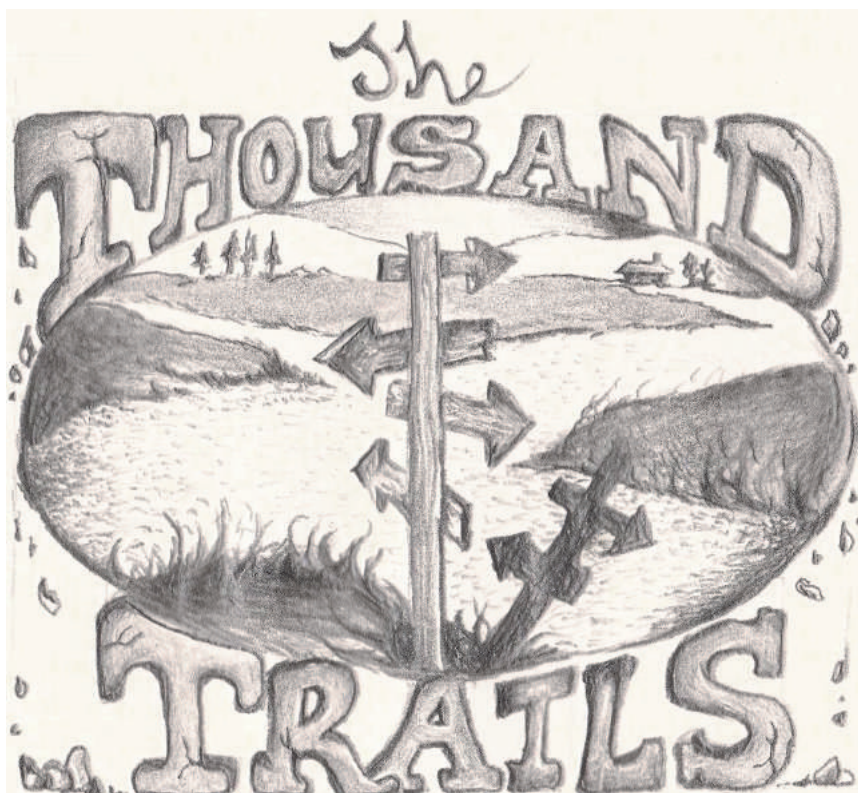


OCEAN'S CALL



THE THOUSAND TRAILS

PART 3



A "True Mask Games" Product

Written by Aleksandar "Earin_Shaad" Petrovic

Cover Artwork by Max Refiend (www.deviantart.com/refiend
www.artstation.com/refiend)

Interior Artwork by

"Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey/Fat Goblin Games
(www.fatgoblingames.com)

Dean Spencer (dean-spencer@live.co.uk)

and Leisal Florian (www.facebook.com/ThePictureSmith/)



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You can contact the author with any and all feedback or questions at
earin_shaad@msn.com

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third book of “The Thousand Trails”. Before you is a collection of over one hundred plothooks and story-seeds to be inserted into your games and used as you desire. Most of these should be able to fit into nearly every fantasy setting with only small adjustments.

We call them “story seeds” because that is exactly what they are: ideas about plots, NPCs and world-building that will sprout and grow into mighty trees inside of your own mind, as you appropriate them in whatever way you think is best suited for your personal RPG group and setting!

The plothooks in this specific book are focused around around the mighty waves of the ocean and every island, harbour or coastal village connected to it. Your players will weather dangerous currents and deadly storms, discover derelict ships and exotic islands, battle both strange tribes and the horrifying beasts of the mysterious ocean depths. And there will be pirates. So, so many pirates. Every journey here is a step into the unknown, for no other environment is as changeable as the sea, before whose vast might even the most powerful wizard is but a child.

The book before you will help you and your group to make the best use of this unique place, giving you ideas for many different types of adventures and dozens of game sessions.

The story seeds presented can be turned into full – blown adventures quite easily, adjusting small details to fit into your world and the area your group of heroes is currently visiting. Or you can simply use our adventure ideas as inspiration, turning them into your personal plots, tailored specifically to the likes and dislike of your own gaming group.

If you do end up doing this, we would love to hear how your players reacted, and how they managed to solve the plots thrown at them. Do not hesitate to let us know!

I hope you have a lot of fun with The Thousand Trails: “Ocean's Call” and are already looking forward to our next book, which will entail 100+ storyseeds for mountain and snow areas, where ice and rocks reign supreme, the winds cut with a thousand knives and even a small fire can mean the difference between life and death!

As always, please feel free to reach out with any feedback or ideas you might have! You can contact us at “earin_shaad@msn.com” or on our True Mask Games Facebook channel.

We look forward to hearing from you!

March 29th, 2019

For True Mask Games, Alex



All the plotoooks and storyseeds in this document are divided into three catrgories: their challenge level, suggested length and what elements of an RPG they mostly focus on.

CHALLENGE LEVEL

This is the suggested level the heroes need to be to successfully complete the adventure. Since this book is intended for many different game systems the suggestions here are very basic. You know the game system you are playing better than we do and will be better suited to judge whether an adventuring idea might be too “tough” for your group or not. That said, with a bit of work you should be able to adjust the challenge level of an adventure quite significantly.

The numbers in brackets describe character levels in some of the best known, D20 based roleplaying games.

Low Level (1-5): The heroes are still at the start of their journey. They might already be locally admired, but they are not yet equipped to face greater threats.

Medium Level (6-10): Leaving their humble beginnings behind, the heroes are now veterans in their fields. They have faced deadly dangers and lived to tell the tale. Their skills, influence and resources are growing.

High Level (11-15): After many adventures the heroes have reached a status only few ever get to. Their names are known far and wide, and they are considered amongst the most dangerous and skilled individuals in the realm. They are ready to stop all but the greatest threats.

Epic Level (16-20): The heroes are legends, their names and deeds known in better parts of the civilized – and maybe also the uncivilized – world. Only the most powerful individuals would dare to cross them, and only the most extreme threats are worthy of their attention.

SUGGESTED LENGTH OF THE ADVENTURE

This is of course up to the individual Gamemaster, for adventures can easily be embellished or shortened according to the desires of the gaming group.

A **short adventure** can usually be played on a single evening, sometimes in as little as an hour or two. They usually include few location and only one or two adventuring styles.

Average adventures can last anywhere from two to four gaming sessions and will often involve several different locations and styles of challenges.

Long adventures are such that will take five, six, or even more sessions to finish, and are basically campaigns at this point. Some can be turned into plots that last for years. Such adventures will nearly always feature a lot of different locations and focus on all four different parts of adventuring (see below).

FOCUS ON:

Exploration: This adventure will have the heroes visit regions they have never seen before, push through untamed wilderness or find secret chambers. They will be filling out the empty spots on their maps, even those spots they never realized were there...

Diplomacy: This adventure heavily features the heroes talking to living creatures, tricking or persuading them to do their bidding. Sometimes such interactions will require a delicate touch, but other circumstances might profit from a more heavy – handed approach. Many situations, if handled badly, can quickly turn into combat.

Investigation: Adventures like these will involve a lot of sneaking, deception and interaction with living beings. Secrets need to be found, plans revealed and schemes pulled into the light of day. Mysteries and complicated intrigues are featured quite often, and only clever actions will be rewarded.

Combat: Sometimes the most simple of all adventures, combat – focused plots can be more or less straightforward, but they will always feature dangers to the very lives of the heroes. Monsters, outlaws and other villains need to be fought and defeated. This might require a more tactical approach, but sometimes it will be a very direct experience. In the end, you never know what your players will come up with!

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS FOR RIVERS AND THE OCEAN

These short encounters can be thrown in whenever the heroes are on board of a ship or boat and travelling over water. They are best used sparingly, but nonetheless can serve to make the players feel they are immersed into a living world, where not every single thing is part of some greater plot. Or you can use these encounters to fill the time if your players, as so often, decide to do something you are completely unprepared for... Most of these encounters should take a couple of minutes to at most an hour to play through, but they could spawn much longer adventures if you so desire. You will probably only need a few minutes to prepare such an encounter (maybe during a food-break?), or, especially if you are an experienced Gamemaster, you could try to improvise the whole thing.

D20 Roll	Random Encounter
1	As everyone is preparing for a night's rest the whole crew is surprised by the sudden call: "Man overboard!" One of the passengers is in the water, struggling wildly as the captain tries to turn the ship around and pick him back up. The man needs saving badly for he seems unable to swim. He is very drunk however and will resist all help, for he thinks our heroes are trying to attack him!
2	While the ship is passing a distant island one of our heroes spots something weird: a fancy looking barrel, made of dark wood, floats in the water. If it is saved the hope for treasure is quickly destroyed. The barrel is full of pickled olives...but hidden beneath them is the corpse of a well-dressed woman in a watertight bag! How did she come to be here? Is this the trail of a horrible crime? Either way, the crew is very spooked.
3	During the night watch a crewman vanishes. Even after the whole ship is searched there is no trace of him and thus the captain declares the man lost, probably fallen overboard. On the next night the man reappears though, confused and weakened. He cannot remember what happened...and the evil spirit who is following the ship and living off the life force of its crew will try to strike again soon.
4	Our heroes notice an older member of the crew furtively painting strange but tiny symbols onto the deck. She is convinced that the ship is cursed and only these markings can save everyone from the foul magic. The captain however does not tolerate such vandalism and will be extremely angry when he discovers the symbols.
5	The ship is followed by a large flock of seagulls. A member of the crew throws a nail at the creatures, injuring one and bringing down the wrath of them all. The birds are making an incredible ruckus, shitting onto both ship and crew whenever they can. The captain, convinced that killing one would mean bad luck, is looking for a non – violent way to get rid of the agitated flock.
6	The heavily bloated carcass of a whale is floating on the surface. A strange silver spear is stuck deeply in its side. Some of the crew want to retrieve this expensive looking weapon but the stench of the carcass is strong enough to make people sick. And the toxins inside the body might make the whale explode at any moment!
7	The first mate approaches our heroes, asking them for a favour. The captain is going to raid all the crew quarters, looking for alcohol, and the mate wants them to hide a few bottles for him, just until the dust has settled. In truth the man is trying out alchemical experiments and, if the captain doesn't stop him, might inadvertently set the ship on fire...
8	Everyone is afraid of the massive, wide-shouldered ship's cook. This man is extremely good at his job, allowing the crew to eat much better than on most other ships. The cook does like to experiment with more exotic meats and spices occasionally however, and can get quite vicious, even violent, if someone complains about any of his meals.
9	A well – lit ship, adorned with colourful cloth and filled with beautiful men and women, drifts past and calls upon the crew of any boat they encounter to join the party. Sadly the cheerfulness hides a deadly trap, for these people are pirates and eager to murder everyone who steps foot onto their deck.

10	A richly dressed woman and a noble looking man are having a lover's quarrel on deck. It turns nasty, with the two insulting each others' lineages and sexual preferences. Suddenly the man rips a large jewelled bracelet off his hand and throws it overboard in anger. Both nobles seem momentarily stunned, then they start begging onlookers to retrieve the precious wedding band. The bracelet is sinking deeper with every second, and the currents here might be treacherous...
11	While preparing for sleep in their hammock, one of our heroes overhears whispered voices. The first mate and two of the sailors are planning to murder the captain and take control of the ship! Mutiny is at hand! But will the captain, whose son the first mate is, believe such accusations? And how many other crew members are in on the foul plan?
12	A large raft is sighted, containing several dirty, long-bearded men who are fishing. At first they ignore the approaching ship but if it gets too close they might turn vicious, throwing insults and even objects at it. The captain thinks they might be survivors from a shipwreck who have gone crazy and need help, but in truth they are a strange cult of hermits, who have sworn never to interact with anyone outside of their group ever again.
13	Strange lights glitter underneath the waves, seemingly just out of arm's reach. Some of the crew are afraid, believing them to be spirits of drowned sailors. Others however think the lights are some sort of treasure floating in the water and they will try to get to it on a lowered rope. Sadly the sea is filled with glowing jellyfish, whose touch proves extremely painful, potentially even deadly.
14	The crew discovers a stowaway. The man pretends to be a noble who needed to get away from a tyrannical father but is in truth a wanted conman. Right now there is a navy ship searching for him close by. Or maybe the man is actually a noble and the navy accuses him of crimes so that they can bring him back to the evil father?
15	Strange noises can be heard when the ship is quiet. These are woodworms that have come our of some antique pieces of furniture and are now slowly eating away at the planks. If they are not discovered and taken care of quickly – smoked out with a foul smelling substance – the ship might be heavily damaged or even sink.
16	One of the other passengers is violently seasick. The ship's doctor treats him with herbs and the illness seems to subside. Two days later however the man is found dead in the morning, his face swollen his skin green. Other passengers immediately claim that the ship's doctor has poisoned their comrade and things might turn ugly. The real culprit however is one of the other crewmen, who saw the chance to get rid of the hated doctor, stole some of his most poisonous herbs and mixed them into an extra dose of medicine.
17	The ship has become infested with particularly aggressive and clever rats who have already eaten half the supplies before they are even discovered. Now the closest harbour is many days away. Arguments rage back and forth which of the crew members is to blame for this disaster...and while violence looms the rats continue eating.
18	A small row boat contains a noble lady and her two weakened bodyguards, only survivors of a shipwreck. The lady is thankful for being rescued at first, but soon proves to be extremely arrogant. After a few days of her scathing verbal abuse and ridiculous demands the crew plots to throw her back overboard, bodyguards included if need be.
19	An abrupt change in weather has the captain worried. It is getting colder quickly and soon there are even small chunks of ice floating on the waves. These could damage the hull...but they are not as bad as the freezing wind that might rip the sails to shreds. A freak storm is approaching and every passenger is asked to help however they can to save the ship and their own skin.
20	During a long voyage the ship's captain is very friendly towards our heroes, sharing drinks, stories and laughter with them. Soon it is clear that he seems to be quite taken with one of their members. He even offers the hero in question a spot on the crew. If this generous offer is refused however, the captain shows his true face, becoming extremely angry. Things might turn ugly is the situation is not handled with care.

THE POWER OF THE OCEAN

A FEW THOUGHTS

No other setting is quite like the ocean. At first glance it is a vast nothingness, only occasionally broken by islands and an eventual coastline. That could lead one to believe that the ocean is a boring setting, nothing more than a place for long journeys summarized in a few quick words. But it is so much more than that. Even without counting islands, fishing villages, harbours and the multitude of opportunities for stories they all provide, the ocean itself is a great place for adventure. Ships are like small floating villages, constantly threatened by the vast power of the elements around them. The things that are lost by one such village, maybe even at the moment of its death, can be picked up and interacted with in many interesting ways by other ships. Even if you disregard all of that, there is still the incredibly vast and mysterious world hiding underneath the waves... Let's take a closer look at all of these elements.

1. Adventuring on islands: More than most other settings islands are isolated from the rest of the world. Such isolation can lead to strange, nearly alien developments, both regarding local culture and customs and the island's flora and fauna itself. Unlike with many other places it *actually makes sense* to have an island that has not been visited by civilization in centuries, or maybe even never before. In our own world three whole continents were mostly unexplored and unknown to the west for a long, long time. Such journeys into the unknown and exotic have the potential for great exploratory campaigns and adventures.

2. Adventuring in harbours: Gateways to the realm that lays claim to them, towns and cities along the ocean or even along large rivers are hubs of travel, mixing pots for many different cultures and customs. It is in great harbours that one can find people from all over the world living side by side. It is here that one can buy and sell all things imaginable and hear stories that originated on the other side of the planet. Harbours are also breeding places for opportunity, drawing the ambitious and the desperate into their embrace, making crime a strong factor in any such settlement. Using all these elements in an RPG allows a Gamemaster to create a setting unlike any other, a place where everything is possible. Whole campaigns can be played in a single city like that...and the heroes would nonetheless never run out of things to do.

3. Adventuring on ships: To venture out onto the waves in a ship means entering a sort of enforced isolation. This wooden box all around you is like a prison cell: anything that happens within it will have an impact upon all inhabitants. They will have to deal with it together, yet mostly without outside help. This weirdly claustrophobic feeling amidst the open space of the sea is something that can be used to great effect in a story.

4. The ocean's power: It is on the ocean where nature's threat is felt more than anywhere else. Even the grandest of ships is tiny amongst the vastness of the sea. Even the mightiest of warriors is helpless in the embrace of the waves. The power of the elements makes even the most learned of mages feel small and insignificant. In many ways the ocean is the final frontier, a place that neither humanity nor any other intelligent race has ever managed to conquer.

5. Darkness in the depths: Finally there is the true vastness of the sea, an incredible world hidden under the surface, far larger than all continents and islands put together. It is a deadly place for people, where the cold, lack of air and massive pressure can destroy even the strongest warrior. In fact it might be the deadliest place in the world. But there is plenty of life down there. The inhabitants of the depths are as alien to surface beings as visitors from another planet would be. Many of them look like horrible monstrosities, driven by hunger and equipped with strange powers. And that is if you only count the dwellers in the lightless depths of *our* world... In a fantasy world *anything* could be hiding down there, from ancient civilizations to massive leviathans, beings that, if raised from their slumber, could shake the very foundations of the earth.

Many people have an instinctive fear of what might be lurking under the waves. Things of great age, unseen but always watching. Some of the greatest horrors ever invented came from down below. Make sure to use that in your games as well.

Keep these things in mind when preparing to run storylines from this booklet and you will be able to get the most out of your nautical adventures, turning them into an experience that is difficult to forget!

PLOTHOOKS AND STORYSEEDS

(ROLL 1D100 FOR A RANDOM RESULT...AND DEAL WITH IT!)

1. LOST IN THE SAND

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Our heroes are looking for some obscure knowledge and hear of a strange hermit living amongst the dunes of a great beach close to the fishing village of Moldavi. Rumours say this old man might know all the secrets of the world. Arriving in the village our heroes will soon learn that the “Sandsage”, as he is called here, is even weirder than the rumours say. He does seem to hold a lot of knowledge, but the people of Moldavi tend to shun him. The fishermen and their families have seen the sage do magical things...and they don't trust any mage whose mind is so obviously broken.

After arriving on the beach it is not hard to spot an old man with a long, dirty beard, dressed in salt – crusted rags, scuttling around like a crab. The man's eyes have a crazy, far away look and it will take him a while to react to the presence of strangers. Mostly he seems to be interested in the sand itself, running his fingers through it as if searching for something. He has lost his name, he mumbles if asked. His name and his mind.

Our heroes, if they are polite, might receive some cryptic answers to whatever questions they have brought, and if they are observant they might notice a strange tattoo on the man's right temple, partially obscured by his long hair. Two circles intertwined, with an arrow running through them both. The mark of an arch – mage of the mysterious island – academy of Divenar! Should our heroes be too forceful or aggressive in his presence the man will turn violent, using strange magics to summon powerful sand beings.

Either way the situation will become more complicated, for a group of outlaws has arrived. They have heard of the tattoo and wish to capture the wizard to hold him for ransom. The outlaw leader, a charming woman by the name of Elindra, will offer to split the gold if our heroes help with the capture.

Should the beach be carefully searched our heroes might discover a strange shell, covered in intricate arcane marks. This shell, held to the ear, will whisper the word “Okenatar”. This is the name of the mage...and speaking it to him will restore his mind. He was broken by a magical experiment gone wrong but will be very thankful to anyone who healed him!

2. THE CURSE OF BLACK BORIN

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

Ten years ago the bloodthirsty pirates of the Devourer, captained by a savage man known as “Black Borin”, plagued the local waters. They had plundered dozens of ships and killed hundreds of people... and then they suddenly disappeared!

Just a few days ago the Devourer has, to the terror of many, been spotted on the waves again! A small panic is setting in and the local ruler, Lady Macinda of Serincliff, hires our heroes to investigate whether the pirate has actually returned.

It is true: the Devourer is back, but the ship and crew are in horrible condition. Black Borin and his men have been cursed by a mighty ocean spirit because of their evil deeds and can neither eat nor drink. They have been sailing exotic seas for ten years, suffering horrible hunger and thirst, yet never dying. Black Borin searched everywhere for a solution...and finally a seer in a far away land told him that only the forgiveness of “her who leads the people you hurt most” can break the curse.

That is why the pirates have returned to local waters. They need Lady Macinda to come onto the Devourer and speak the words of absolution...only then will the pirates be capable of dying a clean death.

Black Borin is desperate and will beg our heroes for help! He will offer them both his ship and the not insignificant riches that lie, nearly forgotten, in its cargo hold, if they can only persuade Lady Macinda. That will be a very difficult task however, for the noblewoman has little pity with such disgusting pirates and is not likely to trust wild stories about magical curses.

3. WHEN CHAINS ARE BROKEN

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

After a very rough and long night of carousing our heroes are woken by a terrible stench, only to find a big bearded brute of a man standing over them. This monster, Captain Ingram of the slaver ship “Windleash”, welcomes them on board. He gloats over them, telling them exactly how an associate of his, a certain merchant, drugged their drinks and sold them for good coin while they were unconscious. Now Ingram owns them and can do with them whatever he likes.

To prove these words the captain and his crew of thugs will beat up at least two of our heroes, choosing whoever looks the toughest or has the most fighting spirit. Being chained to the wall and nearly completely naked makes fighting back an impossibility, so the vile men will have their fun.

Afterwards our heroes are chained to an oar each, unable to move much and forced into the extremely tough work. The conditions below deck, where over fifty slaves are held, are horrifying. Some of the slaves are new, just like our heroes, and will suffer terribly. One of them, a gentle musician from the same town as them by the name of Fenwin, will be beaten again and again for his inability to keep up.

Clearly our heroes will soon realize that they will be too broken to fight if they do this work for any longer amount of time. They need to organize a rebellion now. The Windleash only holds twenty slavers, so if the slaves could be freed, armed and unleashed Captain Ingram and his crew would most likely be torn apart in a storm of fury and vengeance. The slaves do not trust each other though, for their cruel masters have inserted spies into their ranks before...and Ingram is treating one of the heroes better than any other slave, simply to arouse suspicion.

4. THE SHIP OF DEATH

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Meringa Daggertooth has been a pirate captain for years but her ship, the Biter, and its crew have never been much of a threat to the large, well protected merchant vessels. That all changed about six months ago. At that time Meringa seemed to have acquired a massive new ship, the “Tormentor”... and destroyed three merchant ships in a single week!

The Tormentor is a monster, one of the largest pirate ships ever seen. It is equipped with magic of pain and fire, faster than most vessels half its size and seems to manoeuvre with unprecedented swiftness. Several times warships of the realm and even other pirates, threatened by this new power, tried to attack it head on, outnumbering it up to five ships to one! Every single one of these vessels was torn apart by the Tormentor and it is said that their crews were sacrificed in terrible ceremonies to unknown gods. Then Captain Meringa hit the port of Chalsin, setting half the town ablaze and plundering most of its riches. Now other pirates are flocking to her and she has become a real menace.

Our heroes are hired and promised a large sum if they can destroy the Tormentor and stop the emerging pirate armada. They are given command of one of the best warships of the fleet, the “Sunglory”, and her experienced captain, Major Ricardo.

A heads-on attack will nonetheless prove suicidal, thus our heroes need to gather information. Both the tales of several survivors and the strange, swirling symbol on the prow of the Tormentor can give insight into the evil at the core of the story. Meringa has found an ancient power, a living ship possessed by the demon Eskhardon. In battle her own mind merges with the ship, allowing her to use it and its horrible magic as an extension of her own body. The only way to destroy the Tormentor is to take out Meringa first. But she never leaves the ship anymore...and the demon will not be happy if the person he made a pact with was slain.

Was complicates the matter is: should Major Ricardo hear of the truth he might try to use the Tormentor himself, for the good of the realm, thus trying to prevent its destruction.



5. SPLINTERS OF DIVINITY

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND INVESTIGATION

A strange ruin has been discovered on a small island and two of the local sailors, the Pusting brothers, have used a row-boat to visit it in their search for treasures. They are both known as greedy and unreliable but after they are gone for a few days people nonetheless start to worry. Our heroes are hired to search for the brothers.

On the island everything seems still. The small boat is easily found but seems abandoned. Soon after strange cries can be heard drifting out of the brush. These deranged noises are made by Ilvan, the elder Pusting brother. His leg is broken and he seems more animal than man. It is impossible to question him, especially as he is trying to escape from any who try approach him.

A short time later our heroes find a small ruin, overgrown with vines. Nearby is the corpse of Macaro, the younger brother. He seems to have fallen into a very obvious ravine and broken his neck. Within the ruin the only thing of interest is several small figurines made of gold, depicting strange creatures, a mixture of animals and men.

These treasures were once dedicated to gods venerated by the locals a long time ago. The last remnants of these tiny deities are still within the figurines and they will be able to talk to whoever touches the gold. Having contact with the soul of a babbling spirit can be quite a strain to the mind...but what is even worse is that the gods attach themselves to our heroes, just as one of them is already attached to Ilvan! They have been alone for so long and are terribly bored. Now they will never leave again, their voices intruding into the thoughts of their “rescuers” all the time. Not even getting rid of the figurines works, for the power of the gods will make sure they appear in our heroes' vicinity within a few minutes if the golden objects are given away...and the usually soft metal seems absolutely indestructible.

The only way for our heroes to get rid of these annoying spirits is to persuade them that someone else might be a better “host”, then have that person pick up the figurines willingly.

6. LONG SHADOWS OF DEATH

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The Boneship is a pirate vessel with a fearsome reputation. People say its distinct black and white hull is enhanced with all kinds of magic and that it is captained by Rengis the Dead, an avatar of the Lord of the Grave himself. For many years these rumours have been circulating and the fear they cause has been growing with every retelling, even though few people have actually seen the Boneship with their own eyes.

Now our heroes are approached by a desperate woman. Lutilda is a merchant of middling years who has found a little success in the trade of cloth and wool. She is by no means rich but she has tried to give her only son Jeremiah the upbringing he deserves. Sadly the boy has discarded her affections and run off to become a sailor. They have seen each other a few times over the years with Lutilda becoming more and more afraid that Jeremiah has fallen in with some bad company. Now she has heard a rumour his face has been seen in the terrifying crew of the Boneship! The merchant begs our heroes to save her son, offering them all that she owns as reward.

Tracking down the pirate vessel will not be easy. Only some of the most unsavoury individuals, people the Boneship does business with – amongst them the arrogant fence Ilvino and the brutal slaver Remona – know that its crew can be found in the Dreksy Archipelago, a haven for all kinds of criminal scum. Even the other pirates stay away from the Skullport, a small village that is used as harbour only by the Boneship.

Reaching this place, surrounded by many other outlaw dens, will not be easy but once they have arrived there our heroes will soon realize that both the villagers and the crew of the Boneship itself, young Jeremiah amongst them, do not want to be here. They are reluctant pirates at best, but they fear Rengis the Dead more than hell itself. Only the first mate, calling herself Skelara, seems to follow the undead creature out of her own free will.

And that is indeed so, for Skelara is the true captain. Regis “the Dead” is an imposing skeletal figure in massive armour, covered by a magical cape. And he is also an actual skeleton, bereft of unlife or magic. The first mate is a powerful illusionist and she has been working on establishing her “captain's” reputation for many years. Skelara is also absolutely ruthless and will not take kindly to anyone who pries into her business too much.

7. MONSTROUS REMAINS

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

After a violent storm the carcass of a strange, bloated creature from the depths is found floating only a few dozen yards from the edge of the harbour. One of the local sages, Master Menander, quickly determines that this must be one of the fabled Sea Serpents and assures everyone that some of his colleagues would pay very good money for the carcass!

At first locals are extremely hesitant, none wanting to be the first to approach the massive beast that might, after all, not be dead! But soon greed is stronger than caution and as the first group of fishermen tries to claim the carcass a rush for the monster sets in! Two groups of cutthroats, the Blackened Blade pirates and the smuggler gang known as "Grey Mist", join the efforts.

Soon it is determined that the creature is definitely dead and very well preserved...but there are a lot of fish nibbling at it! Chaos ensues as everyone wants to be the one to tow the massive beast to the beach, or at least hack a piece of it off to sell later! Our heroes are caught up in the trouble that might lead to a very bloody battle!



8. A FATHER'S LOVE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Our heroes are asked to attend a secret meeting with Lord Mayor Costa of Silverhaven. The fat man is extremely rich and has a lucrative offer for them, but only if they can keep the details to themselves. Costa has a daughter that he has not seen in years. She was a bastard, not born to Costa's wife, and proved to have some magical abilities. Thus the Lord Mayor sent her away with a teacher, one Magister Qantas, who promised to train her. That was ten years ago, when the girl, Irene, was still little more than a child. She has spent all this time on the small island of Oring's Cliff, three days of sailing from Silverhaven. The Lord Mayor is getting old and he wishes to see his daughter again. Or at least that is what he says. In truth he has received word that Irene's magical talent is significant and her training is nearly complete, thus he wishes to make use of her, which is why he sends our heroes with a small ship to escort her back.

Sadly the ship will get into a storm when nearing Oring's Cliff and could very well be dashed against the rocks. The wind has been conjured by Irene herself, who has become a powerful witch and has taken control of the whole island. She killed her tutor and enslaved the rest of the fifty or so inhabitants using mind magic.

Irene is happy with her kingdom, ruling it as a goddess, and does not wish to leave it. If our heroes survive her first attempts to kill them she might however tell them a completely different story: that of the evil Qantas who has taken control of her and everyone else. Then, leading our heroes into a trap close to the cliffs, Irene will attempt to kill them once again.

9. VERMINTIDE

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

A violent storm has raged over the coastline for days. Luckily nobody was killed on land, but several ships were broken upon the cliffs. Only a few days later the fishing village of Felestone notices that they have a significant new problem: strange ratlike creatures, as big as dogs and unusually aggressive, have started attacking sheep and goats in the area. One of the shepherds tries to intervene and is nearly bitten to death. Our heroes are hired to help with the problem.

They will soon discover that there are quite a few of these creatures...and several young ones indicate that even more are on the way!

Only by following the prints of the youngest of these monsters and dodging the attacks of the whole tide of vermin can our heroes find the source of the problem: a massive, swollen creature, the brood mother, has been on one of the ships that were destroyed by the storm and is now inhabiting its wreck amongst the jagged rocks. The crew members have all been devoured, which has given the thing enough food to spawn several litters. Only if the brood mother is destroyed quickly can the vermintide be stopped.

10. THE OLD WIZARD AND THE SEA

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

The fishing village of Fronel has a problem: about a week ago one of their boats rescued an old man from the sea. He was very weak and seemed unable to talk. Some of the villagers nursed him back to health, which quickly proved to be a mistake. The old man, Fintus by name, is a wizard of significant power...and he believes that the sea god tried to kill him!

Now he has taken control of the village, spending most of his days in the harbour, unleashing powerful spells against the waves themselves. It seems that he is trying to kill the ocean!

But that's not all: old Fintus also suspects many of the fishing folk to be in league with his enemy! He raves against everyone who dares to eat fish, swim or set out onto its waves. He has burned two boats already, injuring several people. Things are getting dangerous and one of the villagers is sent out to find someone that could take care of Fintus.

Our heroes are not meant to injure him severely, for the fishing folk feel pity for the old man, but things cannot continue on like that. Maybe the wizard can actually be talked out of his madness? Or maybe he can be tricked into believing that he killed the god of the sea and has gained his revenge?

11. WHAT THE WATER REVEALS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION, COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Twenty years ago a massive flood hit the coastline, drowning thousands and destroying villages. Having claimed significant parts of the land the water settled, seeming content. Now new catastrophes have come upon the people of the land. An earthquake of medium strength triggered a tsunami that swept the coast clean of all fishing boats but didn't do too much damage otherwise.

After the massive wave the water seems to be receding though, with several new islands rising from the ocean. And one of these islands reveals the remains of Ringhold, an extremely wealthy coastal town that was claimed by the flood twenty years ago!

A small group of fishermen lands in the ruins and manages to find golden treasure! Immediately rumours spawn in the whole realm, and many greedy eyes turn to the coast.

Our heroes will be swept up in this mania, hired by Giswin of the Melora family, whose parents drowned in Ringhold. He wants to be escorted to the new island to hopefully find some family heirlooms. And if there is other treasure to be had, so be it...

Sadly there are other forces gathering to claim the ruins. Pirates, daring merchants and even a necromancer who shows interest in a place where so many were killed all set out for Ringhold.

Soon the treasures are heavily contested...but that is not the main danger. For the water is coming back to reclaim the island, and all those whose ships or nautical skills are not up to the task will be torn apart on the rocks or drowned right away

12. FURY OF SKY AND WAVES

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

The island village of Gardin is usually a quiet place, its inhabitants enjoying a life of fishing, farming and the occasional bit of hunting. That peace has been shattered about a week ago, when a massive birdlike creature descended upon the village, killing several people before it was driven off by men with spears and bows. The creature returned two days later, attacking again in the same spot. Several of the villagers tried to get to the mainland for help, but their boat was attacked by some kind of massive sea – serpent. Only one man, the young fisher Melnar, made it through. He is desperate and comes to our heroes for help.

Getting to Gardin will not be easy, for the serpent lies in wait to attack all who try to reach the village, and it seems unusually smart for an animal. When they speak to the village elders our heroes will soon learn that the two monsters seem to be fighting each other as well, although most of their efforts are focused on the southern part of the village, close to the harbour. Nobody knows why the beasts are attacking, for none of their kind has ever been seen in this area before.

The reason lies hidden in the basement of the hut of Kendar, a vicious youth who is both fisher and thief. Two weeks ago, during one of his midnight strolls, he found a strange, golden egg the size of his head lying on the beach. Kendar was immediately sure that he could sell this artefact for good money and he will ask our heroes to smuggle him to the mainland if the situation becomes much worse. The thief has some unrightfully gained riches and is willing to offer them as payment.

In the meantime both beasts will continue their attacks. They can sense the egg's vague location and are eager to get it. The winged creature wants its emerging child back...and the serpent, enemy of all flying things, wants to eat it. In fact the old water monster might even speak to our heroes and make them an offer if they have proven too tough for it to kill. Giving the egg over to the serpent will send the bird into an incredible rage and it will attack the village until it is slain.



13. THE WORLD'S GREATEST FEAST

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY, EXPLORATION,
COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

Count Eric of Dunmire is known for his lavish parties and decadent behaviour. Yet he is one of the richest nobles in the realm, controlling several highly lucrative mines. Now he summons our heroes to hire them for an...unusual task. The count is preparing the greatest feast the realm has ever seen and offers an incredible amount of gold to the heroes if they are capable of acquiring the services of five of the greatest artisans in the world for him. This will entail long journeys across the ocean and many potential dangers, but the pay is so very, very good.

Along the way our heroes will have to:

1. rescue Wanbile, the world's greatest cook, from a cannibalistic island – tribe who has taken him hostage and is forcing him to use his skills for their very special “food”.
2. persuade the supremely arrogant bard, Hestian, that this endeavour is more worthy of his time and genius than the many joys of the pleasure barge that he currently resides on.
3. impress the famous courtesan known as the Ruby of the Sea with their manners and learning so that she might consider accompanying them on what might – due to her many aggressive suitors - be a very dangerous journey.
4. help the beastmistress Qilenna hunt down the fabled rainbow-drake on the jungle island of Kilmurru, thus proving their worth and that of their employer to her.
5. find the whereabouts of the dancing master Silvestro, who has disappeared from the port of Piosi and is held prisoner by the jealous witch Enkisra who desires his performances above everything else.

All these tasks need to be completed within two moons, for the day of the feast rapidly approaches... and Count Eric absolutely hates to disappoint his many highborn guests.

14. SAILING WITH DEATH

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

As they are travelling on board of a large sailing vessel, our heroes witness the arrival of several boxes of significant size. This new cargo is given to the ship's captain by a richly dressed man, fat and nervous looking. Trivan the Merchant pays handsomely to take care of these goods, making sure that everyone on board understand that they are not to be opened under any circumstances since they contain rare and very precious herbs that could easily be spoiled by even a little bit of the salty ocean air.

On the very night after the ship's departure, a sailor named Boswin disappears without a trace. The captain orders a thorough search of the ship, but nothing is found. Everyone assumes that Boswin might have fallen over board during his watch. Regrettable, but such things happen. Then, the next night, the ship's cook, Erwan, vanishes. Now the sailors are becoming extremely agitated. Several of them are blaming some sort of evil spirit and pointing accusing fingers at the newly arrived cargo. The captain rebukes such superstition, but orders additional guards posted at night. Nonetheless the next morning another sailor, a young deckhand named Prenna, can't be found anywhere. Now the crew, led by the second mate Kinner, who was Prenna's uncle, becomes extremely unruly. A group of them, disobeying direct orders, breaks open the new cargo boxes...and the terror is great when they find not one but three bodies inside! These dead men are not the ones who disappeared, but they seem stuffed with some sort of herbs and look remarkably healthy!

Immediately whisper of "undead", "revenant" and "vampire" start circulating. The captain bars the cargo hold, but that is not enough! Many of the crew demand all three corpses being cut to bits and then thrown overboard. The crew is close to mutiny.

And amongst all this chaos the real culprit, the first mate Quinn, watches on. He is a bitter man but well versed in deception. Together with Boswin and Erwan he had devised a plan to take hold of the precious cargo and sell it to some smuggler friends. Sadly Quinn didn't want to share. Prenna was just a clumsy kid who always annoyed him and who he killed when he had the chance. Now, after discovering that the cargo might not be worth that much after all, he sees a different chance. If he can bring his fellow crew members to mutiny he might be able to get rid of the captain and take control of the ship once and for all.

15. SWEET, SWEET WATER

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

The harbour town of Sweetwater was built at the mouth of the river of the same name. For decades it has been a prosperous place, with many ships coming and going. Now trouble has raised its ugly head in Sweetwater. Many of the town's citizens have become sick and weak, unable to work. Just a few days after the disease struck a few of the harbour workers who were still strong enough to help an oncoming ship have been attacked by the local water spirit, known by many affectionately as "Uncle Bejaz". It seems that the creature, who has always been friendly and peaceful, has turned evil! It must have poisoned the riverwater and is now assaulting the few healthy citizens!

Our heroes are brought in to deal with the troublesome spirit. If they are clever they will however quickly realize that it was not Bejaz who poisoned the Sweetwater. Indeed the creature was affected by the pollution itself and has sworn to take revenge upon the humans.

The real culprit is the greedy local merchant Tiller, whose main business is the export of expensive clothing. The new dyes his people work with on the cotton have been simply thrown into the river after use and it was these fould smelling chemicals that poisoned the water. If this practice isn't stopped people are going to die, one way or another.

GM NOTES:

The solution to this adventure seems pretty straightforward: find the culprit and persuade him, through intimidation or other means, to stop what he is doing. If you want to introduce a slightly more complex finale you need to make sure that it is not only Tiller who profits from his wrongdoing, but also our heroes or somebody close to them. The simplest way to accomplish this is to have the merchant offer them money if they keep his secret, but there are many other ways. Maybe Tiller has connections to some of his more powerful customers that our heroes seek to use for their own gain? Or maybe the business that he runs is connected to other businesses that might be destroyed if he is forced to shut down?

16. TWO - FACED GODS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

People on the island of Merva are astonished when they find a large statue showing a two-faced man in the shallow water of their largest beach. Our heroes are amongst the people who come to investigate the find, but when they arrive on Merva they will not be allowed to approach the statue.

They will soon learn that the people guarding it now are a strange new cult that has emerged only a few days ago. Most of these people are ordinary citizens of the island but they have joined the fellowship of a priestess called Pella who arrived on Merva the very day after the discovery of the statue. Her small group of followers immediately started preaching that the god Jodinus, who it depicts, will grant great riches to the whole island if his commands are obeyed. The most important of his rules is that no non-believer can approach the holy statue and that it has to be pulled out of the water and set up to oversee the harbour of Merva.

The speed with which people join this new cult of Jodinus is astonishing, but has mostly to do with Pella's charismatic personality and the monetary gifts that every new follower receives from her closest disciples. The whole thing is a scam however. The so called priestess is a gifted swindler. She has read about the statue in some old texts and knew that it might emerge during a particularly low tide. Pella also knows that the statue is made of solid gold with just a thin layer of stone around it. She and her crew intend to steal "Jodinus" as soon as he has been brought to the harbour, putting the monument on their ship in the middle of the night.

17. THE LIVING SEA

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Many local fishing communities are suffering under a strange new phenomenon. Thousands of jellyfish have appeared in the ocean and they seem to be getting more numerous by the day. While their strange bodies are certainly a spectacle to behold many of them are extremely venomous, killing the fish and badly hurting several people who happened to touch one of their nearly invisible tentacles by accident. Our heroes are hired to help.

It will soon become clear that the jellyfish are coming from all directions, as if being drawn in by something. While investigating our heroes encounter a group of strange fishmen who look horrifying but are fairly friendly. They have been sent to scout the coastline by their leader, the King of the Deep, and are also interested in finding out what it going on.

The creature responsible for all of this is an ancient fishman mage, a half mad outcast following an ancient prophecy proclaiming that "the path to great magic will be opened only when the sea comes alive with a thousand lights". The mage – wrongly – believes the jellyfish, whom he draws in with a spell, to be the answer to the prophecy and will resist fiercely if he is asked to stop. Fighting the creature in his hideout deep underwater, amidst thousands of tiny but venomous tentacles, could prove tricky.

18. FACES IN THE SAND

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

When arriving in the coastal village of Astabar, our heroes soon learn that there is trouble afoot. Two people in the village have disappeared: Tonio the fisher vanished five days ago. His friend Lentino, who went searching for him, has also not been seen for two days. Many of the locals suspect dark magic and are terrified, for they have found both Tonio's and Lentino's face carved into the sand of the beach. Those faces, twisted into an expression of terror, are nearly the size of a man.

Now all villagers stay far away from the beach but are still afraid that the evil powers might come to get them next.

In truth there is no dark magic...but the people are nonetheless in danger. A colony of rare, scorpion – like insects has emerged from deep underground. They have made a large nest deep within the sands and are hiding there, waiting for lone pray that they can poison, kill, and drag back into their holes. Even though the individual insect is only the size of a small dog their poison is extremely dangerous. Some hidden drive makes these creatures carve the faces of their victims into the sand at night. They are currently digesting the two dead men but soon will become hungry again...and then they might pay a visit to the village itself under the cover of darkness.

19. LOSSES OF BATTLE

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION

The Greenflame was a mighty ship of the royal navy, captained by a brave officer named Stuthorn. Sadly the vessel has been lured into a pirate trap a few days ago. The Greenflame sunk amongst the dark cliffs of Mulldin, all men aboard considered lost.

Our heroes are approached by a beautiful yet deeply unhappy young lady who asks them for their help. Annika is widow to Captain Stuthorn and nearly overwhelmed by her sudden loss. She asks our heroes to help her reclaim the body of her beloved. They need to escort her to the Mulldin cliffs, which can only be reached by small boat. Somewhere there, after overcoming tricky currents and small but dangerous sea snakes, who hide amongst the rocks, our heroes will need to find the captain's body...and then stop poor Annika from committing suicide right there amongst the rocks, so she can be with her beloved forever.

20. LAST BREATH

HIGH LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The ship our heroes are on is caught in a strange phenomenon: purple lights rise from the deep, illuminating the waves. Soon after strange bubbles burst on the surface, filling the air with a weirdly sweet odour. But then disaster strikes! The whole crew, including our heroes, start to have trouble breathing! It is as if their lungs are no longer working properly and several sailors are starting to choke to death!

This weird curse that has been laid upon the whole ship needs to be figured out quickly: for now the people on board are all capable of breathing underwater, but no longer able to survive on the surface. Quick thinking might save everyone...but what then? The crew cannot sail the ship if they cannot breathe. And there is still that strange light rising from the depths...

Far below is the answer to this riddle: a magical well of chaotic energy that releases bubbles of power. Only by touching the well can the curse be broken, but it is guarded by massive mutated crabs that will attack all intruders. And once the curse is broken...how can one survive the long journey up to precious air?

21. CARGO TROUBLE

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND INVESTIGATION

As our heroes are travelling on the "Dawnseeker", a swift ship under the command of the harsh captain Peregrin, they notice that some of their food and other small items have gone missing. The crew does not seem to know anything about the disappearances, some simply blaming unusually active rats that might have snuck into the cabin. But there is more going on.

The thefts are committed by Jakin, a small, nine year old boy, who has been hiding on the Dawnseeker for days. He snuck aboard in the last harbour, seeking to get away from a violent father. Now he is hungry and scared, only coming out of his hidey-hole at night to steal some food or other trinkets that he thinks might help him on his journey.

Captain Peregrin will not be thrilled about the stowaway, especially if he learns that the boy's father is the powerful merchant Vendile who has paid for half the cargo on board. And even if they talk the captain into letting Jakin stay...what are they to do with a nine year old troublemaker?



22. THE COST OF PASSAGE

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Magistrate Benrik is urgently needed for an important court case in the city of Guerding. Sadly the only way to get there in time and to save the life of an innocent nobleman is take a ship down the coast, past the Dagger Isles. This archipelago however is under the control of the pirate captain Krozin, whose younger brother Ektis the magistrate sentenced to death six months ago. Now Benrik has received many threats and even survived an assassination attempt. He has recently heard that Krozin has put a bounty on his head!

Benrik is a brave man and wishes to do his duty, no matter the risk. He isn't suicidal however and hires our heroes to somehow help him get through the Dagger Isles. Whatever the plan turns out to be, success will become more difficult once Captain Krozin is warned and Olliver, the magistrate's assistant, is a man up to his neck in gambling debts who might be tempted to sell out his mentor...

23. GIVING FINGERS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The merchant Peregrin is doing exceptionally well. While he was but a poor fisherman only three years ago he now owns two highly successful trading ships that always seem to be blessed with good weather and swift journeys. Nonetheless, there is misfortune in Peregrin's life too. He loves to cook but seems extremely clumsy with a knife...for he has cut off three of his own fingers already!

Unther, a rival merchant, is suspicious and hires our heroes to find out how it is possible that nothing bad ever happens to Peregrin's ships.

The first strange thing any investigators will notice is that their target, despite the stories of his great love of the kitchen, never actually seems to be doing any cooking himself. His servants also whisper of restless nights, hearing their master scream in his sleep. Some mumble of dark magic...and they are exactly right!

Peregrin has made a pact with an evil ocean spirit. In exchange for riches and good fortune the man has promised to sacrifice one of his fingers to the spirit each year. When the tenth finger falls the creature will claim his soul. At first this seemed like a fairly good deal, but with every passing month Peregrin is getting more and more desperate. Soon the fourth finger is due.

The only thing that can break the curse is the sinking of one of the merchant's ships. This would mean that the spirit has not upheld its end of the bargain and the contract is therefore void. When the creature however realizes how it has been tricked...both Peregrin and every single one of his helpers should better stay away from the ocean for a while

24. REMNANTS OF THE OLD TIMES

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND EXPLORATION

Kevrick, an old fisherman from Seahill Village, has caught a strange fish: a green, shimmering Razormouth, member of a species thought extinct for at least two hundred years! That however is only the start of something darker, for soon other old sea creatures start resurfacing, and several of them are dangerous enough to threaten the fishing boats of Seahill. Our heroes are hired to help with this new threat. They will have to battle several smaller monsters, noticing that they all seem to be coming from somewhere close to the uninhabited island of Rotoa.

That is where the answer lies: underneath the island is a massive underwater cavern, a self-contained ecosystem that has been cut off from the rest of the ocean for hundreds of years. Now a small quake has opened up a hole and many weird things are coming out. The best way to solve this problem is to close the hole again, but to do so one would have to dive down into the deeps and face several dangerous creatures eager to explore this new world and its many exotic dishes...

25. WOOD AND WATER

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

A massive, ancient tree has been broken by a storm and has fallen into the river. Now the water is pushing this large piece of driftwood out into the sea, past several small villages. The spirit Yaenna, who watched over the mighty tree for centuries, is trapped inside the wood and has been driven nearly insane by its wounds. She believes that only an excruciating death awaits her out in the great salt water and will try to die before she reaches the ocean. To this end Yaenna will use some of her last remnants of magic to draw in several locals, then attack them when they approach on their boats.

She does not kill any of them but scares them badly and wounds one quite severely.

Soon stories of the strange creature living in the floating tree spread and adventurers like our heroes are drawn to the area. They can either finish the spirit off or maybe somehow transport her back to the still living remnants of her mighty tree, where she could help nurse it back to health.

26. THE HORROR FLEET

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Only a little over a decade ago Merkandis Island was a small but prosperous nation under the rule of King Ermund. Then came bad harvests, rebellion and bloody civil war. Princess Landira was the only member of her family who survived and witnessing the gruesome deaths of her loved ones broke something within her. She descended deep into the ancient tunnels under Merkan Castle and woke the forbidden beings sleeping there. At the price of her soul Landira gained power...and she used it in horrible ways.

Creatures from the lightless depths rose at the command of the woman who would become known as the "Witchqueen". With grasping tentacles and eternal hunger they devoured the faithless people of Merkandis, leaving the island a broken wasteland.

Now, fifteen years later, the Witchqueen has returned. She has taken control of a vast pirate fleet, intimidating even the most ruthless of cutthroats with her pets from the deep. It seems that Landira's foul masters wish for her to carry their terror out into the world.

Our heroes are amongst the many brave souls drafted into service to protect the realm's coastal cities from this fleet of horror. They will soon have to realize that the Witchqueen's monsters are too many and too powerful. No ship can stand against them. The only way to stop this tide of darkness is to somehow make it to the cursed island of Merkandis, descend into the corrupted depths under the ruin of Merkan Castle and break the Oathstone, a magical artefact symbolizing Landira's dark bargain. Then her powers will mostly disappear, the monsters will ravage her own fleet and most pirates will most likely flee as fast as they can.

27. GLITTERS OF GOLD

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

As our heroes are passing through the coastal village of Emberend they spot a young boy who seems extremely excited. While fishing from the pier he saw something golden glittering amongst the rocks just a few hundred feet away. The whole village becomes extremely excited, for only six months ago a merchant vessel did lose a chest filled with jewellery, thrown overboard by an enraged passenger. The sailors never found the chest, so surely what is glittering must be some of its contents!

Chaos breaks out as nearly everyone races for their boats at the same time. The younger men are shoving and pushing each other, with several fistfights breaking out, while the village elder is trying to preserve his dignity and stop them before blood flows. Our heroes could be caught up in the frenzy.

Once the first boats reach the rocks they will indeed see something golden glittering amongst the seaweed and sand of the ocean floor at a depth of about six or seven yards. Several people, still wrestling and racing each other at the same time, jump into the water. Which is when the ravenous fishmen who were lurking amongst the rocks and devised this trap, attack in full force.

28. SEVEN YEARS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION

As our heroes are travelling through the fishing village of Goldenbeach, they are caught up in a crowd of people all rushing for the harbour. There a small raft approaches, captained by a bearded man dressed in rags. This is Selevan, a local fisher, but he disappeared during a storm seven years ago! Everyone is eager to hear his story and welcome him back home..but they are surprised that Selevan thinks he was only away for a few days. He seems confused by the changes that happened in his absence and can only say that his boat was smashed against the cliffs of a small island and he spent two days there building the raft.

The nameless island in question is only a few hours of sailing from Goldenbeach, and is visited by the local fishermen semi – regularly. There is no way Selevan could have spent seven years there without anyone noticing! After some confusion a group of men, our heroes amongst them, are tasked to sail to the island and investigate.

What is now called Selevan's island is not particularly large, only maybe a mile long and half a mile wide. It is searched easily enough and soon the remnants of some primitive tools that were used to fashion a small raft are discovered. It seems Selevan was telling the truth. But how can this be?

The answer to the riddle is a strange small bush with orange berries. This bush is home to a woodland spirit that took pity on the fisherman as he stumbled across the island seven years ago. Using its magic the spirit enchanted its berries to help Selevan rest and gain strength. Sadly such magic was far beyond the spirit's experience, and it completely misjudged the effects. Selevan slept for seven years, hidden below the bush, protected by the apologetic spirit.

If it is discovered it might actually be sorry enough to provide some further magical help for the villagers...hopefully this time with better results.

29. TRUE GRAVES

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

When the island city of Thaleven was established, it was a highly religious place. The priests of the mighty spirit known as “The King of the Depths” were in charge, ensuring that their many commands were followed and threatening all dissenters with ritual drowning. Fifty years ago there was an uprising, for the priests had become more and more corrupt. Their regime was overthrown, most of its power shattered.

With the rise of Thaleven to prominence more and more ships were coming in, bringing goods, people and new faiths. The large harbour grew richer and was fairly peaceful most of the time. For several weeks now however, it has been plagued by dark powers. Strange, sudden storms have damaged ships and even the edge of the harbour itself, the drinking water of Thaleven is getting saltier and saltier and now even the spirits of people freshly dead seem unable to rest. Our heroes are brought in by the council to fight the dark magic and save the city.

Over the course of their investigation there will be many different opinions. Some say a powerful wizard, employed by a rival harbour, has cursed Thaleven. Some say the gods are punishing the city for its decadent lifestyle. Some say the trouble is the revenge of the King of the Depths for the murder of so many of his priests. And in a way they are right.

Until about ten years ago the prevalent custom of burial was to sew up a body in a bag filled with rocks, then fling it from the “Peacecliffs” into the sea. This was considered as giving the King of the Depths his due and was mostly upheld as a custom even after his priests had lost power. With the coming of new faiths however many bodies are now buried on a new cemetery or burned to ashes.

When Thaleven was first established, all those centuries ago, its founders made a deal with an extremely powerful spirit of the ocean, promising it many gifts of dead flesh in exchange for its protection from storms, pirates and other dangers. Now, with hardly any bodies coming anymore, the King of the Depths considers the people of the city oathbreakers and seeks to punish them.

Only the few remaining priests of his faith, mostly shunned by society, might know what is truly going on and manage to reestablish negotiations.

30. LOVE HURTS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

Xanderan, eldest son to a powerful local magistrate, has it all. He is handsome, rich and good of heart, beloved by his community. Sadly he has given this good heart to a bad girl. Vesha the Younger is the extremely attractive daughter to the pirate captain of the same name. And she is about to marry another pirate, a dangerous swordsman known as Quentin Quickblade. Now, desperately in need of help, Xanderan comes to our heroes. Surely they can help him persuade his beloved that she would be better off with him than the uncultured cutthroat? Maybe they can make it so that he also appears more roguish than he is? Xanderan is confident that he can, once the wedding is off and he finds a chance to spend some time with Vesha, win her heart. The extreme disapproval of both Xanderan's father and Vesha the Elder can make the situation a bit complicated...but the boy is willing to pay our heroes well for success.



GM NOTES:

Since our heroes will spend most of the adventure trying to persuade Vesha to give Xanderan a chance the Gamemaster needs to make sure she is a very well developed character, has different likes and dislikes that our heroes can learn about and use to manipulate her.

31. A TASTE OF MAGIC

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The coastal cities of the realm are plagued by a series of disappearances: more than a dozen mages, wizards, soothsayers and sorcerers have vanished in the last two months. Some of them seem to have been taken by force, their quarters nearly destroyed, others are simply nowhere to be found. A worried group of mages from further inland hires our heroes to discover what danger lurks on the coast.

It will soon become apparent that the mages have not all been taken by the same people. The method of operation differs strongly and the only unifying factor seems to be that the victims were fairly strong magic users. Many of the less powerful wizards of the harbour cities are terrified but do not seem to be in great danger. Until two things happen at the same time: the powerful war-wizard Kotrina is taken when her ship, the Lightningsoul, is attacked by the full force of a small pirate armada...and Esrick, a middling sorcerer, narrowly escapes the clutches of a fairly unprofessional group of harbour thugs known as "The Hook Gang".

Putting more pressure onto the criminal underworld will soon reveal that the mage-nappings started at the behest of a pirate lord known as the Coinmaker, who is promising a significant sum for every magic user delivered to his stronghold on Silvercliff Island. This led to many different criminal organizations planning and executing the attacks. Nobody seems to know why the Coinmaker wants the mages though.

The stronghold is filled with pirates and holds several of the magic – users who disappeared. Not all of them are there though, for the pirate lord has shipped several of them away, about one every week. He brings them to another place nearby, a larger island by the name of Gesemba. Here rules the dangerous Bonewarrior tribe, who have recently acquired a taste for human flesh. Their leader, Dayenda, has discovered an ancient ritual, powered by evil spirits, that grants him and his closest followers some of the magic of any wizard whose heart they devour. Dayenda has offered the Coinmaker all the riches the tribe has amassed over the centuries, and the two have struck a deal.

Stopping the Bonewarriors, many of whom have now gained mystical abilities, will not be easy. And if our heroes cut off their supply Dayenda, now a powerful mage, might order his people to do their own "hunting"...far more brutal and bloody than anything the pirates could organize.

32. TOWER OF LIGHT

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Ridallo, the ruler of Silken Island, has always been a greedy and ruthless man. Now however he has gone further than ever before. His thugs and soldiers have started raiding neighbouring islands, enslaving whoever they can find and pressing them into heavy physical labour. This has been going on for months now, with over a hundred people working hard on a construction site close to the harbour of Silken Island. Lord Ridallo wants to construct the greatest light tower ever seen and is willing to see dozens die if that will make it happen faster.

Our heroes are hired to put a stop to the raids and liberate the captives. Ridallo and his mad scheme must be stopped before they plunge the islands into all out war.

Things are not quite as they seem however, for the lord of Silken Island is not just an insane brute. There is method to his madness. Ridallo has had visions and dreams of a powerful shadow of evil that would rise out of the ocean when winter arrives. Only the light of a tall tower, emerging from a magical crystal that needs to be placed on top, can protect Silken Island from this threat. What meaning do the lives of a few foreigners have when they can save thousands of his people?

Many of Ridallo's closest followers believe in the visions of their lord, even though they were instructed not to talk about them. Sadly, they are all deceived.

The dream have been sent by the witch Corwanna, who wants to use the tower for her own terrible purposes. She has been secretly adding arcane markings to the building's foundation as it is constructed and is also preparing the enchanted crystal. With these two magics together she will be able to call forth the terrible ocean spirits of the deep and take control over the whole island.

Should Corwanna get the feeling that our heroes are getting annoying she will send Lord Ridallo more dreams, this time letting him know that these foreign adventurers are in league with the coming shadow. The nobleman, who by now trusts into these visions completely, will immediately move to imprison or even kill our heroes.

33. BOATS IN THE SHADOW

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

The town of Dunstenine is experiencing a very unusual problem: its harbour seems to be haunted by the spirits of the dead! Locals report hearing strange sounds and seeing pale lights dance on the waves. Some of them have even seen the faces of dead loved ones, staring at them from the water of the harbour! Now people are terrified and at night most of the harbour work comes to a standstill.

Our heroes are hired by a group of merchants who are annoyed with the loss of profit. This strange problem needs to be fixed, the sooner the better!

Investigation in the harbour itself soon reveals that the occurrences are mostly centred around the old light tower. Since the new bigger one was built nearly fifty years ago this one has become abandoned, but is now a hiding spot for the smuggler gang known as "the Gliders". Their leader, One – Eye Jaring, has recently established a lucrative new business partner who brings him unusual jewellery. These items are sold to some of the wealthier inhabitants of Dunstenine...and they carry the magic of the dead realm itself in them!

Jaring, unaware of the dark power in his hands, will hesitate to share any information but can be persuaded to talk with a bit of pressure. He tells a strange story: one night when he was out on the ocean with his own boat a month ago he was met by another, smaller craft. The figure on board, hidden by a heavy cloak, offered him a trade: it would give him riches if he was able to, in exchange, steal small bits of stone from several temples and buildings of office in Dunstenine. The smuggler captain was not about to pass on such an offer and is unaware of what darkness might be unleashed with his help.

The boat Jaring met was captained by a long dead woman known only as "the Shrouded Queen". She is a powerful wraith who wishes to lead an army of spirits against the town she once lived in. For now old magic, centred in the most ancient buildings of the harbour, keeps her at bay. She has however, with Jaring's unwitting help, been weakening the protection and soon will be ready to strike.

34. FORBIDDEN ISLAND

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND EXPLORATION

About a week ago the fisherman Jelvis has disappeared after trying out new fishing grounds close to the fairly secluded island of Annula. Our heroes are hired by his family to find out what happened.

What begins as a fairly simple sounding task turns out much more dangerous than anticipated, for our heroes soon discover Annula to be very much inhabited. And these green – clad, well armed guards are not simply island folk either. They seem professional mercenaries, experienced and tight – lipped, and our heroes might even recognize one of them! Orreka is a sharp-faced woman, a master with both crossbow and knife, who once served in the royal navy and has crossed paths on more or less friendly terms with our heroes before.

Now Orreka and hundreds of other mercenaries are working for the Snake Lord, a powerful figure that controls many outlaw gangs and pirate crews. He has chosen Annula as the site of his newest operation and has built a large harbour hidden away in an inlet that is easy to miss. Here some of the best engineers of the realm (enslaved, blackmailed or bribed) and many unwilling labourers (including Jelvis) are building a whole fleet of new warships for the Snake Lord, a fleet that will make him the most prominent power on the local waterways for many years to come.

After hopefully realizing that there are too many guards on the island and coming back with that information our heroes will be approached by royal agents who will offer them a vast sum of gold if they can infiltrate Annula and sabotage the construction of the ships. A small but heavily armed royal fleet will hit the criminal harbour only a few hours later, destroying as much as they can.

35. A ROYAL DISCOVERY

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE (OR MAYBE EXTREMELY LONG) ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT



While travelling along the coast or close to a river our heroes are startled by what sounds like the cries of an infant. When they follow the sound they find a woven basket in the water with a squirming baby within. The poor thing is being stalked by a hungry wild beast that is getting ready to attack and it will not quiet down for a long time even after the creature is chased off.

In the basket with the baby our heroes can find two large jewels of significant worth, a massive signet ring bearing the sigil of the Duke of Gyptos Island and a parchment, protected from the water by an oilcloth. The parchment bears a note which explains that the infant is Marcian, only son and heir to the Duke Rennald who was betrayed and murdered by his younger brother, Iventis, only a week ago. The traitor, now styling himself as duke, would have murdered tiny Marcian without a second thought. The note, written by the duchess Karinna herself, presumes that she has been killed and implores whoever finds him to take good care of her son, accept the jewels as payment and hand over the ring to him when Marcian comes of age. Until then, for his own protection, the child should not be told of his heritage.

Should our heroes investigate they will indeed learn of Duke Iventis recent ascent after the hunting accident of his brother. They might also learn that lady Karinna is not dead, but instead imprisoned on a small but heavily defended island fortress. Right now most of the inhabitants of Gyptos Island are confused, unsure what to think, but after a few months of Iventis' tyrannical rule they will be ready to rise up and overthrow him. Both mother and child could be powerful tools to gather the people to our heroes' banner.

36. JUSTICE IS SALTY

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND INVESTIGATION

While travelling along the coast our heroes come upon a strange spectacle: a group of twenty or so locals have gathered on the beach, gazing out into the ocean. And there, amongst them in the sand, is a head without a body!

Moving closer our heroes will quickly realize that the head belongs to a man who has been buried in the sand, only a few feet from the waterline. The man looks terrified and begs our heroes to save him, loudly proclaiming his innocence. One of the onlookers, an older man in a black robe, is a minor magistrate by the name of Giska. She decrees that this offender, the fisher Bendin, has been sentenced to death by drowning for the crime of murder. Now they are waiting for the tide to silence his cries and carry his soul away. If our heroes wish to help they only have about two hours...

Rushing to the nearby village our heroes will quickly find Bendin's brother Alok, who is extremely drunk. Alok's wife, the sturdy Harina, can say that her brother in law has been spotted sabotaging some of the other fishing boats, something that could cause the death of many people. The witnesses are the old fisher Janro and his wife Jelena. If our heroes are quick they can find out that the old couple has lied: a brute named Fellin, local fisher and smuggler, wants to get rid of Bendin whom he suspects has spotted him at night. Without wanting to dirty his own hands the thug managed to get rid of a potential accuser and give himself the entertaining spectacle of a drowning judgement, one he is enjoying with great pleasure.

37. HALF A MAP

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Our heroes save the life of a drowning man named Brios, who, in gratitude, offers them an old map that has been in his family for two generations. Apparently it leads to an abandoned goldmine holding immense riches, but nobody has been able to crack the strange code that it is written in.

Our heroes will have to seek help from the well known sage Olvander, who is extremely arrogant but also highly skilled when it comes to deciphering codes. Indeed Olvander will only take a few days to understand the map...but will have bad news for his employers. What they have is only one half of the map. The other half of the information is missing.

A short time later Olvander is murdered and his house ransacked. Soon our heroes will find themselves chased by a group of cutthroats. They are working for the old outlaw captain Silverbeard, who has been after this mine for decades. He holds the second half of the map...tattooed on the back of his son, an extremely dangerous brute and first mate of the "Cutter", one of the fastest pirate ships sailing the seas. Silverbeard and Brios' father had been close friends once and they both murdered the man who originally found the mine. While one of them became even more of a criminal after this dark deed the other one left the life of the cutthroat behind...but always kept the map.

If our heroes want to reach the mine, which is hidden on a small nameless island, riddled with hills and caves, they will have to survive Silverbeard's attacks, take down his son and decipher the other half of the map. Then, potentially chased by an enraged pirate captain, the race towards the island of treasure is on.

38. TERRORS OF THE DEEP

HIGH LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

While our heroes are staying in a Malsboro village, very close to the ocean, they hear the locals call out in excitement. A whale, exhausted and seemingly injured, has beached itself not far from the edge of the village. Such a supply of meat is a massive gift for the people of Malsboro and many of them are gathering to watch the whale die.

In all the excitement nobody seems to notice that the poor animal is not only terrified, but trying to move away from the water inch by inch. For there, just out of view, lies a horrible creature from the deeps. If the whale is not returned into the ocean soon the thing will leave the water, unveiling its terrible majesty, and devour whatever it can grab. It will not stop before most of the people of Malsboro, whoever is not quick enough to escape or paralysed by fear, are dead.

39. WARS OF DUST

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

For several years now many coastal cities have been struggling with an epidemic of drugs threatening the lives of their citizens. These narcotics are smuggled inland by many different criminal organizations and so far all efforts to stop them have failed. The situation is made worse by the death of a local celebrity, a young bard by the name of Travella. She was beloved by many but was found dead from an overdose only a few days ago.

The outrage in the community is great and Lord Mayor Hanzing is forced to hire our heroes as assistance to the local city guard. Soon they will learn that most guardsmen are either incompetent buffoons or actually corrupt and in league with the smugglers. During the investigation one name is repeated again and again: the Dustbringers, most influential local crime gang, is the group most responsible for bringing “the product” into the city. Taking them down will not be easy...for they are led by Lord Mayor Hanzing himself, who has amassed incredible wealth with the drug trade!

And even Hanzing is unveiled as the villain he is, the drugs will not stop coming. Other criminal gangs are eager to take over the Dustbringers' share of the profits.

The only way to stop the narcotics and the epidemic they have caused is to destroy the origin of the trade, where the drugs are grown and harvested. The trail leads to the island of Okaina. At first glance it is a quiet and unassuming place, but in truth most of Okaina's citizens work on the drugfields. Five years ago they have been subjugated by a small army of cutthroats, amongst them some of Lord Mayor Hanzing's favoured lieutenants. Now the island, on whose soil the drugs grow like nowhere else, is one large plantation of narcotics.

Only by breaking through the army of small boats patrolling the waterways and liberating the people of Okaina can our heroes be victorious, destroying the evil powder and saving the lives of hundreds of people.

40. BLOOD IN THE PAST

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS
ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

While taking in freshwater on a tiny island the crew of the boat our heroes are on stumbles upon a half – dead man. He looks like he has not eaten anything for a long time and feebly asks for help. Then he collapses, unconscious or dying.

The man, as he will reveal once he wakes up a bit more refreshed a few days later, is called Marton, once captain Matron of a ship by the name of “Dancer”. He tells a tale of mutiny, how he was ousted and left behind on this tiny island so he could starve to death. He blames all this on his first mate, the villainess Pilla, who persuaded his crew to betray him and become pirates, keeping all the goods in the cargo hold – rare silks and spices – to themselves.

The story is not quite true. “Marton's” real name is Darius, better known as “Captain Silvertooth”, a notorious pirate who just merely managed to jump overboard when he lost a power struggle and his cutthroat crew turned against him. Darius will try to use our heroes to gain revenge upon Pilla and her closest supporters, offering to lead them to a nameless island, hidden amongst corral reefs, where the Dancer has its hiding place. He urges them to strike quickly. The villains have already had more than a week's head start and they will not be on the island forever.



41. A CRIMSON BLOOM

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

On the exotic island of Naan there grows a tall flower known as the Crimson Cup. People say it is the only place in the world where said flower can be found and all attempts to transport it anywhere else have failed. There are many legends surrounding the Crimson Cup. Some say the flower can read peoples' minds and tell good men from evil ones. Others speak of strange regenerative abilities, that the plant regrows within a few hours even if fully cut down. The most well known legend however is known as the Crimson Bloom. The flower blooms only once every three decades, and then only for a few hours. During that time it fills the air with a scent so magical that it can grant people a longer and healthier life.

Our heroes are hired by a young nobleman by the name of Mirion, a lover and scholar of exotic flowers. They are to escort him to the island of Naan and make sure he can witness the Crimson Bloom. They need to hurry, for the bloom is said to happen in about ten days, and the journey there will take nearly that long.

It is not easy to get to the island. The currents are treacherous and sudden gusts can create waves of significant size. Our heroes are also not the only ones racing to reach the island. At least one of Mirion's rivals, a spiteful merchant by the name of Genser, wants to be the only one to witness the rare bloom. He has hired a crew of dangerous mercenaries led by the half – insane wizard Okter, who enjoys nothing more than burning enemies alive, and they are ready to do whatever it takes to earn their pay.

Once the island is reached the dangers do not stop, for the Crimson Cup grows on a high peak and is defended by a vicious tribe who considers the ground around it sacred. And then there is the bloom itself...for the magic of its scent can not only grant a longer life but also strengthen peoples' emotions, which can lead to aggression or even madness.

42. BEAST ISLAND

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Titon, son to the wealthy merchant lord Sundrick, has always been a weird youngster with a knack for finding trouble. His latest exploit was to hire a small crew and set sail for an uncharted island that he found described in an old story. Powerful magic is said to be hidden there, magic that Titon wanted to claim for himself. Now both him and his new crew have not been heard of in weeks and Lord Sundrick has hired another ship, the “Black Swallow”, to look for him. Our heroes are asked to provide protection for captain Ingol and his crew.

Approaching the strange island will prove tricky enough due to reefs and chaotic currents, but the real danger waits after landfall has been made. Soon the wreckage of another ship, only a few weeks old, is discovered close to the beach...but there are also many broken bones scattered about in the sand.

The island is filled with strange creatures, seemingly left over from an ancient time, and many of them are hungry. They have devoured most of Titon's original crew. The few remnants have been scattered: some, half mad with fear, are hiding in mud and tree like animals. Others, led by young Titon, have set out towards the centre of the island where they have glimpsed a mystical tower.

Finding a way through the jungle and swamp, always on the lookout for deadly predators, will take nearly two full days. Upon reaching the mystical tower however our heroes will be greeted warmly by a beautiful woman. She does not share her true name but invites them to stay for a few days. Sadly the lady says that our heroes are the first visitors she has had in decades and pretends to know nothing about Titon and his crew. In truth this woman is a powerful enchantress by the name of Kalendira, who seeks to use a magical potion upon everyone who visits her, thus turning them into strange beasts. Her power is great but she can be defeated if one were to learn her name and speak it. Only a book hidden deep within the tower contains her name though. And the strange bird-creature that is one of the enchantress' guardians – and was once Titon – has learned it too...



43. BIRDCRAP

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

The seagulls visiting the town of Gullhaven are considered holy, for they were once the favoured pets of a wise sorceress who married the god of the sea and is only known as “the Bride”. Whoever injures the gulls, even by mistake, must pay a hefty fine. Whoever kills a gull is whipped.

This has led to minor issues in the past, but now things are becoming worse and worse. The local gulls, maybe emboldened by decades of worship, have started bombarding the townsfolk from above. Many people have been blinded by white crap in their faces and some have even injured themselves in the moment of panic.

Our heroes are hired by the desperate major Aron, who is not really sure what to ask of them. He wants the gulls either driven away – without injuring them! - or, ideally, to stop their disgusting behaviour without any other changes.

After a bit of investigation our heroes might discover that only certain gulls exhibit such strange behaviour. These all come from a bird colony in the cliffs about an hour west of Gullhaven. There, amongst the rocks and nests of hundreds of birds, lives a strange, mischievous hermit. Once a devotee of the Sea God, he has become slightly insane from too much saltwater and sun. After stopping by Gullhaven one day and being treated with little respect he decided to teach the arrogant townsfolk a lesson and used his skills with animals to influence the gulls.

The hermit is neither particularly powerful nor particularly brave, but finding him in his hidden cave (and making the climb to it!) could prove tricky.

44. HUNT FOR BLOOD AND COIN

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

An interesting rumour is spreading through the port towns of the realm. Apparently some strange alchemist has managed to create a magical concoction that allows someone to control the very waves of the mighty ocean! While many people do not believe in these rumours our heroes soon find out that they are true indeed. They are approached by a sorceress named Mathila who asks them for their help on a very dangerous fishing expedition. She admits that she was the alchemist who created what she calls “the Sealord Potion”, but she was only able to create a single one. Now she needs more resources to continue production...and the main resource is found in the blood of the rare and elusive waterdrake!

She has already chartered a ship, captained by a man named Elrok, who was made desperate enough by gambling debts to involve himself into such a dangerous mission. The first part of the hunt will be to track down a waterdrake's favoured prey: sunceels have become rather rare but can still be found hiding amongst the many reefs of Shipbreaker Bay. After these first dangers are mastered the real hunt begins: bringing a waterdrake to the surface is no easy task by itself. Capturing it alive, as Mathila intends to – for she wants the animal to provide her with blood for many months to come – makes the whole adventure rather deadly...which is why the sorceress will not reveal that little “capturing alive” detail until the drake is already very close, then trying to silence objections with the promise of a vast amount of money.

45. GRASPING HORRORS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

Our heroes are called to the local beach by a few small boys who firmly insist that they have found a monster for the mighty warriors to slay. And they are not actually wrong. There, washed ashore amongst the sands, lies the severed tentacle of some vast sea monster. It is twitching faintly but already starting to stink quite a bit.

This curiosity might be worth a nice sum of money if it can be brought to some scholar before it rots away completely, but it still has some fight left in it. The tentacle will, acting purely on instinct, grasp whatever creature moves close to it, be it hero, greedy fisherman or curious child, and try to crush it with a strong grip. It might be tricked by placing a rock or other object into its grasp.

But even so it can be dangerous, for the tentacle has tiny protrusions, so small that they are nearly impossible to see. If one of these touches a person's skin it will deliver a powerful toxin that might, even in its decayed state, be strong enough to stop someone's heart.

46. SHIP OF VENGEANCE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Two years ago several coastal villages were struck by an unusually vicious pirate raid. Amongst the fifty or so people killed was the family of the wizard Geron, who was at the time away to follow a summons by the king. After hearing of the tragedy the mage left royal service and became a hermit somewhere on a small island.

Now rumour has it that Geron has reemerged as captain of a new ship that he has named the “Wrath”. He is looking for a crew and promising all those in his service that together they would take horrible revenge against all pirate scum. Our heroes are hired to keep an eye on what is going on by the harbour master Elvinus, who is slightly nervous about the whole situation. They will watch as several dozen men who have all lost friends and family to pirates gather to form a dangerous crew. Many of the men are at least slightly insane, but Geron does not seem to mind.

Soon the Wrath shows that it is far more than a simple ship. The wizard has used all of its magic to fashion terrible weapons of smoke and fire and he intends to use them. Three pirate ships go up in flames, its crew burned alive. With the third ship, the Falchion, Geron also burns about twenty captives who were held by the pirates as hostages.

Now the authorities are even more worried, for they have seen the Wrath's power. Who is to say that the mad mage and his ship of flame will not eventually turn against the wrong people? Our heroes are given the delicate task to try and reason with Geron and his crew of men thirsting for pirate blood...or stop them if necessary.

47. HUNTING THE SUN

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The old watchtower has stood on the sea cliffs overlooking the village of Worthing for many generations. Wind and rain have worn the stone away, yet still the tower endured. Now something strange is going on in the old ruin, for people have seen flickering lights up there at night. Many are whispering of evil spirits, others think that bandits might have made camp there. Either way, our heroes are hired to investigate.

After a steep and difficult climb over salty, slippery cliffs the old watchtower is reached. Our heroes will immediately realize that the stone has been partially repaired. Nobody seems to be home at the moment, but the ruin is filled with many parchments. On them and on the stone itself a chaotic hand has scribbled down strange arcane calculations, lines that seem to be centred on a massive mirror hanging in a weird angle and facing the sea. This mirror is not a simple item, but instead a magic weapon. The mad wizard Gordile has created this artefact to capture the rays of the sun and the warmth of its reflection on the water. The magic of the mirror can store all the heat and is then designed to release it in a single, violent burst.

Gordile is nearly finished with the “charging” phase and wants to test the destructive power of his new toy on the village of Worthing.

48. DARK WATERS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND INVESTIGATION

A strange new threat has emerged on the ocean: several ships have been attacked by something the sailors call “dark water”, a tar-like substance that floats on the waves and can stick to a ship. It eats the planks away in mere minutes and consumes the flesh and bones of any living creature it touches too. Only a few sailors have survived meeting it, and those few have gone insane. They babble about a “Shadow-Eye”, speak of an alien landscape filled with dead trees, haunted by evil spirits.

Our heroes are hired to find out how this evil substance can be destroyed. Trying to battle it head – on is fruitless, for it seems uncaring of blade, arrow or fire. Even magic has little effect. The only way to end this threat is to follow the mumblings of the mad sailors and find the strange island under a red star, which has emerged from the ocean only a few months ago. There, amidst cyclopean ruins haunted by inhuman spirits, stand an ancient temple. In its centre is a large black crystal, shaped like an eye. Within it the Dark Water has been imprisoned for a long time, and it can once again be used as a weapon against the threat.

Caution is necessary however, for the Dark Water is more intelligent than one might think, and the sight of the Shadow Eye is the only thing it fears.

49. CHAINS OF FALSE LOVE

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

Lord Scriver is a vicious thug and ruler of the small island of Escordis. He is feared and hated by his people, whom he violently abuses. About three years ago the situation got heated, but any thought of rebellion was weakened by the sudden appearance of Lady Eswin, the incredibly beautiful and kind hearted woman the lord suddenly married. She has enchanted many of the islanders with her presence and made even the most hot-headed insurgent hesitate. Soon after a little girl was born, Lucilla, who despite her tiny size seems to have an even more treasured status on Escordis.

Despite the lord's sudden good fortune which seems to have mellowed the darkness in his heart, some people, especially those who have only heard the story without meeting the family themselves, are highly suspicious. Our heroes are hired by the merchant Basro the Younger, son to a murdered father, who saw his plans of rebellion die over a year ago. He, who cannot return there himself while Scriver is in power, wants our heroes to sail to the island of Escordis and find out as much as they can about Lady Eswin, who might be some sort of dark sorceress.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The lady is a kind woman, always willing to help and heal her people. Most islanders would gladly die for her. But there is a sadness to her eyes sometimes, and occasionally she retreats to a small tower overlooking the sea for days. If they spy on her successfully our heroes might be able to learn the truth: Lady Eswin is not human but instead a spirit of the sea who was captured by Lord Scriver and forced into mortal form. She has lost most of her magic, dampened by an amulet she can never take off or even speak about. Eswin does her best to spread calm and goodness through the human world, but she longs to be away from her aggressive master, to return to the vast depths that are her real home. If she were to take her daughter and leave however Escordis island would erupt in open warfare within a few short months. For Basro the Younger that is a very desirable outcome.

50. THE TALE OF THREE SONS

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND EXPLORATION

The powerful arch-wizard Istheran once ruled over the island of Benedin. He had three sons: Jesam, Shorik and Daris, all of whom became strong mages in their own right under the watchful tutelage of their father. As Istheran grew old he sent his sons out into the world, to use their powers and change the course of history, each in their own way. He prophesied that one day they would know that it was time for them to return to Benedin and that together they would claim both the crown and the magical power that was their birthright.

After fifteen years the time has come. All three sons have started having strange dreams of Benedin, hearing the voice of the island's spirit calling them home. Over time the brothers have developed some animosity towards one another however, each striving to become to sole ruler of their father's domain.

Jesam has gathered a group of fanatics, calling themselves "the Purified", who worship him as a prophet. He will return to Benedin at their head while sending out groups of assassins to make sure none of his brothers can be there to challenge his right as the eldest son.

Shorik has fallen in with bad people, becoming one of the most powerful wizards in the realm's underworld. He has hired a large group of saboteurs to find his brothers and slow them down long enough for him to be able to take the throne.

Daris, the only one who remained noble in spirit and deed, has hired our heroes to escort him to Benedin, for he fears that his brothers might try to cut his journey short.

Sadly there is an even darker power in the background. For Istheran is not dead. He is ancient and frail now, hiding in the catacombs beneath his castle. And the arch-wizard is preparing a powerful ritual that will consume the life force of his sons and all their followers. With this vast energy flowing into him, Istheran is sure that he can make himself young again...or at least prolong his own life by a few precious decades.



51. DEATH TO THE GODS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

For over a hundred years the island of Lighttower has been a place visited by many pilgrims. It is said that the god of the sea himself has, with his own hands, built the massive white spire that rises on the island. Now the tower is considered holy ground and houses and order of priests. Many sailors come to sacrifice and pray for safe voyages. In the last three months their prayers have not been heeded. Quite the opposite in fact. A ruthless group of pirates that only seems to be targeting pilgrims has appeared in the area. They use small boats, coming in at night, and have even attacked settlements on the island where pilgrims gather. The local guards are unable to catch them, which is why our heroes are brought in.

They will soon learn that the pirates are clever and seem to be hiding on Lighttower island. They apparently know the area very well and often seem to vanish in thin air. The pirates are in fact using secret underground tunnels built by the priests many decades ago. They know of their existence because their leader, Erinnus, was a priest himself up until a year ago. The young man, struggling with his studies, was the target of much harassment by the older priests. Eventually he snapped, transferring his hatred of the bullies to everyone following the sea god. He ran away from the temple and, with a mix of his knowledge and sheer ruthlessness, gathered several cutthroats around him, whom he promised rich pickings as long as they did not hesitate to attack pilgrims and shrines. The pirates, considering themselves much tougher and more experienced than their young leader, humour him so far. They still need the local secrets he keeps, but will turn against him quickly if they are ever under significant threat.

52. RIDDLES IN A BOTTLE

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

For over a week now dozens of bottles have been washed ashore in the vicinity of the small town of Havert. They all contain parchment with strange texts and symbols, completely unrecognisable to the locals. Our heroes are drawn by the rumours of riddle and treasure.

Soon it will become clear that all parchments bear one of four messages and only by putting four different bottles together can the riddle be solved. The problem is though: a gang of mercenaries has recently started collecting these bottles too. Their leader, a skilled fencer by the name of Sepurinna, thinks that the parchments lead to some sort of vast treasure...and she has managed to claim every single bottle of one specific kind, thus making everyone but her incapable of solving the riddle. Sadly Sepurinna and her men are not smart enough to figure everything else out by themselves, so they might try to abduct one of our heroes and force them to solve the riddle for her.

In the end the whole thing leads to a small island and a specific spot on a cliff. There a magical door will open, revealing the workshop of the old wizard Fisstolis. It was this ancient eccentric who came up with the bottles and riddles as a way to find a pupil, basically the smartest man or woman around. If there is no interest in his teachings or nobody gifted in the arts of magic amongst the group that solved the riddle Fisstolis will be disappointed but still reward clever thinking with some interesting items from his collection.

53. CAPTAIN COLDWATER'S DOOM

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

After terrorizing the coastline with his "Icehawk", the pirate captain Coldwater has finally been captured by local guards. They caught him, quite literally, with his pants down while he was visiting a local house of pleasure whose owner sold him out. Now Coldwater is supposed to be shipped to the city of Nebisport, a place that he has attacked several times. The people there want to watch him hang with their own eyes.

Our heroes are hired as additional guards to help escort the pirate on his two day journey to the noose. The trip will be extremely dangerous, for the Icehawk is still out there, looking for its captain. Coldwater himself is a ruthless, charismatic man, and might try to intimidate or even bribe some of the other guards into switching sides. Either way, the young honourable lieutenant Stilden and our heroes might be the only ones capable of fighting off the angry pirates and making sure Coldwater gets what he deserves.

54. A DARKENED PATH

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

For three months now the Harbinger, a large pirate ship, has been the bane of the local waters. It seems to know exactly where and when to strike to capture lucrative bounty while at the same time evading navy patrols. Now law enforcement is becoming suspicious, assuming that the pirates must have someone leaking them information. Our heroes are hired to find the traitor.

After some inquiries they will soon realize that the Harbinger was engaged in battle with a ship of the royal navy a little over three months ago. This vessel, the Silversabre, was captained by the valiant Costis, young decorated hero of the navy forces. Sadly the navy lost the battle, with the ship itself sunk and most of her crew slain. Costis is assumed dead but there are some rumours that he might be alive and a prisoner of the pirates.

When reporting back our heroes are ordered to locate and free the young officer, whose tortured lips must be the source of the knowledge the Harbinger has been employing for the past three months.

Somewhat sadly the navy high command is mistaken: Costis was a prisoner at the start, but then he led a mutiny amongst the pirates and killed their leader, Nikaros, in single duel. After the bloodshed the young man realized that he found pirate life much more rewarding and thrilling than his days with the navy...and now he is captain of the Harbinger and uses his knowledge for evil deeds. But is his lost forever or can he be brought back into the fold?

GM NOTES:

Stories of redemption in RPGs are mainly focused upon the player characters, mostly due to the fact that the players usually go for the quickest possible solution to a problem. Killing a villain is nearly always easier than trying to reason with them. With Costis, if you want to attempt redemption, there are a few things you need to make sure of: firstly that some NPC offers the player characters a sizeable bonus reward in case they manage to get the rogue captain back on the "right side". Secondly Costis himself should be a likeable fellow for player characters and players alike. To establish this they would have needed to interact with him before his fall. Many players tend to like NPCs who are funny and disrespectful towards authority - assuming the authority in question isn't their own - so that could be a possible way to make Costis dear to them. Thirdly, to make a redemption possible, our heroes should have some background knowledge about the captain, information about his loved ones or similar things that they can use in clever ways to bring him back into the fold.

55. VILLAGE FEUD

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND INVESTIGATION

The fishing villages of Qondas and Masin are neighbours, lying on opposite sides of a bay. For many years the people of both settlements have been friends but over time relationships have slightly deteriorated. Now there is a real feud in the air, for Qondas has had several rough months. Their fishing grounds seem to have been abandoned by most fish swarms and they struggle to catch enough to survive. Masin on the other hand seems to be enjoying many successful fishing expeditions and bringing in large hauls.

Several people in Qondas have voiced the suspicion that Masin is stealing from them somehow. They demand that the richer village share their fishing grounds. The people of Masin, who are working hard and starting to become wealthy, are outraged. These lazy bastards in Qondas, so they speak, simply need to work harder instead of moving in on their turf and trying to claim their catch!

Our heroes are called in by the people of Masin, paid well to protect them from potential violence by angry Qondasians. And there will be a few clashes indeed, for several of the men from the poorer village are desperate enough to attempt stealing fish and willing to beat up anyone who tries to stop them.

The real culprit however hides amongst our heroes' employers. Marlon is an old fisherman who has discovered that the berries of a rare bush growing in the hills above Masin make for excellent bait and that its aroma is enough to draw the fish from many miles away. He has used this knowledge, without sharing it with anyone but his wife, to draw in many catches, uninterested in the consequences his success can have for the village of Qondas.

56. WEBS OF THE SEA

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The small fishing communities of the Kerbis Isles are under threat from a very strange phenomenon. For nearly two weeks now large quantities of grey material, closely resembling pieces of a spider's web, have been washed ashore. They are now covering large parts of the coastline, with thousands of rotting fish captured within them. This not only makes it more difficult for the locals to catch fish themselves, it even makes it hard to leave the shore in small boats at all! And it seems with every passing day more and more of this “waterweb”, as the locals call it, is coming.

Our heroes are brought in to help and they will soon realize that the web is not the only danger. Small creatures, nearly invisible to the naked eye, live within the grey strands. They can attach themselves to a living being, causing a strongly itching rash. This has not happened yet because the “attack” has just begun, but these parasites grow within the host until they are nearly the size of a large coin, then burst forth in an extremely painful release, eager to return to the water.

The threat comes from the depths of the sea itself, where a massively bloated creature, mother to the brood of parasites, can be found lurking in a sunken ship. This disgusting, many-legged and many – finned creature needs to be slain before it can call upon all its children.

The only way to get rid of the parasites themselves is to put the host's body under great heat. Prolonged exposure to a sauna or something similar will kill the creature hiding under the skin.



57. BLADES FOR A CHILD

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Our heroes are travelling on a ship when a richly dressed, obviously pregnant woman comes aboard with two heavily armed guards. She will seem nervous but also arrogant, demanding the best place on the ship and willing to pay for it. This woman, Lady Helina, will exchange a few words with our heroes and be reasonably friendly towards them, even while driving the captain and his crew insane with ludicrous demands.

A few days later the whole ship is woken up by the sounds of combat coming from the lady's rooms. Those who rush to the scene see a horrible view. One of her guards lies slain and the other is already dying. Lady Helina herself seems to have managed to kill one of the black – garbed attackers and the second one jumps into the water, swallowed up by its dark depths.

The lady is horrified and tells a tale that her lover, father of her child and a very powerful man, wants both her and the baby slain because they have become “inconvenient” for him. Even when pressed she does not want to reveal a name but will beg for assistance, for the assassins are sure to return.

The stress of the battle seems to have affected the child however, which is now eager to be born. Only two days after the incident Lady Helina suddenly discovers that she is about to give birth.

At the same time, while the ship's extremely nervous medicus is trying to assist the lady, a massive storm starts gathering with great speed. The captain and crew ask everyone to brace themselves, for things are about to get ugly. At the start of the storm is when the assassins strike. Three of them, highly skilled, have come for the mother and child. But they are not the hired hands of a noble. They are Bladesorrow, a cult of religious fanatics dedicated to exterminating unholy powers...and they know that Lady Helina is part of a dark sisterhood. She is about to give birth to a mighty demon whose magic has summoned the storm, and she needs to be stopped at all costs. Will our heroes let a child be slain? Or will they watch the baby not only kill its own mother but also use its evil powers to destroy the ship and everyone aboard?

58. FRUIT OF LIFE AND DEATH

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

The Sidalli – tribe of the tiny island bearing the same name has many stories of the strange tree that stands on an even tinier island in the middle of a lake in the middle of Sidalli. The wise men say the tree has been planted by an evil god to tempt the good and that whoever eats of its strange, purple fruit will find himself a servant of death.

On the mainland this tree is known as the “Hopegiver” and is considered extremely rare. In fact this one ancient tree on Sidalli might be the only one left. A young, desperate scholar named Binthorn has heard of the Hopegiver's existence and read that its fruit might be the only cure for his dying mother. He hires our heroes to bring him as much of that fruit from Sidalli as they can.

After arriving on the island any strangers will soon be met by the locals. The warriors of Sidalli are quite suspicious of anyone well armed, for they have been attacked by pirates in the past. They will force our heroes to speak to their council of elders and state their business there.

The Sidalli will not allow anyone to take more than one fruit and even then only with a very good reason. They speak of the old legends and warn that the tree can turn people to evil. They are not wrong: the juice within the Hopegiver fruit can be a powerful healing agent, but also contains a strong toxin which can mess with peoples' minds. Only a very careful dosage – something that our heroes might learn from the old tales – can both save Binthorn's mother while at the same time letting her keep her kind, nurturing personality.

59. A FOUL TRADE

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

The fishing village of Endir is ravaged by a dangerous storm. On the next day, while our heroes are passing through, they hear about a large ship that has been forced ashore close by. The vessel is a massive galley that seems damaged by her landing. Soon a group of well armed, brutal looking men will approach Endir. They are looking to buy supplies, but their whole demeanour screams danger. These are crew members of the Liberator, a dangerous slave ship. Their captain, Quona Bloodchain, has lost more than twenty slaves during the storm. Now she is looking to reclaim her losses. She is willing to use violence against Endir village and her people are dangerous fighters. Only with a gift of supplies and honeyed words might she be swayed, especially when they are delivered by a good – looking man...

60. PAIN AND THE WIND

HIGH LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Over the course of the last three months, nearly a dozen people have disappeared in the poor quarters of the harbour-town of Bellina. The fishermen and labourers living in this area are terrified and angry, for their demands for help fall on deaf ears. The important people of Bellina are more concerned with the appearance of horrible storms threatening their ship routes and therefore their income. These two things are connected in fact, as our heroes are likely to discover when hired to help by the poor folk who are willing to give everything they have just to feel safe again. These storms always happened just a few nights after the most recent disappearances.

While snooping around our heroes will be violently attacked by a group of seemingly insane men, harbour thugs whipped into a frenzy by some strange drug. The trail leads back to the smuggler gang known as “the Moonless”. Their leader, Odile, has apparently made a strange and bloody deal just before his disappearance. The Moonless drug some of the poor folk from Bellina, then smuggle them out of the harbour and down the coast. They leave them, bound and gagged, on a remote beach. When they return a few hours later there are objects of silver and gold on the beach and the captives are gone.

These poor souls are in fact taken by a coven of powerful witches who have decided to destroy Bellina for the glory of their master, an octopoid alien god of the deep. They are sacrificing the captives in ritual dances at a black obsidian rising from the shallow water only a few miles further down the coast. With every blood rite they become stronger and the storms they summon more powerful.

61. MASTER OF PUPPETS

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

Strange rumours have been going on recently. People say that several locals have disappeared, simply vanishing during the night. Tales of some sort of evil spirit are spreading.

When our heroes are spending their night in a small seaside village they are awoken by strange music. While the locals are trying to find the source of it several of them – and maybe even a few of our heroes – feel a nearly irresistible pull. They follow the music like sleep walkers, trudging down onto the beach. There they will throw themselves into the sea and start swimming.

Should anyone try to stop those affected by the music they will immediately turn aggressive, punching, kicking and screaming, trying to get away with great fury.

The source of this sinister magic is a large ship hiding in the darkness, only a few hundred feet from the shore. This is the Puppetmaster, an evil vessel controlled by a powerful, masked mage. The silent figure is looking for a new crew, for its old one, all slaves to the music, have mostly been destroyed in a distant battle.

This being of sinister strength and magic cannot be harmed by any means, its body nothing but a pile of rags and a porcelain mask floating in the air. The creature is bound to the ship however, and will be hurt if the ship is hurt and die if it is sufficiently damaged. That is also the only way to break the music before the new and old crew members rip any attacker to shreds.

62. STORMCALLER

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

For many decades the shipping route past the Corelan Archipelago has been one of the most profitable of the whole realm. In recent weeks however many ships have been lost amongst the islands, overcome by sudden bad weather. Now a large group of merchants is threatening to pull all their vessels out of the area, which could lead to massive financial losses on all sides.

Our heroes are hired by Lord Ironin of the port city of Ethelen, a settlement that profits hugely from the current trade. They are to sail to the archipelago and find out if the issue can be fixed.

While the journey itself will be easy enough our heroes will find themselves in great peril as soon as they approach the closest Corelan island. A storm is brewing with unnatural swiftness and it will threaten to tear the vessel apart.

This evil is the handiwork of a powerful witch by the name of Twistle, who is using blood sacrifices and a powerful magical cauldron to summon the storms. She has been preying upon the locals for years, but now she has decided to claim more than just a few small islands. Over the course of the many storms Twistle has had her disgusting servants, corrupted sea creatures of all kind, gather many of the riches the sunken ships were carrying. She will retreat into the depths if threatened, so our heroes will have to gain information about her quickly and strike with great ferocity if they want to destroy her, the cauldron, or both.

63. ISLAND OF GREEN

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Rucio, younger brother to the famous merchant lady Matilla, has run into some trouble. His ship, the Alefinder, was discovered abandoned and heavily damaged in the waters close to an uninhabited jungle island. Matilla does not care much about her foolish sibling, but Rucio was wearing some precious family jewellery that she would like to see returned. Thus our heroes are hired to undertake the expedition and find his body.

Getting to the island is easy enough and soon two small lifeboats, bearing the sign of the Alefinder, can be spotted on the beach. Beyond that however the jungle is thick and no more traces are visible. When our heroes enter the green hell they are running into a trap. For the whole island is covered in a giant plant creature, consisting of thousands and thousands of vines. It lies dormant most of the time but whenever a living being stumbles into one of its sweet – smelling fruit it awakes and prepares a devilish ambush. The complete absence of animal life and presence of many, many bones will hopefully warn our heroes. If they sleep here they will die...unless they use one of the beast's two weaknesses: extensive fire or its core organ made of a bulbous, brain-like cluster of vines and the only part of it that is truly vulnerable.

64. CRIMSON TIDES

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND EXPLORATION

The village of Erugos is disturbed by a weird new phenomenon. The water striking its beach and harbour has turned into a deep red. It seems less salty and causes a weird prickling sensation on the skin. Our heroes are called in by the village elder, a woman by the name of Lusana, who is disturbed by what is happening.

Upon arrival a strange sight greets our heroes: several of the villagers have red blotches on their skin and even their eyes start turning a crimson hue. The people are otherwise healthy and seem very happy. They also bathe on the beach every morning and evening, experiencing great pleasure.

These people behave like drug addicts, and that is indeed what they are.

The waters are infested with tiny algae whose tendrils sink into a person's body, giving them a thrill of pleasure in exchange for a bit of blood. This experience is highly addictive, and it can kill people within a few weeks. Already a small cult, led by the fisher Muron, has sprung up to worship the Crimson Tide which, so they say, offers a chance of purification and must have been sent by the gods.

Our heroes might be able to follow the red trail to its origin, an island a few miles off the coast. There these strange algae are sent forth by an unusual type of red seaweed that only grows in an underwater cave underneath the island. Destroying the seaweed will stop the algae, but getting to it requires a swim through heavily infested waters. And if Muron's cult hears of our heroes' plan to cut off their drug supply, things could get ugly.

65. QUEEN OF THE SEAS

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

In the last few years the pirate threat has been getting more and more dangerous. Their ships are getting more numerous, better equipped and more organized. There is rumour of a unifying influence, a "Pirate Queen" who is taking control over the vast outlaw armada ship by ship and captain by captain.

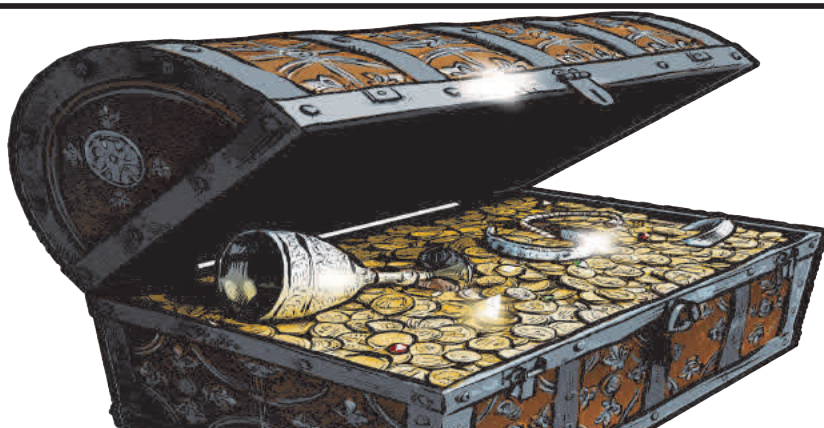
So far, in all their history, the pirates have never been united. Should they all work together their strength would be fearsome and they could be able to destroy the royal navy and plunder even the rich coastal trading cities. This must be stopped at all cost!

Our heroes are approached by Lord Endris, secretly a high ranking member in the king's secret police force. He offers them a significant sum of gold for a dangerous task: they are to infiltrate one of the remaining "neutral" pirate groups and then find out as much as they can about this mysterious woman calling herself "Queen of the Seas". Then, when they have gathered enough information, they are to assassinate her, thus breaking any unity amongst the pirates.

The task is tricky: first our heroes will need to earn the trust of Captain Diego of the "Salteagle", a man who is desperate to stay independent but is being pressured by other captains. Diego will not give his trust lightly, thus our heroes might be forced to help him do some unsavoury things.

A few weeks later, as Lord Endris expected, the forces of the Queen of the Seas will move against the Salteagle and force Captain Diego – or his first mate Qewanna, should he die in the fighting – to swear fealty.

From there on our heroes have the chance to find information about this mysterious woman who is always wearing a white mask. The Queen of the Seas is ruthless, skilled and has a lot of information about the realm and its navy. She is indeed not a queen but a princess... Trevina is youngest daughter to the king who has faked her own death and run away from home five years ago to build a realm for herself! Her family would be overjoyed to see her, but the princess has no intention of ever going back!



66. LOYALTY'S PRIZE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

There is only a single bastion of civilization on the dangerous and exotic island of Sunebar. The Grey Fort is garrisoned by fifty soldiers and defends a small harbour, often used by ships to restock freshwater and other provisions. Now disturbing news are spreading: the Grey Fort is empty, all men gone! Our heroes are hired by Major Ludvic, the man responsible for the garrison. Most of his soldiers are busy fighting pirates so he has to rely on mercenary help to find out what happened on Sunebar.

After arriving on the island it will soon become clear that the garrison left on their own accord. They seem to have taken weapons and resources with them, then left the Grey Fort to travel into the thickly overgrown depths of the island.

Following the soldiers' trail our heroes will quickly realize that they are in danger: venomous snakes, quicksand, crawling insects and some larger beasts can be found on Sunebar and they seem to have killed many of the soldiers. After pushing through a swamp and crossing an area of rocky canyons more and more dead men can be found. It seems that the soldiers have lost half of their number already!

It will take our heroes nearly a week of exhausting travel to reach the men of the Grey Fort. There is only twenty of them left and they are camping on the edge of an ancient ruin which is mostly overgrown. Dangerous lizards, nearly as big as a man, live in these ruins and have attacked several times already. Captain Xiressa, the commanding officer of the Grey Fort, is heavily injured. The man in charge is a scholar called Byron who is very surprised to see other civilised folk so deep within the jungle. In truth he is a charlatan and treasure hunter who made the whole garrison obey him with forged papers that are supposedly signed by Major Ludvic himself. He is close to his goal, the old city holding many riches.

It won't be easy to persuade the soldiers that Byron has deceived them but if it happens they might very well kill him on the spot. His greed and trickery, after all, have led to the death of many good men and women. The charlatan will seek to strike a deal, telling wondrous stories of the riches awaiting only a few hundred yards away...if one can get past the lizards and traps, that is.

67. COLD GIFTS

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Our heroes are travelling the ocean on board the "Panther", a brand new proud merchant vessel. Its captain and owner, Tiernin Vindinger, is an arrogant man who often boasts that he has the fastest ship on the seas.

A few days after the start of the journey a thick fog descends upon the waves. Some of the sailors, a superstitious lot, whisper of dark magic, but Captain Vindinger is unperturbed. Suddenly a large shadow looms in the mist ahead! It is a massive iceberg...and the Panther only very closely avoids an unfortunate end! Scraping past the obstacle, with only a few feet to spare, the ship yet escapes undamaged. While everyone is catching their breath a bit of broken ice is discovered on deck...and within it lies an ornate metal box.

Soon most of the crew is gathered around this strange new item, whispering amongst themselves. Captain Vindinger is quick to claim the box and have it locked away in his quarters, promising to check on it later.

Only a few hours after the incident trouble starts: a few sailors, led by the second mate Palwen, ask for permission to throw the box overboard. They think that it must be cursed and beg the captain not to open it! At the same time another group, gathered around the ship's massive cook, a secret ex – pirate by the name of Warast, wants to open the box as quickly as possible. There might be treasure inside and they don't want the captain to keep it all to himself!

As the discussion rages back and forth amongst the mostly untested crew Captain Vindinger's authority is being eroded with every minute. There is no right decision to make as he watches every single person on the ship join one of the two camps: throw the box overboard unopened or open it publicly so that everyone can see.

If the dispute is not settled within the next couple of hours nightfall might see bloodshed come to the Panther. And all this for an ancient box, containing nothing but the still bones of a long dead captain.

68. THE LUCKY SWAN

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

One of our heroes' friends, the young Gelson, is slick, gifted with a silver tongue and too attractive for his own good. He mostly survives on these three qualities but recently has also managed to have a bit of luck. In a high-stakes cardgame Gelson has won a whole ship from an unfortunate captain!

"The Lucky Swan", as it is now called, is nothing special when it comes to size or speed, but like her new owner himself, she is pretty to look at.

Knowing nothing about seafaring, Gelson has accepted what he thought would be a lucrative offer to smuggle some interesting goods...but he was caught and nearly wrapped in chain. Luckily the young man's quick tongue managed to once again keep him out of prison. But his employers, the ruthless criminal syndicate "Saltblades", want their confiscated cargo back. If Gelson can't do that within a week he will not only lose his ship but maybe even his life!

Gelson comes to beg our heroes for help. He knows where the cargo, some rather rare herbs that can also be used for the making of drugs, is being held. He just needs someone willing to take the place of his former crew, who have all abandoned him. Then Gelson and his compatriots can break into a small seaside barracks, liberate the spice and take it back to the Saltblades, whose ship waits in dangerous waters only a day's journey away. Navigating the reefs in that area could be tricky though, especially if there are naval vessels in pursuit!

69. THE GRAND PARLEY

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

After many years as a scourge of the sea the dreaded pirate Olvan Sharkmaster has had a change of heart. He wishes to make peace with the realm whose citizens he has tormented for so long and sends an offer to the king himself. His majesty, wary but unwilling to miss such a grand chance, hires our heroes to find Sharkmaster and escort him to the capital in secret.

While this first part of the job will be fairly simple, with the pirate himself showing no sign of treachery, our heroes are not quite finished. After speaking to the king Captain Olvan calls for a large gathering of his friends and associates, many dangerous pirate captains in their own right. His majesty wishes for our heroes to help Sharkmaster reach this grand parley safely and keep him alive through whatever it is to follow. The man might be a murderer many times over, but it seems he is actually the realm's best chance for peace on the waves.

The parley is held on Pedusa, a small pleasure island firmly under pirate control. Getting there will be tricky by itself, for several outlaws have heard rumours of a betrayal by Sharkmaster and might seek to end him quickly. Then, once the island is reached, the real work begins. Several of his closest supporters will stand with Olvan after he offers them a royal pardon and a place in the realm's navy, but two dangerous individuals, Okeela Murderfinger and Ereg the Ape, will strongly oppose this course of action. Especially Okeela, who has no wish to serve a king or stop her butchering ways, has a lot of people nearby and she is willing to slaughter all other captains if necessary.

70. THE WORTH OF A LIFE

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Our heroes are sailing on the Golden Steed, a large passenger ship, when a massive storm hits. Despite the best efforts of both the sailors and Captain Shawns the vessel is damaged beyond repair. It is about to sink! Land is days away and the lifeboats can only take on about fifty people. There are over a hundred souls aboard. When people realize this chaos and violence breaks out. Some of the richer passengers offer wealth to whoever can help them claim a seat on the lifeboat. Others are trying to put personal belongings over human lives.

Captain Shawns and his crew, who have armed themselves well, are trying their best to organize an orderly evacuation. Some of them are prepared to go down with the Golden Steed, but they will be damned if people will kill each other like savages on their watch! There is still a bit of time and the captain insists that woman and children come first. Amongst the men everyone must plead their case. Then the majority will decide who gets the last ten or so seats on the lifeboats.

71. THE CAVE OF WONDERS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

On the cliffs of a newly discovered island the crew of an exploratory ship spots something unusual. When the tide recedes it reveals a large face cut into the side of the cliffs. The mouth of this weird carving is wide open, revealing a deep black hole. This must be the entrance of a cave...and who knows what wonders might lie within?

As the speculation spreads several small ships gather their crews to explore this intriguing find. Our heroes are just one of many adventuring groups interested but if they hurry they might be the first ones on the scene.

The interior of the cave proves extremely wet and far larger than expected. It is a network of tunnels, some seeming natural, some definitely constructed, and it was clearly once inhabited. The original owners however did not seem too happy with intruders, for they have left some nasty traps behind.

At the end of this maze is a room filled with ancient treasure, remnants of the vast booty amassed by the legendary pirate captain Goldbeard. He used the services of a powerful spirit to dig out most of this hideout for him, then was killed before he could ever use it properly. The spirit, a being of water and rock alike, is still in there, and it will be released when somebody picks up the large gemstone it is bound into. Far from being thankful for its freedom the creature will try to destroy the whole cave system. Our heroes will have to not only evade that terrible rage while grabbing as much treasure as they can. They also need to hurry, for the tide is coming and the water could cut off any escape they have.

And then there is the small ship filled with bandits, waiting outside for anyone that might come out bearing riches...

72. SHIELDS FOR TURTLES

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

Claressa, young daughter to Baron von Sandis, has spent most of her life on the beach. She loves all the little creatures who live there and has recently, to her delight, discovered an unusually large group of nests hidden in the sand. Within them are hundreds of baby turtles that should, according to one of the baron's advisers who is aware of such things, be hatching soon.

Young Claressa wants to be there to see the turtles' walk to the sea...and she doesn't know how few of them usually make it. The baron, unwilling to break his daughter's heart and unsure if any of his own gruff soldiers are up for the task, hires our heroes to protect the turtles and help them on their way to the sea and beyond.

This might sound like a simple quest initially, but large crabs, hungry raptors and eager fish will all make the task of getting as many of the small buggers to salvation as possible quite tricky.

And then there are the bunch of local thugs, hired by Ivelda, older sister to Claressa. They have been told to wait for the insufferable little brat to show up and then smash as many baby turtles as possible before her very eyes.

73. WAR OF THE DEAD

HIGH LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

During a fairly boring ocean journey our heroes' ship is hit by a strange storm. Purple lightning flashes overhead but despite the strong wind very few waves are roused. After the storm abates nobody on board seems to know where exactly the ship has been blown off to. Soon a dense fog covers the still water. There are shapes moving within it. Apparently a massive amount of unknown ships have surrounded our heroes' vessel. And they are coming closer!

Then dozens of massive warships can be seen pushing through the mist. Some of them are gigantic in size...and they are about to clash in violent battle! Our heroes have been caught in the middle of an ancient war, where the vessels of two long gone empires fought for dominion over the oceans.

Both fleets are filled with the ghosts of sailors bound to this mystical place, doomed to relive their war again and again. They are chained to the vengeful spirits of their admirals, who wish to continue this battle forever. And soon our heroes will be attacked, maybe even by both sides!

The only way to break this curse is to destroy both flagships, thus dispersing the hateful souls of the admirals and bringing the magic to an end. This will not be easy however, for both the "Stormgod" and the "Domination" are very well defended and surrounded by many smaller vessels.

74. TALES A TREASURE TELLS

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION, INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Our heroes are hired by captain Orlas of the Wavebreaker to help him and his crew in a search for treasure. The captain was a famous pirate once but has done many good deeds in the service of the king and has therefore received a royal pardon. Now he wants to sail back to a small, unmarked island where he believes a great treasure was hidden by his father. Orlas expects that there will be trouble along the way, for many people have sadly not accepted his change of heart and are still upset about the crimes of his past. That's why he needs our heroes.

And indeed, the old scoundrel is right. Several young merchants whose families have been robbed by the Wavebreaker many years ago have not forgiven nor forgotten. They hire bounty hunters and rival pirate gangs to hound captain Orlas.

Even after reaching the island things will not be easy: the treasure is secured by many traps, but it does hold a large number of gold coins. However, to the captain's surprise, he does not recognize the markings on most of the coins. There is strange writing on them and Orlas, his curiosity piqued, will give quite a few of them to our heroes to figure out this riddle.

The search for a scholar that can decipher these coins end with, of all things, another pirate: Qentil the Reader is famous for both his ruthless efficiency and his learned ways. He will be extremely interested in the coins – whether he learns about them from our heroes or from some other source – and will realize that they seem to have been minted on the island of Jannus...an island thought to exist only in children's stories!

These tales say that Jannus was a rich and fertile place but became so arrogant that the god of the sea sought to punish its people. The Reader wants our heroes to help him find the origin of the tale and the large amount of riches that might still be waiting there... and he won't take no for an answer.

75. MURDER IN PARADISE

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

Paradise Island bears its name rightly. It is a beautiful place of streams, flowers and fruit, a playground for the rich and their families who all enjoy spending significant time in one of the many pleasure villages. The island is guarded by some of the best mercenaries money can buy and has never been attacked by pirates or threatened by any other evil before.

That makes it especially unusual that the famous painter Melron insists on bringing his own bodyguard and hires our heroes to fill that position. He says that he wants to work on his newest and greatest masterpiece and does not wish to be disturbed.

As soon as they reach the island our heroes will have to defend Melron from many admirers wishing to spend time with the famous old man. Several young ladies are particularly adamant...but the painter simply wants to be left alone. Until disaster strikes.

The merchant Kellin, an old friend of Melron, who was enjoying a small vacation in a neighbouring village, is found murdered. Paradise Island's guard is shocked and spares no expense on the hunt for the culprit. Most of them think that an assassin somehow must have snuck on the island...but the real killer is Melron himself. He has slain Kellin, whom he has hated ever since the merchant succeeded in winning the affection of a girl they both coveted. This is a thirty year old story, but Melron is nothing if not patient.

As he converses with the guards and other people coming to talk to him our heroes will notice some discrepancies in Melron's story. It should be fairly simple for them to find evidence for his wrongdoing, for the painter has not even gotten rid of the murder weapon, wishing to keep it and make it into an artwork later. Should they accuse him he will offer them a lot of money to sabotage the investigation. Nobody, says Melron, will believe that he was responsible anyway, and surely our heroes do not want to make a rich and powerful enemy?



76. FOUL WINDS RISING

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

When the Nereid is damaged by a storm its crew seeks shelter on a small island. There they stumble upon an old ruin and their captain, Swerin, finds an ancient blade covered by rust. As he touches it he feels a strange sensation of power and the storm dies down. Astonished Swerin realizes that the magical sword can control the weather...and that is a truly powerful weapon to have out on the ocean.

When the crew of the Nereid returns to shore the tale of this Stormsword spreads far and wide. On the next journey the Nereid is attacked by two pirate vessels whose captains want the blade, but they are both destroyed by sudden, violent winds.

Sadly Captain Swerin dies from a strange disease soon after and his first mate, Jericho, picks up the blade. He is soon murdered in a back alley, the artefact stolen. From there the Stormsword goes through many hands until it is claimed by King Famorin, lord of Lugah Island. He is the one who realizes that a powerful evil spirit is trapped within the sword. It detests being wielded and curses all those who use its power with an early demise.

Famorin, far from being a fool, comes to understand that his life will be over soon. He however hires our heroes to get rid of the blade. They need to take it to some hidden place where it will never again be found. Dropping it into the ocean does not work, for the blade reemerges after a few minutes, even if it is locked in a box filled with heavy rocks. That was the first thing Famorin tried. Two additional complications are also arising: firstly there are a lot of powerful evil people who, unaware of the curse or not believing in it, seek to steal the blade or take it by violent means. Secondly, and even worse, the Stormsword leaves a small part of its magic in whoever touches it. This seed can be used by the evil spirit to unleash a powerful and highly contagious disease. When it becomes aware that people want to get rid of it the spirit will seek to negotiate with both King Famorin and our heroes, telling them that it has infected over twenty people and that it will use the plague to kill many, many more if they do not allow it to remain in the world of men.

77. BEFORE THE BATTLE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

For several decades hundreds of wealthy foreign merchants have made their home in the city of Duskhaven. The trade they brought, the many ships coming and going, has made Duskhaven rich and powerful. While there have always been some minor issues between foreigners and locals, up until recently the trouble caused by that tension was mostly ignored.

Not things have changed. A large army is marching on Duskhaven, eager to take its riches for themselves. The enemy commander has sworn to slaughter every single merchant in the city. Caught unprepared by such brutality, both foreigners and locals are thrown into panic.

While the commander of Duskhaven, Major Majarro, is trying to put up a brave front, most people assume that the city will fall within a few days. The enemy army is about five days away, but some parts of the enemy fleet are already approaching the harbour!

Chaos reigns in Duskhaven: poor and rich alike wish to leave the city. Major Majarro is trying to stop any large scale evacuation, for he needs as many people as possible to remain if there is even to be a minor chance of victory. In his desperation he has even ordered his soldiers to press-gang people into service.

Many of the foreign merchants are rich enough to bribe their way out of the city, but there is not enough room on the ships for all of them, and most wish to take their most valuable belongings with them as well!

Our heroes are caught up in this mayhem, trying to help prepare the defences on the one hand, on the other several wealthy families offer them riches if they can get them out of the city by ship. Neither of these options is without danger and as the enemy draws closer and closer people are getting both desperate and aggressive. Duskhaven might tear itself apart even before the first arrow of battle flies.

78. WHIMS OF A GOD

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

The people of Messarin Island, known as the tribe of the Messar, know the waterways around their home better than anyone else. Usually they are a mostly peaceful community, worshipping the spirits of the sea and helping other sailors when they are in need. This has recently changed. Several of the small boats of the Messar have attacked merchant ships that approached their island, robbing them of precious jewels, fine foods, wine...they even killed several people who tried to resist!

Our heroes are hired by the merchant Hondis who has had dealings with the Messar before and is extremely surprised by the sudden change. He wants them to evade the tribe's boats, land of Messarin Island and see what is going on.

Should they actually reach the Messar village unseen it will not be difficult for our heroes to find what caused the change. The islanders have a new leader, whom they worship as the son of the sea god. This man, clearly not an islander himself, is Dalmiro, the greedy captain of a shipwrecked vessel. By very chance itself he somehow survived the storm which swept the water clear of all other ships. This storm happened in the holiest of all nights for the Messar. At the height of religious ceremony on the beach Dalmiro was thrown out of the waves, his hair and beard tangled in seaweed. The priests were stunned by his sudden appearance and the captain's addled brain was spouting strange nonsense. When he woke up two days later he had been proclaimed the Son of the Sea and immediately started using this surprising rise to power to order his followers around, forcing them to commit robberies and bring him precious goods.

Dalmiro himself is not a dangerous man but harming him could bring down the wrath of the whole tribe upon our heroes. Many of them are fairly skilled warriors and willing to pursue their enemies onto the open water.

79. THE TOUCH OF PLAGUE

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION

Two fishermen are found adrift in their boat. They are unconscious and seem stricken by some sort of horrible disease. Small sprouts are growing from their skin, which is deathly pale. A medicus called to inspect the two dying men, is terrified: this is the extremely dangerous Embranic Plague, a deadly disease usually only found in distant lands!

As panic and chaos spread through many coastal settlements a few village elders hire our heroes to find the source of the plague. After scouring the fishing grounds that the two unfortunate men usually frequent, the source is located without too many troubles: there is a large merchant ship in the water, its sails torn. Nobody seems to be alive on board. And indeed that is true, for all sailors have been killed by the Embranic Plague, which grows unchecked on the vessel.

The winds and currents are slowly pushing the ship towards land. It needs to be burned or otherwise destroyed before the plague spores infect the whole region! But the large ship does not catch fire easily, especially because rain and wind are coming..

80. IN THE COMPANY OF BEASTS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Redar of Krenn is an extremely rich and ambitious man, a rising star in the game of politics and intrigue that keep the capitol's wheels turning. To win the favour of the masses he has promised to organize the greatest circus games that have ever been seen. For this he has contracted hundreds of hunters and mercenaries to capture some of the rarest and most dangerous beasts in the world and bring them to Redar alive.

Our heroes are tasked with catching the illusive Quinderbeast, a large, catlike creature, most ferocious of jungle dwellers, capable of changing the colour of its fur just like a chameleon can. Afterwards they need to bring it to the Arc, a massive ship built to house all these animals. On board will be wild drakes, vicious half-demons, cunning stalkers and gentle herbivores alike. The shipmaster, Kennick of the Parsing Clan, is confident in his ability to bring all these creatures to his master, but he hasn't expected the grandmother of all storms to hit the Arc halfway to its destination. Even with our heroes and many other skilled helpers on board it will be extremely difficult to survive winds, waves and escaping beasts alike...especially because there are several saboteurs on the Arc, hired by Redar's political enemies. Then, once the storm is gone, the monsters still need to be transported all the way to the capitol.

§1. THE TRUE ISLAND

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

While our heroes are on a large merchant vessel one of them spots a weird glint in the distance. Suddenly one of the other passengers, a young scholar named Vidar, calls out in surprise. He tells everyone that there is a strange island only a few hundred yards away. All the sailors and passengers are looking, but nobody can see anything. The crew mocks the young man, accusing him of having strong drink in daytime.

A few minutes later one of our heroes also spots a small island. It is covered in what looks like bushes with purple leaves. Nobody will believe him however, especially since Vidar can't seem to see the island anymore either. It must be some sort of shy island, the sailors say, showing itself only to one person at a time.

The whole thing is nothing but a joke. One of the passengers is the skilled illusionist Dumitro who has grown bored with the whole voyage and decided to have some fun. After "showing" the island to another two or three people he will try to get them to take a small boat and row out there to find it, even offering to persuade the captain to stop the ship. Captain Ovalis, who is an old friend and in on the joke, will gladly play along. Then, when the furious explorers return with nothing to show, everyone will have a good laugh at their expense.

This harmless bit of fun might have dire consequences however, for young Vidar, despite his unassuming exterior, is not a man to be easily mocked. He is the only son of a dockside criminal lord and knows how to hold a grudge...then pay the insult back tenfold.

§2. THE PRINCESS AND THE COUNT

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

For many years the people of mighty Zeren Harbour have been enemies of the island nation of Nerin. Usually such enmity is only shown in commercial matters and idle threats, but in the last six months the situation has been getting worse and worse. Now warships from both sides, led by captains eager for glory, have clashed on the open sea. Blood has been spilled and war is looming. In these dangerous time our heroes are contacted by Princess Galina, daughter to the ruler of Nerin.

She asks them to escort her to Zeren Harbour, so that she can offer an allegiance of peace and her hand in marriage to their leader, Count Oster.

The princess is an enchanting woman, strong willed, intelligent and extremely beautiful, and as such her chances of success are quite high...if she can get to Zeren Harbour alive.

Our heroes will have to face enemies from both sides: several of Nerin's highest ranking ministers want war and plunder and they will not hesitate to sacrifice "a foolish girl" for their own ambitions. Assassins and mercenaries are sent after Galina...and even the enemy is warned.

Lord Mocian, brother to Count Oster, is an evil man. In war he believes he can wrest control over the mighty city away from his brother and, once warned, he will use any chance that he has to stop the princess. If his men can capture her and send her back to her father in pieces nobody will be able to stop a bloody conflict anymore.



§3. FREEZING TIDES

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

Two merchant vessels heading for the harbour of Greestrand just barely manage to avoid the collision with something rarely seen in such warm waters. A massive iceberg, big as a mountain, comes close to smashing both ships. For a few days this incident is the talk of the whole town but is then quickly forgotten.

Several weeks later the weather around Greestrand starts changing in a very unnatural manner. The water itself turns cold, an icy mist stalks the coast and on some nights even snow begins to fall! Soon the local economy is suffering and everyone is extremely confused. Lord Mayor Thimble hires several groups of mercenaries to try and find out what is happening.

Our heroes are one of these groups and might be able to discover the root of the problem: the iceberg, now only a quarter of the size but still quite massive, has become stuck between several rocky islands only a few miles off the coast. There it is shrinking further...and the powerful ice spirit trapped within is battling for its life. Once all the ice is gone it will die too, which is why it uses all of its freezing power to change local temperatures and slow the melting. The creature is quite potent, especially close to the iceberg, but can be reasoned with. If an offer is made to somehow escort it back to its home far to the north, or maybe to transport it to a mountaintop glacier, the spirit will accept. Negotiations could be made more tricky however by the arrival of Crimson Sergio and his gang of mercenaries who are far more interested in killing the creature than parleying with it.

§6. RAISING THE DEAD

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The ship our heroes are sailing on is visited by a strange apparition one moonless night. This glowing being is the spirit of Merago, a dead captain whose body still lies within his ship deep underneath the waves. He tells a tale of villainous crew members and mutinous treason, begging our heroes to dive down into the depths and recover his bones so that he can rest in peace.

On the ocean floor a small armada can be found. The remains of over a dozen ships are scattered about, and they are guarded by long dead sailors wielding rusted weapons, propelling themselves through the murky water with bony claws.

The captain's remains are found wrapped in heavy chains, enchanted with runes of binding. And this is where "Merago's" story begins to fall apart. For the spirit has deceived our heroes. In life it was Eskar Sharkblood, a murderous pirate captain, whose crimes were so great that several mages came together to imprison his ghost for eternal torment. Should his bones be returned to the surface Eskar will be able to haunt the waters once more. Should however our heroes refuse to break the chains the spirit will attack them in the deeps, trying to force them to share his punishment forever.

§5. UNWELCOME GUESTS

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

The Swanbelly is one of the largest cargo ships ever built, capable of transporting massive amounts of crates and barrels. It even has several small rooms for passengers. While our heroes are travelling on the Swanbelly they are called upon by another passenger, the elderly Lady Agatha. She has lost her pet dog, Prince Blackbelly, and is willing to pay quite well if they can find him.

What begins as a simple search however will quickly turn into something much darker. The poor dog is dead, partially eaten by creatures that look like a mixture of spider and feline, nearly as large as a man. These are Xantheros, deadly things brought on board in secret by the biologist Fatandi, one of the other passengers. They have shaken off the sedatives meant to keep them calm, broken out of their crates and are now hungrily and stealthily stalking fresh prey. They have already eaten all the rats, several seagulls and two pets. Soon the first sailor will disappear...

What makes the whole situation especially difficult is that the Xantheros are extremely resistant against ordinary attacks. The only thing they truly fear is fire, but using fire on a ship might not be the best idea.

§4. WAR OF THE CRABS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Something very strange is happening on the beach near the village of Ornell: two tiny armies are engaging one another in vicious combat. An army of grey crabs is coming from the water itself, while an army of red crabs seems to be defending the beach.

This war has been going on for hours and has drawn several locals who are watching the carnage. Pieces of crab, dying or dead, are everywhere. Hundreds have already died, but hundreds more are coming to join the fray.

While some of the locals might laugh at the tiny war, others are struck by a strange feeling of danger. Soon people are beginning to choose sides: some are cheering for the grey crabs, others for the red ones. A local rogue named Alvik tries to make the best use of the situation. Bets are made on the outcome of the war. With emotions starting to get the better of some of the onlookers it is only a matter of time before human hands throw the first rock against whichever of the two tiny armies they dislike.

Harsh words follow any interference, especially from Alvik and the betting folk. A few shoves tart the violence, then the first real punch is thrown. If our heroes do not interfere the locals will seek to add their own violent confrontation to a beach already littered with the bodies of fearless, tiny soldiers. Eventually one of the groups of crabs wins, forcing the other to retreat and claiming this stretch of land for themselves.



§7. A SCREAM OF SILENCE

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Scalenda, young daughter to the master fisherman Olen, has been struck by a strange illness. She has completely lost her voice and has not been able to speak for over a week now. Many locals are disappointed, for they loved Scalenda's singing. But their disappointment turns into fear when several other people suffer the same fate. Balen, a bitter old herbalist, proclaims that Scalenda must be the carrier of some sort of disease and talks her father into locking her away. Other villagers whisper of a dark curse come upon the area. Our heroes are hired to investigate.

After a bit of poking around they will realize that all the people who have lost their voices were spending some time on a slightly remote local beach. There they each found a beautiful shell which some of them still have in their possession. Many others have sold the shells they have found to a wandering merchant who came through on a small boat just a few days before Scalenda lost her voice. It appears that he was specifically asking for pretty shells to purchase. When inspecting the pretty objects our heroes will soon discover that they are laced with magic. And if you listen closely...you might even be able to hear the lost voice of its owner whispering strange things from within the shell.

In the middle of the investigation the merchant returns, looking to buy more trinkets. This Mulgan is a shrewd and slippery man who will try to talk his way out of things and flee if pressured, but when caught he will admit to being hired by a sea witch who lives on a small island a few miles off the coast. He doesn't know specifics, but this old hag pays him handsomely to bring the enchanted shells that she has thrown into the ocean back to her.

Facing the witch will not be easy, for she will seek to conjure a storm to sink every boat approaching the island except for the one Mulgan is on. When attacked she will threaten to destroy her precious voice – bottles, thus robbing the locals of their voices forever, but that is just a bluff. As soon as these bottles are smashed – or if they are brought to the people who have lost their voices – the curse will be broken.

88. PURE DEATH

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Wilema, a local fisher woman, is desperate. Her daughter, fifteen year old Marla, has been kidnapped by Olvan, the estranged father and Wilema's erstwhile husband. The poor woman begs our heroes to help her even though she doesn't have any money. She is afraid the strange cult Olvan has joined several years ago might lead him to hurt their daughter. And she is not wrong.

Marla and her father are at a gathering of the "Purifiers", who believe that the only way to gain entrance to the afterlife is to go there willingly, in a moment of exultation and enlightenment. They are preparing themselves for ritual suicide, dressing in immaculate white robes and stepping into the ocean to drown.

The cult is lead by the extremely charismatic Lady Undira, whose follower Olvan has been for years. Now he has finally earned the right to die, and he wants to take Marla with him. To deceive the rest of the cult he has drugged the poor girl, giving her an appearance of extreme serenity and telling a convincing tale of her being visited by an angel.

If our heroes try to intervene Lady Undira will calmly ask them to step aside. Every single member of her gathering is here of their own free will. The whole cult, some thirty people, could turn against them if they press the issue. If they on the other hand realize that Marla is drugged and therefore unwilling Lady Undira will be furious. She will not only let the girl go but also expel her father from the Purifiers forever. Olvan might not be able to deal with this fate very well, but at least Marla will be safe.

89. THE MAGIC OF LOVE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

The young Baron Witmar has left his lands and castle in the hands of capable servants and has gone on a long sea voyage. He has been due back home for several weeks. Now his mother, the dowager baroness Ethelia, is getting worried and hires our heroes to track down her son.

Rumours say that Baron Witmar was seen on the pirate island of Towari, quite a dangerous place for anyone even remotely wealthy. There several members of his former crew have, of all things, opened up a small tavern. Business is tricky but lucrative and the new innkeeper, Hudis, can tell our heroes that Baron Witmar is sailing on the "Crimson Lady", a famous pirate ship. He has actually wed captain Lamposa and sworn to be at her side forever. Hudis suspects that some sort of love potion or other foul magic is involved, and the dowager baroness would agree, but they are both wrong. Witmar and his crew were captured by pirates but they were treated well by Lamposa and during the time they spent together the unlikely couple fell in love. Witmar, who has given up on his title, has no desire to leave his wife but will give our heroes a letter to his mother.

Lady Ethelia will be furious! The pirate witch must have ensorcelled her noble son! She is willing to pay whatever it takes to get him back so that she can hire wizards to break the foul magic.

Taking Witmar against his will might prove tricky though, for he is a decent swordsman himself and Lamposa will hunt for him to the end of the world and beyond if need be.

90. RACING WITH DEATH

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION

The people of Oringa Island have a strange custom: every year a random lottery determines four ship captains to participate in a holy ceremony to honour the god of the sea. This ceremony consists of the so called "Grand Race", where the four ships have to leave the harbour, find a path through the tricky, reef-filled passage of the Seal Islands – while not being distracted by the many cute occupants – and reach a temple on top of the largest of these small islands. There the captain must claim a holy flower and bring it back to the harbour.

The really dangerous part about the Grand Race? The losing captain has to sacrifice not only his ship but also his left hand to the god of the sea!

One of our heroes' friends, Captain Levin, who was only visiting Oringa Island, was caught up in the lottery and is now forced to sail for his life. He begs our heroes to help him, especially because he has heard that all three other captains have hired crews to potentially sabotage their opponents during the race. Such trickery is officially allowed, but warships are guarding the whole course to make sure nobody from the outside interferes and brings down the wrath of the god upon the whole of Oringa.

91. THE HEALING SHIP

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

There are many poor fishing villages along these shores, places where people struggle to fend off starvation. Many locals are killed by simple diseases that could be easily cured by ordinary medication. This kind of help is only provided by the Albatros, a large ship owned by a group of relatively wealthy doctors who have spent most of their money to buy provisions and all types of medication. They are led by Archebald, an older man who has sworn to spend the rest of his life and use all the skills of his profession as a medicus to help the poorest of the poor.

The fame of this “ship of life” has spread far and wide, its crew beloved by many for their good deeds. But there are always evil bastards seeking to profit from the weak. Our heroes are hired to provide protection for Archebald and his doctors, for they have been attacked by outlaws several times. These thugs are after some of the more expensive herbs and, while they were fended off so far, the doctors are starting to run out of money.

Even after the outlaws are dispatched there is another problem. An emissary of Duke Dunwell, the local ruler, arrives with a command: the doctors are all to travel to the duke's castle immediately, for his eminence has become sick and wishes to be cured. Archebald refuses, for he despises the cold-hearted nobleman who ignores the plight of the simple folk, and he does not wish to leave the locals for any long journey, for quite a few of them would surely die if they go without treatment for several weeks. The Duke's emissary however is not prepared to take no for an answer and could cause a lot of trouble for the Albatross and everyone on board.

92. IRONHAND'S DAUGHTER

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

Up until a year ago the pirate captain Gregor Ironhand has been ravaging the coast, plundering ships and evading the royal navy. Then he suddenly stopped nearly all his activities. Only a few people know the reason for it: mercenaries in the pay of Guildmaster Harek, ruler of Oldenport, managed to kidnap Ironhand's daughter and were holding her hostage.

Now our heroes are called by the Guildmaster who seems extremely nervous. He will tell them the story of the kidnapping and also reveal that Stellara, the young woman in question, has vanished half a day ago, together with her four powerful guards. Ironhand demands to see his daughter once a month... and the time for his next visit is only four days away! If Oldenport cannot reclaim Stellara by then the pirates will surely attack the city and obliterate it!

While all this is going on Martian, leader of the small but elite mercenary crew known as the “Blue Cloaks”, is travelling inland. Accompanying him are not only his three companions but also Stellara. They are seeking to reach the capitol and simply disappear in the throng of humanity there. For Martian and Stellara have fallen in love and have decided to leave their old lives behind. Like many young lovers they do not consider the consequences their actions might bring to other people... and if they are caught might not come back to Oldenport quietly!

93. THE SANDS OF MAGIC

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND DIPLOMACY

Local lads discover some strange new colours in the sand of a slightly remote beach. After playing there for a while they find that something amazing has happened to them: they have been granted the gift of magic and can now move objects with their mind, produce small fires, cause gusts of wind etc. Our heroes happen to be present when the four boys proudly show off their new powers.

As their story is heard many people become greedy. Immediately several families set out to that beach, seeking magic for themselves. One local merchant even hires some lowlife mercenaries to

claim as much of the coloured sand as possible for him, intending to sell it off in bottles and barrels for a high price.

While everyone is trying to coax the secret of magic from the coloured sands it seems that only very few people actually gain any magical abilities...and when they use them something inevitably goes wrong or they embarrass or even slightly injure themselves.

The whole thing is a trick, a hoax played on the villagers by a mischievous local spirit. While it is invisible, only touching some of the people present with its magic here and there, its soft giggling might very well be heard. If the spirit is caught it will freely admit to its prank, then laugh at human stupidity and greed before it disappears in the nearby ocean.

94. SIREN SONGS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

The small island of Atonai is bereft of people but many merchant ships pass by it quite regularly.

Our heroes find themselves on one such ship, the Soaring Goose, when a sudden storm forces the captain to seek shelter very close to Atonai. At the end of the storm the crew makes an alarming discovery: all the drinking water on board has disappeared! The barrels are empty!

Luckily Captain Ezman knows of a small stream on the island itself, thus two boats of sailors, guarded by our heroes, are sent to Atonai. There they are greeted by a wondrous spectacle: three beautiful creatures, clearly powerful beings of magic, have already awaited their arrival. These

three mighty spirits of the ocean have long watched humans pass by their domains, subtly manipulating them and playing many pranks on them. Now they have broken into quarrel and decided to solve their issues with a contest: they would lure a group of people onto Atonai island and there force them to decide which of the spirits is the most beautiful and powerful.

The terrified sailors will immediately vote to have our heroes decide and thus they will have to watch as all three spirits take on many pleasing forms, listen to the enchanting music they make and maybe even enjoy other forms of attention.

In the end, after a full day and a full night, the time for a decisions comes. Now it will be upon our heroes to find a way to declare a winner without putting themselves into mortal danger, for the two losers will not take their defeat well and might seek to destroy the Soaring Goose, all its sailors and of course also the puny mortals who dared resist their charm.

95. CHILDREN OF FIRE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

The ancient fire mountain on Rage Island has been quiet for a long time, thus granting the native tribes peace and prosperity. Now however the flames have woken, low rumblings can be heard in the ground and smoke rises into the sky.

This phenomenon has stirred up the tribes and brought one of them to prominence. Jwralli is an ancient priest who, up until a few weeks ago, had only a small following. Now many, driven by fear, have started listening to his insane ramblings. Jwralli speaks of a hungry spirit imprisoned far beneath the mountains, struggling to break free. It must be placated, so he says, or it will tear the whole island apart and devour every single soul on it.

Under the direction of the insane priest several groups of warriors have attacked nearby coastal settlements with their small, swift boats, leaving material riches behind but capturing as many children as they can. These of pure blood must be, according to Jwralli, sacrificed to the angry spirit on the night of the new moon.

Our heroes are hired by desperate fishermen who want their children back. The people are about to form a large warband of angry but badly trained and equipped locals. They want to sail to Rage Island and attack the tribes. Not knowing the details of who is responsible for their losses, such an operation might very well turn all the tribal warriors of Rage Island to war and death. One of the cooler heads, an elder named Ukuwan, asks our heroes to take control of the mob and, if possible, find a solution without violence.

Negotiating with the insane Jwralli and his small band of closest fanatical followers will prove next to impossible, but many of his other warriors are simply scared and do not want to see the children hurt. In the middle of any diplomatic efforts however an even larger earthquake hits. The evil spirit is about to break free and it is nowhere near the new moon! Will the children be saved before fire consumes everything? Or will the burning death come upon many as they struggle in bloody war against one another?



96. GUESTS FROM AFAR

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

The terrified screams of a young sailor rouse everyone in Kertel village from their slumber two hours before dawn. This man, a local by the name of Ogris, is usually known as calm headed, but now he seems to have seen something horrible. Soon a small crowd gathers, including our heroes. Ogris tells that he saw a massive monster emerging from the water onto the southern beach. The beast then started spewing forth smaller monsters! Kertel village must be doomed! Many people immediately gather weapons and prepare to defend their homes. But no attack comes.

The monster that Ogris saw is in truth a very strange ship, covered in algae and constructed from a weird, half – living material. It has been washed up onto the beach by strong winds and its crew, alien looking beings covered in crablike armour that gives them a monstrous appearance, are frantically trying to repair the damage to their vessel. If someone approaches they will be eyed wearily then invited to parley with “the Prime Seeker”.

This tall creature, face hidden behind a weird mask, will ask for help. He needs plant and animal matter to repair his vessel so that he can return his crew home. While he is happy to do a trade these strange beings do not actually own anything that is of visible value to the locals...and the Prime Seeker will be very unhappy if no help is forthcoming.

In the end, the people of Kertel village will be faced with a decision: give some of their resources to these alien creatures or defend themselves when the strangers come to take what they need.

97. THE BLADE OF VENGEANCE

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Alarm bells are rung in the harbour town of Merenburg. A group of guards has been found slain in an alley close to the waterfront! All four of them plus one customs worker have been stabbed to death, and the attack must have happened not too long ago. Judging by the blood – drenched silver coins that have been left in the horrible wounds, this is the handiwork of the insane murderer known as Redcoin, who was supposed to have been executed by city officials for his crimes over a week ago!

In truth Redcoin had gotten away before his execution but the local ruler, Baron Pandrick, afraid that such grim news would cause an uproar, decided to keep the matter secret. He was hoping that

the maniac would simply leave Merenburg and never come back...but he did not realize how little Redcoin is afraid of death. The killer has a list of all the people who crossed him: seven guards, two judges, four customs workers, one innkeeper, a chimney sweep...and Baron Pandrick himself. Only when all those are slain will Redcoin be able to find peace and vanish from the city.

Our heroes are hired to not only catch the maniac but also instructed to keep his true identity secret. The baron is spreading the word that the killer is only a copycat, and all people in his employ are supposed to support that story. This makes catching Redcoin far more difficult though, for people do not take a copycat as seriously as the real thing...and the murderer will make full use of it, intending to leave a bloody trail through all the streets of Merenburg.



98. BLOCKADE RUNNERS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The once rich harbour of Duskhaven is under siege by an enemy army and an enemy fleet. So far the walls have repelled all attackers, but Duskhaven is starting to starve. Our heroes are approached by a daring smuggler called Orion, who has concocted a dangerous but potentially profitable plan. He has secured a large shipment of food and fresh water. If he can get it into Duskhaven the people there would be so grateful that they would pay an extremely high price for such simple goods. Orion already has a fairly fast ship, the Scarlet Dwarf, but he is missing a crew.

The smuggler wants our heroes to find him a group of sailors desperate, greedy or foolish enough to join the plan and then help the Scarlet Dwarf to slip past the enemy blockade.

Hiring people with the right mix of foolhardiness and skill will not be easy, but the second part of the operation could prove outright deadly. The enemy navy has twenty ships outside of Duskhaven, four of them tasked with guarding the fleet's rear. Slipping past these heavily armed warships will only be possible under the cover of darkness, but then the landing itself could be extremely dangerous. Even this is doable with the right crew however. The really tricky part comes afterwards: while the people of Duskhaven will rejoice and find new strength – and shower their saviours with praises and gold – now the Scarlet Dwarf is stuck in a city under siege...and the enemy will be warned that they might make a run for it soon.

GM NOTES:

While not directly connected to the ocean this second part of "Blockade Runners" can be extremely exciting. The gamemaster should try his best to build up tension, making sure the enemy fleet somehow finds out about the Scarlet Dwarf. Now they will be ready for the smugglers...and even Orion will hesitate. Trying to get out could be deadly, but the alternative is to remain in Duskhaven, whose walls are under attack day and night. And a great city under siege is a place where hell touches the earth.

If you want to throw in even more complications, there are several simple methods: have some of the crew members be injured or otherwise unable to work, forcing our heroes to find replacement. You can have potential deserters approach the vessel, trying to get onboard. Some of them might be desperate and therefore dangerous. Or you could even have the lords of the city attempt to press our heroes into service, forcing them to fight on the walls, where battle is at its most brutal. Another option is to attack our heroes' conscience: surely they would not be ready to leave desperate women and children behind? But if they take on one family they might be forced to take them all, thus slowing down the Scarlet Dwarf and making an already tricky escape nearly impossible.

99. THE DOUBLE CAPTAIN

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

During one of their many adventures our heroes meet a strange ship: the "Smokesail" is manned by weird foreigners who never show their faces and filled with dries herbs, spices, roots and other plant material. The smell on the ship is strangely appealing, but in a slightly disturbing way. Captain Mongat is the massive blond man in charge of the vessel and he offers our heroes many interesting potions, alchemical concoctions and other things they might find intriguing.

A few weeks later, in a different part of the ocean, the Smokesail appears again and its crew seems eager to do business. Captain Mongat however is a different man, a spindly old fellow with a long, drooping moustache. He does not remember our heroes and seems confused by their tale, but is happy to do business with them, offering a similar but different list of goods.

When our heroes meet the blond, tall Mongat again they can tell him about the other fellow and he will become furious. There is another man impersonating him and copying his business model? Mongat will offer good money if this impostor is taken out and ideally brought to him.

The moustached Mongat however is the original, an eccentric but incredibly skilled herbalist who has made quite a name for himself in other parts of the world. The younger Mongat, a nearly equally skilled but far more ruthless rival potion maker, is trying to steal his name, fame and identity, thus making his business even more profitable.

100. WRATH OF THE SEA

EPIC LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION, COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

It begins harmlessly enough: the Horizontrader, ship of the famed explorer Geraldino of Pentis, discovers a previously uncharted island of significant size. Soon the rumours say that this new island must have risen from the ocean bed itself and that it is riddled with ancient treasure. Several other ships are launched in this hunt for riches, but nobody else can seem to find that island. Geraldino is denounced as a fraud, an accusation he cannot battle against...for the explorer cannot be found either. The Horizontrader is gone, as is all her crew.

A few months pass, then strange incidences start occurring: many fishing villages report that their hauls are much smaller than they are used to. Individual ships disappear, their ill fate attributed to storms that nobody ever truly witnessed. The famous pirate stronghold known only as the Hive is found completely destroyed and bereft of life.

Then comes the Summer of the Red Tide. Massive sea creatures, monsters that nobody has ever seen before, launch devastating attacks upon coastal communities. Thousands die within just a few weeks, with whole harbour cities being abandoned. Tens of thousands of refugees flee inland. Naval operations come to a complete standstill, as every ship or boat that tries to sail the seas is destroyed nearly instantly. It seems that all the life in the ocean, from the smallest crab to the largest leviathan, has risen up against humanity. And indeed it is so. The monsters of the deep are coming. Soon they will use the rivers to leave the sea and attack any community even remotely connected to the ocean.

Our heroes are amongst the massive amount of people hired or pressed into service to save humanity from this intense threat.

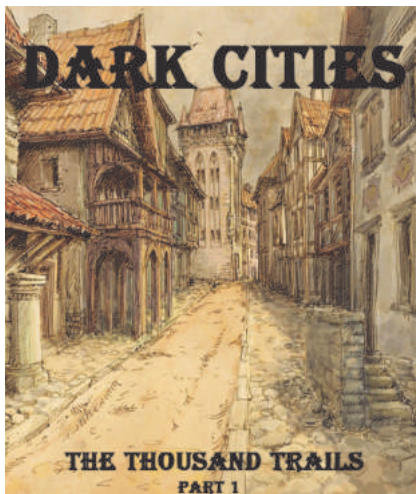
After several violent clashes with brutal monsters and smaller, once non aggressive ocean creatures like dolphins and seals our heroes might notice that all these creatures act and move nearly as if they were part of the same being, connected by strands of subtle magic. This is the work of an ancient Sea God who was awakened when the crew of the Horizontrader stepped onto his holy ground. That island had been covered by the waves for millennia, but an earthquake pushed it up and made it accessible. The God, too ancient to even have a name, has seen the encroaching tides of humanity and decided that they need to be destroyed. He can control every being living in the water and his magic can even raise the waves of the ocean itself. He cannot be threatened, bought or negotiated with. The God wants to see humanity drown...and will only stop if he is destroyed himself.



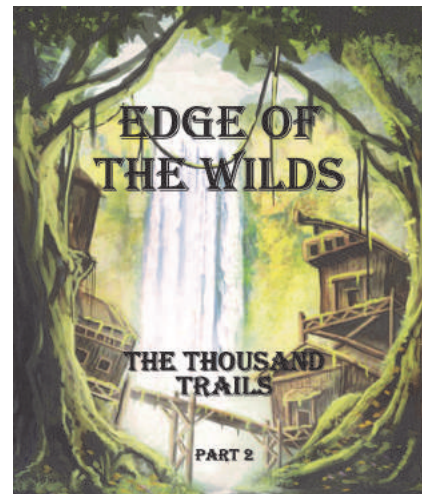
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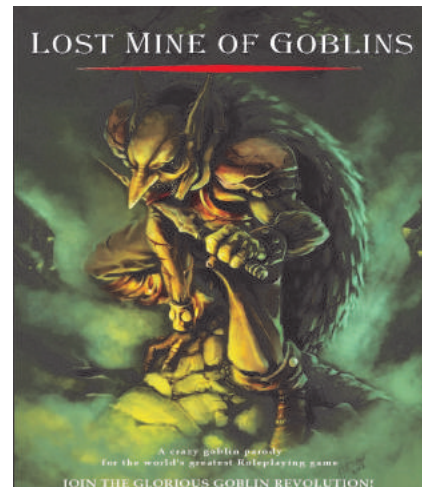
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