

# PIRATES<sup>TM</sup>

OF THE  
LOST KINGDOM

BY: MATT DEMILLE



NEW DIMENSION  
GAMES

FOR PIRI REIS,  
FOR exploring myth . . .

## Credits

**Designer:** Matthew deMille

**Cover:** Frank Schoonover (historical picture)

**Editing, Graphic Design, Typography:** Matthew deMille

**Producer:** James deMille

# PLANNING THE ADVENTURE



Welcome to adventures in the ancient seas, matey! I hope you find what yer seekin' here . . .

**PRONOUN NOTE:** The male pronouns ('he', 'him', 'his') are used throughout this 'ere book. Though women may be bad luck at sea, they're right fine for this 'ere game, and we're not be tryin' to exclude 'em, nor even imply their exclusion. Centuries of use have made these 'ere pronouns neutral, and they're use provides for clear and concise written next—nothing else does.

**ABOUT THIS BOOK:** About this book in particular, indeed this gamebook—just what is a gamebook for a role-playing game?

What is in this book: Contained within these pages are three individual, open-ended Adventures that will take the Characters on thrilling journeys across the Mediterranean sea! These can either be played individually, or used in chronological order, thereby building the basis for the careers of the Player Characters. Or, they may even be played in non-chronological order, assuming that the Encounters keyed to specific years are omitted.

Using this book: These Adventures are relatively short, requiring on an average one full game session (roughly 10 hours) to play through to their end. However, you may increase the length of any Adventure by adding Encounters from other game gazetteers. One must select such additions carefully however, for each of the Adventures in this book are carefully constructed and their own Encounters are carefully chosen to lead the Characters to a certain conclusion, and even one sidetrack can throw the Players' thinking off enough to change the course of the entire Adventure. Additional Encounters are welcome and even encouraged, but you should read through the new material and the entire Adventure itself before choosing what to add and where to add it.

It is important to note that, as these Adventures are not 'full-length', that they should not be played back-to-back, as Players may tend to believe them to be one Adventure. This would lead to problems, in that Players might well associate Encounters in one Adventure with those situations

they face in another, and this can throw them way off track in their choices. These Adventures should only be played one-after-another if the Players are **fully** aware when one Adventure ends and that a **new** Adventure is beginning.

Indeed, if you play these Adventures one after another, have a little 'shore leave' time in-between them, perhaps breaking the game session at that point, or in some other way clearly establishing the time elapsed between adventures.

**PREPARING TO PLAY:** Before you and your friends sit down to play this game, you should consider the basic elements of the Adventure, as explained throughout the following pages.

Tales to be told: The Adventures in this book are presented in their chronological order. The first Adventure, 'The Sultan's Daughter' takes place in 1632. The second Adventure, 'Isles of Evil', takes place in 1635. Finally, the third Adventure, 'Where the Gods are Buried', might take place in 1638 . . .

Telling these tales: The adventures of pirates in the Mediterranean are difficult to imagine at first, not just because the archtypical pirate story is deeply themed with the Caribbean, but also because there is such a diversity of culture in this part of the world that whatever one imagines in one city, the backdrop might be completely different in the next. Therefore, it is best to take a more light-hearted, Hollywood approach to these stories. Indeed, try to abandoned historical and cultural accuracy for the sake of an exciting adventure whenever the choice must be made, tempting though it may be to use the setting's deeply founded history to add greater realism. These adventures are not about realism. In fact, they are quite fantastical, even more so than those found in other realms of piracy.

**MYTHS:** There are times when a pirate comes across a legend, a sailor's yarn that becomes a noose, leaving his mortal life and skill hanging and certain to die, and while each Adventures offers its their own rules to tie unique knots in the thread of the Character's story, here are provided the scores for figures they may encounter during any of the three tales within this booklet.

# PLANNING THE ADVENTURE

## GORGON

**Group number:** 1-3  
**Ability Scores:** B8, A11, E9, G6, W6, I12, C1, L2  
**Defense Score:** 13\*  
**Survival:** 16  
**Attack Rolls:** Bow +7\*  
**Base Damage:** 10\*  
**Morale:** 8  
**Movement Rate:** 110'  
**Treasure:** None

Gorgons are said to be mere myths, these hideous women truly the stuff of legends, with living serpents for hair and a life that lasts for thousands of years, quickened by those they slay. For indeed, anyone who merely sees one of these creatures face-to-face will perish, his life devoured by her eyes, and so one must fight them 'blind', suffering all modifiers thereby, for each Round he can possibly see such a monster make an Intuition Check at a -2 penalty, lest he meet her gaze and die all the same. These creatures lurk in the ruins of ancient shrines and temples where people have long abandoned both the site and its past, perhaps due to the presence of the Gorgon(s), who they do not speak of, lest others be drawn to them and subsequently slain by them, thus only perpetuating both the myth and the life of the unholy monster.

## Mermaid

**Group number:** 1-4  
**Ability Scores:** B3, A9, E11, G8, W8, I9, C12, L12  
**Defense Score:** 10\*  
**Survival:** 5  
**Attack Rolls:** Spells +4\*  
**Base Damage:** 8\*  
**Morale:** 7  
**Movement Rate:** 30' (on land) / 70' (in water)  
**Treasure:** +0

Mermaids are the lore of most sailors, and pirates are no exception, but what they are and what seeing one means depends entirely on he who is fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to come across them. Indeed, while most Mermaids appear only to beguile men, their 'attacks' which effectively drain away one's life made only in their own defense, there are many who 'attack' in many other ways, depending on who approaches them. For instance, a

bloodthirsty Catholic may see such a creature as a devil, and thus she may do him harm outright, by some spell he cannot see. Whatever the case may be, a Mermaid can 'fight' from any distance, and her Attack Rolls are made against one's outright Luck Score rather than their total Defense Score.

## Siren

**Group number:** 1-6  
**Ability Scores:** B2, A5, E5, G12, W11, I8, C12, L9  
**Defense Score:** 9  
**Survival:** 5\*  
**Attack Rolls:** Song +3\*  
**Base Damage:** 3\*  
**Morale:** 5  
**Movement Rate:** 100' (on land) / 50' (in water)  
**Treasure:** +2

Sirens are spirits of the sea, perhaps real and perhaps not, in the physical sense, but real enough to those whom they draw down into the watery depths to an unknown realm. For sirens lurk along coastlines and upon small, unknown islands, or even swim alongside ships, singing to those aboard with a charming, hypnotic voice. This 'attack' is made against one's outright Intuition Score rather than their total Defense Score, a defense increased by one's Religion Skill Level (if any). Their total Damage is not deflected by any armor, but only by 1 point of Protection for every exotic manner of holy symbol that one has with him. Those who are 'hurt' by a siren are losing their will to live in this mortal world, and when 'killed', they do not actually die, but either jump overboard or simply appear in the siren's arms, who then takes her 'playthings' down into her realm where the living cannot follow. However, the treasures of sirens are kept ashore as an additional lure, and thus lost crew can be paid for by what is left behind.

# THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER



Cursed be the dark men o' the east, says not I, but the God-fearin' men o' the western cities. Ye'd be a fool ta be a seekin' ta help them. But then, ye'd be a bigger fool, says I, ta turn down the fortune that awaits them who can find the greatest jewel o' the eastern seas, the Sultan's daughter . . .

**BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE:** Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

**Timeline:** This adventure is set in the Mediterranean in the year 1632. Those Encounters that are marked with an "\*" require the game to be played in this era. If your game does not adhere to timelines, do not use these Encounters.

**Background:** When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

As few tales survive in the Mediterranean as do those brave fools who seek them. Yet for many months now, one story has gathered size like the barnacles on an old ship's hull and traveled just as far. It is widely rumored that the daughter of the Sultan himself has gone missing.

Like birds that circle above a scuttled ship, so too can you hear the echoes of many ships preparing for sail, not for a rescue, but for war. If the Sultan's daughter is indeed lost, it can and will be blamed only on his enemies. Soon the seas shall be stained crimson-red with the sunset of peaceful times. War is inevitable. Some indeed welcome it. Others fear it. And you? You know better than anyone that storms assault men both on land and sea, and only he who has the charts written by rumor can find a way safely through the onslaught of fate and faith to come.

Strangely, nobody, neither nation nor corsair, is taking responsibility for the disappearance of a woman who holds the fate of an empire in her hands and heart. It is as if the ancient gods have spirited her away. It is as if some power that is unknown to the entire world truly desires war, if for no greater reason than the storm itself wishes to unleash its fury, destroying all that it can.

**PART 1: FINDING HEROES:** The party may or may not care about the Sultan's daughter, but they soon will. Use the following Encounters at your discretion to capture the interest of the Players and curse them with the desire to seek this woman.

## 1) Introduction

This Introduction awaits anyone who has no gold left, whether he started with none or spent it all.

Whether the work of one personality of God or another, all fates seem cruel in this world. The Heavens tease you with clouds warmed with the richest golden lining, yet you never reach them, unless in death by pain unimaginable or suicide to damnation. All you see of the Heavens is the horizon from the deck of the 'Sea Hawk', a fair but crowded ship—you and many others have all been rescued or captured by its captain, a man who a year ago was a gentleman, but whose life was ruined by treachery, and his humanity with it. "Evil in the womb of Destiny was his birth." one of the other human cargo says unto you. "All he knows now is gold. I was his first mate, once, but now I'm only property, all the same to him as this ship. At least he'll sell us all when we reach shore." The next evening brings a new horizon, one drawn by golden lamps within the bustling city of Syracuse. You are quickly traded for sheep, and after a hard day's work, set free.

The Characters are now free to do as they will in the port city of Syracuse. The captain of the Sea Hawk will not see any of them, as he is ever in fear of treachery, and he mistreats all his captives and crew alike.

## 2) Introduction

This Introduction will bring into the game anyone and everyone who is in debt.

The wealthy elite of Syracuse are bidding on the latest lot of people—whores, criminals, and you. A chain links you to the other wretches, as you stand in the cold night on the docks.

# THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER



The Characters will not be bid upon unless by another Character, and since nobody has yet been introduced who has gold, to carry out such a bluff will only result in that individual being put up for auction as well. Once everyone has been bid on or ignored, a wealthy woman will bid on all of the Characters—then set them free. Before she merges into the departing crowd, all they can learn is her name: 'Bronwyn Del Torro'. She will not wish to speak to the Characters and guards will keep them at a distance—her motives will remain as much a mystery as the rest of her.

### 3) Introduction

This Introduction will gather together all Characters whose loyalty is to treasure above all else—those who have any gold on them.

Moonlight glimmers upon the waves which try in vain to ascend the cliffs of this ruined fortress, its ancient towers defying time to fall, its people of the most wretched ilk gathering inside defying any law, any nation, any god to cease their sheer debauchery. Yet amidst the dark, smoky haze of the lanternlit dungeons, where men gamble away life's earnings and whores crawl over them like vipers, there comes one who defies them all. For the tale of the Sultan's daughter, envenomed with the dangerous nectar of a Sultan's sweet reward, has finally crept inside this fortress where faith and Royal navy could not, and then for all the boasting of the corsairs and smugglers here, none dare to believe this tale to be true, much less seek this prize. None, save perhaps yourselves.

All Characters who value gold above all else will be here, in the 'Dungeon Taverne' that is the favored drinking hole for sailors within the port of Syracuse, a ruined fort. If the party presses anyone for details about the reward, they will find many that have heard of it, and thus the reported reward ranges between 3000 and 36000 gold. It is offered by the Bey of Tripoli, who wishes to reclaim the Sultan's daughter for his master.

Those who have been introduced already can also be here, whether they have procured any gold for themselves or not.

**PART 2: THROUGH MESSINA:** Once all the Characters have decided to band together and set out in search of the Sultan's daughter for whatever reason, fate will take them northward, through the Straights of Messina. Use the following Encounters as necessary, though they are most likely to occur in the order that they are presented. The only bits of information that can be learned of the current whereabouts of the Sultan's daughter are from the Governor of Naples. Thus the party faces a venture of 56 leagues to that port city.

### 4) Acquiring a ship

If the party doesn't have a ship of their own and thus seeks one, the only pirate vessel not already gone to the race for the Sultan's daughter is thus:

Already are the wharfs deserted, the ancient piers reaching out into the green waters like the stone shadows of those gone to the horizon, sacrificed to race for the reward of the Bey. Only one ship remains here, a half-rotten barque rocking gently in the cradle of wharfs that are the walls of an ancient fort sunken into the sea. The 'Marionette' she is, and the rag-tag lot crawling about on her spiderweb-like rigging must surely be pirates.

The ship is run by one 'Captain Hogsworth', a man as fat and foul as his name implies. He is also going after the reward, but needs some new 'expendable' crewmen in the event of unforeseen dangers—he will eagerly sign the party. His ship's articles are provided as Handout 1. His ship itself has 60 days of food and water, 10 cannons with 20 salvos and a crew of 85 men—50 1<sup>st</sup> Level, 30 2<sup>nd</sup> Level, and 5 3<sup>rd</sup> Level. Hogsworth himself is a Maltese, cutlass-wielding captain of Level 4.

### 5) Half-sunken ship

The Straights of Messina. Normally well patrolled by Catholic and Muslim ships alike, this day you sight nary a sail. Soon, however, the wreckage of many ships begins to stain the surface of the emerald-green waves, indicating that the war has already begun.

# THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER



A Search of the flotsam can find the ghostly image of a sunken barque, laying on a reef so that its deck is only a few feet below the waves, and its aft-deck is still above water. Those who climb aboard will have to contend with the 4 tiger sharks who are swimming amongst the wreckage. If they are killed or driven off, the party can make a new Search, one that might find a treasure chest still in the sunken cabin. Inside the heavy, locked chest is 5200 gold, three human skulls, and a scroll case containing the parchment that is Handout 2.

## 6) By the blood of Allah!

From out of nowhere, a galliot appears, racing in blind fury towards you!

The galliot has 6 cannon and is crewed by 60 fanatical Muslim corsairs. If the party's vessel is not commanded by a follower of Islam, they will attack. If the party is clearly winning, the galliot commander, 'Enderah Rais', will bluff, calling out "If you don't call off your attack I will load our cannons with prisoners!" He has no prisoners, save for the galley slaves, who are already dead due to sheer exhaustion and disease—those not dead will perish before the day is out. If the Muslims are victorious, they will throw overboard all the dead and wounded who are not of Islamic faith—what use are they? Thusly, Characters who are wounded at least get a chance to swim for their lives—half a mile to the western coast of Italy.

## 7) Auction of angels

Navigating through a floating labyrinth of flaming wreckage, you come upon several ships all tied together. It appears their crews are celebrating a victory over the several ships burning upon the waves all around, forming a ring of fire. For the prisoners aboard them, who are being auctioned as slaves, it must be as if they are in Hell itself.

These 57 surviving pirates of these 3 barely seaworthy sloops are auctioning female prisoners. One is the Countess Bronwyn Del Torro from the city of Syracuse. If anyone sets her free, this is to be punished by both being marooned together.

**PART 3: FATES ENTWINED:** In the port city of Naples the party may or may not find what it is that they seek. Use the following Encounters as needed. However, once the day draws to a close, or the Characters plan to leave port, move on to the next Section of this Adventure.

## 8) The tale of the Governor

Only those who make a Charisma Check will be admitted to see the Governor of Naples.

You are escorted inside the large, brick mansion of the Governor. Today he is conducting business on the verandah, as the main court has recently been destroyed by cannons from raiding ships. Passing through the broad, lattice doors, you see him just as your escort announces you all. "His Excellency, the Governor Pumbo of Naples!"

Governor Pumbo will say he knows nothing of the Sultan's daughter. If pressed, he will simply say, rather dismissively, "Maybe it is the gods of Atlantis returning to wreck havoc". But having said this, if pressed further, he will cease business for the day and order everyone out of his house, save for a double-duty of guards. He actually has the Sultan's daughter hidden in a secret dungeon under the mansion, whose only entrance is the fireplace, whose back is a secret door.

## 9) The Fates and Fergusson

You sit down to eat at a small, outdoor taverne. The sole proprietor is a Jew, happily making up large pitabread dough by stretching it outward by hand, with all the glee as if he were God busily making the universe. He's humming to himself, a tale here, a psalm there.

Have each Character make an Intuition Check. If successful, they will hear the proprietor singing a song about the Sultan's daughter being "In Hell". If asked, the proprietor, 'Mr. Fergusson', will have a price of 50 gold (free for those who can prove their faith as bring Jewish). His tale is that the only Hell he knows of is beneath the Governor's mansion in ancient catacombs...

# THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER



**PART 4: ATTACK ON NAPLES:** The very first night the Characters are in Naples, there will be an attack on the port city by 20 galliots and over a thousand fanatical Muslim corsairs! During this bombardment of cannonballs and curses, use the following Encounters as they become applicable to tell the tale of the party's adventures in the city.

## 10) The attack begins

The night sky is as tranquil as the dark waters of the Mediterranean, either one the reflection of the other. Then, suddenly, that mirror is shattered on high and low, as corsair ships launch an all out assault on the city, their oars churning the waves as if stirring a stew of blood and wrecked ships, and spewing cannon salvos into the ancient forts guarding the harbor. The walls endure better than expected, as if spirits from forgotten worlds are helping defend the port, and their ranks are constantly being added to, as fires of fury create the smoke of ghosts on sea and land alike.

Make note of where in the city each Character is based on their last stated action. For example, if one was buying equipment, he's at the bazaar. For moving between any locations calls for a Stealth Check at a total +5 bonus due to the surrounding chaos. Failure of such a Check results in crossing paths and thus swords with 1-6 Muslim zealots.

## 11) Power of the gods\*

The raiders are gaining ground, and from where you are, you can easily see them pouring onto the wharfs like rats deserting their ships. They are armed to their nefarious teeth with the newly developed flint-lock pistols, easily sending to rout the Catholic guardsmen. The tide is turning, and it is a tide of blood rushing in, staining all the docks in crimson-red. They cry how the power of the gods is now in the hands of worthy men!

All the invaders are Muslim zealots, but they have flint-lock pistols as well, though they have a penalty of -2 to use them. Anyone on the wharfs will now have a total of only +1 instead of +5 to his Stealth Check to escape this area.

## 12) Revenge of the gods

Making your way through the city towards the Governor's mansion, you find the way difficult to be sure. The already maze-like streets are now worse, being half collapsed and sending loose an avalanche of rubble around every corner. Then, as you near the gates, you see several guardsmen materialize—living shadows are walking towards you, wielding swords that gleam like moonlight.

These 5 'Skeletons' are shadows indeed, but of guards from thousands of years ago, as one can tell if he can make a Wits Check at a -4 penalty. They will attack everyone who tries to enter the Governor's mansion, which has been built on what was to them sacred ground.

## 13) Fallen angel

Dashing through the streets, you happen upon a woman laying half buried by a collapsed wall of broken bricks. Through the soot and stains of her blood, she seems somehow familiar, like an angel perhaps, or someone even from this life. She is helpless and dying, but looking keenly at you.

This is Countess Bronwyn Del Torro. She is dying and cannot be saved. However, if given any means of comfort in her final breaths, she will say "The dungeon . . . placate the most ancient gods . . ." If she was rescued in Encounter 7, to the one who saved her she will whisper in his ear so that no others can hear her last word; "Poseidon . . ."

## 14) The battle ends

Fires from the harbor are setting the corsair fleet ablaze. With no time for wonder, the invaders are in flight back to their galliots. From here, all you can see is that other ships, European in their design, are responding to the attack. One parting shot from the Muslims brings down the mansion of the Governor in a heap of rubble!

If the party has not yet found the entrance to the catacombs, there are no guards left to hinder them. The Governor will have been killed as well.



# THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER



**PART 5: THE CATACOMBS:** Just beneath the mansion of the Governor, there begins a labyrinth of catacombs, for many centuries ago, the wealthy elite of Naples sought to castrate the pagan ways of Greek shipping by establishing their rule over the sacred ground of the ancients. When the party enters this maze, they will face many dangers long forgotten by the world above. To tell the terrible tale of the adventure through these tunnels, use the following Encounters one and all and in the order that they are presented.

**Vision and light:** The various descriptions of these Encounters are written with the assumption that the party is using torchlight. If they are using some other light source, read the boxed texts differently to compensate. For example, read “Your flickering torchlight . . .” as “Your glowing lanternlight . . .”

**Legends:** The catacombs are forgotten, save within legend. If anyone seeks for records of these mazes within the library, he may with a Searching Check discover one story, rolled on the following chart. This roll will gain a bonus equal to the highest Religion Skill Level among all of those searching.

## Legends

Roll	Legend of the catacombs
10-12	The original entrance to the tunnels was sealed from within and rigged with a trap
4-9	The evil in the catacombs fears Christians but relishes the taste of Muslim blood
1-3	Somewhere in the catacombs is the third brother of the rulers of Algiers

### 15) Gate to the catacombs

Narrow stairs wind down through a rough-hewn shaft, like a tower or a mine shaft. Thick strands of moss dangle like slimy stalactites. When you reach the bottom, you find yourself in a spacious antechamber whose walls are carved in relief, the pagan deities of ancient Rome still embodied in the stonework of mariners and merchants. Your flickering torchlight seems to give them new life, as they seem to move within the shadows, and their eyes blink at you. Thick grime on the floor tells that nobody has been here for centuries.

The blinking eyes are caused by rats within the narrow tunnels carved into the eyes. Someone must stick a pole or similar shaft 4' into the eye of Poseidon (the Sea God) to cause the otherwise unfindable secret door here to open. Solving this riddle merits 20 Experience Points. A search may find writing scrawled on the floor, reading as thus: *'He who was of the three is master of the . . .'* This writing is reproduced as Handout 3. However, sticking a pole into the eye of any other deity will cause a poison dart to shoot out of a different eye socket behind him and automatically hitting the poking trespasser for level 5 poison.

### 16) Haunted passage

Exploring the narrow tunnels, you feel that each corner takes you further back in time. Now you come to a small room, like a Chapel hewn out of the very living rock. Faded frescoes look out at you, as women dance naked upon plains that no sunlight has touched for thousands of years.

Continuing from this room will only lead the party in circles. Here, they must search to find the outline of a secret door worked into the frescoes, as it is camouflaged as an arch on the seacoast. It opens easily, but then a haunted voice will echo from the darkness within, saying “They hung me from their yardarm to stay the losing battle . . . to quiet the guns my body would be no flag . . . the noose was my freedom, not to death, but like the wind I swung to the other ship . . .”

### 17) Bottomless pit

The dark passageway ahead is blocked by air, for you come to the edge of a bottomless pit, reaching from one wall to the next. The opposite side is a good twenty feet away. Hanging amidst the dangling moss above you are countless dried bodies, like ghosts waiting to watch you fall.

The bodies hang from nooses, and each one is thick, though not unbreakable. If someone swings across on a corpse's rope, it stands only a 1 in 12 chance of breaking for every 100 Burden one has (rounded down). The pit is 400' deep.

# THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER



## 18) Ancient treasure vault\*

The tunnel passes by a stone door whose edges are sealed with liquid rock. Ancient words carved into the face of it tempt you to translate them, for what unguarded treasures lie beyond their all too solvable riddle? Such are the ways of devils from the ancient world's tunnels into Hell.

The writing is English, but written with the script of Muslims, thus requiring one with such a language Skill to read it, or else the Players can try to decipher it by studying Handout 4. It reads *'May my brothers Barbarossa never know of my birth or my treasure. May thieves find it first. Yet beware all for I shall not give it up without trial. Sealed by the grace of Allah in the Christian year 1510 to complete its curse'*. The door requires a Brawn Check at a -3 penalty to open. It leads to a small room containing only a coffin that contains a Vampire, along with 6 treasures; 3 rolls worth of jewels and 3 'special' treasures, plus 1510 gold. If there is anyone present of Islamic faith, this fiend will gain a +3 bonus to hit him.

## 19) The end of the catacombs

The catacombs end before a large door, barred from this side. Thick cobwebs grasp the heavy bar like the hands of ghosts, desperately trying to keep the living from entering their vault. Your very breath seems to fade, chilled no less by the underground world than something in your soul.

The bar holding the door is trapped, so that if lifted, it will cause the entire ceiling to slowly fall (centuries ago it fell much faster), leaving everyone with but 2 Rounds before being crushed to death. The ceiling is falling as far back as 50', so those who wish to 'outrun' it must do so quickly. Once it has fallen, it will slowly retract, resetting itself. Breaking the door requires doing 16 Damage with a single blow, lest it blunt one's weapon for either -1 Base Damage (for melee weapons), wound those doing this bare-handed (to knock out rather than to kill), or cause a ricochet to which an Attack Roll is made against all Characters in a random order, but stopping as soon as it hits anyone.

## 20) Sheralinna

The doors open to reveal an ancient throne room that must have been the tomb for nobility. The sarcophagus is indeed carved like a throne. Only, sitting within it, with as much flesh as yourself, is a queen, who stares at you through long trails of midnight-black hair. Yet her flesh is pale, like that of a corpse, and her eyes are ringed with a rotting blackness like someone not of this world.

The 'queen' is actually the Sultan's daughter. She heard the party coming and dressed herself in the funeral ornaments, in case she needed to scare off would-be thieves. She will play the part of a ghost until the party has either shown that they are not afraid, or are here to rescue her and take her to a Muslim haven. Once befriended, 'Sheralinna' will explain she was imprisoned her by Governor Polumbo above, who brought her down a secret shaft. This shaft she will use to escape if she is threatened—she will fear the party more than the guards in the mansion. However, with the mansion now destroyed, the way will be blocked, allowing only those of 60 body weight or less to squeeze through the rubble—she weighs only 50. Yet if the party befriends her, Sheralinna will prove to be a very grateful and cooperative political prisoner.

**CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE:** Once the party has left the smoldering city of Naples behind there are some things to consider.

The reward: If Sheralinna is taken to the Bey of Tripoli, her rescuers will be granted amnesty for the duration of their stay, as well as the reward of either 10000 gold (if they are mostly non-Muslim), or 30000 gold (if a majority of them are Muslim).

The three skulls: The three skulls that may have been found in Encounter 5 are very valuable to the Sultan's daughter Sheralinna, as they were friends of hers—she was aboard the ship they were found on when she was captured. If turned over to her, the Bey of Tripoli will, at her request, reward the party with an additional 3000 gold for each skull.

# ISLES OF EVIL

The winds o' war be smellin' rich with blood, an' ere the sun sets on the battles, the domain o' death will be revealed by a moon made o' gold, says I.

**BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE:** Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

**Timeline:** This adventure is set in the Mediterranean in the year 1635. Those Encounters that are marked with an '\*' require the game to be played in this era. If your game does not adhere to timelines, do not use these Encounters.

**Background:** When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

For years now, the ancient seas have been the battlefield of angels bound in bodies of timber, as the vessels of all Catholics and Muslims have gone from temple to terror, from piety to piracy, indeed from worship of faith to warships at sea. The death-toll has been rising, forcing the greater nations into the conflict. Strangely, none seem to know how it began, or even what they are all fighting for, save each for their own god.

The hardest blows have been dealt by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire raiding European shipping, and strangely even his own subjects to take a greater levy. Stranger still, the only one who questions these actions is his own daughter, Sheralinna. Yet even her mind seems to change with the seasons—first she opposed the war, then she joined merchant vessels to oversee raids, and now she remains recluse, but is seen most often by ambassadors of the Roman Catholic Empire.

With the naval power of both empires fading like sunlight over a broadside battle, mercenaries are being licensed at an alarming rate, their fires providing enough light to dare hope for a dawn beyond victory rather than any cease of hostility. Nowhere are the corsairs of the ancient world more eager and able to accept privateering trades than in the temple of Tsamanni, the unofficial ruler of the pirate haven Tripoli. Fate has landed many in this city, including yourselves.

**PART 1: HAUNTED HAREM:** The city known as Tripoli is actually three cities—Oea is the main, central city, while its outskirts stretch all the way to Sabratha 18 leagues to the west and the port of Leptis Magna 15 leagues to the east, hence what the Greeks called the 'tripolis'. Originally settled by the Phoenicians who built Carthage, this was a bustling port of merchants once, but now is a dead city, a secret anchorage for pirates. All manner of unholy services can be bought here. However, no amount of gold can buy adventure—the party must find that. Once they set out to find Tsamanni, they will be directed to the 'city' of Leptis Magna. To tell of this most fated meeting, play the following Encounters, and in the order they are presented.

## 1) Introduction

This Introduction will bring into the game any and all male Characters of a chosen faith, regardless of what that faith is (Catholicism, Islam, etc.).

One boat leaves the wharf at Leptis Magna each sunset, daring the dark waters of the ancient and sunken cities below to seek the island off the coast. Formed by clusters of massive, volcanic rocks thrust up from the depths, they form the rampart of a natural fortress. Here you and many others are bound, men all, for the whispered and heavenly pleasures of that place, the domain of a man known as Tsamanni, in whose harem easy money consorts with easy virtue to spawn the seeds of the greatest of adventures.

On the boat ride over, one of the men, merely a corsair of 0 Experience Level, will try to pick the pocket of a random Character.

## 2) Introduction

This Introduction can add to the already swelling tale any male Characters who desire it, themselves having already been on the island for some time.

Most of the island fortress is a converted Roman palace, with pillars and old walls surrounding an extensive bazaar. Many men move about here, as much of faith and fortune as yourselves.

# ISLES OF EVIL



The new Player Characters are in the bazaar. How long they've been here and for what reasons they came and why they hook up with the newly arrived are all tales only they themselves can tell.

Also, another pickpocket will try his luck with a randomly determined Character.

### 3) Ghosts of pleasure

Once anyone seeks audience with Tsamanni, the guards will insist they leave their weapons outside, and if they accept, only then run this Encounter.

The guards, swathed in colorful robes and large turbans, escort you without a word to a harem. However, there is nobody here. The guards then leave as well. The lustful smell rising from the plush cushions all around indicate that someone has been here within the last hour. Torches and stained-glass lanterns glow along the walls.

Hiding in compartments both above and below are a total of 10 'disguised' Piratess', which will jump out and attack after 1 Round. They will be painted with green and white in order to have the appearance of ghosts, or at least possessed people, and they will fight without weapons, as must the party—they are being watched through tiny holes in the walls by 20 Ottoman guards of Tsamanni. However, they will let the fight play to an end. Those who beat the women without weapons will be escorted on to the next Encounter.

### 4) Introduction

This Introduction will bring any and all Characters of female stature into the tale.

Beyond the empty harem, the guards lead you through a paradise! Mountains of pillows, glaciers of fountains and forests of fruit trees create the garden of the island's master. Several women are taking their leisure here, though none of them are consorts—they seem to be pirates much like yourselves, only being given special treatment.

Amongst the women here will be the new Player Characters. Let them do as they will.

### 5) The assassin

The guards lead you down a dark corridor. You can see nothing, save for the jewels glittering on their turbans and their sword-hilts.

A Muslim zealot is hiding in a niche in the wall, and will attack and kill one of the guards in the false belief he is a spy. During the fight that will thus immediately begin, he will turn his knife (envenomed with level 4 poison) on a randomly determined Character each Round. The guards will then hold back, doing nothing, as they cannot tell whose side anybody is on. The assassin, in case of capture, took a poison before attacking, so he will die during torture, unable to retrieve his antidote.

### 6) An audience with Tsamanni

You are brought before the unofficial ruler of the island and the city. Tsamanni sits upon a raised dais piled high with cushions, fat beyond telling, and surrounded by equally bloated women. The so-called 'Emperor of Everlasting Evil' seems to be three men, enough to rule Tripoli. You doubt not that he has also the men enough to do just that. Yet he seems calm, at peace, indeed more interested in pursuing other matters.

If the party dares attack, there are 30 Ottoman guards ready for battle. If they listen, the Muslim mercenary king will say the following:

"Neither empire's faith will win this war. War is to be won with weapons. Allah is pressed hard against the shields of Catholic zeal. We are only bringing ruin upon ourselves, all of us. It's bad for business. Good for my business, true, but overall a most ill change in the wind, for the ancient gods long drowned in the sea are getting the gold rather than Bey or Cardinal alike. Therefore I ask you, no, I dare you to seek the Conch of the Siren, an artifact that can force an end to this war. Agree, and I will tell you where to find it. You all seem foolish enough to risk what nobody else will..."

Those who accept will be forcibly branded by a tattoo on their forearm, shown as Handout 5.

# ISLES OF EVIL



**PART 2: FALCONS OF MALTA:** Reaching the island nation of Malta requires a voyage of only 50 leagues to the northeast. Once there, the party will have to find the 'Falcons'. Simple inquiries in local hubs and pubs will soon learn that these men were a faction of the Malta Knights, and their one and only temple lies in ruins down the coast. Once the party ventures there, tell the tale of exploring it with the following Encounters, to be used one and all and in the order they are presented.

Map: If the party is open about their search for a temple or the Falcon Knights, one of those whom they talk to will offer to sell them a 'map' of the temple. For a fee of 200 gold, the party can gain possession of Handout 6.

Legends: Many locals talk about the ruins down on the beach often, though they fancy them to be just that, ruins, and nothing more. Yet through tavern-tales and sailors yarns, the party can find treasures of information, giving them 2 stories rolled on the following chart. This roll receives a +2 bonus for each Character in the party of Maltese heritage.

## Legends

Roll	Legend of the ruined temple
10-12	The heirloom of the English king is still down there and even that is not the most valuable treasure in that dark place
5-9	Some sailors claim they can hear music coming from those dark ruins when the moon is riding high
2-4	The Falcon Knights were in the service of the kings of England for a century
1	Man-beasts crawled out of the sea haunt those ruins, thirsting for human blood

## 7) Sarcastro of Barbados

The ruins rise from the barren headlands, hewn from the cliff itself. The salty smell of the air and the lonely cry of gulls are like the ghosts of the magical music and succulent smell of feasts that once came from within those dark halls. The gravel of the beach crunches beneath your feet as you slowly approach. Once inside the palace, you find naught but spacious, empty chambers.

Hiding in the shadows is a Spaniard from the Caribbean, 'Sarcastro of Barbados' (the island of 'Barbados' with his strong accent). If there are any Spaniards with the party, he will reveal himself, and offer to sell them information in the form of one additional roll for a legend at the price of 20 gold. A sarcastic and crude individual, his name is well earned, and if the party scoffs at all at his offer, it will double without a second thought. He will also laugh at threats, claiming that 'god' is watching over them and is generous with curses. However, this is merely the bluff of a mad Pirate. An offer of 100 gold up front is required for this Pirate to join the party, but he can be 'haggled' down very, very easily to a mere 10 gold—he will claim there are terrors deeper in the ruins, but can be 'persuaded' to face them by confidence in the party's own confidence (and aggression).

## 8) Council chamber

Amongst the many dark, empty rooms, you find a circular council chamber. A round table in the center and ragged coats of arms along the walls echo a poor attempt to model a court after the legends of Europe rather than more efficient fact. Still, there is something captivating to the heart about this dusty room.

A search of this chamber might just discover that one of the table legs is hollow, and inside it is a pearl necklace worth 1000 gold.

This room is haunted by the ghost of a knight (a 'Hero'). The Falcon Knights being the enemies of Muslims, all those among the party whose faith is to Islam increases the chance in 12 that this specter attacks—if there is only one, it is only a 3 chance, with each additional Character adding 2 to the odds. The knight will know of one's faith no matter if the Characters conceal it. However, if this ghost does not attack, the party can talk with it. It will not say anything important unless asked as a question specifically, and then it can only answer "Yes" or "No", though it will possess an unlimited knowledge about things within this Adventure. Yet after the second question has been answered, the ghost will disappear, never to return for the party no matter what they try.

# ISLES OF EVIL



## 9) Grand stairwell

The many empty rooms of this ruin all lead to a broad stair, running straight down into the black depths of the earth. The walls are covered with fading murals. Massive torches in iron sconces lean outward, forming an arched canopy above, made complete by thick cobwebs.

The stairs are trapped, so that every third step triggers poison darts that shoot out from the walls, automatically hitting everyone on the steps with a poison of level 3.

## 10) Dead men tell cryptic tales\*

Delving deeper into the darkness of the ruins, an uneasy feeling begins to overtake you. Finally, a chamber welcomes you with more than shadows and spiders. Here, several large, rose-colored urns stand against the walls, and the ceiling is a low dome covered with a faded mural depicting the Falcon Knights in their days of glory. Laying on the floor is a skeleton dressed in European robes of parliament.

Each of the 5 urns contains a strange liquid, like wine in fragrance but not in taste. If anyone drinks it, roll on the following chart to determine what happens to him. This 'wine' can only effect each individual once, no matter how much he has.

### Magical Wines

Roll	Magical effects of the wine
12	Enchantment; +1 to Endurance
10-11	Healed of all wounds and afflictions
6-9	No effect
4-5	Automatically afflicted by level 1 poison
2-3	Hair fades to white; -1 to Charisma
1	Endurance Check at -2 penalty or perish

The skeleton is of an ambassador sent by the current king of England, Charles. He was killed by Sarcastro a year ago, though he will, if present, be ready to act completely horrified by the discovery, spouting rhetoric about how terrible it is that gods war so much that the English and Spanish find a common enemy—Sarcastro will not confess to this

murder unless it is tortured out of him, or unless it is told by the spirit of this dead man, for if the skull is spoken to, it will glow from within with a vibrant red light and speak back, speaking thus: "The sword of the last Spaniard cannot thwart the last Englishman from the Blue Falcon, who speaks for King Charles, who comes to claim his family loom of thirty and a hundred years past".

## 11) Lake beneath the sea

The foundations of the temple are cavernous, a natural maze of tunnels leading to a large grotto where the floor sinks into a tranquil pool which shimmers beneath your light. Tall stalagmites rise from the mirror-like depths, almost deliberately blocking your view of every distant detail beyond the water. But clear to see from every place on the shore is a beautiful woman in the center of the pool, a sculpture of silvery metal resting on a rock. This Siren sings a silent song with her beautiful body, naked save for a shawl, inviting or perhaps daring you to enter her domain, her lake beneath the sea.

The pool is of salt water and the home of 3 Mermaids, who have a tunnel running 500' out to the sea—they are currently hiding in it, waiting to see what the Characters do. The pool is 10' deep, so one will have to swim or swing the 30' to the island of the statue. A search of that rock can find a conch. However, this is not the Conch of the Siren. If blown, it will compel the Mermaids here to reveal themselves, and they will offer the party a single favor. To earn another favor requires a kiss, but to do so requires a Wits Check, with any failure causing that individual to lose all desire to ever leave this cavern.

*Leaving* would be good to ask for, freeing all who are held by the Mermaids' spell.

*Treasure* can be given in the form of 1500 in English crowns and a necklace (an heirloom of the English King Charles).

*Information* on the whereabouts of the Conch of the Siren earns a song, provided as Handout 7. Once sung, however, if Sarcastro is with the party he will go mad and attack random targets every Round until he himself is killed.

# ISLES OF EVIL



**PART 3: CONS OF CRETE:** The island nation of Crete lies 130 leagues due east of Malta. Along this journey, the party's vessel(s) will encounter as many ships as you wish to present them with, as a full war is on. However, once there, they will find no ruins to explore. Indeed, the whereabouts of the next island they must seek are known only to the local profiteers, forcing the party to find their way through the maze of pirate camps and small city streets, seeking the most wretched and vile scum to pry information from. Once the party begins to do this, tell the tale of their successful ideas with the following Encounters whenever applicable.

## 12) Diary of Grandall

Inquiries at any tavern calls for a Charisma Check for the entire party. If successful, the locals will tell of the whereabouts of 'the prophet' for 1-12 gold. This Check can be re-attempted as often as it takes to be successful, however each subsequent failure adds 1-12 gold to the final price. If asked for 'Mr. Grandall' by name, there will be a bonus of +4 to this Check. Once successful, one and one Character alone will be escorted into a dark room.

Steep, wooden stairs descend into a dark hole, a converted wine cellar that is now a haunting mix of a prison cell and a study. Sitting at a desk is a man hunched over a long parchment, talking to himself as he scribes his journal. He seems to be oblivious to his squalor, as if he has died once and fears it not a second time. A lonely lantern illuminates his back and the parchment he pours over, yet its words remain just at the edge of sight, and his face in shadow.

This is 'Mr. Grandall', though he will not ever give his name unless it is spoken to him. In any event, he will eagerly tell the Character his tale:

"I killed my own brother. Mad we went, and no life besides a pirate shall I ever have. Carved into my forehead the number he did. The day that we found that cursed treasure. No Holy Day was it that was recorded by Columbus. Blessed were we to find the hoard? Cursed it was, and so are we in turn. I live in fear but only of myself, for

if I can kill my own blood, what restraint of the devil is there left within me? Ancient gods. Fear them. They can prove stronger than faith. Now this tale is yours to bear. I shall remember it no more so long as my mind is my own to command".

If asked of the number, Grandall will brush back his hair, revealing '12 - 10' scarred into the pale flesh of his forehead.

## 13) Old Crow Cemetery

There is only one cemetery nearby, and if sought, the party can easily find it.

Old Crow Cemetery tumbles down a hillside and off a cliff overlooking the bay. Not a single one of the hundreds of headstones still stands upright. Sculptures of crows perch upon the posts of the blown down fence, long weathered by the salty air of the sea.

The party must search for an epitaph that does not make sense—there is one that reads the date of death as 2106, which has not yet occurred. The epitaph itself is provided as Handout 8. There is no birth year given, but this is not uncommon for pirates who come from poor backgrounds and are fleeing the law anyway—"Origins are unimportant, and only ends are remembered" is a saying of the locals on this island.

Digging up the grave will find a poor wooden coffin, and therein a corpse and a key encrusted with diamonds, worth 1800 gold total.

## 14) Introduction

This Introduction will bring any and all new Player Characters into the game.

On the wharf, you see several ships docking this night. Most are beleaguered, weather-beaten and half sunken vessels, doubtless having coming to these rocky shores through storms of war. Those sailors disembarking are from as wide a variety of cultures as they are ships—pirates, the lot of them. Lanterns flicker in the darkness, making all these poor souls appear as ghosts.

# ISLES OF EVIL

**PART 4: CLIMB HOLY MOUNTAIN:** The tiny island nation of Bozwell lies 90 leagues northwest of Crete. Along this journey, the party's vessel(s) will encounter as many ships as you desire to present them with, as the war is still raging on. However, once there, they will be told by locals that any answers to all mysteries await them atop the sacred mountain where the ziggurats landed. If one knows his history and argues that these deities were believed to have come down elsewhere, the locals will say that they 'have returned', and even that they 'are there now'. Once the party begins to climb the steady slopes, tell the tale of their ascent with the following Encounters, played one and all and in the order they are presented.

## 15) False faith and fools gold

The only path through the rocky cliffs upon the mountainside begins here, beside the statue of a very strange figure. Tall and thin with massive eyes, this ancient idol must represent the mythic ziggurats of the mountaintop. He holds a small, stone chest, filled with real coins, though they are clearly unreal as well—fools gold.

Writing can be found upon the stone chest in every language, all instructing every pilgrim to take one of the cursed coins here to ascend the slopes, lest the wrath of the ancient gods be cast down on him. However, this set up by Rahz Al Gray who rules the mountain up high to test each Character's respect for ancient gods, passed by taking a coin.

## 16) The blind leaving behind

The path zigzags its way up the mountainside. A while on, you come upon a hermit, sitting beside a campfire atop a mountain of his own—of fools gold. He smiles with a single-tooth and invites you to join him. You cannot tell what misshapen thing he is cooking, though several cats scamper about, all of them with their eyes put out. "I can be paid in false gold!" he says giddily. "Just one coin for both your eyes. It's a fair trade, for the gods up high will otherwise tempt you too much with sight of true treasure." He then produces a harmonica and plays softly, awaiting your choice.

This man is **not** mad, but only feigning to be, as he is also a servant of Rahz Al Gray, testing each Character's courage, and those who would be blinded will pass it. Yet once everyone has made their choice for blindness or not, the old man will feign regret to do the deed, and allow all to pass.

## 17) Omnipotent impotence\*

Further up the path, the peak drawing near, and the sky is growing dark. As the dying sun stains the Heavens with bloody light, a luminous figure comes down the path towards you. Holding up a single hand as a gesture to stop, it speaks, and its voice echoes amongst the rocks. "It has been fifteen long suns since the fall of Istanbul, where my temple was desecrated by your kind. A count of tenfold coin must be repaid for each solar day I have been bound to this earth. You may find forgiveness now and be safe on high..."

This 'spirit' is yet another servant of Rahz Al Gray, further testing the party. Each Character who pays a full 150 coins to him will be 'forgiven', so having pass this test. If confronted, this Ottoman Turk in disguise will use a secretly planned escape route, giving him +4 to his Fleeing Check.

## 18) Rahz Al Gray

At the height of the mountain you find a ruined monastery, its doors flung wide. Just inside, you see a most inhuman man sitting upon a throne. His skin is eternally youthful though he has the length of a century stemming from his pointed chin. His eyes are wide and sharp, and by their power he gazes directly at you.

The man is 'Rahz Al Gray', an Asian warrior who is neutral in this war, a guardian of secrets and of lost powers. He also has 30 former guards of the Ottoman Turks hiding behind secret panels along the false walls that enclose this room. Those who passed 2 of the 3 challenges on the mountain are worthy of the fourth and final challenge—the test of strength. This is a single fight against 3 of his guards, to the death. He who passes first will be deemed worthy, and Rahz Al Gray will remove



# ISLES OF EVIL



from its hiding place down his throat the ‘Graven Eye of Mordachai’. This is a diamond carved like an eye, wherein is trapped a magical light that acts as a compass—the retina always looks towards the Conch of the Siren. Once awarded, Rahz will add “Make no mistake, the ancient gods are **real** . . .”

**PART 5: VAULTS OF DEMON ISLAND:** It is on an island that cannot be found that the treasure awaits the party. This island is cursed, and can be found only by those following the ‘Graven Eye of Mordachai’. Indeed, this island moves in time and space, so you can place it wherever in the bounds of the Mediterranean that you wish, and thus give the party however easy or difficult of a journey to reach it that you desire. Once there, the party will find ruins, their exploration of which is to be told with the following Encounters, to be played one and all and in the order they are presented.

**Fading faith:** The deeper the party ventures into the accursed Demon Island, the further they will be from whatever god they pray to. Indeed, from Encounter 21 and onward, each Encounter poses a cumulative penalty to all rolls on Tables 128-131. For example, Encounter 23 poses a -3 penalty.

**Legends:** On their journey to this island, the party can easily learn of its name, ‘Demon Island’, and perhaps much more. For every ship or city that they visit they get one roll on the following chart, with results of ‘1-5’ finding no tales regarding this accursed island. What’s more, they can continue to find new legends in the same location so long as they continue to best their rolls—as soon as a roll is equal to or less than the previous one, they will have exhausted that source of information.

### Legends

Roll	Legend of Demon Island
12	Beware the demons of ancient worlds that with their gaze snuff the very fires of life
10-11	Somewhere in that ruin is a lost Cross that commands spirits of the Church
8-9	The Spanish hid a treasure on that island in 1578 for King Phillip II. None returned
6-7	There is a secret Chapel inside that keeps count of the days on prays, to his profit

### 19) Door between worlds

The fog rises as you near the island of demons. You can hear it before you see it, as waves lap against its timeless shores, where only the dead walk freely. Finally, the colorless, rocky shores appear through the fog bank. Exploring them is a matter of hours and no more, as the island is an ancient volcano crater. You find many ruins, all empty, naught but small forests of marble statues and columns lost in times long dead. Yet finally you brush back vines on a wall and discover a heavy door set into the cliff, doubtless leading to hidden vaults in ancient tunnels below.

The door cannot be forced or broken open by any means, nor its lock picked. Only the key from Encounter 13 can open it.

### 20) Door of sunken stars

Inside the door, broad stairs descend straight into the fathomless dark of this lost world, ending at last before an enormous door. Made of stone, it must have been sheathed in gold at one time, as countless green stains and scrape marks where it has been chiseled yet remain, obscuring the once raised lettering all over it. There must have been a hundred gems set into it as well, but now only their holes remain, leaving dark slits to map the Constellations they once did with precious light.

There are a hundred keyholes, but only one is able to unlock this impervious door. Indeed, only by using the key from Encounter 13 in the hole that would have been the off-set star of the belt of the Constellation of Orion will open the door. All other keyholes will activate a random trap. Solving this puzzle is worthy of 55 Experience Points.

### Traps

Roll	Trap sprung by a false keyhole
11-12	Hear a trap misfire or break; no effect
7-10	Blade pokes out of keyhole; 1-6 Damage
3-6	Stale poison gas; level 1 and effects 1-4 people including the one at the door
1-2	Poison gas; level 3 and effects everyone in the immediate area

# ISLES OF EVIL

## 21) The antechamber

Murky shadows peel off the walls as you draw near, slithering into the cracks of the crumbling walls like serpents of darkness. Your light floods into a circular chamber with a domed ceiling, its ancient stone glittering with thousands of glass stones, like stars in a stone sky. Surrounding you are tomb doors, ten in all, each marked at its apex with a Roman numeral.

The numerals simply read 'I-X', beginning at the party's left with 'I' and running clockwise, so that 'X' is upon their immediate right. Each door contains a different peril, each explained below. If the room is searched, the party may discover faded writing on the floor, Greek in letter but English in dialect, graven much more recently than the rest of the ancient room. Translated from Greek, it reads *'The Holy Day must outweigh the Cursed Day or there is naught behind the gates but the path to the Nine Hells'*. If nobody can read Greek letters, provide the Players with Handout 9 to study.

*Door I* leads to a small crypt, the floor a pit trap. Every 20 total Encumbrance upon it is the chance in 12 it opens above a 30' deep shaft.

*Door II* has a floor covered with sand and bones, with 3 vipers hiding within it.

*Door III* leads to a small crypt, the floor lost, a crumbled pit trap. A search of the rubble at the bottom of this 30' deep pit may find 450 gold.

*Door IV* holds an unguarded but empty chest.

*Door V* opens to an empty room which has a secret door leading to Encounter 22. Having solved this puzzle merits 50 Experience Points.

*Door VI* contains a stone sarcophagus. Opened, it contains a skeleton that is actually a Gorgon that will awaken in 4 Rounds and come out to fight.

*Door VII* is empty. However, each full day one spends praying in here will reduce the penalty to Prayer Checks in these dungeons by 1.

*Door VIII* is empty.

*Door IX* imprisons the Skeleton of a pirate . . .

*Door X* is empty, save for a shallow alcove wherein burns an everlasting flame around a Cross. The flame destroys all else it touches. If the head of a dead Gorgon is presented to it, the flame will cease and the Cross can be taken.

## 22) Spanish vault

The hall passes by a wide, vault door, flanked by statues of Conquistadors, their tense poses the same as if they were chained, perhaps by the thick, dead vines wrapped around them. Ahead, these scraggly tentacles dangle from the ceiling by the hundreds, ready to grab anyone they can.

The door requires a Brawn Check at a penalty of -3 to force open. Inside is Encounter 23. If the party continues down the corridor, they will come to Encounter 24 instead.

## 23) The vault keepers

The door yields at last, revealing a dark, dingy vault. Its floor is lost beneath piles of treasure, spilling out of iron coffers and seabattered chests, flowing through the bones and armour of many skeletal Spaniards. Thick cobwebs obscure all the corners and the true size of this chamber.

This dead end room contains 58000 pieces of eight, 32000 philips, and jewels enough to equal a total of 19 values from Table 85.

After 3 Rounds, the 6 Skeletal Spaniards will rise up and point their cutlasses at all who are in the vault. If the party talks, a Charisma Check can earn the question "In this year of our Lord 1578, whom do you serve in the war?" If the party says King Phillip II ("The Spanish King" is not enough of an answer), these dead men will let them go, so long as nothing of the treasure is taken—these guards will **know** if it is, even without seeing.

## 24) Underground swamp

The corridor ends on a ledge overlooking a vast chamber whose bottom is lost in a foul swamp, poisoned by seawater bleeding down the ancient brick walls. Thick vines and moss drape across the shadowed heights. On the far side, you see through this jungle of darkness another ledge.

It is 40' to the other ledge. The swamp is 20' below, and each Round one spends in it he will be attacked by 1-3 vipers of the hundreds therein.

# ISLES OF EVIL

## 25) Sunken temple

The passage opens into an even larger cavern, a grotto carved by a thousand years of astrology and art into a temple, and reshaped by at least a thousand more years back into a grotto. Flooded with seawater to the level of your own feet, you see pillars and other sculpture rising out of the depths, competing with stalactites to retain their identity while arches still resist the cave walls to maintain their carvings and letters. Several cracks high above allow daylight to leak in, illuminating the sunken temple as far down as twenty feet, but there is still darkness deeper than that, and things move within it. You see stairs descending through a luminous underwater world and then sinking into liquid shadows, while statues rise up from the abyss as if breathing in light before they are to be pulled back down into the murky blackness. Several tunnels lead from this temple.

The sunken temple actually descends 50' before finding a floor. Cave sharks roam the depths, and 1-3 of them will attack anyone who falls in. It is 120' to the nearest tunnel, and so one will have to climb or swim to reach it, or complete a series of jumps atop pillars and arches. If anyone is killed by these sharks, they will not pursue the party into the next Encounter, as the blood keeps them here.

## 26) Flooded tunnels

The tunnels beyond the temple are a maze. Once high ceilinged ceremonial passages, they have for thousands of years crusted over like any seashore with barnacles and slime of every description. It is your suffering that you must pick your way along through this, for your feet can never find the floor. Finally, after much slow searching, you come to what must be the end, for the way is blocked by a wall carved with the stone ghost of an eroded idol, grinning at you. His eyes are but holes, revealing the darkness of a cavern beyond, if only you can reach it.

If the sharks killed nobody in Encounter 25, 8 of them will have followed the party to this point, and will attack on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round.

The idol was merely the height of an arched gate into the temple beyond, so the party has to go underwater to reach Encounter 27. However, the passage below has collapsed by many earthquakes, so the way will not be easy to find—a Searching Check is required to do so. This Check can be re-attempted each Round, though unless the Characters are secured with a rope, they will not be able to find their way back any more than they can find a way forward—count the Rounds spent underwater in case anyone causes himself to drown.

## 27) Diamond of doom

You climb from the depths upon wide stairs, a ceremonial ascent into a palace. Great pillars rise before you, and in-between them are thrones that appear to be sheathed in gold, three in all. Just beyond such trees of marble you see a new stair, one which narrows as it rises into a grand hall, filled with pale light.

A search of this temple might find a cache in the back of the central thrones, containing 20 jade stones (each worth 400 gold) and 10 rubies (each worth 1600 gold), and a fist-sized diamond (easily worth 5000 gold in itself). This last gem is cursed, and whoever takes it will have his life drained by 1 random Ability Point lost each day. Secretly roll a dice, with '1' being Luck, '8' being Brawn, and so forth. '9-12' results in no Point lost that day.

If anyone approaches the distant tunnel, then he will come to Encounter 28.

## 28) Mirrored terrors

Approaching the tunnel, you see now up close what you missed at a distance—the hall begins with a dolmen arch, flanked by statues of life-sized Spaniards wreathed in rich vines, like those outside the vault earlier.

The 'Spaniards' are actually Gorgons who can alter their shape like chameleons. After 3 Rounds they will attack. If the Cross from Encounter 21 is presented, it will summon the Skeletons from back in Encounter 23, provided they were not destroyed, who will arrive in 6 Rounds to fight the Gorgons.

# ISLES OF EVIL

## 29) The Conch of the Siren

The hall ends in a palace! Unlike the rest of the temple, this area appears clean, without stain or blemish of any kind. It is as if the pale light throughout is alive and somehow keeps back the moldering spell of time. Surrounding you are tall columns in a seemingly random pattern. Within their apparent center is a shallow pool of crystal clear water. Laying within it is a golden conch that is the source of all the light here.

The Conch of the Siren is indeed within reach of the party. However, when anyone moves to take it, an elemental figure of water will rise up from the pool and say:

“You who could claim the Queen’s Horn must beware. While it may lull men to peaceful sleep, when they awaken they will be stronger than ever. The horn was made for love, to delay its passion, thus to let it be unleashed at last with greatest conviction. Yet the queen’s triumph is destined for neither love or war, but for one person, the queen herself. She lives forever and when she sleeps in death she is quick to rise again. This is her horn to use. Sheralinna she is. She must be the one to kiss this power. For it has itself been asleep for so long it will only be able to grant its power once and then be exhausted for many days of lives. In the queen’s realm, it was used so often it had but little effect. Now let whoever would whisper in its ear or kiss its lips beware the desire it has . . .”

With this, the elemental will draw back down into the pool, not to rise again. Yet there is still a great challenge before the party, for to take the Conch demands that one first express true love to someone or absolute hate for someone (but neither needs be present). To do so will allow one to take the Conch safely and earn 60 Experience Points. However, failure to do so will cause him, before touching the Conch, to find either that true love or extreme hate right now! Determine at random one individual from all present, both Player Characters and NPCs alike. If that target of the chanted one’s desire is the same gender, he will attack him until one of them is dead. If that individual is of the

opposite gender, he will swoon for her (or him) and so be totally under their control until they are either married or one of them dies (or at least, the enchanted one **believes** the object of his love to be married to him or dead).

The Conch itself will, if blown, cause all who are within earshot to fall into a trance-like state, one in which their deepest desires will be put to sleep for years—they can neither love nor kill. The powers of the Conch will work only once unless it is blown by the Sultan’s daughter, Sheralinna (she from Adventures #1 and #3) in a specific place, in which case the result will be totally different . . .

**CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE:** Once the party has left the bloody waters around the Demon Island behind, there are some things to consider.

The destiny of the Conch: If the Conch is returned to anyone of the Ottoman Empire, it will set into motion the events of Adventure #3. But until this happens, Adventure #3 cannot take place. A reward of 20000 philips by the Ottoman Empire might be enough to encourage the party to give it up . . .

The heirloom of King Charles of England: If the skull from Encounter 10 was kept, it can be given to any Governor in exchange for 1000 gold. If the party asks about the heirloom the skull spoke of, it will be dismissed as a legend. However, if anyone takes this skull all the way back to London, then the ‘legend’ will come to life, for there the skull can be exchanged to the English royalty for such honor as to merit a reward of 10000 gold as well as Promotion Points—300 for Englishmen, 200 for non-English British, and 100 for all others.

The Cross: This relic from Encounter 21 will not have much extraordinary power beyond its destiny of this Adventure. However, it is worth 3200 gold. If one sacrifices a Round to openly present it in his Prayer, it will grant a +1 bonus to all Prayer Checks made on Table 129 (this bonus will be +2 for Priest Classed Characters).

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



Ahhhh, Venice! Here lie the unseen roads o' the ancient worlds, matey! Here be all manner o' fates entwined, fer good or ill, ne'er to where ye seek, lestin' ye be seekin' death. Aye, those who set sail from the sunken streets be sailin' into destiny, trust me true. Believe me not? Ye'll soon discover the ways o' the ancients fer yerself . . .

**BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE:** Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

**Timeline:** This adventure is set in the Mediterranean around the year 1638, though this can be changed according to what happens during this voyage, so long as it remains in the 1630's. Those Encounters that are marked with an '\*' require the game to be played in this decade. If your game does not adhere to timelines, do not use these Encounters.

**Background:** When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

War! The rising tensions between the Catholic Empire of Rome and the Ottoman Empire of the east has erupted like a ring of volcanoes, spilling blood fiery with faith throughout the seven seas of the Mediterranean, claiming the lives of the pious and the sinful alike. There are heroes and villains on both sides. Chaos reigns supreme.

The symphony of war created by every noble instrument of the civilized world is a deafening roar of curses and hate. Love seems nothing but a ghost of the ancient kingdoms lost beneath the blood-stained seas. The rules of piracy are now consuming everyone on sea and land alike.

After years of fighting, the Ottoman Empire has begun to push its Christian adversaries back into the mainlands of Europe. The island nations are beleaguered and lie in ruins, each smoldering city a trophy to Murdarat Rais, the newly titled and empowered commander of the entire Muslim navy. With his tactics quickly choking the life out of shipping, piracy and Christendom with an apparent ease, his legend almost demands a hero or even an entire kingdom to challenge him.

**PART 1: THE MERCHANT CITY:** The grand adventure will begin in the city of Venice. Here, the party will learn much, both about the ancient world and their thread of a tale in the tapestry of destiny. Use the following Encounters when they're applicable but in the order that they are presented.

## 1) Introduction

This Introduction will bring all Player Characters into the Adventure—there is little time to waste. They will each be summoned to the house of the city's wealthiest person, Count Osric. After all are done with whatever they wish to do around town and go to this meeting, run this Encounter.

You make your way along the bank, built from ancient marble to keep the water from rotting the pilings upon which this city is built, and wonder is reflected back at you from the emerald-green waters—whatever happened to the ancient cities and their secrets? Well, such questions must wait, for you are now led into the parlor of this living city's wealthiest man; Count Sydow Von Osric sits alone upon a massive throne, a relic that is seemingly no older than he is himself. Yet when he speaks, there is vigor in his voice to rival the strongest sailor and the most angry deity.

"Greetings, scum!" he roars. "... I salute you. I am proud of my family and my city, at least of their past. Damned how the Ottoman Empire has forced our great merchant capital to survive due to privateers—pirates like you! Why, there are now gambling tables in the merchant square and brothels in the cloisters! We must all endure this? We who funded the crusaders that sacked Constantinople? We are reduced to hiring thieves and pining for their ill-gotten gold?"

Count Osric stirs in his throne, as if old age struggles to hold back his wrath. "We turned our necessity of boats into business and became the center of trade. Now we will turn our necessity of pirates into a blessing, and become the center of a new kingdom. I will richly reward each of you . . . if you destroy Murdarat Rais!"

The noble's offer is genuine: 3000 gold each up front, and 100000 total upon proof of success.

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



## 2) Jew crew

This Encounter is best used when the party needs crew, but either has low Notoriety or low rolls for acquiring them, and simply cannot get as many men to sign on board as they want.

Signing new crew is difficult. Everyone in this port seems reluctant to go to sea. However, you are soon approached by a rowdy group of men who all look alike—long, braided hair, yarmulke hats, and an unspoken camaraderie—they are all Jewish. “We’ll be your Jew crew!” they boast, though you cannot tell if they’re jesting, or not.

These are 30 men of 1<sup>st</sup> Level willing to join the party’s pirate crew under their articles, though they are all of Jewish faith, which will cause a -5 loss to Morale if a majority of the current crew are not of Jewish faith themselves. These Jews are turning to piracy because of the Holy War—they feel they must help destroy the followers of Islam.

## 3) Christian mission

The marketplace is a maze of tents and gangway planks, as half the goods float in barrels or boats in the narrow channels that criss-cross the bazaar. Making your way through the knots of people, a priest approaches you, waving with his good arm while his other leans on a crutch—he is missing half of his leg, and he also wears an eye-patch and has a terrible scar crawling up his face. If a true priest he is, he’s been to the gates of Hell and returned to tell the tale.

This priest has been watching the party since they were in Count Osric’s manor (though he will not admit to this willingly). He will claim to have beheld the Characters through a ‘divine vision’ and thus be eager to Christen them to faith in Jesus. Indeed, for the small fee of 5 gold apiece, all their sins can be purified, he will claim. Those who are Christian already need only pay a tithe of 1 gold. Those who convert to this new religion simply use the normal rules for doing so. Once the Characters take their leave, he will add “God is watching you all. Seek truth by the Lion’s mouth. Farewell . . .”

## 4) The artist of legend\*

The sun is shining brightly on the Lion’s Mouth, a sculpture true to size whose gullet holds notes and messages delivered anonymously to the court. Sitting beside it is an elderly artist working on, of all things, pictures of pirates. “The Lion, you see,” he says, with a keen eye for eyes, seeing thus your interest, “he was constructed years ago, as the people of Venice wanted a democracy, but feared any one person or family becoming too powerful, unlike, say, pirates . . . Ah, yes, you too have the glint of gold in your eyes, yet with a far greater luster than mine—perhaps you’d care to know where the greatest treasures await?”

The painter, ‘Cornelis’, can sell many different things to the Characters, including tales. Every 10 gold the party gives him will get them a painting, but the total is the cumulative tale that he tells while he sells them, working the art of taletelling.

### Legends

Total	Legends of Cornelis
40+	“In these days, treasures are not hidden with locks, but words within words.”
20-39	“Why, there is a treasure sunken beneath this very city, hidden in a lost tomb”
10-19	“Yes, the angels of stone speak words not heard by man, but are nonetheless true, and within them a greater tale . . .”

A successful search of the last painting that the party buys will discover Handout 10 hidden in-between the canvas and the paper backing.

## 5) Careless priests

The only Christian church whose doors are open this day is in a state of chaos. New laws are an endless burden for the priests, who in this temple are neglecting their duties of upkeep. They seem to be debating, but you quickly learn they are ignoring their duties for the sake of a game—a local tradition, they are applying numerical values to the letters of odd names and thereby finding their ‘number’. The stone angels carved into the pillars all around seem to be watching everyone.

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



If asked, the priests will explain (being used to explaining customs to mariners and other sorts of foreigners) that their game involves applying the numbers associated with the Greek letters of names and thereby ‘guessing the number’, or the reverse, that of starting with a number of guessing a name. They can easily be bribed (20 gold total) for the party to be able to freely search the church. This way they can find the entrance to a tomb behind a pillar—the stone angel pushes aside, revealing the dark stairwell of Encounter 6. If the party does not have such permission, each Round that they search is the cumulative chance in 6 that Spanish guards are summoned, all of them arriving in 3 Rounds and numbering 5, plus 1 for each Character here at the time they were called.

## 6) Hidden passage

This can only be found by searching Encounter 5.

The stairs descend through a dark, narrow sluice. Centuries of cobblestone-buttressed mud to either side leaks a slimy, gray seawater down the walls. Finally you come to a door, clearly the gate to a tomb of some sort. There is old writing on the door but it is difficult to make out. In a shallow alcove to the right is a small dish, where a lone candle must have once illuminated this dungeon.

Only those who can read Greek letters will be able to read the writing on the door, and thus only thereafter should you provide the Players with the writing of Handout 11 (which for some reason is written in English, and thus cannot be read by the Character outright). If exactly 6 coins are placed in the dish, it will deactivate the trap.

If the trap is not disarmed, opening the door will activate its release, opening a floodgate high up in the stairwell, causing seawater to rush in. To force the door open requires a Brawn Check for it to be ajar enough for 80 total Encumbrance (both bodily and carried) to squeeze through in a single Round. To re-ascend the stairs requires an Agility Check at a -4 penalty, with failure causing one to tumble back down as if he had fallen 10'. After 8 Rounds, this entire area will be completely flooded. Closing the tomb door will not re-set this trap.

## 7) Lost tomb

This can only be found by passing Encounter 6.

Stairs ascend into an antechamber, and beyond it you see a half-flooded tomb. A massive, granite sarcophagus rises from the midst of the black, oily water like an island in a Hellish sea. Green stains cling to the stone walls as high as the ceiling, wherefrom hang tendrils of slime, like the trees in a dense jungle.

This chamber’s ceiling is just below tidal level and that is key to its trap. For if the sarcophagus is attempted to be opened, it will activate this trap, causing the door to the antechamber to close, thus sealing inside this crypt anyone who did not state they were hanging back. The seawater will slowly fill the room with the tide, submerging everyone in 30 Rounds unless they can free themselves. Once the water rises above the ceiling, it will float the ‘release’ mechanism in a tiny, hidden niche after 1-6 Rounds. Only during the time that the crypt is completely flooded can the sarcophagus be opened, as its release is also in a hidden niche above the ceiling, which must also float. Inside the granite tomb is a skeleton, with a compass set into one of its eye sockets. This compass actually points not to cardinal directions, but to years, with the year of 1638 replacing ‘North’, 1636 replacing ‘East’, 1634 replacing ‘South’, and 1632 replacing ‘West’. The compass constantly wavers however, never fixing on one direction, unless it is physically heading towards a location key to that date;

1638 is fixed to the location of Encounter 13, for this treasure was created by the Sirens there.

1636 is fixed to the location of the Sultan’s palace in Acre. For it was here that the Sultan’s daughter, Seralinna, set forth in 1636 to seek her destiny, which the Characters are a part of.

1634 is fixed to the mythical Demon Island from Adventure #2. If you have not yet played out that Adventure, you can do so now, for the Conch of the Siren on that island is critical to this tale, and for the Characters to win it themselves would weave their fate deeper into the tapestry of destiny.

1632 is fixed to the city of Naples, where the Sultan’s daughter was once imprisoned.

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



**PART 2: SEARCH FOR THE MURDERER:** It is well known that the flagship of the Ottoman Empire's Murdarat Rais is called the 'Murderer'. The following Encounters can tell the tale of the party's voyage through a Holy War at sea as they search for this ship. Use them to respond to the party's choice of direction—while they can meet random ships endlessly, they will come upon true Encounters when they are drawing near their goal. Still, play these Encounters one and all before the end of the Part, in any order you desire.

A Christian harbor: Venice is predominantly a very Christian harbor. The few Muslim ships that anchor here are clearly pirates—the most vile scum that there are, for their greed alone the city can trust in as proof that they are not part of the Ottoman Navy, and even if they are, it is only for bribes, which can be easily outdone. Therefore, there will be no chance for any contact with official Ottoman sources while in this city.

Acquiring a ship: If the Characters do not already have a ship by their own means, there are vessels setting sail to war every day. The average ship a poor pirate can sign on without question is a small barque with 8 cannons, 20 salvos, 30 1<sup>st</sup> Level men and food enough to last for 30 days. After such a time has elapsed they return to a port hostile to all Muslims to reprovision not only food but crew as well. Sailors who served thus will receive 10 gold for the month at sea, but nothing else.

## 8) Challenge of Ballast

Your ship is ready. As men haul supplies aboard, you glance down at the marble wharf and the green waters beneath, and wonder: What ancient cities will you be flying over on your voyage in the Hellish heaven of Holy War? Yet that will have to wait—one of the crew is challenging for the captaincy! He's a huge man, 'Ballast' by his tradename, with long, braided armpit-hair. "It was my loincloth I used as a sail when I was adrift," he says. "If I can be a ship, then I can run this one!" As if already considering himself captain, he boasts "We sail with the tide, and the tide is want to wait for no man!"

If no Character is captain, then Ballast will be able to take command indeed, but events will run normally. However, if any Character is indeed the captain, he will have to battle this brute, who is a Level 5 Quartermaster with a spiked club instead of a cutlass (but whose statistics are the same). If the brute is beaten, he will forever after prove to be a loyal and daring crewman.

## 9) Captain of the Sea\*

The crew is awakened by the lookout's call. In the dead of night, lanterns glow like ghost crew on a nearby ship, off the larboard quarter. This vessel is already rounding on you, its guns like demons angry at being awakened frothing at their metal mouths with smoke.

The other ship is a galliot running 8 cannon, crewed by 50 1<sup>st</sup> Level men, 50 2<sup>nd</sup> Level men, and 20 4<sup>th</sup> Level men, and captained by Murat Rais, the Ottoman 'Captain of the Sea'. Indeed, given this title by the Ottoman Emperor himself decades ago, he has been undefeated for over thirty years, and so neither he nor his men will ever surrender, thus negating all such rolls and abilities of intimidation. The battle will be fierce, the decks of both vessels rendered slippery with blood before it will be over. If killed, Murat Rais' last breaths can provide vital information. If subdued, he will have to be tortured to reveal anything. What he is able to reveal is that Murdarat Rais is seeking an island known by a cursed name alone, 'Vyralllex Ninn', for it is not on any charts. He does not know its coordinates.

## 10) Piri Rais

Tonight it is a dead calm. But suddenly, all the lanterns flicker to life, burning with blue flames. In the eerie light you see an albatross upon the yardarm, who then flies away.

Have nothing more happen. pretend that the Characters 'fail their Searching Checks' or what have you. When calculating the movement for the next day's voyage, have them 'randomly encounter' a Tuskish officer laying unconscious, floating on a nondescript piece of wreckage. If hauled aboard, he



# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



will appear grateful to be rescued, but have lost all memory. Once alone with the Characters, he will whisper to them his name, 'Piri Rais', and confess that he recognizes some of their crew, and doesn't want them to have his treasure, and so he will tell the party, privately, of its whereabouts; "Seek the map to the kingdom that was lost not on paper, but in stone, the rock where the Sirens sing to all, and they shall tell you of the greatest treasure..." He will then feign unconsciousness, and can do it quite well, given that he is dead, a corporeal ghost that will disappear forever when next left alone.

## 11) For Love Of Men

"Sail ho!" The familiar call rings strange within this crimson twilight. Gathering on deck, all can see the tall sails of a swiftly moving ship that's heading straight towards you, backlit by the sun as it sinks below the horizon. Yet it comes with nary a sound.

The ship is no ghost, but a galliot running 6 cannons, crewed by 50 1<sup>st</sup> Level and 20 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Muslim fanatics, and captained by a Turkish Pirate whose first words to the Player Characters will be "I'm going to use your skull to knock on the gates of Hell!" No matter the Characters' allegiance these Muslims are convinced that everyone is fated for death in defiance of Allah by participating in this war—so they will kill them. Their galliot has been named '*For Love Of Men*'.

## 12) Shipboard fire

Chaos has gripped the crew! A fire has broken out in the hold. Flames erupt through the deck like volcanoes.

Each Round the ship will suffer 1-12 Damage and 0-4 (a single dice roll -8) total Levels worth of crewmen. To extinguish the fire, the Characters will have to act—the rest of the crew are too frightened to do anything. The fire broke out due to a lantern falling because a man drunk on duty mishandled it, so there is no real source to stop. The flames can be quelled in many different ways;

*Steering into a wave* is difficult, as the waters of the Mediterranean are relatively calm. However, maneuvering amongst headlands or other high rocks might work. This is the equivalent act of steering head-on into a Magnitude 5 storm.

*Emptying water casks* can work if the ship is laden with enough of them. Indeed, 10 days worth of 'food' must be sacrificed for every 1 Hull Point worth of damage the vessel has already endured. If this does not douse **all** the fire, it does nothing.

## 13) Song of the Seven Sirens

White sands flow out of the sea and into a lush line of palm trees. Just through them, you see an array of tall pillars gleaming in the sunlight. The faint voices of beautiful womens' singing draws you closer, until you see the ruins to be real, the pillars rising out of a crystal clear lagoon where swim Sirens of every hair color, their piercing eyes an array of azure and emerald-green, their song one that could make angels swoon.

There are 7 Sirens here. They will be friendly if not threatened. If asked of various things, they will reply to anyone who can make a Charisma Check when asking the question—answers that are not provided below require no such Check. All the answers given are true.

*Loving a Siren* in any way requires one to be daring enough to 'fight' her, as her affections and indeed her will are set against him. If he succeeds, she will kiss a single object of his choosing, thus turning it to gold and increasing its value tenfold. But if she wins, he is lost to her.

*Vyrallax Ninn* is an island 'where the ancient gods sleep', and is but 2 leagues south off of the easternmost tip of Crete.

*The compass* from Encounter 7 was made by these very Sirens, centuries ago. If the party offers to give it back, the Sirens will accept it, but warn "To lose it is to lose your way in time, and that you should do only to correct a mistake". To do this is the same as if all the Sirens were killed.

*Killing all the Sirens* will cause everyone here to be transported back in time to Encounter 1-12. Roll once for the entire group. All physical reality and objects will be moved back in time as well.

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



**PART 3: TALES OF VYRALLEX MINN:** Just 2 leagues south of the eastern end of Crete is this island. Once a pirate haven, it has been captured by corsairs. Indeed, once the Characters arrive they will have to fight their way in, be they Muslim or not. Use the following Encounters when applicable but in the order they are presented.

## 14) Arriving at the island

The leagues stretch on, and on, as if your vessel is held in place by some unnatural force, or the sands of time are so soaked with blood that they have choked in the neck of the hourglass. Finally the island reveals itself at twilight. A relatively large island of light palm trees, it is difficult to understand how it has gone undiscovered. There are many small pirate camps visible on the coast, some burning, some newly erected.

The island is currently at war with itself, as pirates are fighting corsairs for control of the entire island—the Christians want to choke off this island as a staging point for Muslim raids on European cities. To enter the island anywhere requires one to make a Stealth Check lest he be noticed by either Christians or corsairs. Roll a single dice, and if the result is '1-6', that is how many foes they meet, be they English Pirates or Ottoman Corsairs. If the result is '7' or higher, they encounter those who would be friendly to them, but must still explain why they were sneaking in, a successful Charisma Check thus required for each individual, lest they have to fight these men all the same.

## 15) Searching through Hell

As night deepens around the island, blazing fires from burning camps and ships appear, like gates into Hell. The distant screams and war-cries are mingled with the unnatural cawing of birds. The very demons of Dante's pit could escape through here and go unnoticed by man and beast alike.

A Searching Check must be made to find the next whereabouts of Murdarat Rais, who is at the island's only watering hole, where all the rivers running downhill converge. This Searching Check

is to be made until successful. However, each time it fails, the party will come across 1-12 enemies, be they Ottoman Corsairs or English Pirates.

## 16) The fate of Murdarat Rais

Towards the west end of the island, several low waterfalls spill into a freshwater lagoon. Its dark surface mirrors the moonlight so that the falls all around appear as quicksilver. The high cliffs are sundered in on place, which is filled with the crooked streets and shanties of a sizable pirate village. The flickering lanterns cast a supernatural glow about the dozens of men whose silhouettes move behind the windows. Yet most of them are coming outside, gathering around a commanding man who is barking orders in Arabic. He wears a large turban inset with amazing jewels.

The man is Murdarat Rais himself, a Turkish Sailor of 6<sup>th</sup> Level and 90 Notoriety, DS 16, G 11, MOVE 160', and he uses a saber at +5 skill. To attack him is to also engage all 42 Pirates here (all of 1<sup>st</sup> Level), but Murdarat will remain rather than flee, and fight when his men are down to 10 or less in number. If not attacked and instead he is challenged to a duel, a Charisma Check can get Murdarat to accept, this roll gaining a +4 bonus if the challenge includes in any way 'being for God'. However, if the Check fails or anyone interferes with the duel, all of his men will attack as before.

## 17) Daughter of destiny

You are approached by an aloof woman, beauty embodied in youth, and seemingly without care of the carnage around her, as if she is somehow invulnerable to it. She introduces herself as the Sultan's daughter, Sheralinna, and asks for your assistance in 'the rise of a new kingdom'.

If Sheralinna was killed in Adventure #1, that woman will have been an impostor, a decoy. The real Sultan's daughter stands before the party now. She will need their help at least, and the Conch of the Siren if they possess it. If they do not, she will have attained this treasure by simply hiring others to do the deeds of Adventure #2. She will ask for

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



the party, whom has 'proven their power', to assist her in uncovering a lost kingdom nearby, and thus 'share in the glory'. If they refuse, 150 Ottoman guards will come from the surrounding buildings at her call and capture them, the price of freedom to be, as Sheralinna sets it, 100 gold for every week of the Greek year, thus 5200 gold apiece. Those who agree to help, however, will move on to the next Part of this Adventure...

**PART 4: TUNNEL OF TRIAL:** Sheralinna will lead the party to a cave nearby. Inside, they will face three perils before reaching the next Part of the Adventure. Use the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

The Sultan's daughter: Sheralinna will wait behind, and then follow the Character who solves each Encounter's challenge once he is safely past. She will pay 1000 philips for his discovery. All those killed by a trap receive 500 philips for their effort, given to their respective party's leader for division later, according to their own articles.

Vision and light: The descriptions of the following Encounters are written with the assumption that the party is finding their way by torchlight. If they are using any other light source, read the boxed texts differently in order to compensate. For example, "Your flickering torchlight..." could be read as "Your glowing lanternlight..."

## 18) The first trap

Thick moss dangles from the cavernous ceiling. The smooth-masoned walls reflect a kingdom lost thousands of years ago, but whose beauty of art and stone even the filth of Hell could not bury. It is as if the ancients defy death itself, as their graven faces look back at you through centuries of crusted mud. Finally, your flickering torchlight is subdued by a shaft of moonlight beaming in through a small hole in the ceiling. Just beside it on the wall are some letters.

The shaft of moonlight lands upon a pressure-plate, so anyone reading the writing will activate this trap. Those passing by stand a 5 in 12 chance

as well, increased by the difference of their Luck Score and 13. Once tripped, sections of the wall will smash together with spikes hidden by the filth, hitting everyone 10' ahead and behind for a Base Damage of 8. The writing is in Greek. Translated, it reads '*Calculate the name of God*'. If none can read such writing, it is provided as Handout 12.

## 19) The second trap

The dank hall comes to a pit. Running wall-to-wall, it is a good twenty feet across. Fixed into the floor is a rusted grappling hook, to which is tied an old rope, gray with age, leading down. In the depths of the darkness is utter silence.

The pit is 60' deep. 30' down, the rope lashes the ankle of a skeleton, held together by its rotten clothes, so it is more like a bag of jumbled bones. Inside it, amongst rusted weapons, is a parchment, provided as Handout 13. On the far side of the pit is a tripwire which activates another pit of equal dimensions, leaving but a 5' space between them.

At the bottom of the pit is a door that cannot be opened or broken, with a tiny hole in it. There is a bucket on the other side. If exactly 666 are placed in it, the door will open. Any more or less will, after 3 Rounds, cause the bottom of the pit to open above yet another pit of equal depth! The door leads on to the next Part of this tale.

## 20) The third trap

The hall ends before a brick wall. There is a tall door in it, but the unstable masonry clearly will collapse if the door that supports it all moves.

A search of this area might discover of Greek writing graven into the wall, buried by a thousand years of moss and more. Translated, it reads thus: '*Hebrew Nero Ceaser 666, Gaios Kaiser 616, Lord Jahova 777*'. If none can read this writing, it is reproduced as Handout 14. If this door is opened, it will indeed cause a cave-in, and everyone must immediately make an Agility Check to leave or get buried alive. Going back gains a +1 bonus to the roll. Going forward suffers a -2 penalty, but will indeed lead to the next Part of the tale...

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



**PART 5: THE KINGDOM RISES:** Sheralinna, daughter of a Sultan, is truly the heir of a greater kingdom, a lost one. Now back in her throne room she will blow the Conch and this lost world will begin to awaken. Use the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

## 21) Voice of the Conch

The echo of the Conch resounds throughout the darkness . . . like waves on the beach, the layered sounds seem to creep forward from around rather than rippling outward, and the rising tide of this echo illuminates bit by bit the great throne room of an ancient kingdom, and its people. For as all the pillars, statues and arches appear, so does an endless horde of spectral sailors, surrounding you. Like the hall itself, with each breath you make, these ghosts gain a little more substance, as their shades begin to glow from within, and then their bones begin to solidify.

Indeed, the Conch illuminated the chamber and its people, but it is the party's breathing that gives them form. Sheralinna will explain that these were all sailors drowned by Poseidon, the patron god of the sea. She will go on to explain that the magic of the Conch is different for her because she is the rightful Queen of this kingdom, bowing neither to Allah or Jahova. Furthermore, the Characters all must make a choice: Renounce current false faith and swear their souls to her, or be banished from her kingdom. To agree not only carries with it the normal modifiers for denouncing one's religion, but full healing of all ills. However, to refuse is to be attacked by 1-4 Ghost Skeletons endlessly—just as one falls, another will take its place, maintaining the number rolled until the 'traitor' either flees or pledges himself to Sheralinna.

## 22) Secrets of the Conch

The hall continues to clean itself, echoing every breath of its queen. The cavern rock melts away as if it were a choral with time being hastened backwards, revealing marble walls just beneath it. On one wall you see a great amount of writing, and though you know it not, you can read it.

The writing is translated on Handout 15. The Characters can read it because of the great powers that are awakening right now. However, to read it also binds one to Sheralinna as if he accepted her offer in Encounter 21.

## 23) Challenge of the Conch

From the Conch begins to rise a sparkling, azure mist. Soon it takes the form of a whirlwind, its heights forming the upper half of a brutish man with blue skin. A long braid of black hair and a pair of glowing eyes harken to magic thought to be mere myth. He glares down at you all. "Who among you is worthy to be Queen's Champion?" it asks in a hollow voice, like the tempest.

This is a Djinn. His statistics always equal the highest scores amongst all those who confront him. Servant to Queen Sheralinna, he will be operating at her subtle suggestion. Indeed, he is offering the Characters the right to compete to be her champion and lover (whether they are male or female—she is of the ancient world), so all those who say they are worthy will be forced to fight, but not to the death, as 'wounds' should be taken as fatigue only and 'death' as a knockout. Those who refuse to do this will have to fight the Djinn for real, who will remain invulnerable to all those who are waiting to compete for championship.

## 24) Hunger of the Conch

The echoes of the Conch finally fade and silence fills the throne room, which now appears clean, glistening as if new, illuminated fully by lights of another world. The Conch, however, seems to be filled with darkness, as either end of it has a sable sheen, and no light reflects in its smooth lining as once it did. The Queen too, she has changed, appearing now as cadaverous as all her sailor-subjects. She is aging further as you watch. She mumbles, slowly, as if fearing that her jaw may dislodge by speaking too quickly. You can discern that she is returning to the age she was when her kingdom fell, thousands of years ago, and that she is desiring food and drink. She and her subjects seem to be waiting for something . . .

# WHERE THE GODS ARE BURIED



The Queen Sheralinna is invulnerable so long as the Conch exists. The Conch itself will after 2 Rounds create a whirlpool effect throughout the air, drawing all living creatures into it. Each Round, all Characters must make a Saving Throw at 6 or one of them will be sucked into the Conch. The victim will be, in order of priority, the youngest in years, then the one with the **highest** total Ability Scores. Each Round a victim is sucked into the Conch, the Queen will put her lips to it and draw the lost life into her body. Yet she needs to so drink in 1500 total years of vitality, and each life she takes will only have the difference of 100 and their current age. If one was deemed to be Queen's Champion in Encounter 23 he will be immune to the Conch's hunger but unable to hinder the Queen herself, and when she is finally attacked, he will be compelled to defend her and the Conch at all costs. During this same battle, 1-12 Ghost Skeletons will attack each individual assaulting their queen. Once anyone destroys the Conch, all the spirits will vanish, and the Queen's Champion will be free once more.

**CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE:** Once the party has left the bloody waters around Vyrallax Ninn behind, there are some things to consider.

The ancient kingdom returns: If the party did not destroy the Conch, then Queen Sheralinna will in time regain her full life, but this will take several hundred years. Indeed, she cannot leave her throne room and only by wayward adventurers wandering into her presence can she gain more life towards her required 1500 years. You may use this island's ancient peril for the basis of other adventures, but there is little the Queen herself can do.

The remains of the Conch: The shards of the once magical Conch will be worth a good 4200 gold to any eccentric aristocrat in European ruled towns.

The remains of the Queen: The ashes of the once immortal Queen Sheralinna, if collected and kept in some manner that preserves them, will prove over time to have some power still. Indeed, they will be responsible for all Prayer Rolls gaining a +1 bonus as long as they are in one's possession, no matter their amount (so everyone can have a pouch thus).

Return of the queen: In order to close this story, be it one Adventure, or two or all three, you may wish to read the following narrative. Play it like a true Encounter, getting the Players anxious, ready for a confrontation, and then, as this tale itself will say, nothing happens. When reading this narrative, replace 'CHARACTER' with the name of the one who, in order of priority, was the one who brought and end to the Conch, was the Queen's Champion, is the current ship's captain, and has the highest total Notoriety Points.

The emerald-green waves of the ancient seas are sparkling under the heavens. Shafts of sunlight pierce the depths like swords, but are blunted by the darkness therein, perhaps by unseen guardians of lost ancient cities. You can only look into the depths of the sea, its surface almost as calm as a mirror, and wonder what worlds yet lie where only fear and fantasy can make venture, your nightmares and dreams alone able to explore the worlds lost to legend.

Stormclouds darken the horizon. Imagination, that most double-edged sword, is dueling with a twilight that might bring peace or war, angel or devil—the clouds seem to taking the shape of a person, looking down on you like a queen, or a goddess. Then, the image is no more. Fleeting to memory and fear alike, it passes, blown away by a gentle night breeze.

The last rays of sunlight set fire to the seas beneath you, but only with reflections of flames in a world that is lost. As night settles over the Mediterranean, the waters become like a mirror, wherein the fires still burn, reflections of starlight blazing white upon the dream-like images of long sunken temples. As the moon takes its throne, you can only wonder, truly, what kingdoms still lie drowned beneath the waves, ready to rise and challenge all gods and their followers who walk the world that once they ruled.

# W

*We the undersigned are men and women without a country, king or queen. Outcasts in our homelands we are proudly outcasts in all others. We are bound by faith rather than government, by piety, not policy. Therefore we do by the blessed skill of our own letters and not those of any Latin church make our agreement in ink and blood with one another, solely. We the undersigned agree to the provision first and foremost to be bound to these Articles of Agreement the same as a pledge to one's own vision of the Almighty. Therefore we the undersigned are also bound to the following provisions one and all:*

- 1. All wealth in the form of monies, philips, jewels, jewelry, slaves and tradegoods shall be bound in a common fund. From this fund shall primarily be taken the money necessary to fit, rig, repair and stock the ship. All that remains thereafter shall be divided in the day of Yule, December the 25th, each year, equally among all crewmembers present. Division to be carried out in full view by the present Aga, Kayia, or Quartermaster.*
- 2. Those wounded in battle shall receive compensation as follows: For the loss of a right arm 500 philips. Left arm 400. Either leg 300.*
- 3. Any individual found concealing money or failing to place it forthwith in the common fund shall be given a choice of ten and a hundred lashings or marooning. This choice must be made by sunrise following discovery of the crime.*
- 4. Any individual who frees slaves or prisoners is to receive the punishment of marooning by the sundown following the discovery of the crime, on the first island found to be otherwise uninhabited prior to that time chosen by the heavens.*
- 5. Any individual who flees battle is subject to forfeiture of all moneys gained by virtue of the conflict, plus the removal of a hand, foot or limb. Loss to be chosen by the individual most wounded in the battle who did not flee.*
- 6. Any individual found drunk on duty shall receive 40 lashings.*
- 7. Any individual found stealing food or water shall receive 30 lashings.*

*Your Excellency,*

*May your office remain blessed until such time as it is knighted for victory and peace. To placate fate and in this stead of time, a Sultan's daughter, Sheralinna, jewel of the Ottoman Empire, is pleased to present you with 100 gold for each week of the Greek calendar year.*

*If it pleases you, may this gift be taken as a gesture of peace in these troubled times.*

*Lord Alfred Dynn,  
August 23rd*

He who was  
of the three  
is master of  
the



חמישית פפגחפרחר פחמנוגחר וין ופיץ

מחהפמחו וין חג נזחדר וין סג יגקמ

זפחדם זר עקדם פמישמדנו ופיץ

זגק ללפנפ ד חגם ללפ מחפירמר זמו

לפרחו זחגנודי בה זר מישרן

קד נפללפ סג משפחן מנו זר עמלפמפ

עמחעקהנ קמזוסדם חפמו קפרזפרחנש מנו

מפחהש פוד מזמלביןגש גו קמו עקפ

Only  
falcons  
can fly  
false knights  
to such  
foolish  
ends

Seek  
the blood  
that is only half  
dead on the isle  
where the king  
is only half  
human

Seek  
the dates  
that can in  
truth never be  
recorded true

40-14

20-5

*The Englishman with the rich blood  
was seeking his ancestral trove there*

Menzer always jokes about his appetite being a bottomless stomach or a shoe for some reason when tales are told of the false Falcon Knights.

*Sir Willem could not map the temple.*

*He alone survived of ten men. His tales  
of shifting passages and stairs that lead  
to the "Devil's Grail" only enrich the ale  
of Salty Mann's old taverne. Folk back  
then never tired of listening to the fool.*

**Dead men tell no tales . . .**

*The Conch, seek you  
of the Siren's lost song  
It lies in the deep  
where ancient gods sleep  
Where earthly compass  
can only read wrong*

*The key, the dead  
of the earth hold it near  
It opens the keep  
where our queen's voice sleeps  
Her kingdom lost  
in this world of fear*

*From old, we came  
from the ancient land drowned  
We read by the stars  
in lands near and far  
Poseidon he ruled  
by Orion's crown*

*The tide, that by the stars  
lands and seas change  
The crown it is lost  
The belt was the cost  
Choking our queen  
until all lands seemed strange  
Yet we remember  
the secrets drowned deep  
We wait for the queen  
to come back from sleep*

**"Immortal Ian" Grandall**

**Born 15?? — Died 2106**

**He lived and died for  
the quest for treasure**

**"You can take it with you  
if you're greedy enough"**

Τηε Ηολψ Δαψ μυστ ουτωειγη  
τηε Χυρσεδ Δαψ ορ τηερε ισ  
ναυγητ βεηινδ τηε γατεσ βυτ  
τηε πατη το τηε Νινε Ηελλσ

The eyes of angels are within the innocent eyes of living children. God's truth is in the games that they play. For their matching wits with numerals intrigues me. The very children are a match for both the Greek and the Hebrew attempts to keep truth to themselves within the labyrinth of writing. The children need not read. They can all well count. They are sly little devils. Even John knew of the hidden wisdom of these hidden angels. Or are they devils indeed? John's Book plays this game with the Empire's greatest leaders who all fancy themselves almighty. Truth: "Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is a man's number" he tells us. Is it then the Emperor of John's time? My apprentice believes it can be only two of the seven Emperors who lived with rule over John. May it then be it the one called by so much fanfare "Gaios Kaiser" whose idolatry burned away all fear from his heart of erecting a statue of himself on the Temple Mount? He shall thus for all time have his name recorded as its equal in numbers the same as any gold he or his men collect; 616. Yet may "Nero Ceaser" not be the Beast? His name can be counted to 666, that of a number which more fearful slaves avoid at all costs. My apprentice feels there is more than just simple game rules of Three To Be "C" by children and their singing. He feels the Scriptures conceal treasures and bury what cannot otherwise be buried or even slain and so be given to earth, the ancient kingdoms of the sleeping gods. Truth if be prophecy, then under the floors of the older of the

TOMB OF  
Prince  
ABBA

THOSE WHO WOULD  
ENTER FIRST LEAVE  
A PROPER DONATION  
OF GILDED RESPECT



The background of the page is a grayscale marbled paper pattern with organic, swirling textures. The text is centered in a large, dark, serif font.

ΥΠΟΛΟΓΙΣΤΕ  
ΤΟ ΟΝΟΜΑ  
ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ

# The fells

The writing translates:

'Calculate the name of God'

By God! By God! The Scripture of  
Revelations has not failed us.

Blessed be poor torchbearer Arkus!

Tripwires, one disarmed, two found.  
Down to last torch. Securing rope.

Wires cut Jun 6.  
Chester Coppertooth

The power of the Seven Headed Beast is the  
revelation of the Emperors who kill our people.  
May the highest be the first to enter into Hell.  
Praise Jesus

ΗΕΒΡΕΩ  
ΝΕΡΟ ΧΕΑΣΕΡ  
DCLXVI

ΓΑΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΕΡ  
DCXVI

ΛΟΡΔ  
ΘΑΗΟςΑ  
DCCLXXVII

MY QUEEN MY KEEPER  
MAY MY SOUL BE YOURS FOREVER  
MAY MY LIFE BE YOURS AS SHIELD  
MAY MY FLESH BE YOURS TO WIELD  
RISE AGAIN, MY QUEEN, MY KEEPER  
MAY THE DJINN RISE ANEW, AND ANSWER  
MAY THE DJINN BE MY JUDGE, MY SLAYER  
MAY THE DJINN GIVE ME WORTH, AND PRAYER  
LIVE AGAIN, MY QUEEN, MY KEEPER  
I WILL CHAMPION YOUR KINGDOM  
I WILL FIGHT THE CHRISTIAN WHORES  
I WILL FIGHT THE MUSLIM SCORES  
MY QUEEN, MY KEEPER