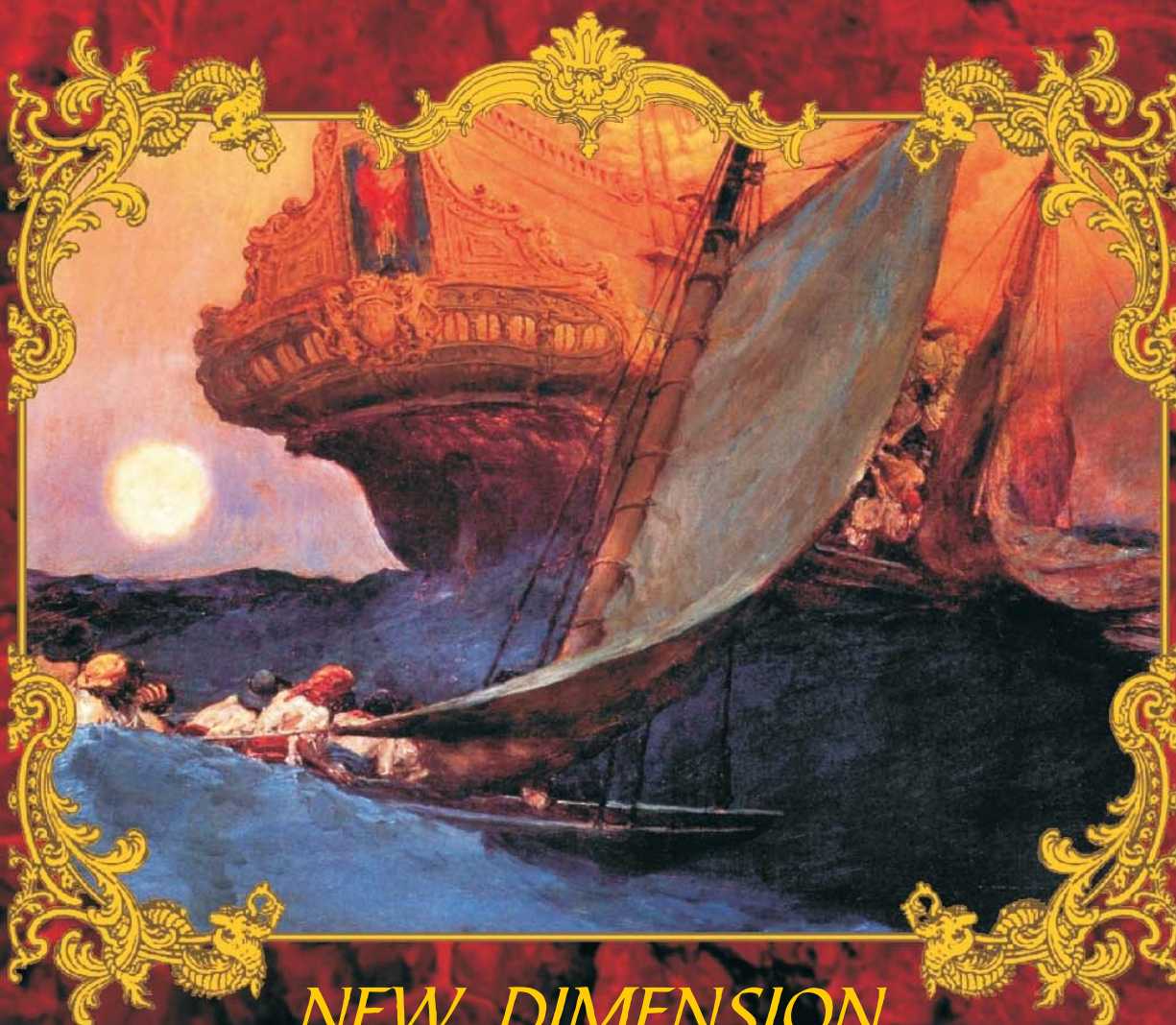


PIRATES

*CURSED BY
DRAKE'S INFERNO*

BY: MATT DEMILLE



NEW DIMENSION
GAMES

FOR Johnny Depp,
for staying proud...

Credits

Designer: Matthew deMille

Cover: Howard Pyle (historical picture)

Editing, Graphic Design, Typography: Matthew deMille

Producer: James deMille

PLANNING THE ADVENTURE

Ye've been marked by the Inferno. Stained by its fate, shadowed by its specter. I be sorry, lad...

PRONOUN NOTE: The male pronouns ('he', 'him', 'his') are used throughout this 'ere book. Though women may be bad luck at sea, they're right fine for this 'ere game, and we're not be tryin' to exclude 'em, nor even imply their exclusion. Centuries of use have made these 'ere pronouns neutral, and they're use provides for clear and concise written next—nothing else does.

ABOUT THIS BOOK: About this book in particular, indeed this gamebook—what is a gamebook for a role-playing game?

What is in this book: Contained within these pages are five individual, open-ended Adventures that will take the Characters on thrilling journeys across the Caribbean! These can be played individually, but as they all are tied to the ghost ship known as 'Drake's Inferno', they can be played in any order as part of a larger, more epic tale, one which will end when the party encounters the Inferno itself.

Using this book: These Adventures are relatively short, requiring on an average half a game session (roughly 6 hours) to play to their end. However, you may increase the length of any Adventure by adding Encounters from game gazetteers. One must select such additions with caution however, for all of the Adventures found in this book are carefully constructed and their own Encounters chosen to lead the Characters to a specific conclusion, and even one sidetrack can throw the Players' thinking off enough to change the course of the entire Adventure. Additional Encounters are welcome and even encouraged, but you should read through the new material and the entire Adventure itself before choosing what to add and where to add it.

It is also important to note that, as these Adventures are part of a larger story, they should be played back-to-back if they are indeed to lead to the Inferno in the end. For if not, the Players may well forget critical clues that would seem to be insignificant as part of a 'short' Adventure but would be important in the larger scheme of things. These Adventures should thus be played one-after-

another if the Players are interested in chasing the Inferno to the bitter end.

Indeed, if you can, play these Adventures one after another, having little 'shore leave' in-between them, at most the breaking of a game session, but not an altogether different Adventure unless the party is so determined to find the Inferno that they are unlikely to forget even the slightest detail.

PREPARING TO PLAY: Before you and your friends sit down to play this game, you should consider the basic elements of the Adventure, as explained throughout the following pages.

Timeline: This adventure is set in the Caribbean in any year from 1655 onward. Those Encounters that are marked with an '*' require the game to be played at least by this date, while some Encounters so marked may specify an even later date. If your game does not adhere to such timelines, do not use these marked Encounters.

Tales to be told: The Adventures in this book are presented in the order they are most likely to take place in, though they can be played in any series, five Adventures to be played in any order, but in the end will lead back to the cursed ship Inferno. The first Adventure, "Call of the Bloody Siren" gathers the party and sets their course towards the Inferno by finding a treasure beneath a tavern. The second Adventure, "Gallow's Bell", tells tales of their time aboard ship while they roam the sea, with the Inferno ever a shadow over other glories. The third Adventure, "Wake of Fire" leads to clues about the Inferno and ultimate binds these stories together. The fourth Adventure, "Caverns of Chaos" leads the party into a labyrinth of pirate caves as they search for a means to help defeat the Inferno. Finally, the fifth Adventure, "Hall of the Mermaid Queen" offers a unique journey all its own, though including a way to defeat the Inferno as well.

The sixth and last Adventure, "The Inferno", is to be played only after all the others have been completed, for only then will the Inferno itself find the party and 'welcome' them aboard. Only then will they have a chance at defeating its evil. Only then will they be able to truly end the adventure by at last defeating The Inferno itself.

PLANNING THE ADVENTURE

The endless curse: Having merely opened up this booklet, the Players' Characters have been stained by the bloody specter of the Inferno, a doom that does not easily let go its grip. For if all of the Characters die, even then the tale is not finished, their Adventures with the Inferno not ended. If you can convince any of the Players to make their new Characters heirs of their old ones, and speed the Campaign ahead the years necessary for all to thus become of age, they will continue these Adventures where their old Characters, indeed their ancestors, their fathers, had left off. Anyone who makes such a 'continuing' Character will gain, at his option, +6 **or** +1-12 Creation Points (the latter option only rolled once this decision has been finalized).

SIGHTINGS OF THE LEGEND: Throughout the course of the five Adventures in this book, Players may not be satisfied with allusions to the Inferno, mere rumors of it or tales of its passing. Therefore if your Players begin to lose interest of or fear in the greater story, the Inferno itself, they may need something to make them dread it more than ever. Thus are the following Encounters provided, each one offering a more direct and often deadly brush with the dark legend of Drake's ghost ship.

1) Dreams of doom

This Encounter should befall a random Character. When reading the narrative below, replace 'NAME' with that of the Player Character's own.

The night is a lonely, silent world. There is a dead calm beleaguering your ship, and a thin fog rolling over the devil's sea. The tolling of a bell echoes in the distance, like a cannon aboard the Grim Reaper's own ship offering a warning shot. 'NAME', it awakens you . . . or does it? The dark sea, the mist, everything is still present. You just wait for the tolling of that ghostly bell . . .

The bell will not sound again. However, if the Character can turn the ship in the direction that he remembered it, and can make an Intuition Check, he will come upon the wreckage of a ship, with one survivor, whose tale is of being destroyed by a ghost ship whose cannons shot fire, not metal.

2) Lost hat

You notice a tricorn hat floating about twenty or so yards off the leeward bow. It's drifting slowly but surely across your path.

The hat belonged to a jinxed sailor. If fished out of the sea, whatever ship it is on will suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls on Table 40. However, the one who wears it will gain +3 to Saving Throws and any rolls involved in saving his own life when the ship he's aboard goes down. If he ever asks in town about the hat, a Luck Check (made once per port visit) can learn the tale of the hat's original owner getting cursed aboard 'Drake's Inferno'.

3) We will not return . . .

"Ahoy the deck! Mariner off the larboard side! She makes to ram us!" The bell rings with such frantic fervor to call all the crew amidships with the speed of devils fleeing Hell. Yet they arrive to find that lookout only tells half the tale—the incoming vessel is drawing water, but this half-sunken ship is none-the-less bent on battle!

The ship is a mariner with but 45 Hull Points left, 4 guns, and a crew of 16 madmen (all of 1st Level) who are fleeing the Inferno, and intend to suicide against the party's ship so as to avoid the eternal damnation aboard the ghost ship which is, in truth, no longer following them.

THE INFERNO: The Inferno itself has chosen as its latest victims the Player Characters. Why? That is of the ship's own mind. Thus will this phantom follow the party like a shark, smelling the blood spilled by their adventures, and when they die, it will devour them, and those who do not die will have a chance to finally defeat the Inferno. Indeed, once Adventures 1-3 plus either 4 or 5 have been completed, only then will the party manage to find the Inferno (or rather, it will have found them) for a time long enough to climb aboard and fight for the freedom of their very souls . . .

CALL OF THE BLOODY SIREN

Yer Players be lubbers, eh matey? Need a venture ta put them land-lovin' lads out ta sea? Well then, just sit right back and we'll spin a tale, a tale of a fateful trip . . .

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE: Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

Shadows of the Inferno: This Adventure being set entirely on land (or under it), references to the Inferno are best delivered as stories told by sailors, thus foreshadowing it at sea, a place the Players will end up whether they like it or not . . .

Background: When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

The sea is a lonely world, yet one which is ever calling out to you, as a Siren calls to your soul. What could your heart seek in the open ocean save for death? Or, just perhaps, is there another world your immortal soul longs for which your mortal eyes cannot yet see?

Tales in these waters abound with myths like mermaids and phantom ships. You hear them all too often as you make your way along the coast. Cove after cove hears countless rumors echoing off its cliffs, like the ghosts of pirates fighting to prove the story they tell as the one which is to be the favorite of still living landmen.

Along this nameless coast, stories, it seems, are all that people care about. A remote region of underfunded colonies and chantey towns, the folk who find a living from fishing, selling rum and trading tales care little for the outside world, its wars, its politics and policies—they only care about what fetches a price.

PART 1: ANSWERING THE CALL: The inne of the Bloody Siren calls to sailors like its name suggests, being perched on a bluff overlooking the harbor. Use the following Encounters as necessary to bring what Characters they can into the game. Those who do not hear such a call will have to wait for fate.

1) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce anyone to the game who is just finishing a previous Adventure and is without a ship in any way.

A fisherman is kind enough to give you passage to the nearest hamlet, where he says pirates are welcome. You stand near the bow of the cutter as it drives through the rancorous waves, almost like a proud captain returning from victory out at sea. Soon, you beach on a bed of gravel, so you are forced to wade through the slimy surf, up a taxing trail to the heights of the cliff above, and finally down a winding lane to the only tavern. It's not much, either. Big, like a converted barn, but also as filthy as one. Still, it's quiet, it's a dry bed, and it's got food and rum awaiting you.

The tavern is the 'Bloody Siren'. All lodging and meals are free the first night for any sailor, as the sole proprietor—Bethany, a widow—likes her guests to get comfortable enough that they don't want to leave easily, and therefore pay more. Plus, a full day of free rum loosens so many tongues as to what treasure they truly have . . .

2) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce everyone who has not had an Adventure yet, provided they are either British, French or Dutch. If nobody has yet been introduced, this Encounter will none-the-less bring in one Character, the one with the lowest total of all Ability Scores.

This night, as others gather in the common-room of the Siren, you overhear a young lad talking with a grizzled traveler, just arrived today. Seems the boy was the sole survivor of a ship whose nemesis he won't dare name. The crusty sailor begins slapping the boy around, trying to shame the name out of him.

The new Characters are in the tavern at this time. If saved, the boy will be grateful. His name is 'Tim Stevenson', only 12 years old, a cabin-boy who won't dare go to sea again. Only a Charisma

CALL OF THE BLOODY SIREN

Check can get his story out of him. His ship was scuttled by a phantom galleon whose approach was heralded by the beating of a drum all through the day, and once the sun sank, so did his ship from ceaseless cannon-fire, and for the entire night the survivors rowed on they still heard the drum. They all died from fever, but the boy was close enough to land that he could row the rest of the way.

PART 2: TALES OF BLOOD: As the evening goes on, events will happen that will prompt the strange adventure that lies below the tavern. Use the following Encounters in the order that they are presented until someone decides to seek for secret passages beneath the tavern.

3) Whispers from Hell

The fire crackles low in the hearth, the dance of spirits in flame to match the spirits of rum and fiery thought dancing in your head. The flames flicker in a draft, though every shutter is closed. Men nearby are telling ghost stories of the sea.

A successful search (this roll made with a +3 bonus if the fire is put out) will find that the floor of the fireplace has hollow spots, as if it was once open and bricked over, allowing for a draft.

4) Madness with meaning

Night is getting on. Bethany the barkeeper starts dowsing lanterns. Suddenly, the heavy front door slams to, releasing into your lives a man whose smell precedes him. He hobbles into your midst, and demands in a voice as broken and loud as the waves he crawled from “Where is she? I’ve come for my most wicked wench! By God there will be blood if someone doesn’t answer me!”

Everyone is too terrified to answer this drunk sailor. If a Character doesn’t beat him down now, he will turn his pistol on a random Character and say “You die unless I’m given my treasure!” This drunk, if interrogated, will tell all he knows, that the tavern somehow holds a great treasure that is in the possession of ‘the wicked wench’. Nobody else will know anything more.

5) Red herring

Your attention is drawn to a squinty eyed guy in the corner. His face is burnt red from the sun and merciless winds of the sea. He’s very lean and oblivious to all except the huge plate of fish in front of him. Between his rather large bites, he babbles bits of a story, about how devils are coming for you all tonight, devils from the sea, devils as red as he, devils from phantom ships.

If the party looks, they can see that his plate is piled high with herring and nothing else. He can be easily provoked, and any question to the truth of his tale will erupt into a brawl with this pirate Crewman and his 4 flint-locks.

6) Fortunate misfortune

Determine the Character with the **highest** Luck and run him through . . . this Encounter. When reading the following narrative, replace ‘NAME’ with that of the Character.

Long into the night, ‘NAME’, you awaken from a nightmare. Voices from below crept up through the floorboards and into your naked mind. Yet even now, awake, these voices continue, as if all of Hell is about to tear through the earth beneath the tavern.

This Character cannot heal (but he can indeed be healed by exotic means) until the dead down in Encounter 9 are put to rest.

Nobody else had nightmares—Bethany is sorry if this is spoken of in her presence, and she will explain how that room has always been haunted. She never uses it unless all other rooms are taken, so she drew lots to see who got it—to the person who had the nightmares she will say “You must be an unlucky person, right?”

7) But a dead man can tell a dog new tales . . .

From a dark corner of the tavern, a dog howls, a lonely baying that could awaken the dead far out at sea.

CALL OF THE BLOODY SIREN

If asked about the dog, the locals can all tell the tale: The dog's master, Bethany's husband, died on this very night many years ago. If the dog is followed, it will go outside to the unmarked grave of its master and paw the ground.

Should the party dig up the coffin, they can find inside of it a compass in a heart shape. If the compass is seen by any locals, they will comment: "Beware. It's like an acorn from which shall grow a tangled tree of tales whose roots reach the very bottom of the sea..."

PART 3: THE SECRET PASSAGES: Once the party searches beneath the tavern for any passages or secret doors, and then finds one behind a wall of wine bottles in the cellar, the real adventure shall begin. Use the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented. After each Encounter, the party must make a Searching Check to find their way to the next one, with failure to do so resulting in their being lost for 1-12 hours. If they are marking their way, this will add a +6 bonus to their rolls.

8) The tunnel

Behind the wine rack, the wall slides open with a dull grinding sound. Beyond it, the flickering lantern light creeps into a corridor like water into a sinking ship. The rough-hewn floor here angles slightly downward, and you catch the familiar smell of wet stone and salt water.

The corridor ahead is guarded by booby-traps. There are three tripwires in all, each spaced about 40' apart. Every Character stands a 3 in 12 chance of tripping the first one that is yet untripped, this chance increased by 1 for every 20 Burden he has. If tripped, a stone block will fall from the ceiling and crush that individual for Base Damage 18.

9) Restless dead

The maze of tunnels leads to several dead-ends and wraparound tunnels. You are convinced that you can go no further, unless you can somehow break through a tunnel sealed up by bricks and three skulls, mortared mostly with moss and fear.

The dead are restless here. If the skulls are blessed by a Priest, or someone carries a Bible on them and reads a passage for a blessing, they will rest. Otherwise, when the wall comes down, they will be 'angry', and moan, their lament echoing into the dark tunnel beyond. Breaking the wall is a feat which requires merely a Brawn Check with a -3 penalty, with failure resulting in a wound of -1 (there is no Check to resist it or to risk dying).

10) Pool of seawater

The network of tunnels has lead through many strange sights—forests of stalagmites, cave-mouths shaped like skulls, phosphorus pools glowing like fountains of eternal life—now you find a shallow pool fed by curtains of thin waterfalls along the walls, where the pure tears of ghosts glisten gold in your light, while the pool is poisoned with seawater, a sickly green.

At the bottom of the pool is a heart-shaped compass exactly like the one from Encounter 7.

If the spirits in Encounter 9 were not put to rest before that wall was broken down, here, they will appear as 3 Shadows, their shadows striking the shadows of the party on the wall for their way of attack, though they cannot at all hinder anyone submerged in the pool.

11) Spiral stairs

Water flows down a natural, spiral stair, coiling deeper into the earth. As the steps descend ever deeper, the water rushes faster, tugging at your feet. You can almost hear the echo of dead men in the darkness below.

Each Character must make an Agility Check to descend the stairs safely. If he fails, he will slip and slide down the stairs for Base Damage 2, but reach the bottom rather fast.

If the spirits in Encounter 9 were not put to rest before that wall was broken down, even if the three were 'defeated' in Encounter 10, they will return to slash ropes used for descending the stairs safely, which they will not fail to do, and cannot be fought at this point.

CALL OF THE BLOODY SIREN



12) Dead man's grotto

The tunnels open into a dark grotto. Stalagmites rise up all around, and stalactites leer down from the darkness above. As you walk slowly along, these sharp stones seem like they're drifting by, like hooded, stone ghosts marching towards Hell. The further you go, the deeper into the darkness, the more the rocks are encrusted with barnacles and bones—skeletons are fused to the stones with the white mold of the sea. Hundreds must have met their end down here. Just ahead is a large, underground lagoon, its waters flowing away into the darkness. Along one wall is a series of slime and seaweed, the drool of a waterfall which does not flow, but sloshes over at regular intervals, as if the sea is vomiting up the last Mortals who dared ascend to its shadowed heights.

The lagoon is 8' deep in the center. There is nothing at its far end. The waterfall is the rim of the pool in Encounter 13, sloshing over with the tide—this grotto is submerged at high tide, which is about 3 hours away. Climbing the waterfall cliff requires an ascent of only 30'. If one times the waves, he will gain a +2 bonus to these Checks.

13) Abandoned ship

You crawl around the rocks, and look out into a large cavern, its ends lost in darkness so distant it may be the night sky. To your left, your eyes are shanghaied by a fully rigged galleon, rotting and ravaged by time but still floating at anchor, its mooring lines groaning against the current of the waterfall behind you. In the distance, a dark, blue shape slowly forms, the outline of a tunnel illuminated by starlight. You can smell the free air even if you cannot yet see it.

Whenever the party left the tavern, the long exploration of the tunnels took the right amount of time to end when it would be the dead of night outside. For the large tunnel is indeed a way into the open ocean, though the incoming current is far too strong to swim or sail, and its ceiling far too low to be noticed from the outside. However, the ship, 'The Wicked Wench', can make the voyage

if it is awakened. For this is a cursed ship, which will sail itself if it is given a compass—the stand at the helm has a heart-shaped hole in it, perfectly fit for either compass found in Encounter 7 or 10, and setting one into it will indeed stir the old sails with supernatural wind, but after that, the compass cannot be removed and the course cannot change. Logbooks cannot be found aboard, but once outside (at sea), the light of either sun or moon will cause writing to glow within the stained-glass windows at the back of the captain's cabin, reading in English '*Dead men keep secrets as low as they may go*'. The ship's logbook is kept in a very unsuspecting (and thus it is not found with a Searching Check) box in the bilge. A Search of the logbook takes hours, but it will, if successfully browsed, find the revealing passages as provided on Handout 1.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party is ready to leave the Wicked Wench behind, there are some things to consider.

A cursed ship: Those who are aboard the Wicked Wench when a heart-compass awakens it shall be bound to the vessel. They physically cannot leave the ship, for when they do, it will be the same as being underwater for 'drowning'. Each such person that now 'crews' the Wicked Wench will have a black spot burn onto their body somewhere, which will at times disappear, indicating that they are for the short while until it returns able to leave the ship without harm. This should occur for a total of only 1-6 days each year for each person, though exactly **when** it occurs is entirely up to you (or rather, up to the ship). If the party ever changes ships, their captain must rename their new ship as 'The Wicked Wench' and then deface the old one, and thus carry the curse over to the new vessel. Thus, all tales told, the party will be the crew for The Wicked Wench for eternity...

Strength of the ship: The Wicked Wench, at least the ship currently named as such, is a galleon with 12 guns, 15 salvos, 240 days of food, an anchor, spare sails, and 882 gold medallions (each one of them worth 30 gold) aboard. It steers itself, so it never fails Navigation Checks. It also decides its course, ever trailing the shadow of the Inferno...

GALLOW'S BELL

Once at sea, what awaits ye? Fer no matter be the ship them pirates be sailin', the curse'll follow 'em wherever they go, an' even their ship itself can be hidin' adventure aboard...

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE: Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

Rumors of the Inferno: This Adventure being set almost entirely aboard ship or at least in port, the Inferno should remain more of a metaphor for the party and what they may become, like a fairytale told to frighten children into obedience while ever tempting them at the same time to dare to enter the woods or eat the forbidden fruit—rumors of a ghost ship should encourage the party to seek it.

Background: When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

It is a time of war, an age of profiteering, a new world built by trade companies and naval ships rather than explorers and missionaries. It is a world built on the foundations of others, where every nation is employing every political excuse to engage in war for profit, and employing every privateer and pirate to win. Yet with betrayal as common as commission, pirates can only wonder: When will their own number be up?

When will **your** number be up? As you drink away the evening, you gaze out to sea, reflecting on this brutal world, and wondering... Who have you angered whom you've never met? What laws have you broken that you don't know exist? And what cities have you plundered that never existed in this age or any other?

Fate—or perhaps some more sinister force but wearing her wig and using her words of wind in the sails of your ship—has led you ashore to yet another seedy port. If this is the new world, it's no better than the old one. There's simply more gold to be had, and a greater tax at the tollbooth when one arrives at the gates to Hell. You have no more hope for the world than any knowledge of your true purpose or place in it.

A belle by any other name: Whatever it may be named now, the ship that the party finally sets sail in was originally named 'Gallow's Bell', so named because its bell hung right next to the mainmast, and was rung when somebody was hung from the yardarm—the only punishment in the articles. Yet it was originally to be called 'Gallow's Belle', for it was built as a pirate vessel seeking revenge for the unjust murder of the financier's wife, a most beautiful belle indeed, though the crew felt it to be bad luck to name it so, and the captain, seeking a successful voyage of revenge above all else, was convinced to alter the name. The ship is now the haunted vessel by some other name that the party will sail aboard during this Adventure. Indeed, they may already be aboard it...

PART 1: GALLOW'S DOCK: Before setting out to adventure, the party must establish just what ship will lead them there. More importantly, they need to learn a bit more about the ship they are aboard. This will occur at whatever port that you choose to start the Adventure in. There, use the following two Encounters as needed to establish all the crew as being on the same vessel.

1) Introduction

This Encounter will draw all current Characters in, like a most seductive woman. If they have not yet found the 'Wicked Wench', the haunted ship found in Adventure #1, do not read the second paragraph of the following narrative.

This harbor has a long line of gallows along the docks. Some hang from old cranes, some from a jagged wall of coral rising from the whitecaps, but all a clear warning... to the Royal Navy. For all the ropes dangle the skeletal remains of merchant sailors, officers and even royalty above the waves. It is here that you have landed by all the grace of God.

Inside town, you quickly find the hub of its activity, 'The Wicked Wench'. This tavern is a lively place, as jolly as the ship sharing its name was evil. Whores hang out of the windows while a man bathes in a hog troth. Inside, all manner of rascals, scoundrels, villains and knaves gather.

GALLOW'S BELL

Either approaching the tavern or already well into their jollies inside of it are the Characters, yet not without adventure—the second Player to speak will find his Character challenged to a brawl by a rather drunken Crewman.

2) Introduction

This Encounter will press gang into the story all Characters who have yet to earn their first Shilling of Story or their first golden Piece of Experience.

Fate has led you to purgatory—the common-room of the rather seedy and smoky Wicked Wench Tavern—close enough, where a bosun is seated at a table with a quill, parchment and bottle of a rum, offering positions on his captain's ship.

If any other Player Characters that have been established have their own ship, then this is one of their crew acting as a boson and taking recruits. Otherwise, this is a genuine offer for a place on the 'Tinker Bell', a schooner which is setting sail with the morning tide, its statistics provided as Handout 2. In any event, to get a place on the boson's roster first requires an act of proving one's ability or worthiness, determined at random on the following chart. Yet never use the same challenge twice—if a roll duplicates an earlier entrant's test, the boson is too drunk to care and just accepts the new recruit outright.

Tests For Recruits

Roll	Challenge to be worthy to sign aboard
12	Pick the sleaziest guy in the tavern (the one whose skin carries poison by touch) and give him a sloppy kiss on the lips
10-11	Pick the largest guy in the tavern (the one with the highest total between his Brawn and Defense Score) and moon him
8-9	Drink some 'Kill Devil's Rum', requiring an Endurance Check at -2 to stay awake
5-7	Star a bar brawl with at least 3 Crewmen and still be standing when it is over
2-4	Knock out the guy behind you in line, be it a PC or an NPC Crewman of 4 th Level
1	Carve off one of your own fingers (gives no penalty or loss of any kind)

PART 2: THE HIDDEN WORLD: Adventure! It awaits the party at sea! Yet, it does not await any beyond their ship—adventure shall find the unwary aboard their very home, their fortress, their vessel. Use the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented to encourage the party to eventually put into port.

3) Whispers of fear

As you walk the deck, you overhear the crew, a conversation that is strange indeed. They whisper about 'that one ship', the 'one that followed us all last year', their whispers wondering whether it is still out there. They speak as if of a phantom, or a creature from another world, fearing when it will return from the night sky to find this world of their ship once again. "Keep moving," one of them says upon seeing you, referring to the ship, "so we can never be found..."

If pressed for details, the crew will only give them up to the captain himself. If the captain is an NPC, a Charisma Check will be required for him to pursue this matter. What and who the crew spoke of was Captain Robert Snelgrave, the only name feared enough to survive the grave, a famous pirate in these waters.

4) Ghosts telling ghost stories

Tonight is a flat calm. The crew have doused a good number of lanterns, leaving only a few on the mizzenmast. Sitting on a barrel before it, one of the crew is telling ghost stories in the golden glow. "Aboard this ship, ye know yer world, but out there, in the great beyond, ye got some big shoes ta fill. Now this guy we be a talkin' 'bout, he busts the seams an' walks through the jungle barefoot, stomping on ever'thin' in his path".

Only continue if any Characters stop to listen. The tale goes on about men in search of Drake's gold (referring to Sir Francis Drake). The man that the storyteller is referring to has no name, a ghost, a metaphor indeed for what one must do to find a great treasure. If asked, he will say that he learned this tale by the 'ghost who has the wet footprints'.

GALLOW'S BELL

5) Pirate ship

Your world, the world of your ship does not rise and sleep by sun and moon, but the call of the lookout. Right now, it's indeed a full moon, as he's sitting bare-assed in the rigging. He awakens quickly enough, sighting a ship. No sooner does he call it than she starts turning! She's running!

The enemy ship is a pirate, one whose captain is aware of the party's curse by the Inferno due to a visit to a fortune teller. An Intuition Check by spyglass can see the distant crew hastily crossing themselves, as if they saw a ghost. They are of a ship type 2 Values, 8 guns and 40 Levels of men above whatever the party has, but they are going to try to flee all the same. If chased, the party can easily catch this vessel, but its captain will hide in a seachest in the cargo hold. All these men would rather die than join the party's crew.

6) Storm of sin

A storm has come out of nowhere, like a wraith of wind and thunder, seizing your ship with the fury that only the Caribbean's unchristened seas can muster. The ship groans and whines in every timber. Through the sporadic flashes of lightning, you see a ship in your wake, a ship with blood-red sails. Each time it reappears, it has changed its course, yet is somehow always closer to you.

The storm is of a Magnitude equal to 3 plus the captain's Notoriety Level. This storm cannot be rounded, as it is not natural—it follows the party. An NPC captain will be Level 4. The Magnitude can be lowered by giving gold to the sea, 1000 to lower 1 Magnitude. Though this will be suggested by the most pious NPC aboard, carrying out this command must be done in secret from all other NPCs, who will not part with any treasure.

7) Sunday services

It's Sunday morning, and many of the crew are holding a mass amidstships. It's odd, it is, how all so many different men, of different skins and so varied of faiths can find fellowship together.

If a Character joins in the prayer, he will gain a +1 bonus to the next type of roll he makes, and that bonus will last for the rest of this Adventure.

8) Unknown grudges

Determine a Player Character at random and then run him through this event, replacing 'NAME' with that of the Character himself.

"Avast there, 'NAME'! Yer the dog what be the reason God is forsaken' us". You see three men clearly ready to attack you. "Yer breathin' be the exception to the rule o' no fightin' aboard ship!"

This fight with the 3 Crew will last 2 Rounds before other crewmen break it up. The trial should clearly be in the Character's favor by any articles, but can change if his story makes no sense (if he hides things), calling for a single Charisma Check for each side. If any crew died, the quartermaster will be informed of an addendum to the articles, one which has been added by a ghost's power so it is impossible to have known of—the punishment for a crew murder is the only exception to being hung, and it is being tied to your victim's corpse, along with weights, and thrown overboard! Once such punishment has been carried out, the 'victim' must make a Saving Throw at 10 to save himself.

However, if one sinks with the corpse(s), after 1-6 Rounds he will land on a sunken ship but 40' down, where a ghostly captain with a deep scar across his neck, calling himself 'Davey Jones', will talk with him, keeping him alive until he is ready to return to the surface. This ghost cannot tell him what is going on, only that 'your ship remembers'.

9) The wet footprints

Your ship, your world must have a hidden sea, for where else can they come from? You chance to glance down and see wet footprints . . . leading to the railing, but coming from the cargo hatch.

The footprints are of a 10 year-old girl's feet. A Searching Check can trace them to a locker in the hold. Nobody knows who owns it. Inside it are 1596 crowns (coins), their minting year all 1540.

GALLOW'S BELL

PART 3: TALES FROM TAVERNES: The next time the party stops in port, things will be a little more wild there than expected, due to the changes imposed by the recent coming of the Inferno. Use the following Encounters whenever applicable.

10) Welcome to New Brothel

As you arrive in town, you find that it is very much changed, and recently. The wharfs are built high, so that traffic walks above the foundations of burned-out buildings, now but sunken graves and soggy cinders, for the dike has been broken, laid waste, and the seawater has crept in, leaving the old port flooded and forgotten. The new port is a maze of wooden streets on the cliffs, all the buildings are new, and flooded with people. The town, you gather, is 'New Brothel', so named as the first building put up was a brothel due to all the wealth the women had, and now the harbor is a proud perversion of New England—the folk here, it seems, believe that the crown did nothing to protect them from the devil which destroyed the old town.

Moving around town, each different type of an establishment (brothel, dry goods store, undertaker, shipyard, etc.) grants one a Luck Check. The first time one is successful, if they have not left behind the ship of Adventure #1 yet, the proprietor will see something within them and so say "You're still bound to the Wicked Wench, aren't ye?" All that he can say about that is that he heard tell of men looking just like them at the Bloody Siren Taverne (in whatever port Adventure #1 is located).

11) The man in black

The filthy, stone walls of the narrow streets are defined only by the flickering lanternlight, like barriers between worlds, and every dark doorway is filled with lost souls. Amongst these phantoms, one locks his eyes with you. Dressed as a rather flamboyant, masked swashbuckler in black, even his fluffy sleeves and long tassels cannot disguise his thin, almost skeletal body and parched skin. Even were he a Chinaman you'd be hard pressed to understand how he remains alive.

If the man is approached, he will turn into the shadows and simply disappear. If not approached, he will say "The English do not openly fear the Spanish Armada. Perhaps you'd find better health in treasures you **should** be afraid of. Those which you'd have a chance to understand, to conquer..." After saying this, he will disappear as before.

12) Haunted cannon*

The town is like a place out of time, where the debauchery and night alike have no end. You see a sailor laying in the mud with hogs and three beerstiens, a whore straddling a cannon, sailors being thrown out of windows, two pirates betting their own arms in a game of dice as a centuries-old executioner looms over them both, and any other madness you can think of. It's like a ghost town, where some people are alive, and some are not, either world invisible to each other, but not to you, as if some special fate surrounds you, allowing you to see everyone's sins at once.

If the whore on the cannon is approached, she will claim the cannon was taken from a ghost ship called 'The Inferno', and still holds many secrets, and for a fee of 6 gold, one can reach into the dark barrel and keep what he pulls out. If asked why one must pay her, she will say "Because if a customer doesn't, I'll tell my regular, Drake, the next time I see him, be it in this port, or in Hell, and he'll come looking for you". Reaching into the cannon (after paying) will get one a random prize rolled on the following chart.

TREASURE FROM The Haunted Cannon

Roll	What the Character grabs
12	A golden cannonball; can be used once, but makes any one salvo a Critical one
11	Potion; random one from Table 98
10	A jewel; value 50-600 gold
7-9	30 pieces of silver (equal to gold coins)
6	A skeletal hand; voice cries from in the cannon to be free, a haunting that causes -1 to all the Character's rolls for a week
4-5	A snake; automatic hit of level 4 poison
2-3	Evil; loses the hand, burned off at wrist
1	Evil; sucks him inside, to be lost forever!

GALLOW'S BELL



13) Gravedigger

On the beach, ever under the shadow of the high wharfs and against the onslaught of the tide, one lowly gravedigger works waist-deep in seaform, a losing battle to be sure, for when the waves roll back, you can see he is stuck in smooth sand. Yet he doesn't seem to care. He labors on, ever mumbling something about 'the cursed ones'.

If approached, the gravedigger will speak with evasive answers, being very talkative but also very absolute, thus each of the following facts must be prompted with a specific question. For example, if asked whose graves these are, he would simply say "Mine". If asked who he digs them for, he would say "Those to be buried here". If asked who are to be buried here he would say "The cursed ones". He 'knows' the following 'facts':

He digs graves between the land and the sea to confuse the cursed ones, so they will be forever confused and unable to know which direction to go when the Inferno returns and rekindles the furnace of their bodies, but he doesn't know which ship is the Inferno, and it could just as easily be the one the party sails on, as there is evil aboard it, just as there was when Drake was forbidden to talk of the ship he and the crown feared all their lives.

PART 4: STOWAWAY DEVILS: Eventually the party will search their ship for whatever unearthly force is aboard it. However, until now, indeed until they met the gravedigger could they have found anything. Now, that evil is awakening, to be found by going from clue-to-clue, as detailed using the following Encounters, to be played one and all and in the order they are presented.

14) Dead man's chest...

The locker from Encounter #9 will at this point be filled with wet sand and, mixed within it, a broken but complete skeleton. Once opened, this Skeleton's skull's eyes will flash red when it comes within an arm's length of the head and thus Encounter 15. Yet for each part of the ship it is taken that is not at the head, the Skeleton will animate anew and attack the one who last held the skull.

15) You're getting warmer...

Once at the head, the skull and Skeleton will offer no further clue. Here, a Searching Check can find English writing provided as Handout 3. If stained with warm blood, additional writing will appear, in the form of Handout 4. Solving this puzzle merits 10 additional Experience Points.

16) Between worlds...

Following the clues from Handouts 3 and 4, if the mainmast is somehow broken (this cannot be done by hand, but only by explosives or cannonade), the area where the metal brace encloses will be hollow and containing a small, golden bell, the original of the ship's namesake. If rung, it will summon long forgotten Skeletons from the deep, arriving in 1-6 Rounds to match the numbers (and Levels) of the crew, including the Player Characters. However, if the bell is rung on a beach with graves, the dead will rise and, being confused as to where to go, ask the party to be released. If granted, they will walk into the sea or inland, depending on the debt of their souls and their personal faiths. However, if the party is wise and bargains, in return for their release, the dead can indeed tell the party where the evil aboard their ship is—the ship cannot rest until the one who escaped with all of its treasure, 'Captain Robert Snelgrave', hangs by a noose from its yardarm.

17) Finding Snelgrave...

'Captain Robert Snelgrave', who fled the Gallow's Bell long ago with all its treasure at the time must hang from its yardarm to appease the spirit of this haunted ship. Yet how to find him? There is only one way, and that is to 'let the ship take control'. If the captain by any means clearly gives up his command to the vessel, it will curse everyone who has signed aboard (whether they are aboard or not) and then turn towards its prey, which can be most anywhere you wish, but unless you have episodes of adventure planned for a longer voyage, Captain Snelgrave should be only days away. Once he is near enough to be sighted, move on to the next Section of this Adventure.

GALLOW'S BELL

PART 5: BATTLE WITH THE KRAKKEN: If there is a monster at sea to be feared, it is a ship so named, the ship of Captain Robert Snelgrave, someone who has hated and hunted the Gallow's Bell—the party's ship—for most of his life. For he was pressed into its service when he was a young man, only to escape years later, but not without a measure of revenge in the form of either taking its treasure with him or throwing what he could not haul with him overboard. Now, only one thing in his waning life remains, and that is to destroy the ship which stole from him most of it. That day has finally come. Use the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

18) The Krakken

The lookout has spied a ship on the horizon. It's closing quickly, making straight for your wooden hide like a demon of the deep. As she draws on your broadside, her sails unfurl like the wings of a dragon, and her cannons run out like claws. A moment later, the crewmen are echoing the name stained on her bow; "The Krakken!"

The Krakken is a man-o-war running 35 guns and manned by 130 crew (60 1st, 40 2nd and 30 3rd Level men for a total of 230 Levels). They use all tactics as intelligently and effectively as possible. Once boarded, go to the next Encounter.

19) The captain

The ships grind together and become one world unto themselves. Through the smoke, you see the enemy captain approaching. Robert Snelgrave is a surprisingly small man, barely over five feet, and looks no more than thirty years, though he holds a cutlass with all the confidence of a man who has lived to see a hundred . . . battles.

This is not Captain Snelgrave, but an imposter whom the crew is aware of, and thus, if this, his quartermaster is defeated, it will not matter one bit to the rest of the fighting crew. The real Captain is waiting in the cargo hold. Once he is defeated, he will bargain for mercy, and only if it is granted should you continue with this Encounter.

Captain Snelgrave seems to be looking into some other world, one unseen by all of you. His eyes are pale white. His voice echoes as if you were all standing within a cavern. He babbles about a time long ago, when he was bound to the ship whose name is bitter taste to speak, the Gallow's Bell. He rambles on about how he escaped with its treasure. The longer he talks, the more cryptic he becomes, until he is reduced to babbling. You can make of his words whatever you may.

There is truly fear upon Snelgrave far greater than death or anything the Characters can present, for he is fearing the afterlife, be it aboard his old prison of Gallow's Bell or when the Inferno comes upon the party—he can see it, less than a mile off it is, in turn watching the party. What the party is able to learn from him must be rolled on the chart below. Only Player Characters (those cursed by the Inferno) can get such a roll, despite any tactics.

The Tale Of Captain Snelgrave

Roll	What the party learns
10-12	To escape the curse of the most Wicked Wench one must find the Mermaid Queen
6-9	The Bell and the Wench are the same
3-5	The Gallow's Bell and your ship are one
1-2	The Inferno is just a mile off and it is watching you because that's what it does

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has left the mystery of Gallow's Bell behind, there are some things to consider.

The fate of Snelgrave: If Captain Robert Snelgrave meets his death by hanging from the Gallow's Bell yardarm, any curse or other hold the ship has over the Player Characters will **not** be lifted, but the Captain's ghost, now bound to that ship forever will follow the party invisibly and attack them for the first 3 Rounds of every fight, until destroyed.

Changing ships: If the party's ship is the Wicked Wench, the curse will remain, but having had its revenge on Snelgrave, it will increase the 'leave' time it grants per year from 1-6 to 1-12 days.

WAKE OF FIRE

A solid ship beneath 'em an' blood-stained waters just a few fathoms lower be all the tale needs be tellin', says I, fer no matter where they go now, them pirates'll be seein' cities an' ships ablaze left in the wake o' their unseen master...

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE: Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

Sightings of the Inferno: This Adventure being set during a voyage with little other purpose, glimpses of and references to the Inferno should be used to set the party's compass so-to-speak, to encourage their wanderings from port to port to try and find the truth about the ghost ship burning all flags...

Background: When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

The Caribbean, the brutal paradise, has become a battleground. Only thing is, nobody knows who is fighting who. Someone has been burning ships and towns regardless of their flag, and yet never letting a single name be linked to the glory of it all. Even pirate towns have been razed. It seems that nowhere in the pirate's lagoon is safe.

Without a face, a nation or a name to credit to this onslaught, the shadows of rumor have as can be expected offered fleeting glimpses into the truth, whatever horizon it may lie beyond. Some say a ghost ship is responsible. More learned or dignified men calculate that only an entire fleet could inflict such damage so quickly. Governors blame each other for using rumors to disguise an all too familiar, clandestine formula for igniting war. The truth remains a mystery.

However, regardless of what that truth may be, you have found yourself in the fiery wake of whatever is unleashing Hell upon the Caribbean. Towns you visited most recently have been said to have burned, as well as those you have but mentioned going to. Eventually, you know, deep within your heart, that this inferno will come for you. The only question is, where will you be the night you see its flaming sails appear?

PART 1: RAISE THE RAZED FLAG: The party will begin this Adventure in a port that has been razed only the day before their arrival. If they are continuing from an earlier Adventure, this should be whatever port they put into at the end of that venture. Otherwise, pick a place for them to start that suits their Nationality or commission, or both. In this port, use the following two Encounters, in the order they are presented.

Trading in town: The town being mostly destroyed by the Inferno is in desperate need of gold and goods, granting an increased price for the selling of all items in the Rule Book by +1, though one cannot sell what is already available for purchase (as determined by a normal Availability Roll).

Repairing ships: Due to the need for materials in rebuilding the town, all ship repairs cost threefold their normal price.

1) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce all Characters who have already been played. If the group is entirely new, one Character will begin his adventures here. In order of priority, he shall be the one who is an Englishman, of the highest English rank, and lastly he with the most value of gold and equipment. As you read the following narrative, replace 'NASSAU' with the name of the settlement you have chosen to begin this Adventure in.

The town of 'NASSAU' slowly emerges from the darkness of pre-dawn and smoke from the night before. Little but foundations of all the buildings remain, like cinders in a fireplace. The ghosts of houses, inns and merchantiles alike climb miles into the heavens. Already are people busy with rebuilding, trading with the newly arrived ships such as yours, and business is moving quickly, as no treasure was taken from the raid. It is as if you have disembarked off the ships of angels onto the shores of Hell, where all the pirates are gathered, trying to buy their way back to life.

A pirate Crewman will attempt to pickpocket the Character who acts first. He has +3 to do so.

WAKE OF FIRE

2) A desperate governor

You have all been summoned to see the town's governor. His manor is remarkably intact amidst the ruin of the razed town. Either it was simply left alone, or was the first to be rebuilt. Yet as you approach the yard, you see English guards raising a burned flag. The governor stands close by, his skin so baked from sun and cannon-fire that he has more the look of a desperado. Upon seeing you, he strides slowly towards you with what dignity he can salvage. It is about all that he can—he walks past piles of burning ledgers, keeping safe but one, merely a single ship's log.

If this is not an English town, in the wake of its being sacked, an English regiment was able to secure it. The governor holds the logbook of one ship that saw 'who did this' and survived. He will be too afraid to say more, though it's unclear if he's afraid of the ship itself, or of breaking orders not to discuss such matters. Desperate for anyone to solve this mystery, he is not allowed to waste men or money pursuing it, but will not give the party the logbook, either—he will insult them and tempt them, doing whatever it takes for them to seize it so his guards will not think him a traitor. His 5 guards will not let him out of their sight. The logbook's one interesting page is Handout 5.

PART 2: THE SEARCH BEGINS: Whether the party realizes it or not, they will be searching for the truth of the terror of the seas, the Inferno. In the next port that they put into, run the following Encounters when they are pursued by the party.

3) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce any new Characters to the adventure of the Inferno. Poor bastards.

Fate has found you in another tavern, this time the 'Virgin Sailor', where pale white seamen that have yet to come into the wet hole of a fat lady ship are gathered, hard up for a chance to do so.

The new Player Characters will be amongst all these men. If anybody listens to the others present,

an Intuition Check can overhear one of the tales below, determined at random. Only one tale can be acquired by each Character.

Tales Overheard At The Virgin Sailor

Roll	Tale told at the tavern
11-12	"The ship what the Navy fears, old Drake feared it too, only thing he ever feared"
6-10	"The phantom what follows sailors, it also chased Drake to the ends of life, says I"
1-5	"Ghost or not, only Drake knew the truth, and took it with him to his watery grave"

4) Undead whore

Run this Encounter for the Character who paid the least for a prostitute (if anyone).

The saucy skinned whore bounces on top of you, then stops suddenly, as if stabbed—her face rots away in a heartbeat, but her face alone, revealing her skull, and with a gurgling voice she speaks: "The Inferno will find you as it did me..." She drools seawater on you as she forces these words from her throat, as if raising a dead man from the depths of the sea. She then collapses on you.

The whore is dead. What she meant will for now remain a mystery. The Character who is now laying under her must make an Endurance Check or lose 1 Brawn Point from being diseased.

5) Visiting a mystic

The only local who knows anything of magic or the supernatural lives in the dank cellar of the Hangman's Inn. Lanterns dangle from the low ceiling beams at the ends of old nooses, like ghosts indeed, faintly illuminating this Witch's workshop. She sits at a table and smiles as you approach, her teeth glowing like a crescent moon.

For the price of 30 gold, this woman can tell the party only 'what the spirits have passed on for her to echo', which is: "The ship Drake feared, the **only** one he fled from, is not of this world. His king kept this truth hidden, both fearing and at the same time desiring its power".

WAKE OF FIRE

PART 3: THE BLOODY WAKE THICKENS:

A mere few hours back out at sea, bizarre things will begin to surround whatever ship the party is on. Use the following Encounters one and all, but in whatever order you deem best to move the party towards seeking the truth of whatever unstoppable force is burning ships, fleets, forts and flags of all kinds throughout the Caribbean.

6) Marooned ghost

In the distance, you see a small cluster of rocks rising from the foam of the sea. The waves ever slosh off the peaks of these sunken mountains, like the drool of sea devils greedy to devour the last bit of a drowned world. Standing upon the highest point is a solitary figure, a man in most ragged clothes, staring off into the sunset. His flesh is half rotten, and his eyes are as dark and hollow as the deepest Circle of Dante's Hell.

The man is a ghost, a Skeleton when viewed by anyone standing on the small rock that he was marooned on. He cannot leave this 30' of island, but he does not lament. He has become one with the sea surrounding him, and can draw power from its depths. In exchange for a single day of simple company, be it tales, songs, conversation or what have you, the party as a whole gains 1 point with which to 'purchase' things from him. What he has to offer is provided below.

Acquisitions From The Depths

Price	What the ghost can offer
1	The answer to a single question; only a 'yes' or 'no' answer, but provided to the best of the Game Captain's knowledge
3	A Special Treasure; one roll on Table 86, given to he who first guesses its power
6	Dead Character brought back in the same undead state as himself; cannot gain any Experience Points or benefit from magic, and can be destroyed normally by damage
13	A ship raised from the depths; +1 day to cost for each Value of the ship, but the ship won't sink if taken to 0 Hull Points
21	Dead Character brought back to a truly living and fully healthy state

7) Pilgrims

"Sail ho!" The lookout's cry stirs the ship like a wind blowing on a fire. You soon cross courses with the other ship, a merchantman. Its crew is aware and seemingly unafraid of you.

This merchantman is crewed by pilgrims who are setting out to begin a Christian colony. They will not fight if attacked. If asked about the force plaguing the Caribbean, their firm belief is that the English keeps secret all logs about ghosts—they do not wish to disrupt trade by allowing fearful stories to leak out, "Because they have faith in cannons and not in what's canon", as they will say. Thus, they imply and indeed believe this force to be an evil phantom ship.

8) Evil storm

The wind picks up as the sun sets, filling all the sails with fear, just like the crew's chests heave with rising dread. "This storm, 'tis not at all the weather of the world, says I" is the statement of one man, and is echoed by many. It is also said "Less than a minute an' this evil'll befall us..."

The storm is of Magnitude 13. If the party is not in command, the order will be given to wait out the storm, thus causing Morale to drop to that of mutiny. During this storm, if the party chooses to sail through it, all damage done will come not from the waves or the wind, but rather from lamps breaking and lightning striking the mizzenmast, all thus contributing to the beginnings of an inferno.

9) The wet footprints

This day, the sun bakes the deck and makes the sails sigh for want of foul weather. As you find your path on the quarter-deck, you see a path of another kind—wet footprints leading from a coop.

If followed to their end, the footprints, which are of a 10 year-old girl's bare feet, will lead to a bloody dagger stuck into the side of the ship. The first person who touches it will burn for 5 Base Damage. After that, the dagger will be 'normal'.

WAKE OF FIRE

PART 4: IN THE WAKE OF DRAKE: Once the party sets out to seek for the ship that Sir Francis Drake feared, or at least the source of the evil that is burning all the Caribbean, people in most ports from Jamaica to Barbados will have tales to tell. Most of it the party will have heard already. Yet there are vital clues to find, as detailed throughout the following Encounters. Use them when the party tracks down such sources of information.

A superstitious crew: The party's crew will at this point lose -1 Morale every day instead of 1-12 a month, as they fear running afoul the 'ghost ship'.

The party off course: Should the party not decide to seek the Inferno, by intention or by accident, it will destroy everything they go to plunder, always a few steps, be it hours or days, ahead of them, leaving them without options for treasure or trade.

10) Audience with a governor

One's rank is his chance in 6 of gaining audience with any English governor (thus Royalty is assured it). One can also gain an audience by the logbook of Encounter 2—every governor will recognize it.

The governor is a staunch yet sterile old man, a fop who has lived beyond his years and is clearly unwilling to accept it, disguising himself in thick layers of white. He greets you with a forced and feeble smile, his lip trembling, perhaps with fear, perhaps with arrogant discontent for you.

The governor knows much that he never talks about—the English Crown keeps many tales of the supernatural secret, both for fear of it disrupting trade, but also so they can search for magic power for their endless wars with other nations. However, this governor is different. Two generations of his fathers sailed with Sir Francis Drake, who claimed that the Great Knight's logs were confiscated and hidden for the above reasons. The governor wishes to tell this tale, but only to the right men: If one who has command of a ship can make a Charisma Check, he will hear this tale. If not, he will be ordered out and escorted by 10 English regiment 'for asking too many questions'.

11) Calling on a Witch Doctor

In any non-Spanish town a Searching Check can be made to find a Witch Doctor, but failure means that there is simply not one to find.

Abubika sits cross-legged on the floor of his frail shack, while snakes writhe about him, their coils inseparable from the innards of dead dogs, goats and men alike, tethered to tattooed points on his body and reaching outside the hut, into the night, like rigging for a celestial ship floating without the slightest motion through an unseen world. He deeply inhales a strange, sweet smoke concocted within a cauldron and asks you to sit down.

The Witch Doctor's price is 300 gold or the head of the local governor. If paid, he will say:

"You seek the log books of the one called the Great Knight. Drake. His wake is the path of your fate. The wake of fire! His books hold secrets no man can know without igniting fear in his heart. Drake was by the will of his Lord to destroy them but he did not. He would not burn them—wise, he was, for that would create a gateway for spirits to enter this world. He did not bury them—wiser still, as they would have been found by cowardly men hiding on land. He could not drown them—of this choice, cursed it was, for he feared the spirits deep reading them, though he would join them. These books, you cannot find them. But you need not. To learn them, ask Drake himself..."

12) The grave of Drake

This Encounter can occur in any English port. If it is somewhere other than '**PORT ROYALE**', replace that the town name when reading this narrative.

In the cemetery of '**PORT ROYALE**', gulls perch on the headstones, leaving as much of a mess as the drunken sailors lounging in a half-dug grave like pigs in a waller. They look up from their prison duties, bleary eyed in the heat, and laugh at you. "The grave of Drake?" they jeer. "Ye'll need be seekin' deeper than this. Ol' Drake lived a century 'fore this 'ere city raised up its colors!"

WAKE OF FIRE

These pirates are digging graves to work off a hangman's noose, but have a lot of time to waste. If questioned further—with fists, sword or pistol—a greater tale can be coaxed from them, that Drake was buried at sea somewhere on the Spanish Main.

13) Wake of time*

The wind is rising. A storm is upon you, but a storm unlike any you have ever seen before. The sky rolls in a spiral before you, like a whirlpool in heaven, spinning both the clouds above and the waves beneath you. From this tunnel to Hell you hear the endless screams of dying men and in the sporadic flashes of lightning see fleeting images of their fates. As the storm closes around you, these visions are gathering like ghost clouds, a storm not of wind or rain, but of memories, a tempest of horror surrounding your ship. Then at last you share their fate, as a hurricane turns the ocean waves into mountains of black water.

The storm surrounding the party is not real. It is a vision of the past (if the year is later than 1715) or the future (if the year is prior to 1715). It is a vision of Spanish treasure ships which were lost along the Florida coast, in seas named as the 'feeding grounds of pirates'. Regardless of where the party is sailing now, the ghosts of all these 11 lost ships and 1400 men are trying to find a way out of the perpetual storm that is their Hell. These 20-gun Spanish galleons will fight the party's ship amidst the storm, and though unable to do damage of any kind, however many ships that the party can sink will be to their benefit when the storm is over. The storm will last for 18 Rounds of naval combat, and then it will break. Afterward, the total number of Spanish ghost ships the party released from Hell will sail past them, telling them where to find their wreckage (buy only after 1715), these ghosts whispering the coordinates into the minds of the Characters and their captain (be he either a PC or NPC). Yet the ships were lost in so deep of water that they cannot be reached, unless the party can find ways to defy the death of the depths (as they will if they prevail in Adventure #4 or #5). Lost near the isle of Grand Bahama, each ship has 10000-120000 in bullion to be found aboard.

PART 5: TIME IS HIS WITNESS: The only hope for the party is to find the grave of Drake, a grave drowned in the sea, in an unknown location. To find its location will send the party off in all different directions. Play out all of the following Encounters at the ends of these unknown routes, as the party pieces together the map of fate.

14) Records of Drake's last voyage

This Encounter can take place in any English port.

The library keeps records of all Royal Navy and their voyages, past and present. However, for all the towering stacks of ledgers and dusty logs, it may be easier to search the depths of the sea. The librarian sits hunched over at a desk, so old and wizened he looks like a skeleton himself.

A Searching Check can be made of the library once each day—once, not once for each Character, as they have to utilize the same resources. Once successful, the party will find Handout 6.

15) The house of Witherby

This Encounter can only take place in Port Royale.

Witherby manor is a larger estate, yet one that is not well kept. A converted Spanish Mission, it's plaster walls are peeling like the skin on a dead man's chest. Both Negro and Spanish slaves tend a dying garden, eyeing you suspiciously. The old, rusty, wrought-iron fence seems more like prison bars. The windows are all filled with shadows.

Inside the house lives the last heir of James Witherby, sailing master for Sir Francis Drake. He keeps Drake's Last Will And Testimony safe and hidden. However, he can be persuaded to reveal its hiding place and show it to the party, depending on who is asking. It is provided as Handout 7.

Englishmen must defeat this Official in a duel with rapiers, but not to the death.

Frenchmen must cook him an exquisite meal, "Better than one of my slaves" Witherby will add in a most mocking tone, an act requiring a Luck Check and nothing more.

WAKE OF FIRE

Dutchmen must simply pay him 1000 gold, as it is a debt long unsettled to him by their king.

All others will be refused, unless they humble themselves by kissing his boot and then defeat his favorite caller, captain of the English regiment, in a non-lethal duel with the longsword.

16) The end and the beginning

Run this Encounter once the party has found both Handouts 6 and 7, and when they are making to leave the port with their second acquisition...

As you make for the ship, you overhear a song. Looking away leeward from the wharf, you see on the beach below a blind Negro fixing fishing nets, singing to himself. It seems to be a song about Sir Francis Drake and his 'phantom foe'. Yet he stops before finishing. Perhaps he heard you, or somehow senses you...

If approached and asked, the blind man shall tell his tale. Through questions, the party can learn that, according to this man, Drake befriended the natives, so they knew him better than the English government. Furthermore, he was buried at sea off Nombre de Dios, and anyone who says otherwise is just trying to keep the location of his grave secret. His song he will repeat for a fee of 3 gold. This song is provided on Handout 8. Once the Players have finished listening to it by reading it, run the second half of this Encounter, as by finishing the song he will have summoned the Inferno...

The winds rise. The horizon line is defined by a red line, as if the sea is turning to blood. The sun sets unnaturally fast, like a sail being drawn in to prepare for a storm. Sailors and slaves on the wharf and the beach rise one by one, every man, woman and child seeing the ship that now comes for them. In their hearts they know what approaches. They know they have seen their last sunset. Surely, this is how all other crewmen and common townsfolk felt before they were burned in the wrath of the Inferno. The ship draws ever closer, yet remains naught but a silhouette before the setting sun. Naval vessels sent to intercept it are set ablaze and quickly founder.

The approaching ship is indeed the Inferno yet it does not intend to kill any of the Characters—it wants them alive. It will simply destroy every ship that tries to leave the harbor, and then fire on the fort and town, setting it ablaze. It will only cease its assault once the party tries to leave port, and then it will disappear over the horizon, unable to be caught. In the meantime, various things can and will occur to the party.

Guards will approach them every 1-6 Rounds, rightfully believing that the Characters are what the ghost ship wants, and order them to leave town, at swordpoint. If these regiment must placate the evil ship by casting the party's bodies into the sea, that is what they will do.

The blind man will flee after 3 Rounds, but be hit in the back by a cannonball from the ghost ship, which will subsequently crumble into ash, the blind slave thus dead. If the party has not yet learned his song, his ghost will whisper incoherent words, the song indeed, to be recalled by anyone who can make an Intuition Check, allowed to be re-attempted once every sunset.

The town will burn if the party doesn't leave it by the end of the 13th Round, reducing its gold and economy to nothing for many months.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has learned the location of Drake's grave—at the bottom of the sea—they will have to give up on the search, thus ending their adventure, though there are still some things to consider.

The legacy of Sir Francis Drake: Knowledge of the true location of Sir Drake's grave will prove very valuable to many, information worth a good 5000 gold to any governor. However, as they all have effective means of communication, this information can only be sold once.

Continuing the Adventure: How can one seek the grave of Drake when it is lost under the ocean? The only way, all sailors will say, lies in either the Caverns of Chaos, or the Hall of the Mermaid Queen, thus presenting the party with the choice of Adventure #4 or #5 in this booklet, respectively.

CAVERNS OF CHAOS

It be an ill choice, says I, one between two evils an' neither leadin' back ta Heaven, not when one be seekin' a way ta fight the very devil-ship, fer if weapons ye be seekin' 'gainst Hell, then ta Hell ya have ta go ta find 'em...

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE: Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

Tales of the Inferno: This Adventure being set entirely in a series of caves, the Inferno will not be seen nor heard, save in the party's memory, a reminder as to why they are facing these dangers, so whenever they consider fleeing, have the caves echo their words without threats or taunts from the devil ship and how they will never conquer it...

Background: When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

The Caribbean, a bright, inviting portrait to those who yearn to go there, a dark, foreboding world to those trapped within it. Pirates throughout the New World are fleeing to their hidden lairs, and how few those are, at least those that the Royal Navy hasn't yet found. As ships and towns burn from Panama to Bermuda, pirates and privateers alike are disappearing just as quickly, either into their hidden coves and caves, or into the darkest depths of the sea.

Still, there are some legends which defy all skill at solving them—it is as if one cannot learn the last of the pirates' lairs unless it is their fate to share, to join the pale ranks of ghosts within those haunted caves. The popular tale these days is the Caverns of Chaos, a labyrinth on an island which cannot be found save by those whose very souls are bound to it. For even though so few find refuge there, pirates of all skin colors are desperate to believe in legends.

As one sailor said last time you put into port "The devil ain't down in them caverns. He's on the sea. He's burning all ships and towns. Hell be the last place he'll go a lookin' fer me, down with his treasure, if me can finds it..."

PART 1: REACHING THE CAVERNS: To find these caves that so few ever can will prove easy for the party—it is their fate. Indeed, no matter in which direction they sail, they will after mere days find themselves surrounded by or grounded on the shoals of this volcanic isle. Once they venture in search of this isle, run the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

1) A crew's questions

If the crew hasn't been given a strong assurance of where they are going and why—a hiding place that also has the promise of hidden treasure—they will want one, so only then run this Encounter.

Mere hours from port, the crew has gathered on deck, and they seem restless. The general notion is that they aren't being told the truth about their voyage. With each passing minute, it becomes all the clearer that they want to know where they're going and why, and what's in it for them. "The waters, they be troubled," says a Jamaican mon, "and to trouble only they lead, so why should a we be a goin' in search of trouble?"

If the party is not in command, the NPC that is will be unable to answer these questions to the crew's satisfaction, as he is too fearful of the isle himself, and too greedy for its riches, to share that information with his crew just yet. However, if any Characters offer this information, it will prevent the otherwise inevitable drop of 30 Morale, and if they are not in command, earn him a 100 gold reward.

2) Deceptive Dutchmen*

The morning's light has failed to clear away one patch of night from the horizon, leaving the dark silhouette of a large ship staining the sky.

The ship is a merchantman, but one running 20 guns! However, 8 of these gunports are fakes, simple wooden shutters over the ship's hull, trying to intimidate the ship's foes. The merchantman has but 24 2nd Level Dutchmen aboard. They will wait for the party to back down from their bluff—which any NPC captain will do—before sailing on.

CAVERNS OF CHAOS



3) Restless crew

It's easy to forget how thick and everlasting the fog banks in the Caribbean can be. All day you haven't seen the golden shadow of the sun nor felt the slightest warmth on the wind. The crew is restless, and are beginning to see all manner of ghosts ships out in the gray clouds, each one built with the sturdy timber of their deepest fear.

The captain must make a Charisma Check to avoid a loss of Morale equal to the difference of his Notoriety Level and 13. Should he roll a '1', the loss will be doubled.

PART 2: THE STEAM TUNNELS: This entire island is a series of steam tunnels, forming a maze of drowned caves, eerie grottos and dead ends. To tell the tale of the party's exploration of this place, use the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

Light and vision: The Encounter descriptions are written with the assumption that the party is using lanternlight. If they are using a different source of light, reword the narratives impromptu to account for it. For example, "Your flickering lamp-light..." could become "Your wavering torchlight..."

Getting lost: The lure of treasure can appeal to a pirate's intuition, and so the party can easily find their way deeper inside these caves, however, to find their way back out requires a Searching Check to avoid getting lost for a number of hours equal to the total count of Encounters they are inside. For example, if they turned back after Encounter 6, to fail to get back to Encounter 4 would cause a group to be lost for 2 hours. Once this time has passed, the Searching Check can be re-attempted.

The curse of fear: There are many restless spirits haunting these lost caves, and thereby haunting the hearts of those who venture inside them. This will cause the normal penalty suffered from all Fears to swell by a factor of -1 (total) if his Fears include: 'strange or unknown noises', 'utter darkness', 'utter silence', 'skeletons or human remains', 'magic' or 'curses'.

4) Entering the caves

Through the mists, you see a large island, a pile of rocks cast down from the building of heaven, left to drift amongst the waves, forgotten since the dawn of time. Gouts of steam rise from rents throughout the bald, sun-baked hills. Through a maze of shoals and reefs, you see a cove, where a large cave leads into the tunnels of legend. It is like the lair of a mythical sea-dragon, daring you to enter and claim its treasure.

While the cave is large enough for a ship to enter, no vessel can make it over the reefs, save for a sparrow. To enter the cave in longboats or even by swimming requires a Charisma Check by the leader to encourage NPCs to follow, and each Check will only get 1-6 of them to do so. Once any such Check fails, no more can be made—no more NPCs can be convinced to go in until the caves have been fully explored and proven safe.

5) Ghostly voices

You drift through a place of absolute darkness. Your flickering lamp-light cannot reveal beyond a sword's length. You can feel nothing except the current of the water beneath you.

If the party remains silent, they will hear faint voices echoing in the darkness, giving them 1 roll on the chart below.

Echoes In The Darkness

Roll	What the ghostly voices say
10-12	"No fear of evil curses, have ye? To dare the guardians of this bewitched treasure? Mark well me words, feast a greedy eye on the cursed gold and ye'll see one all"
6-9	"Properly warned ye be, says I, if ye are to see the cursed treasure. Who knows when its bewitchment will strike the heart of those who dare disturb it..."
1-5	"Ye greedy beholders of the guarded gold proceed at yer own risk...no friendly words have I if ye return this way with no greater fortune of courage..."

CAVERNS OF CHAOS

6) Grotto of greed

The black water slides into a large, low-ceilinged grotto. Monstrous stalagmites rise up from below like stone stumps in an underground bayou, and equally large stalactites reach down as if Cyprus and willow boughs had been turned to stone by the curse within these caves. In the center of the cave is a small island of sand surrounded by a ring of natural pillars, each one bearing a torch bound with ropes and chains. Only one remains alit, flickering at the edge of the shadows. Crabs scurry about half-buried skeletons, the remnants of the losers of a battle still being fought—the ghosts of two pirate captains locked in an epic duel until judgment day, but seemingly unable to leave the beach, even though whatever treasure they are fighting over long since has.

The two Shadows will continue to fight and pay no attention to the party if they in turn draw no attention to themselves. However, if anyone so much as sets foot on the island, both Shadows will make an Intuition Check to notice the trespasser(s), and if successful, turn to attack them instead.

7) Skeleton

The flooding ends here, the ground rising out of the water like a rocky beach. There, you see a skeleton pinned to the cavern wall with a rusty cutlass. Its dark eyes seem to follow your every move. The brown stains on its ragged clothes tell of many wounds before death finally caught him.

If spoken to, the skeleton will speak back, as “You have five questions. That is the price laid on me. Let me give you truth so that I may at last be given peace . . .” The skeleton will indeed give the answers to five questions, but only with “Yes” or “No” responses (informing the party of this will not waste them an answer), and it will always lie. However, following the path of its eyes will see writing on the wall, written in English, and reading *‘The dark men returned for the treasure of their heathen gods. Gunballs turn from them. Swords are afraid of them. They see the spirit world and fear it not’*. This writing is reproduced as Handout 9.

8) Waterfall

The tunnel you are following opens in the midst of a cavern, overlooking a deep pool. Pale lights, like drowned will-O-wisps, are aglow beneath the surface. On the opposite side is a waterfall, just barely disguising another tunnel.

The cave is about 20’ in diameter, requiring an Agility Check at a -2 penalty to jump across and through the waterfall. To fail is to plunge into the pool below, where an octopus dwells. Discovering a way around this area requires both a successful Searching Check and 1-4 hours of time.

9) Den of thieves

You descend into a large but dead-end cavern. Before considering the other tunnels back above, you feast your eyes on this den of thieves—it is a fully functional tavern hidden in a cave. With everything made from ships and their wreckage, it’s a pirate’s den to be sure, yet there are no pirates. Only skeletons. Waterlogged barrels serve as chairs, sections of broken deck for tables, and rigging drapes down the cave walls like curtains. Yet for all its haphazard design, it’s richer than most aristocrat estates with portraits, chandeliers and silverware. Such is the pirate’s world, heaven and hell at the same table.

The plunder here is considerable, only heavy as well. There is 9000 gold value in all the finery, but every 20 gold value (rounded up) burdens 1.

If anyone tries to drink any of the wine, rum or other delights here, one of the skeletons will sit up and, propping itself against the bar, challenge the thief to a drinking contest. The stakes are this: The loser has to remain here forever (this skeleton lost this contest last time—to try to leave is to die and become a Ghost Skeleton like him), and to the victor goes the blessing this skeleton had given to him, which gives one freedom from ‘the evils of the island’s fiery heart’. Indeed, he who has this blessing is immune to magic in Encounters 13-18. But the skeleton has no bottom to its belly so it cannot lose . . . unless the drink is blessed by either a Priest or someone reading from a Bible.

CAVERNS OF CHAOS

10) Blade trap

This next tunnel narrows and leads through many criss-crossing shadows, as if the memories of the earth were crossing swords. It's like being in a colorless jungle. The tunnel just keeps going on.

The party is at that point where intuition has stopped them—just a few feet ahead is a pressure plate, which each passing Character stands a 1 in chance in 6 for every 30 Encumbrance they total (both bodily and carried) of tripping. Once set off, 3 swords will slash from hidden slots in the walls, cutting down the Character for Base Damage 10, and then re-setting.

11) Spectral cannon

A maze of switch-backs and dead-ends leaves but one tunnel left to explore, and not far along it is broken by a wide shaft. Steam rises up along its slick, stone walls as it has since before Christian men looked up at the sky. Now as you do, the heavens send down swords of sunlight, slashing at the steam, carving it into the shapes of ghosts rising from the depths below. The most you can see in the swirling, gray hell is that the shaft's bottom opens into a larger cavern, a tidal pool, where floats the wreckage of many longboats.

After 1 Round, the steam will concentrate, and take the form of the ghosts hauling on thin ropes of steam to raise a spectral cannon—pointing down the tunnel at the party, to make a single Attack Roll at a +6 bonus, applied to the Defense Scores of everybody in its path. Those it hits will suffer Base Damage 12. Those who jump down the shaft into the tidal pool will have to contend with the whirlpool they could not see before—they must be able to resist its suction and climb back onto the cavern walls with a Brawn Check at a -1 penalty, or be drawn into the depths and lost.

After the first salvo, the cannon will break up as mist, as will the spirits here. There is another tunnel on the opposite side of the shaft that can only be seen now that the steam is clearing up. It is the only way on to Encounter 12.

12) False treasure

The flooded tunnels end in a large cavern, long ago converted into some sort of ceremonial hall. The seawater slides up onto the uneven floor of mossy tiles like a black sea upon a stone beach. Beyond, the stalagmites have been hewn into the crude statues of sailors, like rocky Voodoo dolls of pirates. The jagged ceiling echoes every word, every sound you make, twisting, torturing them until their resounding voice is not your own, but the sounds of your ghost escaping from its cell of flesh locked with time. Unearthly voices that are deep perversions of your own talk amongst themselves in the heights of the sharp stalactites, speaking of ill gotten gains, betrayal, and cursed treasure. And there it is . . . in the center of the cavern, resting upon a mound of skulls and rusty swords, there you see a stone chest filled to the blade-chipped brim with gold!

On the far wall is a secret door, leading on to the next Section of this Adventure. However, it is locked, and there are many keyholes. One has to match the right keyhole with the key that is kept in the chest (which is also worth 300 gold). When it is tried with any keyhole, one simply must make a Luck Check, penalized by -1 for each difference of 10 and his Notoriety Level, as evil voices from around the cavern speak about how he must be of evil enough to be worthy of the 'greater treasure'. Indeed, if one isn't 'lucky' enough to get the right keyhole, it's actually more a matter of the spirits here forbidding him passage.

The treasure in the chest totals 26620 gold in all, a mixture of coins, jewels and jewelry alike. Yet it is all cursed in different ways. For it is this chest that the pirates of old used to store any and all cursed treasure they found. Whoever takes any treasure must roll on the following chart. This roll of a single dice is penalized by -1 for every 1000 gold value he has taken. If he takes some now but more later, he rolls for an additional curse, but the penalty is to be totaled from everything he has so far taken. These curses can only be lifted by one putting back the exact amount of treasure he took, no more and no less, and then only after having fulfilled a stipulation detailed by the curse itself.

CAVERNS OF CHAOS

CURSES OF LOST TREASURES

Roll	Curse upon the Character	Magnitude
12	Moonlight serenade	3
9-11	Devils of the deep	3
7-8	Storm of the Soothsayer	4
5-6	The Naked Spaniard	4
2-4	Christopher's Plague	6
1	The Murder Mark	8

Christopher's Plague is what the other crew will come to call this misfortune, which shall see anyone signed aboard the same ship as this cursed individual concoct plague if he touches them, so named for Columbus whose formal name they will not repeat. Having this curse will not directly harm a person, but as his crewmen grow ill around him, it will lower their Morale by 1-6 each and every day until the cursed one is removed from the ship permanently. In addition to restoring the gold one took out of the chest, to remove this particular curse, one must also poison himself, and survive, the Skill Level by which the poison was made the mere chance in 12 of it being strong enough to have cured the curse as well.

Devils of the deep means that sharks in large numbers will swim with the ship, ever hungering for the cursed individual. Their presence will lower Morale by -6 and prevent it from raising above 30 (20 if there is a woman on board). In addition to restoring the gold one took out of the chest, to remove this particular curse, one must also give a part of himself to the sharks, be it a hand, a foot, an arm, a leg, etc—the number of Ability Points he sacrifices in accordance with his lost parts is the chance in 4 that the sharks, and the curse, are placated and are never seen again.

Moonlight serenade is what sailors will come to call the fact that in the moonlight the individual who wears this curse will cast no shadow and not posses any voice, while any sounds he makes echo with a ghostly resounding, altogether lowering his Charisma by -2 and preventing NPCs from being at all agreeable to having him as captain of any ship they are on. In addition to restoring the gold one took out of the chest, to remove this particular curse, one must also sing a song to placate the sea and its spirits, requiring a Charisma Check, which may be re-attempted once every full moon.

The Murder Mark is signified by a dark black, burn-like mark materializing on the individual's left palm. Each day at sunset, this mark will burn, and the individual will then lose 1 randomly determined Ability Point, rolled on a single dice; '1' is Luck, '8' is Brawn, and a result of '9-12' is no loss that night. This curse can be stayed each day that the individual commits murder of any man, but this is not counted for the future—no matter how many he kills on a given day, after sunset he must kill again, or with the next setting sun he will pay the price yet again. In addition to restoring the gold one took out of the chest, to remove this particular curse, he must also kill the captain of a ship that he has signed aboard.

The Naked Spaniard is the ghost of a Spanish pirate who, desperate to escape the natives whose treasure he stole, stripped himself of all clothes so he could swim to his ship, keeping only his shirt to carry the gold, and just managed to stay out of the range of their bows and spears, but not their most-cursing words upon that gold. This spectral madman will appear whenever the cursed individual rolls a natural '1' in combat, causing he and any who fight beside him to lose their next Initiative Roll. In addition to restoring the gold one took out of the chest, to remove this particular curse, one must also strip himself naked and beg forgiveness of the heathen gods.

Storm of the Soothsayer is a tempest that will follow the individual and whatever ship he is on, ever with a disembodied voice echoing amidst the wind, naming itself the 'soothsayer' and predicting that individual's doom. This curse will cause daily results of reefs and calls for Navigation Checks to be storms instead. In addition to restoring the gold one took out of the chest, to remove this particular curse, one must also sail through a storm that has a Magnitude of 5 or greater.

Note that if Characters acquire multiple curses, you must keep track of which ones they are, and their respective Magnitudes. Most of these curses will not apply until the party returns to their ship, so they are of little consequence for now. Yet it is easy to forget about them... the heathen gods or goddesses, or entire pantheons who watch over the Character will certainly not forget...

CAVERNS OF CHAOS

PART 3: THE VOLCANO: The heart of the isle and the center of the cavernous maze is a volcano. Once the party has reached this point, they will be on the sacred ground of many, with death awaiting them at every turn. There is only one way through this new maze, and that is through the following Encounters, which are thus to be played one and all and in the order they are presented.

Aztecs: These caves are the sacred ground of many Aztecs, a lost tribe that came here to guard the treasure, and will fight to the death to do so. They have the normal statistics of Aztecs, however, they cannot be killed, as they share the curse of the gold from Encounter 18. Thus, when they 'die', in merely 1-3 hours, they rise again.

Ghosts: There are many spirits of pirates trapped in these tunnels. In darkness alone are they visible, Skeletons statistically, though they carry no treasure as it is all in Encounter 18, and they only use the cutlass, not the longsword, though they have +2 at using it, for 9 Base Damage. If there is any light, then one can see them, but unmoving, motionless, and only as how they stood or sat before light freed their spirit to move again. Therefore, battling them puts the living in 'blind' fighting conditions.

13) Unlucky?

The tunnels are changing. The maze is giving up its dank darkness, the steam and smell of the sea are gone, replaced by a dry, baking heat. It is as if you are delving into the womb of the devil, if the devil were a woman the size of an island, bloated from all the pirates she's devoured.

This area is infested with spiders. Each person who passes this way will have a number of spiders equal to a single dice roll **plus** his Luck Score all land about his shoulders and torso. Each Character can make an Intuition Check to notice the spiders on everyone. Removing these spiders safely takes an Attack Roll against Defense Score 5, but with failure injuring the person beneath their scimpering horde, but if successful, the Damage done is the total spiders taken off. If one asks, these spiders are doing him no harm, but not leaving his body.

14) Aztec gathering

The tunnels have led into a cave aglow with the torches of dead Conquistadors—their armored ribs and skeletons are hung from the walls, with the torches as their meathook, so the flames fill their helmets like a wraith's skull of Hellfire, each the work of a large group of natives, who look up from their dinner of cave fish as you approach, and wait, as if trying to decide something.

If any individual is still wearing spiders from Encounter 13, their total count is the chance in 12 that these Aztecs will worship that Character as a god. Those who are not being idolized are to be the dinner for those who are (there is already one such 'god' in Encounter 18). Thus, these 36 Aztecs fight to capture rather than kill, with any death-blow being a knockout-blow instead. Once all the 'dinner' has been captured, they will be bound and taken to Encounter 18 to be cooked and eaten. All the 'gods' will be led there with a blindfold on.

If the party is captured and taken there, the natives will pass the dangers of Encounters 15-17 flawlessly, leaving these to be played in a reverse order for the party on their way back out later.

15) Bridges of doom

The tunnels open into a large cavern. The floor is rent by a wide chasm, aglow with fires from the depths where even Davey Jones fears for his soul. Dozens of narrow stalactites rise from the depths like buttes, connecting a maze of rickety rope-bridges. Amidst the smoke from below and the crude craft of these bridges, it is impossible to tell which ones are safe and which are not.

There is only one safe way through this maze of rope-bridges, and to find it requires looking for a specific clue—bridges woven with human entrails and bones amidst their rope and wooden planks. If one doesn't care to look, a random route requires a Luck Check at a -3 penalty to make it across. If a bridge is unsafe, one only busts through the few planks where he stood, leaving the rest of that one bridge still aloft. Those who fall into the chasm of fire will perish.

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16) The gate

The tunnels zig and zag through darkness, thick patches of spiderwebs, and alongside rifts above rivers of fire. Such chaos cannot be the work of God's Creation but some twisted magic or curse within the heart of the island, something that you haven't seen yet. Soon, you come to the mouth of a new tunnel, with ancient writing scrawled above it, colored with and dripping stained-blood.

The writing translates from the native's speech '*Zim Za. Zim Za. May the false follower find he is followed by all the dead he ever created as his punishment for trying to fool our goddess Zim Za*'. If nobody can translate such writing, the Players may attempt it themselves by studying Handout 10. In any event, one must speak the password before he enters this tunnel, which is '*Zim Za*'. He who solves this puzzle earns 20 Experience Points. But he who passes without first offering that name will be followed by the spirits of everyone he has ever killed—his Experience Point total divided by 10 is the number of Ghosts (as detailed on Page 25) that will follow him and attack him whenever battle is begun, but he needs not destroy them, as when the normal battle ends, they will stay their swords and wait with whatever numbers they have left for the next time their shadowcaster enters into a fight.

Note that, if the party was brought past here after being captured in Encounter 14, the natives will not have said the password, as they have each already said it long ago—one needs only speak it once in his natural lifetime.

17) Sacred well

This tunnel you have been following for a while now passes by a wide, yet low-ceilinged cavern. In the pale light you see several natives gathered around a dark hole in the floor, about ten feet in breadth. They seem afraid of it, so held by their dread that they do not notice you.

This is sacred ground, so if any of these 4 Aztecs are killed here, they will rise back up after only 1-3 Rounds instead of 1-3 hours. The dark pit narrows as it descends, until its throat, but 30'

below, is barely wide enough for a small person to squeeze through. The largest body that can pass it is 130 total Weight. Beneath the narrow hole is a cave, a tidal pool filled with the skeletons of many pirates. Lost inside one of the skulls is a large, blue diamond worth 11500 gold.

18) The sacred treasure

Twelve natives guard the passages. Beyond them, the tunnels all converge in a large cavern. The floor is flooded . . . with lava. Small islands rise amidst the bubbling, churning sea of molten rock, forming stepping stones and a larger island out in the center. There, the flickering light brings to life the glow of gold filling a circular stone rim, like a fountain of coins, its spout a platform on top of which sits a jade idol the size of a small man, its three faces glaring out into the room, its six eyes alive with malevolent intuition, searching for any fools to dare approach. The eerie, gray shapes rising from the lava are clearly not steam, but specters, writhing in a silent, unknown prison of agony for eternity. You also notice countless skulls encrusted into the rocky ledge surrounding the fiery lake, as if collected from all those who met their doom here.

This area is guarded by spirits who exist only to those who see them. Any action someone does here without looking at the idol will spare him the wrath of its guardians. However, if one does not avert his eyes, each Round spent here thereafter he will be attacked by 3 Ghosts. Their numbers will replenish each Round, and there is no end to them once they are real to an individual.

The treasure is cursed with Magnitude 9. Any living human who removes but a single piece shall be punished . . . for eternity. The wretched soul will no longer stand among the living and so his body cannot die, yet neither shall he be living. When he is 'killed', his body will be paralyzed for 1-6 days and then reanimate, but in worse shape. He shall feel nothing, in darkness alone finding comfort as his flesh rots away. The longer he remains cursed, the worse he shall become. Each day he is cursed he will lose a random Ability Point, with the roll of '1' being Brawn, '8' Luck, and so forth, and

CAVERNS OF CHAOS

'9-12' being no loss that day. The more one loses in this fashion, the more skeletal he will become. Once any Ability Score reaches 0, his bones will become a prison, and he will never move again, save here on this island. However, even before that time, whenever any strong light falls on him, the intensity of that light will be the chance in 12 that the cursed man rots further, using the normal rules for rotting detailed above. When he rots further by light, he cannot rot again by intense light for the rest of that day, resuming his 'normal' rolling for decomposition the next day.

Paralysis Of Light

Chance	Light source
1	Crescent moonlight
2	Half moonlight
3	Full moonlight
4	Fire or torches
5	The sun

To remove the curse from one's self, he must return all the treasure that he took from this sacred hoard. However, there is an additional task which must be done, and an additional 'benefit' from this curse, depending on what someone is...

Natives of the Caribbean will, no matter their tribe, if 'killed' rise again after merely 1-3 hours, however, they cannot in any way ever remove this curse from themselves.

Women of any non-Caribbean heritage will by this curse gain the ability to command any living man to do their bidding for one action if they can make a Charisma Check, penalized by that victim's Luck Score, and if this fails, that individual adds to the skulls they need to give to this cavern in order to eventually remove the curse.

Captains of any ships will gain the power to forcibly keep everybody aboard their ship—all who sign under their command cannot physically leave their ship unless the captain permits it, and then he retains the power to cause them to perish, at will, wherever they are while off that ship, though to be free of the curse himself, the captain must have a number of men under his command equal to his Notoriety Level multiplied by 10 fall under the curse for themselves.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has left the cursed caverns behind, there are some things to consider.

Returning to the island: While it was fate, perhaps, that the party found this island so easily, will it be so easy to find it again when they wish to lift the curse? The answer depends on their virtue. Indeed, the sea fates are watching them. The heathen gods whose curse is on them are watching. Even God in Heaven is watching. When the party is finished with their need for the curse—visiting the sunken grave of Drake—they would do well to return with all speed to this island and rid themselves of the curse. For not only are they rotting more with the passing days, but to stray from that path, to take advantage of the curse's apparent immortality, will show greed, fear, and raise the ire of those powers watching them. Each and every detour taken from a straight course back here, indeed each ship taken, each port visited, each change of course, these are the cumulative chance in 12 that this cursed island becomes 'hidden' from the cursed themselves, lost in fog and spinning compass bearings for a period of 1-3 weeks. Once this chance has been rolled, be the island hidden or not, it will not be rolled for again until the party adds to their still cumulating chance in 12 of its vanishment by another detour. This chance shall never raise above 10.

Living with the curse: Being cursed has within this tale a very distinct advantage—the individual can see in total darkness and cannot drown, and thus, he can reach the elusive burial site of Sir Francis Drake under the Caribbean waters, provided he can reach it before he decomposes to such an extent that he can no longer move...

HALL OF THE MERMAID QUEEN

Ye fear evil curses too much ta seek ‘em, do ye? There be another path, says I, a deal with a devil as fair as the cursed ones be foul, the most mythic lady o’ the sea, who can lead yet lead ye ta a far greater treasure than ye can dream...

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE: Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

Legacy of the Inferno: This Adventure being set entirely in strange places, references to the Inferno should be used to keep the party in those bizarre locales, indeed to make them fear the sea, at least until they have retrieved the treasure of the mythic Mermaid Queen...

Background: When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

The Caribbean, the pirates’ pond, the sea of salty dogs and savage men, the womb of wicked seed, all at the center of the New World... until now. War between the major European powers are day by day purifying the waters with fire, cannonade and cutlass, burning all safe harbors and hidden lairs they can find, forcing all but the most loyal and wealthy captains to flee to world’s end or to take their chances roving free. Yet most of them only end up taking their chances with whatever devils and legends lie in the deep.

One legend that is circulating throughout the darkest taverns is that of the Mermaid Queen. It is a sailor’s yarn to most, but one that is rapidly gaining popularity, if only out of desperate hope or delusion. Pirates speak of this sea-nymph as if she were the Savior’s sister, capable of stowing the guns of the English, the Spanish, and even the devil himself.

“Whoever has the blessing of the Queen has the blessing of the sea” it is often said, in one form or another. Many ships have set out to find this legend, now so desperate indeed that they’d sooner die on their own terms in pursuit of hope rather than give satisfaction to the Royal Navy, or whoever is laying waste to ships and ports.

PART 1: LEAVING LAND: Whether seeking the Hall of the Mermaid Queen intentionally or simply having fate set one’s course, this Adventure shall begin on a small island, a pirate anchorage, that is very close to the legendary lair. This town consists mostly of the Red Shirt Taverne. The rest of the harbor is small, all Level 1. All business shall take place at the taverne itself. During the party’s time there, use the following Encounters as needed.

Docking: This island is surrounded by reefs, which keep it safe from Royal Navy ships. However, this also means that ships larger than Value 3 cannot enter its harbor. If the party sails within a ship of Value 4 or higher, they will have to drop anchor outside the reef and take a longboat in. Given the Royal Navy patrolling the outside of the reef with dangerous regularity, each day the Morale for those waiting out there will drop the difference of the captain’s Notoriety Level and 12, and if it hits 0, they will sail away.

Acquiring crew: The Red Shirt Taverne is known for having a great many soon-to-die but desperate sailors at any pirate captain’s disposal. Therefore, despite the town’s size, he can always hire enough crew to meet his reputation—the town’s size will not impose any limit, though all these ‘red shirts’ will be Level 1 crewmen and no better.

1) Introduction

This Encounter will bring into the tale anyone who is not part of a ship’s crew.

The reefs surrounding the island are littered with small ships, sparrows and longboats. There can’t be a greater gathering of ragtag, wayward pirates in all of the New World. Hundreds, maybe even thousands are flooding the chanteys and taverns today, safe within the reefs. Fate has smiled on you today, bringing you to this safe haven. Yet the call of the sea is strong, almost as if it is alive, and awakened, bringing all of these souls together to choose you from the lot of them...

The new Characters are those with these very thoughts of the sea, save one... a pickpocket!

HALL OF THE MERMAID QUEEN



2) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce anyone that is part of a ship's crew, provided that they are not Royal Navy (privateers are the exception).

There she is, the island of ringed reefs. Every ill fated sailor knows of it. Nameless, left off maps, written out of journals. The reefs enclosing this pirate's anchorage run for miles, like a heavenly sea, a strange sort of magical barricade by some unknown force of the deep, keeping all of God's blessed Royal Navy at bay. And there you sail.

Consider the normal rules for a ship entering or having to anchor outside the reefs. However, at this time, another ship is entering, and Characters can buy passage aboard it for the price of 3 gold each. If they don't like that price or for whatever other reason decide to attack, the smaller ship will slip into the reefs with such speed as to easily escape battle after the first Round.

3) Tale of the Scotsman

"Listen, lads!" The voice is quick, and the words heavily laden with rum, but everyone, indeed lad and lass alike, listen intently. "I'll tell ye now of me Fifth Voyage, and the Hall of the Queen. Ye know of her, methinks?" The rough and rugged pirates quietly settle down like children to hear a bedtime story. The crusty old Scotsman who tells the tale weaves quite a yarn about the Mermaid Queen, a water-spirit who lives nearby, and who is given credit for this island's existence, for the reefs which surround it, and of a final promise as yet unfulfilled. The Scotsman's story is rather thin, rushed, and missing many pieces, but the crowd enjoys it well enough. As he brings it to a close, he remarks how he alone is free, having on his fifth and last voyage earned the Queen's favor, and daring others to do the same.

The Scotsman believes he is telling the truth, but age and rum have blurred his memory of any greater details. To find these, the party will have to ask around, getting 1 roll for each day spent at making inquiries. Do not re-roll duplicate results.

RUMORS

Roll	Rumor about the Mermaid Queen
10-12	She dwells on a hidden island less than a day's voyage from this one
7-9	The Mermaid Queen is actually the name of the Scotsman's old ship, a brigantine
4-6	If there really is a Mermaid Queen she is only recorded in the logbooks of Drake
1-3	The Queen is a legend sailors encourage to explain the reefs that protect this port

4) Leaving harbor

It is a clear day, as fair of weather as a sailor could wish for, even if he were asking the gods of the sea. Yet something seems amiss. The ring of reefs, white and strong, seems more of a trap than a defense. "The Queen's spell," says a man, a dockhand, sensing your thoughts, "those which set sail into the sun are seen by the Royal Navy and are taken, but those who wait for the mists, they are blessed. Always seek the storm. Only in the wake of fog and foam can you find the safe way out of these waters. Aye, the shapes of the ships of king and crown patrol the fog like the sharks of the depths, but don't give them blood to trail you. Don't fight. Flee. Into the mists..."

Everyone from the harbormaster to wandering sailors will encourage the same warnings as above if the party decides to set sail without there being a fog bank. Such cloud cover will appear after 3 days. In the meantime, their crew will spend their normal time (and gold) in town.

Should the party decide to dare the open and sunlit seas, they will run afoul of 'The Nighthawk' and 'The War Trumpet', two English frigates, each with 16 guns and 80 men (all 2nd Level). They see all who anchor here as pirates. Those not flying an English ensign will be attacked outright. Those that fly English colors will still be cornered and forced to pay a 'newly levied pirate port tax', taking 20% of all treasure and valuables aboard their ship as a forfeit to the crown for engaging in trade at any pirate harbor. The captains of these ships, 'Admiral William Willis' and 'Major Richard Hedde' are as pompous as can be, and will hide in their cabins during any battles, doors bolted shut.

HALL OF THE MERMAID QUEEN

PART 2: VOYAGE INTO THE MISTS: Out in the sea, the whereabouts of the Mermaid Queen's halls will prove elusive indeed. The only way for any ship to find them is to sail until a storm hits, then sail into it, and once it's subsided make a successful Searching Check of the misty aftermath. Until this is done, the party will sail aimlessly at sea. During that time, use the following Encounters as you see fit to maintain the game's excitement.

Shipwreck: Seeking storm after storm may just as soon destroy the party's ship as it would find the Mermaid Queen. If this occurs, go immediately to the next Section of this Adventure.

Mutiny: If Morale drops to 0, those who were in command and those loyal to them will be set in a longboat, adrift with but 5 days worth of food and water for each man and a compass. It is 1-12 days worth of rowing back to the island with the Red Shirt Taverne, but if the group rows instead into any storm that appears, they shall automatically go to the next Section of this Adventure.

5) Omens

You're making good speed. The bow of the ship is cutting through the azure waters of the New World seas. Dolphins are staying just ahead, their sleek beauty jumping under the prow. The crew takes this as a good omen. Then a shark tears across your path and devours one . . .

If the party turns about and goes back to kill the shark, they can easily do it, and it will grant them a bonus of +3 to their Searching Check in the aftermath of the next storm.

6) Introduction

This Encounter will bring any new Characters into the story. However, if there are no new Characters, run this Encounter anyway.

The crew is gathered amidships, watching a good old fashioned brawl amongst several of the men. There are no weapons being used . . . yet.

Any new Characters will have been singled-out by the crew, and that is the reason for the fight, a simple hazing ritual to test their mettle and nothing more. All the new Characters will be victims here, pitted against equal numbers of Crewmen, plus 2. However, if there are no new Characters, then the fight will only consist of 3 men singling out 2 new crew. If nobody among the Player Characters interferes, this will end in a bloody deck, costing the ship 1 NPC crewman (Level 1).

7) Introduction

This Encounter will bring into the game any new or old Characters who are employed by any Royal Navy from anywhere in the world.

The pale light of dawn finally gives shape to the fog bank. When it does, the sails of three Royal Navy ships appear, all flying different colors!

The ships are indeed of different nations, their fleet working together to find and finish whatever force is destroying ships and towns. They believe it to be a pirate fleet, hiding in these waters, and so they will seek to destroy any ships that are not officially employed by England, France, Holland or Spain. The ships of this flotilla are as follows:

The Lady Portsmouth is the flagship, a frigate flying English colors, running 20 guns, crewed by 190 men (all 1st Level), and captained by 'Marquis James Pryce', a 7th Level Sea Hawk of 15 Defense Score, 12 Survival and 110' Movement who attacks with a longsword and a total bonus of +7 with it.

La Resistance is a barque which raises the French colors, running 15 guns, crewed by 50 men (30 1st Level and 20 4th Level), and captained by 'Admiral Hoothing der Wee', a 6th Level Huguenot of 12 Defense Score (14 aboard his own ship as he has traps in the rigging), 10 Survival and 150' Movement who attacks with a rapier and a total bonus of +3 to use it, and prefers lunging attacks.

The Gilde're Hollander is a mariner flying the Dutch colors, running 16 guns, crewed by 80 men (all 1st Level), and captained by 'Admiral Norrings', a 5th Level Sailor of 13 Defense Score, 10 Survival and 120' Movement who attacks with both a rapier and a pistol and a +4 ability to use each of them.

HALL OF THE MERMAID QUEEN

PART 3: A SUNKEN WORLD: The halls of the Mermaid Queen lie beneath a reef, whose gate is marked by a derelict ship wrecked upon it. Once the party finds this lost place, their exploration of it will lead them below the world of God-fearing men, below the waves. This story shall unravel as you play the following Encounters, one and all and in the order they are presented.

8) Derelict ship

The colorless waves slosh against the shores of a haunted reef, piercing the surface but just enough to let you know it is there, its crags and sharp shoals rising almost as a warning to stay away. One who did not heed the warning is a derelict ship, a brigantine, which for the sunken choral is in appearance still afloat, the sea disguising the rocks which now form its keel. A ghost ship it is if ever there was one.

The name of the ship, still visible on its stern, is 'The Golden Queen'. A search of its lower deck can find the entrance to the Mermaid Queen's halls beginning with Encounter 10. However, if the party specifically stays here until sunrise, then run the otherwise unfindable Encounter 9.

9) Ghosts of sunlight

Run this Encounter only if the party is near to the Golden Queen at sunrise.

As the sun rises over the horizon, golden light floods the deck of the Golden Queen. The sea is reluctant to allow the color to repaint the ghost ship's gray timbers, as the tide rises in a losing race to claim the entire wreck. Yet as the eye of God glares down at the ocean spirits, the tide is forced to crawl back into the reef, and the old ship seems to come back to life a little, almost as a Biblical resurrection. The masts, deck, even the broken barrels, all seem alive again with the rich brown of their true selves, even if dark with water, the blood of their fate. Soon, in the pale streams of sunlight, you see some of the crew returning to the decks, ghosts, memories, but no more than that.

The crew whose ghosts walk the decks only by day will freely talk to the party. However, they know very little, and their stories will rise and fall like the tide to add up to nothing new, no change from what the party can already guess. They can indeed confirm that the Mermaid Queen's halls lie beneath them, and that they are prisoners there during the night, but not so much as captives, but rather they choose to hide during the night from their Hellish judgment down below where time is not counted, and the Queen offers them sanctuary, even if they cannot choose to leave her until the sun offers them the strength to do so, and so each night in desperation and weakness they make the same choices all over again.

These ghosts can be easily dispatched by any means, and thus sent on to their final judgment. If this occurs, each person on board the derelict gets one roll on the following chart. Roll once for any and all NPCs without their own Character Sheet.

Last Words Of Lost Sailors

Roll	Final blessings or curses of the ghosts
10-12	"God be with you, mate"; +1 to Luck
8-9	"Bless you"; +1 to next 3 rolls
4-7	"The devil take you!"; Empty threat
2-3	"May this day be cursed"; -1 to Luck
1	"Damn you!" Cannot heal or be healed until he saves another person's life

10) Gate of gold

Beneath the ship, the old cargo hatch opens into a tunnel. It looks half natural, as if hollowed out by the tides, but has been widened by the tools of men. Not far down the rough-hewn steps, the tunnel levels out, and proceeds through knee-deep water. Up ahead, you come to a portcullis-like gate. It's raised right now, but you can tell that it's functional, despite the seaweed hanging from its glimmering teeth—it's **gold** teeth! The entire gate is made from gold! Stranger still, beyond it, the tunnel walls smooth into perfectly cut white bricks, a grand hall filled with fresh, clean air.

The gate is magical, unable to be damaged or forcibly moved, and it cannot to be fooled—it falls and rises by the will of the Mermaid Queen alone.

HALL OF THE MERMAID QUEEN



11) Foyer

You stand at one end of a grand hall. The pale, white walls are crowded with statues of ugly and colorless stone, save for the brown barnacles and dried seaweed stuck to them. They are all piled haphazardly along the walls, crowding each other as if these stone sailors were drunk. Above them are stained-glass windows, the only color to be seen down here, and whose images seem to be moving ever so slightly . . .

The statues are all those who displeased the Mermaid Queen and were turned to stone, set here as a warning for all others who come to visit her. A search might find scratches of writing, some in English; *‘Please, forgive me, my Queen’*, and some in Spanish; *‘May the devil take you, Bitch Queen’*. These faint messages are provided as Handouts 11 and 12, respectively, left by those spirits who have managed to rise up from the coffins of their stone bodies, back to the surface of the Christian world, if only for brief periods. If someone speaks these words aloud, the spirit who carved them into its stone body will rise, a visage over its stone face, echoing these words in the speaker’s own voice.

The figures in the stained-glass windows, these ‘glass ghosts’, they watch over the stone prisoners and those who try to help them. They are, for all intents and purposes, Mermaids, but they cannot be fought or physically interacted with in any way. However, if the window one of them lives in is shattered, the darkness from beyond will flood into the hall like a torrent of black water, but will be concentrated around only the individual who broke the window, hauling him into the abyss ‘outside’ before the window magically repairs itself (though the Mermaid will not reappear as an image within it—it shall bear an abstract image of the seabed), if the victim cannot make a Saving Throw at 10.

To proceed up this hallway however, one must have permission of these stained-glass ghosts. There are dozens of windows, so there will always be a Mermaid left to approve or deny the party passage. The party leader must simply make a Charisma Check, penalized by -1 for each window smashed. Failure to gain permission results in the Mermaids attacking as detailed above.

12) Cavern of the waterfalls

The walls are soon overgrown with a cavern, as if barnacles and other crustaceans of the seafloor are through the centuries devouring this beautiful temple. All around, arches at various heights still defy conquest, while waterfalls flow down before them, like curtains to cover what they cannot by time conceal from the world. The water here is waist-deep, though shimmering in a strange light.

There is a tunnel behind each of the waterfalls but only one leads to the Mermaid Queen—all the others lead to undersea worlds from which there is no returning for humans. Whichever one that any Character passes through first will be the correct one—fate, or perhaps the Queen herself, is guiding them, while every waterfall passed thereafter will never release its trespassers.

A Searching Check (this roll made with a +3 bonus) may notice a shimmering beneath the water, which is actually gold on the sunken floor. There is a total of 580 coins here. It is indeed free for the taking, but note of who takes what anyway.

13) The Two Trials

Beyond the waterfall, you find yourselves in a small chamber with a high, domed ceiling, gold in the light but doubtless only a brass sheathing. Seaweed bleeds down the brick walls. Standing in the center of the floor are two statues, one of a merman and one of a mermaid. They are both facing each other, yet poised as if repelling one another, a dance of desire and defiance. Each is the guardian of an descending stairwell.

When one tries to descend either stairwell, the statue before it shall speak, though its lips shall be still. The merman poses a ‘trial of faith’, while the mermaid a ‘trial of love’. Each Character is free to choose their passage—they both lead to the Queen.

The trial of faith requires one to name who in the world he fears, and the answer can only be his god, by name or by title.

The trial of love requires one to name who in the world he loves, and if he is not married or at least betrothed to that person, he fails.

HALL OF THE MERMAID QUEEN



14) Throne room

You walk down a wide set of stairs, the water splashing upon the steps as you descend into an amazing temple. The walls, floor and ceiling are fashioned from a white, marble-like stone, as if one could build a palace from pearl. Pillars flank the walls to either side and before you, and they are each carved like a hundred men writhing in eternal agony. Large, opulent pearls are set into the walls in seemingly random places, glowing with some other-worldly light, like white candles. Several men are standing around, clearly guards, and an apparent queen sits in a throne fashioned from human skulls and seashells, as if they are of equal value to her. Though the flesh of these people has a pale, turquoise hue, and they are dressed in shreds of cloth clearly woven from the flesh of men only stained white, they are none-the-less very human themselves, not of merfolk. The queen is watching you intently, her eyes as cold as the sea, both welcoming you and warning you at the same time.

The party, in this room, is seeing the Queen's world the way that she wants them to—they are actually in water 3' deep, wherein all these Merfolk indeed have the fish-like tails as one might expect, thus, the party must deal with 'fighting in water' if it comes to that, while the 15 Merguards will be able to move with swift and dangerous speed.

The Queen can be bargained with, calling for a Charisma Check to attain one favor. This Check has modifiers, as displayed below. Roll in secret, for one will not know if he fails or succeeds—the Queen shall always ask for a kiss to complete and consummate the bargain—it is her price.

Bargain With The Mermaid Queen

Modifier	Conditions the Queen judges
+4	He is betrothed, married, or widowed
+2	The ship he sails on has a name that compliments Merfolk or sea creatures
-1	Every 100 gold he personally took in Encounter 12 (rounded up)
-2	He has desecrated or damaged in any way anything in the temple
-4	He has killed any of her people

If one failed, the Queen's kiss shall cause him to turn to stone, to be set amongst those back in Encounter 11. However, if one succeeds, he can ask one favor. What the Queen can and will give is detailed below, but if something is not described there, one wasted his bargain with her.

Gaining treasure is a reward the Queen will frown on, a testament of one's shallow soul, but it is a request she will grant none-the-less, giving the individual who asks for it 100-1200 coins that her people have recovered from sunken ships.

Restoring Characters turned to stone costs the asking individual 1000 gold per Experience Level of those being restored.

A means to find Drake's grave is based on the trial one passed in Encounter 13. If he did not pass either one of the Two Trials, he cannot gain any means to seek Drake's sunken grave. Yet one who passed the trial of faith will receive a golden, heart-shaped amulet, which can be used three times to live beneath the water, indeed three times given freedom from the Queen's realm, each use lasting until one returns to the surface. Those who passed the trial of love will receive a silver, heart-shaped amulet, which enchants one as soon as he wears it for the first time, either (if he is cursed) lifting all curses upon him, or (if he is not cursed) allowing him to live forever under the water, though he will 'drown' above it, unless he is aboard a ship, and once worn, this amulet can never be removed, lest the individual instantly perish.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has left the unearthly halls behind, there are some things to consider.

Legend: Those who entered the Mermaid Queen's halls will gain +5 Notoriety, regardless of Level.

Return to the Mermaid Queen: The Queen will not be able to be found again, neither she nor her hall itself. They will simply not appear in the mists to follow a storm for anyone who has already shared the taste of her lips. That is, unless that individual indeed tasted thus, and asked for the ability to find his way back here, in which case he will awaken from his stone prison after all else is finished here, and with the ability to return whenever he wants.

THE INFERNO

Once the party has been through four of the five previous Adventures in this book, once they have gained an ability to delve into the sea by either a curse or a Queen's enchantment, only then will an end come, an end to their toil, and the beginning of their suffering...

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE: Before running this Adventure, it is a good idea to read through it just to be familiar with the storyline and key elements. However, reading the entire Adventure beforehand is not necessary for play.

Statistics for the Inferno: This Adventure being set almost entirely aboard the Inferno itself, whatever it can or cannot achieve statistically is important. The Inferno is a galleon, crewed by Skeletons that appear this way only in firelight, while the rest of the time they are sailors out of place and time, a motley crew from the last two centuries and all parts of the world, never growing any older... or being allowed to die. The captain is of the same magic, closely resembling Sir Francis Drake though he is nothing but a manifestation of the ship's true captain—the ship itself—and so he only appears at times the ship gives commands, and cannot suffer any mortal flaw. The ship runs 20 guns, their iron cast in the shape of dragons, their gunports carved like caves, and they shoot salvos of fire instead of cannonballs, penalizing rolls on Table 42 by -3. The ship has no provisions of food and water.

Background: When everyone is ready to play, begin the adventure by reading the narrative below.

The Caribbean. It is a world unto itself, a world with enough bloodshed and fire to frighten all of history before it and yet to come, a world where all know what they want yet none know what they need. But to you, everyone is a ghost, their world no longer of any matter to yours.

You are at a crossroads. You know what you need but you do not want it. Perhaps your world is the center of all, for you know the past better than anyone, and it fears you, just as the future does, for your choices this day will create it.

The past and the future await you now. The Inferno awaits you. It has for a long time...

PART 1: THE GRAVE OF DRAKE: This last Adventure begins when the party seeks out the lost grave of Sir Francis Drake. However they find it, the grave can be found off the headlands near the city of Nombre de Dios, indeed within sight of the town, but 125' below the surface, a lead coffin on the bottom of the sea. If the party has some way to survive the crushing depths and also see in the darkness—indeed being cursed or enchanted—only then should you run the following Encounters. Use them both and in the order they are presented.

1) Opening the coffin

The murky depths are a strange world indeed. No man can remember nor describe them, save for a sense of peace throughout, rather than the Hell you expected. Finally, you find a large, lead coffin laying proudly upon a choral bed. If only you could see more, but this is all you need, as your heart tells you... it echoes with surprisingly loud beats in the depths of the sea.

Opening the coffin requires one to swear an oath on his heart to finish Drake's battle, and then it will open of its own accord. Solving this riddle merits 50 Experience Points.

2) The voice of Drake

Upon opening the coffin, time seems to stop, as the water does not rush to fill it, but somehow stands back, as if water ceased to exist, though the surrounding plants and fish continue to drift in their slow rhythm. "You are between worlds," says a voice, followed by a wake of foam and bubbles rising from the coffin, quickly forming a colorless ghost you can recognize from a hundred portraits; "I am Sir Francis Drake, his voice in this world, his love in yours... take his heart and with it end that which Knight and Queen feared above all earthly enemies... farewell..." and with that the ghost disperses into the water which you can suddenly feel once again.

Inside the coffin is a dagger and a drum, the latter of which beats like a heart. If played, it will summon the Inferno...

THE INFERNO

PART 2: THE SHIP OF DOOM: Once Drake's drum has summoned the Inferno, it will appear and take the party, thus beginning their final battle, to be chronicled with the following Encounters, played when applicable but only in their presented order.

3) Join us or die

As the sky darkens, and the sun settles into the horizon, its dying light sets the clouds ablaze. It is a spectacular sight no sailor can ever get used to. Yet this time, the sun does not sink. As the clouds burn blood-red, they become but ghosts of the sails drawing nigh, the entire canvas of the Heavens a doppelganger of the three masts which are making straight for you, allowing the sun to rise anew from its watery grave as the ship you both fear and seek: The Inferno. Now it comes. Now it's real, and it's closing on you...

The Inferno will fire on the party until the ghost ship is boarded or sink their prey, but either way the survivors can only be 'safe' by coming aboard. A boarding party will be quickly put down as all NPCs will cower and either kill themselves rather than face eternal damnation, or be swiftly shanghaied with white-hot iron shackles that burn away their soul, leaving but the body to join the ghost crew. In the end, only the Player Characters will be left alive, and welcomed aboard as guests by the spectral captain of Drake's doppelganger.

4) Confronting the captain

Run this Encounter only if the party asks to see the captain for purposes of bartering or somehow negotiating their place aboard the ship.

The captain sits in his cabin like a ghost in its tomb. While the ship rocks with the waves, the specter of Drake does not, remaining fixed more in your eyes and your nightmares than within the prison of any reality. Indeed, you wonder who is the captive and who is the captain.

The 'captain' will be willing to talk to them, to hear what they have to offer.

Freedom to leave his ship costs nothing at all, but as the Inferno now has what it wants, indeed the Player Characters, it will never put into another port until they are dead and part of its crew. Still, they can jump overboard if they like.

Passage off this ship, indeed to have it put in to a port, is a price that can be paid only by very special gold, that which was found in Encounter 9 of Adventure #2. Every 100 gold from that hoard (rounded down) is the chance in 12 that the ship will do **one** person this favor, and then the chance re-sets for whoever is next.

Dueling the captain will be dismissed, as the ship doesn't wish to harm those it sought for so long. However, if one possesses the dagger found in Encounter 9 of Adventure #3 or Encounter 2 of this one, the captain will offer a bold choice: Stab him with it, and if he is able to kill him (meaning the ship), he will have won freedom for everyone, but if he fails, he will die and thus join the crew, and may then see the Inferno's articles, which are provided as Handout 13. Killing the captain is, of course, impossible, but it can help the party learn the only true way they can defeat the Inferno.

5) Introduction

This Encounter will (re)introduce all Characters that died but whose Players have their Record Sheet(s).

Moving about the deck, you recognize some of the crew, but you cannot remember them. It is as if they walked out of your dreams onto this deck, or were shanghaied in another life and for all this time have been waiting for you. These figures cannot speak, it seems, though their pale eyes tell much—they are watching you, awaiting you to do something. Their cold, colorless lips tighten. They slow down their laborious duties as you drift through their ranks.

All those (un)dead Characters are amongst the ones the current Characters recognize, whether they met in life or not. Once given permission to speak they can do so, and say who they are, and at that moment become playable once again by their old Player. However, if any other Player wishes, once a Character has been (re)introduced, he can wrest

THE INFERNO

control of him by bidding against the old Player and indeed everyone else with Adventure Points. To the highest bidder forever goes control of the undead individual. In this case, a single Player can indeed adopt more than one Character.

The undead Characters can earn redemption by helping the party escape the ship. But truly being worthy of redemption will not be easy—they know it **can** be done and **how**, they just do not know to what degree they must go, and so the adventure begins anew for them as well.

6) Doom

The captain appears on the aft-deck, a whisp of cloud taking shape as if an angel turned pirate, wings resewn into a ragged coat, halo bent and made into a necklace, and a face so fair that it could be from heaven alone now looking straight ahead to a large reef, a hell of sharp choral and chilling waves crashing against it...

"There she blows..." the captain says, and his voice sends a shiver through the ship, all the rigging and even yourselves. "Is this the day we return to see the devil's wife?"

The crew, zombie-like as they are, respond in a collective moan hardly distinguishable from the ship's fighting of the defiant waves.

The Inferno can only be manned by those that crewed it when it crashed into this very same reef centuries go. The ghost ship has since harvested all the souls in the reincarnated bodies of its former crew—the Player Characters were the last ones that it needed to find. Now, with its crew complete, all their souls free from mortality, indeed all cursed or enchanted in some form, they can end their ghostly existence by crashing into the reef again. However, only a living man can do this, whether he is part of the crew or not. The captain will wait for any amongst the party to take the helm and wreck the ship. None of the spirits aboard will do anything to stop him. If nobody does this, they will become ghosts in time due to starvation, and then the ship will capture someone who **will** do the deed, ending the Inferno all the same but not granting the party victory. When the ship wrecks, the **living** shall all survive but be set adrift at sea, for Encounter 7...

7) Redemption

Left to your fate upon the waves, surrounded by the flaming wreckage of the ship, the flotsam of the vessel slowly sinks, as if being salvaged by devils of below, drawn down bit by bit into the black depths. As the fires go out, the deepening darkness makes it harder to tell the difference between sky and sea. Heaven and Hell, land and sea, fate has once again left you at a crossroads.

Each Character must make a Saving Throw against 'swimming great distances' to make it back to land. But, if one kept and beats Drake's drum, the Inferno itself, minus its crew and curse, will rise back up beneath him, to be a fully sea-worthy, mortal galleon of 20 guns once again...

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has left the curse of the Inferno behind, there are some things to consider.

A noble sacrifice: If someone died in Encounter 4 and so allowed the party to see the ship's articles, the Player of that Character will now receive 6 Adventure Points for making this noble sacrifice.

Undead Characters: Those undead Player Characters who helped the party escape the Inferno may find redemption. Every living Character whom survived this Adventure is the chance in 12 that the undead will live again, becoming fully mortal with all the same statistics he had when he died, though cured and purified of all wounds and afflictions, save for things like lost limbs, eyes, etc. At this point, the original owning Player can with the current owner alone bid Adventure Points for control of the now redeemed and living Character.

Drake's Drum: Having defeated the Inferno, what of Drake's Drum? It no longer can summon up the ghost ship. Instead, it will summon Drake himself, in his country's darkest hour. Indeed, if ever the party, with an English captain or majority English crew 'loses' naval battle, beating the drum will be able to summon 100 Levels of ghostly crew to restart the fight for every Adventure Point spent for that one time, led by Drake's spectral form.

if such a situation should ever come to light again, the flour and sugar will have to be the first cargo to be thrown overboard.

12th June, 1589, 8:46pm

The King's shipwright undervalued himself. Our vessel withstood a storm of six days, which in my last ship, "God's Witness," I would have had to meet death after only two. Made personal note to recommend the keel and rigging design to the chief shipwright in Havana when we arrive there, hopefully no later than the 18th day of June.

13th June, 1589, 5:23pm

Lookout sighted again the phantom follower just before dawn. Men have it a name, "Bloody Sails". I have come to refer to it by Dante's verses, so this ship, should it be sighted again and recorded in this log, will henceforth be referred to as "The Inferno." This morning the strange vessel shadowed our sails for nigh upon an hour and then disappeared in a bank of fog. The men felt strongly that it never intended to attack us, but was merely content to watch us, even study us as one might haunt a bazaar for a cutpurse. The sighting has lowered morale but hastened speed, as the crew are eager to put in and forbid this phantom's entry to God's fortified colony in Cubana.

16th June, 1589, 5:32pm

Our course-heading changed twice in the night. The pilot, mate, master and boson are equally at a loss. Have not spoken of this to the crew for fear it will cost them in morale and piety.

16th June, 1589, 9:13pm

Lights out at 8:00pm went over with surprising ease. The men do not fear the night-devils as had worried me during the daylight hours. Still did I give their dreams time to take hold of them before summoning Mr. Hopper to my cabin. Was summoned under the guise of his skills as cooper, not chaplain. It is his opinion that this ship is under the influence of the devil, that like a compass our bowsprit is always drawn towards The Inferno. I thought not to label him mad for all that my eyes had been forced to endure these three days last. Will make no more mention of this in writing lest the devils read it while I sleep. Once only in my life shall the English Crown provide an example, to neither drown these books lest the sea-devils know their secrets, nor burn them lest they release whatever evil's shadow is hidden within the words written by memory of a storm most unnatural.

18th June, 1589, 1:10pm

Reached Havana harbor hours earlier than expected. Tales of The Inferno are already being spread in town, despite my efforts at silence. I fear this will cost our souls in the years to come. Nonetheless the men are renewed in all aspects of morale and faith. Our supply of tobacco was of greatest profit in

The Tinker Bell

Captain: John	Design: Man-O-war	Crew: 95
“angel killer”	Hull Points: 600	Levels: 200
Smith	Mounted cannon: 30	Morale: 25
Flag: Irish	Reserve cannon: 05	Hold: 10000
Speed: 18	Men per cannon: 3	Cargo: 5550
Notes and Changes: _____		

The Tinker Bell is a deceptive name, one which when first heard was mocked by its crew then as it is by all who still meet it, yet the name always succeeds in giving its enemies unfounded confidence, and therefore the ship's ever changing crew allows it to be kept, and all who in turn mock them do so at their own risk.

The Tinker Bell is manned by 95 crew (50 1st Level, 30 3rd Level and 15 4th Level), all British. Their current captain isn't the best, offering them only a +1 bonus for their group rolls, so they often take matters into hand if no immediate command is given. Still, they remain loyal to their captain and their ship, being British and all.

The Tinker Bell is a well provisioned ship, with not 1 but 3 anchors, 40 salvos for its cannons, weapons for its crew, 2 sets of spare sails, 4 longboats, and enough food to last a man 32000 days. Its treasure, however, is rather meager, invested almost entirely in its provisions, which is may well be stocked in food, but leaves its crew hungrier than ever for more than the 2400 gold in the hold.

inferno. Devil comes. Drake's bane.
Fears of the English crown. Ghosts
to the Spanish. Dead men tell no
tales. Let the warmth of living hands
write the next chapter in this story.

inferno. Devil comes. Drake's bane.
Fears of the English crown. Ghosts
to the Spanish. Dead men tell no
tales. Let the warmth of living hands
write the next chapter in this story.

Gallow's Bell is an unborn child.
Her heart lies within her. Never
will the chastity belt of the devil
keep out his trident of wood.

The devil's bells will soon by
the breaking of her mother be
reborn into the fleshly world.

12th June, 1631, 8:46pm

God as my witness, seventy men and myself only this last hour, as we called for lights out, saw the devil himself emerge from the shadows cradled within an island reef. The ship we saw came as if from Hell itself. Blood-red sails were flying a mighty wingspan for thirteen ghosts of blood-soaked canvas. Dare I write even more from memory than Mr. Pilmm's verse? Can the devil read what is the written record of an honest sailor?

12th June, 1631, 11:24pm

Just adjourned a meeting involving myself and eleven other men. The moonlight was majestic and enlivened our laden spirits. We twelve, including all officers of a seemingly doomed ship and three members of the crew chosen by lot and thereby a steal from any plan concocted in shadows of sun or thought to deceive us, we held a meeting that was strange by all accounts. Amongst we twelve, five could recall the name of that ghost ship; "The Inferno" it was. I dare indeed to name it here in ink and parchment. We have evaded it and when we put in to shore I nor any of my officers will for the remainder of our lives set out to sea again. I witnessed this day with my eyes and by witness of others a devil-ship that flies in the face of all earthly matters I have learned in church on land. The sea keeps its own mysteries and they are beyond all of us.

13th June, 1631, 1:13pm

At the behest of my officers, unanimously, we followed the wake of The Inferno. Mr. Pilmm was able to prove well enough to satisfy our curiosities that this ship is the one incarnate every schoolboy hears about that Sir Francis Drake was to ever have feared. God be with us, I fear greed has blinded us to better judgment that may see us to land, but if the stories of the ship itself have proven real enough, its treasure cannot be overlooked. We set out today on a voyage from which there is no beginning, as we began at sea, and whose end may be equally beyond the records of men and earth, for to what end shall this ghost chase take us?

Your Excellency,

Your servant, 'Dennis Bozwell', as per your instructions I am providing you this record of the relocation of the "Queen's Pirate."

Our plans are dangerous now. I believe the captain suspected of this turn, as he rewrote his Last Will And Testament a night prior his fever caught the better of him. Nonetheless, the crew was given to fear of dysentery to overrule the captain's last will and bury him at sea rather than take him back to England, as he wished.

I believe there is a conspiracy here against the Queen and Crown. The captain was helped into his armour the night before he passed, as if to battle with an approaching specter that only he could see. In his armoring he was aided by only one man, his Will claims, but of this man no name is, nor is it in the logbook. I believe he fell ill of that disease which vexes all Christian heroes, in a word, greed.

Now more than ever I believe we must hold to our purpose, forever guarding the captain's secret. For your records, as surely the Crown will conceal the true documents and mask them to the people of the realm, I provide here the resting place of Sir Francis Drake:

On the 28th day of January, 1596, he was buried at sea off the trade route to Puerta Bella in the seas west of Panama. His ship was set aflame and burned on the waves until night quelled its fires. James Witherby, his Sailing Master, alone spoke in his wake.

Last Will And Testament

Sir Francis Drake

Here may I under God's watchful eye offer my Last Will And Testament to His world and those blessed to be His children upon it, King, Country, and Realm. I, Sir Francis Drake, privateer to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of England, offer this new Testament on the twenty sixth day of January in the Year Of Our Lord ninety six and fifteen hundred.

This fateful day have I found my strength fleeting. The untamed wilderness poisoned further by the ungodly ways of Spanish colonists have conspired to take my life from my flesh. However I shall by God's will be granted my final wishes. May first amongst them that the sea which has reflected my life remain reflection alone. May I not be cheated of this wish. I bequeth my soul to Almighty God, my only maker and redeemer, and my body to the earth, my beloved native soil of England, to therein be buried and entombed.

On this day, one don my armour, that I may die like a soldier. May my friends remain hidden in that rare port of Spanish greed where God's voice is still heard. The rest of my worldly arms, of ship, cannon and currency, be returned to Her Majesty the Queen and divided first with all accordance to my signed agreement with the Crown, and thereafter she has taken what is due to the realm, the rest be divided according to Ship's Articles by the Sailing Master James Witherby. After queens and men have played their games with the articles of their own souls on the greater ship of God's earth, let My Lord's will be done.

Witnesses

Gunner Ensign B. VanHoose

Boson' Arthur Gilliamsman

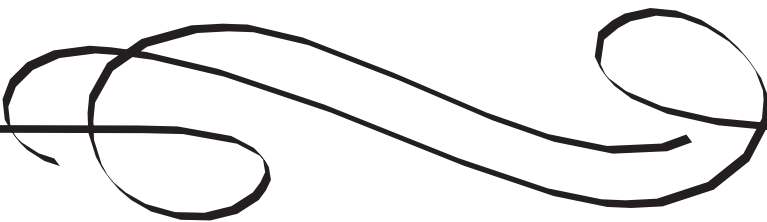
Shipwright Mark Clankese Goldblatt

David Knowles, ship's cooper

Bruce Campbell

Sir Francis Drake

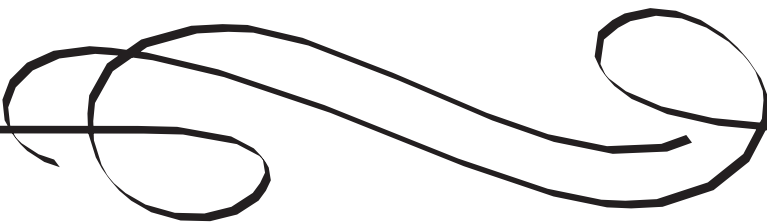
16th January, 1596



*Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre de Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin'
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.*

*Drake he was a Devon man, but ruled the Spanish seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe,
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed
them long ago."*

*Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the dark depths, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Find him on the deep sea, find him for the drum,
Find him if ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin',
The Inferno finds him, ware an' wakin', as it found
him long ago.*





The dark men returned for
the treasure of their heathen gods

Gunballs turn from them

Swords are afraid of them

They see the spirit world
and fear it not

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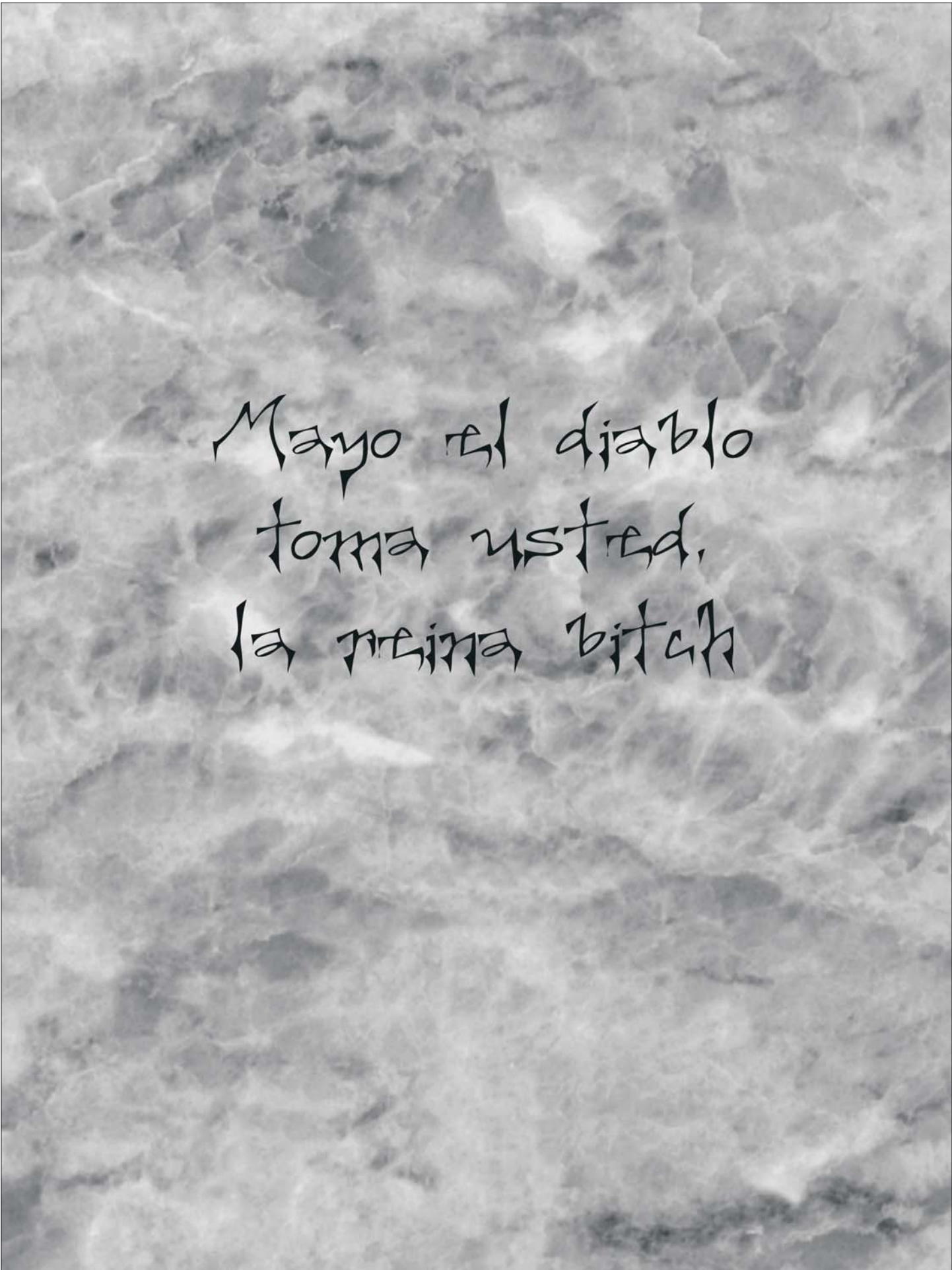
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Please, forgive
me, my Queen

The background of the page is a grayscale marbled paper with a complex, swirling pattern of light and dark gray tones.

Mayo el diablo
toma usted,
la reina bitch

Articles of the Inferno

We who have made our mark in this book are hereby bound to these laws of the world unto the Inferno. May Almighty God know that my own mark was made by my willful approach and boarding of this ship. Thus is my mark also full willing. Here now be stated the articles.

- 1. No man has vote in any affairs. The captain's will is the will of the ship itself. However, all crew shall have equal right to prizes taken for their earthly pleasures to belay the poison of time and dreaming.*
- 2. Punishment shall be administered by the quartermaster alone, but a punishment must be agreed upon by majority vote amongst the crew, but can only be nominated by the captain. Punishments allowed for the violation of any articles are limited to Moses Law of 39 lashes, Sweating runs around the mainmast until collapse, and the Trial of the Sword swung once to the back with Death as sole judge.*
- 3. If any crewman defrauds any other in value of coin, jewel or goods, he faces one punishment according to article 2.*
- 4. No crewman shall game at cards or dice save only for treasure or other earthly property.*
- 5. No crewman shall flee from battle, lest his soul be forfeit to the ship for eternity.*
- 6. All men must keep their piece, pistols and weapons ready for battle. Failure to have a reliable weapon is the same as fleeing from battle.*
- 7. No new crewmen shall be taken on. Only those who manned this ship during its earthly life shall man it reincarnate. Prisoners are neither to be kept nor allowed to leave.*
- 8. No man shall speak aloud the name of the reef which claimed the ship on its first voyage. If a man knows this name he can only be forgiven for speaking it aloud to a child of 4 years or less. To speak of it to any who would otherwise remember will see his lips sewn shut or cut off to be melted back together by the captain's cutlass.*
- 9. No crewman shall leave the Inferno until the voyage is complete.*