

COR1-08



THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT

A One-Round D&D Core LIVING GREYHAWK™ Adventure

version 1

by Creighton Broadhurst

Shipwrecked on the Bright Desert coast, you locate the remains of another shipwreck that can be used to repair your own craft. Unfortunately the crews of this first vessel all seem to have died in some horrible fashion. An adventure for characters level 1-6.



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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapt-

ed to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1-No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.

2-Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.

3-Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING™ adventure, it is expected that players will bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, a character sheet, and a LIVING GREYHAWK log sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer.

DETERMINING AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL (APL)

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportioned to the average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

- 1) Determine the character level for each PC participating in the adventure.
 - 2) If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e., animal companions, familiars, paladin's mounts, etc.) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.
- | CR | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1/4 and 1/6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1/3 and 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
- 3) Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure-round up.
 - 4) If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of an adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL that this adventure is played at playing at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1st-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

- 1) Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
- 2) Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dog to attack they must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.
- 3) A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can "enlist

an iconic." The stats for the 1st-level versions of Tordek, Miale, Lidda and Jozan are given at the end of each adventure. The group may pick one of these characters to joint them on this adventure. The DM controls that NPC.

If you are using a 591 CY adventure (campaign year 1) that uses the old Tiers, assume that the Tier multiplied by 2 is the APL suitable for that encounter.

IS IT A FULL MOON?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

- Destitute** You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.
- Poor** You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.
- Common** You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.
- High** You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.
- Luxury** You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND CAMPAIGN CONSEQUENCES

This adventure has campaign consequences; that is the outcome of this adventure will directly affect future events in the course of the campaign. The answers to some of the questions below may seem trivial or pointless, but because of the complex nature of the back-story and campaign all information requested is vital.

Please send your answers to the Living Onnwal Team at creighton.broadhurst@ntlworld.com as soon as possible. General comments about the adventure are also welcomed at this address.

- 1) Was the survivor rescued? Note: the survivor's identity is not revealed in this adventure due to his mental condition. His identity will be revealed in a future adventure.
- 2) Did Alui survive his encounter with the PCs?
- 2) Did the PCs make sure Varn's bones and the survivor made it back to Onnwal?

SYNOPSIS

The PCs are onboard a merchant vessel, *The Sea Star*, sailing for Greyhawk City. On board along with its crew is a small detachment of mercenaries and the PCs. The vessel runs into trouble as it attempts to bypass the Brotherhood blockade of the Gearnat Straits. Spotted by a pirate ship out of Blue they are forced to flee. Subsequently caught up in a storm *The Sea Star* manages to lose the pursuing pirates but sustains heavy damage and is blown miles off course.

When the storm abates *The Sea Star* is taking on water. Valiant efforts throughout the day manage to slow the influx of water but by nightfall Captain Keriann is left with no choice but to head for land. Unfortunately the nearest landfall is the coast of the Bright Desert. By daybreak *The Sea Star* is considerably lower in the water. The Bright Desert is spotted around noon. Sailing westward looking for a safe place to beach, the crew discovers a wreck washed up in a small cove. Although severely damaged, enough timber remains to effect repairs to allow the ship to limp on to its destination.

At high tide *The Sea Star* enters the cove and intentionally runs itself aground on a sandbar. And the adventure begins for the PCs. The captain informs them that they must explore the remains of the shattered wreck before the sailors cannibalize it to repair their own craft.

The shattered craft is of course the *Azure Warden*, personal ship of the Onnwalish adventurer Slanisar Bantu. While the mercenaries set up a series of guard posts and strong points along the ridge, the PCs are given the task of entering the *Azure Warden* to ascertain the fate of the crew. Investigations of the ship reveal that only the stern has escaped destruction and that all the crew

dead. Everything of value has been taken from the vessel.

While exploring the wreck the PCs encounter the ghost of Varn Amandis who implores the PCs to return his body to his native Onnwal. Varn does not know what befell the vessel being below decks at the time of the attack but tells the PCs that a lone survivor wandered off alone down the coast.

The PCs (perhaps with gentle prodding from Varn) decide to trek into the desert to locate this survivor. After a torturous journey down the coast they come across a small cave, near an almost empty waterhole. Inside is the survivor—driven mad by his ordeal and close to death. Night falls quickly in the desert and the PCs are forced to stay the night in the cavern.

Attacked by a small patrol of nomads aligned with Rary the PCs are trapped in the cave until they manage to break out. During their return journey to *The Sea Star* they will again be attacked, but this time by giant ants.

The Sea Star will be repaired swiftly and the vessel will continue on its way to Greyhawk City.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

The last few days have not been good ones. You sailed aboard the Sea Star, a merchantman bound for Greyhawk City over a week ago. For the first few days everything went well. The wind was at your back, the sun shone and no hostile ships were sighted. Once you neared the Gearnat Straits however things changed. First a pirate ship, probably operating from the port of Blue, spotted you and chased you for a day and a night before you lost it by sailing directly into a storm front. For the next two days you were totally at the mercy of the wild turbulent sea. When the storm finally broke the Sea Star was badly holed and taking on water.

Frantic (and heroic) bailing efforts over the next twelve hours simply delayed the inevitable. The Sea Star was going to sink unless land could be found. The storm had driven the ship much farther north than her captain had intended and you were forced to set a course for the Bright Desert. Wandering the dunes after all, must be better than swimming through shark-infested waters.

Floundering dangerously you sailed westward along the coast looking for a safe place to abandon ship. It was then that fate again took a part in this tale as Istus spun her many strands together. The lookout sighted a wreck beached in a small sheltered cove ahead. Perhaps you wouldn't have to abandon ship after all!

As you drew closer you could discern that the other ship, seemingly abandoned, was extremely badly damaged and had settled high up on the beach.

The Sea Star entered the bay and edged closer to the shore looking for a low lying sand bar to beach herself on while repairs could be carried out. With a shudder and a tortured groan she hit a submerged sand bank and slowly settled. At that moment you all fervently wished that her stay would be temporary.

Once the players have asked any questions and they are comfortable with the chain of events that has led them here, continue by reading or paraphrasing the following:

Taking the rail in one hand you look out upon an accursed landscape. Tales of this wind-blasted, sun-scorched hell have circulated for generations wherever mariners have gathered, but somehow you never really believed them. From your vantage point it is clear however, that the tales spoke the truth.

Heat seems to rise in shimmering waves from the beach just 50 yards away and already you are sweating profusely.

A few pathetic bushes and even the occasional stunted, sickly-looking tree can be seen in the hills beyond the beach. Nothing stirs in this forsaken hell and apart from the creaking of timbers, the fluttering of the sails in the slight wind and the gentle lapping of waves upon the beach all is silent.

You realize that unless the Sea Star is repaired quickly you cannot hope to survive here long.

Responding to the orders of the first mate the crew quickly busy themselves lowering two boats and securing the Sea Star while the mercenaries assemble on deck. Whilst these preparations continue Captain Keriann, a tall, rapier-thin, sun-scarred man approaches you.

"My friends," he begins, "times are hard and we must all pull together to escape this cruel trap that fate has thrown upon us. To this end I must ask you to explore the wreck yonder, clearing it of anything that may wish my men harm. Once you have done this, my sailors will be able to salvage the necessary materials to temporarily repair our vessel. We cannot go any further without repairs and the only place we can get the materials is that wreck. Will you help?"

The PCs really have no option but to accept this mission. The mercenaries are busy setting up a network of defensive points in the hills and the, superstitious, sailors will refuse to enter the wreck unless it is safe. When they accept the task read, the following:

With a splash two longboats are lowered into the calm waters of the cove. One, filled with mercenaries, sets off immediately for the beach, while your own takes a slightly different heading toward the wreck. The four rowers with you mutter and whisper among themselves as you draw closer to the wreck. The rowboat grounds upon the shore and the sailors motion for you to get out. As soon as you oblige they push it back out into the cove and pull for The Sea Star.

The hot sun beats mercilessly down upon you and your clothes and hair are matted with sweat. Apart from the small band of mercenaries rapidly disappearing in to the hills you realize that you are (probably) completely alone in this godforsaken place. Ahead of you stands the stern of

what was once a proud ocean going ship. The rest of the vessel seems to have been smashed to pieces and lie about the beach nothing more than flotsam and jetsam.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE AZURE WARDEN

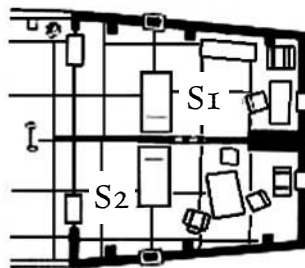
A "S" prefixes encounters that occur in the Azure Warden. The remains of this craft lie on the beach on the high tide mark. The rest of the vessel is smashed and scattered around the beach. It should be evident that either the vessel grounded here at high speed or that a large creature destroyed it. Only the stern portion of the vessel has survived moderately intact. It is this part of the vessel that Captain Keriann wished the PCs to search.

It should be noted that as the PCs begin their exploration they have received no indications that it is the missing Azure Warden. A quick walk around the stern will reveal the following:

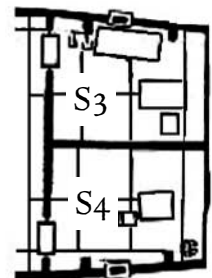
The remains of the stern stand upright in the sand as a testament to the skill of whoever built her. A portion of the main deck also remains and it seems possible to access both the main deck cabins and the two lower chambers. The windows, to the rear of the stern, all have their storm shutters closed. In front of the left hand side door on what would have

MAP 1: THE AZURE WARDEN, STERN SECTION

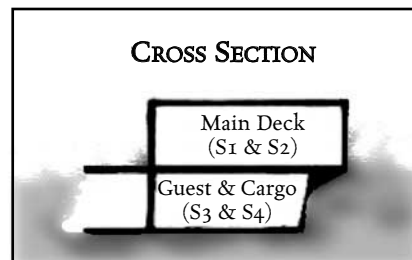
MAIN DECK LEVEL



GUEST QUARTERS AND SECURE CARGO AREA



CROSS SECTION



been the main deck level lies a sun bleached skeleton, still wearing the remains of sailors garb.

On the lower level the doors have both been partially obscured by drifting sand although one hangs slightly open. It may be necessary to dig the other out before gaining entry to the chamber it guards.

The Skeleton: Investigation of the skeleton does not reveal the cause of death. No bones are broken and there are no other clues as to how this man died. Disturbing the skeleton disturbs a small group of scorpions living inside the folds of bone and rags.

ALL APLS (EL 1)

➤ **Monstrous Scorpions, Tiny** (4): hp 4, 3 (x2), 2; see *Monster Manual* page 208.

☛ **The Storm Shutters:** 1/2 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; break DC 10; The storm shutters can only be opened from the inside.

☛ **The Doors:** 1 1/2 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 15; AC 5; break DC 18; All the doors open inwards. It is not necessary to remove the sand piled up against the partially obscured door to gaining entry. Don't tell the PCs this. Such excavations require a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) to avoid 1d4 points of subdual damage due to the heat.

S1. Slanisar Bantu's Cabin

This cabin can be reached by climbing up the hull to the main deck.

This cabin has been completely ransacked. A great melee obviously took place here as there are great gouges cut out of the shattered furniture and walls. Nothing of value seems to have survived but it is evident from the fragments of furniture that survived that this was the cabin of an important person — perhaps the ships captain.

There is nothing of value here, but this is the only area of the vessel that shows signs of an actual melee. There is no indication as to who won the fight, or indeed who was fighting.

S2. First Mate's Cabin

This cabin can be reached by climbing up the hull to the main deck.

Open the door of his cabin reveals a horrific sight. Seven skeletons lie about the small chamber in the clothing of humble seamen. Although there is no clue as to the cause of death all seem to have died in great pain. A shattered table, an upturned chair, a small bed and a ransacked chest share the room with the unfortunates who evidently died here.

Examination of the skeletons yields no further clues as to the cause of death. None have recently broken bones, although all bear the scars of a hard life. Their clothing is in bad condition, but this could be as a result of the climate or the working conditions the men endured in life as much by combat. This room has been stripped like the others of anything of value. Even the sailors' pouches have been emptied.

S3. Guest Quarters

Located on what was once the lower deck this cabin can be reached from the forward portion of the stern.

This small cabin has actually survived the ordeal this vessel went through quite well. Once furnished with comfortable furniture it seems to have escaped much of the destruction in evidence elsewhere. A table and comfortable chair lie on the floor. Against one wall a small bed still stands. Atop the bed lies a skeleton still clad in the garb of a common sailor who seems to have died in considerable pain, although there is no clue as to how he died. Several tools and a small bag of nails are scattered about the floor.

As soon as PCs open the door to this cabin Varn is aware of their presence. He observes the PCs for a few rounds until he has the measure of them, at which time he will reveal himself to them.

At first you think it is a trick of the light but after a second you are certain. Darkness is coalescing in a vaguely man-shaped form over the bed.

Allow the PCs to react before continuing.

As you watch the form takes on the definite characteristics of a man and begins to lighten considerably. Within seconds a middle-aged man faces you. His face is unshaven; his hair is unkempt and falls over his shoulders. He is shoeless, clad in ragged clothing and hovers several inches above the bed. With a start you realize you can see the wall through him!

Varn is not interested in fighting the PCs; he simply wants his bones returned to his native Onnwal and blessed by a cleric of Osprem. He can offer no reward for this apart from the meager supply of coins in his belt pouch.

Varn tells them with pride that this vessel was the Azure Warden, personal vessel of Slanisar Bantu. He does not know what attacked the ship, as he saw nothing of the assailants, although he does know that Slanisar was patrolling the area with the express hope of encountering pirates operating out of Highport or Blue. At the moment that the ship was attacked Varn was in this cabin carrying out some minor repairs in his capacity as ships carpenter. Hearing the dying screams of his shipmates he locked himself in, even refusing to admit others. Of the attack all he remembers is the cold hand of death reach-

ing out to him from the darkness. He can speak of this quite vividly...

Varn tells the party that there was one survivor who wandered off down the coast several days after the *Azure Warden* was attacked. Varn does not know who he was but he was carrying a backpack and two small sacks filled with supplies. If the PCs do not suggest it Varn proposes that the survivor may yet still live and therefore an effort should be made to rescue his shipmate. If they refuse he will deny the vessel to them using his *frightful moan* on any sailors that arrive to cannibalize the *Azure Warden*. Varn suggests that the PCs follow the coast as much as possible as he is certain that this is what the marooned sailor would have done. Varn has unfortunately lost track of time and cannot remember when his vessel was destroyed or how long after his event the survivor left the wreck.

He is ashamed of his actions and does not speak of them. (Indeed it is this shame that has anchored him to this vessel. He can only be laid to rest if the survivor is rescued and his own bones are returned to Onnwal).

ALL APLS (EL 3)

➤ **Varn Amandis, human male ghost War2:** hp 24; see Appendix A.

Tactics: Varn is miserable and tortured by his cowardice during the attack. He does not want to attack or kill the PCs. If he is attacked he simply stands motionless until the PCs cease their actions. If harmed he fades from site and reappear next to the offending PC. He then unleashes a *frightful moan*. Once the PCs have stopped attacking him he converses with them. Varn's motivations and history are discussed above.

Treasure: The only treasure to be found here is the contents of Varn's belt pouch. It contains 12 silver geese and 10 copper ducks. (These are varieties of Onnwalish coin.)

S4. Secure Cargo Area

This cabin was used for the storage of valuable items. It can be accessed from the forward section of the stern

The door to this cabin was of sturdier make than the others, but someone or something has shattered it. Inside, the furniture has been smashed to little more than kindling. Nothing of any value appears to have survived. In roughly the center of the cabin is a single ripped sack that seemed to once hold some kind of grain.

This room was originally shelved. It is the remains of this that lie scattered about the room. The survivor took anything of value that was here before he left the wreck.

ENCOUNTER 2: REPORTING TO CAPTAIN KERIANN

Once the PCs have investigated the wreck and reported back to Captain Keriann it is probable that they will set off to search for the survivor. If they don't they will have an angry ghost to contend with and repairs to *The Sea Star* will be impossible. Once the sailors are aware that a ghost haunts the wreck of the *Azure Warden* they will refuse to go anywhere near the wreck, even if the PCs assure them that they have taken care of the problem. If the PCs have agreed to look for Varn's missing shipmate, Varn in turn promises not to reveal himself to the crew while they are gone—if they don't he will go about spooking the sailors.

If the PCs describe their encounter with Varn, Captain Keriann counsels them to silence, as sailors are a superstitious lot and would probably refuse to sail with parts of a ghost ship. Keriann issues each PC with two days food and water if they do not have their own. He is unable to give them more as food supplies are being rationed against the chance that the ships company will have to spend more time here than planned.

He explains to the PCs that repairs will take two days. If they have not returned by then *The Sea Star* by then, he will sail without them.

If the PCs decide to wait until darkness have Varn Amandis deny the sailors the wreck. Make it clear that they must set out at once as Keriann does not want to spend any more time than he has to here as he is concerned with the dwindling supply situation.

ENCOUNTER 3: THE OUTWARD JOURNEY

For this encounter refer to Map #2.

THE BRIGHT DESERT

Most of the Bright Desert is nothing more than a wasteland of dune piled upon dune interspersed with a few scattered oases. Daily temperatures can reach as high as 120 degrees Fahrenheit during midsummer, although the coastal regions are cooled by sea breezes blowing in off the Gearnat. At night the temperature swiftly drops to near freezing point. In the coastal areas of the desert and upon its fringes the dune so prevalent in the interior give way to patches of scrub desert. Here hardy, stunted shrubs and old sickly, twisted pine trees survive, nourished by the rocky soil and the occasional rain fall. Plant life in the interior is confined to the few trees and date palms dotted around the infrequent oases and a few lone cacti.

It is a harsh, unforgiving environment. Before running this

adventure, take a moment and review both the Heat Dangers and Starvation and Thirst Dangers sections on page 86 of the DUNGEON MASTER's Guide.

If not wearing metal armor, PCs should make one Heat Danger check between encounters. Those wearing medium metal armor should make two such checks between encounters. Those wearing heavy metal armor should make three such checks.

Thirst Danger checks should be made when appropriate. The relative infrequency of the Heat Danger checks is designed to indicate the cooling effect of the winds that normally blow off the Gearnat.

A "D" prefixes encounters that occur in the desert.

Following Varn's directions the PCs know that the survivor journeyed down the coast. The coastal regions of the desert are not as severe and unforgiving as the interior. When the PCs are ready to commence their journey have them indicate a marching order. Once this is done read them the following:

The tortured landscape of the desert gradually gives way to a less forgiving environment as you travel down the coast in search for the illusive survivor. Keeping the Gearnat to your right you are forced to climb into the hills as the beach runs into the sea, ending in a jumble of rocks – a legacy of some old landslide.

To your left the Bright Desert, dune heaped upon dune, stretches to the very horizon, Heat rises from those sun-baked sands in visible waves as the merciless sun beats down upon the landscape. A burning silence seems to envelop you, as even the sound of your footsteps on the parched ground seems muted. The heat is oppressive, getting into your lungs and making breathing difficult. You realize that unless properly equipped no one could survive here for very long.

Dr. Scorpion Ambush

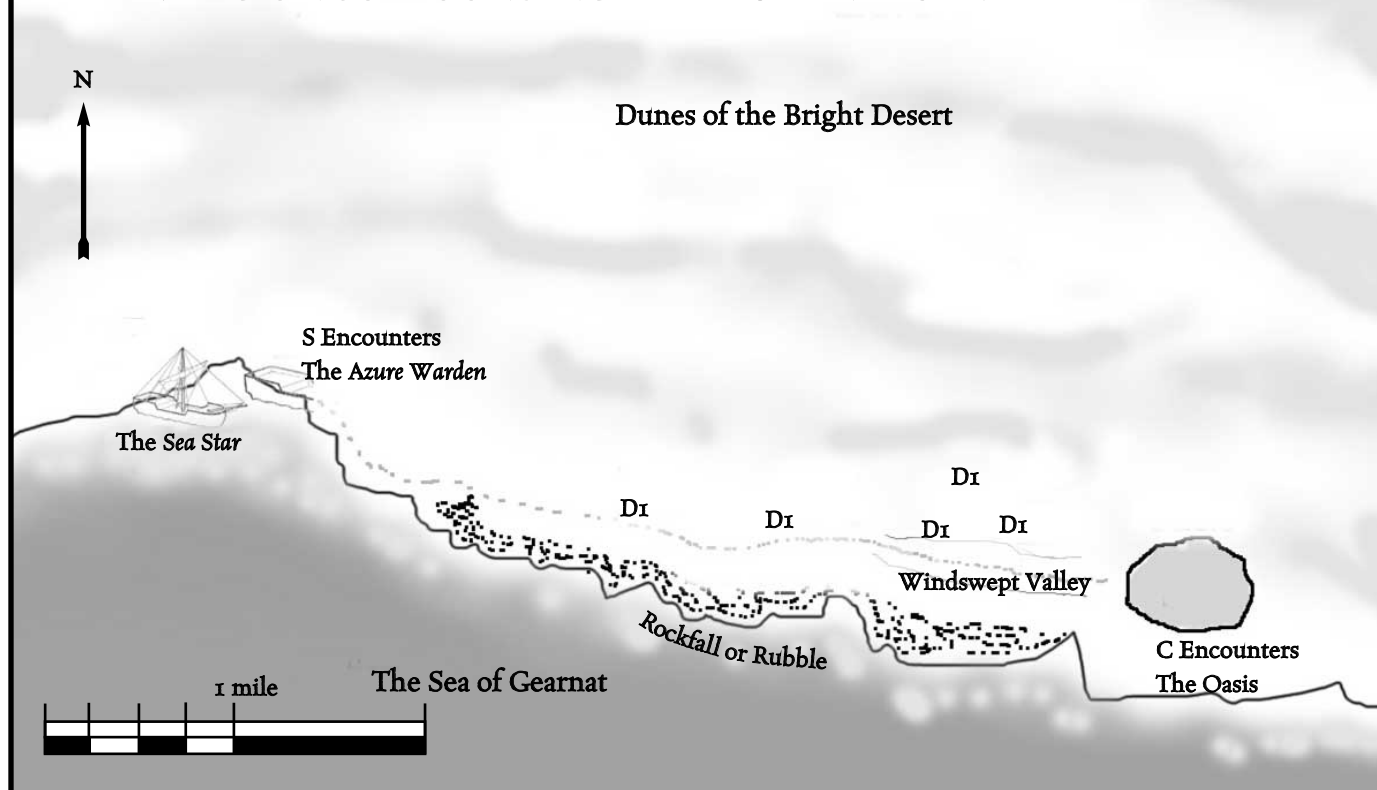
This encounter occurs as the PCs follow the coastline searching for the survivor of the Azure Warden.

Ahead of you a small brackish pool of water has carved a hollow out of the desert floor. The tracks of many small creatures can be seen crisscrossing the ground around the pool and the vegetation is slightly thicker in this area.

If the PCs investigate the pool, or look like they will pass it by, read the following:

With blinding speed a huge scorpion, easily 15 ft. in length, launches itself out of a dune where it has been lurking!

MAP 2: REGION SURROUNDING THE AZURE WARDEN



APL 2 (EL 2)

➤ **Monstrous Scorpion, Large** (1): hp 30; see Monster Manual page 209

APL 4 (EL 4)

➤ **Monstrous Scorpion, Large** (2): hp 30, 28; see Monster Manual page 209

APL6 (EL 6)

➤ **Monstrous Scorpion, Large** (4): hp 33, 30, 28, 27; see Monster Manual page 209

Tactics: Initially the scorpion(s) attack(s) whoever is nearest. Once however it has managed to grab a PC it concentrates all its attacks on that unfortunate individual before moving onto its next victim.

D2. Onwards

After the PCs have defeated the monstrous scorpion they must continue their journey down the coast. You should run the event so that they reach the oasis detailed in Encounter 4 as night is falling.

After your encounter with the giant scorpion your group continues onward down the coast. The sun is as hot as before and soon you all start feeling the its affects. Your journey takes you through a wilderness inhabited only by the occasional tree and stands of small, prickly bushes. As bad as the conditions are here you can scarcely imagine the conditions that must prevail in land.

Apart from the climate, the PCs encounter nothing of note here.

D3. Windswept Valley

For the last several hours the land around you has been slowly rising. You have been following an impromptu path that weaves through the worst of the landscape. The ground around is covered by a vast boulder field, which would undoubtedly slow your progress and offer many opportunities for broken bones.

Quite suddenly you come across the entrance to a narrow, steep-sided valley craved out of the rock by the stinging wind and sand.

To continue further PCs must stick to the path. If they persist in trying to traverse the field of boulders have them make Dexterity checks every 50 feet. Failure results in a fall and 1d2 points of damage from sprains and scrapes. Describe to them the agonizingly slow progress that they are making.

PCs may worry that this could be the site of further combat. Allow them to take any precautions that they deem necessary

before continuing. They encounter nothing here on their outward journey. Refer to Encounter 5 for details of the optional encounter that occurs here on their return.

The valley is extremely narrow, in places not even wide enough for three men to walk abreast. Sand seems to constantly fall from the walls of this natural passageway that reach in places 30 to 40 feet in height. The valley floor is however shielded from the merciless glare of the sun by the same high walls allowing you a brief respite.

The wind has swept the valley floor clear of sand and for the first time since you entered this accursed land you walk upon a floor that doesn't sift and give way beneath you.

Once they have negotiated the valley read the following.

You have lost track of time, knowing only that you have been traveling for most of the day. You soon discover night falls quickly in the desert and it is in the half-light of the fading day that you make out ahead of you a patch of more substantial darkness.

When they indicate that they wish to investigate this move on to Encounter 4.

ENCOUNTER 4: THE CAVE AND THE SURVIVOR

This encounter deals with the PCs locating the survivor and fighting off an attack by desert nomads loyal to the Archmage Rary and his Empire of the Bright Sands. All encounters here are prefixed by "C."

C1. Oasis!

This is the first encounter of Encounter 4 and is reached after Encounter 3 is completed. Play continues here from D3 The Windswept Valley

About 50 feet ahead of you the land dips precariously, forming a small valley. More vegetated than any area you have encountered previously the presence of a small copse of sickly, stunted trees indicates the likely proximity of water.

The small valley does indeed hold a pool of brackish water. The survivor found this place and discovered a small cavern complex. This oasis offered him the best chance for survival and so he made his home here. He has managed to survive here since then on a mixture of the remaining supplies and the occasional wild animal caught as it came to drink. In the last few days however he has finally depleted his supplies and has failed to catch any animals.

C2. The Cave

This encounter is reached from C1, above. When the PCs discover the cave complex the survivor is near death.

On one of the sides of this small valley can be seen the entrance to a cave. The passageway seems well used; footprints are easily spotted crisscrossing the entranceway. The opening seems to be about 10 feet wide but it is impossible to determine how far it may extend into the cliff.

When the PCs enter the cavern read them the following:

The passageway is quite low, being only 5 feet high, but the roof does appear to rise after the initial entrance. The sandy floor clearly shows the imprint of man-sized footprints. It seems clear that this cavern is, or was very recently, inhabited. After about 15 feet progress the passage way bends to the right obscuring your view of what lies beyond.

When the PCs traverse the corridor they are in a position to see the rest of the cave.

The small cavern ahead of you is shaped a bit like a horseshoe. Scattered about it on the sandy floor lie the remains of several empty sacks and a backpack. Other equipment also lies where it has been discarded. From the right hand portion of the "horseshoe" you detect the sounds of sniveling and moaning.

The remains of a few inexpertly butchered animals have been cast toward the rear of the cave while a burnt out fire pit has been dug a man's length directly ahead of you.

There is nothing else of interest here.

C3. The Survivor

This encounter is reached from C2.

Around the corner lies the survivor, weak from lack of food and water and driven into an almost catatonic state by his ordeal.

Once they get a good look at him read the following:

Huddled pitifully on atop a small pile of clothes laid over a man-size mound of sand lies a pitiful example of mankind. Clad in the remnants of a sailor's garb his skin is horribly burnt. His long unkempt hair tumbles over his shoulders partially obscuring his face, which sports a wispy beard. He does not seem to have noticed you. A blunted knife lies near his sleeping mound.

Next to him a light crossbow and a case with three bolts still within it can be seen. Beyond that a partially buried sea chest can just be made out.

Try as they might, the PCs will be unable to get anything out of

him. He is capable of little more than eating, drinking and staggering away from danger if it should present itself. Otherwise he just sits there staring at the wall mumbling and moaning to himself. He is able to walk however but a PC will have to assist him. Basically he is in a state very similar to the effects of a *feeblemind* spell.

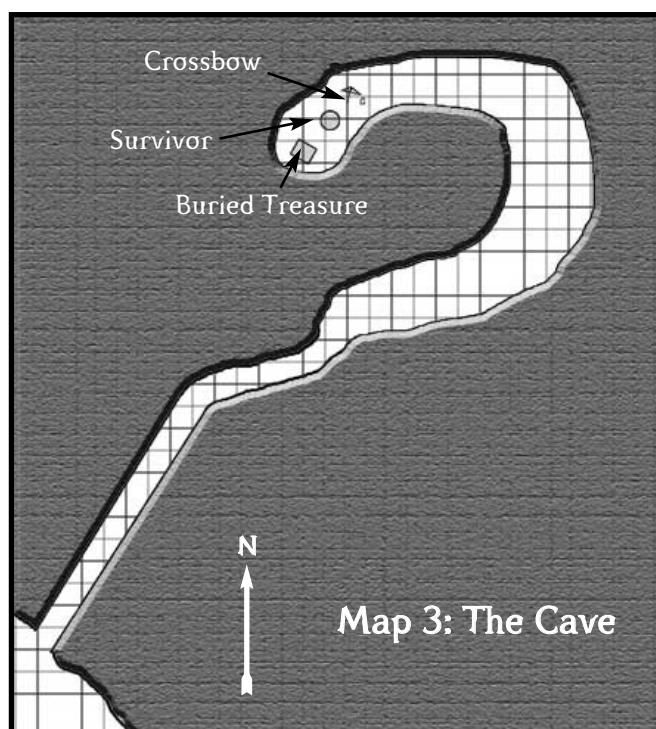
☛ **Survivor, human male:** current hp 1; under effects similar to that of a *feeblemind* spell.

If a PC attempts to open the chest her or she discovers it is locked. The chest's padlock is congested with sand and has to be cleared before an attempt to pick the lock (DC 23) can be made. Alternatively it can be smashed open (DC 18). The contents of the chest are described below.

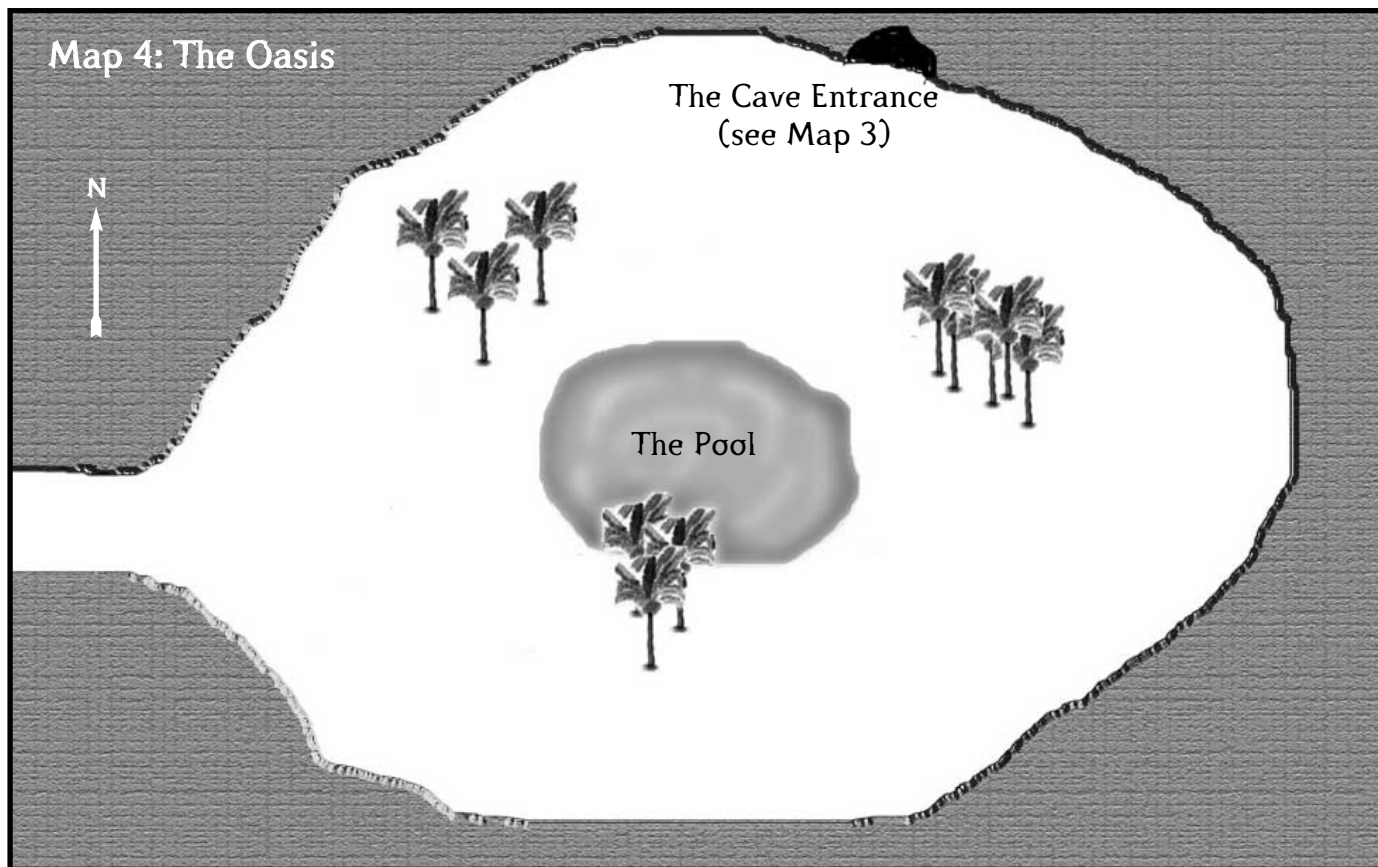
Treasure: The only treasure in this chamber apart from the crossbow is to be found buried in the locked sea chest. Not having the key, but realizing that he had found the ships pay chest he carried it with him. The chest contains 78 Onnwalish golden gulls and 130 silver geese. Mixed in with these coins are 3 small blue stones with white stripes (banded agates worth 10gp each), a single white stone with a blue hue (a moonstone worth 50gp), a *potion of reduce* and a *potion of swimming*.

C4. The Siege

This encounter follows directly on from the cave and the survivor. Allow the PCs to investigate the cave fully. At an appropri-



Map 4: The Oasis



ate juncture run this encounter. In any event this encounter must be run before any PCs leave the cave.

A patrol of hillmen allied with the Empire of the Bright Lands has been following the tracks of the PCs. As the PCs enter the cave they manage to catch up with the party.

Since the PCs entered the cave the nomads have approached and billeting their horses near the pool and searched the area for the PCs, who they view as invaders. Coming to the conclusion that the PCs must be spending the night in the cave Alui sends one of his men to demand their surrender.

The crunch of sand underfoot alerts you to the presence of someone or something else in the tunnel. From around the corner steps a human of obvious Flan descent. Clad in studded leather armor and carrying a belted scimitar at his hip his body language is that of a swaggering warrior. He is outfitted with an incredible array of bone and brass jewelry. Brass armbands with representations of sand dunes carved into them clasp his arms while his jet-black hair is braided around many brightly colored beads. His strong voice seems to fill the small cave. In faltering common he barks, "you surrender now, or we kill you!"

With that he turns and stalks out of the cave.

This is a very free-flowing encounter where the actions of the NPCs are dictated by the PCs' tactics. For assistance in judging

their actions refer to the tactics section below.

APL 2 (EL 6)

➤ **Hillman warriors, male human War2** (4): hp 16, 15, 13, 12, 10; see Appendix A.

➤ **Alui, male human Adp3**: hp 19; see Appendix A.

➤ **Horses, light** (5): hp 20, 19, 17, 16 (x2); see *Monster Manual* page 197.

APL 4 (EL 8)

➤ **Hillman warriors, male human War2** (7): hp 16, 15 (x2), 13, 12 (x2), 10; see Appendix A.

➤ **Holy man, male human Adp2** (1): hp 8; see Appendix A.

➤ **Alui, male human Adp3**: hp 19; see Appendix A.

➤ **Horses, light** (8): hp 20, 19, 17, 16 (x4); see *Monster Manual* page 197.

APL 6 (EL 10)

➤ **Hillman champions, male human War3** (9): hp 21, 19 (x2), 16 (x3), 15 (x2), 13; see Appendix A.

➤ **Holy man, male human Adp2** (2): hp 10, 8; see Appendix A.

➤ **Alui, male human Adp3**: hp 19; see Appendix A.

➤ **Horses, light** (9): hp 20, 19 (x2), 17, 16 (x4); see *Monster Manual* page 197.

Tactics: Once his ultimatum has been delivered Alui is content to await the PCs' response. He knows that eventually the PCs have to come out as he controls the only nearby water supply. His men are well supplied, have ready access to water and are used to living in such conditions. During the night the nomads periodically throw burning branches into the cave entrance so that they can observe the area. Alui also hopes that this tactic keeps the PCs off guard and denies any spellcasters among them the chance to relearn their spells.

If the PCs charge immediately, they will have a hard fight as the Alui and his hillmen will cut them down on horseback. They are cunning fighters who know the danger of spells, and typically fight in small groups using hit-and-run tactics whenever possible.

Most of his men keep to the immediate area of the pool, using the overhanging vegetation as shade and cover against the PCs attacks. Alui deploys them in a shallow semicircle in front of the cave entrance so that they can all fire at anyone leaving the cave. One archers are stationed directly above the cave entrance and expressly ordered to fire at anyone attempting to cast spells (readied action to disrupt the spell). If the PCs are attacking in force or attempting a breakout Alui uses his amulet to *bless* his men, catching as many as possible in the area of effect.

Alui is fanatically loyal to the Empire of the Bright Desert and uses every means at his disposal to capture the PCs. He does not, however, call for reinforcements, as he desires the glory of capturing the PCs for himself.

One nomad has been detailed to stay with the horses. If the combat goes badly for his brethren he slips away with the mounts. If he is slain while escaping the horses gallop off.

The nomads of the Bright desert are quarrelsome, violent, and surly. Those encountered in this adventure are fanatically loyal to Rary and his Empire of the Bright Lands. Power is the only thing that they hold in high esteem and they hold foreigners in disdain. They possess a strongly honor-driven warrior culture that is very patriarchal in nature. Women are considered second class to men and strangers are fit only for to be warred upon.

They are of Flan descent and typically are encountered upon their hardy desert ponies. They tend to wear light robes, or at best

leather armor. They wear simply jewelry for ornamentation made of bone, brass, leather and colored beads. They tend to be armed with scimitars, lances and composite short bows.

Treasure: The only really valuable items to be found here are in the possession of Alui. He owns a *necklace of prayers beads (blessing)* and a suit of masterwork leather armor. The weapons of his men can also be salvaged. All the nomads wear an incredible variety of poorly made bone and brass jewelry, which are essentially worthless.

Development: Once the PCs have defeated the desert nomads proceed to Encounter 5.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE RETURN JOURNEY

This chapter details the trek that the PCs will have to undergo to return to *The Sea Star*.

Describe in general terms their return journey until they reach the Windswept Valley. Then, refer to the text below.

D4. Windswept Valley

This is the first obstacle of note that the PCs will encounter on their way back to their ship.

Once again you find yourselves passing through the narrow wind-blasted valley that takes you back to your ship and escape. This rift in the sun-scorched landscape grants you a much-needed respite from the merciless sun that hurls Pelor's bounty down upon you with such fury. Sand sifts and falls from high upon the cliffs. The towering walls of the valley coupled with the narrowness of the passage give even the hardiest of you a momentary sensation of claustrophobia.

D5. Attack of the Stinger!

This encounter follows directly on from D4 and occurs in the Windswept Valley.

A stinger, a strange fusion of, in this case, woman and scorpion has been practicing her people's strange mystic grid divination (see Appendix A) for the last week. This stinger, Jeejuz'at, was watching the travels on her mystic grid when the PCs passed over her last, and now, as the PCs pass again, its weird auguries will command her to attack. From a network of caverns under the valley, she springs up from the underground using her *bolt-hole magic*.

With a flash of red light, like that of a magical flame, a strange enemy is

among you. A woman, red-skinned and possessing a strange, stunning beauty like that you have never seen before, but whose lower body twists into that of a dangerous scorpion snarls at you, snaps back her spiked chain and lunges.

Jeejuz'at gives no quarter, and no explanation other than the phrase,

"Baj, Mur-dauk Asma-thak,"

Which she repeats over and over, except when (in APL 4 and 6 encounters) she is casting spells. If the PCs are able to use a comprehend language or some other similar ability to translate what she is saying (she is speaking in the Stinger language) it means, "Rider, these are your charges."

APL 2 (EL 4)

🐉 **Jeejuz'at, female stinger:** hp 30, see Appendix A.

APL 4 (EL 6)

🐉 **Jeejuz'at, female stinger Sor3:** hp 45; see Appendix A.

APL 6 (EL 8)

🐉 **Jeejuz'at, female stinger Sor 5:** hp 53; see Appendix A.

Tactics: APL 2 encounters features Jeejuz'at boltholing close enough to use her spiked chain on PCs, which she does from a distance while attacking those who come too close with her tail.

APL 4 and higher is marked by the fact that Jeejuz'at casts *mage armor* on herself and *magic weapon* on the spiked chain before the attack and mixes spells with attacks to their best advantage.

Treasure: Jeejuz'at wears the *tilism of the Rider*, and carries two arcane scrolls of *magic missile* (1st-level caster)

D6. The Return

After dealing with or bypassing Jeejuz'at the PCs will face no more obstacles during their return to the ship. Describe in general the features of their return journey. When the PCs come into view of their ship read the following.

As the light begins to die for the second time since you landed in this accursed land a beautiful sight greets you as you crest a familiar range of hills. Below you, floating in the calm waters of the cove is your means of escape. A shout goes up from a nearby mercenaries' position, which is taken up by the other defenders of the hills. By the time you descend the sand-choked hills the whole ship's company is aware of your return. A

longboat is put in the water and makes slow but steady progress to the beach. As it comes into the beach you see is it none other than Captain Keriann comes to greet you!

"You were successful I see! By Osprey's Brilliant Light I am glad you have returned" he shouts as he strides toward you. He continues: "And not a moment too soon, now we only await the morning tide. Last night we were attacked by a large group of nomads, my boys beat them back, but I'm sure they'll return. Fanatics I tell you, shouting about their empire as they threw themselves on my men's blades. Anyway, come let us get back to the boat where you can tell me outrageous lies about your exploits."

While the PCs were gone the ghost of Varn Amandis never once showed himself to the crew or Captain Keriann, but he comes to the PCs just before the repaired Sea Star leaves.

Thank you for finding my last crewman, now you must return him and my bones to our native Onnwal. Only in our homeland will his mind return, and when my bones rest in its soil my soul will be free to travel to its rightful place.

Captain Keiriann can arrange for the return of both the bones and the survivor at a modest fee of 50 gp. Instead each of the PCs can spend 2 Time Units each to ensure both get back to Onnwal, and in doing so are granted the Favor of Varn Amandis. If the PCs refuse to make sure that either the bones or the survivor make it back to Onnwal, Varn curses the PCs (as the bestow curse spell) give each PC the Curse of Varn Amandis.

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 1

Defeat tiny scorpions 25xp

Encounter 3

Defeat giant scorpion(s) 100xp

Encounter 4

Defeat Alui and the hillmen 175xp

Encounter 5

Defeat the Stinger 100xp

Return the survivor to the Sea Star 50 xp

Total experience for objectives 450xp

Discretionary roleplaying bonus 0-50xp

Total possible experience 500 xp

TREASURE SUMMARY

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g. armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items that are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms),

and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things that it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter 4

- 3 banded agates (10 gp each).
- 1 moonstone (50 gp).
- *Potion of reduce* (250 gp; tiny; 1; yes; common; *):
- *Potion of swimming* (170 gp; tiny; 1; yes; common; *)
- 78 Onnwalish golden gulls and 130 silver geese
- *Necklace of prayer beads (bead of blessing)* (500 gp; tiny; 1 a day; yes; common; *).
- Masterwork leather armor (170 gp; medium; n/a; yes; common 15 lb.): This leather armor is incredibly supple and is designed to be worn in the desert.

Encounter 5

- 2 Arcane scrolls of *magic missile* (25 gp each; tiny; 1; yes; common; *): This is a normal scroll of magic missile (1st-level caster), except for the fact that the writer of the scroll in an annotation toward the bottom of the incantation section of the spell claims to be one Azam'ut of the Muddled Tongue, apprentice of the Archmage Rary.
- *Tilism of the Rider* (360 gp; tiny; n/a; yes; uncommon; ½ lb): This beaten brass amulet strung on thin leather strip. Its face depicts a stylized (in the Paynim style) robed man with a long flowing hair and beard riding a raging stallion. In one hand the man carries a rod, the other hand is a gauntleted fist grasping a crescent moon. This magical amulet will, when the wearer utters the name "Rary," bestow its wearer with a *cure light wounds* spell (as if cast by a 1st-level cleric) once per day.

· Favor of Varn Amandis (n/a; n/a; 1; no; uncommon; *): As thanks for arranging that his remains were buried in his native land of Onnwal, and that the one survivor of the ill-fated *Azure Warden* was also returned to that land, its captain, Varn Amandis, will, at a time of your choosing, reach from beyond the grave and do everything within his power to help you succeed in a specific task. This favor functions exactly like a *true strike* spell, or it will grant a +20 insight bonus on any skill or ability check, or a +10 to AC or to any one kind of save (Fortitude, Reflex or Will) for one round. Activating this favor is a free action that must be declared in concert with a standard, partial, move-equivalent, or full-round action. Once this favor is granted, void or destroy this certificate.

· Curse of Varn Amandis (n/a; n/a; 1; no; uncommon; *): For refusing the last wishes of Captain Varn Amandis of the *Azure Warden* you are cursed (as if a *bestow curse* spell was cast upon you). This curse bestows a -6 effective decrease to your Wisdom score (minimum of 1). This curse cannot be dispelled, but can be removed with a *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish* spell.

APPENDIX A

➤ **Varn Amandis, human male ghost War2:** CR 3; Medium-size undead (incorporeal); HD 2d12 hp 24; Init +1; Spd Fly 30ft. (perfect); AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 11); Atks +3 melee (1d4 [1d4+2 vs. ethereal], incorporeal touch corruption); SA Manifestation, corrupting touch, frightful moan; SQ Undead, incorporeal, +4 turn resistance, rejuvenation; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con -, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: +0 Appraise, +1 Balance, +0 Bluff, +2 Climb, +0 Concentration, +4 Craft (carpenter), +0 Diplomacy, +0 Disguise, +1 Escape Artist, +0 Forgery, +0 Gather Information, +0 Handle Animal, +0 Heal, +1 Hide, +0 Intimidate, +2 Jump, +0 Listen, +1 Move Silently, +0 Perform, +4 Profession (sailor)+1 Ride, +0 Scry, +0 Search, +0 Sense Motive, +1 Spot, +6 Swim, +0 Use Rope, +0 Wilderness Lore; Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Skill Focus (Profession [carpenter]).

Manifestation (Su): When manifested the ghost is visible but incorporeal. Corrupting Touch — Its attacks ignore natural armor, armor and shields although deflection bonuses and force effects such as *mage armor* are effective.

Frightful Moan (Su): A standard action. All living creatures within a 30 ft. radius must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC11) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. Those saving are immune to this effect for one day. It is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect.

Rejuvenation (Su): A destroyed ghost is able to restore itself in 2d4 days if it makes a successful level check 1d20+2 (DC16).

Undead: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromantic effects. They ignore mind-influencing effects. Undead are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain or energy drain. They are immune to anything requiring a Fortitude saving throw (unless it affects objects).

Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. Immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magical weapons he has a 50% chance of ignoring any damage from a corporeal source.

Possessions: Incorporeal sailors garb.

➤ **Hillman warriors, male human War2:** CR 1; Medium-Sized Humanoid (human); HD 2d8+2; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (touch 10, flatfooted 14); Atks +2 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar), or +2 (1d6+1/x3, light lance), or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, composite shortbow); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Handle Animal +1, Jump +2, Listen +2, Ride +5, Spot +3, Swim +1, Wilderness Lore +4; Alertness, Endurance.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, scimitar, light lance, composite shortbow, 20 arrows in a quiver.

➤ **Hillman champion, male human War3:** CR 2; Medium-Sized Humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (touch 10, flatfooted 14); Atks +4 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar), or +2 (1d6+1/x3, light lance), or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, composite shortbow); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Handle Animal +1, Jump +2, Listen +2, Ride +5, Spot +3, Swim +1, Wilderness Lore +4; Alertness, Endurance.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, scimitar, light lance, composite shortbow, 20 arrows in a quiver.

➤ **Alui, male human Adp3:** CR 2; Medium-sized Humanoid (human); HD 3d6+3; hp 19; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 10, flatfooted 13); Atks +1 melee (1d8/x3, shortspear), or +1 ranged (1d4, dart); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +1, Handle Animal +5, Heal +3, Intimidate +1, Listen +2, Ride +3, Scry +2, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +5, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +7; Combat Casting, Endurance.

Spells prepared: (3/3; base DC = 12 + spell level); o—create water, ghost sound, light; 1st—burning hands (x2), cure light wounds.

Possessions: Shortspear, 5 darts, masterwork leather armor, necklace of prayer beads (blessing).

➤ **Holy men, male human Adp2:** CR 2; Medium-sized Humanoid (human); HD 2d6+2; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 10, flatfooted 13); Atks +1 melee (1d8/x3, shortspear), or +1 ranged (1d4, dart); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +1, Handle Animal +5, Heal +3, Intimidate +1, Listen +2, Ride +3, Scry +2, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +5, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +7; Combat Casting, Endurance.

Spells prepared: (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level); o—create water, ghost sound, light; 1st—burning hands, cure light wounds.

Possessions: Shortspear, 5 darts, leather armor.

➤ **Jeejuz'at, female stinger:** CR 4; Large monstrous humanoid; HD4d8+8; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 13); Atk +6 melee (1d6+3 + poison, stinger), and +1 melee (1d6+1, 2 claws), or +6 melee (2d6+3, Huge spiked chain), and +1 melee (1d6+3 + poison, stinger); SA Poison, SQ Tremor sense, *bolthole magic*; Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with the spiked chain); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 16; Dex 14, Con 14,

Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Search +4, Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +4; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Initiative.

Poison (Ex): Stinger, Fortitude save (DC 14); initial and secondary damage 1d6 of temporary Strength damage.

Tremorsense (Ex): Stingers can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Bolthole Magic (Sp): A stinger can move 20 ft. straight up or straight down, so long that it pass through at least a foot of earth during its movement. For every 5 feet (or fraction thereof) of earth the stinger moves through, it suffers 1d3 points of damage. If a stinger's planned movement would place it inside a solid object, it rains in place but suffers the damage as if it had move through the intervening earth. Stingers used their *bolthole magic* to move between previously prepared tunnels and the surface above, or sequence of tunnels, stacking on beneath the other. Use of this ability produces a flash of red light and a smell like that of burning skin.

Feats: Stingers have Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.

Possessions: Huge spiked chain, 2 arcane scrolls of *magic missile*; *tilism of the Rider*.

➤ **Jeejuz'at, female stinger Sor3:** CR 6; Large monstrous humanoid; HD4d8+3d4+17; hp 45; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 13) or, with *mage armor*, 19 (touch 11, flat-footed 17); Atk +7 melee (1d6+3 + poison, stinger), and +2 melee (1d6+1, 2 claws), or +7 melee (2d6+3, Huge spiked chain), and +2 melee (1d6+3 + poison, stinger); SA Poison, SQ Tremor sense, *bolthole magic*; Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with the spiked chain); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 16; Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8; Hide +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Search +4, Spellcraft +6; Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +4; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Initiative, Great Fortitude, Toughness.

Poison (Ex): Stinger, Fortitude save (DC 14); initial and secondary damage 1d6 of temporary Strength damage.

Tremorsense (Ex): Stingers can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Bolthole Magic (Sp): A stinger can move 20 ft. straight up or straight down, so long that it pass through at least a foot of earth during its movement. For every 5 feet (or fraction thereof) of earth the stinger moves through, it suffers 1d3 points of damage. If a stinger's planned movement would place it inside a solid object, it rains in place but suffers the damage as if it had move through the intervening earth. Stingers used their *bolthole magic*

to move between previously prepared tunnels and the surface above, or sequence of tunnels, stacking on beneath the other. Use of this ability produces a flash of red light and a smell like that of burning skin.

Feats: Stingers have Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.

Spells Known (6/6; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, dancing lights, flare, mage hand, read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, cause fear, magic weapon*.

Possessions: Huge spiked chain, two arcane scrolls of *magic missile*; *tilism of the Rider*.

➤ **Jeejuz'at, female stinger Sor5:** CR 8; Large monstrous humanoid; HD4d8+5d4+18; hp 53; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 13) or, with *mage armor*, 19 (touch 11, flat-footed 17); Atk +8 melee (1d6+3 + poison, stinger), and +3 melee (1d6+1, 2 claws), or +8 melee (2d6+3, Huge spiked chain), and +3 melee (1d6+3 + poison, stinger); SA Poison, SQ Tremor sense, *bolthole magic*; Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with the spiked chain); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 16; Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10; Hide +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Search +4, Spellcraft +8; Spot +4, Wilderness Lore +4; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Initiative, Great Fortitude, Toughness.

Poison (Ex): Stinger, Fortitude save (DC 14); initial and secondary damage 1d6 of temporary Strength damage.

Tremorsense (Ex): Stingers can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Bolthole Magic (Sp): A stinger can move 20 ft. straight up or straight down, so long that it pass through at least a foot of earth during its movement. For every 5 feet (or fraction thereof) of earth the stinger moves through, it suffers 1d3 points of damage. If a stinger's planned movement would place it inside a solid object, it rains in place but suffers the damage as if it had move through the intervening earth. Stingers used their *bolthole magic* to move between previously prepared tunnels and the surface above, or sequence of tunnels, stacking on beneath the other. Use of this ability produces a flash of red light and a smell like that of burning skin.

Feats: Stingers have Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.

Spells Known (6/7/5; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, dancing lights, flare, mage hand, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*cause fear, mage armor, magic weapon, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*summon swarm, web*.

Possessions: Huge spiked chain, two arcane scrolls of *magic missile*; *tilism of the Rider*.

STINGERS

Stingers mix esoteric religious mysticism with murderous tendencies and the stinger of a giant scorpion.

Stingers look like a bizarre variant of centaur. They're about the same size as centaurs, but they have the lower bodies of scorpions. Their human half is red-skinned, hairless, and almost inhumanly handsome. Their faces are preternaturally calm.

Stingers possess an extremely sophisticated culture, full of strange philosophies that filter deviant human notions through multifaceted insect eyes. Two of the stingers' strangest practices bear mentioning. The first is referred to on Oerth as "stinger racing." Groups of two to twenty stingers sometimes tear out of their nests, stopping for nothing unless they are attacked and forced to defend themselves, running as far and fast as they can run...until they die. They just drop dead, one by one. And no one knows why.

The second oddity, the stingers' peculiar method of divination, is only slightly better understood by surface dwellers. Stingers live under the surface of the earth. Using their tremorsense, and their sense of the terrain above, they map out mystical grids. Then they spread out a lie in wait, sometimes for days, until enough creatures have moved across the grid to connect its elements in a meaningful pattern. No one understands how stingers conceive of their grids or what information they are hoping to discover—all that is known is that at certain times, stingers erupt unto the surface, armed for war and convinced by just-completed divinations that they are taking the proper step. On other occasions, stingers adopt entirely random attitudes toward strangers, even strangers they have met before, convinced by the proper choice.

Combat

Stingers' tremorsense, *bolthole magic* ability, and excellent initiative frequently enable them to get in the first strike in any combat encounter. They hope to weaken their enemies with their poison sting.

Source: *Monstrous Compendium: Monsters of Faerun*: page 80-81.

ENLISTING THE ICONIC

☛ **Tordek, male dwarf Ftr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (dwarf); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 15 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atks +4 melee (1d10+2/x3, dwarven waraxe), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Dwarven traits; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +0, Jump +0; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, scale mail, large wooden shield, dwarven waraxe, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack and flint and steel.

☛ **Miale, female elf Wizr:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 1d4+3; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atks +0 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or –6 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) and –10 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Elven traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Listen +3, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +3; Scribe Scroll (virtual), Toughness.

Spells Prepared (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—daze, ray of frost, read magic; 1st—mage armor, sleep.

Spellbook: 0—all of them; 1st—charm person, mage armor, magic missile, sleep, summon monster I.

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, quarterstaff, shortbow, quiver of 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 10 candles, map case, 3 pages parchment, ink and pen, spell pouch, spellbook.

☛ **Lidda, female halfling Rogr:** CR 1; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 14, flat-footed 13); Atks +1 melee (1d6/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow), or +1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Halfling traits; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +1, Hide +11, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +7, Search +6, Spot +4, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +1; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Explorer's outfit, leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, dagger, Backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, thieves' tools hooded lantern, 3 pints of lantern oil.

☛ **Jozan, male human Clr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace), or –1 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Turn Undead 4/day 2d6+2; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref –1; Will +4; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Heal +6, Listen +4, Knowledge (religion) +0, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (3/2+1; base DC 12 + spell level); 0—detect poison, guidance, read magic; 1st—bless, protection from evil*, shield of faith.

* Domain spell; Deity: Pelor; Domains: Good (good spells cast at +1 caster level) and Healing (healing spells cast at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Cleric's vestments, scale mail, large wooden shield, heavy mace, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, backpack with waterskin, 1 day of trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, wooden holy symbol (sun disk of Pelor), 3 torches.