

TALK LIKE A PIRATE ~~DAY~~ *Week*

IN STORE GAMING EVENT

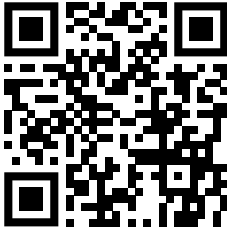
2025



TALK LIKE A PIRATE WEEK 2025

Here's how to run a great one-shot or campaign starter for Pirate Borg. This will take about 3 to 4 hours, or could be extended into two sessions.

1. **Create PCs** (~15 minutes) or have everyone scan the Random Pirate QR code (remind them to screen shot their characters!)
2. **Introductions.** Have each player introduce their PC. Then have them vote (or argue) for who is captain! Give them a small ship (like a sloop or brigantine) to start, but they probably won't use it in a short session.
3. **Setup some backstory.** Tell them the tale of the infamous pirate La Buse and how he tossed a clue about the location of his treasure into the crowd as he was hanged.
4. **Start them in the cemetery.** Use the adventure's backstory to flesh out details. Optionally, pick one of the "rival crews" as their ally, and another one or two as competing crews.
5. **Give them the cyryptogram scoll and the Gold Bug handouts.** Let them decode the message and then they can get started solving puzzles!
6. **Run the adventure.**
7. **If they survive,** have each player narrate how they spend their newfound fortune.
8. **Set a date for session number 2!**
9. **Optional:** Mention that this adventure is preview content for **The Dark Caribbean** a forthcoming new book by Limithron, will playtest material avialable on Patreon (www.patreon.com/limithron)
10. **Optional:** Mention that the **core book is available now** at your friendly local game store, and that the new **Starter Set** and **Down Among the Dead** expansion book should be available early next year!



RANDOM PC GENERATOR

pirateborg.com/randompirate



The Dark Caribbean

A setting and campaign book for Pirate Borg. On
Kickstarter next year. Previews on Patreon now.



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THE GOLD BUG

and the Treasure of La Buse

WHAT IS THIS?

This is a trope-filled pirate dungeon, the **Buzzard's Nest**, inspired by real life events surrounding the life of Olivier Levasseur a.k.a. La Buse, *The Gold-Bug* by Edgar Allen Poe, and classic treasure hunt media like *Goonies*, *National Treasure*, *Uncharted 4*, and the *Indiana Jones* series.

It can be a modular adventure site, inserted into an ongoing campaign, or can serve as a one-shot by beginning at the entrance to the dungeon, important clues in hand.

It can also be run with less combat than other adventures, though, if run as written, it will still prove to be a deadly challenge for reckless groups.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE: *La Buse was French. As such, his cipher and all the cryptograms in this location should be written in French, but are presented in English for ease of use at the gaming table.*

WHERE IS IT?

By default, the Buzzard's Nest is east of Petit-Goâve on the island of Hispaniola, but you should feel free to place it anywhere that makes sense for your campaign.

Historically, La Buse and Paulsgrave both left the Caribbean for Africa: you might extend the adventure with a long voyage to **Madagascar** or to the small island of **Réunion**, where La Buse was captured and hanged.

Alternatively, you can keep your game focused on the Caribbean by placing the dungeon anywhere a large cemetery would make sense: on the French island of Guadeloupe, outside Havana, or next to a large monastery.

If you change its location, make sure to **replace the message in the gold bug's prism** with a new clue.

BACKSTORY

- **Olivier Levasseur** was a talented **architect** in his youth.
- Commissioned as a French privateer with a **letter of marque** from King Louis XIV, he eventually turned to piracy and fell in with the Brethren of the Coast.
- His **pet vulture Aello**—"The Harpy of the Caribbean"—alongside his backstabbing, traitorous nature, earned him the moniker **La Buse** ("The Buzzard").
- After years of raiding, plundering, double-crossing, and betraying, he and his notorious crew amassed a **legendary treasure hoard**.
- Having more than they could spend in a lifetime, **La Buse designed a dungeon** to house their trove. He christened it "**The Buzzard's Nest**".
- La Buse devised a **cipher** to encode messages between him and his crew. His sorcerous quartermaster **Paulsgrave Williams** engraved a cryptogram onto a **gold bug**.
- After the construction of the Buzzard's Nest was complete, the **crew and officers were massacred** to keep the site a secret. Paulsgrave **cast a ritual** that bound the dead men as guardians of the treasure.
- Using the cipher, La Buse **encoded a scroll** detailing the treasure's location.
- The two **parted ways**: La Buse kept the scroll and Paulsgrave kept the bug.
- Years later, **La Buse was captured and hanged**. Before his final moments, he tossed a **necklace bearing a small vial** into the crowd. His last words were: "My treasures to he who will know how to understand!"
- Inside the vial: La Buse's **Cryptogram Scroll**.

HOOKS

Add or subtract details about which clues each NPC has to shorten or extend the adventure.

1. The PCs are in the crowd when La Buse is hanged. One of them catches his necklace (or they must chase the one who does). Word spreads that they have the clue. A shady cutthroat named **Catgut** approaches, revealing an item needed to find the treasure (the **Gold Bug**). He offers to split the treasure if they'll share the scroll. Little does Catgut know, the ghoulish **Paulsgrave Williams**—the pirate he stole the bug from—is hot on his trail.
2. La Buse's treasure is an oft-told dock side tall tale: every sailor knows a deckhand that once met a pirate that helped build "The Buzzard's Nest", and hundreds of copies of the infamous cryptogram circulate. But none have yet decoded it, nor know where to start looking. Enter **Paulsgrave Williams**—a pale, gaunt sorcerer—who knows *exactly* where the treasure is buried and has the *original* version of the scroll. But first, he needs help recovering an item (the **Gold Bug**) from a the thief **Catgut**.
3. **Charles De Blénac**⁵² has dispatched treasure hunters after hearing rumors of La Buse's hoard. Lead by **François Surcouf**, the crew is well armed, but ignorant in the ways of boorish pirates. They are hiring "consultants" in exchange for a "modest" portion of the find. Surcouf has recently acquired both the **Gold Bug** and the **scroll**.
4. **Black Sam Bellamy**⁴³, La Buse's old partner in crime, claims a portion of the treasure is owed to him. He and his crew are in port shaking down pirates to find a man that has "a gold beetle with funny markings on it". They have a **copy of the cryptogram**, but they don't know it's missing a vital hidden piece of information.
5. **Father Gómez** and Inquisition clerics are searching for a religious relic: the **Fiery Cross of Goa**. They believe it was plundered by La Buse. They need muscle to help them retrieve it, and believe it might be located under a cemetery near one of their churches, but possess no other clues.

RIVAL CREWS

The PCs aren't the only ones looking for the treasure. Add as many of these parties as you desire.

For a situation similar to many classic treasure hunt stories, pick one crew, have them begin as allies, then reveal their betrayal at the worst possible moment.

For a "great race" style adventure, add all the rivals, and prepare for battle royale!

1. **Catgut**, a foolish thief with very few teeth and even less common sense, and a longboat full of nitwits. They have a copy of the cryptogram, and found a way in via the **Sea Cliff 6**. A few of them are wounded or dead from traps inside, but they are armed, dangerous, and—worst of all—*panicking*.
2. **Paulsgrave Williams**, La Buse's old quartermaster, and a novice sorcerer. He's is tall, grim, and as pale as a day old corpse. He's come to recover the **Book of the Dead** in the **Museum Hallway 22**, but acts as if he's here for treasure.
3. **François Surcouf** (burley, condescending, patriotic) and a team of French marines sent to investigate and recover the treasure stolen from "His Majesty the Sun King, Louis XIV". They employ outdated, predictable military strategies. If they possess none of the clues to find the treasure, they will track and follow other pirates that do.
4. **Black Sam Bellamy**⁴³ and a crew of seasoned pirates. He has a temper, but ultimately just needs the treasure to finance rebellion operations in Nassau Town.
*① To make Bellamy an even larger threat, add his wife **The Witch of Wellfleet**⁴³ to his crew.*
5. A group of inquisitors and mercenaries lead by **Father Gómez** (fat, greasy, deceitful). He is only interested in finding the **Fiery Cross of Goa**; his crew stuffs their pockets with loot when he's not looking.



THE GOLD BUG

A golden scarab beetle about the size of a small plum. Egyptian in origin.

- **Inset in the center:** A **triangular piece of glass** that extends through the entire bug.
- ∩ **On the front:** An engraved icon of a large bird with an eye on its chest.
- ∩ **On the back:** The alphabet arranged in four patterns, which form a Pigpen cipher.

LOOK THROUGH THE PIECE OF GLASS: Light fractures into a rainbow; it is a prism. A kaleidoscopic message reads:

EAST OF PETIT-GOÂVE

- ① If you relocate the cemetery, replace this clue with one that will lead the PCs there instead. You might even extend the adventure by making this a *series* of connected clues.



THE CIPHER

La Buse's secret code is a simple character substitution cipher known as a **Pigpen cipher**. It employs four geometric grids, each filled with a letter. For example:

לטל ססכ תרת
 טטל ססכ תרת
 V><^ V><^

DECODES TO:

ABC DEF GHI
 JKL MNO PQR
 STUV WXYZ

LIKEWISE:

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

ENCODES TO:

כסכ כסכ >סל סל >לסו

A NOTE ON CIPHERS

Some players love decoding ciphers and solving puzzles; others do not. Feel free to adapt accordingly. Decoding La Buse's scroll might count as enough in-game experience to hand wave future decoding attempts, or you can skip the puzzle altogether and just read the players messages in plain English.

LA BUSE'S CRYPTOGRAM SCROLL

Just before La Buse was hanged at the gallows, he tossed a small vial attached to a cord necklace into the crowd and declared: "My treasures to he who will know how to understand!"

Inside the vial was a small scroll, encoded with a secret message.

IN BLACK INK IT READS:

VΠΟΣΙΟ >ΠΟ ΚΝΣΚ ΖΙΟΝ>
 >ΠΟ ΚΝΣΚ ΖΙΟΝ>
 VΘΛΑΘΘ>Π ΛΦΝΠΠ ΠΓΠΠ
 ΚΝΣΚ>Π'V ΦΓΠΠ> Θ<Θ
 ΠΦΠΠ >ΠΟ ΖΙΟΝ>
 >Θ Λ<Λ><ΦΟ'V ΘΠΠ>

>ΠΓΦ>ΠΠΠ ΚΝΣΚΦΠΠΠ
 ΠΦΠΠ>Π ΠΦ ΠΦΠ>ΠΦΠΠ>

DECODES TO:

"WHERE THE DEAD REST
 THE MANGOES CREST
 SEVENTH BRANCH HIGH
 DEATH'S RIGHT EYE
 DROP THE PEST
 TO VULTURE'S NEST

THIRTEEN DEGREES
 NORTH OF NORTHWEST"

If the scroll is charged with a bright light source, an additional glow-in-the-dark message can be read when in darkness:

ΠΠΠ ΚΝΣΚΦΠΠΠ VΠΠ>
 ΠΠ VΠ<>ΠΦΠΠ>

DECODES AS:

"ONE DEGREE WEST
 OF SOUTHWEST"

D20 ENCOUNTERS

Roll (or pick) an encounter: in every room, every 30 minutes in game, or when you need something to happen (like if the PCs stall or attempt a long task like mining or camping).

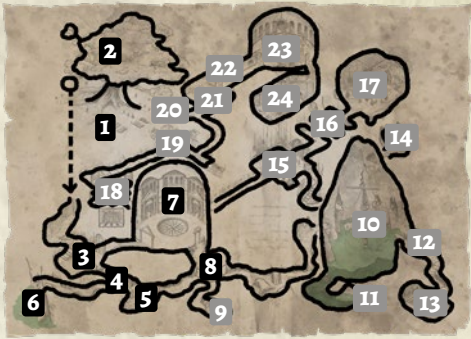
- Recent **footprints** in the dirt.
- A cauldron of **d100** bats blast past.
- d100** small **spiders**. Cobwebs *everywhere*.
- Tripwire bomb** set by a rival crew: Easy to see if careful, everyone close tests AGILITY DR12 if triggered, 2d8 DMG.
- Caltrops** dropped by a rival crew: PRESENCE DR12 to notice or one PC takes d4 DMG.
- Drops of blood** leading to one of the doors.
- Loose **rocks** fall and settle.
- d6 rats** scurvy from the light.
- A eerie **wind** gushes through the caves.
- Skeleton** of a long dead explorer. Has a letter with details about a nearby trap.
- Skeleton** from a pirate, a knife in its back.
- Corpse** from a rival crew.
- d2 Desendants of Aello**²²⁷, skulking.
- 1 Desendants**²²⁷ hunting **d4 gulls**^{PB87}.
- d8 carrion gulls**^{PB87}, pecking at everything.
- d2 rival(s)**, backtracking to get something.
- d6 rival crew**, exploring or scouting.
- The **leader** of the rival crew and **2d4 crew**.
- 1 ghost crew**^{PB96}, one of of La Buse's.
- A single **Pirate Lord Wight**²³¹, patrolling.

EXTENDING THE ADVENTURE

- Separate acquiring the cryptogram scroll and/or the gold bug into their own missions.
- Replace the cryptogram scroll with one of its copies, extending the hunt and requiring multiple trips into the dungeon.
- Create a **treasure map**^{PB119} required to find the island and/or the graveyard.
- Add your own rooms in place of the unused doorways in the **Compass Rose Room 7**.
- Devise your own compass bearings and corresponding clues inside the compass puzzle **7**. The resulting clues can even lead to locations on other islands!
- One of the rival crew got there first: the treasure room is empty once found! The quest continues...



THE BUZZARD'S NEST



1 CEMETERY An expansive burial ground, graves in all directions, lined with trees. Moss, vines, brambles, and fallen leaves throughout.

- **Headstones, mausoleums, anonymous grave markers, and unmarked graves.**
- A **colossal mango tree** towers over one area.

2 COLOSSAL MANGO TREE 70' tall, looms over dozens of graves and ledger stones.

- **Climbing** it is easy (no test required).
- On the **seventh large branch** from the ground, about 50' out, a **skull** is nailed between two forking branches. Finding the skull without clues from the **cryptogram scrolls** takes 4d20 hours.

▶ **DROP AN OBJECT (I.E. THE GOLD BUG) THROUGH THE RIGHT EYE OF THE SKULL:** It falls 50' to the ground, landing on a grave. The tombstone reads:



HERE LIES
AGNES KERWOOD
FROM THE NORTHEAST
DIED 5TH OF
NOVEMBER, 1710

- ▶ **DIG UP AGNES'S GRAVE:**
- **In the grave:** a rotting coffin containing a skeleton in a simple black dress.
 - **Under the coffin:** A 2' x 2' stone slab engraved with a bird, wings spread wide, with a human skull in place of its head.
- ▶ **BREAK OR MOVE THE SLAB:** a **rope ladder** extends 50' down into a dark 3' x 3' shaft.

3 LANDING A tunnel leads to a tall room.

- 15'-tall marble **statue of La Buse:**
 - Bald, muscular, a scar over one eye.
 - His right arm is extended, holding a **brass bullseye lantern** (can be removed).
 - On his left arm is an **huge vulture** (painted black, peeling from age).
- A **plaque** at the base of the statue reads (in plain English):

ABANDON ALL HOPE,
YE WHO VEX THE VULTURE

- Fresh **footprints** (from d4 people) lead from a rocky passage to double doors.
- ▶ 20'-tall **double doors** (*unlocked*) lead down stairs to **Compass Rose Room 7**.
- ▶ **Rocky passage** (recently cleared cave-in) to **Stone Slab 4** and **Sea Cliff 6**.

4 STONE SLAB A 7'-tall rock blocks the passageway.

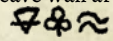
- **Chisel marks** reveal it to be man-made.
- The stone can be moved with:
 - A STRENGTH DR16 test (-2 DR for each person that helps). Takes 10 minutes, loud.
 - Clever use of leverage or tools.

5 EQUIPMENT STORE

- **Digging tools:** pick axes, shovels, buckets, chain, old rope, 1 wheel barrow, 1 large wooden cart with a broken wheel, d6 old sacks of black powder (will explode if handled poorly), torches, and d4 lanterns.
- A **note** rests on one crate. It reads "*Two Degrees South of East*".
- ▶ **Banded wood door** (*locked*, but rusted and easy to smash through) to **Wall of Skull 8**.
- ◀ **Cave passage** (and stone slab) to **Landing 3** and **Sea Cliff 6**.

6 SEA CLIFF

- **dio carrion gulls**^{PBB7} nest here. They are skittish, as they are hunted by vultures that live in the dungeon (see **14**).
- A **rope** and **climbing gear** hang from the ledge down to the ocean below. The gear appears decently new and unweathered.
- Carved into the cave wall are **three symbols:**



▶ **CLIMB DOWN:** The gear is poorly set, making it a dangerous climb. At the bottom, a ship's **longboat** is tied to a rock.

7 COMPASS ROSE ROOM A tall, octagonal chamber with a **white stucco dome ceiling**, at least 50' high at the center.

- Greco-Roman **arches** and **columns** are elaborately carved in each of the eight walls:
 - In each of the four cardinal directions are **doorways**; the other four walls are **facades**.
- 20'-wide **compass rose** in the floor.
 - An 8"-wide, 12"-deep **cylindrical hole** recesses into the center of the compass.
 - There are **360 pencil-sized holes**, one at each of the 360 bearing markers around the perimeter of the compass.
- Fresh **foot prints** lead north.

- ▲ **Corridor** with to **Bottle Room 15**.
- ▼ **Stairs** up to **Landing 3**.
- ▼ **Cave passage** to **Wall of Skulls 8**.
- ▼ **Stone tile hallway** to **Vulture's Perch 18**.

▶ **PLACE A LIT HOODED LANTERN INTO THE HOLE:**

A beam of light shoots under the compass towards one of the 360 pencil-sized holes, bouncing a tight beam of light up to the center of the white stucco dome.

▶ **PLACE GOLD BUG'S PRISM OVER A LIT PIN HOLE:**

That bearing's message is projected up to the dome above in prismatic colors:

BEARING	PROJECTED MESSAGE
Thirteen degrees North of Northwest	CHATEAU CLOS DE VOUGEOT, 1698
Two Degrees South of East	CLIMB THE MAST, RED IS FOR THE DEAD
One Degree West of Southwest	IGNORE THREE LEVERS, PRESS UP
Northeast	☛☞☛

Any other bearing
Roll a d10 or make up misleading gibberish

1. LOOK UNDER ATLANTIS
2. NINE MILES NORTH OF CAMPECHE
3. picture of a pyramid
4. 1 DEGREE EAST OF WEST
5. 178° 45' 5" N, -555° 0' 15" W
6. DRINK "UP" ME HEARTIES
7. GREEN, BLUE, GREEN, RED
8. 2,2,1
9. the constallion Lyra
10. a red X and 4 hash marks

8 WALL OF SKULLS 6 x 6 grid of skulls attached to the north wall.

- **Skull grid:** Each has a symbol carved on top.
- **6 more skulls** ornament the cave's ceiling. Close inspection reveals a small hole in the mouth of each.
 - ▶ **Iron gate (destroyed, open)** to **Mast Cave 10**.
 - ▶ **Iron gate (locked)** to **Mural Gave 9**.
 - ▶ **Iron gate (open)** cave to **Equipment Store 5**.
- ▶ **PRESS A SKULL ON THE WALL:** It indents, like a large button. A click sound can be heard in the wall, like a giant clock turning.

▶ **AFTER THREE SKULLS HAVE BEEN PRESSED:**

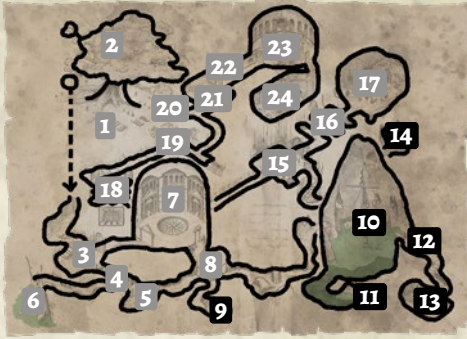
☛☞☛: A clicking and grinding sound is heard in the wall near eastern smashed gate. *The door has been destroyed by a previous inhabitant.*

☛☛☛: The sound of a metal latch clicking is heard near the south gate (already open).

☛☛☛: The southeast gate unlocks and slowly swings open.

☛ **ANY OTHER COMBINATION: poison gas** spews from the mouths of the 6 skulls mounted in the ceiling, filling the room for d4 rounds. Each round, all in the room must test **TOUGHNESS DR12** or lose **d6 DMG** (ignoring armor) and become *poisoned*^{PB31}.





9 MURAL CAVE Painted on one wall is a large mural of a tropical island.

- **Three treasure chests** rest on the floor:
 - **Left:** symbol on top. **Open it:** The iron gate slams shut and locks. *Perhaps a rival crew can be bartered with for help...*
 - **Center:** symbol on top. **Open it:** Filled with **4,000s** and a **treasure map** ^{PB119}
 - **Right:** symbol on top. **Open it:** a **grenade** explodes, 4d6 DMC divided evenly among the occupants.

- ▶ **INSPECT THE MURAL:** It depicts a tranquil port overlooking a tropical harbor. **DETAILS:**
 - A **pirate hanging from the gallows**. A symbol can be seen on his shirt.
 - A **large galleon**, rests low in the harbour as if filled with cargo. A symbol can be seen on the flag flying from its main mast.
 - In the distance, a **skeleton riding a horse** on fire waves a flag with the .

10 MAST CAVE 70'-tall, natural cavern.

- A **ship's mast** protrudes up 50' from **dark water** that floods the cave's floor.
- **Two ropes** hanging from the top of the mast are tied off on the west platform. One is dyed **red**, the other tar **black**.
- **5 rock platforms** extend from the walls.
- The **water shimmers**, as if filled with silver.
- ▶ **SWING FROM A ROPE:** Let the PCs roll, but don't reveal each rope's failure threshold.
 - BLACK ROPE:** **1-in-20** chance it snaps and the swinger falls into the water.
 - RED ROPE:** **10-in-20** chance it snaps and the swinger falls into the water. Raise the chance by 1 after each swing.
- ▶ **CLIMB THE MAST:** **La Buse's flag** hangs atop (a vulture with a human skull for a head), and

a small hidden **cave** can be seen (**Bird Cave & Grave 14**). Reaching the cave requires a **dangerous jump** [Test AGILITY DR14 or fall into water, taking double DMC from the weapons] or another wiser method.

- ⚠ **FALL INTO THE WATER:** Take 3d4 DMC from dozens of **rusty cutlasses, knives, and boarding pikes** rigged under the surface.
- ▶ **SUBMERGE UNDERWATER:** An underwater tunnel can be seen to the south **11**.
 - ① *The rusty weapons are deep enough that anyone swimming carefully can avoid them.*
- ◀ **Stairs** carved up to **Bottle Room 15**.
- ▶ **Platform** with a **Nautilus Shell** on a plinth.
- ▲ **Platform** with a **Glass Bauble** on a plinth.
- ▶ **Platform** to **Columned Passage 12**.
- ▼ **Platform** with a **Bronze Dagger** on a plinth, and a cave that leads to **Wall of Skulls 3**.
- ▼ **Submerged tunnel** to **Underwater Cave 11**.

NAUTILUS SHELL: A pearlescent nautilus shell edged in silver, wrapped in the mouth of a silver dragon, mounted on reptilian clawfoot. Etchings on the shell depict Chinese dragon folktales. *If filled with water overnight, the water turns to flammable oil.*

GLASS BAUBLE: A glass bauble topped with the iron face of a crying woman; a putrid green liquid swirls inside. It hangs from a braided twine necklace. *The face swallows any poison gas the wearer might breath. The gas explodes if the bauble ever breaks.*

BRONZE DAGGER: A bronze dagger in a redwood sheath. Plaited copper grip, bull's head pommel. *Anyone wounded by its blade must pass a MORALE test or they'll imagine that the moon is about to crash into the sea.*



11 UNDERWATER CAVE A watery maze of stalagmites leads to a dry cave and landing.

- **Skeleton**, resting against one wall.
- **Late 17th-century clothing:** Leather boots, tricorne, weathered frock coat.
- **Right hand:** Stiletto dagger (dried blood on the tip).
- **Left hand:** A note written in blood:

*Mr. Taylor,
I beg thy pardon. I stowed the chest as ye bid,
but a grievous rock punctured my good leg
dragging it into this damnable cave, and, alas,
I am too weak to swim back out. Perhaps my
spirit will watch over your precious cargo from
the afterlife. Forgive me, and take care of Yellow
Fever for me, if you mind. He wont understand,
being a bird and all.
- John Collins*

- **Elaborate iron coffer:** (locked) DR16 to pick with lock picks. *The key is on one of the dead pirates in 23.* Filled with **1000s**, d10 **gemstones** worth **50s** each, **blueprints** to the dungeon, and a **journal** detailing its construction (including details on all the traps).

12 COLUMNED PASSAGE 8 Greco-Roman columns support an excavated cave.

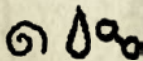
- Engraved on each pillar is a different **pirate lord's sigil** or **Jolly Roger**. ① *None are from real pirates: they are all red herrings.*

➤ **Open to Mast Cave 10.**

➤ **Stairs** down to **Sun King's Vault 13.**

13 SUN KING'S ROOM An elaborate treasure chamber, adorned in the style of Louis XIV. Whatever treasure was stored here was removed years ago. Cobwebs and dust everywhere.

- **Alcoves** line the walls, **torches in sconces** in between each.
- d12 scattered silver **coins**.
- ▶ **INSPECT TORCHES:** One has the shape of the gold bug carved into the handle.
- ▶ **TWIST THE GOLD BUG TORCH:** A secret compartment in one of the alcoves opens. Engraved inside are three symbols:



14 BIRD CAVE & GRAVE Small natural cave that reeks of bird poop and carcasses.

- Sunlight streams in through **small crevices**.
- ☠ **Several large vultures skulk in the shadows: d4 Descendants of Aello** guard nests. *They come and go from the cave via the crevices in the ceiling (too small for humans).*
- In the center of the cave is the **sarcophagus** of Aello, La Buse's pet vulture:
 - 3' x 3' x 6' **stone box**, engraved:

HERE LIES AELLO,
THE HARPY OF THE CARIBBEAN.
1696-1707.

- On a separate **plaque** is a cipher message:

E00E< EΓΓΓ> >Π00 KJFΩ00V
VΓEE F0Λ0JΛ >Π0 VLFEEE 'V
>F<0 U0JFΓ0Γ

DECODES TO:

"ONLY LIGHT THEN DARKNESS
WILL REVEAL THE SCROLL'S
TRUE BEARING"

- ▶ **INSIDE THE SARCOPHAGUS:** A giant vulture skeleton. A huge ruby (**500s**) is under one wing and it rests on 50 gold doubloons (worth **10s** each).

☠ **TAKE ANY TREASURE: Aello's Ghost** materializes above the bones and attacks. *It cannot leave the cave.*

DESCENDANT OF AELLO

Huge vultures. The offspring of the Harpy of the Caribbean.

HP 4 **Morale 4** **No Armor**
▶ **Claw** d4 (2 attacks) or **Beak** d6

AELLO'S GHOST

10' tall, tattered specter of La Buse's vulture.

HP 20 **Morale –** **No Armor**
▶ **Spectral Beak** d10, and test **TOUGHNESS** DR10 or max HP is permanently -1 (as ghostly versions of their intestines are ripped from their body).
▶ **Grave Claws** d6 (hits up to three targets)

Blood Song: 3-in-6 chance each round, free action. All that can hear it must test **SPIRIT** DR12 or during their next turn they cannot move and any tests are +4 DR.



15 BOTTLE ROOM

- Hundreds of **bottles** (wine, rum, beer) hang from the ceiling via ropes:

d8 BOTTLE EXAMPLES

1. *Baboso Blanco, Canary Co., 1701*
2. *Steinwein, 1540* (dusty, peeling label)
3. *Subject #117* (dark, viscous red liquid)
4. *Captain's XXX* (clay jug)
5. *Athena's Oil of Olive* (tall, green, square)
6. *Imperial Dark, Barbados Colony, 1706*
7. Gold-plated, triangular shape
8. Old, cracked brown bottle

- A **decapitated skeleton** with a wine bottle in his hand. A severed rope is tied around the bottle's neck.

- **3'-wide horizontal slits** in the east and west walls, at about neck height.

- ▲ **Double doors.** DR14 to open with brute force or DR12 with lock picks.

- ▲ **Doors (Locked) to Barrel Corridor 16.**

- ▼ **Corridor to Compass Rose Room 7.**

- **Broken wall panel** (*Smashed from other side*) reveals a tunnel to **Mast Cave 10.**

- ▶ **PULL A BOTTLE:** There are *hundreds* of bottles. The important ones can only be found by knowing to look for them (or with an extreme stroke of good luck).

- **Chateau de Clos de Vougeot, 1698:** Unlocks the double doors. ① *This clue is found by using the Compass Rose Room 7 and the bearing found on La Buse's cryptogram scroll.*

- **Saint-Pierre Plantation Dark Rum, 1702:** Opens a secret door in the corner of the room. It contains a chest with **1500s**.

① *This clue is on one of the dead pirates in Round Table Chamber 23.*

- **Cross & Dagger Porto, 1642:** Filled with d20 rubies (worth **50s** each).

- **Professor Dyer's Herbal Elixir:** Drinking it heals d12 HP, but *all* of the drinker's hair turns bright green permanently.

- ⚔ **Any other bottle:** Spring-loaded guillotine blades hidden in the walls trigger and swipe at neck level. All within 10' of the pulled bottle must test **AGILITY DR12** to duck. Then the blades slowly recess back into the wall. **Fail:** 2d6 DMG. **Fail by 4+:** Lose their head.

- ▶ **16 BARREL CORRIDOR** The hall veers into a passage with 5 alcoves.

- In each alcove is a large **wooden barrel**.

1. **Foul water.** d100 silver **coins** at the bottom.

2. A fine, **red wine**, perfectly aged.

3. A **corpse** preserved in rum. **In his pockets:** a black spot on a piece of (wet) paper.

Drink the rum: Learn the *Black Spot* ritual ^{PB65}, then test **TOUGHNESS DR12** or become *poisoned*.

4. Cheap, weak **rum** (4 servings).

5. **d100 rats** feasting on moldy cheese.

- The floor is made of 5' **sandstone tiles**.

- Above each junction is a **large boulder** suspended by a chain.

- A **boulder** fallen on a **corpse** blocking the 2nd junction. It's easy to climb over.

- In one of its hands is a page from a ship's log book. The entries are all mundane, expect the last line says "Some of the crew tried the professor's latest concoction. Now the all have bright green..." (the message is cut off).

- ▲ **Hallway to Bucket Room 17.**

- ▼ **Double doors to Bottle Room 15**

- ⚔ **STEP ON A TILE BELOW A HANGING BOULDER:** The boulder drops. Anyone on that tile tests **AGILITY DR12** or takes 3d8 DMG.



17 BUCKET CHAMBER The floor is covered with several feet of white sand.

- Hanging from a large **cargo grating** attached to the ceiling are:
 - **13 buckets**, each filled with some sand.
 - **13 cargo nets**, each filled with dozens of human **skulls**.
- **3 shovels** rests against the walls.
- ▲ Huge, rusting **metal door** bearing a skull and crossbones.
 - ① *The door is a decoy and leads nowhere.*
- **Graffiti** scratched above the door reads:

PYRATES BE WARNED

- Each wall has a dozen or so **apple-size holes**.
 - ☠ *Spears are hidden inside.*

▶ **ADD/REMOVE SAND FROM A BUCKET OR RAISE/LOWER A CARGO NET:** Each bucket is paired with a cargo net: one will rise as the other falls. A clicking sound can be heard behind the wall whenever heights are adjusted.

☠ *After a total change of 6 feet (~12 clicks), spears shoot out of the walls. Everyone in the room must test AGILITY DR12 to duck or take 2d4 DMG each. The buckets, nets, and spears then reset.*

- ▶ **IN ONE OF THE BUCKETS:** There is a **red wooden fish**. It's recognizable to sailors and fishermen as a herring. On it is carved:
YE BEST NOT FEAR THE DARK!
- ▶ **IF THE ROOM IS PITCH BLACK:** Both the **skull** (detailed above) and a hidden message on La Buse's cryptogram scroll glow faintly green.
- ▶ **IN ONE OF THE NETS:** One **skull** glows in the dark. Inside its cranium rattles an old compass. It is broken and always points southwest. Scratched are three symbols:



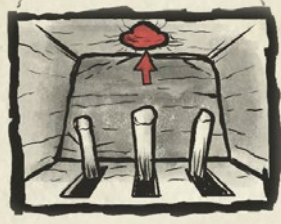
DECODES TO:

"DIG"

▶ **DIG INTO THE SAND:** In the southeast corner, 3' down, is a chest filled with **500s** in teardrop rubies, **200s** in perfectly-cut sapphires, **150s** in Spanish doubloons, and a golden crown from the House of Bourbon-era of the Kingdom of France, worth **300s**.

18 VULTURE'S PERCH A four-way junction. Three of the exits are blocked by **stone doors** adorned with bas-relief skull and crossbones.

- Black marble **statue of a vulture** perched on a white marble **pedestal**: a dark, **first-sized hole** just under the bird's feet extends into the pedestal.
 - A **rotting forearm** (severed ~one week ago) sticks out of the hole. Dried blood is on the ground.
 - The hole is too long and narrow to see inside.
 - Anyone that inserts their hand to about shoulder depth can feel a compartment with **three levers**.
 - Inset in top of the compartment is a **hidden marble button**.



☠ **PULL ANY OF THE LEVERS:** A **guillotine blade** drops from above, severing any limbs in the hole, dealing d6 DMG or half of the PCs current HP—whichever is less. A gear mechanism in the ceiling then slowly raised the blade back into the ceiling, resetting all the levers.

- ▶ **PUSH THE HIDDEN BUTTON:** The west stone door slowly slides open. Pressing it again closes the door.
 - ① *The clue to this button is found using the hidden glow-in-the-dark bearing on La Buse's cryptogram scroll with the Compass Room 7.*
- ◀ **Stone door** (opened with button) down to **Gallery 19**.
- ▲ **Stone door** (false; solid rock wall).
- ✓ **Stone door** (false; solid rock wall).
- **Hallway** to **Compass Room 7**.

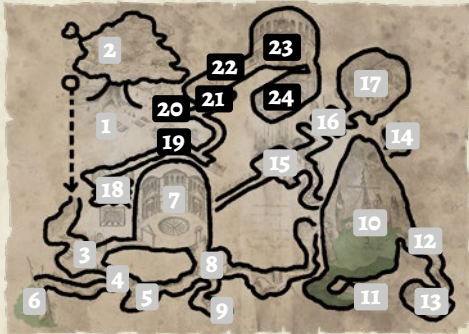


19 GALLERY T-shaped junction, with black and white tile flooring.

- On the walls hang **15 oil paintings** of various pirates, each a high-ranking member of La Buse's crew. **Cipher symbols** are cleverly hidden in each painting:
 - Paintings next to one of the **pressure plates** (see above): □□□□ ("DEAD")
 - A painting of a skeletal pirate captain, the late William Moody, who preceded La Buse (see above): ▮▮▮▮ ("RICH")
 - All other paintings: ▮▮▮▮ ("POOR")

⚠ **STEP ON THE TILES:** Three different spots on the floor are **pressure plates**. When stepped on, they each trigger a **cannon** filled with grapeshot (via a pull-string flintlock) hidden behind a painting. Anyone in the cannon's path must test **AGILITY DR12** or take **3d6 DMG** (lower DMG by 1d6 for each subsequent person it hits) ① *See above for exact locations.*

- ▲ **Secret Passage** behind Moody's painting to **Grave Exit 20**.
- ▼ **Stairs up** to **Vulture's Perch 18**.



20 GRAVE EXIT Added by La Buse and the dungeon builders.

- Stairs leads up to a 2' x 2' **stone plaque**. Moving it reveals the inside of a **grave** and a **coffin filled with digging tools**.
- ▲ **Passage to Massacre Room 21**.
- ↑ **Digging up** leads back to **Cemetery 1**.



21 MASSACRE ROOM Cold, still, and eerie.

- Dozens of **skeletons**, apparently massacred. Most look to have been stabbed or shot. These are the dungeon builder and lower ranking members of La Buse's crew, murdered after construction was complete.
- Assorted **weapons**: d6 **cutlasses**, d6 **daggers**, 2 **flintlocks**, various filthy **hats** and **clothing**.
- ▶ **SEARCH THE BODIES:** Use *Loot the Body* ^{PB3}. On one is a letter mentioning "You must try the '42 port. It's as rich as it is sweet!" ① A clue for **15**.
- ▲ **Double doors** to **Museum Hallway 22**.
- ▼ **Passage** to **Grave Exit 20**.

22 MUSEUM HALLWAY A long hallway with 6 alcoves recessed in the walls.

- Each alcove contains a treasure from La Buse's collection. Each is worth d6 x **100s**:
 - Meosan snake sculpture**. It has heads at both ends of its body.
 - Scribed copy of the **Egyptian Book of the Dead**. *Counts as Pages from the Necromicon* ^{PB62}.
 - Elaborate **model ship of the line**, built for an admiral's approbation.
 - Gold ingot**. Stamped with a mark of the West India Company.
 - Knight's helmet**. French, 16th-century. Gold decorations depict angels smiting demons. *Counts as a morion* ^{PB52}.
 - Black diamond**. Dark stars and purple nebulae swirl inside. *Stare too long and the Great Old Ones whisper tenebrous commands.*
- ▲ **Double doors** to **Round Table Chamber 23**
- ▼ **Double doors** to **Massacre Room 21**.

PIRATE LORD WIGHT

The skeletal officers of La Buse's crew, imbued with necrotic energy from a curse by Paulsgrave Williams's. Glowing, purple eye sockets. Horrifying and demonic. They want nothing but to guard the treasure.

HP 13 **Morale** 12 **Leather Coat** -d2

► **Cutlass** d8, and test a random ability DR 12.

Fail: that modifier permanently decreases by 1, and the wight regains d4 HP.

24 TREASURE ROOM The treasure hoard of Olivier Levasseur a.k.a. La Buse! In total it is worth around **800,000s** and takes **5 cargo slots** on a ship.

- The **Fiery Cross of Goa** (7' long, encrusted with diamonds and gemstones, priceless)
- ~1,000 pounds of silver coins, piled in heaps
- -400 lbs of gold coins, scattered around
- **21 necklaces** (pearls, gemstones, silver, gold)
- **19 rings**, finely crafted
- **15 silver dishes**
- **14 bejeweled goblets**
- **12 candlesticks** and **candelabras**
- **12 treasure chests** overflowing with coins
- **8 statues** from antiquity (gold or marble)
- **7 gold crosses**
- **5 spindles of fine cloth**
- **5 pendants** of religious significance
- **5 barrels of aged rum**
- **4 gold urns**
- **3 golden crowns**
- **3 Medieval shields**
- **2 barrels of French wine**
- **1 gilded throne** encrusted with gems
- **1 suit of Medieval armor**
- **1 small scholarly library** (~75 books & scrolls)
- **1 bundle of arcane texts** (2d6 books & scrolls)

THE REVENANT

If more than half of the treasure or the Fiery Cross of Goa is removed from the dungeon, **La Buse's revenant** animates in his grave on the island of Réunion, east of Madagascar.

Ⓛ For a cinematic climax, reveal this as a "post-credits scene" at the end of the session, or as a nightmare the crew have the next night.



23 ROUND TABLE CHAMBER A round, domed room, decorated as if royalty lived here.

- **25'**-long oval mahogany **banquet table**.
 - All but one seat is filled with a pirate **skeleton**. In front of each is a goblet.
 - Ⓛ They were poisoned.
 - **Plates** covered with long-rotten food scraps.
- **24 niches** are inset in the curved wall.
 - The niche behind the captain's chair (the only chair without a skeleton) has a **secret door**, easily found if pushed.
- **Chandelier** made from a ship's wheel, dripping with tallow, hangs above the table.
- **Yellow Fever**, a golden parakeet, lives here. He is very old. He squawks and taunts the PCs: "Yellow Fever! Knights of the Round Table! Wights of the Round Table! Death and murder! Never gonna find it! No Secrets Doors Here!"

► **SEARCH THE SKELETONS:** One has a key to the chest in the **Underwater Cave 11**. Another has a cork in his hand from a bottle of *Saint-Pierre Plantation Dark Rum* (see **15**).

⚔ **TAKE TREASURE:** If the *any* treasure is taken from **24**, d8 (or one per PC) **Pirate Lord Wights** animate and attack.

- **Doors** to **Museum Hallway 22**.
- **Niche secret door** to **Treasure Room 24**.