

FAERIE TALES FROM UNLIT SHORES

Three Nights in Portsmouth



Daniel J. Bishop



COMPATIBLE WITH
DCC
RPG

FT 2.5

Three Nights in Portsmouth

A **Dungeon Crawl Classics** anthology for 4-8 level
2 characters by Daniel J. Bishop.

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This product offers three short adventures that can be sprinkled into, or occur separately from, *FT 2: The Portsmouth Mermaid*, by Purple Duck Games. The judge may also use these as parts of later campaign events, occurring between *FT 2* and *FT 4*, or even one or more to give PCs some much needed XP if they are not yet ready to handle *The Portsmouth Mermaid*. If you are not using Portsmouth, these scenarios can easily be adapted to any urban environment.

The village of Portsmouth in *The Portsmouth Mermaid* offers several features that the players may not become aware of unless they are specifically pointed out. Each of these adventures highlights one of these features. As *The Portsmouth Mermaid* takes place during a Yuletide celebration, winter is assumed in each of these scenarios. A good judge can easily adapt these to other seasons, often with no more work than changing parts of the descriptive text.

Each of these is also short enough for a judge to run in a two- or three-hour convention slot without difficulty.

Blood for Cthulhu!

Synopsis: Cthulhu cultists capture an ally of the PCs to be sacrificed in a ceremony in the salt marshes. Minions of Dagon are already central to *The Portsmouth Mermaid*. This side adventure brings the Cthulhu cultists into sharp focus.

Setup: An ally, or a character that the PCs like, is kidnapped by Cthulhu cultists. That the NPC has been kidnapped is not obvious until dark. The PCs learn that a suspicious-looking party went into the salt marshes east of town, where there are rumors of occasional human sacrifices at an old standing stone, about three hours' travel distant. Local folklore says that the sacrifices occur at midnight, which is now just over three hours away....

The Cthulhu cultists may simply be taking a victim, but if the PCs actually like any of the Dagonite NPCs they have met, or would be moved to rescue them, that is the character taken. Another Dagonite character supplies the PCs with the information needed to find the monolith, including a crude map. In this way, the initial sacrifice was intended by the cultists to weaken the Dagonites, and the Dagonites are using the PCs to disrupt the cultists.

If the judge is cruel, the Dagonite NPC that the PCs are attempting to rescue has not even been kidnapped – the Dagonites don't know who has been taken, and simply want the PCs to break up the cult ceremony. In this case, a secondary NPC – perhaps one even more important to the PCs – is the actual sacrifice. If the PCs are not moved to investigate, they might not discover this until far too late.

For Judges not using the *FT Series* modules, Dagonites are followers of Dagon, a similar, but different, deity from Cthulhu. You can use any rival cults in your campaign setting, or simply ignore the rival cult angle. Apart from tying into the general action in Portsmouth, it isn't important to how this side-adventure plays out.

Event One: The Salt Marsh: East of Portsmouth, the higher land gives way to a salt marsh fed by countless small streams and brackish pools. Sea water washes into the marsh here, making a habitat for shrimp, sea birds, crabs, and many other creatures. Local legend suggests that the salt marsh was created by one "Granny Whateley", who foolishly bargained with a devil for a mill that could grind anything, but forgot to ask how to stop it. She used it to grind salt, and her ruined cabin is rumored to be hidden somewhere within the marsh, the ancient mill still churning out an endless supply of salt.

Crossing the salt marshes towards Harbin, you see the path you were told to follow, heading north toward the sea. The road here is on a causeway of built-up stone and earth, cutting through marshland to the north and south, and stretching an hour to the west. How far it may stretch to the east you cannot be certain, but Harbin is said to be no more than eight miles – perhaps three and a half hour’s walk – from Portsmouth. The marshland looks almost peaceful, its blanket of dull snow broken here and there by reeds or clusters of dark twisted trees. Somewhere within, though, is an ancient stone monument where, at midnight, sacrifice will occur. You have only two hours left to prevent it.

Travelling the salt marsh at night is handled abstractly. To succeed, the PCs must reach the next event within the next 80 minutes (but see also Event Three). Doing so requires that the PCs successfully complete five “steps” within the allotted time. Each attempt to move forward through the marshlands requires a roll. The standard roll takes 10 minutes of moving through the marsh. A high roll can complete 1, 2, or even 3 steps. A low roll can result in no forward progress, or even undo previous successes. Finally, each time the PCs engage in combat which lasts more than 1 round, they lose 10 minutes.

The players must decide which character is leading. The leader rolls 1d20, adding Intelligence and Luck modifiers. The roll gains a +2 bonus for each character with an appropriate occupation – this should include foresters, trackers, and even vagabonds! If the leader has an appropriate occupation, roll on 1d24 (the +2 bonus still applies). The judge may allow greater bonuses to characters who are swamp natives, or who can scout by flying. Note also that the group can change the leader over the course of this event without penalty, but any long conversations between rolls should be docked against the group’s time.

The writer suggests using 1d12 to indicate the number of 10-minute intervals that has passed, and 1d5 to indicate the number of successful steps that must still be made. Keeping these things within the players’ view will help create a focused sense of urgency, especially if they lose time due to side conversations.

1d20 + Modifiers	Outcome
0 or less	A promising start leads to a rime-encrusted mire which is obviously impassable; not only has the last 10 minutes of effort been lost, but you need to backtrack to regain a trail (lose 1 successful step)
1-5	The trail disappears into the marsh. Roll a Luck check or be forced to backtrack (lose 1 successful step); if the check is successful, nothing is gained, but no successful steps are lost, either.
6-7	You have gone in a circle; nothing is gained.
8-9	2d6 Hobyahs burst out of the surrounding swamp, attempting to overwhelm the PCs. They fight in waves, moving in and out of the reeds, but unless confronted with dogs, will fight to the death. When the last is felled, there is a 1 in 6 chance that another wave of 2d6 hobyahs appear. Check until no more hobyahs come. There is a 1 in 6 chance that the PCs also gain a successful step. Hobyah: Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 10; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 20’ or roll 40’; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60’, afraid of barking dogs; SV Fort -2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.
10-11	A way towards their goal is found, but it runs along the exposed flesh of several gigantic, presumably hibernating, salt leeches. PCs choosing to risk this passage must each make a Luck check. 0 failures: all PCs make it safely. 1 failure: a leech shifts, but does not awaken. 2+ failures: a leech awakens and attacks. For every six rounds of combat, there is a 1 in 5 chance of another leech awakening and attacking. Colossal Salt Leech: Init -8; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 plus blood drain); AC 14; HD 4d8; hp 20 each; MV 10’ or swim 30’; Act 1d20; SP blood drain (automatic 1d4 per round after bite), half damage from bludgeoning weapons; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will -4; AL N.
12-15	A ruined cottage is seen in the distance, apparently 1d3 successful steps away. If a successful step would reach the cottage, it appears to have moved, and is now again 1d3 successful steps away. If ignored, this does little harm, but any successful step toward the cottage doesn’t count as a step towards reaching Event 2. Furthermore, every 3 successful steps towards the cottage negate a successful attempt towards Event 2. It is impossible to reach the cottage; it always appears farther away when approached. If the PCs ignore the cottage, they gain a successful step.

16-18	A relatively safe passage is discovered, resulting in 1 successful step. However, each PC must make a DC 5 Strength or Agility check to cross a section of freezing water. Any failure results in the PC getting his lower half soaked, and taking 1d3 points of temporary Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage (roll randomly) due to hypothermia. He loses 1 additional point every 10 minutes until he makes a DC 10 Fort save. This damage continues until he has warmed himself by a fire or made 3 successful saves.
19-20	A relatively safe passage is discovered, resulting in 1 successful step.
21-22	A relatively safe passage is discovered, resulting in 1 successful step. You can increase this to 2 steps by pushing through a miasmal fog (each PC must make a DC 10 Fort save or suffer 1d3 temporary damage).
23-24	A relatively safe passage is discovered, resulting in 2 steps
25+	Remains of an ancient road are discovered, allowing the PCs to move rapidly. Complete 2 steps within 10 minutes. You can attempt to complete 3 steps, but then the PC with the lowest Luck must make a DC 10 Reflex save or slide into the marsh. This reduces the gain to only a single step if the other PCs pause to help him. Unaided, a PC must succeed in three Strength checks (DC 5, 10, and 15) to pull himself free from the mire. Armor penalty applies. Any failed check causes 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage; if Stamina reaches 0, the PC drowns. Once free of the mire, the PC can then take 1d3 point of Stamina damage to catch up to the others, or be 5 minutes behind per check (15+ minutes).

All temporary damage taken in these step can recovered with 10 minute's rest.

Event Two: Salt Hounds: *The tangled marshes give way to an ancient road, rising on a sort of a berm, and wide enough that two may walk abreast. In the distance, about half an hour away, you can see the light of a large fire burning – surely this is the place you seek!*

At the start of Event One, the PCs had 120 minutes to reach the sacrificial area before it is too late. Subtract the time spent in Event One from this in order to determine how much time (if any) remains. If the PCs are too late, that's okay. There is not requirement that they arrive in "the nick of time". Success or failure should be based upon game play, not the "needs of the plot"!

If the PCs reach this point before midnight, going

forward summons one salt hound per sentient creature (which can include, for example, familiars). If the sacrifice has already been completed, there is only a 1 in 3 chance that a salt hound will arise for any given creature; after an hour, the hounds no longer appear. Salt hounds arise from the frozen slime and broken reeds of the winter marsh. They appear as a large dogs made completely out of bog-stuff, with flaming eyes of marsh gas the size of saucers.

When a salt hound successfully bites an opponent, that creature must make a DC 10 Fort save or take 1d3 Stamina damage as the hound drains salt from its victim. Each salt hound will only attack the being that summoned it, although it can be attacked by others. If the being it was summoned to attack is reduced to 0 hp or 0 Stamina, the salt hound collapses back into cold muck and half-frozen marsh plants. Likewise, a slain hound collapses into muck and detritus.

Salt Hounds (number varies): Init +0; Atk bite +0 melee (1d3 plus salt drain); AC 14; HD 1d8+3; hp 8 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP salt drain (Fort DC 10, 1d3 Stamina), attack only summoner, death throes; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5; AL C.

Event Three: Approaching the Ceremony: The sacrificial area is half an hour from Event Two, but characters can hustle if they so choose, trading 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage (recovered with 5 minutes' rest) to reduce the time to 15 minutes. If it is before midnight, this event occurs halfway to the final location.

As you plow through the frozen marsh towards the red glare ahead of you, you become aware of the sound of muffled tom-toms. Suddenly, as though you have breached a containing wall, you can hear the noise of the religious cult ahead, noises that sound like a strange and terrible admixture of human calls and bestial language – howls and squawking ecstatic hoots that only a poet or a madman could truly describe. Like waves, the orgiastic ululations break, and a chorus of voices rises, chanting "Fungghoul-ay muggle-won-ah-fuh Cthulhu Rye-lay weegah nagul fuh-ta-gun'." The most horrible thing is that you almost believe you can hear an inhuman something else which answers in an indescribable whispering voice.

(The Judge may substitute a different pronunciation guide to "Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh

wgah'nagl fhtagn" if she wishes!)

Continuing on requires a DC 8 Will save. Those who fail faint, passing out for 2d20 minutes (2d3 if a character attempts to revive them).

Event Four: Blood for Cthulhu: This event assumes that it is still possible to rescue the sacrifice. If midnight has passed, skip to Aftermath.

As if a curtain is drawn back, you find yourself suddenly before a tableau of horror. A grassy island rises from the frozen marsh, clear of trees and relatively dry, perhaps 200 feet across. A horde of naked humanity leaps and twists around a monstrous ring-shaped bonfire, braying, bellowing, and writhing. In the center of the bonfire stands a great granite monolith, some eight feet tall, with a smaller greenish statue atop it – somehow, the small statue seems to loom larger than either fire or monolith. The dancers move widdershins around the fire in an endless-seeming bacchanal. Between you and the dancers are a wide circle of ten scaffolds, from each of which hangs a potential sacrifice, head downward, and likewise void of clothing.

The occasional antiphonal whisper seems to come from the darkness beyond the fire. Perhaps it is only imagination that creates the faint beating of great wings from the low wind, or a glimpse of shining eyes and a mountainous white bulk far beyond the island from glittering ice, salt, and stars.

There are about 100 Cthulhu cultists involved in the ceremony, not only from Portsmouth, but from other villages in the area. The Judge is encouraged to include possible glimpses of NPCs from Westlake, for example, which are known to the PCs. This is even more effective if the Judge can avoid granting the players certainty – these cultists are barely glimpsed, and soon escape.

The PCs are presumably armed, while the cultists are naked. A strong showing by the PCs breaks the cultists immediately, and they scatter into the swamp. In this case, they need defeat a mere 1d10+10 cultists while the others flee. Cautious PCs embolden the cultists, who swarm them in order to gain additional sacrifices for dread Cthulhu.





Polypus White Thing

If midnight arrives before the cultists are defeated, 1d3 cultists will attempt to slay each of the sacrifices with obsidian knives placed near them. There is a 1 in 10 chance that any successful sacrifice is the person that the PCs are attempting to rescue, and each successful sacrifice strengthens the White Polypus Thing which lurks in the darkness. If three or more sacrifices are made, the Thing attacks.

The strength of the White Polypus Thing depends upon the number of successful sacrifices made. Where the “Sac” is used in the statblock, substitute the number of each sacrifice made. For example, each sacrifice grants the Thing one Hit Die, one Action Die, and determines the creature’s attack bonus.

The Thing is an amorphous white shape with luminescent eyes, about 15’ tall. It is surrounded by dark, bat-like demons that are actually extensions of its being, and which fly in and out of its central mass. Attacks against the bat-like demons do not count against the Thing’s total hit points. If a demon is hit, it simply vanishes in a puff of cold white air, and a new demon is formed by the Thing. If the Thing is reduced to 0 hp, it is not slain, but is instead forced back into the Outer Dark. It seems to both recede and grow larger, until it is only a pinpoint that fills the entire sky. Freezing air washes over all present (Fort DC 5 or take 1d5

damage), and then it is gone.

Cthulhu cultists (up to 100): Init +0; Atk fist +0 melee (1d3 subdual); AC 10; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 30’; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +5; AL N.

Polypus White Thing: Init +Sac; Atk bat-like demon +Sac melee/ranged (1d5); AC 10+S; HD Sac d10+2 per S; hp 8 per Sac; MV fly 50’; Act Sd20; SV Fort +S, Ref +S, Will +Sac+5; AL N.

Aftermath

The primary benefit of success is rescuing someone important to the PCs. The other would-be sacrifices are either interment merchants, vagabonds, colliers, and others on the fringes of society. There is a 1 in 5 chance that any given sacrifice is a Dagonite. While this may earn the PCs an ally in the Esoteric Order of Dagon, interrupting the ceremony will surely earn them the enmity of the cult of Cthulhu.

The obsidian knives do 1d3, but break on a natural 1 or 20. A wizard or elf can use one of these daggers to sacrifice a sentient victim to Cthulhu as part of casting a spell, gaining a +1 bonus for each victim so sacrificed. The daggers owner suffers nightmares if it is kept on his person (Will DC 10 or suffer 1d3 Personality or Intelligence damage each night of sleep; player chooses). The DC is lowered to 5 if the dagger is kept elsewhere. The save only fails on a natural “1” if the dagger is kept remotely under lock and key.

The idol atop the monolith is an 8-inch image of Cthulhu, carved into light, soapy green stone. Anyone who carries the idol has her Luck reduced by 2 until she gets rid of it permanently. A cleric of Cthulhu who possesses this idol may use it three times a day to perform any of the following functions: add +2 to any spell check, lower disapproval by 2 (to a minimum of 1), or cause a creature within 100’ to take 1d8 damage (no save). A cleric of Cthulhu will recognize these benefits instinctively.

A cleric of any other deity who carries the idol also has his disapproval go up by 2 so long as the idol is in his possession. If the cleric destroys the idol, he immediately lowers his disapproval to 1. In addition, he gains a +4 bonus on his next spell check. The idol is not easy to destroy, though, requiring 9 points of damage and ignoring the first 5 points from any blow. Each time a

character strikes the idol, he must succeed in a DC 10 Will save or suffer a minor curse, taking 1d3 points of damage to a random ability score (not Luck). A cleric will instinctively know these benefits and risks of the idol.

A cleric of Cthulhu who destroys the idol is instantly blasted for 3d8 damage (no save). A cleric of Cthulhu or non-cleric who destroys the idol must succeed in a DC 15 Will save or suffer a minor corruption, which forms over the course of 1d7 weeks.

A wizard of elf can use the idol to Spellburn by calling upon dread Cthulhu himself! To do so, the caster must hold the idol while casting the spell, and roll on the following table. If a living sacrifice is included in the casting, roll 1d8. If the sacrifice is sentient, roll 1d5. Otherwise, roll 1d14. The caster is instinctively aware of how to use the idol, but is not aware of the table results (until they occur!).

1d5, 1d8, Result or 1d14	
1	The Great Abyss yawns before you, and for a moment you see the universe with great clarity, including your terrible insignificance in the whole of Creation...and even the insignificance of Creation itself compared to the Elder Gods. Roll 3d3. You take that much Personality damage, but you also gain twice the result as a bonus to your spell check.
2	You see the underpinnings of this universe with great clarity, and are able to pull the right strings to increase the effect you desire. You gain a +7 bonus to your spell check with no cost.
3	The underpinnings of the universe are visible to you, and you are able to see what must be done to succeed. You gain a +5 bonus to your spell check with no cost.
4	A moment of clarity grants you a +3 bonus to the spell check at no cost.
5	You see your companions as they truly are, not as the fleshly things they cloak their true nature within, and it is appalling. Choose one of your companions now. You gain up to 10 points of Spellburn at no cost now, but if you do not sacrifice that companion the next time you use the idol, you will take additional points of ability score damage equal to twice the Spellburn granted, and each point will be determined randomly from Strength, Agility, and Stamina. The Judge may wish to inform the player of the choice facing him confidentially.

6	You touch Cthulhu's sleeping mind. Your spell check is improved by +3, but you have nightmares for 1d3 nights, and cannot recover lost spells through rest during this time.
7	You touch Cthulhu's mind, where in dreams in R'lyeh, and for a brief second (which seems like an eternity to you) you experience the dreams of the Elder God. You gain a +5 bonus to your spell check, but are haunted by nightmares for 2d5 nights, during which you cannot gain the benefits or natural healing or recover spells through sleep.
8	You enter into the thoughts of Cthulhu, and live an eternity in his dreams. For 1d3 rounds your body does nothing; thereafter roll 1d3 for each round you spent frozen; the total is your bonus to the spell check. Now roll 1d7 for each round you were inactive; this is the number of nights you have nightmares for. These nightmares prevent natural healing, and prevent the recovery of lost spells.
9	The idol feels coldly alive in your hands, enervating your body. You gain Spellburn as normal, expressed as Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage.
10	The idol feels coldly alive in your hands, and you can detect a malevolent will aligning momentarily with your own. You gain a +3 bonus to the spell check, but take 1d5 points of Personality damage.
11	The idol feels coldly alive in your hands, and for a brief second a tendril of Great Cthulhu's thoughts is focused upon you. You gain a +3 bonus to the spell check, but must roll on the Minor Corruption table on page 116 of the core rulebook. You may spend a point of Luck to avoid the corruption.
12	The idol feels warm in your hands, as Great Cthulhu becomes aware of you. You gain a +5 bonus to the spell check, but must roll on the Major Corruption table on page 118 of the core rulebook. You may spend a point of Luck to avoid the corruption.
13	The idol feels hot in your hands, and you must succeed in a DC 15 Fort save not to drop it. If you succeed in the Fort save, you gain a +10 bonus to the spell check. Whether you succeed or not, you take 1d3 damage from the idol and must roll on the Greater Corruption table on page 119 of the core rulebook. You may spend a point of Luck to avoid the corruption, but if you do, you must roll again on the Major Corruption table, and you must take the result.

14	Cthulhu Awakes! You immediately take 1d4 damage to Strength, Agility, Stamina, Intelligence, and Personality as you are blasted by his full consciousness. Three points of this damage are permanent; roll randomly to determine. The spell you were casting is seared from your mind, so that you may not recover it without relearning it or performing some Quest to undo the damage to your psyche. You gain a Greater Corruption which you cannot spend Luck to avoid. You pass out for 1d20 minutes. When you awaken, the idol is gone...returned to its Dread Master in R'lyeh.
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If brought to the Church of Dagon in Portsmouth, Soldeed will buy the idol for up to 300 gp, coins brought up from ancient shipwrecks by the Children of the Deep. These coins are greasy, and stamped with the markings of lost civilizations. They are faintly disturbing; merchants away from Portsmouth are willing to accept them only at half their value.

Trail of the Rat

Synopsis: A child is kidnapped by giant talking rats and dragged into a deserted building. Should the PCs attempt to rescue the child, they discover the tunnels under Portsmouth. This gives the Judge a means to introduce the under-tunnels to the PCs, and it gives the PCs a chance to gain allies in Portsmouth. Finally, it can be used to introduce the idea that the ghouls in Portsmouth know things, and can be traded with.

The Portsmouth Mermaid can also segue very easily into *The Thing in the Chimney*, the first adventure in this author's *HT 1: Perils of Cinder Claws*. If the Judge goes on to run the second adventure, *The Nexus of Yule*, later in the PCs' adventuring career, she is encouraged to link the talking giant rats of Portsmouth to the Ratfields in that adventure. See *HT 1*, published by *Purple Duck Games*, for more details.

Setup: This scenario can take place at any time, although it is better as dusk approaches, when there are fewer people on the street. The PCs see a few children lingering as the sky grows darker, having a boisterous war with dirty snow taken from Portsmouth's streets. Perhaps a PC is hit by an errant snowball, or the PCs stop to talk to the children briefly. It is entirely appropriate for a gaggle of urchins to mob the PCs with cries of "A penny, M'Lord!" or "A coin to buy a sweetie, M'Lady!" These are simply children: dirty, largely

selfish, and, when the players are certain that they are thankless, willing to give a heartfelt "Thank you, and bless you, Miss!" even if they are sent on their way without a bent copper piece. There is nothing sinister about them.

If Princess Annegret is with the PCs, she will give out several copper pieces. She will also, once a child is kidnapped, insist on his rescue, if the players do not seem motivated to help.

This scenario assumes that the PCs seek to rescue the child. If they do not, the scenario ends. The PCs may later go back to examine the building; in this event, the Judge will have to extrapolate what is there from the encounter areas described below, and the general information in *FT 2: The Portsmouth Mermaid*.

Adventure Start: *There is a child's cry behind you, quickly muffled. You turn just in time to see a cloaked figure drag a young boy into an abandoned building. The door closes behind the struggling figures, and the muffled cries fall silent.*

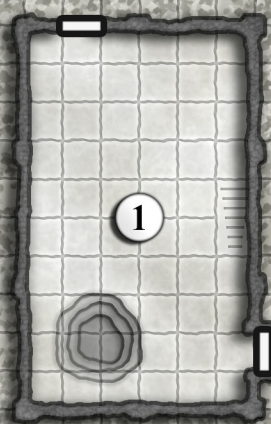
From the outside, the building looks typical of the many abandoned buildings in Portsmouth – two storied with shuttered windows sealed with boards, sagging from time and neglect, and showing signs of fungal infestation (thankfully dormant in the winter months). The door is barred from the inside, but the hinges are weak; it can be kicked open with a DC 5 Strength check.

Encounter Areas:

1. Interior: *The building is a mere shell inside, the upper floor rotted away so that a staircase to the right goes nowhere. To the left, there is a great hole that appears to have been gnawed upward from below, like a gigantic rat hole over ten feet across. The hole is not recent, and debris has been moved by passage in both directions, up from below, and down into the darkness. You can hear scuffling noises below.*

Characters whose occupations include tracking can easily determine that the two figures, one of them struggling, went down the hole. Moreover, one of the figures was barefoot, with long clawed feet. A DC 10 Intelligence check will identify the tracks as human-sized but rat-like. Other characters can make a DC 10 Intelligence check (using 1d10) to track the pair to

Trail of the Rat



THE HOUSE



CROSS SECTION



1 SQUARE = 5ft.



the tunnel, but have no chance of identifying what the tracks are.

Anyone foolish enough to climb the stairs to the north has a 1 in 3 chance of them collapsing on the way up, and a 1 in 3 chance of them collapsing on the way down. Falling damage is 1d6.

2. The Rat Tunnel: *The tunnel drops down 10 feet before curving off to the east at a 45-degree angle. The sides are rough, almost chewed-looking, but if a rat dug through the stone and earth here, but the rat that chewed such a hole would have to be of enormous size!*

The tunnel is 40' long. The first 10' is a drop (Climb DC 5) and the rest is a slope of 45 degrees or less (Climb DC 3). Characters who fail create a fall of loose material that clatters loudly in the darkness. Only if a natural "1" is rolled – and the character cannot succeed with the result – does the PC lose his balance completely, sliding down the clattering scree to land prone in **Area 3**.

3. Which Way Did He Go?: *The rat-hole opens into an ancient tunnel of olive- and emerald-flecked black stone. The immediate area is widened to 40 feet, forming a rough chamber in a tunnel running into the darkness north and south. The tunnel here is 20 feet wide and 16 feet high, so old that stalactites half a foot long hang from the tunnel ceilings. The more recent chamber you are in has also grown stalactites, although these are tiny fingers of rock barely discernable on the rough ceiling. The air is damp and cool, and the must of ages hangs heavy on the air. You can hear the chittering and scuttling of rats all about you in the darkness.*

This is part of the prehuman tunnels running beneath Portsmouth (see *FT 2* for more details). The child and his kidnapper have gone north, but this may not be immediately obvious.

- If a PC fell down the rat-hole (**Area 2**), he heard a cry, cut short, as he landed. An Int check (DC 15) indicates that the cry seemed to come from the north. Otherwise, the PC is unsure. If the player demands to know the direction the PC thinks the cry came from, roll 1d6. On a 1-3, say "north". Otherwise, "south".
- Tracking in this area is difficult, but a DC 15 skill check can show the proper direction to take. Re-

member that PCs without an appropriate occupation roll this check on 1d10.

- A PC may spend 1 Luck to guess the right direction.

There are many rats lurking in the darkness. Any PC that can hit AC 13 with a ranged weapon can kill a rat, and any attack (hit or miss) sends 1d5+1d3 rats squealing off into the darkness.

The passage that leads to **Area 4** is 10' wide but only 4' high, so that characters taller than a halfling must duck to enter. Thick, torn webs indicate that the passage has been used recently. The spiders themselves are hibernating for the winter, although thick egg sacks might give players pause...the webs are flammable, and burn quickly (but not completely), making the corridor far more clear in 1d3 rounds.

4. The Pied Piper of Portsmouth: As soon as PCs begin moving down the corridor, or if they light the webs on fire, an eerie piping noise echoes through the stone tunnels. It seems to be coming from ahead of them. Within 1d3 rounds, a rat swarm is summoned into the passage, coming from the larger corridor to the west. Every 1d5 rounds thereafter, another rat swarm comes from the same direction, as long as the piping continues. These swarms immediately attack the PCs. If the piping stops (see **Area 5**), all swarms disperse in 1d3 rounds.

Rat swarm: Init +4; Atk swarming bite +1 melee (1 plus disease); AC 9; HD 4d8; hp 16 each; MV 40' or climb 20'; Act special; SP bite all targets within 20' x 20' space, half damage from non-area attacks, disease (DC 5 Fort save or additional 1d3 damage); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will -2; AL N.

The passage is only 20 feet long, ending in a low chamber approximately 30 feet to a side. An arched corridor exits from the center of the left-hand wall – this seems to be the source of the eerie piping. Cold water drips down the far wall, creating a green-flecked rippling pattern of age-old mineral deposits on the black stone.

The PCs have one round before two giant talking rats, each about the size of a halfling, come bounding out of the north passage. The judge should play up the fact that they can speak (i.e., "Hot damn!" one growls. "Look what's come fer dinner!"). For most players, this

will be surprising and potentially creepy. Rat swarms ignore these creatures. They seek only to delay and weaken the party, so that more rat swarms might be summoned.

Giant talking rats (2): Init +3; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4 plus disease); AC 13; HD 1d6+2; hp 6, 7; MV 30' or climb 20' or swim 20'; Act 1d20; SP disease (Fort DC 7 or suffer 1d3 damage each day for 2d7 days), manipulative paws, speech (goblin tongue), infravision 60'; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

5. End of the Trail: *The corridor leads into a circular chamber, 30 feet in diameter. The floor drops away some 15 feet below the level of the passage. A stair winds around the room, broader and shallower than one made for human feet, ending just to the left of the passage. A muffled figure stands in the shadows across the room, holding a flute from which the strange piping sounds. It is dressed in motley robes and hood of many dark hues. At its feet you can see the unmoving form of the child you seek.*

Machen, the rat-sorcerer, kidnapped the child (Hans) to give to the Portsmouth ghouls in exchange for missing fragments of the cultes infernales that contain the spell invisible companion. As long as he plays the *Rat Lord's flute*, rat swarms are summoned as described in **Area 4**. As soon as he is injured, or is engaged in melee, he is obliged to stop. If spells are cast, Machen may attempt to spell duel, either using the flute or his own spell abilities. He is certainly willing to threaten PCs with the "Lord of Rats", and warn them that "The ghouls are coming, and they expect this child".

Whether or not the Lord of Rats cares, sends agents to exact revenge, or even exists is up to the judge. If the judge also runs the aforementioned adventure, *The Nexus of Yule*, the Ratfields may also refer to the "Lord of Rats", who is either a rat-god or a supernatural patron.

The Rat Lord's Flute

The Rat Lord's flute allows its owner to play any one of three tunes:

- Summons a rat swarm from the surrounding area. This takes as little as 1d3 rounds to as long as 1d5 hours, depending upon the local



rat population. These rats act as the flautist wishes, so long as he continues to play. If there are many rats in an area, additional swarms may be summoned, as determined by the judge.

- Charms a humanoid creature, as per the *charm person* spell (1d20 + Personality modifier to determine result on the spell table).
- Casts *sleep* using 1d14 + Personality modifier.

If the user is a rat, or has allied himself to the Lord of Rats (using patron bond or as a cleric of the Rat God), there is no cost to using the flute. Otherwise, the flute draws upon the strength of the flautist, draining 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage each time it is used. Further, whosoever carries the flute, unless dedicated to the Lord of Rats, has her Luck

reduced by 2 so long as the flute is carried, and is preferentially attacked by rats or rat-like creatures if the flute is not being played.

Machen, the rat-sorcerer: Init +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); AC 13; HD 6d4+12; hp 24; MV 30' or climb 20' or swim 20'; Act 1d20; SP disease (Fort DC 7 or suffer 1d3 damage each day for 2d7 days), spells, manipulative paws, speech (common, goblin tongue), infravision 60'; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C. Spells (spell check +6): *choking cloud*, *dispel magic*, *magic shield*, *ray of enfeeblement*, and *spider climb*.

The child, a small and grubby-looking urchin, appears to be in shock or ensorcelled – he can take no action except moving at a slow pace (5') until brought back to the street.

Parlay with the Ghouls

As you enter the main tunnel, you hear a sharp hiss to your left. "What beings are these?" a foul voice hisses. "What matters it, brothers?" says another. "They have brought the agreed-upon price. I can smell the young living blood and marrow." Three figures crouch in the tunnel to the south, feral-looking man-things with eyes that glimmer in the dark. They stink of the grave.

These are three of the Portsmouth ghouls (calling themselves Christian, Anderson, and Hans). They carry fragments of ancient scrolls in a wooden box, the *cultes infernales* containing invisible companion, as the rat-sorcerer had arranged. This version of the spell requires that the companion be bound to an item made of brass (such as a ring or a lamp), which must be provided by the caster for the spell to work. Control of the brass item is required to control the companion, and control can be transferred by passing on (or stealing) the item. The ghouls will gladly trade the scroll fragments for the child. They will talk, and may make a different exchange for the boy if the PCs desire, but if completely thwarted they attack.

Ghouls (3): Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d4 plus paralysis) or claw +3 melee (1d3); AC 13; HD 2d6; hp 7, 10, 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralysis (1d3 rounds, Will DC 14 negates), uncanny knowledge; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

Aftermath

The boy's name is Timmy Tivvers. Once taken back to the winter streets of Portsmouth, he recovers quickly, wanting nothing more than to run away. Although he may escape without even thanking his rescuers, at some future time (either while playing through *The Portsmouth Mermaid* or later), the PCs receive unexpected (and timely) aid from a group of ragged urchins led by Timmy.

This might be a distraction that gives the PCs a chance to run away...or turn the tables on a foe. It might be much-needed information, such as the nature of Doctor Fell. A hissed warning prevents the PCs from choosing the wrong ship. If the players seem suitably appreciative, the judge can have additional appearances of Tivvers & co. occur whenever the PCs are in Portsmouth, over the course of a long campaign.

On the other hand, every ghoul the PCs meet is automatically hostile until a price has been paid for their audacious rescue of young Mr. Tivvers.

The Open Tomb

Synopsis: A tomb in the Overlook is rumored to be the hiding place of a great store of pirate gold. Investigating characters find a tunnel that leads to the lair of a sea-dragon.

Dragons are rare in the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* game system, but they are not rare in fairy tales, and one of my goals with the FT Series was to include a dragon somewhere in each adventure. *FT 0* has the rose dragon, and *FT 1* has the jabberwocky. When working on *The Portsmouth Mermaid*, a dragon didn't seem appropriate to either the main storyline, or the add-on encounters based on fairy tales and nursery rhymes. This short adventure, then, adds a dragon hiding within Portsmouth itself. It also supplies a potentially-needed source of revenue, as the basic set-up of *FT 2* can easily bleed the PCs of whatever riches they might have.

Finally, if your players are anything like mine, as soon as they learned there is a cemetery in town, they will head there to look for spare loot or clues. What they find is the Open Tomb.

Setup

The Overlook is a graveyard on a high promontory overlooking Portsmouth Harbor (see *FT* 2), the ancient stone honeycombed with catacombs and burial vaults. At night, the Overlook is haunted by ghouls; there is a 25% chance of meeting 2d6 on any given night. These ghouls are not mindless; they can be spoken to and bargained with. They know many things, and can answer almost any question related to doings in Portsmouth over its entire history. They certainly know that many graves are empty, the “deceased” not being within their sealed caskets – they even know that these so-called dead men slip into the water and swim out to Devil’s Reef.

Ghouls (3): Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d4 plus paralysis) or claw +3 melee (1d3); AC 13; HD 2d6; hp 7, 10, 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, paralysis (1d3 rounds, Will DC 14 negates), uncanny knowledge; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

If the PCs examine the tombs, they will soon discover one that can be broken into: The lock is of poor quality (DC 5), the door is open, or the door is hanging from one hinge, or even missing. If the PCs make multiple forays to the Overlook, the judge is encouraged to have the state of the entrance deteriorate over time.

Adventure Start

You find yourself outside of a tomb you could probably enter. It seems to be composed of a main dome, made of time-weathered granite, with two low wings to the east and west. Although the tomb was once decorated with angels and cherubs, time and the elements have worn away the stone, until the once-celestial creatures seem almost aquatic...the angels of the deep. The name over the entrance is likewise worn, and only the first four letters can be made out clearly. Still, you think that the name of the family buried here is “Hookmorton”.

Encounter Areas

1. The Open Tomb: *Within the mausoleum, there is a smell of decay, which even the salty air blowing off the ocean cannot entirely dispel. Beneath it is the scent of sour alcohol and vomit – it seems from the shattered clay jugs and dirty bottles that the living have used this place in the not-too-distant past. To the right and the left of the domed entry chamber, archways lead into roughly square chambers where the family crypts are located.*

There are six crypts in the west wing, and five in the east. Where one crypt would be to the east, there is a set of narrow stone steps leading into the damp stone of the Overlook. Asking around in Portsmouth reveals that the last Hookmortons died out or left town two generations back.

If players examine the other crypts, they are (clockwise from the northwest corner):

Western Room:

- James and Gwendolyne Hookmorton.
- Our Beloved Peter, Taken From Us As A Child: In addition to the boy’s skeleton there is the skeleton of an inch-long woman, which glows slightly (dimmer than candlelight) for 2d5 days, and occasionally makes faint sounds, like the tinkling of a tiny silver bell. If this grave is opened, the boy’s shadow slips out. It follows the PCs for 1d5 days, causing whatever boyish mischief it can, before finally seeking to attack the youngest male. If the shadow succeeds in slaying its chosen victim, it forces itself into his body, which grows younger until about 9 years old, and then the body flies away, crowing like a rooster and laughing (fly 60’). **Peter’s Shadow:** Init +3 (able to always surprise); Atk debilitating touch +4 melee (1 permanent Strength); AC 15; HD 3d8; hp 9; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP stalk prey to guarantee surprise, permanent Strength damage, incorporeal, immune to non-magical weapons, un-dead traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +6; AL N.
- Dearest Nana, Inseparable Even In Death: Contains the skeleton of a large dog.
- John Darling Hookmorton, Dreams Die Not.
- Jas. Barrie Hookmorton and Elizabeth S. Hookmorton.
- Sir Nicholas Hookmorton and Courtney Stewart Hookmorton, The Brave Die Not, But Stand Eternal Vigilance: This crypt is empty.

Eastern Room:

- Captain Jas. Hookmorton, Lost At Sea, Buried Here His Memory: There is no body here, but there is an oiled leather sack containing 120 sp and 50 gp. If the judge desires, an ancient vellum map in a scroll tube can also be found, leading to a buried treasure. This is a great way to motivate PCs

to explore another adventure location the judge is interested in!

- Lady Jacqueline Harkness-Hookmorton: This crypt is empty.
- William Patrick Hookmorton and Lady Mary Clearwater Hookmorton.
- James and Thomas Hookmorton, Born Together, Died Together: The bones of these twins shows (DC 10 Intelligence check) that they died of sword wounds. Enquiring PCs may learn of “Those young Hookmorton fools” who slew each other in a duel, decades back, over who fired an arrow at a bird. The arrow struck a girl they both fancied; she survived.
- Stairs downward instead of a crypt.
- Lillian Hookmorton and Sarah Jane Heriot, The Flesh Lasts But A Little Time, The Love That Binds Us is Immortal.

2. The Corkscrew: *There is a narrow passage at the bottom of the stairs, only six feet high and five feet wide. It quickly turns to the left, and then begins to corkscrew downwards into the dark, wet rock. The rock is slick with moisture, and there is a constant dripping. The walls are pierced at odd intervals by other tunnels, radiating outwards. These smaller tunnels are only about two feet in diameter, so that a human would be forced to crawl within them. They smell strongly of corruption.*

PCs must move slowly down the corkscrew because of the damp, slick conditions. An average party takes 30 minutes down, and 45 minutes to return. PCs who attempt to move faster must make a DC 10 Agility check to move at twice this speed; failure indicates an abrasive fall, sliding downward 1d7 x 5' (modified by Luck), for 1d3 damage per 5'.

The side tunnels twist and turn, leading under the graves of the Overlook. Some tunnels may lead to the Undertunnels beneath Portsmouth, and others to the Dreamlands – a plane visited by mortals almost exclusively in their nightmares, home to ghouls, bone-eaters, and night gaunts. These tunnels are used by the Portsmouth ghouls. PCs engaged in combat here can only use small weapons, and have a -2d penalty to initiative, attack rolls, and damage (halflings suffer only a -1d penalty). The ghouls suffer no such inconvenience.

As PCs travel downwards towards **Area 3**, the air becomes damper, and the smell of brine overpowers the

graveyard stench of the upper area.

3. Grimperrault's Lair: *The passage ends at last in a larger cavern, roughly crescent-shaped. The high ceiling is dimly lit by countless glowing points of blue light that shine like stars. The floor is covered in a foot-deep salt water, choked with a floating morass of giant kelp, bladder-wrack, and blackened wood from the smashed remains of ancient ships. You can see another passage ahead of you, to the left; it must open to the surface in some way, as light is filtered down from above. A passage to your right seems to lead up, out of the water.*

The water and seaweed hide the uneven floor of the cavern. PCs moving at greater than half speed must succeed in a DC 15 Reflex save or fall; on a natural “1”, a falling PC takes 1d3 Agility damage from hidden rocks. The spots of light are glowing worms hanging from strands of mucilage, which trap the tiny flies they consume. The worms hang 5-8' off the ceiling, which is 15-30 feet above the cave floor. If the floating wood is examined, a plank bearing the title “Jolly Roger” is found.

This is the lair of the sea dragon, Grimperrault. The dragon is not here when the PCs first enter; thereafter when her lair is approached, roll 1d8: (1) the dragon is absent, (2-4) the dragon is present, but asleep if the PCs have not been unusually noisy, (5-7) the dragon is present and awake, or (8) the dragon is present and awake, but has been wounded for 1d24 points of damage. Grimperrault is not hampered by the uneven floor.

For every 10 minutes the PCs spend in **Areas 3, 4, and 5**, the judge rolls a die. If the die comes up “1”, the dragon returns. After the first 10 minutes, roll 1d8, then 1d7, 1d6, etc. Depending upon what the PCs are doing when Grimperrault returns, the party may be able to parlay with the dragon. The dragon speaks Draconic, Elvish, and Serpent-Man. Any service the PCs might ask of Grimperrault will be costly indeed – every 10 gp offered creates a 1% chance of agreeing to a task which the dragon can easily and safely do. The dragon has lived in this cavern for over a century, and knows most of what occurs on or below the sea in this region.

Grimperrault, the Sea Dragon: Init +10; Atk claw +11 melee (1d8); bite +11 melee (1d12); AC 20; HD

10d12; hp 50; MV 50 or swim 100'; Act attacks 3d20, spells 1d20; SP breath weapon, 100' infravision, amphibious, spellcasting, immune to fire, plant growth, pass through vegetation; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +10; AI N. Spells (+5 spell check): *Ropework*.

Grimperault is a vast creature, the size of a small house, resembling a cross between a scale-less fish and a salamander. Her moist skin is mottled amethyst and emerald, and her eyes glitter with a green-gold light. Although she doesn't have wings, she can crawl on any surface (including walls and ceilings) at her full move, and swim with ease. Grimperault's breath weapon is a 30' long cone of cold, with a 20' base, that does damage equal to the dragon's current hit points (Fort save DC 17 for half). Her cold, slimy skin makes him entirely impervious to fire.

The dragon conceals her lair with seaweed, which she can make grow to twice its normal size once per hour. Growth takes 1d4 rounds, and targets within the area of growth (up to 100' radius) are entangled, moving at half speed and taking a -2 penalty to attacks. Grimperault herself can pass through any vegetation at will without leaving any trace. When she casts *ropework*, it manifests as strands of dark seaweed that enlarge and animate to do her silent will.

4. Exit to the Sea: *The passage leads almost immediately to a borehole 15 feet in diameter. The upper area is choked with branches and vines, but the sky can be dimly seen about 40 feet overhead. A great mass of seaweed chokes the lower area of the borehole. This is so thick that you could actually stand upon it, although it is not stable enough to stand easily.*

The top of the borehole leads to a cliff off Portsmouth Harbor, far below the Overlook. From above, it is almost impossible to notice due to the overgrown vegetation around it (which Grimperault used her plant growth ability to create). The lower area is even more choked with vegetation, although Grimperault can pass through it without hindrance. It leads 80 feet down to a passage leading into Portsmouth Harbor. A PC standing on this mass must make a DC 5 Reflex save each round to keep his footing; this increases to DC 10 if moving faster than half speed, and DC 15 if fighting.

5. The Dragon's Hoard: This cavern is not lit, and

the PCs will be unable to see anything without a light source. The descriptive text assumes torches, and should be modified as needed. Torches may be difficult to light in the sea dragon's lair, especially if the PC carrying them has fallen into the briny water more than once!

The passage curves sharply upward, leading you to a cavern whose walls and ceiling disappear beyond the reach of your torchlight. The floor glitters with scattered reflections, light from the dancing flames striking coins strewn haphazardly upon the floor. Several sea chests are visible, open or shut. From what you can see, this dank room must contain the treasure of a dozen shipwrecks or more!

This cavern contains Grimperault's treasure. The dragon will look with displeasure upon any she catches stealing from her hoard! It consists of four open chests, two closed chests, three bags, and a considerable amount of loose coins, gems, and jewelry.

- Chest 1 (open): 1,234 cp, 163 sp, 53 gp, two strings of pearls worth 50 gp each.
- Chest 2 (open): Yards of ruined silk and brocades, including a bolt of cloth sewn with tiny pearls, still worth 25 gp due to the pearls.
- Chest 3 (open): 125 gp minted on greasy Dagonite gold (see *FT* 2), 136 small topaz stones worth 5 gp each, a silver ring with a hematite stone worth 15 gp, and two jade statuettes of cavorting mermaids worth 125 gp each.
- Chest 4 (open): 250 sp, 125 gp, a ruined tricorne hat with a great black plume, a gold ring with a blood-red gem (apparent value 50 gp, but the gem can be swiveled to reveal three drops of a deadly poison; each drop does 3d6 Stamina damage, Fort DC 20 or die immediately, when consumed), and a black iron hook meant to replace a lost hand. The iron hook is magical, and not rusted despite the damp, salty air. When it is placed upon the wrist where a hand has been severed, it serves as a +2 weapon that does 1d5 damage. In addition, it grants the wielder an extra Action Die (1d16) that can only be used to make attacks with the hook. When using this Action Die only, the hook scores a critical on a natural "16". The user permanently gains +1 hit point with each victim slain using the hook, and gains a second attempt with any failed Recover the Body check. However, a soul hunter (see below) begins stalking any who wears the

hook after 1d7 days.

- Chest 5 (closed, locked DC 15): A tattered pirate flag, a black curly wig, ruined fancy clothing (a man's) from which 30 gold buttons (1 gp each) can be recovered, and a small velvet bag containing three emeralds (50 gp each) and a ruby (150 gp).
- Chest 6 (closed, locked DC 10, poison pin trap – DC 10 to locate and remove, 1d3 Strength damage [Fort DC 10 or damage is permanent]): Six tablets made of an unknown white metal which is impervious to any harm mortal strength or spell can inflict. Upon each of these tablets is written a single spell. A PC could attempt to learn the spell from the tablet, but each attempt to do so costs 1 point of Luck per spell level (something the PC learns only by making the attempt). They can be sold for 100 gp each (or perhaps more, depending upon the buyer), but are certain to wind up in the collections of wizards antagonistic to the PCs. The six spells are: (level 1) *Ekim's mystical mask, find familiar, ward portal*, (level 2) *locate object, monster summoning*, and (level 3) *consult spirit*.
- Bag 1 (oiled leather, tied tightly shut, seems to contain a wealth of coins): Contains an elemental wind grue (see below), which attacks as soon as it is released from the bag. A cleric, wizard, or elf with access to the binding spell can attempt to bind the creature within the bag before releasing it.
- Bag 2 (a large bag of oiled leather, tied shut): Contains 3,456 sp and 12,345 cp.
- Bag 3 (rotting cloth bag, falls apart when examined): 342 gp and 10 garnet gems worth 15 gp each.
- Scattered Items:
 - 67,456 cp, 3,451 sp, and 450 gp in scattered coins.
 - 2 strands of pearls worth 25 gp each.
 - A trident with pearl inlay on the shaft (as spear, 40 gp value).
 - 467 loose pearls worth 2 gp each.
 - 152 loose gems of other types, each worth 2d6 gp.

Soul Hunter

The soul hunter is an extradimensional creature that subsists off of the souls of its victims. Its bite passes through flesh without harming it, but tears off a small piece of the victim's soul, causing 1d3 points of Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage and rendering part of the body useless. The damage reflects the effect

of the bite: 1 point of Agility damage might indicate that a few fingers are rendered useless, but, eventually, as the damage adds up, the victim is able to use less and less of his body. The player can choose which ability, from among the three, to take the damage from.

(Some sages and theologians theorize that the soul is suffused throughout the body, so that when an amputee feels "phantom limb pain", he is in fact feeling the remnant soul which has no bodily housing. The action of the soul hunter is the opposite; the housing remains, but parts of the soul are taken.)

The soul hunter needs very little "food" to survive. After each attack, it retreats into shadows and disappears. This allows prepared characters to attempt a free whack. Thereafter, it is attuned to its current victim's soul, and cannot feed off of another until the victim's entire soul is consumed. Every 1d5 days, the creature will crawl out of some shadowy area, attack until it has successfully caused its victim damage, and then retreat again.

So long as the soul hunter lives, the damage it causes cannot be healed or undone, short of divine intervention (DC 20). Such divine intervention also severs the soul hunter's bond with its victim, and it is free to choose another (although if the character retains the magic hook, it will always choose him). If the soul hunter is slain, its victim recovers the ability damage normally. Because the soul hunter is bound to a specific victim, it always knows exactly where that victim is, and can track it through shadows with complete accuracy. Even blinding the creature cannot prevent the soul hunter from knowing exactly where its victim is.

The soul hunter's appearances are preceded by a sound like the ticking of a clock, which only the victim can perceive. This gives the victim 1d5 rounds to prepare, but doesn't prevent the soul hunter from appearing suddenly from shadows, surprising on a 1 in 4 chance. This may be masked by other ticking noises, and other ticking noises may be mistaken for the hunter.

The soul hunter's ability to move through shadows, travelling from any shadowed area to any other shadowy area, anywhere, can be foiled only by full illumination, so that there are no shadows which it can use. Otherwise, even weak shadows allow the creature to pass by using an Action Die, and stronger shadows al-

low it to pass using a normal move.

The soul hunter looks like a shadowy crocodile, with glowing eyes. Its legs are longer than those of a true crocodile, however. If reduced to 0 hp, it melts into shadows, never to be seen again.

Soul Hunter: Init +0; Atk bite +5 melee (special); AC 20; HD 5d8; hp 25; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP transport through shadows, surprise, soul consumption, soul binding; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; AL C.

Elemental Wind Grue

This creature appears to be a small humanoid covered in coarse black hair, whirling in a frenzy of motion. It appears to have too many arms and legs, and too many mouths full of sharp fangs, but it is never still enough to be certain. The elemental grue is accompanied by a high wind that blows loose items within 30' as though in a storm. As a free action each round, the grue can force 1d3 creatures to make a Strength check (DC 10) or be pushed back 1d3 x 5' due to high winds. A creature failing the Strength check must also succeed in a DC 15 Reflex save, or lose its next action.

The high winds surrounding the elemental creature grant it a +4 AC bonus vs. missile weapons.

The grue's poisonous bite requires a DC 12 Fort save, or the victim takes 1d4 points of temporary Strength damage. This damage is restored at the rate of 1 point per 10 minutes of full rest, or 1 point per hour of activity.

When the grue is reduced to 0 hp, it disappears in an explosion of wind. All creatures within 30' must succeed in a DC 10 Strength check or be knocked back 1d5 x 5', and all creatures within 30' must succeed on a DC 15 Fort or Reflex save (choose the better for each creature), or be knocked prone. Creatures failing both saves also take 1d5 damage.

Elemental Wind Grue: Init +8; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3 plus poison) or claw +3 melee (1d3); AC 16; HD 3d6; hp 12; MV fly 50'; Act 5d20; SP +4 AC vs ranged attacks, blow back, poison, death throes; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +0; AL C.

Aftermath

Depending upon how they deal with Grimperrault, the PCs may have access to a considerable amount of

treasure. Bringing all of that treasure to the surface, especially while dealing with the challenges of The Portsmouth Mermaid, might entail some difficulties. This is especially true if the dragon has not been dealt with; the dragon will certainly attack any ship the PCs might use if they have taken any part her treasure. In addition, one PC may now be the target of a soul hunter, and the group as a whole might be followed by Peter Hookmorton's shadow.

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