

# TRAILS OF FREEPORT

D20 SYSTEM ADVENTURES FOR CHARACTERS LEVEL 3-9

BY GRAEME DAVIS

## FREEPORT

THE CITY OF ADVENTURE



GR1020

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# TALES OF FREEPORT

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*Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark;  
and as that natural fear in children is increased by tales, so is the other.*

—Francis Bacon

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## - INTRODUCTION -

Welcome to *Tales of Freeport*! This is a book of adventures for Green Ronin's *Freeport* adventure setting. Within these pages you'll find intrigue, adventure, mystery and mayhem—challenges for your PCs to overcome, plots to uncover, sinister secrets to bring forth into the light of day. To play these adventures, you will need the d20 system *Player's Handbook (Core Rulebook I)* and *Freeport: the City of Adventure*.

### DEATH, TERROR, MADNESS AND HELL

The adventures in this book take place after the events of the first four *Freeport* adventures: *Death in Freeport*, *Terror in Freeport*, *Madness in Freeport* and *Hell in Freeport*, but they do not rely on them in any way. This means that the situation in the city is exactly as described in the *Freeport: the City of Adventure* sourcebook, and that (along with *Core Rulebook I* of course) is all that you need to run these adventures.

### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The adventures in this book are not designed as a continuous campaign, and can be played in any order. Each one is designed for characters of a particular level, but they can easily be made tougher or weaker by changing the types of numbers of opponents. Some of them rely more on character interaction than fighting, and are suitable for characters of any level.

The main adventure, *The Soul of the Serpent*, is longer than the others and can be used to form the core of a short campaign, with the other adventures dropped in now and again to change the pace. Likewise, adventures downloaded from the *Focus on Freeport* section of the Green Ronin web site (<http://www.greenronin.com/freeportfocus.shtml>) can also be dropped in as the Game Master wishes.

As in the *Freeport* sourcebook and *Denizens of Freeport*, NPC and monster statistics are presented in grey toned boxes. Information that is meant to be read aloud to the players is presented in gray toned boxes.



# ~ THE SOUL OF ~ THE SERPENT

AN ADVENTURE INTENDED FOR CHARACTERS OF 5<sup>TH</sup>–7<sup>TH</sup> LEVEL.

## INTRODUCTION

The first three *Freeport* adventures (*Death, Terror and Madness in Freeport*) dealt with a plot by a secret cult called the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign to channel the energy of its hideous god, the Unspeakable One. A summary of the plot can be found on page 11 of the *Freeport* sourcebook, and the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign is described in more detail on page 36.

The plot failed, and the Brotherhood was scattered but not destroyed. Its agents, hidden throughout Freeport, continue their demented quest to bring the insanity of the Unspeakable One first to Freeport, and then to the world. Meanwhile, the Church of Yig, the original religion of the serpent folk of the Valossan Empire, is taking advantage of the Yellow Sign's weakness to expand its influence over the degenerate serpent folk who live secretly in the caves and passages beneath the city.

## K'STALLO'S MISSION

K'Stallo (*Freeport*, p. 107), the last priest of the Serpent god Yig, has ceased masquerading as Thuron, the high priest at the Temple of the God of Knowledge (*Freeport*, pp. 92-93), and has arranged for Brother Egil to take over as high priest. As far as anyone but K'Stallo and Egil knows, Thuron suddenly announced that he was going on a long pilgrimage and appointed Egil as his successor. This caused a minor ruffling of feathers among some of the older priests at the temple, as Egil became the youngest high priest in the temple's history.

In fact, K'Stallo has dropped his human disguise in order to devote all of his time to re-dedicating a subterranean temple to Yig that was recently uncovered not far from the city. Using this as a base, he hopes to bring the degenerate serpent folk beneath Freeport—many of whom have been used as pawns by the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign—back to the true path of Yig. He aims to unite the serpent folk of the Serpent's Teeth—the descendants of those few who survived the destruction of the proud Valossan Empire.

K'Stallo's ultimate goal is to be able to make the serpent folk known to the surface-dwellers without being seen as a threat, and establish friendly—or at least non-hostile—relations so that the Valossans (as he likes the serpent folk to be called) will be able to live peaceably side-by-side with the other inhabitants of Freeport. Then, he will be able to make open and mutually profitable use of the city's sea captains, adventurers and other enterprising souls to recover lost Valossan items, re-establish Valossan culture, and bring back the golden age of his people. It's an ambitious dream, he knows, but he understands that patience is required to see it through.

## THE YELLOW SIGN

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign is in hiding, licking its wounds and trying to re-establish itself after the disaster of Milton's Folly (*Freeport*, p. 19). With the loss of most of its leaders, the Brotherhood in Freeport has split into a number of factions, some of which are not even aware of the other's existence. A human alchemist named Corwin Laxton leads one of these factions; he is unaware of K'Stallo's plans, but intends to bring all the degenerate serpent folk under the command of his faction, which he has named the Brimstone Order. To this end, he has been using *potions of polymorph self* to assume the form of a serpent man, and posing as a priest of Yig on a similar mission to the one which K'Stallo has just undertaken. His ultimate goal is to turn the degenerate serpent folk into an army in the service of the Brimstone Order, have them attack Freeport from below in concert with some strategic assassinations and acts of sabotage on the surface, and take over the city. Laxton dreams of sacrificing Freeport's entire population to the Unspeakable One in a ceremony lasting for days, which he hopes will climax in a physical manifestation of his hideous god.

## THE SSKETHVAI TABLETS

In a forgotten vault deep beneath the city, Laxton stumbled upon an ancient set of tablets containing the doctrine of the Sskethvai (see sidebar). He worked hard to translate the tablets from the Valossan language, with help from a few literate serpent folk who were loyal to the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign.

The Sskethvai tablets—and the news that a serpent priest was working to bring the degenerate serpent folk back to the path of their ancestral god—gave Laxton an idea. Instead of opposing this new priest directly by preaching the worship of the Unspeakable One, he decided to turn his crusade to his own use. Let the serpent folk return to the worship of Yig—but let them follow the Sskethvai teachings. These involve the sacrifice of captives in a very similar manner to the worship of the Unspeakable One, and no one has witnessed their rites for centuries. In front of a congregation of uneducated and blood-crazed degenerate serpent folk, it is a simple matter for Laxton to make sure that the sacrifices they bring in are actually dedicated to the Unspeakable One.

To this end, Laxton has been masquerading as a serpent priest himself, preaching the worship of Yig the Destroyer in the tradition of the Sskethvai. The degenerate serpent folk in his congregation do not make the subtle distinction between the Hitthkai and Sskethvai doctrines; to them, they are worshipping Father Yig as the priests instruct them. He and K'Stallo have not encountered each other directly, as Laxton has been careful to avoid those areas where he hears the scholarly serpent-priest has been active.

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## THE SSKETHVAI AND THE HITTHKAI

Like most religions, the Church of Yig in ancient Valossa was made up of a number of sects. Each emphasized a different aspect of the serpent god or a different facet of his teachings, but the church was able to hold together with a minimum of friction between the sects under most circumstances.

### THE SSKETHVAI

One sect in the Church of Yig was the Sskethvai. The Sskethvai were a martial sect, filled with crusading zeal and composed largely of the Valossan warrior class. They worshipped Yig as the Destroyer, who commanded the serpent folk to subjugate all other races and religions in his name.

### THE HITTHKAI

K'Stallo, on the other hand, follows the teachings of the Hitthkai, who venerated Yig as the Father of Wisdom and the soul of Valossan culture. Like all ordained priests of Yig, he has encountered the teachings of the Sskethvai, but the more philosophical path of the Hitthkai appealed more to his scholarly nature than the warlike teachings of the Sskethvai.

### FUNCTIONAL DIFFERENCES

The difference in doctrine between the Hitthkai and the Sskethvai is reflected by the favored domains of each sect. Clerics of the Hitthkai choose from the Animal, Knowledge, and Magic domains, while those of the Sskethvai choose from the Evil, Strength, and War domains. Some theologians have concluded from this that the different aspects of Yig venerated by the two sects are, in fact, two separate deities with the same name.

## THE END OF MADNESS

This adventure can be played as a sequel to the previous *Freeport* adventures, if the Game Master (GM) wishes. It should take place a few months after the events of *Madness in Freeport*, and the GM may need to beef up some of the earlier encounters to make them an adequate challenge for the Player Characters. Whether this adventure is suitable for a party that has completed *Hell in Freeport* (an adventure for 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> level characters) is a matter for the individual GM to decide.

If they have played the first three *Freeport* adventures, the Player Characters (PCs) will be familiar with Brother Egil and K'Stallo; accordingly, they will have much easier access to information than PCs who have only recently arrived in Freeport. This will probably lead them to short-circuit parts of the adventure, especially if they get too much help from these Non-Player Characters (NPCs). The GM will need to take this into account, as it will result in a shorter adventure with less suspense.

If K'Stallo was killed in an earlier adventure, the serpent priest working to restore the temple of Yig can be a missionary from elsewhere, perhaps leading the PCs to discover a small group of civilized serpent folk, based somewhere in the Serpent's Teeth.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Laxton's serpent folk followers have been venturing up to the surface at night, ambushing lone victims in quiet areas of the city, and bringing them back for sacrifice. Their choice of time and place has ensured that their victims have not been missed—people disappear every day in the seedy sections of Freeport, and no one is overly surprised or concerned. Their latest victim, however, is different.

Gwendolyn Brack is the only child of Matthias Brack, a moderately well-to-do merchant. Bored with playing the dutiful daughter and waiting to be married off to the son of some business partner of her father's, Gwendolyn has become involved with the Daughters of the Guild (*Freeport*, pp. 69-70). A couple of nights ago, she and a group of her fellow guild members set out for the taverns of Drac's End. She drank a little too much, and became separated from her friends. As she wandered the alleys of Drac's End, she was ambushed and captured by a group of serpent folk. She is currently being held prisoner, along with a few other unfortunates, awaiting sacrifice to the Unspeakable One at one of Laxton's false Sskethvai rituals.

*Merchant's daughter missing! Substantial reward offered!*

Recent headline, *The Shipping News*

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## ENTER THE HEROES

The PCs can become involved in the adventure in a number of ways:

### HELP WANTED

Matthias Brack has posted notices around the town (Handout A) offering a reward for the safe return of his daughter and the apprehension of her kidnappers. The PCs will see the notice in one of their usual haunts, and can find Brack at the Merchants' Guildhouse.

### CONTACTS

If the PCs have been in Freeport for any length of time, they will know people who can steer them into the adventure. The exact details will vary, but a few examples are given below. The GM can improvise other introductions as needed.

#### THE SEA LORD'S GUARD

Brack has reported his daughter's disappearance to the Guard, and they are beginning an investigation. Although Brack is not the most wealthy or influential merchant in Freeport, it could be that he has friends in high places putting pressure on Commissioner Williams for a quick result. If the PCs have developed contacts within the Guard, they could be asked to help with some unofficial investigation. Alternatively, the Guard could have its hands full with a crime wave or an outbreak of rioting elsewhere in the city, and hire the PCs to handle the case.

#### THE GOD SQUAD

Ever since the initial incident involving the Brotherhood, the God Squad (*Freeport*, p. 33) has been watching for signs of renewed activity. It monitors news and rumors more closely than the Guard does, and has noticed a growing pattern of disappearances, mostly in Drac's End, where the bodies have never been found. If the PCs have contacts in the God Squad, these NPCs could ask them to conduct some preliminary investigations. Remember that it is not yet known that Gwendolyn disappeared from Drac's End; she left the house secretly, but her father believes she was somehow stolen from her bed, which makes this case appear to be an anomaly.

#### THE MERCHANTS' GUILD

If the PCs have already become known to members of the Merchants' Guild, they may be recommended to Brack, who will contact them directly regarding their services.

#### THE CAPTAIN'S COUNCIL

If the PCs have earned a reputation with one or more councilors as reliable troubleshooters, they could be approached unofficially by one of their contacts on the Council, and asked to look into the matter of Gwendolyn's disappearance. If this turns out to be a kidnapping for ransom, the Council wants the perpetrators apprehended before they can strike again. They are afraid that one of Freeport's more prominent citizens could be the next victim.



#### THE HALFLING BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

PCs with underworld contacts might find themselves summoned before Finn (*Freeport*, p. 55) and given a little job. The disappearance of the sole heir of a prominent citizen is a serious matter, and the Guard is investigating with heavy-handed enthusiasm. This is bad for business as far as Finn is concerned. Since he knows nothing about the disappearance, it might be the work of some unauthorized or renegade group of rogues, who intend to hold the girl for ransom. Finn wants the matter resolved quickly and quietly, so that life can go back to normal. He also wants those responsible brought to him, so that he can make an example of them for mounting such an operation without his approval and, more importantly, without cutting him in on the proceeds.

#### THE DAUGHTERS OF THE GUILD

Gwendolyn's companions are as worried about her as her father is, and if the PCs have a contact in the Daughters of the Guild, they could very well be asked to conduct a discreet investigation and get Gwendolyn back with a minimum of fuss. If the PCs do not know of the Daughters of the Guild, but have made the acquaintance of one or more merchant families, this might be a good opportunity to introduce them to the Daughters.

#### FIRST CONTACT

If the Daughters of the Guild approach the PCs, a meeting will be arranged with Nifur Roberts and Evadne Wiggins (see *The Daughters of the Guild* below). Otherwise, the PCs' first contact will probably be with Matthias Brack at the Merchants' Guildhouse.



# ~ SOUL OF THE SERPENT ~

## THE MERCHANTS' GUILDHOUSE

The Merchants' Guildhouse is described on pages 64-65 of the *Freeport* sourcebook. Characters inquiring at the door for Matthias Brack will be shown into a small private room, where Brack joins them after a few minutes.

*Matthias Brack is a short, stocky man with curly, shoulder-length brown hair and brown eyes. He is dressed expensively, but not ostentatiously. His clothes are slightly rumpled, and he appears not to have slept in some time.*

*"Thank you for coming," he says. "I'll get straight to the point. My daughter Gwendolyn has been missing since the night before last. She went to bed early, saying that she had a headache, and that was the last I saw of her. I can only assume that she was somehow taken from her bedroom while she slept, though no one else in the house saw or heard anything."*

*"I don't know of anyone who would want to harm her—or me, for that matter—although I suppose she could have been taken for ransom. While I'm not the richest man in Freeport by any means, I suppose I am comfortable enough to be the object of envy for some. So far, though, I've received no ransom demands, or any other communication. Gwendolyn has simply disappeared."*

*Brack has been very calm until now, but finally his composure cracks.*

*"I'm so worried about her," he half-sobs. "She's my only child—the only thing I have left of her late mother. If anything has happened to her, I don't know what I'll do."*

Brack has told the PCs everything he knows, and it is up to them to take it from here. He will willingly let them examine

### MATTHIAS BRACK

**Male human Exp6/Fpm4:** CR 9; Medium-sized humanoid; HD 10d6; hp 38; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 *ring of protection*); Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6, rapier) +8/+3 ranged (1d4, daggers); SA Haggle +4, merchant's eye +4; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +10, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (local) +10; Listen +6; Profession (merchant) +14, Search +4, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Swim +3; Alertness, Dodge, Expertise, Leadership, Skill Focus [Profession (merchant)].

**Possessions:** house and contents, suite at Merchants' Guildhouse, rapier, 2 daggers, +2 *ring of protection*.

**Note:** *The Freeport Merchant prestige class may be found on p. 84.*

Gwendolyn's room and the rest of his house, and will instruct his servants to cooperate fully with the investigation. He has a miniature of Gwendolyn, which he will show the PCs, but he will not part with it, explaining that it is all he has left of her.

## INQUIRIES AT THE GUILDHOUSE

If the PCs ask around at the Merchants' Guildhouse, they will find out that Brack is a respected but low profile, mid-level merchant. He has few close friends, but is on good terms with everyone in the Guild, and appears to have no enemies. His business dealings have always been honest, and he has not crossed anyone in business so far as anyone knows.

## A LITTLE SOMETHING ON ACCOUNT

If the PCs ask Brack for money, his eyes will grow suddenly hard.

*"If there is something specific you need for your work and you genuinely can't afford it," he says, a little coldly, "then I will happily discuss it with you. Otherwise, I am only prepared to pay for results. You must understand that one in my position has to be careful not to be taken for a fool."*

Brack can only be persuaded to give the PCs any kind of advance payment by a successful Bluff check. He bargains for a living, and has heard just about every story and angle there is.

## THE BRACK HOUSE

**M**atthias and Gwendolyn Brack live in a comparatively modest (for the Merchant District) two-story house on a leafy side street off Wave Avenue. The PCs will be given the run of the house, and will be able to investigate anywhere they like. The butler, Ffoulkes, will accompany them at all times—his master has ordered him to render the investigators every assistance, and also to keep an eye on them so they don't steal anything! They can take whatever they want from the house, though, so long as they make a case for its being evidence in the mystery of Miss Gwendolyn's disappearance.

## THE HOUSE

### FRONT DOORS

A pair of bronze-faced double doors opens onto the street. They look strong as well as decorative.

### BUTLER'S PANTRY

This small room serves as an office for Ffoulkes during his free time. It is furnished with a small desk and chair, and a locked cabinet. Against one wall leans the stout wooden bar that supplements the front door's locks at night. The floor is of polished wood.

The desk has a few papers neatly piled on it—bills from local tradesmen, and other domestic matters—along with a small

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## THE BRACK HOUSE

### LOWER FLOOR



1 Square = 5 feet

### UPPER FLOOR



# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

glass inkwell, a couple of quills, and a shaker of fine sand used for drying the ink on a document. The desk drawer contains a bottle of ink and a few spare quills.

Ffoulkes carries the key to the cabinet, which contains the household accounts and a few other papers. There is nothing here of any particular interest.

## CLOAKROOM

This is a large closet, intended to store the coats of any visitors. Currently it contains two men's overcoats (belonging to Matthias) and three women's overcoats (belonging to Gwendolyn). The floor is of polished wood.

## HALL

The spacious, marble-floored hall leads to the stairs, with the doorways to the kitchen and dining room under the stairs. The hall is two stories high, with pillars supporting the ceiling.

## LIBRARY

Matthias normally receives visitors here. The room has a large window, secured by iron bars, which lets in a lot of natural light. There is also a large chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The walls are lined with bookshelves, and a large table with four chairs around it stands in the middle of the room. The floor is of wood, but a large oriental rug covers most of the area. There are four tall pedestals in the room, each bearing some unusual-looking fragments of carved stone. Against one wall is a glass-topped case containing a dozen small artifacts of various types; Brack is a collector of antiques and curiosities, and will explain that everything in his collection has been found locally. Although he does not know the story of the Valossan Empire, he does believe that the islands were settled in antiquity, by a civilization that is now lost.

## OFFICE

This is where Matthias conducts much of his business. A huge desk of carved wood dominates the room. Three comfortable looking chairs are in front of the desk, sitting on an ornate and obviously expensive rug. On the wall behind the desk hangs a large painting of the house, as seen from the street; the other walls have smaller paintings, including seascapes and views of the city. The chair behind the desk is similar to those placed in front of it. The desk contains nothing of interest to the PCs.

## DRAWING ROOM

Richly decorated, this room is less businesslike than the library and office. Two silk couches and three stuffed chairs are the main furniture, with a low table in front of each couch and a smaller table beside each chair. A carved marble fireplace dominates one wall. The wooden floor is highly polished, with rugs in front of each couch.

## KITCHEN

This room has a flagstone floor, with a wooden trapdoor leading to the cellar. The walls are thickly plastered and painted white. A large brick fireplace stands at one end, with a

variety of cooking equipment surrounding it. In the center of the room is a solid wooden table, unvarnished and pale from repeated scrubblings. Pots and pans hang from hooks in the ceiling and sit on racks mounted on the walls.

## PANTRY

This is a simple storeroom for food. It is lined with plain wooden shelves holding fresh and preserved fruit and vegetables. Assorted joints of meat and poultry hang from hooks in the ceiling. In the center of the room are five small barrels containing salted fish and meat.

## CELLAR

Entry is through a trapdoor in the kitchen floor. The cellar is lined with roughly dressed stone blocks, both to support the ceiling and to maintain an even cool temperature. In the middle of the floor is a tall candelabrum holding three candles, which are lit only when someone is working in the cellar. A wine-rack stands against one wall, holding a few dozen bottles of good-quality wine (though an Appraise check will reveal that none of them is particularly exotic or outrageously expensive). Against another wall is a large chest, which is locked (DC 20). The cook has the key. The chest contains boxes and jars of various sizes, filled with assorted cooking spices. Beside the chest stands a wooden box about two feet on each side, containing tea, which is an expensive luxury in Freeport.

## DINING ROOM

A large oval table with eight chairs dominates the room. The floor is of polished wood, but the table and chairs stand on a large carpet. A silver-plated candelabrum stands at each end of the table, and a small crystal chandelier hangs from the middle of the ceiling. Polished wooden sideboards stand against three of the walls, filled with tablecloths and serving dishes. A small door in the northeast corner leads to where the silverware is kept. This includes a silver tea service, goblets and serving dishes, as well as knives, forks and spoons. The silver store is always kept locked [DC 20], and Ffoulkes has the key.

## STAIRS

From the main hall, the stairs rise to a landing, and then split to either side. Made of dark, well-polished wood with carved railings, they are carpeted in red and gold. A crystal chandelier hangs above the landing.

## GUEST ROOMS

The guest rooms are all closed and locked [DC 20]; Ffoulkes has the keys to all of them, as does Mrs. Magston, the cook, and the housekeeper. Each room contains a feather bed, a dressing table, a washstand and a wardrobe. Floors are of polished wood, with a small rug beside each bed.

## SERVANTS' QUARTERS

The room at the east end is occupied by Ffoulkes, and Mrs. Magston has the room next door. The other three are each occupied by two of the lesser servants. These rooms are plain, with basic furniture and just a few personal touches.

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## MATTHIAS' BEDROOM

A large four-poster bed with a goose-down mattress dominates the room. The brocade curtains are kept open all the time, as Freeport's climate is not cold enough, even in the winter, for Matthias to need them drawn. The long-handled brass warming pan that hangs on the wall beside the bed is purely for decoration, and to give the appearance of a well-appointed room.

A large chest stands at the foot of the bed, with a dressing table and wardrobe to either side. A brass candlestick holder stands on the dressing table, beside a water jug and washing bowl. Under the bed (if anyone looks) is a ceramic chamber pot. On the wall above the dressing table hangs a small portrait of a woman; she is not conventionally attractive, but her face shows great intelligence and force of personality. The woman in the portrait is Brack's late wife Emelda, who died shortly after giving birth to Gwendolyn.

## GWENDOLYN'S BEDROOM

An elaborately worked carpet with a floral pattern covers the floor of this room. Gwendolyn's bed, like her father's, is a four-poster, but it is much more daintily carved, and is hung with lace curtains rather than brocade. The wardrobe, as well of the rest of the furniture, is likewise feminine in character. On a low table beside the bed are a brass candlestick holder and a framed portrait of her mother.

Since her father presumes that Gwendolyn was taken from this room, it is where the player characters will most likely begin their investigation. Successful Search checks while searching the relevant places will uncover the following clues:

### BEDROOM CLUES

DC	Clue
25	Hidden at the back of the wardrobe is a sword-belt with a broken buckle. The sword to go with it is nowhere to be found. No one in the household has seen it before.
20	Among Gwendolyn's stockings are three pairs that don't look like the others. Anyone with the Profession (tailor) skill will immediately notice that they are men's stockings. All in the household will confirm that Gwendolyn always dressed in a most feminine manner.
20	Among Gwendolyn's jewelry is a large inlaid cloak-pin, which anyone with the Craft (jeweler) skill will immediately recognize as being of a masculine design. No one in the household has seen it before.
30	A false compartment in a clothes-chest contains a plain and very businesslike-looking dagger. No one in the household has seen it before. There is also a folded slip of paper (Handout B).

## QUESTIONING THE HOUSEHOLD

The various members of the Brack household will be able to provide the following information:

### THE FATHER

**Matthias** refers most inquiries to the servants, especially if they concern household arrangements. He will confess that, although he saw his daughter at meals and she accompanied him to social events, he has little idea of how she spends the rest of her time. If he is shown Handout B and asked who "N" and "V" might be, he says that Gwendolyn has recently become friendly with Nifur, the daughter of Captain Roberts of the Captain's Council. She seemed very taken with her new friend, and he was hopeful that he might gain an ear on the council as a result. If he is asked about his key to the front door, he will notice that it is no longer on his key ring. He has no idea what happened to it, as he has not needed to use it for some weeks—he generally only needs it if he comes home after the servants have gone to bed.

### THE BUTLER

**Ffoulkes** noticed nothing unusual on the night that Gwendolyn disappeared. The following morning, however, he found the front door unbarred, with the bar leaning against the wall beside the door, which was locked. The only keys to the front door belong to the Master, himself, and Mrs. Magston.

### THE HOUSEKEEPER

**Mrs. Magston** was roused the morning after Gwendolyn's disappearance by Edwina Scutt, the girl's maid.

### THE LADY'S MAID

**Edwina Scutt** went into her mistress' room as usual to bring her hot water and help her dress, but found the room empty. Her bed had not been slept in. The window was slightly open, as it was every night for ventilation, but the iron bars that cover the window are spaced less than six inches apart, so nothing human-sized could possibly have entered. If she is shown the note and asked who "N" and "V" might be, she has no idea. She also has

### THE TRUE STORY

Gwendolyn was recruited into the Daughters of the Guild by Nifur Roberts, and on her visits to the Brack house Nifur supplied Gwendolyn with some suitable clothing from the Daughters' stock. This was the bundle that Violet saw Gwendolyn taking upstairs. After the household had gone to sleep, Gwendolyn dressed in male clothing, crept into her father's bedroom, and stole his key to the front door. Quietly removing the bar, she unlocked the door, stole out, and locked the door behind her. Then she set out for Captain Roberts' house.

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no idea where the men's stocking among Gwendolyn's clothing came from, or of where she might have come by the sword belt or cloak pin. If she is asked, she will be able to confirm that all the dresses in Gwendolyn's wardrobe belong to her, and there is no sign of a dress that she might have been lent by someone else. If she is specifically asked to check Gwendolyn's clothes, she will notice that all of Gwendolyn's dresses are present, including her night dresses, which raises the question of what she might have been wearing when she disappeared.

### THE KITCHEN MAID

**Violet Briggs**, the kitchen maid, will be able to confirm that Miss Roberts (she doesn't know Nifur's first name), accompanied by a couple of friends, visited Gwendolyn twice recently. They seemed in very high spirits and laughed a great deal, but always fell silent when she entered the room to serve tea. On the second visit, she saw Miss Gwendolyn leave the drawing room with a large bundle, which she took upstairs to her room. When she noticed that Violet had seen her, Gwendolyn explained that one of her visitors had lent her a dress to try on, and asked her not to say anything because she wanted to surprise her father by wearing it to dinner if she liked it.

### THE REST OF THE STAFF

The other servants will have nothing to add, although they will support each other's stories. Everyone has been with the family for at least five years, and no one has any reason to suspect anyone else of involvement in the disappearance.

### MAGICAL TRACKING

If the PCs try spells such as *divination* or *scrying* (or magic items with similar abilities) to find Gwendolyn's whereabouts, the GM should read the spell descriptions in the PHB very carefully.

#### DIVINATION

A successful *divination* spell will elicit a terse verbal response. Here are a few examples (note that the same caster repeating the spell will get the same result each time):

*She is underground.  
In a small place, with others.  
It is dark and damp.*

#### SCRYING

Any attempt at *scrying* is difficult [DC 15], as the PCs have heard of Gwendolyn but not met her. Successful *scrying* will give the following information:

*It is very dark. You see a small room, with no windows. The walls appear to be hewn out of rock; moisture runs down them in places. Several people are in the room, all huddled together. Some are in chains; you cannot tell if all of them are. There is a young woman, dressed in male clothing. A half-mask hangs around her neck, and her face is stained with grime and tears.*

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## THE DAUGHTERS OF THE GUILD

The PCs can come to the Daughters of the Guild (*Freeport*, pp. 69-70) in one of two ways—they may follow up on the leads to Nifur Roberts from the Brack household, or they may be approached directly by the Daughters to help locate Gwendolyn.

### A FEW ROUTINE QUESTIONS

Anyone who has had any contact with the Daughters of the Guild may come to the conclusion that Gwendolyn was a member, given the evidence collected at the Brack house. If the players do not think of this for themselves, the GM can give an Intelligence check [DC 15] to any character that has the relevant knowledge. Even if the PCs know nothing of the Daughters, the information they have gained from the Brack household will give them Nifur Roberts as their only solid lead.

Obtaining an interview with Nifur Roberts will not be easy, however, unless the party has high-society connections. The Roberts house is not open to anyone who comes along, and as Nifur is unmarried, custom demands that she should be approached through her father—especially by young male visitors. Her father, unfortunately, is at sea for the next three months. Matthias Brack can help by giving the PCs a letter for Nifur, explaining that they are looking into Gwendolyn's disappearance and expressing his hope that Nifur, as his daughter's newest friend, will do everything she can to help them. He will not think to give them a letter by himself, however; they must think to ask for it. The GM should not make it impossible for the PCs to see Nifur, but he should make them have to work for it.

At first, Nifur will be very guarded with her answers. She will confirm Violet's story that the bundle she gave to Gwendolyn was a dress, and claim that she has not seen Gwendolyn since that visit. She is a plausible liar but not a skilled one [Cha 15, no Bluff skill], and if she is questioned further by a character who has made a successful Sense Motive check, she will break down and tell the truth. She will also tell the truth if she is presented with any of the evidence of masculine clothing that the PCs may have found in Gwendolyn's room, or if any mention is made of the Daughters of the Guild.

### Hired BY THE DAUGHTERS

If the PCs have been introduced to this adventure by a contact within the Daughters of the Guild, they will arrange a meeting with Nifur Roberts at her father's house, and she will volunteer everything she knows.

*At first she was the image of a composed society lady, but now Nifur Roberts looks more like a frightened and worried teenage girl.*

*"You see," she says, "a few of us—my friends and myself—we've formed sort of a club. We call ourselves the Daughters of the Guild. We go out at night, dressed in men's clothes and wearing masks, and just have fun, as though we were men like our brothers. After all, sitting around drinking tea, making polite conversation and waiting to be married does become tedious after a while.*

*"Gwendolyn had just joined us. It was her first patrol—that is, the first time she went out with us. We went to Drac's End, like we usually do, but somewhere along the way, we somehow lost her. I'm afraid we tend to drink a little too much when we go out on patrol. The last time I remember seeing her was when we were in a tavern called the Sword and Anchor. It's a pretty rough place on the edge of Tent Town. After that, I'm not really sure. We all came home—at least, I thought we all did—and that was that. I can't remember whether she was with us or not when we left Drac's End.*

*"I'm ashamed to say that's all I know. We were just out for a little harmless fun, and nothing bad has ever happened before. Oh, I do hope Gwendolyn's all right. You will find her, won't you?"*

### ANOTHER LEAD

As the PCs leave the Roberts house after their interview with Nifur, one of the guards approaches them.

*Just as you are leaving, one of Captain Roberts' guards comes up to you.*

*"I know a few things Her Ladyship might have forgotten to mention to you," he says with barely disguised sarcasm. "My shift ends at seven—meet me in the Last Port. I can't talk now." And with that, he resumes his patrol around the house and grounds.*

The PCs can spend the time until seven o'clock however they wish—conducting further investigations, buying equipment, visiting the Sword and Anchor (see p. 15), or looking for more information on the Daughters of the Guild.

### THE OTHER DAUGHTERS

If pressed, Nifur will give the PCs the names of the other Daughters of the Guild who took part in the last patrol, so far as she can remember. If the PCs try to interview them, they will face the same obstacles that they did in reaching Nifur—not just anyone is welcome to call upon a young lady of quality without an appointment and without the prior approval of her family. The GM can make this process as simple or as complex as desired; some groups enjoy this kind of social challenge, while for others it can simply bog the adventure down and create frustration.

The easiest way to reach any of the Daughters of the Guild is by having a female character call on them, posing as a

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## MALLEY AND THE GUARDS

All the guards can be treated as identical, unless the GM wishes to generate them in more detail.

**Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; medium-sized humanoid; HD 2d10+2; hp 13; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, club) or +4 ranged (1d4+2, dagger); AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +4, Intimidate +2, Jump +3, Listen +2, Sense Motive +2, Search +1, Spot +2; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Weapon Focus (club).

**Possessions:** studded leather armor, cloak (sufficient to cover armor), hat (large enough to cover face), club, dagger, pouch with 5 gp.

young woman of their own class. Even the most protective of parents and servants will not object to this, although they will be quick to spot any inconsistencies in the character's cover story. Openly carrying weapons and other adventuring equipment is an instant giveaway, and the character must make a successful Bluff check to gain admission to a house. Up to one other character can come along, pretending to be a servant or companion to the "young lady," but they, too, must be able to present a convincing appearance.

The other Daughters of the Guild will be able to add little to what Nifur has already told the PCs. It was Gwendolyn's first patrol, the group started out in the Sword and Anchor, and somewhere during the course of the evening, the rest of the group simply lost track of her. One informant will remember that the group left the Sword and Anchor after a few drinks, and went on to a place called the Grog Pot—but that is as far as anyone's memory goes.

## THE LAST PORT

When the PCs meet the guard in the Last Port, he introduces himself as Edgar Malley, and gives them the following information:

*"I thought something was up when I saw you all going in to see Her Ladyship—something to do with that little gang of hers, no doubt. I know more about 'em than they do themselves, I reckon. The state they get themselves into, I'd be surprised if they remembered anything at all. So what's it about?"*

*When you tell him that you are investigating the disappearance of Brack's daughter who was with the group that night, the grin drains from his face like rum from a holed cask. He closes his eyes, and curses softly but with feeling.*

*"One went missing?" he says, barely in a whisper.*

*"Oh, gods, we'll all swing if the old man finds out." Seeing your puzzled expression, he explains further.*

*"Her Ladyship reckons her little club's this great secret, you see, but her father's no fool. He's known about it all along, and when they go out gallivanting he sends a few of us along—discreet-like, and making sure they don't see us—to keep an eye on 'em and make sure they come to no harm. They go into some rough dives now and again, and they've a way of not making themselves liked. There's been more than one time we've had to start a fight so they could get away.*

*"I was with 'em last time they went out—a couple of days ago now, it was—so I reckoned I could fill you in on anything Her Ladyship forgot to mention, and steer you straight where she might not have told all she knows. I'll be plain with you, this baby sitting's not to my liking at all, and I was just hoping it would be some small thing that might lead the bunch of 'em into a little embarrassment and trouble with their families. I know if any daughter of mine carried on that way, there'd be hell to pay if I ever found out about it—and these are supposed to be young ladies of quality, setting an example for us humbler folk!*

*"Losing one of 'em, though—that's bad, and we'll all be in the soup if she's not found. Listen—me and the lads know every place they went that night, and we can help folks to sharpen their memories, if you know what I mean. I'm at your service, and three more good men besides. I still have my duties in the daytime, of course, but when my time's my own, consider it yours."*

What use the PCs make of Malley and his fellow guards is up to them. Although they are tough enough to keep riff-raff from bothering the Captain's household, they will probably not be of any significant use to the PCs in a fight. They have their contacts in the city—among the guards of other merchant houses and the denizens of certain alehouses—and can act as eyes and ears in places where the PCs might arouse suspicion by their presence.

For now, though, the best thing the PCs can ask of Malley is an account of the group's movements on the night in question, which he will provide most willingly. As Nifur told the PCs, the group started out in a rough tavern on the edge of Tent Town, by the name of the Sword and Anchor. A half hour later they moved on to a dive called the Grog Pot, and after that, they wandered the streets drunkenly for a little while, before they happened upon an alehouse called the Mermaid. Malley can take the PCs to each of these places, or give them sufficiently detailed directions to find them on their own. He did not notice at what point Gwendolyn was separated from the group, but can retrace their route fairly accurately.

## RETRACING THE ROUTE

Acting on Malley's information, the PCs will be able to find the three taverns the Daughters visited on the night that Gwendolyn disappeared. If he or one of his men is with them, they will be able to retrace their route fairly accurately.

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## THE SWORD AND ANCHOR

The Sword and Anchor is a tiny, grubby little place, with half-a-dozen tables and cutlass marks in the bar. The sawdust on the floor looks like it has not been changed for weeks, and the whole place smells of stale beer and worse things. As the PCs enter, the tavern suddenly goes quiet, and they become aware of several pairs of eyes upon them.

Asking around in the Sword and Anchor will earn little response—people here are used to minding their own business, and people who ask questions are never welcome. The best the PCs will get is confirmation that there was indeed a group of loud and well-to-do young women in masks and men's clothing here on the night in question.

If Malley or one of his men is with the PCs, they will be able to retrace the Daughters' route from the Sword and Anchor to the Grog Pot.

## THE GROG POT

Not far from the Freeport Institute, the Grog Pot is slightly larger than the Sword and Anchor, and somewhat cleaner. The regulars here are a little more used to strangers coming and going, and are less close-mouthed and suspicious than their counterparts at the Sword and Anchor.

Even so, there is little for the PCs to learn here. They can confirm that the Daughters were here on the night in question, and that they moved on a little after midnight, but that is all.

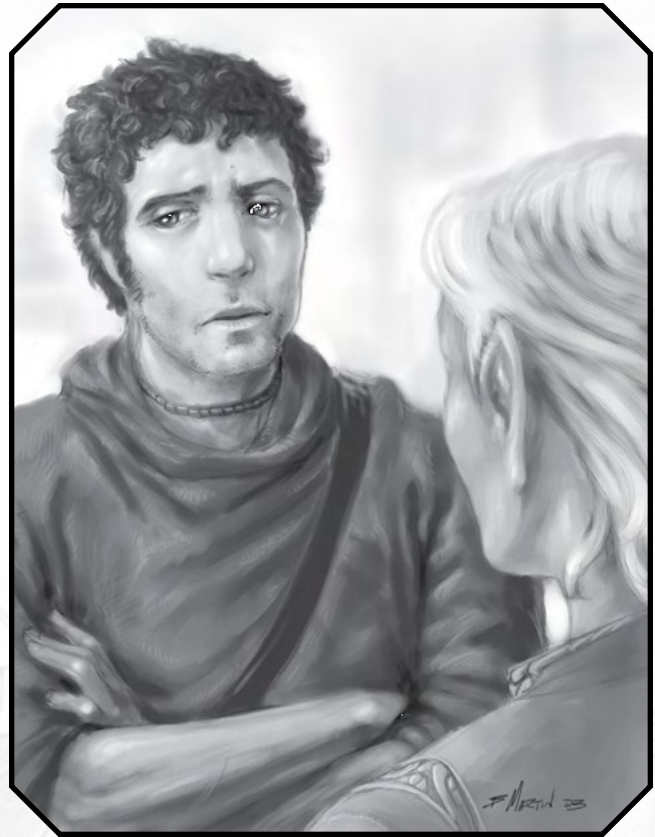
## THE CLUSTER

The Daughters' route from the Grog Pot to the Mermaid took them through the Cluster (*Freeport*, p. 51), and there are several people there who remember seeing them. Malley or one of his men will be able to provide the following information:

*"We followed them through here—I remember it well. One of them—no idea who 'cause they all had their masks on, as usual—said she knew someone who was studying at the Institute, and they decided it would be a good idea to drop in and surprise them. There's always fun to be had in the student quarter, so they say. Never had the benefits of a higher education myself.*

*"Anyway, they spent the best part of an hour wandering through the Cluster, calling out this fellow's name and getting things thrown at them to shut them up. Finally someone must have roused this fellow from his bed, and he tells them that there's no drink to be had. They talk for a while about searching the whole place to see if he's telling the truth—steaming drunk as they were, by this time—and then someone mentions this dive called the Mermaid, which is open all hours of the night. So they drag this young fellow out of the house to take them to the Mermaid.*

*"What was his name, now? Marty? Morty? Something like that."*



The PCs will probably want to track down this student, though it will not be easy, especially as their guide cannot remember his name clearly. If the PCs think to inquire at the Freeport Institute, they will learn that there is one Mortimer Dogwood registered as a student and living in the Cluster. The GM can draw the adventure out a little if desired. There are quite a few students at the Freeport Institute, and more than one student might have a similar-sounding name.

## MORTIMER DOGWOOD

If the PCs track down Mortimer Dogwood, he will be able to tell them a little more of what went on that night. However, he will refuse to reveal the names of any of the Daughters he knows, maintaining that doing so will not help to find Gwendolyn, and will only make trouble for his friends. If he is pressed, he will agree to ask his friends to contact the PCs, although they will not be able to add anything to what they have already learned by the PCs.

Quite frankly, Mortimer remembers very little of that night. He had already visited several taverns and downed quite a few pints of ale, and had just gone to bed when the Daughters roused him. A couple of hours spent in the Mermaid did nothing to improve his condition, or his memory of the events.

## THE MERMAID

The Mermaid is a small but fairly well appointed tavern, and a favorite haunt of the students and bohemian types who inhabit the western part of Drac's End. The staff will be able to confirm that the Daughters were there sometime after



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midnight on the night in question, and that they were very drunk and very loud. They left after the staff refused to serve them.

A successful Gather Information check (or the right questions accompanied by good roleplaying) will reveal that one of the Daughters was left behind in the Mermaid. A few minutes after the group had left, one of them came in asking where the others were. Whether she had been left behind on their way to the Mermaid, or whether she had gone to make use of the outhouse while her companions were being ejected, no one knows. She left to catch up with her friends, and did not come back.

## SEARCHING THE GLUSTER

From what the PCs have learned so far, Gwendolyn became separated from the rest of the Daughters of the Guild at the Mermaid, and the last time she was seen was when she left the tavern to try to catch up with them. She never did catch up with the group, however, so it seems fairly likely that she disappeared somewhere between the Mermaid and Brack House.

The northwestern corner of Drac's End is a maze of alleys, and it will take some time to search them all. Eventually, a couple of streets away, the PCs will find a manhole cover with a small scrap of cloth caught in it. The manhole leads to the sewers (*Freeport*, pp. 104-5), and requires a Strength check at DC 10 to open. The scrap of cloth is a fragment of heavy brocade, such as might have come from the clothing of a fairly well dressed man.

## IN THE SEWERS

Dropping through the manhole, the PCs find themselves at the end of a sewerline, which leads off into the darkness to the southwest. After traveling a short but smelly distance, they come to a heavy iron grate, and at first glance it looks as though they can go no further. The bars of the grate, however, have been sawn through in a few places [**Spot check, DC 13 to detect**], and a part of the grating can be pulled out to create an opening big enough for a medium-size creature to climb through.

The sewer bends to the left after passing through the grate, and crosses another sewer that runs straight for about 200 feet in either direction. The manholes on this length of sewer are locked from the street level, and the PCs can only open them by destroying them [**Strength check, DC 35**].

Past the crossway, the sewer carries on to the southeast, swinging gradually around to the right before ending in a T-junction. About halfway along this stretch is a secret door [**Search check, DC 20 to locate**], which opens into a crudely carved passage. Characters with the Track feat may notice [**Wilderness Lore check, DC 15**] a variety of tracks in the sludge near the secret door.

## THE HOLDING AREA (EL 7)

The PCs have stumbled upon a small complex used as a holding area by the serpent folk who serve Corwin Laxton. Their captives are stored here until arrangements can be made to move them to the new underground temple that Laxton has dedicated to the Unspeakable One.

Two degenerate serpent folk and a dark naga guard the cave. The serpent folk are basically a distraction, since the naga lurks invisibly. Once the PCs engage the serpent folk, the naga maneuvers to its best advantage and makes its presence known with a slow spell. It follows up with *flame arrows*, targeting spell casters first.

## EVIDENCE OF CAPTIVITY

There were clearly several prisoners here recently, but they have been moved. There are scraps of clothing, desperate messages scratched into the walls, and so on—but it is currently empty apart from a small heap of iron chains in one corner.

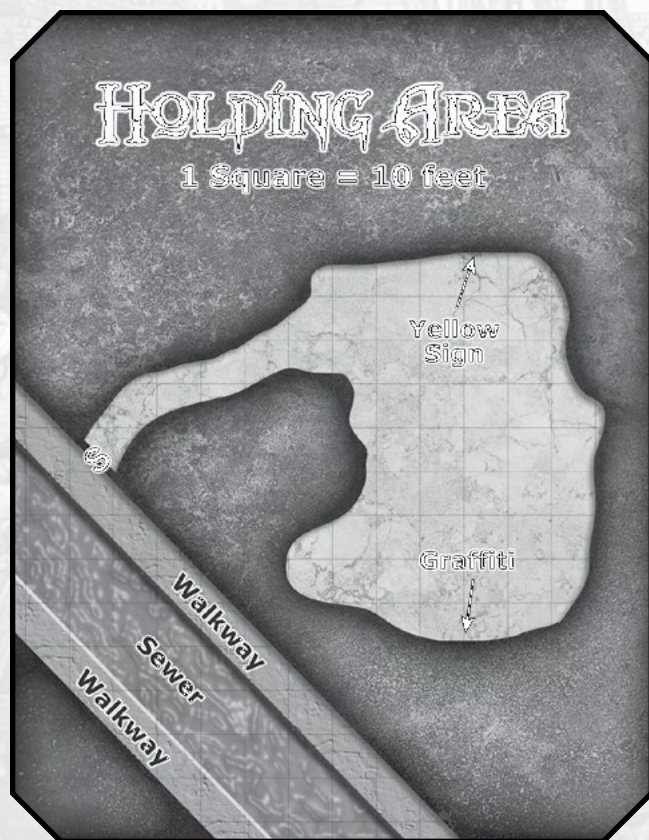
Among the graffiti scratched into the wall is the following message in the common tongue:

*The snakes have us.*

The graffiti is confined to a single area, as though the prisoners were crowded into the back of the cave.

## THE YELLOW SIGN

At the other end of the cave is a deeper, more deliberate carving made into the rock. The degenerate serpent folk holding the captives carved the Yellow Sign into the wall of their cave, after being told by Laxton (in his polymorphed serpent-priest guise) that it is a powerful symbol of Yig the Destroyer. The design has been pecked into the cave wall by



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## DARK NAGA

**Dark Naga:** CR 8; large aberration; HD 9d8+18; hp 50; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +7 melee (2d4+2 and poison, stinger) and +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); SA Detect thoughts, poison, spells; SQ Charm resistance, guarded thoughts, poison immunity; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +9, Concentration +13, Listen +11, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +12, Spot +11; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes

**Spells Per Day:** (6/7/7/5); Save DC for spells is 13 + spell level.

**Spells Known:** (7/5/3/2) 0 – *daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, read magic, resistance*; 1 – *burning hands, charm person, color spray, mage armor, obscuring mist*; 2 – *invisibility, flaming sphere, summon monster II*; 3 – *flame arrow, slow*.

**Possessions:** None.

## DEGENERATE SERPENT PEOPLE

**Degenerate Serpent People (2):** CR 1/2; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8+1, hp 6, 7; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 13 (+1 natural, +2 large shield); Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, shortspear; or 1d4+1, bite and poison), +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA Poison (Ex; 1d6 temporary Wis, initial and secondary; Fort save avoids, DC 15); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +5, Escape Artist +4, Hide +5; Improved Initiative.

**Possessions:** Javelin, large shield

repeated blows of a sharp tool or weapon; a crude attempt has been made to color it yellow, using yellow-orange clay from the waterfront, rubbed into the carving.

If the PCs have encountered the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign before, they will recognize the symbol immediately for the blasphemous glyph that it is. Otherwise, a Knowledge (arcana or religion) check [DC 25] will be necessary to identify this obscure design.

If the PCs do not recognize the meaning of the Yellow Sign, odds are that they will want to find out what it means. They can do so at the Temple of the God of Knowledge or the Freeport Institute.



## A DEAD END?

Although the players might think they've hit a dead end, their characters have gained the following information:

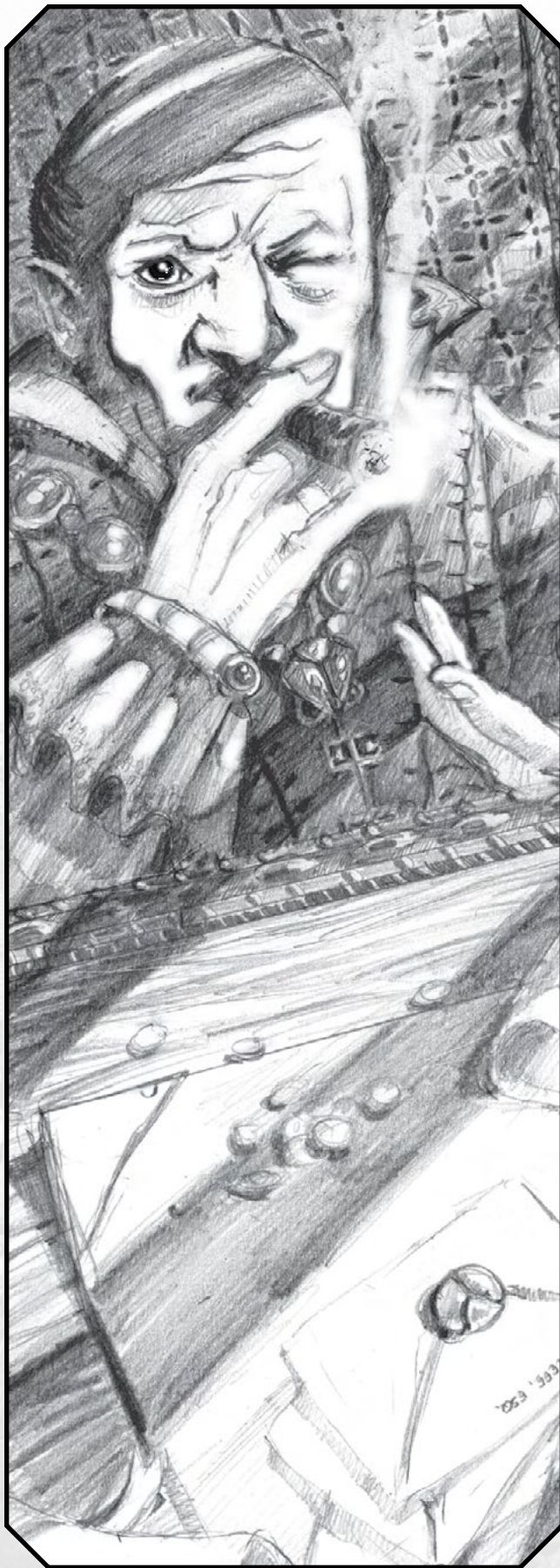
- More than one person was kidnapped, in what appears to be an organized operation.
- Serpent folk are involved.
- The Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign is involved.

## VENGEANCE OF THE YELLOW SIGN

Once the PCs have discovered the holding area and killed the guards there, they will be marked for death by the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign and are subject to attack at any time by the cultists of the Unspeakable One (*Freeport*, pp. 123-5).

No cultist encounters are scripted here; it is left to the GM to stage an attack whenever the PCs are vulnerable, complacent, or simply moving too slowly. The cultists should be of the same level as the PCs, and roughly the same in number. The GM should adjust their abilities downward, however, if the party is weakened from a recent fight or some other cause. The attacks should be a nuisance, and they should worry the players, but they should not detract from the course of the adventure.

If the players have come to a dead end in their investigation, or simply do not know where to go or what to do next, a group of cultists can make a useful mechanism for providing hints or clues. A slain cultist might have a map showing a location that the PCs need to visit, or a note hinting at the involvement of an NPC that has been previously overlooked.



## MISSING PERSONS

The PCs might decide to look for other reports of missing persons. They found several sets of chains in the holding area, and the graffiti in the cave implied that several people have been held there, probably for some time.

## THE SEA LORD'S GUARD

The Sea Lord's Guard will initially be suspicious of a group of adventurers who start asking questions at the Fortress of Justice. They may become more co-operative if the PCs mention that they are looking for the missing daughter of one of the city's merchants, and Diplomacy checks and contacts within the Guard will come in useful. Edgar Malley and his fellow guards have a couple of contacts in the Sea Lord's Guard, which may prove useful.

The Guard will be able to shed little light on the Brack case, but if the PCs inquire about other reports of missing persons, they will be able to confirm that people regularly go missing in Freeport. However, they tend to be the kind the few people will miss, and they tend to go missing from the sort of areas where only the foolish venture after dark. Bodies are found in alleys and turn up floating in the harbor, and few are ever identified. Because of this, the Guard does not generally take an interest in missing persons cases, although they may decide to make an exception in the case of Gwendolyn Brack, especially if her father has posted handbills offering a reward.

What the Guard can confirm is that no dead body fitting the description of Gwendolyn Brack has been found since she disappeared, and no other bodies have been found recently that they consider suspicious. The Guard's definition of suspicious is a narrow one, however; a body with its throat slit is considered routine in some parts of the city. Close questioning will enable the PCs to find out that over the past few months, no bodies have been found in unexpected places, or showing signs of sacrifice or other extensive mutilation.

## THE HALFLING

### BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

Of course, those who want to know what is really going on in Freeport will get their best information from the halfling crime lord, Finn (*Freeport*, pp. 52-55). He is not an easy person to gain an audience with, but characters with underworld contacts may be able to call in some favors and get a few minutes of his time.

Finn is a powerful individual who rules by fear, despite his diminutive stature. He has no patience with fools, and may feel it necessary to make an example of anyone who fails to treat him with sufficient respect. If the PCs let slip that they are working on a missing persons case involving a merchant's daughter, Finn will immediately demand to be cut in for at least half of any reward.

If the group enjoys roleplaying and interacting with NPCs, the GM can stretch this scene out into a major part of the play session, playing the role of Finn and making the players work

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to convince him to help them. His assistance will certainly come with a price, and many further adventures can be spun off from the fact that the PCs owe the crime lord a favor.

If the PCs convince Finn to help them, read the following text to the players:

*Finn leans back slightly in his chair, his hands folded in his lap and with a thoughtful expression on his face.*

*"A merchant's daughter, you say? Well I never. Otto, we don't know of anyone running a kidnap-for-ransom caper in town, do we, or any slavers interested in young ladies of quality?" The huge bodyguard who hovers at Finn's shoulder replies with a grunt and a shrug.*

*"No, I didn't think so," Finn continues. "So if that's what this is, then whoever's behind it neglected to speak to me first, which I find rather disappointing. Look into it for me, would you, Trask?" Another of Finn's men leaves the room without a word, and there are a few moments of silence as Finn considers the situation further.*

*"On the other hand, if the snake-heads are in on it, I'm not sure how much help I can be to you. I'm certainly not about to get involved in a war with them, so if that's what you've come to ask you might as well say good afternoon and be done with it. No, there's no profit in that at all.*

*"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let it be known that I'm interested in any, shall we say, unscheduled, disappearances, and in any bodies that turn up unaccounted for. After all, if something's going on, I should know about it.*

*"You were right to bring this to my attention. Keep in touch." And with that, you get the distinct impression that you have been dismissed.*

The following day, the PCs will receive a visit from one of Finn's henchmen, who will give them a note (Handout C) regarding a few unsolved disappearances.

## OTHER INFORMANTS

Depending on how the PCs were introduced to the adventure, they might also be able to get help from a patron organization. If they have the right contacts and ask the right questions in the right places, they might also be able to make contact with sources of information such as the God Squad (*Freeport*, pp. 33-4) and the Sewer Rats (*Freeport*, pp. 58-9).

## THE GOD SQUAD

As mentioned earlier, the God Squad is aware of a series of disappearances from Drac's End, which the Guard has overlooked. They will also be very interested in any evidence of renewed activity by the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. There have been four disappearances in the last week—five, counting Gwendolyn—all from the western side of Drac's End. No one has seen anything, and the victims seem to have vanished into thin air.

## THE SEWER RATS

The vigilantes of the Sewer Rats have not seen anything unusual in their underground patrols. However, they have *heard* things – odd noises from just around the corner from something too big to be a rat, soft sobbing accompanied by a metallic clinking and the occasional hiss—but every time they tried to track the sound to its source, there was nothing there.

Opinion is divided as to what is behind the strange sounds. Some of the more superstitious Sewer Rats have come to believe that parts of the sewer system are haunted—not surprising, they maintain, when you consider the number of murder victims who end up being dumped there—while others think they are dealing with a particularly elusive gang of slavers.

However, the Sewer Rats have not gone as far from their home base in the Eastern District as Drac's End, and know nothing of any goings-on there.

## THE YELLOW SIGN

Even if the PCs recognize the Yellow Sign, they will probably want to find more information on the Brotherhood and its activities before proceeding further. There are two obvious places to seek this information: the Freeport Institute and the Temple of the God of Knowledge.

## THE FREEPORT INSTITUTE

Anyone inquiring about the Yellow Sign at the Freeport Institute will be referred to Professor Wilmina Gertz at the Indecipherable Scroll. She thinks for a moment, and then pulls a book from a shelf.



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*“Was this the sign you saw?” she says, pointing at an illustration titled *Signum fulvum servorum Inloquitabili*. It is indeed the Yellow Sign that the PCs saw in the cave.*

*“Hmm,” says Professor Gertz, “This is the symbol of a secret society called the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. They were active in Freeport until recently, but so far as anyone knows they were destroyed. Are you sure the sign you saw was fresh? Perhaps you simply stumbled upon one of their disused hiding places that hasn’t been found yet.”*

When the PCs explain that the Yellow Sign they saw was freshly colored with yellow mud, she nods solemnly.

*“Well,” she says, “I think you should talk to Egil, the high priest at the Temple of the God of Knowledge. He fought the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign before, and he probably knows more about them than anyone in the city. So much so that there have been rumors that the Brotherhood was actually headquartered at the temple. They’re a little sensitive about that, so be careful what you say and how you say it.”*

## THE TEMPLE OF THE GOD OF KNOWLEDGE

As mentioned earlier, Egil is now the high priest of the temple, and no longer uses the title of “brother.” He is described on page 93 of the *Freeport* sourcebook. The serpent priest K’Stallo has dropped his masquerade as Thuron the high priest, and named Brother Egil as his successor before he left the temple on a “pilgrimage.”

Unless the PCs have previously met Egil (from having played the earlier *Freeport* adventures, for example), they will have to make an appointment to see him, as he is very busy running the temple and its library. In order to see him immediately, a successful Diplomacy check is required [DC 20, Clerics of the God of Knowledge gain +2/level].

High priest Egil looks surprised if the PCs mention the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. If the PCs have not identified the sign they saw in the cave, he gives them basic information on the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign (*Freeport*, p. 36, except that he believes that the Brotherhood was wiped out) and tells the story of Milton’s Folly.

*“Drac even fabricated evidence implicating this temple in his plot,” says Egil ruefully. “It wasn’t easy to re-establish our reputation.” He seems lost in his thoughts for a moment, then carries on:*

*“They used the serpent folk beneath the city as pawns,” he says. “The poor creatures hadn’t the wits to realize that they were serving a cause other than*

*their own. I have reason to believe, however, that steps are being taken to stop the serpent folk from being a threat to us surface-dwellers. This is pretty serious, though. If there are still some serpent folk who serve the Yellow Sign, and if the Brotherhood is active again in Freeport, they must be stopped before they destroy us all.”*

Brother Egil gives the PCs basic information on the serpent folk and the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, as presented in the *Freeport* sourcebook.

*“You might also ask around in the antiques trade,” he suggests. “There are a few people in the city who collect ancient Valossan artifacts—they might have more information. Be careful, though; if anyone is actually buying Valossan artifacts as a front for the serpent people, he’s not likely to admit it!”*

As the Player Characters prepare to leave, Egil calls after them.

*“I’d like to know everything you find out about the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign! Talk to on one else in the temple about it, but bring your information straight to me! I will make it worth your while!”*

## THE ANTIQUE TRAIL

There are several starting-points for inquiries in the antique trade.

### AN AMATEUR COLLECTOR

The PCs will probably have seen Matthias Brack’s small museum, and if they ask him about Valossan artifacts he will say that he gets most of his objects from the Society of Lobstermen (*Freeport*, pp. 43-45). He has a few contacts in the Society, and offers a standing reward for any ancient and unusual objects recovered from the seabed.

Brack also does some business with Ichibando and Maralei at the Seaside Market (*Freeport*, pp. 41-42), with Egil Horne at The Pawn’s Shop (*Freeport*, pp. 49-50), and with Argyle McGill’s Curio Shop (*Freeport*, pp. 79-80)—although he finds the latter’s goods overpriced.

### THE SOCIETY OF LOBSTERMEN

The Society is a close-mouthed organization under the best of circumstances, and will be reluctant to discuss individual purchasers. However, they will admit that the demand for recovered Valossan artifacts has gone up over the last few months. A successful Gather Information check will yield additional information: roll once for each item below.

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## LOBSTERMEN GLUES

- DC Information**
- 15 Someone else is collecting Valossan artifacts from the places where the Society normally goes to look for them. The location of the Society's collecting-grounds is a trade secret, and will never be revealed to a non-member. No one has seen the other party working the Society's sites, but it is clear that someone else is taking things.
- 20 The Society has done a lot of business with Matthias Brack, but he is not the only one who buys antiquities from them. There are others, far richer and more powerful, but their identities will not be revealed. There are also some buyers who take care to hide their identities.
- 25 A new player has entered the market recently—a soft-spoken man who calls himself Steel and speaks with a slight lisp. He is of medium height and build, with no distinguishing features.
- 30 Steel seems to have unlimited funds, but he is very selective in what he buys. However, if he wants something, money is no object—he has outbid some of the wealthiest collectors in the city.
- 35 Steel sometimes pays in cash, but more often he offers other antiquities in exchange, though never Valossan artifacts. When he does pay in cash, the coins are frequently old. He always takes his purchases with him, and never has them delivered.

The Society does not keep Valossan artifacts in stock, as they can find an immediate buyer for almost anything they recover. If the PCs express an interest in buying Valossan artifacts, though, they can leave an address where the Society can contact them in the event of a find. They hold secret auctions every week, and it happens that the next one is to be held this evening.

## THE SEASIDE MARKET

Ichibando and Maralei (both are merfolk) will gladly discuss their trade in antiquities from the seabed, though the term “Valossan” means nothing to them—they are not students of land-dweller history. They supply a lot of collectors in the city, and through them the merfolk have developed a profitable trade in objects they would have ignored as useless. Several prominent citizens are collectors, but most have asked that their names be kept confidential.

The merfolk are aware of the underwater sites worked by the Lobstermen, and avoid them. They come across various odds and ends in the course of their fishing and farming, and anyone who finds anything they think would be of interest to the land-dwellers brings it to Ichibando and Maralei, who sell it for a



share of the profits. Matthias Brack comes down to the market about once a month, accompanied by a couple of guards, and looks at what they have to offer. He has not bought anything recently.

The merfolk do not know the names of most of the people to whom they sell artifacts, but can identify them from a sufficiently detailed description. If the PCs ask about a man with a lisp, they will say that one such individual visited them about a week ago, looking for books written on metal plates. The merfolk have never found anything like this.

The merfolk have a few objects recovered from the seabed, which they will happily show the PCs. An Appraise check [DC 35] will reveal that they have nothing of Valossan origin at this time.

## THE PAWN'S SHOP

Egil does not discuss specific patrons under any circumstances—too many of his customers value their privacy and have very persuasive means of protecting it. If approached correctly, though, Egil will admit that he occasionally trades in Valossan artifacts, and that demand seems to have risen lately. If the PCs look like adventuring types, he will promise to give them the best price in town for Valossan artifacts, if they should recover any.

If the PCs inquire about buying Valossan artifacts, Egil will show them what he has in stock—currently, he only has three fragments of carved stone that look like they might have been part of a decoration on a building. He wants 50 gp for each piece, but can be haggled down to 30. A successful Appraise check [DC 35] will reveal that they are worth about 20 gp each.

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## ARGYLE MCGILL'S CURIO SHOP

McGill will not admit to dealing in Valossan artifacts unless the PCs convince him that they are serious collectors, with the money to pay for antiquities. He does not like having his time wasted by window-shoppers. If the PCs convince him that they are serious (and wealthy), he will ask them to return the following day, at which time he will have a small quantity of Valossan artifacts to show them. In order to win his trust, the PCs will have to buy at least one object, and be able to discuss Valossan antiquities knowledgeably [**8+ ranks in Knowledge (arcana, history, or Freeport)**] or a **DC 25 Bluff check will do the job**].

McGill will not discuss his customers, or the state of the market. If the PCs press him on such matters, he will politely but firmly ask them to leave, and will do no further business with them.

## WHO IS STEEL?

The mysterious Steel is, in fact, the serpent priest K'Stallo, *polymorphed* into a deliberately nondescript human shape so that he can conduct business in the city without attracting undue attention. He is looking for Valossan artifacts for his work restoring the Temple of Yig and introducing his congregation of degenerate serpent folk to their lost culture.

Because "Steel" has no known address, none of their informants will be able to tell the PCs where to find him. They can stake out any of the locations mentioned above and he will go there sooner or later, as he generally visits each one once a week. If the PCs attend an auction at the Society of Lobstermen, he will certainly be there.

"Steel" will be happy to discuss Valossan artifacts with the PCs, and will exhibit an extensive knowledge of them. Here is some sample dialogue for a conversation with him:

**Have you been collecting Valossan artifacts long?**

*For several years, yes.*

**Are they a good investment?**

*I couldn't tell you, to be honest. I collect for aesthetic and scholarly reasons, rather than investment. I hardly ever sell anything, and I pay little attention to market prices. If I want something, I simply pay whatever is asked for it.*

**You must have an impressive collection. Is there any chance we could see it?**

*I'm afraid that's impossible. My collection is not on general display.*

**(Shows him a Valossan object) What do you think of this?**

*It's very interesting, though I'm afraid the condition leaves a little to be desired. I'm sure you will be able to find a buyer for it, though I have no interest in it myself.*

**What kinds of artifacts are you particularly interested in?**

*I try to see whatever passes through the city, because one never knows what may turn up. The bulk of my collection, though, is artistic and cultural.*

**If we find anything Valossan, would you be interested?**

*Certainly. I'd be happy to look at anything Valossan that you recover.*

## OBSERVING STEEL

"Steel" is of medium height and build, with fairly short brown hair, brown eyes, and no distinguishing features. In fact, his face is so plain as to be almost instantly forgettable. He speaks with a slight lisp, and discusses Valossan art and culture with enthusiasm, but seems unworldly in all other matters. One might easily believe that he is a professor at the Institute, or a traveling scholar. Only *true seeing* spells or magic items with equivalent effects will reveal his true serpent-man form.

There are a few strange things about him, however, that should provide subtle clues to the PCs. A successful Spot check [**DC 25**] reveals that he rarely blinks, and where most people would move their eyes to look at something or someone, he sometimes turns his whole head. He is reluctant to shake hands or have any other physical contact with anyone, but any character who touches his skin will notice that it is somewhat cool—not exceptionally cold, but cooler than one might expect for a human in Freeport's climate. Whatever the weather, he is warmly dressed.

## FOLLOWING STEEL

K'Stallo takes precautions to make sure he is not followed back to his temple. If he suspects he is being shadowed, he will try to duck out of sight long enough to use *polymorph self* to change his appearance. His normal route is to head in the general direction of the Freeport Institute, and he enters the sewer system through the manhole cover that the PCs found near the Cluster.

Once in the sewers, he heads west down the crossway that lies under the merchant district, and uses a well-hidden secret door [**DC 30 Search check to locate, unless the PCs see it in use**] to enter a long passage leading to the Temple of Yig.

## THE TEMPLE OF YIG

**A** note to those who have played *Madness in Freeport*: in that adventure, it was said that the temple was destroyed. Although it did suffer serious structural damage in places, and the PCs would almost certainly have been killed if they had not escaped, the extent of the damage was less severe than it appeared. K'Stallo has patched up the walls in a few places and cleared the temple of fallen masonry, and is in the process of restoring it and rededicating it to Yig. A positive side effect of the previous damage was that the double doors at the bottom level were completely blocked by debris. K'Stallo has had his followers tunnel through the debris, which now gives access to the doors without having to worry about the temple being flooded.

The passage leads to the double doors at the bottom of the temple (Area 20 on the map). Somewhere in the passage, K'Stallo will drop his disguise and return to serpent-man form.

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Guarding the double doors are two serpent folk guards, armed with spears. As soon as they notice the PCs in the passage, they will go inside the temple, bar the doors, and raise the alarm.

## THE TEMPLE

Miraculously preserved from the cataclysm that destroyed Valossa, the temple is being restored by K'Stallo and his followers. He intends to make it the center of an underground Valossan settlement, where he can work to bring all the degenerate serpent folk back to the true path of Yig and restore the lost civilization.

### 1. ENTRANCE DOORS

These large and solid wooden doors are the main entrance to the temple. They are warped and water-stained in places, but the hinges are oiled and the doors themselves have been planed down recently so that they do not stick. The doors are opened inward by means of a huge bronze ring in the center of each.

### 2. THE PIT OF THE GREAT SERPENT

The only way to enter this room is to use the Great Statue of Yig (area 4).

This large room consists of five broad stone tiers, arranged like an amphitheater around a circular pit some 20 feet deep. The pit originally held a sacred serpent that was venerated as an earthly manifestation of Yig, but now it is empty. The walls of this room are hung with faded and tattered tapestries that have been crudely repaired, apparently by someone who was not at all skilled in needlework.

Although the room is scrupulously clean, the floor of the pit is heavily stained.

### 3. WAITING ROOM

The walls are hung with faded and poorly repaired tapestries like those in the Pit (area 2). A large rug, in similar condition, lies on the floor, upon which stands a marble pedestal holding a beautifully-carved snake made of jade. Around the room are various chairs and cushions.

This is the main reception room of the temple, where visitors of note were entertained. K'Stallo has done his best to make it comfortable and welcoming again, but with only limited success. The jade serpent on the pedestal is not magical, but would fetch 5,000 gp from a collector.

### 4. GREAT STATUE OF YIG

The statue is 15 feet tall, and depicts Yig in serpent form, coiled but poised to strike with his head raised and fangs bared. The statue's eyes are made of a translucent yellow stone, and lit from within—they cast a yellow light, picking out the elaborate carvings on the stone doors at the opposite end of the hallway.



A mysterious property of the yellow light is that it casts no shadows; it still shines on the doors even if there are people or some other obstruction in the way. Close examination [**Search check, DC 15**] reveals that the statue has been constructed with a pair of stone eyelids that can be moved down to cover the eyes. If the eyelids are closed, the double doors to the Pit (area 2) swing open. There is no other way to open these doors, which are constructed from massive blocks of stone and radiate magic.

### 5. HATCHERY (EL 8)

The walls of this room are lined with evenly spaced brackets, which once held glowing stones to heat the room. Now, it is as cold as the rest of the temple. In the middle of the floor is a small wooden altar to Yig, apparently of recent manufacture. There are two plain wooden bowls on the altar: one holds a number of small dried fish, and the other is half-full with fresh water. Inscribed in Valossan on the side of the altar are the words "For the unborn who perished here."

This room was once used to incubate the eggs of those serpent folk who were destined to become priests of Yig. When the temple fell, most of the eggs incubating here were destroyed, and K'Stallo has set up the altar to the memory of the unborn serpent folk who died in that disaster.

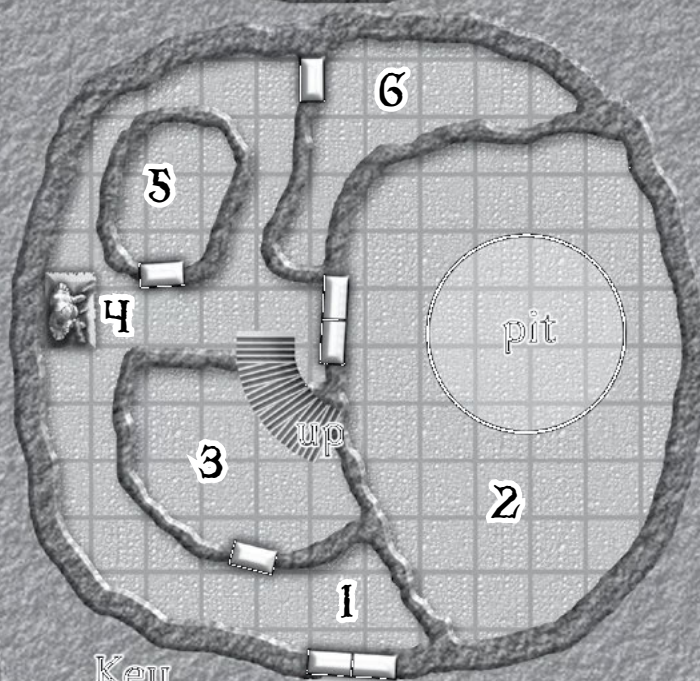
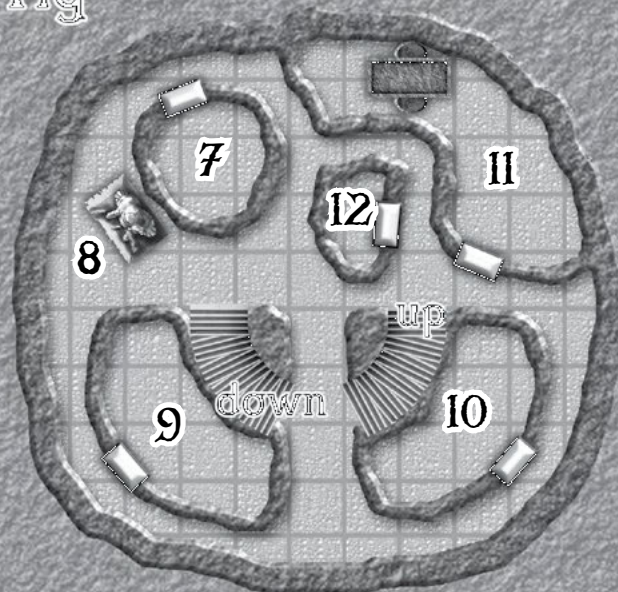
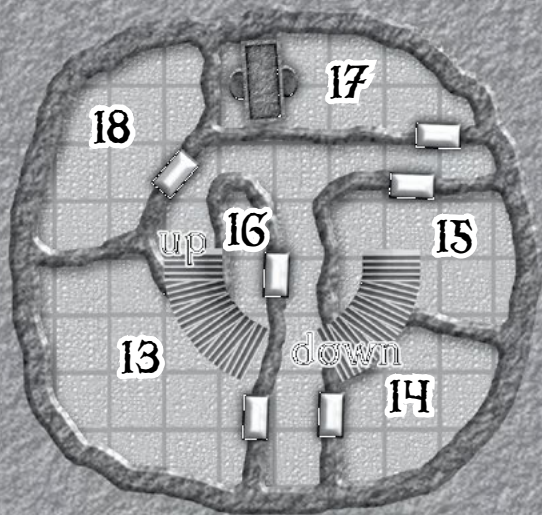
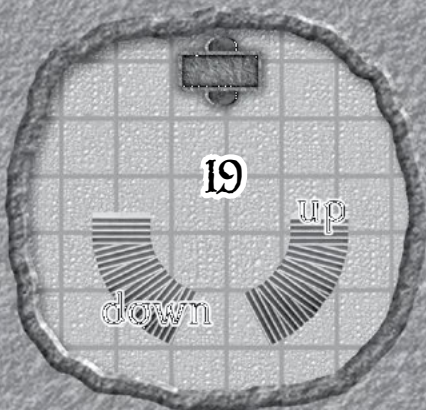
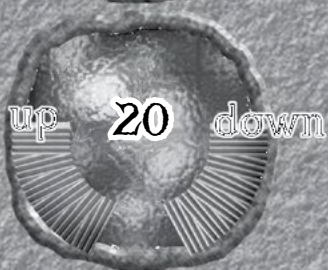
If the altar is disturbed or profaned in any way, the spirits of some of the unborn serpent folk will rise up from the floor and attack those responsible. They will not leave this room.

[**Spirit Serpent Infants (3 wraiths): hp 28, 32, 33. These wraiths are small, rather than medium-size (+1 to AC and +1 Melee vs. Medium Creatures) (See MM pp. 185-186).**]



- SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

# Sunken Temple of Yig



Key

-  altar
-  statue
-  door
-  stairs

One Square Equals 5 Feet

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## 6. SACRIFICIAL CHAMBER

This room was originally used to hold victims awaiting sacrifice on the high altar of Yig. It has been cleaned quite thoroughly, but the smell of death and decay is still noticeable above the odor of soap and the smell of the sweet herbs that are scattered around the room. Here and there, a dark stain can be seen on the floor or walls that scrubbing has not been able to remove.

Currently, the room is empty.

## 7. SERVANT'S QUARTERS

This room is currently used to store surplus furniture. It is piled high with cabinets, tables, chairs and other odds and ends. There is nothing of interest or value in here.

## 8. SHRINE TO YIG

A small statue of Yig stands in the passageway. Originally used for the private devotions of the senior priests who were quartered on this floor of the temple, it has been severely damaged in the past, and has been partially restored, with plain gray mortar filling in the gaps left by missing fragments. On a small altar before it stand two pots of paint (one yellow, one green) and a number of brushes. The faded paint on some parts of the statue has been touched up in places.

Searching the statue [DC 30] reveals a small secret compartment in the tail of the serpent. The compartment is empty.

## 9. HIGH PRIEST'S ROOM

This room is clean and comfortably furnished. Hanging on the wall (and covering a large crack) is a large rug bearing the faded image of a coiled serpent. Beneath the rug is a pile of silk cushions. At the other end of the room are a bookcase, a large wooden desk and a chair.

The bookcase holds a few books written in Valossan, which can only be read by a character who has learned the language. A rogue can use the Decipher Script skill to read the books [DC 25]. Most of the books are old and battered-looking—they are the journals of an ancient high priest of Yig named Alisstar, and tell of the rise of the worship of the Unspeakable One in ancient Valossa.

One book is newer and in better condition. It is also written in Valossan, and is the personal journal of K'Stallo. The most recent journal entries tell of his work to refurbish the temple and bring the degenerate serpent folk of Freeport's underside back into the Church of Yig. If the GM has access to the previous *Freeport* adventures, earlier entries recount the events of those adventures from K'Stallo's point of view.

The most recent entry expresses K'Stallo's concern about the apparent presence of another serpent priest among the degenerate serpent folk. A key passage reads as follows:

*Some of the congregation has heard this new priest speak, and from their reports of his sermons it seems that he follows the path of the Sskethvai. I have asked them to pass on my greetings to him, and*

*convey my invitation to meet for discussions on how best to serve Yig among these unfortunates, but so far I have received no reply.*

*I am concerned by his lack of response, and by the increasing violence of his sermons, as they are reported to me. Though there have been ill feelings between the Sskethvai and the Hiithkai in olden times, we have always been united by our devotion to Yig. Most of all, though, I am worried that his warlike path may lead those who dwell beneath the city into a danger they cannot survive. An ill-judged crusade against the surface-dwellers can only lead to defeat at this time, and dash any hopes of rebuilding from the ruins of great Valossa.*

*There are rumors that he has sent raiding-parties to the surface to capture subjects for sacrifice. I must find out if they are true. Certainly, the surface-dwellers are so accustomed to violence that they will scarcely notice a few disappearances, but if the raiders are seen and identified, the homes of the fallen ones cannot endure against the bands of bounty-hunting adventurers that will surely follow.*

*I must speak with this new priest, and find a way to serve both our paths without leading our people into danger.*

## 10. PRIEST'S ROOM

The door to this room has been damaged and repaired. There are three small holes—no bigger than mouse holes—in the floor at the foot of the door, and the bottom of the door is damaged as if it hit hard and repeatedly against three long, narrow objects in line with these holes. A small hole in the door at eye level—about two inches square—has been patched and painted over.

Inside, the room is furnished with a cot and a table. The walls have been recently coated with lime and painted. The room contains nothing of interest, and does not appear to have been occupied recently.

This was once the chamber of the deputy high priest of the temple, and K'Stallo has made it ready in case any other priest of Yig should come to visit the temple; although he has always believed himself to be the last of his kind, he has heard rumors of another serpent priest active beneath the city (actually the *polymorphed* Corwin Laxton—see p. 39), but so far his attempts to make contact have not succeeded.

## 11. MESS HALL

This room is furnished with a number of long, low stone tables. A shelf on the wall at one end holds fourteen bowls and fourteen spoons; in front of the shelf is a fire-pit with fresh embers in it. A large black iron cauldron is suspended over the fire-pit on a heavy iron chain, which hangs from an iron hook driven into the ceiling.

## 12. SCROLL ROOM

The walls of this room are riddled from floor to ceiling with tiny, square niches. In the middle of the room stands a plain

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## ACOLYTES OF YIG

**Degenerate Serpent People Clr2:** CR 2; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 2d8+2, hp 14; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., swim 10 ft.; AC 15 (+1 natural, +4 scale mail); Atk +1 melee (1d8, heavy mace; or 1d4+1, bite and poison); SA Poison (Ex; 1d6 temporary Wis, initial and secondary; Fort save avoids, DC 15); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (religion) +2; Toughness.

**Spells Prepared (4/2+1):** 0 - *cure minor wounds, detect poison, guidance, virtue*; 1 - *cure light wounds, detect secret doors\**, *sanctuary*.

**Domains:** Animal and Knowledge. \* Domain spell.

**Possessions:** Heavy mace, sacred book of Yig, holy symbol.

## LESSER ACOLYTES OF YIG

**Degenerate Serpent People Clr1:** CR 1; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8+1, hp 7,7, 5; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 11 (+1 natural); Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, short spear; or 1d4+1, bite and poison); SA Poison (Ex; 1d6 temporary Wis, initial and secondary; Fort save avoids, DC 15); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Diplomacy +1, Knowledge (religion) +2; Improved Initiative.

**Spells Prepared (3/1+1):** 0 - *cure minor wounds, guidance, virtue*; 1 - *calm animals\**, *magic weapon*.

**Domains:** Animal and Knowledge. \* Domain spell.

**Possessions:** Short spear, sacred book of Yig, holy symbol.

wooden table, with a cheap glass inkwell and quill on it. Also on the table is a stack—about two feet high—of what appears to be unrolled scrolls, interleaved with strips of linen. The scrolls have extensive water damage, and the linen is damp in places, as if the stack was arranged to dry out some waterlogged manuscripts. The scrolls are written in Valossan. Anyone who succeeds in reading the scrolls [**DC 25 Decipher Script check**] will find that they are a collection of historical and devotional documents of the cult of Yig; studying them for one week (which requires seven successful Decipher Script checks) will give a character a permanent +2 insight bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks regarding Yig and his church. A collector would pay up to 10,000 gp for such a collection of documents.

A dozen or so of the niches contain scrolls. They are made of ordinary parchment, such as might be purchased anywhere in Freeport. They are also written in Valossan, and anyone who succeeds in reading them will realize that they are copies of

some of the damaged scrolls. Because they are complete, they give no penalty to decipher script checks, but there are not enough of them to convey enough information for a rank in Knowledge (religion-Yig) skill. However, a collector might pay up to 250 gp for them, if it can be proven that a serpent priest wrote them. Otherwise, they will be dismissed as fakes.

## 13. STORAGE ROOM

The walls of this room are undecorated, where they can be seen. The room is full of chests, cabinets and cupboards, some of which show signs of water damage, although they are all dry now.

The room is used as a storage area for clerical vestments, ritual equipment, and the Valossan artifacts that K'Stallo has collected under the guise of Steel. The vestments—of which there are thirteen—only fit serpent folk, but are richly-embroidered and worth 50 gp each; they would easily be worth twice that if they were not water-damaged. Among the ritual equipment collected here are thirteen non-magical bronze amulets bearing the symbol of Yig (holy symbols), of Valossan manufacture and worth 2 gp each to a collector. There is also a miscellaneous array of Valossan artifacts, ranging from fragments of sculpture to cracked storage jars. Taken together, this collection might be worth 5,000 gp at auction.

## 14. INFIRMARY

Along the far wall is a stone table with a shelf above it holding various jars. Four rough wooden cots line the walls. The cots are unoccupied.

The jars on the shelf contain various medicines [**Heal check at DC 20 to identify, +2 synergy bonus for each rank in Profession (Herbalist)**]. They are labeled in Valossan. Any character with 6+ ranks in Heal can put together a first aid kit from these medicines that gives the user a +4 circumstance bonus to Heal checks; the kit will have 20 uses.

## 15. RAMP DOWN

Like the others, this room has been cleaned up. There is a scorched-looking patch roughly in the middle of the ramp.

## 16. INCENSE ROOM

The walls of this room are lined with stone shelves that hold various jars and urns. A brazier stands at the far end of the room, unlit.

Most of the jars and urns bear inscriptions in Valossan, naming various types of incense. Most of them are empty, as K'Stallo has not yet been able to replace the various types of incense that the temple used at its peak. Searching the room [**DC 15**] turns up 2d6 blocks of non-magical incense, worth 2 gp each.

## 17. PRAYER ROOM (EL 7)

The walls of this room are decorated with a mosaic of a huge serpent. Its tail begins near the door, and its body winds along the curved outside wall, ending in a fanged head at the far end of the room. A large crack runs down the wall at about the midsection of the serpent. The eyes of the mosaic serpent glow with a green

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## K'STALLO

**Male serpent person Clr6:** CR6; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8; hp 29; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft; AC 18 (+1 natural, +2 *amulet of the serpent*, +5 masterwork chainmail) or 21 (+1 natural, +2 *amulet of the serpent*, +4 *scales of the serpent*, +4 damaged scale; see *Gifts of the Serpent* for special rules); Atk +6 melee (1d8+1d6 electricity +1, +1 *shocking burst heavy mace*); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., polymorph self (Sp); AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +5, Hide +3 (-1 in armor), Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +9, Move Silently +3 (-1 in armor); Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Still Spell.

**Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4):** 0—*cure minor wounds* (x2), *detect poison*, *guidance*, *read magic*; 1—*command*, *cure light wounds*, *detect secret doors\**, *remove fear*, *sanctuary*; 2—*augury*, *cure moderate wounds*, *detect thoughts\** (x2), *enthrall*; 3—*dispel magic\**, *magic vestment*, *prayer*, *summon monster III*.

**Domains:** Knowledge and Magic. \*Domain spell.

**Possessions:** *Minor Cloak of Displacement*, +1 *shocking burst heavy mace*, sacred book of Yig, *Gifts of the Serpent* (see sidebar).



shortspears, and are unarmored. They will defend themselves if attacked, but will try to escape and go to the High Altar of Yig to warn K'Stallo.

light. In front of the head is a stone table, upon which rests a large book. Two acolytes are meditating in here—the PCs will automatically gain surprise when entering the room.

The book on the table is written entirely in Valossan and entitled *The Way of Yig*. The pages are made of sloughed serpent skin. It would be worth as much as 3,000 gp to a dealer in rare books.

The eyes of the mosaic serpent have a strangely hypnotic effect. Anyone staring at them for more than a few seconds must make a Will save [DC 15] or be dominated by the will of Yig. Affected PCs are instructed to sit down and stop fighting; they are entitled to a saving throw, as per the *dominate person* spell. The duration of the spell is 24 hours, and during this time, the affected character will refuse to leave the spot where he is sitting. If a PC under the spell is attacked, the spell will be broken (this is how the affected PC's party members can break the spell before the end of the its duration).

[The Eyes of Yig: CR 6; no attack roll required (*dominate person*); Will save (DC 15) negates; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 10).]

## 18. ACOLYTES' CHAMBERS (EL 1)

K'Stallo has begun to ordain the more intelligent of the degenerate serpent folk into the cult of Yig, and three junior clerics inhabit this room. Unless the alarm has been raised, they are sleeping on large pillows on the floor. They possess

## 19. THE HIGH ALTAR OF YIG (EL 6)

The water that fills the room above stops at the ceiling of this room, defying gravity. The walls of this room are carved with scenes of the worship of Yig, including sacrifices. Evenly spaced around the walls, every ten feet or so, are carved serpent heads, each holding a glowing light between their fangs. A couple have prominent cracks and show signs of repair. A ramp leads down on one side of the room, and up on the other.

Against the wall opposite the ramps is a huge marble altar carved with snakes. The floor is scattered with fine silk pillows (note to those who have played *Madness in Freeport*: the pillows are not disease-ridden, since K'Stallo has bought new pillows in Freeport as part of his work to refurbish the temple). The walls are carved with reliefs of Yig defending the serpent folk from all kinds of enemies, including various humanoid races.

Unless he has been encountered elsewhere in the temple, K'Stallo will be found in here, praying before the altar. He wears his full ceremonial regalia, which include the *Amulet of the Serpent* and the *Scales of the Serpent* (see page 28).

K'Stallo will only fight the PCs in order to protect his followers. He will rely on the invulnerability granted by the *scales of the serpent* until he is wounded; then he will fight defensively and use spells like *enthrall* to stop the PCs from attacking. He will talk to them if given the chance: see *Talking to K'Stallo* on the next page.

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## THE GIFTS OF THE SERPENT

When K'Stallo is encountered anywhere in the temple he will be in his ceremonial robes, and wearing the four *Gifts of the Serpent*, sacred relics of the cult of Yig. The effects of these magic items are as follows:

### THE AMULET OF THE SERPENT

The amulet was made at the order of an ancient Valossan king, as a coronation gift to his high priest. Since then, it has been handed down from one high priest of Yig to another. When worn, the amulet confers the following benefits: +2 to AC (similar to an *amulet of natural armor*) and a +4 luck saving throw bonus against poison (similar to a *periapt of proof against poison*).

*Caster Level:* 5<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *barkskin*, *neutralize poison*, creator's caster level must be at least 6th; *Market Price:* 12,000 gp; *Weight:* negligible.

### THE FANGS OF THE SERPENT

These fangs are made to fit over the natural fangs of a serpent person. They contain a small reservoir, which can be filled with the *Venom of the Serpent* to give the wearer a poisonous bite attack in addition to his normal attacks. They cannot be used by any other race.

*Caster Level:* 5<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *poison*; *Market Price:* 3,000 gp; *Weight:* negligible.

### THE VENOM OF THE SERPENT

This viscous yellowish liquid is a powerful poison. It is designed to be used with the *Fangs of the Serpent*, but can be used with any weapon that can be envenomed. The small glass vial holds 12 doses of the venom when full; when found, it will hold d4+2 doses.

*Type:* Injury DC 20; *Initial Damage:* 3d6 hp; *Secondary Damage:* 2d6 Con; *Price:* 2,000 gp/dose

### THE SCALES OF THE SERPENT

The *scales of the serpent* is a suit of green scale mail, which will only fit a serpent person. It is the most powerful of the four *Gifts of the Serpent*. A Valossan wearing the armor is protected from all forms of physical and magical attack. There is only one weakness - a scale on the right breast that was damaged during the creation of the artifact. Any attempt to hit the damaged scale adds +4 to the wearer's AC. Spells that can be targeted may be aimed at the damaged scale with the same penalty. Any spell that hits automatically (like *magic missile*) can hit the damaged scale as well - as long as the spell's caster intends to hit that spot.

*Caster Level:* 19<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *miracle*, *antimagic field*, *holy aura* (cast by a cleric of Yig); *Market Price:* 25,000 gp; *Weight:* 30 lb.

## 20. THE WATER-FILLED CHAMBER

This floor of the temple is filled with water. No other floors are flooded, and the water is magically contained within this one floor. This is a by-product of the miracle—performed personally by the serpent-god Yig—that allowed the temple to survive the cataclysm that destroyed the rest of Valossa.

A Swim check [DC 10] is required to pass through the chamber to the floors above or below. There is nothing of interest in the room, which appears to have been an antechamber of some sort. The walls are carved with scenes of the worship of Yig, including the sacrifice of various humanoid creatures by the serpent folk.

Against the wall opposite the ramp is a statue of a serpent person.

(Note to those who have played *Madness in Freeport*: K'Stallo is still working on a way to get the water out of this room. He has had the cupboards, chests and other contents removed, however.)

## 21. THE STATUE OF YIG

At the center of the room is a colossal statue of Yig in his snake form, some 15 feet high. Against the wall stands an altar, and the walls are carved with reliefs of serpent folk building and consecrating the temple. The statue, altar and reliefs are all chipped and damaged, but show signs of having been recently cleaned.

Opposite the altar, a ramp leads down into what looks like a pool of water. A great stone door leads out of the temple, into a small area filled with fallen rock. Players or GMs who have played *Madness in Freeport* may recognize this as the way to Black Dog's Caves. The rock fall is impassable and the caves are effectively sealed off from the temple.

## TALKING TO K'STALLO

As mentioned above, the high priest does not want a confrontation with the PCs, and if attacked he will initially make no attempt to defend himself, relying instead on the invulnerability he gains from the *scales of the serpent*. If the PCs have already encountered him in his human guise as Steel, the collector of antiquities, he will recognize them and surmise that they followed him; otherwise, he will want to know how they found the temple, and why they are attacking it.

Here is some sample dialogue for a conversation with K'Stallo:

### What are you doing here?

*Centuries ago, this place was a sacred temple to my people. I am restoring it, in the hopes to lead those unfortunates of my kind that dwell beneath your city back to the true path of Yig, the god of my people.*

### And would your restoration work extend as far as kidnapping people for sacrifice?

*No. I will not deny that humans and others were sacrificed here in the past, when the mighty Empire of Valossa ruled the world, but my people are weak and scattered, and you surface-dwellers are numerous and well armed. Such action would invite retribution, which we are ill prepared to withstand.*

## - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

**But the worship of Yig does involve sacrifices?**

*It does, but they need not be of sentient creatures. A few of my flock bring me rats they have caught, and for now these will suffice.*

**So why have you been secretly collecting Valossan artifacts?**

*The answer is simple. I am trying to recover what I can to assist with the rededication of this temple, and to preserve the artistic and cultural treasures of my ancestors as much as I can.*

**And the serpent folk beneath the city -you are their priest?**

*I hope to bring all of them back to the true path of Yig, though much remains to be done. At present, I have only a small congregation.*

**What about the rest? Do they serve the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign?**

*It is my hope that the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign has been destroyed. It is true, they used some of my people in their foul plans, but since the incident of the lighthouse they have not been heard from. My chief goal is to prevent them from regaining influence amongst my people, for that was what brought about the fall of Valossa.*

**It was?**

*So the ancient chronicles tell me. A group of heretics among the Valossans turned to the worship of the Unspeakable One, and the Valossan Empire was destroyed as a result. These islands where we stand are all that remain of a mighty continent that was destroyed in the ensuing cataclysm.*

**We have found evidence that the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign is active in the city, and serpent people may be involved.**

*Have you? I should very much like to see this evidence.*

**Are there other priests of Yig beneath the city?**

*I am training a small number of acolytes, but generations of savagery make my congregation poor students, and they learn slowly. I have heard of one other, but have never seen him. His name, I believe, is Ffashethh.*

**Do you think this other priest might be ordering his followers to kidnap people from the city?**

*He is from a more militant sect than myself. It is not inconceivable. If he is doing so, he is most unwise. You surface-dwellers would need little excuse to embark on a campaign of extermination against my people.*

**Where does this other priest operate?**

*I do not know. From what I have been told, he simply appears among the people and begins to preach, urging them to re-establish the lost glories of Valossa through force of arms. Surely he must know that they would be no match for the surface-dwellers.*

**How do we know you're telling the truth?**

*Egil, the high priest at the temple of your God of Knowledge, will vouch for my character.*



# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## OTHER QUESTIONS

The GM will have to improvise answers to any other questions leveled at K'Stallo, but there should be enough information in this book (especially the introduction to this adventure) and in the *Freeport* sourcebook to cover almost any eventuality. K'Stallo will be quite open and honest with the PCs, and will emphasize his intention of civilizing the degenerate serpent folk and leading them to live in peace with the surface-dwellers.

## A GUIDE TO THE SURFACE

When the questions begin to run dry, K'Stallo offers to take the PCs back to the surface. If they have made a good impression on him, he will give each of them one of the holy symbols of Yig from the storeroom (area 13).

*"Do not show these to any of your fellow surface-dwellers," he says, "for they have reason to be suspicious of my people and might conclude that you are in league with those of the Yellow Sign. However, any of my flock will recognize you as a friend by this token. Give them my name and they will conduct you here, or bring a message to me. Now, I have much to do. You will hear from me later."*

K'Stallo reaches inside his robes, pulls out a whistle, and blows into it. Humans, half-orcs and dwarves will hear nothing—the whistle is pitched above their range of hearing—but elves, half-elves and halflings will be able to hear it. After a few moments, one of the temple's acolytes enters and bows to K'Stallo, eyeing the PCs nervously. K'Stallo speaks to him in rapid Valossan (any character who can understand that language will be able to tell that the acolyte's name is Sseveth, and K'Stallo is instructing him to conduct them back to the surface), and then turns to the PCs.

*"Sseveth will lead you back to the city,"* he says. The acolyte bows to the PCs, and opens the door. The interview with K'Stallo is clearly over.

## RETURNING FROM THE TEMPLE

Leading them through secret tunnels, Sseveth returns the PCs to the city surprisingly quickly. Along the way, they run into occasional groups of serpent people, who look at them suspiciously, but seem to be comforted by the fact that an acolyte of Yig accompanies the surface-dwellers.

After one such encounter, with a group of about twenty serpent folk, Sseveth speaks to the PCs in heavily-accented common: "Ssurfasse dwellerss not welcome hhere. I keep you ssaife." Although his reptilian face does not permit a wide range of expression, the more perceptive PCs could almost swear that he is smirking.

Almost before they know it, Sseveth opens a doorway and the PCs find themselves alone in a stretch of Freeport's sewer system. Looking around, they will be very hard pressed to find the secret door, which Sseveth closed as soon as they passed through. A Search check against DC 35 will be needed to spot the outlines of a door, carefully hidden among the natural cracks and flaws of the stonework from which the sewer tunnels are built. There is no way to open the door from this side.

The PCs find themselves close to the point where they entered the sewers, via the manhole at the western extremity of Drac's End. They can return to the surface, and decide what to do next.

## A MESSAGE FROM FINN

The PCs may need to heal, rest and replace lost or broken equipment before doing anything else, and if this is the case, the GM should allow them the time to do so. When they are ready to resume the adventure, a street urchin runs up to one of the PCs, presses a tightly folded note into the character's hand, and runs off. The note is from Finn, and reads "One more from Drac's end. Go to the manhole. Finn."

Once they get to the manhole (if they do not need time to recover, skip the note mentioned above and continue the adventure from when they exit the sewers), the PCs will notice a blind beggar sitting at the foot of a wall nearby. He gestures to them urgently, and rattles his collecting bowl loudly as they approach, crying out for alms.

*"Blind Bellew's the name—Finn sent me,"* he says in a quiet voice, punctuating his conversation with loud calls for alms. *"I'm watching this manhole, since it's the only one close to where they all went missing. Not as blind as I look, you see."*

A successful Spot or Search check against DC 25 will enable the PCs to see that the ragged bandage over his eyes has a couple of strategically-placed areas that are thin enough to see through.

*"Ain't seen nuthin' yet,"* Blind Bellew continues, *"though it seems to be every couple of days that someone goes missing. I'll let you know if anything happens."*

With that, he loudly thanks the PCs for the alms that they may or may not have dropped in his bowl, and continues begging.

## RENEWING CONTACTS

If the PCs check in with any of their other contacts from earlier in the adventure, they will learn that nothing new has happened while they were in the temple.

## THE FRANTIC FATHER

Matthias Brack is beside himself with worry about his daughter, and if the PCs mention the involvement of the serpent people or the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, he can

# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

barely be restrained from hiring mercenaries and conducting a search-and-destroy sweep of the sewer system. The PCs will eventually be able to calm him down, but he is clearly afraid that his chances of seeing his daughter alive are diminishing with every hour that passes.

## THE DAUGHTERS OF THE GUILD

If the PCs speak with Nifur Roberts, she will confirm that she has heard nothing from Gwendolyn. She is wracked with guilt, and desperate for news. If the PCs tell her about the serpent people, she will turn white with horror, and ask them what they think the serpent people would do to their captives. The PCs would be well advised to answer tactfully, as she is on the verge of fainting.

## THE GUARDS

Edgar Malley and his guards at the Roberts house will be able to confirm that, so far as they know, Nifur has heard nothing about Gwendolyn since they last spoke with the PCs. They have heard a rumor of another disappearance from Drac's End, but do not know any details.

## THE HIGH PRIEST

Egil at the Temple of the God of Knowledge will be able to confirm that he is acquainted with the serpent-priest K'Stallo, and will listen with interest as the PCs tell of their experiences in the Temple of Yig.

*"I knew he was collecting Valossan artifacts, and it seemed like the best way to put you in touch with him." Egil says with a rueful smile. "It was quite a shock when I learned that he'd replaced the old High Priest some months ago. I'd worked under Thuron for years, and if anyone could have told the difference, you'd think it would be me. But then, a lot of strange things were happening about then."*

If the PCs do not know anything of the events surrounding Milton's Folly (*Freeport*, p. 11), Egil will be able to fill them in on what he knows.

*"All in all, though" he continues, "I think K'Stallo's all right. He certainly did me a favor—the last thing he did as Thuron was to name me his successor as High Priest and announce that he was off on a pilgrimage. I haven't heard from him since, though I've done some research on the serpent folk and the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign. Did you know they tried to make it look like their cult was based here, in this temple? After the dust settled, we had to do some very fast talking to avoid having the place pulled down and all of us burned as heretics. So K'Stallo's found an underground temple of Yig, you say, and he's working to restore it? That should give him a useful base in his crusade to tear the serpent folk away from the Yellow Sign."*

Egil gives the PCs two bundles of notes, written in his own tight but neat hand. One bundle contains the fruits of his research on the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, and the other covers the serpent folk and the Church of Yig. The notes contain all the information presented in the *Freeport* sourcebook on both subjects (pp. 36-37).

## THE MADNESS BELOW

In this phase of the adventure, the PCs get word from K'Stallo that Ffashethh, the renegade priest of Yig, is due to preach the next night at a well-known meeting place of the serpent folk. They have the opportunity to disguise themselves as serpent people and attend the meeting, but find themselves betrayed and surrounded by hundreds of hostile serpent folk.

## WORD FROM THE UNDERGROUND

The PCs get a note from K'Stallo with the first strong lead they have found in this case. The exact details of how they get the note will depend on the circumstances, but it will always be delivered at night and in secret. K'Stallo is too busy to deliver it himself, and none of his acolytes have the *polymorph self* ability of the civilized serpent folk, so they have to deliver the note without being seen. The PCs might return to their lodgings (or one of their regular haunts) to find a sealed note waiting for them, with no indication of how it got there and no-one who can say when or how it arrived. Alternatively, if the PCs are in a secluded part of town, an arrow might whiz by their heads and embed itself in a nearby doorframe with the note tied around its shaft. If they decide to get some sleep, one of the PCs may wake up with the note on his chest, neatly folded.

The note is Handout D. The exact details of how the PCs receive it are not important, but they should come away with the strong impression that the serpent folk are capable of being stealthier than they ever imagined, and could be almost anywhere in the city at any time.

## COSTUME PARTY

The next challenge facing the PCs is disguising themselves. His mind on other things, K'Stallo has overlooked the fact that they lack his inherent *polymorph self* ability, and they will have to figure out the best way to go about concealing their true identities.

## DISGUISE

The Disguise skill can make a humanoid creature look like a member of another race (with a -2 penalty), but since the physiology of the serpent people is so different from that of most humanoid races (in particular, the long neck and small head), that penalty is increased to -4 in this case.

## MAGIC

Of course, there are a few spells that will help. *Polymorph self* or *polymorph other* will enable a character to take on the exact form of a serpent person, but as a level 4 sorcerer/wizard spell it will probably be beyond the magical capabilities of any of the PCs. Potions and wands with the same effect



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will be useful, if the PCs have such things. If they have made friends with the merfolk traders Ichibando and Maralei at the Seaside Market (*Freeport*, pp. 41-42), they might be able to persuade Ichibando to let them use his *wand of polymorph self*—although if they have not planned well, they may find themselves having to walk all the way from the market to Magill’s warehouse in serpent folk form, which will almost certainly lead to trouble with the other denizens of the docks!

Lesser magic means can hide the PCs’ appearance without changing their shape. *Change self* is not powerful enough to disguise a PC convincingly as a serpent person, again because of the difference in head and neck shape. However, when combined with a physical disguise, it will give a +10 bonus to the Disguise check. *Alter self* will allow a character to assume the appearance of a serpent person, but for a more limited time than *polymorph self*.

### INVISIBILITY

Spells and magic items that cause invisibility might offer an easier solution than those that alter the subject’s appearance, but they certainly more risky. Invisibility does nothing to block noise, and the sewers and caves through which the PCs will be traveling are empty, echoing places (-2 penalty to Move Silently checks). In addition, the PCs will have to take care that they do not bump into anyone—or, perhaps more importantly, that no one bumps into *them*—since they will look like an empty space in the crowded meeting!

### BUYING MAGIC

In Freeport, most things are for sale if the price is right, and magic is no exception. PCs who do not mind spending money

will be able to get themselves *polymorphed* or disguised in various other ways. While it looks easy at first glance, this course is fraught with all sorts of difficulties.

As mentioned above, PCs who walk about Freeport looking like serpent folk are going to attract trouble. Although the presence of the serpent folk beneath the city is generally kept quiet to avoid a panic, there are enough people who know or have heard rumors—from seasoned members of the Sea Lord’s Guard to NPC adventurers—to ensure that the PCs will have a very hard time if they are spotted on the surface in serpent folk form. Even NPCs who have never seen a serpent person and know nothing of their presence beneath the city will react negatively to magically-disguised PCs, just on the basis of their monstrous appearance.

Even if the PCs can reach the rendezvous on the docks without attracting trouble, they will not be able to avoid piquing the curiosity of whomever they hire to disguise them. Unless they go to the trouble of explaining the entire situation to the spell caster and swearing him or her to silence—and the GM should remember that a hired spell caster is likely to be of a higher level than the PCs, and therefore harder to influence with *charm* spells and other magical compulsions—they could be in trouble.

The nature of the trouble can vary. A very law-abiding spell caster might conclude that they are up to no good, and perhaps intend to commit some crime and blame it on the serpent people, and report them to the Guard. A more unscrupulous individual might come to the same conclusion, but decide to blackmail them for a share in the proceeds of this nonexistent crime. As a general rule, purchasing magic items will arouse less suspicion than buying the casting of a spell, although it will be considerably more expensive.

Influential contacts can be useful here. People of the stature of Matthias Brack and Nifur Roberts may well be able to lay their hands on a suitably powerful spell caster who will ask no questions, but they themselves will need to be convinced that this will help the PCs get Gwendolyn back.

### REMOTE VIEWING

Some spells and magical effects (*clairaudience/clairvoyance, scrying, greater scrying, vision, crystal ball*) could allow the PCs to observe the meeting without subjecting themselves to the risks of actually being there. Of course, this means that they cannot take any action—to free sacrificial victims, for example—and there is always the danger that the renegade snake-priest will sense that scrying is taking place. Additionally, unless the scrying character understands the corrupted pidgin-Valossan spoken by the degenerate serpent people, he or she will have no idea of what is being said, so there will be a need for further spells to be cast, such as *tongues* or *comprehend languages* (these spells will be necessary regardless of which method the PCs decide to use if none of them speak Valossan, which is highly likely).

An additional consideration is that *clairaudience* and *clairvoyance* require the caster to be familiar with the location, while *scrying* and *greater scrying* require the caster to know the target—simply trying to scry “a crowd of serpent people” could produce a vision of some other place where serpent

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people happen to have gathered, or it could have no effect at all. The *vision* spell does not have this restriction, but since it is a 7<sup>th</sup> level spell it will be beyond the reach of PCs of an appropriate level for this adventure. On the other hand, a spell caster who manages to sneak into the meeting undetected and get a look at the renegade serpent-priest will be able to scry him thereafter. Of course, getting out undetected will be at least as difficult as getting in undetected...

## ETHEREAL TRAVEL

*Ethereal jaunt* and *ethereality* spells are far beyond the capabilities of the level of characters that this adventure is designed for, although there is a possibility that the PCs may have some magical item, scroll, or other means of ethereal travel at their disposal.

Ethereal travel will allow the PCs to see and hear all that is said, while remaining unseen—and insubstantial as well, which solves a lot of the problems associated with invisibility. As with scrying, though, it means that the PCs cannot take any action against creatures on the prime material plane (they can only interact with other ethereal creatures). A kind GM will let the ethereal travel solve all the PCs' difficulties, if they have some means to achieve it; a cruel one might note that there are many creatures known to lurk on the ethereal plane, and some of them might be attracted to a meeting of this sort.

## OTHER SOLUTIONS

The purpose of this part of the adventure is to force the players to come up with creative solutions, and there is almost no limit to the ingenuity that clever players can display in situations like this. Inevitably, some players may have an idea that is not covered above. In such cases, the GM will have to assess the plan on its merits, and guide the adventure accordingly.

## THE RENDEZVOUS

If the PCs are behind Magill's Warehouse one hour after sunset as arranged, they will be kept waiting for about five minutes. A hidden door in the back of the warehouse (no more than a few loose boards in the building's wall) will then open and they will see the shadowed figure of a serpent person beckoning to them.

Inside the warehouse, their guide (a cousin of Sseventh's, since the acolyte himself is too well-known as a follower of K'Stallo) gives them a little time to prepare any spells, equipment, or disguises. Then, they are led through a trapdoor concealed beneath a pile of crates, into a tunnel that looks very similar to the one by which Sseventh led them back to the city from the Temple of Yig. As they walk through the tunnels, they encounter various groups of serpent people, all headed in the same direction. Each encounter is a chance to be discovered, so the PCs must be on their guard at all times.

## THE MEETING PLACE

After traveling through the tunnels for about five minutes, the PCs come to a large open cavern. Tunnels lead into it from all directions, and the floor is bowl-shaped, like an amphitheater would be if it went up in a slope rather than in steps.

The chamber is crowded with degenerate serpent people, talking among themselves in their native, sibilant tongue and obviously waiting for the meeting to start. If the PCs are here in disguise (as opposed to invisible or observing from a distance), the GM might like to make the players sweat a little by having a neighboring group of serpent people try to strike up a conversation. They speak in a pidgin form of Valossan, requiring the appropriate Speak Language skill or some magic like *tongues* to understand and respond.

If any of the PCs decides to show the medallion that K'Stallo gave them in order to reassure suspicious serpent folk, their guide will try to stop them. The medallion marks them as friendly with the Hitthkai, the more moderate faction of the cult of Yig to which K'Stallo belongs. To the degenerate serpent folk at the meeting, it will mean nothing—or even worse, it will mark them as enemies of the warlike Sskethvai faction to which the more devout serpent folk at the meeting believe they belong.

After a few minutes, the assembled crowd becomes quiet, and the priest takes the floor.

## THE SERMON OF HATE

Even those characters that do not understand his words cannot fail to grasp the emotion of the priest's message—it is one of hatred, pure and simple. He whips the crowd into a frenzy with his preaching.

Characters with Speak Language (Valossan) or an appropriate magic spell can understand the sermon. A Knowledge (arcana) check [DC 25] allows a character to pick out a few phrases and understand the gist of the speech. Essentially, the priest is saying that the manifest destiny of the serpent people is to rule the world as they did in the days of the Valossan Empire, and to enslave all other races in the name of Yig. He attributes the cataclysm that brought about the collapse of the Valossan Empire to Yig's displeasure at the fact that the Valossans had become soft and complacent; they were content with their mighty empire, and no longer strove to bring the whole of the world under his rule. The cataclysm, and the current condition of the serpent folk—forced to hide underground and hunted by the surface dwellers—is Yig's punishment for the Valossans' failure to complete their mission of world conquest. In order to regain their former greatness, the serpent people must resume the ancient practice of sacrifice—and Yig desires nothing more than the blood of the hated surface-dwellers.

The priest gestures, and armed guards parade a miserable chain of prisoners before the crowd, which is now howling for blood. There are four men and two women, all human. One of the women is wearing expensive men's clothing, now somewhat torn and begrimed, and if the PCs have seen Brack's miniature of Gwendolyn, they will be able to recognize her. All the prisoners are clearly terrified.

The priest announces that these surface-dwellers will be put to death in this place at midnight on the following night, as a sacrifice to Yig the Destroyer. Their blood, he says, will be the first to be spilled in the great war of liberation that the serpent folk will wage until Freeport—and with it, the whole of the Serpent's Teeth—is once again in the hands of the serpent

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people. Once the remnants of ancient Valossa are recovered, he promises, the crusade will be spread to all corners of the world, until the new Valossan Empire rules all and the warm-bloods are put in their proper place—as slaves to the serpent folk, and sacrifices to great Yig.

### THE PRISONERS

It is clearly impossible to free the prisoners in the midst of this frenzied mob, which numbers several hundred degenerate serpent folk. Impetuous or overconfident adventurers might try, but they will almost certainly die in the attempt, or be added to the chain of prisoners and be imprisoned for sacrifice the following night. Otherwise, the PCs can do nothing but watch as the prisoners are led away down one of the tunnels. Slowly, the crowd disperses.

The PCs' serpent guide will want to leave as soon as the meeting is over, and report back to K'Stallo. The news of an impending ritual of sacrifice is disturbing, and Ffashethh's call for a crusade to destroy and enslave all other races will confirm K'Stallo's worst fears.

Invisible or ethereal characters can follow the prisoners without being detected, find out where they are being held, and assess the strength of the defenses around them. Disguised characters can try to follow, but will quickly lose sight of the prisoners among the milling crowds. Now that they have caught sight of Gwendolyn and the other prisoners, they at least know that she is alive, and will remain so until the following night. They can try scrying to find out where the prisoners are being kept, or bring in reinforcements from the city. At least they know which exit the prisoners were taken down.

### PREPARING THE RESCUE

The PCs have about 24 hours from the end of the meeting to plan and carry out a rescue. They have various options, and much will depend on what they decide to do.

### A SURGICAL STRIKE

The PCs may decide to sneak back into the serpent people's tunnel system and somehow spirit the prisoners away. A lot will depend upon how they carry out this plan—the notes on disguise and invisibility in the previous section apply equally to this situation. The area is not as crowded as it was during the meeting (see below for map key), but neither is it so deserted that a party of adventurers will be able to simply waltz in without raising any kind of alarm. Depending on how the expedition to free the prisoners is handled, the PCs could end up captured themselves, driven off by the guards, or rushing the prisoners through the tunnels with a mob of degenerate serpent people on their heels.

### REINFORCEMENTS

Given the overwhelming number of degenerate serpent people they saw at the meeting, some players may opt for a military-style solution, and either try to alert the Sea Lord's Guard to the situation or persuade Brack to fund the hiring of a sizeable mercenary force.

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The Sea Lord's Guard is used to dealing with wildly exaggerated reports of serpent people beneath the city, and it will take the PCs some time to convince anyone at the Fortress of Justice that they actually saw what they saw, let alone to reach someone of a high enough rank to authorize a large-scale operation. Even those Guard officials who believe the PCs will be unwilling to take any action. To them, the serpent people and other underground problems are best left alone, or given to expendable groups of adventurers—like the PCs—to deal with.

If the PCs try to raise support from the Halfling Benevolent Association, they will find that Finn takes much the same attitude as the Sea Lord's Guard. As he has already said, he has no intention of getting involved in a war against the serpent people, as long as they do not encroach on his turf above ground. There will be no use telling him about the fate that awaits the unfortunate prisoners in an attempt to appeal to his conscience—while it is not as completely nonexistent as some people maintain, Finn's conscience is highly selective. While he will claim to deplore the situation, he will point out that six dead people is actually a fairly quiet night by Freeport standards; the prisoners are too few, and the serpent people too many, for a large-scale raid to be either profitable or likely to succeed.

Brack may be more open to suggestions involving hired mercenaries, although he will be worried about an open attack putting the prisoners at risk of being slain by their captors before they can be rescued. He would much prefer for his daughter to be free and safe before any heavy fighting begins.

K'Stallo will definitely be unwilling to risk any of his followers in an attack on the degenerate serpent people. As a member of the peaceful, scholarly Hitthkai faction, violence—especially violence against other followers of Yig, however alien their doctrine—is simply not an option. He may be persuaded to accompany the PCs on a stealthier expedition, however, provided they promise to keep the killing to a minimum; he regards the degenerate serpent people as his flock, even those who have not yet been brought to the true path of Yig. He will not lend the PCs any of the Gifts of the Serpent (see p. 28), as they are sacred treasures, and may only be worn by a high-ranking priest of Yig.

## THE MEETING AREA

### ARENA

The arena is bowl-shaped, and large enough to hold several hundred people at a time. Passages lead out in all directions, connecting with the greater network of tunnels created beneath the city by the serpent people. These tunnels are not mapped in detail here; the GM can use them to expand the adventure if desired.

At the time appointed for the sacrifice, the degenerate serpent people will congregate here. At any other time, there may be 2d6 individuals passing through in ones and twos on their way to other parts of their subterranean city. They will not attack intruders, but each individual or group will run to the nearest exit to raise the alarm; unless they are prevented from doing so, reinforcements will start to arrive d6+5 minutes later, at the

## CULT BERSERKER

**Degenerate Serpent Person Bbn6:** CR 6; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 6d12+12, hp 56; Init +5 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 19 (+1 natural, +1 Dex, +2 large shield, +5 chainmail); Atk +8/+3 melee (1d8+3, +1 *unholy warhammer*; or 1d4+1, bite and poison), +7 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA Poison (Ex; 1d6 temporary Wis, initial and secondary; Fort save avoids, DC 15), rage (2/day), uncanny doge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +6, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Listen +3; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

**Possessions:** +1 *unholy warhammer*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

## ELITE GUARDS

**Degenerate Serpent People War5:** CR 4; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 5d8+5, hp 30, 30, 28, 27, 24; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., swim 10 ft.; AC 17 (+1 natural, +2 large shield, +4 scale mail); Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, shortspear; or 1d4+1, bite and poison), +5 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA Poison (Ex; 1d6 temporary Wis, initial and secondary; Fort save avoids, DC 15); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +4; Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

**Possessions:** shortspear, 3 javelins.

rate of 2d6 degenerate serpent people (identical to the guards below) per round.

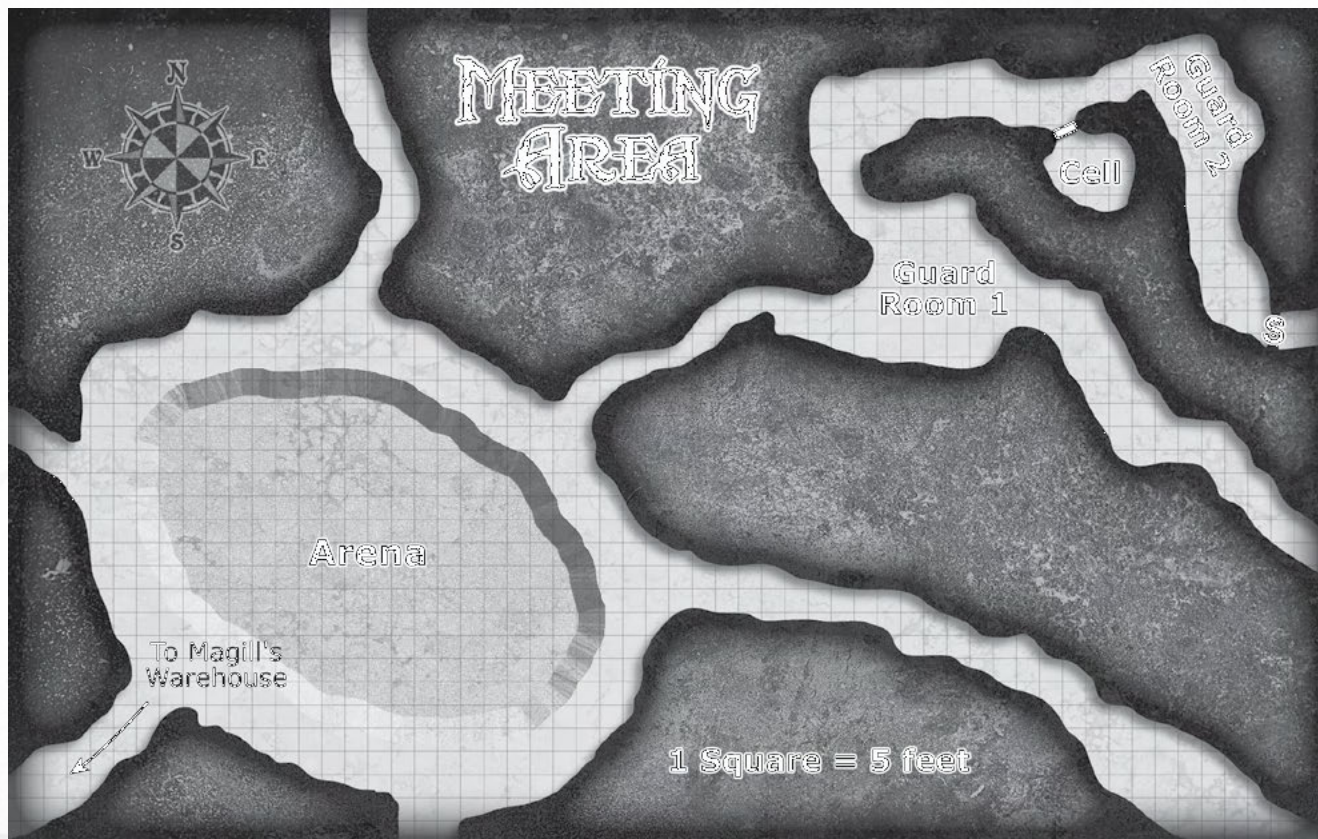
## GUARD ROOM 1 (EL 9)

Six degenerate serpent people are on duty here at all times, one cult berserker and five elite guards. The area to the north of the guardroom is off-limits to most of the serpent people, being the domain of Ffashethh. Laxton has placed his best fighters here, to safeguard the prisoners he needs for his sacrifice.

## GELL

The six prisoners are crammed together in this small area, behind a stout wooden door that is barred from the outside [**6 humans com1, hp 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 3**]. They are chained together with strong iron chains [**DC 25 to break by force, DC 20 to open the locks**]. They are all fit enough to walk, but can only run at half normal running speed, and they are in no condition to fight, even if healed and given weapons. The PCs will have to do all the work of getting them to freedom.

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### GUARD ROOM 2 (EL 9)

This room guards the other approach to the cell, and contains one cult berserker and five elite guards, armed and equipped identically to those in Guard Room 1.

### SECRET DOOR

This secret door [DC 20 to find] leads to a narrow, winding passage that rises steeply, eventually coming out in the Eastern District of Freeport. This is the entrance that Laxton uses in his guise as Ffashethh the militant serpent priest. See *Laxton's Base* below.

## THE SACRIFICE

Unless the prisoners have been freed, the ritual takes place at midnight as Laxton/Ffashethh promised. Although the assembled multitude of degenerate serpent people believe that it will be a sacrifice to Yig under the harsh traditions of the Sskethvai, Laxton instead will be conducting a sacrifice to the Unspeakable One; his congregation are not sufficiently learned in either religion to tell the difference.

The following account of and timeline for the ritual assumes that nothing takes place to interrupt it. The GM will have to modify events in response to whatever actions the PCs may take.

Once the degenerate serpent people are assembled, Laxton takes the floor in his guise as Ffashethh and preaches a short

sermon on the rebirth of the Valossan Empire and the return to Father Yig of his lost children, noting that this ritual is the first step in that process. The prisoners (including any PCs who have been captured) are brought out and paraded before the crowd, and then the ritual begins.

## THE RITUAL

First, Laxton draws a little blood (less than 1 hp) from six prospective acolytes, and sprinkles it in a circle on the floor of the arena, reciting a made-up prayer of consecration to Yig. The acolytes stand around the circle, each holding a spear, as Laxton goes around them one by one and draws an ancient Valossan symbol (actually a glyph meaning “fool”; since the degenerate serpent folk cannot read Valossan, Laxton is making this joke at their expense) on the chest of each with the remaining blood. They—and the other degenerate serpent folk watching—now believe that these six have been anointed as acolytes in the cult of Yig the Destroyer.

After this, the prisoners are led into the circle. They are left in their chains, and one of the “acolytes” holds each prisoner firmly by the shoulders, facing inward. Entering the circle, Laxton begins to chant. Characters with the appropriate skill or spell quickly realize that the chant is not in the Valossan language; a Knowledge (arcana) check [DC 25] will allow any character to realize that the chant contains several references to the Unspeakable One, and none at all to Yig. As the chant grows in intensity, the priest draws a long knife, and stands in the center of the circle with the knife raised high, his head thrown back and his eyes closed. He remains like this for almost a minute, still chanting.

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Finally, he stabs each of the victims in turn, inflicting a mortal wound to each. The victims are allowed to fall to the floor, where they lie bleeding to death. Each is reduced to -1 hit point, and they each lose another hit point each round unless they receive help.

A great cry goes up from the crowd as the victims are sacrificed. Laxton's chant ends when the last one falls. All is still for a few seconds, though the stillness seems to stretch out for much longer.

## THE UNSPEAKABLE ONE

Then, the pooling blood on the floor of the arena begins to bubble—slowly at first, but within a few seconds it is bubbling like the boiling mud near a volcano, creating fist-sized bubbles that spatter blood over the first rank of onlookers. The red steam that rises from the boiling blood begins to coalesce, taking shape over the heads of the congregation. They prostrate themselves before what they think is a manifestation of their ancestral god Yig—but is in fact a mere appendage of the Unspeakable One.

A soundless bolt of black lightning blasts forth from the cloud of roiling red mist, and at least a dozen onlookers are killed. Panic breaks out, with the degenerate serpent people choking all the exits to the chamber in the attempt to escape. The lightning bolts continue, striking the struggling mass of serpent people again and again. Many more are killed from being trampled underfoot in the rush to the exits.

Any PCs in the arena have a 10% chance each round of being hit by one of the lightning bolts, which causes 3d6 damage [DC 15 Ref save for half damage]. In addition, each PC in the arena must make a successful Dex check [DC 20] each round or suffer 1d4 damage from the shoving, fleeing crowd. After the first round the center of the arena is clear (apart from the appendage of the Unspeakable One), so PCs standing there are in no danger of being trampled.

It takes each character 20-Dex rounds to escape through the seething mass; any non-magical disguises are destroyed in the process, but the serpent folk are only thinking of getting away, and must make a Will saving roll against DC 25 to overcome their panic sufficiently to attack any PCs.

## ATTACKING THE UNSPEAKABLE ONE

Particularly brave, devout or foolish characters may decide to attack the misty manifestation of the Unspeakable One. The cloud counts as a large chaotic evil outsider with AC 20 and 99 hp, and a magic spell or weapon of +1 or greater is required to damage it. It has a base SR of 10 against any attempts to dispel, dismiss, or banish it. Holy, Lawful, and Bane weapons with chaotic or evil outsiders as their designated foe have their normal effects.

The manifestation will not respond in any way to attackers (although they have the same random chance as everyone else of being struck by its lightning bolts each round), and will not alter its behavior until it is destroyed. When its last hit point is gone, the cloud of red mist collapses in on itself and disappears.

## THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS

If the manifestation of the Unspeakable One is not stopped, it will grow in strength as it continues to take the lives of those still in the arena. Every five minutes, it grows one size category, its AC improves by 1d4 and its hp increase by 1d10. Within an hour, it has spread its amorphous bulk into all of the tunnels surrounding the arena, and is progressively feeding on the degenerate serpent people. Within two hours, it breaks out of the tunnels and begins attacking the city, starting with the Eastern District and the adjoining docks.

If things go this far, the GM will have to improvise the ways in which Freeport's citizens defend themselves and their homes. Once the Sea Lord's Guard become involved, the siege cannons of the Old City (*Freeport*, p. 74) will help turn the tide against the horror (if they are still the working models—see the adventure *Fair Salvage*, on pp. 63-71 of this book), and all the high-level spell casters in residence will come to the defense of the city.

Eventually, the abomination should be destroyed—although parts of Freeport may be ruined in the process.

## THE FALSE PRIEST

As devoted as he might be to the madness of the Unspeakable One, Laxton is not about to stay behind and be blasted by lightning or trampled by degenerate serpent people. Almost as soon as the cloud begins to form above the seething pool of blood, Laxton realizes that he has summoned a more powerful manifestation of the Unspeakable One than he expected, and knows that it will feed upon all life it can find until it is destroyed or banished. He heads for safety as fast as he can.

## THE GADALRY

Although the consequences will be far from pleasant, the PCs could still get away with their lives—and perhaps even rescue Gwendolyn and the other prisoners—even if the ritual goes ahead. All it takes is a heroic dash to the prisoners' side while the serpent people are fleeing the manifestation of the Unspeakable One, some timely healing to stop them from bleeding to death, and a swift exit from the tunnels.

If they fail to rescue Gwendolyn, they will not be given the reward that her father advertised, but apart from some wounds of varying severity—all in a day's work for a group of adventurers—they should at least be able to escape.

It is quite possible, however, that a moment of bad judgment or a few unlucky dice rolls could get the PCs into deep trouble. In such circumstances, the GM will have to make a decision on whether or not they deserve to be wiped out, and what effect this would have on the campaign, and the gaming group in general. If the GM decides that the PCs need and deserve some extra help, here are a few possibilities:

## HERESY'S REWARD

Although he abandoned the serpent people and allowed the destruction of Valossa, Yig has never forgotten them. Perhaps K'Stallo's devout attempts to re-establish the worship of

## - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

Yig beneath the city has brought them back to his attention. Whatever the case, Yig is aware that his teachings to the Sskethvai are being subverted to serve the ends of the Unspeakable One, and he is none too pleased about it.

If it looks as though the PCs are not going to survive the stampeding serpent people and the lightning bolts of the Unspeakable One, Yig can be used as a literal *deus ex machina* to give them a chance. The arena and the surrounding area is rocked by a massive earthquake; some tunnels collapse, and many are killed, but as a part of the arena wall falls in, an immense snake—a manifestation of Yig himself—enters, and does battle with the manifestation of the Unspeakable One. It is able to wrap its coils around the red smoke of the Unspeakable One as if it was solid, and the Unspeakable One will concentrate all its lightning attacks on the avatar of Yig until one or the other is destroyed.

The avatar of Yig has the same statistics as a great gold dragon (MM pp. 74-75), but it cannot fly or cast spells and it has no breath weapon. Its only attacks are its bite (2d8+12) and its coils (Improved Grab, 2d8+12 constriction). Like the manifestation of the Unspeakable One, the avatar of Yig is immune to non-magical attacks.

### THE HITTHKAI REVEALED

If K'Stallo has accompanied the PCs to the ritual, he will wear and use all of the Gifts of the Serpent (see p. 28), and will take full advantage of the partial invulnerability conferred by the *scales of the serpent* as he tries to disrupt the ritual. A devout follower of Yig, he could overlook the doctrinal differences between the Sskethvai and his own sect, the Hitthkai—but to see the word of Yig perverted to serve the ends of the

Unspeakable One is something he cannot bear, despite his peaceful nature.

A moment before the sacrifice takes place, K'Stallo throws off the disguise he used to enter the meeting (probably the use of his *polymorph self* ability to make himself look like some other serpent person), and loudly denounces the teachings of Laxton/Ffashethh as heresy. Then, he launches himself into the attack, with the sole intention of defeating the rival priest. Although he forbade his followers to follow him, it turns out that quite a few of them disregarded his instructions, and at various places throughout the crowd, the true followers of Yig reveal themselves.

The crowd does not know what to make of this interruption, or of the spectacle of two respected priests of Yig (for all the serpent folk have heard of K'Stallo and the works of charity he has performed among their people) fighting hand-to-hand. For a minute or so, nothing happens, and then a full-fledged riot breaks out as some of the crowd back one sect and some the other. While this is still a dangerous situation, it is nowhere near as deadly as the manifestation of the Unspeakable One or the stampede that would accompany it.

### THE HITTHKAI TO THE RESCUE

If K'Stallo has not accompanied the PCs, he and his followers (and whatever extra support they can summon up from among the serpent people who decided not to attend the meeting) can arrive at a vital moment and disrupt the ritual (as above), giving the PCs a diversion as they try to rescue the prisoners and escape.

### A FEW GOOD MEN

Edgar Malley and his fellow guards from the Roberts house have extensive contacts throughout the city, and could collect a sizeable and battle-hardened force of off-duty guards, unemployed mercenaries and general ne'er-do-wells in the event of an emergency. The rescue of Gwendolyn Brack could constitute just such an emergency, since the guards failed to notice that she went missing as the Daughters of the Guild made their drunken way through Drac's End. When he returns from the sea, Captain Roberts is not likely to look kindly on such dereliction of duty, especially since his own daughter was among the group and—in his eyes at least—it might as easily have been Nifur who was captured by the serpent people.

What this force lacks in numbers, it will more than make up in ability, being composed entirely of Warriors and Fighters of levels 2-5. If things look like they're coming to a direct-armed confrontation with the crowd of serpent people at the ritual, five or six-dozen good men could make all the difference. Of course, a large proportion of this force will expect to be paid for their trouble, but that is a problem for the PCs to address after the dust has settled.

### LAXTON'S BASE (EL 10)

Laxton has rented the end lot of a row of two-room hovels near the Beggars' Market. His neighbors do not know him, but those who live in this area tend to mind their own business.



# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

## GORWIN LAXTON

**Human Male Clt 12;** CR 11; Medium-sized humanoid (5 ft. 11 in.); HD 12d6+12; hp 54; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (14 with shield of faith); Atk +11/+6 melee (1d4+1/15-20/x2, +1 kukri of wounding); SA Leadership +2, sneak attack +2d6; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 8, Cha 15.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +1, Bluff +11, Climb +2, Concentration +4, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +10, Hide +8, Innuendo +5, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +13, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Perform (preach) +5, Search +9, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +6, Spot +5, Swim +1; Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (kukri), Improved Critical (kukri), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Scoundrel's Luck, Skill Focus (Bluff), Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (kukri).

**Spells Prepared (4/4+1/3+1/0+1):** 0 - daze, detect magic, inflict minor wounds, resistance; 1 - bane, cause fear\*, change self, protection from good, summon monster I; 2 - death knell\*, inflict moderate wounds, undetectable alignment, sound burst; 3 - animate dead\*.

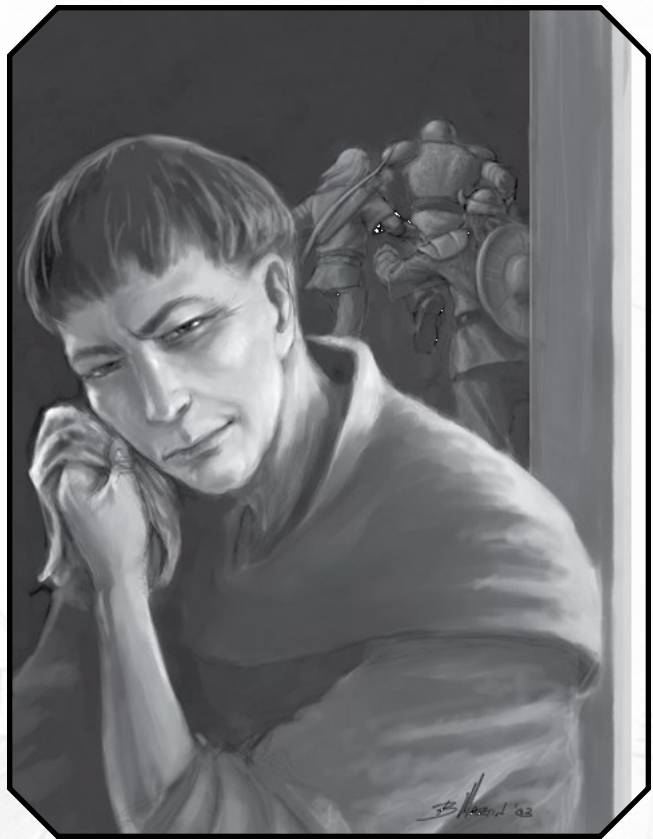
**Domain:** Death. \* Domain spell.

**Possessions:** Robes, +1 kukri of wounding, 2 potions of polymorph self, ring of protection +2, Sskethvai tablets, wand of shield of faith (10 charges).

The front room of the hovel is bare, and looks as though the place is unoccupied. Laxton lives exclusively in the back room, which has a fireplace. The only furnishings here are a bedroll, a desk and a chair. The bedroll is normally positioned to cover the trapdoor in the floor; in his guise as the serpent priest Ffashethh, he had his followers connect the house to their tunnel system beneath the city. When the trapdoor is in use, the bedroll is pushed to one side.

If the PCs have pursued him from the arena, Laxton will change back to his human form as soon as he is in the building, smear some of the blood on his hands across his face, open the back door, and sprawl down beside the bedroll, pretending to be wounded. As the PCs come up through the trapdoor, he will point weakly at the open door and gasp, "It went that way! What was it?" as if he had just been surprised by a serpent man bursting up into his home. Suspicious characters can oppose Laxton's Bluff check with Sense Motive checks.

If Laxton manages to misdirect the PCs, he will clean his face with a rag and head out into the Beggar's Market, trying to lose any pursuers in the crowd. He will head for a small house in the north of the Eastern District, which a small cell of surviving Yellow Sign cultists is using as a safe house. The GM may extend the adventure in this direction if desired,



selecting a location and layout for the house and deciding what the cultists are up to there. So far as this adventure is concerned, however, he escapes once the PCs go after the nonexistent serpent person.

If the PCs see through Laxton's attempted bluff, he will do everything he can to escape, using spells to slow the PCs down until he can duck out of sight and use *alter self* or *change self* to change his appearance. If cornered, he will fight to the death, using his *dagger of wounding* to take as many of his opponents with him as possible.

## THE SSKETHVAI TABLETS

In a drawer of Laxton's desk is a stack of fine metal sheets, as thin as parchment, as smooth as glass, and practically unbreakable. They are inscribed with ancient Valossan glyphs, and contain the doctrine of the Sskethvai, a martial sect of the cult of Yig from the days of the Valossan Empire. On the desk is a pile of manuscripts—Laxton's notes as he worked to translate the tablets.

Laxton's notes tell the whole story behind his plan: he discovered that the teachings of the Sskethvai could be used to secretly bring the degenerate serpent people—even those who would have nothing to do with the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign—to the worship of the Unspeakable One, by disguising it as the worship of an aggressive martial aspect of Yig. The degenerate serpent folk would think that their acts of devotion would bring them back into the favor of their god, but actually they would be serving the purposes of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, and helping to spread the madness of the Unspeakable One.



# - SOUL OF THE SERPENT -

Although Laxton's notes contain partial (and sometimes incorrect) translations of several passages, the Sskethvai Tablets themselves require Speak Language (ancient Valossan) to read them. A character that spends a total of 60 hours studying the Sskethvai tablets over the course of a month will gain a permanent +3 insight bonus on Knowledge (history) checks regarding ancient Valossa and Knowledge (religion) checks regarding Sskethvai doctrine.

The Sskethvai Tablets are without equal in the known body of Valossan antiquities, and any serious collector would pay several thousand gold pieces for them. K'Stallo (if he is still alive at the end of the adventure) would dearly like to have them for himself; although he is from the opposed and more peaceable sect of the Hitthkai, he has taken upon himself to recover all that he can of Valossan culture and civilization, and he would also like to prevent the tablets from falling into the wrong hands and being misused again. If the surface-dwellers were to become aware of the imperialist and racial-supremacist teachings of Sskethvai doctrine, he reasons, they could become even more fearful and distrustful of the serpent people than they already are, which would seriously damage his plans to civilize the degenerate serpent folk beneath Freeport and establish a proper diplomatic arrangement that would allow them to live in peace with the warm bloods, and even share in some of the city's prosperity.

## CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Just like the events surrounding Milton's Folly and the fall of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, this adventure will probably have profound repercussions for Freeport, as well as the PCs. Here are a few of the threads that could be followed up on in future adventures; more will no doubt arise, depending upon exactly how the adventure plays out.

### THE YELLOW SIGN RESURGENT

From the events of this adventure, the PCs will realize that the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign is far from destroyed in Freeport. If Laxton escaped after the ritual, it is possible that he led them to a safe house where a Brotherhood cell is laying its plans. They had agents in the highest places before, and who is to say that all their agents were rooted out after the affair of Milton's Folly?

### THE UNSPEAKABLE ONE WALKS

Even if Laxton's ritual did not lead to a manifestation of the Unspeakable One beneath Freeport, there is always the chance that a similar ritual, conducted elsewhere by another group of cultists, might achieve the same result. The PCs might be given

the opportunity to find out about this ritual in advance and prevent it, as in this adventure, or the first warning they (and the rest of Freeport) might receive is the sudden appearance of the manifestation, towering over the city like Godzilla.

## DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Their experiences in this adventure have taught the PCs more about the serpent folk than any outsiders know, and may well have earned them a powerful ally in the person of K'Stallo. If your gaming group is fond of political adventures with the emphasis on NPC interaction, they might relish the challenge of acting as go-betweens in the first friendly overtures between the surface-dwellers and the serpent people—who, in the light of these recent events, can no longer be ignored. They might usher in a new era for Freeport as they try to establish a basis of mutual trust and respect between the races, or at least come up with an arrangement that is profitable for all.

If the surface-dwellers decide to accept their reptilian neighbors, it may even be decided to build a temple to Yig in the Temple District. While this would create a great deal of work for laborers and craftspeople, some of the staff of the surrounding temples might not like the idea, despite Freeport's reputation for religious tolerance. After all, there are several ancient Valossan artworks that show the sacrifice of humans (and other races well represented in Freeport) to Yig, and rumors will abound that this practice is still followed. Soon the serpent people could find themselves blamed for every disappearance in the city.

## THE ANTIQUES TRADE

If the PCs conclude this adventure successfully, they will have a wealthy and influential patron (though only moderately so, by Freeport's standards) in Matthias Brack. In addition to the kind of adventures that could arise from having any wealthy merchant as a patron,

Brack's passion for Valossan antiquities might send them off on all manner of expeditions. They might even be called upon to set up a formal meeting between Brack and K'Stallo (who, in his guise of Steel, has already done business with Brack on several occasions, though he will not say so) with a view to setting up a multi-racial Valossan Cultural Society to study and trade in such artifacts.

Not all of Freeport's traders in antiquities will regard this as a good thing, however; some will see it as an attempt to regulate trade (something any red-blooded Freeporter will fight with his dying breath!), while others might fear that an agreement between Brack and the serpent folk may lead to the creation of a virtual monopoly, which will squeeze all the independent traders out of business.

Another problem may arise with the Society of Lobstermen; K'Stallo might find out from ancient records that at least one of the sites they are mining for antiquities was a great shrine to Yig, and in Valossan eyes, this wholesale plundering of sacred objects and structures must stop. A diplomatic war between the Lobstermen and the Church of Yig could well lead to murder and wholesale violence.

# ~ THE LAST RESORT ~

AN ADVENTURE INTENDED FOR CHARACTERS OF ANY LEVEL.

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*The Last Resort* is an adventure for characters of any level. The game statistics given here assume a party of about 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> level, but the GM can easily change the levels and abilities of NPCs and monsters to suit the strength of the party.

## INTRODUCTION

This adventure consists of a detailed description of the Last Resort (*Freeport*, p. 66) and a number of adventure plots. The plots are intended to play out simultaneously, over the course of a single night. This is challenging for the GM and can be confusing for the players, as they try to puzzle out what events are connected with which plot. The *Events* section will help the GM to keep things straight—in his own mind, at least—but it will be useful to read through the entire adventure a couple of times before running it.

Some of the events from different plots may well end up clashing with one another. Also, things may be altered by what the PCs decide to do at any particular time. The plots are presented below, and in the *Events* section, as they *should* happen, assuming nothing interferes with them.

Alternatively, the plots could be separated out and used individually or in groups of twos or threes. This will make the adventure last longer, and provide the players with something of interest whenever their characters drop into the Last Resort.

## THE HOTEL

Overlooking the private docks of the Marina, the Last Resort is an imposing building of white stone, with polished brass lamps illuminating the outside at night.

The first (ground) floor is irregularly shaped, but follows the general lines of the main building. A covered veranda extends into the street, providing shade in good weather and shelter in bad for patrons who are waiting for rickshaws. Inside, most of the ground floor is taken up by a huge pillared lobby; dining tables are placed around the outside of this central space, and the kitchens and laundry are off to one side.

The second floor has 21 rooms, arranged around a central balcony that overlooks the lobby. Rooms on the south side, with a view of the Marina, go for 7-10 gp per night, depending on their facilities; those on the other sides, overlooking the city, range from 5-8 gp per night.

The third floor also overlooks the lobby, and is where the hotel's six suites can be found. Again depending on their size and facilities, costs range from 35-50gp per night. The exiled Corellan royalty (see *News from Home* below) occupy suites 1 and 2, and hired guards are posted outside the doors of each.

The fourth floor is also known as “The Imperial Suite,” and has been occupied for several years by a wealthy but reclusive mainland family, the Ducaynes. They keep to themselves—the

words “Do Not Disturb” have been painted on their door, rather than the usual card notice—but they always pay their bills on time. The Ducaynes are a family of vampires (see *Freeport*, p. 66, *Adventure Hooks*) who use the Last Resort as a base but hunt in the poorer parts of town. They are not active in any of the plots presented here, but the GM is quite free to add them to the mix if desired.

The fifth floor is used as a storage area, with locked closets of various sizes containing spare pieces of furniture and other seldom-used objects. In the middle of the floor, a spiral staircase leads up to the observatory, a glass-sided room that offers commanding views in all directions. The management has installed four telescopes on tripods that are bolted to the floor. All guests are free to visit the observatory and use the telescopes.

## PLOT SUMMARIES

### PLOT 1: NEWS FROM HOME

Among its other noble and wealthy patrons, the Last Resort is home to the deposed King Albigensius IV of the mainland nation of Corella. He and his family regularly receive visits from foreign diplomats and Corellan loyalists as Albigensius plans his return to power. The official king of Corella, Albigensius' cousin Cosmus II, has decided to take action against his predecessor before he can stage a successful coup. A hired assassin has been sent to Freeport to murder the king and his entire family, leaving no pretenders to the throne alive.

The nation of “Corella” is used a placeholder. You can substitute any appropriate nation from your favored campaign setting.

### PLOT 2:

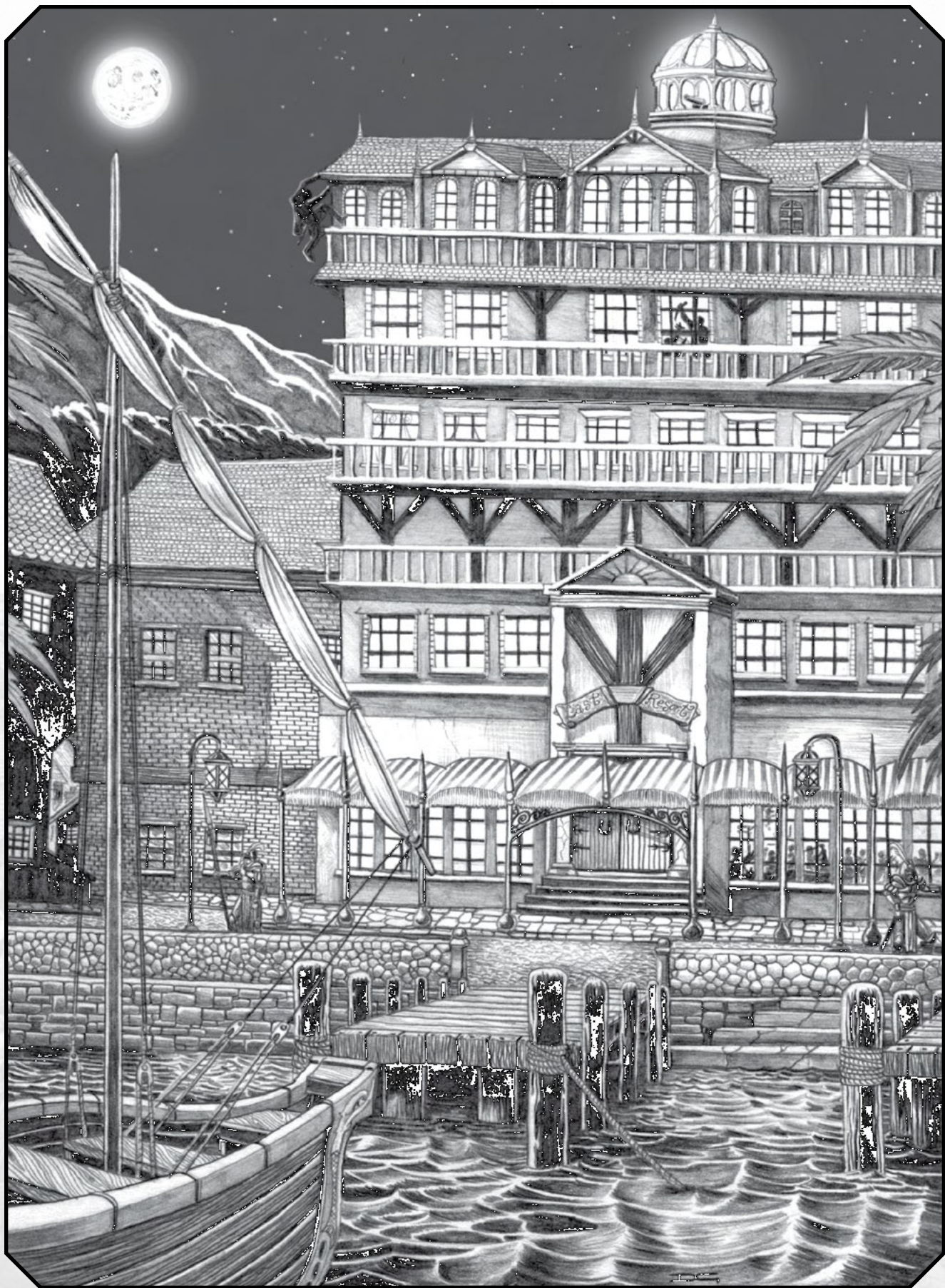
#### A SECRET RENDEZVOUS

Bartholomew Haddon, one of Freeport's wealthier merchants, is not a happy man. He has discovered that his wife Imelda has been having an affair for some months now—and not even with a social equal, but with a musician from the opera by the name of Thomas Rhymer. By having her watched, he has found out that she plans a meeting with her lover in a room he has booked under a false name. Accompanied by a band of hired thugs, he intends to catch the pair in the act, horsewhip the musician, and publicly humiliate his adulterous wife.

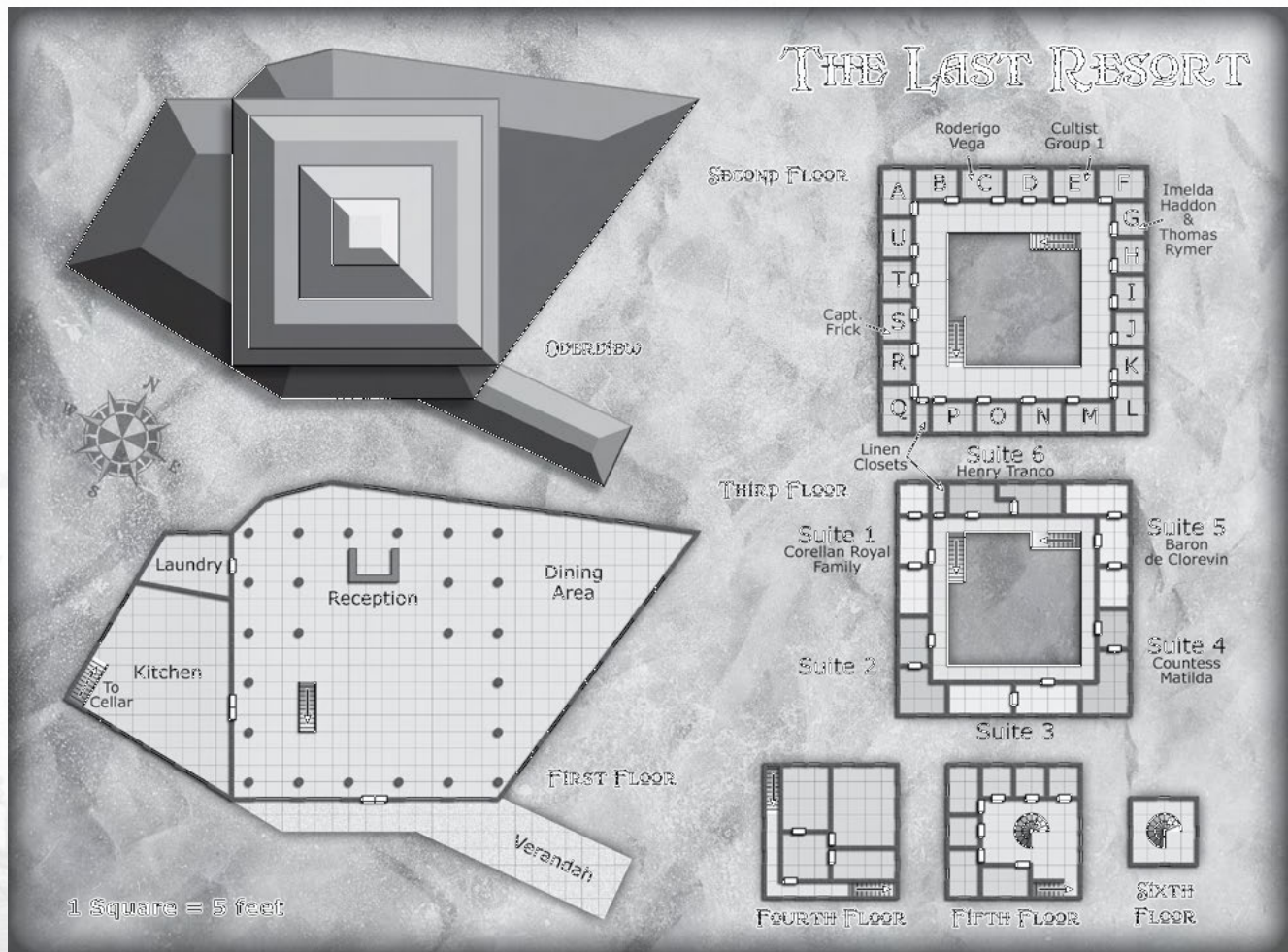
### PLOT 3: AN HONEST GAME OF CHANCE

To the world in general, Henry Tranco appears to be just another of the idle upper class, living the good life as a tenant at the Last Resort. In fact, this gambler and con man is down to his last couple of gold pieces, and looking for a solution to

- THE LAST RESORT -



# - THE LAST RESORT -



this fiscal dilemma. He has been living on credit for the last few weeks while he works on a scam to separate a gullible ship-owner from a substantial sum of money in a phony partnership deal for the exclusive right to ship high-value spices from an obscure (in fact, fictional) island kingdom through Freeport to the wider world. The con has taken a lot longer to bring together than Tranco anticipated, and he is in desperate need of some fast cash. In desperation, he has organized a high-stakes card game with a number of wealthy residents.

## PLOT 4: THE CHOSEN ONE

Although the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign was severely weakened by the lighthouse debacle, Freeport is not free of it altogether. Survivors hide behind a veneer of respectability all over the city, making their various plans to return to power and spread the madness of the Unspeakable One first to Freeport, and then to the world. An obscure prophecy points to a visiting merchant by the name of Roderigo Vega, and a group of cultists is planning to kidnap him for a sacrifice they believe will give them much more power. Unfortunately, they are not the only group of cultists to be aware of the prophecy, and there will be some competition for the capture of the oblivious Vega, who must be sacrificed precisely at midnight tonight.

## PLOT 5: A GENTLE REMINDER

Henry Tranco (see plot 3 above) made the mistake of borrowing money from Finn, the head of the Halfling Benevolent Association (*Freeport*, pp. 54-5), and compounded his problems by being late with his payments. Finn has outfitted a pair of his most presentable-looking henchmen in suitable clothes, and sent them to have a quiet word with Tranco about the outstanding debt.

## PLOT 6: TEARS OF THE SEA

The elderly Countess Matilda of Fridonia is one of several mainland nobles living out a comfortable exile at the Last Resort, and among the family treasures she managed to bring with her is a fabulous pearl necklace known as the Tears of the Sea. She has become a fixture at Freeport's more prestigious social events, such as opening nights at the opera, and is never without her prized pearls. Rumors abound regarding the necklace: some say that they are enchanted, and protect the countess better than a dozen armed men; others whisper of a curse placed upon them by the dying king of the island nation from which they were looted, and observe that Matilda was forced into exile mere months after she acquired the necklace. Baron Philippe de Clorevin, a visiting mainland noble, recently took a suite next to the Countess' own, and has been seen in her

# - THE LAST RESORT -



company in the smartest places in Freeport over the last week. What only the Baron knows is that he intends to steal the pearls, for beneath his affable façade he is a world-renowned jewel thief, known to authorities only as the Ghost.

## PLOT 7: DIRTY BUSINESS

Several years ago, Captain Ebenezer Frick crossed a merchant named Jebediah Morton in business. Morton was ruined; he and his family were turned out on the street and were forced to live in Tent Town. There, his wife and two children died of consumption. Unable to carry on, Morton committed suicide. Captain Frick, wealthier and more successful than ever, has returned to Freeport, and is staying at the Last Resort. The Captain has long forgotten about the incident, but the tortured Morton has not. Unable to rest, his spirit is out for revenge.

## PLOT 8: CULTURAL TREASURES

On a recent voyage to a distant land, Captain Thomas Horngold found the burial ground of a lost people. Knowing that mummies and the like are highly sought after by alchemists and other, less socially acceptable spell casters, he has brought one back to Freeport, along with a few trinkets from its tomb, and hopes to set up a lucrative trade in looted bodies and antiquities. A few potential buyers are meeting with him tonight to inspect the merchandise. He does not know, however, that the lost builders of the cemetery have not all died out. One of them has secretly followed the Captain to Freeport, and plans to recover the mummy and make sure that no one who knows of its existence lives to tell the tale.

## EVENTS

This section sets out roughly what will happen when all these plots collide in one night at the Last Resort. Remember, the sequence of events set out below assumes that the PCs do not interfere in any way, and things will change in response to whatever they do.

### 7 P.M.

- The lobby area begins to fill up with guests who have decided to dine in and other patrons who want to take advantage of the Last Resort's excellent cuisine. While the hotel's restaurant facilities cannot rival Maurice's (see *Freeport: the City of Adventure*, p. 67), the Last Resort still boasts a respectable menu, and the food is always well prepared. Bobbin Brandydale [**male halfling Com15, hp 61**], the hotel's owner, plays the role of maitre d' himself, seating guests and taking reservations. Before long, the first sitting is being served by a procession of waiters and serving maids, while the hopefuls wait in the lobby and on the veranda for tables to become available.
- Imelda Haddon [**female human Exp1, hp 5**] arrives at the same time as the first diners, using the crowd to make her less conspicuous. Having checked in, through a go-between, under the false name of Josiah Banks, she already has the key to room G, and she heads quietly to the room, taking care not to draw undue attention to herself.

# - THE LAST RESORT -

## 7:15 P.M.

- Five silver trays, each with a domed silver cover to keep the food warm while it is delivered, are taken up to suites 1 and 2. The headwaiter exchanges a few words with the guards, and he and two other waiters take the food in. A few seconds later, the waiters return empty-handed.
- Roderigo Vega [**male human Exp4, hp 17**] comes down from room C, and is shown to a table.

## 7:30 P.M.

- Thomas Rhymer arrives [**male human Exp4, hp 14, Perform +6**], exchanges a few words with Bobbin, and goes upstairs carrying a bottle of expensive wine and two glasses. He knocks softly on the door of room G, and is admitted after a few seconds. The door is closed and locked behind him.
- Henry Tranco comes down from suite 6, speaks briefly to Bobbin, and is seated at one of the larger tables. He does not order straight away, and appears to be waiting for someone.
- Captain Thomas Horngold [**male human Ftr 5, hp 35**] arrives and takes a room on the second floor. His luggage consists of a medium-sized sea chest and a large wooden crate, so big it needs a combined Str of at least 40 to lift it. He supervises the hotel staff in taking the crate to his room, telling them to be careful.

## 7:45 P.M.

- Countess Matilda [**female human Ari4, hp 15**] comes down from suite 4, with the bearing of a queen attending her court. She is wearing a gown of embroidered gold silk, and wearing her famous pearls. The more courteous diners stand as she enters the lobby; a few even applaud, and are acknowledged with a regal nod of the head and a vague smile. Bobbin conducts her to her table, which he always reserves, and Edgar, the chef, comes out to take Her Grace's order.
- Two heavy-set men [**male human War 4, hp 16, 18**] in expensive-looking clothes enter the lobby, look around, and head for Tranco's table. They stand on either side of his chair, leaning over him, and a soft but clearly heated discussion takes place. After a couple of minutes, the men leave, stopping at the door to cast a significant glance back at where Tranco sits. He watches them leave, then orders a large glass of rum. A successful Spot Check [**DC 15**] reveals that the two men's clothes don't seem to fit them quite right, as though they were made for someone else. A successful Profession (tailor) or Knowledge (nobility) check [**DC 10**] reveals that the clothes are about a year out of date, and were made for someone smaller. The men are enforcers working for Finn, whom Tranco owes a large sum of money. They came to collect, but Tranco manages to put them off until midnight.



## 8 P.M.

- Five men [**male human Exp2 merchants, hp 7, 11, 8, 8, 6**] enter the room separately over the course of about a minute and join Tranco at his table. After a few minutes, they all order dinner. His guests are all well to do, judging by their clothes and the quality of the wine they order, and they all seem to be in good spirits, laughing and joking among themselves. PCs who frequent Freeport's classier gambling establishments may recognize some of them. At the GM's option, characters who have earned a reputation in Freeport as high-stakes gamblers may find themselves invited to join the group. A Sense Motive check [**DC 25**] is needed to observe that Tranco is slightly nervous—he is used to hiding these things well.
- Baron de Clorevin comes down from suite 5, and sits at a table not far from where the Countess dines alone. He greets her with a gallant bow. She responds with a formal nod.

## 8:15 P.M.

- Dessert is taken up to suites 1 and 2; the waiters return with the empty trays that bore the main course.
- Captain Horngold comes down to dinner.

## 8:30 P.M.

- Roderigo Vega finishes his meal and goes back up to room C.

# - THE LAST RESORT -



## 8:45 P.M.

- A successful Spot check [DC 15] will reveal that someone has been loitering by the doors for some time now, looking up toward the second floor. He is a scout for the cultists who plan to kidnap Roderigo Vega, and he is watching the door of Vega's room (room C).
- Elijah Quelch [male dwarf Exp5, hp 22, Appraise +9], one of Freeport's middle-ranking dealers in antiquities and curios, joins Captain Horngold for dinner. A character who has been in Freeport for more than a month is permitted an Int check [DC 15, but -1 per additional month spent in Freeport] to recognize Quelch; of course, anyone who has done business with him will recognize him immediately. Rogue characters who recognize Quelch are permitted an additional Int check [DC 10] to be aware that Quelch has a reputation for not being too scrupulous about where and how his wares are acquired.

## 9:00 P.M.

- Bartholomew Haddon enters the lobby with four hired thugs [male human War2, hp 11, 13, 15, 12], and makes straight for Bobbin, demanding to know where his wife is. Bobbin tries to calm the enraged merchant, but with no success. Well known for his discretion, he couldn't tell Haddon where his wife was if he wanted to, since she booked the room through a go-between and used a false name. A fight threatens to break out as Haddon and his men start up the stairs to the second

floor and the hotel's guards try to stop them. The guards outside the Corellan party's suites look down over the balcony to see what all the commotion is about, but make no move to intervene. If they are not stopped, Haddon and his men will force their way upstairs and start battering down doors until they find the room (G) of Imelda and her lover. Haddon's men will drag the pair out into the street, and horsewhip the unfortunate musician while his wife is forced to watch. Leaving Rhymer bleeding and unconscious in the street, he will then drag his wife home.

- Rickshaw drivers begin to congregate at the veranda as they do every night, waiting for diners who need a ride home.

## 9:15 P.M.

- Tranco and his companions get up from their table, and one of them invites the Baron to join them in a game. After he politely declines, the gamblers go up to suite 6, and begin playing cards. They will be completely absorbed by their game, and will not come out for anything less than a fire.
- Baron de Clorevin orders a decanter of brandy and two glasses, and takes them to the Countess' table, which is rapidly cleared of dishes. The two sit and drink for a while, discussing the disturbance caused by Haddon and his men, and commenting on the lack of refinement shown by the middle class these days. As their conversation runs to more general matters, it becomes clear that de Clorevin is flattering the Countess shamelessly, and she is thoroughly enjoying it.
- The dessert trays are brought down from the Corellan suites.

## 9:30 P.M.

- Two plainly dressed men [male human Clt4, hp 14, 16; Cultists are described in the *Freeport* sourcebook, pp. 123-125] arrive and reserve a room for the night. They specifically request a room on the west side, and are given room E. These are the advance members of a group of cultists who plan to kidnap Roderigo Vega for sacrifice.
- The Countess rises from her table, and de Clorevin stands up to wish her a good night. He sits after she has gone, sipping at his brandy, apparently lost in his own thoughts.

## 9:45 P.M.

- Baron de Clorevin goes up to suite 5. Shortly afterward, Captain Horngold takes Quelch up to his room (S) and shows him the contents of the crate that was hauled up there earlier. The crate contains a gruesome cargo; the mummified remains of an ancient priest from some obscure island culture (see *The Mummy* under *NPCs and Monsters*).

# - THE LAST RESORT -

## 10:00 P.M.

- Two plainly dressed men [**male human Clt4, hp 12, 15**] arrive and head up to room E. These are reinforcements for the cultists already there.

## 10:15 P.M.

- Having agreed with Horngold on a price for the priest's mummy, Quelch leaves the hotel, intending to return tomorrow with the cash.

## 10:30 P.M.

- One of Tranco's gambling companions leaves suite 6, having lost all his money. He stamps down the stairs in a foul mood, talking to no one, and hires a rickshaw from the veranda.

## 10:45 P.M.

- Dressed in black in his persona of the notorious jewel thief known only as the Ghost, Baron de Clorevin leaves suite 5 via the window, and works his way around the outside of the building to suite 4, where the Countess lies sleeping. He breaks in through a window, quietly so as not to arouse the Countess' servants, and steals the Tears of the Sea, leaving in their place the black silk handkerchief that is the Ghost's calling card. Then he leaves through the window and returns to suite 5.

## 11:00 P.M.

- Another of Tranco's gambling companions has been cleaned out. He comes down to the lobby almost in tears, sits down at an unoccupied table and sets out to drink himself unconscious.
- A group of four plainly dressed men come into the lobby and head upstairs [**male human Clt4, hp 13, 14, 14, 12**]. A successful Spot check [**DC 25, +1 synergy bonus for each rank in Sense Motive**] leads an observer to believe that they are trying to look inconspicuous. If not intercepted, they will make for room C; three of them will stand in front of the door, masking the fourth while he picks the door's lock. There is a brief, muffled noise from inside the room.

## 11:15 P.M.

- The first group of four cultists emerges from room E and heads for room C. One of them picks the lock and they enter, closing the door behind them. After about two seconds, the sound of a fight comes from the room. Guards head to the room to see what is wrong, finding an open window, Vega missing, and a couple of cultists unconscious and bleeding on the floor of the room. They are plainly dressed, and give no outward sign of their cult affiliation, but searching the men will reveal some evidence of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, such as an

amulet or a scrap of parchment bearing the Yellow Sign and Vega's name and room number. They may be woken up and interrogated, and although they will be reluctant to talk, they can be persuaded by force or magical means to reveal that they are members of the Brotherhood, and that Vega was marked for sacrifice to the Unspeakable One, according to an ancient prophecy.

- Roused by the disturbance, the countess' servants discover that the Tears of the Sea have been stolen. The Countess is beside herself with fury, and gives both her servants and the hotel guards a savage (but in terms of vocabulary, entirely ladylike) tongue-lashing. The guard captain inspects her room, and the Sea Lord's Guard is summoned to investigate. If the PCs have earned a reputation in Freeport as detectives or thief-catchers, they might become involved in tracking down the stolen pearls.
- During the course of the Countess' tirade, Baron de Clorevin appears at the door of his suite in a nightshirt and a silk dressing gown, with his hair ruffled and his eyes half-open, and blearily demands to know what all the fuss is about. When he hears that the Countess has been robbed, he immediately moves to comfort her, and having dressed quickly he starts to organize the guards and his fellow guests to search the hotel—much to the chagrin of the guard captain. For the next hour or so, he goes from room to room with a couple of guards, enquiring after the pearls. The Countess, at her wit's end, retires to her suite.

## 11:30 P.M.

- Another of Tranco's gambling companions leaves suite 6, penniless and tipsy. As he passes through the lobby, he spots an acquaintance, and drunkenly sets about trying to persuade this unfortunate individual to stake him for just a few more hands. If the GM wishes, the unlucky gambler's acquaintance might be one of the PCs; this would provide a means of involving them more directly in the events.

## 11:45 P.M.

- Finn's two enforcers return to the hotel, and head upstairs to suite 6. They knock at the door and are admitted, leaving a few minutes later, looking mildly disappointed. A successful Spot check [**DC 15**] reveals that one of them is carrying something under his jacket; it is a leather bag containing the money that Tranco owed Finn. The two enforcers are disappointed because they were hoping that Tranco would not be able to pay so that they could give him a beating.

## MIDNIGHT

- There is a loud scream from suite 1, and the exiled King Albigenus [**male human Ari10, hp 43**] staggers out onto the landing and collapses. The meals served to the Corellan royal family were poisoned; three members of



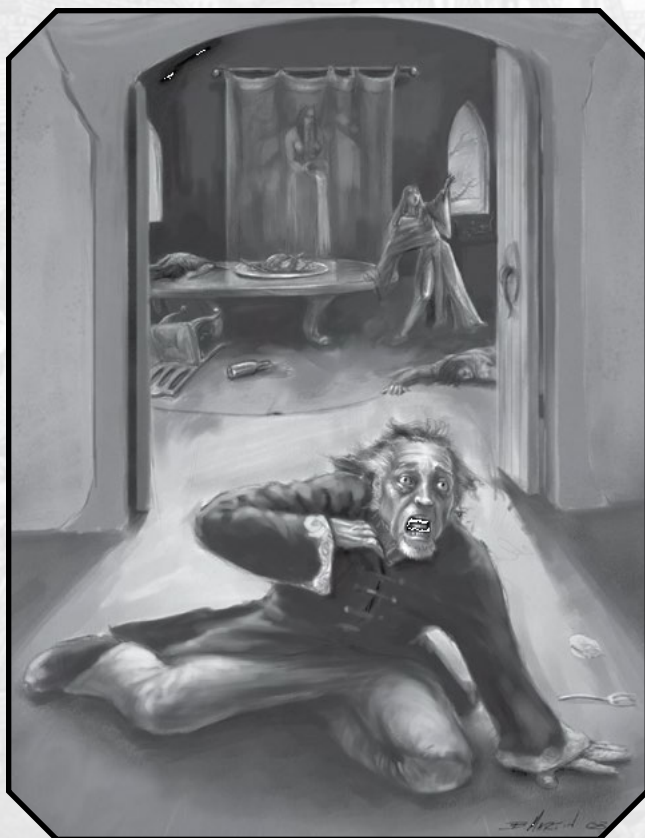
## - THE LAST RESORT -

the family are already dead, and the remaining two—Albigensius and his daughter Waldensia [**female human Ari3, hp 13**]**—**are on the brink of death. Prompt action with a *neutralize poison* spell or some other remedy will save their lives; they brought considerable wealth with them when they escaped from Corella, and can afford to repay their saviors handsomely.

- Both Bobbin and Edgar will be horrified at the thought that such an assassination could take place under their roof, and if the PCs have earned a reputation in Freeport as investigators, they might find themselves hired to get to the bottom of things. After all, having a visiting royal family poisoned by food from one's own kitchens is the worst publicity a hotel owner could wish for!

### 12:15 a.m.

- The two remaining gamblers leave suite 6, grumbling and cursing. Once they have left, Tranco sends down for a bottle of brandy—imported, and much more expensive than rum in Freeport—which is taken up to his room.
- Baron de Clorevin knocks at the door of suite 4, and sadly informs the countess that he has not been able to find the stolen pearls. He can only conclude, he says regretfully, that the thief has gotten away with them. The Countess is distraught, but the Baron comforts her with the assertion that such high-profile jewels would be impossible to fence locally without attracting a great deal of unwelcome attention. He advises her to sleep if she can, and promises that in the morning he will



personally engage a wizard to track the pearls down magically. Somewhat comforted, the Countess goes back to bed. A few minutes later, so does the Baron.

### 12:30 a.m.

- A guest from a room on the south side of the second floor runs screaming down the stairs, claiming that the hotel is haunted. If the guest can be calmed down, he will tell of a ghostly figure that entered his room by walking through the door, gave him a baleful stare, and then left without speaking. This is the tortured spirit of Jebediah Morton [**male ghost Exp5, hp 38**], who is searching the hotel for Captain Frick. If a search is made to track down the phantom, Morton will become ethereal in an effort to avoid detection; if this fails, he will use his *malevolence* special attack to hide inside the body of a mortal bystander until the commotion dies down. Then, he will walk the body to a secluded place, and leave it without anyone noticing.

### 12:45 a.m.

- Outside the hotel, a dark, wiry shape climbs the wall below Captain Horngold's window. It is a descendant of the mummified priest who has followed Horngold all the way from the distant island from which the mummy was looted. Peering cautiously over the windowsill, he begins a soft chant [**Listen DC 25**].

### 1:00 a.m.

- The ghost of Jebediah Morton finds Captain Frick [**male human Exp7, hp 34**] asleep in room S. Entering the room ethereally, Morton uses *telekinesis* to pin Frick to the bed with his own cutlass. Then, as Frick bleeds to death, Morton *manifests* to enjoy his revenge, using *horrific appearance* to torment him further. Anyone summoned by Frick's screams of pain and terror will have to contend with the angry ghost, who will attack anyone who seeks to thwart his revenge; Captain Frick may survive the encounter if help is quick in coming, but he will never be the same again. If Frick is killed, Morton's tortured spirit will be able to rest, and the ghost will dissipate, never to return. If, on the other hand, Frick survives, Morton's ghost will continue to haunt the city (and especially the hotel) at night, using the *rejuvenation* special quality to return 2d4 days after being destroyed, and finally fading away only when Frick dies, whatever the cause.

### 1:15 a.m.

- The mummified priest in Captain Horngold's room comes to life, animated by the chanting of the living priest outside the window. This individual slips off the roof of the hotel and makes his way stealthily back to the Marina, where he has hidden his small boat under one of the docks at low tide. Meanwhile, the mummy proceeds to destroy Horngold's room (and, unless he is quick,

# - THE LAST RESORT -

Horgold himself), break down the door (not having encountered doorknobs or locks before), and lurch down the stairs and out of the hotel toward the Marina, attacking anyone and anything that gets in the way.

## 1:30 A.M.

- Unless it has been stopped, the mummy reaches the boat of its living servant, and the two set sail into the darkness. If the mummy has been destroyed, the living priest will try to collect its remains without being seen, and will punish anyone who has interfered with a blow-dart from the shadows before leaving. He will not hesitate to set fire to the hotel if this seems to be the best way of achieving his ends.

## 1:45 A.M.

- For a brief interval, the hotel is quiet.

## 2:00 A.M.

- Once again dressed in black, Baron de Clorevin leaves suite 5 via the window, and, hugging the shadows, sets off into the Warehouse District, where he has a buyer for the Tears of the Sea waiting.

## 2:15 A.M.

- Baron de Clorevin meets his buyer [male gnome Rog6/Fpm3, hp 44] in an abandoned warehouse. They talk softly for a few minutes, the pearls are exchanged for a large sum of money, then both leave—de Clorevin heading back to the Last Resort, and the buyer back to a ship on the docks, intending to leave on the morning tide at about 5 a.m.

## 2:30 A.M.

- Baron de Clorevin returns to the hotel, climbs back into his suite through the window, and changes back into his nightshirt and dressing gown.

## CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Many of the events described above can have long-term ramifications, allowing the GM to spin off a whole series of adventures if desired. Consider the following adventure seeds that could grow out of this particular night at The Last Resort.

### VENGEANCE FOR THE KING!

Finding the assassin who poisoned the Corellan royal family could lead the PCs into a whole morass of politics and double-dealing, while having them stalked by a vengeful mummy or



ghost could be an adventure in itself, or simply a shadow to cast over their lives for some time to come.

### FOLLOW THE TEARS

Recovering the Tears of the Sea would gain them a staunch ally in Countess Matilda, but might involve a lengthy chase at sea as they try to catch up with de Clorevin's buyer, and possibly a long-running adventure as they track the pearls from one owner to the next, always one step behind.

### SCOUNDREL'S LUCK

If all has gone as he planned, Tranco will have made enough money from his card game to pay off his debt to Finn and to keep himself in style until his scam comes together. The PCs might become involved in tracking him down once he has fleeced his unsuspecting "partner" (who is not named, and could be anyone the GM desires) and left Freeport; alternatively, they might get wind of the deal in advance, and try to expose Tranco as a con artist before anyone can lose too much money.

### SAVE THE CHOSEN ONE!

If Roderigo Vega has been kidnapped from the hotel, the PCs might decide (or be hired) to track down his captors and rescue him before the sacrifice can take place, leading them into a whole web of potential adventures as they find out that the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign has regrouped, and try to prevent them from carrying out their evil plans.

## - THE LAST RESORT -



### NPCs & MONSTERS

#### BOBBIN BRANDYDALE, PROPRIETOR

**Male halfling Com15:** CR 14; Small humanoid (3 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 15d4+15; hp 61; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 13 (+1 size, +2 Dex); Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4-1, dagger); SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +7; AL NG; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 15.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +3, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +7, Handle Animal +4, Jump +5, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +6; Profession (cook) +8, Profession (innkeeper) +11, Ride +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +7, Swim +3; Use Rope +6, Alertness, Dodge, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Knowledge [local]), Skill Focus (Profession [innkeeper]), Skill Focus (Sense Motive).

**Possessions:** the hotel and its contents, well-tailored clothes.

#### EDGAR BRANDYDALE, CHEF

**Male halfling Exp3:** CR 2; Small humanoid (3 ft. 0 in. tall); HD 3d6+3; hp 19; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 13 (+1 size, +2 Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d6, cleaver); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AL N; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Animal Empathy +4, Appraise +4, Balance +5, Bluff +4, Climb +3, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (international cuisine) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Profession (cook) +10; Skill Focus (Profession [cook]).

**Possessions:** cooking equipment, chef's clothes.

#### OTHER HOTEL STAFF

The rest of the hotel staff are servants of various sorts [**Exp1, hp 1d6; skills include at least one Profession skill of 4 ranks**], and detailed statistics should not be required for them.

#### BARTHOLOMEW HADDON, GUCKOLD

Haddon is a middle-ranking merchant [**Male human Exp5, hp 20**], and is armed with a heavy silver-topped cane (value 25 gp, counts as a light mace) and a whip. However, he will be reluctant to get involved in combat (apart from horsewhipping the unfortunate Rhymer), leaving that to his hired thugs.

#### HADDON'S THUGS (4)

**Male human War2:** CR 1; Medium-sized humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 15, 13, 12, 11; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather); Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, club) or

# - THE LAST RESORT -

+4 ranged (1d2+2 subdual, whip); AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +3, Intimidate +5, Ride +5; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Weapon Focus (whip).

**Possessions:** Club, whip, studded leather armor, purse with 2 gp, 20 sp.

## HENRY FRANÇO, GON MAN

**Male human Rog4/Gam2:** CR 6; Medium-sized humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 6d6+6; hp 25; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Atk +8 melee or ranged (1d4+1, +1 *dagger of returning*); SA Lightning calculator, mind on the game, sneak Attack +2d6; SQ Evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 15.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +5, Balance +5, Bluff +14, Climb +2, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +5, Forgery +3, Gather Information +7, Hide +8, Innuendo +4, Jump +1, Knowledge [mathematics] +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Pick Pockets +10, Profession [gambler] +15, Read Lips +5, Search +6, Sense Motive +8, Spot +10; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Profession [Gambler]), Weapon Finesse (dagger).

**Possessions:** Expensive clothes, several decks of cards, various dice.

## BARON PHILIPPE DE GLOREDIN, THE GHOST

**Male human Ari4/Rog7:** CR 10; Medium-sized humanoid (5 ft. 10 in. tall); HD 4d8+7d6+22; hp 64; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+3 Dex, +5 +2 *glamered studded leather*, +2 *ring of protection*); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+2, +2 *ghost touch rapier*) or +12/+7 ranged (1d4+1, +1 *dagger*); SA Sneak attack +4d6; SQ Evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +6, Balance +10, Bluff +7, Climb +5, Decipher Script +3, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +9, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +8, Forgery +3, Gather Information +6, Hide +8, Innuendo +5, Intimidate +7, Intuit Direction +2, Jump +7, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +9, Pick Pocket +10, Read Lips +3, Ride +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5, Tumble +8, Use Magic Device +2, Use Rope +4; Dodge, Expertise, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

**Possessions:** Expensive clothes, dark clothes, rope, lock picks, +2 *ghost touch rapier*, 2 +1 *daggers*, +2 *ring of protection*, +2 *glamered studded leather*.

## JEBEDIAH MORTON, ACTUAL GHOST

**Male ghost Exp5:** CR 6; Medium-sized humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 5d12; hp 38; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection) or 12 (+1 Dex, +1 padded); Atk +4 melee (1d4, incorporeal touch) or +3 melee (1d6, rapier); SA Corrupting touch, horrific appearance (DC 14), manifestation, telekinesis; SQ Incorporeal, rejuvenation, turn resistance +4; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 12, Con -, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +5, Balance +6, Bluff +6, Hide +14, Intimidate +5, Intuit Direction +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (sea lore) +8, Listen +12, Profession (merchant) +7, Search +14, Spot +10; Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

**Possessions:** None.

## THE MUMMY

The nature of the mummified corpse in Captain Horngold's room can depend on the level of the party. For adventurers of level 3-6, it can be a standard mummy as described in the **MM**; for weaker or stronger parties, it could be as weak as a skeleton or zombie, or as powerful as a mohrg - or even a lich based on a high-level adept.

## THE ISLAND PRIEST

**Male human Adp3:** CR 2, Medium-sized humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 3d6+3, hp 15; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, dagger), +4 ranged (1d4, sling); SA Reanimation chant; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +2, Concentration +1, Handle Animal +1, Heal +3, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Scry+2, Spellcraft +5, Wilderness Lore +5; Dodge, Expertise, Mobility.

**Spells Known (3/3):** 0 - *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *guidance*; 1 - *burning hands*, *cause fear*, *obscuring mist*.

**Possessions:** Obsidian dagger, sling, 10 sling bullets.

## YELLOW SIGN CULTISTS (8)

**Male human Clt4:** CR 3; Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 12, 12, 13, 14, 14, 14, 15, 16; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leather); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, kukri) or +4 ranged (1d4+1, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +8, Disguise +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +6, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +6; Deflect Arrows, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (kukri), Improved Unarmed Strike, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Bluff).

**Possessions:** Kukri, leather armor, 2 daggers.

- GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -



# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

AN ADVENTURE INTENDED FOR CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 4 TO 7

*Cut-Throat's Gold* is an adventure for a party of level 4-7. GMs may need to tone down the opposition for weaker parties, as some of the potential adversaries have CRs in the 8-10 range.

## INTRODUCTION

The PCs may think their luck has changed for the better when they find what appears to be an old treasure map hidden somewhere in Freeport. Without tipping anyone else off to the existence of the map—for there are many in Freeport who would gladly cheat them of it, or simply cut their throats and take it from them—they must put together an expedition and find the location shown on the map.

The map shows a ruined city in the middle of an immense swamp, and after they make their way through the natural hazards of the area and reach the city, they find it far from unoccupied. Once a part of fallen Valossa, the city is inhabited by the descendants of the lizardfolk who were kept as servants by the Valossan serpent people. Over the centuries since the fall of Valossa, the lizardfolk have degenerated into a barbaric state, and worship the spirits of dead serpent folk as gods. To them, the city is holy ground, and they will defend it from outsiders at all costs.

To make matters worse, the treasure map is a clever forgery. Hidden in one part of the city is the base of an evil sorcerer, who is slowly building up an army of undead to take the city from the lizardfolk so that he can have free reign to recover the mystical (and valuable!) Valossan artifacts that lie there. The map is simply a lure to draw adventurers to the city, and this is not the first time he has used this ruse. So far, no group of adventurers has survived the natural hazards of the swamp and the attacks of the lizardfolk, but this is as he expected—they usually manage to weaken the lizardfolk before they are killed, and their animated corpses end up joining the ranks of his undead followers.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the treasure map (Handout E) falls into the hands of the PCs. There are various ways to accomplish this, according to the situation at the start of the adventure and the GM's preference.

### OH, LOOK, A MAP

The most straightforward approach is to have the PCs simply stumble across the map while they are going about their business. It might be washed up under the docks in a bottle, or folded and stuck between the planks of a pier.

## DEAD MAN'S GIFT

GMs who prefer a more dramatic introduction to the adventure might have the PCs hear the sounds of combat while walking through one of Freeport's seedier areas at night, and come upon a robbery in progress. They will be able to drive the attackers off easily enough, but the victim of the robbery is mortally wounded, and dies in their arms. With his dying breath, he pulls the map out and gives it to them, saying that this is what his attackers were after. If the party includes a character that can heal the robbery victim, then he could offer to share the treasure with them in exchange for saving his life, and join the party as an NPC.

## A RARE FIND

The PCs might find the map during the course of a previous adventure—as part of a treasure hoard, for example. Or maybe it is hidden inside an antique vase or other object that they find in a curio shop. If they can hide the map without being seen, it's theirs for nothing—otherwise the shop's proprietor will demand a ridiculously high price for it.

## A FRIEND OF A FRIEND

If the PCs have already made the acquaintance of a significant NPC in Freeport, such as Egil at the Temple of the God of Knowledge or a wealthy merchant, the GM might decide that this NPC has found the map, and sends them to recover the treasure.

## OUTFITTING AN EXPEDITION

Once they have the map, the PCs will have to find the location it shows, and make their way there. Depending on the group's preferred style of play, this can be abstracted (“You hire a ship to drop you off and wait offshore for three days for your return—it will cost you 150 gp.”) or played out in full, with all kinds of NPC interaction. Below are a few ideas for enlivening the preparation phase.

## GOVETOUS EYES

If the PCs are too open about the fact that they have a treasure map, they will find no shortage of people in Freeport who are interested in relieving them of it. They might be robbed of the map by a stealthy burglar or a formidable gang of pirates, and have to recover it. If the word gets out that the PCs have a map to Black-Hearted Billy's treasure, they might well find themselves inundated with offers from potential business partners, willing to fund an expedition in return for a share in the treasure; some of them might be planning ways to cheat the PCs and get the map from them to avoid sharing the treasure.

# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

## BLACK-HEARTED BILLY BELLMONT

*Of all the bloodthirsty, swaggering Pyrate Captaines whose deeds redden the pages of Freeporte's history, there is none to match William Belmont, known also as Blacke-Hearted Billy. Indee, so wylde and improbable have become the Tales that are told in the Ale-houses of his several Exploits, that it is meet to set down here the Facts of his Lyfe Pure and Simple, lest Posterity consider him either a Deville incarnate or a Fabrication born in the Fumes of the Rum-keg.*

*It is reported as a Certain Facte that Capt. Belmont was a hugely-built villain of great appetites and violent temperament, as like to Kill a man for Spilling his Drinke as for any other Wrong. But some of these Tales are surely exaggerated. It is said, for example, that he mixed Gunpowder with his Tobacco and Bloode with his Rum, and that he once beat the Renowned Capt. Sigurd Trolldottir at Arm-wrestling.*

*All sources concur, however, on the subject of Blacke-Hearted Billy's Treasure. When he came into Freeporte for the last time, his sloop the Firebrand was laden to the gunwales with Golde, Silver and Precious Stones, which he said had come from a Galleon that had suffered the Misfortune of crossing his Path. So badly damaged was his Quarry that it could not be taken as a Prize, and he ordered as much of its Cargo loaded aboard the Firebrand as that ship could hold. Rather than allowing the Remainder to sink with the stricken Galleon, he set his men to bringing the Treasure ashore in the ship's Long-boats, hiding it aginst his return and Killing all those besides himself who knew the Treasure's Hiding-Place.*

*The Treasure that Capt. Belmont brought into Freeporte on his last Voyage was one of the Greatest Prizes ever returned to the City. The Revelles that followed his Return lasted no less than Five Weekes, and became known as Blacke Billy's Swagfest for many years thereafter. The Treasure was allmost all Spent when, so the Story is told, Blacke-Hearted Billy fell in a Drunken Stupor from the After-Deck of his Ship into the Harbour, and Drowned.*

*Since then, many Soules have set forth in search of Blacke-Hearted Billy's Treasure, but it has never yet been found. Nor, indeede, have many been seen Alive, that have undertaken that perilous Queste.*

- Exerpted from *The Life of William Belmont, Known Also as Blacke-Hearted Billy: A True History of Freeporte Pyrates*

Captain Johannsen, Author  
Black Sails, Publisher

## ENGAGING A SHIP

If they do not have a ship of their own, the PCs will have to be very cautious in how they set about hiring one for the voyage. No ship's captain will be willing to sail to an unknown destination for undisclosed purposes without demanding a great deal of money in advance—almost certainly more than the PCs can afford. If a captain is told that the voyage is a treasure hunt, he will demand a half-share in the treasure; a more unscrupulous captain might well try to murder the PCs at sea, take the map and dump their bodies overboard, setting out after the treasure on his own.

## LAWS AND CUSTOMS

Although Freeport is a more settled and (mostly) more respectable city than it was in its heyday, there are those who maintain that it is still run by pirates. The difference between the rulers of today and those of the Golden Age is simply that they prey on their own people these days, and leave passing shipping alone. If any official source should get wind of the PCs' map, they could find themselves having to negotiate all sorts of obscure laws and regulations.

For example, they might find out that they need to apply for a Writ of Salvage to establish their right to go after the treasure, which entails both a hefty filing fee and a copy of the map to be held in the archives at the Fortress of Justice—from which it may well disappear into the pocket of a well-connected captain who will not hesitate to sink the PCs' ship in order to beat them to the treasure.

Alternatively—or perhaps additionally—they may have to go to court to establish their right to the treasure as the duly appointed heirs of Captain William Belmont, and prove that the map was not stolen. Needless to say, there will be no shortage of rival claimants who will swear up and down that the PCs stole the map from them, and many of these will have the resources to employ very expensive lawyers.

Or, some clerk in the Palace of Justice might unearth a hitherto-overlooked Statute of Treasure Trove, whereby the missing treasure of various renowned Freeport pirates—Bellmont among them—is claimed by the Sea Lord as the legitimate descendant of the city's founding fathers. Other obscure laws might also be “discovered” that will contradict the above Statute, creating a legal tangle that will take months (and a small fortune) to resolve.

## A CASE OF INFLATION

Even if the PCs manage to keep their map a secret, anyone who is seen to be outfitting an expedition will surely attract attention. Unless they are very discreet about making purchases of equipment, the PCs might find prices doubling or tripling overnight. Many Freeport merchants and tradesmen assume that anyone mounting a sizeable expedition is after pirate treasure, which either makes them fools (which in turn, makes it everyone's duty to part them from their money) or promises to make them incredibly wealthy (in which case it is only fair to share in their good fortune in advance).

# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

## THE VOYAGE

**L**ike the preparations, the voyage itself might be abstracted or played out at length. Potential encounters and other hazards can include pirates (of course!), bad weather, sea monsters, and competitors trailing the PCs' ship in the hope of following them to the treasure and then fighting it out for ownership.

## LANDFALL

**T**he map leads the PCs to a dense mangrove swamp at the edge of an island. The exact location of the island is left up to the GM; for a short voyage, the swamp might be on the western edge of Windward, while for a longer voyage it might be on an uncharted island far across the ocean.

The ship will have to anchor offshore while a landing party tries to find a way through the swamp by longboat. The swamp occupies the delta of a small river, and there are a few channels leading inland. Finding them is a matter of luck and persistence.

## SWAMP ENCOUNTERS

There are no set encounters in the swamp, but the GM might like to throw in a few random hazards to enliven the journey using the table below:

### SWAMP ENCOUNTERS

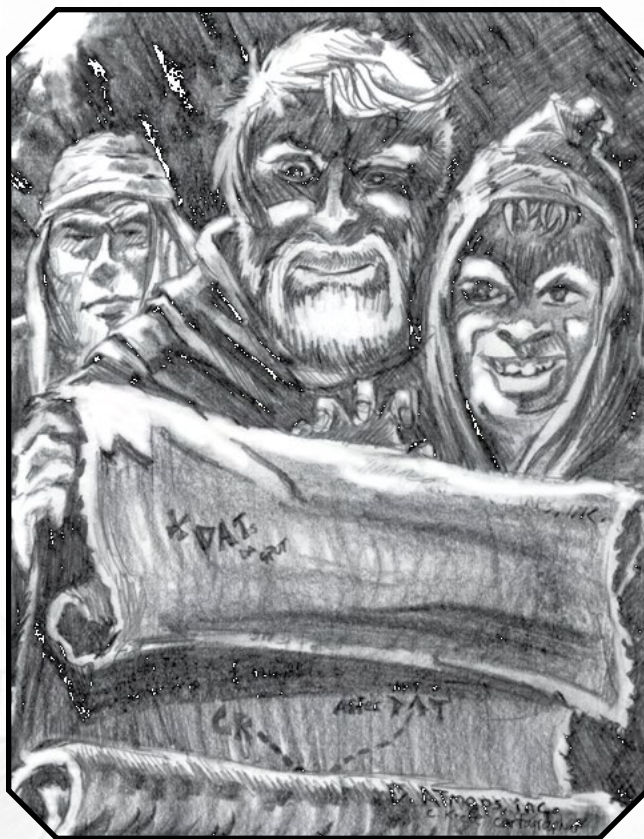
d%	Encounter
01-10	Assassin Vines
11-20	Crocodile
21-30	Giant Constrictor
31-35	Lizardfolk Patrol
36-50	Poison Thorn
51-55	Quicksand
56-70	Ripper Fish
71-75	Sea Snake
76-85	Shambling Mound
86-00	Soft Mud

### ASSASSIN VINES

One of the channels through the swamp is used as a trap by four assassin vines [MM, hp 28, 32, 27, 34]. The channel looks clear, apart from some innocuous looking overhanging vegetation. When any creature comes close enough, the assassin vines strike.

The vines may be identified on a Spot check [DC 20]; otherwise they look just like the rest of the surrounding vegetation. Characters with Wilderness Lore or Knowledge (nature) may substitute one of those skills for Spot if the player wishes.

The vines are spaced out in a zigzag pattern on either side of the channel, some 40 ft. apart. This means that while no character



can be attacked by more than one vine at a time, fleeing from one vine may well bring a victim into range of another.

If the PCs search the floor of the channel (which is about 4 ft. deep and 12 ft. wide at this point), they will find an assortment of fleshless bones and other debris—the remains of unfortunates killed by the assassin vines. Among the mud and bones, a thorough search will turn up 180 gp and a jeweled cloak-pin worth 75 gp.

### CROCODILES

Massive saltwater crocodiles haunt the swamp, feeding on what fish they can catch and upon any larger creatures that are unfortunate enough to cross their path.

The crocodiles typically remain still, submerged so that only their eyes and nostrils are above water. They prefer murky water where they cannot be seen, but a motionless crocodile is easily mistaken for a floating log even in clear water. While crocodiles are not gregarious creatures, a good hunting spot may attract up to half a dozen individuals.

Saltwater crocodiles are giant crocodiles, as described in the MM. They lie in wait for prey to come within reach (or they may try to get within striking range without being detected using their incredible Hide skill in the water), then attack with a sudden rush (Initiative +4 against targets who have not noticed them), trying to use their Improved Grab attack. Once they have a hold of their prey, they will try to drag it into the water to drown it. If the prey struggles, they will perform a “death roll,” spinning rapidly to stun and disorient their prey, which is treated as grappled until it can break free. The tail



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slap attack is used only in self-defense—if the crocodile's jaws are otherwise engaged in holding prey underwater or defending against an attack from another direction, for example.

## GIANT CONSTRICTOR

Giant constrictors are as described in the MM. Only the truly immense individuals (huge or larger) will hunt prey the size of a human, but a character that stumbles upon a giant constrictor resting in vegetation or shallow water will almost certainly provoke an attack, and the snake will defend itself until it sees an opportunity to escape.

## LIZARDFOLK PATROL

The lizardfolk (MM) do not venture far into the swamp as a rule, but do occasionally patrol the area around their settlement. A typical patrol consists of six adults led by one of the lieutenants (see *The Lizardfolk Settlement* below). They will only attack if they think they can defeat the party with minimal casualties. If the party looks strong or numerous, they will avoid contact and try to get back to the settlement to raise the alarm. 1d3 scouts will be sent out to monitor the PCs' progress while the rest of the tribe prepares for battle.

## QUICKSAND

Quicksand works in the same way as soft mud (see below), except that the character keeps sinking. A Swim check against DC 12 (modified as usual for armor and encumbrance) must be made each round; the character sinks one foot for each failed test. Once the character's head is under the quicksand, they begin to drown. Spells like *transmute rock to mud* will harden the quicksand, but anyone in it will be trapped in the rock until freed, taking 1d6 damage each round (halved by a successful Con check) from suffocation and/or crushing damage.

## POISON THORN

The poison thorn originally developed its defenses to protect itself against large browsing animals, but it is a hazard to all creatures that unknowingly encounter it. Outwardly, it looks like any other swamp or rainforest plant, but a Wilderness Lore, Knowledge (nature), or Profession (herbalist) check [DC 13] allows a character to recognize it and understand its danger.

The stems and leaves of the poison thorn are carpeted with tiny barbs, like the hairs of a stinging nettle, which break off at any contact. They cause no damage, but if they contact bare skin they inject a poisonous sap that causes an almost unbearable itching sensation accompanied by a mild fever. A character that enters an area of poison thorns must make a Fortitude save [DC 15] or suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all dice rolls for a number of days equal to 7 - the character's Con bonus. Treatment with appropriate herbs [Profession (herbalist) check, DC 13] will halve the healing time, as will any healing spell. Only *neutralize poison* spells or other magical effects that remove poison will bring immediate relief.

## RIPPER FISH

The channels are patrolled by a school of ripper fish, which hungrily attacks anything in the water. See the sidebar on the facing page for details on this deadly pest.

## SEA SNAKE

Despite the name, sea snakes are often found in mangrove swamps, reefs, wrecks, and other sources of cover. They are large vipers, as described in the MM, except that they have a flattened tail that allows them to swim at a rate of 30 ft. Their venom is more deadly than that of terrestrial snakes, and Fortitude saves have a DC of 15. Sea snakes are solitary, and will attack medium-sized and larger creatures only if they are attacked or threatened; otherwise, they will try to escape. Even so, stepping on a sea snake that is dozing in the muck at the bottom of a shallow channel definitely counts as an attack in the snake's mind!

## SHAMBLING MOUND

Swamps are favorite haunts of shambling mounds (MM). While in water, they look like a mat of floating vegetation, and on higher ground, they blend in very well with their surroundings. They attack from ambush, and will try to escape if they encounter determined resistance.

## SOFT MUD

By and large, the swamp is under about three feet of water, though this can vary between six inches and six feet overall. In places, there are steep drop-offs or unexpected holes that can trap an unwary wader. Anyone wading through the swamp without probing ahead with a pole, staff or spear-shaft (which hampers movement, reducing travel to ½ normal speed) runs the risk of suddenly encountering one of these drop-offs. Unless the PCs are probing ahead of them, the lead character must make a Spot or Wilderness Lore check against DC 12 every minute; if this check is failed, the character sinks into the mud. The depth to which a character sinks is proportional to the amount by which the check was failed, as shown on the table below. This added thrashing about is sure to attract the attention of any nearby creatures.

## SOFT MUD

Check failed by:	Depth	Effects
1-2	Knee	No move next round; Dex check (DC 14) or lose footgear and spend 1d3 rounds recovering it.
3-4	Waist	No move until Dex check (DC18) made, or character is pulled out; -2 to combat rolls until free.
5-6	Chest	No move until pulled out; -4 to combat rolls until free.
7-8	Neck	No move or other action until pulled out.
9+	Over head	No move or other action until pulled out. Swim check (DC20) each round to keep head above water.

# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

## RIPPER FISH SCHOOL

**Large Animal (individually Diminutive)**

**Hit Dice:** 6d8 (27 hp) (1 hp per individual)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** Swim 30ft.

**AC:** 11 (-1 size, +2 Dex)

**Attacks:** bite -1 melee, one per individual

**Damage:** 1 per successful bite

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** -

**Special Qualities:** -

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +7, Will -1

**Abilities:** Str 2, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 4, Cha 1

**Skills:** Spot +9

**Climate/Terrain:** Tropical fresh water

**Organization:** School (1)

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** 1/10 coins, 50% goods, 50% items

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** None

The ripper fish is a small fish with a narrow body. Side on, it looks almost like the blade of a cleaver; from the top or front, it is so narrow that it is difficult to see. While they are individually small, they have wickedly sharp teeth and voracious appetites, and a school can strip a human-sized creature to the bone in less than a minute.

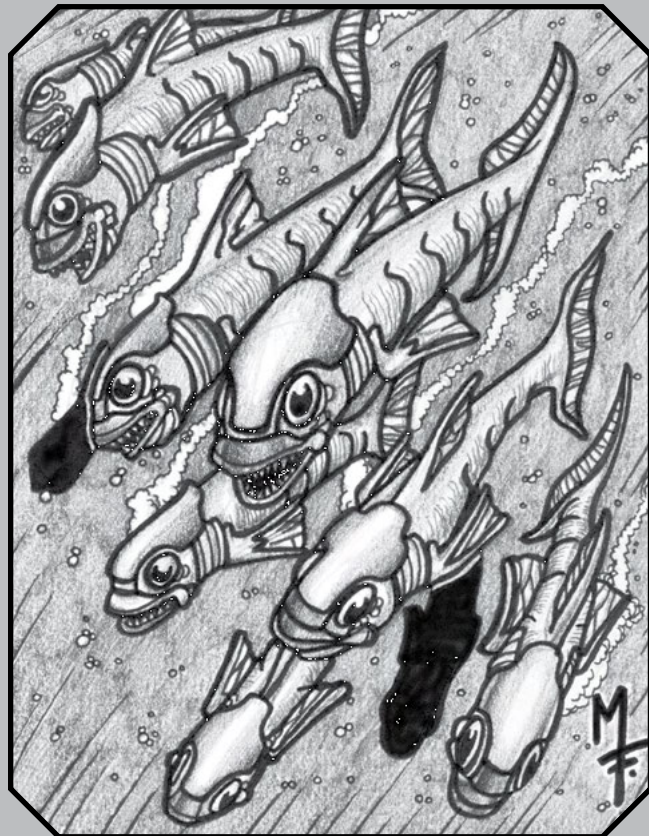
Schools of ripper fish are found in warm fresh waters. Because the school bands tightly together and attacks together, it is treated as a single creature. The waters they frequent are often murky with the stain of rotting vegetation, but they can detect potential prey by vibrations in the water.

The treasure associated with a school of ripper fish will consist of inedible items scattered across the bottom of its patrol area; a thorough search (and some considerable time) will be required to recover all of it.

### COMBAT

A school of ripper fish attacks in a swarming, biting mass, and does not retreat until its victim has been reduced to bones or the school itself is destroyed. Each individual in the school bites once per round for a single point of damage, but when multiplied by forty or more individuals, it makes for a formidable enemy. Its attacks are divided more or less evenly among the number of targets within reach.

Each point of damage caused to the school destroys a single individual, reducing the school's number of attacks along with its hit points.



## TREE SPIDER

As their name suggests, tree spiders live in the canopy of tropical forests, where they prey on anything their own size or smaller. They are tiny monstrous spiders, as described in the MM. Although they are able climbers, they have been known to fall out of trees onto unwary passers-by; this is often as much of a surprise for the spider as it is for their unwitting host, and spiders tend to bite first and then try to escape if they feel confused or threatened. Uncomfortable on solid ground,

they instinctively try to climb the first thing they find—which may be a PC.

The worst-case scenario is where a spider gets inside a character's clothing, either by dropping out of a tree at just the wrong time or by climbing onto the character from the ground or from the inside of a boat where it had dropped earlier. A Dex check against DC 15 is required each round to remove a piece of clothing without panicking the spider and getting bitten (remember, there are no armor or Dex modifiers to AC if the spider is inside the character's clothing); once panicked, the spider will bite once per round until it is killed.

# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

## THE RUINED CITY

**A**top an island of higher ground in the middle of the swamp are the ruins of an ancient Valossan settlement. Because of the dense foliage that surrounds it, the city is almost impossible to see until the PCs actually reach it.

A successful [DC 18] Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check confirms that the ruins are Valossan in style. Characters without this skill, but who have seen Valossan artifacts in the past, will recognize the similarity on a successful Int check against the same DC.

The city is divided into three zones; at the western end, where the swamp has encroached, is the settlement of the lizardfolk. At the far eastern end, abutting the bluff upon which stands the acropolis, is the territory of the undead controlled by the necromancer Thomas Hariot. In between is a no-mans-land, which usually remains undisturbed apart from undead raids on the lizardfolk and their reprisals.

## THE LIZARDFOLK SETTLEMENT

The lizardfolk were originally the servants of the Valossan serpent folk who founded the city. When the city was ruined in the great cataclysm that destroyed the continent of Valossa, the few surviving serpent folk carried on as best they could, waiting for some word to come from other survivors. Eventually, they died out, but their lizardfolk servants survived. Even after they died, some of the serpent folk could not bear to leave the city, and remained in spirit form

to supervise the lizardfolk and keep alive what they could of Valossan civilization. Over time, the lizardfolk's recollection of events has become garbled, and they now revere the spirits of the serpent folk as gods, believing that the ruined city is a great shrine to them that must be defended from all who would defile it.

## A QUIET APPROACH

The notes on the locations below assume that the alarm has not been raised. If the PCs have been spotted approaching the settlement, the lizardfolk will be assembled here, armed and armored to defend their home. They will try to use their numerical advantage to best effect, surrounding the intruders and attacking them from all sides. The superior lizardfolk (the two lieutenants, the chief and the shaman) will try to engage the player characters directly, while their lesser brethren get in as many attacks as they can in support of their leaders. Any intruders who are taken alive will be sacrificed at the Temple of Yig.

### 1. CHIEF'S HUT

Unless the alarm has been raised, the lizardman chief is here with 2d6 regular lizardfolk in attendance. Built lean-to fashion against a partly-ruined stone wall and made of timber and dried vegetation harvested from the swamp, the hut is a little more luxuriously furnished than the others, but is still squalid by any civilized standard. Apart from the chief's belongings, there is nothing of any great value here except for a tall candelabrum made of bronze in the shape of a rearing, seven-headed cobra (150 gp). Small pinches of aromatic herbs are burning in the



# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

candle-sockets, filling the hut with a strange but not unpleasant fragrance.

## 2. TRIBAL HUTS

The bulk of the lizardfolk live in crudely built huts made of salvaged stonework, timber, and leaves. Each has a 50% chance of being occupied by 1d4 adult lizardfolk unless the alarm has been raised.

## 3. LIEUTENANTS' HUT

The tribe's two lieutenants live in a large hut that is built within the ruined wall of a Valossan building. There is a 50% chance that each lieutenant will be in the hut if the alarm has not been raised; if one or both are absent, they will have left their war gear in the hut.

## 4. SHAMAN'S HUT

Outside the ruined temple stands a small shrine that is almost intact. It is now the home of the tribe's shaman. A small brazier burns constantly inside, the dried leaves and berries used for fuel flooding the hut with a dense aromatic smoke. Any non-lizardfolk who spends more than five minutes in the hut must make a Fortitude saving throw against DC 14 or suffer a headache from the smoke that imposes a -1 penalty to all dice rolls for one hour.

## 5. RUINED TEMPLE

The front of the temple is partially collapsed, and the sagging columns have been shored up with tree-trunks and stacks of stones salvaged from other buildings. Both inside and out, the temple is covered with elaborate carvings of serpent folk

### THE LIZARDFOLK

The tribe consists of 46 adults, 23 non-combatant hatchlings, two lieutenants, the chief and the shaman. In addition, there are 6 eggs buried in the hatchery. The adults are as described in the MM; game statistics for the four exceptional individuals are given here.

#### THE CHIEF

**Lizardfolk male War6/Drd4:** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid (lizardfolk); HD 12d8+12; hp 66; Init +3 (Dex); Speed 30ft; AC 20 (+5 natural, +3 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atk +15/+10 melee (1d12+5, greataxe) or +12/+12/+7 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws), +10 melee (1d4+1, bite); or +13/+8 ranged (javelin 1d6+1); SA Animal companion (deinonychus; see MM), nature sense, trackless step, woodland stride; SQ Resist nature's lure; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Animal Empathy +4, Balance +9, Concentration +3, Handle Animal +4, Intuit Direction +6, Jump +8, Knowledge (nature) +6, Spellcraft +2, Swim +10, Wilderness Lore +8; Cleave, Great Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

**Spells Prepared (5/4/3):** 0 - *cure minor wounds* (x3), *guidance*, *purify food and drink*; 1 - *cure light wounds* (x2), *faerie fire*, *magic fang*; 2 - *heat metal*, *produce flame*, *summon swarm*.

**Possessions:** +2 *greataxe* (Valossan relic, worth double the market price), tame deinonychus (hp 36).

#### THE SHAMAN

**Lizardfolk Male Clr6:** CR 7; Medium-sized humanoid (lizardfolk); HD 8d8; hp 37; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+5 natural, +2 leather, +2 large shield); Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, club) or +6/+6 (1d4+1, 2 claws); +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA Turn undead; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +6, Concentration +4, Heal +6, Jump +9, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +6, Swim +7; Combat Casting, Multiattack, Scribe Scroll.

**Spells Prepared (5/4+1/4+1/2+1):** 0 - *cure minor wounds* (x2), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*; 1 - *bane*, *bles*, *detect undead*, *obscuring mist\**, *sanctuary*; 2 - *aid*, *barkskin\**; *cure moderate wounds*, *death knell*, *spiritual weapon*; 3 - *plant growth\**, *searing light*.

**Domains:** Plant and Water. \*Domain spell

**Possessions:** Club, 2 small gourds (vials) of holy water, *amulet of undead turning*, *scroll of summon monster III*.

Note: the shaman is presented here as a cleric, but GMs will find Green Ronin's *The Shaman's Handbook* an invaluable source of ideas and different powers, to make him a character the players will not soon forget. If you are using *The Shaman's Handbook*, you might want to consider giving the shaman a crocodile totem, and the taboos *never kill except for food* (though this says nothing about causing injury!) and *eat only uncooked meat*.

#### THE LIEUTENANTS

**Lizardfolk male War4:** CR 4; Medium-sized humanoid (lizardfolk); HD 6d8+6; hp 33, 30; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+9 natural, +2 large shield, +2 leather armor); Atk +7 melee (1d10+1, greatclub) or +6/+6 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); +4 melee (1d4, bite); AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +8, Jump +9, Swim +9; Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

**Possessions:** Greatclub, large shield, leather armor.

# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

## SSVALISH

**Male serpent person ghost Clr 6:** CR 8; Medium-sized humanoid (serpent folk); HD 6d12; hp 37; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd Fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 11 (+1 deflection) or 14 (+4 scale mail, vs. ethereal only); Atk +4 incorporeal touch (1d4, corrupting touch) or +6 melee (1d6+1/1d6, quarterstaff, vs. ethereal only); SA Manifestation, corrupting touch, corrupting gaze; SQ Rejuvenation, turn resistance +4; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +4, Hide +10, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +12, Search +11, Spot +12; Improved Initiative, Great Fortitude, Leadership.

**Spells Prepared (5/4+1/4+1/3+1):** 0 - *detect magic, guidance, light, read magic, resistance*; 1 - *bane, cause fear, command, detect secret doors\**; *invisibility to undead*; 2 - *calm emotions, consecrate, detect thoughts\**; *hold person, spiritual weapon*; 3 - *bestow curse, dispel magic\*, prayer, searing light*.

**Domains:** Knowledge and Magic. \*Domain spell.

**Possessions:** None

enjoying the blessings of Yig, and supervising lizardfolk in the building of the city.

At the far end of the temple is the high altar, with a statue of Yig looming over it in the form of an immense hooded cobra. The altar is heavily stained with blood, and has clearly been used for sacrifice recently, although there are no remains of previous victims upon it. In front of the altar stands a crude, stone-lined fire-pit containing a quantity of ashes and burned bones.

Beside and behind the altar is heaped the tribe's entire treasure: 3,325 gp in assorted coins, 1,250 gp in jewelry, a *rod of the viper*, a *ring of animal friendship*, and a copy of the *Canticle of Yig* written in Valossan on cured lizard skin. Any character that spends 48 hours (over a minimum of six days) studying the *canticle* gains a permanent +2 insight bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks regarding Yig. The *canticle* would be considered an extremely valuable piece to any collector of Valossan articles, and would easily bring 5,000 gp on the open market.

The spirit of Ssvalish, the last priest of the temple, still dwells here; he is described below.

## SSVALISH

Ssvalish was the last priest of Yig, and the last surviving member of the city's serpent folk. In his declining years he devoted himself to educating the lizardfolk of the city and teaching them the ways of Yig. He was partially successful;

although the lizardfolk did not abandon the worship of their own god, they came to regard Yig as a powerful minor deity, and after Ssvalish died and his spirit began to haunt the temple, succeeding generations of lizardfolk came to regard him as a minor deity in his own right, rather than merely the spirit of a revered priest.

While bemused and a little embarrassed at being regarded as a god, Ssvalish still takes an interest in the welfare of the lizardfolk, and although he cannot leave the temple, he will do his best to punish anyone who does them harm. However, he is concerned with the undead attacks that have taken place of late, and will try to recruit any living outsiders (such as captured PCs brought to the temple for sacrifice) to help scout out the undead threat and bring it to an end. He will even offer part of the tribe's treasure (to the value of 2,000 gp) as a reward for stopping the necromancer so that the lizardfolk can reclaim the eastern end of the city.

## 6. HATCHERY

At the center of the settlement, protected by tribal huts on all sides, is a huge mound of rotting vegetation, 12 ft. high and 25 ft. in diameter. This is where the tribe puts its eggs to be incubated, aided by the heat from the rotting leaves. After the temple, this is the most vital part of the settlement, and the lizardfolk will defend it at all costs.

## THE LAIR OF THE NECROMANCER

**T**he PCs are not the first visitors to the ruined city. About five years ago, a sorcerer named Thomas Hariot discovered the place, and realized that it could be a treasure trove of Valossan artifacts and lost knowledge. He has set up a base in a group of ruined buildings at the eastern end of the city, below the cliffs of the acropolis, and in addition to searching the eastern ruins he has launched a campaign to exterminate the lizardfolk so that he can have the city and its treasures entirely to himself.

First, he found the lizardfolk's burial ground, and created an army of skeletons and zombies. Using his undead troops to raid their settlement, he slowly built up the numbers of his force, but as the lizardfolk became more wary and better prepared against his attacks, he found that they destroyed more of his undead than they replaced with their own corpses.

## A LURE FOR THE GREEDY

A few months ago, Hariot had an idea. Creating a series of false treasure maps (like the one the PCs followed to the city), he has lured parties of adventurers to attack the lizardfolk, thus ensuring a continuous supply of corpses for his necromantic operations without risking his existing troops in battle. In this way, he hopes to build up a strong enough army of undead to overwhelm the lizardfolk and wipe them out. With the last of the lizardfolk dead and animated to serve him, Hariot intends to scour the city stone by stone and extract every last morsel of Valossan wealth and knowledge for himself.

# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -



## 7. MAUSOLEUM

Hariot uses this crudely repaired hut to store corpses awaiting re-animation. It currently contains the bodies of six lizardfolk, two humans, a dwarf and a halfling. All have been stripped of any valuables and equipment.

## 8. CORRAL

A few half-ruined buildings have been linked together with rubble and brushwood to create a makeshift stockade to contain Hariot's undead servitors. The corral currently contains 16 zombies and 12 skeletons of various races—predominantly lizardfolk, but with a few humans, as well—all of which are medium zombies (or skeletons) as per the MM. The zombies and skeletons cannot get out of the corral unless someone lets them out—or unless the presence of the PCs provokes them so much that they manage to break out themselves...

## 9. PARTS STORE

This large building surprisingly still has all four walls, and the roof has been crudely patched with tree branches. It contains bones and severed rotting body parts of all kinds, stacked like cordwood according to type—legs here, arms there, torsos in one place and skulls in another. It's a gruesome array.

These are the remains of Hariot's fallen troops, as far as he has been able to recover them, as well as bits and pieces that were insufficient to animate on their own. Hariot is keeping the parts in the hope that he will be able to use them to repair damaged undead, or even to create new undead from miscellaneous pieces.

## 10. WORKSHOP

This cave is guarded by two Ogre zombies (large zombies according to the MM; hp 27, 32), and contains a large marble workbench looted from a ruined building, and various chests and cupboards for storing equipment. Lying on the table is a patchwork corpse in the process of being assembled; its legs are almost the same length, it has a lizard man torso and a human skull, and one arm of either species. Unless alerted by the sounds of combat outside, Hariot will be in here, sewing his creation together with plant fibers and sinew (for the fleshy parts) and wire (for the bony parts).

## 11. HARIOT'S LAIR

This large cave is what serves as Hariot's rather squalid living quarters, and is a mess; a jumble of Valossan artifacts, including furniture, jewelry and books. The books are stacked together on a series of tables against one wall, along with Hariot's notes on the Valossan language; the other items are heaped here and there, in no particular order. This represents a treasure trove of Valossan materials that could sell for a fortune in Freeport.

Alongside Hariot's notes are several copies of a map identical to the one that led the PCs here, with the same wording. If the players do not realize that Hariot has been making the maps to lure people here, their characters may be permitted an Int check to see the truth [DC 10: Hariot has been manufacturing maps to lure people here; DC 15: he has done so to weaken the lizardfolk and maintain his own supply of undead].

# - GUT-THROAT'S GOLD -

## THOMAS HARIOT

**Male human Sor10:** CR10; Medium-sized humanoid; HD 10d4+20; hp 42; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 *amulet of natural armor*; +1 dusty rose *ioun stone*; Atk +7 melee or +6 ranged (1d4+2, *dagger of venom*); SA Summon familiar; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14; Int 17; Wis 13, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Alchemy +11, Concentration +10, Craft (construct) +11\*, Craft (embalming) +12\*, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (anatomy) +14\*, Profession (scholar) +9, Scry +11, Spellcraft +13; Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Heighten Spell, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Spell Penetration.

\*Expanded descriptions of these skills can be found in *Secret College of Necromancy*.

**Spells Known (9/5/4/3/2/1):** 0 - *dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, read magic, resistance*; 1 - *cause fear, chill touch, hold portal, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement*; 2 - *ghoul touch, scare, see invisibility, spectral hand*; 3 - *gentle repose, halt undead, vampiric touch*; 4 - *enervation, fear*; 5 - *animate dead*.

**Spells per day:** 6/7/7/7/5/3.

**Possessions:** *Amulet of natural armor* +2, robes, *dagger of venom*, dusty rose *ioun stone*, rat familiar, contents of cave.



## FINISHING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs have dealt with the lizardfolk and Hariot, they will have to decide what to do next. Kind-hearted GMs may decide to simply let them get back to Freeport, unload their booty, and enjoy their fortunes; crueler ones, though, might have some fun with the ideas below.

### A HEAVY LOAD

While there is a considerable amount of treasure between the lizardfolk's hoard and Hariot's collection of Valossan artifacts, moving everything out through the swamp exposes the PCs to the same risks they faced coming in—only this time, they will be much more heavily weighed down.

### EVERYONE HAS HIS PRICE

Even if the PCs manage to load all the treasure onto longboats and get it aboard their ship, their problems may only be beginning. Every member of the ship's crew will demand a share, and regardless of whether or not their demands are met, they may well decide to keep it all for themselves, either killing or marooning the PCs if they get a chance.

### HAUNTED

Svalish “the ghostly serpent priest” will react badly if the party wipes out the lizard folk tribe over whom he has watched for centuries, especially after learning of Hariot and the undead. If they slaughter the lizardfolk simply to take their treasure, he may take it upon himself to haunt the PCs for the rest of their lives (or until they can somehow get rid of him). On the other hand, if the PCs simply defend themselves from the lizardfolk, help to wipe out the undead, and then put Svalish in touch with the surviving serpent people in Freeport (K'Stallo would be ideal, since he is already working to restore Valossan civilization), they could gain a valuable, if somewhat unorthodox, ally.

### PRICELESS ANTIQUITIES

Hariot's collection of Valossan books and artifacts poses a particular problem. The total value is left to the GM to decide, but even if all the collectors in Freeport were to spend ever copper piece they had, they would not be able to come close to the true market value of this material, so the PCs may have difficulty turning this into cash. Also, the basic laws of economics dictate that the price of Valossan antiquities will collapse if this much material is released into the market all at once, which may make the PCs some enemies in Freeport's antiques trade as well as failing to net them as much as they might hope for.

Hariot's notes on the Valossan language would be worth 250-500 gp to a collector. A character that spends time studying the notes in conjunction with three or more manuscripts in the Valossan language can spend 1 skill point to learn to read Valossan. A second skill point allows the character to speak the language (as the skill).

# ~ FAIR SALVAGE ~

AN ADVENTURE INTENDED FOR CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 7 TO 9

## INTRODUCTION

The great siege cannons that form the mainstay of the city's defenses (*Freeport*, p. 74) were salvaged from a mysterious wreck over 200 years ago. Now, the relatives of that ship's crew have come to Freeport to find out what happened on that stormy night—and they want the cannons back, along with everything else that was looted from the wreck.

The adventure starts with rumors of a huge and mysterious ship sighted off the Serpent's Teeth, running against the wind so fast that the swiftest privateer couldn't get within more than a mile of her. A day later, people start turning up dead. A curio shop is first—it is thoroughly ransacked and its owner is found dead by very grisly means. One of the wealthier merchants is found dead in his private museum, with one object missing and a fortune in antiques left untouched. Then, *something* breaks into one of the towers of the Old City, killing several guards before being driven off by magic.

The PCs are drafted by some patron organization (a merchant family, the God Squad, the Sea Lord's Guard, or other interested parties) to establish whether the crimes are linked, find out what is behind them, and put an end to them. They'll find out all right, but whether they escape with their lives and sanity intact is another matter. If they are very lucky and extremely diplomatic, they may get to act as go-betweens in some delicate negotiations between the council and the newcomers. They might even have to handle the secret manufacture of some non-functional replicas of the siege cannon, and find a way to switch them with the real ones without anyone finding out.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The first part of this adventure consists of a number of rumors and incidents that lead up to the attack on the Old City. Ideally, these events should take place over a few days—perhaps even as long as a week. In order to not have them stand out too obviously, the beginning of the adventure might be interleaved with some other action—perhaps the end of another adventure, or a few incidents taken from among the adventure hooks presented in this or the *Freeport* sourcebook. This will ensure that the events seem to form part of an overall “background noise” of life in Freeport.

Of course, this is a decision for the individual GM, taking into account the group's preferred style of play. There is certainly nothing wrong with having the initial events of this adventure unfold against a backdrop of comparative tranquility, but for dramatic purposes it can be more effective if the PCs suddenly realize that the assault on the Old City—which is unusual even for Freeport—is linked to a previous series of events, and set out to investigate them hurriedly, looking for any clues before something else can happen.

## STRANGE RUMORS

### THE UNKNOWN SHIP

The *Eliza Red*, newly-arrived from a far-off port, puts into Freeport, and talk spreads of a huge and mysterious ship they sighted a few days out from the Serpent's Teeth. All the ship's officers and many of the crew saw it and were struck by its great size and curious appearance. They claim it was unlike any vessel that has ever been seen in Freeport—and Freeport sees ships of all sizes from every part of the world.

For a couple of days, the talk in most of the city's taverns is of this mysterious ship. Where did it come from, and why has a nation that can build such ships not been heard of before? What manner of crew would work such a magnificent vessel? Where were they headed, and what was the purpose of their voyage?

There is no shortage of theories, either. Some say that the reflections caused by the sunrise on a still sea can play tricks on the eyes, and that if there ever was a ship there in the first place, it was certainly made to seem larger by some kind of optical illusion. Others contend that it was just a ship of a type the crew had never seen before, and that if they would only stop telling tales and describe it accurately, it would be found to be a perfectly ordinary ship from some far-off nation—uncommon in the waters off the Serpent's Teeth, but far from unknown. Much debate is given over to comparing the description of the mysterious ship with the known characteristics of ships from all races and all parts of the world.

Others are more inclined to believe the reports. The crew of the *Eliza Red* is not a collection of green recruits, and her officers are seasoned both in trade and in war. There is also the disturbing detail that the strange ship seemed to be running against the wind, and yet her sails were full and she was making good speed. Of course, some races are known to use

*Massive mysterious vessel sighted off Serpent's Teeth!*

Recent headline, *The Shipping News*



## - FAIR SALVAGE -



magic to ensure that their vessels always have a favorable wind in their sails, but to outfit a ship of this size with such an enchantment would be fantastically expensive. Some conclude that it must be a ghost ship, whose misty shape caused observers to mistake its lines—but others point out that the sighting took place in calm weather and good visibility, and the ship looked solid enough to those who saw it. Some point out that the sighting took place at such a distance that, even with the aid of their telescopes, the officers of the *Eliza Red* could not make out the figures of the crew or any other details that, had they been seen, would surely lead to a swift—and perfectly rational—explanation.

Even so, a lot of old, half-believed stories about ghost and demon ships suddenly resurface, and are told, retold and embellished in taverns across the city.

### THE LOST PRIZE

Just as the talk of the mystery ship is dying down, another sighting is reported. The *Sea Lion*, a warship from a mainland nation, was hunting pirates in the waters off the Serpent's Teeth, and had been stalking the notorious freebooter "Bloody"

Jack Bedlow for several days. They finally found his ship, the *Fury*, chasing down a huge ship of a design unlike that of any race or nation. The *Fury* is widely renowned as one of the swiftest ships on the sea, and incredibly, this much heavier ship was pulling away from her. A projecting headland briefly interrupted the *Sea Lion's* view of the chase, and when they rounded the point, they found the *Fury* in flames, with every man aboard dead, and its would-be prize nowhere to be seen.

### THE UNFORTUNATE ANTIQUARIAN

A few days later, one of Freeport's dealers in antiques and curiosities is found dead, his shop ransacked. The identity of the dealer and the location of his shop are left to the GM to decide, according to the needs of the campaign; Argyle McGill (*Freeport*, p. 79) is one possibility, although the GM may want to keep him alive for future adventures. The GM can feel free to invent another dealer just for the purposes of this adventure.

The first customer of the day found the scene—the door unlocked, the shop's contents scattered, the furniture reduced to kindling, and the proprietor lying on the floor in several pieces, badly charred but still identifiable.

If the PCs happen to be on the scene by some chance, they can glean the information listed below. Otherwise, contacts with the Sea Lord's Guard might be able to fill a player in on what was found.

If the PCs get to inspect the scene in person, a cursory examination yields the following information:

**Search check, DC 10:** the wood of the front door is blackened around the lock-plate, and the lock itself seems to have been melted, as if by intense heat.

**Appraise or Knowledge (arcana) check, DC 15:** among the scattered contents of the shop are several pieces of considerable value; either the murderer was not interested in profit, or he/she/it did not realize their value.

**Spellcraft or Heal check, DC 20:** the damage suffered by the corpse is consistent with *fireball* spell. However, there is none of the widespread fire damage that one would expect from a *fireball* exploding in the shop.

**Intelligence check, DC 10:** the shop's furnishings were reduced to splinters by some incredible force, but they show no signs of burning.

There is no inventory list of the shop to be found, so there is no way of knowing what, if anything, was taken. Enquiries about

*Noted cutthroat "Bloody" Jack Bedlow meets fiery end!*

Recent headline, *The Shipping News*

## *Fear grips Freeport after antique purveyor brutally slain!*

Recent headline, *The Shipping News*

the proprietor are hampered by the fact that everyone who knew him is afraid to speak for fear that they might be the next victims of whoever (or *whatever*) killed him; some are making hurried arrangements to leave Freeport for the mainland, while others flat out refuse to speak to anyone. There is no indication, however, that the proprietor recently acquired anything unusual or got on anyone's bad side through a shady deal.

### EYES IN THE DARKNESS

The brutal murder of the antique dealer casts a pall over the surrounding area. Some people are afraid to go out at night, while others form themselves into vigilante groups and patrol the streets in search of the evildoer(s). There are several cases of mistaken identity that result in innocent people (innocent of the murder, at least) being stopped, beaten, and perhaps even lynched.

An almost palpable sense of nervousness hangs over the neighborhood, but the rest of the city carries on its business as usual—a murder, however gruesome, is not a serious thing in Freeport, so long as it happens at a comfortable distance.

Stories begin to spread about strange creatures seen roaming the city at night. They are never clearly seen and are described as nothing more than distorted shadows slipping in and out of the darkness. The stories all tell of glowing red eyes, and tall, misshapen figures as thin as an elf but as tall as an ogre. Despite these reports, the vigilante patrols, the Guard, nor any of the various groups of adventurers that follow up on the rumors ever encounters any of these creatures, and the stories are widely put down to tricks of the shadows, overactive imaginations and excessive ale.

### THE COLLECTOR

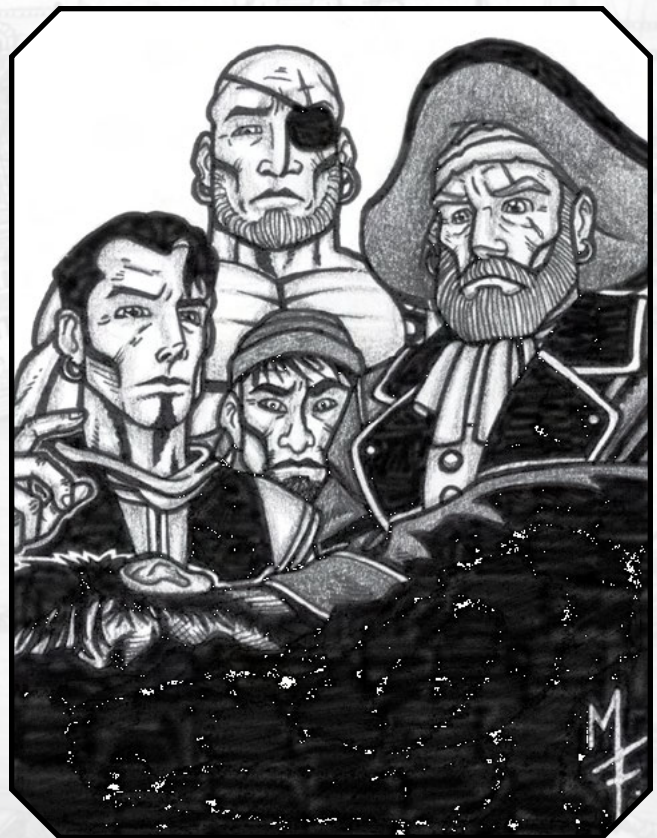
**T**he first break in the case—and the PCs' first direct opportunity to become involved—comes when a wealthy merchant and collector of antiquities is found murdered in his study. If this adventure is being played after the PCs have completed *The Soul of the Serpent* (pp. 4-40), this merchant could be Matthias Brack (see p. 8 for descriptions of Brack and his home). Otherwise, the GM can improvise a merchant, or pick one from the *Freeport* sourcebook whose death will send shockwaves through the city without causing any serious disruption to the Captains' Council or the Merchants' Guild.

The PCs can become involved at this point through a prior association with the merchant's family, or they may simply be hired to solve the murder because they have a reputation for dealing with unusual cases. The murder of a prominent citizen is serious business, and the PCs might also become involved

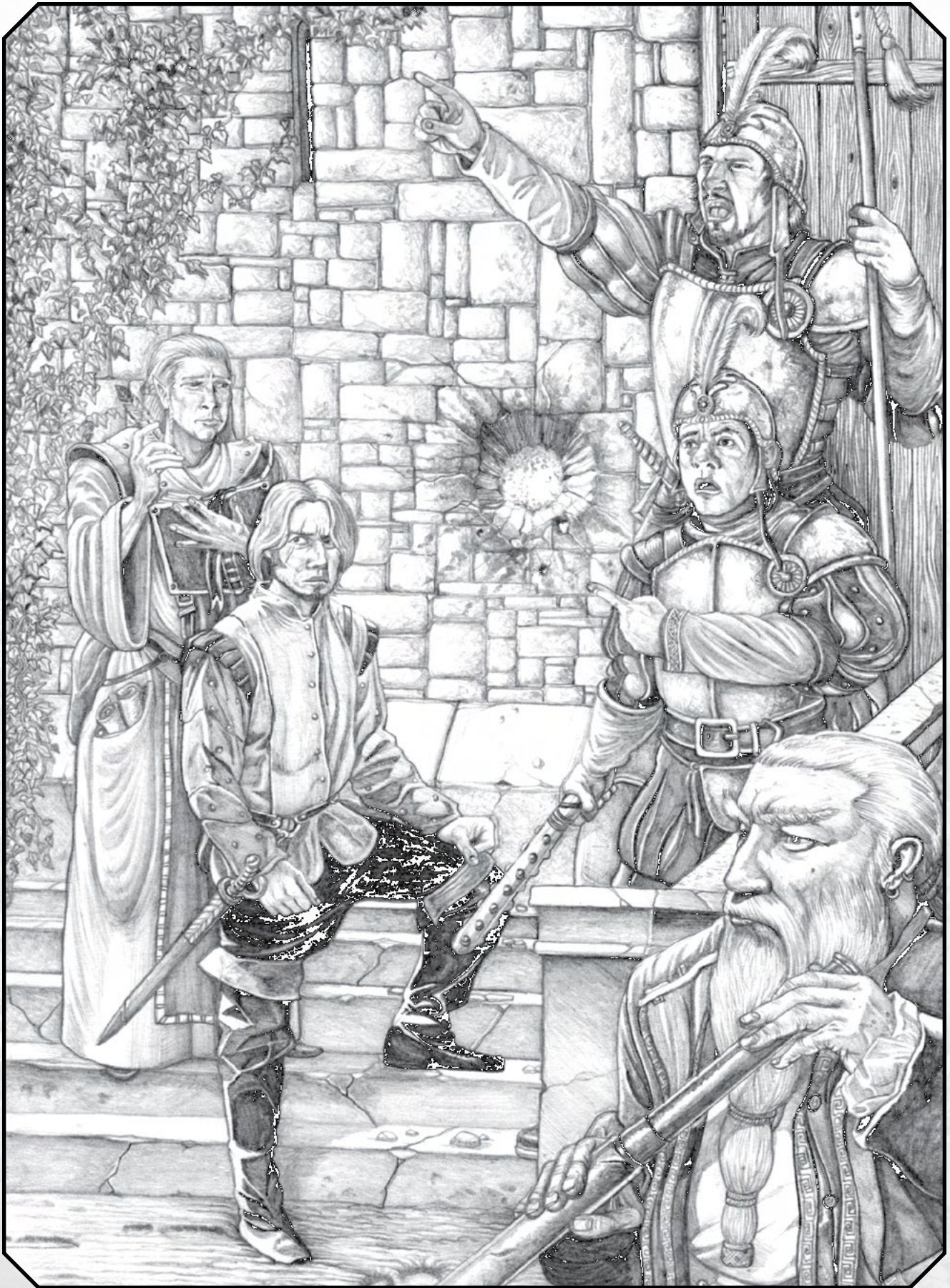
through contacts in the Sea Lord's Guard, the God Squad, or one of the merchant militias.

The merchant's study is found in a similar condition to the antique shop. The intruder apparently entered through a window; as in all well-to-do houses in Freeport, the window is barred, but the bars have been pulled apart, apparently with great force. A Search check [DC 15] while examining the bars will reveal some discoloration of the stone at the points where the bars are anchored to the building, consistent with extreme heating. The merchant is heavily mutilated and burned, and the room's contents are scattered about, as if by a tornado. Most perplexing of all, the attack seems to have taken place in complete silence—none of the merchant's family or servants heard anything at all.

The difference in this instance is that it is possible to tell that something was taken. Like most collectors, this merchant was never happier than when he was showing off his latest find to friends and business associates. Less than a week ago, he had invited several other collectors to his house to admire his latest acquisition—an ornate bowl—made of an unknown metal and about the size of half a coconut—that was taken from the same wreck as the siege cannons, over 200 years ago. The bowl is



- FAIR SALVAGE -



*Old City under attack! Guards repel mysterious midnight raid!*

Recent headline, *The Shipping News*

nowhere to be found, and it seems likely that it is what the intruder was after. The merchant had seen it in the collection of an acquaintance over 20 years ago, and had been trying to persuade its owner to sell it to him ever since. Everyone in the household remembers that he was jubilant when he finally bought the piece from its owner's heirs after he died a week ago. This detail may lead the players to conclude that they are on the trail of a vengeful ghost. Let them—they will find out the truth soon enough.

Some preliminary sketches had been made of the bowl, in preparation for an attempt to decipher the inscriptions upon it, and also to try and establish how it had been made—for the metal was impervious even to being scratched by a diamond. A Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check [**DC 15; +2 synergy bonus for 5+ ranks in Knowledge [arcana]**] made by a character who has seen any of the city's five great siege cannon at close range will reveal some similarities in the decoration, though the sketches are very basic and it is not possible to tell more. The sketches are not sufficient for a spell caster to use *locate object* or a scrying device to find the bowl.

## ASSAULT ON THE TOWERS

The following night, a great commotion breaks out in the Old City, centered on the southwest tower. Alarms are sounded in the Fortress of Justice, and the Sea Lord's Guard turns out in force, along with several of the private militias maintained by powerful citizens. It seems as though the tower—and perhaps the whole city—is under attack.

By the time the PCs reach the tower, the commotion will have died down, and there will be a large crowd of people—mostly armed—wondering what happened. A Gather Information check [**DC 15**] made among the crowd will reveal that the tower was indeed attacked, but no one is quite sure of the nature of the attackers. Estimates of their numbers run from four to twenty, and it seems that no one—not even the guards who fought them off—got a good enough look at them to be able to give even a basic description. They were tall, and dark, and possibly humanoid, but that's about all anyone seems to know.

Examining the entrance to the tower [**Search check, DC 10**] reveals the same evidence of heat as at the previous two murder scenes. None of the guards is hurt, although there is a patch of wall, about the size of a human head, which is blackened; close examination will reveal that the stone in that area has melted and reset, giving it a glassy appearance.

It will be impossible to talk to any of the guards, or get a comment from anyone in authority, at this time. The guards are too busy making sure the tower is secure, and their commanders are busy investigating the incident, trying to discover the nature of the attackers—and the reason why the attack was suddenly broken off. A few superstitious souls are collecting dirt from the threshold of the tower, in case it has some property that drove these unknown creatures away. A few enterprising souls are digging it up with the intention of selling it, until the guards move them away.

## INSIDE INFORMATION

After the commotion has died down and the crowd has dispersed, the PCs may be able to tap some contacts in the Guard or among the city's leadership to get some information on what happened. The guard captain at the time of the attack was Anastasia Hatch [**female human War 6, hp 53**], a seasoned and well-respected officer; by pulling a few strings, the PCs will be able to question her personally about the attack.

The intruders were first spotted a little after nine o'clock, climbing the stairway that runs up inside the tower. When challenged by the guard they did not stop, but one of them raised some kind of wand and loosed what looked like a small *fireball* at the guards. It missed, hitting the wall beside the guard's head, and he was unharmed. If they ask to examine the point of impact, the PCs will find a scorched and melted patch on the wall, similar to that observed outside.

The alarm was raised, and the guard blocked the stairs with their shields, trying to hold the intruders back. The attack was only repelled when a wizard, attached to the guard, arrived and used magic against them. Then they retreated out of the tower, and apparently vanished into the night.

If questioned about the attackers, Anastasia will explain that no one among the guards was able to get a good look at them; even at close quarters, they seemed to have some way of obscuring their appearance, as though they were always in shadow. The appeared humanoid, were unusually tall and thin, but that is all Anastasia can say.

The wizard who drove the intruders off is Henry Gow [**male human Wiz 4, hp 13**], a young-looking man who is currently very pleased with his exploits, having (in his own estimation, at least) defeated an enemy against whom the guards were helpless. He will happily talk to the PCs, and will describe his role in the incident at great length and in great detail, although he will be unable to add any detail to the description of the intruders. In his opinion, he says loftily, they were using some kind of illusion magic to hide their appearances. When he cast a simple *hypnotic pattern* spell, intended to slow the intruders down, they turned and fled.

# - FAIR SALVAGE -

## HEIGHTENED SECURITY

The guard on the towers—and on the gates of the Old City—is doubled for the remainder of the night, and the streets around them are cleared of onlookers—by force if necessary. Companies of the Sea Lord’s Guard are posted on the walls, with a swivel gun every fifty paces, and torches are lit all around the walls of the Old City to expose anyone trying to approach. If the PCs have good contacts in the Guard, they may be able to get themselves sworn in as deputies to scour the streets; otherwise, they will be under the same curfew as the rest of the city. There has already been some trouble between rival gangs of vigilantes in various parts of town, and the Guard has quite enough on its plate preparing for another attack.

## FINDING THE INTRUDERS

**T**here are two possible ways for the PCs to finally find the intruders: they can track them from one of the crime scenes, or they can make the connection between the series of attacks and the mysterious wreck from which the siege cannon (and many other things) were salvaged, and investigate the beach where its keel still juts from the sand.

## THE SCENES OF THE CRIMES

Examining the ground outside the southwest tower [**Search or Wilderness Lore check, DC 20 because of the overlapping footprints of onlookers**] will turn up some strange-looking, two-toed tracks, somewhat larger than human footprints but similar in overall shape. The PCs will have to be quick to spot these, however—as has already been mentioned, some members of the crowd are digging the area up in case it was something in the dirt that repelled the intruders, in the hopes that it will protect them in the same way!

A close examination of the murdered merchant’s study [**Search check, DC 20**] will reveal a similarly shaped indentation in a deep-pile rug beneath the window through which the murderer entered. Although the rug is springing back into shape, the shape is roughly picked out by the absence of debris from that area, as though the intruder stood there while the destruction of the room was taking place.

There are no tracks at the scene of the antique shop murder, either inside or outside.

## FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

A character with the Track feat can follow the trails from each of these places, though it’s up to the GM to decide the difficulty – the tracks are sufficiently different from normal human tracks to pick out, but unlike lightly-traveled wilderness paths, the streets of Freeport are usually crowded and don’t hold footprints very well. The tracks lead west from the city, through the jungle, and end at the beach where the strange wreck was found 200 years ago.

*Divination* spells and other magical means of tracking the intruders will produce a similar result: a suitable response to a *divination* would be “search to the west, where a lone keel rises from the sand.”

## ON THE BEACH

**H**owever the PCs track the intruders to the beach, they will find a strange sight waiting for them there. The area around the keel of the old wreck has been excavated down to a depth of at least twenty feet; sand is piled up on all sides, and the surrounding area is covered with two-toed footprints identical to those outside the tower. But there is no sign of the intruders anywhere.

Examining the tracks (no skill check required, as the sand holds the footprints quite well) reveals a distinct and well-trodden trail leading to and from the excavation. The trail leads to the water’s edge, where the footprints are lost in the surf. There is no trace of any vessel on the beach, or moored offshore, but a Spot check [**DC 20**] reveals an odd-looking patch of water about a hundred yards out, where the waves seem to be broken up, as if by a large obstruction on, or slightly under, the water. See *invisibility* or any equivalent spell, magic item or ability will reveal a huge ship of alien design, fitting the description of the mystery ship in recent rumors, lying at anchor. Indistinct shapes can be seen moving about on the deck.

## THE MYSTERY SHIP

Whether or not they have seen the ship, the PCs have been spotted by the ship’s crew. A minute or two after they arrive on the beach, two immense fireballs land on either side of them—close enough to feel the heat, but not close enough to cause any damage. This is a warning shot from two of the ship’s guns, which are identical to the siege cannon on the city’s towers (*Freeport*, p. 74). If the PCs try to run, shots will be placed in front of them with impressive accuracy, whichever way they turn; they should quickly get the idea that flight is impractical. Any missiles or offensive spells aimed toward the ship break harmlessly on empty air, some twenty feet away from it.

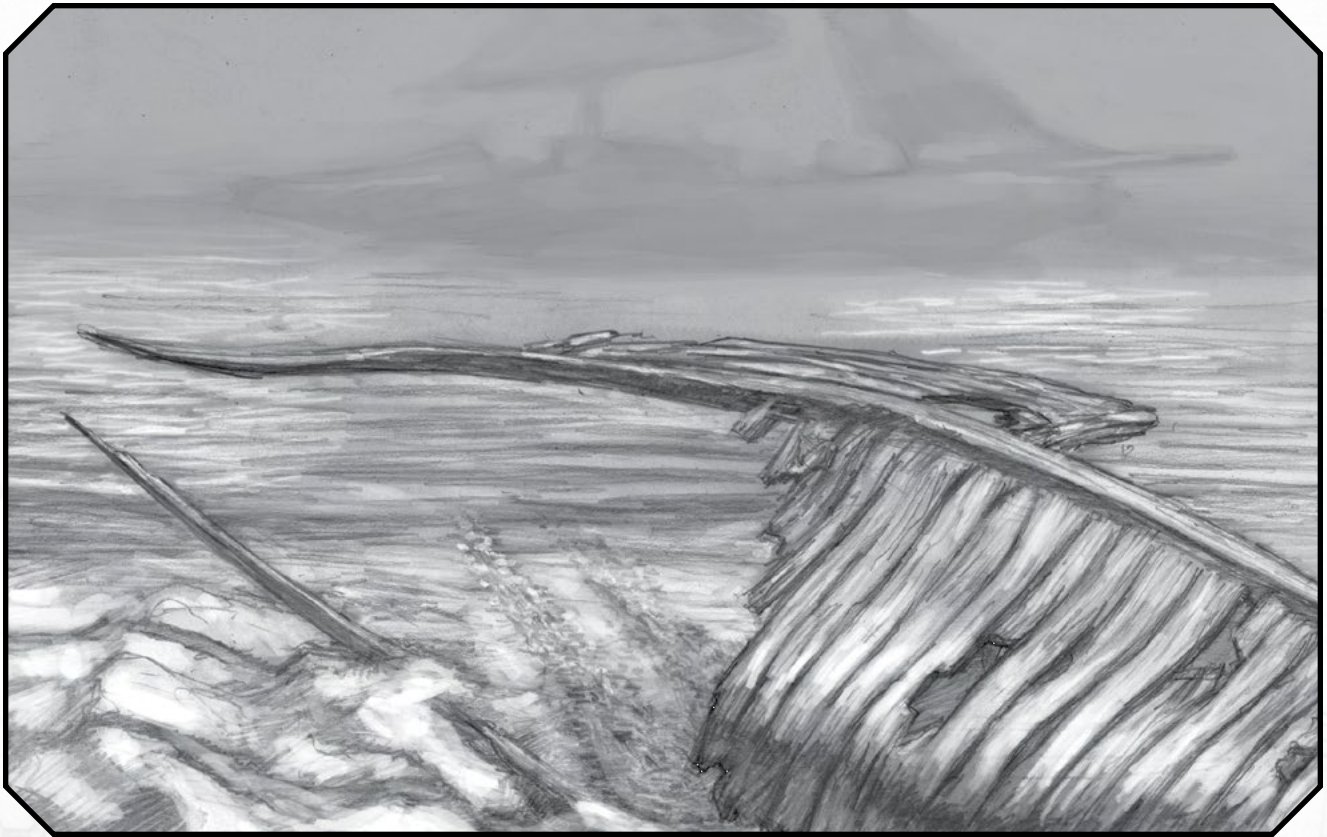
Once the warning shots have been fired, the ship’s crew drops the invisibility that has kept it hidden. Characters who have not seen the ship while it was invisible—even if they know it is there—must make a Will saving throw [**DC 15**] or stand still for one round, unable to do anything except stare at the sight of it.

## MEETING THE INTRUDERS

A longboat pushes off from the ship—again a strange design, made of a blindingly white metal—and heads for shore. The crew of the ship watches the PCs closely, and any aggressive or sudden move is answered by another pair of warning shots, placed a few yards to either side of the party. As the longboat nears shore, the PCs get their first good look at the intruders.

Just as in the various descriptions of eyewitnesses, the strangers are roughly humanoid, but unusually tall and thin.

## - FAIR SALVAGE -



Their skin—or clothing, it is hard to tell—is matte black in color, and their eyes glow red. It is difficult to discern their exact shape, as their outline is obscured. This effect is caused partly by a mist they exude and partly by some less easily discerned means, possibly a *blur* spell or something similar. There are five of them in the longboat, which seems to move without oars.

As the longboat reaches the beach, one of the creatures gets out—the touch of its feet making the shallow water hiss as it walks up the beach toward the PCs. The rest stay in the longboat, watching the PCs and covering their leader with wand-like objects made of a strange reddish metal.

As it approaches the PCs, the form of the stranger becomes a little more distinct. Apart from its glowing eyes it has no discernable face, and some kind of cloak—or perhaps a membrane, like a bat's wing—connects its arms to its sides, apparently without encumbering its movement. Its hands, like its feet, have two digits, but they seem to be longer and more flexible than human fingers. As it approaches, it holds its hands open to show that it is not armed, in a universal gesture of peace.

### THE MESSAGE

The creature communicates through telepathy, but uses images and feelings instead of words. Each of the PCs sees an image of the wreck in the sand, which dissolves into a picture of a complete ship, very similar to the one at anchor off the beach. There is a feeling of great sadness. Then, they see a view of the inside of the great ship, which slowly fills up with strangely-wrought objects of various types—including the metal bowl taken from the merchant's collection—

accompanied by a feeling of puzzlement. Next, there's a picture of a huge weapon, readily identifiable as one of the great siege cannons, accompanied by a feeling of anger. The next picture shows the scene of one of the murders, and is accompanied by a feeling of sorrow. Finally, there is a picture of a long procession of people bringing many strange-looking objects to the beach—including the five siege cannons—and handing them over to the strangers, accompanied by a feeling of hope.

If the players have difficulty interpreting the message, a successful Int check against DC 15 will reveal its meaning—the ship that was wrecked on this beach 200 years ago belonged to the strangers, and they want to recover everything that was looted from it, especially the siege cannons. They regret the killings and destruction, and hope that the people of Freeport will hand over the rest of the objects taken from the wreck voluntarily.

### WHAT NOW?

**H**ow the PCs react to this information is up to the players. Because there are so many directions the adventure can take from this point, it is difficult to provide a firm plot or timeline of events. The situation could be resolved in a couple of hours of roleplaying, or it could spin off into a completely new campaign, with the strangers playing an increasing role in the life of Freeport and the world around it. Some of the broader issues are discussed below, but the GM should feel free to let the adventure go where it will from here.

# - FAIR SALVAGE -

## THE STRANGERS

The strangers do not have a name for their race, as they do not use words in their telepathic communication. When referring to themselves, they project a mental image of one of their race, accompanied by a feeling of kinship. They become known in Freeport simply as the strangers - an accurate enough term, for they are by far the strangest race ever to visit the city. Behind closed doors, however, they are known by a variety of names, revealing the Freeporters' true feelings towards them: bats, black devils, devil men, faceless men and so on.

### THE STRANGERS

#### Medium-Size Outsider

**Hit Dice:** 7d8+7 (hp 38)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 18 (+2 natural, +4 Dex, +2 indistinct form)

**Attacks:** Light mace +9/+4 melee, flamelance +11 ranged

**Damage:** Light mace 1d6+2, flamelance 3d6+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Force storm

**Special Qualities:** Heat metal, indistinct form, membranes, telepathy

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +9

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 15

**Skills:** Climb +8, Hide +11, Jump +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Profession (sailor) +11, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (flamelance)

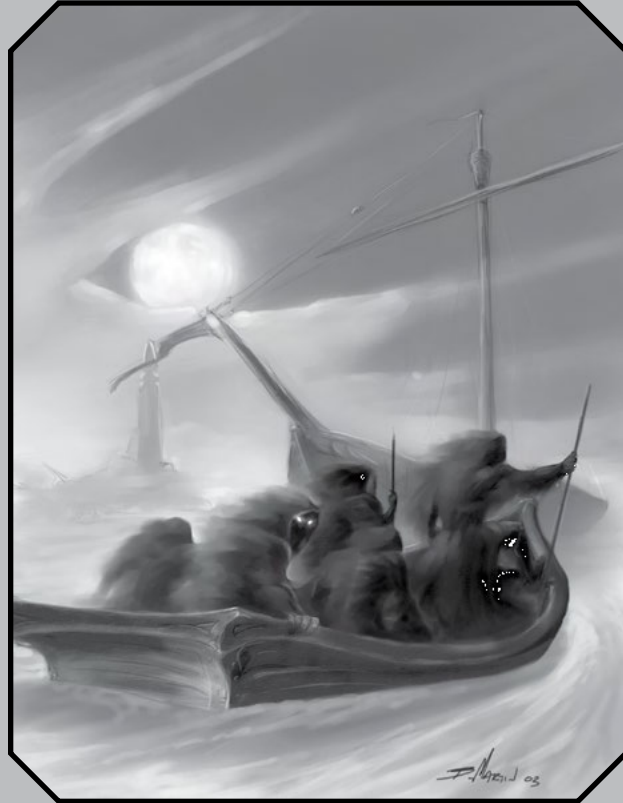
**Climate/Terrain:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary, team (2-4), or squad (6-10)

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** No coins; triple goods; standard items

**Alignment:** Usually Neutral



The strangers are a mysterious race. Their ships are occasionally seen in the waters around the Serpent's Teeth, but no one knows where they come from. They have no spoken language - indeed, they have no visible vocal apparatus - but communicate by telepathy, using a mixture of images and feelings.

### COMBAT

The strangers avoid hand-to-hand combat whenever they can, relying upon their flamelances and telepathic abilities. When forced into melee, they use baroque maces made of the same reddish metal as the flamelances.

**Force Storm (Sp):** Once per day, a stranger can create a *whirlwind* as the spell cast by a 10<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer. This ability costs the stranger 1 hp per round to maintain.

**Heat Metal (Sp):** The strangers can *heat metal* as the spell cast by a 10<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer, by touch. This ability is usable once per hour.

**Indistinct Form (Su):** The strangers' physical form appears slightly blurred. While not conferring as much protection as a *blur* spell, this does increase their AC by 2.

**Membranes (Ex):** The wing-like membranes between the strangers' arms and body allow them to drop from any height without injury, as if they had a permanent *feather fall* spell cast on them.

**Telepathy (Su):** Telepathy is the strangers' primary mode of communication. It gives them the equivalent of the following spells, usable at will, as cast by a 10<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer: *detect scrying*, *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, *emotion*, *misdirection*, and *tongues*.

# - FAIR SALVAGE -

## NEW EXOTIC WEAPON: FLAMELANCE

The signature weapon of the strangers is the flamelance, a wand-like object made of reddish metal. The flamelance is an exotic weapon and the wielder must take the appropriate feat for it to function at all. The weapon shoots out small ball of fire that blossoms into a 1-foot radius burst from the point of impact. A ranged touch attack must be made to hit the chosen target. Missed shots scatter like grenade-like weapons. Like Freeport's siege cannons, the flamelance is powered by the life force of the wielder: each shot costs the user 3 hp. A flamelance may only be fired once per round.

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Flamelance	750 gp*	3d6+3	x2	30 ft.	3 lb.	Fire

\*Assuming it can be found on the open market at all. Flamelances should be extremely rare, since the strangers attempt to recover any that are lost.

## DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS

Freeport is a city built upon trade, and despite the strangers' otherworldly and threatening appearance, many Freeporters may decide to try and get something in return for any objects they possess from the wrecked ship. As the first point of contact, the PCs are in a position to set themselves up as go-betweens, and could make a tidy profit from both sides of the dealings.

The most important thing for the GM to consider is how to deal with the nature of the strangers. They are certainly powerful and well armed, but how warlike are they? The fact that they tried to recover the first few objects by stealth, and withdrew from an all-out confrontation with the tower guards, suggests that they are relatively peaceable, but this need not necessarily be the case. Their message to the PCs could be interpreted as a plea or as a threat, even though it contains no mention of consequences if the people of Freeport should refuse to hand over the salvaged objects, and they have certainly shown themselves capable of meeting force with force.

## FREEDOM FOR FREEPORT!

If the strangers resort to force, Freeport could fall fairly quickly, and the Freeporters might find themselves enslaved by the strangers. Resistance would have to go underground—literally—and the Freeporters might find themselves sharing living space with the degenerate serpent people and trying to unite with them against a common enemy. Others might flee to the mainland and try to rally support from the mainland nations—many of which may still regard Freeport as a nest of pirates.

Depending on which path the PCs take, they could find themselves in a desperate underground struggle for survival and freedom among the ruins of Freeport, or they could find their diplomatic skills tested to the limit as they try to convince skeptical mainland nobles that Freeport has been conquered by a powerful race of unknown beings—and that the mainland could be next unless something is done. Convincing the mainland to free the notorious pirate haven will be no small task!

## DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

If the matter can be settled peaceably, the strangers might become regular visitors and trading partners, which will have varying consequences.

As the Freeporters become used to the sight of the strangers, their attitude to the serpent folk will inevitably change. Certainly, they are scaly, sewer-dwelling, rat-eating savages, but they are *our* scaly, sewer-dwelling, rat-eating savages, whereas the strangers are completely alien. Any xenophobic tendencies among the people of Freeport will increasingly be directed away from the serpent people and towards the strangers. This will have two effects.

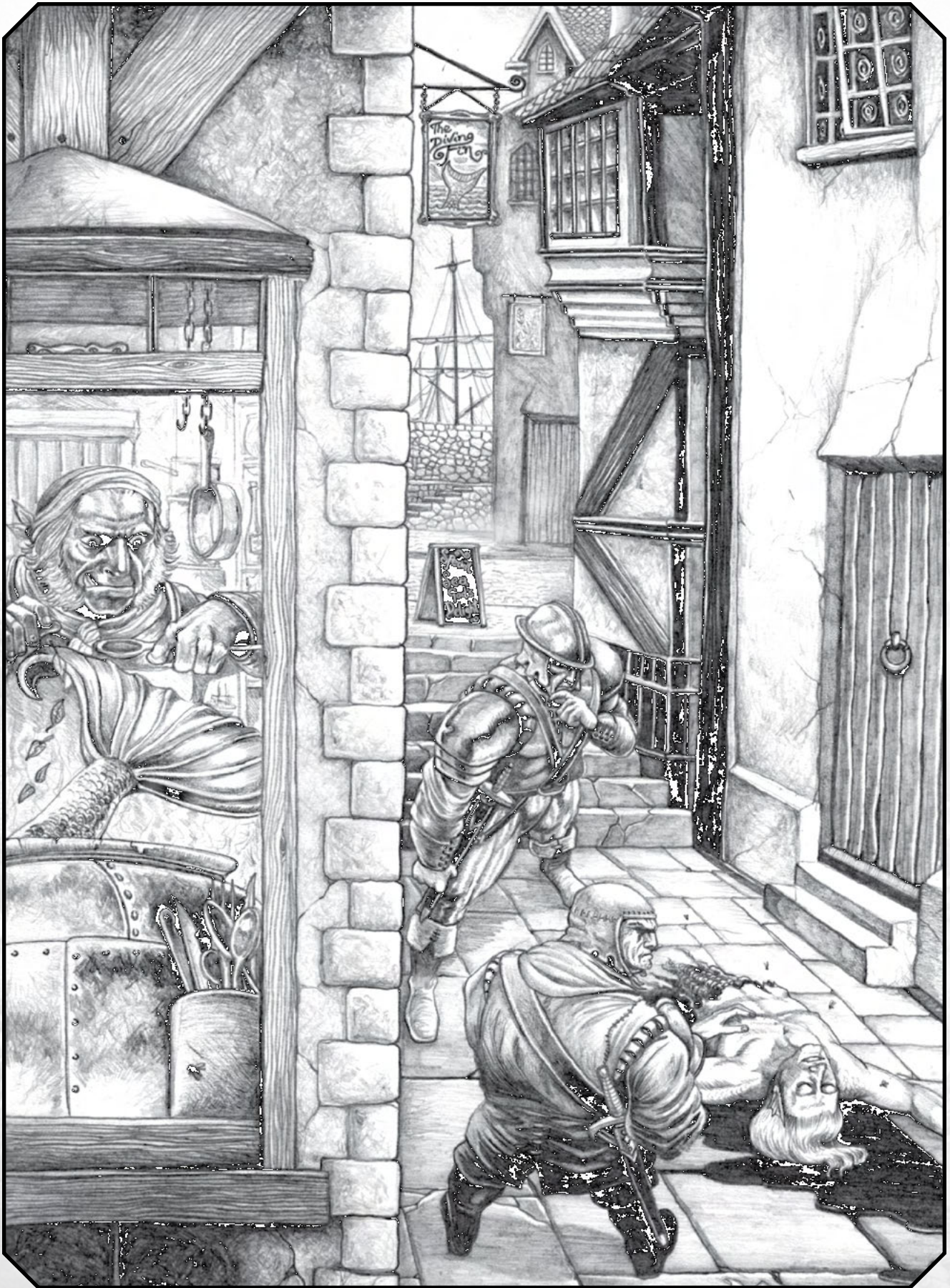
## EMBRACING THE SERPENTS

Firstly, the efforts of K'Stallo and his followers to civilize the degenerate serpent people and integrate them into the normal society of Freeport (see *The Soul of the Serpent* in this book) will face far less opposition than they otherwise would. Serpent people could become as common a sight in Freeport's streets as orcs or ogres. A combined effort to recover the lost knowledge of ancient Valossa could give Freeport a magical and technological edge over the rest of the world, which might lead some on the Captains' Council to dreams of empire, while agents of other nations of the world flock to the city in the attempt to steal what knowledge they can for their masters.

## UNWELCOME STRANGERS

Secondly, the xenophobia that was once directed towards the serpent people will settle upon the strangers, who are far better able to look after themselves. Isolated incidents could lead to reprisals, or to nerve-wracking negotiations as the Sea Lord promises to hunt down the perpetrators and bring them to justice. Underground resistance groups could spring up across the city, and depending on their relationship with the strangers, the PCs could find themselves joining these groups, hunting them down, or infiltrating them and passing information back to the Captain's Council so that incidents can be headed off before they lead to serious trouble.





# - PLOTS & PLACES -

## A SELECTION OF SCHEMES, PLOTS AND LOCATIONS

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Freeport is a place where anything can happen, and the *Freeport* sourcebook contains a large number of adventure hooks attached to particular locations and characters. This chapter presents a selection of additional adventure hooks and outlines, for the GM to develop as desired. They can be used as adventures in their own right, or used to add spice and challenge to other adventures from this book or elsewhere.

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### CATCH OF THE DAY

The PCs are approached by the merfolk traders Ichibando and Maralei (*Freeport*, p. 41) to help find a missing merman named Shalotah. A distant cousin of Ichibando's, Shalotah has long had a fascination with the city, and has often visited their stall at the Seaside Market to get a glimpse of life on land. Recently, he has disappeared.

### A FISHERMAN OUT OF WATER

While his relatives weren't looking, Shalotah "borrowed" Ichibando's *wand of polymorph self*, gave himself some legs, and set out to explore the city. Alone and inexperienced, it wasn't long before he encountered some local thugs and wound up dead in an alley. But the story doesn't end there. Upon his death, he resumed his natural form. His attackers, frustrated that he was carrying no money and fearful of repercussions if a dead merman were found in the city, decided to salvage what profit they could from the incident. They hacked off his tail and, claiming to be honest fishermen, sold it to Dreiden Simmerswell at the Diving Fin (*Freeport*, p. 47), where it became the main ingredient in what patrons agreed was the choicest batch of Sea God's Delight in a long time.

The Sea Lord's Guard, meanwhile, is puzzled about what became of the legs belonging to the half-body that turned up in a sewer recently.

### A STUNNING LIKENESS

Through high-society contacts or other means, the PCs wrangle an invitation to the opening of an exhibition by Marissa Lapideaux, a renowned sculptor from the mainland. Lapideaux had moved to Freeport a few months ago and is, in her own words, "in search of inspiration." The exhibition gives the PCs the opportunity to make some useful contacts in the upper echelons of Freeport's society, as well as some matchless opportunities for the GM to set them up to commit social blunders and embarrass them.

The sculptures on display are the finest that Freeport has ever seen, and it is clear that Marissa's reputation is well deserved. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a life-size statue titled "The Spirit of Freeport," which shows a pirate brandishing a cutlass in defiance of the world. It creates quite a stir, and there is talk of the Captain's Council buying it and setting it up in a public place, such as outside the Sea Lord's palace.

The visitors crowd around the statue, flattered by the compliment that Marissa has paid to her new home. As the PCs get close enough to see through the crowd, they see that the statue's face is incredibly familiar—in fact, it is the face of a beggar they know by the name of Old Tom, who has been missing for almost a week!

Questioning Marissa at the opening will not be easy—she will be surrounded by a crowd of flatterers and hangers-on, playing the part of the gracious hostess and receiving compliments on the amazingly lifelike quality of her work. If the PCs track her down later at her studio, she will admit that she used Old Tom as a model for the statue, because she noticed him in the Beggars' Market and found something striking in his features. She has not seen him since he sat for her, she says.

There are no studies or models in the studio, and if questioned about this, Marissa says that she prefers to work directly with the stone. However, she will become increasingly impatient with the PCs' questions, and eventually she will ask them to leave.

### ARTISTIC SHORTCUTS

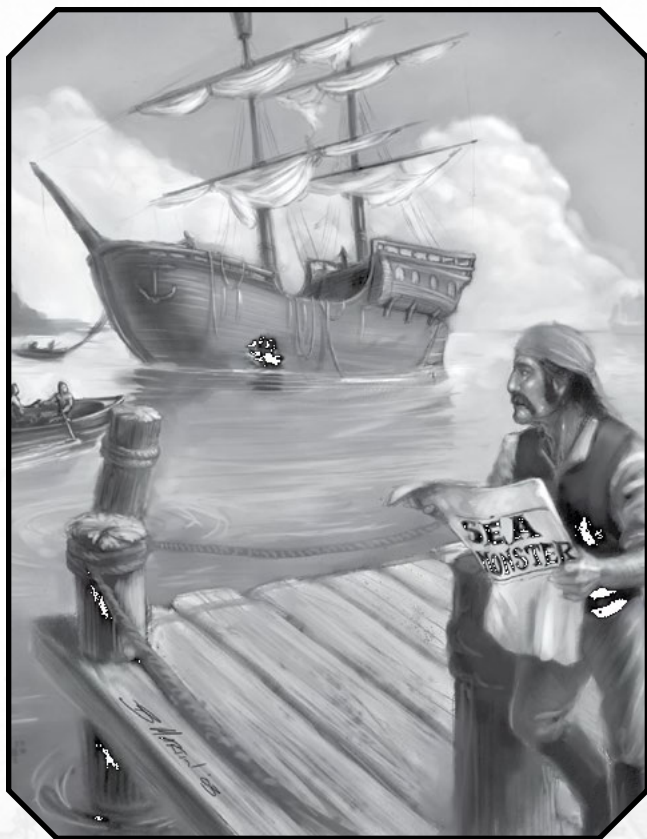
The truth of the matter is this: Marissa has a pet cockatrice, which she keeps hidden in a secret room off her studio. She did indeed ask Old Tom to pose for the statue, offering him enough money to be sure that he accepted. Several people in the Beggars' Market will remember her visit, and most will recall that this was the last time they saw Tom. After cleaning the beggar up and dressing and posing him appropriately, Marissa used the cockatrice to petrify him, creating the statue.

Marissa raised the cockatrice from an egg, and it is as tame as a dog. She has based her career on tricking beggars and other people whom no one will miss into posing for her, and using the cockatrice to petrify them. She came to Freeport because her scheme was on the verge of being discovered, and was attracted by the city's reputation as a place where people disappear and few questions are asked.

### THE SEA MONSTER

Reports come in of a terrible sea monster attacking ships in the waters off the Serpent's Teeth. Descriptions by the few survivors vary, but all agree that the monster had huge, glowing yellow eyes and did not break the surface, holding the ship below the waterline and forcing the passengers and crew to take to the lifeboats. Strangely, there are no reports of the creature attacking the lifeboats.

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### AN INFERNAL MACHINE

The “monster” is, in fact, a magically powered submarine—or perhaps a wondrous item like the *apparatus of Kwalish*. Its is crewed by pirates, who use it to ambush easy-looking prey; attacks always take place in water deep enough to hide the ship once it has been sunk, but not too deep for diving equipment and water breathing spells to allow the pirates to reach the wreck, which they plunder at their leisure. The attacks also take place outside the hunting grounds of the merfolk, to avoid word getting back to Freeport. The pirates are not worried about the local locathah and sahuagin, which have little to do with the land-dwellers.

The pirates’ base is at the north end of A’Val (the island that is home to Freeport), entered through an underwater cave in the base of the volcano that dominates that end of the island. The PCs may be on a ship that is attacked, in the spirit of Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. Alternatively, they may find some object at a local market or fence’s establishment that clearly comes from a ship that was recently sunk by the “monster,” follow the trail back to the pirates’ lair, uncover the truth, and mount a *James Bond* style attack on the secret base to bring the menace to an end.

### VAMPIRE WARS

**A** group of vampires from a mainland nation comes to Freeport and begins preying on the population, prompting a number of responses—none of them particularly conducive to quiet nights in Freeport.

The God Squad, in cooperation with the Sea Lord’s Guard, put together a joint vampire-hunting force to search the city and eradicate the threat; the bulk of this force is recruited from among the temple, but adventurers with undead hunting skills may also be invited to join. This group, unofficially titled the Order of the Sun, conducts nighttime patrols and daytime searches, trying to root out and destroy the bloodsuckers.

### TERRITORIAL BLOODSUCKERS

Freeport’s resident vampire family, the Ducaynes (see *Freeport*, p. 66) both resent the intrusion on their territory and fear that the hunters may uncover their existence, which they have been careful to keep secret since their arrival. As well as being caught up in the conflict between the two vampire clans, the PCs might be recruited by the Ducaynes to help protect them during the day or to hunt down the intruders.

### DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN

**T**he Society of Lobstermen has a problem. Its members keep going missing, and a few have turned up dead on the sea floor, their air-lines cut and their suits ripped open. So far, they have been unable to identify the perpetrators or stop the attacks, but many among the Society suspect that the merfolk are encroaching upon their territory. A few unauthorized punitive raids have gone into merfolk territory, and the two groups are on the brink of open war.

### THE SWIMMING DEAD

In truth, the real culprit is far more sinister. An enterprising necromancer (perhaps Thomas Hariot, either before the events of *Cut-Throat’s Gold*, or later if he survives that adventure) is using skeletons and zombies to attack the Lobstermen in an attempt to drive them off the wrecks and—of more interest to Hariot—the sunken Valossan sites that dot the waters off the *Serpent’s Teeth*. His undead army is comprised of a mixture of merfolk, locathah and sahuagin, together with some land-dwellers whose corpses he has salvaged from wrecks.

The PCs might be asked to investigate by the Lobstermen if they have previously served the Society well, or if any of them are members. Alternatively, they might be asked to help avert a war with the merfolk, and only discover the Lobstermen’s involvement by accident—in which case the Lobstermen might well decide that the PCs are behind it all, until the PCs can convince them otherwise... assuming they live long enough to explain!

### EATERS OF THE DEAD

**O**ne of the small boats that ferry bodies to the Crematorium (*Freeport*, p. 43) has been attacked and sunk. The temple officials of the God of Death fear that body snatchers or necromancers are involved, and begin hiring mercenaries and adventurers to escort the boats. It is not a popular job, and the pay is not spectacular, but it is

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steady work and might appeal to low-level adventurers who are down on their luck.

### WRECK RAIDERS

The culprits are, in fact, a pack of lacedons (aquatic ghouls), who have moved into the area recently. A boat full of fresh corpses is a mobile feast in their eyes, and they have studied the boats' schedule. A boat-load of corpses will sustain them for a couple of days, so not every boat that sets out for the Crematorium can expect to be attacked. However, the lacedons will eventually do what any predator does when faced with an abundant food supply—they will expand their population. Boat crews (and escorting mercenaries and adventurers) killed in their attacks will become lacedons in turn, and as the pack grows, it will need more food, and attacks on the Crematorium boats will become more frequent. Eventually, there may even be an attack on the Crematorium itself, or the ghouls may set up a hidden lair on the Crematorium island, from which they mount stealthy raids to steal the unburned corpses.

### A LONG WALK OFF A SHORT PIER

People have been turning up dead in Scurvytown. Of course, this is not unusual in itself, but a pattern has begun to emerge. Every second or third morning, a body, with its face frozen in an expression of terror, is found floating between the piers just to the east of the Freeport Fishery and Market (*Freeport*, p. 90). The most recent victim was Piers Mowbray, the youngest son of a well-to-do family.

The process of recovering the bodies and determining a cause of death is made more difficult by the fact that they attract a number of sharks from beneath the nearby Chumhouse (*Freeport*, p. 88-89). Once the bodies are fished out of the water, they are usually missing a limb or two and quite a bit of flesh, but no other wounds are visible. Initial suspicion may point to the Chumhouse—people still talk about the floor giving way, and more than one patron has suggested turning the deadly accident into a regular entertainment—but close inspection will reveal that the floor of the Chumhouse is sound, and has no hidden trapdoors or other mechanisms.

### A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

If the PCs watch the piers overnight, they have a 30% chance per night of encountering the culprit—a will-o'-wisp that was accidentally created in an unsanctioned experiment by a student at the Freeport Institute. Invisibly stalking the area around Dreaming Street, it picks on a drugged or drunken victim and lures them toward the docks with its light, walking them off the shorter of the two piers and feeding on their emotions as they drown. If anyone tries to restrain its victim, the will-o'-wisp turns invisible and goes looking for another opportunity. Mowbray fell victim to its lure like many others before him, but his family's position makes him the first victim whose death is being thoroughly investigated.

Catching or killing a creature that is highly intelligent and can turn invisible at will makes this monster-hunt a challenge for even the cleverest adventurers. The will-o'-wisp will only fight if it has no other choice, preferring to flee invisibly and try again somewhere else. Its high AC and spell immunity make it a particularly difficult quarry to bring down, and some ingenuity will be required on the part of the PCs.

### DEATH FROM ABOVE?

The people of Freeport are surprised and awed one bright day when a huge airborne ship flies over the city. The Sea Lord's Guard assembles in a hurry, but the ship does not tarry. It flies to the vicinity of Mount A'Val and stops, floating several hundred feet above the surrounding jungle. A few days later, another similar ship joins it, then another and another.

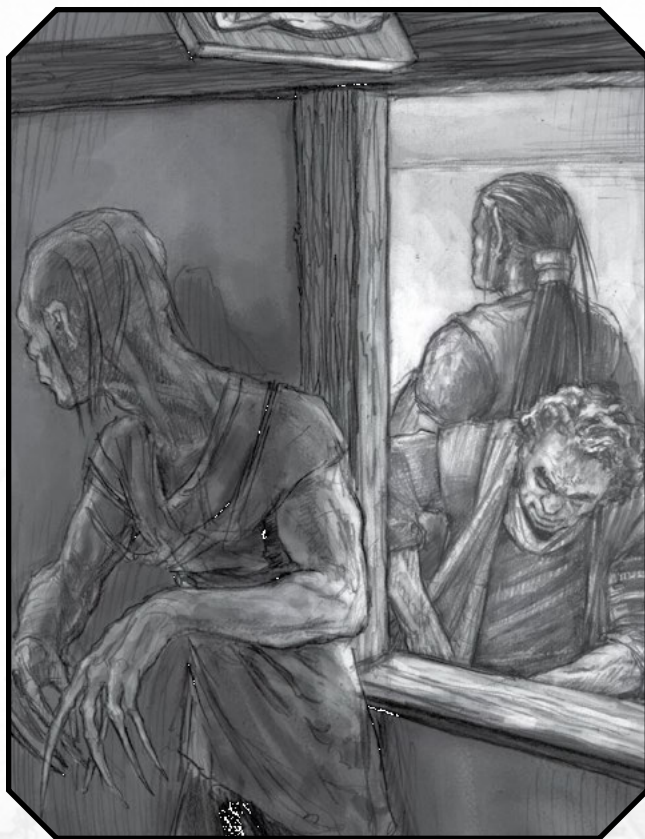
Those who investigate the ships find that they are crewed by dwarves, but dwarves unlike those found in the world of Freeport. These air sailors are a different breed than their doughty, earthbound cousins. They are wilder, more carefree, and they rarely venture from their impressive flying ships.

### VISITORS FROM THE SKIES

The question, of course, is what has brought these dwarves to Mount A'Val? Perhaps it is simply a convenient meeting place for the far-flung members of this aerial clan. Or maybe they need something—a rare fuel for their ships perhaps—that can only be found beneath the mountain. It could be the



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dwarves are evil and planning an invasion of the city itself. Or the opposite: they are the forward elements of an army from the Upper Planes determined to destroy the den of iniquity that is Freeport. GMs interested in pursuing this plot idea may find *Hammer & Helm: A Guidebook to Dwarves* a useful reference.

### FEMME FATALE

Freeport is well known as a den of iniquity, and so it is no surprise that it attracts demons as well as mortals of evil disposition. The House of Serenity (*Freeport*, p. 82) has just gained a new employee—a mainlander known only as Lucrecia—who is proving to be very popular. Her reputation has spread rapidly, to the point where Sylvia has been forced to start a waiting list for Lucrecia's companionship.

She never talks about her past, but rumors abound. Some say that she is a famous courtesan from a great mainland city, forced to flee and come to Freeport under a false name because of a scandal involving an emperor. Others say that she is a noblewoman fallen on hard times, who has come to Freeport to make enough money to return and claim her estates. The tales told by the other girls in the House of Serenity are less complimentary: that she is a vampire, and that she uses some kind of magic to steal customers from others. These are largely dismissed as sour grapes, however, because it cannot be denied that the other girls have been losing money as more and more of their customers clamor for Lucrecia's attentions. Still, no one denies her sense of fairness, for Lucrecia has given large sums of money to many of her colleagues who have complained about dropping revenues.

### FOUL TEMPTRESS

In fact, Lucrecia is really a succubus, who is happily feeding on the energies of her customers. Those with the resources to frequent the House of Serenity can usually afford to lose a level or two along with their gold, and those who notice the effects frequently attribute them to exhaustion from their pleasurable exertions—any doubts are easily put to rest by Lucrecia's high Charisma and *suggestion* ability. Lucrecia is normally careful to avoid anyone who might uncover her true nature, using her *detect thoughts* ability and summarily dismissing any suitor who betrays dangerous suspicions. The enormous demand for her services ensures that she is able to pick and choose her customers without arousing suspicion.

So far, Lucrecia has been careful not to drain her victims of too much life energy at a time, but her chaotic nature rebels against this restraint. It is only a matter of time before someone dies in her company. While, paradoxically, the notoriety arising from such an incident might increase demand for her erotic services, it could also lead to questions which she can ill afford to answer.

### TASTES LIKE PORK

The cannibal cult at the Dead Pelican (*Freeport*, pp. 85-86) may ensure that their victims don't come back by feeding their souls to their patron spirit, but no such prohibition is attached to the cultists themselves—or indeed, to those unknowing dupes who eat the flesh of the victims in the tavern's famous pies.

As these individuals begin to die off—the lucky ones from natural causes, the less fortunate by violence—Freeport will begin to experience a plague of ghouls. To the cultists, this is a natural progression in the service of Oona, and they make preparations to guide their fellow-cultists through the transition to undeath and to keep them hidden and cared for afterwards. The unwitting customers, however, have no such protection. There are various ways for the PCs to become involved.

### GROWING HUNGER

The cannibal cult needs space to house its growing population of ghouls, as well as fresh carrion to feed them. Even in Scurvytown, this is hard to arrange without attracting notice. Worse, one or more ghouls may escape and go hunting on their own account, perhaps leaving a trail that can be traced back to the Pelican. The dietary needs of a growing ghoulish population may cause the already high death rate in Scurvytown to rise to the point where the most lackadaisical authorities are forced to do something about it; on the bright side, though, the ghouls will require so much human flesh that there will not be enough left over to put in the pies, which will, at least, cause an eventual dip in the frequency of unsupervised ghoulish creation.

A rash of ghoulish incidents in Scurvytown may lead the PCs to investigate, and discover that the one thing everyone had in common before death was a fondness for the Pelican's meat pies. If one or more of the PCs has tasted the wares before this discovery is made, this can lead to some interesting situations as they try to find a cure, and keep the doomed characters alive.

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long enough to benefit from it. On the other hand, some groups might find it appealing to add a PC ghoul to the party. Even a tolerant place like Freeport draws the line at undead, though, so the party will have to expend considerable effort to keep their companion's condition a secret—something that becomes more difficult as the transformation progresses.

### UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS

**F**reeport justly deserves its reputation for free-spirited tolerance, but even this easygoing town has its limits. A small group of anti-orc activists has decided that Krom's Throat (*Freeport*, p 84-85) is a disgrace even to Scurvytown, and must go. Perhaps they are in league, knowingly or otherwise, with a group of speculators from the Merchant District whose long-term plan is to clean up Scurvytown, rebuild, and make a killing on the increased property values.

Whoever is behind it, the scheme itself is both simple and elegant. Before opening time, when the Throat is full of unconscious orcs sleeping off the previous night's carousing, and Cragwipe the proprietor is grabbing some shuteye, a hired rogue will break in and spike the blood grog with a powerful herbal concoction that has the same effect on orcs and half-orcs as an *emotion* spell, making them even more argumentative and prone to violence than usual.

### RABBLE ROUSERS

Once the evening's revelries have begun, a group of locals are paid by the conspirators to mount a loud but peaceful protest outside the tavern, posing as concerned citizens who feel that Krom's Throat is a danger to the neighborhood. With a few well-placed (and fleet-footed) agitators, it should take little effort to provoke an all-out race riot, with the orcs running amok through Scurvytown killing those that oppose them while destroying large amounts of property. In addition to forcing the Captain's Council to take punitive action, the orcs' rampages will further the ends of the conspirators by reducing the population of Scurvytown (through outright deaths as well as frightening away those that remain alive) and aid in the demolition work that will be required for the renovation.

The PCs might be among those hired by the conspirators, or they might be called in to investigate the riot by city authorities that are unwilling to risk their paid employees on such an exercise. Either way, an almost perfect mix of fighting, investigative and diplomatic skills will be required to resolve the situation.

### HUNGRY MAN

**A** ship from the mainland deposits a most curious fellow on the docks of Freeport. His name is Arturo the Black and he declares himself the world's greatest huntsmen. His impressive girth does not inspire confidence, but Arturo is nothing if not confident. He claims that he intends to win the next Great Hunt (*Freeport*, p. 17) and he has come to the city early to practice for the event.

Arturo disappears into the jungle for a week and returns with the carcass of a dire boar. What's more, he declares a



great feast in honor of his trophy, and feeds hundreds of the hungry poor in Drac's End. As the weeks go by, Arturo continues hunting and feasting, growing in size himself and gaining a gang of portly followers.

### AN ABYSSAL AGENT

In truth, Arturo the Black is a secret servant of Behemoth, the elephant-headed demon prince of gluttony, despair, and bestial instincts (see *Armies of the Abyss* for more information). The hunts and feasts are his way of establishing a cult to his demonic patron. Characters traveling outside of Freeport for a few months may be surprised to see so many obese families walking around Drac's End. The Captains' Council is amused by Arturo's antics, but not concerned. The dark finale of Arturo's plan may cause them to reevaluate their stance...

### A KNOT OF SERPENTS

**A**s the sidebar on page 106 of the *Freeport* sourcebook points out, the serpent people are in no way related to the yuan-ti. However, the degenerate serpent people do not know this, and it's doubtful that many of the yuan-ti are aware of it either.

Freeport has enclaves of people from all over the world, and the distant east is no exception. While trading ships from that part of the world are not a common sight in Freeport's harbor, they are far from unknown. One such ship has brought a family of yuan-ti to the city, drawn by travelers' tales of snake-like humanoids living in tunnels beneath the city.

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The family settles on the fringes of the Eastern District, posing as small-time merchants and trading in silks, spices, exotic weapons and other oriental goods. The business is run by the purebloods, who pose as humans. Meanwhile, the halfbloods and abominations set about exploring the underside of the city and making contact with the degenerate serpent folk.

### AN IMBALANCE OF POWER

This development adds a third force to the existing struggle between the church of Yig and the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign for the hearts and minds of the degenerate serpent people. The two sides would never join forces against the yuan-ti, but both sides might try to enlist their aid against the other. The yuan-ti will happily play both sides against the other, waiting until they have weakened each other to such an extent that the yuan-ti can wipe them both out and take over. If they succeed, they will install themselves as god-kings over the degenerate serpent people, with the ultimate aim of using them as troops in an assault on the city above.

As their plan progresses and occasional contact with the surface-dwellers cannot be avoided, rumors will begin to spread of unusually powerful serpent people with magical powers and various physical attributes. This will cause some confusion; the rumors may variously be interpreted as signs of a new race beneath the city, mutations among the serpent people, and reptilian demons of some kind taking up residence beneath the city (and there is no shortage of Freeporters who have never doubted that the serpent people have some demonic connection). Bands of adventurers may be sent into the Underside to investigate the stories, and if possible, to capture one or more of the creatures for study.

The yuan-ti might be used as an additional element in *The Soul of the Serpent* (p. 4), although that adventure is fairly complex already, and adding another race into the mix might confuse players too much. However, after the PCs have completed that adventure, they may well be asked by the priest K'Stallo (or his successor) to help investigate stories of a new kind of powerful serpent folk.

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### FALTHAR'S CURIOS

**F**althar's Curios is an out-of-the-way little shop in the Merchant District. Located on a street near the Warehouse District, the shop is wedged in between the Laughing Lady inn and a merchant's townhouse. Obscured in the shadows of two larger buildings, Falthar's Curios is easy to miss. A closer look shows the name of the place carved into the door in thirty odd languages. This is the first clue that the shop may contain more than pickled basilisk eyes.

### FALTHAR

Falthar's family has tilled the soil for uncounted generations. Every once in a while, a footloose scion would leave the homestead in search of adventure. One such soul was Eli, Falthar's grandmother. She became a swordswoman of some repute, and her travels eventually led her out onto the planes. She returned home unexpectedly, heavy with child, and soon after bore an angelic little boy, Rodric.

Eli raised her son for the next several years, but found life around the farm as boring as she remembered it. She left Rodric in the care of her parents and went off again in search of her old companions. She returned home periodically, to tell tales of her adventures and shower her family with gifts. When Rodric was ten, however, Eli stopped coming home. No word of her fate ever reached the farm.

Rodric proved unlike his mother in almost every way. He loved the farm, and only left it when forced by circumstance. He felt he had a duty to his family, so he stayed at home and did his part. He married a local girl and had four children. The third of these was named Falthar. It was soon apparent who was the inheritor of Eli's spirit.

Falthar was a precocious child, the question "why" always ready at his lips. He did his work as requested but his eyes were always fixed on the horizon. Rodric stubbornly kept the youngster on the farm for as long as he could, but eventually he agreed to send the boy to a temple school in the local town. There he came to the attention of the wizard Thiril, who took him on as an apprentice.

Falthar was a gifted student, and took to magic easily. When he had read every book in Thiril's library and learned all the magic she could teach, Falthar took to the road. Like his grandmother, he had many adventures. Unlike her, he found that he preferred knowledge to constant life and death situations. After ten years of travel, including a stint on the planes in search of some word of his grandmother's fate, Falthar was ready to cease his roaming. He had been to Freeport many times, and decided it was an ideal place to set up shop. He would have ready access to the Temple of the God of Knowledge, and all manner of exotic people and goods passed through the port.

Falthar opened his shop fifteen years ago. It took him awhile to build up a real clientele, but he had enough money from his adventuring days to keep him going. After a couple of years, he earned a reputation as an expert identifier of magic items. He not only teased out an item's powers; he also discovered its history and prominent owners. These skills ensured that a plethora of magic items passed through Falthar's hands, and the wizard delighted in learning the story of each one.

### WORD ON THE STREET

Characters in Freeport can hear about Falthar's Curios in any number of ways. Should the PCs ever try to find a purchaser for old tomes, or minor magic items, they'll likely be sent in Falthar's direction. He is also well known at the Temple of the God of Knowledge, where he can found at off-hours doing research and

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consulting with the clerics. In rare cases, Falthar may actually seek out the PCs. He has many contacts in Freeport, and may be tipped off about items in the PCs' possession.

## THE SHOP

Falthar's Curios is only 15 feet wide, but it's a good 50 feet long. It almost seems that the building was an afterthought, crammed between two existing structures with little regard for functionality. Falthar has made it work though. The front room is stuffed with curiosities, from floor to rafters. Here customers can find many exotic and colorful items, but none of magical power.

The front room is the domain of Nell, an aspiring bard whose been working for Falthar for several years. Red haired and lithe, Nell dominates the small room with her chirpy voice and authoritative harangues. She can tell you what bird the rare feathers came from, or why those fruits only grow in the shadows of a volcano, or how that ethereal marauder was turned to stone. In short, Nell is the public face of Falthar's Curios. She deals with the average cityfolk, and feels out those who have legitimate business with Falthar.

Behind the counter, at the far end of the front room, there is a sliding door that leads into Falthar's workroom. This is where the wizard can be found most of the time, working magic and doing research. He keeps magic items that he's currently working on in an iron trunk that's bolted to the floor (and *arcane locked* for additional protection). In addition to a desk and numerous shelves full of reference works, the room is littered with lenses, measuring devices, scales and the like. Scorch marks on the ceiling indicate that accidents have been known to happen here.

A narrow staircase leads from the workroom to the second floor. The entirety of this floor is given over to Falthar's quarters and private library. The windows here are barred just in case. Most thieves know to keep away from wizards, but Falthar prefers to be safe. After Nell leaves each evening, Falthar casts an *alarm* spell in the Front Room. Falthar will thus be alerted if anyone breaks into the downstairs while he's asleep.

The back corner of the upstairs is the living area, with a small but comfortable bed and table for eating. Falthar doesn't have the time or facilities to cook for himself, so he usually sends Nell to fetch him food from the Laughing Lady next door. The rest of the room is given over to Falthar's passions: magic and knowledge. He keeps volumes of journals and notebooks, as well as tomes collected from all over the world (and a few from beyond). Of particular note is a bureau with 30 thin drawers. Each drawer contains a minor magic item in a felt lined box, and a scroll describing its history.

## SERVICES

Falthar provides two levels of service for his customers. For those who want quick and dirty answers, he casts spells for a fee. His most popular spells are *identify* and *locate object*. He charges a little more than the going rate for this service, because he prefers to delve into the history of the items he studies. He gets a little patronizing with adventures that want to know what an item can do but not what it has done.

## FALTHAR

**Aasimar male Div7/Lor3:** CR 11; HD 10d4+20; hp 51; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC: 14 (*ring of protection* +2, *amulet of natural armor* +2); Atk +4 melee or +5 ranged (1d4, +1 *dagger of spell storing*); SA Lore, loremaster secrets (avoidance, instant mastery); SQ Acid, cold, and electricity resistance 5, *light* 1/day; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12

**Skills and Feats:** Alchemy +6, Appraise +7, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +8, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Scry +6, Spellcraft +8, Use Magic Device +5; Brew Potion, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Spell Penetration.

**Languages:** Common, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Infernal.

**Spells Prepared:** (4/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; saves are DC 14 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *read magic*; 1—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *identify* (x2), *mage armor*, *magic missile*; 2—*arcane lock*, *detect thoughts*, *glitterdust*, *locate object* (x2), *knock*; 3—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *explosive runes*, *hold person*, *secret page*, *tongues*; 4—*locate creature*, *mnemonic enhancer*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *screaming*; 5—*contact other plane*, *hold monster*, *sending*.

**Prohibited School:** Illusion

**Possessions:** *Amulet of natural armor* +2, *brooch of shielding*, *candle of truth*, +1 *dagger of spell storing* (current spell: *ghoul touch*), *dispel magic wand* (40 charges), *goggles of minute seeing*, *ring of mind shielding*, *ring of protection* +2, shop and contents.

## NELL

**Human female Brd2:** CR 2; HD 2d6+2; hp 14; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, +1 *rapier*) or +3 ranged (1d4, dagger); SA Bardic knowledge, bardic music; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Wil +2; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 15

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +4, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (arcane) +4, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +2, Perform (epic, poetry, storytelling) +5; Sense Motive +3; Dodge, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

**Languages:** Common, Dwarven.

**Spells Per Day:** (3/1); saves are DC 12 + spell level.

**Spells Known:** (5/2): 0—*daze*, *detect magic*, *mending*, *open/close*, *read magic*; 1—*charm person*, *silent image*.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, +1 *rapier*, journal.



## - PLOTS & PLACES -

Rates do not include the cost of spell components. *Identify* spells thus cost 190 gp (90 gp plus 100 gp for the required pearl). Falthar prefers to have items left with him. He can then dig in and do some real research. In this case Falthar does not charge per spell, instead charging an inclusive fee based on the length of research. His usual rate is 200 gp a week. For that amount, he'll tease out magical abilities and put together a report on the item's history and notable owners. Most items take no longer than a week for him to research. Particularly ancient or famous items may occupy the loremaster for a month or more. Falthar also purchases exotic and magical items. He pays a sliding scale, depending on how interesting an item is. He'll thus pay less than the going rate for some items, but considerably more for others.

### SPELL LEVEL RATE

Spell Level	Cost
1st level	90 gp
2nd level	180 gp
3rd level	270 gp
4th level	360 gp

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

PCs have several good reasons to frequent Falthar's Curios. They can get magic items identified, or sell extraneous loot. GMs can also center adventures on the shop or its proprietor. Some sample adventure hooks follow.

- Falthar's Curios is burglarized. If the PCs are on friendly terms with the loremaster, he may hire them to get back some of the missing items. He may loan the PCs some unusual



items to carry out the mission. This may be a routine thievery or something more sinister. One thing is for sure; it took more than luck to break through Falthar's magical defenses.

- Falthar receives word that his grandmother may yet be alive on the planes. He could either ask the PCs to accompany him (the planes are not a place one should go alone), or ask a PC wizard to run the shop for him. The first option is more appropriate for mid to high level characters, while the second could be a fun low level adventure.
- Falthar's research turns up reference to a lost artifact. He recruits the PCs to find it. His offer is tempting: the PCs can keep the item if he studies it for one year first. He also offers to pay all expenses for the expedition.
- The celestial blood in Falthar's veins is more important than anyone guessed. His very existence threatens a scheme agents of Hell are hatching in Freeport. The PCs find themselves swept up in events as the forces of Good and Evil clash on the streets. GMs may find the *Avatar's Handbook* and *Legions of Hell* useful in developing adventures based on this hook.

### SALON DU MASQUE

For the last two years, the Salon du Masque has been all the rage in the Merchant District. Founded by a mysterious countess from a distant land, the Salon has quickly become a fixture on the social scene of Freeport's elite.

The Salon is open in the evening on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. It is an elegant place, with a garden, numerous balconies, and over a dozen exquisitely furnished rooms that offer varying degrees of privacy. The staff stands ready to cater to every whim or fade into the background as required. There are only two rules of the house: You must pay 100 gp to enter and you must wear a mask at all times. Everything else is permissible.

### COUNTESS D'AMBERVILLE

The Countess d'Amberville presides over the Salon du Masque. She is renowned for her quick wit, her seductive eyes, and her impeccable sense of style. She floats from room to room, charming the patrons and making sure her guests are as satisfied with the conversation as they are with the fine liquors.

There are many stories about the countess. Some say that she is in exile from her homeland, others that she fled to escape the madness of her family. It has even been whispered that once she was a Sacred Virgin, but a masked man seduced her and she was cast from the order. According to this tale, she requires her guests to wear masks to honor the memory of her masked paramour, who was slain by vengeful warriors of the church. The countess neither confirms nor denies the veracity of these stories and her mysterious past only adds to the allure of the Salon du Masque.

### EXTRAORDINARY SERVICES

Behind closed doors, hidden by masks, and lubricated by alcohol, Freeport's elite feel comfortable enough to gossip.

## - PLOTS & PLACES -

Countess d'Amberville hears many rumors, and more than one drunken guildier has told her things he shouldn't. A select few know that the Countess is not just a good listener—she's also a talented problem-solver. With her many contacts, the Countess can make things happen. She can arrange for the right people to be bribed, she can find out when that shipment of ivory is due to dock, and she can even arrange for "inconvenient" people to disappear. The latter service is most costly and the Countess requires utmost discretion. No questions as to the timing and method are allowed. Most of her clients assume that the Countess hires some dockside trash to take care of their problems. They would be shocked to discover that the Countess d'Amberville adds a very personal touch to her "extraordinary services." Unknown to the wealthy patrons that she charms each weekend, Countess d'Amberville is Freeport's most skilled assassin.

It is true that a streak of madness runs through her family and perhaps this explains the Countess's fascination with murder. She could simply run the Salon, make money, trade secrets, and enjoy the confidence of the privileged. All that, however, is not enough for her. Yes, she enjoys the games of the Salon, enjoys the manipulation of her clients, but she also loves the thrill of the hit, the feel of the knife as it slides between the ribs of her latest victim. Furthermore, she has taken on apprentices, young women who work in the Salon by night

but learn the deadly arts by day. They assist their mistress with reconnaissance and misdirection, but it is always d'Amberville who makes the kill.

### ADVENTURE HOOKS

- It is said that no one in Freeport has ever seen Countess d'Amberville's face. She is only seen at the Salon and only in one of her many masks. One night at the Salon, the son of a wealthy merchant pulls off the Countess's mask on a dare and by the next morning he is dead. Is this the work of the Countess, angry that her face was exposed, or is the rake's death just a coincidence?
- One of the Countess's apprentices gets fed up that she never gets to assassinate anyone. She finds a job freelance and proceeds to botch it badly and get caught by the Sea Lord's Guard. The Countess approaches the PCs, charm in full force, and says she would be ever so grateful if they would spring her apprentice from the Fortress of Justice before she goes on trial. The girl is impetuous, the Countess explains, and may say things that cause a great deal of embarrassment to some important people. Those people, she asserts, are willing to pay handsomely for this job (a lie, of course, but the Countess does not want the PCs to realize it is her own secrets she is protecting).

### COUNTESS D'AMBERVILLE

Two sets of stats are provided for Countess d'Amberville. The first uses Green Ronin's *Assassin's Handbook*. For those without access to this book, stats using the assassin prestige class from the DMG are also included.

**Female Human Asa14:** CR 14; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 14d6+14; hp 65; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 *bracers of armor* +6); Atk +18/+18/+13 melee (1d4+3, +3 *wounding punching dagger of speed*), +14 ranged (1d8+1d6+1, +1 *shock light crossbow*); SA Killing blow (4/day), sneak attack +2d6; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 20.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +15, Climb +5, Concentration +6, Disguise +15, Gather Information +15, Hide +13, Innuendo +10, Intimidate +12, Jump +32\*, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10, Tumble +6; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Glib Tongue, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Quick Draw, Quick Change, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Panache (punching dagger).

**Languages:** Common, Elven, Dwarven, Sign Language (assassin).

**Spells Prepared:** (3/2/1; saves are DC 12 + spell level): 1—*change self*, *spider climb*, *shadow hands*; 2—*alter self*, *pass without trace*; 3—*smoke form*.

**Possessions:** +1 *shock light crossbow*, +3 *wounding punching dagger of speed*, *ring of jumping\**, *bracers of armor* +6, masterwork disguise kit.

**Female Human Asn9/Rog5:** CR 14; Medium-size Humanoid; HD 14d6+14; hp 65; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 *bracers of armor* +6); Atk +17/+17/+12 melee (1d4+3, +3 *wounding punching dagger of speed*), +13 ranged (1d8+1d6+1, +1 *shock light crossbow*); SA Death attack, poison use, sneak attack +8d6; SQ Evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked), +4 save vs. poison; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +13, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 20.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +15, Climb +5, Concentration +6, Disable Device +11, Disguise +15, Gather Information +15, Hide +13, Innuendo +10, Intimidate +12, Jump +32\*, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Open Locks +11, Read Lips +12, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10, Tumble +6; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Weapon Panache (punching dagger)#.

# This *Assassin's Handbook* feat allows the Countess to use her Cha bonus instead of her Str bonus on attack rolls with the chosen light weapon.

**Languages:** Common, Elven, Dwarven, Sign Language (assassin).

**Spells Prepared:** (3/3/1/1; saves are DC 12 + spell level): 1—*change self*, *obscuring mist*, *spider climb*; 2—*alter self*, *pass without trace*, *undetected alignment*; 3—*invisibility*; 4—*dimension door*.

**Possessions:** +1 *shock light crossbow*, +3 *wounding punching dagger of speed*, *ring of jumping\**, *bracers of armor* +6, masterwork disguise kit.



# ~ RULES YOU CAN USE ~

## NEW RULES TO ENHANCE AND EXPAND YOUR FREEPORT CAMPAIGN

The adventures in this book make use of a few new character classes, skills and other rules. For convenience, all the new rules material is collected here.

### ~ NEW SKILLS ~

#### SHADOWING (INT)

This skill enables a character to follow another without being noticed.

**Check:** To follow someone who is not suspicious or taking any precautions, the DC is 10, modified at the GM's discretion, according to the circumstances; crowded streets, darkness (if the shadowing character does not have darkvision) and similar circumstances would increase the DC, for example, while a distinctive appearance, colorful clothing or anything else that would make the person being shadowed stand out in a crowd would lower the DC. If the character being shadowed is taking precautions not to be seen, the Shadowing check is opposed by the target's Hide check. If the character being shadowed tries to detect his pursuer, the Shadowing check is opposed by the target's Spot check, modified by circumstances as described above.

**Retry:** Retries are allowed, at the GM's option, on rolls that have failed by less than 5 points.

**Special:** Characters with 5 or more ranks in Spot and/or Hide gain a +2 synergy bonus to Shadowing, according to the circumstances.

Characters who do not have the Shadowing skill can still attempt to follow another character unnoticed. The Spot skill is used to keep a target in sight, while Hide is used to remain undetected.

#### NEW USES FOR OLD SKILLS

##### KNOWLEDGE

##### (NAVIGATION) (INT)

Use this skill to keep a ship on course using charts, the stars, and knowledge of the sea.

**Check:** You can follow a course given a good chart and clear skies for fixing the ship's position by the sun and stars. The DC depends upon the length and complexity of the voyage - for a short voyage with land in sight the entire time, a DC of 10 would be appropriate; for a circumnavigation that involves crossing uncharted waters, the DC might be 20 or even higher. Failure means that you have wandered from your planned course by 5-10 degrees, without knowing it. The GM secretly rolls 1d6+4 for the amount of deviation, and 1d2 for the direction (left or right).

**Retry:** Retries are allowed only if the character realizes that the ship is off course.

**Special:** Characters with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (astronomy) gain a +2 synergy bonus on Knowledge (navigation) checks.

#### PROFESSION (GAMBLER) (WIS)

This skill gives a character a greater understanding of games of chance than an unskilled character would have. The skilled character can reckon odds with greater accuracy, "read" opposing players, and increase his chances of winning. This skill can also be used to cheat, although this can be risky, especially in high-stakes games.

**Check:** Profession (gambler) checks are almost always opposed. In a game (or round, or hand, etc.), all players make Profession (gambler) checks (unskilled gamblers can still add any Wis modifiers they may have; unlike most profession skills, this one can be used untrained). Catching another player cheating, or realizing that a game is rigged, takes a Profession (gambler) check opposed by the Bluff check result of the other player (or the house, as appropriate). For detecting cheating in card or dice games, the Profession (gambling) check is opposed by the opponent's Pick Pockets check rather than Bluff.

**Retry:** No, although the check is repeated for each game, hand, or round.

**Special:** Characters with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (mathematics) gain a +2 synergy bonus on Profession (gambler) checks.

Characters with 5 or more ranks in Bluff gain a +2 synergy bonus to profession (gambler) checks while playing a game where bluffing is a factor. This bonus does not apply when trying to detect cheating or rigged games.

Characters with at least 5 ranks of Pick Pockets can use their skill to cheat in a gambling game that involves some form of manual dexterity (such as rolling dice, dealing cards, etc.), gaining a +2 synergy bonus on Profession (gambler) checks if they so choose. However, other players can attempt to detect the cheating as described above.

#### NEW FEAT: CARD COUNTER

Your analytical mind aids you in gambling. The feat takes its name from the frowned upon practice of "card counting", but you know mental tricks for all games of chance.

**Prerequisite:** 5+ ranks in Profession (gambler)

**Benefit:** You may use your Intelligence modifier instead of your Wisdom modifier on Profession (gambler) checks.

## - RULES YOU CAN USE -

### PROFESSION (SAILOR)

#### (WIS; TRAINED ONLY)

While Knowledge (navigation) is used to plot and hold to a course, Profession (sailor) provides the advanced skills needed to keep the ship out of danger, whether from a storm at sea or from running into the pier in a port.

**Check:** A Profession (sailor) check is made whenever the character is in charge of a ship and faces a situation where the

ship could be damaged. DC 10 is sufficient for most mundane circumstances, such as making one's way through a crowded port without a collision. Storms, reefs and other hazards may impose a DC of 20 or more, depending on their severity. This skill may also be used in battle (or when facing sea monsters!) in the same way that the Ride skill is used to control a mount. A failed check means that the ship is damaged in some way; the nature and severity of the damage depends upon the particular threat.

**Retry:** Only if the danger is not imminent (for example, when trying to avoid an obstacle that is several hundred yards away).

## - NEW FIREARMS RULES -

### WET POWDER

One of the greatest limitations of firearms is the vulnerability of gunpowder to moisture. Not only does this make firearms useless underwater, but they will also misfire or refuse to work even if they are splashed by seawater or dampened by the tropical rain and humidity. Keeping one's powder dry is not always easy.

In response to this limitation, Johann Krupp, an alchemist living in Freeport, has developed a "wet powder" that is resistant to moisture. Wet gunpowder is a blend of conventional gunpowder with fine magnesium filings. It will burn when damp, and even underwater, but does not have the explosive force of conventional gunpowder in ideal conditions.

Wet powder behaves similarly to conventional powder (*Freeport*, pp. 148-151) with the following exceptions:

- Out of the water, the weapon damage is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1 point), and the range of the weapon is lowered by 10%.

- In the water, the weapon damage is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 1 point) and the range of the weapon is reduced by 20%.

Wet powder costs three times as much as conventional gunpowder. In addition to its use with firearms, experiments are being conducted in the area of underwater demolition, but so far results have been disappointing.

### GLUBBING FIREARMS

The long reload time of firearms make them less than useful after the first round of combat, especially at close quarters. However, pirates being such resourceful types, quickly learned to "club" a discharged firearm - grasping it by the barrel and using the wooden stock as a bludgeoning weapon for melee combat.

Clubbed pistols cause 1d4 damage, while clubbed muskets and similar type weapons cause 1d6 damage. A strength of at least 18 is required to use a swivel gun as a club, which causes 1d10 damage. All clubbed firearms have a critical of x2. Each round that a clubbed firearm is used and connects successfully, there is a 5% chance that the weapon will be rendered useless as a firearm.

## - PRESTIGE CLASS: FREEPORT MERCHANT -

Freeport is infamously known as a city of pirates, but it is also a city of merchants. From the backstreet fences that turn ill-gotten goods into cash to the great merchant princes who can buy and sell entire fleets, Freeport's merchants are the heart that keeps the city's lifeblood of trade flowing.

Although the merchant is not an adventuring class, it is not unknown for adventurers to "retire" into trade, especially if they have made enough from their adventuring activities to provide them with a good amount of capital or stock-in-trade. However, the bulk of NPC merchants come from the Expert class (see the DMG).

**Abbreviation:** Fpm  
**Hit Dice:** d6

### REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Freeport Merchant, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

**Alignment:** Any non-chaotic  
**Feats:** Alertness, Leadership  
**Appraise:** 4 ranks  
**Bluff:** 2 ranks  
**Sense Motive:** 4 ranks

### CLASS SKILLS

Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge [area of trade] (Int), Profession (merchant) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Use Magic Device (Cha).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 8 + Int modifier.

### CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Freeport Merchant prestige class.

# - RULES YOU CAN USE -

**TABLE 1-1: FREEPORT MERCHANT**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Merchant's Eye +2
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Haggle+2
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Merchant's Eye +4
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Haggle +4
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Society Contacts +2, Detect Magic Item
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Merchant's Eye +6
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Haggle +6
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Connoisseur's Knowledge
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Merchant's Eye +8
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Haggle +8, Society Contacts +4

## WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Freeport Merchant is proficient with all simple weapons and light armor but not shields. They can use the Weapon Finesse feat with the rapier. Rapier and dagger are the most common weapons, although Freeport Merchants generally rely on hired guards to do their fighting for them.

## MERCHANT'S EYE (EX)

A merchant makes his money by buying and selling, so the ability to spot a bargain, or evaluate objects accurately, can make the difference between profit and loss on a venture. At 1<sup>st</sup> level, the Freeport Merchant gains a +2 competence bonus to Appraise checks. This increases to +4 at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and +6 at 6<sup>th</sup> level, and +8 at 9<sup>th</sup> level.

## HAGGLE (EX)

Trading is in a merchant's blood, and the ability to drive a hard bargain is vital. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the Freeport Merchant gains a +2 competence bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy and all other Cha-based checks used in the trading process. This increases to +4 at 4<sup>th</sup> level, +6 at 7<sup>th</sup> level, and +8 at 10<sup>th</sup> level.

## SOCIETY CONTACTS (EX)

While many merchants will deal with anyone who can afford their prices, the more ambitious of them actively seek to cater to the rich and noble, becoming well known in high society. At 5<sup>th</sup> level, a Freeport Merchant gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Cha checks (including checks for Cha-based skills) when dealing with the

nobility; at 10<sup>th</sup> level, this increases to +4. It will be up to the GM to decide if a particular person qualifies as nobility, though members of the Captain's Council or those of the Aristocrat NPC class would certainly fit the definition.

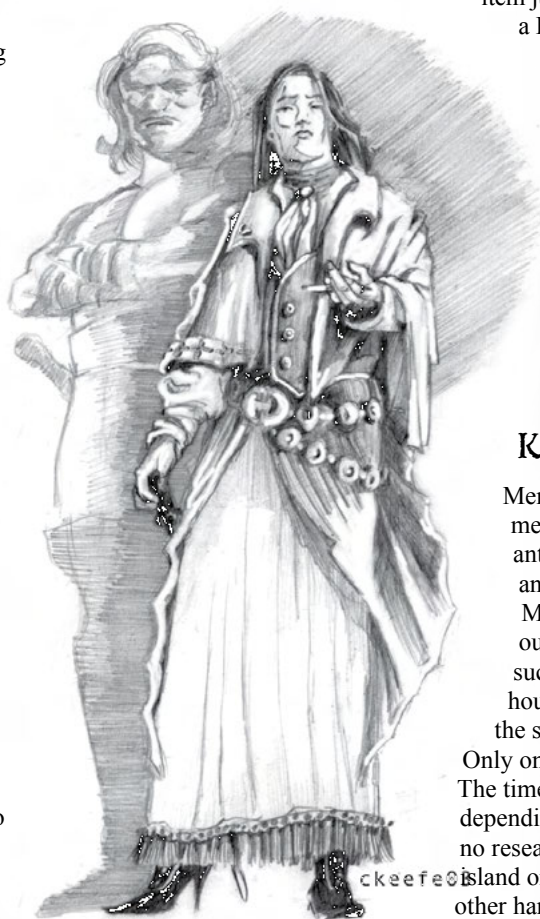
## DETECT MAGIC ITEM (EX)

An experienced merchant can spot a magic item just by examining it. At 5<sup>th</sup> level, a Freeport Merchant can detect the presence or absence of a magical aura just by handling an object for 1d6 minutes. This ability only works on permanently enchanted inanimate objects, and will not, for instance, reveal whether a limited duration spell has been cast or whether a creature or person is under the influence of a magical effect.

## CONNOISSEUR'S KNOWLEDGE (EX)

Merchants keep their ears open for any mention of special items - renowned antiques, famous masterwork items, and the like. At 8<sup>th</sup> level, a Freeport Merchant gains the ability to find out a great deal of information about such objects. If a merchant spends 1d6 hours investigating an item, he achieves the same results as a *legend lore* spell.

Only one item at a time can be researched. The time required may be altered the GM depending on circumstances. For instance, no research can be done while on a desert island or deep within a dungeon. On the other hand, access to an excellent library (such as that in the Temple of the God of Knowledge in Freeport) might reduce the time required by half.



# - RULES YOU CAN USE -

## - PRESTIGE CLASS: SHIP'S CAPTAIN -

Freeport lives by trade, and trade relies on ships. To keep these ships running, skilled captains are needed. The ship's captain must be a skilled navigator, an inspiring (and when necessary, frightening) leader, and an able trader in order to make a voyage successful. Sailors are most likely to become ship's captains, but aristocrats and merchants, too, sometimes command their own ships. Fighters and rangers may take to the sea on occasion, and rogues have been known to command crews - usually of pirates. Clerics, monks and paladins do not normally take part in the worldly business of maritime commerce, although some successful ship's captains have started out as clerics of maritime gods.

**Abbreviation:** Scp

**Hit Dice:** d10

### REQUIREMENTS

To become a Ship's Captain, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +4

**Feats:** Leadership, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Firearms) or Weapon Finesse (Cutlass or Rapier).

**Knowledge (Sea Lore):** 4 ranks

**Knowledge (Navigation):** 4 ranks

**Profession (Sailor):** 4 ranks

**Intuit Direction:** 2 ranks

**Special:** A character must make at least three voyages as a crewman on a ship.



### CLASS SKILLS

Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft [shipbuilding, sail making] (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Knowledge [geography, navigation, sea lore] (Int), Profession [sailor] (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Use Rope (Dex).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + Int modifier

### CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Ship's Captain prestige class.

#### WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Ship's Captain is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, but no type of armor. Wearing armor on the high seas is risky. Ship's Captains can use the Weapon Finesse feat with the cutlass or rapier. Common weapons include cutlass, dagger, rapier, and pistol.

#### EAGLE EYES (EX)

Survival on the seas depends on keeping a sharp lookout for land, hazards and other ships. At 1<sup>st</sup> level, a ship's captain gains a +2 competence bonus to any Spot checks made at sea to see objects on the horizon. At 5<sup>th</sup> level, this bonus increases to +4 and at 9<sup>th</sup> level it increases to +6. A telescope, if available, gives an additional +2 circumstance bonus.

#### BONUS FEATS

At levels 2, 4, 6, and 8, a Ship Captain receives a bonus feat chosen from the following list: Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Skill Focus [Knowledge (navigation) or Intuit Direction], Weapon Focus (any firearm). The Ship Captain must qualify for any feats taken as normal.

#### ENHANCED LEADERSHIP (EX)

Ship's captains are known for their ability to inspire loyalty in their crews. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a Ship's Captain's leadership ability becomes more potent, doubling the maximum number of followers given in the DMG. In addition, the character's leadership score suffers only half the usual penalty (rounded down) for aloofness or cruelty, or for having caused the death of a follower.

#### MAKE WAY (EX)

The speed of a sailing ship normally depends on the ship type and the winds, but an experienced captain can rig and run the ship faster. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, a ship's captain can travel 10% faster than normal for the conditions. At 9<sup>th</sup> level, this increases to 20%.

#### ENHANCED INTIMIDATE (EX)

Every ship's captain must make unpopular decisions from time to time, and a weak leader in such a position faces the

## - RULES YOU CAN USE -

### TABLE 1-2: SHIP'S CAPTAIN

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Eagle Eyes +2
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+2	Bonus Feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Make Way +10%
4th	+4	+3	+1	+3	Bonus Feat, Enhanced Leadership
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Eagle Eyes +4
6th	+6	+4	+2	+4	Bonus Feat
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Enhanced Intimidate
8th	+8	+5	+2	+5	Bonus Feat
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Eagle Eyes +6, Make Way +20%
10th	+10	+6	+3	+6	Master of the Seas

risk of mutiny. At 7<sup>th</sup> level, a ship's captain gains the ability to strike fear into the most unruly crew. He can intimidate (as per the skill) a number of people up to the maximum number of cohorts permissible for his Leadership score (including the doubling for Enhanced Leadership). Use the average hit dice of the targets to determine the DC of the check.

#### MASTER OF THE SEAS (SU)

A truly legendary ship's captain is the master of the seas, where others simply hope to avoid the wrath of the deep. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, a ship's captain gains the supernatural ability to alter the weather while at sea, as if by the *control weather* spell. This ability only works while the captain is aboard a ship or on an island no larger than one square mile and can be used once per week.

## - PRESTIGE CLASS: GAMBLER -

While many people enjoy the occasional game of chance, not everyone has the ability to make a living by gambling. A Gambler does just that, and often supplements his income by other means – some of which may not be entirely legal.

While many rogues become gamblers, a number of impoverished aristocrats choose to make their livings the same way, rather than lower themselves to working. A few spell casters become gamblers, but these individuals can find it very hard to get into a game; people are understandably nervous about entering a game of chance with someone who can use magic to alter reality!

**Abbreviation:** Gam  
**Hit Dice:** d6

### REQUIREMENTS

To be a gambler, a character must fit the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Any non-lawful  
**Feats:** Alertness  
**Bluff, Diplomacy:** 4 ranks each  
**Profession (Gambler):** 7 ranks  
**Gather Information:** 2 ranks  
**Sense Motive:** 3 ranks

### CLASS SKILLS

Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Innuendo (Wis), Knowledge [mathematics] (Int), Pick Pocket (Dex), Profession [gambler] (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 8 + Int modifier

### CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Gambler prestige class.

#### WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Gambler is proficient with all simple weapons and light armor but not shields. On the whole, they prefer to escape rather than fight, but they can use the Weapon Finesse feat with the dagger or rapier.

#### MIND ON THE GAME (EX)

Whenever playing a game, the character gains a +2 competence bonus to Spot checks, Will saves and other checks in order to avoid distractions (such as those caused by another gambler's Distraction ability, for example). However, the character suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to all Spot checks that are not related to the game—he may be able to notice a cheater, but he is less likely to hear an assassin behind him due to his focus on the game.

#### LIGHTNING CALCULATOR (EX)

At 2<sup>nd</sup> level the character gains a +2 competence bonus on any skill checks involving calculation, notably Knowledge (mathematics) and appropriate Profession (gambler) checks. Examples of the latter include games of chance that rely on analysis and calculation, like poker-style games, but not on those that rely on blind luck. This bonus can also be applied to solving mathematical puzzles and other situations, as the GM permits.

#### BONUS FEATS

At levels 2, 5, and 8, a Gambler receives a bonus feat chosen from the following list: Card Counter, Skill Focus (Bluff, Diplomacy,



# - RULES YOU CAN USE -

## TABLE 1-3: GAMBLER

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Mind on the Game
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus Feat, Lightning Calculator
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Distraction
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Skepticism
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Feat, Discern Lies
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Split Focus, Silver Tongue
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Illusion Resistance
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Bonus Feat, Charmer
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Crowd Pleaser
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Clear Sight

Dodge, Pick Pockets, or Sense Motive). As noted in *Freeport: CoA*, Green Ronin recommends that Skill Focus give a +3 bonus.

### Distraction (EX)

Starting at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the Gambler becomes an expert at using distraction and misdirection to cover his actions. Once per hour, the Gambler can attempt to direct attention away from something he wants to conceal. All onlookers must make a Will Save (DC = 10 + Gambler's class level) or fail to notice what he is doing for one round.

### Skepticism (EX)

At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a Gambler has seen enough forms of deception that he gains a +2 competence bonus to all checks and saving throws against any kind of non-magical deception.



### Discern Lies (SP)

At 5<sup>th</sup> level, a Gambler gains the ability to *discern lies*, as the spell of the same name. This ability may be used once per day.

### Split Focus (EX)

At 6<sup>th</sup> level, gaming becomes such second nature to the Gambler that it is possible to focus fully on the game without sacrificing alertness to other things. The character can gain the benefits of the Mind in the Game class feature, without suffering the penalty for spotting external events.

### Silver Tongue (SP)

At 6<sup>th</sup> level, a Gambler may make a *suggestion*, as the spell, once per day per 3 class levels. The target of the spell must make a Will save at DC 12 + the Gambler's Cha bonus.

### Illusion Resistance (SU)

At 7<sup>th</sup> level, the Gambler becomes so expert in the art of deception that he or she gains a +2 insight bonus to all saving throws against Illusion magic.

### Charmer (EX)

At 8<sup>th</sup> level, a Gambler is so personable that he can charm people with ease. Any individual to whom he spends five or more minutes speaking to one-to-one must make a Will save at DC 11 + the Gambler's Cha modifier. Those who fail the save are affected as if subject to a *charm person* spell.

### Crowd Pleaser (SP)

At 9<sup>th</sup> level, a Gambler is so adept at manipulating crowds that he may make a *mass suggestion*, as the spell, once per day. Each member of the crowd gets a Will save at DC 11 + Gambler's Cha modifier.

### Clear Sight (SU)

At 10<sup>th</sup> level, the Gambler can become effectively immune to illusions 2 times/day, as if under a *true seeing* spell. He must concentrate on the task for 3 rounds in order for the ability to be effective. If the subject turns out to be mundane in nature, it does not count as a use of the ability against the 2 times/day limit.

# - RULES YOU CAN USE -

## - FREEPORT ERRATA -

The following is official errata for the first print run of *Freeport: The City of Adventure*:

Barbarian is sometimes incorrectly abbreviated as Bar. It should be Bbn. This occurs on pages 47 and 100.

There are two references to sabers in the text (pages 26, 28). Stats are identical with the scimitar.

**Page 15:** The stats for Ichibando and Maralei are incorrect. Their correct stats are on page 41.

**Page 16:** Kothar the Accursed's ranged attack bonus should be +11/+6.

**Page 25:** Captain Marcus Roberts does not have Improved Initiative. His correct Initiative is +3.

**Page 26:** Arias Soderheim's alignment is Neutral. The Spells Prepared section should be replaced with the following:

### Spells Per Day (3/4/4/3/1)

**Spells Known (6/4/4/4/2):** 0—*dancing lights, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1—*charm person, hypnotism, mage armor, sleep*; 2—*detect thoughts, enthral, misdirection, suggestion*; 3—*charm monster, dispel magic, emotion, lesser geas*; 4—*dominate person, modify memory*.

**Page 26:** Add Power Attack to Buster Wallace's list of feats.

**Page 28:** Captain Lydon does not have Improved Initiative. His correct Initiative is +1. AC is 15.

**Page 56:** The dagger attack bonus of the Typical Hellhound should be +1. This, and the rapier's attack bonus, assumes two weapon fighting.

**Page 65:** Torsten Roth is human.

**Page 66:** The ghost of Fiarella Donadrien in the Freeport Opera House is [female elf ghost Exp6, hp 25].

**Page 71:** The first adventure hook of the Jewelers and Gemcutters Guild mentions a Thieves Guild. This reference should be to Finn's Syndicate.

**Page 78:** In two places in the second column, "Sea Lord's Guard" should read "watch."

**Page 83:** Tarmon also has a few companions: a toad familiar named Burkhard and an apprentice named Glenfield [male gnome Wiz1, hp 4].

**Page 98:** Replace the text about the *wand of guards and wards* with the following:

After Samarka locks the place down each evening, a wizard from the Wizard's Guild casts *guards and wards* on the entire building. This procedure is expensive but Samarka finds it money well spent.

**Page 107:** Use the stat blocks on this page for the Serpent People. K'Stallo's revised stats can be found earlier in this book (in the *Soul of the Serpent* adventure).

**Page 113:** Your Con cannot fall below 3 due to Seasickness. On reaching 3, you fall unconscious.

**Page 120:** Replace the Weapon Specialization entry of the Freeport Pirate with the following:

### SUPERIOR WEAPON SPECIALIZATION (EX)

At 8th level the pirate gains a +2 to bonus to damage with either the cutlass or the boarding pike. This bonus stacks with any existing Weapon Specialization.

**Page 121:** Of the Pirate Weapons, rogues receive proficiency in the belaying pin, cutlass, and gaff.

**Page 123:** In the Weapon and Armor Proficiency section of the Cultist NPC Class, "Adept" should read "Cultist."

Oona, the Cannibal Spirit (see page 86) is also available as a Cultist Deity.

**Page 125:** Add the following to the entry of Naval Code:

Unlike conventional languages, characters may take up to three ranks in Speak Language (naval code). At one rank, they can transmit or receive one sentence per minute. At two ranks, their speed increases to 5 rounds, and at three ranks they can send or translate a sentence with a full-round action.

**Page 141:** The Figurehead of Blue Water grants a +4 luck bonus to Swim. Anyone who touches the figurehead before diving into the water gains the bonus for one hour.

## SERPENT PEOPLE

**Civilized Serpent Person:** CR 1/2; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8-1; hp 3; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 6 (+1 natural, +5 chainmail); Atk +1 melee (2d4, falchion), +1 ranged (1d6, short bow); SQ *polymorph self* (Sp; 3x/day, as by 8<sup>th</sup>-level sorcerer), darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort -1, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Escape Artist +2, Hide +2, Knowledge (arcana) +5; Improved Initiative.

**Degenerate Serpent Person:** CR 1/2; Medium-sized monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8+1, hp 5; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 13 (+1 natural, +2 large shield); Atk +2 melee (1d8+1, shortspear; or 1d4+1, bite and poison), +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); SA poison (Ex; 1d6 temporary Wis, initial and secondary; Fort save avoids, DC 15); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5, Escape Artist +4, Hide +5; Improved Initiative.

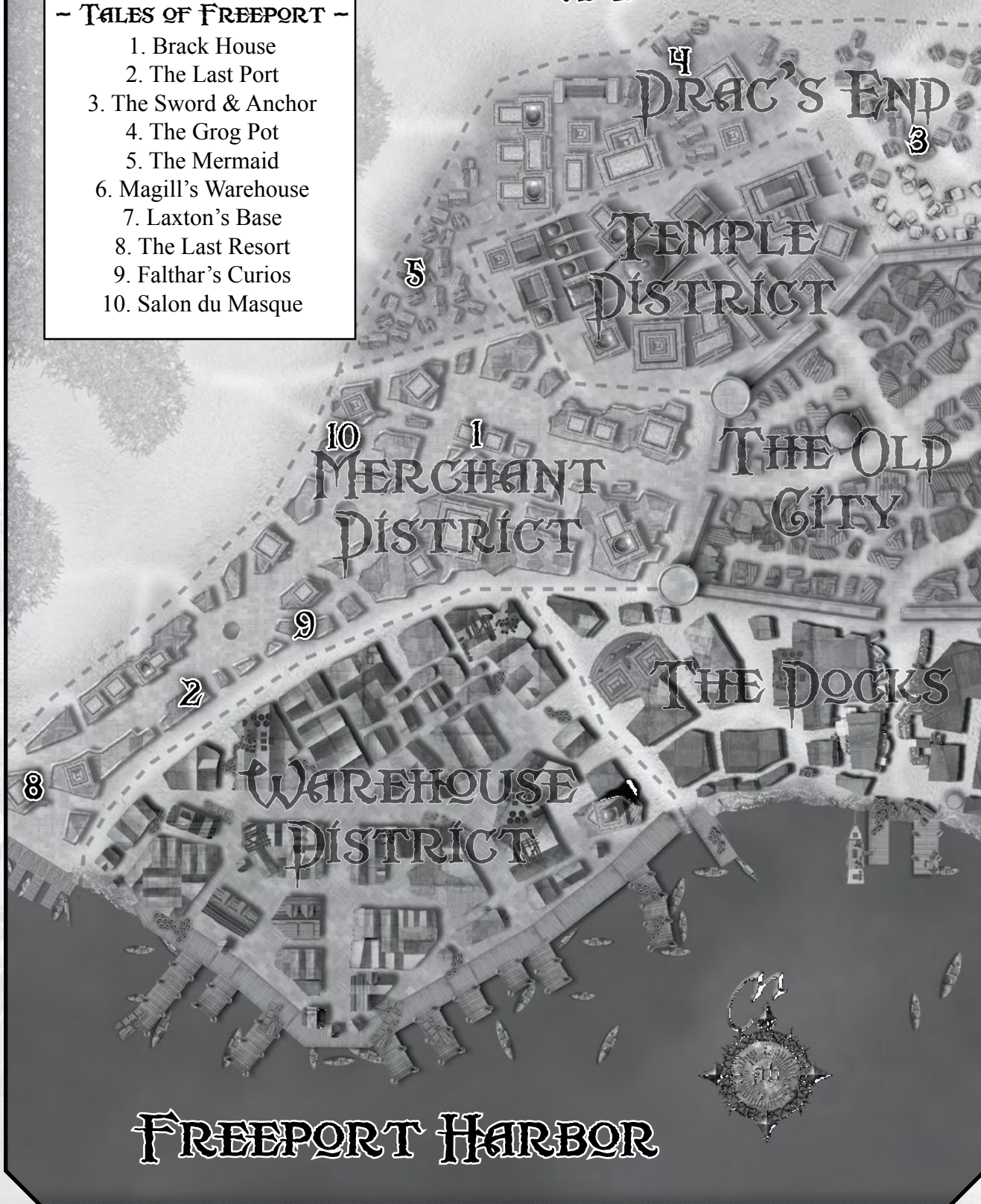
- CITY MAP -

FREEPORT: THE CITY  
OF ADVENTURE

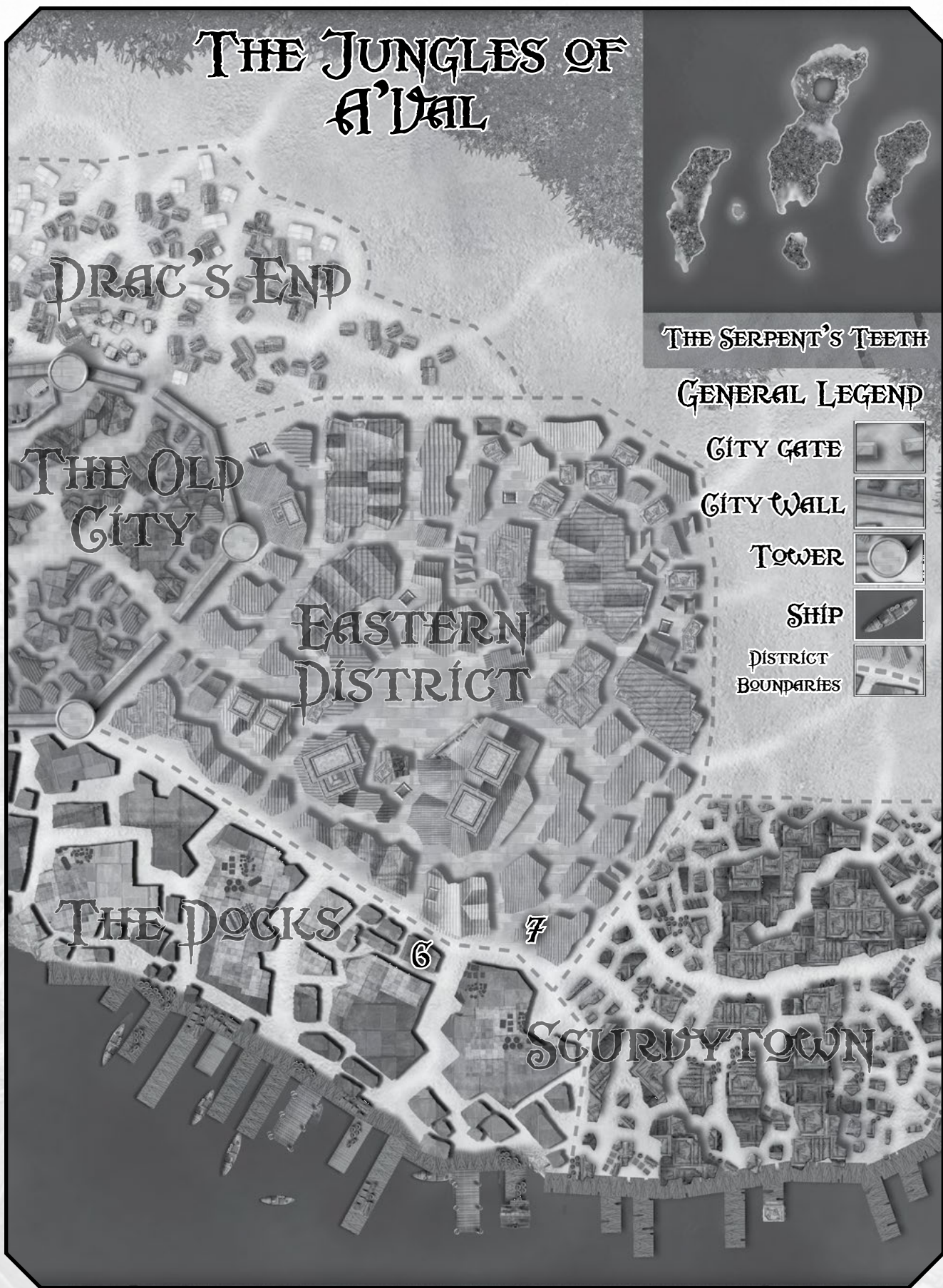
- TALES OF FREEPORT -

1. Brack House
2. The Last Port
3. The Sword & Anchor
4. The Grog Pot
5. The Mermaid
6. Magill's Warehouse
7. Laxton's Base
8. The Last Resort
9. Falthar's Curios
10. Salon du Masque

THE JUNGLES OF  
A'DAL



- CITY MAP -



# REWARD!

TO ALL CITIZENS OF FREEPORT: MATTHIAS BRACK, GENT. OFFERS THE SUM OF

FIVE HUNDRED PIECES OF GOLD

FOR THE SAFE RETURN OF

MISS GWENDOLYN BRACK

HIS DAUGHTER AND SOLE HEIR, MISSING SINCE THE EVENING BEFORE LAST.

FURTHER REMUNERATION IF THOSE RESPONSIBLE ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

ENQUIRE AT THE MERCHANTS' GUILD, FREEPORT.

HANDOUT A

G,

Tonight at N's house, at the usual  
hour.

V.

HANDOUT B

*Five are missing, including your girl. All from Drac's End west of the Temples and all in the last week.*

*Tom Canty, a student at the Institute, living in the Cluster. Matt Somers, apprentice to a wizard, never returned from an errand to the Scroll. Rebecca Budd, a barmaid, went to meet her lover at the Mermaid, but never arrived. Will Dagg, a sailor, lover of the aforesaid Rebecca Budd, left the Mermaid to look for her and never returned.*

*Keep in touch,*

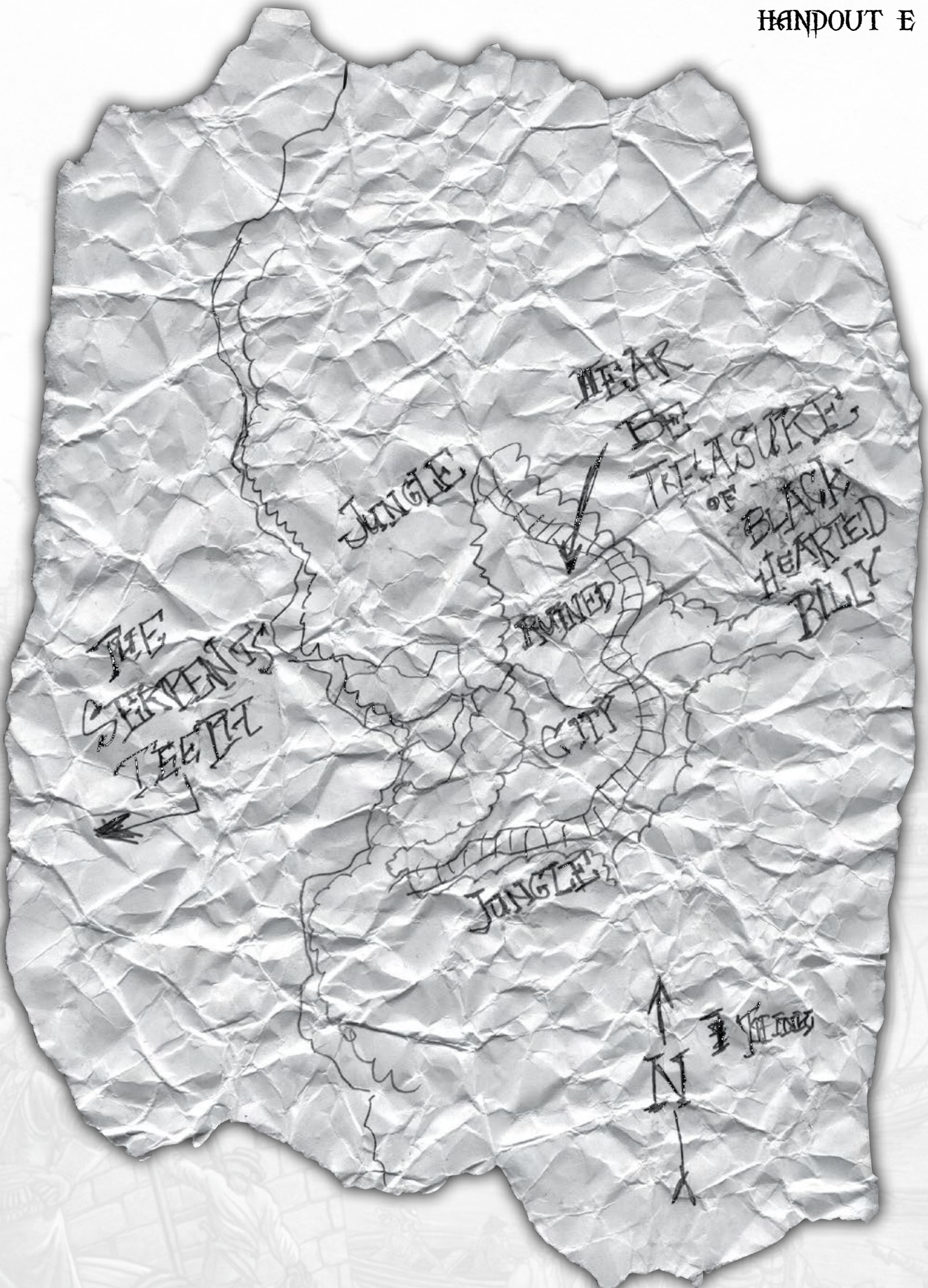
***Finn***

HANDOUT D

*Friends -*

*I have learned that the priest of whom we spoke will preach tonight. I will arrange for you to be conducted there. Please be at the back of Magill's warehouse by the docks an hour after sunset. You will need to disguise yourselves.*

*R Stallo*



- REFERENCE TABLES -

# REFERENCE TABLES: NEW PRESTIGE CLASSES

**TABLE 1-1: FREEPORT MERCHANT**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Merchant's Eye +2
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Haggle+2
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Merchant's Eye +4
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Haggle +4
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Society Contacts +2, Detect Magic Item
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Merchant's Eye +6
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Haggle +6
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Connoisseur's Knowledge
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Merchant's Eye +8
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Haggle +8, Society Contacts +4

**TABLE 1-2: SHIP'S CAPTAIN**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Eagle Eyes +2
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+2	Bonus Feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Make Way +10%
4th	+4	+3	+1	+3	Bonus Feat, Enhanced Leadership
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Eagle Eyes +4
6th	+6	+4	+2	+4	Bonus Feat
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Enhanced Intimidate
8th	+8	+5	+2	+5	Bonus Feat
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Eagle Eyes +6, Make Way +20%
10th	+10	+6	+3	+6	Master of the Seas

**TABLE 1-3: GAMBLER**

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Mind on the Game
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus Feat, Lightning Calculator
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Distraction
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Skepticism
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Feat, Discern Lies
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Split Focus, Silver Tongue
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Illusion Resistance
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Bonus Feat, Charmer
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Crowd Pleaser
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Clear Sight



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