

# TEMPEST RISING

## PART ONE: PERILOUS WATERS

*The PCs sail to Port Peril, where they must present themselves to the Hurricane King and prove themselves worthy to gain official recognition as Free Captains of the Shackles.*

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## PART TWO: AT A LADY'S REQUEST

*On behalf of pirate lord Tessa Fairwind, the PCs sail throughout the Shackles, tracking down evidence of a widespread spy ring in the pirate isles.*

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## PART THREE: THE FREE CAPTAINS' REGATTA

*The PCs enter the grueling annual race called the Free Captains' Regatta in hopes of gaining a seat on the Pirate Council and their own island.*

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### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Tempest Rising" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

**7** The PCs begin this adventure at 7th level.

**8** The PCs should be well into 8th level by the time they venture into the Jasperleaf Apothecary and enter their ship into the Free Captains' Regatta.

The PCs should be 9th level by the end of the adventure.

## TEMPEST RISING

### ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Empire of Cheliox has many spies spread throughout Avistan and Garund, including within the Shackles, though the fractious pirate isles have always proved a difficult region in which to gather intelligence and recruit secret agents. After the Chelish navy's capture of Captain Barnabas Harrigan and their subsequent plans to invade the pirate confederacy, however, Cheliox has stepped up its espionage operations in the Shackles under the leadership of spymaster Zarskia Galembur.

Hailing originally from Thuvia, Zarskia is a widely traveled alchemist who operates under the cover of the Jasperleaf Apothecary, a well-known supplier of alchemical products, herbal remedies, and less savory concoctions in Port Peril. Highly organized, obsessive, and unhindered by morality, Zarskia is an ideal controller for the Chelish spy network in the Shackles. Zarskia hired a wide variety of contacts for her espionage ring, including a beachcomber and part-time smuggler in Drenchport named Haddon Pike, a former ship captain in Quent named Elliece Farhaven, and a quartermaster in Hell Harbor named Roweena Kellet. She also used a tengu smuggler named Corlan to carry messages between her spies. With these agents, Zarskia has been funneling information through Nidalese intermediaries to Cheliox, though she is unaware of her true employers.

With the Chelish invasion imminent, however, Zarskia was ordered to liquidate her primary agents and depart the Shackles. To that end, she hired a Sargavan assassin named Giles Halmis to eliminate these "loose ends," and is only awaiting confirmation of the assassinations before she leaves Port Peril.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs sail to Port Peril to gain official recognition as Free Captains of the Shackles. They must complete a series of challenging "pirate tests" and entertain the Hurricane King's court to receive a letter of marque from the Hurricane King. While on shore leave in Port Peril, the PCs run into one of their former crewmates from the *Wormwood*, as well as a potential new ally, and get caught up in a huge bar brawl. Before they leave port, the PCs are approached by the powerful pirate lord Tessa Fairwind, who asks them to investigate recent rumors of a Chelish invasion of the Shackles.

Tessa's clues take the PCs from one port to another throughout the Shackles. The PCs negotiate with Calistrian sacred prostitutes and Norgorberite assassins, and face water nagas, a crew of barbarous wreckers, and the denizens of a sunken ship, only to discover that most of their clues are, literally, dead ends—those whom they sought to question are now dead or gone. Eventually, the PCs interrupt an assassination attempt against one of the

### ADDITIONAL RULES

The Skull & Shackles Adventure Path makes use of several new rules sub-systems.

**Plunder, Disrepute, and Infamy:** The rules for plunder, Disrepute, and Infamy may be found in "The Life of a Pirate" in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #55: The Wormwood Mutiny*.

**Ship-to-Ship Combat:** Sample ship stat blocks, as well as detailed rules for handling combat between ships, are presented in the *Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*, available for free from [paizo.com](http://paizo.com).

few leads who is still alive, enabling the PCs to learn vital information about the head of the spy ring. The PCs enter the spy ring's headquarters, facing guards, traps, and the mastermind behind the conspiracy, an alchemist named Zarskia Galembur. Defeating Zarskia, the PCs discover important coded messages and evidence of espionage that Tessa Fairwind can present to the Pirate Council.

The adventure concludes with the Free Captains' Regatta, where the PCs face treacherous weather, currents, obstacles, and monsters in a nautical race along the periphery of the Eye of Abendego. The race's finish is neck-and-neck with the PCs' old nemesis Captain Barnabas Harrigan of the *Wormwood*, who does everything in his power to surreptitiously snatch victory from the PCs. If they win the regatta, however, the PCs receive their very own island, as well as a seat on the Pirate Council.

### PART ONE: PERILOUS WATERS

By the conclusion of "Raiders of the Fever Sea," the PCs should have acquired considerable plunder and Infamy and begun making a name for themselves as pirates of particular disrepute. But in order to gain official recognition as Free Captains of the Shackles, they must travel to Port Peril and present themselves to the Hurricane King of the Shackles, Kerdak Bonefist. To prove themselves worthy of a meeting with the Hurricane King, however, the PCs must have at least 10 points of plunder in their hold and an Infamy score of 20 or higher. If the PCs have not yet accumulated enough plunder or Infamy, you should present them with additional opportunities for piracy until they have acquired the requisite amounts. The encounters with monsters and pirate vessels detailed in the opener to this volume's Bestiary can help in this regard (see page 81).

The PCs will likely begin this adventure somewhere in the Fever Sea south of the Shackles, or perhaps at Mancatcher Cove or Tidewater Rock. Wherever they might be, they will need to chart a course through the many islands of the Shackles to reach Jeopardy Bay and Port Peril.



## FIREARMS IN TEMPEST RISING

Firearms are rare on Golarion, and as a result, except for a brief appearance in this adventure, firearms do not appear in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path until the final adventure. If firearms play a more prominent role in your campaign, however, you can use the following suggestions to modify “Tempest Rising” to incorporate them. See *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* for details on all of these firearms and more.

Caulky Tarroon (**Event 3**) might carry a concealed coat pistol in addition to her daggers, and Vakarla and her wreckers (see pages 21–22) could be armed with blunderbusses or dragon pistols. The arrow springal and catapults on the *Dryad’s Grave* (see page 23) can be replaced with a rocket springal and cannons or light bombards, respectively, while the Screaming Satyr might wield a culverin, double hackbut, or even a cannon instead of a ballista. Damaged cannons might also be found on the wreck of the *Brine Banshee* (areas **A6** and **B9**) instead of ballistae. The assassin Giles Halmis (see page 35) would make a perfect gunslinger, replacing his heavy crossbow with a musket, and lastly, the pirate guards in the Jasperleaf Apothecary (area **C2**) might be armed with pistols or buckler guns instead of bows.

## WELCOME TO PORT PERIL

Arriving at Port Peril’s harbor, the PCs can find mooring and arrange for provisioning, and if necessary, repairs to their ship. Their crew is eager to receive their pay and take shore leave. Before the PCs can relax and enjoy the port, however, they must petition for an audience with Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist to receive a letter of marque and thereby become “legitimate” pirates—at least in the eyes of other Free Captains. As long as the PCs’ Infamy score is 20 or higher, gaining an audience is relatively straightforward. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to know the traditional procedure: The PCs simply need to send a messenger to Fort Hazard, the Hurricane King’s seat, along with a bribe of at least 4 points of plunder. Bonefist won’t even deign to respond to so-called “pirates” who have not reached an Infamy threshold of Despicable. As long as the PCs pay the requisite bribe, the Hurricane King agrees to grant them an audience the following evening.

## EVENT 1: THE TESTING

The morning after the PCs successfully arrange an audience, Kerdak Bonefist’s first mate **Tsadok Goldtooth** (CE male half-orc barbarian 15) publicly meets the PCs at the docks. Tsadok arrives with an entourage of cronies, and many spectators gather to see the entertainment as well.

Tsadok starts with introductions, declaring he’s there as the Hurricane King’s formal representative. He plays to the crowd as he explains the situation. It’s unusual for a new, successful, but relatively unknown ship to request a letter of marque without the sponsorship of a recognized Free Captain. In this case, the Pirate Code requires the ship’s captain and officers to undergo “Testing” to determine whether they’re worthy of becoming Free Captains themselves. While this Testing is often merely a formality, Bonefist has sent Tsadok to make a show of it. Even if the PCs somehow manage to get the sponsorship of an existing Free Captain, Tsadok still requires the Testing—unless the PCs don’t want the Hurricane King’s letter of marque, of course.

Tsadok is callous and rude to the PCs, making jokes at their expense and hinting that they’re just playing at being pirates. Some among the crowd laugh at his gibes, but others scowl or remain silent, hinting that many aren’t fond of Tsadok. Eventually, he announces the first of three tests the PCs must face.

While Tsadok doesn’t waste time giving a detailed explanation of each test’s rules, the PCs should choose one of their number to compete in each test, who must perform without help or hindrance from others (the third test is the exception to this rule—all of the PCs are allowed to compete). These are piratical challenges, so bending a rule or two is expected. The crowd cheers in appreciation of clever tricks and boos at crude or unoriginal ruses. Casting obvious spells on a contestant is extremely unsporting, and Tsadok demands the spells’ removal, but a PC might be able to subtly cast a spell on the competing PC and remain unnoticed with a DC 20 Stealth check. Because of the challenges’ stressful competitive nature, contestants can’t take 10 on skill checks while competing. If the PCs accuse their opponents of cheating, they are met with laughter from Tsadok and his cronies. “We’re pirates—did you really expect us to play fair?” he says with a smirk.

## THE FIRST TEST: A CLIMB IN THE RIGGING

Tsadok’s first test is to see whether the PCs are passable sailors, not just “fancy jackets” who found themselves in command of a pirate crew. One PC must swiftly climb to the top of a nearby ship’s foremast and complete the tricky task of unfurling and setting the sail from the top yard without assistance, before one of Tsadok’s crew does the same on the mizzenmast. Flight magic is illegal, and the contestants must unfurl the sails themselves, not conjure creatures to do it.

The ship used for the challenge is the *Stingray*, a brig with two tall square-rigged masts. Competitors must climb 60 feet up the mast’s rigging to the top spar. Climbing the mast requires a DC 10 Climb check for the lower 45 feet and a DC 15 Climb check for the upper 15 feet.

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Contestants must then make their way along the yard, which extends 30 feet out from both sides of the mast, untying sail as they go. Contestants can use accelerated climbing (–5 penalty on the check) to increase their climbing speed from one-quarter speed to half speed. Moving along the yard requires a DC 10 Climb check, or a contestant can walk along the yard at half speed with a DC 15 Acrobatics check (or move at full speed with a DC 25 Acrobatics check). Climbing or balancing requires one skill check per move action.

The sail is tied to the yard at four locations, 15 feet from the mast and 30 feet from the mast on both sides. Correctly unfurling each of the four areas of sail without it snagging or tangling requires a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check and takes a standard action. A contestant who succeeds at a DC 18 Profession (sailor) check realizes that untying all of the sail on one side of the yard will cause loose sailcloth to flap about in the breeze, making the job of setting the remaining sail more challenging. To avoid this problem, the sail should be released in stages on one side of the mast and then the other. If one side of the sail is completely unfurled first, the DC of the Profession (sailor) checks to unfurl the remaining sail increases by 5.

The sailor from Tsadok's crew competing in this test is **Haines Boyne** (N male human fighter 4/rogue [swashbuckler] 3; Init +3; Climb +12, Profession [sailor] +10; use the stats for a pirate guard on page 38 if necessary). He's efficient and doesn't take unnecessary risks. Haines uses accelerated climbing only when the DC is 10 and unties the two points of his sail closest to the mast before releasing the outer points.

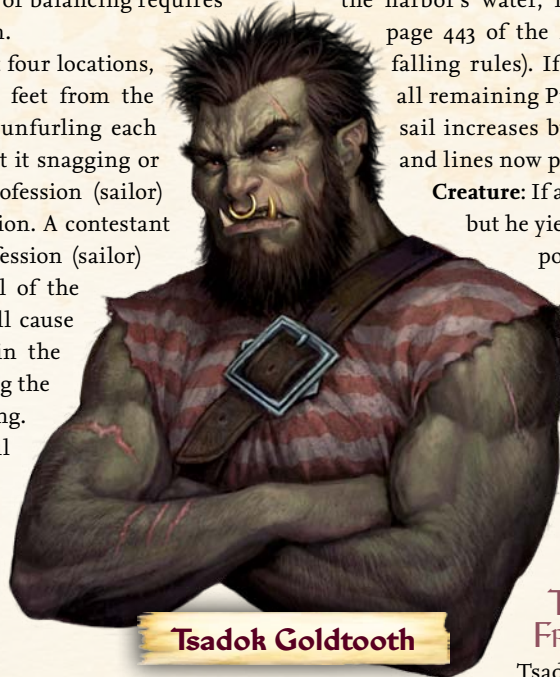
**Shenanigans:** Many spectators watch the test from the *Stingray's* deck, including one of Tsadok's crew, "Bilgerat" Jacobi, who "accidentally" unties (or cuts) the line securing the *Stingray's* forestay boom when the competing PC is at the end of the yard.

Those PCs who are not competing can spot Bilgerat before he begins his sabotage. A DC 22 Perception check picks out the bald sailor on the *Stingray's* foredeck, while a DC 20 Sense Motive check notices him acting suspiciously. If the PCs fail these checks, they can have another chance to make them just as Bilgerat strikes, but with a –5 penalty due to the crowd's distraction. PCs who succeed at both checks can act in the round Bilgerat starts his sabotage. It takes Bilgerat a standard action to untie the knot securing the line, and a full-round action to unwrap the line from

the rail. If he realizes the PCs are on to him, Bilgerat draws a dagger and cuts the rope instead.

If Bilgerat succeeds, the boom swings around and crashes into the foremast's rigging. The PC contestant must succeed at a DC 20 Acrobatics check to keep his balance. Failure means that the PC slips and must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save to catch the rigging or fall. If the PC was at the end of the yard, the fall is into the harbor's water, not onto the *Stingray's* deck (see page 443 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for falling rules). If the PC does not fall, the DC of all remaining Profession (sailor) checks to set the sail increases by +2 because of the tangle of sail and lines now pressed against the foresail.

**Creature:** If attacked, Bilgerat defends himself, but he yields if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, or if he is unable to complete his dirty work.



**Tsadok Goldtooth**

**"BILGERAT" JACOBI** CR 6  
**XP 2,400**  
 Pirate guard (see page 38)  
 hp 57

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 3,200 XP for winning this test.

### THE SECOND TEST: A FRIENDLY GAME OF CARDS

Tsadok's wants to see how much talent and luck the PCs possess in his second test. A small table is set up on the aft deck of the PCs' ship, and one of the PCs must gamble against Tsadok in a card game called *Bastard's Fool*. *Bastard's Fool* is a popular game on pirate ships, and is played using a deck cobbled together from several partial decks. Even a down-on-his-luck sailor who doesn't even have a full deck of cards can play *Bastard's Fool*, as each player brings whatever cards she has, and combines them with other players' cards to create a new deck. *Bastard's Fool* is a bluffing game similar to poker, but Tsadok adds an additional "Port Peril" rule to the game: the winner of each hand must drink a ration cup of Gutburn rum.

Each player starts with a stake of 100 platinum pieces. The PCs must supply their own stake; Tsadok has brought along a moneychanger to exchange currency or plunder if needed. Each hand, gamblers receive a starting hand and place their initial bets. They may then discard some of their cards and draw more to improve their hand, and bet again. Once all bets are matched, the gamblers reveal their cards and the best hand wins. Rather than play out every hand, you can ask the competing player to describe his or her basic strategy, make several checks



(as described below), and then give a quick narrative describing how the game initially progresses.

To simulate an actual game of *Bastard's Fool*, each player rolls dice, trying to get a score as close to 20 as possible without going over. At the beginning of the hand, each player pays an ante of 1 pp and secretly rolls a d20, representing her starting hand. A round of betting ensues (minimum bet is 1 pp; maximum bet is a player's entire stake, called "all in"). To represent the discard and draw, each player may then secretly roll another die of her choice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, or d20) to improve her score (the larger the die, the more cards drawn). This is followed by another round of betting. A player can fold at any time instead of betting—in this case, the opposing player wins the hand. If the total of both dice is 20 or less, that is the gambler's score. If the total is over 20, the gambler's score is only the highest number on a single die (representing a poor draw). The highest score wins the hand. On a tie, no one wins. The pot remains on the table, and a new hand begins, with bets added to the existing pot.

Participants may improve their position using expertise, insight, misdirection, or even legerdemain. A gambler can make one of the following checks each hand (all DC 15): Bluff, Profession (gambler), or Sense Motive. A successful check adds +1 to the gambler's score, with an additional +1 for every 5 points over the DC (even if this pushes the gambler's final score over 20). A failed check reduces the gambler's score by 1, with an additional -1 for every 5 points under the DC.

The gambling PC can also make a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to cheat and increase her score by 4 points, but failing this check means Tsadok notices the attempt. The first failure costs the PC her stake for that hand. If the PC is caught cheating a second time, the game ends and the PC fails the entire test.

Each time the PC wins a hand, she must drink a shot of rum. Each drink after the first requires a DC 10 Fortitude save (the DC increases by +1 for each additional drink). The PC takes a -1 penalty on all skill checks for each failed saving throw. Once the PC has consumed a number of drinks equal to 1 plus double her Constitution modifier, she is sickened (taking an additional -2 penalty on skill checks) for 1 hour for each drink beyond this maximum. Tsadok drinks when he wins as well, but the

alcohol seems to have almost no effect except to increase his toothy sneer.

The poop deck is empty except for the dealer, Tsadok, and the participating PC, limiting the assistance other PCs can provide. The dealer announces the revealed cards and wagers to the crowd who cheer and shout advice. Tsadok sits with his back to the harbor, making it difficult to spy on his cards, but creative PCs might be able to find a way to observe Tsadok's cards and relay that information to the gambling PC. If you're playing out each hand, this allows the PC to know Tsadok's score before betting. Alternatively, or for faster play, you can simply subtract 4 points from Tsadok's score to represent this foreknowledge.

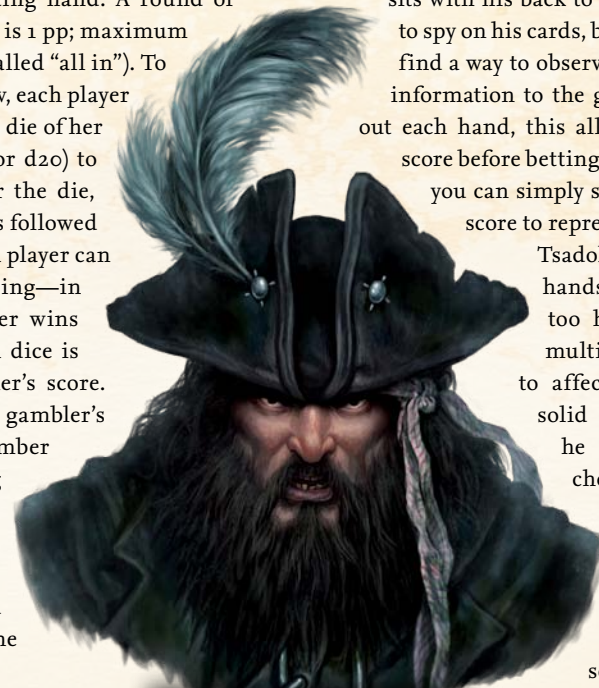
Tsadok bets small for the first dozen hands, folding if the stakes rise too high (over 5 pp), hoping that multiple drinks of rum will start to affect his opponent. Tsadok is a solid but unimaginative gambler; he doesn't bother making skill checks to increase his score, and only rolls a second die with a maximum number that won't put him over 20.

**Stacking the Deck:** As the game proceeds, the dealer secretly arranges the cards to favor Tsadok. This assistance allows Tsadok to add up to 4 points to his score (to a maximum score of 20) in any hand where

he bets 10 pp or more. The gambling PC can make a DC 25 Perception check and a DC 18 Profession (gambler) check. If either check is successful, she notices the dealer subtly manipulating the deck as he shuffles. The PC can use this knowledge to her advantage, evaluating what cards are on top of the deck and drawing them before the dealer can rearrange them. This removes Tsadok's advantage and subtracts 6 points from Tsadok's score for a single hand. After this happens, Tsadok takes over dealing himself, cursing the dealer for being bad luck.

Eventually, Tsadok or the PC goes "all in," betting the remainder of his stake on a single hand. If the crooked dealer is still dealing at this point, Tsadok "gets lucky" with a natural 20 hand; otherwise, roll for Tsadok's hand normally. If the PC wins this hand, the PC wins the challenge. If Tsadok wins, he keeps the PC's coins; if he loses, he grudgingly congratulates the winner and tries to retrieve his own coins, stating that it was just a friendly game for show, not for real stakes. If pressed, Tsadok relents and lets the PCs keep their winnings.

**Story Award:** If the PC wins the game, award the group 3,200 XP for completing the challenge.



**Kerdak Bonefist**

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### THE THIRD TEST: REPELLING BOARDERS (CR 8)

A pirate needs to be able to fight, so Tsadok's third challenge tests the PCs' combat abilities. This test takes place on the PCs' ship—any damage to their ship or property as a result of this test is their own problem. All of the PCs can compete in this test, in which they must defend their ship from one very large, very dangerous boarder. The PCs can position themselves anywhere on their ship that they choose, but any crew must go ashore for the duration of the test—the PCs must prove that they alone can defend their ship. There are no other prohibitions on their actions, but remember that some PCs might still be suffering negative effects from earlier tests.

**Creature:** Once the PCs are in position, some of Tsadok's crew wheel a large, covered cage onto the dock adjacent to the PCs' ship. Tsadok uncovers and opens the cage, revealing a hideously ugly and obese marsh giant called Fishpork—a favorite at several of Port Peril's fighting arenas. Tsadok orders the brute to attack the PCs, and retreats back to the mainland to watch. Tsadok cares nothing for Fishpork—either the giant kills the PCs, or they kill him.

#### FISHPORK

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male marsh giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 129)

hp 102

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Fishpork casts *fog cloud* over any PCs gathered together, then throws rocks (which Tsadok thoughtfully placed in the cage with him) at any PCs outside of the fog. Once the majority of the PCs leave the fog, Fishpork scales the side of the PCs ship and attacks the closest PC. He pauses in his attacks only to cast *bestow curse* on any particularly difficult opponents.

**Morale** Fishpork hasn't lost a bout yet, and fights to the death attempting to prove that he is the best and the strongest.

**Development:** Once the Testing is concluded, Tsadok has a quiet discussion with the PCs. If they passed two or more of the tests, he acts with false magnanimity, heartily thanking them for being "good sorts." If they failed two or more tests, Tsadok gives a broad predatory grin and states that he's still willing to announce they've passed the Testing, for a price—a portion of the plunder in the PCs' hold. Tsadok wants 40% of their plunder if they didn't pass any tests, or 20% of their plunder if they passed one test. Once Tsadok finishes haggling with the PCs over the exact amount, he steps in front of the crowd and proclaims the PCs are indeed deserving of becoming Free Pirates of the Shackles, which receives boisterous cheers from the crowd. Tsadok further announces that Hurricane King Kerdak

### SHACKLES LETTER OF MARQUE

Scribed with a firm hand in blood-red ink and emblazoned with an elaborate seal of crimson wax, this thick, waxed paper grants its bearer license to attack and capture ships of enemy nations as a privateer. It is not an uncommon practice for nations of the Inner Sea to issue letters of marque and reprisal to their ships, but those issued in the pirate confederacy of the Shackles grant permission to engage in egregious acts of pillage and prize-taking, which can only be described as piracy by more lawful nations.

Lawful letters of marque are issued to specific ships, not individuals, but in the Shackles, they are granted to a specific captain and his or her officers. A Shackles letter of marque accords its bearer the authority to seize or destroy cargo, incarcerate or slay crew and passengers, and sink or capture ships from other nations, mercantile or otherwise.

Within the territorial bounds of the Shackles, these manifold privileges also apply against any ships or captains who haven't sworn loyalty to a known Free Captain or who doesn't carry their own letter of marque (though bearing a letter of marque is no guarantee of safety from other pirates, who frequently strike first and ask questions later).

Possession of a Shackles letter of marque is a crime in most civilized nations and regularly carries a penalty of death by hanging. As a result, a Shackles letter of marque is protected by a *secret page* spell, enabling its bearer to speak a secret command word to alter the text to something more innocuous, such as a cargo manifest, nautical chart, or page from a ship's log.

It's common knowledge within the Shackles who has been granted letters of marque, and most Free Captains keep accounts of which ships and captains have them, making it extraordinarily difficult to forge these documents or steal them to perpetrate a deception.

A Shackles letter of marque radiates faint transmutation magic.

Bonefist himself will grant the PCs their letter of marque this very evening. This announcement receives significantly less applause, suggesting that the current Hurricane King may not be as popular as many outsiders believe.

### EVENT 2: LETTER OF MARQUE

After the PCs finish the Testing, they are invited to attend a feast that evening at the Hurricane King's fortress, Fort Hazard. When the PCs arrive, the revelry is already in full swing: tables are laden with roast meat and flagons of ale,



## THE FREE CAPTAINS' REGATTA

While in Port Peril, the PCs should hear plenty about the upcoming Free Captains' Regatta, the grueling annual race in which independent Free Captains can win fame and fortune, as well as lordship of an island and a seat on the Pirate Council. Many NPCs ask the PCs whether they are entering, and in every Shackles port there's much excited gossip and betting on which ships are likely favorites. For the first time in years, the field is wide open, as the infamous pirate lord called the Master of the Gales is judging the race instead of participating. The Regatta is certainly the swiftest way to power and influence in the Shackles, though it is far from the easiest or safest route. See Part Three for details on the Free Captains' Regatta.

mead, and rum, and loud, drunken buccaneers swagger and stagger around the main hall.

Hurricane King **Kerdak Bonefist** (NE male human fighter 8/Inner Sea pirate 10) presides over the revelry from his gold-chased, teakwood throne. A blustery man with long black hair and beard, Bonefist looks more pirate than king, forgoing his crown and royal regalia for the long coat and tricorne hat of a sea captain. A tankard of rum rarely leaves his hand, but his most noteworthy features are his magic pistol and his skeletal right hand, the source of his sobriquet. Already well into his cups, the Hurricane King blearily stares down at the PCs as they are brought forth for introductions.

Bonefist repeatedly roars for silence, only to be ignored, so he finally resorts to firing his pistol into the air to establish a deathly silence after its thunderous echo fades. He glares fierily about the hall until, with an apparent change of mood, he smiles and speaks in a calm voice. "This fresh catch of scallywags want to add their fine ship to our brethren o' the sea," he says, erratically waving his still smoking pistol toward the PCs. "But before I award their letter of marque and make them Free Captains right and true, I say we hear from them." Bonefist turns his dark gaze upon the PCs. "What say you tell us all a tale or two of how you came by the plunder in your hold?" The inebriated pirates draw closer to hear the PCs speak.

The PCs need to successfully entertain the assembled rowdy throng. This functions as a normal Infamy check (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #55 63) with a DC equal to 15 + twice the party's average party level, and plunder can be spent as normal to influence the result. At your discretion, the PCs might receive a bonus of +1 to +3 on the Infamy check as a reward for good roleplaying. Since the PCs are boasting in the court of the Hurricane King

himself, the maximum Infamy and Disrepute they can gain from a successful check increases to 5.

**Hecklers:** When the PCs are partway through their tale, several unruly listeners start heckling, shouting abuse and taunts. Some of these hecklers have orders from Tsadok to yell derisive comments, but others simply make their dislike of a poor performance loudly known. There are three hecklers who try to derail the PCs' story. Any PC can deal with a heckler by shouting him down with a successful DC 20 Intimidate check, engaging a heckler in diverting banter with a DC 22 Diplomacy check, or counter-heckling with a DC 15 Perform (comedy) check. The PCs can also use violent or magical means to remove hecklers, but this is likely to distract and detract from the storytelling, resulting in at least a -2 penalty on the Infamy check (this penalty increases to a -5 penalty if the PCs do anything particularly shocking or offensive). Each heckler who the PCs don't deal with imposes a -2 penalty on the PCs' Infamy check.

At the end of the PCs' tale, Bonefist calls for a show of approval, with the crowd shouting "aye" or "nay" to decide. Assuming the PCs succeed at their Infamy check, the gathering hollers in the PCs favor, and Bonefist officially presents them with their letter of marque in front of the approving assembly. See the sidebar on page 11 for details on this valuable document.

If the PCs fail their Infamy check, the crowd boos them out of the hall for their poor performance, but Bonefist summons them to a private meeting later. Since the PCs passed the Testing, Bonefist tells them that they still earned their letter of marque, and hands it over, but gossip of the PCs' embarrassment filters out to the inhabitants of Port Peril, imposing a -2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks with city residents, and a -2 penalty on all Infamy checks made in Port Peril until the PCs reach a new Infamy threshold.

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 3,200 XP for successfully entertaining the Hurricane King's court.

## SHORE LEAVE

Now officially recognized as Free Captains of the Shackles, the PCs are free to explore Port Peril and enjoy the sights and entertainments of the pirate capital. They can sell plunder, recruit additional crew, refit their ship, purchase magic items or other gear, and increase their Infamy and Disrepute scores (although any Infamy gained in Event 3 counts toward the maximum amount that can be won in Port Peril for each Infamy threshold). See the Port Peril gazetteer on page 12 for more details on this notorious pirate port.

## EVENT 3: BARROOM BRAWL (CR VARIES)

The following event takes place during the PCs' stay in Port Peril. At some point, they likely find themselves wanting to enjoy some of the entertainments the notorious port has

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### RIPTIDE ALEHOUSE

1 square = 5 feet



to offer, and visit a tavern called the Riptide Alehouse. The Riptide is a boisterous and rowdy establishment, full of pirates and freebooters of all stripes, though most of the activity seems friendly enough.

The PCs can order drinks or food, join in a gambling game or two, and generally enjoy their time there. At some point during the evening, have the PCs make Perception checks. Whoever gets the highest result notices a familiar face in the unruly crowd in the bar: “Caulky” Tarroon, Captain Barnabas Harrigan’s cabin girl on the *Wormwood*. The PC who spots her (or any other PCs, if the first PC draws their attention to her) can make a DC 15 Sense Motive check to notice her suspicious behavior. She seems to be surreptitiously adding something to a few sailors’ drinks—an activity suspiciously similar to the way oil of taggit was added to the PCs’ drinks when they were initially press-ganged at the beginning of “The Wormwood Mutiny.”

Before the PCs can take any action, however, they are approached by Captain Pierce Jerrell, a charming rogue of a Free Captain with an eye patch and a winning smile. One of the PCs (choose one) has caught his eye and his fancy, and he smoothly sits down at the PCs’ table, offering to buy them all a round of drinks while he

attempts to charm and flatter the object of his affection. See page 54 for a complete description of Pierce Jerrell.

Regardless of how the PCs respond to Pierce, the activity at their table draws the attention of Caulky. Unless the PCs have all thoroughly disguised themselves, she recognizes them from their time on the *Wormwood* and attempts to slip away to inform Captain Harrigan of their presence in Port Peril.

At the same time, one of the sailors who Caulky was attempting to poison notices that her drink was tampered with. She loudly proclaims that someone is trying to drug her, and throws her drink over her shoulder, square on the head of a rough-looking buccaneer. The bruiser stands up, roaring in rage, and throws a punch, which connects with yet another bystander, and the situation in the tavern soon devolves into an all-out barroom brawl.

Exactly what triggers the melee is relatively unimportant and depends on the current situation—the PCs might get into a fight with Pierce Jerrell, who blocks their way to Caulky; Caulky could bump into someone as she tries to leave; or the events outlined above transpire exactly as written. That the PCs find themselves in the middle of the free-for-all is all that matters.





**Creatures:** Most of the tavern's patrons opportunistically join in the brawl or find themselves dragged into the swirling melee. Rather than roll every attack of every participant, keep the focus on the PCs and their opponents while describing the overall fight happening around them. Once the brawl begins, the mass of people in the tavern makes the entire area difficult terrain. Agile PCs can move swiftly through the mayhem by leaping from table to table above the heads of the brawlers with Acrobatics checks (DC varies based on the distance between tables). The tavern's wooden chandeliers hang 10 feet above the floor. PCs can also leap up from atop a bench or table to catch one and swing athletically over the fight with a DC 20 Acrobatics check.

**Drunken Brawlers:** Although the bar is full of drunken brawlers, four of them take swings at the PCs with their fists. Depending on how the fight develops, more drunken brawlers could engage the PCs if the opportunity presents itself, especially if the PCs escalate the friendly brawl into a deadly fight with weapons or lethal spells.

**"Caulky" Tarroon:** When Barnabas Harrigan transferred half of his crew to the *Man's Promise*, those remaining on the *Wormwood* were put through the wringer. Harrigan's cabin girl, Caulky Tarroon, was no exception. She lost her relatively cushy job on the ship and had to work as hard as any common swab. Without the personal protection of the captain, she quickly had to learn to defend herself, and became an accomplished knife fighter.

Nevertheless, Caulky wants nothing to do with the PCs. She seeks to get out of the tavern as soon as possible, but the PCs are between her and the front door, and the back door behind the bar is locked. As the fight breaks out, Caulky tries to blend into the crowd and sneak up the stairs (DC 25 Perception check to spot), making her way along the balcony to the room at its southern end, where she hopes to find another way out.

The balcony is 15 feet above the main floor. Several barrels of ale are stacked above the stairs at the northern end of the balcony. Caulky gets up the stairs just before they become packed with drunken, brawling pirates (making the stairs difficult terrain as well). If the PCs try to follow Caulky up the stairs, she pushes the barrels down the stairs to further hinder them. Anyone on the stairs must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the barrels. Those who fails the saving throw take 1d6 points of damage as they are pushed to the bottom of the stairs and knocked prone.

If the PCs don't want to fight through the brawlers on the stairs, they can climb the carved wall beneath the balcony

with a successful DC 15 Climb check. Alternatively, a PC can clamber onto a table and jump to catch the balcony railing with a successful DC 16 Acrobatics check.

Caulky frantically tries to get away from the PCs and escape through the window in the southernmost room off the balcony. It takes her a move action to open the window and another to climb out; then she swarms up to the roof to make her getaway across the rooftops of Port Peril.

**Pierce Jerrell:** Pierce Jerrell eagerly joins in the brawl as well, though how the PCs responded to his initial contact with them determines his tactics. If they were at least civil to him and they're within range, Pierce casts *haste* right after the fight starts, targeting the PCs as well as himself. If the PCs rebuffed him or started the fight with him, he returns the favor, perhaps attempting to charm the object of his affection with *charm person*. Pierce uses his brass knuckles and nonlethal spells such as *color spray* in the fight until deadly weapons enter the fray, at which point he draws his longsword.



Caulky Tarroon

**"CAULKY" TARROON** CR 4

XP 1,200

Female human commoner 3/rogue (knife master)

2 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 72)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Perception +6

**DEFENSE**

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 39 (5 HD; 2d8+3d6+17)

Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +0

Defensive Abilities evasion

**OFFENSE**

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +8 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged mwk dagger +8 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak stab\* +1d8

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Caulky does her best to avoid combat with the PCs and escape out the window. If cornered and unable to flee, she uses her Improved Feint feat to feint as a move action, and makes a sneak attack against the flat-footed opponent with her dagger.

**Morale** Caulky fights like a cornered rat, but if the opportunity to escape presents itself, she takes it and flees.

**STATISTICS**

Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12

Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 16

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +9, Climb +7, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Sleight of Hand +10 (+11 to conceal light blades), Stealth +10, Swim +5

## TEMPEST RISING

**Languages** Common, Polyglot  
**SQ** hidden blade\*, rogue talents (weapon training)  
**Other Gear** studded leather, masterwork daggers (2), 29 gp  
 \* See *Ultimate Combat*.

### DRUNKEN BRAWLERS (4) CR 3

**XP 800 each**

Human fighter (cad) 3/rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 45)  
 CN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 32 each (4 HD; 3d10+1d8+7)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** unarmed strike +6 (1d3+3) or  
 improvised weapon +6 (1d8+3)

**Ranged** dagger +6 (1d4+3/19–20)

**Special Attacks** dirty maneuvers\*, sneak attack +1d6

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** These drunken brawlers are just looking for a friendly fight, and fight with unarmed strikes and Power Attack. If any of the PCs pull out weapons or deal lethal damage with their attacks, the brawlers snatch up tankards of ale and smash chairs to use as improvised weapons. The brawlers flank with each other to make sneak attacks, and use combat maneuvers to disarm foes or dirty trick maneuvers to blind opponents for a round or 2 (possibly by throwing ale in their faces) and sneak attack those opponents.

**Morale** A drunken brawler attempts to flee if he takes 20 or more points of lethal damage.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6 (+7 disarm, dirty trick, or steal); **CMD** 19  
 (20 vs. disarm, dirty trick, or steal)

**Feats** Catch Off-Guard<sup>B</sup>, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Stand Still

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Bluff +5, Climb +9, Intimidate +5, Profession (sailor) +7, Swim +9

**Languages** Common

**SQ** catch off guard\*, trapfinding +1

**Gear** leather armor, dagger, improvised weapon, 2d20 gp each

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

### PIERCE JERRELL CR 7

**XP 3,200**

**hp** 69 (page 54)

**Development:** Soon after the PCs defeat their opponents, the Port Peril militia arrives to break up the brawl and arrest the instigators, including the PCs. Assuming he is still alive and conscious, Pierce Jerrell quixotically offers

to show the PCs a back way out of the tavern, leading them behind the bar area and away down a side street. Regardless of how the fight started or turned out, as long as the PCs didn't try to kill him, Pierce harbors no ill will toward the PCs and is happy to forgive any "accidental" injuries. If the PCs befriend Pierce, he becomes another ally they can call upon for aid later in the Adventure Path.

If Caulky Tarroon managed to escape the PCs, there are no immediate consequences, but the PCs can be sure that Barnabas Harrigan now knows the mutinous PCs have survived and are present in the Shackles. If the PCs caught Caulky, she tells them that she was only trying to curry favor with Harrigan by reporting their whereabouts to their former captain. She knows nothing of importance, and holds no great loyalty to Harrigan—in fact, she offers to join the PCs' crew if they spare her life (though her loyalty to the PCs is one of convenience and nothing more). Although Caulky knows where the *Wormwood* is berthed, you should discourage the PCs from visiting their former ship, as both Harrigan and the *Wormwood* have more roles to play, both later in this adventure and in the Adventure Path. In any case, the *Wormwood* leaves Port Peril the following morning, whether Caulky is on board or not.

**Story Award:** If the PCs befriend Pierce Jerrell, award them 3,200 XP, as if they had defeated him in combat.

## PART TWO: AT A LADY'S REQUEST

A day after the PCs receive their letter of marque from the Hurricane King, a messenger delivers a letter from Tessa Fairwind, Mistress of the city of Quent on Motaku Isle, inviting them to dinner at her townhouse in Port Peril the following evening. Tales of the PCs' exploits have impressed Tessa, and she wishes to recruit them for a sensitive task. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (local) check recognizes Tessa as captain of the sloop-of-war *Luck of the Draw* and one of the most powerful and popular pirate lords on the Pirate Council of the Shackles. A result of 15 or higher on the check also reveals the common rumor that Tessa is next in line for the Hurricane Crown—either by the acclaim of the Free Captains, or by taking it from Kerdak Bonefist herself. A full description of Tessa Fairwind appears on page 56.

When the PCs arrive at Tessa's townhouse, her retainers show them into a windowed dining hall with a view overlooking Port Peril's harbor. Tessa introduces herself and congratulates the PCs on being named Free Captains. She asks them what they know of the current political situation in the Shackles, and hints that Kerdak Bonefist's hold over the fractious pirate lords is perhaps not as strong as it might appear. If her own possible candidacy for the position is mentioned, Tessa explains just how reticent she is to become the next Hurricane King. Nevertheless, she recognizes that Bonefist's days



## NAVIGATING THE SHACKLES

Throughout this adventure, and the rest of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, the PCs will be sailing their ship to a variety of destinations. In order to do so, they must successfully plot a course and follow it to their destination. Navigating a ship requires a successful DC 18 Profession (sailor) or Survival check. Characters with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) gain a +2 bonus on the check. Attempts to navigate without proper navigational tools (such as an astrolabe, charts, compass, or sextant) take a –4 penalty on the check. Success means the ship reaches its destination as planned in the normal time. A failure means the ship gets lost, following the rules for getting lost on pages 424–425 of the *Core Rulebook*. Each failed check adds 1d4 days to the ship's travel time.

are likely numbered, and hints that the time is ripe for those with ambition to start gathering allies.

Tessa also mentions the recent whispers she's been hearing about Cheliox's designs on the Shackles. Cheliox's hatred of the pirate isles is nothing new, of course, but lately the rumors have been hinting at another Chelish invasion, which, if successful, could result in the Shackles being annexed into the empire—a horrific outcome to any Free Captain, regardless of who wears the Hurricane Crown. Tessa is convinced that there is some truth behind these rumors, but she needs solid proof to put before the Hurricane King and the Pirate Council to force them to take united action. However, she can't investigate these rumors herself—she's too well known for such subtle work, and she needs to remain in Port Peril to maintain her influence over certain factions within the council.

Instead, Tessa requests that the PCs investigate the rumors. As resourceful newcomers, independent of any pirate lord, they have the best chance of uncovering information. Seeing the PCs as free agents with no preexisting loyalties, Tessa secretly hopes to ally with them and groom them for leadership roles in the Shackles—if not to eventually claim the Hurricane Crown for themselves, then to gain prominent places on the Pirate Council at the very least. Tessa offers the PCs the chance to ally with her and join her fleet, though in truth, they will pretty much be left to their own devices. Indeed, Tessa doesn't want it known that she is investigating these rumors, and her alliance with the PCs should be kept quiet for now.

If the PCs turn down Tessa's offer to join her fleet, she isn't surprised, but still asks that they investigate the rumors. She points out that if they agree, the PCs will have her gratitude and friendship—a valuable commodity, for as Mistress of

Quent and one of the principal lords on the Pirate Council, she possesses considerable influence. If she feels that it might help seal the deal, Tessa even hints at the possibility of a romance with one of the PCs, seductively adding that her favors are a reward many are extremely eager for. If all else fails, Tessa offers the PCs wealth to investigate, promising a reward equivalent to 5 points of plunder should they return with solid proof she can place before the council.

Once the PCs agree, Tessa gives them two leads to follow.

"I am convinced that Cheliox has spies and informants working in the Shackles, and I can think of only two places that might have some knowledge of these traitorous informers in our midst. The first is the House of Stolen Kisses in Quent, a temple of Calistria and one of the best information brokerages in the Shackles. Use this note to obtain an audience with the temple's high priestess, Dindreann.

"The second is the Temple of the Hidden Name, a secret temple of Norgorber said to operate in the town of Beachcomber on Bag Island. If anyone knows of these spies, it would be the followers of the Reaper of Reputation. I have no contacts with the priests of that temple, so I hope you can convince them to reveal what they know."

Tessa then unfurls several beautifully drawn, highly detailed nautical charts of the Shackles. These are *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58), and Tessa points out the locations of Quent and Beachcomber to the PCs on the charts. She gives the charts to the PCs, presenting them in an expertly crafted watertight case as the PCs depart. If the PCs agreed to join Tessa's fleet, she also gives them a pennant to fly from their masthead signifying their allegiance to her. If she flirted with one of the PCs, she adds a farewell kiss before they set sail as well.

The PCs can follow Tessa's initial leads in any order, traveling either to Motaku Isle to visit the House of Stolen Kisses or to Bag Island to find the Temple of the Hidden Name. The steps that the PCs will follow as they investigate the spy ring are presented below in the most likely order for their investigation, but the actual order in which these events and encounters occur should be based on the PCs' actions and investigations.

### STEP 1: HOUSE OF STOLEN KISSES

Following Tessa's lead, the PCs journey to the lively seaport of Quent on the northern coast of Motaku Isle, making their way to the House of Stolen Kisses, both a holy temple to Calistria and a brothel. When the PCs present Tessa's note, scantily clad acolytes escort them through sensually decorated corridors to the chambers of the temple's high priestess, **Dindreann** (CN female human cleric of Calistria 9). Dindreann pleasantly greets the PCs, offers them comfortable seating and stimulating refreshment. When

## TEMPEST RISING

the PCs are seated and refreshed, she asks what service she can render to associates of her “dearest friend Tessa.”

**Spies:** If the PCs mention that they’re seeking spies in the Shackles, Dindreann confirms that the House of Stolen Kisses has leads on such information, as many people share their secrets with the temple’s sacred prostitutes in the heat of passion. But these secrets are shared in confidence, and the temple cannot simply give them away for free. If the PCs were to perform a service for the temple, however, they could expect such knowledge as payment.

Dindreann tells the PCs that a ship owned by the temple, the *Lady’s Sting*, recently went missing. Divinations have revealed that the ship was attacked by a group of pirates who deliberately lure ships into danger so that they can salvage the cargoes of the resulting wrecked ships. Piracy is a fact of life in the Shackles, of course, but the *Lady’s Sting* was carrying a relic sacred to the faith—a gold-plated wasp statue known as the Golden Vespal. The temple seeks revenge on these wreckers who would dare attack one of the faith’s holy vessels, as well as the return of the Golden Vespal, but they have so far been unable to locate the wreckers that attacked the *Lady’s Sting*. If the PCs can find the wreckers, enact the goddess’s revenge upon them, and recover the Golden Vespal, Dindreann will give them a lead on the spies they are seeking.

A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check is enough to realize that wreckers are a not uncommon hazard in the Shackles, and finding the specific crew that attacked the *Lady’s Sting* will be a difficult task. However, it’s possible that the Temple of the Hidden Name in Beachcomber might have some information that could lead to the wreckers.

**Brine Banshee:** If the PCs ask Dindreann about the *Brine Banshee*, she tells them that she knows of someone with information about the lost ship. If the PCs have already defeated the wreckers and returned the Golden Vespal to the temple, Dindreann gives them this information for free. Otherwise, they must succeed at a DC 18 Diplomacy check to convince her to share her information. Dindreann accepts bribes with a smile but these don’t affect her decision, unless the bribes are less than 50 gp, in which case she is quietly affronted, adding +5 to the DC of the check. While Dindreann doesn’t accept offers of a carnal nature at this point, she appreciates the thought, and such an offer grants a +2 circumstance bonus

on the Diplomacy check. Once the PCs convince Dindreann to share her information, she tells them that a retired ship’s doctor in the port of Ollo named Haneilius Fitch claims to have a means to locate the *Brine Banshee*, but is looking for someone to bankroll his expedition. Go to **Step 4** if the PCs go in search of Haneilius Fitch and the *Brine Banshee*.

**Development:** If the PCs return the Golden Vespal to the House of Stolen Kisses as proof of their revenge against Vakarla’s wreckers, Dindreann lives up to her end of the bargain, and tells the PCs that one of the temple’s patrons, a half-elf scrimshander in Drenchport named Jaymiss Keft, claimed to have knowledge of a spy operating in the Shackles. The PCs should seek him out to learn the name of this spy. Go to **Step 5** for the PCs’ meeting with Jaymiss Keft.

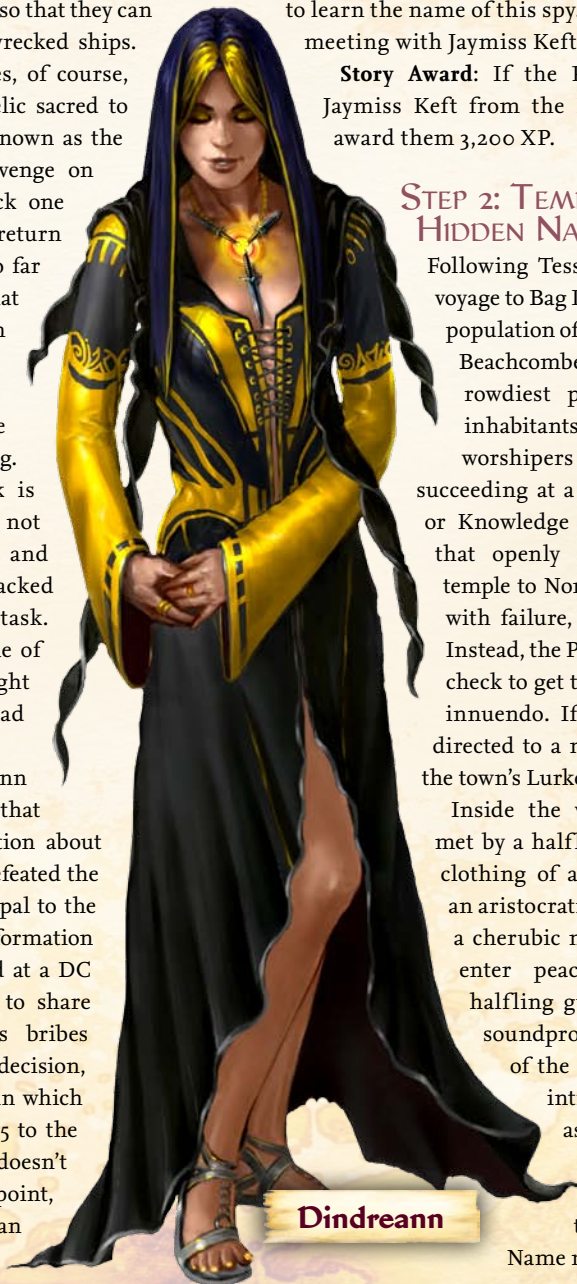
**Story Award:** If the PCs learn the name of Jaymiss Keft from the House of Stolen Kisses, award them 3,200 XP.

### STEP 2: TEMPLE OF THE HIDDEN NAME

Following Tessa’s second lead, the PCs voyage to Bag Island, home to the largest population of halflings in the Shackles.

Beachcomber is one of Bag Island’s rowdiest ports, and many of its inhabitants are rumored to be secret worshipers of Norgorber. Anyone succeeding at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (religion) check realizes that openly asking about a hidden temple to Norgorber would likely meet with failure, if not outright hostility. Instead, the PCs can make a DC 15 Bluff check to get their meaning across with innuendo. If successful, the PCs are directed to a nondescript warehouse in the town’s Lurker District.

Inside the warehouse, the PCs are met by a halfling dressed in the black clothing of an indentured servant of an aristocratic household and wearing a cherubic mask. As long as the PCs enter peacefully, the obsequious halfling guides them to a discreet soundproofed room in the back of the warehouse. The halfling introduces himself simply as “**Slip**” (NE male halfling cleric of Norgorber 3/rogue 3) and asks how the Temple of the Hidden Name may be of service.



Dindreann



**Spies:** If the PCs explain that they're searching for spies in the Shackles, Slip nods and states that the Reaper of Reputation knows much that is hidden, but that secrets always have a price. He goes on to explain that the Temple of the Hidden Name deals in information, using secrets as currency. To learn one of the temple's secrets, the PCs must pay with another secret of equal value. Fortunately, there is information that the temple wants.

Slip tells the PCs that a famous ship called the *Brine Banshee* mysteriously disappeared several months ago. The *Brine Banshee* was said to have been one of the fastest ships in the Shackles, with unparalleled handling for a vessel its size, which many believed were the result of several potent spells woven into the ship. If the PCs can find what happened to the *Brine Banshee*, and discover the secret of its unprecedented speed and maneuverability, they can trade this knowledge for the information they seek.

A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to recall tales of the ill-fated *Brine Banshee*, which disappeared west of Shark Island after leaving the port of Ollo. What happened after remains a mystery, but the ship did visit Quent on its way to Ollo, so perhaps the House of Stolen Kisses has a lead on the *Brine Banshee's* fate.

**Wreckers/Lady's Sting:** If the PCs ask Slip about wreckers operating in the Shackles or the fate of the *Lady's Sting*, Slip says that it is no secret that many such groups operate in the Shackles, but he has knowledge of one crew that claimed to have successfully attacked a Calistrian vessel. If the PCs have already discovered the wreck of the *Brine Banshee*, Slip parts with this knowledge for a "donation" of 750 gp to the temple. Otherwise, he demands another secret from the PCs in exchange. The exact nature of what sort of secret Slip accepts as payment is up to you. Possible examples include the true identity of the PCs' ship and how they acquired it, the fate of the *Infernus* from *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #55, or the location of Mancatcher Cove from *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #56. Alternatively, Slip accepts the promise of a future secret as payment. In this case, it is up to you to ensure that the PCs make good on their promise, keeping in mind that the church of Norgorber is not in the habit of giving away its secrets for free. Once the PCs have negotiated the payment with Slip, the halfling tells them that the wreckers they seek are led by a half-orc wizard named Vakarla, and operate from a hidden island base southeast of the Rampore Isles. Go to **Step 3** for the PCs' encounter with Vakarla and her wreckers.

**Development:** If the PCs return to the Temple of the Hidden Name with the location of the wreck of the *Brine Banshee* and the secret of its speed, Slip accepts that information in trade for details on spies in the Shackles. He informs the PCs that he knows of a water naga named Sarlis who claims to know the location of a smuggler and spy for a foreign power. Sarlis resides in a shallow cove on

the Slithering Coast at this time of year, the location of which Slip marks on the PCs' charts. He tells the PCs to look for a hillock with a lone tree at the top on the western side of the river flowing into the cove. Nearby is a pool where the PCs should wait for Sarlis, which could take several days. The nagas of the Slithering Coast are aggressive and territorial, but Sarlis is more "social" than most of her ilk. Still, they might have to wait several days for the naga to deign to meet with them. The PCs' encounter with the nagas of the Slithering Coast is detailed in **Step 7**.

**Story Award:** If the PCs learn about Sarlis from the Temple of the Hidden Name, award them 3,200 XP.

### STEP 3: SAVAGE SHIPWRECKERS

This side quest is detailed starting on page 20.

### STEP 4: THE BRINE BANSHEE

This side quest is detailed starting on page 23.

### STEP 5: JAYMISS KEFT

In search of the half-elf scrimshander Jaymiss Keft, the PCs sail to the damp and gloomy city of Drenchport on Tempest Cay, making their way ashore as heavy rain washes the streets. Jaymiss is well known in Drenchport both as an expert scrimshaw carver and a shameless rumormonger. A successful DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information reveals that the gray-haired old half-elf spends most of his time by the fire in the Carvers' Hall, a communal building where Drenchport's scrimshanders work together on larger projects and sell their finished works.

**Jaymiss Keft** (N male middle-aged half-elf expert 4) has an initial attitude of indifferent, but he can be made friendly with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. Purchasing one of Jaymiss's scrimshaws (at a cost of 2d10 gp) and getting him a warm drink of black kelp beer, or offering a bribe of at least 10 gp grants a +5 circumstance bonus on the check. Once made friendly, Jaymiss reveals that he has suspicions about a man named Haddon Pike, a beachcomber, fisherman, and occasional smuggler. The thing is, many of Haddon's supposed smuggling trips down south in a hired boat don't actually involve moving goods. Jaymiss knows the black market in Drenchport pretty well, and he's noticed that Haddon seldom buys or sells any contraband goods before or after these trips. Jaymiss can provide the PCs with directions to Haddon's cottage (see **Step 6**).

### STEP 6: HADDON PIKE

Haddon Pike was hired by Zarskia Galeambar to spy on the Master of Gales, and his "smuggling" trips south (noted by Jaymiss Keft) were actually to deliver intelligence to his contact Roweena Kellet in Hell Harbor. Unfortunately for Haddon, he was Giles Halmis's first target.

## TEMPEST RISING

Haddon's residence is a small driftwood cottage perched on the rugged coast just outside of Drenchport. Haddon's neighbors haven't seen him recently, though he tends to keep his own company. The front door has a simple lock (DC 20 Disable Device check to open), and there's an open window at the back. Haddon's dead body lies inside the cottage. Two crossbow bolts protrude from his back, and his head is submerged in a fish tank. The tank holds Haddon's pet, "Grinner," a piranha-like creature with frilled spines, huge eyes, and lots of teeth, which has consumed most of its master's exposed flesh. Clutched in Haddon's hand is a piece of driftwood carved to resemble a birdlike humanoid with a narrow beak, recognizable as a tengu with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) check.

If the PCs examine the body, a successful DC 15 Heal check confirms that Haddon has been dead for around a week, while a successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) or Heal check identifies faint traces of poison on the crossbow bolts. The angle of the bolts suggests that Haddon was shot through the window. A DC 20 Perception check made while searching outside discovers a discarded glass vial near a rocky outcropping about 80 feet away with a good view of Haddon's window. Rain has washed away tracks and any residue from the vial.

**Treasure:** While the cottage has been thoroughly ransacked, a successful DC 25 Perception check finds a concealed compartment in the fish tank's heavily carved wooden base. Inside is a waterproofed bag containing 40 pp, 259 gp, and a scrimshaw walrus tusk scroll case (worth 50 gp). Inside the case are several rolled up scrolls of sheet music and lyrics, part of an old Chelish opera written in Infernal. Besides the obvious incongruity of finding a Chelish opera in the possession of a beachcomber, a DC 15 Knowledge (history) check recognizes that Infernal would not have been used at the time the opera was written, a hint that the opera may hold a clue. In fact, the opera contains a series of instructions that have been encoded in a complicated cipher. Cracking the code requires a successful DC 30 Linguistics check. A character who speaks Infernal, has 5 or more ranks in Perform (sing), or succeeds at a DC 25 Perform (any category) check gains a +2 bonus on the check. The decoded instructions order Haddon to report on the movement of ships visiting Drenchport, especially those belonging to the Master of the Gales. The instructions also identify Haddon's main contact, a woman named Roweena Kellet in Hell Harbor on Devil's Arches (see **Step 9**).

**Development:** If the PCs are unable to decipher the encoded opera, they can take it to a large settlement such as Port Peril or Quent and hire someone to decode it, or take it to the Temple of the Hidden Name, where Slip is only too happy to learn the secrets contained within it for himself.

If the PCs show Jaymiss Keft the tengu carving they found at Haddon's cottage, or question him about Haddon's associates, Jaymiss explains that Haddon had a

regular shipmate and accomplice: a tengu named Corlan. The carving could represent Corlan, who lives in Hell Harbor (see **Step 10**).

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully find and decipher the clues that lead to Roweena Kellet, award them 3,200 XP.

### STEP 7: NAGAS OF THE SLITHERING COAST

This encounter is detailed starting on page 33.

### STEP 8: ELLIECE FARHAVEN

Captain Elliece Farhaven and her ship the *Diamond Star* carried messages, intelligence, and sensitive and contraband materials for Zarskia Galeambar's spy ring. The *Diamond Star* was captured by the Rahadoumi navy shortly after her retirement, but Elliece continued to send intelligence on Tessa Fairwind's fleet to Roweena Kellet in Hell Harbor.

After traveling back to Motaku Isle, the PCs can easily find the mooring in Quent's harbor that holds Elliece's small boat, an unnamed craft with a single tiny cabin. Inside lies the bludgeoned body of a tiny winged devil, identifiable as an imp with a DC 12 Knowledge (planes) check, well and truly beaten to death with the ichor-stained anchor lying nearby. Zarskia sent the imp (supplied by Cheliox through her Nidalese contacts) to "retire" Captain Farhaven, but Elliece's sixth sense for danger saved her when the invisible imp entered the cabin. Elliece grabbed the anchor and knocked out the imp with a couple of lucky blows, then frantically bludgeoned the imp for several minutes to be sure it was dead. Certain that her mysterious employer was behind the assassination attempt, Elliece fled the Shackles, buying passage on the swiftest trading vessel she could find rather than attempting the perilous ocean voyage in her tiny boat.

A DC 10 Perception check notices a sealed glass bottle containing a rolled-up scrap of parchment thrown on the cabin's single bunk. While the page inside the bottle is blank and isn't magical, it does hold a message written in invisible ink (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Adventurer's Armory* 10). Because the page has been sealed inside the bottle for some time, the PCs can notice the chemical aroma about it with a successful DC 20 Perception check, hinting at the nature of the message's concealment. The message can be revealed using either heat or vinegar (both a lamp and a bottle of vinegar may be found in the cabin), or with a successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check that takes 1 hour. When revealed, the message details Elliece's last orders: a simple instruction to report to an address in Hell Harbor—the warehouse of Roweena Kellet (see **Step 9**).

**Story Award:** If the PCs find and decipher the clue that leads to Roweena Kellet, award them 3,200 XP.

### STEP 9: ROWEENA KELLET

Following the leads from either Haddon Pike's cottage or Elliece Farhaven's boat, the PCs journey to the island



of Devil's Arches and the town of Hell Harbor in search of Roweena Kellet. A DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information around town identifies Roweena as a harbor quartermaster in the employ of Arronax Endymion, lord of Hell Harbor and a former admiral in the Chelish navy. Roweena manages two of Endymion's smaller trade warehouses, but she's recently gone missing.

In fact, Roweena was a major player in Zarskia Galembar's spy ring, passing along orders to and receiving information from Haddon Pike and Elliece Farhaven (usually through the tengu smuggler Corlan), while providing her own intelligence on Arronax Endymion to Zarskia. No longer needed after Zarskia was ordered to liquidate the spy ring, Roweena was the second target of the assassin Giles Halmis, who slew her and dumped her body at sea.

Since Roweena's disappearance, the goods in the warehouses she managed have been transferred to other holdings, leaving both warehouses empty, but the PCs can easily learn her home address with another DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information. The front door of Roweena's house has been broken open, and the place has been ransacked. Hell Harbor guards have been through the place looking for her, but at the moment, they're merely concerned that one of Endymion's employees has met with foul play.

None of the many shipping and mercantile papers scattered about Roweena's office implicate her as a spy or informer, but a successful DC 30 Perception check finds a ledger listing the names of numerous major pirate lords of the Shackles, each with a large number beside it. A successful DC 20 Appraise or Linguistics check allows a PC to recognize the numbers as estimated bribes, either to have the named pirates lord turn traitor, or to have their followers overthrow them. Of these names, one stands out: Arronax Endymion, whose entry has only a dash, rather than a number, after to his name. The meaning of this entry is that to the Chelish government, his only acceptable fate is capture, trial, torture, and public execution, but the PCs might misinterpret the entry and assume that Endymion has already turned traitor. Scribbled at the bottom of one page is a single line: "Send with Corlan."

**Development:** If the PCs ask around Hell Harbor about Corlan, or about Roweena's known associates, a successful DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information reveals that Corlan is a tengu smuggler who frequently works as an agent for Roweena. The PCs can find out Corlan's address in Hell Harbor with a DC 15 check. Go to **Step 10** if the PCs go in search of Corlan.

## STEP 10: A CROW'S MURDER

This encounter is detailed starting on page 34.

## STEP 11: JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY

This site is detailed starting on page 36.

## SAVAGE SHIPWRECKERS (CR 9)

Following the lead gained at the Temple of the Hidden Name, the PCs sail to the Rampore Isles in search of the wreckers who attacked the *Lady's Sting*. With no way of knowing the wreckers' exact location, the PCs must sail around until they stumble upon the wreckers, or the wreckers find them first. If the PCs didn't learn about the wreckers at the temple, this encounter can occur at any time during the PCs' travels through the Shackles.

The wreckers have set up their operation in dangerous shoals southeast of the Rampore Isles, 2 days' travel away from any major port. The leader of this crew of barbarous half-orc reavers is an accomplished illusionist named Vakarla. Renegades from the Terwa Uplands, Vakarla and her wreckers take the perfidious and risky gamble of preying on Shackles pirates. The wreckers sail from a nearby island in the early evening and moor their small, leaky lugger near the barren outcroppings of a reef that rise a few feet above the waterline here, returning to their island base just before dawn.

Vakarla used *hallucinatory terrain* and a *scroll of mirage arcana* to disguise the reef and the wreckers' boat as an ordinary stretch of ocean, hoping to lure unsuspecting victims onto the uncharted reef. Vakarla and her wrecker cutthroats hide in the extra-dimensional space provided by a *rope trick* spell, while the rest of her crew hides belowdecks in their illusion-cloaked ship. A lookout keeps watch through the *rope trick*'s window and alerts the rest of the crew once a ship is sighted.

**Ship Combat:** As the PCs' ship approaches the concealed reef, they are spotted by the wreckers' lookout. As it's unlikely that the PCs are heading straight for the reef, Vakarla casts *invisibility* on herself and leaves the *rope trick*. She then casts *major image* to create a detailed illusion of a small merchant sailing ship with its sails lowered and flying a Rahadoumi flag. The figment even has a nameplate that reads *Shining Star*. When the PCs get closer, Vakarla concentrates on the illusion, making the *Shining Star* appear to frantically try to raise sails and get underway, as if fleeing the PCs' ship. The illusory ship floats safely through the glamor-cloaked reef, luring the PCs' ship into the wreckers' trap.

If the PCs pursue the *Shining Star*, they can make opposed Profession (sailor) checks against Vakarla's check. If successful, a character notices discrepancies in how the ship sits in the water and how its crew sails it, allowing that character to make a DC 18 Will save to disbelieve the illusion. If the PCs attack the *Shining Star* with missile weapons or siege engines, Vakarla causes the illusion to react appropriately, but the interaction allows that PCs another chance to disbelieve the illusion.

Likewise, when the PCs' ship enters the *hallucinatory terrain* (usually the same round it strikes the reef), those on deck

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can make a DC 20 Profession (sailor) or Survival check to notice subtle irregularities in the ocean, such as the height and frequency of waves, or the coloring of the nearby sea. Those who succeed at the check can make a DC 19 Will save to see through the *hallucinatory terrain*. Characters directly interacting with the terrain, such as those swimming in the ocean, can also attempt to disbelieve the illusion.

If the pilot of the PC's ship successfully disbelieves the *hallucinatory terrain*, she can attempt a last-ditch DC 20 sailing check to heave to and lessen the impact of the collision. If the ship moves 60 feet or more, it strikes the reef, taking normal ramming damage (usually 8d8 point of damage for a sailing ship), and runs aground, reducing its speed to 0. If the pilot's sailing check was successful, the damage is halved (though the ship still runs aground). The PCs each take 4d6 points of damage from being thrown about by the sudden grinding halt and must make DC 20 Reflex saves or be knocked prone.

The PCs can avoid the wreckers if they ignore the illusory ship or try to steer clear of it. However, if the PCs see through Vakarla's ruse, or start to follow the *Shining Star* then suddenly break off, she knows she can't let them get away to report her presence in the area. Vakarla flies to the PCs' ship and casts a *wall of force* from a scroll directly ahead of the ship, causing it to plow straight into the wall, dealing normal ramming damage as above and halting the ship; those aboard take damage and must make Reflex saves as previously noted. Meanwhile, Vakarla's crew swims out and clamber aboard to fight the PCs and their crew.

If necessary, you can use the statistics for a keelboat (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 24) for Vakarla's lugger, though the PCs are unlikely to engage the vessel in ship-to-ship combat.

**Creatures:** When it seems inevitable the PCs' ship will strike the reef, Vakarla re-enters the *rope trick* to cast her preparatory spells, including *invisibility sphere*. She and her four wrecker cutthroats exit the *rope trick* together as the rest of her crew climbs from their hiding places aboard their vessel, and rush to the site of the PCs' grounded ship, where Vakarla uses her *rope of climbing* to let her crew quickly swarm onto the deck of the ship.

### VAKARLA

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female half-orc illusionist 9

CE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

### DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 shield)

hp 84 (9d6+50)

Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +9

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee mwk falchion +5 (2d4/18–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +7 (1d8/19–20)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +13)

At will—*invisibility field* (9 rounds/day)7/day—*blinding ray*

Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +13)

5th—*mirage arcana* (DC 20), *overland flight*4th—*fear* (DC 18), *hallucinatory terrain* (DC 19), *phantasmal killer* (DC 19), *wall of fire*3rd—*haste*, *invisibility sphere*, *major image* (DC 18), *stinking cloud* (DC 17), *vampiric touch*

Vakarla





2nd—*false life*, *fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *rope trick*, *scorching ray*

1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *color spray* (DC 16), *grease*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15)

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *open/close*

**Opposition Schools** Abjuration, Enchantment

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Vakarla casts *false life*, *mage armor*, and *overland flight* every day. When the PCs' ship is about to crash into the reef, she casts *mirror image* and *shield* from her wand.

**During Combat** Vakarla casts *fog cloud* over the PCs' ship, then casts *haste* on herself and her cutthroats just before her crew board the PCs' ship. She uses her flight to keep out of melee combat and starts by casting *fear* on a large group of foes, then casts her attack spells against those resisting her crew, using her invisibility field to stay invisible. She saves *phantasmal killer* for use against the ship's captain. Vakarla's monkey familiar, Mister Swabb, clings to her shoulder flinging droppings and screeching at anyone who attacks her.

**Morale** Vakarla expects a quick and easy victory, so if her cutthroats are slain, or if she is reduced to fewer than 25 hit points, she flees combat, flying back to her island base (see Development below).

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Brew Potion, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion), Toughness

**Skills** Fly +20, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Perception +10, Profession (sailor) +9, Sense Motive +1, Spellcraft +16, Swim +4

**Languages** Common, Giant, Goblin, Orc, Osiriani, Polyglot  
**SQ** arcane bond (monkey named Mister Swabb), extended illusions +4 rounds, orc blood, weapon familiarity

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of invisibility*, *scroll of knock*, *scroll of wall of force*, *scroll of water breathing*, *wand of shield* (20 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork falchion, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +2, *rope of climbing*, bicorn hat, periscope, watertight engraved bronze scroll case (worth 75 gp), spell component pouch, spyglass

#### WRECKER CUTTHROATS (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Half-orc barbarian (sea reaver) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 29)

CE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, -2 rage)

**hp** 40 each (3d12+15)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** orc ferocity

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** falchion +8 (2d4+7/18-20)

**Ranged** light crossbow +4 (1d8/19-20)

**Special Attacks** rage (10 rounds/day), rage powers (no escape)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The wrecker cutthroats wait for Vakarla to cast *haste* on them, then rage and leap in among the ship's crew to prevent an organized defense. They gang up on opponents, flanking when possible and slaying everyone aboard, even those who surrender.

**Morale** The bloodthirsty cutthroats fight to the death.

**Base Statistics** When not raging, a wrecker cutthroat's statistics are **AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; **hp** 34; **Fort** +5, **Will** +2; **Melee** falchion +6 (2d4+4/18-20); **Str** 17, **Con** 14; **CMB** +6; **Skills** Climb +7, Swim +7.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Power Attack

**Skills** Acrobatics +5 (+6 in aquatic terrain), Climb +9 (+10 in aquatic terrain), Intimidate +6, Perception +6, Survival +6 (+7 in aquatic terrain), Swim +10

**SQ** eyes of the storm\*, marine terror\*, orc blood, savage sailor\*, weapon familiarity

**Gear** studded leather, falchion, light crossbow with 10 bolts, 15 gp

\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

**Development:** If the PCs see through the illusions cloaking the area, they can see the shattered remains of two sunken ships in the shallows. Both wrecks are recent, sunk within the last couple of months. One of them is the lost *Lady's Sting*. Both ships have been thoroughly broken up and picked clean.

If the PCs' ship strikes the reef, its pilot must succeed at a DC 20 Profession (sailor) check to free the ship. If the PCs capture Vakarla or any of her crew and question them, they can learn the location of the wreckers' base, concealed on a small rocky island several miles away. Hidden from the shoreline, the base is a ramshackle series of thatched huts surrounded by a flimsy wooden palisade. If Vakarla fled combat, she flies back here, loads supplies and her sea chest (see Treasure below) into a longboat, and flees the Shackles.

**Treasure:** The wreckers' base contains cargo and supplies worth 6 points of plunder, primarily consisting of leather, spices, timber, and various ships' equipment. The base also contains three longboats and a crude alchemist's laboratory in one hut.

Vakarla's sea chest lies buried under a thin layer of sand beneath her bunk, and can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check (the chest is missing if Vakarla

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fled through here). The unlocked trunk holds a mithral dagger set with aquamarine gemstones worth 900 gp, a *Shackles ensign* (see page 58), 320 gp in mixed coins, and Vakarla's spellbook. The spellbook contains all of Vakarla's prepared spells, all cantrips, *knock*, *wall of force*, and *water breathing*, plus additional spells of your choice from 1st to 5th level, with a focus on illusion spells.

A DC 25 Perception check discovers a golden statue of a wasp wrapped in oilcloth and stuffed in an empty barrel—the Golden Vespal, stolen from the *Lady's Sting*. The statue could be worth up to 5,000 gp to the right buyer, but the priests of Calistria at the House of Stolen Kisses would likely seek to gain their revenge on the PCs for not returning the sacred relic.

### THE BRINE BANSHEE

With the information gleaned at the House of Stolen Kisses, the PCs travel to Ollo on Shark Island in search of Haneilius Fitch, who claims to know something of the missing ship *Brine Banshee*. If the PCs did not learn about Fitch from the priests of Calistria, they can still encounter Haneilius Fitch in any port in the Shackles. In this case, Fitch approaches them about serving as ship's surgeon aboard their vessel, using Bluff to convey a secret message indicating that he has information about the *Brine Banshee*.

The port of Ollo is a foul and wretched place, and its miserable residents are sullenly close-mouthed. They've as much to fear from their bestial pirate lord Avimar Sorrinash as from sahuagin raids, and questions from outsiders are often met with anxious and suspicious silence. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check made to gather information is necessary to learn the address of Haneilius Fitch's surgical offices.

**Haneilius Fitch** (LN male old human expert 6) is a gray haired gentleman with a Taldan accent, who introduces himself as a retired ship's physician. If the PCs ask him about the *Brine Banshee*, Fitch claims to know nothing about the ship, but a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that the old man is not telling the truth. Fitch's initial attitude is indifferent, but if the PCs make him friendly with successful a DC 16 Diplomacy check, or succeed at a DC 20 Bluff check to imply that they can help him find the missing ship, Fitch reveals what he knows. He holds up a glass tube containing a human leg bone suspended in preservative solution.

"This tibia previously belonged to Vargus Brack, one of my old shipmates. Vargus was grateful to be rid of it—he'd have died of gangrene if I hadn't amputated his leg. It's a good

thing I kept it as a specimen, since he was an officer aboard the *Brine Banshee* when she last sailed. Vargus and I were good friends—he came to visit me the last time the *Brine Banshee* was in Ollo, as he always did when he was in port. He mentioned in passing the course the *Brine Banshee* would be taking, and said he wouldn't be back for some time. The *Brine Banshee* had an abundance of riches aboard her, and together I believe we can salvage them. Are you interested?"

Assuming the PCs agree, Fitch goes on to explain how they can track down the missing ship. Although Fitch knows the *Brine Banshee*'s course, he needs magic to find the exact location where the ship went down. Fitch explains that there's a magical ring that can be used to find a corpse, provided the wearer already has a piece of the body. He goes on to tell them that he knows of a pirate captain who wears just such a ring, called the *ring of the iron skull*.

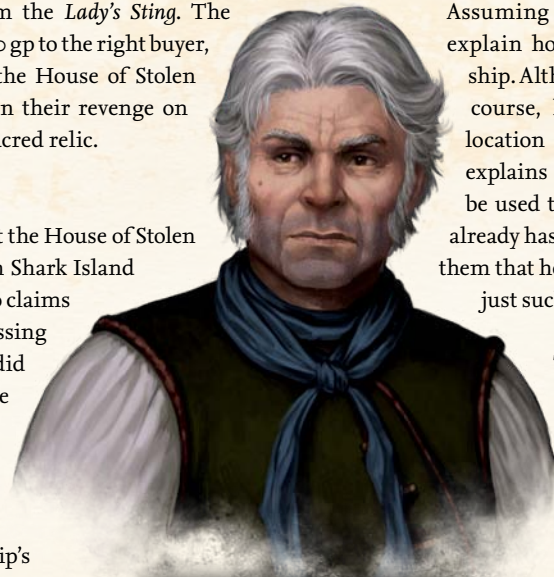
This is where the PCs come in. They have a ship of their own, and are strong enough to take the *ring of the iron skull* from its current owner. Fitch has Vargus's leg bone and knows the route the *Brine Banshee* took. Fitch tries to barter a deal with the PCs:

he wants an equal share of the *Brine Banshee*'s treasure. He doesn't care about magic items; he just wants enough money to live the rest of his life in modest comfort. In exchange, he'll tell them who has the ring and guide them along the *Brine Banshee*'s course until they find the ship.

Once he reaches an agreement with the PCs, Fitch tells them that the *ring of the iron skull* is in the possession of a pirate named "Milksop" Morton, who regularly sails his sloop *Dryad's Grave* between the Smoker and Shark Island. Fortunately for the PCs, the *Dryad's Grave* is due in Ollo within the next week. If they can accost the ship before it makes port, the PCs can acquire the *ring of the iron skull* and find the *Brine Banshee*.

### THE DRYAD'S GRAVE (CR 10)

Assuming the PCs decide to lie in wait for the *Dryad's Grave*, they encounter the pirate sloop a day's sail southeast of Ollo. The *Dryad's Grave*'s greedy captain, Milksop Morton, is an independent, unaligned pirate who does not hold a Shackles letter of marque. He seeks to make a name for himself and earn quick profits by extorting the hard-won plunder of other independent pirates not sworn to powerful pirate lords. Captain Morton is a conjurer who has used ancient rituals powered by his own blood to magically animate several weapons on his ship.



**Haneilius Fitch**



The *Dryad's Grave's* appears on the horizon off the PCs' port bow around midday. The *Dryad's Grave* spots the PCs' ship at the same time and closes in, signaling that it wishes to parley. Not recognizing the PCs' ship, Captain Morton assumes that the PCs and their ship will be easy pickings. If the PCs don't immediately attack, Morton waits until the two ships are within hailing range (100 feet), to yell his introductions and ask what destination the PCs are bound for. He also questions the PCs about their allegiances to the Free Captains and whose fleet they serve. Regardless of the PCs' answers to his questions, Morton assumes they are bluffing, and demands a toll (equivalent to at least 5 points of plunder) for sailing through "his" territory. If the PCs refuse, the *Dryad's Grave* attacks. If they capitulate, Morton sails off, once the PCs transfer the booty to his ship by ship's boat.

**Ship Combat:** Assuming the PCs resist, the *Dryad's Grave* attempts to close and grapple the PCs' ship for boarding as soon as it gets within 50 feet of the PCs' ship. The *Dryad's Grave's* figurehead is carved in the likeness of a bare-chested, goat-horned satyr with muscular arms thrust forward as if diving into the ocean, its mouth open in a silent scream of anger and pain. As the two ships close, the figurehead, called the Screaming Satyr, comes to life—it is actually a magical construct called a ship sentinel (see Creatures below). The Screaming Satyr picks up a ballista from the ship's deck and fires a bolt attached to a long chain into the hull of the PCs' ship (the attack is made with a –4 penalty because of the weight of the chain). The figurehead then proceeds to reel in the PCs' ship to grapple and board (see below).

At the same time, Morton's crew fires its springal and catapults at the PCs' ship. The springal crew targets the helm of the PCs' ship, hoping to hit the PCs and other officers. The catapults are loaded with living grapnels, animated constructs that scuttle around like spiders (see Creatures below). The catapult crews aim at the center of the PCs' deck, maximizing the grapnels' chance of landing on the deck even if they miss their targeted square. The grapnels are connected to the *Dryad's Grave* by long chains. When the grapnels land on the PCs' ship, the belowdecks crew of the *Dryad's Grave* turns large capstans to haul on the chains, drawing the two ships together. Once all three grapnels have been fired, Morton orders the catapults to stop firing, as he wants the PCs' ship intact as a prize.

Morton attempts to grapple the PCs' ship as soon as possible. Provided they successfully hit the PCs' ship, the Screaming Satyr and the living grapnels each grant a cumulative +2 bonus on Morton's combat maneuver check to grapple the PCs' ship (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 14).

If the PCs attempt to escape combat, Morton casts *summon monster III* to conjure small air elementals to tangle their rigging and harass sailors.

#### DRYAD'S GRAVE

CR 7

Shackles sloop (sailing ship) (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 25)

Init +2

#### DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 2; **Hardness** 5

hp 1,620 (sails 240)

Save +12

#### OFFENSE

**Ranged** arrow springal +10 (3d8/x3), 2 mwk light catapults +11 (4d6)

**CMB** +20; **CMD** 30

**Ramming Damage** 8d8

#### CREW

**Captain "Milksop" Morton** (NE male human conjurer 8;

Profession [sailor] +12)

**3 living grapnels** (N animated objects)

**Screaming Satyr** (N ship sentinel)

**Xicorax** (N air mephit familiar)

27 sailors (minimum 20)

#### EQUIPMENT

**Gear** arrow springal with 10 uses of ammunition (aft), 2 masterwork light catapults with 20 stones (fore), magically treated sails, 30 squares of sails (1 mast)

**Cargo** 2 points of plunder (ships' arsenal and stores, various personal possessions)

**Creatures:** Once the two ships are grappled, the Screaming Satyr detaches itself from the *Dryad's Grave* to board the PCs' ship, striking enemies with its two slam attacks. The Screaming Satyr only fires its ballista again if Morton orders it to do so. The Screaming Satyr fights until destroyed.

The living grapnels grab onto masts or railings on the PCs' ship, which gives them the grappled condition. They strike back violently against attempts to pry them off, attempting to constrict attackers with their chains. They only let go if someone severs the chains connecting them to the *Dryad's Grave* (hardness 10, hp 5, Break DC 26), at which point they attack any creature within reach. The grapnels fight until destroyed, but they also cease functioning if the Screaming Satyr is destroyed.

Milksop Morton is a broad-framed man with a large combed-over bald spot and a craggy face. His familiar Xicorax, a foul-mouthed air mephit, flies around his master's head shouting curses.

#### SCREAMING SATYR

CR 7

XP 3,200

Ballista marksman (variant ship sentinel; see page 89)

hp 68

#### LIVING GRAPNELS (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Animated object (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)

## TEMPEST RISING

N Medium construct

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 natural)

**hp** 36 each (3d10+20)

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

**Defensive Abilities** hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +5 (1d6+3 plus grab)

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d6+3)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5 (+9 grapple); **CMD** 15

**SQ** construction points (constrict, grab, metal)

### "MILKSOP" MORTON

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male human conjurer 8

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

**hp** 54 (8d6+24)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk club +4 (1d6-1)

### Arcane School Spell-Like

**Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +12)

At will—dimensional steps (240 feet/day)

7/day—acid dart (1d6+4 acid)

### Conjurer Spells Prepared

(CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*confusion* (DC 18), *resilient sphere* (DC 18), *solid fog*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*fireball* (DC 17), *slow* (DC 17), *stinking cloud* (DC 18), *summon monster III*, *tiny hut*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *scorching ray* (2), *summon monster II*

1st—*grease* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *shield*, *summon monster I*

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *flare* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *message*

**Opposition Schools** Divination, Illusion

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Morton casts *mage armor* daily, and casts *shield* before confronting the PCs.

**During Combat** Once combat begins, Morton casts *tiny hut* to provide one-way concealment around the helm of the

*Dryad's Grave*. As his ship closes in, Morton casts *solid fog* to slow the PCs' ship, followed by *confusion*, *fireball*, or *stinking cloud* on large groups of enemies. When close enough, Morton casts *resilient sphere* to neutralize enemy spellcasters, then summons groups of fire elementals or a fiendish crocodile aboard the PC's ship. Once the two ships are grappled, Morton uses his dimensional steps ability to board the PCs' ship with his familiar Xicorax.

**Morale** If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, or if it's clear that the PCs have the upper hand, Morton calls for parley and begs for mercy. He is loath to lose his ship, but he freely offers the *ring of the iron skull* in exchange for freedom for himself and the *Dryad's Grave*. If given no other choice, he fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16



Screaming Satyr



**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Augment Summoning, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Familiar, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration)

**Skills** Appraise +11, Craft (ships) +15, Fly +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +3, Profession (sailor) +12, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +15, Swim +5

**Languages** Aquan, Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran

**SQ** arcane bond (air mephit familiar named Xicorax), summoner's charm (4 rounds)

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potions of invisibility*, *scrolls of dispel magic* (2), *scroll of fly*; **Other Gear** masterwork club, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of the iron skull* (see page 58), *ring of protection* +1, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, all 0-level spells, plus four additional spells of each level from 1st to 4th)

**XICORAX** CR —

Air mephit familiar (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 202)

N Small outsider (air)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 27 (8 HD); fast healing 2 (gusty and windy areas only)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion; **DR** 5/magic

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** 2 claws +6 (1d3+1)

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (15-ft. cone, 1d8 slashing damage, DC 13 Reflex half, usable every 4 rounds), deliver touch spells

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +8)

1/hour—*blur*

1/day—*gust of wind* (DC 14), *summon* (level 2, 1 air mephit 25%)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Xicorax casts *blur* and attempts to summon another air mephit. He stays near Morton, using his breath weapon and claws against any attackers. The open air and decks of both the *Dryad's Grave* and the PCs' ship counts as gusty areas for the purposes of Xicorax's fast healing.

**Morale** Xicorax flees back to the *Dryad's Grave* if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points. If Morton is slain, Xicorax flies into the sky, never to return.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 13, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative

**Skills** Bluff +8, Fly +23, Perception +6, Stealth +12

**Languages** Common, Auran

**SQ** empathic link, share spells, speak with master

**LAST KNOWN COURSE**

Once the PCs have acquired the *ring of the iron skull*, Haneilius Fitch tells them that the *Brine Banshee* began her last voyage in Port Peril, then headed to Quent for resupply and shore leave. From Quent she sailed to Ollo, stopping briefly to sell cargo before journeying northwest around Shark Island's coastline. Fitch suggests the PCs begin their voyage in Ollo as well to follow the *Brine Banshee's* last course. Once their ship clears the strait between Shark Island and Raptor Island, however, Fitch announces to the PCs that the *Brine Banshee's* last course wasn't northwest as many in Ollo believed, but north-northeast—the captain intended to skim the fringes of the Eye of Abendego to raid merchant ships in the waters near Botosani. The *Brine Banshee's* course followed a line from the two islands north of Shark Island to the Eye's edge, cutting between the Eye and the eastern coast of Mediogalti Island and into Rahadoumi waters.

The *ring of the iron skull* has a limited range, but provided the PCs can hold their ship on a true course, it should be possible to find the *Brine Banshee*. The PCs must succeed at a DC 18 Profession (sailor) or Survival check to follow the *Brine Banshee's* course. Assuming the PCs maintain an accurate course, the *ring of the iron skull* indicates the presence of Vargus Brack's corpse only a few hours after the two islands drop out of sight below the southern horizon.

**WRECK OF THE BRINE BANSHEE**

Once the PCs reach the location where the *Brine Banshee* went down, they can search for the sunken wreck. The ocean is just over 60 feet deep here. Stony outcrops rise out of the sandy sea floor, and small sea plants grow in scattered clusters. Locating the *Brine Banshee* is relatively easy. The shipwreck lies on its side on the ocean floor. Only half the ship is visible, however; the *Brine Banshee's* bow section rests next to a rift in the ocean floor. Insightful PCs can notice the wreck's angle, with its prow pointed away from the fissure, suggesting that the ship split in two when she sank, and the vessel's stern section dropped into the murky depths of the underwater trench. The *ring of the iron skull* points to the rift as the location of Vargus's corpse.

**BLOOD IN THE WATER (CR 8)**

**Creatures:** The region around the wreck is the hunting territory of a vicious merfolk druid named Ormandar, a heavily muscled, dark-skinned merman with disturbingly sharklike teeth. Venerating the deadly killing instincts of sharks, Ormandar and his animal companion Galieus, a sleekly powerful hammerhead shark, lead a school of remorseless bull sharks and seek out exotic quarry to satisfy their degenerate bloodlust. As the PCs approach the wreck

## TEMPEST RISING

of the *Brine Banshee*, the sharks pick up their scent and alert Ormandar. He swiftly prepares for the hunt, and he and his shark pack home in on the PCs' position and attack.

### ORMANDAR

**CR 7**

#### XP 3,200

Male merfolk druid (shark shaman) 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 204, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 40)

NE Medium humanoid (aquatic)

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural)

**hp** 79 (8d8+40)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

**Defensive Abilities** resist nature's lure

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., swim 50 ft.

**Melee** +2 *trident* +13/+8 (1d8+7), bite +8 (1d6+4)

**Ranged** +2 *trident* +10 (1d8+7)

**Special Attacks** totem transformation\* (move action, 8 minutes/day), totemic summons\*, wild shape as 6th-level druid 3/day (shark form as 10th-level druid)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +9)

At will—*speak with animals* (fish only)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +10)

4th—*dispel magic* (2)

3rd—*dominate animal* (DC 15), *greater magic fang* (2)

2nd—*barkskin*, *bull's strength* (2), *chill metal* (DC 14)

1st—*charm animal* (DC 13), *cure light wounds* (2), *entangle* (2, DC 13)

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Ormandar casts *greater magic fang* on himself and his shark companion Galieus every day and uses his totem transformation ability to give himself a shark's bite attack. When he becomes aware of intruders near the wreck, Ormandar casts *barkskin* and *bull's strength* on himself and *bull's strength* on Galieus.

**During Combat** Ormandar orders Galieus and the bull sharks to attack while he stays back and casts *dispel magic* on air-breathers that are using magic to breathe underwater, forcing those opponents to hold their breath or dash to the surface for air. If Galieus or the two bull sharks are slain, Ormandar wildshapes into a Large great white shark and rushes into melee.

**Morale** Once he tastes blood, Ormandar loses control and fights to the death in a gory frenzy.

**Base Statistics** Without his spells, Ormandar's statistics are

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; **Melee** +2 *trident* +11/+6

(1d8+5), bite +4 (1d6+1); **Ranged** +2 *trident* +10 (1d8+5);

**Str** 16; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21; **Skills** Swim +20.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (trident), Natural Spell, Toughness

**Skills** Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +13, Survival +10, Swim +22

**Languages** Aquan, Common

**SQ** amphibious, nature bond (shark animal companion named Galieus), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +9, (+13 with fish), woodland stride

**Gear** +2 *trident*, *bracers of armor* +2

\* See *Ultimate Magic*.



**Ormandar**



**GALIEUS** CR —

XP 135

Shark animal companion

N Medium animal (aquatic)

**Init** +2; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +8

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)

**hp** 59 (7d8+28)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3 (+7 vs. enchantment)

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** swim 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +14 (1d8+11)

**TACTICS**

**Base Statistics** Without Ormandar's spells, Galieus's statistics are **Melee** bite +10 (1d8+6); **Str** 19; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21; **Skills** Swim +16.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 23, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +7, Swim +18

**SQ** link, share spells

**BULL SHARKS (2)** CR 3

XP 800 each

Advanced shark (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 247, 294)

hp 30 each

**Treasure:** Ormandar's lair lies in a small, rocky grotto north of the wreck. The grotto is filled with a large number of bones and other remains, mostly fish and marine animals, but also the carcasses of over a dozen humanoids. Mixed in with these bones are a masterwork longspears carved from whalebone and a swordfish jaw, crafted coral jewelry and ornaments worth 120 gp, polished decorative shells worth 75 gp, and a disintegrating pouch containing 95 gp in strange hexagonal coins.

### THE BRINE BANSHEE'S BOW

The bow of the *Brine Banshee* lies on its side, resting at a slight angle in the sand covering the seafloor. There's plenty of debris and wreckage in the bow, but no corpses—Ormandar and other ocean denizens have disposed of the remains of any sailors not consumed when the *Brine Banshee* went down. The following locations compose the bow section of the *Brine Banshee*.

**A1. Forecastle:** Many of the ship's railings are smashed, hinting at the violence of the *Brine Banshee*'s sinking. A rusting anchor chain hangs from a battered capstan, trailing down to the ship's anchor buried in the sand

nearby. The foremast is snapped off 25 feet above the deck.

**A2. Main Deck:** A jumble of tangled rigging and shattered beams from the foremast rests against the steps leading up to the forecabin, concealing and blocking the entryway into the port cabin. The main cargo hatch is still fastened shut, but the PCs can simply swim around through the tremendous opening where the *Brine Banshee* split in two. The mainmast is shorn away just above the deck, and no sign of it remains.

**A3. Stairwell:** This spiral stairway twists counterclockwise down from the main deck (area A2) to the gun deck (area A6).

**A4. Starboard Cabin:** Unsecured furnishings and equipment lie strewn against what was the portside wall and is now the "floor" of this cabin, formerly the quarters of the first mate and navigator. A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a secret door in the "floor" that opens into the port cabin (area A5). The swollen timbers of the good wooden door can be pried open with a successful DC 16 Strength check. Almost everything of value has been destroyed by seawater, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds an expertly crafted sextant inlaid with silver (worth 1,000 gp) in a box inside the top drawer of a locker and an *oil of slipstream* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 244) in a battered case lying among other debris.

**A5. Port Cabin:** Rigging and much of the fallen foresail block the doorway into this cabin. It takes 5 man-hours of work to clear this wreckage sufficiently to gain access to the door. The cabin's porthole lies buried under several feet of sand. This was the quartermaster's berth; the smashed remains of writing equipment are scattered along the curving hull at the bottom of this area. Other remnants of furniture lie clustered near the porthole. The secret door in the "ceiling" opens into the starboard cabin (area A4) and may be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check. Hidden under the rotten fragments of a mattress is a large iron-banded sea chest. The chest has two good locks, further warded with an *arcane lock*, on opposite sides that must be opened simultaneously (hardness 5, hp 30, Break DC 33, Disable Device DC 40). Inside is the undistributed portion of the ship's payroll: 156 pp, 1,486 gp, 3,172 sp, and 781 cp.

**A6. Gun Deck:** This deck held a formidable array of ballistae behind rows of external hatches. What's left of these siege engines rests at the base of this area amid piles of moldering rope and rusting chain. At the forward end of this deck, a spiral stairway exits out to the main deck and two sets of steps lead into the bow cargo hold (area A8).

**A7. Main Cargo Hold:** This area holds piles of rubble made up of decaying sailcloth, shattered water casks, and other broken ship supplies.

**A8. Bow Cargo Hold:** This area is detailed below.

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### A8. BOW CARGO HOLD (CR 7)

Rows of shelves follow the hull's curving slope in this large storage area, but the crates they once held now lie in a large, jumbled heap at the bottom of the hold. Rotting remnants of food and other ship's stores float near the top of the chamber, and tiny fish dart through the water, feeding on the decay.

**Creature:** A giant box jellyfish has chosen the sheltered waters of this hold as a spawning site. It hungrily stings intruders that enter its lair.

**GIANT JELLYFISH** CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 94 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 170)

**Treasure:** The seawater has ruined the ship's cargo of furs and cloth, but several small, sturdy metal drums containing fine oils have survived, and are worth a total of 2 points of plunder. In addition, a number of carefully padded packing cases holding sealed bottles of potent liquor have also survived intact, and are worth 1 point of plunder.

### INTO THE RIFT

While the *Brine Banshee's* bow holds some treasure, it provides no clues as to the secret of the ship's speed and maneuverability. In addition, the *ring of the iron skull* indicates that Vargus's remains lie within the rift in the seafloor. The PCs must journey down into the rift, which plummets to a depth of 180 feet. The water temperature drops as they venture deeper, light from the surface far above fades away into darkness, and the weight of the water above crushes against the PCs' bodies—the lightless depths are a hostile and alien environment. At the bottom of the chasm, the rift's walls narrow and slope inwards, forming a ravine of pitch-black freezing water. The floor drops away at the northwest end into a vast sinkhole that continues even deeper underwater.

At depths below 100 feet, the temperature and pressure of the water deal damage to unprotected characters. The pressure deals 1d6 points of damage per minute to creatures unused to the depth, and the water is very cold, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute to those without *endure elements* or some other magical protection from cold. *Freedom of movement*, or magic items such as a *pearl of the sirines* or *plate armor of the deep*





can help mitigate these effects. See page 445 of the *Core Rulebook* for more details on deep water dangers.

### THE BRINE BANSHEE'S GRAVE (CR 8)

The stern of the *Brine Banshee* rests at the bottom of the underwater rift 180 feet down, a lost ship that will never sail the waves again.

**Creature:** A gruesome blackwater charda stalks this forbidding area. Normally a solitary inhabitant of the rift, the charda has recently fallen under the control of Uthiggmaru, the aboleth in area **B13**. The aboleth dominated the charda, compelling the creature to guard the wreck and keep anything from disturbing the aboleth in its mysterious activities. While the blackwater charda is already twice the size of normal chardas, Uthiggmaru cast *veil* on the charda to make it seem even larger to further dissuade interlopers. The charda now appears almost 16 feet tall. Even if the PCs don't have light, the charda's superior darkvision makes it highly likely to notice them before they see it. Once it detects the PCs, the charda immediately attacks, obeying its master's orders

and defending its territory. The water in the rift is cold enough for the charda to make use of its cold vigor ability.

#### BLACKWATER CHARDA CR 8

**XP 4,800**

Giant charda (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 55, 293)

**hp 103**

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The charda starts by charging a PC, bull rushing that character away from the others. The charda focuses on this opponent, but also uses its cone of black bile if able to catch most foes in it.

**Morale** While dominated, the charda fights to the death. If the enchantment is removed or suppressed, the charda keeps furiously attacking but retreats when reduced below 20 hit points.

### THE BRINE BANSHEE'S STERN

The *Brine Banshee*'s stern rests upright at the bottom of the rift, wedged against a shelf of dark rock. All of the corpses remaining aboard the wreck are too decayed

## TEMPEST RISING

for *speak with dead* spells. The stern section of the *Brine Banshee* comprises the following locations.

**B1. Poop Deck:** This area is described below.

**B2. Quarterdeck:** The mizzenmast juts up forlornly at the center of this deck. Its moldering sails hang lifelessly in the chill, dark water.

**B3. Captain's Cabin:** Double doors open into an opulently appointed master cabin. Three curtained windows at the stern hold shattered panes of glass. A large desk remains bolted to the floor; the other expensive fittings have been thrown about. The captain's charts and papers are illegible, despite being inside waterproofed pouches. In a side cupboard, crystal glassware and fine porcelain plates are completely smashed, but underneath rests a tray of Taldan silverware worth 450 gp as a set. Lying under the large bed is a teak *wand of gust of wind* with 6 charges left.

**B4. Main Deck:** The main deck has been swept clean and the railing is smashed in several places. Only broken stays and snapped ropes remain to indicate that two longboats were stored next to the steps to the quarterdeck.

**B5. Workroom and Ship's Stores:** Tools, casks of pitch, workbenches, and spare ship's supplies clutter this small and messy work area.

**B6. Larder:** Stores of salted rations, barrels of fruit, and other provisions fester in this pantry.

**B7. Galley:** The good wooden door to this compartment is wedged shut by cooking gear and garbage (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 16). Inside is a galley with a stove and shelves of pots and pans. A thick layer of oil congeals near the ceiling. The putrid corpse of the cook lies facedown here, his legs trapped under a heavy bench.

**B8. Crew Quarters:** A crowd of suspended hammocks obscures vision in these quarters, along with overturned chairs and scattered clothing. A successful DC 15 Perception check and a thorough search turns up 77 gp in assorted coins and other personal items, as well as a board game called *Wyvern's Race* with pieces finely crafted from citrine and bloodstone (worth 175 gp for the set).

**B9. Gun Deck:** This area is detailed below.

**B10. Armory:** The good wooden door to this section of the ship is locked with a corroded good lock (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18, Disable Device DC 27). Inside are stores of ammunition and weapons. Most of the wooden weapons here are sodden and warped, and only six ballista bolts are undamaged. These are +1 *distance adamantine light ballista bolts*. There are also spare weapons—cutlasses, handaxes, and daggers—for the crew, but all are corroded by seawater.

**B11. Officers' Quarters:** This cabin was the private quarters for three of the ship's officers. Sea chests and wooden furniture lie scattered about. The putrefying mortal remains of Vargus Brack (still recognizable due because of his peg leg) rest on the floor. Despite the

### THE BRINE BANSHEE MYSTERY

The PCs are unlikely to discover how the *Brine Banshee* was lost from a simple search of the wreck. However, curious PCs may decide to make a detailed examination or use divination magic. The truth is a cantankerous dragon turtle named *Hirgenzosc* smashed the *Brine Banshee* apart during a fierce squall and devoured the surviving crew. The PCs will encounter *Hirgenzosc* themselves during the Free Captains' Regatta (see Part Three).

corpse's advanced state of decomposition, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Heal check notices he sustained extensive scalding burns around the time of death. Vargus was struck by the dragon turtle's breath weapon and almost passed out from pain, but managed to stagger belowdecks to his quarters where one of his fellow officers kept a spare *potion of cure moderate wounds*. Vargus lost his balance as the ship lurched wildly, striking his head and falling unconscious just as the *Brine Banshee* started to sink. The potion, still unused, lies on the floor, and the sea chests contain stashes of coins worth 168 gp in total.

**B12. Passenger's Cabin:** An upturned sea trunk lies in the corner of this sparsely furnished passenger's cabin. The trunk contains ten female noble's outfits and other feminine garments, but all are severely water damaged. At the bottom is a jewelry case holding necklaces and other jewelry worth 700 gp.

**B13. Main Cargo Hold:** This area is detailed below.

**B14. Brig:** The solid door to this cramped space is outfitted with a metal grille, hinting at the chamber's function as a brig for securing prisoners or punishing crew members. The damage to the ship's stern has snapped the door off its hinges, allowing entry, though a thick chain and large corroded padlock (Disable Device DC 32) still secure the other edge of the door. Stacked in the brig are plain wooden crates bound with iron and stamped with a merchant house seal. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) identifies the seal as that of the DeepTreasure Mining Company in Sargava. The crates are nailed shut (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 23) and contain gold and silver ingots worth 12 points of plunder.

### B1. POOP DECK

The ship's helm still stands atop this deck, a moldering corpse lashed to the wheel.

The *Brine Banshee's* captain, Xiribal Jalhazar, lashed himself to the ship's wheel as the ship went down, and



## WRECK OF THE BRINE BANSHEE (STERN)



his decomposing corpse still stands watch at the helm. Captain Jalhazar's spirit is currently at peace, and untying his body from the wheel or removing his earthly possessions doesn't disturb him. If his remains are treated disrespectfully or his corpse is removed from his ship, however, he curses those who do so from beyond the grave.

### JALHAZAR'S CURSE

**Type** curse; **Save** Will DC 18 negates

**Effect** target takes a -4 penalty on all saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks while onboard any ship; **Cure** returning Jalhazar's body to the *Brine Banshee's* helm or captain's cabin and reciting Besmaran funeral prayers over the corpse automatically lifts the curse

**Treasure:** The seawater has ruined much of Captain Jalhazar's gear, but a corroded masterwork cold iron rapier bejeweled with precious stones (worth 450 gp) still hangs sheathed at his side, he still wears an amber ring of *force shield* on a bony finger, and a platinum-plated compass (worth 250 gp) hangs around his neck. The most valuable treasure here, however, is the ship's wheel. *Jalhazar's wheel* (see page 58) is the source of much of the *Brine Banshee's* reputation.

## B9. GUN DECK (CR 6)

Bones and partial humanoid skeletons litter this deck. Unusual, pallid crustaceans cling to the ship's timbers near the gaping hole outside.

This deck once held rows of ballistae, several of which form a broken pile of debris at the aft end of the deck, partially blocking the doors there. The cargo hatch down to the hold (area B13) is askew. The pale crustaceans infesting the deck are harmless.

**Creature:** A monstrous deepwater scavenger has consumed many of the corpses and provisions in the ship and now lairs on this deck. The anemone lurks just forward of the mizzenmast, having attached itself to the ceiling. It hungrily attacks anything it senses close by.

### DARKFOREST ANEMONE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Variant giant sea anemone (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 238)

N Huge vermin (aquatic)

**Init** +2; **Senses** blindsight 30 ft.; Perception +0

### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size)

## TEMPEST RISING

hp 76 (9d8+36)

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +3

**Defensive Abilities** amorphous; **Immune** gaze attacks, mind-affecting effects, poison, vision-based effects

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft.

**Melee** tentacles +9 (2d8+7 plus grab and poison)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (2d8+7), poison, swallow whole (2d6+7 bludgeoning damage, AC 14, 7 hp)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** 18, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 25 (can't be tripped)

**Skills** Stealth +2

**SQ** anchored, camouflage, sightless

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Camouflage (Ex)** When at rest, a darkforest anemone looks like a bed of kelp or seaweed. As a result, a DC 20 Perception check is required to notice it before it attacks for the first time. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use either of those skills instead of Perception to notice the anemone.

**Poison (Ex)** Tentacles—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dex; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

**Treasure:** Among the crew's bones are their inedible possessions: jewelry, coins, and other belongings worth a total of 327 gp.

### B13. MAIN CARGO HOLD (CR 7)

Broken timber and smashed boxes litter the floor of this cargo hold. Clusters of barnacles and slimy marine growths infest the walls and other exposed surfaces.

**Creature:** An aboleth named Uthiggmaru has taken up residence in the *Brine Banshee's* cargo hold. Normally a denizen of the darkest depths of the ocean, Uthiggmaru is scouting upward, and has been carefully studying the wreck for its own inscrutable reasons. Currently the aboleth lurks in the aft section of the hold behind an *illusory wall*. When it notices the PCs at the wreck, it observes their behavior while using its illusions to toy with them. Uthiggmaru has already cast a *programmed image* that is triggered if any intelligent creatures enter the hold. The *programmed image* is a huge shark that swims out of the depths and into the gaping open end of the hold.

#### UTHIGGMARU

CR 7

XP 3,200

Aboleth (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 8)

hp 84

### TACTICS

**During Combat** As the PCs deal with its *programmed image*, Uthiggmaru casts *dominate monster* on one of the PCs and telepathically orders that character to attack the “shark,” thus adding to its believability. Uthiggmaru then casts *persistent image* to create the illusion of a school of pale, eyeless fish glowing with luminescence, and combines this with *hypnotic pattern*, making the shimmering fish swirl about in mesmerizing formations. Once the true nature of the *programmed image* is discovered, Uthiggmaru casts *project image* to appear at the opposite end of the hold and dominate more foes. Only if the PCs pierce the illusory wall does Uthiggmaru explode into activity, lashing out with its tentacles at any attackers.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, Uthiggmaru attempts to flee, escaping down the sinkhole northwest of the wreck with any newly acquired dominated slaves.

**Treasure:** Most of the shop's cargo and provisions remaining here disintegrate when touched, but several timber boxes hold ivory worth 3 points of plunder.

### NAGAS OF THE SLITHERING COAST

Following Slip's directions, the PCs sail to the shallow cove on the Slithering Coast where the water naga Sarlis resides. The lone tree atop the hillock is an old jukamis plant, its enormous leaves clearly visible from the shoreline. The PCs must venture into the marshy jungle near the mouth of the stream that empties into the cove to find the meeting pool, a deep rocky basin reached by climbing up a series of muddy rises.

**Sarlis** (N female water naga) shows herself a short time after the PCs reach the pool. She rises from the center of the pool, swaying vigorously and hissing. The naga is very agitated; her initial attitude is unfriendly, and in her current state, Sarlis bites anyone who comes within range. Characters who succeed at a DC 20 Sense Motive check get the impression that Sarlis's annoyance isn't entirely at them. The PCs must improve her attitude to at least friendly with a DC 29 Diplomacy check before she deigns to speak to speak with them. Speaking Aquan grants a +2 bonus on the check, and the PCs can gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus on the check if they ask Sarlis what's troubling her and offer to help. If the PCs attack Sarlis or make her hostile, she withdraws underwater, casts *invisibility*, and retreats upstream.

Once Sarlis is willing to speak, she haughtily questions the PCs about why they have intruded in her domain. If the PCs tell her they are looking for a spy, Sarlis narrows her eyes and hisses, and demands that the PCs complete a task for her before she'll consider helping them. Sarlis tells the PCs that one of her ex-partners, a naga named Munarei, has taken over one of her nearby lairs. If the PCs



want her help, they must drive off Munarei. She doesn't care if they hurt him, so long as they don't kill him. Sarlis won't admit this to herself, let alone to non-serpentine outsiders, but she still has feelings for Munarei.

### SERPENT'S ENMITY (CR 7)

If the PCs agree to her terms, Sarlis guides them upriver to a large riverside mound situated where a tributary stream joins the main waterway. Sarlis retires back into the jungle while the PCs approach the earthen mound.

**Creature:** Sarlis's former mate Munarei resides in the mound. Unless the PCs are very stealthy, he quickly appears to confront intruders, swimming up from an underwater tunnel into the middle of the stream. Munarei dislikes and avoids humanoids. His starting attitude is hostile, and he orders the PCs to leave his territory or face his wrath. Unless the PCs can change his attitude to at least indifferent with a successful DC 34 Diplomacy check, he attacks. The PCs gain a +2 bonus on the check if they make appropriate offerings of food or gifts, but they take a –2 penalty if they mention Sarlis. If the PCs make Munarei at least indifferent, they can request him to leave Sarlis's lair without a fight with a DC 19 Diplomacy check. Munarei has no knowledge of spies or traitors in the Shackles.

**MUNAREI** CR 7  
XP 3,200

Male water naga (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 199)

hp 76

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Munarei casts *shield* and *protection from energy* (fire) before a confrontation.

**During Combat** Munarei remains in the water and uses his damaging spells. He casts *mirror image* if wounded by missile fire or if attackers get within melee range. Against a serious threat, he casts *suggestion* against the PCs' apparent leader, ordering that character to "return to your ship and sail back where you came from."

**Morale** Munarei flees if reduced to 25 hit points or fewer, using *invisibility* if needed.

**Development:** If the PCs kill Munarei, Sarlis hisses in anger and swims away, refusing to help them. If the PCs drive Munarei away, Sarlis repays them by guiding them through the muddy wilderness to a small clearing over a mile away. In the clearing is a corpse wearing the rusting remnants of a chain shirt and a backpack. "This one came to ask questions," Sarlis says with a sneer, "unwise questions, which only ones like those you seek would ask, and which made plain the intentions of those who sent him. He also tried to barter for naga venom, but one of my neighbors gave him far more than he wanted. Do what you like with the body." The corpse, the remains of a Sargavan smuggler

named Varad (once in Zarskia Galembar's employ), has been dead over a year and little of his equipment has survived the humid jungle, other than 27 gp in a rotting pouch and 60 feet of moldy rope tied in an elaborate series of knots in his pack. Sarlis believes the knots are a code but doesn't know what it means. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history) or Linguistics check identifies the knots as Sargavan naval code used before the colony's independence from Cheliox. A PC can unravel the code with a DC 30 Linguistics check, or the PCs can take the rope to any major port in the Shackles and find a knowledgeable specialist who can translate the code. The code outlines Varad's orders: "Go to nagas, collect poison and information. Deliver both to the captain of the *Diamond Star*." A DC 10 Knowledge (history) check, DC 15 Knowledge (local) check, or DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information in any Shackles port reveals that the *Diamond Star* was captured by the Rahadoumi navy 6 months ago. Several months before that, however, the *Diamond Star*'s captain, Elliece Farhaven, retired—an unusual occurrence, considering her relatively young age. With a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information in any Shackles port, the PC can identify Captain Farhaven's current place of residence, a small fishing boat moored in the harbor of Quent (see **Step 8**).

**Story Award:** If the PCs convince Munarei to leave without fighting him, award them 3,200 XP, as if they had defeated him in combat.

### A CROW'S MURDER (CR 9)

The PCs can try to find the tengu smuggler Corlan at his apartment house on the edge of Hell Harbor's tengu rookery. Corlan's house sits at a crossroads where two wide streets intersect in a "T." If the PCs knock on the front door, Corlan comes to the door, but any interaction with the PCs is cut short, as a barbed crossbow bolt embeds itself in his chest.

**Creature:** Zarskia Galembar has sent the assassin Giles Halmis to take care of the last remaining link in her spy ring—Corlan. Giles is a racist ex-Sargavan Guard turned mercenary and contract killer. Disillusioned with what he saw as his nation's weakness and pandering to filthy Mwangi natives, Giles abandoned his homeland to sell his finely honed killing skills to those who could pay. Giles doesn't care who is ultimately behind the contracts he has accepted, so long as he gets payment for his kills.

Giles has staked out Corlan's residence, positioning himself on the roof of a two-story factory across the street, 100 feet away. From his vantage point 30 feet above, Giles has cover from those on street level. He's been waiting several hours for Corlan to make an appearance, and has readied an action to shoot the tengu as soon as he appears. Watching through a spyglass, Giles sights Corlan, and unwilling to risk losing his elusive prey, opens fire with

## TEMPEST RISING



his crossbow. Unless the PCs somehow spotted him before approaching Corlan, Giles gets off a shot in the surprise round with a poisoned bolt. Using Deadly Aim and his improved deadshot ability, Giles takes a -3 penalty on his attack roll and gains an additional +8 bonus to his damage, almost certainly dropping Corlan in the first round.

### CORLAN CR 1/2

XP 200

Male tengu rogue 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 263)

hp 9

### GILES HALMIS CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human fighter (crossbowman) 7/ranger 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 104)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Perception +13

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 86 (10d10+27)

Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +5; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *sharpshooter's blade* +15/+10  
(1d6+7/19-20)

Ranged +1 *human bane heavy crossbow* +17/+12  
(1d10+4/17-20 plus poison)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2), improved deadshot\*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Giles coats two crossbow bolts with deathblade poison, but since he risks poisoning himself if he rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll with a poisoned weapon, he drinks a vial of antitoxin as a precaution beforehand.

**During Combat** Being a consummate professional, Giles makes sure of his kill by firing at least one more crossbow bolt at Corlan, even if the tengu fell in the surprise round. Giles shoots at anyone moving toward his position, and at those who try to help Corlan. If a PC wounds him, he uses his second poisoned bolt on that PC. Giles targets humans, especially those of native Mwangi ethnicity, as a priority. He always uses his Deadly Aim feat (taking a -3 penalty on attack rolls, but gaining a +6 bonus to damage). If forced into melee combat, Giles spends a move action to affix his *sharpshooter's blade* to his crossbow, then attacks with the bayonet.

**Morale** Once he is convinced that Corlan is dead and has ensured that no one can use magic to save the tengu, Giles backs off to the rooftop's far side, climbs down the rope he secured earlier, and disappears into an alleyway. If the PCs prevent his

escape, he fights to the death rather than face the ignominy of a murder trial and execution.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +10; CMB +12; CMD 26

Feats Crossbow Mastery\*, Deadly Aim, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (heavy crossbow), Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow), Weapon Specialization (heavy crossbow)

Skills Climb +17, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +13, Stealth +22, Survival +13, Swim +15

Languages Common, Polyglot

SQ combat style (crossbow)\*, crossbow expert\*, favored terrain (urban +2), track +1, wild empathy +2



Giles Halmis



**Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *antitoxin* (2), *deathblade poison* (2 doses); **Other Gear** *+1 shadow studded leather*, *+1 human bane heavy crossbow* with 20 bolts, *sharpshooter's blade* (bayonet\*; see page 59), *backpack*, *climber's kit*, *spyglass*, 50-ft. *silk rope* with *grappling hook*  
\* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**Development:** If the PCs capture and question Giles, he can be coerced into divulging what he knows. Giles reveals his current contract is to eliminate Haddon Pike, Roweena Kellet, and Corlan. His main contact is a Mwangi woman named Zarskia Galembur at the Jasperleaf Apothecary in Port Peril, who gives him his contracts and payments. Giles also admits that asking for “two pounds of powdered thileu bark” at the apothecary is a code phrase to quickly obtain admittance into a secluded meeting room.

If Giles is killed, a search of his body turns up a missive with three names: Haddon Pike, Roweena Kellet, and Corlan. The first two names have been crossed out. The note also contains brief instructions: “Use the supplied dosage on each. When done, return to the apothecary in Port Peril. I can provide more toxin along with your payment if needed. Destroy this after reading.” The note is signed simply “Z.” As he dislikes taking orders from a Mwangi woman (Zarskia), Giles perversely chose not to destroy the note.

If Corlan somehow survives, or if the PCs use *speak with dead* or other magic, the tengu reveals that he's a messenger for the spy ring. He knows little about its operations or other members besides Haddon Pike, Elliece Farhaven, or Roweena Kellet, but he receives almost all of his instructions from Zarskia Galembur at the Jasperleaf Apothecary in Port Peril. See **Step 11** for details on the Jasperleaf Apothecary.

## JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY

Eventually, the trail of espionage leads back to Zarskia Galembur and the Jasperleaf Apothecary in Port Peril. If the PCs have not yet learned Zarskia's name, a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information identifies the likely identity of the “Z” in Giles Halmis's letter as Zarskia Galembur, the proprietor of the Jasperleaf Apothecary. Further Diplomacy checks made to gather information reveal the following information:

**DC 10:** “You can find the place on the corner of Fiddler's Lane and Anchor Way.”

**DC 14:** “Zarskia Galembur runs the apothecary; she bought the old mansion and set up shop about three years ago. It's been closed the last couple of times I've gone past.”

**DC 16:** “The apothecary employs a number of ex-pirates as guards and sells more than just poultices and medicinal remedies. They say you can buy poison and other contraband goods there as well.”

**DC 18:** “The shop has been closed to the public recently, but I hear you can still get in if you know the right people.”

**DC 20:** “Zarskia's been selling her poisons for bargain prices recently; you should get a good price if she's still got any left.”

**DC 22:** “Just bang on the door and say you want to buy ‘three jugs of terrap sap’ and they'll let you in.”

## FEATURES OF THE JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY

Situated at the corner of Fiddler's Lane and Anchor Way, two streets close to the center of Port Peril, the Jasperleaf Apothecary is a large three-story building among several other shops and businesses. Behind the humble storefront lies the faded grandeur of a decaying manor built a century ago. The first and second floors' exterior walls are clay brick 1-1/2 feet thick, and the third floor walls are timber 6 inches thick (all requiring DC 25 Climb checks to scale). Stone tiles 1 inch thick cover the roof, and unless noted otherwise, the windows are shuttered and nailed shut (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18). The building has one large chimney, which narrows at the top to an opening 1 foot square, protected by a reinforced iron grille (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 25). During the day, only dim light shines through the shutters in rooms with exterior windows. Unless otherwise noted, rooms without windows, and all areas at night, are considered dark.

## SCHEDULE

Zarskia has hired eight pirates to guard the apothecary. During daylight hours, the guards' positions are as listed below (two guards are absent during the day, enjoying their time off in the city). The guards have orders not to enter the kitchen (area C11), Zarskia's laboratory (area C15), or the entire third story without permission. The guards are also unwilling to enter Shimerae's lair (areas C12 through C14) unless ordered to. All of the guards have keys that unlock all doors on the ground floor except the kitchen door (area C11).

At night, only two guards are posted in the rear hall (area C8) and the door in area C7 is locked. The remaining six guards are asleep in the dormitory (area C10). When the watch changes every 3 hours, a pair of guards quickly patrols the shop rooms (areas C1 through C7).

## C1. STOREFRONT

The shop's strong wooden front door is kept locked at all times (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30). During the day, the guards in area C2 respond to knocks on the door by yelling back that the shop is closed. Their instructions are to turn away anyone wishing to only buy simple herbs or poultices, but to let in those wanting poisons or who give one of several passwords (including requests for either “two pounds of powdered thileu bark” or “three jugs of terrap sap”). If the PCs give a valid password, the guards show them through to the private meeting room (area C9).

# TEMPEST RISING



## JASPERLEAF APOTHECARY



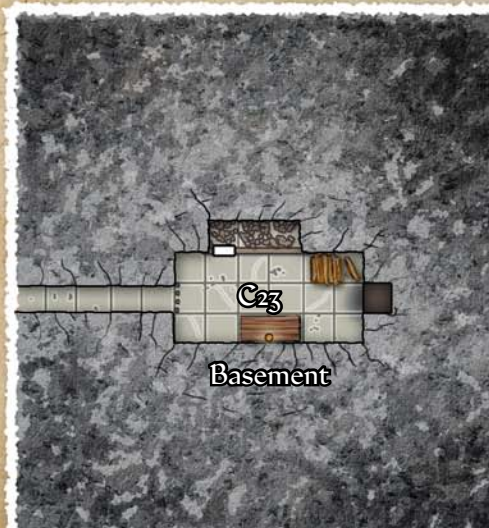
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Basement

1 square = 5 feet





If the PCs don't have a password, they can convince the guards to let them in as potentially lucrative customers with a successful Bluff check (the guards have a Sense Motive modifier of +1). Every 5 gp in bribes the PCs slip under the door adds a +1 bonus on the check. If successful, the guards escort the PCs to the waiting room (area C5), unless the PCs' Bluff check exceeded the guards' Sense Motive check by 10 or more, in which case the guards show them through to area C9.

Once the PCs are inside, read or paraphrase the following:

This neatly ordered shop has a long counter with a tall stool behind it, and display shelves stocked with containers and jars.

Samples of plants, tubers, and roots hang from hooks up on the walls and the scented fragrance of herbs suffuses the store.

The goods on display are common plants and herbs, and there's nothing valuable or incriminating in the counter drawers.

**Development:** After admitting the PCs, one guard waits outside the door to the room where the PCs are waiting, while the other goes to fetch Zarskia from area C15. Both guards wait outside the door while Zarskia sees visitors.

## C2. GUARD ROOM (CR 8)

This plain room contains three wooden chairs and a small table. A set of six bone dice rests on the table, which the guards often use to while away the time.

**Creatures:** During the day, two pirate guards maintain a watch here. All of Zarskia's guards were part of a ship's crew who lost their vessel and captain to a succession of misfortunes, including shipwreck and bankruptcy. They agreed to band together until they could all sign with another captain, but had little luck because of their jinxed reputation. They contracted with Zarskia as bodyguards to raise capital to buy their own ship.



Pirate Guard

### PIRATE GUARDS (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Human fighter 4/rogue (swashbuckler) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 57 each (7 HD; 4d10+3d8+18)

Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +5; +2 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, evasion

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 cutlass\* +11/+6 (1d6+6/18-20)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +10/+5 (1d8+3/x3)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The guards fight as a pair, tumbling into flanking positions to deliver sneak attacks. If caught in the apothecary's narrow passageways, they back off into a wider area where they can gang up on intruders or call on reinforcements.

**Morale** The guards fight until reduced to 10 hit points or fewer before retreating or calling for quarter.

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +6; CMB +9; CMD 23

**Feats** Cleave, Dodge, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Step Up,

## TEMPEST RISING

Toughness, Weapon Focus (cutlass\*), Weapon Specialization (cutlass\*)

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Climb +12, Intimidate +8, Perception +10, Profession (sailor) +10, Stealth +12, Swim +9

**Languages** Common

**SQ** armor training 1, daring\*\* +1, martial training\*\*, rogue talents (combat trick)

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, +1 cutlass\*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, keys to doors on first floor

\* See *Pirates of the Inner Sea*.

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

### C3. CONTAINER STORAGE

The shelves of this small storeroom are stacked with flasks, vials, ampoules, and bottles of various shapes and sizes. Arranged systematically into groups, these containers, fashioned from porcelain, metal, glazed pottery, and glass, appear both clean and empty.

**Treasure:** Zarskia keeps empty containers for her alchemical creations and poisons here. They are bulky and fragile but worth 150 gp in total.

### C4. HERBAL PHARMACY

This crowded workroom holds a stone bench along the wall opposite the door and cupboards on both ends. Weighing scales, a mortar and pestle, and other pharmaceutical paraphernalia are tidily arranged about the room.

Zarskia produces herbal remedies and legitimate medical supplies here, often grinding and mixing fresh batches of herbal medicines while customers wait. Since Zarskia closed the shop to the public, this area is unused.

### C5. WAITING ROOM

This plain room holds a simple table and two wooden chairs. A small oil lamp sits on the table.

The apothecary's guards often show clients wishing to purchase remedies into this room, where they can wait in privacy while their medications are prepared.

### C6. HERB DRYING ROOM

Rows of wooden shelving line this chamber. The shelves contain trays and containers of roots, cuttings, twigs, mosses, and unprocessed herbs. The fragrance of dried aromatic flora fills the room.

**Treasure:** As Zarskia hasn't stocked up on pharmaceutical supplies recently, some of the herbs here have lost their potency, but there is still 110 gp worth of herbalist supplies (weighing roughly 50 pounds) stored here.

### C7. FRONT HALL

This hall connects the apothecary's storefront with the rest of the mansion. A small lavatory containing only a chair with a hole in the center and a covered bucket sits just south of the pharmacy (area C4). The strong wooden door (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25) leading to the rear hall (area C8) is open during the day, but locked at night (Disable Device DC 25).

### C8. REAR HALL (CR 8)

A set of stairs leads up to the second story in the northeast corner. A balustraded gallery winds around the edge of the upper hall, overlooking the area below.

An everburning torch mounted in a sconce on the stair landing illuminates this hall.

**Creatures:** Two pirate guards keep watch here at all times. One guard is usually posted on the ground floor here while the other keeps watch on the gallery above. The guards know Zarskia never invites anyone any further than the meeting room (area C9), so if they spot strangers, they shout an alarm and attack.

**PIRATE GUARDS (2)**

**CR 6**

**XP 2,400 each**

**hp 57 each** (see page 38)

### C9. PRIVATE MEETING ROOM

Two padded reclining chairs and a well-upholstered divan are set around a low table here. To one side, a cabinet holds crystal glasses and wine bottles. The large mantled fireplace set with a bronze fire screen in the corner and the wooden paneling on the walls add to the room's cozy atmosphere.

Zarskia uses this room to meet with affluent customers who wish to acquire dangerous elixirs, illegal drugs, or poisons, as well as with contacts in her spy network. The walls here are thick enough to make it difficult for people outside the room to overhear the details of a quiet conversation, but the guards can still hear Zarskia if she yells loudly for aid.

Behind the fire screen, the fireplace has been bricked up. Zarskia had this opening, as well as the one on the second floor, sealed over. Behind the bricks, the chimney shaft leads all the way down from Zarskia's bedroom (area C22) on the third floor to her secret basement retreat (area C23).



**Treasure:** The crystal glasses are high quality, worth 300 gp for the set, and the wines are excellent vintages of Corentyn reds and whites worth 50 gp for each of the five unopened bottles.

## C10. GUARD DORMITORY (CR 8)

Eight simple beds crowd this room, which is untidy with used plates, flagons, and clothing strewn around. A bricked-up fireplace stands in the west wall, and the room smells strongly of grog and sour sweat.

**Creatures:** Two pirate guards can normally be found drinking, gambling, or sleeping here during the day. If the guards hear the sounds of combat outside, they spend 2 rounds readying their weapons and bucklers before investigating. At night, six guards sleep here. If surprised, they are unarmored, though they take a move action to snatch up their bucklers. If alerted, the guards spend 5 rounds to hastily don their chain shirts before exiting the room.

**PIRATE GUARDS (2)** **CR 6**  
**XP 2,400 each**  
 hp 57 each (see page 38)

**Treasure:** The guards keep their communal pay in a sea chest behind the door. One guard is the group's quartermaster, who keeps a detailed register of accounts and crew's shares. The chest is unlocked and holds this register as well as a large leather purse containing 760 gp and 975 sp.

## C11. KITCHEN (CR 9)

A small rusty stove stands against the north wall of this dank and otherwise unfurnished room. A blackened metal chimney pipe runs diagonally up the wall from the stove into the ceiling.

This was once a kitchen but has been disused for many years. The chimney pipe used to provide ventilation for smoke, but the outside vent was covered over when new roof tiles were laid, and the pipe now ends inside the roof cavity. Behind the east door is a damp pantry (area C11a), its moldy shelves bare. Behind the locked strong wooden door to the south (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25) is the mechanism for the trap detailed below. Stairs used to lead down to the basement (area C23) from here, but Zarskia filled the stairway with rubble, making it impassable without hours of work.

**Trap:** Zarskia has placed a trap in the kitchen to deal with unauthorized intruders. If anyone steps into either of the two squares directly in front of the south door or attempts to open the door, the trap activates, launching a tanglefoot bag from a concealed panel in the door. At

the same time, the kitchen door slams shut and locks (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25) and sleeping gas fills the room. When this happens, a creature adjacent to the kitchen door can make a DC 15 Reflex save to catch the door before it swings shut, followed by a DC 10 Strength check to hold the door open. A resourceful PC caught inside the kitchen could breathe through the chimney pipe to avoid inhaling the poison gas.

**ANESTHETIZING FOG SNARE TRAP** **CR 9**  
**XP 6,400**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair

**Effect** Atk +15 ranged touch (tanglefoot bag) plus poison gas (sleep gas [poison—inhaled; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect unconscious for 1d3 hours; cure 1 save]; never miss; onset delay (1 round); duration 1 minute; multiple targets (all targets in area C11)

## C12. DINING ROOM (CR 6)

This lengthy bare room might once have been a dining hall, given the long, dusty table standing in its center. Aside from the double doors exiting from the hall's eastern end, there are two giant holes, large enough to push a chariot through, jaggedly knocked through the southern wall, revealing a chamber beyond. On the northern wall, windows let in light from the street.

North of the double doors leading into this room, a flight of stairs leads up to the third floor. The windows in this room are unshuttered, letting in a substantial amount of light from outside.

**Creature:** Most of the second story is the demesne of Zarskia's beloved pet, a dusk kamadan named Shimerae. Zarskia originally acquired the poisonous feline as a source of venom several years ago from a hunter of exotic beasts in Bloodcove. In spite of Shimerae's aloof and vindictive nature, however, Zarskia found herself growing attached to the malicious creature. Shimerae has grown to tolerate Zarskia's attention, which means she doesn't often bite Zarskia, and occasionally even follows commands, when it suits her. Shimerae immediately attacks anyone except Zarskia who intrudes in her domain. The guards have a healthy respect for the "unholy devil-cat" and unless directly ordered by Zarskia, they leave her lair well alone, even if they hear sounds of fighting from inside. The holes in the walls provide Shimerae with easy access to the other parts of her lair. If unaware of intruders, Shimerae spends most of her day sleeping and watching the street from the windows. At night, she prowls around the three rooms of her lair (areas C12, C13, and C14), or sleeps in area C14.

## TEMPEST RISING

### SHIMERAЕ

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female advanced dusk kamadan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 158, 290)

NE Large magical beast

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 66 (7d10+28)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +11 (1d6+5), 2 claws +11 (1d3+5), snakes +9 (1d4+2 plus poison)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with snakes)

**Special Attacks** breath weapon (30-ft. cone, sleep, Fortitude DC 17 negates, usable every 1d4 rounds), poison, pounce

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Shimerae sneaks up on intruders and uses her breath weapon on as many opponents as possible. She pounces on any creatures still awake, spitting and hissing.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, Shimerae retreats to the door in area C14, hoping that Zarskia has heard the fight. If unable to flee, she fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 19, **Con** 18, **Int** 9, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack

**Skills** Acrobatics +9 (+13 when jumping), Perception +10, Stealth +8

**Languages** Aklo

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex) Snakes**—injury; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

### C13. LIBRARY

Empty bookshelves line the walls of this large decaying chamber. The place is partially demolished; several walls have huge holes smashed in them, revealing other rooms beyond. Tattered scraps of yellowing parchment are scattered over the floor, and long rows of scratches mar the central bookshelf. A large wooden tray filled with sand sits in the southwest corner.

The scraps of parchment are the remains of books once stored in the library that Shimerae has thoroughly shredded. The tray in the corner is her litter box.

### C14. DEN

Inlaid wooden paneling lines the walls of this snug room, but the walls in the northwest are broken through into another chamber. In the southeast corner, a pile of sheepskin blankets lies next to a bricked-up fireplace.

At night, Shimerae sleeps on the pile of sheepskins here. Unless tending the kamadan, Zarskia keeps the strong wooden door to the south locked (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25).

**Treasure:** Shimerae sometimes plays with a collection of colored stones scattered in the middle of the room. While these pretty baubles are only colored pieces of agate, quartz, zircon, and other low-value stones, they're worth 290 gp in total.



Shimerae



## C15. ZARSKIA'S LABORATORY (CR 8 AND 10)

Benches and worktables hold alembics, crucibles, glass tubing, and other assorted alchemical accoutrements. Bubbling reagents, colorful chemicals, and jars of powders cover the worktop areas. In the middle of the north wall is an old hearth, its opening bricked up with mortared stones. The astringent odor of disinfectant hangs in the air.

Once the manor's lounge, this room is now Zarskia's main laboratory, where she refines venomous components, crafts deadly toxins, and researches new discoveries in alchemical poisoning. An everburning torch mounted on the corner of the fireplace illuminates the room.

The strong wooden door to the northeast that leads to the second floor landing is locked and barred on the southern side (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 30, Disable Device DC 25), as well as trapped.

**Trap:** A corrosive chemical compound of concentrated babau slime and terinav root coats the inward side of the door's stone handle, affecting anyone who attempts to open the door. If the creature triggering the trap is wearing gloves or gauntlets, these take damage from the corrosive babau slime first. If this damage penetrates the item's hardness, it gains the broken condition and the wearer takes half damage from the slime. If the damage destroys the item, the wearer takes full damage. A creature that takes any amount of acid damage is also exposed to the terinav root. Once detected, the trap can be easily bypassed by only touching the front part of the handle.

### TOXIC DOOR HANDLE DC 8 XP 4,800

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 15

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** repair

**Effect** babau slime (2d8 acid damage for 2 rounds); never miss; poison (terinav root)

**Creature:** The leader of the spy ring, Zarskia Galemba, can be found here during the day, working on some last minute experiments. If she hears combat outside the lab, she drinks her extracts (as described in her tactics below) and waits to see whether her guards defeat the invaders. If intruders break into the lab, Zarskia fights a running battle as she retreats through areas C16 and C17 to her bedroom (area C22), then down the chimney to the basement (area C23). See the descriptions of those area for her tactics as she retreats through these rooms. As she fights, the splash damage from her bombs might hit the alchemical equipment here. Doing so shatters glass and ignites materials on the tables, but has no adverse game effect during the battle. However, it reduces the equipment's value (see Treasure below).

### ZARSKIA GALEMBAR

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female human alchemist 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +5; **Senses** Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +5 Dex, +6 natural)

**hp** 90 (11d8+37)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

**DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** poison

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk butterfly sword\*\* +12/+7 (1d4/19–20 plus poison) and mwk butterfly sword\*\* +12/+7 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)

**Ranged** bomb +14/+9 (6d6+3 fire)

**Special Attacks** bomb 14/day (6d6+3 fire and catch fire, DC 18, 10 ft. radius)

**Alchemist Extracts Prepared** (CL 11th)

4th—*greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *displacement*, *fly*, *haste*, *protection from energy*

2nd—*barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *false life*, *fire breath\** (DC 15), *see invisibility*

1st—*bomber's eye\**, *crafters' fortune\**, *cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Zarskia drinks an extract of *false life* every day and consumes her mutagen and extracts of *barkskin* and *stoneskin* as soon as she becomes aware of visitors or trouble at the apothecary. If she knows intruders are close, she drinks extracts of *fly*, *protection from energy* (fire), *expeditious retreat*, and *bear's endurance* before a confrontation (not included in her stats).

**During Combat** Zarskia drinks an extract of *greater invisibility*, followed by extracts of *bomber's eye* and *haste* at the beginning of combat. She throws force bombs against fire-resistant foes or to knock swift enemies prone. If cornered or if she runs out of bombs, Zarskia drinks her extract of *displacement* and poisons her swords using her swift poisoning ability.

**Morale** Zarskia is fully aware that espionage carries a painful death sentence in the Shackles, so unless it's possible to successfully flee, she fights to the last breath.

**Base Statistics** Without her extracts and mutagen, Zarskia's statistics are **Init** +3; **AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; **hp** 75; **Ref** +12, **Will** +7; **Melee** mwk butterfly sword\*\* +10/+5 (1d4/19–20 plus poison) and mwk butterfly sword\*\* +10/+5 (1d4/19–20 plus poison); **Ranged** bomb +12/+7 (6d6+3 fire); **Dex** 17, **Wis** 14; **CMD** 21; **Skills** Acrobatics +14, Disable Device +14, Fly +11, Perception +16, Sense Motive +11.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 21, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

## TEMPEST RISING

**Feats** Brew Potion, Cosmopolitan\* (Bluff, Sense Motive), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Martial Weapon Proficiency (butterfly sword\*\*), Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +13, Craft (alchemy) +17, Craft (traps) +17, Disable Device +16, Fly +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +15, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +11

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Infernal, Osiriani, Polyglot  
**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +11, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 110 minutes), discoveries (concentrate poison, explosive bomb, fast bombs, force bomb [6d4+3 force plus knock prone], sticky poison [3 strikes]), poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

**Combat Gear** Large scorpion venom (2 doses), purple worm poison (2 doses), shadow essence (2 doses);  
**Other Gear** +1 mithral chain shirt, masterwork butterfly swords\*\* (2), cloak of resistance +2, headband of vast intelligence +2 (Acrobatics), alchemist's kit, masterwork thieves' tools, tindertwigs (3), keys to all locks in the apothecary, formula book (contains all prepared extracts plus alchemical allocation\*, alter self, discern lies, dragon's breath\*, invisibility, keen senses\*, perceive clues\*, shield, spider climb, undetectable alignment, and water breathing), diamond dust worth 500 gp

\* See *Advanced Player's Guide*.

\*\* See *Ultimate Combat*.

**Treasure:** The alchemical components and comprehensive alchemist's lab here are worth a total of 1,000 gp but weigh 125 pounds in total. Whenever a damaging area effect (such as a spell or one of Zarskia's bombs) affects a bench square, reduce this gear's value by 75 gp. In preparation for leaving the Shackles, Zarskia has sold off almost all of her stocks of poison aside from her personal supplies. Stored in a sealed chest with many now-empty partitions are 3 doses of id moss and a pouch of dried sassone leaves (which can be turned into 4 doses of sassone leaf residue with successful DC 16 Craft [alchemy] checks). A latched iron strongbox under the westernmost

bench holds six flasks of acid, four flasks of alchemist's fire, two vials of antitoxin, three smokesticks, two tanglefoot bags, and four thunderstones. In a reinforced brass tin are a vial of *salve of slipperiness*, a small sealed bottle holding an ounce of *sovereign glue*, three flasks of *unguent of timelessness*, and a jar holding 5 uses of *universal solvent*. Inside a steel box is a journal containing notes and observations about Zarskia's alchemical experiments. The last entry describes her work cultivating mandragoras (see area C19).

### C16. STOREROOM

An enormous pile of old, broken furniture and other debris fills the center of this room. A ladder rests against the wall in the northwest corner, leading up to a roughly-cut hole in the ceiling.

Zarskia discarded excess furniture from other parts of the house in this room. The ladder leads up to area C17. If Zarskia has time when she retreats through here, she pulls the ladder up after her, or knocks it over. From the room above she can also destroy the ladder (hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 13) with a well-placed bomb, hopefully while a PC is climbing. Without the ladder, a DC 20 Climb check is required to scale the wall to reach the room above.

### C17. MAID'S ROOM

This room is unfurnished and dark. A door to the north wall leads into a passageway, and a jagged hole has been hewn through the floor, opening into the room below.

If Zarskia withdraws through here, she may pause here to drink healing extracts or bombard the PCs as they follow her.

### C18. BATHROOM

Pale tiles line the walls and floor of this clean bathroom. A luxurious bath adorns the floor's center and an ornate stone basin, an inset cabinet, and several mirrors are affixed to the walls.

**Treasure:** The cabinet holds expensive perfumes and cosmetics worth 240 gp.



Zarskia Galembur



## C19. GUEST BEDROOM (CR 7)

The stink of foulest rot and miasmatic decay clog the air in this chamber. Along the west wall rests a heaped morass of mulch and slimy mud, and five open barrels stand in an alcove on the room's southern side.

The strong wooden door leading into this room is locked and barred from the outside (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25 [DC 30 from inside the room], Disable Device DC 25).

In the center of the room center lies the putrefying remains of an eviscerated, almost skeletal humanoid creature with a long tail, sharp claws, elongated skull, and needlelike teeth. The corpse can be identified as a babau demon with a successful DC 21 Knowledge (planes) check. A successful DC 15 Heal check reveals the surgical removal of many of its internal organs not long after death. A DC 20 Heal check also notices two huge suppurated abscesses in the chest cavity are from something actually burrowing out of the body. The barrels to the south are half full of scummy water.

**Creatures:** Two months ago, Zarskia obtained the remains of a freshly slain babau demon at a bargain price from one of her black-market contacts. Aware of the carcass's potential, she immediately set about experimenting on the demon's slime and ichor. Zarskia's attempt to cultivate a mandragora plant from the demon's corpse succeeded far better than she hoped. Her periodic application of distilled demonic essences to the mandrake roots implanted within the cadaver resulted in two hardy mandragoras.

As the malignant beings grew, Zarskia prepared this room by leaving sufficient nourishment for several months and then sealed them in. She has been hoping for a last-minute client interested in mandragora sap-blood before she harvests them and drains their precious fluids. The demon-tainted plant creatures feel secure in the only environment they've ever known, but attack creatures intruding into their domain. The mandragoras begin combat with their shrieks and fight until destroyed.

**ADVANCED MANDRAGORAS (2)** CR 5  
**XP 1,600 each**  
 hp 47 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 185, 292)

## C20. UPSTAIRS HALL (CR 9)

**Trap:** This upstairs hall is trapped. When anyone steps on the marked section of corridor, a blade stabs out from the eastern wall, also ringing an alarm bell loud enough to alert the whole house. The trap's mechanism is in area C21.

**WYVERN BLADE TRAP** CR 9  
**XP 6,400**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden switch  
**Effect** Atk +20 melee (1d8+6 plus wyvern poison /19–20)

## C21. BEDROOM

A bed frame lacking mattresses and a dusty armoire in a recess on the southern wall are the only furniture in this disused but once fine bedchamber. A mechanical apparatus similar to a small arbalest is pointed against the west wall. The apparatus is the mechanism for the trap at area C20. It's easy to reset or disable the trap from here.

## C22. MASTER BEDROOM

A pair of inlaid sconces holding dancing flames illuminates this well-appointed bedchamber. The room is furnished with a canopied four-poster bed, two large wardrobes, a polished circular table, and a mirrored dresser near the door. A grand carved fireplace stands in the southeast corner.

This is Zarskia's bedchamber. The strong wooden door is kept locked (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25), and Zarskia bars the door (Break DC 30) before going to sleep at night. The sconces hold *continual flames*.

The fireplace is 4 feet tall and has no floor—the chimney forms a shaft that drops straight down to the basement 35 feet below (area C23). Zarskia usually flies down the chimney, but the shaft can also be climbed with a successful DC 15 Climb check.

**Treasure:** A stylish purse in the north wardrobe holds Zarskia's day-to-day spending money: 10 pp, 47 gp, and 29 sp. Fashionable outfits and dresses in the wardrobes are worth a total of 360 gp. A jewelry box in the dresser holds high-quality imitation lady's jewelry worth 215 gp (but appears far more valuable to the undiscerning eye). Under the dresser is a slim case containing a fully stocked disguise kit.

## C23. SECRET BASEMENT

A pile of old unused firewood is stacked near a wide brick fireplace in this dingy cellar. Opposite the fireplace, a corroded iron gate secured with a padlock blocks the entrance to a tunnel beyond. To the north, stony rubble and overflowing dirt completely fill a flight of stairs leading upward, and a plain table holding scattered papers stands to the south.

Zarskia's escape route leads through this basement. An everburning torch in a sconce on the south wall illuminates the room. The fireplace is the bottom of a shaft that leads all the way up to the master bedroom on the third floor (area C22), requiring a DC 15 Climb

## TEMPEST RISING

check to scale. The rubble-filled stairway once led to the kitchen above (area C11).

While rust and decay have weakened the gate's bars (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 22), the untarnished padlock is of outstanding quality (DC 35 Disable Device check to unlock). The escape tunnel runs for 200 feet before ending at a secret door that opens near a drainage tunnel exit. If Zarskia flees here, she grabs the bandolier and money pouch from the table and unlocks the gate. If she has time, she then destroys the papers on the table with a bomb or tindertwig, which takes her at least 1 round.

**Treasure:** The majority of Zarskia's espionage payments are already stored safely inside Abadaran vaults in Avistan, but she keeps an emergency fund of 50 pp and 100 gp in a cloth pouch on the table. A leather bandolier on the table holds an *elixir of hiding*, *elixir of tumbling*, and *elixir of vision*, as well as a *feather token* (swan boat). Among the papers on the table are writing equipment and a large vial holding 4 uses of superior invisible ink (*Adventurer's Armory* 10), along with a smaller vial of the triggering substance that reveals this particular ink.

The papers and missives on the table were originally written using invisible ink, but Zarskia has already revealed the hidden messages. Many of the papers are encrypted or use ambiguous code words, but they nevertheless expose the identities of a widespread network of spies throughout the Shackles. The papers also detail the primary players in the spy ring—Corlan, Elliece Farhaven, Haddon Pike, and Roweena Kellet, as well as their ordered assassinations (by an imp in the case of Elliece, and by Giles Halmis in the case of the others).

If Zarskia was able to burn the papers, most of the documents are destroyed, but recent instructions stored in a waterproof satchel survive with only slight charring around the edges. Dated 3 weeks ago and written in Infernal, they read, "Silence is now key. Our plans will go into full force once our agent finishes his preparations. Destroy any remaining evidence and discreetly sell your business. Report to Nisroch for your next assignment."

**Development:** If the PCs capture Zarskia alive, they can also coerce her into revealing the information contained in the papers. Zarskia knows that her handlers are scions of a noble house serving the Umbral Court in Nidal, but she doesn't know which house, nor is she aware that her reports quickly make their way to Egorian, capital of Cheliah.

Even if only the satchel of recent communications survives, there's enough evidence to satisfy Tessa, and deeply worry her as well. While the papers contain no irrefutable link to Cheliah, the use of imp assassins, messages in the Infernal tongue, and hints of Nidal's involvement all provide clues to Chelish backing of the plot. If nothing else, she can present the clues gathered by

the PCs to the Pirate Council to alert them that someone somewhere has new designs upon the Shackles.

Tessa thanks the PCs for the information and rewards them with trade goods and booty worth 3 points of plunder (if she already promised them a monetary reward, she pays that instead). More importantly, she promises them her support and her vote in the Pirate Council, should they ever need to call on her. If Tessa found one of the PCs to her liking, she may give that character a more personal "reward."

**Story Award:** If the PCs recover the information detailing Zarskia's spy network and hand over the proof to Tessa Fairwind, award them 6,400 XP.

### PART THREE: THE FREE CAPTAINS' REGATTA

The annual Free Captains' Regatta is a time-honored tradition in the Shackles, and one of the few opportunities that lesser, independent captains have to increase their station and status among the pirates of the Shackles. The Free Captains' Regatta is a grueling nautical race held among the hazardous sandbars and reefs north of the Shackles among the dangerous currents and winds at the southern fringes of the giant hurricane called the Eye of Abendego. The race is open to any Free Captain with a ship, and while many captains and ships do not finish the race (or even survive it), the regatta has no shortage of competitors each year, for the rewards are truly worth the risk—a hefty prize purse, lordship of a small island, and a seat on the Pirate Council of the Shackles.

If the PCs have not expressed interest in competing in the regatta, Tessa Fairwind strongly recommends that they enter the race, particularly after they have proved themselves in tracking down the Chelish spy network. Tessa seeks more allies on the Pirate Council, and if the PCs can win the competition, they'll gain a seat on the council, not to mention the boost to their reputations and infamy.

Furthermore, common wisdom holds that this year's regatta will truly be an open race. The druid-captain known as the Master of the Gales has won the regatta for the last 5 years, but this year he is officiating the race instead of competing, leaving its outcome in doubt.

To enter the regatta, a competitor must be the captain of his own ship and pay an entry fee of 500 gp. Of course, the other PCs who are not captains can still take part in the race as officers or sailors aboard the vessel. If the PCs are unwilling or unable to pay the entry fee, Tessa happily stakes them the fee in thanks for their help.

As the race date draws close and the last competitors arrive at Port Peril, the city's populace buzzes with speculation about the course for this year's race. A week before race day, the announcement flies through the city that the Master of the Gales has declared Cauldron Rock, the northernmost island large enough to be marked on





most maps of the Shackles, as the race's starting point. A huge flotilla of racers and spectators sets sail northward out of Jeopardy Bay.

Arriving at Cauldron Rock, the race fleet anchors northeast of the island. The captains of most of the competing ships disallow shore leave for their crews, but numerous spectators (including many of the PCs' friends and allies, such as Tessa Fairwind and possibly Pierce Jerrell, Merrill Pegsworth, or others) make merry on their ships or on a small sandy beach nearby, in spite of intermittent rain and wind from the giant hurricane to the north.

The afternoon before the race, the Master of the Gales calls a meeting of all competing ships' captains and their senior officers aboard his xebec, the *Kraken*. An imposing man with tanned and weather-beaten skin and long, windblown hair and beard, the Master of the Gales outlines the course of the race to the competitors and supplies a simple route map to each participant. Designed to test even the most rugged crew, the regatta will take ships along the fringes of the Eye of Abendego and even into the storm itself, ending at a small islet called Coaming Point. Fixing each contestant with a icy blue stare, the Master of the Gales reminds everyone that the Free Captains' Regatta is a nautical race, not a battle or an opportunity to avenge past slights. He announces that he will be monitoring the race, and any ship caught attacking or unduly interfering with another competing vessel will be disqualified, or if necessary, sunk. Nature itself will be the most dangerous enemy the contenders will face, a fact the gathered captains would be wise to remember if they hope to complete, much less win, the regatta. See page 52 for a full description of the Master of the Gales.

Now that they know the general route of the race, the PCs should plot their initial course away from Cauldron Rock in preparation for the race the following morning. They can use the *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58) to do so, but nearly all of the race will occur outside the area detailed on the charts, so they will only be of use for the race's start.

## THE COMPETITORS

This year's Free Captain's Regatta attracts far more entries than the last few years. A wide variety of ships are taking part, from barques, brigs, caravels, clippers, and galleons, to galleys, junks, longships, and triremes. The following ships comprise the PCs' main opposition in the Regatta: the *Albatross*, *Barnacled Bitch*, *Bonny Witch*, *Chimera's Teeth*, *Darcy's Pillage*, *Kelizandri's Favor*, *Pharasma's Price*, *Promise's Bounty*, *Redcap*, *Sea's Largess*, *Skullduggery*, *Stormrunner*, *Sullied Strumpet*, *Wave Wraith*, and lastly, the *Wormwood*—captained by the PCs' old nemesis, Barnabas Harrigan.

See pages 218–219 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* for lists of captains, sailors, and ships if you wish to further detail these competitors.

## RACE MECHANICS

During the regatta, the PCs will track their Race score, measuring their placement relative to the other competitors using this score. A positive score means the PCs are ahead of the average contender, while a negative score means the PCs are trailing behind the pack. The PCs start with a Race score of 0. The players should keep track of their Race score throughout the race so that they can see how they're doing. At the end of the race, the PCs' total Race score will determine whether the PCs win the race or not.

As the PCs make their way through the race, they will need to make numerous skill checks to successfully plot a course and maneuver around the obstacles along the race course. Most of these checks can be made by any PC on the ship. Failing these checks can have negative consequences for the PCs' Race score, as detailed in the specific encounter locations.

In addition, the pilot of the PCs' ship has the opportunity to make additional sailing checks (usually Profession [sailor] checks, if the PCs' vessel is a sailing ship) during the race. Because of the extreme nature of the elements and the regatta itself, the DCs of these checks vary throughout the competition, unlike the static DCs of normal sailing checks (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 10). For every 5 by which a sailing check result exceeds the DC, the PCs' Race score increases by 1. For every 5 by which a check fails, the PCs' Race score decreases by 1.

Up to three additional characters can aid another on any of these checks, each granting the character making the check the normal +2 bonus on the check if successful.

**Hazards of the Eye:** The extreme weather patterns and currents surrounding the Eye of Abendego add an additional hazard to the race beyond those obstacles that are part of the course itself. Each time the PCs enter a new encounter location during the race, roll on the Stormbound Hazards table on page 73 to generate an additional hazard that the PCs must contend with as they race along the fringes of the Eye.

## MAGIC

The use of magic is permitted during the regatta, but whether it will be useful or not is another matter. *Control weather* might seem like an ideal spell to use during the race, but all competitors in the spell's area gain the same benefit, resulting in little change in relative position. In addition, the Master of the Gales uses his own *control weather* spells to negate any weather that unfairly aids a competitor or hinders other contestants.

The winds affected by a *control winds* spell do not move with a ship, but it can be used to circumvent appropriate obstacles, adding a +5 circumstance bonus on one appropriate skill check for each casting.

## TEMPEST RISING

Spells with limited durations, or that affect small or immobile areas, may add a bonus on a single appropriate skill check equal to the spell's level, at the GM's discretion. Examples include *alter winds\**, *control water*, *gust of wind*, *river of wind\**, or spells cast to summon appropriate creatures (such as air elementals). Spells marked with an asterisk (\*) can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*.

### D. RACE START

The race begins first thing in the morning, under leaden skies and sudden squalls of driving rain. Tessa Fairwind comes aboard the PCs' ship to wish them smooth sailing and good luck, as do other friends and allies of the PCs. If Pierce Jerrell is romantically involved with a PC, he loans his *ioun stone* "eye" (see page 54) to his sweetheart with a parting embrace.

After over an hour of shouting, cursing, and jostling for position, the contenders arrange themselves in rough formation behind the starting line drawn between the *Kraken* and another ship, the *Ocean's Revenge*. All eyes look to the Master of the Gales, who stands atop a rocky promontory on Cauldron Rock. He raises both arms to the sky and unleashes a flashing bolt of lightning down into the surf, signaling the start of the race.

As the Master of the Gales transforms into an albatross and flies over the participants, the wind shifts sharply and unnaturally from northerly to easterly, throwing the competitors into chaos. The PCs must pilot their way clear of the milling ships by making two successful DC 25 sailing checks. If the PCs plotted their initial course using the *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58), they gain a +3 bonus on these checks. Using *Jalhazar's wheel* (see page 58) as a full-round action to combine a hard to port or hard to starboard action with a full ahead action grants an additional +5 bonus on one check. Successful checks add to the PCs' Race score as normal. Failing a sailing check by 5 or more results in a collision with another ship, treated as an accidental ramming maneuver (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 14). Roll percentile dice. On a result of 01–50, the PCs' ship rams another vessel, and the PCs' ship takes half its normal ramming damage (no damage if the PCs' ship is equipped with a ram). On a result of 51–75, the PCs' ship is rammed, taking 8d8 points of damage. On a result of 76–00, the PCs' ship is rammed at takes 16d8 points of damage from the collision. Each such collision reduces the PCs' Race score by 1.

### E. THE SILTED SHROUDS

The Silted Shrouds are an extensive series of shallow sandbars formed by the continuous action of the Eye of Abendego. There are no up-to-date charts of the Silted Shrouds, as new channels and sandbars continuously form and wash away. The PCs must make four successful DC 25 Survival checks to navigate their way through. Characters with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) gain a +2 bonus on the checks. Alternatively, the PCs can use aerial reconnaissance or underwater reconnaissance (provided the scout has a fly speed or swim speed of 50 feet or more) to make Perception checks instead. Failing a check subtracts 1 from the PCs' Race score as they backtrack. Failing a check by 5 or more means the PCs' ship runs aground, subtracting an additional 2 from their Race score, unless they have an underwater scout moving ahead of the ship.



The Wormwood



Casting *commune with nature* or *find the path* eliminates the need for any navigation checks. The PCs can avoid making any navigation checks by sailing around the Shroud, but this subtracts 5 from their Race score.

**Sailing checks:** The PCs can make three DC 25 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

## F. RAKER SHOALS

The low-lying coral reefs known as Raker Shoals are a well-known hazard to ships in this region. The PCs must quickly chart a course through the shoals with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check. Using the *charts of the fair winds* (see page 58) grants a +2 circumstance bonus on the check. Failing this check subtracts 1 from the PCs' Race score. For every 5 by which the check result exceeds the DC, reduce the number of uncharted reef encounters by one. At the same time, the PCs should decide the speed at which they are traveling through the shoals.

**Uncharted Reefs:** The PCs encounter five uncharted reefs while sailing through Raker Shoals. Allow the PCs to make Perception checks to spot a reef before encountering it. The base DC of this check is 5, modified by +1 for every 10 feet of distance. The result of this check determines the distance of the reef from the PCs' ship when it is spotted. For example, a result of 23 on the Perception check spots the reef 180 feet away.

Once a reef is spotted, the pilot of the PCs' ship must take a hard to port or hard to starboard action (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 13) with a successful sailing check to avoid the reef. The ship's speed is critical; if a character spots a reef at a distance of four times the ship's speed, no check is required to steer the ship to avoid the reef. If a reef is spotted at a distance of twice the ship's speed, the sailing check has a base DC of 5. If a reef is spotted at a distance of the ship's speed, the base DC is 20. The normal penalties on the sailing checks for the ship's speed still apply.

For example, if the ship is traveling at a speed of 90 feet, a DC 41 Perception check is required to spot a reef 360 feet away, and no sailing check is required at that distance. A DC 23 Perception check spots the reef 180 feet away, and a DC 5 sailing check (with a -10 penalty on the check for the ship's speed) is enough to avoid the reef. A DC 14 Perception check spots the reef 90 feet away, and a DC 20 sailing check (with the -10 penalty) is required to avoid the reef.

On a failed sailing check, the PCs' ship grates against the reef, taking half the ship's normal ramming damage (a ship equipped with a ram takes no damage). If the sailing check fails by 5 or more, or the PCs fail to spot the reef at all, the ship takes 8d8 points of damage and runs aground. This delay subtracts 1d4+1 from the PCs' Race score.

Average the PCs' speed through the shoals and divide by 30, then subtract 2; this is the change in their Race score after this leg. For example, if a ship traveled at an average speed of 90 feet through the shoals, its Race score would increase by 1. The PCs can avoid all of the dangers of the shoals (and all checks) by sailing wide around the shoals, but doing so subtracts 7 from their Race score.

## G. GOZREH'S FLOW

Sometimes called Gozreh's Piss by the less reverent, the swirling wash of powerful ocean currents called Gozreh's Flow sweeps out of the Sodden Lands along the southern fringes of the Eye. Competitors must tack into the strong wind while navigating the treacherous currents. The PCs must make three successful DC 25 Knowledge (nature) or DC 30 Survival checks during this leg to avoid the strong easterly currents dragging them back. Each failed check subtracts 1 from their Race score. Casting *commune with nature* or *find the path* eliminates the need for any checks. There is no way to avoid Gozreh's Flow.

**Sailing checks:** The PCs can make three DC 20 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

## H. IRIS'S SPLINTERS (CR 10)

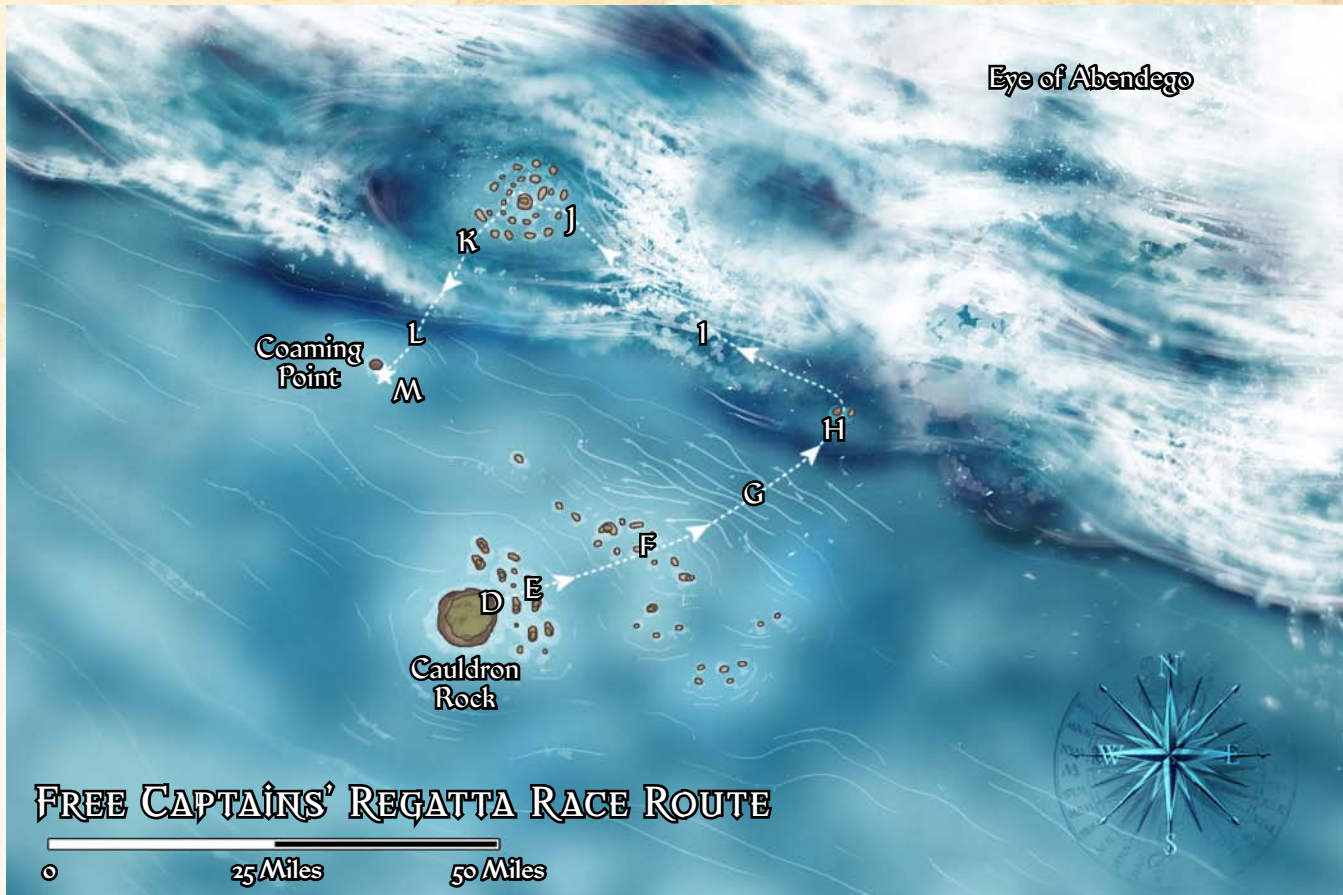
Two jagged shafts of rock, called the Iris's Splinters, rise out of the ocean here, forming a narrow 100 foot gap between them. Competitors must "thread the Iris" and sail between these splinters.

**Creature:** As the PCs approach the rocks, a gigantic turtlelike behemoth surfaces ahead of them. As they watch, the beast smashes into the *Sullied Strumpet* with a bellow, capsizing the light sloop. This malicious giant dragon turtle, named Hirgenzosc, was responsible for the sinking of the *Brine Banshee* (see page 31) and now finds itself in the midst a veritable smorgasbord of ships and fresh food.

Hirgenzosc desires humanoid food (both humanoids and their edible cargo), and hungrily attacks any ships within reach. The dragon turtle's slow swim speed gives the PCs the opportunity to outmaneuver it and dart through the Iris with three successful DC 25 sailing checks. If the PCs wait for another ship to draw Hirgenzosc's attention, only one sailing check is required, but this subtracts 1d3 from the PCs' Race score. Using *Jalhazar's wheel* (see page 58) as a full-round action to combine a hard to port or hard to starboard action with a full ahead action grants an additional +5 bonus on one check.

Failing a check means that the PCs must hold off Hirgenzosc for at least 3 rounds while their ship threads the Iris. Fighting from onboard their ship can be deadly for the PCs' crew, as Hirgenzosc tries to capsize the ship and uses its breath weapon as often as possible. Flying or swimming PCs can keep Hirgenzosc away from the ship while it gets through.

## TEMPEST RISING



**Sailing checks:** The PCs can make two DC 25 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

### **HIRGENZOSK** CR 10

**XP 9,600**

NE giant dragon turtle (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 112, 295)

**hp** 150

#### **TACTICS**

**During Combat** Hirgenzosc attempts to capsize smaller ships and uses its breath weapon repeatedly on larger vessels.

If there's no prey in range, the dragon turtle cunningly remains out of sight just below the surface.

**Morale** Hirgenzosc fights until reduced to 60 hit points or fewer, then plunges down into ocean's depths.

**Story Award:** If the PCs outmaneuver Hirgenzosc, award them 9,600 XP as if they had defeated it in battle.

### **I. INTO THE STORM**

The PCs must now skim through the outer edge of the titanic maelstrom that is the Eye of Abendego, tacking against the powerful northwesterly storm winds created by the cyclone's counter-clockwise rotation. Navigating through the hurricane requires a successful DC 25

Profession (sailor) or Survival check. Characters with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) gain a +2 bonus on the checks. Failing this check subtracts 3 from the PCs' Race score.

Once inside the hurricane, the PCs encounter additional hazards. Roll three times on the Stormbound Hazards table on page 73 to generate the dangers the PCs must face. In addition, the following encounter takes place during this leg of the race.

**Lightning:** A sheet of lightning strikes the foremast of the PCs' ship, dealing 10d8 points of electricity damage to the sails. If this reduces the sails to fewer than half their total hit points, the sails gain the broken condition, halving the ship's maximum speed (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 11). Using magic (such as *fabricate* or *make whole*) to repair the sails is difficult with the violent motion of the storm, requiring Climb checks to get aloft and concentration checks (DC 15 + the level of the spell) to cast the spells successfully. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Craft (sails) or Craft (ships) check can also jury-rig the sails, suppressing the broken condition until the sails take more damage. Failing to repair the sails subtracts 5 from the PCs' Race score.

Skirting around the outside of the storm's edge eliminates the need for the navigation check, and means



the PCs encounter only one stormbound hazard, but this subtracts 10 from the PCs' Race score.

**Sailing checks:** The PCs can make five DC 30 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race. Failing a check by 5 or more means the wind deals 6d6 points of damage to the ship's sails. If the PCs skirt around the storm, the DC for these checks is reduced to 20.

### J. SHARKSKIN REEF AND PINNACLE ATOLL

The PCs must sail through the two concentric rings of Sharkskin Reef and around the towering spire of rock called Pinnacle Atoll. Steering the ship through both rings of the razor-sharp reefs requires four successful DC 30 sailing checks. Failing any of these checks results in 8d8 points of damage to the PCs' ship as waves smash the vessel against the reefs. The PCs can pass through only the outer ring of reefs, which requires only two checks, but the extra distance subtracts 2 from their Race score. Sailing wide around the outer ring to avoid all of the reefs eliminates the need for any sailing checks, but subtracts 6 from the PCs' Race score.

**Sailing checks:** The PCs can make two DC 25 sailing checks to improve their Race score during this leg of the race.

### K. LIGHTNING STORM (CR 9)

As the PCs head out of the Eye of Abendego, an unnatural electrical squall strikes and a corona of baleful green lightning limns their ship's mainmast. A successful DC 19 Knowledge (planes) check identifies the dangerous nature of the glowing nimbus.

**Creature:** The PCs have 3 rounds to act before the energy coalesces into a lightning elemental. The elemental remains near the top of the mast, using Flyby Attack to attack those on deck. It focuses its attacks on those creatures wearing metal armor or wielding metal weapons, using its spark leap ability to knock them overboard. The elemental fights until destroyed.

**GREATER LIGHTNING ELEMENTAL** CR 9  
XP 6,400  
hp 110 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 117)

### L. THE HOME STRETCH (CR 9)

The PCs emerge from the depths of the storm and discover that the majority of the other contenders have not yet made it out of the Eye. In fact, the only other ship in contention is Captain Harrigan's *Wormwood*! To the west, the *Kraken* cruises in the distance, the Master of the Gales on deck observing the race's finish.

**Creature:** Spotting the PCs' ship as his sole competition for the victory, Captain Harrigan attempts a last-ditch effort to slow them, but in a way that won't be noticed by the Master of the Gales. Harrigan's sailing master,

**Peppery Longfarthing** (CN female human sorcerer 8), uses a *scroll of summon monster VII* (caster level 13th) to attempt to surreptitiously summon two invisible stalkers. Peppery must succeed at a DC 14 caster level check to cast the spell. If successful, she sends the two invisible stalkers to attack the PCs' pilot. The invisible stalkers remain for 13 rounds; it takes them 3 rounds to cover the distance between the *Wormwood* and the PCs' ship. The PCs can notice the invisible stalkers flying toward their ship with a DC 42 Perception check. If they are not detected, the invisible stalkers surprise the PCs. The invisible stalkers focus their attacks on the PCs' pilot. As long as the pilot at minimum uses a move action each round to take the stay the course action (*Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* 13), the PCs' ship does not lose any ground. If the pilot does not take this action each round, the ship takes the uncontrolled action. Each round that the PCs' ship takes the uncontrolled action reduces the PCs' Race score by 1. The invisible stalkers fight until destroyed or until the spell duration expires.

**INVISIBLE STALKERS (2)** CR 7  
XP 3,200 each  
hp 80 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 181)

**Sailing checks:** The PCs can make two DC 20 sailing checks to improve their Race score during the final leg of the race.

### M. FINISH LINE

The finish line of the regatta lies at a tiny island called Coaming Point, about 25 miles northwest of Cauldron Rock. The first ship to sail past the island wins the regatta. At this point, as the PCs and the *Wormwood* streak toward the finish line, total up the PCs' Race score to determine the winner of the race.

Race Score	Result
0 or less	The <i>Wormwood</i> is too far ahead. The PCs are unable to catch up, and the <i>Wormwood</i> reaches the finish line first.
1–10	The PCs and the <i>Wormwood</i> are neck-and-neck. At the last second, the PCs' ship noses ahead, and the PCs cross the finish line first.
11 or more	The PCs lead the <i>Wormwood</i> by a considerable margin. Harrigan makes a determined effort to catch up, but he has no chance of winning. The PCs are victorious, crossing the finish line as the clear winners.

**Development:** If the *Wormwood* crosses the finish line first, the Master of the Gales proclaims Captain Harrigan the winner of the Regatta. Harrigan's victory is short-lived,



however, as less than an hour later, the *Pharasma's Price* sails out of the Eye and limps to the finish. On board the ship is one of the crew of the *Barnacled Bitch*, which was lost just past Pinnacle Atoll. The survivor, Zarena Visk, tells a harrowing tale of how the *Wormwood* maliciously rammed and sunk the *Bitch*, losing all hands other than Zarena. It was only sheer luck that the *Price* saw Zarena in the storm-tossed waters and picked her up. Even more damning, Zarena has solid proof of her story—a piece of the *Wormwood's* dragon figurehead that broke off during the attack, to which Zarena clung to stay afloat. With this proof and Zarena's testimony, the Master of the Gales disqualifies Harrigan and declares the PCs the winners of the Free Captains' Regatta.

**Story Award:** If the PCs completed the Free Captain's Regatta but did not win (Race score of 0 or less), award them 4,800 XP and 1 point of Disrepute and Infamy. If the PCs won the race by a nose (Race score of 1–10), award them 9,600 XP and 2 points of Disrepute and Infamy. If the PCs won the regatta with an overwhelming victory (Race score of 11 or more), award them 19,200 XP and 4 points of Disrepute and Infamy.

### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Whether they won the regatta by their own luck and skill or through the *Wormwood's* disqualification, the PCs have now more than ever earned the undying enmity of Captain Barnabas Harrigan. As winners of the Free Captains' Regatta, the PCs receive the regatta's rich prize purse—with 16 entrants, including themselves, the purse totals 8,000 gp. More importantly, the PCs gain a seat on the Pirate Council of the Shackles. The Master of the Gales ceremonially attaches a broken, silver-plated manacle on one of the PCs' wrists as a symbol of this honor, representing the PCs' freedom from the constraints of other nations' laws and authority, but also the responsibility that now binds them to the welfare of the Shackles and its people, whom they now represent. Finally, the Master of the Gales presents the PCs with a deed granting them lordship over a small island in the north of the Shackles. But a deed is only a piece of paper; in order to truly claim dominion over this island, the PCs must explore it and deal with any monsters or other inhabitants there. The efforts of the PCs to claim the isle for themselves are detailed in the next volume of the *Skull & Shackles* Adventure Path, "Island of Empty Eyes."