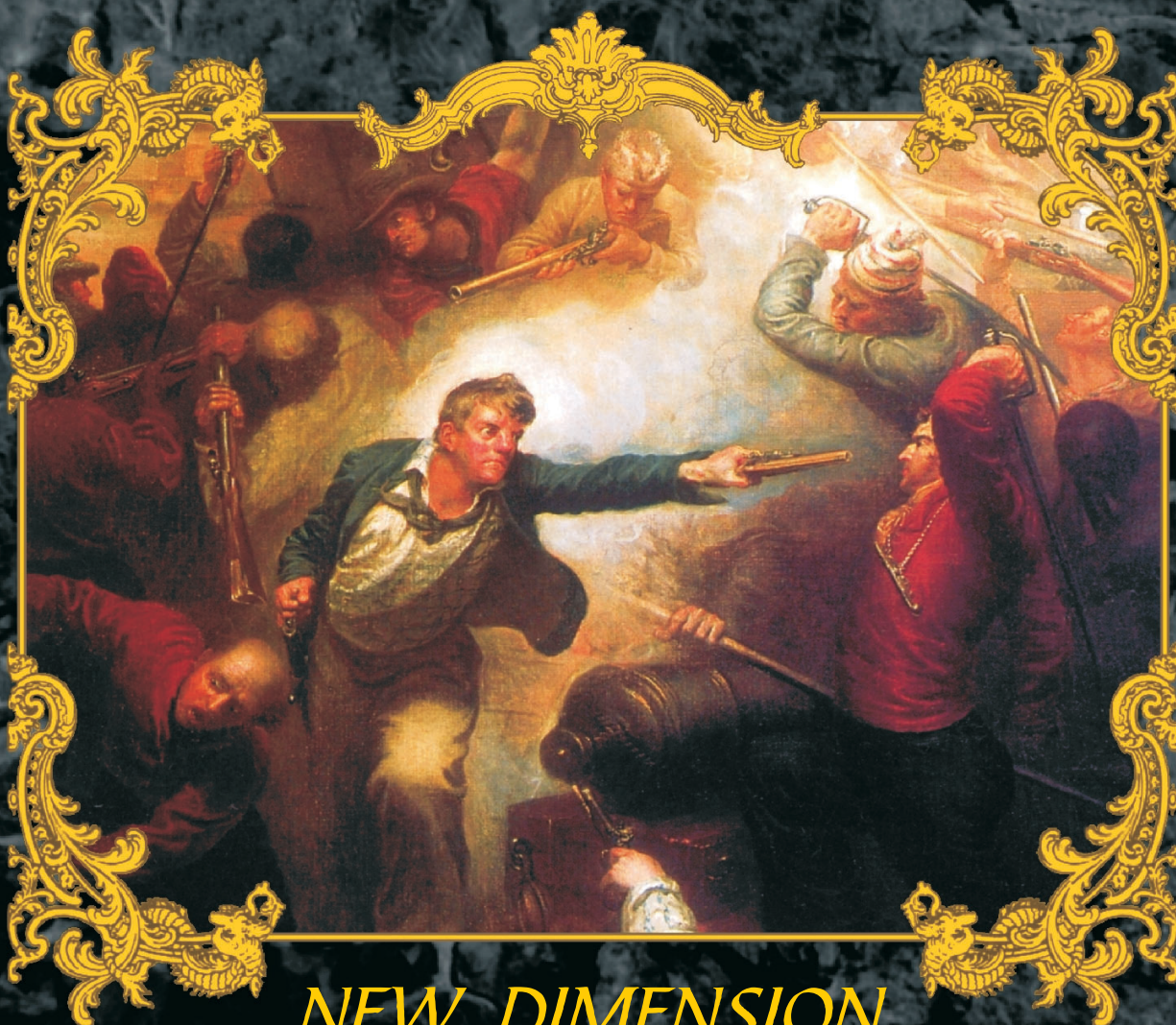


PIRATES

OF THE
DEVIL'S FLEET

BY: MATT DEMILLE



NEW DIMENSION
GAMES

FOR Richard Donner,
for goonie movies...

Credits

Designer: Matthew deMille

Cover: Cornelis Claesz Van Weiringen (historical picture)

Editing, Graphic Design, Typography: Matthew deMille

Producer: James deMille

PLANNING THE ADVENTURE

Avast there! Ye thinkin' the open oceans o' the fair windy world be a hidin' place fer ill gotten gains, or a gate to 'venture the likes o' which ye've not e'er met before? Both be the truth there, matey, so if yer not gunshy 'bout takin' chances, then I says the very fleet o' the devil himself be waitin' fer ya with the reward o' a challenge like none other, 'tis true. Aye, but are ye gonna be able ta survive it?

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 three individual, open-ended Adventures that will take the Characters on adventures unlike any others throughout the Open Seas. These can be played individually, or used in chronological order, building the basis for the careers of the Player Characters. Or, they may even be played in non-chronological order, assuming that the Encounters keyed to specific years are omitted.

Using this book: These Adventures are relatively short, requiring on an average one full game session (roughly 10 hours) to play through to their end. However, you may increase the length of any Adventure by adding Encounters from other game gazetteers. One must select such additions carefully however, for each of the Adventures in this book are carefully constructed and their own Encounters are carefully 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. Still, 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 important to note that, as these Adventures are not 'full-length', that they should not be played back-to-back, as Players may tend to believe them to be one entire Adventure. This could lead to problems, in that Players would associate the Encounters fn one Adventure with situations they face in another, and this can throw them way off track in their decision making. These Adventures should only be played one-after-another if the Players are **fully** aware when one Adventure ends and that a **new** Adventure is beginning.

Indeed, if you play these Adventures one after another, have a little 'shore leave' time in-between them, perhaps breaking the game session at that point, or in some other way clearly establishing the time elapsed between adventures.

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.

Tales to be told: The Adventures in this book are presented in their chronological order. The first Adventure, 'The Bloody Angel's Bounty' takes place in 1801. The second Adventure, 'Mordechai's Revenge', takes place in 1804. Finally, the third Adventure, 'Queen of the Crimson Coast', takes place in 1809.

Telling these tales: Each of these Adventures is in some way tied to the fabled 'Devil's Fleet', a lost armada of Royal Navy ships that all met a brutal end in a hurricane. The ships were scattered into wind and legend. The survivors (or the ghosts) of each vessel is said to have met a different fate, all of them worse than death. Some of these countless scattered souls will form the basis for all of these Adventures.

SIDE ADVENTURES: In order to add greater interest and fun for the Player Characters, there are provided below several 'side adventures'. These are simple, open-ended Encounters that may be used in any of the three Adventures found in this booklet. Use them sparingly, for they do not last long, and moreover, use them wisely, placing them in the story when they will be most effective.

PLANNING THE ADVENTURE

1) Mirage or mutineers?

The sun gleams off the water. It's like a desert of waves, distorting depth perception, even trying to fool you with a mirage—there ahead are three men floating in the water, moving slightly, as if trying to swim.

The men are real, and indeed alive. They are lost mutineers whose raft sank not long ago. If the party is not in command of their ship, then their captain will give them the responsibility of making the decision about what to do with these men, as a test. In any event, rescuing these 3 men, each one a 2nd Level Dutchman, will lower crew Morale by -4, as they are clearly mutineers and not at all favored. However, to leave them behind will cause one crewman to question the Character who gave the order on grounds of Christian charity, this 1st Level Pirate challenging him to a fistfight, and to beat him will raise crew Morale by +1.

2) Captain Roddy

In the corner of the tavern, several women bring an endless flood of rum and pleasure to one man who sits propped up in an ornately carved chair, clearly stolen from some Nobleman. He has the speech and mannerisms of a brash Scotsman, but is dressed with plunder from the world over—his pants are white and spacious like an Arab of the Mediterranean, he's girt with a Caribbean cutlass, he wears a true kilt's shoulder mantle but it is fastened with a Chinese broach. He seems to just enjoy his wealth and his loud mouth too much, but, as the sailors sitting near you whisper as a warning, he enjoys fighting even more...

The man is 'Captain Roddy'. His wardrobe is all his trophies, taken only from those men he has personally cut down. He currently is looking for a 'captain's hat' (or coat), but won't notice it on any Player Characters unless they approach him first or draw any attention to themselves while still in the tavern. Captain Roddy is a 9th Level Rogue, with DS 13, G 11, MOVE 120', pilfering at +2, cutlass at +4, and all other weapons and forms of fighting at +1. He always fights to the death.

3) Bare Bones Beach

This Encounter can let the party 'find something' on any beach where they are for whatever reason searching for something that is not to be found.

The beach is a vast, open place. The sand is not true sand, but some sort of white pebbles, which sucks you down up to your ankles. It seems the tide covers this beach every day, as it is swept clean, like a desert in the midst of the sea, with no trees and little plantlife, save for one—there is a tree about a quarter-mile away.

If the tree is investigated, it will turn out to actually be a construct of broken ship's timbers, a sign on it reading '*Bare Bones*', and a noose still hanging from its highest 'branch'. Digging here is sure to discover a skeleton, whose skull is chock full of 'blood diamonds', 6 in all, each worth a good 800 gold. However, each blood diamond also carries a minor curse to whoever possesses it, and cannot be gotten rid of except by selling the blood diamond for half its value or with the buyer being aware of the curse, whether he believes in it the curse or not (Charisma Check required). The curse itself is to be determined at random.

Curse Of The Blood Diamonds

Roll	Diamond's individual curse
10-12	No curse
8-9	Cannot get drunk but suffer 1-3 Damage from excessive drinking in the morning
5-7	-1 to all Attack Rolls with swords
2-4	-1 to all Attack Rolls with guns
1	Must kill a human every day or he may perish; roll on Table 150 each time

THE BLOODY ANGEL'S BOUNTY



Pssst! Avast there! Ye be ready an' daring fer that grandest o' adventures, goin' on account? Well, ye'd best have yer sea-legs lined with a brace o' pistols if ye think ye'll even make it outside the harbor on this 'ere venture. There be hidden friends ahead, an' open enemies lurking in every sea where sails fill with twists o' fate...

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.

Timeline: This adventure is set in Australia in the year 1801. Those Encounters that are marked with an "*" require the game to be played in this era. If your game does not adhere to timelines, do not use these Encounters.

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

Piracy. It's a trade welcomed in ports the world over. An honest trade. At least, far more honest than privateers hiding their misdeeds merely with a piece of paper, or priests rewriting their papers to sanction their sins, or the East India Trading Company plundering everyone with the blessing of king and country. The world's seas are ever expanding, but the pirate trade is shrinking.

There's little room for an honest pirate these days. Shiny things, glittery things, they're either cursed or taxed beyond their value. Harbors that once welcomed laden pirate vessels and helped spend their treasure now fear them. Only those who work with bloody, brutal, Godless ways are able to claim the coins of the colonies. Pirates like 'the Bloody Angel' ravishing at will, or 'the Holland Marauder' having every murder stricken from her hull by the church. Wicked ways are rewarded, and honest thieves end up here.

Botany Bay. Prison at the edge of the world. Last stop for those too strong in spirit to live as slaves in society and too weak with honest work to butcher the Royal Navy when it comes to lay claim to their bones.

PART 1: FAREWELL TO DIRTY LIVES: In the farthest southeastern reaches of the world's seas is Botany Bay, anchorage for prison ships bringing the world's most worthy criminals to this hell on earth. To begin this Adventure, the party will have to escape this place by making a prison break. To present this challenge, use the following Encounters only where they are applicable but in the order that they are presented.

The prison: Botany Bay is the harbor where ships laden with criminals arrive. The prison itself is a series of huts around the bay. This crescent moon shape makes it difficult for escapees to hide, for at any given point the space between the 15' stockade walls is narrow and easily swept by the guards.

Prison guards: Whenever encountered for whatever reason, the guards of this prison colony travel in groups of 3 or 6 (roll 'odd' or 'even'). They have DS 7, G 6, MOVE 100', a longsword and pistol, and +2 to use them both. Each man is Level 1.

1) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce all Player Characters of European descent. If there are no Europeans in the party-to-be, simply allow everyone to join in.

Hell. That's where you are. This prison colony, Botany Bay, is hell on earth. Today, there's talk of an escape, tonight, when the moon is asleep, casting the crescent-shaped harbor into darkness. The other prisoners here seem like zombies, just alive enough to hope, but not to fight.

The Characters are all prisoners, and have all been stripped of their carried items of equipment. It is likely that, starting as captives, the Players are going to be very unhappy and possibly argue with you about what's 'fair'. Explain to them that adventure on the high seas is sometimes rather unfortunate and that the game wouldn't be 'fair' if it didn't offer the opportunity to make up for such a beginning and more. As for any treasure or gear they may have personally carried, tell them that all their possessions would be kept in the prison and thus be an early part of the Adventure to retrieve.

THE BLOODY ANGEL'S BOUNTY



2) A timely interruption

Do not begin this Encounter until the someone has attempted to escape, however successful his tactics may (or may not) have been.

Gunfire! The unmistakable chaos of a town under attack sweeps through the stockade like wildfire. The moonless night glows with the blood-red ire of cannonfire. The eyes of the guards glint under the fiery shadows like stars in a night without an end. Be hell a realm of fire or ice, you're in it, yet the devils are too busy fighting each other to take any notice of the wretches imprisoned here.

The prison colony is under attack by pirates. For the next 10 Rounds, the guards will be much too busy fighting to take little if any notice of the prisoners. Thus, during this time, there is only a 1 in 12 chance that any action anyone makes alerts a group of guards.

3) Governor's house

If the party seeks the governor's house, it requires a Searching Check to be found amidst the chaos. This Check can be re-attempted each Round during the attack (and with a cumulative +1 bonus).

The governor's house rests on a low hill. Only a few guards can be seen, huddled by the walls, as more a defense against debris raining down from the harbor battle than from any living eyes. They clutch their swords like they were crucifixes and the Devil himself was looking for them. As the fires draw closer, it's easier to believe just that.

There are 4 guards here, plus a fifth who is the only one smart enough to truly hide, gaining a surprise attack on all who fail an Intuition Check. He will use this free attack during the 3rd Round of combat. If his allies have the Initiative, he will gain +3 to this attack on the unaware.

The governor is inside. If confronted, he will try to buy his life with a map showing a secretive way under the fort at 'Massbath', the Dutch East India outpost west along the southern coast of the continent (of Hollandia), allowing a small band to

enter undetected and claim great riches. If the map is accepted, it is provided as Handout 1.

Inside this house, the governor keeps a great deal of wealth in the seachest, totaling 5 rolls on Table 81, plus the once-carried wealth of all Player Characters that have been introduced. Furthermore, a successful Search can find all the weapons and equipment of all the Player Characters, including those not yet introduced...

4) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce all Player Characters who have no gold or are not Europeans—slaves, debtors and the like are imprisoned here.

The wharf! You finally made it. The battle has spilled inland, and flames now lick the stockade walls. There are many foreign ships in the bay, their sails rising like a forest of freedom. Closer at hand, dozens of gibbets rise from the wharf, these trees of iron and skeletons inside of them hanging the forgotten fruit of ten yet living men.

The 10 prisoners can be easily freed. Amongst them are the new Player Characters. The others are all NPC Pirates of 1st Level who will gladly help their saviors and become crewmen later.

5) The escape!

However the party escapes the prison, whether by boarding a pirate vessel, stealing one of their own or making for the wilderness, they will come upon the following sight:

As you bid farewell to your hangmen and hellish lives, and Botany Bay becomes a distant, dying glow, like the smoldering embers of a fire, you see a derelict ship laying beached on the hooked end of the sandbar supporting the stone key.

The ship was overlooked by the invaders for their need of speed and stealth. If 20 man-hours are given to righting it and rigging its sails before the tide comes back in 4 hours from now, the ship will prove seaworthy. Its current statistics are given as Handout 2.

THE BLOODY ANGEL'S BOUNTY



PART 2: STORIES OF SHIPS: The party is bound for sea, as they simply cannot survive long in the uncharted deserts of Hollandia. Whether in a ship of their own or under the command of those who failed to sack Botany Bay and fled, the party will come to learn that the ship bearing them was once part of the infamous 'Devil's Fleet'. In order to provide both excitement and clues during their coming to learn this, use the following Encounters at your discretion.

The pirate fleet: If the party boarded a pirate ship in Botany Bay, that attack ultimately failed, but the single vessel departing still has some strength, that of 35 2nd Level men and 12 cannons aboard this English 'barque'. Its Captain, 'Garth Tyson', at this point is paranoid and ready to fight at a moment's notice. Unless challenged, he is sailing under cover of night all the way to Singapore.

Sighting sails: There is currently very little traffic in this remote part of the world, and so even if an 'Encounter' is made randomly, it should simply not be a ship, as both battle or business would disrupt the ebb and flow of the Adventure's pacing.

6) Tales of terror

As the midday sun dries the deck from the wash of last night's rain, you hear a voice from inside the forecandle. It's a faint, almost ghostly voice, speaking as if reading Scripture. The vague bits you can make out above the waves foretell of the ship's doom, of its past in a devil's armada, and how it will never put into port again...

In the forecandle is a drunk crewman who was in the 'Devil's Fleet', aboard this very ship, and he recognizes it. If there are no NPCs aboard, this will be a ghost from that time. Either way, 'Jacob' is a Jewish pirate always spouting Scripture, given that he has Religion Level 2.

If the party did not acquire the map from the governor in Encounter 4, Jacob will have, and will offer it to the party, be they in command or not, for he believes if they plunder 'Massbath', it will be putting into port without putting into port, thus defying and breaking the ship's foretold doom.

7) Mouth of the Devil

Passing through the gundeck, you see something rather strange. All of the cannons, though still bearing their crew-given nicknames, have a new name amongst their ranks. Now, there's not just 'Old Faithful', 'Boarding Bane' 'Silencer' and the rest, there's also 'Gremory'.

If carefully examined (no roll necessary), the etching on this cannon has been made over that of 'Messiah'. A Religion Check knows the following about 'Gremory', reproduced as Handout 3.

'Gremory is a mighty Duke in Hell, governor of six and twenty legions of the damned, whose equal count of eyes see all things past, present and yet to be in matters of hidden treasure and stealing the hearts of maiden women, whose likeness does he wear in the world of the sea, usually wearing a crown likened to that of a duchess'

8) George Porter*

During evening chow, one of the younger crew, a lad of barely sixteen years, looks at you with the eyes of an intelligent man wanting to spill a secret as eagerly as he wants to spill his dinner.

The young man is 'John Porter', the younger brother of 'Commodore David Porter', the famous commander in the Mediterranean. If spoken to, the young Porter will eagerly tell his tale through as much role-playing as you believe the Players will enjoy without growing weary. John speaks ill of his brother's current fight against the corsairs of the Barbary Coast and their nest in Tripoli, and he resents how his once pious self has ended up here, so far from glory. He believes Hollandia damned, fallen to greed. All this adds up to his being more than willing to 'steal back the stolen', so he can return to the Old World and reunite with his dear brother. He will say this to try and stick by the party's side at all times, his statistics provided as Handout 4 if he is accepted. However, in truth, the young John Porter is only waiting for any chance to betray the party for a governmental reward, for he, like his brother, despises pirates.

THE BLOODY ANGEL'S BOUNTY



PART 3: MASSIAH IN MASSBATH: If the party headed west from Botany Bay, they will pass the coastal fort of 'Massbath', and if they try to sneak inside using Handout 1 they will indeed find a secret, sea-level tunnel which leads deep into the land and to the following Encounters, to be played one and all and in the order they are presented.

Fort's strength: The fort flies the flag of the Dutch East India Company and is of Level 5 fortification. If the party does not sneak in, they will have to fight their way in. All the guards are of standard 'Dutch soldier' stock, who stay in groups of 2 or 5 (as in Part 1, simply roll 'even' or 'odd').

The dungeons: The secret tunnel found on the map (of Handout 1) has only one entrance in the main fort, which requires a Searching Check to find, and it leads directly to Encounter 11.

9) The cave

The roar of the sea drowns every sound of yours as surely as the chopping waves drown your feet as you struggle along the headland. There, a dark cave opens into a tunnel, like the throat of Hell, constantly drinking in the sea, thirsty for when it is stained with the blood of mariners. Deep, deep inside, at the very limit of the light, you can see the crude walls of forgotten dungeons.

Swimming here are 7 reef sharks. They will only fight for 3 Rounds, but will attack anew for 2 Rounds if anyone who tries to leave either way.

10) Dead man talking

The rough-hewn walls of these dungeons appear to have been made for temporary holding, and of anything but men—the shallow alcoves with their rusty, barred gates could only hold a human if it stood upright. It seems many that died in such a way, shackled to the stone or simply collapsing, once their treasure was taken and themselves cast into this place to be forgotten. Most of the long dead bones lie unseen beneath the colorless water that fills this tunnel, now waist-deep, and getting deeper the further you go.

A search of this area might find one prisoner who still lives. A trickle of water falls down from a fissure in the ceiling, dribbling on his head, and he catches fish with his teeth and eats them raw. He has been here for two years, and cannot stand or move if freed from his shackles. Being crippled beyond revival save for his jaws, he will tell the party his tale . . . and theirs. Indeed, he will inform them that to continue is to meet 'Gremory', whom he says is a demon and the mouth of the devil, captain of the ship that captures souls, and he who is destined to capture the party as well.

11) Gremory's ghost?

The ceiling rises, the tunnel opening into a small grotto, the stalactites dripping with ancient waters like the blood of souls falling into Dante's Hell. To the right, a rocky shoal rises out of the dark depths, and there, pinned to the cavern wall, is a skeleton wearing an tattered, rotten wedding dress and a rusty though still bejeweled crown.

The crown can be easily taken, and its jewels count 10 for a total value of 1500 gold. However, this complete 'mannequin' is the only thing that all the guards from the fort above fear, and if it is in any way discomplete, they will no longer fear this cavern. Furthermore, if left undisturbed, following the skeleton's eyes will see an arrow carved in the wall pointing straight down to a submerged cave. This tunnel can also be discovered with a normal Searching Check (this roll made with a -2 penalty). The tunnel is 150' in length and totally underwater. It ends in the otherwise unfindable Encounter 12.

12) Vault of the Messiah?

You emerge in a flooded cave, where many old seachests lie stacked upon a pile of rocks. The signs of religious refugees are everywhere, from crosses painted on the walls to many half-melted candles stacked in niches for some heretical but altogether unknown ceremony.

The chests contain a total 10 treasures. When rolling these on Table 81, use the 'others' column, and re-roll any results of '1-2'.

THE BLOODY ANGEL'S BOUNTY



PART 4: ANGEL'S REVENGE: Once the party either exits the fort or simply sails beyond it, the history of their ship being part of the Devil's Fleet will catch up to them, literally. For now they will be ambushed by several pirate vessels who wish to see that former naval ship sunk. Their flagship, the 'Bloody Angel', will lead these 3 barques, each of them manned by 40 1st Level crew and running 10 cannon, with the Angel's Captain alone having an Experience Level of 6, the other two Captains with only a Level of 2. Run the battle normally. Once it is over, the following Encounters are provided to tell the tale of what is found in the flagship of the foe, to be used simply when they are sought out.

13) Revelations of reward

Run this Encounter when someone explores any of the out-of-the-way places aboard the ship, such as the bilge, the ballast container, etc.

In the darkness, amongst the dripping timbers, a pale gleam traces the contours of a face like a crescent moon in the abyss of the night. It turns to look at you, a face you vaguely recognize, as if from a dream. He waits without words, as if unable to speak until you do.

The Character(s) are seeing the ghost of Jacob from Encounter 6, or simply believe they are, like a dream indeed. If Jacob is not dead, he will have died indeed only moments ago, not by any wound, but simply that it 'was his time', and this is thus his departing spirit, with last words for his mates, if they can make an Intuition Check to hear him. He will be singing a song about Botany Bay to himself, but once heard, he will finish and tell the party that there is gold there, or so he has been told, much more than they realize, a bounty to be paid for the 'Bloody Angel'—just as much as that ship wanted the party's ship for revenge, the fort in Botany Bay wants the Angel even more, and is willing to pay handsomely for it. If someone asks to hear the song he was singing, Jacob will repeat it (seemingly gladly), in their own language, thus providing the party with the following song, which is reproduced as Handout 5.

*Farewell to old England forever
Farewell to my rum culls as well
Farewell to the well known Old Bailey
Where I used for to cut such a swell*

*There's the captain as is our commander
There's the bosun and all the ship's crew
There's the first and second class passengers
Knows what we poor convicts go through*

*Taint leaving old England we cares about
Taint cos we mis-spells what we knows
But because all we light fingered gentry
Hops around with a log on our toes*

*These seven long years I've been serving now
And seven long more have to stay
All for bashing a bloke down our alley
And taking his ticker away*

*Oh had I the wings of a turtle dove
I'd soar on my pinions so high
Slap bang to the arms of my Polly love
And in her sweet presence I'd die*

*Now all my pirates and profiteers
Take warning from what I've to say
All is your own if you return there
And open the key of Botany Bay*

14) Madman*

Run this Encounter when someone explores in the ship's gundeck.

You enter the gundeck and find a cannon turned right at you. Standing behind it is a man with a crazed look in his eye—there's simply nothing in those white pools, as if they're looking through you into another world.

The man is 'Gerald McDavert', a refugee from the mutiny of the HMS Bounty 12 years ago. He's now mad, and 'sees spirits'. He's seeing one right now—behind the party. They can easily step aside the cannon's path, but if they dare approach him, he will fire, causing 10-120 Hull Points of Damage to the ship due to its internal destruction down the long axis of the ship. If this man is asked to join the crew, he will accept, and he has Level 3 with languages in both Malaysia and the Orient.

THE BLOODY ANGEL'S BOUNTY



15) Demonic lock

Run this Encounter when someone explores either the hold or powder storage.

Tucked back amongst the other barrels is a large seachest, clearly locked with some sort of trap, set to explode if opened.

The seachest contains 5000 value of gold dust. It cannot be opened with causing it to explode for 20-240 Hull Points of Damage to the vessel (and causing the gold dust to be lost as well). It can be disarmed only by carefully working the lock, which is specially designed—it has 6 tumbler numbers, its code a specific passage in the Bible. One need not know the Bible, but simply state they look for the psalm which tells tale of 'Gremory'. This can also be found by looking for this name in the logbook. Entering this Biblical passage number disarms the trap. The chest can't be opened without it. Solving this puzzle lock is worth 50 Experience Points.

16) Angel of agony

Run this Encounter when someone explores in the captain's cabin.

You open the door to the captain's cabin to find a grisly sight. The corpse of a young woman in a wedding dress sits in the commander's chair, leaned forward, nailed to the thick table and the blood-stained map upon it by iron spikes driven through her back, through her breasts, and with additional, smaller spikes hammered through her wrists to keep her arms from flopping around. A rusty crown like a halo lies in her withered hair.

This was the bride of the captain, who he had murdered to use as a symbol to deflect the demon they feared coming from the cannons of the party's vessel, led by the gunner who used the 'Gremory' named one. If any of the Bloody Angel's crew are interrogated, they can tell the tale of Gremory and their captain, including the story told as Handout 3 and concluding with the information related above. This woman was a Duchess indeed, 'Elizabeth the Duchess of York'.

PART 6: TO HELL WITH OVERTIME: If the party returns to Botany Bay, this Adventure is ready to offer some 'overtime' for piratin'! Indeed, the party will have two choices for getting greater treasure—to attack or bargain, or both.

Bounty for the Angel: To bring the pirate vessel the 'Bloody Angel' to port will earn the party only the reward of pardon for their crimes and escape. If its captain is brought in, he is worth the same. If both are brought in, then the party will gain a bonus of 2000 gold. In any event, the governor is both foolishly loyal to his country, and believing very strongly that the party already gained treasure at his expense (taking what he was to plunder out from under the fort of Massbath).

Hidden treasure: The town is currently weak from the previous attack that helped the party escape it. The normal fortifications of 4 are currently only 2. Under the end of the key (the wharf), there is the town's hidden gold cache, filled with 18000 total value in gold coins, ingots and bullion. Yet it is sealed and can only be accessed by dismantling the wharf, which can only be done if the fortifications are first subdued and silenced.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has left Botany Bay and its bloody legacy behind, there are some things to consider.

Corpse of the Duchess: If the body of Elizabeth of York is taken to any settlement run by an English governor, he will pay up to 7000 gold for her, so she may be shipped home to England and given a proper, Noblewoman's burial.

Return to the party's ship: If any Player Character began this Adventure with a ship, and thus has not been allowed to use it, he can now return to it, as it will conveniently be close by, his crew coming back for him in what they take as a 'blessing'.

MORDECHAI'S REVENGE

Arrrrr, there be stormy seas ahead, matey! Curses be weavin' their dark threads through the lives o' a hundredfold sailors an' tenscore that if yer weighin' the laden souls o' plunderin' pirates. There be some who do right well in trafficin' what can't e'er be counted save by the Almighty, buyin' off their own ill end with the virtues o' less evil men. Properly warned ye be, says I, as dead men do tell tales...

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.

Timeline: This adventure is set in the Indian Ocean in the year 1804. Those Encounters that are marked with an '*' require the game to be played in this era. If your game does not adhere to timelines, do not use these Encounters.

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

The world turns, scholars say, yet they can never tell up from down. Every sailor worth his salt is now heading south, as autumn casts its chilling spell over the ports in your wake. The water is warmer ahead, along the African western coast, in the shallow isles of Zanzibar.

There's a larger gathering of pirates already here than is usual for the entire southern summer remark many. Talk is rife among the reef-towns and sandbar-cities of how piracy is waning, with opportunities for good plunder drying up all over the Indian Ocean and beyond. Most blame both the English and Dutch East India Companies. Yet one could just as easily blame fate—there seems to be a curse over cutthroats and corsairs, a dark pall over pirates everywhere.

For the first time since you've spoken with sailors not of the Caribbean or Mediterranean, all yarns are being woven into tales of terror, curses of supernatural ships and ghost stories of the sea. From the pirate haven of Zanzibar, the compass reads doom in every direction. Yet as the world turns, time burns, and you know you cannot stay here forever...

PART 1: ISLES OF ILL GOTTEN GAIN: A great many tales have begun here, in Zanzibar, and now the party shall get swept up into one. Use the following Encounters at your discretion to build the story and get the group going in the same general direction together—northeast.

Thievery in a den of thieves: Because this entire settlement is populated by pirates, everyone is ever suspicious of everyone else, penalizing all Pilfering Checks by -2. However, on the flip side, any such Check that fails will not be met with guards, but rather by 1 to 4 Pirates—the person being robbed plus 1-3 of his shipmates. Roll a single dice, with the range of '1-9' being just the intended victim, and '10-12' being the extra Pirates respectively.

Rumrunning: This is big business here, and all rum fetches a much higher price than normal, being the favored drink of the 'townsfolk', that of +3 (even better than the Caribbean's +2 from Table 153).

1) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce any Player Characters who are part of an established ship. When reading this narrative aloud, replace 'VESSEL' with that of the group's flagship name.

The shallow drafted isles of Zanzibar welcome you. Putting into the larger cove, the rest of the crew disembarks from the 'VESSEL' and quickly spreads to the smaller isles in search of the best beer and greatest women to be had. "Welcome to the African west coast, ye who sail under a fell black flag". The voice is none too kind. Turning this way and that, you finally see a man as old as time, leaning on a dolphin piling. "There's no loss of darkness about your souls..." he says, then collapses on the wharf, dead.

If the old man is searched, the party may find that he bears a tattoo of the name 'Kali-Runner' on his right forearm, and 'Kali-ghata' on his left, both written in the common speech of India. If the party asks around town and ships, nobody will be familiar with this corpse (or at least, nobody will admit to knowing him).

MORDECHAI'S REVENGE



2) Ambush

Pretend to carefully study the Character Sheets of everyone who is currently in the game, but really just choose 3 at random, with your dice sounding like some sort of important rolls. When reading the following narrative aloud, replace ‘TOM’, ‘DICK’ and ‘HARRY’ with the names of the three victims.

Amidst the daily clamor of the pirate wharf, you see a rather elegant official searching amongst all the men. He’s easy to spot—such fops are never seen in these isles. Finally, he calls out to you and two others. “‘TOM’, ‘DICK’, ‘HARRY’, the governor of Zanzibar bids you come at once to his estate. He is in desperate need of your help. But only you three—this is an important matter of state and its trust is by invitation only”.

If the fop is followed, the governor’s estate is in a state of disrepair, a dilapidated house at best. This is because there is no governor of this town. If the party foolishly follows the fop inside, they will face an ambush of 4 Pirates (which includes the decoy). These men will gain a free Round to attack anyone who fails an Intuition Check (call for this roll only after everyone has stated whether they are going inside or not). If the house is later examined (no roll necessary), it will prove to be an old Dutch mansion over a century abandoned, an early post for the Dutch East India Company. It has already been thoroughly plundered, long ago.

3) Introduction

Ah, what the hell, this Encounter will introduce all Player Characters who are not part of a ship, crew, or other established group.

A stray shot in a game of pistols, stepping on a cat’s tail, two drunks sobering up when they kiss each other—who knows how this bar brawl got started? It rages throughout the spacious tavern before you’re able to escape, and you don’t need to, really. You and a few others seem to be able to be missed by everything, from flying mugs to knots of entangled brawlers. You can just carry on your business and watch the carnage.

All those miraculously being avoided by the brawl are the Player Characters, old and new alike, even if they do not yet know each other, though this would be a perfect opportunity to notice some sort of ‘blessing’ about each other.

If someone wants to join in the brawl, he can easily be swept up into it, like diving into coastal waters roaring against headland, forcing him to win against 1-6 Pirates before he can ‘choose’ to leave the brawl, or, he can always stay in for another swim with a new wave of brawlers...

4) Doom beckons

If the party is having any reluctance or indecision about setting their course northeast to the coast of India, this Encounter should be used to guide them in that direction.

Lanterns flicker in the fathomless dark that fills the islands at night. Fireflies dance amongst the reeds. The faint echo of drunken revelry flows out of the distant camps like the tide of death. In the gloom, a lone priest walks up the bridge toward you. In this man-made road between two islands, surrounded by the shallow sea, he dares draw a sword—a broken sword, and salutes you.

The priest has sought the party out specifically because he feels they are blessed and thusly can accomplish what so many others, he fears, cannot. He wishes to see a secret cult robbed, so that by the winds of fate this ill-gotten gold will slowly find its way back into Christian circles. Of the end for this treasure he has no doubt, and so his only concern is that the cult is raided. To this end, he will provide the party with Handout 6, displaying the clues for unlocking the vault of the ‘Thug’ cult which has a temple in the city of ‘Kali-ghata’. If asked around town or ships, this priest will be said to be a pilgrim who pays for passage among these pirate vessels, but men do not rob him, for pirates are pious men, or at least enough of them are to stay the more vile behavior that would otherwise take place. A successful Search of the town will be able to discover that this priest came from the northeast, from Arabia and before that from India, on a quest to find ‘someone worthy’, as he said.

MORDECHAI'S REVENGE

PART 2: EVIL FATED ADVENTURE: Once the party sets sail, they will run afoul of some all-too-strange events, setting the compass of their fate toward the evil of Mordechai, and to this end you must run both of the following Encounters and in the order that they are presented.

5) Ominous storm

Select a Character at random and then present him with this situation...

As you make your way amongst the waterlogged barrels and wet ropes and dripping stores, your feet splash along the dark deck. It is not at all a depth consistent with rainage. Looking down, you see that the ship is leaking, even as an unearthly storm gathers in the sky above.

The ship is drawing water indeed, and it will sink in 3-14 Rounds unless action is taken. What is necessary to save the ship need only be an act that is detailed below, but no rolls will be required to put it into effect. The drawing of water isn't the danger—it is merely an omen—it's where or in what condition the ship ends up that is important given the impending supernatural storm.

Bailing the ship will get them caught up in a storm of Magnitude 5 which cannot be rounded as its ill winds are already upon them.

Beaching the ship will catch debris from those shores tossed about by the storm and thus cause the same Damage as if sailing through it, but with all results on Table 42 of '0', '1', '4' and '5' not having their normal results, but instead causing the vessel to suffer an additional 10 Hull Points worth of Damage (except this extra damage will not call for additional rolling on Table 42).

Blessing the ship will see it safely through the storm, suffering only 0-30 (normal roll -9) Damage to its Hull Points.

Burning the ship will cause spectral figures to wreathe about the rigging, putting out the fires and saving the ship any and all damage, but at a loss of 3-36 Morale, and if a mutiny results, the new captain will sail for Kali-ghata (and Part 3).

Everything else attempted will only result in a +1 Magnitude to the storm for each failed tactic.

6) The Kali-Runner

At last the eerie storm is beginning to fail. With the return of sunlight, the waves melt into a flat calm, like melting wax beneath the burning eye of heaven. And you see that others have fared a deal worse than yourself. Not long after sunrise, you come upon a foundering ship, laying at an angle, swamped and slowly disappearing beneath the glass-like sea. The crew scrambles about its deck, and despite their condition, they are clearly preparing for battle!

To make out the name on the side of the ship requires an Intuition Check; 'The Undertaker'. This knowledge will strike fear into the party's crew, lowering their Morale by 1-3.

This privateer ship has only 50 Hull Points to stay afloat with, 3 canons to repel boarders, and merely 20 men of 1st Level still alive. Furthermore, it was a rich ship, gaining a +2 bonus to its rolls on Table 81 (freely inform the Players of this, as such ships can be easily spotted by the designs of their hulls and rigging in these times).

The logbook, if examined, will refer to this ship always as the 'Kali-Runner' and never once as 'The Undertaker'. A search of this vessel might find that the plank bearing the ship's name on the hull has burn marks, as if 'Kali-Runner' was the original name and 'The Undertaker' was burned on top of it. Finally, if any time is taken to read the logbook for clues, it will catch fire, burning from the inside-out, as if the pages caught fire with the devil's ink, and once extinguished, all that can be salvaged is a single page, provided as Handout 7 (it will coincidentally be written in any language that the party can read, formerly used on this ship for purposes of rounding their nation's laws).

However, what the party will come to learn at a much later time, is that this ship has been set-up for 'Mordechai'. This demon of the sea was going to arrive soon after this Encounter and claim this ship's treasure, since his curse prevents him from taking plunder from land, or from any ship that is 'alive'. Indeed, all of his prey must be foundering, sinking or swamped, essentially doomed or 'dead'. Having lost this rich prize to the party, he will hereafter be hunting them.

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PART 3: CITY OF SHADOWS: An ill wind will blow the party to the town of 'Kali-ghata', a town 490 leagues northeast of Zanzibar, 24N 66E, whether or not the party heads there by choice. Once they are there, they will find that any ship they try to leave this town on will receive no wind, as if the very skies are against them. This mystery can only be solved by exploring the town and its own mystery. Use the following Encounters at your discretion, guiding the party toward Part 4.

The city: Kali-ghata appears on few (if any) maps of India, at best marked with a warning such as '*Here be devils*'. There is a large, underground cult here, dedicated to the Indian (Hindu) goddess of 'Kali', the force of destruction. All in the city are aware of this cult and do not challenge them.

The cult: Outside of the city, the cultists are given the simple name 'Thugs', but inside the city, they are known as the 'Phansugars', which means the 'stranglers'. This is because the cultists take their victims by sneaking up from behind and strangling them, as their goddess dislikes bloodshed. All their statistics are as follows: DS 6, G 5, MOVE 110', a cutlass and +2 to use it. Each man is Level 1. If they sneak up, and their intended victim fails an Intuition Check, they get 1 Round to strangle him, which is an automatic hit of 5 Base Damage, and if 'killed' by this, merely rendered unconscious.

7) Cultist ambush

The narrow, maze-like streets are lit with colorful lanterns, casting deceptive webs of light about in the shadows. You come upon a beggar, who has wrapped himself in a burned, blood-stained flag of the English Royal Navy. He looks up at you with the wide, sunken eyes of a native who has spent too many years in the nearby desert.

This beggar is planted as a distraction. After 1 Round, a count of Cultists to equal the party will emerge from the surrounding shadows and attack. Everyone must make a normal Intuition Check to avoid their strangulation tactic. All those who were suspecting an ambush by evidence of their actions gain +3 to this roll. After 2 people are dropped by

the Cultists, they will use their next Round to flee into secret passages that cannot be found in time for the party to give pursuit.

8) Introduction*

This Encounter will introduce any Player Characters to the game who are of either Indian or Arabian heritage as well as all those who start the game with at least 30 gold.

Much of this port is an expansive marketplace, a series of tent-filled courts where endless varieties of wares are peddled in the open air. Entering a new yard, you seem to have found a slave court. Many fine stock of many different skins stand in chains under the blazing sun, while equally alien peoples prepare to bid on them.

Amongst the buyers and crowded public are the new Player Characters. The slaves may include (at a Player's option) any Characters that did not meet the qualifications above, but will only avoid the gallows if purchased here and now. Bidding on all such Characters will reach a maximum amongst the NPC Arab and Indian mine owners equal to a PC's total Points from his Brawn, Endurance and Girth Scores. In the end, all who are introduced here should be noted as being separate from the attention of Mordechai, as they did not help take the Kali-Runner out from under him.

9) Bizarre offer

The market is more crowded than usual. Standing under the shade of a potter's canopy, a dark-clad Arab whispers to you. Here in the bazaar, he has a bizarre offer indeed; "Want to buy the soul of a devil?" he asks.

The offer is for a locket, at a price of merely 30 silver (or gold). Once purchased, inside it one will find a scrap of paper, provided as Handout 8. If the party later searches for this strange merchant they will not be able to find any shadow or story about him. All that the other vendors will say is "He must have met phansugars". In truth, he was a spy who **wants** the party to find his temple...

MORDECHAI'S REVENGE

PART 4: TEMPLE OF DOOM: In the center of town, in a ruined mosque, a trapdoor leads into a stairwell and ultimately a secret temple, unable to be found by any other means. If the party finds and dares enter this place, they shall come to the following Encounters. Use them one and all and in the order that they are presented.

10) Secret passage

The dank, narrow passage winds beneath all the tales of the earth, through infernal darkness, and finally into a square chamber. There is a door of stone on the far side, closed but clearly rounded, as if it were made for something other than a man. The floor, however, is littered with all too human bones and skulls.

A search of this room might find several odd protrusions of hewn stone, clearly the triggers for traps—two on the left wall and one on the floor. If these are not found, everyone passing through here must make a Luck Check to avoid stepping on the floor-peg (this roll made with a +5 bonus). Hitting the floor's trigger causes the entrance door to close with a 1' thick round slab of solid stone. Hitting the lower trigger on the wall will cause the floor-peg to drop down and seal the party in (if it hasn't been tripped already) and at the same time cause the walls on either side (where there are no doors) to start sliding in, thus leaving both triggers sliding away into ever deepening holes. Once this process has begun, to reach the higher wall trigger requires one to have a long and slender arm, for a chance in 12 equal to his height in feet (rounded up) but with a -1 penalty for every Brawn Point that he has above the same (feet). Using a sword or other elongated weapon increases one's chance equal to its Weight from Table 29. Note that this peg requires several seconds of being pushed, thus shooting it with any gun creates only a momentary impact and consequently no effect. In addition, one person alone can try to reach this peg each Round. Yet if it is finally reached, hitting the top trigger deactivates the trap and also opens both doors. But if the party is still in the room after 6 Rounds, all inside will be crushed, and then the trap will begin to slowly re-set and re-open itself.

11) Main temple

The tunnel enters into an enormous, underground temple. The high, rough-hewn ceiling is like the midnight sky turned to stone, supported by great arches rising from thick pillars lining the walls. Torches blaze all around, revealing hundreds, no, thousands of gruesome gargoyles carved all over, their eyes filled with flickering candles streaming with centuries of wax tears. At the far end, one statue is larger and more vile than all, that of a humanoid woman with four arms and a massive crown too large for her head made of metallic serpents. The largest two of these descend into her eyes and emerge from her cavernous mouth entwined as a forked tongue. Beneath them, her bottom lip protrudes several feet, with fiery lava spilling between the teeth into a circular well.

This is a temple to 'Kali', the Hindu goddess of destruction, revered by her followers here as a benevolent goddess—the ultimate end to all things. There are 20 Phansugars hiding in the shadows. They will not attack, but only keep the party from leaving if they try—they have orders to see that they proceed deeper into the temple complex.

12) The guardian

Beyond the temple, torches burn within deep and angled alcoves. Soon, their devilish light reveals a figure in the shadows ahead, a ghost—no, it is a living man, a dark-clad Arab, whispering some archaic chant under his deep, but calm, breath.

This is indeed the same merchant the party all met in Encounter 9. He will pose a challenge for each Character to be worthy to pass, indeed to be sure that to see the inner sanctum one is far more eager for the strength of Kali than any other god. The challenges will not be named until accepted, which shall be according to the party's bravery. If he is threatened in any way, the 20 guards from Encounter 11 will be on the party in no time, plus an additional 15 from other (hidden) passages.

The first challenge will be to be blindfolded by the guardian and walk past him into the tunnel. There is, in truth, nothing to harm him there.

MORDECHAI'S REVENGE



The second challenge will be to kill somebody in the party. Feigning death still requires a blow to be made, with its Base Damage the penalty to the guardian's Intuition Check to spot the deception.

The third challenge will be to retrieve and eat before him a 'leg of long pork', but the challenged one will not be allowed to leave the temple. In fact, 'Long pork' is human flesh, so he needs to dismember a person, and obviously nobody in the temple will be willing to do this! Learning or just remembering the term 'long pork' accurately can be done with a Wits Check at a -2 penalty. But even if one actually acquires such a leg, eating it requires an Endurance Check at a -4 penalty.

The following challenges will all be the same, that of willingly taking a blow from the guardian with the most damaging weapon the challenged has on his person. Surviving this blow passes the test.

13) Inner sanctum

A door opens—you didn't feel it in the darkness, it seems to have opened on its own. Light floods a dead-end chamber, a splendorous sanctum with walls, floor and ceiling of bright marble, lighted with hundreds of candles. In the center of all, an aged man sits cross-legged on a pile of cushions, as if in a trance. Thick incense smoke swirls all around him like ghostly tendrils of his goddess.

Play this ancient priest ambiguous of good and evil to keep the Players guessing—is he friend, foe or neither, will listening to him ally the party with good or evil, will ignoring him be wise or foolish? He will be eager to speak to the party, but his tale will only further distort the lines that divide the divine from the doomed. For as he will slowly say, struggling with the language of the Characters present, he believes his goddess, the great Kali, set the party's course-heading here so that they could receive the gifts he has for those worthy to enter. Ships benefiting Kali's temple have been harassed by 'Mordechai', a cursed pirate who now hunts the party. These relics alone can destroy him. They are 'kirsna-ayas', daggers of black, iron-like metal that fell from the sky (leave this more ambiguous than ever in the end, raising questions as to the validity of this cult's beliefs).

PART 5: SEAS OF BLOOD: Now aware of a possible fate for them, the party will see action at sea when they set sail again. Whether there is any truth to the religion of Kali, the party will now be free to sail wherever they will. Use the following Encounters one and all and in the order that they are presented, but only when a natural '1' is rolled on Table 156—the party must sail day-by-day, not using Tables 157, 158 or 159 at all, for their fate is now being shadowed by a ship sailing from an unknown sea in hell...

14) Fierce storm

A storm of Magnitude 8 will come upon the party. If any mention has been made amongst the Players (their discussions mimic the casual talk engaged in by their Characters) of a ghost ship or the like, all the crew will protest rounding the storm, fearing it has been summoned by their pursuer in order to trick them into open seas by rounding it—to round it anyway will cost them -30 Morale.

15) Purification by poison

One of the crew is leaning over the side heaving his guts out...literally. Blood and entrails spill down portside! He shivers as if being shaken by a host of unseen devils.

The NPC crewman is already dead. Preferring to die rather than be tricked and trapped into Hell by a devil ship, he poisoned his water rations, and many of the others. A Medicine Skill Check can tell how the man died. Once this is known, all the rest of the ship's coops can be examined safely. If they are not, each day 0-6 (a single roll -6) crew will die. In all, half the ship's provisions of both water and food are incurably poisoned.

16) The Jolly Badger*

The party will cross paths with an aspiring English pirate-hunter. This sloop is manned by 80 1st Level men, runs 8 cannons, and will fight the party no matter their odds, being filled with religious zeal. This sloop, the 'Jolly Badger', has been modified with extra armor, thus having 120 Hull Points.

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17) The Undertaker

The sunset finds the shadow of your ship casting a spectral shape with its wake, as the blood-red sun flickers on the waves like a reflection of the ship your spirits sail in the netherworld. Once the light is lost, your phantom follower disappears. However, you can still hear the creaking of the other-worldly rigging and the chop of its bow as it cuts through Hellish, unseen oceans beyond the living world. Then, you **can** see it—another ship follows you, not any wraith but a vessel of true timber and mortal sailors, though they fly a flag as black as midnight.

This ship's name can be easily made out, that of 'The Undertaker'. It is a frigate of 40 1st Level crew running 26 cannons. This relatively small and unworthy crew to such a vessel will appear to be the result of plague—these men are the weakened survivors of some unknown illness, as is clearly visible in their skin, eyes, etc. However, play this as dramatically as possible, as if it is the climax of the Adventure, the 'ghost ship' merely a plague ship embellished by primitive superstition...

PART 6: RACE WITH THE UNDERTAKER: A legend is strong like the sea, its true power usually unseen but unstoppable when it comes to consume you. Once the party defeats 'The Undertaker', their true enemy will appear. The accursed Mordechai, following them for some time, already plundered that ship of its hope, and merely waited for the party to make themselves known to it, the 'plague' the effects of having been ravaged by this devil, its crew those chosen to be used as bait. Now that they have, begin the true climax of this Adventure, using the following Encounters one and all and in the order that they are presented, as the party must break the curse of Mordechai before he reaches the reef at his year's end.

Captain Gremory Mordechai: This devil was once a Royal Naval officer, part of the infamous Devil's Fleet, who in the afterlife cannot give up pressing men into service and attacking the enemies of his (long dead) queen. An accursed ghost now, he treasures bodies. Each victim of his he considers

'crew' or 'cargo' depending on their living state. Once a year he ventures to a reef and casts his new recruits into a blow-hole, which entraps their souls, their bodies to later rise from the reef as zombies of the deep, doomed to obey their Captain Mordechai for eternity.

The Undertaker: Once someone signs the book on Mordechai's ship, 'The Undertaker', he is bound to its curse. This ship, a frigate of 26 cannons, is as undead as its captain—it cannot be damaged at all, except by the 'kirsna-ayas' knives of Encounter 13, and then only if he has not yet seen that particular one. When the party comes aboard, it will be but a fortnight before the annual arrival at Dead Man's Reef, the anniversary of Mordechai's mortal death. During this time, the party will have to fight for a way to escape the curse—leaving the ship without the captain's leave causes one to age by 1-6 years every sunset, and its Ghouls cannot leave it at all.

18) The undertaker

Run this Encounter immediately after the ending of Encounter 17 as the party plunders The Undertaker.

The Undertaker, despite its damage, denies a fate enforced by nature. It will not sink. Yet that is a trifle compared to the rape of all natural law that is now committed by its crew. For they rise up, and in greater numbers than before, zombies of a dark, undersea realm, wearing skin as hard as the coral and with eyes as dark as the abyss. Of all these ghouls, the captain appears the worst, some crustacean devil who looks like he was chiseled out of a reef.

Mordechai and his crew of Ghouls (3 of them to each Character) have always been here. Angered by the party's taking of the Kali-Runner from his dark designs, Mordechai waited for them to come to this ship, to **see** what cursed weapons they might use against him, so only those sable daggers of Encounter 13 not used in Encounter 17 will still be able to do him harm. None-the-less, he will not wish to fight, but offer each individual a choice: sign his book and thus join his crew, or be sent 'to the depths' (attacked by 3 of his crew).

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19) Foundering ship

The churning waves roll like black fire about the broken hull of a ship. But where the ocean ends and the smoke begins upon this foundering vessel is difficult to tell. The flotsam of broken boards and bodies tells the tale of an explosion.

The party will all be ordered by Mordechai to take a longboat to this wreck and investigate, for he and his undead crew cannot leave the decks of the Undertaker. The foundering ship will sink after 8 Rounds. Each Round after the 4th will induce a cumulative -1 penalty to all physically related rolls for those sliding about the sinking ship. To move anywhere on the ship requires an Agility Check. All the ship's 4 treasures are hidden in the brig.

20) Tales of Gremory

Sitting around on the ill-kept decks, with rigging as crusty and all the wood as worm-ridden as its crew of corpses, you are none-the-less unnerved this time as much as the first to overhear these dead men speak. Several of them are reminiscing about their mortal lives.

If the party makes it known that they want to listen, the crew will stop speaking, fearing anything to reach the ears of Mordechai. But if the party is to listen discretely, they can hear a good deal with an Intuition Check, provided below (and reproduced as Handout 9 if a Wits Check can recall it).

"Gremory, truth be told, he's a might'ye Duke in Hell, says the Good Book. Gov'ner o' six an' a count o' twenty legions o' the damned. What him, he sees through the curtain o' time like a captain knows the weather from charts. Must pay ta read the Lord's unabridged Bible, that is, if ye consider damnation a fair price ta pay fer such thievery. A price we all are'ta pay. Think the captain still has the crown o' the duchess? Or is the captain just as much a mockery ta sight as ta soul? Ah, me tale? I did no more wrong'n ta seek gold in Hollandia. Escaped Botany I did, then ran a cannon. Was me captain's use o' that devil's name what drew this ship—our curse—ta us. Somethin' always calls 'im'.

21) Gambling for souls

The voyage continues through the night, when all the sails fill with wind from the outer darkness, unhindered by clouds or light. Dawn finds your living bones working, all the while watching the ghoulish crew playing cards down below, in the shadows of the hold. Dealt on a barrel-head, the crustacean zombies glare at the cards longingly, but nobody dares to pick them up or even touch them. Finally, one of them offers a mumble, a clue which echoes off the stone-like faces of the others, weathering their brows with an agreement; "God, 'e don't play wih' dice, do he? Ahhh, but the evil, e'er he tries ta best 'im wih' cards e'ry year, don't he?"

If the crew are asked about this, they will be eager to explain. The cards belong to the captain, and anyone who dares pick them up in effect challenges Mordechai, who always sets stakes that make a man's soul shiver in fear of losing. By the ship's articles (in the signed book), no gambling is allowed, save for this.

Should someone challenge Mordechai, he will accept, saying "I only gamble when someone bets what he cares most about—it's the only way to know when he's bluffing". Thus, the challenger is dared to set the stakes, and if it is something truly more important to him than his life, as believable through his role-playing thus far in the Character's career, Mordechai will accept. If not, the stakes are always the same for lack of one's conviction—in violation of the ship's articles, indeed to 'gamble' by way of bluffing what matters most to the man, he forfeits his right to name the stakes and thusly must risk his soul instead—to lose one's soul is to be consigned to Dead Man's Reef without prayer for one's redemption when the Undertaker arrives there (now only a few days off).

The only thing Mordechai will risk is that of 'treasure'. To him, treasure is bodies, so to win a game is to win a corpse that has long since been lost to Dead Man's Reef. If dared to wager a soul, he will accept, knowing the party is not bound to him anyway, and that he himself is not a man but a demon in disguise, thus having no soul to risk (as he will say, "I gamble all spirit within me").

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The gambling is played out normally. If one wins his own soul, he has truly gained nothing, for this card game is how Mordechai tricks the living into ultimately joining his crew—when they are cast into Dead Man's Reef, they will just die and can escape to heaven by prayer, unless they have knowingly given up that divine right, and thus the crew is made up all of losers in this card game. The entire crew is in on this trick, for they all welcome new crew members helping them shoulder the burden of manning a cursed ship for eternity, in addition to simply enjoying a cruel jest at the expense of a living man's precious soul, of which they are infinitely jealous.

Still, make a note of how many 'bodies' one gains from his gambling...

22) Carving cannons

Two days out from your destination, you are all called to the gundeck. There, Mordechai declares "When we reach Dead Man's Reef for the year's execution, we need properly possessed guns to be snuffing that many candles". He goes on to tell you each to carve a name into a single cannon, thus making it your own.

If anyone names their cannon 'Gremory', this shall give him a claim to captaincy, and thereby force Mordechai to challenge him to a one-on-one duel for it. If Mordechai wins, he will spare that individual, since he still secretly desires his soul.

23) Mordechai's secret

One day from your destination, Mordechai spends the entire voyage, from sunrise to sunset, on the foredeck, unmoving. More haggard and colorless than usual, the captain's crusty skin indeed looks like stone, a relic raised from a sunken galleon. Finally, as the sun begins to founder, the captain turns and glides into the aft-cabin as if for sleep.

Should anyone successfully sneak into the aft-cabin, they will see Mordechai laying down, but in an unnatural position, as if murdered. There is no light, and if any is created, Mordechai will awake, as he also will after 3 Rounds regardless. Yet for

the time being, one can search through the cabin undisturbed. Hidden in an old hat is a parchment, reading as follows and reproduced as Handout 10.

'Greetings, my lady. How are you feeling this fine day? This fine life? The sun sets like bloody bodies losing the true treasure of their life, doesn't it? Light and life lost all at once. You who have always served us so well know it now yourself, as I know in turn, seeing things through your eyes. If I had only found you sooner you might have found me repelled by your cleverly named cannons. Play not dice with the devil. Nor chance that God will be listening to your plea. He only hears those that are in deepest need. Not unlike you now, my lady? What God allows one to sink into such a darkness that he must rely on one so charitable? Is that a truly generous God or a pirate in heaven? Enjoy our marriage in flesh. By my lust and your ability to sate it we'll consummate every day, every hour, every heartbeat. The sound of battle is quiet when you are sinking into darkness. In time, you will be equally silent and unseen. The sea shall be your voice and your clothing. You cannot deny me any longer. My name you choose! My name you shall wear! Your choice was made when you went out on account, clothed with my name to hide the sins of your past. Each year, on our anniversary, come back to where we became one and purchase newer clothes for us. We shall consummate with the sea. We shall remain invisible to pain and loss. The Undertaker will keep us from Death's embrace'.

This is a letter written by Mordechai's own hand. In life, the captain of the Undertaker was a woman, a piratess who took the fictitious name of 'Gremory' when she began her career, both to use fear of this devil to her advantage and to hide her past life from any reprisal. Yet this name was as a summons to the demon who owns it. Thusly, when Mordechai lay dying amidst a shipboard battle, she was vulnerable to the demon's offer to possess her body and stay Death until Judgment Day. Fearing to answer for her sins, she accepted, and the devil within her took over. She often writes such letters as the one currently in her cabin, writing to herself in a way, the devil mocking, the doomed hoping, hoping that it will clue in someone to her fate...

MORDECHAI'S REVENGE

24) Dead Man's Reef

The day has come at last. The Undertaker makes its way through a maze of reefs, until dropping anchor in the middle of them. The crew prepares a plank clearly for you to walk, extending above a shallow area, in whose depths you can see the dark well of a blow-hole. Drowned bones lie all about it, their skulls looking up with anticipation of who shall join them in their watery grave. All over the parts of the reef that lie above water a great many more skeletons can be seen, bleached bones and rusty weapons burning under the sun. As the crew gathers for the spectacle, Mordechai bitterly says "Fear not, my children. The sounds of the sea and all angels fighting will grow quiet as you sink into the darkness. Now, form a line and decide for yourselves who'll be first..."

The crew will proceed to push the party into the blow-hole one-at-a-time. Once cast in, there is no way to physically escape this pit of tidal wrath, as it is too deep and its suction too strong, and all its 'blows' not of sufficient force to lift any body. Instead, one can pray, needing a total of 7 on one dice roll, modified by the following factors.

Prayers

Modifier	Aspect of the Character
+3	Priest Class
+2	Is of royal blood
+1	Each Skill Level with Religion
+1	Has any title of nobility
-1	Scourge or Rogue Class
-3	Currently has property stolen from any other Player Character

If a prayer is answered, the result will always be the same—the corpses on the coral reef will all rise and help, with some hauling the victims out of the blow-hole, and others gathering weapons for them to fight with. If anybody 'won treasure' by gambling earlier with Mordechai, each body that he won he can command at will, requiring no prayer roll, and if asked to 'help' with specific instruction they will operate the same as described above. All these dead men, in any event, are Skeletons, and there are 11 of them.

If anybody manages to escape the fate of the blow-hole, Mordechai and his crew will storm the reef. Here and here alone can they leave the ship, but they can also be destroyed the same as any living man. While the 13 crew are all Ghouls, the captain himself has the following statistics:

Mordechai alone remains invulnerable to everyone whose soul he rightfully owns, indeed anyone who did not free himself during the voyage. Thusly, Mordechai set up the card game earlier as a means of tempting people into lowering their chances of resisting him here—they were not then owned by him, but by losing at cards, they lost their ability to hinder him at the end (the reef is thus littered with the bones of losers in the card game). Still, the 'kirsna-ayas' knives of Kali, if not yet seen by Mordechai, can always hinder him.

If Mordechai is killed, all those Ghouls in his service will be set free and the Adventure will be over—Mordechai will not come back.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has left Dead Man's Reef behind, there are some things to consider.

A demon defeated: If Mordechai was killed, soon after the party leaves the area, they will be visited by a woman's spirit. She will name herself proudly as 'Lady Luvia Mordechai', and tell her tale as it is explained on Page 18. Now freed of the demon who has so long possessed her, she feels that she has had her revenge upon it, and will present to the party, her saviors, a golden cutlass. This sword gives its user +3 to Attack Rolls and Damage. She will add that it is meant to 'pierce the heart of the dragon', referring to Adventure #3 in this booklet.

Treasure of The Undertaker: The bodies stacked on the reef and in the hold of Mordechai's vessel can prove to be treasure indeed. If their owner is dead, and all these souls thus freed, they will each give the party their personal keepsake, totaling 30 rolls on Table 81 using the 'others' column.

The kirsna-ayas: Once Mordechai is killed, all such knives acquire a Base Damage of 5 instead of 3.

QUEEN OF THE CRIMSON COAST



Welcome, matey, ta the legend'ry China Sea, lands o' golden men an' seas o' the dragon! Here ya be on yer own, beyond maps, beyond e'en me own senses. There be strange waters awaitin' ye...

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.

Timeline: This adventure is set in the Orient in the year 1809. The Encounters that is marked with an '*' requires the game to be played in this era. If your game does not adhere to timelines, do not use this Encounter.

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

The South China Sea. Land of golden men, sea of dragons, the end of the world, where histories and legends are one. Here, the mighty empires of Europe and all that gold can buy and bribe are the lesser powers, struggling to spread their ways to the edge of the map, as if they could tax the gods themselves. And, it appears, some of those gods have come to claim taxes themselves.

Trade has replaced war, currency has replaced patriotism and pirates have replaced sailors in the seas at the world's end, squandering their bloody gold in havens from the far flung Goto Islands to the brothels of Singapore. And yet while most wayfaring seamen are jovial or just drunk, there are some whose growing legacy strikes fear into the most fanatical corsairs of the Mediterranean or the most brutal brethren of the Caribbean. In seas once named for the golden glow of a rising or setting sun, piracy has stained the waters red with souls spilled by fleets so vast that they are empires unto themselves.

Greatest of these is 'Hsi Kai', the 'Queen of the Crimson Coast', named for the bloody wake she leaves wherever she goes. Akin to the rulers on land, this empress is like a deity among men, controlling traffic, politics, even, seemingly, the very designs of destiny. You can only wait and wonder what this legacy has in store for you.

PART 1: THE ALLIANCE: This tale shall start in the pirate haven of Singapore. While here, give the party time to indulge themselves a little, only moving the story when necessary to keep its pace from being mired in boredom. To help this along, use the following Encounters as needed but in the order they are presented.

1) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce all Player Characters that are not part of any crew or established ship.

Singapore is a rocking, rollicking town, where all pleasures can be indulged for the simplest of all European coins. Each day you wait for a chance at adventure, a ship. Today while you wait, the wharf is busy with the typical band of cutthroats playing a game of 'drink to hogs'. Whores stand on the steps of a crumbling Mission, while men pass out and tumble down the mountainous stair, adding to the pile of pirates sleeping with swine at the bottom. Every new casualty gets applause and the same drunken verse:

*Drink ta hogs, yer hearty grog,
e'er do well ta blunt fierce flogs*

To play, one must buy a bottle of grog from the captain at the base of the steps for but 1 gold. It is crude swill at best. But if one can down it in one swig, requiring an Endurance Check, he gets to take one whore of his choosing for the rest of the night. But if he fails, he passes out like the others, and will be robbed at the day's end. Each whore taken is worth 1-12 Experience Points.

2) Introduction

This Encounter will introduce all Player Characters who are already part of an established ship's crew.

Singapore always has plenty of room for vessels from all the seven seas. As you make your way down the wharf, you see several games ongoing, and plenty of pirates and prostitutes. There's also a sailor offering to sell a double-barreled cannon.

QUEEN OF THE CRIMSON COAST



The cannon costs 400 gold, but uses the same salvos as normal ship guns. If part of any vessel's arsenal, it will add +1 to their rolls on Table 43, but also cost them -1 to rolls on Table 44 as it is prone to backfiring (ships just aren't fit or rigged well enough to withstand its recoil).

3) A fateful meeting

Have each and every Character individually sought out by Chinamen and asked to come to a meeting with the town's temporary council. Play out all the gathering of the Characters in order to maximize a sense of importance. Those who agree to go will find the following scene.

You enter a lavish, gilded room such as only the wealth of a thousand-year dynasty could create. There, surrounded by guards, the powerful ruling elite of China share a table with men from both England and Portugal. They bid you sit down, to join them, for indeed to do so is to accept their as yet unspoken task "As well as the payment of a thousand golden coins apiece upon its success by month's end" one Englishman adds.

The council will wait to explain the task until all the Characters have either accepted or left the room. Then, they will relate the following, shifting the tale between them one paragraph at a time.

"The curse of a thousand lifetimes all be upon she who is called the Queen of the Crimson Coast. Hsi Kai she once was. Plucked from nothing more than a brothel by the pirate Ching Yih, she was to become his concubine, then his wife, and finally to be his successor.

In a few short years, Kai organized a pirating empire the likes of which have never before been seen. Fifty thousand men at least and a thousand ships to her name say those she allows to leave alive, and though we doubt not this truth, there is to Kai the profit of fear to be gained for escaping slaves. She rules with an iron hand, terrorizes trade on land and sea alike, attack coastal towns, and is able to defeat every naval force sent to defeat her, from ours and other nations.

She is simply too powerful. We cannot master her by arms.

Now, it is said that Kai's one weakness, like all her ilk, is superstition. Therefor my plan is the way of the Japanese Ninja, to use guile, cunning, and fear as weapons. I ask you to go far inland, upriver, to ancient ruins whose tales have haunted Kai's mind since childhood. There, retrieve for us its treasure. It is said to be an artifact that will set ablaze the mind of Kai and her sailors with fear. With their own weapons of fear we will win.

Of this artifact I cannot speak clearly. Nobody ventures up that river. They have not for thousands of years. None truly know who built those ruins or when. All that is known is the legend that Kai fears, that this treasure anyone will know when it speaks back to him".

PART 2: THE BLACK RIVER: The mouth of the river leading to the lost city is only 3 days to the west by ship, and passage will be provided by the council. Once there, however, the party will be left to a longboat, as the river is too shallow for any vessel of Value 4 or higher (if the party came by the council's ship it is Value 5). So begins an upriver journey of 9 leagues with no modifiers. On this mysterious route, run the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

Myths of the river: If the party seeks rumor of the river, they can find 2 of the following stories. This roll will gain a +1 bonus for every Character that is of either Indian or Chinese bloodlines. Should the second result duplicate the first, it should be re-rolled until it does not.

Rumors

Roll	Rumor about the haunted river valley
10-12	Those who watch the river were men, but are trapped in the forms of beasts, as a punishment for crimes in past lives
7-9	The river is cursed, turning all who taste of it into no better than beasts
4-6	The people of that city were once gods but they fell from grace
1-3	Those who look upon those ruins are to become blind to the daylight forever more

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The river water: The water of the river is accursed and causes madness. Merely touching it calls for a Wits Check, with failure losing 1 Point from that of a random Ability ('1' is Luck, '8' Brawn, and '9-12' no loss at all). To drink it and subsequently fail this Check is to lose 1 Point from **all** Ability Scores. If any Score drops to 0 in this manner, the victim goes insane and reverts to the most primal instincts, effectively becoming a beast.

4) Mouth of the river

The mouth of the river is a wide, shallow reef, far from shipping lanes. The jungle crowds into the hills and is quickly lost in the morning mist. Here, where the dark river spills into the sea, an old ship lies rotting in the shallows.

A successful search of the rotting ship will be able to discover writing carved in the door of the aft-cabin, which has fallen from its hinges and lies face-down on the deck. Written in English, it reads as follows, and is reproduced as Handout 11.

'The river is darkness. Even black people shun this road. We chased a Spanish ship here, and it fled this way. We anchored here, and days later, that same ship came floating back down the dark waters, its decks blood-stained and deserted. The cargo was intact, but the crew had vanished into silence and mystery. This ship we left here, along with this warning to all living souls'

5) Shadows and silence

Dark, murky waters slither past your boat as you make your way sluggishly against the silent but strong current. No sound or movement gives you any sense of your surroundings—it is a jungle in illusion only—no snakes, no four-legged beasts or birds as you would expect. But, as the day starts to fail, pale gray light snows the sandbanks, and the tall reeds create bars of shadow, like cages for the silhouettes of shadowy figures that now begin to form amongst the twisted trees. They're not just illusions—you hear mysterious rustlings, and see the gleam of grim eyes, held at bay by naught but fear, or perhaps the river itself.

Watching the party are the Skeletons of many different pirates from many different eras. They all met their end here, either by drinking of the dark river too much, or drowning in death in the ruined city ahead. They cannot touch the river, but 3 will attack each person who sets foot upon the shore.

6) The devil's choice

Up ahead, the river forks. Several large, blackish stones rise from the dark waters, like the ruined foundations of lost towers. It is clearly far more difficult to steer safely through them into the left channel than into the right.

The party must choose their route. To take the left-hand river requires the craft's pilot to make an Intuition Check to avoid the rocks. If failed, his craft will suffer 1-12 Damage for every Value that it has. If it is a longboat, it will not be damaged, but merely stuck on the rocks, requiring it be set free somehow (consider the river water). The right-hand river simply adds 6 leagues to reach the city.

7) Arriving at the lost city

The river is becoming ever more shallow as you continue. Sandbars are creeping closer and reeds are getting thicker. Yet just as your craft bumps along the bottom, you come to a crumbling stone wharf, leading into the lost city. It is not quite what any man of a sane mind would expect. It's like something out of a dream, or a forgotten era in mankind's distant past, an age and architecture from which all else grew, at once both familiar and alien. This ghost of a city is built with great megaliths leaning against each other, weatherworn and weary of the secrets they've kept for ages. Weeds and rank river grass grow between stones of broken piers and shattered streets. All around, the jungle creeps in, choking courts and spacious plazas, masking fallen columns and covering the crumbling pyramids with poisonous green.

A search of the wharf may find an inscription of Spanish on one of obelisks closest to the river. Its translation is provided below. If no Character can read it, provide the Players with Handout 12.

QUEEN OF THE CRIMSON COAST

'The chest contains the face of the false god. The tower cradles the chest. The devil lives inside the chest. The river is the blood of the devil'

PART 3: THE LOST CITY: This ruin is not of any known civilization, and resembles archetypes so much that it could be the genesis of anywhere, or anyone. This coupled with its deceptively large size—hidden by the jungle—makes it difficult and bewildering to explore. Therefore, what the party is to find by exploring these ruins is in the following Encounters, to be played one and all and in the order they are presented, but each one can only be reached by making a successful Searching Check, which can be attempted by each Player Character three times each day.

Death: Should someone die inside the city, all his sins shall be judged, and his Notoriety Level shall be the chance in 12 that his spirit joins the dark figures in Encounter 5—these Skeletons will swell the normal numbers attacking the party if they are to make their way back by land, with the former party members attacking random foes each Round.

Terrified crew: Not a single NPC can be convinced to go ashore here—they'd rather cut their throats than go into this haunted city.

8) Plaza of the pool

Venturing through the maze of crumbling walls and obelisks, the jungle closes in behind you. As sight of the river disappears, you come to a very spacious court with walls stained green, but not by growth or grime. Rather, the ten foot barrier of this circular plaza seems to be sheathed in a glass or emerald-like surface. In the center of the yard is a pool of vibrant, greenish liquid.

The pool is the source of the river's darkness, and has the same effects, but effecting Scores by a loss of 3 instead of 1. However, if blessed, it will negate the dark effects of the river for 1-3 days.

If the party left their vessel only with NPCs, they'll be massacred by spirits from Encounter 5. In any event, all the lost crew's crafts will be set adrift down the river, out of the party's reach.

9) Echoes of the Old Ones

You have found a secluded yard, small and yet an obvious place of nobility and power. The dull statues would not tell this tale, nor would all the religious writing scrawled along the walls. It is a throne upon a raised dais that evokes this sense of majesty. Rising above the thick growth on the ground, and free of the vines snaking down the rest of the sculpture here, this stone seat beckons to your spirit of freedom and adventure . . .

Anyone who presents a golden weapon stands a chance in 12 equal to its Burden that a ghost appears in the throne, tells his tale, and disappears;

"I see the sun on the blades of men yet once more. These weapons the doomed ones alone fear. The water spoiled their souls. Throughout centuries, the current of the dark flow dragged our race into the depths of sin. They reverted to beasts. Is there ought else a people can go once they reach their pinnacle? The highest achievement still stands, yet its creators do not. The mask could only be worn by one at a time. Greed was the swift undercurrent of the river that was tainted with the first drop of jealous blood. I saw the last fall, the greediest, the most vile—he guards his treasure well. Beware . . ."

10) Treasure of the city

Atop the highest point of the city, a steep, step-pyramid, you find an empty court. Therein rests a chest wrought of black stone. Deep marks like swirling letters are carved all over it, but they're filled with blood stains so thick that the rains of ten thousand years have not washed them away.

The chest is filled with 8 vipers whose poison is of level 5. Within their jungle-like coils is a head-sized object wrapped in layered cloth. If it is retrieved and unwrapped, it is a golden mask from Japan, representing the 'Dogu' (gods), as any man of the Orient can tell with a Wits Check. If that Check is a natural '12', he will also know of the Dogu being deities who 'rode the waves before the oceans drank Atlantis'. It is worth only 3500 gold. Upon leaving, distant laughter echoes in the jungle.

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PART 4: WAITING FOR THE DEVIL: Once the party returns with the golden mask, the council will pay them as promised, and then ask if they're willing to 'go to the end'. This means to join the fleet going to meet Hsi Kai for 'truce negotiations' in neutral waters near Taiwan. If everybody in the party declines, then the Adventure is over. Yet if anyone accepts, they will be off on an uneventful voyage to Yonaguni Island (merely 30 leagues east of Taiwan at the coordinates of 25N 123E). Once there, they and others will wait for the fleets to come together. Yet during this time, a few things will occur. Use both of the following Encounters at your discretion to 'pass the time'.

11) Idle hands and useful tools of devils

Many European and Chinese ships have formed a floating city, with barques, mariners and junks all bound by bridges of rope and hope. The peoples of so many different islands, nations and beliefs merge both chaotically and seamlessly, much like the ocean waves surrounding them. Talk amongst the ever increasing crew turns towards dark and superstitious stories, how the Queen's fleet owes most of its ships and strength to the old Devil's Fleet, that it's united by some other-worldly evil.

Many different things can happen here, so let the party role-play away, bearing in mind the true rewards of their revelry.

Gambling is forbidden for money, but it can still be done for fun. If a Captain is challenged by one's own initiative, and beaten, he will find new respect for the Character, and reward him with his 'dragon', a medallion bearing his Chinese crest.

Rumors of the Queen herself can be heard by all. Once this talk has begun, what the party learns will be summarized by a single roll.

Rumors

Roll	Rumor about the Queen
10-12	If the Queen's fleet is broken, the devil will demand payment for his assistance
6-9	The power which binds her Devil's Fleet is also the power its Queen fears most
1-5	The Queen is immortal, the devil of her fleet's historical namesake

12) Stone ghosts of the deep

As the fleet gathers like a strange flotsam from a storm, weary eyes and drunken stares wander to the nearby island, where ancient ruins stand in defiance of storms both from the sea and of time itself. The crew gets to talking about them, and many speak of a lost temple submerged beneath your very ship! A silence follows, with the hard, rough rocking of the sea making the very stable, seemingly impregnable island appealing somehow, even if it is the burial ground of ghosts twenty thousand years asleep in their stone graves.

The ruins are not very deep here, as the local pirates can freely inform the party, from 20' to the top of them to 80' at their lowest point. Making a Searching Check underwater will find a large stone chest, inside of which are treasures equaling 8 rolls on Table 81 using the 'others' column. However, each Round underwater has a cumulative 1 in 12 chance that a 'tropical shark' attacks. If killed, its blood will attract 5 more after 3 Rounds. All these sharks will be too deep to be hit by any weapons from the surface. Furthermore, rules for fighting in water should apply to humans (but not to the pale, ghostly sharks), with a penalty of -4 instead of -2 due to the strong currents here.

Should the party explore the ruins on the land, they will find two separate tombs roughly hewn in the rock. Both have a different tale to tell, as the writing on their doors say, which can be translated by locals on the ships.

Onino Sechin translates to 'the devil's toilet'. In this tomb is a deep pit that descends straight down 110' into a lateral tunnel running out into a cave with a pool, which leads in turn out into the ruins not far from the treasure box (thus increasing one's Searching Check by a +2 bonus).

Onino Manaita translates to 'devil's chopping board'. In this tomb is a barren, stone slab like an altar. If anyone lays anything on it, that object or person will after a few moments be cut in half by an unseen blade. People stand a chance in 12 for each Ability Score they have that is **below** 5 of being spared out of respect for their courage—this will forever give one a +1 bonus to Slow Death rolls. This can only happen once for each person.

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PART 5: BATTLE WITH THE DEVIL: The clouds have gathered and the storm will now break with the arrival of Hsi Kai's 'Crimson Fleet'. This will be more than just an epic battle. Tell the tale of the heroes in this war at sea through the three Encounters to follow, used one and all and in the order they are presented.

The allied fleet: When battle commences, the party will each command a ship, and if not their own, they will have one of their choice, its maximum Value equal to one's Notoriety Level, and crewed by 20-240 Levels of men with 2-24 cannons.

The Crimson Fleet: When battle commences, the Queen will have one junk to match each ship of the party's fleet, each one crewed by 100 1st Level Chinamen and running 10 cannons, but the Queen herself will remain elusive, unable to be found in the chaos except by the one who wears the golden mask of the Dogu **and** a Searching Check, which can be attempted once each Mass Melee round.

13) Bartering for the damned

Run this Encounter before any naval battle begins.

The allied council, China, England and Portugal, each have a ship to match one of the three most intimidating vessels of the Crimson Queen. They all meet amidst a floating forest of masts, sails and thousands of pirates from the world over. In haste, formalities are exchanged and countered by curses, and negotiations begin. Looking out over the Queen's flotilla, it's clear that she has all the council's fleet outnumbered three to one. Clearer still is that the council isn't bartering for peace, but for time, if minutes only. Haggling turns to stalling, and Hsi Kai, even from this distance, is visibly getting impatient.

The council is simply trying to give the party time to act—should any one of them put on the golden mask, go to Encounter 14. However, if 5 Rounds pass without this happening, the Queen of the Crimson Coast will signal the attack, but with many times as large a fleet as listed above, indeed 3 ships to each 1 of the party!

14) Burning a floating forest

Run this Encounter when the golden mask is worn.

A thick fog rises upon the surface of the ocean and all goes quiet. The low, rhythmic beat of a distant war drums echoes like the devil's heart in the depths of the sea. Finally, the mists catch in spectral sails, giving shape to these phantoms, as an armada of ghostly ships close on the fleet of the Crimson Queen. Her men turn to their own swords or dive into the waves and are quickly lost. Yet the spectral ships never fire a shot. The fear of them alone is enough to even the odds of the battle to a man. With their own weapons are they worsted. Finally, the spectral armada is finished, and forms a circle, enclosing all living vessels to await the victor. Hsi Kai, seen for but a moment, has the look of a trapped animal, and as the sun sets, she rises, and commands attack!

The battle will continue until the party defeats all their one-on-one vessels or Hsi Kai is herself defeated. In the background of the party's vessels, hundreds of other ships will do battle as well, but there is no need to roll for all of those—the stars are aligned to focus on the party, and their efforts shall determine the victor this crimson day.

15) The end or the beginning?

Run this Encounter when the naval battle is over.

The spectral armada fades in the gentle breeze of the open sea. Echoes of these departing souls say words of peace. Called only for battle, their duty has been fulfilled and now sail for shores beyond this world. Yet from the final ship, a dark, even demonic figure speaks with a voice like thunder: "We have aided you. Now repay us. Give to the heart of the dragon the golden flesh of our god's face. Both parties must deliver. I raise your foe. Go now as allies to placate the Dragon!"

Hsi Kai will indeed be raised if necessary, and those who refuse to obey the dead's command, to go through Part 6, will die with the first sunset they see in the wrong direction.

QUEEN OF THE CRIMSON COAST



PART 6: WHERE DEVILS FEAR TO GO:

The voyage must now go into the Devil's Triangle, the legendary sea of superstition, spirits, and worse (merely 60 leagues due east of Yonaguni at the coordinates of 25N 129E).

The golden cutlass: If the party possesses the gold cutlass from Adventure #2 in this booklet, when it is drawn, it will glow when pointing towards the heart of the Dragon's Triangle (25N 129E).

Uneasy crew: During the voyage into this accursed ocean, Morale will drop by 1-3 every day.

16) The captain's ghost?

When reading the following narrative aloud, replace 'NAME' with that of whoever is in charge of the overall fleet, be it a Player Character or NPC.

A strange light this night, of neither moon nor star, it casts a pale glow over the ship, turning the rigging to spiderwebs and the belaying pins to the bones of ten dead men. The methodical groan of the vessel keeps you anchored in the isles of sanity amidst seas of superstitious fear. But soon, the glow ripples up towards the bow, like the wake of a flying ghost ship, and gathers into a single, luminescent figure—a perfect like of 'NAME', but colorless, as if the candles of a thousand corpses cast moonlight upon it.

There are two possibilities of what this ghost really means, and the reality will be the first of all the following possibilities that any Player Character causes by action (not suggestion), with the other possibility never occurring.

A) The current commander still lives, but this is a glimpse of his future. The specter will answer three questions. These questions answers can only be of "yes" or "no". Make a note of which three questions were asked and answered.

B) The ghost will take on Skeleton statistics, even as its bones show through its spectral skin as it moves to counter attack. The main captain will have been 'swapped', and to kill the ghost is to kill the captain forever, but to kill the captain is to defeat this ghost and return things to normal.

17) Ghost ship*

Every hour feels like a day, and the horizon that once felt like an end is now a blur. It is within this dream-like sea that you come upon a derelict merchantman. Her sails are reefed, and there's no sign of anyone aboard, yet she's still seaworthy.

The merchantman is the 'HMS Bashante'. Yet a look through her log will prove strange indeed, as it was launched in 1876, nearly a century from now. Furthermore, its ports of call are not towns known by any maps or crew.

A search of this vessel might find a scrap of paper inside its Bible. Written in English, it is provided both below and on Handout 13.

'June 11, 1881, 4:02am. I may yet enter this in the log proper, but not until I judge the minds of my superiors safe on land.'

The Flying Dutchman crossed our bows. She emitted a strange, phosphorescent light, as of a phantom ship, all aglow. She came up on the port bow, where also the officer of the watch from the bridge saw her, but on arriving there was no vestige or any sign whatever of any material ship to be seen, either near or right away to the horizon. The night became clear and the sea calm.

This bewitches my senses twice this night, for I dreamt during Mr. Cutler's watch of 4:00pm to the midnight hour that I, a lowly naval ensign, though born to royalty, was already king, titled George V'.

18) Unnatural storm

The sky is laced with lightning, slashing at the bosom of heaven to spill the blood of a storm. Soon the clouds bleed indeed, but this is clearly not the weather of the world. The thunder echoes with laughter, and the lighting **follows** it, flashes of orange in curls rather than cracks or corners. The crew whispers excitedly, too frightened to be more than mice in speech, echoing fears of the 'dragon's breath'.

If the party is not in command, the captain of whatever ship they are on will be too terrified to

QUEEN OF THE CRIMSON COAST

make a decision, leaving it to the Characters to be the one. If they ultimately go around the tempest, they will still catch part of it, meeting a regular storm of ‘only’ Magnitude 4 (of which cannot be rounded). If they ultimately go straight through this unnatural storm, not only will they suffer nothing of damage at all, but also somehow jaunt ahead a distance of 10-30 leagues on their journey.

19) Possessed ship

Your ship is riding rough through the broken and defiant waves. More than one lantern has fallen kicked up flames quickly silenced by the same chaos and sails have shredded **after** the mast has cracked. But now, suddenly, the ship begins to ride smoothly. Blue flames leap up where there were no lamps at all, and chaotic figures hardly resembling men emerge from the deck and cabin walls themselves! The sails flare out like dragon-wings! It’s as if you’re about to take flight...

Each Character has but 1 Round before these dead men—1 for each crew—have their eyes finish forming and see their prey. What exactly they use for battle depends on a roll made by the Player of he whom they fix on. Each Round 1-3 NPC crew will automatically die. Each Player Character who dies is the chance in 6 that the ship is ‘satisfied’ and sinks beneath them, drowning all of the NPCs and leaving the party with but a longboat and the supplies they can gather in 2 Rounds. However, if all of the Ghouls who attack Player Characters are killed, the dragon spirit that possesses the ship will recall its regurgitated victims and depart, leaving things normal again.

Weapons Of The Damned

Roll	What the Ghoul uses in combat
10-12	No weapon and thus no Base Damage
8-9	Normal longsword for 5 Base Damage
5-7	Whatever weapon the Character uses
4	Skull of a sailor on a pike, -1 (total) to its group’s Initiative, but 8 Base Damage
2-3	Grapeshot balls-and-chain, -1 (total) to hit, but 6 Base Damage and Criticals on ‘11’
1	Swivel-gun encrusted in its body, shooting fire for 10 base Damage, no need to load

20) Hunger of the Triangle

The sea is dark, its depths never touched by the light of heaven, too deep even for the locker of Jones himself. Yet the sea is in a dead calm. It is in this timeless moment that a whirlpool starts to form nearby. It gathers speed faster than your mortal limbs can answer its call, and what a dire and terrible call—it roars like a dragon, ready to devour your ship whole!

After 2 Rounds, the party’s ship will have to endure 10-120 Damage each Round. However, once the golden mask is cast into it, the whirlpool will subside, allowing the party to sail away safely. At this point you should move on to the summaries in ‘Concluding the Adventure’.

However, if someone jumps into the whirlpool, go on to Encounter 21...

21) Heart of the Triangle

Run this Encounter only if someone dives into the monstrous whirlpool of Encounter 20.

You tumble through the black abyss, surrounded by screaming dead men, angels hanging from the masts of sinking ships and devils dancing around cold fires burning atop sunken mountains. Finally the torment ends, leaving you on the seabed. Is this a dream? The ground is as flat as a desert of salt, the water no worse than the sweltering air of a crowded port. And there, before you, the stepped sides of a triangular pyramid rise into a sky of ghostly sharks and skeletal serpents.

Climbing to the top of the pyramid, one will find a golden, heart-shaped locket. If not taken in 3 Rounds, the ‘dream’ will end and everyone here will drown. Yet if it is taken, everyone will find themselves spirited to the ocean’s calm surface. Only a golden weapon can break the locket. If this occurs, it will release a cloud that surrounds that individual. This Character will now, whenever he is killed, actually cause another **Player Character** in his line of sight to die instead, one determined at random (not by anyone’s choice). Only if he dies alone—not in sight of anyone—will he truly die.

QUEEN OF THE CRIMSON COAST

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party has left the golden mask of the Dogu gods behind, there are some things to consider.

The fate of Hsi Kai: Provided that she survived all the way to the return from the Devil's Triangle, this pirateess will accept amnesty from the council of China, England and Portugal. Her empire, last remnants of the Devil's Fleet, will be disbanded. Thus will new doors open for pirates throughout the Orient, and any ransom for Hsi Kai no longer viable to collect.

Logbook of the HMS Bashante: Outside the sea of the Dragon's Triangle, this ledger that was found beyond the maps of time will begin to fade away, its writing vanishing like footprints on the beach as a tide of invisible time steadily erases it bit by bit. A Wits Check (this roll made with a -2 penalty) can recall information important enough as to be of any monetary or tactical gain later on. Each Character that studied this book before leaving the Triangle gets but one such Check. However, if that information **is** retained, or better yet copied down, it will prove accurate as much as the Player wants to research the locations of towns post 1876.

The end of the Devil's Fleet?: The Devil's Fleet is no title made by men, but whispered in their ears by devils, for once disbanded, anyone can name a flotilla as such and gain its power. Indeed, if any Character who survived all three Adventures within this booklet is commodore (commander) of three or more ships and lays claim to the 'Devil's Fleet', it will become both a blessing and a curse. First, it will increase his Notoriety by +20, however, this is a name he will never be able to rid himself from until all his ships are defeated in a single battle. And while carrying this name, he will gain greater success than his efforts should merit, including one benefit with each Experience Level he has or wins.

Blessings Of The Devil

Roll	Bonus to the Devil's Fleet commodore
10-12	Captains add 1-12 in Values of new ships
7-9	Crew swells by 100-1200 Levels of men
4-6	Immunity to all magic until next Level
1-3	Morale raised on every ship by +10

The return of Hsi Kai: Should a Character attempt to keep Hsi Kai in check, she will actually invite him to her temple, but she will have a different reception depending on who sees her. After reading the first paragraph, read only one more, determined by the fate of the individual it begins with. If one person shares multiple fates as described here, then use only the one that begins higher on the page.

Deep inland, far from the ocean and even from rivers, hidden in an orchard, you find the steep, shingled, curving rooftops of a Chinese temple. Several gardeners eye you as your walk along a path winding around bushes, over tiny bridges, and finally to the golden gates of the compound. Just inside, Hsi Kai greets you rather warmly. A moment's reflection is required to recall the body of this mighty woman. If not for her muscular build, you could not imagine it being the same soul giving color to that flesh. She is not at all the pirateess she once was, but calm, almost holy. She smiles at you like the devil.

"The one who felled me," she says, "yes, I remember your body only too well. Seek you an even greater foe? You should defeat more than a pair of ships and take the name of the Devil's Fleet for yourself".

"The one who wore the mask," she says, "I was to learn both fear and love that day, not for any man or woman, but for my creator, and for that I am grateful enough to tell you this: Wear now the name of the Devil's Fleet, if you can mask yourself with more ships than you have the eyes to find them".

"The captain of those who bested me," she says, "fate plays with dice even if some deities do not, but if you are still a captain and I am not, why are you not the heart of the Devil's Fleet, you who alone have the strength to unite more ships than anyone?"

"The one who took the dragon's heart," she says, "ahhh, yes, the one I love..."

34 South
136 East

Hollandia Southern Coast

Gandel loading

Fort Mockery of God

The Devil's
Throat leads
under the cliff

*Those protected are slowly
devoured by the walls which
make the stone skin of their
leaders and devour the
town populace as
devils.*

Dutch
East
India

*Native and
natural slave
processing stockade*

Hollandia
Fort
Bassmath

These walls were plundered in design from Bavaria. The salvation of Vienna was to become the prison for men in the unknown Southern Land. This is only a mockery of God. Such defenses are not designed to guard a harbor. There are devils being trapped here.

The Ragamuffin

Captain: None still living	Design: Brigantine Hull Points: 140 Mounted cannon: 10	Crew: 000 Levels: 000 Morale: 00
Flag: Holland	Reserve cannon: 00	Hold: 4500
Speed: 15	Men per cannon: 0	Cargo: 1360
Notes and Changes: _____		

The Ragamuffin comes up often in South Seas legend and especially in sailor chanteys. Many a song sings of this vessel, flaying many different flags and with equally diverse captains. Yet no matter how it is remembered, the vessel of this name is spoken of fondly, as if it is one's home or hopeful vessel to sail on. In truth, it is simply a Dutch ship that has served a century.

The Ragamuffin currently has no crew, though there's all the signs of a crew present, from clothes and musical instruments to rum rations, as if the crew suddenly and inexplicably disappeared, leaving behind only a sense that 'this ship is home'.

The Ragamuffin is well stocked for voyage and battle alike. It has the eerie atmosphere of a ghost ship, stores of rich supplies being simply ignored by those that could easily salvage them. There is a total of 1600 days worth of food and water, spare sails, 2 longboats, 10 salvos of cannonballs, charts, 2 spare anchors, and even 500 value in a cache of gold dust.

Gremory is a mighty Duke in hell,
governor of six and twenty regions of
the damned, whose equal count of eyes
see all things past, present and yet to
be in matters of hidden treasure and
stealing the hearts of maiden women,
whose likeness does he wear in the
world of the sea, usually wearing a
crown likened to that of a duchess

John Porter

Brawn:	04	Nationality:	American	Age:	16
Agility:	05	Class:	Sailor	Born:	1785
Endurance:	09	Experience Level:	3	Height:	5'9"
Girth:	07	Notoriety Level:	0	Weight:	130
Wits:	08	Defense Score:	09	Handed:	R
Intuition:	07	Carried Weight:	054	Move:	130'
Charisma:	04	Notes and Changes:	_____		
Luck:	03	_____			

With the Revolutionary War over, America's bloodlust has stained this young man's soul, who sees no need for its navy to plunder lands across the seas. His brother, a young officer named David, is the very embodiment of a lost ideal. He seeks to plunder heathen seas to 'reacquire' God's money and thus return to 'save' his brother.

John was a trained sailor and scholar, but has made his best mark in blood by learning to be as good as he can in combat. He is good with longswords (+4), knives (+2) and brawling (+1). From his more mundane past a variety of tradeskills endure, including linguistics (Level 2), navigation (Level 3) and shipwright (Level 2).

John prepares for as many situations as he can, and battle in particular. He carries a gilded-handled longsword in mockery of the American Navy, a flint-lock pistol, the dagger he says he stabbed his captain with, and a thick shirt that offers 1 Guard. He also carries a compass, 20' of fine silk rope, a rum ration, lockpicks, a spyglass and a tinder box. He always hides all his money.

*Farewell to old England forever
Farewell to my rum culls as well
Farewell to the well known Old Bailey
Where I used for to cut such a swell*

*There's the captain as is our commander
There's the bosun and all the ship's crew
There's the first and second class passengers
Knows what we poor convicts go through*

*Taint leaving old England we cares about
Taint cos we mis-spells what we knows
But because all we light fingered gentry
Hops around with a log on our toes*

*These seven long years I've been serving now
And seven long more have to stay
All for bashing a bloke down our alley
And taking his ticker away*

*Oh had I the wings of a turtle dove
I'd soar on my pinions so high
Slap bang to the arms of my Polly love
And in her sweet presence I'd die*

*Now all my pirates and profiteers
Take warning from what I've to say
All is your own if you return there
And open the key of Botany Bay*

24N 66E lies the devil's vault

In Kali-ghata the blessed await the doomed in vhy

The bravest to approach the vault shall face the greatest fears
that plague the virtue God gave him to separate him from the
beasts of the earth and see in darkness.

The follower shall forge a key to the vault only with the wax of
brethren blood spilled by his hand and stained either true or to
bewilder the eyes of the guardian who watches.

The one who accepts the path before him follows without wisdom
like the beast and must therefor be reduced to one with delight
in devouring what Jesus blessed as bread.

The forth and following I cannot see for their courage lies far
too deep in darkness, though I hear echoes of the deceivers, the
ones who will test their faith to the goddess of destruction.

Father Malachai Rossen
St. Lucia's Mission 1568

when we put into the shores of Bombay. Evil winds blew us off course. The Lord God above forsakes us, I fear. Half my crew lacks piety. The shipboard Chaplain, Arnold, believes this to be true. If I live to see Madagascar I will take care, even at the expense of several days mooring fee, to find a better stock of Christian men.

5th September, 8:02pm

I dare not enter the year in the log. Nor do I refer to my vessel any longer by name. 'The Undertaker' was its name as branded by devil-fire on the hull this night last. Chaplain Arnold has advised me not to anger the devils that roam the sea. They are as unpredictable in temper as they are invisible to our Christian living eyes. All entries shall hereafter refer to this vessel as The Undertaker until such time as I can put into a port where heathens do not control the treasury. I only hope our stores will fetch a higher enough price. I dare not trade or sell this vessel to any unfortunate Christian soul.

6th September 1:20am

Was awakened in the night by a recurring thumping sound under the keel. The night helmsman, Mr. Webster, confirmed this to my Christian ears.

6th September, 5:36am

After the morning's address of the crew, I was moved to return to my charts and recalculate our course-heading. We were on course, but the stars are still strange even as I write this. Taking sun-sight yesterday was flawed, and now our charts are flawed. I am a pious man but not a superstitious sailor, but I cannot ignore the coincidence. I am at a loss, though I dare not disclose my uncertainty to the crew at this time.

26th September, 1:34pm

The treasure of Kali-ghata may be our bane. In pursuit of this gold we have forgotten morning prayers for two weeks. With The Undertaker steering us by its own heading, Chaplain Arnold consigned himself to the deep, lest his soul be corrupted. The men maintain his last words to be the result only of fear, that to divert from the treasure is to play into the devil's hands. Yet I fear in my turn we shall never reach Kali-ghata as living men.

*The mosque fell. Kali is the only goddess
for destruction lies at the end of all things.*

*Monuments of mortals be damned by the
great Kali. Her heart beats in the center
of our city. None but the faithful dare to
approach one who commands us all.*


*The windows are walls to block the blind
with a false faith. The ceiling is a cage for
a soul fearing judgment by its God. The
door lies below for it leads into the womb
of the earth and the hall of the goddess.*

Gremory, truth be told, he's a might'ye Duke in hell,
says the Good Book. Gov'ner o' six an' a count o'
twenty legions o' the damned. What him, he sees
through the curtain o' time like a captain knows the
weather from charts. Must pay ta read the Lord's
unabridged Bible, that is, if ye consider damnation a fair
price ta pay fer such thievery. A price we all are'ta
pay. Think the captain still has the crown o' the
duchess? Or is the captain just as much a mockery
ta sight as ta soul? Ah, me tale? I did no more
wrong'n ta seek gold in hollandia. Escaped Botany I
did, then ran a cannon. Was me captain's use o' that
devil's name what drew this shipour curse ta us.
Somethin' always calls 'im".

Greetings, my lady. How are you feeling this fine day? This fine life? The sun sets like bloody bodies losing the true treasure of their life, doesn't it? Light and life lost all at once. You who have always served us so well know it now yourself, as I know in turn, seeing things through your eyes. If I had only found you sooner you might have found me repelled by your cleverly named cannons. Play not dice with the devil. Nor chance that God will be listening to your plea. He only hears those that are in deepest need. Not unlike you now, my lady? What God allows one to sink into such a darkness that he must rely on one so charitable? Is that a truly generous God or a pirate in heaven? Enjoy our marriage in flesh. By my lust and your ability to sate it we'll consummate every day, every hour, every heartbeat. The sound of battle is quiet when you are sinking into darkness. In time, you will be equally silent and unseen. The sea shall be your voice and your clothing. You cannot deny me any longer. My name you choose! My name you shall wear! Your choice was made when you went out on account, clothed with my name to hide the sins of your past. Each year, on our anniversary, come back to where we became one and purchase newer clothes for us. We shall consummate with the sea. We shall remain invisible to pain and loss. The Undertaker will keep us from Death's embrace'

Captain 'Gremory' Mordechai

The river is darkness.
Even black people shun
this road. We chased a
Spanish ship here, and
it fled this way. We
anchored here, and
days later, that same
ship came floating back
down the dark waters,
its decks blood-stained
and deserted. The
cargo was intact, but
the crew had vanished
into silence and mystery.
This ship we left here,
along with this warning
to all living souls

The background of the page is a grayscale image of marbled paper, featuring intricate, swirling patterns of light and dark gray. The texture is organic and fluid, typical of traditional marbling techniques.

El pecho contiene la cara de Dios falso.

La torre acuna el pecho.

El diablo vive dentro del pecho.

El río es la sangre del diablo.

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