

DAVAE BREON JAXON'S

CINEMATIC ENVIRONS

AQUATIC DEPTHS

CRITICAL HIT
PUBLISHING

CREDITS

Writing: Davae Breon Jaxon, Alex Guillotte, Rob Davis

Rules Development: Davae Breon Jaxon

Design & Layout: Alex Guillotte

Editing: Alex Guillotte, Rob Davis

Art Director & Illustrations: Alex Guillotte

INTRODUCTION

The material in this book is intended to add to the energy and excitement that one should feel when adventuring in a dangerous and mysterious environment. While it's true that combat and social interactions make up a sizable and important portion of most role-playing sessions, the exploration of uncharted locations is another critical element of immersive gaming. The intention here is to add to the overall drama of your game by engaging the senses and cranking up the tension with heart-stopping hazards that can help make your world come alive for your players.

The hope is that you enjoy using this "overlay" and are sparked to create even more memories in the years to come.

THE RULE OF THREE

One of the most important aspects of cinematic role playing is the **Rule of Three**. When adjudicating the dangers presented in this book, be aware of what level of realism you, as a DM, are looking to provide.

In a realistic, brutal setting, allowing only **one** ability check or save to overcome the obstacle is acceptable.

A more adventurous, but still rather gritty feeling is achieved by allowing **two** ability checks or saves before lethal effects befall the heroes. This will give the players a real sense of danger, yet still encourage some heroic stunts.

And for a truly high-action, over-the-top cinematic feel, allow **three** ability checks or saves before the proverbial hammer falls on the characters.

For example, let's say that the party is attempting to climb a sheer cliff face to enter the Black Castle unseen. A deadly setting would see only **one** roll to avoid falling to one's death. In this case it might be that one poor Dexterity check would seal their fate.

A setting that mixes gritty action and heroic deeds would allow **two** rolls before dropping the characters on the rocks hundreds of feet below. In this case, perhaps the climbing roll fails, so an additional strength roll is needed to hold on with their fingertips.

In a cinematic setting of high fantasy and heroic actions, there would be at least **three** potential chances before tumbling

down the rocky mountain wall. In this case, it might be that the climbing skill fails and the strength check fails, but perhaps a Dexterity roll could save the falling hero as she grabs a root dangling nearby.

The **Rule of Three** also applies in the opposite direction when a character attempts to perform a stunt. The more skill or ability checks required to achieve the stunt, the more realistic and dangerous the action will be. In other words, asking for more rolls to succeed will lead to barriers when you want your player group to engage in cinematic action.

For example, suppose a player wants their character to snatch a tapestry from the wall, throw it over an orc guard and then push them out of an open window. In a realistic setting, that player may have to roll to snatch down the carpet, another roll to hit the orc, and yet another roll to knock them over.

In a gritty game, the game master (DM) may ask for a roll to cover the guard and another to knock them prone.

In a cinematic world, a single roll is all that is needed to give the orc a blanket party and send it on its way to oblivion.

It's important that you communicate with your group to decide collectively what sort of game you intend to run concerning the **Rule of Three**. Make sure all are in complete agreement to prevent conflicting expectations in the game.

USING AN ENVIRON

The following cinematic scenes or hazards are not truly monsters or even lairs. Yet it may be necessary to place the effects of the scene in some form of Initiative order. Pick a system and remain consistent: first, last or pick an average roll and apply that to each combat round. Players may have to be tactical, expending an action to remain balanced or hold on, so be aware if a character does not have a movement or action available to maintain safety.

Flavor. At the beginning of each entry, there is a small narrative section that can help set the scene. Although you may certainly read the description verbatim if you wish, it is recommended that you describe the scene in your own words

as appropriate to the encounter and the mood of your game.

Each entry may also include additional options other than those listed below, or it may omit ones that do not apply. Details on their use will be included with each specific description.

Pressure. Sometimes your players will suffer from analysis-paralysis. If they are intent on remaining locked up, refusing to move either forward into danger or around the obstacle, these ideas can help to get the story moving.

If/Then. Many scenes are dangerous to traverse. The notes here describe which specific actions could cause certain consequences. This can and should give your players pause as they weigh various actions and what that means for them moving forward. Do they run across a frozen lake or walk carefully? Both options will have merit based on the party and their mission.

Even the Odds. This is a simple way to randomly pick targets in a crowd. Each target rolls a die. An **even** number means that subject is not targeted, but an **odd** number means suffering the effects of the environment, be it falling through ice, tripping over roots or being smashed against rocks while being swept away by a raging river.

Changes. Even a blizzard can get boring after a while. This section is a prompt to wake up lethargic players. Use one or more of these events to jump start the encounter as things change... for better or worse.

Fumblecrit. During any extreme activity, whether it's combat or dealing with a natural hazard, some will fumble while others will enjoy a critical success. This table will list a few events that you can either roll for, or choose from, to add to the drama and energy of the scene.

CONCLUSION

Although not intended to be a book of lairs or encounters, the environs and hazards provided in this book can offer great opportunities to a creative DM, allowing you to include various monsters or non-player characters (NPCs) and introduce new and exciting adventure locations.

DEFINITIONS

ADVANTAGE

Having **Advantage** means that you roll a second d20 when you make the roll. You then use the higher of the two rolls. For example, if you have **Advantage** and roll a 17 and a 5, you use the 17.

BLINDED

A blinded creature can't see and automatically fails any ability check that requires sight. Attack rolls against the creature have **Advantage**, and the creature's attack rolls have **Disadvantage**.

DEAFENED

A deafened creature can't hear and automatically fails any ability check that requires hearing.

DESPAIR

Spending enough time under extreme conditions is enough to wear anyone down. After enduring extreme conditions for 3 days + Wisdom modifier, you must make a successful Wisdom save (DC 10) or lose 1 point of Wisdom. The DC increases by 1 for each level of exhaustion you have suffered.

DIFFICULTY CLASS

For every ability check or saving throw, the DM decides which of the six abilities is relevant and the difficulty of the task or save, represented by a **Difficulty Class**, usually called the **DC**. The more difficult a task, the higher its **DC**. The table below shows the most common **DCs**.

Task Difficulty	DC
Very Easy	5
Easy	10
Medium	15
Hard	20
Very Hard	25
Nearly Impossible	30

To make an ability check or save, roll a d20 and add the relevant ability modifier. As with other d20 rolls, apply bonuses and penalties, and compare the total to the **DC**. If the total equals or exceeds the **DC**, the ability check is a success, otherwise, it's a failure.

DISADVANTAGE

Having **Disadvantage** means that you roll a second d20 when you make the roll. You then use the lower of the two rolls. For example, if you have **Disadvantage** and roll a 17 and a 5, you use the 5.

EXHAUSTED

Some special abilities and environmental hazards, such as starvation and the long-term effects of freezing or scorching temperatures, can lead to a special condition called exhaustion.

Exhaustion is measured in six levels. An effect can give a creature one or more levels of exhaustion, as specified in the effect's description.

Level	Effect
1	<i>Disadvantage on ability checks</i>
2	<i>Speed halved</i>
3	<i>Disadvantage on attack rolls and Saving Throws</i>
4	<i>Hit point maximum halved</i>
5	<i>Speed reduced to 0</i>
6	<i>Death</i>

If an already exhausted creature suffers another effect that causes exhaustion, its current level of exhaustion increases by the amount specified in the effect's description.

A creature suffers the effect of its current level of exhaustion as well as all lower levels. For example, a creature suffering level 2 exhaustion has its speed halved and has **Disadvantage** on ability checks.

An effect that removes exhaustion reduces its level as specified in the effect's description, with all exhaustion effects ending if a creature's exhaustion level is reduced below 1.

Finishing a long rest reduces a creature's exhaustion level by 1, provided that the creature has also ingested some food and drink.

HYPOTHERMIA

This is a state of deep cold where the body begins to shut down, and the creature's core body temperature begins to drop.

When a creature is exposed to extreme cold without protection, they must make a Constitution save (DC 15) every 30 minutes or become hypothermic. The DC increases by 1 after each check to a maximum of 25. The creature with hypothermia has **Disadvantage** on all Dexterity and Intelligence checks, they suffer 1 level of *Exhaustion*, and their movement is reduced by half.

Every 30 minutes thereafter, they must make a Constitution save (at the current DC) or suffer another level of *Exhaustion*. This process continues until they either warm up or die.

INCAPACITATED

An **Incapacitated** creature can't take actions or reactions.

INVISIBLE

An invisible creature is impossible to see without the aid of magic or a special sense. For the purpose of hiding, the creature is heavily obscured. The creature's location can be detected by any noise it makes or any tracks it leaves.

Attack rolls against the creature have **Disadvantage**, and the creature's attack rolls have **Advantage**.

PARALYZED

A paralyzed creature is **Incapacitated** (see above) and can't move or speak. The creature automatically fails Strength and Dexterity **Saving Throws**. Attack rolls against the creature

have **Advantage**. Any attack that hits the creature is a critical hit if the attacker is within 5 feet of the creature.

PRONE

A prone creature's only movement option is to crawl, unless it stands up and thereby ends the condition.

The creature has **Disadvantage** on attack rolls. An attack roll against the creature has **Advantage** if the attacker is within 5 feet of the creature. Otherwise, the attack roll has **Disadvantage**.

RESISTANCE

If a creature or an object has **Resistance** to a damage type, damage of that type is halved against it.

RESTRAINED

A **Restrained** creature's speed becomes 0, and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed. Attack rolls against the creature have **Advantage**, and the creature's attack rolls have **Disadvantage**. The creature has **Disadvantage** on Dexterity **Saving Throws**.

SAVING THROW

A **Saving Throw** — also called a **Save** — represents an attempt to resist a spell, a trap, a poison, a disease, or a similar threat.

SHAKEN

You are momentarily gripped by fear and doubt. You cannot use your ability score bonuses and have a **Disadvantage** to do anything related to that which has shaken you. This condition remains until you take a full round to gather yourself.

Those who are immune or resistant to fear cannot be **Shaken**.

STUNNED

A **Stunned** creature is **Incapacitated** (see above), can't move, and can speak only falteringly. The creature automatically fails Strength and Dexterity **Saving Throws**. Attack rolls against the creature have **Advantage**.

UNCONSCIOUS

An unconscious creature is **Incapacitated**, can't move or speak, and is unaware of its surroundings. The creature drops whatever it's holding and falls prone. The creature automatically fails Strength and Dexterity **Saving Throws**.

Attack rolls against the creature have **Advantage**. Any attack that hits the creature is a critical hit if the attacker is within 5 feet of the creature.

AQUATIC ADVENTURES

The pristine waters reflect the morning light upon your face. You are filled with a euphoric high as you take the first steps into an aquatic setting. Trepidation gives you pause as you place a toe into the suddenly frigid water.

Let's take a look at some factors involved in a ocean-bound setting. Here are a few suggestions to introduce a world in which rivers and lakes are a major backdrop in you game world.

TESTING THE WATERS

Introducing an underwater environment may require moving slowly. Limited exposure would allow your players to explore the realm and still remain comfortable. The rules involved may become overwhelming for new players and character creation could become problematic if the players are not aware of all that is required to survive in such a place.

Using a river, a lake, or a bay may be a way to engage in underwater exploration and return to the surface after a limited amount of time. Here are a few adventure seeds and ideas for a primarily surface adventure with some small aquatic exploration.

- A flooded keep is ready for exploration; filled stairwells, air pockets and dark tunnels abound.
- A shipwreck filled with treasure and surrounded by beasts rests in the center of a bay. Free diving is possible but lifting the heavy coin is problematic.
- A flash flood sweeps through a hamlet, filling basements and trapping innocents. Floating debris and chambers filling with water are a danger.
- Merchandise is lost at the bottom of a lake, ready for retrieval. Bandits in boats await the swimming adventurers with threats.
- After a long war, the grand magic weapons from the fallen are rumored to rest at the bottom of a wide river or waterfall.

AQUATIC ACTIONS

Running, jumping and climbing are all activities taken for granted by surface dwelling inhabitants. While under the water, such as a lake or deep ocean, dynamic action has dramatically different effects and outcomes.

Listed below are a number of common actions taken by characters and NPC's alike. This list cannot cover every conceivable movement or combat. Use the information below as a guideline and adjudicate fairly and accordingly. It may be best to wait until the game is over to discuss differences of opinion but be open to suggestions.

Bludgeoning. This is a type of damage that comes from blunt objects. Due to the heavy resistance of water against wide, flat objects, all damage from bludgeoning attacks is halved. All targets of blunt and bludgeoning attacks have resistance.

Ranged blunt weapons, such as a thrown stone or hammer, are useless underwater outside melee range. If the object is magical in nature, reduce the range by half. Damage is halved as well.

Swinging these weapons under the pressures of the deep can cause physical stress and exhaustion. Anyone who wants to risk expending precious oxygen can swing a bludgeoning weapon at full strength and damage potential.

Each full damage swing costs 2 minutes of swimming endurance. You will find a full description of swimming under the Athletics skill in the appendix.

Heavy objects, such as a boulder or sinking ship will cause bludgeoning damage as well. Although the damage will be halved due to resistance, the weight remains! A victim can easily survive being hit but remain trapped by a massive object.

Piercing. A ranged weapon attack automatically misses a target beyond that weapon's normal range. If the target is within range, the attack roll has unless the weapon being used is a net or a crossbow, or a weapon that is normally thrown like a javelin. This would include darts, spears, tridents, etc. Weapons of this type cost the attacker 1 minute of swimming endurance per round.

Slashing. For gaming purposes, the swing of a sword or ax under water effectively has no reduction of damage. It is true that the motion of a combatant can be reduced during the swing, but the weapon itself cuts through the water with minimal hindrance, balancing out any limiting effects of the environment. Reduce swimming endurance by 1 additional minute for each round of combat.

Walking or Running Through Water. The party is attacked by a gang of humanoids as they board a river barge. A lone hunter makes eye contact with a dire bear across a shallow stream. A legion of soldiers disembarks from a sailing vessel on a sandy beach only to be assaulted by archers on the ridge.

In each of the above cases the players may, by force or choice, walk, run or dive into the nearby water. As the DM, you can decide how deep the water is, or make it a random element.

If the water is under surge, apply the listed DC's. See *Surge* to understand the effects of the motion of water on the party and on objects floating on the surface or submerged beneath the waves.

If ankle-deep, only apply a penalty of *Disadvantage* to dodging ranged attacks. Resisting the water's pull is a DC 10 challenge using Athletics (Strength) or Dexterity.

If waist-deep, remove all Dexterity bonuses and apply *Disadvantage* as above. Spotting dangers and objects in the water is also at a visual *Disadvantage*. Movement is halved. Resisting the water's pull is a DC 15 challenge.

If the water is chest-deep or greater, movement is quartered. Apply all of the above modifiers. Resisting the water is a DC 20 challenge.

AQUATIC COMBAT

When adventurers pursue sahuagin back to their undersea homes, fight off sharks in an ancient shipwreck, or find themselves in a flooded dungeon room, they must fight in a challenging environment. Underwater the following rules apply:

Melee. When making a melee weapon attack, a creature that doesn't have a swimming speed (either natural or granted by magic) has *Disadvantage* on the attack roll unless the weapon is a dagger, javelin, short sword, spear, or trident. DM's are encouraged to create weapons for their own setting, and/or allow players to introduce weapons as well. Thrusting and piercing weapons are far more effective, as they have less resistance from water due to a narrow and angular shape.

Missile. A ranged weapon attack automatically misses a target beyond the weapon's normal range. Even against a target within normal range, the attack roll has *Disadvantage* unless the weapon is a crossbow, a net, or a weapon that is

thrown like a javelin (including a spear, trident, or dart). As above, a ranged weapon is effective if able to pass through the water with a minimal profile.

Resistance. Creatures and objects that are fully immersed in water have *Resistance* to fire damage.

These are the basics of the restrictions imposed on underwater adventurers. Further details will be found in this tome. The level of detail desired is entirely up to the DM and his or her group. As always, adjudicate fairly, consistently, honestly, and collaboratively.

AQUATIC COMMUNICATION

Air-breathing humanoids will find communication difficult. Talking is not an option due to the obvious danger of drowning, and vocalized sounds do not resonate clearly. There are four methods of communication in an underwater realm.

Touchtalk. This communication is by touch. The "speaker" uses a codified series of lines, dots and curves to trace a message on an outreached hand or forearm. Touch-talking is even used on another's back, by soldiers, or on the face, by loved ones. Because it requires intimate contact, touch-talking is reserved for social events while schooling, or squad tactics during scouting or hunting.

Echo-calling. Using trained animals with ultrasonic or subsonic emissions, simple messages are sent for miles. The animals used to send these messages are oftentimes a form of dolphin, ray, whale or hippo. The recipient has a set of trained animals as well, usually a school of fish. The fish will swim in specific patterns when a signal is intercepted. The fish swim around small patch of bioluminescent fungus. Sages can read the swimming patterns and alert others. This method is a form of early warning system. Guards patrolling the outer borders of a kingdom can alert officials of impending dangers.

Cave Carvings. A scholar gifted in language might carve facts of historical importance on stone walls of caves. There are also cases of carvings on natural aquatic stalagmites. Writing is for peace and learning, not war and conquests. Writing is for peace and learning not war and conquests.

Flicker. Seemingly random flashes of light can send detailed messages. Using gemstones or polished glass, light from bioluminescent fungus, shiny fish or mystic light is refracted and modulated. The pulses, short and long, generate information.

AQUATIC CONTESTS AND CHASES

Both participants in a contest make ability checks appropriate to their efforts. They apply all appropriate bonuses and penalties, but instead of comparing the total to a DC, they compare the totals of their two checks. The participant with the higher

check total wins the contest. That creature either succeeds at the action or prevents the other one from succeeding. If the contest results in a tie, the situation remains the same as it was before the contest.

Contests in an aquatic environment can include out swimming an aggressive predator, remaining hidden underwater from hunters, or trying to keep an airtight door closed against merfolk.

An Extended Contest against another opponent can use a variation on the *Rule of Three*. In three rounds or less, each participant tries to become the first to achieve 3 or more Contest Points.

For a more descriptive outcome in a Contest, a gradient allowing for a more cinematic flare can be used, as opposed to a pass/fail result.

Contest Results	Contest Points
Natural 1/Critical Failure	-2
Fail by 5 or more	-1
Fail by 1-4	+0
Success by 0-4	+1
Success by 5 or more	+2
Natural 20/Critical Success	+3

Note: If the Extended Contest is a Chase, whomever has the higher movement rate begins with 1 Contest Point. Whomever has twice the movement rate or greater makes all Extended Contest rolls with Advantage in a chase.

An Extended Contest can involve using multiple skill rolls to achieve a victory condition. An Extended Contest can be against the environment as well, needing to achieve a result to escape or move before harm befalls the character.

An Extended Contest can be used as a simplified method to adjudicate the outcome of an encounter; be it combat, social interaction, or overcoming obstacles.

This method is extremely simplified but allows for the use of multiple skills, increases tension, and offers the spotlight to those characters that are not built for pure combat effectiveness. As always, discuss Extended Contest use with your players.

Examples of using an Extended Contest can include:

- Having your best warriors hold off a gang of raiders while another cuts the ropes of their sails.
- Be the first to swim the length of a flooded cave before coming up for air.
- A smooth-talking mercenary holds the attention of a dock inspector while three others sneak valuable cargo off of a well-guarded vessel.

AQUATIC CONTESTS – EXTENDED

The characters in your setting will be placed in many underwater hazards and obstacles. Here is a way to increase the tension as characters maneuver their way around tight coral reefs, submerged cave systems or sunken ships.

First, determine the endurance of the character(s), measured in Lung Capacity and Swimming Endurance.

Lung Capacity* = Positive CON modifier + Proficiency

*Measured in minutes (minimum 30 seconds). See Appendix for more information.

Swimming Endurance* = STR + CON + Proficiency

*Measured in minutes. See Appendix for more information.

Second, establish how difficult the obstacle is. DC 10 is easy, DC 15 is medium and DC 20 is hard to overcome.

Third, decide how long it will take to navigate the obstacle. 1 minute is short, 3 minutes is long and 5 minutes is extreme. This will subtract from the character's lung capacity and/or swimming endurance. Which metric is reduced will depend on whether the PC's must swim on the surface, allowing them to breathe, or dive underwater.

Lastly describe the obstacle. Your players may be very imaginative. Allow them to be creative in overcoming your obstacle, but implementing some outside pressure is always a good thing to prevent analysis-paralysis.

Have your players make skill or attribute rolls. This will usually be Athletics (Strength) or Dexterity. Allow other skills if the situation calls for it or the players are very creative and engaged in the situation.

The optional table below can increase the tension further by applying a randomizer. As your players and opponents attempt to avoid dangerous obstacles, the physical and mental stress can take a toll. This may cause a target to burn more or less energy while engaging in underwater stunts. The table will modify how much time it took the individual characters to travel through the obstacle. Alternatively, the table can also be used as the total stress each character suffers after navigating the obstacle. Rolling high allows the character to reduce the amount of lung capacity and swimming endurance lost to navigation of the obstacle.

Maneuver Roll	Change in Time Lost
Natural 1/Critical Failure	Lose an additional 2 minutes.
Fail by 5 or more	Lose an additional 1 minute.
Fail by 1-4	Lose 30 seconds
Success by 0-4	Reduce time by 1 minute.
Success by 5 or more	Reduce time lost by 2 minutes.
Natural 20/Critical Success	Reduce time lost by 3 minutes.

You may use this table to find out how long it takes to navigate an obstacle ("The cleric is still in the tunnel and needs another 2 minutes to swim free.")

Optionally, you may also use this table to find out how strenuous the ordeal was on the party ("All of you emerge into the pocket of air but the druid and warlock are stressed, having lost an additional 2 minutes of lung capacity and swimming endurance.")

Here are a few examples of underwater obstacles and its requisite difficulty and length of time to maneuver before a possibility of drowning occurs.

Tropical Coral Reefs [DC 10, Time 1 minute] – Swim amongst colorful tropical fish off the coast of a warm sandy beach.

Sunken Ship [DC 10, Time 3 minutes] – This wooden husk has long lost its bounty, and the frame has snapped in half. Navigating the rooms within the ship will take time. Hiding within the ship can provide cover and camouflage from predators as long as the swimmer can hold their breath.

Underwater Cave [DC 15, Time 1 minute] – This chamber is located in a difficult location, requiring a need to move around sharp boulders and tight spaces.

Sinking Ship [DC 15, Time 3 minutes] – The sailing vessel leans to the side as you make your way to the cargo hold. It is filled with water. Diving into the hold has you surrounded by floating chests and wooden boxes of merchandise. It will take time to locate your belongings or that one important object.

Subterranean Tunnel [DC 15, Time 5 minutes] – Filled with water, you know the secret entrance to the tomb is hundreds of yards distance. The collapsed ceiling does not improve your chances of making it to the end of the tunnel. The bones of past explorers litters the midway point.

Collapsing Seaside Castle [DC 20, Time 1 minute] – The last bolt of power from the djinn crumbled the foundation of the keep. Your party, trapped in the castle proper, tumbles into the sea. You have very little time to escape, needing to avoid tons of rock and cut stone. The only path to life is to rise towards the surface or get trapped in the violent surf below.

Swallowed Whole [DC 20, Time 5 minutes] – The safety of the cave system becomes your deathbed. You are deep inside the bowels of a titanic monsters throat! As you struggle to escape, millions of gallons of water fill its mouth, tumbling your party yet further into its crushing stomach. It seems as if you will never reach life giving air.

Be aware that lung capacity is usually far less than swimming endurance. The lethality of your obstacles will depend on whether the party must submerge to avoid the obstruction.

CONTEST EXAMPLES

Sample Contest – A sea troll has its black claws wrapped tightly around the barnacle-encrusted treasure chest. A rope tied to the chest was being pulled by a character on the deck of the ship. Both the sea troll and the character make Strength checks. Both roll a d20 plus or minus any Strength modifiers. Highest roll wins the contest. If two or more characters attempt to pull the rope, they can benefit from a help action, gaining advantage.

Sample Contest using Contest Points – The enchanted ring sinks deeper into the dark ocean depths. A character dives after the ring, desperate for its water-breathing gift. The DM sets a DC of 12 and Contest Points at 3 to grab the ring. The character uses Athletics and rolls a total of 18. This character earns 2 Contest Points for rolling 5 or more over the DC. Not enough to reach the ring, but the next round may bring success.

Sample of a Chase – The merfolk raiders were many fathoms below the party. Reaching the portal into the iceberg haven above would take all of their endurance. The PC's and the merfolk both make swimming checks using Athletics. The DM states the side with the most points in 3 rounds reaches the berg first. In this situation, the DM rules that the merfolk have a higher movement rate, earning them 1 Contest Point before the chase. If they also move twice as fast as the PC's or faster, they would also make the skill checks with advantage. The merfolk roll an 11, the PC's a 14. The merfolk rolled 3 less than the PC's, earning them 0 Contest Points, but already have 1 for being fast. The PC's rolled 3 above the merfolk, earning 1 CP. They are even! With two rounds to go, this chase may be close.

Sample of an Extended Contest – The iron cage sinks with urgency. The characters can feel the clang as it hits the bottom of the lake, a party member trapped inside. Both the victim and his rescuer must hold their breath while the latter fumbles with the key to release the lock, allowing the former to swim to the surface. The DM sets the DC at 15 and the time submerged at 3 minutes. Each player calculates his or her lung capacity and swimming endurance. They each make an Athletics skill roll. One rolls an 8, the other a 17. The character who rolled an 8 is 7 below the DC, losing an additional 1 minute of time, for a total of 4 minutes subtracted from both lung capacity and swimming endurance. The other character rolled a 17, which reduces the time by 1 minute. This character only loses 2 minutes of lung capacity and swimming endurance. If either is at the point of drowning, now is the time to apply those penalties and conditions.

Sample of another Extended Contest – The farmlands remained unseen. Flood waters stretched across the landscape, obscuring the fields and hill below. Only a half dozen rooftops of homes and barns could be seen above the water line. A grove of trees also seemed a safe place for respite. The party must swim hundreds of feet across this region to reach solid land. The DM sets the DC at a 10. But the time total is 15 minutes! The characters can rest, splitting up the swim by using the rooftops as islands. To reach each island is a 3 minute swim. The characters will only expend swimming endurance, not lung capacity, as they can breath fresh air on the surface. Reaching each rooftop requires an Athletics check. The table provided will add or reduce the amount of swimming endurance used to make the 15 minute trip. Predators in the water, the threat of debris from a collapsed dam upstream, or enemies in the air may make this a bit more complicated if the DM is so inclined.



AQUATIC MAGIC

The use of spells, magic and items of power may have radically differing effects under the water versus its expected results in the air.

Introducing an element to water can have unpleasant or unwanted results. An element can be anything from bursts of electricity, a spell of wind, a bottle of oil, or a pouch of sand. Again, use the information below as a guide when a unique or bizarre situation arises.

Cold. Any introduction of bitter cold may cause a surprising result. Although the surface of the water may be comfortable, as one dives deeper, the temperature drops dramatically. If the setting and environment warrants the use of cold depths, use the rules presented under the *Ocean Depths* section.

If an item, spell or effect generates significant cold or ice, use the listed frigid temperature ruling under the *Ocean Depths* as if it was one level deeper. This will become an area effect until the source of the cold is removed.

It is possible to create chunks of ice as a result of generating intense cold. Even some spells spontaneously create ice as a side effect or direct result of casting. For simplicity, the DC to resist and the HP of the ice will be 8 plus the level or CR of the person or thing who spawned the formation.

A Dexterity save against being restrained in ice is also a side effect. The DM must decide if this will be used in the game. Please have an open and fair discussion of such things, as this may change the player character's actions moving forward.

Fire. All submerged creatures have *Resistance* against extreme heat and fire.

Weapons that generate fire will not cause fire or heat damage unless placed and held against the target for at least one round.

Spells and fire generated instantly will only operate with the caster or item in the center of the fire's effect. If the spell or effect normally has a range or area effect, it will instead be aimed upwards as superheated water and steam. Again, all targets are protected by the resistance of the water. The range and area effect of the spell are halved as the boiling water rises.

Generating intense fire will produce boiling water and steam that will cascade towards the surface. This rising tower of steam is called an obscuring cloud. Any stealth attempts by the creator of the cloudy water are at a *Disadvantage* if utilizing fire underwater. The cloudy water will obscure the Zone above the fire or heat. The boiling cloud of water will extend from the source of the heat upwards towards the surface. The visual barrier will end at the current depth of the heat source. For example, an underwater volcanic crag at the *Midnight Depth* will expel cloudy water reaching up and ending at the *Twilight Depth* (see *Depths* below).

Force. Targets of force spell effects have resistance due to the friction of the water. The range of force effects is halved as well.

Force spells and effects create surge. Surge causes *Disadvantage* on all balance and reflex actions to all targets along the line or path of the force effect.

For simplicity, a force spell or magical item that creates force can target a number of opponents equal to the caster's level or the number of dice rolled, if a level is not available.

If the target of the force effect is moved any distance, that distance is halved. If a save is possible against that outside force, the save is at *Disadvantage*. The reason for this seemingly contrary effect is due to how the water reacts to outside forces. While the water increases the force due to the density it also absorbs the same powerful motion.

Electricity. Generating electricity underwater will energize the water and zap the entire Zone. If your table requires measurements, default to an area effect spell of similar level. An electrical discharge will travel the entire distance of the bolt, possibly affecting all targets along its path. Fresh water will increase damage by half or 50%, making targets susceptible. Saltwater has a more deadly effect. Damage is increased by 100% or double, making all targets vulnerable.

Those wearing metal armor that has *Disadvantage* on stealth attempts will have *Disadvantage* on saves against electrical attacks in the water.

If the attack has a range of touch, the damage or effect will be centered on the caster or item and cover an area effect. Note that this will affect everything in the Zone, friends or foes.

Necrotic. No change in necrotic spells or effects. Be aware that if the target must be seen, limited vision underwater may hinder the caster.

Radiant. No change in radiant spells or effects. Be aware that if the target must be seen, limited vision underwater may hinder the caster.

Psychic. No change in psychic spells or effects. Be aware that if the target must be seen, limited vision underwater may hinder the caster.

Light. Light cast is reduced by half. The area light illuminates is reduced due to the density of the water. Reduce the range of light spells or effects by half as well. Damage related to the light is not reduced.

Sound and Thunder. Oddly, audio and sonic spells and effects have both a greater and lesser effect. Thunder damage and effects become area effect spells.

Massive sound waves will disrupt the water, sending ripples for miles around. Those with echo-sense, sonar, or tremorsense, or aquatic creatures, will be aware of the noise. Perception checks to notice the sound are with *Advantage*.

All underwater creatures are susceptible to these effects because of pressure waves created, causing all sonic/thunder damage to be increased by 50%.

Targets become vulnerable in saltwater suffering an additional 100% (or double) damage. If the targets are in an area filled with air, ignore this modifier.

Spells that require a verbal component are usable. Any spell that requires others to hear the caster, however, is useless. Mind control or hypnotic spells can successfully target others but giving orders is problematic.

Gases. Spells or effects that generate air or gases are problematic under water. Once the spell or effect ends, the air or gas will remain, rising towards the surface. The spell or effect will last an additional number of rounds equal to the caster's level or the number of dice.

If the gas is poisonous or has a debilitating effect, only those in the bubble will be subject to its effects. Most water-breathing animals will naturally avoid unnatural air bubbles. Water-breathing creatures have *Advantage* on saves against debilitating gas effects. Animals that are breath holders, such as dolphins, polar bears or seals, do not breath underwater and will not draw in poison gases.

SALT WATER VS. FRESH WATER

Fresh water has a much lower salinity value. Objects in fresh water are also much less buoyant. This water also has less ionic conductivity, which means objects are less able to float and electrical activity is less pronounced in freshwater. Hard elements haven't eroded and broken down enough to generate a higher salt ratio.

Freshwater grants susceptibility to those in the water who are targets of electrical and sonic attacks. This means they suffer 150% damage from lightning or thunder damage. Its lack of buoyancy means it costs one additional minute of swimming endurance to tread water and remain in a stable position. Objects that do not float sink at a faster rate. Light, medium and heavy items or structures will sink at a rate of 60, 90 and 120 feet per round, respectively.

Salt water is poisonous to drink, draining much needed fluid from the body, worse than not drinking anything at all.

Saltwater is also a dense fluid due to its higher salt content. This allows sound to transfer with increased intensity.

Saltwater grants vulnerability to those in the water who are targets of electrical and sonic attacks. This means they suffer double damage from lightning and thunder sources. Saltwater offers some buoyancy and does not cost additional minutes of swimming endurance to remain afloat or stable. Light, medium and heavy objects sink at a rate of 30, 60, and 90 feet per round, respectively.

Consuming salt water is dangerous. The subject will need to replace twice the amount of fresh, drinkable water as consumed from the ocean. The need to drink fresh water can arrive from extreme dehydration and despair. If drinkable water is not

available when the characters are sailing on the open sea, dehydration may set in. After 3 days without suitable clean water, each affected character must make a successful Wisdom saving throw with a DC of 10. A failed roll causes the loss of one Wisdom point. Increase the DC by 1 for each level of *Exhaustion*. If the character's Wisdom falls below 7, the victim will not notice the dehydration effects of drinking salt water and must be restrained from doing so. Wisdom lost this way is recovered at a rate of 1 point per hour once fresh water is available and consumed.

Fresh and salt water will protect those in it with the resistance listed under each entry. This reduces damage from the applicable source by half the total result.

When the freshwater from rivers releases its charge into the ocean, this is called brackish water, and it can be a few miles in length. It is in this narrow band of mixed water that fresh and saltwater animals may mix and breed. It is also the delineating mark between the two and is a natural barrier to the species of both from entering either territory.

SWIMMING RULES

Lung Capacity. A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to $1 + \text{its Constitution modifier}$ (minimum 30 seconds). Add the character's Proficiency bonus if the character has the Mariner background.

Swimming Endurance. A creature that does not have a natural or enchanted swimming movement rate can swim, tread water and remain buoyant for a number of minutes equal to its Strength + Constitution. If the subject has the Mariner background, add the Proficiency bonus as well. At the end of that time period, apply 1 level of exhaustion and add half of the swimming endurance. Halve the swimming endurance after gaining another level of *Exhaustion*. Continue this pattern until a short rest or succumbing to *Exhaustion* and begin drowning.

This measurement is based on light activity such as pleasurable swimming, floating and inactivity. Any strenuous activity including combat will burn additional minutes.

Subtract an additional minute for each of the following: combat, full speed swimming, heavy physical activity, light encumbrance, medium encumbrance and heavy encumbrance.

For example, a character has a Strength of 15 and a Constitution of 16. His total Swimming Endurance is 31 minutes. If the character continues to swim or tread water beyond that point, he will gain 1 level of *Exhaustion*, and then can continue to do so for another 15 minutes (3.5 rounded down). At the end of this time, another *Exhaustion* level is added, and the character's swimming endurance is reset to 7 minutes.

Once swimming endurance drops to zero, the character can choose to float (or sink based on encumbrance), having a swim speed of zero, or expend their reserves. In this case, each additional minute of swimming incurs a level of *Exhaustion*.

Lung capacity and swimming endurance are separate yet intertwined. Be cognizant of any changes in either metric. It is reasonable to have complete loss of one category but not the other.

Holding Breath Under Stress. A Constitution saving throw (DC 15) is required to maintain holding one's breath if injured or damaged. Include the Proficiency bonus if a character has the Mariner background.

If the damage caused is a Critical Hit or causes more hit points of damage than the victim's Constitution score in one round, the save is made at *Disadvantage*.

Any failure will reduce lung capacity and swimming endurance by half.

A critical failure will drop lung capacity to zero and will halve swimming endurance as well as inflicting 1 level of *Exhaustion*.

Grappling And Choking Under Water. An air breather who is specifically targeted around the throat or pummeled in such a way as to cause the victim to draw in water, has a higher chance of drowning.

The attacker will forgo damage and instead force the target to make an additional save using Constitution to resist losing lung capacity. The DC to resist is equal to the attacker's Strength.

An attacker with 2 or more attacks per round can force a grappled victim to make 2 or more saves each round to prevent drowning. This onslaught can reduce lung capacity and swimming endurance to the point of zero very quickly.

Swimming Speed. Swimming rates are half of current ground movement.

While swimming, each foot of movement costs 1 extra foot (2 extra feet in difficult terrain), unless a creature has a swimming speed. At the DM's option, gaining any distance in rough water might require a successful Strength (Athletics) check.

For a more granular swimming speed, add the character's Athletics and Proficiency to the movement rate in feet. An Athletics skill of +3 and a Proficiency of +2 adds 5 feet of additional swimming speed.

Any negative modifier due to low Strength subtracts from swimming movement rates measured in feet.

Round all totals up or down to the nearest 5-foot increment if using a grid.

Porpoising. This is the act of leaping out of the water by pure momentum alone. This is most visually remarkable as seen from dolphins, orcas, salmon, swordfish and sharks.

Creatures with a natural swimming movement rate can porpoise or leap out of the water half their swimming speed. If a land-based creature wishes to do the same, they may leap 1/10 their swimming speed.

Drowning. When a creature runs out of breath or takes water into its lungs, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its positive Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round).

Once this time has passed, at the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breath again.

Recovery. The body can suffer tremendous stress after drowning. Once exposed to life-giving air, the victim can begin breathing. The shock isn't over just yet. After taking water into the lungs or suffering from drowning, a character is shaken for a number of rounds equal to any failure on a Constitution (plus Athletics and Proficiency) save against DC 20.

Example: Rolling a total of 13 means coughing up water and trying to recover for 7 rounds.

Hypoxia. Prolonged oxygen deprivation occurs when the brain and muscles cannot draw needed oxygen from the lungs. The lack of oxygen going to the brain can cause permanent damage in the form of mental activity. Memory loss, confusion and more severe brain damage is a real possibility. Any character that is reduced to zero hit points due to drowning more times than its positive Constitution bonus in one day will lose 1 point from Intelligence or Wisdom. This reduction is temporary. In a gritty setting have the deprived victim must make a death save. Failure results in a permanent loss of Intelligence or Wisdom. This loss is 1 point from either stat. A critical failure on the death save will result in an equal loss in Strength or Dexterity.

I Can't Swim! (Optional Rule). It is assumed that all PC's have the ability to hold one's breath, float and swim. The Athletics skill offers additional bonuses, but there is no drawback for not having the skill.

If the setting has a gritty or realistic feel, or the gaming table wants to grant a benefit to those who purchase the skill, use the following option.

If inspiration is used in your game, offer plenty of opportunities to earn the bonus die if a player chooses to have a character that cannot swim.

Any PC that does not have the Athletics skill can still attempt to mimic the actions of a skilled swimmer. Doing so places that character in the shaken condition. If the character cannot swim they must remain out of the water for at least 10 minutes after every event that brings them to the point of drowning, or complete loss of lung capacity and/or swimming endurance before entering the water again. Otherwise they will be paralyzed with fear.

Floating (No skill roll). Any character that remains motionless can float on the surface of the water. A floating character cannot carry any equipment or armor unless those items are naturally buoyant. This effectively makes one Prone and Incapacitated voluntarily. This condition can be ignored instantly, but can save a swimmer from expending valuable stamina if lost in a huge body of water.

The floater will travel in the direction of the flow of water.

Floating facing the sky allows a swimmer to breathe normally. Facing downward allows one to make Perception rolls on objects below the surface, but the floater must hold their breath. Any violent disruption of the water will require a Strength (Athletics) roll to swim.

High Dive (Dexterity + Athletics). Water is a natural shock absorber, it will normally reduce any falling height by half. A victim that falls from a 100 foot high cliff into the ocean will take damage as if they had only fallen 50 feet, (5d6 damage).

Additionally, a character that falls or jumps into a body of water can choose to turn that into a dive. The character can twist and turn, hitting the water in a way to minimize the impact and shock to the body. The height is reduced by 10 feet for each positive Dexterity and Athletics modifier.

For example, if a character had a +2 Dexterity modifier and an Athletics of +1, the height fallen would be reduced by an additional 30 feet before damage dice are calculated. This can result in no damage taken from the fall. In other words, if the character falls from a 100 cliff, they would only take 2d6 damage from hitting the water ($100 \text{ feet} / 2 = 50 \text{ feet}$. $50 \text{ feet} - 30 \text{ feet} = 20 \text{ feet fallen}$).

Swimming and drowning rules would apply after entering the water.

Encumbrance. Use a method that is fair and agreeable to all players and the DM. This may also depend on the level of realism or high cinematic action in the setting.

In general, divide encumbrance into light, medium and heavy weight. Each level of weight will subtract an additional 1, 2 or 3 minutes of swimming endurance respectively.

Using the Rule of Three, allow 1, 2, or 3 items of any one weight to move encumbrance to the next level. For example, in a gritty setting, a character who wears light armor and has a light weapon will only be at light encumbrance. Add another light item and it moves to medium encumbrance.

Armor that reduces Dexterity will do so in the water. Armor that has *Disadvantage* on stealth attempts will cause *Disadvantage* on Athletics checks.

A weapon with the light trait or heavy trait may be considered such. All others are medium weight.

Again, adjudicate fairly and consistently. Use the rules presented, even if it means keeping track of the weight of all items. Just don't bog down you game with more math than action and story.

Aquatic Nature. It is suggested that characters who have a background or profession that involves the open waters, including spellcasters, be allowed to change ground movement bonuses to a swimming movement bonus. For example, if a spell or racial ability grants additional ground speed, an aquatic equivalent would have that bonus added to swimming movement instead. If a class ability is based on the environment, allow the

player to craft an aquatic skills list. After making this choice, it cannot be changed later. If the effect is from a spell, it is now considered a different spell and takes up an individual slot.

USING LIQUIDS

Acid. Acidic effects are nearly useless. Range is reduced to touch only and is only effective for 1 round if the acid is continuous. Acid that is injected or introduced into the target, bypassing the water, will have full effects. Once the acid is exposed to water, the effects end after 1 round. For example, if a victim is covered in acid, which would burn for 6 rounds, once they jump into a lake, the acid will end after 1 round. This will have no effect on a substance, such as an ooze, that adheres to or grapples a PC. The ooze, once attached to the flesh, will have no space for water to invade, and therefore not mitigate the damage.

Blood in the Water. Understand that, as combat is a real and likely event, those injured may bleed into the water. Other bodily fluids and materials may also float free as well. Organs, eviscerated opponents, blasted bodies and smashed foes will leave a cloud of residue.

This cloud will not only become an obscuring cloud, but allows predators with sensitive noses an advantage when tracking the origins of the blood and flesh.

A tactical fighter could use a fallen foe as cover to escape or hide. The tactician could also use the dead body as bait to lure carnivorous monsters out of hiding. Be aware that some predators will go into a blood frenzy. The blind need to feed and consume meat will make any target open for attacks including each other. Sharks, sea-bullettes, piranha and sea-trolls are all susceptible to this blind rage. Your setting's adversaries will dictate how they will react. Use your imagination.

Blood trails are visible in clear water. Expertise as a hunter or ranger underwater can follow bleeding targets. Administering aid to an injured character is important for maintaining camouflage.

Not all sliced-open bellies or beheaded bandits are created equal. If you need a randomized determination of creating cloudy water from injuries, use the following: on any roll of 1 on a d4, fill the Zone with cloudy water from blood and entrails. Make this roll at the end of each round of injuries.

Poisons. Toxins and venom are unchanged under water. If the poison is exposed to water before entering the target, the poison is useless. This includes coating weapons, pouring the poison or covering an item or blade. Many animals, predators and prey, have toxin as a mode of attack or defense. They are naturally equipped to target victims with poison and are unaffected by river or ocean water.

Other Liquids. If any liquid is exposed to water, it becomes

useless. Drinking any liquid requires placing the bottle to the mouth acting as a seal. Salves, lotions and oils are useless if applied to skin while underwater. They must be used in an air environment before becoming submerged. The river or sea water will wash most liquids away. Option: DMs might rule that drawing and drinking a potion underwater is a full action.

USING SOLIDS

Falling. Objects and solids in water do not fall, instead they settle. The rate at which an object settles is based on its weight or mass. Characters will not suffer damage from sinking no matter the distance towards the bottom. The danger comes from pressure or objects that can crush the character from above. Apply damage to those who are covered in massive weight. The rate at which objects sink is based on whether in freshwater or saltwater and its weight or mass. Most characters are considered medium weight.

The technique of grasping heavy rocks and sinking can be used by divers who want to reach a depth quickly.

Light objects sink at a rate of 30 feet per round. Medium objects sink at a rate of 60 feet, heavy objects sink at 90 feet per round. Add an additional 30 feet per round in freshwater.

Avoiding sinking objects and heavy masses underwater has the following modification: Initiative 10. If a character can react before the settling mass, they can take a move action or disengage action to escape being crushed.

If the target is preoccupied with physical or mental activity, the save to avoid the large obstruction is at a *Disadvantage*. Preoccupation involves making a skill check, attack roll or save the same round as the falling weight.

Example: A PC is tangled in a rope from a sunken ship. He is trying to free himself while avoiding being crushed by falling debris. He has his normal initiative bonus of +3 from his 16 Dexterity. He makes an initiative roll, at *Disadvantage* from trying to free himself, and rolls a 16 and an 8. He must use the 8, and adds his +3, giving him a total of 11. He just gets out of the way in time.

Powders. Using any powder underwater creates a cloud. The powder itself will become useless. This is generally called cloudy water.

Cloudy is a term for obscured and opaque watery environments. This can be caused by disturbing the silt at the bottom of a river or lake. Mürk is also a byproduct of steam vents, lava and underwater fires. The churning water, released gases, and dense clouds of bubbles can result from heat sources. Some aquatic animals create inky clouds that mimics the effects of cloudy water. Blood and eviscerated victims can create cloudy water well.

Cloudy water has different properties than an air-based fog.

Clouds will remain far longer. Clouds of silt or sulfur will linger until the particles settle after a few hours. Murky clouds will also move with river or ocean surge.

An obscuring cloud will reduce light sources by half its projected range. All Perception-based checks using vision are at a *Disadvantage*. This applies to those both inside and outside of the cloudy Zone.

An opaque cloud is blinding. Any who are within the thick cloud of silt or bubbles is considered blinded. Every skill check using vision fails. All attacks are made with *Disadvantage*, if the targets can be found at all. Attackers outside the opaque cloud are under the same conditions if targeting those inside, unless

they possess an ability to perceive through the obstructing cloud.

Characters obscured by this cloud are considered to have half-cover, granting at +2 bonus to AC and saves against ranged attacks.

To randomly target the completely unseen, first even the odds. An even result allows the attack to proceed with *Disadvantage*, otherwise the attack launches without hitting anything.

VISION

Visibility is most hindered by depth and cloudy water. Keep track of both to build the tension of not knowing what is beyond the range of any light source.



AQUATIC ENCOUNTER TABLES

The following tables can be used as a random encounter or used to spark new ideas. The purpose of random tables is to assist the DM's in improvising in this environment, as well as having a starting point when the ideas aren't flowing. Your players may also latch onto random situation, creating another avenue of adventure you may not have thought of originally. This could also be used as a source of side quests. Lastly, using the tables could fill out your specific setting, from natural flora and fauna to intelligent life.

Location	Motivation (animal)
1. Frozen surface waters and frigid depths	1. Investigating thick vegetation
2. Coral reef and tropical sandy shallows	2. Feeding on tiny fish or carcase
3. Thunderstorms and torrential rain	3. Investigating the surface
4. Bottomless crag and rockslide	4. Searching for shelter
5. Stream filled fissure and active volcano	5. "Sleeping"
6. Rocky waterfall with morning fog	6. Enjoying a benevolent aquatic flow
7. Thick ocean floor vegetation	7. Playing with a lost item from the surface
8. River Rapids and whirlpool	8. Fleeing from predators
9. Still waters with surface algae and cloudy water	9. Searching for herd
10. Massive ocean surge and hurricane	10. Patrolling territory
11. Flooded cave system and mountain range	11. Protecting younglings
12. Roll twice and combine	12. Roll twice and combine
Creatures (animal)	Motivation (intelligent)
1. A pod of dolphins, killer whales or narwhals	1. Mapping territory
2. Swarm of xuvi, stingrays or aquatic cloaker	2. Rumors of treasure
3. School of harmless tropical fish	3. Fleeing the authorities
4. Giant turtle, crab or manatees	4. Passing by
5. Penguins, puffins or seals	5. Searching for ancient city
6. Giant crocodile, shark or aquatic bulette	6. Escaped enslavement
7. Piranhas, eels or aquatic stirges	7. Reuniting with a friend, love or relative
8. Octopi, squids or kraken	8. Hypnotic call
9. Starfish, roper or rozoa	9. Cultural or religious significance
10. Aquatic basilisk, behir or hydra	10. Scouts for an invading force
11. Aquatic troll, shambling mound or pegasus	11. Extracting resources
12. Roll Twice and combine, symbiotic or antagonistic	12. Roll twice and combine
Creatures (intelligent)	Oddity
1. Pirates, treasure hunters or slavers	1. Tetherball enclave habitat
2. Gnomish divers, dwarven submariner or halfling explorers	2. Bustling berg haven
3. Sea hag, aquatic ghoul or zombie	3. Domed city-state
4. Dragon (black, green, white, bronze or gold)	4. Strange hypnotic lights
5. Fishermen with nets, cages or spear fishing	5. Sunken ship
6. Merfolk, blue elves or aquatic tieflings	6. Abandoned boat
7. Sahuagin, lizardmen or green dragonborn	7. Bloody water and dead bodies
8. Aboleth or storm giant	8. Moving flotilla
9. Water nymphs, naiad or sirens	9. Surface structure collapsing into the water
10. Chuul, aquatic centaurs	10. Strange submersible vehicle
11. Goblin, bugbear or ogre freedivers	11. Strange mystic portal
12. Roll twice and combine as allies or enemies	12. Roll twice and combine





AQUATIC CONDITIONS

The ship groaned as she slipped beneath the surface, all hands lost to the storm. I managed to hold on to a barrel of spice that had ultimately been my salvation. Battered by titanic waves and torrential rain, I could do nothing but wait to live or die at the whim of the sea.

REGIONAL PRESSURES

Sailing the ocean is an environment most characters are unfamiliar with, much less delving beneath the waves. The ocean is a harsh mistress. Foreshadow the events to prepare your players for the dangers of the open sea. It is lethal and omnipresent, but refusing to sail the open seas can lead to doom.

REGIONAL CONDITIONS

Floating on the ocean surface can be life threatening if the waves tossed high by winds, gravity and underwater phenomena. Drowning, being crushed, and disorientation are all hazards. If the character dives below the surface of the water, then they are less likely to be tossed and crushed by the waves above. This does not guarantee safety, as the character must dive down and remain submerged to resist this danger.

Crushing Waves. Each period of time, from 1 to 4 rounds, a will strike everyone and everything on the surface of the water. Each target must make a Constitution saving throw against the DC of the waves, depending on their size. Against something extreme, like a giant tidal wave, the DC would be 30. Athletics (Strength) could alternately be used with GM permission. Failure causes a loss of Hit Points or similar metric equal to the roll missed.

Example: A player makes a Constitution save and gets a total of 17 against a tidal wave, they take 13 (30-17) points of damage. Allow an *Advantage* on the roll if the party holds together or the victim has any applicable talents or native upbringing.

Undertow. Even in only waist deep water, the threat of the undertow is always present. When walking or swimming near the shore where undertows are common, Even the Odds to determine if the creature is caught by one. A victim in undertow

will be forced under for 1d4 rounds, and they are in danger of drowning. The undertow has a DC of 25 to resist its effects.

Drowning. A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to $1 + \text{its Constitution modifier}$ (minimum 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath or takes water into its lungs, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum of 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breath again.

Anyone suffering a physical injury while submerged must make a Constitution save (DC 15) or begin drowning. The DC is 20 if they sustain a critical hit. A failure means suffering a loss of 1d4 points of Constitution. This will reduce the victim's air capacity.

Disorientation. An undertow can twist and turn a victim until they can no longer find the surface. Each round caught in one can be horrific and frightening. After one round under, the victim will automatically reach the surface. After two rounds under, the affected must make an Intelligence save with an Easy DC of 10. After three rounds, the difficulty becomes Medium (DC 15), and beyond that it becomes Hard (DC 20). Failure means remaining under the surface, lost in position and orientation.

Diving Below the Waves. A character must perfectly time a dive and remain under the water as the wave passes overhead. An Intelligence or Wisdom Check (plus Swimming/Athletics) is required at a Medium Difficulty. Failure means guessing at how long the wave remains above. A good bet is to stay submerged for at least 4 or more rounds. Remember that injury and combat will increase the chances of drowning when submerged.

Visibility. The deep water is quite dark. Near the surface on a reasonably sunny day, most non-aquatic creatures can see 60 feet or so. Below that, unless the characters have a form of lighting, visibility is reduced to 30 feet when underwater. Deeper than 100 feet the characters are effectively blind without some sort of light.

These ranges may be very different depending on other lighting conditions or the murkiness of the water. The DM should adjust these as necessary based on the situation.

Underwater. When a non-aquatic creature gets deep enough below the water, the increased pressure and increasing cold can take its toll. Every hour spent swimming at a depth greater than 100 feet counts as 2 hours when determining exhaustion. Swimming for an hour at a depth greater than 200 feet counts as 4 hours.

OCEAN DEPTHS

Sunlight Depth (600ft/200m). This is the closest operating depth to the surface. Humanoids that breath air can operate at this depth without fear of pressure-related injury or trauma. Although this is called the Sunlight Layer, not all natural water regions are clear enough to allow sunlight to pass as deep as 600 feet. This depth is also a comfortable layer for air-breathing amphibians as well. They can reach deeper levels, but instinct and survival will keep them close to the surface for air. Most rivers and lakes will not be deeper than the Sunlight Layer unless a unique natural formation or outside influence has created the deep water phenomenon.

Twilight Depth (3,000ft/1,000m). As the characters descend deeper into uncharted water, the pressure and light will begin to change. At this depth, the brightest natural light will only illuminate the region as if it was a night sky.

All Perception checks using vision are at a *Disadvantage*.

The pressure of the water will begin to force air out of the character's bodies. This will start with small areas like the ears and nose. For every 10 minutes at the Twilight Layer, each land-based air breather must make a Constitution save (DC of 10). Feel free to give a bonus to any subject with an aquatic background. Failure will deafen the victim as the eardrums burst. For game purposes, the character will remain deafened until taking a long rest in an air-filled environment.

A character with a rozoa or xivi can operate at this depth as if in the Sunlight Layer.

The cold waters may cause numbness and possible hypothermia. Each hour spent in them by someone not adapted to the ocean depths must make a Constitution save with a DC of 10. Failure causes minor hypothermia.

Midnight Depth (12,000ft/4,000m). At this depth, vision is nearly blocked as true darkness fills this layer. All subjects that are using visible light to see are considered blind. A light source is paramount, and even with such a beacon or spell of light, all targets outside the radius of the light are in total darkness. Creatures outside the globe of light are invisible, as detailed under the blind condition. To target something randomly, even the odds. An even result allows the attacker to then strike with *Disadvantage*. Otherwise the attack launches without hitting anything.

The pressure is tremendous at these depths. The DC is

15 to resist the crush at this layer. Failing this Constitution save, as in the Twilight Layer above, will not only deafen the victim, but force air out of the lungs. The victim will lose half of their lung capacity. Each failed save will continue to halve this value. Lung capacity is considered zero when it reaches less than 6 seconds.

At this layer, objects will begin to implode if they are sealed. Even the Odds for a single bottle, vial, tube or airtight container that might shatter or crush under the immense pressure. This check should be made once whenever the body or pack is jostled.

The cold at this layer is intense and overwhelming. Every 10 minutes, the unadapted swimmer must make a Constitution save or suffer minor hypothermia. The DC is 15 to resist. If the victim has minor hypothermia, additional saves are made with *Disadvantage*. Failing again induces severe hypothermia.

A character with a rozoa or xivi can operate at this depth as if the are in the Twilight Layer.

Abyssal Depth (20,000ft/6,000m). At this layer, death is a given without skill, luck and equipment. The darkness is equal to the Midnight Layer above.

The pressure is so severe that the DC is 20 to resist any hypothermia. Deafness and loss of oxygen are also as the Midnight Layer as well.

Additionally, the sheer power of the ocean will crush the body until every pocket of air is released. Victims will suffer 1 point of Constitution damage each round unless they reach safety. This loss of Constitution will impact the character's ability to hold their breath and resist being crushed.

Objects that survived the Midnight Layer will most certainly collapse here. Nothing short of magic will retain it's airtight seal. Unless the container is magical, the contents will be lost to the sea.

The cold at this layer is painful and lethal. The unadapted swimmer must make a save each round! Failure causes minor hypothermia. Future saves against the cold are made with *Disadvantage*. The next failure causes severe hypothermia. The DC is 20 to resist these effects. Anyone suffering from severe hypothermia will suffer the loss of 1 point of Dexterity each round for failing additional saves.

A character with a rozoa or xivi can operate at this depth as if they are at the Midnight Layer.

Hellish Depth (50,000ft/12,000m). Not many beings can survive at these depths. Even those born in this environment avoid the deadly pressures of the Hellish Layer. Some claim reaching the bottom of a trench that deep leads to the elemental planes. Others think it's the home of the gods. In any event, the minimum DC is 25 and the chances of broken bones, popped eyeballs, and exploding chest cavities should make any adventurer give pause.

CURRENTS, WAVES AND TURBULENCE

Surge. Surge is created by waves, choppy water and cavitation. A wake is created by a creature or vessel moving on or near the surface of the water. This is a function of a huge mass and volume displacing water.

Chop or choppy water can generate from earthquakes, volcanoes, sinking ships or storms from above.

Force effects create cavitation. This force can be an enormous creature, a huge vessel, or a spell effect. Extreme speed and displaced volume will move the water aside creating a vacuum. The space created by the force will immediately fill with water. As the displaced water reenters the space, the cavitation will cause a disruption around the path of the object or spell. This is similar to the effects of a wake or choppy water.

In any of the above conditions, the effect is called surge. Surge will punish all in the Zone with *Disadvantage* on any movement, balance saves or skill checks. The Zone affected depends on the origin of the force. All physical objects that pass through a Zone under the effects of a surge suffer *Disadvantage* as well. This would negatively affect a trident thrown past a fast swimming sea serpent or a crossbow bolt shot through the wake of a sinking ship.

Surge also imparts movement. Usually this is an additional movement of 10 to 40 feet in the direction of the surge. This movement will subtract from swimming movement rates if those affected attempt to travel in the opposite direction.

If the DM intends to use Zones, surge will move those affected one full Zone in the direction of the water's flow.

Storms, earthquakes, volcanoes and other natural phenomena will cover miles of river, lake or ocean water. They could be a precursor to an even more dangerous event. Storms and earthquake activity can last hours. Enemies may use the event as a barrier from opposition attempting to apprehend them. Animals will flee the area if a major surge event is about to take place.

Localized Zone effects might come from the area around a sinking vessel, a gargantuan creature, or the collapse of an underwater cliff.

A spell with a force element will create surge along its path of travel. The surge will last as long as the force is in effect.

Giant monsters generate surge for a few rounds. A creature or monster two size categories above medium can generate surge around the characters. This could be in the form of a titan stomping down in a lake creating a wake, an earth elemental shaking a riverbed or a tarrasque swimming past ocean bound divers. The surge can affect a number of targets equal to its current Strength modifier.

Tides. We associate a tide with waves seen from a beach. It is the rhythmic cascade of water that rises into the air and tumbles upon itself. As you will read below, surge is created

when a tide forms. Objects on the surface or within the Sunlight Layer of the ocean may feel the effects of a surge generated by a tide.

As the DM, you can choose how often and how strong a tide may be. If you choose to roll randomly, use a d4 for how often the tidal surge passes through the area. Roll 1d10 and add 10 the DC to establish the intensity of the force. During storms, earthquakes and large waves or even tsunamis, increase the DC by 5 more. You can establish a direction of the tide, creating an undertow or confluence of force. These forces can push and objects down or restrain them against a surface or some confined space. Swimming against the tide expends one minute of swimming endurance on top of any other actions. Note that the surge may make swimming pointless, as the movement forward may equal the movement backward.

ABILITY SCORE LOSS

Unless otherwise stated, any ability score points that are lost as a result of environmental conditions are restored at a rate of 1 point per hour once those conditions have been rectified.

For example, if one is suffering from the cold, then time spent in a warm, dry place will allow the creature to recover.

AQUATIC HAZARDS

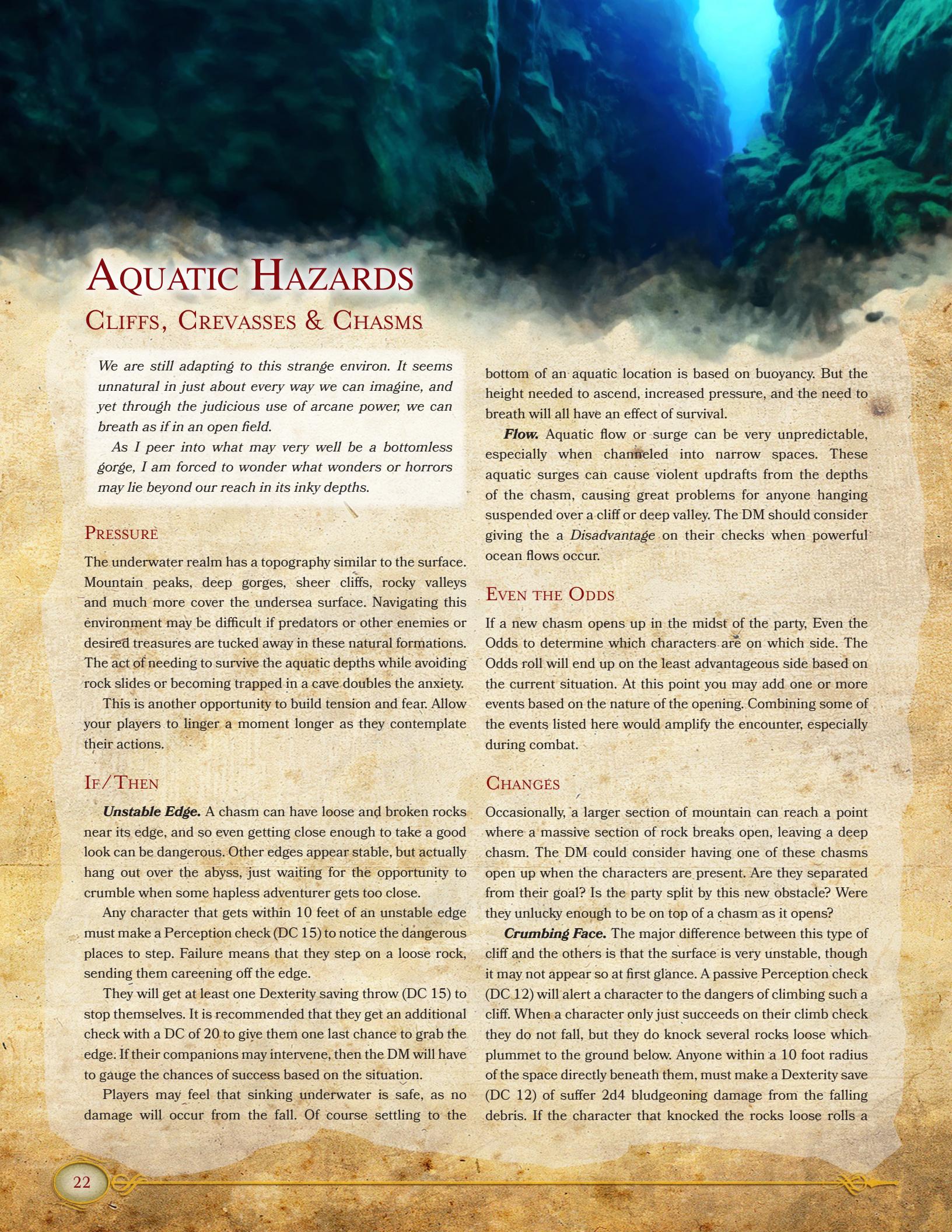
On the 16th of Wolf Moon, a fresh breeze stirred up from the southwest, bringing frequent showers and sleet following soon after. Just before noon, we anchored in the Bay of Lelliell in nine fathoms of water so clear that we could see our shadow on the sandy bottom.

The point of the bay went from southeast to a point east-northeast, though shall hold off on a full description until I come to speak of the rest of the coast.

I went ashore accompanied by Banks and Solander to look for a watering place and to speak with the natives who were assembled on the beach at the head of the bay. The people numbered thirty or forty, and were unperturbed at our arrival. So relaxed was their manner that three of them came on board without the least hesitation.

They are larger than most, with skin of a dark copper color and long black hair. They paint their bodies in streaks, mostly red and black. Their clothing consists wholly of a seal's skin, in the same form as it came from the animal's back.





AQUATIC HAZARDS

CLIFFS, Crevasses & CHASMS

We are still adapting to this strange environ. It seems unnatural in just about every way we can imagine, and yet through the judicious use of arcane power, we can breath as if in an open field.

As I peer into what may very well be a bottomless gorge, I am forced to wonder what wonders or horrors may lie beyond our reach in its inky depths.

PRESSURE

The underwater realm has a topography similar to the surface. Mountain peaks, deep gorges, sheer cliffs, rocky valleys and much more cover the undersea surface. Navigating this environment may be difficult if predators or other enemies or desired treasures are tucked away in these natural formations. The act of needing to survive the aquatic depths while avoiding rock slides or becoming trapped in a cave doubles the anxiety.

This is another opportunity to build tension and fear. Allow your players to linger a moment longer as they contemplate their actions.

IF/ THEN

Unstable Edge. A chasm can have loose and broken rocks near its edge, and so even getting close enough to take a good look can be dangerous. Other edges appear stable, but actually hang out over the abyss, just waiting for the opportunity to crumble when some hapless adventurer gets too close.

Any character that gets within 10 feet of an unstable edge must make a Perception check (DC 15) to notice the dangerous places to step. Failure means that they step on a loose rock, sending them careening off the edge.

They will get at least one Dexterity saving throw (DC 15) to stop themselves. It is recommended that they get an additional check with a DC of 20 to give them one last chance to grab the edge. If their companions may intervene, then the DM will have to gauge the chances of success based on the situation.

Players may feel that sinking underwater is safe, as no damage will occur from the fall. Of course settling to the

bottom of an aquatic location is based on buoyancy. But the height needed to ascend, increased pressure, and the need to breath will all have an effect of survival.

Flow. Aquatic flow or surge can be very unpredictable, especially when channeled into narrow spaces. These aquatic surges can cause violent updrafts from the depths of the chasm, causing great problems for anyone hanging suspended over a cliff or deep valley. The DM should consider giving the a *Disadvantage* on their checks when powerful ocean flows occur.

EVEN THE ODDS

If a new chasm opens up in the midst of the party, Even the Odds to determine which characters are on which side. The Odds roll will end up on the least advantageous side based on the current situation. At this point you may add one or more events based on the nature of the opening. Combining some of the events listed here would amplify the encounter, especially during combat.

CHANGES

Occasionally, a larger section of mountain can reach a point where a massive section of rock breaks open, leaving a deep chasm. The DM could consider having one of these chasms open up when the characters are present. Are they separated from their goal? Is the party split by this new obstacle? Were they unlucky enough to be on top of a chasm as it opens?

Crumbing Face. The major difference between this type of cliff and the others is that the surface is very unstable, though it may not appear so at first glance. A passive Perception check (DC 12) will alert a character to the dangers of climbing such a cliff. When a character only just succeeds on their climb check they do not fall, but they do knock several rocks loose which plummet to the ground below. Anyone within a 10 foot radius of the space directly beneath them, must make a Dexterity save (DC 12) of suffer 2d4 bludgeoning damage from the falling debris. If the character that knocked the rocks loose rolls a

natural 1, then in addition to falling, they trigger a rock slide (see the section on Rock Slides).

Rock Slides. When one occurs, if your players do not choose an action quickly, then all checks or saves related to the rock slide are attempted at a *Disadvantage*. If a DM wants to ramp up the tension, consider using some sort of timer. The instant the rock slide is announced, give the players 30 seconds to describe what their characters do. A rock slide can affect an area from 10 to 100 square feet. The DM can determine the size of the slide or roll $1d10 \times 10$ feet to determine the area of effect. The characters will have one round to react before any saves are necessary. If the area is equal to or larger than a character's movement, they will have to make a saving throw to avoid it.

Example 1: if the area affected is 30 feet and a character has a movement of 30, they will be in danger. Rocks and dirt will slam into every creature in the area, requiring them to make a Dexterity save (DC 20) to avoid the worst of the slide. A failed save means that the creature is pushed in the direction of the slide by a number of feet equal to $10 \times$ the amount they failed the DC.

Example 2: if the player ends up with a save roll of 12, that is 8 less than required, and so the character will be swept 80 feet. Additionally, the victims of the rock slide will suffer $4d6$ hit points of bludgeoning damage and become stunned for $2d4$ rounds. A successful save means that they take only half damage and are not stunned. Due to the sudden violence of the event, everyone in the slide area must make a Dexterity save at *Disadvantage* (DC 20), dropping whatever they were holding on a failed save. It will take at least 30 minutes to recover any lost objects, if possible. The DM may also want to note any fragile items carried by the characters which may have been broken in the event. Even the Odds roll to see if they are trapped by the slide. It might be a pile of smaller rocks or they might be pinned by a large boulder. In either case, it will require a combined Athletics (Strength) check (DC 15) to free the trapped creature.

FUMBLECRIT

- 1 Victim tumbles into the chasm, falling 10 to 40 feet before getting horribly wedged between two massive rocks. They are unable to extract themselves, but may be extracted with the help of others. Doing so requires a combined Strength (Athletics) check (DC 25). Unfortunately, the act of forcibly dragging a character from such a position will inflict $2d6$ hit points worth of bludgeoning damage.
- 2 The victim just manages to grab a hold of someone or something before slipping over the edge into the chasm, but ends up losing a personal or valuable item in the process. The DM can give the player the option to save the item and allow themselves to fall.

- 3 The victim gets tangled in a rope, root, or bit of clothing and ends up tripping into the chasm. Whatever tripped them stops their fall, but it wrenches their leg and leaves them hanging over the edge upside down. Assuming they are rescued, they will have a temporary limp, reducing their swimming movement by half until the end of their next long rest.
- 4 The hapless victim plunges into the unseen depths below. The rest of the party might well assume that the character is dead, but they are still alive, trapped in a massive web suspended between the walls of the chasm. The DM can decide whether this web is abandoned or inhabited, and what might or might not still be using it.
- 5 Victim has one of their limbs crushed by a boulder (roll randomly). It is broken and useless until set and healed. Once set with a successful Medicine check (DC 12), the bone will mend on its own in a month or so, or can be mended during a short rest by imparting at least 20 hit points worth of magical healing. Note that this 20 points is required, even if the character is at full hit points.
- 6 Victim loses 1 to 4 items in the slide. It will require a Wisdom (Perception) check (DC 20) to find any one item.
- 7 Victim is knocked unconscious for $1d4$ hours.
- 8 Victim has sustained an internal injury that is not immediately apparent. Over the course of the next few hours, the character will begin to feel weaker, losing 1 point of Constitution per hour as they bleed internally. A Medicine check (DC 10) will reveal the problem. Using a Healer's Kit can stop the bleeding within the first 3 hours, with a successful Medicine check (DC 15) and a long rest. Magic that imparts a minimum of 15 hit points of healing will also reverse the effects, if also followed by a long rest.
- 9 Victim suffers a massive head injury, causing them to lose consciousness for an hour. Upon waking, they are unable to remember anything about their life, including their own name. Their memory will return gradually over the course of the next day or so. During that time, they will lose the ability to perform any skills that require thought, losing $1d4$ memorized spells, if a spell caster. The DM will have to use their discretion when determining which abilities will suffer as a result of the amnesia.
- 10 Victim twists their leg badly, reducing their movement, both ground and swimming, by half. This reduction will only heal after a long rest and medical attention to set the dislocation or sprain.



CORAL REEF

The envoy moved amongst our party, lightly touching our foreheads. An air bubble suddenly popped around our heads. We could breath!

The envoy and its scouts led the way deeper into the warm tropical currents. Although we kept pace with these marine folk, there was no doubt their adaptations made them superior in speed.

We rounded a rocky bend, the earth covered in patches of lichen. The beauty before us was awe inspiring. Our eyes could not blink from the shock.

We later knew this to be called a coral reef. Hard as steel, this material was a living structure. The reef and that called this place home left vivid memories of vibrant flashes of color.

Pinks, blues and purples, glowing yellows and golds, lines of reds, dashes of orange, pops of greens. Schools of fish moved in lazy formations. There was a chaos of life, a purpose to each given vague recognition in our subconscious.

PRESSURE

The coral reef can be a beautiful reprieve from the more dangerous elements of the sea. This can act as the surface equivalent of a tavern or roadside outpost. It can also house its own threats. The coral is sharp and tough, and all manner of life finds succor in the nooks and crannies. Who knows what lethal predators call this place home?

IF / THEN

Navigating a coral reef while doing strenuous activity is risky. Without an instinctual ability to think in such a surrounding maze, and with no foreknowledge of the region, it can lead to becoming trapped by the sharp edges of coral and predators on the hunt.

Whenever a surface dweller attempts to travel through an opening in the reef equal to their current size or smaller, there is a 1 in 6 chance of becoming restrained. An Action (combat, movement, bonus or a reaction) must be spent to become free. Instead of the restraint, the DM can choose to have clothing or carried item snatched on jagged outcrops. Removing the item or shredding the clothing will release the hold, spending an Action to do so. Diver's Oil allows swimming unimpeded in a coral reef.

Aquatic creatures are adapted to this phenomenon, suffering no Ill effects in and around a coral reef.

Choose or roll for a random passage through the reef. Remember, this is a 360 degree environment. Typically, based on facing, six possible choices are available to the characters. Think of a common six-sided die; front, back, left, right, above and below.

Blocked. Corral growth has covered this direction.

Large. A large-sized or smaller creature can pass through this region. Something bigger can only reach a limb or weapon through this opening.



Medium. A medium-sized or smaller creature can pass through this region. Something bigger can only reach a limb or weapon through this opening. Most characters will fit into this category.

Small. A small-sized or smaller creature can pass through this region. Something bigger can only reach a limb or weapon through this opening. Some races, such as halflings, fit into category.

Tiny. A tiny-sized or smaller creature can pass through this region. Something bigger can only reach a limb or weapon through this opening. Most familiars fit into this category.

Tunnel. Pick or roll above for the size of the tunnel. The passage extends from 10 to 60 feet, or an entire zone. There is a 2 in 6 chance of becoming restrained, as above.

CHANGES

Include any or all of the elements below to increase , add humor, or bits of flavor. Use the same chances above (1 in 6 or 2 in 6) replacing the restraint with an option below.

Bottom Feeders. A swarm of lamprey-like fish attach themselves to the character. They are searching for small bits of vegetation or waste normally on rocks or the sea bed. This sudden 'attack' requires a Nature (Wisdom) save (DC

12), to avoid becoming frightened, made at *Disadvantage* until these pests are removed. It costs a full round of brushing them off to remove this condition. A successful save means not having to make another within 24 hours. Aquatic-adapted characters or the Mariner background grants immunity to these feeders as well.

Quick Nippers. A long fish or eel is annoyed and strikes from a hole with surprise. Suffer 1 hit point of damage.

Tropical fish. The PC is surrounded by a school of fish. They are completely harmless. The vast number of these fish creates *Disadvantage* when targeting ranged opponents and grants the same *Advantage* when targeted by the same. This lasts one round.

Sea Anemones. These are living creatures. They are soft with fronds, tentacles or strands. The base of the anemone is attached to the reef. Brushing past one or more causes an reaction. Pick or roll for a random contact effect: 1) blinded for 1d4 rounds, 2) a single limb is paralyzed for 1d4 rounds, 3) cannot speak for 1d4 rounds, 4) painful sting causes loss of 1d4 strength.

DEAD CALM

It is the twelfth day of our imprisonment in this purgatorial patch of sea. The wind stopped early one evening and simply never returned. The captain tells me that these things can happen, but as we approach our second week without the breeze, I can tell that the crew is on edge.

Plans are underway to hook up the rowboats to the bow and tow the ship with brute force, but no one seems optimistic about this plan.

As if the lack of wind wasn't bad enough, the merciless sun has presented some new problems. Just as in a desert, we are entirely dependent on the water that we brought with us, and this oppressive heat and humidity is causing us to drink nearly twice as much as normal. I heard a rumor that the captain might institute rationing and even require that we save our urine for more desperate times to come.

Fortunately the ship's cook, a friendly fellow named Kelly, has managed to modify the ship's unofficial distillery to turn sea water into something safe to drink. We are all hopeful, but there is no telling how much longer we have before morale starts to disintegrate.

PRESSURE

A dead calm is a meteorological condition where there is absolutely no wind or waves in a large area for an extended period of time. The causes of a dead calm are mysterious, but they can last for days, weeks, months, or even years.

Any vessels that rely solely on wind for propulsion will become trapped until the wind picks up or some other way is devised to move the ship. Vessels that have other means of propulsion, such as oars, can make their way out of the area.

For those trapped in a dead calm, death can be slow and terrible as they dehydrate, starve and go mad.

CHANGES

When in open water at least 50 miles from the nearest coast, there is a 1% chance per day that a ship will encounter a dead

calm of some kind. The size of a dead calm can be anywhere between 10 and 100 miles (10d10), and when one occurs, a ship is just as likely to be caught in the middle as on the edge. Roll a d4 to determine the distance from the closest edge: 1 = Center, 2=3/4 way from edge, 3=1/2 way from edge, 4=1/4 way from edge. For example, if the dead calm is roughly 50 miles in radius, a roll of 3 means that the ship is 25 miles from the edge in the direction that they wish to travel. If they had rolled a 1, they would be 50 miles from the edge in any direction.

A dead calm can last from a few days to years, though most of the long lasting ones are probably charted and relatively well known by experienced sailors. To determine the length of time for a sudden dead calm, roll a d20 x 5 days.

IF / THEN

A dead calm will bring any sea journey to a sudden stop. If the ship is under a serious deadline to reach a destination or if food and water are known to be in low supply, the crew and passengers can begin to experience the effects of stress, panic and despair.

If the food and water is plentiful, it will take a little time before despair becomes a problem unless there are other pressures. After 3 days has passed, the DM should roll a morale check for the crew each day thereafter. A roll of 1 on an d20 means that everyone must make a Wisdom saving throw per the Advanced Despair Rules (see below).

A bard can use their bardic inspiration to keep despair at bay by spending time cheering up the crew with song and stories for at least an hour each day. This will give everyone a bardic inspiration die for their Despair check that day if necessary.

Advanced Despair Rules

These advanced despair rules are designed to generate more drama and tension in the adventure, but if the DM would like to simplify things, they can use the standard despair rule in the definitions section.

After being trapped in a dead calm for a number of days equal to 6 + Wisdom modifier, the character must make a successful Wisdom save (DC 10) or gain 1 level of Despair. The DC increases by 2 for each level of Exhaustion they have suffered.

Despair
Level**Effect**

Despair Level	Effect
1	Confused or Shaken (choose randomly), and lose 1 point of Wisdom.
2	Distracted or Forgetful (choose randomly), and lose 1 point of Wisdom.
3	Numb, Paranoid, or Shocked (choose randomly), and lose 1 point of Wisdom.
4	Hallucinations and lose 1 point of Intelligence.
5	Frightened and lose 1 point of Wisdom.
6	Catatonic and lose 1 point of Wisdom.

Catatonic. A catatonic character is incapacitated, unable to take any actions or reactions. It cannot move or speak. The creature automatically fails Dexterity, Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws. Attack rolls against the target have *Advantage*. Any attack that hits the creature is a critical hit if the attacker is within 5 feet of them.

Confused. The confused character has *Disadvantage* on Initiative checks. They find it difficult to make decisions or understand what's going on around them.

Distracted. The distracted character has *Disadvantage* on Perception checks. Flashbacks, doubt, survivor's guilt, and visions of horror occupy their mind, clouding their thoughts.

Forgetful. The forgetful character has *Disadvantage* on Intelligence checks. This includes spell casting and class related abilities. Traumatic and horrifying events are best forgotten. Unfortunately, this can obscure short and long term memory temporarily.

Frightened. The frightened character must use every means to flee from the source of fear. If this is a result of despair, there may be no way to flee, and so they will likely find shelter or hide. If unable to flee or hide, they remain prone until the fear passes.

The frightened character has *Disadvantage* on any actions

against the source of fear. Their fear could cause them to freeze up on a cliff face, refuse to enter a vast expanse of desert or they might be terrified by the darkness at night.

Hallucinations. The hallucinating character has *Disadvantage* on all mental ability checks. This includes all Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma checks, as well as spell and class related abilities. Whether real or imagined, the mind creates visions the victim cannot ignore.

Numb. The numbed character has *Disadvantage* on Charisma checks, including spell and class abilities. They have *Disadvantage* when resisting mental influence and Charisma-based social interactions. Unless instructed to move faster, the numb character's movement is halved.

Paranoid. Anyone a paranoid character encounters, including a friend, is met with suspicion and mistrust. The character will try to avoid people if possible, placate them if they cannot be avoided, or harm them if, in their mind, they feel threatened.

The character must actively attempt to resist all beneficial spells or class abilities from others, including attempts to heal them. The character will not engage in helping others nor will they offer assistance to perceived enemies while paranoid.

If at least half of the crew becomes paranoid, there will be an attempted mutiny to either force the captain to take some desperate action (no matter how mad) or seize the remaining supplies or both.

Shaken. The shaken character is momentarily gripped by fear and doubt. They cannot use their ability score bonuses and have *Disadvantage* to do anything related to that which has shaken them. This condition remains until they take a full round to gather themselves. Those who are resistant or immune to fear cannot be shaken.

Shocked. The shocked character is unable to communicate by words or action. They are considered to be deaf. They will fail any attempt to hear a sound and will be unaffected by sounds or verbal instructions.



DEAD ZONE

If the merfolk had a concept of hell, this would surely have been it. Though our magic had allowed us to breathe, it was still like being near the peak of Mount Skelharth.

All around us lay a vast bed of bloated, unscavenged corpses on the sea floor. This macabre blanket was made of a countless variety of marine creatures and merfolk that had all died when the oxygen in the water seemed to vanish overnight.

Bits of flesh, fish scales and other bits of debris floated around us like some sort of gray and gruesome snow. The only thing that prevented me from vomiting was the realization that the bubble of magic containing the air around my head would likely trap my disgorged stomach contents within.

We had hoped that our breathing wouldn't become more difficult as we approached the center of the destruction, but several minutes later, we were all feeling light-headed and dizzy. Unfortunately, we had no choice but to press on. The source of the catastrophe had to be discovered and rectified if possible.

PRESSURE

Dead zones are hypoxic (low-oxygen) areas in an ocean or large lake. They are most often caused by excessive nutrient pollution from human activities coupled with other factors that deplete the oxygen required to support most marine life.

Less oxygen in the water is referred to as a “dead zone” because most marine life either dies, or, if they are mobile such as fish, leave the area. Habitats that would normally be teeming with life become, essentially, biological deserts.

Any creature that breathes water, either through natural or magical means, begins to suffocate as an air-breather might at extremely high altitude.

IF / THEN

A water-breathing creature can access the last dregs of oxygen left in the water which can extend their survival time a bit. One could remain conscious in a dead zone for a number of equal to $10 \times$ its Constitution modifier (minimum of 10 minutes), after which it falls unconscious. Once unconscious, the creature will remain stable for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier $\times 2$ (minimum 2 rounds), after



which, hit points drop to 0 and it begins to die. If it still has no access to oxygenated water, death saves are made at *Disadvantage*. For example, a creature with a Constitution of 14 can remain conscious for 20 minutes (+2 x 10).

CHANGES

While these areas might be the bane of aquatic life, they can attract unnatural things or become the spawning ground for abominations.

Necrotic Creatures. When a region of an ocean or lake dies, it becomes vulnerable to the incursion of dark necrotic powers that can reanimate the corpses of dead sea life.

These corrupted creatures will remain dormant on the bottom until a living thing comes near.

Necrotic creatures appear much as they did in life, except that the magic that creates them takes time to run its course. Dead fish rise from the sea floor, bloated, decaying, and riddled with mutated parasites.

Imagine a shark trailing a stream of rotted flesh and innards, its eyes only black sockets with pinpoints of virulent green light. A huge cephalopod lunges from the sea floor to grapple its victim with putrid oozing tentacles.

A swarm of decomposing quippers (MM p.338) picking the flesh from a creature unfortunate enough to enter their sphere of influence.

Necrotic Template

This template can be applied to any aquatic creature in a dead zone, particularly if the zone was caused by magic. When a creature becomes undead, it retains its physical statistics except as described below. The creature loses any trait that assumes a living physiology and their type changes to undead, so that it no longer needs to breathe, ingest food or rest.

Bane of Life. Necrotic creatures will viciously attack any living thing that comes within 60 feet.

Damage Resistance. The necrotic creature has resistance to necrotic and fire damage.

Damage Immunities. The necrotic creature has immunity to poison. It also retains any immunities it had prior to becoming a undead.

Condition Immunities. The necrotic creature can't be charmed, frightened, paralyzed, or poisoned. It also doesn't suffer from exhaustion.

Magic Resistance. The necrotic creature has *Advantage* on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.



FLOODED CHAMBER

I stood before the rough hewn steps. My map and guide gave me no clue as to the source of the water. I could only surmise that the flooded chamber before me and beyond was a barrier to my quest. I would have to have faith that an air pocket or two was available to me when I dived into the cloudy waters.

PRESSURE

Unless hounded by an enemy, your players should have a long hard pause when they contemplate the act of diving into unknown and unseen waters. Even without the presence of a beast or predator, the sheer fact that one may come can create a great deal of stress. Enhance this with threats and imagination, play on their deep-rooted fears.

IF/THEN

Players must swim down the dark flooded chamber. Establish how long it takes to transverse from one pocket of air to the other. Foreshadow the possibility of safety with bubbles, light or some other identifier to find an air pocket. The air pockets can be small, head room only, or as large as a cavern or room above the water line.

This is the perfect time to use the Aquatic Extended Contest rules above. Your players will want to find out how long the chamber extends, if there are air pockets, and how tight the space may be.

Apply modifiers, such as *Disadvantage*, if the characters insist on swimming in heavy armor and full packs in narrow spaces under water. See the encumbrance rules to dictate what affects this will have on navigating the cave, sunken ship or flooded keep.

CHANGES

Predators! Snakes, crocodiles, tentacles or some other subterranean and aquatic creatures are in the water. Dexterity is severely limited, offering no bonus to move or dodge such attacks. Drowning is a real possibility as well as being grappled, cut, bitten or eaten.

The chamber has raiders! When the characters go up for air, enemies attack from dry land. The water is a natural barrier to ranged attacks, with *Disadvantage* to bow attacks, spears and spells that penetrate the water. The act of holding one's breath to remain submerged will increase the tension. Do the characters remain submerged or risk climbing a ledge for life giving air and suffer attacks while vulnerable? Remaining submerged grants the benefit of resistance against fire and ranged attacks, halving damage. The water also limits movement. See walking or running through water above.

Collapse! The chamber is in danger of filling with rocks, furniture or other debris. Even the Odds of getting hit by the crumbling ceiling. Targets suffer 1d6 points of damage. Even the Odds of getting pinned to the chamber floor if hit. Randomly select or choose an Easy (DC 10), Medium (DC 15) or Hard (DC 20) Obstacle to move the rocks that trapped the character. Drowning is possible. Party members can help extricate a trapped character, offering *Advantage* on Strength saves to escape.

Debris! The chamber has objects in it, floating on the surface or submerged in the depths. Describe the scene in such a way as to enhance the fear of the unknown. These disturbances mean that Perception Checks will be at *Disadvantage*. Predators will use this to their advantage.



FOG

We had all experienced fog before, but nothing like the vapor that now obscured our eyes. The captain had been warned about the hot springs spilling into the ocean on the southern edge of the island, but it was another to experience it. Standing on the deck, I was unable to see my feet and my hand turned to a hazy shape inches from my face.

I could hear crew members colliding all around me, but they went silent when we heard the faint scrape of stone on wood as the ship began to lean to port.

The banks of a cool lake as the sun rises. The air above a hot spring in a frozen landscape. The ocean waters after a tropical storm. The region at the base of a towering waterfall. All of the previous locations may have been under a blanket of fog.

Fog is classified as light and heavy. Fog can arrive overnight, after a storm, or from the meeting of hot and cold moisture. Lava flowing into a river, a ball of fire from a magus, or dragon's flaming breath can generate fog over an expansive area.

Winds, both natural and mystic in origin can disperse fog. Skilled casters may have spells available to blow away fog in an area, these should be against a DC of 12.

Light Fog. In a lightly obscured area, such as dim light or patchy fog, creatures have *Disadvantage* on Perception (Wisdom) checks that rely on sight.

Heavy Fog. A heavily obscured area, such as darkness or opaque fog, blocks vision entirely. A creature effectively suffers from the blinded condition when trying to see in that area.



ICE FLOW

When Gavin didn't resurface, I jumped in after him. One of our party had fallen through the ice into the frigid waters. Gavin didn't hesitate, dropping his pack and coat in one swift motion. His feet disappeared before any of us could yell out.

Our eyes met when a count of three heartbeats passed. No one could survive that long in such cold water. I shook as much from fear as cold when I dived in after him.

Below the surface I saw a world unlike any other, Diffused light passed through from above, and ice stretched for miles in all directions. It was thin in areas; I could see the shadows of my companions above me. The ice also reached down, some formations hundreds of feet or more, reaching towards the shallows. Icy caverns had formed passages and tunnels had been shaped by the wintry sea.

In the distance I could make out a stalagmite formed entirely of ice. It had to be hundreds of feet or more in thickness. I saw because I could see lights, the lights of civilization, like windows in tower but inverted. Around this structure swam a cloud of beings, unformed in my eye from the distance and current.

I don't remember being pulled to the surface. The electric shock that ran down my arm told me how close to death I became. Jorma knelt over my body, her arcane gifts handy in rejuvenation of my heart.

I refused to leave our location, and described to them what I saw. They thought my vision one of mere illusion caused by the intense cold. That is, until a knock came from under the ice...

PRESSURE

The frigid temperature in this region of the ocean can mean certain death. The risk of hypothermia, paralysis and drowning combine to make a lethal mixture. Remind players that teamwork, luck and skill are needed to navigate this aquatic landscape.

Increase the cold effects as if the characters are one level deeper than the current depth (see ocean depths above). The use of cold spells or effects compounds, as detailed under the aquatic magic cold effects above.

Unless protected by magic or encased in resistant materials, saves to resist hypothermia are at *Disadvantage* while in the cold water.

IF / THEN

If the characters are traveling over relatively thin ice. Roll 2d10 for both the thickness in inches or centimeters and the DC and HP of the ice. A roll of 14 would be 14 inches thick, have a DC of 14 to overcome using skills or Strength, and 14 hit points to damage enough for a hole or passage for a medium-sized creature.

Submerged. When underwater, the effects of cold, water and drowning will combine, making any attempts to break the ice from below difficult. Place *Disadvantage* on the rolls actions to free oneself where appropriate.

Additionally, surge can move a character away from an opening or from assistance while in those frigid waters.

Falling into the water induces severe hypothermia in a number of minutes equal to the character's Constitution



bonus. Even after leaving the water, the effects of hypothermia continue until the creature is warm and dry.

On the other hand, an injured character is considered stabilized after falling into arctic waters. All conditions after the initial immersion can, of course, remove the stabilization. Drowning, drifting away and sinking to the bottom of the sea or lake is all probable without valuable assistance.

Surface. If a characters are walking no faster than half of their movement rate, then that character can cross the frozen expanse without falling prone.

If they are moving faster than half of their movement rate, the character must succeed on a Dexterity save (DC 10) or fall prone. Moving at full speed increases the DC to 15.

If the character is taking another action while moving (such as engaging in combat), then they have *Disadvantage* on their saves to remain on their feet.

CHANGES

Cracked Ice. Warn your players that hairline fractures explode across the frozen surface offering a chance to avoid being dumping into the frigid water. A crack across an ice flow can separate a group of combatants. Even the Odds. An odds result means a character is on the most disadvantageous side of the crack.

To jump across, a character must make a Dexterity or Acrobatics check (DC 15), or fall through the crack (see Falling Through the Ice). If they choose to spend an action preparing before the jump (combat, bonus or reaction) they can make their check with *Advantage*.

Falling Through the Ice. This can be a random effect, depending on whether the ice is thin or already cracked. If there

is a good chance of breaking through the ice, then even the odds to determine if anyone plunges into the icy darkness. Otherwise, have the characters make a Dexterity save or fall through. The DM should set the difficulty based on the thickness of the ice:

Ice Thickness	Difficulty
Up to 1 inch	DC 20
1 inch to 2 inches	DC 15
2 inches to 3 inches	DC 10

Islands of Ice. The surface shatters into numerous ice floats (see Cracked Ice). Skill or ability checks are required to jump from ice flow to ice flow. Small icy islands are vulnerable to sudden weights. The DC to land standing on a small ice chunk is 20. If the player fails the roll within 5, he lands prone on the target island. If the roll is failed by greater than 5, the PC slides right off the ice, but may make an Acrobatics (Dexterity) save to hang on (DC 15), allowing him to climb upon the float next round.

Breaking the Ice. To recover a creature or object that has fallen through the ice, the character must make a Dexterity save (DC 15) if it is within their reach.

If they must first break the ice, they simply have to inflict hit points of damage to smash through the surface. The total hit points are equal to the DC and thickness of the ice.

FUMBLECRIT

- 1 Victim plunges through the ice and into the frigid water. They are unconscious and suffer a loss of 1d4 Constitution, both in equal amounts. All items carried fall to the bottom of the sea or lake. The victim floats under the thick ice, which must be pierced in order for them to reach the surface. Drowning begins during unconsciousness.
- 2 Victim falls through the ice and into the frigid water. They are stunned for 1d4 rounds and drop anything they are holding.
- 3 Victim falls down. An arm or leg punches through the ice into the frigid water, paralyzing the limb. They are considered prone until able to make a move action.
- 4 Victim twists an ankle or pops a knee. They lose their Dexterity bonus and their movement is halved.
- 5 Victim falls prone and suffers a head injury. Wisdom checks are made with *Disadvantage* until a short rest or healed with 5 hp or more.
- 6 Victim spins in place, turning their back to the action and any potential danger.





OCEAN WAVES

The shore was being battered by massive waves that resembled mountains. If we were going to survive this, we needed shelter right away, but before we could reach safety, we had to push through a hammering sea.

PRESSURE

Sailing the ocean is an environment most characters are unfamiliar with. The ocean is a harsh mistress, omnipresent and potentially lethal. Foreshadow the events to prepare your players for the dangers of the open sea.

A tidal wave is notable for being a tall, broad wave that curls over at the top. Foamy white crests signal the crushing force of the water. As the storm surge presses the water towards land, the water closest to the bottom slows down relative to the surface water. If the difference in speed is dramatic enough, the wave will crest, creating that spectacular curl of lethal wash.

IF / THEN

Floating on the ocean surface can be life-threatening if the waves are tossed high by winds, gravity and underwater phenomena. Drowning, being crushed, and disorientation are all potential hazards. If a character dives below the surface of the water, then they are less likely to be tossed and crushed by the waves above. This is not true safety though, as the character must remain submerged to resist surface dangers.

Crushing Waves! Every 1 to 4 rounds, a wave will strike everyone and thing on the surface. Each target must make a saving throw using Constitution or Strength. Set the DC higher for bigger waves. The DC to resist a tidal wave is 25! Failure causes a loss of Hit Points or similar metric equal to the roll missed. Example: A total roll of 17 against the tidal wave would cause 8 points of damage ($25-17=8$). They may have *Advantage* if the party holds together or the victim has any applicable talents or native upbringing.

Undertow! A victim might be pushed down by a wave, or forced under and unable to return to the surface. Even the Odds of being caught in an undertow. A victim in undertow struggling to reach the surface will lose 1d4 minutes from swimming endurance. If a 4 is rolled, roll another 1d4 and continue to do this until a 4 is not achieved. Add the total together and subtract from the victim's swimming endurance. They may be in danger of drowning.

Disorientation! An undertow can twist and turn a victim until they can no longer find the surface. Each round caught in an undertow can be horrific and frightening. Roll using Intelligence or Nature (Wisdom), with failure meaning remaining under the surface, lost in position and orientation. The undertow has a DC of 15 to resist its effects.

Diving Below the Waves! A character must perfectly time a dive and remain under the water as the wave passes overhead. An Intelligence or Athletics check is required at a DC of 15. Failure means guessing at how long the wave remains above, but it is usually best to stay submerged for at least 4 or more rounds. Remember that injury and combat will increase the chances of drowning when submerged.



RAGING RIVER

The beast has taken Hob. I blame myself entirely. The signs were there; the roiling water, the eddies warning of submerged boulders, and the lack of recent use on the road leading up to it. In truth, the river hadn't appeared that deep at all, but that was a deception, a trap set by nature herself.

By the time we reached the mid-point of our crossing, even the dwarf's solid legs were unable to resist the pressure, and our feet were ripped from underneath us. The stout ropes saved most, but we lost Hob and two of the horses. They were there one moment, and gone an instant later. We managed to pull Riva shore after she had been pinned beneath the surface by the sheer force of the river. She later described it as feeling like being held down by a giant hand. By the time we stood on the far bank, most of our gear was gone. We decided to build a fire and catch our breath, which will give me the opportunity to compose a letter to Hob's wife and daughter.

PRESSURE

Being chased or tracking someone or something can motivate a reluctant party. The water acts as a natural barrier from ranged attacks such as arrows or spears. Being submerged also gives the swimmer resistance against those ranged attacks and fire as well.

EVEN THE ODDS

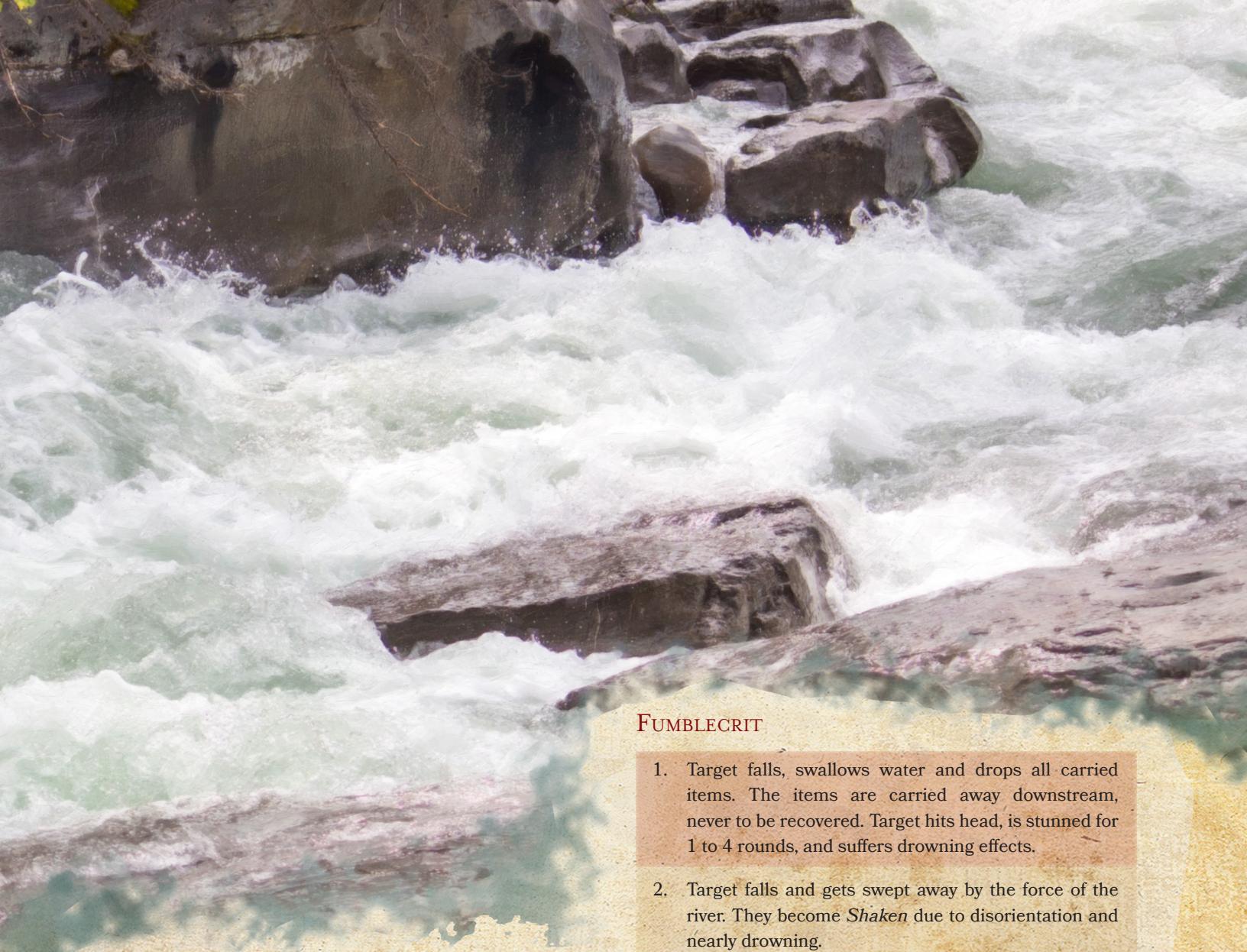
Each round in the water requires stepping safely and keeping one's balance, or risk falling and get carried away by the force of the water. The depth of the water is a major factor in how difficult walking may be (see page 8 for more details).

The surge of the river will move anyone who swims the rapids downstream by an additional 10 to 40 feet forward.

Even the Odds for each of the listed *Changes* below each round.

CHANGES

Sticks & Stones. The fallen trees or overhanging branches are a bane and boon. A victim can hit the logs at tremendous

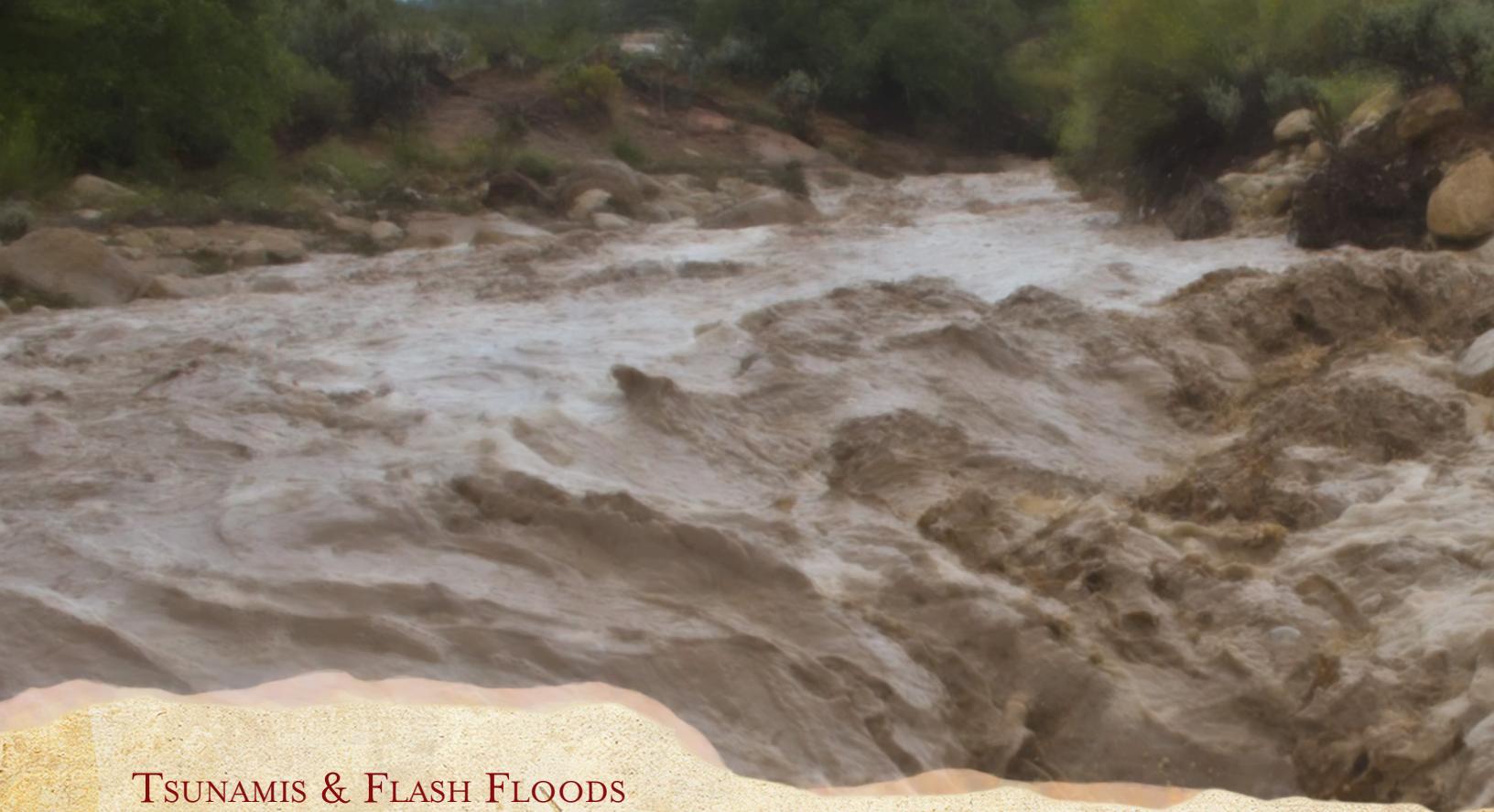


FUMBLECRIT

speed, suffering damage (1d4 points) or become stunned or restrained by the foliage. On the positive side, characters can remain afloat and stop the pull of the river by holding on to a log or branch. Holding on requires a Strength contest against the force of the river. The DC and Strength of the river is $10 + 1d10$, or the DM can choose an appropriate DC/Strength level. Note that holding on creates its own problems. Remaining still may make the character an easy target. On the other hand, hiding under water, resisting ranged attacks and the flames is a useful tactic. See walking or running through water above for more detail.

The river also has numerous boulders and rocks that puts anything carried by the water in danger of smashing against a hard surface, plummeting down turbulent falls, or tumbling down rapids. Any attempt to swim, boat or drift in the water requires an Even the Odds roll. On an Odd result, the target must make a Strength (Athletics) check (DC 15) or roll a d4 to determine which condition affects them; 1-*Restrained* in the rocks, 2-*Shaken* from nearly drowning, 3-*Stunned* from an impact, or 4-*Unconscious* from a nasty knock on the head.

1. Target falls, swallows water and drops all carried items. The items are carried away downstream, never to be recovered. Target hits head, is stunned for 1 to 4 rounds, and suffers drowning effects.
2. Target falls and gets swept away by the force of the river. They become *Shaken* due to disorientation and nearly drowning.
3. Target falls and gets trapped underwater becoming grappled. They must be pulled free, which requires a DC 20 Strength check. Party members can help, granting *Advantage* to the stuck victim to break free. Keep track of how long the victim is underwater, as drowning may be possible.
4. Target falls and traps an arm or leg, becoming restrained. They are not submerged, yet. Even the Odds each round. On an Odd result the victim goes under. This is a DC 15 Strength check to free themselves.
5. Target trips and twists an ankle. They lose any Dexterity bonus and move at half speed until healed or rested. Standing will be difficult. For this victim, the DC to resist the surge of the river increases by 5.
6. Target falls prone, dropping any handheld items. They float free, down river. Victim can stand up, but is moved 10 to 40 feet downstream.



TSUNAMIS & FLASH FLOODS

Days of rain had caused the rivers to spread beyond their banks. This eventually caused the dam upriver to collapse one night. An entire lake burst forth, sending a wall of water sweeping through the hamlet of Westbend, taking with it homes and people.

I have seen this sort of destruction only once before. A tsunami had been preceded by a trembling in the ground, followed by the sea retreating towards the horizon. Minutes later, a gigantic wave came crashing inland, flooding the seaside port.

PRESSURE

Your players may try to play it safe to ride out the storm, but a flash flood may strand them, preventing them from finishing a quest. The flood waters will rise. Landmarks will be submerged and lost. Most small items will be swept away, floating on the surface or carried away downhill, settling in the mud and debris.

IF / THEN

The force of flood water is enormous. Please stress upon your that to actively act against the onslaught could mean certain doom. To simply remain standing in active flood waters requires a DC 20. Failure means being dragged away by the water, perhaps into a solid object.

When a flash flood is about to hit, they can make a Nature (DC 15) or Perception check (DC 20) early on to have ample time to get to safety. Anyone familiar with the side effects of

storms or earthquakes on aquatic surfaces will understand the danger, but everyone else can make a Survival check (DC 12) to interpret the signs. If they are successful, they can easily get to high ground in time. The DM can adjust the DCs based on the specific topography of the setting. For example, if the party is in a boat in the middle of a vast lake, then it may take longer to get to safety, or they may decide to take other actions.

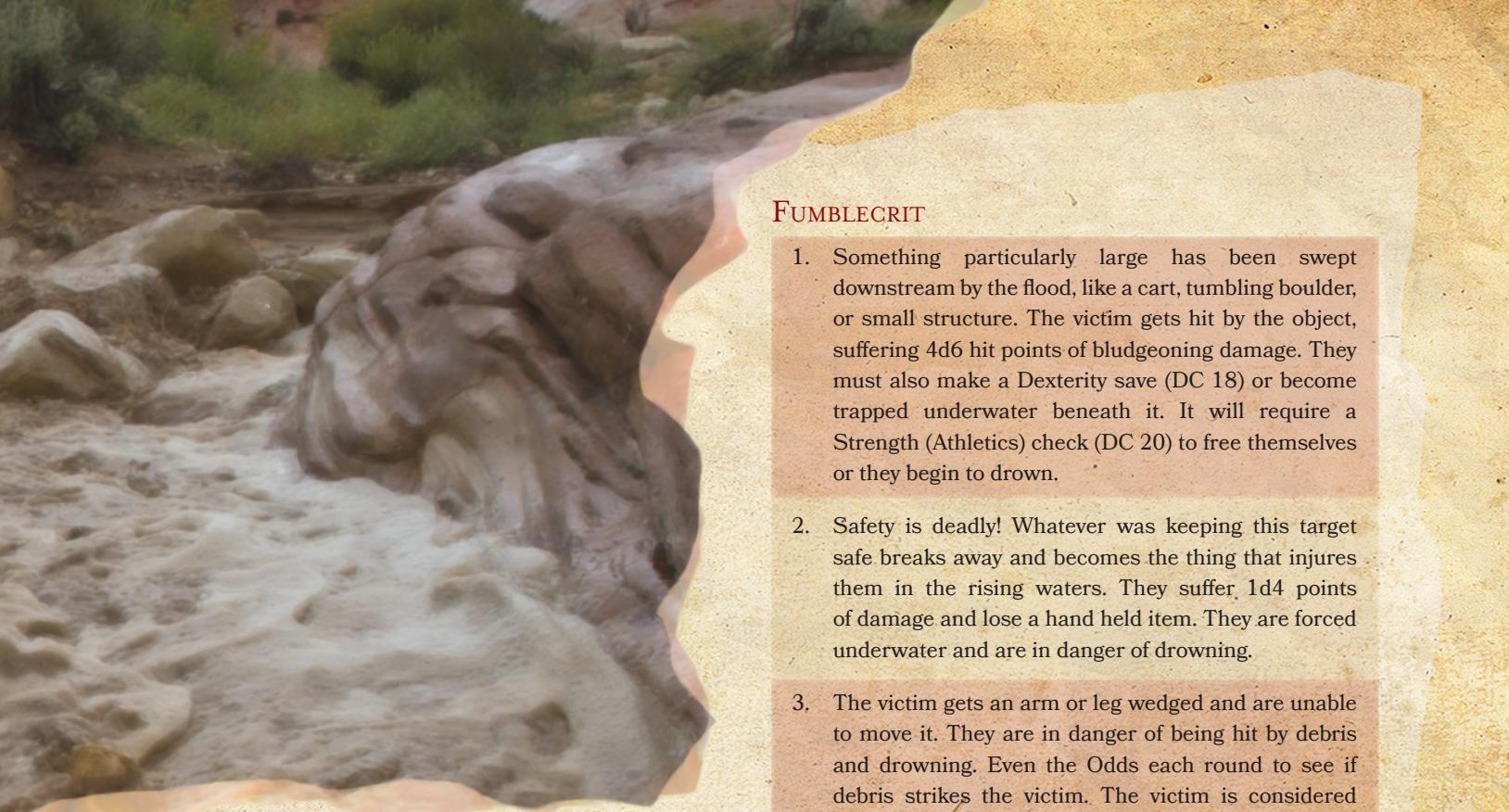
Any characters hit by the flash flood must make an Athletics (Strength) save (DC 15) or get pulled beneath the water and be swept away. If they succeed, they manage to stay on top of the water. Swimming along with the current, they manage to avoid drowning for the time being.

Consider the additional effects of the force of the water. The who swims or gets carried away will move $2d4 \times 10$ feet downstream, in addition to moving in their desired direction.

Anyone suffering a physical injury must make a Constitution save (DC 15) or begin drowning. The save is made with *Disadvantage* if they sustain a critical hit. A failure means suffering the loss of $1d4$ points of Constitution as well from being battered and bruised.

EVEN THE ODDS

A flash flood will knock down anything, pushing all objects, people and buildings towards the lowest area. This means ample opportunity to be hit or pinned by large heavy objects; trees, carts, animals and walls.



CHANGES

Chaotic Waters. Due to the mud, sand and other debris swept downstream by the flood waters, it is nearly impossible to see while underwater. Between that and the constant battering by the current, it can be difficult to determine which way is up. Even the Odds to determine if the character knows which end is up while beneath the surface of the flood waters.

Debris. In addition to the dangers of drowning, flash floods often carry debris that was picked up along the way. This can include rocks, branches and even the carcasses of dead animals that were killed by the flood. Even the Odds to see if they have a chance of getting bludgeoned by debris. They will need to make a Dexterity save (DC 15 if they are on the surface, or DC 18 if they are below the surface) to determine if they are struck. If they fail, they suffer 2d6 hit points of bludgeoning damage. If the water is particularly strewn with debris, then the DM can decide that anyone in the water automatically takes 1d6 hit points per round, but only half damage if they succeed on their save.

Trapped. If a victim is hit, he/she must make a roll to resist being pinned between an object, rolling randomly for the DC (10 + 1d10). If the save to escape being pinned fails, the target is now restrained and in danger of drowning if they do not extricate themselves, or get help doing so. Even the Odds each round that the trapped character is now under water. The victim may use Strength or Dexterity to escape. Imaginative players may use Intelligence or Wisdom to move a heavy obstacle with leverage. In any case, allow the trapped character to save with *Advantage* if other characters help him.

FUMBLECRIT

1. Something particularly large has been swept downstream by the flood, like a cart, tumbling boulder, or small structure. The victim gets hit by the object, suffering 4d6 hit points of bludgeoning damage. They must also make a Dexterity save (DC 18) or become trapped underwater beneath it. It will require a Strength (Athletics) check (DC 20) to free themselves or they begin to drown.
2. Safety is deadly! Whatever was keeping this target safe breaks away and becomes the thing that injures them in the rising waters. They suffer 1d4 points of damage and lose a hand held item. They are forced underwater and are in danger of drowning.
3. The victim gets an arm or leg wedged and are unable to move it. They are in danger of being hit by debris and drowning. Even the Odds each round to see if debris strikes the victim. The victim is considered restrained and will become submerged after 1d4 rounds.
4. Just when you thought you were safe, the water erodes the ground beneath you, sending you into the flood waters below. You can make a Dexterity save (DC 10) to avoid this. If you fail, you suffer 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage, and of course find yourself swept away by the flood.
5. An item being held is the thing that traps the target. Releasing the item will free the target but they will lose the item in rising waters.
6. The water is sweeping the character towards a significant drop (2d4 x 10 feet). Unless the character can stop their movement or get out of the water, they will plunge over the edge and suffer falling damage.
7. The victim is hit by something and stunned for 1 round.
8. Carried away by the water, the target is disoriented. He or she must make an Intelligence or similar roll against a DC 15 Challenge to find a landmark or direction.
9. The victim is knocked unconscious by a stray branch that was caught up in the torrent. Fortunately, their unconscious form ends up on top of the log, and so they are in no immediate danger of drowning. Unfortunately, they are being carried helplessly downstream and could end up miles away. Hopefully the party can find them.
10. Roll twice and combine or create a suitable complication for the victim.



VEGETATION

If someone had told me that I would one day stand in a vast, underwater forest, I'd have thought them mad. Yet there I was, looking into a float of long, thin trunks of gently waving trees. The tops were like great fans of green silk, with bundles of yellow fruit undulating beneath them.

I was in such awe that I failed to notice the thin, worm-like tendril that reached for my leg. Before I knew it, the vine has seized my ankle and delivered an electric sting. To my horror, I suddenly realized that I could not move a muscle

Aweflowers. These blooms are as large around as a human head. They grow in patches on rocky outcroppings. The colors of the fronds are a rainbow of bright reflections, even in the sunless depths. The few creatures that use sight are vulnerable to the Aweflowers. They broadcast an image that can paralyze those who can see them clearly. The range these flowers reach is the outer limit of a light source. To resist this paralysis, targets must make an Intelligence saving throw (DC of 15). A roll of natural 1 means the victim will be paralyzed for up to an hour! A victim can make a save each round to escape

the hypnosis. A successful save against this effect makes those targets immune to the hypnotic effects for 24 hours. Be aware of any light sources. If the Aweflowers cannot be seen, they are ineffective. Paralyzed creatures are easy prey for predators, the fronds feed on the drifting blood of prey.

Blood Sponges. These strange yet beautiful growths can cover acres of ground. Often living among coral reefs, Blood sponges are another component of a picturesque underwater tropical landscape. They are multicolored with bright vivid hues. Blood sponges don't cause wounds but take advantage of injuries. Any subjects with open wounds are a potential target. The sponges will move towards the wounded target and attempt to land on the wound to feed from the victim. Targets may become covered in several sponges but most will fall back to the ocean floor.

Those sponges that remain will draw blood from the wound until the sponge has become full. A full Blood sponge will fall to the lake or ocean floor leaving space for other sponges to feed. A side effect of Blood sponge fields is the elimination of blood generated by cloudy water.

Each wound sucked by a blood sponge will cause 1d4 of damage. After 10 points have been inflicted, the sated

sponge will release and fall back to the ocean floor.

Each round spent in a blood sponge field requires an Even Odds check for those of who have open wounds. An Odd result means a sponge has locked on and begins draining the target. Each open wound is a location to which a Blood sponge may attach. Removing the sponge is easy, requiring an action to do so. This doesn't prevent more sponges from replacing those knocked off.

Necrotic Fungus. This black mold is found on rocks and dead organic remains. It is indistinguishable from most other forms of algae, mold or fungus, though a Nature or Survival skill check (DC 20) can detect its true nature. There is a 1 in 10 chance of getting this fungus on the one's body or equipment if they are passing through a fungi field. The fungus feeds on biological materials like cloth, leather, food items and, of course, flesh.

Each day Even the Odds that the fungus eats a random item. It could be a cloak, backpack, rations or wooden box. If the item isn't immediately removed, the fungus will continue to consume items until it reaches the character. Necrotic fungus on flesh will cause 1 hit point of damage per round until scraped off. This requires using a bladed weapon on the flesh, which will cause 1d4 slashing damage to remove the necrotic fungus.

Snatch Tubes. Tall, seemingly hollow tubes of flexible pale material latch onto and sprout from rocky outcrops and solid formations. Snatch Tubes are about 3 feet in diameter and up to 40 feet in height. Light passes through the translucent body showing shadowy pockets of solid bladders. The Snatch Tube has a long fibrous tongue equal to the length of its body that can snap out, grasp a victim, and drag them into its gelatinous maw.

It will attempt to grab any small or medium creature that comes within 40 feet. Avoiding the grasping tubes requires a Dexterity saving throw (DC 20). On a failed save, the victim is *Restrained*. Due to the immense pressure from the tongue, the victim must also make a Constitution save (DC 20) each round to breath until they are free of its grip.

The second round after being grappled, the tube begins to draw them in, during which time the victim can attempt to escape the grapple as normal (DC 20).

On the third round after being grappled, the victim is pulled inside the main body of the Snatch Tube and begins to be digested. The enzymes inflict 1d8 points of acid damage per round, and the victim must still make Constitution saves to breath. Once inside the tube, the victim cannot physically escape, and must either be rescued from outside or take some action that requires only minor movements. Casting a spell requires a Dexterity (Athletics) check (DC 20) to do so.

A victim can be freed from the Snatch Tube by damaging it, though any damage inflicted may cause damage to the creature inside. Any attack roll will hit, but a natural roll of 1-5 on a d20 will place half the damage on the swallowed victim.

The tongue can be severed by inflicting 20 or more points of damage. The Snatch Tube is completely destroyed after sustaining 40 points of damage. Anything less and the tube will regrow within a few months. Snatch tubes are found in groups of 2-16.

Snatch Tubes are so strong and dangerous that a large enough clutch of them can crush a small ship if it passes within range.

Stranglevine. These long strands extend towards the surface, swaying in watery depths. Stranglevines are fed from biological material of decomposing flesh that settles near the roots. Plenty of small fish use stranglevines as a home for protection and comfort. These vines average a height of up to 60 feet towards the surface. Strangely, the safest path through stranglevine patches is through the base of the foliage.

As living prey passes above, the vines lash out and entangle the victims. Rays, sharks, orcas, eels and characters are all subject to stranglevine attacks. Avoiding becoming restrained requires making a Dexterity save with a DC of 15. The difference in a failed save equals the number of strands around the victim.

For example, rolling a 6 means 9 vines have wrapped around the target (15-6). Each vine has 1 hp. Slashing or piercing weapons can damage the vines, but blunt or bludgeoning attacks are useless. Bare-handed ripping, clawing or biting can also work. Most natural predators cannot bend or reach to escape the entangle. Scavengers and hunters may wait in hiding, attacking when the victims are helpless.

Gill Fillers. These are underwater mushrooms. The mushroom caps are covered in dozens of round knobs or bumps. These knobs will expel a powder filling the Zone with pollen and obscuring cloudy water. The pollen is dangerous to water-breathing species and those under the effects of water-breathing magic. Each round in the cloudy gill filler water forces every water breather to make a Constitution save (DC 15). A failure will paralyze the victim as the gills or lungs fill with adhesive pollen. They will begin to suffocate, suffering the effects of drowning. If rescued from this area, the effects wear off in 1d4 rounds. Gill filler patches cover 1d6 Zones on average.

Sting Weed. At first sight these low wavy sea plants seem benign, appearing to be nothing more than thin seaweed strands stretching up about 3 feet or so. When a small or medium creature moves within 10 feet however, the plant's roots reach up from the sandy bottom, stinging them.

The root's sting inflicts 1d6 points of necrotic damage, and the creature must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 15) or become paralyzed for 3d4 minutes. Once paralyzed, the Sting Weed's root system will pull the creature beneath the sand to die so that it may feed off the remains over time.

Digging in the sand near one of these plants is likely to uncover treasure from other poor victims that have been taken over the years (DM's discretion).



WATERFALL

Climbing the slick rocks of the mountainside didn't bother me. This trek has purged me of that fear. It was the waterfall hundreds of feet tall, disgorging millions of gallons of water every moment beside me that had me puckered. I could easily become dislodged from the wall and tumble against the rocks, or hit the lake below with enough force to shatter marble, or plummet into a deep pool to be gripped by the undertow and drown. Just another day following the river.

PRESSURE

The waterfall is a dangerous place, either crossing from above, ascending or descending the face of a cliff to either side of the falls, swimming at the base, or trying to go behind the watery wall of force. A goal, such as treasure or glory could motivate a party to attempt the foolhardy.

THE WATERFALL ITSELF

All those within the area of the waterfall are deafened. This is only due to the noise of the falls itself. Voice activated items and spells will work as normal, but spells that require targets to hear them have Resistance against the effects. This means charm spells and deafening thunderclaps are at half effect or at a *Disadvantage*.

Between the constantly thundering water, mist and slime making every surface slick, and the risk of hypothermia, these cliffs are particularly dangerous and best avoided if at all possible.

If it is unavoidable, then climbing is an option. Climbing down is easier since a rope can be anchored at the top, allowing for a controlled descent. Ascending the cliffs near a waterfall is far more difficult. Climbing or rappelling down has a DC of 15, climbing up a DC of 18. Using caution, teamwork and time are a must to prevent injury and death.

On the other hand, if the water seems deep enough, the more bold adventurer might decide to dive into the water below and hope for the best. Determining whether the water is deep enough to dive requires the character to make a Perception check (DC 15), followed by a Strength (Athletics) check (DC 20) to make the dive safely. If the water is not deep enough or they fail their dive check, then treat the dive as a fall, except that the damage halved. See swimming in the appendix for more information on diving.

IF / THEN

On a failure please refer to the Fumblecrit Table below. DM's are encouraged to allow the use of Inspiration or an applicable *Advantage* when rolling on the table, rolling twice and taking the most beneficial result. Being in the grips of the full force of a waterfall can mean certain death.

EVEN THE ODDS

Without using any caution around the waterfall, Even the Odds of a target being swept up in the powerful force. DM's be aware that your players may use any number of skills or equipment to resist the pull. Please use common sense and a consistent adjudicative hand. For example: a character ties a rope to a tree and holds on while in a boat on the falls' edge from above. Use Strength to hold on or Intelligence to make a pulley system. Use a climbing skill check on the cliff face wall. The Athletics skill would be appropriate for diving in the pond or lake at the base of the falls. Subjects pushed or forced into the waterfall will suffer the effects below.

FUMBLECRIT

1. **DEATH!** The victim is smashed against the falls, crushed under impossible forces and laid to rest at the base of the falls within the undertow, their body and belongings are never to be recovered.
2. **CERTAIN DOOM!** The victim suffers 4d10 damage and is unconscious and drowning. Objects carried are dropped and settle on the bottom of the falls. They are restrained in the undertow.
3. **A FATAL FALL!** The victim suffers 1d10 damage. They are stunned for 1d4 rounds. They drop any carried items and gain 2 levels of exhaustion after waking up. While stunned they are drowning. The victim is restrained in the undertow, and must roll an Athletics (Strength) DC of 20 to the pressure keeping them under.
4. **NEARLY CRUSHED!** The victim suffers 1d4 damage and is pushed to the bottom of the falls. The weight of water holding them under requires an Athletics (Strength) check (DC 20) to overcome. The character is also restrained. If they escape, they gain 1 level of exhaustion. If they suffer damage, they must make a Constitution save (DC 15) or begin drowning.
5. **RAG DOLL!** The victim hits the rocky surface behind the falls, suffering 2d10 damage. They have a broken limb (arm or leg) and are then thrown out beyond the base of the falls 10 to 40 feet. They are at a *Disadvantage* when swimming and cannot use the limb until healed. Since the victim suffered damage, they must make a DC 15 Constitution save to hold their breath or begin drowning.
6. **UNCONSCIOUS!** The force of the falls knocks the victim unconscious. They are thrown into shallow water. All carried items are dropped, but recoverable with a (Perception DC 15). If they are awakened, they are stunned for 1d4 rounds before gaining full faculties.
7. **BARELY ESCAPED!** The victim is dumped near the undertow, needing to resist a DC 15 to escape the force of the falls. The subject is restrained until they can escape. They must hold their breath and swim away, and gain one level of exhaustion from this ordeal.
8. **HEAD OVER HEELS!** The victim drops everything. They also suffer 1d4 damage. Although they are not in the undertow, they are stunned for 1 round and are shaken afterwards. They must still swim and hold breath or be pulled under.
9. **THROWN FROM THE FALLS!** The victim is thrown away from the falls, drops a carried item and is nearly drowned. They are shaken and prone upon landing. They are 10 to 40 feet away from the base of the falls, landing in shallow water.
10. **GRACE OF THE GODS!** The victim is thrown clear of the falls, only shaken and prone, landing in shallow water.



UNDERWATER VOLCANISM

I was skeptical of this metallic barrel at first, but I must that it functions as promised. We are currently in the Bay of Kaeleth, hundreds of meters below the surface of the water. The captain assured me that this underwater vessel was tested and true, and I am pleased to confirm that claim.

We have been searching for nearly half an hour and there is still no sign of anything that could be causing the plume of smoke streaming from the bay. Looking through the glass lens, I saw a faint glow in the darkness, which meant it's worse than was feared. I shall have to inform the Baron that the city may have to be abandoned.

PRESSURE

Only the most foolhardy or brave will consider moving through an area with active lava, particularly underwater. The toxins, heat, and poor visibility are bad enough, but the pressure wave from a nearby eruption can pulverize flesh and bone in an instant.

The DM and players must be aware of the lethality of this region. Unless the characters are both experienced and epic heroes with great magic, death is a strong possibility.

IF/THEN

There are two obstacles to avoid or navigate around; the scorching heat and the cloud of “smoke.”

Cloudy Water. As the steam and gases rises, the primordial broth will obscure the area around the event, making visibility extremely difficult throughout the entire Layer in which the vent exists. A steam vent in the Midnight Layer will obscure a Zone in a tower rising to the Twilight Layer.

In an obscured area, visibility varies between 5 and 20 feet. Each round, creatures should roll a d4 (x 5 feet) to determine how far they can see. For example, a roll of 3 would mean they can see 15 feet.

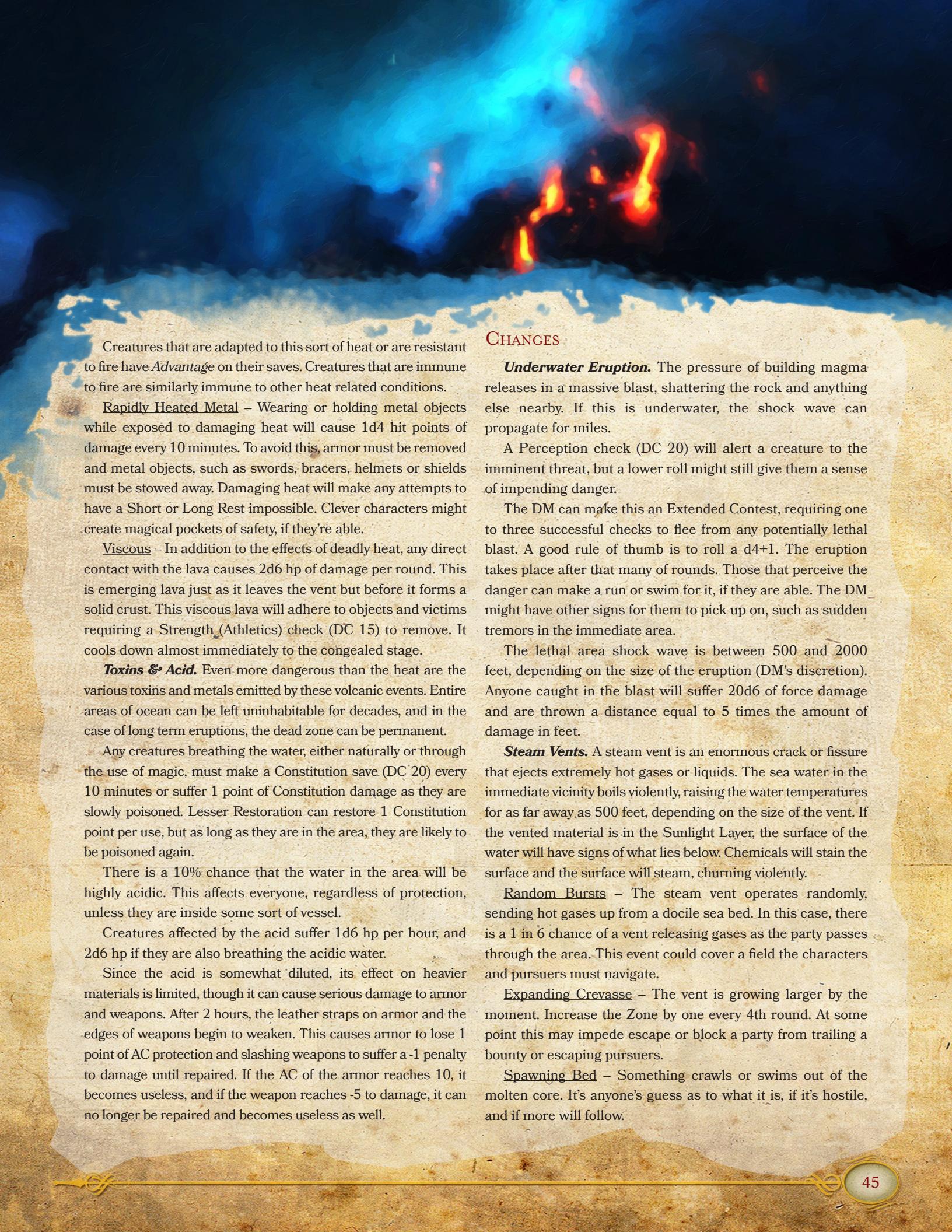
Special vision does not help in this case. Combatants can use the cloudy water to hide and ambush prey.

Damaging Heat. As one approaches within 10 feet of the source of the lava, the water can reach lethal temperatures, which range from 150 to 212 degrees Fahrenheit.

In a large body of water such as a large lake or ocean, the water cools the lava rapidly, limiting the range of the heat, but in an isolated pool or small lake, the entire body of water can be brought to a boil.

Rapid Heat Exhaustion – A creature exposed to damaging heat must succeed on a Constitution saving throw every 30 minutes or gain 1 level of *Exhaustion*. The DC is 10 for the first 30 minutes and increases by 1 every 10 minutes thereafter.

Those in medium or heavy armor have *Disadvantage* on this saving throw.



Creatures that are adapted to this sort of heat or are resistant to fire have *Advantage* on their saves. Creatures that are immune to fire are similarly immune to other heat related conditions.

Rapidly Heated Metal – Wearing or holding metal objects while exposed to damaging heat will cause 1d4 hit points of damage every 10 minutes. To avoid this, armor must be removed and metal objects, such as swords, bracers, helmets or shields must be stowed away. Damaging heat will make any attempts to have a Short or Long Rest impossible. Clever characters might create magical pockets of safety, if they're able.

Viscous – In addition to the effects of deadly heat, any direct contact with the lava causes 2d6 hp of damage per round. This is emerging lava just as it leaves the vent but before it forms a solid crust. This viscous lava will adhere to objects and victims requiring a Strength (Athletics) check (DC 15) to remove. It cools down almost immediately to the congealed stage.

Toxins & Acid. Even more dangerous than the heat are the various toxins and metals emitted by these volcanic events. Entire areas of ocean can be left uninhabitable for decades, and in the case of long term eruptions, the dead zone can be permanent.

Any creatures breathing the water, either naturally or through the use of magic, must make a Constitution save (DC 20) every 10 minutes or suffer 1 point of Constitution damage as they are slowly poisoned. Lesser Restoration can restore 1 Constitution point per use, but as long as they are in the area, they are likely to be poisoned again.

There is a 10% chance that the water in the area will be highly acidic. This affects everyone, regardless of protection, unless they are inside some sort of vessel.

Creatures affected by the acid suffer 1d6 hp per hour, and 2d6 hp if they are also breathing the acidic water.

Since the acid is somewhat diluted, its effect on heavier materials is limited, though it can cause serious damage to armor and weapons. After 2 hours, the leather straps on armor and the edges of weapons begin to weaken. This causes armor to lose 1 point of AC protection and slashing weapons to suffer a -1 penalty to damage until repaired. If the AC of the armor reaches 10, it becomes useless, and if the weapon reaches -5 to damage, it can no longer be repaired and becomes useless as well.

CHANGES

Underwater Eruption. The pressure of building magma releases in a massive blast, shattering the rock and anything else nearby. If this is underwater, the shock wave can propagate for miles.

A Perception check (DC 20) will alert a creature to the imminent threat, but a lower roll might still give them a sense of impending danger.

The DM can make this an Extended Contest, requiring one to three successful checks to flee from any potentially lethal blast. A good rule of thumb is to roll a d4+1. The eruption takes place after that many of rounds. Those that perceive the danger can make a run or swim for it, if they are able. The DM might have other signs for them to pick up on, such as sudden tremors in the immediate area.

The lethal area shock wave is between 500 and 2000 feet, depending on the size of the eruption (DM's discretion). Anyone caught in the blast will suffer 20d6 of force damage and are thrown a distance equal to 5 times the amount of damage in feet.

Steam Vents. A steam vent is an enormous crack or fissure that ejects extremely hot gases or liquids. The sea water in the immediate vicinity boils violently, raising the water temperatures for as far away as 500 feet, depending on the size of the vent. If the vented material is in the Sunlight Layer, the surface of the water will have signs of what lies below. Chemicals will stain the surface and the surface will steam, churning violently.

Random Bursts – The steam vent operates randomly, sending hot gases up from a docile sea bed. In this case, there is a 1 in 6 chance of a vent releasing gases as the party passes through the area. This event could cover a field the characters and pursuers must navigate.

Expanding Crevasse – The vent is growing larger by the moment. Increase the Zone by one every 4th round. At some point this may impede escape or block a party from trailing a bounty or escaping pursuers.

Spawning Bed – Something crawls or swims out of the molten core. It's anyone's guess as to what it is, if it's hostile, and if more will follow.



WHIRLPOOL

The next moment all this joy was turned into horror – for he put his mouth close to my ear, and screamed out the word “Moskoe-ström!”

No one ever will know what my feelings were at that moment. I shook from head to foot as if I had had the most violent fit of the ague. I knew what he meant by that one word well enough - I knew what he wished to make me understand. With the wind that now drove us on, we were bound for the whirl of the Ström, and nothing could save us!

– *Descent into the Maelstrom* by Edgar Allan Poe

IF / THEN

Anything caught in the whirlpool will move in a circular pattern. The victims and objects will also begin to descend into the central funnel, continuing to spin. A funnel shape of the whirlpool will require more energy in imagining the environment than most.

Step 1 – Event Horizon. It is at this first step that the uninitiated in an aquatic environment will suffer. The DC to notice the slight pull and spiral motion of the impending whirlpool is 20. Those who are well versed in this type of phenomenon have *Advantage* on Perception, Nature or Survival checks. Those who don't notice will be pulled into the swirl. Any who are swimming must make an Athletics check or use the Ship's Captain Feat. Victims have 3 rounds to earn 3 Contest Points or more to escape. See Extended Contests for the applicable table. Failure means being caught in the Vortex below.

Step 2 – Vortex. Once in the grips of the vortex, the victims will spin around the upper level of the whirlpool. They will have 4 rounds before being sucked down into the funnel. A full circuit takes 4 rounds, one round for each quarter movement or radial point. In other words; the first round leads away, the

second round is furthest from the point of entry, the third is heading back, and the fourth round brings back to the point of entry and descent towards the central stack. Exiting the vortex requires help or a stationary object to grasp. This requires an Athletics (Strength) check with a DC of 18. Those outside the effect who are assisting must time their assistance right when the victim passes by.

Step 3 – Funnel. Once in the funnel, the outside world will be unseen. Only the strongest and mightiest could swim or climb against such forces. The DC to resist the pull requires a Strength check of 25! The difficulty is high enough that most will not be able to resist under this kind of pressure.

Step 4 – Final Passage. Once at the origin to the whirlpool, the DM must decide what effects, if any, fall upon those sent deep. It could be an open chamber filling with water. It might be a portal to another world, such as the elemental plane of water. A huge sea monster may be swallowing its fill of drink, or it could be a natural occurrence, crushing everything it embraces. Victims and objects alike will suffer 8d6 damage per round until pulverized or an escape is made.

CHANGES

Depth. Based on the location of the whirlpool, those who are captured by it and thrust down the shaft of the vortex may also suffer the effects of depth. In such a case, include the additional effects of pressure, lack of sight and possible damage to airtight containers as well.

Size. The above descriptors do not include the width of the whirlpool. The total diameter is relative to the setting, genre, realism of the situation and the dramatic action one is looking for. A whirlpool can be just large enough for a single humanoid or large enough to swallow dozens of sailing vessels.

APPENDIX I

NEW BACKGROUND

MARINER

You live life with one foot on shore, the other in the water. Unlike a sailor, you prefer to swim unhindered by something as mundane as a boat. This would only separate you from the wonders of the aquatic realm.

You may live near a wide river, a pristine lake, a treacherous waterfall or an ocean beach. Maybe you were raised along jagged cliffs that overlooked a turbulent sea. Although you may never meet others who also live near the water, you share a kinship that is instantly identifiable.

The water often calls to those who are running from a dark past. Maybe you are fleeing a very real danger, or maybe that fear is something inside and unresolved. In any case, you have made a life in the aquatic realm.

As a water-man or -woman, this is your lifeblood. It supplies your food and water. It dictates how important a local village is to the economy. It might be of religious importance. Perhaps valuable gold rests deep under the waves. In any case, you feel territorial about your home and how it is used, for good or bad.

If you live along a river, you may be tasked to travel with traveling its banks. Merchants will need skilled river runners to pilot barges, avoiding predators and navigating treacherous waters.

Living near the shore of a lake shore put you in a position between aiding the local industry and maintaining the pristine beauty of the water. You may be tasked with the duties of a diplomat, guildsman, guide or enforcer.

The ocean cannot be tamed. Yet you stand guard, saving lives, hunting down dangerous prey on the high seas or uncovering lost ships on the sea floor. Life on the docks can be just as unruly as the ocean. You may be an instigator or pacifier of violence in the local pubs.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Fishing Gear

Weapon Proficiencies: Karambit and Trident

Languages: One of your choice.

Equipment: Durable swimming bottoms and top, three vials of diving oil, fishing tools, a rozoa or xivi for deep water exploration, a pouch of 2d4 pearls (each worth 1gp value),

FEATURE: AQUATIC NATURE

Living a life around and under the water has gifted you. You are not afraid of river rapids, deep lakes or ocean waves.

You are comfortable operating in the water, either on the surface or diving towards the unseen. You are unfazed by the vastness of the sea.

You are familiar with an aquatic environment. You know how powerful storms can be. You have innate knowledge of which predators are to be avoided.

You are skilled in fishing. This may involve using a rod and string, using a spear in shallow water, diving for shellfish, or using a net or cage. In any case, you can harvest food and occasionally even valuables such as pearls to make a living. See Skilled Survival, from Critical Hit Publishing for more information on fishing, trapping and other survival techniques.

You add your Proficiency to your Constitution when calculating your lung capacity.

You also add your Proficiency to your Constitution when measuring your swimming endurance as well.

You add your Proficiency to your Athletics skill checks when in an aquatic environment.

Lastly, you add your Proficiency to your saves against purely aquatic threats, such as the environment and natural animals in your setting.

You are never *Shaken* when under stress in the water.

You are always assumed to take in a full breath of air whenever you enter the water.

[Note: This Special Feature is significantly more effective than the features of other backgrounds. The reason? Aquatic locations are rare. Having a significant advantage in the water is mitigated by its lack of use overall.]

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Often seen a gruff and cold, you give your heart freely and usually think the best of people.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 The ocean swallowed my loved ones. I have a special hatred for elementalists and those that worship the sea.
- 2 You can't swim? Please stop talking to me.
- 3 Let's share a nip of fish and a tall drink over impossible stories.
- 4 Whether calm seas or lethal storms, I will never turn from my mates.
- 5 My mood changes as readily as the sea, from calm to violent
- 6 I will protect the rivers and lakes until my dying breath
- 7 I have no respect for the ocean. It's infinite. Who cares how many creatures I kill?
- 8 Let me teach you the ways of the coastal folk.

d6 Ideal

- 1 Organization. We depend on each of us doing our job, no matter how minor. (Law)
- 2 Pleasure. Fight, drink, love. Never hold back. (Chaos)
- 3 Secrets. Litter the rivers with the dead. The water tells no tales. (Evil)
- 4 Duty. Maritime law says to save anyone in distress, even my enemies. (Good)
- 5 Practicality. The rivers, lakes and ocean are nothing but a resource. (Neutral)
- 6 Vision. Revel in her beauty but respect her brutality. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I'm next to run the family shipping and fishing business.
- 2 I saved the life of someone who was better left dead.
- 3 I have no idea who or what saw me when I discovered numerous dead bodies underwater. I have told no one.
- 4 To save the town, I'm an informant to the local constable about crime on the docks and at sea.
- 5 A sunken ship belongs to an ancestor of mine. One day soon I intend to find it and uncover its bounty.
- 6 I found a deep sea temple. I pray there with others who have also found it. We never speak to each other.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'm overdressed in anything more than a loin cloth and a weapon.
- 2 I value only those things found in the water and made from the sea.
- 3 I am distracted by dreams of an enchanting aquatic being.
- 4 No one is allowed to fish here! No one!
- 5 I can't help but tell tall tales, even when I know it's wrong.
- 6 I can't seem to control my rage when it builds like a storm.

NEW FEAT

SEAMANSHIP

You have spent years working on large sailing ships, fishing boats and city docks, and have developed the skills necessary for life on the sea. As a professional sailor, you gain the following benefits:

- You have *Advantage* to any skill checks related to using rope, including climbing a rope or rope ladder, tying exotic knots, attempting to escape its bonds, and so on.
- You gain proficiency in *Cartographer's Tools* and *Navigation Tools*.
- You have a sailor's instincts for moving about a ship at sea. You have *Advantage* on all Acrobatics and swimming checks.

NEW EQUIPMENT & WEAPONS

BIVAL

These marine creatures are commonly referred to as clams, oysters, scallops or mussels. Most have a rough, stone-like appearance, with a pearlescent sheen on the inside. For excellent samples, the shell of the bival is cleaned and polished to a hypnotic translucency. Pale ivory, blues and pinks are layered in glossy lines of calcium carbonate.

Bivalves or bivalves are encased in a two-part shell, each equal in size and shape. A powerful muscle acts as a hinge.

A small waste deposit, commonly called a pearl, is collected from each bival. This pearl can be sensed by the bival. The pearl acts as a key that opens or closes the shell. The pearl is a hardened orb, and their colors range across the rainbow, dependent on the digestive history of that mollusk.

Civilizations under deep rivers, lakes and oceans often cultivate massive size bivalves for various purposes.

Small bivalves are used for storage in place of chests or trunks. Their thick shell and powerful muscle holds it shut against intrusion.

Medium bivalves can hold a small humanoid inside. The bival can expel liquids, making an airtight seal. Along with being immune to the crushing pressure of the ocean, the bival makes an excellent cage or transport vessel.

The largest bivalves can hold several medium-sized humanoids. Royalty often travel in the open oyster, the shell decorated as a backdrop. In case of danger, the shell can close, protecting those inside. Others use the larger bivalves to transport supplies, valuables or slaves.

The bival's AC is 16, with a total of 20, 50 or 80 hit points, depending on their size; small, medium and large respectively. Once inside, sound and vision is blocked. Destruction of the 'tongue' interior will lock the shell closed, killing the bival.

The bival reacts too slowly to act as a trap.

BREATHING TUBE

This is a short hollow tube made from a reed, shoot, or if the materials and knowhow are available, wood, bone or metal. A creature swimming near the surface of the water can extend the tube out of the water to breath the air above. This allows the swimmer to ignore the need to hold their breath, as long as the tube is above the water line and it is unblocked.

DEPTH GAUGE

This gauge measures the depth as one dives beneath the surface of the water. It does this by measuring the increasing pressure as one descends.

This brass and leather item is often worn on the wrist or attached to the chest, and is built to survive in the deepest pressures of the ocean.

This device will notify the character when each level of depth is reached (see ocean depths for more details).

The depth gauge will also measure distance swam. Divers often determine their maximum, then divide that in half, as a return trip to the surface may be the only source of life giving air.

DIVER'S OIL

This is a salve or lotion derived from certain fish glands and other local ingredients. It must be slathered on any exposed skin while exposed to the air.

The primary purpose of diver's oil is to protect the skin from toxins and venom, but it also makes the flesh hard to grasp. Animals with poison as a defensive mechanism will be repelled by the oil. The tendrils of jellyfish will slip from the skin, most likely causing no harm.

Diver's Oil grants *Advantage* on all saves against touch poison from aquatic life. Most natural aquatic creatures are repulsed by the oil. Grappling attempts against someone covered in diver's oil are at a *Disadvantage*.

Diver's Oil is ineffective if the user wears clothing or armor over the oil. The oil lasts for 1 hour per application.

HARPOON

A harpoon follows the same rules as a trident (including the option) except for two significant differences. A harpoon has a ring that allows a rope to be attached to it, and it can be launched using a crossbow designed for one.

It is also generally shorter than a trident or spear, and is usually made entirely of metal. [Use the statistics for the Trident, but add the grapple feature described above.]

HARPOON CROSSBOW

This crossbow is much larger than the normal version, and is designed to shoot a harpoon. Fishing and whaling ships often use these on mounted pivots, with stout ropes secured between the harpoon and heavy winches used to pull in their catch.

This weapon is designed to be used underwater, though its range is greatly reduced when doing so. [50gp, 18 lbs, 1d10 piercing, ammunition, heavy, loading, two handed, (range 100/400) or (underwater range 20/60), grapple]

KARAMBIT

The karambit is a specialized fishing dagger with a curved blade. Cord or shark skin is often used to wrap its grip. It is wielded like an ice pick, with the crescent pointing down and towards the target. An index finger hole helps keep the blade from slipping from the hand in the water or when holding slimy fish.

Karambits are fashioned out of stone, wood, bone or forged from local metals, with bronze being the most popular.

Expertise with the karambit allows the wielder to flick or spin the weapon on the index finger for additional range and blunt, and for maneuvering the weapon's deadly edge around the opponent. A master of the karambit will dart in and out, striking rapidly with lethal cuts to sensitive areas of the body. [Use the statistics for the dagger, except that its critical hit range is 19-20. Other critical hit enhancements do not stack.]

LEIOMANO

This is a coastal warclub. Notably, it uses shark's teeth, bone, shells or shale sandwiched between moisture-resistant wood. The sharp pieces are set around the wooden paddle. The outer edge is able to cut, leaving sharp fragments in those wounded.

The Leiomano causes slashing damage or bludgeoning damage, whichever its wielder prefers. A natural roll of 1 or 20 during an attack will break off the jagged edges, allowing it to only cause bludgeoning damage until repairs are made. [5gp, 3 lbs, 1d6 slashing or bludgeoning]

TRAPWEED

This is a naturally growing weed that can usually be found in lakes or deep ponds. It appears as a large, flat frond on top but is anchored to the bottom by a long, hollow tube. Clever adventurers have harvested this weed to assist them in breathing while underwater. The anchoring tube is cut at the required length (maximum 150 feet), and then can be used to breath through like a long snorkel. The flat frond keeps the open end on the surface of the water, and this allows air to reach to the end of the tube.

On its own, the trapweed will have small insects land upon it, which it then curls around, trapping and very slowly digesting them. When it's cut from its base, the trapweed will die within a day, but may still close around bugs landing on it. If this occurs while a PC is relying upon it for air, the air supply may be cut off.

Once dead, the trapweed will begin to deteriorate within no more than a week, creating holes in the tube that let water in. This could prove problematic or even deadly for an adventurer relying on a steady source of oxygen.

TRIDENT

The trident, or tiger-spear, is a polearm with three spear heads, with the central spear of equal or slightly longer length. The overall length of the trident can be anywhere from 5 to 10 feet depending on its use.

Originally used as a fishing tool, it was later made popular in gladiatorial arenas where the vicious barbs inflicted horrific wounds on the combatants.

In addition to the obvious merits of the weapon, a skilled wielder of the trident can choose to grapple a target with this weapon after a successful strike. This option is only available if the total attack roll is 5 or more above the target's Armor Class. For example, if the target has an AC of 12, an attack roll of 17 or higher means that the creature can be successfully *Grappled*.

Each round thereafter, the trident wielder can engage in a contest of Strength instead of their normal attack. Success by the attacker inflicts more piercing damage from the trident, while failure automatically releases the target, and they are no longer *Grappled*.

The DM should decide if a particular creature is able to reasonably suffer additional damage from being impaled. For example, some undead and constructs would likely be immune to the impalement damage. The attacker may still engage in a grapple, foregoing this additional damage.

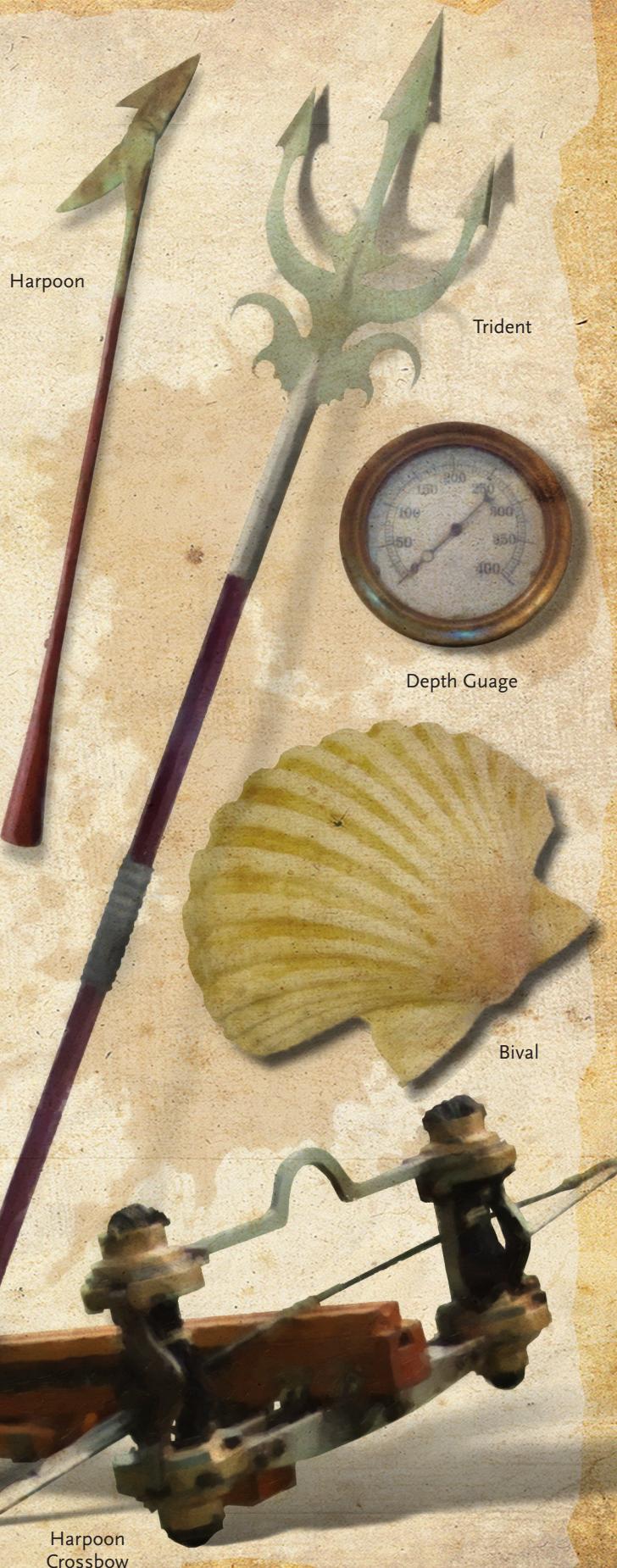
The DM should use their own judgment when adjudicating the rules for this weapon. *[Use the statistics for the Trident, but add the Grapple feature described above.]*

SEASHELL SIBLINGS

These are pairs of seashells that transmit sounds to its identical match. On land all one hears is the ocean. Underwater the true nature comes forth. They are short range, about a mile or so, but nonetheless important in undersea dialog. When enemies want to parlay a messenger will take one of the pair of shells to the opposing side to engage in diplomacy.

SILVERSONG

This mercury-like substance is collected in large clear orbs. fluid will vibrate when spoken to, which will cause other silversong orbs to ripple as well, generating a clear voice of the speaker. The range is measured in hundreds of miles. Most political bodies have a number of orbs to coordinate with the outer borders of their realms. Silversong orbs are used in public celebrations, political announcements and entertainment venues. Dictators have used the silversong orbs to pacify the populace by focusing mind altering magics and vocal enchantments through them.





NEW CREATURES

LEVIATHAN

These colossal aquatic mammals are around 90 feet long, weighing over 500 tons. Long and slender, the leviathan's body can be various shades of bluish-gray dorsally and somewhat lighter underneath.

These titanic beasts are extremely intelligent and gentle, forming strong social bonds with others of their kind. They often

ignore creatures smaller than themselves unless they are eating or defending themselves.

If a leviathan or any of their pod is threatened, they will attack the source of the threat. Normally, they will only attack for 4 rounds before going on their way. If a leviathan loses 25% or more of their hit points, they will attack with their sonar and attempt to flee.

LEVIATHAN

Gargantuan beast, neutral good

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 676 (33d20 + 330)

Speed 60 feet

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	11 (-0)	30 (+10)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +12, Cha +12

Damage Resistances bludgeoning weapons, cold, fire

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, stunned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 feet; blindsight 2500 feet; passive Perception 20

Languages Cetacean

Challenge 25 (70,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The leviathan has *Advantage* on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Siege Monster. The leviathan deals double damage to objects and structures.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: The leviathan's mouth is so large, it effects more than one creature per bite. The leviathan attacks a

20 foot area that contains at least one creature that it perceives as a threat. All creatures within the area must make Dexterity saving throws (DC 20) at *Disadvantage* or suffer 8d12 hit points of bludgeoning damage.

Sonar (Recharge 5-6). The leviathan projects a directed burst of intense sound in a 90 foot cone in front of them. All creatures in that area must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 20), taking 12d8 sonic (thunder) damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Swallow. Once a target has failed its bite save, it is swallowed. While swallowed, the creature is effectively blinded and restrained, has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the leviathan, and it takes 8d6 crushing damage at the start of each of the leviathan's turns. The swallowed creature also begins to suffocate unless they do not need to breath air or water.

A creature can remain conscious without air for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds), after which it falls unconscious. Once unconscious, the creature will remain stable for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round), after which, its hit points drop to 0 and it begins to die. If they still have no access to air, their death saves are made at *Disadvantage*.

If the leviathan takes 60 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the leviathan must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the leviathan. If the leviathan dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone.

MEGALODON

These huge sharks are up to 100 feet long, weighing 150 metric tons. These lone apex predators are the largest fish in the ocean.

While dangerous, they are not particularly aggressive, attacking only to eat or to defend themselves. Like all sharks, they are attracted to the sound of creatures in distress and blood in the water, which they can detect from over a mile away.

They can swim at a speed of 15 mph, with short bursts of speed up to 20 mph to attack prey.

They are charcoal gray on the upper half of their body with faint, slightly darker stripes like a tiger shark. Their underside is a lighter bluish gray that can make them difficult to see from below. Wisdom (Perception) checks are at *Disadvantage* to spot a megalodon from below.

MEGALODON

Huge beast, neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 225 (18d12 + 108)

Speed 120 feet

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Senses blindsight 50 feet; passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1400 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4d6+6 slashing damage.

Swallow. A creature that is bitten must make an opposed Strength (Athletics) check or be swallowed. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the leviathan, and it takes 8d6 crushing damage at the start of each of the megalodon's turns. The swallowed creature also begins to suffocate unless they do not need to breath air or water.

A creature can remain conscious without air for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds), after which it falls unconscious. Once unconscious, the creature will remain stable for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round), after which, its hit points drop to 0 and it begins to die. If they still have no access to air, their death saves are made at *Disadvantage*.

If the megalodon takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the megalodon must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which are thrown clear of the megalodon. If the megalodon dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone.

ROZOA

A rozoa is a type of starfish. It has a tough, smooth surface with vestigial bumps. They average in size one to two hands wide and come in colors ranging along the blue and purple spectrum.

The rozoa is used for deep water diving. When it is placed on the face, the fingers will adhere to the jaw, cheeks and along the nose to the forehead. They are docile and mindless. None have ever become aggressive and they eat small amounts of fungi and plankton on sea rocks.

Rozoa are transported in buckets filled with fresh seawater and a few rocks covered in algae or plankton for sustenance. They can live for weeks in this condition, but returning them to a natural environment is encouraged.

It has a special property that allows it to produce oxygen. The rozoa is placed on the face. Its long central proboscis wiggles down the throat and esophagus. When underwater, the rozoa will produce the required oxygen to survive lake and ocean depths.

A side effect of the rozoa is that it will allow a safer operating depth of the wearer by one level by modulating the air pressure in the lungs. See ocean depths for more details.

If the PC wearing the starfish is struck with a critical hit, the creature is considered killed and is no longer able to function as a breathing and pressure aid.

XUVI

The xuvi are a species of jellyfish that are benign and docile in nature. They are non-poisonous, and are easy to train.

Xuvi are large enough to fit a human head within the central body. Long silky tendrils move gracefully giving slow propulsion in the sea. Small dots and lines of bioluminescent glands cast a dim light in cloudy water.

They are not as tough as the rozoa, so care must be given around sharp objects and hazardous energy. These jellyfish only have 1 hit point and suffer damage on any area effect spells.

Breeding xuvi is an art. They are sensitive to temperature changes. Aquatic farmers who raise xuvi have a valuable skill. There are rumors and legends of some that have grown large enough to fit 10 or more under the care of a master breeder. The enlarged size in no way increases the xuvi's structural integrity. Attacks and damaging spells both outside and within can easily puncture the membrane of the jellyfish.

Xuvi are notable for having a stable pocket of air inside of their translucent bell shape. This breathable air is a benefit to exploring the vastness of the ocean.

Xuvi grant a movement rate of 10 feet per round. This cannot be improved by a Dash action. It also allows the wearer to descend safely by one level in the ocean's depths under pressure.

NEW VEHICLES

Subaquatic Vessel. One of the most complex vehicles ever built, these vessels can travel below the surface of the water, while the passengers inside are provided a dry, air-filled environment.

The Subaquatic Vessel is essentially a steel cylinder with air inside. They are often propelled by hand cranks connected to a complex series of gears that allow the crew to turn drive propellers or "props" forward or in reverse.

The vessel also has several pressure tanks that can change its buoyancy, allowing it to surface or sink. These tanks are enchanted to draw in water or push water out at the command of the crew. Some vessels are designed to take verbal commands, such as "dive 300 feet," or they may respond to the positioning of specific levers and valves.

Many subaquatics have windows, called portholes, as well as some method of underwater egress, usually located in the bottom of the vessel. This airlock allows those within to leave and return to the vessel without flooding it.

There are a wide variety of subaquatic vessel styles, ranging from completely mechanistic craft to arcane constructs that are more like hollow golems than vessels.

There are two primary methods for supplying air to the vessel's crew; an air siphon or a portal valve.

The air siphon is simply a bundle of hoses that stretch from the subaquatic vessel to the surface. The hose is tethered to the surface by a low, floating buoy that keeps the hose several feet out of the water at all times. This allows for the exchange of air between the underwater vessel and the surface.

The portal valve is more difficult to employ, but is ultimately much more flexible than the air siphon. This item looks like a small silver cage of fine wire mesh encased in a heavier copper frame. It is enchanted to maintain a constant, movable portal to a matching cage kept somewhere on the prime material plane. They are usually kept someplace extremely safe since the lives of the vessel's crew depend on it providing clean, fresh air and allowing exhaled breath to escape.

The air siphon has obvious *Disadvantages*, such as limiting the depth to which the vessel can go and marking the vessel's location on the surface. The portal valve on the other hand has no such limitation, but they are extremely difficult and expensive to make, and they must be stored somewhere that is absolutely secure and trusted.

The typical subaquatic vessel can reach a maximum speed of 8 mph and a depth of 800 feet, though some have been known to go deeper. The maximum capacity is 10 medium-size creatures. A small creature is the equivalent of half a medium one, and a large creature is double. Larger creatures are not recommended.

If the vessel nears the 800 foot mark, the metal will begin to creak and groan, warning of failure. For every 10 feet after 800, the crew must roll a crush save. The initial DC is 20, but increases by 1 for every 10 feet they descend. The vessel can fail 2 crush saves before complete structural failure.

On the first fail, the hull is compromised and water begins to fill the interior. It will fill at this rate in 30 minutes. On the second fail, the leak becomes worse, cutting the remaining time by half. On the third fail, the aquatic vessel is crushed and all hands are dead. [Cost 20,000 gp]



NEW SPELLS

AIR BUBBLE

1st level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: S

Duration: 3 hours

This spell can only be cast underwater or submerged in a watery liquid. It creates a flexible bubble of air up to 2 feet in diameter. The inside of the bubble is dry with breathable air, extracting oxygen from the water while allowing exhaled air to pass through the bubble in an effervescent emission.

The bubble can be placed around an object or creature, or a portion thereof. A humanoid might cast the bubble around their head to allow them to breath, or place it around a valuable object that is sensitive to water.

Anything other than water can physically pass through the bubble, feeling only slight resistance. Doing so will not break it. The bubble moves with the consistency of a jellyfish, returning the same roughly spherical shape if it is distorted.

If the bubble leaves the water, it will burst in 2 rounds, allowing the creature to poke out of the water for a quick look or attack.

This spell's duration increases by 3 hours when you reach 5th level (6 hours), 11th level (9 hours), and 17th level (12 hours).

BUOYANCY

1st-level alteration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: S, M

Duration: 1 hour

This spell doubles the natural buoyancy of the target. For the duration, the affected creature can float much more easily. This gives *Advantage* on all swimming checks, or rolls made to stay on the surface. Note that if the creature is trying to swim deeper into water, this will make that more difficult, giving *Disadvantage* to such attempts.

If cast upon an unwilling target, the potential victim is allowed a Wisdom saving throw against the caster's spell DC.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you can affect one additional creature for each slot level above 1st.

FILTER WATER

Cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a drop of clean drinking water)

Duration: Instantaneous

You convert up to 5 gallons of saltwater into potable water. The source water must be placed in a container first, or otherwise be separated from the saltwater, else it will immediately blend again with the water around it.

QUICK BREATH

Alteration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: S, M (a small beach stone)

Duration: Instantaneous

You touch a willing creature with a special stone. The creature instantly has the maximum amount of air it would normally have. The stone must be acquired from a wet beach, and be at least the size of the average thumb. The stone is consumed when used, so while a caster might carry several of these to be used in an emergency, their combined weight might impede his ability to swim or tread water.

SONAR SENSE

2nd-level Alteration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Caster

Components: S, M

Duration: 4 hours

For the duration of the spell, while you are submerged, you gain the sonar sense. At the start of each round, you will be aware of any solid objects within 300 feet. This includes living creatures, as well as natural objects, including the shape of aquatic ground. You know the approximate size, shape and speed, but not the nature of it. Your sense is merely an outline of each object. Note that this will detect invisible creatures, but cannot detect an object or creature hidden within another. Only the outer surface of objects is sensed.

WATER LANCE

Evocation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You hurl a thin lance of water at a creature or object within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 piercing damage. When cast underwater, the range is doubled (120 feet).

This spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

AQUATIC PLATE ARMOR

Armor (heavy), rare (requires attunement)

The suit of plate armor looks normal in most respects, except that the metal has a slight blueish-green coloring, and the helm resembles an angler fish, its long thin teeth forming the face shield. The armor is adorned with fin-shaped appendages on the arms, legs and back, and its surface is etched with detailed images of various underwater flora and fauna.

While wearing this armor, it functions as +1 plate. When underwater, it keeps the wearer dry and allows them to breath normally. The wearer can also swim through the water at their normal movement rate, and is not encumbered by the armor.

The appendage from jutting from the helmet illuminates in dark conditions, shedding bright light for a 10 foot radius, and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

When the wearer extends their hand towards a target, they can cast Water Lance as the cantrip (see above).

The maximum safe depth for this armor is 3200 feet.

ROD OF PROPULSION

Wondrous item, uncommon

This magical rod is made of bone, flared at one end, with a command word and button at the other end. When activated, it will send a strong blast of air out the wide end. This will create a large stream of air bubbles, pushing the wielder through the water at a speed of 120 feet for one round. These bubbles will also create a temporary cover in the water, which can obfuscate the character or an enemy. The cover will gradually diminish over each round from full cover, to three-quarter cover, to half-cover.

The rod has a total of 10 charges, and each activation uses one of those charges. The rod will recover all charges at dawn if it is kept submerged in seawater overnight.



AQUATIC HABITATS

The following is a list of common living arrangements those who live in and around the water would build and maintain. Very large habitats combine two or more of the following and may use advanced technology for the time, or mystic energies to enhance the lifestyle of those in the aquatic realm.

Berg. This habitat floats on the surface, but the majority of the living space is below the water. Like an iceberg, the structure points downward into the lake or ocean. The lower portions may have viewing windows of ice, crystal, glass or some sort of permanent magic. If filled with air, swimmers can enter from below, surfacing in an entry pool.

Dome. A domed city is often built over a crater or dead volcano. The dome structure itself can be made from panels of heavy membrane, thick glass, or some sort of permanent magical force keeping the water at bay.

These domes can range in size from a hundred yards to nearly a mile across. While most native aquatic races do not require breathable air, they may have a few areas set aside for visitors or prisoners.

Flotilla. Logs are lashed together to form vast cities that float on the surface of the water. Some are tethered to a landmass while others travel at the whim of the currents. They often have smaller vessels docked around the border, and may even be mistaken for islands from afar. Some flotilla habitats have been designed as a planned living space, while others began as vessels collected together in a random chaotic mess.

Hive. A hive is a large globe or egg-shaped collection of modules fashioned from local materials. These habitats are often easily accessible to swimmers with simple methods of ingress and egress. While functional, hives often lack elaborate decor or artistry.

Some hives have air pockets for visitors, slaves or prisoners. These would be prepared on an as-needed basis by temporarily expelling water from a single room or section. Hives within civilized areas can number in the hundreds.

Tetherball. A tetherball habitat is attached to the bottom of a body of water by long, thin vines or tendrils. From afar these habitats look like balls of green, yellow and blue yarn swaying above the seabed. Upon closer inspection, one realizes that the balls are huge with the tether alone reaching thicknesses of one hundred feet.

The ball can be as much as a thousand feet wide, formed from natural, translucent plant growth. Plant life forms the structure and frame while coral and shellfish carcasses become inner walls. These habitats are safe to grow near geothermal vents and earthquake zones because the flexibility of its structure allows it to move and sway with ocean currents while remaining insulated from the motion of the earth.

APPENDIX II

RANDOM AQUATIC EVENTS

Unlike random encounters, events are often less consequential and they can either be good, bad, or neutral. These are simply the sorts of things that can happen when adventuring in an aquatic environ.

Please note that some of these events will have to be adapted to fit certain environs or situations. The DM should adjust the description to fit or roll again to get a more appropriate result.

DEEP SALT WATER

Whether diving into a deep sea trench to look for treasure or traveling to an underwater temple, there is no telling what might be waiting around the next wall of coral.

These events are appropriate for most oceans, seas, or similarly large bodies of salt water.

Roll Event

1. A pod of $10 + d6$ leviathan (p. 39) move through the area. They are not aggressive, nor are they interested in the characters at all. If attacked, the pod will retaliate for 2 rounds, and then attempt to go on their way. It might be best to let them be.
2. A one-foot diameter bubble of air remains motionless in the water. The bubble is easy enough to penetrate, and though it will distort slightly if touched, it will remain intact. If someone sticks their face into the bubble, they will be able to breath fresh air indefinitely.
3. A massive school of fish is moving through the area. They are not aggressive, but may temporarily swarm the party if they are in the way. Characters within the school will have their visibility limited to 5 feet, and must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 20) to not become disoriented. The school might engulf the party for a few rounds or a few minutes, depending on size (DM's discretion).

Once the swarm of fish has passed, each character must make a Survival saving throw (DC 15) to avoid being separated from their group. This roll is made with *Disadvantage* if the character became disoriented. Separated characters might be hundreds of feet from where they started, moved by the force of the school and the water. The characters must then deal with being separated from the others, which could include having to face threats without assistance.

4. A caravan of merfolk are rising from the depths with translucent sacks of yellowish ore being lifted by balloons of air. The 10 sacks contain about 500 pounds of sulfur (50 lbs. each). This is part of their normal deep sea mining operation. Most of the ore is sold to a nearby village of goblins for purposes unknown.
5. A strong up-current from a deep thermal vent is about 300 feet in diameter. It is nearly invisible, requiring a Wisdom (Perception) check (DC 20) to notice it. Anyone passing into the up-current will be pushed up toward the surface at a movement rate of 50 feet per round. A Strength (Athletics) check (DC 15) will allow a creature to escape the current. Otherwise, they will be ejected 200 feet above where they started or pushed to the surface, whichever is closer.
6. A school of fish comes speeding through the area. Anyone who has an understanding of sea life can make a Nature check (DC 15) to know that these creatures are evading a predator. Two rounds later a megalodon (p. 40) sweeps into view. There is a 10% chance that the huge shark will decide to attack one of the characters (decide randomly). If any of the characters are bleeding from a recent wound, this chance jumps to 25% for them.
7. A steady stream of bubbles rises from the sea floor. If the characters are able to trace the bubbles to their source, they find the bubbles escaping from a split in a large boulder. They do not contain air, but methane. The right mixture of methane and air can be extremely volatile. If the bubble stream is ignited on the surface, it will burn with a faint blue flame until blown out by the wind or waves.
8. A large number of crabbing cages are scattered across the sandy bottom. They are tethered to a floating buoy that keeps the ropes above the water line. Each rope allows the cages to be retrieved easily from the surface. A small fey creature is trapped inside one of the cages. It can change into a number of tiny aquatic animals, though it isn't terribly smart, and has wandered many miles away from its home. If assisted, it will help the party as best it can. If threatened, harmed or killed, its family will eventually find the corpse and uncover what transpired. A blood feud will begin with a powerful aquatic fey court. Optionally, a character with the proper magic might convince this fey creature to become their familiar.

The fey can take on the form of three random tiny aquatic animals (DM's discretion). The fey will not leave the water even if they agree to be a familiar, but will know if the caster one day returns to these waters.

- 9. A pod of dolphins is corralling a school of fish. This fish-ball is being used for feeding, with each dolphin taking turns to dive through the confused fish. If the character's watch or are non-threatening, a young calf will deposit a mouthful of fish near the party. If the party is friendly, the dolphins invite them to feed as well. Based on favorable interactions, each party member can earn a boon. This will manifest as an assist from a dolphin at a later time.
- 10. The water is cloudy with blood. Further inspection will show that many dozens of seals or whales were killed. Their bodies have been split open, some of the organs removed, and the rest dumped in the sea.

This is the work of an unethical fishing company. Their boats are not currently nearby, but a knife belonging to a crew members was lost in the hunt, and it has the company trade mark on the pommel.

There is a 10% chance per round (cumulative) that 10d6 sharks (MM p. 336) will show up to start feeding. Even the odds to determine if any character is attacked.
- 11. The characters stumble upon a mile-wide smack of large jellyfish. Each individual is at least 8 feet across with dozens of stinging tendrils that stretch 12 feet below. The jellyfish are so dense that extreme caution must be used to pass through them.

If passing through at a normal movement rate, the creature must make a Dexterity save (DC 10) each round, or get stung. This will stun the creature with agonizing pain for 1 round, inflict 2d4 hit points of necrotic damage, and slow their movement by 5 feet. If their movement reaches 0, they are effectively paralyzed. This effect lasts for 2d4 x 10 minutes, or Lesser Restoration is cast. Paralyzed creatures will immediately sink at 10 feet per round.
- 12. Carved into the sea bottom is a round, bowl-shaped depression that is 500 feet across and 50 feet deep. The smooth surface of the bowl is free from seaweed or any other plant growth. In the center of the bowl is a three foot diameter sphere of smooth black stone.
- 13. Teetering on the edge of a 50 foot hole in the sea floor is a crumbling tower of dark green stone. The hole is perfectly round and seems to have no bottom.
- 14. At the foot of a rock outcropping lies a sunken ship, the remains of the oarsmen still chained in place. The stern cabin contains an iron chest with 50 large rubies worth 10 gold pieces each. A giant octopus (MM p.326) has made its home behind the chest and will attack anyone who disturbs it. The chest weighs about 200 pounds including the gems.
- 15. Several large, translucent globes are tethered to the floor of this body of water. They are about 20 feet in diameter and are filled with strange water plants. These are floating gardens maintained by a nearby tribe of aquatic folk.
- 16. There is a deep crevasse that zig-zags for about 70 feet. A length of spider silk rope is attached to a steel piton. The rope is slack and descends 150 feet into darkness, though the crevasse goes much deeper. Warmer water is rising in a current from the depths below.
- 17. A team of four giant seahorses is pulling a beautiful carriage fashioned from an enormous nautilus shell. It is trimmed with silver and inlaid with cut blue stones. Windows cut into the side reveal a pair of noble-looking tritons (VGtM p.115). Three more armed tritons are riding up front. They will ignore the characters unless threatened.
- 18. A sunken ship is wedged between two pillars of stone reaching up from the darkness below. It has become the home of a merfolk alchemist named Scillith who has an impressive collection of potions. She specializes in potions for surface folk that allow them to breath, see, and move more effectively underwater. She has enchanted the inside of her shop to have breathable air to make her patrons more comfortable. She is a powerful caster, and if need be, she can summon several large water elementals to defend herself.
- 19. A ten foot wide giant clam sits in a stone shrine decorated with semi-precious stones and shells. The decorations are actually offerings left by various local water fey. Inside the clam is a royal blue pearl worth 6,000 gold pieces. If anyone attempts to steal the pearl, 3 water elementals will appear to stop the thief.
- 20. A sunken ship with the insignia of a noble house rests on the bottom of a narrow pass. Clearly, the ship sank instead of arriving at the family keep. The public has been told of their safe passage.

SHALLOW SALT WATER

The breathtaking allure of these environs can give one a false sense of security, but their enchanting beauty can hide many mysteries and dangers. These are the places where land and water meet, diverse creatures gather, and civilizations are born.

These events are appropriate for shallow ocean waters near the shores, bays, lagoons, and coastal sea caves.

Roll Event

1. A badly charred fishing boat is sinking slowly towards the bottom trailing debris, cloudy water, dead fish and four half-orc bodies. The half orcs are also badly burned, but there is no sign of injuries from weapons. If the boat can be searched, a small chest is found containing: 213 silver coins and 28 assorted gemstones worth about 1 gold piece each.
2. A fey creature on the back of a stingray offers objects to surface dwellers who answer a riddle: "A funeral pyre, who do you see. One whom you admire, who do they flee. A heart's desire, and that makes three."
3. Lightning strikes the water's surface, conducting down to a vein of metal ore. The rock breaks away, showing iron, nickel, magnetic stone or copper.
4. A cave carving shows a naga, a sea hag, an aquatic troll and merfolk magi locked in battle.
5. A whirlpool begins to take form. Lazy swirls turn into a dangerous funnel in a few hours.
6. Steps lead from the surface into a sunken temple. The temple has isolated air pockets, allowing swimmers periodic access to air while inside. Worshipers continue to attempt the swim, despite the fact that several drowned pilgrims are washed ashore every month.
7. A rocky outcrop is stuffed with offerings to a sea god. The waves submerge the carved idol, only to have it appear as the waves retreat.
8. A mechanical vehicle is crushed beyond repair. It looks like it is designed for water breathers to explore the land.
9. Egg sacks are attached to rocky nooks. They appear to be a species of aquatic spider.
10. A plethora of small fish bones litters the sandy bottom of a shallow bay. The bones seem to be collected and arranged neatly.
11. A hot spring is surrounded by lichen, plankton and thick moss – like vegetation.
12. A small fish is creating intricate patterns in the sand. It is removing small stones and brushing slight piles of silt into perfect geometric patterns.
13. A spawning turtle takes an interest in the characters.

It is benign and friendly, but it wants food. It will nudge the characters continually, begging for a scrap of food or ration. Even when camping, traveling or hiding, the turtle will seek them out to softly bump them with its head. This will spoil a long rest or sleep, not a short rest. This lasts for a full day until it gets bored and swims away. If fed, it could become an aquatic mount for a character in 30 years or so.

14. A zombie (MM p. 316) is trapped at the bottom of a body of water. It is pressed beneath a boulder, bound to it with heavy, rusty chains. Around its neck is a blue stone pendant worth 1000 gold pieces.

If anyone attempts to remove it without destroying the zombie first, it will make a bite attack on them at *Advantage*. If bitten, the creature must make a Constitution save (DC 15) or become diseased. This disease will feel like the flu at first, but will begin to turn them into a zombie over the course of three days. Only Lesser Restoration will remove the disease. If they become a zombie, anyone they bite will become diseased, and anyone they bite will become diseased too. This could turn into a major campaign point, so the DM should use caution with this event.

Later investigation will reveal the zombie is a crew member of a ship that sank 84 years prior. The ship is nowhere to be found.

15. An archway of white stone sits in the sand on the floor of this body of water. It is about 10 feet tall, 5 feet wide, and a foot thick. It is intricately carved with images of birds and clouds. It radiates faint magic.
16. You come upon the shipwreck of a strange vessel. It is about 80 feet long with a deep keel. Most of the ship has rotted away, but the mast is intact. The wood is reddish in color and seems to be in remarkably good condition, despite the fact that the wreck has been here for centuries. If the red wood can be harvested somehow, it could be worth quite a lot of gold. When this wood is incorporated into something, the object gains the property of imparting resistance to fire. The mast is about 60 feet long, 2 feet in diameter at the base, tapering to 6 inches at the top, and weighs about 1000 pounds. Its market price would be about 15,000 gp.
17. An abandoned forge rests next to an active volcanic source. The forge uses a stone wheel to press and fold the metal. It is old and unused, requiring a master's hand.
18. A strange ship dumps tons of chum into the water attracting predators and scavengers from miles around. Many feeding frenzies erupt for the next several hours.
19. A sunken marble statue of a giant multi-headed serpent sticks out of the sand or mud. Two Kuo-toa and a

Kuo-toa Archpriest are trying uncover the rest of it. The marble statue is part of a temple complex that is thousands of years old.

20. A large floating 'island' of debris supports a tiny town of scavengers and tinkers. At the outer edge is a collection of anchored boats with gang planks connecting them.

DEEP FRESH WATER

There are lakes in the world that can rival many seas in their scope and depth. They can have tides, breaking waves, and deep canyons with even deeper secrets.

These events are suitable for deep lakes, large flooded caverns, and even underground fresh water seas.

Roll Event

1. What at first seemed like shallow body of water suddenly drops off into a deep trench that is between 100 and 150 feet wide. An investigation of the trench reveals that it is over 600 feet deep. At the bottom is a collection of bones from countless creatures including humanoid and even of a young red dragon. Sifting through the debris at the bottom will yield 3d4 gold pieces worth of coins and gemstones per hour of searching. The treasure runs out after 6 hours.
2. A small three-foot stone shrine sits on the shore of this body of water. Inside is the statue of a strange bird carved from ivory.
3. A heavy knot of strange water plants grow here. These plants are remarkably strong and resistant to cutting. Investigation reveals that they are growing out of the remains of a shattered troll skull.
4. A large glass jar is chained to a large stone block. The jar contains a newborn baby with the umbilical cord around it, floating in a cloudy fluid. It will open its eyes when an intelligent creature approaches, telepathically offering to answer any question if released. It has a 50% chance of being accurate.
5. Beneath the surface of the water is an ancient burial mound. This barrow contains the remains of eight seers. Each wears a pendant that allows the wearer to communicate with anyone wearing one of the other pendants. This communication is telepathic with a range of 150 miles. There is a side effect that causes each person with a pendant to feel any strong emotions or feelings experienced by another pendant wearer.
6. A bronze sundial sits in the sand or mud on the bottom of this body of water. It is decorated with images of local wildlife. If set up in a sunny place, it will chime a

gentle bell at every hour. It is a beautiful tone and can be heard for up to half a mile.

7. There is a cold spot in the water about five feet in diameter. It remains stationary, even if there is a strong current. Anyone entering the area will be at *Disadvantage* to all ability checks while there and for 10 minutes after they leave it.
8. A small rowboat is anchored far from shore. Investigation will reveal some fishing tackle and some old bread that looks like it's been there for several days at least. There is no sign of the boat's owner or the fishing pole.
9. Recent storms have dumped a lot of dead wood into the water making swimming difficult and even dangerous if the water is fast-moving. All rolls related to swimming are at *Disadvantage*. If it's a strong current, creatures in the water should make a successful Dexterity saving throw (DC 10) each round or suffer 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage.
10. A sinkhole has opened up on the floor of this body of water, revealing a small stone building. Inside are the remains of an armory with weapons of all sorts. There is a 10% chance of there being a magical weapon of some kind (DM's discretion). The sinkhole is continuing to expand, so in less than an hour, the structure will tumble into the hole.
11. A small clay pot about a foot in diameter and two feet tall is half buried in the sand. It is sealed with wax, meaning that the contents are dry. Inside is some sort of spice that induces severe hallucinations when ingested. If it is opened underwater, the spice is ruined.
12. The surface begins to freeze rapidly and without warning. Reaching air will become impossible without breaking the icy shell above.
13. A massive storm sweeps through the area. On the surface, the rain is blowing sideways by gale force winds. Lightning flashes illuminating the mountainous waves is followed by deafening claps of thunder.

Underwater, this storm blots out any light from above. Near the surface of the water, the massive waves rise up and crash back into the sea, creating a powerful surge. This does not relent until the storm passes in 1d4 hours. If any creatures are within 50 feet of the surface, their Perception checks, ranged attacks, hearing and sound-related actions are all at *Disadvantage*. Natives to the area will find shelter or head for safe waters.

If the water is shallow, the storm will kick up sand or mud from the bottom of lakes and rivers. Something once lost is now uncovered. A random small trinket (PHB p.159) is found by a character.

14. A predatory bird dives deep below the surface, snatching a morsel of fish nearly 30 feet down, returning to flight as it leaves the water.
15. The currents in this body of water are violent and unpredictable due to underwater geysers that explode randomly. There is a 1 in 20 chance that anyone swimming in this water will be blown 50 feet sideways and suffer 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage. If the creature is closer than 50 feet to a hard surface, the damage could be much greater (DM's discretion).
16. The skeletal remains of slaves litter the bottom of this body of water. The bones are still bound in chains and manacles, which are in turn bolted to a massive ten foot square stone block.
17. A dangerous slurry of toxic compounds has been introduced into the water. Whether from a natural geologic source or a careless alchemist, this vile brew has formed into a harmful cloud 100 to 400 feet in diameter. The cloud is a sickly violet color that glows faintly and seems to be traveling towards magnetic north.

This alchemical cloud is death to aquatic life. It causes 1 hit point of necrotic damage each round inside the murky cloud. It is also difficult to see through, giving all creatures reliant on sight Disadvantage on perception checks using vision. The water has no effect on dispersing the size or harmful effects.

If investigated, the characters will discover that a land-based mercantile company is responsible for alchemical waste. Undersea natives may blame the characters, another community, or choose to take revenge on the air breathers.
18. Jutting from the sand or mud at the bottom of this body of water is a huge arm of green jade. The hand appears to be a female humanoid and is open as if reaching skyward. It is about ten feet from elbow to finger tip, and is part of a much larger statue buried beneath. The statue depicts a beautiful elven water goddess. It has been buried here for more than five thousand years.
19. A domed underwater village has been sacked. The dead bodies of its native people float in macabre positions. Surface warriors dressed in chain mail, shields and long swords are also found on the bottom. There appears to be no enchantments on these surface soldier's bodies.
20. An underwater phenomena, similar to the aurora borealis, lights up the shadowy depths below. The light cannot be seen from the surface except on moonless nights.

SHALLOW FRESH WATER

When one thinks of a lake, they imagine graceful water birds, surrounding forests, and beasts grazing at its shore. Below the surface however, dark, forgotten secrets can remain hidden for centuries, or even millennia.

These events are appropriate for smaller bodies of fresh water such as lakes, ponds, pools and flooded caves.

Roll Event

1. A patch of vegetation is blackened and dead. A rift in the soil ejects a harmful fluid. A sickly green ooze slowly bubbles towards the surface, gathering into an ever bigger paste tens of meters in diameter.
2. Waterproof barrels are held down by rocks and ropes. A hidden buoy on shore allows one to release the barrels. Inside are alchemical compounds. They are valuable but useless without the proper equipment.
3. A group of 2d4 giant leeches attempt to attach themselves to the characters. Every creature must make a Dexterity save (DC 10) each round to avoid them. A failure means that the leech attaches, inflicting 1d4 points of necrotic damage. Each has an AC of 10 and 2 hit points.
4. Some sort of geothermal ejection has heated the water in a 50 foot area around the vent. At the edge of this area, the water is a pleasant 80 degrees Fahrenheit, but if a creature comes within 10 feet, they must make a Constitution saving throw or suffer 1d4 points of heat (fire) damage. The vent is surrounded by a 10 foot area of dead aquatic life.

Anyone within 50 feet can hear unintelligible whispering in their head and must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 20) to avoid madness (DMG p.258). A successful save means suffering a headache that inflicts 1 level of Exhaustion for one hour, while failure means suffering a short-term madness. A natural 1 inflicts a long-term madness.
5. A six foot obelisk of dark green stone rises out of the water. The surface of each side is perfectly smooth and the top is carved with a squat statue of a vaguely anthropoid creature. It has an octopus-like head whose face is a mass of feelers. It has a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind.
6. Sticking out of the water is a shaft of a spear. Impaled to the bottom is the body of a man wearing noble garb that has rotted, though the victim seems remarkably well-preserved. He is actually a vampire spawn (MM p.298). The trident is keeping him dormant, but if it is removed the vampire will immediately reanimate and attack to sate its ravenous hunger.

7. In a shallow sandy depression is a large emerald green egg. It is about a foot long.

8. A temple to an ancient god rests on the floor of this body of water. Time has eroded the marble and stone pillars of the building, but there is enough to make out the strangeness of the religion. Characters with a Wisdom score of 14 or higher will hear a whisper in their head offering to teach them. If they accept in any way, they gain one peculiar spell or power gifted by the DM. This forges a bond with this entity that may take years to overcome.

9. Near the shore, there is an empty turtle shell about three feet long and two feet wide. It has arcane symbols carved on the inside and radiates a very faint, but indeterminate arcane aura.

10. Bubbles escape a series of boulders on the water's bottom. Searching the area reveals the entrance to a cave system. There are air pockets inside that allow surface dwellers to rest and breathe at regular intervals. Natives will know to be cautious against lighting a fire in these spaces as this will consume the oxygen.

11. A lakeside knighthood, complete with aquatic mounts and weapons, enforce law and order. Suddenly martial law and curfew is established. Guild leaders are imprisoned in an island jail in the center of the lake. Executions begin tomorrow. The guilty are locked in iron cages and dropped into the dark lake water.

12. A broad lake has a handful of disparate but communal cultures. Everyone enjoys what the lake has to offer. Nowhere else is there such peaceful coexistence. Until now. Turmoil has begun, and it seems to coincide with the arrival of a homeless gnome.

13. A hypnotic fey creature lifts from the lake and walks across the surface to hand over items of power to the just and righteous. That is, until found dead on shore. Who picks the next king or queen? Are there more valuables at the bottom of the lake? Will another fey creature step up and become the new lady in the lake?

14. The lake before you was formed from a massive impact crater. Rumors of star metal ore have brought prospectors to set up camp and try to dive to retrieve this object. It may serve as an excellent forge material.

15. This lake is really a caldera; a lake on top of a dormant volcano. Ships sail across this lake, the center boiling from internal heat, the edge filled with havens carved into stone. Underworld beings live in dark caves flooded with water. They are blind, and have adapted to aquatic life well. Criminals find this place home, as there is no law but what comes at the edge of a blade or evocation. What sinister power is organizing this haven of villainy?

16. Each year a week-long celebration takes place. Acts of skill and strength are seen. All of this is done in the water, in tribute to the gods and good fortune. The PCs are expected to join the games. High dives, snorkeling, races, wrestling, deep retrieval and other tests fill the days. Gifts are handed out at the end, some enchanted.

17. A half dozen sunken vessels litter the ramshackle docks of an abandoned fishing village. Rumors of pearls possessing arcane power may be left in the hull of one or more of these ships. The crew still inhabit these ships as former shells of themselves, a life unfinished.

18. An old hag lives in a hut braced above the water line by poles and tree limbs. No one sees her enter or leave, but she is often seen peering out a small window. In the past she had given gifts of potions and wards to children, asking only a copper piece in return. Unfortunately, the hidden cost was a fragment of soul attached to the coin.

19. A strange people live on the surface of a lake. Homes float. The streets are like canals. The courtyards of large dwellings are lakes. Citizens are expected to join a guild, at which point all other guilds become enemies. During the day, everyone is friendly, but at night, rooftop intrusion and submerged infiltration.

20. A Druidic circle is asking for assistance to defend the lake for a year. At the end, the defenders are granted a gift. This may come in the form of a boon, a young pegasus or being touched by a unicorn.

As the lake environment goes through the seasons, the defenders must uphold the natural order, repelling enemies, stopping fires, protecting spawning beds, purifying the water and clearing debris. A character with a strong connection to nature or the fey may be drawn to this task. The DM could turn this into an entire campaign seed.

MOVING FRESH WATER

There are few things in nature to rival the sheer power of moving water. It can carve vast canyons, tunnel through mountains, and scour the land. Moving waters provide life to deserts, the opportunity of travel, and they define the borders of kingdoms.

These events are appropriate for moving fresh water including rivers, streams and flash floods.

Roll Event

1. The water seems to just flow into the air, pouring in an arch for about 500 feet before returning to its bed. The figure of an old blind man sits by the river's edge, his hand gestured towards the water.

2. A large water sphinx lives near the access point to this river. She might dispense wisdom in form of riddles or require them for passage.
3. Several barrels are discovered floating in the water. A thumping sound can be heard from within. Perhaps they contain people escaping a catastrophe or something else entirely.
4. You find 3d12 copper pieces thrown into the water as offerings to the gods for safe travel.
5. An eroded riverbank has caused a tower to collapse into it, partially or completely blocking the river. The water around the fallen tower is full of colorful, magic liquids which could have any number of effects. Treasure might be found within the tower.
6. One day per year, in early spring, the frozen river thaws. The surface ice cracks and snaps loudly, and a rushing torrent pours forward, snapping trees and causing severe damage or harm to any crafts or persons within the water.
7. Some thugs, led by a strong ogre, have caused a blockage in a major river, and are charging tolls to anyone wanting to pass through.
8. A cargo barge is on fire and headed straight towards a village on the riverbanks.
9. Centuries of erosion have exposed a valuable treasure in a deep section of river. It is guarded by a water weird who attacks anyone trying to claim the treasure.
10. There are two river pirates swimming in the river. They operate by pulling victims into the water, or sinking their boat. They will seize valuables and let the rest get swept down river.
11. An old keep sits on a sand bar at a river delta. Footprints on the shore suggest goblinoids are using the place as a headquarters. The only way in is through underground passages that are flooded and murky.
12. There is a dead body on the river bank. Investigation reveals that two business rivals are at odds over travel rights, and there is a deadly feud between them. Dead bodies litter the river banks daily, and this has attracted crocodiles, so now no one is safe. If anyone approaches a body, there is a 1 in 10 chance that a crocodile (MM p.320) will attack them.
13. A stony region is split by river rapids from mountain runoff. There are two communities isolated on either side, and there is a long-standing feud between them. The river is the only thing preventing open war. Only during the coldest month, when the river freezes solid, does the conflict escalate, turning the ice red.
14. A moss covered rock is inscribed with the words "Fountain of Youth" with a carved hand pointing in the direction from which the water flows. If the characters follow the direction, they encounter all manner of life, from bears to deer to cougars that cross their path on the journey up stream. By the time they reach the river's origin, they find a mere trickle of water with no fountain. Instead is the inscription: "The lessons learned will keep one young forever."
15. A tribe of lizard folk live in a fjord or valley. A fast moving river bisects this community. It extends vertically along the rocks and earth of this steep canyon. Vines and ropes criss-cross the water, connecting both sides of the river. Getting across this network of lashed cables and navigating the treacherous rapids is necessary to parley with these scaled beings.
16. A notorious gang uses kayaks to raid passers-by and then escape quickly down stream. These boats are specially designed to survive the raging river.
17. The rains upstream have not stopped for weeks now. Fields are flooded, homes submerged, and trees uprooted from erosion. The water is muddy and impossible to see through. Flash floods happen daily as soft earth gives way.
Survivors have begun attaching wheels to boats or carrying boats across land, since a safe path in the morning becomes a river of mud in the afternoon. Bandits are making matters worse, taking advantage of those left homeless.
18. The water has dried up. A greedy lord has built a dam upstream that has blocked the much needed water for local communities down river. The landowner has no intention of taking the dam down, since doing so would flood his new mines. He currently has dozens of indentured workers digging 14 hours a day to extract gold and silver for him, and if the characters attempt to intervene, the lord will likely try to put their strong backs to work as well.
19. There is an emerald green tent at the edge of the water. A sage is exploring the local river ecology and could use some help. He is looking for living examples of the flora and fauna to complete his studies. He plans to build a massive wildlife preserve that will house the larger animals captured along the way. More exotic monsters won't be collected, nor will they be killed in the name of research.
20. In the middle of the water a large rock juts six feet out of the water. Carved from the living rock on the top is the life-sized statue of a beautiful human woman garbed in flowing silk-looking robes. She is facing upstream with her arms outstretched as if welcoming the oncoming water.

LEGAL INFORMATION

Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document 5.0 ("SRD5") is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.

This material is being released using the Open Gaming License Version 1.0a and you should read and understand the terms of that license before using this material.

The text of the Open Gaming License itself is not Open Game Content. Instructions on using the License are provided within the License itself.

The following items are designated Product Identity, as defined in Section 1(e) of the Open Game License Version 1.0a, and are subject to the conditions set forth in Section 7 of the OGL, and are not Open Content: Dungeons & Dragons, D&D, Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master, Monster Manual, d20 System, Wizards of the Coast, d20 (when used as a trademark), Forgotten Realms, Faerûn, proper names (including those used in the names of spells or items), places, Underdark, Red Wizard of Thay, the City of Unip, Heroic Domains of Ysgard, Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo, Windswept Depths of Pandemonium, Infinite Layers of the Abyss, Tartarian Depths of Carceri, Gray Waste of Hades, Bleak Eternity of Gehenna, Nine Hells of Baator, Infernal Battlefield of Acheron, Clockwork Nirvana of Mechanus, Peaceable Kingdoms of Arcadia, Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia, Twin Paradises of Bytopia, Blessed Fields of Elysium, Wilderness of the Beastlands, Olympian Glades of Arborea, Concordant Domain of the Outlands, Sigil, Lady of Pain, Book of Exalted Deeds, Book of Vile Darkness, beholder, gauth, carrion crawler, tanar'i, baatezu, displacer beast, githyanki, githzerai, mind flayer, illithid, umber hulk, yuan-ti.

All of the rest of the SRD5 is Open Game Content as described in Section 1(d) of the License.

The terms of the Open Gaming License Version 1.0a are as follows:

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), notation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor; (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in

terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you-distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

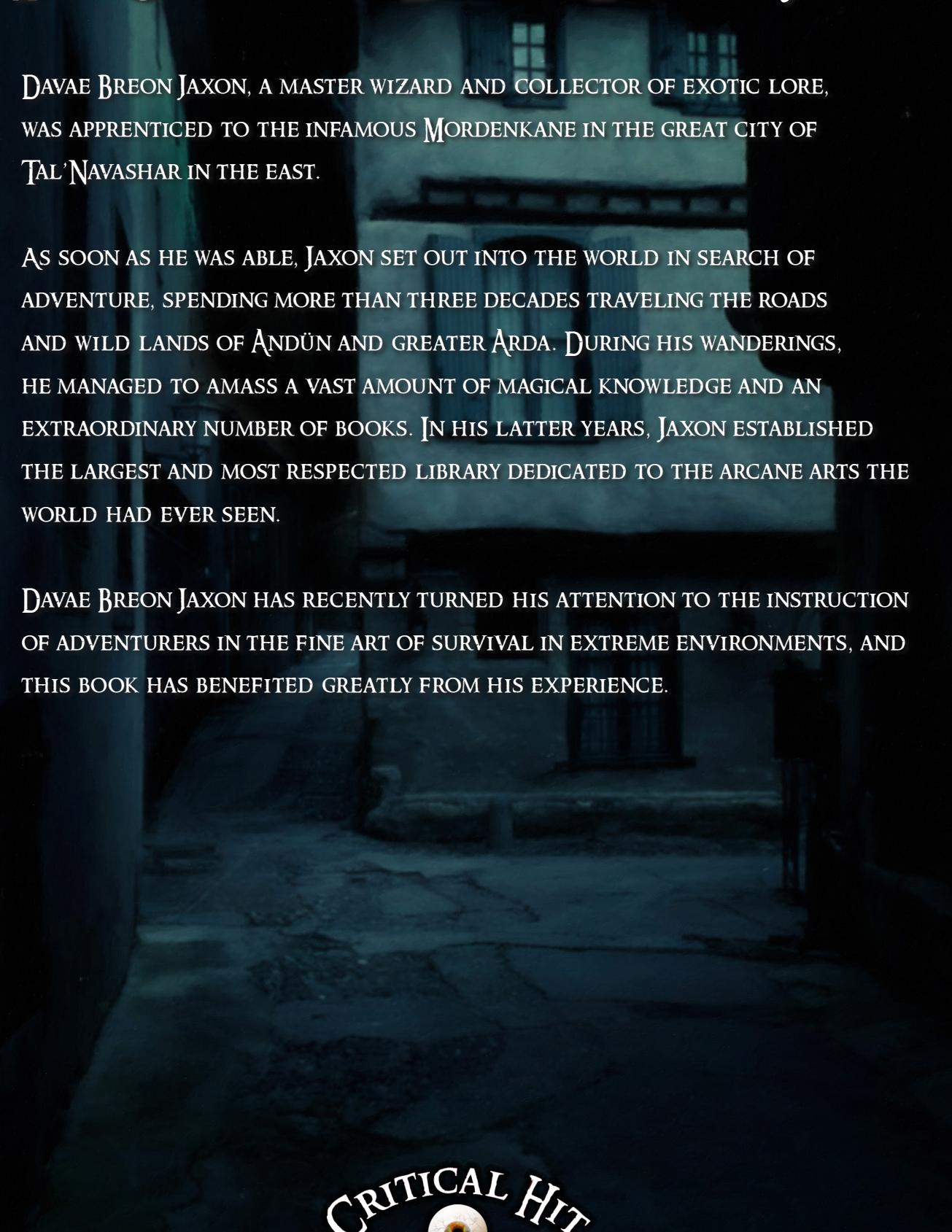
13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc. System Reference Document 5.0 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

END OF LICENSE

THE STORY OF DAVAE BREON JAXON



DAVAE BREON JAXON, A MASTER WIZARD AND COLLECTOR OF EXOTIC LORE, WAS APPRENTICED TO THE INFAMOUS MORDENKANE IN THE GREAT CITY OF TAL'NAVASHAR IN THE EAST.

AS SOON AS HE WAS ABLE, JAXON SET OUT INTO THE WORLD IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE, SPENDING MORE THAN THREE DECADES TRAVELING THE ROADS AND WILD LANDS OF ANDÜN AND GREATER ARDA. DURING HIS WANDERINGS, HE MANAGED TO AMASS A VAST AMOUNT OF MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND AN EXTRAORDINARY NUMBER OF BOOKS. IN HIS LATTER YEARS, JAXON ESTABLISHED THE LARGEST AND MOST RESPECTED LIBRARY DEDICATED TO THE ARCANE ARTS THE WORLD HAD EVER SEEN.

DAVAE BREON JAXON HAS RECENTLY TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE INSTRUCTION OF ADVENTURERS IN THE FINE ART OF SURVIVAL IN EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS, AND THIS BOOK HAS BENEFITED GREATLY FROM HIS EXPERIENCE.

