



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

DARK WATERS OF HATE

PART 2 OF THE TENETS OF BANE SERIES



CCC-WWC-02



DARK WATERS OF HATE

THE SECOND ADVENTURE IN THE TENETS OF BANE SERIES

A devout priestess of Torm seeks one of three platinum discs once carried by a trio of Banite fanatics. To retrieve the item, the characters must sail the Moonsea, journey to its depths, and unravel the protective magic left behind by the archmage who originally hid the disc.

A Two-Hour Adventure for 1st-4th Level Characters



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ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Dark Waters of Hate*, a D&D adventure that is part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 3rd-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. Players with ineligible characters can create new 1st-level characters or use pregenerated characters.

The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, midway between the cities of Melvaunt and Thentia. During play, the characters sail the Moonsea and journey to its depths to retrieve one of three platinum discs known as the Tenets of Bane.

ADJUSTING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition Party	Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a specific recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

THANK YOU

The Adventurers League could not exist without talented and dedicated Dungeon Masters to bring its smelly trolls and evil necromancers to life. Being a DM isn't always easy, but it can be rewarding, and we certainly appreciate your time and effort!

ABOUT WINTER WAR

The Tenets of Bane adventures were written exclusively for the Winter War gaming convention. For over four decades, Winter War has been providing a place for tabletop gaming enthusiasts to come together to express their passion in a no-frills and no distractions atmosphere. Independently managed for over thirty five years, it has strived to preserve and promote the very essence of the gaming community: the games.

Located in Champaign-Urbana, IL, Winter War provides a relaxed gaming atmosphere with an almost limitless variety of gaming to be had and friends to be made. The convention is also dedicated to the promotion of gaming in the younger generation, offering a wide variety of kid-friendly gaming and family oriented events.

No matter your interests in tabletop gaming, experience level, or age, Winter War has an event to suit your tastes. From roleplaying to World War II combat simulations to collectible card games, Winter War has it all.

Use the web address below to take a look at the previous conventions for a taste of what types of games Winter War has offered in the past. Also, hop on the mailing list to discuss what you would like to see. Winter War welcomes anyone who would like to try their hand at running an event, even if it is your first time!

www.winterwar.org

FORGOTTEN REALMS DEITIES

The Tenets of Bane adventures mainly feature two deities: Bane and Torm. These gods have a long and storied history in the Forgotten Realms, and you can learn more about them in supplements such as the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*, *Faiths and Pantheons*, and *The Avatar Trilogy* of novels.

The following sidebars provide basic information about each god and detail how loyalty to each might impact the adventure.

Loyalty to Bane

Bane is the evil and malevolent deity of fear, hatred, and tyranny. He prefers to plot and scheme and rarely acts in a direct manner. Bane furthers his nefarious agenda by utilizing a network of priests, worshippers, and other agents. He seeks to control all of Faerûn, and he works toward this goal ceaselessly. Bane's symbol is an upright black hand with thumb and fingers together. You can learn more about him in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

While Bane is wholly evil, not all who follow him hold the same darkness within their hearts. He represents power, ambition, and control. Many of his worshippers pray to him for strength, and he is said to favor the bold. Because of this, one or more characters playing the adventure might worship or serve Bane. Their devotion to him has the potential to put them at direct odds with the story's plot. If you find a Bane loyalist amongst the characters, pull the player aside before the adventure begins and give them the Servant of the Black Hand secret mission below.

Servant of the Black Hand. The church of Bane has learned of Malana Homwell's plan to recover the three platinum discs known as the Tenets of Bane. You are to infiltrate those in her employ and assist in the recovery of the discs. Keep your true allegiance a secret at all times, and alert your superiors when all three of the items are in Malana's possession. The church of Bane will handle the rest.

Important. This mission is for roleplaying purposes only. It has no treasure, XP, or renown rewards associated with it.

Loyalty to Torm

Torm is the god of duty and loyalty. Those who face danger for the greater good often worship him and seek to emulate his values. Because of his beliefs, many goodly paladins and clerics are found among his faithful. Those who worship Torm believe that spiritual deliverance is achievable by service. They struggle to accomplish his edicts by going out into the world as an active force for good. They seek to correct injustices and help those in need. Torm's symbol is a right-hand gauntlet held upright with its palm forward. You can learn more about him in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

FROM MOUNTAIN HALLS TO FORESTS DEEP,
I WILL NOT LET YOU BE.
I AM DEATH, AND YOU ARE MINE;
YOU WILL RETURN TO ME.

-DEATH



DARK WATERS OF HATE

As Bane's worship grows, the world suffers.

—Malana Homwell

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In 1357 DR, three of Bane's devout followers attempted to establish a slave trade in the city of Thentia. These individuals were collectively known as the Servants of Strife.

Each Servant of Strife possessed a platinum disc depicting a painted black hand outlined in red on one side and a single word representing an edict of Bane on its opposite. These words (fear, hatred, and tyranny) each embodied a facet of Bane's teachings. Together, the discs were known as the Tenets of Bane.

In 1358 DR, a trio of Thentia's powerful archmages (Phourkyn One-Eye, Flamuldinath "Firefingers" Thuldoum, and Rilitar Shadow-water) defeated the Servants of Strife and divided the Tenets of Bane between themselves for study. They quickly discovered the Tenets were divine in nature and beyond their complete understanding. Moreover, each disc seemed to radiate an aura that intensified emotions related to the word it bore. Simply having the items near proved to be disturbing, and when they could find no way to destroy them, the archmages instead chose to hide them away.

Each archmage hid one of the Tenets of Bane in a remote location of the Moonsea, safeguarding it with protective magic. They documented their studies of the discs in a shared text and presented it to Sureene Aumratha, the high priestess of the House of the Moon (a temple dedicated to Selûne in Thentia), for safekeeping.

Over time, the House of the Moon's prosperity waxed and waned. Many of the temple's items were sold or stolen, and the text detailing the Tenets of Bane made its way into the private collection of an aged Thentian scholar, where it remained until his recent passing.

Last month, Malana Homwell, a cleric of Torm, acquired the text. Malana oversees the Helping Hand, a temple dedicated to the Hand of Righteousness (Torm) that lies midway between Melvaunt and Thentia on the Sword Trail. The priestess has taken it upon herself to locate the Tenets of Bane and transport them to Elturgard. She is confident the high clerics of Torm in the city of Elturel will know how to destroy the items once and for all.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Dark Waters of Hate consists of five parts.

Part 1: The Helping Hand. The characters arrive at the Helping Hand, a temple to Torm on the Sword Trail midway between Melvaunt and Thentia. The temple's overseer, Malana Homwell, asks them to recover one of three items known as the Tenets of Bane.

Part 2: Open Water. To reach the suspected location of the second Tenet of Bane, the characters must sail the waters of the Moonsea, navigate its depths, and deal with the native creatures of the sea.

Part 3: Dark Water. The characters journey to a forsaken merfolk settlement inhabited by undead. There they encounter the ghost of a merfolk leader and retrieve the second Tenet of Bane.

Part 4: Bloody Water. In this optional encounter, the characters attract the attention of several sharks as they make their way back to the surface.

Part 5: Conclusion. The characters return to the Helping Hand and deliver one of the Tenets of Bane to Malana Homwell.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The characters may already have their own reasons for traveling to the Helping Hand, but if not, use the following adventure hooks to draw them into the story.

Faction Orders. Malana Homwell has contacted each of the factions in the Moonsea and requested their assistance in locating three items known as the Tenets of Bane. Once recovered, she plans to transport the items to Elturgard, where they will be destroyed.

Bane's ever-growing presence in the region is a threat to all of the factions, and anything they can do to curtail the deity's influence benefits them all.

Travelers. The Helping Hand serves as a respite for those traveling between Melvaunt and Thentia. Adventurers who do not belong to a faction may be passing through the area or encounter other adventurers bound for the temple while traveling the Sword Trail.

Faction assignment: Order of the Gauntlet. The Homwell family of Elturel counts Ontharr Frume, a paladin of Torm and high-ranking member of the Order of the Gauntlet, as a close friend. Ontharr has agreed to use his faction's influence to help Malana Homwell retrieve the Tenets of Bane. Characters who successfully aid in retrieving all three items earn an additional renown point.

PART 1: THE HELPING HAND

Expected Duration: 15 minutes

Either of their own volition or by the direction of their factions, the characters arrive at the Helping Hand, a temple to Torm built from the ruins of an old roadhouse. Here the temple's overseer, Priestess Malana Homwell, and a dozen acolytes offer respite to weary travelers, spread the word of Torm, and make the finest goat cheese in region. If the characters have already met Malana in a previous adventure, you can forego introductions and skip to the bulleted details in The Second Tenet section.

Once a simple two-story roadhouse on the Sword Trail between Melvaunt and Thentia, the Helping Hand now stands as a sizeable temple to Torm, the god of duty and loyalty. It is nearing dusk, but as you approach, you see several people in plain woolen robes tending a large garden adjacent to the structure. Noticing you, a young brown-haired man in his early twenties approaches. "Greetings. My name is Acolyte Ryman. Are you in need of lodging for the evening?"

If the characters arrive at the temple at the behest of their factions and mention Malana Homwell's name, Acolyte Ryman escorts them to a meeting room to wait for the priestess. If they do not make their intentions immediately known, Malana learns from her acolytes that individuals who appear to fit the description of capable adventurers have arrived, and she seeks them out shortly after dusk.

Roleplaying Malana Homwell

A native of Elturgard, Malana comes from a long line of paladins and clerics dedicated to the worship of Torm. When she was 18 years old, she left her homeland to preach Torm's word throughout the Sword Coast. She was young and full of pride in her deity, and she traveled with a party of adventurers for nearly a year before her piousness caused rifts among the group.

Malana fell in battle while dealing with an ankheg infestation north of Baldur's Gate, losing her arm to one of the creature's powerful pincers. Only the quick actions of her allies saved her life. She returned home to Elturel intent upon reclaiming her missing appendage, but ultimately, no healing could replace her missing limb.

Knowing she had failed her god, she returned to the farmland where she lost her arm and worked as a simple farmhand for nearly three years. During that time, she came to understand the aspects of Torm that she had cast aside.

With respect, kindness, and humility in her heart, she traveled to the Moonsea, a land rife with Bane's worship, to serve as a counterpoint to his teachings of ambition and strife. Since that time, her flock has grown, and the Helping Hand temple has earned its name.

THE HAND OF TORM

Acolyte Ryman leads you to a small, comfortable room inside the temple and informs you that Priestess Malana Homwell will be with you shortly. Moments later, a female halfling with curly red hair arrives carrying a tray containing a bowl of fresh fruit, a wheel of cheese, a pitcher of water, and several wooden drinking cups. She places the tray atop the room's table and bids you to sit and enjoy.

After ten minutes, the door opens, and a woman of nearly fifty years enters. She is dressed in clean white robes fringed with light-blue embroidery. A pale-blue shawl bearing the upraised hand of Torm hangs neatly over her shoulders. The right sleeve of the woman's garment is rolled and pinned at her elbow, making her missing appendage easily apparent.

In spite of her handicap, she is beautiful. Light streaks of grey grace her lustrous blond hair, and her bright blue eyes convey both intelligence and authority. Smiling, she says, "Welcome to the Helping Hand. I am Priestess Malana Homwell, and I am pleased to make your acquaintance."

About the Helping Hand

The two-story stone temple to Torm is simple and austere in comparison to many of those dedicated to the Hand of Righteousness. When Malana arrived in the Moonsea many decades ago, it was little more than a burnt-out shell, but over time, the structure has seen several expansions. It now includes separate wings for travelers and its permanent clergy, gardens for raising vegetables, and three large barns that serve as a dairy for a sizeable heard of milking goats.

The Helping Hand augments the income it generates from lodging by making cheeses seasoned with herbs, which the temple sells in Melvaunt and Thentia. Many of its specialty products are prized by the nobility of both cities and command a steep price. This success has enabled the temple to prosper and expand over the years.

Temple Services. As long as the characters agree to assist Malana, they may request one spell per day of 100 gp or less from the Spellcasting Services table on page 4 for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material components, if any.

After formal introductions, Malana asks the characters to sit and continue enjoying their refreshments. As they relax, she relays the important information below.

- Malana needs adventures to retrieve three palm-sized platinum discs known as the Tenets of Bane. Each disc has a word (fear, hatred, or tyranny) on one side and a painted black hand on the other.
- The discs were once carried by three devout worshippers of Bane known as the Servants of Strife. They were defeated decades ago by a trio of Thentian wizards who took the discs to study their properties.

- The wizards learned that the discs were divine in nature, but they were unable to determine their true purpose. Having the items near was disconcerting, as they seemed to amplify the emotions that each disc represented.
- The wizards could find no way to destroy the discs; so instead, they hid them in desolate regions of the Moonsea. They documented the locations and their findings in a text, which they gave to the Church of Selûne in Thentia.
- The church fell from favor, and the text passed between collectors until Malana acquired it last month.
- As a priestess of Torm (Bane's rival), she feels it is her duty to locate these items and transport them to her homeland of Elturgard, which is now the shining center of Torm's faith. She is confident the high clerics there can find a way to destroy the discs, thus eliminating at least a small portion of Bane's influence in the world.
- Malana does not expect the characters to help her without a reward. She is willing to pay 250 gp for each disc. She would like to retrieve the discs herself, but her physical limitations and temple duties prohibit her from doing so.

THE SECOND TENET

If the characters accept Malana's offer, she provides them with the information below about the second Tenet of Bane.

- The second Tenet of Bane bears the word "hate". Simply holding the disc is enough to cause discontent and mild anger in a normal person.
- According to the text Malana acquired, the disc is located in a deep rift at the bottom of the Moonsea.
- The archmage, Rilitar Shadow-water, hid the disc within a stone container crafted to look like a large scallop shell roughly the size of a dinner plate. The shell bears a riddle in Elvish. The riddle and its answer are not documented in the text. Only the shell's location is known.
- Malana has procured the services of Captain Blane Lesiko, his ship (*Wave Dancer*), and his crew to aid in the disc's retrieval.
- Captain Lesiko's ship is anchored offshore roughly a mile west of the Helping Hand where the Sword Trail runs near to the Moonsea. He is expecting the characters to arrive in the next day or two.
- Captain Lesiko's crew includes a wizard capable of casting *water breathing*, if needed.



PART 2: OPEN WATER

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

When the characters arrive at the location along the Sword Trail provided by Malana Homwell, they find a two-masted sailing ship anchored offshore. Near the water's edge, two men in sailor's clothing wait with a rowboat. The characters need only mention Malana Homwell's name to gain access to the ship.

WAVE DANCER

When you reach the deck of the sailing ship, you spy a tall, thin man in a knee-length blue coat. He wears his greying black hair neatly pulled back in a ponytail. Beside him stands a female elf with a clean-shaven head covered in tattoos that resemble waves. Seashells and other marine trinkets adorn her teal robes.

Once you and your companions are aboard, he speaks, "I am Captain Blane Lesiko, and this is Halara Windsong, my ship's wizard. Welcome aboard Wave Dancer."

Captain Lesiko assigns the characters a small area of hanging bunks below deck. While friendly, this trip is a business excursion. Time is money, and he prefers to be out to sea as quickly as possible. As the captain readies his crew for departure, the ship's elven wizard, Halara Windsong, relays the following information to the characters.

- Malana Homwell informed Captain Lesiko that the item the characters seek is located in Maston's Trench, a deep rift in the eastern portion of the Moonsea. The trench was named after Garret Maston, a scholar who studied the Moonsea nearly two centuries ago.
- Neither the crew nor the captain knows exactly what the characters are attempting to locate. Malana paid them well for their discretion.
- Captain Lesiko and his crew will sail Wave Dancer to the edge of the rift and drop anchor. It is up to the characters to descend into Maston's Trench and retrieve what they seek.
- Halara can cast a *water breathing* spell on the characters when they reach the rift. The spell allows them to breathe underwater for 24 hours.

Important: The official rules in the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* are vague on whether characters can speak and cast spells with verbal components while underwater. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS ADVENTURE, Halara's *water breathing* spell also allows the characters to communicate/speak normally and cast spells with verbal components while underwater.

- Deep-sea delving is an exhausting and difficult endeavor. While armor and shields can provide protection from underwater creatures and hazards, they also make movement more difficult. Halara advises the characters to forego armor and shields while underwater.

Underwater Adventuring

5th edition does not attempt to present a rule for every possible adventuring scenario. It is up to you as the DM to adjudicate the uncommon situations that often arise during gameplay in a fair and fun manner. Below is a list of several important official rules to keep in mind as the characters probe the depths of the Moonsea. Any additional adventure-specific rules can be found in each encounter's description.

- While swimming, each foot of movement costs 1 extra foot (2 extra feet in difficult terrain), unless a creature has a swimming speed.
- Unless aided by magic, a character can't swim for a full 8 hours per day. After each hour of swimming, a character must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.
- A creature that has a swimming speed—including a character with a *ring of swimming* or similar magic—can swim all day without penalty and uses the normal forced march rules in the *Player's Handbook*.
- Swimming through deep water is similar to traveling at high altitudes, because of the water's pressure and cold temperature. For a creature without a swimming speed, each hour spent swimming at a depth greater than 100 feet counts as 2 hours for the purpose of determining exhaustion. Swimming for an hour at a depth greater than 200 feet counts as 4 hours.
- Visibility underwater depends on water clarity and the available light. Unless the characters have light sources, they become aware of an encounter at a distance of 60 feet in clear water with bright light, 30 feet in clear water with dim light, and 10 feet in murky water or with no light.
- When making a **melee weapon attack**, a creature that doesn't have a swimming speed (either natural or granted by magic) has disadvantage on the attack roll unless the weapon is a dagger, javelin, shortsword, spear, or trident.
- A **ranged weapon attack** automatically misses a target beyond the weapon's normal range. Even against a target within normal range, the attack roll has disadvantage unless the weapon is a crossbow, a net, or a weapon that is thrown like a javelin (including a spear, trident, or dart).
- Creatures and objects that are fully immersed in water have resistance to fire damage.
- A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again. For example, a creature with a Constitution of 14 can hold its breath for 3 minutes. If it starts suffocating, it has 2 rounds to reach air before it drops to 0 hit points.

MASTON'S TRENCH

With light winds and fair weather, the journey to Maston's Trench takes the crew of Wave Dancer only one and a half days of easy sailing. Upon arriving at the location, the crew drops anchor and settles in for the wait.

Halara Windsong confers with Captain Lesiko and then makes her way to you and your companions. "I do not know what it is you hope to find at the bottom of the Moonsea, but I do know your search will be difficult. The sea demands much, and it can be a cruel and unforgiving mistress. The crew attached a 1000-foot coil of rope to the anchor before they dropped it to the sea floor. Use it as a guide to find your way back to the ship after you have located what you seek. Good luck, and may the Bitch Queen show you mercy."

The sea floor lies 100 feet below the water's surface. Characters may swim to the bottom or simply sink if they carry 20 or more pounds of weight with them. Maston's Trench is a long crevasse nearly 150 feet wide and one quarter of a mile long. Its tapered sides contain rocky ledges that descend 100 feet below the sea's floor. Wave Dancer's anchor rests 75 feet from the trench.

The exact position of the ship, its anchor, and the layout of the trench are not essential to the progression of the adventure's events, but you can

provide the characters with the information above if they request details. Feel free to let them formulate a plan for searching the trench, but try to keep them from becoming too bogged down with the details.

When the characters descend into the trench, the greater depth creates additional pressure, and the water becomes colder. As the party searches the bottom of the trench, characters without a swim speed must make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw every 30 minutes or gain a level of exhaustion (see the Exhaustion sidebar for details). Characters wearing armor or carrying a readied shield make this saving throw with disadvantage.

After two hours of searching (and 4 Constitution saving throws), the characters encounter **two giant octopuses (O)** hiding among the rocks at the bottom of the trench. When they enter within 60 feet of the octopuses, the creatures attack. Since the characters are actively searching as they move throughout the trench, allow each of them to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check when combat begins. Characters who succeed on the check (or those with a passive Perception of 15 or higher) are not surprised and may act during the first round of combat.

Note: While this may not initially seem like a challenging encounter, the restrictions imposed while fighting underwater (see the Underwater Adventuring sidebar) and the characters' possible lack of armor make it more difficult than it appears.



Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove one **giant octopus**. The remaining giant octopus has 39 hit points.
- **Weak party:** Each **giant octopus** has 39 hit points.
- **Strong party:** Add one **giant octopus**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **giant octopuses**.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Light. Dim light from the daylight on the surface.

Rocks. Outcroppings of rocks dot the area, rising to a height of roughly 5 feet.

Sea plants. The surrounding plants vary between 2 and 3 feet in height. They provide half cover.

TACTICS

The octopuses employ very little in the way of tactics. They attack the nearest creature and fight until reduced to one quarter or less of their hit points before using their ink cloud ability to escape.

Exhaustion

Some special abilities and environmental hazards, such as starvation and the long-term effects of freezing or scorching temperatures, can lead to a special condition called exhaustion.

Exhaustion is measured in six levels. An effect can cause a creature to suffer one or more levels of exhaustion, as specified in the effects description.

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

As a creature's level of exhaustion increases, the effects worsen. The creature suffers the effect not only of the current level of exhaustion, but also of all the previous levels, so a creature suffering level 2 exhaustion has its speed halved and also has disadvantage on ability checks.

An effect that removes exhaustion reduces its level, with all exhaustion effects disappearing if a creature's exhaustion level is reduced below 1.

Finishing a long rest reduces a creature's exhaustion level by 1, provided that the creature has also ingested some food and drink.

UNEXPECTED VISITORS

Searching Maston's Trench is an endeavor that could easily take the characters days and would ultimately be fruitless. Roughly a century ago, the merfolk of the Moonsea found the stone shell that contains the Tenet of Bane and gave it to their king as a gift (see the bulleted list below for additional information).

The merfolk routinely patrol this area of the Moonsea, and they have been watching the characters from a safe distance since Wave Dancer dropped anchor earlier in the day. Immediately after the party's encounter with the giant octopuses, they approach the characters in an effort to learn their intent.

Important DM Note: While statistics are provided for the merfolk, this is not intended to be a combat encounter. The merfolk are peaceful and do not wish the characters harm. Moreover, their cooperation is essential to the plot of the adventure. You should portray them as curious and somewhat shy and do your best to let the characters know they pose no threat. Alternatively, if the characters have difficulty with the fight against the giant octopuses, you can have four merfolk join the fight and lend them assistance, thus opening the way for cordial interactions.

When the sand and sediment disturbed by your fight with the giant octopuses finally settles to the sea floor, eight aquatic humanoids with the upper bodies of a human and the lower bodies of a fish emerge from the surrounding vegetation and rocks. While they carry spears, their posture is non-threatening, and they seem more curious than frightened or alarmed. With some hesitation, the largest male amongst them swims forward. In a voice that carries easily through the water, he says, "Greetings, I am Kalinos of the merfolk tribe Orlanthis. We mean you no harm, but your presence is unexpected. Why have you ventured below the waves?"

As long as the characters do not threaten or attack the merfolk, Kalinos happily shares what he knows of the trench. If attacked, the merfolk simply flee. They return hours later with a dozen more of their kin and attempt to reestablish a dialog, hoping their numbers will make the characters think twice about any further hostile actions.

Kalinos knows the information below.

- Around the time of the Spellplague, King Garnon united the merfolk clans of the western Moonsea. He built a small city amid the coral reefs and underwater cliffs north of the dry lands that hold the human settlement of Mulmaster.
- The city was named Garnthall, and it flourished for decades with King Garnon as its cherished ruler.

- Just as the Spellplague changed the surface world, it also changed the lands beneath the sea. Tremors dislodged many rock ledges within the trench, and when the merfolk investigated, they found a large scallop shell made of stone amid the rubble.
- The shell was beautiful, with flowing engravings along its top half. The merfolk presented it to King Garnon as a gift, and he prominently displayed it in his common room.
- As the years progressed, King Garnon's disposition soured, and he began to treat his people with malice and contempt. He slaughtered those who opposed him and tortured others for fun. He obsessed over the shell and eventually moved it to his private quarters so only he could be near it.
- The merfolk are a peaceful and nonviolent race. While other societies might have devolved into civil war, most of Garnthall's merfolk simply left the city, forming small tribes elsewhere in the Moonsea.
- Only King Garnon's most loyal and fanatical subjects remained with him. What became of the king is unknown. Garnthall remains, but the merfolk do not go near it. Legends tell that the king and those who served him haunt it.
- If desired, Kalinos can lead Wave Dancer and its crew to where Garnthall lies, but the merfolk will not enter the ruins under any circumstances.



PART 3: DARK WATER

Expected Duration: 60 minutes

If asked, Kalinos and his merfolk companions lead Captain Lesiko and Wave Dancer to the ruins of Garnthall, easily swimming in front of the ship as it sails. The entire journey takes about eight hours, during which time the characters can take a long rest, if desired. After the crew drops anchor, the merfolk depart, wanting nothing to do with forsaken city below the waves.

If the characters are still suffering from the effects of exhaustion, they may rest longer on the ship before descending into the ruined merfolk city. The delay displeases Captain Lesiko, who prefers to be on to his next trip, and he grumbles, but consents.

When the characters are ready, Halara Windsong once again offers to cast her *water breathing* spell, which grants each party member the ability to breathe, communicate, and cast spells underwater for 24 hours.

GARNTHALL

The ruined merfolk city of Garnthall rests at the base of an underwater cliff one hundred feet below the surface of the Moonsea. A forest of kelp leads to the cliff, which rises eighty feet to a coral reef. A stone palace, partially built into the side of the cliff, inhabits the rocky face. It rests atop a sizeable ledge twenty feet off the sea floor. Dozens of small cave entrances dot the cliff on both sides of the structure.

In spite of its architectural beauty, the area conveys a darkness. Large patches of barnacles cover the palace walls, creating a scab-like exterior, the kelp forest appears muted in color, and no fish swim in the surrounding water.

If the characters search exterior of the palace for an entry, they find none. While several outside entrances to the palace once existed, the building's accumulation of barnacles and sea moss make them either unable to open or impossible to find. As such, the only ways into the structure are through the kelp forest or the cliffside caves. Allow the characters to decide which they would like to investigate, and then proceed to the appropriate encounter.

KELP FOREST

A great kelp forest lies at the base of the cliff that holds the palace. The dense kelp stalks rise to a height of 20 feet and cover an area that extends roughly a quarter of a mile from the palace. The vegetation hides the remains of nearly one hundred small stone structures once used as dwellings by the merfolk. It also obscures the area of the cliff below

the ledge that holds the palace, hiding a 10-foot-round tunnel that leads to its lowest level.

The kelp forest covers a vast area, and if desired, the characters can spend time searching the ruined dwellings within. While no hostiles inhabit the forest, the structures still contain the remnants of a merfolk society. For every hour the characters spend searching, they recover one of the following weapons: a dagger, a javelin, a shortsword, or a trident. These weapons are made of whalebone and function as their land-based counterparts. However, their unique composition makes them worth three times their normal value. After four hours of searching, no more weapons remain to find.

Unless the characters have a swim speed, they run the risk of exhausting themselves as they explore. The best course of action is for the characters to find a way into the palace quickly. If they choose to bypass the forest and swim directly to the base of the cliff, they easily locate the tunnel leading to the palace's lower level in less than a half of an hour. To continue the adventure, proceed to the **Lower Level** encounter under **King Garnon's Palace**.

CLIFFSIDE CAVES

Dozens of caves dot the cliff that holds the palace. The merfolk carved the caverns from the natural stone and used the blocks they extracted to build the palace and the simple dwellings within in the kelp forest. After the palace's completion, King Garnon's friends, relatives, and trusted advisors used the caves as their residences. A complex series of vertical and horizontal passages that the merfolk once used to move about connects the chambers.

Centuries ago the merfolk planted bioluminescent fungi throughout the palace and the cave system. While the fungus remains, it glows less brightly than it did in the past. The dim light it gives off allows characters without darkvision to move throughout the caves without the need for a light source.

As with the kelp forest, a potential for exploration exists within the cave system. If desired, the characters can search the interconnected chambers, which harbor no hostile creatures. For every hour the characters spend searching, they recover 25 gp worth of statuettes carved from bone, shell necklaces, and ancient coins. After four hours of searching, no more valuables remain to find.

Unless the characters have a swim speed, they run the risk of exhausting themselves as they explore. The best course of action is for the characters to find a way into the palace quickly. The caves connect to the palace's upper level via a horizontal passage. Locating that central corridor from any of the cliffside caves takes the characters less than a half of an hour. To continue, proceed to the **Upper Level** encounter under **King Garnon's Palace**.

KING GARNON'S PALACE

King Garnon's palace consists of three levels: the lower level that connects to the kelp forest, the upper level that connects to the cliffside caves, and the middle level, which is only accessible via the upper or lower levels. All other entrances have been lost to time by the growth of barnacles and sea moss. As a result, very little water moves through the palace, which has prevented the sea from completely reclaiming the structure. In spite of the stale environment, the bioluminescent fungi originally placed by merfolk still survives, bathing the palace's interior in an eerie blue light.

Navigating the Palace

To navigate the palace, the characters likely need to swim. Don't forget about the movement penalties and Constitution saving throws required for creatures without a swim speed.

Reminder: Characters wearing armor or using a shield make their Constitution saving throw with disadvantage.

LOWER LEVEL

A 10-foot-round tunnel leads from the base of the cliff that holds the palace to the central room of its lower level. In this audience chamber, the proud merfolk ruler once hosted feasts and held court. Round doorways connect the central chamber to ten smaller rooms (not shown on the map) that once served as quarters for visitors. **Ten skeletons (S)** now occupy these rooms, standing sentinel under King Garnon's command for all eternity. The merfolk skeletons were once the king's personal guards, and they attack any creature that enters the room. The merfolk skeletons are identical to those shown in the stat block, except **they also have a swim speed of 40 feet and do not carry shortbows**.

Circular openings line three walls of this sizeable rectangular room. Large columns provide support for the space, and the entire area is bathed in dim blue light from glowing fungi that covers the floors and walls.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove six **skeletons**.
- **Weak party:** Remove three **skeletons**.
- **Strong party:** Add three **skeletons**.
- **Very strong party:** Add five **skeletons**.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Ceilings. The ceilings are 15 feet high.

Columns. The support columns block line of sight and provide full cover to those behind them.

Floors and walls. The floors and walls are made of worked stone covered with a slight buildup of sea moss, algae, barnacles, and bioluminescent fungi.

Horizontal passages. Each 5-foot-diameter passage leads to a 15-foot-square rooms that once served as quarters for visiting dignitaries. Kelp curtains once provided privacy while allowing for water movement between the rooms, but without upkeep, the plants died off. These rooms contain only invaluable remnants of their former purpose and are not shown on the map.

Light. The area is bathed in dim blue light from tiny bioluminescent fungi.

Vertical passages. Vertical passages, each 10 feet

in diameter, connect to the palace's adjacent levels, allowing creatures to swim up or down as needed.

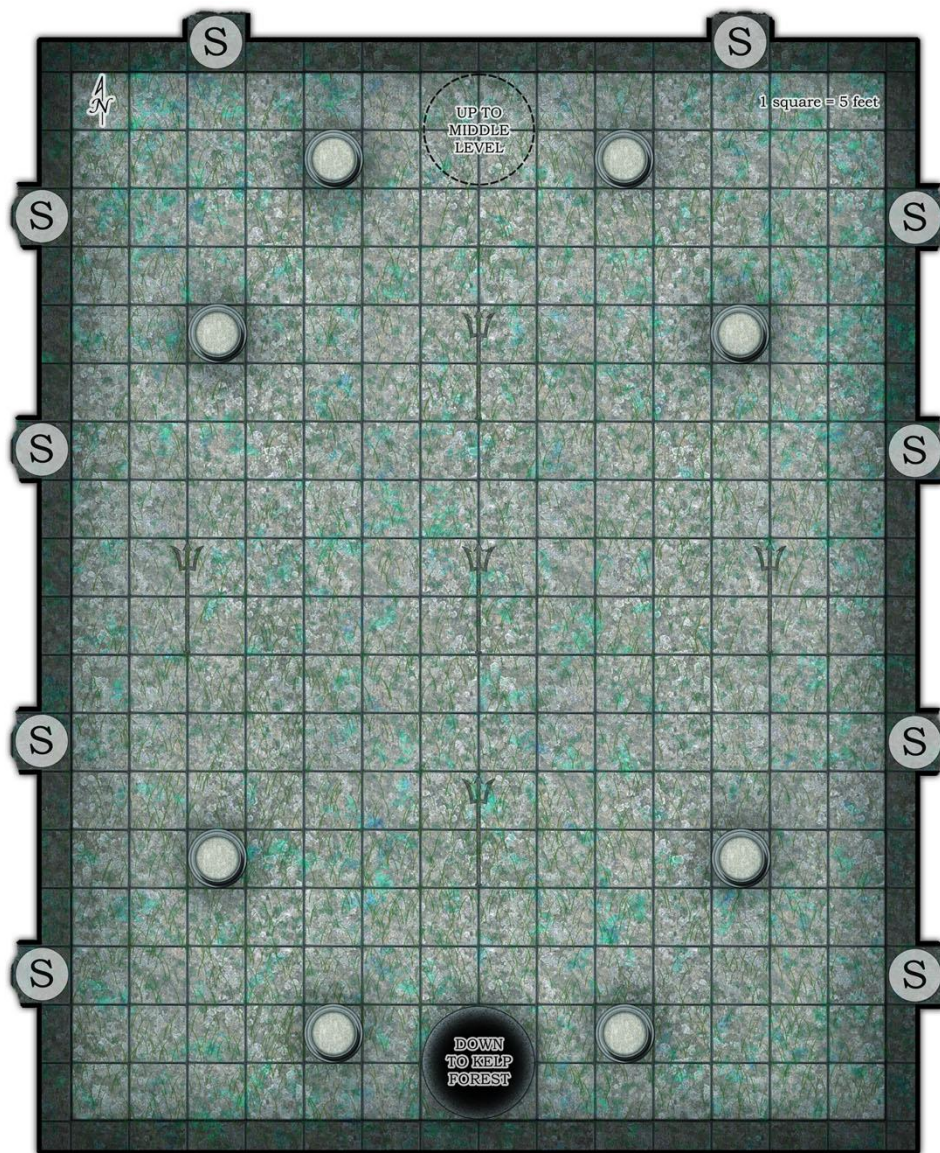
TACTICS

The skeletons attempt to kill any intruders that enter the palace's lower level. They do not pursue characters who leave the palace. Per King Garnon's order, the skeletons fight until destroyed.

If possible, at least one skeleton attacks each character. If there are more skeletons than characters, attempt to distribute the remaining number evenly amongst the characters.

3D Combat on a Grid

When fighting underwater, the potential for combat exists in three dimensions. If necessary, place a six-sided or larger die next to a creature to track the number of 5-foot increments it swims from the surface or bottom during the encounter.



UPPER LEVEL

An enclosed walkway leads from the cliffside caves to the upper level of King Garnon's palace. This dome-shaped room once served as the King's solar. At the height of his rule, the space remained open to the sea, and from his lofty perch, the merfolk king watched over his subjects and his city. As time progressed, the effects of the Tenet of Bane slowly twisted King Garnon's mind. He became angry and withdrawn and when he could no longer stand the sight of his kingdom, he ordered his workers to enclose the dome with stone from the caves.

Three specters (S) now patrol the room. They are all that remains of King Garnon's trusted advisors. Their king's incessant hatred and the influence of the Tenet of Bane has corrupted their souls and prevented them from departing the Material Plane. The specters are identical to those shown in the stat block, except **they also have a swim speed of 40 feet**.

A 30-foot passage leads from the cave complex to a domed room 50 feet in diameter. Broken statues of female merfolk lie scattered about the perimeter. Three spectral figures float near the floor, where a large hole descends into darkness.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Ceilings. The domed ceiling rises to a height of 15 feet at its peak.

Floors and walls. The floors and walls are made of worked stone covered with a slight buildup of sea moss, algae, barnacles, and bioluminescent fungi.

Light. The area is bathed in dim blue light from tiny bioluminescent fungi.

Horizontal passage: A 10-foot-round enclosed passage 30 feet in length connects the palace's upper level to the cliffside cave complex. Thick stone doors capable of protecting the palace from intruders once stood at the end of the passage, but their hinges failed decades ago, rendering them useless.

Vertical passage. A vertical passage connects the palace's upper level to King Garnon's personal residence below. The 10-foot-diameter opening allows creatures to swim up or down as needed.

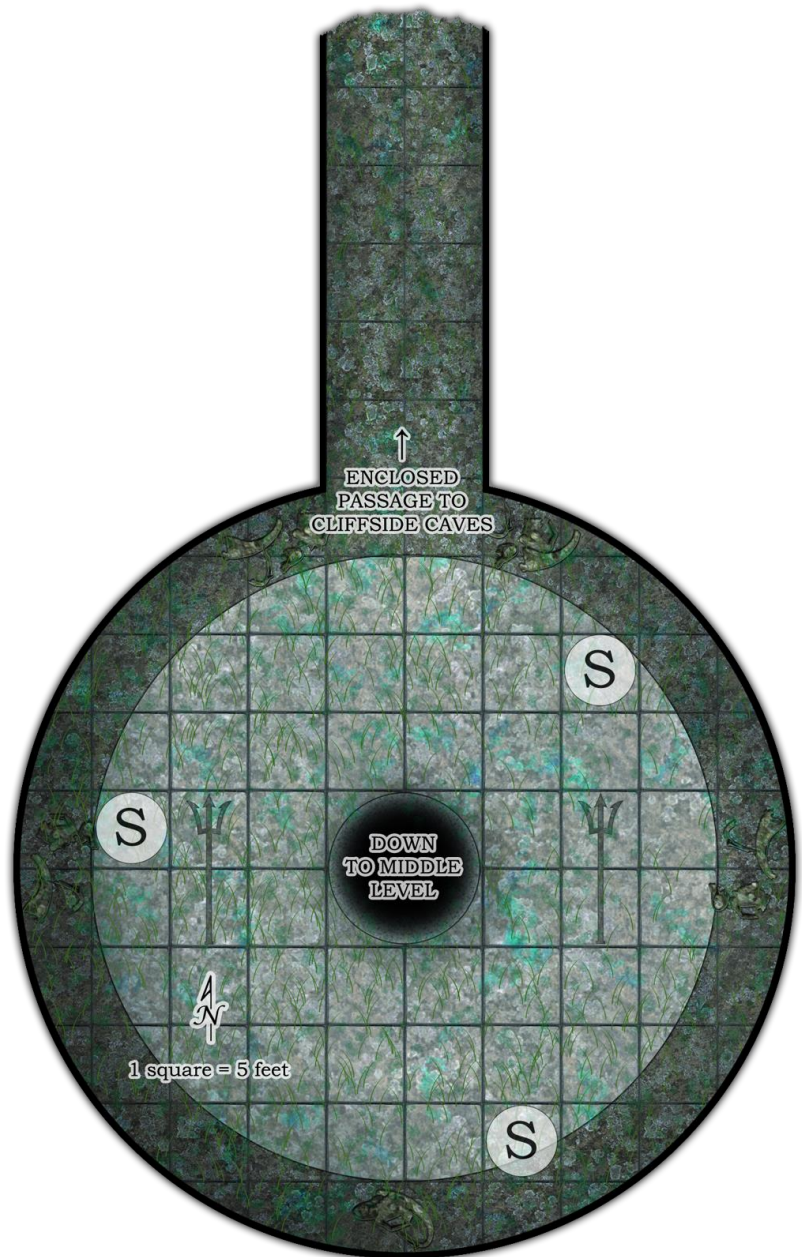
TACTICS

The specters do not attack until a creature enters the room or they are attacked from a distance. They each engage different opponents, hoping to deprive their own target of its life. If necessary, they pursue intruders into the adjoining passage, but they return to the domed room if the characters flee back into the cave complex. The specters fight until destroyed for their king.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **specters**. Add one merfolk skeleton.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **specter**. Add one merfolk skeleton.
- **Strong party:** Add two **specters**.
- **Very strong party:** Add four **specters**.



MIDDLE LEVEL

The central level of the palace once held King Garnon's private quarters. The merfolk king's ghost still spends most of its time here. Twisted by the effects of the Tenet of Bane, King Garnon grew to loath all things, including himself. He eventually sought release from his unrelenting hatred in death, ultimately ending his own life. To his horror, he rose from his death as a ghost, tied to his city by the heinousness of his actions during life.

Broken merfolk statues litter this rectangular chamber. The east and west walls hold 10-foot round openings that lead to adjacent rooms. In the dim blue light reveals a stone throne set near the southern wall. A ghostly form floats before it. When it sees you enter, it moves forward with alarming speed, stopping inches from you. In a deep, booming voice it yells, "HOW DARE YOU ENTER MY HOME!" Its spectral face appears twisted in rage, but it does not immediately attack. Instead, it shouts, "Be gone from this place! This hell belongs to me and me alone!"

Roleplaying King Garnon's Ghost

By the end of his life, King Garnon was quite mad. As a ghost, the Tenet of Bane is no longer capable of influencing his mind, but his consciousness remains in the same state as when he died. Because of this, his ghost is prone to bouts of ranting and erratic behavior. It often stops midsentence and moves to the western room to howl in rage before the stone slab that holds King Garnon's bones.

The characters have an opportunity to interact with King Garnon's ghost, but only if they can calm it down first. This requires them to engage in conversation with the spirit and persuade it to listen to reason. To do so, a character must make a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the character mentions they seek the shell that holds the Tenet of Bane, they make the check with disadvantage, as the ghost still obsesses over the item. If the check is successful, the ghost calms and is able to share the information below via roleplaying or as a dramatic monologue. If the check fails, the ghost's hatred and anger overcome it, and it attacks (see **Fighting King Garnon's Ghost**).

An inner struggle seems to play upon the ghost's visage. After several moments, it grows calm and speaks, "I was once a beloved ruler, known for my compassion and goodwill. That all changed when I came into possession of the stone shell. The changes were subtle at first. Mild annoyance and general displeasure clouded my mind.

"Without realizing it, I would spend hours staring at the etchings on the shell's surface, but I was unable to read them. The longer I spent, the harder it became to maintain my composure. I lashed out at my servants and belittled my advisors. I ordered my subjects put to death for petty crimes. I tortured those who spoke out against me for my own enjoyment.

"The merfolk are a non-violent race, and eventually, many of my people departed, leaving me with my guards, staff, and trusted advisors.

"As the days passed, I grew to hate all of those around me, myself included. I saw death as my only release from a life I had grown to despise, but my hatred was too deep to allow me to exit this world alone.

"I instructed my advisors to gather large quantities of pufferfish extract, a deadly poison. I held a feast for those who remained by my side, and at it, I murdered them all by poisoning the fermented kelp wine I served. I diluted the mixture so it would kill them slowly and then watched as they suffered over a span of several days before dying.

"With my awful task complete, I prepared my own rest and consumed a lethal dose of the same poison. I expected eternal peace, but instead I now endure an eternity of loathing for my crimes. The moments of lucidity are the worst, for in them, I fully realize my own weakness and the depravity of my actions."

Any mention of the stone shell that holds the Tenet of Bane causes the ghost's hatred and fury to present itself. It shouts angrily, howls with rage, and moves about unpredictably, often coming face-to-face with the characters, but it does not attack. If the characters explain that the shell holds an item infused with the influence of Bane, the ghost quiets somewhat. The realization that something evil and divine could be responsible for its current situation gives the ghost temporary relief, but it will not let the characters take the shell without proof to back up their words.

The stone shell resides in the western room of the palace's central level. It sits upon a stone altar with King Garnon's remains. If the characters touch the shell without telling the ghost the truth about what it holds, it attacks immediately and fights until destroyed. If they inform the ghost of the Tenet of Bane inside, it agrees to let them examine the shell.

The crowned remains of a merfolk skeleton rest upon the stone altar before you. Its left hand clutches a bone trident, unblemished by its time in the sea. Beneath its right hand lay a large scallop shell carved of stone. Elaborate flowing text adorns its surface.

Two separate lines of text appear upon the shell, both written in Elvish. The first is a single word at the top of the shell. Any character capable of speaking Elvish can read the text, which means **sympathy** in Common. Ten flowing Elvish letters adorn the lip of the shell: **O N S C P O S M I A**. (see Player Handout 1 for a visual representation).

The letters make up the word **compassion**. If a creature touches the letters in the appropriate order, they glow briefly and the shell opens, revealing the Tenet of Bane inside.

The Stone Shell

The text upon the stone shell is magical, but it does not conform to any specific spell. For the purpose of this adventure, a character cannot dispel or suppress its magic. If a character uses *detect magic* on the shell, the spell reveals a complex concentration of transmutation and abjuration magic. A character also detects auras of enchantment and illusion magic, which seem to be coming from inside.

If the characters attempt to deface or destroy the text upon the shell's surface, they quickly discover its magic prevents any physical damage. The only way to open it is by touching the letters in the correct order. Once opened, the shell's magic fades, and it becomes an ordinary container.

If the characters successfully converse with King Garnon's ghost, it watches their examination of the stone shell with growing agitation. Start a timer when you give the players the previously referenced handout. As they attempt to decipher the word scramble, describe the ghost's actions and attitude as becoming more erratic and aggressive. If three minutes of real time passes before the players decode the word scramble, the ghost loses focus, screams in anger, and attacks (see **Fighting King Garnon's Ghost**).

If the players manage to solve the word scramble and open the shell, King Garnon's ghost begins to weep uncontrollably at the sight of the platinum disc inside, and its form begins to fade.

Upon seeing the platinum disc, King Garnon's ghost begins to shudder and sob. When the ghost regains its composure, it speaks in a peaceful voice. "All of this...all of the hate...all of the death. Why would a god inflict such cruelty upon this world?" Looking at you and your companions, the ghost continues, "I do not expect you to have an answer. You have already done much in showing me the truth. Take my trident, my crown, and my jewels. I do not need them. I am finally ready to depart this world.

"Before I go, I ask for an act of mercy that I surely do not deserve. Bury my remains in the coral reef above the city so that my soul might find peace in the afterlife."

With a heavy sigh, the merfolk ghost fades from existence.

TREASURE

The altar in the western room holds a *trident of fish command* and a jeweled crown worth 50 gp. The stone chest to the south is unlocked. It contains *two potions of healing*, a *potion of water breathing*, and six pearls worth 25 gp each.

DEVELOPMENT

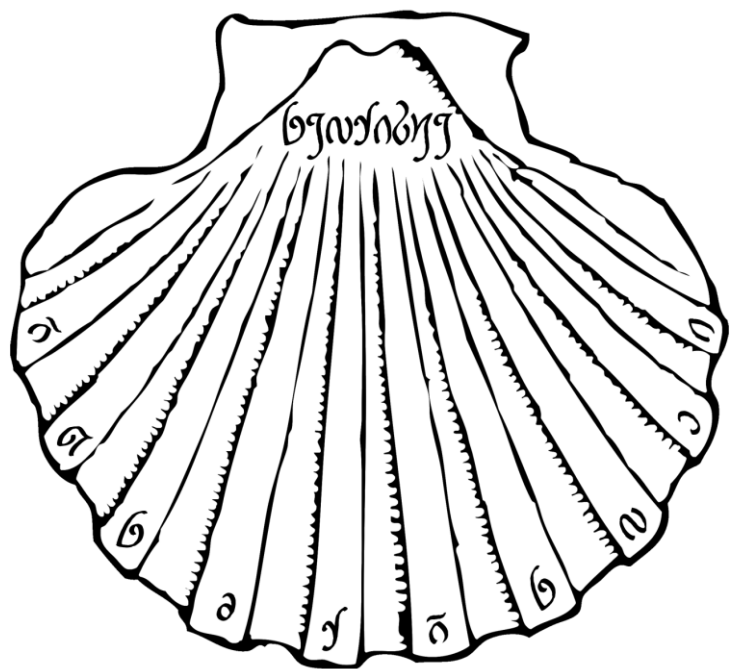
Whether willingly or by force, once King Garnon's ghost departs the material plane, the bond his spirit held over the undead in Garnthall is broken, releasing their souls as well. Any remaining undead in the palace either vanish or collapse into piles of inanimate bones.

AWARDING XP

If the characters complete the encounter without fighting the ghost, award them XP as if they had defeated the spirit in combat.

STORY AWARD: MERCY FOR THE MERFOLK KING

If the characters honor King Garnon's request and bury his remains amid the coral reef above Garnthall, they earn the *Mercy for the Merfolk King* story award, which is detailed in full at the end of the adventure. Some characters may object to fulfilling King Garnon's final request. It is not necessary for the entire party to be in agreement concerning the matter. However, only characters who agree and participate in the burial earn the story award.



FIGHTING KING GARNON'S GHOST

Several opportunities exist for the party's interactions with King Garnon's ghost to end in combat. If this happens, use the information presented below to run the fight. King Garnon's **ghost (G)** is identical to what is shown in the stat block, except that **it also has a swim speed of 40 feet**.

Read the text below when the characters defeat the ghost.

As you deal the final blow, the ghost's ethereal form flickers momentarily and then appears tranquil. In a peaceful voice, it speaks, "An end. Perhaps not the end I desire, but certainly the end I deserve. Before I go, I ask for an act of mercy that I surely have not earned. Bury my remains in the coral reef above the city so that my soul might find peace in the afterlife." The spectral form flickers several more times before raising its head to the heavens to issue a terrible scream. With a flash of bright light, it is gone.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Altar. King Garnon's remains, his *trident of fish command*, and the stone shell holding the Tenet of

Bane rest atop a 3-foot-tall stone altar near the northern wall of the western room. The altar provides half cover.

Ceilings. The ceilings in each room are 15 feet high.

Chest. A stone chest sits against the southern wall of the western room. Inside are *two potions of healing*, a *potion of water breathing*, and six pearls worth 50 gp each.

Floors and walls. The floors and walls are made of worked stone covered with a slight buildup of sea moss, algae, barnacles, and bioluminescent fungi.

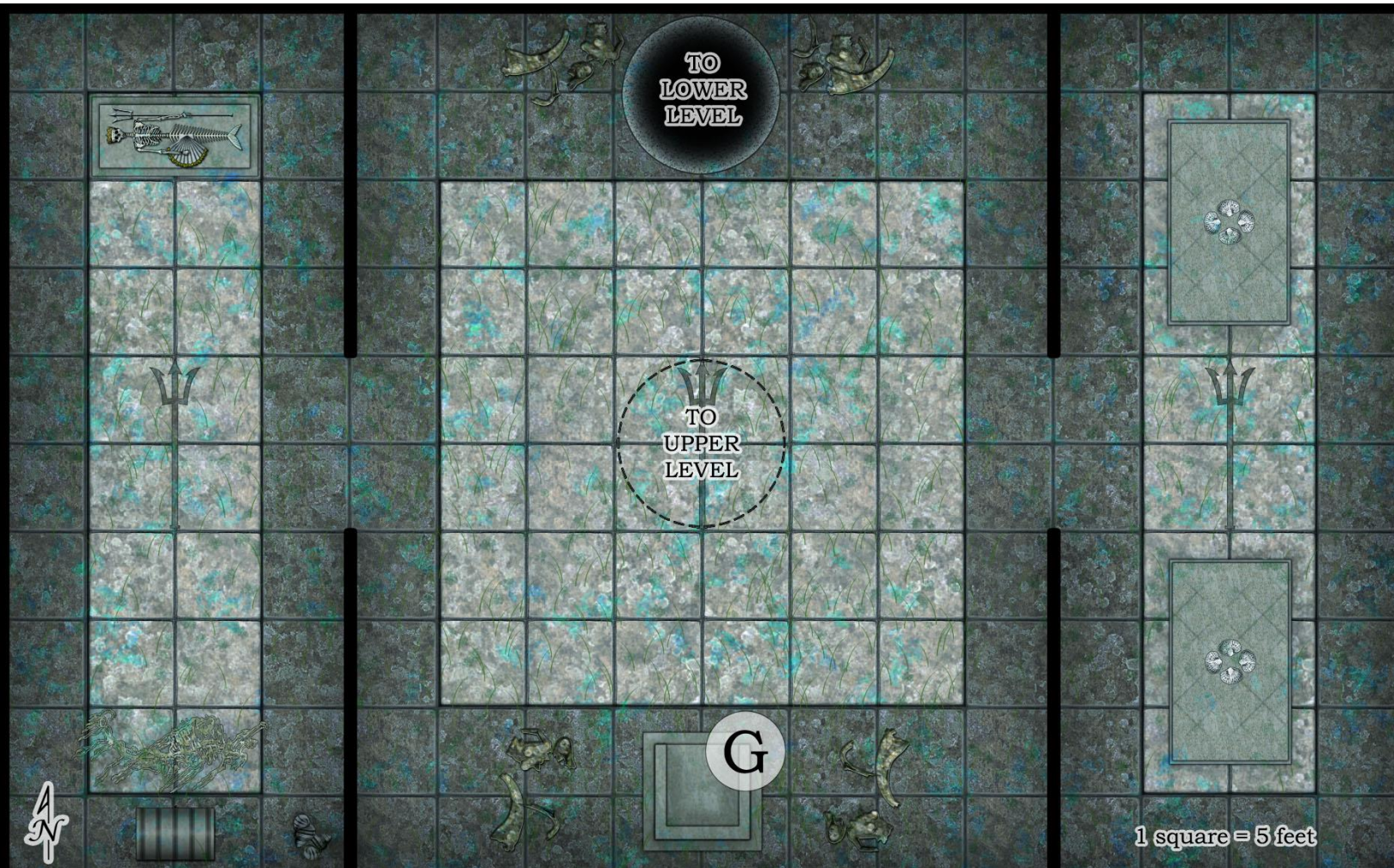
Light. The area is bathed in dim blue light from tiny bioluminescent fungi.

Horizontal openings. 10-foot-round openings exist on the east and west walls of the main room. These openings lead to two smaller rectangular rooms that once served as a sleeping and dining area.

Tables. Two large stone tables occupy the east room. They are fixed to the floor and cannot be moved.

Throne. King Garnon's throne sits against the southern wall in the central room. Its 3-foot-tall sides provide half cover.

Vertical passages. Vertical passages connect King Garnon's personal residence to the upper and lower levels of the palace. The 10-foot-diameter openings allow creatures to swim up or down as needed.





Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the **ghost** with a **specter**. Add one merfolk **skeleton**.
- **Weak party:** Replace the **ghost** with a **specter**. Add three merfolk **skeletons**.
- **Strong party:** Add one **specter**.
- **Very strong party:** Add two **specters**.

TACTICS

The ghost begins combat by using its Horrifying Visage. It then uses Possession to possess the strongest character. If successful, it uses its new form to attack the nearest party member. If the possession fails or the ghost is expelled by a spell or the use of turn undead, it instead uses its Withering Touch to suck the life from the nearest enemy, killing with reckless abandon. It fights until destroyed.

THE TENET OF BANE

If the characters successfully solve the stone shell's magical word scramble, the container opens, revealing the Tenet of Bane inside. If no characters in the party speak Elvish, they can bring the stone shell to surface, where Halara Windsong easily translates the text for them. It is not necessary for the characters to open the shell to complete their mission. Delivering the item to Malana Homwell is sufficient.

If the characters manage to open the stone shell, read the following.

You touch the letters in order, spelling the elven word for compassion. Moments later, the text glows briefly, and the shell opens, revealing a palm-sized platinum disc painted with the symbol of Bane.

Any character who touches the disc feels a rush of intense anger and hatred that quickly fades to a general loathing. See the Tenet of Hate sidebar for more details.

The Tenet of Hate

Three of Bane's devout followers originally carried the Tenets of Bane. Collectively, these individuals were known as the Servants of Strife. The wizard, Sax Magnus, magically created each of the three discs. Upon their completion, they were bathed in the blood of the assassin, Cyran Steel, and blessed by the blackguard, Mace Dred. This process somehow bound the discs to the souls of each Servant of Strife, but since the exact nature of the joining is both arcane and divine, it is likely unknown to all but their deceased owners.

The Tenet of Hate is one of the three palm-sized discs that make up the Tenets of Bane. It once belonged to the assassin, Cyran Steel. The disc bears the word HATE in black letters on one side and a symbol of Bane (a painted black hand outlined in red) on the opposite. In spite of its age, the disc's paint remains bright and flawless. Any attempt to deface or damage the item has no discernable effect.

Creatures that touch the disc feel a sudden and intense rush of anger and hatred, which quickly subsides to a general loathing of everyone around them. The disc radiates a less intense aura of anger and hate in a 100-foot radius. While the aura is faint, creatures that experience prolonged exposure to it become angry, hateful, and prone to fits of violence. The disc's effect imposes no mechanical disadvantages. It is for roleplaying purposes only. The effect dissipates if the creature spends an equal amount of time out of the disc's aura. In addition, a *calm emotions* spell suppresses the effect, and a *lesser restoration* spell removes it completely.

PART 4: BLOODY WATER

Expected Duration: 20 minutes

With the Tenet of Bane in their possession, the characters are free to return to the Helping Hand and claim their reward. If you are not playing the adventure in a fixed timeslot, or if the party has done very well and you have time left, you can use the encounter below to extend the adventure's length.

CHUMMING THE WATER

As the characters make their way back to Wave Dancer, they discover **four reef sharks (S)** near the sea floor circling the ship's anchor.

In the distance you spy the hull of Wave Dancer floating just below the Moonsea's surface. With relief finally in sight, you swim over a large patch of sea grass toward the ship. As you clear the obstruction, you notice four sharks circling the boat's anchor. Your motion immediately draws their attention, and they quickly start to swim your way.

Note: If the party recovered the *trident of fish command* from King Garnon's palace and one of the characters took the time to attune to the item (attunement requires a short rest), he or she can use it to charm one or more of the sharks.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two **reef sharks**.
- **Weak party:** Remove one **reef shark**.
- **Strong party:** Add three **reef sharks**.
- **Very strong party:** Add four **reef sharks**.

GENERAL FEATURES

The area has the following features.

Light. Dim light from the daylight on the surface.

Rocks. Outcroppings of rocks dot the area, rising to a height of roughly 5 feet.

Sea plants. The surrounding plants vary between 2 and 3 feet in height. They provide half cover.

TACTICS

The sharks have little intellect and simply attack the nearest foe. They use Pack Tactics to focus on a single opponent at a time. Each shark fights until reduced to 10 or less hit points before it thinks better of its assault and swims off in search of an easier meal.

PART 5: CONCLUSION

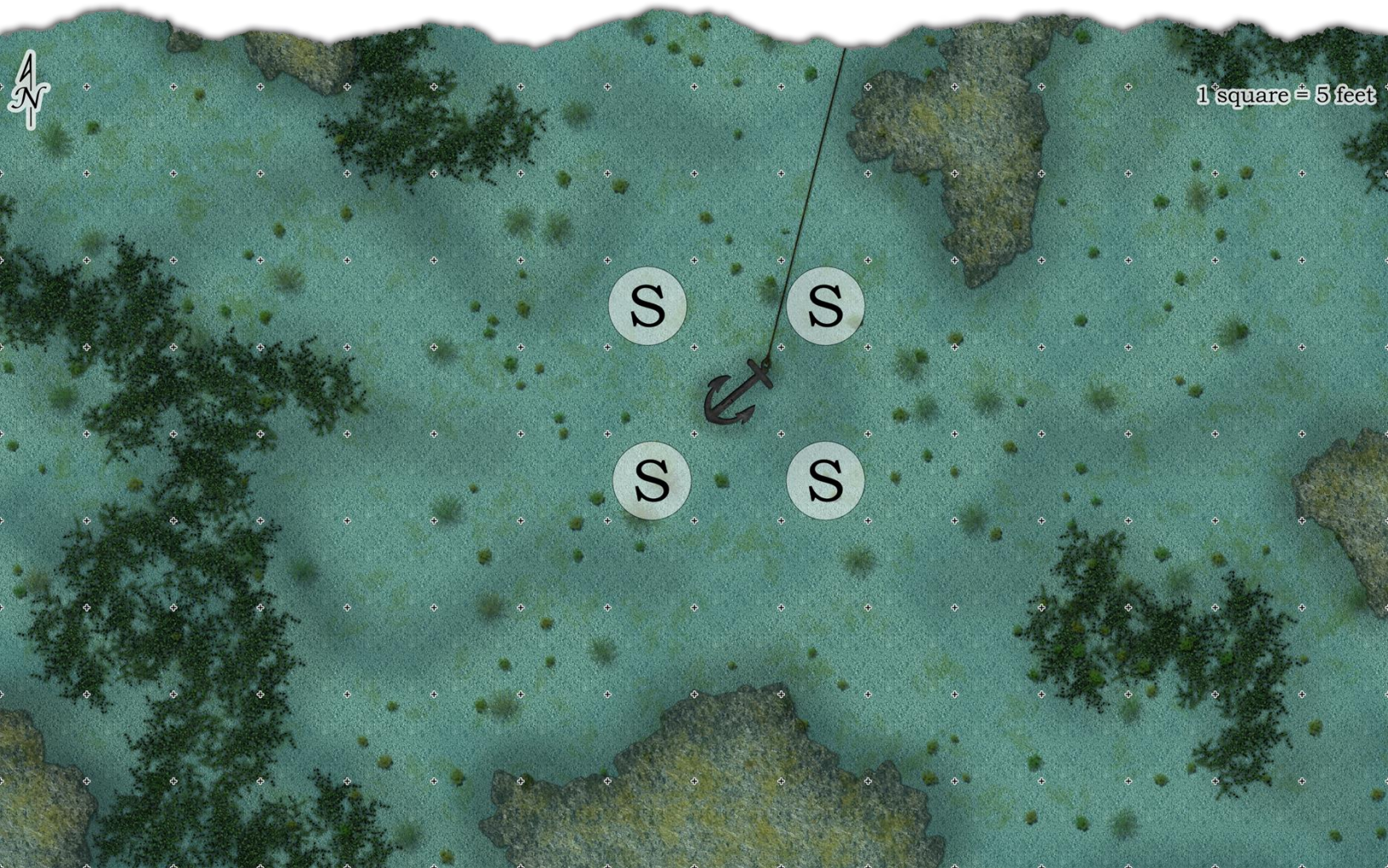
Expected Duration: 15 minutes

Malana is pleased when the characters return to the Helping Hand with the Tenet of Bane. While the magic of the item repulses her, she remains confident that retrieving and destroying the tenets is the correct thing to do.

She happily pays the characters the agreed upon 250 gp for the disc. In addition, she offers them free lodging and meals at the temple for a job well done.

To wrap up the adventure, continue to the Rewards section.

Important note: The Non-Combat Awards table in the Experience section under Rewards contains a 120 XP award called **Delved the Moonsea**. This award represents the added difficulty of underwater combat and should be awarded to all characters who participated in the adventure, regardless of any racial or class features (such as a water genasi's amphibious and swim traits, etc.) that benefited them.



REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Ghost	1,100
Giant Octopus	200
Merfolk	25
Reef Shark	100
Skeleton	50
Specter	200

Non-Combat Awards

Task or accomplishment	XP per Character
Peacefully dealt with the ghost	same as defeating the ghost in combat
Delved the Moonsea	120

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **450 XP**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **650 XP**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
King Garnon's Jeweled crown	100
King Garnon's Pearls	150
Malana's reward	250

TRIDENT OF FISH COMMAND

Weapon (trident), uncommon (requires attunement)
This trident is a magic weapon. It has 3 charges. While you carry it, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to cast *dominate beast* (save DC 15) from it on a beast that has an innate swimming speed. The trident regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common
You regain 2d4 + 2 hit points when you drink this potion.

POTION OF WATER BREATHING

Potion, uncommon
You can breathe underwater for 1 hour after drinking this potion. Its cloudy green fluid smells of the sea and has a jellyfish-like bubble floating in it.

Permanent Magic Item Distribution

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's log sheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

RENOWN

All faction members earn one renown point for participating in this adventure.

Order of the Gauntlet characters earn one additional renown point if they assist in returning ALL THREE Tenets of Bane to Malana Homwell.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **5 downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **150 XP**, **75 gp**, and **5 downtime days** for running this session.

STORY AWARDS

Characters who agreed to the request of King Garnon's ghost and buried the merfolk ruler's remains in the coral reef above Garnthall earn the following story award.

Mercy for the Merfolk King. You displayed kindness by helping King Garnon's spirit find eternal rest. Malana Homwell has noted your compassion and is impressed by your actions.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

This downtime activity is available to characters with the ***Courage in the Face of Fear***, ***Mercy for the Merfolk King***, or ***Worthy Sacrifice*** story awards.

Priestess Malana Homwell is always on the lookout for those who exhibit the qualities of Torm. Your extraordinary virtuousness has caught her eye, and she offers to teach you the beliefs of Torm. You may spend **5 downtime days** to study at the Helping Hand temple. When your instruction ends, you earn the ***Inspired by Torm*** story award below.

Inspired by Torm. The teachings of Torm have shown you a better way to live your life. While you may not worship the deity directly, you have come to appreciate Torm's commitment to duty, loyalty, and

courage, and you do your best to incorporate these qualities into your own life. While this story award may have benefits in future adventures involving the Tenets of Bane, it is intended primarily for roleplaying purposes.

ART CREDITS

Symbol of Bane title page glyph: Dave Zajac

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APPENDIX: MONSTERS

GHOST

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. A ghost can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horridifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horridifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost

now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

GIANT OCTOPUS

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 52 (8d10 + 8)

Speed 10 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Hold Breath. While out of water, the octopus can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Underwater Camouflage. The octopus has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made while underwater.

Water Breathing. The octopus can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the octopus can't use its tentacles on another target.

Ink Cloud (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). A 20-foot-radius cloud of ink extends all around the octopus if it is underwater. The area is heavily obscured for 1 minute, although a significant current can disperse the ink. After releasing the ink, the octopus can use the Dash action as a bonus action.

MERFOLK

Medium humanoid (merfolk), neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Amphibious. The merfolk can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage, or 4 (1d8) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

REEF SHARK

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Perception +2

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The shark has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the shark's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Water Breathing. The shark can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage

SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

SPECTER

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

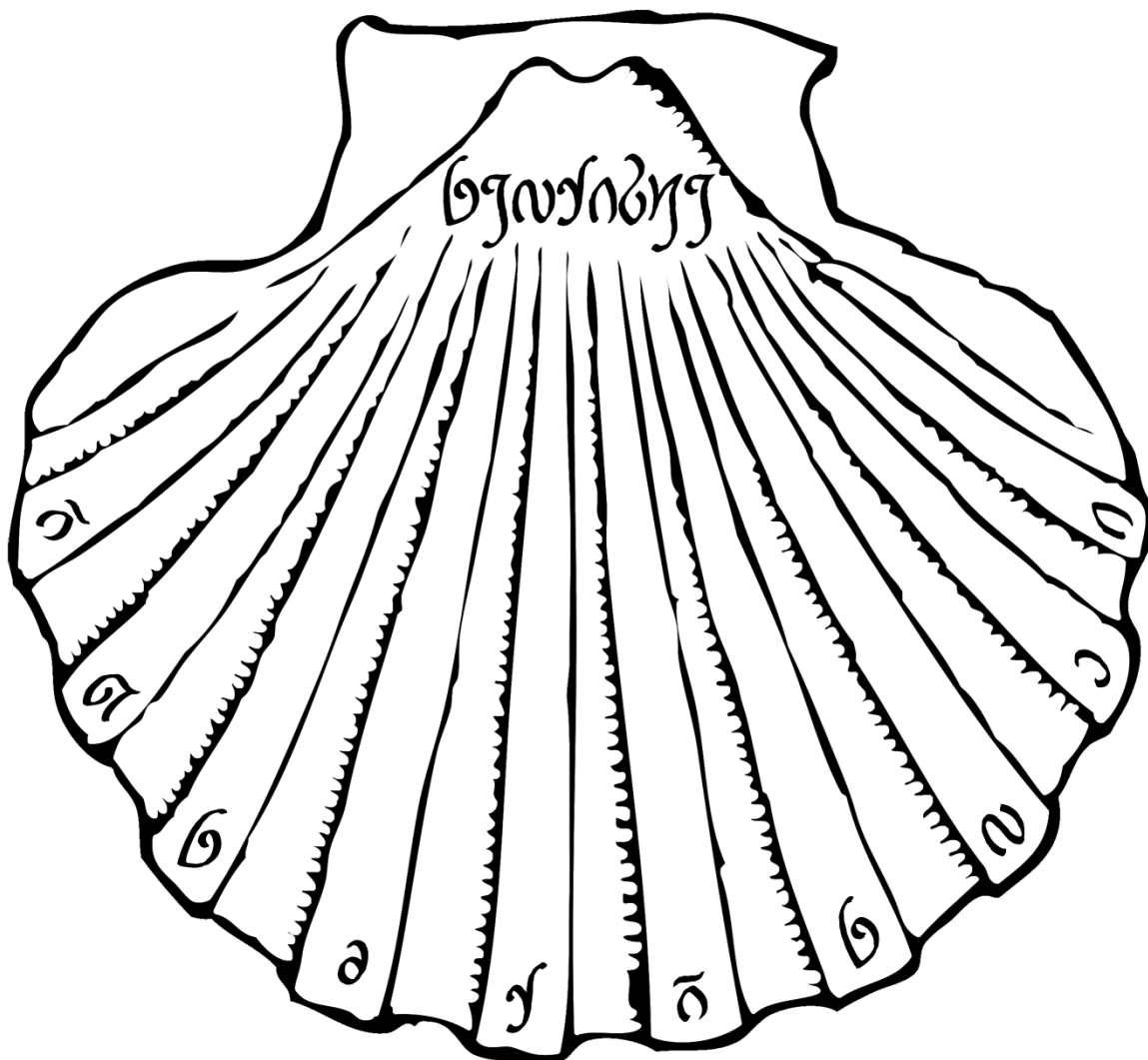
Incorporeal Movement. The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1



PLAYER HANDOUT 2

Once they receive their mission from Malana Homwell, share the rules below with your players so they are able to prepare for adventuring in an underwater environment. If necessary, characters can purchase crossbows (and ammunition), daggers, javelins, shortswords, or spears from the Helping Hand temple before departing. Use the costs found in the *Player's Handbook* for these items.



Underwater Adventuring Rules

- While swimming, each foot of movement costs 1 extra foot (2 extra feet in difficult terrain), unless a creature has a swimming speed.
- Unless aided by magic, a character can't swim for a full 8 hours per day. After each hour of swimming, a character must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.
- A creature that has a swimming speed—including a character with a *ring of swimming* or similar magic—can swim all day without penalty and uses the normal forced march rules in the *Player's Handbook*.
- Swimming through deep water is similar to traveling at high altitudes, because of the water's pressure and cold temperature. For a creature without a swimming speed, each hour spent swimming at a depth greater than 100 feet counts as 2 hours for the purpose of determining exhaustion. Swimming for an hour at a depth greater than 200 feet counts as 4 hours.
- Visibility underwater depends on water clarity and the available light. Unless the characters have light sources, they become aware of an encounter at a distance of 60 feet in clear water with bright light, 30 feet in clear water with dim light, and 10 feet in murky water or with no light.
- When making a **melee weapon attack**, a creature that doesn't have a swimming speed (either natural or granted by magic) has disadvantage on the attack roll unless the weapon is a dagger, javelin, shortsword, spear, or trident.
- A **ranged weapon attack** automatically misses a target beyond the weapon's normal range. Even against a target within normal range, the attack roll has disadvantage unless the weapon is a crossbow, a net, or a weapon that is thrown like a javelin (including a spear, trident, or dart).
- Creatures and objects that are fully immersed in water have resistance to fire damage.
- A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath, it can survive for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying, and it can't regain hit points or be stabilized until it can breathe again. For example, a creature with a Constitution of 14 can hold its breath for 3 minutes. If it starts suffocating, it has 2 rounds to reach air before it drops to 0 hit points.

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