

FIRST EDITION FANTASY

MODULE #2

SMUGGLER'S BANE



**Written by Andrew Kenrick, Matt Drake,
and Brett M. Bernstein**

Ronin Arts steps back in time to an age of excessive violence, deep dungeons, wandering monsters, and late-night gaming excitement! **SMUGGLER'S BANE**, the latest release in Ronin Art's **FIRST EDITION FANTASY** series, features a journey through sea-side caverns and an encounter with an evil race of fish-like monsters. For 4-6 characters levels 5-7. For use with **OSRIC™** or any other first edition-style game system.

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ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

In **Smuggler's Bane**, the heroes are hired by the authorities of a small fishing village, known as Cooper's Point, to root out a band of smugglers operating out of a nearby cave complex and circumventing the port's import and export taxes. The smugglers have successfully eluded all attempts by the authorities to bring them to justice, until now. Acting on information gleaned from an insider, the heroes journey to the gang's hideout in a cave complex where they are to bring them to justice. The adventure is not quite that simple, however, for on the night before the heroes attack the complex, another foe beats them to it. Unbeknownst to the heroes or the smugglers, a group of evil, fish-like creatures, called phaciore, has a secret temple deep in the caves. The phaciore attack the smugglers in the dead of night, dragging them off to be sacrificed to their primeval god—a giant crab. The heroes arrive to find the caves deserted, with signs of a struggle and a trail leading them to the phaciore secret temple just in time for a smuggler sacrifice.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Phaciore society is cruel and harsh. Beneath the waves, they are the tyrants and the slavers. Their gods embody aspects of their psyche, and are themselves spiteful and wicked. One of the most evil and twisted of these deities is the crab-god Axiarcha, representing the phaciore's love for causing pain. Axiarcha demands sacrifice and self-mutilation, alternately rewarding and punishing his followers. Although he was once a powerful god, few phaciore pay Axiarcha service any longer and his priests are shunned, banished to temple complexes far from the phaciore cities.

The phaciore settlement of Ghoolup lies beneath the sea near the town of Cooper's Point, though the two have rarely had any contact. Ghoolup is a dying city, too far from the central phaciore cities to be prosperous, established as a frontier venture some 150 years ago. In recent years, famine has struck the city and phaciore have been moving away in droves, leaving behind only the poor and the dying, along with a small garrison commanded by the city's de facto ruler. Almost all of the phaciore priests have left Ghoolup in favor of the more prosperous congregations of the central cities. Desperate, the city's faithful have embraced the only remaining religion—that of Axiarcha, whose temple lies in a cave complex on the shore.

The high priest of Axiarcha, a malevolent and insane phaciore by the name of Gharaka, has been waiting for this moment all his life. He has long plotted a religious revolution, intending to topple the current dominant

religions and return his own god to glory. With Ghoolup failing, Gharaka has been whipping up religious fervor and has successfully converted most of the city to Axiarcha's worship, leading them in acts of sadism and masochism. Their devotion and prayer has gone unheeded, however, and Gharaka has taken to kidnapping and sacrificing worshippers to his god, whom he believes has taken the form of a giant crab kept within the temple. Still his sacrifices have gone unheard, for his victims were wretched and diseased. Fearful that his people will lose faith and that his revolution will falter before it has started, Gharaka has decided to raid Cooper's Point and sacrifice its populace, a move which is sure to bring him favor.

Before he can carry out his raid, Gharaka learns of the smugglers using the caves adjoining the temple complex. Gharaka and his priests quickly raid the caves, capturing the smugglers in the dead of night. Now he prepares to sacrifice them to Axiarcha, hopeful that they will be gratefully received and that he will be well rewarded. He has not bargained on the fact that someone else might want them, or indeed that they would be missed.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout the adventure, you will see text in a shaded box. This text is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased to the players, so that they know what their heroes can see, hear, and smell.

There are a number of ways to begin **Smuggler's Bane**, largely depending on the heroes and their relationship with the town of Cooper's Point. If the heroes are known to the town's folk, Nicholas Warren, the de-facto mayor, can approach them with a request to meet with the insider and bring the smugglers to justice. Newly arrived heroes looking for adventure could see a sign offering a reward for the capture of the smugglers, or overhear the insider talking in the inn about the smugglers. If the game referee wishes to skip the town entirely, the heroes could, while journeying along the coast, come across the cave complex and make camp there for the night. Perhaps they are forced into it for shelter during a fierce storm.

Cooper's Point

Cooper's Point is a quiet settlement eking out a living from fishing and trade. The settlement has a population of sixty-three, most of whom make their living fishing the reef just off the coast or farming the nearby green lands. Nicholas Warren, the proprietor of Cooper's Point Inn, is the closest thing the town has to a leader, and he has organized the villagers to come up with the money to hire a band of adventurers.

While Cooper's Point Inn is a quiet and peaceful tavern, the Port O'Call is a much more lively establishment, catering to passing sailors and travelers looking for loud music and attractive barmaids. It is here that sailors come to unwind after a long spell at sea, and is the only place where travelers and traders can stay in the town. A large board mounted between the two taverns is used to post messages and notices for those who can read them.

SCENE ONE (ENCOUNTERS AT PORT O'CALL)

How the heroes are embroiled in this adventure depends very much on their situation. Heroes in Cooper's Point will inevitably come to the Port O'Call, whether they use it as their base of operations or are just passing through. Here, a few different approaches can land them on the path to adventure.

The first of these assumes that they are newcomers and are actively seeking adventure. While drinking in the bar they overhear the conversation from an adjacent table where a very drunk sailor is proclaiming that he knows the location of the secret lair of the smugglers. For a price he will take people to it—and the fabulous riches that the smugglers keep there. This man is one of the smugglers, a sailor named Reni, and interactions with him are detailed below.

The second approach assumes that the villagers know the heroes as adventurers, and may have employed them in the past. Godwin Warren, Nicholas' son, approaches the heroes requesting that they come with him to speak with his father. Nicholas takes a break from running his inn to speak with the heroes. He explains about the smugglers who have been eluding capture and sometimes raiding the coast for some time, and the possible lead which one of his men has come across—one of the smugglers is in town and is willing to exchange the location of their lair for amnesty and the reward. Nicholas explains that the town is too small to muster a group to oppose the smugglers. If the heroes bring the smugglers to justice, there will be a reward in it, plus a share of the smugglers' booty. By all reckoning, there could be quite a bit of treasure there. If they accept, Nicholas will direct them to the Port O'Call to meet Reni, the turncoat. If they decline, Nicholas will bid them good day and say that he will try to gather a posse later in the week. His men never return and the phaciore's ritual is unhindered. Future expeditions to the lair will find it flooded and collapsed.

Reni is a gruff-looking man in his late twenties, tired of a life on the run and seeking to take in the better things in

life, which in his opinion entails cheap ale and women of dubious virtue, both in excessive quantities. He reckons that the authorities will catch the smugglers eventually, and that if he does not turn them in then someone else will. When the heroes speak with him, he is very drunk, boasting loudly about his plans. It will take a little coercion to quiet him down and speak with him, but the promise of alcohol or gold will expedite negotiations. Before he reveals the location of the smugglers' hideout, Reni wants a signed and sealed confirmation of the amnesty and the promise of his reward. Reni cannot read however, and any official looking document will persuade him. If his demands are met, Reni will reveal that the hideout is in a group of caves about half a day's walk to the south. They can't be seen from the sea very easily, but are easily spotted by walking along the cliff top. Reni would never accompany the heroes on their mission.

SCENE TWO (A CLIFF TOP WALK)

The journey along the cliff tops to the smugglers' hideout takes about half a day on foot, or a few hours if traveling by horse. Close to the smugglers' hideout, the cliffs dip down into sheltered coves and back up again.

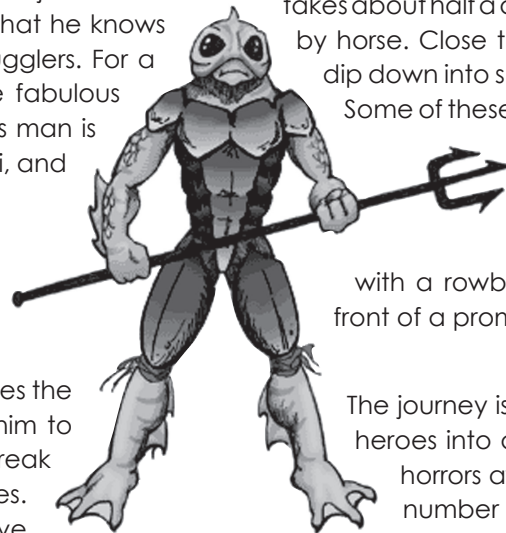
Some of these coves have caves leading off from them. Investigating these small caves leads only to a dead end. However, a little further on, the heroes come across a sandy cove with a rowboat dragged up onto the sand in front of a promising cave entrance.

The journey is intentionally uneventful, lulling the heroes into a false sense of security before the horrors awaiting them within the caves. Any number of encounters can be introduced along the way, however, from wandering monsters to other travelers. The route is along a barely traveled trail but could easily be made into a well traveled road, increasing the likelihood of encounters along the way.

SCENE THREE (INTO THE DEPTHS)

1. Cave Entrance

The cove can only be approached from three directions, and two of those are difficult at best. The first way is from the cliff top, and involves a scramble down the side of the slope. Each hero must successfully climb down the side of the cliff (25% chance of success plus the character's Dexterity score, though thieves may use their Climb Walls percentage) to avoid slipping or falling all the way down. Heroes who fail this roll will suffer normal falling damage from the tumble over the rocks to the sand below.



The second approach is along the base of the cliffs, which is possible when the tide is out. The sharp rocks at the base of the cliff faces are not the easiest of surfaces on which to walk, requiring at least one successful athletics roll to cross. Anyone falling receives normal falling damage. Even when the tide is out, the sea is pretty close to the cliff's base and heroes face the added danger of falling into the water, where tidal swells make swimming more difficult than expected (there is a percentage chance of drowning equal to 50% - the character's Dexterity score).

The third and easiest way by which to approach the cove is by boat. However, the smugglers chose the cove largely for its seclusion, and for this reason it has gone undetected by the coastal authorities for so long. Acting with the knowledge from the insider, there is a 75% chance of finding the cove. If the heroes did not gain this knowledge, a fair deal more searching will be required.

The cave entrance is five-feet (5 ft) high, forcing taller heroes to duck.

2. Loading Area

This section is six-feet tall, ten-feet wide and fifteen-feet long (6 x 10 x 15 ft). Heroes searching under the boat will find a lantern and a flask containing one pint of oil. Anyone knowledgeable in sailing or building boats can discern that the boat was holed by a sharp rock.

This area of the caves is used for loading and unloading boats, which are pulled in out of the water. It also doubles as a storage area for boats either when under repair or during particularly nasty weather. The scrape marks on the floor of the tunnel are from heavy crates dragged to and from the Storeroom (7).

3. T-Junction

This section is eight-feet tall, twenty-feet wide and fifteen-feet deep (8 x 20 x 15 ft) at its longest point. Heroes successfully searching the boulders will find a low tunnel entrance four-feet (4 ft) tall leading off into the Concealed Passage (8). They will also find a single playing card dropped among the rocks. The playing card is the beginning of a trail left by one of the smugglers as he was dragged off by the phaciores. The trail continues as far as the Hall of Statues (10), deep inside the phaciores' complex.

This passageway is simply a connecting corridor between the Loading Area (2), the Guardroom (6) and the Sleeping Quarters (4). Before the phaciores attacked, the boulders were stacked over the cave entrance, and the smugglers didn't realize that the caves went further back. When the phaciores attacked, they blew the boulders outward with a blast of magical-like force.

4. Sleeping Quarters

This room is thirty-feet wide and twenty-five-feet deep (30 x 25 ft). The entrance is ten-feet wide and six-feet high (10 x 6 ft). The bedrolls are numbered *i* through *viii* from top left to bottom right. Anyone searching the bedrolls will find a journal in number *ii* (top row, second from left), a dagger stained with some sort of green ichor in *iii* (top row, second from right) and a silver pendant bearing the symbol of Arr the Sea Goddess in *viii* (bottom row, far right). The journal was written by one of the gang and dates back about five months, although it does not stretch far beyond details of the weather and smuggling runs made by the gang. There are no clues as to the whereabouts of the gang. Heroes with a rating of four or greater in the medicines skill will be able to identify the green ichor as some sort of blood; it smells faintly like the smell emanating from the Concealed Passage (8). Heroes examining the stains on the bedrolls may be able to conclude that they are quite recent, perhaps from within the past day.

All four of the chests are locked and numbered as a through *d* from left to right.

- a. Rusted padlock. The chest contains a leather pouch with 36 gold pieces and a half-empty bottle of liquor.
- b. This chest contains a well-crafted short sword with a ruby embedded in the hilt (worth 350 gold pieces), a moth-eaten winter blanket and a set of worn but clean clothes.
- c. This chest contains a folded gray woolen cloak. Hidden in the cloak is a small leather pouch containing 25 gold pieces and a gold locket containing a painting of a young girl.
- d. This chest is locked and trapped with a mechanism which fires a sharp dart at anyone attempting to break or pick the lock. A thief must make a successful Find/Remove Trap check (at -15%) in order to detect the trap. Failure indicates that the trap goes off, striking the hero for 1d4 points of damage. Upon opening the chest, the heroes find several compartments, each containing a different type of gemstone or coin. Also inside is a bundle of parchment notes. Most contain lists of goods received and sold, another is an inventory

of the chest, dated to the middle of last week, and another still is a list of local officials on the gang's payroll. The chest contains a total of 420 gold pieces and gemstones worth 250 gold pieces. Also in the chest, on top all of the compartments, is a loaded crossbow and a vial of blade venom (poison intended for use on bladed weapons).

This room was where the members of the gang slept when off duty, and contained many of their personal belongings. Four of the gang were asleep here, caught unawares when armed phaciores burst in. The large chest at the far end belonged to the leader of the gang and stored undivided booty and payment.

5. Connecting Corridor

This section is eight-feet high and ten-feet square (8 x 10 x 10 ft). It is nothing more than a short of tunnel between the Junction and the Guardroom (6).

6. Guardroom

This room is twenty-feet (20 ft) square. The entrance to the room is ten-feet wide and seven-feet tall (10 x 7 ft). The sturdy door into this room is open but undamaged. Heroes examining the table may note that although there are four places at the table, there are only three hands of cards. This is because one of the guards used his hand to leave a trail as he was dragged off.

This room was where gang members relaxed either when on guard duty or when off duty and not asleep. They were caught unprepared when the phaciores attacked and put up very little resistance.

7. Storeroom

This room is fifteen-feet wide and twenty-feet long (15 x 20 ft), and the highest of the stacks is eight-feet (8 ft) high. None of the boxes are locked, although many are nailed shut. Prying them open will reveal a mixture of empty boxes and boxes filled with contraband. The currently stored contraband is a mixture of liquor and herbs or spices. A thorough search of all of the boxes will turn up a small sealed package hidden within a crate of spices. The package contains a small vial of clear blue liquid and a sachet of green powder. The vial is a healing potion while the green powder can be mixed as a mildly euphoric drug in light doses (same as any basic alcohol for game purposes). If mixed in greater concentration, the green powder becomes a poison which must be ingested to take effect.

Investigating the source of the whimpering will find the first living creature within the caves, the Sea Dog. The Sea Dog is the pet of the smugglers' leader, and is a mangy gray hound with an expensive jewel encrusted collar around her neck. Injured in her fight against the phaciores, she fled here to lick her wounds. She is currently too weak to do anything except raise her head when the heroes enter. If her wounds are tended she will make a full recovery, and will faithfully follow her rescuers around. She will not accompany them into the Concealed Passage (8) and the phaciores' lair however; the smell scares her. Her collar is actually a magical relic, and is kept around her neck for safekeeping. It grants the wearer the protection +2 to AC, which is how the Sea Dog managed to survive her encounter with the phaciores.

8. Concealed Passage

This tunnel is five-feet wide and fifteen-feet long, and only four-feet high (5 x 15 x 4 ft), causing most heroes to stoop. Although harmless, luminescent moss lights the tunnel, a better light source is needed to make out any details. Heroes using a better light source will find a trail of two playing cards along the passage. The smell is coming from the cavern ahead, but is not overpowering enough to have any adverse effects on the heroes.

This passage connects the smugglers' caves with the phaciores' temple complex and leads into the Breeding Pools (9).

9. Breeding Pools

This cavern is thirty-five wide and thirty-five long (35 x 35 ft), with a narrow exit at the far end that a hero must squeeze to pass—a process made somewhat easier by the thick, foul smelling (yet harmless) slime left on its edges. The smell coming from the cavern is overwhelming, and heroes must each make a successful Constitution check (by rolling 1d20 under their Constitution scores) or spend 1d6 minutes retching until they become accustomed to the smell. The moss only dimly lights the cavern and a better light source is needed to make out any details within. A trail of three playing cards leads across the cavern to the exit. Closer inspection of the pits will reveal them to be shallow and filled with salt water. Disturbing the water will cause small fish to scatter from the bottom to hide behind rocks. In some of the pools, young crabs grow, already the size of a fist. In others, tiny, horrible creatures with large, saucer like eyes and four limbs resembling fins are grown. There are also two shadowy figures, phaciore farmers, who tend the pools and rear the young crabs and phaciores. The farmers carry strange pincer-topped staves, which they

wield dangerously if attacked. They are not fighters, but will attack if the heroes look to be threatening their young. On the far side of the room, concealed in the shadows by the exit, a phaciore guard watches over the farmers and ensures they do not slack off work. When the guard notices the heroes, he will move to attack, fighting to the death to protect the young.

This room is used by the phaciores as a breeding chamber for their young, and for the young of their god, the giant crab. The farmers constantly keep the pits clean of debris and feed the young. Most of the phaciore young raised here are destined to be sacrificial victims for their god. Only a lucky few are initiated into the priesthood, or trained as temple gods. Normal phaciores are raised in breeding pools within their city, rather than in the temple complex.

10. Hall of Statues

This room is ten-feet long and thirty-five-feet wide (10 x 35 ft), and exits both to the left and the right, and through the doorway on the far wall. The hallway is somewhat better lit than the previous chambers, and heroes will be instantly visible should they emerge from the entrance crack into the hallway. The light source is not visible, which may prove somewhat disconcerting for the heroes. This playing card is the last one dropped by the smuggler before he was taken to the shrine, and does not help the heroes in deciding which way to go next.

Two temple guards will move to attack the heroes as soon as they move into the hallway, but will not chase them beyond the hallway should they flee. The temple guards attack with their tridents, which they wield with great skill. If the heroes made any noise fighting in the previous room, the temple guards will have heard, and will be waiting for them on either side of the entrance. Likewise, should the heroes make too much noise in this fight, the temple guards in the shrine will be ready for them. Not only will the phaciores be prepared, but the high-priest Gharaka may begin his ceremony immediately if he feels threatened.

This room is the main entranceway for worshippers and dignitaries coming to the temple from the phaciore city. On particularly holy days this hallway is lined with temple guards and filled with worshippers, only a privileged few being allowed into the shrine (14) or the crab pen (11) to watch the ceremonies. The statues are a combination of phaciore heroes and famous leaders. Being able to carve stone above water is thought to be an impressive and highly sought-after skill, although these statues were carved from volcanic rock brought up from below the surface.

11. Crab Pen

This room is thirty-feet by thirty-feet (30 x 30 ft) and the two portcullises are each five-feet (5 ft) high. The water in the pool is six-feet (6 ft) deep, and the opening into the shrine on the far wall is placed three-feet (3 ft) from the surface of the water. This room is lit in the same manner as the hallway. The portcullis blocking the entrance can be opened with the adjacent lever—it is there to keep victims in the crab pen rather than to keep nosy heroes out. The portcullis is raised using an ingenious water powered system of ballasts and gears, a very noisy process that will alert all phaciores who are still unaware. Heroes loitering by the portcullis entrance may be surprised to find that the giant crab has a ten foot (10 ft) reach and can reach through the bars when at the edge of its pool. The submerged portcullis operates in the same manner, except the lever is on the other side, rather than within the pool. This leads to an underwater passageway that in turn leads to the Entrance (12) to the temple complex and out into the sea.

The giant crab in this area will move to attack any heroes who enter the pen, or any who loiter at the entrance for too long. If any of the phaciores in the shrine are still alive, one will move to the entrance, sealing the portcullis. The giant crab cannot escape from this pen and will fight to the death. If the crab begins to lose the fight, the remaining phaciores will enter the room and attempt to kill the heroes. The crab will not attack the phaciore guards or Gharaka.

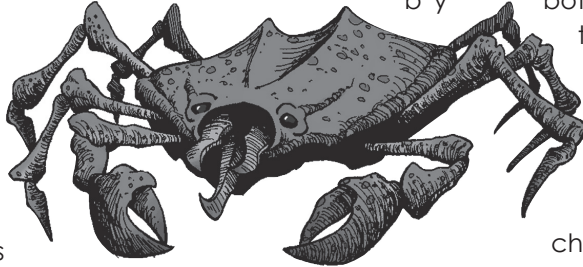
If the heroes are watching from the portcullis when the ritual begins, they will see the whole grisly sacrifice. They will see the shadowy figure moving about through the opening into the shrine, but no more unless they find some way of illuminating further, or have the means to see in the dark. Then they will see a steady stream of blood pouring out of the opening and onto the crab waiting below, driving it into frenzy as it splashes around the pool, snapping its claws impatiently. Then, one by one, a temple guard will push the bound and bleeding victims through the opening and into the pool where the crab will attack and kill them swiftly. More on the ritual can be found below.

12. Phaciore Entrance

This room is twenty-feet wide and twenty-five-feet long (20 x 25 ft). The pool is, at its deepest, ten-feet (10 ft) deep. This room is somewhat dimmer than the adjoining hallway, although there is enough light by which to see. Two tunnels lead away below the water—one leads out to the open sea and the other loops around to the tunnel adjoining the Crab Pen (11).

The three phaciore statues are intended to guard the temple against non-phaciore intruders. They animate and attack anyone who approaches within five-feet (5 ft) of them, or who stands on the steps. The statues will step off their pedestals and pursue intruders into the Hall of Statues (10). They will not pursue into the water, or beyond the Hall. Should intruders leave their line of sight, they will wait for five minutes before returning to their untiring guard.

This room is the entrance chamber to the entire complex, used by visiting worshippers from the phaciore city. The phaciore statues are carvings of famous warriors and were carved from the same porphyry as the altar in the shrine. The unanimated crab-like statue is a depiction of Axiarcha.



13. Luminous Corridor

This passage is thirty-five-feet long and five-feet wide (35 x 5 ft). The moss lights the tunnel, though a better light source is needed to make out any details. Heroes using a better light source will stand a better chance of keeping upright, and will notice a trail of footprints marked by depressed areas of moss and slime.

The copious amounts of moss and slime act as a defense mechanism. When a character steps into the muck, it releases poisonous gas into the passage. The slime is very slippery, requiring anyone stepping on it to make a successful Dexterity check (by rolling 1d20 under their Dexterity scores) or fall over, triggering the moss. The slime is also faintly acidic, although this will have little effect unless a player character remains for long. The muck does not give off gas if stood on with salted feet, such as the saltwater-coated feet of the phaciore. Anyone else stepping on it will set the gas off, which quickly fills the passageway. The gas causes 1d6 points of damage each turn. The muck can be avoided by stepping on the footprints, although there is still a chance of slippage due to the slime.

Any noise made in this corridor will alert the temple guards and Gharaka, although they will not risk fighting in the passageway, instead setting up an ambush for the heroes just inside the shrine entrance. Gharaka begins the ceremony immediately if he feels threatened.

14. Shrine of Axiarcha

This room is thirty-feet wide and twenty-feet long (35 x 20 ft) at its longest point. The room is only dimly lit, but enough details can be made out to make the heroes' stomachs churn. The opening into the crab pen is five-feet (5 ft) tall and it is a three-foot (3 ft) fall to the surface of the pool beyond, which in turn is five-feet (5 ft) deep. Five of the smugglers are here, still alive but shackled by both wrist and ankle. Gharaka holds the keys to the shackles, and has already fed three of the smugglers to the giant crab (see below). If freed, the surviving smugglers will mill about near the heroes, keeping out of the way of any combat—they are not in any state to fight. The drainage channels are designed to funnel blood drawn from the smugglers into contact with the altar, sanctifying it, and then into the crab pen, inciting the crab to attack any nearby captives in expectation of the sacrifice. When sanctified, the altar provides divine-like powers that can be used by the priest. So long as there is sacrificial blood in contact with the altar, the priest acts as a 10th-level cleric for purposes of spellcasting.

The temple guards watch both the entrance and the sacrifice victims, and they are responsible for pushing the sacrifices into the crab pen. If the heroes have made any noise near the shrine then the guard will be expecting them, waiting in ambush on either side of the entrance. Gharaka will ignore the heroes unless attacked, but will commence the ritual as soon as he thinks it is endangered. In a fight, the temple guards will attack to protect their priest, interposing between the heroes and the rest of the shrine. If outnumbered, the temple guards will attempt to block the entrance and force the heroes to fight while standing in the corridor, incurring the effects of the poisonous gas. Should the heroes get past the guards, attempts will be made to push them through the opening and into the crab pen below.

SCENE FOUR (THE RITUAL)

The ritual to be carried out by Gharaka is detailed here; the events will change depending on the heroes' actions. A number of contingencies and reactions are laid out here.

Gharaka will move methodically around the shrine, drawing eldritch symbols in the air with his claw and on the altar and the chest of the sacrifices with blood. All the while, he is intoning power-laden words with a gargled sound. Then he will slice open the victim's chest and stomach. The blood will flow into the channels at the victim's feet and then into the depression at the base of the altar. As the blood touches the altar, it will seem to be

surrounded by a nimbus of greenish light, as will the priest. Then the chanting will change tone as the energy filling the room comes to a climax. As the blood flows past the altar and through the opening into the crab pen below, the sounds of thrashing and splashing can be heard as the crab begins to grow anxious. The priest will wait by the opening, his sharpened claw at the ready as one of the temple guard unshackles a victim and brings him to the opening where the priest draws the claw across his throat and pushes him into the pen in his death throes to be eaten by the crab.

As each of the sacrifices is pushed into the pen, the energy in the room continues to grow, sparking between the altar and the priest with arcs of green lightning. When the ritual is complete, there will be a tremendous exploding sound from the crab pen as large sections of the walls collapse, causing the sea to rush in, beginning to flood the complex. The giant crab will, after thirty seconds, be able to escape from its pen into the rest of the complex or out to sea—it is maddened and possessed by the spirit of Gharaka and will seek out more victims, be they phaciore or human, before escaping. The entire complex will be flooded within two minutes as far as the breeding pools, and as far as the smugglers caves a further three minutes afterwards, with water pouring out of the cave mouth into the sea. Heroes will be swept out one way or another, but will spend a good portion of this time underwater.

At the same time as the explosion, Gharaka will let out a piercing scream that is cut short by a hideous gurgling sound as his throat fills with water and blood. Anyone nearby will see movement beneath his skin and he convulses in pain as his body begins to grow. The shell armor and the claw merge with his body and his eyes bulge out as if on stalks. Gharaka's mind has been forced from his body and into the giant crab, his own body now possessed by the spirit of Axiarcha. Axiarcha will then leave the shrine to find the giant crab and the two will descend on the phaciore city of Ghoolup accompanied by a tide of crabs and phaciore/crab hybrids, enslaving the populace and beginning the holy crusade against the phaciore.

Disrupting the Ritual

The ritual can be disrupted in a number of ways, and the effects of each are detailed below.

- Freeing the sacrifices. Without all five of the sacrifices, the ritual will not reach its true height and Axiarcha will not manifest. Any five humans will do, however, and if the smugglers are freed then Gharaka may well look to the heroes to fill

his quota. As he completes sacrifices, Gharaka gains abilities as follows:

- First Sacrifice: Gharaka gains 2 hit dice.
 - Second Sacrifice: Gharaka gains 4 hit dice.
 - Third Sacrifice: Gharaka gains the ability to cast spells as a 6th-level cleric (and has access to all spells).
 - Fourth sacrifice: Gharaka gains the ability to cast spells as a 8th-level cleric (and has access to all spells).
 - Fifth sacrifice: The ritual is completed and Gharaka becomes Axiarcha incarnate, keeping all of the advances described above and gaining 15 hit dice, 90% magic resistance, and any other abilities the game referee wishes to throw at his players.
-
- Killing Gharaka: The easiest way to disrupt the ritual is to kill the high priest. Once he is dead, the growing power in the shrine quickly dissipates. However, this is probably only a temporary measure at best, and unless the complex is destroyed, a new priest will take his place, acquiring new sacrifices and attempting to complete the ritual anew.
 - Destroying the altar: The altar is tough and destroying it is tricky. It can only be damaged by blunt, heavy objects such as hammers, and has an AC of 5 and 100 hp. If the altar is destroyed, the ritual ends abruptly and the complex begins to collapse as described above, although Axiarcha does not manifest.
 - Killing the crab: The crab is not integral to the ritual. If it is slain, the ritual can still be completed by slaying all of the sacrifice victims. Should the crab be slain, Gharaka will slit the sacrifices' throats and ensure they are dead before throwing them into the pool. Should the ritual be completed, Axiarcha will possess Gharaka's body as before, but there will be no waiting receptacle for Gharaka's spirit, which will instead be shunted into the closest body—be it a temple guard, a corpse or even one of the heroes. If one of the heroes is the target, he may make a saving throw vs. death to avoid possession. If the hero is successful, Gharaka's spirit will be bound to the altar for all eternity. If the hero fails, his body will be inhabited by Gharaka's spirit. The degree of failure should act as a guide to whether the hero's spirit is lost forever, or the two spirits share the body, fighting for control.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure can end in a number of ways, depending on the actions of the heroes. If they manage to stop the ritual and destroy the temple complex then all will be well—the threat to the mainland will be ended before it can begin and the phaciore city will eventually die out entirely, leaving the inhabitants of Cooper's Point to get on with their lives. If the smugglers are captured alive, the citizens of Cooper's Point will make good on their promise and give the heroes a reward; the exact amount is left up to the game referee. The heroes will also be entitled to all of the smugglers' booty, as the citizens of Cooper's Point lack the resources to collect a tax even if they felt so inclined. The smugglers will all be sent off to be tried, convicted, and sentenced to execution by hanging. The turncoat, Reni, will disappear in the night. If the smugglers were killed but the heroes brought back their remains, they still receive the reward. Of course, if the heroes return without evidence that they killed or captured the smugglers, no reward will be forthcoming.

If the heroes managed to stop the ritual but did not destroy the temple complex, a new priest will rise within a year to fill the role Gharaka left. He, too, will attempt to complete the ritual and will require new sacrifices. He will turn to Cooper's Point to fill this quota, either sending his followers on a nighttime raid or attacking and kidnapping the crew of fishing boats. If he is not stopped, the ritual will be completed and Axiarcha incarnate will lead a religious crusade against the rest of the phaciore.

If Gharaka (or his replacement a year later) completes the ritual, then Axiarcha will lead a religious crusade against the phaciore. This will have next to no effect on the surface world . . . for now. Cooper's Point's residents may be alarmed over the following weeks as the bodies of phaciore are washed ashore, and a number of fishing boats will disappear without a trace. The area will be subjected to an infestation of crabs as well, vicious little things which nip and claw at any who come near. Soon life on the surface will return to normal, but beneath the sea, the phaciore will be gripped by a holy war between the followers of Axiarcha incarnate and the traditional gods.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

There are a number of ways in which the adventure can be continued, most notably via the tunnels leading under the sea and to the phaciore city of Ghoolup. If the heroes have means of adventuring for any length of time underwater then they may wish to explore the phaciore city. Much of the city is in a state of ruin, its alien looking buildings collapsing in on themselves and the city consolidated at its center, clustered around the fortified compound of the city's ruler. There will be little opposition against the heroes throughout much of the city, for the people are wretched and starved. If handled properly, the city's ruler may even agree to speak with them, assuming they feign politeness and manners. Should directors wish to pursue this option, they can supply the heroes with the means to explore underwater by including several rings that allow underwater breathing in the Shrine, used by Gharaka to transport surface slaves about in the phaciore realms.

The adventure can also be continued in Cooper's Point. The locket found in the sleeping quarters belongs to one of the smugglers, and the picture inside the locket is the smuggler's little girl. The girl was kidnapped and held hostage by the leader of the smuggling gang to ensure the father's cooperation. The girl may be somewhere hidden, with nobody to come and tend to her, or she may be in the clutches of another gang of villains, and require rescuing. Either way, it would be a hard-hearted group of heroes who could turn away such a plea.

Other ways to continue the adventure depend largely on the conclusion of the adventure, for there may be a large number of plot ends left untied. This is especially true if a new phaciore priest rises to fill the place left by Gharaka, for he will turn his attentions to the surface world. The heroes could then be sent to investigate missing fishing boats and strange kidnappings from the town itself. This would eventually lead them back to the temple itself to stop the ritual anew.

CREATURES

Phaciore

SIZE: Medium

MOVE: 90 ft.

ARMOR CLASS: 5

HIT DICE: 6

ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE: By weapon (usually 1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: None

SPECIAL DEFENSES: None

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

RARITY: Very Rare

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-4

LAIR PROBABILITY: 25%

TREASURE: Individual: 3-24 cp, 2-8 gp; In Lair: 1-8k cp (20%), 1-12k sp (15%), 1-8k ep (15%), 1-6k gp (50%), 3-18 gems (80%), 1-6 jewelry (25%), 2 magic items plus 1 potion (15%)

INTELLIGENCE: Low to Average

ALIGNMENT: Game referee's call, always evil.

LEVEL/X.P.: 6/350 + 8/hp

Fish-like monstrosities, phaciore are bi-pedal humanoids with the ability to live both in and out of the water (though they must keep their skins damp or they begin to lose 1d4 hp each round). Phaciore come in a variety of sizes and colors, just as fish do, though most are a gray-green in color. Used to life underwater, phaciore are easily blinded by bright lights (75% chance of being blinded, lose next 1d4 turns).

Phaciore society is cruel and harsh. Beneath the waves, they are the tyrants and the slavers. Their gods embody aspects of their psyche, and are themselves spiteful and wicked. Phaciore are able to communicate with marine life and can be vicious and tough fighters.

Giant Crab

This is one big crab. Treat as a giant crayfish for game statistic purposes.

Gharaka (Phaciore Priest)

Gharaka has the same statistics as a typical phaciore, although he will not attack during the fight with the heroes and will not be blinded by sudden light sources, because of his obsession with finishing the ritual. He is also skilled in the use of clerical magic (treat as a 4th-level cleric and increase his abilities as the ritual advances).

Sea Dog

The smugglers' leader's pet. 5 hp, AC 6.

Animated Statue

SIZE: Medium

MOVE: 30 ft.

ARMOR CLASS: 10

HIT DICE: 2

ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE: Stone weapon, 1d6

SPECIAL ATTACKS: None

SPECIAL DEFENSES: None

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

RARITY: Very Rare

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-4 (or as needed by game referee)

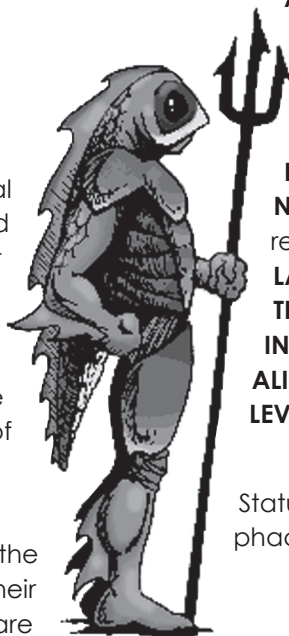
LAIR PROBABILITY: 100%

TREASURE: None

INTELLIGENCE: None

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

LEVEL/X.P.: 4/130 + 5/hp



Statues made from volcanic rock, depicting phaciore heroes.

CREDITS

Written by Andrew Kendrick, Matt Drake, and Brett M. Bernstein

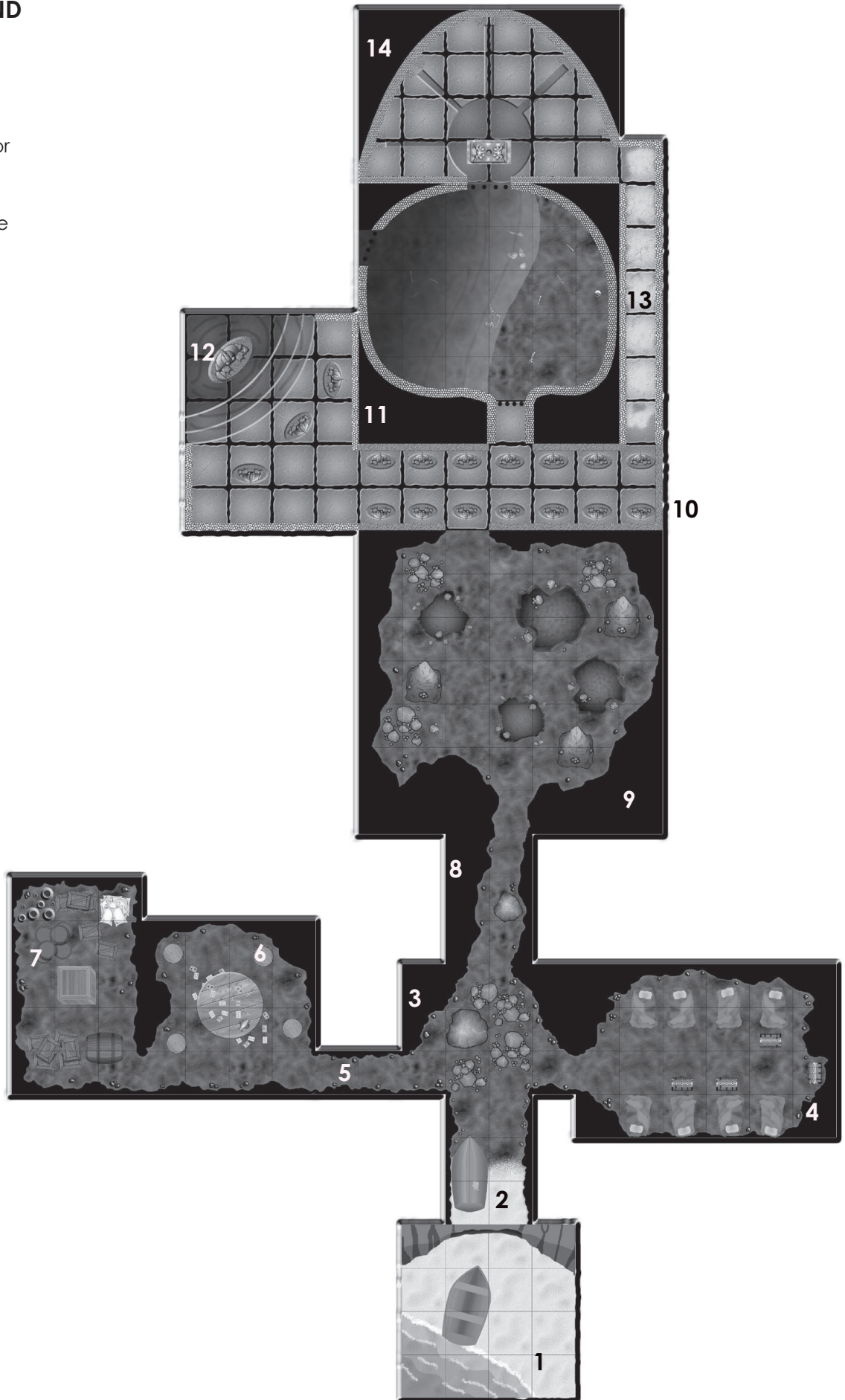
OSRIC Conversion and layout by Philip Reed

Cover art by Jon Hodgson

Interior art by Bill Bricker

MAP LEGEND

1. Cave Entrance
2. Loading Area
3. T-Junction
4. Sleeping Quarters
5. Connecting Corridor
6. Guardroom
7. Storeroom
8. Concealed Passage
9. Breeding Pools
10. Hall of Statues
11. Crab Pen
12. Fishman Entrance
13. Luminous Corridor
14. Shrine of Axiarcha



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DISPOSABLETM HEROES

PAPER MINIS

Smuggler's Bane [IG002]



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REQUIREMENTS

- Scissors or sharp hobby knife
- White glue, glue stick, or tape
- Straight-edge if using hobby knife
- Cutting board if using hobby knife
- Spacious work surface
- Free time

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Print the desired pages. The color minis work best on color printers, or black and white printers which are capable of 600dpi minimum (1200dpi recommended). Black and white minis are recommended for black and white inkjets and all laser printers.
2. Cut out the desired miniatures along the solid lines.
3. Fold the miniatures along the shaded lines.
4. Glue or tape the bottom tabs together to form a tent-like shape. Be careful not to use too much glue, as this may warp the paper.

GUIDELINES

1. PAPER
For best results, use 65 to 67lb cover stock. If your printer supports heavier paper, go with 90lb. You will most likely need to use your printer's manual feed in order to accommodate 65lb and heavier stock. 20 to 24lb paper will suffice, but will not be as rugged.
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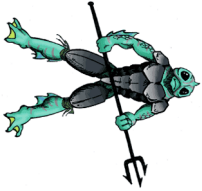


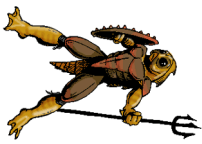

Smuggler's Bane

[IG002]






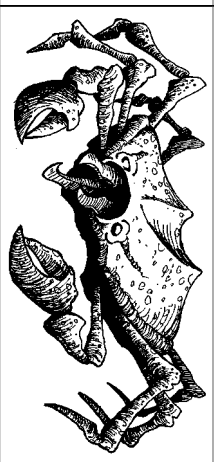
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0097	Phaciore 1
0098	Phaciore 2
0099	Phaciore 3
0100	Phaciore 4
0101	Giant Crab

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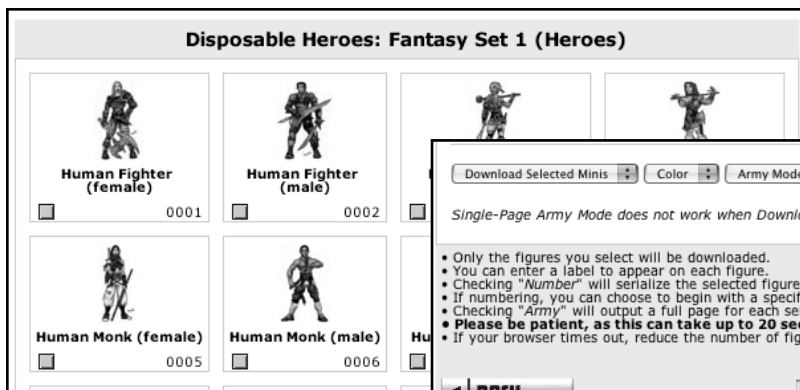
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