

nLS2



the northlands series:
the long night of winter

NLS2: The Raid
by Jeff Provine



FROG GOD
GAMES



the northLANDS series: the LONG NIGHT OF WINTER

NLS2: The Raid

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The Long Night of Winter

NLS2: The Raid

By Jeff Provine



The Raid is a *Swords & Wizardry* adventure for the Northlands Saga setting and is the second adventure in *The Long Night of Winter* adventure anthology. Like the other adventures in the anthology, *The Raid* is intended to be dropped into a Northlands Saga campaign by the Referee at any time or place that is convenient. It is not, therefore, tied to any particular location in the Northlands or to any specific time beyond occurring near the beginning of spring as the viking raiding season is about to begin. It is designed for a party of characters of levels 3-5.

The Northlands Series: The Long Night of Winter



“Gather round, lads and lasses, and draw close to the hearth fire. Let the glowing coals warm your hands and a horn of mead warm your heart while the old men tell tales and sing songs of days long gone. Each winter the storms howl down from the Far North and bury our fields and halls in a thick blanket of white. They bring nights cold enough to shatter a man’s bones or freeze an aurochs’ blood in its veins, and all men huddle close to their fires in the darkness and wonder if this is finally the Fimbulwinter that will bring about the great battle of Ragnarök. Some say these harsh winters are the work of demons of the Ginnungagap sent to break the will of men in preparation for the coming End Days. Others say they are the gift of the Æsir to mold men and hone their strength as the fire tempers good steel in anticipation of those dark times.

“Me? This old skald thinks it is a time to gather close to comrades and loved ones and tell stories and lies, to swap boasts and jests, and to celebrate that the All-Father has given us one more night for the heartsblood to run hot. The morrow’s dawn is never promised us, and there are things other than the cold that stalk the long night of winter and can kill a strong man just as surely. So tilt the flagon to fill an old man’s drinking horn once again, for talk can be dry work, and lean in close to listen. I have a tale to tell you ...”

The *Northlands Series (NLS)* are standalone adventures set in the Northlands that allow the Referee to drop a one-shot game into that setting or a short interlude into *The Northlands Saga Adventure Path* with minimal effort. They are not tied to a particular locale within the Northlands, though they may require a certain general type of terrain (e.g. mountains, forest, etc.), and they are not tied to a specific chronology. They can be played in any order, and all or none of them can be used as the Referee sees fit. They are presented from the standpoint of a fireside tale being told by an old skald to pass the long hours of a winter night, allowing the Referee to use them as short breaks from normal campaign play with different characters and without any long-term consequences, or they can be inserted into a normal campaign. The idea is to provide the Referee with the maximum flexibility for their use with a minimum of fuss.

So take them. Use them. Make them your own. The winter night is cold, and there are many hours to pass before the dawn ...

The Raid

The Raid is a short *Swords & Wizardry* adventure for character levels 3–5. It can be set in any of the nations of the Northlands. With the first days of spring, when the wind shifts and comes from the west, driving ships before it on the Great Ocean Úthaf, the warriors of the Northlands gird themselves with mail hauberk and steel helm, grab axe and shield and take to the sea in dragon-prowed longships to go a-viking. At times, this is done on a small scale against other Northlanders with whom this war-leader holds a grudge or sees as a particularly vulnerable target, but more often the longships take to the deep waters beyond the North Sea in search of richer prey. In olden days, the kingdoms to the south of Hrolfland were frequent targets, but these have become savvy to the viking raids and constructed defensive works near the shore, organized towns into trained militias, and fortified all the abbeys and villages that once stood so vulnerable along the coast. Those that were unable to take these measures have long since been reduced to so much abandoned rubble.

As a result, the Northlanders find they must go farther afield to find suitable targets that will provide sufficient plunder to make these raids worthwhile in the costs of both men and ships. Some ships are always lost to storms or monsters, and a particularly prepared location might inflict considerable casualties on viking crews whose *wyrd* was to die on foreign sands. Furthermore, a war-leader must provide plunder generously for his men, or he will soon find that he has no men following him. A viking warrior would rather follow a bold leader who risks great danger for high reward than a cautious leader who minimizes risk but finds plunder to be scarcer for it. Though in truth, he'd rather follow neither, choosing instead a skilled or lucky leader that is able to skirt the greatest dangers but still fill the hold of his longship with hacksilver and gold rings aplenty.

To keep up with this precarious economy of reputation versus reward, many Northlander warlords gather small fleets of ships, numbering anywhere from two or three to more than a dozen, and take their raids even farther afield through the Mulstabhin Passage and into the warm waters of the soft Southlanders beyond. These lands have massive populations compared with the Northlander kingdoms, and heavily armed ships that dwarf a Northlander longship in size, but they do not constantly expect the raids of vikings like the lands farther north do. If a Northlander captain is lucky enough to avoid striking a prepared and well-defended target, then the haul of plunder is incomparable. And though Southlander ships may be big and terrible to face in battle, the sleek Northlander longships are much faster and more agile, able to disappear into the sea mists before the great Southlander navies can even respond. This is the dream of many a Northlander warlord, but the dream can easily become a nightmare when the Norns cut a thread short or dance a man's fate before them like a puppet.

Adventure Background

Often do the skalds of the Northlands sing of the great raids into the warm seas of the South where the constant green leaves hands uncalled and the bright sun bakes their heads to dawdling thought. Many brave warriors have led their crews a-viking upon the whale road, leaping ashore to feed the eagles with the carrion of the slow-footed Southlanders, and challenging the battle-will of their strongholds over purses of Frigg's thread.

Yet one skald who became known as Ake the Lost returned to the Northlands upon a slaver's ship, singing for his passage and being granted freedom only upon his brother's price. His journey south had been in the great fleet of Ulf Greymane, whose many years were equal in number to the longships of his men. In his latest glory-quest, Ulf did forge a mighty army of men, hungry for trials and reward. When the timid and tired stowed themselves away as the snow began to fall, Ulf howled his command to sail south, ahead of the winter's gale. His battle-brothers bid farewell to their wives and kin and vowed to return in time for planting as the sky's jewel warmed the earth again. The wood of their ships growled

as their oars bit into the water, driving on as the fleet faded into the sea-mists. Time passed, and when the snowmelt began to flow into the sea, they were missed.

Upon the arrival of Ake, the lone survivor, the families of the lost as well as all those who had puzzled and shivered with them called the Thing. There the skald opened his word-hoard and shared his tears generously.

He tells an astounding tale of disaster at the island kingdom of Santhera, farther south even than the longship-laden shores of the distant Helcynnngae. There, in those turquoise waters as warm as a man's lifeblood, the fleet of Ulf Greymane ran afoul of a sea creature of the cold deeps, far out of its natural ranging territory. These tentacled horrors made short work of the ships of Jarl Ulf and completed his *wyrd* as ordained by the sisters Norn at his birth, no doubt. Ake alone survived to tell the tale, and for more than a year made his way back to his homeland to bring word of the disaster.

Adventure Summary

The characters are recruited as part of a new fleet raised by Ulf's brother, Arne. The true action begins as they approach their target: the southern island of Santhera in the warm seas of Oceanus, the Mother Ocean. There, the viking fleet is set upon by a kraken. Though they fight valiantly against the massive tentacles of the beast, the players are eventually driven to shore as more krakens appear. Pursued by militia from the town, the party must find shelter in a stone ruin on the beach by seizing it from the defenders there. Inside, they discover the passage that leads to a sunken lighthouse where two sea-wizards ply their strange arts upon an ancient relic that emulates the mating call of a female kraken. Upon defeat, the Santherans' scheme to manipulate krakens into being defenders is revealed to the gargantuan beasts. They level the town and leave the harbor open, enabling the remaining vikings to pillage what is left.

Beginning the Adventure

The characters are present when the local Thing is called to relate the tale of Ake the Lost. Depending on where the Thing is held, the characters may be respected landowners and voting members of this assembly. If not, then they are merely passing through when the Thing is called and are drawn to it out of curiosity like any red-blooded Northlander would be. After the Thing opens, Ake is brought forward to speak once again.

After the usual preamble at the opening of the assembly of the local Thing, the speaker turns his words to the tale of woe and danger to be presented by an aged skald who is also present. Ake Burison, or Ake the Lost as he is now called, has unkempt gray hair and a face lined and weather-beaten, aged far beyond its years. He walks with an old man's stoop, though he is not yet of an age to be among the elders, barely past the prime of his life.

Ake accompanied last year's voyage by the famed viking raider Ulf Greymane, a jarl of this region who departed with a fleet of twenty-two ships to raid far to the south, perhaps farther than has ever been reached before. But Jarl Ulf never returned. And only after a year did this broken skald called Ake return aboard a ship selling slave thralls, where he had been able to obtain passage by singing for his supper and being bonded free by his brother for a small fortune

in hacksilver. His is surely a tale of woe, no doubt a tale of vengeance, but quite possibly it could also be a tale of plunder and great riches, a fact that is plainly visible on the face of every man and woman in attendance.

The enfeebled skald takes the speaker's place, and a barrel is brought forth for him to sit on. So ravaged is his stamina by his ordeal that he cannot stand before the Thing to speak as is customary. And though his body is weak, his voice is strong and still carries the singsong enchantment and spell-binding power of the skalds. Soon everyone listens with rapt attention.

"We sailed for Santhera, where elders sit on the shore while they send their young, the boys and the girls, to pillage the seas for treasure. They are strong swimmers and may long hold their breaths, going deep under the waves amid the coral and the crawling-fish. Many pearls they do find, but also sometimes greater things: miracles from the lost city of Atrotiri.

"O city of ancient lovers of wisdom, how great you once were. You were a citadel of sorcerous-knowledge, but wyrd punishes the haughty pride of cunning-folk. Now you sit below Dröfn's* foam-flecked waves with the town's wide harbor as your sea-grave.

"So our ships, on the way to sweet-smelling Santhera, passed over the sea-swaddled ruins. Amid the watery shade beneath our ships, a light began to shine just as the sky-candle glows above. It fell dark and glowed again, time, time, and time again, radiating with the long blink of a tired man's eye. Our shadows were cast upward, disappearing and reappearing like the sun through Himinglæva's* fast-moving clouds when the wind blows strong. Some of the warrior-kin traded their nervous whispers, but Ulf Greymane remained resolute at the steering oar of his longship. We followed the path of his gaze toward our prize of the Southlander town with its painted walls and baked plate roofs.

"Then the sea churned behind us! Our ships were separated by Hrönn* with her welling waves and the pulls of Dúfa's* chaos. At last Hefring* rose behind us, but it was not her alone. A great sea-creature bore forth upon the surface. I have heard the songs of monsters that dwell in the seas, and I have sung them myself, but there are no words to hold the power of such giants, just as flies have no word for a man with his slapping hand.

"Some of our foul-fated band of ship brothers meant to flee, and some stayed to fight, but all were lost. Our weapons were but the sting of an ant against its hide. The monster laid arms, long and languid yet possessed of the strength of ten giants, upon our ships and crushed them. Men were tossed by the dozen into its screeching maw, out of which poured the sound of howling storm-wind.

"My oar-weary body fell into the waves, where I caught hold of the fallen mast of Ulf Greymane's own ship. I saw Jarl Ulf himself drive his ax into the wall of the creature's beaked mouth before it swallowed him whole. I watched and knew it was not my time to die only because I did not see a valkyrie for me. Nay, they were kept busy drawing up the rest of my war-brothers to fight before the gods until Ragnarök.

"Wyrd brought my salvation as another creature breached the sky-floor, and its birth-wave sent my bit of mast flying toward the shore. The two creatures bickered over the few remaining warriors, slapping one another with their long arms, using force that could fell even the Gate of Flokkison! I pushed my wooden life raft until sand came under my feet. Then I slipped past the watchful archers of the city and foot-journeyed to the far end of the island, beyond the mountain, to hide. There after some days, I found a slavers' ship with whom I was able to bargain for my passage, that it might bear me here ... home."

The old skald falls to weeping at the heart-tearing worth of his words, leading the assembly into creating a swamp of

tears beneath the feet of the Thing. A few men try to question him about the creatures, but the skald's mind has been torn apart even though his body is sound. Too much thinking of the battle-chaos makes him shriek and sing nonsense words of fear.

Once Ake the Lost's wailing grows soft, a bellow of anger silences all but the softest sniffing. Arne Greymane, whose brother had led the gods-forsaken fleet, holds aloft his fist and cries out, "I will have my weregild from the murderous beast!"

"Nay, Arne," Beorend the Elder warns. "Clearly this sea-monster is an ally of Santhera, and the skald's description of it bears the hallmarks of the kraken, the lurker in the deeps of the Great Ocean Úthaf. Its kind does not dwell normally in the shallow, warm seas there, where they would have to crawl to keep their gills submerged and their soft flesh would burn from the hot South-sun. We are war-wise in fighting from sea to land, but to face an enemy upon each at once, the Santherans with their bows and the strange war-fists of the kraken — and there indeed sounds to be more than one — this is too much."

"I respect your years," Arne Greymane answers Beorend, "but we cannot allow revenge to go unpaid."

A murmur breaks out among the Thing. Arne's great-words are true: Defeat by an enemy means their strength was greater, and admitting their own is lesser might bring the enemy to threaten these very shores. A fleet of Santheran ships accompanied by a kraken is not something that anyone present wishes to stomach.

Arne pulls the golden rings from his own arms and holds them aloft. "With these, I shall build a new longship and avenge my fallen kin. Whoever will join me, join me, and we will slay the sea-beasts and capture the treasures of Santhera that were left behind by them for us to seize, as wyrd will see fit."

A grunt and cheer ring out, and so the great voyage south of a second fleet begins.

*Any Northlander recognizes these as the names of various daughters of the sea goddess Rán that embody different aspects of the waves. See *NLS3: The Drowned Maiden* for more details on the Daughters of Rán.

The normal coffers and resources for gathering a fleet were largely tapped out by Ulf Greymane a year ago, so Arne's fleet of vengeance consists of only 9 ships, though they are also forearmed with knowledge of their enemy, which Arne believes will prove to be the difference maker in the coming raid. With so few ships, they tend to become over-crowded, meaning smaller shares of plunder for the ship, less space for the long voyage, and, most importantly, a greater likelihood for supplies to grow scarce upon such a long voyage.

As adventurers of some experience, the characters are not interested sharing in such unnecessary risks and hardships if they do not need to. And, in fact, they don't because they are recruited to join the crew of a small knaar called the *Vindurbrottingr*, owned and helmed by **Fretr Bondason**, a prosperous landowner and known bondi of the area. With a smaller crew, of which the characters will represent a significant portion, and a lucrative agreement for not only a crewman's share of any plunder but also a bonus share for each if they acquit themselves as the heroes they are rumored to be, the characters can hardly refuse such an opportunity. And with a smaller vessel requiring fewer hands to manage it, there will be greater stores of food and drink — that Fretr has promised to provide — to last the voyage. As a result, the characters find themselves upon his ship commanding a position of respect among his crew but, of course, expected to carry themselves as the Northlanders they are with their share of pulling at the sweeps and taking a central place in the shieldwall when the weather of war comes.

Fretr Bondason: HD 2; AC 4[15]; Atk shortspear (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: none.

Equipment: chainmail, wooden shield, shortspear, gold arm-ring (70hs), silver arm-rings (20hs).

However, knowing Fretr Bondason's carefully cultivated reputation and actually meeting the man for the first time aboard ship make for two very different experiences. They say there is no such thing as a viking past middle-age, and Fretr Bondason is a clear example. Standing at an un-commanding 5ft 4in tall with a slim build over which his wrinkly skin is hung from his balding scalp, Fretr is not much of a warrior. Fretr did accompany one raiding party in his youth, and he has never let anyone forget about it. As the years have passed, so have the stories changed about his adventures. Others who attended remember Fretr's part during the raid filled with fewer battle-cries and more pants-wetings.

After the raid, Fretr used his portion of the plunder to buy part-ownership in a swine farm and slaughterhouse, taking it over completely when the previous owner retired by death after a night of legendary drinking. Fretr proved to be a savvy businessman, adding a brewery and smokehouse to his burgeoning stockyard. He is famous for outfitting longships going a-viking with the finest in smoked and salt-cured hams, and for welcoming travelers with heavy purses to his establishment to eat their fill while plying them with drink almost as strong as the smell of the stockyard that daily wafts in through the open doorway.

Fretr's wife's cousin is married to Arne's younger sister, and so he was guilted into buying his own ship, the *Vindurbrottingr* ("Wind Strong"), and joining the expedition to the South. However, to keep his costs down, Fretr opted to buy only a small ship, easily crewed by no more than 20 men, and augmented his small crew by using the increased size of the crew shares to entice a band of true Northlander heroes to join him, thus increasing his profitability and odds of survival. Fretr has put his business in the hands of his strangely adoring wife and unruly flock of children. He has covered the expenses of travel, food, and, most importantly, drink for the long journey, which will be repaid by his captain's share of treasure, about which he speaks often.

Fretr is an emotional chatterbox and routine liar, constantly making things out to be better or worse than they actually are. In combat, Fretr relies on his feet more than his old spear, doing his best to be nowhere near an opponent and trusting the hired help to fight for him. He is also known to shriek like a child in the face of direct melee combat but tries to keep this very embarrassing secret to himself.

Part One: Santhera

Long has the journey been across the whale road from the ice-flecked oceans that slap the rocky shores of the Northlands to the caressing waves in the warm seas of the Southlands. Ægir's* storm-loving daughters have been largely absent during the summer sailing, perhaps off battering another shore. The characters have only felt the billowing arms of Bylgja*, urging them on southward with her rhythmic undulations. During the months-long voyage, they toast her often with libations, seeking to quaff Fretr's whole store of ale before arriving at Santhera.

Whatever shore the small fleet passes, the villages go dark and quiet. The only Southlanders seen are the wall guards as they watch with narrowed eyes under their shadowy helms and a few merchants in wispy clothes holding up white flags with hopes of trade. Arne Greymane passes by both without a pause (much to Fretr's constant consternation), dead-set on winning his weregild in the deaths of Santherans and their undersea war-beasts.

*Ægir — the Jötnar father of Rán's daughters; Bylgja — another of Rán's daughters.

After many weeks at sea, at last a cry goes up from the lead ships: "Land ahead! Santhera!"

Peering over the bow to the southern horizon, you can see the clouds forming over the mountain at the back of the island. Its brown, rocky hillsides are dotted with the lush green of olive trees and a few goat beds. The long peninsular arms that rest at the edges of the bay where Atrotiri once stood now act as a natural harbor wall. Arne guides the fleet toward its narrow mouth and into the smooth, warm waters within.

Thanks to the stillness of the bay, the shadows of the ancient ruined city beneath the water are clear. Few buildings are recognizable after the destruction of years, but the faint lines of streets may still be seen. At the far end of the harbor, Santhera rests on a wide beach crowded with fishing boats drying their nets and the tightly packed houses of whitewashed stone and clay tile roofs beyond.

Santhera

Neutral large town

Qualities prosperous, strategic location, tourist attraction

Government council

Population 2866 (2234 humans, 341 dwarves, 168 halflings, 66 elves, 57 half-elves)

Notable NPCs

Percutio Opavian, High Judge (Chaotic male human aristocrat, 31hp)

Marco Domi, Captain of the Guard (Neutral male human Ftr5, 37hp)

Sister Pas, High Priest (Lawful female human Clr6 of Quell, 29hp)

Purchase Maximum 15,000gp

Thousands of years ago, the island where Santhera now sits was larger and home to the city of Atrotiri. Few specifics are known about Atrotiri, but lore suggests that it was founded as a colony of exiled wizards of Hyperborea searching for a peaceful bastion from which to research their arcane philosophy. Darker tales are built upon rumors that the Atrotiri performed foul experiments that caused their exile to begin with, and that they modified these experiments to twist and enslave the creatures of the deep. Whichever is true, all stories agree that Atrotiri was destroyed after the mages dug too deeply into forbidden arts and triggered a massive earthquake that caused much of the island to slide into the sea, leaving behind only the massive crater that now forms the famous Santheran Bay.

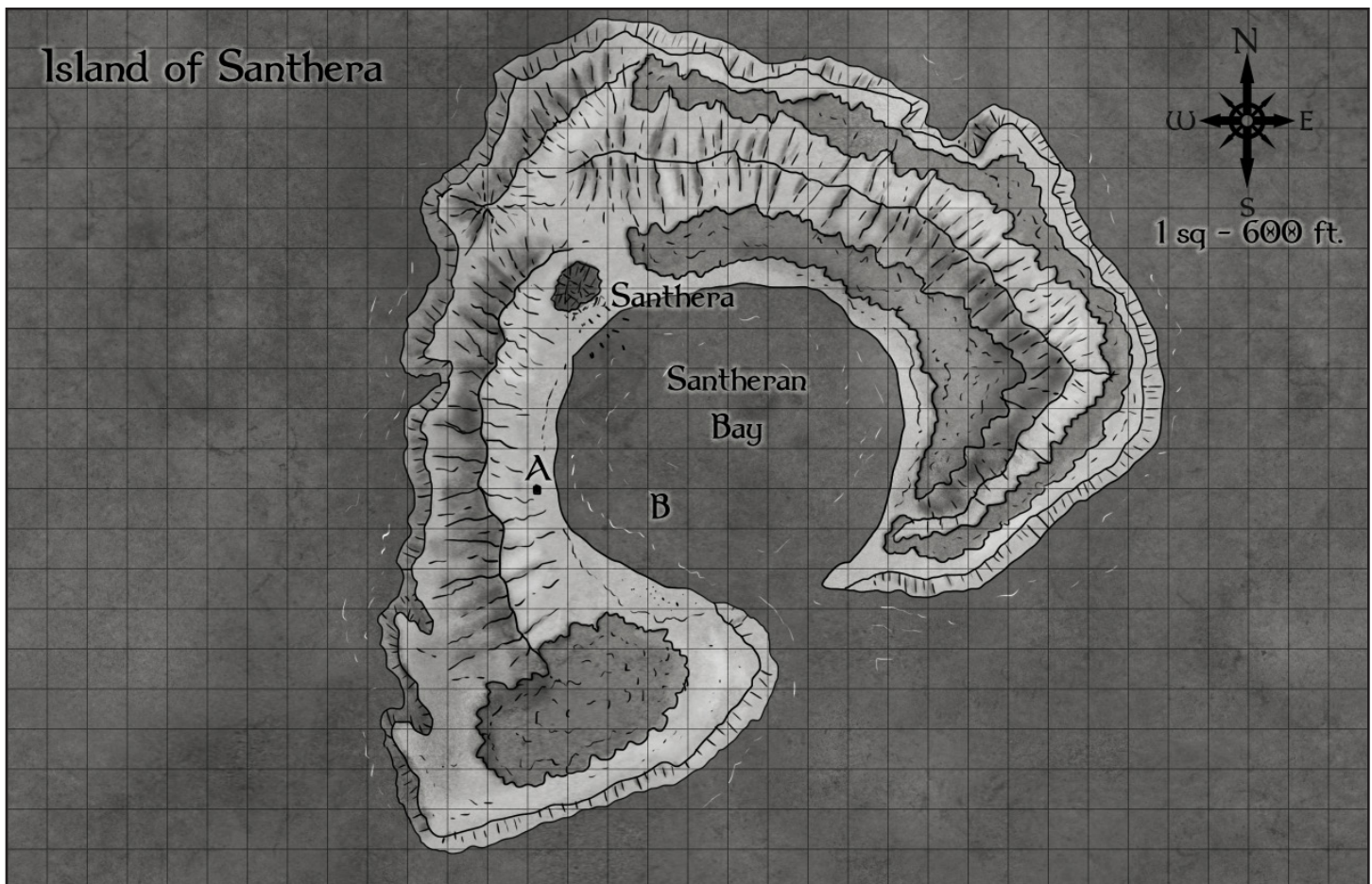
The bay's floor is covered in the ruins of old Atrotiri. At times of extremely low tides, the tips of old bronze spires and the jagged tops of stone walls still peek above the waters. These hazards unfortunately make the harbor too dangerous for trade-ships requiring deep water at these times, but this loss of commerce as a port is more than made up for in Santhera by the rich coral and pearl beds that now cover the submerged ruins. As the island became populated again over the centuries, locals have adopted the customs of raising their children to be strong swimmers, sending the best down to dive for treasures. Sometimes divers find ancient artifacts, for which agents of collectors and wizards are eager to bid in auction. Much of the rest of the economy is simple fishing.

Ostensibly ruled by a town council, the town has been effectively ruled for generations by the Opavian family, which has kept a tight grip on the seat as high judge over the island and council leader by each nominating their own child or niece or nephew before retiring from the post. Santherans espouse deeply conservative traditions, though in practice they are largely apathetic, living quiet lives of daily work and seasonal festivals accompanied by a drink of fermented olive juice, just as their parents and grandparents did before them.

The Wrath of the Northmen

As the Northlander ships cross into the harbor, the weary rowers fill with the energy of the coming raid. They begin to cheer and shout war chants: "Death to the murderous Southlanders!" "Slayer of Giants, give me strength!" "Glory to those who seize it!" "What wyrd wills!"

In the heat of the moment after long weeks at sea, Arne forgets the caution he spoke of long months ago and spurs his fleet forward toward the seemingly defenseless village. Fretr's inherent cautiousness wins



through, causing him to bring his longship in near the middle of the coursing ships, all the while nervously and halfheartedly urging his men onward to greater pulls upon the sweeps with a timid, “Come on, war-men! Let’s race them to the shore.”

It is here that the characters truly have the opportunity to assert their leadership and experience. The characters (who are also rowing) can urge the crew to either greater speed or greater caution. All of the characters present can shout out their own exhortations, so it is possible that different characters could shout different orders (caution versus speed), in which case the players should roll 1d20 with the highest roll winning the crew’s attention. The results of successfully urging on or holding back the *Vindurbrottingr* are discussed under **The Drowned Maid’s Light** below.

bursting from the depths outside the island harbor. The kraken seems to have gone mad, attacking the fleet head on without provocation. Its huge tentacles seize the two ships nearest the harbor entrance.

Even above the crashing of Rán’s hammer and the terrible roaring of the sea-monster, the horn of Arne blows, calling the Northlanders to war. Ships that remain with their hulls in the water quickly turn about to face the beast. Arne is the first to fall, racing up the side of the kraken to strike at its beaked mouth as his brother did.

The Drowned Maid’s Light

The longships surge forward, Arne Greymane’s own vessel in the lead, the wild-haired raider standing beside the prow and looking like a second dragonhead set to intimidate the landsvaettir of this southern realm, his face a mask of bloodlust and exultation. Even as the bow of his ship breaks the waves in a froth of sleek foam, a light like a second sun begins to glow from the ruins visible beneath the waves. Its brightness surges and fades, then surges and fades again, pulsating with an eerie, unearthly glow as if all of Hel’s flickering lamps have suddenly lit in the long-drowned city. Many of the longships slow as the rowers abandon the beat of the ship-drum and peer over the edge at the strange light in amazement.

The still waters of the harbor begin to swell. Many of the ships that have not yet made it through the sea-mouth are thrown into the air by an enormous wave. The wave turns to waterfalls cascading down the sides of an enormous kraken

Whether the *Vindurbrottingr* surged ahead, held back with caution, or remained near the middle of the pack at Fretr’s urging determines the challenge that they face here. The characters do not face the might of the kraken directly but must deal with its sinuous, flailing tentacles. For the purposes of this encounter, those tentacles are treated as if they are creatures of their own. If a tentacle is reduced to 0 hp, then it is sorely wounded (though the kraken itself is little hurt) and the beast pulls it back protectively, removing it as a threat to the characters. In any fight, Fretr and their fellow crewmen are of little help as they try to pull comrades out of the water and otherwise keep control of the battered ship. What crewmen are available follow the orders of the characters in this crisis, effectively ignoring anything Fretr says.

If the characters successfully urged the ship forward, then they are only a few ships back from Arne’s leading vessel and are close to the explosive emergence of the kraken. In this case, they must roll below their dexterity on 4d6 to maintain their balance or find themselves thrown from their benches and onto the deck. If a character’s roll is 5 points or higher than his dexterity, he is hurled overboard and must spend the next 2 rounds (1 round if assisted by another character) climbing back into the ship. In this situation, the characters find themselves and their ship beset by **2 kraken tentacles**. Fretr tries to convince the crew to make for shore in the face of the great sea-beast.

Part Two: Landfall

If the characters succeeded in holding the ship cautiously back, then the kraken attack unfolds before them. Their ship is not affected by the massive explosion of waves, and none risks falling into the water. However, they have a 3-in-6 chance to notice the approach of more gigantic dark forms beneath the waves — more krakens are swimming toward the island's harbor. When Fretr sees this, he almost hysterically urges the ship forward, figuring that dealing with one kraken is better than dealing with a school of them. It is obvious, however, that the best bet would be to make for shore and try to warn the other ships and get out of the water before this impossible gathering of foes descends upon the entire fleet. If the *Vindurbrottingr* remains where it is, it soon finds itself battling multiple krakens on its own. If it makes for the nearest shore, it still has to deal with **2 kraken tentacles** from the newly arriving beasts as it makes its retreat.

If the *Vindurbrottingr* remained safely ensconced within the center of the fleet, then it is one of the closest ships to the sudden emergence of the kraken. In this case, the ship is lifted bodily into the air and crashes down some 2d10x5ft away. Everyone aboard takes 2d6 points of damage from the battering and must roll below their dexterity on 5d6 to remain on board. Even those that remain aboard the ship are still thrown to the deck. Those aboard the ship and those in the water are then beset by a total of **4 kraken tentacles**. Regardless of what the characters are doing, Fretr manages to somehow stay in the ship and immediately orders whatever crewmen remain to row the badly damaged vessel toward shore with all the speed they can muster.

Each kraken tentacle attacks as a 4HD creature, has 16hp and AC 6[13]. Each tentacle does 2d6 points of damage with a successful hit and has a 3-in-6 chance of wrapping around the victim to constrict for an automatic 2d6 points of damage each round thereafter.

Tactics: The kraken tentacle stats assume that the kraken is preoccupied battling other Northlander ships and is devoting only a portion of its attention to menacing the characters and their ship. If the characters attempt to engage the kraken itself, then its stats are provided below, though such an act likely spells doom for the characters. Their best bet is to fight off the tentacle(s) that menace them, get any who have fallen overboard back into the boat, and make for shore as quickly as possible before the kraken turns its full attention toward them.

Kraken: HD 20; AC 0[19]; Atk 6 tentacles (2d6), bite (3d6); Move 3 (swim) (jet 21); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 24/5600; **Special:** ink cloud (80ftx80ftx120ft cloud lasts for 4 rounds, 1d4 damage), constriction (automatic 2d6 damage after hit plus bite), control weather (as spell), create lights. (**Monstrosities** 281)

Development: During the battle, 3 more krakens join in the attack on the fleet. The closest kraken's enormous eyes are blurred and rolling back in its head. Likewise, the characters have a 10% chance (40% for druids and rangers) to realize the creature is an adolescent male of its species. All of the krakens involved in the attack are adolescent males.

Any character thrown into the water who attempts to see the source of the flashing light (which continues throughout the battle) has a 3-in-6 chance to spot it among the turbulent blood- and ink-stained waters. If successful, the character catches a glimpse of a structure down among the sunken city many fathoms below. It is a tower-like structure lying on its side, identifiable after a moment as an ancient lighthouse. The apex of the tower is a dome-like cupola of crystal from which stream golden rays of light in their unceasing, flashing on-again, off-again pattern. Further details cannot be made out as the fury of the titanic battle quickly obscures all vision beyond a few feet.

As soon as the characters have fought off any tentacles menacing their ship, Fretr orders the remaining crewmen to pull hard at the oars and make for shore. The battle of the fleet is lost, and now is a time to think of survival and hold vengeance for later.

As the characters and their battered ship and crew make for the beach, still more krakens breach the foamy waves of the sky-floor. What is left of the mangled viking fleet either flees or works to evade the trouncing sea-legs of the creatures. It is apparent that the krakens are now ignoring any Northlander ship that isn't fighting them directly, turning their attention instead toward each other. They wrestle with thrashing giant tentacles filling the air with constant battle-thunder.

The characters come to shore riding the rushing waves caused by the krakens' battle, clinging to what is left of *Vindurbrottingr*. The sea-roar is deafening as the characters wash up on the sand. It is made of broad, heavy grains, the bits of ancient ruins broken-up over centuries of tides. Several boulders of dark, volcanic rock stick up from the sand, once porticoes and pillars in the heights of the ancient city. A few glass grains reflect the slow glimmer that rises from the strange light beneath the harbor-water, and shadows rise and fade behind the boulders. Even through the swells of the krakens' tumult, the unearthly submerged light makes the water of the bay glow.

On land, the town of Santhera is more than half a mile away. The town's architecture is of ancient Hyperborean influence, featuring geometric patterns through the use of domes, square columns, and heavy use of plaster to create smooth surfaces. There are intertwining shapes made in the brickwork and complicated murals that have faded in their years under the blazing Southlands sun. The pinnacle of the town, the copper dome of the city temple, stands out as a blue-green cap amid red, white, and yellow domes. Most of the buildings are low, blocky brick structures decorated with arched balconies and skywalks built over narrow streets.

Militia with longswords stand on a short stone wall. The wall is lined with hastily dismantled traders' tents and ropes still hung with drying laundry. Although they have certainly been taken by surprise, the Santherans have used the distraction of the kraken to raise the call for arms. Trumpets blow, and drums beat. A gate draws open, releasing several squads of men to mop up any Northlander stragglers spilled on the beach.

A Beach to Die On

The characters stand upon the open beach among the wrecked remains of the *Vindurbrottingr*. Fretr is with them, as are 2d6+4 crewmen (minus 1 for each kraken tentacle that was faced), but none other than the characters is in any real shape for a fight, hobbling along exhausted, battered, and many sporting major wounds or broken bones. Now is the time to find defensible ground to make a stand, but a shieldwall on the open sand is easy to flank.

Fortunately, a stone building, seemingly a ruin from the original city but repaired with bits of rubble and patchwork masonry into a reasonably secure structure, is only 100 yards down the beach. It serves as a guard post for the city, and the characters can see the handful of Santheran soldiers who even now stand outside the hut watching the fracas in the bay. They spot the characters at the same time the characters notice them, and they suddenly realize that they are alone on the beach with a crew of crazed Northlander raiders. They immediately turn and run back into their post, securing the door against the characters. The characters should quickly realize that overcoming the small garrison and fortifying the building is their only chance against the coming reinforcements from the city.

The structure is a single-story affair made of sturdy volcanic stone with walls a foot thick and repaired in many places with more recent stonework. It stands 20ft tall with a single window high on each side to allow in air and light, and a single heavy wooden door that the Santheran soldiers have closed and barred. The guard post is manned by **4 Santheran soldiers** led by a **Santheran captain**. Two of the soldiers remain inside to guard the door while the captain leads the other two to the roof to pelt the approaching Northlanders with arrows. The characters can choose to assault the barred door to break it in, though they might want it to still be whole if they wish to use the guard post as a defensive position against the other Santherans coming from the city. They could instead choose to scale the rough walls of the post (30% chance for non-thieves) to gain the roof,

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or they could use a rope and grapple in one of the high windows to make the climb easier (60% chance with rope). Even a stone or piece of wood with a ship's line tied to it used as a makeshift grapple could be thrown through one of the these upper windows (AC 8[11] to hit the window with a thrown grapple, 50% chance that it catches on something and holds firm). The Santherans, meanwhile, do their best to cut any lines they can reach; the windows are 5ft below the roofline, so a soldier lying on his belly and using his short sword can just reach such a rope.

Santheran Captain (Ftr6): HP 43; AC 2[17]; Atk +1 *trident* (1d8+3) or *javelin* (1d6+1); Move 12; Save 8 (cloak); AL N; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** multiple attacks (6) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD, +1 to hit and damage strength bonus, +1 to hit missile bonus.

Equipment: +1 *chainmail*, steel shield, +1 *trident*, 6 javelins, *cloak of protection* +1, *potion of flying*, *potion of healing*, silver badge of rank (75hs), 27gp.

Santheran Soldiers (4): HD 2; HP 13, 11x2, 9; AC 4[15]; Atk short sword (1d6) or shortbow x2 (1d6); Move 12; Save 16; AL N; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** none.

Equipment: chainmail, steel shield, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, *potion of healing*, pouch with 3d6gp, 2d20sp, 2d20+10cp.

Development: If the characters pretend to surrender to get the guards to open the door, the captain has a 75% chance to not trust them. However, if the ruse is detected, the captain likewise feigns acceptance to draw the characters in close and allow his men to loose arrows upon them at pointblank range.

The soldiers themselves are mediocre guards held together largely by the will of their captain. Guard duty at the post is usually left to those who are out of favor with the Opavians but not bad enough that they would be kicked out of the city guard. Their morale is low, and half of them were interrupted in off-shift sleep by the call to arms upon sighting the

Northlanders. The captain fights to the death. Until then, the soldiers fight diligently. They continue to fire their bows until their arrow stores run out (including those carried by their comrades guarding the door) and then throw loose rocks, cooking utensils, and other paraphernalia from the roof at any attackers within range. However, upon the captain's death, the soldiers surrender in hopes of mercy and survival.

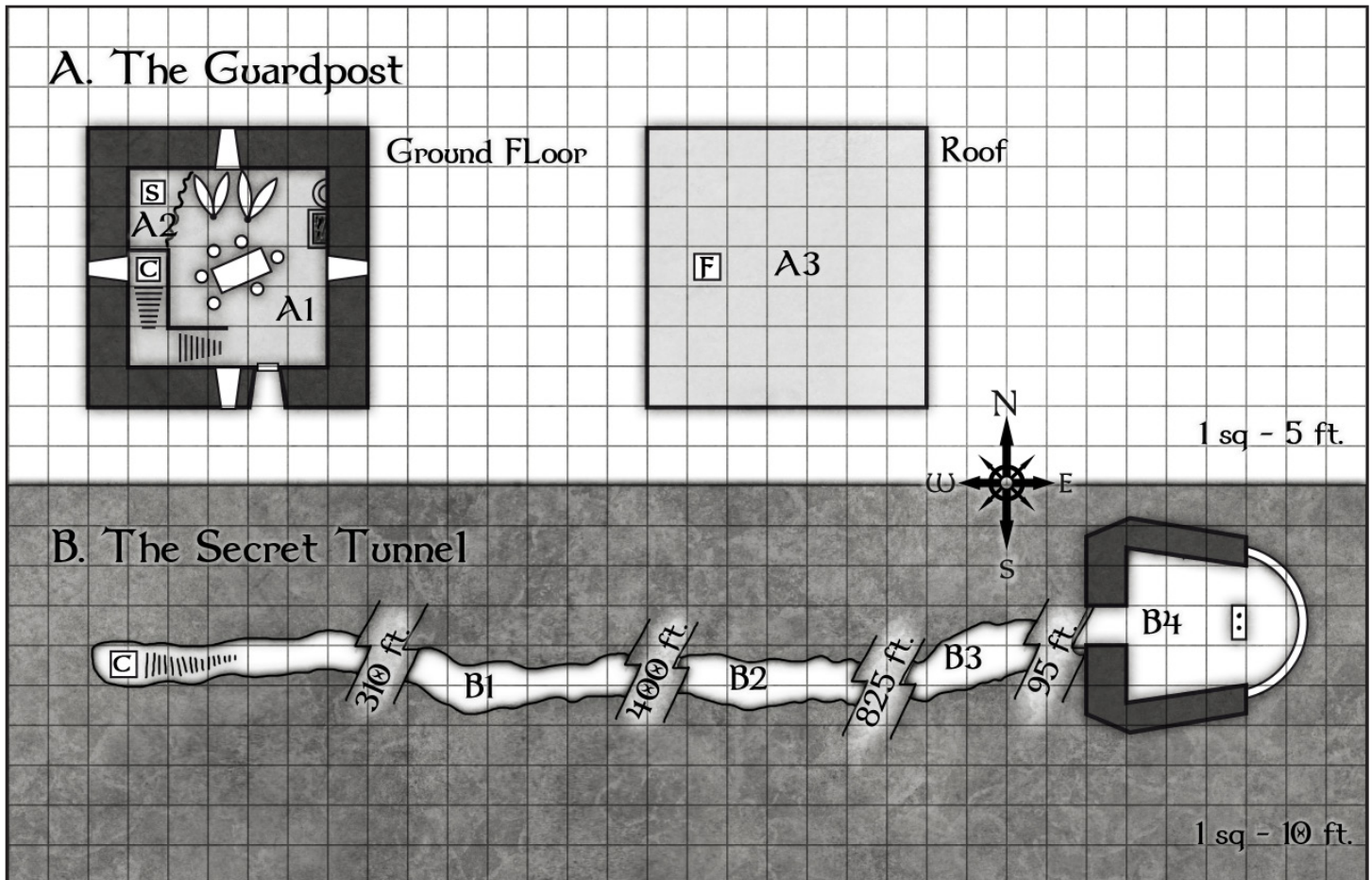
If the soldiers agree to surrender to the characters, they are hesitant to open the door and must be bribed (or at very least promised not to become thralls) before they do so. If the characters take any of the soldiers alive, they immediately confess the existence of the trapdoor inside the post (Area A2). They do not know precisely what dwells beyond it, except that Judge Opavian has made a deal with strangers who go down into the trapdoor and stay for days at a time. They can describe the strangers: one is male, the other they believe is female, though she always wears a baggy, dark cloak. They know the area beyond the trapdoor has something to do with the krakens that come to defend the town but do not know what.

A. The Guard Post

Once the players subdue or slay the Santheran guards, the outpost is theirs to fortify against the approaching Santheran soldiers and, ultimately, to explore.

Ar. Main Room

The single room inside this blockhouse is shadowy and cool, a welcome relief from the heat of the southern sun. The only light comes through a narrow opening at the top of each of the four walls just below the corbelled arches of the roof and a clay oil lamp resting on a large table in the center of the room. A number of stools are pulled up to this table,



and its top is cluttered with wooden plates and mugs with half-eaten food still on them. A stair constructed of wooden planks ascends to a trapdoor in the roof of the structure. A makeshift kitchen with an open stone hearth and large water basin is set up in one corner opposite the stairs, a flue made of tin piping rising from a hood above the hearth and running up and out the nearest window. The far wall of the room is hung with four hammocks where soldiers can sleep between shifts. Behind the stairs, blankets hanging from ropes strung between the walls and the supports partition off a section of the chamber.

The whole structure is obviously of ancient make, its walls, floor, and roof composed of finely cut ashlar mortared so closely together that not even a knife blade can slip between. In sections where the walls or roof have crumbled, these have been repaired with more recent masonry of obviously inferior craftsmanship.

Originally a part of the ancient city of Atrotiri, this building survived that long-ago cataclysm and has weathered the long years since in fairly good condition so that it makes a serviceable shoreline outpost for the city guard of Santhera. The trapdoor to the roof can be barred from the inside and has the same stats as the main door of the outpost. The kitchen area of the chamber has wooden shelves holding supplies of beans, dried fruit, salted fish, hard bread, olive oil, and amphorae of cheap wine sufficient to feed this small garrison for up to a week before being in need of re-provisioning. Leaning next to the hearth is a metal bar used to hold a stone plate over the fire for cooking.

Anyone taking the time to inspect the kitchen area can notice that the tin pipe that serves as a flue for the hearth is more than it appears. A second extension of the tin pipe runs up through the floor beside the hearth and ties in with the flue. Anyone disconnecting this lower pipe from the flue can feel a slight current of cool air flowing from it but cannot hear or see anything to tell where it originates. It is buried beneath the stone floor where it has been cemented into place with new mortar so that the characters cannot try to follow where it leads without major effort to dig up the very floor of the building.

A2. Officer's Bunk

This small area has been partitioned off with curtains to provide some modicum of privacy for its occupant. A single field cot rests on the floor here, and an old sea chest doubles as a table and writing desk. A clay lamp, its wick floating unlit in the thick olive oil in its bowl, rests upon this chest next to a quill, penknife, inkpot, and several rolls of unused parchment. Behind the chest stands an empty armor rack. Behind this rack is a tin pipe that runs from the floor, along the crease of the wall and up through a small hole cut in the ceiling.

The captain of the outpost occupied this small area. The sea chest holds his personal possessions, including a few articles of clothing and a leather satchel containing the captain's **treasure**. The tin pipe behind the armor stand runs from the floor to the ceiling. Anyone who attempts to disconnect it can tell that it creates a slight suction that draws air in from a grate in the roof above that disappears down into the floor below.

Anyone searching the floor beneath the bed has a 4-in-6 chance (or automatic if shown by one of the soldiers) to tell that one of the ashlar has had the mortar around its edges removed and a small groove cut along one edge. If the metal bar from the kitchen area or a crowbar (a weapon blade is not strong enough unless made of adamantite) is used as a lever, the stone can be lifted to reveal a stair leading into a stone tunnel that descends to the east. The tin pipe running from the roof above can clearly be seen running along the length of this tunnel as it disappears into

darkness below, and the pipe running under the floor from the hearth can also be seen joining the tunnel and running down along its ceiling.

Development: Whether the characters think of it or not, Fretr suggests that going into the secret tunnel would be a better place to avoid and, if necessary, hold off any Santheran soldiers that come looking for them rather than trying to defend the entire guard post. If nothing else, the narrowness of the tunnel requires any enemies to come in no more than two abreast and evens the odds in a fight considerably. Plus, there could be another way out that is not apparent from the surface.

Treasure: The leather satchel holds 230gp, a long linen shirt with a gold bracteate sewn to the front (250hs), a brass key to a chest back in Santhera (Referee's choice as to what it contains and where it lies), and a bundle of 6 quills.

A3. Rooftop

The roof of the structure is flat and skillfully crafted of the same great stones supported by a series of corbelled arches just below the roofline. The roof has no battlement or railing, and it is a 20ft drop to the beach below. A wooden trapdoor that can be barred from within provides access to the roof. Next to this trapdoor, a tin pipe protrudes through the roof and is covered with a layer of netting from old fishing nets that have been tied over the top of it. Anyone examining this pipe can detect a slight suction pulling air into it.

Part Three: Beneath Rán's Hammer

Descending the stairs from the secret door in the outpost leads into a tunnel that runs deep under the shore.

B. The Secret Tunnel

The stairs from the guard post descend a total of 30ft and are finely crafted from the same fitted ashlar as the building above, though these are in much better condition, having been largely preserved within the ground. The tunnel itself is 10ft wide and 8ft high. A tin pipe, approximately 6 inches in diameter, runs along the ceiling on either side of the tunnel and is held in place by wooden braces. These are obviously of much newer installation than the tunnel itself and are the two pipes described in **Areas A1** and **A3**. The pipe that ascends from below and exits at **Area A1** serves as an exhaust vent for the air below, and the pipe that originates at **Area A3** pulls fresh air in from the surface above, keeping a constant circulation in the depths far below the ground.

Fretr and any survivors of the *Vindurbrottingr* will not descend any farther. Instead, they take the oil lamps from the outpost above and then close the secret trapdoor. It is easily opened from within by pushing upward, but they take the metal bar from **Area A1** with them to prevent easy access for the Santherans. Fretr says that they will hold the entrance as long as they can but encourages the characters to explore further and discover a way out.

After descending 30ft and then turning to the east, the condition of the tunnel changes. Rather than a straight-hewn tunnel, this is a jagged course requiring steps up and down, gradually going deeper into the earth. After traveling some distance, the walls begin to be plastered with fresh tar that shows damp spots in many places. By this point, the air inside the tunnel reeks of tar and rotten fish (perhaps a sweet smell to characters who enjoy lutfisk) and comes at a constant, almost howling breeze from down the dark depths of the tunnel. The two metal pipes running along the ceiling continue down the tunnel as far as the players can see.

There are patches in the tunnel walls where the tar has worn thin, allowing seawater to bubble through the volcanic stone to leave knee-deep puddles through which the characters must wade. Barnacles and various seaweeds grow on the dripping seawater, rich in nutrients from the stone, and serve to disguise the traps in the tunnel.

Br. Strangle Weed Patch

A particularly lush proliferation of seaweed grows abundantly in the tunnel, blossoming in the damp tar growing on the walls. The growth is a patch of **strangle weed**. This plant's rudimentary intelligence has become accustomed to having a fresh fish thrown to it anytime someone comes within range, and it will not attack if the characters do so. Otherwise, it lashes out to feed on any living thing that comes within reach.

Strangle Weed: HD 8; HP 53; AC 5[14]; Atk slam (1d6); Move 3; Save 8; AL N; CL/XP 9/1100; **Special:** camouflage, constriction (save or be held, automatic 1d6 points of damage per round), resist fire (50%), surprise (1–4 on 1d6). (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 523)

B2. Tentacles Trap

This dry stretch of tunnel has been **trapped** so that writhing tentacles erupt from the floor when anyone reaches the point in the tunnel where the trap has been set. The tentacles attack anyone within a 20ft radius for 12 rounds. Anyone in the area is attacked by 1d6+2 tentacles per round for 2d4 points of damage plus 1 point per attacking tentacle. The tentacles attack as 5HD creatures.

B3. Crab Swarm Trap

This stretch of the tunnel has 5ft of water in a 15ft-long stretch. At the midway point of this pool of seawater, a trap has been placed to summon forth a crab swarm into the water of the pool.

Crab Swarm: HD 5; HP 36; AC 5[14]; Atk swarm (1d8+4); Move 9/12 (swimming); Save 12; AL N; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** swarming attack.

B4. The Drowned Maid's Light

The tunnel runs for almost a third of a mile before opening into the hollow interior of the sunken lighthouse.

The tunnel levels out, its floor now constantly covered in a couple of inches of seawater. The air is much cooler and has a salty tang, and you know you must be some distance out under the harbor by now. The tunnel now comes to a smooth stone corridor, perfectly round, crafted of great stones skillfully fitted together with almost no seams. Condensation still gathers on the stone, but it is no longer covered in tar, and there are no longer any areas of seepage. The two tin pipes continue their course along the ceiling of the tunnel, but now you can see that they are tethered to a ladder of ancient corroded bronze that has been affixed to the ceiling and travels in the same direction you are heading.

The building is ancient, built by Atrotiri hands with cyclopean blocks without seams. It lies on its side, the tower now a long corridor with a transparent dome at its end. Anyone looking down the corridor can readily see the unearthly flashing of a light in the distance, the same flashing that they saw up in the bay during the attack. When the characters have traversed the 80ft length of the fallen tower, read the following.

The round corridor suddenly ends at a wide chamber. Its floor, walls, and ceiling are of the same tightly fitted stonework, and its far end is capped by a great crystalline window, like a dome tilted on its side that looks out on a magnificent view of the ancient, devastated city submerged



beneath the harbor. These picturesque ruins are not what capture your eye, however, for through the wavering waters you can see in the distance the thrashing tangle of multiple krakens in a great free-for-all melee near the harbor mouth.

Nearer to hand, at the edge of the crystalline dome, an enormous amber jewel sits atop a stone altar. The jewel is a perverse shape, cut to have four twisted legs, a trailing upright head, and broad wings standing raised between which the yellow jewel is suspended. It is this jewel that is the source of the pulsating light, growing brighter and then darker in a nearly hypnotic rhythm. Two dark figures stand on either side of the jewel and altar, one in a baggy hooded cloak and the other in shiny, smooth, formfitting leather. Both stand with their hands on the strange stone altar and jewel.

The crystal-glass is nearly a foot thick, unbroken even in the devastation of Atrotiri and impervious to anything the characters can throw at it. The strangely cut pulsating gem is in the shape of the strand-like heart of a squid. It is the shape of a kraken's heart, in fact.

The rest of the fallen lighthouse serves as a wizard's workshop. A set of stone shelves hold jars of preserved squids and cuttlefish: some whole, some in pieces, some featuring mutated, almost-humanoid faces. Jars labeled with cryptic arcane symbols hold powders and dark liquids. Overhead, the two tin pipes from the guard post run to a huge set of bellows that operate magically on their own. The fresh air pulled into the lighthouse creates positive pressure, forming the wind that blows back down the tunnel and forces the stale air out through the second pipe (and accounts for how the room's occupants did not hear the characters' approach even if they set off the traps). If the characters seek to destroy the tin piping or the bellows, they find that it takes several hours for the air in the chamber to go stale.

The two figures are the sea-mage **Alithrusia** and her thrall and apprentice **Elijos**. They stand on either side of the heart-stone and direct their focus into it, causing its pulsations. The wizardess wears a heavy black cloak over her rotund body. The apprentice wears formfitting leather armor made of shiny, smooth cephalopod hide. When the party enters, they both look up from their work of laying hands on the heart-stone.

Alithrusia (MU9): HP 32; AC 4[15] or 2[17] (missile) and 4[15] (melee) from *shield* spell; **Atk** 2 tentacle slams (1d4+1), bite (1d6), +1 dagger (1d4+1); **Move** 12 (climb 9); **Save** 5 (ring); **AL** C; **CL/XP** 12/2000; **Special:** immune to poison, +2 saves vs. spells, wands and staves, spells (4/3/3/2/1), spit ink (poison, 1d4 damage for 4 rounds, save avoids, can be wiped off to end recurring damage), tentacle grafts.

Spells: 1st—*charm person*, *detect magic*, *shield*, *sleep*; 2nd—*darkness* 15ft radius, *invisibility*, *web*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*; 4th—*dimension door*, *polymorph self*; 5th—*wall of stone*.

Equipment: bracers of defense AC 6[13] (shaped to depict squids, fish and strange aquatic humanoids cast in a pale yellow gold, 2200hs), *cloak of the squid**, +1 dagger, ring of protection +2, wand of magic missiles (9 charges), bag of holding, 3 potions of extra healing, scroll (*teleport*), 3 emeralds (450hs each), 360gp.

*See Sidebar

Alithrusia has affixed the membranes of a squid's eyes over her own to give her excellent vision in dim light (5-in-6 chance to notice things in darkness). They also give her the strange bi-lobed pupils of a cuttlefish.

By means profane and perverse, Alithrusia has managed to graft ink glands into the front of her neck that allow her to produce and spit kraken ink at a single target within 10ft (to-hit roll required, 1d4 points of damage for 4 rounds unless wiped away). The process by which she implanted these ink glands rendered her immune to any nonmagical poisons in the process. This process caused unnatural thickening of her neck, as well as hideous scarring. If used underwater, this attack creates a poisonous cloud in a 10ft spread. She can spit this ink once every round.

Medium Miscellaneous Magical Item

Cloak of the Squid

A *cloak of the squid* appears to be made of the shiny, leathery hide of some aquatic creature. If taken into water, the cloak adheres to the wearer and he appears identical to a giant squid. The wearer gains the ability to breathe underwater in this form and gains the ability to swim like the squid (swim 9, jet 27).

While in human form, the wearer gains the bite of a giant squid, dealing 1d6 points of damage with a hardened beak that forms around the wearer's mouth.

Giant Squid: HD 6; AC 7[12] head and tentacles; 3[16] body; **Atk** 10 tentacles (1d3); **Move** 0 (swim 9); **Save** 11; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 9/1,100; **Special:** constrict (automatic 1d6 damage after tentacle hit), ink (cloud), jet (swim 27). (**Monstrosities** 457)

Because of her extensive experimentation with marine life, particularly cephalopods, Alithrusia has successfully grafted two giant squid tentacles to her shoulders. These tentacles allow her to make 2 slam attacks that deal 1d4+1 points of damage to anyone within 10ft. They also allow her to climb walls easily. The tentacles and added musculature in her shoulders necessary to control them effectively are concealed under her heavy cloak but give her a gnarled and hunched appearance.

Elijos (MU3/Thf4): HP 23; AC 5[14]; **Atk** +1 rapier (1d6+1 plus sea urchin venom) or dagger (1d6 plus sea urchin venom); **Move** 12; **Save** 8 (ring); **AL** C; **CL/XP** 8/800; **Special:** backstab (x2), +2 saves vs spells, wands and staves, +2 saves vs. traps and magical devices, spells (3/1), thieving skills.

Spells: 1st—*charm person*, *magic missile*, *sleep*; 2nd—*phantasmal force*.

Thieving Skills: Climb 88%, Tasks/Traps 30%, Hear 4 in 6, Hide 25%, Silent 35%, Locks 25%.

Equipment: +1 squid leather armor, +1 rapier, 3 daggers, ring of protection +1, potion of extra healing, sea urchin venom (3 doses, save or paralysis for 1d3 hours), thieves' tools, pouch containing 38gp, 56sp and 12pp.

Tactics: When the characters are first spotted, Alithrusia and her apprentice make ranged attacks to hold the characters back. The first time a blow strikes the wizardess, she shrugs the cloak off of her shoulders to reveal her horrifying grafted squid tentacles. She uses these dexterous appendages to fight and cast spells so that she can keep her hands in contact with the heart-stone. As long as she does so, it continues its strange, pulsating flashes. Elijos attacks with his rapier, hoping to paralyze victims with his sea urchin venom to keep them away from Alithrusia. He is utterly devoted to his mistress, and she herself harbors a strange fondness for the apprentice-thrall.

Development: If Alithrusia is forced to remove her hands from the amber jewel, it ceases its hypnotic pulses, though once she touches it again (which she does if within reach of it), it starts up again. When the pulsing light stops, the krakens in the bay cease their fighting and eye each other warily. But when the pulsing begins again, they renew their mad combat with redoubled fury.

If either the wizardess or her apprentice falls, the other pulls a hitherto hidden lever. With a loud hissing pop, the seal that holds the crystalline dome to the end of the lighthouse is released, and immediately water begins pouring in through this groove. If it is Alithrusia who still lives, she attacks with her most-potent remaining attacks for one more round before using *dimension door* to step through the crystalline dome and into the water outside. There, she activates her cloak and begins to swim away.

NORTHLANDS SAGA: THE LONG NIGHT OF WINTER

If Elijos instead survives, he continues to fight madly while weeping over the body of his mistress and lover, not caring that his doom is imminent.

Once the seals of the lighthouse dome are ruptured, it is only 3 rounds until the dome itself comes free and floods the entirety of the lighthouse and the tunnel for almost a quarter mile of its length. Anyone who is unable to breathe underwater surely drowns. However, the pumping of air into the lighthouse interior has had an unexpected effect. The positive pressure causes the dome to be pushed outward and swing upward in the 3rd round to form an air pocket within its concavity. Any characters (or enemies) still in **Area B4** find themselves swept upward with this sudden torrent and are able to tread water in this air pocket as it quickly begins to rise, or they can hang onto its edge to be pulled to the surface. The air-filled dome quickly rises 70ft to the surface of the bay where it tips over in a blast of spray as it releases the air pressure trapped beneath it. At this point, it is now floating upside down as a crystalline bowl and remains afloat as long as it does not become swamped with water. Swimming characters can easily climb aboard and bail to keep it afloat and even awkwardly paddle it toward shore.

Concluding the Adventure

The torrents of flooding water quickly destroy the sunken lighthouse under the stresses of their pressure. Its only whole piece, the crystal dome, floats safely at the surface, having risen from below on its bubble-wings. Though the characters may be safe for the moment, their peril is far from over. With the fall of the wizardess and her apprentice, the heart-stone is no longer active or directed, and an eerie calm has fallen over the dozen-odd krakens who have until this point been battling at the harbor mouth. They seem confused but quickly catch sight of the characters and their odd vessel.

The krakens reach the characters before they have any chance to make it to shore. One spots and quickly retrieves the now-darkened heart-stone from where it rested among the rubble of the lighthouse. Another of the monsters plucks the wizardess and her apprentice from where they float, shaking out any vestiges of life left in them. The other sea-giants examine the wreckage of the laboratory. It does not take their powerful minds long to realize that they have been fooled by powerful magic. The primal, pulsating call of a vibrant female kraken in estrus that they have been beholden to was an illusion created by the strange amber jewel. All of their lust-madness and battling was for nothing. The kraken holding the heart-stone easily crushes it within his tentacle.

In burbling Nørsk the krakens voice their appreciation for the characters and their efforts to destroy the sea wizards and their foul spell. For more

than a year now, they have suffered in the hot, shallow seas, kept nearby with the draw of the heart-stone to be at the beck and call of the wizards rather than recline in their cool, dark lairs in the deep seas of the North. The krakens do not care to repay the wergild for the Northlanders lost during the lustful rampages, but they agree the characters and any of the surviving Northlander folk may plunder what is left of the island city ... after they have had their own vengeance.

The krakens jet toward Santhera, letting out a terrifying chorus of shrill and gurgling war cries. Their tentacles crush the fishing fleet resting on the beach and quickly turn the town walls to rubble as they crawl forth onto the land. A few Santheran soldiers make a halfhearted attempt to stand and fight, but their puny weapons are meaningless against the hides of the gargantuan sea-beasts. Collective screams of pain and terror can be heard from within the ruined walls for some hours before the last of the cephalopodic horrors crawls forth once more and returns to the waters of the open sea.

The characters and Fretr's crew watch from the beach near the guard post as Santhera is devastated and reduced to so much ruin just as Atrotiri had been so many years before, the sea reclaiming the legacy proudly held by the Santherans.

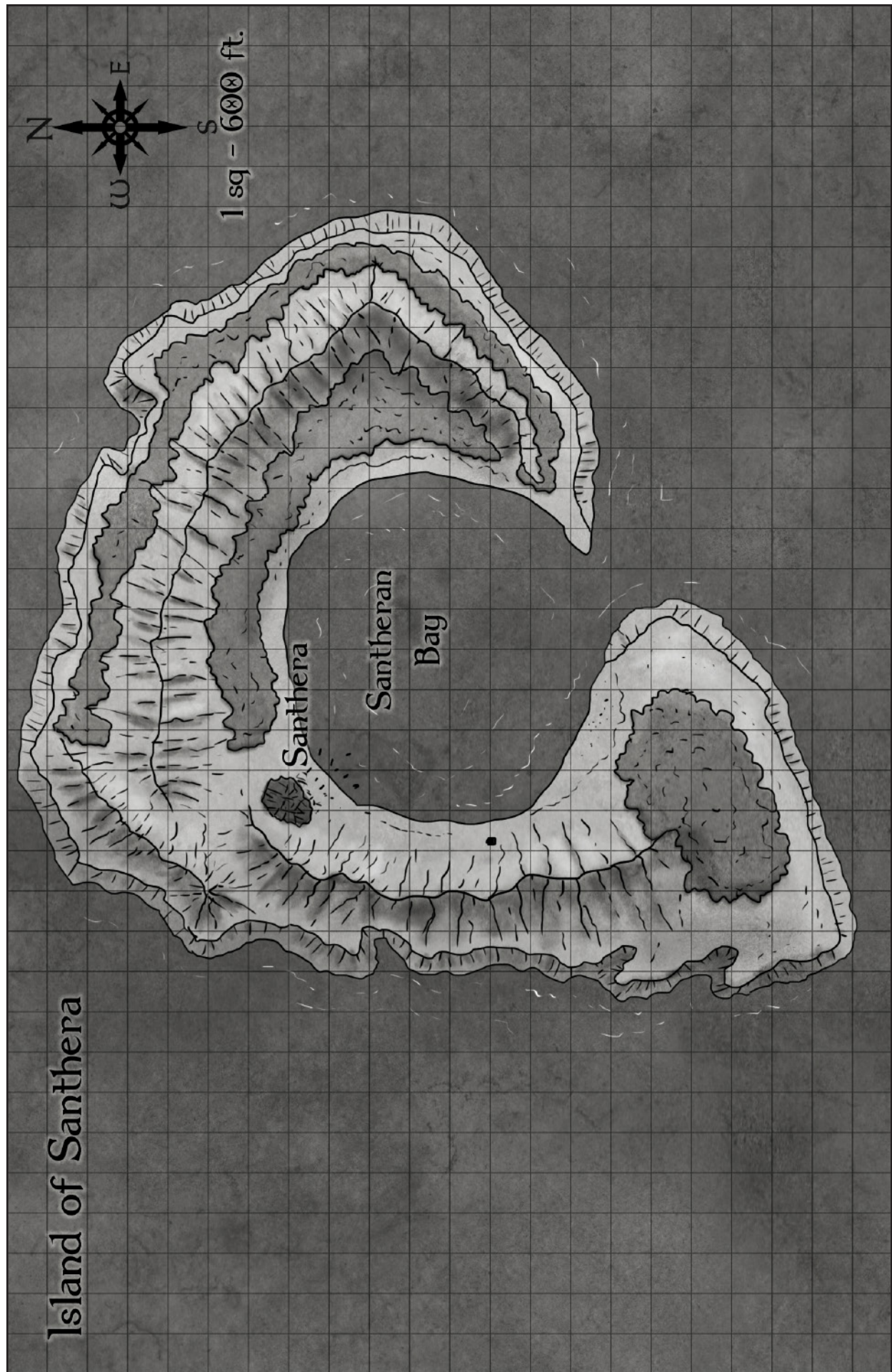
Gradually in their battle-daze, the remnants of the Northlander fleet gather with the characters. Most of the raiders are on foot, staggering from wherever they washed up on the sandy arms of the harbor's natural seawall. A few longships are still seaworthy, but even these need heavy repairs. It is just as well, since there is much to plunder and perhaps some Santherans that escaped the onslaught who would make fine thralls. With Arne fallen in the initial harbor battle, the characters now lead the raid into the second ruined city of the island and return to the Northlands with a tale of their own heroic deeds.

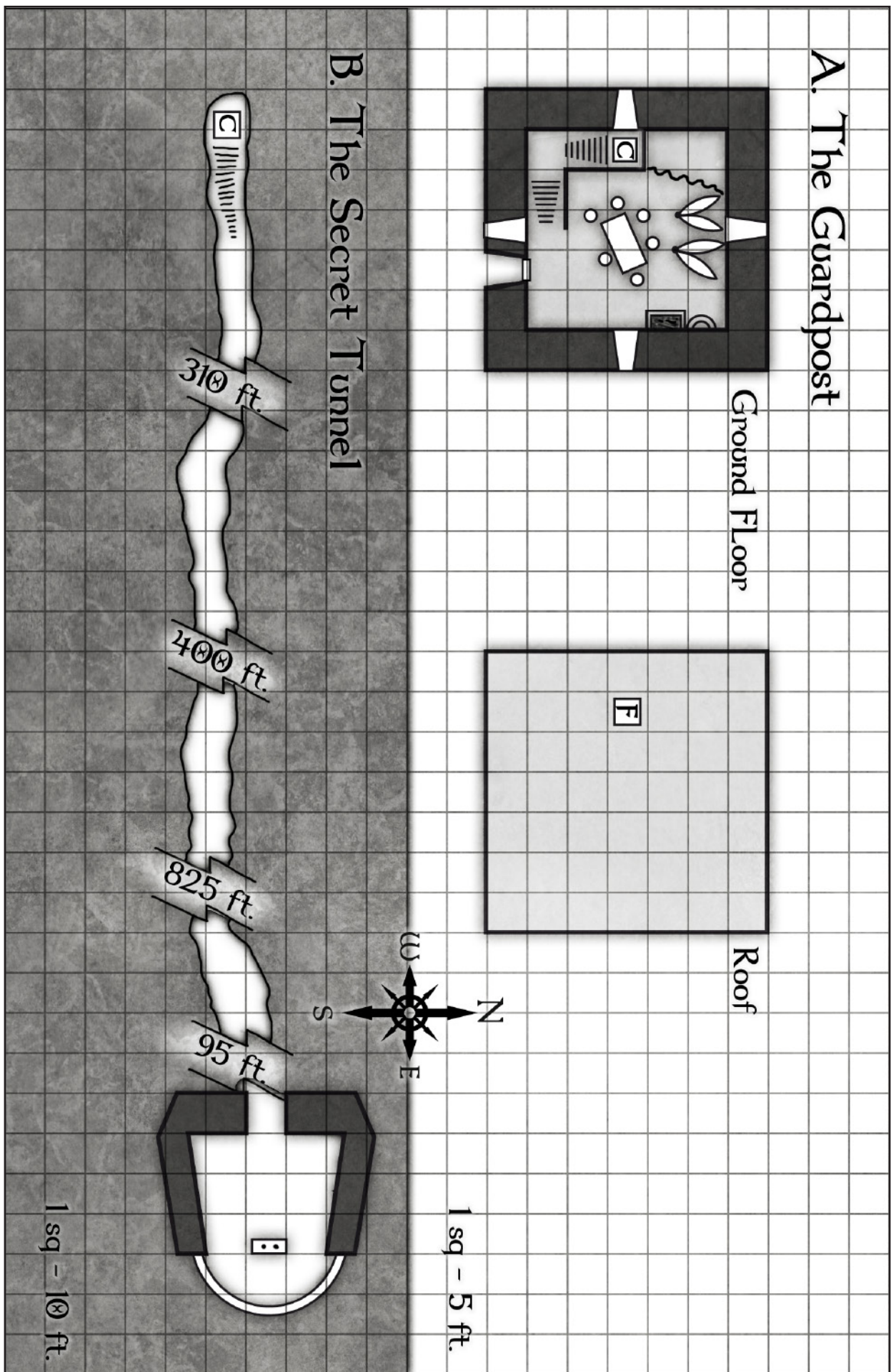
Plunder

For their heroics in overcoming the Santheran threat and then leading the remnant of the fleet in plundering the ruined city, the characters get first pick of the loot, receiving not only their normal crewman share for their position aboard the *Vindurbrottingr* and their agreed-upon hero's share for acquitting themselves with mind's-worth, but they also receive a commander's share for their role in bringing about the ultimate success of the raid. All in all, each character should roll 5d6 and multiply the result by 100 to determine the value in hacksilver of the shares of plunder that he recovers from the ruins. All of this is in addition to any loot the characters recovered in their own foray ashore and into the lighthouse under the harbor. They are not expected to split that plunder.

Any further plunder should be determined by the Referee.

ISLAND OF SANTHERA - PLAYER'S MAP





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NLS2: The Raid

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