

Quoth the Raven



Don't Go into the Water....

Welcome Aboard!

Ah, the Sea!

Welcome to issue 9 of Quoth the Raven! This is our second issue under the new trimester system and as some of you may know, articles from this issue will be reprinted in the Undead Sea Scrolls in January. Under our new system, our readers are asked to vote on the articles they see in Quoth the Raven and select the best of the best to be revised and expanded on in the Undead Sea Scrolls. Last issue we received little fan response on the topic, so this month we're hoping to get a little more participation to make this new endeavour work. But I go on....

The sound of the crashing surf roars like rolling thunder while the foamy waves dance against the backdrop of the setting sun. Seagulls wheel in the orange sky, calling out to one another in the dying hours of dusk. As the sunset slips behind the waves, a shadow falls across the water. The sky rumbles as clouds emerge from the growing darkness, the wind blows stronger and the tide begins to swell. The storm brews....

The sea is a giver of life, the source of food upon which so many depend. Yet the sea is a harsh mistress; ever mercurial she gives life and takes it with equal vigour. Humans are such tiny beings, and no where is that more apparent than upon a tiny boat amidst a storm. Tossed like a fly in a hurricane, man is powerless against the capricious whims of the ocean. Those who are chosen by the sea are doomed to eternal darkness.

Beneath the foam and spray, there lurks evils that make the sea herself seem benign. Those who the ocean have claimed sleep restlessly in their watery graves. Deep within the frigid embrace of the depths, the dead lie in shadows that the sun will never touch. Their lungs filled with water, their empty eyes staring sightlessly, they lie and wait. They dream in the darkness; dream of home upon the land, of the family they once loved, of the life they once lived. When they wake, they become angry. Driven mad by envy, they yearn to take that which was stolen from them.

The sea hides many secrets, including those creatures that nature herself wishes to obscure. All manner of piscine fiends haunt the lightless canyons of the ocean floor, devouring one another in the cruel dance of predator and prey. Woe be to the human who trespasses within those haunted seas bottoms, for they shall surely fall prey to the dwellers of the depths.

There is no end to the terrors awaiting adventurers on the open sea. In this issue, you shall find a wide range of tools to use to put the saltwater in your player's blood. So shiver your timbers and set a course for the mists!

ScS.

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Lost at Sea

An Original Story

By Renee True

rhan7@allstate.com

A gull glides in wide circles over strangely calm waters. Not seeing any food in the waters near shore, it catches an updraft and skims up the cliff. Cresting the top, it is surprised by the sudden sight of a young woman tending to her garden and gives a raucous call. The girl turns just in time to see a hawk fly up from the cliff-side and attack, breaking the gull's neck in the first strike. She shrugs and turns back to her work as the hawk carries its meal back to the eyrie.

The garden is Julia's pride and joy. She had inherited it from her mother, who felt a close affinity with flora and passed that love down to her youngest daughter. The garden surrounded their house, with the shade-loving plants to the north and the sun worshippers to the south. Having such a varied and enormous garden has had a large impact on Julia's way of life. Their home lay a mile west of the cliff-side fishing town of Lesja, so as to avoid the inevitable smoke and dust of industry. Their roof is not of straw like the others in town, but of slate tiles, fitted closely together and slanted towards the northeast corner. Whenever it rains, this ingenious roof catches the fresh water and drains it into a large wooden tub. This roof was her father's labour of love, to help his beloved wife have the means to support such a large garden on the windswept plateau upon which they resided.

Marta watches Julia from the oversized kitchen window. As she rinses that morning's dishes, she reminisces about the past few years. They had been hard on the two sisters. Had it already been ten years since their parents were lost at sea? Julia was just seven years of age when Jakob, the fleet captain had come to the door with the sad news. Marta took over the running of the household, a large task for a sixteen year old. She was forced to put her life on hold as she raised Julia, and as a result was one of the few unmarried women approaching thirty in the entire county. Catching her frowning visage in the glass, she paused to school her features into a more pleasant appearance. She had been beautiful once, but her features had blurred with age. Her blonde hair, once a glorious platinum, has faded to dirty dishwater color. Her jaw line is not as firm, and yet seems harder than before. Her curves had flattened, and her lips were thinner. But she still walked lightly with her back straight and her head held high.

Switching her focus from the glass back to her sister, Marta realizes what a beauty Julia is becoming. The sunlight glistened on Julia's fair skin, and seemed to make the highlights in her blonde hair dance with joy. She is wearing her usual outfit – a wide-necked cotton blouse, a matching skirt that would swirled at the slightest movement, and a colourful scarf tied about her slim waist. Marta smiles as she watches Julia caress a rose with her long slender fingers. She was still a young girl in many aspects, both physical and psychological. In a year or two, she would be the envy of all the girls... Marta frowned at that thought. How was she to make sure that Julia picked the right man? Julia was so innocent, so trusting...

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Marta finishes the last plate with a frustrated swipe. Drying her hands on her apron, she steps out the side door and catches Julia's eye. "Julia, dearest, will you be done soon? The fleet is supposed to be in late this morning, and we'll be expected to help with the gutting and salting."

"Oh, Marta, what a beautiful morning it is! That shower yesterday really picked up the garden. Just look at that hydrangea! And, no, I didn't forget about the fleet, but I was hoping you had." Julia says, scrunching her nose.

"The plant looks great, Julia, but the morning does not match it. I don't think I've ever seen a sky so red at dawn! Nothing good will be coming to us today."

"Marta! Don't tell me you believe that old wives' tale! Just look, the sea is calm, the sun is shining, and there are only a few small clouds in that deep blue sky. Don't be so gloomy. I feel like something wonderful is going to happen!"

Marta gives an exaggerated sigh of long-suffering, causing Julia to laugh and give her a quick hug before running inside to tie her hair up and find her shoes. She is soon back at her sister's side, and the two walk arm-in-arm down the path heading towards town.

Lesja is a moderate sized fishing village perched on the cliffs overlooking the Sea of Sorrows. A broad packed-dirt highway leads through the center of town, connecting it with the other villages scattered up and down the coast. A wooden elevator, a rarity in these parts, connected the town above with the harbor below. The town's main occupation is fishing, but Lesja is also known for weaving baskets of intricate patterns from the sea-reeds that grew by the shore. Marta and Julia purchase several baskets a month, using them to make grand floral arrangements that are much sought after for celebrations and mourning.

The sisters are just passing the first set of buildings as the lookout cries, "The fleet is coming!" Marta and Julia bundle into the elevator with several other women and go down to the harbor to meet the ships. While waiting for the fleet to dock, they busy themselves with brewing coffee and sharpening knives. They are jarred from their duties by a shout from the captain's wife, Molly, who is standing at the end of the dock, exchanging hand signals with her husband on board the lead ship.

"Mol, why all the shouting?"

"Molly, what is it? What's wrong? Are there no fish?"

"It's not my Victor, is it, Molly?!"

Molly finally shouts over the women's din, "Quiet! The catch is good and nobody got hurt, so stop worrying, all of you! They found a man at sea, clinging to a piece of driftwood. You three, stoke the fire, and Kerstin, bring the healer down."

Julia grips Marta's arm in excitement. "Oh, Marta! I wonder what the stranger is like!? I told you today would bring good things! He must have such stories to tell! How do you think he ended up at sea? Where do you think he comes from? What does he look like, I wonder? Is he hurt, that we needed to call the healer? When do you suppose he'll..."

"Julia! Shush," Marta interrupts Julia's string of questions. "I don't know any more than you do about this new person. And just because they've pulled some poor soul out of the water does not automatically mean it's a 'good' thing."

Julia giggles and replies, "I'm sure the stranger thinks it is!"
Marta rolls her eyes and continues to sharpen her blade.

Despite the rampant curiosity of the villagers, the man is transferred from ship to shore with alacrity. While Molly attempts to hold the women at bay, Jakob instructs six sailors to carry him on a primitive canvas stretcher to the left side of the pebble beach, where a roaring fire had been built for the sailors' benefit. The healer is waiting there for his new patient. He demands impatiently, "Give us some room, women! Go help your menfolk and leave this one to me!"

Julia reluctantly turns back towards the docks and is surprised to see Marta walking towards her with a basket of headless fish. Seeing Julia's expression, Marta smiles. "Close your mouth, Julia, before someone mistakes you for a fish! While the rest of you were all here gawking, I went and got work. Why don't we sit here and start?"

Julia flashes her sister a huge grin before promptly sitting down. She wriggles a little to create a comfortable depression in the pebbles and sand. Marta sits beside her and takes a carcass from the basket. Gripping the scaler firmly in her right hand and the fish in her left, she runs the instrument up the body, from tail to head. After a few swipes, the fish is clean and Marta passes it to Julia before taking another fish from the basket. Julia holds the smooth body tightly in her left hand and expertly flips the knife through its underside. After two careful scrapes, Julia flips the innards from her knife into a second basket, and drops the head-less, scale-less, gut-less fish into a third. The sisters make an efficient team, and they are soon finished with their first load. Marta rises and takes the now-empty basket back to the docks to get more fish. Julia stays on the ground, but turns to watch the healer and the stranger.

The man is slender, and Julia can see the fine muscle tone beneath his skin. His skin is rough, as though he spends much time battling the elements. The healer moves to the other side, and Julia can see the man's face for the first time. He looks as though he'd seen over thirty-five summers. His hair is a magnificent silver grey, and his nose is straight and sharp. His face is narrow, matching his slim build. Julia wonders what the man's eyes look like, but he is still unconscious. The healer sees Julia examining the man and looks up sharply. "Harrumph! Turn around, young woman! Back to work!" Blushing, Julia turns, only to find Marta gazing at her with one eyebrow raised.

"Marta! You're back fast! What a large catch the men have brought in this time. I don't remember the last time so many were caught! The nets will probably need much more mending than usual..." Julia's voice trails off as she concentrates on the fish in her hand.

"Your curiosity is natural, and nothing you should be embarrassed about..." Marta comforts Julia, whose blush is just beginning to fade. "I overheard the healer telling Jakob that the man doesn't seem to be very hurt, and if he doesn't die, he should be able to travel in two or three days. I'm sure we'll just need to give him some supplies and send him back home. I'm surprised everyone is getting so worked up over such a small thing!"

"But, Marta, it's *not* a small thing! Just think, our village has pulled this man from the sea and brought him back to life! Ooh, perhaps he is a rich lord who will reward us with lots of gold! Or a powerful mage who will gift us with wards of protection and healing! Or..."

“Or an evil man who will kill us all in our sleep? I find that more likely than he being a rich lord! What would someone so rich and powerful be doing abandoned in the middle of the sea? He’s probably just a fisherman, with a family waiting somewhere. It would be best to get him out of town as soon as possible, before more imaginations start running wild.” Marta glances over at a small group of young women standing only a few yards away and taking their chance to ogle the man while the healer was meeting with the captain. Upon seeing Marta watching them, they cease their whispering and return to the docks. Marta shakes her head sadly. She opens her mouth to speak again, but is interrupted by Julia’s gasp.

“Marta, he’s watching us!”

“Well, that’s fair. You’re watching him!” Marta turns and looks at the stranger for the first time. She finds herself drowning in the piercing gaze of large steel-grey eyes. After a moment, the focus moved to her sister, and Marta discovers she had forgotten to breathe while in this stranger’s thrall. Drawing in a ragged breath, she turns to Julia and finds her similarly caught. Seeking to break the connection, Marta clears her throat and in an artificially loud voice addresses the man. “Welcome back to the land of the living, stranger! We are Marta and Julia of Lesja. What do we call you?”

The man turns his gaze back to Marta, and she is oddly disappointed when the effect is not nearly as potent as it was just moments before. He says regretfully, “Actually, Marta, I do not know who I am or where I come from. It is as though I was just born, with no past or present. I was hoping you might be able to tell me...”

Julia gives a small cry of pity and rushes to the man’s side. “Oh, you poor man! Our fishing fleet found you at sea and pulled you onto their lead boat. They docked two hours ago, and you were brought ashore right away. Our healer has been tending you, but he is talking with Jakob now,” she explains as she brushes his damp hair from his forehead.

The man tries to sit up and winces, falling back down. He glances at Marta, then Julia, and speaks in a slightly weak voice, “Yes, the healer. I’ve actually been awake for a bit, but I did not like the aura he gave off. He seemed a man accustomed to asking questions rather than giving answers, and I’ve plenty of questions to ask and no answers to give.”

Julia giggles lightly. “I don’t like him either! But Marta says we’d have more trials without him, and that he’s gone through many hardships to learn his craft, and so I should try to tolerate him.”

The man looks at Julia’s gleeful countenance and smiles slightly. Marta feels her chest constrict. The silence seems complete and everlasting, and she was just about to speak when a voice behind her startled the entire group.

“It looks like our new friend has finally woken up,” booms Jakob, who is watching the scene with interest. “More like the women woke him up,” the healer added peevishly. Jakob grimaces at the healer. “Hush, Kurt! Now, would someone please tell me who this man is?”

Marta speaks first, “We do not know, Jakob, and neither does he. Says he can’t remember.”

“Is this true, stranger?” Jakob directs his question directly to the man on the stretcher.

“Yes, sir. I do not know my name, my home, nothing.”

“This is unfortunate for you. If you are willing to work to earn your keep, you are welcome to stay with us here in Lesja. I am Jakob, the captain of our village’s fishing fleet. This is Kurt, the town healer. The woman over there with the orange kerchief in her hair is my wife, Molly. And you’ve met our local florists, Marta and her sister Julia.”

“It is nice to meet you, Jakob. Thank you for your good care, Kurt. And thank you for keeping a stranger company,” the man smiles at the sisters, but looks at Julia alone.

Jakob coughs and speaks, “We can’t keep calling you stranger. Let’s see... how about ‘Elland’? It means ‘stranger’ in the old tongue.”

“‘Elland’, eh? A man could get used to that name. Many thanks, Jakob!”, the newly monickered invalid exclaims.

Julia looks up from Elland to ask Jakob a question. “Where will he stay? Marta and I have an extra room. Will that work?”

Jakob and Marta exchange a meaningful glance before Jakob answers, “I don’t think that would be the most appropriate choice, Julia, although I’m sure the offer is appreciated. Elland, you can stay with Molly and I until you’ve found a place of your own, be it here or elsewhere. I’ll give you five days of rest, but I expect you to be on the fleet when it ships out again next week.” Looking at Marta and Julia in turn, he continues, “It looks like the other women are beginning to tend to the nets. With your quick fingers, I am sure your services are required. Thank you for keeping Elland company until we could return.”

Thus dismissed, Julia reluctantly leaves Elland’s side and walks with Marta in silence towards the gaggle of women gathered on the other side of the beach. Both are lost in their own thoughts, but are soon dragged from their inner musings to answer the many questions of the village women. It seems as though only minutes have passed when Molly speaks up, “It’s sundown, ladies! Let’s wrap up what we’re working on and go home. It’s been a very busy day. And no lingering outside my home this evening! Elland will be sleeping, and I’ll have no disturbances.”

Over the next few days, the furor generated by Elland’s appearance slowly diminishes. The only people allowed to see him are Jakob, Molly, Kurt, Marta and Julia. The sisters were added to the short list at Elland’s request. He seems to enjoy the feeling of Julia’s light, cool touch on his forehead, and spends much of their time together cradling her soft hands in his rough ones. The sisters visit every day, but with each visit Marta feels more and more like an outsider. During their fourth visit, Marta excuses herself from the invalid’s room and goes in search of Jakob or Molly. She finds Molly in the kitchen preparing lunch. Without looking up from her task, Molly asks, “Is there something you need to talk about, Marta?”

“Actually, Molly, I was hoping to get some advice about Julia and Elland. They are growing very close, and she is very happy, which makes me happy, but I can’t help but feel there’s something about Elland that seems fishy. Has Jakob been able to find out any more about who he is or where he’s from?”

“You’re not the only one concerned by those two lovebirds. But don’t worry about it too much, Marta. The fleet heads out again tomorrow, and Jakob has promised me that Elland will be on it. Out of sight, out of mind, you know.”

“Oh, thank you! That’s great news! I can keep Julia busy with cleaning while the fleet is out. Maybe being out on the water will cause him to remember something.”

“We can only hope, dear.”

The next day, Julia and Marta join the rest of the village on the beach to wave farewell to the departing ships. As the last one disappears from sight, Julia quickly wipes a tear from her cheek. Marta throws a comforting arm around her and leads her back to the elevator. The two remain silent during their entire walk back to their home. When they arrive, Julia begins to walk towards her room, head bowed and feet shuffling. Marta calls to her, “Julia! There’s no time to mope. Since we’ve been spending so much time in town with your new friend, there is a lot that hasn’t gotten done around here. You can start by dusting the main rooms, while I sweep the floors and beat the rugs.”

Julia blushes and protests, “Elland is your friend, too!” She straightens up and goes to find the dust cloth. “I miss him already,” she murmurs to herself. Marta overhears her, but chooses to ignore it.

One week later, Julia is still sulking around. Not even tending to her garden is able to lift her spirits for long. She and Marta are sitting outside on a lovely morning, breaking their fast, when Julia heaves yet another long sigh. Marta snaps, “What?! What is so awful? So he’s gone for a bit! He’ll be back and then you two can stare at each other for days on end.”

“But what if he doesn’t come back? Or what if he remembers who he is while at sea, and he leaves me? Oh, I miss him, Marta! It seems I never lived before he appeared!”

“Well, thank you very much. I didn’t realize life with me was so awful and deadening,” Marta responds dourly. She regrets her initial outburst, but is happy that Julia is at least talking again.

“That’s not what I meant, Marta! Oh, you’d understand if you were ever in love!”

Marta winces at that cruel blow. To have such a large sacrifice thrown back in her face was almost more than she could bear. She rises and begins walking away. Julia wakes from her depressed stupor enough to notice her sister leaving. Suddenly, she realizes what she said, and with a small cry jumps up and runs to Marta’s side. Giving her a huge hug, she apologizes, “Marta, I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean it! I’m grateful for this wonderful life you’ve given me, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. Please forgive me, I’m so sorry!”

The two stand in the middle of the garden, supporting each other as they both let their frustrations and disappointments vent in a torrent of tears.

One week later, the two find themselves back at the harbor, waiting for the ships to come in. While Julia peers eagerly at the far-off fleet, Marta busies herself with sharpening blades and exchanging gossip with the other women. Before she knows it, the first ships have docked. She begins to tell Julia not to wander off, that there was work to be done, but turning, she finds she is too late. Elland is one of the first sailors off the lead ship, and Marta sees him just in time to watch him catch Julia up into his arms and swing her in a wide circle. ‘Julia looks so happy,’ she thinks to herself. ‘Perhaps I am being too careful.’

The three of them settle very near to where they all first met. But although there were now three working, it was taking noticeably more time to get through one basket. “Would you two quit chatting and start working?” Marta snapped.

“But, sister, we haven’t seen each other in ten days! That’s a lot to catch up on!” protested Julia. Glancing slyly over at Elland, she continues in a wheedling tone, “But perhaps if he were able to join us for dinner tonight, we could catch up then. What do you think?”

Seeing no graceful way to refuse, Marta agrees to the suggestion. Julia beams at Elland, while Marta scowls as she walks back to the docks for another load of fish.

A few hours later, the sisters bid farewell to Elland and continue towards their cottage. Along the way, they cross paths with a traveling merchant. He tilts his hat as they begin to pass each other and says, “Good afternoon, ladies! Would you care to glance at the lovely wares I have available for such pretty young things as you? Hestor is my name. And you are?”

“I’m Julia and this is my sister Marta. What sort of wares?” Julia asks as she walks towards the cart. Marta follows reluctantly. The merchant lowers the side of his cart to display an incredible array of beautiful fabrics, glistening jewellery and fanciful decorative items. The two women gasp in surprise and delight, and immediately close in to finger the cloth and hold the jewellery up to their bodies. “How did you come across such a fantastic assortment of womanly objects? Usually you people only have three or four,” Marta asks.

“I’ve run into a nice bit of luck recently,” Hestor explains. “On my way down the coast, I passed through several villages that were in mourning over the loss of one of their most beautiful girls. Suicides over lost love, apparently. Threw themselves off the cliff. Had the men folk really up in arms! Sad for them, but good for me! The families were glad to get rid of their dearly departed daughter’s stuff. I got it cheap and I’ll pass the savings on to you!”

Marta stares at him with a look of mingled horror and disgust, hastily putting down the choker she had been considering and backing away from the cart. Grabbing Julia’s arm, she says, “Come, Julia. It would be ill luck to buy a dead woman’s things. Let’s go.”

Julia shakes her sister’s grip loose and replies, “You and your silly superstitions! Wait just a minute, Marta. I want to look!”

“A wise one you are, miss! Have you seen these?” Hestor asks, holding up a pair of elbow gloves made of intricate white lace. “I bet they’d fit you perfectly!”

Carefully pulling them on, Julia exclaims, “Why, so they do! Oh, Marta, look! These would be perfect with my red dress! And that’s what I was planning on wearing tonight, since it is Elland’s favourite color!”

A look of confusion passes over Marta’s face. “Red? Really? He never wears it.”

“Well, no, he doesn’t like to wear it. He says he can appreciate it more on someone else.” Julia explains. Turning to Hestor, she asks, “How much for the gloves?”

Hestor eyes Julia and the gloves and then says, “For such fine gloves, I say… ten silver pieces.”

As Julia begins digging through her purse, Marta stops her and glares at Hestor. “Ten pieces for used gloves? We’ll give you four.”

The merchant’s eyes narrow. “Four?! You insult me. Look at the perfect fit, the elegant craftsmanship. I could not let them go for less than eight.”

Marta is quick with her rebuttal. “You insult *me*. These are hardly gloves that will stand the test of time. We’d be lucky to get three uses from them! We’ll pay no more than six.”

Hestor is about to reply when he is interrupted by Julia. “But, Marta, they’re so perfect! Please, let me pay him and let’s go get ready!” Marta looks at disbelief at Julia’s beseeching eyes to Hestor’s triumphant gaze. Throwing her hands up, she backs away, saying, “I tried.”

Julia happily hands over eight silver pieces to Hestor, who happily receives them. Holding her new gloves tightly to her chest, Julia skips up the road towards Marta, who is standing a few yards away with a dour expression marring her features.

Marta is still disgruntled when the two finally get back to their home. Her irritation increases when Julia immediately runs to her room to prepare herself for their guest. Marta grabs a basket from the counter with unnecessary force and heads out to the garden. After harvesting a variety of fresh vegetables, she releases some of her frustration by tearing the lettuce leaves and chopping the roots into bite-size pieces. She wipes the knife blade and proceeds to slice that morning’s loaf of bread. Before heading to her room to ready herself for company, Marta throws together a stew of grilled fish, vegetables, and crushed herbs. Passing Julia’s room on her way, she sees her sister sitting in front of her mirror, laboriously putting up her hair. Her red linen dress hangs on the door. Julia calls to her, “Marta, can you give me a hand? I have so much to get done before Elland arrives!”

Marta swallows her retort and enters the room. “What would you have me do, sister?” she asks sweetly.

Julia beckons her over to her side. “Could you hold these locks up while I pin them? Oh, I’m just so excited about tonight! I know I’ve only known him for three weeks, but I feel as though I’ve known him all my life. He really *understands* me, you know? Do you suppose we might get married? I hope so, Marta, I really do! Just think, I would be Elland’s *wife*! I’d never have to worry about being lonely or dying alone. I’d always have him to rely on. Life will be so grand! And then... OW! Marta, you tugged my hair a bit hard just then!”

“Oh, I’m sorry, dear sister. Is this better? Say, it comes to mind... how can you think about marrying a man that might already be married? You really don’t know anything about Elland. How can you be so sure he’s the one? He’s not even sure who he is!”

“It doesn’t matter if he doesn’t know who he is. I know who he is, and that’s a fine man with a great sense of honour and duty. He’s a hard worker, and he loves me. That’s all I need to know! Oh, why do I bother trying to explain this to you? You’ll never understand!”

Julia bursts into tears, and Marta walks stiff-backed from the room. She is able to enter her own room and shut the door before wilting to the floor. Squinting her eyes tight to keep the tears from flowing, she hugs herself close and bites her bottom lip. In the absolute stillness of the house, she can hear the pot boiling on the stove. Dinner was almost ready, and Julia’s guest would be arriving soon. Rising, Marta quickly changes into a nicer dress, smoothes her hair back into a tie and splashes her face with cool water.

On her way to the kitchen, she stops at Julia's closed door and listens. Hearing nothing, she continues on her way.

The dinner hour arrives quickly. Julia greets Elland at the door with a hug and a smile. "We're so glad you are here! Come in, make yourself at home!" While Marta remains sequestered in the kitchen, putting the finishing touches on the meal, Julia chatters with Elland. The two are deep in conversation when Marta enters the room and announces that dinner is ready.

Standing to follow Marta to the table, Elland gallantly offers his arm to Julia. Giggling, she lifts her hand to take it. Elland gives her a startled glance and takes hold of her hands in his. Examining the gloves, he asks, "Julia, dear, where did you get these gloves? They look so familiar."

Julia smiles at him and explains, "I purchased them from a traveling merchant just this afternoon. I thought they would go well with my dress. Don't you like them?"

Elland shoots her a wide grin and replies, "I like them very much. But compared to the heavenly beauty of your hands, they are mere sackcloth." Julia blushes as Elland slowly removes first one glove, then the other. He gently kisses both hands and then proceeds to escort her to the table where Marta is waiting.

Marta remains silent through most of dinner, while Julia tells Elland all about Lesja and its inhabitants and Elland entertains Julia with stories of the fleet's latest voyage. Marta is inwardly satisfied that Elland seemed to really enjoy the stew, even though he hardly touched his salad. After a dessert of fresh berries and cream, Marta excuses herself. "Pardon me. I feel a headache coming on. You two have a pleasant evening, but please try not to stay up too late." The two lovebirds wish her a good evening and walk outside.

"Julia, my love, is something wrong with your sister? She was strangely silent during the meal."

"Oh, she's just sulking. She said I shouldn't show so much interest in you, since you do not know if you are already spoken for. She's jealous."

Elland stops and tilts her chin up with his hand, forcing her to look into his eyes. "So you do have interest in me? I am glad to hear it, for I have much interest in you."

Julia blushes and turns away. When she looks back, Elland swoops in, taking possession of her mouth. The kiss becomes more passionate with each passing second. Julia tears herself away, putting a hand up to her lips. Holding her hand out into the moonlight, she sees a suspicious wetness. Licking her lower lip, she confirms that it is blood. Elland is watching her, and when she looks back at him, he promptly apologizes, "Julia, my dear, I am very sorry. You awaken such an appetite in me, I can barely control it. Please forgive me!"

Julia considers the matter for half a second, then smiles at him and, reaching up on her tip-toes, gives him a quick peck on the lips. Smiling toothily, he licks his lips and grabs her hand. Turning forward, they continue their stroll.

As they get farther from the house, Elland appears increasingly nervous. Julia leads him to a bench by the cliff. "This is my favourite spot to sit and think," she tells Elland. When he doesn't respond immediately, Julia asks, "Is something wrong? Can I help?" Elland looks at her and takes a deep breath. Holding her hands in his, he says, "Julia, my

love, there is something I must tell you.” Julia looks up at him with trusting eyes. He smiles at her and then begins his tale.

“I lied to you, Julia. I do know who I am and where I’m from. My name is Chordato, and I am from a fishing village very similar to this one. About a year ago, I was accused of killing my fiancée and was forced to flee my home. Her clansmen followed me from town to town, destroying any chance I had for a normal life. The last time they caught up with me, they tried to kill me. That’s how I ended up in the sea. I didn’t want to tell anybody my real name because if those men ever found out I was still alive, they’d start hunting me again. I thought it would be easy, to lie to everyone. But I can’t lie to you, Julia.” Bowing his head, Elland slumps into silence.

Julia takes only a few seconds to make up her mind. “Oh, Ell... Chordato! I believe you, darling, and I’ll never tell a soul! My poor dear! Oh, my love!”

Chordato squeezes her hands in thanks and the two embrace passionately.

Inside, Marta weeps into her pillow, mourning the inevitable loss of her sister.

The next morning, Marta and Julia sit at their normal outdoor table to break their fast. Julia is strangely silent, and Marta grows concerned. “Julia, is something wrong? Did something happen last night? Has that man hurt you?”

Julia looks up defensively. “No, last night was wonderful. He was wonderful. Why do you ask so many questions? Don’t you trust me? I’m old enough to take care of myself, thank you!” With that remark, Julia rises from the table and stalks off towards a far corner of her garden. Marta considers following, but thinking back to Julia’s dark glare, thinks the better of it.

After rinsing off the morning’s dishes, she changes into a clean dress and heads out the door. Walking past Julia, she asks, “Would you like to walk into town with me? There are a few things we need to pick up.”

Julia replies tersely, “No.”

Undaunted, Marta continues, “Is there anything you’d like me to pick up while I’m there?”

Again, Julia responds with a quick, “No.”

Shrugging her shoulders, Marta turns and continues on her way. Not fifty yards from the house, she passes Chordato along the road. The two of them nod to one another, but no words are exchanged. After seeing him, Marta slips further into a bad humour. “Things were so much better before he came along,” she thinks to herself. “If only he would just go away, then things between Julia and I would be normal again...”

Arriving in town, she is distracted from her depression by the sight of a large group of strange men outside the blacksmith’s shop. Since that shop was one of her planned destinations, Marta decides to go there first. Pushing through the crowd to get to the front door, she notices that they are all heavily armed and scowling. Reaching the door, she pulls it open and slips in with a slight sigh of relief. That feeling quickly disappears when she looks up to see three very large men glaring at her. The largest man was in the center and seemed to be the leader. He was a fisherman by the look of him, but he was not from this town, nor any of those immediately nearby. His scornful gaze was mirrored in the faces of the two men at his side. Recovering her sense of purpose, she pointedly ignores the strange men and asks the blacksmith directly, “Would you have any three inch nails on hand? We need to make some repairs to the water tub.” He impatiently

sends one of his assistants to check, and then returns his attention to the lead man. Even at the other side of the store front, Marta can't help but overhear their conversation.

"Like I said, we be looking for a man, about six feet, grey hair, slight build. Have any newbies come round fittin' that description?"

"And like I told you before, I don't go around telling town business to angry men with weapons. Now I'll ask you again, what business is it of yours?"

The smallest of the men puffs his chest out and opens his mouth to issue a stinging retort when the center man holds his hand up. "You make a fine point. We are men from many villages up the coast. Though our names and faces be different, our stories are the same. In each of our towns, a strange man would show up. In a few days, he would trick a young woman to fall in love with him. Then he would disappear. The woman would become so sad and depressed that she would throw herself from the cliff to be eaten by the sharks below. Is it any wonder we are angry? Each of us has lost a sister, a daughter, or a friend."

Marta feels as though her heart has stopped beating. It all fit so perfectly together. Elland was a newcomer, six feet, grey hair, slim build. Her sister was a beautiful young woman who had fallen deeply in love with him. If he was to leave, and Julia kill herself, Marta's life would be over. "I have to stop this!" Marta says to herself. Squaring her shoulders, she turns to the men. "Excuse me!" They ignore her. Louder, she repeats herself, "Excuse me!" They continue to ignore her. Once more, she cries, "Excuse me! I know the man you speak of!"

The largest man turns to her and pins her with a fierce gaze. "You say you know this man? Speak up, woman!"

"He was pulled from the sea about three weeks ago. He couldn't remember who he was or where he was from, and so was invited to stay here. He and my sister have grown very close. If Elland is the one you seek, please, go find him before anything happens to me sister!"

"Where is he? Where is this man?"

"At my house!" Marta cries frantically. "Up the road about one mile. Shale roof, large garden. Please, hurry!"

"You stay here, woman. We'll return when it's been taken care of." With that, the leader turns swiftly on his heel and marches out. The two smaller men follow.

Suddenly, the storefront seems very large to Marta. She looks up at the blacksmith. "I guess there's no rush on those nails."

Julia and Chordato are walking hand-in-hand along the shell-lined garden path when they see the mob approaching along the road. Chordato freezes and Julia instinctively knows that this is the group of bloodthirsty clansmen that have hunted her love all along the coast. Weeping, Julia frantically clings to Chordato. He reluctantly pries her off, kissing her tear-streaked cheeks and hands, then turns to run.

Julia meets the angry throng at the gate. Arms spread wide, she blocks the front entrance, crying out defiantly, "You cannot enter! You bloodthirsty bastards, turn around and go back where you came from!"

The men mill about in confusion at this unexpected delay, but the lead man that Marta had talked to back in town pushed through the crowd and confronted Julia. "Let us through," he demands grimly.

“No!” Julia protests angrily.

The large man doesn't look at her again, but simply pushes her aside and walks past. The rest of the rabble follows.

Julia stumbles back onto her feet and runs after the large man, shouting, “Stop, stop!!!”

The crowd slows to a stop as it rounds the corner of the house. Julia catches up to the rabble, and leaps up into the air in an attempt to see over their heads. It is Chordato! He is standing on the cliff's edge, looking back at all of them.

Julia howls, “Nooooooooo!” Her cry seems to act as a catalyst for the men, for they roar in anger and rush forward. In the tumult, Julia is pushed to the ground and remains there, watching the unfolding scene with growing horror. When the first man's weapon is only inches from Chordato's throat, he smiles at them and falls backward, twisting in his decent to dive gracefully into the crashing surf and jagged rocks below. Julia's hysterical screams are mixed with the men's roars of frustration. The crestfallen men turn as one and begin walking out to the road. Many of them pass right by Julia's crumpled weeping form, but none offer to help, or even look down.

After the last man has gone, Julia clammers to her feet and runs to the edge, desperately searching for any sign of Chordato's body. Seeing none, she begins to run for help. Though her blurred vision makes the journey more difficult, she eventually finds herself in the harbor. Untying a small skiff from the docks, she hurriedly lofts the sail and heads toward the surf underlying her house. Tossing the small anchor overboard, she eagerly scans the churning water for any sign of her lover. Seeing nothing but a lone shark in the water, she kneels down and sobs.

When no more tears would come to her eyes, Julia stares blankly at the dark waters. The shark approaches and slowly circles the craft. Julia feels as though her heart has been ripped in twain and her world has come crashing down around her. Mesmerized by the intense gaze of the shark, Julia leans forward over the water.

“Julia! Juuuu-liiiiiaaaa!” Marta's call brings Julia back to her senses. Looking around, she sees her sister waving at her from the dock. Reluctantly, she pulls up the anchor and tacks back to the harbor.

As Marta helps Julia out of the boat, she sees her sister's crestfallen expression and tear-stained cheeks. “What on earth is wrong? What were you doing out there? You know the shore under the cliff is dangerous!”

Julia can only wail, “He's gone! He's gone!”

Marta pulls her close, and holds her sister while sobs rack her slender frame. When Julia's sobs subside, Marta hugs her fiercely and helps her back to the elevator. It is a silent walk back to the house, with both sisters lost in their own thoughts.

When they reach the house, Marta gives a small cry of dismay. “Those louts! They've completely trampled the garden! This will take years to repair!” Suddenly aware of Julia's intense gaze, Marta quiets and continues to walk into the house. Julia does not follow.

“How do you know about those evil men? You couldn't have, not unless...” Julia looks at her sister in shock. “YOU! You told them about Chordato and where to find him! You betrayed me! How could you do this? I hate you!”

Julia starts running around the house. Marta follows after her, but is not able to catch up to her youthful sister. Marta turns the corner just in time to see Julia throw herself from the cliff. As she falls, Marta can hear her cry, "I'm coming, my love!"

With disturbing similarity, Marta cries out and runs to the edge, searching for any sign of her sister's body, hoping against hope that somehow she had survived. Seeing nothing, Marta runs to town. She is soon pounding on Jakob and Molly's door. Molly opens the door and promptly brings Marta in and sits her in the kitchen. Jakob is there and listens to Marta's tale carefully. Once Marta is done, he grabs his coat and leaves without saying a word. Molly hands Marta a warm mug of laced tea.

Several hours later, Marta wakes up. Upon remembering the events of the last twenty-four hours, she sits up abruptly. Stumbling out of bed, she quickly makes her way out of Molly's house and into the street. Lesja seemed strangely deserted. Running to the elevator, Marta sees that most of the town seems to have gathered in the harbor. She throws the lever and descends.

As Marta approaches the crowd, the townspeople reluctantly part to make way for her. She does not notice their looks of pity. Nearing the front, she sees a body being lifted from a boat. Running forward, she cries out, "Julia!"

Molly is at the front, and catches Marta as she tries to run past. "Child, you don't want to see this. Let's go back home and get you comfortable." Marta barely hears her, and rips herself from Molly's grasp. Nearing the body, she drops to her knees and begins crying.

She hears someone shout, "Get her out of here!" She feels hands pulling at her, trying to get her to rise and leave her sister's side. Angrily, Marta tears the hands away and wipes her eyes. Focusing her vision to see at her sister one last time, she falls back with a cry. Huge chunks of flesh have been ripped from Julia's body, and her face was barely recognizable. Bite marks mar the areas where tattered skin still clung. Numbly, Marta allows Molly and another woman to pick her up and begin assisting her back to the elevator.

As the three make their way back through the crowd, Marta hears someone gasp, "Look at her hands!" Before the women are able to stop her, Marta slips their grasp and runs back to the corpse. Throwing herself on top of Julia's body, she begins weeping and tearing at her hair. Hands again reach for her, pulling her away from her sister, away from the only person she loved. Before slipping into a comfortable blackness, Marta notices that Julia's hands are pristine, with not a scratch or bruise marring the smooth alabaster skin.

Scourge of the Misty Seas

Pirates of the Demiplane of Dread

Stephen "ScS" Suffon

Stephen@fraternityofshadows.com

"Damn them for a pack of craft rascals, and you, who serve them, for a parcel of a hen-hearted numbskulls. They vilify us, the scoundrels do, then there is only this difference, they rob the poor under the cover of law, forsooth, and we plunder the rich under the protection of our own courage; had ye not better make one of us, than sneak after the arsēs of those villains for employment?"

- Captain Charles Bellemy, pirate

In the dying light of dusk the mists part before the prow of a ship. Silently the galley sails into port, unnoticed by the merchant ships tied to port. Only as it swoops upon the shipyards is the vessel spotted. To the terror of the dockworkers the ship raises its banner, the dreaded black flag. Thunder and lightning burst from the corsair galley as waves of cannon fire savagely rend flesh and timber. Hordes of filthy men in colourful rags swarm the decks of the galley, boarding the victim vessels. Amidst the flaming wreckage of the merchant ships the pirates do ferocious battle. Many sailors flee before their fierce attack, jumping into the sea rather than face the rusted cutlasses of the brigands. The holds of the merchant ships are viciously plundered as the buccaneers tear into the booty like starved sharks in a feeding frenzy.

Soon the tide of raiders spills down the gangplanks of the victim ships, spreading the orgy of violence across the

dockyards. Pistol shot falls like hail upon the fleeing crowds and all who stand their ground are mercilessly cut down by blades and daggers. Grenades and burning pitch are thrown through smashed windows, wreaking horrible havoc upon the clustered tenements. Merchants cower in terror beneath their counters as their wares are pillaged and their stores sacked. Amidst the terror women and children are cornered by the brigands and netted like beasts. As their homes crash down around them the hapless commoners are dragged aboard the raiding galley to be imprisoned within its brig.

In less than an hour the shipyards are ablaze, while in the distance alarm bells ring, summoning the garrisons of city guards. Even as the defenders muster, the pirates have set sail. With their hold laden with booty, their brig filled with prisoners and three captured ships in tow they vanish into the mists, never to be seen again. The carnage they wreaked in less than an hour will echo for decades in the annals of history and the nightmares of the survivors. They are pirates, enemies of the human race, scourge of the misty seas.

Piracy

For as long as humans have plied the waters, there have been pirates. Whether they are Northmen in mail terrorizing the coast in longboats or are pistol wielding buccaneers in sophisticated ocean craft, pirates have

been a constant threat to water going societies. Even in the cold fog shrouded waters of Ravenloft brigands pursue their ancient profession.

Pirates are experts in ship-to-ship combat, notorious for their prowess on the waves. Though the goal of a pirate attack is often to strip a ship of its valuable cargo, frequently the true prize of a raid is the victim ship itself. Called a "*prise*", these captured ships become the backbone of piracy. Those crews that become successful rise in power by seizing new ships and recruiting more sailors to their motley band.

By strict definition, piracy is the act of robbing a ship at sea. In practice pirates use a variety of strategies to sustain their occupation. Corsairs often raid coastal villages and ports to increase their gains. Often brigand crews supplement their income by other criminal endeavours such as smuggling goods or people, or working as mercenaries.

Causes of Piracy: Pirates are themselves a mottled group and the corsairs of the mists are all the more diverse for the number of lands within the demiplane so closely linked by the mists. Rogue sailors from Mordent are often intermixed with Darkonian brigands, seamen from Souragne, escapees from Saragoss and raiders from Rokushima Taiyoo.

The causes of piracy are as varied as the men who ply the profession. There is any number of reasons that a seaman might turn against his fellows and engage in a life of thievery. In most cases, the cause of Piracy is unemployment. When seamen are forced to decide between the life of a beggar on the docks and the life of a pirate, the choice becomes obvious. As

well, many otherwise fine officers have turned rogue rather than face creditors or an unpleasant spouse.

The life of a seaman can be a humiliating one, filled with backbreaking labour and spirit robbing degradation. There are a plethora of punishments devised by cruel captains to maintain discipline aboard their ships including whipping, branding and keelhauling. Should a captain prove too cruel to his crew, it is entirely possible that the crew may mutiny. Though necessary, mutiny is entirely illegal. Mutinous crews may be forced to turn pirate rather than return to home port and the noose that awaits them.

Buccaneer crews sustain themselves by pressing crewmen of victim ships into service. The majority of pressed workers are crewmen taken to staff a newly captured ship or replace pirates lost in battle. Skilled labourers such as carpenters, sail-makers and surgeons are always taken by raiders and forced to work aboard pirate crafts. Musicians and skilled navigators are also highly sought by pirate crews and often taken as captives. These impressed labourers are often issued letters by a pirate quartermaster to prove that they themselves are not pirates and are aiding such criminals against their will. Sadly, these letters are often disregarded by naval courts.

Privateers: Separate from brigands are the privateers, legally sanctioned pirates. These raiders are given licence by monarchs to attack the ships of their enemies and loot their cargo. Privateers are a stark contrast to pirates, often operating more as a military vessel than true buccaneers. Nonetheless, the line between privateer and pirate is a fine one.

Privateers are sanctioned by a document known as the Letters of Marque, the official contract issued by a monarch that gives the privateer captain the right to raid ships of an enemy kingdom. In exchange for this letter, the Monarch is entitled to a share of the profits of the haul. Privateer captains must be ever wary of the shifting political winds. More than one captain has returned home from a successful raid, only to be clapped in irons for attacking a vessel that had previously been fair game. Privateers must be cautious to obtain evidence of the allegiance of all their victims to prove their own authority to raid and pillage.

Privateer crews begin their voyages as rigid, disciplined and professional as any lawful vessel. However as the crew suffers the hardships of a life of piracy they evolve into a brigand mindset. It is not uncommon for a privateer crew to turn rogue should their captain prove too brutal or their flow of goods too meagre.

Privateers in Ravenloft: From the moment the Seas of the Core appeared, the domains of the mainland have been infused with trade. The vibrant traffic of goods has made the costal kingdoms centers of commerce, culture and civilization. Indeed, as the providers of consumer goods to the isolated islands the costal domains have held a virtual monopoly over their customers. However, in recent times, a relatively stable mistway has been discovered between the Sea of Sorrows and the Nocturnal Sea. With this connecting passage has come a flood of traders, disrupting trade and sparking a battle between merchants competing to barter with the island markets.

These developments have led to an unhealthy competition between Nova Vaasa and Dementlieu. Neither nation is willing to surrender their monopolies to the interlopers from across the Core, nor will they curb their ambitions to trade in the markets across the mist. Rather than declare open warfare these kingdoms have authorised letters of Marque to numerous privateer ships in the hopes of achieving mastery over both seas.

Nearly half a dozen privateer vessels have been commissioned and now prowl the seas looking for targets. Skirmishes have kept the numbers of privateers low, as have storms and other mishaps. More than a few crews have abandoned their legal mandate and become true pirates, preying on neutral vessels and even ships flying their own kingdom's banner. Like starving wolves unleashed amongst sheep, these sea hunters are a danger to all who ply the misty waters of Ravenloft.

Piracy on the Misty Seas

All lands touched by the seas have felt the scourge of piracy, even in the demiplane of dread. Though comparatively tiny by the standards of other worlds, Ravenloft boasts a surprisingly abundant population of brigands. The oppressive gloom that hangs over the misty seas seems to drive men to piracy. An eclectic collection of lands, the domains of the demiplane spawn unique breeds of buccaneers to plague their waterways.

Sea of Sorrows: The Sea of Sorrows has suffered the predations of numerous pirates, from the savage Northman Auden Beck, to the verminous Andre De Sang, and even the half-forgotten brigand Urdogen the Red. Pirates patrol the Sea of Sorrows, lurking between the

islands and scouring the seaside of coastal traders. Corsairs target the vessels on the return voyage from Ghastria, laden with the proceeds of the spice trade. Dementlieu maintains a presence to maintain law on the high seas, though for the most part merchant vessels must depend upon their own prowess.

The port cities of Ludndorf, Martira Bay, Mordentshire and Port a-Lucine are tempting targets for pirate raiders, though the strength of the defenders dissuades all but the most foolhardy or daring. Even still, corsairs have had limited successes with lightening raids on ships leaving dock. Pirate captains who accomplish a raid on a port city quickly gain fame and notoriety, as well as a hefty bounty on their heads.

Pirates in the Sea of Sorrow have forged relations with important individuals in the Western Core. A few pirates have bragged of connections to the sinister Kargat of Darkon. Presumably, such corsairs could be offered protection from the law within Darkon in exchange for services as smugglers, informants, and even assassins on the seas. Buccaneers in need of hard coin have been known to collect the bodies of their victims and transport them to a castle in Northern Lamordia. By the rocky shores below Schloss Mordenheim a brigand may barter with the misshapen assistant of the lord of the manor, who purchases human body parts with legitimate coin.

The Sea of Sorrows has been plagued by many scoundrels and sea rats, yet none have proven quite as daring as Henri d'Bustard, the Vulture. A privateer turned rogue, the Vulture preys, not on ships, but on port cities. He has led raids on Ghastria, Blaustein,

Mordentshire and even the heavily defended ports of Ludndorf, Martira Bay, and Port a-Lucine. His ship, the Condor, is shrouded in a veil of perpetual fog that disguises his vessel until he strikes. Pursuing vessels claim that the mists themselves heed the whims of the Vulture, whisking the pirate to a secret haven when danger closes in. When questioned, captured crewmen have claimed that the Vulture keeps a captured Vistani girl who bends the mists to his dark will.

Nocturnal Sea: Though infamously difficult to navigate, the Nocturnal Sea is home to many populated islands. The merchants of Darkon and Nova Vaasa have grown rich on the sea trade between the Core and these habited isles, enjoying far greater riches than their counterparts in the Sea of Sorrows. Yet as the rewards of trade grow, so too do the risks. Hidden in the nebulous mists of the Nocturnal Sea are cutthroat pirates, searching for prey.

Corsairs prowl the sea routes between Liffe, Graben Island and Vechor, robbing the merchant vessels from Nova Vaasa and Darkon. The ports of Arbora, Egertus, and Nevuchar Springs are heavily defended to protect the ships docked there from the predations of buccaneers. Even still, neither nation can field more than a token navy to chase off the pirate menace.

The brigands of the Nocturnal Sea have found more than a few allies to give them protection. The criminal mastermind known as Malken includes many buccaneers in his empire. These rogues benefit a massive network of fences for their stolen booty, at the price of a generous tax to Malken. As well, a mysterious family from Graben Island

has been known to hire pirates and other ne'er-do-wells to transport questionable cargo or procure special materials.

The taverns and salons of the Eastern Coast are abuzz with rumours of the latest pirate menace; the demonic Captain Teach. A privateer gone rogue, Captain Teach terrorizes the coast of the Core. He has raided countless vessels and even sacked the docks of Egertus. A terrible figure to behold, Teach is a massive man distinguished by a jet black beard. In battle he is said to wear burning slow matches underneath his hat so as to wreath his head in demonic smoke. Some whisper that he is in fact a man possessed, becoming more like a true devil with each passing year.

Souragne: Many pirates weigh anchor at the impoverished ports of Souragne, where their gold and goods are accepted without question. Port d'Elhour is a legendary haven for seagoing rogues, infamous for its complacency to pirates. The sweltering docksides are crowded with the vermin of the sea, who eagerly trade their blood money for base pleasures.

Many pirates trace their origins back to Souragne. The term "buccaneer" is derived from the souragnian word *boucanier*, for a peasant smoke-house, the preferred cooking tool of the serfs of that land. The wealthy landowners of the marshy island exploit the peasant farmers, keeping them bound to inescapable servitude. Several of these serfs and slaves escape indentured servitude into a life of crime. The authorities of Souragne despise these rebels, though since the influx of goods and gold sustains Port d'Elhor, little action is taken.

Most famous of all Souragnian buccaneers is the man known as "Papa" Morgan. A former slave turned pirate, Captain Morgan is a hulking, dark skinned man. Always savagely jovial, his face is perpetually plastered with a wide grin, even in the midst of melee. It is whispered that Papa Morgan is powerful hougan sorcerer with the power to work evil magic against his victims. His vessel, "The Samedi" flies under the banner of a skull wearing a top hat at the center of two crossed bones. Whatever the source of his success, Captain Morgan's fame continues to grow amongst the rogues of Souragne. It is whispered that he is gathering a flotilla of ships for some secret purpose.

Rokushima Taiyoo: The Poison Sea of Rokushima Taiyoo swarms with pirates. As the warfare between the islands rages, lawlessness flourishes beyond the reach of the shoguns. Indeed, each the four factions have offered bounties on the merchant vessels of their enemies, hoping to woo foreign brigands into forming a naval force. The provinces of Rokushima Taiyoo are a dumping ground for foreign pirates carrying trade goods. The starved, impoverished port cities accept all manner of merchandise, regardless of its origins.

As the rulers of Rokushima Taiyoo destroy the last vestiges of their feudal nobility, they shelter the growth of a kleptocracy within their midst. In the center of the Great Mirror lake is Kam Tora, the island fortress of the yakuza-lord, Isen Kang. Originally formed by the shells of millions of crustaceans left by ancient fishermen, Kam Tora is a tangled web of floating platforms, towering barges and junks anchored tenuously to the reef below. Hidden in the dank labyrinth of Kam Tora, the

vermin of the sea gather and plot fell deeds. Isen Kang claims the Great Mirror Lake as his personal hunting grounds; ships passing through the lake must pay a hefty tribute for his “protection”. An honourable scoundrel, brigands caught molesting vessels under Kang’s protection are slain without mercy. Though an extortionist, Isen Kang has made the Great Mirror Lake the peaceful eye at the center of a hurricane. A small fleet of junks flies under Kang’s insignia, a black flag with the Rokushiman runes for Evil and Death drawn in blood. The Shujin of Rokushima Taiyoo cannot match Kang’s naval forces, though they would gladly pay a massive bounty for his head.

Saragoss: Most sailors turn to piracy out of desperation, and there are no seamen more desperate than the prisoners of Saragoss. Amidst the thirst and starvation of the deadly doldrums, sailors must turn against one another to prolong their lives, if only for a little longer. Like starving dogs, the ships cannibalize one another, culling the weakest of their number. No crew mired in the creeping weeds will last unless it turns to piracy.

Battles between ships in Saragoss are not won with grand confrontations or fine manoeuvres. Rather, these clashes are decided by guile and patience. Boarding parties are sent out across the weeds, either in rowboats or on the webbed shoes designed to allow men to walk on the thick layer of seaweed. The parties murder, plunder, and set fires to further weaken their victims before fleeing into the night. Raid after raid they wear the victim down until they have taken everything of value. The ships of Saragoss are ever watchful for signs of weakness, so battles are planned

with the greatest of caution. An attacker who loses too many men to achieve victory will be unable to fend off the inevitable feeding frenzy.

Life on the Account

Pirates are despised and adored, a symbol of terror and chaos and yet also liberty and equality. Romanticized in song and story, the pirate represents the repressed urges of all who live in quiet desperation. The filthy, bearded men of a brigand ship are unbound by social class or convention, unfettered by laws or taboo. Though these raiders are hated and feared, there is not a civilized man who does not envy their freedom.

Feast and Famine: The life of a pirate is a cycle of feast and famine. With each victory a pirate obtains sustenance, yet the space between such victories is great. Starvation, sickness and thirst are the constant companions of a brigand. Even when food or medicine can be secured, it is often of poor quality. Many pirates eat only in the dark, rather than retch upon the site of the weevils and lice that infest their meals. The alcoholism amongst pirates is partly owed to attempts to dull their senses to their hideous sustenance.

Aboard a corsair ship, life is as unpleasant as any prison cell devised by man. To maintain an advantage in combat a pirate ship must be horribly overcrowded. Hands aboard a pirate vessel sleep in huddles on deck, eating and performing other daily functions in public view, like vermin. Lice and fleas infest every crewman, spreading like wildfire amongst the filthy unshaven brigands. As one might expect, violence and vice are prevalent amongst such a motley parcel of rogues. Often a pirate’s worst enemies are his drunken

confederates, who could easily slay him in a booze fuelled brawl over an imagined slight.

Cruelty and Compassion: Pirates are a chaotic group, taken to shifts of mood as mercurial as the seas themselves. Though often a despicable race of rogues, pirates are capable of surprising extremes of generosity. Pirates kill without compunction, enslave whoever they capture, raid whatever vessels they stumble upon and pillage at every opportunity. Yet, pirates are also capable of acts of honour, compassion and even piety.

When a pirate vessel captures a *prise*, the first course of action taken after the looting and pillaging is to discuss with the crew who amongst them wishes to join their raiding band. The brigands consider the nature of the victim captain, and if the captured crew describe him as cruel or ungenerous, the pirates extract revenge. Generous captains, however, are spared and set free. There are many cases where a captain so impressed his captors that he was released without ransom and even given a smaller vessel as a trade for his own.

Many pirate crews abide by common morals. Agreements amongst pirate crews include the freeing of all slaves encountered, forbidding rape, or prescribing conditions for quarter to the enemy. Certain crews may attempt to retain a chaplain to administer to their religious needs and hear confessions.

Horrors from the Depths: Though pirates are universally feared as outlaws, there remain far more terrifying creatures within the black depths of the misty seas. Alone on the high seas and often adrift in the mists, pirates are

convenient prey for the children of the night. The search for prey takes pirate crews to the strange, dark corners of the seas where they may find things that men were not meant to see. Indeed, if pirates are brave in battle, it is only because they have learned to fear far more horrible things than mortal men.

Whether facing the pitiless predators of a jungle isle, or defending the ship against the vengeful spirits of their former victims, pirate crews are often drawn together by the need to survive against the horrors of the night. Of all the terrors of the mists, none holds so much terror for a pirate as the fiends they dub Jolly Rogers. As the restless remnant of a fallen corsair, these cackling killers are compelled to slay their living counterparts. Lore has it that a pirate who is slain by a Jolly Roger will rise again as its slave, bound to serve forever on its ghastly ship.

Leadership

For all their appearance, pirates are not chaotic rabbles. Within every pirate crew there is a defined hierarchy of command. Yet at the same time, this command structure is based on an egalitarian, democratic model.

Captain: Paradoxically, rank of the captain is in truth the secondary position aboard a pirate vessel. A pirate captain is essentially the martial leader of the crew, given leadership only during combat. While possessing complete authority during a battle, a pirate captain has only a marginal say in the daily decisions made aboard the ship. Just like a quartermaster, a captain is chosen by a democratic vote. Pirate captains are chosen for being “pistol-proof”; they are selected for courage in combat, strategic talent and their ability to secure *prises*.

Captains receive very few of the privileges given to their lawful counterparts. While a pirate captain may use a captain's quarters as his private domicile, no member of the crew may be refused entry at any hour. The captain's possessions are considered common property and may be used by any hand aboard without permission. For all of his duties, a captain is only entitled to a double share of the treasure taken.

Particularly fierce pirate captains command more obedience from their crews, using fear and intimidation to seize more privileges. In rare cases, a particularly charismatic or fearsome pirate draws together a fleet of vessels. These commodores possess more authority and more privileges than traditional pirate captains, though each vessel remains autonomous and could theoretically strike out on their own.

Quartermaster: Chief position amongst any pirate crew is the quartermaster. The quartermaster is responsible for assigning the division of labour, dividing the treasure taken from a prize and any important decisions. It is the responsibility of the quartermaster to appoint the boatswain and sailing master. Furthermore, the quartermaster is responsible for drawing up the articles of Piracy which dictate the actions of the crew as well as any letters exonerating pressed labourers. Finally, the quartermaster is responsible for doling out compensating crew who have been injured or crippled during battle. The quartermaster is elected by the majority of the crew, and could potentially be ousted at any moment. In exchange for his responsibilities, a quartermaster is entitled to a double share of any *prise* taken.

Boatswain: The boatswain of a pirate vessel is the taskmaster. It is his

duty to ensure that all of the daily chores aboard the ship are completed, that the ship is in good repair and to implement the commands of the quartermaster in peace, or the captain in combat. The boatswain is required by tradition to lead any boarding party onto a victim ship. In exchange for his duties and risks, the boatswain is entitled to one and a half share of all treasure taken.

Sailing Master: The navigator of a pirate vessel is known as the sailing master. The sailing master is responsible for charting the location of the ship and entering appropriate logs, if the quartermaster demands it. The sailing master is entitled to one and a half share of all booty taken.

The Cannon's Roar

Robbery on the high seas requires more than a ship packed with flea-bitten scoundrels. Those pirates who live long enough to close the distance between themselves and a victim do so with skill. Pirates enjoy an advantage over their law-abiding counterparts, in that their officers are chosen according to their skills. The crew of a pirate vessel are usually desperate when they encounter a *prise*, either starving or suffering from scurvy. As desperate men, pirates are always a danger, even to the most heavily armed ship.

Strategies: Successful pirate captains develop large repertoires of cunning combat strategies to overcome their enemies. Pirate captains have devised countless strategies to entrap prey. The simplest plan amongst pirates is to patrol well used shipping lanes. Eventually the pirate vessel encounters a merchant vessel to loot and they attack.

More sophisticated pirates employ ruses, posing as a friendly ship in

distress and luring the enemy out. Pirates use newly seized *prises* to carry out this lethal charade, using the reputation of lawful vessels to fool their victims. Such a decoy might be outfitted with pirates who lie in wait to attack the vessels who come to their aid.

Some cunning pirates employ ambushes. The pirates set up camp on an island commonly used as a source of fresh water on long voyages. The best islands used are those with shoals or reefs, which force the victim ship to manoeuvre within a maze of hazards. Like spiders, the buccaneers lie in wait in hidden lagoons until a vessel is ensnared. Brigands with weak ships might wait for a launch to be sent to shore, then waylay the crew and hold them as hostages. Daring corsairs might even disguise themselves as the crew and row out to the victim ship to launch a surprise boarding. Pirates are quick to move on to other islands, rather than mark one isle as dangerous.

The misty borders of Ravenloft offer pirates a unique advantage that their counterparts on other worlds do not enjoy. Though mist travel is a risky venture at the best of times, pirates happily face the peril to seize an advantage. The mists allow pirate vessels to travel large distances instantly, escaping pursuit or falling upon unexpected prey. Mist-ways are often patrolled by pirate vessels that extort costly tribute from passing vessels.

Fear: Psychological warfare is often the most effective weapon at a brigand's disposal. Using their fearsome reputation, a pirate vessel can intimidate vessels into surrendering. At the beginning of an engagement, a pirate vessel signals its intent to raid by raising the "jolly roger". This flag is little more

than a black banner, though each pirate captain possesses his own personal flag. Many pennants are a variation of the skull and crossbones, though any fearsome image could feasibly adorn such a standard. Particularly brutal pirates may even raise the red flag, which signals that no quarter will be given to those who resist.

Prior to engaging in battle pirates prepare various psychological tools. The crew might gather on the deck and ritually make a show of strength; musicians may be called to prepare a dirge to demoralize the enemy, the ship may even fly a number of captured flags to display their past victims. In some cases pirates adorn themselves with facial paint or other fearsome trappings.

Battle: Often described as cowardly, pirates readily flee from battle if they do not possess an advantage in numbers or guns. Once embattled, however, pirates fight as fiercely as rabid animals, setting themselves into battle with iron determination.

Pirates are masters of the hit and run technique, which they employ to raid victims and flee before reinforcements can arrive. Brigands prefer not to use cannons at close range to avoid sinking their potential prize. Instead, buccaneers fire to disable a ship and to attack the defenders as the muster above deck. Once their enemy is disabled, a pirate ship closes in so that the crew can board the victim vessel. The boatswain of the pirate vessel always leads the attack to coordinate the assault. The pirate crew swarms the defenders with pistols and cutlasses, sometimes even throwing makeshift bombs into the lower decks to wreak further havoc. Quarter is usually given to defenders who surrender, though if the pirate

vessel has raised the red flag they will mercilessly hack down everyone aboard if there is so much as a token of resistance.

The scars of a vicious battle are left on more than mere flesh and often the wounds of a skirmish are imprinted in the ship and the seas themselves. Such lesions last longer than mortal injuries, echoing into the ages. Old salts whisper that ships where sea battles once took place are stained with violence. If that is true, then pirate vessels are soaked in the spectral blood of their victims. Perhaps, with time, a ship so bathed in blood may begin to feed on the spilt life-force. Many would shiver to think what depravity such a cursed vessel would drive its occupants to commit.

The Spoils

Should a pirate crew succeed in their raid, they proceed to loot the spoils of war. Pirate crews are often starved and half dead of thirst, so their first priorities upon seizing a ship are devouring every morsel of food and consuming their fill of fresh water. Canny brigands seize the medicine chests aboard the ship, hopefully obtaining herbs or ointments to relieve any of the plethora of diseases from which they suffer. Others raiders make a beeline for the alcohol that is sure to be aboard any vessel. In their haste to consume spirits, most “knick the bottle”, slicing it open with a blade rather than fumbling with the cork.

Once sated, they begin the sack of the prize. Pirates seize everything that may be of value, including any coin aboard, the ship’s cargo, expensive clothing, jewellery, the personal belongings of the passengers, special tools and equipment, maps, furniture, and any animals aboard. Brigands

always press skilled carpenters, musicians and surgeons into service, as well as any number of seamen needed to replace lost men. In many cases, the victim ship is itself the prize. The pirate crew divides and refits the victim vessel to serve the brigands. The captain and the remaining crew are usually set free in a life boat with provisions and the means of making their way to land.

Most tales suggest that women passengers are taken as captives by buccaneers. In truth, the majority of pirate crews refrain from this despicable practice, if not out of morals then by the expedient that the limited quantity of women aboard a ship inevitably breeds disputes between desirous men.

“Walking the plank” is another popular pirate myth. Only a tiny few of the more fearsome buccaneer captains have ever engaged in this practice. Much more frequent, and by some accounts more horrible, is the practice of marooning victims. After raiding a vessel, the crew is sometimes left abandoned on an island in regularly traveled waters, in the hopes that they will be picked up by a passing vessel. The victim is left on a habitable island with tools necessary for survival. In cases where marooning is used as a punishment, however, the victim is abandoned on a barren, inhospitable rock and left to die of thirst or starvation. Most sailors would confess that while the prospect of drowning terrifies them, they would sooner face a quick death at sea than the slow maddening torment of being marooned.

On the misty seas of the demiplane there are many strange tales of abandonment on islands. A common tale is told of a ship that spotted a fire burning on an island. The crew investigated and rescued a lone, ragged

man who claimed to have been marooned by pirates. The survivor was taken aboard, and though obviously starved, ate sparingly and rarely spoke. When the ship finally returned to port, a crewman came to the survivor's bunk to wake him. There in the hammock he found the bleached bones of a skeleton.

Buried Treasure

Common mythology holds that pirates horde their stolen booty in buried caches. Tales told around the fireplace abound with chests of gold buried in the sandy beaches of deserted islands, or mounds of coins hidden within trap filled vaults carved into sea caves. Though colourful, these tales are mostly fictitious, inspired by a rare few cases. Indeed, the life of a pirate is far too short and dangerous to squander with miserly thrift. The vast majority of brigands consume their booty as quickly as they plunder; fencing stolen goods and fritting gold away on vice, indulging themselves with every moment of their painfully short lives.

Even still, within such an eclectic people as pirates there are countless exceptions to the norm. There are many reasons for a pirate crew to store their treasures for latter use. The most common reason for hoarding treasure is necessity. Pirates require a market for their plunder and merchants to accept their gold, though as outlaws they are often denied a safe harbour in which to exchange goods. Rather than load down their holds with booty, a crew might build a hidden base in which to horde their wealth. They then wait, for years if necessary, until lawful authorities are otherwise occupied and the ill-gotten goods can be divided.

On more than one occasion privateer captains have hidden their

booty to be used as a bargaining tool should their patron decide to try them for piracy. The trinkets taken from prizes may then be used to bribe officials, buy pardons, or even be returned to their rightful owners in exchange for a reduced sentence.

Whatever its origin, buried pirate treasure is rarely the windfall that popular tales describe. Often the treasure comprises of useful, non-perishable trade goods such as spices, silks or furniture. Gold and coins being easily traded are almost never buried. Gems and jewellery are the most valuable prize to be found amongst pirate treasure. From time to time, a pirate crew may come upon an object of particular significance. Though ignorant of such a relic's purpose, a canny pirate may secure such an item in the horde. In the past many a mysterious organization has sought adventurers to find a pirate horde and retrieve a lost artefact.

In the rare instances that a haul is comprised of particularly valuable goods, such as coins or jewels, it is often buried with protective traps to eliminate potential thieves. Often these traps are spread out in a number of locations, to distract searchers from the true location of the booty. Traps are designed to be disarmed only by the pirate captain or quartermaster, thus forcing the crew to wait for their leaders to divide the goods. In some cases the crew must wait longer still, for if tragedy strikes and the captain and quartermaster are slain, the crew must find other means of obtaining their loot.

Tales are told around the dockside of grave robbers who seek the bodies of famous pirates. Grisly rumours suggest that the knowledge contained within their brains can be extracted by arcane

rites. Unscrupulous treasure seekers might employ such means to discern the location of a pirate cache as well as the means of safely looting it. Such adventurers would be wise to cover their trails, for the former comrades of such fallen pirates may follow after for revenge, or for their own share in the lost treasure.

Treasure Maps: As a whole, pirates are an untrusting group, so it is rare that a pirate crew would leave their treasure in the hands of their colleagues. Instead, pirate treasure is often cleverly hidden in a remote location known only to the crew. Rather than risk the location of their treasure falling into the wrong hands, most pirate crews commit the location to memory and destroy any clues to the location of the booty. The myth of a map to pirate treasure is almost completely fictitious, for foolish would be the pirate crew that allowed a member to pass on the location of their goods.

More than a few foolhardy adventurers have followed maps to buried treasure, never to be seen or heard of again. Some say that fake maps are made and distributed by malignant forces, hoping to lure the foolish and greedy to a grim fate.

The End

The life of a pirate is filled with excitement and adventure but all good things invariably come to an end. The population of seagoing bandits is always in flux as battle, disease and storms whittle down their numbers. Sanitation amongst pirates is often very poor and in their travels to so many exotic lands they encounter countless alien illnesses to which they have no immunity. It is a grim irony that while the pirates may

carry away gold and booty from a raid, they inevitably carry away new diseases which may very well take their lives.

A few brigands live long enough and save enough to retire. Successful pirate crews may decide to turn legitimate after a particularly good haul, and there are no shortage of islands that would welcome the gold and goods that such crews would bring. Many nautical kingdoms offer pardons to pirates in the hopes of building up their naval forces and filling their coffers with taxable pirate gold.

More than a few respected gentleman farmers have made their fortunes as pirates on the misty seas. Those men who escape the pirate life are often haunted by their violent past, perhaps even literally. The fortunes they have amassed are stained with spectral blood, infecting the lands they tend and the homes they have built. A retired buccaneer is ever fearful of the night that those he slew will rise and take back what was stolen from them.

No matter how courageous a buccaneer may be, there is one fate that constantly weights upon his mind; the hangman's noose. The civilized kingdoms of the seas do not gladly suffer pirates to live and universally seek the destruction of brigand vessels. Upon capture a pirate can expect a quick trial followed by a long drop and a sudden stop.

Those who have been forced to labour aboard a pirate ship can expect little better, though with a letter written by the quartermaster a pressed seaman might expect a reduced sentence, perhaps even release. Legend holds that should a man who was forced into the service of pirates be hung unjustly, he will rise up to slay those who took his

life. Through the years there have been a handful of reports of judges, barristers or jurors who were found throttled not long after a dubious hanging. Civilized city folk scoff such superstition; though in the small costal towns and villages, where memories are not so short, magistrates execute pirates with the greatest of caution.

The hanging of a pirate is a great public spectacle, attended by spectators from miles around. The executions are carried out in batches, with each prisoner given time to make a final confession before hanging. Buccaneers are expected to make long, blustery speeches decrying the law and rarely are the crowds disappointed. After death, pirates are taken to the sea where tradition dictates that the bodies be left to be washed by the tide three times before burial. Nautical superstition holds that unless the sea is allowed to rinse a pirate's body, he might rise up again as a spirit to take revenge upon his killers.

The bodies of particularly important pirates are embalmed, washed with tar and bound with iron bands. They are then hung from a gibbet on a hill, costal cliff or some other visible location. Nearly every port hangs a collection of such bodies as an example to all who would dare turn pirate.

Though intended as a preventative measure, such displays of bodies could feasibly lead to greater terror. The embalmed bodies of the condemned are preserved in a manner not unlike those used by ancient civilizations to protect their dead. Woe to the costal town that wakes one morning to find the iron bands of a gibbet bent and broken from the inside and the familiar corpse of a villain mysteriously absent.

The Arden Bay Cutters

The Arden Bay Cutters are a typical pirate band. Though they take their name from the Mordentish port, they are a collection of rogues and scallywags from all corners of the Core. Banding together by a mutual lust of gold, these pirates have squeezed aboard a leaky sloop, the Bilge rat, and ran amok across the misty waves.

This flea-bitten rabble has drifted aimlessly for years, wandering the mistways for prey. Perpetually starved, diseased and dying of thirst, the Cutters are a crew of desperate, dangerous men. In battle the Cutters fly a pennant of a grinning skull above two crossed sabres.

Captain Teneal: CR 8; Expert 5, Fighter 4; Medium human; HD 4D10 + 5D6 +18; hp 58; Init +2; Spd 30ft; AC 14 touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 armour); Atk +10/+4 melee (sabre, 1d8+3, 19-20/*2), +8 ranged (pistol, 1D10, *3, 50 ft.); SA ; SQ ; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: balance +10, climb +11, diplomacy +10, intimidate +14, profession (sailor) +10, sense motive +10, spot +10, survival +10, swim +11, use rope +6; back to the wall, courage, dodge, exotic weapon proficiency: firearms, mobility, endurance, jaded, spring attack.

Oi' Haggerty, Quarter Master : CR 6; Expert 6, Rogue 3; Medium human; HD 9D6+18; hp 50; Init +2; Spd 30ft; AC 14 touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 armour); Atk +7/+2 melee (dagger, 1d4+1, 19-20/*2), +8 ranged (pistol, 1D10, *3, 50 ft.); SA sneak attack +2D6; SQ evasion, trap finding, trap sense +1; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +10;

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Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: appraise +11, balance +11, bluff +7, climb +4, diplomacy +9, gather information +5, hide +5, intimidate +9, knowledge (nature) +7, knowledge (local) +6, move silently +5, profession (sailor) +13, search +6, sense motive +15, spot +12, survival +12, swim +10, use rope +11; courage, jaded, iron will, negotiator, persuasive

Grizzly, Boatswain: CR 5; Barbarian 4, Fighter 1; Medium caliban; HD 4D12 + 1D10 + 10; hp 42; Init +3; Spd 40ft; AC 15 touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 armour); Atk +9 melee (great axe, 1d12+4, *3); SA rage 2 per day; SQ fast movement, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; SW illiteracy; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 9.

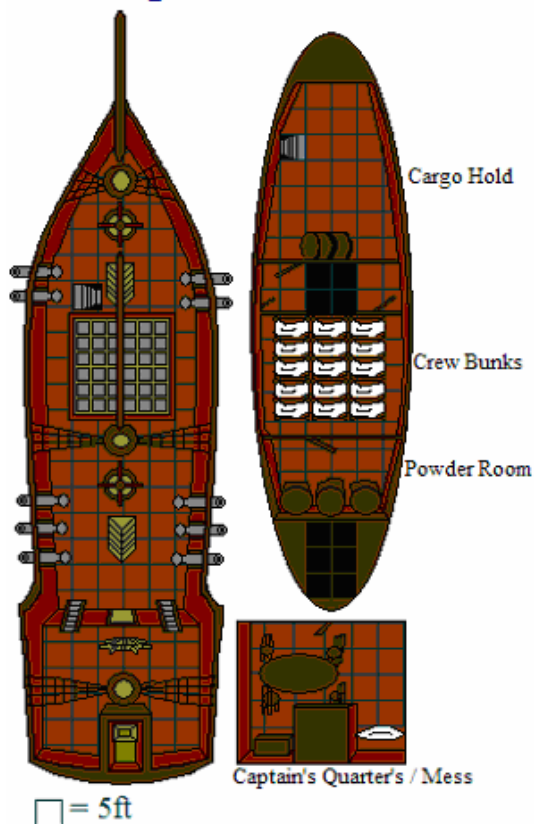
Skills and Feats: balance +8, climb +9, intimidate +6, profession (sailor) +2, spot +2, survival +8, swim +9; back to the wall, diehard, endurance, jaded.

Typical Buccaneer (30): CR 2; expert 1, fighter 1; Medium human; HD 1D6+ 1D10 +2; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30ft; AC 13 touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2

armour); Atk +2 melee (cutlass, 1d6+1, 19-20/*2); SA ; SQ ; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: balance +6, climb +5, intimidate +4, profession (sailor) +4, survival +4, swim +5, use rope +4; courage, jaded

The Bilge Rat



Children of the Night

Augustin von dem Meer

By Thomas "Malus Black" Rasmussen
malus_black@hotmail.com

The many men so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge –
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

"They're beautiful, aren't they?" Marcus nodded. "I've always loved this. Just sitting here, looking up at the stars above, wondering about my place in this world." Lisa smiled.

"You know, Marcus, it's far too late in the evening to be concerning yourself with such things, don't you? You'll lie up all night if you keep on wondering about such far-fetched matters." Marcus laughed, the cheery sound seeming strangely hollow on the empty ship. All others were asleep by now. In the calm of the night they could hear only the low, steady sound of the waves and the gentle creaking of the masts as they moved slowly in the breeze.

"But you know," said Marcus, "I always did like the moon the best. Never figured out why." He leaned back, hands behind his head, and smiled as he looked up at the softly glowing shape of the crescent moon. Lisa leaned back, sighed, and relaxed, almost to the point of falling asleep, the waves gently rocking the ship.

"Marcus," she said, and looked at him. Or, at least, she would have.

All she saw was the dark deck, the coiled ropes, and the sea, reaching out into the horizon. There was no sign of Marcus. Lisa stood up, surveying the deck, any hint of a smile now gone. "Marcus?" Lisa walked towards the front of the ship. "Marcus, this isn't funny. Stop it!"

Suddenly the silence was broken by the sound of flapping cloth. A dark shape fell from the mast and hit the deck a few feet from her with a wet thud. Lisa screamed in shock and grief, backing away from Marcus' open, lifeless eyes which stared up at her, frozen in shock, dark liquid pooling from his head. Tripping over a coil of ropes, she fell backwards, hitting the deck hard. As Lisa struggled to get to her feet, she caught a glimpse of something, up by the limply hanging sails. High above the lifeless shape of her dearest friend, a dark shape stood, looking down at her with palpable contempt. As suddenly as it appeared, it was gone, leaving Lisa alone with the body of her friend and the sound of the mast creaking in the breeze.

Augustin von dem Meer

CR 6; Medium undead (human)
4th level expert; HD 4d12; hp 45; Init +4 (+4 dex); Spd 30ft; AC 18 (+4 dex, +4 natural); Base attack/Grapple +3/+9, Full Attack +9/+9 melee (1D10+6, slams/claws*); SA Blood

drain,* Dread Gaze (DC 15); SQ Allergen, Anchored, Leaping,* Damage Reduction 10/Gold, Moonlight, Shadow Cloak,* Spider Climb,* Undead Qualities; SV Gold dagger; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 22, Dex 18, Con -, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Hide +13(17**) Intimidate +10, Jump +30, Knowledge (Geography) +13, Knowledge (Nature) +13, Move Silently +15, Profession (Sailor) +7, Tumble +11; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Firearms), Skill Focus: Knowledge (Geography), Skill Focus: Knowledge (Nature)

*Only usable at night

**Only when not moving

Appearance

Augustin plays the role of a gentleman captain very well, having had a long time in which to perfect his act. He dresses in a finely cut, dark blue, silver-lined coat which reaches to his knees above straight, black pants and black, lacquered shoes. He also dons a three-point hat of the same dark blue and silver lining as his coat. He often puts his hat slightly askew, thinking that it makes him look more “dashing”. His dark, silver streaked hair is pulled back in a ponytail, framing a tanned, kind face with small wrinkles and brilliantly blue eyes. Augustin is a charming man; he smiles, laughs, and comes with encouraging words to all he meets, winning their friendship in a matter of minutes. If his victims knew of his true shape, however, they would not be so quick to offer their friendship to the creature.

In the pale light of the moon, his true shape is revealed. The blue color

of his coat fades and darkens, and pieces of loose clothing flap around him in the wind. His dark hair lengthens and becomes a tangled mass of shadow, spreading out behind his head as a dark corona in the wind. Augustin’s skin becomes pale and stretched, and his teeth elongate into half-inch long razors which shine palely in the moonlight. His eyes become dark pits in his face that glow with the dark blue nimbus of the moon reflected from the depths of the sea. The flesh on his fingers retracts, revealing razor-sharp claws. In this shape, the creature haunts the masts and sails of his ship, preying on the unwary men below. None who survive his vicious attacks make any connection with the captain they all know and admire, and the ferocious creature of the night.

Background

Augustin was born in Neufurchtenburg, Lamorida, in the year 702, the only son of a wealthy merchant. The Von dem Meers had made their fortune selling navigational tools and maps to the vessels that docked at Neufurchtenburg. The family business, combined with the impressive collection of sea-charts and nautical artefacts, sparked a great interest of the seas in Augustin’s heart. Even in his childhood he knew that he was destined for a life upon the waves.

In the late days of his schooling, Augustin came under the influence of a radical new theory that flew in the face of accepted doctrine. Rather than adhere to the “clockwork” view so prevalent in his country Augustin claimed that the world upon which they lived was a sphere. For his beliefs he was mocked. Fool, the scientists

called him. If the world was round, they said, how come it looks so flat then? Had it ended here, the tale would have been sad enough in itself. Yet the ambitious scholar, by then only in his late twenties, would not give up.

He secluded himself in the family house, studying weather patterns and complex mathematical theories, all to prove that he was indeed right, and that they, the so-called scholars were wrong. Then, in 750, with the appearance of the Nocturnal Sea, Augustin saw new evidence to support his case. Von dem Meer further reasoned that one could travel from the coast of the Sea of Sorrows, around the world, and after a short while arrive at the coastline of the Nocturnal Sea. Yet after already having spent almost two decades on futile research he realized that his only means of proving his theory was to make the voyage himself. And so, in the year 752, he set sail westwards, his crew lured with promises of glory and fortune if they would aid him. His ship, *The Pathfinder*, made good speed, and within hours they had lost sight of the rugged Lamordian coastline.

For the first few days, the crew were in high spirits, but as the wall of mist loomed up in the horizon, they began to worry. Augustin calmed their fears by displaying his newly acquired, state-of-the art compass as well as explaining his mathematical theories. While completely incomprehensible to the crew, his speech inspired confidence in the seamen. As the wall of white engulfed the ship, Augustin was blissfully ignorant of the peril ahead.

Immediately upon entering the mists the needle of the compass started to skitter and jump, spinning wildly in

circles. Augustin knew that revealing this fact to his crew would be foolish, as their faith in his logic and technology was all that sustained their courage. Even still another danger would soon become all too real. After a week in the mists the stores of food and water were beginning to empty. Frightened, the crew demanded an explanation. Yet, for once, Augustin could not allay their fears. Examining his calculations he realized that the vessel was long overdue to enter the Nocturnal Sea and in his arrogance, he had failed to secure provisions for such a lengthy voyage.

With a rebellion brewing, Augustin attempted to hold the crew together. Encouraged by the ship's most senior sailor, Elias Archer, Augustin's greatest supporter, he explained that they could not go wrong with such equipment. But even as he pleaded the crew would not listen, and one man snatched the compass from him and looked at it. His eyes widened in shock at the sight of the spinning needle, and then narrowed in anger as he glowered at the now terrified Augustin, who was desperately trying to back away from the crew. The mutiny was swift and when Augustin woke up, he found himself locked in a small compartment which had once held salted meat. The days passed, and no-one came to him with food or water. He was left there to die. He clawed at the walls, tormented by the smell of food, and even more by the sight of the empty shelves. Each waking moment was spent trying to pry open the lock, and one night he succeeded.

He stormed out of the room, found his way to an unattended meal, and ate. But while the food sated his

hunger, it did little for his thirst. Finding no water below deck, he ventured above. Feeling the fresh air on his face for the first time in so many days, he looked up at the full moon and realized that the vessel had finally escaped the mists. There on the deck he found a crewmember, asleep, an empty cup at his side. Suddenly the thirst and rage surged back like a vengeful tide. The world faded in a blood-red haze of anger as Augustin lunged at the sleeping shape.

When he finally came to his senses, the first thing he felt was the sensation of something liquid trickling down his throat. The second feeling was his teeth biting into something soft. Backing away in shock and horror from the near-decapitated corpse, he knew what he had done. He had not only killed a fellow human, but also drank its life-blood. Disgusted, he fled back to his prison, making the door appear to be locked. When finally the crew discovered the body of their mate, no one imagined that the captive captain had slain him. Rather, they believed that something horrible had followed them from the mists.

The next night, Augustin ventured out again, sneaking across the ship as silently as a shadow, searching for the barrels of water. He found them, locked behind a sturdy door in his former quarters. The mutineers' leader sat sleeping in his chair, and Augustin remembered how the fool had pried the compass from his hand and crushed his dreams. As the man slept Von dem Meer retrieved from the desk his golden dagger that served as his letter opener. With it he slit the man's throat and greedily drank his lifeblood even as the man gasped for air.

By the next morning, the crew were convinced that something truly terrible was loose on the ship, and they arranged to have men on guard. Augustin rejoiced from the shadows, for they merely made his revenge easier. One by one, he picked the crew to pieces until only one was left, huddling in the middle of the ship on a moonless night. Augustin revelled in his victory but even then, the man reached down to his belt, grasping for a golden dagger he had stolen from the captain's quarters. Surprised by the sudden attack, Augustin did not budge. With a single blow he shattered the man's neck, and the limp shape fell to the deck. Only then did Augustin sense a throbbing pain in his chest, and looked down to find the source. As Augustin looked down at the hilt of the golden dagger protruding from his chest, the blade deep within him, the night began to fade into numbing darkness. As he fell forwards on the deck he vowed that he would not die, that his quest would not go unfulfilled.

When he opened his eyes the next morning, he heard the seagulls circling the ship. He stood up, confused, and looked around. In the distance, he could see a shoreline, and the entrance to Pernault Bay in Dementlieu. Rejoicing, Augustin looked down at his latest victim, grinning, and then stopped, as he found the golden dagger, still lodged in his utterly silent heart.

Current Sketch

After his initial shock and horror, Augustin has grown to enjoy his state. As one of the living dead, he has all the time he needs to search for the passage around the world, which he is still convinced exists. Augustin is

often at sea for months at a time, searching for a path through the mists, probing that impenetrable wall of white. However, his transformation has not been without its disadvantages. Firstly, when exposed to moonlight Augustin's appearance transforms into a hideous visage of undeath, forcing him to stay either inside or in the shadows on almost every night in case someone notices him. Secondly, he thirsts for blood. Von dem Meer quickly realized that he needed fresh blood to exist, but he could not get hold of living plasma easily on the open sea. Augustin devised a solution to his dilemma; if he had lured a crew once, why not do so again?

And so, whenever the Pathfinder sails into a harbour after yet another unsuccessful expedition, Augustin welcomes new members of the crew with open arms, promising them glory and fortune as he has so many times before. Augustin is careful to avoid drawing unwanted attention, as this would quickly create rumours of the doomed ship. He will not return to the same harbour twice for many months. Augustin always keeps a small crew on board his ship, consisting of those who are loyal, most often out of fear, as these seamen know of his true shape. Those who try to flee or warn new crewmembers soon find themselves on the captain's menu.

Combat

Augustin does not enter combat heedlessly, as he is afraid of falling out of or into the moonlight, depending on his current shape. Instead, he sneaks up on his victims, knocking them unconscious and dragging them to a quiet corner where he can feed. Augustin might arrange the death so it

appears to be an accident, or he might drop the body in the sea to hide his crimes. At other times Augustin reveals his feeding and leaves the carcasses in the open to terrify potential hunters.

Blood Drain (Ex): By making a successful grapple check, Augustin can suck blood from his victim. Each round he maintains the hold, he drains 1d4 points of Constitution until he releases the victim or it dies. For each point of constitution he drains, he heals 5 hit points. He may never gain more hit points than his current maximum.

Each week, Augustin must drink enough blood to drain 8 points of Constitution. Since he always feeds aboard his ship, he cannot afford to let anyone survive his attacks, so he always drinks until his victims are dead. If he does not manage to drink enough blood, he begins to starve, and loses 10 permanent hit points each day he does not feed. The hit points are all regained the next time he drinks enough blood to drain at least 4 points of Constitution for each day he has gone without feeding.

Even though he is a blood-drinker, nothing prevents Augustin from eating and drinking normal food and drink, although he gains no nourishment from this. The blood drain ability is only usable at night.

Dread Gaze (Su): As a standard action, Augustin may make a gaze attack against a single creature, overwhelming it with feelings of fear, hatred and pitiless, cruel amusement. The victim must succeed at a Will save (DC 15) or be frightened for 1d4 rounds.

Allergen (Ex): If Augustin ever sees someone spill fresh water or any other drinkable liquid he must succeed

at a Will save (DC 16) or fly into a rage for 1d4 rounds. Enraged, Augustin will strike down the person who spilled the liquid, beating them savagely until he regains his composure.

Anchored (Ex): At no time may Augustin venture more than 40 feet from the Pathfinder. This restriction allows him to go ashore, but if he attempts to move any further from the ship than 40 feet, he is overwhelmed by a desire to return to his ship. If his ship is ever destroyed, Augustin will sink with it. Waves of fog will wash over the location of the wreck and the ship will reappear in 1d6 days, with Augustin standing on the deck as if nothing has happened.

Leaping (Ex): Augustin often hunts from above, leaping between the masts as if flying. He has an innate +30 bonus to jump checks. This ability is only usable at night.

Damage Reduction 10/Gold (Su): Augustin shrugs off the first 10 points of damage from any successful attack, unless the weapon used is made of gold. Only weapons made of pure gold will bypass his damage reduction.

Moonlight (Su): If Augustin is ever struck by moonlight he will assume his true shape, as described under appearance above. This only applies to the parts struck by the moonlight, and it is very possible that he may be only partially revealed. In this case, it will be obvious to any who see him that he is not human. Augustin also benefits from Fast Healing when exposed to the direct light of the moon.

The rate of healing depends on the current phase of the moon, as shown here:

Phase	Fast Healing
New	0
First Quarter	3
Half	6
Last Quarter	9
Full	12

Shadow Cloak (Su): As long as there are shadows large enough to conceal him, Augustin may hide, even in plain sight. He cannot, however, move, and must stay absolutely still if he wishes to conceal himself in this way. This ability is usable only at night.

Spider Climb (Ex): This ability allows Augustin to climb walls and ceilings as if he was under the effect of the spider climb spell. This ability is only usable at night.

Undead Qualities (Ex): Augustin is immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. He is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain or death from massive damage. He is also immune to effects requiring a Fortitude save, unless such effects can also affect objects.

Vulnerability (Su): The weapon that was originally used to kill him, the golden dagger now lying on a shelf in his quarters, will do triple damage to him if used to attack him.

The Ship and Crew

The Pathfinder is a 150-foot long ship with three masts. The ship is made out of black-painted oak, contrasted by the pure white sails. The ship itself is kept in excellent repair, but has an ancient feel about it. While witnesses cannot explain their impression, they describe a palpable “wrongness” to the

vessel. The DM may use the deck plans for the adventure Ship of Horrors, or make her own. The ship is always near-empty when it sails into a harbour, with only four or five crewmembers are on board. Of particular note is one man:

Elias Archer

Elias (Human male Rog2, LN) is indeed the same Elias who supported Augustin during the mutiny long years ago. Like Augustin, Elias was locked in a compartment, but he was not treated as harshly as his captain and was given small portions of food and water each day. Still, it was far from enough and Elias has a permanent look of illness upon him. He is nearing sixty now, and is small, skinny and constantly skittish, constantly stealing small glances at his surroundings. Nonetheless, he is the one person who does not obey Augustin out of fear, but out of a desire for vengeance. Indeed, the first thought that struck him when Augustin opened the door to his compartment was to strike back at this foolish scholar who had doomed them all. When he realized that Augustin was no longer the mortal he had once been, Archer decided to bide his time.

To this date, he has seen Augustin's powers in action, and knows that in order to kill him he must find a weakness. He has still not found it and knows that his time is running out. In the meantime, he tries to warn away sailors from joining the crew. If, however, he sees someone he believes have the capabilities to take Augustin down, he is more than friendly to them; at times telling stories much like Augustin's to tip them off. He has done this twice, and both times, the potential saviours have met a grisly end. Still, he keeps hoping.

Adventure Hooks

Augustin and his ship can appear in any port along the Sea of Sorrows, and will always be looking for crew, or even just passengers. He will later mysteriously drift off the course into the Mists and begin feeding. Alternately, the PCs may also be awaiting a friend of theirs who sent a letter telling of his imminent journey on the Pathfinder. They may become suspicious when the ship never arrives and will investigate when they hear of its arrival at another port.

Aquatic Horrors

An Illustrated Discourse

By Stanton Fink

apokrylfaros@earthlink.net



"What's this snaggle-toothed monstrosity?"

"Lamordian sailors call it the 'Alptraumrahmen,' or, 'Nightmare Cage.'"

"They don't eat them do they? I've tried that kohlfischwurst they make in Ludendorf... I was afraid I'd never stop retching."

"Nonsense. No Lamordian would sooner eat these horrors than they would kiss a coal toad."

"What does this darling do, then?"

"The Lamordians believe that the Alptraumrahmen emits a colorless light that can't be seen to drive its victims insane."

"Odd. Perhaps it hopes

to chase people into the sea because of this? And how does one notice this "colorless" light that can't be seen?"

"The sailors claim that a Nightmare Cage is near when candles dim for no reason, and all is swathed in a dark blue glow."

"How interesting... Hmmmm..."

"What is it?"

"No wonder they threw that sailor overboard on my trip to Ludendorf."

"Why?"

"There was a man running around on the deck, screaming 'Ich bin durch den Alptraumrahmen ergriffen worden!'"

"Ah."

Quoth the Raven: Issue 9

In Rokushima Taiyoo, it is said that the spirits of the drowned return to the surface of the Ookfi Kagamiko at night, and use the Tenguzame to wreak vengeance on the living.

The Tenguzame is an appalling creature which prowls the surface of the Great Mirror Lake. Those who are foolish enough to sail their boats at night risk attracting these beasts' attentions. Such victims are easily identified by the gaping holes in their flesh where the Tenguzame had sucked out their innards.

According to legend, these spirit-terrors can not abide the odour of burning myrrh, and will not approach those who smell of it. In the spring, the Rokuman peasants cast offerings of red bean paste in the hopes of placating the spirit masters of the Tenguzame.



Quoth the Raven: Issue 9



One of the ghost sharks said to prowl the depths of the Sea of Sorrows. Legends abound about the origins of these undead horrors. Some say that they are the spirits of the victims of pirates searching for their tormentors. Others claim that they are the spirits of pirates themselves, and they linger on, hoping to claim the bodies and souls of those who would steal their treasures. A few even believe that they are the actual ghosts of sharks, summoned through fell sorceries.

Sea Shanties

An Original Story

By David Gibson

jester_canuk@hotmail.com

The salt coated everything it touched like a thin second skin, a crystal shell clinging firmly to wood and canvas and metal. Sea spray and foam broke harshly across the bow of the boat as it bounced roughly against the waves. The planks creaked under the repetitive strain, groaning and moaning mournfully. The tightly knotted ropes swayed back and forth like twined metronomes timed to the rise and fall of the boat. He sat at the bow looking forward towards the setting sun, the final rays painting the horizon a dull red and highlighting the growing mists a faint crimson. He licked the spray from his lips and let the taste linger on his tongue.

“Be careful not to fall in there.”

He jerked up abruptly and turned his head to face the voice. “Pardon?”

“If ya fall in don’t expect us to turn around and pick you up.”

The speaker strolled over gracefully, obviously to the rising and falling of the deck, walking as if on the firmest, most solid dry land. He leaned on the railing and patted the side of the hull as one would a faithful and long-time pet.

“I said ye better not fall in. You’re payin’ me good money to get you to the shore but I’m not about to risk my crew fishing your carcass from the waves.” Giving the passenger a wink the speaker licked his lips and continued. “You’re obviously not from around here. Not dressed like that anyway, but you speak Vaasi like a native. I think, however, that your accent sounds a bit Mordentish. If ya don’t mind my askin’.”

“I’m from all over,” he said evasively, offering a quiet grin in place of an explanation. “I did not hear ye coming, Captain Rum.”

The sailor smirked to himself and tugged on his rough red beard. “No, I imagine ya were a bit distracted. Sunsets are a definite perk of trip. Red skies at night and all that.”

“Actually I was looking at the water. I thought I saw someone in there for a moment.”

The captain shrugged. “Mebbe it was the figurehead reflecting in the water like.”

The traveler looked over at the captain of the vessel. He smiled at the bearded sailor. “No, this was different.”

“And how exactly do ya figure that?”

“The figurehead is female. I saw a man.”

The captain scratched his face methodically. He carried the expression of a man debating something internally. After an eternity of seconds he spoke. “Ah, I see. So ya saw one of them.”

“Them?”

“Aww, ya don’t want to hear about them.” The captain rose and stretched slowly. “Just a myth, a legend. Nothing ya would be interested in.”

The passenger smiled. Or rather his already present smile spread, stretching out farther across the face. “Oh, believe me, I am interested. In all things. Myths and legends especially. Ye might say they’re me stock and trade.”

The captain glanced over the edge cautiously, as if the flickering reflection of himself in the sea foam could reach up and assault him. “All right, but not right here. Closer to the masts.”

The pair rose and walked farther up the deck away from the forecandle. The boat rose abruptly and the passenger stumbled forward sliding on the wetted planks. Captain Rum grinned to himself and chuckled silently. “Carefully there.”

“Yeah.” The Traveler’s smile flickered, but only for a moment.

The captain rested his hand against the mainmast. “I didn’t think we’d see any of them on this trip; they aren’t normally seen this far to the North, otherwise I would have kept you in the hold. They are not things I wish to anger.”

The Traveler grinned again and pulled out a thin clay pipe from his jacket. “And what exactly are they? Don’t hold back on me, I’ve heard it all,” he said, tapping some tobacco into the bowl.

“It’s the elves.”

The Traveler lit his pipe then shook out the match. “Elves?” he said, exhaling a small puff of smoke.

“Elves. Of the sea. We grow close to their land. Or rather, close to their territory. And they protect it much. Very territorial and temperamental to intruders, especially those who make a mess.”

The Traveler nodded, gesturing for the captain to continue.

“They don’t like it when people sail through their waters. They take exception to them, especially if they do something as rude as disposing of waste or refuse over the side. Or if the trespassers take too many fish from the waters. They do not like that.”

The Traveler nodded. He looked at the burnt stub of the match in his hand and pocketed it carefully. “Yes, I’ve heard of sea elves but I have not heard much of them.”

Captain Rum chuckled to himself and scratched his large nose in a dedicated manner. “But ya thought they were just a legend old sea dogs like meself told in smoke-filled taverns late at night, didn’t ya?”

The Traveler smiled knowingly. “No, I know better than to believe every old legend is nothing but a story. Far better.” He took another breath from his pipe, let the smoke float around his mouth for a moment before exhaling in a single large puff. “And I’ve been in me share of smoke-filled taverns contributing me own tales. If ye get my meaning.”

The Captain nodded and pulled out a small waterproof pouch of his own filled with chewing tobacco. He stuffed a small pinch into the hole in he beard and chewed thoughtfully. “So now ya know. I’d keep away from the edges of the boat, lest they get curious of you. Or decide that yer a trespasser.”

“And what do they do to trespassers?”

Captain Rum frowned for a second. “Now that is less of a nice tale. Not sure a young gent such as yerself would find it appealing.”

The Traveler shrugged. “As I said, I’m a collector and trader of tales and information. Ye would not want to deprive me of me livelihood, would you?”

The Captain sighed. “No. I would no like to do that.” He paced back and forth for a few seconds in deep thought. Then he stopped and rested his arm against the thick rough wood of the mast. Callused hands gripped the roughly carved shaft, immune to all manner of splinters and scratches. “They do not like trespassers, but they are tolerant of the ignorant. They just play pranks on them. Small things like covering the deck in rotting fish or untying knots. They’ve been know to deface figureheads or bind dead animals to the sides of ships so the vessel is besieged by birds and trailing fish.”

“That does nae sound so too bad.” The Traveler said tapping out his pipe on the heel of his boot. “I was expecting worse. Other fey I’ve heard of have been known much more... temperamental. Heard of one around Graben Island that sings sailors to their doom on the rocks. And another that spreads an infection through Falkovnia and kills men with a look.”

The Captain shook his head. “No, that is simply the least they do. A far worse fate awaits those that displease them. One that befalls those that repeatedly trespasses or befouls their lands. Once, when I was but a cabin boy we passed a ship that had crossed ill fortune with the sea fey. Every man aboard had vanished in the night, save one. The lone figure in the crow’s nest acting as look-out. The rest had been sleeping soundly. When the sun rose he was alone and everyone else had vanished without a trace. Save the tracks of water below deck, like footprints.”

“My brother was on a ship that was raiding and attacked a few ships near the elf-lands.” Came a rough voice with a distinct lisp. The Traveler turned to the speaker and found one of the mates had joined them. Several other sailors had ceased their activity and begun to walk over to the growing group. “The fey don’t like people who sink ships on their heads and dump bodies overboard with weights attached. Two days later the crew awoke and found almost all of their fresh water had been taken.”

The Traveler nodded. “Yes, I can see that being a problem. Were they far from shore?”

“No, a few days if the wind was favourable. And it was not. They were stranded with empty sails and miles from land. I’m sure the elves did something to halt the wind, used some dark magics, for revenge’s sake.” The sailor walked closer to the Traveler and leaned forward, their faces were scant inches apart. “Let me tell you, the worst part was not the water that was taken though, it was the water that was left. Plenty enough for a man or two to survive on. But not enough for the lot. They fought over what was left, drew swords on their companions. The survivors took the water. But by then there was not enough arms to man the ship. By the time it drifted into shore there were no survivors.”

The ship trembled slightly as a large wave struck the bow. Water lapped up across the deck slowly flowing back and forth as the boat rocked.

“Aye.” Captain Rum nodded. “Mate Baker is fond of that yarn, but let me tell you, each word of that is the honest truth. Ya see, the elfin folk talk a liking to some people. Those with respect who pay homage. And if someone does wrong by them the fey are like to take revenge. Not as someone takes vengeance over a friend done wrong, but as someone repays cruelty done to a dog. We are not men to them but animals to be rewarded or disciplined as they see fit.”

The Captain rose after this was walked over sterncastle and checked the compass there. He whispered something to the helmsman who nodded and adjusted the course.

The captain hopped over the railing then and vanished into the lower decks. A rough hand laid itself on the Traveler's shoulder; he turned and found a toothless crewmember smirking at him. One of the nameless grunts that kept the ship afloat though back breaking labour.

"I've seen them too, the fish elveses." He spoke with a raspy voice that had inhaled too much saltwater and harsh wind. "They look after their fishes like they look after those who pay them respect. You never kill any large fishes in their land. Small ones, ones for food, them you can kill and eat. But the big ones, dolphins and porpoises, kill them and you anger the elveses. My cousin Elton served with a man that speared a dolphin one day. Didn't kill it right away, just winged it, but they left it to bleed to death in the salt water. He vanished soon after that, figured they just took him. When they pulled up to dock they finally found him. He'd been tied to the rudder and left there for days. Not a pretty sight he was. Lived though, shame that."

The Traveler shuddered a bit at that. He tuned and found himself surrounded by sailors in all directions. All were looking directly at him.

"They also know when you're talkin' about 'em." One of the mates spoke. "Bad luck to talk about 'em. They might take offence, think you're disrespecting them. That you're spreadin' lies about them or something of the sort. Bad that."

"Nae, we can't have that."

There was a murmuring of agreement from all sides. The sailors formed a tight ring around the Traveler. He looked around for a break in the group but found none. Slowly the group closed in around him.

There was an abrupt crack that shook the air and made the deck quiver in fright. Captain Rum twisted the cat-of-nine-tails in his rough grip and eyed down the sailors. He strode up from below the deck. Tucked beneath one arm was a small item no larger than a shoe but wrapped in a thick brown canvas.

"Now don't ya think about what ya'll are thinking about." The Captain growled as he strode forward. The circle separated and dispersed through the force of his will. "There will be none of that here, not on my ship. We promised this gent safe passage and that is what he gets. We won't be breaking none of our promises, not here."

The captain walked up beside the Traveler and gestured at the stairs. "It might be best if you spend the next bit of the trip in your cabin. It's getting late."

The Traveler nodded and headed below deck. He took one last look at the captain as he was walking down the stairs. The sailor had unwrapped the canvas revealing the item for a second. It glimmered in the fading sunlight, smooth black stone with eyes twinkling a deeper crimson that he would have thought possible. Small but still valuable. It fell from the captain's hands and tumbled beneath the waves, sinking into the black depths. The Traveler watched the crew relax at the sight and return to their posts. Night was coming, homage had been paid and there was a ship to be run.

Deep Kin

Humanoid Horrors from the Depths

By Uri "Shadowking" Barak
uzibarak@zahav.nef.il

*Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.*

*The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.*

*About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.*

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge- The Rime of
the Ancient Mariner**

This article introduces notes on the origins, personality, lifestyle and culture of the three aquatic, evil fish-like races of Ravenloft- warrior Sahuagin, cunning Kuo-Toa and savage Reavers. It is a companion to Terrors from the Deep.

Deepkin is a collective name for all manner of evil, fish-like humanoids. 3 major Deepkin races exist in the Demiplane of Dread- the war-like Sahuagin, the cunning Kuo-Toa and the savage Reavers.

While Sahuagin and Kuo-Toa are known to exist on other worlds beyond the Mists, the Reavers as a species are unique to the Demiplane of Dread. Even the Sahuagin and Kuo-Toa of Ravenloft are somewhat different than their cousins in other worlds. This article explores the origins, personality,

lifestyle and society of the Deepkin races, and their interactions with each other and the world of Humanity.

Deepkin of Ravenloft- Index

- * Deep Ones- Kuo Toa
- * Predators- Reavers
- * Sea Devils- Sahuagin
- * Religions of the Deepkin
- * Deepkin Half-breeds
- * Terror Tracks

Kuo-Toa

Kuo-Toa are generally humanoid in form and have the strange features of something fish-like, but ugly, unwholesome and out of this world. They are covered in a thin layer of reeking slime.

Origins: The Kuo-Toa came with the Shay-Lot from the abyss Beyond the Stars, and thus are related to humans or fish only in vague form.

In the time of the Ancients they were they most favoured slaves, holding a position of power above all the other slave-races (such as the Sahuagin). When the Shay-Lot dominion collapsed most Kuo-Toa have died with their masters and the remainder were forced into hiding, delving into the murky depths of the ocean and the lightless seas under the Core. The race's Ancients forever remind young Kuo-Toa of the glorious past and how they were so

wrongly deprived of what was theirs by right- and how they should constantly strive to reclaim it.

Through cunning and the corruption of humans into the degenerate cults of the Shay-Lot, they seek to re-enact their masters' dominion and thus regain own power and prestige.

Personality: Kuo-Toa are cunning and ruthless beings, who value knowledge and power above all else. They seek vengeance for the wrongs done to them and constantly plot the resurrection of their sleeping masters. Kuo-Toa view humans as rivals, and seek to corrupt and distort them into Kuo-Toa through blasphemous rites. Kuo-Toa are irreligious, although they admire their former Shay-Lot masters and seek to return the old days of their glory. Still, they often run blasphemous false cults to recruit and corrupt humans to their cause. A few Kuo Toa settlements have turned away from the Shay-Lot, and worship fiendish entities such as Demogorgon- such beings are reviled as traitors by the rest of the race.

Kuo-Toa speak their own language, composed of gurgles, hisses and words which sound like slithering shadow and dripping slime.

Kuo-Toa are effectively immortal, and thus plan with the long term in mind. Unlike Sahuagin, they have no qualms about associating with humans, and often serve as information brokers, trading the secrets they've learnt during their long lives and slowly building the path to the accomplishment of their plans. Kuo-Toa walk amongst mankind's settlements in disguise and they live far closer to major human towns than either Reavers or Sahuagin)

or act through their half-breed spawn. They are selfish, vengeful and extremely subtle and patient- a deadly combination indeed.

Society and Lifestyle: Kuo-Toa society is rather small compared to the Sahuagin, and far less organized. However, they are no less a threat, since their strength comes from their cunning and plotting instead of actual physical might. Information and secrets are to them what gold is to humans. While the Kuo-Toa often squabble amongst themselves and each of them strives for his own self-gratification, they share two common goals; to perpetuate their race to resurrect the Shay-Lot. These goals cause them to band together and live in settlements in the chthonian depths of the ocean and especially near the underground seas. These settlements often include dry areas to enable human cultists to live with them until they shed off their mortality.

The three most important areas in a Kuo-Toa settlement are the Spawning Pools where the race's tadpoles are grown (and are occasionally nurtured with humanoid blood), the House of Lore which contains a library of stone tablets (since paper tends to corrode in water) and the Temple where human cultists are initiated into the perverse rites of the Shay-Lot. Each settlement has a token guard force but most Kuo-Toa are not warriors but cunning manipulators.

Kuo-Toa society is ruled by an elder caste called the Ancient Ones, those learned in the ways of the Shay-Lot. These sages (all of which are Wizards/Loremasters) ascend to their current position through knowledge and

cunning; they hold significant Arcane power and know enough dark and painful secrets to keep the other Kuo-Toa from betraying them. Some Ancient Ones are so old and powerful that they do not even possess the physical forms of present Kuo-Toa, instead appearing as massive barely-humanoid monstrosities. They heed the faint yet constant calling of their own masters, who lurk under the ocean dead but dreaming. The Ancient Ones lead the Kuo-Toa settlements in their common goals, and in addition, educate the race's young and serve as High Priests for the Cult of the Murky Depths. There is constant power struggle between individual Ancient Ones but they are aware they cannot afford an all-out civil war and thus the conflicts are most often decided by careful blackmail. Only a true Kuo-Toa may see the face of an Ancient One and live; cultists are killed on the spot as they are not yet "holy" enough.

Kuo-Toa evolve from tadpoles placed in vast Spawning Pools. However since the fall of the Shay-Lot empire the Kuo-Toa race is slowly dying out. Only one out of eight tadpoles reach maturity, perhaps due to their alien nature which is so opposed to the demiplane. To ensure the race's survival, the Kuo-Toa have focused their efforts on artificially creating new Kuo-Toa by corrupting humans into the Cult of the Murky Depths - a degenerate religion which reveres the Shay-Lot as gods. As the Kuo-Toa are near-immortal, mortals who desire to live beyond their years make obvious candidates for the Cult. The promise of ancient riches and secrets are other lures.

By engaging in vile rites and learning secrets man was not meant to know, human cultists gradually shed their forms and become true Kuo-Toa.

Fledgling Cult members whose form is not yet monstrous and half-breed Kuo-Toa who appear human serve as sleeper agents, corruptors and information gatherers in human society.

The Kuo-Toa's main goal which unifies the otherwise-treacherous race is finding the lost cities of the Shay-Lot and returning their old masters to power. The Ancient Ones cross and weave the secrets collected by individual Kuo-Toa and cultists into one massive web, which lead into the fulfillment of their nefarious goal. Of all the Deepkin races, they pose the greatest threat to mankind, because once the Shay-Lot awaken the old order will cease to exist...

Note: Kuo-Toa gain the Extraplanar subtype in Ravenloft. Their favoured class is Wizard.

Reavers

Reavers are even more hulking the Sahuagin and have sharp scales covering their bodies which do not remind of any particular predatory fish. Reaver population is concentrated mostly in the Sea of Sorrows since the rise of the organized Sahuagin pushed them out of the Nocturnal Sea.

Reavers lack the cunning of the Kuo-Toa or the discipline of the Sahuagin, being nothing more than brutal, sadistic savages. However, encountering a Reaver school can be sometimes more terrifying than even the well-oiled war machine of the Sahuagin and the cunning web of the Kuo-Toa, for these creatures are wholly savage, wicked and merciless.

Origins: As the most commonly encountered Deepkin race, the Reavers have several legends tied to their origins. Some say they are the male children of

Sirens corrupted by the Mists, whose appearance accurately reflects their inner ugliness (unlike their beautiful but cruel mothers). Others say they are former pirates, transformed into monsters by the Dark Powers as a punishment for their brutal deeds. Still others (those versed in the lore of the Old Ones) insist that the Reavers were created by the ancient Shay-Lot. A failed prototype for what became the Sahuagin, they were spawned by magically mixing humans with the essence of predatory fish.

However, due to the Reavers' lack of intellect and discipline, they were soon abandoned to their own fates and unsurprisingly managed to survive, even developing their own crude society, living as perverted mockeries of the humans they once were.

Personality: Reavers are savage and bestial, combining animal lust and ferocity with the wickedness within the heart of Man. While more physically powerful than either Kuo-Toa or Sahuagin, their animalistic and highly chaotic nature prevents them from becoming more than a local threat. They are slaves to desire and act upon whim, lusting to devour the flesh of humans. They also like to see others suffer and admire sparkling jewellery and gold, although they are too stupid to recognize its actual value. They are so crude they never use weapons, preferring to rend and tear with their vicious scales, claws and bite like frenzied sharks. Few Reavers have the intelligence or patience to set up a long term plan, and even those who do often abandon it once desire takes over them. Brute physical strength is the tool a Reaver uses to fulfill its desires; a Reaver always solves a problem by its claws and jaws. They

have no honour and no pity, and are vicious and relentless in their attacks.

Society: Reavers live in wandering packs known as "schools", constantly moving in search of prey. Reaver packs rarely last for long, collapsing quickly to in-fighting. Their society lacks any order, established settlements or lasting leaders, and Reaver leaders rarely remain in power for more than a few months. Reaver schools are rather small, and conflict between themselves and one another prevent them from becoming more than a local threat. Individual Reavers schools still pose a threat to lone ships and small coastal towns, suddenly swarming from all sides and attacking without mercy, retreating should their losses mount.

Reavers only respect physical strength, and a Reaver leader constantly must prove his power by battling challengers for his rank. A Reaver leader is usually recognized by sheer size and muscle mass, a large amount of battle scars and the jewellery he wears as a sign of status. Rarely a former human Reaver manages to create himself a sizable school, but such leaders are most often thwarted by stronger, less insightful rivals before they can fulfill their plans.

These piscine fiends are so treacherous they might even turn on another in the middle of battle to settle an old debt. The discipline and experience of the Sahuagin Warriors and the cunning and Arcane might of the Kuo-Toa keep the Reavers from seriously harming the other two Deepkin races.

Reaver youngsters are spawned by their mothers aware and bloodthirsty, and grow rather quickly to full size (10 years), in the mean time squabbling

before the older Reavers before they can challenge them. Reavers rarely die of old age, as the young often devour the old who grow weaker (the maximum Reaver age is 200 years). A Reaver who becomes old, is wounded too severely or otherwise shows weakness is cornered and devoured by the other members of the school.

Reavers are rarely religious, although occasionally a shaman revering some abominable deity of the depths arises to lead a school. Reavers have a bestial and very primitive language composed of gurgles, hisses and ultrasonic projections which only other Reavers can sense. Only Reavers with an Intelligence score above 8 may advance in a character class (Favoured Class: Barbarian). Other Reavers can only gain Monstrous Humanoid HD, up to a maximum of 12. Reavers with 9 or more HD are Large.

Sahuagin

Sahuagin appear as powerful and muscular shark-like humanoids with massive snouts and back fins. Their skins are often blue, white or grey. Sahuagin males are slightly larger and stronger than the females.

Origins: Unsurprisingly, Sahuagin (or sea-devils) are not a natural race, created by the now-extinct Shay-Lot in ancient times by magically crossing humans with the essence of sharks to form a race of powerful warrior-slaves. Despite their bloodlust, the Sahuagin were intelligent and well-disciplined, making efficient soldiers for their masters.

With the collapse of their masters' empire the Sahuagin escaped and

followed their own destiny, coming into the worship of a diabolical shark-god they call the Great Devourer and seeing themselves as its chosen children, destined to conquer the seas and flood the surface, forgetting and denying their past as slaves.

Personality: The Sahuagin are highly disciplined, militant and proud. They use a façade of honour to commit atrocities, but the only things they truly respect are strength, courage and cunning. Of other Sahuagin that is, for all other life forms are inferior, rivals or prey to be devoured. Humans in particular are viewed as weak and inferior beings only fit to serve as slaves, food or to die at the gladiatorial arena to entertain the Sahuagin. Females are weaker than males but a Sahuagin female can still prove her worth by becoming a Bride of the Devourer and embracing his divinity.

The Sahuagin are highly religious, and the Great Devourer plays an important role in the life of every Sahuagin from birth to death. Sharks are revered as sacred animals, and killing one is punishable by 77 strokes of the scourge. While the Sahuagin as a race are extremely lawful, every Sahuagin have a savage and animalistic streak which they constantly struggle to suppress, but occasionally it bursts out with dire results. Sahuagin admire the deadly and sleek beauty of sharks, and their cities include many shark motives. While grandiose, they are but a crude mockery of the power and evil glory of the old Shay-Lot cities. Sahuagin speak their own harsh and violent sounding language often accompanied by the snapping of jaws.

Society and Lifestyle: Sahuagin society is a rigid, highly-organized and cruel system made to ensure the survival of the fittest, as only the strong are viewed as worthy children of the Great Devourer who will accomplish the ideal of a race of warrior-kings. The society is divided into a strict caste system, with each one filling its own niche. Sahuagin females give their eggs to the "Brides of the Devourer", temple priestesses who are themselves forbidden from having children.

When the eggs hatch the priestesses cull the weak from the nest, feeding the weak, stupid or deformed to sharks or even consuming them themselves. Mutants who could prove useful to the war-effort, such as four-armed Sahuagin and the Malenti are allowed to live.

The priestesses are responsible for the education of all young Sahuagin until the age of 12, when they are sent to the Military Academy and spend another 4 gruelling years in war-training. Those who survive basic training can join the Artisan caste or continue in the Military Academy by joining the Warrior caste. The artisan cast forms the majority of Sahuagin society and enjoys only partial rights. The warrior caste possesses the rights of full citizens and holds great influence and respect in Sahuagin society. The warrior sect protects the city and the Nobility, lead raids on coastal settlements and enforce the law. Females can become Brides of the Devourer by joining the Priesthood, who like the Warriors are considered full citizens. These priestesses are responsible for education and propaganda, performing religious rites, arbitrating disputes and advising rulers. There is a constant power struggle

between the Warrior caste and the Priesthood.

Warriors are known for fighting in highly-organized yet swift and ferocious units called "Schools". All Sahuagin Warriors have Fighter levels but members of specific Schools sometimes multiclass either as Rangers (with Shark animal companions) or Barbarians forming berserker-units who revel in their inner bloodlust and fury.

Warriors who prove their worth in combat can join the Nobility, further ascending in rank by challenging their superior to a duel to the death. The loser is partially devoured by the winner, with the remainder of the body parts sacrificed to the Devourer. Assassinations and the use of magic are strictly forbidden, punishable by death. There is no show of power in poison and a hidden blade, only cowardice resulting from weakness. These protections apply only to other Sahuagin, for other races are less than animals and are unworthy of honour.

At the top of Sahuagin society sits a Baron, Prince or King (depending on the settlement's size) who is advised by a War Council of 5 army generals and 5 high Priestesses. While a Sahuagin King passes his title to his oldest worthy son anyone can actually become King by gaining the support of at least 8 Chancellors and thus being allowed to challenge the existing King to a duel. Should the usurper win, he is obliged to sacrifice all the former King's family members to the Devourer- after which he can ascend the throne.

Outside the Caste system are the slaves, who are viewed as property and

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have no rights at all. They are worked to death to produce weapons in forges built in dry air pockets and construct the Sahuagin's grandiose cities, with weak or old slaves eaten or sacrificed to the Devourer. Occasionally dead slaves are raised as undead minions by the Priesthood to supplement the army.

When Sahuagin die, they are fed to the sharks to honour the Devourer—corpses have no use for this practical war-like race. They also have no qualms about cannibalism, and it is actually one of the preferred punishments for criminals who are fed to the sharks or the High Priestess herself in especially severe cases. The Devourer also occasionally grants various dark gifts to powerful Warriors and faithful Priestesses, like Vampirism or Lychantrophy or the birth of a strong child.

The Sahuagin are not yet ready for an all-out war with the Core, and they are carefully biding their time. The race's diplomats (half-breed Sahuagin specifically bred and raised for this purpose, considered part of the Artisan caste) are building alliances, and have already contacted the leaders of several

major Reaver schools, especially amoral pirate lords and other unsavoury groups. When the dark tide of the Sahuagin rises, they will not be alone in their assault...

Narseus

Narseus is a special drug harvested by Sahuagin to enable their human slaves to breathe underwater and also increase their strength but addle their minds. It is highly addictive, and only the Sahuagin know the secret of its production— which means the Sahuagin often use Narseus on slaves they send to the mainland to serve as spies, knowing they will come back for another dose. Narseus is a light green powder, often ingested in small pills. Full rules for drugs are outlined in the Book of Vile Darkness.

Initial Effect: Character can freely breathe water for 3 hours.

Secondary Effect: Characters gains +2 alchemical bonus to Strength.

Side Effects: -4 Wisdom as long as the drug is in effect.

Overdose: Character must make a Madness check DC 15.

Name	Type	Price	Alchemy DC	Addiction
Narseus	Ingested DC 15	50 GP	DC 17 (27 for non-Sahuagin)	High

Religions of the Deepkin

The Great Devourer: The Great Devourer is speculated by many religious scholars to be a shark-like Devil rather than an actual god. Indeed, archaic texts from the Dementlieu sect of Ezra establish the "deep devourer" as one of the ancient enemies of the Goddess.

He is a brutal, unforgiving and merciless deity, who preaches the survival of the fittest and the devouring of the weak, and whose chosen children are sharks and Sahuagin. His dogma encourages his followers to take what they want through strength and war, but also see discipline and order as the keys to victory. The Great Devourer's hunger needs to be appeased by daily sacrifices of the weak (when a victim is ritually gutted on the altar and the remains fed to the Priestesses, the King and the sharks), for his wrath should be great if ever forsaken by his children.

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Domains: Evil, Death, Law, War, Water

Favoured Weapon: Bite or Trident

Symbol: A great white shark's head

Cult of the Murky Depths: The Cult of the Murky Depths is a false religion invented by the Kuo Toa to ensnare humans to follow their wretched goals. Its "priests" are actually Wizards, delving into the obscene lore of the Shay-Lot bit-by-bit, slowly forsaking their mortal form and thought patterns behind as they advance deeper in the religion's Circles.

The Cult reveres the Shay Lot as gods, promising immortality and untold

power within the New Order to those who help them reclaim their rightful place. The Cult is arranged in Circles, with cultists required to perform various vile rites to advance into the Inner Circles, such as mating with Kuo-Toa to produce half-breed spawn. Once arriving at the innermost Circle, the cultist is granted an audience with an Ancient One and is transformed into a true Kuo-Toa in body and mind.

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Symbol: An unblinking fish eye grasped by a tentacle

The Sea Queen: The Sea Queen is actually a human religion, although some Deepkin- especially half-breeds heeding the call of their blood- have come to revere it. The Sea Queen is a fickle, vengeful and treacherous deity who represents the stormy sea. She is prone to horrible temper tantrums if not appeased with sacrifices, done by drowning treasures, animals and in the past- people. However, she rewards the faithful with a calm sea, favoured winds, rich bounties of fish and the treasures of the drowned. This makes her the patron on all those who depend on the sea for living, such as sailors, fishermen and pirates. She views the Deepkin (and especially the raiding Reavers) as her favoured creations and a tool of divine vengeance towards mortals who are lax with their worship. Her priesthood is powerful in coastal towns and amongst the pirates of Saragossa.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Protection, Water

Favoured Weapon: Scimitar

Symbol: A massive blue wave rising to engulf a tiny lighthouse

Deepkin Half-breeds

Occasionally, Deepkin mate with humans, resulting in the birth of a horrid half-breed. Driven by unnatural attractions, Reavers are the most likely of the three Deepkin races to mate with humans. The degenerate practices of the Kuo-Toa often involve mating with human cult members to create powerful agents in human society. The Sahuagin are the least likely to produce Half-Breed spawn, viewing humans as prey and unsuitable, weak mates. Fifty percent of the time, a Deepkin mating with a human produces a Half-Breed; there is a 25% chance for the birth of a normal human and a 25% for the birth of a full-blooded Deepkin. This only applies to human females mating with Deepkin males- in the rare case of a human male mating with a Deepkin female the child is always a pure-blooded Deepkin.

A woman pregnant with a pure or half-breed Deepkin is plagued by terrible nightmares of a raging sea and slithering things lurking in the depths. This sometimes results in the child being a caliban in addition to a half-breed. A Deepkin half-breed is treated in all aspects as a normal member of the human race, except that he receives a +2 racial bonus to Animal Empathy, Knowledge (Nature), Swim and Profession (Sailor) checks as the sea is literally calling out for him. He also gains a Swim speed equal to half his land speed and may hold his breath underwater twice as long as normal. Deepkin Half-breeds often become successful sailors or aquatic druids, influenced but unaware of the true calling of their blood.

For every 10 years, a Deepkin half-breed must make a Fortitude save DC 15

as something monstrous awakens within him. The DC increases by 5 points if the character is near the sea. A failed check counts as a failed Powers Check and a progression on the Terror Track of the relevant Deepkin race. The whole transformation process is accompanied by terrible nightmares and a longing for the sea. The progression (or regression) stops once the half-breed reaches the Creature stage- he cannot become a Darklord simply through embracing his true nature. Deepkin half-breeds who complete their transformation into full-blooded Deepkin gain the Amphibious and Alternate Form abilities and may freely switch between their true monstrous forms and their original forms as humans.

Terror Tracks of Deepkin

Sea Devils: Track of the Sahuagin

The Terror Track of the Sahuagin can be applied to warriors who use the law as a justification to crush the weak, cultists of the Great Devourer and Sahuagin/human crossbreeds that awaken their inhuman nature.

Stage 1: The character's body adapts for swimming and he sprouts devolved gills, granting him a swim speed equal to half his land speed and allowing him to stay underwater twice as long as normally possible. As well, he can freely drink salt water to quench his thirst. He purges himself of any weakness and all his ability scores are now at a minimum of 10. However, when drinking fresh water the character must pass a Fortitude save against a DC 5 or vomit the untainted liquid. His

slightly-alien appearance grants him +1 Outcast rating.

Stage 2: The character starts shedding his own skin, growing a new layer of tough shark-skin beneath and gaining a natural armour bonus of +2. He also gains Blindsight 30', but this ability only works underwater. He gains the agility of a predator, granting +2 Dex. However, the character grows uncomfortable when not on shore or in the sea itself, receiving a -2 penalty to attacks rolls and skill checks while out of water. Finally his face begins to develop shark-like qualities and his body hair drops in patches, increasing his 1 Outcast rating by +1.

Stage 3: The character gains the Aquatic subtype, his swim speed now equals his land speed and he can breathe underwater indefinitely. He gains +4 to any Hide, Listen and Spot checks while underwater. The character grows tougher, increasing his constitution score by +2 and his natural armour bonus by +1. The character now has full webs between his digits, a back fin and clammy, nearly-hairless skin. His teeth are slightly pointed, his eyes bulge and his nose closely resembles a shark's snout. Vegetables disgust him, and he can only subsist on meat, preferably fish. He gains an additional +1 Outcast rating modifier.

Stage 4: The character's mouth widens and his teeth grow into needle-points, and he also sprouts black claws on his hands and feet. He gains 2 primary Talon attacks dealing 1d4 + Str damage, and a secondary Bite attack that deals 1d4 points of damage, plus half of the character's strength modifier. While underwater he also gains 2 Rake attacks

at his base attack bonus, dealing damage equal to 1d4 + half his strength modifier. Once per day when wounded he can fly into Blood Frenzy, increasing strength and constitution by +2 and reducing his armour class by -2. The Blood Frenzy lasts until either the Sahuagin or his enemy are dead. The character now has the strength of a frenzied shark, gaining +2 to his strength score, and more shark-skin emerges to grant another +1 natural AC bonus.

The character is Blinded for 1 round when exposed to bright light, and is dazzled the subsequent rounds as long as the light source remains. The character is now completely hairless and only flakes of mortal skin remain on his almost-shark like form. His eyes bulge terribly and his face is barely recognizable as the human he once was. He gains another +1 modifier to his Outcast Rating.

Stage 5: The character becomes a true Sea Devil, a predator of the Misty Seas. His type changes to Monstrous Humanoid, and his swim speed now equals double his land speed (typically 60 ft.). He gains another +2 bonus to strength, a +1 bonus to natural armour and the Multiattack feat. Finally he develops a kinship with sharks, gaining +4 racial bonus to Handle Animal checks when working with them and being able to communicate telepathically with any sharks within 150 feet, although he can only use simple commands such as "prey" and "flee". The character also becomes lawful evil in the unlikely event he wasn't already. At that stage, the creature seeks out the nearest Sahuagin settlement to claim his place and prove his devotion to the Great Devourer.

However, the character can only stay out of water for 1 hour per 2 points of constitution or start suffocating, and his aversion to fresh water increases. When immersed in fresh water he attempts to immediately flee. If he can't flee he must make a Fortitude save DC 15 or become fatigued. He must repeat the save every 10 minutes regardless of its results. The character is humanoid only in slight form and gains a final +1 modifier to his Outcast rating.

Stage 6: The character becomes a Darklord of his own domain, an undersea area rife with sharks and including at least one Sahuagin settlement. Special powers for such a Darklord might include the ability to Charm or summon Sharks, the ability to enter Frenzy additional times each day or the ability to Swallow Whole victims. He cannot close the borders, but often sends packs of Sharks and Sahuagin warriors to patrol them and kill any who attempt to escape. As the Sahuagin are orderly, honour-bound and cruel creatures, a possible curse for a Sahuagin Darklord will include the seeds of chaos and shame within himself. For example, the character might be King, but every sibling born to him is imperfect, weak and dumb and as he slowly ages and weakens in body he must stave off constant contenders, knowing his line will inevitably come to an end and knowing all that all he worked for is for naught.

Deep Ones: Track of the Kuo-Toa

Cultists of the Shay-Lot, amoral seekers of forgotten past knowledge and ruthless manipulators who dwell near the sea are very likely to gradually transform

into Kuo-Toa. As well, Kuo-Toa crossbreeds who act in tune with their true vile selves may follow along this path.

Stage 1: The character becomes slightly piscine in body, gaining a swim speed equal to half his land speed and being able to stay twice as long underwater as should be possible. Their skin exudes a layer of slime which makes them slippery, granting them a +8 racial bonus to Escape Artist checks. No web, mundane or magical, can confine the character's slippery body.

The character's mouth begins to warp into an unusually wide arc and their eyes bulge ever so slightly from the sockets. The strange appearance of the character now increases their Outcast Rating by +1. Most coastal communities are familiar with this trait. Commonly referred to as the "Innsmouth Look", this appearance is associated with sinister folk. Thus amongst natives to the seashore, the character suffers a further Outcast Rating increase of +1.

Stage 2: The character's eyes become large and bulbous like a fish's. These great rolling orbs focus independently of one another, allowing the character to see any moving object or creature, even if it is invisible or ethereal. Furthermore, the character gains a +4 bonus to Search and Spot checks. The character develops dark insight, gaining +2 Wis.

Abrupt exposure to sunlight or brighter light Blinds the character for one round, and he is dazzled for every round afterwards. The character's large bulbous eyes and widening mouth increase his or her outcast rating by +1.

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Stage 3: The character becomes a creature of the depths; his swim speed now equals his land speed, he can stay underwater indefinitely and gains the Amphibious special quality. He becomes inhumanly agile, gaining a +2 bonus to dexterity. He also gains Alertness as a bonus feat.

However his face is now that of a fish, and he exudes the powerful scent of oil and rotting fish, bestowing an additional +1 modifier to his outcast rating and granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Wilderness lore attempts to track him through scent. Characters at this stage will not let themselves be seen by humans, preferring the darkness of the depths to the light in the world of mankind.

Stage 4: The character becomes immune to poison and paralysis as his metabolism becomes unlike that of any creature of this world. His slime coating grants him Electrical Resistance 10, and he can produce a powerful adhesive from his body oil and other materials which requires 1 hour of work and 20 gp worth of material. After applying the adhesive to a shield or a similar surface it forces anyone who makes an unsuccessful melee attack against the character to pass a Reflex save DC 14 or have his weapon yanked from his grasp. Creatures using natural weapons are automatically grappled. Releasing the weapon or breaking from the grapple requires a Strength check DC 20. The adhesive lasts for 3 days or until it is used up. The character grows maliciously cunning, gaining a +2 bonus to intelligence. Finally, he gains the feat Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Pincer Staff), developing innate understanding how to master the traditional weapon of the Kuo-Toa.

As the character becomes more like an amphibian he or she mutates physically once more. The character's skin shifts colours with his or her mood. Her skin becomes an inflamed red when angry, a silvery white when calm and a dull grey when frightened. This increases the characters outcast rating by +1 and gives opposing characters a +2 circumstance bonus to sense motive checks.

Stage 5: The character becomes an otherworldly, inhuman thing. His type changes to Monstrous Humanoid (Extraplanar), and he gains a bonus of +2 to his wisdom score as the darkest secrets of the Ancients are revealed to him. His teeth sharpen into needle-points, granting a bite attack dealing 1d4 points of damage. By joining hands, Kuo-Toa Arcane spellcasters can produce a stroke of lightning. They must join hands to release the bolt of lightening, but must only remain within 30ft of one another as the charge builds. Each bolt requires 1D4 rounds of charging before it can be released. These bolts of electricity deal 1D6 points of damage for every caster involved in the charging, but deal only half damage when the victim makes a successful reflex save against a DC equal to 13 plus the number of casters involved.

The character has completed the final stage of the mutation; his or her eyes now protrude from the top of a bullet-shaped head, their hands and feet become wide flippers, while their ears and nose vanish into their froglike skull. The character is now clearly inhuman and gains a final +1 modifier to his outcast rating. His alignment becomes neutral evil in the unlikely event it wasn't already, and he usually seeks out other Kuo-Toa to aid his nefarious goals.

Stage 6: The character becomes a Darklord of his own domain; a network of dark, partially-flooded caverns located deep under the lands of Man where many ancient secrets lie hidden. Possible darklord powers include the ability to know one's deepest, most shameful secret by passing a special Sense Motive check (with a +8 Profane bonus), to Scry through any water surface in the domain or to produce an especially potent version of the Kuo-Toa's natural adhesive. He can close the borders by summoning a wall of choking algae (or tentacles) which prevent escape. A possible curse for such a Darklord, a seeker of obscene knowledge, is having a single secret hidden from his knowledge, which he is convinced is known by his enemies.

Predators: Track of the Reaver

Characters who commit acts of extreme violence and brutality at sea, such as pirates, might find themselves transformed into Reavers. As well, Reaver half-breeds who commit evil acts awaken their monstrous heritage.

Stage 1: The character grows webs between her fingers and toes granting him a swim speed equal to half his land speed. Undeveloped gills sprout on his neck allowing him to stay underwater twice as long as would normally be possible. However, the webbing between his digits interfere with actions which require manual dexterity, imposing a -1 penalty to all attacks with manufactured weapons and -2 penalty to Pick Pocket skill checks. Furthermore, the character's slightly

inhuman appearance grants her +1 Outcast rating.

Stage 2: The character's nails harden into tiny black claws and his original set of teeth fall off over the course of a week as she grows rows upon rows of tiny sharp teeth. These changes grant the character two claw attacks and a bite attack, dealing 1d4 and 1d3 points of damage respectively. These attacks are natural weapons, with the claws serving as primary weapons and the bite being secondary. His skin also grows slightly scaly, giving her +2 Natural AC, and develops a slight tone ranging from dark green to mottled-brown. The character develops a strong appetite for raw meat, the bloodier the better. As he becomes even more fish-like, he gains another +1 penalty to his Outcast rating.

Stage 3: The character gains the Aquatic subtype, granting him a swim speed equal to his land speed and allowing him to breathe underwater indefinitely. The character also becomes stronger and tougher than a normal member of his race, gaining +2 to Strength and Constitution. While underwater, the character receives a +2 racial bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Profession (Hunter) and Wilderness Lore checks.

The character's behaviour grows bestial and degenerate and he finds it harder to control his base urges, losing 2 points of Intelligence and Wisdom. The character also feels more at home in Water than on land, suffering a -2 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves and checks while out of water. He gains +1 Outcast Rating as his mouth widens and his face becomes like that of a monstrous fish.

Stage 4: The character's eyes become bulging like those of a fish, granting him dark vision 60'. His monstrous claws and teeth grow larger and tougher, increasing their damage to 1d6 and 1d4 points respectively. His swim speed increases by 20 ft. as he becomes more adapted to the sea, and he grows agile, gaining 2 points of dexterity. The character's skin becomes even darker, more hardened and scaly, gaining further +2 Natural Armour class.

The character's webbed feet are unsuitable for walking on land, decreasing his land speed by 20 ft. The character develops a taste for the flesh of sentient creatures, preferably land-dwelling humanoids. The character loses the ability to speak in a coherent human voice, and is only able to communicate in gurgles, hisses and ultrasonic whispers only other Reavers hear. Reaver spellcasters must gain the Still Spell feat to be able to cast spells normally. As the character degenerates into a sea monster in mind and body, he gains +1 Outcast rating.

Stage 5: The character becomes a true Reaver. He gains the Monstrous Humanoid type and is no longer a Humanoid. The racial bonus to the relevant skills while underwater increase to +4. The character's physical power is truly superhuman, granting him an additional +4 bonus to strength and a +2 bonus to constitution as well as the Improved Grab special quality when hitting with her claw attacks. The character's skin is a dark green color and fully scaly, granting him a further +2

Natural Armour class bonus. These hardened scales are sharper, granting him the Cutting Scales special attack.

The character can only remain out of water for one hour per point of Constitution, after which he begins drowning (see the DMG rules). His mind becomes that of a savage beast, gaining another -2 Int and -2 Cha. He feels a strange calling towards the Sea of Sorrows and is guided towards the nearest Reaver school where he can claim his rightful place. The character gains a final +1 Outcast Rating, topping it at +5. He is completely unrecognizable as the person he once was, his alignment shifts to Chaotic Evil if was not already.

Stage 6: The character becomes a Darklord of his own pocket domain within the Sea of Sorrows. This realm is a stretch of treacherous reefs where he commands his own pack of Reavers. Possible Darklord powers might include monstrous strength, a Rage ability like that of a Barbarian or the ability to track others through the scent of blood. He is able to close the borders of his domain by creating a violent, bone-crushing current which tosses escapees back into the domain, dealing 2d10 Bludgeoning damage in the process. As Reavers are creatures of savage lust and violence, a possible curse for a Reaver Darklord might be physical impotence. Perhaps he turns extremely ill at the sight of true violence, and constantly fears losing his status in the pack when he is forced to fight a contest.

Lurking Beneath the Waves

Guide to Underwater Adventurers

By Andrew "alhoon" Pavlides

apavlides24@hotmail.com

Ardern and Resh touched the bottom of the sea, near the shipwreck of the merchant ship, which sank a few miles from Martira Bay during the last week's storm. The bottom of the sea! They were more than a hundred feet below the waves. The outlander cleric, Tarshal, who was waiting them in the rented boat on the surface, could make it so that they could breathe underwater. He also had equipped them with necklaces that would glow for half a day; more than enough time to locate the ship and retrieve any valuables.

The shell of the ship appeared to be badly battered from the storm. Cracked masts and broken rails made that easy enough to discern. Still, as a son of a fisherman, Ardern couldn't imagine how a storm opened those small holes in the hull. Most likely, there had been sabotage. Obviously, somebody wanted the ship to sink and took advantage of the chaos and confusion during the storm. Why would a sailor want the ship he worked on to sink and put his own life to danger, though? Still, it wasn't his problem. After all, he would profit from this sabotage.

The underwater environment was an alien but beautiful sight for Ardern. There were schools of shiny fish, colorful corals and seashells, strange plants and weeds he had never imagined down here. Everything seemed so peaceful. They carried

spears and their studded leather armor and wooden shields with them, since Ardern didn't want to risk becoming a shark's lunch.

Then he saw them. From the overturned ship, five figures rose and began swimming gleefully as fish. He could see them only as shadows at the edge of the light's radius. He turned to warn Resh, but his companion was waving frantically to make him look up. Another two forms were circling above them. Those, Ardern could discern better. Humanoids, covered in dark gray-green scales with malevolent eyes, sharp talons and mouths filled with pointed teeth. The resemblance they had with sharks was difficult to miss. Grabbing his spear, Ardern went back to back with Resh. After all, they were both skilled fighters even if the water made their movements difficult. However, they were only two against seven. They would wound these sharkmen and flee at the first opportunity.

He saw one of the humanoids waving its hands and he felt... something. Their enemies could employ magic! Ardern decided to leave the slower swimming Resh behind. At least he would escape with his life even if that cost Resh his own. That was when he found out that he was frozen. The spell has stolen his mobility! He tried to scream in fear, but he couldn't even do that. Resh, already swimming

for the surface, stopped abruptly caught by the same spell.

Something small, descending deeper into the water, caught Ardern's eye. It was Tarshal's mauled head locked in a horrified expression...

The bed of the sea is a dark, mysterious place with plants and creatures so different from those on the surface that they seem alien. Survival for land dwellers here is an ordeal from the very beginning. There are dangers hidden everywhere and the environmental hazards are deadly without the use of magic. Surface dwellers can only hope to explore the depths for a few hours unless they have access to very powerful magic. All the while, malevolent creatures hide in the darkness where the sun rays never reach.

Beneath the Waves

Under the surface of the sea, an adventurer has many more problems than on land. Movement is impeded, weapons deal less damage, and breathing is a problem. In deep waters, there is darkness everywhere and the pressure begins to weigh upon characters. The adventurers' underwater enemies are in their natural environment and are far better equipped by nature to survive.

Underwater, movement is severely hampered. A land dweller has half his normal movement speed. Movement is also more taxing. A character trying to run while underwater should tire much more easily. As a variant rule, apply a -4 penalty to all constitution checks for land dwellers to see if the character is fatigued from hustle, run or forced march. In addition, halve the time a

character can hustle or run without a problem.

As another variant rule, a character using a slashing weapon underwater should have a -4 penalty on attack rolls and a character using a bludgeoning weapon should have a -6 penalty on attack rolls. Slashing weapons should deal half damage (roll damage normally, apply the modifiers, and then halve the damage). Bludgeoning weapons should do minimum damage plus half the modifiers from strength, magic, feats etc. Piercing weapons are more reliable giving only a -2 penalty on attack rolls and dealing normal damage. Natural weapons of surface dwellers, like claws and teeth, have just a -2 penalty on attack rolls and deal normal damage.

Crossbows should give a -4 penalty on attack rolls and half their range increment if they are crafted by surface dwellers. All other missile weapons don't work underwater at all. From the thrown weapons, only javelins and spears work somehow. They have half their range increment and give a -4 penalty on attack rolls. Their maximum range is 3 range increments. That means that a Javelin can go up to 45' with a -8 penalty on attack rolls.

Aquatic creatures are far more adept at fighting in water. The penalties for them are 2 less than those of surface dwellers. That means that they have no penalty when using piercing and natural weapons, a -2 penalty with slashing weapons, and a -4 penalty with bludgeoning weapons. Also, all aquatic races and creatures have a +10 racial bonus in the swimming skill and can take 10 in all

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circumstances (unless otherwise noted).

On the other hand, things in water weight much less than usual, since the water's density is greater than air's density. Subtract 60 lbs/ cubic foot volume an object has, or 0.35 lbs/

10 cubic inches volume. An item, whose weight underwater is less than zero, floats to the surface.

The following table shows the percentage decrease in weight for some substances:

<i>Substance</i>	Weight	<i>Substance</i>	Weight	<i>Substance</i>	Weight
Iron	-15%	Copper	-10%	Stone	-35%
Lead	-10%	Gold	-5%	Human body	-105%
Wood	-120%	Silver	-10%	Ice	-110%

For example, a human weighing 180 lbs carrying full plate armor (50 lbs), a wooden shield (10 lbs), and adventuring equipment (70lbs, half cubic foot volume) in water weights: -9 lbs +42 lbs -2 lbs +40 lbs =71 lbs total weight (the man and his equipment). His equipment alone weights 80 lbs. Why is the equipment heavier than the sum? The human is less dense than water so he acts like a balloon.

The pressure of very deep water can be extremely dangerous. Water pressure deals 1d6 points of damage every minute for every 100 feet of depth (rounded down). With a successful Fortitude save (DC 15 +1/ previous save), the character doesn't take damage. Very cold water deals 1d6 points of subdual damage per minute of exposure unless a Fortitude save is made (DC 15 +1/ previous save).

Aquatic creatures get a +4 racial bonus to these fortitude saves and most aquatic races (aquatic elves, merfolk, sahuagin, Kuo-Toa, etc.) ignore at least 100 to 200 feet of depth. Some aquatic races ignore more pressure at the DM's discretion.

Undead ignore at least the first 300 feet of depth and have a +4 racial bonus to resist pressure damage. Even then, this damage is reduced by the damage reduction of the undead.

Magic

Most of the problems with being underwater can be solved or lessened with spells. An underwater adventure is not for characters without access to magic, since they cannot survive underwater for more than a few minutes. Potions and spells of water breathing solve the problem of survival but not the problems with movement and pressure.

If a character is to delve into the depths of the sea unhindered, he or she will need the following spells: *water breathing*, *freedom of movement*, and *darkvision* (or *light*). In some cases, he or she will need an *endure elements* spell. *Alter self* and *polymorph* spells can also solve most of the problems.

A few spells and items to make underwater adventuring easier are presented here:

Aquatic grace
Transmutation

Level: Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 2, Dr 2, Rng 2

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: 1 hour/ level

This spell lessens the penalties of underwater movement as if the target was an aquatic creature. That means that the character can take 10 in all swim checks, has a +10 competence bonus to swim, ignores the first 100' of depth, has a +4 bonus on fortitude checks to resist damage from water pressure and cold water and the penalties for using weapons underwater are lessened by 2. However, this spell doesn't provide the target with the ability to breath in water or darkvision.

Two minutes before this spell expires, the focus of this spell turns black to warn the caster that the magic is almost spent. After the spell expires, the focus turns back to normal.

Focus: A special shell that must be given willingly by an aquatic creature to the caster or passed to the caster willingly by the previous owner. The shell must be prepared thereafter with a special ritual taking 2 hours and special materials costing 50 gp.

Improved aquatic grace

Transmutation

Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 5, Dr 4

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Target: One living creature/ 2 levels

Duration: 1 hour/ level

This spell gives the target creatures the effects of the spells:

water breathing, aquatic grace, endure elements, and darkvision.

All targets feel how much time remains until the spell ends.

Focus: A special shell that must be given willingly by an aquatic creature to the caster or passed to the caster willingly by the previous owner. The shell must be prepared thereafter with a special ritual taking 8 hours and special materials costing 500 gp.

Helm of Improved aquatic grace:

This helm is made of corals. When worn, this item gives the owner the effects of the improved aquatic grace spell.

Caster level 7th; Prerequisites: Craft wondrous item, improved aquatic grace. Market Price: 36,000 gp.

Note: when created by underwater dwellers the cost of this item is halved as is its market price.

Non-magical ways to deal with the problems

Alchemy can also help to solve some of the problems but not as much as magic. Sunrods or Glow jars (from VRA) can provide some light. Heat pouches (from VRA) can provide warmth and Night Drops (from VRA) can give low light vision for some time. However, alchemy cannot give a creature the ability to breath underwater or help it move easier.

Diveguide

This alchemical substance is a thick, greenish liquid that can help adventurers withstand the pressure of water. It has a craft (alchemy) DC 25 to make and costs 30 gp per dose. For 2 hours after it is consumed, it gives the character the ability to ignore the first 50' of depth (he or she takes

damage under the 150') and gives a +6 bonus to fortitude checks to ignore water pressure. After the first 2 hours, it gives the recipient just a +3 bonus to fortitude checks to resist damage from water pressure for another 2 hours and then the effects end.

When consumed underwater, the character should be careful not to spill it. This substance is heavier than water.

Nymph's Kiss Brew

There are also some rare herbs and sea weeds that when mixed properly can create a brew that gives the characters the ability to breathe water for 1d2+1 hours. The sea weeds however grow at depths of 40' – 50' underwater in the sea of sorrows. A land dwelling character with the knowledge (nature) skill can discern them with a DC 22 check. If the character knows what he is looking for (i.e. another character describes them) the DC is 15.

Mixing the herbs and preparing the brew requires a successful profession (herbalist) check with DC 22 and takes 3 hours. The cost to buy this brew is 300 gp per dose, far less than a water breathing potion, but the duration is shorter and the brew is less reliable.

To gather all the other herbs a character must travel to Darkon, Tepest and Nova Vaasa and succeed at a profession (herbalist) check with a DC 18 or a knowledge (nature) check with a DC 24 in each of these domains.

The brew remains good for 2+1d3 days after it is created. Note that those who sell the nymph's kiss don't mention the randomness in the duration.

Swimming Bracers and Boots

The swimming bracers are normal leather or iron bracers with triangular hardened leather fins attached on them. The swimming boots are boot-flippers. These inventions help adventurers and divers swim underwater. The bracers give a +2 equipment bonus to swim checks and the boots a +3 equipment bonus and increase the swimming speed of the user by 10'. Both items combined give a total +4 bonus (not +5).

The items are usually from hardened, boiled leather. The bracers cost 5 gp and the boots 10 gp. They are CL 2 items.

The Metal of the Depths

A very important difference of living in the sea is the absence of fire. Without fire, there can be no metallurgy. However, there is a kind of rare sea wood that aquatic creatures gather from the depths. This dark green wood, named Sader, is as hard as normal wood but is also as malleable and elastic as a hot iron, which makes it an excellent material to shape.

Sader weights 25% less than iron. However, if sader is bathed in the blood of a mammal (not fish) it takes the physical properties (except weight) of *bronze* like hardness, elasticity, etc. If it is bathed in the blood of a sentient surface dweller, it takes the properties (except weight) of *iron* and a red hue (called red sader). Sader starts rotting after 6 – 9 years and red sader after 2 – 3 years. Even when bathed in blood, sader remains wood; it can be burned, it is affected by spells that affect wood and it isn't affected by spells that affect metal.

By curving and hammering sader, the aquatic races give it the shapes they

want and then use blood to make it functional like a metal. Good aquatic races hunt aquatic mammals (like some species of whale, seals, etc) to use their blood to harden sader. Neutral aquatic races hunt aquatic mammals but also use captive or drowned surface dwellers that wronged them to harden their sader weapons. Evil aquatic races raid communities or kill fishermen to make as much iron-hard sader as they can.

One problem Sader has, however, is that the plant isn't very tall or wide. It is like a bush. The base of the plant is 4" - 6" wide but splits up in about a dozen branches. Most of the branches are 1" - 2" wide and 2' - 4' long. So things like axe blades or breast plate armor are almost impossible to make. The main branches have thin branches about ½" wide and 3" - 9" long that can be easily used as crossbow bolts or spikes or even to create sader scale armor. Each Sader bush weights about 200 - 400 lbs.

Another problem is that a newly planted sader bush will need about 4 - 6 years to fully grow and take the sader properties (if tended right). Plus, the plant can't be planted anywhere. There should be certain conditions in the water and ground to give sader its properties (temperature, bacteria, PH, EH, minerals etc). Also the ethereal resonance of the place shouldn't exceed 1 for a length of time, or else the plants become "poisoned" and useless. Ethereal resonance of rank 4 would poison the plants in hours while ethereal resonance of rank 2 would poison them in a few weeks. A usual "Sader mine" is a valley with 50 - 100 plants.

Adventure Hooks

The Followers of Sah Ratur

Sah Ratur is a new god. He was one of the great gods of the creation that spawned life in the water. His dogma is that the sea dwellers are the best creatures and the land dwellers are abominations that turned their backs on the creation. They got away from the sea lured by the potency of an evil, unholy thing: fire. Fire is considered unholy since it is the opposite of water, the most holy element (where all creatures were meant to live). Fire could be used as a weapon, but it should never be used as a tool.

However, surface dwellers are guilty for an even greater blasphemy than using fire. The ungrateful land dwellers renounced the gifts of the gods, like water breathing and swimming abilities, and betrayed their love. They became abominations, who have the ability to use fire. So the followers of Sah Ratur should punish the blasphemous abominations of the land and those that still plague the sea, harvesting the goods they renounced (like fishermen and sailors).

Worshippers of Sah Ratur are watchful against sea dwellers that remain indifferent to humans and treat as traitors those that help humans. The clerics of Sah Ratur can choose from the following domains: Water, evil, destruction, war. The favorite weapon of Sah Ratur is a barbed spear.

The Domain of Shartor

A small undersea domain exists between Dominia and Blaustein. It is 10 by 20 miles and the average depth varies between 100 and 250 feet, but it can be more deep or shallow at various

points. The borders of Shartor do not extend all the way to the surface, however. Shartor borders are 30 feet below the surface of the Sea of Sorrows.

The water has strong currents that could hinder the movement of swimmers. The bottom of the sea is a beautiful and deceptively peaceful place, full of life, with schools of tiny fish in a great variety of colors and shapes. Many of these fish decorate the aquariums or the salons of the rich throughout the core. The plant-life is also attractive and colorful giving a false sense of security. The waters of Shartor, however, have much more than their share of sharks. Thankfully, most of these man-eating fish are medium-sized.

Sahuagin and kuo toa followers of Sah Ratur inhabit Shartor. There are two large villages (see below), one ruled by Sahuagin and the other ruled by kuo toa. The villages coexist peacefully and cooperate with each other. A couple of priest-sheriffs of Sah Ratur rule each village under the rule of the priest-lady, Sacarka. Both villages have a small population of reavers and a valley of Sader.

The good relations don't stop kuo toa and sahuagin competing for power in the church from working against, framing or even assassinating competitors. The penalties for these crimes (except assassination) aren't lenient, but they aren't harsh either. Assassination, however, is considered treachery against the church, and it is punished by "giving" the offender to Sah Ratur by feeding him alive to small sharks.

Sparse in Shartor are small enclaves (thorps) of other aquatic races, some devoted to Sah Ratur,

some not. The other followers of Sah Ratur consider the word of the priest-lady a law. The rest, either pretend to be Followers or hide from the true Followers.

The domain has a CL 3 and an RMR 2. The darklord cannot close the borders.

The sahuagin and the kuo toa treat any underwater dweller is as if his/hers/its OR was 3 less. The OR of humans is 4 and all other land dwelling races get an OR increase of +1. sahuagin and kuo toa treat each other as if they had an OR of 1 only.

The darklord is a hideous, blind sahuagin priestess/sorceress named Sacarka, who is cursed never again to see the underwater landscapes and the depths for the crimes she committed against the land dwellers. Her eyes are burned out, and her whole body is scorched (OR +2 even to her people). She believes this curse is an attack by the evil land gods to lead her away from her pursuits, the same as her imprisonment in the domain.

Sacarka is an 11th lvl cleric of Sah Ratur/ 5th lvl sorceress. She is a neutral evil, envious creature. She hates land dwellers just for being able to live in the surface and see the sunset, the sunrise and the open sky. She doesn't admit this even to herself, although she is tormented sometimes by nightmares. She believes these are sendings from the evil Land gods that hate her and they want to torment her for her lost sight. She is a sadist and cruel even with her people. Secretly she is afraid that even her people may betray her and turn against her, so she rules with cruelty and demands absolute devotion to herself and Sah Ratur.

Sacarka has blind sense with a 60' radius. The Dark Powers also gifted her with a magnetic personality so that she could sway and lead the Followers (+4 bonus to Charisma) even though she is scarred. She has also been gifted with the War domain.

Sacarka entered Ravenloft in 743 BC when she was leading a raid against a castle devoted to a sun god in an outlander world. The sahuagin and their kuo toan allies were winning the battle until the clerics summoned a powerful outsider of their god. This creature burned the eyes and scorched the body of the sahuagin priestess and turned the battle against them. The sahuagin and kuo toa lieutenants retreated into a bank of fog, taking the wounded priestess with them.

The mists parted and the followers of Sah Ratur found themselves in a beautiful underwater land named Shartor. The villages were devoted to Sah Ratur and the coming of Sacarka has been prophesied. She was their Priest-lady. Sacarka recovered quickly from her wounds and passed the command of the kuo toa village to the kuo toa and of the sahuagin village to her own people. She is the absolute leader however, and her word is the law. Even her formidable powers couldn't heal the scars on her body or restore her sight.

Sacarka: Cleric 11th lvl/ Sorceress 5th lvl (136 hp). Abilities: str 18 dex 14 con 16 int 17 wis 20 cha 16. Domains: Water, evil, war

Sacarka can command sharks at will as a standard action. This power works as a charm monster spell with a DC of 21 and duration of 1 minute per HD she has. She can also communicate with (and command) sharks everywhere within her domain. She

doesn't actually sense them, however, but rather she has to think of a place in her domain and try to contact the nearest shark or sharks; this takes her a full round action. She is usually accompanied by one large shark and two or three medium-sized sharks.

Village of Dretoth (Sahuagin)

350 sahuagin, 75 kuo toa, 35 reavers, 30 aquatic elves, 25 merfolk.

Personalities of Note: Priest-Sheriff Argana NE fm Sahuagin Cleric 7th/Ranger 2nd. Priest-Sheriff Kragern NE m Sahuagin Cleric 5th/ranger 3rd. Captain of the guard Tregh m Sahuagin Fighter 2nd/ Ranger 6th

Village of Ariath (Kuo Toa) 320 kuo toa, 90 sahuagin, 45 reavers, 40 aquatic elves, 15 merfolk.

Personalities of Note: Priest-Sheriff Neorn NE fm Kuo Toa Cleric 8th. Priest-Sheriff Kragern NE fm Kuo Toa Cleric 7th/fighter 2nd. Captain of the guard Faish m Kuo Toa Fighter 4th/ Ranger 4th

Dread Possibilities

- ❖ The followers of Sah Ratur kidnap humans to use in a ritual that will transform them to reavers.
- ❖ A nearby community composed by aquatic elves, locathahs and merfolk is infiltrated by malenti priests and sorcerers of Sah Ratur. The good aquatic folk save the PCs from a shipwreck but ask them to help them in this problem.
- ❖ The followers of Sah Ratur equip weresharks with weapons and magic to help them slaughter surface dwellers.

The Foolish Mermaid

A Short Story

By Stanton Fink

apokrylfaros@earthlink.net



Once upon a time, there was a shy and naïve mermaid. Her sisters worried about her, and decided upon themselves that she should have a sailor of her very own to care for, as after all, what is a mermaid without an ensorcelled sailor to tend to?

So, the mermaid's sisters conjured forth a storm and swept away a particularly handsome-looking sailor for their sister to keep. The mermaid loved her new captive more than anything, not unlike the way we all love our first pet we received as a child. But, try as she might, she could not care for her pet sailor. He whined and whimpered for the sight of his children, and begged for one last kiss from his wife. And then, finally, just as he withered away in the mermaid's embrace, he cried out, "Death takes me!" and died then and there.

One would think that that mermaid's heart would break in two upon seeing this, but, not really. Truth be told, she was frightened senseless, as she had never truly had anything die right before her eyes. Sure, there was those fish she ate, or that slug she swallowed, but, nothing like this. After all, fish and slugs are one thing (several actually), but a dead man is quite another.

A few months later, another mermaid found herself caught in a fisherman's net. And the next thing this other mermaid knew, she was on display in a pig's trough in a local fish market. When she realized she could not return to the sea, she, too, cried out, "Death takes me!" and died on the spot (and made a terrible smell).

Our naïve, yet death-fearing mermaid was now so terrified, she was certain that this "Death" was out to take her, too. She traveled far and wide within the sea, until she came to a red cavern deep beneath a volcano. A voice deep within the red cavern called out to the mermaid, "Our child, why

have you come here?"

She, in turn, asked, "I beg of you, save me! Help me so that Death can never take me, please!"

"For a price, we will make sure that Death shall never claim you..." the voice within the red cavern replied.

"Name it, and let it be done!"

"We desire your beauty."

Oh! What foolishness! What the poor creature did not know was that so long as a mermaid had her beauty and stayed wet, she would live forever...

But, now, what would happen to a mermaid bereft of her beauty?

Old Sea Dog

The Hound Returns

By Mark Graydon

morfavius@hotmail.com

“What’s that young one? That ship? Ye’ve a keen eye, child. That thar’ is the Prideful Mercy, and a merchant ship she was in her day. Ye wonder why I say was? Well, she is retired now; her last run must’ve been nigh on nine years ago. She used to run up and down the coast o’ the Sea o’ Sorrows, trading with the great port cities to the north. Now her stock and trade be barnacles, and a ripe crop she is growing on her belly this year!

Where once the Mercy housed a good and fine crew, now only her captain lives there. They say that old Thaddeus liked the sea so much that he couldn’t ever leave it. Could be true. Personally, I think Thaddeus somewhat addled. Anyone who wants to spend his days on the Sea of Sorrows hasn’t enough sense to come in out of the rain, least that’s what I think! But Thaddeus will do as he will.

Who’s Thaddeus? Oh! I’ve gotten ahead of meself! Captain Thaddeus Capper is his name, a good man, if somewhat touched in the head. Spent his whole life on the water, first as a boy, then as a captain, then finally to retire in his boat. You probably haven’t heard of him before. He was hardly noteworthy. Not a pirate you see, nor some great explorer or adventurer. He was just a merchantman.

Mind you...Thaddeus may have something of note now. Rumor around town has it that Thaddeus is having some problems with a spirit. O’ course,

he won’t do the sensible thing and go to the good clerics of Ezra and have them come and exorcise the ghost back to the Other Side. That’s just another reason why old Thaddeus is a bit muddled, if you know what I mean. Perhaps an adventurer like yerself might inquire to Thaddeus directly? It’s said that Thaddeus found many a strange thing on the ocean, and though he sold many of them, some are still in his possession. Either way, I’ve no doubt that if it continues much longer; the good priests themselves may pay Thaddeus a visit o’ their own accord.”

Captain Thaddeus was a merchant who traveled up and down the Sea of Sorrows in his days, visiting the various port cities. He had a remarkably uneventful career, except for a single incident, involving his dog, Silas.

On every voyage he undertook, Captain Thaddeus brought with him his faithful hound. Silas was a good dog and acclimated to life about a ship without incident and trouble. Thaddeus loved the dog dearly, and it repaid its master in kind, but a long life for Silas was not to be. On one voyage up the coast between Mordentshire & Port-a-Lucine, the ship became mired in a bank of fog. As if that was not bad enough, a band of Reaver’s attacked the boat. The aquatic horrors swam about, screeching in their strange language, and made ready to scale the sides of the ship. In desperation, the crew seized the dog

Silas and threw him to his death to sate the hunger of the fiends below. Thaddeus himself was aghast at the crew's reaction but the threat of mutiny hung heavy in the air and Thaddeus could not stop them. The Reavers were preoccupied enough with the dog's warm body to allow the merchant ship to escape, but Thaddeus never forgot about his beloved dog Silas. Eventually, Thaddeus retired, and lived on his boat with his small fortune that he had amassed as a trader. Nine years later, his dog Silas returned to him.

Silas returned to life as a Bowlyn, a spirit of the sea. Although it is no more intelligent than a normal dog, it harbors a great hatred of Thaddeus whom it trusted as only a dog can trust its master. For his part, Thaddeus recognizes that his beloved Silas is long gone, but is loathe to ward off the spirit. Silas has just begun returning at night, and as such is right now only causing small accidents against Thaddeus such as knocking over oil lanterns and gnawing a small hole in the hull. However, if the haunting continues Silas will confront and kill his old master, or Thaddeus will be forced to flee his boat.

Thaddeus will not strike at Silas directly, but he will not stop adventurers from doing so. His love for his pet has stopped him from asking for help, but if it's offered to him he is willing to help however he can, as long as he doesn't have to stand directly against Silas. Thaddeus also has a few choice unique magic items obtained from his merchant days still stored away. He may offer one or more items as a reward to adventurers for helping him.

Captain Thaddeus Capper, Male Human Exp4

CR 2; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d6-8 (8 hp); Init -2; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 12, touch 8, flat-footed 12; Base Attack/Grapple +3/+1; Attack Dagger +2 melee (1d4-2, 19-20 x2) or Pistol +1 ranged (1d10 x3); Full Attack Dagger +2 melee (1d4-2, 19-20 x2) or Pistol +1 ranged (1d10 x3); Saves Fort -1, Ref -1, Will +5; AL LN; Str 7, Dex 7, Con 7, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Appraise +12, Balance +4, Bluff +8, Climb +4, Diplomacy +11, Profession (Sailor) +8, Swim +3, Use Rope +5; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Firearms), Skill Focus (Appraise, Diplomacy)

Equipment: Masterwork Chain Shirt, Masterwork Dagger, Pistol, Bullets (x10)

The stats above assume that Thaddeus is wearing his armor and has his weapons; two things, which he rarely does nowadays.

Thaddeus is a man in his early 60's, definitely showing the effects of his age in his slow movements and frail health, but still retaining a keen mind and the skills he learned during his career. In short, Thaddeus' body may be slowing down, but his mind is as fast as ever.

Silas, Male Dog Bowlyn

CR 3; Medium Undead (Incorporeal); HD 4d12 (26 hp); Init +7; Spd Fly 40 ft. (Perfect, 8 squares); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Attack/Grapple +2/--; Attack Incorporeal Bite +5 melee (1d6); Full Attack Incorporeal Bite +5 melee (1d6); SA Manifestation, Seasick Bite, Telekinesis; SQ Incorporeal, Low-Light Vision, Scent, +5 Turn Resistance, Undead

Traits; Saves Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5; AL CE; Str --, Dex 16, Con --, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills & Feats: Jump +6, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +1, Survival +1; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Track

Manifestation (Su): Silas must manifest to attack with his bite. This manifestation causes all who view it to make a Will save (DC 12) or be affected by a Fear spell as cast by a twelfth level Sorcerer.

Seasick Bite (Su): Silas' bite causes those struck to make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or become nauseated until cured by either a Heal check (DC 12) or curative magic (any Cure Wounds spell will work, as will Remove Disease or similar magic).

Telekinesis (Sp): Silas can use Telekinesis once per round as a free action, as cast by a Sor12, though the ability can only affect non-living objects

Adventure Hooks

Captain Thaddeus has many resources that a party of adventurers could find useful. The stories of Thaddeus having ancient magical treasures are partly true; he does not have any artifacts, but he does have an esoteric collection of unique items. Among them is a compass that always shows the direction to the bearer's desired destination, a holy stone relic

from an undersea culture that bestows *water breathing*, and even a treasure map or two. Of course, exactly how these items work is up to the Dungeon Master.

The PC's may also hire Thaddeus to take them somewhere on the Sea of Sorrows; he has been to every common port of call on that ocean. Should the players wish to travel to Ghastria, Blaustein, Markovia, or even Dominia, Thaddeus could take them there. He also has knowledge of two of the Mistways that are present in the Sea of Sorrows (The Emerald Stream & The Way of Venomous Tears), though due to their reliability, he is reluctant to journey on these passageways. The only condition that Thaddeus requires is that the PC's act as his crew (his own had left him when he retired nine years before).

Finally, this scenario is presented in the harbor of Mordentshire to show a difference from the standard water-borne presentation of a Bowlyn. But, should the DM decide to heighten tension somewhat, the PC's could hire Thaddeus before Silas returns, and then have the spirit come to the ship while the PC's are out on the Sea of Sorrows, thus preventing an easy egress. Initially, Silas only cares about Thaddeus, but anyone getting in between it and the captain quickly earns the spirit's ire.

Character Development

The Old Salt

By Stephen "Sc8" Suffon
Stephen@fraternityofshadows.com

The angry sea pounded against the hull of the caravel, tossing the little merchant ship like a kite in a hurricane. Rain hammered upon the deck like a hail of bullets while the vengeful spray swamped the deck in a deluge, forcing men to grab the railing for dear life. The gale winds screamed with all the fury of hell, tearing at the sails even as the seamen struggled at the rigging. Another great wave lifted the boat high before sending crashing down into the water. Even still the little vessel surged upwards again, a desperate rider on the storm.

Valleria held the mast in an iron grip. Her mail was soaked through and through, weighing her down. Only now did the sylvan wish she had heeded the humans when they told her to remove the armour. Silently she cursed her elfin confidence as the boat tilted crazily with the impact of another wave. All around her the humans scampered, running up and down the ever rocking slope of the deck, climbing hand over hand along the ropes and railing when the waves threatened to wash them into the roiling ocean. Like furious ants they struggled against the elements, held to their boat by miraculous skill. Never in all her decades had she seen such skill or courage in so many humans.

Thunder exploded above while lightning danced on the horizon, revealing the endless miles of raging sea beyond. In the purple nimbus Valleria saw the captain, standing in the midst of

the gale, as tall and straight as an oak while his coat whipped furiously in the wind. The elf woman watched with fascination as he moved his nimble sea-legs with each rocking blow from the sea he orientating him straight and true. In his cold blue eyes she had seen an ancientness unseen in any mortal man. In his few years he had aged more, seen more, learned more than in all of Valleria's centuries.

"The sails will be ripped," Valleria hollered. She stood no more than a foot from the captain, yet had to scream to hear herself over the furious gale. The captain folded his arms.

"They'll hold a little longer," He said, his gruff voice clear even in the hurricane. "Well get you and your cargo to port safely, missy. You can count on it." As the wind shrieked and the waves crashed against the boat, Valleria believed him.

Background: The old salt is a sailor born and bred, seasoned with years of salty spray. Often an old salt inherits his calling, harkening back to a proud legacy of seamen that stretch far beyond the bounds of memory or record. Some say that old salts are born with salt water in their veins, seized from birth by the calling of the open sea. Still, more than a few "landlubbers" have fallen under the spell of the sea latter in life and made her their mistress. The old salt has made the sea his constant companion, making his living upon waves in the tradition of

his ancestors. Many old salts are fishermen or merchants, though more than a few are professional soldiers with a navy. The best captains are old salts themselves. Though they may be landed property owners, they're only true home is the sea.

Personality: The wind and the waves are a mercurial companion, given to extreme changes. Old salts are perpetually wary, ever watching for the telltale signs of a storm. Sailors of this bent are a thoroughly practical lot, unimpressed with fancy words or show gimmicks. Many find these men stubborn to accept change, though in truth Old Salts are merely hesitant to put their faith in unproven knowledge.

The hardships of a life at sea have made old salts a stoic breed. They accept adversity without question, plunging ahead into raging gales, biting blizzards or sweltering doldrums without fear or complaint. Old salts are universally disciplined, having learned firsthand the grim cost of disorder. These sailors will not gladly suffer fools, nor will they stand for laziness. These sea-hands can be cold and distant; especially to those they term "landlubbers". Nonetheless they will warm to those who earn their respect.

Psychology: Some may call them cagy, guarded, or even grizzled; the old salt has seen many a good friend vanish into the cruel ocean, never to return. Such seamen remain cold and distant to all they meet, possibly to the point of rudeness. While some might mistake this aloofness as indifference, in reality it is an overwhelming pragmatism that drives the old salt. They must be ever ready to sever a tie that threatens to drag them or their ship under.

Surrounded by the infinite oceans, buffeted across the roiling waves like a fly in a thunderstorm, a man quickly learns of his insignificance to the greater world. Old salts have been stripped of any arrogance they might once have had. For this reason, many old salts are pious followers of faith.

In stark contrast to their pragmatism are the numerous superstitions held by such sea dogs. Perhaps as an attempt to control their own fate, Old Salts believe that there are certain rules that can protect their ship at sea. Seamen of this stripe are ever on the lookout for omens of ill luck. Amongst the most common beliefs are; the presence women cause bad luck aboard ships, dead bodies must never be carried by a ship, a ship that has been renamed is doomed to be wrecked and a red sky at morning is an omen of bad luck.

Patterns: Old salts are married to the sea; their lives are inextricably linked to the surf and salty spray. Most old salts live and work upon ships, either working as merchant seamen or grizzled fishermen. When finally the toll of the years robs them of their strength, old salts feel compelled to retire to a local close by their beloved sea. They might spend the rest of their years working as fish mongers, lighthouse keepers, net-weavers or even as tavern flies to be close to their fellow sailors.

They're careers often keep them from home for months, if not years at a time. Old salts are a frugal people, working hard to provide for the family they rarely see. When finally they do return home they cherish their time with their children and spouses, dotting on them with every coin they have earned. There is nothing that a sailor would not

do for his beloved family, whether that be braving a storm to obtain medicine for a sick child, or facing off against a fearsome spawn of the night.

When a seaman finds a good ship and a fine captain to serve, they loyally bond with that vessel and form a tight nit crew. The camaraderie between old salts and their shipmates is legendary, standing in the face of death and despair. Self-sacrifice is demanded of these men by the unspoken bond of a ship. In the face of peril they will not hesitate to forfeit the lives of the individual for the good of the many.

Role-playing: Old salts are a grizzled people, aged beyond their years by the weathering of the wind and the waves. These seamen are often distant and standoffish, even to their friends and crewmates. Each salt conducts himself with a quiet, humble dignity. Much like the dwarves of Darkon, old salts are a dour people, not given to light humours. Though not extravagant, seamen still enjoy the finer pleasures in life; a stiff drink on a old night, a fine smoke from a pipe, the company of a spirited wench or a story of the sea.

An Old Salt will never venture far from the sea, for he is bound by the salty spray and the rocking of the waves. Old Salts rarely adventure, per se, though they are often called upon to transport adventurous passengers to mysterious locals. An adventuring party will find few allies as valuable as a seasoned seaman on the waves. Old Salts are experts in the lore of the seas, and with their own eyes seen nearly everything between the skies and the ocean floor. Retired salts are valuable sources of information and may provide a party with first hand experience of the terrors of the depths.

Old salts have deep ties to their families, which drive them to face the dangers of the depths. Should a creature of the night harm a seaman's family, it calls down the wrath of a stubborn foe. Old salts pursue vengeance with single-minded purpose, facing the perils of the night with a courage that weathered a thousand storms.

Class and Prestige Classes: Old salts are often experts, reflecting their training and experience as seamen. An old salt may have taken class levels as a fighter to help to increase his ability to defend his ship, while piratical salts may have levels of the rogue class. Noblemen who began their careers at sea may have levels in the aristocrat class and Seagoing chaplains might possess levels in the cleric class. Retired salts may perfect their story-telling technique to the point where they become bards. Druids devoted to the sea may become old salts themselves, but rarely do other spell casters fall to the calling of the sea.

When the denizens of darkness harm the friends, family or crew of an old salt, they earn a determined foe. Old salts seeking vengeance may take on the avenger class, or even levels of the ranger class focussing on aquatic enemies.

Suggested Feats: The feats *courage*, *great fortitude*, *iron will* and *toughness* appeal to Old Salts. Seamen also benefit from feats such as *athletic* to increase their ability to climb rigging and swimming in the ocean and *self sufficient* to heal wounded comrades or survive in desperate situations. The feat *skill focus* could be taken to improve their ability to fish, handle rope or ply their profession.

Captain Jonas Wyldman

Male human Exp 7, Avn 6: CR 9; medium sized humanoid; HD 7D6 + 6D10 + 26; HP 82; Init +1; Spd 30ft.; AC 12 (flatfooted 11, touch 11); Atk +12 melee (cutlass, 1d6+1, 19-20/*2), +13 ranged (harpoon, 1D6+2, *3, 20 ft.), +12 ranged (net, -, 10ft); SA harpoon, Resolve +2, sworn enemy (animals); SQ; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Reflex +5, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: craft (carpentry) +6, craft (fisherman) +9, balance +7, climb +7, gather information +4, knowledge (nature) +8, spot +9, profession (sailor) +15, sense motive +8, survival +12, swim +8, use rope +8; endurance, exotic weapon proficiency (net), jaded, iron will, skill focus (knowledge nature), sworn enemy (animals)

Languages Known: Mordentish, Lamordian

Signature Possessions: Cutlass, heavy coat (acts as leather armour) masterwork harpoon, necklace of squid claws, throwing net. Jonas is captain of the Albert, a two masted fishing vessel outfitted with trawling nets.

Captain Jonas Wyldman is a seaman of fifty, weathered by the years. Even in his age he is a powerful figure, commanding the authority due to a veteran captain. His long, square jawed face is as wrinkled and hard as old leather, worn by storms and sorrow. He is always neatly shaved, except for a steel grey beard running from his sideburns across his square chin. Wyldman most often dresses in a long, thick grey coat and a drooping rain hat.

Background: Before he was even born, Jonas Wyldman was destined to be a

sailor. Like his countless ancestors before him, he was drawn to the sea by an irresistible force. He began as a gaffer aboard a fishing vessel trawling the cold waters of the Sea of Sorrows. After years of backbreaking labour, Jonas saved enough to buy his own boat, with enough left over to buy a cottage and start a family.

Like all fishermen, Jonas hoped his children would follow in the proud nautical tradition. So it was that when his son Albert was old enough to walk Jonas took him to sea. Little did he imagine the danger that awaited them.

A week into the voyage Jonas' crew began to haul a fine catch of cod into the trawler. Yet as the men gaffers began their work, a cry rang out. One of men spotted something in the water, a huge undulating shape that seemed to be growing. Before Jonas could react, the ship was seized with a titanic force that tore the vessel in two. One by one the men were pulled under, including Jonas' son. In the dark, churning water Jonas could see a single, gigantic eye peering back at him with inhuman intelligence.

Wyldman spent the next three days in the frigid water, clinging to life only by his thirst for revenge. As soon as he returned to land Jonas dedicated his life to the destruction of squid and all the creatures of the depths that preyed on man. That winter the Sea of Sorrows suffered from many more attacks as the population of giant squid multiplied. Wyldman invested the last of his fortune into a new boat, the Albert, to exterminate the monstrous killers and hunt the beast that took his child. In the following years Captain Wyldman would slay nearly a hundred of the killer squids, as well as the monster that had taken so much from him.

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Current Sketch: Now past his prime, Captain Wyldman is a man without a purpose. After personally slaying the creature that killed his son, Jonas has drifted aimlessly. His wife having died of pox years ago and his daughters married away, Jonas remains the last of the Wyldman line, with no sons left to pass on his proud heritage. Nonetheless, he faces despair with the same stoicism that saw him through life.

Today, Jonas can be found trawling the coast of the Sea of Sorrows, selling what fish he finds to make ends meet. To break the monotony of the years, he ferries passengers and cargo from island to island, and on more than one occasion, to lands deep in the mists. Jonas has been to nearly every port in the demiplane and seen nearly every thing that swims or sails. Wyldman is ever alert for tales of giant squid, or any other aquatic horror that preys on man. He still keeps a necklace of the sucker claws of the beast that slew his boy, to remind him of the monsters that lurk within the depths.

Combat: Captain Wyldman faces combat with the same courage and determination that has saw him through his many hard years. In a crisis, Captain Wyldman seizes control and leads his

crew into battle. He will stubbornly defend his vessel, his crew and anyone else in his charge to the bitter end.

Against a spawn of the deep, Wyldman adopts the strategy of a hunter. With the patience that only a fisherman can possess, Wyldman lures his prey into a trap. When he is ready to spring, Wyldman uses his trusty harpoon to spear his target and bind them to his ship, making escape impossible. Once the kill is secured, Jonas throws his nets to entangle his quarry before closing in with his cutlass.

Harpoon: On a successful attack roll with a harpoon, Jonas impales the target and secures the victim with a line of rope. To remove the harpoon the victim must spend a full round action and make a strength check equal to 10 + the damage dealt by the initial attack. Removing the harpoon deals 1D6 points of damage.

Resolve: When facing a squid, octopus or any other tentacle monster Jonas receives a +2 bonus to his constitution and wisdom scores. These bonuses remain as long as he battles such a monster, and 1 round thereafter.

Sworn Enemy: The feat sworn enemy grants Jonas a +1 moral bonus to attack rolls against any aquatic animal.

Terrors of the Deep

New Nautical Nightmares

By Uri "Shadowking" Barak
 Template Creatures by Sunstar
 uzibarak@zahav.nef.il

*Father, father, where are you going
 O do not walk so fast.
 Speak father, speak to your little boy
 Or else I shall be lost,*

*The night was dark no father was there
 The child was wet with dew,
 The mire was deep, & the child did weep
 And away the vapour flew.
 "The Little Boy Lost"- William Blake*

Organization Solitary, Swarm (10d10
 Giant Jellyfish) or Tide
 (1000-10000 Giant
 Jellyfish)
Challenge 1/2
Rating
Treasure None
Alignment Always True Neutral
Advancement 3-4 (Small) 5-6
 (Medium)

Jellyfish, Giant

Size and Type Medium Vermin
 (Aquatic)
Hit Dice 2D8 +2 (10 HP)
Initiative 0
Speed Swim 10 feet
AC 10
Attacks 2 tentacles +1 melee
Damage Tentacle 1d4 + acidic
 poison
Face/Reach 5ft. by 5 ft. /5 ft. (20 ft.
 with tentacles)
Special
Attacks: Acidic Poison
Special
Qualities Aquatic Traits, Ooze
 Traits, Vermin Traits
Saves Fortitude +3 Reflex +0
 Will +0
Abilities Str 10 Dex - Con 14 Int -
 Wis 11 Cha 3
Skills Spot +10
Feats Blindsight (B)
**Climate/
 Terrain** Any aquatic (Saragossa,
 Nocturnal Sea and Sea of
 Sorrows)

These disgusting, slimy creatures are a massive species of man-on-war jellyfish. They are passive creatures nearly incapable of individual movement, and are randomly carried the waves- which often causes them to wash unto Ravenloft's shores in great numbers during storms. Their hood is over 5 feet wide and their 2 longest tentacles extend over nearly 20 feet. They also possess a plethora of shorter tentacles of varying lengths.

Combat

A Giant Jellyfish mindlessly flails with two main tentacles in combat, paralyzing its prey for later consumption.

Acidic Poison (Ex): The Giant Jellyfish has a nasty stinging poison which can even paralyze small creatures. It is delivered by contact with bare skin and through its tentacle attack. The toxin requires a Fort save DC 10, causing initial damage of 1d3 acid damage and paralysis as secondary

damage for 1d3 rounds. Both acid and poison immunity protect against this effect.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Giant Jellyfish can breathe freely underwater and fight with no penalties while underwater.

Ooze Traits (Ex): A Giant Jellyfish is blind (blindsight 60 ft.) and immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight. It is immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or flanking.

Vermin Traits (Ex): A Giant Jellyfish is immune to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). It also has darkvision (60-foot range).

Barracuda

Size and Type: Small Animal
(Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 4D8 + 4 (20 HP)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: Swim 70 feet

AC: 16 (+1 Size, + 4 Dex, +1 Natural)

Attacks: 1 bite +3 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6 (19-20/ x3)

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

Special Attacks: Vicious Bite

Special Qualities: Aquatic Traits,

Saves: Fortitude +5 Reflex +8
Will + 1

Abilities: Str 10 Dex 18 Con 13
Int 3 Wis 11 Cha 10

Skills: Spot +5 Swim +10

Feats:

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic
(Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Murder (2-12)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always True Neutral

Advancement: 5-8 (Small) 9-12 (Medium)

Barracudas are a feared species of predatory fish known for their cunning and ferocious bite. They have a long, slender frame and are covered in scales that range from silver to blue. Barracudas are often solitary, but smaller species are known to school.

Combat

Barracuda are relentless hunters who prowl the water in great packs, attacking anyone they view as food. These ferocious fish never retreat in battle.

Vicious Bite (Ex): A Barracuda has an especially vicious bite. It deals damage as a creature one size category larger (1d6 for a Small Barracuda) and has a critical range of 19-20/x3.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Barracudas can breathe freely underwater and fight with no penalties while underwater.

Sea Zombie

Size and Type: Medium Undead
(Obedient, Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 3D12 +6 (24 HP)

Initiative: -1 (Dex)

Speed	30 ft. 30 ft. Swim
AC	13 (-1 Dex, +4 Natural)
Attacks	2 slams +3 melee
Damage	Slam 1d6 +2
Face/Reach	5ft. by 5 ft. /5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Drowning Touch
Special Qualities	Aquatic Traits, Fire Resistance 5, Partial Actions Only, Stench of the Sea, Undead Traits
Saves	Fortitude +1 Reflex +1 Will +3
Abilities	Str 15 Dex 8 Con - Int - Wis 10 Cha 1
Skills	Hide +4
Feats	Toughness (B), Toughness, Weapon Focus (Slam)
Climate/Terrain	Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)
Organization	Solitary, Gang (2-5), Squad (6-10) or Mob (11-20)
Challenge Rating	2
Treasure	Half standard
Alignment	Always Neutral Evil
Advancement	4-6 (Medium) 7-9 (Large)

Sea Zombies (or Drowned Dead) are Obedient Undead created by sea-dwelling Necromancers from drowning victims by using a slightly modified version of the Animate Dead spell. While they might appear to be nothing more than Zombies created from victims who drowned at sea, the circumstances of their death and the Necromantic enchantments placed on them during their creation make them more powerful. The darklord Meredoth and the vile priestesses of the Shaugin are well-

known for using Sea Zombies as minions.

The vile diseases known as Nocturnal Rot and Ocean Wasting and the feeding of Aquatic Vampires also creates them, and people murdered through drowning (such as the sacrificial victims of the barbaric faith of the Sea Queen in Saragossa) who lack the sufficient willpower to rise as more powerful forms of undead occasionally rise as free-willed Sea Zombies.

Sea Zombies appear as decaying, bloated and waterlogged corpses. Slimy things are occasionally seen crawling between their exposed ribs, and there is a dim red light of malice shining in their otherwise blank white eyes. The mere sight of a Sea Zombie viewed for the first time draws a Horror Check with a DC of 13. This is the standard, medium-size humanoid Sea Zombie. An alternative way for using these creatures is presented with the Sea Zombie Template.

Combat

Sea Zombies, like most Obedient Dead, are almost never found alone. Despite being mindless creatures, their masters often teach them several useful combat tactics using the Reign Undead skill. All Sea Zombies are taught how to ambush; usually lurking submerged a short distance from shore until they spot a victim walking. As Obedient Dead, there is no limit to the amount of time they can lay motionless in the same place. A few, older Sea Zombies were trained to lure victims to swim near them (taught a few basic words and phrases such as "Help me!") but most simply swim closer to the victim and rise from the water, attacking en-masse with their Slams until either they or their victim fall down. More intelligent Sea Zombies

(such as those whose master was slain) might learn or develop other tactics, but will usually attack the living on sight just as their mindless kin do, motivated by a sense of growing hate to the living.

Drowning Touch (Su): Those struck by a Sea Zombie's slam attack must succeed at a Will save DC 13 or experience the horrible sensation of drowning, suffering a -2 penalty to all attacks, saves, AC and skill checks. The condition can be removed by Dispel Magic, Lesser Restoration or by resting.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 5 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks. However they suffer a -2 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves and checks while out of water.

Partial Actions Only (Ex): A Sea Zombie can perform only partial actions- for example it can attack or move but not perform both at the same round.

Stench of the Sea (Ex): Sea Zombies exude a powerful stench of rotting fish and salt-water. Attempts to detect them via scent a +8 Circumstance bonus to Wilderness Lore checks.

Undead Traits (Ex): Aquatic Zombies are undead.

Creating Sea Zombies

Sea Zombies are created when the Animate Dead spell is used on a victim of drowning. Instead of the normal material component the Necromancer needs a piece of the Corpus Coralis, a rare black-coloured coral which grows only in ship wrecks (requires a successful Profession: Herbalist Check DC 12), which must be inserted into the corpse's mouth.

New Disease- Nocturnal Rot

This foul disease is the creation of Meredoth, the hateful and misanthropic darklord of the Nocturnal Sea, and was meant to spare him the effort to animate new Sea Zombie by giving his existing minions the ability to Create Spawn through the Nocturnal Rot disease. This way, he can fully dedicate himself to his precious studies without being interrupted by the need to replenish his minions' ranks. The Nocturnal Rot is a strain of the infamous Ocean Wasting disease carried by Sea Zombie Lords. Unlike Nocturnal Rot, Sea Zombies created by Ocean Wasting do not carry the disease.

A Knowledge (Undead Lore) DC 18 is required to differentiate the two diseases. Sea Zombies with Nocturnal Rot gain Disease as a Special Attack and a Salient Ability and add +1 to their CR. They deliver Nocturnal Rot by their slam attack.

Nocturnal Rot: Supernatural disease- Injury, Fortitude save 16, incubation period 3 days, damage 1d3 temporary Str, 1d3 temporary Dex and 1d3 temporary Con. Victims of Nocturnal Rot have their body tissues gradually filling with salt water and decaying at the same time in an extremely painful process. Any victim killed by Nocturnal Rot or remaining infected for more than 7 days immediately dies (no save) and rises as a Sea Zombie under Meredoth's control in 1d4 rounds and only a Hallow spell cast on the corpse prevents this from occurring. Nocturnal Rot is a magical disease and thus successful saves do not allow an infected character to recover. Only magical healing can save the character.

Baracuda, Dire

Size and Type	Large Animal (Aquatic)
Hit Dice	7D8 + 35 (52 HP)
Initiative	+3 (Dex)
Speed	Swim 70 feet
AC	15 (-1 Size, + 3 Dex, +3 Natural)
Attacks	1 bite +9 melee
Damage	Bite 2d6 +4 (19-20/ x3)
Face/Reach	5 ft. by 5ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks	Vicious Bite
Special Qualities	Aquatic Traits,
Saves	Fortitude +10 Reflex +8 Will + 4
Abilities	Str 19 Dex 16 Con 20 Int 4 Wis 15 Cha 10
Skills	Spot +5 Swim +10
Feats	
Climate/Terrain	Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)
Organization	Solitary, Pair, Murder (2-12)
Challenge Rating	3
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always True Neutral
Advancement	8-14 (Large) 15-21 (Huge)

Dire Barracudas are vicious oceanic predators, strong enough to give most sharks pause. Unlike normal barracudas, they prey upon humans.

Combat

Dire Baracuda are surprisingly intelligent for fish, and utilize their numeric advantage to bring down stronger foes.

Vicious Bite (Ex): A Dire Baracuda has an especially vicious bite.

It deals damage as a creature one size category larger (2d6 for a Large Dire Baracuda) and has a critical range of 19-20/x3.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Dire Barracudas can breathe freely underwater and fight with no penalties while underwater.

Vampire Spawn, Sea

Size and Type	Medium Undead (Aquatic)
Hit Dice	4D12 (24 HP)
Initiative	+6 (+2 Dex, +)
Speed	30 ft. 60 ft. Swim
AC	16 (+2 Dex, +4 Natural)
Attacks	1 bite +5 melee and 2 claws +1 melee
Damage	Bite 1d6 + 3 plus poison and claw 1d4 +3
Face/Reach	5ft. by 5 ft. /5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Blood Drain, Poison, Improved Reach
Special Qualities	Aquatic Traits, Blood Scent, DR 5/silver, Fast Healing 2, Fire Resistance 10, Foam Form, Immunities, SR 12, Turn Resistance +2, Undead Traits
Saves	Fortitude +1 Reflex +1 Will + 3
Abilities	Str 16 Dex 14 Con – Int 4 Wis 10 Cha 12
Skills	Climb +5, Hide +5 Move Silently +5 Swim +5
Feats	Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
Climate/Terrain	Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)

Organization	Solitary or pack (2-5)
Challenge	3
Rating	
Treasure	Standard
Alignment	Always Chaotic Evil
Advancement	-

Sea Vampire Spawn are wretched creatures, formerly living humanoids drained of blood by a Sea Vampire and not deemed worthy to be transformed into true Vampires. Their minds are shattered by the transformation to undeath and they become little more than sadistic beasts and slaves to their desires- above all the desire to drink blood. However, usually a Sea Vampire Spawn is enslaved to the Vampire who drained his blood, with his only hope of freedom being the death of his master. Unlike a true Vampire their power level is set (they are too unintelligent to advance in a class and don't increase in power as they age) and even a free-willed Sea Vampire Spawn is little better than a wild beast anyway- death is probably the best for these wretches.

Sea Vampire Spawn appear similar to regular Sea Vampires, but have a hunched and bestial look and are even more fish-like in appearance, looking like a decaying, feral Deepkin more than a human. A Knowledge (Undead Lore) DC 8 is required to tell Sea Vampire Spawn and Sea Vampires apart.

Combat

Sea Vampire Spawn are almost mindless yet cunning and savage foes, and should never be underestimated. They often hide in the sea near the coast, preying on casual swimmers.

Blood Drain (Ex): A Vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fanged tongue by making a successful

grapple check. If it pins the foe it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin is maintained.

Improved Reach (Ex): The Sea Vampire's tongue is extremely long and flexible and has a fanged maw at its end. It allows the Vampire to make bite attacks and grapple with an additional reach of 5 feet.

Poison (Ex): Sea Vampire Spawn deliver their poison with a bite attack. DC 15, initial damage 1d4 Int, secondary damage Charm Person for 1 hour. The charm effect can only be removed by negating the poison.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks.

Blood Scent (Ex): A Sea Vampire notices creatures by scent in a 180 foot radius and detects blood in the water at a range of 1 mile.

Damage Reduction (Su): A Sea Vampire has DR 5/silver.

Fast Healing 2 (Ex): Sea Vampires heal 2 hit points per round as long as they have at least 1 Hit Point left and are in contact with salt water. If reduced to 0 hit points or less the Vampire immediately turns into a patch of thick sea foam and attempts to escape. It must reform its body while fully immersed in salt water within a hour or be utterly destroyed. Once at rest within salt water, it rises to 1hit point after 1 hour then resumes healing at a rate of 2 hit points per round. In addition, a Vampire can regrow its tongue if it severed within 5 rounds. A Vampire loses its Fast Healing if it remains out of the water for more than a hour. A Vampire can renew its Fast Healing by

spending 10 full rounds immersed in salt water.

Fire Resistance 10 (Ex): A Sea Vampire Spawn has Fire Resistance 10.

Foam Form (Su): As a standard action a Sea Vampire can assume Foam Form, which works as a Gaseous Form spell cast by a 5th level Sorcerer with the some differences. The Vampire turns into sea foam rather than mist (gaining +10 to Hide checks while within the sea), cannot fly (and his land speed is reduced to 10 feet) but gains +60 to his Swim speed. He can remain in foam form indefinitely.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Sea Vampires are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Turn Resistance +2 (Ex): Sea Vampire Spawn have Turn Resistance +2.

Undead Traits (Ex): Sea Vampire Spawn receive all undead traits.

Skills: Vampire Spawn receive +4 racial bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Swim and Wilderness Lore checks (regarding sea regions).

Repelling and Slaying Sea Vampire Spawn

Sea Vampire Spawn are treated as Fledgling Sea Vampires for purpose of determining their weaknesses. In addition, they are utterly enslaved to their creator until either is slain.

Siren, Dread

Size and Type	Medium-Size (Aquatic, Mists)	Fey
Hit Dice	5D6 (15 HP)	
Initiative	+4 (Dex)	
Speed	30 ft. 60 ft. Swim	
AC	19(+4 Deflection)	Dex, +5
Attacks	Dagger +6 melee or short bow +6 ranged or spells	
Damage	Dagger 1d4 -1 (19-20/x2) or short bow (1d6/x3) or by spell	
Face/Reach	5ft. by 5ft./5 ft.	
Special Attacks:	Kiss of Idiocy, Siren Music, Spell-like Abilities, Spells	
Special Qualities	Aquatic Traits, Deflection, DR 5/cold iron, Low-light Vision, Unnatural Aura	
Saves	Fortitude +1 Reflex +5 Will +7	
Abilities	Str 8 Dex 19 Con 11 Int 14 Wis 16 Cha 20	
Skills	Bluff +16, Knowledge (Nature) +10, Perform (Singing) +14, Wilderness Lore +8	
Feats	Ability Focus (Siren Music), Weapon Finesse	
Climate/Terrain	Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)	
Organization	Solitary, couple (1 Siren with a male mortal thrall) or covey (3 Sirens)	
Challenge Rating	6	
Treasure	Standard	
Alignment	Always Chaotic Evil	
Advancement	By character class (Favoured Sorcerer)	Class:

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Dread Sirens are wicked Fey women who haunt the shores of Ravenloft's oceans. Originally Dread Sirens were normal Sirens, selfish, tricky and not prone to human definitions of morality - yet not evil. However, upon entering Ravenloft they were driven evil and completely mad, corrupted physically and mentally by contact with the land's tainted waters. They became unholy creatures of Ravenloft, emotionally alienated from all other forms of life. Their once harmless pranks have become sadistic games of temptation, domination and death.

Dread Sirens set up lair in the undersea area beneath especially treacherous shoals, where they lure human sailors to their deaths with their charming voices and appearance. Reavers and similar predators are often attracted to these areas to finish off any survivors, but the Siren drives them away with her own animal minions, wishing to finish them off herself.

Occasionally a Dread Siren will take a male human as a lover- actually, there are only female Sirens and they can only be impregnated by human males. The results of such mating are Sirens if the child is female and Reavers if the child is male, although Sirens detest their brutish spawn and drive them off their territory. Her kiss eventually reduces her lover into a mindless, drooling thrall, so the Siren toys with him for awhile before discarding of the worthless mortal. Sometimes up to 3 Sirens will form a partnership of a sort to increase their victim count. Such as a gathering is called a Covey and rarely lasts for long due to the Siren's hateful and bitter nature. Many Dread Sirens pursue character classes, usually becoming Sorceresses or Necromancers.

A Dread Siren's abode is eerily silent, since no animal (not Charmed or Dominated by the Siren) will approach a Dread Siren willingly. A Listen or Spot check DC 10 is required to notice this, and a Knowledge (Fey Lore) DC 15 will recognize the place as a Dread Siren's lair- but usually it is too late, as the monster begins singing her infernal song.

Physically a Dread Siren appears as a scantily-clad Elfish woman of amazing beauty and grace. Her only unnatural features are a slight greenish skin tone, gills (often hidden by her long, weed-choked hair) and webbed hands and feet and cruel eyes filled with mad hatred. They typically wield coral daggers and short bows made of bleached fish bones, as well as various pieces of jewellery stolen from victims. When a Siren dies she reverts into bloody sea-foam.

Combat

Dread Sirens typically avoid combat, preferring sadistic games to actual confrontation. In combat they rely on their song to crush the wills of opponents, attacking with their bows (which often carry poisoned arrows) or spells behind their minions and only using their coral daggers as a last resort.

Kiss of Idiocy (Su): A mortal subject to a Dread Siren's kiss suffers 1d4 points of Intelligence damage each round the kiss is maintained. The creature must make an Int check DC 15 to notice his mind slipping away. A mortal reduced to 0 Int by the Kiss of Idiocy is treated as permanently Dominated by the Dread Siren, becoming her willing utter thrall. The creature must be subject to Dispel Evil first before his Intelligence can be

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restored, causing a Madness check DC 12.

Siren Music (Sp): 5 times per day, the Dread Siren can produce special music by Performing. Any Animal, Humanoid, Giant, Magical Beast or Monstrous Humanoid within 90 feet of the Siren who sees her and hears her voice must make a Will save DC 19 or be subject to Cause Fear, Charm or Suggestion as cast by a 10th level Sorcerer. This is a mind-affecting sonic effect.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): As a 10th level Sorcerer.

At will: Fog Cloud, Ghost Sound, Light, Ray of Frost

1/day: Create Food and Water (Faerie Food only), Improved Invisibility, Inflict Moderate Wounds, Silence

Spells: A Dread Siren casts spells as 5th level Druid.

Aquatic Subtype: Dread sirens possess the aquatic subtype.

Deflection (Su): The Dread Siren gets to apply her Charisma modifier as a Deflection bonus to AC. A Dispel Magic spell will suppress this ability for 1d4 rounds, while a Dispel Evil spell will suppress it for the entire day's duration.

DR 5/Cold Iron (Ex): A Dread Siren takes full damage from cold iron weapons.

Low-light Vision (Ex): A Dread Siren sees normally in poor illumination.

Mists Subtype (Ex): The Dread Siren can be summoned inside any domain with a large body of salt water and can pass unharmed through closed domain borders.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals will refuse to approach within 30 feet of a Dread Siren, and will be Panicked as long as they are within the area. A

Handle Animal DC 20 or certain spells and abilities (such as the Siren's Music) will prevent them from panicking.

Dread Siren Faerie Food

A Dread Siren can create a single dose of Faerie Food once per day. When digested, it allows a mortal to breath underwater indefinitely but also causes him to be permanently Charmed by the Dread Siren. The Dispel Magic or Dispel Evil spells will remove both effects of the Siren's Faerie Food.

Soulless

	Medium	Undead
Size and Type	(Restless, Aquatic)	
Hit Dice	8D12 (21 HP)	
Initiative	+1 (Dex)	
Speed	40 ft. 60 ft. Swim	
AC	20 (+1 Dex, +9 Natural)	
Attacks	2 claws +9 melee	
Damage	Claw 1d6 +5 +1 Vile	
Face/Reach	5ft. by 5ft./5 ft.	
Special Attacks:	Fear Aura, Soulless Gaze, Spell-like Abilities	
Special Qualities	Aquatic Traits, Curse of the Soulless, DR 15/magic, Fire Resistance 20, Immunities, Mind of Many, Turn Resistance +4, Undead Traits	
Saves	Fortitude +2 Reflex +3 Will +6	
Abilities	Str 21 Dex 13 Con - Int 14 Wis 11 Cha 16	
Skills	Bluff +8, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Knowledge (Ravenloft) +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +7	
Feats	Dark Speech, Ability	

	Focus (Gaze), Quicken Spell-like Ability (Wither Limb), Vile Natural Attack (Claw) (B)
Climate/ Terrain	Cold aquatic (Sea of Sorrows)
Organization	Solitary, Soul Seekers (2-5 Soulless), Soul Takers (6-10 Soulless)
Challenge Rating	9
Treasure	Double Standard
Alignment	Always Lawful Evil
Advancement	By character class (Favoured Class: Wizard)

The Soulless are cursed undead beings, empty corpses filled with nothing but ancient malice doomed to forever search for their lost souls which they bartered away for the empty promise of a fiend. They are an undying testament to the disasters which occur when man dabbles with forces far beyond the Mortal Coil. On a distant time and world, the monsters now called the Soulless (with that cursed name often accompanied by a warding gesture) were known by another name, the Vasharan. They were once humans much like you and I, the greatest civilization of its period.

Their city, the jewel metropolis of Vashar, was located on a fertile peninsula and was a center of trade, architecture and lore both Arcane and mundane. However, as usually occurs in these stories, the Vasharans' arrogance and folly increased together with their power and enlightenment. They started to doubt the existence of the old gods and embraced a sinful path of self-gratification and debauchery, viewing themselves as beyond such petty moral codes. This degeneration had continued

for countless generations, until the furious gods had decided to take action. They sent a Prophet to warn Vashar of the impending doom, telling them to repent lest they are all destroyed for their sins. Rather than heed his just words, the Vasharan mocked him and put the holy man to the torch simply to spite the gods. As a punishment for the execution of their chosen servant, the gods wracked Vashar with disasters such as droughts, floods and a great plague, sending one priest after another and begging the Vasharan to choose redemption, as the gods didn't wish to destroy their children created in the Divine image. All were killed, their words falling on empty ears and empty souls. Rather than repent, they fell deeper into their lives of sin. From the tiniest infant to the King himself, Vashar was a den of corruption, and there was no more hope left for it. It had to be destroyed, for all to see.

With grim acceptance, they unleashed their most terrible minion on the city, the Angel of Death himself. And He came with fire and with water and with iron and the pale touch of the Plague, destroying everything in His wake. And as their city was falling all around them, the Vasharan elite- its archmages, scholars, generals, merchant princes, the nobility and the Royal Family itself gathered in the Great Temple which once served the Gods of Good but stood empty for many years. On its hallowed altar they spilled the blood and offered the souls of their lesser Kinsmen to call a terrible fiend from Beyond, a being known as the Bargainer who was said to possess the power to defy the gods themselves. The humans who will one day be known as the Soulless struck a terrible Pact with

the Bargainer, offering their souls to him for immortality and protection from the gods' wrath. They have all signed their names in the Bargainer's great Book of Keeping, and as the fire and water consumed them and their city they ceased to be men and became the Soulless... And where the great peninsula and the city once stood there was only Mists.

The Vasharans' vile act had attracted the attention of Ravenloft's Dark Powers and the Demiplane of Dread absorbed the ruins of Vashar, placing the sunken city and its Soulless denizens on the bottom of the Sea of Sorrows. They, the social elite who led the corruption of Vashar and spat in the gods' faces would be unable to enjoy their newly earned unlife, forced to slumber a nightmare-induced sleep at the bottom of the Sea of Sorrows and awake only for a single day every century as the cursed city rises out of the Ocean.

Even while awake, their lack of a soul would keep them alienated from many of the pleasures they embraced so wholly in their sinful lives. The Soulless would only be able to break the curse and gain control over their own destiny by reclaiming their souls. And so every century, as the ruins of Vashar rise out of the ocean its cursed denizens scour the Core and beyond in a futile quest to find the Bargainer who deceived them (as they sensed the fiend's entry into Ravenloft some time ago) and the Book of Keeping which contains their own souls, and woe to any who stands in their way...

The Soulless are desperate creatures who would use their diabolical abilities to their fullest extent and they are driven by an overwhelming Crave to regain their souls. Most Soulless have

completely forgotten their mortal lives, only remembering the final moments of Vashar and how they bartered away their own souls. They are very intelligent and cunning, able to analyze the situation well, and will use intimidation, diplomacy (offering mortals the riches of Vashar or its ancient knowledge in return for aid), bluffing (pretending to be poor, suffering creatures- but the Soulless should never be pitied, for they embraced their fate) or torture. They will stop at nothing to complete their task, for unlike most undead they have very little time to complete their task.

In their true form, the Soulless appear as withered, bluish-grey corpses dripping with salt water, quite dead-looking yet strangely well-preserved despite the ravages of the sea (although some Soulless were partially eaten by the fish). They wear the once-proud, archaic robes of their ancient city, and their skins are covered in runes and tattoos which glow with an unwholesome, uncomfortable light. Their eyes have long decayed and their empty eye sockets are dark holes signifying the empty void where their souls should've been. Their fingers became carved, bony talons whose touch sears the soul. Soulless rarely carry weapons, preferring to use their dire gaze, wicked talons and spell-like abilities to devastate enemies.

The Soulless speak Vasharan, Dark Speech and 2 native Ravenloft tongues (typically Low Mordentish and Balok).

Combat

The Soulless enter combat as a last resort, for it steals precious time they could use for searching for their souls. They activate their Fear Aura to scatter lesser foes, using their Soulless Gaze

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and spell-like abilities to get rid of the rest. In the rare case the Soulless have to resort into melee combat, they cast Desecrate and tear foes apart with their wicked claws. When Soulless are encountered together, they use Mind of Many to co-ordinate their attacks. Regardless of the combat's outcome, the Soulless are effectively immortal unless the Curse of the Soulless is broken, but being physically destroyed forces them to wait another 100 years before they can rise again and thus if combat turns out badly for them they attempt to Paralyze foes with their Soulless Gaze and flee.

Fear Aura (Su): The Soulless can activate a terrible aura of fear as a free action. It forces any creature with less than 5 HD near the Soulless to succeed at a Will save DC 17 or be subject to the effects of a Fear spell cast by a Sorcerer of the Soulless' HD (8).

Soulless Gaze (Su): The Soulless can project the hungry void within them into a malicious gaze. The Soulless Gaze has a range of 30 ft. and may create one of two effects: cause Paralysis (Will DC 19) for 1D4+1 minutes (this is a magical fear effect) or inflict 1d10 points of Vile damage per round (no save).

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): The Soulless may use the following spell-like abilities as an 8th level Sorcerer.

At will: Death Grimace, Death Knell, Deeper Darkness, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic

3/day- Desecrate, Fly, Heartclutch, Locate Object, Reality Blind

1/day- Grim Revenge, Haste, True Seeing

1/week- Consume Likeness (no Corruption cost), Insanity

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks.

Curse of the Soulless (Ex): All Soulless suffer from a Deadly Curse. They spend all their time in a state of nightmarish slumber, and only awake for a single week every century to search for the Bargainer who holds their souls. At the end of this period, they are magically compelled to return to Vashar (and turn into dust and foul water which evaporates in the wind should they somehow be trapped).

The Soulless also awaken when a living creature enters the ruins of Vashar, and are compelled to destroy it. Should a living creature steal (not be voluntarily given!) some of the treasures of Vashar, the Soulless will be compelled to track it down and reclaim what was theirs.

When a Soulless is destroyed in combat outside Vashar, its remains become dust and foul-smelling seawater within the course of a minute, eventually evaporating in the wind. At that exact same moment, the Soulless' body reforms in Vashar at a dormant state and the creature will have to wait for the next rising of the city before it can awake once more. When confronted inside Vashar, the Soulless will reform within merely a hour in a fully-active state and nothing except breaking the curse can prevent this.

Should someone erase the Soulless' names in the Bargainer's Book of Keeping the Soulless will no longer be bound by the Curse, which also means they can be killed normally. Some Soulless might actually gain final rest simply from the joining of the soul with the body, but the majority simply refuse

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to let go of the unlife for which they sacrificed so much.

Damage Resistance 10/magic (Ex): A Soulless has DR 10/magic.

Fire Resistance 20 (Ex): Soulless ignore the first 20 points of damage from fire-based attacks due to their water-soaked bodies.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Soulless are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Mind of Many (Su): The Soulless can communicate telepathically with others of its kind within 100 feet. They often use this ability to co-ordinate the search for their souls and during combat. Using Mind of Many is a free action.

Turn Resistance +8 (Ex): As long as they are affected by the Curse, the Soulless are turned as undead of double their HD. The common Soulless has 8 HD so it is turned as a 16 HD undead.

Langoir

Size and Type	Huge Aberration (Aquatic)
Hit Dice	16D8 + 96 (160 HP)
Initiative	+3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed	50 ft. Swim
AC	22 (-1 Size, -1 Dex, +14 Natural)
Attacks	1 bite +28 melee
Damage	Bite 3d6 +16 (18-20/x2) and poison
Face/Reach	10ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Improved Grab, Poison, Swallow Whole
Special Qualities	Alter Self, DR 10/magic, Light, Voice Mimicry
Saves	Fortitude +11 Reflex +7
Saves	Will + 12

Abilities	Str 33 Dex 8 Con 22 Int 6 Wis 14 Cha 10
Skills	Bluff +14, Hide +14, Swim +14
Feats	Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
Climate/Terrain	Cold aquatic (Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)
Organization	Solitary or Pair
Challenge Rating	10
Treasure	Standard
Alignment	Always Chaotic Evil
Advancement	17-32 (Huge), 33-48 (Gargantuan)

The Langoir is a cunning and hideous predator which lurks in the depths of Ravenloft's Sea of Sorrows and Nocturnal Sea. In theory, it could exist in any cold aquatic environment, although most lakes are too small for the massive Langoir to live in and thus it prefers the ocean. Due to its unnatural appearance and evil nature, many believe the Langoir to be the creation of Dark magic. They are far more intelligent than any natural animal should be, and their appearance and mindset seem like the creation of a true madman. The fact that Langoirs can mimic the forms and voices of devoured victims gives rise to rumours they devour souls.

While a Langoir has the general appearance of a gigantic angler fish, the bait at the end of its pole looks surprisingly similar to the form a living human child. Grieving fathers and mothers could swear they had seen their own loved ones at the end of the Langoir's bait.

Combat

A Langoir prefers intelligent prey, relishing their fear and surprise before devouring them alive. It often lurks near the shore, moving its child-like bait in the water as if it were drowning and using the few simple phrases it learnt to call for aid. When someone approaches near enough (either a single person or a boat- the Langoir is large and powerful enough to wreak small ships), the Langoir leaps out of the water with surprising speed and swallows them whole. Those who are not initially swallowed are paralyzed by the monster's venom and end up in its belly anyway. While the Langoir often extends its bait to shore (especially when luring children into the water to "come play") the bait itself is incapable of attack and the creature itself cannot enter land.

When found in the depths of the ocean, the Langoir uses its Light ability to lure prey to it.

Improved Grab (Ex): A Langoir that hits with a bite attack may start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it succeeds in its grapple a Langoir can swallow an opponent whole on its next turn with a successful grapple check.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial and secondary damage 1d8 Dex. A victim reduced to 0 Dex by a Langoir's venom is not killed but is permanently paralyzed until it recovers at least 1 point of Dexterity. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A Langoir can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to one size smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside the opponent takes 2d6 + 11 points of Bludgeoning damage and 1d8 +4 points of acid damage from the Langoir's

digestive juices. A swallowed creature can cut its way out using a light slashing or piercing weapon by dealing 30 points of damage to the Langoir's digestive tract (AC 17). Once the creature exits muscular action closes the hole- another swallowed opponent must cut its way out.

Alter Self (Sp): The Langoir can use Alter Self at will as a 10th level Sorcerer. However, this only affects the bait at the end of its pole and it can only assume the shapes of devoured victims.

Damage Resistance 10/magic (Su): A Langoir takes full damage from magical weapons.

Light (Ex): The Langoir's pole can shed light at a 20-foot radius. This acts as the spell, but is non-magical in nature and has an infinite duration. The Langoir can turn this ability on and off at will.

Voice Mimicry (Su): A Langoir can accurately mimic the voices of devoured victims (only). To do so, it must make an opposed Bluff check (with a +8 racial bonus) against the target's Listen check. A Langoir knows a few simple phrases in various domain languages which it uses to lure victims to it.

Sea Zombie, Swarm

Size and Type	Medium (Obedient, Swarm)	Undead Aquatic,
Hit Dice Initiative	20D12 +6 (126 HP)	+3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed AC	30 ft. 30 ft. Swim	
Attacks Damage	Swarm +12 Swarm 8d6	and Drowning Touch
Face/Reach	10 ft. /0 ft.	

Special Attacks:	Create Spawn, Distraction DC 20, Drowning Touch, Frightful Presence
Special Qualities	Aquatic Traits, Fire Resistance 20, Immunities, Life Sense, Overwhelming Stench of the Sea, Partial Actions Only, Spider Climb, Swarm Traits, Turning Immunity, Undead Traits
Saves	Fortitude +9 Reflex +8
Saves	Will + 15
Abilities	Str 15 Dex 8 Con - Int - Wis 10 Cha 1
Skills	Concentration +7
Feats	Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (Swarm), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Toughness (B)
Climate/ Terrain	Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)
Organization	Solitary or Hour of Ascension (10-20 Swarms)
Challenge Rating	12
Treasure	Double Standard
Alignment	Always Neutral Evil
Advancement	21-40 (Medium) 41-60 (Large)

A Sea Zombie Swarm is spontaneously animated at a location when more than 1000 people have drowned to death around the same time. Drawn together by a mindless hatred for all life, the Sea Zombie Swarm rises out of the sea like a tide of rotting flesh at the anniversary of its creation to engulf

and extinguish all life. Only empty villages are left in the wake of the Swarm's attack, with wet footprints leading into the sea. Darkonian legends speak of the Hour of Ascension, when thousands of undead will rise out of the sea to devour the living and reclaim what was once theirs. Perhaps Sea Zombie Swarms are gathering for this dire event...

The process of Sea Zombie Swarm creation cannot be magically duplicated, for no necromancer in the Land of the Mists (except Azalin Rex himself, who takes no interest in the sea) has the power to animate and command such a large number of undead at once. Their mindless devotion also makes them immune to turn and rebuke attempts.

A Sea Zombie Swarm appears as a mobile tide of rotting flesh and dripping water, extending over many feet. The features of individual Sea Zombies can barely be recognized within the mass, and for any Sea Zombie slain another 10 take its place. They usually carry a few sea-worn trinkets from their lives. The sight of a Sea Zombie Swarm emerging from the water or advancing draws a Horror check DC 25 in addition to their Frightful Presence ability.

Combat

Sea Zombie Swarms are mindless foes, simply attempting to overrun and consume their opponents. They will fight until they are destroyed.

Create Spawn (Su): Any living creature slain by a Sea Zombie Swarm's swarm attack rises as a Sea Zombie within 1d4 rounds unless a *Hallow* spell is cast on the corpse and immediately attempts to join the Swarm. For every 50 Sea Zombies which join the Swarm it is

fully healed of damage, and every 100 cause it to gain an additional HD.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature vulnerable to the swarm's damage that begins its turn with a swarm in its square is nauseated for 1 round; a DC 20 Fortitude save negates the effect. Even with a successful save, spellcasting or concentrating on spells within the area of a swarm requires a Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level). Using skills requiring patience and concentration requires a Concentration check (DC 20). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Drowning Touch (Su): Those struck by a Sea Zombie Swarm's swarm attack must succeed at a Will save DC 20 or experience the horrible sensation of drowning, suffering a -2 penalty to all attacks, saves, AC and skill checks. Victims killed by Sea Zombies appear to have drowned (water in the lungs etc.) and may be reanimated as Sea Zombies by an Animate Dead spell. The condition can be removed by Dispel Magic, Lesser Restoration or by resting.

Frightful Presence (Ex): A Sea Zombie Swarm can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect whenever the Swarm attacks or moves towards the creature. Creatures within a radius of 30 feet from the Swarm are subject to this effect if they have fewer HD than it. A potentially effected creature that passes a Will save (DC 20) is immune for the Swarm's Frightful Presence for 24 hours. On a failure creatures with 4 or less HD are panicked for 4d6 rounds and creatures with 5 or more HD are shaken for 3d6 rounds.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks. However they

are more at home on Water than on land, suffering a -2 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves and checks while out of water.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Sea Zombie Swarms are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Life Sense (Sp): A Sea Zombie Swarm can sense the presence of nearby living creatures by concentrating. Life Sense is similar to the Detect Undead spell except it is keyed to living beings. The longer the Swarm concentrates the more information it gains. For more information on Life Sense refer to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead.

Partial Actions Only (Ex): A Sea Zombie can perform only partial actions—for example it can attack or move but not perform both at the same round.

Spider Climb (Su): A Sea Zombie Swarm can scale vertical surfaces as affected by a Spider Climb spell.

Stench of the Sea (Ex): Sea Zombie Swarms exude an unbearable stench of decay. They can be detected through scent over up to 1 mile from their location and Wilderness Lore attempts to track them beyond that range gain a +20 circumstance bonus. In addition living creatures within 100 feet of them must succeed at a Fortitude save DC 20 each round or become nauseated for as long as they stay within that range, and even if they leave it they remain nauseated for 1d4 rounds.

The stench also drives animals within 100 feet range into a frenzy, and they will not willingly approach a Sea Zombie Swarm and will be panicked as long as they stay within that range. Creatures within 30 feet or less of the Sea Zombie Swarm receive no save against this ability.

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Swarm Traits (Ex): A swarm has no clear front or back and no discernable anatomy, so it is not subject to critical hits or flanking. A swarm composed of Fine or Diminutive creatures is immune to all weapon damage.

Reducing a swarm to 0 hit points or fewer causes the swarm to break up, though damage taken until that point does not degrade its ability to attack or resist attack. Swarms are never staggered or reduced to a dying state by damage. Also, they cannot be tripped, grappled, or bull rushed, and they cannot grapple another.

A swarm is immune to any spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as disintegrate), with the exception of mind-affecting effects if the swarm has an Intelligence score and a hive mind. A swarm takes a -10 penalty on saving throws against spells or effects that affect an area, such as many evocation spells or grenade-like weapons. If the area attack does not allow a saving throw, the swarm takes double damage instead.

Undead Traits (Ex): Sea Zombie Swarms receive all undead traits.

Meredoth's Horror

Size and Type	Gargantuan Undead (Aquatic, Obedient Dead)
Hit Dice	33D12 (300 HP)
Initiative	+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Imitative)
Speed	Swim 90 ft.
AC	30(-2 Size, +2 Dex, +20 Natural)
Attacks	1 bite + 31 melee, 2 tentacle rakes + 26 melee, 6 arms + 26 melee
Damage	Bite 4d6 +15 (18-20/x2 +1d6 or death), Tentacles

Face/Reach	2d6 +7, Arms 1d6 +7 15ft. by 75 ft./15 ft. (100 ft. with tentacle)
Special Attacks:	Berserk, Constrict 2d8 +15 or 1d6 +7, Devastating Critical DC 42, Disease DC 16, Improved Grab, Rend 4d6 +22, Swallow Whole
Special Qualities	Aquatic Traits, Bending the Land, Damage Reduction 15/magic and cold iron, Energy Immunities (Cold and Electricity), Ink Cloud, Keen Scent (dire shark), Life Sense, Stitching, Undead Traits
Saves Saves	Fort +18 Ref +16 Will +13
Abilities	Str 40 Dex 14 Con - Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 10
Skills	Listen +7, Spot +8
Feats	Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative (B), Great Cleave, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack (B), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)
Epic Feats	Devastating Critical (bite), Dire Charge, Overwhelming Critical (bite)
Climate/Terrain	Cold aquatic (Nocturnal Sea)
Organization	Solitary or Hour of Ascension (10-20 Swarms)
Challenge Rating	23
Treasure	Triple standard + Ring of Spell Resistance 32
Alignment	Always Neutral Evil
Advancement	-

This monster was created through the foul sorcery of the Necromancer Meredoth, darklord of the Nocturnal Sea. He invested a vast fortune and much of his power into the creation of this monstrosity, which is tasked with guarding his private isle of Todstein and destroying any fools (such as pesky adventurers) who would disturb his privacy, which the reclusive Necromancer values above all else.

More rarely, Meredoth orders his Horror to capture test subjects and bring them to him by swallowing them whole, although usually they are too damaged to be used properly when they arrive and thus he prefers to use less cumbersome minions (such as the Lebentod) for such tasks.

The Horror was created from the corpse of a Dire Shark of extreme size and strength, killed by whalers in the far-off land of Saragossa and imported by a particularly smart Lebentod who thought of the value the corpse of such a creature would have to its master. Meredoth grafted the tentacles and some of the armoured skin of a Kraken recently slain by him into the decaying body of the Shark and stitched the severed head of a little Human girl who drowned at sea into the tip of the Shark's tongue, granting the monster the limited ability of speech. He then fortified the thing with Dark magic and animated it, creating one of the most vile terrors to ever bring dread into the hearts' of Ravenloft's sailors. While the Horror is barely intelligent, it is inherently wicked and follows the orders of a genius (albeit a very disturbed, sick and evil genius).

Survivors of the Horror's attacks describe it as a gigantic, decaying great white shark (with bones sticking out of

its rotting flesh and mucus and pollution filling the water nearby it. Iron poles and the stitched flesh of men and Demons keep the grisly mass from falling apart.

The flesh around its massive jaws has fallen off, making them seem even larger than they truly are, and metals shine around the teeth. It might be mistaken for a simple Zombie Dire Shark, but is much more powerful. Eight rotting, dark-blue tentacles whirl around the gargantuan form, seemingly eager to crush the living and feed them to the monster's maw. They are attached to the sides of the body and maintain it as streamlined as possible.

When the abomination opens its mouth the little girl's head is revealed, bloated and dripping with water yet quite well-preserved. It is often singing a chilling lullaby, which usually signals the Horror's attacks. It is connected to the tip of the monster's long tongue, like the head of some nightmarish snake. Another Human's hand is stitched somewhere else around the massive body with a Ring of Spell Resistance 32 on its finger.

The mere sight of the Horror emerging from the murky depths draws a Horror check with a DC of 30 for the first time it is viewed, due to its sheer size and unnatural, disturbing appearance. The DC is increased to 35 if the beast opens its mouth.

Combat

The Horror's approach upon detecting a victim with Life Sight can easily be spotted (Spot check DC 5) by its massive back fin jutting out of the water and the creepy lullaby it sings in the dead girl's voice, which seems innocent and sweet yet occasionally gurgles with water.

A Knowledge (Local) or Knowledge (Undead Lore) with a DC of 10 is enough to identify the Horror for what it is due to its infamy, which causes most sane Sea Captains to turn back and sail for their lives.

Once contact is made the Horror attempts to use its size and strength to either break or turn the ship down, throwing the sailors into the water where the beast is nearly unbeatable. Its preferred combat tactic is to initially activate its Ink Cloud to obscure victims' vision then use its monstrous bite to destroy and devour all creatures in sight, with the tentacles serving to catch escaping victims and bring them closer to the gaping maw. It targets obvious spellcasters above all else, being taught to identify them by Meredoth. In second priority are large targets such as ships. However, the rare few victims who manage to escape beyond the tentacle's grasp for more than 10 rounds are not chased unless clearly ordered by Meredoth, as the very purpose of creating this Horror was to drive trespassers away.

In combat with a powerful Aquatic creature (such as a living Dire Shark or a Kraken) or when attempting to break the hull of a ship, the Horror will go Berserk and attempt to hit with its two tentacle attacks and use Rend to inflict maximum damage. In the unlikely case the Horror is reduced to less than 1/2 of its HP it was instructed to submerge deep into the black bottom of the ocean and swim back to Todstein where it can be repaired by its master, who doesn't want to waste the effort he put into his greatest creation.

Meredoth replaced the tips of some of the Horror's teeth with adamantine, mithral and silvered and magical tips,

allowing it to breach damage reduction normally with its bite attacks.

Berserk (Ex): Meredoth's Horror can enter a state of unholy rage 5 times per day. The Berserk state lasts 4 rounds, during which the Horror receives +4 Strength, -2 AC and it is only destroyed after being reduced to -10 Hit Points or less. When the Berserk state ends the Horror loses its Strength bonus, retains its penalty to AC and in addition suffers a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls for the next 4 rounds.

Constrict (Ex): The Horror deals automatic arm or tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex): The Horror delivers Nocturnal Rot through all its attacks (bite, tentacles and arms).

Nocturnal Rot: Supernatural disease- Injury, Fortitude save 16, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 temporary Str, 1d6 temporary Dex and 1d6 temporary Con. Any victim killed by Nocturnal Rot or remaining infected for more than 7 days immediately dies (no save) and rises as a Sea Zombie under Meredoth's control in 1d4 rounds and only a Hallow spell cast on the corpse prevents this from occurring

Improved Grab (Ex): If the Horror hits with either of its 3 attack types it may start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it succeeds in its grapple the Horror can swallow an opponent whole on its next turn with a successful grapple check if using its bite for the grapple, or Constrict if it uses its tentacles or arms.

Ink Cloud (Ex): The Horror can exude a 80-foot cloud of disgusting, ochre-coloured mucus once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment, which the Horror normally

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uses to escape a fight that is going badly. Creatures within the cloud are considered to be in darkness. The Horror's cloud transmits Nocturnal Rot to open wounds (any creature with at least 10% less than its maximum HP).

Rend (Ex): If the Horror hits a victim with its tentacles, it automatically inflicts 4d6 +22 points of Bite damage. The victim is considered grappled, and every round that the hold is maintained the Horror automatically hits with all its natural melee attacks.

Swallow Whole (Ex): The Horror can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to one size smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside the opponent takes 2d8 + 15 points of Bludgeoning damage and 1d8 +4 points of negative energy damage from the Horror's infused power every round (its digestive acids spilled long ago). A swallowed creature can cut its way out using a light slashing or piercing weapon by dealing 50 points of damage to the Horror's stomach (AC 20). From that point on swallowed creatures can freely exit the Horror- it must use its Stitching ability to repair the hole.

Aquatic (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks.

Bending the Land (Su): The Horror always remains at a distance of

150' feet from a fleeing victim no matter how fast he runs or how cleverly he hides his tracks. The Horror may approach such a victim normally should he stop moving or leave said area as it wills.

DR 15/cold iron and magic (Su): The Horror takes full damage from magical cold iron weapons due to its partially-demonic hide.

Immunities (Ex): The Horror has the standard undead immunities and in addition is immune to cold, electricity and water-based attacks.

Keen Scent (Ex): The Horror can notice creatures in the water in a range of up to 180 feet and detect blood within a mile.

Life Sense (Su): The Horror can detect the presence of the living (similar to a Detect Undead spell) by concentrating for 3 rounds, gaining more information for each round of concentration. For more information on Life Sense refer to Van Richten's Guide to the Walking Dead.

Stitching (Ex): For every 10,000 pounds of meat the Horror devours, it heals half its overall HP and regenerates all wounds and injuries caused to it after its reanimation (which means it will regrow a severed tentacle, but the spear wound which took its life will never heal) in a process which takes 4 hours.

Undead Traits (Ex): Meredoth's Horror is undead.

Templates

Lycanthrope, Wereshark

Weresharks are humanoids who can transform into the form of a shark, as well as a hideous and deadly hybrid form. Cruel and gluttonous, they go out to prowl the seas at nights of full moon, looking out for victims to devour.

Weresharks are rapacious creatures bloated on their power, often to the point of megalomania. They are the ultimate hunters of the sea, and follow the law of the jungle- only the strong survive. They delight in combat, and often pursue violent careers such as piracy. True Weresharks who are more in tune with their animal side often use their advantage in sheer strength and intellect to dominate entire packs of sharks, using them to archive their nefarious goals.

Followers of the Sea Queen view Weresharks as sacred avengers of the goddess who follow Her divine will and devour the unworthy, and some true fanatics willingly contact this strain of lycanthropy to prove their devotion. Shaugin likewise revere Weresharks as part of their religion, viewing the state as a blessing from the Great Devourer.

Weresharks in humanoid form tend to have little body hair, and it is usually grey or white in color. Sometimes, their skins have a slight grey or bluish tint. They develop a strong appetite for raw, bloody meat and are often overweight, but one can notice muscles bulging beneath their fat and they move with surprising speed. They have a large, slightly flat nose and slightly pointed teeth, which also grow back should they fall off. Weresharks in animal form appear as massive great white sharks, their eyes shining red with unnatural malice and bloodlust. In their hybrid

form they appear similar to Shaugin, although more muscular and shark-like, with black claws on their fin-like hands.

Creating a Wereshark

"Wereshark" is a template which can be added to any humanoid, monstrous humanoid or giant. It can be inherited (for true weresharks) or passed on as the results of a curse or magical disease (for infected weresharks). The creature's type changes to "shapechanger" and it gains the aquatic subtype.

Size and Type: The creature becomes a Shapechanger with the aquatic subtype and its animal and hybrid forms are Large.

Hit Dice: Same as the creature plus those of the animal, a Large shark in this case (7d8). Each set of HD is modified by the creature's constitution in this form. For example, a 1st level human commoner with 12 constitution in human form and 13 Con in his shark or hybrid forms has 1d4 +1 and 7d8 +6 HP.

Speed: A Wereshark gains 40 swim speed in his hybrid form and 60 swim speed in his animal form.

Armour Class: The base creature gains +2 natural AC in all forms. In hybrid form it has +4 natural AC or the base creature's natural AC bonus, whichever is higher.

Attacks: Same as the character or the animal, depending on which form the character is using. In its hybrid form the wereshark gains 2 claw attacks dealing 1d6 damage and a bite attack dealing 2d4 damage, with the bite being its primary attack.

Damage: Same as the character or the animal, depending on which form is used.

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Special Attacks: A lychanthrope retains all the special attacks of the base character or animal, depending on which form it is using, and also gains those listed below.

Curse of Lychanthropy (Su): Any humanoid, monstrous humanoid or giant hit by the wereshark's bite or claw attack in animal or hybrid form must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or contact lychanthropy. A Wereshark's transformation is typically triggered by the scent of blood, the full moon or the sight of the sea.

Special Qualities: A Wereshark has all the special qualities of the base creature or animal and also gains those listed below.

Alternate Form (Su): A wereshark can assume the form of a Large shark or a shark-humanoid hybrid as a standard action.

Damage Reduction (Ex): An afflicted Wereshark in animal or hybrid forms has DR 5/shark marrow, while a true Wereshark has DR 10/shark marrow.

Keen Scent (Ex): In all forms a Wereshark can notice creatures in the water in a range of up to 180 feet and detect blood within a mile.

Shark Empathy (Ex): A Wereshark can freely communicate with sharks in any form and gains +4 racial bonus to any attempt made to improved the attitude of sharks towards him.

Saves: A Wereshark gains +2 to Fortitude and Reflex saves, and also adds its saves from its animal HD to its base saves

Abilities: A Wereshark in animal or hybrid forms gains +6 Str, +4 Dex and +2 Con.

Skills: A Wereshark gains a +4 racial bonus to Search, Spot and Listen checks while in humanoid form, which increases to +8 while in hybrid or animal form. An afflicted Wereshark gains Control Shape as a class skill.

Feats: A Wereshark gains Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite) and Power Attack in all forms which can make use of them. An afflicted Wereshark can spend 100 XP to purchase the Improved Control Shape feat.

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic region

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Family (2-4), Pack (6-10) or Troupe (family plus 2d4 Medium Sharks)

Challenge Rating: Same as the character +4.

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually Neutral Evil

Advancement: By character class

Sample Wereshark

This example uses a 12th-level sahuagin fighter as the character.

Wereshark

Medium-size/Large Shapechanger
(Aquatic)

Hit Dice: HD 2d8+6+12d10+36 +7d8 +21 (182 hp); 2d8+8+12d10+48+7d8 +28 (203 hp) as hybrid or shark

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex); +4 (+4 Dex) as hybrid or shark

Speed: 30ft.; swim 40ft. as hybrid; swim 60ft. as shark

AC: 19 (+2 Dex, +7 Natural); 23 (+4 Dex, +9 Natural) as hybrid

Attacks: Unarmed strike +18/+13/+8 melee; bite +21, 2 claws +19 as hybrid; bite +21 as shark

Damage: Unarmed strike 1d4+5; claw 1d6+8, bite 1d4+8 as hybrid; bite 1d8+8 as shark

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

Special Attacks: Curse of lycanthropy

Special Qualities: DR 10/shark marrow, alternate form, keen scent, shark empathy

Saves: Fort +21, Ref +13, Will +6; Fort +22, Ref +15, Will +6 as hybrid or shark

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 8; Str 27, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 8 as hybrid or shark

Skills: Animal empathy +5, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +2, Hide +7, Knowledge +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +12, Move silently +7, Profession +6, Search +9, Spot +12, Tumble +11, Wilderness lore -1*

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Cleave, Dodge, Endurance, Expertise, Improved bull rush, [Multiattack], Point blank shot, Power attack, Skill focus (tumble), Two-weapon fighting, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Control Shape

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic region

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Family (2-4), Pack (6-10) or Troupe (family plus 2d4 Medium Sharks)

Challenge Rating: 18

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Neutral evil

Combat

Curse of Lycanthropy (Su):

Any humanoid, monstrous humanoid or giant hit by the wereshark's bite or claw attack in animal or hybrid form must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or contact lycanthropy. A Wereshark's transformation is typically triggered by the scent of blood, the full moon or the sight of the sea.

Alternate Form (Su): A wereshark can assume the form of a large shark or a shark-humanoid hybrid as a standard action.

Keen Scent (Ex): In all forms a Wereshark can notice creatures in the water in a range of up to 180 feet and detect blood within a mile.

Shark Empathy (Ex): A Wereshark can freely communicate with sharks in any form and gains +4 racial bonus to any attempt made to improved the attitude of sharks towards him.

Skills: A wereshark gains an additional +4 racial bonus to Search, Spot and Listen checks while in hybrid or animal form. While in these forms the wereshark also has Hide, Move Silently, Tumble +2, Concentration +1 due to the increase of the relative ability scores.

Sea Vampire Template

Sea Vampires are a disgusting Vampires strain native to Ravenloft's two seas and other large bodies of salt water. The strain was originally created by Shay-Lot Sorcerers as a way to reward especially faithful Kuo-Toa and Shaugin slaves with immortality, but since the Ancients' demise had spread to other races through the bite and blood transference from existing Sea Vampires. Still, the majority of Sea Vampires are not humans but Deepkin.

Like their land-bound cousins, Sea Vampires thirst for living blood, which they drain with their fangs or a long, sharp tongue. However, they display unique powers like the ability to secrete a charming toxin, to smell blood like a shark, transform into a variety of aquatic creatures and summon the creatures of the depths to its aid. Regarding weaknesses Sea Vampires are far more vulnerable to daylight, fresh water burns them like acid and a coral stake can paralyze and even kill them.

Personality wise, they are more feral and less controlled than land-based Vampires, with only older Vampires

able to retain their personality from life (although twisted to evil by undeath). Under the ocean which they are maniacally compelled to they develop a barbarous, cruel and degenerate society, led by shamans who carry the favour of the chthonian lords of the depths. They rarely enter land themselves, preferring to act through Charmed minions, as their skin requires to be constantly moist and their appearance is monstrous and can only be hidden through extreme disguise or magic.

Sea Vampires look like a horrid cross between standard Vampires, Vrylokla and fish. They are decaying (although not as much as Sea Zombies and Sea Zombie Lords) and have webbed hands and feet and fish-like features such as armoured scales. Their hands grow sharp talons, and they have a long and flexible barbed tongue which they use to drain blood. Their eyes have a red, feral glow.

Creating a Sea Vampire

The "Sea Vampire" template can be added to Humanoid, Monstrous Humanoid or Giant with at least 5 class levels or HD who was drained to 0 Con by the Vampire's Blood Drain attack and received a dose of the Vampire's blood. The creature's type changes to "undead" and it gains the Aquatic subtype.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12

Speed: The Sea Vampire gains a Swim speed equal to double its land speed + 10 per Age category above Fledgling.

AC: The Sea Vampire gains + 7 Natural Armour +1 per Age category above Fledgling.

Damage: The Sea Vampire gains 2 claw attack and a bite attack if it did not have these attack forms before, with the bite being its primary natural weapon.

These attacks deal damage as described below or higher if the creature already had a bite or claw attack and could inflict more damage.

Size	Claw Damage	Bite Damage
Fine	-	1
Diminutive	1	1d2
Tiny	1d2	1d3
Small	1d3	1d4
Medium	1d4	1d6
Large	1d6	1d8
Huge	1d8	2d6
Gargantuan	2d6	2d8
Colossal	2d8	4d6

Special Attacks: An Sea Vampire retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those noted below. The saves to resist an Sea Vampire's special attacks have a DC of 10 + 1/2 Sea Vampire's HD + Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Blood Drain (Ex): A Vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fanged tongue by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin is maintained.

Children of the Depths (Su): Once per day while underwater the Sea Vampire can call the slimy denizens of the depths to its aid. He can call 3d6 Octopi or Squids, 2d6 Medium-Size Sharks or 1d6 Blood bloater Ooze Swarms (from Fiend Folio). These creatures arrive within 2d6 rounds and serve the Vampire for 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A living creature reduced to 0 Con by the Vampire's Blood Drain rises as a Sea Vampire Spawn (a standard Vampire Spawn without Energy Drain and with the Aquatic subtype) under the

Vampire's control 1d4 days after the time of death. If the creature is a humanoid, monstrous humanoid or giant and received a dose of the Vampire's blood it rises as a Sea Vampire the following night and is enslaved to the creator Vampire's will. A Sea Vampire may maintain an infinite number of Vampire Spawn under its control and a number of true Vampires equal to its Age Category + Cha modifier. Upon advancing an Age Rank an enslaved Vampire can make a Will save DC 20 + sire's age rank to break free of his control.

Poison (Ex): The Sea Vampire delivers its poison through its bite. The DC, initial and secondary damage vary according to the Vampire's age category. Note: the Charm and Domination results of the Vampire's Poison are a result of its effect running its course, and can be removed only with spells which cure poison. Otherwise, they expire after 4 hours per age category the Vampire has.

Spells: Sea Vampires can cast any spells they could while they were alive. Many Sea Vampire Clerics turn to dark and barbarous faiths of the ocean such as those of the Great Devourer (Domains: Law, Evil, Death, War and Water) and the Sea Queen (Domains: Chaos, Evil, Destruction, Protection and Water).

Special Qualities: A Sea Vampire retains all of the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below, and also gains the undead type and the aquatic subtype.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action the Vampire can assume the shape of a jellyfish, giant jellyfish, squid, giant squid, medium, large or huge shark. This ability is similar to a Polymorph Self spell cast by a 12th level Sorcerer, and he can remain in that form

indefinitely until he assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks.

Blood Scent (Ex): A Sea Vampire notices creatures by scent in a 180 foot radius +60 per Age category and detects blood in the water at a range of 1 mile per age category.

Damage Reduction (Su): A Sea Vampire gains DR 10/silver, which grows stronger as the Vampire ages.

Fast Healing 5 (Ex): Sea Vampires heal 5 hit points per round as long as they have at least 1 Hit Point left and are in contact with salt water. If reduced to 0 hit points or less the Vampire immediately turns into a patch of thick sea foam and attempts to escape. It must reform its body while fully immersed in salt water within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. Once at rest within salt water, it rises to 1hit point after 1 hour then resumes healing at a rate of 5 hit points per round. In addition, a Vampire can regrow its tongue if it severed after a number of rounds equal to 6 – its Age category.

A Vampire loses its Fast Healing if it remains out of the water for more than a number of hours equal to its Age Category. A Vampire can renew its Fast Healing by spending 10 full rounds immersed in salt water. Thus Sea Vampires who travel over land are often carried by their minions in caskets containing salt water.

Fire Resistance 20 + 5 (Ex): A Sea Vampire has Fire Resistance 20 + 5 per Age category above Fledgling.

Foam Form (Su): As a standard action a Sea Vampire can assume Foam Form, which works as a Gaseous Form

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spell cast by a 5th level Sorcerer with the some differences. The Vampire turns into sea foam rather than mist (gaining +10 to Hide checks while within the sea), cannot fly (and his land speed is reduced to 10 feet) but gains +60 to his Swim speed. He can remain in foam form indefinitely.

Improved Reach (Ex): The Sea Vampire's tongue is extremely long and flexible and has a fanged maw at its end. It allows the Vampire to make bite attacks and grapple with an additional reach of 5 feet.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Sea Vampires are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Outcast Rating (Ex): The Sea Vampire grows more monstrous and fish-like in appearance as he ages. Thus he gains a base of +5 Outcast Rating +1 per Age rank above Fledgling.

Spell Resistance (Ex): The Sea Vampire becomes more resistant to magic as he ages.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Sea Vampire gain +4 Turn Resistance and more as they age.

Undead Traits (Ex): Sea Vampires gain all traits of the undead type.

Saves: Same as the base character.

Abilities: Change from the base creature as follows: Str +10 Dex +6, Con - Int -4, Wis +2 Cha +4. As undead creatures Sea Vampires have no constitution score.

Skills: Sea Vampires have keen senses and gain a +8 racial bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Swim and Wilderness Lore checks (regarding sea regions). Otherwise same as the base creature.

Feats: Sea Vampires gain Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge,

Improved Initiative and Lightning Reflexes, assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and doesn't already have these feats.

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)

Organization: Solitary, gang (2-5) or troop (1-2 plus 2-5 Sea Vampire Spawn)

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2 (Fledgling)

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: usually chaotic; Always evil;

Advancement: By character class

Vampire Weaknesses

For all their monstrous power, Sea Vampires also possess several mythical weaknesses which can be exploited by hunters.

Repelling a Sea Vampire

Sea Vampires recoil from a mirror or a strongly presented holy symbol. They are unable to cross an unbroken line of amaranth. These things don't harm the Vampire- they simply keep it at bay. They are utterly unable to enter or attack any portal (door, window, cave entrance etc.) smeared with water from a drowned man's lungs.

Destroying a Sea Vampire

Sea Vampires are even more vulnerable to sunlight than regular Vampires, and like them must rest during daylight hours (usually in lairs set in the lightless depths of the ocean). While exposed to sunlight, they may take only partial actions and are outright destroyed (in case of young Vampires) or gradually burn to cinders.

Concealment (like using a cloak) reduces the damage done and if the Vampire is more than 50% concealed he can take full actions.

Fresh, pure water burns the Sea Vampire as if it was holy water and immersion in fresh water causes it to lose 1/3 of its hit points until its permanent destruction on the 3rd round. However, they are able to freely cross running salt water. A coral stake driven through the heart permanently slays a Fledgling or Mature Sea Vampire, but with older Vampires more drastic

measures should be taken because once the stake is removed the Vampire immediately starts Fast Healing once more.

To permanently destroy the Vampire it must be decapitated as well and the head together with the body (still containing the stake) must be dissolved in fresh water for 3 continuous days. A slain Sea Vampire collapses into a pile of dust and foul-smelling water.

Sea Vampire Aging Table 1

Age Category	Str	Dex	Int	Wis	Cha	Swim Speed	Damage Reduction	Fast Healing	Turn Res.	Spell Res.	Fire Res.
Fledgling	+10	+8	-4	+2	+4	+0	10/silver	5	+4	12	20
Mature	+10	+10	-2	+2	+4	+10	10/magic	5	+4	14	25
Old	+12	+10	-2	+4	+6	+20	15/magic	6	+5	16	30
Eminent	+12	+10	+0	+6	+6	+30	15/magic	7	+6	18	35
Ancient	+12	+12	+2	+6	+8	+40	20/magic	8	+7	20	40
Patriarch	+14	+12	+4	+8	+10	+50	20/epic	10	+8	22	45

Sea Vampire Aging Table 2

Age Category	Poison DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Sunlight Effects	CR	AC	Outcast Rating
Fledgling	20	1d4 Int	Charmed	Destroys (No save), Partial Actions	+2	+7	+5
Mature	22	1d6 Int	Charmed	Destroys (Fort Save DC 20) or 6d10 damage per round, Partial Actions	+3	+7	+6
Old	24	1d6 Int, 1d4 Wis	Charmed	6d10 damage per round (Reflex for half), Partial Actions	+3	+8	+7
Eminent	26	1d8 Int, 1d6 Wis	Dominated	4d10 damage per round (Reflex for half), Partial Actions	+4	+9	+8
Ancient	28	2d4 Int, 1d8 Wis	Dominated	2d10 damage per round (Reflex for half), Partial Actions	+4	+9	+9
Patriarch	30	Charmed	Dominated	1d10 damage per round (Reflex for half), Partial Actions	+5	+10	+10

Sample Sea Vampire

This example uses a 5th-level kuo-toa wizard as the character.

Sea Vampire (Fledgling)

Medium-size Undead (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: HD 7d12 (48 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 feat)

Speed: 20ft., Swim 50ft

AC: 27 (+4 Dex, +13 Natural)

Attacks: Bite +10 melee; or 2 Claws +6/+6; or spear +8 ranged

Damage: Bite 1d6+6; Claw 1d4+6

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Blood drain, children of the depths, create spawn, poison

Special Qualities: Keen sight, slippery, adhesive, immunities, electricity resistance 30, light blindness, amphibious, alternate form, blood scent, DR 10/silver, fast healing 5, fire resistance 20, foam form, immunities, improved reach, SR 12, turn resistance +4

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +9

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 18, Con -, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 19

Skills: Climb +14, Concentration +5, Craft +7, Diplomacy +7, Escape artist +22, Hide +12, Knowledge +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +17, Move silently +14, Profession +5, Scry +8, Search +10, Spot +20, Swim +14, Wilderness Lore (sea regions) +12

Feats: Alertness, Brew potion, Craft wand, Extend spell, Great fortitude, Scribe scroll, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)

Organization: Solitary, gang (2-5) or troop (1-2 plus 2-5 Sea Vampire Spawn)

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Neutral evil

Outcast Rating: +5

Combat

Blood Drain (Ex): The Sea Vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fanged tongue by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin is maintained.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action the Vampire can assume the shape of a jellyfish, giant jellyfish, squid, giant squid, shark or dire shark. This ability is similar to a Polymorph Self spell cast by a 12th level Sorcerer, and he can remain in that form indefinitely until he assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Blood Scent (Ex): A Sea Vampire notices creatures by scent in a 240 foot radius and detects blood in the water at a range of 1 mile.

Children of the Depths (Su): Once per day while underwater the Sea Vampire can call the slimy denizens of the depths to its aid. He can call 3d6 Octopi or Squids, 2d6 Medium-Size Sharks or 1d6 Bloodbloater Ooze Swarms (from Fiend Folio). These creatures arrive within 2d6 rounds and serve the Vampire for 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A living creature reduced to 0 Con by the Vampire's Blood Drain rises as a Sea Vampire Spawn (a standard Vampire Spawn without Energy Drain and with the Aquatic subtype) under the Vampire's control 1d4 days after the time of death. If the creature is a humanoid, monstrous humanoid or giant and received a dose of the Vampire's blood it rises as a Sea Vampire the following night and is enslaved to the creator Vampire's will. A Sea Vampire

may maintain an infinite number of Vampire Spawn under its control and 5 true Vampires.

Foam Form (Su): As a standard action a Sea Vampire can assume Foam Form, which works as a Gaseous Form spell cast by a 5th level Sorcerer with the some differences. The Vampire turns into sea foam rather than mist (gaining +10 to Hide checks while within the sea), cannot fly (and his land speed is reduced to 10 feet) but gains +60 to his Swim speed. He can remain in foam form indefinitely.

Improved Reach (Ex): The Sea Vampire's tongue is extremely long and flexible and has a fanged maw at its end. It allows the Vampire to make bite attacks and grapple with an additional reach of 5 feet.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Sea Vampires are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Poison (Ex): The Sea Vampire delivers its poison through its bite. Save DC 20 (1d4 Int/ Charm)

Undead Traits (Ex): Sea Vampires gain all traits of the undead type.

Spells (Sp): This creature can use arcane spells as a 5th level wizard (DC = 11 + spell level).

Sea Zombie Lord

Sea Zombie Lords are powerful Restless Dead created from a captain who brought death at sea for him and his men, foolishly sailing into a certain doom compelled by vanity and a disregard for life. Evil men and women who escape justice by committing suicide through drowning also have a chance of rising as Sea Zombie Lord. There are also rumours of a ritual which may transform a mortal into a Sea

Zombie Lord, as a poor man's substitute to Lichdom.

Their twisted desire to cheat death causes them to rise as terrible undead who amongst other powers carry a vile disease called Ocean Wasting, which causes its victims to rise as Sea Zombies under the Sea Zombie Lord's control. Motivated by the desire to gain power over the dead and the living and retaining their full intellect from life (though most Sea Zombie Lords are driven mad by the transformation to undeath), and with a host of unquestioning Aquatic undead minions at their command (mostly Sea Zombies, but sometimes other creatures such as Jolly Rogers and weak Aquatic Vampires also serve them), Sea Zombie Lords can bring the fear of death into the hearts of the bravest sea-faring adventurers.

Sea Zombie Lords look similar to standard Sea Zombies, appearing as hideous rotting corpses soaked with seawaters. Unlike their land-bound cousins the standard Zombie Lords, they can only hide their appearance through magic for the water accelerates the natural process of decay and their stench is nearly unbearable. They usually wear the tatters of once-fancy clothes. Unlike standard Sea Zombies they are as agile as the living men and women they once, though many cunning Sea Zombie Lords attempt to fool hunters by feigning the shambling walk of their lesser kin. The dead, blank-white eyes of a Sea Zombie Lord clearly shine with the lavender glow of undeath.

A Knowledge (Undead Lore) DC 12 is required to tell a Sea Zombie Lord apart from a standard Sea Zombie when encountered together.

Creating a Sea Zombie Lord

The "Sea Zombie Lord" template can be added to Humanoid, Monstrous Humanoid or Giant with at least 5 class levels or HD and a Charisma score of 12 or higher. The creature's type changes to "undead" and it gains the Aquatic subtype.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12

Speed: Sea Zombie Lords gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed, and do not need

AC: A Sea Zombie Lord has +4 Natural AC or the character's original natural armour class, whichever is ever.

Damage: The Sea Zombie Lord gains slam attacks if it did not have this attack form before. This attack deals damage as described below or higher if the creature already had a Slam attack and could inflict more damage.

Damage	Size
1	Fine
1d2	Diminutive
1d3	Tiny
1d4	Small
1d6	Medium
1d8	Large
2d6	Huge
2d8	Gargantuan
4d6	Colossal

Special Attacks: A Sea Zombie Lord retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those noted below. The saves to resist a Sea Zombie Lord's special attacks have a DC of 10 + 1/2 Sea Zombie Lord's HD + Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Black Breath (Ex): Sea Zombies Lords are constantly surrounded by a profane aura 90 feet in diameter, which physically manifests as the smell of decaying, waterlogged flesh and a strong sense of unease. When living creatures

first enter this aura, they must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 Sea Zombie Lord's HD + Cha modifier) or contact Ocean Wasting. Creatures who fail their save by more than 10 points are instantly killed and transformed into Sea Zombies under the Sea Zombie Lord's control.

Command Lesser Undead (Su):

As a standard action, Sea Zombie Lord can command all Undead with the Aquatic subtype or Aquatic Salient ability with a lower Charisma score than itself as an evil Cleric of his HD. Any Sea Zombies created by his Ocean Wasting are fanatically loyal to him, obeying his commands without question. The Sea Zombie Lord can mentally command all Sea Zombies (and only Sea Zombies- not other Aquatic Undead like Jolly Rogers and Soulless) within sight, at will as a free action. They can also use the senses of any Sea Zombie within 1 mile radius as though they were standing in the place of such thralls. The second effect of this ability replaces the first one regarding Sea Zombies. Sea Zombie Lords with Cleric or Blackguard levels may choose to use Command Lesser Undead instead of their own Rebuke Undead ability.

Control Infection (Su): Sea Zombie Lords hold a measure of power over living creatures infected by their own Ocean Wasting. At will, they can halt the disease's progression or increase the incubation period in a particular victim for a single day. Once per day they can accelerate the disease in a particular victim, reducing Incubation period to a mere one hour and increasing the Fort save DC to resist by 2. Victims killed by Ocean Wasting in its accelerated state rise as Sea Zombies in 1d4 rounds and only a Hallow spell cast

on the corpse prevents this from occurring.

Alternately they can send a Suggestion a victim afflicted by Ocean Wasting, as the spell cast by a 12th level Sorcerer.

Disease (Su): A victim struck by a Sea Zombie Lord's slam or subject to the effects of Black Breath must pass a Fortitude save or contact Ocean Wasting.

Ocean Wasting: Supernatural disease- Injury, Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 Sea Zombie Lord's HD + Cha modifier), incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d4 temporary Str, 1d4 temporary Dex and 1d4 temporary Con. Victims of Ocean Wasting have their body tissues gradually filling with salt water and decaying at the same time in an extremely painful process. Any victim killed by Ocean Wasting or remaining infected for more than 7 days immediately dies (no save) and rises as a Sea Zombie under the Sea Zombie Lord's control in the following night unless both Bless and Remove Disease are cast on the corpse and it is properly buried. Ocean Wasting is a magical disease and thus successful saves do not allow an infected character to recover. Only magical healing can save the character.

Drowning Touch (Sp): Those struck by a Sea Zombie Lord's slam attack must succeed at a Will save DC 10 + 1/2 Sea Zombie Lord's HD + Cha modifier or experience the horrible sensation of drowning, suffering a -2 penalty to all attacks, saves, AC and skill checks. Victims killed by Sea Zombies appear to have drowned (water in the lungs etc.) and may be reanimated as Sea Zombies by an Animate Dead spell. The condition can be removed by Dispel Magic, Lesser Restoration or by resting.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): As a 12th level Sorcerer once per day each: Animate Dead, Control Water, Enervation, Fog Cloud, Suggestion. Sea Zombie Lords can also Speak with Dead at will, only affecting drowning victims.

Spells: Sea Zombie Lords can cast any spells they could while they were alive. Many Sea Zombie Lord Clerics turn to dark and barbarous faiths of the ocean such as those of the Great Devourer (Domains: Law, Evil, Death, War and Water) and the Sea Queen (Domains: Chaos, Evil, Destruction, Protection and Water).

Special Qualities: A Sea Zombie Lord retains all of the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below, and also gains the undead type and the aquatic subtype.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks. However they are more at home on Water than on land, suffering a -2 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves and checks while out of water.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Sea Zombie Lords are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Damage Reduction (Su): A Sea Zombie Lord gains DR 10/silver.

Fast Healing 2 (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords heal 2 hit points per round as long they are in contact with salt water. Creatures with Fast Healing cannot regrow or re-attach severed limbs, and a Sea Zombie Lord reduced to 0 Hit Points is immediately destroyed.

Fire Resistance 20 (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords ignore the first 20 points

of damage from fire-based attacks due to their water-soaked bodies.

Greater Stench of the Sea (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords exude a powerful stench which combines rotting meat, fish and salt-water, and thus grant attempts to detect them via scent a +8 Circumstance bonus to Wilderness Lore checks. Sea Zombie Lords often use perfumes to hide their stench but cannot reduce the bonus to less than +2.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords gain Turn Resistance +2, which increases to +4 when in contact with salt water.

Undead Traits (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords gain all traits of the undead type.

Saves: Same as the base character. Fortitude and Will saves change according to the Sea Zombie Lord's ability score adjustments.

Abilities: Change from the base creature as follows: Str +4 Dex +0, Con - Int +2, Wis -2 Cha +2. As undead creatures Sea Zombie Lords have no constitution score.

Skills: Sea Zombie Lords gain a +4 racial bonus to Knowledge (Undead Lore), Reign Undead and Wilderness Lore checks (regarding sea regions). Otherwise, same as the base creature.

Feats: Sea Zombie Lords gain Toughness as a bonus feat.

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)

Organization: Solitary,

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +3

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Always evil;

Advancement: By character class

Sea Zombie Template

Creatures with the Sea Zombie Template are created when a modified version of the Animate Dead spell is cast on the corpse to a former living creature who drowned at sea or a creature with the Aquatic subtype. They become horrid undead with the power to inflict the agony of drowning with a touch, and sometimes (but not always) carry a disease with the ability to produce more of their kind. Sea Zombies appear as shambling, decaying water-logged versions of themselves, and blindly follow the commands of their masters. For more information on Sea Zombies, see the Sea Zombie monster entry.

The "Sea Zombie" template can be added to any Aquatic living creature or a creature that drowned to death. The creature's type changes to "undead" and it gains the Aquatic subtype.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12

Speed: Sea Zombies gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed, and do not need to make Swim checks.

AC: A Sea Zombie Lord has +4 Natural AC or the character's original natural armour class, whichever is ever.

Damage: The Sea Zombie Lord gains slam attacks if it did not have this attack form before. This attack deals damage as described below or higher if the creature already had a Slam attack and could inflict more damage.

Damage	Size
1	Fine
1d2	Diminutive
1d3	Tiny
1d4	Small
1d6	Medium
1d8	Large
2d6	Huge
2d8	Gargantuan
4d6	Colossal

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Special Attacks: A Sea Zombie retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those noted below. The saves to resist a Sea Zombie Lord's special attacks have a DC of 10 + 1/2 Sea Zombie Lord's HD + Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Disease (Su): Some Sea Zombies carry Ocean Wasting or Nocturnal Rot, which they deliver with a Slam or their natural attacks. The Fort save DC to resist these afflictions equals 10 + 1/2 Sea Zombie's HD + Cha modifier.

Sea Zombies who carry a disease gain +1 Challenge Rating.

Drowning Touch (Sp): Those struck by a Sea Zombie Lord's slam attack must succeed at a Will save DC 10 + 1/2 Sea Zombie Lord's HD + Cha modifier or experience the horrible sensation of drowning, suffering a -2 penalty to all attacks, saves, AC and skill checks. Victims killed by Sea Zombies appear to have drowned (water in the lungs etc.) and may be reanimated as Sea Zombies by an Animate Dead spell. The condition can be removed by Dispel Magic, Lesser Restoration or by resting.

Special Qualities: A Sea Zombie Lord retains all of the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below, and also gains the undead type and the aquatic subtype.

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold and water-based attacks. However they are more at home on Water than on land, suffering a -2 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves and checks while out of water.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Sea

Zombies are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Damage Reduction (Su): A Sea Zombie Lord gains DR 10/silver.

Fire Resistance 5 (Ex): Sea Zombies ignore the first 5 points of damage from fire-based attacks due to their water-soaked bodies.

Partial Actions Only (Ex): A Sea Zombie can perform only partial actions—for example it can attack or move but not perform both at the same round.

Stench of the Sea (Ex): Sea Zombies exude a powerful stench which combines rotting meat, fish and salt-water, and thus grant attempts to detect them via scent a +8 Circumstance bonus to Wilderness Lore checks.

Undead Traits (Ex): Aquatic Zombies are undead.

Saves: Same as the base character.

Abilities: Change from the base creature as follows: Str +4 Dex -2, Con - Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1. As mindless undead creatures, Sea Zombies have no Int or Con scores.

Skills: Sea Zombies lose all their skills from life but gain 1d4 +3 skill points.

Feats: Sea Zombies gain Toughness as a bonus feat.

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)

Organization: gang (2-5), squad (6-10), mob (11-20)

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature

Treasure: Standard

Alignment usually neutral:
Always evil

Advancement: By character class

Sample Sea Zombie Lord

This example uses an 8th-level human cleric as the character.

Sea Zombie Lord

Medium-size Undead (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: HD 8d12+3 (56 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30ft., swim 30ft

AC: 14 (+4 Natural)

Attacks: Slam +11/+6 melee

Damage: Slam 1d6+5

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

Special Attacks: Death touch, rebuke undead, rebuke water creatures, turn fire creatures, spells, black breath, command lesser undead, control infection, disease, drowning touch, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: DR 10/silver, fast healing 2, fire resistance 20, aquatic traits, immunities, greater stench of the sea, turn resistance, undead traits

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +9

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 11, Con -, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 20

Skills: Concentration +11, Heal +13, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (undead lore) +5, Listen +3, Move silently +0, Reign Undead +7, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore (sea regions)+7

Feats: Combat casting, Heighten spell, Quicken spell, Silent spell, Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Any aquatic (Saragossa, Nocturnal Sea and Sea of Sorrows)

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Double Standard

Alignment: Neutral evil

Combat

Aquatic Traits (Ex): Aquatic undead gain a swim speed equal to their normal land speed. They also have Fire Resistance 20 and are immune to Cold

and water-based attacks. However they are more at home on Water than on land, suffering a -2 morale penalty to all attack rolls, saves and checks while out of water.

Black Breath (Ex): Sea Zombies Lords are constantly surrounded by a profane aura 90 feet in diameter, which physically manifests as the smell of decaying, waterlogged flesh and a strong sense of unease. When living creatures first enter this aura, they must make a Fortitude save (DC 19) or contact Ocean Wasting. Creatures who fail their save by more than 10 points are instantly killed and transformed into Sea Zombies under the Sea Zombie Lord's control.

Command Lesser Undead (Su): As a standard action, Sea Zombie Lord can command all Undead with the Aquatic subtype or Aquatic Salient ability with a Charisma score lower than 20 as an evil Cleric of 8th level. Any Sea Zombies created by his Ocean Wasting are fanatically loyal to him, obeying his commands without question. The Sea Zombie Lord can mentally command all Sea Zombies (and only Sea Zombies-not other Aquatic Undead like Jolly Rogers and Soulless) within sight, at will as a free action. They can also use the senses of any Sea Zombie within 1 mile radius as though they were standing in the place of such thralls. The second effect of this ability replaces the first one regarding Sea Zombies. Sea Zombie Lord may choose to use Command Lesser Undead instead of their own Rebuke Undead ability.

Control Infection (Su): Sea Zombie Lords hold a measure of power over living creatures infected by their own Ocean Wasting. At will, they can halt the disease's progression or increase the incubation period in a particular victim for a single day. Once per day

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they can accelerate the disease in a particular victim, reducing Incubation period to a mere one hour and increasing the Fort save DC to resist by 2. Victims killed by Ocean Wasting in its accelerated state rise as Sea Zombies in 1d4 rounds and only a Hallow spell cast on the corpse prevents this from occurring.

Alternately they can send a Suggestion a victim afflicted by Ocean Wasting, as the spell cast by a 12th level Sorcerer.

Death Touch (Sp): Once per day this creature can use a death touch as per the Death domain granted power (8d6 hit points).

Disease (Su): A victim struck by a Sea Zombie Lord's slam or subject to the effects of Black Breath must pass a Fortitude save (DC 14) or contact Ocean Wasting.

Drowning Touch (Sp): Those struck by a Sea Zombie Lord's slam attack must succeed at a Will save DC 19 or experience the horrible sensation of drowning, suffering a -2 penalty to all attacks, saves, AC and skill checks. Victims killed by Sea Zombies appear to have drowned (water in the lungs etc.) and may be reanimated as Sea Zombies by an Animate Dead spell. The condition can be removed by Dispel Magic, Lesser Restoration or by resting.

Immunities (Ex): In addition to the standard undead immunities Sea Zombie Lords are immune to all forms of Cold and water-based attacks.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): As a 12th level Sorcerer once per day each: Animate Dead, Control Water, Enervation, Fog Cloud, Suggestion. Sea Zombie Lords can also Speak with Dead at will, only affecting drowning victims.

Spells (Sp): This creature can use divine spells as an 8th level cleric, from the cleric list and from the Death and Water domains (Cleric spells per day: $6/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1$, DC = 13 + spell level).

Stench of the Sea (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords exude a powerful stench which combines rotting meat, fish and salt-water, and thus grant attempts to detect them via scent a +8 Circumstance bonus to Wilderness Lore checks. Sea Zombie Lords often use perfumes to hide their stench but cannot reduce the bonus to less than +2.

Turn/Rebuke Undead/Fire Creatures/Water Creatures: Each of these powers can be used 7 times per day.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords gain Turn Resistance +2, which increases to +4 when in contact with salt water.

Undead Traits (Ex): Sea Zombie Lords gain all traits of the undead type.

The Night the Sea Stood Still

A Side Trek Adventure

By Matt White

Edited by Joel Paquin and Nathan Okerlund

Introduction for DM

Nearly every town and seaside village has its tales of shipwrecks and ghost ships; those phantoms of the sea breaking through the fog and the mist on dark, stormy nights. Of course, most of those stories about ghost ships are just legends, but a few of them are true. This adventure is about a ship that found a way from the Sea of Sorrows to the Nocturnal Sea—although the crew did not live to see their success...

This adventure made for any level, but low level is probably best. No schedule or duration is given for any of the events described in this adventure. The DM should use whatever timeline seems best for the adventure to flow smoothly.

Adventure Start

The initial goal of the DM is to make sure the PCs enter the ship's cargo hold. Here's a possible adventure hook:

A large two-masted ship, the *Sea Sable*, is docked while its crew of more than two dozen men move about the deck, looking at the city. A sailor calls out to the PCs.

Ship's captain Jean Pierre wants some people to clear the rats from the cargo hold; the crew doesn't want to spend the time themselves since they want to explore the city and spend their hard earned pay. The crewman promises an easily earned 2 silver pieces and if the PCs do it without disturbing the ship's equipment, he talk about raising the wage to 1 gold piece each. The sailor will not give any more

information, just states "*if you are going to ask too many questions the job is never gonna get done*" and threatens to find someone else.

Once they accept they are taken down a set of stairs past the crew quarters of the first lower deck, and to the cargo hold on the second and lowest deck of the ship.

Boat Description and Haunfing

This section of the ship is clearly intended as a cargo hold. Two large wooden hatches are visible in the middle of the room's ceiling. Kegs and crates fill the room; a roll of canvas is in one corner. A wooden staircase leads up to the hatch which leads to the next level of the ship.

- 1 Crates & kegs are marked LUDENDORF in red letters.
- 2 Kegs are full of water, beer or rye.
- 3 Crates have furs, rope and furniture (chairs, couches, tables).

As the PCs do a Search check, they may find the following:

At DC 15: There are no rats in the hold--very strange considering the sailor's request!

At DC12 (or if they ask): A barrel of wine marked EGERTUS

DM Note: After 15 - 30 minutes in the cargo hold, run Event 1 below:

Event 1: The Cursed Ship Moves

This event is the *Sea Sable* making its progress across the Nocturnal Sea, to eventually reach the Sea of Sorrows.

After 15 minutes in the cargo room, the PCs notice that they now can hear waves crashing against the ship, and feel the ship is moving. At this time (unknown to the PCs) the ship has been transported mysteriously to an isolated spot in the Nocturnal Sea as if the mists themselves carried the ship there. The crew has vanished.

The crew were fully corporeal ghosts; they vanish from the town and from the ship when the *Sea Sable* leaves port. The sailors are endlessly re-enacting their last port visit.

The view from the ship is of the open sea; maximum visibility is 1,000 feet. Walls of mists surround the part of the sea where the ship sails. Even at sea, a feeling of oppression lingers on the PCs. After the ship is on its way, the whole ship slowly shows its age; the doors become rotten, and once entering the mist, large gaps appear in the bulkheads and sails become torn remnants. Bunks and furniture become piles of soggy wood and debris. Wood from the ship itself is unusable, aged and rotten.

The PCs should search or try to stop the ship. If they try to burn it they find fire conveniently blows out, but if ship is set on fire move to Event 2 and the blizzard winds and ship's decay should make the fire stop. It's only a matter of time till the ship reaches the Misty Border (see Event 2); if the PCs can fix the rowboat in time they can escape and complete the adventure. Trying to stop the ship should fail and the cold waters an unknown distance from land should not be inviting for a swim.

Haunfing

All the kegs have rotted long ago, letting their contents spill out; the remaining water is brackish. Crates are made of rotten wood; furniture is also aged and rotten, and furs fall apart in rotten handfuls. Canvas and rope is also rotten and unusable. The cargo hold smells of old beer and rotten wood, and the cargo hold is flooded up to the ankles from many small leaks.

Only the EGERTUS crate is made of sound wood.

Crew Quarters Level: This level holds the crew quarters; in the middle of the floor and ceiling above are two large wooden hatches. There are two doors in this room, one leading to the crew's quarters, the other to the brig. The door to the brig has a crossbar to hold the door shut and a barred window to look into the room.

The Brig: This room has three uncomfortable looking bunks, each with shackles fixed in the wood, making it clear that those who found themselves here did not remain voluntarily. A large wooden tower shield is discarded here, along with some torn pants, an old boot and a ragged shirt.

Haunfing

If all the PCs enter, or a PC enters alone, the door will close and lock. Break DC 25, hardness 5, hit points 30.

Crew Sleeping Quarters: Twenty hammocks are stretched across the room, though about half have fallen due to wear and age. A coarse blanket of grey wool is thrown or folded on each hammock.

Search DC 10: There are 12 silver

pieces (sables, of Lamordian mint) and 32 copper pieces (marten) within the room; once removed from the ship they erode completely away, leaving only greenish stains.

Search DC 20: (or found automatically if second time returning to the room) -Note in a bottle:

"No doubt if you find this I have perished during the travel of this haunted ship. We tried to fix one of the rowboats but the wood we used from this accursed ship was rotten and aged once away from the ship; if only we had brought enough of our own wood with us! Food stores ran out and the bitter cold storm made it impossible to stay on the deck. Please inform Orval Pyke of Mordentshire to send the group's money to their wives or husbands, and tell my own wife I am sorry for going on such a foolish venture."

-signed Edger Deller.

Main Deck: After raising the hatch and reaching the main deck, the PCs notice the two large, wooden hatches that take up the center of the ship. These are worn around the edges and show much use. A pair of stairs leads to the forecastle (a higher deck at the ship's bow) and the quarterdeck (a corresponding higher deck at the stern). Below the quarterdeck a door leads to the captain's quarters. The ship's wheel (helm) is also located on the quarterdeck. Two rowboats are flipped upside down on each side of the deck; gaping holes can be seen on the rowboats' hulls. A rotting box of rusty nails and a mallet lie under one rowboat.

The sky is overcast and grey waves batter against the ship; there is no land in sight, and no sign of the crew. Two tall masts rise from the deck, each bearing a furled sail. Atop each mast stands a crow's nest, from which a spider's web of rigging

descends to the deck. These wooden spires creak with each gust of wind, and rigging hums eerily, filling the air with a sound that serves to magnify the unnatural silence beside the lapping waves. No land can be seen anywhere, even from the crow's nests, and how the ship got this far from port is not apparent.

Haunfing

If the helm is touched, the PC must make a Will save at DC15, or the person touching it becomes zombie-like and guides the ship while staring ahead. He will not react to anything and only opposing strength checks or unconsciousness will be able to pry him from the wheel, at which time the victim snaps out of his fascination. No amount of strength can move the wheel deliberately, as if the wheel has a mind of its own. Removing or destroying the wheel has no effect on changing the ship's course.

Fore Deck: The forecastle is only 3 feet higher than the main deck, and supports two sturdy capstans with thick rusty chains wound up evenly. An anchor hangs from one of these chains; the other chain is broken.

Spot Check DC 10: The chains are very rusted, and would not hold the weight of the anchor if lowered.

Stern Deck: As the vessel shifts to and fro in the waves, the ship's wheel rotates freely.

Haunfing

If the wheel is touched by one of Will save DC15, or the person touching it becomes zombie-like, and guides the ship well staring ahead. He will not react to anything and only opposing strength checks or unconsciousness will result on prying for the wheel, at right time the victim snaps out from it.

No amount of strength can move the wheel deliberately, as if the wheel has a mind of its own. Removing the wheel has no effect on changing ships direction.

Stern Quarters

Room 1: This small hall has doors to left and right, and two doors ahead. The left and right doors are marked "Guest's Quarters". The leftmost door ahead is marked "Chart Room", the rightmost door ahead is marked "Captain's Chamber".

Captain's Chamber: There is what used to be a large bed against the far wall, with a chest fallen into decay next to it. A collapsed writing desk is against the near wall.

The chest contains mouldy clothes, copper coins that have eroded away to almost nothing, and a spyglass [which becomes rusted, shattered junk when removed from the ship].

Search DC10: Captain's Log

This very worn book was written by Captain Jean Pierre of the *Sea Sable*. The book contains cargo manifestos and dates. If this book taken off the ship it vanishes eventually. Only two entries remain readable; they convey the following information:

1 *Sea Sable* was built in Lundendorf 750,

was a cargo ship that travels to ports like Port -a-Lucine, Mordentshire, Lundendorf, and East Riding.

2 *Last Entries Summer 752: Paid to find passage from Sea of Sorrows to the Nocturnal Sea. Trip financed by Baron von Aubrecker. Entered a wall of mist two days after leaving port, and was in a midst of a blizzard.*

Chart Room: The walls of this room are lined with shelves holding piles of paper mush. One intact yellowed chart depicts the area the ship had currently sailed, showing marks of many revisions. The western coast of Lamordia, Dementieu, and Mordent is done with confidence. The center of the map is a mess of islands scratched out and resketched.

Guest Room 1: This room is empty except for a pile of rotten wood and cloth that once was three beds (one more than would fit in this room), a table and a chest of clothes.

Guest Room 2 Professor Orval Pyke's Quarters: An intact hammock lies against one wall unhung. A rotted but still intact desk is against another wall. A large cherry wood plush chair that looks new and has a bronze plaque reading "Property of Orval Pyke" is in front of the desk. A large wooden chest marked "Orval Pyke", also quite new, is against the other wall. On the desk is an empty inkwell.

The chest contains 2 scholar's outfits, an empty water skein, a pouch with 3 gold pieces and 27 copper pieces of Mordentish mint, and a large scrapbook titled "The Ghost Ship *Sea Sable*", by Orval Pyke.

Orval Pyke was writing a book about ghost ships after being inspired by Van Richten's books; this scrapbook of hand-drawn

pictures and side notes (written in Mordentish), is just a rough copy of the book he was writing. (The book can be written in another language to suit your group).

Scrapbook 'The Ghost Ship *Sea Sable*' contents :

- 1 *Spring 752: Sea Sable went missing after the captain Jean Pierre tried to seek a western passage to the Nocturnal Sea.*
- 2 *Late Spring 752: Sea Sable sighted at port in Nevuchar Spring, its crew still live and well.*
- 3 *Summer 752: Sea Sable sighted near the Isle of Agony; when the ship Ordan found her, the Sea Sable sails had rotted away, the ship was riddled in gaping holes just above the waterline, and there was no sign of the crew. They did not risk boarding it and let it be, fearing it to be a Ghost Ship*
- 4 *Winter 752: Sea Sable sighted by Armeikos, the ship in good condition and crew seemingly alive and well. Unfortunately she was not approached by the Armeikos.*
- 5 *Spring 754: Professor Orval sent an adventuring party to meet the Sea Sable and board it in Egertus in Nova Vaasa. It was successfully boarded by the party but also disappeared from port that same night.*
- 6 *Autumn 754: Professor Orval boarded the Sea Sable at Arbora, in Nova Vassa, and bought passage from the very alive Captian Pierre. During the night Orval found the ship deserted but heading east. Orval begin mapping the course and hoped to be with the ship once it reached the Sea of Sorrows, but he noticed that the cargo hold's contents had rapidly decayed and become useless. Later in the day*

the ship sailed into mists, and soon a bitter winter storm hit the ship, breaking the sails and caking the ship in ice. He was unable to repair the rowboat and hopes anyone reading this will finish his work on the book. Orval was suffering from hypothermia and bad frostbite on the third day. This is the final passage.

Concluding the adventure

The PCs must find and use at least three of five sources of useable wood—not from the ghost ship itself—to fix the repairable rowboat and escape. Once the rowboat is in the water, they eerily find themselves in Rookhausen harbour after the mists part. Anything brought from the *Sea Sable* will vanish.

Sources of useable wood: The large tower shield in the brig, Orval's chair, Orval's chest, the barrel marked Egertus in the cargo hold, and any wood the players brought aboard (should only count as a one source for repair purposes). Good Craft: carpentry checks or the spell *mending* could lower the amount of wood needed.

Boat Haunting & Events

While the PCs search the ship for clues, here are some sample events.

- 1 A PC may fall through rotten floor boards; the PC must make a Ref save at DC 12 or take 1d6 damage.
- 2 Waves bash against the ship too hard; all PCs must make a Ref save at DC 10 or fall overboard (if on the upper deck) or fall down stairs (if on the lower deck) for 1d2 damage. If in the cargo bay, all PCs make Ref saves at DC 15 to avoid crates and barrels slamming against them, doing 1d4 damage.
- 3 Taking hold of object that belongs to

the *Sea Sable* causes the player to act out an emotion (despair, fear, love) or become violent (hatred, jealous, rage) as the spell *emotion*.

- 4 Noises of crew are heard from a empty room.
- 5 Objects move across the room when PCs are not looking.
- 6 Food putrefies and water becomes brackish and undrinkable, causing sickness if eaten or drunk.
- 7 Seasickness checks must be made every hour (Fort save at DC10). If the save is failed, PCs move and fight as if *slowed* until healed magically or until the check is passed next hour.
- 8 Areas become very chilly; one PC's weapon becomes ice cold, causing him or her to drop it or suffer frostbite (1d2 cold damage per minute).
- 9 A room suddenly becomes caked with ice and snow blows around; PCs must make Fort saves at DC15 or suffer 1d6 subdual damage from exposure.
- 10 The door becomes stuck. DC16 to break.
- 11 The PCs see the shadow of somebody moving on deck.
- 12 PCs hear the sounds of footsteps and door opening and closing.
- 13 The blanket on one of the hammock seems to have a humanoid form underneath sleeping, but when the blanket is removed there is nothing there.

Event 2: The Mist Cometh

The *Sea Sable* will eventually cross the misty border from the Nocturnal Sea to the Sea of Sorrows. This event is triggered once the stern quarters are looked at, or repeated attempts to stop the ship or destroy it are made.

The ship enters a rapid approaching fog bank. Soon the wind becomes cold and snow starts to fall.

PC could eventually die from exposure or worse if they do not repair a rowboat in time to leave. At this time the ship begins to decay until it is a skeleton of its former self yet stays afloat. Any wood that belongs to the *Sea Sable* is rapidly rotting and becomes waterlogged; it cannot be used to fix the rowboat. The PCs should then notice that one of the rowboats is not rotting and is workable for repair. The other rowboat quickly turns to mush and woody pulp. Not using the rowboat may put them at the mercy of the sea and mists (or in other words the DM).

Option, if the PCs Fail to Repair the Rowboat: After a few hours of mist sailing in the frost and snow, the ship reaches the other side – it is now in the Sea of Sorrows. The ship become incorporeal and those still on it will vanish as well. The fate of the PCs is left to the DM.

Recurrence

The PCs may hear again of the *Sea Sable*, perhaps as it makes other victims elsewhere on the coast. Tracking its random visit to sea ports will almost certainly be useless; the only possible solution is inform most port authorities of the *Sea Sable*, in order to prevent innocent people getting on board.

Nedragonne

Seas of Savagery and Sorrow

by "Adam Carou"

adam_garou7@hotmail.com

"If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow."

-Chinese Proverb

A child born of violence is not necessarily doomed to a life of violence. Each sentient creature can choose its own path to walk, and how to live the life it has been given. Sometimes, when that being chooses to answer the brutality in its blood, it is pitied. Sometimes it is punished. Sometimes, it simply gets exactly what it wants.

And sometimes, all three happen at once.

The Land

Located in the frigid waters of the northern Nocturnal Sea, the domain of Nedragonne (pronounced NED-ra-GAWN) consists of two parts—the primary landmass (stretching 150 miles running north-south and approximately 75 miles east-west) and the surrounding icy waters in a 10-mile radius.

The land in Nedragonne incorporates a number of different terrain types, from rocky, black-sand beaches in the southwest that gradually evolve to temperate grasslands, to thickening forests of evergreens, to mountains with frosty peaks as one travels to the north and east. In keeping with this varied landscape, there are a number of different settlements throughout the land, including the coastal villages of Sphyrna, Orcinas, and

Galekard located in the southwest and the cities of Kantys and Moros in the grasslands and forests. The capital city and main seat of commerce, Tenebria, is located roughly 30 miles inland from the eastern coast, in the shadow of the great Caliginar mountain range. Here, traders bring all manner of fish, pearls, grain and produce, fermented beverages, furs, wood, and even uncut gems to buy, sell, and trade.

Cultural Level

Medieval

The Folk

Because Nedragonne is an island, the populace has had to learn self-sufficiency. Since the main island teems with natural resources there is little reason for the islanders to conduct any substantial trade with the rest of the Core. Most inhabitants, regardless of occupation, put in their day's work and retire to the quiet comforts of home and hearth when the labour is complete.

The folk are a varied lot, as reflected by the geographical differences in the land, and as such can have nearly any physical characteristic imaginable (human, dwarven, gnomish or kender). This diversity means that racial or economic discrimination is nearly unheard of in Nedragonne, with the natives understanding little of social distinctions or "class systems" spoken of by visitors from the mainland Core. To

them, what matters is not the type of labour one performs—whether blacksmithing, farming, or songcraft—only that such effort is undertaken. A strong work ethic is taught to each Nedragonni as a child, and they tend to retain this outlook throughout their adult lives. As long as an individual knows a trade of some sort or fulfills some function important to his or her community, he or she is afforded respect by the local populace.

However, the intense self-reliance most Nedragonni exhibit is accompanied by an equally intense desire to mind one's own business. The folk tend to be a taciturn lot when "mainlanders" (as they call the inhabitants of the Core) appear. While they will be friendly enough, there is a definite divide between the Nedragonni and those from other lands—and in a subtle yet definite way, most Nedragonni will make mainlanders aware of it. They tend to keep their own counsel—thus, gaining any useful information from them regarding the land or its dangers requires some effort.

Native Player Characters

Native PCs from Nedragonne can be of any background or class (except for Anchorites, as the Church of Ezra has not yet reached this isolated island community). Humans are by far the most numerous inhabitants, with gnomes and the rare kender comprising roughly a tenth of the population. Scattered remnants of dwarf clans mine ore and gems in the mountain range to the northeast, but they keep to themselves in the underground city of Furornacht, coming into other settlements only four times a year to trade for what few goods they cannot produce on their own. There

are no elves, half-elves, or half-Vistani in Nedragonne.

Because of the lack of urban development and the consistent reliance of each settlement on trade with the others, many take up the mantles of fighters and rangers (guardsmen and guides for trade caravans). Few wizards or clerics hail from Nedragonne; priests will generally worship some sort of sea deity, and wizards will be either general mages or water elementalists—these characters typically live in the coastal villages, as those settlements have greater need of magic to defend against dangers from the deep. Rogues are not often found in Nedragonne... though perhaps that is simply the mark of a good rogue. The larger settlements of Tenebria (2,000 inhabitants) and Moros (1,200 inhabitants) could certainly support a population of such characters.

Due to their hard-working lives among the various elements, native Nedragonni gain a +1 bonus to their Constitution scores, and can choose to add another +1 bonus to *either* Strength or Dexterity (as appropriate to class). These characters also receive the Endurance non-weapon proficiency for free. Unfortunately, because of their somewhat xenophobic outlook on life and their few dealings with people from other parts of the demiplane, native Nedragonni must subtract 1 from their starting Wisdom scores.

Personalities of Note

Serena O'Shea , Mayoress of Orcinas: female human mage 6/thief 5, infected wereorca, LN

In her human aspect, Serena O'Shea is a stout woman in her late forties, though she looks much younger. Her hair is blonde and is usually worn tied back in a careless ponytail, while

her eyes are deep-set, bright blue, and unusually intense. In her orca aspect, Serena is a twenty-foot long killer whale, with the black and white overlapping color pattern common to normal orcae. While powerful in this form, but she is a calm and methodical hunter, rarely succumbing to bloodlust.

As the mayor of Orcinas, Serena holds a great deal of power and knowledge, both of her own city and of the domain as a whole. She is certainly the person the PCs would need to talk with if they wished to procure water-borne transportation out of Nedragonne, as the village has a number of sailing and whaling vessels that might suffice. She is typically accompanied by an entourage of 1d6 bodyguards (3rd-level fighters, all NG).

Despite her lycanthropic infection, Serena is a capable wizard, who concentrates most of her magical abilities in divinatory spells that she uses to her political advantage in negotiations and bargaining. Her rogue skills further aid her in gathering information (and in spotting and prosecuting rogues operating in her city). While well-informed, she is savvy enough that PCs will not get any information for free—most likely, they will owe her a “favour”... one they would be wise to repay.

Serena never wears armour—both because it interferes with her spellcasting and roguish talents and because of the threat of constriction damage if she changes form. She carries a +4 *dagger, defender* as her only weapon.

Nathaniel Finn, Sheriff of Sphyrna: Sheriff Nathaniel Finn, male human fighter 8, true wereshark, NE

In human form, Nathaniel Finn is a tall, powerfully built man who stands 6’3” in height and weighs in at a muscular 220 lbs. His eyes are unusually prominent and so raven-black that they appear to have blue highlights. Nathaniel’s hair is also black and closely cropped, as is the goatee that encircles his cruel mouth. In his shark aspect, Finn is 22 feet long and closely resembles a great white shark.

As the sheriff of Sphyrna, he is the head of all the city’s law enforcement and serves on the city’s council of governors as an advisor to the mayor. All police and civilian militia report to him, and he can muster a surprisingly large quasi-military force in little time (roughly 200, wearing the equivalents of leather armour and carrying longswords).

Nathaniel is vicious and cruel, but rarely openly so. Should someone be unfortunate enough to catch him involved in some bloodthirsty activity, he typically either infects the observer with lycanthropy and utilizes him/her as a source of information (provided the individual is “well-connected”) or simply slays him/her with blade or teeth.

Nathaniel has infected progeny in various positions among the fishermen, sailors, and whalers of Sphyrna (as well as in Orcinas). Thus, at the DM’s discretion, almost any sailor or seaman the PCs meet could well be one of the Sheriff’s soldiers—the total population of true and infected weresharks in Sphyrna (and in neighboring Galekard) is unknown, but could easily be four or five dozen or more.

Mariska Allyn, The Ear on the Streets: Mariska Allyn, female kender thief 7; CN

Mariska is a plucky young kender whose knowledge of Nedragonne is second only to that of Serena O'Shea. Mariska is the head of a gang of 15–20 street urchins (all human) who know all the illicit operations taking place in Tenebria. Appearing as a young human girl no more than 12 years of age, Mariska is actually in her late thirties, with curly red hair and an open, innocent expression—one she has perfected through the telling of a thousand lies.

The kender is quite protective of her protégés, and will stop at nothing to avenge one of them if they are injured or killed. Each carries *dust of disappearance*, allowing them to make quick escapes if they are discovered during their activities. In addition, she carries a +2 *short sword of quickness* and a +3 *dagger of venom* (filled with Type D poison, injected on a roll of 18–20, due to Mariska's skill with it). Mariska also wears a kender-sized cloak that functions both as a *cloak of elvenkind* and a +1 *cloak of protection*.

Aeowyn Caladorn, the Darklord's Love: Aeowyn Caladorn—4th magnitude mutable ghost (banshee); CE

As Xanthos Kastigir's former wife (see **"Background"**), Aeowyn Caladorn's rage and despair at her husband's fatal attack caused her to rise as a fourth-magnitude banshee. She still retains beauty and intelligence, but her other qualities—mercy, gentleness, trust, and selflessness—died with her physical body (which was also brought to the demiplane and which now lies buried deep beneath the sand on the outskirts of Galekard).

A banshee, Aeowyn is what Van Richten would call a *humanoid, beauteous spirit*, whose appearance is an idealized version of her living form. She

stands near six feet in height, with the muscular build common to the Kagonesti. Her skin is as black as that of any drow and her hair is a flowing mane of stark-white waves that constantly drift and flow around her as if blown by unfelt winds or sea currents.

Aeowyn is bound to the land of Nedragonne, and can never leave the island to set foot in the sea she loved so much. Therefore, she will only be encountered on land. She typically roams the northern coastline, bemoaning her inability to rejoin the water and taking out her frustrations on those who wander across her path. Because she is a banshee, Aeowyn can sense the presence of living, sentient creatures up to 5 miles away.

Aeowyn's unlife is sustained by the prospect of someone wreaking her vengeance on the darklord. If encountered by PCs who make it obvious that they are against him, there is a 50% chance that she will break off her attacks and seek to parley with them. She knows much of Xanthos's history and is aware of his physical and chemical vulnerabilities as a true lycanthrope, as well as his ability to call upon the ghosts of those he has slain.

Should intelligent players think to ask about her corpse, they should be able to find and unearth it with investigative work (best adjudicated by the DM). Upon doing so, they will discover a white pearl pendant around the corpse's neck—a perfect mirror image of the black one Xanthos wears to this day (a symbol of their marriage vows). If the PCs possess this pendant, they can destroy Aeowyn forever by throwing it over her ghostly neck after reducing her to 10 hit points. On contact with her ghostly flesh the silver chain will begin glowing with a blue-white radiance that

will quickly devour her ghostly essence and will send her spirit to its final rest.

In addition, the pendant has the ability to turn Aeowyn as a holy symbol wielded by a 10th-level priest. While she cannot be destroyed by the presentation of the pendant in this manner, she will suffer a –3 to all her attack rolls against the possessor.

Xzorsha Syldebar, the Devil's Own Mother: 4th magnitude incorporeal ghost (banshee); CE

Xzorsha is what Van Richten would call a *humanoid, corrupted* spirit—thus, her ghostly form looks much as a long-dead elven corpse might appear. Her once dark blue skin has deepened to purple in color, and is shot with twisting black and blue veins. She bears the wounds Xanthos inflicted on her—furrows have been torn in her left cheek and a large portion of her right abdomen is simply missing. These wounds constantly ooze intangible black blood. She stands approximately five-and-a-half feet tall, with the willowy build common to Dargonesti. One of her eyes is missing completely, but both the empty socket and her remaining eye glow with pinpoint of red hate.

Bound to the waters as securely as Aeowyn is anchored to the land, Xzorsha can never set foot out of the sea except onto sailing or whaling vessels. She will therefore only be encountered by PCs on such a vessel or beneath the waves. Like all banshees, she can sense the presence of living creatures up to 5 miles away.

As powerful as she is, Xzorsha is not without weaknesses. Any weapon carved from wood formerly used in the construction of a sailing vessel inflicts full damage upon her—reflecting the powerlessness she felt at the hands of

Xanthos's father long ago. In addition, any weapon fashioned from the teeth or claws of a seawolf will inflict twice-normal damage upon her with each successful strike.

Unlike Aeowyn, Xzorsha will never parley with the PCs for any reason, even if they curse Xanthos's name in front of her. She is too consumed by her rage to ever cooperate with those who might seek to destroy the darklord.

The Law

Each settlement in Nedragonne is autonomous, answering only to itself and its own leaders. Oddly enough, the insular nature of the inhabitants and their inherent mistrust of non-natives allow them to cooperate with each other in an interdependent collective effort to survive and prosper. None of the settlements has the resources to provide everything the people crave, so numerous trade routes have been established between each town.

There is no official ruler unifying the island of Nedragonne—each town elects a council of governors and a mayor or mayoress to oversee its administrative/legal affairs as they see fit, as well as to organize militia and watch patrols to protect the townspeople from criminals and predators. The right to vote in elections for the governors' council or the city mayor is given to every citizen over the age of twenty-five. In this way, the Nedragonni enjoy a degree of freedom uncommon among inhabitants of the demiplane.

Encounters

Much as the land teems in natural resources, Nedragonne also abounds with natural (and some unnatural) predators, both on land and in the water.

On land, the flora is usually benign enough, as much of the arable earth has been converted to farmland, wherein the natives raise the grains and cattle-grasses necessary to feed their families and support their trade. In the forests however, a number of dangerous plants grow, including fearweeds, lashweeds, bloodroses, and others. Evil treants are also not unknown in the evergreen forests, ruling their patches of trees as minor despots and constantly in search of fresh sentient meat.

The forests are home to a variety of game animals suitable for hunting/trapping, including deer, elk, beaver, raccoon, and mink, as well as more dangerous predators such as bears and wolves (including some dire wolves as well as normal timber wolves). Timber cutters in these forests cannot rely on the “logger’s luck” of their Kartakan counterparts, and must take active steps to defend themselves from animal attacks as they go about obtaining their livelihoods. The loggers rotate the dangerous duty of patrolling around the current logging site in groups armed with swords and silver or cold-iron daggers. Occasionally the loggers enlist the help of a wizard to aid in their protection—typically the wizard will send one of his more talented apprentices to provide such assistance. In exchange for this help, the loggers harvest various spell components and items for magical research and send them back with the apprentice.

Nevertheless, the land is far safer than the surrounding ocean, so much so that only the hardest Nedragonni aspire

to become sailors, fishermen, or pearl divers. In most places, the water is cold enough to quickly induce hypothermia, and is nearly full to bursting with marine predators as well as the expected fish. Pods of orca hunt off the frigid northwestern shore of the island, competing with a considerable population of sharks for meals of seal and fish. Lycanthropes (such as wereorcae, weresharks, and seawolves) capable of hunting along with either of these groups are not uncommon. There is also a small population of selkie (“sealweres”) in this part of the domain, who must also compete with the orca and sharks for food while not *becoming* food.

Off the northern shore of the main island, several ravenous packs of lacedon (sea ghouls) compete with saltwater scraggs (sea trolls) and merrow (sea ogres) for fresh sentient meat. Few Nedragonni are naïve enough to thus endanger themselves, so these unnatural predators must survive on a diet of large fish, small sharks, narwhales, sea turtles, barracuda, seals and the occasional uninformed human, elf, or half-elf.

The southeastern shore of the main island is rumoured to be the home of a sea hag. Stories abound in nearby villages of a beautiful woman whose voice sounds as sweet as tinkling chimes and whose form is physical perfection. Again, most Nedragonni are far too wise to fall victim, and it typically falls to foolish mainlanders to feed the hag’s dark hunger.

The waters off the southeastern shore are known to be slightly warmer than most of the other seas, and as such are also home to cold-blooded reptiles, including large sea snakes, saltwater crocodiles, and giant eels.

On land, there is a 25% chance for a random encounter either day or night—check four times in any 24 hours. Typical land-based encounters on the roads between towns will be with various forest animals, such as wolves, dire wolves, black bears, or possibly wandering human bandits (treat as 2d6 3rd-level thieves). There is also a 10% chance of encountering a running pack of seawolves in hybrid form at night, as these predators are actually safer on land than in the water.

Anywhere in the water, there is a flat 50% chance of a monstrous encounter with any of the sea creatures mentioned thus far, regardless of the time. The natural predators—orca, sharks, sea snakes, and other such animals—are more numerous and thus more likely to be encountered than the lacedon, merrow, or scrag; therefore, if the dice indicate an encounter, roll again—only 25% of encounters involve the latter creatures.

Darklord of Nedragonne

Xanthos Kastigir

12th-Level Half-Sea Elf Fighter

Greater Seawolf, Chaotic Evil

Armour Class	9 (5)	Str	20
Movement	12 (15, Sw28)	Dex	17
Levels/Hit dice	12	Con	16
Hit Points	110	Int	16
THAC0	9	Wis	10
No. Of Attacks	3 or 2	Cha	12
Damage/Attack	By weapon; 1d4/1d4/2d4 (land); 5d4 or 3d6 (water)		
Special Attacks	<i>Sharpness</i> bite; tail slap; 5% chance for lycanthropy; spell-like abilities		
Special	immune to weapons of		

Defences less than +2; regenerate 3 hp/round

Magic Resitance 30% (land) or 40% (water)

Background: Xanthos Kastigir was born in the warm waters off the coast of Ansalon, on the world of Krynn. The son of a Dargonesti elf woman and a human pirate captain, Xanthos was the result of an all-too-typically violent interaction between the two races.

His mother Xzorsha was caught in the dragnets of a passing ship, and the captain, taken with her beauty, ordered her brought to his quarters. When Captain Waylon Kastigir had finished with her, Xzorsha would have been offered to the rest of the crew had she not regained consciousness while in Kastigir's cabin. As the captain was dressing himself with his back to her, she managed to knock him unconscious and escape back into the sea, assuming her dolphin form as she did so.

When giving an account of what had taken place back in her home of Teravia, Xzorsha initially chose not to reveal all she had suffered. However, time eventually made her deception clear—it was discovered that she was pregnant. In tears, she confessed to her father, Telthanas, who, along with Xzorsha's brothers and sisters, wished to mount an immediate war party to seek out their sister's attacker and avenge her honor upon him.

In the midst of their murderous planning, Xzorsha's mother Zauirelyna stepped in, counselling patience and warning them that such an attack would be met with indiscriminate war in which many others would be lost. She asked the family if they could, in good conscience, put their friends and

neighbours (whether sea elves or other natural ocean creatures) at such risk.

“No,” Xzorsha answered her mother, before any of the rest of her family could speak. They turned to look at her, watching as she wiped away her grief. “No... I would not see my family or friends die to right a wrong that cannot be undone. I am alive... and I will go on with my life, stronger for the pain I have endured.”

“But what of the child?!” her brother Iolaus demanded angrily. “It carries the blood of the human—the child will serve as a constant reminder of your dishonour! How are you to heal, my sister, when there shall be a living testament to the crime with us always?”

“It is not the child’s fault.” This time, it was Telthanas who spoke, the rage in his eyes slowly retreating. “The babe will bear, *can* bear no responsibility for the circumstances surrounding his or her creation. That guilt is for the surface dweller only... but it will be our guilt if we do not treat the child for what he or she is.”

He looked carefully to Zauirelyna, and saw the priestess’s agreement in her eyes. “The child of our child; flesh of our flesh, as much as that of the air breather.”

Iolaus spoke a final time, folding his arms across his hairless blue chest. “Even if we do this, the rest of our people will never accept the half-breed. What kind of life will this child have if he or she remains with us? Torn not merely between two peoples—humans and elves—but between two *worlds*? Would any of us want to live in such a state? With scorn and ridicule heaped upon us each day?”

No one replied for a long while, and then Xzorsha said softly, “I would. I love the sea, and the goodly creatures in

it—I love my family, and would never wish that I had not been born, had not been allowed to see what I have seen. And...” she broke off for a moment, seemed to collect herself, and forged ahead. “And I love this child already... as much as I could love the child of my husband, had I one... I will love it no less because of who the father was.”

Her brother seemed about to speak again, then subsided. Embracing her, he spoke softly. “You are stronger than, than I,” he whispered to her. “May your child inherit only your strength and mind, and not the taint of its sire.”

“From your lips, to goddess’s divine ears,” she whispered back.

Months later, on a near lightless beach in a cave as old as the Cataclysm, Xanthos Syldebar entered the world of Krynn.

Named for the Dargonesti word for “survivor” as he could live in either world, Xanthos grew quickly, as was normal for a half-elf (an admittedly abnormal creature). In only three decades, he had the physical stature of an adult elf twice his age, with broad shoulders and long, muscular limbs.

An unusually perceptive and intelligent boy, Xanthos knew he was different from most of his kin... indeed, from all of the other sea elves he met. His skin was a dark grayish-brown rather than the dusky blue of the other Dargonesti, and his hands lacked the distinctive webbing between their fingers, making it impossible for him to swim as fast or as easily as his peers. Lacking this ability, Xanthos was treated as handicapped at the best of times... and at the worst of times, as something even less.

Something in the boy’s hybrid nature disturbed the other young sea elves, some kind of instinct that they did

not fully understand and so could not put into words. But they reacted much as human children might have—with taunts, threats, and even physical assaults, striking out against what they feared. These youth were chastised severely by older family members whenever they were caught, but they typically shrugged off such punishment as the intemperate young adults they were and continued. Some parents publicly condemned such victimizing behaviour but did little to discourage it in private.

One day, mere weeks after Xanthos reached an age corresponding to a human's late teens, the half-elf found himself able to take on the form of a dolphin. His body twisted, reshaping itself as his kicking legs fused together into a long, muscular tail, his arms shrank to flippers and his mouth filled with rows of flat teeth. His usual simmering anger dropping away, he rocketed to the surface as if propelled by magic, leaping out of the water and relishing the feel of the cool, biting air on his thick, rubbery skin. He splashed back down with pure, unfettered joy vibrating through his soul.

At the surface, he was joined by a pod of true dolphins, who wordlessly invited him to play at their games. His habitual misanthropy overcome by the gentle, simple acceptance of his bottlenose brethren, Xanthos was soon mimicking them, racing and leaping and diving as though he had been doing it all his life. The young half-elf had never felt anything similar before, and had no words to describe his contentment, no context for the joy and happiness he suddenly knew.

After a time, some of his former tormentors joined the rest of the

dolphins, apparently finding common ground in the dolphin form with the half-breed they had shunned and despised for so long. In this way, Xanthos's life improved immeasurably. His former tormentors ceased their attacks, apparently convinced that this new ability proved him a Dargonesti regardless of his birth. He began spending time in his alternate body, allowing its simple joy to obscure his repressed anger and loneliness for longer and longer periods. This continued despite the few tentative friendships he began to make, as all of Teravia gradually changed their perceptions.

His mother was surprised and pleased with his ability to assume dolphin form—nonetheless, she feared that the hurt and anger would simply grow inside him until he could no longer contain it. Now, however, her concerns seemed unfounded, as her son slowly and gradually adapted to his new situation. To aid him in becoming a valued member of the community, Xzorsha arranged for him to learn ranger skills—a rare and specialized vocation among the Dargonesti, and one which she hoped would continue to soften her son's temperament while teaching him of the beauty of the world around him.

Xanthos was almost as delighted with this development as with his ability to change his form. The ranger's solitary lifestyle suited him well, allowing him to forget his past misanthropy among the elves by focusing on protecting and preserving the other natural creatures around him. While in training, he continued to make hesitant forays into the unfamiliar realm of friendship, and gradually began to call others by the title. He learned to differentiate the clicks and whistles of the dolphins and other whales, grasping

their language and befriending many of them. He learned of the dangers of the sahuagin of the neighbouring communities, noting their habits and weaknesses and how to slay them should they attack.

As his studies progressed, Xanthos was given more responsibility—first accompanying and then leading patrols of pure-elf warriors around Teravia. His intelligent and inventive mind surprised many of the city's seasoned soldiers with new designs for weapons and traps to defend the city. In addition, he took on hazardous missions exploring the ocean's deepest depths in pursuit of further natural resources, as his half-human bones were denser and stronger than those of pure elves—allowing him to bear the crushing pressure of the deep water with greater ease and less discomfort.

One dark night after a clash with the neighbouring sahuagin community, Xanthos happened upon a prisoner who had been captured in another raid—an elven woman who bore her own unique nature. She was Aeowyn Caladorn, the full-elf daughter of a Kagonesti mother and a Dimernesti father.

Learning that Xanthos was, like her, torn between two worlds, Aeowyn felt an immediate kinship with him. After providing information to the Dargonesti community on the nearby sahuagin, Aeowyn—fiercely independent as she was—began actively seeking the half-elf's company. At first, the cautious and sarcastic ranger assumed that her motives were somehow selfish, but Aeowyn persisted, and some months after her rescue the two eventually married. With a respected position among his city's defenders, the knowledge and skills to guard and

protect nature, and a lovely wife as unique as he himself was, it seemed that the happiness Xanthos had sought throughout his entire misbegotten life had finally found him. Unfortunately, it was not to be.

One morning, a vast sahaugin force attacked the city in concert. At least half of them had exchanged their customary shark mounts for giant wolf-headed seals with mouths full of yellowed fangs. The city militia held their weapons steady as the great beasts bore down on them, carrying their scaly-hided riders at a speed a full-grown shark could not have matched. As the battle progressed, Xanthos was struck in the leg by a crude spear that was attached to a line of braided seaweed—a makeshift harpoon that the scaly creature used to drag him away from his compatriots like a fish on a hook. After extricating the weapon from his thigh, the half-elf found himself surrounded by enemies. Though he fought well, there were simply too many of them and he was too badly wounded by spear, claw and tooth.

"You're dead, you know," he suddenly heard a voice whisper at the back of his mind. It sounded familiar somehow, but he couldn't quite place where he'd heard it before. "You can't kill them all. Sooner or later, your enemies are going to overwhelm you... and you'll never see your precious family or your lovely wife again."

Xanthos tried to ignore the voice, but the mention of his family—especially Aeowyn—made it impossible. He continued to stab away with his blades, but his own body was bleeding from dozens of bites and scratches now, and he felt his strength waning even with the eldritch gauntlets he wore.

“But I can make it so you get back to the people you love. You’ve got the power within you—you’ve always had it, really. You’ve just forgotten how to use it—buried it under the garbage the elves have been teaching you for decades.”

Leaden weight was creeping into his limbs, and the liquid world swam out of focus before his eyes. Looking down at his wounded side, he saw his own lifeblood gushing into the water with every frantic beat of his heart, exiting through a massive bite wound he didn’t remember receiving.

*“You want to kill these creatures, don’t you? It **excites** you, the violence—it has nothing to do with them attacking your “home,” because you’ve never really had a home. Do you remember what wonderful people it is you’re fighting for?”*

For an instant, the sahuagin across from him had the face of one of his elvish tormentors, its craggy, scaly face morphing into the smooth, delicate features of a boy who had once beaten Xanthos so badly with the blunt end of a trident that the half-elf had taken nearly a week to recover.

“Not him,” he muttered, shaking his head and forcing his muscles to obey him despite the lack of vital blood. “We were just children... still my people.”

*“Oh, but that’s not true, Xanthos—you don’t **have** a people. These sea elves have never thought of you as anything but a surface-born bastard who’ll die before they reach adulthood. They see an abomination just as savage as any sahuagin.*

*But what they don’t see is that it’s a gift—**your** gift, passed down from your father. You’ve already killed more of these invaders than any five of your so-*

called comrades—you’re a truer warrior than any of them will ever be.”

The dagger in his hand began to sag, and he shook his head again, summoning his willpower to make it obey his commands. It drew another line along seawolf flesh, and the creature shrieked in pain, gasping out its air and drowning in the salty water.

“They’ll be glad when you’re dead, you know—glad Xzorsha’s little mistake has been erased. She’ll be relieved, too. All your life, you’ve been a millstone around her neck. Those soldiers are leaving you to die, half-elf, and your family doesn’t care—they’d just as soon see you out of their lives. That’s why no one’s helping you here. You’re all alone. All alone... except for me. But I can make sure you live—for a price.”

“What price?” he mumbled. He no longer really knew what he was saying, no longer remembered why he was conversing with someone who wasn’t even there.

*“Don’t worry about that. The big question, is do you **want** to survive this?”*

A passing shark slapped its tail and struck him alongside the head, stunning him. He drifted in the water, his weakness rolling over him like a tidal wave. The world shimmered before him, and his arms lowered. Sensing his sudden vulnerability, the enemies spurred their mounts forward, eager for the kill.

“Time’s up, Xanthos, my friend. Last chance. Yes, or no?”

The oncoming sea demons all had the faces of his childhood tormentors now—then back to their scaly visages, then back again. The injustice of it when added to all the other misfortunes of his life, the sudden wonder if he was

fighting for a people who truly cared nothing for him... it was too much to bear. “Yes!” he choked out. “Yes... damn you!”

“That’s my boy.”

With that single phrase, the voice was gone, and a black haze of rage descended over the half-elf, flowing into his opened veins, filling his muscles with strength and power. The half-elf lost himself completely in an orgy of blood and pain and fury, knowing only death at each stroke of his dagger, each pass of his curled fingers, each bite of his teeth.

When he came to himself again, he was in an unfamiliar bed. His wife was beside him, gazing with tears in her eyes. Weeping openly, she told him of her surprise and wonder at his survival, when the elvish forces had been decimated by the invaders—including most of their family. Interrupting this tender moment, a priestess inspected him and noted the lack of visible wounds—something that should not have been possible given the battle he had fought, unless a possibility too dark to think about had come to pass.

The half-elf was taken to the king, who ordered that the magical rite be performed to detect whether lycanthropy burned in the half-elf’s veins. At his words, Xanthos was silent—he knew nothing of lycanthropy, not even the whispered tales elven infants learned when being educated about the dangers of their water-filled home. When the nature of the affliction was explained, the half-elf shook visibly.

“What does this have to do with me?” he asked, as calmly as he could manage. “What do you expect to find in performing this rite?”

“Nothing, I hope, Lieutenant,” King Khoryphos replied gravely. “But time will tell. You see, sea elves are immune to this particular infection—something in our natures repels and defeats the disease before it can take hold.”

“Then why—?”

“Because, Xanthos Syldebar,” the king interrupted, heat rising in his face and deepening its color from blue to purple. “Because *you* are NOT a true sea-elf! You carry the blood of a human—and humans are notoriously susceptible to lycanthropy, in all its forms. There is every chance that many of the creatures you slew spent half their lives walking on land among the humans!!!”

The latest shock in a day full of them hit Xanthos in the gut like a rusty pike. At a nod from his mother—wounded gravely but still alive, she had sought the king’s council chambers when word reached her that her son had miraculously survived an unsurvivable battle—he held up his hands in a gesture of surrender.

Khoryphos nodded once to Xzorsha, then turned to her captive son. “Lieutenant Xanthos Syldebar,” he said, speaking in a flat monotone. “On your honour, I charge you not to harm those who would come to test you, but to allow them to proceed—that we may speed this matter along. If our hope is granted, we would welcome the addition of your strength to our rebuilding efforts.”

Xanthos shook his head. “I swear,” he answered the king. “I have done no wrong thus far, and will not add weighted guilt to a heart already heavily laden with grief. Perform your spell, that I may return with my wife and my mother to bear our grief together.”

The king nodded back, and motioned two of the clergy forward. The rite began, as the priest and priestess chanted, waving their hands in the mystical gestures that summoned up the Goddess's favour, churning the water into complex patterns as it passed between their webbed fingers. The designs formed in the surrounding water and floated there, motionless in a sea of motion, and the chanting continued. The priestess's voice was a low alto lullaby, matched with the bass of the priest in a symphony of eldritch music.

And suddenly, the music became a noise unlike anything Xanthos had ever heard before! The cacophony sounded like nothing so much as a choir of screaming demons. The half-elf fell to his knees, covering his ears, expecting at any moment to feel the blood pouring from them. "Stop!!" he cried out. "Stop, I beg you—the noise!! I can't—I can't bear it!"

The cacophony continued, growing louder as the priestess and priest ignored him. He pressed his hands firmly into his ears, trying to block out the soul-tearing sound...

And suddenly it was done. Sudden, blessed silence.

Xanthos knew instantly from the expressions on the faces of those around him what the rite had revealed.

"Lieutenant Xanthos Syldebar," intoned Khoryphos in a formal voice that echoed throughout the now silent room. "Our priests have tested you, and found you tainted. Your blood is unclean, and your fate is sealed—banishment, forevermore."

"Banishment?!" Xanthos choked, his stomach churning while his eyes flashed. "But why? You must have a cure for this!!"

"Such a cure exists," the priestess spoke from his left side. "But not for the curse of the seawolf. Your blood, your very soul is tainted forever... and no magic on Krynn can make it even as it once was. You must leave us!!"

"Leave??!!!" he echoed again, sure he misunderstood. "I FOUGHT for this damned city, gave my all in its defense!!! I suffered and bled for it, and acquired a curse for it!! What more loyalty could you demand from me??!!!"

"It is not your loyalty we question," Khoryphos returned, sadness darkening his features. "But the person we knew is dead. You are no longer who you were—you can no longer be trusted. In recognition of your service, we will not execute you... but your days of living among us are over. That is my final word."

Reeling, the half-elf turned desperately to Aeowyn. "My love, will you at least come with me? I can bear any punishment, even this, so long as you are there beside me."

He saw the answer in her eyes before she even spoke. "My husband," she said softly, tears welling. "I love you more than I love my own life. I would shackle myself to you were you marching through fire, sure that our love would protect me from the burns."

She wiped at her eyes, and the sheer sorrow in her voice was as palpable as the salt in the water around them. "But I cannot go with you—for our love will NOT protect me from the beast in your blood. If anything, it will put me in greater danger than any other here."

Aeowyn took his hairless face in her supple, strong hands. "Many of the shapeshifters are like you—bearing the curse through no fault of their own. But unlike other strains of this disease, the

seawolf affliction can never be pulled from your veins while you live—it is who you are now. And it is who our...*your* children would be. Forever.”

Xanthos’s eyes involuntarily closed, starbursts of pain exploding behind his eyes, still reeling. His family, dead. His own life, over. Banishment from his home, from the only home he had ever known in all his years. And now... his wife, the only creature besides his mother that he had ever truly loved, was rejecting him...

“Of course she is,” whispered an all too familiar voice inside his mind. *“You can’t have expected anything different. She doesn’t love you, she only fears you—and rightly so.”*

“Shut up,” he muttered. His mother, Xzorsha, leaned on her attendants for support, tears streaming down her face now in silent sorrow. But in her eyes he saw the same rejection he had spied in Aewyn’s... genuine sadness perhaps, but still rejection.

“I know it is painful, my love—and it is most definitely not easy to say...”

*“Listen to how she says it. “My love.” As though it means anything—as though **you** mean anything to her at all. As though you ever did, to either of them.”*

“SHUT UP!!” he cried out, pounding his fists against his temples, trying to silence the voice that seemed to be speaking only the truth.

The pain, the rejection, the grief, the all-too-familiar loneliness and despair—it was all too much to bear. Betrayal the likes of which he hadn’t known was possible. His wife, who had sworn to love him forever, and his mother, who had loved him since before his birth... and they were banishing him, along with the king, they had pushed him away.

“You remember I mentioned a price, right? Well, this is it—it’s time to pay up.”

“I’ll kill you all,” he whispered. And the moment the words were out of his mouth, he knew they were true. Something broke inside him, and he whispered the words again, tasting them... and finding he liked their flavor. “I’ll kill you all.”

“That’s my boy.”

The rage that descended over him again was not the same whirlpool of numb, unthinking anger that had saved him from the sahuagin. It was conscious. It was pure. It was **right**.

His body contorted, wrenching itself into a new configuration—one that was new and frightening, and yet strangely familiar. He felt the fur erupting from his face, felt his mouth elongating into a yellow-toothed muzzle, felt his body growing larger, stronger. They thought him an unthinking, uncontrolled beast?

So be it, he thought, knowing now why the voice was familiar—it sounded like his own.

The giant seawolf gorged itself on elven flesh, tearing out great chunks of meat and swallowing with pleasure. It thrashed through the water, ignoring the minor wounds it received from weapons that could not hurt it. Its powerful body propelled it so fast that it crushed skulls and snapped limbs against the stony walls. The guards fell, as did the clergy, whose incantations bounced off his furry, rubbery flesh like so much chaff.

As if from outside his own body, Xanthos watched the carnage he wrought, reveling in it. Reveling in the power that coursed through his veins; in the heated, seemingly endless strength that fueled his muscles. This was good.

It was right. They deserved it for banishing him, for punishing him when he'd given so much to save their cursed city.

This was justice.

"Of course it is. And you always knew it would have to end this way."

Of course he had. Some part of him had always suspected the truth—they'd always thought him a monster, born of violence, born *to* violence. Well no more. He would be death itself. Even to Aeowyn and Xzorsha. *Especially* to them.

He whipped his tail, thrashing through the water at a speed no other undersea creature could match, and found them. Xanthos tore into Aeowyn first, for her excuses and feeble lies. He ripped her limb from limb, her weakened cries of pain and outrage echoing like music in his pointed, furry ears. The small room grew even darker, the water more opaque with the added blood.

As he turned and bore down on Xzorsha, she whispered to him. "The gods will curse you for this, my son! You betray them, and you betray us! The gods *will* curse you..." She held out her hand again, as if beckoning him, to comfort him as she had so many times.

Oh, 'Mother', he thought, barely slowing for an instant. They already have, don't you see? They already have...

As Xzorsha's blood joined the rest of the blood in the water, the room became almost completely dark. Swimming through the murky red haze, Xanthos completely lost sight of everything else—all the bodies, torn and broken and still bleeding, the rough coral floor, even the stone walls.

Propelled by his powerful tail, he continued to move through the murk and found nothing more than open sea. The

red water finally parted before him, revealing the open ocean, and he felt a sudden burning in his chest, a need to breathe.

Surfacing and suddenly fatigued beyond imagination, he spotted land only a few hundred yards away. Making for it, he beached himself, then resumed his more familiar form and lay there in the sand, too exhausted to move.

While familiar in some ways, this land was no land he had ever seen before... but he was its master, and the newest ruler in the Demiplane of Dread.

Current Sketch

Xanthos Kastigir has always been a man at war with himself, and nothing has occurred since the creation of Nedragonne to change that. He has cast off his mother's family name, deciding that his 'father's' name is more appropriate. As a half-elf, his elfish heritage still enables him to appreciate natural beauty—the forests, the grasslands, the smooth, sandy beaches, and the rolling waves are all extremely important to him. But his lycanthropic nature—and the human genetics vulnerable to it—drive him to prey upon and destroy the creatures that inhabit those naturally beautiful places.

Because of the unique nature of seawolf lycanthropy, Xanthos is no longer a true half-elf. He was different from any creature he ever encountered when he was born—now, he is even more unique and more alone. He has found through experimentation that any children he sires will be seawolves like himself. Because of the hatred he has for his own form, he banished his offspring as soon as he learned what they were. He thus lives alone on the outskirts of the capital city of Tenebria—unable to bear the company

of its human inhabitants... and yet unable to completely do without them either.

Xanthos's curse is simple—he wishes, with all his heart, to be living back among the dolphins who accepted him as one of their own, whose motivations he never had to guess at or question... a society he lost forever when he slew his family. Dolphins will only rarely enter his domain, repelled by something about it. When they do, he is compelled by the lycanthropic blood he carries to hunt and eat them, further adding to his mental anguish and guilt.

The second part of his curse stems directly from the first—he can no longer breathe freely beneath the water, and can no longer swim in his humanoid form. When he enters the water, he immediately begins to drown, and can only survive by taking seawolf form—the form he despises, even as part of him revels in its power and savagery.

Closing the Borders

When Xanthos wishes to close the borders of Nedragonne, all of the predators in the Nedragonni ocean begin circling the perimeter of the domain, including orcae, wereorcae, sharks, weresharks, and seawolves. These creatures immediately fall into an intense feeding frenzy, biting and attacking each other and churning the water into bright red death. Other predators from outside the domain join with these creatures, replacing those slain in the bloody feast, so the borders can remain closed for long periods of time.

These predators form a nearly solid wall all the way to the ocean floor. At the surface of the water and down many hundreds of feet, the sharks and orca and seawolves feed. Down too deep for

these creatures to dive, giant squid, deep kraken and unnaturally aggressive sperm whales mimic the frenzied feeding actions of the shallower-dwelling predators. Thus, it is impossible to go under these fearsome creatures, even with magical aid. Should anyone attempt to fly over the feeding frenzy, they will (predictably) find that the air no longer supports them—whether their flight is a natural ability, a mental power, or a magical spell. The person will simply fall into the middle of the feeding, and his/her blood will be added to the already red water.

Anyone attempting to move outward from Nedragonne through this feeding frenzy will suffer at least 2d6 attacks from random predators each round. These attacks include the *sharpness* bites of the weresharks, the threat of being swallowed whole, and all other attack modes of the creatures. Provided that the unfortunate character is attempting to move back *into* Nedragonne, the sharks and other predators making up the feeding frenzy seem to take little notice of him or her (although this doesn't mean the character is perfectly safe—with so much blood in the water, it is certainly possible for one of the beasts to break off from the main ring and attack).

Combat

As a 12th-level fighter, Xanthos is an expert warrior, specialized in the use of the trident, as well as proficient in the net (not used as often above the water), the shortsword, and the dagger. The Dark Powers have granted him the strength of his alternate form in his normal humanoid shape, and he is immune to weapons of less than +1 enchantment or those not carved from whale bone. In combat in his humanoid

form, he achieves a ferocity that is mirrored in his beast form, granting him two attacks each round with a third on alternating rounds (which can be either weapon if he is wielding short sword and dagger—50% chance of either one). He typically fights with a *trident* +3 (which he can use to *skewer* for double damage and which acts as a *trident of submission*) and a *net of entrapment*, or a +3 *short sword of sharpness* and a +1 *dagger of wounding*.

When on land, Xanthos may assume a half-man/half-beast form similar to the hybrid aspect of a lowland loup-garou with matted fur. In this form, he can attack three times per round with a claw/claw/bite attack routine (doing 1d4/1d4/2d4 damage, but without his great strength bonuses). He rarely assumes this form, however, preferring to remain humanoid since he can no longer become a dolphin.

When in the water, Xanthos's greater seawolf form may attempt either two bites, two tail slaps, or one of each per round, depending on the relative position of his enemies in relation to his body (the tail slap is only feasible if the targets are above the water, as in a boat for example). In this form, his bite attacks do 5d4 damage, and *can* pass on the contagion of lycanthropy (5% chance per point of bite damage inflicted). Xanthos has no control direct over these lycanthropes (as anyone infected with seawolf lycanthropy becomes a "true" seawolf, able to infect others and to breed naturally with each other), but quite literally hates them as much or more than he hates his own form.

In addition, the Dark Powers who made Xanthos the dread lord of Nedragonne have granted him additional powers along with this position. He regenerates 3 hp per round, and is

immune to magical weapons of less than +2 enchantment (unless the weapon is made from the bones or teeth of a whale, which of course can affect him normally). He is also immune to cold- and water-based attacks, having lived most of his life under the chill ocean. However, he suffers 1 die greater damage per dice rolled for fire-based spells (for example, if he is hit by a 6HD *fireball* that overcomes his innate magical resistance, the damage is rolled as 6d8 rather than 6d6).

Xanthos has another unusual ability—one that he prefers not to use unless absolutely necessary. The half-elf lycanthrope can summon and command the ghosts of those he has personally slain in battle. As might be expected, these undead bear nothing but hatred for Xanthos, and serve him because they are compelled to do so. Approximately 2d4 of these creatures will appear within 3 rounds after the dread lord summons them, and they will follow his commands to the letter.

For game purposes, summoned human spirits can be considered 1st-magnitude or 2rd-magnitude incorporeal ghosts, the half-elves can be considered 3rd-magnitude corporeal ghosts, and the elves can be considered either 3rd-magnitude mutable ghosts (in the case of male elves) or banshees (in the case of female elves). Note that 4th-magnitude ghosts are beyond Xanthos' ability to command.

To determine what ghosts answer the darklord's mental summons, roll 1d6:

Die Result	Summoning
1 or 2	human ghosts
3 or 4	half-elven ghosts
5	male elf ghosts
6	banshees

As stated earlier, when summoned by Xanthos, these undead will follow his commands precisely, obeying the letter rather than the intent of his orders. While evil (and therefore not at all reluctant to attack his enemies), they will invariably call out to the darklord, whispering to him of his dark deeds—especially the slaughter of his family—attempting to awaken some last spark of guilt and torment within the evil warrior. Should the summoned ghosts include elves (male or female), Xanthos will suffer a -2 penalty to all of his attacks for four rounds, as on some level the elven ghosts do remind him of his lost family; by the end of the fourth round, however, he has steeled himself against the memories again and can attack normally. He is not afforded a saving throw to avoid this effect, but no other ghosts (including half-elves) affect him in this manner.

Xanthos can communicate with and command any animal of his realm, whether the animal is a native of the land or the sea. These animals keep him informed of the goings-on in Nedragonne, speaking to him in their own languages. These animals will follow his commands to the best of their abilities, including tracking, harassing, or attacking humanoids. When he is in the water, both normal and lycanthropic predators (i.e. weresharks and wereorcae) obey him unswervingly. The darklord can see through the eyes of any of his animal minions, provided that he concentrates for a full round before attempting to do so.

Xanthos has an innate 30% magic resistance to all hostile spells when on land; in the water, this magic resistance

rises to 40% (much as a mountain loup-garou). This resistance applies equally to damage-causing spells (such as *fireball* or *lightning bolt*) as well as simple effect spells such as *cause blindness*. Anytime he changes form (to any aspect) he heals from 10% to 60% of any damage he has suffered up to that point.

The darklord can also cast the following spells 3 times per day, as a priest of his level (12th): *create/destroy water*, *dispel magic*, *transmute rock to mud/mud to rock*, and *oars to sea snakes* (a variant of the standard *sticks to snakes* spell which creates giant sea snakes from ship oars or other pieces of driftwood; these snakes are never poisonous, but do have a powerful constricting attack). Xanthos can cast these spells instantly through an act of will, and requires no verbal or material components to do so.

Should he be killed on land, his body reverts to a rapidly evaporating puddle of water, reforming itself completely within 1d8 days somewhere on Nedragonne (with all wounds healed). This reformation may appear to be random at first glance, but in fact it is not—Xanthos invariably reforms at one of the three coastal villages on the main island (Sphyrna, Galekard, or Orcinas), according to the phase of the moon at the time of his “death.” If the moon is new, he reappears in Sphyrna; if it is waxing or waning, he reforms in Galekard; and if it is a full moon, he reawakens in Orcinas.

Should he be slain in the water, Xanthos’s body seems to dissolve into a cloud of murky red blood that dissipates over the course of a single round. His body then reforms as described above, except that it does so within 1d4 days.

Winter's Sorrow

An Original Adventure

By Thomas "Malus Black" Rasmussen
malus_black@hotmail.com

This adventure is set in a small village along the coast of Mordent as well as the nearby manor, church and lighthouse. The village in the adventure, Ashford, is left vague in order to allow the DM to move the adventure to any other domain, as long as it has a shoreline. The adventure requires no particular combination of races, classes or levels, since it is mainly investigative in nature.

Background

The village of Ashford seems to the casual observer to be nothing more than a quiet fishing village on the coast of the Sea of Sorrows. Anyone who stays in the village for some time, however, will notice that Ashford is a village in constant change and economic progress. The reason for this is the self-styled Lord Alfred Winter, the aging patriarch of the Winter family.

Lord Winter was originally nothing more than a fisherman from Ashford. In time, however, he grew tired of his lot in life and the constant struggle for survival. Being the ambitious yet stubborn young man he was, he decided to find something more suitable for him. After a brief voyage through Mordent, where he found nothing of interest, he journeyed north into Dementlieu. There, he was overwhelmed by the degree of evolution and sophistication. But, more importantly, he discovered the marvels of printed books. After working a few

years at the University of Dementlieu, he had saved up enough money to return to Ashford with a printing press and the determination to bring more knowledge to his fellow countrymen.

Strangely enough, it was a success. While few have actually heard his name outside the village of Ashford and its surroundings, his books have appeared as far away as Richemulot and southern Borca. Lord Winter kept Ashford as the headquarters of his business, educating the villagers to aid him in gathering knowledge and writing books. As the village prospered, so did he, and he could soon live in the newly-built Winter family manor, from which he could look at all he had helped create. He soon had a family as well, which included his wife, Anne, his younger brother Nathan, and his young daughter Emily. Together, they oversaw the day-to-day affairs of the village as well as of their business, and both they and the villagers were most happy with their lot in life.

Unfortunately, there are rarely happy endings in the Land of Mists. As young Emily came of age, she fell in love with a young man named Marcus Archer. Regrettably for both her and her family, she did not believe that her father would approve of her choice, as her beloved was nothing but a poor sailor. The irony of it all was that her father would likely have agreed if Emily had told him. But she did not tell him, and the young couple met in secret for the

next year without the Winters suspecting anything.

Then, only a week ago, disaster struck. A massive storm, driven by the autumn winds, broke over Ashford. Marcus' ship, which had been out fishing, desperately tried to get back to the harbor but failed, and the ship shattered against the southern cliffs just beneath the lighthouse. The storm calmed the following day, and the villagers who found the debris realized that none could have survived. Emily, who now knew that her lover was gone forever, fell into a trance-like state from which she could not be stirred, even with the aid of the local cleric, Toret Michael Sykes. Emily simply wanders around the manor, often gazing out of the manor's northern windows at the lighthouse where she had lost everything.

But Marcus was not truly dead, as the knowledge that he would never again see his beloved caused such massive emotions that he was bound to the world as a ghost after his death. Five days after the disaster, he returned to Emily at midnight, visible only to her eyes, where he sat by her side for one hour before he returned to his body. Unfortunately, Emily was his connection to this world, and merely by being near her does he drain her strength, and Emily has grown paler and weaker over the last two days, to the horror of the Winter family. Marcus is also frightened, as he does not understand his connection to her and does not wish her to die. Through his growing rage and his strange connection to the weather, a storm is yet again brewing in the Sea of Sorrows, and it promises to be just as spectacular as the last one.

Ashford

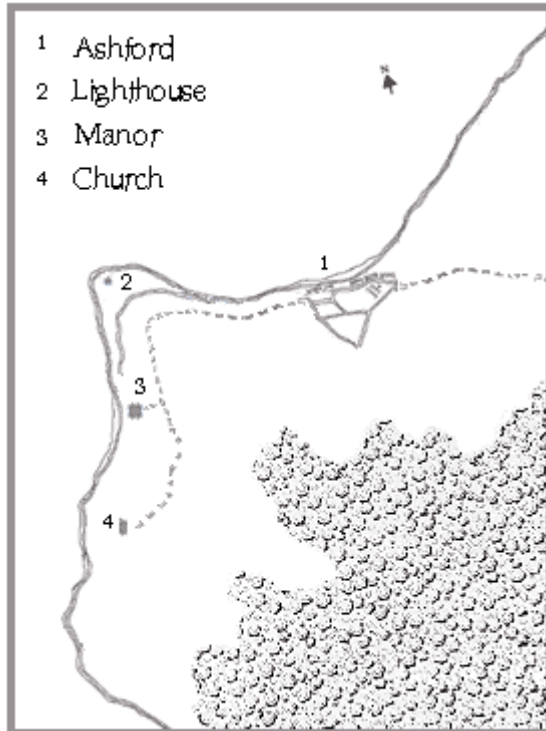
The PCs should have a reason to visit Ashford (*location 1 on the map*). Perhaps a book or a scholar can be located here, or perhaps they need a ship to take them further north to Mordentshire. The best reason might be a friendship with lord Winter, which gives them a greater emotional attachment to their task. If the DM wishes to run this adventure without any former introduction, the PCs may simply want a place to rest after a long journey. Whatever their reason may be, read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs reach Ashford:

The sky above you is gray and cold, casting a dull light over the world. Out to sea, the gray of the clouds fades into darkness and finally pitch black, only illuminated by a few forks of lightning leaping between clouds. Rain hangs as a hazy curtain beneath the darkness, and the Sea of Sorrows is churning violently with white foam visible even from here. It appears as if you have reached Ashford just in time, and seldom has a village looked so inviting to you.

Ashford (hamlet) Conventional; AL LG; 100 gp limit; Assets 1750 gp; Population 350; Isolated (human 99%, other 1%).

Authority Figures: Lord Alfred Winter, male human Com1/Ari2.

There is little for the PCs to do in Ashford, and few people will stop to speak with them, as they are all busy preparing for the coming storm. There are only one location of any interest to the PCs, the local tavern *Winter's Heart*.



Winter's Heart

The local tavern is a one-story house on the eastern outskirts of the town, giving a good view of the sea as well as the distant silhouettes of the manor and the church. The owner, Martin Abbot, is a childhood friend of lord Winter's, and the Winter family often dines here when they are visiting the village or the printing factory, hence the tavern's name. The sign over the door even bears the Winter family crest, a scroll and a snow-white quill crossed.

The tavern is where the PCs are most likely to hear of Emily's situation, due to Martin's obvious depression and sad looks at the manor in the distance. If the PCs inquire about his depressive manner, he will tell them of Emily's condition and lord Winter's growing desperation. If the PCs ask if there is anything they can do to help, Martin is grateful and will gladly write a recommendative letter to his friend.

The tavern does not have a room for the PCs to sleep in, although Martin plans to build some with the increase in travelers to the village. If the PCs wish to spend the night in Ashford, which they should, he informs them that lord Winter often keeps his manor open for travelers. Martin is not sure if lord Winter will do this now, given the current circumstances. This might also be a way to inform the PCs of Emily's condition, and getting them to aid the Winters.

If the PCs spend some time in the village (they have about an hour before the storm breaks), they might overhear people muttering about this storm being worse than the previous one, and wondering who, if any, will die this time. Likewise, Martin might vaguely remember the disaster last week if the PCs question him about other events at the time of the start of Emily's condition. Either way, the DM should keep this as background information only, keeping it subtle to avoid the PCs discovering the connection already. Traveling around Ashford, the PCs may also overhear people talking about lord Winter's daughter, so that the PCs learn of her condition even if they do not visit the tavern. When the PCs are finished with whatever business they have in Ashford, they should begin to move towards the manor (*location 3 on the map*).

Winter Family Manor

The manor lies about a mile and a half from the village proper. As the PCs travel towards it, a light drizzle begins to fall and lightning leaps between the clouds more regularly. When the PCs reach the manor, read or paraphrase the following:

The Winter family manor towers above you, dimly outlined across the black sky. A flash of lightning illuminates the manor, bringing the massive construction into sharp detail. Then, the storm breaks. Rain pours down and drenches you in seconds. Lightning flashes back and forth between the clouds, followed by deafening thunder. And you can see, out to sea, that there are still darker clouds to come.

If the PCs knock on the manor's large front door, as they undoubtedly will, Nathan Winter will quickly show up and show them in before inquiring about their business at the manor. Nathan is a tall, slender man with thick black hair that is cut short. Although he may come across as a very direct and unemotional man, this is simply because he tries to hide his fears about Emily to avoid further upsetting his brother. If the PCs respond that they are simply there because they needed a place to sleep, Nathan will look even more downcast but has no choice but to let them stay. He invites them into the main living room to warm themselves. If, however, they respond by saying that they are here to help in any way they can, and if they have also brought a letter from Martin, Nathan will be very pleased and brighten up a little. He invites them into the main living room to both warm themselves and talk to his brother about Emily's current condition.

The main living room is a large, luxurious room with a large fireplace in which flames dance merrily, bathing the room in a warm, golden light. Lord Winter sits in front of the fireplace, obviously lost in his thoughts. He looks much like his brother Nathan, save that

he is older. His hair is greyer in color than black, and he wears half-moon spectacles. It is obvious merely by looking at him that lord Winter is deeply concerned and worried. He looks as if he hasn't had much sleep lately. When Nathan introduces the PCs to his brother, lord Winter is most surprised and even more so if the PCs wish to help him. If they don't, lord Winter, or Alfred, as he insists they call him, will plead them to help. He will offer a substantial reward of 500 gp, which is all he can afford if he is going to be able to run both his business and Ashford successfully.

If and when the PCs agree to help, he will tell them the story as outlined in *Background* above, excepting the things he doesn't know, namely his daughter's relationship to Marcus. He will also not mention last week's disaster as he has no reason to suspect any connection. Instead, he will focus on his daughter's trance-like condition and her diminishing health. He is, however, interrupted by Emily's appearance.

Suddenly, Alfred stops talking and looks behind you with an expression of sorrow and longing in his eyes. Turning, you see that a young girl, perhaps in her late teens, has entered the room. Her long, black hair hangs lifelessly to her shoulders, and her pale face is devoid of any emotion. She looks through you, as if you do not even exist, focusing what little attention she has at the raging storm outside. A woman enters, looking so much like the young girl that she can only be her mother, and, holding the girl's hand, leads her up the stairs to the bedrooms.

Alfred is on the verge of breaking down completely, although he is calmed by Nathan. If the PCs also give their

assurances that they will help, he smiles grimly and stands up. Saying that there is nothing more to do tonight, he tells them that they will see Toret Sykes tomorrow and shows them to their bedrooms upstairs.

The First Night

The PCs are given three bedrooms, all next to each other and with doorways directly between the rooms. The PCs should be allowed to sleep soundly, at least for a few hours, despite the raging storm outside. Just before midnight, however, one of them will be awakened. The DM should roll randomly to determine which one it is. Whoever it is, read or paraphrase to following to her.

You wake up. Why, you cannot tell. Then, suddenly, you notice that something is different. At first, it is hard to determine exactly what it is, but then you realize it. Everything is silent. While the rain still hammers against the windows, the wind appears to have forgotten to blow. And then, with no warning, the room goes cold. Your breath is as heavy with steam as if it was in the middle of the winter, and you shiver as the cold increases in strength before fading away, as if disappearing down the corridor.

If the PC investigates, as she hopefully does, she will most likely assume that the presence is heading for the room at the end of the corridor; Emily's room. The presence is Marcus, and the storm has calmed due to his calm now that he will soon see Emily again. If the PC enters Emily's room, she will find nothing out of the ordinary, only an open window and soaked curtains blowing in the wind. A few distant

lightning flashes serve to illuminate the pale figure of Emily in her bed. The cold the PC felt earlier is also obvious here. This could be a good time to scare the players by making the shadows and the open window seem sinister. Even if the PC is wary, she will not be prepared for what she will see when she turns around. Next to the door to the corridor hangs a large mirror, reflecting the room. The PC, when she turns, will see everything as normal, save for a young man in torn clothes sitting on Emily's bed, looking directly at the PC. The young man is slightly short, barely taller than Emily herself, and has an angular, hawkish face framed by sandy, soaking wet hair. He is even paler than Emily but bears no other signs of his death. If the PC looks away from the mirror only for a second, the man is gone, and so is the cold. Seconds later, the storm starts again at full strength, causing the very house to shake with its power.

Revelations

The following morning (or whenever the PC wishes to tell the Winters of the events during the night), the Winters will be very disturbed by the apparition. They cannot possibly understand why such a thing could wish to torment Emily. Describing the man to the Winters will be of no help, as they have never met Marcus and wouldn't remember him if they had. PCs may draw connections between last week's disaster and the apparition, although the Winters still cannot see a correlation and are certain that Emily didn't know any of the sailors who died. Any attempts to question Emily herself when she wakes up are pointless, as she simply looks through whoever is talking to her, as if existing in another world altogether. The

storm calms around noon, and Nathan suggests that they should go see Toret Sykes now.

The Church

The church (*location 4 on the map*) is a large structure built from dark stone. A small room in the tower serves as Toret Sykes' room, but he spends more time in the library beneath the church. The library holds a vast amount of books, as lord Winter has donated one example of each book he has printed to the church. The surrounding graveyard has five new graves, although Marcus' grave is empty. They simply couldn't find his body, which now rests inside the shipwreck.

Toret Sykes (male human Exp2, LG) is pleased that the PCs wish to help but is disturbed by the apparition. He has seen the man a few times during services, but he does not know who he is. If the PCs suggest that it is one of the crewmembers of the ship that went down last week, he will say that it's as good a theory as any. He continues by saying that one of the crewmembers, Marcus Archer, was never found. Due to the nature of the apparition, Toret Sykes rightly believes that it is some form of ghost. He remembers that burying the body properly often lets ghosts return to their final rest. The only problem is that Marcus' body is, as previously said, missing. Toret Sykes suggests to the PCs that they might want to search the shipwreck more thoroughly.

If they decide to do this, proceed to the *Lighthouse* section below. Alternately, they may also decide that this task is pointless, and that they should attempt to keep the ghost from entering Emily's bedroom instead. In

that case, proceed to the *Incantations* section below.

The Lighthouse

The lighthouse (*location 2 on the map*) is built on a small outcrop near the bottom of Ashford Point, a vast cliff reaching nearly three hundred feet into the air. There are two ways to reach the lighthouse. The first, and most used, is to travel by boat from Ashford and climb the rock-hewn staircase up to the lighthouse. The other, less used, way is to travel along the small, three hundred foot long path which goes along the coastline. This is rarely used due to the danger, as the path is not only narrow but also slippery during wet weather. If the PCs choose to use the path, balance checks (DC 5) should be rolled three times, once per hundred feet. If a PC fails the check, she may attempt a Reflex save (DC 10) to grab hold of the cliff and avoid falling. If this save also fails, she falls into the cliffs below. As the path descends, the damage ranges from 7D6 at the highest point to 1D6 by the lighthouse. The damage is 4D6 near the middle.

Whatever path the PCs end up using to reach the lighthouse, read or paraphrase the following once they get there:

The massive lighthouse towers above you, its lantern shining as bright as the sun compared to the dull darkness above. It illuminates the slowly rocking shipwreck which lies, shattered, on the rocks beneath. The entire left part of the prow is shattered, as is the roof of the captain's cabin. The ship's mast lies about a dozen feet away.

The lighthouse is locked tight, as it was yesterday before the storm broke.

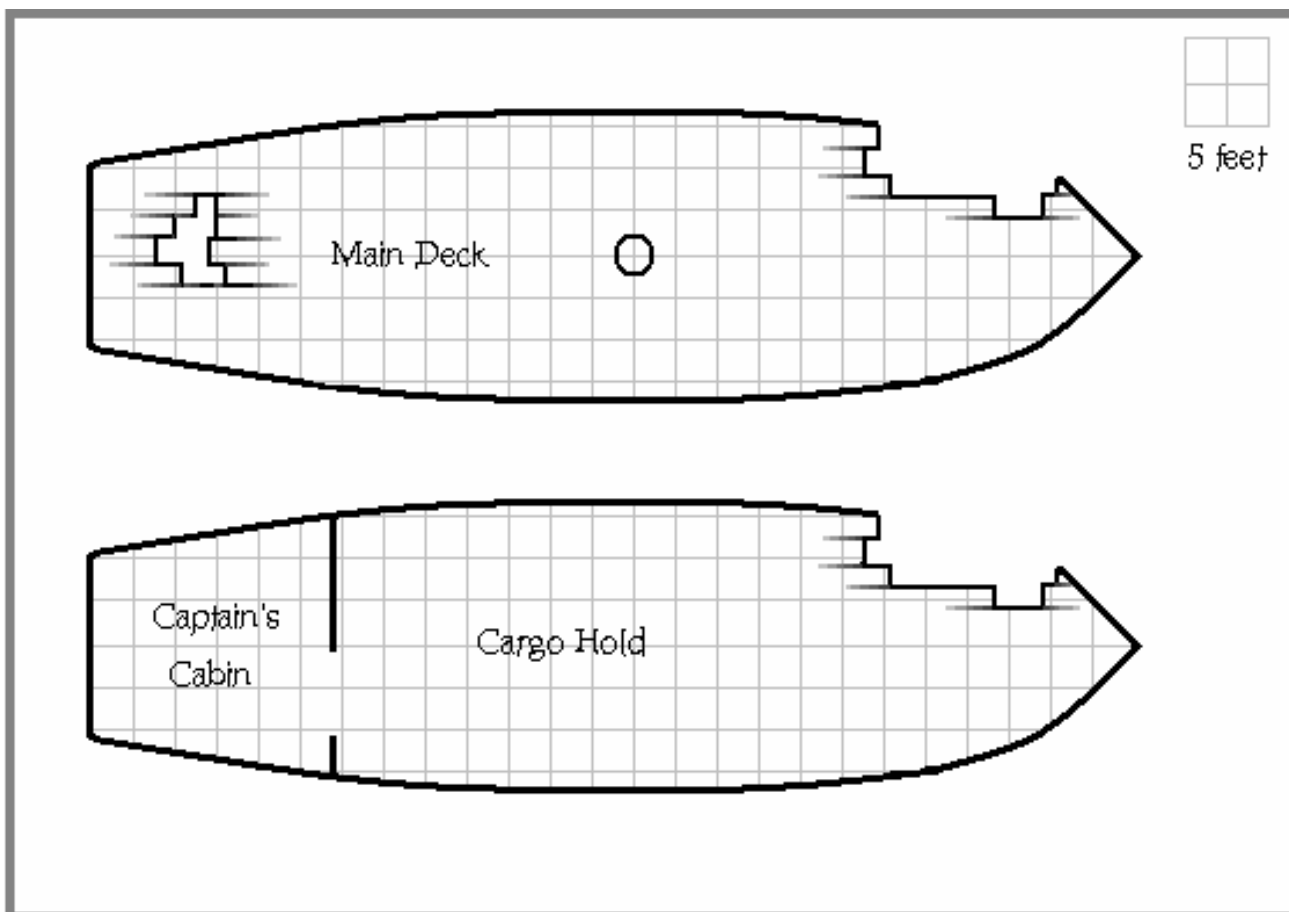
The keeper of the lighthouse lit the lantern before retreating to Ashford. If the PCs are persistent in attempting to enter the lighthouse, the door is a strong wooden door as detailed on page 61 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If the PCs enter the lighthouse, they will find nothing much of interest, only a few barrels of lamp oil, some flint and steel, and a quantity of food. A narrow staircase leads up to the lantern platform, which is now burning brightly. It is the ship, however, that they should be interested in.

The ship is relatively easy to get onto and this should pose no difficulty. The trouble is that the entire cargo hold and captain's cabin is underwater, making it dangerous to enter them. If the PCs climb onto the main deck, the DM should make Reflex saves (DC 15) for each fifteen feet they walk. Failure indicates that the rotting, broken deck

breaks and causes them to drop into the cargo hold or captain's cabin, depending on where they are. The ship is relatively untouched by the raging storm, since Marcus doesn't want his remains to be washed out to sea, a desire reflected in the storm.

The cargo hold

Swimming here is hazardous due to loose crates and other paraphernalia floating around in the water. These hazards increase the Swim DC to 15. There is little of value here, as Marcus is found in the captain's cabin. Still, the DM may wish to play upon the ominous creaking and rocking of the ship in order to make the players worried that the ship might break into pieces.



The captain's cabin

This is where Marcus' body is found. As the ship hit the cliffs, the mast fell backwards, killing Marcus and throwing him into the cabin below. The nets used to catch fish are also here, thrown out of their containers by the crash. When a PC enters the cabin, she must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 10) or be tangled in the net the way Marcus' body is. If the save fails, the PC may attempt to free herself with the use ropes skill (DC 13). Each time she fails, she takes a -1 penalty to future checks. Even if the check is successful and the PC manages to untangle herself, she must still make another save each round she spends in the cabin to avoid becoming entangled. Marcus is floating in the middle of the cabin, a sight which might warrant a Horror check (DC 8). His left shoulder and torso is shattered, and pieces of wood are still lodged in him. He is also entangled in the fishing net. A use rope check (DC 15) is necessary to untangle him. The -1 penalty for failing applies here as well.

When, or if, the PCs manage to get Marcus out of the ship and onto land, read or paraphrase the following:

As you climb onto the outcrop where the lighthouse stands, you feel that the weather has changed. A hard, cold wind blows in from the east, and the waves are already white with foam. Looking up, the lantern is nothing but a small light in a sea of black. Lightning leaps through the sky, mere seconds between each bolt, and the following thunder sends shivers through your spines. The storm is upon you.

Marcus is enraged. He cannot believe that these fools dare to disturb

his body. Had he known that they are planning to prevent him from seeing Emily again, he would probably have been mad with anger. The boat, if used, the PCs used to get to the lighthouse is washed away, and the only path to take is the dangerous one. Certainly, the PCs can hide in the lighthouse, although Marcus will likely use his *Control Lightning* ability to shatter it. If the PCs travel along the path, the DC to walk it has increased to 10, and the DC of the Reflex save has been increased to 15. Any PC who carries the body of Marcus suffers a -2 to both these rolls. While they walk along the path, Marcus will use his *Control Lightning* ability to great effect. He is most likely to strike at those who are carrying his body, although he might also strike at the PC who discovered him last night. In addition to the effects detailed below, any PC struck by the lightning must instantly make a balance check as detailed above. Marcus knows no mercy, and if a PC is downed, he may very well unleash another bolt at her, especially if she is hanging on to the cliff and is about to drop.

Marcus will most likely use all his bolts here and is as such unable to interfere with the burial in such a direct manner. Even though he cannot throw lightning at them, however, does not mean that he is harmless. When he sees that they desire to bury him, the storm grows in power until it threatens to blow the PCs away and drown them in rain. To the dismay of the PCs, the storm does not die when Marcus is buried, despite what they thought. The only viable solution left is to defend Emily's room from the ghost.

Incantations

Toret Sykes has access to some items he believes will be of use to the PCs in defending Emily. He gives them five candles, powdered silver, and a scroll he believes will keep the ghost away. He will not participate in the incantation himself as he does not believe that he has the force of personality to stand up to the ghost's attacks, although he will be present at the ritual. The ritual itself consists of three basic steps. First, a circle must be drawn around the area to be warded. In this case, Emily's bed. Second, candles must be placed at five points along the circumference of the circle and lit. They will burn for two hours. Third, a person must sit in the circle and read from the scroll all the time if she wishes to keep the ghost from entering.

Given the Winters' approval of the plan, which is guaranteed as this is their last chance, the first two steps are easy enough to complete. The PC who first encountered Marcus should try to remember when the ghost arrived in order to time the lighting of the candles correctly. Then, at midnight, a PC must sit down inside the circle and begin to read. Other people in the room do not have to stay in the circle, since it will not harm the ritual.

The appearance of Marcus is, as before, preceded by an unnatural cold, and this would be a good time to start reading the scroll. For each fifteen minutes the scroll is being read, the PC and Marcus must make opposed Charisma checks. If Marcus wins, the ritual fails and Marcus is free to enter the circle. If the PC wins, Marcus will fly into a rage, causing the wind to increase in strength, making the house quake under its fury. The second time the PC wins, the wood begins to crack and

paintings and mirrors fall from the walls. The third time the PC wins, the windows shatter and the wind extinguishes 1D4+1 candles. The PCs have a minute to rekindle them and shut the wind out before the ritual fails. If the PC manages to win the fourth time as well, Marcus leaves with a cry of rage so violent that the clouds seem alive with lightning bolts, one of which strikes the room causing a fire which must be extinguished quickly. If the PCs succeed in this as well, the night is over and they can rest until tomorrow night.

Choices

By the next morning, the PCs as well as the Winters should realize that they are nearly out of options. If the ritual failed, Emily is so weakened that she will not survive another drain. Even if the PCs did manage to drive the ghost away, they can only hope to do it once more before the candles are burned up. The last option is the most difficult one, destroying the ghost. Toret Sykes suggests that the PCs accompany him to the library in the church's basement, where they will search for any information on destroying the ghost or making it return to its rest. The day is bleak but not stormy. Instead, it appears as if the darkness out to sea is simply biding its time, waiting for nightfall. This should be made clear to the PCs, so that they are more and more worried as the day progresses.

The library is not completely organized yet, and half the books are haphazardly stacked into bookshelves. Searching for and finding information on destroying ghosts requires a search check, DC 15 – 1 per additional person searching. The three different ways to destroy the ghost are detailed in the next section, *oblivion*. Whenever a PC

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succeeds in her search check, roll 1D3 in order to find out which solution she finds. After the first find, if the PCs continue their search, roll a 1D2 to find out which they find, and if they keep searching after that, they'll eventually have all the solutions.

Oblivion

There are three ways of destroying the ghost of Marcus Archer.

Emily's death

Since Emily is his connection to this world, her death will free him and let him pass on to the afterlife. This death can be either through Marcus' actions or any other cause. In this case, the Winters, and especially lord Alfred, will withdraw and become mere shadows of themselves for the rest of their lives. The business as well as Ashford will fall into oblivion and disrepair.

Destroying Marcus' ship and body

The complete destruction of Marcus' ship and body will destroy the physical, if not the emotional ties, Marcus has to the world. While he will not pass on to the afterlife, he will lose all his powers and be unable to affect the physical world in any way. He will stay in this state until the day Emily dies, either of old age or other causes, at which point he will follow her to the afterlife. Destroying the ship and body will prove most difficult. Marcus now knows that they wish to separate him from Emily, and he is likely to strike at the PCs with both storm and lightning if need be.

Destroying Marcus

If the PCs can find out what killed Marcus in the first place (the mast of the ship) and fashion a part of it into a weapon (club, quarterstaff, etc.), they can use this to strike at Marcus during the first hour of the day, when he manifests in Emily's room. If they kill him with this weapon, he is forever destroyed and will pass on to the afterlife.

The last two options will not result in any miraculous recovery for Emily, although she will, with the absence of draining, steadily recover from her shock. When she returns to full consciousness and learns of the events which have transpired in her absence, she is likely to become both withdrawn and depressed due to Marcus' return from the grave to be with her, and subsequent destruction. Even so she may, in time, become happy again, even if Marcus will always be on her mind. These last options also give the PCs a place to drop by later in their careers to check on Emily, giving the DM plenty of opportunities for new adventures involving the Winter family.

DM Appendix

Marcus Archer

CR 5; Medium undead (human), 2nd rank ghost, 2nd level commoner; HD 2d12; hp 19; Init +2 (+2 dex); Spd 30ft; AC 12 (+ 2 dex); Base attack/Grapple +1/+2; SA Control Lightning, Control Weather; SQ Rejuvenation, Turn Resistance +4, Undead Qualities; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con -, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Profession (Sailor) +8, Use Rope +4;

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Skill Focus: Profession (Sailor), Toughness.

Control Weather (Su): Weather in a 10-mile radius around Marcus changes to fit his current mood. If he is content and happy, the winds may be calm and the sunlight warm, but if he is enraged the weather might be a terrible storm. Marcus has no control whatsoever of this change.

Control Lightning (Su): If the weather around Marcus is stormy, he may call down lightning to strike at his foes. Marcus may send a lightning bolt at a target within his line of sight 3/day as a free action. He rolls a ranged touch attack. If he misses, the bolt deviates just as a grenade-like weapon, save that it moves 10 feet away from the target square instead of 5. Those in the square where the lightning strikes take 6D6 points of damage, with the possibility of making a Reflex save (DC 16) for half damage. Those in the squares next to the target only take 3D6 damage, and the DC to halve the damage reduces to 13.

Rejuvenation (Su): Unless Marcus is destroyed through any of the methods described in the *oblivion* section above, he will return in 1D4 days.

Invisibility (Su): Marcus is naturally invisible, even while manifesting, and may attack without becoming visible. Since this ability is his natural state, *invisibility purge* and similar spells will not affect him. He will, however, be visible in mirrors, as shown in the *First Night* section above. As such, it is possible to fight him by looking at his reflection as opposed to directly at him. Attackers using this method suffer a 50% miss chance, however.

Aura of Cold (Su): An unearthly aura of cold follows Marcus whenever he has manifested. The aura has a radius of 30 feet. The cold is not harmful, although it can be quite discomforting and frightening. The cold strengthens the closer to Marcus one gets, from the mild chill at the edge to the biting cold at the center.

Perilous Pursuits

The Vistani Killer

Uri "Shadowking" Barak
uzibarak@zahav.nef.il

"A murderer you call me? Bah! I'm the only one with enough guts to do what everybody thinks must be done, but are too scared to say. As our great leader once said, the New Order shall be built on warm blood and cold steel- the future of this land lies at the tip of my blade!"

-Marcu, an Invidian Vistani Killer

A new power is rising in the war-torn land of Invidia. He is Mallochio Aderre, the Dukkar, and his name whispered on the ill wind rising above countless mass graves and funeral pyres. Mallochio is a fiendish tyrant who has moulded a massive army through terror, guile and personal charisma. While he desires conquest and the establishment of an empire, above all else he yearns for the utter genocide of the Vistani people. In Invidia, a troubled land with a rich history of conflict and bigotry, the Dukkar found ripe ground for his propaganda of hatred and many men are willing to take up blade and fulfill his bloody vision. These are the fearsome Vistani Killers, Mallochio's merciless warriors in a crusade of hate and death.

The Vistani Killers are Mallochio's favoured and most valued minions. While the majority of his army fights Gabrielle's Aderre's own soldiers on the front, slowly advancing in their conquest of the realm, the Vistani Killers follow in the main army's wake. Marching under their own banner, the Bleeding Eye, they hunt the Vistani, scouring the

land for any escaping Vardo or hidden refugees. While all of the Dukkar's forces are charged with the cleansing, the Vistani Killers are solely dedicated to it. Their goal is a simple one and they will stop at nothing to archive it.

One is led to the bloody path of the Vistani killer for one of two reasons; either a burning hatred for the Vistani people or a greed so powerful it overwhelms all morality. Mallochio pays his favoured servants extremely well, far more than his typical grunts. Usually it is a combination of both motivations that birth a vistani killer. Any who meet the skill requirements and can do the dirty work efficiently are welcomed into the Vistani Killers' ranks, even known criminals. In truth, many criminals and other vile men join the Vistani Killer ranks simply to receive atonement from the Dukkar and an official authorization to engage in various depraved acts such as pillaging, rape and murder. Many rank-and-file soldiers also aspire to join their ranks, but the wholesale slaughter of harmless, unarmed people requires the cold heart of a true murderer, which only a few possess.

Once a soldier has joined the ranks of the Vistani Killers, there is no escape besides death. Rogue Vistani Killers are hunted by their former peers with the same ruthlessness reserved for the gypsies. Some Vistani Killers live a

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dual existence, raising a family while indulging in the terrible slaughter of innocents without guilt or remorse. Others are too disturbed to maintain any connections besides the unit. Outside Invidia, known Vistani Killers are seen as barbaric butchers and receive a foul reputation (+2 Outcast rating), except in Falkovnia where they are almost as respected (and feared) as the Talons.

All Vistani Killers are inevitably evil, due to the foul deeds they commit. Regarding ethical alignment, Vistani Killers belong to all sides of the axis. While they are required to blindly obey the commands of their superiors, no matter how twisted or wrong, they are otherwise given free reign to do as they please with their spoils of war. Lawful Vistani Killers heed Mallochio's ideal of genocide, fulfilling their orders with strict efficiency, while chaotic Vistani Killers use the war and genocide as the means to accumulate a fortune for themselves and fulfill their material lusts. Due to failed Powers Checks, many Vistani Killers eventually join the ranks of the Children of the Night, usually as bestial and violent monsters such as Werewolves and Ghouls, a reflection of their black soul.

In the not-so-distant past, only Humans were allowed into the ranks of the Vistani Killers. However, after his recent alliance with the Cannibals of the wastes Mallochio has allowed Calibans to join his elite force. The Vistani Killers often work with Mohj Redmaw's unit in missions of terror and genocide, although Mohj usually takes a more frontline role. Only males are allowed to join the Vistani Killers, as Mallochio views females as weak and suitable only for breeding his new generation of warriors.

Most Vistani Killers are former Fighters or Warriors, coming out of the ranks of Mallochio's regular army or various mercenary units. Others are Barbarians or Rangers, usually being Calibans from the wastes. A rare few fallen Paladins take up the class, placing their own bigotry above the true light. Vistani Killers with a criminal past are likely to have levels of Rogue. No Cleric, Monk or Druid would ever join the Vistani Killers, as they place the state of Invidia and the ideal of Vistani genocide above religion or nature. Bards, Sorcerers and Wizards usually do not possess the martial training required for the Vistani Killers.

Vistani Killer

Being warriors, Strength is the most important attribute to a Vistani Killer. Constitution helps them shrug off wounds, while dexterity helps more finesse-based Killers. Amongst the mental statistics, Wisdom is the most important to a Vistani Killer for it boosts Will saves, which are a valuable protection against many of the Vistani's tricks. Intelligence is also helpful for advancing in the unit's hierarchy, and Charisma helps a Vistani Killer bully others around and spread his dogma of hate and death.

Hit Dice: d10

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Vistani Killer (Vkr), a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Sex: Male

Race: Human or Caliban

Alignment: Any Non-Good

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Arcana) +2, Knowledge (Local) (Invidia) +2

Feats: Cleave, Jaded, Power Attack

Special: The character must commit the cold-blooded murder of a non-combative (woman, child or elder) Vistani or half Vistani. This act must be witnessed by superior officers, who scrutinize the prospective member for any signs of disgust or hesitance. This foul act requires a Powers Check.

The Vistani Killer is inducted into the unit with a ritual in which the character must swear a blood oath to Mallochio. The Killer invoking evil entities and permanently sacrifices 1 hit point, forever binding his fate to the Dukkar.

Class Skills:

The Vistani Killer's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are: Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha Jump (Str), Knowledge (Arcana) (Int), Knowledge (Local) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Ride (Dex) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2+ Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Vistani Killer prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A Vistani Killer is proficient with simple and martial weapons with all armour types and with shields. Armour check penalties apply to the relevant skills.

Bane of the Vistani (Ex): At 1st level, the Vistani Killer may apply his Vistani Killer level as a bonus to all damage dealt to Vistani targets,

including Darklings, Half-Vistani and Mortu.

Evil Eye Resistance (Ex): At 1st level, the Vistani Killer becomes resistant to the fearsome Vistani power of the Evil Eye. He may apply twice his Vistani Killer level as a bonus to Will saves made against the powers of the Evil Eye and is immune to the convulsions effect caused by failing a save against the Paralysis power by more than 4 points.

Notorious (Ex): The Vistani Killer's reputation follows him like a black cloud of terror. He receives a penalty of +2 to his Outcast rating outside Invidia, and +10 to Outcast rating amongst Vistani who know him to be a Vistani Killer. However, amongst those loyal to Mallochio Aderre the Vistani Killer receives a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. When interacting with those loyal to Vlad Drakov this bonus decreases to +1.

Bonus Feat (Ex): At 2nd and 4th levels, the Vistani Killer gets to pick a bonus feat from the Fighter list.

Exalted of the Dukkar (Ex): Starting on 3rd level, any Vistani attempting to curse the Vistani Killer receive a penalty to the Curse roll equal to the Vistani Killer's level plus the Killer's Will save bonus.

Evil Eye Immunity (Ex): At 4th level, the Vistani Killer becomes completely immune to all effects of the Evil Eye.

Null Sight (Ex): At 5th level, the Vistani Killer cannot be detected by the Vistani Sight and Magical Tracking abilities. This ability extends to a number of companions equal to his level in the Vistani Killer class, plus his charisma bonus.

Scourge of the Vistani (Ex): At 5th level, the Vistani Killer's hatred is so powerful that any weapon he wields is treated as a Vistani Bane weapon, dealing 2d6 bonus points of damage against Vistani targets, including

Darklings, Half-Vistani and Mortu. This ability replaces the Bane of the Vistani ability, and does not apply to weapons which already have the Vistani Bane special quality.



The Vistani Killer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bane of the Vistani, Evil Eye Resistance, Notorious
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus Feat
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Exalted of the Dukkar
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus Feat, Evil Eye immunity
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Null Sight, Scourge of the Vistani

Perilous Pursuits

Monster Hunters

Uri "Shadowking" Barak
uzibarak@zahav.net.il

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"
- Psalm 23

The Children of the Night are a constant threat to the people of Ravenloft. These evil creatures prey on mankind for food, amusement and often both. Most sink in fear and denial rather than face these monsters, but a rare few rise up to the challenge. Stalking Ravenloft's Mist-shrouded nights, they confront the Children of the Night on their own ground and fight to save the rest of humanity from their predations, at least for a time.

The motivations to enter the Monster Hunter's path are varied. Some do so out of vengeance, suffering some great personal tragedy at the hands (or claws) of a monster and dedicating their lives to hunting down these denizens of darkness. Others join the path out of a scholarly curiosity or religious devotion.

Good-aligned Monster Hunters fight for the greater good and society as a whole. They have no qualms about slaying the wicked Children of the Night, and in many cases it is actually a release for their tortured souls.

Neutral hunters are willing to cross moral lines and sacrifice some of their own innocence and mercy to better hunt their foes. They might be so jaded by their experiences that all passions are

dimmed within them that they only care for the Hunt. Evil Monster Hunters often believe themselves to be good, even if they bring suffering to the innocents they originally swore to protect. Lawful Monster Hunters try to act in co-operation with the rulers of the land as best as they can, while chaotic Hunters trust no one but themselves and see the law of the state as an obstacle in their path.

A few truly fanatical Monster Hunters might willingly join the ranks of the Children of the Night, sometimes becoming Half-Golems, Vampires or Werebeasts to better combat their foes. These hunters fight an additional, often losing battle against the damnation of the unnatural state.

A Monster Hunter usually focuses on hunting one species of creatures, although some Hunters act on a broader scope and do not limit their quarry to one kind of creature. A Monster Hunter's most important weapon against the Children of the Night is her encyclopaedic knowledge of her foes. They are capable warriors with access to a myriad of skills as well as numerous "tricks of the trade", which resemble divine magic. Overall they can be described as warrior-scholars, with individual Monster Hunters emphasizing each part of this dual role.

Note: The Monster Hunter class uses the following sources for references: Player's Handbook, Ravenloft Campaign Setting, Van Richten's Arsenal, Gazeteers I-III and the Book of Vile Darkness. Psychic is a homebrewed Wis-based skill.

Monster Hunter

Most Monster Hunters are former Fighters, Barbarians, Rangers, Rogues and Experts. Clerics of the Morninglord and the militant lawful good and lawful evil branches of the Church of Ezra also make powerful Monster Hunters, their spells and powers to Turn Undead supplementing their martial skills and Monster Hunter spells. Some Druids such as the Goblin Hunters of Forlorn also join this dangerous path to protect nature from defilement.

The Paladins' dedication to honour conflicts with the Monster Hunter's role as a stealthy vigilante of the night and Monks are generally too cloistered and focused on their quest for self-perfection to pursue the Monster Hunter's path. Finally, few Bards, Wizards or Sorcerers enter this class due to its martial nature and slow spell progression.

Hit Dice: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a Monster Hunter (MHR), a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Knowledge (Arcana) +3, Knowledge (Religion) +3, Knowledge (Monster Lore) +6

Feats: Sworn Enemy *(Aberrations, Constructs, Fey, Humanoid Type, Outsider Type, Shapechangers, Undead), Track

Special: The Monster Hunter must have had some traumatic encounter with the supernatural.

* Feat from Van Richten's Arsenal

Class Skills

The Monster Hunter's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are: Alchemy (Int), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Arcana) (Int), Knowledge (Religion) (Int), Knowledge (Nature), Knowledge (Monster Lore) (Int), Knowledge (Ravenloft) (Int), Knowledge (History), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Psychic (Wis), Search (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spot (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), Wilderness Lore (Wis)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2+ Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are features of the Monster Hunter prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A Monster Hunter is proficient with simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armour but not with shields. Armour check penalties apply to the relevant skills.

Spells per Day: A Monster Hunter has the ability to cast a small number of Divine spells, powered by her own devotion rather than any god. To cast a spell, a Monster Hunter must have a Wis score of 10 + the spell's level. A Monster Hunter with a Wisdom score of 10 or lower cannot actually cast spells. Monster Hunter bonus spells are based on Wisdom, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell

level + Monster Hunter's Wisdom modifier. When a Monster Hunter receives 0 spells of a given level she gains only bonus spells. The Monster Hunter's spell list appears below. A Monster Hunter prepares and casts spells just as a Cleric does. They meditate or pray for spells at sundown, asking the Powers of Light for guidance and protection so they live through the Night.

Lore of the Night (Ex): The Monster Hunter is font of folklore and knowledge concerning the Children of the Night. She can make a special Lore of the Night Knowledge check relating to her Special Enemy, which works like Bardic Lore in all aspects (PHB pg. 29).

Special Enemy (Ex): At 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th level the Hunter selects a specific race of monsters. She may not pick a general type of monster, such as undead or shapechanger, but instead must select a particular monster type, such as zombie or werewolf - although in some cases a DM may rule the Special Enemy also applies to extremely similar creatures like Zombie Lords and Werebears.

This ability is similar yet different than the Ranger's Favoured Enemy ability. The Monster Hunter gains a +1 bonus to Gather Information, Intuit Direction, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot and Wilderness Lore checks when attempting to identify or track her Special Enemy and an identical bonus to hit and damage against her special enemy. Unlike the Favoured Enemy ability, the bonus to hit and damage also applies against creatures normally immune to Critical Hits. This bonus only applies this bonus against one race of monsters rather than the entire creature type. For example, a Monster Hunter with Special Enemy: Vampires

will not gain the bonuses from her Special Enemy ability when fighting just any undead.

At 5th and 10th level a Monster Hunter can either pick a new Special Enemy or increase the bonuses provided against an existing Special Enemy by +1. Unlike a Ranger's Favoured Enemy ability, only one bonus increases at a given level. The bonuses provided by Special Enemy stack with those provided by the Sworn Enemy feat or the Ranger's Favoured Enemy ability.

Know Thy Enemy (Ex): The Hunter can unconsciously recognize the true face of her enemy, even when magically disguised. When the Hunter's Special Enemy passes within 10 feet or less of the Hunter, the DM should secretly roll a Spot check to see through the guise, even when the Hunter is not actively looking for signs. Successful results should be immediately informed to the player, varying from a mere feeling of unease to the complete piercing of the illusion.

Hunter Ability (Ex): At 3rd, 6th and 9th level a Monster Hunter receives access to an extraordinary or supernatural ability chosen from the following list

Bonus Feat (Ex): The Monster Hunter may choose a bonus feat from the following list:

Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cold One, Combat Casting, Courage, Dead Man Walking, Demon Sight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Expertise, Ethereal Empathy, Ghostsight, Greater Supernatural Immunity, Great Fortitude, Hexbreaker, Improved Critical, Improved Supernatural Resilience, Indomitable, Iron Will, Jaded, Open Mind, Scent of the Grave, Skill Focus (Any Class Skill), Spell Penetration,

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Greater Spell Penetration, Spirit of Light, Voice of Wrath, Warding Gesture, Weapon Focus

Demon Hunter (Su): The Monster Hunter gains access to powerful spells which enable her to better combat fiends. She adds the following spells to her spell list;

1st level- *Nether Trail*

2nd- *Detect Chaos*

3rd level- *Imprison Possessor*

4th level- *Msytick Cage*

Hunter of the Dead (Su): The Monster Hunter is familiar with powerful lore which is useful against the undead. She adds the following spells to her spell list;

1st level- *Invisibility to Undead*

2nd level- *Negative Energy Protection*

3rd level- *Death Ward*

4th level- *Danse Macabre*

My Will is My Own (Ex): The Hunter gets +2 to all Will saves, and +4 to Will saves to resist fiendish Possession or the Malevolence power of Ghosts. These two bonuses don't stack.

Piercing Eyes (Su): The Monster Hunter brings terror to the hearts of her enemies through the power of gaze.

By directly looking into the eyes of her Special Enemy the Monster Hunter can force it to make a Fear check with a DC equal to the Monster Hunter's PrC levels + Cha modifier. This acts as a gaze attack with a range of 10 feet and functions even against creatures normally immune to fear, such as Vampires, but not mindless creatures such as the Obedient Dead. Regardless of the results, Piercing Eyes cannot be

used on the same foe more than once per day. This is a supernatural ability.

Shroud of Life (Su): The Monster Hunter gains Negative Energy Resistance 5.

Spell Resistance (Su): The Monster Hunter gains SR equal to her Monster Hunter level + Wis modifier against any spells and Curses cast by her Special Enemy.

Vampire Slayer (Ex): The Monster Hunter can perform critical hits on Vampires by targeting their vulnerable parts - the heart and the head. She can only do so when using slashing weapons or wooden piercing weapons.

Weapons of Faith (Su): Once per day, the Hunter may focus her will into the weapon she is currently wielding. At this time the Monster Hunter selects a particular material, allowing the weapon to be considered made of that specific material for the purpose of piercing damage reduction or bypassing regeneration. Alternately, the Hunter could choose to allow the weapon to strike ethereal and incorporeal creatures just as if she was using a Ghost Touch weapon. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Hunter's class level + Wisdom modifier.

Tools of the Hunt (Ex): At 4th level the Monster Hunter learns to craft her own tools for hunting the Children of the Night. She may apply her Monster Hunter levels as a bonus to Alchemy, Craft and Profession (Herbalist) checks made to create tools required for the Hunt. Furthermore, she only requires half the material cost for creating such items. This ability could be used in the

creation of Holy Symbols and wooden stakes or successfully finding herbs such as belladonna.

Sealed Soul (Ex): The Monster Hunter adds her Monster Hunter levels to Fortitude saves against Death effects, ability damage and drain, energy drain and magical diseases such as Lychantrophy and Mummy Rot. The body of the monster hunter may no longer be possessed by an outside force, not may it be animated by an *Animate Dead* spell. Casting *Create Undead* or *Create Greater Undead* on her corpse requires a successful Spellcraft check against a DC of 30 to work successfully. Finally, she only has a chance of 25% to become a Vampire.

Multiclass Note: Paladins of Ezra and the Morninglord can freely multiclass with the Monster Hunter prestige class.

Monster Hunter Spell List

Monster Hunters choose their spells from the following list:

1st - *Bless Water, Cure Light Wounds, Death Grimace, Detect Magic, Detect Undead, Disrupt Undead, Faerie Fire, Identify Spoor, Light, Mage Armour, Magic Weapon, Obscuring Mist, Protection from Alignment.*

2nd - *Allergen, Bless Weapon, Bull's Strength, Darkness, Daylight, Endurance, Insight Lesser Restoration, Protection from Curses, See Invisibility, See Ethereal Resonance, True Strike.*

3rd - *Bestow Curse, Deconstruct, Diminish Undead, Dispel Magic, Greater Magic Weapon, Halt Undead, Magic Circle Against Alignment, Protection from Elements, Shackle.*

4th- *Break Enchantment, Dark Sentinels, Dispel Evil, Feast of Oblivion, Induce Lychantrophy, Reflect Pain, Remove Curse, Suppress Lychnatrophy, Transfix Form, True Seeing.*



The Monster Hunter

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Lore of the Night, Special Enemy 1	0	-	-	-
2	+2	+3	+0	+3		1	-	-	-
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Hunter Ability, Know Thy Enemy	1	0	-	-
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Tools of the Hunt	1	1		-
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Special Enemy 2	1	1	0	-
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Hunter Ability	1	1	1	-
7	+7	+5	+2	+5		2	1	1	0
8	+8	+6	+2	+6		2	1	1	1
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Hunter Ability	2	2	1	1
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Sealed Soul, Special Enemy 3	2	2	2	1

New Feat

Demon Sight (General)

You gave up your natural sight by mutilating your eyes to be able to see fiends hiding amongst mankind.

Prerequisite: Blind Fighting, Knowledge (Outsider Lore) or Knowledge (the Planes) +6, Sworn Enemy (Outsiders) or Favoured Enemy (Devils, Demons or Yugoloths) or Special Enemy (Fiends). Special; Character must have ritually blinded herself.

Benefits: You gain Blindsight 60', and a continuous True Sight effect which applies only to Outsiders (with a caster level equal to your HD). This is a supernatural ability. You perceive creatures other than Outsiders as blurry, dark shapes, with Outsiders sticking out in burning clarity. Any creatures other than Outsiders receive +10% concealment against your attacks, you gain -4 to all Spot checks against non-Outsiders. To be able to determine fine details such facial features or writing you must roll a Spot Check with a DC of

15 modified by the penalty to spot checks against non-outsiders.

New Spell

Tranfix Form

Transmutation

Level: Drd 4, Rgr 4, MHR 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 2 rounds/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude Negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is an effective tool in the arsenal of Werebeast hunters. The spell locks the target in its current form for its entire duration, preventing it from magically changing its shape. This includes Polymorph Self, Shapechange and similar spells, a Druid's Wildshape and the Alternate Form special attack of many monsters such as Lychantropes. External polymorph effects such as Curses and the Polymorph Other cannot be counted by this spell.

Material Component: A pint of a true Lychantrope's blood.

Credits

Contributors

"Adam Garou";

adam_garou7@hotmail.com; Creator of the domain of Nedragonne. Having stumbled into the Mists for the first time only four years ago, I emerged at a quiet little tavern in Vallaki. After wandering my new surroundings for some time, I eventually extricated myself... but as we all know, the Mists rarely let anyone go after they get their tendrils in him. A shameless lurker and sometime poster at both the Secrets of the Kargatane website and the Fraternity of Shadows Manoir under various names--including "Castor Ravenwood", "Abel Carrick", and "Argus Darquestar"--I'm alternately pleased, honored, and shocked that my first netbook submission was accepted, and would like to thank the Fraternity for keeping the darkness alive, even after the mysterious fire in the Vallaki bookshop. When I'm not lost in the Mists, I divide my time between my work in the sales & marketing department of a health care company, my lovely fiancée, the rest of my family and friends, and any of a half-dozen writing projects in various stages of procrastination. "Nedragonne" was my attempt to create a darklord like nothing I'd ever seen before... and a way to get inside the Darklord's head and see how he fell so far so fast. You all can judge how well I succeeded... but I had a lot of fun doing it, regardless. Let me know what you thought--email, message board, smoke signals, whatever. Thanks again!

Andrew "Alhoon" Pavlides

apavlides24@hotmail.com. Author of Guide to Underwater Adventures.

David "Jester" Gibson

jester_canuk@hotmail.com. Author of Sea Shanties. David has also contributed 3.0E stats of Rudolph Van to QtR#2, his take on the Carnival's creepings in #3, multiple works on the Abber in #6, the Shadow Fiend and revamped Gentleman Caller in #7 wrapping up with Paladin Mounts and Dread Devourers in #8. He has been lost in the Mists since sucked in through a Red Box and has been trapped ever since. Someday he may escape the hold of the Dread Lands, but not today.

Mark Graydon

mortavius@hotmail.com. Creator of Old Sea Dog. After a long hiatus from Netbooks, I came back with this article. I got the source idea for it when I wracked my brains, trying to come up with a sea adventure that didn't necessarily involve the sea very much. I also wanted to use an ocean creature in a venue that wouldn't normally be expected. I think it turned out all right.

Matt White. Author of When the Seas Stood Still.

Renee True

RHan7@allstate.com. Author of Lost at Sea. I was introduced to the Ravenloft setting only two years ago, and I found it interesting and thought provoking. I give many thanks to my wonderfully

patient husband, Jason, for his support and sense of humour.

Thomas R. Rasmussen aka Malus Black malus_black@hotmail.com. Creator of Children of the Night: Agustin Von Dem Meer and author of Winter's Sorrow. I'm a 16-year-old Norwegian who only recently got into D&D, although I've been interested in fantasy, literature and history since long before that. I got into Ravenloft because it was and is different and more mature than the generic settings, and the underlying, thought-provoking themes of the setting captivated me instantly. Other than Ravenloft, I enjoy writing, reading, drawing, playing and listening to music, philosophy, science, culture and history.

Uri "Shadowking" Barak uzibarak@zahav.net.il. Author of Deepkin, Terrors of the Deep and Perilous Pursuits: Monster Hunter and Vistani Killer. I first knew Ravenloft some 5 years ago from reading "Vampire of the Mists", "Knight of the Black Rose" "Dance of the Dead" and "Heart of Midnight", and became enthralled. When I also became familiar with D&D 3 years ago I played and DMed a few short campaigns set in Greyhawk, then moved to the wonderful world that is Ravenloft. Ever since then I became smitten with the setting. My inspiration for the articles I submitted to the issue came from the relative lack of aquatic monsters in D&D and Ravenloft, Call of Cthulhu (for the Deepkin) and various movies and real-life inspirations (for the two PrCs). I would also like to thank ScS and Sunstar for their aid with making my vision come to (un)life.

Stanton Fink

apokryltaros@earthlink.net. Author of the Foolish Mermaid, artist of Aquatic Horrors. Stanton F. Fink, resident entomologist of the big pile of ash that used to be the Malodorous Goat Tavern. Was last seen in the web of a Dementileuese Red Widow. The Widow, in turn, was last seen screaming "HELP ME HELP ME" over and over again.

Editors

Dion Fernandez Aka Dion of the Fraternity. souragne@yahoo.com.

Dion is a 23-year old masterals student living in Baguio City, Philippines. He has been a Ravenloft fan since 1998, has contributed fan-based articles for the campaign world, including the Worlds of Ravenloft series of netbooks, and manages the Midway Haven Alchemical Observatory. Dion is also a local folklorist and scholar of urban esoterica, whatever that means.

Eddy Brennan aka Wicky of the Fraternity

Eddy@fraternityofshadows.com.

Author of Of Reavers. Member of the Fraternity of Shadows and a person of many tastes. I have had some success in the professional animation, design and illustration fields and since decided to try and write a book of poetry, I also have plans for a novel in the future (when he finds a good proofreader). Previous work in the Online Ravenloft Community may be found in the Kargatane's Book of Sacrifices, Midway Haven's Crisis in Hunadora (a long narrative compiled by the kind souls at the Midway Haven Alchemical Observatory), The Malodorous Goat Netbook as well as previous Undead Sea Scrolls netbooks and the first Quoth the

Raven. Other than Ravenloft, I have many interests including theology, some parts of history, folklore, mythology, reading, the occasional video game, art, poetry and writing in general.

Nathan Okerlund aka Nathan of the Fraternity.

Nathan@FraternityofShadows.com. I'm a graduate student in San Francisco; I teach headless cockroaches to avoid electric shocks and perform other services to humanity. Among them are money laundering (I recommend Tide), finding life mates for single socks, feeding Drusilla, and contributing to and editing the Undead Sea Scrolls. Three and a half years in the Mists and counting...

Joël Paquin aka Joël of the Fraternity, or Gotten Grabmal.

joekin@hotmail.com or
Joel@FraternityofShadows.com. The

2003 year was full of changes for me. Again, I'd like to thank my family and friends for support.

Jason “Javier” True

xaos313@hotmail.com. A 27-year-old man living in the suburban jungle of the Windy City (Chicago, Illinois), who has been a teacher, a pharmacist, and most recently a doctor. When I am not busy working, I enjoy spending time with my lovely wife or pursuing my role-playing interests with friends. While there was not enough time for me to write anything for this issue, I would like to thank all of the authors who made a contribution. It is due to their efforts that we can continue to produce our works!

Stephen “ScS” Sutton

stephencsutton@hotmail.com. Author of Scourge of the Misty Seas and Character Creation: Old Salt.