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THE
BRIDES
OF
PYARAY

A
Stormbringer!
5th EDITION SCENARIO

THE BRIDES OF PYARAY

REVISED EDITION

A STORMBRINGER 5TH EDITION ADVENTURE BY
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A NOTE ON THIS SCENARIO

This scenario was the first new content to be released since the Stormbringerrpg.com site created a Patreon account enabling it to bring more great Eternal Champion roleplaying material to life. It is therefore that this release is dedicated to the first patrons who have leapt onboard to support this venture – thanks to you this is the beginning of something fun and exciting!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all of my poor long-suffering adventurers, from weekly gaming through convention play, all of you deserved so much better!

THE BRIDES OF PYARAY

The commander pointed into the distance, where the Chaos fleet could be seen creating havoc amongst the eastern ships. "There! He sails with Lord Pyaray of Chaos whose fleet that is. You cannot reach him there for any man not protected or not already dead-would turn to flowing, liquid flesh once he neared the fleet"

AN EXTRACT FROM **STORMBRINGER**

THE BRIDES OF PYARAY is a short scenario written for the Stormbringer 5th edition ruleset, and is designed to be played over one or two sessions. The premise of the adventure requires that the characters have access to their own ship and are – as any good Gamemaster is likely to ensure in any case – a little desperate for their next paying job. Set in the Isles of the Purple Towns and dealing with a number of events on the open ocean, it is recommended that the Game Master has access to the Stormbringer 4th edition supplements **Sea Kings of the Purple Towns** and **Sailing of the Seas of Fate**. In addition, some of the magic described in this adventure can be found in **The Bronze Grimoire**.

As written, this document presents the core events and scenes the party are likely to encounter during the scenario, with the overarching narrative left to the Game Master to define and present as they see fit.

INTRODUCTION

Chaos hides everywhere and most especially in those places that struggle the hardest to eradicate it. In fact, the more one attempts to suppress chaos, the sooner it seems to reappear! Even in most liberal of societies, such as one sees in the city states on the Isle of the Purple Towns, the

open worship of Chaos is suppressed with an iron hand; to allow the influence of chaos reign unchecked is to invite nothing but despair and destruction.

Nevertheless, this veneration of change, and its masters continues unabated behind closed doors, and as we will discover, even amongst the Sea Lords of the Purple Towns, such dedication thrives and grows! One such cult is The Red Sail, a gathering of sea traders and lesser merchant captains who call upon Pyaray, the Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets, to protect their interests on the dangerous oceans of the Young Kingdoms.

But, of course, these blessings do not come without a cost. As part of the cult's bargain with Pyaray, they must annually offer up worthy sacrifices to their lord; an offering that must be deposited at a secret location deep in the midst of the Eastern Ocean. Here, a guardian of the chaos god – a Son of Pyaray – awaits to accept this 'gift' and, if required, met out its 'father's' justice to those who betray the cult.

Of course, the question of what constitutes a 'worthy sacrifice' is a highly debated one amongst the cult's hierarchy, with the years that have resulted in poor trade or seasons of especially bad weather, usually resulting in the members responsible for the previous year's selection finding themselves being offered up during the next deliberation. Most year's however, the Red Sail looks to

find individuals of considerable talents or influence, whose powers are yet to peak. This is often divined through a ritual or ceremony, and although the cult doesn't realise such, they have been most successful when offering up individuals who contain great 'potential' (i.e. persons who themselves could be become agents of the Cosmic Balance, such as the player characters themselves).

This year, the Red Sail has located someone extra special amongst their other offerings; Evealissa Aveye. Also known as "The Rose of Seshcal", Evealissa has a growing reputation as a voice of change and the champion of the poor in Lormyr. Although barely twenty and the youngest of eight daughters of the harried Earl Rober of Seshcal (Seshal being a small estate located on the northern coast of Lormyr), she is already making political waves within the city of Ramasaz. (In fact, characters regularly frequenting Ramasaz in Lormyr or have a high rating in the Young Kingdoms skill might have already heard of 'The Rose of Seshcal' and her work in these circles). Obviously, a woman with such a reputation and influence was too good an opportunity for the cult to pass up and they have, a few days prior to the start of this scenario, kidnapped her as she travelled from the family home.

Although The Rose is the most 'powerful' of the sacrifices the cult has taken this year, she is by no means the only offering to be made. As this scenario unfolds the characters will discover these other victims - and their looming fates - and in their roles as agents of the Cosmic Balance be afforded the opportunity to rescue these innocents and stop the Red Sail's nefarious plans!

ABOUT THE RED SAIL

While the Cult of the Red Sail is neither the largest or most prominent worshippers of Chaos in the Young Kingdoms (or likely even in the Isles of the Purple Towns), their ritual dedication to Pyaray, has allowed their lord's chaotic influence to - slowly but surely - seep into the world. Worryingly, this plague-like infect of spreading disorder and change is lost to most of the cult's devotees, who simply see their membership as an opportunity to build their own riches and power in the serious business of sea-born trade. Of course, this is not true of all the cult's leadership and there are some who are well aware of the true goals of the Chaos Lords in the Young Kingdoms. These few take their adulation much more seriously and in return are privy to the much deeper secrets and allowed access to many more formidable powers.

During this scenario, the characters are likely to encounter three of the Red Sail's more active members (and their dedicated crews).

- * **Hennim Bloodeye** – The most senior member of cult involved in this scenario is Hennim Bloodeye (see page 20 for his description and statistics). Bloodeye has been part of the Red Sail's inner circle for a number of years, and it is his responsibility to see that this year's sacrifices are properly prepared and safely delivered to the Son of Pyaray in the Eastern Ocean. By the time the characters are involved in the adventure, Hennim and the crew of his ship, *Narwhal*, are in port at Isle of the Purple Town port of Utkel, awaiting their fellow followers of Pyaray and ready to prepare their captive **Survann Mord**.
- * **Dernic Jarl** – One of the few active cult members not hailing from the Isle of the Purple Towns, Dernic Jarl (see page 19) captains the *Blessed Wanderer* with his all Lormyrian crew. Dernic, a brash, confident man was assigned the role of kidnapping **The Rose of Seshcal** and is presently swiftly sailing across the Oldest Ocean towards the cult's rendezvous point at Utkel.
- * **Resorgan Oncenamed** – A recent inductee to the cult, Resorgan (see page 21) and the crew of the *Graoll's Teeth* are more interested in claiming Pyaray's power for themselves that acting in subservience to the cult. To this end, after kidnapping their sacrifice, **Nara Penalver**, Oncenamed has ignored Bloodeye's order to convene at Utkel, and instead has pushed directly on to the site of the sacrifice (after a brief stop at Kariss). Little does Oncenamed know that Captain Bloodeye is the only one who has a map to the reefs surrounding the island upon which the Son of Pyaray lies, a fact that will lead him and the crew of Graoll's Teeth to disaster.

THE RED SAIL'S PLAN

Currently three sacrifices, all young women with some degree of influence or power, have been captured and should be on their way to Utkel. While these three might be kidnapped by the cult, none of them could really be called victims; each more than capable of fighting back against their captors, if given the chance. However, as learnt through many years of experience, the cult has used some of their magic – in the form of enchanted caskets – to transport the sacrifices (see the information provided in the discovery of Evealissa Aveye below for more details of their vessels).

- * **The Rose of Seshcal** – Evealissa Aveye (see page 22) is

on the Blessed Wanderer, captained by Dernic Jarl, which is making its way from Ramasaz to Utkel. Once freed from his bonds, The Rose will use all her influence and determination to attempt to redirect the characters against the Red Sail.

- * **Survann Mord** – Survann (see page 22) is a young priestess of Checkalakh. Kidnapped off the streets of Gromoorva, Mord arrived in Utkel the day before the party becomes involved in the scenario (onboard Hennim Bloodeye’s Narwhal). Like Evealissa, she is restrained in the magic casket and hidden onboard Bloodeye’s ship, where she will remain until he decides to move her to more secure location.
- * **Nara Penalver** – Nara (see page 23) is the eldest daughter of Inkare Penalver, a minor Vilmirian noble who is a confirmed opponent of the changes going on in his country (especially those advocated by Duke Avan Astran of Old Hrolmar). Nara was taken from her home (through an arrangement with her father) by Resorgan Oncenamed. Rather than being onroute to Utkel, the trapped Penalver is currently onboard the Graoll’s Teeth at anchor in the Purple Town city of Kariss, from which she to be taken directly to the Isle of Pyaray.

INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

The party are brought into this adventure through a contact and trader based in Menii, **Harold Bronzethinker** (see page 23). More an information broker and ‘discoverer of secrets’ than a Purple Towns Sea Lord, Bronzethinker has heard whisper that a small cog holding a ‘very special cargo’ has slipped its moorings in Ramasaz a few nights ago and is ripe for the taking. Unfortunately, the Purple Towner knows nothing of the true nature of the ship or its goods, and simply believes that whatever is onboard will fetch a good price on the black market.

Given this circumstance, Harold is looking for a discrete crew to waylay this ship – the *Blessed Wanderer* – before it reaches its ‘final’ destination at Utkel (the industrial port located on the southern coast of the Bay of Menii). Learning that the player characters are in need of money or a job, he will invite them back to his opulent manor within Menii’s Lassa’s Spoke to discuss the opportunity.

Over a fine wine, and the attention of attractive servants, the overly cheerful man will outline his need for the group and will explain what (little) information he

WHAT IF THE CHARACTERS ARE ALIGNED TO LAW?

So just how does a Game Master get a group of Law aligned characters involved in a scenario that is initiated by an act of thievery and violence?

In this case Harold Bronzethinker tells the party that whatever the prize is on the Blessed Wanderer, it is most Chaos related and his goal is not to profit from its capture but instead its destruction. Whether or not this is actually his motivation or simply a story to tell the group to get them to act on his behalf is left to the Game Master to decide!

knows of the prospect. While he can’t say what the prize is, he is quite certain that it will be worth their while – the individual who gave him the lead has always been right in the past. That said, as he doesn’t know the true details or worth of the prize in question, he will be quite generous with the party in his dealings, offering them a third share of any profit to be made from its sale upon their return (he easily be bargained up to 45% of the item(s) worth if so required).

Once this percentage is agreed, however, he will say that he does have some conditions in the deal. First, that no one on the Blessed Wanderer must ever be able to identify the party or link the attack back to Bronzethinker; how the group deals with the sailors on the ship, though is left to them of course! Second, that sale of the prize must be completed by himself, although he will be more than happy for the group to join him when he goes to negotiate the sale. And third, Harold’s smiling demeanour now gone, that if the party even thinks about double-crossing him, he will hunt them down and see to it that their deaths are slow and very painful!

With that warning aside, he quickly returns to the overly congenial manner the group had previously enjoyed from their employer, as he ask them if there is anything else they need of him? If required, he will outfit the characters or their ship with any common items or supplies but will say that time is of the essence in this matter, with the Wanderer only a day or so away.

Once the deal is agreed, Bronzethinker ushers them to the door and waves them goodbye, leaving the group free to plot their next moves.

THE BLESSED WANDERER

Unless the characters back out from the deal or initiate some other scheme, they will have little time to prepare

their ship to leave port. Although once everything is in order, they find they at least have a favourable wind and tide. Finding the Blessed Wanderer isn't as difficult as it might seem, with the ship entering the Bay of Menii, around the southern peninsula, just as the character's ship arrives at the same point.

When spotted, it is immediately obvious that small cog seems to struggle against the outwards tide, suggesting to the characters that their quarry is either damaged or short-handed in crew, and as such it is easy to quickly bear down on the vessel.

It is up to the party how they play out this encounter, with lies, diplomacy, and out and out combat all working equally well.

IN DEFENCE OF THE BLESSED WANDERER

The captain of the Wanderer, Dernic Jarl, will be suspicious of any approach by other craft, especially knowing the nature of his supercargo. That said, he is more expecting to be pursued from the south, than encountered by ships leaving the bay. If the party attempt to directly attack the Wanderer, Jarl and the crew will be initially stunned by the assault but will quickly recover and put up a spirited defence of their ship. To the party's benefit there is only a skeleton crew on board the Blessed Wanderer and if the character's own craft is adequately crewed, they should have no trouble taking the prize.

While most of the men and women of the Blessed Wanderer will fight to protect their ship, only Jarl is willing to die for it and will do anything in his power to protect the cargo carried in the ship's hold. To this end he will not be taken alive!

INTERROGATING SURVIVORS

If the characters are not too bloodthirsty, they may wish to talk to any surrendered survivors amongst the Blessed Wanderer's crew. In doing so they may discover further information about the purpose of the Blessed Wanderer's voyage and the existence of Red Sail.

- * The ship most recently departed its home port of Utkel and journeyed to Ramasaz, where a 'special' cargo was loaded. They were currently on course to return to Utkel.
- * All of the crew on the Blessed Wanderer are members of the Red Sail, although these lowly sailors simply see themselves as affiliates to a very secret smuggling ring (they all know that saying too much will see them killed). As such they know nothing more of the

RUNNING THE SEA BATTLE

In most cases it is easy enough to 'handwave' the mechanical requirements of any sea battle, especially when the Blessed Wanderer is in no real condition to fight. Once a boarding action is undertaken, the author suggests that the characters are paired in combat with Jarl or one of his officers, with the party's crew able to account for anyone else. This allows for a focus on the narrative and action rather than the mechanics of the sea battle!

chaos connection of the cult nor do they know anyone of importance in the society beyond their now dead captain.

- * While any survivors will agree it was foolhardy to sail with such a skeleton crew, they all believed that their captain did so to ensure larger shares for the delivery of their prize (this isn't actually the case, but they don't know that).
- * Any member of the crew learning that the prize onboard their ship was a young lady (none will know The Rose by name or sight), are genuinely shocked, but can add no more to their story.

FINDING THE PRIZE

With the crew of the Wanderer defeated, the ship can readily be searched for the 'special cargo'. At first it is difficult to locate, as the large 6-by-2-foot casket is hidden amongst the vessel's 'legitimate' shipment of Lormyrian wool, but once extracted, it can be readily examined.

The container s made of thick southern continent oak, and it looks as if it has been sturdily made, even though it is of a simple design. One thing that immediately stands out to any observer, however, is the runes that have been carved into the casket's lid. These are obviously Chaos in nature, with any character with a talent in Magic (POW over 16), or with a high skill in either Scribe or Million Spheres able to identify them as the Runes of Confinement and Slumber (see **The Bronze Grimoire** for more details). All of these seem slightly altered from their traditional forms, although what these changed effects might be, cannot be readily discerned by the characters.

SIGNS OF THE CULT

Beyond the discovery of the casket in the hold, the only other items of interest the party might find is in Dernic Jarl's own cabin. In addition to the items typical of a man

in his position, a few links to the Cult of the Red Sail can be discovered in the captain's desk.

- * A ring seal can be found along with a candle of red wax. This seal is the shape of three overlapping sails or shark's fins (this is the sign of the Cult of the Red Sail).
- * A small medallion of pressed bronze depicting a 12-pointed star, similar to that used to represent the guiding star most seas travellers use to navigate. This is the symbol that masters of the Red Sail used to identify the Blessed Wanderer and its captain.
- * A letter written in an unreadable code. This is the instructions from the masters of the cult to Jarl, ordering him to capture the Rose. While the code cannot be broken without a cipher, the sign of the Red Sail prominently appears on the document's broken wax seal. If the characters translate the document in the future, it notes the date and time the Rose will be departing her family's estate in Ramasaz, and how activate the magic runes to confine her to the casket.

MEETING THE ROSE

Once the group decides to open the casket (either in the presence of Bronzethinker or alone), all of the runes inscribed on its surface are deactivated. With the runes of Confinement and Slumber broken, Evealissa will slowly awaken and be able to be freed from her incarceration. It takes a few moments after the lid is lifted before Evealissa is fully awake, and for those seconds she looks something more akin to a life-sized doll - fully made-up and dressed in Lormyrian finery - than a real person. This state, however, quickly passes and her eyes flicker open. Unless otherwise restrained, she will arise from the casket also as if she is one of the living dead; groggy and confused about where, why and even who she is.

As her memories come back to her - the ambush on the way from her father's estate to Ramasaz, the smug face of Dernic Jarl and being unceremoniously thrown into the casket - Evealissa angrily starts to accuse the group of kidnapping her, how they will all pay dearly for their deeds.

If Harold Bronzethinker is present at the opening of the casket, he is appalled by the turn of events, not so much in having to deal in human trafficking (which he is well used to), but rather because he knows he never going to get away with selling the Rose of Seshcal as a slave. As such he will want little more to do with the situation and

will say that Evealissa is now the character's issue to deal with.

However the misunderstandings around party's role in the kidnapping is resolved, Evealissa is not happy being used as a pawn in someone else's games, and as such will demand that the characters assist her in finding out what is going on. Although fiery in personality, she is no fool and will use all her skills in getting the group to sign up to the arrangement. He is happy to offer a reward, recognition or even some of her influence within the Lomyrian court if it will get her to the bottom of why she was kidnapped! Damn any trip home to Ramasaz, the Rose wants answers Grome damn it!

LEADS & DISCOVERIES

With the group now in the 'employ' of The Rose of Seshcal there are a number of leads that may which to follow:

- * **Grilling Bronzethinker** - It is obvious that Bronzethinker knows more than he has revealed to date. Even if he was not complicit in the kidnapping, where or from whom did he hear about the prize onboard the Blessed Wanderer?
- * **Investigate the Blessed Wanderer** - Who was the captain of the Wanderer? While the characters might not have asked, Evealissa recalls that his name was Dernic Jarl - as he introduced himself be unceremoniously throwing her into the casket. It is obvious that he was planning on undertaking some activity with her in Utkel; it's just a matter of finding out what.
- * **What is the Red Sail** - If the characters found the letter in Dernic's cabin they may wish to track down its meaning and who might be behind the kidnapping of The Rose?

WHAT BRONZETHINKER KNOWS

Unless the characters have done something untoward to scare him away, Harold Bronzethinker can either be found at his home (in Lassa's Spoke) or his trading offices within Straasha's Spoke of Menii. While he is expecting that the characters will return to him with some fabulous artifact or ancient Melnibonian treasure, he is not stupid enough to not expect some sort of double cross or 'renegotiation' of the terms of their deal. To this end, his bodyguard of ex-sailors and mercenaries are readily on hand for the party's reappearance.

Once it is made clear that the group is now working with/for Evealissa, Bronzethinker wants nothing more to do with the deal, and refuses to part with any information... at least without proper compensation, of course! It will quickly come clear that to get anything further from the merchant they group will either need to part with a large number of Bronzes (which they are unlikely to have) or squeeze the information out of him.

If a fight does breakout, Bronzethinker's bodyguards will look to subdue the characters, rather than kill them (as any death is likely to result in an investigation of the local guard), while the merchant attempts to make his getaway (his sister own a small holding in the Isle's northern lands).

Unfortunately, successfully detaining Harold doesn't actually provide the group with too much more information. Bronzethinker knows nothing about Evealissa's captors (or for that fact, surprisingly of the existence of the Cult of the Red Sails) and is only able to provide the name of the man who gave him the tip on the supposed 'treasure' - Aterac Threefingers. Aterac is an Assistant Harbour Master on Utkel's dock, and often provides Bronzethinker with a few 'insights' into interesting items that are coming into the port. Harold says he is not Threefinger's friend or anything like the sort, but rather the Harbour Master is just a typically corrupt informant who owes him a few debts.

INVESTIGATING CAPTAIN JARL

Dernic Jarl might only be a junior member of the Red Sail, but he has garnered a fair reputation amongst the merchants and traders of the Purple Towns. He is known as an honest and caring captain, although he does have a flare for the dramatic and could be labelled as having somewhat of a swashbuckling personality.

When in Utkel, those searching for a connection to Jarl or the Blessed Wanderer on the docks will discover that the man and his ship are well enough known as a regular visitor to the port, but no one can readily give any true insight into the Lormyrian or his history. However, these inquiries will allow the group to learn that an ex-crewman from the Blessed Wanderer has recently been looking for a new berth. This man, Azhar Longmane (a Purple Isle native), is currently holed up in a local tavern, where he drinks away the hours between hunting for his next job. Running short of funds, he'll happily discuss what he knows of Jarl and the Blessed Wanderer for a few Bronzes.

* Longmane only sailed with the Blessed for a few months, and was dismissed a few weeks ago, when

the ship last departed Utkel.

- * No reason was given for his dismissal, although Longmane thinks it was because the storm damage to the Wanderer was worse than Jarl was letting on, and he needed to save money for proper repairs. (The truth of the matter is that as he was the only non-Lormyrian crewmember and not a member of the Red Sail).
- * If asked if Jarl was up to anything suspicious, he will say that for the majority of the time in his employ he was a happy, gregarious captain who spent a lot of his keeping the crew's spirits high (be it through his stories or over drinks). However, just before Longmane was dismissed, the captain became quite reserved and it was rumoured that he'd be seen talking to one of Utkel's Assistant Harbour Masters, Aterac Threefingers.

SIGNS OF THE RED SAIL

If the party seek out information on the coded message or the symbol they discovered in Dernic Jarl's cabin onboard the Blessed Wanderer, they will quickly alert the Red Sail to their presence in the city. As such they will be followed (see the **Crew of the Narwhal** below for typical stats for a Red Sails agent), to see what they might know of the cult, and if need be attempts will be made on their lives (and the items stolen from the Blessed Wanderer retrieved).

Outside of this, talking to the captains, merchants or dockhands in any port doesn't provide any real insight into the meaning or purpose of the letter. There is a chance that someone might recognise the symbol, and be able to name the Cult of the Red Sail, but no one really knows the group's purpose or any of the activities of the sect. (While in Utkel, really lucky individuals might be directed to Assistant Harbour Master Aterac Threefingers, has he seems to know everyone and everything going on... for the right price, of course!).

For the most persistent of characters, they will be lured into a trap, with rumours being spread that a sage in Utkel could help them translate the code. Here the group will be ambushed by the Red Sail (again use the stats for the **Crew of the Narwhal** to represent these attackers).

CONFRONTING THREEFINGERS

Almost all the leads the party have discovered during their investigations will lead to Assistant Harbour Master Aterac Threefingers (see page 23). Aterac has spent many years on Utkel's docks, working his way up from a simple stevedore all the way to his present position as the head assistant to the port's Harbour Master. This progression has been the result of as much luck and good planning, with Aterac always happy to take a bribe, sell out a colleague or do a deal that will advance his own position.

Everyone on the Utkel docks knows of Aterac, if not for his reputation, then at least for his having only three fingers on his left hand. The reason behind the loss of these digits changes with each telling, with the stories ranging from being taken by a thrashing tiger shark, through to being chopped off in a fight with a Pan Tangian raider.

Threefingers can be tracked down at the Harbour Master's office where he spends most of his time ordering the junior clerks out and about on various tasks. He has little time for visitors and will only meet with the characters if he feels that they have something to offer him or is tricked into doing so.

SECRET DEALINGS

Once confronted by either a connection to the Red Sail or Harold Bronzethinker, Aterac will initially deny knowledge of either. However, his own fears of having sold out the cult to Bronzethinker and the thought that his own cosy position within the Harbour Master's office might be under threat should soon loosen his lips.

- * He was approached by Hennim Bloodeye, captain of the Narwhal, a few weeks back and was 'incentivised' assist in a special delivery. This favour would be to allow the captain to utilise one of the warehouses owned by the City Council. Further it was intimated that the one of the Harbour Master's boats would also be appreciated to transport sizable packages from the certain ships to said warehouse.
- * Hennim was awaiting two ships other than his own Narwhal, the Blessed Wanderer and the Graoll's Teeth (both of which are due anytime now from Ramasaz and Gromoorva respectively). He doesn't know the names of these vessel's captains but knows they haven't arrived as yet.
- * Angry that Bloodeye has leveraged the use of the warehouse out of him (rather than paying for the

privilege – as any good captain should do!) and owing a few debts to after last season's river races, he sold the information to Harold Bronzethinker. Threefingers suspecting that the merchant would look to raid this warehouse at some point and he'd get double the pay by looking the other way!

For the right incentive (or threat) Threefingers will provide the whereabouts of the warehouse in question – an old building sitting among a number of other storehouses located on a small island in the midst of the Mindorn river. If further pressured, he's also able to furnish his interrogators with what little he knows of the Cult:

- * The Red Sail are a shadowy collection of influential captains who work together to smuggle illicit and highly taxed goods across the Young Kingdoms. They use the sign of the three sharkfin sails as their symbol.
- * He is unsure where they are based, but knows they operate out of a number of ports in the Purple Isles,
- * He (honestly) knows nothing of their worship of Chaos Gods or Pyaray but does know that they do not look kindly on anyone looking to disrupt their business and can sight credible examples of them acting against merchants or traders that have crossed them in the past.

THE NARWHAL

Armed with the names of Captain Hennim Bloodeye and his ship, the Narwhal, the party will have no trouble locating its berth in Utkel main docks. A large merchantman's Cog, it stands tall in the water, a sure sign that it presently carries little in the way of cargo.

Observing the ship, the characters will notice that the majority of the sailors lounge about and dally in their assigned tasks (a sure indication that the Captain and his senior crew cannot be onboard). If they watch long enough, they will learn that every twenty-four hours or so, a group of sailors (no more than half a dozen or so) will arrive on the docks coming from the direction of the town proper and file onboard the ship, only for roughly the same number of different men to depart shortly afterwards. This represents the changing of the crew at the warehouse island further up the Mindorn River (see below). This means that only about a dozen sailors are on the Narwhal at any one time.

Depending on the character's actions and investigations into the cult Red Sail, they may see the movement of another casket (one almost identical to that

WHILE WATCHING THE WAREHOUSE

The following events might occur while the characters are watching the warehouse. Obviously, these only occur if appropriate and are based on other events of activities that might have taken place previously.

- * After the characters have been watching the warehouse for a while, the casket of Survann Mord will be brought up the river (if the party hasn't rescued her already). The cult's lookouts in the abandoned house along the river will signal this arrival and watch with interest as the boat is rowed up the river.
- * If the party has rescued Mord or attacked the crew of the Narwhal, Bloodeye and the surviving sailors will go on the offensive, using what contacts and information they can find to track down the characters.
- * If the party watch long enough without interfering, as detailed further below, Bloodeye will receive a message (via the Demon Scroll he has with him) that Resorgan Oncenamed and the crew of the Graoll's Teeth have arrived in Kariss (a message that is sent from a cult informer in that harbour). This will send the captain into an almost uncontrollable rage and he will strike out at a poor crew member standing nearby, knocking him to the ground; Hennim will need to be physically restrained by others until he calms down. Once recovered he orders the crew to pack up the warehouse and return to the Narwhal in readiness to pursue the rebellious Oncenamed.

in which The Rose was found) be lowered off the ship onto a small jolly boat and rowed up the Mindorn (see **Another Casket Appears** below for more information). It is likely that if the characters start to make a nuisance of themselves, this event will happen sooner rather than later (as Hennim starts to worry about what has gone wrong and looks to secure his prize close to him).

ONBOARD THE NARWHAL

Any discoveries made upon the ship will depend on whether or not the party searches the vessel before or after Survann Mord's casket has been moved.

As a general observation, Captain Bloodeye keeps his fine ship clean and as well presented as possible, displaying no outward displays of his beliefs or worship. For the majority of the year, the merchant-captain takes on normal trading activities across the Young Kingdoms, and so has all the equipment, space and labour needed to undertake such journeys. In fact, the only things out of place on the ship is a section of hidden hold, which is

concealed behind a fake bulkhead. It is here that the casket holding Survann Mord will be held until it is moved upriver.

Capturing and interrogating any of the Narwhal's crew will reveal most of the Red Sails plans (Bloodeye's sailors being long term veterans of the dealings with Pyaray). These captives won't give away this information easily of course, but it is likely the only way the characters might learn the entire story behind the cult and their goals.

HARBOUR MASTER'S WAREHOUSE

The Harbour Master's Warehouse is located on a small island about a twisted kilometre upriver from the port. This small unnamed bit of land has been claimed by the City Council as a location in which dangerous or confiscated items are to be stored, free from the influence of the guilds and the various Sea Lords that might take an interest in them. Like most of Utkel's swamp-bound settlements, the three buildings on the island are ramshackle and have long seen better days, but nevertheless remain mostly secure and intact. The warehouse claimed by the Red Sail is the centremost of these and it commands a good view of the river as well as the town itself. The other two storehouses on the island currently stand empty and devoid of any contents.

Inside the warehouse, Hennim Bloodeye and a dozen of his crew waits the arrival of the other captains, while four other sailors occupy a small building a few hundred yards down river, watching for anything suspicious on the water. Both the house by the river and the warehouse are far enough away from most other inhabited buildings, as not to immediately raise any alarm if a fight breaks out within or near them.

Depending on the actions to date, the warehouse is either quite as Bloodeye and his crew await the arrival of the other ships and their prizes or if they have been alerted to the character's interference, are on high alert ready for their next action. In the original plan, once all three of the caskets arrive, Hennim was complete the ritual of preparation required for the Son of Pyaray to accept the sacrifices. Of course the character's attack on the Blessed Wanderer and the probably yet unknown actions of the rebellious Captain Oncenamed have put pay to this scheme ever eventuating.

SCOUTING THE ISLAND

The cult has secured the warehouse and now use it as a base of operations as they look to consolidate their prizes before moving on to their final destination. Within Hennim awaits with impatience for the arrival or news of Jarl's Blessed Wanderer or Oncenamed's Graoll's Teeth, knowing that each day delayed runs the risk of something going wrong in their plan.

As such Bloodeye actively sends groups of his sailors to search out any news of the other ships – asking the merchant's or other newly arrived crews if they were seen on the seas. The result is a continual coming and going on the little island, with sailors hustling about to do anything in their power to avoid the growing wrath of their captain. Worried that his plans are going array, Hennim is careful to set a constant watch both from the roof of the warehouse, as well from the abandon house a few hundred metres down river; a room in which commands both a view of the Harbour Master's island and the nearest curve in the Mindorn river. From this house, the sailors signal the comings and goings of their fellows (or any other activities of interest) with whistles and coloured cloths.

Observing the warehouse reveals that it houses about a dozen sailors, although no more than eight or nine are ever onsite at any one time (and these, as detailed above, are rotated out daily). Careful observers may catch a glimpse of Bloodeye as he angrily awaits to hear of the fate of the Blessed Wanderer or the Graoll's Teeth.

Given these numbers, it seems foolhardy to arrange a frontal assault of any kind, and it will quickly be clear that the best way to approach the warehouse is at night, or early morning, when the regular swamp fog that obscures most of Utkel will allow the party to approach unseen.

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

The warehouse, while small in comparison with those in Utkel's port or elsewhere in the Young Kingdoms, still looks spacious and large when, as it is presently, mostly empty (with what little goods there are stored having been piled into one corner). Even the signs of occupation here look temporary, with none of the sailors daring to get too comfortable with their captain so angry. Beyond the main storeroom, a few unconnected chambers are scattered around the building. Most of these are empty, but two are of particular interest to the characters.

THE CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Hennim has set up one of the smaller rooms as his own, allowing him to plan out the journey once the

THE DEMON SCROLL

One of the few gifts bestowed on the Cult of the Red Sail by their lord, Pyaray, are the Demon Scrolls. These unique forms of communication are rare and extraordinary valuable artifacts, allowing the senior members of the cult to instantaneously send messages to one another, no matter where they might be within the Young Kingdoms or Unknown East.

Each Demon Scroll has been flayed from the back of the same bound demon, mystically connecting them together, so that whenever a missive is written upon one (with the appropriate special ink), an exact copy of the same message immediately appears on all.

These devices require a small expenditure of will (1 Magic Point) to activate, and while the specialist ink dries almost immediately, the message can be wiped clean with a splash of water (each copy will need to be cleaned in this way otherwise no further messages will appear). While these parchments are an incalculable boon to the cult, being both portable and easy to use, they do have the downside of needing the user to be literate and there being no way to exclude any of the bound scrolls from receiving any sent message (it is strictly a one-to-all form of communication).

ceremony here is completed. In addition to the captain's personal gear neatly stacked in one of the corners, the room is dominated by a large table and an old moth-eaten lounging couch.

The table has also seen better days but is sturdy enough for Hennim's purpose. Upon it is stretched out a large detailed nautical map covering the navigation routes and known obstacles within the Straits of Vilmar, the waters around the Isle of the Purple Towns, and the closest portions of the Eastern Ocean.

* Marked on the map are three distinct symbols, the horned wrapped tentacle (representing the Narwhal), a 12-pointed star (the Blessed Wanderer) and a row of sharp teeth (for the Graoll's Teeth). These originate from different points along the western edge of the map, but show courses leading directly to Utkel. Only a single course (the Narwhal) departs Utkel and tracks into the middle of the Eastern Ocean, where upon it stops reaches at a fourth symbol (depiction of the sun – for the Isle of Pyaray). These, of course, were the original planned voyages of the Red Sail captains honoured with providing the sacrifices to the Son of Pyaray, which given the actions of the characters and Resorgan Oncenamed are now in disarray.

* Reading the map and deciphering the courses of the

THE BOOK OF PYARAY

For many years, the Cult of the Red Sails has been devoting sacrifices to their god through its son at the secret Eastern Ocean isle. This simple looking book records each and every sacrifice offered over that period, along with the names of the captains undertaking the devotion and whether or not the ritual provided the blessings they all hoped for.

While it is written in the cult's secret code, the names of the sacrifices are not, and with a quick calculation it seems that over a hundred men and women from all of the Young Kingdoms have been given in the name of Pyaray.

As with the map found in Bloodeye's room, each captain who has participated in these activities is also noted in the book (using the cult's unique symbols for them). Of the symbols known to the characters only that of Hennim and his Narwhal (the tentacled horn) appears previously, and then only twice (in the role of assisting captain, not the leader of the ceremony).

In a few passages at the front of the book, a description of the Son of Pyaray can be found (see page 15 for these details if the party are able to translate the text), as is the need to properly prepare the offerings with the listed oils (as found the Ceremony room). It makes it clear that without these preparations the Son will refuse the sacrifice and likely kill the supplicants.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the book is that it seems that no matter who or how many sacrifices are given to the Son each year, only one in three ceremonies actually seems to have provided success for the cult and their trade!

ships is easy enough for any experienced sailor but as far as anyone present can tell, nothing exists at the location represented by the sun symbol.

Searching amongst Hennim's personal items locates a variety of clothes, tools and equipment (in general everything a good captain needs to travel the seas of the Young Kingdoms) in addition to:

- * A large bronze key, the head of which has been crafted into the shape of an octopus. This opens the chest found in the ceremony room.
- * A rolled piece of parchment, a quill, and a small bottle of strangely blued ink. On closer inspection it becomes obvious that the vellum is actually the flayed skin of some exotic creature (see The Demon Scroll for more details), while the ink smells and looks nothing like any scholar has seen before. Depending on when the characters discover this scroll, the message from the Red Sail's spy in Kariss

might have already passed on the arrival and departure of Resorgan Oncenamed and the Graoll's Teeth. Otherwise this missive "Oncenamed has come and gone from Kariss, he intends to take the prize to the Son alone" appears very shortly after the party locates it. As noted, this betrayal sends Hennim Bloodeye into a rage, if he learns of it!

- * A single tattered sea chart, that is devoid of any words or symbols. This map is the only copy of the route the Cult of the Red Sails has been using for years to safely navigate the reefs around the rocky island upon which the Son of Pyaray lives. This will guide will become vital later in the adventure when the characters face the same challenges that will have destroyed the Graoll's Teeth upon its arrival there.

THE CEREMONY ROOM

The largest of the side chambers has been selected for the preparation ceremony Hennim Bloodeye and the other captains were to conduct on their captives (in fact, depending on what has occurred so far, Survann Mord might actually be laid out here ready for such when the characters arrive). Over the years the Red Sail's ceremony to prepare their selected sacrifices has become more and more elaborate, to the point when most (but not all) of what is undertaken is actually irrelevant. Nevertheless, such a formal and ostentatious ritual is now deemed vital in keeping up the tradition of the cult and spurring others in later years in doing even more.

Upon entering the room, it is immediately obvious that it has been set up for some lavish ceremony. The room is lit by a dark reddish light that emits from a number of small censers placed around the edge of the room. These burners also burn some unique incense, filling the space with the sharp smell of the sea and salt air. In the centre of the chamber a large circular dais has been built (from wood found the warehouse) about three feet off the floor. Large enough for all three offerings to be laid upon, it is covered with a blood-red cloth of the finest Melibonean silk. A raised platform, about 5 feet high, overlooks the dais, while the walls of the room are covered in red hangings (made to look even darker in the poor light). All these trappings are embroidered with the iconography of the Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible, the Chaos Lord of the Depths, Father Pyaray.

Carefully placed in one corner of the room is a large chest, engraved clearly with the symbol of cult (the three sharkfin-like sails). This chest is locked but can be opened with the Octopus headed key found in Hennim Bloodeye's room (or picked with the appropriate skill). Within the party will find:

- * Three white silken robes, design to cover slim figures completely from head to toe. The offerings, The Rose, Mord and Penalver were to be clothed in these prior to the commencement of the ceremony.
- * A collection of exquisitely crafted bottles, ranging in colour from dark blues, through vivid violets and brilliant yellows. Each of these contains an exotic oil or balm that was to be anointed upon the sacrifices. These are the rituals actually required for the Son of Pyaray to accept the sacrifices, marking them to be consumed and their very essence provided to the Chaos Lord itself.
- * A series of parchments written the Red Sail's cant. While not actually needed in any way, these words of sacrifice and devotion is just another of the practices that has developed over the years for the Red Sail's ritual.
- * A large but simple looking book bound in black leather. This is the Red Sail's Book of Pyaray, a record of the cult's actions and devotions in the name of their god. Like many of the documents found here, it is written in the cult's code making it almost impossible to translate.

SURVANN MORD

The characters have the opportunity to rescue Survann Mord in a number of places in this scenario, from the secret hold of the Narwhal, during the boat trip to the Harbour Master's Island, or even from the ceremony room within the warehouse itself. In all these events, Mord is discovered, just as Evealissa was, confined within a sturdy oaken casket, with it also being engraved with the magical runes of Confinement and Slumber.

Upon opening the casket, the group might think that they have discovered a newly interred mummy of a child, with the sleeping Mord face is a mass of burn scars (as is much of the rest of her robe covered body). These are actually signs of her devotion to the Burning God, with each day an offering of bare flesh burn made, and even great offering made as she progresses inside her church. While painful looking and off putting, such things mean little to a daughter of Checkalakh.

Upon waking in the casket, Mord is in a feisty mood, and will likely strike out at her 'captors'. Although young, she has been well trained to defend herself and the sanctity of her God, putting up quite a fight until restrained. After calming down and taking note of the situation, Survann will quickly come to befriend any that treat her with dignity and respect, and, although keen to find passage back home to Dharijor, will happily assist the group in

STOPPING AT KARISS

Heading north around the Isle of the Purple Towns, as opposed to the quicker southern route adds about half a day to the character's journey. Unfortunately undertaking this diversion adds little to the quest at hand, with Oncenamed and the Graoll's Teeth having long departed, and little way of tracking down the Red Sail's agent in the port.

any way possible. Unfortunately, she remembers little of the attack that rendered her unconscious but states that she was on a pilgrimage at the time – travelling between various shrines across her country.

CONVINCING THE PARTY TO CONTINUE?

After rescuing Survann Mord the characters might think that they have done everything they need to, to stop the cult. This is again where The Rose of Sechcal and/or Mord can be used to motivate the party onwards. Neither woman is willing to let another of kidnap victim to be consumed in the name of a Chaos Lord, and they will do anything in their power to get the characters to attempt to put a final end to the cult's terrible and frightening plan.

While such convincing is hopefully not required, in this the women could offer further rewards, the blessing or curse of Mord's own deity Checkalakh, or even the threat of Evealissa influence being used against (or for them).

THE ISLE OF PYARAY

Returning to the port of Utkel is a simple enough task, although depending on the party's actions, other agents of the Red Sail or the remaining crew of the Narwhal might look to take their revenge on them upon their arrival (again use the statistics of the Crew of the Narwhal as required). With these sorts of disturbances aside, the group will need to decide how or when they are going to travel to the Isle of Pyaray. Of course both The Rose and Survann Mord will insist on coming along on the journey, but there is nothing stopping the characters sailing away without them.

Unless the Game Master is feeling very vindictive, or the party has acted in such a way as to alert the rest of the Cult of the Red Sails, the journey to Isle of Pyaray is uneventful and only takes about 4 days (a trip that

involves rounding the Isle of the Purple Towns and heading directly east towards the Roaring Rocks).

RISKING THE REEFS

The first time the party sees their target, they are likely to be disappointed with the view. The Isle of Pyaray seems to be little more than a large rock jutting out of the Eastern Sea. As the character's ship get closer, they can make out that is obviously surrounded by shallow sea, or reefs of some kind as at least two ships can be seen damaged and beached near the Isle.

The key to passing through the reef's safely is found on the chart discovered amongst Hennim Bloodeye's possessions in Utkel. A competent navigator is able to slowly and carefully pick their way through the shallows via the marked route with relative ease. Sailors not using the chart as a guide risk becoming another victim of the isle, however and may end up aground like the Graoll's Teeth and the Lighting the Way (see below and the sidebar for details).

For ships attempting to navigate the shallows by eye alone, the Game Masters should ship's helmsman's make three (3) **Navigation** skill rolls.

- * On a single failure, the ship grinds against the hidden rocks, causing the ship 1d6+6 structure points.
- * The second, does 2d6+6 points of structure damage.
- * While the third automatically beaches and holes the ship on the rocks, leaving the vessel destined to slowly break apart from the constant battering wind and waves.

THE WRECK OF GRAOLL'S TEETH

For once Resorgan Oncenamed's determination to claim fame and fortune as lead to his ship's (and most of its crew's) demise. Without Hennim's chart and knowledge, the brash Red Sails' captain has driven headlong into the reef, beaching his ship. Currently lying near the Isle, the Graoll's Teeth has suffered a catastrophic collision and lists to port, exposing a great rend in the ship's hull. In the water around the once proud ship, trade goods and the bodies of some of its crew can be seen floating.

Although the ship isn't exactly in the easiest place to reach for those taking the safest route into the isle, anyone coming within shouting distance will see and be hailed by a number of bedraggled sailors. These half-dozen sorry souls (most of whom have serious injuries) are some of the remnants of Oncenamed's crew. They are keen to provide the heroes with the details of their ship's demise

THE LIGHTING THE WAY

The wreckage of this schooner is all that remains of a previous Red Sails sacrifice, and it is the accident that led to the cult to become much more careful in deciding just who and how their offerings were to be brought to the Isle. Today the Lighting the Way stands as a symbol of what becomes of those who fail in the service of the Red Sail and Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets. Long since picked clean and ravaged by the seas and seasons, there is little left of the ship except the bow upon which can still be seen the words 'Lighting the Way'.

and the fate of their captain if the characters promise to take them onboard their vessel.

- * The Graoll's Teeth left Kariss in good time, but once the First Mate became aware of Resorgan's plan to bypass the orders of Hennim Bloodeye and travel directly to the Isle, she started to openly discuss mutiny. In the ensuing confrontation with Oncenamed, she was killed in a brief duel and her body unceremoniously dumped overboard. This fight and subsequent dishonour done to the First Mate resulted in even more unrest amongst the crew, and it took over a day of threats and promises from the Oncenamed to finally get the ship back underway. (And even then, the crew refused to be hurried).
- * They sighted the isle on dusk two days ago, and rather than wait for morning, Resorgan ordered the ship to sail close and weigh anchor. In the fading light they didn't have a chance to see the reefs hidden under the waves and struck the shallows way too fast.
- * With many of the crew killed or badly injured, it took another day or so for the ship to be stabilised enough to ensure it didn't full break apart.
- * Late yesterday Resorgan and a few of the more able-bodied crew, rowed off to the Isle to scout it out. He returned late in the evening saying that it was a disappointing and barren piece of land, absent of all life. In fact, the only place of interest seemed to be a series of caves leading down into the innards of the isle.
- * Today, he spent the morning preparing to take the casket of their offering - Nara Penalver - off the ship, determining that the group's only chance of success was to complete the sacrifice, and ask for its assistance in escaping their current predicament.
- * To this end, he and the remaining half a dozen fit

sailors returned to the island with the casket only a few hours ago!

The survivors of the Graoll's Teeth can also fill in any further details about Oncenamed, the Red Sails cult or their purpose on the Isle of Pyaray as the Game Master sees fit.

ANCHORING AT THE ROCK

As the group's ship draws up near the rocky island, they will make out the large mountain that dominates the land is surrounded by a narrow stony beach. This natural formation has steep sides and from on board their ship, it doesn't seem like there's any easy way of either scaling the rock or finding a way up on to its peak. On the route directly from the grounded Graoll's Teeth the characters will see that a rowboat has been dragged up onto the shore, although there are no other signs of any one present nearby.

Without any real dock on the island, the party is best using their own ship's jolly boat to make land fall. It is easy to row the short distance to the beach and drag the boat up onto the pebbly shorefront. As previously noted, nothing other than the abandoned Graoll's Teeth dory can be found anywhere around the base of the rock. Once there the characters will be able to clearly make out a series of tracks leading up a seemingly more easily traversed section of the rock face. Here a steep and narrow path can be made out going up the mountain and is obvious that Oncenamed, his crew and the oak casket took this route.

Without having to haul anything heavy up the mountain, the group are able to climb the rise with relative ease, following the track as it leads to large cleft in the rock face itself about halfway up the slope. Once inside the mountain, the characters are forced to follow the incision in the rocks, with there being little space to turn around. This cramped pathway bears witness to the casket's passing, with stone and wood chips liberally seen scattered along the journey. After about three hundred yards, the narrow crevasse opens up into more comfortable surrounds, and the group come to a large opening in the interior of the rock. Rather than finding themselves inside some sort of cave, however, they instead discover that the entire interior of the mountain is actually open to the sky, forming something like the interior of a volcanic cone. This cone forms cylinder that descends down at least a thousand yards and must somehow lead down past the natural water level of the ocean?! Further, instead of focusing down to a vent of lava, the bottom of cone ends in a wide body of water.

From the character's vantage point they can see a clear path leading down to the water, and at its bottom, a group of men and women milling about upon a rocky beach.

THE SON ARISES

As the party begins their trip down the interior of the cone, they see that the pathway, while secure enough, is exposed to the line of sight of the individuals below. Avoiding making Resorgan and his crew aware of their descent is nigh impossible, with small stones and rock constantly clattering down the cliff face and splashing into the water.

Upon detecting the characters, Oncenamed and his party spring to action, commencing the ritual that will summon the Son of Pyaray (see page 24). There is little the player characters can do to stop this ceremony from where they currently stand, and even moving at full pace (a dangerous proposition that may require a few appropriate skill rolls), they will at best arrive just as the rite is done.

As Resorgan completes the summoning, the water within the 'lake' begins to roil and churn as something large releases bubbles of air and ink from below. Too quickly a large set of tentacles appears in the water snaking towards the casket and the stunned sailors. These rise up and seem to gently pulse, as if being used as some sort of sensory organs. The characters might rightly guess that the creature is attempting to source the appropriate offering amongst the beings standing before it. However, as Resorgan failed to anoint his sacrifice with the necessary oils and balms it cannot distinguish who it is meant to take!

After a few short moments, the limbs stop their twitching and slide back under the water... only for seconds later the head of a massive creature to surface in their place. This octopus-like visage seems to exude immense evil and anger, and immediately half-a-dozen tentacles flay out of the water striking at everything on the beach.

In that instant chaos breaks out with the unopened casket being flung aside, and a few of the Graoll's Teeth's crew being swatted by the greasy-grey limbs or dragged screaming towards the beast's gapping maw. A few, such as Resorgan seem ready for this eventuality and draw their weapons to fend off the attack.

RUNNING THE BATTLE

The conflict between the Son, Resorgan and the characters can be played out in any number of ways, with the Game Master encouraged to ramp up the action and terror associated with the party being forced to fight a giant mutated octopus-thing.

- * The Son is angered and will not let anyone survive its wrath. This includes the Resorgan and the characters.
- * Resorgan might look to ally with the characters while they fight off the Son of Pyaray but will immediately betray the party as soon as its defeated.
- * If the party attempt to flee, the Son begins to strike the walls of the cone, cascading down rocks and debris that makes the journey but up to the crevasse very difficult. Do not hesitate in having any fleeing party member being knocked from the path into the water below.

To easiest way to defeat the Son is to allow it to consume three mortal souls, at which point it has fulfilled its bargain and will return to its home under the waves. Of course, the characters might not like this option and will fight the Son directly. In this case a nice Game Master might allow the avatar of Pyaray to give up after half-a-dozen of its tentacles are defeated.

ENDING THE SCENARIO

The scenario ends after the party defeats the Son of Pyaray and what is left of Resorgan Oncenamed's crew. This climax should be a dramatic and dangerous finale, one worthy of heroes acting (whether they know it or not) in the service of the Cosmic Balance.

During this scenario, the party will have potentially made many friends and enemies, and there could be numerous unresolved opportunities and challenges that might lead for further adventures.

- * Once free of the Isle of Pyaray, the group are free to do what they want with the young woman they have rescued. The presence of these three will make for an interesting dynamic on the characters ship and will surely lead to many other adventures as they attempt to return them to their homes across the Young Kingdoms.
- * The rest of the Cult of the Red Sails still exists of course, and while the party has done immense damage to their power and influence, they are not without other resources to act. Motivated characters may wish to continue their efforts against the cult and endeavour to track down their network of

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This scenario appears here in a form that I never expected it to take. I originally conceived of the core story behind The Brides of Pyaray nearly twenty years ago, when I needed to create a short, dynamic scenario for a session I was running at a local roleplaying event. In that version of the story, the characters were to take on the roles as the unwitting servants of Chaos, employed to take the casket holding the Rose of Sechcal to its fate in the Eastern Ocean!

While this story is much changed from that first play through, it is built from the same story telling elements – championing the weak, challenging fate and the ambiguity of individuals trying to live in a pretty dark world.

In the end, I just hope that you enjoy reading and playing this scenario as much as I did writing it!

leaders. Similarly, if ignored, the Red Sail will soon rise once more in influence, and the names of the player characters will forever be whispered as hated enemies. Who knows how long it will be before they cult strikes back?

- * Worse still is that the players actions might have drawn the attention of Lord Pyaray himself. While unable to directly act in the realm of the Young Kingdoms, it has many agents and powers ready to represent its interest in this plane of the Multiverse. Angering a Chaos Lord is never a good thing, and our heroes might soon discover just what fate awaits agents of the Balance that act against the Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets.
- * But, on the positive side, good can also come from this scenario, if the group has proven themselves honourable and worthy, they might well be offered an opportunity to become agents of The Rose herself. While still young, it is obvious that Evalissa Aveye will one day be a powerful individual in Lormyr, if not the entirety of the Young Kingdoms. Having such an ally might will lead to many more adventures in the future!

APPENDICES

He reached the ship's rail and hauled himself over it, spitting bile from his throat as he entered a peculiar region of darkness and came to the first of a series of decks that rose like steps to the topmost one where he could see the occupants—a manlike figure and something like a huge, blood-red octopus. The first was probably Jagreen Lern. The second was obviously Pyaray, for this, Elric knew, was the guise he took when he manifested himself on Earth.

AN EXTRACT FROM STORMBRINGER

This section details all the adversaries and allies the party might encounter in *The Brides of Pyaray*.

THE BLESSED WANDERER

The Blessed Wanderer is typical of the myriad of smaller merchantmen that ply the oceans of the Young Kingdoms. While she has seen many years of service on the open seas, under many different captains, she was – until recently – well maintained. Having recently taken some damage in a storm, she very slightly lists to the port, and shows signs of jury-rigged repairs along that side's waterline.

HULL TYPE: Small Cog (Merchant)

HULL QUALITY: 8 SEAWORTHINESS: 18

STRUCTURE POINTS: 32

CREW: 9 including the captain

ERNIC JARL

SWASHBUCKLING CAPTAIN OF THE BLESSED WANDERER

The casual observer could be forgiven in that the short, slightly dowdy Deric Jarl, was as reserved and taciturn an individual as the rest of his Lormyrian countrymen. That would be, however, until the blond-haired captain of the

Blessed Wanderer reveals his bright, wide smile and infectious laugh. Considerably more free-spirited and easier going than most sea captains, he embraces his daring personality and cavalier approach to his home countries traditions.

While not the most dedicated member of the Red Sail, he is hoping that his involvement in the offerings sacrifice of The Rose of Seshcal will improve his fortunes – which in recent months have seen him almost lose the Blessed Wanderer to a violent storm, and death of many of his original crew due to an illness. As such he is devoted to his ship and will not give her up while he still draws breath!

STR 13, CON 15, SIZ 12, INT 14, POW 13, DEX 16, APP 16

HIT POINTS: 14

ARMOUR: SEA LEATHER AND HELM (1D6)

DAMAGE BONUS: 1D4

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|-----------------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 79% | 1D3+DB |
| Cutlass | 102% | 1D6+2+DB |
| Throwing Dagger | 108% | 1D4+½DB |

SKILLS: Tell a Tall Tale 62%, Climb 82%, Dodge 57%, Evaluate 52%, Jump 73%, Navigate 77%, Sailing 86%, Swim 48%, Throw 54%, Young Kingdoms 56%

CREW OF THE BLESSED WANDERER

A mix of old hands and new recruits, the crew of the Blessed Wanderer have been united under their swaggering captain. All presently on board are Lormyrian by birth and have been inducted into the Cult of the Red Sail (although few actually

know it is a Chaos cult, thinking instead that they are simply part of a smuggling ring). While some will fight to the death in defence of their ship, not all believe this pact is worth such a sacrifice.

BELOW IS A SELECTION OF STATISTICS THAT CAN BE USED AS REQUIRED FOR THE CREW

| STATISTICS | #1 | #2 | #3 | #4 | #5 |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| STR | 12 | 16 | 16 | 09 | 16 |
| CON | 12 | 10 | 13 | 17 | 13 |
| SIZ | 08 | 09 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| INT | 14 | 10 | 14 | 10 | 14 |
| POW | 09 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 |
| DEX | 17 | 16 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| APP | 12 | 09 | 15 | 10 | 12 |
| Hit Points | 10 | 10 | 13 | 15 | 13 |
| DB | N/A | 1D4 | 1D4 | N/A | 1D4 |

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|----------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 55% | 1D3+DB |
| Cutlass | 81% | 1D6+2+DB |
| Sea Pike | 64% | 1D8+1+DB |

| ARMOUR | TYPE |
|--------------|---------------------|
| #1, #2 & #4: | Sea Leather (1d6-1) |
| #3 & #5: | None |

SKILLS: Climb 55%, Jump 65%, Navigate 33%, Sailing 65%, Swim 50%, Young Kingdoms 35%.

THE NARWHAL

The rising fortune of Hennim Bloodeye are best demonstrated by the quality and seaworthiness of his Narwhal. Built only a few years ago at the dockyards of Menii, it is a fine example of Purple Towns ship building where even the fittings and chandlery are of the best quality. Having a large hold and plenty of secondary storage space, it has been built with efficiencies of trade in mind, resulting in rather cramped sailors' quarters and few cabins (excepting for the Captains of course!)

As befits her name, the Narwhal displays a distinctive figure head; a long wooden 'horn' crafted from fine Southern Continent oak. Painted white, it is most definitely for display only and would be easily smashed if used as some sort of ram.

HULL TYPE: Large Cog (Merchant)

HULL QUALITY: 16 SEAWORTHINESS: 27

STRUCTURE POINTS: 77

CREW: 27 including officers and sailors.

HENNIM BLOODEYE

STOIC CULT CAPTAIN OF THE NARWHAL

One of the most senior members of the Cult of the Red Sail, Hennim Bloodeye has been a devote of Pyaray since his old captain inducted him to the secrets and power of the hidden chaos gods almost half a century ago. Senn as very successful sea lord in his own right, Bloodeye has never quite been able to break into the ranks of the most respected merchant captains of the Purple Towns, a fact that has embittered him greatly.

Like all Purpletowners, Hennim received his surname after surviving been smashed in the face with a ship's spar during a particular vicious storm decades ago. While he recovered mostly unscathed, the blow permanently damaged his left eye, leaving it forever protruding and red. Little bothered by the look himself (he still sees well enough out of it) he uses his visage now to scare and intimidate his crew and enemies. Hennim, typical of most who live life on the sea is covered in tattoos, with many representing the ships of the Red Sail upon which has served over the years, the newest and most prominent of these is the sign of the Narwhal – a horn wrapped in what looks like octopus tentacles.

This year is the first he has been given sole charge of the vital ritual of the cult, and hence is absolutely dedicated to seeing the ceremony of preparation and presentation of the sacrifices through to the end – he has too many others of the cult being given over the Son of Pyaray in punishment for failure!

STR 16, CON 16, SIZ 16, INT 15, POW 14, DEX 10, APP 09

HIT POINTS: 16

ARMOUR: HALF PLATE (1D8) WHEN NOT AT SEA

DAMAGE BONUS: 1D6

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|---------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 73% | 1D3+DB |
| Sea Axe | 123% | 2D6+2+DB |

SKILLS: Give Orders 89%, Bargain 49%, Climb 68%, insight 39%, Million Spheres 5%, Navigate 82%, Sailing 89%, Scribe 16%, Swim 32%, Unknown Kingdoms 15%, Young Kingdoms 63%

THE CREW OF THE NARWHAL

All of captain Bloodeye's crew are veterans of the sea, and most are long term devotees of the Cult of the Red Sail. Hailing from a variety of ports and countries around the Young Kingdoms each wears a symbol of this devotion – a horn wrapped in tenacles, the emblem the cult uses to represent the Narwhal – either as a hidden tattoo or in the form of a medallion or bracelet. Dedicated to the cult and its masters they undertake without question the orders given to them by their captain and will happily lay down their lives for him or their shipmates. Well rewarded for this sacrifice, they cannot be easily bribed or convinced to change sides by any means.

USE THE STATISTICS LISTED ABOVE FOR THE CREW OF THE BLESSED WANDERER

GRAOLL'S TEETH

A gift from his father, one of the Sea Kings of the Purple Towns, the Graoll's Teeth is Resorgan Oncenamed's swift schooner. Built more for speed and agility it should have may have been able to avoid the reefs around the Isle of Pyaray. However the murder of the First Mate (and sailing Master) resulted in Resorgan smashing the Teeth into the reef.

HULL TYPE: Swift Schooner

HULL QUALITY: 13 SEAWORTHINESS: 0

STRUCTURE POINTS: 0

CREW: 6 crew remaining onboard with another 6 escorting Resorgan and the casket.

RESORGAN ONCENAMED REBELLIOUS CAPTAIN OF THE GRAOLL'S TEETH

The eldest son of a prominent Purple Towns Sea Lord, Resorgan thought he was bound for great things. However, while his father and siblings toiled for their position and wealth, Resorgan just seemed to expect them to fall on his lap. Eventually his family had enough of this laziness, and he was sent away to be a work on a distant cousin's merchant fleet. Angry and vengeful at this treatment, suddenly all the skills and talents that had laid dormant for so long came to the fore. Soon he was the captain of his own ship, and with it took the surname Oncenamed, as both a reminder of his past and as motivation for the future.

Inducted to Red Sail by his cousin, he saw the cult as a way to the power and influence he had long deserved. However, as always, the old Resorgan traits of expecting to always be the centre of attention, and 'knowing' what is 'right' soon resurfaced. And it is this that has led him to betray the cult in the mistaken belief that he can harness the power of Chaos Lord for himself!

Tall, and thin, he has a charming smile and the unique skill of being able to convince others to do the real work for him. In some ways people can see the leadership potential in him... if he'd only control his ego.

STR 16, CON 13, SIZ 17, INT 13, POW 17, DEX 10, APP 16

HIT POINTS: 15

ARMOUR: SEA LEATHER (1D6-1)

DAMAGE BONUS: 1D6

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|------------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 63% | 1D3+DB |
| Broadsword | 152% | 1D8+1+DB |

SKILLS: Hurl Insults 67%, Bargain 36%, Climb 29%, insight 26%, Dodge 42%, Jump 63%, Move Quietly 30%, Navigate 52%, Sailing 49%, Scribe 19%, Swim 62%, Throw 50%, Track 60%, Wrestle 60% Young Kingdoms 27%.

THE CREW OF GRAOLL'S TEETH

Mostly men of the Purple Towns, the crew of the Graoll's Teeth are a mix of experienced sailors and newly minted sea dogs. Few have been on board the Teeth for long, and all have quickly come to dislike their captain, with his arrogance and ego. While not all are confirmed members of the cult, most are and probably were more loyal to the murder First Mate than Captain Oncenamed.

USE THE STATISTICS LISTED ABOVE FOR THE CREW OF THE BLESSED WANDERER

THE BRIDES OF PYARAY

The 'Brides' are all young women who have some degree of influence or power within either their home regions or the wider Young Kingdoms.

EVEALISSA AVERYE THE ROSE OF SESHCAL

Although young, Evealissa has already grown to be a strong and determined woman. With fiery red hair, and bright green eyes, too many that meet her are too quick to be enchanted by her beauty and foolishly overlook her intellect and resolve. Many a politician or noble have already made the mistake of dismissing the 'silly girl' only to become the subject of her wrath.

An advocate of equality amongst the classes, she has garnered a reputation as a champion of the people in Ramasaz. Unfortunately, it is this unerring resolve that may well be the aspect that leads to her downfall, as her unwillingness to ever let go of a plan or scheme once formed... even when the gains are minimal... has the potential break as many alliances at it will create!

Once awoken by the characters, she will not be stopped in her quest to bring to justice those who had kidnapped her, and this determination will only grow if she becomes aware of the wider Red Sail plot.

STR 11, CON 12, SIZ 13, INT 16, POW 17, DEX 12, APP 17
HIT POINTS: 12

ARMOUR: ROBES OF OFFICE (NONE)

DAMAGE BONUS: NONE

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|--------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 62% | 1D3+DB |
| Rapier | 82% | 1D6+1+DB |

SKILLS: Form a Convincing Argument 99%. Craft (Needle work) 12%, Insight 76%, Listen 31%, Natural World 42%, Ride 48%, Scribe 28%, Young Kingdoms 45%.

SURVANN MORD PRIESTESS OF CHECKALAKH

Although barely older than a child, the 15-year-old Survann Mord is a strong, independent spirit dedicated to the worship of the Burning God, Checkalakh. Baring many scars of this worship upon her face and skin she wears these marks with pride, although hides them when dealing with the non-devout.

An orphan, Mord was taken into the convent before she can clearly recall any other memory, and since that time has been trained in the task of ensuring that the fires of her God stay alight all over Dharijor. In this service she and her sisters travel as a pilgrims, journeying from shrine to shine as a devotion to the Burning One. Living off the kindness of the devout and making daily offerings of unblemished skin, she is tough, mentally hardened and well-practiced in self-sufficiency. Like all sisters she is trained in the arts of self-

defence and will not take kindly if teased about her God or her piety.

STR 12, CON 15, SIZ 10, INT 14, POW 16, DEX 16, APP 09

HIT POINTS: 13

ARMOUR: ROBES OF OFFICE (NONE)

DAMAGE BONUS: NONE

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|--------|-------|--------|
| Brawl | 112% | 1D3+DB |

SKILLS: Form a Convincing Argument 99%. Craft (Needle work) 12%, Insight 76%, Listen 31%, Natural World 42%, Ride 48%, Scribe 28%, Young Kingdoms 45%.

NARA PENALVER INSOLENT DAUGHTER

Raised in the reasonably well-off family home in Vilmaro, Nara - much to her father's chagrin - has never amounted to much. Pretty enough to marry off to some son or another of one of the more important Vilmar nobility, Nara refused to be used as one of her father's trading pieces in his need for social climbing. Now in her late 20's, Inkare Penalver has tried many times to rid himself of his insolent daughter, but nothing had worked... until now.

More by luck than good planning, Inkare was approached by a courier claiming to represent an ailing noble from Jadmar, who was looking for a second wife, to look after him in his final days. Knowing that of course, Nara would not submit to such an offer, the two contrived a kidnapping, hoping that it would be too late for his daughter to act until she was settled in her new home. Of course, little did elder Penalver know that his oldest was destined to be an offering to a Chaos Lord, but nevertheless he happily accepted the good Bronzes offered to him in the deal.

Nara is a tall woman with long brunette hair, and full figure. Well educated and very bright when she wants to be, she often falls back on spoilt and brattish behaviour if she doesn't get her own way. That said, she is also more than capable of displaying the serious and resourceful side to her personality when required and can be relied on to act calmly and rationally in moments of danger.

The rescued Nara Penalver, if she survives, is extremely grateful and will promise great rewards if the characters take her home to Vilmar (although her father might not be so forthcoming given his part in her kidnapping)!

STR 09, CON 09, SIZ 12, INT 15, POW 14, DEX 11, APP 13

HIT POINTS: 11

ARMOUR: VILMARIAN FORMAL WEAR (NONE)

DAMAGE BONUS: NONE

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|-----------------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 36% | 1D3+DB |
| Sharpest Needle | 26% | 1D2+1+DB |

SKILLS: Avoid Responsibility 50%, Take Responsibility 50%, Art (Formal Dance) 33%, Craft (Needlework) 58%, Fast Talk 26%, Natural World 43%, Physik 36%.

FOES, FRIENDS & INFORMANTS

During the party's investigation into the Red Sail they will encounter many other allies and enemies/

HAROLD BRONZETHINKER CRAVEN MERCHANT

Tall, thin and slightly hunchbacked, Harold has that untrustworthy look that one often sees in those more interested more in profit than by the manner in which it is come by. Although he hails from a long line of Purple Town merchants and traders, Bronzethinker is the antithesis of his forebears - men and women who devoted themselves to hard work and meaningful toil - being more interested in making the quickest profit for the least amount of effort. That said, while this reputation proceeds him, he usually keeps to his word, and has rarely been known to betray or sell out the individuals he is working with.

STR 09, CON 10, SIZ 14, INT 15, POW 12, DEX 11, APP 12

HIT POINTS: 12

ARMOUR: STYLISH GARB (NONE)

DAMAGE BONUS: NONE

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|------------|-------|--------|
| Brawl | 55% | 1D3+DB |
| Long Knife | 89% | 1D4+DB |

SKILLS: Negotiate Secrets 72%, Disguise 33%, Insight 63%, Fast Talk 66%, Listen 49%

BRONZETHINKER'S BODYGUARDS

Not every able-bodied man or woman of the Isle of the Purple Towns finds the calling of the sea irresistible, with many offering their sword arms to those who provide the most coin. Thankfully for the characters, the type of guards Harold Bronzethinker employs rarely have any desire to lose their lives in the trader's defence.

STR 14, CON 14, SIZ 15, INT 11, POW 11, DEX 13, APP 09

HIT POINTS: 15

ARMOUR: LEATHER & RINGS (1D6-1)

DAMAGE BONUS: 1D4

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|-------------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 86% | 1D3+DB |
| Broadsword | 79% | 1D8+1+DB |
| Battle Axe | 79% | 1D8+2+DB |
| Short Spear | 79% | 1D6+1+DB |

SKILLS: Look Intimating 69%, Climb 50%, Dodge 39%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 35%, Search 32%, Wrestle 68%

ATERAC THREEFINGERS CORRUPT HARBOUR MASTER

A big, burly, tattooed individual with faint wisps of hair still found on his otherwise balding hair, Aterac Threefingers is

the true master of Uktel's harbour – or at least he likes to think so. It is true that he knows a lot about the comes and goes in the port and probably knows anyone doing business – legitimate or not – going on in the city, but his knowledge on goes so far. With an appetite for women, wine and boat racing he is easily bribed and owes as many favours as are owed to him.

STR 15, CON 11, SIZ 16, INT 12, POW 11, DEX 10, APP 09

HIT POINTS: 14

ARMOUR: CLOTHES OF OFFICE (NONE)

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|-----------|-------|----------|
| Brawl | 92% | 1D3+DB |
| Claw Hook | 109% | 1D4+1+DB |

SKILLS: Spin a Story 99%, Bargain 39%, Climb 28%, Conceal Object 67%, Dodge 50%, Evaluate 35%, Sailing 27%, Scribe 12%

it takes a round to drag the scream morsal into its inky mouth, and a second to consume the unlucky individual.

The other four attacks will be used as whips, strike out to keep the rest of the mortals on the beach from rescuing their friends.

THE SON OF PYARAY CHAOS IMBUE D CREATURE

The Son of Pyaray is an immense creature that cannot be easily killed with simple weapons or even magic. An avatar of the Secrets itself, it exists to feed on the souls of mortals, providing their power and potential to Lord Pyaray.

For those able to even behold this 'thing' with mortal eyes is a feat in itself. Grey, bulbous and slick, it resembles its head resembles the long squat shape of an octopus; as for the rest of its body, be thankful no one knows.

STR 30, CON 38, SIZ ??, INT ??, POW ??, DEX 08, APP 00

HIT POINTS: N/A

ARMOUR: THICK YET RUBBERY HIDE (1D20+2)

DAMAGE BONUS: N/A

WEAPON: Chew Maw Greedily 99% (65%, Instant Death)

SKILLS: Unfathomable 99%

THE SON'S TENTACLES

While the Son itself cannot be defeated, its long, swinging tentacles can be. These seemingly unlimited whiplike appendages seek out any living soul on the beach and will attempt to drag whatever they grab into the Son's waiting maw.

STR 15, CON 15, SIZ 15, INT ??, POW ??, DEX 15, APP ??

HIT POINTS: 15

ARMOUR: SLIME & BLUBBER (1D4+1)

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

| WEAPON | SKILL | DAMAGE |
|---------------|-------|------------|
| Grab Victim | 65% | See below* |
| Whip Tentacle | 80% | 1D6+1+DB* |

SKILLS: None

* The Son attacks up to five targets per turn (it has innumerable tentacles so new ones replace those defeated). Each round, one attack will attempt to grab a single victim (who can use a STR vs STR roll to break free. Once ensnared



THE BRIDES OF PYARAY is a simple STORMBRINGER 5th Edition scenario developed to provide a good session or two of swahbuckling adventures for a party of any size or experience.

Drawn by Mistress Fate into the mysterious abduction of The Rose of Seshcal, the people's champion from the city of Ramasaz, the player characters will quickly learn that deeds worse than kidnapping are afoot! Will our champions of the Balance final discover what is going on behind a veil of red sails? Or will they be dragged into the grasp of Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible... the all powerful Chaos Lord Pyaray?

THE BRIDES OF PYARAY was written by Marcus D. Bone (the host and webmaster of www.stormbringerrpg.com) and was originally written as a one-off convention style scenario. It is released here in a slightly expanded version, exploring further the Cult of the Red Sail and their path to power and influence.

"Slain upon the sea and his body taken by the waves. That was not a good portent, for it meant that Elric had gone to serve Pyaray, the Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets, the Chaos Lord who commanded the Chaos Fleet--dead ships, dead sailors, forever in his thrall--and it was not fitting that such a fate should befall one of the Royal Line of Melnibone."

From ELRIC OF MELNIBONE by MICHAEL MOORCOCK

Stormbringer!