

Issue Seven  
Winter 2006

# Buccaneers & Bokor



## Captain's Log

Welcome to the seventh issue of **Buccaneers & Bokor**—beginning with this issue, we're expanding our focus to not only cover material of use for historical piracy campaigns like **Skull & Bones**, but also to provide material of use for standard fantasy d20 games looking to add a bit of nautical or piratical adventure!

In this issue, we have the long-awaited final installment of the "Governor's Prize" adventure series, a new prestige class, and an article on running nautical fantasy campaigns. Enjoy!

Gareth-Michael Skarka  
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# NAUTICAL FANTASY

By Walt Ciechanowski

*The players gathered around the table as the Game Master set up his screen. It was the dawning of a new campaign in the fantasy world of Arak-Tor and there was an increased level of excitement as the players began considering what their new characters were going to be. In the last campaign, after several hard earned levels cleaning out the dungeons of Old Pavak, the party had made a final stand against the evil God Emperor of Vokol. In the campaign before, the PCs had united the warring principalities of Sorrانيا by traveling to the four corners of the great continent and collecting the pieces of the shattered Rod of Sorrانيا. The players couldn't wait to see with the GM was going to spring on them next.*

*"I think I'm going to be an elven paladin this time," said one. "I want to play a dwarven barbarian," said another. "I think I'll play a cleric/wizard of Radnor," said the third.*

*"Hold on guys," the GM chuckled. "Before you start generating those characters, I should warn you that you're all going to be pirates plundering ships traveling along the spice route between the Great Continent and the Golden Archipelago."*

*The players stared back at him as if he had three heads. "Pirates?" One of them asked. "In medieval fantasy? Shouldn't we be Vikings or something?"*



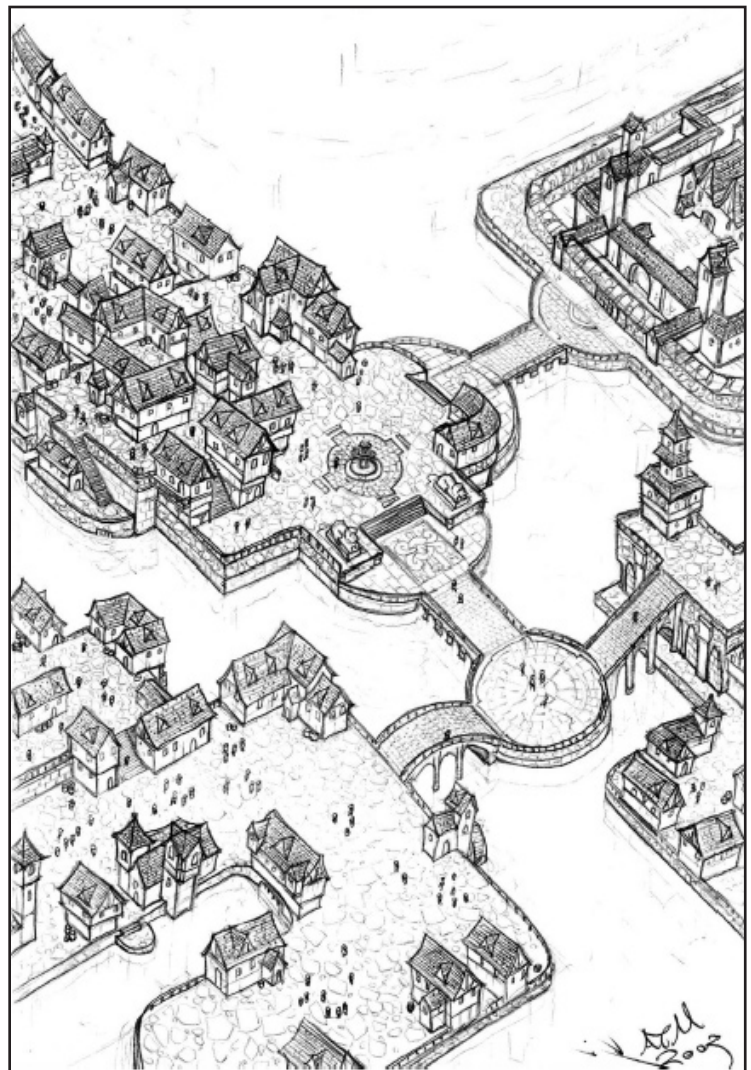
As was pointed out in the introduction to this volume, the word “pirate” doesn’t exactly scream “medieval fantasy.” The image of the pirate in popular culture is tightly wedded to the Golden Age of Piracy. While there have been a number of pirate and nautical supplements written for d20 and other fantasy RPGs in the past, most gamers still associate medieval fantasy with land-based encounters. Ships are perceived merely as a mode of transport to get from port to port, with perhaps an encounter or two along the way.

Piracy, however, can make for very interesting d20 campaign. Nor does one need to leave the confines of medieval fantasy in order to maintain the flavor of high seas adventure. So long as your campaign world includes travel and trade by ship, there will always be unscrupulous people willing to take advantage of it. This article is designed to introduce GMs to the concept of nautical adventures and how to incorporate piratical elements into medieval fantasy campaigns.

## *Life on the Open Sea*

When designing maps for fantasy game worlds, GMs often focus on the physical and political geography. Outlines of continents and islands are clearly delineated as well as mountain ranges and major forests. Major political features, such as the names of kingdoms and major cities, are also included. Some maps will even have dotted lines marking the accepted boundaries of each political region. Most maps, however, leave out major trade routes and resources. Both of these are fertile ground for nautical adventures.

Sea trade routes are the easy to display on a map, primarily because most of what you’re doing is connecting ports. Ports tend to connect to each other in the most efficient way possible. This may lead to some trade routes being more trafficked than others. Physical geography must also be taken into account. Many extreme northern trade routes may become impassable during



the winter. Other trade routes may be slowed by the hurricane season. Political relations are also a key factor. Two kingdoms at war with each other, for example, will probably not have trade routes open to each other’s ports. Merchant ships will also avoid straying too close to dangerous political regions, no matter how much longer it would take for a ship to steer clear.

Fantasy elements can play a major role in establishing trade routes. The quickest, easiest sea route between continents may take trade ships over a particularly violent undersea kingdom of mermen or aquatic elves. Other trade routes may pass too close to the layers of dangerous beasts (and rich merchants may pay handsomely for someone to slay a beast to open up a lucrative trade route). Strange weather patterns will also play a major role in determining where ships are willing to sail.

Once we understand where the trade routes are, we come to the question of why. What resources are available in one region that would be coveted by other regions? Historical examples include silk, spices, tea, and slaves. Resources need not be unique to a particular region. It may be more cost-effective for a nation to import lumber rather than to chop down its own forests. Many resources are luxuries, a symbol of status, as the cost of procuring and shipping these items is expensive. In the modern age, for example, it is difficult to think of tea as a luxury item, since it is readily available and cheaply bought in any corner grocery store. During the Golden Age of Piracy, however, tea had to be imported from China and shipped around South Asia and Africa before it could reach European ports, making it rather expensive. Tea didn't grow well in Europe, and changing risks and political conditions actually encouraged English merchants to seed British-controlled India with tea. This expensive tea was coveted by the lower classes, leading to a market for secondhand (recycled) tea.

Fantasy resources can also play a major factor. Magical animals, plants, and minerals may only be available in certain regions. Certain types of magic may only be available in particular areas. If the dwarves of Nogorond are the only weapon smiths capable of forging rune swords, then anyone wishing to purchase or sell rune swords will have to establish a trade route with Nogorond. If unicorns are only found on the remote Isle of Taranth, then anyone wishing to acquire a unicorn horn will have to brave the dangerous waters around Taranth.

Once trade routes are established, it's necessary to determine where along the route merchant ships are the most vulnerable. Often times, as is the open sea, where a ship could travel for weeks along a trade route and not spot another vessel. If a pirate vessel approached on the horizon, the ship's crew understood that they would have to deal with it alone (especially if the pirate vessel disguised itself until the last possible moment). Fast ships might be able to outrun the pirates, while slower ships either had to make a stand or flee in the hopes that they could reach a friendly ship or port in time.

Still, the most dangerous waters for a merchant vessel are near landmasses. While pirates can be found the open sea, they are more often encountered near areas where they can re-supply and repair their vessels. While there are always stories of secret pirate havens, pirates more often hail from ports that are hostile towards their victims (or simply don't care about such things). These ports are usually the beneficiaries of any loot the pirates acquire. This is also fertile ground for privateers, pirates hired by one nation to attack the merchant ships of another. This is especially likely if two nations are vying for control of an important resource or trade route.

## *Exploration and Control*

So long as a world map contains unexplored areas, there will always be rulers and entrepreneurs wishing to explore it. New lands hold the potential for new resources, creating competition for discovery and ultimately control of those resources. Rulers may be willing to employ mercenary vessels to assume the risk of exploration in return for being handsomely paid by whatever terms they agree upon. Rulers can outfit and send their own vessels, but they run the risk of being seen by their people as wasteful spenders (whether or not the ruler cares is based on the security of his position).

Sometimes, explorers can find virgin territory untouched by civilization. More likely, someone else already inhabits these "new and undiscovered" lands. How the explorers respond depends upon the strength and sophistication of these native residents. A reasonable show of force, magical or military, will prompt the explorers to tread cautiously, using their diplomatic skills to negotiate favorable terms of trade. These terms will often include an exclusivity clause, closing the door to any of the explorer or patron's rivals.

If the explorer or his patron feels that the local population can be controlled, then imperialism or colonialism will be considered. Imperialism

involves taking control of the local government by ensuring that its rulers swear fealty to the imperialist nation. This may involve removing the current ruler and replacing him with someone that will recognize the dominion of the imperialists. The imperialist nation will install an overseer to ensure its interests as well as maintain a military presence in the area (often building military forts near major cities).

Colonialism involves the creation of settlements inhabited by subjects or citizens of the mother country. Native populations, if there are any, are swept aside, enslaved, or exterminated. The new colony, for all intents and purposes, operates as an extension of the mother country. It is possible for imperialism and colonialism to occur in the same place, especially if there is decentralized control. An imperialist nation may establish colonies in some parts of a new land and establish trade agreements or imperialist governments in others. As a nation increases its control over a particular region it may incorporate colonies and imperial dominions under a single regional authority.

Few nations are able to consolidate control over the newly discovered region before other nations decide to stake claims. These nations will send their own explorers and navies to secure resource rich regions for themselves before the first country is able to establish dominion. While this creates strong trade routes, it also increases competition. How the various nations react to such competition depends on their own political relationships with each other. This could be as benign as rival diplomats vying to secure the best trade agreements with local rulers or as aggressive as each nation's ships attacking the others on sight.

Thus, these new regions will quickly become a patchwork of local independent nations, dominated nations, and colonies of various powers. The home countries relations with each other will often influence these regional relations. One country may employ privateers to raid the ships of a rival. Other times, a war at home may spill into the region. Ironically, two home nations could be at war with each other while

their regional counterparts continue to enjoy good diplomatic relations.

Within this convoluted patchwork, pirates thrive. A multitude of markets means a multitude of opportunities. The more rival nations are in competition with each other, the more profit a pirate can make in stealing from one and selling to the other. Most pirates ensure that they have at least one friendly port to call home. Sometimes an independent safe haven is created for pirates. This is often a hidden location known only to local pirate captains. Other pirates may become unofficial agents of a particular nation, perceiving protection and safe haven in return for a share of the booty acquired from rival vessels. These pirates are known as privateers.

## *Fantasy Elements*

Fantastic elements can add a lot of spice to nautical adventures. New cultures may not just be encountered in far-off lands; they may also be under the water. This adds another layer of complexity to establishing trade routes and transport. Diplomats with the ability to breathe water, whether natural or magical, will have a competitive edge over their rivals. Underwater pirates also provide an extra challenge, as they can attack merchant vessels from below, often their most vulnerable point.

Fantasy campaigns typically include hazardous encounters with aggressive sea creatures as well as other ships. PCs must be ready to handle non-traditional attacks, such as giant tentacles wrapping themselves around the ship to crush it or angry giants hurtling boulders at a merchant ship as it passes through a narrow strait.

Fantasy regions can also include strange geographical features. An island containing the only known field of a rare spice may actually be atop the shell of an enormous floating sea turtle. There really may be an island with a hidden pool that grants eternal youth to anyone who drinks from it. Magical storms may randomly hover over a particular sea, making navigation difficult.

Particularly nasty types of encounters on the open sea are deteriorated ships operated by undead crews. Necromancers or liches captain some of these vessels. These pirates are often in the market for human flesh and travel only by night. Ghostly vessels can also be found sailing the open sea. Ships that are actually living golems may also be encountered, providing a nasty surprise when they raise their arms and punch holes into enemy vessels.

## *Nautical Adventures and Campaigns*

Nautical adventures tend to fall into three categories: incidental, one-shot adventure, and campaign. The frequency of nautical encounters will have an impact on how players design their characters. Incidental adventures are isolated nautical encounters within a larger adventure. For example, the party may need to explore an uncharted island. They'll first need transport to the island, which may involve hiring a ship. The meat of the adventure, however, is not in the journey to the island (although there may be a few nautical encounters along the way), but in the exploration of the island itself. In other words, the party was hired for their suitability in dealing with the traditional, land-based encounters on the island, not for their effectiveness as sailors. GMs running incidental nautical adventures should not expect the party to be proficient at nautical skills. At best, they'll be extra muscle for dealing with monstrous dangers along the way.

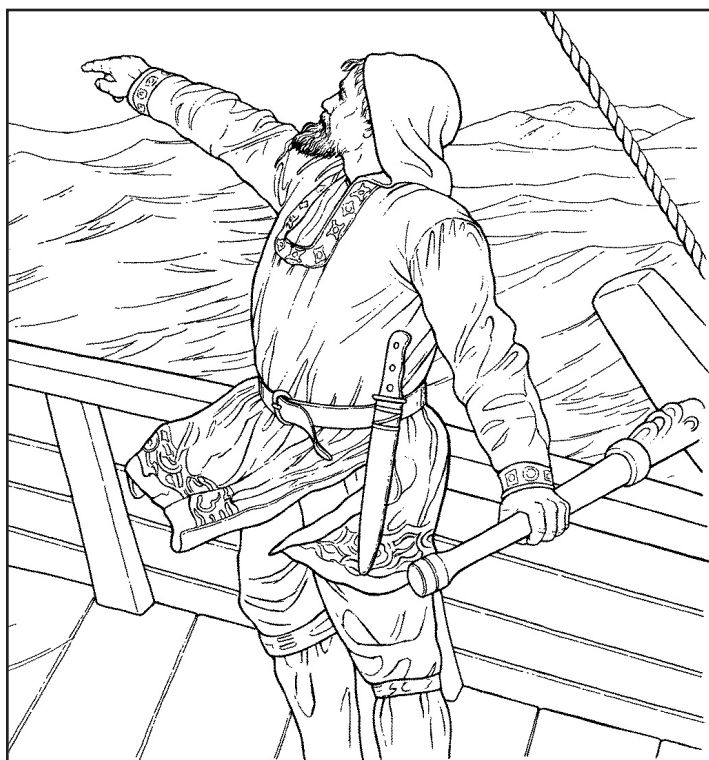
Nautical one-shot adventures involve larger stretches of high seas adventure. While the party is not expected to deal with nautical adventures all the time, they should have some proficiency at sea. As with incidental adventures, the PCs are usually hired hands rather than the owners of the ship themselves. Spell casting PCs may be expected to fill their spell slots with appropriate nautical spells. If the fantasy campaign includes intelligent underwater races, some of the PCs should be conversant in their

languages. Fighter PCs should be able to handle themselves as adeptly on a ship as when fighting on solid ground. If the campaign uses nautical core and prestige classes, each PC may be expected to take a few levels in those classes. This model works best in exploration campaigns, where PCs in search of new lands spend as much (or more) time at sea as they do exploring those new lands.

The nautical campaign requires a more in depth look, as the vast majority of the adventures will involve being at sea. PCs will be designed with a nautical campaign in mind then will probably take the race and class suggestions below to heart. Any new nautical core or prestige classes, as well as playable aquatic races, will become much more attractive character options.

There are a variety of nautical campaign models. A few of these are described below. GM should note that these models might sometimes blend with or replace each other at various points throughout a single campaign.

**Vikings:** In a Viking campaign, the PCs are primarily raiders. They terrorize and loot inadequately defended coastal settlements. This campaign often takes place in a chaotic environ-



ment where local governments aren't able to successfully repel invaders. As in incidental nautical adventures, the PCs rarely engage in high seas combat. They're more like modern marines in that they sail to a location, disembarked, overcome the local defenses, loot the settlement, and return to their ships. As such, there is little difference between a Viking PC and his land-based counterpart.

**Pirates:** In a typical pirate campaign, the PCs are unaffiliated criminals. They may loot and plunder whatever ship happens to cross their path. Pirates often traveled trade routes, hoping to catch merchant vessels at their most vulnerable. PC pirates may designate a particular port city (or cities) as a safe haven, entering into an unofficial understanding with local authorities. The usual understandings are that the PCs will not loot any vessels affiliated with the port city and that they share a portion of their booty with the local government. The residents of the port are beneficiaries of the agreement, as the pirates will usually unload their wares while at port.

**Privateers:** The privateer campaign is similar to the pirate campaign with one key difference: privateers are sanctioned by a particular nation. Privateers will generally receive a Letter of Marque and Reprisal from a government that authorizes them to attack the merchant vessels of another government, particularly one that has offended the sanctioning nation. This Letter grants immunity to the privateer from the authorities of the issuing government, and, depending on the relations between governments, entitles a captured privateer and his crew to be treated as prisoners of war rather than criminals. Privateers need no safe haven, as they are welcome at any port run by the sanctioning government.

**Merchantmen:** Not all nautical campaigns need involve the PCs as the outlaws. In a merchantmen campaign, the PCs are either merchants or their hired hands. The primary goal of the PCs is to keep their cargoes safe from pirates and privateers as they travel from port to port. A subset of the merchantmen campaign is the fishermen campaign. The PCs actually acquire their resources from the sea itself. This could

be as easy as netting schools of game fish or as difficult as needing to extract a potent magical ingredient from the venom of a still-breathing sea monster.

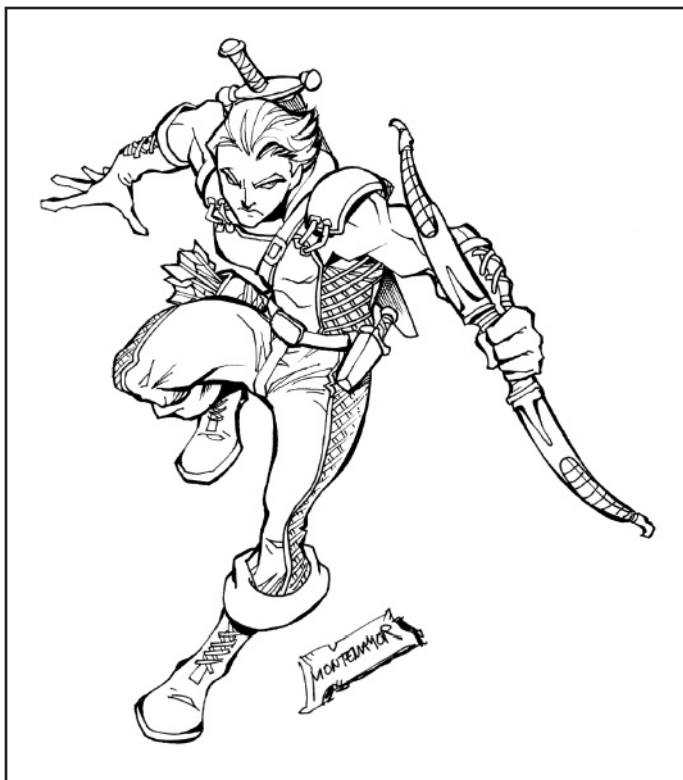
**Naval:** In a naval campaign, the PCs are members of a particular navy. They will often be based at a fort overlooking a major port city under the control of their government. Naval ships are expected to protect ports and territories under their government's control as well as any other vessel flying under the flag or protection of their government. Naval campaigns involve keeping trade routes safe, hunting down particularly troublesome pirates, and occasionally exchanging fire with an enemy naval vessel.

## *Nautical Races*

All of the standard medieval fantasy races can be found at sea, although some take to it better than others. As with almost everywhere else, humans tend to dominate the high seas and often hold the major positions of leadership. The other races are elaborated upon below. Please note that these racial depictions are based on the traditional SRD assumptions. If your game world has a race of aquatic dwarves, when they obviously won't share the stereotypical dwarven view of the sea.

**Dwarf:** Dwarves are creatures of the earth and they have an almost elemental relationship with it. The thought of the wide, open sea can be very intimidating to dwarves. Still, dwarves are highly prized on ships because of their metal-working abilities. Dwarves who accept such an occupation tend to stay in the claustrophobic comfort of the lower decks, rarely venturing outside.

**Elf:** An entire subrace of elves makes its home in the sea. Sea elves make a great addition to any ship's crew for their ability to thrive under water. Sea elf pirates can sneak up on an unsuspecting merchant vessel from below the waves. Sea elves also make great commandos for naval ships, sneaking aboard pirate ves-



sels and neutralizing pirate captains before they have a chance to react. Other elves also make excellent sailors and pirates, particularly for their excellent night vision and combat abilities.

**Gnome:** Like dwarves, gnomes aren't commonly found aboard sailing vessels. Instead, gnomes are likely to make their homes in port cities and act as fences, purchasing gems and other valuable treasures from pirates for resale or their own collections. Gnomes encountered on ships are usually passengers or they are tracking a valuable cargo.

**Half-elf:** Born of two races yet belonging to neither, half-elves feel a spiritual calm while sailing the high seas. Their friendly nature makes them excellent merchant ship captains and charismatic pirates. The eclectic mix of a pirate crew makes the half-elf feel at home, giving him a sense of belonging that he can find nowhere else.

**Half-orc:** While most of their kind prefers to live in the company of orcs, seagoing half-orc pirates find it easy to form bonds of kinship with the other races. The seafaring outlaw lifestyle suits their temperament well, and half-orcs make excellent pirates. Half-orcs rarely captain their own ships, choosing instead to serve under a

human captain that has earned their respect.

**Halfling:** Seagoing halflings are a curious lot. While they are found scattered amongst naval, merchant, and pirate vessels, halflings tend to seek out their own kind when in port. This kinship extends to all halflings, no matter which ship they hail from. While at sea, however, halflings are intensely loyal to their own crew and will not hesitate to fight an enemy halfling, even if they shared a drink together only a night before. Because of this kinship, seagoing halflings are a great source of rumors.

## *Nautical Classes*

All of the standard medieval fantasy classes are appropriate in nautical settings. A few nautical notes are provided for each class below. While it is very playable to run an entire nautical campaign using only SRD classes, there are a number of d20 and OGL products that include pirate and other seafaring classes. GMs should be careful when incorporating sea-specific classes, as many of them have special features that only apply at sea. Unless they are involved in a wholly nautical campaign, PCs of these classes may find their special abilities too limiting during land-based adventures.

**Barbarian:** Barbarians can make for savage pirates. They may also be local warriors pressed into service by seagoing invaders. While it may take a barbarian longer to learn the skills of the sea, he makes an excellent defender when the ship is under attack.

**Bard:** Every ship needs a bard, someone who can lift the crew's spirits and inspire them to perform at their best. Bards also weave tales of their ship's glory when singing in taverns at ports of call.

**Cleric:** Almost all ships employ at least one cleric to heal injuries and to provide other services. The easily learned Purify Food and Drink spell has saved many crews from starving.

Some clerics, even those aboard pirate vessels, insist on the crew paying homage to his patron deity. This can result in the somewhat bizarre image of a crew of cutthroat pirates bowing their heads to pray as their cleric performs a morning service.

**Druid:** The druid is a champion of nature and nothing is more natural than the open sea. Many Druid spells are quite useful in this environment. Druids that spend a lot of time at sea will befriend marine animals and use weather control to propel their ships. The druid's Warp Wood spell is particularly potent, causing approaching vessels to sink without the druid's crew lifting a finger.

**Fighter:** Fighters are often employed by merchant captains to protect the ship's crew and cargo. Veteran fighters tend to forgo heavier armor and weapons in favor of mobility. Most pirates tend to be fighters or have at least some levels in the class.

**Monk:** At first, the monk may seem out of place in a nautical setting. Their lawful nature and lack of concern for treasure make them ill suited for the life of a pirate. Some monks, however, will offer to protect a merchant vessel in return for passage. Other monks may join a vessel to pursue a particularly ruthless pirate. Some pirates are even ex-monks, providing their opponents with quite a surprise in the middle of combat. The monk's dedication to personal perfection and his unarmed combat style make him a particularly deadly opponent at sea.

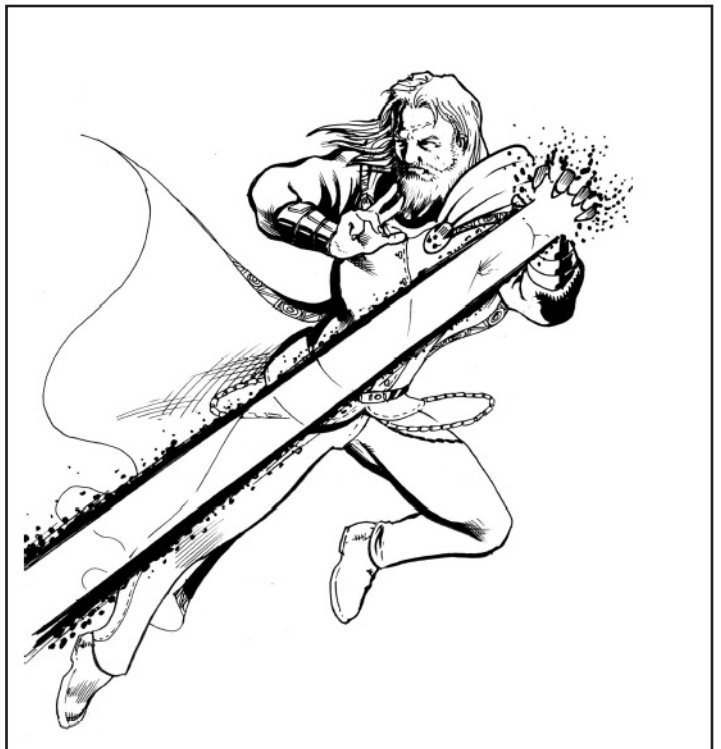
**Paladin:** Paladins make poor pirates, but they're often found aboard naval vessels upholding the law and justice along the important trade routes. While paladins are rarely captains (most monarchs recognize that the captain of a ship must sometimes make decisions that are contrary to a paladin's code), they are highly prized as first mates.

**Ranger:** While normally associated with forests, rangers make potent pirates. Rangers often choose the most commonly encountered humanoid aboard merchant vessels as their favorite

enemies. This, in addition to their formidable combat skills in two-weapon combat or archery, makes rangers fearsome opponents. GMs should caution potential PC rangers, however, that their tracking skills wouldn't be of much use on the open sea.

**Rogue:** Ironically, while the rogue seems to be the best suited class for a pirate, few pirates are exclusively rogues. While the rogue has special abilities that are useful in combat, most rogue pirates opt to multi-class for better combat or spell casting abilities. The rogue shines when detecting and defusing trapped treasures and cargo holds.

**Sorcerer and Wizard:** The sorcerer and wizard are grouped together because of their similar abilities. Both are highly prized by ship captains for their usefulness as artillery or in other supporting roles. Sorcerers know fewer spells, but they may cast more spells per day, and extra spell slots could be critical in a combat situation. Wizards are more versatile and can study appropriate spells based on what their ships are likely to encounter that day. Some pirates will multi-class into sorcerer or wizard so that they can keep a magical trick or two up their sleeves.



# *Nautical Skills*

While most skills are self-explanatory and require no elaboration for use in nautical adventures, there are some skills that are particularly relevant for characters at sea. Such skills are noted and detailed below.

**Appraise:** This is a highly useful skill when a ship is sinking fast and the character must choose which items in the cargo hold are the most valuable to take.

**Balance:** Balance is a particularly useful skill, especially for characters trying to keep their footing on rocking decks. Five ranks in Balance can mean the difference between being caught flat-footed or not in a combat situation. Balance is also useful when running across guardrails or gangplanks.

**Concentration:** This is a crucial skill to have when attempting to do something on board a ship in the middle of a violent storm.

**Climb:** This skill enables a character to proficiently scale the ship's rigging. In combat, this allows a character to climb out of melee combat range (assuming that he has two free hands). It can also aid characters in scaling up or down the crow's nest during violent weather.

**Craft:** There are a variety of craft skills that are crucial to a ship's survival at sea. These include carpentry (for fixing structural damage), cooper-smith (for making and maintaining barrels—very useful for preserving perishable cargo), and ship-building (for designing and building entire vessels).

**Disable Device:** Particularly sneaky characters can make excellent use of this skill, sabotaging rigging, sails, rudders, and anchors.

**Handle Animal:** Fantasy campaigns can have a number of aquatic animals that are intelligent enough to be trained to be used as pets, guards, or even mounts (dolphin riders, anyone?).

**Hide:** A swimmer can use this skill to hide beneath the surface of the water. Sniping applies if the swimmer has a means of locating a target while submerged.

**Jump:** Characters with high Jump skills can leap from one ship to the other without their opponents being able to do the same.

**Knowledge:** Like Craft, Knowledge includes a variety of skills that can be useful to seafaring characters. Skull & Bones provides rules for Navigation and Sea Lore, but these are really nautical variants of Geography and Local (Skull & Bones has excellent rules for navigation DCs).

**Profession:** This general skill provides a catch-all for a broad range of skills that a crewman would be expected to know. Types of Profession include naval sailor, merchant sailor, and pirate.

**Ride:** In a fantasy campaign, characters could have exotic aquatic mounts (dolphin riders again).

**Search:** This is a very useful skill for finding hidden cargo aboard a ship.

**Survival:** One of the key uses for this skill is to predict the weather, which could be a matter of life or death on board a ship.

**Swim:** Any seafaring character without this skill can expect a very short career.

**Tumble:** Many pirates and other lightly armored characters will have a few ranks in Tumble. GMs should note that most ship decks are slippery by nature.

**Use Rope:** This is another essential skill for a seafaring character.

# *Nautical Spells*

Seafaring spell casters will often have a repertoire of spells appropriate for the open sea. While it is far beyond the scope of this article to list every nautically useful spell, a few interesting ones are noted below.

**Acid Fog:** This particularly nasty spell can have an entire crew running below deck or abandoning ship before your own crew boards it. Other area-effect spells, such as Ice Storm, Incendiary Cloud, or Meteor Swarm, can have similar effects.

**Control Weather:** This potent spell must be carefully used, as the changed weather can affect the spell caster's vessel as well as the enemy's.

**Dimension Door:** This spell can provide a nasty surprise for an enemy vessel as the spell caster and several crewmen can manifest on board, even below decks!

**Disintegrate:** This spell can punch holes in an enemy vessel. This is especially effective in choppy water, where the spell caster can target a lower part of the hull as it rises above sea level and then submerges.

**Fireball:** This and other fire-based spells are particularly deadly when unleashed on wooden ships.

**Ironwood:** This druid spell can create lightweight wooden armor that is hard as iron.

**Leomund's Secret Chest:** This spell can keep especially prized items out of the hands of plunderers.

**Magic Missile:** This trusty spell allows high-level spell casters to fling multiple bolts of energy at an enemy crew.

**Purify Food and Drink:** This life-saving spell can make spoiled food or saltwater pure. Not only is this useful during a sea voyage, but this

spell can purify any spoiled cargo that would otherwise have been lost.

**Quench:** This spell acts as a fire extinguisher, which is very helpful if a fire rages aboard a ship.

**Reverse Gravity:** This is a particularly nasty spell to use on the crew of a moving ship, as the ship may have left the area when the spell duration is over. This is also a wicked spell to use on board rocking vessels.

**Summon Monster:** These and similar spells (such as Shambler or Summon Nature's Ally) can place instant adversaries aboard opposing vessels.

**Warp Wood:** This is another devastating spell to use against wooden ships.

**Water Walk:** This skill can enable the spell caster to send a boarding party across the water, keeping his own ship out of danger. This is a particularly effective tactic if the enemy vessel's vision is obscured, such as in fog or at night.

# *Nautical Equipment*

GMs running nautical adventures will have to determine what equipment is available in their own campaigns. While the SRD provides guidance on equipment for standard medieval fantasy campaigns, there are a few things that need to be considered for nautical adventures.

Nautical adventurers will prefer, light elegant weapons and little to no armor. Balanced weapons, such as knives, scimitars, and rapiers, are easier to use on rocky boats than axes and polearms (polearms, however, make great weapons for defensive postures, such as holding off a boarding party). Armor can be a liability at sea for three main reasons. First, an armored character will have trouble staying afloat and swimming should he fall into the sea. Second, since most veteran sailors realize this, their combat styles have adapted accordingly. Third, most sailors work with their armor off and donning

armor takes too much time. Shields are almost unknown on sailing vessels, as they tend to get in the way (Vikings actually carried their shields on the outside of their longships).

Due to these preferences, seafaring characters prize magical items that will increase their armor class, weapon damage, and movement. Rings of Protection are especially prized, and many port city wizards make quite a good living simply churning out such rings.

## *Ship and Crew*

Images from the Golden Age of Piracy include large vessels armed with cannons as well as rifles and pistols and hands of their crews. While the typical medieval fantasy campaign does not include gunpowder, magic provides a more colorful and potentially more threatening alternative.

In games where sorcerers and wizards are common, every significant merchant vessel will employ one or more as artillery. Its crew will also be outfitted with any useful magic items that the captain or his patron can afford. Clerics are also prized for their ability to heal as well as provide sustenance during long ocean voyages, and more than one would-be pirate vessel has learned the hard way about using a wooden vessel to attack another with a Druid onboard. Spell casters that can mend damaged objects are also highly sought after.

In games where underwater threats are not uncommon, ship captains will wish to employ spell casters that can breathe underwater or naturally aquatic races, where available. In addition to protecting the vessel from underwater threats, aquatic races can provide food and other resources from beneath the sea.

## *Nautical Plot Hooks*

1: A native island tribe is easily conquered by an imperialist nation. The nation decides to enslave the natives and colonize the island. Later, when a merchant vessel arrives to re-supply the new colony and fill its hull with goods for the mother country, it is surprised to find the ambassador and the colony missing. The PCs are asked to investigate. (The tribe is protected by a sea dragon that sleeps most of the time. The dragon awoke to discover the foreign invaders, and decided to destroy them. The PCs must tread carefully or suffer the same fate).

2: A large, uninhabited island is discovered in late summer. This island includes a small forest, the wood of which has unique and highly desirable properties. Merchant ships came and went throughout the autumn logging the forest for its wood. One winter morning, a merchant ship arrives to discover that the entire forest is gone. It's as if someone had come along and uprooted every tree. (While not intelligent, the trees actually migrate to a different part of the island for the winter and remain rooted there until spring, upon which they return to their coastal site).

3: The merchant vessels of a particular nation are being attacked and sunk. While the goods of these vessels manage to make their way to other ports, the nation's navy has been unable to find the privateers responsible. The merchant ships simply disappear over the horizon with their crews floating on the water, unable to remember anything that occurred. (The privateers are actually aquatic elves that magically put the crews to sleep, sink the vessels from below, magically preserve the cargo, and drag it underwater to accommodating ports. The sleep spell is lifted just in time for the crew to swim. This band of elves is actually sanctioned as privateers by a rival nation).



# Secret of the Island

Now free to pursue Bullhead Willows and the treasure chest, the Player Characters travel to uncharted Rigas Island, a place of native intrigue, to finally claim their booty!

This **Skull & Bones** adventure is intended for characters of 3rd or 4th level.

The characters must have possession of their own ship. Stats for the Fortune, an appropriate ship, are provided if needed, along with its crew (see Appendix B, at the end of the adventure).

Though "**Secret of the Island**" is intended as part of the "Governor's Prize" series, it is not necessary to play each of the parts of the series, though they should be played in order if possible.

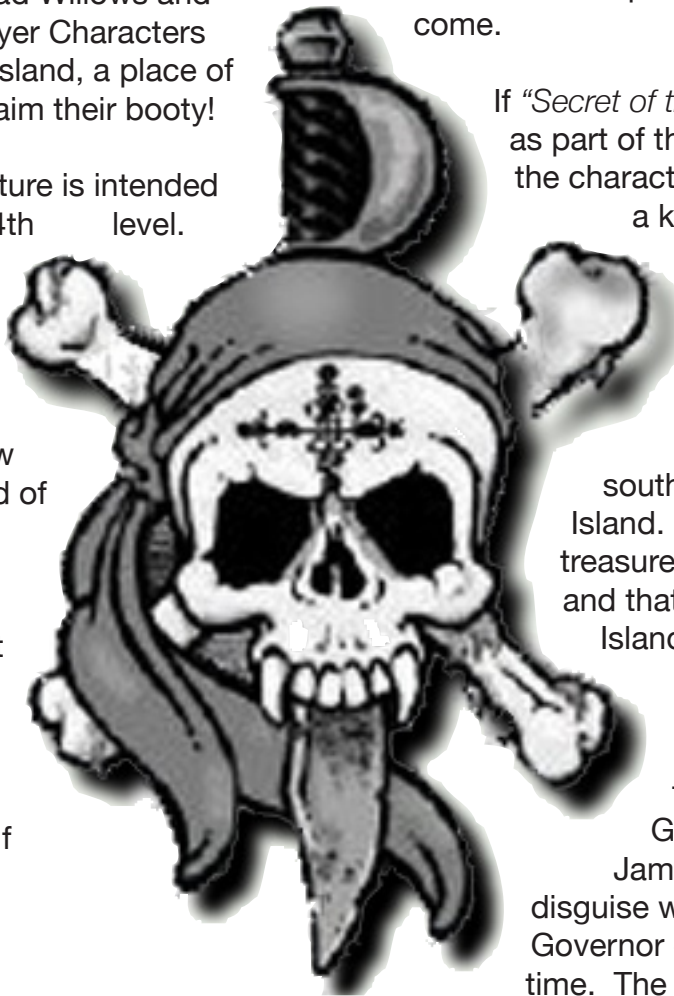
## Background

Prior to the start of this adventure, there are a few story elements of which the Game Master should be aware. In order to understand what is going on, the Game Master should be aware

of what has transpired already, and what is to come.

If "*Secret of the Island*" is being played as part of the "Governor's Prize" series, the characters are in possession of a key that opens a treasure chest known to be in the hands of a pirate named "Bullhead" Willows, who has left Hell's Cove, a pirate hideout on the Mexican coast, heading south towards uncharted Rigas Island. Bullhead believes that the treasure chest he carries is cursed, and that a witch doctor on Rigas Island can remove this curse.

Earlier in the series, the characters found a journal that exposes the current Governor of Port Royal as James Galloway, a master of disguise who has been acting as the Governor of Port Royal for a short time. The journal makes mention of a deal between the French pirate, Albert de Montblanc and Galloway to take the actual Governor away from Port Royal, William Haverford, and hold him hostage. Montblanc then turned Haverford over to Bullhead Willows in Hell's Cove, and headed back to Jamaica. On



the way back to Jamaica, Montblanc's ship, the Scarborough, encountered a nasty storm and the pirate was forced to abandon ship. In the violence of escaping the ship, Montblanc lost the key to this chest. The player characters now have this key in their possession after finding the wrecked Scarborough during the events of **GP-1 - "Salvage Rights."**

In **GP-2 - "A Widow, A Necklace & a Skeleton Key"**, the PCs acquired a map to Hell's Cove, so that they could search for Willows, but upon investigation at Hell's Cove (in **GP-3 - "Never Make A Deal With A Pirate,"** they discovered that he had left for Rigas Island. During the investigation, the PCs learned of Rigas Island from Paolo, Willows' first mate, and found a map to the island.

What is unknown to just about everyone is that Rigas Island is home to a strange cult of Aztec descendants who worship a deity of unknown origin. The dangerous cultists are very hostile to visitors, as the PCs are certain to discover.

If **"Secret of the Island"** is being played as a standalone adventure, the PCs have received a mysterious key as well as a map to Rigas Island, an uncharted island just off the Mosquito Coast (Mexico). The key opens a chest that contains a vast store of gold doubloons. "Bullhead" Willows, a pirate of dubious reputation, is in possession of this chest and is en route to Rigas Island. The PCs are in Hell's Cove, a secret pirate's hideout off the Yucatan, though you can start the adventure elsewhere with little modification.

## *Setting and Scope*

**"Secret of the Island"** is set in the Caribbean, during the time period from 1670 – 1690. It does not contain historical figures or references, so the Game Master has some room with which to work in an ongoing game.

Characters start in Hell's Cove, a fictional pirate hideout off the Mexican coast, and are about to leave for fictional Rigas Island, just south. There

is not much sea travel in this adventure. "Secret of the Island" begins in early or late May. This adventure provides a Map of Rigas Island, depicting a fictional location off the Central American coast. Feel free to reuse this setting for other pirate adventures.

## *Adjusting the Adventure*

**"Secret of the Island"** is intended for 4 Player Characters of at least 3rd level, with no access to magic. If you want, you can modify the adventure to suit higher-level characters, or to add magical elements to the adventure. One element of this adventure that departs from prior adventures in this series is that some of the NPCs, the Tulcan Priests and the High Priest, use magic. Note that, because the cultists' magic is not based on that found in the Caribbean (the bokor and voodoo magic systems), we are using the standard magic system from the Core Rules in this adventure. The spell selection (see Appendix A at the end of the adventure) has been made in such a way to fit in fairly well with the magic system from the **Skull & Bones** setting. If you do not wish to use magic in this adventure, there are variant abilities for these adversaries.

Scaling for higher-level characters is not difficult. The easiest way to accomplish this is simply by increasing the number of opponents in any of the combat encounters. You can also raise the difficulty by adding other elements, such as weather effects, additional ships, NPC mutinies, etc. Adding more magical elements to the adventure is not difficult. In fact, the key NPCs have been provided with magical spells and trinkets (see Appendix A). You could also replace some of the cultists with skeletons or other undead (see the Core Rules for information on these creatures) for more of a supernatural feel.

# The Hook

At the beginning of **“Secret of the Island”**, the Player Characters are in Hell’s Cove, a secret pirate hideout off the Mexican coast. If the characters have played through **“Never Make a Deal with a Pirate”**, they can use the same ship from that adventure. Otherwise, if this is their first adventure together, assume they all know each other. The PCs start the adventure traveling in their own ship, and thus must be able to work together to a certain degree. It is important that one of the Player Characters be designated as Captain, and owns the ship. Other than that, the other PCs can serve as officers, or have whatever role you choose.

If the characters have completed **“Never Make a Deal with a Pirate”**, they should have the same crew. The PCs may have had the opportunity to acquire additional crew in the prior adventure, during the short time spent in Hell’s Cove prior to learning that “Bullhead” Willows had already left.

If this is the PCs’ first adventure, and you’re not sure how to bring a ship into the PCs’ possession, try one of the following:

- One of the PCs had a relative (father, uncle, grandfather, older brother) or close friend to the family who was a pirate, and has just retired (or died) and left the ship to the character in question. If you use this option, make sure the PC’s family is in the Caribbean, and that this fits with the character’s Background.
- The characters all served together aboard a ship that had a mutiny. A great battle took place on board, and there were few survivors, and among these were the PCs. One of the PCs was named Captain, and they sailed back to Port Royal to hire on more crew (most were killed in the mutiny).
- As a result of a miscommunication, one of the characters was challenged to a duel. The challenger, a pirate, believes this

character to have insulted him gravely. This insult can be anything you choose, from insulting his family, or a lady in his presence, or even his ship! In any event, the character defeats the pirate who is forced to give over his ship to the character, but the pirate retains his own crew. This pirate could serve as an Enemy for this character if applicable.

- One of the characters, a clever (and apparently lucky) gambler, has won a small ship in a game of chance. The Captain giving up the ship is not at all pleased, and may serve as an Enemy for that character if applicable.

If the Player Characters have completed **“Never Make a Deal with a Pirate”**, the third adventure in the **“Governor’s Prize”** series, the characters should be well motivated to travel to Rigas Island and pry the chest of gold from “Bullhead” Willows.

Should **“Secret of the Island”** be run as a standalone adventure, the GM must slightly alter the adventure, removing story-based elements that are intended to run as part of the series. Essentially, give the PCs a reason to be traveling to Rigas Island in search of “Bullhead” Willows, the chest, William Haverford, or any combination thereof.

**“Secret of the Island”** is intended to be run as the final part of the **“Governor’s Prize”** series, though certain elements of the adventure may lend themselves to future adventures. Suggestions for future adventures based on the events of the **“Governor’s Prize”** series will be provided in the Conclusion.

## *Sway and the Crew*

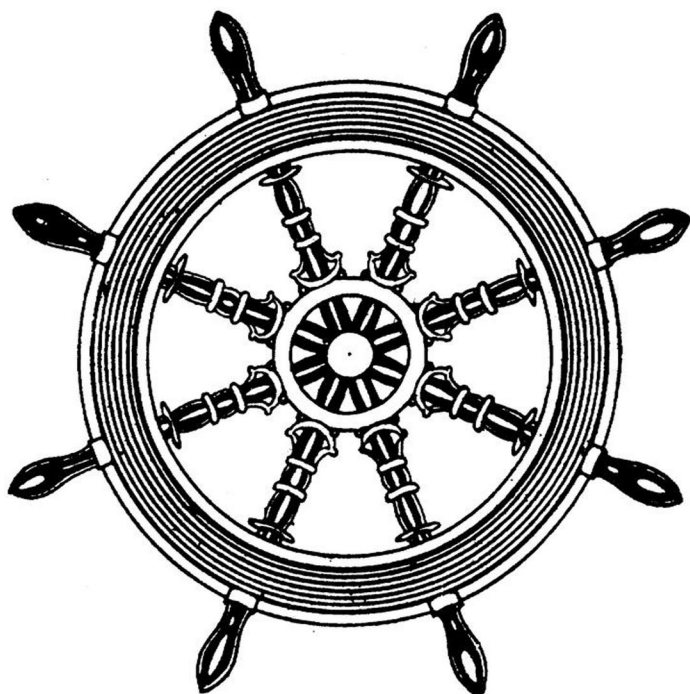
As “**Secret of the Island**” begins, the Player Characters have had the same crew for a short period of time. They may also have hired new crew members to take the place of dead or dismissed ones. Make sure to take this short service time into consideration when it comes time to make any Sway checks. “Secret of the Island” does not involve much sea travel, so you may not need to keep track of Sway for the balance of the adventure.

See p. 71-74 in **Skull & Bones** for more information on tracking Sway and making Sway checks.

## *Encounters*

There are six encounters in “**Secret of the Island**”. See below for the details of each of these encounters.

The Player Characters begin “**Secret of the Island**” in Hell’s Cove. If this adventure is being run as the fourth and final installment of the “**Governor’s Prize**” series, the PCs are about to leave Hell’s Cove for uncharted Rigas Island on the Mosquito Coast.



## *Sailing the Mosquito Coast*

### **[EL 0 or 4]:**

The object of this encounter is to get the Player Characters from the pirate hideout of Hell’s Cove south to Rigas Island.

Read the following as the PCs leave Hell’s Cove.

Your vessel finds the open water easily, and you leave the pirate hideout of Hell’s Cove far behind. The currents are kind, and you are able to speed south with little trouble. Storms appear on the horizon, but you can barely make them out. You seem alone out here, sailing the Mosquito Coast, south into the unknown.

Though Willows got a head start on you, the map in your possession tells you he cannot have gotten very far.

If you are pressed for time, you can simply hand-wave the passage of time and move events forward to the island itself and the next encounter, Shipwreck and a Clue. In this case, read the following passage and move on to the next encounter:

After a few days’ travel, clearer skies reveal a set of southern islands. According to your map, Rigas Island should be nearby. A short search reveals the island you seek, and you make towards it.

Alternately, you can choose to include a storm encounter here. Normally, you will want to give the PCs a chance for some advanced warning about a storm. This is done by calling for Knowl-

edge (sea lore) checks. Adjust the difficulty based on the lighting and time of day, and how long the PCs spend checking the weather. For the storm encounter, read the following:

On the second day out of Hell's Cove, the skies turn dark and rain begins to pour. Winds pick up, and the rain begins to sting. The more experienced sailors among your crew warn that this storm may damage your sails unless certain measures are taken.

Your ship tosses and turns on the shifting surface of the water. It's difficult to even know which direction you are being blown by these chaotic winds. You will need to decide whether to weigh anchor and ride out the storm, or take your chances and try to continue south.

Refer to pp. 110-112 of the ***Skull & Bones*** rules for more information on handling storms.

This is a medium-sized storm, and cannot realistically be avoided, since it travels in the opposite direction as the PCs are sailing (it is traveling north right at the PCs). A Knowledge (sea lore) check DC 20 reveals that this storm is likely to cause some damage to the ship, and will likely tear sails if they are not secured.

If a ship weighs anchor and rides out the storm, it causes 1d6 sp per day to the vessel in question, modified by crew quality: +2 dmg for Rabble, +1 dmg for Poor, and no modifier for Average. This storm can cause critical damage on a roll of 5 or 6 on the damage die. This storm lasts 3 days.

If a ship tries to continue south despite the storm, have one of the PCs make a Knowledge (navigation) check DC 20. If this check fails, the ship travels in a different direction (most likely

north, although this is up to you). In addition, have the PC first mate make a Profession (sailor) check DC 20, for each day of travel. If no one among the PCs has a good enough Profession (sailor) bonus, use that of the Crew. Remember to modify the roll by the Crew Quality. If this check fails, the ship is not properly secured and the ship takes a base 2d6 sp damage (modified as above). If the check succeeds, the ship takes no damage that day.

Be careful not to do too much damage to the PCs' vessel. After all, they are intended to continue on to Rigas Island and the rest of the adventure. A ship that weighs anchor and has an Average quality Crew will take around 10sp, which should not wreck the PCs' vessel, but should cause it to need repairs. A ship that tries to run south could potentially wreck, so make sure the players are aware of the risks in not trying to ride out the storm.

You can choose to include a ship encounter along the way. You can add this in addition to the storm encounter above, or in place of it. If you are going to include both the storm and ship encounters, double the xp award below (see Conclusion).

If you wish to include a ship encounter, refer to Appendix A below for details on the *Wooden Nichol*, an English merchant vessel. Make sure to allow for proper sighting, depending on the time of day. For the ship encounter, read the following:

Cresting over the horizon is a ship of some size, slightly larger than your own. While the flag is indiscernible at this distance, it does not appear to be a warship. It lists, not bearing straight for you, but at the same time, not avoiding you either.

This ship is the English merchant ship, the *Wooden Nichol*. Details for this ship, her Crew, and her Captain can be found in Appendix A. Capt. Ross

is not keen for a fight necessarily, although if the PCs' ship is flying a Jolly Roger, the *Wooden Nichol* is likely to attack on sight.

Once this encounter is resolved, move on to the next encounter, Shipwreck and a Clue.

## Shipwreck and a Clue

### [EL 2]:

The object of this encounter is to establish that "Bullhead Willows" is indeed on the island, and to have the PCs inspect the wreck site. It will also introduce the characters to the Tulcan Cult. Read the following as the PCs get closer to the island:

You see in the distance a large island. The rocky shoals between your ship and the shore are easy enough to identify and avoid, and while doing so, one of your crew spots a ship drifting just south of your position.

Moving closer for a peek, you are almost certain that this is the *Majestic*, the same ship "Bullhead" Willows used to sail from Hell's Cove. The vessel appears to be damaged, and you do not see any crew aboard at this time. The ship is heavily damaged, and would need serious repairs to once again be seaworthy.

The *Majestic* was damaged during a recent storm. This could in fact be the same storm that hit the PCs in the prior encounter (if you used a storm encounter). In any event, the *Majestic* is damaged, and cannot be sailed without at least a few days' repairs.

Refer to Location 1 on the Map of Rigas Island (on the following page) for the location of the shipwreck. This is the starting point for the PCs' adventures on Rigas Island. The PCs are free to

inspect the wreck. They will find a few clues, but the ship is deserted. Here are the clues that can be found:

- On the bridge, and the adjoining navigator's room, the PCs find a map to Rigas Island that matches the map in their possession. There are notes on the map that appear to be dates and times, markings that correspond to Willows' exodus from Hell's Cove and his trip south to Rigas Island.
- Also in the navigator's room is a journal. According to the journal, the *Majestic* circumnavigated the island from a distance before attempting to make landfall. The writer noted a few signs of civilization here on the island, as well as a thick jungle to the south and a mountain to the far south. Rigas Island, according to the journal is 5 miles in length, and 2 miles wide and their longest and widest points.
- The final note in the journal states that Capt. Willows spotted some natives and wanted to go ashore and meet with them. They seemed "friendly".
- The weapon racks in the hold are completely empty, and it also appears that all of the provisions have been taken. Two of the four ship's rowboats are missing. The PCs can see one ashore, directly across from the wreck.

Allow the PCs to make Search checks (DC 15) to find each of the clues above. There is nothing else of value aboard the *Majestic*.

At this point, the PCs should continue to the island. When the PCs make shore, they find one of the two rowboats from the *Majestic*. The other is nearby, about a quarter of a mile downshore to the southwest. There are many footprints to be found in the sand, along with broken weapons and other signs of a struggle. The PCs also find a few nets in the sand. These nets appear to be larger than the standard fishing net, and are large enough to snare people.



PCs with the Track feat can make a Survival check to find a trail from here that leads south towards Location 2 (see the Map of Rigas Island). See the Core Rules for more information on this use of the Track feat.

Otherwise, allow the PCs to find a pair of waist-high stones about 250 yards inland from the beach (this is on the way south, so PCs using the Track feat will also find these stones). Beyond these two stones is a large outcropping of rock, where two dozen Tulcan Cultists are waiting. They saw the PCs' ship arrive, and are setting up for an ambush. The natives are completely hidden from view, although one will peek out occasionally to see where the PCs are in relation to the pair of stones. Give the PCs one chance to see the native peeking out. This is a Spot check DC 20.

The two stones, about waist-high, are gray in color, like small pillars with smooth, rounded tops. On the face of each stone is a carving, an angular spiral pattern etched into the rock. The stones appear to have been here a long time.

If you are using magic in this adventure, the stones emit a loud scream when the PCs get within 10' of them. This is similar to the Alarm spell from the Core Rules. This is the signal for the Tulcan Cultists to attack. If you are not using magic in this adventure, allow the PCs to inspect the stones for the equivalent of six combat rounds before the cultists attack.

When the PCs approach the pair of stones, read the following:

There are 24 cultists in this ambush. You will see in Appendix A that the cultists use the Can-

non Fodder mechanic. If the PCs brought any crew with them, treat those crewmen as Cannon Fodder as well. See the **Skull & Bones** rules for more information on running combats using Cannon Fodder. Because they are crazed cultists, the enemy fights to the death. The cultists as a group have 17 Wounds.

The cultists do not have any treasure.

If the PCs decide to continue on, and they should, refer to the next encounter, Scouting the Island.

## *Scouting the Island*

### [EL 3]:

The object of this encounter is to have the PCs travel around the island, gathering clues as to the possible location of “Bullhead” Willows, Haverford, and the chest. At the end of this encounter, the PCs should be at the Fishing Village (see the Map of Rigas Island).

Directly south of the wreck of the *Majestic*, past the pair of stones and the Tulcan ambush, is a series of deserted settlements along the coast, and a few inland locations as well. The Tulcan cult once inhabited these villages, but abandoned them long ago in favor of the Golden Temple (see below).

At each abandoned village, the PCs find one or two of the stones similar to those found in Shipwreck and a Clue, above. These stones do not alert any cultists nor make any noise when approached. The PCs can freely search these abandoned settlements, but will find nothing of note. They have been abandoned long ago, and most of them contain nothing of interest other than their mere existence.

When the PCs reach the abandoned settlement closest to Location 2, the Fishing Village, the PCs will spot an inhabited village of some kind to the south. Read the following:

Just below a crest of rocky outcroppings, you see what appears to be an inhabited fishing village. Several small canoes are easily seen on the water, and you can make out several fishing nets astride the shore.

Activity inside the fishing village is sparse, and from what you can tell, there are no more than 30 adults here. None appear to be heavily armed.

The 30 adults are Tulcan Cultists, and are all combatants, women and men alike. If approached, the cultists will fight. Treat them as Cannon Fodder for this combat. As a group the cultists have 21 Wounds. The cultists speak only in the Mayan tongue, and will fight to the death. The cultists out at sea fishing will not return unless the PCs are in the Fishing Village for a very long time.

Searching the Fishing Village, the PCs will find evidence that sailors from the *Majestic* were here. First, there is a large enclosed area in which about 20 people could be housed. Inside this enclosed area are scraps of clothing that matches that worn by sailors and European colonists. Second, in another area, pistols, blunderbusses, and shot can be found, along with boarding axes bearing the name, “Majestic”. Finally, among the ashes of a still-burning pyre are what appear to be charred remains of human beings. Drawn all around the pyre are angular spiral patterns similar to those found on the stones throughout the northern part of the island. Off to the side of this pyre are trinkets and necklaces bearing evidence that Europeans were here: crosses and the like are among these trinkets.

Near the end of the search, one of the PCs finds a mostly-dead sailor from the *Majestic*. Garrett Noth was being prepped to be sacrificed to Tulcan when the PCs struck. He is bleeding to

death, and will die within 3 combat rounds unless one of the PCs can make a successful Heal check (DC 20).

Garrett relates the following:

The man can barely breathe or speak. "I... am done for... please, you must listen," he says. "Save yourselves... leave this place. The natives, they... they are wicked beasts."

He coughs up blood, and spits it on the floor. "Too many of them... we could not hold them off. Not like the ones we met before... they are led by a... witch doctor of some kind. He worked magic on us."

His eyes close, and he coughs once more. "You're not from our ship... you must be looking for Capt. Willows... He is not here." Opening his eyes, the man stares directly at you. "They took him... and the chest... and the rest of our men... inland to the jungle. I saw a trail... led them... away..."

The man faints from loss of blood, and dies.

There is indeed a demarcated trail leading west out of the Fishing Village. This trail leads to Location 3, the Hunting Camp, and the next encounter of the same name.

## *The Hunting Camp*

### **[EL 0 or 3]:**

The object of this encounter is to have the PCs find Haverford and Willows at the Hunting Camp and learn of the Golden Temple at the foot of Mount Tulcan, where the chest has been taken.

Following the trail west, it isn't long before the PCs are nearing the jungle to the south. The trail grows closer and closer to the edge of the jungle until the PCs can see the Hunting Camp (Location 3 on the Map of Rigas Island). Read the following as the PCs get close to the camp:

Ahead, nestled just at the edge of the jungle, you spot an encampment of some kind. You don't see much activity within the camp. In fact, the place seems deserted. There are three tents, a blackened fire pit, and several wooden racks throughout the camp. Nobody seems to be home.



The Hunting Camp is mostly deserted. The only people found within the camp are “Bullhead” Willows, William Haverford, and 6 sailors from the *Majestic*. All are tied up and found within one of the tents. Of these, only Haverford and Willows can travel. The sailors have been left for dead, and are too wounded to be of much assistance to the PCs.

As soon as they are discovered, Willows and Haverford are overjoyed at seen someone other than these natives come to kill them. Willows speaks:

“Lads,” he says, “I’m so glad to see you. These natives... not the friendly types I was expecting. In fact, well, you can see the nature of their hospitality.”

“I suppose you are here to find me,” he continues. “Or rather, the chest. Did Montblanc send you? Doesn’t matter – I don’t have the chest anyway. The natives took it into the jungle. But I think I know where they went. If you’ll free me, I can show you.”

Normally, Willows would use this opportunity to escape. In this case, however, he realizes that escape is futile. Because the *Majestic* wrecked during the storm, Willows figures that the PCs have a ship, and he will need their help to escape the island.

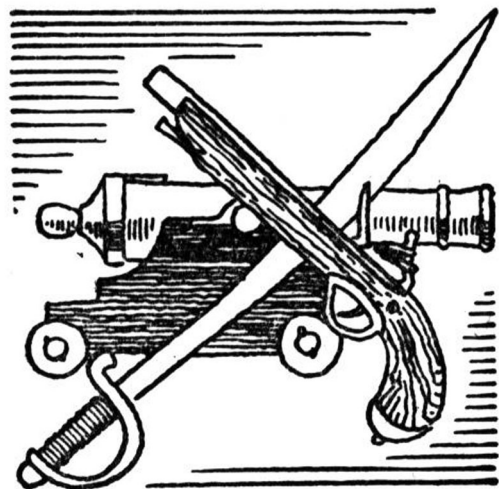
Assuming the PCs free Willows, he takes them to another tent. On the wall there is painted a crude map of Rigas Island with all sorts of strange writing and symbols. The writing is in Mayan, with angular spiral patterns added in various places. Willows had a chance to look at this map while held in this tent and, using his Decipher Script skill, translated some of it. He will relate what he knows:

“I’ve come across this writing before, and had occasion to have it translated,” Willows explains. “I wish I could tell you more, but this is what I can discern.”

He indicates the jungle area on the map. “All right then. This is the jungle to the south. We are at this point just to the north.” His finger moves to a gold colored temple of some kind in the southern reaches of the jungle. “This is their Golden Temple. Here, they worship some god called Tulcan.” Finally, he indicates the large mountain south of the jungle. “I believe it is at this Mount Tulcan – they believe their god lives here – that the natives sacrifice animals and human beings to Tulcan.”

“They’ve taken my chest to this Golden Temple, for what reasons I have no idea,” Willows says. “Listen, I’ve had enough trouble with all of this. I just want to leave. You are welcome to the chest and its contents. If you can find it.”

Willows is reluctant to assist the PCs any further, mostly because he has no great desire to trek into the jungle and go to the Golden Temple. But he can be convinced to come along with a Diplomacy check (DC 20), or a successful Intimidate check.



Haverford is quite grateful to no longer be in the hands of Willows and his pirate crew, although he is unsure of the identity of his captors. When he is untied, Gov. Haverford speaks:

“Well played, young men,” Haverford says. “I wish to commend you on finding me, and rescuing me from the clutches of these... pirates. Although I should point out that they have been quite accommodating. Still, it is nice not to be tied up anymore.”

“I have to ask who you are, and why you have come to this remote place,” the governor continues. “I find it unlikely you have come for me, although that thought has crossed my mind, but perhaps you are hunting for this “Bullhead” person.”

“You should know, however, that I am William Haverford, Governor of Port Royal. I am prepared to make it worth your time and effort to take me back to Port Royal and remove the impostor that acts in my stead there.”

Haverford will be more likely to help the PCs than Willows, though the governor is not much of an adventurer. If asked about any reward for the governor’s return, Haverford states that he can pay them in the range of 1,000dbl each, possibly more. He won’t discuss any more about the reward until he is returned to Port Royal.

Returning Gov. Haverford to Port Royal is not a necessary part of the adventure, and the PCs are free to completely ignore this part if they wish. See the Conclusion below for more information on returning the governor.

## *The Golden Temple*

### **[EL 4, Multiple]:**

The objective of this encounter, which is really multiple encounters inside the temple, is to have the PCs explore the Golden Temple in search of Haverford, Willows, and of course, Montblanc’s chest.

The trip to the Golden Temple can be brief, although you may wish to add a combat encounter to spice things up, especially if you have a group of players who enjoy combat. In this case, halfway through the jungle, have a group of 30 Tulcan Cultists ambush the PCs. Feel free to use the stats from Scouting the Island, above, for the purposes of this “bonus” encounter.

Otherwise, the trip from the Hunting Camp to the Golden Temple is without incident. Read the following to the players as their characters exit the jungle to find the temple:

Clearing the last bit of jungle foliage out of your way, you come upon an awesome sight. In front of you, within a large clearing at the foot of a looming mountain, is a two-story native temple. This massive structure, some 150 feet long, is constructed entirely of some kind of gray stone. The most interesting feature, however, is that the temple is painted entirely in a gold color.

A smooth stone path leads from where you stand to a pair of snake statues, and behind which are a series of square pillars before the entrance to the temple. The columns feature a serpentine motif, along with an angular spiral pattern appearing in places. These symbols match what you have found previously elsewhere on the island.

There does not appear to be anyone around. A set of impressive stone doors leads inside the temple...

There are six map areas on the Ground Floor, and five map areas on the Upper Floor. See the Map of the Golden Temple on the next page for more information. On the map, note that several areas are labeled with the same encounter number. These areas are identical to each other in every way, including number of NPCs in the location and loot available. For example, in Ground Floor #4 (Guard Barracks), each location contains 30 Tulcan Cultists and 1 Snake Statuette.

Unless otherwise noted, the temple's doors are unlocked and are not trapped. There are no windows or exterior openings anywhere in the temple area.

## Ground Floor

**1. Walkway.** There are two 12' tall stone snake statues and behind those, two rows of 10' high columns constructed of the same gray stone as the statues. On the columns are inscribed angular spiral patterns similar to those found elsewhere on the island. While there is a great deal of evidence of foot traffic here, the area is currently unoccupied.

**2. Temple Foyer.** The double doors leading into the temple are very heavy. It normally takes two people on each door to open these doors. One person can open a door using a Strength check (DC 20). Each attempt (successful or otherwise) causes the person opening the door to be Fatigued (see Core Rules) for one round. Inside the foyer, there are 30 Tulcan Cultists (21 Wounds), who will attack intruders on sight. Also found here are stairs leading to the Upper Level.

**3. Foyer Anteroom.** This area features only a weapons rack, containing the following: 12 Spears, 12 Crude Axes (treat as a Boarding Axe, with a -1 penalty to hit), and 20 Clubs. Any combat noise in this area has a 50% chance to draw attention from the occupants of areas 4 and/or 5. Check separately for each adjoining area.

**4. Guard Barracks.** This room contains 30 Tulcan Cultists (21 Wounds), who make this their

living quarters. It also contains a small stone idol (a snake) the cultists use to worship. This idol is worth 2,500dbl to a collector of native art.

**5. Acolyte Chamber.** This room is home to a pair of Tulcan Priests. If attacked, the priests sound an alarm that will cause the guards to arrive in 2 rounds. The priests wear elaborate feathered headdresses worth 250dbl to a collector of native art, as well as a snake totem amulet worth 200dbl. There is also a total of a half ton of incense, worth 500dbl.

**6. Storage.** The cultists store food and other supplies in this room. Here are found a total of 2,000 man/days of provisions, as well as a number of native art objects, about a quarter ton's weight, worth 500dbl to a collector of such things.

## Upper Level

**1. Stairs Room.** This room contains the stairs connecting to the Ground Floor. There is nothing else in this area, however, combat noise here may (50% chance) draw the attention of patrols from areas 2 and 4. Check separately for each adjoining area.

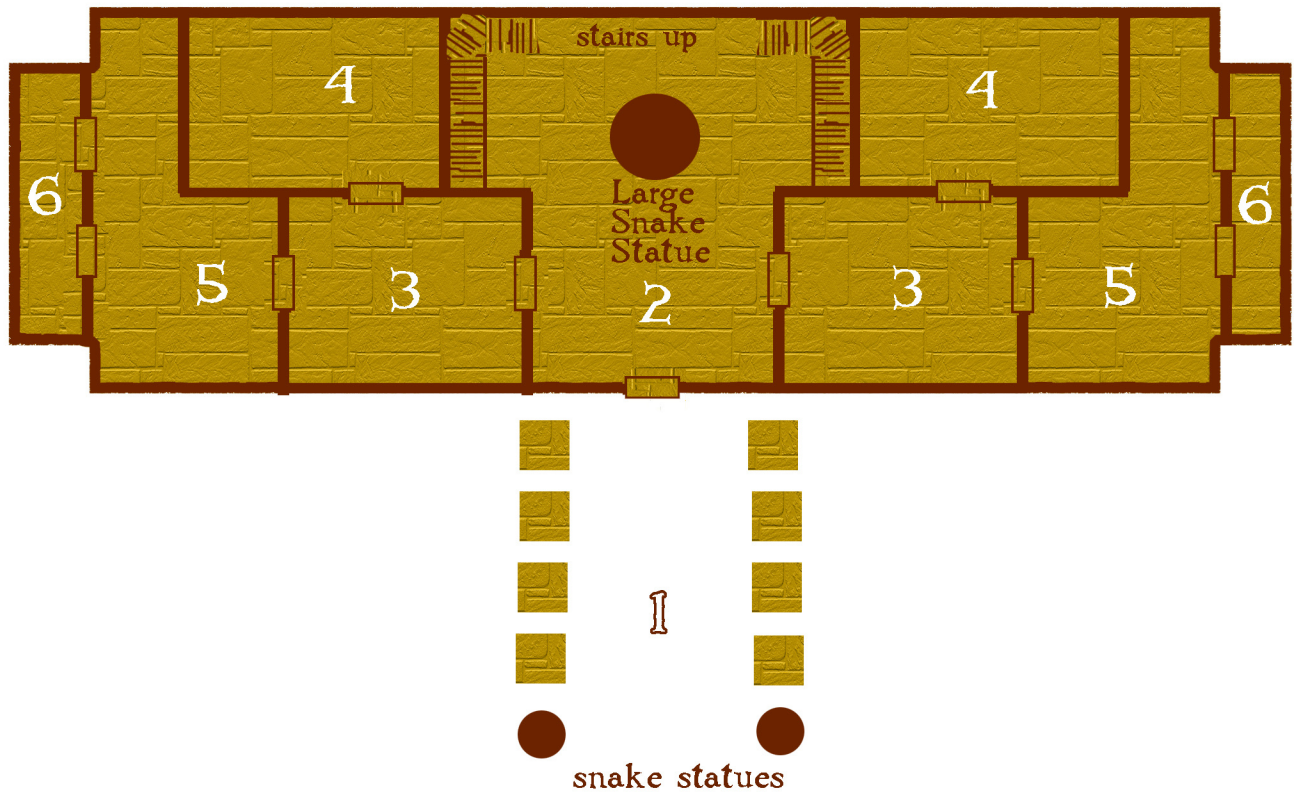
**2. Passageway.** There is a 35% chance that this area contains a patrol of 15 Cultists (11 Wounds). They may flee into the nearest Priest Chamber if presented with overwhelming opposition. If the patrol is not found here, it will be found within the Priest Chamber.

**3. Priest Chamber.** This area is home to 2 Tulcan Priests. If the patrol was not found in the passageway leading into this room, there will be 15 Tulcan Cultists in here as well. The priests wear elaborate feathered headdresses worth 250dbl to a collector of native art, as well as a snake totem amulet worth 200dbl. These priests carry jeweled daggers worth 250dbl.

**4. Passageway.** There is a 35% chance that this area contains a patrol of 15 Cultists (11 Wounds). If possible, they may flee into the

# The Golden Temple

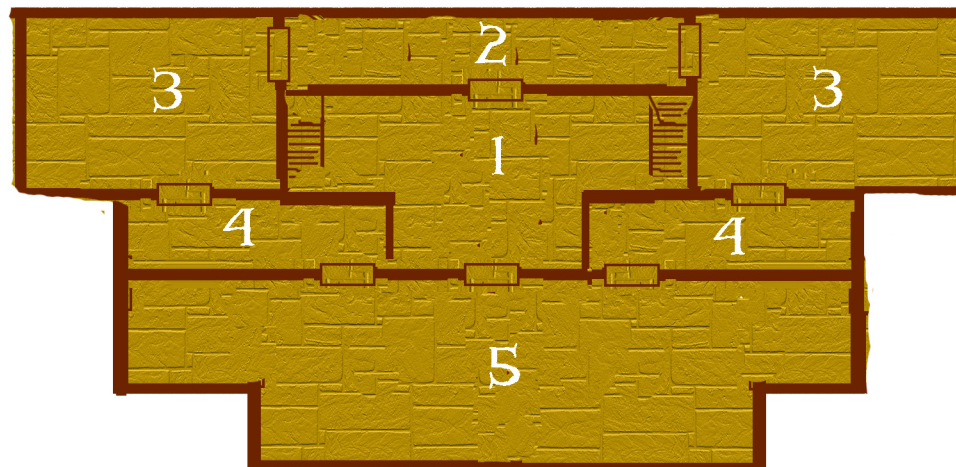
Ground Floor



Scale



Upper Level



nearest Priest Chamber if presented with overwhelming opposition. The door to area 5, the Sacrificial Chamber, is locked and trapped. Unlocking the door requires an Open Locks check (DC 25). The trap can be found with a Search check (DC 20). It is a non-magical trap that can be successfully removed with a Disable Device check (DC 25). The trap fires 3 poisoned darts at the target (the person attempting to open the door), and requires a Reflex save (DC 20) to avoid. The darts inflict 1d4 dmg each, and the poison has initial and secondary effects of causing 1d4 Constitution damage, and has a Fort Save DC of 14.

**5. Sacrificial Chamber.** Make sure that the players hear faint drumbeats from behind the door. These are loud enough not to necessitate a Listen check. Refer to the next encounter, *The Chest and the High Priest*, for additional details on this room.



## *The Chest and the High Priest*

### **[EL 4]:**

When the PCs have managed to get the doors open, read the following passage:

You open the doors to a scene of chaos. In the center of the room, you see a tile mosaic depicting a giant snake, with seven naked women kneeling before it in worship. Standing in front of this mosaic is a tall man dressed in feathers, a bone breastplate, and wielding a strange-looking club or mace of some kind. Standing on either side of this man are two other men, wearing feathered headdresses and carrying daggers. Surrounding these men are 20 cultists, dressed in feathered skirts and painted in gold, bent in supplicant kneel.

Women surrounding this scene softly beat drums and chant. You can guess that this noise is the reason the cultists had not yet detected you. In the noise and confusion, you spot a large treasure chest next to the trio of standing men.

Seeing you, the standing man, possibly the high priest, opens his eyes wide and shouts something in a language you don't comprehend. At this command, the kneeling men spring into action and attack!

In this room are the following: the Tulcan High Priest, a pair of Tulcan Priests, and 30 Tulcan Cultists. The drumming women are noncombatants. All will fight to the death.

Once the cultists have been defeated, the PCs will find the long sought-after treasure chest of Albert de Montblanc. Read the following to the players:

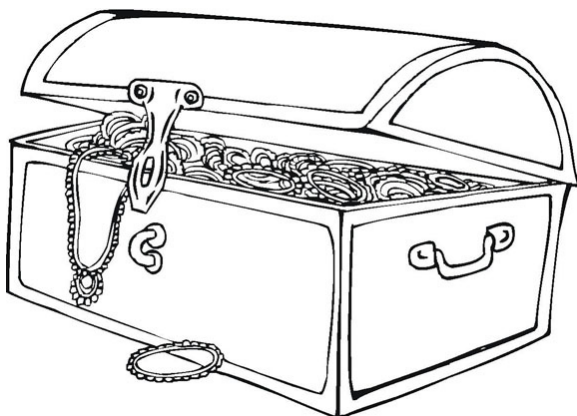
At long last, you have found Albert de Montblanc's treasure chest. It is large, measuring four feet long, two and a half feet wide, and two feet tall, with a rounded top. Crafted of sturdy oak and bound in iron, the chest has one additional prominent feature: unknown symbols carved into the top of the chest.

These symbols convinced "Bullhead" Willows that the chest was cursed, and that he would have to take the chest to these natives to remove the curse.

The other alternative, of course, is to use the key, which you have in your possession.

Despite the carvings, there really is no curse on the chest. Albert de Montblanc, knowing full well the extent of Willows' superstitions, told Bullhead of the curse in an attempt to prevent Willows' opening the chest before Gov. Haverford was returned. The chest can be opened normally using the key. The lock can also be picked with an Open Locks check (DC 25). There is a trap, which can be avoided by using the key.

Alternately, finding the trap requires a Search check (DC 25), and a Disable Device check (DC 25) to remove the trap. If sprung, the trap sprays a powerful contact poison (Reflex save DC 15 to avoid), inflicting 1d4 Dexterity damage on the target.



The chest contains the following items:

- 32,000dbl,
- four ornate jeweled ivory combs worth 500dbl each,
- a set of ivory pipes worth 500dbl,
- a pouch of fine tobacco worth 50dbl,
- a silver flute worth 250dbl,
- a gold and silver St. Christopher's Cross worth 2,000dbl.

There is also a note, comprised of the following:

If you have made it this far, you have discovered that there is indeed nothing special to this chest. I applaud you, Capt. Willows, for overcoming your irrational fear of the unknown, and opening the chest. I know you are not clever enough to have opened it on your own, so please share your ill-gotten gains with whomever helped you thwart my wishes.

Know, however, that since you have broken the terms of our agreement, you will certainly die at my hands – and soon. Enjoy your winnings while you can.

- Albert de Montblanc

But the true treasure is hidden within a secret compartment within the chest. A Search check (DC 20) reveals the compartment, which can be easily opened once found. Inside is a small vial containing a slimy, translucent white liquid, and what appears to be a desiccated, bony finger.

This is the **Finger of St. Anthony the Abbot**, a relic of the Catholic Church. As a holy relic, this item confers a certain amount of divine power upon the bearer of the vial (it can be worn as a necklace). Here are the game effects:

### The Finger of St. Anthony the Abbot

The wearer of this divine relic receives a +1 divine bonus to all saving throws. In addition, the wearer may touch a wounded character and heal his character level's worth of hit points once per day.

On January 17th each year (the feast of St. Anthony the Abbot), the wearer may activate the ability to raise the dead. If the wearer fasts (does not eat or drink for the entire day), the wearer may on the following day cast Raise Dead (as in the Core Rules), with the caveat that the relic's bearer must spend the entire day with the deceased target, who must not have been dead for more days than the wearer's character level. This ability can be used just once, and only under those conditions.

The relic does not have a resale price. The Catholic Church is constantly on the lookout for relics such as these and will arrest anyone bearing such a relic (and, of course, confiscate the relic).

Once the chest has been opened, the adventure is essentially over. See the Conclusion, below, for information on wrapping up the series.

## Conclusion

If you are playing **"Secret of the Island"** as the final part of the **"Governor's Prize"** series, read on. Otherwise, skip this section and see below. The Player Characters have found Willows, Haverford, and the chest, and can now finally open the treasure chest and earn their just rewards. Leaving Rigas Island should not be a problem assuming that nothing has happened to their ship, and that there is enough crew left to man ship stations.

If the majority of the Tulcan Cultists have been dispatched, the characters should have no trouble leaving Rigas Island. If the island has been entirely cleared, the characters could even use Rigas Island as a base of operations. In any event, the PCs should decide whether or not to return Gov. Haverford to Port Royal. He has offered to pay the PCs to return him, offering a reward of 1,000dbl each to the officers (he will also pay the crew a total of 5,000dbl to be evenly distributed among them). Simply returning Haverford to Port Royal is enough to restore him to the governor's seat (although you may wish to add more intrigue to this – see below for an idea to expand on this option).

This is the end of the **"Governor's Prize"** series. However, events during this adventure and other parts of the series can be parlayed into future adventures for these characters. Here are some ideas for future adventures based on the **"Governor's Prize"** series:

- Expanding the quest to restore Governor Haverford to power in Port Royal is probably the most obvious way to continue this story. James Galloway, who is currently posing as Haverford, has contacts and resources, and can try to prevent the real Haverford from regaining control. See the first adventure of this series, **"Salvage Rights"**, for more information on Galloway's operation. Haverford will pay to have the PCs help him regain the governorship, which may in turn lead to a privateering career for the PCs in the long run.

- There are a number of religious relics in Albert de Montblanc's chest. If these are stolen, agents of the Catholic Church may be pursuing Montblanc or his acquaintances in search of these items. You could create an entire story based on avoiding these relic hunters.

- Finding a buyer for the native art objects found on Rigas Island turns out to be more than intended. The PCs get involved with a fence, as well as a criminal underground, who wish to pay for the PCs' services.

If you are NOT playing **"Secret of the Island"** as the finale of the **"Governor's Prize"** series, you will need to come up with a motivating factor for your next adventure based on the outcome of this one. Leaving clues on the island for your next adventure is probably the best way to do this. You could also have an additional NPC (that leads to your next adventure) found in the Golden Temple.

In this case, you may want to change Gov. Haverford to another character, possibly a famous pirate, or some other figure of note who may need rescue.

## Awarding Experience

Below are suggestions on how you might award experience for this adventure. Feel free to modify this in any way you like to suit your game. Remember to change these values if there are more or less than 4 players (this alters the EL listed above), or if you have added anything significant to the adventure.

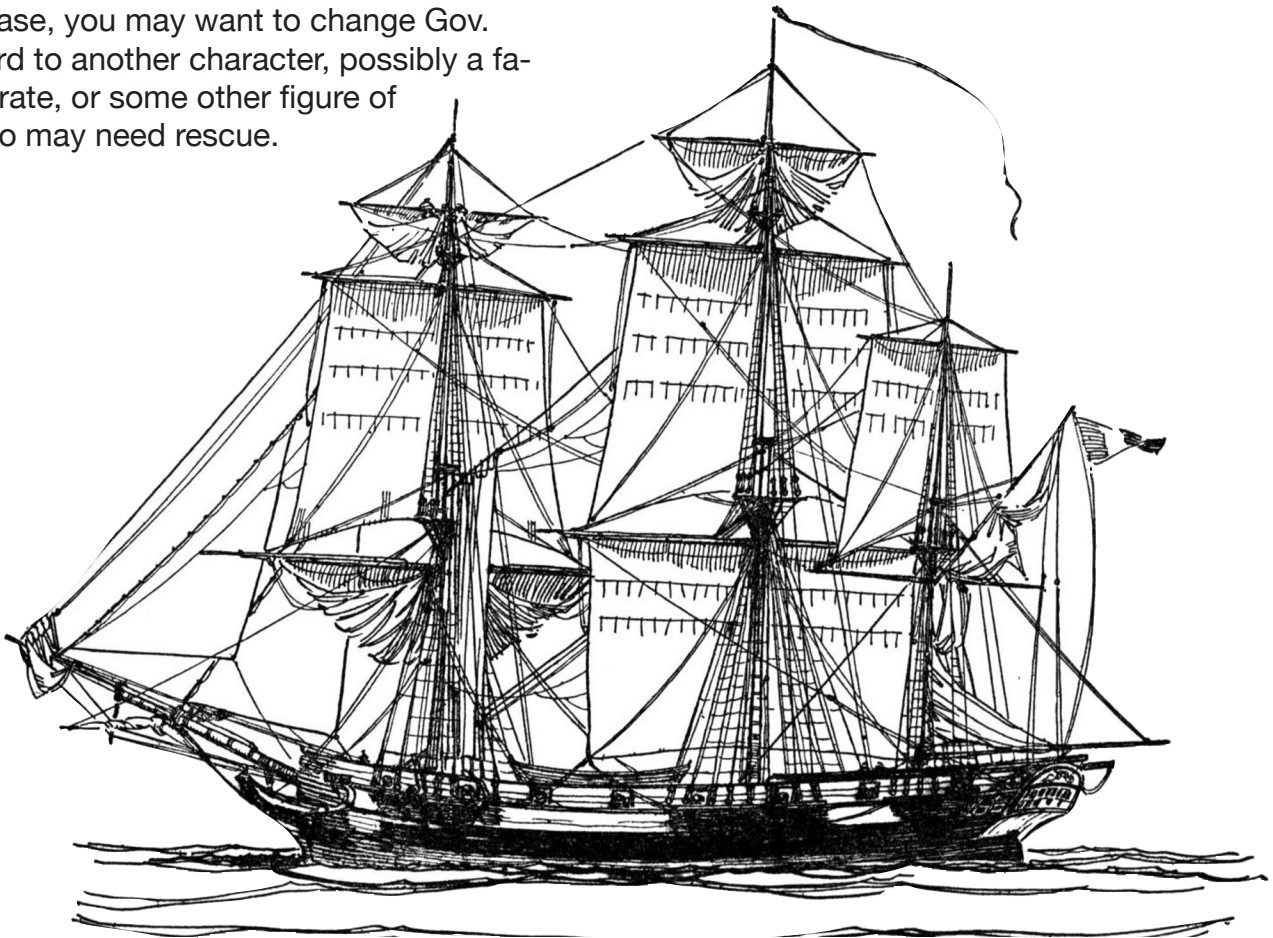
**Sailing the Mosquito Coast:** 0 or 1,350xp (if there is a combat/ship encounter or a storm encounter)

**Shipwreck and a Clue:** 600xp

**Scouting the Island:** 900xp

**The Hunting Camp:** 600xp

**The Golden Temple:** Multiple – 600xp for each combat encounter, with the exception of the patrols on the Upper Level, which are worth 300xp. 900xp for the trap encounter.



**The Chest and the High Priest/Conclusion:** 2,700xp, plus 800xp for each player involved in returning Gov. Haverford to Port Royal

**Story Award:** This is optional. Award an additional 300-500xp for each character whose player did an outstanding job of roleplaying, planning, or executing the goals of the adventure.

## *Awarding Fame*

Refer to Table 8-2 in **Skull & Bones** for rules on awarding Fame Points. Here are some possibilities in this adventure, separated by Encounter: Sailing the Mosquito Coast: None, though possibly some if there is a combat encounter.

**Shipwreck and a Clue:** None

**Scouting the Island:** None

**The Hunting Camp:** None

**The Golden Temple:** None

**The Chest and the High Priest:** None

**Conclusion:** 1 for each character involved in returning Gov. Haverford to Port Royal, 1 additional for the Captain of the ship.



## *Dividing the Plunder*

The standard agreement that is easiest to calculate is to use the following concepts. First, lump all the booty into one pile and give it a monetary value, even if it's not been sold. Next, subtract any fees for repairs needed for the ship, as well as restocking supplies. Finally, the remainder is to be divided amongst the crew and officers (anyone eligible – see p. 96-100 of *Skull & Bones* for more information on who onboard would be eligible for a share).

Assume that each of the Player Characters receives 2 shares. If for some reason a Player Character would not receive 2 shares, adjust the following formula accordingly. There may be NPCs onboard who also receive multiple shares, so make sure to add them to the total number in the formula. Calculate each share as such: (Remaining Booty) / (Total Number of Shares). The result is how much an individual share is worth. For characters that receive more than one share, or fractional shares, use this as a base.

Characters that receive goods and items in lieu of coins must 'pay' for the value of that item from their share. If the good or item is worth more than the value of their total share(s), the character must either pay the remainder from his or her pockets, or sell the item in question.

**Example:** There are four Player Characters (each receiving 2 shares), an NPC Navigator (2 shares), and 40 crewmen (each receiving 1 share). The pirates have a total booty after repairs and supplies of 6,000 doubloons. There is a total of 50 shares, so each individual share is worth  $(6,000 / 50)$  120 doubloons. Each crewman receives this as his share, while the Navigator and the PCs each receive 240 doubloons.

# Appendix A: NPCs and Ships

## SHIP: THE WOODEN NICHOL

English Schooner (Medium Merchantman)

**Draft:** 1.5 fathoms

**Structure Dice:** 4d8 (Max 22sp, Current 16sp)

**Hardness:** 5

**Maneuverability:** -2

**Speed:** 120 ft./12 knots

**Turn Rate:** 4

**AC:** 8

**Weapons Fore:** Demi-Culverin x2

**Weapons Aft:** Demi-Culverin x2

**Weapons Broadside:** Culverin x10

**Damage:** Demi-Culverin 1d4, Culverin 2d4

**Special Qualities:** None

**Crew:** 50 (Normal 50)

**Passengers:** None (Max 20)

**Cargo:** 100 Tons

**Booty:** 3,200dbl, 1,300poe, 60 Boarding Pikes, 20 Boarding Axes, 12 Broadswords, 16 Long Muskets, 8 Short Muskets, 240 Powder/Shot for Muskets, 180 Powder/Shot for Cannon, Masterwork Navigator's Instruments, Carpenter's Tools, Shipwright's Tools, Provisions for 960 Man/Days, 1 Ton of Tobacco, 1 Ton of Rice, 2 Tons of Salted Beef, 4 Tons of Lighting Oil, 36 Chicken, 24 Gallons of Old Rotgut, 16 Gallons of Rum, 16 Gallons of Good Wine, 40 Casks of Cocoa, 48 Bushels each of Wheat and Corn, and 16 Tons of Native Trinkets and Art worth 1,600dbl.

A sturdy and reliable English vessel, the Wooden Nichol, under the helm of Capt. Michael Ross, sails the Spanish Main, trading European goods for native art and silver. Under a special agreement with the Spanish authorities, the Wooden Nichol is allowed to trade in Spanish ports, so long as she disarms herself before sailing in. The ship has just survived a pirate attack of a few days past, and is a bit damaged from the encounter. Capt. Ross has no love of pirates, and will launch an attack on any pirate ship he thinks the Wooden Nichol can take down.

## CREW OF THE WOODEN NICHOL (CF)

**Class:** Expert

**Level:** 2

**Crew Size:** 50

**Crew Wounds:** 50

**Attacks:** Belaying Pin +1, Dirk +1

**Damage:** Belaying Pin 1d6, Dirk 1d4

**AC:** 12

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +4

**Seamanship:** +3

**Feats:** Sure-Footed

**Crew Quality:** Average

## NPC: CAPTAIN MICHAEL ROSS

[Ari 3, Exp 3] [Medium Humanoid] **CR:** 4

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+3 & 3d6+3 (31 hp)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**Armor Class:** 14 (touch 12, flat-footed 12)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4, Grapple +6

**Attack:** Melee +7 (1d6+2, Cutlass) or Ranged +8 (1d12, Blunderbuss Pistol)

**Full Attack:** Melee +7 (1d6+2, Cutlass) or Ranged +8 (1d12, Blunderbuss Pistol)

**Space/Reach:** 5x5, 5'

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7

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

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (navigation) +10, Knowledge (sea lore) +11, Profession (sailor) +10, Sense Motive +5, Swim +7.

**Languages:** English, French, Spanish.

**Feats:** Crack Shot, Crimp, Port Savvy (bonuses included above), Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (blunderbuss pistol).

**Background:** Seaman

**Fortunes:** Code of Honor (British naval code).

**Treasure:** As described in encounter listing.

**Alignment:** Neutral Good

**Equipment:** Masterwork Blunderbuss Pistol, 48 Powder/Shot, Masterwork Cutlass, Buff Coat, Fancy Plumed Hat, Gentleman's Outfit, Masterwork Navigation Tools, Telescope, Fine Map of the Spanish Main, Cob Pipe and 16 oz. Tobacco, and 1,900dbl.

Capt. Michael Ross is a fourth generation sailor. His father, retired Admiral George Ross, is a 40-year veteran of the Royal Navy. Though Michael Ross served in the Royal Navy for more than 10 years, he loathed the harsh discipline, and decided upon surrendering his commission to buy a ship and make his fortune in the New World. The Wooden Nichol, his ship, has been in service for about six years. Capt. Ross has drafted an excellent crew for his purposes, and is proud of his men. He hates pirates dearly, and will attack on sight ships flying the Jolly Roger.(End Boxed Text)



## TULCAN CULTISTS (CF)

**Class:** Expert

**Level:** 4

**Crew Size:** Varies

**Crew Wounds:** Varies

**Attacks:** Club +3, Spear +4

**Damage:** Club 1d6, Spear 1d6

**AC:** 10

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6

**Seamanship:** n/a

**Feats:** Hardy, Sure-Footed, Weapon Focus (spear).

**Crew Quality:** n/a

In this adventure, treat the Tulcan Cultists as Cannon Fodder (see the **Skull & Bones** rules for details on the Cannon Fodder mechanic). In each encounter, their exact size and wounds will be given.

## NPC: TULCAN PRIEST

**[Adept 4] [Medium Humanoid] CR: 2**

**Hit Dice:** 4d6+4 (18hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30'

**Armor Class:** 11 (flat-footed 10, touch 11)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2, Grapple +2

**Attacks:** +2 melee (1d4, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d4, thrown dagger)

**Full Attack:** +2 melee (1d4, dagger) or +2 ranged (1d4, thrown dagger)

**Space/Reach:** 5x5, 5'

**Special Attacks:** Spellcasting.

**Special Qualities:** None.

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

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

**Skills:** Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +4, Heal +9, Knowledge (spirit lore) +5, Spellcraft +5, Survival +5.

**Feats:** Combat Casting, Dodge.

**Background:** Native

**Treasure:** As noted in encounter.

**Alignment:** Neutral Evil

**Equipment:** As noted in encounter.

**Note:** This character uses the standard magic system as presented in the Core Rules (see above for a complete explanation).

**Spellcasting:** A Tulcan Priest memorizes 3 0-level, 3 1st level, and 1 2nd level spells. They are as follows: 0-level – *Cure Minor Wounds*, *Detect Magic*, *Light*; 1st level – *Cause Fear*, *Cure Light Wounds*, *Sleep*; 2nd level – *Aid*. The DC for his spell saves is calculated as (12 + Spell Level).

**Non-Magic Option:** If you are not using magic in this adventure, replace the Priest's spellcasting abilities with the following:

Instead of his spell use, the Tulcan Priest coats his weapons with a dangerous poison. This is an injected poison, which can be used on his dagger. The poison has initial and secondary effects of causing 1d4 Constitution damage, and has a Fort Save DC of 14. The Tulcan Priest carries 4 doses of this poison.

## **NPC: TULCAN HIGH PRIEST**

**[Cle 5] [Medium Humanoid] CR: 5**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+10 (33hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30'

**Armor Class:** 15 (flat-footed 10, touch 11)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4, Grapple +5

**Attacks:** +6 melee (1d6+1, masterwork maquahuitl) or +5 ranged (1d4+1, throwing knife)

**Full Attack:** +6 melee (1d6+1, masterwork maquahuitl) or +5 ranged (1d4+1, throwing knife)

**Space/Reach:** 5x5, 5'

**Special Attacks:** Spellcasting, Rebuke Undead.

**Special Qualities:** None.

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 16

**Skills:** Bluff +10, Concentration +10, Craft (alchemy) +9, Heal +11, Knowledge (spirit lore) +9, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +9.

**Feats:** Combat Casting, Dodge, Mobility.

**Background:** Native

**Treasure:** See Below

**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil

**Equipment:** Masterwork Maquahuitl (Aztec Barbed Club), 6 Throwing Knives, 4 Potions of *Cure Light Wounds*, Wanga of *Hold Person*, Wanga of *Wind Wall*, and a *Mage Armor Charm* (+4 armor bonus to AC).

**Note:** This character uses the standard magic system as presented in the Core Rules (see above for a complete explanation).

**Spellcasting:** The Tulcan High Priest memorizes 5 0-level, 4(+1) 1st level, 3(+1) 2nd level, and 2(+1) 3rd levels spells. They are as follows: 0-level – *Cure Minor Wounds*, *Detect Magic*, *Detect Poison*, *Light*, *Resistance*; 1st level – *Bane*, *Cause Fear*, *Cure Light Wounds*, *Doom*, *Protection from Good*; 2nd level – *Aid*, *Cure Moderate Wounds*, *Hold Person*, *Invisibility*; 3rd level – *Infllict Serious Wounds*, *Nondetection*, *Prayer*. The DC for his spell saves is calculated as (14 + Spell Level). His domains are Evil and Trickery.

**Non-Magic Option:** If you are not using magic in this adventure, replace the High Priest's spellcasting abilities and magic items with the following:

Instead of his spell use and wanga items, the High Priest coats his weapons with a dangerous poison. This is an injected poison, which can be used on either his throwing knives or the sharp edges of his maquahuitl. The poison has initial and secondary effects of causing 1d4 Constitution damage, and has a Fort Save DC of 14. The priest carries 8 doses of this poison.

## NPC: “BULLHEAD” WILLOWS

[Rog 2, Sdg 4] [Medium Humanoid] **CR: 6**

**Hit Dice:** 2d6+2 & 4d10+4 (37hp)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 30'

**Armor Class:** 14 (flat-footed 12, touch 12), 15 base with Two Weapon Fighting

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +5, Grapple +6

**Attacks:** +7 melee (1d6+1, masterwork rapier) or +7 ranged (2d4, pistol)

**Full Attack:** +5 melee (1d6+1, masterwork rapier) and +4 melee (1d4+1, dagger) or +7 ranged (2d4, pistol)

**Space/Reach:** 5x5, 5'

**Special Attacks:** Sneak Attack +1d6

**Special Qualities:** Close Quarters (+1 to dmg), Favored – English Ships (bonuses included below).

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +2

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

**Skills:** Appraise +6, Balance +4/+6, Bluff +5, Climb +10/+12, Decipher Script +6, Disable Device +4, Forgery +4, Gather Information +5, Hide +9/+11, Intimidate +9, Jump +5, Knowledge (navigation) +11, Knowledge (sea lore) +7, Move Silently +9/+11, Open Lock +4, Profession (sailor) +6/+8, Swim +5, Tumble +5, Use Rope +4/+6.

**Feats:** Dodge, Mobility, Two Weapon Fighting, Two Weapon Defense, Weapon Focus (dagger), Weapon Focus (rapier).

**Background:** Seaman

**Fortunes:** Superstitious (from Sea Dog).

**Treasure:** See Below

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

**Equipment:** Masterwork Buff Coat, Masterwork Rapier, 3 Daggers, Pistol and 48 Powder/Shot, Various maps/charts/journals, Forgery Kit, 2,000dbl.

James “Bullhead” Willows has always had an interest in maps and charts. From an early age, this son of an English colonist sought out old maps and texts for his amusement. He grew up to be a well-read young man, but hardly a cloistered saint by any stretch. Willows, whose interests soon expanded to the acquisition of illicit goods and services, found friends among the sailors and seamen who traveled the Caribbean. Bullhead earned his nickname while serving on the *Redemption*, a merchant ship sailing the trade route between West Africa and Bermuda. Willows was a stout melee combatant, and never fell during the many brief pirate attacks the *Redemption* endured during its 3-year run.

The *Redemption*'s captain retired, forcing Willows to seek out new employment. Luckily, the *Redemption*'s first mate, Gillaume Devereaux, a Frenchman, had purchased a ship and was seeking skilled men. Willows became Devereaux's navigator, a post which he filled for 10 years.

After serving with Devereaux, Bullhead served on several other ships, but always pursued his love of maps and navigational charts. At the same time, Willows' long term memory started to fail. To combat that, Willows began to make copies of his treasured collection, in some cases two or three copies.

Willows recently made a deal with a French pirate, Albert de Montblanc (see the events of prior adventures in this series). Under the terms of this deal, Willows would keep watch over a captive, Governor William Haverford of Port Royal, in exchange for a chest full of gold doubloons. The catch was that the chest was locked and allegedly cursed. Due to his superstitions, Willows would not open the chest.

One of Willows' friends, the native first mate Paolo, made Willows aware of a native witch doctor who may be able to remove the curse on Montblanc's chest. To that end, Willows has traveled to mysterious Rigas Island in search of this witch doctor.

## **NPC: WILLIAM HAVERFORD**

**[Aristocrat 4] [Medium Humanoid] CR: 2**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8 (18hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 30'

**Armor Class:** 10 (flat-footed 10, touch 10)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3, Grapple +3

**Attacks:** +3 melee (none, varies by weapon) or +3 ranged (none, varies by weapon)

**Full Attack:** +3 melee (none, varies by weapon) or +3 ranged (none, varies by weapon)

**Space/Reach:** 5x5, 5'

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 17

**Skills:** Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (heraldry & nobility) +6, Listen +8, Perform (dance) +8, Sense Motive +5, Spot +8.

**Languages:** English, French.

**Feats:** Iron Will, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Weapon Focus (rapier).

**Background:** Gentleman-Adventurer

**Fortunes:** None

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Lawful Neutral

**Equipment:** None.

William Haverford, an English noble, was born on an estate just outside Sheffield, England. His father, a shipping magnate, exposed William to world cultures and took him to many different places. William loved seeing the world, and when England started colonizing the Caribbean, Haverford took the first ship west, and found himself in the Bahamas. Serving as a clerk to Governor James Plant, Haverford started making the connections that would one day earn him an appointment as Governor of Port Royal.

From the Bahamas, Haverford traveled to St. Domingue, where he served as a translator and advisor to the French Governor, Jean-Paul De-

main. Haverford has occasion to travel to Port Royal in his duties for the French government, and fell in love with the island. He immediately resigned from Governor Demain's administration and married Hillary Milton, daughter of the then-Governor of Port Royal, Henry Milton.

Haverford served Gov. Milton for more than 20 years, eventually as his chief of staff. When Milton resigned due to poor health, he highly recommended Haverford for the position.

Gov. Haverford had only been a sitting governor for about three months when he was captured and taken to Hell's Cove (see the events of previous adventures in this series for more information).



## Appendix B:

### Sample Ship and Crew

If the PCs do not already have a ship and crew, here are stats for the *Fortune*, a sloop, and her very green crew. As above, note that these crewmen have just been signed on, so any Sway rolls should take that into consideration for this adventure.

#### SHIP: THE FORTUNE

English Sloop (Medium Warship)

**Draft:** 2 fathoms  
**Structure Dice:** 4d10 (24 sp)  
**Hardness:** 5  
**Maneuverability:** 0  
**Speed:** 130 ft./13 knots  
**Turn Rate:** 4  
**AC:** 10  
**Weapons Fore:** None  
**Weapons Aft:** Culverin x2  
**Weapons Broadside:** Culverin x8  
**Damage:** Culverin 2d4  
**Special Qualities:** None  
**Crew:** 50  
**Passengers:** 10  
**Cargo:** 80 Tons

The *Fortune* is a tad stouter than other sloops found in common use. She was once part of an escort group that traveled with African slave ships making the Middle Passage, but following a pirate attack on the slave ship she was guarding, the *Fortune* found herself in the hands of Jean-Marc Boulanger, a French pirate. She has since changed hands many times, but is still in good condition.

#### CREW OF THE FORTUNE (CF)

**Class:** Commoner  
**Level:** 1  
**Crew Size:** 40  
**Crew Wounds:** 40  
**Attacks:** Belaying Pin +0, Dirk +0  
**Damage:** Belaying Pin 1d6, Dirk 1d4  
**AC:** 10  
**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1  
**Seamanship:** +0  
**Feats:** None  
**Crew Quality:** Rabble

Note that, because the number of crew members (40) is less than the minimum crew numbers required for the *Fortune* (50), all actions taken for the *Fortune* are at -1. If the PCs have had time to add crew, or have pressed captive crews into service, adjust the modifiers as appropriate.(End Boxed Text)



# THE SEA WITCH

A Prestige Class by Nate Christen

All around the world, tales are told of strange women who seem to have a mystical connection to the sea, women who can bend it to their will, for good or for ill. Some say this is because they still have a link to the pagan goddesses who were once associated with the sea, such as the Norse Ran, the Egyptian Isis, and others. Whatever the truth of the matter might be, these women can develop great powers that make them valuable allies or powerful enemies. Like the sea itself, they can help lead people to great gain, or can trap them in a watery grave.

## *Requirements*

**Knowledge:** sea lore 6 ranks

**Alignment:** any chaotic

Additionally, only female characters may become sea witches.

## *Characteristics*

Sea witches, just as one would think, tend to live very close to open water. They are often involved in the types of professions that bring other people close to the sea, such as fishing, boat building, mending of sails and nets, etc., but their unusual connection to the sea tends to leave them on the edge of civilized society. Indeed, they are frequently at odds with members of more traditional religions, as detailed below.



## *Alignment*

Just like the sea itself, sea witches tend to be chaotic in nature, but they can have differing outlooks when it comes to good, neutrality or evil.

## Class Skills

Climb, Concentration, Craft (various), Knowledge (navigation), Knowledge (sea lore), Listen, Profession (various), Search, Spellcraft, Spot, Survival, Swim, Use Rope.

**Skill ranks per level:** 6 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

### Weapon and Armor Proficiency

A sea witch is proficient with all simple weapons, plus the belaying pin (large and small), boarding axe and buccaneer knife. She is not proficient with any types of armor or shields.

### Bonus Feats

The sea witch may choose her bonus feats from the following list: Alertness, Animal Affinity, Augment Summoning, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus, Spell Focus, and any of the Meta-Magic Feats from Chapter 5 in the *Player's Handbook*.

### Attuned to the Sea

The sea witch has such a connection to the sea that she receives a +2 competence bonus to all Swim checks as well as to all Knowledge, Listen, Profession, Spot and Survival checks made that involve the sea.

## Religious Enmity

Because of her connection to pagan traditions, the sea witch is viewed as something of a heretic by members of religions such as Christianity. When dealing with people of rank in these religions, she suffers a –2 penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks.

## Spells

The sea witch casts spells spontaneously, just as a sorcerer does, except that she uses her Wisdom bonus to determine saving throw DC's and bonus spells. She does not learn spells, as a wizard does, but can choose from any spell of a level that she can cast, in the same manner as a cleric.

## Wind Cord Ritual

The first ritual that the sea witch learns is one that allows her to control the winds. To do this she prepares a special cord, tying three knots in it. If the first of these is untied, it produces a steady breeze (Moderate speed); untying the second whips up a powerful gale (Severe speed). Should someone be so foolhardy as to untie the third, a Hurricane-force wind is unleashed. Refer to the Sailing chapter in **Corsair** for effects of wind speed on rates of travel for ships, and to Chapter 10 in **Skull & Bones** for the difficulties created by a hurricane.

**Table 1: Sea Witch Level Progression**

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Reflex Save | Will Save | Special                                      |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1     | +0                | +2        | +0          | +2        | Attuned to the Sea, Religious Enmity, Spells |
| 2     | +1                | +3        | +0          | +3        | Wind Cord Ritual                             |
| 3     | +2                | +3        | +1          | +3        |                                              |
| 4     | +3                | +4        | +1          | +4        | Bonus Feat                                   |
| 5     | +3                | +4        | +1          | +4        |                                              |
| 6     | +4                | +5        | +2          | +5        | Ship Model Ritual                            |
| 7     | +5                | +5        | +2          | +5        |                                              |
| 8     | +6                | +6        | +2          | +6        | Bonus Feat                                   |
| 9     | +6                | +6        | +3          | +6        |                                              |
| 10    | +7                | +7        | +3          | +7        | Maelstrom Ritual                             |

To create the wind cord, the sea witch must find a suitable piece of material and tie the knots into it, all the while using special incantations to harness influence over the winds. While there is no monetary cost for doing so, she must spend 100 experience points to create the item; doing so takes fifteen minutes. It functions as a scroll of *Control Weather* spell, except that it only has the effects mentioned above and can be used by any character who can untie the knots. Moreover, the effects cannot be dispelled by the caster. Once it is invoked, the crew has no choice but to weather the storm.

### Ship Model Ritual

The next ritual learned by the sea witch allows her to craft a model of a specific vessel, one that gives her power over that ship. The model need only crudely resemble the ship in question, but gives her power over that ship as if she'd cast a *Control Weather* spell on it. (One of the chief benefits here is that she need not be aboard that ship in order to use the ritual.)

Creating this ship model requires a piece of wood of the same type as the ship, along with a Craft: woodcarving check (DC 10) to shape it so that it crudely resembles the vessel in question. The ritual also costs her 200 experience points, and lasts one half hour. Unlike the wind cord, she is the only one who can make it work. This ritual works in the same manner as a true *Control Weather* spell, and therefore she is able to dispel its effects at will. To make it happen, the sea witch usually places the ship model in a container of water of some kind, such as a cooking pot, and then begins to slowly stir up the water in the container, fan it with wind or sprinkle in additional water, actions that simulate the effects of the spell on the real ship.

### Open Maelstrom Ritual

The most feared ritual of the sea witch's arsenal is the one that allows her to open up a deadly whirlpool. Unlike the previous rituals, this one requires no material components, although it costs her 500 experience points and can only be used once per month.

When invoked, this ritual creates a whirlpool three hundred feet in diameter, one that inexorably draws ships that it catches into its watery maw. All vessels within one hundred feet of its outside edge must make a DC 20 Profession: sailor check or be drawn fifty feet closer to it; those who succeed at a DC 25 can move away from it normally. These DC's each increase by five once a ship is pulled within the circumference of the whirlpool. Additional checks are required each round, with outcomes as indicated. Should a ship be pulled into the center of the maelstrom, it suffers 6d6 sp damage per round until it is smashed to pieces and pulled underwater.

Those crew members and passengers unfortunate enough to be aboard the vessel at this time are also pulled underwater, unless they succeed at Swim checks (with DC's as listed above) to escape. Any characters who fail their Swim checks begin to drown, as detailed in the ***Player's Handbook***. Once they have been pulled beneath the waves, only a DC 30 Swim check can allow them to reach the surface again.



Table 2: Sea Witch Spell Progression

| -----Spells per Day----- |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Class                    | Level | Level | Level | Level | Level | Level |
| Level                    | 0     | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |
| 1                        | 3     | 1     | --    | --    | --    | --    |
| 2                        | 4     | 2     | --    | --    | --    | --    |
| 3                        | 4     | 2     | 1     | --    | --    | --    |
| 4                        | 4     | 3     | 2     | --    | --    | --    |
| 5                        | 4     | 3     | 2     | 1     | --    | --    |
| 6                        | 4     | 4     | 3     | 2     | --    | --    |
| 7                        | 4     | 4     | 3     | 2     | 1     | --    |
| 8                        | 4     | 4     | 4     | 3     | 2     | --    |
| 9                        | 4     | 4     | 4     | 3     | 2     | 1     |
| 10                       | 4     | 4     | 4     | 3     | 3     | 2     |

Additionally, sea witches receive bonus spells based on their Wisdom ability score.

Sea Witch Spells

**Level 0**—*Detect magic, Guidance, Know Direction, Message, Resistance, Virtue*

**Level 1**—*Bane, Bless, Doom, Endure Elements, Identify, Obscuring Mist, Summon Monster I*

**Level 2**—*Aid, Augury, Gust of Wind, Protection from Arrows, Resist Energy, Status, Summon Monster II*

**Level 3**—*Bestow Curse, Dispel Magic, Locate Object, Obscure Object, Pacify Storm\*, Protection from Energy, Summon Monster III*

**Level 4**—*Control Water, Locate Creature, Remove Curse, Sending, Summon Monster IV*

**Level 5**—*Break Enchantment, Control Currents\*, Spell Resistance, Summon Monster V*

\*These spells are detailed in the **Corsair** rules supplement.

