-fifths of the district's residents are human, with the remainder split between gnomes, dwarves, halflings, half-orcs, half-elves, and a smattering of other humanoids.

The Styes is ruled by a group of four corrupt officials called "the council." The four councillors are **Mr. Dory** (see appendix C), Rashlen (NE male elf **assassin**), Sliris (NE female **wererat**), and Thornwell (LE female human **mage**; also see "Thornwell's Offer," above). The district is policed by a poorly trained militia consisting of some two hundred **guards** (LE humans) led by ten officers (LE human **bandit captains**) and one commander (LE human **veteran**). The militia patrols in groups of at least ten, for their own protection more than anything. Larger groups of twenty or more usually include an officer.

Unless you used Thornwell as a hook, the only councillor who takes an active role in this adventure is Mr. Dory. Anyone who talks of Dory describes him as a longtime resident of the Styes and a wealthy warehouse owner, and mentions the tragic skin condition that requires the councillor to take regular immersion in water for relief.

The rest of the councillors are occupied with other concerns. If one of their fellow councillors is slain, however, or the balance of power in the Styes is seriously upset, the surviving councillors will almost certainly make sure that the characters responsible don't get to walk away from the district. The timing and details of their revenge are left up to you.

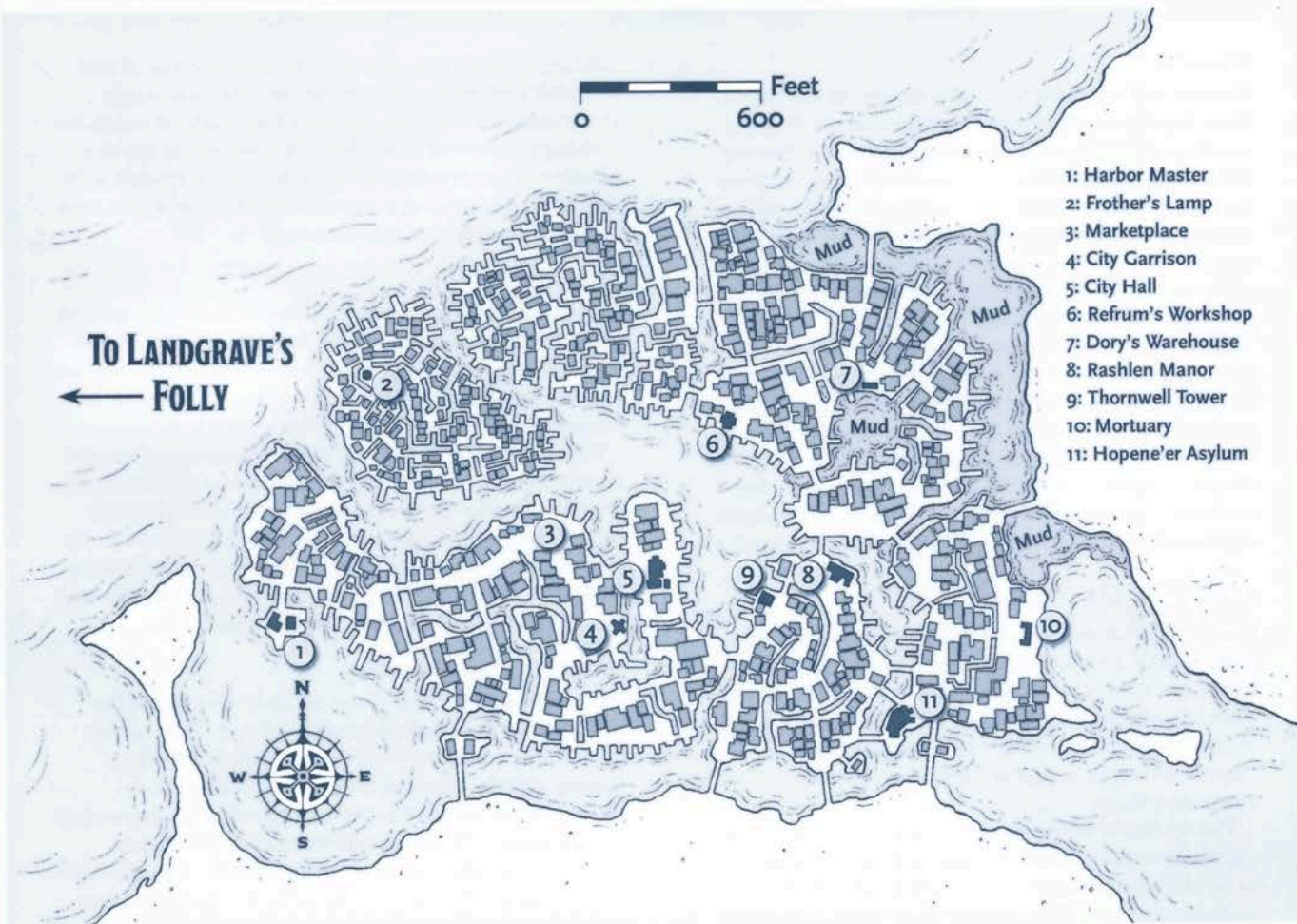
STYES ENCOUNTERS

The adventure presents only those encounters and events that drive the plot, but any character who spends time in the Styes is bound to have additional unpleasant interactions. As the characters are exploring and following up leads, feel free to spice up their time in the district with one of the following encounters.

STYES ENCOUNTERS

d6 Encounter

- 1 The characters are swarmed by 3d6 urchins (**commoners**), who beg for coins and food, offer their services as guides or baggage porters, or pluck clumsily at the characters' unsecured items. The young urchins can be hired as unreliable guides or for any simple job for 1 cp each, but they run away the moment they're paid.
- 2 A pack of 2d6 beggars (**commoners**) gathers around the characters. Each cries out loudly for alms, food, or spare clothing. Though the beggars aren't thieves, some of them clutch at the characters' sleeves and hands in a way that might be misinterpreted as attempts at picking a pocket or purse. If they're given food or a few coins, any of the beggars can answer basic questions about the Styes and specific locations in the district.
- 3 A group of 2d6 pickpockets (**spies**) gathers around the characters, appearing to be beggars but trying to steal anything they can from pouches and backpacks. Any pickpocket that snatches something flees into the crowd, while the others get in the way to prevent pursuit. Attacking or killing an unarmed pickpocket gets the characters in trouble with the law. It also guarantees that they are bedeviled by vengeful pickpockets everywhere they go in the Styes.
- 4 A pair of skills (**commoners**) in fine clothes approach the characters with guarantees that they know where to find the best deals on food, drink, rooms, potions, merchandise, magic items, or absolutely anything else. The skills lead characters to shops and inns that pay them a kickback, so prices are actually 5 to 10 percent higher than normal—and the quality of goods is typically subpar. If the skills are chased away with threats or violence, they look for opportunities to cause trouble later.
- 5 A militia patrol (seven **guards** and one **bandit captain**) approaches the characters to demand they pay an entrance tax of 10 gp each—a simple shakedown of out-of-towners. The "tax" can be negotiated down to 5 gp per character. If they are paid, the militia members laugh and stroll away. If the characters attack, the militia retreat if any of them are killed or at the end of the second round of combat. If any militia members are killed, the characters are immediately attacked by any other militia patrols they encounter, and they get no cooperation from any member of the militia in their investigation (including Constable Jute).
- 6 A press gang (two **veterans** and eight **thugs**) attempts to kidnap the characters and sell them as deckhands to the captain of an under-crewed ship. This attack might happen openly, or the gang might wait until the characters are separated or sleeping before attacking. They have no qualms about following the party to (or entering) their seedy lodgings.



MAP 8.1: THE STYES

LIFE IN THE STYES

In better days, the fact that the Styes was sheltered from offshore winds was one of its more desirable qualities. Now, the Alchemists' Quarter spews a permanent miasma of acrid, rancid yellow vapor that hangs above the district and coats its walls and roofs with a greasy film. The dense population of the decaying district makes the waters around the port swirl with sewage, blood and offal from butchers, lye and fur from tanners, and indescribable chemical mixtures from alchemists. In the eastern portion of the Styes, the pollution is so bad that the river's flow has been diverted, leaving a large portion of the district's boardwalks suspended over a wallow of rancid mud.

MERCHANDISE

Most items for sale in the Styes can be had for standard prices, but they are of noticeably substandard quality. Anyone who walks around in fancy clothing, brightly colored accessories, flashy jewelry, or with expensive weapons or armor on display is bound to attract unwanted attention from thieves, opportunistic merchants, and any local willing to commit a crime of opportunity (which is to say most of them). Bartering is common in the district, and characters will find it difficult if not impossible to sell anything with a value over 75 gp for cash. Local merchants don't have that much coinage on hand, or won't admit it if they do.

TAVERNS AND INNS

Taverns are everywhere in the Styes, ranging from large public houses to holes-in-the-wall with two tables and nothing but acrid, home-brewed rotgut on tap. The clientele are uniformly glum and morose, and brawls and fights are common. The best taverns in the Styes would be considered dives in most cities—and its inns are no better. Visitors are advised to bring their own bedding to avoid bugs, and to move the bed in front of the door to keep out burglars and unscrupulous innkeepers.

RELIGION

Though religion is important to many of the Styes' citizens, no public temples operate in the district. This is partially because the councillors impose steep taxes on the faithful, to prevent religious leaders from becoming too popular and eroding the council's authority. But beyond this, even the most dedicated members of the clergy are eventually overwhelmed by the region's emotionally fatiguing problems.

Disease, famine, cruelty, and brutality weigh so heavily on the Styes that well-meaning clerics are driven to despair. Small temples dedicated to gods of healing and charity operate quietly in nondescript buildings, and tiny shrines can be found in alleys and cul-de-sacs all over the district. Beyond these, only one organized faith exists in secret in the Styes, and it plays a central role in the adventure—the cult of Tharizdun.

HEALTH

Disease and infection are real concerns in the Styes. Most residents suffer from some form of debilitating condition brought on by the poisonous waste flowing and billowing out of the Alchemists' Quarter, or from the polluted water of the river and harbor. The adventurers are no exception. Anyone who visits the Styes is exposed to a disease known as redface. This affliction causes itching and painful inflammation all over the face, and especially around the eyes.

The effects of redface are identical to those of sight rot (see "Diseases" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), but it's caused by pollutants in the air rather than contaminated drinking water, making it difficult to avoid. Sewer plague (also described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) is common in the Styes as well, but avoiding contact with the district's ubiquitous rodents and vermin is usually sufficient protection against it.

LAYOUT OF THE DISTRICT

Map 8.1 shows the layout of the district and the locations of important buildings and land features. The islands that support the buildings are almost all artificial. Some were created by ancient spells used to lift the floor of the bay above the water. Others consist entirely of huge boardwalks supported above the brackish water by decaying pilings.

The district is made up of four quarters. Travel from one to the other is either by foot over rickety walkways or by skiff. Local fishers often supplement their income by renting their skiffs as crude water taxis. Most trips cost 1 cp, but a skiff ride to a dangerous section of town usually brings 1 gp or more.

LOW QUARTER

Also known as Flotsam, the northwest section of the Styes consists mainly of slum tenements, dubious taverns, rickety warehouses, hovel-crowded alleys, and decommissioned ships converted into buildings. This entire area is slowly sinking into the sea. As old buildings become unlivable, new ones are built atop them, and the tangle of structures is four or five stories deep in some places. Many of the lower structures are completely walled off from the outside, making them ideal places for hidden temples and black markets. Swaying rope bridges provide the best avenues between the blocks of this quarter, since the old boardwalks are sinking like everything else.

ALCHEMISTS' QUARTER

The Alchemists' Quarter is the northeast section of the Styes. Long ago, it was the seat of the district's scholastic and religious leadership, but its once-fine temples and universities have long been dismantled for construction materials, or converted into dim, smoky factories and noxious laboratories owned by shady alchemists.

With no regulation to speak of in the Styes, alchemists are free to conduct whatever dangerous experiments they like, and to cut corners on safety and quality control. Iron chimneys belch smoke and foul vapors into the air, while liquid and solid waste are dumped into the water around the quarter.

A large part of this area has become so clogged and befouled with refuse that the water now moves only along shallow, sluggish channels that snake through the reeking expanse of mud. Still, it's common to see desperate scavengers wallowing in the filth, scrounging for anything of value that a distracted alchemist might have carelessly tossed out with the trash.

HIGH QUARTER

The seat of local government in better days, this quarter is the southeast section of the Styes. Most of the buildings here were once municipal offices, but only a few are still in operation. All the rest are either deserted or have been rented to strange and furtive eccentrics.

This section of the district is the least populated, and its often-empty streets and boardwalks are in stark contrast to the crowds that frequent the other three quarters. Militia patrols are common here, but guards in the High Quarter are universally corrupt, accepting bribes from nobles, bureaucrats, and powerful merchants, and extorting protection money from everyone else.

MERCHANTS' QUARTER

The southwest section of the Styes hosts most of the district's industry and mercantile efforts. Most of the community's fishers live here, and numerous warehouses line the edges of the quarter. Most of these places are either abandoned and boarded up, or serving as flophouses. Of the four quarters, the Merchants' Quarter is the most welcoming to visitors—though that's not saying much. It's also said to be the healthiest part of the district—but that's not saying much, either.

LOCATIONS IN THE STYES

The most notable buildings in the Styes are described here. A few of these locations are detailed later, but most are left for you to develop as you see fit.

1. HARBOR MASTER

These two stone buildings on a small island in the Merchants' Quarter are the base of operations for Harbor Master Tak Merakin (NE female half-orc **bandit captain**) and her constables (twelve NE human **thugs**). Tak is profoundly lazy, and as long as merchants and fishers pay their dues without complaining, she doesn't interfere with business on the water. She reacts only to obvious threats such as fires, riots, and storms—and even then, she displays an infuriating lethargy.

2. FROTHER'S LAMP

This decommissioned stone lighthouse was once a proud beacon welcoming ships, but it functions now as nothing more than a sad Flotsam landmark. When the last caretaker died in a loud argument at a nearby tavern, no one took up her mantle, and the light has fallen into disrepair. After a few more decades of slowly sinking into the soggy seabed, it might end up consumed by shanties and other buildings built atop its corpse.

3. MARKETPLACE

This large, open space serves as the primary market for the Styes. The area is always crowded, but the goods for sale here are of low quality and dubious origin.

4. DISTRICT GARRISON

This three-story stone building houses the district's militia (some two hundred LE **guards**, ten **bandit captains**, and one **veteran**) in crowded conditions more like a prison than a barracks. A handful of the guards are honest, but they are the exceptions. Most of the militia members are youths who needed a job, and whose ambition was satisfied by becoming paid thugs. The guards' patrol routes are determined entirely by who pays the largest fees for protection. The gallows in front of the garrison seldom lies unused for more than a few days.

5. COUNCIL HALL

This once-elegant structure is the traditional seat of the council in the Styes, which is a part of the larger city government in name only. Today, the four councillors who run the district spend most of their time in their own homes and businesses. A small staff of clerks works here, and the councillors hold town meetings in the hall once or twice a month, but most of this structure's other rooms have sat unused for decades.

6. REFRUM'S WORKSHOP

This modest wood and brick building along the edge of the Alchemists' Quarter is the home of Master Refrum (LG male human **priest**). Refrum has much to say to the characters, as discussed previously in "Adventure Hooks" and below in "Murder Mystery."

7. DORY'S WAREHOUSE

This is the home and business of one of the Styes' councillors, the sinister **Mr. Dory** (see appendix C). This location is detailed fully in part 3, "Hemlock Pit."

8. RASHLEN MANOR

One of many run-down manors in the High Quarter, this building is home to Rashlen (NE male elf **assassin**), one of the Styes' councillors. The manse is said to be guarded by golems and similarly horrible creatures.

9. THORNWELL TOWER

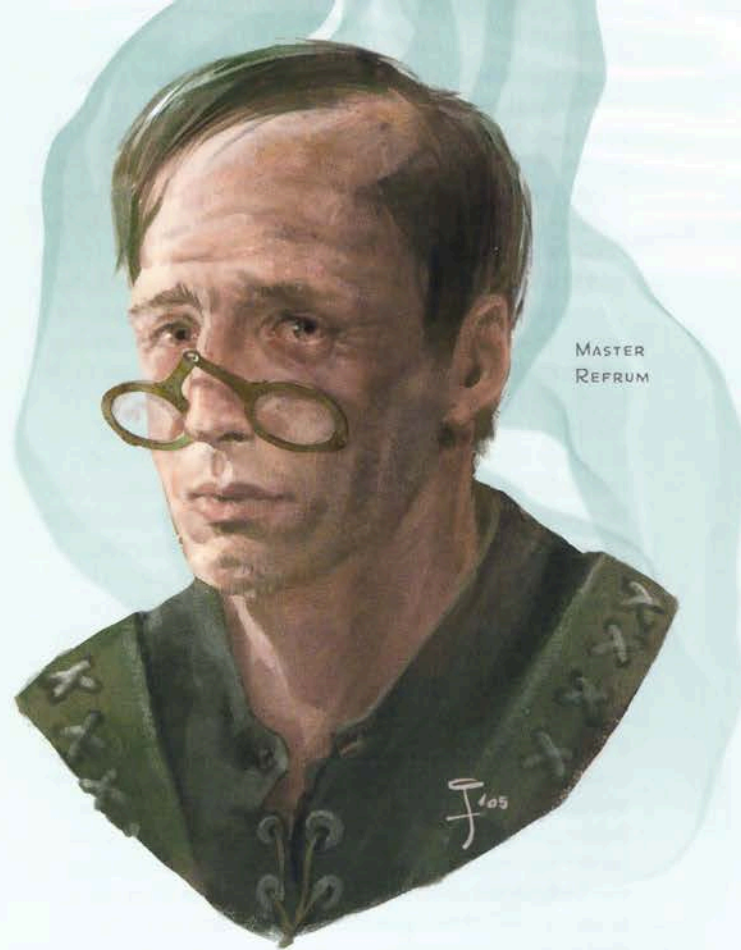
The tallest structure in the Styes, Thornwell Tower is a pinnacle of black and red marble surrounded by a stone wall. Councillor Thornwell (LE female human **mage**) dwells here. Locals whisper that the tower is haunted by devils and contains a portal to the Nine Hells.

10. MORTUARY

The lack of a strong religious presence in the Styes means that the task of dealing with the dead falls to the mortuary. This large building is surrounded by a disused graveyard, but the district's dead have long been universally cremated. Those who operate the mortuary are rumored to be thieves, undead, or wererats. The truth is a combination of all three. The master of this morbid structure is Sliris (NE female **wererat**), a devils and secretive member of the council.

11. HOPENE'ER ASYLUM

This enormous building (detailed in the following section, "Murder Mystery") is the last remnant of a more optimistic time, when the desperate and doomed of the Styes were cared for and watched over.



PART 2: MURDER MYSTERY

Once the characters have been contacted by or referred to Master Refrum, they travel to his abode in the Alchemists' Quarter. Refrum's cluttered home is filled with half-finished clockwork inventions, and the air is thick with the smell of grease. Hundreds of books line every available inch of shelf space, and a tiny bed, likewise covered with books, stands in a corner of the room.

Refrum is a slight, bent figure. He wears simple gray clothing, speaks in short, excited gasps, and waves his arms when carried away with enthusiasm. The inventor is one of the last philanthropists in the Styes, and he strives constantly to focus his research on caring for the local poor. Refrum uses the statistics of a male human **priest**, with these changes:

- Refrum is lawful good.
- His AC is 10, and he is unarmed.
- He has the *speak with dead* spell prepared instead of *spirit guardians*.

DARK JUSTICE

Refrum has few friends in the district, and he is eager to enlist the characters' aid in clearing Jarne Loveage's name. Refrum attended Jarne's execution the previous day, and the memory pains him. Because Jarne spent so much of his time alone, he had no alibi for the murders, but Refrum insists that his friend was a kind and honest man. (If Jarne's sister, Eleanor, is present, she supports Refrum's testimony with tears and pleading.)

Refrum is angry about how Jarne was never properly put on trial. When he tried to meet with Jarne in his cell at Hopene'er Asylum, he was denied access by the militia (secretly paid off by Mr. Dory). Faced with this challenge, Refrum launched his own investigation into the Lantern Ghost killings. He describes how the killer had been on the prowl for half a year, striking intermittently and leaving mutilated victims in public locations to be discovered at dawn. He also describes how singularly inept the militia were in their efforts to track down the killer, and how the slayings had pushed the Styes to the brink of chaos.

Jarne's arrest came after he was found looming over the body of a victim, a dagger clutched in his blood-stained hands. Refrum can't dispute this evidence, but he talks of how Jarne went to the gallows professing to have no memory of any slayings. After the execution, Refrum offered his ability to cast *speak with dead* to learn the truth, but was told by the militia that the case was closed. He was then threatened with incarceration in Hopene'er if he didn't leave the matter alone.

A NEW MURDER

Part of what drives Refrum's need to exonerate Jarne is his belief that the Lantern Ghost is still killing. Rumors already spreading through the Styes talk of a young fisher named Raif turning up dead the morning after Jarne's execution. The authorities were quick to ship the body to the mortuary for cremation, as if trying to cover up the event—and Refrum sees this as evidence that a sinister conspiracy in the Styes has some connection to the Lantern Ghost killings.

The priest suspects that agents of this conspiracy used enchantments to control Jarne, forcing him to commit one or more of the murders. When Jarne was caught, they used their influence to have him executed quickly. Now Refrum fears that the conspirators are not only free to continue their work—but that they know he's onto them.

Refrum believes that the authorities are watching him. Moreover, his notoriety as a thorn in the side of the council means that many people are afraid to talk to him. As such, he believes that the characters will be able to gain access to information and witnesses that he can't. The priest suggests that they start their investigation at Hopene'er Asylum (area 11 and below), where Jarne was held for a few days after his capture. Refrum also recommends that the characters track down and speak with Constable Jute, the militia guard who found Jarne crouched over his victim. She can be contacted at the district garrison (area 4 and below).

Refrum intends to leave the Styes and spend a few weeks in hiding for his own safety. Any Wisdom (Insight) check made to assess the priest confirms that he is honestly afraid that his investigation into the murders has made him a target of the conspirators.

HOPENE'ER ASYLUM

Hopene'er Asylum lies on Lamplicker's Way in the High Quarter. The building is an old prison with bare walls and barred windows. A faded sign bearing the words "Welcome Home" hangs above the main entrance.

Hopene'er is run by Emil Trantor, a prematurely old female human physician with a worried brow and ashen-gray skin. Trantor and her staff of four are hard-pressed to control the more than four hundred residents and prisoners housed in the asylum. Consequently, the less troubled residents are called upon to help run the place. Everyone in the asylum, workers and residents alike, uses **commoner** statistics.

When the characters arrive at the looming stone structure, they are met at the door by Brey, a troubled youth who has a worrying way of staring at people for a long time before responding to them. Eventually, Brey agrees to allow the characters to enter and asks them to wait in a bare foyer while he fetches Trantor.

SPEAKING WITH TRANTOR

When Trantor first meets the characters, she is harried and protests that she has no time for long conversations or prying questions. But as soon as any character mentions Jarne or the Lantern Ghost killings, her attitude changes to one of concern for a lost patient.

Trantor describes Jarne as a quiet sort who was resolute in his claims of innocence. Though the physician has no reason to doubt the evidence suggesting that the fisher committed the murder he was arrested for, she describes Jarne's remorse as far more compelling—and far more believable—than that of any other troubled person she has ever worked with.

If the characters ask about visitors during Jarne's short stay at Hopene'er, Trantor tells them that only one person was permitted to see him, on the militia's orders. That visitor was the councillor Mr. Dory, whose presence at the asylum struck the physician as both unsettling and odd.

Jarne's body was cremated and the ashes were dumped into the receding tide, so nothing remains to be questioned with *speak with dead* or similar magic.

JARNE'S LAST MESSAGE

Trantor also volunteers that Jarne spent his last days of life covering the walls of his cell with drawings, etched with a cast-off lump of charcoal. The resulting images were unsettling, to say the least, and Trantor is happy to let the characters see them.

The journey into the depths of the asylum to Jarne's former cell is not pleasant. Constant screaming and cursing from the cells combines with an overpowering stench of unwashed bodies, filth, mildew, and rotting straw. Each character must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution check or gain one level of exhaustion that lasts for as long as they remain in the asylum. A character recovers automatically after spending 10 minutes in the open air.

Trantor eventually stops before a heavily locked door, at which she offers a word of caution. "This wing is where the worst of our cases are kept. I beg you not to look into any of the other cells. We've given succor to many folk over the years. But those here are truly forsaken by the gods."



Unlocking the door reveals a long corridor with iron doors lining both walls. Each door has a small viewing hatch that's latched shut. An unnatural gurgles up from a cell to the right, and is quickly joined by other voices.

Trantor ignores the din as she hurries to the far end of the hall, where she ushers you through an open cell door. The walls beyond are covered with childlike sketches, all overlapping each other in confusing waves and patterned swirls.

Any character who studies the sketches for a few minutes quickly recognizes that they are multiple depictions of a tentacled creature something like a squid or octopus, but determining further details is difficult. With a successful DC 13 Intelligence check, a character discerns a specific element hidden within the chaotic sketches. A character who has proficiency in Nature can add twice their proficiency bonus to the check. The specific elements include the following details:

- The tentacled creature is shown devouring a coastal city whose skyline suggests the Styes.
- The creature is shown trapped in a deep chasm or underwater pit, its tentacles wrapped around humanoids who are dragged down into the inky dark.
- The tentacled creature appears to be shackled by a collar attached to a chain, with the chain held by another creature resembling a vile, multi-tailed fish. Any

character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the creature as an aboleth, as does anyone who has encountered aboleths before.

DISTRICT GARRISON

If the characters visit the district garrison, there's a 30 percent chance that Constable Jute is there. Otherwise, she's on patrol and returns in 1d8 hours. As long as the characters don't proclaim that they're investigating the Lantern Ghost case, the militia guards are fairly friendly toward them. (It's their policy not to antagonize powerful-looking strangers.) If the guards realize what the party is up to, they immediately suspect the characters are out to make them look bad. In that case, they become surly and tight-lipped.

All the militia guards have been assured by their commanders (all of whom were bribed by Mr. Dory) that the Lantern Ghost was executed, the murders have been solved, and anyone who wants to dig deeper into the matter must be a troublemaker trying to stir up dissent.

CONSTABLE JUTE

Constable Jute (LG female human **guard**) is a rarity in the militia—an honorable and honest public servant. She is noticeably nervous and reticent when first asked about the Lantern Ghost case, as a result of the warnings that she and the other members of the militia have received. Being an honest guard means that Jute is already the target of scorn from her superiors and fellow guards, and she doesn't need any more trouble in that area.

If she's reassured that the characters aren't trying to make the militia look bad, Jute gives a frank account of her discovery of Jarne in the area of the Alchemists' Quarter known as Hemlock Pit. She remembers that Jarne was cooperative when apprehended, which was surprising considering the state of his mutilated victim.

If the characters win Jute's full confidence, either through roleplaying or with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, she admits that she doesn't believe Jarne was the sole killer—if he was the killer at all. She is aware of the murder that took place the morning after Jarne's execution, and of how quickly its investigation was dispensed with. Jute doesn't know why her superiors are acting the way they are, but she suspects that powerful interests must be involved.

Though she's reluctant to name names, a little prodding inspires Jute to disclose that one of the councillors, Mr. Dory, has had numerous closed-door meetings with militia commanders recently. These visits did not occur during the day when Jarne was executed. Jute can also tell the characters that Mr. Dory can be found in the warehouse that is his home and business (area 7).

SCENE OF THE CRIME

Constable Jute can show the characters where she caught Jarne, but there are no further clues there. The same isn't true of the scene of the murder that took place the day after Jarne's execution. Jute can escort the characters to that site, or they can find it in a few hours by asking around the Styes.

This latest murder was committed on Mr. Dory's orders by one of his **skum** minions (see appendix C). Dory wants to maintain the momentum of fear in the Styes while he searches for a replacement for Jarne.

The deed took place in an alley in the northern end of the Alchemists' Quarter. The body's immediate cremation was ordered by Mr. Dory, but the site holds one important clue. No effort was made to clean up the area, with the expectation that local rats and gulls would take care of any remains. But a careful inspection of the site is sufficient to locate unfamiliar, webbed footprints nearly obscured by the tracks of the militia and gawkers.

A character who has proficiency in Survival can attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, the character determines that the odd tracks were made by at least three separate creatures. Anyone can try to follow the tracks by making a DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a failed check, the trail is lost after a few dozen yards. On a success, the trail leads through muddy, reeking alleys to Dory's warehouse (area 7).

PART 3: HEMLOCK PIT

Although Jarne's murderous actions were controlled by the Whisperer, no clues yet point toward the aboleth. If the characters don't learn about Mr. Dory's seemingly suspicious activities from Constable Jute or from the physician Emil Trantor, and if they missed the trail leading from the latest murder, they might need to resort to *divination* or *commune* spells or similar magic. Use the cryptic results from such magic to steer the characters toward an investigation of Mr. Dory, his warehouse, and his residence.

SKUM ONE, SKUM ALL

Sgothgah has a number of minions called skum, humans that are warped by an aboleth's magic and become faithful servants of their master. As part of his arrangement with Mr. Dory, Sgothgah pledged several of the creatures to Dory's service. Skum wear long robes and heavy overcoats to hide their true nature. Only in a city as wretched as the Styes could they move about unnoticed. Although the skum are loyal minions, they can spend only a short time away from water before their skin starts to slough away. If necessary, they can endure that pain for the time it takes to complete a particularly important task.

Mr. Dory gained a variety of powers from Sgothgah's patronage, though he was too clever to allow his mind to become compromised. The transformation came with a price. Similar to the skum, Dory's body is now dependent on a hot, wet environment, such that his body begins to decompose if he spends more than an hour away from his chambers. When he appears in public, he wears heavy perfume and thick clothing soaked in water to forestall the effect, then rushes back to his lair as soon as he can to recover.

Dory's unique home is in the center of the Alchemists' Quarter, perched at the edge of a large swath of mud known as Hemlock Pit. His ruthless business practices are well known, inspiring in the townsfolk a mix of respect, fear, and mockery. People know that his warehouse is well guarded, and protected at night by "vicious guard dogs" (a trio of manticores whose snarling can be heard from the street). Getting that information out of any local requires a bribe of at least 10 gp.

Bribes and questions on the streets around Hemlock Pit also inform the characters that two figures in the Styes have strong dealings with Mr. Dory and are good potential sources of information: Master Loquid, a local perfumer, and Grotten Longflint, a gnome burglar.

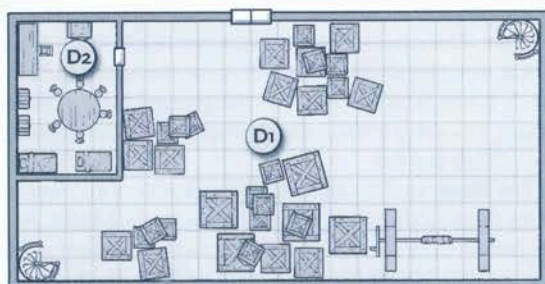
STRANGE HOUSEKEEPING

The perfumer Loquid (N male human **commoner**) supplies Dory with large quantities of perfume from his shop in the Merchants' Quarter. He loves to talk about himself and his well-off clients, and he responds well to simple flattery and chatting up. In conversation, he cheerfully describes Dory as seeming to carry an unpleasant, mildewy odor.

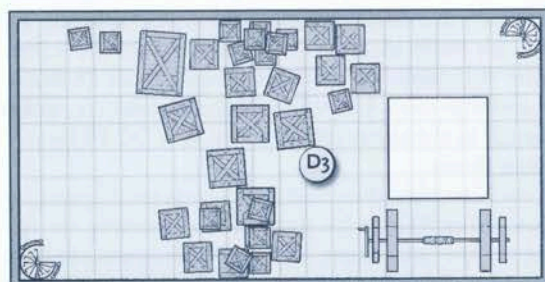
During several of Loquid's long talks with Dory, the councillor has enigmatically mentioned his "beauties in the pool" (the creature's skum and golem servants) more than once. Loquid also knows that for inexplicable reasons, Dory floods the inside of his home with water, and keeps stoves burning day and night to maintain the place at a stiflingly hot temperature.

WAREHOUSE SECRETS

Grotten Longflint (NE female gnome **spy**) describes herself as an adventurer, but her current trade is burglar and pickpocket. She is understandably circumspect about her business, and discusses nothing without receiving a "consulting fee" of 100 gp up front. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can get her down to 50 gp, but no lower.



GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

1 square = 5 feet

MAP 8.2: MR. DORY'S WAREHOUSE

Recently, Grotten was led to believe that a cache of stolen pearls was hidden in Dory's warehouse, so she did some "research" on the place to determine whether it was worth burgling. But a few days of watching the site revealed too much activity, with people coming and going day and night. Grotten also noted that Dory has creatures watching his place that appear to be part human and part fish (Dory's skum guards).

Though Grotten loves to talk, she makes it clear that she has one other secret the characters definitely want to know—but she requires a 30 percent cut of anything valuable the characters extract from Dory's warehouse in return. If that deal is struck, the burglar tells them that some sort of golem made up of parts of sea creatures was recently delivered to the warehouse. Grotten has no idea where it came from, but is sure that the golem is at the warehouse or in Dory's residence still.

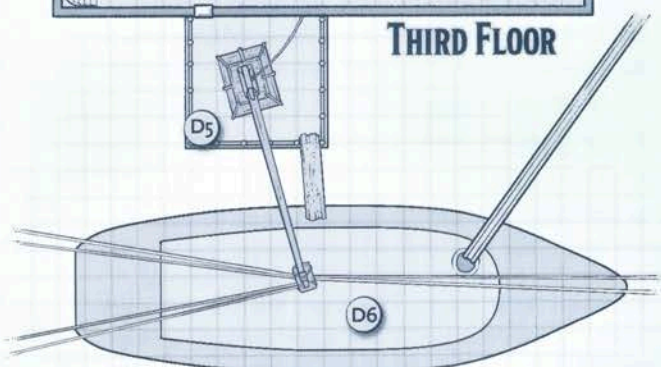
MR. DORY'S WAREHOUSE

Map 8.2 depicts the warehouse where Mr. Dory's business takes place and the bizarre location where he resides. When the characters approach, read:

Mr. Dory's warehouse is a three-story stone building, roofed in slate and dotted with iron-barred windows. Its walls and roof appear to be coated with a bituminous black gruel, an accumulation of the pollution that belches from nearby alchemists' workshops.



THIRD FLOOR



SHIP INTERIOR



Behind the warehouse spreads a gray-green pit of mud. A huge, rickety crane protrudes from the far wall of the warehouse, its limbs rusted and bent. Dangling from it is the dripping hulk of a ship, hanging some fifty feet above the greasy mud.

During the day, the warehouse bustles with workers who load and unload large, six-wheeled freight wagons. Dory rents space in the warehouse to merchants and alchemists, many of whom use it as a staging area for shipments. After dark, the warehouse is locked tight and protected against intruders by monstrous guardians.

Dory lives in the suspended ship. Reaching the ship without magic requires climbing the crane, which takes a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the climber falls 40 feet. The safer route across the bridge can be accessed only through the warehouse.

The warehouse workers don't want any trouble. If the characters bully their way in, the workers flee, hollering that they intend to summon the militia. Fortunately for the characters, they have an unknown ally pulling strings for them behind the scenes. Another of the local councillors, Thornwell, has her own reasons for wanting Mr. Dory humiliated, bankrupted, or—better yet—killed. She has been keeping an eye on her enemy as a result (see the "Adventure Hooks" section), and has counter-bribed the militia that Dory has paid off, so that they ignore calls for help from the warehouse. No patrol

ever arrives, forcing Mr. Dory to rely solely on his own guards and minions to defend his property and himself.

D1. MAIN STOREHOUSE

The interior of the warehouse is piled high with crates, boxes, and packages, most marked with alchemists' personal symbols and "FRAGILE" or "HANDLE WITH CARE." A closed door offers a way into a walled-in area to the northwest. A mechanical lift stands along the south wall to the east, and two iron spiral staircases rise from the northeast and southwest corners.

The lift is operated by a winch, and it can be used to move large objects between this area and the loft. At least two people are needed to operate the winch.

Daytime Crew. By day, this room bustles with workers (eleven **commoners**) loading and unloading shipments of alchemical supplies and products onto and off wagons. The workers are too busy to talk, but four guards (**thugs**) approach the characters to ask their business, and to direct them to Birsk Chumwell in area D2 if they ask odd questions or seem suspicious. If they see anyone trying to enter the loft (area D3), they alert Chumwell at once. If the characters act belligerently, the workers and the guards flee from such obviously capable foes, and try (without success) to summon the militia.

Nighttime Watch. By night, the only denizens of the warehouse are three **manticores** and their **red slaad**

handler. The manticores fly between levels on constant patrol, and the slaad spends its time lounging in the loft. If it needs to get down to the ground floor, it simply jumps, knowing it will quickly regenerate the damage it takes from the fall.

Fire Hazard. The alchemical contents of the crates make the warehouse a risky place to have a fight. At the end of each round in which weapon damage or the movement of combatants might accidentally disturb a pile of crates, or if any effect deals damage in an area other than necrotic, poison, or psychic damage, there's a 20 percent chance that a nearby crate explodes, setting off a chain reaction that engulfs the entire warehouse in flames. The initial explosion deals 28 (8d6) fire damage to each creature in the warehouse, or half damage to creatures that succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.

Every creature that starts its turn in the burning warehouse takes 3 (1d6) fire damage. Additionally, the upper floors of the warehouse collapse 2d4 rounds after the fire starts. Each creature in the warehouse when it collapses takes 14 (4d6) fire damage and must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes an additional 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage and is restrained beneath the rubble. On a successful save, the creature takes half the bludgeoning damage and is not restrained.

The collapse makes the entire area of the warehouse difficult terrain, and each creature that starts its turn in the warehouse thereafter takes 7 (2d6) fire damage. A restrained creature can escape by using an action and



succeeding on a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check, or can be pulled free by another creature within 5 feet that uses an action and succeeds on a DC 15 Strength check.

If the warehouse catches fire, a huge crowd gathers to help put out the flames before they spread to nearby buildings. This firefighting effort takes up to an hour, so it won't help characters who were trapped in the blaze. The crane holding Dory's home aloft is made mostly of metal, so it doesn't collapse in the fire. Dory's minions aboard the ship prevent the fire from spreading to it. Then they spend the next several days repairing the crane, clearing rubble, and installing rickety ladders to replace the stairs, while Dory devotes himself to plotting revenge on whoever he suspects of burning down his warehouse.

Treasure. A search of the crates reveals a wealth of alchemical gear and supplies, including everything from acid and alchemist's fire to portable alchemy labs—a total value of 2,500 gp. These items are next to impossible to fence in the Styes because they're all clearly labeled, and no one wants to cross the influential and vengeful Mr. Dory. (If the characters cut a deal with Grotten Longflint, the gnome's assistance might make it easier to sell off the goods, as you determine.) All this treasure is destroyed if the warehouse burns.

D2. OFFICE

This area appears to be the business office of the warehouse, containing filing cabinets, a work desk, and a large table, along with two sets of rickety bunk beds.

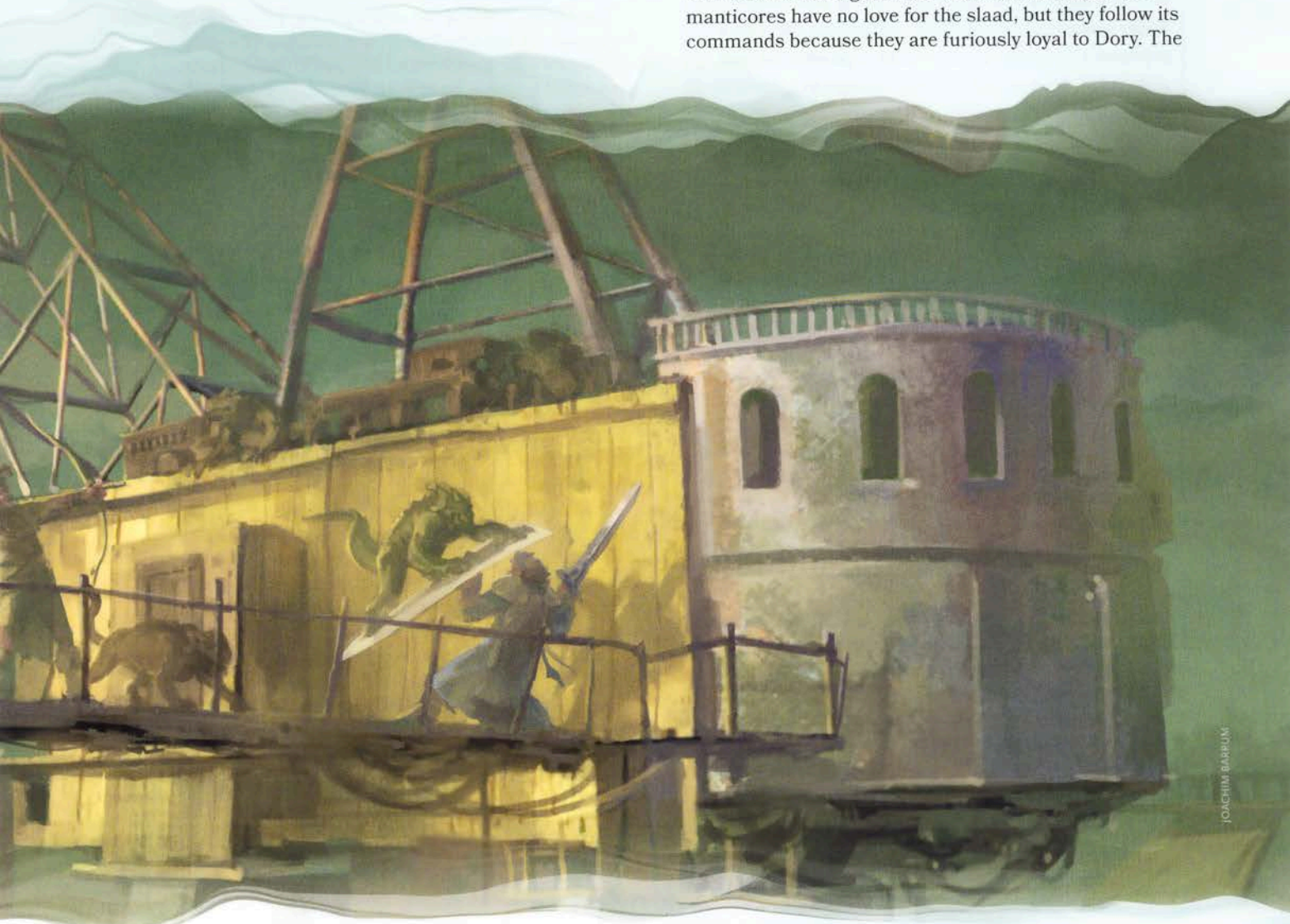
If the characters arrive during business hours, they're directed to this office, where they are greeted by the warehouse manager. Birska Chumwell (N female human **commoner**) is a phlegmatic, no-nonsense woman with a permanent look of frustration and a never-ending list of tasks. If the characters ask to meet with Dory, she agrees to put the request in for his consideration. She warns that it might be several days before a meeting can be scheduled, and it's obvious she just wants to be rid of the party and get back to her work.

A search of this room turns up nothing suspicious. All the paperwork suggests that the warehouse and its activities are perfectly legitimate.

D3. LOFT

This area is used for long-term storage. Many of the crates here are in a kind of legal limbo; their owners have either forgotten about them, died, or for some other reason never reclaimed their belongings.

The loft is also the lair of the three **manticores** and the **red slaad** that guard the warehouse at night. The manticores have no love for the slaad, but they follow its commands because they are furiously loyal to Dory. The



manticores roam freely through the warehouse at night. They spend their days in the loft but respond quickly to any disturbance in the main warehouse below.

Treasure. The crates in this area and their contents are similar to those in area D1. The chief difference is that no one in town is likely to notice or care if these items are pawned or fenced. Much of what's here has spoiled or lost its potency, but 1,700 gp worth of still-valuable equipment and supplies can be collected with a thorough search.

D4. UPPER WALKWAY

A walkway surrounds the highest level of the warehouse, which is now used only as an approach to area D5. The door to area D5 is made of iron and is kept locked. Dory and all his guards carry a key for the door, which can otherwise be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. The door can also be smashed open by making a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check and a lot of noise.

D5. CRANE

A narrow, rotting walkway with missing boards and no railing surrounds the rusting bulk of this ancient crane. The hull of the ship dangles from the crane's arm, fifty feet above the broad mud pool below. A wooden trough connects the ship to a nearby water tower, and a crude bridge suspended between the crane and the ship's deck promises a treacherous climb. Steam rises from the hulk, and rivulets of water spill out from between the planks of the hull, raining down to the mud below.

The walkway around the crane is rickety but is more solid than it looks. The real danger on the walkway and the bridge comes from their uneven surface and the lack of a railing. A character who moves no more than 10 feet per turn and devotes all their attention to watching where they place their feet is in no danger while moving through this area. But a character who moves more quickly or who performs any other action in addition to moving must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. If the saving throw fails by more than 5, the character slips and falls 60 feet. The fall deals only 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage because of the soft, deep mud below, but the mud is contaminated. Anyone who falls in must also succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract sewer plague (see "Diseases" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The crane's gears and controls are heavily rusted and frozen in place.

Three **skum** (see appendix C and the "Skum" sidebar) hidden inside the crane's shed stand guard over this area. They confront anyone who tries to cross the footbridge to the ship, simultaneously calling out to alert the ship's occupants. These skum are intimately familiar with the walkway and the precarious bridge, so they can move and act normally with no risk of falling. If they can, they try to push intruders off the walkway rather than fight them.

D6. UPPER DECK

The decrepit-looking hull of a ship is suspended from the crane by massive chains, all of which creak and groan ominously as the ship shifts in the wind. The only apparent access to the vessel's interior is near the bow on the port side. A grate in the hull there belches smoke, while water flowing along a wooden trough pours through the grate into the hull.

Many of the compartments of this decommissioned hull have been flooded with water so that its aquatic occupants can move about more easily. The skum that lurk in area D7 patrol the upper deck once every 30 minutes, but they mostly rely on the guards in area D5 to warn them of intruders.

As the characters move around on the hulk, stress the ominous creaking and groaning from the chains holding it aloft. These chains are solidly attached and there's no danger of the ship crashing to the ground, but it should feel like a dangerous environment. The grate through which water flows into area D7 isn't locked or trapped, but lifting it open creates a lot of noise unless someone makes a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check while doing so. Once the grate is open, characters can drop down into area D7.

The chains holding the ship aloft are too sturdy to be broken by any quick or simple method. Severing one would take a successful DC 30 Strength check, prolonged heating, or half a dozen *shatter* spells. Such attempts also likely attract the attention of nearby skum.

D7. BOW POOL

The air in this compartment is oppressively hot and humid. Clouds of smoke rise and escape through the grate above, billowing from a pair of roaring boilers near the bow, bolted to the deck and walls on either side of a large pool of steaming water. The walls, floor, and ceiling of the compartment are thick and shiny with condensation and mildew.

This area is difficult terrain because of the moisture and slime everywhere.

The bottom of the pool is open to the ship's flooded bilge, allowing all the water in the ship to be heated from this area. That opening can't be seen from above through the smoke, steam, and dirty water. A creature can swim from this pool through the bilge directly into areas D8 and D9, and vice versa.

The cloudy water conceals three **skum** (see appendix C and the "Skum" sidebar). If they were alerted by the skum guarding the crane or by a noisy opening of the grate above, they're prepared for trouble and can't be surprised. Otherwise, they're napping or loafing in the water, so they're automatically surprised by enemies who approach stealthily.

WATER HAZARD

The water in areas D7, D8, and D9 isn't boiling, but it is uncomfortably hot and exceedingly foul. Any creature that starts its turn in the steaming water takes 1 fire damage and is poisoned until the start of its next turn. (The creatures that serve Dory spend all their time in the water and have become immune to it.)

D8. AMIDSHIPS

The air here is hot and damp. Two pools of dark, swirling water fill most of this area. A narrow wooden walkway crosses between them to connect doors toward the stern and the bow. Condensation streams down the walls and drips from the ceiling.

Water and slime make this area difficult terrain.

The last two **skum** (see the “Skum” sidebar and appendix C) that serve Mr. Dory lurk in this room, along with one of the first victims to be enthralled by the Whisperer after its arrival in the Styes: a hateful man named Harid (LE male human **assassin**). He fell victim to the Whisperer while trailing a target through the Styes. Now completely dominated and transformed by the aboleth, Harid must soak his slimy, transparent skin in water every ten minutes to avoid excruciating pain.

Harid is cunning and clever. If combat breaks out here, he remains hidden in the water while the skum do the fighting. He makes a Dexterity (Stealth) check in an attempt to hide. As long as he remains unnoticed, his first attack can still benefit from the Assassinate trait after the first round of the fight.

Development. On the Whisperer's orders, Harid offered his services to Mr. Dory. But his actual purpose here is to keep an eye on Dory, whom the Whisperer does not trust. Dory suspects this subterfuge, of course, and so he keeps Harid confined to this compartment. Because Harid has no loyalty to Dory, he might stay hidden in the murky water if the skum are dispatched quickly. Then after everyone else leaves the ship, he'll eventually make his way back to the temple of Tharizdun to rejoin his master. See the “Temple of Tharizdun” section in part 4 for more information.

D9. DORY'S CHAMBER

The air here is thick with clouds of steam scented by cloves, cinnamon, and ginger. Strange plants hang from the ceiling, featuring thick, twisted vines tangled around enormous bulbs and flowers of a sickly yellow hue. A large pool of steaming green water dominates the room.

A scarred desk with its legs sawed off is pulled up alongside the pool. The desktop is cluttered with damp parchment, a wicker platter of raw seafood, and a mahogany box.



MR. DORY

The stern of the ship is Mr. Dory's personal chamber. All of this area is difficult terrain because of moisture and slime. The creature spends most of its time in this compartment, leaving only when council business or boredom demands it.

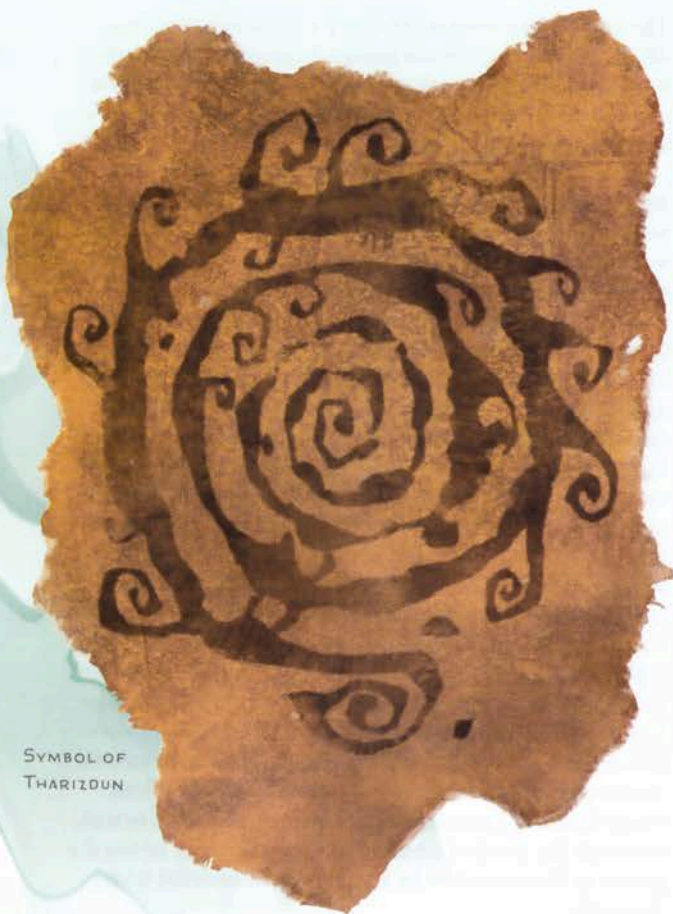
Dory's Plots. The rumors of Dory's terrible skin condition are partly true. Several of the Tharizdun cultists were turned to skum to better serve Sgothgah, but Dory was too clever and important to be reduced to a simple thrall. Sgothgah granted him superior durability, along with magical talents, but at the cost of his partial transformation into a creature similar to a skum. Dory maintains his outwardly human appearance, but he must spend as much time as possible in a hot, wet environment to maintain his physical form. Otherwise, he develops lesions as the aboleth's magic causes his body to rot away. After a few minutes away from a wet environment, his skin takes on a waxy sheen, while boils and ulcers form on his body. Anywhere other than the Styes he would have been ostracized long ago, but in this squalid, lawless place he has managed to turn his new talents to his advantage.

Dory's Tactics. Any intrusion into this area draws an immediate attack from **Mr. Dory** (see appendix C), who has likely been alerted by fighting elsewhere. The aberration does not fight alone. Sgothgah recently bestowed another gift on the councillor—a unique **flesh golem** made from fish, monstrous lobsters, sharks, and octopi, and with the head of a humanoid female. Dory keeps the golem in this chamber as a guardian, concealed under the water.

If Dory is aware of the characters' approach, he casts *invisibility* on himself before they arrive here. While the golem holds intruders at bay, Dory retreats to the far corner of the room and uses Eye of Corruption to weaken the most threatening character. He then follows up with *cloudkill*, catching the victim of Eye of Corruption. He uses *fear* to drive the characters away from him and, with luck, into the lingering *cloudkill* spell. Finally, he mixes *fireball* and his melee attacks to finish off the party. If the situation becomes dire, he casts *etherealness* in an attempt to escape.

Development. If the golem is defeated and Dory is captured, his bravado vanishes. He begs for mercy, promising information to the characters in return. He willingly provides any of the following information in exchange for a promise of freedom:

- Jarne was guilty of the Lantern Ghost murders, but was never anything but a mind-controlled pawn.
- A cult of Tharizdun is thriving in the Low Quarter. The cult has made an alliance with some sort of sea monster, which the cultists have identified as a spawn of their dark god.
- The cultists augment the spawn's growth by incubating it in the fear and misery of the Styres. The Lantern Ghost murders were set up to amplify that fear.
- The cultists hope to have their god's spawn fully grown in a matter of weeks.
- Dory does know the location of the cult's temple, and gladly shares it. But he will not go there with the characters under any circumstances.



SYMBOL OF
THARIZDUN

Dory is willing to give up this information because he knows its time in the Styres is coming to an end—and he wants to trigger as much final mayhem as it can. If he can't use the cult for its own purposes, he wants the characters to seek out and slaughter its members. That doesn't mean he won't nurse his grudge for a few months, then come back seeking revenge against the characters for ruining his fun.

The wicker plate on the desk is heaped with strange and hideous fish, their bodies burst as if from internal pressure. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies them as fish from the deep sea, seldom caught by fishers. (Dory has the flesh golem fetch these delicacies.) A careful search of the room also locates a crumpled sheet of soggy parchment bearing a message:

The catch again indicates a disturbance beneath us. We cannot locate the cause but fear THEY may be in the water near you. Praise Tharizdun! He rests and awaits!

The Whisperer anticipates renewed Lantern Ghost harvests—the young one must be fed. This is how you will serve us. The harvest must increase, for the young one grows in both size and appetite. Find someone to resume the Lantern Ghost's task, and bring the candidate to the temple, where we shall appraise its worth.

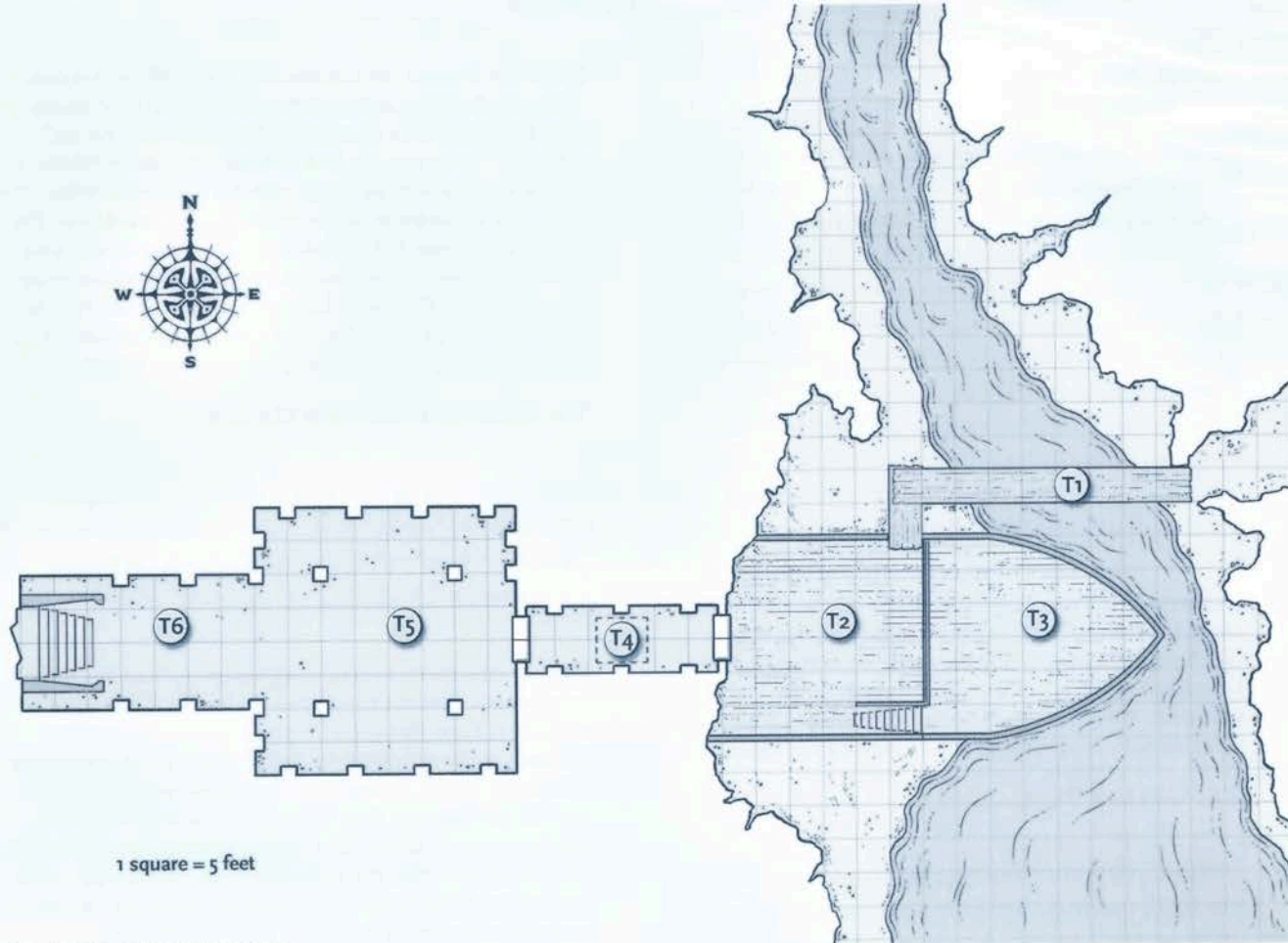
Dory received this note from one of the Whisperer's minions in response to Jarne's arrest. It tasks Dory with finding more flesh and negative emotion for the kraken.

Other notes on the desk and the table are either horrid examples of disturbing erotica written with a shaky hand, or various letters that implicate Dory in foul crimes. Still more scraps of parchment contain scribbles and crude drawings of tentacled monsters—mad visions induced by Dory's connection to the Whisperer. If the characters saw the drawings on the walls of Jarne's cell, they immediately notice a similarity.

Treasure. The mahogany box on the desk is unlocked. Within it is a velvet purse containing six rubies (500 gp each). The box also contains a tattered book with a florid spiral design. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies this design as the symbol of Tharizdun. The book is handwritten in a combination of Abyssal and Infernal. It contains nonmagical prayers to Tharizdun, and a folded scrap of parchment tucked inside the front cover with a note written in Infernal:

This book contains all the invocations and prayers you'll need to learn the truth, Mr. Dory. The dark god's faithful are wary of new converts. But learn the words, and they should accept you soon enough. Seek their pulpit in the evening shadow of Frother's Lamp. Praise Tharizdun!

If the characters don't know the reference to "Frother's Lamp," inquiries anywhere in the district can direct them toward the abandoned lighthouse in the Low Quarter, where part 4 of the adventure takes place.



MAP 8.3: TEMPLE OF THARIZDUN

PART 4: THE LAMP'S SHADOW

Whether they learn of the temple of Tharizdun from questioning Mr. Dory or from studying the documents found in his lair, the characters should make seeking the temple their next move. If they recognized the imagery in Jarne's sketches (see "Jarne's Last Message"), they might also suspect that the true menace behind the Lantern Ghost killings is an aboleth. Otherwise, that aspect of the plot remains unknown.

A huge complication in the characters' investigation is the imminent arrival in the Styes of a pair of aboleths from the Endless Nadir. Having learned of Sgothgah's traitorous turn to religion, these creatures have used magic to track both Sgothgah and the juvenile kraken to their hiding place, and they are on a mission to destroy Sgothgah and release the kraken into the sea.

As this part of the story begins, the aboleths have already mounted one attack on their traitorous kin at the sunken temple at Landgrave's Folly (see part 5, "Tharizdun's Progeny," for more information). This assault has forced Sgothgah to flee to the temple of Tharizdun to recover.

TEMPLE OF THARIZDUN

The temple of Tharizdun, depicted in map 8.3, is located near Frother's Lamp in the Low Quarter. At sunset, the shadow of the abandoned lighthouse stretches out to

point in the general direction of the temple—a structure cobbled together from a partially sunken galley and some empty apartments under an abandoned pleasure pier. The area surrounding the temple is filled with partially collapsed buildings and walled-off alleys, atop which newer buildings and boardwalks have been built. The entire place is damp, reeks of mildew, and is loud with the creaking and groaning of surrounding buildings. The floors, walls, and ceilings of the temple are old wood, too damp to burn and rotten enough to be almost spongy to the touch.

No cultists dwell inside the temple. The faithful of the dark god hide their true calling and live otherwise normal lives as dock workers, fishers, or sailors. For years, they gathered once a month at the temple to venerate the dark god through the night, but were little more than a desperate mob whose tainted dreams brought them together. With the arrival of the aboleth Sgothgah in the Styes, the cult now has renewed vigor, and its members meet once a week or more.

This section assumes that no cultists are on site when the characters arrive, giving the party a chance to explore in relative peace. But if you decide so, the cultists could be in the middle of a dark ceremony to raise the risk and the stakes. None of the cult members are dangerous to a party of the characters' level (see area T5 for statistics). But the presence of a hundred chanting, swaying, convulsing zealots can add a large dose of eerie atmosphere to the characters' investigations.

T1. MILDEN SPAN

A tangled wall of apartments and storefronts rises up on either side of a channel of sluggish, tainted water. The structures down near the waterline are empty and desolate, while the ramshackle additions built over their roofs appear progressively more inhabitable as they rise up into the polluted sky. The overall effect is that of a canyon, with walls made from the cross-section of a decaying shantytown rather than from stone.

A narrow timber bridge sags across the channel, leading from the back of a crooked alley to what appears to be a partially sunken galley whose structure has been incorporated into the ruined jumble of buildings.

Unless the characters want to swim in, clamber down the side of several stories of buildings, or use magic, this bridge (known locally as the Milden Span for its long-dead builder) is the only approach to the temple's entrance. The skum lurking in the ship's prow (area T3) keep an eye on the bridge and respond to any intruders.

T2. GALLEY PIER

The main deck of the ruined galley has buckled, and is cluttered with trash, driftwood, and other refuse washed up on the tide. To the east, the galley's prow juts into the channel like a jagged fang, while the west side of the deck disappears into a wall of boarded-up and badly weathered buildings. The only cleared pathway across the tilted deck leads from the bridge to a pair of massive wooden doors leading into the buildings.

This area is used by cult members as a gathering point before they stage their ceremonies inside the temple. A flight of rickety steps half hidden behind detritus leads up to the ship's prow (area T3).

Unless a meeting is taking place, the heavy doors into area T4 are locked. They can be finessed open with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, or broken down by physical damage (AC 15, 25 hit points, immunity to psychic and poison damage, resistance to piercing and slashing damage). If the characters manage to get to this point without attracting the notice of the skum in area T3, those guards are alerted by any noise at the doors.

T3. SHIP'S PROW

The ancient ship's prow juts up from the foul water of the channel, its tilted surface a hopeless tangle of trash, driftwood, and filth. Scurrying sounds within the detritus suggest the presence of a great many rats.

The trash heaped here make this area difficult terrain.

The aboleth has ordered the cult to keep four **skum** guards posted here (see appendix C and the "Skum" sidebar). These guards lurk behind mounds of rubble as they watch the surrounding area for intruders. When the characters assemble on the galley pier created from the ship's deck (area T2), the skum rise up and attack with thrown tridents (they have a large supply of those weapons on hand). They have half cover while in the rubble, and they engage in melee only if the characters come to them or attempt to open the doors into the temple.

T4. CHUUL-HAUNTED HALLWAY

This oppressive hallway reeks of mildew and rotting fish. The walls are severely stained, and the ceiling sags where pockets of water and fungus weigh it down. The sounds of creaking wood and dripping water echo loudly here.

Humanoid cultists and aboleth savants aren't the only ones whose dreams have been tainted by Tharizdun's whispers. Four **chuuls** have also become haunted by the dark god's sendings, and were driven to seek out the cult in the Styx. Being near the temple soothes their psychic torment, so they spend most of their time hidden in a secret, submerged grotto beneath areas T4 and T5. They know that the cultists always chant when they are inside the temple, and so they interpret any voiceless movement in this hallway as a sign of intruders.

The chuuls have a number of options for their attack. Think about the type of combat the players might enjoy and choose one of the following:

- The chuuls can pull down the floor of area T4 from below, so that all creatures in the corridor fall into their grotto. The grotto is roughly circular, 40 feet in diameter, and filled with water 20 feet deep. The surface of the water is 5 feet below the floor of area T4. A submerged tunnel connects the grotto to the larger tunnel outside (see area T6 and "Mysterious Tunnel," below).
- They can wait until the characters have filed into the chapel area of the temple (area T5), then tear their way through the floor of the tunnel or the floor of the temple to climb up and fight in those areas.
- They can use both tactics, splitting the party so as to turn the encounter into simultaneous battles in the temple and the submerged grotto. The chuuls are most likely to use this option if their Sense Magic trait suggests that doing so might separate powerful magic-wielding characters from the rest of the group.

T5. DARK GOD'S CHAPEL

This cavernous room smells of decaying fish and seaweed. The walls, floor, and ceiling are covered with carvings of complex spirals and smeared with blood. Crude chairs and benches are arranged in a semicircle facing a smaller antechamber to the west. A large, fish-like shape hangs in the air at the far end of the alcove.



When the cultists gather to worship Tharizdun, this room is filled with nearly a hundred of the dark god's faithful (**commoners**, **thugs**, **bandits**, and **cultists**), brought together by their belief in the imminent end of the world. These warped worshipers pay homage to the dark god in the hope of gaining reward in the new world he creates from the ashes of this one. Unless you prefer otherwise, no cultists are present here when the characters arrive.

T6. WATERY DESCENT

A wide flight of slippery stairs stands at the end of this antechamber, leading down into a pool of slimy, murky water. The shape above the stairs is a rotting shark's carcass, which hangs from the rafters on frayed, mildewed ropes. Humanoid heads in various states of decay have been crudely lashed to the shark's flanks.

The stairs descend 20 feet into a completely submerged chamber that's 20 feet square. Water fills the staircase to within a foot of the top of the stairs. A 10-foot-wide tunnel (not shown on the map) extends from the west side of the chamber, leading eventually to the kraken's hiding place at Landgrave's Folly (see the "Mysterious Tunnel" section below).

Several hours before the characters' arrival at the temple, Sgothgah fled here from Landgrave's Folly after losing a battle against two hostile aboleths from the Endless Nadir. It intends to rest here while it plots its retaliation.

The **aboleth** lurks at the base of the stairs (just outside the map), but it is aware of intruders as soon as they enter area T5. If the four chuuls in area T4 haven't sprung their attack yet, it waits for them to do so before joining in.

While remaining hidden, Sgothgah uses its *lair action* to cast *phantasmal force* to make it appear to the characters that the dead shark has reanimated and is swimming through the air to attack them. Until one of the characters detects the illusion, pretend to use the statistics of a **giant shark** for the creature, but its attacks always hit and deal 3 (1d6) psychic damage. Even though the illusory shark doesn't actually take damage, the characters' attacks appear to injure it.

The aboleth doesn't reveal its presence unless a tempting target approaches within its 10-foot reach of the flooded stairwell. It can also use its *Enslave* attack from under the water against a creature it can see.

If all four chuuls are killed and the characters are aware that their real enemy is in the water, Sgothgah awaits the characters in the submerged chamber below this area.

Development. Sgothgah recognizes that accomplished adventurers would be highly useful servants in its conflict against the aboleths sent from the Endless Nadir, and it tries to keep at least three of the characters alive if it can. If the battle appears to be turning against the characters, Sgothgah contacts one of them telepathically (without identifying itself) to demand their surrender. If that demand is refused, the aboleth softens it to a request that they accept a temporary truce and agrees to answer a few questions.

The aboleth has no intention of dealing with the characters honestly, since inferior beings don't merit such treatment. Using its Probing Telepathy, it discerns each character's greatest desire, then uses this information against the party, promising each character what it knows the character wants in exchange for nothing more than being allowed to spend a few more months in the temple. After that time, Sgothgah promises, it will return to the unfathomable depths of the ocean and never bother humanity again.

If the characters have put together a sense of the aboleth's plots, Sgothgah admits that it is raising a kraken, but it claims that the creature is meant to be used against its enemies in an ongoing civil war between opposing factions of the aboleth civilization. It claims that those enemies are already probing the aboleth's defenses around the Styes, and are just as much a threat to the district and its people as to it. If the characters are so inclined, Sgothgah says, it could use their help in driving them off—concocting some far-flung suicide mission for them on the spot.

Sgothgah freely weaves lies, truths, half-truths, and the characters' desires into the conversation. As long as doing so is believable, Sgothgah offers and promises anything—because the cunning creature has no intention of ever delivering. All it wants is for at least three promising victims to come close enough to the pool for it to use a lair action to send forth a grasping tide, pulling the characters into the water in an attempt to infect and enslave them.

Dark Altar. The shark hanging above the stairs serves as the altar in this evil place. The cult routinely kidnaps beggars, vagrants, and lost children and sacrifices them to the dark god, saving their heads and affixing them to the shark. Eventually, the carcass will rot to the point where it tears loose from the ropes and falls into the water to be eaten by scavengers. When that happens, the cult members celebrate the occasion, hunt down a replacement shark, and start the cycle again.

Treasure. The cultists hid treasure they have collected from victims under the topmost step leading down into the pool. The treasure can be discovered with a search of the staircase and a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Inside a flooded hollow under the removable step are eight sacks of coins, each containing 100 sp and 50 gp. A rusted iron coffer holds 17 pieces of jewelry worth a total of 1,530 gp, along with three *potions of healing*, four *potions of greater healing*, and six *potions of water breathing*.

Also inside the hollow is an object sealed inside a tightly sewn oilcloth—an *instrument of the bards* (*Cli*

lyre) found by a cultist years before. The lyre is the cult's greatest treasure, and has been kept as a gift for the leader that the cultists hoped would someday come to them. (They offered the lyre to Sgothgah, but the aboleth had no use for it.)

MYSTERIOUS TUNNEL

The submerged tunnel snakes westward for nearly a mile, and is flooded along its entire length. It opens up to the seafloor 40 feet underwater and a few hundred feet off a deserted stretch of coastline. The only visible landmark in the area is the spire of Landgrave's Folly, the sunken island where Sgothgah has been raising the juvenile kraken.

If the characters return to the Styes without exploring the area further, any of the folk in the Styes can tell the story of Landgrave's Folly (as detailed in the next section) in response to hearing about the spire that the characters spotted jutting out of the waves. If the characters investigate the temple and take on the final section of the adventure immediately, the background story of Landgrave's Folly can be filled in after they return to the Styes.

PART 5: THARIZDUN'S PROGENY

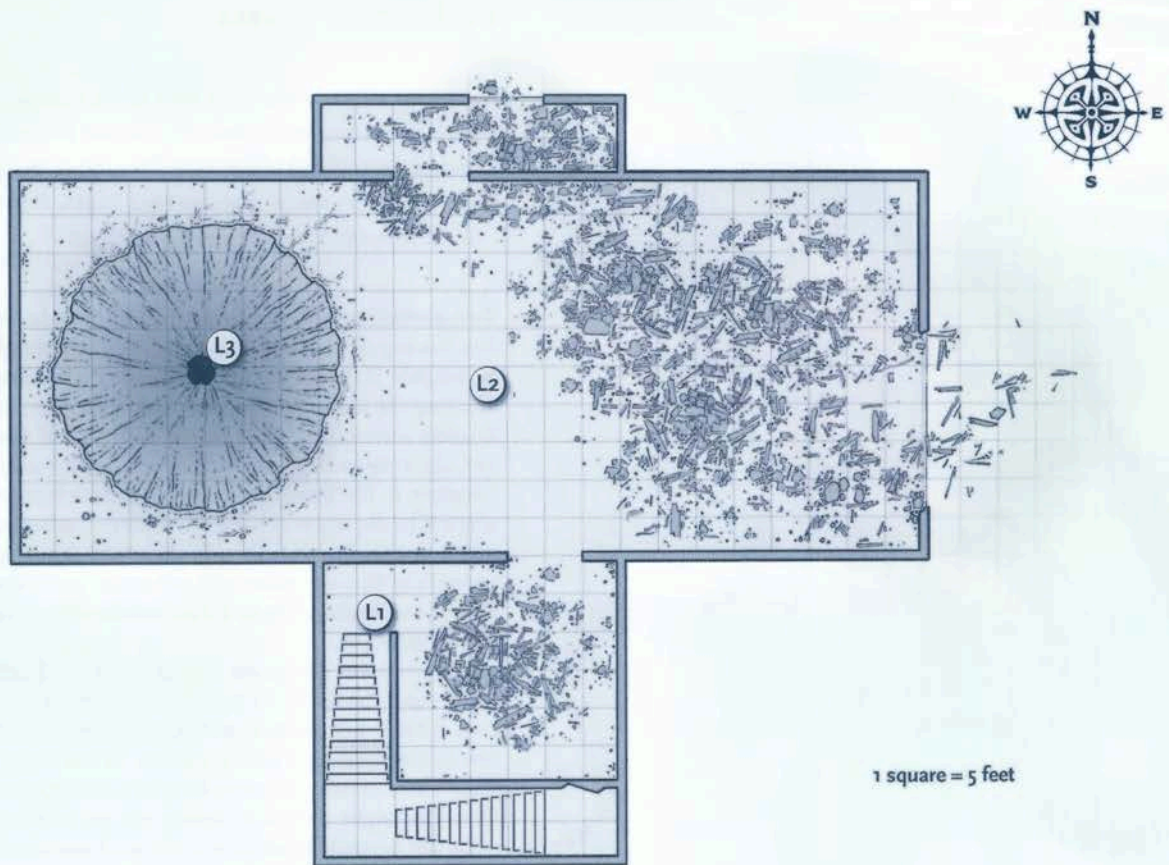
At the height of the Styes' long-ago glory, a local eccentric noble named Bryson Landgrave announced his intention to discover what lay on the underside of the world. To that end, he ordered the digging of a great pit that would eventually lead to whatever was there. Locals dismissed the effort as mad, but the noble was rich, and no one complained about the wages he offered to diggers.

For reasons no one could comprehend, Landgrave chose to excavate down through the solid rock beneath a small islet a mile or so west of the Styes. The work went well at the start. But then workers began to perish in bizarre or mysterious accidents. In an attempt to counter his ill luck, the noble commissioned the construction of a temple (using material removed from the hole) at the dig site to confer blessings on his work. As Landgrave's luck would have it, on the night the temple was to be consecrated, a violent earthquake struck the islet, which sank into the sea and took the pit, the temple, all but a handful of workers, and Landgrave himself with it. Only the temple's spire is still visible above the waves as a testament to what becomes of rich fools, and the site became known as Landgrave's Folly.

DEATH FROM THE DEEP

Landgrave's Folly is where Sgothgah has hidden the growing kraken, in the pit at the bottom of the flooded, ruined temple. The two aboleths that tried to attack the site did well in their earlier battle with Sgothgah, forcing it to retreat, and are in the process of dismantling the last of the magical wards set up by the renegade aboleth.

As the characters approach Landgrave's Folly after either defeating Sgothgah, making a deal with the aboleth, or succumbing to its enslavement, the two aboleths



MAP 8.4: LANDGRAVE'S FOLLY

from the Endless Nadir are arguing over what is to be done with the kraken. One wants to enslave it, and the other argues it must be destroyed. Neither of them understands the juvenile kraken's intentions or suspects that a party of determined adventurers is about to interrupt their plans.

LANDGRAVE'S FOLLY

The temple at Landgrave's Folly, shown in map 8.4, is in ruins and under 40 feet or more of water, though its weed-encrusted spire extends above the ocean surface even at high tide. The characters can't proceed into the temple without some means of breathing underwater, such as *caps of water breathing* or the potions found in area T6. *Potions of water breathing* are also readily available from alchemists in the Styes, being one of the district's more popular exports. Before running this final part of the adventure, make sure you're familiar with the rules on underwater combat (in chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*) and underwater movement (in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The characters have three means of entry into Landgrave's Folly: descending the spire that projects above the waves, going through the front doorway, or moving through a hole in the north wall. All areas of the temple are lightly obscured by dim light and silt in the water.

As the characters approach the sunken temple, read the following, making adjustments depending on whether they are coming from above or below the water:

Below the water looms the dark bulk of a sunken temple. Looming up and out of the briny murk is the temple's spire, which appears to have been struck by more than one unfortunate ship, judging by the chunks missing from it. The temple lists toward the north, its roof and walls draped with seaweed and festooned with barnacles. The building's facade is a mess of partially collapsed walls and ruined scaffolding, making it appear as though the site was still under construction when it sank. But it's hard to tell which parts weren't finished and which parts were damaged by the collapse.

L1. RUINED SPIRE

Most of the roof is gone from the belfry beneath the upthrust spire, but portions of the walls and their arched windows remain. A seaweed-tangled staircase descends deeper into the flooded tower.

L2. FLOODED TEMPLE

Layers of silt cover the stone floor of the main section of the temple. Tangled mounds of collapsed scaffolding lie toward the east end of this area. The west side is dominated by a circular pit that stretches from wall to wall, and that throbs with a dim, unnatural light.

Two **aboleths** from the Endless Nadir are in this chamber, having rested and recovered from their fight with Sgothgah. If the characters infiltrate the temple without alerting the aboleths, the characters spot the creatures floating above the rubble on the east side of the chamber, arguing in Deep Speech over whether to kill the creature in the pit or enslave it. If the aboleths have been alerted to the approaching characters (including if the glyph in area L1 was set off), they retreat to opposite corners of this chamber and stir up an immense cloud of silt for camouflage. Area L2 is heavily obscured for the next 5 minutes.

Failure is not an option for agents of the Endless Nadir, and the aboleths fight to the death if it comes to that. This is not the lair of these creatures, so they can't use lair actions or regional effects. In the event that the characters could use some help in a battle, one of the aboleths might stray too close to the pit and be pulled in by the juvenile kraken; see the next section for more information. A fight isn't inevitable, however.

Making a Deal. These aboleths have two goals: to kill Sgothgah and to deal with the kraken, either by destroying it or capturing it. If the characters don't instantly jump to the attack and can demonstrate that they aren't enslaved by Sgothgah—or, better yet, that they have killed the rogue aboleth—they can engage these aboleths in diplomacy regarding their desire to kill or enslave the kraken.

The aboleths might respond to a number of different arguments:

- Even if the aboleths can enslave the kraken now, the creature is still growing and will eventually break free of their control. Even a gang of aboleths is no match for a full-grown kraken, so the creature should be destroyed for the aboleths' own safety.
- The kraken's substantial intellect has been hopelessly tainted by exposure to Sgothgah's religious beliefs. All gods are anathema to aboleths, so the kraken should be destroyed before its poisoned thoughts can influence others.
- Nothing in the sea can match the strength of a kraken, and the aboleths might never again have the opportunity to take control of such a weapon in their fight against the gods. The creature must be enslaved and forced to serve them.

If the players would rather not roleplay a telepathic argument with highly intelligent alien minds, they can lead the aboleths toward one option or the other with a



JUVENILE
KRAKEN

Warded Entrance. Sgothgah's advanced magical knowledge has allowed it to set up dozens of wards to protect the temple, each treated as a casting of *glyph of warding* using the explosive runes option. All but one of the wards have been dismantled or triggered by the aboleths that attacked the site. The sole remaining glyph is at the bottom level of the tower, in the doorway into area L2.

The glyph is triggered when anyone who isn't a worshiper of Tharizdun moves or swims through the doorway from area L1 to area L2. When the glyph is triggered, each creature in area L1 takes 22 (5d8) lightning damage. Because the lightning diffuses evenly through the water, no saving throw is allowed against this effect.

The glyph can be found by any creature that inspects the doorway and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The glyph can be dispelled by *dispel magic*, but there is no nonmagical way to disarm it. It can be avoided only by entering the temple through another entrance.

successful DC 20 group Charisma (Persuasion) check. If negotiations break down or if the characters give the aboleths a reason to be paranoid (which is easy to do, given their natural inclinations), these creatures attack.

L3. LANDGRAVE'S PIT

The light that fills the pit originates in the flicker of intricate magical sigils that cover its top edge and the upper twenty feet of its walls. Those sigils are woven into a complex tapestry of magical light, undulating and writhing like an obscene carpet of snakes. Below their pulsing glow, the pit descends into utter darkness.

Landgrave's dedication to his mad goal is demonstrated by the success of his doomed digging effort. The pit that opens up inside the temple is hundreds of feet deep and pitch black below the uppermost 20 feet. But the creature that lurks within is much closer than that.

The **juvenile kraken** (see appendix C) normally lurks several hundred feet down in the pit, but its hunger has steadily drawn it up higher. Its progress is slow because it must acclimate to the decreasing pressure as it rises. It now lurks 40 feet below the edge of the pit, concealed in the inky-dark water. If it senses activity in the water above or at the lip of the pit, it races up and strikes.

Although still immature, the kraken is already monstrous to behold, with oily, dark green flesh, 20-foot-long arms, and a ravenous mouth lined with hundreds of dagger-like teeth. Its enormous eyes are surrounded by an aura of red energy, the mark of the power channeled into it. The glyph with which Sgothgah branded the creature takes the form of a blue-black mark resembling the spiral sign of Tharizdun. The flesh surrounding the spiral is scarred by ulcers and sores; the energy channeled into it sometimes erupts spontaneously and rots away its flesh.

The kraken understands from Sgothgah's constant whispering that it has a great, unknown destiny. It was content to let Sgothgah serve its needs as it grew, but it had already decided to kill the aboleth once Sgothgah's usefulness had run its course. The kraken has no interest in cooperating with anyone. Its only fear is dying before it becomes monarch of the sea, so if it is reduced to 40 hit points or fewer, it stops fighting and focuses on escape.

Writhing Sigils. The glowing marks that writhe around the pit are a unique magical channeling device concocted by Sgothgah. The two aboleths from the Endless Nadir didn't recognize it or understand its purpose, which led to their hesitation about attacking the kraken. If the characters heard Mr. Dory's explanation of how the cultists are incubating their spawn in the fear and misery of the Styes, the players might figure out the function of this magical conduit. Otherwise, a character who has proficiency in Arcana who studies the glyph for a few minutes and succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check determines its purpose.

The pit's magic acts as a beacon for negative emotional energy generated within five miles of it, drawing wisps of all such energy from the dismal environment of the Styes. Channeled through the unholy symbol of Tharizdun that the kraken bears, that energy accelerates the kraken's growth and fuels its hostility. Normally such a beast would take decades to reach maturity, but Sgothgah's magic has reduced that time to mere months—and now the kraken will reach maturity in only a few weeks unless it is destroyed.

The magic of the pit can be destroyed with a successful casting of *dispel magic* (DC 19), or by physically destroying the sigils on the floor of area L3 and the similar marks on the top 20 feet of the pit wall. The floor and the pit each have AC 17; 75 hit points; immunity to necrotic, poison, and psychic damage; and resistance to all other damage while the magic endures.

AFTERMATH

To end the killings that have been plaguing the Styes, the characters need only slay Sgothgah. But killing the aboleth won't save the Styes from the doom lurking in Landgrave's Folly.

If the characters don't destroy the juvenile kraken (or at least wound it badly enough that it flees, after which they destroy the magic of the pit), it eventually kills the two squabbling aboleths and begins a reign of terror.

The creature starts to systematically destroy any ships and fishing boats sailing past Landgrave's Folly, and seemingly for sport it periodically slithers up to the Styes to pluck hapless victims from its sagging docks. The cultists of Tharizdun are able to foresee the kraken's strikes and can appease it with sacrifices, and their status in the district quickly improves. Eventually, the cult leaders replace the councillors as rulers of the Styes. Defeating the kraken and its growing cult becomes much more difficult at that point, though it could make for an exciting follow-up adventure.

If the characters destroy the kraken, they have done a huge service to all seafaring folk in the area, though the locals might not realize it or appreciate it at first. Some time after the kraken's defeat, the councillors hold a closed meeting and decide to reward the characters: each receives a small teak coffer containing pearls and other gems worth 3,000 gp, on the condition that they do not speak publicly about their efforts.

If any of the aboleths survive, those creatures have long memories, and are certain to seek revenge against characters who wronged them. This is especially true of Sgothgah. Alternatively, if the characters came to an agreement with the aboleths of the Endless Nadir and aided them in their mission, they might be able to call in a favor in the future. The aboleths' alien nature, however, means that their idea of repaying a favor might not necessarily match that of the characters.

If the kraken escapes, it retreats into the dismal depths of the sea and grows naturally to maturity. The dire, apocalyptic events that might be triggered by a gargantuan monstrosity whose mind has been poisoned by negative energy and the constant nightmares of Tharizdun are left for you to imagine.

APPENDIX A: OF SHIPS AND THE SEA

The ocean is a vast and dangerous place, ripe with adventure both above and below the waves. This appendix expands the material available in the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*, providing further resources for waterborne adventures.

SHIP STAT BLOCKS

To aid in running adventures where ships engage in combat, undertake precise navigation, or face situations where their various capabilities become relevant, the following section presents new rules and stat blocks for a spectrum of vessels.

BASIC STATISTICS

A ship stat block has three main parts: basic statistics, components, and action options. Ships can't take any actions on their own. Without effort from its crew, a ship might drift on the water, come to a stop, or careen out of control.

SIZE

Most ships are Large, Huge, or Gargantuan. A ship's size category is determined by its length or width, whichever is longer. For instance, a ship that is 10 feet long and 20 feet wide would use the size category that has a 20-foot width, which means the ship is Gargantuan.

SPACE

A ship doesn't have a square space unless its stat block specifies otherwise. For example, a ship that is 20 feet long and 10 feet wide occupies a 20-by-10-foot space.

A ship can't move into a space that is too small to accommodate it. If it tries to do so, it crashes, as described in the "Crashing a Ship" section (page 199).

CAPACITY

A ship's stat block indicates how many creatures and how much cargo it can carry. Creatures include both the crew of the vessel and any passengers who might ride along. Passengers don't generally engage in running a ship, but they also don't need to be mere bystanders. Seasick merchants and marines thoroughly capable of facing menaces from the deep both count as passengers.

Cargo capacity notes the maximum amount of cargo a ship can carry. A vessel can't move—or might even start taking on water—if its cargo exceeds this capacity.

TRAVEL PACE

A ship's travel pace determines how far the vessel can move per hour and per day. A ship's movement-related components (described later in the stat block) determine how far the vessel can move each round.

ABILITY SCORES

A ship has the six ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma) and the corresponding modifiers.

The Strength of a ship expresses its size and weight. Dexterity represents a ship's ease of handling. A ship's Constitution covers its durability and the quality of its construction. Ships usually have a score of 0 in Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma.

If a ship has a 0 in a score, it automatically fails any ability check or saving throw that uses that score.

VULNERABILITIES, RESISTANCES, AND IMMUNITIES

A ship's vulnerabilities, resistances, and immunities apply to all its components, unless otherwise noted in the stat block.

Ships are typically immune to poison and psychic damage. Ships are also usually immune to the following conditions: blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, and unconscious.

ACTIONS

This part of the stat block specifies what the ship can do on its turn, using its special actions rather than the actions used by creatures. It even relies on its actions to move; it doesn't have a move otherwise. The ship's captain decides which actions to use. A given action can be chosen only once during a turn.

COMPONENTS

A ship is composed of different components, each of which comprises multiple objects:

Hull. A ship's hull is its basic frame, on which the other components are mounted.

Control. A control component is used to steer a ship.

Movement. A movement component is the element of the ship that enables it to move, such as a set of sails or oars, and has a specific speed.

Weapon. A ship capable of being used in combat has one or more weapon components, each of which is operated separately.

A ship's component might have special rules, as described in the stat block.

ARMOR CLASS

A component has an Armor Class. Its AC reflects the materials used to construct it and any defensive plating used to augment its toughness.

HIT POINTS

A ship component is destroyed and becomes unusable when it drops to 0 hit points. A ship is wrecked if its hull is destroyed.

A ship doesn't have Hit Dice.

DAMAGE THRESHOLD

If a ship component has a damage threshold, that threshold appears after its hit points. A component has immunity to all damage unless it takes an amount of damage that equals or exceeds its threshold, in which

case it takes damage as normal. Damage that fails to bypass the threshold is considered superficial and doesn't reduce the component's hit points.

SAMPLE SHIPS

This section provides stat blocks, deck plans, and other details for some of the most common ships.

GALLEY

Galley is long vessels that rely on sails and sizable rowing crews to move. These ships can carry siege weapons and soldiers to war or transport large amounts of cargo for merchants. No matter the ship's purpose, the crew almost always hires extra protection, since galleys make large, cargo-rich targets for pirates.

A galley has the following features:

Ceilings. The ceiling of the galley's lower deck is 8 feet high.

Light. Hanging lanterns cast bright light throughout the ship.

Rigging. Rigging on the ship can be climbed without an ability check.

GALLEY

Gargantuan vehicle (130 ft. by 20 ft.)

Creature Capacity 80 crew, 40 passengers

Cargo Capacity 150 tons

Travel Pace 4 miles per hour (96 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	4 (-3)	20 (+5)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn, the galley can take 3 actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only 2 actions if it has fewer than forty crew and only 1 action if it has fewer than twenty. It can't take these actions if it has fewer than three crew.

Fire Ballistas. The galley can fire its **ballistas** (DMG, ch. 8).

Fire Mangonels. The galley can fire its **mangonels** (DMG, ch. 8).

Move. The galley can use its helm to move with its oars or sails. As part of this move, it can use its naval ram.

HULL

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 500 (damage threshold 20)

CONTROL: HELM

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 50

Move up to the speed of one of the ship's movement components, with one 90-degree turn. If the helm is destroyed, the galley can't turn.

SIEGE WEAPONS

Some ships are armed with siege weapons, the descriptions of which are in the "Siege Equipment" section of chapter 8 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. In this appendix, the name of a piece of siege equipment appears in bold with a parenthetical note (DMG, ch. 8), reminding you where to find the object's description.

Sails and Oars. The galley has one 120-foot-tall mast with sails to catch the wind and oars on the lower deck for rowing the vessel.

EXAMPLE GALLEY CREW

A galley requires a crew of eighty to properly sail or row the vessel and might carry extra passengers or soldiers. If the characters are guests on a galley, the crew consists of the following creatures, all of which have proficiency with water vehicles in addition to their normal statistics:

- One captain (**bandit captain**)
- Five other officers: a first mate, a bosun, a quartermaster, a surgeon, and a cook (**scouts**)
- Forty-two sailors (**commoners**)
- Twelve siege engineers (**guards**)
- Twenty **guards**

MOVEMENT: OARS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 30 ft. (requires at least 40 crew)

MOVEMENT: SAILS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -10 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 35 ft.; 15 ft. while sailing into the wind; 50 ft. while sailing with the wind

WEAPONS: BALLISTAS (4)

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 50 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (3d10) piercing damage.

WEAPONS: MANGONELS (2)

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 100 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 200/800 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 ft. of it), one target. **Hit:** 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.

WEAPON: NAVAL RAM

Armor Class 20

Hit Points 100 (damage threshold 10)

The galley has advantage on all saving throws relating to crashing when it crashes into a creature or an object. Any damage it takes from the crash is applied to the naval ram rather than to the ship. These benefits don't apply if another vessel crashes into the galley.

MAIN DECK

The main deck of the galley has the following features:

Ballistas. Four **ballistas** (*DMG*, ch. 8) are attached to the fore of the deck. Ten ballista arrows are stacked and secured near each.

KEELBOAT

Gargantuan vehicle (60 ft. by 20 ft.)

Creature Capacity 3 crew, 4 passengers

Cargo Capacity 0.5 tons

Travel Pace 3 miles per hour (72 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn, the keelboat can take 2 actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only 1 action if it has only one crew. It can't take these actions if it has no crew.

Fire Ballista. The keelboat can fire its **ballista** (*DMG*, ch. 8).

Move. The keelboat can use its helm to move with its oars or sails.

HULL

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 100 (damage threshold 10)

CONTROL: HELM

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 50

Move up to the speed of one of the ship's movement components, with one 90-degree turn. If the helm is destroyed, the keelboat can't turn.

MOVEMENT: OARS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 20 ft.

MOVEMENT: SAILS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -5 ft. speed per 20 damage taken

Speed (water) 25 ft.; 15 ft. while sailing into the wind; 35 ft. while sailing with the wind

WEAPON: BALLISTA

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 50

Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (3d10) piercing damage.

Keelboats typically include a **ballista** (*DMG*, ch. 8) only when they are equipped for combat.

Mangonels. Two **mangonels** (*DMG*, ch. 8) are attached to the aft of the deck. Ten mangonel stones are stacked and secured near each catapult.

Naval Ram. The galley's stern features an iron naval ram used for attacking other ships.

Opening. A 10-foot-wide, 80-foot-long open space in the middle of the deck stretches fore to aft and leads down to the lower deck.

Railing. A 3-foot-high rail is built around the deck's perimeter, providing half cover for Medium creatures and three-quarters cover for Small creatures behind it.

Rowboats. Eight rowboats are stacked in two groups of four on this deck. Ropes and pulleys can hoist these boats in and out of the water.

Timpani. A timpani with two attached mallets sits on the aft of the main deck just before the opening to the lower deck. A crew member plays this instrument while the sailors on the lower deck row, the beat helping to synchronize the rowers' strokes.

Wheel. The ship's wheel stands at the aft of the deck.

LOWER DECK

The cramped lower deck of the galley ship reeks of body odor and has the following features:

Cargo Holds. Cargo holds at the fore and aft of the lower deck hold crates, barrels, and ammunition secured with rope.

Oars. Thirty-two benches are built into the deck, each with a 20-foot-long oar. When the ship is rowed, crew members sit on these benches to work the oars. Ten spare oars hang on the walls.

KEELBOAT

One of the smallest sailing vessels, keelboats can be sailed or rowed by a single person. These ships often transport small amounts of cargo or passengers. They're perfect for pleasure cruises, as they're easier and less expensive to operate than larger vessels.

A keelboat has the following features:

Light. A hanging lantern or two casts bright light across the ship.

Rigging. Rigging on the ship can be climbed without an ability check.

Sails. The keelboat has one 10-foot-tall mast with sails.

EXAMPLE KEELBOAT CREW

A keelboat requires a single crew member to operate smoothly. If the characters are guests on a keelboat, the crew consists of a single captain who has the statistics of a **bandit captain** with proficiency with water vehicles.

KEELBOAT DECK

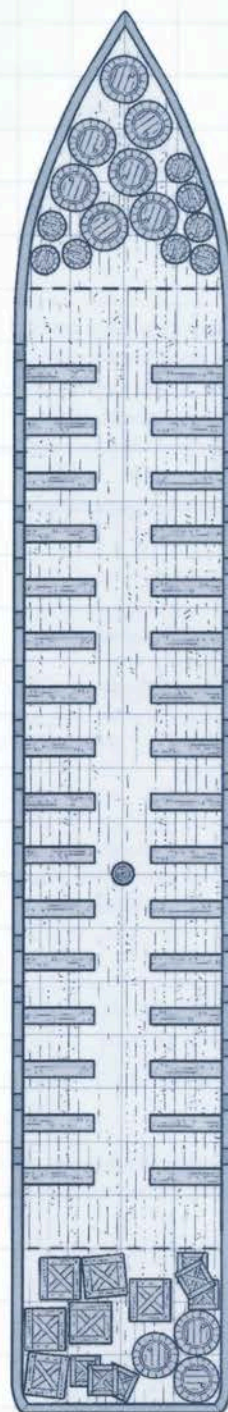
The deck of the keelboat has the following features:

Ballista. A **ballista** (*DMG*, ch. 8) is mounted on the fore of the deck. Ten ballista arrows are stacked and secured nearby.

Oars. The deck of the ship holds twelve benches and four 15-foot-long oars. When the ship is rowed, crew members sit on these benches to work the oars.



MAIN DECK



LOWER DECK

1 square = 5 feet

Railing. The deck has a 3-foot-high rail around its perimeter that provides half cover for Medium creatures and three-quarters cover for Small creatures behind it.

KEELBOAT CABIN

The keelboat cabin has the following features:

Footlockers. Beneath each bed is a footlocker. The footlockers are iron and have AC 19, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Furnishings. Two beds and a desk with a chair stand at the aft of the cabin.

LONGSHIP

Longships are vessels that rely on a rowing crew and sails to move across the sea. These ships are typically used to carry soldiers into combat. The size of a longship makes it easy for troops to get on and off quickly, making it the perfect ship for engaging in surprise strikes.

LONGSHIP

Gargantuan vehicle (70 ft. by 20 ft.)

Creature Capacity 40 crew, 100 passengers

Cargo Capacity 10 tons

Travel Pace 5 miles per hour (120 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	6 (–2)	17 (+3)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn, the longship can take the move action below. It can't take this action if it has no crew.

Move. The longship can use its helm to move with its oars or sails.

A longship has the following features:

Light. Hanging lanterns cast bright light over the deck.

Rigging. Rigging on the ship can be climbed without an ability check.

Rudder. The ship is steered by a rudder control on the aft of the deck.

Sails. The longship has one 20-foot-tall mast with sails that can be used to sail the ship.

EXAMPLE LONGSHIP CREW

A longship requires a crew of forty to properly sail or row the vessel and often carries extra passengers or soldiers. If the characters are guests on a longship, the crew consists of the following creatures, all of which have proficiency with water vehicles in addition to their normal statistics:

- One captain (**berserker**)
- Five other officers: a first mate, a bosun, a quartermaster, a surgeon, and a cook (**berserkers**)
- Thirty-four sailors (**commoners**)

HULL

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 300 (damage threshold 15)

CONTROL: HELM

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 50

Move up to the speed of one of the ship's movement components, with one 90-degree turn. If the helm is destroyed, the longship can't turn.

MOVEMENT: OARS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; –5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 20 ft. (requires at least 20 crew)

MOVEMENT: SAILS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; –10 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 45 ft.; 15 ft. while sailing into the wind; 60 ft. while sailing with the wind

ROWBOAT

Large vehicle (10 ft. by 5 ft.)

Creature Capacity 2 crew, 2 passengers

Cargo Capacity 0.25 tons

Travel Pace 3 miles per hour (24 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	8 (–1)	11 (+0)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn, the rowboat can take the move action below. It can't take this action if it has no crew.

Move. The rowboat can move using its oars.

HULL

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 50

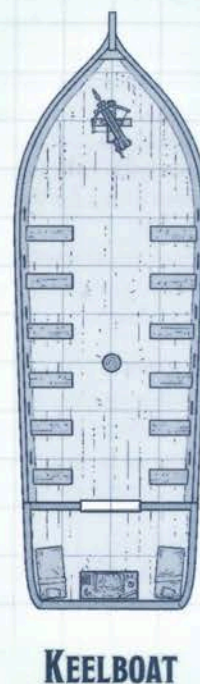
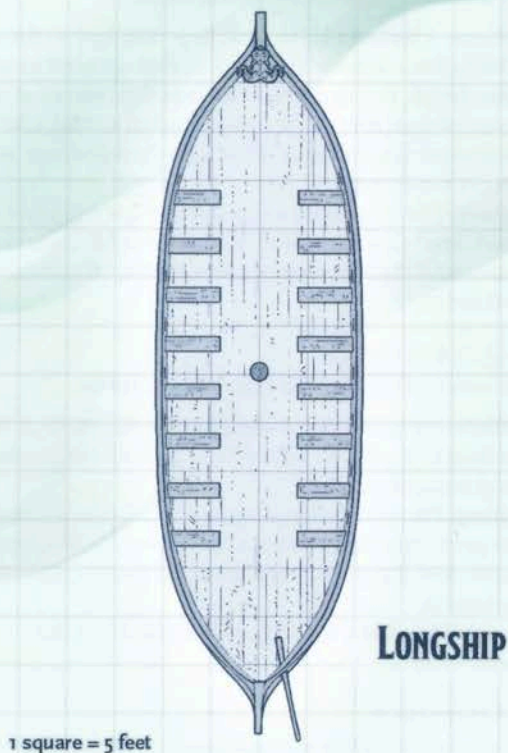
CONTROL AND MOVEMENT: OARS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 25

Speed (water) 15 ft.

Move up to the ship's speed, with one 90-degree turn. Without oars, the rowboat's speed is 0.



A.2: LONGSHIP AND KEELBOAT

LONGSHIP DECK

The deck of the longship has the following features:

Oars. Sixteen benches are built into the deck, each with a 15-foot-long oar. When the ship is rowed, crew members sit on these benches to work the oars. Five spare oars hang on the walls.

Railing. The deck has a 3-foot-high rail covered in wooden shields around its perimeter that provides half cover for Medium creatures and three-quarters cover for Small creatures behind it.

ROWBOAT

The humble rowboat serves to ferry passengers back and forth from larger ships or to navigate lakes and rivers. Due to its simple, versatile design, a rowboat has no decks or typical crew. Weighing 100 pounds, a rowboat is easy to transport and might be carried by larger ships.

SAILING SHIP AND WARSHIP

Sailing ships are fast-moving designs focused on travel. Warships are slower but more heavily armed vessels capable of taking on more cargo. They share many of the following areas, but, as their map tags reveal, they don't have the exact same facilities.

A sailing ship or warship has the following features:

Ceilings. The ceilings in the lower deck, holds, and cabins are 8 feet high with 6-foot-high doorways.

Doors. The ship's doors are made of wood and have AC 15, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic

damage. A lock can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made using thieves' tools, or the door can be forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Footlockers. Footlockers on the ship are iron and have AC 19, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Light. Hanging lanterns cast bright light throughout the ship.

Rigging. Rigging on the ship can be climbed without an ability check.

Sails. The ship has three 80-foot-tall masts with sails to catch the wind and oars on the lower deck for rowing.

EXAMPLE CREW

A sailing ship or warship requires a large crew to properly sail the vessel. Warships carry extra soldiers to fight battles and fire the siege weapons. If the characters are guests on a sailing ship or warship, the crew consists of the following creatures, all of which have proficiency with water vehicles in addition to their normal statistics:

- One captain (**bandit captain**)
- Four other officers: a first mate, a bosun, a quartermaster, and a cook (**nobles**)
- Twenty-five sailors (**commoners**)

A warship typically includes the following additional crew to augment its fighting ability:

- Forty soldiers (**guards**)
- Eight siege engineers (**guards**)
- One **priest** (the ship's surgeon)

1. MAIN DECK

The main deck of the ship has the following features:

Mangonel. Sailing ships have one **mangonel** (*DMG*, ch. 8) attached to the deck. Warships have two **mangonels** (*DMG*, ch. 8). Each weapon has 10 mangonel stones stacked and secured near it.

Hatch. A covered, 10-foot-square opening leads to the lower deck (area W8).

Railing. The main deck has a 3-foot-high rail around its perimeter that provides half cover for Medium creatures and three-quarters cover for Small creatures behind it.

Rowboats. Four rowboats are stacked on top of each other on this deck. Ropes and pulleys can hoist these boats in and out of the water.

2. OFFICERS' QUARTERS

Four beds stand in the officer's quarters. Beneath each is an iron footlocker that holds the officers' belongings. The officers sleep in shifts so someone remains on duty to command the crew and carry out the captain's orders.

3. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The captain's quarters hold a bed and a desk. Beneath the bed is an iron footlocker that holds the captain's belongings.

4. SIEGE WEAPON AMMUNITION

Shelves and rope on the walls of this cabin secure mangonel stones and ballista arrows.

5. SUPPLIES

This area holds tools, barrels of tar, rope, extra material to repair sails, and other supplies needed to maintain the ship.

6. FORECASTLE

The forecastle has the following features:

Ballista. A **ballista** (*DMG*, ch. 8) is attached to the deck. Ten ballista arrows are stacked and secured nearby.

Figurehead. Warships have an iron figurehead at the front of their forecastle, often shaped to look like a fearsome sea predator. This figurehead serves as the ship's naval ram.

Railing. The forecastle has a 3-foot-high rail around its perimeter that provides half cover for Medium creatures and three-quarters cover for Small creatures behind it.

7. QUARTERDECK

The quarterdeck has the following features:

Ballista. On a warship, a **ballista** (*DMG*, ch. 8) is attached to the deck. Ten ballista arrows are stacked and secured nearby.

Railing. The quarterdeck has a 3-foot-high rail around its perimeter that provides half cover for Medium creatures and three-quarters cover for Small creatures behind it.

Wheel. The ship's wheel stands at the aft of the quarterdeck.

8. OAR DECK

Twenty-two benches are built into the deck of the lower deck, each with a 20-foot-long oar. When the ship is rowed, crew members sit on these benches to work the oars. Ten spare oars hang on the walls of the ship.

9. PRIVY

Benches line the walls of this room. Four holes carved in them house chamber pots.

SAILING SHIP

Gargantuan vehicle (100 ft. by 20 ft.)

Creature Capacity 30 crew, 20 passengers

Cargo Capacity 100 tons

Travel Pace 5 miles per hour (120 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	7 (-2)	17 (+3)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn, the ship can take 3 actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only 2 actions if it has fewer than twenty crew and only 1 action if it has fewer than ten. It can't take these actions if it has fewer than three crew.

Fire Ballista. The ship can fire its **ballista** (*DMG*, ch. 8).

Fire Mangonel. The ship can fire its **mangonel** (*DMG*, ch. 8).

Move. The ship can use its helm to move with its sails.

HULL

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 300 (damage threshold 15)

CONTROL: HELM

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 50

Move up to the speed of the ship's sails, with one 90-degree turn. If the helm is destroyed, the ship can't turn.

MOVEMENT: SAILS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 45 ft.; 15 ft. while sailing into the wind; 60 ft. while sailing with the wind

WEAPON: BALLISTA

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 50

Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (3d10) piercing damage.

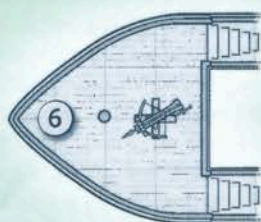
WEAPON: MANGONEL

Armor Class 15

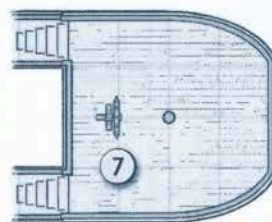
Hit Points 100

Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 200/800 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 ft. of it), one target. **Hit:** 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.

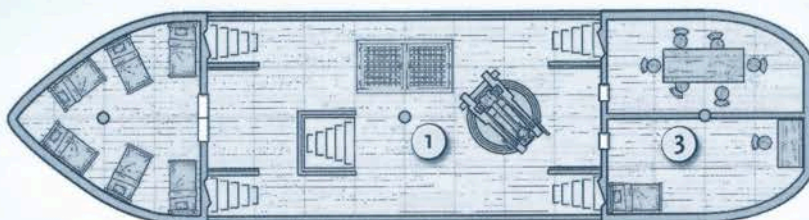
1 square = 5 feet



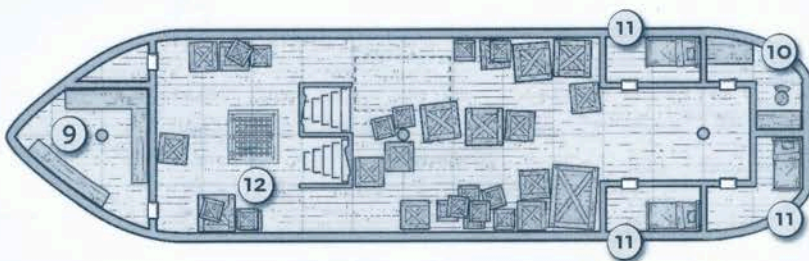
FORECASTLE



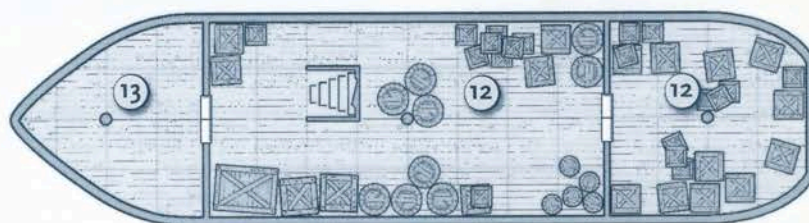
QUARTERDECK



MAIN DECK



LOWER DECK



HOLD

10. MEDICAL CABIN

Hooks and shelves on the walls hold medical instruments, bandages, balms, tonics, jars of leeches, and more, ready to treat injuries from combat or sailing mishaps.

11. GUEST CABIN AND BRIG

This cabin is meant for guests and visiting high-ranking officials along for the journey. Since warships often have a greater need to house prisoners rather than guests, each bed aboard such a vessel also has a set of manacles (see chapter 5 in the *Player's Handbook*) attached to its frame.

12. HOLD

This area houses both passengers and cargo. The ship's off-duty crew sleep on bedrolls among the crates and barrels of food, water, and other supplies.

13. ARMORY

The ship's supply of weapons and armor is held in this cabin. Its walls are fitted with built-in weapon and armor racks. The door to this cabin is usually locked, the key kept by one of the ship's officers.

WARSHIP

Gargantuan vehicle (100 ft. by 20 ft.)

Creature Capacity 40 crew, 60 passengers

Cargo Capacity 200 tons

Travel Pace 4 miles per hour (96 miles per day)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	4 (-3)	20 (+5)	0	0	0

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

ACTIONS

On its turn, the warship can take 3 actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only 2 actions if it has fewer than twenty crew and only 1 action if it has fewer than ten. It can't take these actions if it has fewer than three crew.

Fire Ballistas. The warship can fire its **ballistas** (*DMG*, ch. 8).

Fire Mangonels. The warship can fire its **mangonels** (*DMG*, ch. 8).

Move. The warship can use its helm to move with its oars or sails. As part of this move, it can use its naval ram.

HULL

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 500 (damage threshold 20)

CONTROL: HELM

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 50

OFFICERS AND CREW

Each vessel requires people to run it: the officers in charge and the sailors who follow their orders.

TYPES OF OFFICERS

If you'd like to explore running a ship, it needs officers to oversee its operations—officers who fill six different roles. Some roles aboard a ship reflect the need for trained experts to direct a crew's efforts. Other roles focus on keeping the crew's health and morale in order. The roles are meant to provide a sense of the types of ability checks useful to managing a ship. Of these, though, captain is the only role that must be filled for the ship to function. A ship needs a single person to issue orders and respond to threats, otherwise a ship risks chaos and confusion during a crisis.

Each type of officer is described below, along with the abilities and proficiencies that help a character excel in that role:

Captain. The captain issues orders. The best captains have high Intelligence and Charisma scores, as well as proficiency with water vehicles and the Intimidation and Persuasion skills.

Move up to the speed of one of the ship's movement components, with one 90-degree turn. If the helm is destroyed, the warship can't turn.

MOVEMENT: OARS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 20 ft. (requires at least 20 crew)

MOVEMENT: SAILS

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 100; -10 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

Speed (water) 35 ft.; 15 ft. while sailing into the wind; 50 ft. while sailing with the wind

WEAPONS: BALLISTAS (2)

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 50 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (3d10) piercing damage.

WEAPONS: MANGONELS (2)

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 100 each

Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 200/800 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 ft. of it), one target. **Hit:** 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.

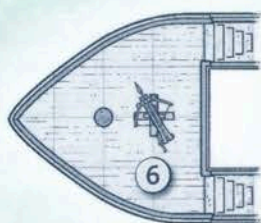
NAVAL RAM

Armor Class 20

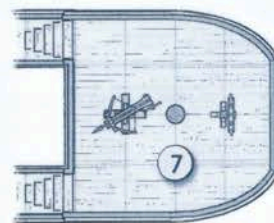
Hit Points 100 (threshold 10)

The warship has advantage on all saving throws relating to crashing when it crashes into a creature or object. Any damage it takes from the crash is applied to the naval ram rather than to the ship. These benefits don't apply if another vessel crashes into the warship.

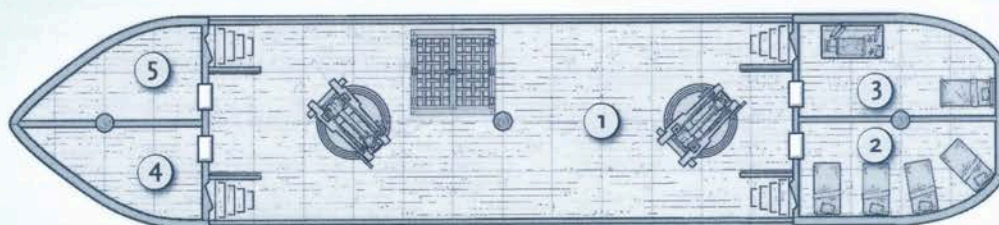
1 square = 5 feet



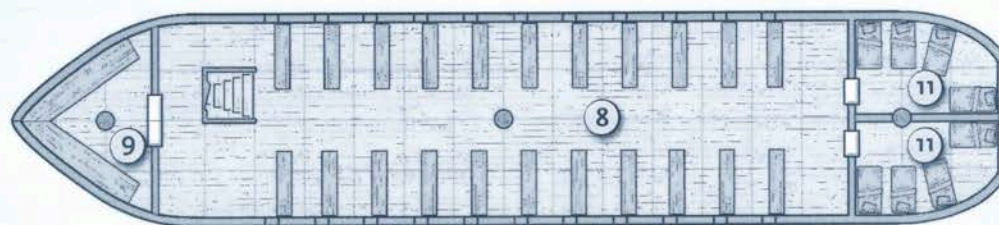
FORECASTLE



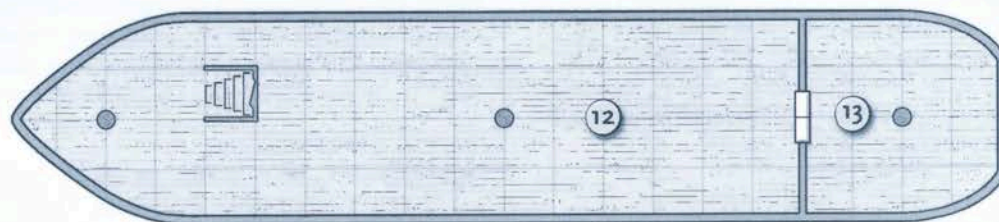
QUARTERDECK



MAIN DECK



LOWER DECK



HOLD

First Mate. This specialist keeps the crew's morale high by providing supervision, encouragement, and discipline. A first mate benefits from a high Charisma score, as well as proficiency with the Intimidation and Persuasion skills.

Bosun. The bosun (or boatswain) provides technical advice to the captain and crew and leads repair and maintenance efforts. A good bosun has a high Strength score, as well as proficiency with carpenter's tools and the Athletics skill.

Quartermaster. The quartermaster plots the ship's course, relying on knowledge of nautical charts and a study of weather and sea conditions. A reliable quartermaster tends to have a high Wisdom score, as well as proficiency with navigator's tools and the Nature skill.

Surgeon. The ship's surgeon tends to injuries, keeps illnesses from spreading throughout the ship, and oversees sanitation. A capable surgeon benefits from a high Intelligence score, as well as proficiency with herbalism kits and the Medicine skill.

Cook. A ship's cook works with the limited ingredients aboard a ship to make meals. A skilled cook keeps the crew's morale in top shape, while a poor one drags down the entire crew's performance. A talented cook has a high Constitution score, as well as proficiency with brewer's supplies and cook's utensils.

CREW MEMBERS

A ship requires a number of able-bodied sailors to crew it, as specified in its stat block. A crew's skill, experience, morale, and health are defined by its quality score. This score can affect a number of general ship activities, like the crew's ability to notice threats or contend with hazards. A crew starts with a quality score of +4, but that score varies over time, going as low as -10 and as high as +10. It decreases as a crew takes casualties, suffers hardship, or endures poor health. It increases if the crew enjoys high morale, has good health care, and receives fair leadership.

A typical crew member uses the **commoner** stat block in the *Monster Manual*.

OPTIONAL RULE: LOYALTY AND QUALITY

When dealing with an individual member of the crew, you might find it useful to use the optional loyalty rule from chapter 4 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. To convert a quality score into an individual's loyalty score, add 10 to the crew's quality score.

MUTINY

A poorly led or mistreated crew might turn against its officers. Once per day, if a crew's quality score is lower than 0, the captain must make a Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check modified by the crew's quality score.

If the check total is between 1 and 9, the crew's quality score decreases by 1.

If the check total is 0 or lower, the crew mutinies. They become hostile to the officers and might attempt to kill them, imprison them, or throw them overboard. The

crew can be cowed into obedience through violence, combat, or offers of treasure or other rewards.

When the DM ends the mutiny, the crew's quality score increases by 1d4.

SHORE LEAVE

Life aboard a ship is a constant wear on the crew. Spending time in port allows the crew to relax and regain its composure.

If a crew's quality score is 3 or lower, the score increases by 1 for each day the crew spends in port or ashore.

SUPERIOR SHIP UPGRADES

Some vessels possess extraordinary abilities, whether due to magic or superior artisanship. The upgrades below can replace a ship's existing components or provide a new element to augment a ship's abilities.

Adding an upgrade costs 15,000 gp and requires 1d4 weeks of work. During that time, the ship must remain in port. If the ship leaves, the work must start over, but you don't need to pay the gold piece cost a second time.

HULL UPGRADES

Any ship with a hull can gain one of the following upgrades. In some cases, an upgrade also provides a benefit to the ship's other components.

CHURNING HULL

A tempest rages within these rune-etched, iron chains. Raiders and pirates who operate under the blessings of a storm god sometimes make use of this upgrade.

By draping the chains over a ship's hull, the storm's fury thrashes into the water around it. The water within 210 feet of the ship is difficult terrain for everything other than this ship.

DEATH VESSEL

Crafted with materials harvested from the Shadowfell, this upgrade grants a ship an aura of dread. As an action, the ship can create a pulse of horrific energy. Every creature that is an enemy of the ship who is on board or within 210 feet of it must make DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is frightened of the ship for 1 minute. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this ability for 24 hours. Once this ability is used, it can't be used again until 1d4 hours have passed.

FROST-LOCKED HULL

This upgrade replaces a ship's hull with supernatural ice drawn from the elemental planes. The hull and the other components of the ship are immune to cold damage but vulnerable to fire damage. The ship can also move at its normal speed over ice of any thickness, floating on the ice at the same depth as it would in water.

LIVING VESSEL

This vessel's hull was crafted in the Feywild under the direction of master eladrin shipwrights. It is a living plant, drawing sustenance from water and sunlight. Vines covered in thick leaves hang over its side, and

the wood runs with fresh sap when damaged. The ship gains a +2 bonus to all Constitution checks or saving throws. As long as the ship has at least 1 hit point, it regains 10 hit points every minute.

REINFORCED HULL

A master shipwright can use superior materials and clever design to make a ship's hull more resilient. Such reinforcement doubles the hull's hit point maximum.

VIGILANT WATCH

A row of crystal orbs, each filled with viscous liquid and a beholder's eyeball, is mounted along this ship's hull. Invisible creatures are visible while on the ship or within 120 feet of it.

MOVEMENT UPGRADES

Each movement upgrade applies to a specific movement type. A component can gain the benefits of one upgrade.

CLOCKWORK OARS

Using a combination of magic and clockwork, the oars on this ship require only one crew member to use them, pushing the button or lever that activates them.

EVER-FULL SAILS

These billowing sails are woven from cloud-stuff drawn from the Elemental Plane of Air. Wind whips and whistles around them, allowing a ship to move with a speed of 60 feet regardless of direction relative to the wind.

DEFIANT SAILS

These sails glitter with a fine coat of mithral treated with abjuration magic. While the sails are unfurled, ranged weapon attacks made against the ship and anyone aboard it are made with disadvantage, as a result of the sails' protective magic. This drawback doesn't apply if the attacker is aboard the ship.

DRAGON SAILS

Dragon scales woven into these sails make them more resistant to damage. The sails gain a +3 bonus to AC, and they have resistance to a damage type based on the type of scales used to craft them, as shown on the Dragon Sails table.

DRAGON SAILS

Dragon Type	Damage Type
Black	Acid
Blue	Lightning
Brass	Fire
Bronze	Lightning
Copper	Acid
Gold	Fire
Green	Acid
Red	Fire
Silver	Cold
White	Cold

SCREAMING SAILS

Woven from the energy of captured wraiths and bound with the spirit of a banshee, these sails groan mournfully when they catch the wind. As an action, while within 5 feet of the sails, the ship's captain can cause the sails to unleash a howl. Every creature hostile to the ship who is on board or within 300 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, or the creature takes 4d6 psychic damage and is then frightened for 1 minute. Once this ability has been used, it can't be used again until 2d6 hours have passed.

SCYTHING OARS

Sharpened, magically reinforced oars make a vessel dangerous to approach. When the ship takes an action that moves it with these oars, any creature or object in the water within 10 feet of it at any point of the move must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2d6 slashing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

WEAPON UPGRADES

The following upgrades can apply to any weapon mounted aboard a ship. A component can gain the benefits of one upgrade, or two upgrades if one of the upgrades is Arcane Artillery.

ARCANE ARTILLERY

Using methods similar to those used to produce magic weapons, a skilled spellcaster imbues a ship's weapon with destructive energy. This weapon gains a +2 bonus to its attack and damage rolls, and its attacks count as magical.

CONCUSSIVE ROUNDS

Enhanced by abjuration magic, this weapon's attacks burst with raucous noise capable of momentarily distracting and disorienting enemy crews. If this weapon hits a vehicle's hull, that vehicle's speed decreases by 2d10 feet until the start of the attacker's next turn.

EXPLOSIVE ROUNDS

Drawing on powerful evocation magic, this weapon's attacks are imbued with unstable energy that explodes in a fiery blast. When this weapon hits, it deals an extra 2d6 fire damage.

GRASPING ROUNDS

This weapon creates spectral chains that trail after its shots, restraining enemy vessels in their grasp. When this weapon hits a ship, that vehicle must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or it can't move away from the attacker. As an action, the attacking ship can end this effect, and the target can end it by taking an action and succeeding on a DC 14 Strength check.

FIGUREHEAD UPGRADES

While figureheads are usually purely decorative, they might be magically treated to produce extraordinary effects. A ship can receive one figurehead upgrade.

GUARDIAN FIGUREHEAD

This figurehead depicts an armored knight. As an action, the ship can activate this item, causing it to animate as an iron golem. The golem acts on the ship's turn when the captain uses one of the ship's actions. The golem remains animated for 1 minute. At the end of that time, it teleports back to its position as a figurehead. Once a ship uses this action, it can't use it again for 24 hours.

RED DRAGON FIGUREHEAD

This figurehead depicts a red dragon rearing to strike, its mouth open. As an action, the ship can activate this item to create a 60-foot cone of flame that originates from the figurehead. Each creature and object in the cone must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once a ship uses this action, it can't use it again for 1 minute.

STORM GIANT FIGUREHEAD

This figurehead depicts a storm giant clutching a thunderbolt. As an action, the ship can activate this item to create a 60-foot cone that originates from the figurehead. Each creature in the cone must make DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails its saving throw is also pushed 10 feet away from the figurehead. Once a ship uses this action, it can't use it again for 1 minute.

MISCELLANEOUS UPGRADES

The following upgrades don't apply to a specific element of the ship. A ship can use any number of them, but it can gain a specific upgrade only once.

BONES OF ENDLESS TOIL

The bones of ancient, mysterious creatures festoon the ship. Potent runes crawl across these remains, emitting a sickly green radiance. When a humanoid dies aboard the ship, that creature must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, it dies as normal. If it fails, it immediately rises as a **zombie** obedient to the ship's captain. The zombie gains a working knowledge of the ship, allowing it to serve as a member of the crew. A number of creatures equal to the ship's creature capacity can be animated in this manner at any given time.

SMUGGLER'S BANNER

This flag is meant to be flown from a ship's mast. Its powerful magic causes it to appear as a flag or banner displaying the symbol of a group, captain, or realm friendly to the viewer. Multiple viewers might see different flags or crests.

The banner's true power is its ability to aid a ship in making rapid escapes. As an action, the ship and all friendly creatures aboard it teleport up to 3 miles to a known destination of the captain's choice. Hostile creatures aboard the ship don't move with the ship and fall into the water it once occupied. Once this item is used to teleport, it can't teleport in this way again for 2d6 days.

TASKMASTER'S DRUMS

This 4-foot-tall bronze drum comes with a pair of iron mallets. A creature can activate the drums as an action, causing the hammers to float above the drum and strike it to produce a thundering rhythm. For the next minute, the ship gains one additional action, as long as it has at least one action. Once this item is used, it can't be activated again for 2d10 hours.

SHIPS IN COMBAT

Whether sailing to war or hunting notorious pirates, ships make deadly weapons and dramatic battlefields. This section provides guidance on using ships in combat.

SHIPS AND INITIATIVE

A ship rolls initiative using its Dexterity, and it uses its crew's quality score as a modifier to that roll.

On a ship's turn, the captain decides which of the ship's actions to use.

SPECIAL OFFICER ACTIONS

During an encounter, the captain, first mate, and bosun each have access to two special action options: Take Aim and Full Speed Ahead, both detailed below.

TAKE AIM

As an action, the captain, first mate, or bosun directs the crew's firing, aiding in aiming one of the ship's weapons. Select one of the ship's weapons that is within 10 feet of the officer. It gains advantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of the ship's next turn.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

As an action while on deck, the captain, first mate, or bosun can exhort the crew to work harder and drive the ship forward faster. Roll a d6 and multiply the result by 5. Apply the total as a bonus to the ship's speed until the end of the ship's next turn. If the ship is already benefiting from this action's bonus, don't add the bonuses together; the higher bonus applies.

CREW IN COMBAT

Managing a ship's entire crew in combat can prove cumbersome, especially as larger ships often host dozens of sailors. Typically the crew is too busy managing the ship to do anything else during combat. Don't worry about tracking their specific positions unless you want to add that complexity. You can assume that the crew is evenly divided among the upper two decks of a ship.

CREW CASUALTIES

Slaying a ship's crew reduces the number of actions most ships can take, making the crew a tempting target in combat. Resolve individual attacks as normal, using the guidelines for resolving many, identical attacks at once from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* as needed.

In the case of spells that cover an area, such as *fireball* or *lightning bolt*, you might track the exact location of

the spell and crew to determine how many sailors it affects. Alternatively, you can roll 1d6 per level of the spell. The total of the dice is the number of crew members caught in the spell's area.

CRASHING A SHIP

If a ship moves into the space occupied by a creature or an object, the ship might crash. A ship avoids crashing if the creature or object is at least two sizes smaller than it.

When a ship crashes, it must immediately make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes damage to its hull based on the size of the creature or object it crashed into, as shown on the Crash Damage table. It also stops moving if the object or creature is one size smaller than it or larger. Otherwise the ship continues moving and the creature or object collided with moves to the nearest unoccupied space that isn't in the ship's path. At the DM's discretion, an object that is forced to move but is fixed in place is instead destroyed.

A creature struck by a ship must make a Dexterity saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + the ship's Strength modifier, taking damage based on the ship's size (as shown on the Crash Damage table) on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CRASH DAMAGE

Size	Bludgeoning Damage
Small	1d6
Medium	1d10
Large	4d10
Huge	8d10
Gargantuan	16d10

TRAVEL AT SEA

It's not just pirates and sea monsters that make journeys on the sea so treacherous. Foul weather, nautical accidents, infested food, illness, and worse all conspire to send even the most capable crews to watery graves. The following rules help adjudicate travel at sea, specifically voyages of an hour or more. This material builds on the travel rules in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

TRAVEL PACE

Ships travel at a speed given in their stat blocks. Unlike with land travel, ships can't choose to move at a faster pace, though they can choose to go slower.

If a ship's mode of movement takes damage, it might be slowed. For every decrease of 10 feet in speed, reduce the ship's travel pace by 1 mile per hour and 24 miles per day.

ACTIVITY WHILE TRAVELING

The activities available to a ship's crew and passengers are a bit different from the options available to a group traveling by land. Refer to "Activity While Traveling" in chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook* for more information on some of the topics discussed below.

A number of activities are restricted to certain officers, unless the DM rules otherwise. For example, a DM might allow a bard to engage in the Raise Morale activity by playing bawdy songs on deck to lift the crew's spirits.

The party's pace has no effect on the activities they can engage in while traveling by ship.

DRAW A MAP

A ship's captain often undertakes this activity, producing a map of the ship's progress and helps the crew get back on course if they get lost. No ability check is required.

FORAGE

The character casts fishing lines, keeping an eye out for sources of food, making a Wisdom (Survival) check when the DM calls for it.

RAISE MORALE (FIRST MATE ONLY)

The first mate can manage the crew's time to grant extended breaks, provide instruction, and generally improve the quality of life on the ship. Once every 24 hours, if the crew's quality score is 3 or lower, the first mate can make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a successful check, the crew's quality score increases by 1.

NAVIGATE (QUARTERMASTER ONLY)

The quartermaster can try to prevent the ship from becoming lost, making a Wisdom (Survival) check when the DM calls for it. (See "Becoming Lost" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.)



NOTICING THREATS

Use the passive Wisdom (Perception) score of the player characters or the crew to determine whether anyone on the ship notices a hidden threat. The crew has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score equal to 10 + the crew's quality score. The DM might decide that a threat can be noticed only by characters in a specific area of the ship. For example, only characters below deck might have a chance to hear or spot a creature hiding on board.

REPAIR (BOSUN ONLY)

At the end of the day, the ship's bosun can make a Strength check using carpenter's tools. On a 15 or higher, each damaged component regains hit points equal to 1d6 + the crew's quality score (minimum of 1 hit point). A component other than the hull that had 0 hit points becomes functional again.

STEALTH (CAPTAIN ONLY)

The ship's captain can engage in this activity only if the weather conditions restrict visibility, such as in heavy fog. The ship makes a Dexterity check with a bonus equal to the crew's quality score to determine if it can hide.

HAZARDS

Sea travel is an innately dangerous proposition. A storm on land might bog down a caravan, delaying its trip by a few days, while at sea a storm can split a ship in two and send everyone aboard to their doom. The close quarters of life aboard a ship leads to short tempers and brawls, while a few rats that sneak aboard can spread disease and spoil supplies. This section presents a variety of common hazards sailors might face on the sea.

GROUP CHECKS

To determine how a ship fares against these hazards, each threat requires the ship's officers and crew to make a special group check (see chapter 7 of the *Player's Handbook* for how group checks work). The description of a hazard specifies which officers can roll to contribute to the group check. That description also states what ability check an officer makes. Even if the officers make different ability checks, their successes and failures contribute to the one group check.

Additionally, all the non-officer members of the crew make a single check, a d20 roll modified by the crew's quality. The success or failure of all these checks—both the officers and the crew—determines the result of the group check.

While each hazard lists the officers assigned to participate in a group check, anyone can attempt an officer's check in a pinch, with two exceptions: First, only the captain can make checks associated with the captain's role; no one else can take the captain's place. Second, only one character can attempt an officer's check; they can't receive help.

Once all the checks related to the group check have been rolled, the ship's success or failure is determined. Hazards offer four levels of success or failure determined by the results of the ship's group check. A total success or a total failure occurs when every roll in the group check is a success or a failure, respectively.

DETERMINING HAZARDS

Traveling by sea is an innately dangerous proposition. When running an ocean adventure, you can select hazards based on the needs of your campaign or generate them randomly.

To determine hazards at random, roll a d20 at the start of each day of an ocean voyage. On a 20, the ship faces a hazard that day. Use the following two tables to determine the nature of the hazard and the DC of the threat it presents. Specifics corresponding to each of these DC levels are detailed along with each of the following hazards.

HAZARD TYPE

d20	Hazard Type
1–3	Crew conflict
4–6	Fire
7–9	Fog
10–12	Infestation
13–20	Storm

HAZARD DC

d20	Hazard DC
1–9	10
10–17	15
18–19	20
20	25

CREW CONFLICT

Sailors can be a rough-and-tumble bunch, and cramming them into a ship's confined quarters leads to inevitable rivalries, feuds, and petty crimes. If resentments among the crew grow too strong, the officers must step in and set things right, lest they risk mutiny or worse.

Each day a ship spends dealing with a crew conflict requires those aboard to make a group check. The check's DC is randomly determined or chosen from the Crew Conflicts DCs table. The captain, first mate, and cook each make an ability check, as shown on the Crew Conflict Checks table. This check takes the place of any other activities that the officer might undertake that day, representing their contribution to placating the crew. If no one makes the check for a particular officer, a failure is contributed toward the group check.

Even though the crew is causing trouble, some members help the officers, and thus the crew still contributes a roll to the group check. Roll a d20 for the crew, using its quality score as a modifier to the roll, and compare that check to the DC.

Determine how many of the group's checks succeeded—the officers' and the crew's—then consult the Crew Conflict Check Results table.

CREW CONFLICT DCs

DC	Description
10	Minor scuffle or petty theft
15	Brawl involving several people, theft of a valuable
20	Large brawl resulting in several injuries, theft of a prized item
25	Murder, serious brawl involving most of the crew

CREW CONFLICT CHECKS

Officer	Check
Captain	Charisma (Intimidation)
First mate	Charisma (Intimidation)
Cook	Intelligence (brewer's supplies)

CREW CONFLICT CHECK RESULTS

Result	Effect
Total Success	The crew's quality score increases by 1 for 1d4 days and the hazard ends.
Success	The hazard ends.
Failure	The crew's quality score decreases by 1.
Total Failure	The crew's quality score decreases by 1, and the crew immediately mutinies.

FIRE

A fire at sea can turn a ship into a burned-out hulk, its crew slain or forced overboard.

If a fire erupts aboard a ship, its officers and crew must make a group check to coordinate efforts to extinguish it. The check's DC is randomly determined or chosen from the Fire DCs table. The group check represents 5 minutes of work. The captain, first mate, bosun, and surgeon each make an ability check, as shown on the Fire Checks table. If no one makes the check for a particular officer, a failure is contributed toward the group check. Also, roll a d20 for the crew, using its quality score as a modifier to the roll, and compare that check to the DC.

Determine how many of the group's checks succeeded—the officers' and the crew's—then consult the Fire Check Results table.

FIRE DCs

DC	Description
10	Small, contained fire, equivalent to an oil lantern
15	Dangerous flame, equivalent to a large campfire, or multiple, smaller fires ignited at once
20	Intense fire with significant chance to spread, equivalent to a bonfire
25	Sudden, pervasive flames, such as from igniting a hold filled with flammable cargo

FIRE CHECKS

Officer	Check
Captain	Intelligence (water vehicles)
First mate	Charisma (Intimidation)
Bosun	Strength (carpenter's tools)
Surgeon	Intelligence (Medicine)

FIRE CHECK RESULTS

Result	Effect
Total Success	The fire is extinguished with nothing beyond cosmetic damage.
Success	The fire is extinguished, but the hull and 1d3 other random components take 6d6 fire damage.
Failure	The hull and 1d3 other random components take 6d6 fire damage, and the fire continues. Make another set of checks.
Total Failure	The crew's quality score decreases by 1 due to injuries, while the hull and 1d3 other random components take 6d6 fire damage. The fire continues. Make another set of checks.

FOG

Fog on land is usually an inconvenience, but at sea it can prove disastrous. Decreased visibility makes navigation more difficult and can cause a vessel to crash.

A group check determines how the officers and crew manage through one day of fog. The check's DC is randomly determined or chosen from the Fog DCs table. The captain and quartermaster each make an ability check, as shown on the Fog Checks table. If no one makes the check for a particular officer, a failure is contributed toward the group check. Also, roll a d20 for the crew, using its quality score as a modifier to the roll, and compare that check to the DC.

Determine how many of the group's checks succeeded—the officers' and the crew's—then consult the Fog Check Results table.

Fog DCs

DC	Description
10	Light fog
15	Moderate fog
20	Heavy fog
25	Very heavy fog

FOG CHECKS

Officer	Check
Captain	Intelligence (water vehicles)
Quartermaster	Wisdom (Nature)

FOG CHECK RESULTS

Result	Effect
Total Success	The fog has no effect on navigation, and the crew's quality increases by 1 for 1d3 days.
Success	The fog has no effect on navigation.
Failure	The fog slows the ship, reducing its travel pace and speed by half for the day.
Total Failure	The fog slows the ship and disorients the crew, reducing the vessel's travel pace and speed by half for the day and causing it to move in a random direction.

INFESTATION

Provisioning a sea journey is challenging, particularly when allocating what to pack for the voyage. A rat infestation or an outbreak of even a minor illness can spell disaster at sea. This type of hazard covers illnesses, infestations, spoiled supplies, and other troubles that wear away a crew's health.

Each day a ship spends dealing with an infestation requires those aboard to make a group check. The check's DC is randomly determined or chosen from the Infestation DCs table. The captain, first mate, surgeon, and cook each make an ability check, as shown on the Infestation Checks table. This check takes the place of any other activities that the officer might undertake that day. If no one makes the check for a particular officer, a failure is contributed toward the group check. Also, roll a d20 for the crew, using its quality score as a modifier to the roll, and compare that check to the DC.

Determine how many of the group's checks succeeded—the officers' and the crew's—then consult the Infestation Check Results table.

INFESTATION DCs

DC	Description
10	Minor bug or rat infestation, common cold
15	Persistent bug or rat infestation, stomach ailment or typical flu
20	Serious bug or rat infestation, contagious flu or spoiled food
25	Overwhelming bug or rat infestation, lethal plague

INFESTATION CHECKS

Officer	Check
Captain	Intelligence (water vehicles)
First mate	Charisma (Persuasion)
Surgeon	Intelligence (medicine)
Cook	Constitution (cook's utensils)

INFESTATION CHECK RESULTS

Result	Effect
Total Success	The crew's quality score increases by 1 for 1d4 days, and the hazard ends.
Success	The hazard ends.
Failure	The crew's quality score decreases by 1.
Total Failure	The crew's quality score decreases by 1, and the distraction caused by the crisis forces the ship to move at half speed that day.

STORM

Winds and towering waves toss ships like bath toys. Snowstorms batter vessels venturing too far north. Hurricanes consume whole armadas. More common and deadlier than most sea monsters, storms claim more ships than any other threat on the high seas.

Each day a ship spends involved in a storm requires those aboard to make a group check. The check's DC is randomly determined or chosen from the Storm DCs

table. The captain, first mate, bosun, and quartermaster each make an ability check, as shown on the Storm Checks table. This check takes the place of any other activities that the officer might undertake that day, representing their contribution to keeping the ship afloat. If no one makes the check for a particular officer, a failure is contributed toward the group check. Also, roll a d20 for the crew, using its quality score as a modifier to the roll, and compare that check to the DC.

Determine how many of the group's checks succeeded—the officers' and the crew's—then consult the Storm Check Results table.

STORM DCs

DC	Description
10	Heavy gale
15	Strong storm
20	Typical hurricane
25	Overwhelming hurricane

STORM CHECKS

Officer	Check
Captain	Intelligence (water vehicles)
First mate	Charisma (Intimidation)
Bosun	Strength (carpenter's tools)
Quartermaster	Wisdom (Nature)

STORM CHECK RESULTS

Result	Effect
Total Success	The ship survives unscathed. The crew's quality score increases by 1 for 1d4 days.
Success	The ship survives unscathed.
Failure	The ship's components each take 4d10 bludgeoning damage. The crew's quality score decreases by 1. The ship struggles, moving at half speed that day.
Total Failure	The ship's components each take 10d10 bludgeoning damage. The crew's quality score decreases by 2, and 10 percent of the crew is washed overboard and lost. The ship is blown off course and struggles to recover its bearings, moving in a random direction.

OCEAN ENVIRONS

For those who dwell on land, the sea is an alien world filled with unpredictable hazards. Yet rare treasures hide in the depths, making such dangers well worth the risk for brave and brazen mariners. This section details a variety of environmental features one might encounter both on and beneath the waves.

BLUE HOLES

A blue hole is a circular sinkhole that forms on the bed of the sea in shallow water. The deep blue water of the hole creates a stark contrast with the lighter color of the

shallow water that surrounds it. Blue holes have diameters of $1d10 \times 100$ feet and are $1d10 \times 100$ feet deep.

Blue holes are filled with secrets. Many blue holes hide monsters or treasure, as shown on the Hiding in Blue Holes table.

HIDING IN BLUE HOLES

d10	Creatures or Treasure
1	2d10 sahuagin
2	1 giant octopus
3	1d4 + 1 chuuls
4	1 sea hag and 2d4 merrow
5	1 plesiosaurus
6	1d4 swarms of quippers
7	2d4 reef sharks
8	1 giant shark
9	1d6 items from Magic Item Table A in chapter 7, "Treasure," of the <i>Dungeon Master's Guide</i>
10	Treasure rolled on the Treasure Hoard: Challenge 0–4 table in chapter 7, "Treasure," of the <i>Dungeon Master's Guide</i>

CORAL REEFS

Coral reefs grow all over the ocean floor, though most are found within depths of less than 150 feet near the shoreline. Reefs range from a few feet to over 1,000 miles in length and width. These colorful ecosystems house small fish, crustaceans, and mollusks. As a result, predators come to reefs looking for prey.

Uneven and sharp, coral reefs can harm those forced into them. A creature forcibly moved on the reef—without using the creature's action, bonus action, or reaction—takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage per 5 feet of reef that it is pushed over.

CURRENTS

Ocean water is moved by wind and tides to create constant river-like flows called currents. Tidal currents are typically the strongest. They're usually found within 50 miles of shore and at depths of less than 300 feet. These currents have a speed of 1d6 miles per hour that changes daily.

Currents become weaker farther out to sea and deeper in the ocean. These currents have a speed of $1d4 - 1$ miles per hour that changes daily.

CURRENTS AND TRAVEL

When a vessel or creature travels in the same direction as a current, that current's speed is added to the vessel or creature's travel pace. A creature or vessel traveling against a current has that current's speed subtracted from the vessel or creature's travel pace. If this results in a negative travel pace, the vessel or creature can let the current carry it. Alternatively, the crew of the vessel or the creature can fight against the current by rowing or swimming hard, moving at half the vessel or creature's normal pace. Vessels and creatures fighting against a current must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of every hour traveled, with a bonus equal to the crew's quality (if they have crew). Vessels



that fail have their crew's quality score decreased by 1. Creatures that fail gain one level of exhaustion. The DC for this saving throw is $10 + 1$ for every consecutive hour spent fighting the current.

SUBMERGED IN CURRENTS

When a creature without a swimming speed is submerged in a current, the creature must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) check at the end of its turn or get pulled $1d4 \times 5$ feet in the direction of the current. The DC for this check equals $10 +$ the number of miles per hour the current is moving.

DEPTH

The deeper a surface-dwelling creature travels into the sea, the more hostile the environment becomes. Those venturing into the depths must keep the following natural forces in mind.

ILLUMINATION

When it comes to light, the sea is divided into three layers:

Sunlight Zone. The sunlight zone extends from the water's surface to a depth of 650 feet. This area of the sea has the same natural illumination conditions as above the water.

Twilight Zone. The twilight zone is between the depths of 650 and 1,000 feet. When the sunlight zone above is bathed in natural bright light, the twilight zone is filled with dim light. If the sunlight zone is filled with dim light or darkness, the twilight zone is dark.

Midnight Zone. Any depth below 1,000 feet is considered the midnight zone, since no natural light from the surface penetrates this deep.

PRESSURE AND TEMPERATURE

Water pressure, or the weight of water on top of a creature or object, increases with depth. Conversely, temperature decreases as depth increases. The pressure and temperature's effects on creatures without a swimming speed at depths below 100 feet can be found in the "Unusual Environments" section in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

OPTIONAL RULE: PRESSURE AND OBJECTS

With this optional rule, characters who dive deep in the ocean require specialized equipment that can withstand the ocean's pressure. Nonmagical objects not made to withstand the water pressure are destroyed at various depths, as determined by the material used to create them. This destructive depth is presented for various materials on the Objects and Water Pressure table. Objects made of other materials break at the DM's discretion.

OBJECTS AND WATER PRESSURE

Material	Destructive Depth
Glass, crystal, ice	100 ft.
Wood, bone	500 ft.
Stone	1,000 ft.
Iron, steel	1,500 ft.
Mithral	2,000 ft.
Adamantine	2,500 ft.

ELDRITCH MIST

While natural fog on the ocean can be a nuisance to ship crews, eldritch mist strikes fear into sailors everywhere. These rare, mysterious mists are almost indistinguishable from the naturally occurring variety until it's too late.

If a ship encounters eldritch mist, choose a type or roll for one on the Eldritch Mist Types table.

ELDRITCH MIST TYPES

d6	Mist Type
1–2	Ghost Fog
3–4	Shadowfell Fog
5–6	Wild Magic Fog

MIST THICKNESS

Mist lightly obscures the area it fills. Depending on its density, it heavily obscures an area beyond a certain distance from creatures within. Use the Mist Thickness table to determine a mist's thickness at random. The Mist Obfuscation table notes how far a creature in mist can see before the area beyond is heavily obscured.

MIST THICKNESS

d10	Thickness
1–3	Light
4–7	Moderate
8–9	Heavy
10	Very Heavy

MIST OBFUSCATION

Thickness	Heavily Obscured Distance
Light	30 ft.
Moderate	20 ft.
Heavy	10 ft.
Very heavy	5 ft.

GHOST FOG

Ghost fog contains the souls of murder victims whose bodies were thrown into the sea. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that this mist is ghost fog.

The souls of the dead want the living to join them. Every hour a ship is immersed in ghost fog, roll any die. On an even number, 2d4 hostile **specters** appear and attack those on the ship. If a humanoid creature dies in ghost fog, its spirit rises as a specter that is hostile toward all creatures that aren't undead.

All non-undead creatures immersed in ghost fog are vulnerable to necrotic damage.

SHADOWFELL FOG

Shadowfell fog seeps into the Material Plane at thin points in the boundary between the two planes. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that this mist is Shadowfell fog.

When a vessel travels through this oppressive, shadow-haunted miasma, its crew and passengers feel despair. Each hour a vessel is immersed in the fog, the crew must make a quality score check by rolling a d20 and adding their quality score to the number. The DC for this check is 10 + the number of hours the ship has been immersed in the Shadowfell fog. If the crew fails this check, their quality score decreases by 1 while within the Shadowfell fog and for 1 day afterward.

WILD MAGIC FOG

Few know the origins of wild magic fog, with some claiming it is the creation of capricious gods while others believe it is the result of magical experimentation gone wrong. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that this mist is wild magic fog.

Whenever a creature in wild magic fog casts a spell of 1st level or higher, roll on the Wild Magic Surge table in chapter 3, "Classes," of the *Player's Handbook* to create a magical effect.

KELP FORESTS

Kelp grows in dense forests across the ocean floor. Most forests are found within depths of less than 100 feet near the shoreline, and range from 10 feet to over 100 miles in length and width. The kelp grows in vines up to 175 feet in length.

Kelp roots are shallow, and a whole forest can be uprooted by a strong storm. But it grows at a rapid pace, sometimes as much as 18 inches a day, meaning that a kelp forest can spring up quickly. Such forests can hide thousands of small fish and other prey animals, which attract predators. The forest is so dense that anything within it is heavily obscured to an observer more than 10 feet away, and the whole area is difficult terrain.

KRAKEN'S GRAVE

When krakens die, their bodies often rot on the seafloor. In such cases, the ground absorbs the decaying kraken's supernatural energy, marking the area with a dark stain in the shape of the kraken's body. This stain is called a kraken's grave.

When a creature moves within 30 feet of a kraken's grave or starts its turn there, that creature must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check or it disturbs the grave. If a creature disturbs the grave, a tendril made of lightning stretches from the ground and attacks the creature with a +7 bonus to hit. On a hit, the target takes 10 (3d6) lightning damage, and it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become blinded for the next 2d4 hours.

LURE LIGHTS

When aboleths die, their souls sometimes gather in clusters called lure lights. These 100-foot-diameter collections of pale, yellow lights are found in the deep ocean below depths of 1,000 feet. They glow with bright light in a 100-foot radius and dim light for another 100 feet.

Any creature that can see the lure lights must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the lights for 24 hours or until the lights are destroyed. A creature that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the effect of the lure lights for 24 hours.

While charmed by the lights, a creature can't willingly move out of line of sight of them and defends them to the death. If forcibly moved away from the lights, the creature tries to find its way back to them. The creature can't take a short or long rest while under this effect. After 24 hours, the charmed creature gains one level of exhaustion and must repeat the saving throw if it is within line of sight of the lights, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the lights aren't within line of sight at this time, the creature succeeds automatically.

Each cluster of lure lights has AC 17, 100 hit points, and immunity to necrotic and poison damage.

MAGICAL STORMS

Even worse than the threat of storms is the menace of weather imbued with magic. When a ship enters a storm, roll a d20. On a 20, the storm churns with magical energy. Pick or randomly determine the type of magical energy brimming within the storm, consulting the Magical Storm Type table.

MAGICAL STORM TYPE

d8	Magic
1	Abjuration
2	Conjuration
3	Divination
4	Enchantment
5	Evocation
6	Illusion
7	Necromancy
8	Transmutation

ABJURATION

A storm infused with abjuration magic repels ships, as if protecting something in the sea. Right before the storm ends, a ship within it is teleported 5d20 miles in a random direction.

CONJURATION

When conjuration magic churns within a storm's heart, creatures of wind and rain emerge from distant realms to attack anything they encounter. The ship encounters 1d3 hostile **air elementals**.

DIVINATION

When divination magic seeps into a storm, howling winds and residual whispers temporarily scramble the knowledge of a ship's crew; for 1d3 days, the ship's crew suffers disadvantage on all quality checks.

ENCHANTMENT

Storms infused with enchantment magic disarm a creature's sense of danger, enthralling mariners and causing them to speed into danger. During the storm, any checks made to resolve hazards or manage the ship are made with disadvantage.

EVOCATION

These ferocious storms are wracked with thunderbolts, driving sheets of acid rain, exploding meteors, and other dangers. After each day of the storm, every component aboard the ship takes 1d10 fire, 1d10 acid, and 1d10 lightning damage. In addition, roll a d20 and add the crew's quality. On a 10 or less, the crew's quality decreases by 1, and 1d6 members of the crew are killed.

ILLUSION

A storm brimming with illusions poses little direct harm to a ship, but experienced navigators know it poses an insidious threat. During the storm, the ship travels in a random direction that isn't its intended course.

NECROMANCY

Ghosts howl and whirl in this storm's wind, while the remains of long-dead mariners stir in their watery graves. During the storm, 1d4 **specters**, 2d4 **ghouls**, and 4d6 **zombies** emerge from the waves to attack the ship.

TRANSMUTATION

These violently unpredictable storms cause the waves to warp and twist. The storm transforms the water around the ship into an amalgamation of ice, stone, and stranger materials, making travel difficult and damaging the ship. The ship's hull takes 4d10 bludgeoning damage, and the ship's speed decreases by half during the storm.

SANDBARS

Waves and currents deposit sand in shallow water near the shoreline. These sandbars form a line that can be between 10 feet and 3 miles in length and width. During high tide, sandbars are below the ocean's surface, while they peek above the water during low tide.

NAVIGATING SANDBARS

Sandbars make dangerous obstacles for vessels, particularly at high tide when they are less noticeable. The crew of a ship moving toward a sandbar beneath the waves must have a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or higher or fail to see the sandbar in the way (see “Noticing Threats,” page 200). When a ship passes over a submerged sandbar, the sandbar counts as difficult terrain, and the ship must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw. The DC of this save corresponds with the depth of the sandbar, as listed on the Sandbar DCs table. If the ship fails this save, it gets stuck on the sandbar. A ship can become unstuck by using an action to make a Strength check, with a bonus equal to the crew’s quality, against the sandbar’s DC.

SANDBAR DCs

DC	Description
10	Deep sandbar
15	Moderate sandbar
20	Shallow sandbar

SAPPING SNOW

Sapping snow—that’s what aquatic explorers call the powdery remains of dead organisms that cover the ocean floor. When this substance is imbued with necromantic magic, it becomes a life-leeching detritus.

Whenever a creature starts its turn touching sapping snow, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The creature’s hit point maximum decreases by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. If this effect reduces the creature’s hit point maximum to 0, the creature dies, and its body immediately crumbles into sapping snow.

SHIPWRECKS

Shipwrecks at the bottom of the ocean make the perfect locations for monsters’ lairs and lost treasures. The Shipwreck Contents table provides ideas for the creatures and treasure within these wrecks.

SHIPWRECK CONTENTS

d10	Creatures or Treasure
1	1 sahuagin priestess and 2d10 sahuagin
2	1 young bronze dragon
3	4d10 giant crabs
4	3d10 giant seahorses
5	1d4 hunter sharks
6	1 giant octopus
7	2d6 merrow
8	2d10 merfolk
9	1d6 items from Magic Item Table B in chapter 7, “Treasure,” of the <i>Dungeon Master’s Guide</i>
10	Treasure rolled on the Treasure Hoard: Challenge 5–10 table in chapter 7, “Treasure,” of the <i>Dungeon Master’s Guide</i>

WHIRLPOOLS

In areas where storms or opposed currents drive powerful waters together, violent maelstroms might form. Whirlpools are difficult terrain. Each whirlpool has a rank, which determines its size and strength, as shown on the Whirlpool Rank table. A whirlpool’s depth equals half its diameter.

WHIRLPOOL RANK

Rank	Diameter	Velocity	DC
1	22 (4d10) ft.	5 ft.	5
2	55 (10d10) ft.	15 ft.	10
3	110 (20d10) ft.	25 ft.	15
4	165 (30d10) ft.	35 ft.	20

CREATURES IN WHIRLPOOLS

When a creature moves into a whirlpool or starts its turn there, it must make a Strength (Athletics) check with a DC determined by the whirlpool’s rank. On a success, the creature can move normally. On a failure, the creature is immediately moved toward the vortex’s center at the whirlpool’s velocity, and the creature is restrained by the whirlpool until the start of its next turn. If the creature reaches the whirlpool’s center, the creature is pulled under the surface and either appears at a special location (see “Whirlpool Destinations” below) or plunges a number of feet underwater equal to the whirlpool’s velocity.

VESSELS IN WHIRLPOOLS

If a vessel starts its turn in a whirlpool with a diameter greater than the vessel’s length, the ship’s officers and crew must make a group check to escape. This group check works like the special ones made against hazards (see page 200).

The group check represents 5 minutes of work. The check’s DC is chosen or randomly determined by rolling



a d4 on the Whirlpool Rank table. The captain, first mate, bosun, and quartermaster each make an ability check, as shown on the Whirlpool Checks table. If no one makes the check for a particular officer, a failure is contributed toward the group check. Also, roll a d20 for the crew, using its quality score as a modifier to the roll, and compare that check to the DC.

Determine how many of the group's checks succeeded—the officers' and the crew's—then consult the Whirlpool Check Results table.

WHIRLPOOL CHECKS

Officer	Check
Captain	Intelligence (water vehicles)
First mate	Charisma (Intimidation)
Bosun	Strength (carpenter's tools)
Quartermaster	Wisdom (Nature)

WHIRLPOOL CHECK RESULTS

Result	Effect
Total Success	The vessel uses the whirlpool to its advantage and increases its speed by 20 ft. during its current turn.
Success	The vessel can move normally on its turn.
Failure	The vessel is immediately moved toward the vortex's center at the whirlpool's velocity, and the vessel is restrained by the whirlpool until the start of its next turn.
Total Failure	As a failure. Additionally, if the vessel is in the whirlpool at the start of its next turn, all checks the vessel makes to determine the whirlpool's effects are made with disadvantage on that turn.

WHIRLPOOL DESTINATIONS

While a whirlpool might be a short-lived hazard that drags things into the depths, they might also serve as a violent passage to another realm. In such cases, things dragged into a whirlpool are deposited elsewhere, be it through a crack in the seafloor leading to an Underdark ocean or a portal to a different plane of existence. Use the Whirlpool Destinations table to choose or randomly determine where a whirlpool leads, usually to a body of water in that destination. See chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for information about the destinations on other planes.

WHIRLPOOL DESTINATIONS

d10	Destination
1–3	Underdark
4	Elemental Plane of Water
5	Elemental Plane of Earth
6	Feywild
7	Shadowfell
8	Astral Plane
9	Outlands
10	Outer Plane of the DM's choice

ENCOUNTERS AT SEA

The open seas provide endless opportunities for adventure. This section supplies you with a variety of random tables, perfect for detailing the challenges awaiting your characters on and beneath the waves.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

For each day of a voyage, in addition to checking for hazards, roll a d20. On a 19 or 20, the ship has a random encounter. If you roll both a hazard and a random encounter, the ship experiences both. They might occur simultaneously or in an order of your choice.

The levels given on the following tables allow you to sculpt what dangers the characters face. The low-level table is useful for when a ship travels in safe waters, while the higher-level ones are suited for primeval waters, far from well-trafficked sea lanes. The tables also allow for encounters with other ships and the discovery of mysterious, uncharted islands. Additional tables for further detailing such encounters are included later in this appendix.

OPEN WATER ENCOUNTERS (LEVELS 1–4)

d100	Encounter
01–03	3d6 quippers
04–08	1 swarm of quippers
09–12	3d10 dolphins (see appendix C)
13–14	1 giant octopus
15–16	1d4 killer whales
17–18	1d6 merfolk
19–20	1d6 giant sea horses
21–24	1d8 giant crabs
25–28	1d4 reef sharks
29	1 hunter shark
30–34	1d4 sahuagin
35–37	1d4 koalinh (see appendix C)
38–40	A rank 1 whirlpool connected to the Elemental Plane of Water (see "Whirlpools," page 206)
41–45	1d4 locathahs (see appendix C)
46–51	1d3 harpies
52–54	2 merrow
55–57	1 sahuagin priestess and 1d4 sahuagin
58–59	1 koalinh sergeant and 2d4 koalinh (see appendix C for both)
60–62	1 plesiosaurus
63–64	1d3 sea hags
65–67	1d4 blood hawks
68–70	1 sahuagin champion (see appendix C)
71–74	1 giant shark
75	1 young bronze dragon
76–00	A ship (generated at random)

OPEN WATER ENCOUNTERS (LEVELS 5–10)

d100	Encounter
01–03	1 giant shark
04–07	1d4 swarms of quippers
08–11	1d10 killer whales
12–17	3d6 merfolk
18–25	1 sahuagin high priestess and 1 sahuagin wave shaper (see appendix C for both)
26–30	2d8 giant crabs
31–35	2d4 reef sharks
36–38	1d4 hunter sharks
39–40	1d4 water elementals
41	A rank 2 whirlpool connected to the Elemental Plane of Water (see “Whirlpools,” page 206)
42–45	2d4 locathahs (see appendix C)
46–47	1 harpy matriarch (see appendix C) and 1d4 harpies
48–49	2d4 merrow
50–52	1 sahuagin baron and 1d4 sahuagin
53–57	1 koalinth sergeant and 2d4 koalinth (see appendix C for both)
58–59	2d8 giant crabs
60–61	1d4 plesiosauruses
62–63	A coven of 3 sea hags
64–65	1d4 sahuagin blademasters (see appendix C)
66–69	1 hydra
70–71	1 marid
72	1 storm giant
73	1 adult bronze dragon
74	1 dragon turtle
75–90	A ship (generated at random)
91–00	A mysterious island (generated at random)

OPEN WATER ENCOUNTERS (LEVELS 11–20)

d100	Encounter
01–03	1 storm giant
04–07	2d6 giant sharks
08–11	1 marid
12–18	1 sahuagin high priestess and 2d4 sahuagin champions (see appendix C for both)
19–25	1 sahuagin baron and 1d4 sahuagin blademasters (see appendix C)
26–28	3d6 reef sharks
29–32	2d6 hunter sharks
33–39	A rank 3 whirlpool connected to the Elemental Plane of Water (see “Whirlpools,” page 206)
40–43	A rank 4 whirlpool connected to the Elemental Plane of Water (see “Whirlpools,” page 206)
44–45	1d3 hydras
46–48	1d4 koalinth sergeant (see appendix C) and 3d10 koalinth (see appendix C)
49–50	2d4 plesiosauruses
51–53	3d6 merrow
54–57	1 harpy matriarch (see appendix C) and 2d8 harpies

d100	Encounter
58–60	A coven of 3 sea hags
61–63	1 dragon turtle
64	1 ancient bronze dragon
65–75	A ship (generated at random)
76–00	A mysterious island (generated at random)

RANDOM SHIPS

The characters aren’t the only sailors traveling the high seas. Each new vessel they encounter presents an opportunity for adventure. The following rules can be used to generate other ships met on the open seas.

SHIP TYPE

The type of ship the characters meet determines the vessel’s statistics, along with how many creatures and how much cargo it can carry.

SHIP TYPE

d100	Ship
01–09	Rowboat
10–25	Keelboat
26–38	Longship
39–60	Sailing ship
61–79	Galley
80–00	Warship

SHIP NAME

Every ship has a name, which you can create yourself or randomly generate using the Ship Names table. Roll on the table—once for an adjective and once for a noun—to create a ship name.

SHIP NAMES

d20	Adjective	Noun
1	Beautiful	Adventure
2	Bilious	Barnacle
3	Bold	Brawler
4	Cold	Devil
5	Dandy	Dragon
6	Dawn	Gem
7	Drunken	Flower
8	Fiery	Jester
9	Furious	Kraken
10	Grimacing	Leviathan
11	Intrepid	Mermaid
12	Jolly	Prince
13	Misty	Princess
14	Rambunctious	Revenge
15	Red	Saber
16	Royal	Shark
17	Salty	Tide
18	Sinful	Treasure
19	Twilight	Victory
20	Zealous	Wanderer

CREW

Unless you decide otherwise, each ship encountered on the sea has its full crew and enough food and water to sustain that crew and any passengers for the duration of the ship's journey. You can generate a crew using the suggestions in the "Ship Purpose" section below or by using the suggested crew for a ship's type.

CREW MEMBER NAMES

Should you need to quickly generate the name of a member of a ship's crew, the following table makes it easy to produce a two-part name that could apply to any member of a crew, regardless of gender or race.

CREW MEMBER NAME

d20	First Half	Second Half
1	Salty	Beard
2	Ol'	Eye
3	Silver	Copper
4	Golden	Fish
5	Black	Whale
6	Blue	Dog
7	Silky	Cur
8	Heartless	Fingers
9	Drizzly	Patches
10	Thirsty	Hook
11	Rum	Salt
12	Gloomy	Rat
13	Handsome	Charm
14	Wee	Beast
15	Clever	Devil
16	Ugly	Liar
17	Pretty	Angel
18	Lost	Blood
19	Mad	Maps
20	Poor	Mast

SHIP PURPOSE

Every ship has a reason for its voyages, which can be rolled or chosen on the Ship Purpose table. Each purpose is described after the table.

SHIP PURPOSE

d100	Purpose
01–17	Cargo
18–34	Passenger
35–51	Fishing
52–68	Military
69–85	Piracy
86–95	Mercenary
96–00	Ghost

CARGO

Cargo ships haul mercantile goods, emergency relief supplies, traveling carnivals, and any other materials that need to move across the seas. Let the ship's align-

ment, racial makeup, and disposition guide what a ship might carry as cargo.

Most crew members and officers on cargo ships are **commoners**. Vessels with valuable cargo may carry 2d10 **guards** with a **veteran** guard captain. Cargo ships that transport livestock may have **goats**, **camels**, **draft horses**, **mules**, and other beasts, in addition to their crews and passengers.

PASSENGER

Passenger ships carry travelers. Such vessels are chartered for journeys or pleasure cruises or carry refugees, religious missionaries, or some other peaceful group traveling to an important destination.

Most crew members and officers on passenger ships are **commoners**. Vessels carrying important people may carry 2d10 **guards** with a **veteran** guard captain. The passengers on a passenger ship generally consist of **commoners** and **nobles**, though many creatures have the need to travel by ship.

FISHING

Fishing ships include commercial vessels that catch fish and crustaceans to sell at market, whaling boats, and trophy hunters stalking sharks, giant octopuses, and other sea monsters. Any vessel that hunts sea life for profit, survival, or sport has this purpose.

Most crew members and officers on commercial fishing ships are **commoners**, but whaling vessels and sport hunters often have **scouts** among their ranks.

MILITARY

Military vessels carry soldiers to war and are equipped for battle on the sea. These vessels hunt pirates, defend and invade territory, carry important government cargo, escort officials, transport prisoners, and do anything else their commanders require.

Most crew members on military ships are **guards** or **scouts**. Officers are **veterans**. Many military ships carry extra **guards** as passengers for invasion, boarding, and operating siege weapons. A military ship may also carry 1d4 **bandits** or **guards** as prisoners.

PIRACY

Pirates smuggle contraband goods and rob other ships, seaside towns, and outposts. They engage in criminal operations, but not all are evil. Many have an ethical code. Some serve governments as privateers, harming only these masters' adversaries, while others rob only the corrupt and give their ill-gotten gains to the needy.

Most crew members on pirate ships are **bandits**. Officers are **bandit captains** and could include a **pirate captain** (see appendix C) and a **pirate bosun** (see appendix C). Many pirate ships carry extra **bandits** and at least one **pirate deck wizard** (see appendix C) as passengers.

MERCENARY

Mercenary crews travel the world in search of adventure and pay. They explore uncharted territories, fight wars, slay monsters, transport special cargo or people, and undertake any quest for the right cost.

Mercenary ships have crews and passengers similar to military ships.



GHOST

Ghost ships are incorporeal vessels that carry undead crews. The crews often died in a grisly manner and have unfinished business that keeps them tethered to the Material Plane. They sometimes serve necromancers, but more often these crews are beholden to no master.

A ghost ship has the same statistics as a normal ship of its ship type with the following changes:

- The ship has resistance to the following damage types: acid, fire, lightning, and thunder, as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.
- The ship is immune to cold, necrotic, poison, and psychic damage.
- The ship can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Crew members and officers on good and neutral ghost ships are **ghosts**. On evil ghost ships, the crew members are 90 percent **skeletons** and **zombies** (even mix of each), 10 percent are **specters**, and the officers are **wraiths**.

ATTITUDE AND RACE

Each ship's crew and passengers have an attitude that guides how they interact with the characters. Friendly ships seek to trade or share news, neutral ones attack if they feel threatened and otherwise try to avoid contact, and hostile ones seek to attack and seize the characters' ship.

First, roll or choose an attitude on the Ship Attitude table, then roll on the appropriate table to determine the nature of the crew. The race chosen or rolled need not be the only one found on the ship, and you might use a table multiple times to make a ship's crew and passengers more diverse. Feel free to substitute suggested statistics for other statistics if you feel they make more sense with the ship's race (for example, substituting the **bandit** statistics with **orc** statistics on a pirate ship crewed by orcs).

SHIP ATTITUDE

d6	Attitude
1–2	Friendly
3–4	Neutral
5–6	Hostile

FRIENDLY SHIP

d100	Race
01–05	Dragonborn
06–10	Dwarves
11–30	Elves
31–40	Gnomes
41–50	Tieflings
51–60	Halflings
61–00	Humans

NEUTRAL SHIP

d100	Race
01–05	Dragonborn
06–10	Dwarves
11–30	Lizardfolk
31–40	Hobgoblins
41–50	Orcs
51–60	Halflings
61–00	Humans

HOSTILE SHIP

d100	Race
01–05	Frost giants
06–10	Kobolds
11–30	Orcs
31–40	Hobgoblins
41–50	Undead
51–60	Gnolls
61–00	Humans

SHIP DISPOSITION

Each ship has a disposition that determines events happening aboard the ship when the characters encounter it. Choose or roll for a ship's disposition on the Ship Disposition table. Each disposition is described after the table. If you roll no special disposition, the ship is under no unusual stress and reacts based on its attitude.

SHIP DISPOSITION

d10	Disposition
1	Diseased
2	Emergency
3	Help with purpose
4	Mutiny
5	Trading
6–10	No special disposition

DISEASED

Roll percentile dice. The result reveals the percentage of the ship's crew and passengers infected with a disease of your choice from "Sample Diseases" in chapter 8, "Running the Game," of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. This ship approaches the characters, begging for or demanding help with the infection.

Ghost ships can't be diseased; if you get this result for a ghost ship, ignore it and roll again.

EMERGENCY

A ship experiencing an emergency is suffering some sort of crisis. The crew and passengers beg or demand the characters' help in getting out of the situation. Choose or roll for an emergency on the Ship Emergency table to determine the vessel's crisis.

SHIP EMERGENCY

d4	Emergency
1	The ship's crew is lost.
2	The ship is damaged and can't be steered as it drifts with the current.
3	The ship is stuck on a sandbar.
4	The ship is sinking.

HELP WITH PURPOSE

Ship crews looking for help with their purpose approach the characters asking for direct aid in a task. For instance, mercenaries ask for help mapping an unexplored area while a cargo ship's crew asks the characters to serve as guards. Most crews offer compensation in return for the characters' services, though some might threaten or beg for charity to get help.

MUTINY

The crew of ships ready to mutiny are unhappy with the leadership of their officers and plan to overthrow them. The officers approach the characters, asking for or demanding help quelling the uprising, or the crew approaches, requesting aid with their uprising or attempting to trick the characters into killing the officers.

TRADING

Ship crews and passengers looking to trade offer their cargo or services to the characters in exchange for deeds, items, or coin. Use the ship's purpose to guide what they have to trade. For instance, commercial fishermen might offer a crate of valuable crabs in exchange for the head of a shark that keeps consuming

their catches, while pirates might offer stolen potions in exchange for gems or gold. Most of the people offering trades are willing to haggle. If the characters refuse to trade, evil-aligned crews and passengers might attack to get what they want.

MYSTERIOUS ISLANDS

Small islands dot most oceans, distant or unexplored locales that might host all manner of adventures. The following rules can be used to generate any islands the characters might encounter.

ISLAND SIZE

These rules are used to generate islands with areas roughly 1d6 miles long and 1d6 miles wide. Most islands aren't perfect rectangles, and most coastlines aren't perfectly straight, so feel free to make areas of the island shorter, longer, thinner, or wider as you see fit.

ISLAND HABITAT

An island can have any habitat that seems appropriate for the climate it occupies. For example, islands of floating ice are found in arctic seas, while islands with jungle habitats are found in tropical waters. Not all islands are created by nature, though. A powerful spellcaster or divine being could conjure an island made of crystal, iron, or any material you choose.

ISLAND THEME

Each island encountered has a theme chosen or rolled on the Island Theme table. This theme defines the island's story in one broad stroke. Once you have a theme, consult its section after the table to determine related details and story hooks.

ISLAND THEME

d6	Theme
1	Alien
2	Cursed
3	Hostile
4	Sanctum
5	Welcoming
6	Wild

ALIEN

Alien islands are inhabited by isolated creatures with ways of life beyond most beings' comprehensions. Everything about the culture of the island, from architecture to food, is unfamiliar and unsettling to outsiders. At your discretion the inhabitants of the island might speak, read, and write a language all their own.

ALIEN ISLAND LEADER

d4	Leader
1	Aboleth
2	Beholder
3	Death slaad
4	Kraken

ALIEN ISLAND INHABITANTS

d6	Inhabitants
1	1d6 berserkers and 5d10 tribal warriors
2–3	1d6 cult fanatics and 5d10 cultists
4	1d6 lizardfolk shamans and 5d10 lizardfolk
5	1d6 bullywug croakers (see appendix C) and 5d10 bullywugs
6	1d8 locathah hunters (see appendix C) and 3d10 locathah (see appendix C)

ALIEN INHABITANT REACTIONS

d6	Reaction
1	The inhabitants try to force the characters to serve their leader.
2	The inhabitants demand the characters give their leader an item worth 10d10 × 100 gp.
3	The inhabitants wish to devour the characters.
4	Some inhabitants are planning to rise up against their leader and ask the characters for help.
5	The inhabitants see the characters as no more than insects and refuse to interact with them unless forced.
6	The inhabitants see the characters as gods and can be convinced to worship them.

ALIEN ISLAND STORY HOOKS

d4	Story Hook
1	The leader has a <i>spell scroll of true resurrection</i> among its belongings.
2	The island contains a piece of a tablet with instructions on how to open a portal to the Far Realm.
3	The island's leader knows how to end a planar disease infecting a humanoid settlement.
4	A mage with information the characters need hides among the ranks of the inhabitants, learning their ways.

CURSED

Cursed islands are steeped in dark magic from a ritual cast by necromancers, hag covens, evil spellcasters, foul deities, or worse. The island might still hold some hint as to why it was cursed, or all trace of those who brought down the affliction might have been scoured away.

ISLAND CURSES

d6	Curse
1	When a creature dies on the island, its spirit rises as a specter 1d4 hours after death. The specter is obsessed with killing its former friends.
2	Creatures that aren't inhabitants of the island must succeed on a Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour they spend on the island. If they fail, they gain one level of exhaustion. The DC for this check equals 10 + the number of hours spent on the island.

d6 Curse

3	Each day at dawn, the island conjures 2d10 magma mephits , which are hostile toward creatures that aren't inhabitants of the island.
4	When a creature that isn't an inhabitant of the island completes a long rest there, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be blinded for 8 hours.
5	Creatures must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour they spend on the island. If they fail, they gain a 1-inch scar in a random place on their body. Only a <i>remove curse</i> spell or similar magic removes the scar.
6	When a creature that isn't an inhabitant of the island completes a long rest there, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain a random form of long-term madness (see "Madness" in chapter 8, "Running the Game," of the <i>Dungeon Master's Guide</i>).

CURSED ISLAND INHABITANTS

d6	Inhabitants
1	5d10 specters
2	10d10 zombies
3	A coven of 3 sea hags and 1d4 flameskulls
4	1 medusa and 3d10 skeletons
5	1 vampire and 2d6 vampire spawn
6	1 demilich and 2d10 wraiths

CURSED ISLAND STORY HOOKS

d4	Story Hook
1	The island contains rare spell components the characters need.
2	Pirates buried treasure worth 5d6 × 1,000 gp on the island.
3	A keelboat carrying 1d6 commoners crashed on the island. The commoners are struggling to survive.
4	The ghost of a character's loved one is trapped on the island.

HOSTILE

Hostile islands contain creatures that want to harm the characters. These creatures fill their islands with traps and attack outsiders out of hunger, boredom, or fear.

HOSTILE ISLAND LEADER

d6	Leader
1	Cloud giant
2	Hill giant
3	Oni
4	Spirit naga
5	Werewolf
6	A chromatic dragon of the DM's choice

HOSTILE ISLAND LEADER MOTIVATIONS

d4 Motivation

- 1 The leader wants to commandeer a boat to conquer other islands.
- 2 The leader takes all treasure gained by its followers, growing rich off their brutality.
- 3 The leader needs humanoid remains to perform a ritual with a dark purpose.
- 4 The leader never ages because it consumes the souls of creatures its followers kill.

HOSTILE INHABITANTS

d6 Inhabitants

- 1 3d10 winged kobolds and 10d10 kobolds
- 2 1 goblin boss and 8d10 goblins
- 3 1d6 berserkers and 5d10 tribal warriors
- 4 1 orc chieftain, 2d10 orogs, and 5d10 orcs
- 5 4d10 ogres
- 6 3d10 trolls

HOSTILE ISLAND STORY HOOKS

d4 Story Hook

- 1 The island's leader killed an NPC the characters admired.
- 2 The island's leader has a headband of intellect.
- 3 The characters are challenged by rivals to survive a night on the island.
- 4 An eloquent invitation from the island's leader invites the characters for a hunt.

SANCTUM

The inhabitants of sanctum islands use the seas to protect themselves and their property, or they simply enjoy the isolation a remote island affords. The creatures on sanctum islands usually live in permanent structures like abbeys, fortresses, libraries, or towers.

SANCTUM ISLAND LEADER

d6 Leader

- 1 Archmage
- 2 Lich
- 3 Night hag
- 4 Noble
- 5 Rakshasa
- 6 Werebear

SANCTUM ISLAND INHABITANTS

d6 Inhabitants

- 1 5d10 guards and 10d10 commoners
- 2 1 pirate captain (see appendix C), 1 pirate bosun (see appendix C), 2d4 pirate deck wizards (see appendix C), and 8d10 bandits
- 3 1d6 flesh golems, 1d4 priests, and 2d10 acolytes
- 4 2d4 veterans, 2d10 scouts, 4d10 guards

d6 Inhabitants

- 5 1d4 stone golems, 1d4 mages, and 3d10 guards
- 6 1 shield guardian, 2d4 knights, 2d6 priests, and 6d10 commoners

SANCTUM ISLAND REACTIONS

d6 Reaction

- 1 The characters are allowed on the island, but the inhabitants don't allow the characters into any buildings.
- 2 The inhabitants like the characters and give them advice to help them impress the island's leader.
- 3 Some unhappy inhabitants believe the characters are their ticket off the island. They flirt, lie, bribe, and beg to be taken away.
- 4 The inhabitants attempt to convince the characters to use the island as a base of operations and contribute to the community.
- 5 The inhabitants hunger for information about the outside world and allow the characters to use news as currency.
- 6 The inhabitants don't trust the characters. All Charisma checks made to influence the inhabitants have disadvantage.

SANCTUM ISLAND STORY HOOKS

d4 Story Hook

- 1 A spy among the inhabitants needs extraction from the island.
- 2 The island's leader misses an item (such as a flower or a particular food) that can't be found on the island and offers a reward for the item.
- 3 The island asks for aid against an adult green dragon that regularly raids it.
- 4 The island has an armory full of legendary adamantite and silvered weapons.

WELCOMING

Welcoming islands host creatures that are friendly toward the characters. These creatures provide what aid they can and might even put themselves in harm's way for the characters if a friendship is established.

WELCOMING ISLAND LEADER

d6 Leader

- 1 Bard (see appendix C)
- 2 Druid
- 3 Guardian naga
- 4 Treant
- 5 Unicorn
- 6 A metallic dragon of the DM's choice

WELCOMING ISLAND INHABITANTS

d6	Inhabitants
1	5d10 aarakocra
2	8d8 pixies and 8d8 sprites
3	1d6 lizardfolk shamans and 5d10 lizardfolk
4	1d6 druids and 5d10 tribal warriors
5	3d10 centaurs
6	3d10 scouts and 5d10 commoners

WELCOMING ISLAND STORY HOOKS

d4	Story Hook
1	The island is a colony or outpost sponsored by a nation or wealthy noble the characters are associated with.
2	The island's residents swear a character looks like a beloved past leader. Melancholy, they treat the characters as they would their lost hero.
3	The island never gets visitors. The characters' arrival is cause for a peculiar but earnest celebration.
4	The island's leader is a long-lost relative or friend of a character's family.

WILD ISLAND

Nature reigns on wild islands. The creatures on the island respond to the ebb and flow of the natural world rather than trying to tame the environment.

WILD ISLAND FEATURES

d6	Feature
1	A waterfall flows up a mountainside.
2	The island slowly rotates clockwise.
3	Geysers shoot bright light into the sky at night.
4	Razorvine (see "Wilderness Hazards" in chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," of the <i>Dungeon Master's Guide</i>) grows in 10-foot-tall hedges shaped like animals.
5	Rain on the island creates a beautiful melody.
6	All beasts on the island have truesight out to a range of 120 ft.

WILD ISLAND ENCOUNTERS

d20	Encounter
1	2d8 baboons
2	1d4 brown bears
3	1 owlbear
4	2d6 giant toads
5	2d10 giant wasps
6	2d4 giant spiders
7	4d4 pixies or 4d4 sprites
8	1d4 blink dogs
9	1 pirate captain (see appendix C) and 3d10 bandits digging up buried treasure
10	3d6 tribal warriors
11	2d4 druids
12	1d6 dryads

d20	Encounter
13	2d4 centaurs
14	1 ankheg
15	1d10 giant boars
16	2d6 giant eagles
17	1d4 giant apes
18	1d4 treants
19	1 roc
20	1d4 veteran explorers

WILD ISLAND STORY HOOKS

d4	Story Hook
1	The island hides a spring that restores life to anyone washed in it, as per the <i>raise dead</i> spell. A creature can only benefit from the spring once.
2	A djinni recluse dwells on the island and grants favors.
3	Pixies beg the characters to help them oust a group of 3d10 trophy hunters (scouts) from the island.
4	The island holds the tomb of an archdruid, which contains a portal to the Feywild.

UNDERWATER LOCATIONS

The underwater locations in this section can be used for single-session adventures or as side treks to help you fill out the story of Saltmarsh. Each location includes a map, a description, story hooks, and encounters. You can place these locations anywhere near Saltmarsh or off distant shores of your choosing.

COVE REEF

Near the shore of a cove, a coral reef built around an alien idol teems with life. Long ago the reef was the home of merfolk enslaved by an aboleth named Ogorloro. Lenth, a merfolk cleric of the ocean deity Eadro, killed Ogorloro and freed the merfolk, but the influence of the aberration still lingers around the reef and in a nearby gorge that descends into darkness.

COVE REEF FEATURES

The cove reef has the following features:

Depth. The reef and the area around it are 50 feet below the surface of the water. The depths of the rock formations around the reef are noted on map A.5.

Light. Unless otherwise noted in an area's description, the cove is brightly lit by the sun during the day and dimly lit by the moon at night.

COVE REEF AREAS

The following areas are keyed to map A.5.

Cl. BLOOD HAWK ROOST

Twelve **blood hawks** hunt fish in the cove and roost in six nests atop a rock formation that peeks above the surface of the water. The blood hawks attack any creature

that approaches within 10 feet of the nests, fighting to the death to defend their eggs.

Slippery Rock. Algae, ocean spray, and blood hawk waste make the rock formation slippery. Moving on the rock requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, and failing this check results in the creature falling into the water.

Treasure. Each nest holds 1d4 – 1 blood hawk eggs. Blood hawks make excellent hunting animals. Nobles are willing to pay 25 gp per intact egg.

C2. CRYSTAL CAVE

This cave has a single spherical room with a radius of 15 feet. Ogrorlo's merfolk slaves carved this cave. The aberration used the cave to meditate and rest.

Glowing Mosaic. Pink, purple, and blue crystals cover the walls in a mosaic that depicts merfolk raising their hands toward an aboleth. These crystals give off dim light that fills the cave. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of divination magic radiating from the mosaic.

A creature that takes a short or long rest in the cave receives at the end of the rest a vague vision of a danger it might face within the next 10 days. If the creature isn't an aberration, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or gain a random form of short-term madness (see "Madness" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Removing a crystal from the wall causes that crystal to stop glowing and become worthless. Removing all of the crystals from the wall by hand takes 24 hours of work divided by the number of creatures performing the task (rounded down). As long as at least one crystal remains embedded in the wall, the mosaic's magic functions.

C3. CORAL REEF

The reef teems with 10d10 × 10 fish of various species and 5d10 **crabs**. Each fish has the statistics of a **quipper**, but it doesn't have the Blood Frenzy feature and can't make attacks.

See "Coral Reefs" earlier in this appendix.

Stone Clam. A pedestal-like rock near the middle of the reef rises 5 feet above the coral. The rock holds an algae-covered stone statue of an enormous clam. A character who makes a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check knows that the clam is the symbol of the aboleth Ogrorlo.

A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of enchantment magic emanating from the statue. Every night at midnight the statue sheds bright green light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for another 20 feet for 4 hours.

A creature that touches the statue feels bolstered and happy, gaining 10 temporary hit points. This feeling also makes the creature more likely to trust others, giving it disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks and saving throws against being charmed for the next 24 hours.

The statue can affect a creature only once every 24 hours. Aberrations and creatures that can't be charmed are unaffected if they touch the statue.

C4. BLEACHED REEF

This small reef is stark white and covered by twenty **crabs** crawling over it. This reef marks Ogrorlo's grave. The aboleth's loyal slaves buried the remains after Lenth killed the aberration.

Whispered Message. A creature that touches the reef hears a faint message whispered in Deep Speech: "Bend the knee, pearl. The god Ogrorlo, the shield and our protector, rests here."

Ogrorlo's Coffin. The seastone coffin of Ogrorlo, a cube 10 feet on a side, lies 12 feet beneath the floor of the reef. It is adorned with large clamshell carvings and weighs 2,000 pounds. A character who makes a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) check knows that the clam is the symbol of the aboleth Ogrorlo.

If the coffin is opened while underwater, it releases a cloud of mucus in a 15-foot sphere that rises 10 feet toward the water's surface every round on initiative count 20. Creatures that touch the cloud must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is diseased for 1d4 hours. A creature diseased in this way can breathe only underwater. When the cloud reaches the surface, it dissipates immediately. If the coffin is opened outside the water, the mucus dissipates without effect.

The coffin holds the bones of Ogrorlo and the aboleth's treasure (see "Treasure").

Treasure. Ogrorlo's coffin holds a *trident of fish command* left behind as tribute by loyal merfolk slaves.

C5. GIANT ANEMONE

This enormous orange, red, and purple anemone anchored to the side of a boulder is a trap from the time of Ogrorlo meant to guard the cove.

When a creature starts its turn within 20 feet of the anemone, it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature abandons whatever it is doing and gives in to a sudden overwhelming urge to touch the anemone, attacking creatures that get in its way. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Aberrations, beasts, and creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this effect for the next 24 hours.

The anemone's tentacles deliver a poisonous sting. A creature that touches the anemone must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The anemone has AC 10 and 45 hit points.

C6. MERFOLK MASS GRAVE

Fifty merfolk skeletons are buried in a mass grave 12 feet beneath the seafloor. These bones are the remains of Ogrorlo's slaves that died in the ancient battle with Lenth's forces. The top layer of skeletons peeks through the seafloor. The merfolk bones float if they are unearthed from their resting place.

A giant white moray eel hides coiled up in the bones. When the eel is hungry, it attacks any creature smaller than it.

The eel has the statistics of a **giant constrictor snake**, with the following changes:

- The eel can breathe only underwater, its walking speed is 0 feet, and its swimming speed is 40 feet.
- It has a +4 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks.
- It doesn't have the Constrict action option.

C7. COVE GORGE

This gorge goes down to a depth of 1,500 feet. Ogrorlo went here to be alone when it was tired of being worshiped. A **chuul**, an ancient guardian and servant of Ogrorlo, still inhabits the bottom of the gorge. It attacks any creature that isn't an aboleth or merfolk that approaches within 60 feet of the gorge's bottom.

Treasure. The bottom of the gorge holds a stone chest carved with the image of a clam that contains a hundred tiny white pearls (10 gp each), five large pink pearls (100 gp each), and a single black pearl (500 gp).

COVE REEF ADVENTURES

You can create your own stories for adventuring at this site or use the information in the Cove Reef Encounters table to create an adventure. You can roll randomly or choose an encounter appropriate for the average level of the characters. Each encounter is described in detail after the table.

COVE REEF ENCOUNTERS

d4	Encounter	Level
1	Tentacle Trap	3rd
2	Worshippers of Koolooshidoop	5th
3	Coven of Wet Rot	7th
4	Elkahraal	9th

TENTACLE TRAP

Two female merfolk named Talnad and Valas were kicked out of their tribe for stealing. Together with their pet giant octopus Allero, the merfolk plan to set a trap in the cove to attract adventurers and steal from them.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. To help draw the characters to the cove, Talnad and Valas unearth merfolk bones from the mass grave (area C6), which causes the remains to float to the surface. Fishers working in the cove find the bones and refuse to continue fishing in these waters. Eda Oweland offers the characters a special favor (see "Special Favors" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) to discover the source of the problem and end it.

Clever Ruse. Talnad and Valas stay near the top of the gorge (area C7), looking for creatures that have equipment they can steal. Allero, a **giant octopus**, hides in the darkness of the gorge at a depth of 1,000 feet.

Talnad and Valas have the statistics of **scouts**, with the following changes:

- Their alignment is chaotic evil.
- They have a walking speed of 10 feet, a swimming speed of 40 feet, and can breathe air and water.
- They don't carry longbows.

When the merfolk spy the characters, Talnad begs them for help, saying she dropped her seashell necklace in the gorge. The merfolk don't have a light source to search the bottom of the gorge and hope the characters can help. A character who makes a successful Wisdom (Insight) check contested by Talnad's Charisma (Deception) check discerns that she isn't telling the whole truth.

If the characters follow the merfolk into the gorge, Talnad and Valas lead the group to Allero and then attack. If the characters refuse to help, the merfolk whistle for Allero and attack when the octopus arrives. If this battle goes poorly for the merfolk, they dive to the bottom of the gorge toward the chuul, hoping the characters follow.

A character who captures one or both of the merfolk and makes a successful DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) check convinces the merfolk to reveal the truth about the floating bones. Otherwise the merfolk deny knowing anything about the bones.

Disturbed Grave. If a character examines the merfolk mass grave, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check reveals marks in the mud on the ground—some of the bones were recently dug up by webbed humanoid hands.

WORSHIPERS OF KOOLOOSHIDOOP

The middle of the gorge (area C7) is connected to a lake in the Underdark by way of a tunnel. Fuuna, a female kuo-toa monitor, and her retinue used the tunnel to reach the surface after she ordered the group to find new gods to add to their pantheon. After the kuo-toa found the stone clam in the reef (area C3), they named it Koolooshidoop and believed it to be a god. Before returning to the Underdark with the clam, Fuuna feels she must make a sacrifice to Koolooshidoop to avoid angering the clam.

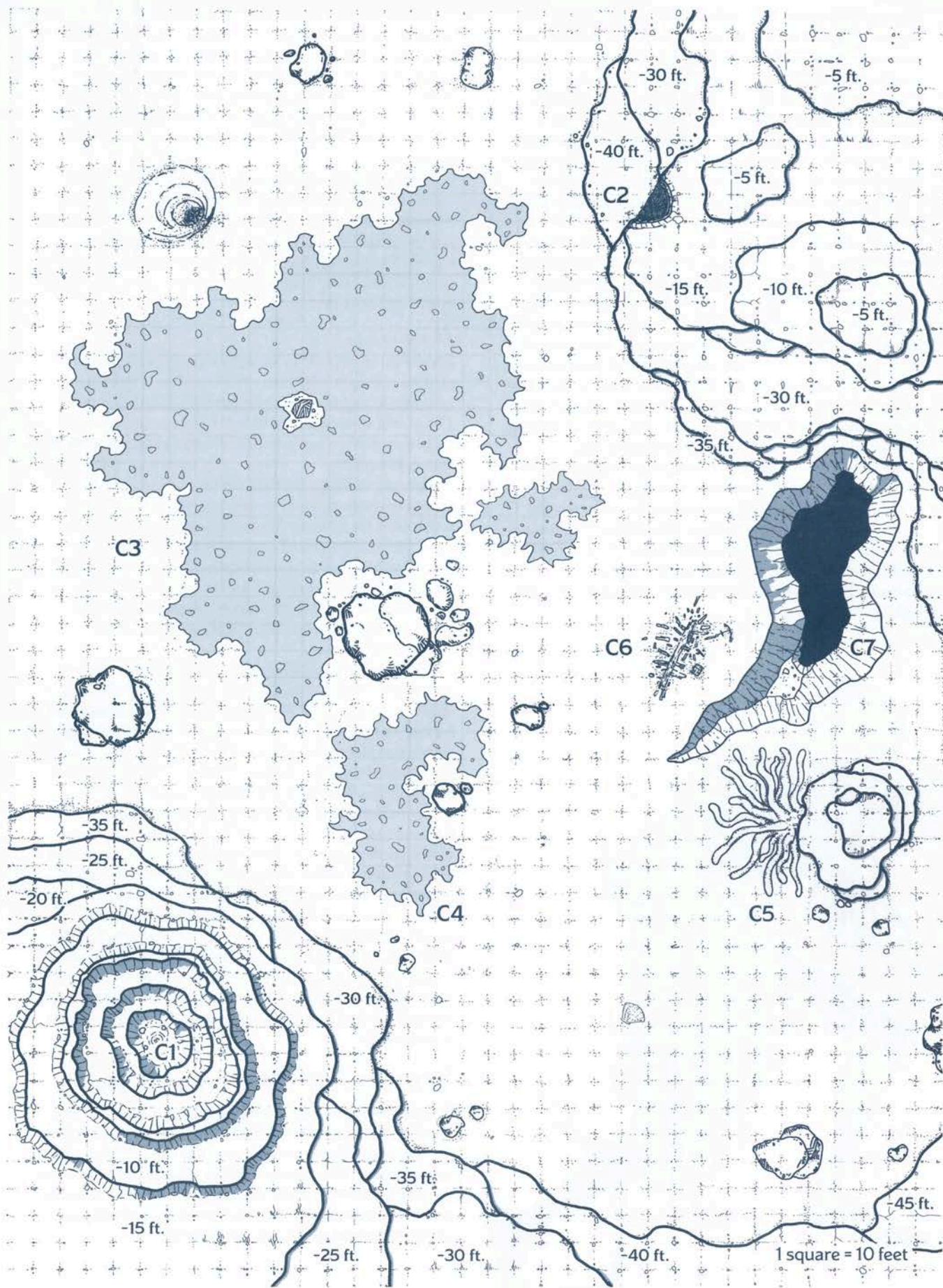
Saltmarsh Story Hook. The crew of *Jolly Good*, a Solmor fishing boat, went for a swim in the cove, and six of the sailors never returned. Anders Solmor offers the characters 200 gp to find out what happened to the six human sailors.

Confronting the Kuo-toa. During the day, the **kuo-toa monitor** Fuuna, two **kuo-toa whips**, and eight **kuo-toa** rest in the gorge at a depth of 1,000 feet. At night they form a circle around Koolooshidoop and pray. If the kuo-toa spot the characters, they attack, believing the characters to be a worthy sacrifice to their new deity. The kuo-toa aim to capture the characters and sacrifice them when the clam is glowing.

Corpses in the Reef. A character who searches the reef (area C3) and makes a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a shallow grave beneath the reef that holds the remains of six sailors from *Jolly Good*. The sailors were obviously killed by the weapons of the kuo-toa (part of the sacrifice to Koolooshidoop).

COVEN OF WET ROT

The Wet Rot Coven is a group of three sea hags named Driftwood Moistrot, Rotten Blubbersore, and Auntie Canker. The group wants to depose Granny Nightshade (see "The Dreadwood"). The coven used to work for



Granny Nightshade and hides from her in the cove, using the magic of the crystal cave (area C2) to try to stay one step ahead of the night hag. The cove has no minions but is working on correcting that problem.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. The presence of the hags pollutes the water in the cove, killing the fish, which then wash up on shore. Ferrin Kastilar (see location 29 in Saltmarsh) offers the characters four *potions of water breathing* to find and end the source of this problem.

Help from New Friends. If the three **sea hags** spot the characters, they approach in the guise of three merfolk named Ranna, Caulau, and Vira, who claim that the rest of their tribe was killed by the minions of Granny Nightshade. They try to convince the characters to attack the night hag's fortress. A character who makes a successful Wisdom (Insight) check contested by the hags' Charisma (Deception) checks discerns that the "merfolk" aren't telling the truth about their tribe. If called out on their lies, the hags reveal their true nature and ask for the characters' help in overthrowing Granny Nightshade. They agree to give the characters a share of the night hag's treasure when they depose her.

If the characters attack, the hags fight back until one of them falls, and then the other two flee.

Dalixiateara. Recently the hags captured a female **young bronze dragon** named Dalixiateara. The dragon is chained to the side of the gorge (area C7) at a depth of 1,200 feet, muzzled, and restrained. The hags are trying to break the dragon's mind to force it to serve them but have had no luck so far.



SEA HAG

The locked chains have AC 19, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Auntie Canker holds the key to the chains. A character who makes a successful DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools can pick the lock, freeing Dalixiateara. If freed, the dragon attacks the hags and rewards the characters who freed her with a *cloak of the manta ray* from her hoard.

Polluted Water. At the end of every hour spent immersed in the cove's water, a creature that isn't a hag must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. The DC for this saving throw equals 10 + the number of continuous hours spent in the cove's water. If the hags die or leave the cove, this effect ends 1d10 days later.

ELKAHRAAL

Elkahraal is a marid in search of skilled and accomplished slaves to help him rob Favnahva, a rival genie who has a larger treasure hoard than Elkahraal does. The marid knows the history of the cove and believes that his schemes can attract adventurers to the area for him to kidnap.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Fishers in the area report seeing tendrils made of water rise out of the sea and crash onto their boats. So far only minor damage has been caused, but rumors about these incidents have spread wildly and the local fishing crews are spooked. Keledek the Unspoken (see location 6 in chapter 1) promises the characters a *cap of water breathing* if they can discover what the shapes are and report back to him.

Elkahraal's Test. When the characters first arrive at the cove, Elkahraal, a **marid**, casts *invisibility* and *tongues*. Elkahraal has a **water elemental** servant that forms the shape of an aboleth above the surface of the water, and the genie speaks to the characters as if he is the ghost of Ogorloro, saying, "Find my remains and my pearls in one hour or I will destroy Saltmarsh!"

If the characters don't find Ogorloro's remains (see area C4) and his pearls (see area C7), Elkahraal sends the water elemental to terrorize Saltmarsh. The elemental attacks until it is destroyed, while Elkahraal hopes to draw smarter, stronger heroes out to the cove.

If the characters find Ogorloro's remains and the pearls, Elkahraal and his water elemental attack. His plan is to knock as many adventurers as possible unconscious and then use *plane shift* to bring them back to the Plane of Water. Elkahraal fights until reduced to 80 hit points and then flees, while the elemental fights until it is destroyed.

WRECK OF THE MARSHAL

The *Marshal* was a seafaring vessel built by missionaries of St. Cuthbert. Their plan was to travel the world in the ship, bringing law, order, and the word of their god to every port. Three years ago the mission launched, but the *Marshal* never made it to the first stop. Harpies serenaded the travelers, luring the vessel shoreward until it crashed into the rocks near Saltmarsh.

WRECK FEATURES

The *Marshal* has the following features:

Barnacles. The outside of the *Marshal* is covered in all manner of sharp barnacles. A creature that is pushed against the outside of the ship by magic like the *thunderwave* spell, or by a shove attack, or that falls prone onto a barnacle-covered surface takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage.

Ceilings. The ceilings of the *Marshal's* lower deck are 8 feet high, with 6-foot-high doorways connecting the chambers.

Depth. The sea floor is 40 feet below the surface of the water. The *Marshal's* highest point is 5 feet below the surface of the water. The depth of the rocks and various decks of the ship are noted on map A.6.

Light. The exposed decks of the *Marshal* and areas outside the ship are brightly lit by the sun during the day and dimly lit by the moon at night. The interior of the ship and the sea cave are concealed in darkness.

Structure. The wood of the *Marshal's* hull, deck, and doors is rotting. Unless otherwise noted, a door or a 5-foot-square section of wall, ceiling, or floor of the ship has AC 10, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

WRECK AREAS

The following areas are keyed to map A.6.

M1. HARPY ROCK

Eight **harpies** lurk in their bone-covered nests on this rock, gnawing on humanoid remains. When the harpies notice humanoids nearby, they use Luring Song to bring their prey in close before attacking. The harpies fight until four remain and then flee.

Treasure. If the characters search the harpy nests, they find a holy symbol of St. Cuthbert made with gold and sapphires (150 gp), a jasper (50 gp), a piece of obsidian (10 gp), a tiger eye (10 gp), 1,231 cp, 641 sp, 320 ep, 164 gp, and 12 pp.

M2. UPPER DECKS

The upper decks of the *Marshal* have the following features:

Barnacles. The upper decks are covered in barnacles (see “Wreck Features”).

Cabins. Doors leading fore and aft from the central portion of the deck give access to cabins that once were occupied by the ship's officers. These cabins (not depicted on the map) were emptied of their belongings long ago.

Naval Ram. The ship's iron naval ram is shaped like an enormous cudgel, the chosen weapon of St. Cuthbert.

Pit. A 15-foot-wide, 10-foot-long pit leads 10 feet down to the cargo hold (area M3). It is half covered with a net overgrown with algae.

Trapdoors. Two trapdoors lead down to steps that end in area M3.

Cudgel Ram. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of evocation magic around the 1,000-pound naval ram. A ship with the naval ram at-

tached has advantage on all saving throws relating to crashing when it crashes into a creature or object. The ship and the ram suffer no damage in the crash. These benefits don't apply if another vessel crashes into the ship with the naval ram attached.

M3. CARGO HOLD

The cargo hold has the following features:

Debris. Broken crates and barrels that once held food and fresh water litter the ground.

Statue. A 25-foot-tall marble statue of St. Cuthbert is laid horizontally and attached to the floor with rusty chains.

Rusty Chains. The chains that bind the statue of St. Cuthbert have AC 14, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The chains are rusty but solidly locked. A character can pick the lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A character can break the chains with a successful DC 14 Strength check.

Statue of St. Cuthbert. The missionaries of St. Cuthbert planned to stay for months or years in most ports, so they brought along a statue of their sacred deity to display at each stop. The statue weighs 1,500 pounds.

A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals auras of enchantment and necromancy magic radiating from the statue. A creature of any nonchaotic alignment that prays to St. Cuthbert for 1 minute while within 10 feet of the statue is affected as if it just drank a *potion of heroism*. The statue grants this benefit to no more than one creature every 24 hours.

A creature of any chaotic alignment that prays to St. Cuthbert for 1 minute while within 10 feet of the statue must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become blinded for 1 hour.

M4. ST. CUTHBERT'S SHRINE

The missionaries fashioned this shrine so they would have a place to worship during travel. It has the following features:

Altar. An oak altar painted with a faded image of St. Cuthbert stands at the west end of the room.

Benches. Four rotting benches are attached to the floor.

Altar. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of divination magic radiating from the altar. A character who examines the altar and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a hidden lid that allows the altar to open. The inside of the lid is mirrored. The altar's inner compartment holds a carved indentation of a holy symbol of St. Cuthbert and a coiled **iron cobra** that attacks any creature not wearing a symbol of St. Cuthbert.

When a creature places the *symbol of St. Cuthbert's knowledge* (see area M8) in the indentation, that creature can touch the mirrored lid and cast a *scrying* spell (DC 17) with the altar. The altar can be used to cast this spell only once every 24 hours.

M5. CREW QUARTERS

The crew quarters are a mess of rotted mattresses, broken furniture, and ruined belongings.

Treasure. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check while searching the room finds a set of gilded navigator's tools (100 gp) amid a great deal of ruined paper and deteriorated clothing.

M6. PASSENGER QUARTERS

The furniture in the passenger quarters is in pieces that litter the ground.

Crab of Cuthbert. The day before the *Marshal* sank, Clergol of the Viola, a bard and a follower of St. Cuthbert, cast the *awaken* spell on a crab he named Barnacle Bess. Bess has the statistics of a **giant crab**, with the following changes:

- She is lawful neutral.
- Her Intelligence score is 10 (+0), and she can speak and understand Common.

Bess hides beneath the broken pieces of furniture. She is timid and knows very little about the ship's history, though Clergol did teach her the tenets of St. Cuthbert and how to sing a few of the god's hymns. If the characters find Bess, she tries to flee unless one of them wears a symbol of St. Cuthbert, in which case she follows that character around singing and obeys orders given to her by that character.

M7. MISSIONARY CARGO

The door to this area is locked. A character can pick the lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A character can break the door open with a successful DC 12 Strength check.

This cabin contains fifteen watertight crates of various sizes, which hold hundreds of copies of *St. Cuthbert and Common Sense*, a short book used to explain the tenets of the deity's faith to nonbelievers.

M8. BRIG

The brig's door is made of rusted iron. Inside is a broken chamber pot and four skeletons wearing torn and rotted priest robes and manacles with broken, rusty chains.

Skeletons. The skeletons are the remains of the missionaries that overcame the allure of the harpies' song and tried to convince the others to put the *Marshal* back on course. Their pleas failed, and these missionaries were imprisoned in the brig, where they ultimately drowned.

Symbol of St. Cuthbert's Knowledge. One of the skeletons is that of Uzol Telmock, a high priest of St. Cuthbert. It still carries the *symbol of St. Cuthbert's magic* inside its robes. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of divination magic emanating from this jade symbol of St. Cuthbert. The symbol can activate the altar in area M4.

M9. CAVE OF LOST SOULS

This sea cave has the following features:

Algae. The sea cave is covered in phosphorescent algae, which fills the cave with dim green light.

Ceiling. The ceiling is 10 feet high.

Ghosts. Calimara and Alina are the **ghosts** of missionaries that died in the brig (area M8) along with the high priest when the ship sank. The ghosts spend most

of their time in the cave. They can't stand the painful memories that come from looking at their old ship.

The ghosts are devout followers of St. Cuthbert, and they attack any creature they see committing an illegal or evil act (such as if the characters are carrying items they stole from the ship's occupants).

If the characters have committed no such acts, the ghosts ask the characters to recover their remains as well as the bones of their friends in the harpy nest (area M1) and the brig (area M8) and give them a proper burial. If the characters perform this task, the ghosts give them permission to take treasure from the *Marshal*, after which they share their knowledge of the ship's original purpose and then fade into the afterlife.

WRECK ADVENTURES

You can create your own stories for adventuring at this site or use the information in the Marshal Wreck Encounters table to create an adventure. You can roll randomly or choose an encounter appropriate for the average level of the characters. Each encounter is described in detail after the table.

MARSHAL WRECK ENCOUNTERS

d4	Encounter	Level
1	Vecna's Twist	5th
2	Merrow Mayhem	7th
3	Golem Diver	11th
4	Dragon Turtle Bandit	15th

VECNA'S TWIST

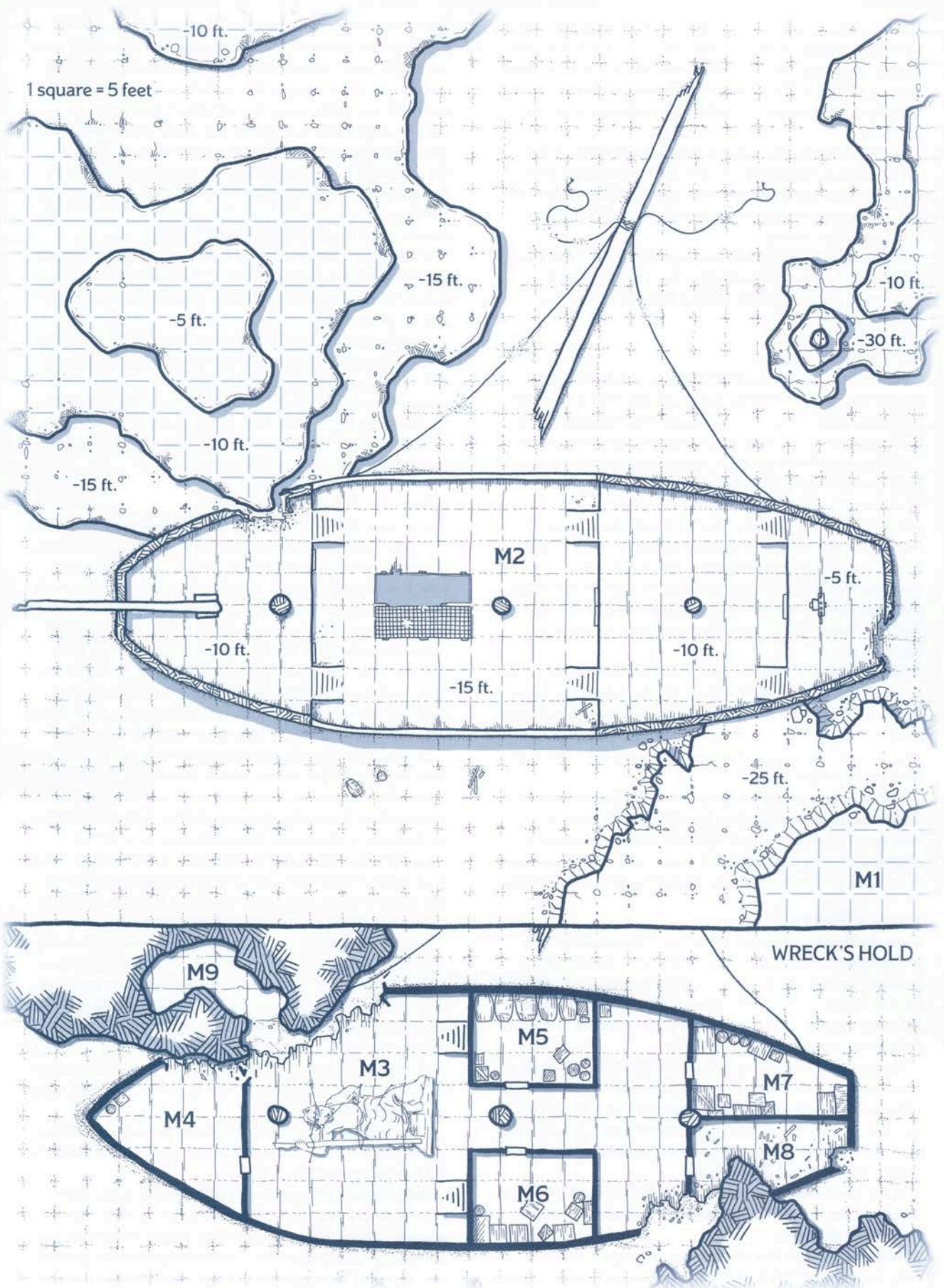
The town guard of Saltmarsh recently broke up a secret cult of Vecna, an enemy of St. Cuthbert. Jander Caudron (NE male human **cult fanatic**) was the leader of the cult. During interrogation, Jander revealed that the cult honored Vecna by using a cursed ceremonial dagger to twist the souls of St. Cuthbert's faithful killed on the *Marshal* into warriors of the Maimed God meant to assault Saltmarsh. The dagger is hidden somewhere in the wreck.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Eliander Fireborn asks the characters to investigate the matter, offering 300 gp if they neutralize the threat and recover the dagger.

Cursed Dagger. The cursed dagger, decorated with the hand and eye symbol of Vecna, is hidden beneath the statue of St. Cuthbert in area M3. A character can spot it with a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of necromancy magic radiating from the dagger.

Whenever an undead creature is destroyed within 500 feet of the dagger, the creature's essence is trapped in the blade, and 1d10 days later the creature re-forms with all its hit points in a space within 10 feet of the dagger. When a creature that is not undead and does not worship Vecna touches the dagger, that creature must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 hour. If the creature is still touching the dagger when the condition ends, that creature must repeat the saving throw, becoming subject to the effect again on a failure.

A character who examines the dagger and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check discerns that



A.6: WRECK OF THE MARSHAL

casting *dispel magic* on the dagger or striking the dagger with a magic or adamantite weapon will cause the dagger to break. The ghosts in area M9 know how to destroy the dagger. If the dagger is destroyed, the undead it created are destroyed, and their souls return to the afterlife.

Vecna's Dead. The cultists twisted the souls of five missionaries, turning them into one **wraith** and four **specters** that haunt the lower deck of the *Marshal*. The undead attack the characters when they come below, fighting to the death.

Ignoring the Threat. If the characters don't kill the undead and recover the dagger, the undead attack the town during the next festival thrown by Gellan Primewater.

MERROW MAYHEM

Calimara Deswin (see area M9) was a warrior who fought the forces of Demogorgon in life. The Prince of Demons wants to keep Calimara's soul trapped in her watery grave and has sent merrow to guard the wreck.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Gellan Primewater's smugglers bring in goods by moving through the waters near the wreck of the *Marshal*, since they know other people avoid the place for fear of the harpies. One of these boats, posing as a merchant vessel, was attacked by merrow while traveling near the wreck and barely escaped. Gellan offers the characters a letter of recommendation (see "Letter of Recommendation" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) if they can end the merrow threat.

Merrow. Relzagon is a muscular **merrow** (with 72 hit points), missing one eye, who spends most of her time in area M3 with four other **merrow**. Another three **merrow** patrol the water just outside the *Marshal*. These monstrosities are on a mission from Demogorgon and fight to the death.

Extra Reward. If the characters kill the merrow and fulfill the ghost's request to lay the missionaries to rest (see "Ghosts" in area M9), the ghosts reward the characters with a *charm of heroism* as they depart (see "Charms" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

GOLEM DIVER

Captain Xendros (see location 7 in Saltmarsh) wants the statue in the cargo hold (area M3) of the *Marshal* because he knows the gift would please Iuz, an enemy of St. Cuthbert. At the same time, Arla and Vengi Carmaclo, twin mages and worshipers of St. Cuthbert, want to recover the statue for themselves.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Captain Xendros asks the characters to recover the statue from the wreck, offering a box of *Nolzur's marvelous pigments* in exchange for the likeness of St. Cuthbert. Xendros warns the characters that bandits might try to recover treasure from the wreck and to be on the lookout.

If the characters recover the statue but don't give it to Xendros, he sends two **glabrezus** to attack the characters while they rest.

Wizards. When the characters approach the wreck, they notice a keelboat, the *Bat Guano*, anchored in the distance. The boat belongs to the twins Arla and Vengi

Carmaclo (LN human **mag**s), devout followers of St. Cuthbert on a mission to recover the statue, which was carved by their father, Fergos. They sent their iron golem to claim the work of art so they could avoid the harpies and are waiting for the construct to return.

If the characters are polite, the wizards happily share their mission. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check convinces the mages to allow the characters to recover the statue for them. The wizards are willing to give 500 gp to the characters if they help with the recovery.

If the characters recover the statue without talking to the wizards, the mages attack the characters, demanding the statue be given to them. The mages fight until one of them falls.

Iron Golem. When the characters arrive at the wreck of the *Marshal*, Arla and Vengi's **iron golem** is in area M3, breaking the chains that bind the statue before it attempts to lift it out of the ship. If the characters try to hinder the golem, it attacks, fighting until the characters retreat. The golem allows the characters to help it bring the statue back to the *Bat Guano*.

DRAGON TURTLE BANDIT

Those who fish in the waters around Saltmarsh know that a dragon turtle called Xalatamos claims the wreck of the *Marshal* as part of its domain. As long as the wreck was undisturbed, Xalatamos kept to itself—until recently, when it began threatening fishers to hand over their daily catches to pay for the theft of his treasure.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Anders Solmor can't turn a profit with his fishing vessels if Xalatamos keeps demanding the haul. He offers the characters 1,000 gp, plus the recovery of any expenses they incur, to discover why the dragon turtle is angry and mollify it.

Xalatamos. The **dragon turtle** spends most of its time within 60 feet of the wreck, watching the *Marshal*. When the characters enter the area, the dragon turtle approaches, demanding to know what they are doing in its domain. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Xalatamos to speak with them. Otherwise, Xalatamos demands tribute in the form of coins and gems worth no less than 500 gp before speaking further with the characters.

If the tribute is forthcoming, Xalatamos tells the characters that it kept a *staff of power* in the crew quarters (area M5), but the item went missing ten days ago. The creature is certain a thief from Saltmarsh took the staff, and it intends to make the fishers of the town pay until the item is returned. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Xalatamos to let the characters explore the wreck for clues of where the lost staff could be.

If the characters try to explore the wreck without its permission, Xalatamos attacks. It fights until reduced to 100 hit points and then flees.

What Really Happened. The culprit is none other than Keledrek the Unspoken (see location 6 in Saltmarsh). After using research and magic to discern that an item of power was likely buried somewhere aboard the *Marshal*, he conjured a water elemental and sent it forth to uncover what it could. The elemental found the



staff and, remaining undetected, escaped the ship and returned to Keleddek with its prize.

Finding the Staff. If the characters search the crew quarters (area M5), they find an important piece of evidence among the debris: the moldy remains of what was once an ornate wooden case meant to hold a staff. Where the head of the staff would rest, the outside of the case is sculpted in the image of a beholder.

If the characters take this knowledge (or the item itself) back to Saltmarsh and ask around, someone who makes a successful DC 14 Charisma (Investigation) check finds out that Keleddek has been sporting a new staff recently—and the head of the staff is a miniature sculpture of a beholder. If Keleddek is confronted about the item, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check convinces Keleddek to give the staff to the characters so that they can return it to its rightful owner.

If the staff is given back to Xalatomos, he stops harassing the fishers and hides the staff in a more secure location.

WARTHALKEEL RUINS

Centuries ago, Warthalkeel was a settlement built on a seaside cliff. Its people worshiped a kraken named Vaalastroth. The kraken would visit the town once every decade, giving orders and taking treasure as tribute from the people before descending into the deep to slumber. Malek Trandence, a priest of Procan, visited Warthalkeel and persuaded the people to worship the god of the sea. When Vaalastroth next returned, the kraken was furious at the people's betrayal. Vaalastroth broke the cliff beneath Warthalkeel, sending the town into the water. Rumors of hidden treasure and strange magic in the town's ruins sometimes attract explorers into the depths.

WARTHALKEEL FEATURES

The ruins of Warthalkeel have the following features:

Ceilings. The ceilings in enclosed buildings are 10 feet high, with 8-foot-high doorways between the chambers.

Depth. The seafloor on which the ruins sit is at a depth of 100 feet. The depth of ledges below the surface of the water and the height of those above are noted on map A.7.

Light. Areas exposed to the outside are brightly lit by the sun during the day and dimly lit by the moon at night. Enclosed areas have no light sources.

Structure. The ruins are made of stone. A door or a 5-foot-cubic section of wall, ceiling, or floor has AC 17, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Submerged. The ruins are filled with seawater.

WARTHALKEEL AREAS

The following areas are keyed to map A.7.

W1. WARTHALKEEL CLIFFS

These cliffs once held the town of Warthalkeel. Climbing the walls of the cliffs without equipment requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

W2. VAALASTROTH TRENCH

The floor of the trench is at a depth of 10,000 feet. An entrance to the kraken's lair lies somewhere in the deepest part of the trench.

W3. RUINED BUILDINGS

These buildings are so utterly demolished that it is impossible to know what purpose they served. Swarming around each ruin are 3d10 fish of various species and 2d4 **crabs**. Each fish has the statistics of a **quipper**, but it doesn't have the Blood Frenzy feature and can't make attacks.

Characters who dig through the rubble of a ruined building for 10 minutes find an object on the Ruin Objects table.

RUIN OBJECTS

d10	Object
1	Human bones
2	An iron holy symbol of Procan
3	A tin toy kraken
4	A rusted blade engraved with a tentacle
5	The cover of a book of hymns to Procan
6	A rusty tool, weapon, or armor
7	An engraving, sculpture, or other work of art depicting a kraken
8	An engraving, sculpture, or other work of art depicting Procan
9	A broken piece of a boat
10	A stuffed and preserved octopus corpse

W4. WINDMILL

The wood blades of the windmill are gone, and the inside of the mill is covered in rubble from the grinding wheel that broke apart when the building was submerged. Two human skeletons lie among the rubble.

Two **will-o'-wisps** occupy the mill. When a creature enters the building, the undead attempt to lead the creature into Vaalastroth Trench (area W2), whispering promises of treasure.

W5. KRAKEN'S VAULT

The people of Warthalkeel built a vault to store the treasures earmarked for Vaalastroth.

W5a. Guard Post. Stone benches line the walls, and a stone counter stands before the vault doors. Three human skeletons in rusted chainmail lie on the floor.

W5b. Vault. The door to the vault is locked with an *arcane lock* spell. A character can pick the lock with a successful DC 25 Dexterity check using thieves' tool or force the door open with a successful DC 30 Strength check. Touching the door with a bone from the high priest's skeleton (in area W7d) unlocks the door.

If a creature touches or attacks the door while it is locked, the door produces a spectral tendril that makes

an attack against the creature with a +7 bonus. If the tendril hits, it deals 11 (2d6 + 4) psychic damage.

Most of the vault's treasures were removed from the vault when Warthalkeel's citizens converted to the worship of Procan, but a stone chest in the vault contains 1,232 gp and 213 pp.

W6. HOUSE OF PROCAN

The house of Procan was erected to replace the Temple of Vaalastroth (area W7).

Malek Trandence secretly worshiped Erythnul, the god of slaughter. He knew that converting Warthalkeel to a new religion would bring down the kraken's wrath, pleasing his true god.

W6a. Chamber of Prayer. A chipped statue of Procan holding a trident in one hand and a piece of coral in the other stands on the east wall. A human skeleton lies at the feet of the statue.

W6b. Reflection Chamber. A glass fish tank overgrown with kelp stands on the east wall, and a mosaic of Procan's coral trident holy symbol is built into the ceiling. A **giant crab** hides in the kelp and attacks any creature that disturbs it.

W6c. Priest's Office. Broken wood furniture lies on the cracked floor. A 2-foot-diameter hole in the ceiling allows light from outside to enter and provides entry and exit to the **swarm of quippers** that lives here.

A character who searches through the debris on the floor finds a gold holy symbol of Procan (15 gp).

W6d. Priest's Room. Broken wood furniture and rusty mattress springs cover the floor.

A character notices the outline of a secret compartment in the wall with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The compartment holds an iron holy symbol of Erythnul.

W6e. Shrine to Erythnul. All doors to this area are locked. A character can pick the lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tool or force the door open with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

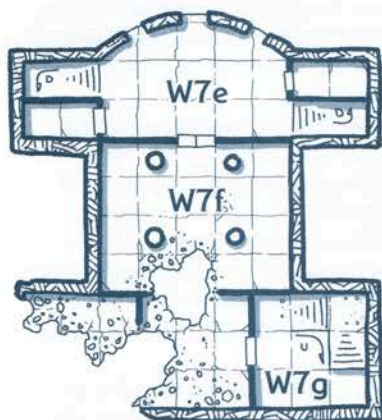
The skeletal remains of several beasts litter the floor, and an altar to Erythnul made of bones stands on the east wall. A magic morningstar lies on the altar. This weapon has the Curse property of a *berserker axe* and no other magical properties.

W6f. Shrine to Procan. Six cracked stone benches line a path leading up to a stone altar of Procan on a 2-foot-high dais at the south end of the room. Four human skeletons lie on the floor.

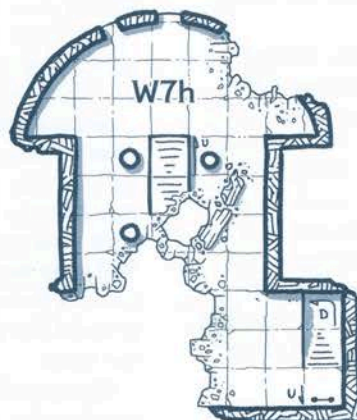
W7. TEMPLE OF VAALASTROTH

A four-story temple honoring Vaalastroth served as Warthalkeel's house of worship and seat of government for years. After Malek Trandence converted most of the townspeople to the worship of Procan, a few priests loyal to the kraken remained in the temple, preaching Vaalastroth's word only to each other.

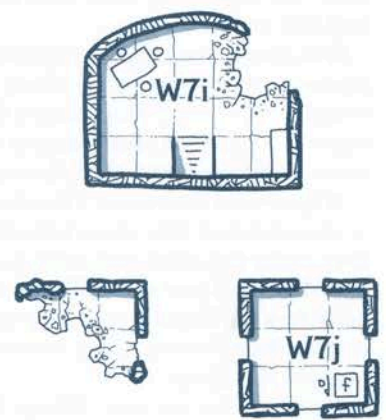
W7a. Entry Chapel. The chapel's floor, walls, ceiling, and columns are painted with a mosaic of a kraken reaching its tentacles up into a stormy sky. An altar shaped like a kraken's head stands in the center of the room.



Level 2



Level 3



Level 4

Twenty **octopuses** swim in place around the room. They attack only to defend themselves.

W7b. Supply Closets. These supply closets held food and liturgical materials that were lost to or broken by the sea. A closet has a 25 percent chance of containing a hungry **quipper** and a 10 percent chance of containing an object from the 25 gp Art Objects table in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

W7c. Meditation Chamber. Tattered tapestries and cold, rusty braziers decorate this chamber. Yalaga Maladwyn sits cross-legged in the center of the room. She is a **drow priestess of Lolth**, with the following changes:

- Yalaga is undead.
- She doesn't have the Fey Ancestry trait or the Summon Demon action option.

Yalaga was a loyal priestess of Vaalastroth until the end of her life and continues to be so in undeath. She meditates in this chamber trying to hear the voice of Vaalastroth, which has been silent for her since Warthalkeel's destruction.

If she notices the characters, Yalaga immediately begins asking why they have come to Warthalkeel. A character who succeeds on a DC 14 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check convinces her they mean no harm. If convinced, Yalaga shares Warthalkeel's history and allows the characters to explore the temple as long as she can escort them.

If the characters can't convince Yalaga they mean no harm, or if she catches them stealing or defacing any property in the temple, she attacks and fights to the death (though she doesn't leave the temple to follow the characters if they flee).

W7d. High Priest's Chambers. The door to these chambers is locked. A character can pick the door's lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tool or force the door open with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

Halkal Kyrith, the high priest of Vaalastroth, died cowering in his chambers for failing to defend the worship of the kraken. The high priest's skeleton lies in rotting robes amid debris on the floor, clutching a *tentacle rod*.

W7e. Balcony. The balcony is 10 feet above the sea-floor. The tops of the 3-foot-high parapets are carved to look like tentacles.

W7f. Crumbling Hall. A crumbling mosaic depicts a kraken devouring an entire planet on the ceiling of this chamber. A creature that touches the walls, floor, or ceiling of this chamber must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d6) damage from falling debris.

W7g. Grand Staircase. This staircase's stone railing is carved to look like a long tentacle. A **giant octopus** lives under the stairs and attacks only if disturbed. Yalaga Maladwyn (see area W7c) feeds this octopus and considers it a friend. A character can peacefully coax the octopus from its nest with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

A gold kraken statuette (100 gp) lies amid the waste in the octopus's nest.

W7h. Ballroom. The ballroom once hosted grand celebrations in honor of Vaalastroth. A 10-foot-diameter, 200-pound crystal chandelier shaped like a kraken (750 gp) hangs from the ceiling. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Dexterity check using mason's tools can safely remove the chandelier from the ceiling. The chandelier is fragile. If it takes any damage, it becomes worthless.

W7i. Private Room. This room offered privacy to important ballroom guests. A stone table shaped like a kraken sits in one corner. A long prayer to Vaalastroth is carved into its surface.

W7j. Tower Roof. The top of this tower holds an indentation of one of Vaalastroth's tentacles, marking where the kraken touched the building to bless it. A creature that touches the indentation feels an overwhelming desire to pray to the kraken. If a creature offers a prayer to Vaalastroth, the creature must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the creature gains a *charm of animal conjuring* (see "Charms" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), but can conjure only **octopuses** and **giant octopuses**. On a failed save, the creature takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage.

WARTHALKEEL ADVENTURES

You can create your own stories for adventuring at this site or use the information in the Warthalkeel Encounters table to create an adventure. You can roll randomly or choose an encounter appropriate for the average level of the characters. Each encounter is described in detail after the table.

WARTHALKEEL ENCOUNTERS

d4	Encounter	Level
1	Mephitis Mischief	1st
2	Lizardfolk Games	3rd
3	Release the Kraken	11th
4	Extended Life	13th

MEPHIT MISCHIEF

Gali, a curious merfolk teenager, stumbled upon a green conch shell in Warthalkeel's ruins. When she blew on the shell, a one-way portal from the Plane of Earth appeared, and out of the portal came a mud mephitis. The mephitis stole the shell and dropped it somewhere in the ruins before heading to the surface. As the days passed, more mephitis emerged from the portal, heading to the mainland to cause mischief.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Over several days recently, **mud mephitis** have appeared in Saltmarsh to steal food, pull pranks, and annoy people. Wellgar Brinehanded (see location 26 in Saltmarsh) tracked the mephitis back to Warthalkeel's ruins. He offers the characters 100 gp to find and close the portal that the mephitis are coming through. If the characters take the job, Wellgar gives each a *potion of water breathing* before they go to the ruins.

Elemental Portal. The 2-foot-diameter portal is located on the sea floor just outside area W7. Every 1d6 hours, a **mud mephitis** emerges from the portal and



MUD MEPHIT

swims for the surface. If the green conch shell is destroyed, the portal closes.

Gali. Gali, a **merfolk**, searches the ruined building (area W3) directly east of the Temple of Vaalastroth (area W7). She saw the mephitis that stole the conch shell swim over the temple and then over the ruined building. She didn't see where the mephitis dropped the shell. If she notices the characters, she flags them down, begging for help and sharing her story.

Green Conch Shell. The green conch shell was dropped into area W7f of the Temple of Vaalastroth. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of conjuration magic around the shell. If the shell is destroyed, the portal closes.

Treasure. If the characters close the portal, in gratitude Gali gives them a *potion of climbing* she found in an old shipwreck.

LIZARDFOLK GAMES

Wynce, queen of the Black Claw lizardfolk tribe, holds a series of athletic games every year to challenge her best warriors. These games are legendary among the Black Claw, for the grand prize is always an item of great power. This year the games take place in the water over the ruins of Warthalkeel.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Eliander Fireborn tells the characters that a group of lizardfolk has gathered in the water above the ruins of Warthalkeel. He asks the characters to greet the lizardfolk on behalf of the town and find out why they're close to the town. Eliander offers the characters 250 gp to talk to the lizardfolk and gives each character a *potion of water breathing* before they set out. He expects the potions back if the characters don't use them.

Let the Games Begin! Wynce, a **lizardfolk shaman**, six of her finest **lizardfolk warriors**, and thirty **lizardfolk commoners** (see appendix C) are gathered

in twelve canoes on the surface of the water when the characters arrive. Wynce welcomes the characters and explains why the Black Claw tribe is congregating. Not one to let a chance for a challenge go by, Wynce invites the characters to participate in the games.

Wynce oversees the games. She is a fair judge and allows the use of magic in the following contests:

Turtle Shell Toss. The participants in this game hurl a sea turtle shell across the water. All those participating make Strength (Athletics) checks. The participant with the highest check total makes the farthest toss and wins. The winner keeps the impressive shell as a trophy.

Driftwood Surfing. The players of this game stand on a large piece of driftwood, keeping their balance on the shifting waters. All those participating make Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks. The highest check total wins. The winner keeps the driftwood as a trophy.

Quipper Wrestling. Wynce casts *conjure animals* to conjure eight **quippers**. The winner of the game is the one who grapples and holds onto a quipper longer than any of the other players and is rewarded with a crown made of quipper bones.

Water Sparring. Each competing character battles a lizardfolk in the water. The battle continues until a creature submits or is defeated. The lizardfolk submit when reduced to 5 hit points, and if they reduce a character to 0 hit points with a weapon attack, the character is automatically stabilized. The winner of each match gets a pearl worth 10 gp as a prize.

Main Event. After the initial games, Wynce announces the main event. She has given a *ring of swimming* to a "stone-faced guardian" in the ruins of Warthalkeel. Normally she would divide her warriors into teams, but if the characters compete, she pits her warriors against them. The team that brings the ring to the surface wins and gets to keep the ring.

The *ring of swimming* is around one of fingers of the statue of Procan in area W6a. It takes the lizardfolk 1 hour to find the ring. If the characters find the ring in less time than that, they win.

RELEASE THE KRAKEN

The Society of Tentacles is a group of cultists that worship krakens. Elagoth Rinecot, the cult's leader and a descendant of the people of Warthalkeel, wants to call forth Vaalastroth and apologize for her ancestors' betrayal. The priest also plans to offer the characters to the kraken as tribute.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. Calduran Bravewater, a **deep scion** (see appendix C), approaches the characters posing as a rich noble and asks for their help in diving into the ruins of Warthalkeel to find lost treasure. He offers to give the characters whatever it takes to persuade them to go to the ruins (since he has no intention of paying).

Society of Tentacles. Two **kraken priests** (see appendix C) and a **deep scion** (see appendix C) desecrate area W6f of the House of Procan while another four **kraken priests**, including Elagoth Rinecot, hold hands in a circle and chant to perform the ritual in area W7h of the Temple of Vaalastroth. The cultists attack the characters with the intention of subduing them.

Yalaga Maladwyn (in area W7c) knows of the cultists and allows them to perform the ritual, though she suspects that waking the kraken could anger it, so she avoids participating.

Calduran tries to steer the characters toward area W6f but turns on the characters when they find either group of cultists.

The Kraken Cometh. If the cultists defeat the characters, the kraken priests use their *water breathing* spells to keep the characters alive and then bind them with manacles (see chapter 5 in the *Player's Handbook*) near Vaalastroth Trench (area W2). The cultists complete their ritual 12 hours after they capture the characters. A loud hum rings through the area, and then Vaalastroth the **kraken** rises from the trench.

Elagoth offers the characters as tribute, claiming that these powerful adventurers are the greatest threats to Vaalastroth's takeover of the settlement. Vaalastroth then attacks the cultists, calling them insolent for disturbing its slumber and offering such a paltry gift. If the characters have not escaped by the time the kraken kills the cultists, it demands all the characters' magic items in exchange for their lives. When it is satisfied, the kraken returns to its lair.

EXTENDED LIFE

The ancient storm giant Brinecane Ulganot is terrified of death. To cheat the inevitable, Brinecane drew on the magic of Warthalkeel's ruins, transforming himself into a mighty storm.

Saltmarsh Story Hook. For days, a powerful storm unlike any seen before rages over Saltmarsh. Ferrin Kastilar (see location 29 in Saltmarsh) tells the characters that he believes the cause of the storm is unnatural, since its borders never move and the ruins of Warthalkeel are at its center. The storm threatens everyone in Saltmarsh, so Ferrin has convinced the nobles to pledge 3,000 gp to the characters if they can find and stop the cause of the danger.

Calming a Storm. Brinecane Ulganot has transformed himself into a **storm giant quintessent** (see ap-



DEEP SCION

pendix C), and the ruins of Warthalkeel are his lair. The giant spends his days in area W7h making music with his harp—the calm in the eye of the storm.

Yalaga Maladwyn (in area W7c) knows she can't kill the giant, so she allows him to do whatever he wants. She would agree to ally with the characters in a plan to evict Brinecane.

When the characters find Brinecane, the giant tells them of his plight. He is scared to die, but he knows that without the magic of Warthalkeel he would succumb to old age.

If the characters offer to help Brinecane, he tells them he would agree to move to a new location touched with magic that would allow him to continue to extend his life. One such location that would put the storm far from Saltmarsh is Granny Nightshade's fortress, Castle Spiral, in the Dreadwood. Of course, Brinecane requires that Granny Nightshade and her minions be removed before he takes possession of the castle.

A character can comfort Brinecane and convince the storm giant to accept the inevitable, end the storm, and move out of the area with a successful DC 22 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If this check fails, Brinecane is insulted and attacks the characters.

If combat breaks out, the giant fights until reduced to 30 hit points and then flees.

APPENDIX B: MAGIC ITEMS

The magic items introduced in this book are detailed here in alphabetical order. The adventure in which an item appears is given at the end of its description.

CHARM OF PLANT COMMAND

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This fist-sized charm is made from a bundle of dried plant stems wrapped in silver thread. Hung on a leather thong, it is typically worn around the neck or attached to a belt.

This charm has 3 charges. While you bear the charm, you can expend 1 charge as an action to cast the *speak with plants* spell. For the duration of the spell, you also have advantage on Charisma checks made to influence the behavior, demeanor, and attitude of plants. The charm regains all expended charges at dawn each day. (*Tammeraut's Fate*)

CURSED LUCKSTONE

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This flat, gray-and-black river stone is inscribed with an unknown arcane symbol and feels cool to the touch. While carrying the stone, you can gain advantage on one ability check of your choice. The stone can't be used this way again until the next dawn.

Curse. This item is cursed. Attuning to it curses you until you are targeted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. As long as you remain cursed, you cannot discard the stone, which immediately teleports back into your pocket or pack. After you use the stone's magic, your next two ability checks are made with disadvantage. (*The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*)

HELM OF UNDERWATER ACTION

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this brass helmet, you can breathe underwater, you gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet, and you gain a swimming speed of 30 feet. (*Danger at Dunwater, Tammeraut's Fate*)

PIPE OF REMEMBRANCE

Wondrous item, common

This long, delicate wooden pipe features a bowl made from smooth river stone. When the pipe is lit, smoke exhaled from it does not dissipate, instead lingering around the bearer. After 10 minutes, the smoke forms moving shapes that reenact the bearer's most impressive and heroic achievements for 5 minutes. When this realistic performance is complete, the smoke dissipates. The pipe can't be used this way again until the next dawn. (*The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*)

PRESSURE CAPSULE

Wondrous item, common

This small capsule is made of beeswax blended with sand and a variety of enchanted water plants. A creature who consumes a *pressure capsule* ignores the effects of swimming at depths greater than 100 feet (see "Unusual Environments" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). (*Tammeraut's Fate*)

SEKOLAHIAN WORSHIPPING STATUETTE

Wondrous item, common

Skillfully carved from sandstone, this 1-foot-tall statuette depicts a shark twisting through the water with its mouth open. If any Tiny sea-dwelling animal is within 1 inch of the statuette's mouth, the shark flashes to life and deals 1 piercing damage to it. The shark can deal damage in this way no more than once per hour. (*The Final Enemy*)

APPENDIX C: MONSTERS AND NPCs

This appendix details creatures and nonplayer characters that are mentioned in this book and that don't appear in the *Monster Manual*. That book's introduction explains how to interpret a stat block.

Some of these creatures are also described in *Tomb of Annihilation*, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, and *Princes of the Apocalypse* but are reproduced here for your convenience.

The creatures are presented in alphabetical order.

AMPHISBAENA

Found in *Danger at Dunwater*, these strange reptiles have a head at either end of their serpentine bodies, each one equipped with venomous fangs. To move, an amphisbaena uses one head to grip the neck of its other head, forming a hoop that rolls over the ground.

ASSASSIN VINE

An assassin vine is an ambulatory plant that collects its fertilizer by grabbing and crushing prey and depositing the carcasses near its roots. It usually stays put unless it needs to seek out prey. A mature plant consists of a main vine, about 20 feet long. Smaller vines up to 5 feet long branch from the main vine every 6 inches. In late summer, the secondary vines produce bunches of small fruits that resemble wild grapes. The fruit is tough and has a hearty but bitter flavor.

A subterranean variant grows near hot springs, volcanic vents, and other sources of heat. An assassin vine growing underground usually generates enough offal to support a thriving colony of mushrooms and other fungi, which spring up around the plant and help conceal it.

AMPHISBAENA

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	3 (–4)	10 (+0)	3 (–4)

Skills Perception +2

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

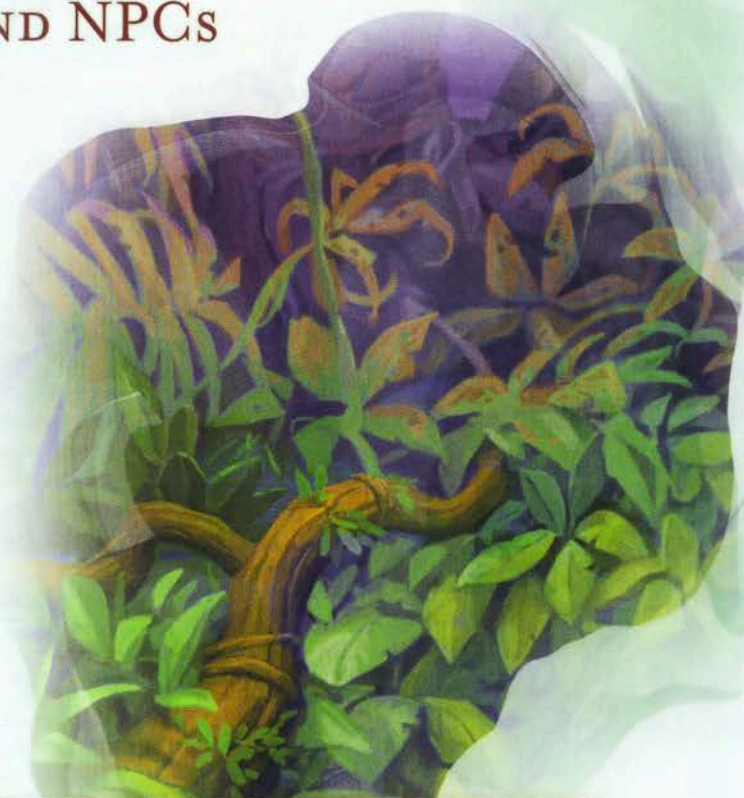
Two Heads. The amphisbaena has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The amphisbaena makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



ASSASSIN VINE

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	1 (–5)	10 (+0)	1 (–5)

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, prone

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

False Appearance. While the assassin vine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal plant.

ACTIONS

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and it takes 21 (6d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The vine can constrict only one target at a time.

Entangling Vines. The assassin vine can animate normal vines and roots on the ground in a 15-foot square within 30 feet of it. These plants turn the ground in that area into difficult terrain. A creature in that area when the effect begins must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be restrained by entangling vines and roots. A creature restrained by the plants can use its action to make a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, freeing itself on a successful check. The effect ends after 1 minute or when the assassin vine dies or uses Entangling Vines again.



BARD

BARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +6

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The bard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends*, *mage hand*, *vicious mockery*
 1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *healing word*, *heroism*, *sleep*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *shatter*

Song of Rest. The bard can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The bard can confer this benefit on itself as well.

Taunt (2/Day). The bard can use a bonus action on its turn to target one creature within 30 feet of it. If the target can hear the bard, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of the bard's next turn.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

BARD

Bards are gifted poets, storytellers, and entertainers who travel far and wide, but are commonly found in taverns or in the company of jolly bands of adventurers, rough-and-tumble mercenaries, and wealthy patrons.

BODAK

A bodak numbers among the numerous undead guardians in *Isle of the Abbey*. These soulless terrors, each one risen from the remains of someone who revered Orcus, Lord of the Undead, exist only to spread further suffering and death.

BODAK

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, the languages it knew in life

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aura of Annihilation. The bodak can activate or deactivate this feature as a bonus action. While active, the aura deals 5 necrotic damage to any creature that ends its turn within 30 feet of the bodak. Undead and fiends ignore this effect.

Death Gaze. When a creature that can see the bodak's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the bodak, the bodak can force it to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw if the bodak isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, unless it is immune to the frightened condition. Otherwise, a creature takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against the bodak until the start of its next turn. If the creature looks at the bodak in the meantime, it must immediately make the saving throw.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The bodak takes 5 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

Withering Gaze. One creature that the bodak can see within 60 feet of it must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



BULLYWUG CROAKER

Some bullywugs are born with the ability to weave magic into their songs. These rare specimens are raised in protected enclaves where they are taught to use their magic to both heal and harm. As demonstrated in *Danger at Dunwater*, they are among the most pompous of bullywugs.

BULLYWUG CROAKER

Medium humanoid (bullywug), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +3

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Bullywug

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. The croaker can breathe air and water.

Speak with Frogs and Toads. The croaker can communicate simple concepts to frogs and toads when it speaks in Bullywug.

Standing Leap. The croaker's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The croaker has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Glaaar-pat (3/Day). The croaker sings a song of marshy doom. Each chosen creature within 30 feet of the croaker that can hear the song must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw also has disadvantage on Constitution saving throws until the end of its next turn.

Rooooo-glog (1/Day). The croaker sings an ode to an elder froghemoth. Each bullywug within 30 feet of the croaker that can hear the song gains 10 temporary hit points.

BULLYWUG ROYAL

The largest and most intelligent bullywugs invariably end up leading their kind. These sneering specimens dress in robes made from leather, rough cloth, and bits of marsh plants. As seen in *Danger at Dunwater*, a bullywug royal is often accompanied by and mounted astride a giant toad.

BULLYWUG ROYAL

Medium humanoid (bullywug), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +3

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +4, Stealth +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Bullywug

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious. The royal can breathe air and water.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the royal hits with it (included in the attack).

Frog Rider. The royal has advantage on melee attacks made while riding a frog mount.

Speak with Frogs and Toads. The royal can communicate simple concepts to frogs and toads when it speaks in Bullywug.

Standing Leap. The royal's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The royal has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The royal makes two attacks: one with its royal spear and one with its bite.

Royal Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Croaked Decree (1/Day). The royal makes a loud pronouncement. Each bullywug within 60 feet of the royal that can hear the pronouncement has advantage on its next attack roll.

DEEP SCION

Deep scions began life as people who were stolen from shore or saved from sinking ships and offered a terrible bargain by an undersea power: surrender, body and soul, or drown. Those who submit are subjected to an ancient ritual widespread among evil aquatic creatures. Its methods are painful and the result never certain, but when it works, the magic transforms an air-breathing person into a shapechanger that can take a form that is fully at home beneath the waves.

DEEP SCION

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. and swim 40 ft. in hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +4

Skills Deception +6, Insight +3, Sleight of Hand +3, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Aquan, Common, thieves' cant

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The deep scion can use its action to polymorph into a humanoid– piscine hybrid form, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The deep scion reverts to its true form if it dies.

Amphibious (Hybrid Form Only). The deep scion can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. In humanoid form, the deep scion makes two melee attacks. In hybrid form, the deep scion makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Battleaxe (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Bite (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Psychic Screech (Hybrid Form Only; Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The deep scion emits a terrible scream audible within 300 feet. Creatures within 30 feet of the deep scion must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of the deep scion's next turn. In water, the psychic screech also telepathically transmits the deep scion's memories of the last 24 hours to its master, regardless of distance, so long as it and its master are in the same body of water.

DROWNED ASCETIC

Dressed in tattered robes, its fists wrapped in long ribbons of rotting cloth, the drowned ascetic moves with alarming speed for an undead creature. This martial artist, rising from the ocean in *Tammeraut's Fate*, retains its fighting reflexes despite its rotting flesh.

DROWNED ASCETIC

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Dex +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Bottom Treader. The drowned ascetic cannot swim, and it sinks to the bottom of any body of water. It takes no penalties to its movement or attacks underwater. It is immune to the effects of being underwater at a depth greater than 100 feet.

Bound Together. The drowned ascetic shares its mind with every other drowned one within 1 mile of it, and can communicate its thoughts and observations to them instantaneously and without limitation.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the drowned ascetic to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the drowned ascetic drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drowned ascetic makes three unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract bluerot (see the "Bluerot" sidebar).

REACTIONS

Dexterous Target. The drowned ascetic adds 3 to its AC against one ranged attack that would hit it. To do so, the drowned ascetic must see the attacker.

DROWNED ASSASSIN

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +5

Skills Intimidation +5, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Bottom Treader. The drowned assassin cannot swim, and it sinks to the bottom of any body of water. It takes no penalties to its movement or attacks underwater. It is immune to the effects of being underwater at a depth greater than 100 feet.

Bound Together. The drowned assassin shares its mind with every other drowned one within 1 mile of it, and can communicate its thoughts and observations to them instantaneously and without limitation.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the drowned assassin to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the drowned assassin drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drowned assassin makes two hand crossbow attacks or two dagger attacks. It can then take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract bluerot (see the "Bluerot" sidebar).

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract bluerot (see the "Bluerot" sidebar).

Reveal (1/Day). The drowned assassin removes its mask, revealing its rotting face. Each creature of the assassin's choice within 30 feet of it that can see the assassin must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn.



DROWNED
ASSASSIN

DROWNED ASSASSIN

The drowned assassin stalks and kills in a grim pantomime of its former occupation. Sneaking from shadow to shadow, and appearing in the undead assault of *Tammeraut's Fate*, it aims its barnacle-encrusted hand crossbow with deadly precision. Hidden behind a simple driftwood mask, this creature's face causes terror in mortal hearts when exposed.

BLUEROT

This disease targets humanoids. While afflicted with bluerot, a victim grows grotesque blue boils on their face and back. This disease is carried by undead (including the drowned ones in *Tammeraut's Fate*), and victims most often acquire it through wounds caused by infected creatures.

The disease's boils manifest in 1d4 hours, causing the victim's Constitution and Charisma scores to decrease by 1d4 each, to a minimum of 3. This is quickly followed by a fever and tingling in the extremities. An infected creature is vulnerable to radiant damage and gains the ability to breathe underwater.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature makes a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a success, the victim regains 1 point of Constitution and 1 point of Charisma lost to the disease. If the infected creature regains all the points lost to the disease, it is cured. Other effects that raise the victim's ability scores do not cure the disease. On a failed saving throw, the victim takes 18 (4d8) necrotic damage as the boils burst and spread. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage cannot regain hit points until the disease is cured, though it can be stabilized as normal.

DROWNED BLADE

Assaulting the hermitage in *Tammeraut's Fate*, this bar-nacle-encrusted undead warrior fights with surprising cunning. Starfish cling to its wispy beard, and its evil rage is visible in its bloated gray eyes.

DROWNED MASTER

This waterlogged undead, bound to the Pit of Hatred in *Tammeraut's Fate*, hovers menacingly over the bones of its victims. Its torso, arms, and head retain their former shapes, but its legs have split into shadowy tentacles. The drowned master is tethered to a source of powerful magic that prevents it from traveling far. It commands other drowned ones, compelling them to serve as agents in its dark plots.

DROWNED BLADE

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 10 (leather armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (–1)	16 (+3)	3 (–4)	9 (–1)	5 (–3)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Bottom Treader. The drowned blade cannot swim, and it sinks to the bottom of any body of water. It takes no penalties to its movement or attacks underwater. It is immune to the effects of being underwater at a depth greater than 100 feet.

Bound Together. The drowned blade shares its mind with every other drowned one within 1 mile of it, and can communicate its thoughts and observations to them instantaneously and without limitation.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the drowned blade to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the drowned blade drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drowned blade makes two rusted longsword attacks.

Rusted Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract bluerot (see the "Bluerot" sidebar).

DROWNED MASTER

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 157 (21d8 + 63)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +6

Skills Perception +10

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Bound Together. The drowned master shares its mind with every other drowned one within 1 mile of it, and can communicate its thoughts and observations to them instantaneously and without limitation.

Cold Aura. At the start of each of the drowned master's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) cold damage. A creature that touches the drowned master or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) cold damage.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the drowned master to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the drowned master drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drowned master makes two attacks: one with its greatsword and one with its Life-Draining Tentacle.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) cold damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or contract bluerot (see the "Bluerot" sidebar).

Life-Draining Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. On a failed save, the target also contracts bluerot (see the "Bluerot" sidebar).

Necrotic Ink (Recharge 5–6). The drowned master discharges foul ink in front of itself in a 30-foot cone. Each creature caught in the ink must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw is blinded until the end of its next turn and contracts bluerot (see the "Bluerot" sidebar).



FATHOMER

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 10 (13 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Arcana +2, Perception +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shapechanger (2/Day). The fathomer can use its action to polymorph into a Medium serpent composed of water, or back into its true form. Anything the fathomer is wearing or carrying is subsumed into the serpent form during the change, inaccessible until the fathomer returns to its true form. The fathomer reverts to its true form after 4 hours, unless it can expend another use of this trait. If the fathomer is knocked unconscious or dies, it also reverts to its true form.

While in serpent form, the fathomer gains a swimming speed of 40 feet, the ability to breathe underwater, immunity to poison damage, as well as resistance to fire damage and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. It also has immunity to the following conditions: exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, restrained, prone, unconscious. The serpent form can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if water can pass through a space, the serpent can do so without squeezing.

Olhydra's Armor (Human Form Only). The fathomer can cast *mage armor* at will, without expending material components.

Spellcasting (Human Form Only). The fathomer is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has two 3rd-level spell slots, which it regains after finishing a short or long rest, and knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*

1st level: *armor of Agathys*, *expeditious retreat*, *hex*

2nd level: *invisibility*

3rd level: *vampiric touch*

ACTIONS

Constrict (Serpent Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 12). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the fathomer can't constrict another target.

Dagger (Human Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

FATHOMER

Fathomers are cultists who have sealed a pact with Olhydra, elemental Princess of Evil Water. In addition to their spellcasting abilities, fathomers have the ability to transform their bodies into water, taking serpent-like shapes. In their water serpent forms, fathomers gain many of the resistances that elemental creatures possess, as well as the ability to grapple and crush their enemies with their watery bodies.

GIANT CORAL SNAKE

Comfortable on land or in water, these brilliantly colored snakes are renowned for their potent and hallucinogenic venom. They are most often found in coastal caves. In the abandoned chambers of the hermitage in *Tammeraut's Fate*, these giant serpents feed on any creature that crosses their path.

GIANT CORAL SNAKE

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	3 (–4)

Skills Perception +2

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn. On a failed save, the target begins to hallucinate and is afflicted with a short-term madness effect (determined randomly or by the DM; see "Madness" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The effect lasts 10 minutes.

GIANT SEA EEL

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Water Breathing. The eel can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 13 (2d10 + 2) piercing damage.

GIANT SEA EEL

Snaking predators lurking in the dark waters of the ocean, these kelp-colored beasts serve as guards and mounts for the locathah (including those found in *Danger at Dunwater*).

HARPY MATRIARCH

Happy to watch its flock squabble over carrion in *Tam-meraut's Fate*, this gray-feathered matron of the harpies is surrounded by a cloud of magical spirits resembling skeletal seabirds.

HARPY MATRIARCH

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	9 (–1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +6

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Luring Maestro. While within 60 feet of the matriarch, creatures have disadvantage on saving throws against the matriarch's Luring Song.

Magic Resistance. The matriarch has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The matriarch makes two claws attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 13 (3d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Fleeting Form. The matriarch can magically disguise itself to resemble a humanoid of roughly similar size and shape for up

to 1 hour. It can revert to its true form as a bonus action. This illusion does not hold up to close scrutiny.

Luring Song. The matriarch sings a magical melody. Every humanoid and giant within 300 feet of the matriarch that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the song ends. The matriarch must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time. The song ends if the matriarch is incapacitated.

While charmed by the matriarch, a target is incapacitated and ignores the songs of other harpies. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the matriarch, the target must move on its turn toward the matriarch by the most direct route, trying to get within 5 feet. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks, but before moving into damaging terrain, such as lava or a pit, and whenever it takes damage from a source other than the matriarch, the target can repeat the saving throw. A charmed target can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If the saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it.

A target that successfully saves is immune to this matriarch's song for the next 24 hours.

Visage of Desire (1/Day). The matriarch projects a vision into the minds of creatures within 30 feet of it that aren't constructs or undead, showing each creature achieving whatever it most desires. An affected creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or drop whatever it is holding and become paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

JUVENILE KRAKEN

Huge monstrosity (titan), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 207 (18d12 + 90)

Speed 20 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +12, Dex +5, Con +10, Int +9, Wis +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities lightning

Condition Immunities frightened, paralyzed

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal, and Primordial but can't speak; telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Amphibious. The kraken can breathe air and water.

Freedom of Movement. The kraken ignores difficult terrain, and magical effects can't reduce its speed or cause it to be restrained. It can spend 5 feet of movement to escape from nonmagical restraints or being grappled.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The kraken makes two tentacle attacks, each of which it can replace with a use of Fling.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature grappled by the kraken, that creature is swallowed and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the kraken, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the kraken's turns. One Medium or two smaller creatures can be swallowed at the same time.

If the kraken takes 35 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the kraken must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all

swallowed creatures, which fall prone in spaces within 10 feet of the kraken. If the kraken dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 10 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained. The kraken has ten tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

Fling. One Medium or smaller object held or creature grappled by the kraken is thrown up to 40 feet in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes a solid surface, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

Lightning Strike. The kraken magically create a bolt of lightning, which can strike a target the kraken can see within 90 feet of it. The target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The kraken can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The kraken regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Tentacle Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The kraken makes one tentacle attack.

Fling. The kraken uses Fling.

Ink Cloud (Costs 3 Actions). While underwater, the kraken expels an ink cloud in a 40-foot radius. The cloud spreads around corners, and that area is heavily obscured to creatures other than the kraken. Each creature other than the kraken that ends its turn there must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. A strong current disperses the cloud, which otherwise disappears at the end of the kraken's next turn.

KOALINTH

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (scale mail)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +2

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amphibious. The koalinth can breathe air and water.

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the koalinth can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the koalinth that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.



KOALINTH

JUVENILE KRAKEN

Hidden in a deep, dark underwater pit near the Styes, this creature bears the mark of the dark god Tharizdun's madness. Becoming more independent every day, it dreams of freeing itself from its aboleth tenders and wreaking its own foul will upon the seas.

KOALINTH

The koalinth, found in *Danger at Dunwater*, are martial and aggressive aquatic hobgoblins, with brightly colored faces and functional gills. They are known for their ferocity, and for their hatred of elves.

KOALINTH SERGEANT

These fierce koalinths lead special missions for their people, such as the diplomatic envoy encountered in *Danger at Dunwater*. A koalinth sergeant focuses its ire on the most significant threats on the battlefield, then eliminates those threats one by one.

KOALINTH SERGEANT

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (scale mail)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +2, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. The koalinth can breathe air and water.

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the sergeant can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the sergeant that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sergeant makes two melee attacks with its trident.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Hooked Net. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 12 Strength check to free itself or another creature in a hooked net, ending the effect on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 12) frees the target without harming it and destroys the net.

REACTIONS

Spear the Helpless (2/Day). Whenever a creature within 30 feet of the sergeant becomes restrained, the sergeant can move its speed toward the restrained creature. If the sergeant ends its move within reach of the restrained creature, it can make a melee attack against it.

KRAKEN PRIEST

A kraken can seem godlike to folk who have witnessed its fury. Those who believe that its might comes from being a divine entity and those who seek to appease the monster through its veneration sometimes find themselves infused with special abilities, to serve thereafter as kraken priests.

KYSH (TRITON)

A prisoner of the sahuagin in *The Final Enemy*, Kysh is a defender of the deep sea realms who is ready to join the party in their struggle. Tritons are folk of the Elemental Plane of Water who journeyed to the Material Plane to watch over the dark places of the ocean depths. They stand guard over portals, deep sea chasms, and other places where foul monsters might emerge. When such threats appear, the tritons take up arms to drive them from the world.

KRAKEN PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any two languages

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amphibious. The priest can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The priest's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *command*, *create or destroy water*

3/day each: *control water*, *darkness*, *water breathing*, *water walk*

1/day each: *call lightning*, *Evard's black tentacles*

ACTIONS

Thunderous Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 27 (5d10) thunder damage.

Voice of the Kraken (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). A kraken speaks through the priest with a thunderous voice audible within 300 feet. Creatures of the priest's choice that can hear the kraken's words (which are spoken in Abyssal, Infernal, or Primordial) must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.



KYSH

Medium humanoid (triton), lawful good

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Persuasion +4, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Primordial

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. Kysh can breathe air and water.

Emissary of the Sea. Kysh can communicate simple ideas with amphibious and water-breathing beasts. They understand the meaning of his words, but he cannot understand them in return.

Innate Spellcasting. Kysh's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He can cast the following spell, requiring only verbal components:

1/day: *fog cloud*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kysh makes two melee attacks with his spear.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

LIVING IRON STATUE

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities acid

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Immutable Form. The statue is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The statue makes two attacks: one with its blade and one with its hammer.

Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Whirl (Recharge 5–6). The statue can use its action to spin at the waist, targeting creatures of its choice within 10 feet of it. Each target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 19 (3d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LIZARDFOLK COMMONER

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +2, Survival +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Hold Breath. The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

LIVING IRON STATUE

This squat, solid-looking statue, currently guarding the evil cult's treasure in *Isle of the Abbey*, is made from pure iron. Its hands are shaped into deadly weapons.

LIZARDFOLK COMMONER

These lizardfolk, found wandering the halls in *Danger at Dunwater*, are just as fierce as their armed kin, and can equip themselves with weapons and shields if such are available.

LIZARDFOLK RENDER

Filled with the primal magic of Semuanya, the lizardfolk render undergoes terrifying changes during a days-long ritual performed by a shaman. As seen in *Danger at Dunwater*, the render's claws grow long and hard as steel, its frame enlarges, and its temperament becomes even more ferocious.

LIZARDFOLK RENDER

Large humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The render has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Hold Breath. The render can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The render makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its bite.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Rend the Field (Recharge 5–6). The render makes a claw attack against each creature of its choice within 10 feet of it. A creature hit by this attack must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

LIZARDFOLK SCALESIELD

Serving as the elite warriors and officers of a lizardfolk clan, these robust creatures wear thick armor made from crocodile scales and metal. Trained in martial weapons and advanced combat tactics, they are found protecting lizardfolk lairs such as the one in *Danger at Dunwater*.

LIZARDFOLK SUBCHIEF

The lizardfolk subchief (seen in *Danger at Dunwater*) is a devout priest of Semuanya, pursuing the worship of its god in a manner similar to a cleric. It wields a dagger crafted of a massive crocodile tooth blessed by Semuanya, representing the subchief's prowess in both battle and piety.



LOCATHAN

LIZARDFOLK SCALESIELD

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 16 (scale mail, shield)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	7 (–2)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Hold Breath. The scalesield can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scalesield makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Spiked Shield. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Shield Block. If an ally within 5 feet of the scalesield is hit by an attack, the scalesield can reduce that attack's damage by half.

LIZARDFOLK SUBCHIEF

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +5

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +5, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Hold Breath. The subchief can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Spellcasting. The subchief is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *guiding bolt*, *purify food and drink*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *silence*

3rd level (2 slots): *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*

ACTIONS

Tooth Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Jaws of Semuanya (Recharge 5–6). The subchief invokes the primal magic of Semuanya, summoning a spectral maw around a target it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw is also frightened until the end of its next turn.

LOCATHAH

These resilient and proud fish-folk (found in *Danger at Dunwater*) have endured war, slavery, and mistreatment at the hands of other aquatic creatures. They dwell in submerged tribal communities along seacoasts, and hunt both above and below the water.

LOCATHAH HUNTER

The far-ranging locathah hunter is trained in tracking and stalking prey on land and in water. They often serve as leaders to small bands of locathah or emissaries for their people (such as the hunter found in *Danger at Dunwater*). Their colorful, poisoned, and fast-loading crossbows rarely miss a target.

MAW DEMON

A quartet of squat fiends—all mouth and malice—turn their bottomless hunger to Lolth's servants in *Salvage Operation*. Infamous for their ceaseless hunger for carnage and mortal flesh, these fiends devour all in their paths. After a maw demon rests for 8 hours, anything it has devoured is transported to the Abyss for further digestion of a different sort.

LOCATHAH

Medium humanoid (locathah), neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +3

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Leviathan Will. The locathah has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned, or put to sleep.

Limited Amphibiousness. The locathah can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The locathah makes two melee attacks with its spear.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

LOCATHAH HUNTER

Medium humanoid (locathah), neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +4

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Leviathan Will. The hunter has advantage on saving throws against spells and effects that control its actions.

Limited Amphibiousness. The hunter can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hunter makes two attacks with its envenomed crossbow.

Envenomed Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

MAW DEMON

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (–1)	13 (+1)	5 (–3)	8 (–1)	5 (–3)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Abyssal but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Rampage. When it reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the maw demon can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

MAW OF SEKOLAH

Summoned from the shadowy depths of the ocean through ritual and tidal magic, the Maw of Sekolah appears in *The Final Enemy* as the avatar of the hungry sahuagin god. This huge, two-headed shark is fed a steady diet of sentient creatures, captured by the sahuagin and offered up as tribute. Sahuagin priestesses adorn the fins of the maw of Sekolah with gemmed bands and polished skulls.

MAW OF SEKOLAH

Huge monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d12 + 36)

Speed 0 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+0)	17 (+3)	2 (–4)	14 (+2)	7 (–2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin, telepathy 100 ft.

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the maw of Sekolah fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Water Breathing. The maw of Sekolah can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The maw of Sekolah makes one attack with its bite and one attack with its tail smash.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Tail Smash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

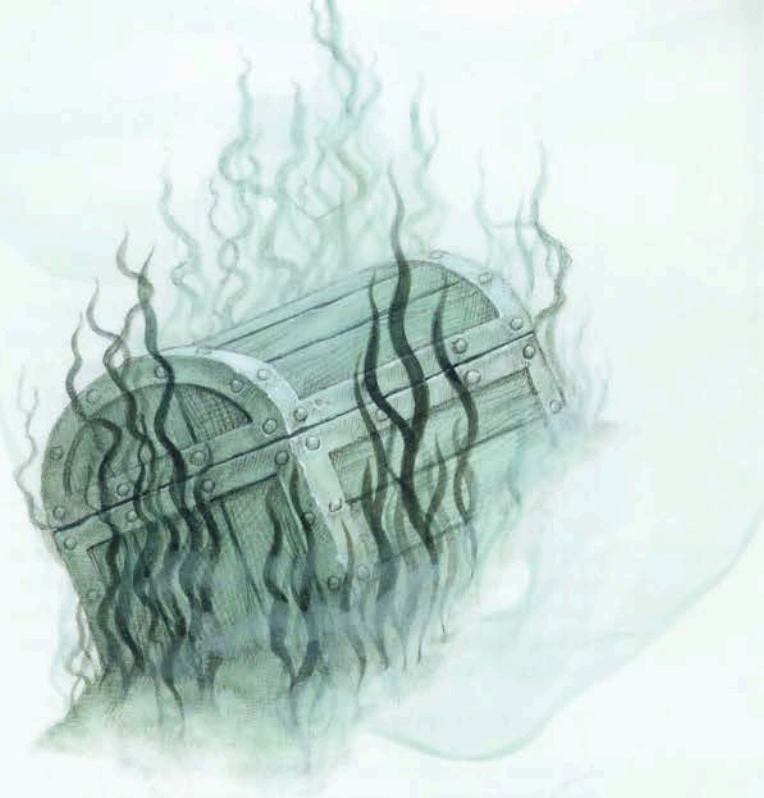
LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The maw of Sekolah can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The maw regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The maw of Sekolah makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Speed of Sekolah. The maw of Sekolah moves up to its speed.

Feed (Costs 2 Actions). The ferocious spirit of Sekolah flashes through the water, tearing through the foes of the maw of Sekolah. Each creature of the maw's choosing within 60 feet of it must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



MERFOLK SALVAGER

Veterans of scouring the wrecks and ruins found in the deepest waters, these skilled warriors help defend their kin with rapier-like weapons of living coral. The salvagers escort other merfolk on scavenging missions, using their keen senses to detect danger. They are found ally-ing with the lizardfolk in *Danger at Dunwater*.

MERFOLK SALVAGER

Medium humanoid (merfolk), neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Skills Athletics +3, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. The salvager can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The salvager makes two attacks with its coral rapier.

Coral Rapier. *Melee Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Inject Toxin (2/Day). *Melee Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the creature must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

MINOTAUR LIVING CRYSTAL STATUE

Given life through powerful magic, a large, crudely carved crystal minotaur guards the tunnels in *Isle of the Abbey*.

MONSTROUS PERYTON

The terror of the coast and the recent scourge of Firewatch Island in *Tammeraut's Fate*, this large peryton preys on ships and coastal communities alike. It has built numerous nests to mark its territory.

MINOTAUR LIVING CRYSTAL STATUE

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	9 (–1)	16 (+3)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	5 (–3)

Damage Vulnerabilities force

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Immutable Form. The statue is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The statue makes two attacks: one with its greataxe and one gore attack.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Flying Shards. In response to a creature hitting the statue with a melee weapon attack, the statue deals 11 (2d10) piercing damage to the attacker.

MONSTROUS PERYTON

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 144 (17d10 + 51)

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +6, Wis +6

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages understands Common and Elvish but can't speak

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Flyby. The peryton doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Sight and Smell. The peryton has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the peryton fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The peryton makes two attacks: one with its gore and one with its talons.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Warp Shadow. The peryton chooses up to three creatures within 60 feet of it that it can see. Each creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become cursed. While cursed, whenever the creature makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, it must roll a d4 and subtract that number from the roll. A cursed creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to this peryton's Warp Shadow for 24 hours.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The peryton can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The peryton regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The peryton makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Talons Attack. The peryton makes one attack with its talons.

Dive Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The peryton moves up to its speed toward one target of its choosing. It then makes a gore attack that deals an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage on a hit.

MR. DORY

One of the four councillors who rule the Styes, Mr. Dory hides his cursed nature in plain sight. His rare, liquid-sensitive “skin condition” is actually a form of the same aboleth affliction that creates skum, though Dory’s condition is not as severe, and he has managed to retain his free will.

MR. DORY

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (leather armor and shield)

Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +6

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +6, Stealth +9

Damage Immunities necrotic

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Abyssal, Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Mr. Dory’s innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Mr. Dory can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *invisibility* (self only)

2/day each: *fear*, *fireball*, *fly*

1/day each: *cloudkill*, *etherealness*

Magic Resistance. Mr. Dory has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Water Dependency. Mr. Dory takes 6 (1d12) acid damage at the end of every hour he goes without exposure to water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mr. Dory makes three attacks with his rapier.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage and 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Eye of Corruption (Recharge 5–6). Mr. Dory glares at a creature he can see within 30 feet of him. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 27 (5d10) necrotic damage and 27 (5d10) poison damage and then gains vulnerability to both necrotic and poison damage for 1 minute. On a successful save, it takes half damage and does not gain the vulnerabilities.



OCEANUS (SEA ELF)

Before being captured, this sea elf had been tasked with investigating the *Sea Ghost*’s movements in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*. Oceanus is a smart and resourceful elf who is more than willing to join adventurers who have brave hearts and good intentions.

OCEANUS

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +5

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Aquan, Elvish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amphibious. Oceanus can breathe air and water.

Friend of the Sea. Using gestures and sounds, Oceanus can communicate simple ideas with any beast that has an innate swimming speed.

ACTIONS

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.



PIRATE BOSUN

The bosun (or boatswain) is tasked with organizing the cargo and crew aboard a ship. Bosuns are capable fighters whose experience with hauling cargo and delivering beatings make them tough opponents. Foul Frithoff in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* is the bosun who protects the cargo aboard the smugglers' ship. Ever since a bad accident, he has worn a hook at the end of one arm in place of a hand.

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Pirate captains spend their lives at sea, earning and keeping command through blood and daring. A captain's impressive sword work and biting words inspire both confidence and fear in a ship's crew. Sigurd "Snake Eyes" is the pirate captain who leads a gang of smugglers in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*.

PIRATE BOSUN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (studded leather)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Cargo Hauler. The bosun has advantage on Strength checks.

Sea Legs. The bosun has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Light Hammer. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Hook. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13).

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Flourish. The captain adds its Charisma modifier to the damage roll for its longsword attacks (included in the attack).

Sea Legs. The captain has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes two attacks: one with its hand crossbow and one with its longsword.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands.

REACTIONS

Shape Up, Ye Dog (2/day). Whenever a friendly creature within 30 feet of the captain that can hear it misses with an attack, the captain can yell perilous threats to allow that creature to reroll the attack roll.

PIRATE DECK WIZARD

These salt-encrusted practitioners of magic are at once learned and superstitious. The crews of pirate ships generally give their deck wizards a wide berth, as they magically step from place to place and unleash their briny magic against attackers. The ship *Sea Ghost* in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* is home to a pirate deck wizard named Punketah.

PIRATE FIRST MATE

These no-nonsense sailors are the trusted allies of a pirate ship's captain. Ex-soldiers and trained mercenaries often find employment as mates aboard pirate ships. In *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*, Bloody Bjorn serves as the first mate aboard *Sea Ghost*.

RIP TIDE PRIEST

Priests of the Rip Tide cult gather in secret cabals to perform dark rituals that glorify Olhydra, the elemental Princess of Evil Water, as the embodiment of water's destructiveness. They believe that using water to kill their enemies, such as through ritual drowning, earns them Olhydra's favor.

PIRATE DECK WIZARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Sea Legs. The deck wizard has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

Spellcasting. The deck wizard is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *disguise self*, *fog cloud*, *mage armor*, *witch bolt*
2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *misty step*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

PIRATE FIRST MATE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Athletics +4, Intimidation +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Sea Legs. The first mate has advantage on ability checks and saving throws to resist being knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The first mate makes two attacks with its longsword.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands. If the target is a creature, the first mate can choose to deal no damage with the attack to disarm the target. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding on the ground.

RIP TIDE PRIEST

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Religion +2, Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat*, *magic missile*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *hold person*
3rd level (2 slots): *sleet storm*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

SAHUAGIN BLADEMASTER

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate armor and shield)

Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The blademaster has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The blademaster can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The blademaster can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blademaster makes three attacks with its wavecutter blade, or one attack with its bite and two with its claws.

Wavecutter Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

SAHUAGIN CHAMPION

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The champion has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The champion can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The champion can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its spear, or one attack with its bite and two with its claws.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

SAHUAGIN CORAL SMASHER

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The coral smasher has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The coral smasher can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The coral smasher can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

Siege Monster. The coral smasher deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The coral smasher makes two attacks with its warhammer, or one attack with its bite and one with its claws.

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

SAHUAGIN BLADEMASTER

A cunning veteran of countless campaigns, the sahuagin blademaker decorates its armor with the bones of its defeated foes. As demonstrated in *The Final Enemy*, sahuagin blademasters often serve as officers in the sahuagin army.

SAHUAGIN CHAMPION

Those sahuagin warriors who prove themselves through heroic acts are given both title and status. Sahuagin champions often serve as lieutenants in the sahuagin army, as they do in *The Final Enemy*.

SAHUAGIN CORAL SMASHER

Employed as frontline brutes in *The Final Enemy*, coral smashers are drawn from the ranks of the strongest sahuagin warriors. Their physical strength overcomes the

resistance of the water as they swing their hammers at structures and foes with equal zeal.

SAHUAGIN DEEP DIVER

These mighty sahuagin, found in *The Final Enemy*, are transformed by the divine magic of Sekolah to enable them to better explore the darkest depths of the ocean. Out of the water, they cling to shadows and serve as hunters and assassins. A long, scaly lure that can be illuminated extends from a deep diver's forehead.

SAHUAGIN HATCHLING SWARM

Roiling through the waters in *The Final Enemy*, these swarms of sahuagin hatchlings are dangerous to any creatures they encounter. Other sahuagin avoid the swarms, while the individual members devour one another until only the strongest hatchlings are left alive to grow to maturity.

SAHUAGIN DEEP DIVER

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +3

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The deep diver has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Brine Lurker. The deep diver has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made while submerged in water.

Limited Amphibiousness. The deep diver can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Lure. The deep diver can cause its lure to light up or darken at will. While the lure is lit, the deep diver sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius centered on itself and dim light for an additional 20 feet.

Shark Telepathy. The deep diver can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The deep diver makes two attacks with its glaive, or one attack with its bite and two with its claws.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d10 + 2) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Light of Sekolah. The deep diver pulses magical light from its lure. Any creature within 30 feet of the deep diver that can see the light must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the end of its next turn. A creature charmed in this way is incapacitated as it stares at the light.

SAHUAGIN HATCHLING SWARM

Large swarm of Tiny beasts, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 52 (8d10 + 8)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Seething. Once it enters combat, the swarm deals 10 slashing damage to itself at the end of its turn if it did not make an attack on that turn. This damage ignores resistance, and it cannot reduce the swarm to 0 hit points.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and it can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny creature. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Water Breathing. The swarm can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

SAHUAGIN HIGH PRIESTESS

A sahuagin high priestess is the most devout and ferocious of all Sekolah's worshipers. Armed with a staff studded with jagged shark's teeth, she can be seen leading dark rituals in *The Final Enemy*.

SAHUAGIN WAVE SHAPER

These hunched and twisted sahuagin sacrifice their bodies to the mutating magic of Sekolah. Wave shapers add elemental magic to sahuagin armed forces (as seen in *The Final Enemy*) and delight in creating destructive whirlpools.

SAHUAGIN HIGH PRIESTESS

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +6

Skills Insight +6, Perception +6

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The high priestess has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The high priestess can breathe air and water, but she needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The high priestess can magically command any shark within 120 feet of her, using a limited telepathy.

Spellcasting. The high priestess is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance*, *mending*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bless*, *detect magic*, *guiding bolt*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *spiritual weapon* (trident)

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *fear*, *mass healing word*, *tongues*

4th level (1 slot): *banishment*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The high priestess makes two attacks with her toothsome staff, or one attack with her bite and one with her claws.

Toothsome Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

SAHUAGIN WAVE SHAPER

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +6

Skills Arcana +6, Intimidation +4, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The wave shaper has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The wave shaper can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The wave shaper can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

Innate Spellcasting. The wave shaper's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It can cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

At will: *message*

1/day: *comprehend languages*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wave shaper makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) cold damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) cold damage.

Whirlpool (1/day). The wave shaper targets a body of water at least 50 feet square and 25 feet deep, causing a whirlpool to form in the center of the area. The whirlpool forms a vortex that is 5 feet wide at the base, up to 50 feet wide at the top, 25 feet tall, and lasts for 1 minute or until the wave shaper is incapacitated. Any creature or object in the water and within 25 feet of the vortex is pulled 10 feet toward it. A creature can swim away from the vortex by succeeding on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

When a creature enters the vortex for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and is caught in the vortex until it ends. On a success, the creature takes half damage and isn't caught in the vortex. A creature caught in the vortex can use its action to try to swim away from the vortex as described above, but it has disadvantage on the Strength (Athletics) check to do so.

The first time each turn that an object enters the vortex, the object takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. This damage occurs each round it remains in the vortex.

SANBALET

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. Sanbalet is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *color spray*, *magic missile*,
silent image
2nd level (2 slots): *magic mouth*, *scorching ray*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

SEA LION

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d10 + 4)

Speed 15 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	5 (–3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +2, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hold Breath. The sea lion can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sea lion makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage, and the target is pushed up to 5 feet away from the sea lion.

SANBALET

In *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*, Sanbalet is the leader of the land-based half of a smuggling ring. He is a cunning narcissist with an interest in illusion and mind control. He defends the contraband stored in the caves under the haunted house.

SEA LION

These large marine mammals live along coastal regions and around islands at sea. One sea lion is kept in a cell in the lowest reaches of the sahuagin fortress in *The Final Enemy*.

SHELL SHARK

These impressive creatures, swimming through the sahuagin stronghold in *The Final Enemy*, are chosen by priestesses of Sekolah to serve as protectors and messengers. The sharks are blessed in a ritual during which plates of shell and coral are permanently affixed to their bodies.

SHELL SHARK

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (shell plate armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	3 (–4)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

Saving Throws Str +6

Skills Athletics +6

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The shark has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

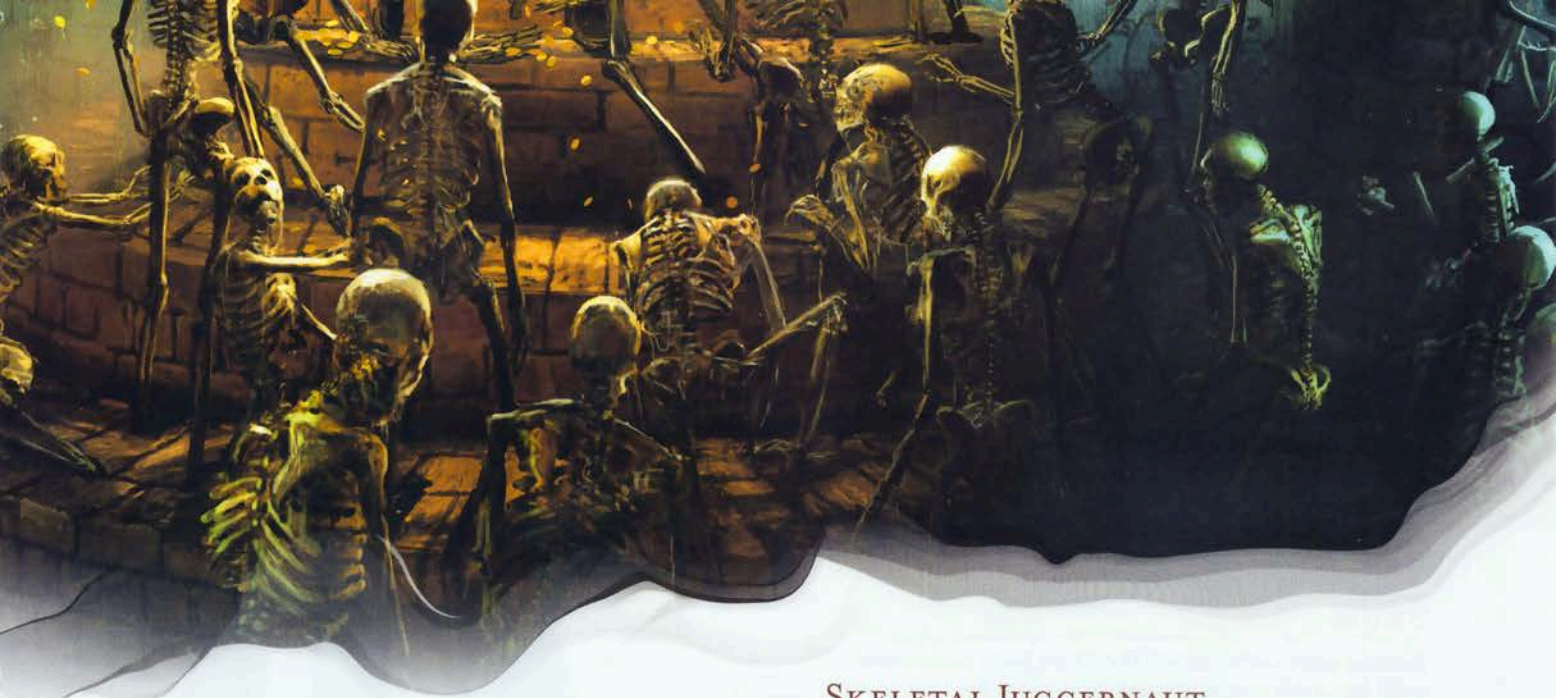
Magic Resistance. The shark has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Water Breathing. The shark can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shark makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d10 + 2) piercing damage.



SKELETAL ALCHEMIST

This undead retains enough of its former self to continue its alchemical work, often on behalf of necromancers or other sinister patrons. It toils in a dark laboratory (such as the one found in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh*), often falling dormant for long periods of time.

SKELETAL ALCHEMIST

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Arcana +4

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Magic Resistance. The skeletal alchemist has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The skeletal alchemist makes two Lob Acid attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Lob Acid. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) acid damage.

SKELETAL JUGGERNAUT

As seen lumbering across the beaches in *Isle of the Abbey*, a skeletal juggernaut is an oversized, bipedal assembly of bones that loses a portion of its mass with each step. These skeletal guardians hold together for only a short time before disassembling into a gang of individual undead.

SKELETAL JUGGERNAUT

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 142 (19d10 + 38)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Disassemble. If the juggernaut is reduced to 0 hit points, twelve skeletons rise from its remains.

Falling Apart. If the juggernaut does not have all of its hit points at the start of its turn, it loses 10 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The juggernaut makes two claws attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Avalanche of Bones (Recharge 5–6). The juggernaut collapses into a large heap before quickly reforming. Each creature within 10 feet of the juggernaut must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that fails this saving throw is also knocked prone.

SKELETAL SWARM

This swarm of bones found rising out of the sand in *Isle of the Abbey* is made from the remains of several animated skeletons. A skeletal swarm alternates its appearance between partially formed humanoid shapes and a chaotic, swirling mass.

SKUM

Several poor souls around the Styes have succumbed to an aboleth's magic through its disease-bearing touch. Transformed into creatures called skum, they barely resemble their past forms, their skin turning slimy and translucent while their limbs warp to resemble those of deep-sea oddities. The change makes them dependent on water, which they must immerse themselves in regularly lest they experience painful—and potentially lethal—skin eruptions. Skum are bound to their aboleth master not just by their cursed state, but by a psychic bond that compels them to serve its every sinister whim.



SKUM

SKELETAL SWARM

Large swarm of Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 60 (8d10 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Resistances slashing, piercing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Deafening Clatter. Creatures are deafened while in the swarm's space.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Small humanoid. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

SKUM

Medium aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	7 (-1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances psychic

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Abolethic Vassal. The skum is permanently charmed by its aboleth master.

Amphibious. The skum can breathe air and water.

Psychic Conditioning. The skum is immune to the frightened and charmed conditions unless they are from effects created by an aboleth.

Water Dependency. The skum takes 6 (1d12) acid damage every 10 minutes it goes without exposure to water.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The skum makes three attacks: two with its trident and one with its Mind-Breaking Touch.

Trident. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Mind-Breaking Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) psychic damage, and the target has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws until the end of the skum's next turn.

STORM GIANT QUINTESSENT

Some storm giants approaching the end of their natural life spans seek an escape from death. They plumb the depths of their powerful connection to the elements and disperse themselves into nature, literally transforming into semiconscious storms.

STORM GIANT QUINTESSENT

Huge giant (storm giant), chaotic good

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)

Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover), swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +10, Wis +10, Cha +9

Skills Arcana +8, History +8, Perception +10

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities lightning, thunder

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Amphibious. The giant can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant makes two Lightning Sword attacks or uses Wind Javelin twice.

Lightning Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 40 (9d6 + 9) lightning damage.

Wind Javelin. The giant coalesces wind into a javelin-like form and hurls it at a creature it can see within 600 feet of it. The javelin is considered a magic weapon and deals 19 (3d6 + 9) piercing damage to the target, striking unerringly. The javelin disappears after it hits.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The giant can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The giant regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Gust. The giant targets a creature it can see within 60 feet of it and creates a magical gust of wind around it. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 20 feet in any horizontal direction the giant chooses.

Thunderbolt (2 Actions). The giant hurls a thunderbolt at a creature it can see within 600 feet of it. The target must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

One with the Storm (3 Actions). The giant vanishes, dispersing itself into the storm surrounding its lair. The giant can end this effect at the start of any of its turns, becoming a giant once more and appearing in any location it chooses within its lair. While dispersed, the giant can't take any actions other than lair actions, and it can't be targeted by attacks, spells, or other effects. The giant can't use this ability outside its lair, nor can it use this ability if another creature is using a *control weather* spell or similar magic to quell the storm.

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Rot grubs are finger-sized maggots that eat living or dead flesh, although they can subsist on plant matter. They infest corpses and piles of decaying matter and attack living creatures that disturb them. After burrowing into the flesh of a living creature, a rot grub instinctively chews its way toward the heart in order to kill its host.

Rot grubs pose a threat both singly and as a swarm. See the accompanying stat block for the mechanics of a swarm of rot grubs.

A single rot grub has no stat block. Any creature that comes into contact with one must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the rot grub burrows into the creature's flesh and deals 3 (1d6) piercing damage at the start of each of the host creature's turns. Applying fire to the wound before the end of the host creature's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the host and kills the infesting rot grub. After this time, the rot grub is too far under the host creature's skin to be burned. If a creature infested by one or more rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target. Burning a body kills any rot grubs infesting it.

SWARM OF ROT GRUBS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	2 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny maggot. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* The target is infested by 1d4 rot grubs. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per rot grub infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these rot grubs. After this time, these rot grubs are too far under the skin to be burned.

If a target infested by rot grubs ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the rot grubs burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all rot grubs infesting the target.

THOUSAND TEETH THE DEVOURER

Thousand Teeth is an ancient crocodilian nightmare that has served as the apex predator in the swamps near Saltmarsh for as long as anyone can remember. This monster recently fought a number of lizardfolk and lost one of its teeth. Angered and hungry, it sulks in its lair, lost in primal dreams of rending and tearing. It is found in the deep marshes in *Danger at Dunwater*.

THOUSAND TEETH

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6

Skills Athletics +7, Stealth +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Hold Breath. Thousand Teeth can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Thousand Teeth fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Thousand Teeth makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Thousand Teeth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Thousand Teeth regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. Thousand Teeth makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Lunge. Thousand Teeth moves up to half its speed.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). Thousand Teeth makes a bite attack.

VAMPIRIC JADE STATUE

A large, exquisitely carved jade statue of a vampire guards the tunnels in *Isle of the Abbey*, having been brought to life by dark magic. Its stone fangs draw blood that it then uses to work a curse on its victims.

VAMPIRIC JADE STATUE

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities force

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Immutable Form. The statue is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the statue fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The statue makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, that creature becomes cursed by the statue. The curse lasts for 10 minutes. While the creature is cursed, the statue has advantage on all attacks against it.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The statue can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The statue regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Bite. The statue makes one bite attack.

Blood Reaper. All creatures currently cursed by the statue and within 20 feet of it take 5 necrotic damage.

Move. The statue moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS

Nestled on the coast of the Azure Sea is Saltmarsh, a sleepy fishing village that sits on the precipice of destruction. Smugglers guide their ships to hidden coves, willing to slit the throat of anyone fool enough to cross their path. Cruel sahuagin gather beneath the waves, plotting to sweep away coastal cities. Drowned sailors stir to unnatural life, animated by dark magic and sent forth in search of revenge. The cult of a forbidden god extends its reach outward from a decaying port, hungry for fresh victims and willing recruits. While Saltmarsh slumbers, the evils that seek to plunder it grow stronger. Heroes must arise to keep the sea lanes safe for all.

This supplement introduces the port town of Saltmarsh, the perfect starting point for a nautical campaign. Seven sea-based adventures, including the classic *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* and its sequels, take characters from 1st to 12th level. Also inside are rules and DM advice for ships and sea travel, as well as deck plans for various vessels. An appendix provides rules for the new and classic monsters in the adventures.

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