

X1.5**WILDERNESS MODULE**

BASIC & EXPERT



Dungeon Module X1.5 Dead Men Tell New Tales

By Thom Wilson and Mike Badolato

The nobles of New Tradertown are dismayed by the news of a missing courtesan, the Lady Anna d'Lannatta. Orgo d'Lannatta, her husband, swears she was abducted by the smooth-talking swashbuckler, Cortezzo Fadamazzi. All ports and roads leading in or out of New Tradertown are closed until the kidnap victim is found. Hildric Vendor, a powerful guildmaster, has himself offered a bounty of 5,000 gold coins for her return and double if the offending privateer is brought to justice. Are your characters willing to accept a bounty that will surely lead them into the dangerous and corrupt world of pirates and buccaneers?

2019, by ThrowiGames LLC and North Texas RPG Con.

North Texas RPGCon

June 6-9, 2019

Dallas, TX

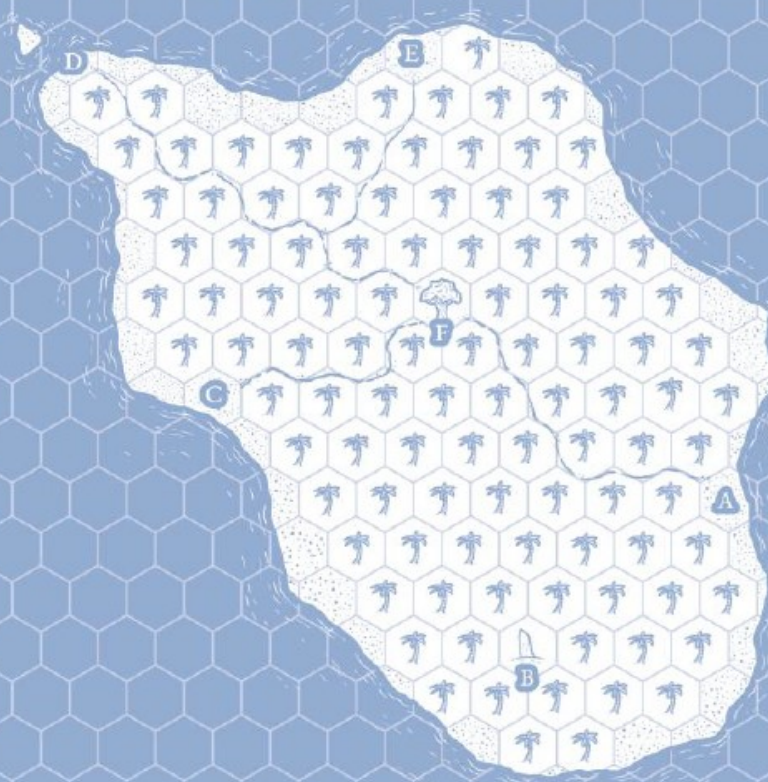


Special
Expansion
Adventure

NTX2019

Cursed Tree Isle

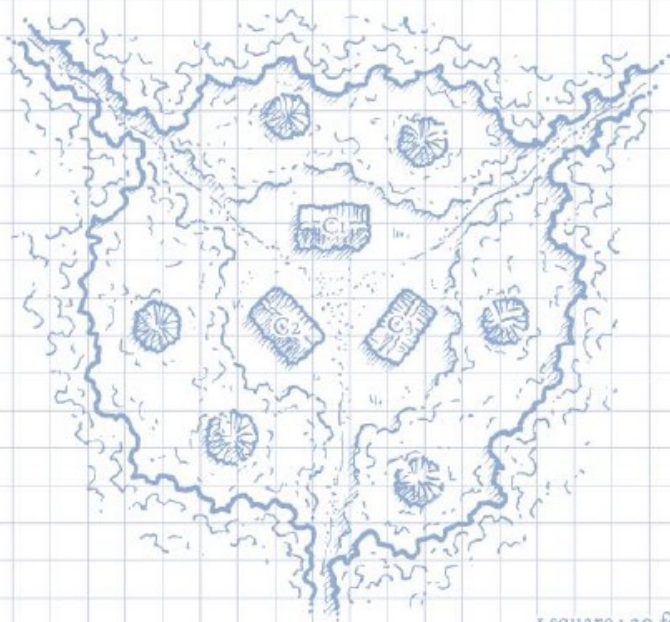
1 hex : 200 feet



North

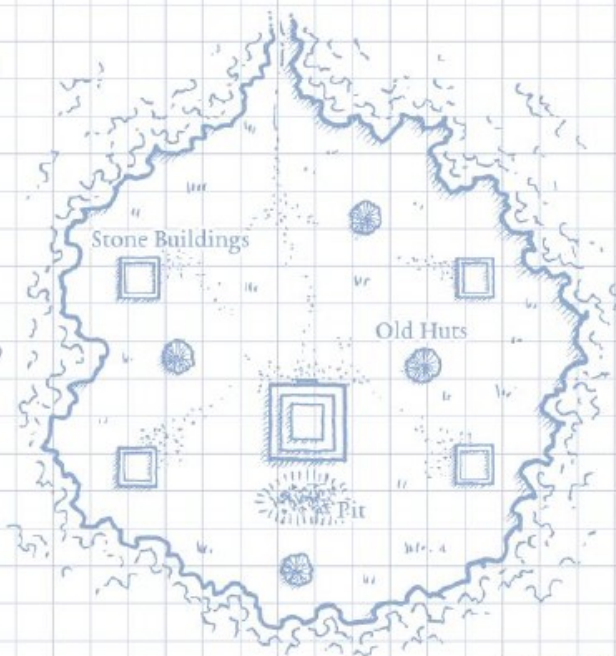


Forbidden Isle (C) Village



1 square : 20 feet

Forbidden Isle (D) Deserted Temple



1 square : 20 feet

Forbidden Isle

1 hex : 200 feet

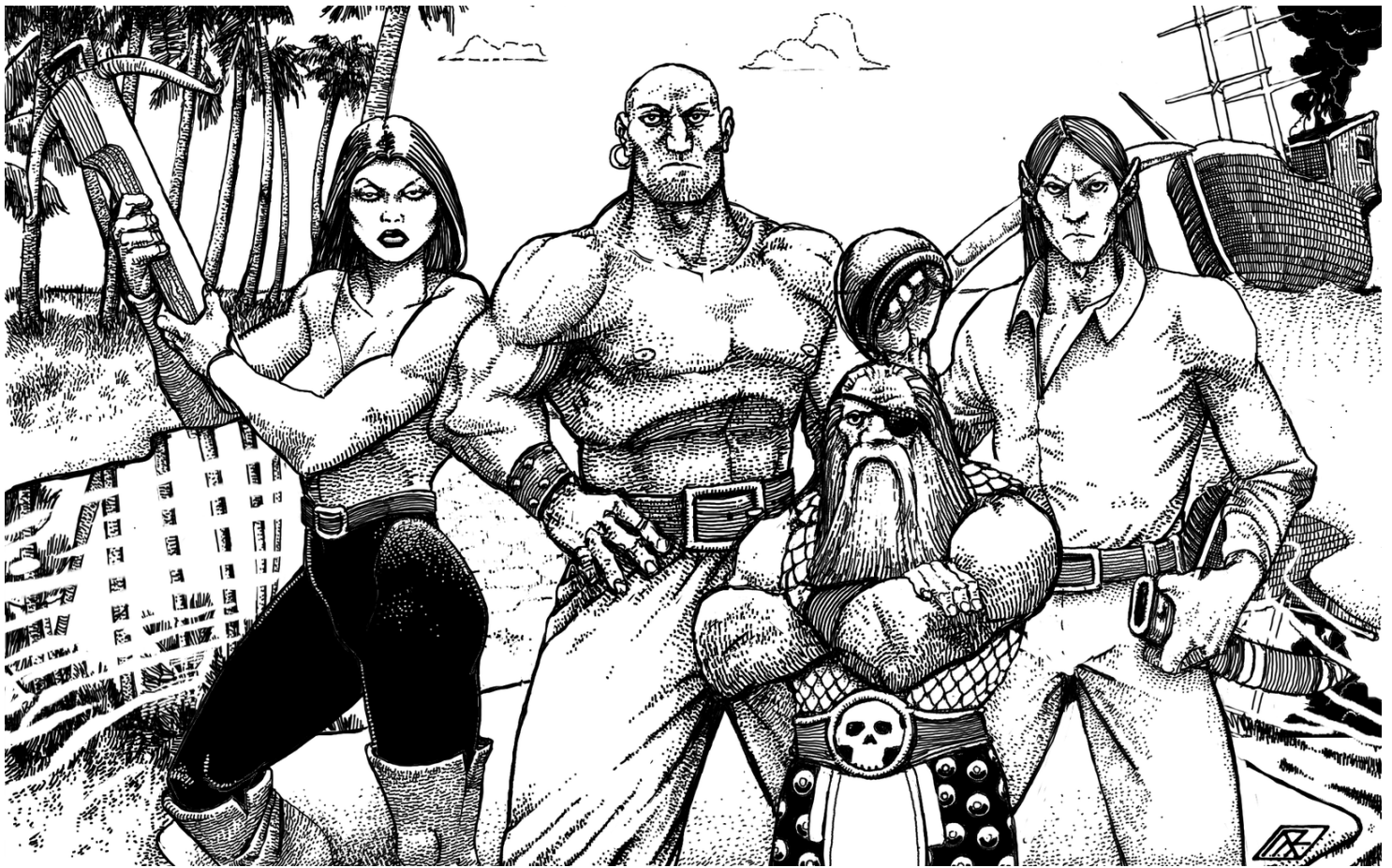
North



- Hill
- Mountain
- Beach
- Coastline
- Temple
- Lake
- Grass
- Marsh
- Volcano
- Jungle
- River
- Stones
- Trail
- Village
- Crypt



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Dungeons & Dragons

Dungeon Module #X1.5

Dead Men Tell New Tales

Introduction: When I think of great adventures produced in the early eighties, I immediately think of that famous island excursion in the Sea of Dread. You know the one, that tropical island of mystery south of the great continent, detailed in numerous products that followed. In addition to that dangerous isle, there are a number of uncharted islands nearby, just beckoning to adventurers!

Dead Men Tell New Tales takes place in the Sea of Dread, starting within one of the Sea Guild island cities before plunging brave adventurers into the high seas and to two nearby islands. There are plenty of unexplored and unnamed land masses in the Sea of Dread to select for this adventure.

Notes for the Dungeon Master: Although this adventure assumes the Game Master is using the B/X game system and the great continent as their world, *Dead Men Tell New Tales* can be adapted to any system and fantasy setting. However, if the GM is playing the book as written to fit within the same sea region as that "dreadful island", they should prepare by reviewing adventures and supplements within that region, especially *GAZ9, The Minrothad Guilds* by TSR. This adventure starts on the western side of Trader's Isle in the expanding city of Tradertown.

If GMs want to add this adventure to the end of that other, famous island adventure, they can easily do so. Characters will be able to spot the fires aboard the *Sea Fancy* from the nearby island and may wish to investigate. If so, skip the first part of this adventure, starting characters at Chapter Two: The Sea of Dread.

Depending on player experience and luck, this adventure should provide 4-8 hours of gameplay, making it suitable for a single night or one-off adventure.

Background: Orgo d'Lannatta, a ruthless member of Guild Corser, has recently learned of his wife's adulterous relationship with an infamous privateer and court philanderer, Cortezzo Fadamazzi. Before he could act, the swashbuckler and his wife escaped, disappearing into the night. Orgo claims his wife was kidnapped, but the truth is she left willingly.

The Lady d'Lannatta has been ignored and mistreated by her scheming husband. With his attentions fully focused on political intrigue and court business, he has driven his wife into the arms of another man. To avoid public scandal and vicious rumors, the nobleman has declared his wife taken and has pointed the finger at the young swashbuckler, Cortezzo. With the support of the local guildman, Hildric Vendor, Orgo has succeeded in closing all roads and ports in and out of the Tradertown. No business or trade will transpire until his wife is found.

Unfortunately for the poor citizens of Tradertown, the Lady and her lover have already left the city, arranging passage on the infamous pirate ship, the *Sea Fancy*. Captained by the notorious Victollo Strongjaw, the *Sea Fancy* slipped out into the sea before daybreak after a port guard was bribed. Captain Strongjaw has taken the lovers and his ship to their pirate lair to the south.

City guards have searched the city for two days without finding a trace of the lovers. Orgo d'Lannatta has publicly announced the bounty, willing to reward hunters 5,000 pieces of gold to whomever finds and returns his wife. Another 5,000 coins are offered for the kidnapper, dead or alive. The Guild laws of Sea strictly prohibit local guild members from accepting bounties, leaving the job and subsequent rewards to outsiders.

The adventure begins in Tradertown after characters have accepted the bounty mission. They will only be given the descriptions of Anna and Cortezzo and be told that the swashbuckler has known ties to pirates and privateers.

Rumors: Characters may learn additional information leading to the Lady's whereabouts by questioning courtesans and port workers. Rumor tables are listed for both societal castes. Roll a 1d10 once every four hours of questioning to determine if any new information may be learned. Entries marked with an "F" represent false rumors.

Courtesan Rumors

1. "The Lady rarely left her residence in Old Tradertown."
2. "The Lady Anna was lonely and missed her old life in court. After marrying Orgo, she rarely visited us in the gardens and museums."
- 3.F "I heard a group of pirates broke into her home while Orgo was away on business, and took her away!"
4. "I believe someone saw that young courtesan kiss the Lady's hand for a second longer than was appropriate. They said she only smiled at the blunder."
- 5.F "Orgo dotes on his young wife, lavishing her with exotic gifts and rare spices regularly."
6. "My friend said that she saw a large bruise on the Lady's arm recently."
7. "Lady Anna was once full of life and looked forward to marrying a nobleman. She seemed to lose some of that excitement once she was wed."
- 8.F "I heard the Lady would often leave her home in the middle of the night to ride aboard pirate vessels! How inappropriate for a young noblewoman!"
- 9.F "Given her lonely disposition, I heard she left Orgo and gave herself to the Temple Sea."
10. "My servant's sister, a maid at the d'Lannatta home, said she saw Orgo strike the young lady in the face just before he angrily left their home. Lady Anna didn't leave her bedchambers for a week."

Port Rumors

- 1.F "Who cares for this court nonsense? The old bastard likely just killed her. Why? 'Cause he could."
2. "All of Strongjaw's sailors were at the *Dirty Mermaid* just a few days ago. All but a few are now gone. Ain't that strange? A pirate captain leaving some of his faithful men behind?"
- 3.F "All this business of shutting down the harbor for some lovers quarrel, it's hurting my business. I think she's just hiding out somewhere to teach her husband a lesson."
4. "She probably just left him. I heard he was a no-good, backstabbin' liar. And a cheat. That's for certain."
5. "They say that handsome Cortezzo was good friends of Captain Strongjaw, the scourge of the Sea of Dread. Some say Cortezzo was once his first mate."
- 6.F "They gotta be in Tradertown. Them roads and port gates are locked up good. There's no getting past them guards, not with Orgo running things up on the hill."
7. "Good for her. That Orgo d'Lannatta is mixed up with Guild Corser who they say plots to kill Guildmaster Oran Meditor. She probably just ran away with that good-lookin' swashbuckler."
8. "Just as the harbor alarm bells tolled, my son saw a sleek ship sliding between the gates. He said it was a pirate vessel for sure."
- 9.F "I saw Lady Anna disguised as a low-caste maid, leaving the city on the East Road. I could tell it was her, 'cause the girl was too pretty to be a lowborn."
10. "I saw Cortezzo a week earlier, selling off some of his fancy possessions down at the port trade shop. When I hailed him, he looked the other way. When I got closer, he grabbed his gold and slipped out the door. Strange, even for Cortezzo."

Chapter One: Tradertown

Much of the layout and details of the city are unimportant to this adventure as the real mission takes characters into the Sea of Dread. However, as characters navigate both New and Old Tradertown, they will need to visit a few places where rumors from the tables above have led them.

Tradertown Court and Gardens

Sitting atop a great hill at the old city's center, the Tradertown Court is the primary place of governing and business for the western city. Noblemen and women are found there during the day, either sitting within the building's cold walls, pontificating and gesturing, or wandering its wondrous gardens, flirting and gossiping. No lowborn citizens are allowed at the court unless on official guild business.

At least three nights a week, the Court holds a banquet or ball for highborn citizens. These events are attended by invitation only – invitations are extended by guildmasters and their advisors exclusively.

Tradertown Trade Shop

Owned by Brugg Offenbawler, the Tradertown Trade Shop is the best place to sell goods, regardless of how their seller came by them. Brugg looks the other way and asks few questions. In exchange for his silence, sellers will receive inadequate offers, often one-tenth the item's value. However, anyone can sell their legal or illegal items without worry of judgment or arrest. Brugg can always find a buyer for what he takes in.

If asked, Brugg will not remember Cortezzo coming in and selling his personal effects. Unless threatened with actual and believable death, Brugg will not divulge any customer information (even then, he may give false testimony instead). However, if characters pay 250 gp or more for information about Cortezzo, he may hint to answers that may be found at the *Dirty Mermaid*.

East Road Guard Post

Guards at this post have been strictly warned about allowing any entry or exit through the gates. No one without a pass signed by a Guildmaster is allowed to pass through. If questioned, they will not recall seeing anyone matching the descriptions of Lady Anna or Cortezzo. They also will be adamant that no unauthorized persons have slipped through, listing only a half-dozen names of reputable merchants and noblemen that have been granted passage.

While the guards turn back citizens and visitors trying to exit, a line of waiting travelers desiring entrance into Tradertown has formed outside the gates.

The Dirty Mermaid

Situated on the far end of the wharf, the *Dirty Mermaid* appears ready to fall into the harbor water at any moment. The ramshackle, two-story building leans heavily to one side, highly dependent on a city wall to keep it from a collapse. Drunken sailors, unemployed port workers, and thugs looking for an easy mark slip in and out of the building at all hours. Much of the harbor flotsam and jetsam aggregates below the docks in front of the tavern and inn, contributing to the awful stench of the area.

Barmaid and owner Fraunna Yippsi is a hulking brute of a woman, capable of tossing a seasoned pirate or drunken mercenary out the front door of her establishment without breaking a sweat. Her foul mouth and hairy chin are legendary in Tradertown. However, her rough exterior belies her honest and good-natured heart. She rarely lies and will never betray a trusted friend.

Fraunna Yippsi, Fighter 5th level. S17 I13 W13 D14 C15 Ch7, AC 6 HP 30, carries a **club** +2 under her apron, wears leather armor.

She knows Cortezzo but has not seen him for a few weeks since he began spending more time at Court. If asked about Strongjaw or the *Sea Fancy*, she'll point to the three drunken sailors (pirates) in the corner who have not left the tavern in several days.

The pirates are extremely drunk and can be played by the GM in two different ways – either defiant in their protection of their captain or careless with information, feeling betrayed by him. The characters should be able to get key information out of the men somehow. What the adventurers will learn is that the pirates' captain had to round up his men quickly and depart Tradertown in mere minutes. Being too drunk to sail, these three were left behind. They were given a note (which none of them can read) that states that the *Sea Fancy* will be gone for a few weeks and should return to Tradertown when the port is open again.

The pirates will not divulge the location of their camp unless threatened considerably or given enough gold to buy their knowledge.

Port Gate Guards

If the characters obtain a small rowboat and row out to the guard tower by the port gate, they can talk to the guards about their duty. A guard will mention that, during the night of the alarm, he awoke to find the new guard on duty to be gone and the gate open. He quickly closed the gate but has not seen the guard since.

If the small area around the tower exterior is searched, characters will find the decomposing body of the missing guard. His hand is clutching a leather bag and a crossbow quarrel is firmly set in his chest. The bag contains 100 gp and a note that reads, "*Open the gate at the arranged time for the discussed amount. No questions. -S*" Captain Strongjaw had bribed the new guard to allow the *Sea Fancy* to pass but when the guard tried to get more gold for his service, he was killed.

Conclusion to Chapter One

By this time, the characters should have concluded that the lovers left Tradertown by way of the pirate ship, the *Sea Fancy*. They will need to convince Orgo d'Lannatta that his wife and her lover have left the city and to arrange for them to secure passage into the Sea of Dread. The nobleman will have to give the order to open the harbor gates to allow the characters to continue their search.

Of course, Orgo will want to know the characters' next step so that he can arrange for a second set of bounty hunters to follow the group. Not trusting foreigners and wanting to prevent the truth of his wife's disappearance from surfacing, Orgo will wait for the characters to do the dirty work of dispatching pirates and finding his wife before trying to eliminate them. Only when the characters have succeeded in finding Anna and Cortezzo will the second team of hunters step in to secure their prize. They have happily agreed to murder the meddling characters as an additional reward.



Chapter Two: The Sea of Dread

A violent and often unpredictable body of water, the Sea of Dread has a long history of sinking ships and taking souls. Great aquatic beasts roam the waters, searching for trapped vessels in calmed winds. Huge waves occasionally appear out of nowhere – catching inexperienced sailors unawares and sending them to watery graves. Only veteran sailors should attempt to sail the Sea of Dread.

Wandering monsters may be encountered on the sea—roll a 1d100 once every four hours of sea travel, consulting Table 1 for results.

Characters leaving the mainland should seek transport aboard a merchant vessel or military ship once the authorities of Tradertown have lifted the lock down on the port city. Several trading ships will be eager to leave the harbor, their holds filled with spices, wines, and salted meats destined for distant ports. Additionally, Guild military ships have been ready to return to their patrol routes and will willingly accept passengers if authorization is given by leaders. For characters looking to leave quietly, a few privateer ships may accept passengers. Of course, adventurers will have to take their chances with the unscrupulous pirates.

Passage may be booked with several vessel types found within the Tradertown harbor—consult Table 2 for options.

A dozen small sailing ships are available for sale or rent for brave (or foolish) characters. Although this option is not recommended due to

Vessel Passage—Costs		
Ship	Cost *	Details
Trading Ship	1 gp	Common sleeping area, food and water included
Merchant Ship	5 gp	Private cabin, food and wine/beer included
Military Ship	5 sp	Common sleeping area, food and water included
Guild Ship	Varies	varies
* cost is per character per day		

Table 2

the dangerous sea, nothing prevents characters from trying this approach. Review Table 3 for ship types and costs.

Note that Captain Strongjaw's camp is well hidden within the archipelago in the south. If the characters were unable to extract the location from the drunken pirates at the *Dirty Mermaid*, they may be able to learn of its site by former sailors, or merchants who are smart enough to avoid the approximate area.

Cortezzo and Anna's Voyage

While the characters were searching the city for clues to the noble woman's whereabouts, the pair of lovers were making their way across the Sea of Dread aboard the *Sea Fancy*. Although Captain Strongjaw and Cortezzo were once crewmates during the captain's first command, the sailors aboard his new ship have no ties to the fleeing swashbuckler. In fact, during their voyage to the pirate's camp,

Sea of Dread—Wandering Monsters			
1d100 Roll Result	"Wandering" Monster	# Encountered	Basic Statistics
01-02	Shark, Great White	1-4	AC 4 HD 8 MV 180 AT 1 D 2-20
03-04	Elemental, Water	1-2	AC 2 HD 8 MV 180 AT 1 D 1-8
05	Sea Serpent	1	AC 5 HD 6 MV 150 AT 1 D 2-12
06	Sea Dragon	1	AC 1 HD 8 MV 180 AT 1 D 3-24
07-08	Octopus, Giant	1-2	AC 7 HD 8 MV 90 AT 9 D 1-3(x8)/1-6
09-10	Squid, Giant	1-2	AC 7 HD 6 MV 120 AT 9 D 1-4(x8)/1-10
11-12	Whale, Killer	1-6	AC 6 HD 6 MV 240 AT 1 D 1-20

Table 1

Sailing Ship Costs				
Ship	Cost *	Miles / Day	Sailors (Min)	Details
Boat, Sailing	2,000 gp	72	1	MV 120, AC 8, 20-40 Hull points
Sailing Ship, Small	5,000 gp	90	10	MV 150, AC 8, 60-90 Hull points
Longship	15,000 gp	18/90	75	MV 90/150, AC 8, 60-80 Hull points

* cost to buy, or 10% of cost to rent per day (not including sailors or rowers, costing 3-5 sp or 1sp per day, respectively).

Table 3

several of the pirates colluded to cheat the unsuspecting Cortezzo out of all of his wealth. Before the pirates pull the *Sea Fancy* into their protected lagoon, they will have already cornered Cortezzo in the dark hold of the vessel, demanding their payments from the fixed games.

Unable to pay the money owed to several men, the pirates locked up both lovers with the intention of killing the swashbuckler and ransoming Anna to the Guilds in Tradertown. A dozen sailors will be searching the ship for Cortezzo's wealth, unaware that Strongjaw has kept the lover's treasure safe in his personal quarters.

When Captain Strongjaw learned of the deception, he and several pirates loyal to their leader attempted to lock the cheating sailors in the brig. Divided into two groups, the pirates fought aboard the *Sea Fancy*, setting fire to the vessel before the killing spilled out onto the beach of their island camp. By the time it was all over, Captain Strongjaw and a dozen trusted men are all that are left of the crew. The *Sea Fancy*, badly burned but repairable, remains drifting in the lagoon.

Cortezzo and Anna escaped their imprisonment during the fight between the pirates fled into the jungle of the small island. Before speeding off, the pair were able to remove their stored treasure from within the Captain's cabin. However, Cortezzo, never one to leave an opportunity behind, also secured several of Strongjaw's valuables as well.

The Forbidden Isle

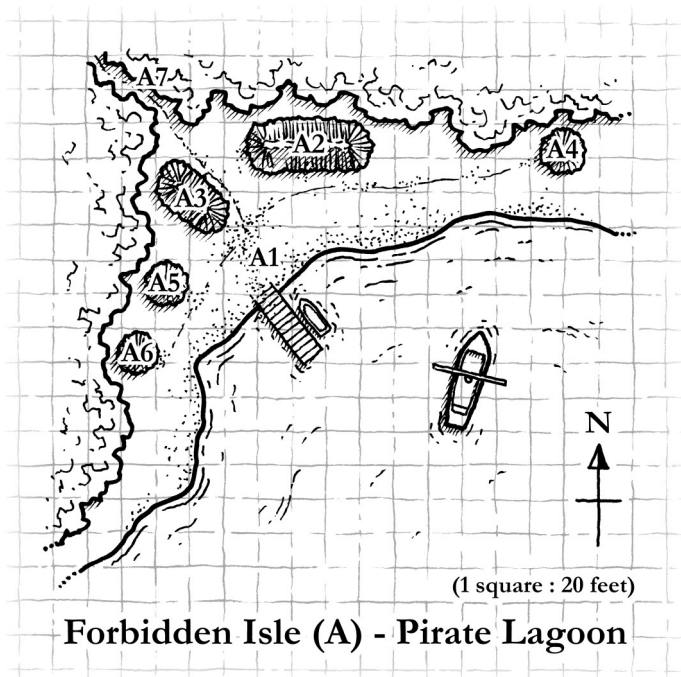
Arrival at Strongjaw's Camp

Long before the characters arrive at the small island, they will have seen the smoke of the burning *Sea Fancy*. The lagoon entrance is challenging to find, well hidden by mangrove trees and several rocks at its mouth. When the characters enter the lagoon, they clearly see the damaged pirate ship as well as dozens of slain sailors in the water and along the beach. Captain Strongjaw and his men will be found resting on the beach (Area A1), nursing their wounds with rum and ale.

The captain and his men will be drunk and ill-tempered, and will warn the characters that if they don't leave the island they will be killed. Although injured and clearly tired after the failed mutiny, they are still a formidable force of hardened cutthroats. If the characters delay or refuse, the pirates charge.

The captain and his men will protect Cortezzo and Anna regardless of what happens to them. After searching the camp and beach, the characters will likely find the pair's footprints leading into the jungle beyond.





Both the captain and first mate have the number of steps and turns from the beach to their buried treasure tattooed on their chests. See Area G for more details on their hidden trove of valuables.

Area A2: Common Area

Most of the crew of the *Sea Fancy* use this long hut for sleeping quarters, resting, and gambling. On warm evenings, many pirates will build bonfires on the beach, sing, drink rum, and eventually nod off – sleeping until woken by their captain the next morning. The crew will use the hammocks in the long hut on rainy nights or when they need a good night of rest.

Four dozen hammocks hang from dozens of sunken timber throughout the long structure. A few footlockers and burlap bags litter the floor but are empty of anything of value – a pirate would be crazy to leave valuables in the hut.

Area A3: Dining and Kitchen

Pirates take turns, two per day, to prepare meals for the crew of the *Sea Fancy*. Dozens of stools surround a half-dozen filthy, wobbly tables. Old food and dirty utensils are scattered throughout the messy hut. A crate of salted meat, six loaves of hard bread, and a small cask of ale are found in the preparation end of the dining area.

Area A4: Latrine

The hut at the far end of the pirate camp is their latrine. Several filled-in holes adjacent to the jungle nearby hint to other previous locations of their outhouse.

Area A5: First Mate's Hut

The second-in-command of the *Sea Fancy* is entitled to his own hut, separating the crew from the Captain's quarters nearby. The first mate is responsible for taking charge of the men when the captain is not present or dealing with issues with the crew that aren't worthy

Area A. Pirate Camp

A1: Pirate Beach

The sands run red with the blood of a few dozen pirates, their corpses littering the beach and already beginning to overtake the pleasant smells of the ocean and jungle plants nearby. A single rowboat is tied to a worn but serviceable dock that juts out into the lagoon. Thirteen pirates lounge on the beach, resting after their violent dispute with a portion of the crew. Captain Strongjaw, his first mate, and eleven sailors drink rum and ale as they rest.

Pirates (11): AC 7 (leather), HD 1, HP 5 each, #AT 1 weapon, D 1-6 short sword or crossbow, MV 120 (40'), Save F1, ML 8, XP 10 each

First Mate: AC 6 (**leather armor +1**), HD 4, HP 20, #AT 1 weapon, D 1-8+1 **sword +1**, MV 120 (40'), Save F4, ML 9, XP 75

Captain Strongjaw: AC 4 (**chainmail +1**), HD 7*, HP 35, #AT 1 weapon, D 1-8+2 **sword +2**, MV 120 (40'), Save F7, ML 10, XP 850

Note that the GM may want to alter the hit points of the pirates to reflect their injuries from their recent battle. Dozens of swords, a few crossbows, and a hundred or so quarrels can be found on the beach, dropped by dying and dead pirates.

of Strongjaw's time. The current first mate has been with the captain for almost three years.

His hut is nearly empty, besides a hammock, an empty chest, and a bookshelf filled with dusty tomes chronicling the feats and marvels of fictional pirates and legendary swashbucklers. One of the tomes has a **Scroll of Magic Missile** folded in the back.

Like Strongjaw, the bulk of the first mate's best loot is hidden in a secret location known only by himself and his captain. A massive chest is buried in the southern beach of a lake in the jungle (Area G).

Area A6: Strongjaw's Hut

Although the captain prefers sleeping aboard the *Sea Fancy*, there are times when a comfortable bed on land is a welcome break from the violent rocking of the unforgiving sea. Strongjaw keeps his hut sparsely furnished, storing his best sheets, clothes, and wines aboard his ship. His most valuable items are hidden in a secret location, buried under the sand at the edge of a jungle lake (Area G). Only he and the first mate know of this location deep within the jungle.

However, when Captain Strongjaw requires coin to pay for services or to buy a needed supply, and he doesn't have the time to make the trek to his stash at the lake, he will uncover the hidden iron box from a hole in the sand under his hammock. He keeps **250 sp**, **100 gp**, and **20 pp** in the chest at all times.

Area A7: Entrance into the Jungle

A single trail leads out of the camp and into a dense, humid jungle. Most of the pirates rarely venture far into the tropical area, preferring to sleep on the sandy beach, swim in the **lagoon**, or drink in the huts instead of facing the horrors of the dark jungle beyond their safe camp. Several pirates brave the jungle trail to hunt apes (Area B) or swim in the mystical waters of the volcanic spring (Area H). Few of the pirates have ventured beyond these known locales.



The Sea Fancy

The once-sturdy ship is badly burned and barely seaworthy after the battle between the pirates. It lists in the lagoon and is blackened with smoke and fire in dozens of areas. The hull is still sound but the ship requires several days (up to two weeks) of repairs before it can be trusted in open water again.

The captain's cabin will be found with a splintered door and his belongings obviously searched. Before escaping, Cortezzo and Anna took as much as they could carry within the room, including the majority of their valuables and most of the captain's. Unable to carry everything, they left behind a bag of silver (**500 sp**), the Captain's **dagger +1**, a box of jewelry (20 pieces, each ranging from 100 **gp** to 500 **gp** value, including a **Ring of Protection +1**), several expensive gowns, and a dozen old treasure maps of unreliable authenticity.

Flight into the Jungle

Cortezzo, unfamiliar with the jungle of the island, led Anna down several trails before eventually finding the boats at the beach (Area M). His tracks are easy to spot from the pirate camp to Area B. After that, they become harder to follow as Cortezzo and Anna changed directions several times searching for a safe location.

Although the pair entered several areas hoping to hide from the pirates, Anna felt unsafe in the strange locations. Cortezzo kept them moving north and eventually west, where they found the boat at the beach, fleeing the island to the smaller land mass a mile west.

Use Table 4 as characters try to track the lovers through the jungle. Many of Cortezzo's tracks are identifiable in several places between jungle locations. Although the table may indicate "automatic" success in some places, the DM should still make characters roll for tracking success,

Tracking Cortezzo and Anna		
Between Areas	Roll 1d6	Result
A to B	Auto	Follow tracks
B to H	1-3	Tracks go North
	4-5	Tracks go West
	6	Tracks go East
B to C	1-5	Tracks enter area C
	6	Tracks leave C, go West
H to I	1-2	Tracks go West
	3-4	Tracks go North
	5-6	Tracks go East
I to M	Auto	Follow tracks
H to J	1-5	Tracks enter area J
	6	Tracks leave J, go South
H to K	1-4	Tracks enter K
	5-6	Tracks leave K, go South
C	Auto	No tracks found
F	Auto	No tracks found
J	Auto	No tracks found

Table 4

Thousands of deadly creatures hunt the dense jungle, seeking their next meal. The wandering monster chart in Table 5 should be checked every 1-2 hours while characters travel in the island jungle.

Area B. Lair of the White Apes

This area is dominated by a group of white apes, a mutated offshoot of the regular apes of the isle. These apes are as intelligent as men and have a society based on Geniocracy, where the most creative and intelligent take over the leadership of the pack when they are old enough, and rule until they die.

At this time, the leader is a huge specimen (6 HD) of almost 100 years in age who has managed to teach himself to read and write. He and the rest of his pack (18 strong) hold a dim opinion of most humanoid creatures because their white fur has been the object of many pirates and hunters who have come to this isle over the years. Therefore, their initial contact with the party will be hostile. Unless the party takes great pains to show the apes compassion or courtesy, they will be treated as enemies. The six most powerful apes are the soldiers and scouts of the army and half will always be patrolling the perimeter of their territory. The apes use their huge fists and crude weapons including bows and stone-tipped arrows (1d6 dmg) dipped in snake venom (every other arrow causes a save vs. poison at +4, failed save for an additional 1d6 dmg). Their intelligence and jungle ingenuity helps them employ sophisticated defenses in the form of pit and falling net traps around their lair. If somehow befriended, the leader will trade the party a map to a hidden artifact he has no use for (human-/elf-sized **chainmail** +3, buried nearby in a hidden location). Otherwise, the group of white apes has no treasure except for small gemstones they use for decorating their camp (1-2 stones per ape, worth 1d4 gp per stone).

White Apes: AC: 6, HD: 4, HP: 27, 20x5, 19, 18, 17, 16x4, 15, 12x3, 11, # AT: 2 claws or bows, D: 1-4/1-4 or 1-6, MV: 120' (40'), Save: F 2, ML: 9, AL: N

White Ape Leader: AC: 4 (bone armor), HD: 6, HP: 40, # AT: 2 claws, D: 2-5/2-5, MV: 120' (40'), Save: F 3, ML: 10, AL: N



Forbidden Isle—Wandering Monsters

1d100 Roll Result	"Wandering" Monster	# Encountered	Basic Statistics
01	Quicksand	1	Dexterity save fail, drown in 1d6 rounds
02	Tar Pit	1	Dexterity save fail, drown in 1d4 rounds
03-04	Jungle Pit	1	Check versus Traps, take 1d6+1 damage
05-06	Zombies (from area J)	1d4	AC8 HD2 HP 10 MV 120 AT 1 D 1-8
07-08	Large Lizards, Chameleon	1d3	AC 2 HD 5 HP 25 MV 120 AT 2 D 2-8/1-6
09-10	Jungle Cat	1d2	AC 4 HD 4 HP 20 MV 210 AT 3 D 1-4/1-4/1-8
11-12	Murder Vines	1	AC4 HD 5 HP 20 MV 0 AT 1 D 1-3
13-15	White Apes	1d2	AC6 HD 4 HP 15 MV 120 AT 2 D 2-5/2-5

Table 5

Area C. Abandoned Village

An ancient race of snake people once resided in this abandoned village. Their visages can be found as wall mosaics, worn statues, and on cracked path tiles. The jungle has slowly crept into the village, overtaking most of the old huts and stone outbuildings. However, the three interior structures are mostly free of creeping vines and thickening undergrowth.

Area C1: Private Residence (map on inside cover)

Tall, thick weeds and young trees have sprouted up all around the building, forcing those wishing to enter the single-story structure to hack through the growth to find an entrance. **Two jungle pythons** hide within the serried bamboo stalks. Both will attack the first passerby.

Jungle Pythons (as Rock Pythons): AC 6, HD 5*, HP 25 each, #AT 1 bite/1 squeeze, D 1-4/2-8, MV 90 (30'), Save F3, ML 8, XP 300 each – a successful bite attack begins the constriction.

A nest of snake eggs (1d4+1) is found in the thickest part of the growth. Additionally, a dozen necklaces, bracelets, and rings lie amidst the eggs and straw of the nest. Each piece of jewelry is worth between 100 gp and 350 gp (1d6+1, x50 gp).

The roof of the residence collapsed long ago,

filling the central living area with rotting leaves and stagnant water. A careful search will reveal a jade, snake statuette worth 1,250 gp and a hidden ivory box filled with fifty plain, silver discs. Each disc is worth 10 sp. The side rooms where the occupants slept are empty.

Area C2: Royal Palace

This two-story structure has held up surprisingly well, resisting the erosion of weather and time. The door to the palatial building is locked and the windows are all shuttered from within. A golden door knocker in the shape of a cobra head is set with two small rubies. If removed undamaged, it is worth 2,500 gp.

The interior of the palace is bare, its furniture and valuables removed long ago. An intense evil presence is felt by Lawful beings upon entry – a failed saving throw versus Rods, Staves, or Spells causes Lawful adventurers to flee the place for 1d6 turns.

Although the first and second floors are empty, a concealed hatch to a basement will lead to the former occupant's family tomb filled with stone slabs, skeletal snake creatures, and several jars overflowing with gold and silver coins. Stepping upon the dirt floor of the basement awakens the **four skeletal snake-men** who rise to attack. Each undead snake-man can attack three times each round or concentrate on one target to induce a strong fear that may cause their target to flee (save as above).

Skeletal Snake-men: AC 7, HD 4*, HP 20 each, #AT 1 bite/2 claws, D 1-6/1-4/1-4, MV 60' (20'), Save F2, ML 12, XP 125 each – turned as Mummies.

Each snake-man was laid to rest with its ceremonial javelin and shield, now found on the slab or on the floor nearby. Each javelin is a **+1 weapon** but deals +2 damage to Lawful creatures. **5,000 sp** and **1,750 gp** are found in the clay jars in the room. A secret niche under one of the stone slabs holds the palatial family's true treasure – a **Staff of Power** with 3 charges remaining.

Area C3: Meeting Pavilion

Nobles once met in this open-air pavilion to discuss village business or to lounge in the jungle heat. A sloped, stone roof supported by eight granite pillars is open on all four sides, although the thick vegetation of the surrounding jungle threatens to soon overtake the ancient structure. To gain entry to the pavilion, a group of adventurers must hack their way through several dozen feet of interwoven bamboo and weeds.

Once inside the structure, the group will find colorful mosaic floor tiles, stone benches, and several small, dry pools. Three snake-men skeletons lie on the floor, their arms outstretched to the south as if they had died face down in prayer. Each skeleton is wearing beaded and glass jewelry around their bony necks and wrists. Each piece is worth 50 to 100 gp to collectors in the region. One skeleton still holds a **golden key** in its bony hand. This key opens the temple in Area D.

A thorough search of the temple area will reveal a concealed spot under a loose floor tile. A small vial of thick, viscous fluid is found within the hole. When opened, the brown liquid gives off a putrid, foul smell. However, when fully consumed, it provides 48 hours of full resistance to petrification and paralyzation.

New Magic Item

Potion of Flesh Protection. When imbibed, this potion protects from petrification and paralyzation effects from monsters and spells for 48 hours. Additionally, it provides a base armor class of 3 for exposed skin. If armor is worn, the armor class of the armor is used instead.



Area D. Deserted Temple

Snake-men from the nearby village (Area C) once traveled daily to their evil temple in this area. Strangely, the jungle has not overtaken the clearing where a tiered temple stands at its middle. Although decrepit and crumbling in places, the stone structure rises proudly above the stunted jungle trees along the edge of the open area.

Several old huts and partially standing stone structures are clearly visible in the clearing. A well-marked trail leads directly to the gilded front doors of the large monolith. Filled with sparse furnishings, the huts looked to be the living quarters for servants and peasants. Each stone structure is marked with several engraved outlines of a snake-man, supplicating to a large, winged snake. The stone buildings were used by priests before the snake-men mysteriously left the jungle island.

If adventurers climb the tiered temple, they will find a sacrificial table at the top, stained for decades by spilled blood and viscera. Blackened clay pots and remnants of straw baskets are piled near the table, hinting to their dark purposes. A search of the table will reveal a concealed storage alcove in the base of the table. Two sacrificial knives and a silver headband are found within. Each knife is equivalent to a **dagger +1, +2 versus Lawful creatures**. The **silver headband** acts as a *Helm of Alignment Changing* except that it only changes a wearer's alignment to Chaos. The cursed item may only be removed by magical means (e.g. *remove curse* spell).



A trough in the stone floor under the grotesque table leads down the southern side of the structure, ending above a strange depression in the ground behind the temple. Stirring the dirt in the depression awakens the remnants of sacrificed victims – within 1d4 rounds, **partial and whole human skeletons** will begin digging their way out of the shallow grave.

1d100 Skeletons: AC 7, HD 1, HP 4 or 2 (torso skeletons) each, #AT 1 claw, D 1-6, MV 60 (20') or half for partial skeletons, Save F1, ML 12, XP 10 each.

The skeletons will continue to emerge from the depression until it is emptied, attacking any living thing they can find. If left to their own devices, the skeletons will climb the temple, relentlessly searching for a way inside to find the priests that murdered them long ago.

Temple Interior

The large, gilded doors of the temple are a challenge to open, reducing thieves skills by half. (i.e., if a sixth-level thief attempts to open these doors, they use the third-level percentage chance.) However, the adventurers can open the doors with the golden key found in Area C3. Regardless of how the doors are opened, chimes ring within the structure for sixty seconds afterward.

Much of the interior has collapsed within the structure – a singular, clear hallway leads to the center of the temple but all the side passages, small alcoves, and rooms along the central hallway are filled with rubble and are thus impassable. The dark hallway, from the front doors to the temple, is seventy-five feet in length. At the end of the wide passage, characters will find a temple within a massive, hollow space. The ceiling is supported by hundreds of columns throughout the center of the building. Instead of a many-tiered, multi-level structure, the characters will see a single room once used as a temple.

Twenty stone crypts line the path from the hallway to the back of the temple. Hundreds of stone benches, positioned to face the back of the temple, fill the rest of the room. Each crypt contains the remains of a former priest of the vile temple. Each priest is buried in ceremonial garb and has one **magical scroll** tucked in its waistband. Additionally, there is a 1 in 6 chance that a bag of coins may be found with the priest's remains. **1d20 gold pieces** are found within any bag located.

For each scroll found, roll a 1d6 to determine the spell level of the scroll: 1-3 represents a first level spell, 4-5 is a second level, and a 6 for a third level spell. Note that 75% of the scrolls contain Cleric spells. Once the spell level is known, roll the appropriate die to find the spell on the scroll. Each scroll will deteriorate in the heat of the region within 7 days.

At the back of the room, a huge jade idol stands upon a gigantic slab of black granite. The snake idol has a pair of wings that spread out over forty feet. The idol's arms are also outstretched, holding a sickle and a scimitar in its hands.

Closer inspection reveals that the idol is made of stone, covered in thousands of carved pieces of jade (each thin piece is worth 25 gp and weighs one pound). Touching the idol disturbs the hibernating creatures of the temple – **dozens of small, winged snake creatures** are fast asleep, hidden in the contours of the darkened ceiling, until awakened.

2d12+12 Winged Snake-Imps: AC 7, HD 1*, HP 4 each, #AT 1 bite + low-intensity venom, D 1-3, MV 30 (10'), Save F2, ML 10, XP 13 each

Each bite of a winged snake creature introduces a mild venom into the target's bloodstream, causing discomfort and disorientation (all attacks and saving throws are made at -1 penalty) for four hours. Although the penalty does not get any worse than -1, each successful bite increases the length of the time the venom remains in the target's system by four more hours.

Though the sickle and scimitar held by the idol are both large and ornamental, any who grasp either weapon will magically transform both artifacts to their true state. Those that grasp one of the weapons must pass a saving throw versus Spells to avoid succumbing to the weapon's evil effects. These effects are as if the wielder were hit by the weapon, as described below.

New Magic Item

Venomcoil, sickle +2 (treat as shortsword for damage): Once per day, wielder may snap the sickle to uncoil it into the form of a 20' whip. It may remain in this state for 10 combat rounds. Each successful hit in the whip form releases a deadly poison (victim may make a saving throw).

New Magic Item

Fangbite, scimitar +2: Wielder may attack twice per combat round (or once more than allowed at the wielder's level). The bonus attack always occurs last in the round. If both attacks are successful, the second attack releases a deadly poison (victim may make a saving throw). If the victim succeeds on their saving throw roll, the scimitar deals double damage instead.

Area E. Crab Beach

The jungle trail terminates at a wide and white sandy beach that stretches several hundred feet in either direction. Driftwood and dead seaweed litter the beach close to the water line and dozens of small crabs meander about the hot sand. Warm wind blows in from the ocean and waves roll up on to the beach with a pleasing rhythm.

Six Giant Crabs lurk in nearby mangrove trees, springing into ravenous action when the adventurers enter the beach.

6 Giant Crabs: AC 2, HD 3, HP 13 each, #AT 2 pincers, D 2-12, MV 60 (20'), Save F2, ML 7, XP 35 each

A partially buried chest lies within the center of the mangrove trees, left behind by pirates who frequented the isle long before Strongjaw arrived. The bottom of the chest has rotted, releasing most of its smaller contents into the ocean years ago. However, a large golden cup in the shape of a human skull with a dozen diamond teeth and two sapphire eyes remains within the rotting chest. The cup weighs three pounds and is worth between 5,000 and 10,000 gp.



Area F. Murder Vines

This area of the jungle trail is filled with unnaturally thick vegetation, preventing access to the path beyond. Any attempt to move or strike the vegetation urges the surrounding **Murder Vines** into motion, stretching dozens of thorny and strangling vines toward victims.

Murder Vines: AC 4, HD 5, HP 22, #AT strangu-
lation, D 1-3, MV 0 (0'), Save F3, ML 12, XP 175

Captain Strongjaw and his first mate have a concealed a small trail around the murder vines, found by adventurers with a secret door check roll from either side.

Area G. Jungle Lake

The eastern trail ends at the small beach of a clear lake. Water from springs far below the isle provide clean, fresh water for the island's inhabitants (wandering monster chances are double in this location). Several old buckets and clay pots are found along the beach, used by the former villagers who traveled here for drinkable water.

Several dilapidated huts have suffered the elements of the jungle along the edge of the lake, each emptied of contents long ago. Captain Strongjaw's treasure is found in their midst, buried at the center of the abandoned village. If the characters have the pace count from the pirates' tattoos, they easily find the buried treasure. Without the map, there is a 1% chance that adventurers realize the area may contain hidden treasure by discovering disturbed earth or a slight depression in the ground.

Two chests are buried in the sand, roughly three feet under the surface. The larger chest is owned by Captain Strongjaw and is filled with ten leather bags (see the contents in the table below). The first mate's smaller chest is filled with gold and silver coins, **1,567 gp** and **2,092 sp**.

Contents of Strongjaw's Chest		
Bag	Contents	Details
1	Silver coins	3,427 sp
2	Gold coins	2,991 gp
3	Platinum coins	769 pp
4	Emeralds (77)	75 x50gp, 1x250gp, 1x500gp
5	Sapphires (49)	45 x25gp, 2 x100gp, 2 x250gp
6	Rubies (98)	90 x25gp, 4 x150gp, 4 x500gp
7	Diamonds (155)	100 x10gp, 29 x50gp, 20 x250 gp, 6 x1,000gp
8	Jewelry	14 necklaces x500gp each, 27 bracelets x100gp each, 67 earrings x10gp each, 1 diamond/ruby tiara 5,000gp
9	Glass Sphere	<i>Crystal Ball</i> , with ESP and Clair-audience
10	Mosaic Bottle	Stoppered <i>Efreeti Bottle</i>

Table 6

Characters looking into the lake from the beach may see a glint of amber below the surface a few dozen feet from shore. What appears to be an amber statue of a great lion that sits mid-roar within the shallows of the lake is actually an **Amber Golem**, waiting to be re-activated (by touch). Left here by a mighty wizard after his death, the Amber Golem stands watch over its master's watery grave dozens of feet below. Walking nearby or touching the golem reawakens it.

Amber Golem: AC 6, HD 10**, HP 45, #AT 2 claws, 1 bite, D 2-12 / 2-12 / 2-20, MV 180 (60'), Save F5, ML 12, XP 2,300



A stone coffin is buried below the Amber Golem's location, set over fifty feet below the water. The great wizard Xendestofes was buried with his two most prized possessions – a **Staff of Wizardry** with 1d10 charges and his massive, 100-page spell book. The spell book still has 2d12+5 spells within (GM to determine levels and spells). The skeletal form of the dead wizard still clutches both his items. Note that exposure to water will likely ruin the spell book.

Any disturbance in the water may summon **two Giant Catfish** that are resting in the mud at the bottom of the lake. The fifteen foot long creatures are always hungry and would enjoy a good meal of floundering adventurer.

2 Giant Catfish: AC 4, HD 8+3, HP 39 each, #AT 1 bite, 4 tentacles, D 2-16 / 1-4 x4, MV 90 (30'), Save F4, ML 8, XP 650 each

Area H: Volcanic Spring

Boiling water, heated by the volcanic mountain at the center of the island, bubbles up from underground and fills a vast pool at the junction of four jungle trails. A stream of cooler water joins the boiling pool, reducing the temperature to a tolerable warmth. Primates and a few brave pirates occasionally take short dips in the pool, relaxing in its soothing heat. There is a 25% chance that one to two gorillas may be here, soaking in the spring.

A narrow and slippery ledge around the spring provides access to the surrounding four trails. Less dexterous adventurers may slip into the pool if rushed or chased. The skeletal remains of a clumsy adventurer can be found at the bottom of the pool. His gear and bones have rapidly deteriorated in the prolonged exposure of the intense temperature of the volcanic water. However, his chainmail armor remains pristine. The armor is magical, unaffected by the heat. The human-sized armor is **chainmail +2**. Characters will have to make three consecutive Constitution saves (rolling under CON) to successfully swim to the pool's bottom and retrieve the armor.



Area I: Rock Formation

Although not easily seen from the trail itself, a strange rock formation can be glimpsed peeking above the jungle canopy from any higher location on the isle. Unnatural and seemingly purposeless, this strange arrangement of blended rocks and narrow openings has a sinister and unwelcoming appearance. Those brave enough to venture close will sense great evil emanating from the mound. Touching or climbing the rocks disturbs the linen-wrapped remains of **mold-covered pygmy-wights**. Four smallish creatures will take one round to crawl from the small niches to attack any living creature within sight.

4 Mold-covered Pygmy-wights: AC 4, HD 1+1**, HP 6 each, #AT 2 claws, 1 bite, D 1-3 / 1-3 / 1-4 + level drain, MV 60 (20'), Save F2, ML 12, XP 27 each

The claw and bite of a mold-covered pygmy-wight saps the energy of its victim, draining one level of experience. Unlike other undead creatures with level drain capability, the successful attack of the smaller pygmy-wight allows for a saving throw versus Death Ray and Poison. Additionally, the first three strikes made to a creature releases a cloud of yellow mold spores (as the monster).

Each burial niche is lined with silver and gold coins, gems, and jewelry. There is a 50% chance for 10x1d100 sp and 5x1d20 gp, 1d20 various gems, and 1d4 pieces of jewelry. If no coins or gems are found, there will be one magical non-sword weapon found instead.

Area J: Tunnels of the Exiled Mage

Many decades ago, an Exiled Mage found the Isle and with his followers and retainers carved out a hidden base for his study of the dark necromantic arts. Over time, he and his followers went mad due to disease and traffic with dark forces. All that remains of their stronghold is tumbled rocks and rotted timbers buried underneath the lush jungle growth. Underneath the ruins is a long-forgotten lab/burial chamber, filled with the Exiled Mage's foulest creations and worse...

Zombies (Exiled Mage creations)

AC 8, HD 2, HP 10 each, #AT 1 fist, one bite, D 1-8 fist/1-4 bite, MV 120' (40'), Save F1, ML 12—These unique zombies do not always attack last and turn as Wights while in the underground temple area.

Zombies are undead humans or demi-humans animated by an evil cleric or magic-user. As with undead, they may be "Turned" by a cleric but are not affected by sleep or charm spells or any form of mind reading. They are often placed to guard treasures since they make no noise until they attack. Zombies will always attack on sight but can be destroyed by normal weapons. NOTE: All zombies in the dark temple area move normally and do NOT automatically strike last, so the DM must roll for initiative in these combats.

Zombies in the above and underground area of the Dark Temple all have a particular look, as they were created by the Exiled Mage and the knowledge he learned from his corruption by the Dark God. They have dark, wrinkled skin, their eyes glow with a blue light and their mouths are full of sharp, filed teeth (extra attack for 1d4 along with the clubbing/claw attack). They move unnaturally quick for zombies, and thus do not always attack last (roll for initiative as normal). Those that are in the underground cavern are turned as Wights until the Dark Temple is destroyed.

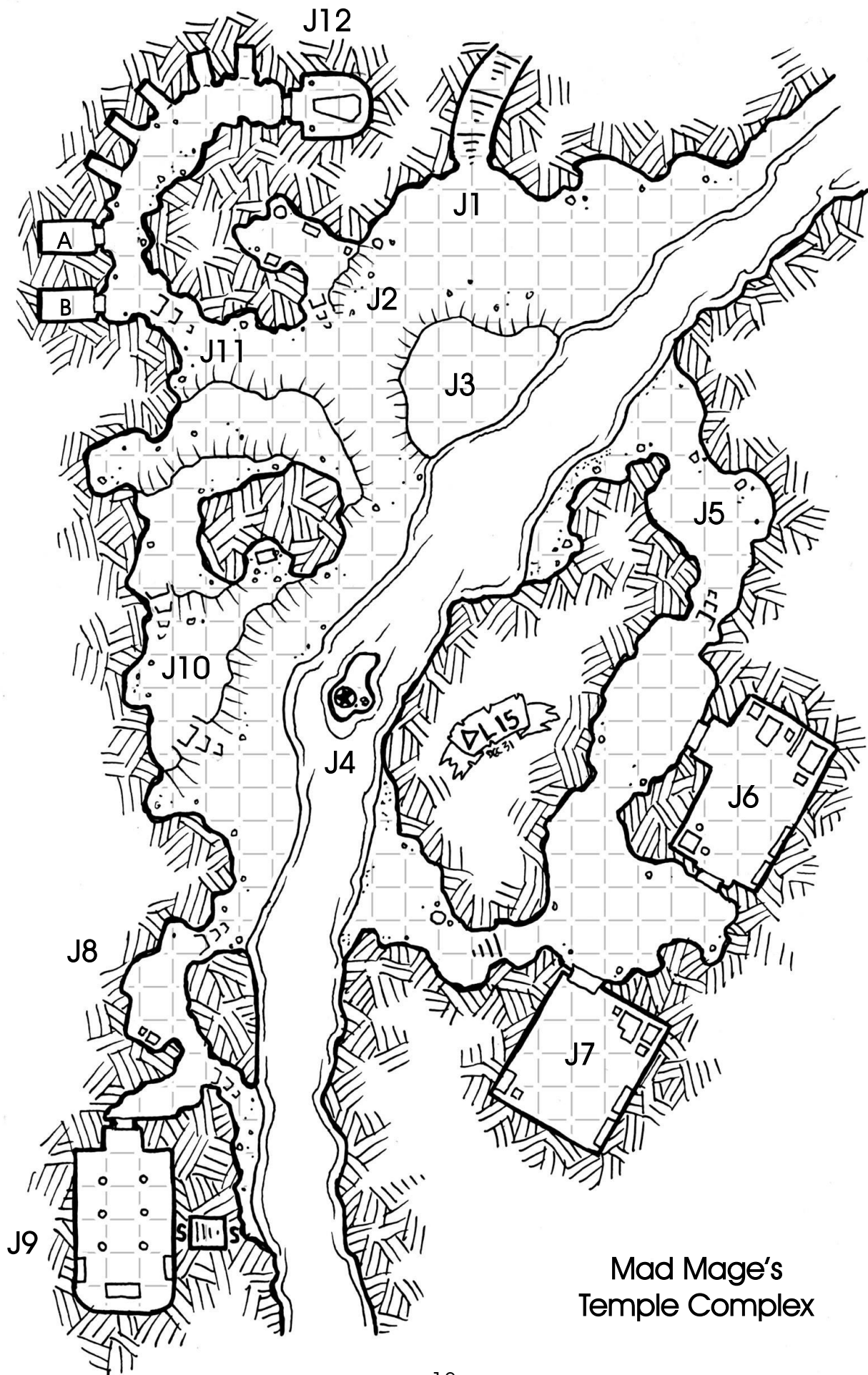
The above ground area (100 yards square) has no standing structures and can be searched for possible treasures. (Every turn the area is searched, there is a 10% chance a random potion or magical ring can be found, a limit of one each.) Wandering zombie groups will be encountered in the vicinity of the ruins every three turns, consisting of 2d8 per encounter. If the area is thoroughly searched, the zombies can be traced back to a nearby cave where hanging vines can be seen to have been broken and parted, leading to a larger entrance and a crude set of stone steps leading downward.

Underground Temple Complex

Except as noted, there are no wandering monsters here unless the GM wishes there to be. There are a few light sources—Continual Light spells of a bluish hue had been cast at the entrance to area J5, the chamber between areas J6 and J7, and the entrance to area J8—but otherwise it is dark throughout the cave complex.

Area J1—Entrance

The moss-covered and crumbling staircase leads into a larger cave complex where a slow-moving freshwater stream bisects the cavern (the source is an underground lake, which may be created by the DM; the stream comes out from a cave entrance near the shore of the Isle). It is quiet down here except for the trickling of the stream, the dripping of water, the scuttling of spiders or insects, and the occasional odd whisper or dark laughter coming from the distance (from a trapped, desperate dark soul). It is cool and damp. Most of the rock surfaces are slightly slippery with moss or mold. The ceiling varies in height from ten to thirty feet high throughout the cavern. The walls are smooth and wet, covered with moss and verdigris-colored ferns (-10% chance for any thief to climb walls). Immediately upon entering, a party or individual will be attacked by a group of **zombies (10)** in the northeast area with additional zombies lumbering down the path by the river for the next turn (1-2 each round) to join the battle.



Mad Mage's
Temple Complex

Due to the presence of the dark temple in area #9, all zombies here turn as Wights, which will not be discovered until the first attempt is made. The cleric attempting the turn will feel a pain in his head and his vision will grow dark for one round after the turning attempt (same effect as a Continual Darkness spell on the cleric only, blinding him or her). These "negative energy attacks" occur after every attempt until the dark temple at area #9 is destroyed. Once the temple is destroyed, zombies here turn normally, and any cleric will no longer be affected by the negative energy attacks. The path leading northeast by the river can lead to a dead end, or if the GM wishes, an entire other complex full of underground creatures....

Area J2—Crude Kitchen

Crude stone steps lead upward into a small cavern, which contains barrels with rotted food, brackish water, rusty pots, and moldy bones. The remains of a large pit fire and evidence of gnawed and chopped human bones and skulls are proof of cannibalism. All the items here are rusty and useless, with the exception of a **silver-hilted dagger +1, +2 vs undead** lying at the bottom of the fire pit, notable by its shiny and unmarred blade.

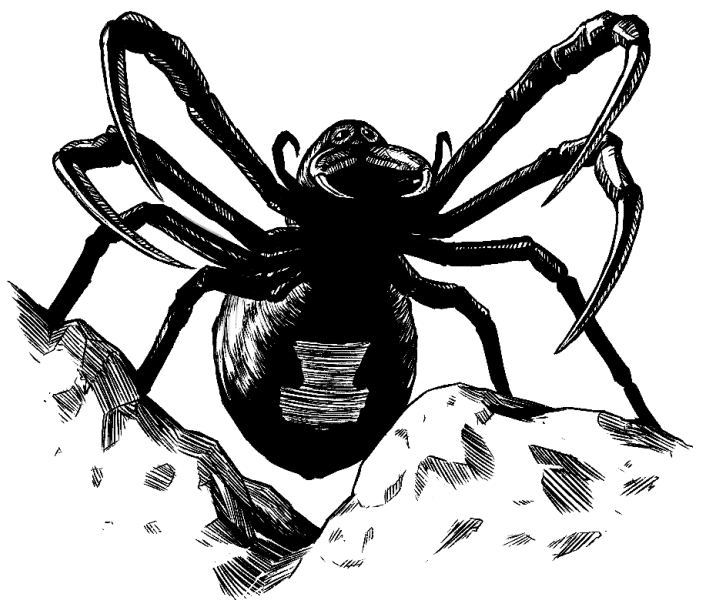
Area J3—Spider Nest

This raised area is the anchor point of a large spider web that extends across the river. A "nest" of bones, husks, and pieces of rotted items lay strewn around the area. The spider itself is a giant Black Widow variety and will avoid dropping down or attacking large groups or groups with burning torches. It will, however, track the party around the chamber—awaiting a moment when it can drop down, poison a victim, and crawl back up the wall to await another chance. The dark energies here have filled the Black Widow with a dim evil cunning and she will patiently stalk and kill the party one by one if they allow her! Smaller humanoids (halfling or smaller) are in danger of being picked up, bitten, and hauled back to the ceiling to be webbed up for a future meal.

Anyone touching or venturing into the webbed area to search husks has a chance to be entrapped (treat as a magic-user's web spell). The entire web can be torched but that will destroy anything made of paper within the sticky strands and cause some of the husks to drop into the river (at the DM's discretion).

There are many husks still wrapped up and hanging in the webs, containing creatures she has captured and eaten in the caverns (primarily catfish and frogs). However, two husks are bodies of lost explorers or shipwrecked survivors who discovered these caverns and paid the ultimate price. The first is a mage with rotted and useless items except for a backpack that still contains **23 cp, 44 sp**, two vials of holy water, and a scroll tube with several scrolls: *Detect Magic*, *Invisibility*, and *Lightning Bolt*. The second husk is a thief whose **Leather Armor +1** has avoided rotting due to its magical enchantments. His **magical sword** was dropped into the stream and can be found by the small island (area J4). His rotted boot contains a secret compartment with a 100 gp ruby secreted within.

Black Widow Spider: AC 6, HD 3*, HP 18, #AT 1 bite, D 2-12 + poison (death in one turn), MV 60 (20'), Save F2, ML 8, Can use Web like the Magic-user spell once per turn, XP 50



Area J4—Underground Island

This small island contains a large statue of a forgotten dark god or goddess. It was here long before the dark mage took over these caverns as his underground lair. The statue is carved of a foreign black stone that makes the statue look unnaturally new and little worn by the elements. The statue's subject will be unknown by anyone except for the most knowledgeable of clerics (roll under WIS on d20) who will recognize the figure as a long-forgotten deity of darkness and insanity. In truth, after this statue was discovered by the dark mage, he began to hear whisperings in the night and slowly descended into madness. This resulted in his building an evil temple and degenerating into cannibalism, demon worship, and insanity...taking his followers with him.

If the stone is cleaned off, faint words can be found written at the base, understandable only with a *Read Languages* spell: "The Quiet Darkness, The Delicious Flesh". After translating, the person who reads the lines will begin to experience nightmares and whisperings urging them to indulge in cannibalism and worship of the dark god. Only a *Remove Curse* spell will have any effect on this; the DM can take this in any direction they wish if a *Remove Curse* spell is not cast.

In the waters by the small island is the sword of the dead thief from area J3. It came to rest here years ago and has had sediment pile up around it. Anyone specifically saying they are searching the shoreline will see a carved hawk bone hilt sticking out a couple of inches above the muck. Upon its release, the character will be in possession of the short sword "**Griffon Slayer**". This **+1 blade** (+2 vs. winged creatures) also allows the bearer the power of flight once a day for a turn (as the magic-user spell *Fly*).

Area J5—Crossing the Stream

The stream is easily crossed here, as the waters are neither swift flowing nor too deep (3-4 feet at the deepest). However, the stream is inhabited by a **Giant Catfish** that manages to eat anything else that swims in or comes to drink in

this stream. It is 15 feet long and will take a bite out of anything trying to cross or swim in this section of water. If injured to half its hit points or less, it will attempt to swim either up or downstream to escape battle.

Giant Catfish: AC 4, HD 8+3, HP 40, #AT 1 bite, 4 tentacles, D 2-16 / 1-4 x4, MV 90 (30'), Save F4, ML 8, XP 650

The chamber across the stream is well lit by a *Continual Light* spell, but it is not the usual *Continual Light* spell. Cast by priests of a dark god, it is more like a smoky-blue light that causes wavering at the edges of vision. These lights can be dispelled with *Dispel Magic* or destroyed with a *Continual Light* spell cast upon them. Their odd shadows make all combat within the area at -2 to hit. The light shines out of a rock partially sunken in the sand at the base of the crude stone steps. The two rooms here are newer than the caverns in the western area, as they were constructed by the Exiled Mage's minions to further his "research" in a more private setting than the stronghold on the surface.

Area J6—Alchemy Chamber

The chamber outside this room has two statues, one on either side of the western stone door. While one is a harmless carved bone and wood construct, the other is a deadly **Bone Golem** holding stone warhammers. Its instructions are to attack anyone attempting to open the stone door to the room behind it. It can be destroyed—or fled from—as it will not pursue anyone past the stream to the west. If characters manage to destroy the golem or get past it, they will find that the door is locked. It can be opened with a *Knock* spell, lockpick, or the keys hidden in the altar at area J9. The door cannot be destroyed without maximum effort, tools such as sledgehammers, and lots of time. Likewise, the door to the south is similarly locked but instead of a guardian, it is protected by a curse. Anyone picking or breaking the lock will have one of the ill effects (from Table 7) befall them (a *Knock* spell will not activate the curse).

Curse Table (Area J6 Door)	
1d4 Roll Result	Details of Curse
1	All cure spells have no effect on the victim for 24 hours
2	On the next successful attack in battle, the victim's weapon breaks (magical weapons get a 50% chance to resist this effect)
3	All the food and water upon the character for the next 24 hours immediately rots or turns rancid. This includes holy water and potions
4	The victim is affected by <i>Cause Disease</i> spell with an accelerated effect (death in 2-24 hours, not 2-24 days)
<i>A Remove Curse spell will successfully take the ill effects away.</i>	

Table 7

Inside the chamber is a research lab for the dark mage. Tables contain a variety of tubes, glass, beakers, alchemical supplies, and rotted books. Although his main laboratory was in the now-ruined upper level, this room still has quite a bit of equipment covering the tables and shelves. Unfortunately, most is rotted or broken. Over 100 books, most now swollen and rotted from moisture, fill the shelves. Careful searching or casting a *Detect Magic* will reveal that one of the books is a spell book (the Dark Mage's backup spellbook). Although rotted, a few pages survive. These contain the spells *Sleep*, *Ventriloquism*, and *Water Breathing*. There is also a **scroll** of the spell *Dispel Magic* tucked into another book on the shelf.

Careful searchers will discover a few valuable items among the debris: a **potion of Healing**, another of **Poison**, and one of **Gaseous Form**. There are also a few small diamonds, the tips of cutting tools, 1d4+1 of these can be found and are worth 100 gp each.

Bone Golem: AC 2, HD 8, HP 48, #AT 4 weapons, D 1-6, MV 120 (40'), Save F4, ML 12, immune to *Sleep*, charm, hold, gases, fire, cold, and electricity, immune to non-magical attacks, XP: 650

Area J7—Laboratory

The large open area between here and area J6 is trapped...**11 zombies** are buried in the exact center of the open area, a foot or so below the soft ground. They will not emerge from hiding until the door to area J7 is opened.

Once triggered, they begin crawling and scrabbling through the loose sand, attacking any living creature they see. It will take them a full round to fully exit their shallow graves—enough time for the party to attack or a cleric to attempt to turn them. The baleful blue *Continual Light* is here also, cast on four separate stone pillars.

The stone door here is locked, but can be picked or opened with a key found in the Dark Temple at #9. Inside is another laboratory, but one with a darker purpose. Here the Exiled Mage continued his experiments into the unliving that led to his exile from civilization, as well as his slow descent into madness with the discovery of the Dark God's statue and temple. Ancient bloodstains and mummified body parts are scattered around the room. Tables have dissected bodies—mostly now just skeletal remains—covering every surface along with now-rusty scalpels, chisels, and saws. Most disturbing is the fact that many of the bones feature marks as if they were gnawed upon. The walls are covered with scribbling made in blood—incomprehensible even with a *Read Languages* spell—as they were made by a diseased mind.

In one corner is a giant (6-foot diameter) iron pot with a sticky tar residue covering the interior. It was here the Exiled Mage "cooked" the bodies of explorers, shipwrecked sailors, natives, and his own followers to create the zombies that infest these lower caverns. Touching or ingesting this substance causes a save vs.

Poison—failure means a swift paralysis that lasts for a period of 4d6 hours. The person poisoned can see and hear everything but is unable to move or speak. Many of the ingredients of this evil brew are still scattered around the room, now dried and unusable. The only thing of value within this room is a ruby ring that fell off a body. It now lies in a corner under a mound of bones (150 gp).

Area J8—Entrance to the Dark Temple

The stone stairway leads up to a small antechamber, and one of the blue Continual Light spells dimly lights this area. The glow reveals a small stone pedestal and a small group of **6 zombies** that will attack anyone trying to enter the chamber. On the pedestal is a basin of dark, rancid water that has the same effect as Death Poison if ingested or touched. A small passageway to the southwest leads to a narrow strip of beach. The beach is full of bones and skulls from past sacrificial victims. Poking through these remains can uncover the following treasure: 2 gold earrings worth 100 gp each, a tarnished silver bracelet worth 150 gp, a platinum necklace worth 300 gp, and assorted small gemstones (32 10-gp, 17 25-gp, and 4 100-gp gems). A bright light source will be needed to find these treasures and it will take a full hour to carefully search the bony beach.

Area J9—Dark Temple

Opening the stone door here leads to the Dark Temple. There is a bright bluish glow that is centered above the sacrificial altar at the south end of the room. The light causes the white marble floor and obsidian pillars to pulsate with an unearthly brightness. Along the walls of the temple stand **10 zombies**, five on each side. Within the baleful blue light these zombies are resistant to being turned and fight with a ferocity born of a closeness to the source of their evil (+2 to hit and damage). They attack anyone entering the sanctum, but do not go outside this temple. If the light is destroyed (with either a *Dispel Magic* or *Continual Light* cast on the glow) the zombies lose their added powers and can be destroyed or turned by a cleric.

A mural painted with blood-red river clay on the south wall depicts the same image as the statue of the Dark God in area J4, with two blue gems for eyes (500 gp each). The vision of the dark god is disturbing and nightmarish in a way that is difficult to describe, leading to unpleasant thoughts and images. (Sleep is disturbed for all entering the room. They are unable to heal by resting for the next 2-7 days.)

A small stone table on the west side contains a gold plate (100gp), with a stone knife, chisel, spoon, and axe—all worn and well-used in their work of beheading a victim (ancient bloodstains cover the tools) before his or her brain was devoured. The stone table to the east contains an empty stone basin, melted candles, and a few glass containers with dried-up paints. The altar itself is a huge stone affair with grooves in the side, leading to gold basins at the bottom to catch the sacrifice's blood (two stained basins are here, worth 200 gp each). A secret compartment at the back of the altar holds several stone keys (to areas J6, J7, and J12); a **sacrificial dagger** (+1, casts Continual Darkness once daily as the spell); **Potions of Human Control, ESP, and Invisibility**; and an assortment of jewelry taken from victims after they were sacrificed (assume this sack contains 1,000 gp of mixed rings, earrings, necklaces, and bracelets).

Touching a particular stone in the east wall causes part of the wall to slide aside, leading to a small secret stairway going down to the bony beach.

Destroying the blue glowing light, the mural, or cleansing the area of evil (the DM should allow the party to describe these actions, but can be as simple as pouring holy water on the altar, destroying the sacrificial blade and basins, or pouring oil inside and lighting the entire room on fire) causes the zombies to lose all their extra powers (being turned as Wights, their faster movement, and extra bite attack) and become "normal" zombies.

Area J10—Watcher of the Dead

Atop this ledge sits the watcher of the tombs to the north, a **Guardian Serpent** (see details below). This three-headed giant stone snake is 30 feet long and appears to be a well carved statue of black marble with pieces of blue azurite for eyes. The job of guarding the entrance to the tombs has kept it here, immobile, for many years. After being activated the first time, the Exiled Mage ordered his followers to search the tombs. The Exiled Mage realized after losing many men trying to enter J11 that the construct could be circumvented by various means (gaseous form and diminution being two of them) and thus he himself explored areas J11 and J12 without facing death. The orders of the Guardian Serpent are to allow no man-sized living creature to enter the tomb area. If it observes this happening, it will go on the attack, slithering down the stairs to the south to circle around and attack until it or the interlopers are destroyed. The Serpent will pursue anyone entering the entrance to #11, cornering them in the narrow catacomb to destroy them, or chasing them out if they choose not to face its wrath. When finished (all invaders of the tomb are dead or have left the area), it will return to its position at the top of the plateau, until again activated by someone entering or leaving the tomb area.

Guardian Serpent: AC 0, HD 10**, HP 55, #AT 3, D 1-12/1-12/1-12, MV 90 (30'), Save F8, ML 12, immune to *Sleep*, charm, hold, gases, and non-magical attacks, XP: 2,300

Area J11—Tombs

The entrance to the tomb area is covered with bones, most of them crushed or broken. A set of steps leading up brings the characters to a curved hallway that smells of mold, dampness, and ancient dead. Except for the Exiled Mage, no creature has trespassed here in hundreds of years. The first two tombs contain a large stone door with no visible operation. Indeed, these two tombs must be broken into using tools like hammers, chisels, and sledges as they have been sealed using a crude ce-

ment (DMs can decide how long to get inside based on which implements the players have. It is recommended each tomb take several hours to break into). Any attempt to break inside either of the first two tombs causes skeletons stacked inside the last five tombs to come to life, leave their graves, and try to put a stop to the noise disturbing their slumber. There are a **dozen skeletons per tomb**, which means sixty in all, but—unlike the zombies—they have no special powers and can be turned or battled like “normal” skeletons. The wave of bony warriors might be overwhelming for even a higher-level party, but they will not pursue adventurers past the steps and the entrance to the tomb area. There is nothing except for broken pottery and rocks inside these five barrows.

Tombs A and B contain remains of past priests of the Dark God. Each has a Continual Darkness spell cast within, which will have to be dispelled or countered before exploration can take place. Both tombs look remarkably similar, containing obsidian chunks of rock with the mummified remains of the priests wrapped and preserved upon the slabs. Neither corpse is alive, but the feeling of gloom and evil within these areas will cause even the most seasoned explorer to pause. As part of the burial procedure, both corpses have had the top of their heads cut off and the brain removed (this was consumed by those participating in the ceremony). The organs were also removed and placed in a blood-filled clay urn (present) while their favorite weapon placed at the head of the obsidian slab. There is a **Staff of Striking** (20 charges) in the first tomb and a **Staff of Withering** (16 charges) in the second. No other treasure or wealth was placed in either sealed vault.



Area J12—Tomb of the Mad Mage

The unsealed vault contains the remains of the Exiled Mage. After building his stronghold on the place of power holding the Dark Temple, he fell under the spell of the Dark God and grew more and more evil and insane, degenerating into cannibalism and madness. The dark rituals he learned from the whispers in the dark led him to raising numerous zombies, most of them once his followers. He was eventually poisoned by a once loyal follower, but managed to make his way here before expiring.

The elaborate lock on this tomb was bypassed by a *Knock* spell, so the huge stone door stands open a foot or two. It can be entered normally (it was never completely sealed like the first two tombs were). Those who wish to enter, however, must make a save vs Fear or are penalized -2 to hit and attack while in the area. Once inside, the then-insane Exiled Mage forced his body across the floor, crawled atop the obsidian slab, and expired. His splayed, decimated body can be found atop the slab, still wearing his **Displacer Cloak** and **Ring of Fire Resistance**. The forces of darkness have somehow corrupted him so fully he is now a **Mummy**, one who will rise to attack those who enter "his" final resting place. Powered by magical energy even after the Dark Temple is destroyed, he will battle ferociously to protect his final resting place, pursuing intruders anywhere in the underground cavern area.

The two stone poles inside the entrance glow blue with the same murky Continual Light spell in the other areas of the tomb. If they are dispelled or destroyed, the fear effect is dissipated and the room can be entered normally. This is much like the other two tombs, with a stone pot filled with dried blood and organs of the original priest and his favorite weapon (a **Mace +1** that drains life energy, 6 levels remain to be drained before it becomes a normal Mace+1) lying on the floor beside the slab near the discarded body. When or if the

mummy who was once the Exiled Mage is destroyed his person can be searched. Besides the magical ring and cloak, he also has a **Wand of Fear** tucked into his belt (29 charges), is wearing a gold medallion (non-magical, but studded with diamonds and worth 5,000 gp), and has **two potions** inside his pouch (both are **Diminution**, which he used to bypass the Guardian Serpent at the entrance). The only other bit of treasure to be found here is his personal notebook, which the DM can construct to interest the party in further explorations of the Isle...Filled with lurid and disturbing tales from the time the Exiled Mage discovered the Dark Temple, it also has several clues and maps to other caches of treasure the mage scattered around the Isle, waiting to be discovered!

Mage-Mummy: AC 3, HD 5+1**, HP 26, #AT 1 touch, D 1-12 + disease, MV 60 (20'), Save F4, ML 12, immune to non-magical attacks, all other damage at half; Spells as a 7th level Magic-user, XP: 1,000



Area K. Volcano Caves

The northern trail winds around clusters of hardened lava made by previous eruptions from the lone mountain of the isle. Much of the jungle thins out around the solitary peak, the vegetation having been burned and destroyed multiple times over several decades of lava flows. The volcano has not erupted for some time and is overdue to release its pressurized heat and magma.

A large cave opening on the south side of the lone mountain leads to several molten-rock tunnels that wind throughout the interior. Eventually, the tunnels lead to the center of the volcano where a great chamber and ledge overlook the conduit pipe and magma chamber far below. The heat is intense here – those wearing metal armor will begin to take 1 hp of damage each round after the number of rounds equivalent to their Constitution score. Prolonged exposure will eventually result in dehydration, heat exhaustion, and possibly death.

Two Fire Elementals dance along the edges of the conduit pipe below the ledge and will rise to face intruders within 1d6 rounds. They dislike being bothered by mortals and will attack if the trespassers fail to leave quickly.

2 Fire Elementals: AC 0, HD 12, HP 54 each, #AT 1 fiery blow, D 2-16, MV 120 (40'), Save F12, ML 10, XP 1,100 each

Area L. Shark Beach

The trail opens onto a white, sandy beach with little vegetation along the edge of the isle. Three skeletons, lying face down and facing the jungle, are bleached white from the heat of the sun and strong wind whipping around the northern point of the small land mass. A few dozen silver and gold coins may be found in the sand around the remains, along with a few rusty weapons.

A shipwreck lies amidst several low-lying rocks a few hundred feet off the shore. A broken mast with tattered sails leans to one side and a gaping hole in the hull exposes part of the interior of a ship that ran aground. Occasionally, the glint of metal shines from within the hull of the damaged ship.

Any who swim out to the to the cluster of sharp rocks will encounter a frenzy of **Great White Sharks** who make this area their preferred hunting ground. Swimmers will find themselves trapped by 1d4 hungry sharks who circle a single prey, likely one who may already be injured and/or bleeding.

1d4 Great White Sharks: AC 4, HD 8, HP 36 each, #AT 1 bite, D 2-20, MV 180 (60'), Save F4, ML 7, XP 650 each

The ruins of a small pirate ship lie amongst the hidden rocks off the northern shore of the isle. Nearly a dozen skeletal remains of trapped pirates lie on the rocks, dead from starvation or heat stroke. Much of the contents of the ship's hull were lost to the bottom of the sea during the wreck, but a single, large chest remains lodged between the hull boards and a protruding rock. The shiny brass bands of the chest reflect the sun's rays and are visible from several hundred feet. The unlocked chest contains a set of priestly garments—a white robe and tall hat, both made from silk and inlaid with several hundred tiny rubies, lies neatly folded under a golden rod. The rod is encrusted with several dozen large rubies and is **magical**. Once per day, the rod may be placed upon any injury, healing it as a *Cure Serious Wounds* spell would. Several pockets are found within the robe—there is a 5% chance that a small ruby (value 50 gp) will magically appear in one of the robe pockets each day.

Area M. Quiet Beach

The trail that Cortezzo and Anna used to escape the island ends in a narrow strip of deserted beach. Mangrove trees and bunches of tall grass blend with the jungle, nearly making the beach invisible from further up the trail. Several sunken rowboats lie in the shallows beyond the sand, destroyed by Cortezzo before he and his lover fled the isle. However, a single boat was missed—an undamaged rowboat with four oars is caught up in the mangrove roots, found on a successful search of the area.

A smaller island, nearly a mile west, can be seen from the beach. Adventurers with a strong eye may see the single tree at the island's center, towering above the rest.

Chapter Three: An Island Made for Two

The small island to the west of the Forbidden Isle is known to a few as the Cursed Tree Island. A small land mass, roughly a quarter of the size of the Forbidden Isle, is just as thick with jungle as any of the tiny islands in the Sea of Dread. What makes this island different, is the single, massive tree at its center. This tree, a different species than any other tropical tree on the island, towers above all others by nearly double.

Island tribes avoid the island, primarily because of its rich legend of curses and death. Rarely have hunters or explorers stayed longer than a few nights on the island, claiming to hear the moans of dying humans and animals and seeing ghostly images flitting between the jungle boles. The deserted village encampment around the giant tree at the island's center appears welcoming at first but slowly transforms into a shadowed, frightful place after a few nights. The camp is deemed too evil for use and is left abandoned and untouched by island tribals.

A New Home for the Lovers

After stashing the small boat in the tall grasses along the jungle edge, Cortezzo and Anna followed the only trail they could find, a worn and little used footpath. The trail led the pair to the center of the island and to the base of the great tree in the middle of an abandoned encampment. The lovers finally have found a secluded place away from those seeking to disrupt their relationship and tear them apart.

However, they have yet to realize that they are in greater danger than ever before. The island is haunted by ghostly spirits that will slowly drive them insane with fear. An evil spirit living within the roots of the great tree will instill its wickedness within the hearts of the two lovers, eventually leading them to murder or suicide.

Area A: Beach Landing

The nearest beach within view of the Forbidden Isle, this area is an obvious landing spot for any arriving from the east. Adventurers should easily find the tracks of Cortezzo and Anna in the sand near the solitary jungle trail. Additionally, the concealed rowboat can be found rather quickly, stashed in the tall weeds at the edge of the small beach.

Lawful adventurers will sense the presence of evil immediately after they set foot on the island. Neutral characters will not feel similarly until they are within a few hundred feet of the encampment (Area F). The feeling of dread and wickedness continues to intensify as characters near the great tree at the center of the island. Chaotic characters will feel none of the same feelings as other-aligned characters.

Ghostly apparitions will be glimpsed flitting from tree to tree, climbing vines, or disappearing into thick vegetation. At first, these shadowy appearances are seen infrequently but by the second full day of being on the island, the events will occur almost hourly. Brave adventurers that stay on the island will begin seeing these ghostly visages all day and night, even spotting them in their dreams.

Hallucinations and Issues on Cursed Tree Isle	
Days Present	Results
2-3	Fearful, lack of sleep (-1 to saving throws), a strong desire to leave the island
4-5	Suspicious of others, jealousy, extremely irritable, little to no sleep (-1 to actions)
6-7	Angry, hateful, easy to provoke, alignment shifts (L to N or N to C)
8+	Will attack any living creature nearby, must make daily saving throws (roll under Wisdom) to avoid going insane
<i>"Cured" by leaving the island.</i>	

Table 8

Cursed Tree Isle—Wandering Monsters

1d100 Roll Result	"Wandering" Monster	# Encountered	Basic Statistics
01	Green Dragon	1	AC1 HD 8** HP 40 MV 90/240 AT 3 or breath
02-03	Giant Snake	1	AC6 HD 5 HP 25 MV 90 AT 1 D 1-4 + constr
04-05	Quicksand	1	Dexterity save fail, drown in 1d6 rounds
06-07	Jungle Pit	1	Check versus Traps, take 1d6+1 damage
08-09	Jungle Cats	1d2	AC 4 HD 4 HP 20 MV 210 AT 3 D 1-4/1-4/1-8
10-13	Jungle Boars	1d6	AC7 HD 3 HP 15 MV 150 AT 1 D 2-8
14-17	Root Spiders	1d6	AC4 HD 1+1 HP 6 MV 60 AT 1 D 1-4 + venom
18-20	Exploring Pirates	1d4	AC7 HD 2 HP 10 MV 120 AT 1 D weapon

Table 9

Area B: Burial Pillar

Far from the few remaining trails, the forgotten burial site of a great island chieftain has lain unmolested for nearly a century. The tip of a great pillar marking the site rises above the jungle forest line and may be seen from any of the four beaches of the island. Getting to the site is challenging – a new trail to the location must be forged with dozens of hours of axe and blade work. Wandering monsters of the jungle island will indeed be interested in the commotion made by adventurers hacking their way through thick vegetation.

An unmarked pillar leans slightly to one side, its base in the soft ground shifting over the years. The base of the pillar is nearly fifteen feet wide and is buried ten feet deep. The pillar rises well over fifty feet in total. How a single piece of stone of this size and weight was brought to this place and set on one end is a mystery.

The adventurers will find a stone tomb under ten feet of loose soil at the base of the pillar. When opened, the tomb will reveal mostly dust and fragments of bone. Remnants of cloth and wooden jewelry can be seen amidst the decayed remains. However, a silver bracelet and a strange, golden dagger appear untarnished by time. The silver bracelet is a **Bracelet of Protection from Spells**. When worn, it protects from unwanted spell effects by giving a +1 to Spell saving throws. The dagger is silver (but painted gold) and is three-sided. The

weapon provides a bonus to attacks and damage (much like a **dagger +1**) but leaves a wound that will not heal naturally. Only healing spells and potions can heal damage caused by this dangerous weapon.

Areas C, D, E: Small Beaches

Each of the three beaches are small and nearly undetectable unless passed by within twenty feet. The trails leading from the beaches to the center compound are old, overgrown and often perilous with quicksand, sinkholes or dangerous denizens of the island.

Area F: Great Tree Compound

All trails end in the center of the island, terminating in a great clearing below a massive tree. The great tree is nearly thirty feet in diameter and is of a species not found in this region. Towering over one-hundred and fifty feet in the air, the sight of the massive tree is breathtaking.

Ten-foot high wooden walls supported by thick boles surround the encampment, providing great protection from jungle creatures and enemies. Three gates in the walls provide access into the camp. A clear spring of cool water is also found in the clearing outside the walls of the encampment. Creatures of the jungle travel to this only source of water on the island. Lingering too long here, adventurers will encounter plenty of creatures desperate to get a drink of water.

Area F1: Inner Compound

Four huts are found within the fortified encampment, each filled with simple furnishings to support twelve to eighteen people. Although old and dirty, the furnishings are well-made and suitable for use. The camp has the appearance of a village that was quickly abandoned – clay pots contain spoiled liquids and tables are covered with wooden dishes of rotted food. A search of the compound may yield a few pieces of ornate jewelry.

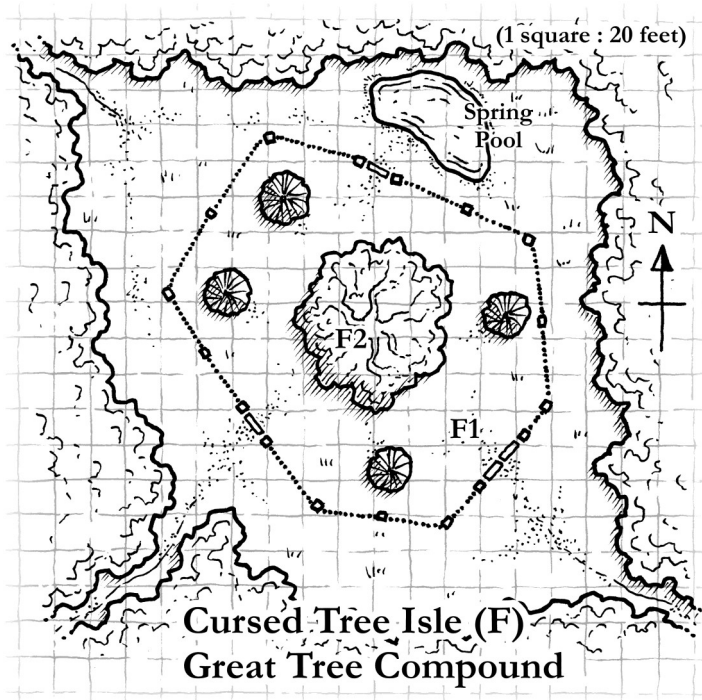
The footprints of Cortezzo and Anna are found throughout the camp but can be traced most recently to the stairs at the bottom of the great tree.

Area F2: The Great Tree

Stairs have been carved in the tree, starting at the bottom and leading up into the leafy vegetation above. Several landings in the tree branches provide additional living quarters for camp villagers. Ten more beds and plenty of chairs and tables are found in eight separate landings. A series of rope bridges and ladders provide access between landings.

When characters arrive in the camp, the swashbuckler and his lady will be descending the stairs and will stop when they see the characters. Seeing that they are outnumbered, Cortezzo will try to negotiate with the group. He will offer more than what Anna's husband has offered for characters to leave the two in peace on the island. He has a small chest of gold, silver, gems, and jewelry that he will trade for their lives. The total value of the contents of the chest is 20,000 gp.

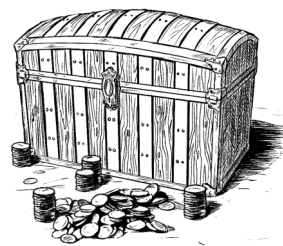
Anna will plead with the characters to lie to her husband, to tell him that they found her dead and that they killed Cortezzo. She will explain that she was mistreated by her terrible husband and that he never loved her but only used her as a pawn in the political games of the region. She can display several scars and old bruises that hint to the sinister behaviors of her malicious husband as proof if need be.



Decisions, Decisions

The characters are presented with four viable options: 1) to take Anna and Cortezzo back to New Tradertown, 2) take the swashbuckler's payment and leave the pair to live out their days on the island, 3) refuse the swashbuckler's payment but leave the pair to live out their days on the island, or 4) to confiscate Cortezzo's treasure and return the pair for the reward. Of course, only despicable characters would act on option four. If the adventurers decide to leave the pair here, the GM may end the adventure at this point. However, the story can be extended by adding the "Ensuring Anna's Return" optional ending to the adventure.

Cortezzo and Anna, at first hopeful that this island would be the end of their flight, will begin to feel the evil presence below the tree and within the camp. They may ask the characters to investigate the area further, afraid to do so themselves.



Ensuring Anna's Return

To ensure his wife's return, Orgo d'Lannatta hired a second set of bounty hunters to track the characters as they search for the lovers. Their orders are to kill the characters and Cortezzo before returning Anna to her husband safely. The best time to move the bounty hunters into the adventure is when the characters confront Cortezzo and Anna in the island encampment. The bounty hunters are all Chaotic and will not think twice of mercilessly killing all the characters (see Table 10 below).

The GM should hint (likely with comments made by the bounty hunters) that Anna's husband was never really going to pay the adventurers for their work, planning all along to double-cross them. This should help the characters realize that Anna has been telling the truth about her untrustworthy and ruthless husband.

Under the Great Tree

A secret door is found under the stairs at the base of the great tree, leading to a spiraling staircase into the earth. At the bottom of the stairs, several "root" tunnels head in different directions. Each short tunnel requires all but

halflings to stoop or crawl to pass through. Most of the tunnels terminate in small empty chambers where ancient pots of clay hold water or minerals that are used to feed the great spirit of the tree. At least a dozen **Root Spiders** move about the tunnels, busy collecting nutrients for their master. At the first sound of battle, the remaining spiders will arrive to assist in driving out intruders. Each root spider's bite injects a slowing venom – each successful bite penalizes the victim's initiative by 1.

12+ Root Spiders: AC 4, HD 1+1, HP 6 each, #AT 1 bite + venom, D 1-4, MV 60 (20'), Save F1, ML 12, XP 15 each

The Great, Evil Spirit of the Tree

An evil Druid was penalized for her crimes against nature, a rival goddess binding her to the roots of a great tree on a remote island. Cursed to remain bound to the tree for all eternity, the spirit's hatred and evil heart slowly corrupted the island's creatures, vegetation and water supply. Victims of her corruption now roam the island as ghostly apparitions, bent on driving intruders mad. They cannot be harmed but are ever-present, continually seeking new prey to haunt and torment.

"Evil" Bounty Hunters						
Name	Class	AC	Level	HP	S-I-W-D-C-Ch	Details
Fornazzi *	F	3	5	30	15-11-12-13-15-15	sword +2, chainmail +1, Potion of Heroism
Burk	F	5	6	25	17-8-9-11-12-11	Mace +1, chainmail, (3) Potions of Healing
Yurk	F	5	5	20	13-9-9-15-13-12	Sword, short bow +1, 40 arrows, leather armor +1
Giggly Pete	T	5	6	24	11-11-11-16-12-15	Dagger +1, short bow +2, 20 arrows, leather armor, Bag of Holding **
Merkel	T	5	6	23	12-9-13-17-11-14	Spear +1, dagger +1, leather armor, Potion of Gaseous Form
Kenothan	MU	8	4	12	9-17-13-13-9-13	Staff of Snakes (3 ch), Wand of Secret Door Detection (9 ch) spell book, spells: <i>Darkness</i> , <i>Magic Missile</i> , <i>Invisibility</i> , <i>Mirror Image</i>
Brother Grell	C	1	5	20	13-11-16-13-12-17	Mace +1, (2) Scrolls of Healing, plate mail, shield, spells: <i>Cause Light Wounds</i> , <i>Cure Light Wounds</i> , <i>Bless</i> , <i>Hold Person</i>

* Leader of group, ** Bag of Holding holds the group's treasure (Treasure Type E)

Table 10

The evil spirit of the tree is one with the root system and is no longer a separate entity. However, its enlarged heart is suspended by hundreds of small roots in the central chamber far below the tree. Three successful strikes will destroy the corrupted organ, finally ridding the island of its evil and curse. However, any attacker that inflicts pain to the evil spirit's heart may be affected by their action—see Table 11 below for potential effects.

When the blackened heart is finally destroyed, it will burst into a hundred tiny fragments. Each of these fragments will be found to be an uncut onyx gem worth 25 gp each. Once the evil druid spirit has been slain, the presence of evil will disappear, returning the island to normal once again.

Cursed Tree Spirit Afflictions			
L	N	C	Effects
1	1-2	1-3	Evilness transfers to character's heart, takes 1d4 months
2	3-4	4-6	Permanently reduces Charisma by one half (round up)
3	5-6	7-9	Permanently loses 1 level
4	7-8	10-12	Takes half their full hit points in damage (no saving throw)
5	9-10	13-15	Suffers a penalty of -2 to all actions for 7 days
6	11-12	16-18	Is tasked with a quest from an evil god
7	13-14	19-20	Takes 1d10 hit points in damage
8	15-16	n/a	Gains a temporary bonus of 1 to the Constitution for 7 days
9	17-18	n/a	Is tasked with a quest from a good god
10	19-20	n/a	Gains 1d10 hit points to their maximum (permanent)
11-18	n/a	n/a	Permanently gains 1 point to a random attribute score
19-20	n/a	n/a	Instantly gains one level of experience
<i>Roll 1d20 and use the score by alignment</i>			

Table 11

Adventure Conclusion

If the evil tree spirit is destroyed, and Cortezzo and Anna are left on the island, they will enjoy a long life together in peace. The characters will always be welcome to visit, even stay for short periods in the encampment, if traveling in this part of the Sea of Dread. Other good-natured folks may come to live with Cortezzo and Anna, growing the size of the village over time.

However, if the tree spirit is not dealt with, Cortezzo and Anna will likely kill each other or themselves after a week or two. Adventurers returning to the island will find nothing but their remains and the still-present oppressive evil of the cursed druid.

With the main plots of the story uncovered and revealed, and depending on the outcome of the optional bounty hunter encounter, the characters may have new tasks ahead of them. Should they search out Orgo d'Lannatta and bring him to justice in some way? Should they explore more of the islands in the region? Should they leave the sea and return to dry land again, preferring to delve into dungeons and ruins? There are plenty of options for the curious adventurer in the Sea of Dread!

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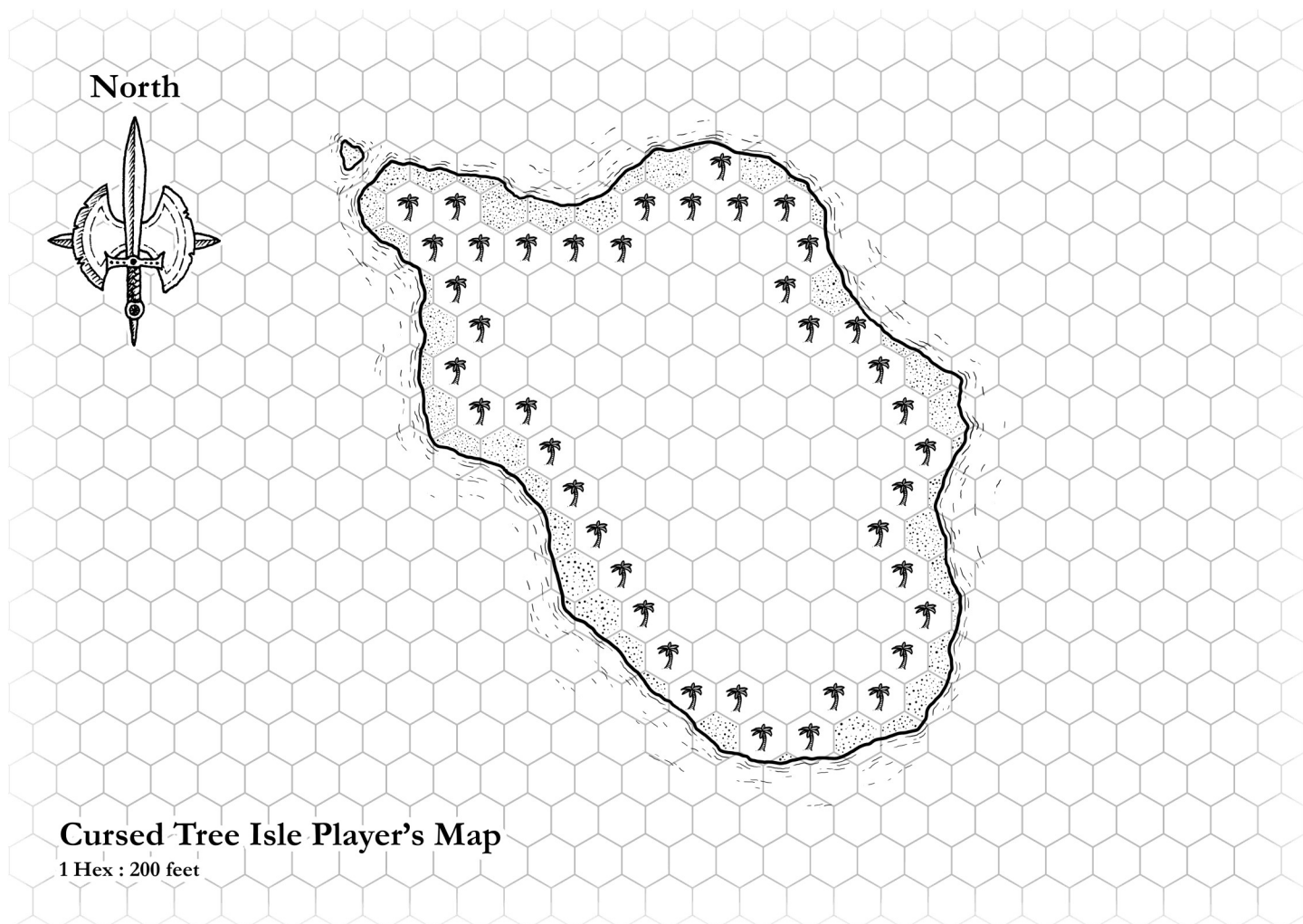
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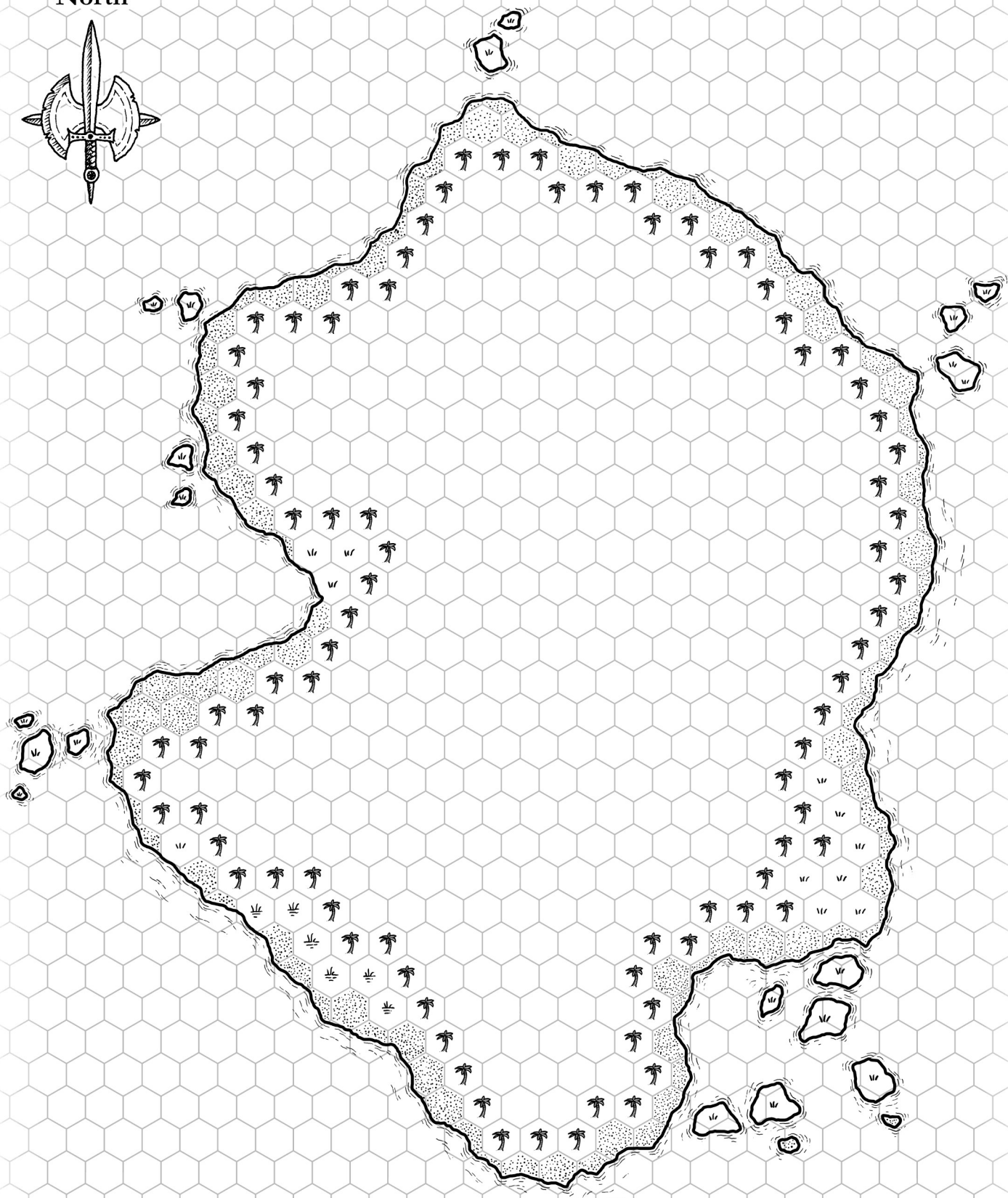


Additional Player and non-Player Characters

Use this page to list characters and non-player characters for this adventure. Use the Special column to note interesting details about each character or non-player character (spells, magical items, etc.) and the Place column to indicate where the characters or non-player characters may be found (or first encountered).

Characters / Non-Player Characters													
Name	Class/ Profession	Level	AC	HP	Str	Int	Wis	Dex	Con	Cha	Personality	Special	Place

North



Forbidden Isle Player's Map

1 Hex : 200 feet



This item is only one of many North Texas RPGCon Exclusives produced yearly for the convention.

Other adventure books produced for the convention include:

Palace of the Vampire Queen by Wee Warriors (OD&D, 2010)
 Ursined, Sealed & Delivered by Dennis Sustare (S&W, 2010)
 High in the Hellgate Mountains by Tim Kask (OD&D, 2010)
 Temple of the Weaver Queen by Tim Kask (OD&D, 2010)
 Black Ridge Island series (1-3) by Ben Burns (D&D, 2010)
 Dwarven Glory by Wee Warriors (OD&D, 2011)
 The Dark Abbot of Kos / Hive of the Wasp Men by Steve Winter (B/X & Gamma World, 2011)
 Onto the Devil's Skillet by Tim Kask (OD&D, 2011)
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 Return to the Frozen North by Tim Kask (OD&D, 2011)
 Tower of the Mad Wizard by Tim Kask (OD&D, 2011)
 Tourist Traps by Dennis Sustare (S&W, 2011)
 The Misty Isles by Wee Warriors (OD&D, 2012)
 Island Town by Erol Otus (D&D, 2012)
 Tomb of Amemnes by Steve Winter (B/X, 2012)
 Death of Tlangeshan by Steve Winter (EPT, 2012)
 Rendezvous With Ruinator by Steve Winter (Gamma World, 2012)
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 The Sinister Secret of Sweetmeade Abbey by Tim Kask (OD&D, 2012)
 The Wizard's Amulet by Frog God Games (S&W, 2013)
 A Simple Clearing of the Land by James M. Ward (Solo Fantasy, 2013)
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 Oublette by Chris Clark (Solo D&D, 2015)
 Oracle of the Three Towers by James Ward and Chris Clark (MA, 2015)
 Return From Dragonmount by Edwin Nagy (D&D, 2017)
 Dungeoneer Revisted: Night of the Walking Wet by Jennell Jaquays (OD&D, 2017)
 Caves of the Unknown by Charley Phipps, Thom Wilson and Mike Badolato (B/X 2018)



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