

# GAZETTEER

## THE SEA OF DREAD

by Colin Wilson



# GAZETTEER

Unofficial Game Accessory

## The Sea of Dread

Colin Wilson

### Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
What Everyone Knows About the Sea of Dread.....	5
History as the Immortals Know It .....	6
Isles of the Open Sea.....	12
The Thanegioth Archipelago.....	19
Emoren .....	19
Arachne .....	20
Utsiwano .....	20
The Isle of Dread .....	21
Bararna.....	21
Therian .....	22
Sekorvia.....	22
Phema .....	23
Teki-Lo-Kia.....	24
Teki-Moa-Ha .....	24
Roatana.....	25
Islands of Interest.....	26
The Isle of Dread.....	31
The Empire of Twaelar.....	36
Monsters.....	43
Magic Items.....	46
Adventures .....	47

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# INTRODUCTION

## Foreword

Welcome to *The Sea of Dread*, a fan-made gazetteer describing part of the world of Mystara – the only game world designed for the classic box-set series of *Dungeons & Dragons™* by TSR/Wizards of the Coast™.

This module details the ocean region between the continents of Brun and Davania including the Thanegioth Archipelago. The region was first described in *X1 The Isle of Dread*, but that module only detailed the largest island on the Archipelago. *X7 War Rafts of Kron* and *X8 Drums on Fire Mountain* added some new locations, and *XSOLO Lathan's Gold* outlined some of the smaller islands. Beyond that, the Sea of Dread remained an unknown quantity (barring a passing mention of an undersea kingdom in *PC3 The Sea People*).

The thematic link between these modules was the pulp adventure stories of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century; specifically *The Lost World* by Arthur Conan Doyle, the film *King Kong*, and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne. The adventures contained all the famous tropes of the genre, including dinosaurs, giant creatures, restless natives and merman civilisations.

This module is based on the four primary modules and then expanded to include much of material suggested by the Mystara community. It also contains some ideas generated specifically for the Gazetteer, and much of the information from the Greyhawk version of the Isle of Dread published in several issues of *Dungeon* magazine. To maintain the thematic integrity of the module, we have used those ideas most compatible with the pulp adventure literature that inspired the original works.

We hope you enjoy the final product.

## The Sea of Dread

The Sea of Dread is an enormous expanse of ocean stretching between the south coast of Brun and the north coast of Davania. It reaches west to the Serpent Peninsula and east to the island of Ochalea. For the most part, it is open water with little of interest to see or do. There are many tiny islands dotting its

surface, but these have never been accurately mapped and they change over time due to vulcanism, storms and erosion. The northern part of the Sea also lies over an exceptionally deep trench which prevents any islands forming above it. This area is truly a blue desert, containing almost no surface life whatsoever.

Roughly halfway between Brun and Davania lie a series of large islands, known as the Thanegioth Archipelago. These islands, ranging from a few square miles to several hundred, are host to a series of little known cultures both human and humanoid. They are also home to some of the more feared pirates of the region.

Despite lying off the coast of several sea-faring nations, the Sea of Dread has a dark reputation due to its unpredictable weather, dangerous wildlife and shifting terrain. Sailors avoid its interior and prefer to sail the coastal routes, despite the long travel times this imposes. Consequently, the islands of the Sea, and particularly those of the Archipelago, are barely known. They appear on a few maps and sometimes sailors claim to have visited them, but few pay much attention to these stories. It is a region of legend and rumour, where the truth is often stranger still, and a truly dedicated adventurer could make their fortune there, or perish in the attempt.

The only true culture in the Sea of Dread is found under its surface. The merrow kingdom of Twaelar occupies almost all the shallows surrounding Thanegioth. It is known about by the merrow of Undersea and by a few land-dwellers, but most inhabitants of Mystara are unaware of its very existence. This is probably for the best, as the Empire is paranoid to a fault and is likely to respond poorly to any attempt at communication.

## The Final Goal of the Campaign

The Sea of Dread is most easily used as an exotic location for parties to occasionally visit, either through choice, shipwreck or kidnap. The individual islands lend themselves to traditional dungeon crawls, wilderness treks or

monster hunts at various levels of character experience and adventures in the region should stand alone with no trouble. Even the smallest atoll can be used for a quick adventure while sailing, and if a party is shipwrecked on Thanegioth simply finding a way of getting home could provide a number of interesting opportunities.

As the focus of a campaign, the Sea can be used in several ways. A campaign of exploration and mapping would perhaps be the simplest. The ancient ruins and treasures would provide a party with plenty of reward if they went under their own auspices, and scholars and generals from the mainland would pay good money for information on the islands.

Such an approach could lead to a political or military campaign for control of the Sea of Dread. This would necessarily centre on the Thanegioth Archipelago as control of those islands essentially grants control of the shipping lanes between Brun, Davania and Ochalea – a hugely influential position. Several countries, most notably Thyatis and Minrothad, would support such an endeavour and would need adventurers to get the process going and found the first dominions. A particularly confident party could even try it themselves, carving a new country out of the mysterious islands. In either case, the challenge would be enormous. Among the obstacles standing in their way are undying princesses, half-real fiends, planar gates, Immortal magic and the greatest gathering of pirates outside of the Hollow World. The local population, human and humanoid, would have to be co-opted, driven out or enslaved, and even then, the merrow of Twaelar would take a very dim view of any attempt to colonise the islands.

## Who Should Play

Any combination of races and classes can play on the Sea of Dread. Its nature as a drop-in adventure location makes it appropriate for almost anyone who enjoys the backdrop of steaming jungles, hidden coves and ancient ruins. For those seeking a more unusual approach, the rules from *PC3 The Sea People* could be used to generate Twaelar PCs to either defend Twaelar

from its enemies (an espionage campaign could work well) or to topple its corrupt government. Equally DMs could create kara-kara PCs (Polynesian humanoids) using the rules from GAZ10. They could try and take over the Archipelago themselves or simply travel around causing trouble.

### **Kudos and Corrections**

The Isle of Dread and the surrounding sea was first introduced in *X1 The Isle of Dread* by David 'Zeb' Cook and Tom Moldvay. The smaller islands were covered in *XSOLO Lathan's Gold* by Merle M. Rassmussen, while Kron, Suthus and Colhador are taken from *X7 War Rafts of Kron* by Bruce Nesmith. Teki-Nura-Ria and the kara-kara culture are from *X8 Drums on Fire Mountain* by Graeme Morris and Tom Kirby, and the island of Phema is based on "Island of the Storm Giant" from *AC10 Bestiary of Dragons and Giants* (Deborah Christian, editor). Twaelar and the abyss

are taken from *PC3 The Sea People* by Jim Bambra. There is a disagreement on the status of Suthus between *X7* and *PC3*. In this case we have taken *X7* as the basis to allow that adventure to be played in full.

Further details of the Isle of Dread and the city of Scuttlecove are based on *Torrents of Dread* by Greg A. Vaughan (Dungeon #114), *Tides of Dread* by Stephen S. Greer & Gary Holian (Dungeon #143), *Serpents of Scuttlecove* by Richard Pett (Dungeon #146) and *Scuttlecove: City of Chaos* by James Jacobs (Dungeon #146). All of these are published by Paizo Publishing. Some extra flourishes were provided by *Attack of the Tyrantclaw* by Greg Bilsland and Matt James.

Particular thanks go to Geoff Gander (for Bararna, Teki-Nura-Ria and Colhador), James Mishler (for what eventually became Teki-Moa-Ha), Sean Meaney (for Ilsa Miena), Colin Davidson (for Arachne), Eldersphinx

(for Ruhaladero) and Jesper Andersen (for parts of Kron). Thanks also go to the contributors to the fan-made Poor Wizard's Almanacs who provided parts of Twaelar, to Håvard Faanes for the translation of *NM2 Treasure of Crocodile Isle*, and to Donald Eric Kesler (for the Clerics of Protius).

Literary inspiration was varied but included, in addition to the books mentioned earlier, *She* by H. Rider Haggard, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* by H.G. Wells, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Mysterious Island* by Jules Verne, *Doctor Syn* by Russell Thorndike, *The Ruby in the Smoke* by Phillip Pullman, *Stingray*, *War Gods of the Deep*, *Pirates of the Carribean*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Finally special thanks to JTR for creating the Gaz F line upon which this product is based.

## WHAT EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT THE SEA OF DREAD

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“Storms, monsters, pirates and more storms. That’s what you can expect from the Sea of Dread. I’ve sailed the northern islands for my whole life, but you won’t catch me heading south no matter how much the cargo was worth.

“From here the Sea of Dread stretches right the way to Davania. It’s cold, blue and lifeless, without so much as islet to break the surface. If you don’t drown or die of thirst there are darker things that’ll get you. The monsters are bigger, the squalls are fiercer and the pirates more vicious than anything you’ll meet hereabouts. Some talk of the red sails that strike terror into the hearts of any who see them.

“There’s even supposed to be land in the middle somewhere. Cursed islands filled with savages so the old salts say. Might be true. I don’t much care, cos I’m not going near them.”

**Carys Cardiel, Minroth Trader**

“I’ve met one or two of our cousins to the south. Dour lot. I think they must live too deep for the sunshine to get to

them. That’s why they’re so grim the whole time.

“They claim to hold sway under all the waters beyond the Abyss, but who knows what’s true. All I know is that they swim up every few years, share a feast with the Queen, then swim away again, looking no happier than when they arrived. They’re always surrounded by guards too. Odd that.”

**Skyrovia, Merrow of Undersea**

“Travelling down to Raven Scarp we were, in the Hinterlands. It’s a long trip if you’re to avoid the deep regions, but the Captain said it was better than the alternative. A week out from Ochalea we were blown off course by a storm that came from nowhere. Clear sky it was just before, I swear it.

“The ship was practically wrecked off the coast of some island. Looked proper lovely it did when we first arrived. We even sang round the camp fire that first night. But after six days with no sign of a ship the food started running out. Then the storms started up again tearing apart

our shelters and destroying what remained of the ship. On the tenth day the green-skins arrived and after that things got really bad...

**Marcus Declan, Thyatian Colonist rescued from a slave ship**

“No place like the Sea o’ Dread. Rich pickins for the brave and death for the foolish. If ye think the shore is full o’ rogues, it just gets worse further on in. In fact these days you’re more likely to meet another pirate ship than a merchantman.

“In my time, I’ve toiled under more Cap’ns than you’ve got fingers. I’ve sailed from here all the way to Davania and back again – the straight way mind, none of this shore-huggin’. I’ve even stopped off at the pirate port once or twice, and I’ll tell you somethin’ for nothin’. A brave man’ll do well. A coward? Not a prayer.

**Kenny Skulls, Retired Pirate**

Awwk!! Wind in your sails! Wind in your sails!

**Paco, Parrot**

## HISTORY AS THE IMMORTALS KNOW IT

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### The Lost World

In the dawn of history many races flowered on Mystara and then faded into nothingness. Even in these ancient times, the Immortal Ka the Preserver collected the last of these races and placed them in the Hollow World, making a living museum of Mystara's history. By the time of the earliest civilisations on the surface, the Hollow World was inhabited by giant reptiles, primitive creatures and the Brute Men, all extinct on the outer world. At this time, a group of Entropic Immortals corrupted the Hollow World causing devastation on a massive scale. Ka, seeking to counter the effect, resolved to cast a Spell of Preservation which would prevent further corruption and ensure the residents of the Hollow World never died out.

Before carrying out his plan, Ka decided that the spell needed to be tested since the consequences of failure would be catastrophic. He chose a highland region on a huge island north of Davania and transported some of the flora and fauna of the Hollow World along with a tribe of Brute Men to the area. Once they were in place, he cast the first Spell of Preservation around them. As Ka expected, in the region of the Spell, the transported species could not be made extinct nor could their culture change. The species in its area also lost any desire to leave, thus keeping them protected. However, the expected limitations on spell use in the area did not occur. Learning the lessons from this, Ka created the true Spell of Preservation in the Hollow World and left his little experiment to its own devices. Over the following centuries other species occasionally entered the region and, due to the Spell's effect, they never left and so added to the area's diversity.

### The Spider Kingdom

Some centuries later a rebellion broke out among the aranea of the Isle of Dawn. The rebels had turned away from the rulership of the Night Spider, but were driven out the island and ran westward, taking their phanton servants with them. The bulk of this exodus crossed through the islands

north of Davania and continued onwards towards the Savage Coast and the Orc's Head Peninsula, where they founded Herath.

Despite this, a large group chose to stay on their islands where they built Aglamoth, an extensive civilisation based on magic. They created huge cities spun entirely from silk and designed a mass teleportation system to take them from island to island. They controlled the weather and seas and Aglamoth was, without doubt, one of the most powerful empires Mystara had ever seen. Within the region of their control was Ka's lost world. They quickly discovered its strange properties and made efforts to avoid it, but eventually some aranea stayed too long and so were added to its growing list of permanent species.

The spiders ruled for a thousand years before the civilisation of Blackmoor brought about their destruction. The shifting of the planet's axis in the Great Rain of Fire led to earthquakes, rising sea levels and a catastrophic change in climate. The aranea could not cope and much of Aglamoth sank beneath the sea as the planet heaved. Eventually all that was left were some stone monuments and a few scattered tribes of aranea, eking out an existence as nomads.

### The Olman People

One of the human cultures decimated by the fall of Blackmoor was the Oltecs, a civilisation who had risen to prominence on the southern coast of Brun. Many small groups made efforts to escape the carnage by heading south to warmer climates and one such group eventually arrived on the island containing Ka's experiment long after the aranea had disappeared. They named the island Thanaxiottl and called themselves the Olman people. Their culture was not too far removed from their Oltec ancestors and they built many temples and cities joined by long, paved roads. The change in climate had decimated the population of Ka's lost world leaving only tiny groups of the creatures who lived there, so the Olman considered it safe and constructed their magnificent capital, Thanaclan, atop the plateau. As the population of giant

lizards slowly recovered the Olman built magical obelisks in their settlements which their druids used to keep the creatures away.

During this time, an Olman Princess named Asha became ruler of the city of Olmoran, some distance west of Thanaxiottl. While exploring her domain she discovered a series of tunnels which led into an underground complex left over from the aranea's days. There she found a magical flame which had originally been created by the aranea for rejuvenation. She worked out some of its properties and stepped through, so becoming forever young. However, the flame affected Asha's mind as well as her body and over the years she became ever more paranoid and unstable. Eventually she cut off Olmoran from the rest of the Olman culture by blocking the only entrance to the valley where the city lay.

The Olman culture continued for several centuries before it was quietly subsumed into the kopru empire of Adhuza. This loose collection of linked states was ruled by the kopru through their fearsome ability to control the minds of others. Having been forced to move away from their Vulcanian homeland by climatic changes, the kopru had come north and they took over the Olman culture by controlling their leaders. These local kopru rulers established themselves in hot springs beneath Thanaclan, which became the local capital of Adhuza.

The Adhuzan kopru also took control of the large merrow nation on the Davanian coast and brought a small number of merrow and tritons north to Thanaxiottl and further still to the coast of Brun. There the controlled tritons founded the underwater city of Suthus as the northernmost outpost of the Adhuzan realm.

Around this time the Meditor and Verdier elves left Ilsundal's migration and settled on the coast of Brun. They founded a new city, Colhador, on an island near the sea and began trading with the local humans. This continued for many centuries until the city was eventually conquered by a tribe of wandering humans, who took it for their own.

Hundreds of years later a series of earthquakes and volcanoes all but destroyed the region. Thanaxioltl was badly hit and the island split apart, forming the archipelago as it is today. Thanaclan was almost totally destroyed and the Olman culture disappeared, leaving only scattered tribes who came to call themselves the Roa, from an Olman word meaning 'survivor'. Although Olmorán was all but levelled, Asha survived and led her remaining people to rebuild the city in their hidden fastness.

The kopru were similarly affected and retreated south, leaving their subjects to fend for themselves. However, the few remaining in Thanaclan chose not to leave due to the effects of Ka's spell. Far away from their homeland and denied subjects to control, these kopru adopted the worship of Demogorgon.

The earthquakes also affected the Davanian coast where the large merrow civilisation was also set free. Their culture collapsed and the survivors migrated north where they settled around Thanegioth, as it had become known, in small communities, farming the shallow seas.

### **Nithia's Colonies**

The effect of the earthquakes on the region went beyond cultural destruction; the sea floor dropped away, opening a huge abyss between Thanegioth and Brun. Suthus was almost completely destroyed and the northern tritons were wiped out. The currents and weather changed forever, leading to massive storms which made the sea all but impossible to cross. During this time the Meditor elves finally gave the waters the name it still carries: the Sea of Dread.

Meanwhile, in the east, the Nithian civilisation was fast becoming the most powerful human culture that would ever be seen on Mystara. From their river cities, the Nithians spread in all directions colonizing the Isle of Dawn in the east and the Savage Coast in the west. In the south they reached the Davanian coast and founded several cities, although their foothold was tenuous. They also colonised the Thanegioth Archipelago and enslaved the Roa. The Nithians began to mine the islands and imported troglodytes and lizard-men as workers to build their

towns and temples using stone taken from the Olman ruins. On the largest island, the Nithians attempted to remove the giant reptiles, Brute Men and all the other strange inhabitants of Ka's Lost World but, due to the influence of the Spell of Preservation, they failed. They also discovered the kopru in the ruins of Thanaclan, now evil, twisted versions of their former selves. A conflict ensued as the kopru attempted to take control of the Nithians, however they were defeated and confined once again to their highland prison. To protect themselves from further attempts, the Nithians walled off the entire central region of the island and, taking the name from the elves, called the land the Isle of Dread.

The Nithians continued to rule over the Roa through the following centuries, even as their own culture was corrupted by Entropic Immortals. One result of this corruption involved the increasing use of the undead as servants, a practice which spread to the Roa. Finally, the Immortals decided that Nithia's corruption posed a threat to the wellbeing of all other peoples. Nithia was systematically destroyed and all memory of it was removed from the world. The Roa were left with confused memories of their vanished gods, while the Cult of the Undead quietly continued among them. Left to their own devices, the remaining troglodyte and lizard-men slaves went native and retreated into the wilds.

Meanwhile, in northern Davania, a group of orcs of the kara-kara tribe overturned their cultural taboo and began interbreeding with their human slaves. It took many generations but eventually a new race was created. These part-orcs were green-skinned but bigger and more human than other orcs. They were also brighter and resistant to sunlight. Many true orc tribes nearby took exception to their green cousins, regarding them as abominations. The kara-kara were attacked on all sides and, lacking any other route of escape, they took to their sea-going canoes and headed into the Sea of Dread. Over the following centuries they spread from island to island until kara-kara orcs could be found on islands almost anywhere in the tropics. Early on in this migration the kara-kara arrived on Thanegioth and attacked the Roa. The

two sides were evenly matched but peace was eventually established. By the end of the war, the Roa still held sway in the west, but the eastern islands were exclusively the domain of the kara-kara.

In Colhador, the latest in the line of Kings was young man called Hadric. He feared death above all things and, after years of planning, enacted his mad plan to attain immortality. He turned himself into a water vampire: a velya, and disappeared into the waters around the city, leaving his brother Meric to rule. Meric, distraught over the fate of his brother, determined to kill him but Hadric sank the city rather than face him, killing all its occupants.

Meanwhile, far to the north, a group of kara-kara blown far from their normal routes discovered a colony of twisted psionics, descended from a group of Blackmoorian exiles. They killed them and took over their caverns. As the years passed, they became increasingly confused as to their own origin and finally ended up believing that they were themselves descended from the island's original inhabitants.

### **Shezzeth**

Long after the arrival of the kara-kara, a group of Roa encountered the kopru in the ruins on the Isle of Dread. They were swiftly enslaved and, without the Nithians to keep them at bay, the kopru controlled the whole Isle of Dread within a few years and finally began to increase their numbers. It took only a few more decades for all the islands of the archipelago to fall under their influence (though they never discovered Olmorán). Using their armies of enslaved humans and kara-kara, the kopru then attacked the merrow, who were still quietly farming kelp, and brought the underwater realm under their control. Only the aquarendi elves, who lived among the merrow, managed to resist the mental onslaught, but they were too few. The kopru turned their whole army against them and the aquarendi were all but wiped out.

Thus the empire of Shezzeth was founded, dedicated to the dark worship of Demogorgon. The kopru reigned for nearly five hundred years, controlling all who came under their baleful influence and adding still further to the archipelago's dark reputation. Then the

Immortal Protius took an interest. He spoke to the merrow in dreams and the strongest threw off the kopru's control and became his priests. With Protius' support they turned the tide and freed their people from the kopru's control. Within a few short years the merrow had regained the seas and founded a new city on the site of their temple, named Twaeloporis. The last remaining elves came out of hiding while the merrow killed any kopru they could find and expelled the shark-kin from their territory.

The loss of the merrow proved too great a strain for the kopru and Shezzeth collapsed, freeing the Roa, the kara-kara and all its other subjects who murdered the kopru in a frenzy of killing. At Thanaclan a few once again survived, protected by the Spell of Preservation, while others managed to hide in hot springs, dormant geysers or lava tunnels beneath the Isle of Dread.

### **The Rise of Twaelar**

Their experience under the kopru was a traumatising experience for the merrow. They became increasingly paranoid, seeing new threats under every stone and continually hunting for kopru spies. Many innocent people died at the hands of the merrow inquisition and the militant tendency eventually became the defining feature of the merrow culture. Finally, in 674AC, the priests of Protius declared a holy war on the surrounding inhabitants of the sea, believing that only through complete control could they ensure their future security. The merrow called their new country Twaelar and swiftly brought the nearby areas under their sway.

The Twaelar wars continued for decades with gains and losses on either side. The merrow's greatest enemy were the

shark-kin of Shezykk who controlled a large area outside the merrow's influence. Eventually the merrow conquered the aquatic ogres of Mushun and used an artefact they created to bring them under the priests' mental control, becoming the very thing they hated. Using the controlled ogres as shock troops, the rest of the conquest was swift. Within a short time Twaelar controlled all the waters around the archipelago and the shark-kin were reduced to slavery.

### **The Modern Era**

Not long after Shezzeth's fall, a purge of lycanthropes took place in Minrothad, far to the north. Almost all were-beasts in the country were rounded up and killed, but one group managed to escape by ship into the Sea of Dread. They were presumed drowned but, despite their hardships, a small number survived to land on an island in the archipelago. Away from human eyes they founded Therian, a new purely lycanthropic culture.

Meanwhile Thyatis, unable to move east because of Alphatia, was turning its eyes on the Sea of Dread. Intending to create a trade route to Thanegioth and Davania, they found the settlement of Aquapopulus on one of the islands in the Sea of Dread. The first colonists found the island hospitable and the outpost quickly expanded into a sizable settlement. Yet its closeness to Twaelar was too much for the merrow. Seeing the Thyatians as a threat to their rule, they ordered the Thyatians to leave. When they didn't, the merrow descended on the outpost and destroyed it utterly, killing all the inhabitants. For the Thyatians this was their first encounter with the Twaelar and, although the Emperor of the time swore

that Aquapopulus would one day be avenged, the area was not re-colonised and the event was confined to the history books.

Some seventy years before the present day Evgeny Sekorski, a pirate captain from Slagovitch in the West, sailed into Thanegioth with the idea of founding his own kingdom. He named the island he landed on 'Sekorvia' and, having wrested it from the kara-kara, founded the town of Scuttlecove. Although his intention had been to create a formal kingdom under his rulership, he failed to do so and died in a knife fight within a few years of arriving. Scuttlecove, only known to those pirates and traders mad enough to sail to Thanegioth, became a free port with no rulers or laws.

More recently still, the shark-kin slaves in Twaelar revolted after centuries of slavery. The revolution was bitter and bloody but, using the ogres, the merrow eventually managed to suppress it. In the final settlement many shark-kin were given their freedom in exchange for putting down their weapons, a development that the merrow deeply resent. Shortly afterwards the merrow decided that Thyatis needed to be watched more closely, so they create a hidden colony on an island off the Thyatian coast to begin observation and infiltration operations.

Finally, with Aquapopulus all but forgotten, the Thyatian government decided that the time to claim Thanegioth was ripe. It was clear that the establishment of a better sailing route to the Hinterlands in Davania was becoming essential. Rather than risk their own armies, Thyatis granted land rights on the Archipelago to any adventurer who could take and hold the land. None have yet taken up the offer.

## Timeline of the Sea of Dread

BC 6000: There is no true civilisation in the Outer World. As cultures rise and fall, some are transferred to the Hollow World by the Immortals to preserve them.

BC 5000: Before using the Spell of Preservation on the whole Hollow World, Ka transports a small group of Brute-Men and several ancient species from the Hollow World, including dinosaurs and Cave Rakasta, to a large island north of Davania. He casts a small version of the Spell and observes the effect before embarking on the full version. As a consequence of the Spell it is impossible for species to go extinct in the region of its effect.

BC 4500: A group of aranea and their phanaton servants flee the Isle of Dawn after turning away from the Night Spider religion. They stop for a time in the islands north of Davania, where they build Aglamoth, an extensive, magical civilisation. Many aranea and phanatons continue onwards towards the Savage Coast and the Orc's Head Peninsula.

BC 4000: The Oltec culture begins a rise toward civilisation.

BC 3050: A group of Blackmoorian technologists who call themselves 'Makers' begin work on biological enhancement using captured beastmen as test subjects. Their work catches the attention of the authorities who expel them from Blackmoor. They settle in the far south.

BC 3000: The Great Rain of Fire: Blackmoor is obliterated and the planet shifts its axis. Aglamoth is all but wiped out by the rising sea-levels. The web-cities rot away leaving only occasional stone temples and the aranea regress into primitive nomads. The Oltec civilisation collapses, many groups head south to escape the devastation.

BC 2980: The Makers' settlement survives the catastrophe but as harvests worsen they are forced to use their enhancement technology on themselves to survive. Over the generations they begin to mutate. As their technology

fails, they use magic to compensate, creating unstable psionic powers. They withdraw into their settlement and do not have much contact with other races.

BC 2800: A group of Oltec survivors, known as the Olman, arrive on the large island north of Davania and found the nation of Thanaxiotl.

BC 2500: The Olman culture is at its height. They have built temples and cities throughout the island chain, including the area covered by the spell of preservation. Asha, Princess of Olmoran, discovers a flame that grants eternal life beneath her city.

BC 2440: Now paranoid and desperate, Asha seals Olmoran off from the outside world.

BC 2330: The kopru of Adhuza arrived in Thanaxiotl and quietly take over the Olman culture. They establish themselves beneath Thanaclan.

BC 2300: Adhuza-controlled tritons found the city of Suthus off the coast of Brun.

BC 2100: Meditor and Verdier elf clans leave Ilsundal's northward migrations and settle on the southern coast on Brun near Suthus. They found the city of Colhador on one of their islands.

BC 1750: Earthquakes and volcanoes rock the southern coast killing many on land and sea. Thanaxiotl splits into a series of islands. The Olman cities are left in ruins and much of their civilization disappears, leaving only scattered villages. The kopru abandon northern Adhuza leaving only a few of their number beneath the ruins of Thanaclan. Over time these few turn to the worship of Demogorgon. Beneath the sea, the deep abyss opens, destroying Suthus. The Meditor elves are stranded on a series of islands in what they rename The Sea of Dread. The Makers, now called the M'Kar and hugely mutated, are confined to a single island by the disaster and flee underground.

BC 1720: Further quakes affect the Sea of Dread. Near Davania, the merrow

civilisation collapses as the sea floor drops. They migrate north and settle around Thanegioth, as it has become known.

BC 1500: On Eastern Brun, the Nithians begin their climb to greatness.

BC 1000: The Nithians colonize the southern continent and the Thanegioth archipelago. The local Olman, now calling themselves the Roa, are conquered but continue their village lifestyle under Nithian rule. The Nithians import lizard-men and troglodytes as slaves.

BC 950: Nithian's discover the kopru survivors who attempt take control of the colony. The Nithians win the ensuing conflict and wall off the centre of the island to prevent further contact with the kopru or the strange creatures that inhabit the region.

BC 700: Entopic immortals corrupt the Nithians. On Thanegioth a cult of using the undead as slaves spreads among the Nithian overlords.

BC 612: The Nithian entropic sorcerer, Ithaq-Talmir, becomes Lord of the North.

BC 602: Ithaq-Talmir moves to Davania, where he dies a short time later.

BC 515: A tribe of Yanifey, led by Ythol come across Colhador and conquer the island. They expel the elves and Ythol is declared King.

BC 500: The Nithian Empire, having incurred Immortal dislike, is wiped out. The colonies are systematically destroyed including those on Thanegioth, leaving the Roa with confused memories of their vanished gods. Despite the immortal intervention, the Cult of the Undead remains hidden among the surviving Roa. The troglodytes of the archipelago go native and retreat into the wilds.

BC 490: The Kara-kara tribe of orcs interbreed with humans slaves in northern Davania. The resulting race is green-skinned and can survive in

sunlight. They develop sea-going canoes and spread into the many islands of the Mystaran oceans.

BC 468: The Kara-kara reach the Thanegioth Archipelago. They drive out the local humans of the eastern islands, but the west remains in Roa hands.

BC 294: Through the practice of secret rites, King Hadric of Colhador becomes a velya. He disappears from the city.

BC 289: In a quake of tremendous power, Colhador sinks into the sea. A large section of the sunken city falls into a crevasse. Hadric, in hiding for several years underwater, moves into the sunken city and begins to build up an army of undead.

BC 134: A group of Roa encounter the kopru in the ruins of Thanaclan on the Isle of Dread. They are enslaved and slowly begin to spread the kopru influence through the islands. The kopru finally begin to build up their numbers.

BC 124: A group of kara-kara are blown far from their usual lands to the island of the M'Kar, which they name Teki-Nura-Ria. The M'Kar, now hopelessly inbred and half-insane, are forced underground by the humanoids. The Kara-kara spread to nearby islands.

BC 110: The kopru enslave the kara-kara and take control of the archipelago.

BC 101: The kopru attack the merrow and extend the empire of Shezzeth under the waves.

BC 85: The kopru, unable to fully control the aquarendi elves, launch a fierce attack through their proxies. The elves are almost wiped out over the next few years.

BC 83: The Kara-kara on Teki-Nura-Ria kill the last few M'Kar. Over the following centuries they come to regard the M'Kar as their own ancestors.

AC 0: First Emperor of Thyatis crowned.

AC 382: The merrow priests of Protius overthrow the kopru control of their people. They unify the merrow, found

the city of Twaeloporis on the site of their temple, and expel the shark-kin from their territory. The surviving aquarendi in the region come out from hiding.

AC 386: Having lost control of the merrow, Shezzeth collapses, freeing the Roa and the kara-kara of the islands. Groups of kopru retreat into hiding in the tunnels beneath the Isle of Dread.

AC 410: Minroth traders inadvertently spread lycanthropy to the seaside kingdoms.

AC 432: A group of aranea on the archipelago discover an Eye of Arik buried on their island and turn to his worship, gaining great rewards. These aranea weave the city of Hearts in some Olman ruins. They enslave the local phanatons and wipe out the Roa.

AC 445: The Silver Purge: Elves and humans purge Minrothad of all lycanthropes. One group of lycanthropes escape in a captured vessel and settle in the Thanegioth Archipelago, where they found an exclusively lycanthropic culture. They name their home Therian.

AC 498: On the island of Bararna, a group of troglodytes encounter the being Gleesshka and begin sacrifices to it. Over time they become horribly deformed.

AC 526: Kron, a human mage from Minrothad, creates the Unsinkable Throne. He launches his raft palace into the Sea of Dread. Over the remainder of his life he expands the raft into a floating city.

AC 593: The Silver Hunter kills the last of the werehawks on a rocky island in the Sea of Dread.

AC 625: A porcine lycanthrope called Lord Ingram sets himself up as ruler of an island south of Thyatis. He becomes known by the terrified inhabitants as 'the Devil Swine'. The government of Thyatis sends warriors to remove him but he escapes before they arrive. The inhabitants of the island abandon it rather than risk his return.

AC 674: In Twaeloporis, the priests of Protius begin a holy war against the surrounding creatures of the sea. They call their expanding realm Twaelar.

AC 692: The merrow of Twaelar conquer the aquatic Ogres. Over the following years they add them to their armies.

AC 698: Using ogre troops the Twaelar complete their conquest of the waters around the archipelago. The shark-kin put up the strongest fight but are eventually overwhelmed and enslaved.

AC 722: Thyatis founds the settlement of Aquapopulus on an island in the Sea of Dread. It is intended to be the outpost of a trade route to the archipelago and Davania beyond. The outpost quickly expands.

AC 735: Fearing Thyatian imperialism, the merrow of Twaelar attack the Aquapopulus settlement, razing it and massacring its inhabitants.

AC 760: The Kara-kara of Teki-Moa-Ha are unified under a strong leader. He leads them to construct Malo, the only known Kara-kara city in the world.

AC 894: The merrow of Twaelar begin colonising the waters off the shores of Davania.

AC 934: Evgeny Sekorski, a pirate captain from Slagovitch, lands on an island in Thanegioth intending to create his own private kingdom on the archipelago. He names the island Sekorvia and founds the town of Scuttlecove. His men drive the local Kara-kara into the wilderness.

AC 941: Evgeny Sekorski dies in a fight with another pirate. With no clear leader, the town of Scuttlecove becomes a free port, known only to pirates.

AC 944: A group of militant triton led by Lopra, unhappy with the government of Undersea, move into the ruins of Suthus and re-found the city. They force out the local shark-kin, who begin a guerrilla war against the invaders.

AC 952: The shark-kin slaves in Twaelar revolt against their merrow

masters. The revolt is eventually put down but only after significant losses on both sides. Some shark-kin are freed as part of the settlement.

AC 966: Twaelar merrow establish the hidden colony of Lyonesse to spy on Thyatis.

AC 973: Coram the Changer becomes leader of the lycanthopes on Therian. He begins a programme of re-introducing lycanthopes to Minrothad.

AC 979: Ruhaladero the Pitiless, a mad mage, is exiled from Jaibul and makes his home on the island of Teki-Lo-Kia, in the archipelago. He sets himself up as ruler of the kara-kara but they don't really care.

AC 987: A giant kara-kara orc named Kana-Lo-Loma becomes the Chieftain on Teki-Moa-Ha after killing and eating his predecessor.

AC 993: Duke Stefan Karameikos lays claim to a small island in the Sea of Dread and builds the prison of Ilsa Miena.

AC 996: The Crimson Fleet arrive in Scuttlecove.

AC 998: 'The Swallow' sinks in the Archipelago after setting sail for Thyatis from Davania. A new volcano erupts in the southern Sea of Dread.

AC 999: Ships around Thyatis and Minrothad begin disappearing.

AC 1000: Thyatis grants land rights on the Thanegioth Archipelago to any who can take and hold the land. Twaelar prepares for an influx of Thyatian adventurers.

### **Possible Future History**

AC 1004: The fey of Menehune on Teki-Moa-Ha attempt to move the archipelago into another plane of existence. The effect of Ka's Spell of Preservation prevents the move, though the islands vanish for several months causing changes in weather and quakes throughout the region. Although the islands return, unstable copies of the Isle of Dread are left on several other planes.

AC 1005: The devilfish begin attacks on Twaelar.

AC 1007: The Twaelar colony of Gwaelor declares independence. Unable to take the ogre troops so far from Twaelar proper, the Empire sends war-wizards and merrow but is unable to retake the region. An uneasy relationship opens between the two nations.

AC 1008: The kara-kara under Kana-Lo-Loma complete the building of their temple-pyramid and are commanded to worship the Feathered Serpent instead of Tapu the Pig God. The manwu-papas refuse and many are killed in the ensuing fighting. Ponui-Lo-Teva, the chief manwu-papa, escapes with some followers to Teki-Bali-Hai and begins plotting how to remove Kana from power.

AC 1009: During the Week Without Magic the artefact used to control the ogres of Twaelar stops working. The artefact's effect continues for some days but the ogres become increasingly restless. The Twaelar bring them back under control, but begin planning for any future ogre insurrection.

AC 1010: The Pirates' War breaks out between the various factions in Scuttlecove. By the time the fighting is

finished, half of the town has been burned and the Sea of Dread has a Pirate Lord for the first time in generations.

AC 1012: Shark-kin rebels sink *The Laurana*, a ship traversing the Sea of Dread, above Twaelopolis. The ship strikes the Imperial Palace causing massive damage. Emperor Titan III is killed and the rest of the Imperial Family disappears in the confusion. Over the following days Diviloplop, emerges as the new Emperor.

AC 1014: Having stabilised his reign, Emperor Diviloplop declares war on the air-breathers and specifically Thyatis. Ship-breaker regiments attack Thyatian shipping and take prisoners for interrogation.

AC 1015: A prisoner escapes from Twaelar and warns the Thyatians of the merrow threat. Thyatis declares war and establishes bases on Spider Isle and Skeleton Key. Renegade Alphatians begin arming the Twaelar.

AC 1016: Thyatis takes crippling losses in the Twaelar War but gradually learns how to fight the merrow. A Thyatian fleet lands on the Isle of Dread and claims the island, making a base at the village of Mora.

AC 1017: Thyatis takes the initiative in the Twaelar War. A peace agreement is agreed between the two Empires granting Thyatis rights to the Thanegioth Archipelago. The Empire begins shipping colonists to the islands and founds the town of Farshore. It is only a matter of time before the cultures already there are discovered.

AC 1019: Demogorgon seeks to unleash the Savage Tide on the Sea of Dead.

## ISLES OF THE OPEN SEA

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### Overview

The surface of the Sea of Dread is vast and, for the most part, unoccupied. Beneath its surface lies a gaping abyss of such enormous depth that it ensures that for mile upon blue mile there is nothing but endless water, causing sailors to wish for the slightest glimpse of land. To the north, near Ierendi and Minrothad, the surface is dotted with islands. These range from tiny sandbars to small rocky outcrops, host to Rocs and other dangerous beasts. To the south, around the Thanegioth Archipelago, there are too many small islands to be easily mapped. Between the two, the open sea holds sway, wracked by the regular storms which rip through the region.

However, the area is not completely barren. A number of larger islands can be found by sailors with a good map or a lot of luck. Each island is less than twenty-five miles across, a dot on the ocean. But such stopping points are vital for a mariner short of supplies or looking for a place to rest.

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### Three Sisters Keys

Far off the south-eastern edge of Ierendi lies Three Sisters Keys. These three islands lie in a triangle, separated by roughly 30 miles of shallow water. For many miles around the islands lies the Dragon's Teeth Reef. The reef is close enough to the surface to make reaching any one of the Three Sisters almost impossible. Any sailor attempting to land on the reef is subject to a 95% chance that their ship will strike the reef, so having its keel ripped away. No vessel can survive this and the reef is littered with the wrecks of those who have tried. Any crew or passengers who survive the loss of the ship must attempt to swim for shore or drown. As a consequence of this, very few explorers have reached the Three Sisters.

In fact the reef is the remains of Shevayim, one of the aranea cities, built long before the destruction of Blackmoor. The city itself was lost in the rising seas and corals have grown over the millennia to form the Dragon's Teeth Reef. The three islands themselves are all flat with sandy beaches and palm trees towards the

centre. Stone remains can be found in some places on the islands, but they are rare, due to the aranea habit of spinning their cities from silk.

The northernmost island contains the lair of Gryonax, a huge yellow dragon (See Monsters) who keeps the local monster population down. Yellow dragons are exceedingly rare on Mystara and the difficulty of reaching Three Sisters has meant that any sightings of Gryonax have thus far been dismissed as sailor's tales. Indeed the dracologists of Brun are unaware of the existence of yellow dragons as a species and would pay a fair sum for a scale of such a creature. A complete corpse would fetch an enormous price, and the value of a living captive is incalculable.

The middle island is almost completely empty apart from the occasional wandering monster but the southernmost island contains the most interesting part of the Three Sisters. Near the centre of the island lies the remains of part of the Aranea's magical transportation system. This was developed by the spider-magicians to carry them around their empire instantly. Sadly, all the other ports were lost as the seas rose. The site is an unusually circular clearing surrounded by palm trees. Around the edge a series of eight pillars are still standing. The ground is made of a single stone and the site is open to the sky. There are no marks of any sort but the site does radiate magic. To use the site any person must stand in the clearing and speak the name of the island in the Sea of Dread that they wish to travel to. It doesn't matter what language they use as long as they know what island they mean (even if they have never travelled there themselves). A few seconds after uttering the name, the person is instantly teleported to that island, although their exact place of arrival is random. Very few people have discovered this secret and even fewer have made it known. However, there are rumours are that a pirate who discovered the site taught the secret to his parrot. Of course nobody believes such a ludicrous story.

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### Skeleton Key

Further south is Skeleton Key. This island is flat and stony, providing a good basis for construction. Dotted around the island are the remains of houses and some larger buildings, although they are dilapidated and overgrown. In the centre of the ruins lie thousands of bones, both of humans and merrow. Among the bones lie weapons and armour, some long rusted by the passing centuries. Although safe during the day, at night several of the skeletons rise and walk the island.

Skeleton Key had another name. It was once known as Aquapopulus, a settlement founded by Thyatis to act as a waypoint to the Thanegioth Archipelago and to Davania in the south. The colony was established and flourished for several years before the paranoid merrow of Twaelar decided that the Thyatians could not be allowed to establish what they viewed as a bridgehead for an assault. They gave the Thyatians two months to clear the outpost and, when they didn't, the merrow and their servants attacked in force. The colonists were hopelessly outnumbered and the outpost was wiped out. Since then, the Thyatians have not returned to the island or the archipelago and have long forgotten the attack.

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### Insect Island

This is the smallest of the major islands, only 8 miles from north to south and barely 4 wide. It is an unpopulated desert island, home only to palm trees, sand and insects. In fact there are an unusual number of these creatures for a place so far out to sea. Any mariner who moors at Insect Island must protect their food and water well, as the insects can and will get into most containers brought near their home.

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### Spider Isle

This island is relatively verdant for the Sea of Dread. It has palm trees and stunning sandy beaches along with some beautiful bird life and a fresh-water spring. In the centre of the island rests an ancient building surrounded by eight standing pillars. The roof of the building is shaped like the body of a spider. Cobwebs stretch between the

building's pillars. This is another remnant of the ancient araña civilisation. It was once the highest point of their most religious site and is all that is left of a temple complex that stretched for miles. Several similar temples can be found underwater nearby. The temple is ancient and strangely beautiful. It has become known to the few travellers who have seen it as the Lost Temple of Araknee, a coincidence caused by the spider-shaped roof.

In the floor of the temple is a secret door that has, so far, remained undiscovered. It once led to the temple complex of the araneas but is now a maze of tunnels filled with creatures of the darkness. At the heart of this complex lies The Silken Map. This item is a map apparently drawn on a cloth made of spider silk. It is 3 feet square and shows the area of the aranea civilisation, as it is today. The islands of the Sea of Dread, Thanegioth and even Ierendi and Minrothad are all clearly visible. The map is magical; it updates itself as islands form or sink, and it shows its own location. It can be used to plot safe sailing paths to all the islands of the Sea of Dread, including Three Sisters Keys. Should the existence of the map ever become known, all the trading empires of Brun and Davania would want to own it.

Knowledge of the island is limited due to a peculiar magical effect which shields it from view until ships are within two hundred yards of the shore. Beyond that distance the sea appears empty. As a result, many mariners have sailed right past it without suspecting its existence and it does not appear on any map of the region (apart from the Silken Map itself). Both the island and the Temple are therefore considered travellers' tales. The island is also home to a large number of monsters attracted by its magical aura. Staying overnight is not recommended.

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### **Termite Atoll**

Lying South of Aloysius Island in Ierendi, Termite Atoll is one of the closest islands to civilisation. For centuries it had been avoided due to the infestation of salt water termites in the region of the island. These would attack the hull of any ship that moored near the

island, causing serious damage to the vessel.

A few years ago, Duke Stefan Karameikos decided to use this to his advantage. He claimed Termite Atoll on behalf of Karameikos and renamed it Ilsa Miena. Since then he has turned the island into a prison colony. Criminals who have not committed crimes serious enough to warrant execution, are taken to Isla Miena by a prison ship. The ship's crew includes a druid who has developed a way of keeping the termites at bay. The ship then dumps the criminals on the Atoll and lets them work the land to keep themselves alive. They are unable to escape as any boat they build would be destroyed by the termites before it can leave the island.

There is a Governor of the colony who lives in the fortified port of Coelina, where the ship docks. He ensures that the island remains habitable and reports periodically on events to the Duke. In the last few years, the inhabitants have started exporting fish, rum and even a little copper via the port.

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### **No Name Island**

This is little more than a sandbar with inedible plants growing on it. Mariners marooned here are likely to die of hunger or thirst unless rescued. Staying overnight on No Name Island holds other dangers. On nights of the full moon, there is a 20% chance that the island will be over-run with shark-kin trying to reclaim their tribal ground.

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### **Pirate Rock**

This barren, rocky island is only slightly larger than Insect Island and has never been more than a stopping off point for occasional seafarers. Its stony beaches give way to a palm forest dotted with occasional clearings. What the island has been used for is secreting treasure. Pirates frequently stop here between their attacks on the high seas to store some of the loot. They will normally pick it up again within a few days so staying for any length of time is inadvisable. Treasure hunters will normally do well here though, as some pirates never return from their fateful voyages.

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### **The Burning Mountain**

Two years ago a new island appeared in the Sea of Dread. A massive volcano,

the like of which has not been seen for many years, suddenly reared out of the sea. Since then the Burning Mountain, as it became known, has been constantly erupting and has now reached a significant height. It is an incredibly dangerous area to be. The sea for miles around the island is filled with steam as the hot lava boils the nearby waters. Poisonous gases seep from cracks in the volcano's side bringing a silent death to any foolish enough to approach from downwind. Should explorers be able to land they are likely to encounter falling rocks, deadly gases and molten lava as they scale the mountain's sides. However those who do make the trip can reap great rewards. The volcano leaks rivulets of molten gold which run down its sides. Once they cool and harden, lumps of the precious metal can be prised off the rock by a determined adventurer. Since the mountain appeared, rumours of the mountain's gold have reached the ears of the Black Eagle Baron, the Iron Ring and a number of others who would use any means necessary to persuade a traveller to approach the mountain.

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### **East Key**

Far from the other islands, south of Hattias in Thyatis, lies East Key. It is another sandy island with fresh water and abundant food supplies. Several centuries ago it was inhabited by Thyatians and was considered as part of the Empire, albeit a small part. Then, in the year 625AC, a man called Lord Ingram arrived on the island. He and his associates swiftly took control and began a reign of terror, forcing the inhabitants to provide him with food and riches. Lord Ingram was the earliest recorded modern porcine lycanthrope (although earlier examples had existed millennia ago) and the locals called him 'The Devil Swine' so giving the name to that evil race. Eventually the Thyatians heard what was happening and sent a group of soldiers to remove the man. By the time they arrived Lord Ingram was gone, secretly spreading his contagion elsewhere. The people of East Key refused to believe he had left them permanently and so abandoned the island forever.

To the casual observer East Key has been uninhabited since that time. However, beneath the surface it is a

different story. After the Aquapopulus war the Twaelar were always alert to a further Thyatian incursion. Decades ago they decided to establish an outpost to watch Thyatis and report their activities to the homeland. So Lyonesse, a hidden underwater base, was built in the shallows off East Key. This coral structure looks like a natural formation but hides a small contingent of merrow (~50) who continually observe the Empire and report their findings to their masters in the South. They occasionally send polymorphed spies to the Thyatian mainland and several have penetrated the Government of the Empire. The Thyatian authorities have yet to realise that the merrow are watching them, but it is only a matter of time.

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### **Teki-Nura-Ria**

Off the south-east coast of Thyatis lies an island that is often shrouded in mists. Ships do not venture near it because of the storms that frequently lash the area and the strange green-skinned pirates that haunt its waters. This is Teki-Nura-Ria, although only its kara-kara inhabitants know it by that name.

Teki-Nura-Ria is volcanic, with two dormant volcanoes on its east and west sides. These are known by the Kara-kara as Ni-malowa and Ki-ata. There are two natural harbours in the island. The southern harbour is a long, sandy beach that runs into dense jungle. Roughly a mile from the beach is a long abandoned Kara-kara village, which is slowly being reclaimed by the island's plants. Only a few bamboo frames remain. South of the village lies a swamp filled with foot-deep, brackish water and a tangle of mangrove roots. Further north is the Trail of the Dead. This old path runs in a gully between the two volcanos. At its south-western end the Kara-kara have a guard post made of bone and ancient stone statues stand at intervals along the gully. At its north-eastern end, the Path becomes a wooden causeway which extends into another swamp. This ends in a platform that the kara-kara use for hunting creatures of the swamps both for food and ritual purposes. Half way down the Path, a tunnel enters the mountainside. The tunnel is left over from the M'Kar occupation of the island and contains both physical and mental traps for the unwary. Eventually this tunnel comes out on in the Valley of

Tombs, which contains the entrances to three tombs of the Manwu-papas.

Beyond, by the other harbour, lies Moatia, the kara-kara village. This is made of a series of long huts and contains over 180 of the green-skinned creatures. Nearby are some of their outrigger canoes and several giant horned chameleons, which are used as mounts by the kara-kara of the island. A tunnel from here leads to a huge cave under the volcano which the kara-kara use for their annual drum ceremony. This ritual event lasts four days during which the drums can be heard for miles out to sea. Like the kara-kara of the south, those who live on Teki-Nura-Ria worship Tapu the pig-god (an aspect of the Immortal Orcus), and the shaman of Tapu are known as manwu-papas, the spiritual keepers of kara-kara culture. On Teki-Nura-Ria the religion has become more rigid; rather than just worshipping a porcine deity, the kara-kara of the island now revere all pigs as sacred creatures and no longer use them for labour.

Beneath Teki-Nura-Ria lie the caverns of the M'Kar. As the History of the Sea of Dread explains, these unfortunate people are long dead but during their lives they built a series of caverns, which thread beneath both volcanoes on the island. These caverns are filled with strange illusions and disturbing pictures showing the twisted and decadent pleasures of the mutated race. Although the kara-kara themselves do not enter these caverns, they have recently become the home of an interloper on Teki-Nura-Ria. Calan Caius, a magic-user from Thyatis, escaped to the island with his daughter and henchmen after becoming a Devil Swine. He has used this disease to masquerade as the incarnation of Tapu, the Kara-kara pig god and is using them to attack Thyatian shipping in the area. The kara-kara are fanatically devoted to him and are becoming bolder with each passing month. Since they cannot pronounce his real name they call him KalnaKaa.

The island is also host to many dangerous creatures including boars, crocodiles and snakes. The oddest inhabitants however are the ship-bane, known as Kal-Muru by the kara-kara of the region. These are vicious man-sized creatures from the elemental plane of air who enshroud themselves in a cloud of

fog and then attack ships that drift in. They are responsible for the strange mists and storms which are associated with the island. They have also come under KalnaKaa's malign influence and so augment the kara-kara in their attacks (see *X8 Drums on Fire Mountain*).

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### **Teki-Lua-Ni and Teki-Lua-Mo**

The kara-kara who were blown to Teki-Nura-Ria spread to nearby islands over the years and the two largest of these are Teki-Lua-Ni and Teki-Lua-Mo and they are both found to the east of Teki-Nura-Ria. There are kara-kara tribes on both islands and, until the arrival of KalnaKaa, the three tribes raided, traded and exchanged brides on a roughly equal basis. Now the poor inhabitants of these lesser islands are increasingly being captured for use as slaves by their cousins.

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### **Kron**

There is one island on the Sea of Dread that cannot be found on any map as its position changes with the tides and the winds. Indeed most people from the mainland are not even aware of its existence. Kron is not so much an island as an artefact. It is constructed from fourteen massive rafts, joined together into a floating city. The rafts range from 200' to 400' across and are connected together by flexible wooden bridges, so making the rafts into a small city. The main bulk of Kron is surrounded by nearly a hundred small rafts, tethered to the city by mooring lines. On each of the large rafts are several buildings, while the small rafts each support a single structure. The roofs of these buildings are angled to collect rainwater in tanks for drinking. Round the edge of the buildings runs a 10' wide ledge which people use to make their way around the city.

The central raft is also the largest and contains the royal palace. The other large rafts contain living quarters for the residents of Kron, as well as shops and factories for manufacturing ships, clothes and food. There is even a stadium for entertainment and a prison for punishing those who break the city's laws. In short, everything that is needed to a fully-functioning society exists in floating form. Inside the buildings, almost everything in the city is waterproof and there are no loose

objects anywhere on Kron. The residents of the city put objects away or tie them up. In addition, all the furniture is secured to the walls or floor, all cups and bowls have lids and tables have depressions and slots to hold objects.

The people of Kron are mostly descendants of the followers Kron himself gathered during the early years of the city's existence. They wear lightweight clothing and if the weather is good they swim from place to place as often as they walk. Any child that can crawl in Kron can also swim and anyone older than six years can out-swim most mainlanders. The staple food of the people of Kron is fish and kelp, which is harvested by divers and dried on rafts. Below the rafts hang many huge nets to catch fish. Every morning the nets are inspected by divers. If there is a substantial catch the nets are hauled up and emptied.

Firewood is naturally lacking, but for cooking the citizens of Kron harvest different types of sea plants that burn well when dried. At night and indoors the city is illuminated by luminescent corals that need to be regularly replaced. For crafting items that require a more powerful heat source, the city relies on the potent mixes of the local alchemist, who is also responsible for producing alchemy fire for the tower-mounted ballistae used to defend the city against enemy fleets and large sea monsters. The city also has a small military that use catamarans to patrol the seas around the city.

Kron is ruled by a king, who is normally the strongest son of the previous ruler, though an election takes place if there is no male child. The current king is called One-Eye. He was a great fighter and led Kron's military in his youth but his age is now getting the better of him. Beneath the king stand Morak, the High Sorcerer, and Falcon, the First Mate. Before Morak became the high sorcerer, Kron was a peaceful city. However, Morak has One-Eye under a permanent charm spell and has convinced him that Kron should take what it needs from those who have it. To this end he has made One-Eye sign a pact with Lopra, king of the triton's underwater city, Suthus. Under this agreement, Kron builds war rafts for Suthus which the tritons use to attack local shipping. The plunder is divided equally between the

two cities, while captives are sent to Suthus. Falcon, the First Mate, is increasingly uncomfortable with this arrangement but has not yet decided what to do about it.

The centre of the city is the throne room, where One-Eye conducts all of his affairs of state. The room is covered with silk hangings and rugs, while in the centre stands the Unsinkable Throne. This is shaped like a giant supporting hand and is made from a marble-like material of many swirling shades of green. Only Morak and his apprentices know the secret of the Throne. Any floating object connected to it cannot sink even in the roughest storms, no matter how badly it is damaged. As a result, Kron has never lost a raft during a storm. Most of the inhabitants believe this to be the blessing of a great being hundreds of years ago. Ironically, the Throne itself cannot float. If thrown into water, it sinks immediately.

A wererat recently arrived on Kron from a ship after having been on the run from Minrothad authorities for some time. He is currently scouting the city in rat form, trying to find the best location to set up a more permanent lair. Since the citizens of Kron have next to no silver weapons, his presence could become a major problem in the longer run.

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## Suthus

South of the nation of Undersea lies the underwater city of Suthus. The city was founded over fifty years ago by a group of tritons who were unhappy with the government of Undersea. They regarded their home nation as weak and slow to respond to the devilfish threat. Led by Lopra, a senior member of the Undersea military, they set out south and reoccupied the long-abandoned ruins of the palace once at the centre of the ancient triton nation of Suthus. They took this location partially because of its proximity to the Abyss, and partially out of a desire to claim continuity with that ancient triton culture (unaware that Suthus had actually been a kopru-ruled city). Unfortunately, the city is in the middle of territory usually claimed by the shark kin. The tritons wasted no time in forcing the shark kin out of the area and proclaiming it as an independent city-state. They intended Suthus to be a bastion on the edge of the abyss, which could be used to defend

against devilfish attacks. So far, they have been few, but Suthus remains prepared.

Suthus is made from coral cut from distant reefs. The triton residents, who love beauty and music, created the city to be a natural musical instrument. As the water currents flow through it, they create a complex rhythm that can be heard many miles away. The city is very small, stretching only 500' across and it rises only 30 feet from the sea floor. In the centre of the city lies the Royal Palace, which is a huge building made of different types and colors of coral. It is hexagonal and a short tower rises from each corner. Atop these towers are large glow worms, which illuminate the entire city and can be seen up to five miles away. Inside, Suthus is a twisting maze of tunnels dotted with small rooms. The interior of the city is as beautiful as the outside and the color and shape of the coral walls constantly changes. The shark kin still regard the location of Suthus as their territory and mount several attacks a year. Consequently, the city is designed for defence. In every wall there are several murder holes and patrols of tritons constantly swim around the perimeter. Sometimes, even getting to and from the city is made difficult by the shark kin, so the triton of Undersea tend to regard the area of Suthus as off limits.

Lopra became the King of Suthus after its founding and still rules in name. However, he is really a puppet controlled by Ulobon, the Leader of Ceremonies for the city. Ulobon has been permanently charmed by the velya, Hadric, of Colhador, who used to hunt for victims among the cities inhabitants. Ulobon has convinced Lopra that they can hold off Hadric's predations if they send a captive to Colhador every seven days. He suggested that they sign a pact with the city of Kron, to attack shipping and take the passengers hostage. By capturing airbreathers, the tritons do not have to send their own people to Colhador. Kron's leaders have stuck to the bargain, but are unaware of the true fate of the prisoners. The arrangement is not approved of by Uthom, Lopra's personal wizard, but he is too weak to beat Ulobon in combat and spends much of his time despairing over what his city has become.

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## Colhador

North of Suthus, lying within the boundaries of Undersea itself, lies a darkened ruin that few will go near. Colhador sits on the edge of an undersea precipice and so is not often visited by the inhabitants of the Sunlit Sea. It is the remains of a surface city, which once sat on a small island in the Minrothad region. In its earliest days, the city was populated by elves. They ruled for a thousand years, but were driven out by human invaders who created an independent city-state under a long line of kings.

These kings ruled until King Hadric, who feared death so much that he used terrible magics to avoid it. He transformed himself into a velya, an aquatic vampire that is immortal and exceedingly dangerous (see *X7 War Rafts of Kron*). After his transformation, and needing to be submerged to survive, he retreated into hiding in the waters around the city and preyed on its peoples by night. Eventually his brother, Meric, realised what had happened and formed a plan to defeat him. He had a sword forged and enchanted specifically to kill the velya his brother had become. But before he could use it, the island on which the city rested started to collapse. Hadric had used his time in hiding to magically weaken the shelf on which the island rested. As it collapsed, Meric hid the sword with a bronze golem as a guardian, before perishing trying to save his people. The island collapsed into the deep and the city ended up perched on the edge of a steep drop into deeper waters. Hadric moved into the ruins and over the following centuries he built up a small army of undead from the corpses of his former subjects. He also changed the layout of the ruins incorporating many traps both physical and magical.

To this day Hadric still lurks in his lair. He prays on the merrow and triton of Undersea and Suthus if they stray too close and Colhador has acquired a dark reputation as a result. His arrangement with Suthus and Kron, has removed the necessity for him to hunt, so now he sits in his lair and broods on his next move.

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## Personalities

### Calan Caius (KalnaKaa)

MU9/Devil Swine HD9. For many years Calan Caius was a researcher in Thyatis,

obsessed with lycanthropy. He carried out terrible experiments on captured subjects but was eventually attacked and given the disease. Driven from place to place he travelled with his daughter and occasional hired (or charmed) bodyguards. Eventually he found his way to Teki-Nura-Ria where he plans to take revenge on his former country. He is cruel, cunning, bitter and vengeful, but not a coward. He wears a long black robe with a matching cloak as well as an amulet, which he keeps on even in swine form. In his human form, he is a middle-aged, fat, swarthy man with small, piggy eyes, black, bristly hair and a matching beard and moustache.

*Equipment:* Staff of striking, amulet of protection.

### Maerie Caius

T7. Maerie is an attractive, young woman and is outwardly very pleasant. However, she is ruthlessly devoted to her father and his evil plans. She is a very convincing liar and will use any technique to ingratiate herself with those she sees as a threat to her father. She is a beautiful woman with auburn hair and deep brown eyes. She wears long, white robes and white silk belt.

*Equipment:* Dagger of concealment +2 (in the form of a plain, gold ring).

### King One-Eye

F6. One-Eye is the current King of the floating city of Kron. He is a large man with long, graying hair and a patch over one eye. He lost the other in a fight when he was a young man and has cultivated his image as a ruthless warrior. He became King 15 years ago and originally continued the peaceful trading policies of his father. However, he has been charmed by Morak, the High Sorcerer and, having signed an agreement with Suthus, uses Kron as a large-scale pirate operation.

*Equipment:* War Hammer +2, ring of protection +1

### Falcon

F12. Falcon is the First Mate of the city of Kron and head of security. Like the king, he was part of Kron's military before One-Eye appointed him First Mate. He has been One-Eye's right hand man for a number of years and, due to One-Eye not having a son, is likely to be the next king. In recent months he

has been deeply disturbed by the change in his old friend but does not understand its cause. He is also not a supporter of the arrangement with Suthus, and wishes to return Kron to a less aggressive path.

*Equipment:* Sword +2, leather armour +3, ring of water walking.

### Morak

MU12. Morak is High Sorcerer of the floating city of Kron. He was born on Kron and his aptitude for magic was noticed at an early age. He trained under the previous High Sorcerer and took his position when he died. Although outwardly pleasant he harbours a secret resentment for all the shore-bound who he regards as weak and pathetic. On his appointment he came to an arrangement with Ulobon of Suthus and set about making Kron a military city. Unable to affect matters directly, he placed King One-Eye under a charm and now rules through him. Morak is medium sized with fair hair.

*Equipment:* Dagger +2, ring of spell storing, ring of human control (used on One-Eye)

### Garimir

MU5. Garimir is the head alchemist and glue-maker on Kron. He lives on a large raft in the northeast corner alongside his famous 'glue factory'. Garimir and his apprentices use the glands of giant jellyfish along with other ingredients and a secret recipe to produce barrels of waterproof, sticky goo, which the citizens then use for a variety of things. Foreign traders have also come to appreciate its many uses and so Garimir has established a formal connection with Clan Corser of the Minrothad Guilds. He also has a vast knowledge of undersea animal and plant life and can provide anti-toxins, underwater lights, salves and ointments.

### Igoa

F3. Igoa and a handful of men run the primitive docking area in the southeast corner of Kron. The enclosed area is only roughly 200 x 400 feet and protected on the two sides facing the sea by a floating wall and a gate mechanism. The docks also include a stables area for sea horses and other aquatic mounts and so can rarely accommodate more than two small

sailing ships at any given time Dock Master Igoa is in charge of overseeing everything that goes on at the docks - a dull job most of the time.

### **Yirav the Shipwright**

NM. Yirav is in charge of the large ship building yard on Kron. Here, he and group of skilled workers produce and repair Kron's fleet of war catamarans and other small boats used for fishing or for loading and unloading vessels that are too large to dock at the city itself. Yirav also has a number of triton customers, for whom he constructs special sea horse-drawn rafts that can operate both underwater and on the surface.

### **Zalni**

T2. Zalni is one of the few women to run her own business in Kron – the city's only inn, called The Maiden's Kiss. It is located on one of the large rafts in the western part of the city, just west of the palace and south of the city's stadium. Her inn only has a few rooms for guests that want to spend the night and don't have their own ship, but the ones she have are fairly nice and clean. The food is also reasonable, even if the menu has very little variation. She also allows a small amount of gambling and has employed a burly fighter by the name of Vamar to make sure any cheaters or troublemakers are shown the door (and the ocean right outside it).

### **Paewyn**

NM. One of the wealthier individuals in Kron is the merchant Paewyn, owner of a small diving and salvage operation. He has built his business through paying Kron's divers for bringing up salvageable goods from shipwrecks and undersea ruins. He then sells the produce to visiting merchants at a considerable mark-up. Recently, Paewyn has expanded his operations with a sinister crew of Thyatian divers under the leadership of one Joshua Stormshadow. Joshua and his men have expanded Paewyn's operations by roaming far from Kron in an *Undersea Boat* and bringing back lost treasures but most of the citizens of Kron are uneasy around Joshua and his men. After all, they would not be the first fugitives to lay low in Kron.

### **Hallar**

One of Kron's gifted native citizens by the name of Hallar has recently found employment as a local agent of the Blue Eels (the Minrothad secret police). His mission in Kron is to gather information about the city's salvage operations and to monitor the buyers of rare items brought up from the deep. Hallar was recruited because the Blue Eels suspect that magical items retrieved from wrecks or undersea ruins may be working their way into unknown hands in the Minrothad Guilds. With the recent attempt on Oran Meditor's life, the Blue Eels are investigating any possible leads to who might be building up a secret force in the isles.

### **King Lopra**

Triton Mage HD7. King Lopra was once General Lopra of Undersea. Lopra is a large triton with green eyes and fair hair. In his youth he fought numerous battles with the Devilfish and became increasingly outspoken in his claims that the Devilfish were massing for an attack and that Undersea was not sufficiently prepared. His opinions led to his political ostracism and eventually he left Undersea with a large group of similarly-minded triton. They moved to the border of the Abyss, where they could watch the Devilfish more closely, and founded the city of Suthus, expelling the local shark-kin. Lopra has now ruled as King for over 60 years and has become a shadow of his former self. A few years ago, merfolk began disappearing in the region of the ruins of Colhador. The culprit was eventually identified as a velya and the merfolk made a few attempts to destroy him, each of which ended in disaster. With Undersea still refusing to engage with Suthus and with the Devilfish threat increasing, he turned to Ulobon, his Master of Ceremonies, for advice. Ulobon suggested sending prisoners to the velya, enabled by an agreement with Kron. Lopra reluctantly agreed.

*Equipment:* Sword +3

### **Ulobon**

Triton Cleric HD7. Ulobon has been Master of Ceremonies for Suthus since it was founded. He, like many other inhabitants, left Undersea with Lopra and fully agrees with his aims and ideals. Some years ago Ulobon

wandered too close the the ruins of Colhador and was ensared by Hadric the velya. He charmed Ulobon and sent him back to Suthus with instructions to facilitate the sending of victims to Colhador. Ulobon is now his devoted servant and works tirelessly to this end.

*Equipment:* Spear +1, wand of lightning bolts

### **Uthom**

Triton Mage HD7. Uthom also accompanied Lopra from Undersea. He has been the King's personal wizard for more years than he likes to count and considers himself Lopra's closest friend. He too has been depressed by the scale of the difficulties facing Suthus but cannot bring himself to agree with Ulobon's solution, which he regards as utterly evil. However, Ulobon is too strong for him and Uthom has little idea what to do next.

*Equipment:* Bowl of commanding water elementals, medallion of ESP 90'.

### **Hadric**

Velya HD 7\*\*. Hadric was once King of Colhador. He became King at an early age and swiftly became fond of the trappings of power. He was also beautiful, able and swift in combat. As the years started to take their toll he became ever more morbid, brooding on the coming loss of his looks and his eventual death. Finally, he decided that it was better to be immortal but evil, than to die old and bitter. Using terrible magics he turned himself into a velya and disappeared into the waters round Colhador, preying on any people foolish enough to swim too near. Using his powers, he discovered his brother Meric's plan to kill him, so he weakened the structure under the city and Colhador sank in a matter of hours, drowning almost everyone. He has now lived in the ruins of Colhador for over a thousand years and has no recollection of his mortal life. In his human form, Hadric is blue-skinned with gills. He can also take the shape of an enormous Great White Shark, a Manta Ray, or a current of water.

*Equipment:* Ring of spell turning, ring of telekinesis.

### **Lathan Lancehand**

E4. Lathan is a Callarii elf from Specularum in Karameikos. He is a

young elf, with blonde hair and pale, sharp features. Lathan is oddly obsessed with reaching the Burning Mountain, the volcano recently reported in the Sea of Dread. He can be found in many of the bars in Specularum harbour trying to charter a ship that will take him there.

*Equipment:* Sword +1.

#### **Elrem Nessumsar**

D6. Elrem is a dark haired and dour dwarf from Rockhome. He has a slightly madcap scheme to found a new dwarf colony in the south and had settled on the Thanegioth archipelago as a good location. He can be found in many of the ports in Minrothad trying to find a trading vessel willing to take him there and looking for adventurers to accompany him.

*Equipment:* War hammer +1.

#### **Brother Octave**

C5. Brother Octave is a middle-ranking cleric from a small church in Karameikos. Octave's superiors have asked him to find an old temple pictured in an ancient book sacred to their order.

They believe it can be found on an island far to the south, but can give little indication of where to look. Octave is not very pleased with this assignment but it making tentative steps toward beginning it.

*Equipment:* Mace +1.

#### **Kuat the Dragon-Hearted**

F6. Kuat made his name in the arenas of Thyatis where he was one of their greatest gladiators. He has since won his freedom and has been asked by a Thyatian senator to track down the location of Aquapopolus, an old colony in the Sea of Dread that was reportedly destroyed some centuries previously. The senator and several of his friends wish to establish whether the stories of the fabled merman empire are true and believe locating Aquapopolus is the first step in finding out.

*Equipment:* Sword +1.

#### **Suparjo**

MU4. Suparjo, a small, dark man from northern Karameikos, is seeking a

seven-headed hydra in the waters of the Sea of Dread and the Malpheggi swamp. He can often be found sailing the seas and will pay handsomely for information on such a monster.

*Equipment:* Dagger +1

#### **Krag Scradle**

T6. Krag is an old lag more used to cutting purses than sailing. Tired of the shorebound life, he has set sail south, looking for pirate treasure. He has little expectation of finding any, but it's something to do now he's too old for the street life.

*Equipment:* Sword +1.

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#### **Monsters**

Medusa, blink dog, traders, cyclops, giant draco lizards, pit vipers, stirges, flame salamanders, insect swarms, flying hydra, harpies, salt-water termites, merrow, sea-snakes, pirates, ogres, bandits, yellow dragon, kara-kara orc.

# THE THANEGIOTH ARCHIPELAGO

## Overview

South of the open seas lies the Thanegioth Archipelago. This set of tropical islands rests on a large volcanic ridge making it the only land for hundreds of miles. There are ten large islands ranging in size from twenty miles across to over a hundred. Between them lie many smaller islands, some little more than sandbars.

Although the existence of the archipelago been known about for many thousands of years, the current civilisations of the world have no presence there. This is partly because of their isolation but also because of the danger they pose. Previous expeditions to the region have often vanished into the thick jungles, never to return. Those few that have made it back to civilisation tell stories of dangerous creatures and strange peoples.

Despite the advantages of modern shipping, reaching the islands at all is still a dangerous venture due to the nearby reefs and the isolation from land. The regular storms of the Sea of Dread, the numerous sea-monsters and the surprisingly large contingent of pirates in the area also make the journey fraught with danger. Most ships avoid the archipelago completely and sail up the coast of Ochalea and the Isle of Dawn, although some occasionally sail through trying to cut short the long voyage between Davania and Brun.

Yet modern scholars do not realise that the Archipelago has been host to four great civilisations, each of which has come to a catastrophic end. In the depths of pre-history, the islands were the highlands of the aranea's magical culture, now lost to the seas. After the Great Rain of Fire, the Olman built many cities on the islands but these were destroyed in the earthquakes that created Ierendi and Minrothad. The Nithians conquered here too and ruled for centuries before the immortals ripped their culture from the face of Mystara. Finally the kopru ruled the islands until revolts from within toppled their power and left the lands isolated once again. Now each island has a unique culture, reflecting the strange history of these lost lands.

The weather in the archipelago is uniformly warm and humid, often unpleasantly so. With cooling breezes from the sea, the coasts and mountains are often at a comfortable 20°C, but the temperature quickly rises and the interiors of most of the islands can reach 35°C. The islands have a wet season and a dry season, though rain is a daily occurrence during both. The main difference is that, during the wet season (Kaldmont to Yarthmont) the islands are wracked by regular typhoons, making the islands all the harder to reach.

## Emoren

The easternmost island of the archipelago is called Emoren, although only one person remembers where the name came from. The edge of the island consists of idyllic beaches, which give way to a tangled jungle covering much of the interior. Small mountains run from north to south down the twenty-mile spine of the island. Around the edges of the island lie three villages, populated by the Roa-Emor people, called Kitabe, Dari and Pabetano.

The Roa-Emor, like nearly all the humans in the archipelago, are descendents of the Olman, who inhabited the islands over three thousand years previously. The villages are made of wood and leaves, and the inhabitants live on fish from the nearby waters, and tropical fruits and vegetables grown in their gardens. They are rarely visited by those from the outside world and give no real thought to life beyond the island. They have little spiritual life but, if pressed, speak in hushed tones of the goddess who lives in the island's interior. To them she is unearthly and terrifying, although none claim to have ever actually seen her.

In the heart of the island lies a valley between two of the mountains. It can only be entered through a small, natural gate at one end. Once through the gate, the path widens into a lush landscape in the heart of which stands the city of Olmorán, the only true Olman city left in the world. The valley path runs into the city where it passes beneath a massive stone corbel arch with a beautiful woman's face carved into it.

Streets cross between buildings made of huge, interlocking blocks of greyish stone. The houses are flat-topped with square windows and many have several stories, linked by external staircases. The central region of the city is raised on a giant step pyramid on which the buildings and temples are made of white marble, with pairs of plain columns holding up their entrances. The largest building in this region is a vast palace, surrounded by bronze-armoured guards. Outside the city, a square theatre is carved into one wall of the valley and several massive tombs can be found just outside the city walls.

Citizens of Olmorán can be seen moving around in the city, or tilling the terraced fields on the slopes of the valley. They look similar to the Roa fishermen but are taller and better fed. The women wear wraparound ankle-length skirts and tunics, often with flowers embroidered on them. The men wear a cotton cloth wrapped around the waist and a sleeveless shirt in white, red or blue.

Olmorán's survival is down to one woman, its God-Queen, Asha. She is the original Queen of Olmorán, a Princess of the Olman people. As a young woman she discovered a series of catacombs beneath her city. There Asha found the Pillar of Fire, a magical artefact left over from the days of the aranea. It was originally used by them for rejuvenation, but for a human the effect is much more profound. Asha walked through the flames and was rendered undying. She does not age and, as a side effect, became more and more beautiful and more and more unstable. She returned to the surface and continued to rule the city but, as the years passed, she began to fear that her immortality would attract attention so she sealed Olmorán away from the rest of the Olman culture.

When the great catastrophe that wiped out the rest of Olman struck, she and the survivors rebuilt as much of the city as they could and continued their way of life, cut off from the outside world. Because she still remembers Thanaxiotl at its height, they never lost their culture in the way those outside of the city did. She also never told her subjects the

secret of her long life and, over the centuries, they have come to worship her as a goddess. Occasionally one of the Roa-Emor wander into the city, so Asha has some awareness of the outside world. Even more rarely one of them made it out again, leading to the rumours of her existence among the island's inhabitants. Asha is paranoid that her city may be discovered, but is also desperate for the company of someone not descended from the city, so those who stumble on her lost valley are not permitted to leave. Ever.

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## Arachne

East of Emoren lies the island of Arachne. At over 100 miles east to west it is one of the largest islands in the archipelago. The long coast of the island is mainly sandy with a few natural harbours. In the centre these give way to rolling hills covered with dense jungle. On the south-west corner of the island is a peninsula containing a few villages of phanatons. There is no human presence on the island and the Roa will not go near. Explorers who have travelled there very rarely return and those who do tell of packs of aggressive giant spiders. This led to the island's being named Arachne by mainland scholars.

In the interior of Arachne, a new race of spiders descended from the ancient aranea has built a society that has remained in place for over five hundred years. The spiders, a race named the taranteans, are larger than aranea, having an average span of 8', and they are mute, communicating through telepathy (see Monsters). The taranteans have no polymorph ability so they use packs of non-intelligent giant spiders to keep prying eyes from discovering their culture.

Although the taranteans are masters of the island, phanatons are also common there. Unlike the phanatons of the rest of the archipelago, and those of the island's peninsula, those found in the interior are a shadow of what they were. Countless generations of servitude have turned them into near mindless drones, they passively allow themselves to be fed, protected, and preyed upon by the taranteans. Few other predators are found on the island; the occasional Shark Kin incursion is put down brutally and flying monsters are dealt with by being lured into massive webs.

The history of Arachne is a dark one. After the fall of the aranea civilisation in the Great Rain of Fire, the few survivors in the archipelago lost much of their magic along with their culture. They regressed into nomadic bands and these can still be found on most of the larger islands of the archipelago. This was the case on Arachne until 432 AC, when an aranean female called Hem explored some caves that had recently opened beneath a ruined Olman city. She found an Eye of Arik buried there (See module B3 for more details) and it spoke to her, promising her great gifts if she would serve the imprisoned immortal. She devoted herself to Arik's service and gained gifts of size, strength and magic, at the cost of her voice. She soon converted others of her party and killed any who would not follow her. The taranteans, as they called themselves, quickly consolidated their hold on the island and, within two generations, they became its masters. The humans who lived there were killed in the conquest and the phanatons enslaved. Weaving thick webs over the ruined city they claimed it as their own and, to this day, the taranteans work within the aura of the Eye of Arik to plot the return of He of Many Eyes.

The main settlement of the taranteans, Hearts (population 1100), is built on the ruins of a large Olman city a little east of the centre of the island. The City of Hearts itself is a dark, foreboding place, with all of the walkways and streets being entirely contained within the mass of webs produced over the centuries. Within the city itself, the outer suburbs, referred to as The Web, are inhabited mainly by taranteans and their phanaton servants. Anyone entering the city is certain to disturb the web, and will soon be confronted with a horde of inhabitants; intruders are found and eliminated quickly. Inside the city are eight temples, evenly distributed in a ring around the centre of the town. These temples, known as the Pumps, are all dedicated to Arik, being filled with symbols associated with the Eye and the taranteans. They act as entry points into the centre of the city, an area called Venom. It is in Venom that the Eye of Arik is located, and the most sinister secrets of Arachne reside.

Venom is home to the darkest, most evil inhabitants of Arachne. Here the

tarantean high priests of Arik work diligently to turn themselves into the perfect beings in readiness for the return of their immortal. Plunging the depths of the darkest magics on Mystara, they research inter-planar and inter-dimensional travel as well as chronomancy and demonology; all of the arts that might be used to return Arik to the prime plane. Venom is a claustrophobic complex of what was formerly the human temple and palace in the city. Extending for around 400 yards in each direction (and many hundreds of feet down into the volcanic rock below), and buried under at least 150' of tightly knit web, it is dark, damp and highly dangerous. While the high wizard, the high priest and their underlings are found in the buildings on the 'surface', down below all manner of evil creatures attracted to the eye of Arik (still buried deep under the city) from other planes are to be found.

The High Wizard of the taranteans, Hem, has been the ruler of this land for centuries. It is her goal to achieve immortality in the sphere of entropy. As part of this she seeks to return Arik from his prison plane. Her immortal patron in this task is Alphaks, one of the few immortals foolhardy enough to desire Arik's return from exile. The High Priest, known as Meh, is the High Wizard's consort. He is dwarfed by the massive bulk of the female, but is still a wily, intelligent, and powerful individual. It is his goal to attain immortality in the sphere of entropy by creating a new race to unleash on the world, a race that is the perfect combination of tarantean and beholder. Most of the creatures guarding the Eye are of this kind, and although few of his experiments have been entirely successful, most of them are at least potent. All living taranteans are the progeny of the Hem and Meh. None can become fertile themselves until their leaders are removed from the island. None can leave the web without Hem and Meh instantly becoming aware. While parties of taranteans are found across the island, none are known to have escaped Hem and Meh.

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## Utsiwano

This small island lies east of Arachne and is home to a large concentration of Olman descendents. Unlike on many of

the other islands, the humans of Utsiwano are volatile and dangerous. They regard all peoples not of the Roa-Utsi as enemies to be killed in sight. Explorers have made contact with them but few have escaped with their skins intact. There are three villages dotted around the coast of the island, Tosi, Buroroa and Siarano, while the interior remains a haven for wildlife and some humanoids who have learned to avoid the Utsi and their spears. The Utsi villages consist of wooden houses on stilts and look like most of the other human dwellings of the archipelago. Mostly they spend their time farming near their villages and hunting for sport (but not for food).

Once every couple of months, the young men of the Utsi take their canoes and sail to a nearby island where they will hunt for meat. They attack human villages and will kill or capture any humans they can find before bringing them back to Utsiwano for the Ceremony of Blood. During this feast, they kill any captives from their expedition and roast them over an open fire before sharing them among all the Utsi. This is the only meat the Utsi eat. The severed heads of the dead are then placed in the Cave of Skulls, near the centre of the island. The Utsi believe that by doing this, they hold off the evil spirits that ruled them in the past (the kopru). The belief is entirely erroneous but nothing will convince them of this. Every few years, the Utsi undertake a different expedition. They still raid the local islands but this time they capture women of childbearing age to be new brides for the tribe. The brides are carried away from their family and inducted into the Utsi way of life. They are held in a central compound until the next Ceremony comes round, when they are brought to the table and given goblets of blood to drink. Those who refuse are sent back to the compound. This continues until the third ceremony when any who still refuse are killed. Those who pass the test are married the same night.

Within their own communities, the Utsi are entirely peaceful. Realising that a conflict between the villages could wipe them out, they practice the spears every day but are sworn never to use them against another Utsi. Although a concerted effort by the other humans of

the archipelago would overpower the Utsi, their reputation and the lack of knowledge concerning their numbers keeps them safe. Like the rest of the Roa, the Utsi are matriarchal and captured brides have even been known to become Mistress of the Utsi in the past.

In the centre of the island lies an abandoned and overgrown Olman temple. The Utsi are aware of the structure but pay it little attention, not even realising that it was built by their ancestors. Inside the temple are a number of dangerous traps including pits, spears and weights. At its centre is a solid gold idol in the shape of a head with a grimacing mouth. It is worth about 50,000gp.

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### **The Isle of Dread**

This island is one of the most complex and bizarre in the archipelago. This is partially because it was the centre of the Olman, Nithian and Kopru cultures, but also because it includes the region of Ka's experiment. As a result, the island contains many ancient structures and is inhabited by a wide variety of creatures, several of which are unique to the area. The Isle of Dread is covered in detail in the next section.

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### **Bararna**

Explorers sailing around the coast of Bararna will find no sign of any human habitations, and this should tell them that something is seriously amiss on the island. Yet there are some who have not taken the warning, and have uncovered something of Bararna's dark secrets. The island is one of the larger members of the archipelago and so has a long coastline that contains several natural harbours and coves. The largest such inlet faces southward towards far-off Davania and is filled with incredibly calm, turquoise waters. Further in, the island is filled with dark, thick jungle, which ranges over a series of low hills. Unusually, there are no birds or mammals of any type on Bararna. Indeed all the fauna there is reptilian in nature. There are lizards, salamanders, toads and many snakes, but no boars, giant cats, rodents, or even monkeys. This is because the inhabitants of Bararna have wiped them all out over the preceding centuries.

The island is home to a unique race of troglodytes. Like the rest of the lizardmen and troglodytes on the archipelago, they are descended from Nithian slaves who escaped into the wilds when the empire was destroyed. Most of them still live wild in the jungles of the islands, but the troglodytes of Bararna have been following a different course for several centuries. Over five hundred years ago, a group of these troglodytes, living miserable lives on the edge of existence, encountered an entity that called itself Gleesshka. This creature spoke to them from a chasm deep in the heart of the island and promised them greatness in exchange for the obedience and worship.

Gleesshka delivered to her faithful: the rains came, the seas were full of fish, and no natural disasters struck. Over the next centuries, the troglodyte population grew from a few hundred to several thousand. No one complained when Gleesshka started demanding the sacrifice of the weaker members of the tribe, over the pit from which Gleesshka spoke; nor did they question the appearance of disfiguring mutations among the tribespeople. As time passed, the troglodytes grew mighty, and set out to explore their world once more. It was at this time that they encountered humans – the Olman-descended tribes who now inhabit much of the Thanegioth Archipelago. Gleesshka told her shamans that the humans were descended from those who committed great ills against the troglodytes in ages past, and that they should be sacrificed to him as punishment. This they did, killing all the humans who inhabited the island.

The practice continues; three times per year, Gleesshka orders the troglodytes to assemble a war party and acquire sacrifices to satiate her thirst for blood. During this time, the troglodyte warriors board their outrigger canoes (capable of holding 25 rowers each) and paddle for the island indicated by their patron. Once they land at the desired target, the troglodytes stealthily creep through the jungles and mount raids on isolated villages, killing any who oppose them and trying to capture suitable sacrifices, often young adults. Once a suitable number of prisoners have been taken, they are tied up, and stuffed under the seats of the canoes – up to ten prisoners

may be loaded onto a canoe in this fashion. That evening, the captives are tied over the pit on wooden stakes that lean out over the chasm. The troglodytes dance around them to the sound of incessant drumming before the shaman comes forward and leads the tribe in a mass trance. When the song reaches its height, the throats of the captives are cut, pouring blood into the pit.

The creature inside is a Hissing Fiend of the Plane of Entropy. Many centuries earlier, some Nithian entropy worshippers attempted to open a tiny hole to this plane in the land that became Bararna. They were halted by a brave band of adventurers who cast a protective spell on it, but by that time one of the hideous inhabitants of the realm of Entropy was already trapped in the opening. Since that time, the spell has gradually weakened until, eventually, Gleesshka was able to communicate through the opening. It tricked the troglodytes into providing blood which is gradually making it more and more powerful. Eventually it will become sufficiently strong to rip through the gap and bring itself fully into the prime plane, where it intends to revenge itself on any mortals it can find. The opening to the entropic plane is also the source of the deformities that affect the troglodytes. They are essentially identical to those describes in the Rules Cyclopaedia, save for the fact that, due to hideous deformities (ranging from abscesses to half-formed extra appendages, third eyes, and the like), anyone seeing them must make a Horror Check against a Horror Rating of 2. There are approximately 5,500 troglodytes on the island, most of whom spend their time fishing, and gathering nuts and berries. Technologically, they are primitive, using weapons made from stone and protecting themselves with simple bucklers made from hardened wood or leather – the latter derived from the livestock they poach from other islands, or their fallen opponents. They both paint and tattoo their bodies with garish colours, in patterns reminiscent of skulls.

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## Therian

The small island of Therian mostly consists of lush forests and rolling hills with sandy beaches around its northern

shore and rocks to the south. There is a small volcano in the centre but it is long dormant. The island is roughly circular and is about 18 miles across. There is only one settlement on Therian and it is hidden deep in the forests. The town is called Safety and was founded over 650 years earlier by a group of lycanthropes who escaped from the Silver Purge in Minrothad. Those traumatic events made the lycanthropes of Therian deeply paranoid. They worried for generations that Minrothad troops were going to arrive on the island to finish what they had started. Consequently the structures of Safety are in the trees. There are huts and walkways across several miles of forest all of which are invisible from the ground.

Those few who have visited the island believe it to be uninhibited apart from an unusually large array of wildlife. This is partly due to the care the inhabitants take to remain in animal form when visitors come and partly due to the way in which the settlers dealt with the Roa who lived in the island. Being primarily a peaceful people, the lycanthropes could not bring themselves to kill so many innocents. Instead, they infected them with lycanthropy, thus ensuring their loyalty to Therian and its ideals. These islanders then told traders from elsewhere in the archipelago that there was a terrible plague on the island and they must not land. Since then none have, and the disappearance of the few villages was put down to the ravages of the plague.

The lycanthropes of Therian are an unusual race. The initial settlers represented all of the types of lycanthropy then present in Minrothad, including one of the last surviving families of werewolves. Within less than a century of their arrival on Therian, the last remainder of that family learned that a man called The Silver Hunter was scouring the Sea of Dread to find any of his race. Desperate not to reveal Therian, he flew north to a rocky island and waited, knowing that the Hunter would kill him in the end. Since then, the lycanthropes of the island have never forgotten his sacrifice.

The inhabitants have also been very careful not to add allow any new lycanthropic breeds into their paradise, so there are no devil swine or were-rats on the island. However, generations of

interbreeding have meant that most of the inhabitants have a mixed lycanthropic heritage and this can have strange results. Some may have one half-animal form but a different full animal form, or they may have animal traits in their human forms. Their current leader, Coram the Changer, has the full effects of a were-wolf, were-tiger and were-bear. It is he who has set the inhabitants of Therian onto a new course, which will bring them into conflict with the world they left.

In recent years the Thanegioth Archipelago has become less isolated than it once was. Explorers, pirates and adventurers now land on its shores more regularly than they used to and, Coram believes, it is only a matter of time before the community on Therian is uncovered. He knows the history of his people and is convinced that, when the people of Minrothad hear about the lycanthropes on the island, the Silver Purge will begin again. To counter this threat he has been secretly sending lycanthropes to the mainland, and particularly to Minrothad, over the last 20 years. This programme is partly responsible for the sudden increase in lycanthropes on the southern coast of Brun. He only sends his more militant followers, and only those who look like normal humans, but their instructions are to infect as many people as possible, particularly in positions of power. When the inevitable discovery of Therian occurs, Coram intends there to be an uprising of lycanthropes who will take control of the governments and ensure that were-kind can never be persecuted again.

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## Sekorvia

Sekorvia is a volcanic tropical island dominated by tangled jungles and stinking salt marshes. It is barely 40 miles across at its widest point, and a jagged spine of mountains including no less than three active volcanoes runs down its length. There are few humans living anywhere on the island other than the port of Scuttlecove. However, it is the westernmost island of the archipelago to contain a significant presence of kara-kara (who call the island Teki-Rano-Tia). They once controlled the whole island, but were driven into the wilderness when Evgeny Sekorski claimed the island decades

before. They are now considered a nuisance by the pirates who inhabit the island, but are not considered a serious threat. Several have even started to add them to their crews.

The town of Scuttlecove is a rough, ramshackle port built at the mouth of the Noyaro River on the island's south-eastern coast. Very few buildings in the town are well kept and most are rundown one-story wooden buildings with sagging roofs. The lack of regular income makes it impossible to keep the buildings in good repair. Any permanent building is always the home of one of the powerful individuals of Scuttlecove. The harbour of the town is filled with scuttled ships which give the town its name and makes it almost impossible to dock without the help of a local pilot. There are few common folk in the town as it is simply too rough a place. Most people who live here are pirates or those who support the pirate industry. The town exports all kinds of illicit things including drugs, slaves, and stolen property. The economy is unstable and completely dependent on the arrival of loot from the pirate crews.

Visitors to Scuttlecove are almost certain to attract attention from the local population. All the pirates know each other and have learned who to leave alone. Each day that a character spends in Scuttlecove there is a chance of a threatening encounter with a group of the local pirates. These thugs stalk the victims and strike with the best possible advantage. However, not every citizen will attack visitors; most of the pirates are cowards at heart and eye contact is rare. Merchants usually assume that the customer is tougher than they appear. This is also true of the merchants themselves; merchants will not survive long without backup in Scuttlecove. Most pay a protection fee to one group of thugs or another, so attacking a merchant will cause retaliation. Almost anything can be bought in Scuttlecove but everything has been stolen and availability is not always assured. Merchants are likely to include a substantial mark-up for goods and services if they do not recognize a face.

With no central government there are six factions currently struggling for control in Scuttlecove, who help or hinder each other depending on circumstance. The first of these is **The**

**Crimson Fleet**, a large group of pirates under their leader, Cold Captain Wyther. The Crimson Fleet controls much of the city's trade in goods and many inhabitants depend on them for food and supplies. Crimson pirates can be found roving the streets in packs either enjoying their booty or occasionally pressganging unsuspecting people into service aboard one of their ships. Although Crimson ships regularly visit the city, the Fleet is actually based at The Wreck, a magically hidden structure made of wrecked ships 11 miles northwest of Scuttlecove.

Wyther is the most influential of the captains currently vying to claim the title of Pirate Lord of the Sea of Dread, and so rule over all the pirates from Davania to Karameikos. With such a high level of piracy in the area, the Overlordship has not been successfully claimed in generations. Even now many other captains stand in Wyther's way including Black Nick Hackett, Clegg the Devil, and the mysterious Ah Ling.

The second faction are **The Dealers' Consortium**, a group of drug dealers, who harvest rare plants from Thanegioth and Davania, refine them in Scuttlecove and sell the produce to smugglers. This group also provides protection to merchants and prostitutes of Scuttlecove, for where there are pirates, there are the women who are willing to serve them for gold. Indeed, prostitution is the one steady and thriving business in Scuttlecove. Almost any woman can have this job if she is willing. There are several houses in Scuttlecove that have protection from the drug dealers but the largest is so powerful that it constitutes a faction in its own right. **Porphyry House** is a huge building that rises above western Scuttlecove, dwarfing the nearby hovels. It is owned and run by Tyralandi Scrimm, a cleric of Loki who took over the running of the place a few years previously. She uses the House to gain intelligence on the actions of the other factions and, although she currently promotes Loki's aims in the city, she intends to eventually become its ruler.

In addition to the pirates, a large group of Sekorvian lizard-man slavers, known as **The Seventh Coil**, have preyed upon the towns and villages of the coastal Sea of Dread for years. They use the Minting House in Scuttlecove as the

base of operations for their trade in human flesh.

The most disturbing group in the town are the monks of **The Monastery of Dire Hunger**, known by most of the inhabitants as "the cannibals". They are an order of monks who patrol the streets at night in search of bodies of unfortunate victims from recent fights. They believe that cannibalism is the path to enlightenment; however, this belief has twisted and corrupted both their minds and bodies. After their nightly forays they return to The Mausoleum where they prepare the dead for their disturbing feasts.

Not every group in Scuttlecove is vile. **The Protectors** live double lives. During the day they pose as pirates, drug-dealers, prostitutes and merchants, but at night they aid the weak of Scuttlecove through force of arms. They also maintain a safe-house in an abandoned factory called Red Foam Whaling, which they use to house people who have a desperate need to disappear. They are the smallest faction and, although they may one day bring the town back into the light, the fight would be long and hard.

Other places of interest in the city include Skindancer Academy – a brothel that caters for more unusual tastes, The Birdcage – a torture-to-order information house, and the Rusty Shunt – the most famous of Scuttlecove's inns. The seas to the south of Sekorvia are also home to an intermittent whirlpool which has been known to appear suddenly and drag ships to their doom. What the survivors don't know is that, in general, the lost vessels survive and surface in the Merry Pirate Seas in the Hollow World.

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## Phema

The small island east of Scuttlecove is known as Phema, and is widely considered to be uninhabited. This is not quite true. The island is roughly circular (about 8 miles across) with beaches round its edge giving way to jungle in the centre. Monkeys, pigs and other small animals inhabit the jungle, the island is clear of larger humanoids. In the centre is one volcano that is not believed to be active. There are reefs on its east side making landing difficult while to the south a freshwater river flows out of the jungle into the sea. This

is navigable although the entrance is blocked by a large sandbar. If followed it leads to spring at the base of the volcano.

On the island's west side is a natural harbour with beautiful clear water and gently sloping, sandy beaches. From here the land rises gently until it becomes open grass. The jungle lies to the south and in the north is a rocky escarpment. Near the eastern end of the rocks is a small opening that allows access through to a wide valley which passes through the escarpment. In here is pasture land inhabited by sheep and also a few vineyards dotted about. These are kept by Jib and Stay, a pair of Cyclopes who live on the island (HD13 each). Their hut lies at the far end of the valley. It is a large thatched building set in a compound that contains a large winepress and a pen containing some wild pigs. The third member of the farming band lives here. Ned Land is a sailor who was wrecked off Phema five years previously and has been living on the island since then, awaiting rescue. Jib and Stay are large, slow and stupid. They are also loyal and gentle unless angered. They are firm friends with Ned and will do almost anything to protect him.

There is a trail that leads up the north face of the volcano, passing through the jungle as it climbs. It leads to a ledge in front of a large cavern, which is the home of Jord, a storm giant who lives on the island (See AC10 *Bestiary of Giants and Dragons*). He keeps his pet roc in the cave as well as many of his possessions. At the back of the cave, an entrance leads into the flooded interior of the volcano and, from there, into the sea.

Jib and Stay were originally brought to the island by Jord and he invited Ned to join them after the wreck. The four have lived in the island since then in harmony, however an aquatic beholder has recently taken residence in Jord's underwater lair, which can be found 80 feet underwater one mile off the island's north-east coast. The beholder has yet to be noticed but, given its power of charming, trouble is likely ahead.

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### **Teki-Lo-Kia**

Teki-Lo-Kia is a small island fifty miles from Phema. It consists of a few low hills, sandy beaches and some relatively

open forest. Although technically an island of the kara-kara, Teki-Lo-Kia (or The Grand and Glorious Land of Ruhalastan) belongs to one person.

Ruhaladero the Pitiless, Scourge of the Seas, The Ruby-Eyed One, Master of the Storms, Reclaimer of the Nine Treasures, and many other grandiose (and mostly self-bestowed) titles, is one of the less predictable inhabitants of the Thanegioth Archipelago. Originally one of the many wizards that pass for nobility in the small kingdom of Jaibul, Ruhaladero's unpredictability and open use of necromancy eventually became too much even for Jaibul. The problem was that he was simply too powerful to kill. So his rivals instead played on and encouraged his growing madness, and set him up as the new Goptri of All the Oceans, charged with making all who sailed upon the ocean waves fear and respect the Rajahstan of Jaibul.

That was over 20 years ago. In the years since his promotion/exile, Ruhaladero has honestly not accomplished much. He found his way to Teki-Lo-Kia more by luck than judgement and then magically erected a 'magnificent palace'. This is actually a barely structurally-sound wizard's tower which has been clumsily glitzed up with illusion spells. From here he holds court and issues proclamations over a wholly-imagined realm. The only inhabitants are a few hundred kara-kara who live in two villages elsewhere on the island. They fear Ruhaladero and do his bidding after a fashion, but they mostly try to keep out of his way.

Sometimes he's still sane and broods on how he might be able to put one over on the fools who arranged his ousting from the court of Jaibul. Most of the time however, he's cheerfully and dangerously delusional. He spends his time 'commissioning new warships' (magically crafting and launching crude wooden longboat hulls, crewed by animated kara-kara ghouls), "putting down rebellions" (teleporting above some island and dropping half a dozen fireballs and ice storms on anything he imagines as insufficiently obsequious) or "collecting tribute and dispensing royal favour" (playing with worthless trash and holding lively conversations with the voices in his head). In the meantime, he's a threat... but not one the major powers are yet really aware of.

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### **Teki-Moa-Ha**

The westernmost island of the archipelago is also one of the largest, stretching for over 120 miles east to west. Its central regions are relatively flat and are covered with dense jungle through which little can penetrate, especially in the west. The eastern jungles are broken by tracts of farmland but these are relatively small. Its north coast is rocky, and cliffs tend to cut isolated bays off from the rest of the island. The south coast is sandy but swells underwater make navigating to the island difficult.

The eastern regions of the isle are dominated by the kara-kara orcs. In fact, if there could be said to be a centre to the kara-kara civilisation, Teki-Moa-Ha is it. It plays host to the largest concentration of kara-kara in the Sea of Dread, spread over 20 small villages and surrounding the city of Malo, the only kara-kara city in the world. The kara-kara of the island are still vicious and superstitious but they are also famers and have built a thriving society. They are ruled from Malo by Kana-Lo-Loma, a truly massive kara-kara who continued their slightly peculiar practice of eating the previous king to prove his worth. He is bright and exceedingly strong and so has the backing of the manwu-papas who run the individual villages. Atzanteotl has begun to take a small interest in the kara-kara as he finds them amusing. He is currently sending disturbing dreams to Kana-Lo-Loma and some select manwu-papas. Orcus has yet to notice this interference with his worshippers.

Malo itself is constructed from stone taken from a nearby Olman ruin and shows kara-kara architecture at its most intriguing. Pictograms showing the history of Teki-Moa-Ha, including the domination of the kopru, run over the walls. In addition there are several step pyramids, in which the most revered manwu-papas of previous ages are buried. There is also a central marketplace where traders from the villages meet to sell their wares. A temple to Tapu the Pig God stands at the western end of the marketplace and contains a bronze statue of a giant pig with genuine ivory tusks.

Outside of the city, the kara-kara ride giant war boars and keep domesticated

normal boars. They farm fruit and vegetables, coffee, tobacco, sugarcane and cocoa for trade with each other. The extremely rich soil of the isle allows for an extra growing season, which enables both surpluses of food as well as significant exports to smaller kara-kara islands dotted around the seas. The rich waters around the island also provide fish and clams. In fact the kara-kara would make excellent trading partners were any nation to realise what bounty was contained in the jungles of the island. Of course, conquest would also be an option.

There are no horses or cattle on the island, due to the presence of an unusual disease which would kill all such creatures after more than a year on the island. Consequently, the kara-kara farmers use giant boars as dray animals instead of horses or oxen.

The western jungles are another matter altogether. Faerie creatures, including pixies, sprites and treants, dominate the area from their settlement, Menehune, and the kara-kara keep well away, fearing the creatures' wrath. The jungles are otherwise home to natural beasts, such as panthers, snakes, lizards and spiders, as well as no small number of deadly plants. The usual small bands of aranea, phanton and other inhabitants of the archipelago can also be found. There are no dragons on the isle, though sea serpents are said to swim in the great southern bay.

The other settlement of interest lies in a hidden cove on the north coast that can only be reached from the sea. The Nuari Pirate Village changes its name with every change in leadership. It is currently known as "Tanokora's Port" and is the only human habitation on the island. It is home to a few hundred pirates and their families – all Pearl Islanders. They have been based there for some years and work hard to ensure neither the kara-kara, nor the residents of Scuttlecove, find their base.

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## Roatana

The ten islands already outlined are the largest in the Archipelago but there are many others too small to appear on most maps. Most are under a mile across and contain nothing but wildlife, but some are inhabited by Roa or kara-kara depending on the location. These islands are most concentrated within the

Archipelago, but islands can be found dotted throughout the seas all the way to the coast of Davania. The bulk of these are inhabited by kara-kara who arrived during their slow migration from that continent, though some are host to other species.

These islands are similar in many ways, often containing a single village and little else, but some have unique features of interest to the adventurer.

**Roatana** (known by sailors as Crocodile Island), for example, lies some 20 miles south-east of Utsiwano. It is a coral island consisting of a large and dangerous reef surrounding a circular lagoon. A large number of salt water crocodiles live outside the reefs, however the lagoon inside is relatively clear.

The island is formed by corals which have grown around the crater of a partially submerged dormant volcano. In the middle of the lagoon, a small volcanic island was formed a few centuries ago, but other than that, there are no signs of seismic activity. The outer ring is divided by several channels, giving access to the lagoon inside, but these are filled with underwater reefs that make it impossible to navigate a large ship through. Smaller boats or canoes, such as the natives use, can navigate across the reefs.

The beaches of the island are made of soft, white sand, although in some places on the coasts facing away from the lagoon there are rough coral cliffs. Inland can be found many huge palm trees, odorous and flower covered bushes, lianas, and tall bamboo trees. The foliage is not as tightly knit as in a true jungle, but in some places it becomes almost impassable. Edible plants are easy to find and there are coconuts, bananas and breadfruit as well as all kinds of berries and edible roots. There is quite a bit of wildlife on the island as well, especially birds. Some birds may be of value due to their exotic feathers or as unusual pets. There are several species of colourful parrots and also a kind of flightless seabird somewhat resembling penguins, only smaller and with brown and grey stripes. The natives call this bird tu'aro and say it tastes good. Also, there is an abundance of fish both inside the lagoon and outside the reefs.

There is a small tribe of fishermen living on the island. They call both the island and their village Roatana, and refer to themselves as the Roa-Hano. There are about 75 people in Roatana, making a living from fishing and farming as well as gathering edible plants from the island. They fish using nets inside the lagoon and from canoes at sea. Any Roa-Hano is intimately familiar with the waters surrounding the island, including the whereabouts of underwater reefs. The people here are quite isolated, but are able to get to neighbouring islands in their canoes, although they avoid Utsiwano and Arachne. Some of the younger villagers go diving inside the lagoon for recreation or looking for pearls or fish, although they are wary of a giant squid which is rumoured to live there. The villagers are generally friendly to explorers and, like many isolated communities, offer their daughters to those who look strong. There are a few places on the island that are considered taboo by the villagers. These include the volcanic island, the shadow mountains and the burial grounds. Explorers do occasionally visit the first two locations without consequences but the villages get very agitated over possible desecration of the burial grounds.

On the small Volcanic Island in the middle of the lagoon, there's a tiny, run down stone building that was once an Olman temple. The temple consists of a single small room, and is constructed from huge lava blocks. By one wall there is an altar which has a niche for a religious icon behind it, but the statue is missing. The temple is unstable and disturbing the area could lead to the whole building collapsing, killing anyone inside instantly.

The second place which is taboo is a cave high up in a mountain side in the Shadow Mountains. This is partly due to the fact that the terrain here is difficult to move through, but also because those venturing here often end up as a snack for a huge Green Dragon who visits the island from the nearby Isle of Dread. It only uses this cave as a place to rest and so keeps little treasure here.

Perhaps the most interesting place on the island is found under the water in the lagoon. This is the wreck of *The Swallow*, a ship that sailed into the lagoon seeking shelter in a storm several

years ago. The ship had already been damaged by the storm when it sighted the island and, although it made it through the reef, it sunk soon after it entered the lagoon. The crew escaped however, and lived on the island for several months before being rescued by a ship from Davania that came looking for them. *The Swallow* was a smuggling ship, used primarily for transporting ivory from Davania to Ierendi. The trip was long and rarely undertaken, and it was only their regular stop at Roatana that allowed the ship to make the journey safely. On its final voyage, the ship was also carrying a passenger, the mage Nosanje.

Nosanje was originally from the Pearl Islands, but he relocated to Kastelios in Davania and joined The Sons of the Serpent, a secret society descended from the entropy worshippers of Nithia. Despite the Immortals' best efforts, some of the writings of the entropy worshippers survived Nithia's fall and these were found many years later by a group of Davanians who based their religion on them. The Sons are dedicated to increasing entropy and chaos in the world. They achieve this through crime and acts of entropic magic but are, so far, mostly limited to Davania. Over the centuries they have preserved some of dark Nithia's culture, they even speak a degenerate form of the Nithian language in their rituals. They have also recently begun to establish a power base in Ierendi and are hoping to increase entropy-worship in the islands, and so make the culture more like old Nithia.

Some years ago, members of the Sons discovered the remains of the tower of Ithaq-Talmir, an entropy-worshipping Nithian wizard who had died many centuries before. In the ruins they found several magical items that belonged to the long-dead wizard. Knowing that they would help their efforts in Ierendi, they were being transported by Nosanje in *The Swallow* before it was lost. After the wreck, Nosanje buried the items on the island and made a map guiding him back to them. Knowing that the remaining crew were aware of the items, Nosanje attempted to kill them but was killed during the fight. The surviving crew hid his body and continued their journey to Ierendi, taking the map with them. Shortly after arriving they were

kidnapped by the leader of the Sons in Ierendi, Zarachton. He took the map from them and killed them before they could reveal what they knew. Since then Zarachton has been considering how to return to the island and reclaim the treasure. He is not an adventurer himself and is considering hiring a party through an agent. What he doesn't know is that the map, as it stands will not lead to the treasure.

The wreck of *The Swallow* lies about 7m down and contains 3 Giant Squids. Inside lies the body of Nosanje. On his finger, he wears a serpent shaped ring, which once contained a poisonous pill, but it has long since been dissolved. Even now, anyone who touches the ring (without cleaning it first) will be exposed to the poison. The poison will disappear within one day, but if someone with poison on their hands eats or in any other way puts their hands to their mouth (60% chance), they will be poisoned. Nosanje was very careful; he enchanted the map so that only he could read it properly. To reveals the new markings on the map it must be held next to the Serpent Ring. The new path shows that the treasure is on the burial grounds in a cave by a broken mango tree. Should anyone uncover the horde, they will find Ithaq-Talmir's tools and treasures (DMs can tailor these to their campaign).

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### Islands of Interest

Roatana is simply one example of what can be found on these tiny islands and many more are waiting to be discovered. Some islands of interest are:

**Oti:** This small island is home to many dangerous creatures. The Roa eke out an existent here but are often on the brink of extinction.

**Tobewao:** This island is home to a single Roa tribe who produce amazing giant statues of animals which they carve from stone. These statues, often 30' high stand sentinel on the island's coasts.

**Tiketama:** This island is surrounded by shallow seas on which strange oysters can be found. These oysters produce unusual pearls in many shades including pink, blue, green and even gold. The Roa spend much of their time harvesting these and trading them beyond the island.

**Ube:** A large amount of loco-weed (a local narcotic) grows on this island. Consequently the local Roa are dissolute and disinterested.

**Banatube:** This island is both sheltered and fertile. It produces enormous amounts of fruit which the local Roa trade with other tribes (and occasionally visiting kara-kara).

**Teki-Bali-Hai:** This island is a kara-kara spiritual home containing beautiful waterfalls, delicious fruits and friendly wildlife. The kara-kara who live here are unusually peaceful and the females are particularly friendly to visitors. Consequently the island is barred to all visitors but the manwu-papas who come here to "refresh themselves".

**Teki-Ruja-Hai:** This island, half way between Thanegioth and Davania, is surrounded by huge cliffs on all sides, which are home to thousands of screaming seabirds. Landing anywhere is difficult though occasional coves can provide some cover. There is also one safe path up the cliff but it's hidden from offshore. Atop the cliffs the plateau is covered with thick jungle with a single tribe of kara-kara within it. They fiercely protect the freshwater spring with forms the centre of their settlement.

**Teki-Nara-Ki:** This island is home to several kara-kara tribes who live in amazing wooden houses suspended from the trees and joined by tubes, bridges and ropes. The island is also home to an enormous number of butterflies.

**Teki-Muna-Ka:** This island contains a high volcano which has thick jungle at its base but is bare at the top. Several kara-kara tribes inhabit the jungle, hunting for food and quarrying the volcanic rock to make tools. The top is a sacred site where the manwu-papas of the tribes go to observe the stars.

**Teki-Ko-Ata:** This low lying island contains a particularly aggressive tribe of kara-kara who are shunned even by their own kind.

**Journey's End:** This is not really an island but a huge mass of floating seaweed which drifts around the seas north of Davania and entraps ships within its fronds

## Personalities

### Asha

M9, Ch18. God-Queen of Olmoran. Asha was born over three millennia ago when the Olman civilisation ruled in the region. She was the princess of the city of Olmoran who, while exploring, discovered the magical Pillar of Flame which gave her unending youth and beauty. Shortly afterwards her father died and she became ruler in her own right. But the flame was never meant for humanoids and had strange side effects. Although she became more beautiful, she also became paranoid, arbitrary and occasionally violent. Finally, she cut Olmoran off from the outside world, refusing to allow any of her subjects to leave. When the rest of the Olman civilisation was destroyed she rebuilt and continued her reign. Now her people, who have little recollection of their history, regard her as a God – awesome and everlasting. In fact, she is desperately lonely and longs for contact with others even though she is terrified of it. She is olive-skinned, dark haired and breathtakingly lovely as well as being easily angered and very used to getting her own way; anyone who crosses her is liable to be executed. She is also liable to fall in love with the first attractive man (or woman) from the outside world that she meets, and is not likely to let them go.

### Torai

F4. Mistress of the Utsi. Now an old woman, Torai was born and brought up on Utsiwano and so accepts their culture unthinkingly. She regards all men from beyond the island as enemies or food and she believes women should be pleased to be kidnapped by the Roa-Utsi. She is aware of other lands from talking to some of the wives who have come from other islands but wants nothing of their way of life to enter her world. Within the tribe she is just, stern and widely loved.

### Coram the Changer

F12, Were-wolf 3, Were-tiger 1, Were-bear 1. Coram is the current leader of the lycanthropes of Therian. He reached the position partly through the power of his personality and partly through the respect due to his lycanthropic powers. Coram is a massive man with sharp features, pale grey eyes and dark hair. In

his animal forms he is equally huge. Coram is cultured, careful and casually ruthless, willing to sacrifice anything to establish a lycanthropic powerbase. He has left the island several times and even once sailed to Minrothad in his youth to look his enemies in the face. It was there that he conceived his plan to take over the mainland governments. Almost nothing will dissuade him from that course.

### Erien the Flighted

Erien is probably the most beloved lycanthrope on Therian. After centuries of lycanthropic interbreeding, a freak chance produced Erien, the first werewolf on Mystara since the last sacrificed himself 400 years ago (see Monsters). She is yellow-eyed, pale skinned and beautiful, standing barely 5' tall. The celebrations on Therian after her power became clear went on for many weeks. For the lycanthropes it was as if the Immortals had returned something long lost and Erien remains something of a celebrity. At 19, she is shy and gentle and cannot bear the thought that Coram may bring the mainlanders down on their beloved home. She frequently speaks out against his plan but has little support among the powerful. She is also in immense danger. Should any lycanthrope-hunters hear even a rumour of her existence, they would tear the archipelago apart in their attempts to be the one to kill her.

### Cold Captain Wyther

F15. Captain Wyther is broad-shouldered and clean-shaven with a handsome face and chiselled look. He was born in Hojah, one of the City States on the Savage Coast. At a young age he was pressed into service aboard a pirate ship that preyed upon the shipping around the Savage Coast. He quickly rose through the ranks and eventually became captain of his own ship, *The Crimson Scar*, which had red sails and a crew entirely equipped with Red Steel weapons. Through diplomacy and conquest he became admiral of a collection of ships known as The Crimson Fleet and eventually became Pirate Lord of the Izondian Deep. But four years ago he lost that position to a pirate even more ruthless than he was. Rather than serve under another, he and his crew sailed round the Serpent

Peninsula and began raiding the richer lands around the Sea of Dread, basing the Crimson Fleet on Sekorvia. Wyther is eyeing another Lordship but hasn't enough strength to claim it yet and has recently turned to the worship of Demogorgon as a way of increasing his power.

### 'Black' Nikolas Hackett, the Tattooed Captain

F12. Nikolas Hackett (or Black Nick) is tall, broad-shouldered and covered from head to foot in tattoos. He was a young swashbuckler from Minrothad who delighted in the sea. He was also arrogant and quick-tempered, but these traits did not manifest themselves often. He left Minrothad as a sailor and returned after several years to find a friend of his, Kester Grace, married to a beautiful Espan girl called Imogene. He fell immediately in love with her and pursued her aggressively. Eventually she relented and the two eloped together. Unable to return to Minrothad, Nick took to the sea and swiftly fell into the life of a pirate. Since then he has sailed the Sea of Dread preying on shipping and making a name as one of the most black-hearted pirates on the waves. He named his ship after Imogene and hid her in Garganin on Davania, while making his home in Scuttlecove. Over time he has gained many pirate followers and has several ships at his command.

### Captain Clegg, the Devil

C13 of Tarastia. Clegg is tall and thin, with pale eyes and hair and a fierce expression. His real name is Kester Grace and he was born in Minrothad where he was a pleasant, if wild, young man with a devout nature. In his early twenties he met and married an Espan girl called Imogene who had recently arrived in Minrothad by ship. Only a few months later Imogene eloped with Nick Hackett, who Grace regarded as a friend. Grace went mad with anger and grief at her loss and swore to get her back at all costs. He set out to sea in pursuit of them but was captured by pirates. Within a few hours, he overpowered his guards, slew their captain in single combat, and took command of the ship, *Brimstone*. From then on he became Captain Clegg, pirate of the Sea of Dread. He spends his time

taking ships and pursuing Black Nick, intending to kill him for his betrayal. Nick has yet to work out that Clegg and Grace are the same person but the revelation must come soon. Despite his originally good nature, Clegg has fallen far and fast. He is as dangerous a foe as any on the seas and utterly ruthless in his quest to find Imogene.

#### **Ah Ling**

M10. Ah Ling is an Ochalean mage of unremarkable appearance. After many years of study he yearned for excitement and so left Ochalea to pursue a life at sea. He swiftly joined a group smuggling drugs and slaves between Sekorvia and Alpathia and, through judicious use of magic, rapidly became its leader. Since then 'The Seven Blessings', as the gang is known, has successfully branched out into piracy and may even threaten The Crimson Fleet in time. Ah Ling himself almost never sails with his fleet and, as he magically changes his appearance, even his own henchmen are unsure precisely what he looks like. Most of the time he lives a quiet life on Ochalea running things from a distance, though he regularly visits Scuttlecove in disguise to keep an eye on his underlings.

#### **Kotorolo Dwair**

T10. Kotorolo is a Pearl Islander with brown eyes and short black hair. Though he is shorter than average, he is surprisingly stocky. He is a serious man who rarely smiles and has never been heard to laugh. In his youth, he came to believe that his people were regarded as little more than primitives by the Thyatian nobility. Before he reached twenty he had gathered a group of like-minded individuals and began to fight, violently, to make the Pearl Islands independent. Unfortunately he was captured and sentenced to life as a galley slave on a trading vessel, plying the routes between the Islands, the Isle of Dawn and Brun. Against the odds, he survived for three years, during which time he gradually gained a following among the other slaves. One day, when the ship was far away from land, he organised a revolt. The slaves broke their chains, killed the Thyatian crew and took up the life of pirates, with the long term aim of freeing the Pearl Islands from Thyatian rule. Now the

*Freedom* preys on ships throughout the Sea of Dread, concentrating on Thyatian vessels when possible.

#### **Ismeron**

M12. Ismeron is dark-skinned man with large black moustaches and greying hair. A magic user from Jalawar, in Sind, he was originally court mage to the Rani Drisana Madhar. As he grew older, he began dabbling in dark magics, summoning creatures from other planes and specialising in predicting the future. Eventually he attempted to overthrow the Rani, but the rebellion failed and he fled from Sind. Using his magic he commandeered the ship he left on, the *Sindhi Queen*, and set off on a life of piracy on the high seas. Now he makes his base in Jaibul and uses his magic to foresee the location of the weakest victims with the most treasure.

#### **Greytan Narrowgirth**

Halfling 8. There are many Hin pirates who sail the waters south of the five shires. Some are dabblers who engage in piracy for sport, others do it for adventure, while some even do it for the treasure. But Greytan Narrowgirth does it because he's good at it. Greytan is tall for a hin, with short, brown hair and a mischievous expression. Like many others he started his career as a buccaneer because it was more interesting than being a trader. He did both for a while, but eventually settled on piracy as he continually lost money on trading trips and gained it through thievery. It was, in fact, the only thing he'd ever truly excelled at. Unlike the more ruthless pirates of the region, he abides by an unbreakable set of rules: no needless death, no Halfling ships, no slavery. However, like many Hin, he is not to be underestimated and will kill those threatening him with no warning, using both the blade he wields very well and the considerable number of magic items he has amassed over his life. He can be found sailing the western Sea of Dread in his ship *The Juggler's Fool* and, if he's in a good mood, may tell the story of how it came to have such a curious name over a pipe and several flagons of ale.

#### **Sariena**

Elf 9. Sariena is a medium height elf with long pale hair and distinctive

mismatched eyes, one green, one blue. She is very beautiful, but also cold and distant. Though born among the water elves of Minrothad her mother is a shadowelf who was sent out of their caverns to learn more of the elves of the south. To maintain her cover, her mother formed a relationship with one of the Meditor elves and Sariena was the result. Like many of her clan, she learned to sail at a very young age and trained as a trader, eventually rising to the rank of Captain. Her skill with arms and her lack of fear soon led to her being trained as a privateer by the Minrothad government, and she now sails her ship, the *Seastar*, around the northern Sea of Dread, sinking enemy trading ships and taking their treasure for Minrothad. She is one of their most prized captains and it is in this role that she has been asked to investigate the possibility of shadowelf spies among the elves of Minrothad, a task she intends to undertake with vigour.

#### **Marie Raye**

F14. Marie is a human of medium height with long brown hair that falls in waves to her shoulders. She wears brown leggings and boots with a white blouse that she lets hang open, a ploy to distract her opponents. She uses a sword, and wears jewellery and an eyepatch, having lost her eye in a battle five years ago. Marie was born in Minrothad on Trader Isle. Her parents were very devout and originally planned for her to be cleric in a contemplative order, locked away from the world. Unfortunately for them Marie turned out to be wild, wicked and generally unsuited to such a life. After she caused untold mayhem in her village, her parents arranged for her to be married to the local blacksmith's apprentice. He was not an unattractive man, but Marie had no interest in being tied to one man forever. She couldn't escape the wedding but crept out of her new home early the following morning and left, leaving the ring on the blacksmith's anvil. She made for Harbournown and took a place as a deckhand on a trading ship, looking for a life of adventure. The ship in question turned out to be a raider, rather than a trader, but Marie found that all the more exciting. The ship's captain, another woman with an uncertain past, took a liking to Marie

and taught her how to sail and fight, eventually bequeathing her the ship itself. That was twenty years ago. Since that time Marie has become a major player in the criminal community of the northern Sea of Dread. Aboard the *Maiden's Revenge*, she sails out of Crossbones and is the most respected pirate in the Minrothad area. She is no privateer though, and will prey on any ship that crosses her path.

#### **Marcus Kerral**

F9. Marcus is a good looking young man with a ready smile and an easy manner. He was brought up in Thyatis City as the second son of a merchant family. A combination of boredom and a taste for the high life led him into gambling, which he turned out to be very good at. In the course of a few years he won jewels, money, property and even a ship. Eventually he had won so much that he was suspected of cheating. Though nothing was ever proved, he had made enough enemies that he was run out of the city, escaping on his ship with only the goods he could carry. Within a few weeks he had turned pirate, putting his extraordinary good fortune to work in robbing the shipping lanes near Thyatis and the Isle of Dawn. He now makes his home in the town of Crossbones and his ship, the *Lady Luck*, can regularly be seen there, often with the sounds of music and laughter drifting from below decks. He's not considered a great pirate yet, but his star is on the rise and some of those who have heard of him are beginning to wonder whether his luck can be entirely natural.

#### **Nathan McRhomaaag**

F12. Nathan is a young man with broad shoulders, huge muscles and a dour expression. He is the nephew of Baron Uthgaard McRhomaaag, the ruler of the Barony of Caerwicca on the Isle of Dawn. When he was a boy, Baron Uthgaard noted that Nathan was both strong and ill-tempered, which he felt were the main requirements for a truly successful pirate. Uthgaard had been a pirate himself when younger but his accession to the Barony prevented him from continuing. Instead, he helps Nathan in exchange for some of haul. Although the Baron supports many pirates, Nathan received goods,

training, men and even a ship, the *Cleaver*, from his uncle. Nathan now leads the Caerwiccan pirate fleet and is trying to extend his influence further. Should he gain much more power, his uncle may find him a good deal more difficult to control than he thinks.

#### **Adrienne Xylonias**

C11 (of Petra). Adrienne is from Kastelios on the continent of Davania, and has the dark hair and golden skin common in that region. As a young girl she was sent to serve in the Temple of Petra and so was trained as a fighting cleric, dedicated to defending the weak. When she was in her early teens her father, a trader plying the routes on the Davanian coast, was killed by pirates. This event gave focus to her abilities and, with the church's blessing, she took command of a ship and set sail to destroy any pirates she found and return their booty to the Temple for the glory of Petra. Her approach since then has been simple; she sails the southern Sea of Dread in her ship, the *Vengeance*, preying only on pirates. Since there are plenty in the area she is never short of targets. Ordinary trade ships are completely safe with her, but any pirate ship will be attacked. For them she has no mercy and will commonly execute the entire crew, steal any treasure and burn the ship where it stands.

#### **Krem**

Orc 7. Krem is a red orc from northern Davania. He is short, squat, ugly and has enormous ears. When he was a young man he was driven out of his village after losing a fight with another male over one of the tribe's females. He made his way north and eventually met a pirate who was sheltering in a cove on the coast. The pirate offered Krem a place on his ship and the orc spent several years learning the ways of the sea. Eventually he rose to first mate and, when the Captain was lost in a storm, he took command of the ship. Now he prowls the seas around Davania attacking shipping and looting the coastal villages. His ship, the *Marauder*, is a terrifying sight with hideous red and yellow eyes painted on the hull.

#### **Tyralandi Scrimm**

C10 of Loki. Tyralandi is dark-haired, blue eyed and beautiful. Although

thirty-seven years old, she still looks nineteen due to judicious use of magic. She was born in Vestland to a gambler and was brought up by him to worship Loki. At the age of fourteen he lost her in a card game to a pirate who took her as his concubine. She accompanied him for several years, devoting her time to Loki's service, before he was killed in a fight at Scuttlecove. Electing not to become another pirate's property, she joined Porphyry House, a brothel, and swiftly took over the running of it. Since that time she has worked to further Loki's aims in Scuttlecove, while maintaining a house of ill-repute (but excellent reputation). She delights in tricks, deceits and cons, and willingly takes part in any scheme she thinks has a chance of working.

#### **Kedward Bone**

MU16. Kedward is the head of the Dealer's Consortium in Scuttlecove. Originally from Glantri, he studied at the School of Magic until he was expelled for inappropriate behaviour with an inter-dimensional being. Indeed he caught a disease from one of these liaisons which caused the strange disfigurements which distort his features. After moving to Scuttlecove he swiftly saw a market in providing simulated oblivion to the downtrodden folk of the town, land-locked pirates and the world at large. The consortium was the result and it now controls nearly all the narcotic that flow into or out of Scuttlecove. In Glantri Kedward also developed a taste for duelling and, with his double-bladed scythe, he is a vicious fighter. In fact he is as dangerous a man as can be found in Scuttlecove and is always flanked by his familiar, Matylda, a diminutive, red-skinned, heavily-pierced, imp who acts as his research assistant and lover.

#### **Ned Land**

F3. Ned is about 50 with wild red hair and a beard. He was captain of a small smuggling ship which sailed the coast of Davania. After being blown off course, his vessel sank off the coast of Phema and he was the only survivor. Although rescued and nursed back to health, he is marooned on the island with no way to get a message to his friends. Despite this, he is a cheery soul, and is confident he will be rescued eventually.

### **Ruhaladero the Pitiless**

M22. Ruhaladero the Pitiless, Scourge of the Seas, The Ruby-Eyed One, Master of the Storms, Reclaimer of the Nine Treasures. Ruhaladero is small, dark, snake-like and utterly loopy. Originally from Jaibul he was exiled by the other wizards and made Goptri of All the Oceans, charged with making all who sailed upon the ocean waves fear and respect the Rajahstan of Jaibul. After finding his way to Teki-Lo-Kia he has ruled erratically and dangerously. Occasionally sane, mostly not, he spends his time attacking the natives, the other islands and anything else that takes his fancy. If he actually put his mind to it, he would be horribly dangerous. Fortunately he hasn't, yet.

### **Kana-Lo-Loma**

Kara-kara Orc 10. Kana is a kara-kara orc of almost impossible size. He stands 7 feet tall, with magnificent green skin and hair. When he grew to manhood he decided that the current leader of the kara-kara on Teki-Moa-Ha was old, weak and foolish. He was proved right in a trial by battle and, having eaten the corpse of his predecessor, is the embodiment of all kara-kara chiefs throughout history. He rules his realm from a palace in the city of Malo where he eats, makes decisions, eats, takes tribute and eats. He believes that the

kara-kara have a right to rule the islands and seas and is considering how he might bring that about. He is also considering having his tribe build a pyramid, to show how magnificent they are. Even he is not aware that some of these ideas are not his, but have been sent to him by Atzanteotl. The Immortal is not certain quite what he wants to do with the kara-kara, but thinks it might be fun to shake things up in Davania and the Pearl Islands.

### **Ponui-Lo-Teva**

Kara-kara Orc Cleric 8 of Orcus. Ponui is the head manwu-papa of Teki-Moa-Ha and therefore one of the most powerful kara-kara clerics around. He has led the religious life of the island for as long as anyone remembers and regularly visits Teki-Bali-Hai to meditate. He is a proponent of the old ways and is totally resistant to the effects of Atzanteotl's dreams which he dismisses as being caused by too much meat in the diet.

### **Tanokoro Nuar**

T8. Tanokoro is dark skinned and dark eyed. He was born among the Nuari pirates on Teki-Moa-Ha and is now their current leader. He preys on shipping throughout the Sea of Dread but has no interest in the wider pirate community and no desire to visit Scuttlecove. Like his predecessors, he is

careful to maintain the secrecy of his port and people.

### **Zarachton**

C4 (of Thanatos). Zarachton is a middle-aged, rather stern man. He works as an accountant for the Merchant House Argad & Solmar in Ierendi, but is secretly a member of the Sons of the Serpent. Zarachton planned with his associate Nosanje to return the magical treasure from the tower of Ithaq-Talmir in Davania, hoping it could be used to increase Entropy in Ierendi. After Nosanje failed to return, Zarachton tracked down the other passengers from his ship, killed them and took the map Nosanje had made. He is now using Tormyl, an agent from the Merchant House, to recruit the adventurers to recover the treasure from Roatana. His intention is to kill them once they return.

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### **Monsters**

Medusa, blink dog, cyclops, pit vipers, stirges, insect swarms, flying hydra, salt-water termites, merrow, sea-snakes, pirates, ogres, aranea, cave bear, cyclops, green dragon, black dragon, dryad, giant elk, granger, hydra, roc, rock baboon, treant, troll, wyvern, lizard man, troglodyte, phanaton, zombie, kopru, cannibals.

# THE ISLE OF DREAD

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## Overview

The largest island of the archipelago is simply known as the Isle of Dread, even by its inhabitants, the Roa-Tamo, who no longer remember that the name was created by the Nithians as a reference to the Sea of Dread. The island stretches 150 miles north to south and is 50 miles at its widest point. It is rockier than many of the other islands in the region and there are fewer safe landing places as a result.

Apart from a small number of hidden coves, most landing places are on the south-western peninsula, home to the largest concentration of humans on the island. The peninsula is known by the Roa as "Faré" in the local language, which simply means "home". There are seven villages in the area, all containing humans descended from the Olman colonists with a total population of about 2,100. The villages are Kirikura, Dawa, Mora, Panitube, Burowao, Usi and Tanaroa, which is the largest of them. This area is cut off from the rest of the island by an enormous wall built by the Nithians and the Roa avoid the rest of island as much as possible.

Beyond the wall, the island is filled with choking jungle which stretches up to a plateau in the north. This is the beginning of the area affected by the Spell of Preservation. Before Ka the Preserver cast his spell on the whole of the Hollow World, he wanted to ensure that it would have the effect he wished. The area that became the Isle of Dread was his testing ground. The effects of this small version of the Spell are slightly different from that in the Hollow World. Magic is unaffected, but those races that were in the area when the spell was cast cannot become extinct, nor can their culture change. The culture of newer races who found the area was not bound in the same way; any race that lived in the area of the spell for more than ten years could not go extinct, though its culture may change. This has made the main portion of the Isle of Dread a very strange place. Small bands of almost any type of creature can be found alongside each other. When one is destroyed another mysteriously springs up in its place. Thus humans, lizard-men, aranea,

phanatons and many other species exist in tiny settlements, eking out an existence in the jungles. Humanoids can be found in many areas, and a huge green dragon has taken up residence in the middle of the north eastern jungle, where it keeps most other creatures at bay. More unusually, the races Ka brought from the Hollow World still thrive in their bizarre homeland. Giant reptiles roam much of the island and brute-men can be found in the foothills of the mountains in the middle of the island. Cave Rakasta (see Monsters), an ancient species normally only found in the Hollow World, also wander the forests with their sabre tooth tigers.

In the north of the island lies a massive natural plateau, bordered by mountains on one side and a canyon on the other. Its cliffs rise 3000' making the plateau almost unreachable. The only safe path up is reached by crossing a rope bridge over the canyon. The whole region of the plateau is inhabited by dinosaurs, particularly flying ones like pteranodons and pterodactyls. There are also cloud forests, in which treants can be found. The plateau is unstable and is regularly struck by earthquakes of varying intensity, which discourages explorers.

In the centre of the plateau stands a huge volcano that dominates the skyline. The walls of the volcano are steep and dangerous although it is possible to climb up if an experienced climber leads the way. Again, climbers will encounter pteradons and pterodactyls living in the cliffs as they make their way up. It can take as much as 12 hours to reach the edge of the crater, where snow lies on the rocks and the temperature is below freezing. People who stay on the exposed outcrop are likely to suffer badly from the elements. A further 8 hour climb into the crater leads to the central lake and the village of Mantru. Jungle vegetation covers the lower parts of the crater, but animal life is scarce due to the difficulty in reaching the area.

The coasts of the island, while clear of the Spell, are still dangerous. There are sea snakes and crocodiles as well as a sea hydra in the northern bay. Pirates from Sekorvia also maintain small hideouts in the more isolated bays and

on the coastal islands, which are also home to less organised tribes of Roa and occasional monsters. Many of these islands are volcanic, severely limiting the number of inhabitants.

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## Tanaroa and the Peninsula

Tanaroa stands in a clearing at the edge of the jungle. Looming up just north of the village is a 50 foot high wall built out of stone blocks. This 'Great Wall' stretches for 2 miles across the thin neck of land that joins the peninsula with the main island. Evenly spaced along the wall are 28 square towers and in the centre stands a pair of massive wooden gates. Each gate has double doors and each can be barred by a heavy wooden beam. The Great Wall is always garrisoned by warriors from the villages. Each village clan garrisons one tower with seven warriors (196 in 28 towers). Towards the village, several deep pits filled with tar form a second line of defence should a non-human raiding party or monster fight past the wall. Between the wall and village, the ground has been cleared of trees and brush to allow a clear spear and arrow shot.

The villagers have no clear idea who built this defensive system. They refer to 'gods' who made the wall to protect them, but the stories are variable and contradictory. This is because the wall was made by the Nithians when they controlled the island. The Nithians ruled here for centuries, although they built few cities and were content to let the local humans continue their village lives. After many failed attempts to make the centre of the island safe, they abandoned the idea and built the wall to keep out the kopru and other monsters that still infest the interior. Much later, their civilisation was wiped out by the immortals and the memory of them was removed from the Roa, leaving them utterly confused about where the wall had come from. To this day, they guard the wall, knowing that it is all that keeps the villages safe.

A cleared trail leads into the village from the south and continues north through the gates into the jungle beyond. The trail circles four groups of raised huts made of wood and roofed

with palm leaves. Each group is laid out in a circle and each group faces a central graveyard. The backs of the huts face the encircling path. Each set of huts represents one of the clans that live in the village (Ape, Tiger, Boar and Sea Turtle). The people of each clan believe they are blood brothers to that animal. A large wooden totem statue of each animal stands in the middle of each graveyard.

Each clan is responsible for specific jobs in the village's life. The Boar clan are builders and craftsmen, making houses, boats and any other object needed. The Tiger clan are hunters and gatherers, bringing back berries and meat to feed the villagers. The Ape clan are farmers and storytellers, tending to little patches of agricultural land found all over the peninsula. Finally the Sea Turtle clan are fishermen and sailors, responsible for fishing the Sea of Dread and trading food and goods between the seven villages and with the many Roa communities found on the smaller islands of the Archipelago.

In the centre of the village is a flat-topped hill that has been artificially levelled. A 10' earthen pyramid stands on its top and it is faced with stone slabs. Set on the summit is a huge alarm gong. The hilltop is the assembly place of the village. Members of each clan sit or stand on the earthen mound on the side facing their clan site, while the village leaders conduct their business atop the pyramid. Between the clan sites and the hill are the clans' gardens and the grounds for the clans' animals, which include pigs, chickens and goats. A little outside the village stands a black stone obelisk which is all that remains of the Olman town on whose ruins Tanaroa was built. One village legend talks of a time when matriarchs used the obelisk to become one with the giant lizards found in the island's interior. If this were ever possible (which the villagers doubt), the secret is long lost.

Apart from the wall, the other six villages are broadly similar. The seven villages are loosely allied through a council of village chiefs that meets once a year. The seven villages are matriarchies, so each chief is female and the natives trace their descent and inheritance through their mothers and take their mother's names. Although each chief is female, the clan leaders are

male. The clans serve to unify the villages in times of war, each clan being organised into a separate regiment. Each village elects a special official to serve as advisor to the chief. This person acts as war leader in times of trouble. War is, of course, very rare here. The only real threats come from occasional raids by pirates searching for slaves, and attacks by other villages, particularly those of Utsiwano, looking for fresh meat.

The inhabitants of the villages mainly rely on fishing for their food, although small-scale agriculture supplements their diet. Hunting on the peninsula is limited and the Roa rarely cross the wall without good reason. The Roa are avid traders; food is plentiful and the Roa collect pearls to exchange with other villages and traders from further afield.

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### **The Cult of the Walking Dead**

Spiritually, the Roa-Tamo follow a rather unusual form of ancestor worship. Each village has a spiritual leader called the Zombie Master (or Mistress), who is usually a 5<sup>th</sup> level Cleric. They have the responsibility for carrying out funeral rites, leading worship at festivals and tending to the village's "walking ancestors". These are zombies, made from the bodies of the revered dead and used by the villagers as warriors and labour. Although revered, they are also feared. They are housed in each village's burial grounds and their naturally aggressive instincts are only kept in check by the presence of the Zombie Master.

The zombies are not created by the Zombie Master alone. Some members of each village are part of the Cult of the Walking Dead, who meet secretly to create new zombies when needed. Most villagers have heard of the Cult but very few will speak about it due to their fear and awe of the Cult's powers. Each village's Cult meets regularly, either in the burial grounds, or occasionally in catacombs beneath the villages. These catacombs have been constructed as the Zombie Masters' personal domains over the course of several centuries and, while they can be found in all the villages, Mora has the most extensive network, stretching out under the sea.

Day to day this religion, though distasteful, is essentially harmless. However, the Cult hides a dark secret that no explorer has yet uncovered. It is

actually a leftover of the Nithian occupation. When the Nithians were wiped out, they had turned to the worship of entropy. A pale reflection of this worship had already seeped into the Roa's lives and that became the Cult of the Walking Dead. All clerics of the Cult, including the Zombie Masters, are actually clerics of Thanatos, even if they are unaware of the fact. As they progress through the Cult's ranks, they are inducted into more of its mysteries. Most Zombie Masters start out as good individuals, but a lifetime serving Thanatos corrupts them and the oldest and most powerful are self-serving and resentful. Some even become completely evil and carry out terrible experiments to make new forms or zombie, or use the undead to terrorise villagers into giving them tributes and disposing of their enemies.

The identity of the overall Master of the Cult, the man who trains new Zombie Masters, is unknown even to its members. He lives in Panitube and appears to be a decrepit old man. He is in fact surprisingly strong and a 9<sup>th</sup> Level Cleric of Thanatos. Hidden in his village is a book that has been passed down since the time of the Nithians. The Cult Master is unable to read it, and so does not realise that it contains a spell to open a portal to the plane of Entropy. Should the Sons of the Serpent ever get hold of the book they would understand its contents and would likely use it to open a portal in Ierendi City, causing untold chaos in the region.

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### **Mantru and the Lost Lake**

Mantru is a small village and is all that remains of the Olman capital of Thanaclan after it was caught within the Spell of Preservation. It is totally cut off from the outside world by the volcano and the plateau and so has no idea of the existence of the other villages on the island. It was the last village to escape the domination of the kopru and the people live permanently on the edge of extinction. Only the Spell keeps them alive.

The village itself lies on the shore of the lake in the crater. Its western edge is a crude stockade of palm trunks, which extends into the water on both sides of the village. Parts of the wall have been expanded to form two fish pens. The village consists of six palm thatched

huts raised on stilts. Two more huts stand out in the lake. The smaller belongs to Umlat (the tribal cleric) and the other is the village council hut. The village is inhabited by roughly 50 people divided into five families, who share food and work. The villagers are not warlike although they know how to defend themselves if threatened. The head of the village is Fano, the 'talking chief'. The actual 'chief' is a small stone carving of an old man kept in the council hut. All decisions supposedly come from this statue. This curious custom is a relic of Shezzeth, the Koprú Empire, when the dominated chief of the village passed instructions from his koprú masters. The village is occasionally attacked by headhunters from the island that stands on the lake. This blights their miserable lives further and they would be grateful to have rid of the threat. They feel they cannot deal with it themselves as the island is taboo, so they cannot bring themselves to go there. The taboo dates from the end of the koprú empire and exists to prevent it spreading again by isolating the koprú from hosts that they may dominate. The taboo island is a rocky outcrop dotted with ruins, statues and broken terraces. The largest ruin on the island is a temple carved into the western cliff. This was once an Olman temple and later became the centre of the long-collapsed Empire of the Koprú. The current inhabitants are a group of Roa from Utsiwano who found their way to the plateau several months ago and were unable to get back down. They took the temple as their home and occasionally raid Mantru, eating their captives. These headhunters only inhabit the temple on the first floor as they fear the creatures found on the lower levels; for deep under the temple, a group of Koprú can still be found, plotting their return to greatness. These koprú are one of a number of groups of surviving koprú hidden beneath the island. The Spell kept this particular group from dying out and now they live under the temple in the volcanic springs that give rise to the lake. They are utterly devoted to recreating their lost kingdom but are also impotent due to their lack of numbers and the taboo that prevents humans going to the island. The Utsi presence may be enough for them to get

the foothold they need but, so far, no Utsi have wandered into their realm. It may only take one to start the process again.

### Places of Interest

**Ashfall Isle:** Ashfall is a desolate rock, constantly in the shadows of Red Belcher's smokey plume. Little lives here.

**Badwall Isle:** This is a jagged islet with little vegetation and no safe shores upon which to land. A nest of two dozen wyverns claim its peaks.

**Blackfen Swamp:** This swamp surrounds the half-sunken ruins of an Olman town.

**Blisterhill Isle:** This island of barren stony slopes is studded with dozens of active geysers.

**Bloodwater Lake:** This large lake is infested with dangerous menaces, including freshwater reptiles and huge schools of piranha. The lake is named not for the hue of its waters, but for the ferocity of its denizens.

**Buwao:** The village sits atop a tall cliff and can be reached by a huge wooden staircase which zig-zags up from the shore. The village is home to the finest fishers and divers on the island and is increasingly interested in trading with the sailors who occasionally pass through the archipelago.

**Cankerdark:** The noisome pits of this large cave network are more vertically aligned than horizontal, and are home to countless vermin and scavengers.

**Dark Mountain Pass:** This ancient underground pass was built by the Olmans as a tomb complex. It joins the jungle to the nearby shore but is now infested with vermin and scavengers.

**Dawa:** Dawa is hidden in a deep cove on a small island of the main Isle. It can only be approached from water and is consequently very well defended. The village is the most private of the area and the people of Dawa are very suspicious of strangers.

**Dragonhaunt Hollow:** This area is home to Xiureksor, a huge green dragon, who spends most of her time sleeping in a deep cave under this boggy jungle.

**Ember Lake:** So named for the red, phosphorescent fish that dwell in the depths, Ember Lake is connected to the surrounding sea by several submerged

channels. Aquatic reptiles are common in these waters.

**Emerald Isle:** This verdant isle is relatively safe - its largest predators are dire boars, crocodiles, and the occasional anaconda. On its shore stands Halkith's Tower, a long abandoned wizard's abode, which contains many unusual magic items guarded by strange creatures and traps for the unwary.

**The Fangs of Zotzilaha:** Twin volcanoes that loom over the surrounding jungle. The Roa believe that the bat god Zotzilaha dwells somewhere in the numerous caves along these dangerous peaks.

**Fireshrike Isle:** Although this island is dominated by an active volcano, the eruptions (while common) tend to be relatively minor. The western and southern sections are home to many creatures large and small.

**Fogmire:** This area is a fog-shrouded patch of jungle that the natives claim is even more dangerous than the rest of the island. It contains a shrine to Demogorgon built by troglodytes under the control of the koprú, which is the source of both the fogs and the danger.

**Gargoyle Eyrie:** This inhospitable reach of ragged mountains is riddled with caves that serve as the home for a large tribe of gargoyles.

**Glasswall Rift:** A sizable rent in the mountainside here glitters by day, its razor walls of obsidian and other volcanic glass is home to pteranodon nests and monstrous web-spinning spiders of all types. Tunnel entrances and pits in the rift's bed lead into the extensive caverns that riddle the isle's foundations.

**Griff Isle:** The largest of the isles surrounding the main island, this verdant isle is named for the numerous flocks of hippogriffs that nest here.

**Huhuetotl's Throne:** Once a sizable ancient town, all that remains above the sunken swampland of this forgotten city is a black stone ziggurat capped by an immense throne bearing images of an ancient god of fire and the passage of time. On certain nights of the year, sinister fires burn in the swamp and strange shapes can be seen cavorting atop the ruins.

**Jixtú:** This village of arboreal platforms and cleverly hidden huts is inhabited by nearly 550 phanatons led by Tekitek.

Other phanton settlements exist in the jungle but none are as large as this one.

**Kirikura:** The village is long and thin, stretching down the straight coast of one of the small islands near the Isle. The villagers specialise in catching the beautiful birds that can be found on the island in enormous numbers. Some of these are edible and many have iridescent feathers which the villagers trade with other Roa.

**Kopru Tunnel Entrance:** This unassuming coastal cavern actually represents the most direct route to the deep caverns below the island where the remaining kopru make their home.

**Lost Citadel:** This Olman citadel is made of gleaming stone covered in an opalescent shimmer and appears entirely unspoiled. It is built on an impossibly high terrace cut into the mountains on the Isle's western edge and can sometimes be seen from the western sea or from certain angles of the plateau. Its inaccessibility has prevented anyone from discovering why it is so well preserved.

**Mora:** The largest village after Tanaroa, Mora often vies for primary position among the villages. The villagers make the largest use of "walking ancestors" and a large number of zombies are confined to the burial grounds. Mora is also host to a huge network of tunnels underneath the village, some of which link up to the kopru domains.

**Olman Obelisks:** There were once many of these dotted around the island. The Olman used them to steer dinosaurs away from their settlements using a form of temporary mind control. Most of these have long since been destroyed though a few are still intact. One of these stands in the village of Tanaroa, one on the plateau and another in the jungles near the Tyrantclaw Orcs. These obelisks can still be used by druids to control the dinosaurs for a short time. However, the magic is powerful and difficult to control (see Magic Items).

**Panitube:** The villagers of Panitube are among the finest warriors on the island. This could give them an advantage over Tanaroa but the weakness of their leader means that the villagers are content to provide protection from pirates and creatures rather to assert their authority.

**Rakasta Camp:** The Cave Rakastas of the Island can be found in a number of camps which they move depending on

the weather. Occasionally they will set up a larger camp to trade, but these are shortlived.

**Rat's End:** This ragged settlement is built from ruined ships converted into huts. It houses nearly two-dozen pirates who moved here after being run out of Scuttlecove.

**Red Belcher Isle:** An active volcano makes this isle uninhabitable to all but a few flocks of tenacious wyverns.

**Reefs:** Six major reefs surround the Isle of Dread – each is infested with dangerous sea creatures like monstrous crabs, dire eels, and mashers.

**Rivenskill Cave:** Actually several dozen caverns connected by narrow fissures, Rivenskill Cave is inhabited by several tribes of Brute-Men.

**Scorpion Isle:** This rugged island is infested with all manner of monstrous scorpions.

**Shenev:** This arboreal village of cavelike webs is inhabited by dozens of araneas. They are left over from the early spider civilisation but have long since descended into a semi-nomadic life and only maintain their existence due to the Spell of Preservation.

**Shrine of Zotzilaha:** This cavern was once an Olman temple and the Roa still maintain some religious links to it. They bring offerings every few months to appease the anger of Zotzilaha though it is not clear whether they have any effect.

**Skinrazor Rock:** Dozens of geysers can be found on this inhospitable swath of stone that barely rises above the sea. In many places the rock is too hot to touch.

**Skyscar Peak:** The highest peak on the Isle of Dread the slopes of Skyscar Peak are a favoured nesting ground for roc.

**Standing Stones:** Olman ruins abound on the isle, yet few can match these immense standing stones in sheer spectacle. Two dozen stones stand here, said to mark the lost tombs of ancient kings.

**Tar Pits:** A day's travel beyond the Great Wall lies the tar pits. These are the only location now regularly visited by the Roa and even then only in large armed groups. The tar is collected by the inhabitants of Tanaroa who trade it with the other villages for food and goods. The Roa use the tar to waterproof their boats and roofs so it is an essential item both on the island and among the Roa of other islands.

Tanaroa's monopoly has enabled it to grow rich in comparison.

**Temple of the Jaguar:** This Olman temple was taken over by the Cave Rakastas that inhabit the island but has since been abandoned.

**Thanegioth River:** The mightiest river on the Isle of Dead, the frequent rapids along this waterway make it a poor choice for exploration by boat.

**Tyrantclaw:** This region deep in the central jungle is home to the Tyrantclaw Orc clan. These humanoids have mastered riding the giant reptiles found in the vicinity making them even more dangerous than usual. Their region of influence is slowly spreading and eventually they may even threaten the Roa.

**Usi:** Usi's position away from the main island has led it down a different path from the other villages. Although it still has a Zombie Master, the villagers practice a form of druidic spiritualism and they are increasingly abandoning the use of "walking ancestors".

**Valley of Madness:** The plant known by the Roa as 'loco weed' is a narcotic that grows in several parts of the island. However it is at its thickest in this secluded valley.

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## Personalities

### J'kal

Druid 4. Matriarch of Tanaroa. This aged and respected woman is a shrewd leader and brilliant strategist. Through her experience and clever use of ESP, she usually takes the best course of action and maintains Tanaroa's position as the foremost of the Roa villages.

*Equipment:* Medallion of ESP.

### Bakora

F5. War-leader of Tanaroa. Because of his skill with weapons, this warrior is highly respected in his village. Though he is not extremely intelligent, he does have good advisors. Bakora is strong-willed and somewhat superstitious.

### Mvembi

C6. Zombie Master of Tanaroa. Mvembi is a middle-aged man with an easy smile and good manners. His naturally kind heart has made him resistant to much of the taint of Thanatos' worship but, as the years pass, he is becoming increasingly callous. He is unlikely to ever become

entirely evil but his desire to protect Tanaroa may one day override his morals.

#### **Thulsa**

Druid 3. Matriarch of Mora. Thulsa is an old woman by Roa standards and is dedicated to her village and her tribe. She is aware that Mora is becoming an increasingly unpleasant place but does not see how to change things.

#### **Karta**

F2. War-leader of Mora. Karta is essentially good but weak. He has only recently become war-leader after the sudden death of the previous incumbent a year ago.

#### **Tilorak**

C7. Zombie Master of Mora. Tilorak has been a Zombie Master for many years and is second only to the Cult Master himself in the hierarchy of the Cult of the Walking Dead. He was always arrogant and unpleasant but his years serving Thanatos has made him thoroughly evil. To that end he has increased Mora's use of zombies well beyond what is normal, knowing that only his presence keeps the zombies under control. He also uses the complex of tunnels under the village as his own personal domain using it to imprison and torture his enemies. His has extended the complex so far that he risks encountering the kopru if he explores much further.

#### **Sanar**

T4. Matriarch of Burowao. This schemer has one goal – to become leader of all the villages. She sees increased trade as a tool to this end. Sanar uses any person any way she can as long as that person can serve her needs. She is ruthless and treacherous, but practical, and she respects those who bargain from strength.

#### **Masawa**

F4. War-leader of Burowao. This arrogant warrior is feared by the people of his village, not only because of the great war skills of which he boasts, but because of his cruelty to those who cross him. Masawa does not like strangers and does not wish to trade more widely, but has been overruled by the village matriarch.

#### **Kuna**

T2. Matriarch of Panitube. This matriarch is neither very bright nor very brave. She often acts on a whim, but is never intentionally cruel. Although Kuna is content to let her advisors make the decisions while she remains the figurehead, she occasionally uses her charisma to sway them. She is much loved.

#### **Kuro**

F4. War-leader of Panitube. This mighty leader carries a family heirloom, a magic spear. Though he is first a warrior, Kuro is also a kind and honest man. His fair and just treatment of his people and of captured enemies has earned him respect and fame throughout the seven villages.

*Equipment:* Spear +1

#### **Vanos**

C9 of Thanatos. Vanos is Master of the Cult of the Walking Dead. Appearing to be a decrepit old man, he lives in Panitube among the retired. He is entirely devoted to his own pleasures and uses the Cult to live a life of luxury (as far as village life allows). He is devoted to Thanatos and wishes to raise an army of undead with which to take over the island but this is currently beyond his power. His lifespan has been hugely extended by his devotion to Thanatos and he is, unbeknownst even to himself, slowly turning into a lich. In another decade the process should be complete.

*Equipment:* Scythe +2

#### **Fano**

F4. "Talking chief" of Mantru. Fano is an elderly man, badly scarred and crippled in the left arm. His infirmity, his responsibilities to the tribe, and his superstitious fear of the island prevent him from dealing with the raiders on the island. His goodwill is important, as his opinion of the any people he meets decides the treatment the villagers give them. Fano is goodnatured, but proud of his position. He does not tolerate mockery of it or of the "chief" of the village.

#### **Umlat**

C6. Tribal cleric of Mantru. Umlat is a pious man, devoted to his deity (Oloron, Lord of the Skies – a dimly remembered version of an Olman deity), but he seems to have been both blessed and cursed. He is an extremely aged man, living many years beyond the normal lifespan of others in the tribe. The villagers attribute this to the favor of his deity. However, he is frail and weak, and his activities are greatly limited. The villagers speculate that this weakness is due to some past failing. Because of his condition, Umlat cannot travel far.

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### **Monsters**

Medusa, blink dog, cyclops, pit vipers, stirges, insect swarms, flying hydra, salt-water termites, merrow, sea-snakes, pirates, ogres, aranea, cave bear, cyclops, green dragon, black dragon, dryad, giant elk, granger, hydra, roc, rock baboon, treant, troll, wyvern, lizard man, troglodyte, phanaton, zombie, kopru, cannibals, allosaurus, brontosaurus, giant crocodile, dimetrodon, plesiosaurus, pteranodon, trachodon, triceratops, tyrannosaurus rex, brute man, cave rakasta, dinosaur riding orc.

# THE EMPIRE OF TWAELAR

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## Overview

While the islands of the Thanegioth Archipelago are a disparate collection of primitive tribes and wandering creatures, the country beneath the waves could not be more different. The shallow, warm waters around the islands play host to the Empire of Twaelar, the kingdom of the merrow. Unlike the merrow of the sunlit sea, those found deep in the Sea of Dread are dour, paranoid and hostile to any they see as a threat to their way of life. For anyone other than the merrow, the Empire is a place of drudgery and arbitrary justice, meted out by a regime desperate to prop itself up. It is a place of secrets and lies, watching the countries of the known world with fear in its heart.

The Twaelar Empire consists of the nation of the merrow and members of other aquatic races that are subject to it. It was formed after the collapse of the Kopru Empire, which was precipitated by an uprising among the merrow. After their success they began warring on the surrounding aquatic realms to ensure that no race could ever threaten their existence again. Twaelar was the ultimate expression of their fear – a kingdom that exists to keep threats to the merrow at bay.

Twaelar is a span of territory roughly twice the size of Darokin although its borders are rather indistinct. There are some areas that the Twaelar don't completely control, particularly the deep submarine canyons, which are feared and the subject of superstitions. They also have some enclaves beyond their core areas as well, including a series of colonies off the Davanian coast and the hidden base of Lyonesse, south of Thyatis.

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## The People

The Twaelar merrow dominate the Empire. These are merrow akin to most others, but more militant, aggressive, and organized than those of the Sunlit Sea. They have succeeded in either wiping out or subjugating and absorbing the other aquatic races of the area, creating a powerful empire. Within the Empire, merrow are placed above all others. The shark-kin are particularly despised; they were the merrow's

greatest rivals for power in the area until they were crushed in the early wars. From that time on they were kept as slaves until a rebellion almost fifty years ago. It was brutally put down, but was stopped only at the expense of freeing many of the shark-kin. The merrow regime deeply resents this and is doing everything in its power to return the shark-kin to their enslaved status.

Triton in the empire are treated relatively well, partially because of their similarity to merrow. Equally the elves are well respected and seem to treat merrow rule with equanimity. Some kna can also be found in Twaelar. They are mostly ignored by the merrow hierarchy and principally act as agricultural labourers. The aquatic ogres form a menial caste, and also serve as shock troops for the merrow (see Monsters). Although they once fought the merrow almost as fiercely as the shark-kin, they are now blindly and fanatically loyal to their merrow leaders for reasons that will become clear.

All the 'lesser' races in the Empire are considered second-class citizens, denied positions of authority and rulership, but otherwise able to pursue most careers. Although none of the aquatic ogres are officially classed as slaves, some of the members of all the other aquatic races are enslaved. This ranges from almost half of the shark-kin to less than a fifth of the aquatic elves. These slaves can be found all over the empire providing menial labour of any sort. They are owned both by individuals and by the state and so can be found in individual houses, on the kelp plantations or down the mines.

Though theoretically above the other races, many merrow are not of the ruling class. As farmers and fishers they face just as much of a life of drudgery as the lesser races.

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## Politics

The merrow of the Empire are highly religious, and the priest caste devoted to Protius is very influential. In many ways the Empire is a theocratic state. The Priests of Protius gained power after they led the liberation of the merrow during the days of the revolt against the kopru. This movement began in a single

temple, which eventually became the centre of Twaeloporis. A few hundred years later the priests began a holy war against the other aquatic races, cementing their authority over the merrow themselves. While the Emperor himself is not a priest, almost all his decisions are ratified by them and the High Priest of Protius is without doubt the second most powerful merrow in Twaelar, if not the first.

The Twaelar warrior caste forms the second-most respected rung of society (war-wizards included), due to the support they provide to the maintenance of the empire and its authority over the subject races. They are present in every city and even the small towns have a contingent of Twaelar military to 'keep the peace'. They are mostly used to prevent subjects of the empire leaving their settlements without permission, or to engineer the 'disappearance' of those suspected of sedition. These unfortunates often end up in the imperial work camps, near Davania.

Working with the military are the aquatic ogre shock troops, which are often used in war and to terrify the populace should it become restive. While commanded by the Twaelar warrior caste, they are not considered part of it. These ogres are kept segregated and cannot even be spoken to without permission from their merrow overseers.

The other major group in the empire is the Stashai, or secret police. This group watch everything that goes on in Twaelar and reports it directly to the ruling council and, eventually, to the emperor. They have informers everywhere, including among the lesser races and the slaves. The fear that the Stashai are listening keeps many possible rebels from confiding their opinions to others. Those who are too free often vanish or are killed by 'raiders'.

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## Economy

Twaelar is not really a trading nation, given the paucity of people with whom it is willing to trade. As such its primary activities are kelp farming, fishing and mining (mostly of the rock faces on the Thanegioth shelf). It's only product of

real worth are pearls which it produces in sufficient numbers for them to act as the main unit of currency in the empire. Black pearls are particularly prized due to their rarity.

The vast majority of the twaelar are thus engaged in those three activities, and mining is in general only undertaken by slaves. The state is essentially communist, so the output of each settlement is pooled and split between its workers after the state has taken its share. This varies depending on circumstances but can be as high as half of a settlement's output. The food and valuables taken are used to support the bloated military sector, the Priests of Protius and the ruling elite.

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## Settlements

### Twaeloporis

The capital of Twaelar, Twaeloporis, is a very large city, covering as much area as Thyatis City itself. The buildings are spaced apart to make it easier to swim through. Though many of these buildings (actually rock formations with chambers carved into them) are many stories high, a comparatively small proportion of each consist of rooms, since carving out too much of the stone would weaken the structure and cause it to collapse. Thus, though it covers a wide area, the actual population is around 200,000. Around two thirds of its inhabitants are merrow, as this is the centre of their culture. Most of the rest of those who live here are their aquatic ogre servants, with some aquatic elves as well (less than 1% of the population). No shark-kin, even slaves, are permitted to enter the city.

It is a majestic, eerily beautiful but foreboding place, with schools of shimmering fish swimming between the spires that form the city's buildings. There is a huge palace-temple in the centre of the city, which is seemingly carved out of multicoloured coral, akin to the palace of Ierendi but several times larger. This palace is perched atop an ocean mesa, looming over the rest of the city, except for some of the taller spires. This structure is the home of the senior Priests of Protius, the Ruling Council and the imperial family. Many Twaelites never see the people who live in the building. The Emperor and his family do very rarely appear at carefully choreographed military parades, but

security is very high at these events and some even suggest that the dignitaries who come are fakes, created using polymorph spells.

Twaeloporis, like the rest of Twaelar, is a heavily militarised city. Armed troops are seen in every street and aquatic cavalry and ogre shock troops parade regularly. It would be difficult to invade and conquer, especially by a surface (air-breathing) power. Many of these troops are used to keep the rest of their empire under control. The Twaelar have some highly innovative artisans and enchanters, who are said to be working on developing weapons to permit them to expand their operations to the surface lands themselves, particularly given the perceived threat from Thyatis.

There are also several dozen major temples in Twaeloporis, heavily patronised by the merrow, who to conduct religious ceremonies daily. The other races of the kingdom worship their own Immortals, but all are required to give at least some veneration to Protius and obeisance to the Twaelar's version of His faith.

### Titanica

The second largest city in Twaelar is the centre of its military operations and the home of the ogre troops. Titanica was, until 30 years ago, called Mushun. The previous emperor, Titan II, changed its name to reflect his greatness and to remove the last vestiges of ogre culture from Twaelar. Mushun was not originally a city, but an underwater region inhabited by aquatic ogres, who spent their time hunting in the surrounding waters. They were, like most ogres, strong yet stupid and it was relatively easy for the religiously driven merrow to conquer them in the early days of Twaelar's expansion.

After the ogres surrendered, the merrow constructed Mushun as a massive prison for the defeated ogres. It continued in this purpose until the ogres' sudden conversion to the Twaelar cause some years later. After that time the city was re-purposed as a military training centre. Unlike Twaeloporis, the city is constructed from stone and is much more brutal in its look. The buildings are massive, grey and square with rows of small windows looking down on the kelp fields which surround the area. Within the city lie all the organisational

facilities for the extensive Twaelar military, but not the headquarters of the Stashai, which are based in Twaeloporis. Most of the ogres in Twaelar live in the city or in villages surrounding it. Triton and shark-kin farmers also live in the area, but are kept under close watch by the merrow who inhabit the city itself.

Like all the settlements in Twaelar, a temple of Protius stands in the centre of the city. The temple in Titanica is almost as large as its equivalent in Twaeloporis, and is heavily guarded. No ogres can be found among these guards; only merrow clerics of Protius are allowed into the building and even the Emperor would be refused access should he try to enter. This is because the temple holds the greatest secret of the Twaelar merrow: the Mindbender. The artefact was created by a group of very powerful clerics, shortly after the fall of Mushun. It appears to be a gigantic black pearl roughly 12' across and is inlaid with merrow sigils which glow slightly, illuminating the darkened room in which the device sits. A group of six senior merrow priests sit on chairs surrounding the device staring at it. These clerics are replaced at regular intervals but they are always there, day and night. With the correct command, the Mindbender can open revealing two chambers, one in each half of the device. In one is placed a kopru and in the other an aquatic ogre. With this device, the six merrow amplify the power of the kopru's mind control and use it to control all aquatic ogres within a 400 mile radius of Titanica. It is this device which creates the ogre's strange devotion to the merrow; it is this device that allows Twaelar to exist. The aquatic ogre in the device lives out a natural life and is replaced from the hordes of ogres when it dies (the effect lasts for a few days before fading). The kopru however is in permanent agony, and dies after only a few years. The merrow priests believe that this is justice for the terrible rule of the kopru. They hunt kopru in the waters of the Sea of Dread and keep a small group imprisoned beneath to temple to replace the one in the Mindbender when it inevitably dies.

### Shezykk

Shezykk was the capital of the shark-kin nation and was the last bastion to fall in

Twaelar's conquest of the Thanegioth Shelf. Much of its structure was destroyed in its fall and it is now only the size of a medium town. It sits near the edge of the shelf and so exists in a state of semi-darkness. However, glow worms are used to light the dwellings of the merrow and tritons that moved there after the conquest. These individuals live in the centre of the town, clustered around the temple and the markets.

Shezykk has the highest population of shark-kin in the empire and, consequently, the highest concentration of Stashai agents. The dwellings of the free shark-kin form a ring of slums around the town itself and are small, grim and unpleasant. However, the shark-kin here still have a better life than those slaves, who are likely to be kept in tiny, dark rooms in the dwellings of their owners. There is little in the way of kelp fields nearby but the rocks of the shelf contain several mines which are used for producing metals.

Shezykk was also the centre of the shark-kin rebellion fifty years previously and still has a significant military presence, including several regiments of ogre Shock Troops. Despite this and the dangers of the Stashai, a rebel movement still exists among the shark-kin, plotting the overthrow of their masters. They carry out occasional acts of sabotage and even manage to kill the occasional merrow soldier, but their plans are currently small scale. Their latest plan however is more ambitious. They intend to sink a human vessel above the Temple in Twaelaporis and so precipitate a war against the surface peoples 'responsible'. The hope is that this will weaken the Twaelar Empire, and thus loosen its grip on the subject races.

### **Syndryl**

Even the priests of Protius at the height of the conquest could not bring themselves to destroy Syndryl, the dwelling of the Aquarendi. It was simply too beautiful to damage. The underwater elves grew, rather than built Syndryl; it is a town made of living coral, about which giant seaweeds curl. These contain blisters in which some of the elves live. At its centre is a giant pearl, nearly 50 feet in diameter. Even the elves are not certain how it came into being. It is hollow and in its centre,

bathed in the diffuse light that comes through the walls, is the sacred frond of the local elves.

The elves of Twaelar are shy and retiring, preferring to live simply and to cause no trouble. This stems mostly from the kopru rule. The elves resisted much of the kopru mind control, leading to a series of bloody wars in which the elves were almost annihilated. The small number who survived stayed in hiding, having magically rendered Syndryl invisible from the outside. It is the only elven dwelling that survives from this period. Because of this background, the elves regard the rule of the merrow as a necessary evil. Since it keeps order and ensures that the kopru cannot return, they are content. Equally, the merrow regard the elves with a level of uncertainty and, in some case, even awe. They only enslave those who have proven themselves to be criminal and tend to leave the rest alone. Consequently, Syndryl and its environs remain comparatively untouched by the predations of the Twaelar military. A reasonably large number of kna live near Syndryl in their peculiar homes, floating a little above the sea bed. Although they are concentrated in this area, they can be found throughout Twaelar as they never had a centralised culture in the region.

### **Athis**

Athis is a city of ruins. This coral structure was the centre of the triton culture in the area during the time of the conquest. When the Twaelar merrow and their ogre army laid siege to the city, the fighting was long and hard. And so, when triton resistance finally collapsed, there followed an orgy of destruction in which no building was left standing. The triton race was totally subdued and those who survived were forced to relocate to other parts of the empire. Triton can thus be found in any part of Twaelar and, due to their similarity to the merrow, are the most trusted of the lesser races. However, any attempt to move back into Athis would be met with severe reprisals.

The ruins are now dark and cold, and are inhabited by all the unpleasant denizens of the deep. Monsters of most sorts can be found here including jellies, giant squid, snakes and other more dangerous creatures. A small colony of

kopru is hidden in the town, where they hope to avoid the hunting parties from Titanica. Unbeknownst to the Ruling Council, the Devilfish of the north have recently discovered Athis and are building up their numbers in secret.

### **Slaar**

The town of Slaar is the centre of the principle mining region of Twaelar. It sits above the water-filled shafts that are used by the merrow for extracting minerals from beneath the islands of the archipelago. It is a grim, industrial town which is always warm due to the flow of hot water from within the mines. It is also host to many slaves and prisoners who provide its main workforce and are kept in their place by a small army of overseers.

### **Aerol**

Aerol is a small village primarily filled with Aquarendi elves. It was founded some centuries after the fall of the kopru when the population of Syndryl finally became large enough to require more living area. It is a quiet locale far from the main cities, and the elves like it that way.

### **Thaeris**

The village of Thaeris is mostly inhabited by triton and merrow who specialise in the farming of fish rather than kelp. The village is surrounded by huge mesh structures, some several miles wide, which keep the fish in place as they are tended to. Many of the farmed fish are brightly coloured and, in the tropical sunlight, the village is one of the most beautiful locations in Twaelar.

### **Soumaat**

Soumaat is another mostly merrow village though it has a medium sized kna population which lends the village a strange air.

### **Twystaer**

Twystaer is a strange settlement. It appears to be a giant shell lifted on its end and embedded into the sea bed. Within it are rooms and corridors where its inhabitants, mostly servants, reside. It was discovered as a ruin shortly after the founding of Twaelar and was swiftly claimed by the Twaelar aristocracy as a retreat. Over the centuries since then it

has been carefully rebuilt and is now considered one of Twaelar's most endearing places for senior officials to visit. There they can be pampered, engage in sports and generally relax away from the prying eyes of the more lowly inhabitants of the empire.

### **Graeal**

Graeal is Twaelar's prison. The Twaelar have no wish to keep undesirables in the capital and would not risk hosting a prison in Titanica. Instead this fortress is the principle facility for incarcerating traitors, criminals or anyone the Stashai has taken a dislike to. Its surface layers are filled with rooms and offices while the prison itself is formed from tunnels embedded into the bedrock. At its lowest levels sit the Stashai's torture chambers which few prisoners enter and even fewer leave.

### **Rionesse**

Rionesse is a small base on the borders of Twaelar, near the Abyss. It is staffed entirely by merrow military including war-wizards and exists to keep a close eye on the creatures that occasionally surface from the depths. Anything that the inhabitants cannot deal with on their own is followed while a warning it sent to Twaeloporis.

### **Cantref, Gwaelor and Lemaeria**

These three areas are the colonies found on the northern Davanian coast. They lie on the coastal shelf not far from the Thyatian Hinterlands. As they are so far from the Mindbender, the Twaelar cannot use their ogre troops to keep order. Equally the Stashai are less active so far from the capital. Consequently life in the colonies is freer and more relaxed than in the empire proper. Gwaelor, the oldest of the colonies, is particularly advanced in this respect. Its ruler is now considering whether the empire is a help or a hindrance and is slowly building up support for a bid for independence.

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## **Personalities**

### **Emperor Titan III**

Merrow F12. Titan is tall, imperious and green-skinned, with a small beard and high cheekbones. He has been the Emperor of Twaelar for ten years, since the death of his father Titan II. He is also the latest in a line of emperors that

took power around a century before in a coup. He is arrogant and unpleasant, and his isolated life means he has no empathy whatsoever with the average inhabitant of Twaelar. As the council and the Stashai essentially run the Empire, his life consists of an endless round of ceremony and self-aggrandisement. He hates the surface dwellers, thinks air-breathers are little more than animals and believes that it is inevitable that Twaelar will eventually take over all the world's oceans.

### **Empress Marinal**

Merrow NW. Marinal is medium-sized with long, fair hair and sad eyes. Like many previous Empresses, Marinal was born among the poorer merrow who inhabit the city of Twaeloporis. When she was young, the crown prince (now the Emperor) saw her in the city and declared she would be his wife. The military took her immediately and she has not left the palace since that day. She has long since forgotten what her family look like and instead spends her time with her children, trying to make them less unpleasant than their father. Titan ignores her much of the time but is not actively unpleasant. Even so, her sufferings have been so great that she now barely speaks.

### **Oblontius**

Merrow C20 of Protius. High Priest of Protius. Oblontius is ancient, slow and dignified. He has been High Priest for so many years that very few remember who the previous incumbent was. During that time he has vigorously championed maintaining the status quo, while working to increase the worship of Protius. He, along with Diviloplop, is the most senior member of the ruling council and, between the two of them, they control Twaelar. His health is now failing and he knows it is only a matter of time before the College of Priests must choose a successor.

### **Diviloplop**

Merrow C12 of Protius. Head of the Stashai. Diviloplop is cunning, ruthless and utterly dedicated to Twaelar's security. He joined the Stashai from the Priesthood and swiftly rose through its ranks, eventually becoming its head. Since then he has spent his time crushing any perceived threat to

Twaelar. He has little time for the niceties of justice and, if a case cannot be proven, simply arranges for people to disappear. The Stashai's massive intelligence operation all ends at him and only he knows the full extent of their penetration of Thyatis. He knows that another confrontation is inevitable and, looking to that future, is increasingly uncertain that Titan III is capable of looking after Twaelar's best interests. He is even more unhappy with Marinal's influence on the next generation of leaders and is seriously beginning to consider whether a new imperial dynasty should be established – with him at its head.

### **Karryk**

Shark-kin HD8. Karryk is the leader of the shark-kin rebels in Shezykk. He was very young during the slave rebellion and lost both his parents before the fighting subsided. He was brought up by an uncle, another freed slave, and hates the merrow and the ogres for their oppressions. Apparently just another subsistence farmer, he runs a network of over fifty rebels based around the city. Their activities are currently very limited but he would like to achieve more and is seeking any possible way of attacking the Government.

### **Cyrendir**

E15. Cyrendir is the chieftain of Syndryl and *de facto* leader of the elves of Twaelar. He is an old man who remembers the founding of Twaelar and considers the Empire to be an unfortunate inconvenience that will, no doubt, collapse in time. Until then he is content to let the merrow keep the kopru at bay and works to minimise the effects of the Empire on his people. He would be horrified were he to discover the existence of the Mindbender and would likely lead a revolution himself were he to find out.

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## **Military**

The Twaelar military are at the centre of the empire's power. The merrow practice conscription among their own race to maintain the necessary numbers, and expect the triton and elves to provide small number of additional troops. These troops are spread among different regiments to ensure no regiment becomes too far removed from

merrow control. Large numbers of aquatic ogres are collected into shock troop units which have merrow officers. There are also a few special units including several consisting solely of soldiers able to use magic, and two specifically outfitted to sink any ships that the Twaelar take a dislike to.

**Basis:** Medieval; males and females (8% standing, up to 25% wartime); population 1,000,000; standing.

**Regiment Name:** 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Twaelar (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Twaeloporis, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in Titanica, 5<sup>th</sup> in Shezykk, 6<sup>th</sup> in Syndryl).

**Type of Regiment:** Elite Regiment

**Number of Such Units:** 6

**BR:** 138 **Personnel:** 1,962 **Troop**

**Class:** Excellent **BFR:** 105

**Regiment Breakdown:**

Commander: General (F13, +1 int, +1 wis, +1 cha)

Deputy Commander: Under-General (F10)

Heroes: 1 Mage-Commander M8, 1 Priest of Protius C7.

1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> School, Light Bowmerrow: each has 200 Bowmerrow (F2), no armour (AC7), light crossbow (for underwater use), knife; 5 Sergeants (F4), 1 Captain (F6).

3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> School, Heavy Bowmerrow: each has 200 Bowmerrow (F2), no armour (AC7), heavy crossbow (for underwater use), knife; 5 Sergeants (F4), 1 Captain (F6).

5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> School, Tridenteers: each has 200 Tridenteers (F2), no armour (AC7), trident, net; 5 Sergeants (F4), 1 Captain (F6).

7<sup>th</sup> School, Spearmerrow: each has 200 Spearmerrow (F2), no armour (AC7), spear, net; 5 Sergeants (F4), 1 Captain (F6).

8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> School, Seahorse Cavalry: each has 200 Seahorse Cavalry (F2), layered shell armour (AC5), lance, knife; 5 Sergeants (F4), 1 Captain (F6).

Mounted on giant sea-horses.

10<sup>th</sup> School, War-wizards: 100 war-wizards (M2), no armour (AC7), knife; 3 Mage-Sergeants (M4), 1 Mage-Captain (M6).

**Regiment Name:** 7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Twaelar (7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> in Twaeloporis, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> in Titanica, 12<sup>th</sup> in Shezykk, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> patrolling)

**Type of Regiment:** Regular Regiment

**Number of Such Units:** 8

**BR:** 115 **Personnel:** 1,962 **Troop**

**Class:** Good **BFR:** 88

**Regiment Breakdown:**

Commander: General (F9, +1 cha)

Deputy Commander: Under-General (F7)

Heroes: 1 Mage-Commander M7, 1 Priest of Protius C7.

1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> School, Light Bowmerrow: each has 200 Bowmerrow (F1/2), no armour (AC7), light crossbow (for underwater use), knife; 5 Sergeants (F3), 1 Captain (F5).

3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> School, Heavy Bowmerrow: each has 200 Bowmerrow (F1/2), no armour (AC7), heavy crossbow (for underwater use), knife; 5 Sergeants (F3), 1 Captain (F5).

5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> School, Tridenteers: each has 200 Tridenteers (F1/2), no armour (AC7), trident, net; 5 Sergeants (F3), 1 Captain (F5).

7<sup>th</sup> School, Spearmerrow: each has 200 Spearmerrow (F1/2), no armour (AC7), spear, net; 5 Sergeants (F3), 1 Captain (F5).

8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> School, Mixed Cavalry: each has 200 Mixed Cavalry (F1/2), layered shell armour (AC5), lance, knife; 5 Sergeants (F3), 1 Captain (F5).

Mounted on giant sea-horses, swordfish and manta rays.

10<sup>th</sup> School, War-wizards: 100 war-wizards (M1/2), no armour (AC7), knife; 3 Mage-Sergeants (M3), 1 Mage-Captain (M5).

**Regiment Name:** Defenders of Twaelar (1<sup>st</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> divided among cities, settlements and colonies)

**Type of Regiment:** Regular Regiment

**Number of Such Units:** 14

**BR:** 86 **Personnel:** 1,962 **Troop Class:** Fair **BFR:** 65

**Regiment Breakdown:**

Commander: General (F7, +1 cha)

Deputy Commander: Under-General (F6)

Heroes: 1 Mage-Commander M6, 1 Priest of Protius C6.

1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> School, Light Bowmerrow: each has 200 Bowmerrow (F1), no armour (AC7), light crossbow (for underwater use), knife; 5 Sergeants (F2), 1 Captain (F4).

3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> School, Heavy Bowmerrow: each has 200 Bowmerrow (F1), no armour (AC7), heavy crossbow (for

underwater use), knife; 5 Sergeants (F2), 1 Captain (F4).

5<sup>th</sup> School, Tridenteers: each has 200 Tridenteers (F1), no armour (AC7), trident, net; 5 Sergeants (F2), 1 Captain (F4).

6<sup>th</sup> School, Spearmerrow: each has 200 Spearmerrow (F1), no armour (AC7), spear, net; 5 Sergeants (F2), 1 Captain (F4).

7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> School, Mixed Cavalry: each has 150 Mixed Cavalry (F1), layered shell armour (AC5), lance, knife; 4 Sergeants (F2), 1 Captain (F4).

Mounted on giant sea-horses, swordfish and manta rays.

9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> School, Triton Soldiers: each has 200 triton (M1), layered shell armour (AC5), knife; 5 Triton-Sergeants (M2), 1 Triton-Captain (M4). Mounted on giant sea-horses, swordfish and manta rays.

**Regiment Name:** War-wizard Legion (1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> in Twaeloporis, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in Titanica, 6<sup>th</sup> in Syndryl)

**Type of Regiment:** Elite Regiment

**Number of Such Units:** 6

**BR:** 114 **Personnel:** 616 **Troop Class:** Good **BFR:** 82

**Regiment Breakdown:**

Commander: Mage-General (M7, +1 cha)

Heroes: 1 Mage-Commander M6, 1 Priest of Protius C6.

1<sup>st</sup> School, War-wizards: each has 150 War-wizards (M1/2), no armour (AC7), knife; 3 Sergeants (M3), 1 Captain (M5). Mounted on giant sea-horses.

2<sup>nd</sup> School, Triton Soldiers: each has 150 triton (F1), layered shell armour (AC5), knife; 3 Triton-Sergeants (F2), 1 Triton-Captain (F4). Mounted on giant sea-horses.

3<sup>rd</sup> School, War-clerics: each has 150 War-clerics (C1/2), no armour (AC7), knife; 3 Sergeants (C3), 1 Captain (C5). Mounted on giant sea-horses.

4<sup>th</sup> School, Elves: each has 150 Aquarendi Elves (E1), layered shell armour (AC5), spear; 3 Elf-Sergeants (E2), 1 Elf-Captain (E4). Mounted on giant sea-horses.

**Regiment Name:** Ogre Shock Troops (1<sup>st</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> patrolling or stationed at Titanica)

**Type of Regiment:** Regular Regiment

**Number of Such Units:** 20

**BR: 105 Personnel: 1,268 Troop**

**Class: Good BFR: 95**

**Regiment Breakdown:**

Commander: General (F7, +1 wis, +1 cha)

Heroes: 1 Priest of Protius C6.

1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> School, Ogre Troops: each has 200 Ogres (HD4+4), no armour (AC4), spear; 10 Merrow Sergeants (F3), 1 Merrow Captain (F5).

5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> School, Ogre Archers: each has 200 Ogres (HD4+4), no armour (AC4), heavy crossbow (for underwater use); 10 Merrow Sergeants (F3), 1 Merrow Captain (F5).

**Regiment Name:** Shipbreakers (1<sup>st</sup> in Twaeloporis, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Titanica)

**Type of Regiment:** Regular Regiment

**Number of Such Units:** 2

**BR: 104 Personnel: 424 Troop Class:**

**Good BFR: 86**

**Regiment Breakdown:**

Commander: General (F7, +1 wis, +1 cha)

Heroes: 1 Priest of Protius C6.

1<sup>st</sup> School, Ogre Shipbreakers: each has 200 Ogres (HD4+4), no armour (AC4), spear; 10 Merrow Sergeants (F3), 1 Merrow Captain (F5).

2<sup>nd</sup> School, Ogre Harpooneers: each has 200 Ogres (HD4+4), no armour (AC4), heavy harpoon (mounted on underwater chariot pulled by manta rays, 1 for every 4 ogres); 10 Merrow Sergeants (F3), 1 Merrow Captain (F5).

If a battle is taking place underwater, the Twaelar should be considered as being in an extremely favourable environment. If the battle is on land, the reverse is true.

## Priest of Protius Spells

**Locate Sea Life** (instead of *Detect Evil*)

Range: 0 (Cleric Only)

Duration: 6 turns

Effect: detects one sea creature within one mile

This spell allows the caster to sense the direction of one known, normal, sea creature or plant. The caster cannot locate fantastic creatures, plant monsters, or intelligent beings. He must name the exact type of sea life he seeks. The creature or plant gets no Saving Throw.

**Charm Aquatic Life** (instead of *Snake Charm*)

Range: 120'

Duration: 4d4 (4-16) turns

Effect: magically charms 4d4 HD of sea life with a 40' square area

This spell functions like charm person, except that it affects aquatic creature of no greater than animal intelligence. It can also affect multiple targets within the area of effect. Please note that this spell does not allow the caster to communicate with the affected creatures.

Creatures affected by this spell will regard the caster as a good friend and kindly benefactor. If the spell caster speaks a language that the creatures understand the spell caster may give orders to the target. As long as these orders are not obviously self destructive then the target will obey without question or hesitation. The target may resist orders that are contrary to its nature, alignment and habits. No roll is required to resist.

The charm is automatically broken if the spell caster attacks the target, either by spell or by weapon. The target will fight normally if attacked by the spell caster's allies.

**Obscure** (instead of *Silence 15'*)

Range: 0

Duration: 1 turn per level of the caster

Effect: Creates obscuring bubbles around the caster

This spell causes the water around the cleric to become filled with millions of tiny bubbles. The area is 1' high per level of the cleric and is 10' in diameter for each level. For example, a 20<sup>th</sup> level cleric could cast an *obscure* 20' tall and 200' diameter (100' radius). The bubbles have no ill effects except to block vision.

The caster, and all creatures able to see invisible things, will be able to see dimly through the bubbles. All other creatures within the area will be delayed and confused by the effect. While within the bubbles, these creatures are effectively blind.

**Speak with Children of Protius** (instead of *Speak with Dead*)

Range: 0 (Cleric Only)

Duration: 12 Turns

Effect: allows caster to communicate with sentient sea life within 60'

This spell allows comprehension and communication with all aquatic

creatures of greater than animal intelligence. For the durations of this spell the cleric may speak with all sentient sea life within 30'; the effect moves with the caster.

The creatures spoken to usually have favourable reactions (+2 bonus to the reaction roll), and they can be talked into doing a favour for the cleric if the reaction roll is high enough.

## Relations with Other Nations

**The Archipelago:** The Ruling Council of Twaelar have almost no relation with the land dwellers of the islands they surround. They are content that the islands are almost entirely chaotic and ungoverned, believing that this keeps the larger nations away and so increases their security. They keep a close watch on colonisation and exploration attempts to ensure that any reports to the mainland show the archipelago in the worst possible light.

**Undersea:** The merrow are aware of their nomadic cousins in the Sunlit Sea but have almost no contact with them. This is partially because reaching them is not an easy task. The presence of the abyss and the Devilfish make the direct journey all but impossible. Reaching Brun requires swimming up the coast of the Isle of Dawn, which is a long and arduous trip. However, occasional contact does occur, so both sides are aware of the other. Diplomatic ties to Undersea itself are distant.

**Ierendi:** The Twaelar rulers are aware of Ierendi and have a small number of agents on the islands. Due to Ierendi's lack of imperial ambition, they feel it is less of a threat than the other coastal nations. However they watch for any sign of a change in this policy.

**Minrothad:** The sailors of Minrothad worry the Twaelar due to the increasing range of their trade ships. They feel it is only a matter of time before the Guild try to establish some sort of outpost on the archipelago and are preparing a military response should that become necessary.

**Thyatis:** Thyatis is the country with which Twaelar has had the most dealings, none of them good. They regard the empire as the single biggest threat to their security, especially since the declaration that settlement in Thanegioth is an imperial ambition. They maintain a very close watch on the

country and will attempt to undermine any colonial venture. Direct diplomatic contact ceased after the Aquapopulus massacre, and Thyatis has all but forgotten Twaelar. However, a small group of senators have rediscovered the story in a history book and are looking into its truth. Should they prove that Twaelar is real, they will almost certainly warn Thincol of the threat.

**Davania:** Twaelar has a number of colonies in the waters off Davania and considers it a safe region for expansion due to the lack of strong local governance. They regard the Thyatian colony on the Hinterlands as a threat but are not taking direct action against it.

**Alphatia:** Although potentially their greatest ally against Thyatis, the Twaelar regard Alphatia with deep suspicion. The last thing they wish to do is replace one strong empire with another even stronger one. They occasionally send agents to the Isle of

Dawn but have yet to visit Alphatia proper.

**Other Nations:** The landbound nations hold little interest to the Twaelar so they have no real awareness of the other nations of Brun.

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### Statistics

**Population:** 1,000,000 (including 200,000 in the capital of Twaeloporis). Roughly 50% merrow, 15% aquatic ogre, 10% triton, 10% kna, 10% shark-kin, 5% aquatic elves.

**Language:** Merrow (Twaelar dialect).

**Coinage:** *Black pearl* (5 gp), *pearl* (gp), *seed pearl* (sp), *coral* (cp). Merrow coins consist of mother-of-pearl into which seed pearls are embedded; none for the *coral*, one for the *seed pearl*, five for a *pearl* coin, and five black seed pearls for the *black pearl*.

**Taxes:** 20% income tax collected biannually, 5% sales tax on all goods

except food, plus in-kind exactions and corvée labour on behalf of the empire.

**Government Type:** Monarchy advised by a council of priests.

**Industries:** Fishing, kelp-raising, pearl-harvesting.

**Important Figures:** Titan III (Emperor), Marinal (Empress), Oblontius (High Priest of Protius).

**Flora and Fauna:** Kelp forests, coral, whales, dolphins, seahorses, hippocampi, narwhals, giant leeches, electric eels, lacedons, dragonfish, dragon turtles, giant lampreys, jellyfish (man o' war), water naga, piranhas, giant squid, devilfish, giant sharks, marids, urchins, school fish, giant clams, nereids, aquatic beholder, krakens, giant octopi, aquatic jellies, giant sea snakes, giant lobsters, scraggs, sirines, giant sea spiders, kelpies, aquatic dinosaurs, and in hidden areas, kopru.

# MONSTERS

## Aquatic Ogre

(from the AD&D *Monstrous Manual*)

Armor Class: 4

Hit Dice: 4 + 4

Move: 30' (60' swimming)

Attacks: 3 (talons/teeth) or by weapon

Damage: 1d6/1d6/2d8/ or weapon

No. Appearing: 2d6 (2d10)

Save As: F4

Morale: 11

Treasure Type: C

Alignment: Chaotic

XP Value: 190

Aquatic ogres are faster, brighter and fiercer than the land-based variety. They are also rare outside warm tropical waters and so are not well known in the lands of Brun but are a regular menace around the shores of Davania. They resemble land ogres, being 8'-10' tall but are greenish and scaled with webbed hands and feet. They also have visible gills and breathe salt or fresh water. Their necks are long and thick, their shoulders are sloping, and they have huge mouths and undershot jaws. They also have black teeth and nails and deep green eyes with white centres, and hair like slimy seaweed.

Using their green coloration, aquatic ogres can hide, becoming effectively invisible 10-80% of the time, depending on the terrain. They attack from cover, so others are -5 on their surprise roll, and typically use a large piercing spear (2d6) in a swimming charge at +1 to hit, followed by melee with talons and teeth. They are most commonly found as small tribes of around 50 individuals living in warm, shallow waters near coasts (where they occasionally forage). Their chieftains are larger and more dangerous and some tribes have a few shaman of varying ability. Larger groups do occasionally link together and form long-lived nations, such as Mushun, which was the major location for aquatic ogres in the Sea of Dread until it fell to the merrow of Twaelar.

## Cave Rakasta

(from *Bruce Heard's 'Rakastas of Mystara'*)

Armor Class: 6

Hit Dice: 2+2

Move: 12

Attacks: 2 claws/1 bite

Damage: 1d4/2d4/1d12

No. Appearing: 3-30 (+1d8 sabre teeth)

Save As: F2

Morale: 9

Treasure Type: M

Alignment: any non-chaotic

These creatures are primitive, oversized versions of Simbastas. Apart from their small presence on the Isle of Dread, their kind has long since been relinquished to the Hollow World. They ride sabre-tooth tigers as mounts and live in caves in the mountain foothills. They also have an instinctive fear of water and cannot be made to travel over it.

Cave Rakastas have a powerful roar. This enhanced roar causes fear to all opponents within 100' who fail a saving throw vs. paralysis. The fear lasts 1d6+1 rounds, during which victims drop any weapons at hand and attempt to escape in the opposite direction at maximum speed.

## Kara-kara

(from *X8 Drums on Fire Mountain*)

Armor Class: 9 (8 with shield, 6 with armour and shield)

Hit Dice: 1+1 (1+4 during chant)

Move: 120' (40')

Attacks: 1

Damage: By weapon (see below)

Save As: F1 (F2 during chant)

Morale: 9 (11 during chant)

Treasure Type: R

Alignment: Chaotic

Kara-kara are tribal humanoids distantly related to orcs. They are slightly shorter than humans with green skin, tangled curly dark green hair, and muzzle-like mouths with curved yellow fangs. Most wear only loin-cloths, lurid body paint and primitive jewellery. They speak only their own language which can be understood by creatures who know the orcish tongue. Kara-kara inhabit tropical or semi-tropical islands, but may occasionally be encountered at sea in their large outrigger canoes or while raiding the coasts of civilized lands.

Kara-kara do not know how to work metals and so nearly all of their weapons are made of stone, wood and teeth. Warriors and leaders will each

have a large decorated wooden shield and 1-2 spears. In addition, they will have a stone-headed mace, a wooden pick or a wooden short sword edged with shark's teeth. Females usually have stone daggers. Stone daggers inflict 1d4 points of damage while all of the other weapons inflict 1d6 points.

Most tribes of kara-kara are usually ruled by councils of manwu-papas (or witch doctors). Most manwu-papas are 4th level clerics though some can reach 6th level. Manwu-papas normally have metal weapons gained through trade or war with outsiders. They often wear armour made from thin plates of tough wood. This armour has the same effect as leather.

The kara-kara are a singing people. In battle the males set up a rhythmic chant which raises their morale to 11. It also increases the hit points of warriors and leaders by 3 and makes them the equivalent of 2 hit dice creatures (save as 2nd level fighters) for the purposes of determining the effects of spells such as sleep. The chant takes effect in the round after it is started. It requires at least five kara-kara to maintain and can be negated by, for example, a silence 15' radius spell. Dispel magic or similar spells will not affect it.

## Tarantean

Armor Class: 5

Hit Dice: 5\*\*

Move: 60' (20')

In web: 120' (40')

Attacks: 1

Damage: 1-8 + poison

Save As: M6

Morale: 7

Treasure Type: D

Alignment: Chaotic

Taranteans are mutated aranea who have increased in size and malice. They are around 8' across, and are deep black in colour. Like their forebears, taranteans are web-spinners, and their bite is poisonous. Their front limbs divided into flexible digits which they use to grasp prey and manipulate tools. In addition, the tarantean can cast spells as a 5th level magic-user. Taranteans are silent, having lost the ability to speak, however they are telepathic and can

communicate with each other over distances of up to 50'.

### Werehawk

Armor Class: 5  
Hit Dice: 5\*\*  
Move: 60' (20')  
In web: 120' (40')  
Attacks: 1  
Damage: 1-8 + poison

Save As: M6

Morale: 7

Treasure Type: D

Alignment: Chaotic

This powerful feathered creature stands upright like a human, but that's where the resemblance ends. Its form is that of a humanoid raptor with wings instead of arms. It also possesses a powerful hooked beak, and extremely sharp talons. It stands about 6 feet tall.

Werehawks in human form tend to be sleek individuals of average height, often with an aquiline nose or over-long finger nails.

### Yellow Dragon

(from *The Dragon Compendium, Vol 1*)

#### Small Yellow Dragon

Armor Class: 1  
Hit Dice: 5\*\*(L)  
Move: 90' (30')  
Flying: 270' (90')  
Swimming: 120' (40')  
Burrowing: 90' (30')  
Attacks: 2 claws/1 bite  
Damage (claws): 1d4 each  
Damage (bite): 2d8  
Breath cone: 80'x30'  
No. Appearing: 1  
Save As: F5  
Morale: 7  
Treasure Type: H  
Intelligence: 9  
Alignment: Chaotic  
XP Value: 725  
XP with spells: 950

#### Large Yellow Dragon

Armor Class: -1  
Hit Dice: 8\*\*(L)  
Move: 90' (30')  
Flying: 330' (110')  
Swimming: 120' (40')  
Burrowing: 90' (30')  
Attacks: 2 claws/1 bite  
Damage (claws): 1d6 each  
Damage (bite): 1d8+3  
Breath cone: 80'x40'

No. Appearing: 1  
Save As: F16  
Morale: 8  
Treasure Type: Hx2, I  
Intelligence: 12  
Alignment: Chaotic  
XP Value: 3,000  
XP with spells: 3,700

#### Huge Yellow Dragon

Armor Class: -3  
Hit Dice: 11\*\*\*\*(L)  
Move: 90' (30')  
Flying: 390' (130')  
Swimming: 120' (40')  
Burrowing: 90' (30')  
Attacks: 2 claws/1 bite  
Damage (claws): 1d8+1 each  
Damage (bite): 2d8+6  
Breath cone: 90'x40'  
No. Appearing: 1  
Save As: F36  
Morale: 9  
Treasure Type: Hx3, Ix2  
Intelligence: 15  
Alignment: Chaotic  
XP Value: 4,750  
XP with spells: 5,625

Chance of talking: 20%

Chance of being asleep: 30%

Spells (small): level 1: 3

Spells (large): level 1: 4, level 2: 2

Spells (huge): level 1: 5, level 2: 3, level 3: 1

Crush, kick and tail attacks can be used at DM's discretion.

Damage (kick, tail): 1d4 each(S), 1d6 each(L), 1d8 each(H)

Damage (crush): 2d8(S), 1d8+3(L), 2d8+6(H)

Yellow dragons are enormously rare on Mystara, so much so that many dracologists are unaware of its existence. Although a true chromatic dragon, it is naturally hated by chromatic and metallic dragons alike and so is attacked on sight. It is a solitary creature, preferring to stay away from others of its kind and it loathes cold weather, limiting its range to the tropics. Gryonax, the yellow dragon who resides in the Sea of Dread is the only one of his kind in the area, and possibly on the whole of northern Mystara. Indeed it seems likely that there are less than 20 yellow dragons left on the surface (though a larger

number can also be found in the Hollow World).

The yellow dragon's long, serpentine body is covered with yellow scales flecked with white. Despite its lack of wings, it moves through the air with a speed and agility that belies its great size. Its narrow head has two beady, glittering emerald eyes, a forked tongue projects from its fanged jaws, and a small green frill runs from between its eyes to the end of its tail. Their ability to fly, swim, and burrow allows them to evade most pursuers and attack their foes from a variety of hiding places. They prefer to keep their lairs beneath the waves or in caves hidden beneath the shifting dunes.

While by far the physically weakest of the dragons, it is the fastest flier and the most agile of them all. Other dragons could easily tear it to pieces, if they could get their claws and fangs on its lithe, fast body. In truth, few dragons or mortal warriors have the skill and patience needed to land a telling blow against these beasts.

The yellow dragon relies on its speed and supreme agility to defeat its enemies, often attacking from the air. They also tend to flee into the waves or beneath the ground if faced with superior foes. If possible, a yellow dragon swoops past its enemies and blasts them repeatedly with its breath weapon. After slowly crippling and immobilizing its foes, it lays into them with claws and fangs at its leisure. Because they lack wings, yellow dragons cannot make wing attacks.

The yellow dragon's breath weapon is a cone of salt that binds to creatures caught in the area of effect. A successful save allows a creature to avoid becoming covered in salt. Creatures caught in the breath weapon and encrusted in the yellow dragon's salt blast suffer effects based on the number of saves they have failed against the effect. Each time a character is struck by the breath weapon, he faces increasingly crippling effects in addition to the usual damage. A creature takes a -2 penalty on attacks, AC, and Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution based skill checks per failed save against the breath weapon. A creature takes a -10' penalty on speed per failed save. A creature reduced to speed 0 cannot move (flying creatures crash to the ground). The effects of the

breath weapon fade after 10 minutes and all of the effects disappear at once as the salt crumbles away. In addition, a gallon of water (or water-based liquid) can wash away the salt. Multiple attacks

require an equal number of gallons of water

Despite having no wings, the yellow dragon is a supreme flyer. As long as it remains airborne, it gains a +2 bonus on

attacks. In addition, a yellow dragon can breathe water as easily as air. It can use its spells, breath weapon and any other abilities underwater without restriction.



## MAGIC ITEMS

### The Mindbender

The Mindbender is used by the Twaelar merrow to maintain their control over the Aquatic Ogres. It appears to be a gigantic black pearl roughly 12' across inlaid with sigils which glow slightly. The device requires six merrow priests to maintain a trance in its vicinity and it is their thoughts which are subliminally transmitted to any Aquatic Ogres within the Mindbender's range. This is obviously exhausting so the clerics are replaced at regular intervals.

Upon command the Mindbender opens revealing two chambers, one in each half of the device. In one is placed a kopru and in the other another creature (in the case of the Twaelar this is an Aquatic Ogre). The device amplifies the power of the kopru's mind control and takes subconscious control of all members of the other occupant's species within a 400 mile radius underwater (the effect will not work through air). The non-kopru occupant of the device lives out a natural life but the kopru is in permanent agony, and dies after only a few years. When either occupant dies it is replaced but this does not affect the mind control, which continues for 1d4+5 days after the Mindbender stops working.

It is a secret known only to the highest priests in Twaelar that the device is not actually of Twaelar make. It was adapted from an artefact created by kopru priests of Demogorgon to extend their mind control over a huge area. Like many other kopru artefacts it is a form of Shadow Pearl wrested from their control and turned to a different use by the Twaelar.

What is unknown, even to the priests, is that the device has several other effects. Firstly, the clerics operating the device gradually become more attuned to the desires of Demogorgon. The Twaelar practice of regularly changing shifts has diluted this somewhat but, over time, the Twaelar are becoming more militant and more dangerous. This is, to some extent, caused by the Mindbender.

Secondly, when the mind control stops (following the grace period), the previously controlled subjects descend into an uncontrollable rage for 1d8 days,

during which they will attempt to destroy anything that crosses their path. Given the numbers of Aquatic Ogres now under the device's control, should the Mindbender ever fail for some reason the resulting chaos would probably destroy Twaelar outright.

### The Pillar of Flame

The Pillar of Flame is a magical device created by the Aranea for rejuvenation. It is found in a cavern deep below the ground which is lit with a continuous rosy glow from the fire which burns at its centre. The Pillar itself changes continuously, flickering and changing both hue and brightness through all the colours of the rainbow. It seems to have no source and no fuel, burning on a bare floor. It does give off considerable heat and it takes some courage to enter the flame but, if someone does so, it does not actually burn.

For an aranea, the effect of the fire is simple; on first use it reduces their apparent age by 5d10 years. The following use reduces it by 4d10 and so on until after five uses the Pillar becomes useless. For a human however the effect is markedly different. After a single use all ageing stops. Although they can still die from violence or accident, those affected will not die of old age or disease. It also immediately increases their charisma by 1 and they go on gaining 1 charisma point every 2 years until they reach the maximum. They also, in a similar timeframe, become increasingly paranoid and unpredictable. By 5 years after exposure the affected human will believe almost everyone to be scheming against them. Should an affected human pass through the Pillar a second time, these effects will all be instantaneously reversed. Any human who has lived beyond their natural lifespan will die from the resulting rapid aging.

### The Silken Map

This magical map is drawn on a cloth made of aranea silk. It is 3 feet square and shows the area of Aglamoth, as it is today. This approximately covers the area between southern Minrothad, Three Sisters Keys, a hundred miles south of

Thanegioth and the coast of Ochalea. All the islands of the Sea of Dread in that area are visible and subsurface dangers such as sandbars can also be seen. The map is magical; it updates itself as islands form or sink, and it shows its own location. It can be used to plot safe sailing paths to all the islands of the Sea of Dread, including Three Sisters Keys. It does not show settlements either above or below the surface, only natural features, and anything under water deeper than 100' is not shown. As it is both ancient and made of silk, the map is very sensitive to fire. If set alight, it will burn to dust in seconds.

### Olman Obelisks

Each obelisk is 10 feet tall, made of dark stone and has a golden glyph (in Olman) on each side. Any druid (or fey character) within 20 feet of the Obelisk have a 20% chance of gaining some understanding of the obelisk's power. If a character has gained that knowledge they may, if touching the obelisk, make a check to control the actions of a target dinosaur for 10 minutes (25% chance). Each time this ability is used (whether it succeeds or not) one of the four glyphs glows then dims. Once all four have been used up the obelisk requires a week to recharge.

A character attempting to control a dinosaur has a 20% chance to lose control and turn into a dinosaur (which type is at the DM's discretion). There is a 25% chance that they will maintain control after the transformation. If they fail, they lose themselves in the dinosaur mind and become a monster under the DM's control. The effect lasts for 2d12 hours. If this occurs, any character (not just druids or fey) is eligible to make the above checks for the duration of the transformation.

A druid of 9th level or above can choose to control the actions of up to 10 dinosaurs for 10 turns on a single successful roll. However, their chance of transformation is now 50% with the same chance of maintaining control. The transformation will last 1d10 days.

# ADVENTURES

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This section includes a series of adventure ideas for use in the Sea of Dread sorted into possible campaigns based in the area. There are no level suggestions as the adventures can be modified for almost any combination of levels. Equally, elements of the adventures can be easily mixed-and-matched for parties that are already at sea.

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## On Stranger Tides

This campaign introduces the characters to some of the smaller islands of the Sea of Dread. The adventures can be run in any order and each one includes a hook to get the characters out to sea. Once there, several can be run together if the DM wishes.

### Dracology for Beginners

Rumours have reached the mainland of a strange creature attacking shipping in the western Sea of Dread near the deadly reefs that sweep through that area. Some scholars believe it to be a giant lizard or snake, while others think it an illusion. However, a select few have come to the conclusion that it may be a previously unknown form of dragon. One of these philosophers hires the party to travel to the region and find the truth. Whatever the answer, they require proof and will pay for nothing less.

The party hire a ship and sail to the region, exposing them to a variety of threats including storms, pirates and creatures of the deep. Assuming that they survive these perils, they eventually reach the Dragon's Teeth reef where it is likely that their ship will founder. Unless they possess extraordinary skill, luck or magic, they are most likely to find themselves marooned on one of the islands of Three Sisters Keys. Even if the party's ship survived the trip, there is almost no chance of successfully sailing it back through the reef, so the party will be marooned and will have to forage for food and water. With enough exploration the party uncover the lair of Gryonax the yellow dragon. Armed with the knowledge of the truth of the rumours they need now only collect some tangible proof of the dragon's

existence, find a way to leave the island and return to the mainland. No trouble there then.

### The Lost Colony

The party are approached by one of the Thyatian Senate who shows them an extract from an old history book describing a failed attempt by Thyatis to colonise the Sea of Dread. The book speaks of a great merman kingdom and the Senator would like to find out if the stories are true and whether such a threat really exists. The first stage will be to find the location of the lost colony of Aquapopolus that the books talks of. The party can talk to sailors, scour maps and use magic to try and find the location, but eventually they will have to try and find it for themselves. They may also find that the well known warrior, Kuat the Dragon-Hearted, left on a similar mission some months ago and has not returned.

Having acquired a ship the party sail far to the south, exposing themselves to the usual difficulties of the Sea of Dread and possibly visiting other islands on the way. With the information they gained on the mainland they eventually find their way to Skeleton Key, the location of the lost colony. To please the Senator they explore the ruins hoping to find some proof that this is Aqualopolus and, by some mischance (the DM can use their imagination here), they find themselves unable to leave before dark. They bed down among the ruins only to find the many bones that litter the island are not as dead as they appear. What follows is a long night fighting waves of the undead who attack the party wherever they try to hide, led by a monstrous creature that inhabits the island's old temple.

If the party survive till morning, they can seek a way off the island but the fighting has alerted the watchers from Twaelar who lurk in the surrounding waters, waiting for the day the colonists return. The merman war party will attack, trying to ensure that the party never return to tell their tale. A final battle at sea decides whether the party warns the Empire of Twaelar's

existence or whether they sink forever into the deep.

### Escape from the Rock

Through misfortune, conspiracy or sheer criminality, the party are arrested and imprisoned on the island of Ilsa Miena, also known as Termite Atoll. They must plan their escape under the watchful eye of the guards and return to sea, while braving the deadly sea life that surrounds the rocky island.

### The Island of Burning Gold

#### [XSOLO: Lathan's Gold]

Lathan's Gold is a published D&D adventure intended for a single player but converting it for use with a party is relatively straight-forward. In the original module, the main character's love interest is kidnapped by Baron von Hendricks of Karameikos, who demands gold for his/her return. This sends the player on a sojourn through the Sea of Dread where they try to locate the Burning Mountain and bring back some of its riches. The same basic approach can be played out for a simple adventure with a party. For more complexity, other groups may also be looking for the Mountain including members of The Iron Ring, the Minrothad Guilds and the Thyatian Navy. If they all arrive at once a pitched battle may the result. A member of the party's own family may be kidnapped or the party could be hired by Lathan himself.

### The War Rafts of Kron [X7]

The party are asked to investigate the disappearance of shipping near Minrothad and uncover the strange story of the floating city of Kron.

For more details see the published adventure. This may lead to a series of adventures uncovering the secrets of the floating city.

### Drums on Fire Mountain [X8]

The party are sent to investigate the mystery of ships vanishing off the south coast of Thyatis. They uncover an island of kara-kara just off the mainland led by a mysterious man. For more details see the published adventure.

### **Return of the Pig**

The Thyatian Government grants permission for a new settlement to be established on East Key but, within a few days of arriving, the new villagers are plagued by thefts, strange goings on, and mysterious disappearances. The party are dispatched to help (or may even be among the settlers) and find a community living in fear and on the point of abandoning their new home. As the investigation proceeds, evidence starts to point to the return of Lord Ingram, the devil-swine who ruled the island centuries before. Where is he now, and how could he still be alive after four hundred years? Could this be related to the recent rise in lycathropy across the region? Or is there another explanation lying in the waters off East Key where the Twaelar merrow skulk in their hidden fortress?

### **Treasure of Crocodile Island [NM2]**

The party are hired by Tormyl, an Ierendian merchant, so retrieve the treasure referred to in a map he owns. The island where the treasure is located is a small speck in the southern Sea of Dread and will be difficult to reach. After a long journey the party will have to get onto the island, negotiate with the locals and find the treasure on the sunken vessel. If they get off the island with their lives they will be attacked in Ierendi shortly after returning the treasure to Tormyl. Investigations will lead eventually lead them to Zarachton and a showdown with the Sons of the Serpent. This may open the way to further adventures in Davania combating the secret society of entropy worshippers.

### **Raiders of the Temple of Doom**

The party are hired by Brother Octave to locate the rumoured Lost Temple of Araknee, which is said to be found somewhere in the southern Sea of Dread. Sailing south, the adventurers have to contend with pirates and storms, before finding Spider Isle and making a safe landing. Given its remote location, the unreliability of maps of the region, and the magical ward that prevents the island from being seen, it will take several attempts to find and will probably require magical assistance. Once on the island, the party could make an attempt to map its location and

return to Brother Octave. If successful, his order may even want to start a small chapter on the island and will require the party to clear the many monsters that currently inhabit it.

Of course, the party may discover the secret entrance to the Aranea ruins. If they do, the maze-like city below will prove to be an astonishing mix of deadly creatures and fantastic treasures. Should they find the Silken Map and be foolish enough to let others find out about its existence, there would likely be many attempts to buy or steal it in the coming months.

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### **Islands of Dread**

This campaign is based in the Thanegioth Archipelago. It starts by getting the party to the Isle of Dread, after which they are able to explore at their leisure. There are suggested adventures for each major island, usable when the party arrive there.

#### **The Isle of Dread [X1]**

The party are sent to investigate the rumours of a large island in the southern Sea of Dread. Getting there requires a dangerous journey south. Once they locate the island, one apparently of many, they find several local villages, apparently long cut off from the wider world. Moving inland they explore the interior of the island and find many strange and frightening creatures. As they move northward, they find creatures not seen on the outer world for millions of years and uncover the danger of the kopru. For more details see the published adventure.

On finishing this adventure the party may return to the mainland. However, they may choose to explore more of the Isle or the rest of the archipelago to uncover more of its secrets. Another approach may be to have them shipwrecked on the Isle of Dread when they arrive. Their access to Roa canoes will allow them to travel to other islands but they will not be able to leave the region until they find a seaworthy ship.

#### **The Fires of Love**

On the island of Emoren the party can investigate rumours of the goddess who inhabits the island's interior. Making their way there will be difficult but, with persistence, they will find the long lost

city of Olmoren. The discovery of a thriving city hidden deep in the Sea of Dread should be a source of amazement to the party. Equally, their arrival is an event not seen in generations by the city's inhabitants. Eventually they will be brought to Asha, the God-Queen. She will declare them wards of the city and insist that they stay and talk to her of the outside world. Initially charming, it will become clear that she is deeply unstable and, when the party tries to leave, she will have them imprisoned. She will also become fascinated by the member of the party with the highest charisma and will insist they stay by her side at all times. The remainder of the party must now escape their bonds, rescue their compatriot and escape the hidden valley.

#### **Darkness Falls**

Investigating the island of Arachne, the party encounter the hordes of spiders and other dangers that infest its forests. Unless the party is very high level, this adventure is likely to be a wild escape through the jungles pursued by all manner of horrible things.

#### **Taken at the Flood**

One night, a group of Roa-Utsi attack the village of Kirikura and kidnap many of the local people. The remaining villagers ask the party for help in getting their loved ones back. The party must sail to Utsiwano, overpower the Utsi and rescue the villagers. They may even uncover the temple hidden on the island and fabulous treasure therein.

#### **Torrents of Dread [Dungeon Magazine #114]**

During a visit to the village of Mora on the Isle of Dread the party find that their matriarch is dead and undead horrors stalk the village. Tilorak, the local Zombie Master, has finally taken over and has unleashed his hideous undead experiments on the island. The party must secure the village and pursue Tilorak to his undersea lair. For more details see the published adventure.

#### **The Hissing Pit**

The party are attacked by hideous deformed troglodytes and are taken prisoner. After a terrible ordeal they find themselves on the island of Bararna, where they are to be sacrificed to the

troglydites' evil God. Low level parties should be satisfied with escaping with their skins intact. Parties of higher levels may want to investigate the pit and perhaps combat the evil therein.

### **This Side of Paradise**

Investigating the isle of Therian, the party find it utterly uninhabited. According to the Roa of the nearby islands the island is the source of a plague and any who go there die. If they choose to stay they will have their belongings stolen and find themselves attacked by wild animals. If even this does not deter them, lycanthropes will attack their camp with the intention of killing or converting them. Whatever the outcome, the players will uncover the lycanthrope civilisation on Therian and the adventure then hinges on what they choose to do about their discoveries. This can be played as a straight defeat-the-monsters adventure or as something more thoughtful where the prejudices against lycanthropes can be called into question. Should the Therian population be allowed simply to get on with their lives? Can the party persuade them to let them go? Their leader Coram is fearsome and dangerous but not all of the lycanthropes agree with his methods. With work the party could bring the dissenters to their side. The party may even uncover Coram's plans for the mainland which would lead to further adventures rooting out the lycanthrope threat (or even aiding it).

### **City of Pirates**

Sailing between islands, the party is attacked by a pirate ship. They defeat the pirates but not before a valuable magical item is stolen (most parties will have a few and the DM can always give them one shortly before if necessary). Upon following the retreating ship the party find themselves on the grimy streets of Scuttlecove, possibly the most appalling city in Mystara. Investigations in Scuttlecove find that the pirates want to use the item to take on the might of the Crimson Fleet. Getting it back from the pirates is complicated by the Dealers' Consortium (who want to take the item and sell it), the Seventh Coil (who are trying to steal the item to use) and Tyralandi Scrimm (who is just trying to cause trouble).

### **Island of the Storm Giant [AC10]**

The party travel to Phema after Roa canoes and larger ships begin mysteriously sinking near the island. Investigations point to the Storm Giant who lives there but perhaps there is more to this than meets the eye. For more details see the published adventure.

### **The Ranting Sorcerer**

The party are suddenly attacked by a mysterious sorcerer who teleports to their location, announces that he is the rightful lord of the area and unleashes a series of horrors. If they survive, they can follow rumours and stories to the island of Teki-Lo-Kia where they find the tower of Ruhaladero the Pitiless (or Loopy). They must now find a way to deal with an insane and very powerful magician. A frontal attack may work if they are powerful enough but more subtle approaches are more likely to be successful. Ruhaladero could be convinced that he doesn't need to attack the other islands, though his own twisted logic would need to be used against him. Maybe he could be persuaded to attack Jaibul, so leaving the islands forever or the local Kara-kara could even be asked for help

### **The Tides of Time**

One day a strange magical wave passes over the party, briefly turning the sky dark and the sea silver before fading. Searching for the source leads the party to Teki-Moa-Ha. Initially suspecting the local Kara-kara the party investigate Malo, city of the Kara-kara and home to their massive king. Through diplomacy or guile they find that the Kara-kara are not the source of the magic and that they need to enter the forests of the fey-folk and find their legendary settlement, Menehune. During this time the magical waves occur every few days, getting closer together. At Menehune, the party find the faerie in the midst of their final ritual intended to move the Archipelago into another plane of existence using a strange magical artifact. The plan succeeds and the party find themselves in another world. Ka's spell on the Isle of Dread has made the move unstable but the party will need to reverse the spell if they ever want to see home again. They will need to steal the

artefact and travel back to the plateau on the Isle of Dread, where Ka's spell was first cast. Once there, they can reverse the magic and return to Mystara, but will they arrive back when they left or will the tides of time turn against them? This adventure provides a nice way to take characters to other planes or times for more adventures.

### **Prisoners of the Deep**

The party uncovers evidence of the local merman civilisation and is taken captive by the war mages of Twaelar. Imprisoned in Graeal, prison city of the merrow, the party have to escape and make their way to freedom. Along the way, they may meet the Shark-kin resistance or elves willing to help, but perhaps they will fall foul of the Devilfish or the sinister Stashai, secret police of the Empire.

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### **The Savage Tide**

This campaign was originally an Adventure Path published in Dungeon Magazine issues #139-150. It details twelve adventures taking characters from a jungle-based city to the Isle of Dread and Scuttlecove and eventually to the Abyss, an entropic elemental plane. It is a big campaign played out over a vast backdrop. It is also very plainly set in the world of Greyhawk and therefore explicitly contradicts Mystara canon. However, it is also clearly based on the original X1 module so is not enormously difficult to convert it for use in Mystara.

This module has been designed to link with the campaign and has suggested it take place in AC1019, which allows for the changes of setting that make conversion to Mystara easiest. However, there is no requirement for it to take place then.

Only the middle third of the campaign is actually set on the islands and this can be used in isolation if required. Equally the first third works very well if set on northern Davania.

There are several good suggestions of how to convert the campaign on the internet. For more information see the published module.

# **The Sea of Dread**

**An Unofficial Game Accessory**

**“No place like the Sea o’ Dread. Rich pickins for the brave and death for the foolish. If ye think the shore is full o’ rogues, it just gets worse further on in”**

**This unofficial Gazetteer further expands the world of Mystara, detailing the rich cultures of the Sea of Dread, home to pirates, savages and monsters. Far from being a lifeless ocean, the Sea of Dread harbours civilisations, settlements and secrets – all waiting for a brave adventurer to discover them.**

**“The Sea of Dread” describes the history, society, and personalities of the many islands found throughout the region, including the mysterious Thanegioth Archipelago. It also includes a detailed description of the Isle of Dread and reveals the secrets of the paranoid and isolated Empire of Twaelar.**

**The Sea of Dread is not for the faint-hearted. Death waits for the unprepared, but there is glory for those willing to seek it.**