

GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH

SALVAGE OPERATION



DM's Resources for Ghosts of Saltmarsh
Chapter 4: Salvage Operation

INTRODUCTION

Salvage Operation is the third adventure of seven in the *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* campaign book. It has the party seeking out a derelict ship lost at sea to retrieve a vast treasure, pitting them against fearsome arachnids, foul demons, decayed undead, an evil cultist – and finally has them racing for their lives to escape the clutches of a malevolent elder octopus!

Salvage Operation is a classic one-shot adventure that can be inserted into any campaign and run over the course of a single session. The focus is definitely on the combat encounters and the exciting escape at the end, which is handled really well.

In this document, we seek to make running *Salvage Operation* fun and manageable for you and your players, as well as giving you advice on how to fit *Salvage Operation* into a campaign and how to make sure the adventure also has a story to go along with the action. This document includes:

- **A guide to making *Salvage Operation* part of a *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*-campaign.**
- **3 new nautical magic items** that make sure your party will want to go salvage a ship!
- **Advice on changing the adventure's story** and making a proper villain out of Krell Grohlg.
- **DM's Notes** for quick and easy reference at the table.
- **Monster Stat Blocks** for every foe in the adventure, arranged for swift and easy use.



RUNNING SO

In this section, you'll find advice on how to run *Salvage Operation*. We strongly recommend that you read Chapter 4 of *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* before reading these suggestions. As always, use only what makes sense to you – you know best, what works at your table.

PART OF A CAMPAIGN

Salvage Operation comes fully equipped with a long background and adventure hook. It's a simple tale of a merchant prince who's lost a cache of valuable deeds and promissory notes on a ship that disappeared in a storm. The ship was since infested by dark cultists and has now been found adrift on the ocean, prompting the merchant prince to sponsor an operation to secure the ship's important cargo.

There's nothing wrong with neither the background or the hook given here, especially not if you're running salvage operation as a stand-alone adventure. But, if you're running *Salvage Operation* and the other *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*-adventures as larger campaign, there's some easy changes you can make to fit it into your campaign.

On our blog, we have written a bit about making *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* into a single, sea-based campaign, but even if you don't follow the outline described there, you might want to tie *Salvage Operation* to the other early adventures in the book. Luckily, it's quite easy to tie *Salvage Operation* together with *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* and *Danger at Dunwater*, simply by changing the contents of the Emperor's hold.

A DANGEROUS CARGO

The smuggling uncovered by the party in *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* wasn't the lizardfolk tribe's only effort to arm themselves against the sahuagin. They've also had magical items particularly effective against the sahuagin commissioned – but, unfortunately, the ship carrying the items, *Emperor of the Waves*, was lost in a storm several weeks ago. Recently, however, merfolk allies spotted the badly battered ship floundering in the waves, but a foul presence in the water surrounding the ship has deterred them from coming too close. Eager to retrieve the valuable items, the lizardfolk asks the town of Saltmarsh – and, thus, the characters – for aid in the salvage operation. In return, the lizardfolk offer to share the items with the characters.

If you use this hook, the strongbox in area 12 doesn't contain valuable documents, but instead holds 20 *thickblood potions*, 10 *sharkfin harpoons* and *Bane of Sekolah* (see 'Weapons Against the Sahuagin' on the following page). The lizardfolk agree to split the items with Saltmarsh, although they prefer to keep the *Bane of Sekolah* for themselves. A persuasive character might convince the lizardfolk to let them wield it before venturing into the sahuagin stronghold in *The Final Enemy* – perhaps even dueling a champion of the lizardfolk (**lizardfolk scaleshield**) for the right to do so.

FORESHADOWING

If you are combining *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* into a single campaign, you'll likely have a more impressive foe than just sahuagin waiting at the end. As an extra touch, you can foreshadow this greater evil by changing a few minor things in this adventure.

The Elder Octopus. The first step is to re flavor the elder octopus to better fit your main villain. If it's Umberlee or another sea-based deity, it can remain as it is – a harbinger of destruction sent from the depths. If it's a deity like Tharizdun, consider describing it with pulsating veins of purple and green, and a pinkish light shining from its eyes, marks of the Elder Elemental Eye's aberrant energy. If your campaign's big bad evil is a deity like the Demon Prince of Undeath, Orcus, the elder octopus might be undead, pale and rotting, carrying the stink of decay as it attacks the ship.

Lolth's Outcast. You can also change the conflict that drives Krell Grohlg to seek refuge on the ship. Instead of an unexplained civil war, you can have Krell be the former shaman of a goblinoid tribe on the island, who had to flee because his tribesmen had begun worshiping a new deity in the wake of a visit by foreign cultists – which, of course, are followers of your campaign's greater evil.

Captain's Log. You can have the captain's log (area 2) reflect any of the above chances you introduce, as well as anything else you'd like, such as sightings of undead beings, a description of the magical maelstrom that caused the ship's destruction (perhaps caused by the Pit of Hatred found in *Tammerauts Fate*) and so on.

Weapons Against the Sahuagin

It's up to you to decide where the magic items aboard *Emperor of the Waves* come from. It might be as simple as a merchant supplier in any coastal city, but it could also be a contribution from a tribe of sea elves, who are too far away to participate in the defense, yet still eager to give aid against their mortal foes.

If you're placing the adventure and the campaign in the Forgotten Realms, they could also be commissioned from the coastal druids of the Moonshae Isles, or even stolen wares sent by a pirate lord from Luskan.

Bane of Sekolah

Weapon (trident), rare (requires attunement)

Forged by the sea elves, the Bane of Sekolah is a silver trident engraved with the deity Deep Sashelas' dolphin symbol, and enchanted against the elves' greatest foe: the sahuagin.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Shark's Bane. When you hit a creature that has the Blood Frenzy feature with this trident, it must make a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, the creature is consumed by lust for its own blood, and is incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

Dolphin's Charge. When you move at least 15 feet straight toward a target on your turn, it takes an extra 1d8 piercing damage the next time you hit it with this trident before the end of your turn.

Sharkfin Harpoon

Weapon (javelin), uncommon

This coral-studded harpoon is designed specifically for hunting sharks.

When you hit a creature with this magic weapon, the harpoon remains embedded in the creature (if the attack was a melee attack, you can choose to immediately pull the harpoon free instead of leaving it embedded in the creature). Until removed, the creature's move speed is reduced by 10 (this can't reduce the creature's move speed to less than 10) and it doesn't gain the benefit of the Blood Frenzy feature, if it has it. A creature can use an action and a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to shake or pull the harpoon free.

Thickblood Potion

Wondrous item, common

This small, red potion is a favorite among sea elves and pearl divers, who use it to avoid minor cuts from attracting sharks and other underwater predators.

When you drink this potion, your blood thickens and becomes odorless for 1 hour. During this time, you are considered to have all your hit points when determining whether a creature with the Blood Frenzy feature has advantage on attacks against you.

STORY AND BACKGROUND

The adventure comes outfitted with a rather long background, but much of the story is known only to the dead sailors and **Krell Grohlg**. Speaking of Krell, there's little chance the party will ever find out how what his part is. This is unfortunate, because the adventure – a bunch of spiders on a ship being attacked by an elder octopus – could use a good explanation to make sense and feel less contrived.

CHANGING THE STORY

As mentioned earlier, you can change Krell's story and have him be a refuge from the island, cast out because his tribe took up worship of another deity, or because even his fellow goblinoids tired of his maniacal devotion to the Spider Queen.

In this story, Krell comes to the ship as a savior. The *Emperor's* captain and his crew are stuck between a rock and a hard place: the ship's stores are empty, but the island's inhabitants are far from welcoming. To make matters even worse, the sailors have spotted a large shadow in the water not far out from the coast; some sort of sea-monster waiting for them to pull anchor and sail into deeper waters.

Enter Krell. Dirty and bestial, covered in religious regalia, and with spiders crawling all over, he offers peace and salvation to the desperate seamen. Take him aboard, and he'll not only provide food and water, he'll also defend the ship from any sea monsters. Left without a choice, the captain accepts and, thus, seals the ship's fate.

At first, Krell keeps his promise. The **Elder Octopus** attacks, killing many and damaging the ship, but the half-orc calms it with his druidic magic. Soon, however, the injured and weakened seamen find themselves at Krell's mercy, depending on his healing and the provisions he doles out. Day by day, they are corrupted in both body and mind by the Spider Queen's insidious poison, and are soon turned into demons or left as food for Krell and his monstrous minions.

This both makes Krell a more devious and interesting villain, and also better explains why the elder octopus suddenly stopped attacking the *Emperor* – and, possibly, why it decides to attack again (see 'Speaking With Krell' below).

GETTING THE STORY TO THE PLAYERS

Changing the story doesn't mean much, if we don't make sure the players have an opportunity to learn it.

Captain's Log. The captain's log allows you to relay the story from the captain's perspective, foreshadowing the dangers awaiting the party and explaining how spiders came to infest the ship. To make sure it is found, allow the party to find the log either in the debris in area 2 or on the table in area 3 – whichever place they look first. Or, if they miss it there, have them find it in area 10 after dealing with Krell.

Speaking With Krell. Although the adventure has Krell attacking the characters immediately, some maniacal boasting never hurts. Have the half-orc proclaim proudly that "the Emperor belongs to the Queen now!" and demand that the characters "give yourself to the Spider Queen as the sailors already have, and you shall live eternally as her servants". This gives the party a chance to speak with Krell and hear his remorseless account of how he made everyone aboard "servants to the Queen, willing or not". Additionally, this also allows you to explain the elder octopus' sudden appearance, as Krell either dies with a grin ("You fools... It was only the Queen's will that kept it away... Listen... It's coming now – can't you hear it?") or shouts maniacally at the party, after they've found the treasure in the hold ("You think yourself clever, ha? I've called it now, haha. It comes now, to crush, to kill, to bring us all to the Queen's embrace!").

DM's NOTES

BACKGROUND

- Years ago, greedy Merchant Prince Aubreck Drallion converted most assets to deeds and promissory notes, and send wealth with ship to invest in southern jungle trades.
- *Emperor of the Waves* disappeared during storm. Was nearly sunk, and came ashore on uncharted island to find food and water. Savage creatures on island killed crew.
- Island's population became fractured, one group took ship, stocked it with supplies and sailed away.
- Some days before characters arrive, hungry elder octopus attacked ship, destroying much and killing most on it.
- Half-orc druid Krell Grohlg and his arachnid monsters are only living creatures aboard.
- Fifteen days ago, Aubreck heard *Emperor of the Waves* was seen adrift and hires party to fetch his valuables, offering advance of 200gp and a promise of 10,000gp if they return a box of shiny blue metal packed inside a wooden crate with the letter A from the ship's hold.
- *Emperor of the Waves* was last spotted five days from land.

JOURNEY TO THE EMPEROR

- Aubreck has hired ship *Soul of Winter*. Captain is Wolgar Windrune (**veteran**), 30 dwarves (**guards**).
- Ship carries equipment and supplies: studded leather armor, two light crossbows with twenty bolts each, five 50-foot coils of rope, two grappling hooks, twelve torches, two healer's kits, six vials of *antitoxin*, two *potions of healing*, and two sacks for carrying treasure.
- Journey takes 1d4 + 3 days.
- **SAHUAGIN AMBUSH (optional)** – 18 **sahuagin**, a **sahuagin priestess** and a **sahuagin baron** slip aboard ship late at night. Try to slay crew and characters using stealth. Flee if six or more of their group is slain.

EMPEROR OF THE WAVES

- **DESCRIPTION** – Looming, shattered hulk. Masts are torn off, upper deck cleared of debris. Figurehead, once majestic angel in flight, hacked and disfigured. Has suffered heavy damage across upper decks, as from typhoon or tidal wave. Lists to port, rides low in the water, implying bilge and possibly lowest deck are flooded.
- **OCTOPUS ATTACK** – DC 15 Nature spots damage to ship's hull indicating attack from seagoing creature.
- **GETTING TO THE EMPEROR** – The *Soul of Winter* stays 500 ft. away, two sailors ferry characters in a rowboat with rope and grappling hooks for scaling the hull. Takes rowboat 200 ft. away after unloading the characters.

1. MAIN DECK

- **DESCRIPTION** – Slopes gently to port (left) side. Masts are only short, wooden stumps. Doors to cabins fore and aft appear intact, metal grate to the lower decks.
- **DOORS** – closed, not locked, but door to area 3 needs DC 15 Athletics or attack (AC 15, 18 hp, immune to poison and psychic, resistance to piercing and slashing) to open.
- **GRATE** – ladder extends to area 5, rusted shut, need DC 15 Athletics or attack (AC 15, 10 hp, immune to poison and psychic) to open. DC 10 Perception sees fist-sized spiders crawling on walls below. Spiders flee if disturbed.
- **WHEEL** – turns freely, DC 10 Intelligence knows it is not connected to rudder and needs extensive repairs.
- **BLOODSTAINS** – DC 15 Perception sees bloodstains, DC 10 Medicine knows they are about three days old.

2. ALTAR TO LOLTH

- **DESCRIPTION** – Rough stone altar, strange markings on surface, dried mud cakes on floor, humanoid skulls mounted on spikes ring wall above it. In corners, garbage and debris – logs, ruined furniture, sacks and crates, small piles of pal fronds. In southeast corner, stair descends.
- **ARACHNIDS** – if the characters linger, **giant spider**, **ettercap** and 4 **swarms of insects (spiders)** attacks party from hiding, surprises characters with passive Perception 14 or lower.
- **CAPTAIN'S LOG** – DC 15 Perception finds ship's ledger and captain's log. Log includes account of the storm that threw ship off course, running low on food and water, anchored off an uncharted island, describes attack by orcs, goblins and monstrous vermin, crew fended off but suffered heavy casualties, captain afraid that this attack is just a precursor to an even larger assault.
- **TREASURE** – A search of the cabin finds offering to Lolth: sack with 10 red rubies (100 gp each).

3. NAVIGATOR'S ROOM

- **DESCRIPTION** – Webbing all over, obscuring sight, narrow staircase down, four chairs and table with charts and maps.
- **DOOR** – Webbed shut, DC 15 Athletics or attack (AC 15, 18 hp, immune to poison and psychic, resistance to piercing and slashing) to open.
- **ARACHNIDS** – A **giant spider** and **ettercap** hide in web on ceiling, attacks character that investigates maps, surprising characters with passive perception 17 or lower.
- **DEVELOPMENTS** – Combat alerts vermin below, 1d4 rounds after attack, a **swarm of insects** join battle. Another swarm comes 1d4 rounds later – 4 swarms come in total, unless passage from area 4 is blocked.

4. WEBBED DOORWAY

- **DESCRIPTION** – Not shrouded in webs like other rooms.
- **HIDDEN WEB** – stretches across doorway, spotted with passive Perception 17 or higher. If character walks into it, restrained as if hit by a **giant spider's** web attack.
- **DEVELOPMENTS** – if a creature is caught in web, creatures in area 5 attack.
- **TREASURE** – silver bracelet (250gp) on floor.

5. SPIDER NEST

- **DESCRIPTION** – room shrouded in webs, rotted and web-covered wooden grate covers hole in deck.
- **ARACHNIDS** – An **ettercap**, two **giant wolf spiders** attack, surprising passive perception 16 or lower. 6 **swarms of insects (spiders)** are also here, two join fight each round.
- **GRATE** – grate to area (area 12) is unsafe (passive Perception 14 or higher to spot) and can be easily broken. Character that puts weight on grate falls into cargo hold (no damage), alerting ghouls there.

6. FOOD STORAGE

- **DESCRIPTION** – room shrouded in webs, covering strung-up bones, humanoid limbs, other remains. 10 ft. into room, four human-sized bundles hang in thick webs.
- **WEBBED BUNDLES** – DC 10 Perception spots bundles twitching. DC 12 Athletics or attack (AC 10, 10hp, immunity to bludgeoning, poison, psychic) to open bundle. **Maw demon** inside attacks, 3 other **maw demons** use action to tear free from webbing.
- **TREASURE** – DC 10 Investigation finds gold earrings (200gp) and amethyst necklace (250gp) in webs.

7. KRELL'S CABIN

- **DESCRIPTION** – Bed of palm fronds in corner, stone-tipped spear, oblong shield with symbol of humanoid skull with spider in eye socket. Two humanoid skulls on wall.

8. FIRST MATE'S CABIN

- **DESCRIPTION** – room shrouded in webs, hundreds of tiny spiders, smashed bed, dresser and desk on floor.

9. SPIDER CHAMBERS

- **DESCRIPTION** – room shrouded in webs, smashed furniture, crushed wooden boxes and other debris.

10. UNHOLY SHRINE

- **DESCRIPTION** – floor covered with runes written in blood, circle carved into floor, spiderwebs on walls and ceilings. Two humanoid bundles hang from ceiling, covered with small spiders. In back, wooden box.
- **KRELL GROHLG AND ARACHNIDS** – Krell Grohlg, 2 giant spiders and a phase spider attack the party. If party has made any noise on ship, Krell has already cast *shillelagh* and *barkskin*. Phase spider targets spellcasters, giant spiders protect Krell, one attacking from floor and one from ceiling.
- **DEVELOPMENTS** – DC 20 Persuasion (orc or half-orc has advantage) to convince Krell to stop fighting and leave ship with characters.
- **TREASURE** – the box contains spell scrolls of *gust of wind* and *protection from poison*, a *potion of heroism*, a *potion of water breathing*, a *cloak of protection*, 507gp and 199 sp.

11. GALLEY

- **DOOR TO GALLEY** – held shut by rusty iron spikes. DC 15 Athletics or attack (AC 15, 12hp, immunity to poison and psychic) to open.
- **DESCRIPTION** – cluttered with bones, debris and tiny spiders. Cookware from hooks in ceiling, stench of rotting fish. Stairs leading up. Trapdoor in floor.
- **TRAPDOOR** – access to cargo hold, barred shut.

12. CARGO HOLD

- **DESCRIPTION** – Three feet of murky seawater, sloshing against moldering crates against the ship's port hull.
- **MURKY WATER** – difficult terrain for medium creatures, small characters must swim.
- **GHOSTS** – hiding under water, attack when characters enter, surprises passive perception 11 or lower. One ghost wears silver bracelet (75gp) and gem-studded belt (400gp).
- **AUBRECK'S BOX** – DC 15 Perception to spot crate with A marked on it. Closed, but unlocked. Inside is magically enhanced blue box that can't be opened.

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

GENERAL NOTES

- **FLOOR IS DIFFICULT TERRAIN**
- **DC 10 ATHLETICS TO CLIMB STAIRS OR LADDERS** failure means falling prone where climbing began.
- **DC 10 DEX SAVE OR HIT BY TENTACLES** failure is 2d6 bludgeoning damage, monsters take 1d6 auto each turn.
- **20 DAMAGE TO OCTOPUS IN ONE TURN** means no tentacle Dex saves until end of character's next turn.

AUBRECK'S BOX

- **HEAVY** – DC 12 Athletics to pick up or pass box.
- **SPEED PENALTY** – -10 ft. (18+ Str), -20ft. (12-17 str), -30 ft. (8-11 Str). If two carry, add Str scores to determine speed penalty, moving together at lowest initiative.
- **SWIMMING** – DC 20 Athletics at turn start or sink 20 ft. If two carry, share turn on lowest initiative, one character makes DC 15 Athletics, other uses Help action. If dropped, box sinks 30 ft. per round (ocean is two miles deep).

ROUND 1

- Octopus begins attacking
- Arachnids begin moving to area 1

ROUND 2

- Ship lists 30 degrees to port. DC 10 Dexterity save or fall prone and slide 10 ft. to port
- From now, characters that fall prone slide 10 feet to port.
- Maw Demons break free and begin moving to area 1

ROUND 3

- Area 12 is filled with water
- Arachnids have arrived at area 1
- Ghosts begin moving to area 1

ROUND 4

- Rowboat begins approaching ship from starboard side
- If present, Krell spots rowboat and prepares to swim beneath it and ambush sailors aboard it

ROUND 5

- Areas 4-11 are filled with water.
- Port side of area 1 is level with water.

ROUND 6 THROUGH 13

- Port half of area 1 is 3 feet below water

ROUND 14

- Rowboat arrives if it began approach on round 4
- If alive, Krell attempts his ambush

ROUND 15 THROUGH 19

- Ship rolls over on port side
- Everyone in area 1 is thrown 2d20 in random direction
- Rowboat is 20 ft. from hull
- Monsters in the water tries to board rowboat

ROUND 20

- The ship sinks, descending 3d20 ft. each round

CONCLUSION

- Aubreck pays promised fee (10,000gp).
- Box can be opened with DC 30 *Dispel Magic* or password 'Tildivarias' that only Aubreck knows.

MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)
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Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)
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Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

GIANT WOLF SPIDER

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	4 (–3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +7

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

SWARM OF SPIDERS

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8 + 0)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (–4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (–5)	7 (–2)	1 (–5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Spider Climb. The swarm can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the swarm knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The swarm ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

ETTERCAP

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	7 (–2)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spider Climb. The ettercap can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the ettercap knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The ettercap ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The ettercap makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Web (Recharge 5–6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The creature is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained creature can make a DC 11 Strength check, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 10, 5 hit points, is vulnerable to fire damage and immune to bludgeoning damage.

KRELL GROHLG

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Nature +3, Perception +4
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Druidic, Orc
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Relentless Endurance. When reduced to 0 hit points, he drops to 1 hit point instead (but can't do this again until he finishes a long rest).

Spellcasting. The druid is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *flaming sphere*, *barkskin*

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

PHASE SPIDER

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	6 (–2)

Skills Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Ethereal Jaunt. As a bonus action, the spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

GIANT SPIDER

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (–4)	11 (+0)	4 (–3)

Skills Stealth +7
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

GHAST

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 36 (8d8 + 0)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities necrotic

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 ft. of the ghast must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the ghast's Stench for 24 hours.

Turn Defiance. The ghast and any ghouls within 30 ft. of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

MAW DEMON

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances Cold, Fire, Lightning

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 9

Languages Understands Abyssal but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Rampage. When it reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the maw demon can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SAHUAGIN

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (–1)

Skills Perception +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The sahuagin has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The sahuagin can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The sahuagin can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

Actions

Multiattack. The sahuagin makes a bite attack and one claw attack or one spear attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

SAHUAGIN BARON

Large humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Int +5, Wis +4

Skills Perception +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The sahuagin has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The sahuagin can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The sahuagin can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

Actions

Multiattack. The sahuagin makes three attacks: one with his bite and two with his claws or trident.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

SAHUAGIN PRIESTESS

Medium humanoid (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +6, Religion +3

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The sahuagin has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The sahuagin can breathe air and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Shark Telepathy. The sahuagin can magically command any shark within 120 feet of it, using a limited telepathy.

Spellcasting. The sahuagin is a 6th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, detect magic, guiding bolt*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon (trident)*

3rd level (3 slots): *mass healing word, tongues*

Actions

Multiattack. The sahuagin makes two attacks: one with her bite and one with her claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Day 17, morning

The severity of the storm has thrown us far off our original course. Much of our stores have been destroyed, and we lost seven barrels of water. I've ordered the men down to two servings of biscuits and half a cup of water per day, until we know how long it'll take to find a port. I hope it's sooner, rather than later, or I'll risk losing the Emperor to mutiny.

Day 28, midday

Blessed be the Gods, we've found land. It's a small island that doesn't show on any of our maps. I've taken due precautions, ordering the Emperor anchored a ways off the coast, and sent a skiff in with our strongest men to search the island. They carry gifts and weapons to secure provisions by any means necessary.

Day 29, evening

Our men have not yet returned. Several deckhands report hearing a deep drumming coming from the coast. We're down to our last pack of biscuits, and my bottle of Dragonwine is the only drinkable liquid left on the Emperor. There'll be no sleep tonight.

Day 30, morning

In the dark hours of night, we were beset by savage creatures from the island. Orcs, goblins. Monstrous eight-legged beasts. We drove them off, but at the cost of 11 good sailors. I fear that it was merely a precursor to the real assault, but dare not pull anchor, for another misfortune assails us. The corpses we've thrown overboard seem to have drawn the attention of something sinister. I've seen it with my own eyes; a dark shadow stalking underneath the waves, tentacles large enough to strangle a ship roiling on the surface as it circles, waiting for us to head into deeper waters.

Day 30, evening

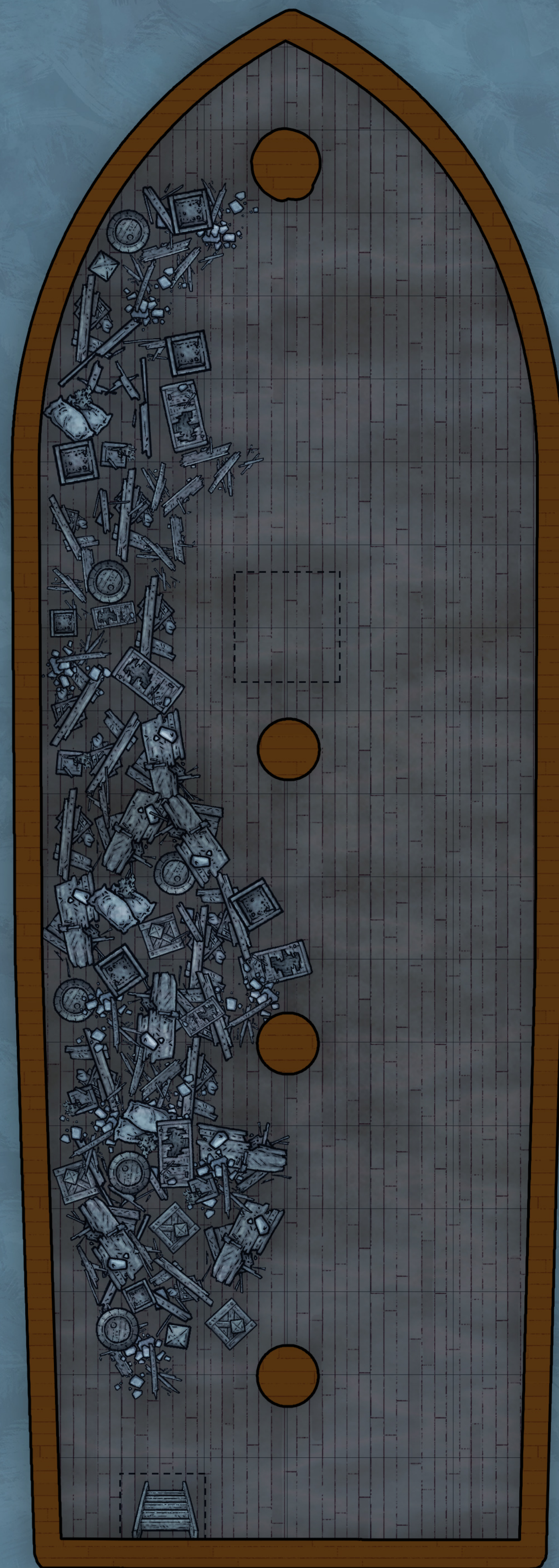
The most peculiar thing just happened. While we were preparing for our last night alive, a stranger approached us in a single skiff. Krell Grohlg, as the stranger introduced himself, is claims he is fleeing the island and its other inhabitants. It seems he was a shaman of sorts, before his tribe ousted him, although I will not pretend to understand the hierarchy of these savages. Regardless, he has brought enough food and water to last us at least a week. Better yet, he swears he can protect us from whatever lurks in the depths. All he wants is to sail away with us - he seems even more desperate to escape his 'blasphemous' kinsmen than we are. I do not trust him, but at I see no other option than to accept the half-orc's aid.

We're setting sail immediately.

Day 31, midday

The Creature attacked us once we reached deeper waters. Three dead. Myself and the First Mate wounded. Krell kept it at bay, before it could destroy the ship entirely. He tends to us now. Serves a foul brew, which he insists will heal us. I can feel a fever coming. Krell says it'll pass quickly. I hope he is right.

I know not how many days has passed. Fever is growing stronger. Shivering, shaking. I am burning. I feel them crawling on me... Eight legs, crawling on me, feasting on me.. Krell says I'll be better soon. It'll be better soon



EMPEROR OF THE WAVES

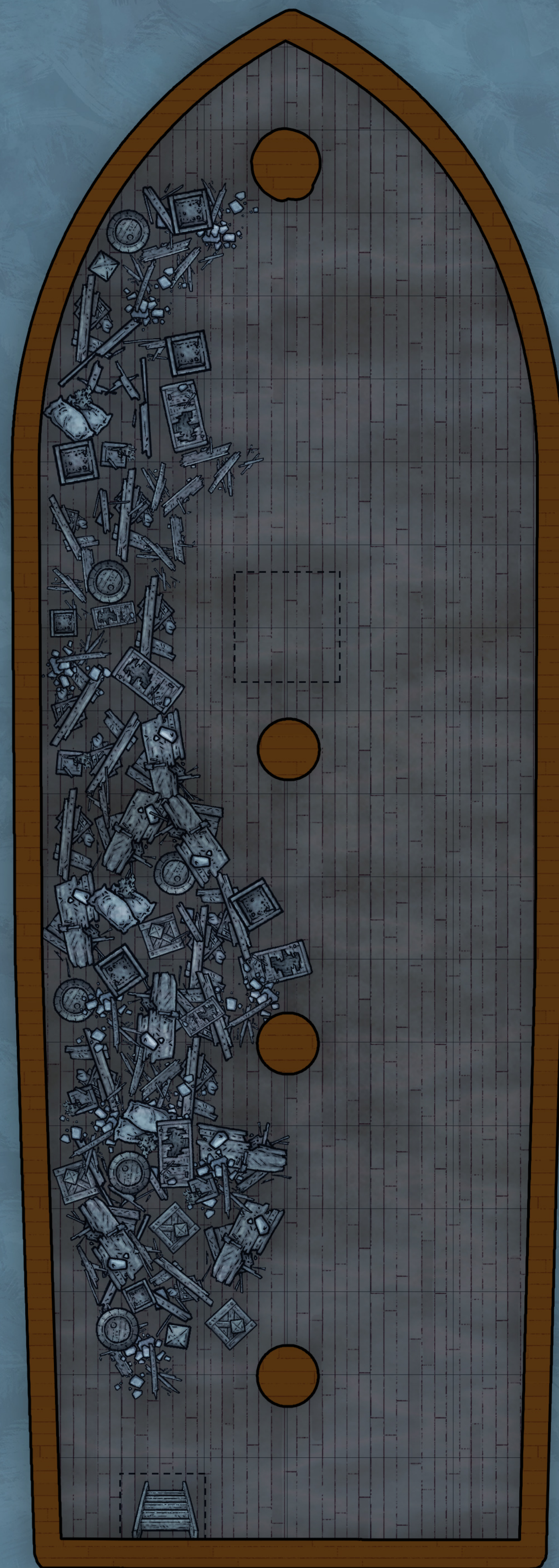


CARGO HOLD

LOWER DECK

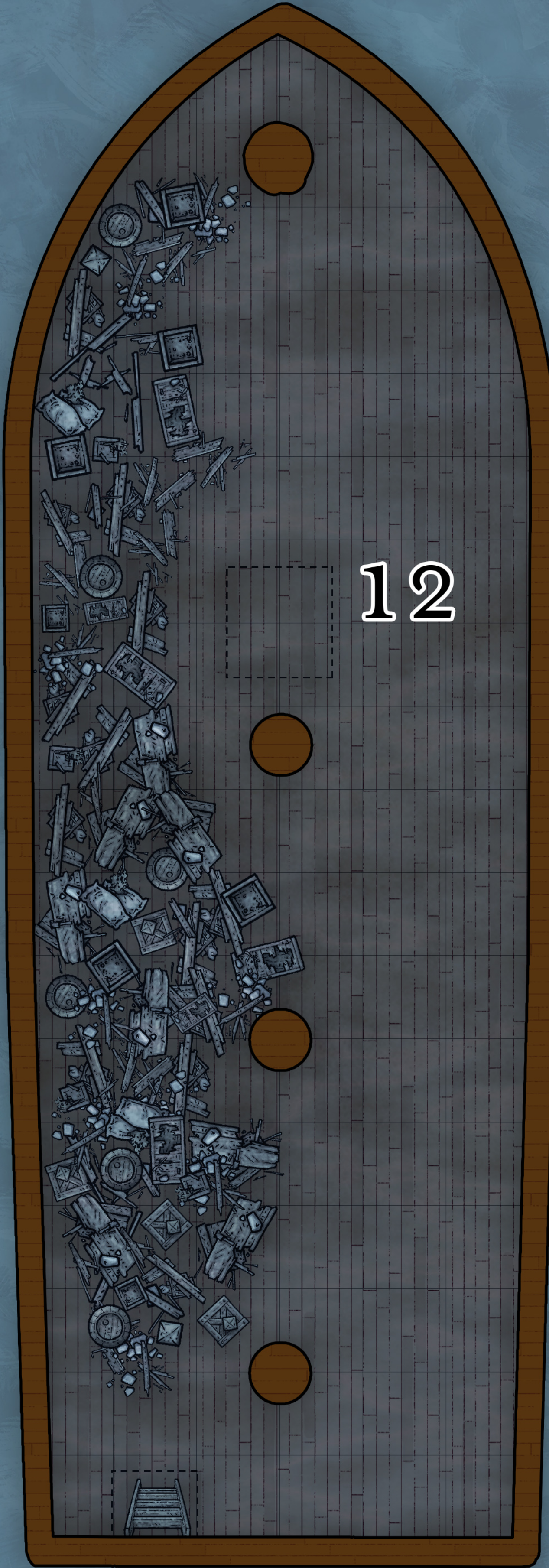
MAIN DECK

QUARTER DECK



EMPEROR OF THE WAVES

ROUND 5



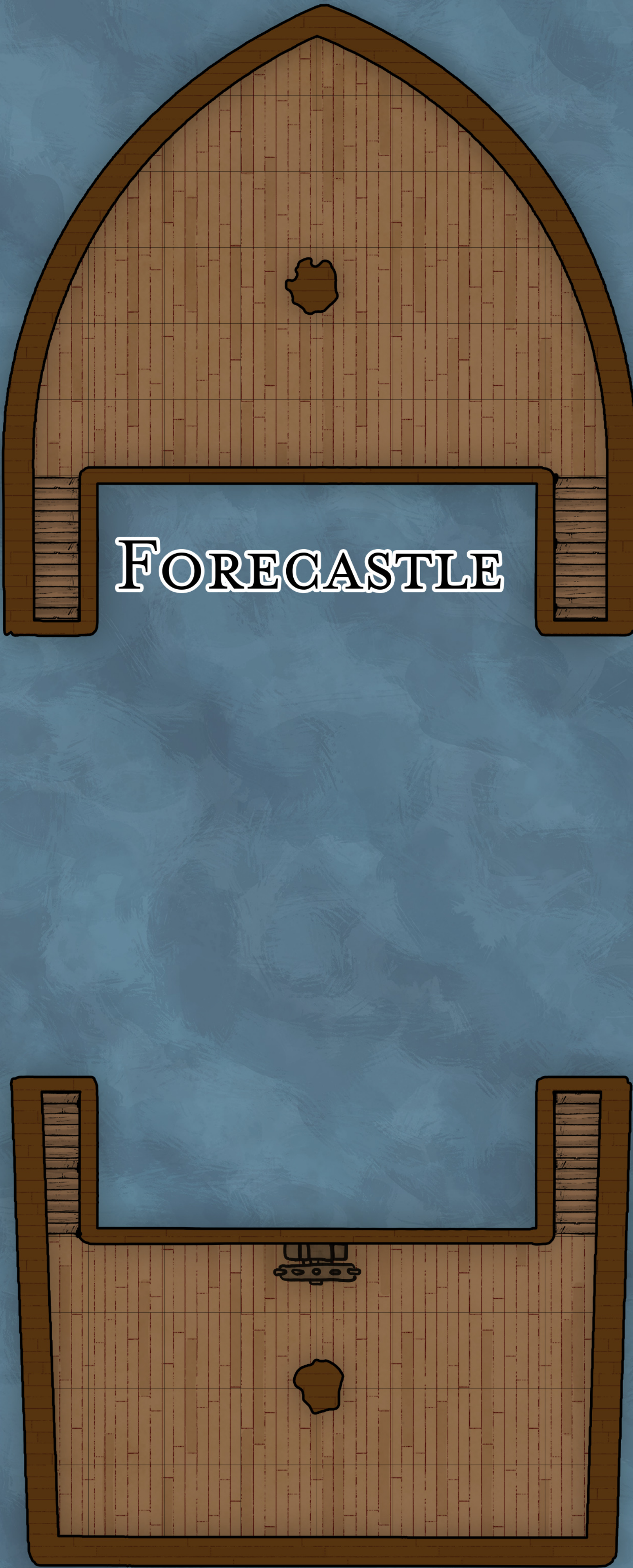
CARGO HOLD



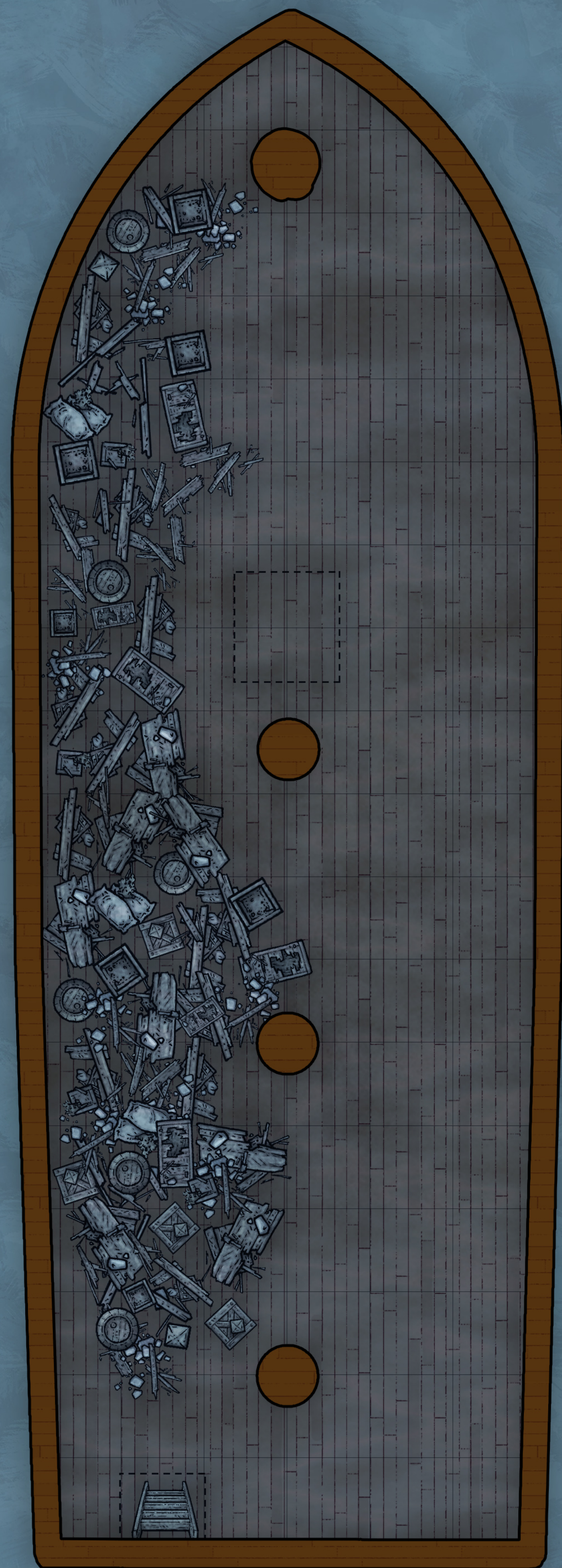
LOWER DECK



MAIN DECK

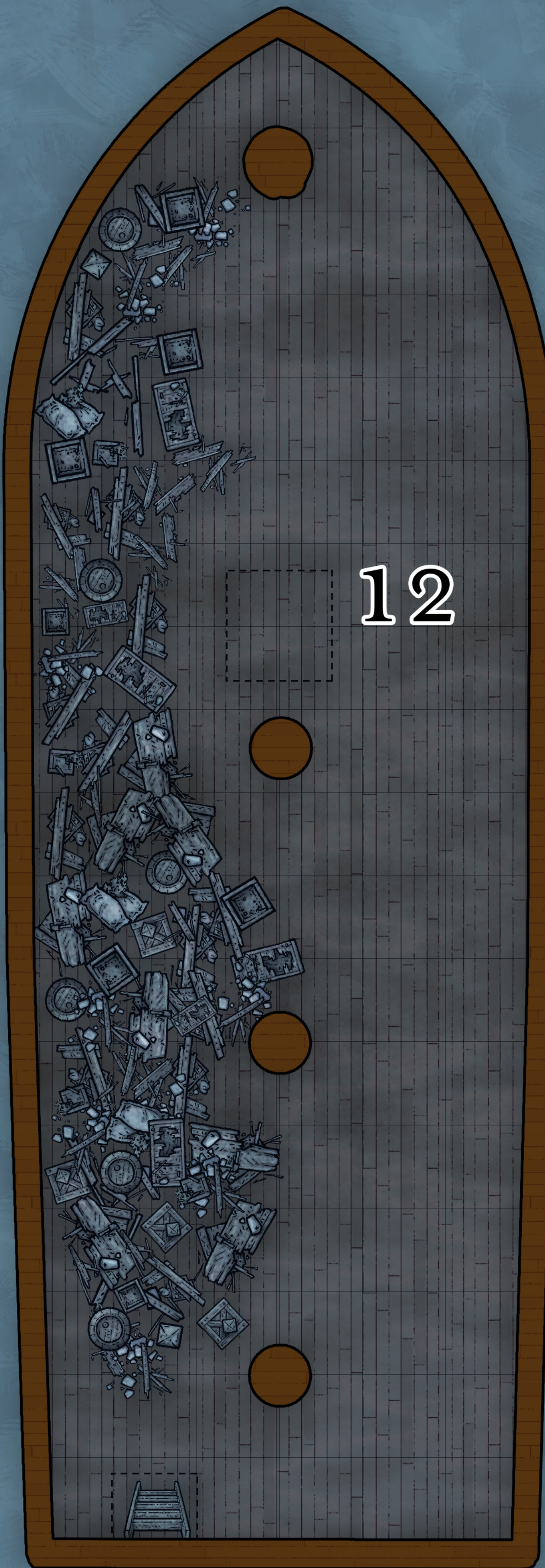


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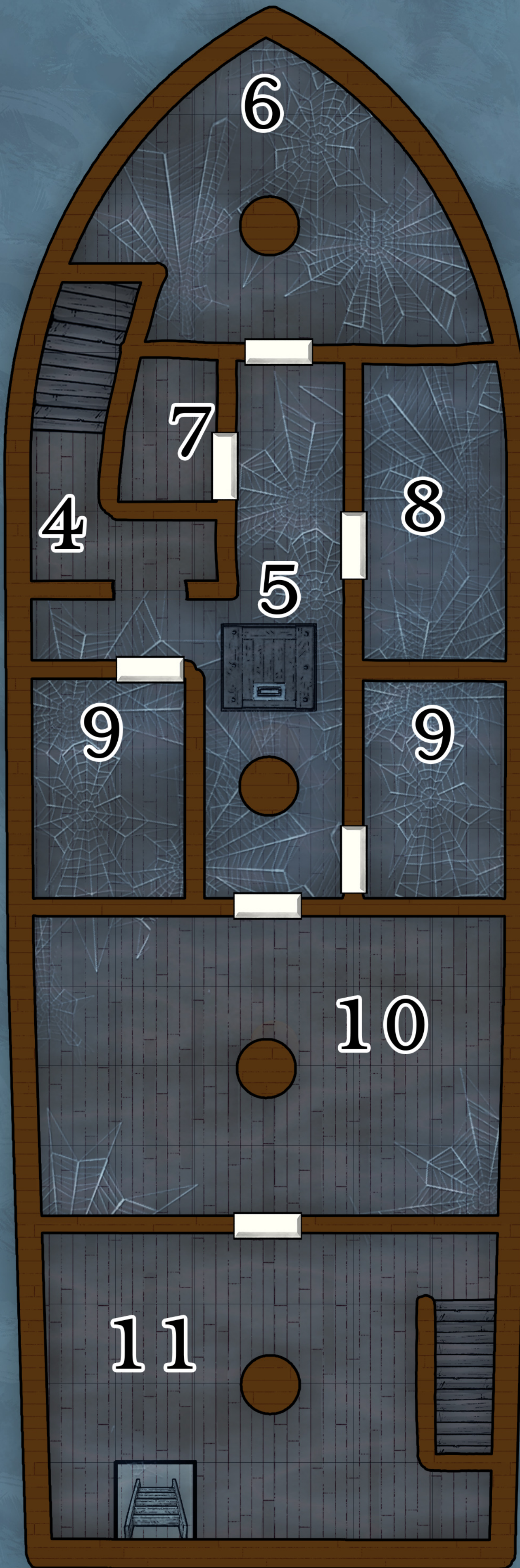


EMPEROR OF THE WAVES

ROUND 6-14



CARGO HOLD



LOWER DECK



MAIN DECK



QUARTER DECK

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