

# ENCOUNTERS ON THE SAVAGE SEAS



Expand your game with this collection of nautical-themed mini-adventures, creatures, and magic items for the world's greatest roleplaying game

# ***ENCOUNTER ON THE SAVAGE SEAS***

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## ABOUT THIS SUPPLEMENT

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Thank you for purchasing *Encounters on the Savage Seas*! I've dreamt of creating this supplement for a couple of years and am very happy with how it's turned out. The writers have come up with some fantastic stories and encounters.

As with the other *Savage Encounters* supplements, I reached out to writers for encounter submissions. With these supplements, I want to give you a valuable resource for your gaming sessions, and I want to share the imagination, creativity, and the writing styles of various authors with you.

I want to say **Thank You** to all the writers, artists, cartographers, and everyone else who had a hand in making this product what it is.

Thanks for purchasing *Encounters on the Savage Seas*! We hope you enjoy the encounters!

Now – go play D&D!

- Jeff C. Stevens

*Oh! I almost forgot to mention – watch for Encounters on the Savage Seas II*

Questions or comments? Email me at [jcorvinstevens@gmail.com](mailto:jcorvinstevens@gmail.com) or on Twitter: @jcorvinstevens

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Several Dungeon Masters Guild writers have created resources which I think you might find useful:

**CAPTAINS AND CANNONS: A SHIP COMBAT GUIDE IN D&D 5E** : a ruleset for running ship-to-ship combat

**TAVERN GAMES** : card and dice games which can be used while the characters travel the savage seas

**CALL FROM THE DEEP: SHIPS & CREWS** : information on how to populate ships and crews

**CALL FROM THE DEEP: RACES & FEATS** : new aquatic races and feats

**OTTERFOLK** : a playable race I created which you can pick up for free

**TREASURES OF THE SEA** : 32 sea-themed magic items

## USING THIS SUPPLEMENT

Although some encounters mention specific locations, with a little adjustment, each could be used in nearly every campaign and setting.

Text in these yellow boxes is to be read to players.

TEXT IN BLUE BOXES REFERS TO COMBAT SCALING AND LOCATION FEATURES AND IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE DM.

Text in these boxes is additional information for the DM, some of which may be shared with players.

Most of the creatures in these adventures are found in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition *Monster Manual*. Page numbers have been included for easy reference but depending on the printing edition of your *Monster Manual*, they may not match.

This supplement uses creatures from:

*Monster Manual* (MM)  
*Volo's Guide to Monsters* (VGtM)  
*Tomb of Annihilation* (ToA)  
*Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* (MTof)

In addition, several new creatures have been created for this supplement. You can find these creature stat blocks at the end of the adventure in which they are mentioned.

Unless otherwise noted, all NPCs have the stats of a **commoner**.

## SHIP STATISTICS

As there are several ships mentioned in this supplement, it is advised that you review **Chapter 5: Adventure Environments** of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, which gives details about Waterborne Vehicles and their Damage

Thresholds – the amount of damage required per attack before the ship is damaged.

## AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL

The **Average Party Level** (APL) can be used to calculate the appropriate challenge level for your party. To calculate the APL, add the total levels of all characters and divide the sum by the number of characters (rounding up for .5 or greater).

## SKILL CHECKS AND SAVING THROWS

Specific DCs are written for each of the encounters. You may wish to change these DCs based on the APL of the adventuring party. We suggest the below range:

| APL                                    | Check / Save DC |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> thru 3 <sup>rd</sup>   | 11              |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> thru 6 <sup>th</sup>   | 13              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> thru 9 <sup>th</sup>   | 16              |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> thru 12 <sup>th</sup> | 19              |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> thru 15 <sup>th</sup> | 22              |

In addition, if you feel a skill check or save is too low or too high, feel free to adjust the DC as you wish.

## MAPS

Unless otherwise noted, for all maps:  
1 square = 5 feet.

## YOU ARE EMPOWERED

As mentioned above, you do not have to run these encounters as written. You (as the DM) are empowered to make changes as you wish – adjusting the encounters as the game is played, if you like. You are part of the collaborative storytelling that is Dungeons & Dragons and you know best how to adjust the encounters so that your adventurers get the most out of the session and story.

## THE CAST OF WRITERS

Thank you to each of the below for contributing to this project. Please take a moment to follow them on Twitter and check out their other products!

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*Adamantine Chef: Supreme Challenge;*  
*Jungle Treks;*  
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**JVC PARRY**  
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*The Frosted Prince*

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*Return of the Lizard King*

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*Savage Encounter Series;*  
*The Madhouse of Tasha's Kiss*

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## THE TOWNSHIP OF BADU

By: Bryan Stevens and Jeff C. Stevens

Artists: Erin Harvey (Badu), Kelly Brown (Tabaxi)

*A pirate township travels along the back of an over-sized dragon turtle named Badu. The township, named after the creature upon which it rides, acts as a safe haven and neutral ground for warring pirates and merchants.*

### BACKGROUND

**Carmalee Johanas**, an elf ranger with a love of reptiles, rescued Badu when he was young. Carmalee found Badu landlocked, wounded, and struggling to find access to the sea as vultures tormented him.

Carmalee nursed the young turtle back to health after shooing away the vultures. Even at a young age, Badu was a large creature and Carmalee found it difficult to keep the growing reptile fed. She decided to take him to the sea to forage in his natural habitat. However, the two had developed a strong bond and couldn't bear to be apart for long. The ranger decided to build a small structure on Badu's back, allowing her to travel with her friend.

As the turtle grew, so did the number of dwellings on his back. Over the years, many merchants and pirates asked for shelter from dangerous weather and decided to stay. Carmalee's abilities and magic grew, too. She was eventually able to create a transparent hemisphere of calm air around the turtle's shell, allowing Badu to dive without drowning the township and preventing all but the worst storms from damaging the structures on Badu's shell.

## CREATURES OF THE ISLAND

Carmalee's love of reptiles has turned Badu into a sanctuary for lizards and turtles. Many now roam the island, skittering between buildings, sunbathing on the docks, or resting on top of Badu's exposed shell in the center of the township.

### RULES OF THE TOWNSHIP

Though weapons are allowed, creatures may not use them against one another while on the island. Doing so causes the creature to be shunned from the island. Word spreads quickly within the merchant guilds and pirate ships that the individual cannot be trusted, having disobeyed the code of neutrality on Badu.

### CARMALEE AND BADU

The two are mentally and emotionally connected. If Carmalee dies, Badu reverts to his animal instincts: shaking off the village, diving as it likes, and traveling to wherever it wishes.

### MERCHANTS

Carmalee has allowed several merchants to open stores on Badu. Some of these merchants are retired pirates, others are merchants who grew tired of city life.

### A: TAVERN – THE STICKY BARNACLE

The Sticky Barnacle is a tavern owned and operated by retired pirate **Barnacle Bigun** (**bandit**, CR 1/8; MM, p 343. Add advantage on Charisma ability checks and saving throws). Many illicit exchanges have been completed in The Sticky Barnacle. Carmalee turns a blind eye as long as they don't involve trafficking in humanoids.

A notice board sits on the first level of the tavern near the entrance. Several townsfolk and travelers post advertisements for assistance or tasks they need completed on the notice board (see Quests).

### B: HOTEL – SHELLBACK INN

Barnacle Bigun also maintains the Shellback Inn. Rooms are rented on a nightly basis, though longer stays can be haggled with enough coin. On the front of the hotel door, a sign reads *“Shellback Inn – Go to The Sticky Barnacle to rent a room.”*

### C: MERCHANT – COASTLINE

Coastline is the merchant store owned and operated by an old dwarf pirate who goes by the name **Icky** (**swashbuckler**, CR 3; VGtM, p 217). Icky’s motto is *“Welcome to Coastline – Your Direct Connection to Coastal Goods.”*

There is a 50 percent chance that Coastline has any requested piece of adventuring gear, container, or tool listed in the *Player’s Handbook*. When a character requests an item, roll percentile dice. On a result of 51-100, the item is in stock. If the item is in stock, roll a d8 to see how many units of that item Icky has on hand. This inventory resets daily in good weather and weekly in bad weather, as Icky is very active in trading with fellow merchants and pirates.

Icky charges base price when selling an item. On a failed percentile roll, it’s possible that Icky has the requested item stored in the back of his shop, though such items are less than perfect. Examples include magnifying glasses with broken or cracked glass, hourglasses missing some or having too much sand, and a silver bell missing its ringer.

### D: RETIRED JEWELERS – THE FOLKORES

**Gistalt** and **Heva Folkore** are retired gnome jewelers, though they still enjoy crafting and selling jewelry. The pair often set up a small table outside their home, peddling their handcrafted bracelets, charms, earrings, and necklaces to new arrivals.

Both gnomes are very lively and witty, a carryover from their days as salespersons.

### E: THE DOCKS

Each of the docks is maintained by **Havel** and **Hovel Hansmith**, identical human twins (**swashbuckler**, CR 3; VGtM, p 217) who act and sound alike. The twins are outgoing, helpful, and quite athletic, as can be witnessed when they scurry up masts, swing within rigging, and slide down sails.

### BUILDINGS

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Buildings without notations are residences of those who live on Badu. Each pays a fee to Carmalee, which goes toward the care of Badu—the township and the turtle.

### OTHER NPCs

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Badu is home to a variety of people, not all of which own or run businesses on the great turtle.

**CAPRICE** – A halfling woman who, though she rents a home on Badu, sleeps wherever she can find a place, often due to being extremely intoxicated.

Carmalee feels sorry for the down-on-her-

luck halfling and allows her to stay as long as the woman doesn't stir up too much trouble. Caprice has a few treasure maps of various authenticity stored in her rented home, dating back to the days when she was a cartographer. She's likely to sell a map for the right price, though her weakness for spirits often gets the better of her, making her an unreliable source of information at best.

**OSTERID** – An elderly tiefling woman who waits for a long-lost friend. Osterid's friend, Peg Leg Pete, was to meet her here but is late (see Quests).

**THE CAPTAIN** – A human (**scout**; CR ½; MM, p 349) who rents boats from the docks. Though he's sailed the seas, he's never had much luck, having sunk three of his own ships over the past five years. Luckily, he's learned from his failures and now profits from renting boats.

The Captain has one rowboat and two keelboats. He's made a small living space on one of the keelboats.

- The rowboat holds a total of 4 humanoids (1 crew and 3 passengers) and can be rented for 10 gp per day.
- The keelboat holds a total of 7 humanoids (1 crew and 6 passengers) and can be rented for 100 gp day.

**WHISKEY NEAT** – A tabaxi **bard** (CR 2; VGtM, p 211).

During the day, Whiskey Neat roams the township, strumming their lyre and singing songs. At night, the bard is either making music in The Sticky Barnacle, or sitting at the docks,

reciting poems while watching the sunset or the moon high in the sky.



**VALERAYA** – The **druid** (CR 2; MM, p 346) in charge of maintaining Badu. Not only does she make sure the township stays clean, she also maintains the underside of the turtle. Barnacles often build up on his underside, and Valeraya cleans them weekly, hiring outside workers for the worst part of the removal—the rear tail section.

## QUESTS

Locals and travelers alike who seek assistance post their needs on the notice board hanging in The Sticky Barnacle.

**BARNACLE REMOVAL NEEDED** - See Valeraya at the docks

The tail is covered in 2d6 + 10 barnacles, each requiring a successful **DC 12 Strength** check to

remove. Valeraya offers to pay 25 gp per barnacle returned to her.

Valeraya shows the characters a system she has developed for removing the barnacles. One creature is tied to a long rope, while another creature stays on Badu, managing the length of the rope and the distance the tethered character is from Badu. Letting out the rope is an easy task, while pulling the rope back in requires a successful **DC 12 Strength** check. This system works very well when Badu is traveling at his regular, slow pace. Characters have disadvantage on these checks if Badu is traveling faster.

Creatures often trail Badu, seeking scraps from the turtle or the township on its shell. These creatures can include **reef sharks** (CR ½; MM, p 336), **hunter sharks** (CR 2; MM, p 330), **giant sharks** (CR 5; MM, p 328), or any number of aquatic denizens.

**MISSING: PEG LEG PETE** – see Osterid at the docks.

Peg Leg Pete is an old friend of Osterid. Pete was to meet Osterid here on Badu several weeks ago. Osterid knows it is nearly impossible to locate someone on the open sea, but she offers a reward of 250 gp if, while on their journeys, the characters come across Pete. If Pete isn't alive, returning with his gold tooth suffices to prove they found him.

Sadly, Pete is no longer alive. He ran into a bad experience and can be placed wherever the DM wishes in their own campaign. When found, Pete's body is mostly skeleton now, his flesh having been eaten away by a multitude of different creatures.

However, his gold tooth is still intact, hiding in the back of his snaggle-toothed mouth. A *detect magic* spell reveals that Pete's pair of beautiful boots radiate transmutation magic. The boots are magical and cursed, as described in the *peg leg boots* sidebar.

#### **PEG LEG BOOTS**

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

These boots are black leather and calf high with a silver buckle along the outside of each. While you wear these boots, you have advantage on Charisma ability checks and saving throws while on a ship, an island, or coastal settlement. In addition, your base movement speed is reduced by 5 feet.

**Curse.** These boots are cursed, and becoming attuned to them extends the curse to you. Once attuned to the boots, you can't remove them unless you are targeted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. While wearing these boots, your right leg twists and contorts into a wooden peg leg.

**PEARLS WANTED** – see Gistalt.

Gistalt and Heva Folkore are a pair of retired jewelers who still enjoy dabbling in their craft and selling jewelry. Heva has had an idea for a beautiful pearl bracelet, though they have run out of pearls. They request the characters return with pearls. The Folkores gladly offer to pay 110 gp per pearl (a 10% markup to what a pearl is normally worth).

The Folkores can direct the characters to a place where they know oysters thrive, or the characters can discover such a place by speaking with other locals in Badu.

The oyster bed is guarded by sea creatures that often wait to ambush those who come to

claim the pearls. These creatures could include **sahuagin** (CR ½: MM, p 263), **merrow** (CR 2; MM, p 219), or other similar creatures. It is possible that several **zombies** (CR ¼; MM, p 316) stand interspersed in the oyster bed, swaying with the current. These zombies are passive until they catch the scent of humanoid flesh.

### **BADU'S NEMESIS – VESRYN NOSS**

A rather diabolical elf warlock has taken a liking to Badu. **Vesryn Noss** (**warlock of the archfey**, CR 4; VGtM, p 219) has attempted several times to either infiltrate the island or take control of the turtle with his magic. So far, these attempts have failed.

Vesryn sees Badu as the ultimate stronghold which he could use to transport his minions while staying safe in his tower. He's persistent, but not stupid. He knows when he's been defeated and retreats often. Though no matter how many times he suffers defeat, he continues to devise plans to take over the creature.

### **F. CARMALEE'S TOWER**

**Main Level:** A large general area with a stone floor, fireplace, and several comfortable chairs. A small dining area, stocked with fresh vegetables, herbs, spices, and fresh water is at the back of the room.

A spiral staircase in the center of the room leads to the levels above and below.

**Sublevel:** A spiral staircase leads from the main level to the sublevel.

The floor opens to Badu's exposed shell, where magical runes help protect and sustain the creature, providing it magical sustenance and reducing its need for actual food. The runes radiate a magical aura if the *detect magic* spell

is cast. If the runes are destroyed, Badu's hunger grows, and the creature becomes irritable and may even burst into fits uncontrollable thrashing as it battles its hunger. Several crates and other containers hold rations and beans.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Level:** The spiral staircase opens to another level, but also continues further. A small room holds a couple of dwarf lemon trees, each with two ripe lemons. A side room contains a small wooden table and chairs. A larger room acts as Carmalee's bedroom and holds a large, feather bed. One side of the bed looks to have been slept in by Carmalee, the other side looks to have been pulled and rooted into a small nest. Several tables and cabinets line the walls, on which the following can be easily found:  
3 books, each valued at 10 gp.

- *Care of Reptiles*
- *Ranger Stories*
- *You and Your Pet*

A small bag of dried fruits and meat morsels. If the bag is near Reginaldo, the lizard catches the contents' smell floating on the air and begins hissing at the character carrying the bag. A shortbow, its wooden limbs ornately decorated with carved feathers. This is a *shortbow +1*. Carmalee rarely uses the bow. She may offer it as a reward if the adventurers complete a quest for her.

A character succeeding on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** check while actively searching the room finds a leather satchel tucked under the mattress. The satchel holds 7 gold bars worth 100 gp each.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Level:** The spiral staircase ends at this level, opening to another sitting room. A balcony

allows Camaralee a view of the surrounding sea. She often uses the *spyglass*, which rests on the table near the balcony, to watch scan the seas. In the evenings, she and Reginaldo often sit on the balcony, gazing at the stars. In the far room, a coat rack holds a leather, hooded cloak. Several tables and cabinets line the walls. A character searching the cabinets easily finds:

Three books, each valued at 15 gp:

- *How Many Stars are There?*
- *Are We Alone?*
- *Memories of a Vegetarian*

A character succeeding on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** check while actively searching the room finds:

A secret hiding place behind one of the stones at the top of the stairwell. Removing the stone reveals three potion bottles:

- *Potion of heroism*
- *Potion of water breathing*
- *Potion of animal friendship*

**Caught:** If Carmalee learns the characters have stolen from her, she bans them from Badu. They are given one hour to procure transportation, or they will be dropped off at the next coast, port, or island they reach before nightfall. If none of these options are available, the characters are given a rowboat and left to fend off the savage seas on their own.

## CARMALEE JOHANAS

By Jeff C. Stevens

Artist: Petar Penev

*Carmalee Johanas is the leader of Badu—both the township and the dragon turtle. She leads with quick actions, and those who cross her are banned from the township.*

### BACKGROUND

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The pale skinned, silver haired Carmalee Johanas is a wood elf ranger, one with a love for reptiles. Like most young rangers, there was a time when Carmalee trekked through forbidden terrain, explored ruins, and chased treasure. That all changed when she saved a young dragon turtle, which she named Badu.

Land locked, the poor young dragon turtle, though still the size of a large canine, was being pestered by vultures. The foul creatures swooping down and sneaking their beaks in between the places where Badu's carapace didn't seal.

Carmalee took action, frightening the feathered beasts away from the young reptile. The two quickly bonded as Carmalee tended to its wounds.

Badu grew quickly. It soon became obvious to Carmalee that her friend needed the open water.

She built a small shack on Badu's back. As the dragon turtle grew, so did Carmalee's home. Once Badu was fully grown, Carmalee designed a tower from which she could scout the seas for pirates and danger.

## THE TOWNSHIP

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News of the floating tower ran rampant across the seas. Those who came upon Badu asked to stop so they may meet the inhabitant of the tower. Carmalee granted these requests as long as the visitors paid a docking fee, which she used to maintain the turtle and her tower.

Over the years, the tower has grown into a township, with each person living on the back of Badu paying an annual fee, which is put toward the care of the township and the turtle.

Pirates and merchants use the island to settle arguments, sign treaties, and prompt goodwill. It's a safe haven, a "sacred ground." Those who break the rules are banned from the township and shunned by others they meet on the sea.

Carmalee is a just leader and respected by the townsfolk who call Badu their home.

### MEETING WITH CARMALEE

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Carmalee seldom ventures out of her tower, she has no real need to do so. Her reptile friends, which are free to come and go as they like, keep her company. She does accept visitors and welcomes a good chat from time to time.

### RETURNING TO BADU

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As long as one is in good standing with Carmalee, she allows them to return to the traveling township. Though doing so may be difficult as Badu changes locations often. To make this task easier, Carmalee offers two options:

A monocle, which, when looked through on the open seas, shows a small green dot

designating Badu's current location. The cost of the monocle is 100 gp.

A small green lizard roughly 4 inches in length. When set down, and the word "Badu" is spoken, the lizard's snout points toward Badu's current location. There is no charge for the lizard, but returning to Badu without the lizard upsets Carmalee unless a convincing reason for the reptile's disappearance is given. Failure to provide a convincing argument results in banishment from the island.

### REGINALDO

Carmalee has a strong bond with Badu. She also has a bond with a lizard named Reginaldo. The creature is often found resting on the ranger's shoulder. The two communicate but Reginaldo's voice is a series of grinding noises and hisses, though Carmalee responds in Common. Reginaldo screams loudly when frightened.

A character casting *speak with animals* could understand Reginaldo's words. Always the skeptic, he could be heard saying:

*They look fishy. I don't trust 'em.  
These low lifes look like immature pirates to me.  
I bet they can't hold their ale.  
Charge 'em double!*

### CURRENT MOTIVES

Carmalee's primary motive is to keep Badu happy and to provide a sanctuary for reptiles, both those she rescues and those that happen upon the island.

Carmalee can be used as an NPC as follows:

- **An Ally** - As long as the characters are friendly and don't cause trouble on Badu, they are welcome. They may even procure a residence on Badu.
- **A Threat** - Should Carmalee learn the characters have unjustly hurt innocent animals, she may track them down. She first asks about the incident, giving the characters a chance to explain themselves. If she doesn't like their reason, she let's Badu handle the situation.
- **A Quest Giver** - Carmalee may send the characters on a mission to retrieve a rare lizard or turtle from an island Badu cannot reach.

### LONG TERM MOTIVES

Vesryn Noss's interest in Badu concerns Carmalee. She worries that someday the evil warlock will take control of Badu. She wants to put as much distance between Badu and Vesryn as possible, but she understands the warlock may need to be dealt with differently.

### FLAWS

Her love of reptiles has often caused Carmalee to urge Badu near harsh and dangerous waters. A character mentioning a reptile needing rescued could easily persuade Carmalee to change Badu's current course.

### CARMALEE'S MONOCLE

*Wondrous item, rare*

When scanning the open sea through this monocle, you see a small green dot which represents Badu's current location. If Badu changes location, so does the dot.

## CARMALEE JOHANAS

*Medium humanoid (wood elf), lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 19 (*leather armor +1*)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d8 + 30)

**Speed** 35 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Con +7, Int +6, Cha +9

**Skills** Animal Handling +6, Insight +4, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Survival +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Archer's Eye.** As a bonus action, Carmalee can add 1d10 to her next attack or damage roll with a longbow or shortbow.

**Fey Ancestry.** Carmalee has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

**Spellcasting.** Carmalee is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Carmalee has the following ranger spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *alarm*, *animal friendship*, *speak with animals*

2nd level (2 slots): *beast sense*, *locate animals or plants*

**Suave Defense.** While Carmalee is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, her AC includes her Charisma modifier.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Carmalee makes two attacks with her scimitar or shortbow.

**Scimitar +1.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

### LAIR ACTIONS

While on Badu, on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Carmalee can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Carmalee mentally calls out to Badu, asking the dragon turtle to shake and buck. Each creature on Badu must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. Carmalee automatically succeeds on this save.
- Carmalee mentally calls out to the animals on Badu, asking them to aid her. At the start of her next turn, 2d10 lizards (MM, p 332) scurry near her, attacking any hostile creatures.
- Carmalee mentally calls out to Badu, asking the dragon turtle to cry out. The permanent residents of Badu know this is a warning signal. They take up arms and run to aid Carmalee.





## LIFE AQUATIC...

By Jean Lorber

*This d8 table details a collection of small encounters involving ocean-bound flora and fauna*

| d8 | Event                                     |
|----|-------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Does this dance please you, Storm King!?! |
| 2  | Dolphin Trick-or-Treat                    |
| 3  | Flying Blind                              |
| 4  | Mer-Kid Punks                             |
| 5  | Elemental Plane Portal                    |
| 6  | 51 Uses for Kelp--Number 9 Will...        |
| 7  | Jelly Bombs                               |
| 8  | Kraken Mating Ritual                      |

### DOES THIS DANCE PLEASE YOU, STORM KING?!

A huge flock of long-winged, black and white seabirds flies past the PCs ship, pushed by an oncoming thunderstorm. Any PC trained in Religion (and all superstitious sailors) know that these birds are associated with Talos, God of Storms (aka the Storm King).

The birds circle the ship and several land on the railing in front of a PC. They seem to be waiting for something. A nervous sailor turns to the PC: *"They'uns is a waitin for you! Show the Storm King some respect."* Tradition holds that someone on a ship "honored" by these birds must climb to the top of the mast and dance a little jig; it amuses Talos to see such foolishness and lessens the chances that he'll strike the mast with lightning. The sailors all but insist the PC climb the mast.

A successful **DC 8 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check is needed to climb the mast; a failure means the PC falls into the rigging below, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage. To execute the jig at the top, a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Performance)** check is needed; Talos

doesn't care about the quality of the moves, he just wants to see some effort.

A PC who really leans into the performance and risks injury earns the King's respect. A successful **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check along with the Performance check above equals success. On a failure, the PC falls into the rigging, takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage, and damages a sail and rigging. Either way, the PC gains a boon from the Storm King, usable when on or under the ocean:

- A one-time use of the cantrip *guidance*
- A one-time use of the spell *bane*, the targets of which must be water-dwelling creatures.

### DOLPHIN TRICK-OR-TREAT

Two **dolphins** (CR 1/8; VGtM, p 208) have learned how to trade with sailors. The dolphins bring freshly-killed fish, and in return they get treats like peanuts or beer.

The dolphins approach the PCs ship and execute a little shimmy to get their attention. They push dead fish towards the boat and look expectantly for a treat. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check reveals the basic nature of the animals' request. If no treats are offered, the dolphins leave in a huff. They return later shepherding 3 **reef sharks** (CR ½; MM, p 336), which stay in the ships wake for the next 2 days. Sailors don't like being trailed by the sharks and their presence becomes a hot topic of conversation, distracting most of the ship.

### FLYING BLIND

The PCs' ship sails through a school of flying fish that flash their wings to blind predators. Any spellcaster on board senses the presence of illusion magic when the wings flash and also senses that the magic could be harvested.

With an hour of work by anyone trained in Arcana, 4 sets of wings can be transformed into

a consumable magic item, granting the holder 1 use of the spell *color spray* at first level.

Assuming the PCs are on the ship, snatching a fish out of the air requires a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. But after the first failed check, the fearful fish flash their wings, triggering all subsequent PCs to make a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw. On a success, the PC averted their eyes in time. On a failure, a PC is dazzled for 2 rounds; they can still attempt to fish, but with Disadvantage on the check. The ship will be amongst the school for 1d8 rounds.

### MER-KID PUNKS

Three juvenile **merfolk** (CR 1/8; MM, p 218) secretly climb aboard the PCs ship in order to pull a prank on some unsuspecting “floaters” (ship-dwelling humanoids). While minding their business on deck, an unsuspecting PC is suddenly pelted with large, gooey fish eggs. Childlike laughter follows, then splashes can be heard as two merkids leap into the water. But one merkid named Mmmeeee has gotten caught in some rigging.

Mmmeeee panics and screams for help, entangling himself further in the ropes. Relatively kind actions towards Mmmeeee causes him to be grateful; he warns the PCs away from a hidden reef nearby. But rough or punitive actions cause him to tell his father, who tracks down the PCs’ ship and breaks the rudder that night. Whatever the interaction, Mmmeeee parts ways with a gleefully rude hand gesture and a cry of: *“Smell you later, floaters!”*

### ELEMENTAL PLANE PORTAL

In front of the PCs ship, a geyser comes into view. A spout of water shoots seemingly out of thin air, 10 feet off the ocean’s surface. The spout is about a foot in diameter and shoots out horizontally for 300 feet, evidence of extremely high pressure.

The geyser is the result of a very small, stationary portal to the Elemental Plane of Water. It is unmapped, but Sword Coast scholars, mages, or cults would likely pay good money to know its location.

A superstitious veteran sailor believes that running the ship through the firehose-like geyser will bring good luck. It’s up to you whether that’s true. Sailing within 100 feet of the source could result in a hole punched into the ship’s hull or 2d12 bludgeoning damage to anyone caught in the stream.

Small plants or animals, previously unknown to Faerun, occasionally shoot out of the geyser as well. These deep-dwelling oddities might be valuable to collectors or academics, and might also be terribly dangerous...

### 51 USES FOR KELP--NUMBER 9 WILL BLOW YOUR MIND!

While in colder seas, the ship comes across a large patch of kelp. Thick stalks stretch 50 feet down to the sea floor, anchored in the sand. Veteran sailors know several uses for kelp and recruit the PCs to harvest the plants.

The lowest leaves are the most edible and contain vitamins that are usually lacking on long sea voyages. A meal including kelp puts the sailors in a good mood, granting Advantage on any Charisma-based check with them (for a few hours at least). Kelp leaves are buoyed by thick-walled air bladders. One sailor wishes to craft a “life jacket” prototype out of dozens of these bladders. Collecting enough bladders takes about an hour of diving, searching and cutting. The life jacket works as intended; if worn, a Medium-sized creature can float for up to 1 hour. Could come in handy in the future... Ask your players to come up with other possible uses of these underwater trees and go with it!

With no limitations to time, these tasks can be achieved without checks. In a time-sensitive situation, a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** check

allows for collection of the materials, with a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw used to earn additional checks.

### JELLY-BOMBS

In the final stage of their life cycle, a swarm of 3-foot-long **jellyfish** inflate and float 30 feet above the water, readying to cast their jelly-baby polyps to the wind. The PCs see the mass of tiny dirigibles from a distance but are unable to steer around them.

Sailors don't want jellies stuck in the rigging and ask any PCs with ranged attacks to shoot them out of the sky and clear a path for the ship. The PCs have to hit 1d6 jellyfish per round, for 4 rounds. On average, a jelly is 10 feet from its neighbor.

With a successful hit, a jellyfish deflates vigorously and flatulently, and possibly still lands on the ship. Targeting far-off jellyfish (i.e. next round's creatures) imposes a -2 penalty, but there is no threat of the creature landing on the ship. Targeting closer jellyfish (i.e. this round's creatures) imposes no penalty but leaves a 30% chance of it landing on the ship if hit.

For any jellyfish that lands on the ship, roll a d10 and consult the table below to determine its target.

| Roll | Landing spot                                                                                                   |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | In the Captain's breakfast                                                                                     |
| 2    | Tangled in rigging                                                                                             |
| 3    | In a barrel of fresh water, fouling it                                                                         |
| 4    | On a sleeping crewman                                                                                          |
| 5    | On a PC: <b>DC 10 Dexterity</b> save to avoid                                                                  |
| 6-10 | On the deck, right in front of a sailor carrying a large stack of neatly-coiled rope (the ocean's banana peel) |

### KRAKEN MATING RITUAL

On a calm, moonlit night, the PCs motionless vessel bears witness to two **kraken** (CR 23; MM, p 197) engaged in a courtship display. The PCs ship must quietly get away (under oar power), or risk being used as a token of kraken affection.

The male kraken is well aware of the PCs ship, but is much more concerned with impressing the female. As long as his mating ritual isn't interfered with, he leaves the ship alone.

Two sets of 50-foot-tall tentacles rise up out of the water, causing the watchman to yell out in alarm. The tentacles are on either side of the ship, but a good ¼ mile apart. They don't threaten the ship, just ominously loom over it. One set begins swaying in the air and churning up water, the other set remains motionless. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals that the behavior looks amorous and ritualistic.

The ship is slowly drawn in towards the churning tentacles. Then the party sees the swaying kraken release a 6 foot-long, glowing cylinder, the male's spermatophore packet. Someone on board knows exactly what this is and that it is a delicacy, worth around 500,000 gold pieces! With the stakes now set, ask your party what they do. The captain or officer seems sorely tempted to risk the kraken's wrath and grab the valuable item....

Moving towards the packet triggers a warning flurry of bubbles from the male kraken. If the PCs move any closer, the male decides to use their ship in the ritual; he breaks off the mast and tosses it to the female as a gift. He then gives the ship a mighty shove (it comes to a stop in a mile).

## BONUS ENCOUNTERS

### THE WORST LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER

The PCs see a small island with a single hut on it, a derelict signal light on its roof. A man runs out and waves vigorously at the ship. A hidden reef lies between the ship and the island. If the PCs come any closer, they risk running aground; a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** or **(Survival)** check spots the hazard and allows them to navigate within earshot of the island. In this case, the man's only message is: "Watch out for the reef!" He laughs really hard at his joke. The man, Kelch, is a prisoner, exiled to the island for a year. Your players can fill in additional details about this individual.

### FAST FEET

A **quickling** (CR 1; VGtM, p 187) named Skzzzrrrr is gleefully zipping across the ocean's surface, carrying messages among the local island leaders. The PCs initially only see a rooster-tail of water as he speeds by. But Skzzzrrr has misjudged his errand's length and is growing tired. He turns and runs laps around the ship, trying to tell if the crew is friendly.

Encouraging role-playing from the PCs will cause the quickling to zip up onto the deck for a rest. He can provide information about possible destinations ahead, but is quite impatient about having to speak slowly.

## JELLYFISH

*small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class 8**

**Hit Points 3 (1d6)**

**Speed 5 ft. (swim) 5ft. (fly)**

| STR    | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2 (-4) | 6 (-3) | 10 (+0) | 2 (-4) | 2 (-4) | 8 (-1) |

**Damage Resistances lightning**

**Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)**

**Translucent.** *If the jellyfish is in water, a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check is needed to locate it.*

#### Actions

**Tentacles.** *Melee Area Attack:* reach 10 ft., any creature within the tentacles reach must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid taking 10 acid damage and being **stunned** for 2 rounds.

# TRouble IN THE TIDE POOLS

By **Hannah Rose**

Map: **Jeff C. Stevens**

Estimated runtime: 30-60 minutes

*Trouble in the Tide Pools is a short investigation/combat encounter designed for five characters of 3rd level. Scaling suggestions are included for parties up to 10th level.*

## BACKGROUND

An enterprising group of sahuagin have trapped several aquatic creatures in a coastal cave system and are charging their peers to view the captive animals.

## PLOT HOOKS

- The party is visiting the beach for some rest and relaxation, and accidentally stumbles across the tide pools.
- A group of friendly merfolk enlists the party's aid in freeing the imprisoned animals.
- Gossip at a seaside tavern hints that there is a horde of sahuagin treasure hidden in a cave by the beach.
- A disgruntled sahuagin loudly complains to the party about the high price of admission to see "a few squishy animals."

## C1. BEACH CAVE ENTRANCE

This cave, formed by natural erosion and tidal forces, has a rough, rocky floor with scattered tide pools. At high tide, ocean waves wash through a low crack in the south wall. Two **sahuagin** (CR 1/2; MM, p 263) are feeding raw fish to a **swarm of quippers** (CR 1; MM, p 338) in one of the tide pools. The other pools contain several sea urchins, starfish, sea anemones, and

hermit crabs. A deeper pool at the back of the cave opens into an underwater passage to area C2.

When the characters enter the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

As you step into this damp cave, you see two green-scaled, bipedal creatures with webbed feet and tails, crouching on the rocky ground next to one of several tide pools. The smell of the fresh ocean breeze clashes with the odor of raw fish and brine.

Unless the characters are deliberately trying to be stealthy, the sahuagin immediately grab their spears and hiss menacingly, Ready an action to Attack when the characters are within 30 feet. However, if the characters offer them gold and indicate a desire to see the animals, a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion)** check can diffuse the situation. They warily allow the characters to tour the tide pools in area C1 for an (inflated) fee of 5 gp per person.

If combat ensues, the sahuagin take the Disengage action and flee to area C2 when they are reduced to fewer than half their maximum hit points.

## SCALING THE COMBAT

**APL 1-3:** as written

**APL 4-6:** 4 sahuagin

**APL 7-8:** 6 sahuagin

**APL 9-11:** 4 sahuagin and 1 sahuagin baron (CR 5; MM, p 264)

## C2. UNDERWATER PASSAGE

This submerged tunnel is about 10 feet in diameter, 30 feet long, and completely dark.

The tunnel descends 15 feet, then ascends to reach the surface in area C3.

When a creature without a swim speed reaches the middle of the passage, it must succeed on a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** check to keep moving. Otherwise, the creature's speed is reduced to 0 until the end of its turn. This check can be repeated each round at the risk of running out of air. The same check is required to return from area C3 to area C1.

#### ADDED THREAT

If the characters are at least 5th level, there is a **swarm of quippers** (CR 1; MM, p 338) in the tunnel.

### C3. GLOWING GROTTO

The underwater tunnel from area C1 emerges into a surprisingly beautiful grotto, illuminated by a floating globe of blue-green light that drifts above a small island in the center of the saltwater pool.

A **sahuagin priestess** (CR 2; MM, p 264) is standing on the island, accompanied by any sahuagin who escaped area C2. She commands two **reef sharks** (CR 1/2; MM, p 336) that circle the island, guarding the submerged treasure chest on the other side of the grotto. As soon as the sahuagin notice the characters, they shout in Sahuagin and attack.

#### SCALING THE COMBAT

**APL 1-4:** as written

**APL 5-8:** 2 sahuagin priestess (CR 2; MM, p 264)

**APL 9-11:** 2 sahuagin priestess and 1 sahuagin baron (CR 5; MM, p 264)

**Treasure.** The floating globe of light is a *driftglobe*. The chest guarded by the sharks

contains 1d4 x 10 gp for each sahuagin and sahuagin priestess, and 3d6 pp for each sahuagin baron, if any.

### C4. OCTOPUS CAVE

This small cave is almost completely submerged, and the opening has been blocked with a fine wire mesh nailed to the rock, requiring a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics)** or **DC 16 Dexterity** check with thieves' tools to remove. Inside the cave is a **giant octopus** (CR 1; MM, p 326) that curiously pats friendly creatures with its tentacles.

### C5. SEA OTTER DEN

This partially underwater cave is occupied by a pair of underfed **sea otters**. The entrance to the cave is blocked by an iron grate, which can be removed with a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** or a **DC 14 Dexterity** check with thieves' tools. The sea otters are friendly to any characters who give them fresh fish or mollusks, and will happily accompany the characters as long as they are not separated from each other.

## SEA OTTER

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 5 (1d6 + 1)

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 3 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) |

**Skills** Athletics +3, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

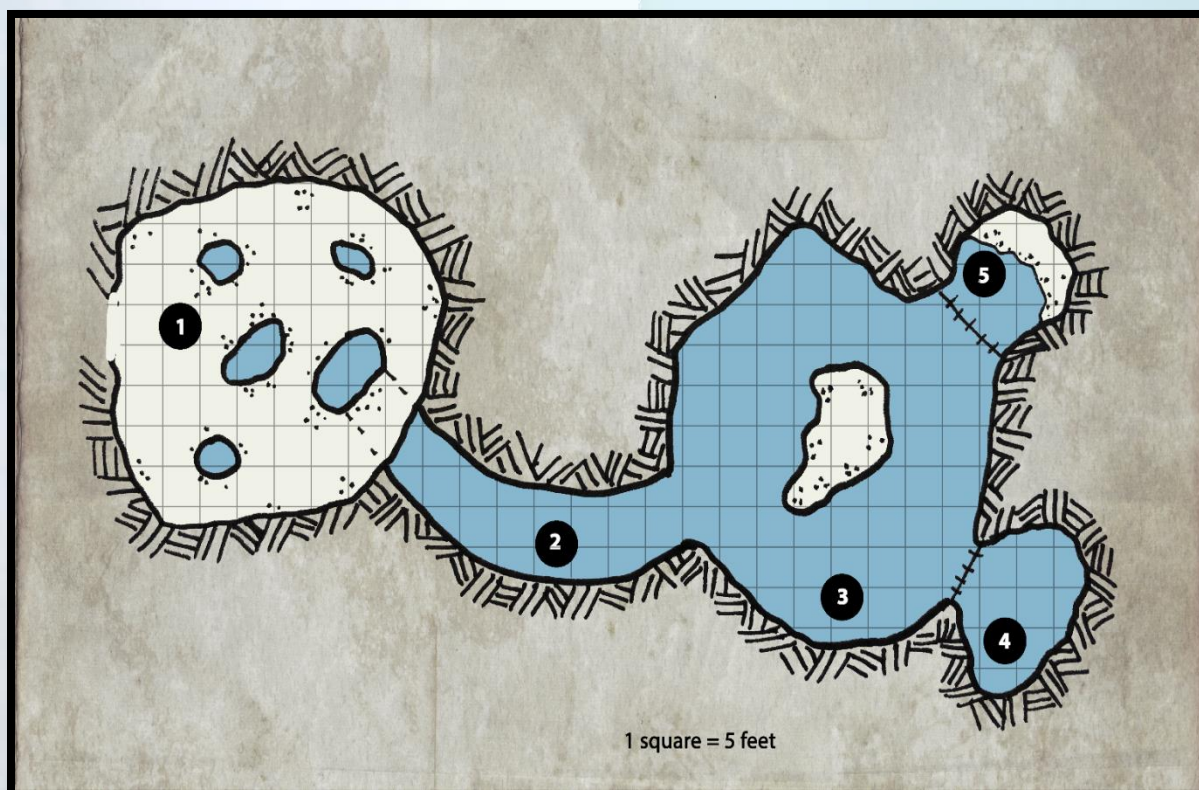
**Dexterous Grip.** The sea otter can hold small objects in its paws but can't wield them as weapons.

**Actions**

**Multiattack.** The sea otter makes two attacks, one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.



# FINGUL GLOT AND THE SPONTOON

By: Jeff C. Stevens

Artist: Daniel Walthall

Map: Erin Harvey

*Though not accustomed to the sea, a goblin has deemed itself captain of a peculiar, yet fascinating, sea vessel pulled by large sharks.*

## BACKGROUND

Fingul Glot grew bored of the traditional goblin lifestyle of constant raiding of human settlements, ambushing merchant wagons, and stealing from other humanoids. The ambitious goblin took it upon herself to fashion a ship and see what new adventures she could find on the sea.

The trouble was, none of the crew knew how to sail. That didn't stop Fingul, who captured (after many failed attempts prior to finding her Necklace of Shark Command) two large sharks and tethered them to the flotilla she calls Spontoon. Now, the goblins travel the open water, as long as they have something to feed the sharks.

## THE CREW

The crew of the *Spontoon* includes its captain Fingul (**bandit captain**; CR 2; MM, p 344) and four **goblins** (CR ¼; MM, p 166). Occasionally, Fingul hires a goblin shaman (**druid**; CR 2; MM, p 346) to accompany them on longer missions.

## FINGUL AND CREW AS NPCs

Below are a few suggestions on how Fingul and the crew can be used as NPCs:



**An Ally** – Fingul is fond of gold and treasure. Though it is unlikely adventures will stumble upon the captain in humanoid settlements, they could find her on an island or near a water ruin.

**A Merchant** – The crew have discovered, either by salvage, adventuring, or theft, many items and magical items, which they may be eager to part with for the right amount of gold. There is a 30% chance that Fingul has any item or weapon listed in the Players Handbook and charges two times the listed price.

**A Quest Giver** – Fingul often loses a crew member to the sharks; their constant movement and occasional thrashing and leaping from the water have caused a few of the crew to fall overboard and be devoured.

Near mainland, replacement goblins are easy to come by; however, at sea Fingul finds it necessary to recruit crew members of other races. The adventurers may run across the *Spontoon* stranded in the water. Fingul offers an amount of gold or a magic item to entice the characters to help them crew the ship.

**An Antagonist** – The *Spontoon* is seen in the distance, shadowing the characters' vessel. The *Spontoon* moves chaotically, shooting off in random directions, but then corrects course as the goblins wrangle the sharks. It may take several hours or days for the *Spontoon* to catch up to the adventurers. When it does, Fingul and crew attack from a distance until they are close enough to attempt to board the ship.

**A Side Quest** – Having recently kidnapped a humanoid from a coastal settlement, the adventurers may be tasked with hunting down the *Spontoon* and rescuing the humanoid.

## THE SPONTOON

The *Spontoon* is pieced together from ill-fitted planks and rope. The ship has an AC of 12 and 75 Hit Points, with a damage threshold of 10.

Its speed is determined by the hunger of the sharks, and by the bait that is dangled in front of them, but ranges from 1 mph to 8 mph, with the highest speeds reached when a bloodied piece of bait dangles in the water ahead of the sharks, especially if the bait is still alive.

The sharks are very active and, unless steered by the dangling bait, sometimes pull in opposite directions. Causing the craft to move in random directions. Even when anchored, the sharks tug the ship, rotating it chaotically. The goblin crew is accustomed to this movement and sleep well but characters may not be able

to gain the benefits of a long rest if onboard the *Spontoon*.

## THE BAIT

Fingul often kidnaps a humanoid and uses it as bait. Other forms of bait include rotting meat or leftover organs from a recent kill.

## THE BAIT POLE

The bait pole retracts to a length of 10 feet and extends to a length of 25 feet. To add bait to the pole, the mechanism is swung to the rear of the craft and then retracted, allowing easy access to the hooks and harnesses that hold the bait.

Two locked, wooden cages sit at the rear of the ship, where the goblins keep potential bait humanoids or animals. The cages can be opened with a successful **DC 14 Dexterity** check using **thieves' tools**, or by using the key that Fingul keeps in her pocket.



## CHAOTIC MOVEMENTS

If the bait isn't fresh, or if no bait is used, the sharks become disinterested and move as they like. Consult the below table for how this can impact a party or the crew:

| d4 | Result                                                                                                                                                  | Impact                                                                                                                                                        |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | The sharks turn in opposite directions, causing the ship to jolt.                                                                                       | Each creature on the ship must succeed on a <b>DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)</b> check or find itself knocked prone in an empty square within a 5-foot radius. |
| 2  | The sharks catch sight of a tasty morsel other than the bait. Both sharks turn to follow the morsel, causing the ship to quickly spin to a new heading. | Each creature on the ship must succeed on a <b>DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)</b> check or find itself knocked prone in an empty square within a 5-foot radius. |
| 3  | One of the sharks sees a crew member and decides to leap for them, landing on the deck of the <i>Spontoon</i> .                                         | The shark makes melee attacks against a creature in range.                                                                                                    |
| 4  | The sharks tire and stop moving.                                                                                                                        | The bait must be replaced. The sharks won't move until they smell fresh blood in the water.                                                                   |

## NECKLACE OF SHARK COMMAND

*Wonderous item, rare*

*A turquoise-colored piece of coral festooned with shark teeth and a smooth onyx gem, attached to a strap of aged leather.*

This necklace has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing the necklace, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast one of the following spells, which effect only sharks:

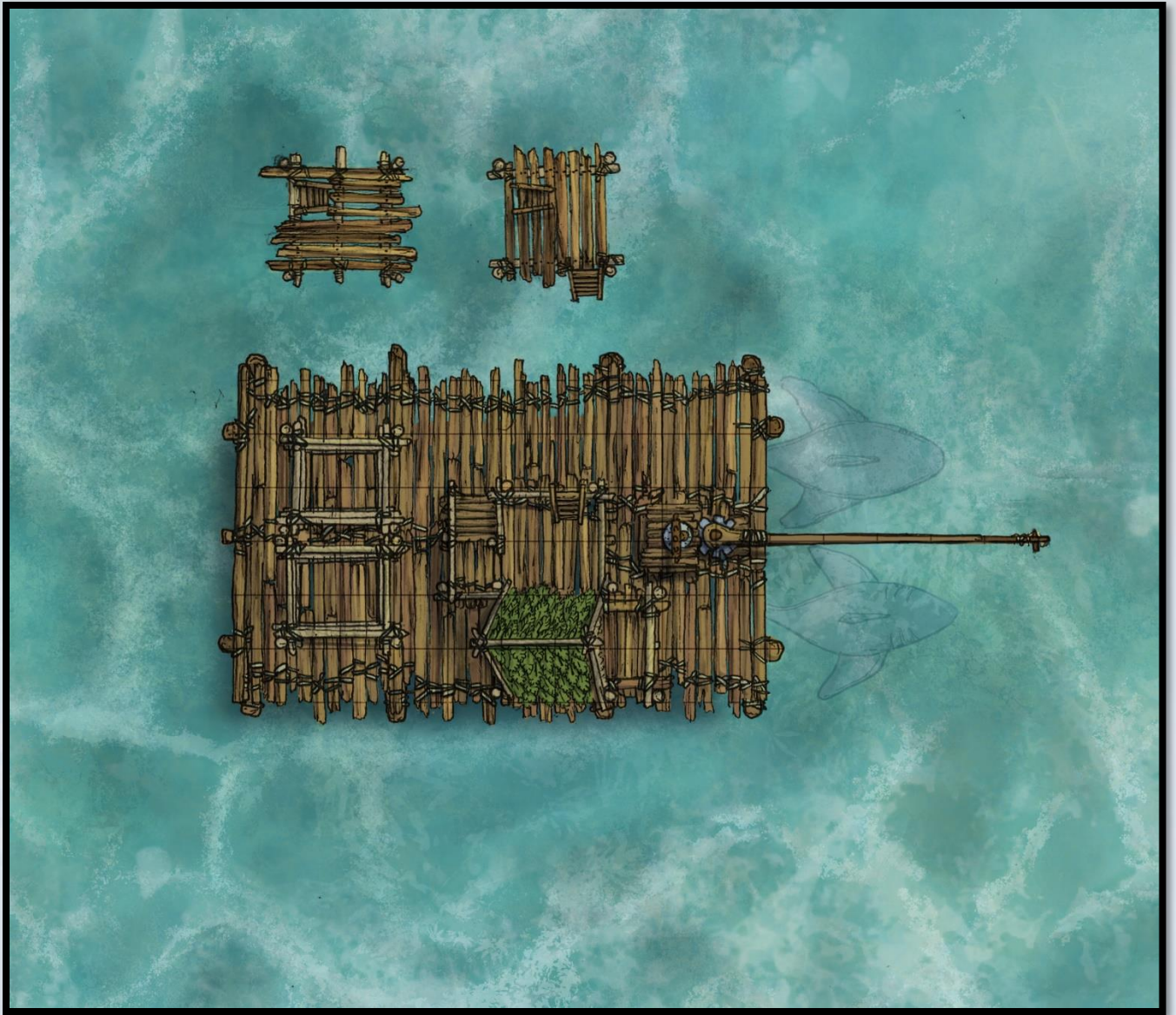
*Animal Friendship* (save DC 12)

*Speak with Animals*

In addition, you gain the following ability:

**Swim Speed.** You gain a swim speed of 30 ft. If you already have a swim speed of 30 ft., you gain +10 ft. to your normal rate.





# THE HAG'S BARGAIN

By Teos Abadia

Cartography: Mobral Rox

Estimated run-time: 60-90 minutes

*The Hag's Bargain is a short coastal adventure designed for six characters of levels 6-9.*

## BACKGROUND

*Fortune's Promise*, a ship with a reputation for ferrying wealthy passengers, has been caught in a storm and swept onto the rocky coast. A clever sea hag, Scheming Hilda Rottentooth, has seized the opportunity to force the survivors into a terrible bargain in exchange for their lives. Scheming Hilda plays the long game and will release the survivors from the bargain if the heroes offer a suitable deal.

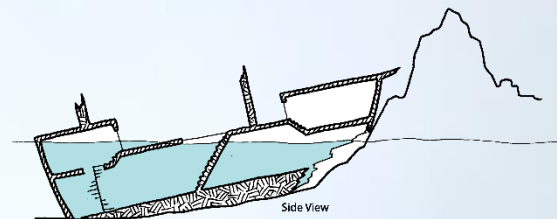
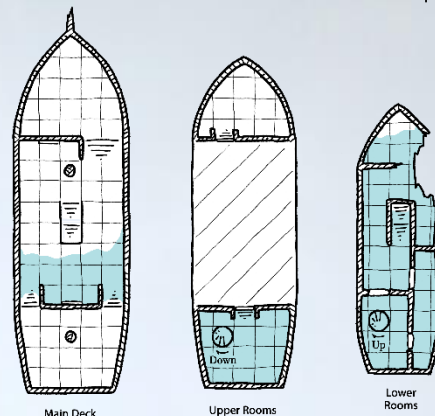
## PLOT HOOK

The player characters can learn of the shipwreck in several ways. If aboard a ship, they can see *Fortune's Promise* in the distance, caught in a dangerous current and swept onto the rocks. Waters near the wrecked ship are too treacherous for a direct approach, but the player characters can come ashore in a cove a few hundred feet away and quickly travel overland to the shipwreck site.

If in a coastal town, the party can hear cries from a watchtower or lighthouse, where a sharp-eyed woman has seen the ship in the distance, crashing into a treacherous part of the shore. Townspeople can indicate a safe passage leading through cliffs surrounding the town and down to the shore.

Should anyone think to ask a local about the area, they hesitate before saying that ships do not usually approach this part of the coastline. Not only do the rocks make it impassible, but a terrible witch is said to watch over the area. A **DC 14 Intelligence (History)** check can provide the same information. Persistence and

1 square = 5 feet



exceptional roleplaying with townspeople could uncover that the witch is a hag named Hilda Rottentooth, but locals fear her and the bargains she offers to those who foolishly turn to her in times of need.

## APPROACHING THE SHIPWRECK

Aside from the heavy rain, the approach from either the town or along the beach is uneventful. As the heroes approach the shipwreck, read or summarize:

Torrential rains from the overcast gray sky and crashing waves from dark aquamarine waters drench the coastline, the cold air is permeated with the salty smell of the sea. The shipwrecked *Fortune's Promise* is just fifty feet away, still in the water but with its bow lodged upon one of the large jagged rocks dotting the coastline. Both of the ship's masts have been broken in half, its sails torn away. Waves strike the vessel, showering it with spray and tilting the deck momentarily.

The ship seems to be in peril, but the characters have a few moments to make any plans and

then approach the shipwreck. Climbing the large rock allows any creature to safely descend onto the bow of the ship.

Approaching along the ship's side would require swimming through the perilous waves and obviously appears to be a great way to die. If a character insists on swimming, they must succeed at a **DC 18 Strength (Athletics)** check each round to swim at quarter speed. If they fail the check, they take 13 (3d8) bludgeoning damage as they are washed onto the large rock by a crashing wave. If a swimming character reaches the ship, they must succeed at a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** check to climb up the side.

If an adventurer tries to see more from afar before approaching, they may attempt a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check. If successful, they see a hulking shape with blue-green skin move across the deck and strike a door to the sterncastle, as if trying to break it down. If the check result was 20 or higher, the character recognizes the creature as a troll.

## CONDITIONS ON THE SHIPWRECK

### GENERAL FEATURES

**Terrain.** The deck is slippery. The rear half of the deck has a foot of water on it. See below for effects.

**Weather and Light.** Cold, with overcast skies and a torrential downpour. Areas more than fifty feet away are considered lightly obscured. Waves crash upon the ship.

**Smells and Sounds.** The smell of brine fills the air and there are the incessant sounds of crashing waves and falling rain.

**Slippery Deck:** The entire deck of the ship is considered difficult terrain as the rain and crashing waves tilt the deck and make it slippery. Any creature striking another creature in melee anywhere on the deck realizes that with effort they could push their target. Once they realize this, as part of a successful melee attack the attacker may attempt an **opposed Strength (Athletics)** check. With success they may slide the target of their attack 10 feet in

any direction in addition to the normal effects of their attack. Trolls will use this feature starting on the second round of initiative, though not always intelligently. They just like shoving things around! Precautions such as characters tying each other with rope could remove the difficult terrain or prevent being pushed by a troll.

**Water-logged Deck:** The rear half of the top deck is covered in about a foot of water. Any sea troll can regenerate while standing in the water.

**Scrag:** The trolls in this adventure are sea trolls, also known as scrag. Use the statistics of a **troll** (CR 5; MM, p 291) though they regenerate only when standing in water. The characters can use the slippery deck and smart tactics to try to move the scrag out of areas where they can regenerate. Fire does not stop a scrag's regeneration.

## THE SHIPWRECK OF FORTUNE'S PROMISE

When the player characters climb to the top of the rock, or if they reach the ship by other means, read the following:

The ship's deck is intact, though it looks slippery. Rain and crashing waves wash over the deck, tilting it slightly and covering the rear half of the vessel in a foot of water. A large sterncastle stands at the far end, with a single door. A hulking troll, its warty skin blue-green, and its hair resembling seaweed, is unleashing blows against the door, trying to break it down. If anyone is within, the rain and crashing waves prevent you from hearing their screams.

A young woman crouches behind a barrel, not far from the troll. She sees you and seems to be trying to say something, but her words can't be heard over the crashing waves.

The young woman is a **sea hag** (CR 2; MM, p 179). Scheming Hilda Rottentooth is using her *illusory appearance* to hide her true nature. In her current form she is unattractive (as she must be as a sea hag), with disheveled hair and a jutting chin. Each round, Hilda calls out to the survivors in the ship, asking them to accept her bargain. See **The Bargain**, below. She will engage in combat if she thinks she and her trolls can win, preferably attacking an unsuspecting character with surprise. She is quick to negotiate if near defeat (see **Negotiating with Hilda** below).

One **scrag** is currently striking at the door. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Nature or Perception)** check reveals that the troll is pulling its punches and is not striking the door as hard as it could. Its role is to strike fear in the survivors huddled in the sterncastle, so that Scheming Hilda can get the survivors to bargain. If it is engaged in melee combat, or if it loses a quarter of its hit point total to any sources of damage, it stops beating on the door and Hilda can no longer convince more survivors to accept her bargain.

Another sea troll hides behind a fold in the rocks at the bow of the ship, trying to surprise any adventurers who climb over the rocks. It can reach an adventurer just as they step onto the deck. If characters have a **passive Wisdom (Perception) of 16 or higher** they spot the hidden troll.

## SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

### SCALING THE COMBAT

**APL 6:** two scrag are a medium challenge. For a hard challenge, add 3 to the damage inflicted by their attacks and increase their hit point maximum by 15.

**APL 7:** add a third scrag for a hard challenge. Increase the sea hag's hit point maximum by 8.

**APL 8:** use three scrag and increase the damage of their attacks by two and their hit point maximum by 20. Increase Hilda's hit point maximum by 15.

**APL 9:** use 4 scrag. Increase Hilda's hit point maximum by 20.

### TACTICS

At all levels of play, the sea hag can engage in combat, though she is not considered a full combatant and Scheming Hilda is quick to call an end to hostilities if she is losing. See **The Bargain** and **Negotiating with Hilda** below for details.

### THE BARGAIN

Scheming Hilda Rottentooth has offered the survivors, who are holed up in the sterncastle, a deal. She will save them from the trolls if they agree to serve her for one year. This is a truly terrible offer, for Hilda will be sure to pick the worst time of their lives for the bargainer to serve their sentence, and the worst deeds possible as tasks to utterly corrupt them. Corrupting so many would elevate her position as a hag, strengthening Hilda greatly.

By the time combat starts, one third of the survivors have already accepted. At the end of each round, another third will accept so long as the troll banging on the door has not been drawn away. By the end of the third round, all of the survivors will have accepted the bargain.

Characters wondering about this troll, the door, or the young woman should be allowed to make checks such as **Intelligence (Insight)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** to pick up on the troll or Hilda's motives, to realize the troll at the door is pulling its punches, and/or to hear some of what Hilda is calling out to the survivors.

### NEGOTIATING WITH HILDA

If the player characters figure out Hilda's motives, they could negotiate with her. Hilda will also negotiate if she is reduced below half her maximum hit point total or if her trolls are near defeat.

Hilda will initially offer to release all of the survivors from her bargain, "so long as no harm comes to me and my coven." That language is problematic, as it covers any type of harm (not just from the characters) and across any length of time. If the characters realize this, she can be convinced to refine the language (to be harm inflicted by the characters, during some stated period of time, or even to just cover Hilda) if the party negotiates well. In addition to roleplaying, such negotiation can require one or more **Charisma (Persuasion)** checks opposed by her **Wisdom (Insight)** check. Hilda gains advantage if all the survivors are under her bargain, and the negotiating player character gains advantage if only one third of the survivors accepted her bargain.

The repercussions of any deal the characters strike could lead to future adventures. Scheming Hilda gleefully twists the wording of any accord and will remember the characters for the rest of her life.

If negotiations turn sour, or should Hilda be close to defeat, she dives overboard. Her ability to breathe water and swim allows her to dive below the dangerous waves and likely to avoid pursuit. Hilda could make for an excellent recurring villain.

### THE SURVIVORS

A dozen survivors are locked in the sterncastle. Zora Willowtree (LG female human **noble**; CR 1/8; MM, p 348) acts as their leader, trying to encourage them to stay strong and not accept the bargain. Survivors treat any rescuers as

heroes and offer jewelry and coins worth a total of 100 gold pieces as thanks for their freedom. Zora and several of the NPCs are influential in their communities and could provide adventure seeds in the future, including to other encounters in this supplement.

### BELOW DECKS

---

Stairs in the center of the ship and in the sterncastle lead below decks, though the area is submerged. The NPCs, if rescued, can share that the deceased captain of the vessel had a chest with valuables below.

Brave characters can hold their breath and swim below. The captain's chest is located under the forecastle. However, a trapped **Hunter Shark** (CR 2; MM, p 330) is in the area. Characters venturing below decks may defeat it through combat or could help the shark get out through the hole in the deck with a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Nature)** check. Clever ideas could provide advantage on checks or perhaps defuse the situation without any checks.

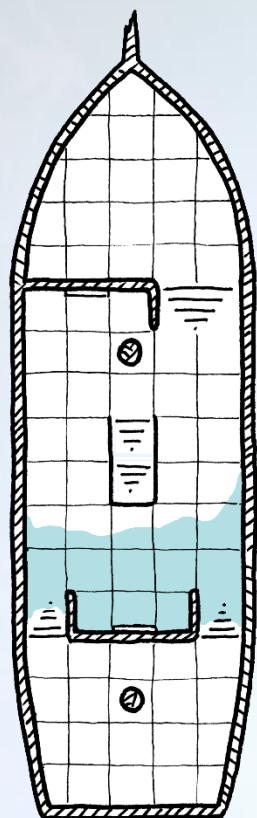
The chest is unlocked and holds 150 gold pieces worth of gold and emeralds.

### CONCLUSION

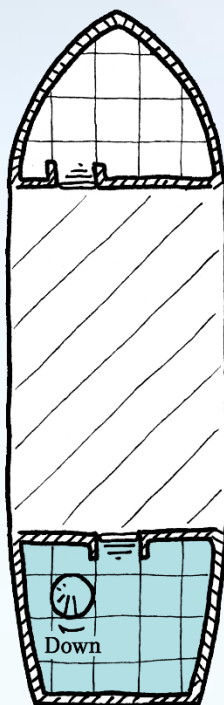
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Once the characters have resolved any negotiations with the hag, freed the survivors, and completed any exploration below decks, they may escort the survivors back to their own ship or the nearby town. News of their heroics spreads quickly. Word also spreads to other hags, which could have repercussions even if Hilda did not survive. If Hilda did survive, any negotiations or remaining bargain could lead to future adventures.

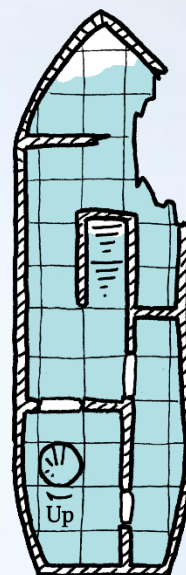
1 square = 5 feet



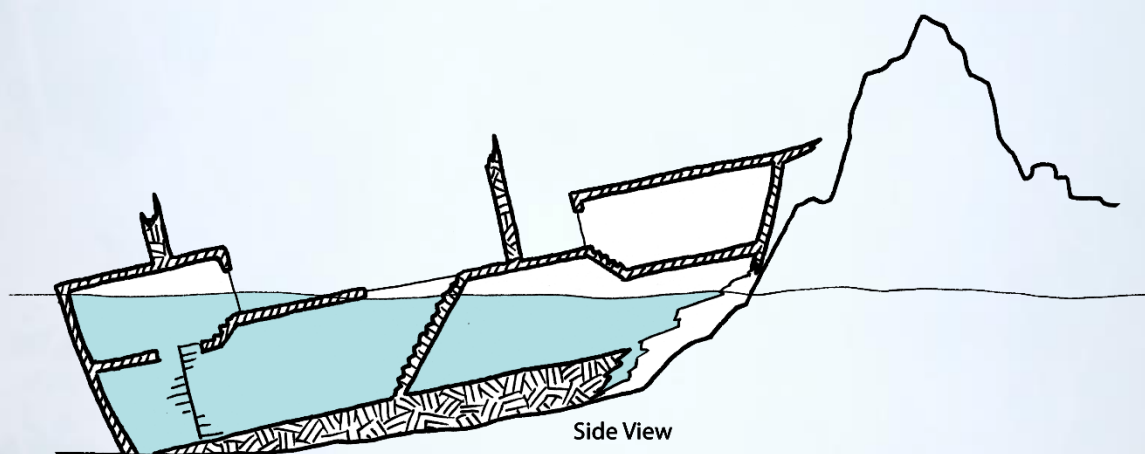
Main Deck



Upper Rooms



Lower Rooms



Side View

## UNDINE UNDONE

By Shawn Merwin

@shawnmerwin

Artist: Gary Dupuis

Estimated run-time: 60 minutes

*Undine Undone is a short exploration and roleplaying nautical adventure designed for five characters of levels 1-10.*

### BACKGROUND

An efreeti's love was captured by a marid and is being held in an underwater cell. While the characters undertake an ocean voyage, they are asked by the efreeti to rescue his love and bring her back to him.

### PLOT HOOK

As the characters voyage in deep waters, most likely on a large lake, sea, or ocean, the efreeti Calxiyron appears in the sky above their ship.

## CALXIYRON'S PLEA

When the efreeti appears, read:

A whirlwind of fire erupts in the sky and funnels its way directly toward your vessel. At the last moment, the fireball ceases its descent, taking the form of a genie made of fire.

"Mortals, I am here to talk with you, not destroy you. Hear my tale and help me if you can. I fell in love with an undine called Milla from these waters, a lesser faerie of the water, but the most beautiful creature I can imagine. I would visit her and listen to her tales for days on end."

"The last time I visited, Milla was swimming to the surface when a terrible marid, Raqwinia, pulled her back down. Raqwinia said that my love would be forever imprisoned beneath the waves as punishment for daring to love me."

"I have the means to destroy your vessel, but I will not do that. My burning heart breaks at the loss of my love, and I ask that you travel where I cannot, beneath the waves, and free her."

Calxiyron the **efreeti** (CR 11; MM, p 145) is truly distraught at the capture and imprisonment of his love.

Ability checks or any truth-detecting magic reveals that Calxiyron speaks the truth. He offers any characters who cannot breathe water a *potion of water breathing*.

Calxiyron explains that the marid's outpost rests directly below the current position of the ship. If the characters swim straight down, they can reach it in just a few minutes. The efreeti cannot promise financial reward for their help, but he can promise to assist the characters at some point in the future when their need is great.

## THE DESCENT

If the characters agree to the efreeti's request, they can prepare for their challenge and then jump in.

On the way down, the characters must contend with the electric eels that guard Raqwinia's outpost. These creatures are too innumerable to battle. Instead, the characters should avoid them.

Characters must succeed on a **DC 10 + character level Dexterity (Acrobatics), Strength (Athletics), or Intelligence (Nature)** check to avoid being swarmed by the eels. On a failed check, the character takes 2 (1d4) per character level lightning damage.

## THE MARID'S OUTPOST

After braving the eel guards the characters see a domed structure on the sandy floor. A hatched opening allows passage into the dome, but the hatch is guarded by a strange-looking turtle being.

### REEFUS

The guard is an indestructible water construct called Reefus. It cannot attack, but it reflects damage done to it back on the attacker. Characters dealing damage to Reefus must succeed a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw, taking their own damage reflected off of Reefus on a failure, or half as much damage dealt on a success.

If the characters talk to Reefus, it answers in bored monotone. It tells the characters they cannot enter without an invitation from its master Raqwinia, or one of the other occupants.

### GAINING ENTRANCE

The characters can gain entrance in a variety of ways:

- Entertain the bored creature with a **DC 10 Charisma (Performance)** check. It is particularly fond of interpretive dance.
- Trick Reefus into believing the characters are invited with a **DC 10 Charisma (Deception)** check.
- Open the hatch with a **DC 15 Dexterity check** by a character proficient with thieves' tools.
- Trick Reefus into supplying the passcode, which is "bubbling beneath."
- Any other ploy that catches your fancy.

Reefus can do nothing to stop characters from just entering if they can get the hatch open on their own, as he is only there to let in creatures that belong.



## THE PRISON

The hatched opening the characters have just come through creates an airlock, keeping water out of the domed structure. It is a 20-foot drop from the hatch in the dome to the floor of the chamber. Characters can jump down and take the falling damage, or come up with another way to safely descend.

When they get to the floor, the characters see nothing but a 50-foot diameter marble floor and no other furnishings. With a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check, the characters notice a seam on one of the slabs in the floor. Alternatively, a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check lets a character hear a soft sobbing coming from beneath the floor, which reveals the area with the seam.

### TRAP

The slab that covers the prison holding Milla is trapped. Characters succeeding on a **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check see the faint runes etched into the slab. The runes can be deactivated with a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check.

If the slab is removed before the trap is disarmed, or if the check to disarm it fails by more than 4, the trap erupts. Everyone in the dome must succeed on a **Constitution** saving throw or take 1d6 per character level cold damage, or half as much on a successful save.

### SCALING THE SAVING THROW

**APL 1-4:** DC 10 Constitution save

**APL 5-10:** DC 15 Constitution save

If the trap does go off, the damage kills Milla, meaning the characters must go back to Calxiyron and explain what happened.

After the trap is disarmed or set off the slab can be pried up easily, revealing a cell below. If she is still alive, the undead Milla is looking up from the bottom of the 30-foot-deep cell in fear and worry.

## RETURNING

The characters can return to the surface, either with Milla or with the news of her death. If they bring her back alive, Calxiyron is ecstatic. He gives the characters an *elemental gem* holding a fire elemental that can serve them at their greatest need.

If the characters failed, Calxiyron demands to know what happened. As long as the characters tell the truth – even if they killed her accidentally – Calxiyron accepts their answer and blames the marid for her death.

If Calxiyron catches them in a lie, he angrily hurls fire at their ship and vanishes, leaving the characters to deal with a burning ship in the middle of a vast expanse of water....

## FOG OF HORRORS

By Anne Gregersen

Artist: Lotta Ignatius

Estimated run-time: 30 to 60 minutes

*When sailors die at sea, there is often no one present to witness their demise. There is no one there to bring news of their passing to their loved ones. These lost sailors are left as forgotten memories, skidding along the waves like seafoam, forever unable to find rest.*

*The essence of these lost sailors become twisted in their loneliness. Perished sailors taken by the unforgiving depths are forced together, in their ceaseless and desperate attempts to be remembered and mourned by the living. They follow the darkness of night and the black ocean waters to a sailing vessel. When their attempts to communicate with living sailors inevitably fail the forgotten dead attack, claiming new souls for their host of the lost.*

### EFFECTS OF THE FOG

At a distance, the fog looks indistinguishable from a regular fog and would not raise any concerns among a ship's crew members or a party of adventurers. This changes as the fog gets closer to the ship, where gaunt humanoid forms begin taking shape and tendrils of gray, reassembling arms begin clawing at the sides of the ship.

Once a ship has become engulfed by the fog, it is hard to escape it. Because of the speed of the fog, fleeing its embrace is impossible without the aid of a strong wind, magic, or certain spells, such as *gust of wind* or *control winds*, hitting the sails and allowing the ship to escape the fog's effects. These spells might also be used to ward off the effects of the fog for a limited time, as the strong winds are blowing the lost souls away from the ship.



In the beginning, the fog merely looks frightening and will not have any effects on the characters or the crew, but when they have been in the fog's presence for a while, they will begin to be physically affected by it. After a designated amount of time, as written below, the characters must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom** saving throw or be affected by the twisting evils of the fog. The time passing can be changed to be shorter or longer as the DM sees fit.

Roll on the Character Effects table to see how the characters are affected. The characters make a new saving throw at the end of each section of time as described below. If a character has previously failed a saving throw from this fog, they have disadvantage on their current saving throw. In addition, the ship's crew are also affected by the fog. Their reactions, if relevant, are rolled for on the Crew Events table.

## AFTER ONE HOUR

People on board the ship are getting antsy and are suffering minor bouts of discomfort.

### CHARACTER EFFECTS

| 1d4 | Effect                                                                                                 |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | The character becomes distant, automatically failing any Perception checks made to look out for danger |
| 2   | The character sees strange, humanoid shapes moving in the fog                                          |
| 3   | The character gets a stinging headache                                                                 |
| 4   | The character forgets a simple fact, such as another character's name or the ship's end destination    |

### CREW EVENTS

| 1d4 | Event                                                                                    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Screams are heard from below deck as the crew is haunted by nightmares                   |
| 2   | Someone is singing, but no one can find the source of it                                 |
| 3   | Members of the crew are seen throwing up over the railing                                |
| 4   | The crew is doing unnecessary tasks, such as raising the sail or scrubbing down the deck |

## AFTER TWO HOURS

The crew are all awake, as no one seems to be able to sleep. People are beginning to suffer from paranoia and are engaging in compulsive behavior.

### CHARACTER EFFECTS

| 1d4 | Effect                                                                                                             |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | The character has a hard time saying words and can only speak in short sentences                                   |
| 2   | The character keeps seeing a strange figure looming over their shoulder, but when they turn around nothing's there |
| 3   | The character suddenly believes their crew members are looking to betray them                                      |
| 4   | The character suffers from short term madness (DMG p. 259)                                                         |

### CREW EVENTS

| 1d4 | Event                                                                                   |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | A crewman is furiously tying and untying the same knot over and over                    |
| 2   | Some of the crew have fetched their weapons and are sending each other frightened looks |
| 3   | A member of the crew is talking to someone who isn't there                              |
| 4   | Someone has begun throwing supplies, such as food or trade goods overboard              |



## AFTER THREE HOURS

The crew is abandoning ship. Fights are breaking out on deck and people are going mad.

### CHARACTER EFFECTS

| 1d4 | Effect                                                                   |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | The character has a sudden urge to fight something                       |
| 2   | The character is panicked, insisting on leaving the ship and crew behind |
| 3   | The character refuses to move in any way                                 |
| 4   | The character suffers from long term madness (DMG p. 260)                |

### CREW EVENTS

| 1d4 | Event                                                                                               |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | People are starting to abandon ship, either by using the available rowboats or by jumping overboard |
| 2   | Some of the crew have started fighting on the main deck                                             |
| 3   | A member of the crew is screaming strange phrases and names into the fog                            |
| 4   | Someone is hitting their head bloody against the main mast                                          |

## AFTER FOUR HOURS

The spirits of the fog are satiated from the panic aboard the ship and rise out of the fog to attack the crew. A number of **specters** (CR 1; MM, p 279) equal to the average character level of the adventurers board the ship, looking to attack the party and the crew. The maximum amount of specters that boards is 5, but this number can be increased for a stronger party as appropriate.

The goal of the specters is to have as many souls join their ranks as possible and they will target what they see as the physically weakest characters first. This means the specters will try to go after the ship's crew if they are able to do so.

Any character that has failed a saving throw against the fog within the past 24 hours must make a **DC 12 Wisdom** saving throw or become frightened of the specters upon first seeing them coming out of the fog. A frightened character may repeat this saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success.

If the adventurers and crew manage to fight off the specters, the fog will slowly disperse, allowing the ship to make its escape before it reforms.

## LOAN SHARKS

By JVC Parry

Map: Dyson Logos

Estimate run-time: 30 to 60 minutes

*Organised crime isn't restricted to the land.*

*Beneath the waves the Loan Sharks, a gang of ex-pirates, sea devils, and outcasts keep an eye out for their next victims. They run protection rackets, set up fake tolling schemes, give threat-offers and 'repair' ships.*

### BACKGROUND

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One gang, the Loan Sharks, is led by Galeo Cuvier (LE male human **wereshark**), a slick character whose charm in human form matches his clout as a hybrid. His smile is unmistakable and feared throughout sailing communities, a wide grimace with too many teeth that means your luck is up. Galeo's consigliere is a woman known as Big Hetty (NE female triton **bandit captain**). Her role primarily concerns setting up ambushes and collecting payments. Under their command are four **sahuagin** and three **bandits**. The Loan Sharks have a sunken lair in the form of the wreck of The Wight's Shadow where they store their goods and rest. The lair is protected night and day by sharks and other marine life (see 'Lair').

### ENCOUNTER

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As the characters are moving through a stretch of shallow water, such as along a coastline, through a mangrove swamp, or in a lagoon, they are approached by Galeo. Depending on the scenario, Galeo could arrive by swimming, or by rowboat from a nearby stretch of coast. Characters with a passive **Wisdom (Perception)** of 10 or higher notice Galeo moving toward

them, though his malign intentions are not clear from the start.

When Galeo first approaches the party, he attempts to charm them by praising the construction of their boat and the worthiness of the crew. Galeo poses as a stranded fisherman, an interested merchant, or any other number of guises to get access to the ship. A character could attempt a **Wisdom (Insight)** check versus Galeo's **Charisma (Performance)** to see through the grimacing veneer and detect some unscrupulous intent.

Once aboard, Galeo's demeanour quickly changes. His behaviour becomes cold and business-like, and his eyes go from human to pitch black like those of a shark. He proposes one of the schemes from the 'Crimes' section below.

If Galeo is prevented from boarding the ship, or if the characters try to forcibly remove him from the deck he becomes aggressive. If it seems likely that he could best the party in combat, he uses that to his advantage. Otherwise, he grimaces and descends to the depths, only to later with the Loan Sharks (see 'Consequences').

### CRIMES

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The following is a list of potential crimes and schemes that the Loan Sharks can pull on characters. Pick whichever is most useful for you as a DM, or whichever you think your players will enjoy most. At any point during Galeo's scheme, a character can attempt a **Wisdom (Insight)** check versus Galeo's **Charisma (Deception)**. A successful check makes it obvious to a character that they are being swindled out of their money.

### PROTECTION RACKET

Galeo offers to 'protect' the party and their vessel from potential threats in the waters. Of course, there are very few threats here save for the Loan Sharks themselves. The money guarantees that the party won't be attacked by the vicious gang.

"These waters are dangerous. Too dangerous for folk like yourselves to be navigating alone... or more precisely, navigating without protection. Lucky for you, me and my crew can fix that for you, a hundred gold pieces and we've got your back."

#### If the party accept;

"That's very wise of you. There are all sorts of nasty shit in these waters. You've done yourselves a favour. I'll be seeing you."

#### If the party initially refuse;

"You know you're making a real mistake here. It's not that much money and believe me, you need the protection. Dangerous waters here, very dangerous indeed. You better cough up the cash. You understand?"

If the party continue to refuse, Galeo leaves the ship with a few parting words. See 'Consequences' for the development of the encounter.

"No? Well that's your choice I suppose. I hope you have a safe journey."

### FAKE TOLL

Galeo lets the party know that they're travelling through an area of marine importance and that all ships passing through are required to pay a toll to offset the damage to the natural ecosystem caused by their presence.

"You know you all are in protected waters, right? You can't just sail through here. It's an important ecosystem, lots of rare seaweeds and the like. It's okay though, don't worry about turning back, you just gotta pay the toll. It's only a hundred gold pieces. To offset the damage you've already caused with your ship you know? The money goes toward the areas conservation."

#### If the party accept;

"That's very good of you, very considerate. You have a nice day now. Keep your eyes open for that rare wildlife, you know? Some lovely specimens out here."

#### If the party initially refuse;

"You know you can't really say no here. You're crossing waters that are environmentally protected, you understand? You have to pay the cash, or I'll be forced to impound your vessel."

If the party continue to refuse, Galeo leaves the ship with a few parting words. See 'Consequences' for the development of the encounter.

"Gosh this is really inconsiderate folks. That's a real shame. You'll be seeing me again soon."

### THREAT-OFFER

Galeo proposes a threat-offer to the party which would be financially beneficial to accept but morally questionable. Unlike the other scams the consequences of refusing Galeo's thoffer are spelled out clearly. There are four stolen casks of extremely fine wine (250 gp each) that Galeo wants to load on the ship. He won't tell the characters what they contain. He needs them to be dropped off to any harbourmaster next time the party docks with the promise that they're 'a gift from the Loan Sharks.' If the characters ship is searched by law

enforcement at any time, they'll recognise the stolen barrels and punish the party for taking them.

"Now folks, I've got a bit of an offer to make you here. It's one you can't really refuse. My boys are gonna load a little extra cargo onto your ship and I'm gonna drop this purse of a hundred gold ones right here on your deck. You understand me? Nothing you need to worry about, okay? You just need to drop these barrels off to the harbourmaster next time you're in port. Tell them it's a gift from the Loan Sharks, they'll know what that means."

### If the party initially refuse;

"Okay, okay, I can see you need a little convincing. You don't need to know what's in the barrels, okay, but you do need to know that I'll sink your ship if you don't take them, okay? I don't like to do this to you folks, but business is business, you know?"

If the party continue to refuse, Galeo leaves the ship with a few parting words. See 'Consequences' for the development of the encounter.

"It's just a few barrels folks. That's a real shame there's no room in your hold. I warned you though, these are dangerous waters."

### SHIP REPAIR

If the party's ship is damaged in any way, Galeo offers to get his crew to repair it for them. The repairs are poorly done and only offer aesthetic properties rather than mechanical ones. A character can realise that the ship hasn't truly been fixed with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check.

"Now folks, I can see your vessel's been damaged down here. It's looking pretty rough, not so seaworthy if you ask me. You know, me and my crew can fix that up for you nicely, okay? A hundred gold pieces is all. Looks like it needs doing soon, you know? I'd hate to see a lovely ship like this fall to pieces beneath you. That could happen, you know. Dangerous waters."

### If the party initially refuse;

"Now see some sense folks. This isn't something you can just put off. I can guarantee your ship's going to get a lot worse pretty soon if you don't get that fixed up."

If the party continue to refuse, Galeo leaves the ship with a few parting words. See 'Consequences' for the development of the encounter.

"Gosh, I really hope you're right, you know? Looks pretty bad to me. Looks like it's gonna get very much worse pretty soon."

## CONSEQUENCES

If the party attempt to attack Galeo, he doesn't stand and fight. He flees back to the Loan Shark's lair and gathers his crew to attack the party and their ship. The same thing occurs if the party refuses his schemes. The following night the entire gang (a **wereshark** (Galeo), a **bandit captain** (Big Hetty), four **sahuagin** and three **bandits**) head out on an interception course with the party. Big Hetty and the bandits approach the ship in a rowboat while Galeo and the sahuagin swim up to the ship. The rowboat can be spotted with a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check. The swimmers can be spotted with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check.

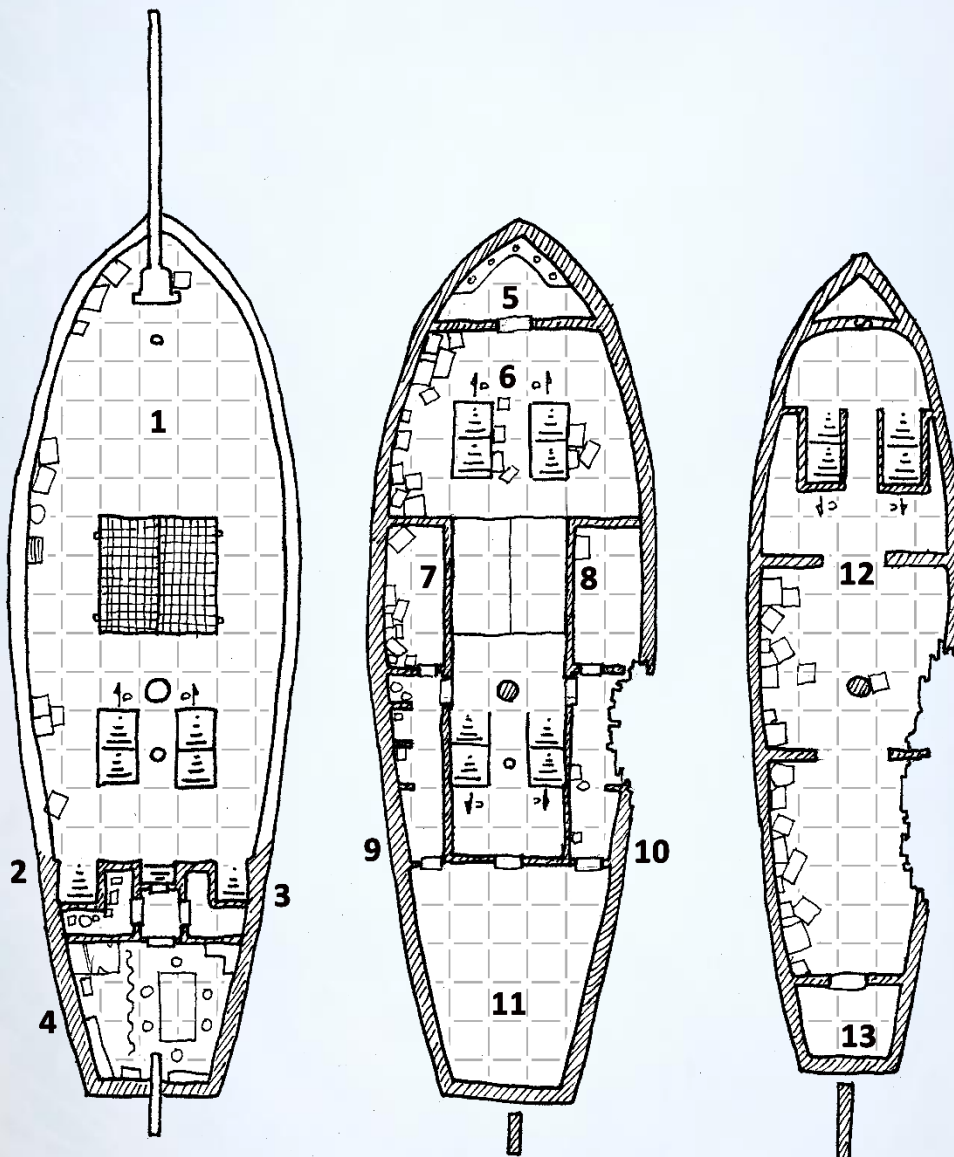
If the gang make it up to the ship the bandits launch the first attack by using grappling hooks to board. The swimmers join the fray in the second round of combat, having gained access in the same fashion. Big Hetty carries three flasks of alchemist's fire, which she will use to try and ignite the ship. Once the ship is ablaze, the Loan Sharks flee back to their lair.

## LAIR

The lair of the Loan Sharks is in the wreck of The Wight's Shadow, and old pirate vessel sunk

many years ago. The wreck can be located by asking anyone in the local area (either on land or ship) about Galeo or the Loan Sharks, as they have built a reputation for themselves.

Alternatively, the characters should be able to follow any fleeing Loan Sharks back to the lair. The lair can only be accessed by swimming down into a seaweed filled chasm for two minutes. The top of the wreck can be seen emerging from the underwater foliage.



## GENERAL FEATURES

The following features are common throughout the wreck, except where noted otherwise in the text.

**Underwater.** The wreck is submerged in sea water. A creature that cannot breathe in water must hold its breath while in the wreck. Melee weapon attacks made by creatures without a swim speed have disadvantage unless made with a dagger, javelin, shortsword, spear, or trident. Ranged weapon attacks automatically miss beyond their normal range. Even within normal range the attack has disadvantage unless made with a crossbow, net, or thrown weapon like a javelin. Submerged creatures and objects have resistance to fire damage.

**Air Pocket.** Areas W2-W4 and W11 are sealed by a magical air pocket. Characters entering and exiting these rooms pass through a magical membrane that keeps the water out. Casting *dispel magic* (DC 15) on a doorframe where this pocket is in effect causes it to break, allowing water to flood the chamber. A creature unable to breath underwater who is surprised by flooding water in a previously air-filled room will begin suffocating. (PHB, 183.)

**Light.** The wreck is dimly lit from the sunlight above during the day, allowing characters a visibility of 30 feet. At night, the wreck is unlit. The wreck is lightly obscured from the outside by seaweed.

## 1. DECK

Emerging from an undulating mass of seaweed is the rotting deck of the ship. In the centre of the deck, a pair of staircases lead down into the ship's hold, and at the stern, a barnacle-covered quarterdeck rises above what must be the captain's quarters. The ship's figurehead is that of a screaming undead creature with hollow cheeks and sunken eyes. At a glance the wreck seems deserted, but there are weapons leaning against the rail and the ship's grate is tied open with chains.

**Creatures.** Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 15 or higher, or who are carrying a source of bright light notice three **reef sharks** circling the deck of the ship 40 feet away. Any character who starts exploring the deck draws the attention of these trained sharks, who attack without hesitation.

**Figurehead.** The figurehead of the ship portrays the wight after which it was named. A casting of *detect magic* reveals a necromantic aura around the figurehead. While the figurehead remains attached to the ship and unbroken, any humanoid killed within 30 feet of the ship rises 1d4 rounds later as a **zombie** with a swim speed of 20 ft. The figurehead can be destroyed by attacking it (AC 15; 15 hit points; damage immunities: poison, psychic; damage resistances: fire, necrotic), removed from the ship in 10 minutes by a character proficient in carpenter's tools, or dispelled with a casting of *dispel magic*.

**Treasure.** The few rotting barrels and crates on the deck contain nothing of value. There are three whalebone spears resting against the rail.

## 2. STOREROOM

The cramped storeroom is filled with crates and barrels of various sizes. Hanging on one of the walls is a taxidermied swordfish.

**Treasure.** The store contains a total of twenty rations, six casks of ale (50 gp each) and five bronze cups etched with a rendering of Castle Waterdeep (or similar recognisable location) (25 gp each). The swordfish has the key to area W8 in its mouth. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 20 or higher or who succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** check notices the tip of the key protruding slightly.

## 3. EMPTY STOREROOM

This room is empty.

This room is dry but entirely empty.

## 4. GALEO'S QUARTERS

If the Loan Sharks are in the lair this room is unlocked. If they are out, the room is locked. Galeo has the only key, but the lock can be picked with a **DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** or forced open with a **DC 16 Strength** check.

This lavish chamber is filled with fine furniture laden with silverware. A thick curtain hangs across the right-hand side of the room. Hanging from the ceiling is a huge chandelier hung with cut crystal which glitters in the dim light. Behind the curtain is a messy bed, side table, and bookshelf.

**Creatures.** If the characters enter this area when the Loan Sharks are present, Galeo the **wereshark** is in this chamber looking at some maps on the desk at the back wall.

**Treasure.** The chandelier can be detached from the ceiling but weighs 100 lbs (worth 300 gp). Atop the dining table are four sets of silver cutlery (10 gp) and two silver candlesticks (25 gp each). The rear desk has a whalebone scroll case (150 gp) on it which contains four maps (locations of your choice) (100 gp total).

## 5. BOW

This room is empty.

This dark room is right at the front of the ship. Here the hull of the ship is reinforced with rusting iron.

## 6. LOWER DECK

Although there are mouldering crates and barrels stowed on this deck, they have been moved clear of the main routes through the ship. Light filters down from the open ship's grate above. Several large anemones grow in the corners of the deck.

**Creatures.** There are three awakened anemones in this room. The plants defend the ship against intruders. They use the statistics of an **awakened shrub** but with the following changes:

- They have 20 (6d6) hit points.
- They have immunity to poison damage.
- Their Rake attack deals an additional 7 (2d6) poison damage. In addition, the target must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw against poison or become paralysed until the end of their next turn.
- They have a Challenge Rating of 1 (200 XP).

## 7. BARRED ROOM

The door of this room is barred from the outside. Three iron bars have been nailed onto the doorframe. They can be prised off with a crowbar or similar tool with a **DC 20 Strength** check.

Piled crates obscure your line of sight into this chamber. The water is filled with floating pieces of rotting organic material. Suddenly, something launches from the darkness toward you, knocking crates aside as it lunges.

**Creatures.** The first character to enter this room is attacked by four **zombies** with a 20 ft swim speed. The zombies are dressed in pirate attire and are the undead remains of the crew of the Wight's Shadow.

**Treasure.** One of the zombies has a pistol in a holster on their waist. It has been badly damaged by water, and has no ammunition or powder, but can be fixed by a suitably talented character or a character with a *mending* spell.

## 8. TREASURE CHEST

The door to this chamber is locked. The key is in area W2. The door can be picked with a **DC 14 Dexterity check using thieves' tools** or forced open with a **DC 16 Strength** check. There is a slight crack in the wall where the ship was breached which can be noticed by characters with a **passive Wisdom (Perception)** of 16 or higher. This crack can be opened further with a tool such as a crowbar with a successful **DC 12 Strength** check.

A hefty treasure chest is the only feature of this room. The rich mahogany from which the chest is made has been braced with gilded steel. Inlaid in the steel banding are polished agate stones.

**Treasure.** The chest is unlocked. Inside are six purses, each of which contains 100 gp. At the bottom of the chest is 26 gp, 157 sp and 332 cp. Resting atop the coinage are two large agate stones (50 gp each) and a crystal coffer (100 gp).

## 9. BALLISTAE DECK

*There are three decaying ballistae on this deck. They appear beyond repair.*  
This room is empty.

## 10. BREACHED DECK

Half of the hull has been torn away from this chamber. Around the edges of the decomposing wood are dozens of mussels and barnacles. Seaweed rises from the hold beneath and obscures the ocean outside. A massive anchor rests against what remains of the hull.

**Creatures.** Any creature that is not a member of the Loan Sharks that tries to gain access to area W8 is attacked by the **animated anchor**. The anchor uses the statistics of a **flying sword** but deals bludgeoning damage rather than slashing damage.

## 11. CREW'S QUARTERS

Hammocks hang down from the rafters of these quarters concealing anything above waist level. The floor is strewn with waste food, playing cards, and discarded bottles of rum. The place stinks of sweat and stiff liquor. One of the hammocks is twice as wide as the others and seems to have been reinforced by leather straps.

**Creatures.** If the Loan Sharks are here, there are three **bandits** playing cards in this room. Big

Hetty the **bandit captain** is sleeping in her hammock.

**Treasure.** In the larger hammock, which belongs to Big Hetty, is a corked bottle containing 12 gp, 6 cp, and two pearls (50 gp each). The contents cannot be retrieved without smashing the bottle. In one corner of the chamber are four stolen casks of extremely fine wine (250 gp each).

## 12. HOLD

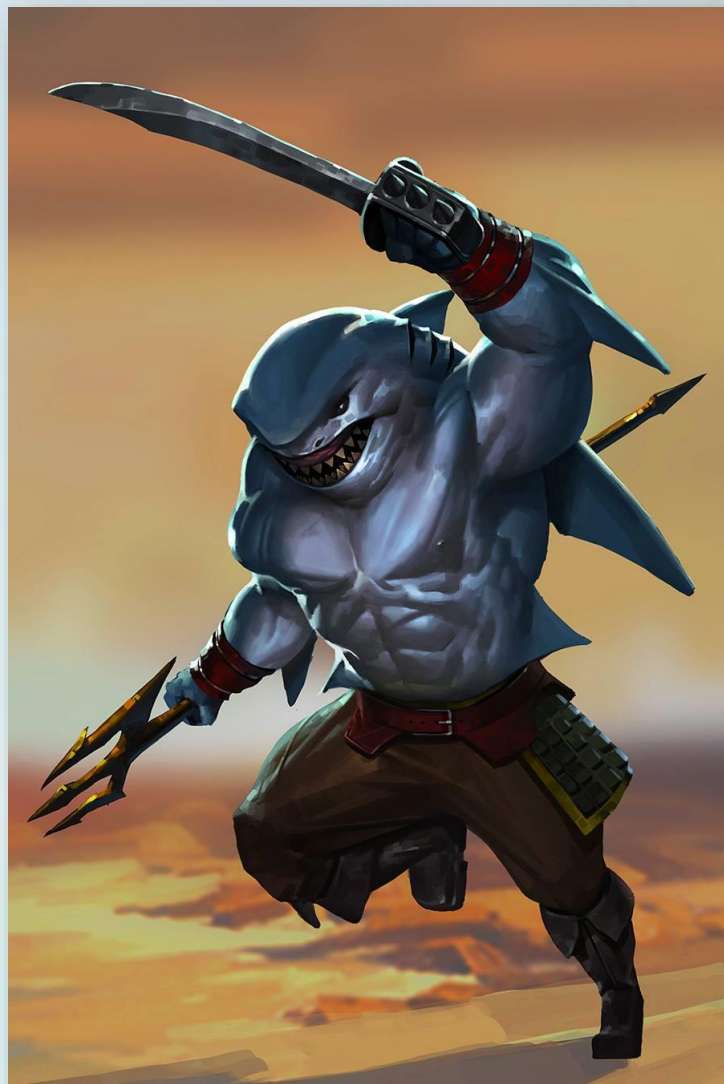
Circling around in the bowels of the ship is a bulky shark with cold, black eyes and a body rippling with muscle. The seaweed growing up between the planks of the keel is whipped around by the shark's erratic movements.

**Creatures.** There is a single **hunter shark** guarding the hold. If the Loan Sharks have returned, there are four **sahuagin** resting here, petting the shark whenever it comes close.

## 13. CHUM CHAMBER

This room is empty save for the fish used to feed the sharks.

As you open the door to this chamber a flood of red water spills out. Chunks of fish flesh float around in the water.



## WERESHARK

*Medium humanoid (shapechanger), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 11 in humanoid form, 12 (natural armor) in shark or hybrid form

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft. (0 ft., swim 40 ft. in shark form)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Perception +4

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common (can't speak in shark form)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The wereshark can use its action to polymorph into a shark-humanoid hybrid or into a hunter shark, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Blood Frenzy.** The wereshark has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Amphibious (Hybrid Form Only).** The wereshark can breathe air and water.

**Water Breathing (Shark Form Only).** The wereshark can only breathe underwater.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** The wereshark makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its trident.

**Bite (Shark or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wereshark lycanthropy.

**Trident (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage is used with two hands.

**Shortsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

### PLAYER CHARACTERS AS LYCANTHROPES

A character who becomes a lycanthrope retains his or her statistics except as specified by lycanthrope type. The character gains the lycanthrope's speeds in nonhumanoid form, damage immunities, traits, and actions that don't involve equipment. The character is proficient with the lycanthrope's natural attacks, such as its bite or claws, which deal damage as shown in the lycanthrope's statistics. The character can't speak while in animal form.

A humanoid hit by an attack that carries the curse of lycanthropy must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + the lycanthrope's proficiency bonus + the lycanthrope's Constitution modifier) or be cursed. If the character embraces the curse, his or her alignment becomes the one defined for the lycanthrope. The DM is free to decide that a change in alignment places the character under DM control until the curse of lycanthropy is removed.

**WERESHARK.** The character gains a Strength of 18 if his or her score isn't already higher, and a +1 bonus to AC while in shark or hybrid form (from natural armor). Attack and damage rolls for the bite are based on Strength. The wereshark also gains the Amphibious and Water Breathing traits.

## UPON THE CRASHING WAVES

By Ashley Warren

Map: Courtesy Dyson Logos

Estimated run-time: 60 to 90 minutes

*Upon the Crashing Waves is a short encounter designed for five characters of levels 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>.*

### BACKGROUND

Overlooking the Sword Coast is a fortress that was once a naval lookout for an order of paladins known as the Templars of the Trident. The Templars served as sailors and knights that protected the local coastal village. But they were caught unaware when aberrations crawled from the depths of the sea and ransacked the fortress, leaving the village vulnerable. Now, the Templars are gone but the threat has returned, spilling in from a planar portal through the grotto at the base of the cliffside.

### PLOT HOOK

Villagers report spotting a woman roaming the long abandoned cliffside fortress. This, along with dreadful howling noises, have given the villagers cause for concern. The villagers beg the characters to investigate and eradicate any threat they uncover.

## APPROACHING THE CLIFFSIDE

As the party approaches the cliffside, read or summarize:

The white-capped waves of the sea curl and crash into the base of a craggy cliffside. The air is cool and fresh, thick with the sharp scents of salt, brine, and fish. The sea spray coats everything with a gritty, salty film. Vibrant lichen and moss cluster in the cracks of the stone bricks that comprise a fortress in ruins; its ghostly form looms over the tumultuous bay. The sky above fades to navy, heralding an impending storm.

Over the course of the encounter, build up the storm for atmosphere.

### GENERAL FEATURES

There are three locales in this encounter:

- The area outside of the cliffside fortress;
- The interior of the fortress;
- The grotto at the base of the cliffside, facing the ocean.

**Terrain.** The coast is rocky, slick, and slippery underfoot. It can be risky to climb; the proximity to the ocean has made the cliffside prone to rockslides.

**Weather.** A storm is brewing at the start of the encounter. Every few minutes, the bluster increases.

**Light.** If the encounter is set during the day, the daylight is gray but does not impact visibility. The fortress's windows let in ample daylight. Inside the grotto, the walls are covered in bioluminescent fungi. However, the visibility remains dim.

**Smells and Sounds.** The air is fresh and briny. Seagulls squawk along the coastline. The sound of the waves is consistent and quite loud, drowning out most other coastal noises. As the storm worsens, thunder rolls and lightning cracks overhead.

## AREA 1: STAIRCASE THROUGH THE CLIFFSIDE

As the party enters Area 1, read or summarize:

A narrow, roughly hewn stone staircase leads upward through the rock formation. The sounds of the storm reverberate off the stone walls.

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check spots a recurring motif: stone carvings of a sword crossed with a trident. A **DC 17 Intelligence (History)** check identifies this as the symbol for a paladin order called the Templars of the Trident.

## AREA 2: BRIDGE TO THE FORTRESS

As the party enters Area 2, read or summarize:

A moldering rope bridge connects the rock to the fortress on the cliffside.

The space between the rock and the bridge is 30 feet; the drop is 60 feet. The bridge has a 20 percent chance of collapsing under the party's weight. This is reduced to 10 percent if they proceed one at a time or take safety precautions. However, the chance increases by 5 percent upon subsequent crossings. Falling from this height results in 6d6 bludgeoning damage.

## AREA 3: FORTRESS INTERIOR

As the party enters Area 3, read or summarize:

The main chamber of the empty fortress contains several wooden tables that have rotted from the sea spray. Above what was once a great hearth are two crossed weapons, both rusted: a trident crossed with a greatsword. On the far wall, a woman bedecked in armor sits in a window facing the sea, drenched from the storm.

## THE LAST OF THE TEMPLARS

Serena Alexios is a former Templar who is now a **revenant (CR 5; MM, p 259)**. She is stoic and speaks with reverence of her former companions. She lurks in the fortress, hoping to avenge her order.

Serena tells about the Templar's demise and knows the threat has returned. Depending on the APL, the characters may encounter different enemies, but all are evil sea aberrations or demons; see "Scaling the Combat" in Area 4.

Serena teaches the party a verse called the "Song of the Sirens." Reciting the verse takes one action and earns each member of the party a charm of heroism. As an action, a character gives themselves the benefits of a *potion of heroism*. This is a one-time-use benefit.

### SONG OF THE SIRENS

*I resign myself to a watery grave  
In service to those I protect and save  
With might I fight, with courage I clave  
My sword is sharpened upon the crashing waves*

## AREA 4: THE GROTTO

The grotto is a naturally formed cavern at the base of the cliffside. The water that spills in from the ocean is 2 feet deep. Bioluminescent fungi covers the grotto walls, casting an eerie blue glow on the surface of the water.

Deep in the cave is a circular black void, a portal where the evil sea enemies emerge. Depending on the APL, the characters meet the following enemies:

#### SCALING THE COMBAT

APL 1-3: A Sahuagin priestess (CR 2; MM, p 264) and 2 sahuagin (CR 1/2; MM, p 263)

APL 4-6: A kraken priest (CR 5; VGtM, p 215) and 1 giant octopus (CR 1; MM, p 326)

APL 7-9: A wastrilith (CR 13; MToF, p 139)

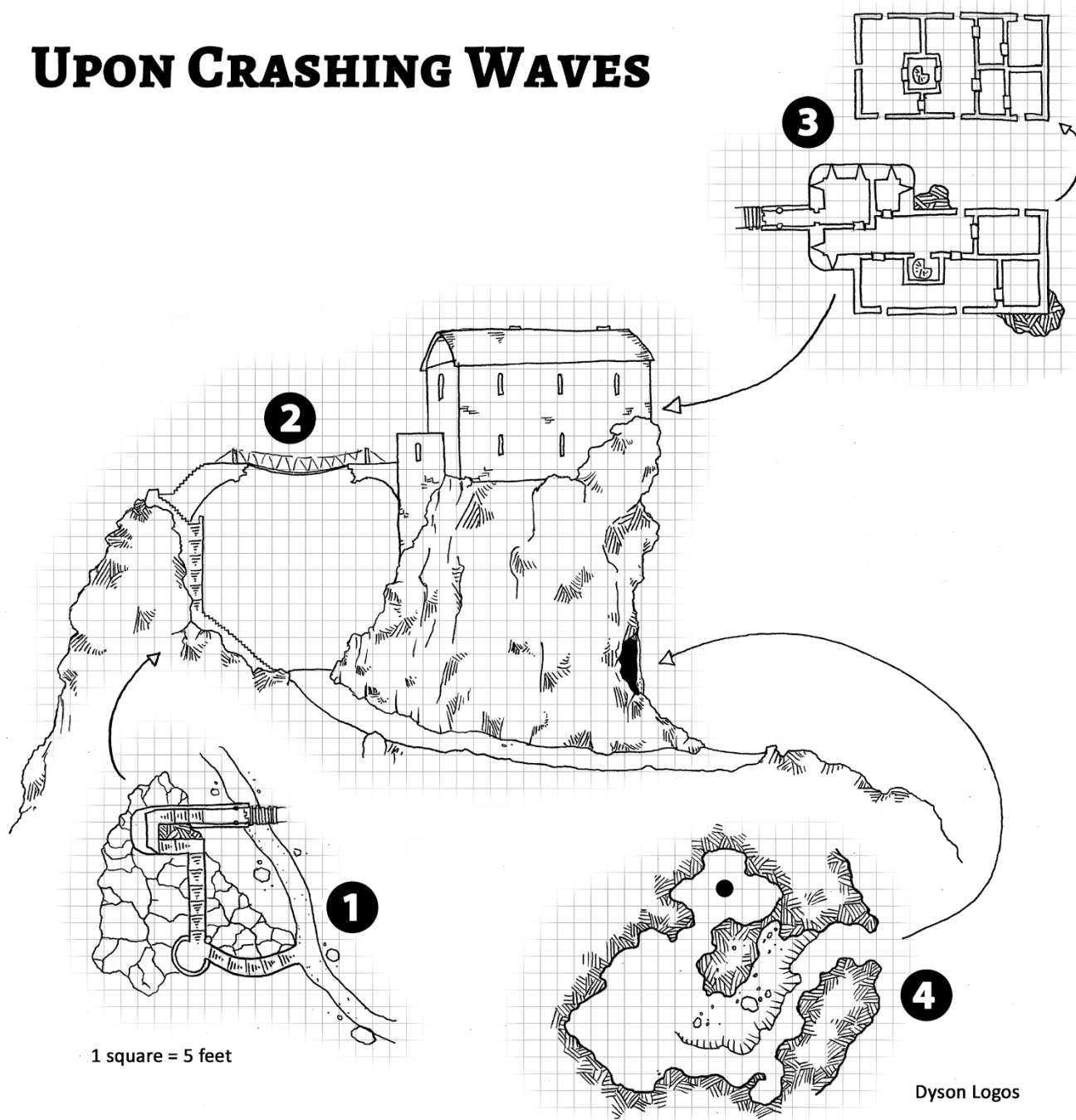
## Conclusion

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If the party successfully defeats the enemy, the portal can be closed for good with a *dispel magic* spell. If the party fails or flees the battle, 1d10 more enemies appear and travel into the coastal village.

Upon a success, Serena's spirit dissipates into the Astral Plane. The villagers are grateful for the party's help and turn the fortress into a seaside memorial in service to the Templars and offer to include the party. The party can choose what they want to be commemorated, such as a symbol or motto.

# UPON CRASHING WAVES



## WATERS GONE WILD

By Bryan Holmes

Artist: Jacob E. Blackmon

Estimate run-time: 30 to 60 minutes

*Waters Gone Wild is a short combat adventure with a small number of social choices to be made and is designed for five characters levels 7 - 10. Waters Gone Wild will present a less difficult challenge to characters of higher level.*

### BACKGROUND

Aboard their ship, the heroes had noticed a ship flying no flag approaching. It wasn't long before they realized they were being hunted by pirates. However, these pirates have a wild mage aboard, and things are going to get dicey.

### PLOT HOOK

While no specific hook exists beyond the approach of pirates, allow the players to try to do what they will. Escape should not be allowed due to the abilities of the wild mage, and the pirates begin the encounter at a very long range from the players, making it difficult for players to attack them accurately.

### APPROACHING PIRATES

After the party has a chance to react to the pirates coming ever closer, read or summarize:

On the stern of the ship, you see a woman clad in robes that fade from red to yellow, granting a fiery appearance. The trim of her robes is fit with a royal purple, glittering brightly as her arms wave about.

The air crackles as a lightning bolt is unleashed across the waves. Steam rises from the water where the bolt arched out, but thankfully she failed to estimate the distance to your ship and no real damage was done.

## FLAMING DANGERS

After a few minutes, the pirate vessel comes within 30 feet of the heroes' vessel, navigating to a boarding position. Read or summarize the following:

Another series of attacks is exchanged between the boats, but the pirates don't want to chance damaging any treasure you might be carrying. Their mage has been holding back her magic, but now she begins the casting of another spell.

Allow the heroes to make checks to try and stop her. *Counterspell* and *dispel magic* will fail, absorbed into a charm she wears that shines brightly if either is cast. If the players try to identify the spell, they learn it is some type of summoning spell.

You notice fear sketched into her face, surprise even. Her ship-mates don't seem to notice it. Clouds begin to gather overhead, but they're shades of red and orange as though the sky itself were aflame.

Suddenly, a streaking fireball falls from the sky, smashing into the water below and throwing up a mixture of water and steam. Smaller fireballs similarly fall out of the sky. The smell of sulfur is all around you and a hot wind billows in the sails.

That's when the clouds part, creating a large circular opening. Within this portal, everyone can easily make out a floating city of brass. The wild mage is aghast with what she's done.

Each round going forward, flaming rocks fall from the sky. A successful **DC 13 Dexterity** check avoids these. If a character is proficient with Vehicle (water), they may add their proficiency bonus to this check. Failure indicates a rock strikes the boat, dealing 2d8 fire damage and creating 1d3 **Magmin** (CR ½; MM, p 212).

## FORGING FORWARD

The portal needs to be closed. Have a crew member come forward, asking the characters what they think should happen. During this conversation, the captain of the pirate vessel throws a white flag up and asks to come aboard after dropping her sword and gun on the deck of her own ship.

The captain swings across to your own ship, and lands on her feet. “Not quite how I figured this would go, but it seems we are in a predicament that requires something of a truce. I offer this: Help keep my mage safe while she undoes this damage. None of my crew will raise a hand against you. We’ll even bleed for you if the need arises. Once that portal is closed, we each turn away and sail where the winds take us. No fightin’. How say ye?”

The players should agree, deciding what to do with the two boats (locking them together with boarding planks or just splitting up) and how to protect them.

The portal will close in 8 rounds on its own, but on each round, any creature can use their action to make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check. On a success, the portal closes one round sooner. The mage always spends her action trying to close the portal.



Each turn, roll 1d10. Creatures appear randomly on one of the two boats unless a boat is empty.

| d10 | Result                                                                                |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-3 | No new monsters appear.                                                               |
| 4-5 | 2d4 Magma Mephits (CR ½; MM, p 215)                                                   |
| 6   | 2d6 Magmin (CR ½; MM, p 212)                                                          |
| 7   | 2d4 Azer (CR 2; MM, p 22)                                                             |
| 8   | 1d4 Fire Elementals (CR 5; MM, p 125)                                                 |
| 9   | 1 Fire Elemental Myrmidon (CR 7; MToF, p 203) or 1 Young Red Dragon (CR 10; MM, p 98) |
| 10  | Roll twice on this table (ignoring rolls of 1-3 or 10).                               |

Through bad luck, your players may have a lot of creatures added in to the fight with each new wave. Feel free to adjust the number of creatures coming in or to delay rounds, granting your players additional time. If your players are having too easy a time, you can add additional rounds to the portal before it closes.

Don’t forget that the pirate ship has a crew as well. It has 8 **Deck Hands** (Commoner, MM, p 344) who try to stay out of the way. They’ll rely on ranged attacks only. The captain is a **Hobgoblin Warlord** (MM, p 187) and the Wild Mage is a **Mage** (MM, p 347). It’s easiest to put the deck hands on their own initiative, and the captain on her own. The mage is too preoccupied to be able to assist with the battle.

For an extra challenge, consider having falling, flaming rocks continue to spawn new Magmin

combatants. To make the already hectic situation easier on your players eliminate this variable.

### **CLOSING THE RIFT**

After the rift closes. Any remaining creatures fly in to a rage and begin to fight harder, focusing their attacks on the mage or the nearest player character.

Above, it looks like the clouds are boiling over and rushing to meet themselves as the portal closes. A smile spreads across the face of the wild mage and a cheer erupts from the crews.

The captain walks over with a swagger. "You know, I'll keep my promise of no fighting, but I think we could really start something good together. There'd be no one to tell us what to do, or where to go. We could be a feared pair, and make mistress fate our queen."

The pirates will honor their deal, although should the players decide to fight, nothing will hold them back. Joining the pirates could be the start of a very interesting turn for the campaign and, of course, making them a recurring team offers many future roleplaying opportunities.

# THE STORMSEER

By Christopher Walz

Estimated run-time: 30 to 60 minutes

*The Stormseer is a short roleplay and possible combat themed encounter for characters levels 11-15. If the characters have access to powerful combat-oriented crewmembers or weapons on their ship, the combat may prove less challenging.*

## BACKGROUND

**Isgaver Saltmantle** is a storm giant outcast who has made her home at the bottom of a deep trench just off the shore. She calls herself the Stormseer, taking auspices of the future from storms and delving into the past hidden under the waves. Isgaver was born to a minor noble storm giant family that resided high in The Cloudpeaks, in the smallfolk nation of Amn. As a child, she, like all giant children, was taught to revere Annam All-Father and his son, Stronmaus, the progenitor of the storm giants. Isgaver grew to look beyond the giant pantheon, however, believing there to be much greater forces at work in the world, for Annam only shaped the giants themselves, not the earth, skies, and seas. In her formative years, Isgaver began studying druidic magic in secret, communing with spirits and elemental forces much older than even Annam and his children.

Eventually, Isgaver's experimentations were discovered and she was cast out from giant society; she no longer holds a claim to the Ordning and, to many giants, is lower in status and respect than even an ogre. Her magic was seen as an affront to Annam All-Father's absolute rule and seen as a means to subvert the Ordning and claim power for herself. She

fled to the ocean and has continued her studies for centuries.

Now an old, and quite powerful druid, Isgaver watches the happenings in her aquatic domain from afar, intervening only when she feels the "Will of the Vast Blue," as she calls her personal religion of druidic worship. Isgaver appears to aquatic races only rarely and landwalkers only when a great undertaking demands it. Some who have spoken with the Stormseer claim she is mad, with the centuries of isolation shattering her mind. Others protest that she is a prophet, deserving of her self-ordained title.

## Isgaver and Badu

The Stormseer is aware of Badu, the dragon turtle being used as a seafaring settlement (see Bryan and Jeff C. Steven's *The Township of Badu* in this volume). Isgaver believes that Badu is being held captive by evil arcane magic summoned forth by Carmalee Johanas. The storm giant sees Badu's predicament as a form of slavery, his instincts ripped from him by the wiles of a landwalking manipulator. She has used her powers of divination to spy on the township, but needs more information to confirm her theories and plan an assault to free Badu.

## PLOT HOOK

Isgaver is seeking help in the Badu matter and, unfortunately, knows she must resort to landwalking allies who can easily enter the Township of Badu. She has used her Storm Sight ability to watch the characters and has determined they are well-suited to helping her, even if they need some coercion.

If you have used *The Township of Badu* in your campaign, this encounter is a great follow-up. Carmalee is likely presented as a kindhearted, loving character. The Stormseer's claims will

likely shock characters that have interacted with Carmalee and call into question any alliances they have made.

### IN THE PALM OF MY HAND

**Isgaver Saltmantle** (see below for stats) cast *control weather* 2 hours ago, bringing temperature, wind, and precipitation conditions to stage 4, as detailed in the spell. She controls the direction of the wind to force the characters' ship toward her location. The weather conditions cause all **Wisdom (Perception)** checks that rely on sight to have disadvantage while in the area. Characters who succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check see a Huge-sized humanoid form taking shape 100 feet from the ship's bow. While it is unlikely that the ship can safely stop given this distance, the characters can use the time to prepare themselves.

The giant is 30 feet tall, towering well above the deck of most ships.

If the characters take hostile action toward Isgaver at any point during the encounter, see Wrath of the Storm below.

When you are ready to introduce Isgaver, read or summarize:

The storm continues to beat against the ship, the wooden planks groaning in protest as yet another wave rises, threatening to send you under. In the distance you see a shape emerging within the storm. What at first you may have thought to be land begins to stride toward you atop the water—a giant! A wave rises some 20 feet, but barely reaches the giant's chest; she casually turns a shoulder as the massive swell breaks against her body like a cliffside.

The Stormseer, under the effects of a *water walk* spell, stands on the surface of the water, imposing herself between the characters' ship and their destination. As the ship approaches, she begins calming the winds down to stage 2 using her *control weather* spell. Isgaver reaches down and pulls the bow of the ship out of the water; every creature onboard the ship must succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw or fall prone from the sudden stoppage and tilt. At your discretion, creatures on the deck who are near the edge fall overboard if they fail the check by 5 or more. While being held in this way, the ship is effectively grappled.

Isgaver demands to speak with the captain or whomever represents the ship. She is quick to say she means the crew no harm if they assist her, even going so far as plucking a crewmember from the sea who may have fallen overboard as a sign of good faith.

### PARLEY WITH A GIANT

Speaking to whomever represents the ship (likely a player character), the storm giant tells how Badu, a great dragon turtle, is being imprisoned and forced to serve an evil wizard. If the characters have visited the Township of Badu, they will certainly recognize the name. Isgaver claims to have been watching the characters' exploits from afar and believes they are well suited to helping her gather more information regarding Badu. Emphasize these points when outlining Isgaver's perspective:

- Carmalee has been in possession of Badu for many years, giving her more than enough time to devise powerful magics to break the dragon's will.
- Dragon turtles are the ocean's apex predators, yet Badu has been reduced to a beast of burden. This action alone is offensive to the Will of the Vast Blue

and has had noticeable impacts on ocean ecology.

- While some dragon turtles have been known to work with landwalkers, it is always for payment, normally in great hoards of coins, gems, and magic items. The fact Badu labors for free under Carmalee's rule means she must hold a great ransom over his head.

See *Allying with the Stormseer* below if the characters agree to assist the storm giant.

If the characters suspect Isgaver is lying or feel something's not quite right with the giant, the following ability checks can provide more information.

**DC 18 Intelligence (History).** The character recalls the Saltmantle surname as it relates to giants. Many centuries ago—barely a lifetime for a storm giant—a storm giant king from this family ruled all giants under the auspices of the Ordning south of Baldur's Gate and north of Calimshan on the Sword Coast. His family was overthrown by a combined force of storm and fire giants after it was discovered that the king allied with a red dragon, bribing it with giant-crafted items to keep it away from Saltmantle's domain. Isgaver fits the family resemblance, but bares no marks of nobility and is far from her family's former domain.

**DC 16 Intelligence (Religion).** Druids have advantage on this ability check. The character realizes that Isgaver carries druidic foci and other symbols related to druidic magic. They also know that such magical practices are unheard of in giant society and could lead to a practitioner being exiled. If the character fails by 5 or more, they believe that Isgaver is a cleric of Stronmaus. If the characters praise her as a priestess of the storm giant deity or try to use his name to persuade Isgaver, she considers this

an offense and attacks. See *Wrath of the Storm*, below.

**DC 16 Wisdom (Insight).** The character senses that Isgaver is truly devoted to this cause and believes her own words—she is not lying or trying to deceive the characters. The character also feels that she is predatory, nearly bestial, and may be quick to resort to bloodshed and other extreme measures. Her grasp on civilized society has long since washed away. Failure by 5 or more leads the character to believe that Isgaver is lying and has some evil plan waiting to hatch.

If the characters have visited Badu in the past and try to convince Isgaver that Badu is not in danger, they begin a skill challenge. Each character makes one ability check of their choosing (encourage pairing nonstandard abilities and proficiencies, as described in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) at **DC 17**. The player should describe how their character utilizes this ability check to convince Isgaver. The players can determine in which order they make these ability checks.

The goal is for the characters to achieve 3 successes before 3 failures (adjust these numbers for particularly large or small parties, at your discretion). Each failure increases the DC of all other ability checks made as part of this skill challenge by 1. If the characters succeed, Isgaver becomes withdrawn, questioning how she so easily judged another life. She offers the characters the rewards described in *Allying with the Stormseer*, below, and retreats to contemplate her actions under the waves. If the characters fail, however, Isgaver loses her patience and attacks. See *Wrath of the Storm*, below.

If the characters refuse her offer, Isgaver believes them to be Carmalee's agents and cannot allow them to escape. Likewise, if they offend her by showing obvious disregard for marine life, she attacks. See Wrath of the Storm, below.

### What's the Truth?

Whether or not Carmalee is a villain under clever disguise is entirely up to you. It could be that Isgaver is correct and Carmalee has something as powerful as Badu's soul in her back pocket. Or, perhaps this misinformation is another one of Velyn Noss' plots, knowing that if the storm giant attacks, Badu and his friends will be weakened.

### ALLYING WITH THE STORMSEER

Isgaver fears Carmalee will detect any divination magic, so she must use a more tangible method to gather information. She gives the characters a bundle of **awakened seaweed** (see below for statistics), which she has made sentient through the *awaken* spell. The seaweed is loyal to Isgaver and cannot be convinced to act against or deceive the giant in anyway.

The giant asks the characters to leave the seaweed somewhere on Badu where it will go unnoticed. After gathering information, the plant will slip away and find Isgaver in the ocean to report back to her.

If the characters do this for her, Isgaver rewards them with a *stormrider's cloak* (see below for statistics) and a huge pearl taken from a giant oyster worth 700 gp. She finds the characters at sea 1 day after they complete her task and delivers the items without incident.

### WRATH OF THE STORM

At the beginning of combat, Isgaver increases weather conditions to their maximum stages per the *control weather* spell. During the first round of combat, Isgaver hurls a Lightning Strike that hits as many characters as possible. During subsequent rounds she target's the ship's hull and sails with her coral halberd and damaging spells. Her goal is not to kill every character onboard, but rather sink the ship and let the storm finish the deed.

If she is reduced to 100 or fewer hit points, Isgaver Disengages and swims under the water. If the players seem to want to continue the fight, at your discretion Isgaver may cast a 5th-level *cure wounds* on herself and resurface 400 feet away from the characters' ship and continue to use Lightning Strike.

**Treasure.** Isgaver carries the *stormrider's cloak* and the giant pearl worth 700 gp in a woven seaweed satchel. Each character may roll once on the table below to determine what else they find in the satchel.

| d6 | Item                                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | 200-foot length of kelp with an iron weight at the end.                              |
| 2  | Giant-sized necklace made from sahuagin skulls.                                      |
| 3  | 1d10 adult brass dragon scales.                                                      |
| 4  | Spearhead etched with Talos' holy symbol.                                            |
| 5  | Large-sized pearlescent ship figurehead depicting a dragonborn warrior.              |
| 6  | A 3rd-level druid <i>spell scroll</i> of your choice etched into a large clam shell. |

## Giant Tactics

Using a giant in combat poses a lot of interesting opportunities for a Dungeon Master, but few are detailed in the *Monster Manual*. Here are a few optional rules to consider:

**Grappling Multiple Enemies.** Due to their Huge size, a giant can grapple 2 Small or Medium-sized creatures at the same time. Isgaver might use this to scoop up two of the most threatening characters within reach and plunge them into the ocean.

**Powerful Shoves.** If the giant successfully shoves a Small or Medium-sized creature, it can either knock the target prone and push it 10 feet away or push it 15 feet away. Isgaver can use this option to shove characters overboard.

**Climbing a Giant.** Undoubtedly a player will want to climb a giant at some point. This provides for an iconic, cinematic moment. In order to climb a giant, a character must be within 5 feet of the giant and succeed on a **DC 18 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. Once on the giant, the character can use their movement to climb to the giant's front, back, or head. Any time the character climbs on the giant in this way, the giant can use its reaction to attempt to grapple the character. Depending on where the character is located, they have different options:

**Front:** The character can use their action to interfere with the giant's attacks, giving the giant disadvantage on all attack rolls until the beginning of the character's next turn. The giant has advantage on attack rolls (including grapple attempts!) against characters on their front side.

**Back:** The character has advantage on attack rolls against the giant and the giant has disadvantage on attack rolls against the character.

**Head:** Any melee weapon attack from the character that hits the giant is a critical hit. The giant has advantage on attack rolls (including grapple attempts!) against characters on their front side.

## AWAKENED SEAWEED

*Medium plant, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 16 (3d8 + 3)

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 12 (+1) | 12 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 6 (-2) |

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing

**Senses** passive perception 10

**Languages** Giant

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Amphibious.** The seaweed can breathe both air and water.

**False Appearance.** While the seaweed remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from normal seaweed.

### Actions

**Lash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

## ISGAVER SALTMANTLE

*Huge giant, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 18 (coral half plate)

**Hit Points** 253 (22d12 + 110)

**Speed** 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 29 (+9) | 14 (+2) | 20 (+5) | 17 (+3) | 21 (+5) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Str +14, Con +10, Int +8, Wis +10

**Skills** Athletics +14, History +8, Insight +10, Nature +13, Perception +10

**Damage Resistance** cold

**Damage Immunities** lightning, thunder

**Senses** passive Perception 20

**Languages** Aquan, Common, Druidic, Giant

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)

**Amphibious.** Isgaver can breathe air and water.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Isgaver's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic, feather fall, levitate, light*

3/day each: *control weather, water breathing*

**Spellcasting.** Isgaver is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Isgaver has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, frostbite, shape water, thunderclap*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, fog cloud, ice knife, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *absorb elements, darkvision\*, gust of wind, hold person*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, dispel magic, water walk\*\**

4th level (3 slots): *control water, freedom of movement\*, ice storm,*

5th level (2 slots): *greater restoration*

\*Isgaver has already cast these spells on herself.

\*\*Isgaver has already cast this spell on herself as a ritual.

**Storm Sight.** While outside and in a storm, Isgaver can spend 1 minute focusing on the storm to see and hear any location affected by the same storm. Additionally, Isgaver does not suffer penalties on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight due to fog, rain, or other weather conditions.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Isgaver makes two attacks with her coral halberd.

**Coral Halberd.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d10 + 9) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) lightning damage.

**Rock.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

**Lightning Strike (Recharge 5–6).** The giant hurls a magical lightning bolt at a point it can see within 500 feet of it. Each creature within 10 feet of that point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### STORMRIDER'S CLOAK

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

This windswept gray cloak is decorated with lightning bolts sewn in gold thread. It catches easily on the wind, billowing dramatically behind you. These cloaks are sought after by pirate crews who can magically control the weather, using stormriders to harass their prey before boarding.

When you are outdoors in stormy conditions you gain a flying speed of 60 feet while you wear this cloak.

## SYBIL AND THE SHANTY

By: Brandi Williams & Jeff C. Stevens

Artists: Nathalie Lehnert, Lotta Ignatius

Map: Erin Harvey

*Sybil is an outsider and a loner; she lives in a hovel outside of town with her eerie bird friend she only refers to affectionately as “Ma’am.”*

### BACKGROUND

**Sybil** (Swashbuckler; CR 3; VGtM, p 217) grew up in a small, tight-knit village of hunters and gathers. When she was eleven years old, land barons uprooted Sybil and her family from their village and forced them to live in the slums of a neighboring city, where her father became a leatherworker, and her mother worked at a local inn. Their wages were small and life in the slums was miserable.

In her spare time, Sybil slipped into the forest that surrounded the city, escaping the hustle and bustle of city life. She dreamed of one day moving her family from the chaos of the city, back to the peacefulness of the forest.

Sadly, a plague swept through the slum area and Sybil lost her parents when she was fifteen. Emotionally distraught, she left what she knew and headed to the coast, in hopes of finding a fresh start in a small coastal community, distancing herself from the memories of her parents and her past.

When she was nineteen, the stars seemed to align for Sybil. She happened upon a creature washed up on the shore—a bird. This bird looked sickly, starved, and dying. Sybil began to take care of the bird; she kept it as a companion for many weeks before it was strong enough to



move and eat on its own. One morning, while Sybil and the bird were lounging on a rock, soaking in the sun, something peculiar happened. Sybil began to hear a voice, but not an audible voice, this was coming from inside her head. Even more confusing, she believed it to be coming from the bird.

The bird told Sybil how grateful she was that Sybil had saved her. The bird told her of a wretched wizard and how he had cursed her. She told Sybil she was once a beautiful, powerful Fey Queen, and the destruction of her lands left her weak. The bird, whom Sybil began to call “Ma’am,” promised to teach Sybil the ways of dark magic.

The villagers began to speak behind Sybil's back, whispering rumors to one another: "*That girl is crazy.*" "*That bird carried a disease that made her mad.*" "*The poor child has snapped.*"

Fearing the girl, the villagers banished her, putting her on a shanty of a ship and sending her out to the sea, where Sybil has lived ever since.

### SYBIL AND MA'AM AS NPCs

Below are a few suggestions of how Sybil and Ma'am can be used as NPCs:

**An Ally** – Sybil could provide information about locations she's visited, poses maps the characters need, or provide the characters with transportation.

**A Merchant** – Sybil has taken to looting old shipwrecks, and she has a knack for finding things other looters missed. She has many basic items but more trinkets than anything. Her most prized possessions are the magical items she's found.

**A Quest Giver** – Ma'am has shared many secrets and stories with Sybil. Some of which involve the location of lost or buried treasure. She may share this information with the characters for a small price or a nifty trinket. Though, Sybil has no idea what she is talking about. When the party arrive at the treasure's location, they are attacked by several hungry **tigers** (CR 1; MM, p 339) that were lurking in the brush near the supposed treasure site.

If confronted about this, Sybil says, "Funny, Ma'am's never been wrong before."

**An Antagonist** – Sybil is mad enough to follow the characters, even trailing them in her own

ship as they travel. She's more of a nuisance than a threat, yelling at them from a distance.

### THE SHANTY

The *Shanty* has been upgraded since the villagers originally set Sybil to sea. It has an AC of 12 and 80 hit points and a damage threshold of 15.

Its speed is determined by the wind, with a range of ½ mph to 3 mph. Sybil's large hat is magical and acts as a *wind fan*, which she uses to give the vessel an extra boost of speed, effectively increasing *Shanty's* speed to 9 mph for 1 minute.

The boat is steered by the helm on the upper-level, where Sybil and Ma'am also sleep.

### MERCHANDISE

Sybil has turned the *Shanty* into a traveling, floating store—complete with a showroom, desk, and storeroom.

The desk drawer contains 95 gp, 73 sp, 25 ep, and 88 cp. In addition, a leather journal, ink pot, and quill are found in the drawer. If opened, the journal contains stick figure drawings of humanoids and sea creatures, and squiggly lines.

#### PURIFICATION BOTTLE

*Wondrous item, rare*

A small, corked, blue glass potion bottle. When uncorked and placed in water, the bottle fills with up to 1 gallon of water. In addition, all foreign substances are removed from the bottled water, including poison, leaving you with potable water.

### HUNTER'S TRIDENT

*Weapon (trident), rare (requires attunement)*

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, the weapon ignores resistance to piercing damage.

When you roll a 19 or 20 on your attack roll with this magic weapon, the target takes an extra 5 piercing damage.

### SEAFARER'S WHISTLE

*Wondrous item, rare*

A small brass whistle with a pearl inside.

When blown above water, the whistle acts normally. When blown below water, the whistle summons a random creature determined by a d8:

- 1) One **giant seahorse**
- 2) 1d4 **reef sharks**
- 3) A **swarm of quippers**
- 4) 2d4 **octopuses**
- 5) A **giant crocodile**
- 6) 12 **sea horses**
- 7) 1d4 **hunter sharks**
- 8) 1 **killer whale**

The summoned creature appears in two rounds, swimming to its summoner. When it does, roll a d6. On a result of 1-3, the creature is friendly and obeys the summoner's verbal commands. On a result of 4-6, the creature is unfriendly and attacks its summoner.

The summoned creature remains for 1 hour, after which time it swims away.

The whistle may not be used again in this way until you finish a long rest.

### SAILOR'S BOOTS (CURSED)

*Wondrous item, rare*

*Mid-calf boots fashioned from navy blue leather and brass buttons.*

You gain advantage on Dexterity checks and saving throws while wearing these boots. In addition, once per day you may cast the *water walk* spell, though the spell's duration is reduced to 10 minutes.

**Curse.** These boots are cursed, and donning them extends the curse to you. Once donned, you can't remove the boots unless you are targeted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic. While wearing these boots on land, your legs feel like jelly and you have disadvantage on Dexterity checks and saving throws.





## BROKEN CITY, SHATTERED MIND

By Remley Farr

- *Before written time - Illithids break from the Far Realms*
- *8,000 years ago - Tunggima City founded beneath the ocean*
- *6,000 years ago - Umbraxxis' ceremorphosis completed*
- *4,623 years ago - Umbraxxis' dementia begins*
- *4,600 years ago - Tunggima City disappears*
- *4,598 years ago - Umbraxxis tears out her own brain*
- *Now - You find the basin*

### HER NAME WAS UMBRAXXIS

She was a mind flayer born from the brain of a disgraced Lolth sorceress, deep in an Underdark city. She does not remember the city. She does not remember her youth. She does not remember much of anything. But she remembers escaping and digging up—up—up. She remembers rock giving way to seawater as a cascading flood slithered towards the dark elf domain that enslaved her. The sea drowned away her past. She should have died like the others below.

### TUNGGIMA CITY

A coral enclave inhabited by isolated merfolk. Kings and queens and in-betweens directed their peasantry, much like the despised surface folk. For millennia the Tunggima merfolk ruled in isolation, eyes and spears ever upward. But beneath their seabed foundation, an illithid punctured their ocean domain. No merfolk died in the resulting whirlpool, but they did find a strange creature floating nearby. They should have let her die like the others below.

### THE FALL OF TUNGGIMA CITY

The strange creature called herself Umbraxxis, and she told tales of a massive world beneath their own, a world of rock and darkness—a mirrored counterpart to the surface above Tunggima City. Umbraxxis used her psionics to bend the water around her, providing herself with a bubble of breathable air. The merfolks' holy text labeled all surface dwellers as devils... so do angels come from the rocks below?

Umbraxxis babbled, her Deep Speech tongue translated by the Tunggima priests—they dare not misinterpret a word from their dark rock angel! In deciphering her absolute wisdom, the priests thus sated her demand: day after day, volunteers offered their heads to quench the mind flayer's desire to consume brains. The priests themselves extracted the volunteers' fleshy skull-cores with baleen blades over murk-blood chants, plopping the brains into a coral basin. A new world awaited! Those begging to be cut would be the first explorers!

But even ancient creatures carry ancient ills. Madness ceded to dementia, and thus the ancient illithid's matriarchy lead to genocide. Her prophetic dismissals carried no more truth than those of a babbling child, but what happens when a hyper-intellectual contracts a brain-killing disease?

Within months, the high priests of Tunggima City joined their venturing underlings, offering themselves as Umbraxxis' final meal. She was alone now—in the physical sense. Within her fractured mind, a hundred-hundred merfolks' existences tumbled in maelstrom, each one terrified from their demise; each one a voice in a never-ending chorus. Umbraxxis' madness exponentially fought with her hunger—she had no more herd to feast from! So she knelt over the sacrificial altar, baleen blade in hand, and started cutting just behind her eye.

Her brain fell into the coral basin atop the altar. Her body floated into the murk. Her

empty city existed only in legend. But the Far Realm magic convulsing in her brain spilled into the Material Plane, and as her abandoned brain dissolved away, Tunggima City lived on in the basin that last cradled the knowledge of a merfolk city.

### UMBRAXXIS' BASIN

*Magic Item – Legendary*

10 inches in diameter, 5 inches deep, hollowed out chunk of green coral. Shimmers with a magical glaze. Holding it to your ear allows you to hear the discordant cries of 1,000 terrified merfolk.

A portal to a parallel world forged by the Tunggima City merfolks' combined minds. Their souls have departed, but Umbraxxis' dementia kept their existence anchored on a plane tangent to the Material world. This basin enchants any water placed inside of it for 1 hour. When the enchanted water is poured out, the puddle forms a portal to the Tunggima City merfolks' plane. This plane mirrors the Material plane, but the atmosphere is always sea water and any structures are made from coral and shell. Babbling, confused merfolk occupy this reflective world, but they will not leave it unless strongly goaded. Though the merfolk are unstable, they may be entreated to perform favors such as guarding loot, exchanging information, or even tending to wounds. Decide, as a dungeon master, if there are spellcasters among the merfolk that can benefit the party with an assisted spell.

If the basin is kept in the merfolks' plane and the enchanted water portal becomes disenchanting, then the basin is trapped on the other side (magic spells can be used to visit the plane). If more than one puddle is poured from the basin, then more than one portal can exist, so if a character pours a puddle in an inn's dining room then throws a puddle of water into a neighbor's yard, the character can enter through the dining room portal, travel to the neighbor's yard, and exit through that portal.

Using the below table, roll 1d6 or choose from below how your players discover Umbraxxis' Basin

| d6 | Result                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Picking through old Tunggima City's wreckage.                                                                                                                                  |
| 2  | The basin bobs to the surface as the PCs are anchored.                                                                                                                         |
| 3  | A thief uses it to steal from the party (breaking into their base, trapping someone, etc.)                                                                                     |
| 4  | A merfolk anthropologist is researching Tunggima City and knows the coral basin is a relic. Place the coral basin in a dungeon to serve as loot.                               |
| 5  | One of the Tunggima City merfolk escaped the realm and is terrifying locals—the basin is tucked under its arm.                                                                 |
| 6  | A religious cult possessing the basin wears illithid masks. They have convinced the Tunggima City merfolk that they are illithid gods. The merfolk obey them without question. |

Adventurers can find Umbraxxis' Basin in the ruins of Tunggima City, or if the city is already looted, they may find it in a treasure horde. An NPC or villain may possess the basin, using it for nefarious deeds.

# THE HIDDEN COVE OF THE SPACE PIRATES

By Tony Petrecca

Map: Mobral Rox

Estimated run-time: 90 to 120 minutes

*An uncharted islet conceals a hidden port with access to the multiverse!*

## INTRODUCTION

Though it may appear to be just another small, uncharted islet in the middle of the sea, the Arcanaloth Ciretose Reconditus maintains a waystation and warehouse for elite clientele in this out of the way location.

## FLIGHT OF THE KUO-TOA

The encounter begins as a Spelljammer Squid Ship leaves the cove. When the adventurers sail near the islet, read or paraphrase the following:

Another day on deck, cruising the vast sea, the ocean breeze warm and steady, filling the sails. A pod of dolphins provides brief escort and a break from the monotony. Off to port, an islet can be seen, another uncharted rocky outcropping breaking the horizon with its low, jagged peak.

Something emerges from behind the islet and takes to the sky. Truly a bizarre sight, it looks to be a massive, flying cuttlefish... with a double mast and sails!

This is the Kuo-Toa Spelljammer Leemoogoogon's Glory, and its captain, a **Kuo-Toa Archpriest** (CR 6; MM, p 200) named Kleeya-polteep, has made a crucial mistake, piloting the craft away from the islet and its hidden port in view of terrestrial mortals. The captain quickly generates a plan to rectify the mistake – a typically insane Kuo-Toa plan.

The Spelljammer flies toward the PCs craft and takes a position hovering above.

The flying ship approaches, and as it closes its crew can be seen upon its deck. Fish headed humanoids flit about upon its deck, waving excitedly in greeting.

The captain hopes that friendly waves will maintain the element of surprise as a boarding party prepares. The ship takes a position 100 feet above the party's craft, with Kuo-Toa leaning over their deck waving and holding one finger up as if to say "just one minute". Ropes are tossed over the deck for a boarding party to rappel down, all while nervous Kuo-Toa wave and nod.

If allowed, a boarding party consisting of 8 **Kuo-Toa** (CR ¼; MM, p 199) and 4 **Kuo-Toa Whips** (CR 1; MM, p 200), none of which suffer from Sunlight Sensitivity, rappel down onto the deck of the PCs craft, waving excitedly as they do. If the PCs attempt to attack while the boarding party rappels, the boarding party is cut loose and the Spelljammer races off at its full speed of 50 miles per hour.

If the boarding party is allowed to board safely, Leemoogoogon's Glory flies away as soon as they are securely on deck, its captain unwilling to risk its capture. Should that happen, the boarding party gazes up with fishy eyes, realizing they've been stranded. Desperate, the boarding party attacks, hoping to seize the PCs craft.

### Leemoogoogon's Glory and Crew

While this encounter is NOT about providing a Spelljammer to your PCs, it might be useful to know a bit more about the Kuo-Toa vessel just in case the PCs manage to board. The vessel is a standard 25-ton Squidship, powered by a Spelljammer Helm as detailed in *Waterdeep: Dungeons of the Mad Mage*.

The full crew consists of the aforementioned Kuo-Toa Archpriest captain, his first mate PleektoLootop, also a Kuo-Toa Archpriest, 10 Kuo-Toa Whips and 24 Kuo-Toa. Note that none of these Kuo-Toa suffer from Sunlight Sensitivity.

"But Tony, I'm old school and I've never heard of Kuo-Toa piloting a Spelljammer."

I know, I haven't either... until now. Fun, right?!?

## THE ISLET AND THE HIDDEN COVE

### General Features

**Terrain.** Hard Granite.

**Environment.** The cavern is humid but comfortably cool.

**Light.** Unless otherwise noted, unlit lanterns hang from the walls of the cavern in such a manner as to provide dim light throughout when burning.

**Smells and Sounds.** A salty breeze circulates within, often whistling or howling its way through the narrow passage that leads up the stairs to the plateau.

**Cavern Height.** Unless otherwise noted, the large central cavern's ceiling soars to a height of 30 feet, while the hallways and attached rooms have 10-foot high ceilings.

**Doors.** All doors in the cavern are sturdy iron reinforced oaken doors. Each are typically kept locked, requiring a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** check with Thieves Tools to pick. Alternatively, they may be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength** check.

The granite islet is roughly 300 feet in diameter, its sides are sheer cliffs that rise to a plateau 60 feet above sea level. Smaller granite formations abound within 100 feet of the islet, making a close approach with any vessel with a keel longer than 30 feet impossible without running aground. Indeed, the spacefaring

pirates who use this cove either weigh anchor and use dinghies to approach or set down upon the plateau and take the stairs.

The cove itself is carved into the southern cliff face, a large sea cave with two wooden docks is its primary attraction. To the east of this larger cave is a notably smaller cavern with its own small wooden dock. The entrance to this smaller cavern is obscured by illusion, making its detection unlikely from the sea. See **Area 5** for details.

The Arcanaloath Ciretose Reconditus (see below) provides guarded storage in the larger cavern at a cost of 20% of goods stored. The western suite is leased out to long-term high-end tenants (currently, a group of Githyanki Space Pirates) for undisclosed prices most mortals would find shocking. Ciretose keeps the eastern dock and suite for its own uses.

### CIRETOSE RECONDITUS

Ciretose is an **Arcanaloath** (CR 12; MM, p 313) with the following modifications:

- It has an Armor Class of 18 (*ring of protection*) and adds +1 to all saving throws.
- Its saving throws are as follows: Dex +6, Int +10, Wis +8, Cha +8
- It can use its *Teleport* action to activate permanent *teleportation circles*, thus allowing the fiend to move rapidly from site to site throughout the multiverse.

Ciretose has a permanent arrangement with a troop of **Mezzoloth** (CR 5; MM, p 313) mercenaries, allowing Ciretose to summon 1-4 Mezzoloths with 100% certainty once per day. The Mezzoloths obey Ciretose and remain for one hour, or until Ciretose takes a bonus action to dismiss them.

This powerful Arcanaloath holds multiple properties throughout the multiverse – inns, shops, farms, fortresses, even a yugoloth mercenary guildhall on Gehenna. Some are long term holdings, while others are brief enterprises, and while they are often lucrative in their own rights, each is ultimately a front for information gathering of one sort or another. Somewhere, in some hidden vault in the lower planes, are vast files of intel, from the mundane to the magnificent, and Ciretose is a key contributor to its knowledge base. To what ends this archive serves is not the purview of this adventure.

Ciretose is interminably polite, to friend and foe alike, and has a remarkable talent at drawing information from those it interacts with. Curious, charming, and gregarious, the Arcanaloath is an engaging conversationalist, and is especially attentive to tales others have to share. The beast makes wise use of open-ended questions while actively listening in such a manner that creatures tend to reveal more than they should. That, of course, is the Arcanaloath's goal, as intelligence gathering is its true specialty.

Ciretose is under no contractual obligation to risk its own life defending any client's wares. On the rare occasions that intruders stumble upon the islet, Ciretose prefers to remain invisible and quietly observe their efforts for as long as he can. Should intruders fall to the Cobras, or clients, so be it. Should intruders overcome the Cobras and Githyanki then, well, those might be intruders worth getting to know further. It is at that point that Ciretose would offer a greeting.

*"Well met, brave souls. Please indulge an ancient fiend – what might your business be here today?"*

While Ciretose insists, politely, that PCs return any objects they might have looted, if treated with respect the fiend offers food and drink, including ale from the Goblin kegs. Thoroughly disinterested in dying over this islet,

should things turn violent, the fiend summons Mezzoloth mercenaries to its aid, turns invisible, and retreats through the teleportation circle. Scaling the combat, below, assumes Ciretose is a non-combatant.

### Scaling the Combat - Mezzoloths

- **Levels 5-6:** two Mezzoloths
- **Levels 7-8:** three Mezzoloths
- **Level 9-10:** four Mezzoloths

## THE HIDDEN COVE

### AREA 1 – THE DOCKS AND GRAND CAVERN

As the party enters Area 1, read or summarize the following:

Sunlight filters in to this large cavern from its broad, southern entrance, the waves gently lapping at its rocky shore. Two wooden docks protrude thirty and fifty feet out into the water, but no vessels are currently docked.

Upon land can be seen a handful of wooden crates, two kegs, three wooden tables and many chairs scattered about. An open cupboard with haphazardly stacked tableware rests upon a wall. The most striking feature of this cavern is the decor – a handful of large cast iron statues of coiled snakes are randomly positioned about the cavern.

This large, deep cavern hosts two docks, and provides storage and a common resting area for its tenants.

### THE DOCKS

Drawn into the underside of the northern end of each dock is a powerful *glyph of warding* programmed as a silent alarm. A creature swimming beneath the docks can spot these glyphs with a successful **DC 17 Wisdom**

(Perception) check. Should any sentient creature who isn't a tenant come within thirty feet of a glyph, that glyph casts a *sending* spell directed at Ciretose, wherever the Arcanaloth might be in the multiverse. The sending states simply "unannounced guests in prime cove X", prompting Ciretose to *teleport* or *plane shift* to the cove's teleportation circle (see Area 2) to investigate.

The Arcanaloth arrives within one minute of receiving the alarm, immediately turns invisible, and quietly observes intruders until moved to reveal itself. Polite intruders who happen to call out and announce their presence are greeted in kind. Those who attempt to loot are quietly observed in combat, with Ciretose noting strengths, weaknesses, and tactics used. Should intruders prove victorious, Ciretose reveals itself, unconcerned by the destruction of the cobras as they can be mended in short order. See **Area 6 - Ciretos' Suite** below for further details.

### THE SNAKES

The area is guarded by 2 to 5 **Spitting Iron Cobras**, customized clockwork constructs that are identical to **Iron Cobras** (CR 4; MTof, p 125) with the following ranged attack added to their potential actions:

**Poison Spit.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) poison damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

The cobras are programmed to remain motionless unless one is attacked, or a crate or door is opened by any creature who is not a client of Ciretose. Once in attack mode the cobras fight until destroyed.

### Scaling the Combat – Iron Cobras

**APL 5-6:** two spitting iron cobras

**APL 7-8:** three spitting iron cobras

**APL 9-10:** four spitting iron cobras

### THE CRATES AND KEGS

The various crates are marked with an unusual two-headed lobster icon and are property of the Kuo-Toa. They contain nothing of great value – jerky and other dried foodstuffs in one, several large fishing nets in another, and a dozen spears in a third oblong crate. The two kegs are property of the crew of the goblin Spelljammer *Gnome Crusher* and contain a delicious dark goblin brew. These kegs are worth 50 gp each to an inn of discerning tastes.

### AREA 2 – THE TELEPORT

Utilized as storage overflow when needed, this area is currently empty except for the permanent *teleportation circle* in the eastern alcove of this cavern. High end clients are provided with the coded sigil pattern of this circle, allowing them to defend their wares, should they receive a *sending* alert.

### AREA 3 – THE STAIRWAY

These stairs ascend sixty feet to emerge atop the islet's plateau. Halfway up the stairs a *glyph of warding* identical to those under the docks in Area 1 is etched into the ceiling, alerting Ciretose of unwanted intruders from this access point.

### AREA 4 – THE WESTERN SUITE

The three western rooms comprise what Ciretose refers to as the Western Suite. They are currently leased to Zodra, a **Githyanki Gish** (CR 10; MTof, p 205) who uses the suite as a private rendition site for the brutal interrogation of her enemies. As payment, Zodra has provided Ciretose with a captured Mind Flayer and brains to keep the Illithid from starving.

*Glyphs of Warding* are etched on the insides of the northern, eastern, and southern entrances of the suite. These glyphs are triggered if the door is breached by any creature that isn't a Githyanki. Should a glyph be triggered, that glyph casts a *sending* spell

directed at Zodra, alerting her of the intrusion. Zodra typically dispatches a **Githyanki Knight** (CR 8; MM, p 160) and/or one or more **Githyanki Warriors** (CR 3; MM, p 160) to slaughter any intruders with extreme prejudice. The Githyanki arrive at the public teleportation circle in **Area 2** within one minute of a glyph's triggering, and then coordinate an attack utilizing all three entrances to the suite, in order to surround intruders.

### Scaling the Combat - Githyanki

**APL 5-6:** four Githyanki Warriors

**APL 7-8:** six Githyanki Warriors

**APL 9-10:** one Githyanki Knight and four Githyanki Warriors

#### 4A – INTERROGATION

In the center of this large room is a lone wooden chair, with four shackles mounted to the floor, two on either side. The floor around the chair is dotted with blood stains. Atop a wooden table on the southern wall are various implements of torture – knives, plyers, bone saws and such – a brazier for heating the implements rests on the floor nearby.

#### 4B – HOLDING CELL

Shackles are mounted to the northern and southern wall of this prison cell.

#### 4C – SITTING ROOM AND OFFICE

A remarkably comfortable garish red velvet sofa rests along the northern wall of this chamber, while two matching chairs rest along the western wall. The entire ensemble is worth 1000 gp, if it can be transported out and sold.

A locked chest sits conspicuously against the southern wall. Picking the lock requires a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** check with Thieves Tools. Inside the chest are six glass jars, each containing an illithid brain floating in preservation fluid. Zodra provides these brains to Ciretose so the Arcanaloth can keep its plaything alive via cannibalism.

### TREASURE

While the Githyanki keep no particular valuables on site, they do carry coin and wear valuable jewelry. Each Githyanki Warrior has 2d12x10 gp worth of coin and jewelry on their person. The Githyanki Knight has 1500 gp in coin and jewelry on their person, but its most valuable possession by far is its *Silver Sword*. See page 89 of Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes for details.

### AREA 5 – CIRETOSE'S DOCK

The two seaside entrances at the southern end of this cavern are obscured by 6<sup>th</sup> level *major image* spells. The illusions are programmed to conceal the entrances by making them appear to be a continuation of the granite walls of the island. Illusory water splashes upon illusory solid rock in an impressively convincing fashion. Upon close inspection, a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the slightest of flaws – the precisely repetitive, looping nature of the water's splashes in those locations.

Both the underside of Ciretose's dock and the southern door to the suite are protected by *glyphs of warding* identical to those in Area 1, alerting Ciretose of any intruders. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check is required to notice the secret door leading to Area 1.

### AREA 6 – CIRETOSE'S SUITE

Though Ciretose doesn't live here, the fiend does keep a suite furnished with creature comforts, and keeps a plaything chained to a wall.

#### 6A - THE HALL

An *explosive runes glyph of warding* is etched on the ceiling of this room. Careful inspection and a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals the presence of the glyph. The glyph is triggered when any sentient creature other than Ciretose passes beneath it. When triggered, the glyph explodes

with poisonous gas in a 20-foot radius centered on the southern door. All creatures within the area must succeed on a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw or take 20 (5d8) poison damage, or half as much on a successful save.

### 6B - THE OFFICE

Ciretose uses this suite as an office when here, keeping a desk, a reading chair, a sofa and an ottoman in the small space. Four paintings adorn the eastern wall, a tapestry hangs on the western wall, and a gorgeous Zakharan rug, valued at 750 gp, really ties the room together.

The oil paintings, signed “Crag Kragen” are worth 2000 gp as a set. The paintings illustrate the rise, fall, and rebirth of an elvish civilization from a far-off world. From left to right they depict:

- A glorious golden hued wood with a massive golden tree at its center.
- A flight of red dragons, fireball wielding orcs leaping off their backs, burning the golden wood.
- A charred land with a wicked thousand-foot-tall tower of black iron at its center.
- The black tower destroyed, and saplings sprouting from the ground anew.

The tapestry, which is 8-foot-high and 10-foot-wide, depicts a massive battle between devils and demons upon a barren wasteland and is worth 1000 gp to the right buyer.

A feathered pen and inkwell rest on top of the desk, while a blood red leather-bound journal can be found in the desk’s lone drawer. The journal, hand written by Ciretose in both abyssal and infernal, offers nauseating details of the months of torments the fiend has performed on its illithid prisoner. Any non-fiend who spends one hour reading the journal must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or become afflicted with **short-term madness** (DMG, p 259). Success on this saving throw

allows the creature to finish reading without further effect but should a creature who failed this save continue reading to the end, they become afflicted with **indefinite madness**. See pages 259-260 in the Dungeon Master’s Guide for details.

If Ciretose has gleaned any useful information from the illithid through this torture, it is not revealed in this tome.

### 6C - THE PRISONER

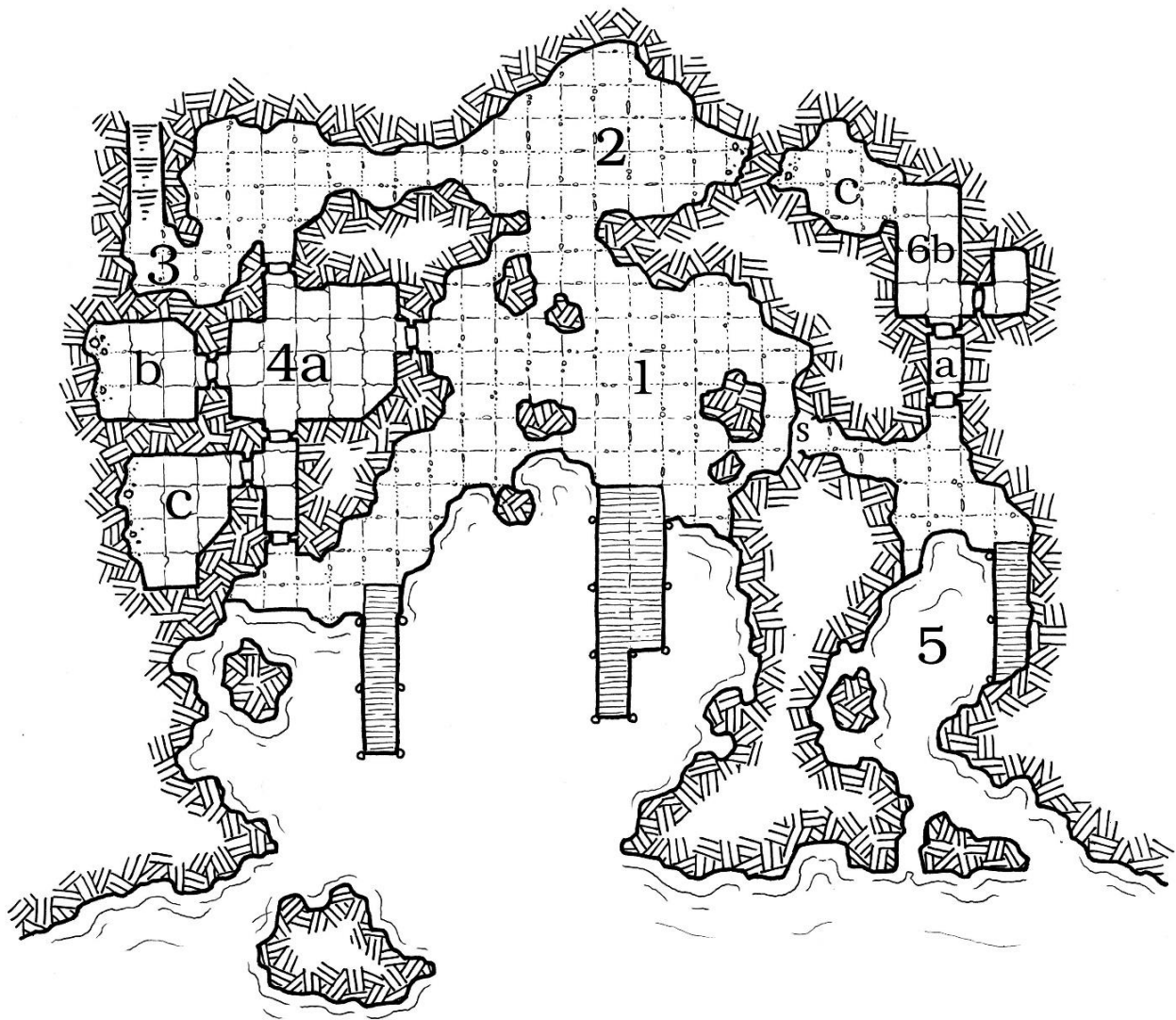
Ciretose’s **Mind Flayer** (CR 7; MM, p 222) prisoner hangs in the center of this room, chained by its wrists to the ceiling. Attached to its feet are a pair of *dimensional shackles*, preventing its escape via *plane shift*, and on one finger is a *ring of regeneration*, keeping it alive no matter the torture. The illithid has been trapped in this manner for eight months and is suffering from 5 levels of exhaustion.

A table placed in front of the illithid holds a dizzying array of torture implements, likely created by the same craftsman who supplied the Githyanki. A glass jar containing a half consumed illithid brain sits atop the table as well, with an ichor covered silver spoon resting next to it.

### CONCLUSION

The potential for short and long-term consequences for stumbling upon this nefarious port abound. Leemoogoogon’s Glory might make a future appearance, attacking the PCs while they’re at sea. A respectful group in need of storage or rest may find a potential business partner in Ciretose, while those who raid the place may find themselves hunted by yugoloth assassins for years to come. And woe be it to any adventurers who dare steal a Githyanki *Silver Sword*! No matter the outcome, Ciretose is sure to catalog names, talents, and other details to be entered into the fiend’s database.

1 square = 5 feet



## SONG OF THE ONE BELOW

By Michael E. Shea

Map: Daniel Walthall

Estimated run-time: 90 to 120 minutes

*Song of the One Below is an exploration and combat adventure designed for five characters of roughly 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> level. Higher-level characters will have an easier time with most of it but might find a high-level challenge at the end.*

### BACKGROUND

High atop cliffs against which crash the relentless ocean waves, a titanic skull of a kraken lays fossilized in the rock wall. For millions of years it has stared into the blue depths stretching out over the horizon. At the cliff's base, cultists and their aquatic followers use a network of passages to reach chambers within the cliffs where they conduct terrible rituals to call to their god in the sea. Once every twenty-three years, when the moon is brightest in the sky and the waters rise to their highest level, the One Below answers.

### PLOT HOOK

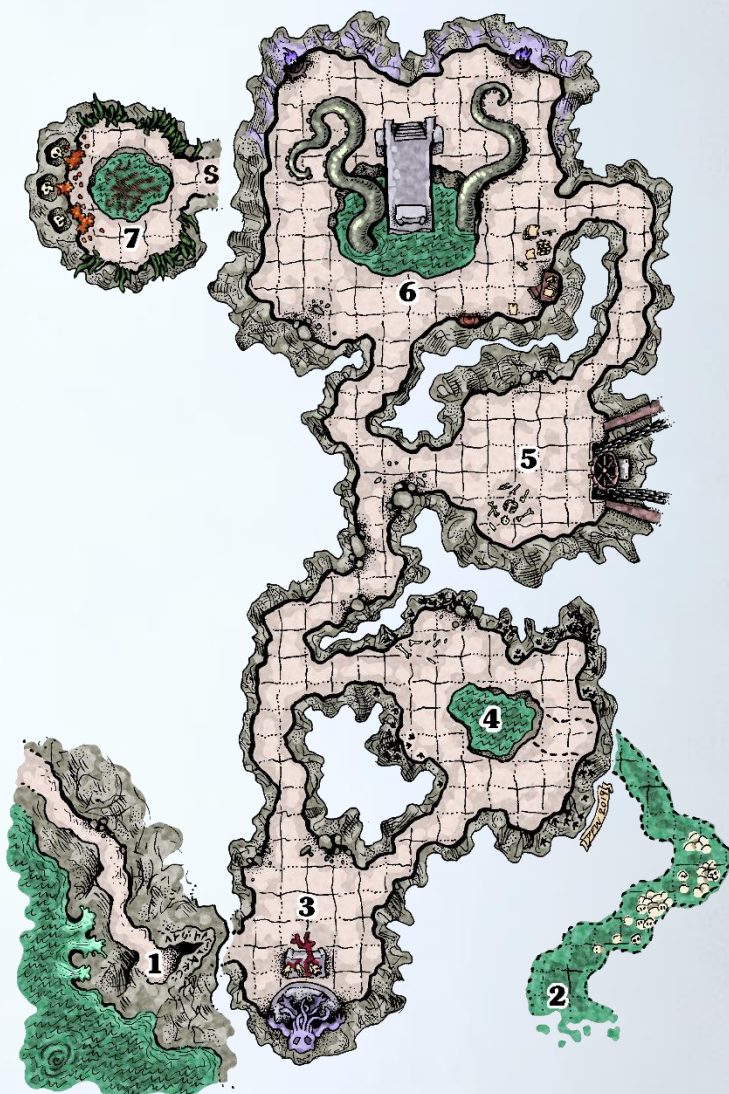
Numerous events could bring the characters to this location. The cultists might have stolen something from the characters or their patron and plan to use it during the ritual. Someone dear to the characters might be kidnapped and brought as a sacrifice to the One Below. It is possible the characters are asked to save one of the cultists themselves who has given themselves over to this dark religion. A rich benefactor might ask the characters to learn more about the ritual for her upcoming book on apocalyptic cults. Feel free to fashion or adapt whatever hook fits well into your campaign.

### APPROACHING THE CAVES

As the party approaches the cliffs, read or summarize:

A great howling wind rushes across the tops of the cliff ahead. Unrelenting ocean waves crash against the rough rock wall. A titanic skull lays half-buried in the cliff wall, the depth of its exposure revealing its vast age. A natural rock walkway leads to a large crack in the cliff's base.

The entryway at Area 1 leads into the natural caves used by the cultists to conduct their strange rituals. A character who succeeds on a



**DC 14 Intelligence (Nature)** check can see the waves turning in a small vortex out to sea, revealing shallow underwater caves that lead under the cliffs to Area 2 and a much larger and deeper cave that leads to Area 6.

### INHABITANTS OF THE COVE

Members of the Cult of the One Below reside in these chambers. Among them are eight **cultists** (CR 1/8; MM, p 345), four **sea spawns** (CR 1; VGtM, p 189), two **deep scions** (CR 3; VGtM, p 135), and a **kraken priest** (CR 5; VGtM, p 215). Depending on the activities within the caves, the characters may run into one or more of these inhabitants as they explore. The two sea spawns and a deep scion often break away from the rest to swim in the ocean. The cultists might patrol outside of the caves hunting for sacrifices or seeking intruders who might disrupt the ritual. The kraken priest, Deserel, spends nearly all of her time in Area 6 studying ancient sodden tomes and scrolls in her attempts to better understand the One Below. As the DM, you may decide when and where to put these inhabitants throughout the caves. Aside from Area 6, we did not describe where these inhabitants are within the caves.

### THE COMING OF THE ONE BELOW

At a point of your choosing, the cultists open up the vents within the cave (see Area 5). The leather shutters on the vents, when closed, prevent air from blowing through the caves. When open, air rushes through the skull creating a deep whistling howl like a continuous whale song. The sound can be heard miles away and deep in the water. A few minutes later, great waves crash against the shore as a **kraken** (CR 23, MM, p 197) arrives. The kraken swims through the underwater cavern and snakes its tentacles up through the chute into Area 6 where it seeks mortal flesh to devour. The

kraken is not intended to be fought or defeated in direct combat, though the characters can certainly try. Instead, it either leaves when it has devoured one or more beings or, after a time, when the vents are closed and the howling stops. It is possible that, if the vents are closed and the ritual stopped, the characters will simply see the kraken out on the waves heading back to the depths disappointed.

### ENVIRONS OF THE CAVES

#### General Features

**Terrain.** Slick stone.

**Weather.** Salty humidity and a cold howling wind that turns into the deafening song from the kraken skull when the vents are open in Area 5.

**Light.** Dim torchlight from ancient sconces on the wall.

**Smells and Sounds.** The low sound of chanting and drips of water landing into puddles.

### AREA 1: THE ENTRYWAY

As the party enters Area 1, read or summarize:

Narrow wet steps lead up to the crack in the cave wall. Strange symbols decorate the walls around the entryway.

A character who examines the symbols surrounding the crack in the wall can make a **DC 14 Intelligence (Religion or History)** check to decipher some of the text and learn that the cultists worship a deity known to them as the One Below. The cultists believe in their own divine transformation into aquatic beings. Every twenty-three years, the One Above (the petrified kraken skull) calls to the One Below and the One Below answers.

### AREA 2: THE SUBMERGED TUNNEL

The party can reach Area 2 through an underwater cave entrance. When choosing to swim through the high currents, each character must make a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. As they make

their way through the tunnels, read or summarize the following:

An underwater cave roughly five feet wide snakes into the caves beneath the cliff rock. Humanoid skulls leer up from beneath the growth of centuries of algae on the cave's floor.

The tunnel is ancient and covered with algae and coral. The humanoid skulls embedded in the walls date back thousands of years. There is a chance that a **Sea Spawn** (CR 1; VGtM, p 189) is swimming through the tunnel at any given moment. It fights those who travel through the tunnel and attempts to escape to Area 4 if brought below one third of its hit points.

Nearby is a much larger and deeper underwater tunnel that leads to Area 6. Deep currents make it very difficult or impossible to swim to Area 6 from these underwater tunnels.

### AREA 3: THE IDOL OF THE ONE BELOW

As the party enters Area 3, read or summarize:

A pair of tunnels lead off to the north and north-east from this natural chamber. Torches burn from sconces on the wall. A nightmarish idol of a half-man, half-tentacled creature stands on the southern wall. The head and hands of a mortal lay on an altar in front of the idol.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Religion)** check recognizes that the idol is a form of human/ sea creature hybrid. A waterborne messiah known as the Child of the Deep One who will rule over humanity and prepare them for their journey as eternal servants and nourishment for the Deep One.

### AREA 4: THE SALT BATHS

As the party enters Area 4, read or summarize:

A large bath of seawater dominates the center of this chamber. Hundreds of black webbed handprints cover the walls.

The **sea spawns** (CR 1; VGtM, p 189) and **deep scions** (CR 3; VGtM, p 135) use this salt bath daily to stay close to the sea. Sometimes they swim out through the underwater tunnel to the ocean below. At any given time, two sea spawns and one deep scion might be found in this chamber.

### AREA 5: THE VENTS

As the party enters Area 5, read or summarize:

The ceiling of this natural chamber reaches up over one hundred feet. A large iron wheel is connected to a network of chains that snake up into the darkness above.

The wheel in this chamber controls a number of large leather shutters that seal off dozens of vents in the caves above. When the wheel is turned, the vents open and a howling wind flows through this chamber and the rest of the caves. The wind rushing through the tunnels creates a great howling sound like a continuous whale song. This causes the One Below to begin its journey underwater to Area 6. Only **deep scions** (CR 3; VGtM, p 135) are allowed to turn the wheel. Usually one deep scion, two **sea spawns** (CR 1; VGtM, p 189), and four **cultists** (CR 1/8; MM, p 345) come to this chamber to open the vent and call their god.

## AREA 6: CHAMBER OF THE ONE BELOW

As the party enters Area 6, read or summarize:

A constructed platform of stone hangs over a deep pit filled with seawater. A stone altar of great age sits at the very edge of the platform. Two iron braziers burn with a violet light in the far corners of the chamber.

Every twenty-three years the Cult of the One Below uses this chamber to commune with their dark god. On those nights, when the moon is largest and fullest in the sky above, bringing the water of the oceans to its highest level, the cult brings a sacrifice to the altar, opens the vents in Area 5, and calls in the Deep One, a **kraken** (CR 23; MM p. 197). When the kraken arrives, its tentacles come up the shaft and reach for the mortals on the altar. It cares little for protocol, however, and will just as likely grab a cultist or sea spawn. Only two tentacles can make their way up from the shaft and the kraken has disadvantage on all attacks and all attacks against the tentacles are made with advantage (since the kraken cannot see its attackers). During the ritual, Deserel, the **kraken priest** (CR 5; VGtM, p 215) is attended to by a **deep scion** (CR 3; VGtM, p 135), two **sea spawns** (CR 1; VGtM, p 189), and six **cultists** (CR 1/8; MM, p 345). The kraken leaves if it takes more than 50 damage or if it successfully grabs and pulls down at least one mortal to devour before returning out to sea.

Along the left wall, a constructed wall was built over an opening to a tomb to the first follower. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** check can detect the wall. The wall is warded with a *glyph of warding* that activates an *Evard's Black*

*Tentacles* spell in a 20-foot area in front of the wall if the wall is disturbed.

## AREA 7: THE TOMB OF THE FIRST FOLLOWER

As the party enters Area 7, read or summarize:

Thick seaweed coats the walls of this small chamber. Gold, silver, and copper coins spill out from carved alcoves, each containing a humanoid skull. A partially preserved body of a human lies at the bottom of a pool of saltwater in the center of the chamber. Dozens of tentacles sprout from his shoulders where his arms should be, and his feet are abnormally long and webbed. Two long tentacles ending in spined, oblong pads sprout from the back of his bald head.

This chamber contains the body of the First Follower, a human who first heard the call of the One Below, and, in his frenzied worship, began to take on the aspect of the Kraken, transforming his body and corrupting his soul. He has been preserved in this mystical salty pool for centuries. His tomb is filled with the following treasure: 623 cp, 1968 sp, 2265 gp, 94 pp, and a pewter crown worth 250 gold pieces. Many of the coins are from different mints that date back thousands of years. Clutched in the hand of the First Follower is a *+1 Rod of the Pact Keeper*.

## CONCLUSION

This adventure ends when the characters successfully stop the ceremony to summon the One Below and rescue the sacrifice being offered to the sea god. Wounded or disappointed, the One Below returns out to the sea from whence it came where it will wait

nearly another two dozen years, before  
returning again.



## PRISONERS OF THE DEPTHS

By Lilah Han 韩月兔

@Lunar\_Bunni

Artist: Dean Spencer

Estimated run-time: 45 to 75 minutes

*Prisoners of the Depths is a short Chinese folklore horror encounter suitable for 5 to 6 adventurers of levels 1-10. Any adventure taking place at sea, especially near or in the Shou region is ideal for this encounter.*

### BACKGROUND

Tales tell of the shuǐ (水) guǐ (鬼), or “water ghost” who are the spirits belonging to people who have drowned. These ghosts lurk within the waters in which they met their end, waiting to lure unsuspecting victims into their grasp, with the hope of returning themselves to life.

When a victim is near, they are dragged underwater to be drowned and the shuǐ guǐ possesses their body through tì (替) shēn (身), or “substitute/replace body.” In this way the ghost replaces the victim’s soul with its own. As a result, the victim becomes the new water ghost while the previous water ghost enjoys its new life in the victim’s body.

A life at sea or the ocean side commonly exposes one to this particular hazard. Cases involving a ship crew and its passengers whose vessels have been capsized at sea are the prime targets of this particular encounter.

### PLOT HOOK

This encounter occurs at sea, any method of sea or water transport is ideal. The encounter begins in the twilight hours of night. You can have this event wake the characters from resting to increase the urgency and set an eerie mood for the encounter.

## ENCOUNTER ATMOSPHERE

### General Features

**Ship Structure.** The vessel can be any sea worthy craft that is currently transporting the adventurers.

**Atmosphere.** The air is still and thick with chilling fog that partially obstructs visibility.

**Light.** Not even the stars give light on this night. The only luminescence is one or two lanterns lit for the night crew.

**Smells and Sounds.** The scent of salt water tinged with fish and rotting wood permeate the air. Besides the common creaking of the ship within the waves, an eerie silence hangs in the air.

### APPROACHING THE HAUNTED WATERS

As the party approaches the water occupied by shuǐ guǐ, read or summarize the following:

The air is still and silent despite the creak of wooden planks and waves lapping against the hull. An eerie calm permeates the atmosphere as the waters seem to wane, as if waiting for someone, or something. A creeping mist suddenly descends, blanketing the waters around you with an ominous chill that makes your blood run cold.

The unearthly silence is shattered with a violent splash and a voice echoes across the waters.

*“Help me! Don’t let me drown!”*

Suddenly another hysterical voice sounds out, and then another, and then another, until a cacophony of panicked cries echo discordantly in the water around you.

These are the cries of shuǐ guǐ. They were all passengers and crew of a previous ship that capsized near the current location of the characters. If the party delays engaging the shuǐ guǐ, the captain of the ship begins helping the people in the water instead. When this happens, the **captain** (see Scaling Suggestions) is first to be possessed and the shuǐ guǐ climbs on board using captain’s body who then begins to attempt to throw the characters over board.



### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

Here are some suggestions for adjusting the captain's statistics. In all cases, the captain does not use weapon attacks. Their main goal is to throw creatures off the ship, doing so by grappling it (see Part 2: Combat in the Player's Handbook, p 195).

**APL 1:** use Bandit Captain (CR 2; MM, p 344)

**APL 2:** use Knight (CR 3; MM, p 347)

**APL 3:** use Veteran (CR 3; MM, p 350)

**APL 4:** use Gladiator (CR 5; MM, p 346)

**APL 5:** use Gladiator add 25 HP

**APL 6:** use Blackguard (CR 8; VGtM, p 211)

**APL 7:** use Blackguard (CR 8; VGtM, p 211)

**APL 8:** use Champion (CR 9; VGtM, p 212)

**APL 9:** use Warlord (CR 12; VGtM, p 220)

**APL 10:** use Warlord and add 45 HP

For a grander challenge, adjust the captain's HP to the maximum for the suggested creature.

If the characters try to prevent the captain from helping, the shuǐ guǐ find another way to assail the ship.

### ENCOUNTER OBJECTIVE

For the encounter to unfold successfully, characters must come within 5ft of the shuǐ guǐ.

When this happens, the shuǐ guǐ will attempt to grapple the character and then submerge it, switching souls with the character prompting a **DC 14 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the grappled creature switches bodies with the shuǐ guǐ, becoming a water ghost.

The encounter chiefly becomes a tug-o'-war of soul switching and body reclamation and ends when a number of shuǐ guǐ equal to the number of characters who are exorcised or destroyed.

### SCALING THE COMBAT

Although the encounter can total up to 18 water ghosts from the previously sunken ship to inspire a sense of dread. The characters do not necessarily engage all of them at once.

As a general guide, there should only be 1 shuǐ guǐ to confront every 1 adventurer. If for any reason this is not enough of a challenge, the DM can easily include more shuǐ guǐ where necessary.

### ROLEPLAYING SHUǐ GUǐ

The primary goal of the shuǐ guǐ is to return to life. They are not easily negotiated with and any attempts to parlay fall on deaf ears unless a release from their watery prison is proposed.

The shuǐ guǐ are cunning ghosts which the characters would be unwise to ignore. If characters are hesitant to engage, the shuǐ guǐ will beckon an NPC ally who is an easier target. If luring an alternate target is unsuccessful, the shuǐ guǐ become enraged. In desperation, they begin to overturn the ship with the intent to plunge everyone into the ocean at once.

If characters try to keep their distance with range attacks, the shuǐ guǐ uses its natural surroundings or the ship to take full cover and attempt to overturn the ship its attackers are on.

### TÌ SHĒN TROUBLE

When a shuǐ guǐ drowns and possesses a body, they climb on board the ship and throw anyone not yet possessed into the water. Although shuǐ

guǐ are classed as undead, the bodies they occupy are not classed as undead. Any soul who is trapped in the water can be seen clearly and spoken to.

Characters whose bodies have been taken by a shuǐ guǐ are not yet accustomed to being a water ghost and they have limited capabilities in this form. As a water ghost, characters are restricted to movement in the water only. The character's statistics are replaced by the statistics of a shuǐ guǐ, but they retain their alignment, personality, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. They are able to shout and see combat taking place on board a ship from the water, but they are unable to participate in combat directly unless the water they inhabit is brought on board and is within melee range. In this form, characters can actively hinder other shuǐ guǐ from drowning their allies by grappling other water ghosts. In this way they may assist their allies by giving them advantage on their wisdom saves against the shuǐ guǐ.

Alternatively, characters can also switch and possess another character, NPC body, or construct who are Medium to Tiny in size. To do so takes two actions: the first to successfully grapple the target, the second to attempt to drown it, requiring a **DC 17 Wisdom** saving throw by the grappled target. On a failed save, the character switches bodies and statistics with the grappled target.

## RECLAMATION RITUALS

Soul switched shuǐ guǐ who make it on to a ship in a possessed body must be expelled by *turn undead*, the *dispel evil and good* spell or by being tossed back into the water.

If characters use *turn undead* or the *dispel evil and good* spell, this only expels the shuǐ guǐ and leaves an empty husk in its place. The soulless body must still be tossed back in to the water for the owner to reclaim it. Additionally, shunting the shuǐ guǐ from the body is treated as if the character drops to 0 hit points. Characters must make death saving throws to determine whether their soul remains tethered to their bodies long enough to be returned to its owner. On the third failure, the tether breaks and the character dies. On the third success, the body stabilizes, and the character's soul tether remains intact.

If characters toss the shuǐ guǐ possessed body back into the water, the owner can counter possess the body with the *tì shēn* action in the shuǐ guǐ statblock. Thus, returning the shuǐ guǐ to the watery prison they came from.

## CONCLUSION

If a shuǐ guǐ possesses every character's body and boards the ship or makes it to land, the characters remain in the sea as a water ghost until they are able to obtain another victim in order to possess their body.

If characters clear the encounter successfully and manage to return to land with their captain, they are rewarded for their contribution. Each of the characters is given *10 X APL platinum pieces* and a *Letter of Recommendation* writ (See *Dungeon Master's Guide*, pgs. 228) from the captain, vouching for their character and integrity to any realm that recognizes it.

Example: If the party's APL is 3, each character is given 30 platinum pieces.

## SHUǏ GUǏ 水鬼

*Medium undead, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 79 (17d8)

**Speed** 0 ft., swim 50 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 20 (+5) | 10 (+0) | 15 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 24 (+7) |

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** High Shou, Shou, Common

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Detect Life.** The shuǐ guǐ can sense the presence of living creatures up to 4 miles away that aren't undead or constructs. It knows the direction they're in but not the exact locations.

**Waterbound.** The shuǐ guǐ cannot leave the water unless it has drowned and taken over a victim's body.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The shuǐ guǐ can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. The shuǐ guǐ takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

### ACTIONS

**Grab.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and the shuǐ guǐ can't grapple another target.

**Tì shēn 替身.** A creature grappled by the shuǐ guǐ must succeed on a DC 14 saving throw or have their soul switch places with the shuǐ guǐ. While the target is now trapped in the shuǐ guǐ's previous water prison, the shuǐ guǐ controls the target's body and

cannot be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect except ones that turn undead. The shuǐ guǐ retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features or proficiencies.

Tì shēn lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the shuǐ guǐ is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell, or the target's body is placed back in the water the switch took place in so the owner can reclaim their body and return the shuǐ guǐ to the water. If the owner has switched into a different body, a different shuǐ guǐ may try to claim the body instead.

### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1-3:** Reduce HP to 35, to hit bonus to +5

**APL 4 -6:** As written

**APL 7-8:** Increase HP to 95

**APL 9-10:** Increase HP to 100

## GFS BAD-STINGY

By Alex Clippinger

Artist: Daniel Walthall

*The GFS (Goblin Floaty Ship) Bad-Stingy is not a ship per se. It's a barely-buoyant amalgamation of flotsam from wrecked vessels lashed to lost cargo and left adrift on the open water. At a distance, the top of the 'vessel' looks like a floating junk pile from a wrecked ship, complete with sail canvas stretched across most of the top in a seemingly random fashion. This appearance is calculated, and key to the goblins' tactics. The areas of canvas and haphazard wood structure act as both a shelter and a hiding place for the Bad-Stingy's crew. The goblins wait in hiding for a curious ship to approach the apparent wreckage and pull alongside it, and then...*

### INITIATING THE ENCOUNTER

The *GFS Bad-Stingy* can be encountered anywhere on the open sea, as its goblin 'crew' allows it to float freely on the tides. The goblins take great care to make sure none of them are visible as a curious ship approaches, but sharp-eyed observers might notice unusual clues. These clues could be discarded pieces of half-eaten food, smelly fecal matter, or other evidence that the apparent flotsam is not uninhabited.

### GOBLIN JELLYFISH STRIKE TEAM, GO!

As soon as the ship is adjacent to the *Bad-Stingy*, the goblins burst out of hiding and initiate combat. Before the fight begins, the goblins spring the ambush with the following:

**Grappling hooks.** Goblins throw grappling hooks attached to ropes over the edge of the ship. There are five hooks in total. Creatures using a rope secured by a grappling hook do not need to make **Strength (Athletics)** checks to climb.

**Flingers.** Makeshift catapults throw four **stingtosser goblins** (see below) onto the deck of the ship.

### STINGTOSSER GOBLINS

The *Bad-Stingy* is named for the questionably ingenious way the goblins have learned to harvest and weaponize jellyfish, utilizing them as a thrown weapon. **Stingtosser goblins** have the same statistics as a regular **Goblin** (CR ¼; MM, p 166), but their shortbow attack is replaced with the following:

**JELLYFISH.** Ranged weapon attack: +4 to hit, reach 15/30 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d4+2) lightning damage. On a hit the target must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

### GOBLIN OBJECTIVES

The goblins of the *Bad-Stingy* want control of the ship, but only temporarily. Goblins don't have the temperament and intelligence to operate a large proper water vehicle, and are happy with their floating ambush-enabling home. The goblins have the following goals:

**Disable the ship.** The goblins might seek to drop the anchor or simply control the helm while they are aboard.

**Loot key supplies.** The invading crew needs to secure as much food and fresh water as they possibly can, as it could be weeks before they encounter another ship.

**Prevent pursuit, prevent stories.** The captain of the *GFS Bad-Stingy* is clever enough to know that the free-floating wreckage can't escape pursuit by an actual ship, and that survivors who live to spread the word about the goblin-flotsam will ruin future ambushes. Fortunately, killing the entire crew solves both of these problems.

## RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

The goblins swarm from the *GFS Bad-Stingy* onto ships by any means possible; grappling hooks, free-climbing, and flingers alike. It's possible to run the encounter with these goblins in a number of different ways:

**A single pitched battle.** For simplicity's sake, you can run the fight with the *Bad-Stingy* goblins as a fight for control of the upper deck of the ship. The goblins may or may not play around certain objectives, such as protecting grappling hooks or attempting to seize control of the ship's wheel.

**Goblins everywhere!** For a more chaotic approach, the goblins constantly board the ship and scatter in various directions as they attempt to accomplish different tasks, including stealing precious supplies. This can be an added challenge for higher-level characters who would otherwise laugh off a straightforward combat encounter with goblins, as they're forced to split up or prioritize on the fly.

## CAPTAIN TEN TIKKLES

The captain of the *GFS Bad-Stingy* is a **stingslapper goblin boss** named Captain Ten Tikkles, who keeps her crew in line with an iron fist and a jellyfish whip. After 2-4 rounds (depending on whether you're running the encounter as a straightforward combat or haphazard ship-wide event), Ten Tikkles climbs aboard and attempts to turn the fight in the goblins' favor.

Captain Ten Tikkles has the statistics of a **Goblin Boss** (CR 1; MM, p 166), but her scimitar attack is replaced with the following:

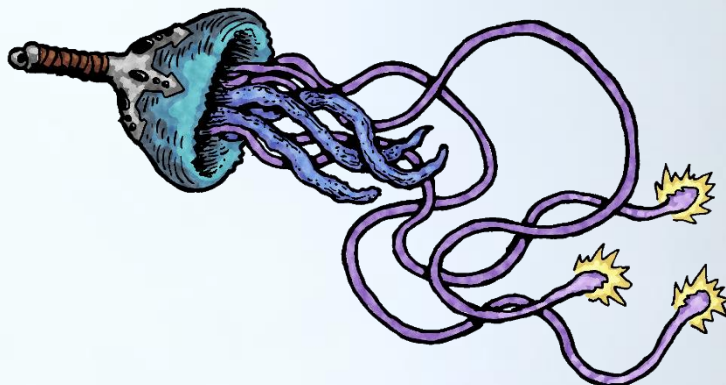
**JELLYFISH WHIP.** *Melee weapon attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) lightning damage. On a hit the target must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

### JELLYFISH WHIP

*Weapon (whip), uncommon*

This magical, 10-foot long whip is made from a large jellyfish. The magic of the whip keeps the jellyfish alive.

On a hit, a target takes 4 (1d4 + 2) lightning damage. In addition, the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. On a successful save, or after one minute, the creature is immune to the poison effects for 24 hours.



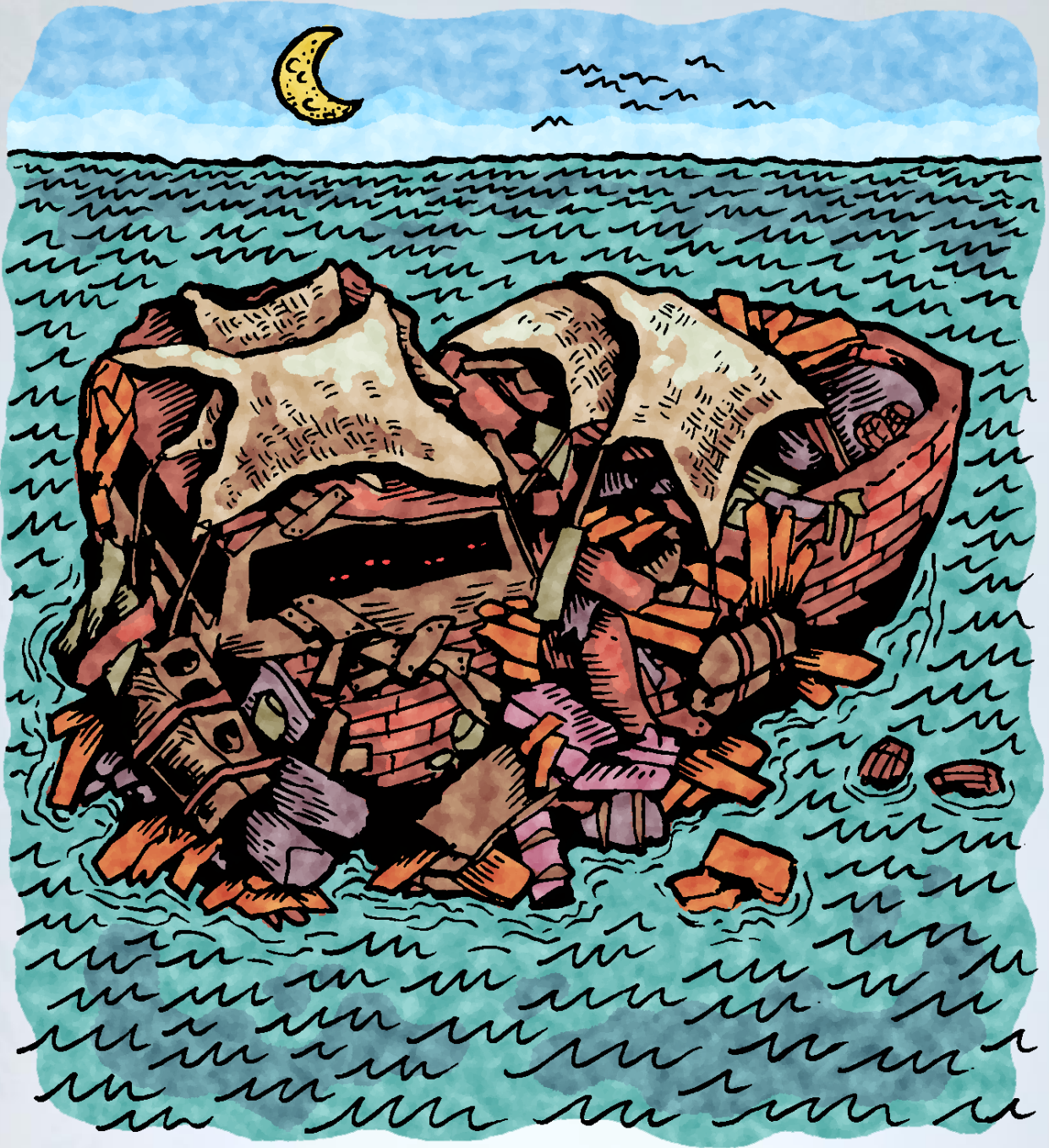
### SCALING SUGGESTIONS

**APL 1:** Two stingtosser goblins and Capt. Ten Tikkles

**APL 2:** Four stingtosser goblins and Capt. Ten Tikkles

**APL 3:** Eight stingtosser goblins and Capt. Ten Tikkles

For higher-level parties, consider applying the goblin template (see Chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, p 282) to other humanoids found in the *Monster Manual* or *Volo's Guide to Monsters*.



## ESCAPE FROM SYDINTHE'S TOWER

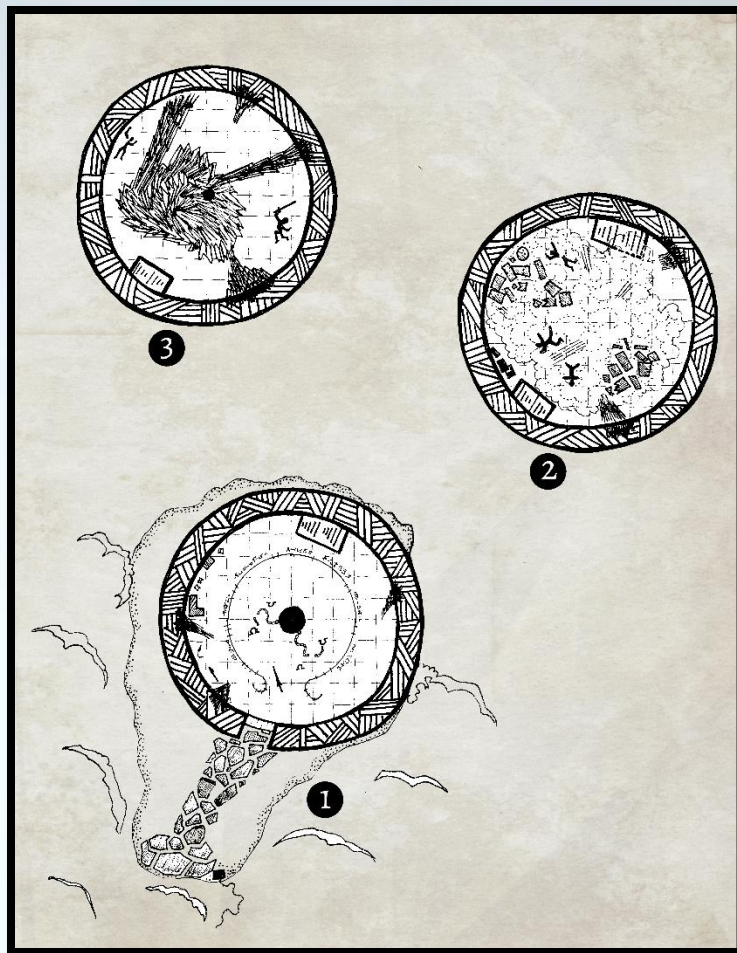
By **Chad M. Lensch**

Map: *Jean Lorber*

### ENCOUNTER OVERVIEW

As the group travels the seas, they spy a sturdy stone tower on the edge of the horizon. Soon after, they see what appears to be a “signal” coming from the tower (the tower is actually on fire). If they choose to investigate, they find what appears to be a small prison in complete disarray. Many dead bodies are found inside. The furniture is smashed and scorched, and the stone walls burned by an unidentified source. At the top of the tower is an unconscious and injured woman who is relieved to have someone rescue her. She explains that a dragon escaped and killed everyone but her. After speaking with the party for a little while, she asks if they would take her back to land with them.

If fact, Sydinthe is a *wing-clipped (cannot fly)*, chaotic evil **Brass Dragon**. The Zhentarim (or any other faction that fits in your adventure) was holding her in the tower and torturing her to ascertain where her treasure hoard is hidden. A few hours after she gave away the information to the Black Network, she became enraged, and found the energy to burst out of the cage. She enacted her revenge on the entire tower, killing everyone in sight. She knows that reinforcements will be on the way, and because she no longer can fly, she needs to leave before the help comes. She'll ask to come on the ship with the party and she'll help however she can. The party may see through her ruse and fight or escape and leave her at the tower to her fate,



or “rescue” her with the implications that come with that decision.

### ENCOUNTER SETUP

At some point when land can no longer be seen in any direction, the party notices a something on the horizon: if it is during the day, it is a rising column of smoke; if at night, it is a flickering signal fire. It takes about one-half day to get to the tower. When the party is about two hours away from reaching the tower, the “signaling” stops.

### APPROACHING THE TOWER

A short, but imposing, round stone tower 50 feet in diameter, and 30 feet high comes into view. The tower, worn by the elements, is built

on a small, submerged island of rock, with a moss-covered stone pathway leading toward a golden door. Waves gently wash up on the shallow rocks, with an occasional collision that sends the cool, salty spray scattering into the wind. There is no dock nearby. The ship will have to anchor about 500 feet from the tower, and the party will have to tender (take a smaller ship) to the island.

## THE DOOR

The 4x6 ft. door appears to be made of gold. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation)** check reveals that it is a metal door that is covered in a thick gold leaf. A success by 5 or more, and the party understands that the gold leaf keeps the door from rusting. If the party wants to try to take the door, they would need to succeed on a **DC 30 Strength** check. It weighs 250 lbs. and is worth about 100 gold pieces if scrapped. There is no lock on the door (even if a prisoner would have escaped, there would be nowhere to go). When the door is opened, a faint smoke comes out of the door.

## 1: FIRST FLOOR

When the party enters this area, read or summarize:

The door opens to a large room filled with a thin, smoky haze and scorch-marked walls. A pillar rests in the center of the room, with a circular metal cage surrounding the pillar. Attached to this pillar are four long chains with broken shackles. A strange cage-like apparatus rests on the floor.

The stone floor is detailed with exceptionally complex and intricate runes.

## LARGE CAGE

An iron cage in the center that is 30 feet in diameter and goes from floor to ceiling. A large stone support pillar is in the center of the cage and is about 5 feet in diameter. Attached to this pillar are four huge 20 ft. long chains with broken shackles on the ends the size of tree trunks. The doors of the cage are ripped off their hinges and twisted outward.

A strange metal apparatus, a 6-foot long cage-like object with a few chains and straps of leather encircling it, is on the ground in a twisted heap. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling)** or **Intelligence (Investigation)** reveals that the apparatus could be a muzzle for the long snout of a huge animal or monster.

## RUNES

The runes seem to be more concentrated around the cage and emit a faint blue glow. A successful **DC 18 Arcana** check reveals the runes for a permanent *antimagic field* that imbues this room (from floor to ceiling) with its properties.

## WRECKED ROOM

The room has been scorched by Sydinth's fire breath. Burned spears, glaives, and lances lay around the cage in disarray. Charred chairs, crushed desks, singed books, and loose parchment are strewn around the chamber. If the party searches the room, they'll find a few papers not destroyed by the fire that talk about a treasure of incredible value.

## A SPECIAL BOOK

On the ground, in this room, is one magical leather-bound book with a dragon emblem on it, which contains the location of a treasure

hoard. If the party detects magic on the book (while not in the *antimagic field* of the first floor, of course), they will find an Aura of Abjuration (*Protection from Fire*). If the party makes a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (History)** check, or if the party had previous adventures dealing with the Zhentarim, they will immediately recognize the emblem as that of the Zhentarim. Inside are instructions to an “Ardragon Vahl” on how to get to a place with a treasure with astonishing value. It also describes the most effective torture techniques of the flightless brass dragon. If the group made the aforementioned check, they also realize the term “Ardragon” is that of a Zhentarim member with a very high rank.

### WELL-DONE

There are charred humanoid corpses lying upon the ground, and a few more burnt beyond recognition sprawled out on the stairs. It appears they were slain by fire while trying to run up the staircase.

### STAIRCASE

There is a hole in the roof over the point where the curved staircase goes to the second floor. Large fragments of stone litter the ground underneath.

## 2: SECOND FLOOR

When the party enters this area, read or summarize:

The smoky haze grows thicker, stinging your eyes and burning your throat.

More devastation is seen here: bodies, some burnt, others ripped apart, lie about the scorched floor; and smashed and smoldering bunks, chests, desks and chairs chaotically decorate the room.

### DEVASTATED QUARTERS

The smoke becomes thicker as the group goes up the stairs. Because of this acrid haze, everything in this room has half cover. Fire damage is more prevalent on this floor, and the destruction to life and property is horrific. Other dead bodies can be found lying about. Three or four (it’s hard to tell) are ripped apart; claw and bite marks are evident on these bodies.

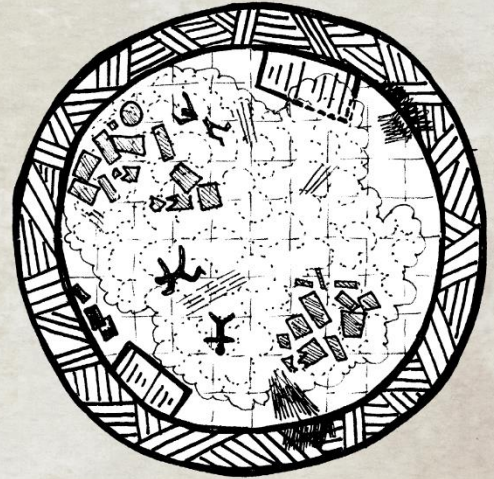
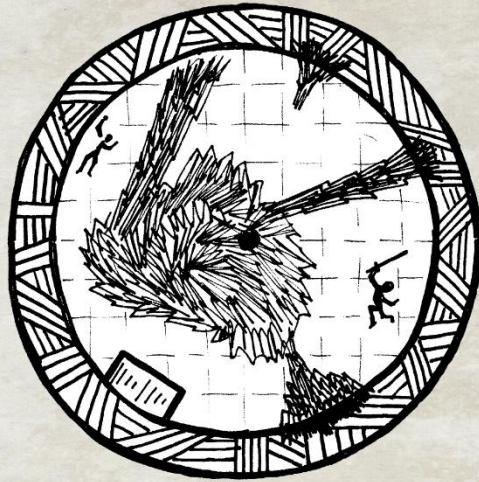
There are also a few desks smashed and burned, with all their contents burnt up in a fire. The burnt remains of many bunks and chests are strewn about. As with the first floor’s stairway, there is a hole in the roof over the point where the staircase goes to the roof. Large fragments of stone litter the ground underneath.

### INTERESTING ROSTER

If the party searches the chests, in the least damaged of the chests they will find a roster of names of every Zhentarim and prisoner in the tower. If the party later asks about this list, Sydinth’s name is not on this list; only an entry for “dragon”.

### STAIRCASE

A curved staircase lines the back of the room and goes up to the roof.



1 square = 5 feet

### 3: ROOF TOP

When the party enters this area, read or summarize:

The devastation continues as more bodies lie scattered on the rooftop: the remains of a smoldering guard, a severed arm adorned in a once noble-looking sleeve, and, leaning against the parapet, a woman wearing a burnt and tattered yellow dress.

#### SIGNS OF ANOTHER STRUGGLE

The floor of the roof top is covered in soot and marked with the black patterns of fire damage. More bodies are found, in similar condition as those on the other floors.

#### SIGNS OF ANOTHER STRUGGLE

She lies against the parapet that surrounds the rooftop, but does not seem to be as burnt as the other bodies. If the bodies are checked for belongings, the party will see that she is alive. If the party succeeds at a **DC 14 Passive Perception, Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation)** check, they will also notice the living woman. The roof top is otherwise empty, except for a metal flagpole attached to the middle of the space. The rope and flag are gone, conceivably burnt up in the fire.

#### LONE SURVIVOR

A woman (**Syдинthe**), skin and clothes blackened by ash, lies unconscious until the party comes up close to her. She is covered in abrasions, scratches, and bruises. If the party happens to try to heal or inspect her, they realize that she is not burned. Her hazel eyes blink open, struggle to focus, and, for a moment, look panicked as she raises her arms

in defense, and screams, *"Don't hurt me! Please! Where did the dragon go?!"*

### SYDINTHE

#### BACKGROUND

Syдинthe is not your typical Brass Dragon. From a very young age, she knew that she was...different... from the rest of her metallic dragon kind. She grew increasingly irritated by the slow and ineffective method of accumulating treasure by honest means and decided to leave her family and their law-abiding methods behind. She pursued the expeditious and dishonest life of a thief, taking treasure from the vulnerable. She has also killed smaller dragons of her own kind and taken their treasure.

One day, she happened to see a caravan, full of treasure that appeared to be a soft target for plunder. Robbing this unfortified opponent seemed to be a straightforward task. She was wrong. In fact, the convoy was the wagons and support team for the famous Zhentarim "Doom Raiders", who skillfully incapacitated the wings of the dragon, and eventually hunted her down and defeated her. Seeing this as an opportunity to profit, they surmised a plan to leave her alive and interrogate her until she gave up her lair's location. The Black Network whisked her away to a clandestine location, where she could not escape until they could get the information they needed.

#### PROFILE

Syдинthe is a manipulative liar, who is smart enough to play dumb, act helpful, and be kind until she identifies the right moment. When she feels she has an advantage, she will ruthlessly deal with her opposition, and take whatever

she can of value. She particularly enjoys burning victims with her fire breath, her favorite weapon.

Her ambition to build her treasure, and protect it drives her every decision.

The following information can be relayed by Sydinthe (as required). Be aware, there will be inconsistencies in her story that will be addressed later.

#### **As to what happened at the tower:**

- *"Where am I? Who are you? Don't hurt me!"*
- *"I was a prisoner of the Zhentarim (She spits on the ground for dramatic effect). I am an expert on dragons, and a member of the Harpers. I was kidnapped from my home in Waterdeep and forced to help the Zhentarim get information out of a poor brass dragon. They would have killed me if I didn't comply!"*
- *"The good dragon was tortured without mercy. After many months, it finally gave up the location of its treasure hoard. It then became angry and broke out."*
- *"It first broke out of its chains and pulled off its muzzle. Before the guards could react, it burst the doors open, and turned its fire breath on the men in the room. I barely escaped up the stairs, when it killed the others."*
- *"I heard a large crash as the tower shook, and I heard it following me upstairs. There was nowhere to go but up. I heard it breathe fire a few more times, and I heard men screaming. A few of the Zhents ran up the stairs to escape as I did. The dragon, not able to fit up the stairway, burst through the opening, and proceeded to breathe fire on the remaining guards. I must have fallen unconscious. I'm lucky to be alive!"*

#### **As to what she will ask of the party:**

- *"I would really like to get off this rock as quickly as possible. I am sure more Zhentarim will be on their way within a day or two, and I don't think it would be in our best interest to be here when they arrive!"*
- *"Would you mind if I join your party until I can get back to land? I don't care where you are going. I am sure the Harpers would reward you handsomely for my safe return!"*

#### **As to about the magic book:**

- *"I would be happy to study the book a little further, if you'd allow me to have it. I may be able to get more information out of it that may be helpful to you."*
- *"The Harpers probably would not want to take this poor dragon's hoard away. The Bronze are good dragons, and it would seem unwarranted to steal from the creature."*
- *"Perhaps we should destroy the book, to give the creature some peace? How about we dump it overboard when we are sailing away?!"*

#### **INCONSISTANCIES IN THE DISCUSSION**

Despite Sydinthe's best attempts at deceiving the party, there are obvious holes in her story. Use the following as general guidelines:

- Insight checks contested by Sydinthe's Deception or Persuasion could garner the information the party is looking for.
- If Sydinthe should lose this contest, and the party brings up one more of the following inconsistencies, she gives up the ruse, changes into her dragon form, and attacks the party.
- If Sydinthe's deception and persuasion skills are up to the challenge, but the party brings up 4 (or so) of the following inconsistencies anyway, she also gives up the ruse, changes into her dragon form, and attacks the party.

- As an alternative to the above, the party, through thorough roleplaying and investigation, may decide that Sydinthe is lying. In this case, the DM may also decide when she gives up the ruse, changes into her dragon form, and attacks the party. If they haven't shown enough skill in these things, then she will not turn into her dragon form.

### INCONSISTENCIES IN HER STORY:

Feel free to mark off the inconsistencies (listed or not listed) as they come along.

#### Where is the dragon now?

- *(Lie) "I am not entirely sure, it must have flown away afterwards. I am sure it's long gone."*

#### Didn't you know that the dragon couldn't fly?

- *(Lie) "Maybe it swam away, then? I don't know, I was unconscious!"*

#### Why weren't you burned by the fire on the rooftop?

- *(Lie) "Hmmm! You are right! I don't know how that could have happened. Perhaps the dragon didn't want to hurt me since I was a prisoner, too. Bronze dragons are good creatures, right?"*

#### Where were you kept in the tower?

- *(Lie) "I was chained up on the first floor with the dragon."*

#### Why is your name not on the roster?

- *(Lie) "I don't know why. Maybe they didn't keep accurate records?"*

#### Why do you want to destroy the book?

- *(Lie) "The Harpers would not be interested in any of this information at all. I am really not sure stealing from this dragon would be approved of."*

### FIGHTING SYDINTHE

Sydinthe's wings are clipped, so she cannot use her wings to fly, swim, or for a Wing Attack. With this in mind, she will have to rely on her melee attacks and her breath weapons.

Sydinthe does not gain any Lair Actions. She will not use her Fire Breath if the fight somehow gets to the ship. She does not want to destroy her only means of escape.

Familiar surroundings.

If possible, Sydinthe will fight in the lower level, where the Antimagic Field is, to mitigate spellcaster damage.

### HELPING SYDINTHE ESCAPE

If the party does not suspect that Sydinthe is a threat, they may take her on the ship, and add her to the crew. Keep the following in mind:

- She will protect the ship in her human form as best she can, until she can sneak away or leave in a grand style (DM's choice).
- She will be useful to the party in matters of dragons, history, and the appraisal and identification of magical treasures.
- If she is able, she will steal the magic book before getting away, ensuring her treasure's secrecy.
- If she can destroy the book ("dropping" the book overboard), without drawing attention to herself, she will.
- If the party finds her treasure, she will transform into her dragon form, and gain any applicable Lair Actions.

### OTHER ADVENTURE OPTIONS/HOOKS

- The DM may lead the group through an adventure to find the dragon's treasure!
- The Zhentarim search out and find the party, somehow knowing that they helped the prisoner escape. They may send other ships to intercept the party's

vessel, or set up an ambush to try to get the book back from the party.

- The party may be confronted by a metallic dragon party looking to take Sydinthe to justice.
- If Sydinthe is caught stealing or destroying the book, she will try to play dumb or dodge any accusations, if she can, until she reaches land. If the party keeps pressure on her, she will attack the party. She may turn into a dragon if it is safe for her to do so on the boat.

#### **SCALING SUGGESTIONS**

Here are some suggestions for adjusting Sydinthe's statistics. For all of the below, Sydinthe has the Change Shape ability.

**APL 1:** Brass Dragon Wyrmling

**APL 2:** Brass Dragon Wyrmling (AC 16, hp 45, breath DC 11)

**APL 3:** Brass Dragon Wyrmling (AC 16, hp 60, breath DC 12)

**APL 4:** Brass Dragon Wyrmling (AC 17, hp 75, breath DC 13)

**APL 5:** Young Brass Dragon (AC 17, hp 90, breath DC 14)

**APL 6:** Young Brass Dragon

**APL 7:** Young Brass Dragon (AC 17, hp 125, breath DC 14)

**APL 8:** Young Brass Dragon (AC 17, hp 133, breath DC 15)

**APL 9:** Young Brass Dragon (AC 17, hp 140, breath DC 16)

**APL 10:** Adult Brass Dragon (AC 18, hp 148, breath DC 16)

### SYDINTHE'S TREASURE HOARD

Below is what the party might find if they locate Syndithe's lair and treasure:

| Average<br>Party<br>Level | XP   | The Hidden Treasure Value |      |      |      |                        |
|---------------------------|------|---------------------------|------|------|------|------------------------|
|                           |      | CP                        | SP   | GP   | PP   | Other                  |
| 1                         | 200  | 1500                      | 1000 | 50   | -    | 2d6 10 gp gems         |
| 2                         | 450  | 1600                      | 1050 | 250  | -    | 2d6 50gp gems          |
| 3                         | 700  | 1700                      | 1100 | 500  | -    | 1d6 Magic Item Table A |
| 4                         | 1100 | 1800                      | 1150 | 1000 | -    | 1d4 Magic Item Table B |
| 5                         | 1800 | 500                       | 5000 | 1500 | -    | 1d4 Magic Item Table B |
| 6                         | 2300 | 600                       | 7000 | 2000 | 100  | 1d6 Magic Item Table A |
| 7                         | 2900 | 700                       | 7500 | 3000 | 250  | 1d4 Magic Item Table B |
| 8                         | 3900 | 800                       | 8000 | 4000 | 500  | 1d4 Magic Item Table B |
| 9                         | 5000 | 900                       | 8500 | 6000 | 800  | 1d4 Magic Item Table C |
| 10                        | 5900 | 1000                      | 9000 | 8000 | 1000 | 1d4 Magic Item Table C |

## GRETA AMBERHAIR AND THE WATER WAGON

By: Jeff C. Stevens

Artist: Kelly Brown

Map: Dante Ezio Cifaldi

*An ambitious, young gnome has built herself a fantastic watercraft. She and her crew use the craft for several purposes: for hire as merchant and traveler transport, helping with rescue missions, and the occasional smuggling scheme. The captain of the vessel, though good in nature, is slowly finding that the excitement of smuggling, its risks and dangers, is alluring.*

### BACKGROUND

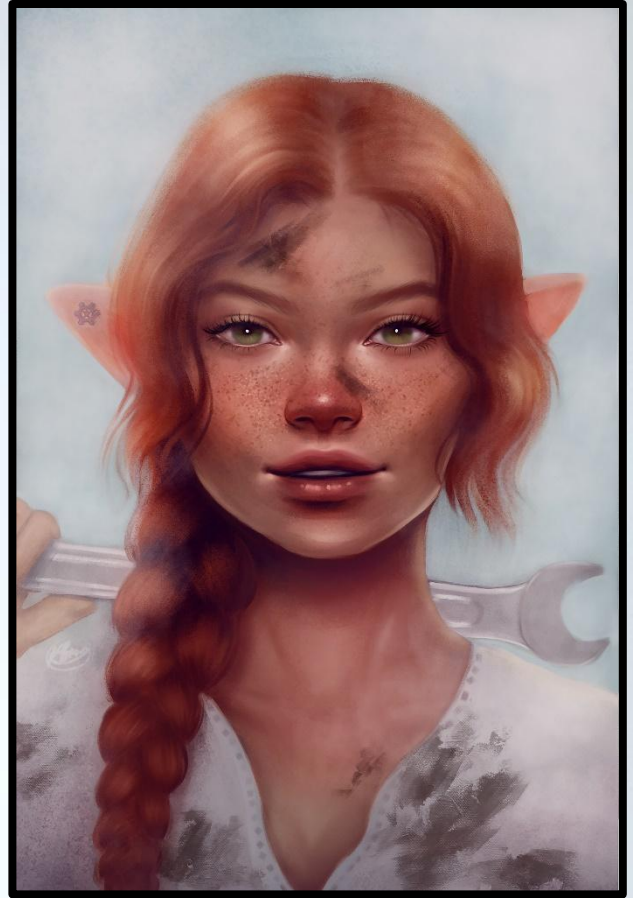
Greta Amberhair comes from a long line of gnome tinkerers. Though her lineage holds many clockwork tinkerers, Greta found herself drawn to watercraft. She failed miserably several times, trying to create a new way of propelling a craft across the waters. Her failures didn't stop her, they only gave her more drive and perseverance to continue experimenting.

### THE SHIP

The young gnome finally succeeded when she created her ship called *Water Wagon*—a vessel powered by several waterwheels along each side of the hull. She invented a pedal and gear system, which allows for the ship to move when only pedaled by two individuals, meaning the ship could move on the calmest of days.

### GOALS

Greta continues to tinker and hopes to someday create an even better vessel, one powered by only one humanoid. To fund this research, she and her crew hire out to transport



wares and travelers across the seas. This part of her business has been profitable, as many travelers find her *Water Wagon* very impressive and awe inspiring.

This type of income is sufficient for her and her crew to live on, but it doesn't cover Greta's research and experimentation expenses. For this, she's taken on smuggling missions, for which she sometimes needs to hire security.

### FLAWS

Greta is often easily distracted. She enjoys speaking to other tinkerers and hearing about their craft and creations. She can get lost in the conversations for several hours.

She also has a penchant for new technology. The mere presence of a strange, foreign object is enough to cause Greta to do everything that she can to study and investigate the item.

## GRETA AS AN NPC

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Below are a few suggestions on how Greta can be used as an NPC:

**An Ally** – for a fee, Greta can transport the adventurers across the waters. This may come in very handy if the seas happen to be calm and the wind is not cooperating. Seeing the *Water Wagon* quickly cruise into the harbor while other ships wait for the next wind might inspire the adventurers to hire the ship.

**A Merchant** – always excited to study new technology, Greta may purchase rare items from the adventurers. During her career as a sea captain, she has collected and studied a few items which she no longer needs and may offer in trade.

**A Quest Giver** – Greta has heard rumors of a strange metal being found on a nearby island. Her current schedule does not permit her to investigate, but she is more than willing to pay the adventurers to visit the island and retrieve a sample of the metal.

**An Antagonist** – Greta's desire to earn coin quickly has made her turn to more smuggling operations, one of which may involve a stolen, priceless family heirloom belonging to a rich and pompous nobleperson, who offers the adventurers a hefty reward if they retrieve the item. In this case, Greta and her crew aren't malicious, but they do defend themselves if required.

**A Side Quest** – the *Water Wagon's* crew encountered a dangerous storm or aquatic creature, leaving only Greta on the ship, in the middle of the sea. She's unable to pilot and

power the vessel on her own. The adventurers may assist Greta by offering to tow her and her ship, or by jumping on board the *Water Wagon* and pedaling the water wheels.

## THE WATER WAGON

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The water wagon is made from a very buoyant and light wood. That, along with the sleek design and high-performance gear systems, allow for the ship to travel quickly across the waters.

The ship is maneuvered by issuing commands to those pedaling the wheels. This also allows the *Water Wagon* to make precision turns and adjustments as the wheels work against one another.

## THE WATER WAGON (CONTINUED)

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The ship is humanoid powered by the below-deck pedal system. Its maximum speed is determined by the number of humanoids manning the pedals.

2 – 1 mph

4 – 3 mph

6 – 7 mph

## WATER WAGON DEFENSES

Greta has found that the materials used in creating the gears and paddle wheels creates static electricity. She has harnessed this energy and uses it as a defense mechanism for the ship. A thin copper line traces the railing of the ship. As long as the ship is moving, any creature that grabs the railing must succeed on a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw, suffering 7 (2d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

## HELM

As mentioned, there is no wheel or rudder for the ship. Instead, Greta uses a pipe, which leads to the lower deck, to bark orders to those pedaling the ship.

## ROOMS

**Crew Quarters** – below deck: Two comfortable feather beds are found in each of the rooms. If actively searching the rooms (DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check), a character might find:

| d6 Roll | Result                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | A small, purple leather pouch containing 1d4 platinum pieces                                                                                                                      |
| 2       | A small brass box containing 53 gp and a journal. Written on the first page of the journal is “GOAL: 250.” Below that is a list of dates and a gold piece amount, which total 53. |
| 3       | A small, exquisitely-crafted pink owlbear plushy.                                                                                                                                 |
| 4       | A tattered, worn-thin green blanket. Embroidered along the seam is the word “blankie.”                                                                                            |
| 5       | A <i>shortsword</i> +1.                                                                                                                                                           |
| 6       | A set of thieves’, smith’s, and jeweler’s tools, each stored neatly in rolled-up leather.                                                                                         |

**Storeroom** – below deck: Supplies, merchandise, crates of preserved food, along with flasks of oil and pots of grease are kept in this room.

**Greta’s Room** – Main Deck: Several maps, a set of navigator’s tools, and a leather pouch containing 25 gp and 25 sp are kept in the top drawer of the unlocked desk.

A character succeeding on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check while actively

searching the desk finds a hidden drawer under the main drawer. The hidden drawer contains a gold bar worth 200 gp, a red leather pouch containing 50 small turquoise gemstones (worth 10 gp each), and a small painting of a young, red-haired girl gnome sitting on the knee of a much older, male gnome.

A medium-sized bed folds out from the southern, interior wall.

Several small chests and tables line the interior wall. If searched, a character finds five sets of the same clothes—a white, poet-style shirt and tan pants.



### TINKER'S RING

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

This ring has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing the ring, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast one of the spells below. Spells cast from the ring have a spell save DC of 15. The ring glows fiery red when a charge is expended.

*Burning hands*

*Heat metal*

*Locate object*

### GRETA'S WRENCH

*Weapon (mace), rare*

Inscribed along this wrench's handle are the words "To Greta, from Great, Great, Grandpappy Otha."

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus increases to +2 when you use the weapon to attack a construct.

The weapon also has the following properties:

Floats on water but cannot hold additional weight.

As a bonus action, speaking the phrase "let's fix this" transforms the mace into a set of tinker's tools, granting the wielder proficiency in tinker's tool. The tools revert to mace form when the phrase "time to fight" is spoken.

### Greta Amberhair

*Small humanoid (gnome), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 13 (*ring of protection*)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 25 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** +1 bonus to all saving throws (*ring of protection*)

**Skills** Insight +4, Persuasion +4,

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Gnomish

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Gnome Cunning.** Greta has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Artificers Lore.** Greta has +6 to Intelligence (History) checks related to magical items, alchemical objects, or technological devices.

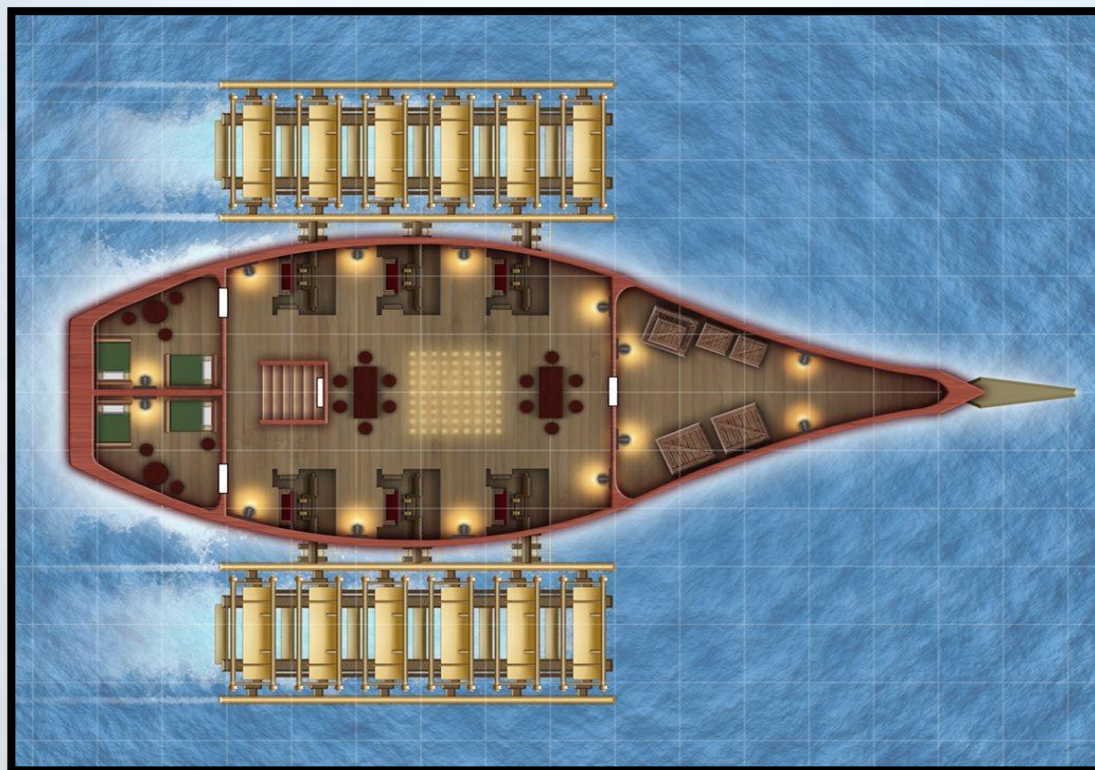
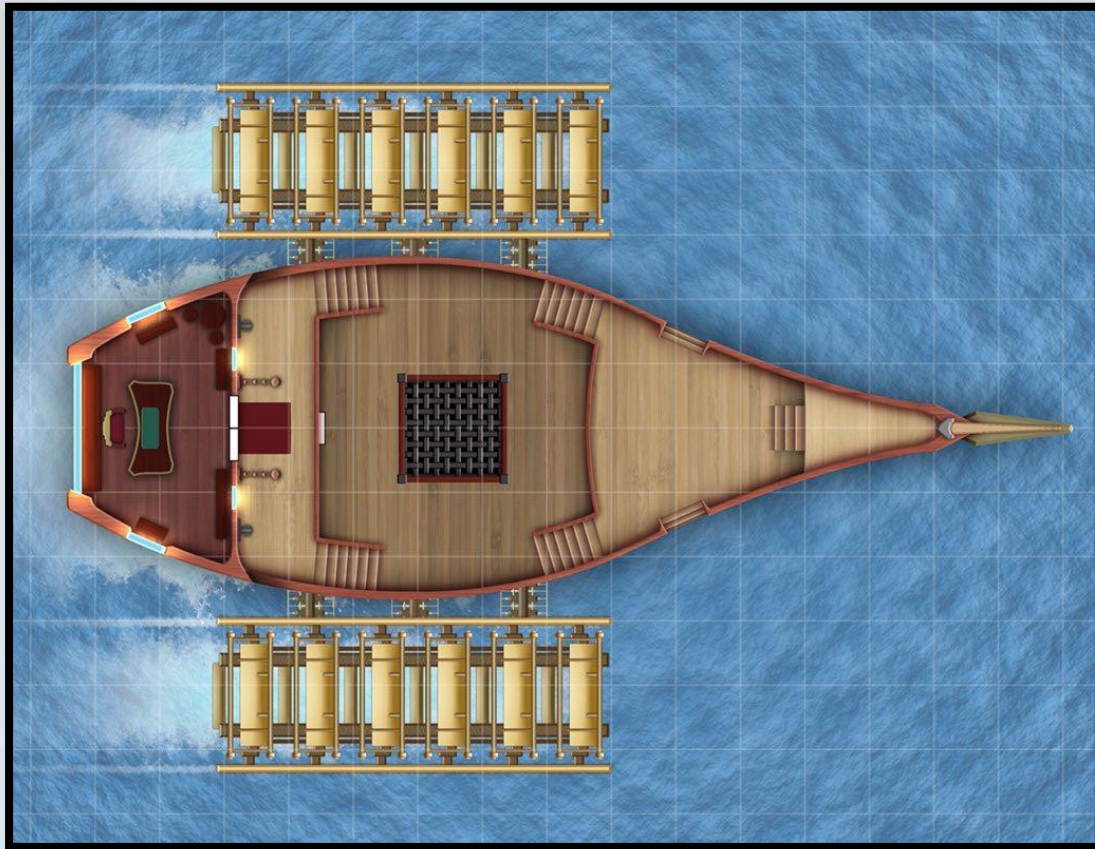
**Innate Spellcasting.** Greta's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *druidcraft, guidance, mending*

#### ACTIONS

**Greta's Wrench.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon*

**Attack:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.



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