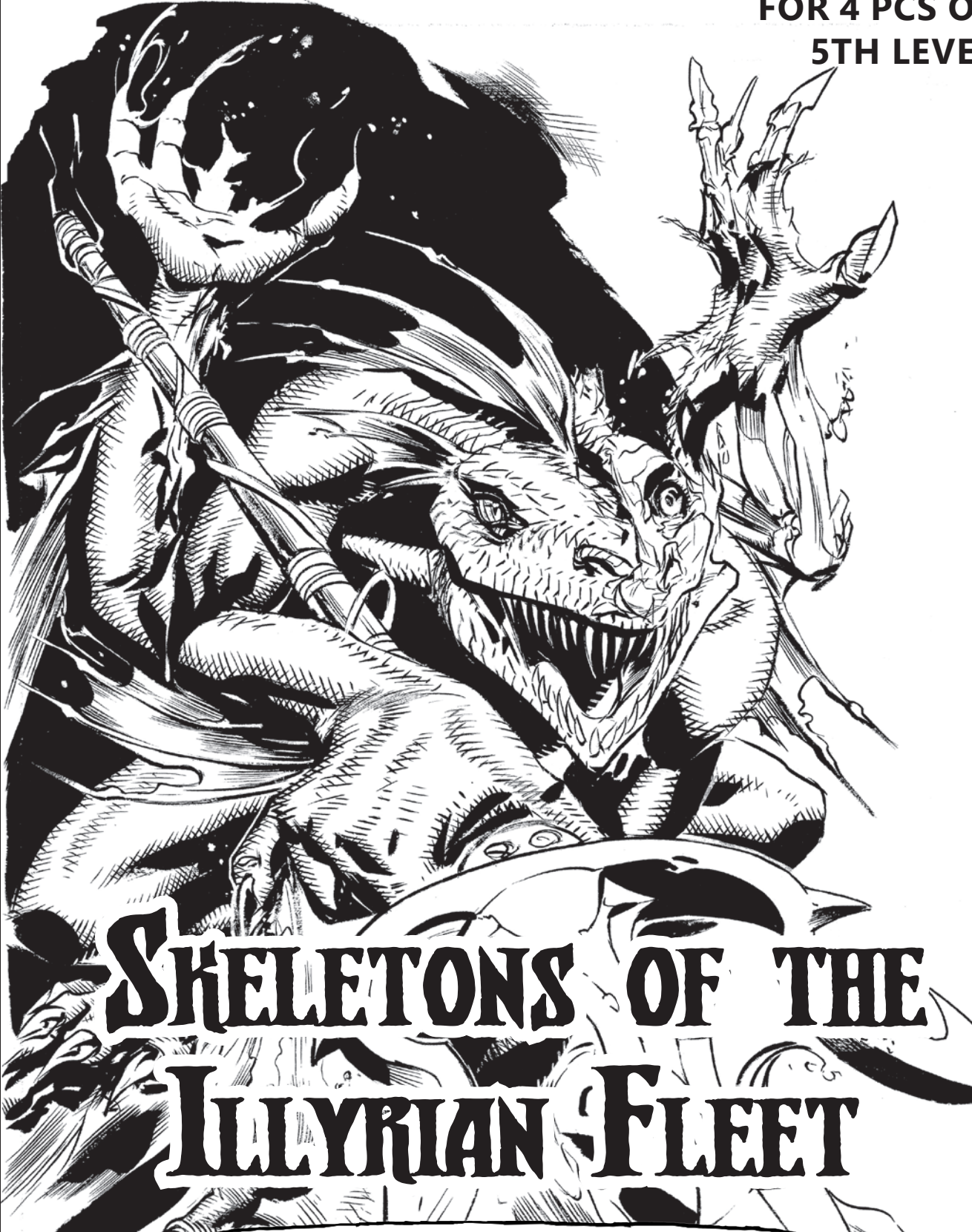




FOR 4 PCS OF
5TH LEVEL

SKELETONS OF THE ILLYRIAN FLEET

A 5E WARLOCK ADVENTURE
BY JAMES J. HAECH

SKELETONS OF THE ILLYRIAN FLEET

“Travel through Sharktooth Reef, are you crazy?” the captain said, his mustache bristling. “I don’t know who you think you’re talking to, but I’m no pirate, and I’m no death-seeking maniac, neither! Take the coast road. You won’t find a sailor mad enough to take you through those waters.”

Background

Somewhere along the coast of the Septime Peninsula is a wretched monument to the cost of war. Amidst the jagged black rocks of Sharktooth Reef rest the skeletons of dozens of ships from the merchant fleet of Illyria—a state now crushed under the boot of the Mharoti Dragon Empire—and some rotting carcasses of Mharoti vessels. The flags of the ships have been bleached white by the sun, and their emblems stripped away by the relentless waves. In death, these vessels are all but indistinguishable, save for the mighty size of the imperial galleys.

The city of Triolo is awash with Illyrian refugees, and the Mharoti army has a foothold on the nearby island of Kyprión—but the hourly changes of war matter not in the Sharktooth Reef. Sahuagin glide between the jagged rocks, prowling the hulking wooden skeletons of Illyrian and

Mharoti ships alike in search of treasure. These vultures have picked clean the skeletons of the Illyrian fleet—and now they set their hungry eyes on travelers foolish enough to walk the coast road between the Seven Cities.

Major NPCs

The following NPCs feature prominently in this lair:

THE NAMELESS WARRIOR

The corpse of a warrior who lost its life in the wreckage of the battle between Illyria and the Dragon Empire has returned to life as a **ghost**. Its past is a mystery to it: name, rank, even allegiance. Death and decay stripped all of these things from the Nameless Warrior, who now exists as an apparition clothed in a naval uniform tattered beyond recognition and wrapped in a cloak made from a sun-bleached flag. The only thing it remembers is the face of the creature that killed it: a monster with a terrible, piscine face decorated with kelp-green frills and a maw filled with razor-sharp teeth. Tortured by a mind devoid of memories, the Nameless Warrior clings to its one purpose: to destroy the creature that ended its life—the four-armed sahuagin known only as the Sharktooth Scourge.

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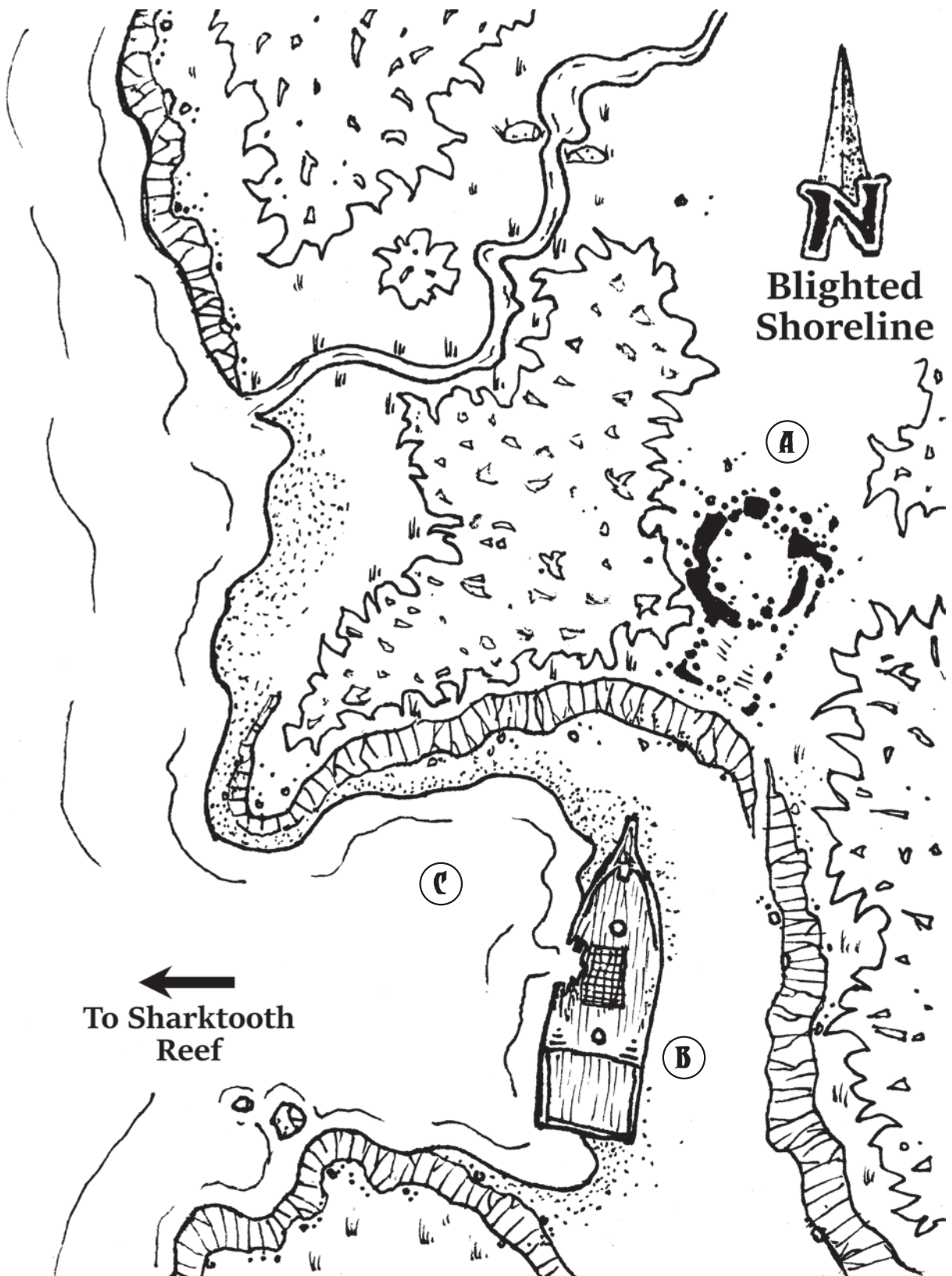
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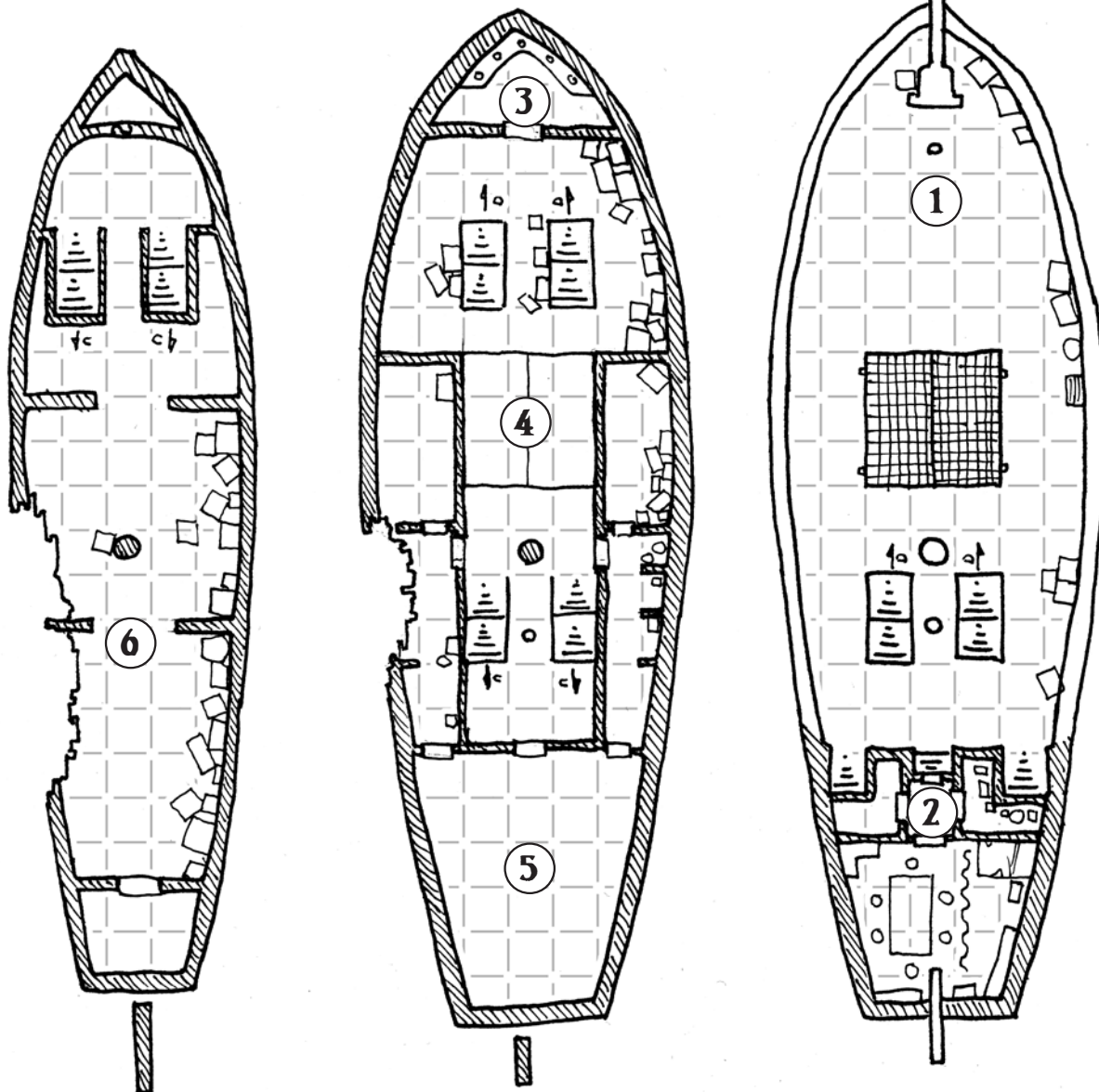


BLIGHTED SHORELINE



MAP: [CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THIS MAP FOR YOUR VIRTUAL TABLE TOP.](#)

WRECK OF THE LOST MENALCAS



The Nameless Warrior is the victim of a senseless war. It survived the initial battle between the Illyrian and Mharoti forces and clung to the ragged hull of its ship for hours, surrounded by corpses wearing the colors of both nations, in hope of rescue. Rescue never came; only raiders and death. The Nameless Warrior is now confined to the wreck of the ship it clung to in death.

THE SHARKTOOTH SCOURGE

None know exactly how many sahuagin infest the lightless waters of the Middle Sea, and few care to know. Most humanoids can't distinguish one shark-person from another, but a hulking, four-armed sahuagin known as the **Sharktooth Scourge** (see below for statistics) has gained a reputation in the Seven Cities. The Sharktooth Reef was named for the Scourge and his herd of shark-toothed sahuagin pirates.

However, the Scourge has suffered many terrible wounds in the years since his herd first began raiding ships traveling the Middle Sea. He feared death. He met with a sea witch in a hidden Septime cove and begged her to grant him eternal life so that he could survive his wounds. She granted his wish, but not as he expected. Her blessing bestowed upon the Scourge and his herd the curse of undeath. The entire herd of sahuagin then raided ships not to steal their valuables, but to devour their crews to the last man.

When the Mharoti fleet chased the Illyrian ships into Sharktooth Reef, the undead Scourge and his raiders lurked in wait until both sides had thoroughly crushed one another, then struck. The sahuagin's attack was vicious and decisive. All survivors of the battle were quickly and brutally cut down, and the skeletons of their ships—many now skewered upon the reef itself—became a new home for the sahuagin. These days, ships have learned to avoid the reef, so the Scourge has taken to raiding nearby fishing villages and attacking travelers on the coastal road.

Undead Sahuagin. An undead sahuagin uses the statistics of a sahuagin, except its type changes to undead, it is immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition, and it understands Sahuagin but can't speak. In addition, the undead sahuagin gains the following trait:

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the undead sahuagin to 0 hp, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the undead sahuagin drops to 1 hp instead.

Adventure Hooks

- The characters are traveling along the Coast Road between cities. They make camp in a ruined cliff-top tower for the night and see the hull of a wrecked ship beached upon the shore below.

- The characters have heard of a grand treasure lurking in the waters of the Sharktooth Reef and have come to find it.

The Scourge Takes Action

The Sharktooth Scourge and his undead herd go to the bay the night the characters arrive. On their way inland to raid a nearby village, the undead sea devils pass the wrecked ship and draw the attention of the Nameless Warrior, who attacks the sahuagin. When this event happens is at your discretion. If the characters make camp at night instead of exploring, it may happen in the middle of the night. If they decide to explore the ship of their own volition, it may happen immediately after they encounter the Nameless Warrior on the deck of the ship (Area 1).

If this encounter happens in the middle of the night, the characters hear the Nameless Warrior fighting for its life on the deck of the *Lost Menalcas* against 10 undead **sahuagin** and a **Sharktooth shaman** (see below for statistics) just before their own campsite is attacked by a group of undead **sahuagin**—one per player character.

Any adventure areas affected by this scenario will have the changes marked by **The Scourge Takes Action** header.

THE MAP OF THE LOST MENALCAS

The shipwreck map included in this adventure is also featured in our Warlock lair "Storming the Queen's Desire." Given the dynamic nature of how the fights aboard this ship can play out with the Sharktooth Scourge taking action or not, any shipwreck should do if you choose not to use this map. Alternatively, encounters with the Sharktooth Scourge and his undead sahuagin can take place on the beach, in the abandoned watchtower, or in the nearby water. If you choose to have fights outside of the shipwreck, the Nameless Warrior's "tether" can be modified to include the beach near the shipwreck, allowing the Nameless Warrior to participate in combat or interact with the PCs instead of being bound to the ship itself.

A. ANCIENT WATCHTOWER

Just 20 feet off the main Coast Road, this ancient Septime watchtower looks over a tiny bay carved out by the waves of the Middle Sea. It has long since been stripped of anything of value, but it does provide some cover from the elements. It is a fine place for weary travelers to rest, and it still has the ashen remains of a campfire from the last group of travelers who stopped here.

The first set of stairs is still intact, and a character can climb up about 10 feet before the tower becomes too precarious to stand on. From this perch, a character can easily see the bay at the base of the cliff and the wrecked ship below.

B. WRECK OF THE LOST MENALCAS

This wrecked Illyrian ship was pushed free from the rocks of Sharktooth Reef shortly after the battle, and it came to rest here on the shoreline. Its proud mast is snapped roughly in

half and collapsed on the deck, its ragged sails draped over it like a lean-to. A large hole in its port side—not immediately visible from the shore—allows easy access to the ship’s flooded hold (Area 6).

A creature can climb onto the ship’s deck from the starboard side of the ship by making a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. If the creature fails this check by 5 or more, it falls onto the sharp rocks of the shore below, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and 5 (1d10) piercing damage. The ship is detailed further below.

C. DRIFTWOOD BAY

This bay is filled with detritus torn from shipwrecks. The rough waves in Sharktooth Reef tear away at the wrecked ships skewered upon the reef, and currents cause the flotsam to drift into this bay. Most of the debris is junk, but some treasure rests at the bottom of the bay. A character that succeeds on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check can dive 30 feet to the bottom of the bay and recover a sunken treasure chest containing 120 gp in Septime coins. A creature with a swim speed doesn’t have to fight the current and only has to succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to pull up the chest.

If a creature fails either of these Strength (Athletics) checks by 5 or more, it crashes into a rock or heavy piece of debris, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, and is forced back to the surface.

Wreck of the Lost Menalcas

The **ghost** known as the Nameless Warrior resides in this ship. It usually lurks in the captain’s quarters (Area 1) but responds to any noise on the ship. Characters that climb onto the ship’s main deck without trying to be stealthy draw its attention. In this circumstance, it stands upon the quarterdeck in the aft of the ship, crackling with spectral flames, and observes the intruders ominously for 1 round before attacking.

Playing the Nameless Warrior. The Nameless Warrior is a spirit obsessed with vengeance. It attacks intruders on sight, but pauses its onslaught if the characters try to reason with it. It ceases hostilities if a character succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. Characters that help it fight invading sahuagin have advantage on this check. If calmed, the Nameless Warrior is single-minded in its purpose to destroy the Sharktooth Scourge and shows kindness towards characters who share that goal—and derision for characters that disdain it. On each round of combat, it hisses a warning to the characters in Common, such as:

- This ship is my only home; I will defend it to the last.
- You are not the one from my dreams, but I will cut you down just the same.

- I have sworn no vengeance against you. Get out of my way or be destroyed.

If all of the characters refuse to help it track down and destroy the Sharktooth Scourge, the warrior uses its Possession feature to take over one of their bodies. It is no longer bound to the ship in this new body and leaves the shipwreck to track down the sahuagin, if necessary. The Nameless Warrior has the following action option in place of the ghost’s Withering Touch:

Spectral Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) force damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. The Nameless Warrior can’t be disarmed of this blade.

1. MAIN DECK

The ship’s sails are draped over the main deck like a tent, creating a 20-foot-tall “ceiling” of drenched canvas. The deck is strewn with fresh sahuagin corpses and long-rotted humanoid corpses. A few crates and barrels are still bound to the sides of the ship. Their provisions have long since spoiled, though some salted meat remains. A set of stairs leads up to the quarterdeck and the helm, and two sets of stairs lead down into the main hold (Area 4). A seaweed-choked iron grate looks down into the hold.

The Scourge Takes Action. The Nameless Warrior fights off 10 undead **sahuagin** and a **Sharktooth shaman**. To simulate the fight without rolling individually, the Nameless Warrior kills 1 sahuagin and takes 10 damage each turn until the characters arrive.

2. AFT CABINS

The Nameless Warrior resides here most of the time. It etched single-minded words of vengeance against the Sharktooth Scourge into the walls of the captain’s quarters with its *spectral blade*. A golden letter opener worth 50 gp sits on the captain’s desk.

3. FOREHOLD

The bones of a human in an Illyrian sailor’s uniform rest here. The skeleton’s arms are wrapped tightly around an iron lockbox. It requires a key or a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools to open. Inside, a golden circlet with an inlaid sapphire rests upon a bed of 100 gp in Septime coins. This circlet is worth 500 gp, but it has a magical secret. While its wearer is underwater, it functions as a *circlet of blasting* with the following changes: it casts *scorching ray* at 3rd level and ignores resistance to fire damage.

The Scourge Takes Action. Three **Sharktooth shamans** and two undead **sahuagin** have broken down the door to this room and torn the lockbox from the sailor’s arms. The sahuagin are banging a rock against the lock.

4. MAIN HOLD

The main hold of this ship is filled with many small rooms, all of which are filled with storage crates made of water-rotted wood. Two sets of stairs lead down into the lower hold (Area 6).

The northeast room is filled with fungus, and three **gas spores** are ready to pop on any creature that opens the door. They were growing on top of a chest filled with medicinal herbs. A character proficient with alchemist's supplies can brew the herbs into 4 *potions of greater healing* if it spends 1 hour brewing and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check.

The southwest room has been breached but is above sea level. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check allows a character to climb into this area from Area 6 or vice versa. If a creature fails this check by 5 or more, it falls onto the sharp rocks of the shore below, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

The other two rooms appear to have been used for storage or extra quarters for Illyrian soldiers.

5. AFTERHOLD

This large cargo hold is filled with corpses of both Illyrian and Mharoti marines alike. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the corpse of an Illyrian soldier holds an iron key in its armored glove—the key to the lockbox found in Area 3.

The Scourge Takes Action. The undead **sahuagin** known as the **Sharktooth Scourge** is hunched down here, tearing off scraps of fetid flesh from the corpses and crunching on their brine-caked bones. A **Sharktooth shaman** accompanies him at all times.

If you wish to extend the adventure, the Scourge flees when reduced to half of his hit point maximum. He punches a hole in the weakened floor and dives underwater. He howls a call for all sahuagin to retreat and protect him then swims off to Sharktooth Reef to protect himself. The Nameless Warrior, if it survived, wants to sail to the reef to track down his prey.

6. LOWER HOLD

The lower hold has a massive breach from where the Sharktooth Reef tore through the ship's hull. This chamber is completely flooded.

The southernmost room is home to a sleeping **giant octopus**, which attacks any creature that opens the door.

Conclusion

The sahuagin flee back to Sharktooth Reef when their leader is killed, and the Nameless Warrior weakly thanks any characters who aided it in its quest for vengeance. Its strength quickly fades as it begins to pass on into the afterlife, but it uses the last of its vitality to bequeath its *spectral blade*

unto a character who fought alongside it. The Sharktooth Reef is still home to pirates and sahuagin, but the PCs would need to find a boat to hunt down the treasures in that dreadful place...

SPECTRAL BLADE

Weapon (shortsword), rare (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon, and you can choose for its attacks to deal force damage instead of piercing damage. Its blade seems to flicker in and out of existence but always strikes true.

As an action while holding the *spectral blade* or as a reaction when you deal damage to a creature with it, you can turn incorporeal until the start of your next turn. While incorporeal, you can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. You take 5 (1d10) force damage if you end your turn inside an object.

Sharktooth Shaman

Medium undead (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)

Skills Perception +5, Religion +3

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Sahuagin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The Sharktooth shaman has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hp.

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

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the Sharktooth shaman to 0 hp, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the Sharktooth shaman drops to 1 hp instead.

Spellcasting. The Sharktooth shaman is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *guidance*, *poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *create or destroy water, faerie fire, fog cloud, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *heat metal, hold person, moonbeam*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, conjure animals* (sharks only)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Sharktooth shaman makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its trident.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 – 1) piercing damage, or 3 (1d8 – 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Sharktooth Scourge

Large undead (sahuagin), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (–1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +2, Wis +4

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Sahuagin

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The Sharktooth Scourge has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hp.

Shark Telepathy. The Sharktooth Scourge can magically command any shark within 120 feet of him, using a limited telepathy.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the Sharktooth Scourge to 0 hp, he must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the Sharktooth Scourge drops to 1 hp instead.

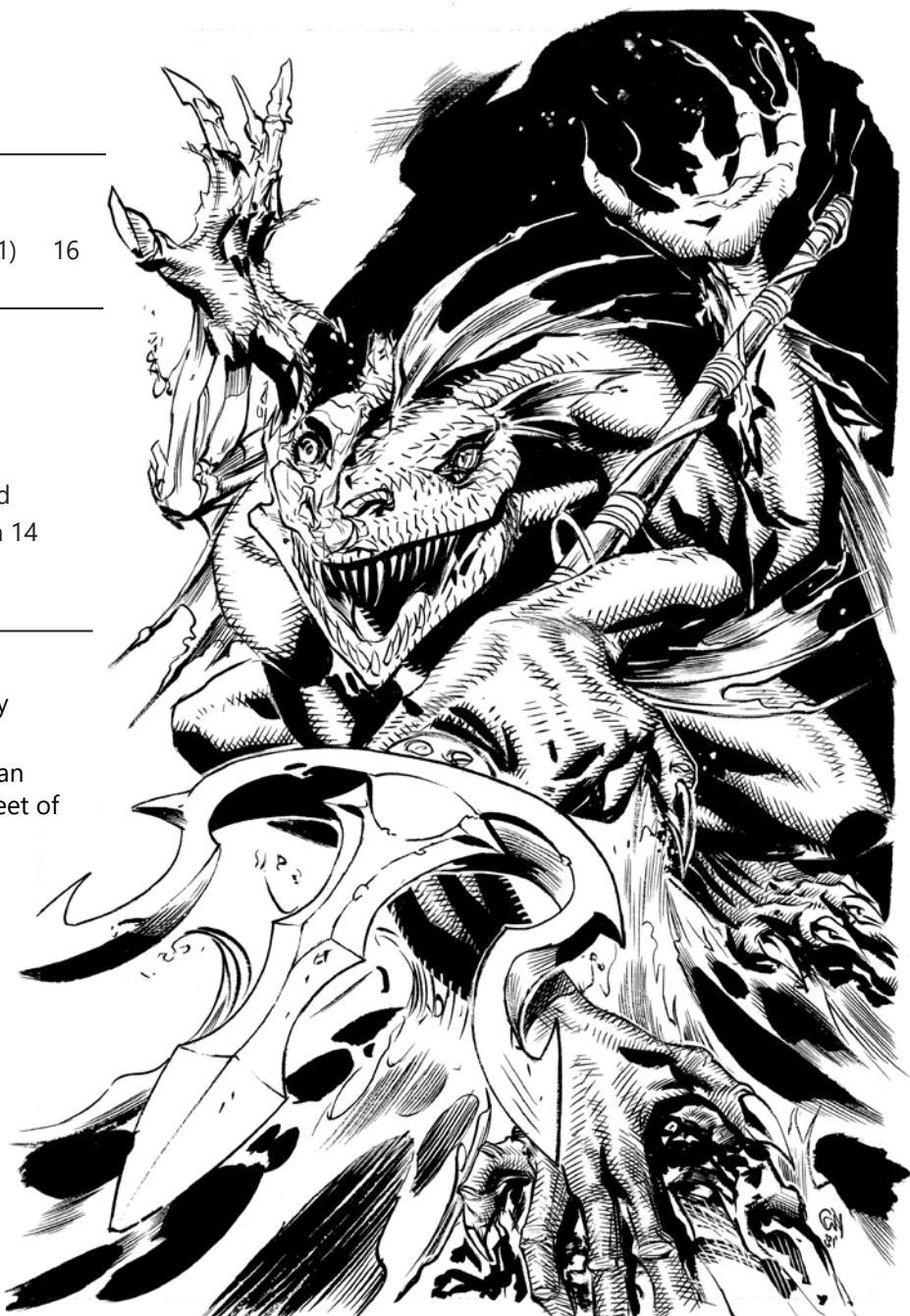
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Sharktooth Scourge makes three attacks: one with his bite and two with his claws or trident. If two claw attacks hit a target that is not undead, the target must succeed on a DC 13 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.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage, or 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned 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.



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