



THE QUEEN OF GOLD

TALES OF THE PIRATE ISLES



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A Shadow of the Demon Lord Supplement

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TALES OF THE PIRATE ISLES

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INTRODUCTION

The die has been cast and the Demon Lord approaches Urth. As this monstrous entity nears, its shadow causes mayhem and wreaks havoc. Empires fall, cults rise, beastmen rampage, and plagues rage—all bringing civilization to its knees.

People offer prayers to gods who do not answer them, or look to their leaders for guidance only to find them inept and craven in the face of the terrors to come. Many turn against each other, abandon their communities, or seek refuge from the coming storm wherever they can find it. Some even leave the continent altogether, believing they can put the horror behind them and start new lives in distant lands.

But there is no hope, salvation, or refuge anywhere on Urth—only pain, misery, violence, and death. Insatiably hungry and filled with hate, the Demon Lord seeks to devour all of existence.

The Queen of Gold presents a complete campaign set in the world of *Shadow of the Demon Lord*, taking characters from meager origins to the heights of power as they struggle with evils coming from beyond the world's edge, a malevolence from which there is no safe place or escape. Like other adventures designed for *Shadow*, this campaign has no expectations for survival or even success, and it's entirely possible for the group to be the catalyst that brings about the end of all things. But that's how it goes when you're standing before the maw of the endless Void that is about to consume the world—and everyone's looking to you to stop it.

WHAT YOU NEED

You will need a copy of *Shadow of the Demon Lord* and *Demon Lord's Companion* to use this product. The Death and Spiritualism traditions are detailed in the *Companion*, along with a few creatures used in these adventures. You might also find the *Shadow of the Demon Lord Freeport Companion* useful, which includes a slew of rules for voyages and ship combat, along with paths and spells designed for maritime adventures. And *Beyond the World's Edge* provides detailed descriptions of several locations mentioned in this adventure, though the salient bits are included here.

CAMPAIGN

The Queen of Gold presents a series of eleven connected adventures that form a complete campaign. You can run the adventures in the order they are presented in this book, or pick out the adventures you like most. However you decide to run them, you should take a few minutes to read this introductory material to learn about the setting and how to weave everything together.



BACKGROUND

The troubles began with Anne the Red, the notorious captain of the pirate ship *Orphanmaker*. Fleeing from privateers charged with sinking her, the *Orphanmaker* sailed into the swirling chaos of a tremendous storm to shake off the pursuers, and found itself blown off course untold leagues into uncharted waters. Weeks later, the battered galleon dropped anchor off the shores of the lost continent of Eremeä, a land once ruled thousands of years ago by the Edene, now overrun by savage tribes, bizarre monsters, and, in one forsaken place, legions of the undead under the command of the thoroughly corrupted necromancer Rudebendius Mal.

Anne went ashore with a band of her best fighters, leaving the rest of the crew to make repairs on the ship. While in Eremeä, the pirate captain had many adventures, but her greatest was slipping into the Mountain of the Necromancer and making off with some of Mal's finest treasures, the most prized of which happened to be his bride, the Queen of Gold. With relentless hordes of undead pursuing them, Anne and her fellow pirates managed to escape Eremeä and began the long voyage back to Rûl.

Rudebendius Mal might have let the thieves go, if not for the abduction of his bride. Enraged, he risked his very soul by performing an ancient ritual of the darkest magic such that none had ever dared before. The ritual enabled Mal to reach deep into the Void and summon forth Viscallux, a demon of incalculable power, intending to send it to hunt down and destroy the pirates and bring back what was his.

Instead, already on the brink of madness when he began the ritual, Mal's sanity was completely shattered by the manifestation of the supremely powerful demon before him, enabling it to invade and possess the necromancer. Viscallux wants nothing more than to unleash its master, the Demon Lord, upon the world, and is using Mal to achieve that purpose. From time to time, however, the demon will relinquish control, bemusedly watching Mal's efforts to regain his Queen and exact revenge upon the pirates responsible for her abduction.

A terrible storm is bearing down on the Pirate Isles, a demonic tempest whose winds fill the rotting, tattered sails of bone ships setting sail from Eremeä. Crewed by the dead, this fleet has been dispatched by the necromancer to both rescue his bride and destroy everyone and everything in their path. With this menace looming on the horizon, the characters have the chance to gain fame and fortune by taking a stand against the coming onslaught and driving its threat from the world.

SHADOW OF THE DEMON LORD

This campaign uses “Infectious Madness” (see *Shadow*, page 198 and *Hunger*, page 15) as the Shadow of the Demon Lord effect, though you can choose a different one if you like. As the campaign unfolds, the shadow’s influence intensifies as shown in the following list.

Starting Characters: All creatures have disturbing dreams that leave them shaken upon waking.

Novice Characters: Each time a creature completes a rest, it must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Insanity.

Expert Characters: All creatures make challenge rolls to avoid gaining Insanity with 3 banes. As well, creatures gain 1 extra Insanity whenever they gain Insanity.

Master Characters: Whenever a creature goes mad, apply the following result instead of rolling on the Madness table:

Demonic Apotheosis Your soul is destroyed, and your body transforms into a demon of your Size. The demon can take the next available turn.

THE PIRATE ISLES

The adventures presented in this book focus on the lands east of Rûl, those islands and larger land masses scattered across the vast Auroral Ocean. Specifically, many of the adventures focus on the Pirate Isles, a collection of islands settled by pirates long ago. Over the years, these pirates have used the isles as a haven when they are not busy raiding the shipping lanes and the coastal settlements of the Kingdom of Sails, the Freehold of Nar, and the various coastal city-states of the Confederacy of Nine Cities. In recent years, the ruling body known as the Captains’ Circle, an elected group composed of the most powerful and well-to-do pirate captains, has been seeking to move the region away from piracy as its primary economic venture in order to enter the world stage as a legitimate nation.

Basic information about this nation can be found in the main rulebook. The *Shadow of the Demon Lord Freeport Companion* introduces Freeport to the world of Urth, so you can use it, as well as Green Ronin Publishing’s *The Pirate’s Guide to Freeport*, to more fully flesh out the setting if you like, though neither book is necessary to run these adventures. Finally, this book adds further details to some of the locations described in *Beyond the World’s Edge*.

CHARACTERS

Each player should have at least one starting character. Inform the players that their characters will start aboard a ship bound for the Pirate Isles. Since they’re starting characters, it’s not necessary for them to know each other, though it certainly couldn’t hurt.



Players can choose from any of the ancestries described in *Shadow of the Demon Lord*, *Demon Lord Companion*, or *Shadow of the Demon Lord Freeport Companion*. You can also let players choose ancestries from other supplements, such as elves (*Terrible Beauty*) or salamanders (*Tombs of the Desolation*). While the adventures in this book can accommodate most ancestry choices, some ancestries might have a harder time than others—like centaurs (from *Riders of the Wind*) or vampires (*Tombs of the Desolation*)—and you might need to adjust certain adventures to accommodate these choices.

BACKGROUND ELEMENTS

In addition to the background elements all starting characters possess, each character should have a background element that relates to this campaign. Have each player roll a d20 and find the result on the following table. Reroll duplicate results.

CAMPAGNA BACKGROUND ELEMENTS

d20 Background Element

- 1 A vile pirate named Anne the Red sacked your village and killed your loved ones. You have vowed to get revenge.
- 2 You keep having recurring dreams of a beautiful woman made of gold.
- 3 You have family relations in the Pirate Isles.
- 4 One of your ancestors sailed east, beyond the world's edge, and never returned.
- 5 You are wanted for a crime you didn't commit. You are headed east to start a new life.
- 6 You are a spy for Kem, the Golden City, making the journey east to learn more about the Pirate Isles' economic situation.
- 7 You hunt for someone who wronged you. You picked up a lead that this person is hiding out in the Pirate Isles.
- 8 Orcs burned your community to the ground during their rebellion. You have left the continent to escape the growing violence.
- 9 You belonged to a strange cult that was uncovered and destroyed by witch hunters. You escaped, but fear the hunters are still on your trail.
- 10 You found a treasure map you believe points to a small island near the Pirate Isles.
- 11 You are a sailor (add the profession to your list of professions) and you hired on as part of the crew.
- 12 You hope to find fame and fortune on the Pirate Isles, having heard the capital is a "city of adventure."
- 13 You made a powerful enemy on the continent and had no choice but to leave behind your old life. You have assumed a new identity to throw your pursuers off your trail.
- 14 You heard the Pirate Isles are a great source of illicit substances and hope to broker a deal that will make you rich selling the drugs in the Free Cities.
- 15 You want to travel and see the world.

- 16 You were invited to the Pirate Isles by a powerful merchant family for a business opportunity.
- 17 You were born in the Pirate Isles and now you're returning home after a long absence.
- 18 You were shipwrecked on a small island until the crew of this vessel rescued you.
- 19 You owe large sums to a powerful criminal that you cannot pay back. You are on the run for your life.
- 20 You are searching for a family member, friend, or lover who disappeared in the Pirate Isles.

STARTING EQUIPMENT

In the starting adventure, “Night of Terrors,” the characters become shipwrecked on a small island near the Pirate Isles. Although they escaped with their lives, they have done so with little in the way of equipment. Instead of using the normal rules for determining starting equipment, have each player roll on the following table to determine his or her character’s starting equipment. Characters still start with one interesting thing.

STARTING EQUIPMENT

d6 Starting Equipment

1	Soiled rags
2	Soiled basic clothing and a club or dagger
3	Basic clothing and a club or dagger
4	Basic clothing, a club or dagger, and 1d6 cp of gear
5	Basic clothing, a club or dagger, and 2d6 cp of gear
6	Basic clothing, a club or dagger, and 1d6 ss of gear

ADVENTURES

The adventures making up *The Queen of Gold* campaign are intentionally short. They provide you with the essential elements needed to run them and little else. Sparse on detail and free of extraneous information, you have plenty of room to develop these adventures further to bring them to life. You can add your own side plots, intrigues, additional secondary characters, monstrous threats, or whatever else you desire to enrich the play experience and add depth to the campaign for your group. In short, consider the adventures as starting points and inspiration for you to create your own awesome campaign!

HOOKS

After the starting adventure, the remaining adventures in this book leave it to you to come up with ways to weave the characters into the story. You can always use classic hooks—patrons who hire the characters or assign them missions, or you can drop the group into a tough situation related to the plot. It’s best, however, if the hooks directly connect or are relevant to one or more of the characters, either drawing from their background elements or from

events that have unfolded in the campaign so far. A personal stake in the plot gives the players strong motivation to see the adventures to their conclusions.

GROUP SIZE

The adventures in this book expect groups to consist of three to five characters. Smaller groups will find the challenges difficult, while larger groups might breeze through the scenarios. If you have a smaller group, consider allowing the characters to bring along a few hirelings (see *Shadow*, page 108). Alternatively, you can scale back the opposition, reducing the damage a creature deals by half, or by halving the creature’s Health score.

If you have a larger group, you should make the challenges more difficult. You can increase the Health of creatures they fight by 20 to 50 percent, or just add additional creatures as needed to bring the total Difficulty up by half. For example, if a fight normally involves 5 shrieking eels, the total Difficulty is 50. You can add 2 to 3 more eels to bring the Difficulty up to 70 or 80.

CREATURE REFERENCES

Most adventures draw creatures from *Shadow of the Demon Lord* and call out these creatures by bolding their numbers and names. If you see **4 hoods**, you can find statistics boxes for a hood in chapter 10 of the main rulebook. Creatures drawn from other sources have their full statistics included in the Appendix of this book.

Rewards

Characters need to accumulate treasure during the adventures so they can purchase better weapons and armor, as well as acquire the potions and incantations they will likely need to face later challenges. Some adventures offer less than the standard amounts, while others offer a bit more. If you find the characters lagging behind, give them the opportunity to earn more treasure in between adventures to make up the difference.

BETWEEN ADVENTURES

Adventures are the highlights and most important experiences in the characters’ lives. While some adventures in this book can be run right after each other, many allow time to pass between them. What happens during this time can also be important for developing the characters’ stories. They might work in their professions, engage in research, go on minor expeditions, or spend their time crafting items, inscribing incantations, or brewing potions. When the characters have downtime, be sure to ask the players what they do during this time. Alternatively, if you have *Forbidden Rules*, you can use the “Downtime” tables in that book to determine what happened.

NIGHT OF TERRORS



STARTING

By Robert J. Schwalb

After a harrowing day-long storm, their ship apparently lost beneath the waves, the player characters find themselves washed up on the shore of a small island just as night falls. With only their meager possessions and their wits, the characters must work together to find a way to survive until help comes. The characters complete the adventure when they find a way off the island. If they manage to deal with the dread mother and the pirates (see Events), rescue comes for them $1d3$ days later.

THE ISLAND

The adventure takes place on a small island, about 5 miles in diameter, some 40 miles southeast of the Pirate Isles. From the narrow strand encircling the island, the ground rises until it reaches the top of an ancient volcano. Thick jungle covers the island with no more than a few game trails. It takes about three hours to cross from one side of the island to the other, or five hours to walk all the way around the island.

The characters can find some or all of the following characters or locations while exploring the island, though they should not find more than one per hour. Place these locations anywhere you like on the island.

Anselm the Missionary: Anselm (acolyte of the New God) lives in this small daub-and-wattle hut. A carved wooden altar stands nearby, with a few half-melted candles on top, its front showing the symbol of the New God. The hut has a single entrance covered by a leather tarp. Inside the smoky interior, one can find a reed sleeping mat, a wooden bowl, a couple of burlap bags holding clothing and worthless personal effects, and a few gnawed bones. There is also a scroll containing an incantation of the *produce water* spell from the Water tradition, 2 *healing potions*, and an axe.

Anselm is an old man with a halo of frizzy white hair on his head and torn, tattered black robes hanging from his skeletal body. He has lived on the island for many years, trying to convert the people living here to his faith until the “monster” killed them all off. He wants to leave the island, but he doesn’t have a way to do so, as his boat rotted away long ago.

If asked about the monster, he tells the characters it is a ghastly winged thing with a swollen belly that strikes at night without warning. Anselm does not tell the characters that the monster (a **dread mother**) attacked him the night before the characters meet him and filled his belly with 3 eggs (see “Hatching,” below).

Buried Treasure: Anne the Red buried a chest of coins on the island a year ago in the center of a small

clearing somewhere in the jungle. She marked the place with four skulls mounted on poles. Each skull bears the device flown on her flag—a red, horned skull. Digging in the clearing for 6 hours turns up the chest, which holds 200 ss and 500 cp.

Ghost Village: In the jungle lays the remains of a tiny village consisting of five tiny huts made from branches and mud. The huts surround a fire pit, which hasn’t been used in at least a week or more. A large idol of a winged, pregnant woman carved from volcanic rock sits in the pit’s center.

A search of the hut turns up a few sleeping mats, wooden bowls, bits of leather clothing, and other minor miscellaneous items of your choice. Of the villagers, only a few bloated corpses remain. Inspecting the corpses reveals something burst out from their abdomens.

Lair of the Dread Mother: The dread mother makes its lair in the hollow of an enormous tree growing on the upper slopes of the dormant volcano. Thick, viscous slime covers the wall of the space, and the floor is buried under a thick layer of guano. The dread mother sleeps here during the day and leaves it to hunt at night.

SURVIVORS

In order to survive their present predicament, the characters can undertake certain activities, which are described below.

Hunting and Foraging: The characters quickly discover signs of wild pigs. A character can hunt the pigs, or forage for edible roots and berries. For each hour spent hunting or foraging, the character must make a Perception challenge roll. Characters with professions related to hunting or foraging get an automatic success. A character finds enough food for $1d3$ meals with a success on the roll.

If the characters hunt or forage for 3 hours or more, Anselm finds them and invites them to his hut. He has food and water enough for everyone.

Find or Build Shelter: Heavy rains continue for several days after the shipwreck. If the characters don’t make or find shelter, they might be subject to the effects of exposure. It takes $1d3 + 3$ hours of work to build a reasonable shelter for the group. Each character helping reduces the time by one hour (minimum 1 hour). Alternatively, the characters might head inland in hopes of finding shelter, in which case they might happen upon one of the locations described above.

Signal Fire: The characters might try to build a fire to signal passing ships. It takes $1d3$ hours to find enough dry wood to build the fire, though the heavy rains make lighting the fire impossible unless the characters build or find shelter. Building a signal fire attracts the pirates (see below), who show up 1 hour later.

Scavenge: Debris from the ship the characters escaped washes up to shore. Each hour a character spends searching through the wreckage on the shore, roll a d6 – 1 (minimum 0). The total of the roll is the value in ss of the equipment the characters find. If you roll a 6 on the die, the character also finds 1d3 vicious crabs (tiny animals) that attack.

Make Stuff: A character with the appropriate profession can attempt to make items with the right materials (see *Demon Lord's Companion*, page 25). Any character can fashion a club or a spear from the debris.

The characters might also attempt to build a raft by lashing together logs with rope, though they need an axe to have any chance of success. Anselm, however, has an axe and offers it to the group if they agree to take him with them. With the right tools, it takes 1d6 + 3 hours to construct a raft to hold everyone in the group.

Explore: The characters might explore the island. In addition to the locations and characters above, the characters might run into dangerous creatures. Each hour the characters spend exploring, roll a d6 and consult the following table.

ISLAND ENCOUNTERS

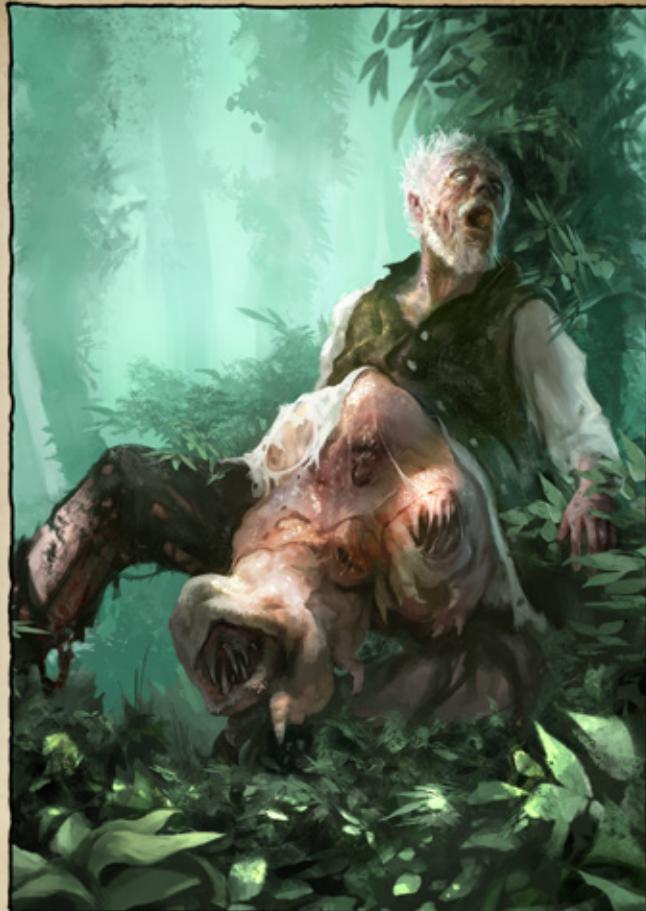
d6	Encounter
1	1d3 warthogs (small animals) charge out to protect their young
2	A hungry zombie of a dead villager stumbles into view
3	1d6 juvenile dread mothers (tiny monsters) slither forth to feed
4	A large spider attacks a straggler
5-6	Nothing

EVENTS

While the characters grapple with the hazards of their predicament, the following events occur to complicate their situation.

The Hatching: If the characters met Anselm, the eggs he carries in his gut hatch at a time of your choosing. Anselm screams and flails from the pain of the three larvae chewing their way out of his belly as he falls to the ground and dies. The larvae are Size 1/8 noncombatants with Defense 5 and Health 1. Any creature that sees their “birth” must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Insanity.

The Dread Mother: The dread mother emerges from its lair an hour after the adventure begins and finds the characters at a time of your choosing, preferably after the eggs hatch in Anselm. The dread mother prefers to attack characters who are alone or just with one other person. It attacks to lay its eggs and then departs. It also flees if injured.



The Pirates: Captain Anne has sent a landing party of 6 pirates (see Appendix) on a launch to retrieve the treasure she buried on the island. The pirates drag their launch onto the beach, with five going inland to retrieve the treasure and one remaining behind to guard the boat. The pirates are hostile and not interested in rescuing anyone; they will immediately attack anyone they encounter.

If the characters discovered the buried treasure first, the pirates scour the island for them. If the characters attempt to take the launch, they can easily overpower the pirate and steal it, but will make an enemy of the pirate captain when she has to send another launch to retrieve her stranded crew.

If the player characters have not yet dealt with the dread mother, it might, at your discretion, prey on the pirates, picking them off one at a time, filling their bellies with eggs. The characters might lure it into attacking the pirates or it might attack them on its own.

BLOOD FOR A CHILD

By Robert J. Schwallb



NORDIGE

A demon has come to the fishing village of Chum. Unearthed by a lonely fisherman, lamenting the sudden death of his son, the demon

has twisted the man's mind and enslaved him, driving him to murder in the dead boy's name. The characters complete the adventure when they unmask the killer and rid the village of the evil spirit.

CHUM

Found on the south side of one of the small islands neighboring the Pirate Isles, Chum is a fishing village home to a few dozen humans. A community of twenty buildings spreads along the rocky southern shore overlooking a modest, sheltered bay. Nearly everyone living here depends on fishing for their livelihood and sustenance.

Fisher's Shacks: Sixteen of the buildings are shabby gray shacks that house the people of Chum and feature nets, shells, and detritus dragged up from the depths as decoration. Each one features $1d3 + 1$ rooms, consisting of a kitchen or common area and the rest made up of bedrooms. A shack has



a 5-in-20 chance of having valuables worth $1d3$ ss and $1d6$ cp, and a 1-in-20 chance of having a random enchanted object.

The Captain's Widow: Chum's only tavern, The Captain's Widow stands nearest to the docks, serving the fishers and the rare traveler. Anileda Gud (**commoner**) tends the bar and keeps the locals from harassing her two daughters who work the tables. A large mute man works as the cook in the kitchen at the back of the tavern.

Temple of Oceanus: The small temple dedicated to the sea god sits on a rocky outcropping on Chum's eastern edge. Built from piled driftwood, it features an enormous wooden idol of Oceanus draped in fish guts and seaweed. Father Yenniker (**commoner**) tends the place and lives in a tiny hut a few yards away from the temple.

Witch's Hut: Grisla, Chum's witch (**apprentice witch**), lives in a crooked but sturdy hut on the village's westernmost edge, having inherited the place from the crone who taught her the art. Grisla tends to the locals' ailments, delivers children, and offers wisdom to those who seek it. She is a young, plain woman, intelligent and sharp-tongued, with no time or patience for nonsense.

STRANGER TIDES

The adventure starts in the late afternoon, when fishers row back to shore, their boats riding low on the water from the weight of their catch. Most of the boats reach the docks, but one is out in the water, some 20 yards away, when **5 shrieking eels** attack the boat and the two fishermen on board.

Award Fortune to the first character to attempt to help the fishermen. If the characters manage to rescue at least one, the characters make attack rolls with 1 boon in any social conflicts or interactions involving the locals. Finally, such characters can eat and drink at The Captain's Widow free until the adventure ends. In the boat, if rescued, is a weird idol pulled up from the waters and worth 5 ss.

Within an hour after the attack, more shrieking eels enter the bay's waters, screaming when they break the water's surface. They appear in such numbers the locals fear to go back out onto the waters. Anyone can tell the characters the eels are sometimes spotted in these waters, but never in such numbers. Locals can tell the characters that Grisla (Witch's Hut) or Father Yenniker (Temple of Oceanus) might know more about what's going on.

Grisla: The young witch doesn't know why the shrieking eels have descended on Chum, but she's not surprised. Over the last few nights, she's been experiencing strange dreams of a faceless man suspended on strings like a marionette, made to walk through the village, repeatedly crying out "my child, my son!" Grisla believes danger is coming and that it is somehow connected with the man in her dreams.

If the characters ask after anyone who has recently lost a child, Grisla mentions two names: Micca and Soren. Micca's son drowned three months ago, while Soren's son died under mysterious circumstances. Both men work as fishers.

Father Yenniker: The characters find Father Yenniker drunk in the temple, seated on the ground at the base of the idol, stinking of rum and puke. He's been drinking all day, and dried vomit covers the front of his robes. Although he slurs his words, he can tell the characters the following information:

- It's unnatural for so many eels to show up.
- The old witch (confusing the long-dead crone with Grisla) might have something to do with it. Everyone knows she ruts with devils.
- Maybe one of the fishermen disturbed something they shouldn't have. Those men pull all sorts of weird things up from the sea.

Sunken Treasure: The fishers at The Captain's Widow or on the docks watching the eels admit they have pulled all sorts of unusual things out of the sea, perhaps coughed up by the ruined city reputed to lie on the bottom just offshore. Most throw these finds back, believing them to be cursed. If the characters ask if anyone pulled up anything recently, a few fishermen look around at each other awkwardly until one finally says that Micca found a medallion just last week. Micca is not at the tavern nor the docks, but the fishers can point out to the characters where he lives.

Soren: The characters can find Soren (hired killer) in The Captain's Widow. He's pounding down ale, one after the other, becoming surlier as he goes. If asked about his son, he says the boy died of sickness. If pressed, he becomes violent. If intimidated or injured, he breaks down in heaving sobs, confessing that he killed his boy in a drunken rage.

If the characters search Soren's shack, they find he lives alone in one of the drab buildings fronting the bay. There's nothing of value or suspicion in his house.

Micca: Characters searching for Micca don't find him—yet. Anyone can direct the group to the man's house, which is a small shack with three rooms, one of which is the room once occupied by a boy, left exactly the way it was when he died. The characters don't find much searching the place, but they do note that there are no knives of any kind in the shack and that there's a strange stink of burned meat everywhere inside.

THE FOG ROLLS IN

An hour after sunset, thick fog rolls in and heavily obscures the village. The eels continue to shriek and splash in the waters as the demon goads Micca to begin killing, so his victims can add their screams to the unholy din.

Phantoms: Several **phantoms** walk through the fog, crying out "the son has returned." The spirits, formerly the souls of drowned sailors, might attack characters they encounter, but no more than two at a time.

BLOODY BUTCHERY

Micca (**hired killer**) moves from shack to shack, murdering any occupants he finds, believing that doing so will bring his dead son back to life. It takes him $3d6$ minutes to kill all the occupants before he moves on to the next location. Each time he kills, his Corruption score increases by 1. Characters happening upon a crime scene discover the victims with their throats slit and sexual organs removed.

Covered in blood, his chest burned from the medallion hanging around his neck, eyes flashing with madness, Micca attacks the characters when they confront him. Micca's statistics change based on his Corruption score, as shown below.

MICCA'S CORRUPTION AND TALENTS

3 or less	Micca gains a +4 bonus to Defense and a +10 bonus to Health.
4-5	Micca makes attack rolls with 1 boon and deals 1d6 extra damage.
6-7	Twin Strike Micca attacks twice with his long knife, making each attack roll with 1 bane.
8 or more	Micca gains the Horrifying trait.

CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when the characters kill or subdue Micca. In either case, the demon hides in the medallion. If taken, the character possessing it risks being corrupted by it. If the medallion is destroyed, a **small demon** appears in an open space within 5 yards of the broken device and attacks until injured, at which point it flees.

Defeating or driving off the demon clears the bay of the shrieking eels. The locals somehow scrounge up a reward of 50 ss for the characters.

THE FACE IN BRONZE

A fist-sized bronze amulet wrought to look like a leering old man's face hangs on a heavy chain. The metal feels warm to the touch and its shadow seems to flicker and dance regardless of the lighting conditions.

Demon Possessed A small demon hides within the medallion and cannot leave it until the medallion is destroyed. The demon can communicate telepathically with any creature wearing it and can create illusions only the wearer can see that otherwise function as the *glamer* Illusion spell.

Sense Demons The medallion grows warm when within 20 yards of a demon or an ongoing effect created by a Demonology spell. The medallion grows hot when within 5 yards of such things, hot enough to cook the flesh it touches, though without dealing damage to the wearer.

FLYING COLORS

By Nat Webb



NODIGE

The ghost ship *Islander* floats on the Auroral Ocean, a trail of blood in its wake. Three days ago, Anne the Red and the crew of the *Orphanmaker*

boarded her, searching for a famous treasure rumored to be carried by the *Islander*'s captain, Edmund Doughty. The pirates failed to find the treasure, but the hapless crew of the *Islander* will never awaken from the nightmare of violence into which they were plunged. The group completes this adventure when they learn who attacked the *Islander* and obtain Doughty's treasure.

THE GHOST SHIP

The *Islander* is a small sloop from the Pirate Isles, carrying ten guns and a crew of about thirty. Under Captain Edmund Doughty, she ran packets and light shipping for the Captains' Circle, preferring to take honest work rather than engage in actual piracy.

The *Islander* was boarded by the *Orphanmaker*'s crew three days ago; the pirates were searching for a magical pocket watch that was said to be in Captain

Doughty's possession. They failed to find the watch, and in a rage, Anne ordered the crew of the *Islander* slaughtered.

The *Islander* can appear anywhere you wish, floating adrift out of a fog or appearing after a storm. She has all sails set and drifts at random unless her anchor is dropped, leaving a massive red smear of blood in the water wherever she goes.

THE POCKET WATCH

Captain Doughty did indeed possess the magical pocket watch sought by the pirate captain. He was bringing it back from Lij, the City of Wonders, as a gift for one of the Captains' Circle when the *Islander* was taken. Anne learned of the watch's existence from Nathaniel Hawkins, a spy for the pirate captain who was posing as a sailor on the *Islander*.

The watch appears to be normal. When found, it has wound down and is not ticking. It can be wound anywhere from one to twelve turns and then run for an equal number of hours.

The watch does nothing abnormal during the day, but if it is running between dusk and dawn, a large demon immediately springs from the watch and begins attacking all those around it other than the watch's bearer. It begins with damage equal to ten for every hour less than twelve the watch was wound, so if the watch has seven hours remaining, the demon begins with 50 damage. It gains 10 damage every hour. The demon disappears instantly if the watch winds down or when dawn breaks.

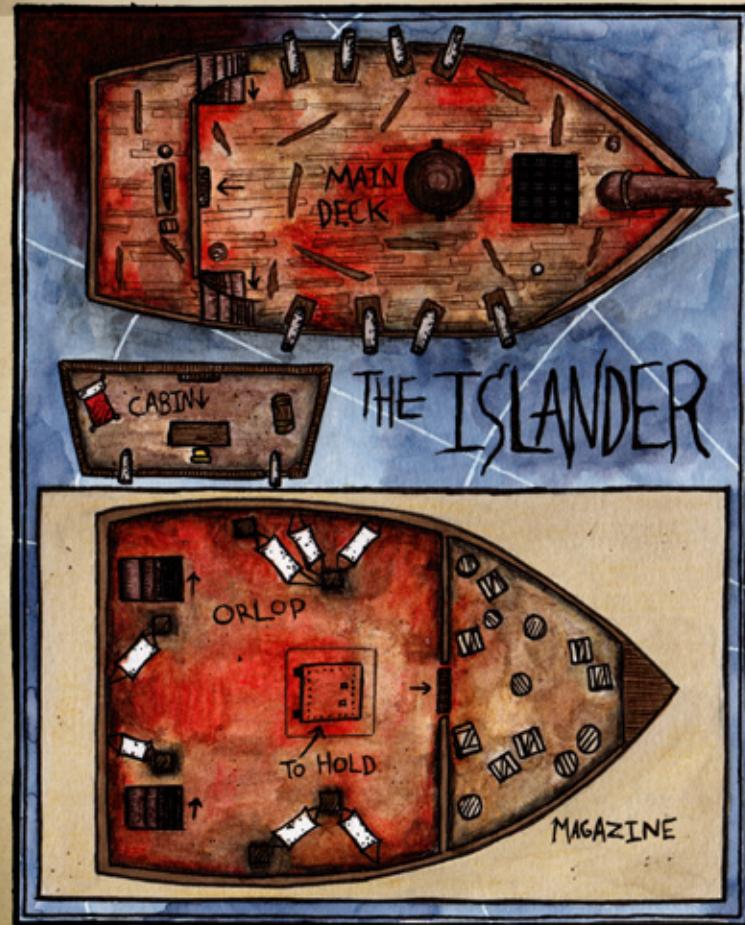
ABOARD THE ISLANDER

How the *Islander* appears depends on whether the group boards her during the day or night. Specific differences are given below, but the most obvious is that at night, the restless ghosts of the *Islander*'s crew relive their final moments in the brutal battle that claimed their lives.

MAIN DECK

The main deck of the *Islander* boasts four guns on each side, with two chase guns set at the bow and stern, and a single great mast with full sail set from her attempt to outrun the *Orphanmaker*. The main deck is red with blood and covered in a shattered mess of splinters and rope. There are no bodies. The billowing of the sails and the creaking ropes are the only sounds one can hear other than a single errant cannonball that rolls around the deck as the ship pitches.

Night: Most of the *Islander*'s crew is on deck serving the ship's guns. These spirits are too distracted to notice the party unless interrupted, in which case they fight as phantoms.



There are four riflemen (**manes**, but dealing 3d6 damage with their rifles) seated on two high crossbars of the mast, who believe the characters to be boarders. They fire on opposite turns, so two shots per turn. The crossbars are 5 and 10 yards up and hold two spirits each. If the characters cuts down their crossbars during the day, these spirits do not return at night.

POOP DECK

The ship's wheel spins freely; clearly the line to the rudder has been cut. The ship's bell hangs nearby. The binnacle (a standing compartment by the wheel) holds an hourglass, sextant, and compass. Peering through the sextant shows every living creature viewed as a ghastly version of itself; the viewer gains 1 Insanity. The first two can be removed but the compass is bolted down, and can only be read if the small oil lamp in the binnacle is lit. The compass spins wildly and does not stop. None of these items have any effect off the *Islander*.

Night: The sextant shows any spirits in their original, corporeal forms.

Starting the hourglass at night causes the bloody half-hour of the attack to play out in phantom form around the ship. The group sees a ghostly version of the *Orphanmaker* come alongside, and all hell breaking loose as the pirates board the *Islander*. The name of the *Orphanmaker* is clearly visible on her side and stern, as is her pirate flag. The characters can move about the ship in the chaos, but come under attack by 1d3 sailors or pirates (**manes**) each time they move from one area to another. After the sand runs out, the melee disappears and the ship reverts to its usual static scene of phantom battle.

Ringing the bell eight times at night causes the ship's crew to go through a change of watch, as the sailors and marines from the orlop deck replace those on the main deck. If they move quickly, the group can slip into the captain's cabin during this changeover.

CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Captain Doughty's small private cabin contains a bed, writing desk and chair, the stern chase cannon, and a locked sea chest holding the captain's clothing and 50 cp in paper rolls of ten each. Two unlit lanterns hang by the glass windows at the rear of the room.

Sitting on the writing desk are two books: *Forester's Manual of Seamanship* and the ship's log. The *Manual* is open to a page detailing the proper ringing of the ship's bell: one ring for every half an hour in a watch, culminating in eight rings to signal change of watch. Tucked into this page is a note from the Captains' Circle commanding Captain Doughty to begin using this method of timekeeping.

The ship's log is mostly dull, but details the *Islander*'s arrival and departure from Lij eight days

earlier. Its final entry is noteworthy: *Under attack by Anne the Red, damn her eyes! Hawkins must have tipped him off, may that bastard burn in Hell forever! I must not let the watch fall into her hands. I shall wind it and then we shall see. God forgive me, but I shall wind it.*

There is a false panel built into the left-hand wall of the cabin. Behind it is a small locked chest that holds the pocket watch, 14 ss in a silk handkerchief, and a love letter from a woman named Rosie.

Night: At night the door to the captain's cabin is guarded by two phantom marines (**phantoms**, with the Hero role applied, wielding ghostly sabers). The first time the group approaches, they see these marines brutally cut down two pirates, which dissipate into smoke. The group can slip into the cabin during a change of watch or during the phantom boarding action (see Poop Deck above), but will be attacked by one phantom marine and 1d3 **manes** in the latter case.

Within the cabin, the ghost of Captain Doughty is desperately clawing at the false panel, glancing behind him in terror every few seconds. If disturbed he fights as a **phantom**.

If either of the lanterns is lit, the grinning face of Anne the Red can be seen in the reflected glow on the stern windows.

ORLOP

Dozens of hammocks are slung from the beams of the lower deck. Blood is everywhere, as well as the scattered remains of sailors' belongings, but no bodies. In the bloody muck on the floor are 3d20 bits and 1d20 cp. Hidden under the filth is a locked hatch that leads down to the hold.

Night: The ghostly corpses of sailors, their throats slit, fill the hammocks. Phantom boys run powder cartridges from the magazine to the stairs.

MAGAZINE

This small room holds the ship's black powder stores, which are extremely flammable, evident to anyone who gets a success on a Perception challenge roll. Anyone carelessly entering this room with metal armor or weapons will, on a roll of 1 on 1d20, spark a flame that will explode and sink the ship in 1d3 minutes. Bringing an unprotected flame into this room accomplishes the same effect without having to roll.

HOLD

The hold contains the corpses of the *Islander*'s entire crew, where the pirates stowed them before cutting the ship loose. The hold stinks of death, with an unnaturally large pool of blood in its center, which is leaking profusely into the ocean.

THE CURSED SNUFFBOX

By Robert Adducci



EXPERT

Wrecker's Roost, a small town on one of the Pirate Isles, has a problem—its people are disappearing at an alarming rate.

When Lord Halidale Insmeister's son went missing, he offered a reward to anyone who can find and return his son. The characters complete the adventure when they unmask the villain responsible for the disappearances, and destroy the cursed relic that gives him his power.

KLINZ AND THE CURSED SNUFFBOX

Balic Klinz, a cultist of the Unspeakable One, recently came into the possession of a cursed relic, purchasing the item from a member of the *Orphanmaker*'s crew when the pirate vessel last came into port. The relic turns people into vile seaborne beastmen, and Klinz has been using it on townspeople he's kidnapped.



The Snuffbox: When a creature inhales snuff from this small silver container, it must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 3 banes or gain 1d3 Corruption, 1d3 Insanity, and become cursed (as if by a rank 5 spell). While cursed in this way, a creature becomes addicted to the snuff and is subject to the effects of deprivation as if the snuff were food. If the creature's Corruption total reaches 9, the creature transforms into a seaborne beastman, retaining none of its original statistics, and is no longer addicted to the snuff.

Seaborne Beastmen: Beastmen created by the curse gain physical qualities of aquatic creatures instead of goats, wolves, or bulls. Seaborne fomors have seal heads, seaborne wargs have barracuda heads, while seaborne minotaurs have walrus heads. As well, many have scaly skin, chitinous armor, maws of shark teeth, narwhal-like horns, tentacles, spines, fins, webbed hands, walrus-like tusks, or pincer-like claws instead of hands. All seaborne beastmen have the swimmer trait.

NIGHTLY EVENTS

Each night, Klinz and his beastmen kidnap locals.

First Night: The seaborne beastmen terrorize the coastal villages. The next morning word reaches the town that a small fishing village north of the town was decimated, all its occupants gone. If explored, tracks lead into the sea.

If the characters explore the coast, 1d3 wargs, 1d6 mutant crabs (large animal with swimmer trait), and 1d6 + 1 fomor emerge from the water and attack. The beastmen take prisoners and bring them to Klinz's shrine.

Second Night: Klinz searches for more victims. If the characters have spoken with him, he might approach one character and offer pinches of snuff from his snuffbox.

Third Night: A dockworker goes missing sometime during his shift. If the characters are on the docks 2d3 wargs and 1d3 mutant crabs (large animals with swimmer trait) attack them. The beastmen take any prisoners to Klinz's shrine.

Fourth Night: The beastmen raid a homestead on the edge of town. All of the inhabitants are either missing or dead. Tracks lead into the sea, most of them human—one set, however, is particularly large and flipper-like. The townsfolk are visibly afraid. The sheriff offers 50 gc, which he gained from the noble, to find who is behind the raids.

Fifth Night: A search party that went north to the Devil's Fingers fails to return before dark.

RUMORS AND INVESTIGATION

The following rumors spread in response to the disappearances and the unsettling sightings.

- The sea swallows people who spend too much time by it at night.
- The disappeared were transformed into sea wolves, skinchangers of the sea.
- People leave all the time; most likely, these people had business out of town.
- Friends and family of several missing people claim to have seen their loved ones on the shore just north of town.
- A small fishing vessel with a half dozen crew was due yesterday, but hasn't been seen. Their favorite fishing spot was north of town near the Devil's Fingers.
- Tisvale Insmeister has recently been consorting with a rough crowd. A mate of his recalls that he met with some of the crew of the pirate vessel *Orphanmaker*. The *Orphanmaker* is no longer in port, but the man who introduced Tisvale to the pirates is. The man's name is Klinz.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Characters investigating the disappearances are bound to run across the following people and places.

Balic Klinz: The villain responsible for all the disappearances, Balic Klinz devoted himself to the Unspeakable One following the drownings of his wife and children at sea. Driven mad by grief and alcohol, he yearns to see the whole world drown. He believes the snuffbox came to him by the will of his dark master and sees it as his "sacred" duty to transform everyone he can.

Klize wears a worn-out long brown coat and a dirty tricorn hat. He speaks quickly, occasionally stopping as if lost in thought for a moment, before resuming what he was saying. If questioned, he offers the following information:

- He arranged a meeting between Tisvale Insmeister and the pirate crew of the *Orphanmaker*.
- Klinz reveals he met the crew when he purchased the ornate snuffbox from them.
- He lies about not knowing what happened after the meeting (he gave Tisvale cursed snuff and took him to the shrine of the Unspeakable One).
- When the characters push for more information Klinz tells them that Tisvale was involved with some questionable folk who kept a small pirate camp north of town along the coast, giving them specific directions to the camp.

- If captured and interrogated, Klinz reveals the location of the shrine and from whom he got the snuffbox.

If threatened or attacked, Klinz pulls the snuffbox from his pocket and blows in the box, causing a cloud of snuff to erupt from it. All creatures within 3 yards are exposed to the powder, including Klinz, as described above.

Pirate Camp: A ruined pirate camp sits north of town along the coast in a small cove. If Klinz pointed the group to the camp, he sends 2d3 wargs and 1d3 mutant crabs (large animal with swimmer trait) to capture them. Defeated characters are taken to Klinz's shrine. Captured beastmen can reveal the location of the shrine.

Devil's Fingers: Near a cliff face north of town, several pillars of rock jut up from the sea. Locals call the place Devil's Fingers for their crooked appearance. Klinz found a submerged entrance to a cave system there and uses the caves as his shrine. At night, Klinz might be spotted swimming down to the entrance with his latest victim in tow. At the tunnel entrance, 4 mutant crabs (large animal with swimmer trait) stand guard. The tunnel leads to an air-filled cavern system with three separate caves linked by short passages.

Inside the cave is a shrine to the Unspeakable One, assembled from driftwood and decorated with bits of rubbish pulled from the sea. At any time, there are 1d6 fomor and 1d3 wargs here performing profane rites and rutting.

In an adjoining cavern an additional 1d6 fomor and 1d3 wargs watch over 5 prisoners, each of which have almost transformed into fomor. The prisoners are what remains of Tisvale Insmeister and the fishing crew. Klinz is here watching over the transformation of his newest servants. Once combat breaks out, Klinz calls for the minotaur, who rushes into the room during the next round.

The third cavern is Klinz's private chambers, filled with treasure from the sea, some of which is valuable, totaling 200 gc. Klinz's possessions are guarded over by an ogre that the cursed snuffbox corrupted into a seaborn minotaur with long walrus-like tusks jutting out from its face.

CONCLUSION

Killing Klinz or taking the snuffbox temporarily ends the curse. There is no way to reverse the curse for those already turned into beastmen, but the ones who have yet to succumb see the curse's effects fade over time provided they perform no other vile acts that corrupt them further.

THE EELWIVES' LAMENT



EXPERT

By Jason Bulmahn

Not everything that the pirate captain Anne the Red and her men stole from Rudebendius Mal was of obvious value. Some of the objects were grotesque and bizarre, most particularly the Phallus of the Eelwives, a pickled eel with its tail cut off that twitches and undulates inside an iron-banded jar. When Arctan Holbrin, a wealthy merchant lord, saw the foul thing and its accompanying ritual book, he bought it without a second thought.

Arctan has never been too popular with the fairer sex, usually leaving his partners frustrated and unsatisfied; he is often the butt of mean-spirited jokes questioning his prowess told behind his back. The Phallus, however, offered to change all that by giving him the ability to please anyone with a taste for such things, male or female, if only he grafts it onto himself.

This adventure begins on the night of Arctan's terrible ritual, which also summons the Eelwives to emerge from the briny depths to demand their pleasure. The group completes the adventure when they destroy the Phallus.



SETTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure takes place in a small port town of your choice before the player characters track down the pirates selling off stolen goods. The precise location of the included scenes is left vague so that you can place them around the characters as they deal with the rising tide of eelwives.

The nightmare begins an hour after sundown, as Arctan begins the ritual to replace his own sexual organ with the Phallus. Start with "Raining Eels," following up with any scenes that are appropriate to the characters' situation. Make sure to include "Eelwives Rise" sometime around 11 p.m. The events of the evening conclude at around 1 a.m. with "Eelwives' Pleasure," unless ended earlier by the group's actions.

SCENES

The following scenes start at approximately 9pm with "Raining Eels." In addition to this introduction to the terror of the evening, only the "Eelwives Rise" scene is required, which marks the transition into the late-night scenes. Note that scenes marked "late night" can only occur after "Eelwives Rise."

Raining Eels: Arctan's initiation of the ritual causes a sudden storm to materialize over the town. This takes place in just under 30 minutes, and any character outdoors must get a success on an Intellect challenge roll with 1 boon to determine that the storm is not a natural occurrence, and that it seems to be centered on the town, forming over Arctan's house, which is in the most affluent neighborhood.

At first, thick clouds form over the town, and then after several incredibly loud thunderclaps, a heavy downpour—a mix of slimy rain and thousands of small biting eels—begins to fall. Characters outdoors must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane; any who fail are knocked prone and take 1d3 damage from the biting eels.

After 30 minutes, the storm turns to simple driving rain, with the majority of the eels slithering away or rolling off into deep puddles, ponds, and gutters, making them somewhat treacherous to fall into.

Wounded Sailor: A drunken sailor comes bursting into the nearest tavern, screaming for a doctor and holding the crotch of his trousers. It is clear he has been terribly wounded and blood pours down his legs. He takes a swing at anyone who tries to restrain him without saying that they can help him (impaired commoner).

Characters examining the man see that his pants are ripped and his genitals have been bitten off. Getting a success on an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane can stop

the bleeding, as well as identify that whatever caused the wound had rows and rows of razor-sharp teeth.

If questioned, the sailor says that a beautiful maiden, entirely naked, approached him down by the docks and lustily embraced him. Not a moment later his manhood was bitten off, but he swears that her mouth was locked on his and nowhere near his crotch. The only other thing he remembers is that she was “cold... oh so cold.”

Guarded Panic: Four guards of the town militia (patrollers) are hurriedly making their way back to the guard station. They could be encountered on the street, discussing the terrible rumors in hushed tones, or at the local tavern where they stopped for a pint to calm their nerves. In either case, they will not speak freely if they believe anyone is attempting to eavesdrop.

The guards have been getting strange reports from all over town ever since the storm began, some related to the eelwives, others not. Feel free to add your own rumors or red herrings as appropriate.

- A young girl was found face down in a puddle filled with eels. She was dead, her face having been entirely eaten off.
- The harbormaster reported seeing strange shapes walking atop the waves and screams coming from one of the small ships moored in the harbor. The entire crew has gone missing.
- Screams were heard coming from a house in the merchant quarter just as the storm set in, but nobody is sure from where.
- Odd chanting was heard coming from inside a burnt-out shrine just after the rainstorm began. The guard reported hearing calls to a long-forgotten storm god.

Eelwives Rise: A few hours after the storm begins, a few dozen eelwives walk into the harbor, totally naked but for the seaweed draped upon them, striding across the water as if it were dry land. These waterlogged corpses were once women who drowned themselves while lamenting a lost love. Sinking into the depths, they became hosts to a foul colony of corrupted eels, all of whom were also female, desperate to find the last male of their species. The male eel was caught years ago by Rudebendius Mal and transformed into the cursed phallus. Drawn to it, the eelwives followed the pirate ship and have now come ashore, hoping to find their mate and consummate their desire.

When the eelwives emerge, they immediately begin terrorizing the town. They brutally slaughter any woman they meet, and attempt to seduce any man and devour his genitals. The eelwives should be treated as **zombies**. They can move across liquid surfaces, i.e., walk on water. Creatures who gain Insanity from seeing the eelwives also become charmed for as long as they remain frightened from

gaining Insanity in this way. Finally, if an eelwife grabs a male character with its grasping hands, its next attack is made with the eels (treat as the teeth attack, but with 1 extra boon).

The eelwives begin at the harbor, methodically working their way toward the merchant’s home, where their mate awaits. The characters can learn about this from fleeing townsfolk, terrified guards, horribly wounded men, or the general chaos and screaming in the streets.

A Feast (Late Night): By now, the characters are probably searching for the source of the mayhem. In the market square a group of eelwives (one per character) is attempting to devour a group of guardsmen. Most of the men have strange looks of ecstasy on their face, even though eels protruding out of the women are gnawing away at their genitals. If the characters have not yet encountered the eelwives, they must make a Will challenge roll against the **Horrifying** trait with 1 extra bane.

Last Stand (Late Night): A group of commoners have barricaded themselves in an alley behind a pair of overturned wagons. They are being beset by the eelwives and as the characters arrive, the men in the group are planning on making a run for it to lure them away. If the characters can fight them off, the alley might be made defensible.

Eelwives’ Pleasure (Late Night): Eventually the eelwives make it to Arctan’s abode, intent upon taking him back to the sea, where they will use him to sate their long-deferred desires.

Arctan has spent the evening in agony. Driven mad by carnal urges, but unable to control his new body part, he instead locked himself in his study, and is fighting to gain control of the Phallus. All of his servants have fled except for his old butler, who stands at the front door, desperately calling out for help. He does not know what Arctan did, but his duty to his master has kept him here, despite the agonizing screams and bloody mess. If the eelwives arrive first, they tear the butler apart.

It should not be hard for the characters to follow the eelwives here. They can attempt to force their way inside, only to find Arctan fighting with himself in his blood-splattered study. If they kill Arctan, the Phallus detaches and tries to attach itself to the nearest male character. They can instead try to cut it off. In either case, treat the phallus as a **shrieking eel**. Any attacks made against it while it is still attached to Arctan, who fights to protect it, are made with 1 bane. They might also simply stand aside and let the eelwives claim the man, causing the characters to make a Will challenge roll or gain 1d3 Insanity and 1 Corruption.

The eelwives peacefully return to the waters once they have the Phallus. If it’s destroyed, all of the eelwives’ bodies instantly fall apart, with rotting eels and slime pouring out of their slimy remains.

THE LURID LIGHTHOUSE



EXPERT

By Greg Marks

After their big score, not all of the *Orphanmaker*'s crew were content to continue to follow their captain.

One particular troublemaker, "Restless" Braxton Rave, was the pirate ship's sea artist, or navigator. Under Restless's sway, a few pirates stole more than their allotted shares and set out on their own. They are hiding from the wrath of Anne the Red in the ruins of a lighthouse on a small islet across from whatever seaside village or town the characters currently find themselves. Selling off pieces of their ill-gotten gains, the renegade crew are unknowingly spreading cursed items about as they themselves are slowly mutating into horrific monstrosities.

Either from previous adventures, or through scuttlebutt heard while in town, the characters have determined the ruined lighthouse to be the hideout of unsavory persons responsible for selling or trading away many of the cursed items they've encountered or heard about so far.

THE ISLET

The islet is no more than a ten-minute walk across rocky terrain, covered in scrub and a few trees. While the pirates once mounted a more thorough watch of their home, the treasure's corrupting effect has made them apathetic and inattentive, allowing the characters to land unnoticed.

Bloody Sally and Jon Stringer still make patrols of the island during the day. After dark, "Restless" Braxton Rave, or more accurately the thing he has become, swims out of the undersea caves with its young, in search of food.

THE BEACH

A small bay offers a sandy landing and protection from the sight of passing ships. A launch, with the name *Orphanmaker* painted on the side, is hidden in the bushes. A cold campfire not more than a few days old contains the remnants of fish bones.

Characters searching the area who get a success on a Perception challenge roll with 1 bane locate a cache buried in the sand under the boat that includes 2d6 ss worth of goods taken from the ship and a pouch with 1d6 ss and 1 gc. The coins are strange and foreign to the characters, having been minted in Eremeä.

If the characters search the beach, or spend significant time here, they attract the attention of Bloody Sally and Jon Stringer.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

The ruined lighthouse is visible atop a low hill. Only a story and a half remain, the rest having collapsed into the sea long ago. There are no windows on the ground floor. A stench comes from a nearby shallow pit the pirates haphazardly dug to use as a latrine.

Ground Floor: The door to the lighthouse is barred unless Sally and Jon are on patrol, but can be battered down if a character gets a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. The room has ten bedrolls, though all but two of them do not appear to have been used in some time. Stone stairs go up to the next floor and down to the basement.

Next to a small hearth is a trunk locked with a good lock that imposes 2 banes on attempts to pick it. Bloody Sally has the key. In the trunk are 7d6 cp, 5d6 ss, and a gem worth 10 gc that glows with a sickly purple light when held against warm skin. Any character with the gem in their possession who completes a rest must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gain 1 Insanity from horrific dreams about the sea.

Bloody Sally and Jon Stringer (pirates, see Appendix) make this place their home for now. Sally has developed weeping sores all over her body, and Jon has horrible dreams about wanting to drown. The pair has grown fearful of what's been happening to the others and plan to run off the next time they take the launch for supplies. They are looking for a way out, so any attempts to convince the pair to turn on their fellows are possible and made with 1 boon if they are allowed to take their treasure with them. If bribed, they are willing to describe the horrors that have befallen them since finding the Queen of Gold and leaving the *Orphanmaker*. They don't know where the Queen of Gold is, but believe Hawkfaced Jake might.

Second Floor: The stinking, tarp-covered ruin of the second floor has become the domain of Hawkfaced Jake (veteran). The walls are covered in drawings of people from the village, inked from Jake's blood, semen, and feces. Jake spends his days with a tripod-mounted spyglass, watching the people of the village and taking notes. While his journal originally detailed potential threats and scores, it becomes increasingly incoherent over time. The later pages focus entirely on lovingly detailed descriptions of the village's children and their routines. If studied in detail, there are enough clues throughout to construct a map to hunt for the Queen of Gold; doing so, however, will take a week of study and threatens the sanity of the reader. The character must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or gain 1d3 Insanity.

If bothered, Jake becomes irate, unleashing the full horror of his corruption. His genitals have mutated into a two-headed eel creature (treat as an *amphisbaena* with a speed of 0).

Basement: The basement is filled with a dozen or so empty trunks and lockers. Behind the stack, there is what appears to be pile of bloody clothing. Closer inspection requires the character succeed on a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or gain 1d3 Insanity when they realize that it is not just a pile of cloth, but also several sets of moldering human skin ripped skull to groin.

The walls are covered in deep gouges and in one spot the wall has been broken through to a natural tunnel that winds its way down to the undersea caves. A success on an Intellect challenge roll notes that many of the bricks are missing. The tunnel has been rigged with a crude falling bricks trap.

FALLING BRICKS TRAP

A net filled with bricks has been fastened to the ceiling and disguised with wet mud. The bricks are rigged to collapse when a creature steps on a tripwire. When sprung, the bricks fall from the ceiling and any creature under it takes 4d6 damage. A creature takes half the damage with a success on an Agility challenge roll. A success on Perception challenge roll finds the tripwire and a success on an Intellect challenge roll disarms it.

UNDERSEA CAVES

The hole in the basement proceeds through a natural tunnel into the center of the islet where the gestation cave can be found. The entire place is wet and smells of rot. The thrumming sound of pounding surf echoes throughout.

Gestation Cave: The tunnel ends in a room half filled with water. Submerged in the water are hundreds of fleshy eggs that glow with a sickly phosphorescence. Inside each gestates a tiny horror: a humanoid infant with distinctly piscine features. Smashing an egg kills the fetus inside. The eggs are surrounded by $3d6 \times 100$ cp and 2d6 pieces of jewelry worth 20 ss each; the coins and jewelry are all from Eremeä. In the center of the room, rising out of the water, is a staff made of coral-studded driftwood. A success on an Intellect challenge roll suggests that the staff is somehow helping the creatures to gestate. If taken, the staff can be used once per day to cast the *wellspring of life* spell from the Water tradition. Roll a d6 when doing so: on a result of 1, the user gains 1 Insanity and becomes obsessed with the sea.

The fetuses are tended by six of the crew, now fully transformed by their corruption into **deep ones** (see *Shadow of the Demon Lord Freeport Companion* or use **wargs** with the aquatic descriptor instead), the largest of which is clearly the source of the eggs. Creatures in the water without the aquatic descriptor suffer 1 bane when making attacks and Agility challenge rolls. A tunnel leads from this room to the feeding chamber.



Feeding Chamber: Like the gestation cave, this room is half-filled with water. Mounds of rotting fish and corpses rise above the water. The Thing (see Appendix) that was “Restless” Braxton Rave staves off its endless hunger here and nurtures its spawn: 3 tiny demons who take the form of piscine toddlers. Their need to feed is overwhelming.

Exit Tunnel: This entirely submerged tunnel exits from the feeding chamber out to the sea on the opposite side of the island from the beach. The Thing and the other corrupted pirates exit through here to hunt when the sun goes down.

ENDING THE CURSE

In order to end the curse, all of the treasure must be destroyed, such as being cleansed with fire, or simply cast into the sea. The staff and purple gem are utterly evil and a *sense magic* spell reveals them to be tainted with Demonology. The coins and jewelry radiate magic as well, but can be safely melted down, purified, and half their value recovered by characters determined enough to make the effort.



THE QUEEN IN EXILE

By Steve Kenson



EXPERT

Having learned of the fabled Queen of Gold from current or former crewmembers of the pirate ship *Orphanmaker*, the characters set out

to find the small island where the fantastic treasure is hidden. What they do not know is that the Queen of Gold is worth far more than a king's ransom in precious metal; she is also enlivened with a sorcerous spirit, one that constantly exudes a corrupting magical energy.

The Queen's presence has warped the local wildlife of the island, transforming them into tribes of savage beastmen, all of which worship and covet their "golden goddess" and supernatural "mother." The largest and most powerful of the beastmen tribes has seized the Queen of Gold and built what they consider a suitable shrine for her. They are now preparing to launch a holy war in her name against all the other creatures of the island.

Meanwhile, the Queen of Gold is enraged about her abduction, and fervently desires to return home to her "husband" Rudebendius Mal, a powerful necromancer. The problem is that she knows absolutely nothing about the mundane world, or even where "home" is in relation to her current location. She needs someone to bear her back to Eremeä, which is where the characters come in.

THE ISLAND

Left for safekeeping by Anne the Red until she can return for it, the Queen of Gold is hidden on a small island: a nondescript, nameless place chosen precisely because it is uncharted, remote, and uninteresting. It lacks any natural harbor or lagoon in which to drop anchor, making it even less appealing or worth going ashore to most seafarers.

The island is a volcanic promontory a few miles across, with a tall, conical peak rising high above the sea, surrounded by a band of thick jungle, then a stretch of black sand beach to the sea. One side of the island has a number of small sea caves, with a bank of broken and jumbled rocks before them being constantly pounded by the surf.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Only two places on the island really matter to the characters: the sea cave where they believe the Queen of Gold and other pirate treasure has been hidden, and the volcanic shrine where the golden statue has been moved by the victorious Goretusk and his jungle beastmen.

THE SEA CAVE

The combination of vulcanism and tides have created a number of small sea caves in the black rock encrusting the western side of the island. The largest of these caves is where the crew of the *Orphanmaker* concealed some of their treasure, including the Queen of Gold. The cave is large enough for a small launch to sail into it, which is what the pirates did.

Bipedal, nonhuman footprints in the wet sand within the cave are clear evidence someone other than the pirates has been here, entering and leaving through a narrow cleft in the rock leading up and out into the jungle. Once beyond the cleft, it takes a success on a Perception challenge roll with 1 bane to follow the tracks to the slopes of the volcano (see “The Volcano Shrine”).

There is also a shallow pit dug in the sand, with a partially buried wooden chest at the bottom. The chest is locked and it takes one minute and a success on an Intellect challenge roll with one bane to pick the lock.

Within a minute of the characters entering the sea cave, 1d3 sharkmen (see Appendix) follow them in. If there is only one sharkman, it surfaces briefly to assess the presence of the strangers, and then swims off to gather reinforcements, returning after 5 minutes with 1d3 additional sharkmen. Any character getting a success on a Perception challenge roll spots the sharkman just before it submerges, allowing them a brief chance to stop it before it swims away. If two or more sharkmen appear, they attack immediately.

The chest contains a leather sack holding 212 ss, a strand of fine pearls with a gold clasp worth 12 gc, a small jade carving of a nymph worth 5 gc, an engraved silver snuff box worth 1 gc, and a gold filigree broach set with a small emerald worth 10 gc.

THE VOLCANO SHRINE

Nearly three-quarters of the way up the slope of the volcano, a broad cleft leads into a small cavern overlooking a deep magma pocket, casting the cavern in a fiery orange light. Any creature who falls or is thrown from the precipice into the magma pocket dies instantly unless it is immune to fire damage.

A warg and two fomor of the Jungle Tribe guard the shrine at all times. The magma makes the air shimmer with heat, and the cavern is filled with the sounds of the molten rock constantly hissing and

popping. This environment makes it difficult for the beastmen to notice anyone approach, requiring them to make any Perception challenge rolls with 1 bane.

The Queen of Gold is nestled into a depression in the cave wall, standing on a crude pedestal of piled rocks and surrounded by a rotting pile of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and choice pieces of dead animals placed there as offerings. See “Conclusion” for details about this relic.

THREATS

To reach their goal and escape the island, the characters have to deal with two main threats: the various beastmen on land, sea, and even in the skies; and the volcano at the heart of the island.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Each hour the characters are on the island, roll for a random encounter. If any Jungle Tribe beastmen manage to capture any character(s), they take them straight to Goretusk.

ISLAND ENCOUNTERS

d6	Encounter
1	Nothing
2	A pair of vulturemen (see Appendix) swoop down and attack
3	A minor tremor shakes the ground, with the effects of the <i>tremor</i> spell from the Earth tradition
4	A patrol of 1d6 + 3 fomor led by a warg spots the characters
5	A major tremor shakes the island, like the effects of an <i>earthquake</i> spell from the Earth tradition, with a duration of 1d6 rounds
6	A patrol of 1d6 + 3 wargs spots the characters

THE BEAST TRIBES

The corrupting power of the Queen of Gold’s magical energy has warped the local wildlife, turning them into savage humanoid beastmen. This includes the nearby sea-life and even the birds flying over the volcanic peak and jungle. The new beastmen have grouped themselves into three loose “tribes” based on their environment: the sea, the sky, and the jungle, with the jungle tribe being the most numerous.

THE SEA TRIBE

The Sea Tribe consists of a gang of a dozen sharkmen, made up of several different species, including great whites, hammerheads, and tiger sharks. The sharkmen were the first beastmen to arise from the Queen’s influence and therefore consider themselves her “chosen” people (see Appendix for the sharkmen’s statistics).

THE SKY TRIBE

The Sky Tribe is made up of two dozen vulturemen, vaguely humanoid vultures with shriveled, blackened heads and three-fingered hands at the apex joints of their wings. (see Appendix for the vulturemen's statistics).

THE JUNGLE TRIBE

The Jungle Tribe is the most numerous, made up of two dozen **fomor** and a dozen **wargs**, all warped from various jungle beasts, led by the boar-man Goretusk (see Appendix for Goretusk's statistics).

THE VOLCANO

The Queen of Gold's presence has done more than just warp the life of the island: when the jungle beastmen set the Queen in the shrine they built in the volcanic cavern, her influence began to awaken the volcano as well, and it is slowly building towards an eruption.

The superstitious beastmen believe the tremors and the increasing plumes of dark smoke from the peak are signs that their Goddess-Queen is angry. In order to appease her, they believe, they must utterly annihilate their enemies, the other two tribes. They also believe that living sacrifices to her might help quell her anger, should they happen to capture any of the characters.

Tremor Count: As the characters explore the island and deal with its threats, keep track of the instances of minor and major tremors that occur on the **Island Encounters** table. Each minor tremor counts for 1, and each major tremor counts as 2. When the total tremor count reaches 10, the volcano erupts! Castings of the *tremor* and *earthquake* spells from the Earth tradition anywhere on the volcano add 1 or 2 to the tremor count, respectively. An eruption also occurs once the Queen of Gold is moved away from the slopes of the volcano, regardless of the current tremor count.

Eruption: The entire island is affected as if by the *earthquake* spell from the Earth tradition, lasting $1d6 + 10$ minutes, after which the volcano explodes with enough force to obliterate all life on the island. During the eruption, lava flows down the slopes of the volcano, setting the jungle aflame, and filling the air with ash, smoke, and terrible heat. You can call for a Strength or Agility challenge roll each minute for the characters to avoid $3d6$ damage from the various hazards.

If she is still in the shrine during the eruption, the Queen of Gold slides down the slopes upon one of the lava flows, totally unharmed. If the characters are able to somehow pull the statue from the lava flow, they find it is not even hot to the touch.

APPROACHES

The characters can approach retrieving the Queen of Gold and getting off the island in a number of ways. Allow the players the opportunity to come up with their own approach, using the guidelines presented here to assess their chance of success.

ASSAULT

The simplest approach is a full-on frontal assault: the characters hack and slash their way through the jungle and any beastmen standing between them and the Queen of Gold. A capable group of ruthless expert adventurers can wade through the blood of dozens of beastmen to reach their goal, provided they're not too badly damaged or depleted in any one fight. In the characters' favor is the fact that the different tribes of beastmen will *not* cooperate with each other, and might even attack each other instead of the characters, given the opportunity.

STEALTH

Some groups might prefer the stealthy approach, doing their best to slip in, take the Queen, and then leave the island as quietly as they came. This is difficult, but possible. The beastmen of the island have never seen outsiders before, and will initially attribute any deaths or attacks to the enemy tribes. Adventurers who make a point of dispatching their enemies quickly and quietly, and preventing any of them from escaping and warning the others, can whittle down the numbers of the beastmen considerably before they are discovered.

DECEPTION

The characters can try outright deception to convince the beastmen they themselves are gods or powerful spirits, perhaps the chosen ones of the "golden goddess" come to reclaim her. While the beastmen are stupid and gullible, they are also selfish, greedy, and vicious. They will demand proof of the newcomers' "divine power," and will not give up the Queen of Gold without a fight. Even if the characters cow the beastmen with a show of force or magic, it will not last long, especially once it becomes clear the characters mean to take their goddess away from the island.

ALLIANCE

Characters might try and strike up an alliance with one or more of the beastmen tribes in order to use them against the others. The beastmen are easy to deceive, but they're also unpredictably vicious and violent, and cooperating with creatures unlike them is an alien concept. The strangers might need to knock some heads or spill some blood before the beastmen

respect them enough to parley. Even then, the corrupt, treacherous creatures will turn on their new allies once they have destroyed their various enemies.

CONCLUSION

Once the characters have found and taken the Queen of Gold, they need to get off the island. The beastmen are supernaturally drawn to the statue, and they go berserk looking for it as soon as it is discovered missing. Of course, once the party takes the Queen away from the volcano, it erupts and then everyone has bigger things to worry about.

The end of the adventure ideally features the characters making a mad dash through the jungle towards the beach or the sea caves carrying the Queen of Gold while the ground quakes, the jungle begins to catch fire, and crazed beastmen give chase and attack.

Even once they reach the water, the characters are not necessarily safe, as the sharkmen and vulturemen can easily follow them. At that point the volcano explodes, taking most of the island with it, which either puts a quick end to any remaining threats, or gives the characters one final challenge before they reach safety.

Once they have escaped from the island, or possibly before that, the Queen communicates with her “rescuers”—read or paraphrase the following:

“Know that I am the bride of the dread and all-powerful necromancer Rudebendius Mal. My beloved husband shall avenge my abduction by visiting upon you a storm of devastation such as your world has never known. Your only hope of survival is to return me home. If you do so, I shall intercede on your behalf and attempt to calm his terrible wrath.”

Unfortunately, the Queen of Gold does not exactly know where her home is—the geography of this part of the world so far from Eremeä is completely unknown to her. To learn that, the characters are going to need to track down the pirates who originally stole her from the necromancer.

THE QUEEN OF GOLD

The relic known as the *Queen of Gold* is a three-foot tall statue of a beautiful, regal human woman with a cold, distant expression some describe as both “mysterious” and “alluring,” with eyes that appear to follow the viewer wherever they move.

Although the statue appears to be cast in solid gold, it is indestructible, and none of the “gold” can be removed from it.

Strangely enough, the statue weighs only 35 pounds, although it can vary from being feather-light to heavy enough that it’s a strain to lift it.

The *Queen of Gold* contains a corrupt and malevolent spirit of mysterious origin within it, able to communicate psychically with any creature within 20 yards of her. She wants nothing more than to be reunited with her husband, the dread necromancer who summoned her.

Corrupt Presence The *Queen of Gold* exudes a powerful corrupting magical energy that tends to warp the forces of life and death in the surrounding area, unless her power is magically contained. The GM can use this effect to introduce strange mutations, weird magic, or similar effects from **Chapter 9** of *Shadow of the Demon Lord* in the area.

Forbidden Secrets The *Queen of Gold* can teach any Curse, Forbidden, Necromancy, or Primal spell a student is capable of casting. This takes an hour of psychic “communing” with the Queen and a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, the student learns the spell and gains 1 Corruption. On a failure, the student gains 1d6 Insanity and 1d3 Corruption, but can try again.



SHOWDOWN AT FLOAT TOWN



By Eric Cagle

After learning of the terrible storm of destruction bound for the Pirate Isles, the characters must locate the pirates of the *Orphanmaker* to learn any information that would help lead them to the homeland of the Queen of Gold. The characters must follow several leads to find the location of the ship and its captain, the dread pirate Anne the Red.

In time, the leads point them to the galleon's location: docked at a makeshift pirate haven known as Float Town. The characters must find and fight the pirate captain to secure a map that shows the way to the lost continent of Eremeä. The characters complete this adventure when they defeat Anne and take the map she carries.

HUNT FOR THE ORPHANMAKER

Depending on where the characters begin, they'll need to start asking questions at different villages, ports of call, or from passing ships. Investigation should take several days as the group moves from location to location, gaining a little information at each stop. Eventually the characters should learn that the *Orphanmaker*, low on supplies and in dire need of repairs, set sail two to three weeks ago for Float Town, described below.

CLUES

You can use the following clues to feed the group information that will lead them to Float Town. The group should get at least one clue per place they visit.

CLUES

Informant	Clue
Fisherman	I heard from another crew that the <i>Orphanmaker</i> 's been making erratic courses. Maybe they're trying to throw someone off their scent?
Innkeeper	The <i>Orphanmaker</i> definitely went south, away from the Pirate Isles! (The innkeeper is in deep with Anne's crew. When the characters leave the inn, five of his men—pirates, see Appendix—ambush them in an alleyway. If defeated, either they or the innkeeper will fess up that the ship is headed to Float Town.)

Barmaid

She stopped here for supplies not two nights ago. But we were fresh out of everything! She was so angry, I thought she would kill us. I did hear her first mate say something to her about Float Town and Cromby.

Ship Captain

Aye, we caught sight of her coming at us from the east. She seemed to be listing oddly, but we turned tail and got out of there—I wasn't going to risk facing that ship!

Prostitute 1

Most of us won't take coin from that crew—too dangerous. But back when I worked on Float Town... well, they'll be happy to welcome any crew there, no matter who they are.

Prostitute 2

Oh, the bosun of that crew is a favorite of mine. He was acting real strange though. I think they're carrying something special.

Harbormaster

The *Orphanmaker*'s almost invincible, but she's a ship like any other and needs repairs. Only a few places will take her in, though: Cromby and Float Town up north.

Longshoreman

Only an idiot captain would take a ship to Cromby or Float Town, but if you're looking for the *Orphanmaker*, you'd be an idiot not to stop by Float Town.

EVENTS

Each time the characters finish talking to an informant, roll a d6 and add to the roll the number of characters with whom the group has talked. Find the total on the following table.

EVENTS

Total	Result
2	When finished talking, the informant sprints away, vanishing into the crowd.
3	A nearby seadog screams that Anne the Red is going to kill them all (he's totally insane and says that to everyone).
4	The informant turns out to be a tear thief who, obsessed with one of the character's eyes, tries to lure him away for "more information," and attacks.
5	Three longshoremen who work as Anne's spies (hired killer) catch wind of the investigation and strike before the characters can re-board their ship. They know the ship is headed to Float Town.
6	The informant was driven mad by one of the cursed relics gained from Anne the Red and tries to trap the characters and burn the place down along with them.
7	When traveling to the next location, the character's ship is set upon by a flock of 5 harpies .
8+	Another pirate crew looking to settle a score with Anne the Red attempts to board the character's vessel—they want information, not an alliance. The boarding party consists of 1 veteran and 8 mercenaries .

THE STORM

As the group goes from place to place to hunt down Anne the Red, the storm loosed from Eremeä draws closer. A fleet of ships, crewed by the dead, sails westward, intent on murder and destruction. The ships of the dead are cogs, each crewed by **20 grave thralls** led by a **barrow wight** captain. In addition,

the ship has another **20** boneguards who serve as marines. The ships fly tattered sails, their hulls decorated with skulls and rotting body parts. Each ship flies the same colors: a golden woman with reaching arms on a black field.

These ships were sent by Rudebendius Mal to find the Queen of Gold and lay waste to the Pirate Isles. They sail in groups of $1d3$ ships, spreading out to attack coastal villages and sink any ships they encounter. The characters should encounter at least one of these vessels during the adventure, as well as hear rumors of the sailing dead or witness signs of their recent attacks.

FLOAT TOWN

Armed with the information that the *Orphanmaker* is low or out of supplies, apparently damaged, and headed to Float Town, the characters can make their way to that notorious place. It is so named for its construction: an artificial island, cobbled and lashed together from a dozen or so wrecks, and moored off the coast of a small, verdant atoll.

On the periphery of the Pirate Isles, Float Town serves as the only deep-water port for many leagues around. Absent any real authority governing it, anyone can dock there for repairs, resupply, or trade. It is a vile, despicable place full of buggers, rotters, and scum—going there is almost always a last resort, and few would do it by choice.

A FLOATING NIGHTMARE

Float Town might be a nightmarish warren inhabited by some of the worst people in the known world, but there are only so many places one can hide here. Characters searching the community are bound to come across Anne the Red, but whether they get the drop on her, or she on them, depends on how the characters conduct themselves.

The *Orphanmaker*: As the characters draw close to the island, they spot the *Orphanmaker*, anchor dropped, a bit away from Float Town. On board the galleon are **40** pirates (see Appendix) led by the first mate (veteran). Whether the characters sneak on board or make a direct assault, any prisoners taken can reveal that Anne went into Float Town for supplies.

Finding Anne: The captain went into Float Town with the ship sorcerer (apprentice wizard), the quartermaster (veteran), and 10 pirates (see Appendix). Anne makes no effort to conceal her movements, knowing the locals fear her and will not willingly betray her whereabouts, which requires a success on a Will attack roll with 2 banes against a local's Will, which is typically 9. However, if the characters search around enough, they should eventually find her, haggling over prices as the town bobs and rolls beneath their feet.

THE CONFRONTATION

Anne is not about to hand over the map to Eremeä to the characters, nor is she interested in helping them. If the characters have the Queen of Gold with them, Anne urges them to hand it over—she intends to carry the accursed object back to the continent to put right the chaos she began.

If the characters attack, she and her crew (see above) fight to the death. Fighting on Float Town is fraught with hazards, such as ropes, canvas shelters, jerry-rigged planks, loosely tied barrels, and the like. You can make the fight more exciting by introducing slippery patches or shifting decks, which impose 1 or more banes to attack rolls. A tipped lantern might start a fire, while makeshift cranes loaded with cargo swaying in the breeze might suddenly fall.

If the group fails to outright defeat her, Anne escapes to the *Orphanmaker* and fights them from there, although her ship is not yet seaworthy. She surrenders only if knocked unconscious.

If the characters manage to make a truce, Anne the Red will help them reach the lost continent, but she will invariably betray the characters before the campaign ends.



SHE WHO EATS THE SKY



MASTER

By Andrew Follett and Robert J. Schwab

The Maztacan people of Eremeä believe their sleeping goddess, Chutliatl (koo-TLEE-atl), will awaken one day to devour the heavens and plunge the world into darkness. When the *Orphanmaker* limped to their shore, the Maztacans, who had never seen anything like a sailing ship, believed its appearance heralded the coming of the prophesied apocalypse. When the strange people born of the sea beast came to their village seeking a guide, the Maztacans worried the end times were nigh.

Tihuican (tee-HOO-i-kahn), the village shaman, led Anne the Red and her pirates up the secret path to Chutliatl's mount—the pirates having threatened to murder the villagers if he didn't. He both worried and half-hoped that the pirates might awaken the goddess, who would destroy them for their outrage.

What Tihuican did not know was the mountain was not the resting place of his goddess, but in fact the lair of Rudebendius Mal, a vile necromancer. After the pirates plundered Mal's lair and made off with stolen treasures, they sailed away. Thereafter, the dead began to come down from the mountain, harrying the Maztacans, and their attacks are growing more frequent and dangerous.

In this adventure, the characters come to the village of Maztaca to find a guide to lead them to the Mountain of the Necromancer. The only way the characters can recruit help will be to make a monstrous choice, one that will either plunge the world into darkness or save it. The characters complete the adventure when they deal with the horror Tihuican unleashes.

A NEW WORLD

The characters have either acquired a map to chart their course to Eremeä, or somehow obtained the information from the pirate captain Anne the Red or her lackeys. In any event, having spent weeks at sea, they finally reach a sandy shore bordering a dense jungle, which climbs up a mist-covered range of foreboding mountains.

A GUIDE?

When the characters land on the beach, the one with the highest Perception score notices a young woman standing a few hundred yards away, naked but for the flowers in her hair, the paint on her body, and the spear in her hand. When spotted, she quickly darts into the jungle, obviously frightened.

The young woman flees through the jungle until she stumbles upon a great cat. Unless rescued, the animal kills her, and drags her off to devour her. If rescued, the girl remains very frightened, but can be calmed enough so that she gabbles at the group in her native tongue, which has elements of Old Edene and the Common Tongue enough for characters who know these languages to pick out a few words. Between that and lots of gesturing, the characters learn her name is Xochitl (sho-KEE-tl) and that she was gathering healing herbs when she spotted them. Assuming the characters treat her well, she leads them back to her village.

If the characters do not give chase or if she gets away, she is killed and never seen again. Allow the group to wander through the jungle for a few hours, during which time they occasionally see ruins of gargantuan structures and strange stone carvings of monstrous figures. When night falls, **8 vampire bats** drop through the canopy and attack them. The next day, they encounter warriors from the village (as **commoners** with spears), who offer to escort them to the village.

MAZTACA

Located a couple miles inland, Maztaca consists of nineteen thatched-roof family huts. The huts are huddled on the banks of a wide river flowing from the distant mountains that twists and turns through the jungle until it reaches the sea. The village stands atop the ancient remnants of a ruined city. Exposed patches of a bedrock road dot the clearing and small rock walls jut from the earth, the skeletal remains of age-old buildings.

Of particular interest is an enormous stone disk. Across its surface are concentric circles made from dots, dashes, and other geometric shapes. Carved within the circles are the depictions of humanoids performing daily activities such as gardening, building, worshipping, and tending to the young.

Not far from the disk looms a 12-foot tall statue, carved from rock, of a monstrous being with scores of sagging breasts and a yawning mouth. It is an idol representing a malevolent earth goddess named Chutliatl. The Maztacans have a prophecy in which it is said she will one day rise from her slumber in the depths to devour the sky and plunge the world into darkness, an event which will be triggered by the appearance of a sea beast (a ship) who gives birth to a new people (sailors). After the arrival of the *Orphanmaker*, the villagers are worried the apocalypse is imminent, especially with the undead spilling out from the mountains.

If the characters rescued Xochitl, she leads them into the village; the rescue grants them 1 boon on any rolls made in social conflicts or interactions with the Maztacans. Otherwise, the villagers are mistrustful and scared of the outsiders, and the characters have 1 bane on such rolls instead.

THE MAZTACANS

A small tribe of people live in the village, being the last descendants of an ancient and powerful civilization that arose after the fall of Edene only to be shattered by war, plague, and several natural catastrophes. The people now live simply by hunting and gathering. They wear little clothing, and what they do wear incorporates feathers, bones, and semi-precious stones. All adults have elaborate tattoos, especially on their faces. Maztacans are **commoners** armed with clubs and spears.

In addition to Xochitl, the group might meet and interact with any of the following important people.

Coatl (KO-atl): The Maztaca chieftain distrusts all outsiders, worried that they will bring about the apocalypse. He does listen to Xiatl, though, and tolerates the characters' presence for now. If the characters get on his good side, he explains that dark times have fallen upon the world and that his people have been fighting the dead who come down from the mountains. He also blames the undead on people who, like the characters, were birthed from a great sea beast and came to shore several months ago (Anne the Red and the landing party from the *Orphanmaker*). He tells them the shaman Tihuican led these outsiders into the mountains and nothing but evil has come from it since.

Xiatl (SHEE-atl): A kind, venerable medicine man, the whole tribe looks to him for guidance, healing, and wisdom. He can tend to any injuries the characters might have sustained, allowing creatures he treats to heal damage equal to their healing rate, but no more than once per day. If friendly, Xiatl warns the characters there has been talk of making a human sacrifice to appease the goddess, who will eat the sun any day now unless she is fed.

THE SHAMAN

At some point in the evening, the shaman Tihuican (apprentice witch) returns from consulting with the spirits and who have told him the goddess demands a sacrifice. He does not want to sacrifice any of the people, and instead looks to the characters to offer up one of their own. After all, it was their kind who brought this mess to their doors. If the characters did not learn that Tihuican is the only one who knows the way, he reveals this to them after he consults with the other villagers, claiming he will lead them into the mountains, but only after a sacrifice is made.

Tihuican intends to make the sacrifice the next day, when the goddess gives him a sign. If the characters refuse to offer up one of their own, he demands the group leave on pain of death. If the characters resist, a fight breaks out involving sixty **commoners** armed with clubs and spears. The villagers fight until half their numbers have fallen and the rest flee for the jungle.

If the characters agree to offer up one of their prisoners or hirelings to be sacrificed, the villagers lead the intended victim to a hut, which remains guarded until the appointed time.

MONSTROUS RAIDERS

After the confrontation with the shaman, a band of **8 boggarts** emerge from the jungle to devour the villagers. If the characters left, they hear the sound of fighting echoing through the jungle. Unless the characters help the Maztacans, the boggarts kill twenty people and drag off a dozen or more, never to be seen again. The victims should include Coatl, Xiatl, and any other villagers the characters befriended.

SWALLOW THE SUN

The next day, at around noon, Tarterus passes between Urth and the sun, causing a total eclipse. Shadows spread across the jungle as everything goes quiet and still. What happens next depends on what has transpired so far.

A SACRIFICE

If Tihuican still lives, he drags the captive—either someone the characters offered up or someone from the village—to the stone disk and, after shouting at the sky in Dark Speech, he plunges an obsidian blade into the victim's heart, killing the creature at once. Rather than end the eclipse, however, the reverse occurs: from the shadow, Chutliatl tears free, a hideous **huge demon** with the flier trait, lightning crackling all around it. In addition, **4 shadows** step out of the gloom in the village and begin to slaughter everyone there.

NO SACRIFICE

If no sacrifice is made, the eclipse occurs and passes a few minutes later. When it does, the massive idol at the village center animates, the spirit of Chutliatl inside becoming enraged. The idol (**living idol** if you have *Beyond the World's Edge* or **golem**) goes on a rampage, destroying the village and the villagers.

CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when either the characters defeat the demon and the shadows or defeat the living idol. In either case, the threat to the surviving Maztacans has passed. If Tihuican survives, he offers to lead the characters into the mountains. If he died, the characters will either have to find their own way or another guide; this could perhaps be Xochitl, or even someone else they might find in another adventure of your own making.

NIGHTMARES OF THE SLEEPER



By *Miranda Horner*

Led by Tihuican, someone else from the village, or having divined the path ahead by some other fashion, the characters ascend into

the Mountains of Fear and Flame. A great, jagged mountain range cutting across the entire continent, the characters wend their way through it in search of the Mountain of the Necromancer, in order to return the Queen of Gold.

As the characters travel up the steep slopes, following trails and making harrowing ascents, they catch the attention of a foul spirit who hungers for the life force it needs to restore itself to life. The characters complete the adventure when they overcome the spirit and destroy its receptacle of souls.

IDENTIFYING THE FEAR

Because the Sleeper traps creatures inside their worst nightmares, you need to determine the current strongest fear each character has before going into this scenario. Depending on your group, you could either ask them, or you could think back to the thing that most recently frightened the characters so that your “reveals” are not as telegraphed. Use that information to inform the scenes that play out as the characters proceed through the landscape of Nightmare thrust upon them by the Sleep.



THE SLEEPER

The Sleeper (see Appendix), formerly known as Dahlia, the Keeper of Death’s Door, was a skilled necromancer until her apprentice, Rudebendius Mal, murdered her. Although her physical body is dead, her soul remains on Urth. Long before Mal killed her, she called upon her extensive knowledge of the dark arts to develop a means for her to escape death. She imbued a massive quartz crystal with the power to anchor her soul in spirit form on Urth in the event of her death. The crystal also enables her to project her spirit into the dreams of others in order to steal their life energy and store it within the crystal. Once she has accumulated enough life energy, then she will be able to return, albeit as a death lord.

The crystal is hidden in a cave in the side of the mountain, and the Sleeper has almost enough life energy to begin the formation of her body when the characters arrive.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

It takes several days for the characters to ascend the path up the mountainside that leads to Mal’s lair. Along the way, they might have to contend with the following dangers.

MOUNTAIN PATH ENCOUNTERS

d6 Encounter

- 1 A withered corpse of a human lies on the path. Examining the eyes reveals they have been replaced by quartz crystals.
- 2 On patrol, **1d6 +2 boneguards** secure the path by killing anything they encounter. One has a random enchanted object.
- 3 Dark clouds gather above the mountains and release heavy snow for 2d6 hours.
- 4 At night, a **killing mist** swirls around the characters.
- 5 The characters spot a few pieces of purple quartz crystal scattered on the snow.
- 6 At night, **2d6 vampire bats** drop from the sky to feed upon the characters.

NIGHT TERRORS

About halfway up the mountain, as the characters make camp for the night, the Sleeper senses their presence and projects herself into their dreams to feed on their life energy. She does so by playing a subtle game with her prey. She eases them into a nightmare by making it start out simply enough: the characters think they’ve woken up and are about to do their normal things. For anyone who is on watch, the Sleeper uses Nightmare Binding (see Appendix) to start the process.

Use the following sample scenes in whatever order you choose to emulate situations where the Sleeper can drain the characters. Allow each player to play their character in the scene, but secretly choose one

focus character for each. That character is the current target of the life drain and should have a chance (or two) to wake up before they are killed outright.

You have two options for handling damage dealt to the other characters in the scene, though. You can either ignore any damage dealt, which makes this adventure less deadly, or you can take that damage into account when it is that character's turn to escape the nightmare. Remember: the Sleeper has all of them in her nightmare landscape initially. After they escape, they are not subject to her attacks until she pulls them back into the nightmare.

NIGHTMARISH SCENES

In each scene, use the information you determined earlier to tailor the scene to a specific character. You can either use the text as written or adjust it to suit your needs. In each case, the Sleeper manifests in the characters' dreams. Any damage the Sleeper takes while in the dream disappears when the next dream begins.

THE BLOODY MISTS

Around you, a cloying mist rises, filling the air within seconds. It swirls around you, a reddish-brown haze, threatening to conceal even the person closest to you. It smells like you're in a charnel house, and your eyes sting. A slow, deep throbbing sound begins, soft at first, but grows louder. Is that your heartbeat, or someone—or something—else's?

THE SINKHOLE

The ground seemed firm enough a moment ago, but now you've stepped into something squishy. A loud sucking sound is your only warning before a gush of creamy liquid erupts out of a newly formed dark hole in front of you. You're covered with the slick, viscous goo. The hole in front of you widens, and you begin to slide toward it.

THE EMPTY VILLAGE

Nothing moves in the slovenly village before you, yet you sense eyes upon you. Suddenly, all of the hovels rise up on wooden legs, and begin to walk away. As they do, you hear wet ripping sounds, and dark shapes drop out of them, making plopping noises as they hit the ground. The shapes are then dragged, gibbering and screaming, each attached to a walking hovel by a veiny cord.

THE MIRROR TRADER

The odd fellow in front of you spits a bloody goblet of phlegm to the side, causing each of the mirrors dangling from his hefty pack to shake. Wordlessly, he snags one of the mirrors and holds it up in front of you. You don't see yourself in it. Instead, what's within the mirror reaches through it as if to touch you.

This could be the Sleeper; if so, she leaves the mirror and attacks in whatever form you've chosen for her.

THE VANISHING WATERS

The water stops moving entirely, becoming eerily and unnaturally calm. Then it vanishes, but everything in it remains suspended where it had been—for a moment. A thrumming sound vibrates within you, and all the creatures that had been living in the water explode outward in a cascade of blood. The gore and guts coat you and everything around you, then starts expanding, forming into a nauseating, pudding-like ooze.

CAVE OF THE QUARTZ CRYSTAL

If the characters manage to survive the nightmares and continue on their journey, they will discover the mouth of a cave a day from their destination. The mouth opens onto a long, twisting passage that descends into the mountain's heart. Small quartz crystals dot the walls and reflect the characters' light, if any. After 100 yards in, the passage opens up into a huge chamber dominated by a pillar of purple quartz crystal that pulses with strange violet light.

The Sleeper is in this chamber, invisible, along with 5 phantoms bound to her will. She cannot manifest physically anywhere else except in this chamber, due to the power of the crystal. If any characters make a move toward the crystal, the Sleeper appears, and she and her minions attack.

If combat breaks out in this room, the life energy inside the crystal becomes agitated. At the end of each round until the combat ends, or the crystal is destroyed, each creature in the cave must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gain 1d6 Insanity.

The crystal is a Size 4 object with Defense 5 and Health 80. If reduced to Health 0, the crystal shatters, throwing shards out in a 10-yard radius that deal 4d6 damage to everything in the area. A creature can make an Agility challenge roll and take half the damage on a success. Breaking the crystal also dispels the phantoms, sending them wailing and shrieking into the Underworld.

If the characters manage to defeat the Sleeper and search the chamber, they find 50 gc worth of assorted coins, 20 quartz shards, each worth 5 ss, and three random enchanted objects. At your discretion, you might also place a relic of your choice in the cave, especially if you feel the characters will need help to get through the final adventure.

CONCLUSION

If the Sleeper manages to kill some or all the characters, it uses the life energy to form a new body, a process that takes 1d6 days. She returns as a death lord (see *Tombs of the Desolation*).

Otherwise, the Sleeper will disperse if defeated, only to return and seek her vengeance at some point within the next 24 hours. Destroying the crystal destroys her entirely.

THE NECROMANCER'S MOUNTAIN



MASTER

By Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Within the deep jungle, far from where any sane creature would stray, stands Skull Peak. It was from

this mountain fastness that Anne the Red stole the Queen of Gold from Rudebendius Mal, an ancient and powerful necromancer. In doing so, the pirate captain and the crew of the *Orphanmaker* set the necromancer's mind and might solely upon revenge against the Pirate Isles and retrieval of his bride.

The characters might come here in the effort to return the Queen of Gold or with a mind to put the nightmare Mal has created to an end with brute finality. No matter their goal, they'll find more than they bargained for upon entering Skull Peak.

THE QUEEN OF GOLD

During "The Queen in Exile," the characters might have retrieved Mal's "bride," a sentient relic called the Queen of Gold. The relic is a three-foot tall statue of a beautiful, regal woman with eyes that appear to follow the viewer wherever they stand. It contains a malevolent spirit who exudes strong corrupting magical energy. She has likely been pressuring and berating the characters to reunite her with her "husband" as quickly as possible.

Strangely, the Queen of Gold grows quiet as the characters approach the mountain. Within sight of her home, she gives away no secrets to the dangers within the necromancer's sanctuary. She knows it is a dangerous place and prefers the characters fall to her husband's servants or traps. She only speaks again when they approach Mal, when she learns of his current possessed state.

DEMONIC POSSESSION

Unbeknownst to the Queen of Gold, to regain his bride and wreak vengeance on the pirates who stole her, Mal cast a terrible spell that summoned the demon Viscallux, in order to aid him toward those ends. Instead, the demon was more powerful than Mal could handle, and its appearance shattered the last shred of sanity he had left, enabling the demon to possess its summoner.

Viscallux is using Mal's body to prepare for the coming of its terrible master, the Demon Lord. When it is not doing so, however, it is entertained by Mal's thirst for vengeance and his twisted love for his "bride." Whenever it suits the demon, Viscallux allows the necromancer to pursue his schemes, retaking full control of Mal anytime its plans are in jeopardy.

THE PEAK

The peak juts from the jungle below, veined by sinewy crawler vines of a sickly dark green hue. The craggy mountain has been carved in the shape of a stylized skull, nearly 300 feet tall. Water trickles from its eyes, running down the sides like tears into a giant pool at the base of the peak.

1. INTO THE MAW

The path around the pool at Skull Peak's base winds toward the Skull's bottom jaw. Massive, chiseled boulders stand 20 feet over the cavern floor, arranged as the skull's bottom row of misshapen teeth. The water trickling down from the skull's eyes collects into muddy puddles that drain into the main pool. Sickly brambles flourish amid the cave's shade. Skeletal and rotting fleshy remains of people and beasts intertwine with the jagged leaves and thorns of the shade brambles.

Not all of the remains fertilizing the brambles are restful. Four grave thralls rise to stop any intruders from entry into their master's sanctum.

2. BRUTAL PORTALS

Inside the maw is a massive chamber, its walls are carved with innumerable skulls and skeletons, all in the strange style of the peak itself. A pair of intricately decorated double doors, both towering, stands at the chamber's far end. Constructed chiefly of wood, the doors are carved and inlaid with semi-precious stones and seashells. Each has maybe a hundred square panels, each depicting gory scenes of horrible death and murder. A smaller door, its only adornment a large water stain, seems out of place in the grisly, garish chamber.

A pair of boneguards waits here, one in each easternmost corner of the chamber. The one in the northeastern corner has a large brass key hanging like a medallion around its neck. The green flames of the guards' eyes follow any intruders, but the undead will simply watch unless attacked, or the characters move to open the smaller door or the southernmost double door, at which point they attack. If the characters set off the false treasure trap (area 3), and the boneguards still wait, they move to bar passage from any trying to escape that trap's foul energies.

3. FALSE TREASURE

The massive double door is sturdy and has a complicated lock that imposes 3 banes on challenge rolls made to unlock it. One of the boneguards wears the key. Beyond is a chamber carved in the same style as the entry chamber reaching into the darkness, though any amount of light will cause something to glimmer in the distance. At the end of the hall sitting

on a pedestal is a large clear gem, glittering with a thousand facets, as large as a meaty fist.

The gem is a convincing but rather cheap bauble (worth maybe 1 gc to the right buyer). When a creature approaches within a yard of it, a necrotic gas sprays into the room from the eyes and mouths of the various leering skulls carved into the walls. The clever nature of the trap imposes 4 banes on challenge rolls made to find the trap or disarm it.

A cloud of the gas fills the room and lasts for 10 minutes before dissipating. Living creatures within the cloud must get a success on a Strength challenge roll each round with 1 bane or take 2d6 damage and become dazed for 1 minute. While dazed in this way, the creature also becomes poisoned; if it's already poisoned, it instead takes 1d6 extra damage. An undead creature standing in the gas heals 1d6 damage at the end of each round it spends in the gas.

4. JUST ENOUGH ROPE

The double doors leading to this chamber are not locked, opening into what appears to be a rather plain room. A small door made of rust-covered iron is set within the east wall, and a passage opening into darkness is on the south wall. In front of the iron door is a length of thick, black-stained rope weighed down

by a metal ball, rusty like the door. The rope leads up to a hole in the ceiling.

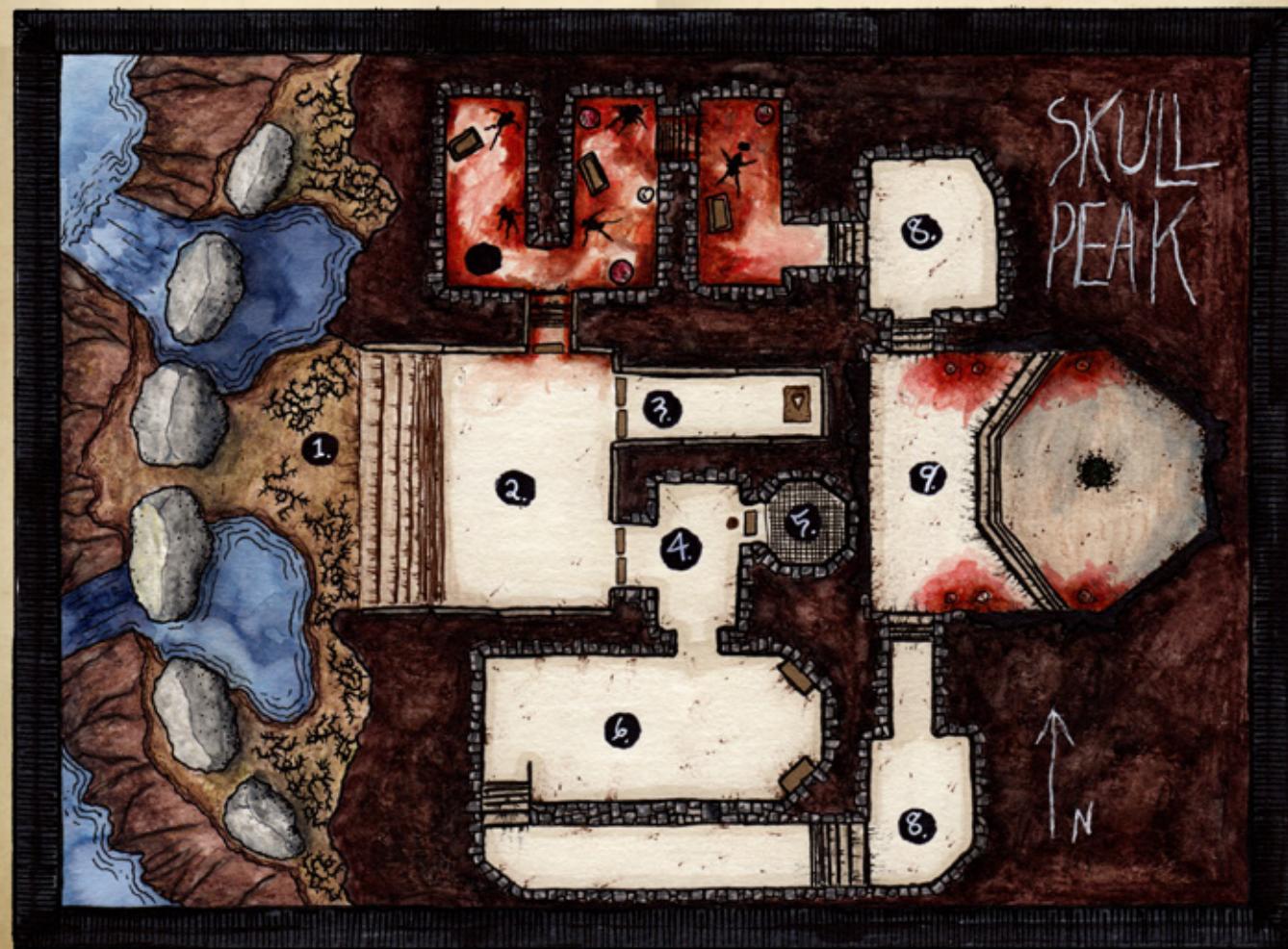
A character pulling the black rope finds it gives, but it sounds no alarm, nor does it seem to do anything observable. It does magically mark those who pull it, and any with them, for a nasty surprise if they open the iron door and explore area 5.

5. BOILING DEATH

The iron door leading to this chamber is not locked, but is heavy and difficult to open, requiring a success on a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes. The room beyond is an octagonal shaft, the top and bottom leading into darkness. A metal grate, sturdy enough to stand on serves as the floor of the chamber and another as the ceiling, creating a kind of cage amid the shaft.

On the eastern wall carved glyphs move and morph on the stonework in a seemingly random swirling pattern—the closer one gets to the strange occurrence, the less the glyphs seem to move and morph.

The glyphs only settle when a character who pulled the black rope in area 4 approaches within a foot of the wall, spelling out in whatever language the character can read: "You end here." At that point, the



iron door slams shut and a deep rumbling can be heard, coming from the bottom of the shaft. After two rounds have passed, a jet of steaming, volcanically heated water explodes upward out of the shaft, flooding the room and dealing 6d6 damage to any creature within, before the geyser subsides.

6. WAITING WARRIORS

Its floor, walls, and ceiling adorned with a massive mosaic of scintillating color and strange maddening patterns, this long hallway reaches west toward skeletal figures patiently standing guard. At the eastern edge of the room, are two niches, each holding an obscene ivory fetish in the shape of a massive and diseased phallus being devoured by maggots. The magic of these strange objects makes the maggots appear to squirm and writhe across their respective shafts. Merely staring at the things requires a character to make a Will challenge roll with 1 boon, gaining 1 Insanity on a failure. Touching either of them requires a character to make another Will challenge roll and gain 1 Insanity on a failure for each round the creature holds or carries it. The character begins to feel that the maggots are somehow gnawing their way into his or her body, the sensation starting within their own genitals.

The skeletal figures to the west are **4 boneguards**, standing as pairs on the north and south walls of the room's western half. They wait until a character



who is not carrying one of the phalluses attempts to pass them, then they attack. They will not attack any character who carries a phallus.

7. EXPERIMENTATION CHAMBERS

This strange zigzag of chambers constitutes the necromancer's main experimentation chambers. The place is cluttered with a jumble of strange devices, obscene diagrams, and the remains of dozens, possibly scores, of victims sacrificed in Mal's quest for forbidden knowledge. The place reeks of a charnel house. Skins have been tacked to the walls, with obscene secrets written upon them with blood and bile. There are numerous vats filled with viscera and congealed blood scattered about the place. Here and there bones are stacked in swirling, morbidly artistic patterns. Within moments of entering it, the characters realize the full measure of the obscene place and must make a Will challenge roll with 2 bane, gaining 1d3 Insanity on a failure.

These disgusting chambers are also home to **4 ghouls**, who typically dwell within the center chamber, feeding from the large vats of leftover blood and organs, enjoying how the decomposition plays upon their tongues, or how the abundance of different types of creatures' remains in the vat makes their forms shift in a delightfully disgusting way. They have become true gourmands.

Once the ghouls realize that intruders are in their midst, they each grab a viscera extractor: a large brass syringe-like device magically infused to suck the life juices from any living creature into which they are stuck. The ghouls rush forth to extract the fresh vital fluids and tear out the organs from the intruders with manic glee. The extractors grant each ghoul the following attack in addition to their normal attack options:

ATTACK OPTIONS

Viscera Extractor (melee) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 + 3 plus horrific extraction on attack roll of 20+)

Horrific Extraction If the target is a living creature of flesh and blood, it takes 2d6 extra damage and becomes fatigued. While fatigued in this way, the target is also slowed. If it was already fatigued, it instead takes another 2d6 extra damage. All characters that watch this extraction must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or gain 1 Insanity. Once a horrific extraction occurs, the viscera extractor cannot be used again until it is emptied, which takes 1 minute.

8. REAR GUARDS

Each of these rather open chambers has **2 boneguards** who try to stop anyone who attempts to enter the master's chamber. Once the characters do battle with Mal, and when the necromancer calls down the grave thralls from the walls, any boneguards from either of these rooms who haven't already been destroyed will come to their master's aid.

9. THE MASTER'S CHAMBER

An eerie flickering of greenish flame emanates from this large chamber, as does a cackling and gurgling sort of babbling, accompanied by a strange rattling sound. Diabolic diagrams and formulas in some spidery script cover the rough-hewn walls. Their eldritch markings are made even weirder by the drifting of pungent smoke wafting up from the green flame that burns in a fire pit on the lower tier of this vast chamber.

The chamber's upper reaches feature an unadorned tile floor, but the lower tier is a mass of loose dirt—like grave dirt—scattered with bits of bones and debris. Rough stone stairs connect the two parts.

Four corpses of pirates who once served Anne the Red hang impaled on spikes in the upper tier, two on the north wall and two on the south. Two more hang on the walls of the lower level, one each to the north and the south.

A single man, gaunt and corpse-like, with ashy gray skin paces about in front of the fire, mumbling to himself, stopping ever so often to scratch strange diagrams in the dirt with a sickle made of obsidian. He wears a shirt of bone and leather that clanks and jingles as he moves about, the bones tied in his matted, greasy hair adding to the clinking rhythm.

This is **Rudebendius Mal**, the necromancer lord of Skull Peak (see Appendix). He stays lost in his strange reverie and movements until the characters make themselves known, or the Queen of Gold comes within 20 yards of him, where she can attempt to make telepathic contact with her husband (although Viscallux has the power to block their communications).

If the characters tell him they have returned her to him, he seems extremely pleased at first, overly so in fact. His face splits into a yellowed and gap-toothed smile, truly happy that his love has returned. He lauds the characters with effusive praise, becoming quite amiable as he extolls their virtues.

Then, something goes wrong. His body suddenly lurches, and his demented happiness immediately turns to rage as Viscallux resumes control. Seeing the characters as potential threats to its plans, the demon attacks the characters with all the powers Mal has at his disposal.

The demon-possessed necromancer starts by calling allies to his aid. Each of the six corpses impaled on the wall have been turned into a **grave thrall**. As the characters approach, Mal can call to any number of grave thralls to attack the intruders. The first of such calls will also bring any remaining **boneguards** from either **area 8**. He will then cast *army of the dead* to enhance his defenses further, falling back on *invisibility* and his other spells to whittle down and destroy the intruders.

Once the Queen of Gold figures out her husband is possessed, she implores the characters to find a way to drive the demon out of the necromancer. If they refuse or say they cannot, she threatens them; if that doesn't work, she begs and cajoles, promising treasure and power. But she lies: even if the characters are successful, the treacherous queen will deliver none of it. She would rather they end up as subjects of her husband's necromantic experiments than fulfill any bargain made to rescue her love from possession.

Once the characters defeat Mal, unless they have found some way to end the possession and send him back to the Void, they must then deal with Viscallux, who issues forth from the necromancer's corpse as a black, oily smoke that then forms into his ugly, misshapen form. The **large demon** has the Foment Discord demonic talent and fights viciously to keep his hold on the world, possessing one of the characters if possible.

CONCLUSION

Even if the characters can drive Viscallux out of Mal, the Queen of Gold tells her husband to betray the characters at the first possible opportunity. But while Mal is not sane, he is also not stupid. He only does so if he feels victory is a sure thing. This is likely the only way that the characters can succeed and Mal still lives.

In most cases, the adventure concludes—and quite probably the campaign—with the characters dead and the demon free to use the necromancer as his puppet for the coming of the Demon Lord. If both Mal and Viscallux are vanquished, the characters will need to determine what to do with the Queen of Gold. They might drop her in some deep hole in the ground, or even into the depths of the sea, and hope she is never found again. Then again, she might have uses. A potent user of magic could, in time, forge a bond with her and become formidable in their own right—and, of course, corrupted and thoroughly insane.

If the characters have managed to rid Urth of Rudebendius Mal and drive Viscallux back into the Void, the shadow of the Demon Lord recedes from the world for now, its planet-shattering screams of rage filling the vast emptiness, its burning hatred stoked beyond comprehension against the mortals who thwarted it.

It is only a matter of time, and the Demon Lord has plenty of that in abundance. It will never give up on trying to destroy Urth, and all of existence itself. In some obscure place, cultists or some other corrupt peoples will tamper with things no mortal should even know about, causing the barrier between the Void and Urth to become dangerously thin, and the darkness of the Demon Lord's shadow will begin to ooze through once more.

APPENDÍX: CHARACTERS AND CREATURES

Several adventures call out unique characters and new creatures. You can find their statistics boxes here in one place for easy reference.

CHARACTERS

Here you will find the most important characters featured in *The Queen of Gold* campaign.

ANNE THE RED

The infamous captain of the *Orphanmaker*, Anne leads a crew on a campaign of villainy and mayhem across the Auroral Ocean and beyond.

She speaks, reads, and writes the Common Tongue.

ANNE THE RED

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human

Perception 12 (+2)

Defense 17 (plate and mail); Health 80; Insanity 5; Corruption 6

Strength 16 (+6), Agility 12 (+2), Intellect 12 (+2), Will 14 (+4)

Speed 10

Determined When Anne rolls a 1 on the die from a boon, she can reroll the die and choose to use the new number.

Leadership Other creatures within medium range of Anne that are friendly to her and that can see her make attack rolls with 1 boon.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword (melee) +6 with 2 boons (3d6 + 2)

Dagger (melee or short range) +6 with 2 boons (3d6)

Pistol (3) (range) +2 with 2 boons (4d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Dire Threat Anne uses an action, or a triggered action on her turn, to threaten one creature she can see within short range. If the target can hear her, she makes a Will attack roll with 1 boon against the target's Will. On a success, the target becomes frightened for a number of rounds equal to 2 + its Insanity total.

GORETUSK

A vile beastman of unusual build and nature, Goretusk combines the features of an enormous man with those of a wild boar. His piggish head has a wide, wet snout, with large, curling tusks, and a wide mouth. The rest of him appears generally human, though larger and bulkier than most men, his tough hide covered in thick, coarse hair.

Goretusk speaks the Common Tongue and Dark Speech.

GORETUSK

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 beastman

Perception 15 (+5); shadowsight

Defense 16; Health 80; Insanity 5; Corruption 6

Strength 16 (+6), Agility 10 (+0), Intellect 8 (-2), Will 13 (+3)

Speed 10

Ferocious When Goretusk would become incapacitated, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, Goretusk immediately heals 10 damage.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Great Club (melee) +6 with 2 boons (3d6 + 2)

Tusks (melee) +6 with 2 boons (1d6 plus Stagger on attack roll 20+)

Stagger If the target is a creature, it becomes dazed for 1 round.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Bloody Charge Goretusk moves up to twice his Speed.

Once, at any point during this movement, he attacks with his tusks. The attack deals 2d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Vicious Rebuke When Goretusk takes damage, he can use a triggered action to attack a random target he can reach with his tusks.

PIRATES

The brigands of the sea, pirates encompass a wide range of characters, from ruthless murderers to charming buccaneers.

PIRATE

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 human

Perception 9 (-1)

Defense 12 (soft leather); Health 15; Insanity 1d3 - 1; Corruption 1d3 - 1

Strength 10 (+0), Agility 11 (+1), Intellect 9 (-1), Will 10 (+0)

Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Cutlass (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d6 + 1)

RUDEBENDÍUS MAL

The insane, horribly corrupted necromancer responsible for weakening the fabric of reality over the theft of his beloved bride, Rudebendius Mal has mastered the arts of necromancy and uses his powers with great effect. Being possessed by the demon Viscallux, however, makes him an even more terrifying threat.

Mal speaks, reads, and writes the Common Tongue, Dark Speech, and High Archaic.

RUDEBENDÍUS MAL

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 frightening human

Perception 15 (+5); shadowsight

Defense 14; Health 60; Insanity —; Corruption 9

Strength 10 (+0), Agility 12 (+2), Intellect 15 (+5), Will 16 (+6)

Speed 10

Immune damage from disease and poison; gaining Insanity; diseased, frightened, poisoned

Demonic Shadows While injured, darkness bleeds from Mal's wounds, turning light within 3 yards of him to darkness.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sickle (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Counterspell When a creature Mal sees attacks him with a spell, he can use a triggered action to counter it. The triggering creature makes the attack roll with 1 bane and Mal makes the challenge roll to resist it with 1 boon.

Improved Spell Recovery Mal can use an action to heal 8 damage and regain two casting he has expended. Mal can only use this ability once before he takes a complete rest.

Swift Spell On his turn, Mal can use a triggered action to cast a rank 3 or lower spell.

MAGIC

Power 5

Forbidden harm (6), **hateful defecation** (3), **ravenous maggots** (2), **part bone from flesh** (2), **soul exchange** (1)

Illusion **disguise** (6), **vertigo** (3), **invisibility** (2)

Magician **sense magic** (6)

Necromancer **command undead** (3)

Necromancy **spectral grasp** (6), **grave grasp** (3), **harvest soul** (3), **cannibalize magic** (2), **seal the Underworld's gates** (1), **army of the dead** (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Soul-Rending Presence Each living creature that is not a demon or possessed by a demon within short range must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or take 1d6 damage and gain 1d3 Insanity.

THE SLEEPER

The former master of the Necromancer's Mountain, once known as Dahlia, Keeper of Death's Door, was murdered by her apprentice, Rudebendius Mal. Through various necromantic machinations, her soul remains anchored in this world instead of hurtling straight to Hell. She is now known as the Sleeper, a spectral-like creature who can enter the dreams of others to inflict pain and agony, enabling her to extract the life energy she needs to restore herself as a death lord.

The Sleeper speaks the Common Tongue, Dark Speech, and High Archaic.

THE SLEEPER

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 frightening spirit

Perception 14 (+4); **darksight**

Defense 11; **Health** 66; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 10

Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 10

Immune damage from cold, disease, or poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, charmed, dazed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned, stunned

Insubstantial The Sleeper takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.

Naturally Invisible The Sleeper is invisible to all creatures other than those affected by Nightmare Binding. While invisible, the Sleeper lacks the frightening trait and cannot use her attack options.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Nightmare Blade (melee) +1 with 2 boons (2d6 + 2)

Draining Touch (melee) +4 with 2 boons (2d6 plus Drain on attack roll 20+)

Drain A living target gains 1 Corruption and takes a 6 penalty to Health until it completes a rest. While it is subject to this penalty, the target makes Strength attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane.

If this penalty reduces the target's Health to 0, the target dies.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Nightmare Binding The Sleeper makes a Will attack roll with 1 boon against the Strength of one target creature she can see within medium range. On success, the target falls asleep for 1 minute. At the end of this time, the Sleeper can use a triggered action if she is within medium range of the target to make a Will attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target remains asleep as long as the Sleeper wishes or until she becomes incapacitated.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Change Shape The Sleeper uses an action or a triggered action on its turn to transform into a creature that she has identified as being terrifying to her victim. The Sleeper remains in this form until she uses a triggered action at any time to return to her normal form.

Nightmare Eruption When the Sleeper takes damage and she is not incapacitated, a nightmarish creature tears out of her. Roll 1d6. On a result of 1-3, a **medium monster** forms from her essence. On a result of 4-5, a **large monster** roars into being. On a result of 6, a **huge monster** erupts from the Sleeper. Each creature steps out from the Sleeper's space into an open space within 1 yard of her. After the Sleeper forms one huge monster, she cannot use this Nightmare Eruption for 1 minute.

Manifestation The Sleeper uses an action or a triggered action on her turn to become visible. She remains visible until she uses an action or triggered action to become invisible once more.

THE THING

The Thing that was "Restless" Braxton Rave is a horrid monstrosity standing taller than two men with a massive fishlike head, a raggedly fanged maw, and vicious claws. A fleshy glowing lure, like that of an angler fish, emerges from its head, which it uses to attract prey so it can feed.

THE THING

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening demon

Perception 13 (+3); **truesight**

Defense 13; **Health** 80; **Insanity** —; **Corruption** 7

Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 12; **swimmer**

Immune damage from disease or poison; gaining Insanity; dazed, diseased, fatigued, immobilized, impaired, poisoned, slowed, stunned

Vulnerable to Fire The Thing takes double damage from fire.

Spell Defense The Thing takes half damage from spells.

When a creature attacks the Thing with a spell, the Thing imposes 1 bane on the attack roll and makes the challenge roll to resist the spell with 1 boon.

Demonic Shadows Lit areas out to 4 yards around the thing become shadows.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claws (melee) +5 with 2 boons (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Frenzied Attack The Thing attacks two different targets with its claws, making each attack roll with 1 bane.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Rancor If the Thing takes damage, it can use a triggered action to use its claws to attack a creature it can reach. The thing makes the attack roll with 2 banes.

Void Step The Thing uses an action, or a triggered action on its turn, to teleport to an unoccupied space it can see within medium range. Roll a d6. On a roll of 1, the Thing cannot use Void Step again for 1 minute.

END OF THE ROUND

Epic Recovery The Thing removes one affliction from itself.

Lantern of the Depths Each creature within medium range of the Thing that can see it must either use a triggered action to avert its eyes or make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane.

For 1 round, creatures who averted their eyes make attack rolls with 2 banes and grants 2 boons to creatures making attack rolls against it.

Any creature who gets a failure on a Will challenge roll must move its Speed toward the Thing. If it moves to a space within the Thing's reach, the creature also becomes dazed for 1 round.

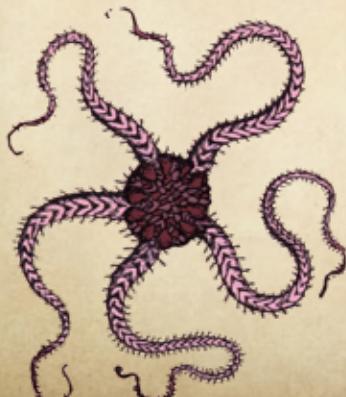
CREATURES

Here you will find altogether new creatures, as well as others drawn from sources other than *Shadow of the Demon Lord*.

SHARKMAN

The savage, brutal sharkmen surrendered their civility to bloodlust long ago, roaming the waters in search of prey to feed their insatiable appetites. Like fomors and wargs, sharkmen inherited the curse that let loose the beastmen into the world. Each one has human features commingled with those of a shark. Many strains of sharkmen exist, usually resembling particular types of sharks. For instance, one can find sharkmen who appear to be related to great white sharks, tiger sharks, and even hammerheads. Despite their cosmetic differences, they are all thoroughly vicious and slaves to their never-ending hunger.

Sharkmen might hunt alone or in small groups. They communicate in Dark Speech and have little use for anything other than food.



SHARKMAN

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 beastman

Perception 10 (+0); shadowsight

Defense 13; **Health** 49; **Insanity** 2; **Corruption** 3

Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 11 (+1)

Speed 10; swimmer

Amphibious A sharkman can breathe air and water.

Blood Frenzy A sharkman makes attack rolls against injured targets with 1 boon.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Teeth (melee) +4 with 2 boons (5d6 plus Rend Flesh on attack roll 20+)

Rend Flesh A living creature of flesh and blood suffers a bleeding wound that remains until it heals any damage. At the end of each round when a creature suffers from a bleeding wound, it takes 1d6 damage from blood loss.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Darting Attack The sharkman moves up to half its Speed and attacks with its teeth. If the sharkman gets a failure on the attack roll, it can move up to half its Speed without triggering free attacks.

VULTUREMAN

Vulturemen combine the traits of humans with vultures. Their gray, wrinkled heads sport sharp beaks, perfect for tearing flesh and are smeared with filth from previous meals. In place of arms, they have large wings, capable of lifting them into the air, while black features cover their torsos from shoulders to groins. Their legs appear human, but they end in talons instead of normal feet.

Vulturemen speak Dark Speech.

VULTUREMAN

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 beastman

Perception 12 (+2); shadowsight

Defense 14; **Health** 20; **Insanity** 3; **Corruption** 5

Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 10 (+0)

Speed 12; flier (swoop)

ATTACK OPTIONS

Talons (melee) +4 with 2 boons (2d6 plus Rend on attack roll 20+)

Rend If the target is a creature, it takes 2d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Snatch and Drop On a fast turn, the vultureman flies up to half its Speed; on a slow turn, it flies up to its Speed. At any point during its movement, it can use its claws to attack one creature it can reach. On a success against a Size 1 or smaller creature, the vultureman snatches the target, lifts it up to 6 yards into the air, and then drops it. A creature dropped in this way is subject to damage from landing after a fall (*Shadow*, page 38).



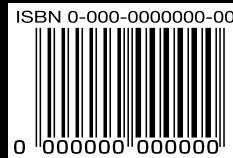
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