

# THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

## PART ONE: THE WORMWOOD

*The PCs get a firsthand look at the life of a pirate when they wake up in the hold of a pirate ship and are forced to join its crew of cutthroats and scoundrels.*

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## PART TWO: THE MAN'S PROMISE

*The PCs get their first taste of real piracy when their ship attacks a merchant vessel and they are assigned to the skeleton crew that will sail the captured ship back to port.*

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## PART THREE: BONEWRACK ISLE

*Driven aground in a terrible storm, the PCs must explore a tropical island in search of missing crewmates and supplies for their ship, before seizing both the ship and their own destinies.*

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### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“The Wormwood Mutiny” is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 1** The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.
- 2** When the *Wormwood* attacks the *Man's Promise*, the PCs should be 2nd level.
- 3** The PCs should be 3rd level before they descend into Riptide Cove.

The PCs should be 4th level by the adventure's end.



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

### ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Free Captains of the Shackles have long been a thorn in the sides of the nations of the Inner Sea, and no country has chafed under their predations as much as Chelixa. Unfortunately, removing the threat of the pirates by invasion is made almost impossible by the howling winds and treacherous currents of the Eye of Abendego, the permanent hurricane that rages just north of the Shackles. Since the defeat of two Chelish fleets in 4643 and 4660 AR, respectively, the House of Thrune has longed for revenge and the chance to eliminate the pirate confederacy once and for all.

This chance finally presented itself when the Chelish navy recently captured Barnabas Harrigan, a Free Captain of the Shackles who had long plagued Chelish merchant shipping in the Inner Sea and Arcadian Ocean. Facing execution for his crimes and the scuttling of his ship *Wormwood*, Harrigan offered Chelixa a deal—if they gave him immunity from his past crimes, he would lead a Chelish fleet to the Shackles to put an end to the threat of the pirate confederacy once and for all. And once he had handed the Shackles over to Chelixa, perhaps Harrigan could get himself appointed governor of the new Chelish colony there.

But such plans take time, and Harrigan needed to solidify his own position in the hierarchy of the Free Captains before he could seize power following the Chelish invasion, all the while ensuring that no word got out of his treachery. Fortunately, with the exception of a few close confidantes of the captain, the *Wormwood's* crew was decimated in the battle with the Chelish navy, but Harrigan needed to replenish his crew with fresh bodies. He returned to Port Peril, the rough-and-tumble capital of the Shackles, to press-gang new hands for his ship—including the PCs, who now find themselves members of his crew of scoundrels and cutthroats. With a hold full of impressed sailors, the *Wormwood* left Port Peril and headed for the open sea, where Harrigan will put his plans into motion. Harrigan's new crew, including the PCs, need to quickly adapt to life on a pirate ship, or suffer the harsh consequences of pirate justice.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Having been press-ganged off the streets of Port Peril, the PCs wake up in the hold of the pirate ship *Wormwood* and are forced to join the crew of the despicable Captain Barnabas Harrigan. As they get used to life as pirates, the PCs soon make both enemies and friends among the ship's crew. Gradually, the PCs become the center of talk of mutiny—they might be unwilling crew members on the *Wormwood*, but they're pirates at heart, and want to control their own destinies rather than serving under Captain Harrigan.

As members of the *Wormwood's* crew, the PCs take part in an attack on a Rahadoumi merchant ship called the *Man's*

### FIREARMS IN SKULL & SHACKLES

Although rules for firearms appear in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*, firearms are relatively rare on Golarion—they have been around for little more than 100 years, and are still uncommon outside of Alkenstar. As a result, firearms do not appear in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path until the final adventure, when the PCs face the Hurricane King, one of the few Shackles pirates to possess firearms.

For some, however, piracy and firearms go hand in hand, and a swashbuckling pirate Adventure Path would be incomplete without a trusty cutlass and pistol. Fortunately, it is relatively easy to add firearms to your campaign if you want to include them in your game.

Each adventure in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path will contain notes with suggestions on modifying the adventure to include firearms. In “The Wormwood Mutiny,” there are ample opportunities to not only include characters who use firearms, but also give the PCs access to those firearms. Perhaps the quartermaster's store (area A9) contains a few firearms that the PCs could steal, or maybe the booty on board the *Man's Promise* includes a brace of pistols that Captain Harrigan presents to Mr. Plugg, who would naturally use them against mutineers. It's also possible that firearms survived the wreck of the *Infernus* on Bonewrack Isle, and ended up in the castaway Arron Ivy's stockade (area C8) or were carried off to Riptide Cove (area D) by the grindylows on the island.

*Promise*, and are chosen as part of the skeleton crew placed on the captured ship. With a smaller crew, and the first mate Mr. Plugg in command, the opportunity to mutiny finally presents itself. Before the PCs can overthrow their pirate captors, however, a powerful storm arises and cripples the *Man's Promise*, grounding it on a small island at the edge of the Shackles, where the island's monstrous inhabitants attack the ship and kidnap some of the PCs' friends in the crew. As the rest of the crew repairs the ship, the PCs explore the island to gather needed supplies and find their missing friends.

When the PCs return to the ship, they and their allies can finally take on Mr. Plugg and those pirates loyal to him to seize control of the ship and finally become pirates in their own right.

### PART ONE: THE WORMWOOD

The adventure begins as the PCs wake up in the hold of Captain Barnabas Harrigan's *Wormwood*. The campaign traits from the *Pathfinder Adventure Path Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* (available for free at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com)) provide





information about how each PC ended up on the *Wormwood*. If you're not using those traits, the PCs should each have a reason for being in Port Peril, and should be eager to embrace (or at least should not have strong opposition to) a life of piracy and adventure on the high seas. It is not necessary for the PCs to know each other—they'll have plenty of time to become acquainted during the coming weeks aboard the *Wormwood*. Whatever their reasons for being in Port Peril, each of the PCs spent the previous night drinking at the Formidably Maid, a notorious drinking establishment in Port Peril, where a press gang from the *Wormwood* marked them as targets. After drugging the PCs into unconsciousness, the press gang dumped them in the ship's hold to sleep it off, where the PCs soon get a rude awakening.

## WELCOME TO THE SWEET TRADE

The PCs wake up the following morning in the dark hold of the *Wormwood* (area **A10**). They all remember the night before—the ringing laughter of a wild night, the heady joy of excess, the scents of rich stewed meat and perfume lingering in their nostrils. Then describe the sensations that the PCs feel—a pounding headache, the sickly taste of cheap wine in their mouths, the hard floor, a rhythmic creaking noise, and the feeling of the room swaying, as if they were still drunk. Before the PCs can do much more than sit up, however, several pairs of heavy footsteps enter the dark room, and the harsh light of a lantern painfully spears the PCs' eyes.

**Creatures:** Master Scourge, the *Wormwood*'s boatswain, master-at-arms, and infamous disciplinarian, has entered the hold to wake the PCs and get them up to the main deck. Six rough-looking *Wormwood* pirates, armed with saps, accompany him. An expression that might be mistaken for pain but which is clearly an attempt at a smile bruises Scourge's face as he cracks the whip in his hand and screams at the PCs.

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"Still abed with the sun over the yardarm? On your feet, ye filthy swabs! Get up on deck and report for duty before Cap'n Harrigan flays your flesh into sausage skins and has Fishguts fry ye up for breakfast!"

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The PCs quickly discover that most, if not all, of their weapons and equipment are gone (see below). If the PCs refuse, even momentarily, to accompany Scourge, he lashes out at any offending PCs with his whip. If necessary, he calls for aid from the pirates, who attack uncooperative characters with their saps. It should be immediately clear to the PCs that if they don't cooperate, they will quickly be overpowered. Scourge and the pirates herd the PCs up through the middle deck (area **A6**) and onto the *Wormwood*'s main deck (area **A3**) to meet the ship's captain.

As the PCs make their way to the main deck, they can begin to adjust to their surroundings and deduce what happened to them. A DC 10 Perception check discerns the aftertaste of oily nutmeg on the tongue. A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check or DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check recognizes this as a clear sign of oil of taggit poisoning (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 560). Each PC remembers indulging in either spicy food or spicy rum late last night, and those who made the above checks realize that the oil was likely added to their food or drink, and the spices hid the taste of the taggit oil. Any PCs who



**Master Scourge**



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make a DC 10 Intelligence check remember seeing the face of Master Scourge last night as well, and can piece together the facts outlined above.

### MASTER SCOURGE CR 3

XP 800

hp 32 (see page 21)

### WORMWOOD PIRATES (6) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 20)

**Development:** If the PCs decide to fight, Master Scourge and the pirates attack, attempting to disarm the PCs of any weapons they might have concealed and subdue them with nonlethal damage. The pirates will not kill the PCs, however. Once the pirates have the upper hand (with the help of additional crew, if necessary), they take the PCs—conscious or unconscious—to the main deck, where they get an immediate taste of punishment on the *Wormwood*. The PCs are tied to the mainmast, and Master Scourge gives each of them three lashes before the captain's address. See "The Life of a Pirate" on page 60 for details of punishments on a pirate ship.

### PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

The PCs begin this adventure with virtually none of their starting equipment. Captain Harrigan is no fool, and he is not about to let sailors who have been press-ganged against their will keep weapons and other gear they can use against him.

Allow the PCs to purchase starting equipment as normal before the campaign, but to make things easier, ask them to write down their equipment on a separate sheet from their character sheets—then take those sheets away at the start of the adventure. Bear in mind that without certain equipment, some characters—particularly alchemists and wizards—have next to no abilities beyond their skills and feats. Many pirates place little value on the written word, however, so these characters can quickly get their precious formula books and spellbooks back. See page 25 for details on how the PCs can recover their equipment. In addition, the PCs will soon find they have a friend aboard—Sandara Quinn, who has managed to acquire a few choice items of the PCs' gear for them (see page 17).

Although the *Wormwood's* press gang vigorously searched and robbed the PCs while they were unconscious, the pirates likely missed a few items. At your discretion, you can allow each PC to keep one item of equipment that could be easily concealed or overlooked—a holy symbol, a light weapon, a spell component pouch, or thieves' tools would all be good choices.

In addition, the following items are so common aboard the *Wormwood* that the PCs can easily access them at any time: barrels, baskets, blocks and tackle, candles, canvas, grappling hooks, hemp rope (any length up to 200 feet), lanterns, leather drinking vessels and waterskins, sacks, simple tools or hardware (especially carpentry tools such as hammers and nails), and any other simple items you deem appropriate.

### ANIMAL COMPANIONS AND FAMILIARS

Waking up in the hold of a pirate ship can present another problem for certain PCs—namely, those who have animal companions or familiars. The best way to handle this potential complication is to discuss it with your players beforehand, and arrange for them to acquire their familiars or animal companions during play, aboard the *Wormwood*. A variety of animals already exist on the ship: the parrot Pluck in area A2, the livestock in the hold, rats, and even the bilge spiders in area A11. Aquatic or flying animals can easily be encountered swimming or flying along with the ship. Other animals can be part of the ship's cargo, held in cages in the ship's hold (area A6) and awaiting rescue at the hands of the PCs. Because they're roleplaying meeting their companions during play, PCs should not be required to spend any additional time or money to acquire these animals or familiars with this option.

Alternatively, if you or your players want to begin with animal companions and familiars before the adventure starts, it's easy enough to say that PCs' familiars followed their masters on board and are hiding in the various nooks and crannies of the ship until the PCs awaken. This is probably the best option for those PCs whose familiars are necessary for their class abilities, such as witches. With this option, the PCs' animal companions were captured along with the PCs, and are now held in cages in the middle hold (area A6), the quartermaster's store (area A9), or even in the galley (area A8), if they're of the edible variety. Freeing their companions or familiars from their captivity can be a fun side adventure for the PCs.

### MEETING THE CAPTAIN

When the PCs reach the main deck, either of their own volition or under duress, it's quickly apparent that they are on a sizable ship in the middle of the ocean, far from any land. Port Peril and the mainland of the Shackles are just an ochre haze many miles astern. Figures cluster around the ship's mainmast, looking up at the higher deck on the stern, where two figures stand. One of them is a broad, muscular Garundi man with a shaven head, a long beard bound with gold rings, and an eye patch—clearly the captain. The other is a younger, balding





## PIRATE GEAR

Many of the characters encountered in this adventure, and in subsequent volumes of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, are equipped with a variety of new pirate-themed weapons and equipment. In most cases, all of the information you need to run such characters is already included in their stat blocks. For your convenience, the weapon qualities for several new pirate weapons are presented in the *Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*, but for full descriptions and statistics for the pirate gear referenced here, check out *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea*, available at fine gaming stores and at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com).

man with a long black ponytail, wearing a long coat and carrying a well-used cat-o'-nine-tails.

At this point the PCs also notice that they are not the only new recruits—four others are standing with them on the deck, set apart by their relative cleanliness and their apparent unease with their newfound situation. A dozen or so other pirates, clearly existing members of the crew, stand about on the deck or in the ship's rigging.

Once the PCs are on deck, the captain addresses the crew.

"Glad you could join us at last! Welcome to the *Wormwood*! My thanks for 'volunteering' to join my crew. I'm Barnabas Harrigan. That's *Captain* Barnabas Harrigan to you, not that you'll ever need to address me. I have only one rule—don't speak to me. I like talk, but I don't like your talk. Follow that rule and we'll all get along fine.

"Oh, and one more thing. Even with you new recruits, we're still short-handed, and I aim to keep what crew I have. There'll be a keelhaul' for anyone caught killin' anyone. Mr. Plugg! If you'd be so kind as to make pirates out of these landlubbers, it'll save me having to put them in the sweatbox for a year and a day before I make pies out of 'em."

At the end of his speech, the captain walks away, leaving behind the man with the cat-o'-nine-tails. This is Mister Plugg, the *Wormwood's* first mate. He looks down at the PCs and other impressed captives and smiles unpleasantly. Plugg has no time for small talk or pleasantries. His intention is to get the new recruits working on the ship as soon as possible. He immediately begins his own unique and cunning evaluations to test the PCs' abilities. Mr. Plugg is introduced on page 20.

## MR. PLUGG'S TESTS

After Harrigan's recent difficulties, the *Wormwood* is seriously undermanned, and Mr. Plugg has a number

of positions to fill on the ship. Whether or not the PCs are ideal candidates does not concern him in the slightest, as he assigns jobs first, then worries about making the PCs fit their roles afterward. Plugg is not remotely interested in who the PCs believe is best, or whether, for example, the best climber makes a couple of bad rolls and loses out to a lucky non-climber. The PCs can deliberately try to fail a test, however, by making a Bluff check opposed by Plugg's Sense Motive skill to get away with it. If the check fails, Plugg smells a rat and immediately gives that PC three lashes with the cat (see page 66) as punishment.

Plugg's first test is to see how good the PCs are at climbing, as he needs another sailor to work in the rigging. He instructs the PCs to climb to the crow's nest on the mainmast above the main deck as fast as they can, coldly cursing them if they hesitate, and cruelly taunting them if they fall. Climbing the rigging requires a DC 10 Climb check to reach the crow's nest, 60 feet above the deck. Remember that the PCs climb at one-quarter their normal speeds (or half speed with an accelerated climb) so each PC will need to make several Climb checks. The first PC to reach the crow's nest is the winner. In the event of a tie, the PC with the highest final Climb check is the winner. PCs who refuse the test are whipped by Scourge until they climb. The PC who wins this test is told that he or she is now a rigger, and works directly for Plugg, who assigns that PC the first day's duties at the conclusion of the second test.

Plugg's second test is one of necessity—he knows the ship's cook, Ambrose "Fishguts" Kroop, has a drinking problem, and he's fed up with eating rubbish. This test is simple: Plugg asks each PC in turn whether they can cook, and if one of them says yes, that PC becomes the new cook's mate. If Plugg gets to the end of the line without an affirmative answer, he simply picks the fattest PC (Plugg assumes that character likes food the most) and says, "You're a cook's mate now," and tells that PC to report to Ambrose Kroop in the galley (area A8). If more than one person claims to be a good cook, Plugg picks the fattest.

The remaining PCs are all assigned to be swabs, under the command of Master Scourge, who immediately gets them working. See *A Pirate's Day* on page 22 for details on the tasks associated with the PCs' new jobs. For the cook's mate, see page 21 for details on that PC's first meeting with Ambrose Kroop.

## WELCOME ABOARD!

The PCs are about to spend a significant amount of time on their new home, the *Wormwood*. While there is much for the PCs to do and learn, there are characters and places aboard the ship that are far too dangerous for



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low-level characters to deal with, and it's important for you to emphasize this. Aboard the *Wormwood*, tangling with the wrong person or triggering one of the ship's many traps can be deadly.

Some players might assume that low-level adventures are designed to allow them to interact with, and perhaps overpower, all foes they encounter, and might struggle with the concept of potentially fatal punishments, superior locks, and 16th-level adversaries in a 1st-level adventure. The adventure contains several broad hints about the relative strengths of various parts of the ship and crew within it, but take care that your players don't assume that Harrigan and his crew are there to be defeated. Many of these characters appear in "The Wormwood Mutiny" not as enemies to be killed, but to make the PCs' time aboard the *Wormwood* more memorable, and to instill in the PCs a healthy fear and loathing of Harrigan and his crew, several of whom will reappear later in the *Skull & Shackles* Adventure Path. As a result, if your players prefer more straightforward challenges, consider completely removing access to the more dangerous parts of the ship (through continual guards, magical locks, or beast guardians, for example).

Be sure to read through the following sections and familiarize yourself with the locations, characters, and activities aboard the *Wormwood*. The ship is not a static dungeon to be explored and cleared room by room; it is more of a "sandbox" that the PCs can wander through and scrounge for equipment, and in which they interact with the colorful NPCs aboard, both to gain allies and acquire enemies.

The *Wormwood* can be a dangerous place, and there are plenty of opportunities for the PCs to slip up and get in over their heads. Allow them to make mistakes and enjoy the experience, but be wary—if your players continually get beaten by Mr. Plugg or Master Scourge, they'll soon lose their tempers and simply try to kill the NPCs. Have friendly NPCs warn the PCs against taking such actions (for now) and counsel the PCs to bide their time. Revenge is a dish best served cold, and sooner or later the chance will come to serve it. The PCs may also have fun occasionally humiliating rival NPCs from a safe distance. A slippery floor, a bucket of bilgewater propped above a door, or a foul-tasting dinner are all good ways for the PCs to have their revenge without killing anyone.

Almost all of the lesser crew aboard this ship, with a few exceptions, are there for the PCs to interact with in any way they see fit. This adventure deliberately allows the PCs to take any approach they wish in dealing with the NPCs they meet, but be aware that the more enemies the PCs make while aboard the *Wormwood*, the tougher the final encounter of the adventure will be.

### THE WORMWOOD

The *Wormwood* is a three-masted sailing ship, 100 feet long from stem to stern, and 30 feet wide amidships. Statistics for a sailing ship (as well as other common ship types) are detailed in the *Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*. The ship needs a minimum crew of 20, and presently has just in excess of that number (including the PCs). If the crew falls below 20 people for any reason, the work becomes harder, and the DC of all checks for work-related tasks (see page 23) increases by +2.

Unless otherwise indicated, interior walls on the ship are of wood, 2 inches thick (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 20). Doors are of good wooden construction (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18). Interior rooms are unlit during the day (except for those with windows or portholes), and usually have a single hooded lantern for light at night, providing either normal or dim light (open flames are dangerous on a ship at sea). Many doors and chests are trapped to keep them off-limits to swabs and common sailors (such as the PCs). The following traps may currently be found on the *Wormwood* (see individual encounter areas for the locations of these traps).

#### CROSSBOW TRAP

CR 6

XP 2,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden lock (DC 25 Perception, DC 30 Disable Device)

**Effect** Atk +15 ranged (1d10 plus purple worm poison/19–20)

#### HARPOON TRAP

CR 3

XP 800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden switch (DC 25 Perception)

**Effect** Atk +15 ranged (1d8+8 plus greenblood oil/x3)

#### SHOCKING GRASP TRAP

CR 3

XP 800

Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch (*alarm*); **Reset** none; **Bypass** hidden switch (DC 25 Perception)

**Effect** spell effect (*shocking grasp*, Atk +6 melee touch, 5d6 electricity damage)

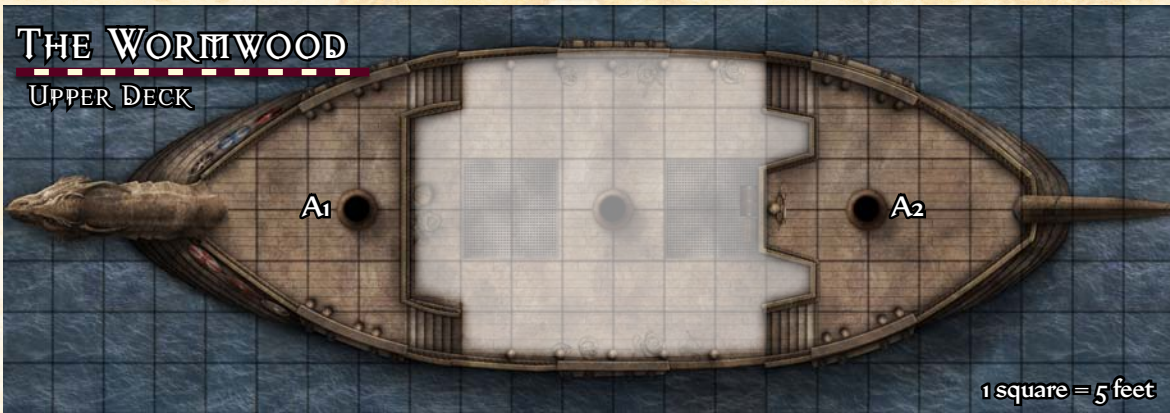
The *Wormwood* is crowded with pirates constantly moving about the ship, so it is not a static location, and any place on the ship can contain a variety of NPCs to interact with. The various cabins and compartments on the ship are therefore described below rather than being presented



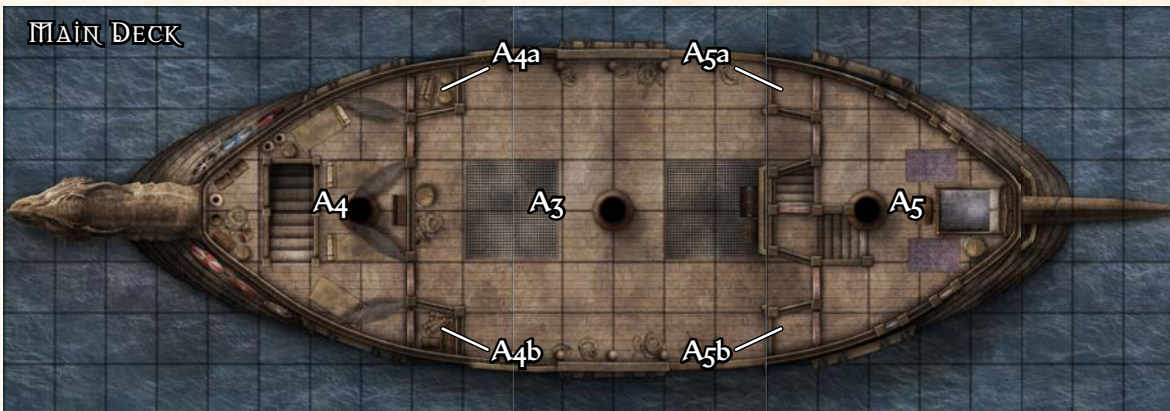


# THE WORMWOOD

## UPPER DECK



## MAIN DECK



## MIDDLE DECK



## LOWER DECK



## BILGES



GameMastery Map Pack: Ships Cabins



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as individual encounter locations. Certain NPCs frequent certain areas (such as private cabins) on the ship, and these NPCs are mentioned in the descriptions that follow. Full information on all of the NPCs present aboard the *Wormwood* can be found beginning on page 16.

**A1. Foredeck:** This raised deck stands some 10 feet above the main deck (area **A3**), immediately behind the bowsprit, which is shaped like a rearing dragon. The foremost rises 30 feet above this deck.

**A2. Poop Deck:** This raised deck stands 15 feet above the main deck (area **A3**). The mizzenmast rises 30 feet above this deck. The ship's bridge protrudes forward of the mizzenmast, and holds the ship's wheel. The wheel is 3 feet across and has 10 spokes decorated with silver inlays, its bolts carved to resemble kraken heads. An iron cage hangs from the side of the mizzenmast, containing the body of Harmak Gruft, a pirate who beat the captain at dice. Gruft is dead, but his ugly parrot Pluck perches atop the cage, still waiting for its master to awaken. The aptly named Pluck, which has lost more than few of its feathers, could make a good pet or familiar if it can be lured down (such as with magic, a successful wild empathy check, or a DC 20 Handle Animal check). Pluck is considered unfriendly and possesses a considerable vocabulary of appalling curse words.

Captain Harrigan and Mr. Plugg spend most of their time on this deck. When the captain is on deck, the poop deck is off-limits to everyone but officers.

**A3. Main Deck:** The ship's main deck runs between the foredeck and poop deck. The mainmast rises from the center of the deck, extending 60 feet into the air and topped by a crow's nest. Rigging connects the mainmast to the ship's other masts and can be crossed with DC 10 Acrobatics or Climb checks. Several strands of thick rope are secured to the foot of the mainmast for use as a whipping post. An Escape Artist check (DC 20 + the binder's CMB) is required to escape the bonds. The ship's clock, a macabre brass-and-copper object depicting worms writhing through whale corpses, hangs from the mast above the whipping post. Not only does the clock keep time, but its bell strikes at dawn and dusk to signal the beginning and the end of the workday.

Two 10-foot-square hatches sit in the deck fore and aft of the mainmast. These hatches are thick wooden grilles (hardness 5, hp 30, DC 25 Strength check to lift) and open onto the middle hold (area **A6**) 15 feet below. At the fore of the ship, two doors lead into the officers' quarters (area **A4**), while two doors aft lead to the captain's quarters (area **A5**).

A large wooden box bound in iron sits just beneath the bridge. This sweatbox, used to torment sailors, has just enough room to hold one Medium creature (and can be altered to confine a Small creature). It is locked with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30); Captain Harrigan and Mr. Plugg have the keys.

A small jolly boat (same statistics as a rowboat) sits on the deck next to the port rail. It has two sets of oars but no mast. Although designed to carry four Medium passengers, the jolly boat can fit six at a push.

**A4. Officers' Quarters:** The ship's officers occupy the hammocks and sleeping mats in this cramped cabin. A set of steps descends sharply into the middle hold (area **A6**) below. The two narrow doors leading to the main deck (area **A3**) are locked with good locks (Disable Device DC 30; all of the occupants have keys), and are trapped with harpoon traps (see page 11). The officers store their possessions in footlockers, each with an average lock (Disable Device DC 25). Roll on the Crew Lockers sidebar on page 14 for the contents of the officers' lockers.

Mr. Plugg, Master Scourge, Riaris Krine, Peppery Longfarthing, and Habbly Quarne sleep here at night, and at least one of them may often be found here at any given time during the day as well.

**A4a. Armory:** This tiny chamber is crammed with chests and neatly ordered weapon racks. The armory is secured with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30) and trapped with a harpoon trap (see page 11). The weapon racks hold 20 clubs, 12 heavy crossbows, 20 cutlasses (see *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea*), 50 javelins, 12 shortspears, and 20 grappling hooks each attached to 50 feet of rope. Two chests contain 500 heavy crossbow bolts each, while three other chests each hold 12 flasks of alchemist's fire. Four other chests each contain a breastplate, chain shirt, and buckler. The ship's master gunner, Riaris Krine, is meticulous in her job and quickly spots any obvious thefts, in which case an immediate search of the crew's lockers is made. Anyone found in possession of stolen items from the armory is given six lashes with the cat for a first offense, or is keelhauled (see page 67) for a second offense.

**A4b. Peppery Longfarthing's Laboratory:** The ship's sailing master and resident sorcerer, Peppery Longfarthing, uses this chamber as her laboratory. The cramped cabin is overwhelmed with curious and often unsettling objects that Longfarthing is studying. The door is secured with a good lock as well as an *arcane lock* spell (Disable Device DC 40; only Longfarthing has the key), and is trapped with a *shocking grasp* trap (see page 11).

**A5. Captain's Cabin:** Captain Harrigan's cabin is richly decorated, its walls covered with intricate carvings depicting krakens devouring whales. A quartet of portholes allow light to drift in, and a bed that can double as a navigational or dining table when the mattress is rolled up sits against the aft bulkhead with a chest at its feet. Two rich carpets flank the bed. A flight of steps leads down to the middle hold (area **A6**). The two doors leading to the main deck (area **A3**) are trapped with *shocking grasp* traps (see page 11), while the door on the stairs is trapped with a crossbow trap (see page 11). All of these doors have superior locks (Disable





## CREW LOCKERS

Each pirate on the crew is assigned a locker with a poor lock (Disable Device DC 15) to hold their personal effects (though some characters have provided their own better locks). Each pirate's locker contains coinage (mostly silver) worth 1d20 gp (unless that character is currently gambling) and 1d3 objects from the following list. Pirates refer to this cache as their duffel.

d% Roll	Locker Item
01–05	An extra 2d10 gp
06–10	An extra 1d10 gp
11–15	Flask of acid
16–20	Flask of alchemist's fire
21–25	Flask of holy water
26–30	Tanglefoot bag
31–35	Thunderstone
36–40	Bedroll
41–45	Silver ring worth 5 gp
46–50	Gold earring worth 15 gp
51–55	Bullseye lantern
56–60	Thieves' tools
61–65	Masterwork tool
66–70	Common musical instrument
71–75	1d2 agates worth 10 gp each
76–80	1d2 hematites worth 10 gp each
81–82	Lucky rabbit's foot
83–84	Bicorn hat
85–86	1d6 days of trail rations
87–88	Bottle of brandy
89–90	Bottle of wine
91–92	Fancy peacock feather
93–94	Battered tankard
95–96	Brass knife
97–98	Sealed flask containing 1 dose of small centipede poison
99–00	Vial of antitoxin

Device DC 40; Harrigan has the only key). The portholes are very narrow, but a DC 30 Escape Artist check would allow a creature to squeeze through. The chest is locked (Disable Device DC 30) and contains Captain Harrigan's personal possessions, including a selection of nautical charts (which grant a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge [geography] checks made within the Shackles).

Captain Harrigan usually entertains his officers for dinner here, and sleeps here at night.

**A5a. Cabin Girl's Quarters:** The captain's cabin girl, "Caulky" Tarroon, sleeps on a small cot in the starboard compartment.

**A5b. Captain's Storage:** The captain stores his personal booty in the portside compartment, locked with a superior lock (Disable Device DC 40). Inside is a pair of iron chests, covered in a thin wood veneer. Both chests have superior locks (Disable Device DC 40) and poisoned dart traps (*Core Rulebook* 420), and they contain coins, jewels, and other treasures worth almost 10,000 gp in total.

**A6. Middle Hold:** This is the ship's main cargo hold. The hold is mostly empty at the start of the adventure, save for the 14 pigs; normally kept caged, they periodically escape and run loose within the hold. In the forward section, a flight of wooden stairs climbs up to the officers' quarters (area A4), while a second set of stairs descends into the lower hold (area A10). Owlbear Hartshorn is invariably chained to the foremast here to keep him from causing trouble and to keep people out of the officers' cabin. Another flight of stairs in the aft section next to the galley leads up to the captain's quarters (area A5), but it is common knowledge among the crew that the door is trapped. Stored near the mainmast are two light ballistas, a disassembled light catapult, and 12 barrels containing 20 gallons of oil each.

**A7. Quartermaster and Cook's Cabin:** This tiny cabin contains two beds and two footlockers. The *Wormwood's* quartermaster, Cut-Throat Grok, and ship's cook, Ambrose "Fishguts" Kroop, share this cabin with several of Kroop's chickens. Grok sleeps here at night, as does Kroop, who is found here during the day as well if he is insensibly drunk. See the sidebar on this page for the contents of the lockers here.

**A8. Galley:** The galley is the domain of Ambrose "Fishguts" Kroop, the drunken ship's cook. The cramped and chaotic kitchen holds two wooden worktables, several wooden cupboards, and two small stoves against the port wall, as well as virtually every cooking utensil imaginable and a frightening array of meat cleavers. A score of chickens and three goats wander freely throughout the chamber; the goats are meant to be caged, but have a distressing tendency to escape their bonds. The kitchen is a madness of dirt, food, and knives, and finding anything in here requires a Perception check. The stoves are perpetually lit, and large cauldrons bubble away atop them all times. A huge array of spices mingle with barrels of rainwater, two tuns of rum, cupboards full of ship's biscuit and salted beef, barrels of sauerkraut, and a small supply of fresh vegetables picked up in Port Peril. Despite the chaos, the entire galley functions as a set of masterwork tools for Profession (cook) checks.

Several items of value are lost among the ruin and squalor in the galley, each requiring a DC 10 Perception check to discover: a masterwork dagger being used as a butcher's knife, a pair of handaxes used as meat cleavers, 11 knives, a short sword, a vial of holy water, a good lock hanging unused off a pantry cupboard, 2 pounds of soap, four



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

waterskins, a barrel of poor wine, six bottles of good Chelish brandy worth 20 gp each, three bottles of magnificent rum worth 12 gp each, a large cookbook worth 125 gp (using the tome while cooking grants a +1 circumstance bonus on Profession [cook] checks), a prosthetic leg made of wood and edged with a silver band worth 45 gp, and 12 sp fallen behind a cupboard. In addition, a trio of harpoons (see *Pirates of the Inner Sea*), a spear, and Kroop's *steadfast grapple* (see page 59) hang on the walls.

**A9. Quartermaster's Store:** This cramped storeroom is detailed below.

**A10. Lower Hold and Crew Berths:** Sixteen pillars support the deck above this spacious hold. At night, the *Wormwood's* common pirates tie their hammocks between the walls and pillars and sleep until dawn. Two of Mr. Plugg's toadies, Kipper and Patch Patchesalt, have claimed the far forward section of the hold as their own, and their hammocks are strung between the foremast and the stairs leading up to the middle hold (area A6). A trap door just behind the mainmast opens onto the bilges below (area A11), and requires a DC 10 Strength check to lift. The hold is currently empty of cargo, but several footlockers line the walls. Each member of the crew has a locker, equivalent to a small chest. At the start of the adventure, only 18 of these lockers are in use (see the sidebar on page 14 for their contents), while 22 empty lockers are stacked along the walls.

**A11. Bilges:** This deck is detailed below.

### A9. QUARTERMASTER'S STORE

The ship's quartermaster, Cut-Throat Grok, can usually be found in this cramped, crowded storeroom containing numerous barrels, boxes, and chests. The door is locked with a superior lock (Disable Device DC 40; Grok keeps the key), and features a 3-foot-square serving hatch (also with a superior lock).

The quartermaster's store acts as a kind of unofficial shop aboard the *Wormwood*. While any plunder stored there technically belongs to the captain, this is a pirate ship after all, and everything has its price. Any equipment stored within is for sale at the normal price listed in the *Core Rulebook*.

Items found on the ship (or won from other pirates) can also be traded at the store for other merchandise. Bartered objects are generally worth 50% of their normal value when traded for goods.

While the store is, in theory, open at all hours, it's usually only open from dawn to about 3 P.M., when Grok starts drinking. She only opens the door outside these hours to friends. Grok has a tendency to get drunk in the afternoons and closes the store before heading to the deck for the evening meal. After supper, Grok carries the crew's rum rations in a bucket to the main deck. She

often forgets to lock the door or the hatch at this time, an oversight that occurs 75% of the time.

**Treasure:** The quartermaster's store contains two tuns of rum (each holding about 105 gallons at the start of the journey) and six other containers. The contents of these lockers, along with information about their locks and any traps, are detailed below. Grok knows the value of the majority of the items in the store, but she is unaware of the value of those items marked with asterisks or thinks they are mundane, and sells or barter those items at their standard list prices.

At the start of the adventure, the PCs' starting equipment is held in one of the lockers, as described below. See *Recovering Gear* on page 25 for how the PCs may regain possession of their gear.

**1. Wooden Locker** (simple lock, Disable Device DC 20, no trap): Contains a random selection of mundane adventuring gear with a value of 10 gp or less.

**2. Wooden Locker** (simple lock, Disable Device DC 20, no trap): Contains the PCs' equipment, Rosie Cuswell's masterwork fiddle (see page 17), a starknife, 3 flasks of acid, 6 flasks of alchemist's fire, four sets of thieves tools (one of which is masterwork\*), and a battered iron box containing six candles, one of which is a *candle of truth*\*.

**3. Wooden Chest** (broken lock, arrow trap [*Core Rulebook* 420]): Contains a *potion of barkskin*, a *potion of cure light wounds*, a *potion of haste*, a masterwork climber's kit, a disguise kit, 4 flasks of holy water, a magnifying glass, a set of manacles, and two tanglefoot bags.

**4. Wooden Chest** (average lock, Disable Device DC 25, arrow trap [*Core Rulebook* 420]): Contains a masterwork light crossbow, three cutlasses (see *Pirates of the Inner Sea*), 31 daggers, three masterwork daggers, 43 masterwork darts, four saps, a masterwork sap, 120 arrows, 20 masterwork arrows, six +1 arrows, and 200 crossbow bolts.

**5. Wooden Trunk** (good lock, Disable Device DC 30, no trap): Contains a suit of banded mail, a breastplate, two chain shirts, masterwork leather armor, three suits of studded leather armor, 12 bucklers, two masterwork bucklers, and a small cash box containing 231 cp, 99 sp, and 103 gp.

**6. Metal Trunk** (good lock, Disable Device DC 30, poisoned dart trap [*Core Rulebook* 420]): Contains a +1 *animal bane dagger*\* (Grok thinks this is just a normal +1 dagger), a +1 *short sword*, a masterwork warhammer, *scrolls of cure moderate wounds*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *scorching ray*, and *summon swarm*, and a *wand of bless weapon* (16 charges).

### A11. BILGES (CR 1/4)

The lowest deck of the ship, the bilges are a foul, damp place with thick cobwebs above and 1–2 feet of dark, brackish water that stinks abominably below. A ladder leads up to a trap door that opens in the lower hold (area A10), and a single bilge pump rests near the stern. The bilges also double as the ship's brig, and six sets of





masterwork manacles with average locks (Break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30) are fixed to the bulkheads in the forward portion of the deck.

**Creatures:** At the start of the adventure, a pirate named Jakes Magpie is held here awaiting his punishment (see page 26). In addition, the cobwebs on the ceiling are home to countless large, hairy spiders known as bilge spiders, which occasionally drop on someone working in the bilges. For every day a character spends working in the bilges, there is a 25% chance that a single bilge spider drops down and attempts to bite. Once attacked, a spider flees back into the webs.

#### BILGE SPIDER

CR 1/4

XP 100

Variant scarlet spider (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 120)  
hp 4 each

**Treasure:** A number of discarded crates and boxes packed with straw lie in the bilges, among which can be found a suit of leather armor, three heavy maces, and 12 sp. In addition, a DC 15 Perception check turns up the following in the dark waters (one item per successful check): a buckler, a masterwork handaxe, a vial of holy water, a tanglefoot bag, two tindertwigs, and 21 gp.

## THE WORMWOOD'S CREW

The *Wormwood* is a busy place, and the PCs are in constant close proximity to their shipmates. In such close quarters, friends and enemies become very important—enemies might attack at any moment, but friends can help watch your back. In addition, the PCs' relationships with their shipmates become crucial at the end of the adventure when the PCs lead a mutiny against their oppressive masters. The players might not immediately realize that friendships are important, but a few of the events beginning on page 26 are designed to emphasize the importance of influence aboard the *Wormwood*. As the PCs make friends, friendly NPCs can further emphasize the importance of friendships.

At the start of the adventure, 18 pirates serve aboard the *Wormwood* (in addition to the ship's officers and the PCs). Like the PCs, most of them were impressed onto the crew, but some have been aboard several weeks now. These pirates come from diverse backgrounds and vary enormously, and have very different initial attitudes toward the PCs that reflect their personal histories. Some of these characters are just plain nasty and hostile (particularly those who toady up to Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge), while others are more friendly, but even the most hostile NPC can be befriended with luck or chance.

With the exception of most of the ship's officers, the PCs can interact with any of the crew NPCs during their time

on the *Wormwood*. Each NPC's initial attitude to the PCs is listed below, and the PCs can attempt to change an NPC's attitude using Bluff (to pretend to be friendly), Diplomacy (to be genuine), or Intimidate (to frighten an NPC into submission). These checks are treated as Diplomacy checks to change a character's starting attitude (regardless of the actual skill used), but they take time. Each check requires a ship action (see page 24), and a PC can only attempt one such check each day against a given NPC. There is no right or wrong way to approach these characters, but some NPCs have characteristics that influence their thinking, which can be discovered with a DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information or a DC 15 Sense Motive check. Changes in an NPC's attitude remain in place unless the PCs change it again through some action.

Friendly NPCs help out their shipmates during the day. A friendly NPC can provide a +2 bonus on any single job task skill check made by a PC (see page 24), provided the NPC has ranks in the appropriate skill. Helpful NPCs provide aid not only during the day as above, but also at night, providing a +2 bonus on checks to influence other NPCs, or on checks for pirate games and entertainments. Helpful NPCs are also happy to lend money or equipment (up to half their ready cash) or perform other actions at your discretion. If a PC abuses a helpful NPC in any way (such by attacking or cruelly duping the NPC), that character becomes hostile for the remainder of the adventure. Hostile or unfriendly NPCs tend to stick together with Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge in the evenings, where their talk is at the expense of the PCs and their friends. Be sure to keep track of the PCs' relationship with each NPC as this will become much more important later in the adventure, when talk turns to mutiny.

With so many NPCs in this adventure, be careful not to get overwhelmed by trying to track all of them. Let the PCs decide whom they interact with, and be sure to emphasize that Master Scourge and his cronies are also interacting with others at the same time.

The four NPCs below are, like the PCs, recent "recruits," and make natural allies (or perhaps rivals). Their jobs on the ship and initial attitudes to the PCs are presented before their stat blocks. The remaining crew listed in the Other Crew section have been with the *Wormwood* for varying lengths of time, though most came aboard fairly recently. Several of the NPC descriptions presented below include the contents of the NPCs' lockers in area A10. NPCs never lend their locker keys to anyone, including friendly PCs.

**Story Award:** Each time the PCs make an NPC helpful (other than Sandara Quinn), award them XP as if they had defeated that NPC in combat.

### SANDARA QUINN

Sandara Quinn is a cleric of Besmara the Pirate Queen, goddess of piracy, sea monsters, and strife. Impressed on



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

the *Wormwood* like the PCs, Sandara takes an immediate liking to them, the result of a recent altercation with Master Scourge. She is a potential ally for the PCs from the very start—the only one aboard the *Wormwood* initially.

Before the start of the adventure, while the PCs were sleeping, Sandara visited Cut-Throat Grok and convinced the quartermaster to return her personal equipment, claiming the items were righteous artifacts blessed by Besmara that would bring a terrible curse on those who wrongfully held them. She also managed to acquire two items of use to the PCs. These items should be ones that two PCs would struggle to cope without, such as spellbooks or formula books, holy symbols, thieves' tools, or, if no PCs have such requirements, two light weapons.

If the PCs don't already know her, Sandara approaches them as soon as she can on their first day on the *Wormwood* to return their equipment and offer her friendship. She explains that on a pirate ship, it's not what you know but who you know that helps you get by. Friends help each other out, enemies cause trouble—on a crowded pirate ship, this fact is essential for basic survival. Sandara is detailed fully in the NPC appendix on page 56.

**Job:** swab

**Initial Attitude:** helpful

### ROSIE CUSSWELL

Short but fierce, Rosie Cusswell has more muscles than most of the crew, and a fouler mouth than all of them put together. Rosie is from Port Peril, and like the PCs was impressed onto the *Wormwood's* crew. She has been on board 3 days and has already made her mark by threatening to chop off the hand of anyone who messes with her with her beloved handaxe. She has a healthy hatred of Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, who did not take her threats kindly. Rosie loathes the attention of Conchobhar Shortstone (see page 18), but secretly quite likes his style.

Like many halflings, Rosie loves food, drink, and tall tales; anyone who provides her with them gains a +2 bonus on all checks made to influence her. At the start of the adventure, Rosie is missing her fiddle, and has been unable to convince the quartermaster Cut-Throat Grok to give it back to her (having lost her temper when initially trying to do so). Any PC who can get Rosie's fiddle back becomes her firm friend, and her attitude to that character permanently changes to helpful.

**Job:** swab

**Initial Attitude:** indifferent

#### ROSIE CUSSWELL

CR 1

XP 400

Female halfling fighter 2

CN Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +6; Senses Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 17 (2d10+2)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; +3 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1

#### OFFENSE

Speed 25 feet

**Melee** mwk handaxe +7 (1d4+3/x3)

**Ranged** sling +5 (1d3+3)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Rosie likes to tumble through fights to gain the advantage. She is fearless and fierce in battle unless alone, in which case she fights from a position of strength and safety.

**Morale** Rosie withdraws from combat if reduced to fewer than 5 hit points. If cornered, she fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 16

Feats Fleet, Improved Initiative, Power Attack







**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Climb +9, Intimidate +4, Perception +1, Perform (string) +1, Profession (sailor) +3, Stealth +6

**Languages** Common, Halfling

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*;

**Other Gear** leather armor, masterwork handaxe, sling with 20 bullets in a leather purse, 3-pint drinking stein with a silver lid depicting halflings riding dire badgers and slaughtering goblins (worth 25 gp), long red silk scarf, masterwork fiddle (currently stored in area A9); **Locker** 2 flasks of acid, 2 flasks of alchemist's fire, tanglefoot bag, 30 feet of silk rope

### CRIMSON "COG" COGWARD

Crimson Cogward (so called after the color his neck turns when he's angry) is a loner, and prone to incredible rages and dark moods. He wears a blue Varisian scarf tied tight around his shaven head to hide the scar left when his ear was bitten off in a bar fight. Cog gets pleasure from little other than combat and is quick to get into fistfights, whether because of a chance remark or simple bad luck. A devout follower of Pharamasma, Cog prays regularly (particularly after combat) and participates in all Pharasmin religious festivals if possible. Cog actually volunteered to join the crew of the *Wormwood*. He has spent his first few days aboard stealing and secreting away goods for barter.

Cog loves dark tales. A PC who makes at least a DC 10 Perform (oratory) check focusing on dark tales gains a +2 bonus on checks to influence Cog for the next 24 hours. Similarly, fighters and other warriors (as well as more aggressive characters who favor muscle over talk) who intersperse their talk with grisly details of fights gain a +2 bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks with him. However, a failed check is likely to elicit a violent response from the angry sailor.

**Job:** swab

**Initial Attitude:** unfriendly

#### CRIMSON COGWARD

CR 1

XP 400

Male human ranger 1/rogue (thug) 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

**hp** 19 (2 HD; 1d10+1d8+5)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** -1

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** cutlass\*\* +4 (1d6+3/18-20) or

dagger +4 (1d4+3/19-20 plus poison) or unarmed strike +4 (1d3+3)

**Ranged** composite shortbow +2 (1d6+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (humans +2), sneak attack +1d6

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Cog fights like a cornered boar, caring little for his own safety.

**Morale** Cog does not fight to lose—he fights to win, or dies trying.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Improved Unarmed Strike, Intimidating Prowess

**Skills** Appraise +4, Climb +7, Disable Device +4, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +4, Profession (sailor) +4, Stealth +5, Swim +7

**Languages** Common

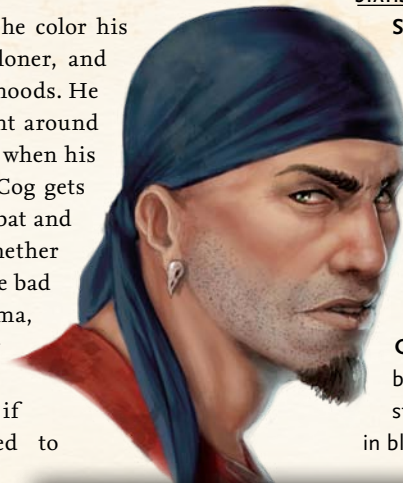
**SQ** frightening\*, track +1, wild empathy +2

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, black adder venom (1 dose); **Other Gear** studded leather, cutlass\*\*, dagger (coated in black adder venom) in a darkwood sheath, composite shortbow (+3 Str) with 31 arrows, long waxed coat with several pockets, thieves' tools, silver ring with symbol of Pharamasma worth 75 gp, silk

Varisian scarf worth 15 gp; **Locker** (average lock, Disable Device DC 25) *potion of haste*, *potion of neutralize poison*, *scroll of scorching ray*, *wand of magic missiles* (18 charges), alchemist's fire (2 flasks), 2 bottles of wine, 2 small silver mirrors, tanglefoot bag, 39 gp, 132 sp

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

\*\* See *Pirates of the Inner Sea*.



Crimson Cogward

### CONCHOBHAR TURLACH SHORTSTONE

Conchobhar Shortstone is a handsome, honey-tongued gnome who wears a foppish purple hat, an eye patch, and a white silk shirt, and carries a dandyish cane. His appearance is that of someone pretending to be a pirate, rather than a true buccaneer. Conchobhar is a professional gambler who made the mistake of drinking with the *Wormwood's* crew one night and failed to notice the cosh in a crew member's hand until it was too late. He has been on ship less than 24 hours at the start of the adventure. Conchobhar is resigned to his fate but is determined to make the most of it, as he's always yearned for the sea anyway. One thing dominates Conchobhar's thinking—himself.



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Conchobhar is also a serial womanizer, and female characters gain a +2 bonus on all checks to influence him. He finds Rosie Cusswell (see page 17) magnificent.

**Job:** rigger

**Initial Attitude:** unfriendly

### CONCHOBHAR TURLACH SHORTSTONE CR 1

**XP 400**

Male gnome bard 2

N Small humanoid (gnome)

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 size)

**hp** 14 (2d8+2)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3;

+2 vs. illusions

**Defensive Abilities** defensive training

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee** sword cane\* +2 (1d4)

**Ranged** shortbow +4 (1d4/x3)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance

9 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1), hatred

**Gnome Spell-Like Abilities** (CL

2nd; concentration +5)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals*

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 2nd; concentration +5)

1st (3/day)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *flare* (DC 13), *know direction*, *light*, *summon instrument*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Conchobhar prefers to talk rather than fight. If he must fight, he lurks at the edge of combat, preferring to flank or attack with his bow.

**Morale** Conchobhar flees if reduced to 7 hit points or fewer, but he fights to the death for any female character he is on friendly or better terms with.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Martial Weapon Proficiency (sword cane\*)

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Appraise +5, Climb +5, Perception +7, Perform (sing) +8, Profession (gambler) +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +10

**Languages** Common, Gnome, Halfling, Sylvan

**SQ** bardic knowledge +1, gnome magic, versatile performance (sing)

**Combat Gear** oil of animate rope, wand of mirror image (11 charges); **Other Gear** shortbow with 12 arrows in wood quiver, sword cane\*, black silk gloves, bottle of musky perfume worth 35 gp, fake eye patch, foppish clothing, outrageously foppish purple hat, yellow silk handkerchief, key to locker hidden down left boot; **Locker** (average lock, Disable Device DC 25) *elixir of love*, 42 gp

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

### OTHER CREW

The *Wormwood's* remaining crew members are listed below, along with their jobs on the ship and initial attitudes. The further down the list one goes, the more hostile toward the PCs the pirates are, and conversely, the friendlier they are with Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge. Even though many of these pirates are of different races, you can use the generic stat block below to represent all of these pirates for ease of play.

**Barefoot Samms Toppin** (CG female human): a former fisherwoman from the Sodden Lands who never wears shoes; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

**Giffer Tibbs** (NG female gnome): a bedraggled gnome with one eye; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

**Jack Scrimshaw** (N male human): a young lad talented at scrimshaw; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

**"Ratline" Rattsberger** (N male halfling): a rat-faced halfling with long arms and three missing fingers; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

**Tilly Brackett** (N female human): a tough joker who likes her rum; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

**"Badger" Medlar** (N female half-elf): an older woman who shaves her gray hair into stripes; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** unfriendly.

**Shivikah** (N female human): a very tall Mwangi ex-slaver; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** unfriendly.

**Aretta Bansion** (NE female human): a bad tempered ex-harlot with big ears; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** hostile.

**Fipps Chumlett** (NE male human): a fat, pushy bully with a shaved head; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** hostile.

**Jaundiced Jape** (CE male half-orc): a humorless, greedy half-orc mute; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** hostile.

**Maheem** (LN male human): a big Rahadoumi with a permanent scowl; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** hostile.

**Slippery Syl Lonegan** (CE female human): an unhinged murderer who fled to sea to escape the gallows; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** hostile.



**Conchobhar Shortstone**





**Tam “Narwhal” Tate** (NE male dwarf): an old friend of Master Scourge with a large, ugly nose; *job*: rigger; *initial attitude*: hostile.

**Jakes Magpie** (N male human): a thief caught stealing from the quartermaster’s store and sentenced to keelhauling on the PCs’ first day (see page 26); *job*: swab; *initial attitude*: hostile.

#### WORMWOOD PIRATES (14) CR 1/2

##### XP 200 each

Male or female warrior 2

Medium humanoid

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +1

##### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

**hp** 11 each (2d10)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** –1

##### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** cutlass\* +3 (1d6+1/18–20) or

dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20) or

sap +3 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

**Ranged** dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20) or

throwing axe +4 (1d6+1)

##### TACTICS

**During Combat** *Wormwood* pirates fight according to their loyalties. They always look out for themselves first, but aid those they are helpful to next.

**Morale** A *Wormwood* pirate withdraws from combat when reduced to 6 hit points or fewer, and flees when reduced to 3 hit points or fewer.

##### STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Athletic, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])

**Skills** Climb +7, Intimidate +4, Perception +1, Profession (sailor) +6, Stealth +3, Swim +7

**Languages** Common

**Other Gear** throwing axe, cutlass\*, dagger, sap, basic pirate clothes\*, personal effects such as cheap earrings, leather belt, lucky rabbit’s foot, hat with a parrot feather plume, etc.

\* See *Pirates of the Inner Sea*.

## THE WORMWOOD’S OFFICERS

Captain Harrigan’s vicious temper and strict discipline ensures a regular turnover of fresh faces among his crew, and his officers are no exception. While the PCs should be able to befriend some members of the crew, the majority of the ship’s officers are too important and distant for the PCs to influence. In particular, Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge are the primary villains of the adventure, and both men automatically dislike the PCs. Of the remaining officers, only Ambrose Krook, Cut-Throat Grok, and Owlbear

Hartshorn can be influenced by the PCs, following the rules presented on page 16.

## MR. PLUGG

Mr. Plugg is the *Wormwood*’s bullying and sadistic first mate. He is Captain Harrigan’s second-in-command, and his word is law on deck. He takes an immediate dislike to the PCs and any friends they make among the crew. Plugg is terrified of Captain Harrigan, however, and has more things on his mind than just the PCs. He’s suspicious of everyone on the crew, and while he grows to hate the PCs, he does not sully his hands with fighting them unless they attack him, in which case he fights with relish, calling on his allies for aid in dealing with the “mutineers.”

Plugg is a figure to be hated, though the PCs have little opportunity to get their revenge at first. By the end of the adventure, however, the PCs finally have the opportunity to give him (and his toady, Master Scourge) their just rewards. Mr. Plugg is detailed fully in the NPC appendix on page 54.

## MASTER SCOURGE

Master Scourge is the *Wormwood*’s boatswain and master-at-arms, and Mr. Plugg’s right-hand man. As boatswain, he is in charge of all activities and sailors on deck, and as master-at-arms, he is responsible for discipline. Master Scourge is a sneering man with a braided beard and a mouth full of gold teeth. His body is tall and thin, and even his long coat and heavy boots fail to give any impression of strength or bulk. A sadistic coward, Scourge uses his association with Plugg as protection and in return has no morals when it comes to the tasks his master sets. He is bold and violent when the odds are stacked in his favor, happily kicking a dying dog in the street if asked to do so. But should that dog get up and bite, he quickly flees.

Master Scourge is a key villain in the early part of the adventure, and his whispered words further poison Mr. Plugg against the PCs. Scourge’s relationship with the PCs is a crucial one. He immediately senses something out of the ordinary about them, and his dreams of rank and fortune soon begin to unravel. Like most bullies, Scourge is a coward at heart, and sets out to discredit and ultimately kill his rivals.

This enmity is personal, and primarily directed at a single PC, though how this manifests is ultimately up to you. Scourge was recently rejected by Sandara Quinn (see page 56), and any object of her affections is sure to earn his jealousy and hatred. Likewise, Scourge might be jealous of a handsome and talented PC and fear for his own position on the ship. While Scourge focuses his hostility on one PC, he is also happy to intimidate and victimize the other PCs, as well as seeking to discredit the PCs’ friends. He avoids the PCs as a group, however, and immediately goes



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

to Plugg's side if threatened. If actually attacked, he also goes to Plugg, who may have the PCs disciplined.

Playing the bully requires you to temper the PCs' anger while ensuring they recognize Scourge as a deadly enemy with far too many allies to simply be killed. Terrified as he is of Harrigan and having no desire to be keelhauled, Scourge won't try to kill the PCs—at least, not at first. Instead, he seeks to poison the other crew members against the PCs, and is likely to succeed with his own small band of admirers, whom the PCs will find hard to convert. In essence, this group becomes a rival adventuring party, but with one crucial difference: these rivals also enjoy the support of Mr. Plugg. It's not until events move on to the *Man's Promise* in Part Two that Plugg and Scourge decide to have done with the PCs, but they'll eventually get their comeuppance at the hands of the PCs in Part Three.

### MASTER SCOURGE

CR 3

#### XP 800

Male human fighter 2/rogue 2  
NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 32 (4 HD; 2d10+2d8+8)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** whip +6 (1d3 nonlethal+2) or  
mwk handaxe +7 (1d6+2/x3) or  
punching dagger +6 (1d4+2/x3 plus black adder venom)

**Ranged** shortbow +6 (1d6/x3)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Scourge prefers intimidating opponents to fighting them. Once in combat, he attempts to attack from behind, flanking with his allies.

**Morale** If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, Scourge flees and tries to make good his escape. A man who bears a grudge, Scourge is certain to try to slip dark reaver powder or oil of taggit into the meal or drink of anyone who humiliates or injures him when the chance comes.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Bluff +6, Climb +9, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +8, Profession (sailor) +8, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

**Languages** Common

**SQ** rogue talents (bleeding attack +1), trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of blur*, *potion of cure light wounds*, black adder venom (on punching dagger); **Other Gear** leather armor, punching dagger, masterwork handaxe carved with notches for kills, shortbow with 12 arrows in leather quiver with a buttoned shutter to protect them from the elements, whip, boatswain's call, corked dark green bottle containing 8 doses of oil of taggit, six gold teeth worth 5 gp each, hefty waxed coat with many hidden pockets, leather snuff box with a diamond stud worth 100 gp containing 1 dose of dark reaver powder, silver wedding ring worth 25 gp, 14 pp, 29 gp

### AMBROSE "FISHGUTS" KROOP

Ambrose Kroop is the ship's cook, nicknamed "Fishguts" by the crew, though whether this refers to the contents of his soups or the stains on his apron is unclear. His job is to bring the ship's biscuit on deck at dawn for the crew, and prepare and serve the evening meal. Kroop is a drunkard, but not constantly inebriated, and is a potential ally for the PCs. His unpredictability makes him a frustrating but ultimately useful friend. Like his friend Cut-Throat Grok, Kroop is from the school of hard knocks, but where Grok has become tough, Kroop has capitulated in the face of endless discipline and violence. However, as the adventure progresses and he becomes closer to the PCs, he becomes an increasingly useful ally. Kroop is detailed fully in the NPC appendix on page 52.

When the PC assigned as cook's mate first meets Kroop, be sure to emphasize the cook's sorry condition—he is drunk, but not insensibly so. He describes the job of the cook's mate, which basically entails helping him prepare meals, and actually acquiring food for meals by fishing on a fairly regular basis. At some stage during this initial discussion, Kroop makes the following point.

"It's poison, this ship, but don't let anyone hear you say it aloud. The hull listens, see, and the cap'n hears it all. Poison the *Wormwood* is, though, rotten to the core. You'll not meet a more nasty, sour piece of work than Cap'n Harrigan in all your days at sea, and his crew's the same, 'specially the first mate, Mr. Plugg. Vicious little sod, he is. He'd take his own mother's liver to the butcher to make pies with, he would. But they leave me alone, mostly. They know I can't 'arm 'em."

While Kroop is indifferent to the PCs at the beginning of the adventure, he is, at heart, a friendly salt, and soon becomes attached to any character who makes a modicum of effort as the cook's mate. In general, Kroop likes to cook and drink rum. He is usually insensibly drunk in his quarters during the evening, rarely venturing onto deck after serving the evening meal. Kroop's cook's mate gains a +2 bonus on all checks to influence the quartermaster Cut-Throat Grok. Kroop is also happy to





lend his mate any equipment from the galley, though stealing it without his permission is easy enough.

**Initial Attitude:** indifferent

## CUT-THROAT GROK

**Cut-Throat Grok** (N female half-orc fighter 5) is the *Wormwood's* quartermaster, a no-nonsense character with a huge scar across her neck. Growing up among pirates is tough for anyone unusual, and Grok got her scar fighting a gang of cutthroats in the alleys of Port Peril who robbed her and left her for dead when she was only 11 years old. Grok is a reedy half-orc who favors dark clothing. She carries a notched greataxe and an array of throwing axes hangs from her belt. Grok frequently grins toothily, and uses appalling curse words, particularly when drunk. Grok is renowned for



**Cut-Throat Grok**

being tough, and she doesn't suffer fools, but she is a close friend of Ambrose Kroop, whom she sees as someone who's had even worse luck than she's had.

Grok is usually found in the quartermaster's store (area A9) during the day. In the evenings, she locks the store and carouses on deck, drinking and gambling with the other pirates before returning to her cabin (area A7) to sleep it off.

Grok loves unusual drink and fine songs, and a character who provides her with at least 20 gp worth of alcohol that isn't rum or who makes a successful DC 15 Perform (song) check gains a +4 bonus on all checks made to influence her. If Grok is made friendly, she allows the PCs into the quartermaster's store after normal hours, where PCs can negotiate for equipment with her with additional Diplomacy checks. Recovering a PC's starting equipment is considered simple aid (DC +0), a loan of goods worth up to 150 gp is considered lengthy aid (DC +5), and a loan of 300 gp worth of equipment is considered dangerous aid that could result in punishment, since she might get keelhauled herself for theft (DC +15).

**Initial Attitude:** indifferent

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 400 XP if they make Cut-Throat Grok helpful.

## OTHER OFFICERS

In addition to the major NPCs detailed on these pages, a number of other officers serve aboard the *Wormwood*. Although most of these characters play little or no role in this adventure and cannot be influenced, the PCs may spot them aboard the ship or hear about them from their fellow pirates. Be aware that some of these NPCs do reappear later in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, so you should try to avoid forming any strong relationships between these characters and the PCs at this point.

**Barnabas Harrigan** (NE male human fighter 5/rogue 11): captain of the *Wormwood*

**Peppery Longfarthing** (CN female human sorcerer 8): sailing master and old friend of the captain

**Riaris Krine** (NE female human fighter 7): master gunner  
**Habby Quarne, the "Stitchman"** (N male human fighter 4/expert 3): ship's surgeon and carpenter

**Kipper** (CE male human rogue 6): gunner's mate and bootlicker for Plugg and Scourge

**Patch Patchesalt** (CE female gnome rogue 3/fighter 3): boatswain's mate and sycophant of Plugg and Scourge

**"Caulky" Tarroon** (CN female human commoner 3): the captain's cabin girl

**Owlbear Hartshorn** (N male human fighter 2): simpleton and "pet" of Mr. Plugg (see page 27)

## A PIRATE'S DAY

The *Wormwood* works on discipline and routine. Captain Harrigan's philosophy is that a busy swab is a tired



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

swab, and tired swabs don't pick fights with each other. After breakfast, the crew work at their allotted jobs until dusk, when they gather on the main deck to witness punishments (the "Bloody Hour"), eat dinner, and receive their rum rations. After punishment time and the evening meal, the crew can do what they wish until dawn bell the next morning. See "The Life of a Pirate" on page 60 for more details on a pirate's daily life.

Each day, the PCs are assigned tasks to complete, based on their jobs (cook's mate, rigger, or swab). Roll 1d6 on the following tables to randomly determine the daily tasks for each PC who's a rigger or swab. See The Cook's Mate below for details on tasks assigned to the cook's mate. Each task represents a day's hard work and requires at least one successful skill check to complete. Failing a task's required skill check results in punishment. The punishment for failing a check by 4 or less is merely a severe verbal reprimand, or at worse, a rope bash (see page 66). Failing by 5 or more results in three lashes. The number of lashes increases to six if this is the second such failure in a row, to nine lashes for three failures in a row, and so on.

Work takes place under the watchful eyes of Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, and getting away from them is not easy. If a PC refuses to work or is unable to work, he or she receives a dozen lashes for the first such offense and a dozen lashes with the cat for the second. A third offense results in the character being put in the sweatbox (see page 66) for 12 hours.

### Rigger Tasks

- 1 **Rigging Repair:** The ship's rigging frequently gets damaged and must be repaired, requiring DC 10 Climb checks to reach the rigging 30 feet up, followed by a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.
- 2 **Line Work:** Hard work hoisting and lowering sails, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 3 **Upper Rigging Work:** Work in the upper rigging, 50 feet up, requiring DC 10 Climb checks, followed by a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.
- 4 **Rope Work:** Handling the ship's ropes, including coiling them, stowing them, and securing them to cleats and single and double bollards, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.
- 5 **Lookout:** A climb to the crow's nest 60 feet up, requiring DC 10 Climb checks followed by a DC 10 Perception check.
- 6 **Mainsail Duties:** Tough work raising and lowering the mainsail, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Strength check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.

### Swab Tasks

- 1 **Man the Bilges:** Vile and sweaty work cleaning out the bilges (area **A11**), requiring a DC 12 Strength check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 2 **Rat Catcher:** Catching rats and other vermin belowdecks, requiring either a DC 10 Stealth check, Survival check, or Dexterity check to catch and kill enough rats, cockroaches, and beetles for a good day's work.
- 3 **Swab the Decks:** Backbreaking work mopping the decks and scrubbing them with sandstone blocks called holystones, requiring a DC 10 Strength or Constitution check. Failing either check results in the PC being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 4 **Hauling Rope and Knot Work:** Tying and untying knots in the ship's ropes and moving heavy coils of rope from one part of the ship to another, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Strength check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 5 **Runner:** Passing messages to the crew and officers of the *Wormwood* in all parts of the ship except officers' cabins (areas **A4** and **A5**), requiring a DC 10 Acrobatics check and DC 10 Constitution check. Failing the Constitution check results in the PC being fatigued at the end of the shift. A PC with the Run feat automatically succeeds at this task.
- 6 **Repairs:** Things constantly tear or break aboard the ship and need repairs, whether sewing sails or splicing rope all day, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.

### THE COOK'S MATE

The PC who ends up as the cook's mate is in for an interesting life. The ship's cook, Ambrose Kroop, spends half of his time drunk. At the start of each day, there is a 50% chance that Kroop is insensible and no help during the whole day. Otherwise, he is merely drunk, but not helplessly so. If Kroop is insensible, Mr. Plugg supervises the cook's mate instead.

Each day, roll 1d6 on the table below to randomly determine the cook's mate's daily task. When Kroop is sober, he automatically makes the skill check for the day's cooking, with the PC's assistance. When the cook is drunk, the cook's mate must make the day's meal for the pirates by herself, in addition to her normal duties for the day. If the PC has to hunt or slaughter the food as well as cook, all checks for both tasks are made with a -4 penalty. In such cases, if the cook's mate takes any ship action (see page 24) during the day other than working, all work checks automatically fail (the cook's mate does not receive the +4 bonus for working diligently in this case; see page 25). On a failed check, the angry crew soundly berate the cook's





## VOYAGE OF THE WORMWOOD

In preparation for his long-term plans (see the Adventure Background), Captain Harrigan wants to strengthen his position among the other Free Captains of the Shackles, but he first needs to increase his funds by plundering the shipping lanes. He tells only his closest allies (including Mr. Plugg) where they are heading, and tells no one why. After leaving Port Peril, Captain Harrigan takes the *Wormwood* north across Jeopardy Bay, then steers southwest, passing to the east of Dahak's Teeth on the fourth day and Motaku Isle on the seventh day. At this point, a storm strikes, driving the *Wormwood* southeast. Once the storm blows over, Harrigan tacks east, keeping his vessel well away from the Slithering Coast, sailing into the open Fever Sea for the remainder of the voyage, where Harrigan hopes to pick up merchant vessels from Bloodcove, the Mwangi Expanse, and Sargava. The *Wormwood* encounters the *Man's Promise* (see page 31) on the 20th day of its voyage and attacks within a few hours.

A DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or Profession (sailor) check enables the PCs to identify the countries and regions the *Wormwood* passes on its voyage, while a DC 20 check enables them to identify individual islands or settlements.

mate and administer several rope bashes to Kroop and his lazy mate. Regardless, food is still food, and the crew generally eat what they are given, no matter the results of the cooking checks (though they are still likely to complain loudly and frequently).

The captain's cabin girl, "Caulky" Tarroon, collects the officers' food from the galley each evening to take it to the captain's cabin. She tastes the food for poison before serving the other officers (you can't trust anyone on a pirate ship). Attempting to poison the officers is a horrendous crime, punishable by a triple keelhauling for the ship's cook and his mate.

### Cook's Mate Tasks

- 1 or 2 **Cooking:** Assisting Ambrose Kroop in preparing the day's meal. If Kroop is sober, no check is required. If Kroop is drunk, this requires a DC 10 Profession (cook) or Intelligence check.
- 3 **Fishing:** Catching tonight's supper using the ship's nets. A DC 10 Profession (fisherman) or Survival check provides enough fish. A failed check results in a day in the bilges as punishment the following day (see the swab task Man the Bilges on page 23).
- 4 **Turtle Hunting:** Hunting leatherback sea turtles with harpoons, treble hooks, and nets. A DC 10

Profession (fisherman) or Survival check provides enough food. A failed check results in a day in the bilges as punishment the following day (see the swab task Man the Bilges on page 23).

- 5 **Bull Session:** Drinking with Ambrose Kroop and listening to his stories. The cook's mate must drink an additional rum ration, but is able to take an additional ship action during the day.
- 6 **Special Occasion:** Captain Harrigan is celebrating something today, and wants one of the ship's pigs butchered and cooked for dinner. The PC must make a DC 10 Profession (cook) or Survival check to slaughter the animal, then help Kroop to clean, cut, and prepare the carcass. If Kroop is sober, no additional check is required. If Kroop is drunk, this requires a DC 15 Profession (cook) or Intelligence check.

## SHIP ACTIONS

In addition to their normal jobs on the ship, the PCs can also utilize their time during the day (and night) to explore the ship, scrounger for gear, interact with their shipmates, or attempt to influence NPCs.

With the PCs potentially scattered across the ship working at their jobs, however, there is a danger that early events in the adventure might focus too much upon the actions of individual characters. Some PCs might have more time on their hands and act accordingly. To avoid this, the PCs' activities aboard ship—carrying out their assigned tasks; exploring the ship; robbing, bullying, or befriending shipmates; working; or playing—are performed as part of ship actions. These actions reflect the time required to set up or complete an activity, such as gathering enough crew to play a game, scouting out a room to make sure it's empty, and so on. Remember that even the cook's mate has a job to do during the day, and ship actions are meant to reflect the available time a PC can carve out from his or her work time without going into too much detail.

Each PC can normally take two ship actions each day, one during the day and one at night. A PC can also attempt to take up to two additional ship actions during the middle watch in the dead of night (any nighttime ship action marked with an asterisk), but to do so the PC must make a successful Constitution check (DC 10, +4 per extra ship action taken) or be fatigued for the next day.

A list of possible ship actions is presented on the following page. As always, use your judgment as to when these actions are appropriate.

**Story Award:** Award a PC 100 XP for winning his or her first pirate entertainment aboard the *Wormwood*. The first time a PC succeeds in entertaining the crew, he or she should also receive an award of 100 XP.



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

### Daytime Ship Actions

**Work Diligently:** Gain a +4 bonus on any one check for a job's daily task

**Influence:** Make normal checks for a job's daily task and attempt to influence a single NPC

**Sneak:** Make normal checks for a job's daily task and briefly explore one area of the ship (the PC can make a single Perception check or other skill check with no chance of detection)

**Shop:** Take a -2 penalty on all checks for a job's daily task and visit the quartermaster's store (area A9)

**Shirk:** Take a -2 penalty on all checks for a job's daily task and take time exploring one area of the ship. The PC can take 10 on a single Perception check or other skill check, but must make a check to avoid being discovered (see below).

### Nighttime Ship Actions

**Sleep:** Go to bed early and sleep through the night (automatically recover from fatigue)

**Gamble:** Play or gamble on a game of chance or pirate entertainment (see page 67)

**Entertain:** Make one Perform check to entertain the crew (see page 67)

**Influence\*:** Attempt to influence a single NPC

**Sneak\*:** Take time exploring one area of the ship. The PC can take 20 on a single Perception check or other skill check, but must make a check to avoid being discovered (see below).

**Steal\*:** Attempt to open a locked door or locker. The PC must make a check to avoid being discovered (see below).

## THEFT, PILFERING, AND SECRECY ABOARD THE WORMWOOD

The *Wormwood* is a pirate ship, filled with dubious and murderous characters at best. Theft is common, but the key is not getting caught.

To perform any action unobserved, a PC must generally make an opposed skill check, such as a Sleight of Hand or Stealth check against an NPC's Perception check. On a crowded ship, however, it's not practical to make opposed checks against potentially dozens of NPCs. Instead, the PC should make an appropriate skill check (usually Sleight of Hand or Stealth) to represent a typical situation, using the following guidelines to set the DC of the check.

Attempting a stealthy action in a crowd, such as casting a spell with verbal or somatic components without being noticed: DC 20.

Attempting a stealthy action where there is a chance of discovery, such as visiting the quartermaster's store during work, exploring a room during the day, or attempting to open a chest in a room while its occupants are sleeping: DC 15.

Attempting a stealthy action under cover of a suitable diversion, such as attempting to open lockers when the rest of the crew are working or on deck enjoying themselves: DC 10.

Failing this check by 4 or less means the PC attempting the action is merely disturbed and is unable to complete the action. Failing the check by 5 or more means the PC is caught red-handed by a random crew member, and might be turned over to Master Scourge for discipline.

## RECOVERING GEAR

One of the first challenges the PCs are likely to face is getting back their starting equipment, as well as adding to it. Everyone aboard the *Wormwood* knows that the quartermaster, Cut-Throat Grok, oversees equipment and booty, which is what the PCs' possessions currently are. Grok often sleeps and works in the quartermaster's store (area A9), an unofficial shop of sorts aboard the ship.

When the adventure begins, Sandara Quinn has managed to acquire a few of the PCs' items from Grok to return to them (see page 17). The rest of the PCs' equipment is held in one locker in area A9, as detailed in that area's description. Grok is used to dealing with impressed sailors' requests for the return of their personal equipment, and always tells such characters that their goods are now the captain's booty. However, Grok can be bluffed into believing that items are cursed or should otherwise be returned. On a successful Bluff check (opposed by Grok's Sense Motive check; she has a +1 skill modifier), Grok returns 10 gp worth of a PC's equipment for every point by which the PC's Bluff check exceeds her Sense Motive result. Grok is also incredibly superstitious, and anyone using superstition to bluff the quartermaster gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff checks against her. A PC cannot try to bluff Grok more than once in a 24-hour period.

The PCs are also free to purchase or barter for items from the quartermaster's store, as outlined in the description for area A9.

The PCs can also try theft, but stealing from the store is very risky. That said, Grok's memory has become progressively worse over the last few years, and she sometimes forgets to lock the store when leaving it, as described in area A9. If Grok is drinking with Kroop, the cook's mate might easily slip away for a few minutes to have a look around the store. Unless obvious evidence of theft is left behind (such as broken locks, triggered traps, or dead or unconscious characters), stealing from the store is likely to succeed, as long as the thief isn't too boastful or foolhardy. A PC who steals goods from the store and attempts to barter or sell them back to Grok discovers that the quartermaster is likely to recognize stolen goods for what they are, unless she is very drunk at the time. If Grok finds evidence of theft, a full search





## WEATHER

The *Wormwood* encounters different types of weather as it progresses on its voyage, which can affect work on the ship, as detailed below.

**Days 1 through 5:** normal weather

**Day 6:** heavy rain

**Day 7:** building storm (–2 on all work checks for rigger)

**Day 8:** storm (see page 28)

**Day 9:** weakening storm (–2 on all work checks for rigger)

**Days 10 and 11:** normal weather

**Days 12 and 13:** heat wave (save DCs against fatigue increased by +2)

**Days 14 through 21:** normal weather

## SEASICKNESS

Characters unaccustomed to life on board ships run the risk of getting seasick. Such characters must succeed at a DC 5 Fortitude save or become nauseated for the rest of the day. On the following day, the character is entitled to a new save. On a success, the character is sickened instead of nauseated. On a failure, the nauseated condition persists for another day. Each day thereafter, a character is entitled to another Fortitude save. Making two successful saves in a row allows the character to recover from seasickness for the duration of the voyage. The DC of seasickness increases to 15 in rough weather, and those who succeed at a check to stave off seasickness for a day must make an additional save if conditions change for the worse. Characters with 1 or more ranks in Profession (sailor) are never subject to seasickness.

of the ship and crew's lockers is launched, carried out by Mr. Plugg, Master Scourge, and six of their most loyal pirates. If stolen goods are found, the penalty is usually keelhauling, even if such booty is planted.

**Story Award:** Award 200 XP to each PC who manages to recover all of his or her equipment.

## DAY 1: A KEELHAULING FOR JAKES MAGPIE

The PCs' first day aboard the *Wormwood* sets the pattern for the succeeding days, as they get used to the routine of the ship and her crew. In general, days always follow the following format of work, leisure, and rest, unless other events take precedence as detailed below.

**Arrival:** The PCs wake up in the hold of the *Wormwood*. Master Scourge and his mates lead them on deck, where Captain Harrigan welcomes the PCs aboard and Mr. Plugg assigns the PCs jobs on the ship.

**Work:** The PCs spend the day at their assigned jobs. In addition, each PC can take a single daytime ship action.

**“Bloody Hour”:** The crew gathers on deck at dusk to witness the keelhauling of Jakes Magpie, a pirate caught stealing from the quartermaster's store the night before. After a brief interrogation at the hands of Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, Jakes admitted his crime, and is now brought up from the bilges (area **A11**) to be slowly keelhauled before the evening meal. A DC 15 Perception check notices the relish with which Mr. Plugg, in particular, tugs at the rope as the unfortunate Magpie is dragged under the ship for 12 rounds. What appears on the other side has been cut to shreds and is soon thrown overboard to feed the sharks. A PC who examines the body before it is dumped can make a DC 15 Heal check to estimate that the unfortunate Jakes took about 24 points of damage from the punishment and drowned as well. Witnessing Jakes's keelhauling should help impress upon the players the deadly nature of pirate punishments.

**Leisure:** After dinner and the rum rations, various pirate entertainments (see page 67) take place on deck or below, for as long as people are sober enough to participate. In addition, each PC can take a single nighttime ship action.

**Rest:** Provided they've drunk their rum rations, the PCs can retire to their hammocks in the lower hold (area **A10**) whenever they wish. The PCs can take additional nighttime ship actions if they have the energy.

**Story Award:** Award 100 XP to each PC who successfully completes his or her first day's work.

## DAY 2: LAYING DOWN THE LAW (CR 3)

This encounter occurs at dawn on the PCs' second day aboard the *Wormwood* in the crew berths (area **A10**).

**Creatures:** Mere seconds after the bell tolls to summon the crew on deck, four pirates—Aretta Bansion, Fipps Chumlett, Jaundiced Jape, and Slippery Sy Longan—block the PCs' path. “In a hurry?” one says, and laughs, pushing a random PC in the chest. Master Scourge has already talked to the four, telling them he doesn't like these new swabs (the PCs), and that the sluggards need to be knocked into shape. Scourge has instructed the pirates to give the PCs a bit of a beating and prevent them from getting on deck in time for their shift. The pirates want a fistfight, not a knife fight, and approach the PCs without weapons drawn. Meanwhile, a handful of other sailors loiter on the stairs to watch the fight.

**WORMWOOD PIRATES (4)**

**CR 1/2**

**XP 200 each**

**hp 11 each** (see page 20)

**Melee** unarmed strike +3 (1d3+1 nonlethal)

### TACTICS

**Morale** The pirates fight for 8 rounds, then run on deck. If the PCs draw weapons, all of the pirates back away except



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Fipps Chumlett, who draws a dagger. If faced by two armed characters, however, he backs down. In this event, Fipps can no longer be influenced by the PCs and remains hostile for the remainder of the adventure.

**Development:** If any character is killed, Mr. Plugg launches an investigation, and keelhauls the murderer. Any characters who arrive late on deck (whether PCs or NPCs) are sentenced to three lashes for laziness. Mr. Plugg adds three more lashes if they are impertinent.

### DAY 4: SOMETHING IN THE BILGES (CR 3)

The PCs should not be assigned duty in the bilges today. If such work is indicated, roll again to find new tasks for the PCs.

At about mid-morning on the fourth day, young Jack Scrimshaw rushes onto deck. Any PCs on deck can make a DC 10 Perception check to notice his ashen face as well as overhear what he reports to Mr. Plugg. Jack was below on rat-catching duty when something big swam out of the bilge water and bit him. Plugg immediately looks for volunteers to investigate, and selects all of the PCs (including the cook's mate), telling them to get down to the bilges (area A11) and not bother coming out until whatever is down there is dead.

**Creatures:** Six dire rats have gnawed their way out of a dodgy consignment of barley the captain picked up in Port Peril on the cheap, and have taken up residence in the brackish water in the bilges. Today the weather is so blistering that the bilges are considered very hot (*Core Rulebook* 444). The water provides the rats with concealment against the PCs.

**DIRE RATS (6)** CR 1/3  
**XP 135 each**  
 hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

**Development:** After they have dealt with the rats, the PCs have the chance to explore and ransack the bilges for gear (see area A11). If the PCs spend more than 4 hours in the bilges, Mr. Plugg sends one of the pirates down to tell them if they can't deal with one tiny creature in half an hour, they each get three lashes. If the PCs fail to kill all of the rats, they're likely to bite someone else, an event that earns the PCs three lashes each. In that case, the following day Mr. Plugg automatically assigns only one PC (to prevent time wasting) to the bilges again.

### DAY 5: THE OWLBEAR (CR 1)

This encounter occurs during the fifth evening of the voyage.

**Creature:** Mr. Plugg's "pet," a simpleminded, hulking brute called Owlbear Hartshorn, is usually kept belowdecks in the middle hold (area A6), but Plugg brings him out on special occasions, such as when he wants someone killed

or taught a lesson. Plugg and his cronies lead Owlbear onto deck just after the evening meal "for a bit of sport" and dare one of the PCs to take him on—bare-knuckle fists or wrestling only, no magic tricks, and the last one conscious wins. To make it interesting, Plugg tosses down a purse of 100 gp as a wager on Owlbear. The PCs can choose which of their own will fight Owlbear, and can bet on their chosen champion—the winner takes the entire pot.

Owlbear Hartshorn is a large man with meaty fists. He's a bit simple, and the rest of the crew enjoys having a laugh at the poor fellow's expense. To try to make friends, Hartshorn has taken to clowning, laughing, and crying out random phrases at the top of his voice, as this seems to make people laugh. Owlbear likes to eat live crabs, breaking the shells with his teeth and fingers, and his



**Owlbear Hartshorn**





shaved skin still shows signs of the tarring and feathering the crew gave him as a cruel joke not so long ago.

**OWLBEAR HARTSHORN** **CR 1**

**XP 400**

Male human fighter 2  
 N Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init** -1; **Senses** Perception -2

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (-1 Dex)  
**hp** 24 (2d10+9)  
**Fort** +5, **Ref** -1, **Will** -2; +1 vs. fear  
**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1  
**Weaknesses** blind in one eye

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 feet  
**Melee** unarmed strike +5 (1d3+3 nonlethal) or club +5 (1d6+3)  
**Ranged** barrel +1 (1d6+3) or club +1 (1d6+3)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Owlbear fights with his fists, dealing nonlethal damage until reduced to 15 hit points or fewer (see *Morale* below). If grappled, he attempts to break the grapple, but goes to back to using his fists as soon as he is free.  
**Morale** If Owlbear is reduced to 15 hit points, Plugg hurls a club in his direction. Owlbear naturally picks up the club and continues the fight with the weapon. If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, Owlbear cries and tries to back away, but is pushed back into combat by Plugg and his mates.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 17, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 4, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 10  
**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 14  
**Feats** Catch Off-Guard, Intimidating Prowess, Throw Anything, Toughness  
**Skills** Climb +8, Intimidate +8  
**Languages** Common  
**Other Gear** handful of live crabs

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Blind in One Eye (Ex)** A character who makes a DC 10 Perception or Sense Motive check notices that Owlbear is blind in his left eye and very slow. If his opponent notices this and attempts to fight Owlbear from that side, that PC can make a DC 10 Acrobatics or Bluff check each round to easily avoid Owlbear's clumsy blows.

**Development:** If the PC defeats Owlbear, that character gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all future checks (Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Perform) to influence the NPCs on the ship for the remainder of the adventure. This circumstance bonus stacks with other bonuses. If the PC backs away when Owlbear does, he gains an even more valuable boon—Owlbear's friendship. The

towering hulk is not used to being treated with respect and kindness, and becomes helpful in attitude to that PC for the rest of the adventure. Although Owlbear is kept belowdecks most of the time, he can be a useful ally when the PCs mutiny at the end of the adventure.

Mr. Plugg keeps a close eye on the PCs, and if anyone attempts to fix the fight with magic, or if the PC fighting Owlbear draws a weapon, the offending character is given six lashes for the transgression. If the PCs kills Owlbear, the punishment is a dozen lashes with the cat.

**Story Award:** If Owlbear is defeated (or the PCs gain his friendship), award the PCs his full XP value.

**DAY 8: THE STORM (CR 2)**

After a day of heavy winds and rain, a storm well and truly hits the *Wormwood* on the eighth day. The ship is tossed about on the high seas and all hands are called on deck to work, including the cook's mate. All of the crew is required in the rigging, and the PCs are assigned random tasks from the rigger task list. The DC of all such tasks is increased by +2. The crew must stay up all night battling the storm—there is no evening rest or entertainment, and after the evening meal (ship's biscuit only, on this occasion), assign the PCs new tasks from the rigger task list. The PCs must make DC 14 Constitution checks to avoid becoming fatigued at the end of their second shift; PCs who are already fatigued and fail this check become exhausted and drop to sleep at work, an act that earns them each six lashes the following day as punishment.

At some point during the storm, a friendly NPC (your choice, but not Ambrose Kroop or Sandara Quinn) goes overboard. Swimming in stormy waters requires a DC 20 Swim check. The NPC must make two consecutive DC 20 Swim checks within 12 checks or the *Wormwood* vanishes from sight and the character is lost at sea. The PCs can try to rescue the overboard NPC by tossing rope to them. To get the rope close enough, a PC must make a ranged touch attack against the character in the water (range increment 10 feet). On the first round, the NPC is 10 feet away. Each succeeding round, the NPC drifts 1d3x10 feet farther away from the ship. If the attack misses, the rope lands too far away to help and must be drawn back and thrown again or a new rope must be thrown (use the rules for splash weapons [Core Rulebook 202] to see where the rope lands). If the attack hits, the NPC in the water gains a bonus on his Swim checks equal to twice the total Strength modifiers of those hauling the rope. Up to three characters can add their Strength modifiers to help in this way. If the NPC fails the Swim check by 5 or more, he loses his grip on the rope and it must be drawn back and thrown again or a new rope must be thrown.

When the night shift ends, the next day's work begins, and new tasks are assigned using the normal task tables.



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

The PCs must make DC 18 Constitution checks to avoid becoming fatigued or exhausted as detailed above.

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 600 XP for surviving the storm. If they rescue the NPC who falls overboard, award them XP as if they had defeated that NPC in combat.

### DAY 11: TROUBLE IN THE SUN (CR 3)

Approaching the Slithering Coast, the waters become shallow and navigation is tricky. As the afternoon wears on, Mr. Plugg calls the PCs together on the main deck. At his feet lie four crab pots. Plugg informs the PCs that the captain wants fresh crab for supper. Plugg points to a reef lying some 200 feet north of the ship and instructs the PCs and one of the NPCs friendly to them to swim to the reef, fill the pots with crabs, and swim back. Plugg brooks no further discussion.

The waters are calm (DC 10 Swim checks) and clear (visibility 100 feet). The initial swim across the open water passes without event, and the PCs soon approach a superb coral reef, measuring approximately 100 yards square, lying between 5 and 30 feet below the surface. Many crabs inhabit the reef, and each round, each PC can make a DC 10 Perception or Survival check to spot a crab, followed by a DC 10 Swim check to swim down and catch that crab. Four crabs are required to fill a pot.

**Creatures:** Two reefclaws lair in the reef. They swim out from the cover of the coral to attack 1d4 rounds after the PCs arrive at the reef, eager to get a rare taste of human flesh.

**REEFLAWS (2)** **CR 1**

**XP 400 each**

**hp 13 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 234)

#### TACTICS

**Morale** The reefclaws are tenacious in combat and fight to the death, wanting to feast upon these tasty new morsels.

**Treasure:** Reefclaws make very good eating, and a single reefclaw fills a crab pot. If the PCs bring back any reefclaws for the captain's supper, the captain rewards them by returning all of one PC's equipment. If the chosen PC has already reclaimed his or her equipment, the captain rewards the PCs with a *potion of cure moderate wounds* instead.

### DAY 14: BOARDING SCHOOL

The PCs are excused from their regular work today, as they are to be trained in boarding. This training is carried out

under the watchful eye of **Riaris Krine** (NE female human fighter 7), the *Wormwood's* master gunner. Krine's skin is darkened from countless days on deck under the sun, and her nose has the appearance of having been broken several times over. One of her legs has been replaced with a wooden peg leg, the result of a wayward catapult shot that took off her leg below the knee. She may be the most vile-tongued wench the PCs have ever met, and her language makes Rosie Cusswell sound like a nun.

Grappling hooks are an essential part of piracy, used to grapple enemy ships and draw them closer for boarding. Being able to use them is therefore considered a vital pirate skill. Krine orders the jolly boat on the main deck (area **A3**) to be launched at dawn for the day's work. She takes two characters out at a time to instruct them in using grapples.

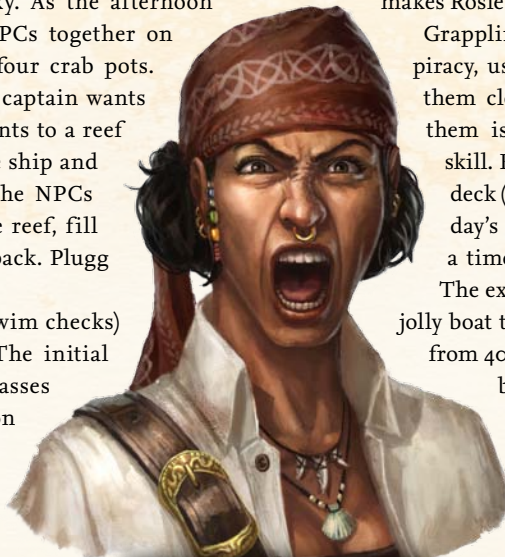
The exercise consists of the characters in the jolly boat throwing grapples onto the *Wormwood* from 40 feet away, tying the rope off, and then boarding the *Wormwood* by climbing along the rope. To make it interesting, however, Krine has instructed four random crew members to hurl objects at the boarding characters in an attempt to knock them off, simulating a real attack.

Throwing a grappling hook (*Core Rulebook* 155) requires a ranged attack roll, treating the hook as a thrown weapon with a range increment of 10 feet. The *Wormwood's* rail is AC 5. At 40 feet away, the PCs have a -6 on their attack rolls. Once the hook is set, the PC must tie off the rope as a move action, then shimmy along the rope, requiring DC 15 Climb checks. As they climb, the four pirates aboard the *Wormwood* hurl a variety of rotting food, garbage, empty bottles, and buckets of bilgewater at the PCs. These items (which count as improvised weapons) do no damage, but any character struck must make a DC 10 Reflex save or lose his grip and fall into the water.

Krine is determined to make the characters learn this exercise. If any character fails to reach the *Wormwood*, she makes that character do it again, but this time alone, with the four pirates on the ship throwing things solely at that character. After three attempts, regardless of the results, Krine is satisfied that the character knows what to do.

**Development:** Any character who is knocked off the rope three times is given six rope bashes after the exercise. Make a note of the PC who performs best in this task. In a few days, that PC will lead the other PCs onto the *Man's Promise* as part of the boarding party in Part Two.

**Story Award:** Award each PC who successfully completes the boarding exercise 100 XP.



**Riaris Krine**





### DAY 17: UNPLEASANT DUTIES

At this stage of the journey, the PCs and their allies and Scourge and his followers have become more polarized. Decrease the attitude of any NPC not on at least friendly terms with any PC by one level. NPCs who are already hostile to the PCs can no longer be influenced by the PCs. Scourge has also wholly convinced Mr. Plugg that the PCs are trouble, no matter what they have done.

Mr. Plugg begins making more appearances at this point, taking a personal interest in the PCs, soundly abusing them, carefully noting each mistake for punishment, and generally bullying and trying to humiliate them.

With the exception of the cook's mate, you should no longer roll for random tasks each day. From now on, Mr. Plugg assigns the PCs the worst duties or the duty they most hate every day.

### DAY 19: RISKY GAMES IN THE BILGES (CR 2)

The PC whom Scourge hates the most (or a random PC, if no one particularly stands out) is assigned to the bilges (area A11) to help pump them out. The other PCs are assigned tasks as normal, though no others are assigned to

the bilges. On the way to the bilges, the PC bumps into Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, who search the PC for hidden weapons and forcibly remove any the PC might have.

**Creatures:** Three characters man the pumps—the PC and two hostile *Wormwood* pirates. Each pirate carries a hidden dagger. The PC can make a DC 12 Perception check to spot the hidden weapons. After a few minutes, one of the pirates accuses the PC of slacking. The other pirate quickly joins in and attacks the PC, intending to kill the PC away from prying eyes and make it look like an accident.

**WORMWOOD PIRATES (2)** CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 20)

**Development:** Keelhauling is the normal penalty for killing a member of the crew, but if they kill the PC, the pirates topple several barrels over the PC's body, claiming the death was a terrible accident. If the PC kills the pirates and the deaths are discovered, the PC is locked in the sweatbox to await keelhauling on the following day. Fortunately for that PC, the *Wormwood* encounters another



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

ship before the punishment can be carried out, and the PC is released to join the boarding party (see Part Two).

### DAY 20: SAILS ON THE HORIZON

A lookout cries “Ship ahoy!” late in the afternoon, and Captain Harrigan immediately turns the *Wormwood* to pursue its prey. As the evening wears on, the *Wormwood* gradually gains on the other ship, and by dawn, less than half a mile separates the two.

### DAY 21: PIRACY!

The *Wormwood* closes on the ship sighted the previous day. Proceed to Part Two.

## PART TWO: THE MAN’S PROMISE

The PCs are about to get a taste of real piracy as the *Wormwood* closes in upon a Rahadoumi merchant vessel called the *Man’s Promise*. As soon as she spots the *Wormwood*, the merchant ship flees, but her sails are no match for those of the pirate ship, which closes over a period of 12 hours. During the last hour, Captain Harrigan instructs Kroop and the PC cook’s mate to slaughter half a dozen pigs, slit their throats, and throw them overboard to attract sharks to the scene of the battle.

The *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide* has rules for ship-to-ship combat, which will be utilized in future volumes of the *Skull & Shackles Adventure Path*. As lowly swabs, however, the PCs have little influence upon this battle until the two ships are close enough for boarding. As a result, the ship-to-ship combat rules are not used for this battle. The *Wormwood* automatically closes with the *Man’s Promise* and grapples it, allowing the *Wormwood’s* crew to board the Rahadoumi vessel. If you wish to play out the ship-to-ship combat using the rules in the *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide*, you may do so, but bear in mind that the safe capture of the *Man’s Promise* is an integral part of this adventure.

The battle between the *Wormwood* and the *Man’s Promise* is presented as a series of events, with the two ships closing, followed by grappling and boarding actions, and finally the fight between the two crews on the ships’ decks. Once shipboard combat begins, the focus of the battle shifts to the PCs, with events transpiring round by round, as detailed below.

### BATTLE APPROACHES

As the *Wormwood* closes to within half a mile of the *Man’s Promise*, Riaris Krine summons the PCs to the *Wormwood’s* poop deck (area **A2**) to give them their task for the upcoming battle. The PCs’ orders are as follows.

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“The ship’s wheel is on the aft deck, just below the sterncastle. You’re going to grapple over, kill the guards on the sterncastle,

take the wheel, and guard the ship’s boats. Kill anyone who tries to get away on one of the boats. Don’t move from the wheel until the fighting’s done, or you’ll have to answer to me. Oh yeah, as we get close, it’s going to get foggy. Just stick to what I told you to do.”

Krine puts the PC who performed best in the boarding training (see page 29) in charge of the boarding party, and issues any PC who still has not acquired a weapon a single weapon (excluding alchemist’s fire) from the armory (area **A4a**). The PCs can make a DC 15 Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince Krine of the importance of their mission and choose two NPC pirates to accompany them, but characters such as Grok, Kroop, and Owlbear are all busy elsewhere. The PCs can choose two hostile or unfriendly NPCs if they wish—people do die in battle after all.

### CLOSING FOR BOARDING

The two ships soon enter into reasonable firing range (120 feet) and close together at a speed of 30 feet per round. The crew of the *Man’s Promise* begins to bombard the *Wormwood* with missiles, mainly crossbow bolts, but also with two ballistas on the sterncastle attacking the *Wormwood’s* rigging in a futile attempt to slow the pirate ship. At the same time, banks of heavy mist suddenly envelop the enemy ship. From now until the conclusion of the battle, combat aboard the *Man Promise* takes place within multiple *fog cloud* spells cast by Peppery Longfarting (CL 8th).

As crossbow fire is exchanged between the two ships, the PCs are free to act against the rapidly approaching ship. Their closest targets are the Rahadoumi sailors on the sterncastle of the *Man’s Promise* (see Round 1 below). Sailors on a ship (including the PCs) have partial cover (+2 to AC and +1 on Reflex saving throws) while those in the sterncastle have cover (+4 to AC and +2 on Reflex saving throws), as well as total concealment (50% miss chance) from the *fog cloud*.

If the PCs fire or cast spells at the other ship, they have a chance of being targeted themselves. Each round, there is a 40% chance that the PCs are attacked by 1d4 heavy crossbows from the *Man’s Promise* (Atk +1 ranged, 1d10/19–20).

After 4 rounds, the two ships collide, and the pirates begin hurling grapples and lowering planks to board the *Man’s Promise*. The ships remain locked together, as depicted on the map on page 32, until the battle ends.

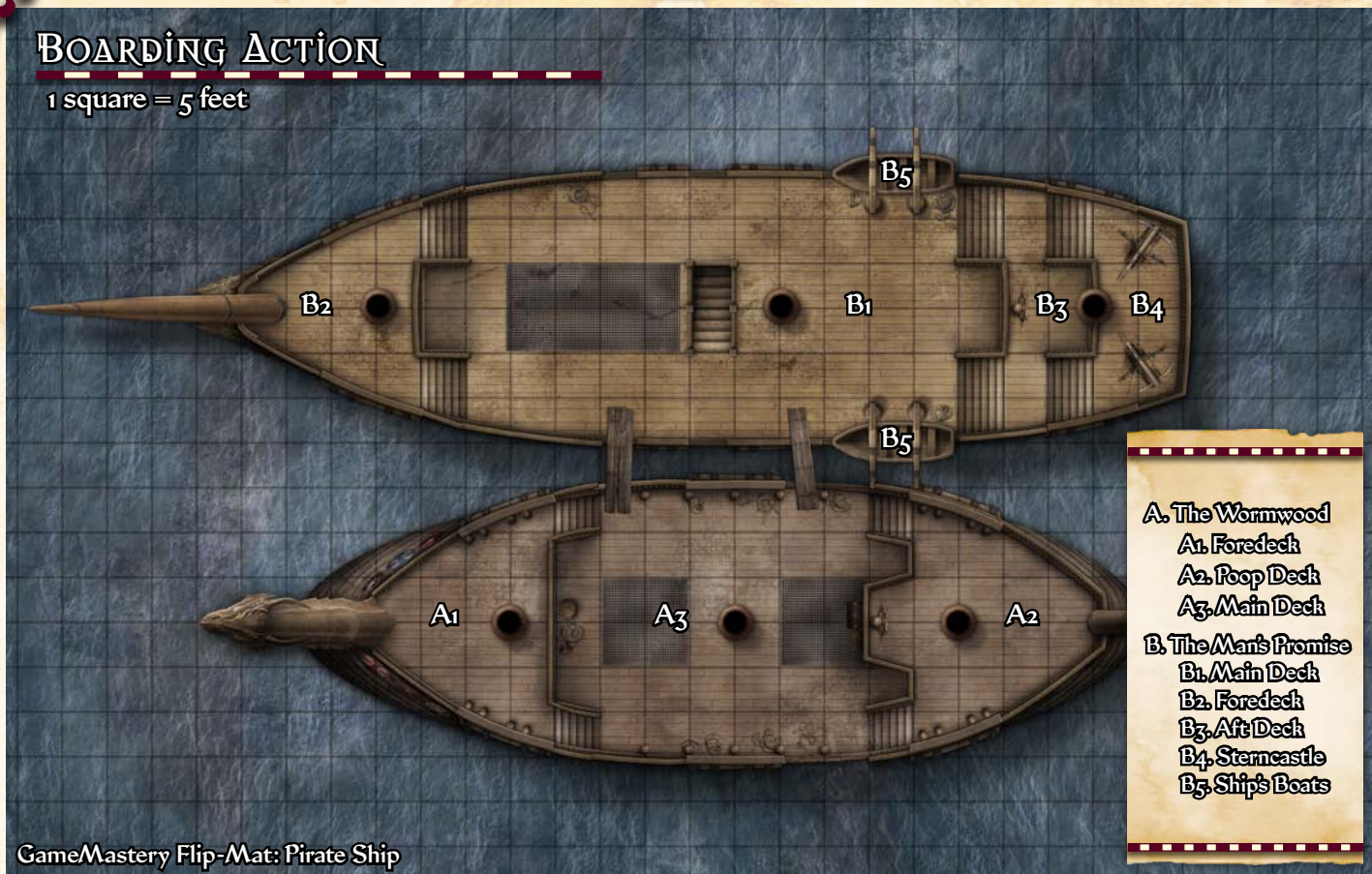
Although the PCs have only a relatively small part to play in this fight, try to give your players a cinematic experience of the battle. Describe the noises of fighting that drift out of the mist, which occasionally parts to give the PCs a glimpse of the larger battle. As pirates and Rahadoumi sailors fall or are thrown into the sea, let the PCs hear their screams as they’re ripped apart by sharks. Finally, describe the hush that falls over the two ships as the battle finally nears its end.





## BOARDING ACTION

1 square = 5 feet



- A. The Wormwood
  - A1. Foredeck
  - A2. Poop Deck
  - A3. Main Deck
- B. The Man's Promise
  - B1. Main Deck
  - B2. Foredeck
  - B3. Aft Deck
  - B4. Sterncastle
  - B5. Ship's Boats

GameMastery Flip-Mat: Pirate Ship

### THE SEA (CR VARIES)

During the battle, the sea around the ships is calm (DC 10 Swim check). Characters who fall overboard can make a DC 10 Climb check to climb back aboard a ship.

**Creatures:** Six sharks swim in the water around the two ships, drawn to the site of the battle by the slaughtered pigs thrown overboard by Kroop and his mate. Characters who fall overboard are not likely to be alone for long. Each round a character spends in the water, there is a 1 in 3 chance of being attacked by a single shark. After one successful attack (either from or against a shark), the blood in the water makes it a 1 in 3 chance that two sharks attack, and so on.

**SHARKS (6)** **CR 2**  
**XP 600 each**  
 hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 247)

**TACTICS**  
**Morale** If two sharks are killed, the others ignore other prey in the water to feast upon their own kind.

### ROUND 1: BOARDING ACTION (CR 4)

The PCs must cross from the *Wormwood's* poop deck (area A2) onto the aft deck of the *Man's Promise* (area B3). They

must first grapple the *Man's Promise*, as described on page 29, then climb or jump across to the other ship. The PCs are considered flat-footed for the first round they are on the *Man's Promise*, because of the difficulty of climbing over the ships' rails and finding footing on the enemy deck.

**Creatures:** Six Rahadoumi sailors guard the aft deck of the *Man's Promise* (two on the aft deck [area B3] and four on the sterncastle [area B4]). They attempt to repel the pirates at all costs. Sailors on the sterncastle are considered to be on higher ground and gain a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls against opponents on the aft deck.

**RAHADOUMI SAILORS (6)** **CR 1/2**  
**XP 200 each**  
 Human expert 1/warrior 1  
 N Medium humanoid (human)  
**Init +1; Senses Perception +3**  
**DEFENSE**  
 AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)  
 hp 11 each (2 HD; 1d8+1d10+2)  
**Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1**  
**OFFENSE**  
**Speed 30 ft.**



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

**Melee** short sword +2 (1d6+1/19–20)

**Ranged** heavy crossbow +2 (1d10/19–20)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The sailors fight in a well-organized way, firing their crossbows at any PCs attempting to board or cutting the grappling ropes as the PCs are attempting to cross. Once the PCs reach the deck, the sailors attempt to bull rush boarders over the side, then draw their short swords to defend their ship, working as a group to outflank opponents.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 6 hit points, a sailor withdraws to the sterncastle (area **B4**) but continues fighting with his crossbow. If reduced to 3 hit points or fewer, a sailor flees or surrenders.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

**Feats** Athletic, Rapid Reload

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Climb +7, Heal +4, Perception +3,

Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +7

**Languages** Common, Osiriani

**Gear** studded leather, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, short sword, 10+1d6 gp

### ROUND 3: THE CAPTAIN'S BACK

Whether or not the PCs have defeated the sailors on the aft deck, at this point the fog parts, allowing the PCs to see Captain Harrigan and two officers rushing madly for the doors to the captain's cabin below the aft deck, slashing and hacking as they move. Have the PCs make DC 10 Perception checks. If successful, the PCs notice a Rahadoumi sailor sneaking up behind Harrigan.

If a PC attacks and hits the sailor or alerts Harrigan, the captain turns just in time and slays the sailor. Harrigan glances up at the PC who acted and nods in recognition. If the PCs take no action, the sailor hits the captain from behind. Although Harrigan survives the attack (and immediately kills his attacker), he looks around and notices the PCs who could have warned him. The repercussions of this event are detailed at the end of the battle (see page 34).

### ROUND 5: EXPLOSION!

An explosion rocks the *Man's Promise*, as Kipper sets off a barrel of alchemist's fire somewhere belowdecks. Although badly burned, Kipper survives the explosion.

### ROUND 6: FLEEING SAILORS (CR 2)

**Creatures:** Three Rahadoumi sailors appear out of the fog, hoping to board the starboard side ship's boat (area **B5**) and escape the battle. The sailors must make three DC 10 Profession (sailor) checks or Dexterity checks (each a full-round action) to release the boat.

### RAHADOUMI SAILORS (3)

CR 1/2

**XP** 200 each

**hp** 11 each (see page 32)

### ROUNDS 7–10: THE BATTLE TURNS

Through the fog, the PCs can see the Rahadoumi crew scattering or surrendering. Below, Captain Harrigan momentarily appears, gripping what appears to be a human heart in his hands.

### ROUND 11: ABANDONING THE SHIP (CR 3)

**Creatures:** A senior Rahadoumi officer and two sailors appear on the main deck, intent upon fleeing in one of the ship's boats (area **B5**). The officer makes for the starboard boat (if it's still there; otherwise, she heads for the portside boat) and attempts to untie the boat. If the fleeing sailors in round 6 managed to partially untie the boat, the officer needs less time to launch it.

### RAHADOUMI OFFICER

CR 2

**XP** 600

Female human ranger 3

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** Perception +6

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

**hp** 24 (3d10+3)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** *boarding pike of repelling* +6 (1d8+4/x3) or

mwk short sword +4 (1d6+2/19–20) and mwk short sword +4 (1d6+1/19–20)

**Ranged** heavy crossbow +5 (1d10/19–20)

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (animals +2)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The officer orders the two sailors with her to attack the PCs while she tries to release the boat. She uses the extended reach of her *boarding pike of repelling* to keep attackers at bay.

**Morale** If reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, the officer decides to take her chances with the sharks and dives into the sea.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting

**Skills** Climb +6, Intimidate +7, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +6, Survival +6, Swim +6

**Languages** Common, Osiriani, Polyglot

**SQ** favored terrain (water +2), track +1, wild empathy +4

**Gear** chain shirt, *boarding pike of repelling* (+1 *boarding pike*; see page 58), heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork





short swords (2), colorful clothing set with small pearls (worth 75 gp)

**RAHADOUMI SAILORS (3)** CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 32)

### AFTERMATH

After 16 rounds, the battle ends with the pirates victorious. The fog dissipates, and a line of prisoners from the *Man's Promise* is paraded before Captain Harrigan and the cheering crew of the *Wormwood*.

Aboard the *Wormwood*, a party begins as the pirates celebrate their victory with fine food and drink from the *Man's Promise's* hold. Captain Harrigan holds a meeting with his top officers and divvies up the plunder from

the *Man's Promise* among the crew in the early evening. Bolstered by gold and good drink, the party lasts for 36 hours, well into the next night. Naturally, no work takes place during the party. During this time, the PCs can take up to 5 ship actions of their choice, or do nothing but drink and revel like most of the pirate crew does.

**Treasure:** Each PC receives 150 gp in coinage as his or her share of the booty, modified by the following factors.

- If the PCs took the aft deck and sterncastle within 6 rounds, they receive three *potions of cure moderate wounds* and a *potion of invisibility*, and each is awarded an additional 100 gp.
- If a PC warned Captain Harrigan as he was being attacked in Round 3, the PCs receive an *amulet of natural armor +1*. If the PCs also killed the attacking sailor, they receive a +1 *short sword* as well.
- If the PCs did not warn the captain when he was being attacked, each PC receives only a half share of plunder (75 gp).
- For each Rahadoumi sailor killed by the PCs, the PCs receive +25 gp to divide among themselves.
- If the PCs killed the Rahadoumi officer in Round 11, they receive an additional 100 gp to divide among themselves. This reward increases to 200 gp if the PCs managed to capture the officer alive.
- For each pirate accidentally killed, deduct 150 gp from the party's reward.

**Development:** If any PCs did not take part in the battle and are discovered, they are accused of cowardice and given a dozen lashes with the cat before the plunder is distributed. Such characters forfeit their share of the booty.

### SKELETON CREW

At dawn, a few hours after the celebration finally winds down, the ship's bell sounds, calling all hands on deck. When the crew is assembled, a long line of captured officers and sailors from the *Man's Promise* is brought on deck and paraded before the crew. Captain Harrigan addresses the captives first, offering a place on the *Wormwood's* crew for any who want to throw their lot in with pirates. Several of the Rahadoumi sailors step forward; Master Scourge cuts their bonds, and the sailors take their places among the *Wormwood's* crew. Harrigan then turns to address the *Wormwood's* crew.

"All right, you scurvy tars! You've done a right good job by me—we've got a second ship now, and she's quite a prize from the looks of her. But I still have only one crew. So here's the plan—the *Wormwood* will sail on to our planned destination with our new shipmates here, while Mr. Plugg will pick a skeleton crew to sail the *Man's Promise* to Port Peril, where she'll be worth a pretty penny as salvage.



Rahadoumi Officer



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

“As for these fine fellows here”—Harrigan gestures at the remainder of the captured ship’s crew—“some of them will no doubt be worth a hefty ransom from their families back in Azir. And for the rest, if the life of a pirate’s not for them, they can spend the rest of their lives at sea!”

To make his point, Harrigan grabs one of the Rahadoumi sailors and throws her overboard to the accompaniment of cheers and laughter from the *Wormwood*’s crew. As the unfortunate woman sinks beneath the waves, many of the remaining sailors scramble to swear their loyalty to Harrigan. The officers are led belowdecks and the crew begins to disperse to their daily tasks.

As they do, Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge pick out several of the *Wormwood*’s original crew, telling them to be aboard the *Man’s Promise* within 10 minutes to set sail for Port Peril. The PCs are chosen to join the skeleton crew as well, and Scourge smiles evilly at them as he picks them. The PCs have little time left on the *Wormwood*, but allow them to gather whatever gear or loot they may have acquired, and give them one last chance to purchase supplies from the quartermaster’s store. If any of the PCs have befriended Cut-Throat Grok, she cries as they leave. If she was made helpful, she gives them a gift worth 100 gp from the stores on parting.

The skeleton crew of the *Man’s Promise* includes Mr. Plugg, Master Scourge, Owlbear Hartshorn, and all of the surviving members of the *Wormwood*’s original crew of sailors, as well as the PCs, Ambrose Kroop (whom the captain is glad to be rid of), Conchobhar Shortstone, Rosie Cusswell, and Sandara Quinn. At this stage, ensure that there at least eight *Wormwood* pirates loyal to Plugg and Scourge (meaning unfriendly or hostile toward the PCs) aboard the *Man’s Promise*. If there are not enough loyal pirates, make up the numbers with Rahadoumi sailors who are naturally grateful to Mr. Plugg for sparing them and allowing them to join his crew. Once everyone is aboard with their gear, the *Man’s Promise* sets sail.

### THE MAN’S PROMISE

The *Man’s Promise* is a three-masted sailing ship, 105 feet long and 30 feet wide (see the *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide*). A minimum crew of 20 is required to sail her. Unless otherwise indicated, interior walls on the ship are of wood, 2 inches thick (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 20). Doors are of good wooden construction (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18). Interior rooms are unlit during the day (except for those with windows or portholes), and usually have a single hooded lantern for light at night.

The decks and compartments of the *Man’s Promise* are detailed below. The crew of the *Wormwood* has thoroughly ransacked the *Man’s Promise*, and besides those features listed below, the ship is empty beyond common items

### VOYAGE OF THE MAN’S PROMISE

The *Man’s Promise* commences her voyage in the Fever Sea, approximately 100 miles southwest of the Slithering Coast, and heads northwest toward the Shackles and Port Peril. Once out of sight of the *Wormwood*, however, Mr. Plugg changes course and heads northeast for an isolated estuary on the Slithering Coast. Just as the Slithering Coast appears on the horizon, a storm strikes, driving the *Man’s Promise* away from the coast and shipwrecking the PCs on Bonewrack Isle.

such as hammocks, lanterns, rope, and a few other mundane objects. At the start of the voyage, Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge assign the crew to berths and cabins on the ship; these assignments are included in the room descriptions below.

**B1. Main Deck:** Two 10-foot-square hatches sit in the deck forward of the mainmast and open onto the middle hold. Between the hatches and mast, a steep set of wooden steps descends into the middle deck (area **B8**) 15 feet below.

**B2. Foredeck:** The foredeck rises 10 feet above the main deck. The ship’s nameplate on the hull reads *Man’s Promise*, but a DC 10 Perception check notices a second nameplate beneath it. This second nameplate reads the *Motley*. Further investigation reveals marks in the wood of the hull that indicate that a previous nameplate existed before that one, but it has long since been removed.

**B3. Aft Deck:** The aft deck sits 10 feet above the main deck, and steps lead up to an even higher deck behind the mizzenmast. The ship’s wheel stands just before the rail overlooking the main deck.

**B4. Sterncastle:** This high deck sits behind the mizzenmast, 20 feet above the main deck. A pair of light ballistas sit upon this deck, next to a box containing a dozen ballista bolts.

**B5. Ship’s Boats:** Two ship’s boats, a cutter and a gig (see the *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide* for statistics), hang from davits on the gunwales just forward of the aft deck. The boats are lashed to the ship and require three DC 10 Profession (sailor) checks or Dexterity checks to launch. Each such check is a full-round action. Each ship’s boat has four oars and a single mast. The cutter can carry up to 12 Medium passengers, while the gig can carry up to 8 Medium passengers.

**B6. Officers’ Quarters:** This tidy cabin has two portholes to allow light and fresh air to enter. A hefty trap door sits in the floor, leading to the middle deck (area **B8**). Mr. Plugg assigns Master Scourge and those pirates





# THE MAN'S PROMISE

1 square = 5 feet



GameMastery Flip-Mat: Pirate Ship



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

loyal to him to this cabin. He also instructs the two NPCs who are most loyal to the PCs to sleep here, aiming to keep an eye on them.

**B6a. Officers' Storage:** These two storerooms are both unlocked and hold the lockers and personal effects of those pirates berthed in the officers' quarters (area B6).

**B7. Captain's Cabin:** The rear wall of this luxurious (by pirate ship standards) cabin holds four gilt-framed windows that rise the full height of the chamber. The cabin contains a luxurious hammock, a dining table and chairs, and a few chests and bookshelves. A trap door opens directly into the cook's cabin below (area B11). The two doors opening onto the main deck and the trap door are locked with good locks (Disable Device DC 30; Plugg has the keys). The windows do not open. Mr. Plugg has claimed this cabin as his own, and has also chained Owlbear Hartshorn to the mast with manacles and a 15-foot-long chain (hardness 10, hp 10, Break DC 26, Disable Device DC 20; Mr. Plugg has the keys), instructing him to kill anyone who enters. Owlbear carries out this instruction unless a PC has befriended him, in which case he follows his friend's lead. The hammock is a *hospitality's hammock* (see page 58).

**B7a. Captain's Storage:** These small storerooms do not have doors, but are separated by sliding walls that can also be removed and made into a folding table. The starboard compartment contains a small writing desk and a couple of chests. One of the chests is locked with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30) and trapped with an electricity arc trap (*Core Rulebook* 420); this chest holds Mr. Plugg's share of the booty from the *Man's Promise*, worth 2 points of plunder (see page 61).

**B8. Middle Deck and Armory:** The middle hold of the *Man's Promise* is currently empty, though the weapon racks along the walls only need to be restocked to turn this hold into a working armory. Steps behind the foremast descend into the main hold (area B12). A second set of stairs against the aft bulkhead lead up to the main deck (area B1).

**B9. Crew Berths:** Ten supporting pillars behind the mainmast fill this spacious compartment, with room for over a score of hammocks. Plugg assigns all of the PCs and their friends to these berths, except for the two NPCs he wants to keep an eye on (see area B6).

**B10. Galley:** This sizable galley contains a large stove against the aft bulkhead and a single porthole in the starboard wall. In one corner, a derrick stands next to a trap door that opens into the secure storage below (area B13). The door is locked with a huge, good padlock (Disable Device DC 30). It takes a full round to raise or lower the line on the derrick, which can lift up to 200 pounds of cargo. The galley has been stocked for the journey to Port Peril, but the food is scant at best.

**B11. Cook's Cabin:** This filthy cabin contains two dirty hammocks and a single porthole in the port wall. A rickety

ladder ascends to a trap door in the ceiling, leading to the captain's cabin (area B7). Ambrose Kroop sleeps here, and he has also stashed a small barrel of rum he managed to secure from Cut-Throat Grok before leaving the *Wormwood*.

**B12. Main Hold:** Essentially empty after being looted by the crew of the *Wormwood*, the main hold of the *Man's Promise* contains a large water barrel secured to the starboard wall. Stairs behind the foremast lead up to the middle deck (area B8), while a trap door near the mainmast leads to the bilges, which contains two bilge pumps, forward and aft. If anything, there are more bilge spiders there than in the *Wormwood*.

**B13. Secure Storage:** This large compartment aft of the main hold is locked with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30), but is presently empty.

### DAY 1: NEW SHIP, OLD RULES

As the *Man's Promise* sets sail, acting captain Mr. Plugg and his first mate Master Scourge gather the crew together to inform them that although this is a new ship, the rules are the same, though discipline on the *Man's Promise* will be a good deal harsher than on the lackadaisical *Wormwood*—all crimes are now punishable with the cat instead of the whip. All of the crew keep the same jobs they had before on the *Wormwood*, but they will have to work a good deal harder, as the crew is smaller. From now on, the DC to avoid fatigue for a daily task increases by +2, and PCs must now make DC 8 Constitution checks to avoid fatigue for those tasks where no fatigue chance previously existed. Master Scourge ensures that the PCs continue to have the worst jobs of the crew for the remainder of this journey (you should assign the PCs the worst duties or the duties they most hate every day rather than rolling randomly).

As night falls, the sails of the *Wormwood* disappear over the horizon. Mr. Plugg does not believe in crew entertainment or rum rations, and anyone caught above decks after dusk without leave gets six lashes with the cat. At your discretion, gambling might still go on belowdecks, but it is quite likely that Plugg and Scourge will hear about it and act accordingly. That night, Plugg, Scourge, and those pirates loyal to them hold a secret meeting in the captain's cabin (area B7), where they plot to sail the ship not to Port Peril, but to a dry dock on the Slithering Coast called Rickety's Squibs, where they can make the *Man's Promise* their own and engage in piracy for themselves. Plugg and Scourge want only the most loyal crew with them, however, and plan to do away with the PCs and their friends as soon as Rickety's Squibs is in sight.

### DAY 2: WHISPERS OF MUTINY

Friendly NPCs begin whispering their concerns to the PCs on the second day of the voyage. If the *Man's Promise* is sailing back to Port Peril, what is to become of the





## BRINGING TO A SLOW BOIL

The adventure continues with the PCs sailing away from the *Wormwood* and allegedly heading toward Port Peril. However, the ship is soon blown off course in a storm and grounded on an isolated island. Keeping up suspense in the closing stages of the adventure requires you to perform a tricky balancing act.

As written, the adventure assumes that the PCs and their friends stage a mutiny and overthrow Mr. Plugg and Maser Scourge at the conclusion of the adventure. If the PCs decide to mutiny beforehand, you can go along with their plans, play out the mutiny to its logical conclusion, and then have the *Man's Promise* run aground on Bonewrack Isle as written. Alternatively, if you wish to follow the adventure as written, it's a simple matter for some of the PCs' allies to have second thoughts about mutinying, especially while the *Wormwood* is still feasibly within striking range. These friendly NPCs should urge the PCs to take their time and plan such an attack so that it's most likely to succeed.

group of press-ganged crew? Rumors begin to spread among the friendly NPCs that Mr. Plugg might decide to claim the *Man's Promise* for himself and establish himself as a pirate captain in his own right. These rumors become more certain when a friendly NPC deduces (if the PCs haven't already) that the ship has changed course and is heading east toward Bloodcove, a notorious port on the edges of the Mwangi Expanse. If the PCs have not considered staging a mutiny themselves, friendly NPCs begin making that suggestion for them, but only when the time is right.

During the evening, Kroop suggests to the PCs that he knows where the *Man's Promise* might be heading—to a seedy, isolated dry dock on the Slithering Coast west of Bloodcove called Rickety's Squibs. For a price, old Rickety Hake completely refits ships into "squibs," providing new identities by changing ships' lines, silhouettes, and general appearance to be unrecognizable to their former owners or anyone else familiar with them.

## DAY 4: A STORM AND A SLITHERING HOST BY NIGHT (CR 4)

A storm hits the *Man's Promise* in the early hours of the fourth day. The wind blows with incredible force, driving the *Man's Promise* far off course. The ship is tossed about on the high seas, and all hands are called on deck to work, including the cook's mate. All of the crew is required in the rigging, and the PCs are assigned random tasks from

the rigger task list. The DC of all such tasks increases by +2. Toward dawn, as the sky begins to brighten almost imperceptibly, the storm redoubles its ferocity, and dark shapes loom out of the sea all around the ship—small islets and coral reefs that dot this area.

Unknown to the crew, the *Man's Promise* is approaching the shores of Bonewrack Isle (detailed in Part Three). The island's grindylow inhabitants see the beleaguered vessel and approach it in the raging seas, subtly slithering aboard to capture a few tasty sailors. At this point, the storm is considered a powerful storm with strong winds (*Core Rulebook* 438–439), and visibility is practically zero, making Perception checks all but impossible. The stormy water requires DC 20 Swim checks, but the grindylows can easily take 10 on their checks, and a small number manage to climb aboard and spirit away two of the ship's crew, likely without any of their shipmates seeing.

**Creatures:** The success of the kidnapping emboldens the grindylows, and six more of the creatures climb aboard in search of prey, only to run into the PCs. The grindylows immediately attack, attempting to trip opponents and knock them overboard into the churning waters, but once half of them are slain, the remainder flee, slithering over the side in a squall of green tentacles and vanishing into the stormy sea.

### GRINDYLOWS (6)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 148)

## DAY 5: SHIPWRECKED

As the storm begins to abate, the *Man's Promise* hits the coral reefs surrounding Bonewrack Isle and runs aground. As the sun rises and the tide goes out, the members of the crew slowly come to terms with their predicament. The *Man's Promise* is holed in the main hold (area B12) on the starboard side near the ship's water barrel. A DC 15 Craft (ships) or Profession (engineer) or (sailor) check is enough to surmise that although the ship is not in immediate danger of sinking, she'll eventually sink unless repairs are made, even if the bilge pumps are operated 24 hours a day. Mr. Plugg immediately instructs several of the crew to begin dismantling the ship's deck to repair the vessel.

Early in the morning, Mr. Plugg calls the roll of the crew, and two of the ship's sailors are discovered to be missing. One of the missing crew members is Sandara Quinn; the other should be chosen randomly from among those pirates most friendly to the PCs. If the PCs search the ship for clues, a DC 15 Perception check or DC 20 Survival check finds signs of where the grindylows clambered aboard, as well as Sandara's holy symbol of Besmara on the deck, dropped when she was captured by the grindylows.



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Mr. Plugg is dismissive of the two pirates' fate, declaring that they were washed overboard during the storm. If the PCs suggest that the grindylows were responsible or propose a rescue mission, Plugg immediately forbids it, claiming that it is better to lose a few expendable scum and get the ship to Port Peril than to risk crossing Captain Harrigan.

At the same time, the crew discovers that the ship's water barrel burst when the vessel ran aground and is now empty. Mr. Plugg orders the PCs to take the ship's cutter (see area **B5**) and a couple of empty barrels and find fresh water and supplies on the nearby island. Plugg refuses to consume any magically created food or water, fearing it might be poisoned. He tells the PCs that the repairs will take a day and a half, and that the ship will sail at the first high tide thereafter. That gives the PCs 48 hours to get to the island, find supplies (and rescue Sandara), and return, or the ship will leave without them. In fact, Plugg has had enough of the PCs and intends wait for their return to kill them before sailing. See page 50 for the events that take place when the PCs return to the ship.

### PART THREE: BONEWRACK ISLE

The *Man's Promise* has been holed on the edges of a coral reef surrounding a small tropical island, called Bonewrack Isle. A huge ridge towers over the island's western portion. A single raised tor glowers across the isle at the imposing ridge, with miles of jungle lying between the two.

A tribe of grindylows have lived in caverns beneath the isle for decades, but the island is well off the normal shipping lanes, and receives few visitors. Three years ago, however, the Chelish scout ship *Infernus* ran aground here. While most of her crew was lost to the weather, a small group of survivors managed to make it to shore. Most of the survivors soon fell victim to ghoul fever (see area **C5**), but one castaway, a man named Arron Ivy, survived longer than the others and even managed to ransack the wreck of the *Infernus*. The futile efforts of his last days still remain on the island at area **C8**.

With the arrival of the *Man's Promise*, the grindylows were able to sneak aboard and make off with two prisoners—Sandara Quinn and another shipmate. These unfortunate sailors now await rescue by the PCs in the grindylows' lair, Riptide Cove (area **D**).

### BONEWRACK ISLE FEATURES

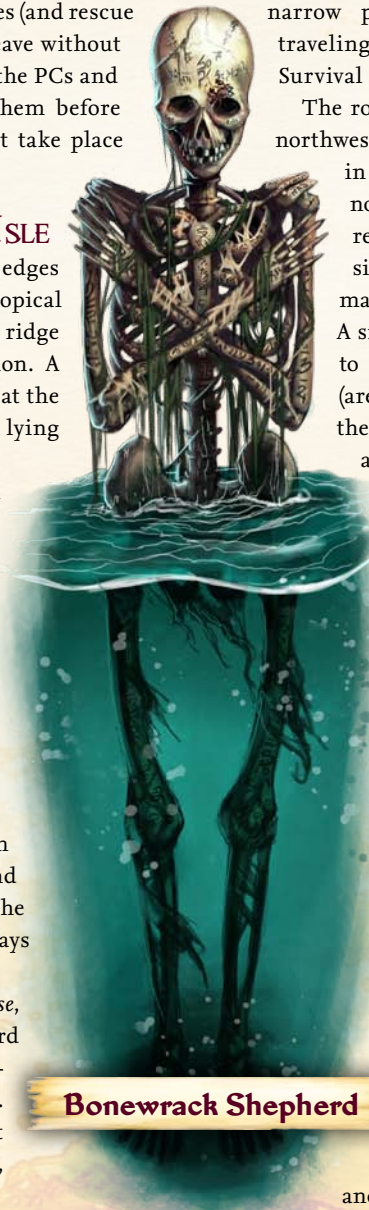
The waters around Bonewrack Isle are crystal clear (visibility 320 feet), but the island is surrounded by coral reefs, which lie between 5 and 25 feet beneath the surface and grant a +5 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks made within the reef. Despite the beauty, however, the tides around the island are vicious, particularly along the western shore. Even on calm days, the DC of Swim checks is the same as in rough water (DC 15), and creatures that fail a Swim check by 5 or more are dragged farther out to sea at a rate of 30 feet per round by the strong currents.

With the exception of the swamp to the east (see The Swamp on page 40), the majority of the isle is covered in thick jungle—considered dense forest with heavy undergrowth. Unless they are using one of the few narrow paths traversing the jungle, characters traveling through the jungle must make DC 16 Survival checks to avoid becoming lost.

The rocky cliff that towers over the island to the northwest is some 500 feet high and covered by trees in many places, particularly the more shaded northwest slopes. A DC 20 Climb check is required to scale the cliffs, but in places of significant vegetation (as indicated on the map on page 42) the Climb DC is reduced to 15. A single path ascends the cliff as well, leading to the castaway's stockade atop the summit (area **C8**). Simple steps have been carved into the cliff and the vegetation has been cleared along the path, requiring only a DC 5 Climb check to reach the top.

All along the perimeter of the island, the grindylow inhabitants have left "shepherds"—small, twisted "statues" made of the sinew-twined, scrimshaw-covered skeletons of their prey. These statues lurk in the shallows of the sea and on the edges of lagoons, and hang from palm trees on the fringes of the jungle. No two are alike; each is the product of a twisted imagination. The bones show signs of trauma and gnawing, a fact obvious to anyone who makes a DC 10 Heal check while examining one of the creepy statues.

If the PCs approach the island in the *Man's Promise's* cutter, they discover there are no safe landings along the island's west and northwest coasts. They must sail around to the island's eastern side to find a safe landing. The two most likely sites to make a safe landing are the abandoned fishing village (area **C3**) and Crab Palm Beach (area **C6**).



**Bonewrack Shepherd**





## GHOUL FEVER-INFESTED BOTFLIES AND MOSQUITOES

The Chelish scouting vessel *Infernus* (area C9) was carrying some unpleasant passengers when it ran aground on Bonewrack Isle—a small pack of ghouls used as shock troops by the captain. These ghouls escaped the wreck and subsequently infected the local botflies and mosquitoes with ghoulish fever. These vermin are not normally dangerous—they rarely swarm and generally only come out at night, but the disease they carry makes staying on the island dangerous.

Creatures spending the night anywhere on the island that does not have a substantial body of flowing water beneath (such as the hulk of a ship or on a raft) must make a DC 10 Fortitude save or be bitten by a botfly or mosquito carrying ghoulish fever. Creatures that are bitten must make a DC 13 Fortitude save to avoid contracting ghoulish fever (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146). Normal means to prevent insect attacks, such as vermin repellent (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Adventurer's Armory* 11) or spells such as *repel vermin*, keep the flies at bay.

## THE SWAMP (CR VARIES)

A swampy salt marsh covers the eastern end of the island, functioning as a deep bog (*Core Rulebook* 427). A path crosses the swamp from area C3 to area C5, and then into the jungle, and is used by the ship's whores in area C5 to hunt on most nights.

**Creatures:** Each day the PCs spend in the swamp there is a 50% chance of encountering a mosquito swarm carrying ghoulish fever. In addition, at night there is a 50% chance of encountering 1d3 of the ship's whores from area C5 out on a hunt. The ghouls travel as far as area C7 but no farther, as they fear the ankheg that inhabits the fields.

### MOSQUITO SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

hp 31 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 193)

**Special Attacks** disease (ghoulish fever, DC 13)

### SHIP'S WHORES (1–3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male or female ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13 each

## C1. THE MAN'S PROMISE

The holed merchantman-turned-pirate vessel rests on the edge of the coral here, lodged on the reef, which lies but 5 feet beneath the water's surface at low tide.

## C2. THE FIST

A glowering fist of rough granite rises from the jungle on the eastern end of the island. The Fist is approximately 50 feet high and is fairly easy to climb (DC 10 Climb check). The summit of the Fist commands not only a fine view of the sea and the *Man's Promise* (area C1), but also of the fields that form a break in the jungle (area C7), as well as the castaway's stockade on the ridge to the west (area C8), which can be seen with a DC 15 Perception check.

An old beacon fire also sits atop the summit. The beacon is some 10 feet across and consists of trees, branches, and old ship's timbers, but is unlit. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check discover a store of six torches and a pair of tindertwigs in undergrowth nearby.

## C3. ABANDONED FISHING VILLAGE

A small gathering of collapsed mud huts sits on the island's northern beach. The village has not been inhabited for decades, ever since the grindylows first came to the isle. A path leads away from shore into the nearby swamp toward the mire (area C4).

## C4. THE MIRE (CR 4)

The pathway slips suddenly into a large green bog. Remnants of an old wooden bridge cross the bog, but only short timber platforms on either side remain, leaving just the pilings jutting from the mud.

A salt river oozes through the swamp here, forming a solid barrier of quicksand and marsh some 70 feet across (see the map on page 42). This is the only place to cross this stretch of the swamp, unless the PCs want to climb the cliffs at the swamp's western edge (Climb check DC 20). The mire is composed of quicksand (*Core Rulebook* 427), making it dangerous to cross, but PCs who succeed at a DC 10 Perception check notice the tree canopy overhanging the mire. The PCs can climb through the branches some 20 feet above the mire with a DC 20 Climb check, or they can climb up a tree (Climb check DC 15), lash a rope, and swing across with a DC 10 Acrobatics check. The PCs can also jump across the pilings sticking out of the mud with DC 10 Acrobatics checks as well.

**Creatures:** A pair of giant frogs make their home in the mire. The frogs stay submerged in the mire until characters attempt to cross it, then attack with their tongues, hoping to pull opponents into the mire. The frogs are hungry and fight until killed.

### GIANT FROGS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 15 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 135)



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

### C5. WHORES' BOUDOIR (CR 4)

A terrible stench fills the swamp here, a fetid odor of cheap perfume and rotting flesh. A huge tree stands in the middle of a clearing in the swamp, draped with some sort of huge tent. Lurid, painted faces cover both the tree trunk and tent, and both are decorated with rotting humanoid body parts and carpets of squirming insects.

When the ghouls aboard the *Infernus* escaped the wreck, the local botflies and mosquitoes quickly spread their affliction among the surviving crew. The three ship's whores fell victim to ghoul fever first, transforming into ghouls and turning on the rest of the crew. The ghouls devoured the survivors one by one, but were unable to reach Arron Ivy, fearing the cliff paths leading to his stockade (area C8). The three whores now lair in their boudoir, the remnants of a considerable tent lashed around a great tree (see the map on page 42). Inside the tent are more rotting human remains, a huge pile of filthy clothes, and a vast bed of moldering cushions at the base of the tree. Clouds of flies dance above the decay.

**Creatures:** Three ghouls, the rotting remains of the experienced harlots from the *Infernus*, occupy the tent during the day, dressed in decaying silks and vermin-infested dresses. At night, the three whores go on the hunt, following paths across the isle looking for prey.

#### SHIP'S WHORES (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male or female ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13 each

**Treasure:** Among the piles of revealing clothing inside the tent are a *potion of cure moderate wounds* in a leather hip flask depicting a crocodile (worth 25 gp), three very sharp, oft-used daggers (one of which is masterwork), a chest containing six flasks of alchemist's fire, two barrels of very cheap perfume worth 25 gp each, a wedding dress inlaid with pearls and set with three tiny rubies (worth 400 gp), a whalebone corset set with mother-of-pearl inlays worth 20 gp, a dozen silver hatpins set with tiny obsidians worth 5 gp each, scattered gems worth a total of 250 gp, 56 gp, and 97 sp.

### C6. CRAB PALM BEACH (CR 2)

Towering palm trees stretch along a white sand beach for a mile or so, each around 50 feet high and crowned with a wide canopy of palms brimming with coconuts. Shattered coconuts litter the beach beneath three of the trees, noticeable with a DC 10 Perception check.

**Creatures:** Among the many normal coconut crabs inhabiting this beach are three crabs that have reached great size. These crabs can generally be found in the

upper reaches of the palm trees surrounded by the smashed coconut shells. Although the crabs inhabit separate areas of the beach, they use the same tactics. If they spy a likely looking fleshy meal passing beneath their trees or are disturbed in any way, the crabs quickly descend the palms and attack.

#### GIANT CRABS (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 50)

### C7. THE FIELDS (CR 3)

A clearing in the jungle contains overgrown fields of some sort of corn. The crops have gone wild, creating a high barrier wafting gently in the breeze.



Ship's Whore





# BONEWRACK ISLE

1 square = 1/5 mile



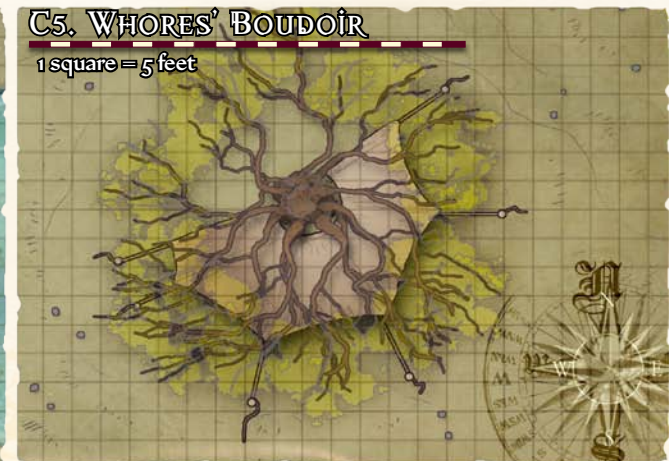
## C4. THE MIRE

1 square = 5 feet



## C5. WHORES' BOUDOIR

1 square = 5 feet



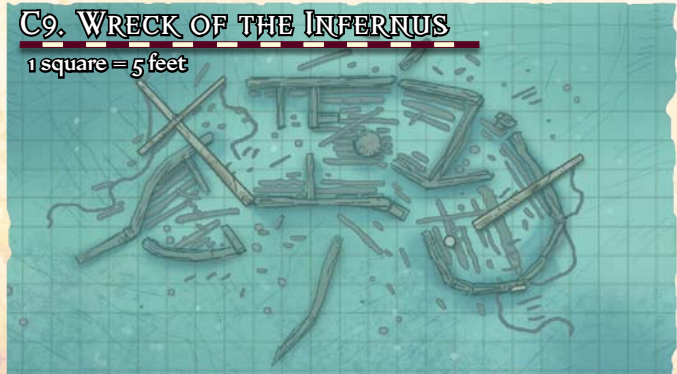
## C8. CASTAWAY'S STOCKADE

1 square = 5 feet



## C9. WRECK OF THE INFERNUS

1 square = 5 feet





## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

These fields were planted by the castaway Arron Ivy in his first few days here, but attacks from the ghouls from area C5 drove him back. Having no interest in crops, the ghouls left the fields alone and now a sizable area covering just over a square mile lies neglected here. There is only one track through the cornfield, but it requires a DC 15 Survival check to follow. The cornfield has grown to over 8 feet in height and provides concealment for those within it, reducing visibility to 5 feet. Characters making a DC 25 Perception check notice the occasional exposed jawbone or other skeletal remains of a humanoid taken by the creature living below the fields.

In several places, Ivy erected scarecrows topped with the heads of dead sailors as a warning to the ghouls, but these rotting fetishes had no effect upon the undead. Some eight heads litter the fields next to the main path, each impaled on a crude staff 6 to 9 feet high. These rotting heads are now infested with botflies carrying ghoulish fever, which swarm around the heads in ugly black clouds. Creatures that strike, remove, or otherwise tamper with the heads release a swarm of botflies that immediately attacks.

**Creatures:** In addition to the botfly swarms infesting the heads, an ankheg lurks beneath the soil. The ankheg uses its tremorsense to locate passing creatures, burrows beneath the prey, and attacks from below, trying to use its grab attack to pull victims into the ground. The ankheg does not have a network of tunnels beneath the fields, as game is scarce here, but because visibility is so low, the ankheg might be able to attack, take its prey, and disappear without anyone else noticing.

### BOTFLY SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

Variant mosquito swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 193)

hp 31

**Special Attacks** disease (ghoul fever, DC 13)

### ANKHEG

CR 3

XP 800

hp 28 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 15)

**Treasure:** The bodies of several who visited the island over the years lie throughout the fields, but an extensive search is required to locate all of the booty without magic, as the treasure lies with separate bodies throughout the area. A DC 25 Perception check is required to locate

each body with valuables. One body has a *potion of water breathing* attached by a metal hook to a rotting leather belt with a gold buckle worth 25 gp. A second body has a rusted iron dagger in a scabbard inlaid with pearls worth 75 gp. A third body still grasps a purse containing 45 gp and 3 small obsidians worth 10 gp each in a skeletal hand.

### C8A. CASTAWAY'S STOCKADE (CR 4)

A well-built timber stockade surrounds a small lodge in a jungle clearing. Vines wrap and strangle a great tree that rises next to the lodge, blocking light from above. Beside it is a bubbling spring.

The castaway Arron Ivy, the last survivor of the crew of the *Infernus*, built this stockade (see the map on page 42). The stockade gate is ajar and the walls are made of sharpened wooden stakes 7 feet high. A DC 10 Climb check is required to clamber up the tree. The small spring next to the tree is the only available source of fresh water on Bonewrack Isle (and the reason Arron Ivy built his stockade here). The PCs can get as much water here as they need to replenish the water barrels on the *Man's Promise*.

In addition, a DC 10 Perception check notices a weathered spyglass fixed onto the stockade wall. The spyglass is pointed at Riptide Cove (area D1) and a DC 15 Perception check is enough to recognize that the spyglass has been deliberately fixed in that position. If the PCs look through the spyglass, they can catch a glimpse of pair of grindylows cavorting in the water of the cove. A DC 20 Perception check notices that one of them is wearing Sandara Quinn's tricorne hat—a clue as to the missing pirates' whereabouts.

**Creatures:** Two vine chokers hide in the branches of the tree 10 feet above the ground. These chokers have camouflaged skin that helps them hide in the trees and have adapted to life in the jungle, but they are otherwise identical to their subterranean cousins. The chokers attack anyone passing under the tree, attempting to draw victims up and strangle them.

### VINE CHOKERS (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Variant choker (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 45)

hp 16 each

**Treasure:** The spyglass affixed to the stockade wall is weathered but still functional, and is worth 750 gp. The



Botfly-Infested Head





chokers' lair sits 70 feet above the ground in the uppermost boughs of the tree. It contains a *potion of water breathing*, a trio of silver shoe buckles worth 5 gp each, a ghoulish finger with a gold wedding ring on it worth 50 gp, and a silver hatpin worth 5 gp.

### C8B. STOCKADE LODGE (CR 4)

The wooden door to the lodge is of good construction (hardness 5, hp 15) but is currently ajar. Inside is a single chamber, crowded with a large amount of furniture looted from the wreck of the *Infernus*, including a comfortable bed (formerly the captain's), a small writing desk, cooking gear, and several barrels of rotting food. The stench of rot is overpowering and flies swarm within the room, particularly around the hooded corpse hanging from a chain off a beam in the middle of the room. A stool lies on the floor nearby where it was kicked.

**Creatures:** Arron Ivy, the last survivor of the wreck of the *Infernus*, is the hanged man. Alone on the island, beset by the ship's ghoulish whores, and already suffering from ghoulish fever himself, Ivy decided to take his own life

using a Chelish hangman's collar, a wide leather collar attached to a chain, designed for more efficient hangings. Unfortunately, the device didn't function properly in Ivy's amateur hands, and the castaway was left hanging for days as he eventually succumbed to ghoulish fever.

Now transformed into a ghast, Ivy has been unable to free himself from the collar and its rusty iron chain (hardness 8, hp 8, Break DC 24). He dreams of escape, but upon hearing the PCs in the stockade, he remains still until someone comes within striking distance, at which point he attempts to grapple the person. If he manages to grab an opponent, Ivy uses his victim to lift himself and try to escape the collar, which he manages with a DC 15 Escape Artist check (Ivy gets a +4 bonus on the roll). Without such a lever, escape is impossible for the undead. Once freed, Ivy attacks with bite and claws. If unable to free himself, he lashes out at anyone within his reach with his claws. Ivy fights until destroyed.

Ivy's stench fills the entire room, and the reek of his decay has drawn a swarm of ghoulish fever-infested botflies to his body, which attack any living creature entering the lodge.

**ARRON IVY** CR 2

XP 600

Male ghast (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146, 294)

hp 17

**BOTFLY SWARM** CR 3

XP 800

Variant mosquito swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 193)

hp 31

**Special Attacks** disease (ghoulish fever, DC 13)

**Treasure:** Among the furnishings in the lodge are a suit of leather armor, six spears, and eight finely tailored courtier's outfits, worth 30 gp each. A DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check identifies the clothes as Chelish in style, while a DC 15 Perception check finds a silver *ring of swimming* in the pocket of one outfit. In addition, the lodge contains a spice cabinet holding 5 pounds of pepper in waxed bags (worth 10 gp total), a silver tankard worth 30 gp, and a silver locket depicting a beautiful, buxom young blonde woman (one of the ship's whores from the *Infernus*) worth 45 gp.

### C9. WRECK OF THE INFERNUS (CR 4)

The rotting hulk of a shipwreck leans in a bed of coral just off the shore.

The wreck of the Chelish scout ship *Infernus* lies on a reef in shallow water here, some 20 feet below the surface at low tide (see the map on page 42). Although the *Infernus*



Vine Choker



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

is badly damaged, its gargoyle figurehead still glowers from the seabed and its nameplate can be found with a DC 10 Perception check. A close inspection of the hulk and a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or (history) or Profession (sailor) check identifies the ship as *Chelish*. A large rusty cage, big enough for three Medium creatures, can be easily seen among the sunken remains of the *Infernus*. The cage is still locked, but its iron bars have been pried apart by force. The cage once held the ship's caged ghoul pack.

**Creature:** A young giant moray eel now lairs in the barnacled, seaweed-infested hull. The eel hides in the seaweed until likely prey swims by, at which point it attacks. If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, the eel swims away, returning to its lair the next day.

**YOUNG GIANT MORAY EEL** CR 4  
XP 1,200  
hp 38 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 119, 295)

**Treasure:** In addition to several rusted, useless weapons, the following items are buried in the silt among the wreck (a separate DC 15 Perception check is required to find each): three bottles of fine *Chelish* perfume worth 15 gp each, a pair of chopsticks made from manticore spikes worth 15 gp, and three wax-sealed clay ewers containing the ashes of the *Infernus*'s last three captains, their carved names now worn away by the waves.

### D. RIPTIDE COVE

The grindylows of Bonewrack Isle inhabit a series of flooded caverns on the island's southwest shore. Led by a twisted druid called the Brinebrood Queen and her beloved son, a freakish and bloated giant grindyflow called the Whale, the grindylows have kidnapped a pair of pirates from the *Man's Promise*. The creatures have been busily interrogating their prisoners and soon learned everything there is to know about the grounded ship. The grindylows are always hungry, so they eagerly await any rescuers, such as the PCs. The grindylows know of the human weakness called friendship, and though it is alien to them, it is a tool to feed their sadism and hunger.

If the PCs do not discover Riptide Cove while exploring the island, the Brinebrood Queen sends a pair of grindylows, clearly carrying some of the captured pirates' possessions, to lure more sailors into Riptide Cove. These grindylows spot the PCs on the island, and attempt to signal them from the safety of the water (at least 300 feet from shore), beckoning them slowly back toward Riptide Cove.

If the PCs do not follow them but instead return to the *Man's Promise* to sail away, the Brinebrood Queen orders a full attack, leading all of her followers (except the Whale, who is too big to fit through the narrow tunnels) into battle against the ship and its crew.

### RIPTIDE COVE FEATURES

Riptide Cove is a series of low natural tunnels and caverns around a deep central chamber known as the Cauldron (area D8). Save for tiny air pockets above some of the larger caverns, the complex is completely submerged at high tide, so be sure to familiarize yourself with the underwater combat rules on page 432 of the *Core Rulebook*. At low tide, the tunnels are mostly free of water, but many of the caverns remain half-flooded.

The tunnels are littered with partially eaten bones sucked clean of flesh. The grindylows decorate these bones with strange scrimshaw, and tie them together with sinew to create revolting "sculptures" resembling lurking horrors and twisted sea creatures from the depths, the product of sadistic and almost alien minds. Other features of the caverns are detailed below.

**Lake of Hooks:** In various locations throughout their lair, the grindylows have rigged up floating hooks in the seaweed. These cruelly barbed hooks are attached to pieces of cork by thin, strong sinews and float between 1 and 3 feet from the floor. While they deal no damage, the hooks grab the clothing and armor of those passing through them. When entering such an area on foot or by swimming through the seaweed, the PCs must make a DC 10 Reflex save or be snagged by the hooks and become entangled. A snagged creature can escape with a DC 10 Escape Artist check or by breaking the hooks with a DC 10 Strength check. The only way to avoid the hooks is to swim above them or clear them from an area (hardness 2, hp 12, Break DC 18 per 5-foot square).

**Riptide:** The caverns are deep, but still subject to the tides. The caverns are almost completely flooded at high tide, which occurs twice per day at roughly 12-hour intervals. The side-view map of the caverns shows the water level at low tide. The waters are very murky because of the endless tides, with a visibility of 10 feet. Unless otherwise indicated, Swim check DCs are 10 while within the complex.

**Seaweed:** Seaweed grows thick on all cavern floors between 5 and 8 feet deep. The DC of all Acrobatics checks made to walk on such surfaces are increased by +5.

### D1. RIPTIDE COVE (CR 3)

High cliffs surround a deep cove churning with dark seawater.

The cliffs around the cove vary in height from 40 to 80 feet. A DC 15 Climb check is required to scale them. The cove is deep, nearly 50 feet in places, and the tidal waters churn considerably, requiring a DC 15 Swim check to navigate. A DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or Profession (sailor) check is enough to notice that the cove's dark waters indicate the absence of rocks below the surface.

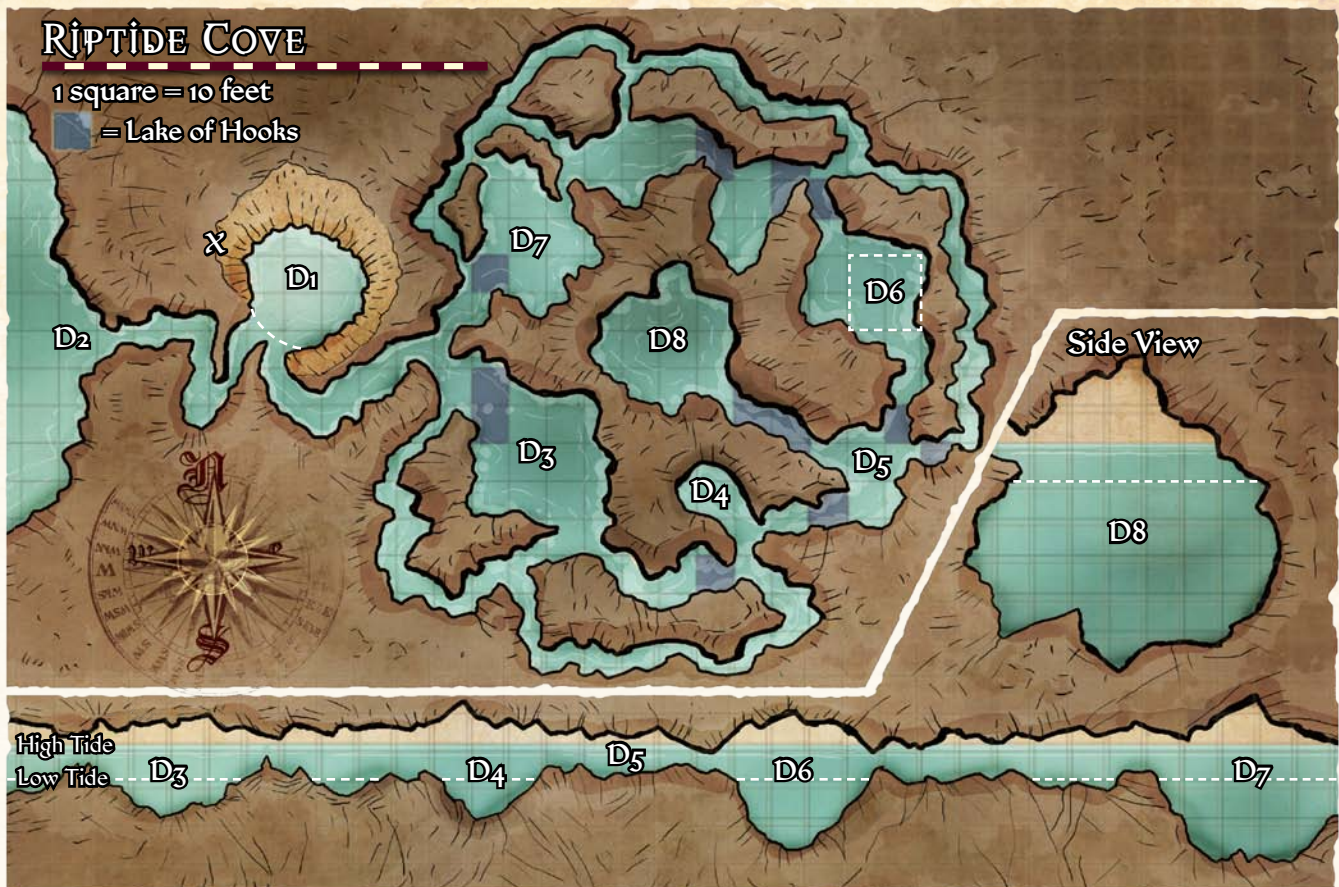




## RIPTIDE COVE

1 square = 10 feet

= Lake of Hooks



The PCs can dive directly into the water from above with a DC 15 Acrobatics or Swim check (DC 20 if the leap is from higher than 50 feet). A PC who succeeds at the check takes no damage, while a failed check results in 2d3 points of nonlethal damage plus 1d6 points of lethal damage per 10-foot increment dived beyond 40 feet.

**Creatures:** Eight stirges nest on the cliffs 20 feet above the sea, at the point marked X on the map. The nests are built on a narrow ledge beneath a steep rocky overhang, making them difficult to see from above. The stirges attack anything above the surface of the water that passes below them. Only four stirges attack at any one time, swooping down to latch onto opponents. The stirges are cowardly, and if struck, they flee back to their nests, calling pitifully.

**STIRGES (8)** CR 1/2  
**XP 200 each**  
 hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 260)

### D2. THE NECK (CR 3)

A narrow tunnel runs between the sea and the open cove (Area D1). The tunnel is just over 100 feet long and is flooded at all times. The ocean churns in this narrow space, which

requires DC 15 Swim checks to traverse. A character who fails her Swim check must make a DC 10 Reflex save or take 1d3 points of damage from the deliberately sharpened walls of bladed stone lining the tunnel.

**Creatures:** Four grindylows are on watch near the ocean entrance. Their job is to watch the seas for intruders, not the island itself. If the grindylows spot intruders, they flee to the Cauldron (area D8), alerting the other grindylows on the way.

**GRINDYLOWS (4)** CR 1/2  
**XP 200 each**  
 hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2148)

### D3. THE FRONDS (CR 5)

The tunnel leading into this natural tidal cavern is decorated with the jawbones of numerous frightful-looking fish, resembling the throat of some hideous aquatic creature.

The seaweed on the floor of this cavern is 8 feet deep.

**Creatures:** Eight grindylows watch the entrance to the caves here. They attack any intruders, using the seaweed for cover and attempting to swarm opponents. The



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

grindybows attack as few targets as possible; they flank with each other, and use their jet ability to quickly escape as a group in various directions, regrouping for another attack as soon as they can. The grindybows fight to the death.

### GRINDYBOWS (8) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 148)

**Development:** Some of Sandara Quinn's equipment has been given to the grindybows in this cavern, most notably her *Besmara's tricorne* (see page 58), as well as any of her other possessions that you deem appropriate.

### D4. THE MESH (CR 3)

The walls of this small cavern display strangely ribbed markings.

Unlike many of the decorations in these caverns, the markings here are simply the result of wave action. Hidden beneath the carpet of seaweed and visible with a DC 20 Perception check are a series of metal bars spaced approximately 18 inches apart. These bars form the cavern "floor" and are wedged in place, requiring a DC 25 Strength check to remove.

**Creatures:** Two sailors from the *Infernus* are trapped below the bars. Fleeing their fellow shipmates who had succumbed to ghoulish fever, the sailors drowned while attempting to escape the island. Unfortunately, they had already contracted the affliction and were transformed into aquatic ghouls called lacedons. The ghouls lash out at anything that swims or walks across or near the bars, though the grindybows are aware of the lacedons and avoid them.

### LACEDONS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

Aquatic ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13 each

**Treasure:** One of the lacedons still wears the sodden remains of a battered greatcoat with five large silver buttons worth 2 gp each. One of the buttons has a secret compartment (DC 25 Perception check to find) containing an *anchor feather token*. In addition, 120 gp in assorted coinage lies among the decaying crab shells, dead fish, and seaweed at the bottom of the chamber.

### D5. THE CATARACT (CR 4)

The tunnel opens into a wider cavern decorated with hundreds of leering skeletal parts, wriggling with worms. Four dark circular openings exit the chamber.

**Creature:** A devilfish lairs in this cavern, acting as a guard to the Brinebrood Queen in area D8. The grindybows regard the devilfish as incredibly beautiful, and revere the creature as a wise and powerful ally. The worms are small, harmless eels that preen the devilfish, devouring any algae that grows on it.

### DEVILFISH CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 88)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** As soon as intruders enter the cavern, the devilfish uses its unholy blood ability to provide it with concealment. It attacks any stragglers with its tentacles and savage bite.

**Morale** If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, the devilfish retreats to area D8 to join the Brinebrood Queen.

**Treasure:** Among the distended skeletal jaws decorating the walls is a dull metal bracelet snagged upon a jawbone. The bracelet is a single *lesser bracer of archery*. If its twin can be found in area D8, the pair functions normally.

### D6. THE DROWNING CAVE (CR 4)

Seaweed fronds sway gently in the current in this broad cave.

**Trap:** A heavy spiked iron grille, cleverly disguised with barnacles and aquatic plants, hangs from the ceiling of the chamber, poised to fall on intruders and trap them beneath the water.

### DROWNING SPIKES TRAP CR 4

XP 1,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** Falling iron grille (6d6 damage, DC 15 Reflex save avoids); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. square). Anyone hit by the trap is trapped beneath the grille. Trapped creatures must make a successful DC 15 Escape Artist check or DC 20 Strength check, or destroy the portcullis (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 28) to escape. Up to six Medium creatures can attempt to lift the portcullis at one time.

### D7. THE GULLET (CR 5)

This cavern has been carved to resemble the interior of some great sea creature, its ribs towering over and around the chamber.

The waters of this cavern are deep and form a small eddy of conflicting tides, resulting in a light riptide. The seaweed on the floor of the chamber is 5 feet deep.





**Creatures:** Eight more grindylows lurk in this chamber. They attack using the same tactics as the grindylows in area D3.

**GRINDYLOWS (8) CR 1/2**

**XP 200 each**

**hp 5 each** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 148)

**Treasure:** Among the countless smaller skeletal fetishes here are a scrimshawed hammerhead shark skull with a piece of driftwood thrust through it. The skull is worth 250 gp, while the driftwood is a *wand of mirror image* (23 charges). There is also an ivory walrus tusk set with gold with a scrimshawed map of the Shackles worth 400 gp, and a curious harp made from the jaw of an orca set with pearls worth 500 gp.

## D8. THE CAULDRON (CR 6)

Hundreds of remains float in this large bowl of water, which churns with bones, scraps of flesh, and the carcasses of strange, almost alien fish. Just visible through the roiling stew are humanoid bodies floating in the water, wan corpses drifting near the bottom of this cauldron like sleeping guardians.

The water churns and seethes in this cavern, giving occasional glimpses of its contents but mostly concealing anything beneath its surface. Visibility is generally 5 feet or less in the water.

Characters tripped within the Cauldron must make a DC 10 Swim check or begin sinking to the bottom of the chamber at a rate of 15 feet per round.

Two figures hang from the ceiling above the churning water, bound hand and foot with thick strands of seaweed and sinew and weighted with heavy ingots of silver—the kidnapped sailors from the *Man's Promise*, including Sandara Quinn. Both characters are wounded—Sandara is currently at 10 hit points, while the other NPC has but 1 hit point remaining, having been partially eaten alive by the grindylows.

**Creatures:** The Brinebrood Queen, matriarch of the grindylows of Bonewrack Isle, lives in this cavern with her beloved son the Whale. The Brinebrood Queen claims divine descent from Lamashtu, a patent lie, but her devoted followers believe anything that the unhinged aberration says and worship her as the divine get of gods. When the Brinebrood Queen was blessed with the birth of a son, her focus changed to feeding her progeny, for the Whale never stops growing, and the Brinebrood Queen endlessly seeks sustenance to keep her precious child fed.

The Whale is an obscene, bloated monstrosity with a gaping, toothy maw, now grown more than twice as large as its mother and her followers—so large, in fact,

that it can no longer fit through the tunnels exiting the Cauldron. The Queen regards the Whale's freakish growth as a divine blessing, as well as a warning to keep her precious cherub close.

In addition, two lacedons are chained to the bottom of the cavern with masterwork manacles. The aquatic ghouls attack anything that sinks to the bottom of the Cauldron, but are unable to reach farther than 10 feet up. The pair were formerly sailors on the *Infernus*, and one of the lacedons bears a tattoo of a five-pointed star being eaten by a whale on its naked body. Anyone making a cursory examination of the lacedons notices the tattoo, while a DC 15 Knowledge (history) or (local) check can identify the tattoo as the symbol of the *Majestrix Malus*, a scouting arm of the imperial navy of Chelifax.

As soon as the PCs enter the Cauldron, the Brinebrood Queen screams in hunger and cuts the bonds holding the two captive pirates above the water. The weight of the silver ingots immediately drags them beneath the surface, and they sink to the bottom of the Cauldron the round after. Unless PCs help them, they are quickly attacked by the lacedons on the bottom. Meanwhile, the Queen and her son concentrate their attacks on anyone remaining on the surface.

**THE BRINEBROOD QUEEN CR 3**

**XP 800**

Female grindylow druid (aquatic) 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 148, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 98)

NE Small aberration (aquatic)

**Init** +2 (+4 in aquatic terrain); **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8 (+10 in aquatic terrain)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 26 (5d8+4)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9; +4 vs. water spells and aquatic or water subtype abilities

**Defensive Abilities** resist ocean's fury

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 15 ft., swim 30 ft., jet 200 ft.

**Melee** *vindictive harpoon* +7 (1d6+4/x3)

**Ranged** *vindictive harpoon* +7 (1d6+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** icicle (1d6+2 cold damage, 6/day), tangling tentacles

**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin*, *chill metal*, *fog cloud*<sup>D</sup>

1st—*entangle* (DC 14), *hydraulic push*<sup>\*</sup>, *longstrider*,

*obscuring mist*<sup>D</sup>, *speak with animals*

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 13), *guidance*, *resistance*

**D** Domain spell; **Domain** Water

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** The Brinebrood Queen casts *barkskin* and *speak with animals* before combat.



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY



**During Combat** The Queen uses her *wand of summon nature's ally II* to summon an octopus (she never summons a squid) to attack foes, then casts *entangle* against groups and *chill metal* against any armor-wearing opponents. The Queen stalks prey through the rot-infested soup of her lair, flanking with the Whale and attacking with her *vindictive harpoon*.

**Morale** The Brinebrood Queen fights to the death so long as her beloved child survives. If the Whale is slain, however, she uses her jet ability to flee Riptide Cove for the deep waters of the sea.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4 (+8 trip with tangling tentacles); **CMD** 16 (24 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (harpoon), Power Attack

**Skills** Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (geography) +4 (+6 in aquatic terrain), Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +8 (+10 in aquatic terrain), Spellcraft +4, Stealth +16 (+18 in aquatic terrain), Survival +5 (+7 in aquatic terrain), Swim +16 (+18 in aquatic terrain)

**Languages** Aquan

**SQ** amphibious, aquatic adaptation, natural swimmer, nature bond (Water domain), nature sense, wild empathy (aquatic) +5

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *wand of summon nature's ally II* (12 charges); **Other Gear** *vindictive harpoon* (+1 *returning harpoon*; see page 59), lobster pot containing grindylow flensing knives including two masterwork daggers, a masterwork silver dagger, a rusting masterwork cold iron sickle, a scrimshaw blade of great workmanship depicting an octopus worth 125 gp, and 12 other blades of varying shape and quality

### THE WHALE

CR 3

**XP** 800

Male advanced grindylow (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 148)

CE Large aberration (aquatic)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 31 (3d8+18)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 15 ft., swim 30 ft., jet 200 ft.

**Melee** bite +6 (1d8+7 plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** swallow whole (1d8+7 damage, AC 13, 3 hp), tangling tentacles

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The Whale's distended mouth enables it to swallow opponents whole, and its hunger drives it to this action, though it may regret doing so later. If a swallowed



The Brinebrood Queen





victim deals damage to the Whale, the giant grindylow vomits up its undigested meal on the following round as a free action.

**Morale** Unable to leave the confines of the Cauldron, the Whale fights to the death. If the Brinebrood Queen is slain, the Whale flies into an incredible rage, focusing its attacks solely on the character who killed her, ignoring any other threats to avenge its dead mother.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 20, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9  
**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +8 (+12 grapple, +12 trip with tangling tentacles); **CMD** 18 (26 vs. trip)  
**Feats** Improved Initiative, Toughness  
**Skills** Stealth +6, Survival +6, Swim +19  
**Languages** Aquan  
**SQ** amphibious

**LACEDONS (2)** **CR 1**  
**XP 400 each**  
 Aquatic ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)  
**hp** 13 each

**Treasure:** Dozens of scrimshaw objects litter the chamber in various nooks and crannies carved into the walls. Although many of these items are merely curious, repulsive, or both, among them are the jawbone of a shark carved with scrimshaw images of a vast octopus eating whales and containing a dozen silver and gold rings hammered into it (worth 250 gp), a huge hooked tooth from some colossal sea creature with a seaweed-plugged cavity containing six pearls worth 75 gp each, and a whale skull weighing 25 pounds whose scrimshaw carvings function as arcane *scrolls of alter self*, *black tentacles*, *blur*, *color spray*, *daylight*, *enlarge person*, *hypnotism*, *slow*, *touch of idiocy*, and *vampiric touch*.

In addition, a total of eight 4-pound silver ingots are attached to Sandara Quinn and the other captive pirate, each worth 20 gp. The rest of their equipment lies scattered on the floor among the lacedons' masterwork manacles, along with four +1 *heavy crossbow bolts*, a silver spearhead, an iron bracelet (a single *lesser bracer of archery*, the twin of the one found in area D5), 211 sp, and 136 gp in assorted coins.

Finally, Sandara Quinn gives the PCs her *Besmara's tricorne* (see page 58) as a token of her gratitude for rescuing her.

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 800 XP for successfully rescuing Sandara Quinn.

**Development:** If the PCs rescue the second captive pirate, that NPC immediately becomes helpful toward the PCs and throws in his lot with them, regardless of his previous attitude. If the NPC was an ally of Mr. Plugg, he

also tells the PCs of Plugg's plan to kill them when they return to the *Man's Promise*.

**MUTINY! (CR VARIES)**

The PCs can lead a mutiny against Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge at any time, of course, but the most advantageous time is likely when they return to the *Man's Promise* after exploring Bonewrack Isle. If the PCs have not already made such plans, Plugg and Scourge decide to take the PCs out of the picture anyway, and attack the PCs as soon as they return from the island.

**Creatures:** Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge lead at least eight *Wormwood* pirates loyal to them (those unfriendly or hostile toward the PCs), though this number might vary depending on the PCs' actions and influence on the crew. Owlbear Hartshorn joins them as well, unless he was befriended by one of the PCs, in which case he supports the PCs. Ambrose Kroop and Sandara Quinn fight on the side of the PCs, along with any of the *Wormwood* pirates who are friendly or helpful toward

the PCs. Any NPCs who are indifferent toward the PCs do not participate in the battle. Remember that the advantage goes to the side that acts with surprise, and if the PCs don't act first, Mr. Plugg and his loyal crew attack the PCs and their allies with missile fire as the PCs approach the *Man's Promise* from the sea.

How this battle works out depends upon the circumstances of the mutiny. As the identity and abilities of both allies and enemies depend upon the PCs' actions, the resolution of this battle likely requires some planning on your part, based on who is loyal to whom. If the PCs have overwhelming numbers, Plugg and Scourge might challenge the PCs to face them directly, just the PCs against the two of them. That said, if the PCs have worked hard to befriend the majority of the crew and get those NPCs on their side, then an easy fight between the PCs and their many allies versus Plugg, Scourge, and just a few supporters can be considered the PCs' just reward for their hard work and success in befriendng the crew. However the battle plays out, those *Wormwood* pirates loyal to Mr. Plugg attempt to flee when reduced to 4 hit points, and surrender if Mr. Plugg is slain.



**The Whale**

**MR. PLUGG** **CR 4**  
**XP 1,200**  
**hp** 47 (see page 54)



## THE WORMWOOD MUTINY



### MASTER SCOURGE

CR 3

XP 800

hp 32 (see page 21)

### WORMWOOD PIRATES (8)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 20)

**Infamy:** Increase the PCs' Disrepute and Infamy scores (see page 62) by 2 for successfully mutinying and taking command of the *Man's Promise*.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Regardless of when the PCs stage their mutiny, the crew has finished repairing the *Man's Promise* by the time the PCs return to the ship. But the adventure does not necessarily end when the PCs leave Bonewrack Isle. The PCs might still need to resolve a mutiny, and if the PCs failed to deal with the grindylows on the island, the creatures attack the *Man's Promise* in force before it can set sail.

The Brinebrood Queen lives for her son, and if the PCs defeated the Whale but the Queen escaped, she vows revenge. The Brinebrood Queen flees in madness and

anger into the deepest trenches of the darkest oceans, where light is unknown. In that dark abyss she whispers to obscene things of the night, calling them to the surface to avenge her beloved son, the grandson of a goddess. This gives you a great opportunity to plague the PCs with a returning foe in later adventures.

Assuming the mutiny is a success and Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge are defeated, any surviving pirates are keen to remain aboard under the PCs' command, regardless of their previous affiliation. After all, it's better to serve a new captain than be marooned on a monster-infested flyspeck of an island.

The PCs' new crew does, however, point out that the moment Captain Harrigan hears of their mutiny he is bound to seek vengeance. Unless the PCs suggest it first, one NPC (such as Ambrose Kroop) suggests following Plugg's plan of taking the *Man's Promise* to Rickety's Squibs for a refit to prepare for a new life on the ocean waves.

The adventure concludes with the PCs sailing their own vessel into an uncertain but exciting future. This future, filled with the PCs' adventures as pirates in charge of their own destinies, begins in the next volume of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, "Raiders of the Fever Sea."