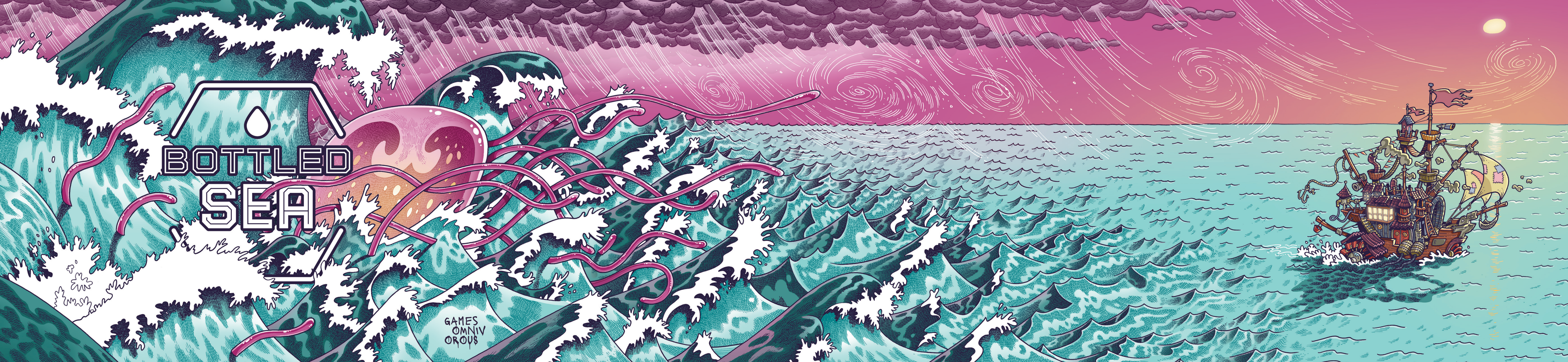




BOTTLED SEA

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This is a minimalist, system-agnostic RPG setting. It may be played as a self-contained hexcrawl or plugged into an existing campaign setting. *The Bottled Sea* is an alternate dimension, where ships and sailors from across history are sucked inadvertently into, through strange wormholes and foul circulations. Locked in a timeless state, the Sea is a flooded realm of buoyant wastes, coral-reefs of multiversal debris, floating wrecks, and makeshift technology, littered with sunken vestiges of a world that was or could yet be. Four factions with competing agendas vie for control over the Harborage, a suspended pocket of rubble and ruin in the very centre of the endless waters.

1. Set aside Hex A and Hex B – these only appear under specific circumstances.
2. Place all other hexes in the cloth bag.
3. Remove a single hex at random and place it on the table. This is where the characters will begin their adventure.
- 4a. If the hex is numbered, read the corresponding description from the central panel. Improvise as you see fit. Each numbered hex displays two sites for exploration.
- 4b. If the hex is unnumbered, you may use the *Encounters* or *Weather* tables to generate adversity. Or simply move on to a new hex.
5. Ask the party which direction they wish to travel in. Each hex takes two days to navigate (fast vessels take only a day, slow ones take three). Cut water and rations accordingly.
6. Place another hex on the map where the players are going, explore as listed in 4a and 4b respectively.

In a certain part of the Sea – any sea of your campaign world – ships disappear under inexplicable circumstances. Victims vanish, as if they never were. Rumours have it that they are flushed into an unknown dimension, swallowed in the belly of a transdimensional beast. However it occurs, once there, they find themselves trapped. And there are only two ways out: either plunge yourself down the Mythical Whirlpool or find the fabled Solid Ground.

- Don't worry too much about preparation. Reading the descriptions and improvising will often be fun enough on its own. Alternatively, you can always detail and expand on sites that interest you in advance.
- Actions have consequences and characters should pay for poor planning, ill luck, and the uncaring tides of an endless ocean.
- Roll *Encounters* and *Weather* whenever it seems fitting, especially if the game comes to a stall. Adversity will lead to action.
- If the party is not interested in a hex, mark rations and move forward. It's a big ocean.
- If you don't like a result, change it. The tables here exist to make your stories stronger, they work for you. You don't work for them.

Concept & Writing: **Adriana Oliveira & Andre Nova**
 Artwork & Cartography: **Kevin Cannon** // Design: **lina&nando** // Editing: **Brian Yaksha**
 Inspiration: *Waterworld, The Drowned World, New Weird, A Canticle for Leibowitz.*
 Music: *Los Piranás, Acid Mothers Temple, Whale Songs.*
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1. Solid Ground materialises once every 100 years.
2. Though there is a night and day, time does not pass in the Bottled Sea.
3. Things from Before and What Comes Next fall from the sky, sent by Gods.
4. Eating an egg of the Great Cephalopod will reveal the route to Solid Ground.
5. The World will end when the last bonsai dies.
6. Find the Mythical Whirlpool and you can leave the Sea.
7. Machinery defying space and time are drowned deep beneath the Sea.
8. A floating hexahedron holds the Great Wealth of a World That Was in its vault.
9. To find Solid Ground, one must first piece together the Map.
10. Only the fabled monks at the Church of Buoyancy will be able to decipher the Map.

2. Conifer full of combative crabs. They attack!
3. Container: (1) food-cans, (2) seed packets, (3) pharmaceuticals, (4) fertile soil.
4. Paper: (1) bottled message, (2) sheet music, (3) love letters, (4) Sudoku puzzles.
5. Junk: (1) old batteries, (2) firecrackers, (3) carved prostheses, (4) antique ceramics.
6. Art: (1) Cubist masterpiece, (2) marble effigy, (3) Rocco bust, (4) the Mona Lisa.
7. Navigation: (1) barometer, (2) storm-glass, (3) astrolabe, (4) compass.
8. Barrels: (1) gold doubloons, (2) tobacco, (3) spices, (4) cocoa.
9. World Map: (1) antiquated, (2) futuristic, (3) odd timeline, (4) PC's world.
10. Plants: (1) tomato, (2) goji-berry, (3) kumquat, (4) strawberry.
11. Plastics: (1) bags, (2) bottles, (3) tupperware, (4) clothes hangers.
12. Ancient Viking longsword, etched with runic enchantments.
13. V-shaped electric guitar and Fender valve amplifier.
14. Gold-foil Phoenician tablet depicting a Myth, possibly cursed.
15. Automated circular vacuum cleaner (needs batteries.)
16. Atmospheric diving suit made of metal with a glass helmet.
17. Ornithopter, wooden flying machine operated by cranks and pulleys (needs repairs.)
18. Oil motor and damaged thruster (only the Collectors can use it properly; needs oil.)
19. Alternator that yields electricity (10% chance to break on each use.)
20. Fully functional jet-ski with enough fuel for 164 days.

BEST PRACTICES

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- Roll *Encounters* and *Weather* whenever it seems fitting, especially if the game comes to a stall. Adversity will lead to action.
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- The Idol. A gigantic statue. It touched, it speaks in a booming voice. "I am always in front of you, yet I am never here. What am I?" If **Future** is answered, the Rectangle begins to hum with energy.

- The Rectangle. A great portal threshold, timeless and still. If crossed while energized, the characters are returned to their world of origin, 320y years passed their current time. In this world, Solid Ground vanishes, turning into a map, torn in half by unseen hands, placed inside two bottles, and sent floating off into the endless sea.

Hex A will only appear in play once the party unearths the two halves of the map to Solid Ground, and the monks at the Church of Buoyancy (Hex 8) decode them. Once this occurs, place this hex on the map face-down in the furthest possible space. Once the players go there, turn it face-up.



Collectors: (1) en route to The Machine, (2) returning to The Harborage.

Ichthys: (1) deep-diving for *Salvage*, (2) fleeing another *Encounter*.

Deserting Shepherds: carrying (1) stolen sheep, (2) either half of the Map.

2d4 **Dolphin-Riders** (low-level, bearded marauders riding dolphin-chariots.)

Wild Dolphins (low-level, sought after by the Dolphin-Riders to tame.)

1d4 **Castaways:** from (1) the future, (2) the past, (3) the PCs era, (4) another dimension.

Merchant skiff: selling (1) foods, (2) rain water, (3) sunscreen, (4) *Myths*.

Ghost Watercraft: containing (1) 2d4 animals, (2) books, (3) *container*, (4) *junk*.

Carpenterfish School (low-level, attempts to eat wooden watercrafts.)

Mugger Crabs (low-level, invade watercrafts to eat and steal rations.)

Archerfish School (low-level, spits jet of water into boats until given rations.)

Bioluminescent Hydrozoa (mid-level, hypnotises prey; save or dive into the sea.)

2d4 **Flying Anglerfish** (mid-level, leaps out of the sea & flesh-eating bites.)

1d4 **Double-Tusked Narwhals** (mid-level, tusks ground out magic.)

Behemoth Frilled Shark (mid-level, serpentine moves & mangling bites.)

Mother Sea Cucumber (mid-level, wally like; spouts out toxic jets of acid.)

Hagfish Coven swarm (high-level, snotty school; slimy bloodsucking attacks.)

Floating Boxjelly (high-level, hovers above water; huge burning appendages.)

Himic-Islet (high-level, attempts to swallow landing parties whole.)

The Great Twenty-Tentacled Cephalopod (nearly unkillable, good luck!)

Storm Tempest: if carrying metal, character is struck by 1d3 lightning bolts.

Waterspout: character is tossed into the air, with a 20% chance of serious injury.

Horrid Winds: personal water evaporates and rations dry.

Heavy Squalls: 1d6 pieces of equipment go overboard.

Blazing Sun: character takes one irrational action due to heat exhaustion.

Doldrums: party cannot move for 1d3 days. No fish, no breeze (cut rations.)

Strange Tides: party is thrown 1d3 hexes in the direction they came from.

Tsunami: an adjacent numbered hex sinks, replace it with unnumbered hex.

Colossal Cyclone: shuffle and re-arrange all hexes in play.

When facing hazards 1-5, each character must roll an appropriate save or ability check. Those who fail must endure the consequences. When facing hazards 6-10, the effects apply automatically.

merging on the shores of their original world – or Hex 2 of the *Undying Sands*. Their tintercrafts will be wrecked, and they will be injured by the journey.

Otherwise, the Whirlpool vanishes after 1d6 days. Remove the hex from play afterwards, (re)placing it only if rolled again under *Weather*.

× B appears in play when a 10 is rolled on *Weather*. Place the hex on the map, adjacent to the current hex being explored. If no such location is available, remove a random adjacent hex from play and replace it with the Mythical Whirlpool.



The **Abandoned Arboretum**, now the nest of the Beelzebub (high-level, giant tickle tongue.) Choose or roll endemic flora: (1) acid-apple trees, (2) marching coconut palms, (3) explosive kiwi-melons, (4) giraffe-sized floral man-eaters. Use *The Plantary* for additional inspiration.

Pink Miasmic Fog swirls above the water. It drones in low tones. Upon investigation, the fog is a scintillating mass of pink and green, two-headed osquitos. They whisper a *Myth*.

The **Alabaster Fingers**. Three colossal rocks jutting from the ocean, whitewashed with shellbliss guano. A sacred site, a *Myth* is carved here in the form of a pictogram. The eggs of the feisty birds are a rare delicacy, but climbing is dangerous.

Raft of the **Clairvoyant Hover**. An oracle wearing eight-lensed cubist spectacles sells *Myths* in exchange for mad honey. Will also offer the precise whereabouts of particular location (never Hex A or B), if offered a bonsai - place that location's sex on the map wherever you see fit.

Ceberg Flow, a labyrinth of potable glacial water. A treasured resource, scarce and prized in the Bottled Sea. A colony of sea lions and seals dwell within, likely worth something on The Harborage. Roll *Weather* on approach.

Two **Wrecked Watercraft**, entrenched in the ice. In need of repairs. Upon inspection, they have been sealed from within. If entered, roll *Encounter*. One craft as a mini-cube hidden within. The other has *Salvage*, and the right half of the mangled map to Solid Ground.

Gifted Dealers. A market of rope-joined watercrafts. Roll or choose what's for sale: (1) *Salvage*, highly priced, (2) ambergris & whale oil, (3) scrimshaw, (4) diving gear, (5) fake pants, (6) a myth, told by an ancient mariner.

The Bloat of a Leviathan, its carcass being dismantled by dealers. Hammerhead marks (mid-level, ripping bites) swim in circles. *Salvage* and a mini-cube can be used in the Leviathan's guts, but there is a 1-in-6 chance each round of the corpse exploding in a rain of rot.

The Machine. A double-craned contraption said to birth islands from the seabed and. It has been mathematically calculated that the process will take another 132 years to be completed. Controlled by the Collectors, who occasionally sell the sand for profit.

The Crab-Jumble. A roaming mountain of red crabs, feeding on microscopic life, kelp fragments, and anything else they can get. In-6 chance of finding *plavage* (up to 3 pieces), but each search is greeted with 3d20 crab pinches.

Junkmen's Float. A scrapyard of broken watercrafts run by a posse of Junkmen. They want engines and sources of energy. They trade in parts and half-damaged boats. Sell *1d3 Watercrafts and Salvage* for what is available.

Killer's Quay. A bloodsports arena. Choose your weapon: (1) boomerang, (2) speargun, (3), harpoon, (4) whalebone saw, (5) shark-tooth machete, (6) barbed fishnet. Challenge a champion to win glory. 1d10 plants, and a jar of dirt.

Drinking junk slug called **Roll-Hee**. Built from refuse of the Plastiglomerate, currently led by a gang of Dolphin-Riders looking to hire mercs to raid The Harborage. They have no *Salvage*, and will barter with one of them.

The **Plastiglomerate**, an amalgam of rocks and plastics, bottles, molten shining nets, and fossilized food cans. It towers up through the clouds. A pair of Ichthys are scouring for loot, holding *Salvage*. They are not alone. Roll-Hee is out for what else is plundering the heap.

the **Church of Buoyancy**. Inside, 16m monks tend to millennial bonsais and contemplate the possibilities of dry land. They toil day and night copying as many books, parchments and scrolls as possible and will pay handsomely for more. Only they can decipher the encoded map to Solid Ground (see Hex A.)

Emerging through the waters is the **Protruding forest**, one hundred sequoias rise just high enough above sea level to survive. They yield quality resin and are populated by colourful songbirds. Cutting the wood is highly sacrilegious.

the Hives, managed by cryptic beekeepers selling hallucinogenic mad honey, is a swarm (mid-level, hundreds of stings) will relentlessly attack anyone who harms beekeepers. If mad honey is consumed, there is a 80% chance of a bad trip, 20% chance of prophetic visions (roll a *Myth*).

Countiful Sargasso. Drifting plains of ball-shaped algae, a staple food in the Bottled Sea. Populated by tiny, tasty lobsters. Roll *Encounter* if the algae are harvested. Takes double time to cross this hex.

the **Great Bross Reef**. The only shallows in the Bottled Sea, a cluster of garbage filled by currents. Organic life has flourished despite the slop. Roll *Encounter* when ring to collect fish, rare corals, and *Salvage*.

the **Floating Slums**. A trifling junk atoll whose inhabitants subsist off a reef. Occupied by a Land-Seeker sect who worship sand and dirt.

the **Shallow**. A small, shallow bay. A mini-cube in their most secure building, and will elude all of it for soil or ceramics, which they consider sacrosanct.

the **Floating Hexahedron**, a sealed cube made of polished, reflective materials. Inside dwells a herd of livestock (cows, sheep, pigs, and chickens.) The entrance is sealed only when three mini-cubes are placed in respective sockets on its surface. **Boiling waters** surround the floating cube, caused by a huge hydrothermal vent beneath the structure. Will cook characters alive if they fall in. Roll **11** **Weather** if approached. A pair of Ichthys are attempting to find rare volcanic ions, despite the danger.

erpetil **Seahorse Breeding Post.** Can be repaired with hard labour and new power source, but is currently infested with sea ouse, radioactive glowing lichen, and is home the Unctuous Gastropod (high-level, slimy clutch.) Within the structure is *Salvage* and 4 cold-preserved broods of *Seahorse*, an exotic treasure.

A thick kelp jungle called the **Underwater Garden.** The algae extends over the sea level and the kelp is used both as food and textiles. Twin horticulturists maintain the site and sell these wares.

12

the **Lunar Octant**. A resplendent flotilla of futuristic sextants, octants, and astrolabes. o bombing scholars seek to unravel its mysteries. If used, players may draw three xes and place one on the map. They may also re-roll *Weather* once in the future. The ar Octant can only be used at night, when the stars are out.

battalion of Manta Rays encircle these waters. Travel takes double he and risks an *Encounter*. The rays will alert the party to the encounter he behaviour is observed.

13

reck of the **CYCLOPS**, a derelict tanker. Impossible to fix or operate, unless one is
ative and has ample time. Within, a group of *castaways* and a tank loaded with refined
which will make a motor or engine work, but only the Collectors will understand how
properly use, after 1d6 weeks of thorough investigation.

the **Deep Blue Hole**. A benthic sinkhole funnel into the deep abyss,
rounded by a flooded atoll. The alleged lair of the Great Twenty-Tentacled
palapod, Master of the Bottled Sea.

14

Phantom Galleon, infested by mutated mice whose bites cause disease. The ship is equipped with cannons, *Salvage* within its hull, and 2d6 pigs locked within the hold. In the captain's quarters, the right half of the encoded map to Solid Ground.

THE BEACON a lighthouse on a miserable rock. Run by a telekinetic eccentric known as the Keeper (high-level, mutant wizard). Uses the Light to attract crews and steal their stuff.

15

The Light. If broken, the Keeper goes berserk. Also, it causes a *Watercraft* to crash here tonight.

The diagram shows a stylized illustration of a wizard's tower. A large green line starts from the top right and branches into three lines pointing to different parts of the tower: the top spire, a window, and the base. A blue line starts from the bottom right and points to the base. The text on the left is connected to the tower by a large, faint, light-blue 'X' shape.

Wizard spellbook: (1) telekinesis, (2) mental prison, (3) illusion, (4) light, (5) mirror image, (6) control jellyfish.

Electric ray

Plans for a huge robotic floater to harvest salvage from the Sea (stolen from the Collectors).

equipped with a light source

wired to generators powering the Light

a large battery pack



Cabinet of Curiosities:
mammoth skeleton, two
narwhal tusks, coral display
in cupboard, fossilized eggs
(label "The Great Cephalopod"),
carbonized tree, and
inflatable boat.

Reinforced steel door.
The Keeper has the key.
Id3 *Salvage* within.

a fortune).

Lush plants circling a mermaid statue.

Ringing the doorbell makes it sing. Those who hear it suffer a penalty vs. spells for 1d6 days.

Secret passage

Device labelled

Steep and slippery rock; speckled axolotls (mid-level, poisonous tongues) prey on climbers.	who were attracted by the Light. They hold one half of the Map (if the GM wants).	Actually, a giant blender to dispose of corpses, turning them into fertilizers. Smells like noxious chum.
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WHAT IS THIS?

1. It hasn't rained in months. Potable water is at a premium. People are drinking salt water.
2. The Great Cephalopod shall arrive in 1d6 hours, heralded by a storm. It wreaks havoc.
3. Roll *Weather*. The weather remains this way around the Harborage for a week.
4. Dolphin-Riders from Atoll-Key (Hex 7) arrive to raid the Harborage. They want *Salvage*.
5. A raft of *castaways* arrives. They bear half of the map to Solid Ground, but need aid.
6. A team of Ichthys return to the Harborage landing with rare *Salvage* (roll 1d10-10).
7. The High-Rainmaker is missing! The faithful accuse other factions and kindle a revolt.
8. 2d6 sheep are found poisoned. The Shepherds begin a witch hunt.

Collectors: a masonic lodge of inventors and innovators. Junk artificers, rumoured to assemble automatons from salvaged art. Obsessed with creating an artificial island.

Ichthys: amphibious mutants, experts acquisitionists and deep-divers. Capable of retrieving salvage from the seabed. Dream of a greater unity between sea and surface.

Shepherds: cult that owns and worships Sheep for their wool and sweet milk. Self-impose a disciplined ascetic lifestyle. Wish to herd their flock out of the Bottled Sea.

Rainmakers: priests of the rains. In truth, liars who use a secret 'tempest prognosticator' (barometer with bell-ringing leeches) to forecast the weather and control the populace.

Ryes-Crux, the Master-Collector	Meh-Meh, the Great Shepherd
1. Steal bezoar stones from the Shepherds.	1. Steal Ryes-Crux's prized mini-pig.
2. Salvage working machinery from the sea.	2. Design a sacred automated wool shear.
3. Devise and construct a hydroplane.	3. Retrieve livestock from the Seas.
4. Expose the Rainmaker's secret.	4. Steal Id4 Great Cephalopod eggs.
5. Freight tools to the Machine (Hex 5.)	5. Dismantle the sea lion milk farm.
6. Rebuild the desalination unit.	6. Copy the full map to Solid Ground.

1. Bring castaways to the Harborage.
2. Protect the seals in the Icebergs (Hex 3.)
3. Appeal to the Great Cephalopod.
4. Confront the Dolphin-Riders.
5. Restore the Seahorse Post (Hex 12.)
6. Liberate the sea lions and medusas.
1. Sabotage the desalination unit.
2. Seize control of the Temple.
3. Destroy Collector's barometer schematic.
4. Receive a vase of mad honey (Hex 9.)
5. Rig the wishing window to their favour.
6. Steal storm-glass from the Museum.

- **Food:** (1) fish-paste cakes, (2) dried algae chips, (3) squid & kelp gumbo, (4) salted sashimi, (5) gull beak soup, (6) boiled carp claws.
- **Weapons:** (1) stevedore's hookblud, (2) deck cutlasses, (3) spearguns & harpoons, (4) salvaged flintlocks, (5) narwhal-tusk fencing blades, (6) volcanic-stone daggers.
- **Underworld:** (1) fermented blud grenades, (2) algae amassers, (3) wetsuits, (4) air-recyclers, (5) chumming bait, (6) shark fins & drowned masks.
- **Treasures & Luxuries:** (1) dirt & sand, (2) paper & books, (3) plants in vases, (4) seal furs, (5) live ducklings, (6) volcanic-stone surgical tools.

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. The Cephalopod-Killer | 9. The Sheep Pen | 17. Harborage Landing | 25. The Rainmaker's Cistern |
| 2. <u>The Aquaponic Tanks</u> | 10. The Drifting Scrap | 18. The Cultch Casino | 26. Oyster Ranch |
| 3. Derelict Desalinization Unit | 11. The Museum of Discarded Curiosity | 19. Blood Polo Sharkdrome | 27. Hydroponic AgriTowers |
| 4. Sea Lion Milk Farm | 12. Seaweed Grog Brewery | 20. Seabed Sand Trawler | 28. Crowswatch Tower |
| 5. The Mills | 13. The Grand Gate | 21. The Collector's Lodge | 29. Wishing Window |
| 6. Cask of the Medusae | 14. Compost Sludgepools | 22. Marine-Mycologist Clinic | 30. Sea Cucumber Spa |
| 7. The Temple | 15. Salvage Storehouses | 23. Algae Scraper Pond | 31. Crab Cages |
| 8. Islet of the Last Coconut Tree | 16. Hawkers Towpaths | 24. Pigeon Post | 32. Float-Inn |