



XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

Mere of Shattered Souls **Expedition Adventure #2** **An Adventure for 4th Level Characters** **(Scaled for 2nd to 5th Levels of Play)**

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Sources: *Arms and Equipment Guide*, *Secrets of Xen'drik*, *Stormwrack*, *Book of Vile Darkness*

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Adventure Background

The cosmology of Eberron is a mysterious panoply of planar lore and unique celestial bodies. The many planes intersect and diverge, bringing about fields of power and strange new magic all over the world. In this adventure, a triad of dimensional energies threatens the very life force of the Xen'drik jungle. If the PCs cannot defeat the soul-bound villains of this adventure, the soil of Xen'drik will become forever tainted, slowly spreading pestilence and death through the verdant land until everything is as barren and toxic as the Mere of Shattered Souls itself.

The story of the mere begins two years before the start of play. A ship named the Twilight Lady left port in Sharn bound for Stormreach. Its hold contained a number of treasures intended for Radiant Hold, the stronghold of the Covenant of Light. On its way to Xen'drik, the fabled and deadly storms that tear through the pass between the jungle continent and Khorvaire blew the caravel off course and sent it around Xen'drik's western coast.

Before the ship could recover its bearings, a massive wave lifted the craft and sent it hurling inland to crash in a wetland valley. Everyone aboard was killed on impact and the remains of the ship half-sank into the murky earth. Because the ship was so drastically off course before coming to ground, it could not be located and was written off as lost at sea with all hands.

As tragic as this was, it would have quietly joined the long list of vessels sunk by the temperamental waters of the Straits of Shargon had it not been for the Twilight Lady's unusual cargo. While many of the goods in the ship's hold were valuable or rare, the Covenant of Light was only concerned with a single iron-banded chest. Sealed with the paired symbols of the Sovereign Host and the Church of the Silver Flame, the chest contained two unholy relics dedicated to the powers of the Dark Six.

The Covenant of Light would have been worried that such items were lost regardless of the circumstances, but the faction's true concern came when *auguries* revealed the containment chest had been broken by the accident. The relics could not be allowed to remain unbound; their corruptive powers could not be given free reign to taint the world with their evil. No matter the cost, the Price of Avarice and the bow known as Tempest had to be recovered from the Twilight Lady's wreckage.

Unfortunately, no amount of coin or effort could turn up the slightest trace of the ship. For two years, the best agents the Covenant could find or hire combed the shoreline and shallows all over the northern end of Xen'drik. They were very careful and thorough, but none found anything more than a broken plank of wood bearing part of the Covenant's crest. Weeks became months, and eventually the faction had no choice but let the matter go. As terrible as the relics of the Keeper and the Fury were, more immediate threats required the Covenant of Light's attention. Reluctantly, the matter was considered closed but not solved.

Fate, however, has a way of never letting the past go, especially when disaster and death are involved. Recently, psychic shards of crystal bearing many ancient pieces of lore came into the possession of the four factions. Deciphering the information in the crystals has not been without its own misfortunes; a good and wise priest of the Silver Flame was possessed by a dark spirit within the shard and sacrificed his own life to keep it from flooding Stormreach with a horde of horrors from the Dreaming Dark.

Caution and diligent research have brought forth a passage of the Caldryn Fragments, one that seems to indicate a turning point in history that will take place on the continent of Xen'drik. More importantly for the Covenant, information regarding the Prophecy also links the passage to the Twilight Lady. With most of their resources dedicated to other agendas throughout Xen'drik, the factions must turn to trusted but relatively inexperienced members instead.

There is no time to do otherwise; the opportunity presented by the psychic shard has to be taken advantage of immediately or it will be lost. To serve the greater good, to further the cause of knowledge, to secure the power of the Dragonmarked Houses, or to darken the shadows that already cover Stormreach, the Twilight Lady must be found!

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins innocuously enough with the PCs as guests at the Restless Spirits, a tavern known for its fine food and finer libations. Invited on behalf of their faction's leaders, this meeting has been given a high priority and attendance is mandatory. The meal goes uneventfully, with the only odd occurrence being that no one has arrived yet to dine with the PCs. Fully half the meal goes by before anything out of the ordinary happens.

The dinner is interrupted by someone being flung through the wall of the PCs' private dining room. This precedes what could easily be a fight if the PCs are so inclined; the culprit behind the meal's untimely intermission is a flesh golem in hot pursuit of the regretful gambler it just used as a battering ram. Quick thinking and diplomacy can avoid bloodshed or, if the PCs wish, the golem can be fought as a tough but not completely unbeatable opponent. One way or the other, the golem will not kill any PCs; it is here to provide

an immediate action hook to the adventure and serve as an introduction to the person responsible for the PCs' invitation here – a necromancer named Grave.

Grave appears either to stop the PCs before the golem can annihilate the PCs or lament his hard work being ruined by their combat prowess. In either case, he greets them and apologizes for being late. He was held up in a rather cutthroat game of Three Dragon Ante and is only free now because an ill-advised comment on his part (“What a stupid play! You are killing me here!”) caused his latest project, the golem, to assault his gambling partner.

Grave has the mess cleaned up, provides healing for any PC needing such, and joins them for the last part of the meal. Once introductions and pleasantries are done, Grave gets down to business. He has a number of things to discuss and, all diversions aside, he needs to inform the PCs of the particulars of their upcoming mission.

He has been given the authority of the PCs' faction(s) to assign the PCs the task of locating the Twilight Lady and dealing with the vessel's ramifications in the newly revealed Caldyn Fragment. He doesn't have a lot of answers for the PCs, but he can provide their factions' theories on what the prophecy pieces might mean. The PCs are given the likely resting place of the Twilight Lady, as well as specific orders based on faction affiliations and objectives.

After explaining the situation and giving PCs their orders, Grave makes a somewhat less than graceful exit as his flesh golem (“Tatters”) smashes through the far wall of the room into the street beyond. With a sheepish grin and a regal bow, the strangely cordial necromancer leaves the PCs to begin their journey to the Mere of Shattered Souls.

The next scene moves the PCs from the tavern to a small trawler on the western coast of Xen'drik. Several days have passed and they have reached a cliff-sheltered cove near the possible location of the Twilight Lady. The PCs have to set out on foot across the rocky beach and into the warm, wet interior of the caves to track down their lead on the vessel. While trudging through the morass of mud and undergrowth, they come face to face with a nest of serpents surrounding a pestilent, bloated dire boar. Drawn to the corpse by the heat of its unnaturally swift decay, the snakes provide a quick battle and their “home” offers foreshadowing to the threat posed by the exposed relics of the Dark Six.

PCs with wilderness skills can learn that something is adversely affecting the plants and animals of the region. A brief battle with a hungry krenshar can be avoided if the PCs realize it is starving and needs food for its cubs. Dead snakes would provide a fine meal, as does anything edible in their packs; the beast is not particular right now. The toxins in the land have killed most of the smaller creatures, leaving the krenshar and other predators with very little hunting. Nature-savvy PCs can tell that the ecological damage will be crippling if it continues.

The last encounter along the way follows a sporadic trail of ship's pieces that show the PCs they are moving in the right direction. The PCs find the several oars, a ragged section of sailcloth caught in the trees, and the Twilight Lady herself – the vessel's figurehead – half buried in the mud. This last object proves to be a dangerous find, when the ravid dwelling at the wooden statue's base *animates* it to fight off the intruding PCs. Once sundered, the figurehead falls to pieces and the ravid flees.

The wilderness trek ends a short distance from the discovery of the figurehead in a mire – the final resting place of the Covenant's caravel. Listing forward and partially sunk, the ship is now a moss-covered island of half-broken wood in the midst of the fetid lake. Even at a distance, the mere has a stench to it; the rot and putrescence are the result of the dark artifacts submerged in the vessel's hold.

The PCs have to find a way to cross the small swamp to the ship, but such a task is not impossible. The worst option is to wade or swim; the water is befouled and toxic. While it would not necessarily kill the PCs to come into contact with the swamp, becoming *nauseated* is certainly a danger. Safer options include using surrounding plant life or cast-off wood to make a bridge, magic that allows crossing the water without contact, or anything else the PCs might intuit. The ship's old lifeboat also hides at the edge of the overgrown lagoon for observant PCs.

PCs might be concerned with dangerous creatures in the mere, and while precautions are prudent, they are also unnecessary. Nothing can live in the depths of the swamp for very long; even the dense plants at the water's edge are nearly dead and rotting. PCs wishing to examine the mere before crossing it will be able to tell that somehow this site is at the heart of the poisons seeping into the land. If anything, this should only reinforce the urgency of their mission.

Once aboard the Twilight Lady, the PCs have a short time to explore its shattered upper deck before the denizens of the vessel start to appear. Ghostly apparitions drift out of the few remaining structures on the ship's deck, advancing on the PCs with dark, empty eyes and soft, echoing moans. While it would be perfectly logical for the PCs to attack the ghosts of the ship's crew, they are not in any real danger yet. The ghosts are just curious at the new arrivals and do not mean any harm. If attacked, they instantly retreat and must be convinced to return.

Once conversation is established (if at all), the ghosts can be persuaded to take the PCs to the ship's captain. They are literally only shadows of their former selves and cannot help much. Virtually every inquiry is met with the response of suggesting they speak to the captain. They seem insistent on the idea,

something that may make the PCs suspicious. In truth, the captain is one of the only things these dim spirits can remember clearly.

Captain Tayvor is a disturbing sight; only the right side of his spectral body is clearly visible. His left side is indistinct and literally fades away into nothingness near the arm and leg. He seems like half a man, and for good reason. He was in the hold trying to secure the ship's invaluable cargo when a set of pulleys gave way, and he fell violently to the deck beside the chest containing the vile relics. When the ship landed and the hull buckled, the sheering support beam tore him in half, killing him instantly.

The influence of the relics has forced the good captain to suffer a terrible fate; his soul was also rent apart. Half fled the presence of the chest and found itself trapped within the confines of the ship, along with the rest of the crew. The other half was in contact with the chest and became bound to the terrible power of the relics it contained. That half has become a dark, malignant reflection of Tayvor, a brutal wraith in command of the broken bodies of the Twilight Lady's unfortunate crew. Taylor knows this and explains as much to the PCs if they treat him with any kindness at all. After so long alone, all the shattered captain wishes is a little company and to find his final rest.

The peace comes once the PCs agree, or decide on their own, to venture into the hold and retrieve the relics. Reaching the chest is difficult; there is a considerable number of undead in the way, as evil reigns below the upper deck of the Twilight Lady. Powerful ghastr minions forged from the brutalized bodies of the crew try to prevent any attempt to gather the icons of the Keeper and the Fury. Mostly mindless, they are still savagely effective at combating the PCs with cragged teeth and broken, claw-like fingers.

The PCs must navigate the belly of the vessel. Even after they make it to the hold, they have to contend with the corrupted captain. "Tayvor the Black", as he calls himself, desperately defends the chest with his unlfe; if the relics are sealed in their chest again, he ceases to exist and all remaining zombies collapse into harmless piles of rot.

Once resealed using a new lockplate proved by Grave during the PCs' initial meeting, the chest safely contains the dire power of the relics again. This also frees the crew from their curse and allows them to pass gratefully into the next life. The captain is also restored; his halves rejoining and becoming clearer and as his spirit is reborn. His memories intact now, he rewards his saviors with the only thing he has – a brief vocal glimpse of the afterlife he has been denied for so long.

Tayvor's soul was torn apart because the power of the relics had been previously used as part of an unfinished ritual to summon a demonic being called the Riven Prince, a malevolent creature rumored to be the severed bodies and minds of two different demons grafted together as a powerful, terrible whole. Why the Covenant of Light would want such fell objects or risk their capture on a single, unguarded vessel is beyond him. He bids the PCs farewell and expresses his gratitude before disappearing with a content sigh.

What the PCs do from here is entirely up to them. Their ship awaits them back on the coast for return to Stormreach and their waiting factions. Some PCs may be eager to get these relics back into the hands of the Covenant while others may completely mistrust the supposed "Light" and its motives. Some may wish to turn the chest over to their own side or at least inform their superiors of what they discovered. In any case, the Prophecy has been fulfilled at least in part. Because the relics have been recovered, "pure water" is once again returning to the Mere of Shattered Souls, and the PCs have been instrumental in saving Xen'drik from a slow, lingering demise.

Troubleshooting

The only difficult part of the module from a judging perspective is atmosphere. The setting is a dark one, especially once the PCs board the haunted ship. Make certain there is a feeling of claustrophobia, and stress how difficult it is for the PCs to see past the edges of their light, hear anything in the muffled confines of the wet vessel, or smell anything besides the pungent rot clinging to every surface. Using terms that describe sensory deprivation and limitations helps convey the sense that they are in an alien, unfriendly environment where undiscovered dangers could emerge at any moment.

As the DM, you may also want to stress the roleplaying elements of this scenario. The introduction is a fine opportunity to allow the PCs to interact with each other and with a single NPC (Grave). His oddly gregarious personality can draw out others, even typically reserved PCs with a tendency to stay in the background and not participate out of combat. Make sure Grave addresses everyone in the party at least once; this gives everyone the chance to be a part of the conversation.

As will be noted in the relevant section of the text, do not be afraid to inject a little horror or action if the PCs seem to be getting complacent or bored. To keep them on the edge of their seats, make sure they never have the chance to remain idle for long once they reach the jungle and the Mere of Shattered Souls. In compliance with the "Kick in a Door" idea put forth in the published Eberron adventures, there are text boxes called Kickers in the module. There are small encounters or simply momentary occurrences that force the PCs to suddenly react. Feel free to use any or all of the Kickers when running this scenario.

Surveillance

The PCs are not under any form of surveillance or observation through any part of this adventure, unless otherwise noted by the text. The only example of this is that Tayvor the Black, the corrupt wraith in the hold of the Twilight Lady, has the power to see everything that occurs below the ship's upper deck. Thus, once the PCs come down into his vessel, they are under constant surveillance by Tayvor, and his minions act accordingly.

Adventure Start

The adventure opens with the PCs gathered for dinner at a small inn called the Restless Spirits. This introduction can begin with everyone already together and about to be served the meal pre-ordered for them (suggested), or the following text can be read to get them to the same place quickly. Some find it jarring to have an adventure begin without lead-ins or explanations, while others prefer the feeling of jumping straight into the action. Judge your group and start accordingly.

The Stormreach youth found you in one of your usual haunts and pressed this message into your hand with little explanation. Even more strangely, he did not wait for a tip or even acknowledgement. One moment he was there, the next he was just a small shadow on an alley wall, disappearing to wherever the misbegotten street children of the City of Storms call home.

In cordial script with an elegant air to the penmanship, the message read, "Your friends dearly wish your presence at the Restless Spirits for dinner and conversation. Casual dress, but come prepared for a long voyage. Fortune and opportunity await." Unsigned, the message crumbled to dust after being read.

If using this pre-introduction method, be prepared to have PCs suggest all manner of precautions or concerns. Be sure to allow them their worries, and even grant a brief discussion of each, but make certain they eventually understand that this seems to be a rendezvous arranged in secret by their individual factions through a third, unnamed party. While this may be odd for their faction, it is not unheard of and all avenues of research point to this gathering being legitimate and urgent.

The opening scene in the Restless Spirits is given in boxed text below, but do not feel obligated to use it verbatim. It is there to set the scene, and as long as the PCs are interacting and roleplaying, the introduction has done its job. Try to ease the PCs into a sense of calm and security; caution is understandable, but try to impress upon the PCs the atmosphere of a private meal with other professionals in a relaxed environment.

The lighting in the private dinner booth is provided by a set of somewhat dim candles a few feet above your heads. Your chairs are quite comfortable and match the turned-oak table perfectly. Accommodations at the Restless Spirits might be dark, but they cannot be said to lack in luxury. Even the method of your gathering with the other Stormreach folk at your table was done elegantly, in the form of a note politely asking you to come to this tavern and be prepared for "dinner, conversation and the possibility of a long voyage".

Your waitress, a pleasant-looking woman with shoulder-length auburn hair and a brush of rouge to her lips, smiles and asks you all what you wish to drink. "Your meals have already been arranged by another party, good folk, but drinks have been left to you. The tab is covered completely so order whatever you wish. Your host also apologizes for not being with you yet; he's been held up by pressing matters and hopes you'll accept these drinks as his apology." The woman touches a small piece of grey chalk to the slate resting against her other arm and patient awaits your answers.

The waitress, Aiva, is a calm, unassuming human woman and is willing to put up with nearly any behavior to keep her job and help support her four-year-old son. Only outright abuse sends her to the tavern's manager; anything short of that is tolerated if not enjoyed. She is genuinely friendly, though a rough life here in Stormreach has left her a little standoffish. As a waitress, she serves very well and is considered a very lovely asset of the establishment.

If the manager needs to get involved, the PCs have a problem. By himself, Vorgas is not that dire a threat. He is only a 2nd level wizard (necromancer) and has no desire to get physical with his erring customers. However, as a supplier of dark and "questionable" components to the priests and mages of Stormreach, he has a lot of associates that frequent his bar and have no qualms about turning a group of crass ruffians into next week's lunch special. If any kind of fight breaks out, feel free to be creative in what you send against the PCs. Make it very clear that the patrons of the Restless Spirits have both the numbers and power to slay them a dozen times over if they do not sit down and behave.

This sort of ugliness is not likely to occur, but if it does, the module ends afterward. This meeting was set up to gather a trustworthy and effective group for an important mission. If the PCs start an unprovoked

brawl, they obviously aren't what their factions need. Thank the players for their time, record the event, sign Adventure Journals, and conclude the scenario.

Assuming such unpleasantness does not happen, Aiva is happy to take drink orders and return after a short time with them. She visits the table again a few minutes later with the PCs' meals as described below. Change the menu if you like; this one is a suggestion.

Your waitress slides open the private screen door and steps inside with a large serving tray. From it, she lays down several plates and utensils in a stack for you to share. The center of the table is graced with a metal platter heaped high with sliced, roasted boar. Dozens of small potatoes and wedges of onion, all glistening in browned butter, surround the stack of seared meat.

Three bowls of grilled autumn vegetables join the platter, as does a tall pitcher of water and another of wine. "Enjoy your meal, folk. If you need anything, just rap on the screen."

Be sure to pace the meal so that PCs can talk to each other and roleplay. This is the "getting to know you" stage of the game and is vitally important for character interaction later on. If the players seem content to ramble and act in character, don't push on to "A Rude Dessert" until things feel ready for it. Roleplaying comes first in the introduction; the action can wait. There is plenty of opportunity to annihilate things later.

A Rude Dessert

Once the PCs have finished the bulk of their roleplaying and the players seem eager for something else to happen, fate provides a diversion:

Two sounds happen almost simultaneously. The first is the shout of a human male voice, obviously in pain, followed immediately by the tortured groan of the door to your private booth as it shatters inward. A flailing figure hurtles into the room and lands with a deafening crash on your dining table, sending food and libations in all directions. The hapless newcomer is bleeding from the corner of his mouth, nearly unconscious.

Standing in the broken remains of the doorway is a massive humanoid that looks to have been sewn together from the body parts of a dozen or more different donors. Its brutal masculine expression is one of pure rage as it roars soundlessly, clenches its fists, and stomps forward into your booth!

The new arrivals are Vennit, a down-on-his-luck gambler from the tavern's casino upstairs, and Tatters, a newly made and not altogether perfected flesh golem owned by the PCs' host. Tatters is acting on a misunderstood "command" from its creator and has every intention of pummeling Vennit into a liquid consistency if not stopped.

If the PCs wish, Tatters can be reasoned with using Diplomacy or just solid roleplaying. Tatters understands the Common language, and while it is unable to speak or make any sound, it can respond through gestures and expressions. It takes a Sense Motive (DC 15) to understand anything Tatters tries to impart beyond simple "yes or no" conversation. Of course, conversing with Tatters involves getting him to hold off his attacks on Vennit first.

This entails either physically preventing the flesh golem from attacking the gambler or trying to reason with it. A Diplomacy check (DC 20) makes it delay its assault long enough for conversation to commence. A second Diplomacy check (also a DC 20) calms it long enough for its concerned owner to arrive. PCs with a solid roleplaying idea for talking to or calming Tatters should be allowed to succeed, even if they don't have the requisite Diplomacy skills. The key to this scene is to see if the PCs try a non-violent solution or intervene on the poor gambler's behalf.

Combat is a dangerous alternative. The first round of combat is a surprise round in the PCs' favor; Tatters does not consider them enemies until they prove otherwise. After the first round, Tatters turns on the nearest hostile PC with full force. This combat should not be lethal for the PCs, even if they are completely outmatched by the flesh golem; if it looks like a PC will actually die from this battle, make sure Grave arrives sooner than scheduled.

Creatures: As described above, Tatters is not necessarily a combatant in this scene; that entirely depends on the reactions of the PCs. If it does attack the PCs, it does not hold back and can be a very deadly opponent. Vennit is completely unresponsive and useless during this battle. If he is healed, he stammers a "Thanks!" and runs off as fast as his aching legs carry him.

Tatters, Flesh Golem; hp 70; *Monster Manual* 135

The combat lasts five rounds before the golem's maker rushes into the room and commands him to "Halt!" This occurs at the end of the fifth full round of fighting (five rounds plus the initial surprise). If Tatters has been talked down or defeated, the following still occurs, but Grave reacts to the situation in the dining booth accordingly.

Another figure appears in the doorway. Dressed in grey and black leathers, with a long coat accented in silver, like the skull-shaped buttons running up both sides of his tall boots, the white-haired human looks frantic as he shouts into the chamber, "Tatters! Down boy! Heel! Ummm... Halt!" He glances around the room in a sheepish panic, offering you the briefest of nervous smiles as he surveys the damage.

This gentleman is Grave, City Necromancer in service to Stormreach and an independent operative hireable by any of the four factions. For tonight, he is in league with all the factions represented by the PCs and has called them together to make them a proposition. The intrusion of Tatters, his latest project, was not at all part of the agenda, and for that he's sorry. The attack on Vennit is a matter of somewhat less regret; the incompetent gambler has lost him a considerable amount of money tonight and the thrashing is, in Grave's opinion, the least he deserves.

Still, the golem responded to Grave's off-hand comment to Vennit at the card table: "What a stupid play! Mate, you are killing me here!" The golem interpreted that as a threat to Grave's life and attacked Vennit immediately. While Grave rather enjoys seeing Vennit pay for his incompetence, he doesn't wish the dolt dead for it, knowing that an erratic flesh golem could sully his reputation in the city. As such, he wants to get the beast back under control and commence with the PCs' meeting as soon as possible.

The golem immediately stops all attacks as soon as Grave appears and shouts "Halt!" Dutifully, it returns to Grave's side (assuming it is capable of doing so). Grave is disappointed if the PCs destroyed or badly damaged Tatters, but this incident is technically his fault so he is willing to stay quiet on the matter.

As soon as he can, Grave addresses the PCs and invites himself to what's left of their table.

"Fabulous to meet you all," the new arrival says with a slight smile. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Grave, necromancer and agent to many of the rich and powerful in the city. I called you all here tonight to discuss a business matter I think you will find interesting. May I sit? Thank you."

Play Grave as a slightly arrogant but oddly cordial man with refined manners and a sense of the bizarre. He is obviously high born but has no qualms about sitting at a broken table and picking up bits of dinner off the floor to eat. He freely admits his tardiness is due to a card game running too long upstairs. *"One I was losing, thanks to this dunderhead,"* he says, pointing out where Vennit made a crater out of the dining room table.

He is eager to get the night's meeting finished so he can return home with Tatters and get to work on repairing and refining the golem. As such, he is friendly but constantly trying to get to the matter at hand. If the PCs insist on questions, he answers them but should obviously wish to avoid idle chatter. If he has to, he mentions that he is here on the authority of the leaders of the PCs' faction(s), but only as a last resort to get the PCs' attention.

"Some time ago, you recovered a shard of psychically resonant crystal for your superiors, or at least someone did. Since turning that over to them, it has been examined by some of the finest minds in Stormreach. A fascinating item to be sure, and far more complex than you might think. Fascinating, but not exactly unique. Apparently there were many such items in Xen'drik in ages past. It is only today that psychic crystals are considered a rarity.

"In any case, the crystal has yielded one of its secrets recently, and your leaders have happened upon a golden opportunity, thanks to the fragments of the Prophecy contained within. Allow me to recite it for you verbatim before continuing. All right? Thank you.

"In a place where mists kiss shadows, the lady of twilight laments. Her tears are pearls of envy; her sigh is a breath of hate. Mend the soul shattered, bring pure water to the mere, and herald the divided regent when the moons are bright, blue, and light.

Grave clears his throat before going on, giving you all a chance to write those words down or commit them to memory. Then, with another mysterious smile, he begins again.

"Now then, the crux of the matter is that the 'mere' in question has been located and the 'lady of twilight' identified. It seems the Covenant of Light lost a supply caravel a couple of years back to one of the storms this coast is so famous for: The Twilight Lady. They spent thousands trying to find it, to no avail. Apparently the ship was transporting some valuable items from Sharn, and the Covenant was desperate to retrieve them.

"Be that as it may, the ship vanished and no trace could be found, save for a piece of wood with part of the Lady's title painted in faded gilt on one side. The Covenant came to me, hoping my skills could summon up the ghosts of the ship's lost crew and find their wayward vessel. Alas, even I wasn't up to the challenge. The Twilight Lady kept her secrets and her crew. Tragic, really.

Grave pauses to blow his nose loudly on a table napkin. *"Where was I? Oh yes, tragedy. Well, armed with this newly uncovered fragment of the Prophecy and a score of images in the crystal, the location of the*

Twilight Lady may have been uncovered. Your associates, my employers, have a task for you regarding the ill-fated Lady if you'll hear me out. What say you?"

The PCs may be from different factions; if this is true, they may want to speak to Grave privately so as not to have their orders revealed to the others. If they ask for this, Grave initially refuses and stresses that confidentiality is one of his hallmarks. With that, he holds up finely scribed letters on expensive parchment, each bearing one of the PCs names. If the PCs are insistent, he consents, but it's obvious he would prefer to speak with them all at once.

Once the PCs agree to the task (since if they do not, the adventure ends here), provide the PCs with Handout One. The piece of the Handout they receive must match their Faction, though if the PCs wish, they can certainly attempt legerdemain or other means to obtain and read the handouts given to others. The parchments are enchanted to fade to dust when they leave this room; until then they can be stolen, shared, read, or anything else the PCs wish to do with them.

When the PCs are ready to continue the meeting, Grave sets a pack on the table and smiles widely.

"Never let it be said I never gave you anything. This bag contains materials your superiors believe necessary to complete your mission. Whatever is not used will be yours to keep, divided among yourselves as you desire. The satchel contains, if I recall correctly, two magical scrolls, a potent healing draught, a week of food for each of you, and four flasks of holy water created and certified by the Church of the Silver Flame. Don't hold that against the flasks though; it's not their fault.

"Oh, and you'll find a shiny piece of flat metal in there as well. I've been instructed to tell you that should you find any magical chests, don't open them. If you should be dumb enough to do so, or if you find one that's already open, scoop its bits back inside and use that enchanted lock plate to reseal the bugger.

"Please don't ask me about the plate or any magic chests. The only chest I'm interested in cracking is Tatter's here. I really think I sneezed while I was sewing him up. With a heart of mucus and half-chewed cheese sandwich, no wonder he's homicidal."

This last comment is said with a grin; Grave has a dark sense of humor that should shine through during conversation. He's also a touch morbid and thinks nothing of saying things that might make others uncomfortable. If any of the PCs take real umbrage, he apologizes and tones down his behavior slightly. He also marks that PC for later picking on, but all in good fun. He is most certainly not harmless, but he genuinely likes people and is not an evil man.

The pack contains two scrolls of *purify food and drink*, a potion of *cure serious wounds*, one week of traveling rations (no water) for each PC, and four flasks of holy water. Despite Grave's joke, the Church's certification of these flasks is not without merit; each one is effectively *maximized*, inflicting a full eight (8) hit points of damage on undead creatures and evil outsiders. This creation process has a short-lived effect, however. After the end of this scenario, the holy water flasks revert to normal items of their type.

"If you are ready and willing, a ship is in port, ready to take you on your way. Setting sail at night might seem a bit odd, but the Prophecy mentions a celestial arrangement regarding two moons that lasts two weeks at best. If you are to reach the mere in time, you'll need to leave immediately."

Grave isn't mistaken; the conjunction is a rare one involving Irian and Syrania both visible during the day. This arrangement makes the "light" and "blue" moons "bright", satisfying the conditions of the Prophecy. When Irian leaves its position in another 11 days, the conjunction ends, and the chance to free the souls trapped in the mere is lost forever.

Before the PCs can leave, Grave does have a small offer of his own to make.

"Oh, one last thing, though this one's personal."

Grave turns to the nearest female PC or, barring a woman at the table, the man with the highest Charisma score (even if it's a warforged) and says:

"(PC's name), I've always loved you." The strange man then grins and chuckles. "Sorry, fishes... I couldn't help myself. I've always wanted to say that."

Gathering his perhaps addled wits again, Grave smiles and gets more serious. "Actually, I'd like to ask that if you come across any strange substances or plant life while you are on the other side of Xen'drik, I'd appreciate some samples. I'll pay you handsomely for your time, even if you bring me back only one chemical or biological oddity. Good? Great!"

The scene is set for the PCs to depart on their mission. There is no time to shop, and they were told to come prepared to travel. If it is vital that they return to their lodgings or guilds for whatever reason, Grave

begrudgingly allows it, but he and the PCs are both on a short timetable. Their ship is ready to depart. Next stop, the Mere of Shattered Souls!

Part One: The Misty Cliffs

The adventure moves directly from Stormreach to the landing site of the PCs' vessel, the *Endeavor*, a shore-hugger of a boat with cramped accommodations and a swift soarwood hull. The travel is not very comfortable, but it only took four days to get from Stormreach to the western side of Xen'drik's northern coast and the cove where the real excitement begins.

When ready, read or paraphrase the following:

"If the weather stays fair, I can give you all the time you like, my friends, up to the two weeks I've been chartered for," shouts Captain Failan of the Endeavor. "You've been good passengers, and it's been a pleasure sailing with the lot!"

"If a storm comes up, I might have to leave sooner so do not dawdle! I'll give you a week no matter what; you've my solemn oath on that!"

And with that, the ship leaves the beach of this mist-shrouded cove and slips away to drop anchor near the northern cliff face, a sheltering rock wall should the winds turn fierce. You are four days out from Stormreach, and in that time, you've made it west all the way across the coast of Xen'drik to this hidden reef somewhere on the jungle continent's northwestern side.

According to the ship's captain, you are supposed to head inland "east as straight as a Valenar's arrow". Beyond that, you are in a hostile land with no help, no directions, and only your orders to guide your way.

The PCs are standing in the sheltered cove between a pair of dangerous looking cliff walls on the continent's northwest coast. The mainland is to the east, past a swath of mist caused by the warm shore waters touching the cool sands of the cove itself. The northernmost cliff blocks the setting sun in the west, forming a line of shadows that almost looks like a path of darkness heading into the mists. Describe this image to the PCs; it matches a line in the Prophecy they heard during the introduction.

Now the PCs have a chance to prepare, discuss the adventure at hand, and work out group dynamics in their own time. While the mission is urgent, they have made good time and can enjoy the benefits of having some time to prepare. They have their own supplies, the pack Grave gave them, and their survival skills (if any) to draw on for the journey.

They also have the words of the Prophecy to guide them. If no PC thought to write down the fragment, let them make a DC 10 Intelligence check. Only one such check can be made by any given PC. Success indicates the PC remembers the fragment fairly clearly; re-read it to the PC in question. If none of the PCs can recall the Prophecy or make this attribute check, well... fortune favors fools.

Perhaps that will be enough for them.

The First Night's Camp

Because the sun is setting, the PCs may make camp for the night before setting out into the jungle. If they do not, modify the text below to match wherever they make camp; the journey to the wreckage of the *Twilight Lady* is likely too far for them to travel without resting at least once. This scene is important, as it creates an atmosphere of isolation and danger, two vital themes to impart to the players before they reach the haunted vessel.

The sheltering cliffs provide a safe haven of stone and shadows for your first night's camp. While the mists are teeming all around, blocking vision past about twenty feet over the waves and only half that up the sandy beach to your east, the breeze is calm and the fading light offers just enough illumination to set up your tents and bed down for the evening.

PCs hoping to use Survival to stretch out their supplies will be disappointed by the meager fare this land provides. The DC to hunt here (normally 10) is 20 because of the taint in the land and the scarcity of wildlife and edible plants. Any PC trying this, whether they succeed or fail, can tell that there is something wrong with the area; there should be better hunting. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15) verifies this and can identify the problem as some kind of blight or poison in the ground with a second check (DC 25). Nothing can be ascertained beyond that, however, as the source is unlike anything the PCs have ever seen.

If the PCs do succeed at hunting and foraging for meals during this adventure, their repast is bitter and nearly poisonous. They cannot truly hurt themselves eating the few animals and plants left edible by the blight emanating from the Mere of Shattered Souls, but they have "digestive issues". Feel free to be creative in describing the complications and messy ramifications of eating tainted food.

Note that the PCs are carrying two scrolls of *purify food and drink*. If they think to use these, they can avoid at least some of these issues. The scrolls are useful later in the adventure but not vital; it is no great loss if they use them here.

Variations on this scene can be used any time the PCs camp on their way to the *Twilight Lady*. Once they enter the jungle, the action moves to Part Two: Shadows of Blight

The Endeavor

The PCs may wish to try and use the *Endeavor* for supplies or other ends. While her captain is on friendly terms with the PCs' faction(s), he is neither a fool nor under their command. He is willing to let the PCs scavenge extra supplies to the extent that each PC gains an additional day of rations and water, but beyond that he refuses to outfit them. He has his own men to look after, and the waters around Xen'drik are an unforgiving place. Any weakness or loss could spell doom for his vessel.

Thus, he gives what he can but makes it clear that he cannot give them more than a day of supplies each and, if they can succeed at a Diplomacy check (DC 15), up to six blankets and enough spare wood and tinder for three campfires. He has nothing else to provide, save his well wishes and a prayer to the Sovereign Host for their safe return.

Other Preparations

PCs are by definition creative and unpredictable sorts. They may come up with any number of useful (or not so useful) plans for making their way to the *Twilight Lady*. Aerial scouting, arranging for mounts, and other such ideas should be judged by individual merit and allowed if they seem feasible. Take every idea seriously and let the PCs succeed if they have the resources or creativity to do so. The challenges of the *Twilight Lady* are hard enough on their own; the PCs should have every advantage they can muster before they reach her.

That said, don't let the players take too long with this part of the scenario. The rest of the adventure requires considerable time to run, and the pacing may feel rushed or abbreviated if there isn't a sufficient period of play allotted to it. Let the PCs be as creative as they wish, but guide them into the next part whenever you can.

Part Two: Shadows of Blight

Once the PCs enter the jungle at the edge of the sheltered cove, the comforts of camp and beach are left behind. Travel becomes difficult, every step through hindering terrain, and there are **no** paths to speak of. This is untamed wilderness, jungle travel at its purest and most painful. The trees are dense and thickly overgrown, the plants on the jungle floor are often barbed and always tough to cut through, and the threat of attack by predators and vermin remains a constant danger.

A constant danger, however, rarely occurs. Except for the two sections below and the "kickers" listed at the end of this part, only the possibility of assault exists. While the jungle should have a stalking killer around every corner, this part of Xen'drik has been suffering for some time under the contagion released by the Dark Six relics in the *Twilight Lady's* shattered hold. As such, few creatures remain here.

A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15) reveals this after an hour of travel. There is simply not enough wildlife of any kind, insect or otherwise. Another check (DC 20) reveals the source of this absence as some kind of disease in the soil, lingering in the plant life itself. This check is five points easier than on the beach because the PCs are closer to the contagion's origins, another fact that is revealed with a success on the second Knowledge check.

Tracking in this area shows little activity in the last few weeks and only sporadic passage before that. Signs of four-legged predators of large size and the slithering tracks of snakes are apparent, but beyond this, trackers cannot determine much else. These signs give the PCs some warning of what is to come and negates the possibility of a surprise round for either the snakes or the krenshars, if any of the tracking Survival checks were 20+.

You may read or paraphrase the following to summarize the PCs' travel through the jungle. It is merely an initial passage to establish the mindset of difficult travel through harsh conditions, serving to lead into the next sections of this part.

The greenery clings to you with each step as if the jungle itself were alive. Thick fronds and wide leaves obscures your vision, and the wet mud beneath the needles of grass leaves you struggling to make any headway at all. Racing the clock to reach the Twilight Lady before the end of the lunar conjunction is all the harder because of the rough conditions of these emerald surrounds.

You cannot see farther than a few feet past the foliage, and plants and cloying jungle air muffle sounds. A herd of rampaging carvers could be rushing through the trees toward you, and no one would know until they exploded through the green!

Keep in mind that some PCs may have an easier time of things than others. The Endurance feat will help with the exhaustion factor of this difficult travel and certain class features (like Trackless Step) might aid in journeying through the forest unhindered. Without these abilities (or something similar), the PCs are constantly moving through difficult terrain with all the usual effects of such (2 squares of movement for every one traveled, for example and limited distance per day possible).

Also, any opposition they might face while suffering such conditions automatically gain the benefit of concealment with a 30% miss chance, just as in a heavy undergrowth forest setting, which is essentially what this is. The snakes in the Slithering Surprise section below freely ignore this miss chance when attacking the PCs, as they are native to the area and use the concealment as part of their hunting tactics. The krenshar in the Emerald Screams section are too large to gain this benefit; the concealment chance applies equally to them as well.

Because of the rough traveling conditions, most groups need to camp at least once before reaching the next section. The first two encounters below (Slithering Surprise and Emerald Screams) are spaced one day apart, unless the PCs have a method of rapid travel through or over the jungle. Flight avoids both of these encounters, but then you are encouraged to use at least one of the flying kickers listed at the end of this part to provide some action for the PCs before they reach the *Twilight Lady*.

The third "encounter" (Signs of Tragedy) should be scattered between the first two with each of the three items discovered being roughly the same amount of time apart. A typical timeline for this part of the scenario should run as follows:

- PCs leave the beach.
- PCs discover the scattered oars of the *Twilight Lady*. (Six hours in)
- PCs are attacked by the snakes in "Slithering Surprise." (Nine hours in, before they camp)
- PCs discover the length of mast and sheets of sailcloth from the *Twilight Lady*. (Second day)
- PCs are attacked by the krenshar in "Emerald Screams." (Four hours after previous encounter)
- PCs discover the animated figurehead of the *Twilight Lady*. (Eight hours after "Emerald Screams" ends.)

Once the encounters above are run, the PCs should feel more than a little ragged and worn out, feeling the strain of difficult travel and under constant threat of attack before they find the *Twilight Lady*. If they are not down at least half their basic resources and/or feeling challenged, use one or more of the kickers at the end of this section to provide them with more action.

Keep the time limits of the scenario in mind; at least an hour and a half is need for the exploration of the *Twilight Lady* and the conclusion of this adventure. Two hours is optimal.

Slithering Surprise

The marshy ground beneath your feet suddenly gives way, falling into a shallow culvert blocked from view by the dense undergrowth all around. The sound of motion is only a split-second's warning before the leaves part around a pair of flashing, serpentine heads, each one bearing its fangs and seeking your flesh!

Foes: There is no immediate ability to use Wild Empathy or other animal-handling skills in this encounter. The snakes attack the moment they are disturbed, seeking to kill as quickly as possible and claim as many victims as they can. This behavior is odd for wild snakes, something any character with Knowledge (nature) can determine with a DC 15 skill check.

The snakes are desperate for food, and even if they cannot eat the PCs, dead bodies attract smaller scavengers including rodents and birds that they can consume. With the growing blight in the land, food has become so scarce that while they would normally just avoid the PCs, attack is now their only hope for survival. The snakes will not retreat from this combat, even if wounded; this is another oddity that PCs might be able to discover with a Knowledge (nature) skill check at the same DC (15).

Snakes, Large Viper (2): hp 15, 17; *Monster Manual* 280. (The Fortitude saving throw DC for these snake's poison is 13. This is a +2 circumstance increase to the DC, reflecting the biological reaction of venomous snakes to develop deadlier venom when hunting becomes difficult.)

Tactics: The snakes attack without mercy and try to focus their assault on a single target, flanking as soon as they can and biting repeatedly until they drop the foe. They will not *coup de grace* fallen targets, as their poison usually accomplishes this for them. Under no circumstances will these snakes flee; this is literally a life or death battle for the serpents.

Developments: Once the PCs defeat the snakes, the serpents' den may be of interest. While the reptiles do not have any treasure, they have made their home in the slightly exposed roots of a banyan tree, a wide-branched jungle specimen with blade leaves and thick, colorful bark. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 12) reveals that the tree is extremely unhealthy. A DC 12 Craft (alchemy) check can identify that the source of the illness is likely the brackish sap leaking from several rents in the bark. This sap is most definitely toxic, though it does not match any poison the PCs have ever seen.

Collecting some sap secures a tidy profit from Grave. The sap is too raw and unrefined to act as a toxin directly, and even if concentrated, it does not seem to have any useful or detrimental properties. The poison in the sap is one that only works over a long period of time. The tree has been ailing for many months; the sap is really only the latest symptom of its imminent demise.

This find should confirm the PCs' suspicions that something is poisoning the land here and, if they have made any of the skill checks, this verifies that they are getting closer to the blight's source. If they ask, be sure to tell the PCs that this tree and those around it look unhealthy and that the plants look worse here than the ones they've already seen.

Scaling the Encounter

2nd-Level Characters: Only the viper with 17 hit points is present.

3rd-Level Characters: No change.

5th-Level Characters: Raise vipers' hit points to 17 and add Snake, Huge Viper (1): hp 35; *Monster Manual* 280.

Emerald Screams

Sections of the jungle seem more alive than others. As you've made your way through this dense, clinging land, the only sounds or motions has sometimes been yourselves. Other times, a cacophony of noises and the sudden flicker of things just outside your vision have assailed your senses. There seems no pattern to the changes; activity seems to come and go here with startling frequency.

You've been traveling through a dead area for some time now, nothing to see or hear save the swaying of the jungle plants as you move past them. There have been no bird, no insects, not even the whisper of the wind. All is quiet. All is still.

If the surroundings permit, suddenly scream as loud as you can! Even if the session is being played in a setting where you cannot do this, startle your players in whatever way you can to emphasize the shrieking arrival of their krenshar foes. Then:

The jungle parts to either side of you, four-legged creatures much like lanky wolves bearing down swiftly. With alarming speed, they tear into your flanks, no mercy or pause in their sudden assault!

Of course, if the PCs have been very careful to scout or keep watch as they travel, it is possible they might not be as readily surprised as this scene makes them out to be. If the PCs have taken thorough precautions or have the right abilities to keep from letting the krenshars get the drop on them, paraphrase the text above to reflect the encounter properly.

Otherwise, the pack of krenshar is likely to get a surprise round in which to attack the PCs before they can be struck in return. Preventing this surprise round requires a successful Listen check (DC 20) to hear the beasts as they move slightly in the underbrush. As wily predators driven by near starvation and a desperate need to feed themselves and their young, these beasts are likely to go after lightly armored figures if they can. See the Tactics section below for more on this.

Foes: The krenshar pride is six strong, and they are desperately hungry. Normally they would leave humanoids alone and go after smaller creatures, but there is little of their favored prey to be found. Thus, they have little choice but risk their lives in a sudden, savage attack.

Krenshar (6): hp 10, 10, 11, 11, 12, 15; *Monster Manual* 163

Tactics: The krenshar are pack hunters and act like it during this encounter. They pair off on a single target, attacking three PCs during the surprise round in this way. They are just as hindered by the concealing and difficult terrain as the PCs, but they have been lying in wait for this ambush and begin the encounter flanking their three chosen targets. Once combat begins, they do not deviate from their initial opponents, attacking fully until their targets drop and they can move on to others.

Like the snakes, they do not coup de grace. They want as many kills as they can get because meat has gotten scarce, and this ambush may be the last good hunting they see in some time. As such, they will

hold back on their *scare* ability. They don't want to frighten potential meals away, nor do they wish to waste energy chasing anything.

Developments: When the fighting is over and the krenshars are defeated, the PCs can examine their corpses. The bizarre cat-like hunters are unremarkable save for festering sores along their lower legs and around their mouths. These boils are the result of the krenshar making contact with the tainted earth and eating poisoned creatures. A Knowledge (nature) or Craft (alchemy) skill check at a DC 12 can determine that the boils are result of toxic exposure.

If any of the PCs wish to collect it, Grave accepts the fluid from the krenshars' pustules as an unusual substance. No skill check is needed to gather the liquid; a strong stomach will suffice.

Scaling the Encounter

2nd-Level Characters: Only three krenshar are present, two with 10 hit points and one at 15 hit points.)

3rd-Level Characters: Drop the two 10 hp krenshar, making it a pack of four instead.

5th-Level Characters: Raise all six krenshars to 15 hit points each, apply a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls, and give them a pack leader (a seventh krenshar) with 20 hit points. If the pack leader drops, the morale bonus is lost.

Signs of Tragedy

This encounter is actually a series of discoveries showing the PCs they are following the right path to the *Twilight Lady*. The order of discovery is given above, and the objects found are described in the correct order below. You are welcome to vary the order if you wish, but the PCs should find the *animated* figurehead last.

Discarded Oars

More than a dozen long, thin pieces of rain-soaked, rotting wood can be seen littering the ground. Some are obviously broken, while others are as intact as their poor condition allows. One end of each of the intact spars is flattened as wide, ending in a slight curve.

Any PC with Profession (sailor), Craft (woodworking), or a similar skill automatically recognizes these objects as oars. Otherwise, PCs may simply be able to guess at their identity through the given description or, if the players are truly stumped, allow a DC 10 Intelligence check. In all likelihood, someone in the group can figure out what the long wooden objects are. If not, they can remain a mystery without damaging the scenario or harming the PCs' chance of success.

The *Twilight Lady* had been trying to make up for slow winds and lost time by having several of the crew row when the storm that claimed her appeared. With no time to pull the oars back in, the ship's captain ordered them locked down in hopes of weathering the tempest. The storm jarred the oars out of their brass locks when it threw the *Twilight Lady* into her current swampy grave, and the long poles of forgotten wood ended up scattered here.

Exposure and the elements have rendered the oars completely waterlogged and useless. Touching one causes the wood to crumble and reveals hundreds of small red and white-banded worms writhing in the rotted mess. These worms are completely harmless, but they might serve to give the PCs a bit of a fright. For example, call for a Dexterity check, and tell one of the PCs who touched the wood that some worms are on their skin. Pretend to make notes and roll dice and watch the PCs panic.

The Ghost of a Tall Mast

Past the foliage of a dense copse of trees ahead, you can see something pale and billowing. It makes little sound, but the motion seems oddly rhythmic, undulating in the faint jungle breeze.

From this description, the PCs may think they are about to encounter a ghost or something ethereal. That thought makes for good foreshadowing but is not what awaits them here. The pale shape is just a large piece of sailcloth, all that remains of the mainsail of the *Twilight Lady*. Once the PCs venture close enough to see it clearly, read or paraphrase the following:

The shifting white figure is more than ten feet wide and rests in the pinning branches of a massive jungle tree. The still-lacquered pole of a large mast juts up through the pale form, revealing it to be dozens of yards of pale canvas caught on the tree's branches. The cloth looks aged and worn, endlessly flapping in a wind it will never sail again.

The PCs can take the sailcloth if they wish; it is soiled and ragged but still useful as cloth. The mast may look polished and intact, but beyond the thick coat of lacquer it bears, the wood is rotten to the core. It hosts another colony of the red and white worms, but its somewhat-intact crow's nest bears a vastly more

dangerous surprise. Read the following if anyone examines the mast closely or decides to climb it or make contact with the crow's nest for any reason.

The stained and wilted planks of the crow's nest form a sunken basket around a four-foot-wide platform of bleached oak. The wood grain is still visible, showing a greater resistance to the elements than any other part of the mast. That wood might actually be of some use if it could be harvested.

The wood of the crow's nest is just as rotted as the rest of the mast; it just looks more intact because of a layer of clear varnish that was applied when the ship was last in dock. If any PC touches the wood, it crumbles instantly and reveals a colony of yellow mold.

It is important to note what time of day it is at this point. If the PCs are traveling at night, the mold poses an immediate threat. The PCs are more fortunate if they encounter the mold during the day; sunlight keeps the mold from being active, and while a Knowledge (nature) check at a DC 16 can identify the substance, it is not dangerous to them.

Yellow Mold (CR 6)

If disturbed, a 5-foot square of this mold bursts forth with a cloud of poisonous spores. All within 10 feet of the mold must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution damage. Another DC 15 Fortitude save is required 1 minute later—even by those who succeeded on the first save—to avoid taking 2d6 points of Constitution damage. Fire destroys yellow mold, and sunlight renders it dormant.

The yellow mold is one of the many side effects of the poisoning caused by the Dark Six relics in the *Twilight Lady's* hold. Grave gladly accepts a sample of it as fulfillment of his personal request; how the PCs manage to gather the substance is entirely up to them. During the day, gathering the mold into a jar should be easy. At night, this becomes considerably more dangerous a proposition.

Scaling the Encounter

2nd-Level Characters: The mold is horrid smelling and makes PCs inhaling it feel ill for a few minutes but is **not** yellow mold and has no in-game effect.

3rd-Level Characters: Reduce the area of effect from 10 feet to 5 feet and lower the Fortitude save required to avoid the Constitution damage to DC 14. In addition, the secondary damage becomes 1d6 Constitution instead of 2d6.

5th-Level Characters: No changes.

A Dance with the Lady

A lone figure stands in a small clearing ahead. The grasses and leaves around her have been pinned to the earth by a dense covering of broken wood, forming a ragged field roughly forty feet wide. Near the middle of the field, the humanoid shape stands motionless, its feminine outline dimly visible in the meager light penetrating the canopy above.

The shape and the wood here came from the same place—the front of the *Twilight Lady*. The 'feminine outline' belongs to the ship's figurehead, an eight-foot-tall wooden and steel statue of a maiden holding a silver star in both hands. The star is tarnished, and only a few of its bladed points have survived the elements, but it is real silver and valuable if salvaged. The rest of the statue has been ruined by the weather and its plummet from the sky; there is not enough left of it to be of any value.

It is, however, intact enough to pose a threat because of the clearing's other inhabitant. A ravid lurks in the area, making its nest in the loamy earth at the Lady's carved feet. It has been away from its planar home for so long, it doesn't really think of itself as an outsider any longer. This jungle is its lair now, and no intruders are going to threaten it! Unfortunately, 'intruders' means the PCs.

When the PCs approach the figurehead to investigate it, nothing happens until they come within 5 feet. The ravid is dormant beneath the wooden planks around the statue and is only awakened when the weight of a PC presses the 'ceiling' of its home down. If no PC comes within 5 feet or moves the statue in any way, this encounter does not occur (and is counted as a victory for the PCs; sometimes the best tactic in an unknown situation is to leave things well enough alone).

Foes: The ravid animates the figurehead as its first action, doing so from concealment under the PCs feet. This motion allows the PCs to make a Spot check against his Hide check of 25. If the PCs succeed, the ravid is revealed as he uses his *animate object* ability. Otherwise, he is automatically seen when he comes out of hiding to battle the PCs alongside the *Twilight Lady*.

The Twilight Lady, Large Animated Object; hp 40; *Monster Manual* 13 (The Lady's hit points have been reduced to reflect erosion and prior damage. The Twilight Lady attacks with her silver star; this still counts as her 1d8+4 slam attack but is considered both bludgeoning/piercing damage and counts as silver for purposes of damage reduction.)

X'xiquath, Ravid; hp 20; *Monster Manual* 213

Tactics: The ravid does not employ its *animate objects* ability other than to bring the Twilight Lady to life as a defender. The reason there is so much scattered wood in this clearing is that over time, all the planks here have been animated to fight off intruders, and now only the Lady is intact enough to animate reliably. If the Lady is destroyed, X'xiquath flees as fast as he can into the jungle to the north. The negative energies of the Mere of Shattered Souls makes east an undesirable direction to go; he does **not** go east under any circumstances, even fighting to the death if that is his only route of escape.

Developments: Once the battle is over, the only item of use is the silver star held by the Twilight Lady. A fine piece of silversmithing when it was new, the object is in dire need of polish and repair. Even so, its precious metal value alone makes it worth 300 gold pieces per PC. As Event Treasure, the star must be recorded as such in the PCs' Adventure Journals.

The star holds an even greater treasure for the observant; a Search check (DC 20) discovers a hidden compartment in the back of the star. Opening the locked compartment is a challenge for even a skilled rogue, as the lock is of surpassing quality and calls for a DC 30 Open Lock check to defeat. Even then, the unwary may fall victim to the compartment's trap:

Sepia Snake Sigil trap; CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (sepia snake sigil, 5th-level wizard, DC 14 Reflex save negates); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Getting past all this is worth the effort. Inside the four-inch-wide, one-inch-deep compartment rests Captain Tayvor's emergency medical supplies – three black crystal potion vials carved to look like miniature versions of the Twilight Lady figurehead. These are 1 *cure serious wounds*, 1 *remove disease*, and 1 *water breathing* potions. Each has a base value of 750 gp, but as a consumable item in Xen'drik Expeditions, each is worth 3,750 gold pieces. These potions count as Event Treasure. Each PC can choose any 1 potion to record in their Adventure Journal at the end of this adventure.

The Twilight Lady was the last part of the ship to break free during the ship's exodus through the air. Shortly after losing her figurehead, the vessel plunged earthward and smashed into a swampy pool. The PCs are only a short distance from the caravel now, as evinced by the horrific state of the vegetation here. Any PC with Knowledge (nature) can see that the plant life around this clearing is suffering terribly. Much of the undergrowth is dead or moldering, and even the trees are not long for life. No skill check is needed to determine that something toxic exists here in the land; any PCs with eyes can see that for themselves.

There is one additional factor now – the stench. Detailed in the next part of the scenario, the smell is evident before the PCs leave this clearing and press onward. Use the following words or paraphrase them to give the PCs a small preview of what's to come.

A foul wind emanates from the east through the dying trees. The breeze reeks of mold and rot, hinting at something even fouler beyond. The smell is almost thick enough to be visible, tainting the air as it assaults your senses.

When the PCs are ready to press on, move to the next scene: Part Three: Ship of Sorrows

Scaling the Encounter

2nd-Level Characters: The ravid will not fight at all. As soon as it is attacked, it will flee as quickly as it can. It will not initiate combat in any way.

3rd-Level Characters: No changes.

5th-Level Characters: Add two additional large animated objects, a mizzenmast (long wooden pole) and a tangle of rigging (treat as a constricting object); hp 45, 30. These animate in the second and third rounds, respectively.

Part Three: Ship of Sorrows

Setting the mood for this scene, especially when the PCs first see the *Twilight Lady* in all her forlorn, ragged glory, is vital to the rest of the scenario. Be sure to impress upon the PCs how dismal and dark the scene is, describing the clinging fog that billows out from around the wrecked vessel, the brackish water that laps against the muddy banks of the mere, and the terrible smell that lingers in the air like a vaporous bile. If any of your players look like they are going to be sick when you've finished your description, you've managed to convey the image perfectly.

The decaying trees nearly fall apart as you push past them to reach what may be the end of your long journey. Ahead of you lies a wide depression in the earth filled with bleak, murky water that exudes a heavy,

grey fog. The slow waves of the mere move as though the water were thick, like a fungal syrup or congealing bile. What few plants have struggled to the surface of this fetid swamp are black and rotting, barely alive, if they are alive at all.

The most prominent feature of this putrid lake is the moss-covered carcass of a merchant caravel half-submerged at its heart. At least thirty feet of rank water surrounds it in all directions, the mists making it difficult to see exactly where the bank of this mire begins. No bridge or connection exists; nothing links the decaying vessel to the shore at any point.

Just as the players are reeling from this horrifying description, add the wonderful smell they've discovered.

Tendrils of mist have made it to where you stand, carrying with them an odor unlike any other. Like rancid flesh left to decompose, the scent is disgusting in a way that leaves the word 'stench' unable to fully describe its foulness. The smell is the stuff of nightmares, curdling the air itself and making each breath an exercise in olfactory torment.

Of course, as always, feel free to paraphrase the text. As long as the players understand that the air around the Mere is as disgusting as anything their PCs have ever smelled, the point has been made.

There is a game effect to this stench. Unless a PC takes at least the precaution of tying cloth around his or her nose and mouth, the smell is a constant detriment similar to the musk excreted by a troglodyte. This effect is summarized below and remains with the PC for as long as he or she is within 100 feet of the Mere (effectively making it a continual hazard of this entire scene).

What is That Horrible Smell?

PCs without some kind of protection from the stench of the Mere of Shattered Souls suffer a -2 to all attack rolls, damage rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws unless making a DC 15 Fortitude save. This is identical to the *sickened* condition caused by troglodyte musk, and the condition lasts until the affected PC leaves the area completely.

Any reasonable precautions (thick cloth around the face, herbal oils like mint under the nose, etc.) prevent this effect. Also, warforged characters are immune.

PCs attempting to get a better look at the *Twilight Lady* from a distance may make a Spot check (DC 16) to note occasional lights glimmering on the deck or through gaps in the hull. The ship is badly damaged and is obviously resting on the bed of the mere as it could not possibly float. The mist rising off the water prevents any more details from being visible, though observant PCs (another Spot check, DC 20) may note that the densest fog is coming from the front of the ship, bubbling from under the waterline.

There is also no apparent way to get to the ship itself without swimming or finding some method of crossing the mere physically. Fly or similar magic is an option if the PCs possess such abilities; otherwise, it's a 30-foot jump at its closest point, and no natural bridge exists. All the surrounding timber is too rotted to support weight, meaning the PCs must be extremely clever if they wish to get to the ship without braving the rank waters of the mere.

Ways of crossing the Mere of Shattered Souls to reach the *Twilight Lady* are summarized below:

- Swimming is a poor idea as the stench is only a precursor to how terrible the water of the lake has become. A cursed bile has formed from contact with the dark relics in the *Twilight Lady's* hold, one that has poisoned the mere to the point of *nauseating* anyone coming into contact with it. For every 10 feet a PC swims through the mere, a DC 16 Fortitude save needs to be made. Failure results in becoming *nauseated* the moment the PC reaches the *Twilight Lady*. This means the PC cannot even climb out of the water without help; he or she can only cling to the decayed wood and retch helplessly. This effect lasts until the PC is no longer in contact with the water. (As with the *sickened* effect above, warforged are immune to the water's putrid power.)
- Flying or other means of travel that keep a PC out of the water are quite possible. Unless such movement is instantaneous (such as *dimension door*), the traveling PC must make a DC 15 Fortitude save halfway across the mere; this represents moving through a dense cloud of mist from the waters below. Failure means the PC is *nauseated* as soon as he or she lands. This effect lasts for 1d6 rounds.
- Going back for wood and forming a raft/bridge/stilts/whatever is also a viable solution. PCs have to have the right skills to make this tactic work; Craft (woodworking) is a good start but allow any useful and relevant skill to work in a pinch. If the PCs are being creative and looking to solve the problem of how to get to the *Twilight Lady*, allow them to succeed as long as their plan seems reasonable and they have all the resources required.

- Searching the banks of the mere also nets the PCs a way across. A lifeboat managed to stay attached to the deck to the bitter end, only jarring loose when the ship smashed into the ground. As such, it is still in fairly good shape, serving to get the PCs safely across the fetid swamp without taking on too much water. Finding the lifeboat requires a Search check (DC 18), as it has become covered and overgrown by the foul vegetation clogging the banks of the mere. If the PCs do any kind of repair or *mending* to the lifeboat before setting out, it remains afloat long enough for them to take it back across the lake after leaving the *Twilight Lady*. Otherwise, it sinks shortly after getting them to the ship.

Creative PCs might find other ways to get to the *Twilight Lady*, as above, allow such plans to work as long as what the PCs do is not entirely outlandish or impossible. Once they reach the ship, the heart of the scenario awaits within. As exhausted and battered as the PCs likely are, their real adventure is only just beginning.

As a note, Grave accepts a vial of the mere's water as an "unusual or rare substance," but he won't be happy about it. Even he has a hard time dealing with the stench of the liquid, and given the kinds of odors he is exposed to as a necromancer, that's saying a *lot*.

Tragedy of the *Twilight Lady*

The *Twilight Lady* is presented here in three parts: the upper deck, the middle deck, and the hold. The upper deck includes the main deck, the stern castle, and the bow deck. The middle deck includes crew quarters, the galley, the rowing room, and the stern guest cabins. The hold includes the portage rooms, the stern hold, the primary hold, and the vault.

Of special note to Crimson Codex players is the stern castle. One of the rooms in the stern castle is the chartroom; the glyphbook they are here to recover lies hidden in a moldy patch of rotted maps.

Of special note to the Cabal of Shadows is the starboard guestroom. While the bed here is completely collapsed and covered in fungus, the posts are intact. One of these contains the dragonshard mentioned in their faction orders.

Of special note to all the factions is the vault. Located in the lowest part of the front of the vessel, the iron containment chest with the two Dark Six artifacts rests here along with their guardian, the corrupt wraith of Captain Tayvor's sundered soul.

The action in this scene begins as soon as the first PC gets to the deck of the *Twilight Lady*. The text associated with **Welcoming Committee** can be read at that time; other PCs can react as soon as they are in a position to do so. If the pacing of the scene would work better with starting **Welcoming Committee** once all the PCs are aboard, feel free to run it that way. The only important thing to remember when running this part of the scenario is how best to keep the action flowing and the sense of creeping horror at a constant pitch. This is a scary setting – the moldering remains of a ship haunted by the shades of a long-dead crew – and the players should see it that way.

Welcoming Committee

A dim glow builds along one broken plank of the deck beneath your feet. It seems to pass straight through the worm-ridden wood, forming the ephemeral shape of a vacant-eyed man clad in colorless rags. As it reaches out to you, mouth opening in a soundless moan, more ghostly apparitions appear behind it, each one more gaunt and pale than the last.

These ghosts are the spirits of the *Twilight Lady*'s lost crew, reacting to the first living visitors they have had since their ship crashed here, killing them all. Because their darkest emotions and everything that could be considered "evil" about them is captured below in their broken bodies (see the "Aghast in the Hold" level description), these ghosts mean the PCs no harm.

Of course, the PCs may not realize that, and hostilities might commence. The ghosts suffer a surprise round, as they did not intend to fight the PCs at all and are caught off-guard by any assault. If a fight does occur, see Tactics below.

Creatures: There are four ghost crewmen in total, and while they cannot speak, they can hear and respond to anyone speaking the Common language (the only one they remember). No diplomacy is needed if the PCs converse with them peacefully; the crew are curious about the newcomers and have no wish to fight. If the PCs remain calm (guarded behavior is fine; hostile actions are not), the ghosts try to communicate through gestures, asking the PCs to follow them into the stern castle.

There is little else they can express, as the crew hardly remember their lives and do not have much self-motivation. They know their captain and they trust him; any PC communicating peacefully is urged to come to the stern castle and meet Tayvor. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) shows the ghosts do not mean any harm and genuinely wish the PCs to follow them.

Spectral Sailors, Ghosts (4); male human rogue 1; hp 6; Combat Statistics.

Tactics: The ghosts do not want to fight but defend themselves if they must. After the surprise round the PCs automatically gain, they spend one round attacking any PC that engaged in combat. Only PCs that took an offensive action are attacked, and then only for one round. After that, the crewmen withdraw from combat and flee for the stern castle. If the PCs give chase, they find the entry room of the stern castle filled with potential adversaries (see below).

Assuming this first contact goes peacefully, the PCs will be led to the captain's quarters in the stern castle. The scene moves to that room's description and the text accompanying that section of the deck layout given below. If the PCs choose to proceed some other way through the ship, disregard that text and simply run the scenario as the PCs encounter it on their own.

SPECTRAL SAILOR	CR 3
Human ghost rogue 1	
Neutral Medium undead (Augmented Humanoid) (Incorporeal)	
Init +3; Senses darkvision ; Listen +6, Spot +6	
Languages Common (barely)	
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AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13	
hp 9 (1 HD)	
Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +2;	
Immune Undead immunities, incorporeal	
<hr/>	
Speed Fly 30 ft. (perfect) (6 squares)	
Melee cutlass +1(1d6+1/18-20) or incorporeal touch +3 (+1 against ethereal opponents (1d6/x2)	
Ranged dagger +3(1d4+1/19-20)	
Base Atk +0; Grp +1	
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6, corrupting touch, malevolence (no ghostly crewman will use this ability in Mere of Shattered Souls), manifestation, horrific appearance (this ability will not function during Mere of Shattered Souls).	
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Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con -, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10	
SQ Undead special qualities, rejuvenation (while the Dark Six relics remain in the hold of the Twilight Lady, ghost crewmen will always reform), turn resistance +4, incorporeal.	
Feats Stealthy, Skill Focus (Profession (sailor))	
Skills Climb +4, Hide +9, Jump +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Profession (sailor) +8, Spot +6, Tumble +6	
Possessions studded leather armor, cutlass	

Layout of the Twilight Lady

Upper Deck

The upper deck of the Twilight Lady is covered in slick lichen, present due to constant exposure to the foul conditions of the mere. The mist has congealed the moss and rot of the ship's timbers into an incredibly wet, slippery mold capable of causing even the most sure-footed PC to lose his or her balance unless extreme care is taken while moving.

The entirety of the main deck and the bow deck are under the constant effect of a *grease* spell. This slippery coating is not magical and cannot be dispelled. A full-round action can be taken to clean a 5 foot section of the deck if the PC doing so has any form of alcohol and wishes to do so. A typical wineskin or bottle of alcohol can affect up to four such 5x5 areas; other containers apply to larger or smaller areas as you see fit.

To summarize the *grease* effect: any creature in the moss-covered area must make a successful Reflex save (DC 11) or fall. This save is repeated on the PC's turn each round that he or she remains within the area. A creature can walk within or through the area of slick rot at half normal speed with a DC 10 Balance check. Failure means it can't move that round (and must then make a Reflex save or fall), while failure by 5 or more means it falls (see the Balance skill for details).

1) Main Deck

A sea of moss and black fungus cover what was once a proud ship's deck. Sections of railing and the jutting spars of masts can be seen rising from the rot; their features are obscured by the clinging corruption. A higher deck rests uneasily on either end of this main platform of shuddering wood, doors and stairs leading into each can be dimly made out through the haze of mist that clings to every surface.

This is the area where the ghosts first try to make contact with the PCs (see above). If the PCs board the ship elsewhere (nearly impossible due to the fog, the water conditions, and the dangerously unstable vessel itself), the ghosts do approach until they reach the Main Deck. This deck was their focus in life, and they 'feel' it more strongly than any other part of the *Twilight Lady*.

This area is subject to the *grease* effect described in the Upper Deck section above. Note that PCs affected by the slippery conditions may be unable to attack the ghosts, which could benefit the party in the end, since the ghosts back away if not attacked.

2) Entryway

The rotted door opens to reveal a short hallway extending left and right to walls of lacquered wood. The closed portals don't seem to have kept out much of the rancid fungus from the upper deck, though it is not quite as riddled with patches of flowing, brackish slime.

If there are ghosts leading the PCs, they pass through the doors on the west side of the room (the ones that lead to the back half of the stern castle and the Captain's Quarters. If not, there is little of interest here save for a break from the constant motion hazards of the slick lichen outside. The *grease* effect is absent here, though the stench is not much better.

3) Captain's Mess

Normally called a mess hall because of the meals served within, this small, private room earns its name for other reasons, including the patches of mustard yellow and fecal brown growing up its worm-ridden walls. The once-opulent table of hand-turned ebony is now a broken, mold-coated pile of flinders incapable of supporting the weight of a single dish, much less the feasts that likely once graced its surface.

A tall-backed chair is the only intact furniture in the room; everything else has succumbed to decay. While the cushions of the chair are now more putrescence than padding, its gold framework seems mostly intact and bears a surprisingly small amount of tarnish given the rank conditions of the room.

This room was the captain's dining chamber and hosted many lively debates between Tayvor and Brellin, his first mate, over topics ranging from religion to the political complications of the Thronehold Accords. The air here is inundated with memories of those conversation, some of Tayvor's fondest moments in life, and any PC with psychic abilities can feel a lingering presence of mental energy in the room.

There is nothing dangerous about this presence; it is just the impressions of hundreds of conversations between two close friends. If a PC sensing the presence wishes to make a Psicraft check (DC 20), he or she can actually overhear moments of these debates. Choose or roll on the chart below each time the check is successful; there are no other conversations to hear, and it is quite possible to hear the same phrase multiple times. Note that each check represents a full minute of concentrating on the psychic emanations of the room; other PCs may wish to move on before the psionic hears everything this room has to "say."

D10 roll	Ghostly Phrase Overheard
1	"Say whatever you like, I am telling you the Karrnathi cannot be trusted."
2	"It's funny you should mention that. Are you sure you don't work for the church?"
3	"Pain keeps us going. If we make the crew any more comfortable, we'll never..."
4	"I don't agree. Warforged are as alive as you and I. Metal may not bleed, but..."
5	"House Cannith tore down all its forges? Right, and I'm the flipping King of Sharn."
6	"You are an intelligent man, Brell. How can you honestly believe what you just..."
7	"Mark my words, mate. One day we will all be working for Zilargo. Gnomes!"
8	"I really need to compliment our cook. This ocean perch is so tender."
9	"Sorry, Brell. I'll have to play the Druid. You thought that ante was yours."
10	"There's something about the chest in our vault down below that worries me."

The last item in the chart is relevant to the scenario; the rest are just echoes of a good man's life lingering in the ether for those with the mental gift to hear them.

The chair is ruined beyond repair, but the metal from it can be salvaged if the PCs wish to do so. It's a lot of gold once melted down or sold, and its value is reflected in the story questions at the end of the scenario. The chair is **not** event treasure; it is part of the module's standard reward.

4) Captain's Quarters

The door to this room has been waterlogged to the point of nearly being stuck. While this door does not bar a determined effort to enter, the almost sealed doorway has kept most of the moisture out of this room. The smell here is less repulsive than anywhere else you've been, making the chamber a welcome respite from the rancid Mere outside.

There is a four-poster bed with decaying, thread-bare sheets, a chest of drawers lying on one side with its frontispiece shattered around it, and a broken mirror hanging on one wall. Aside from a distinct chill in the air, there is nothing else of note.

Nothing that is, but the ghost of Captain Tayvor waiting to manifest should he need to do so. He automatically manifests if his crew led the PCs here from the Main Deck. Otherwise, he stays *invisible* and observes the PCs to determine if they are the sort of people he can trust to finally lay the curse of the *Twilight Lady* to rest and free his soul.

In life, Tayvor was a very careful, discriminating man who would only work with the brightest of souls. An avid member of the Church of the Silver Flame, his ideals guided him to a life of service in the name of Good and Right. Now that he has been both dead and spiritually torn in half for more than two years, his sense of morality has wavered somewhat. While he would normally only consider trusting fellow members of the church and other obviously "good" individuals, his desperation to be freed from this wretched unlife leaves him considerably more flexible.

As long as the PCs are not obviously destructive and evil, he approaches them after waiting a few minutes. As the DM, you must to judge the PCs on Tayvor's behalf. Keep in mind that he is willing to overlook quite a bit; even members of the Cabal of Shadows are acceptable as long as they aren't actively talking about torture, murder, and other truly diabolical deeds.

When Tayvor chooses to manifest (which is immediately after the PCs enter if they are preceded by crewmen), read the following:

A ghostly white image takes shape near the foot of the bed, becoming more coherent with each passing moment. Humanoid, it reveals itself to be an indistinct figure of a man dressed in the regalia of a sea captain, complete with a seafarer's blade at his hip and a tri-corner hat perched on his pale brow.

In the next few seconds, the figure's right side becomes considerably clearer. He is human, smiling softly, and his hand is raised in a gesture of peace. His left side, however, remains completely unfocused and blurred. In fact, as his right side flickers into greater detail, the rest of him fades into a billowing, barely formed mist. His left arm and leg trail off into oblivion; the left side of his face has no features at all.

"Forgive my alarming appearance, but I mean you no harm."

Captain Tayvor is speaking the truth, something that a Sense Motive check (DC 15) can verify immediately. If the PCs give him a chance to speak, he continues. If they attack, they receive a surprise round just as with the crewmembers on the Main Deck. If there are ghost crewmen present, they do not tolerate any attack on their captain and can act in the surprise round if he is attacked. Assign them an initiative order as soon as the first PC turns hostile.

Assuming the PCs allow Captain Tayvor to talk with them, he speak again:

"You stand upon the cursed decks of the Twilight Lady, my friends. Once, she was a proud cargo ship plying the waves between Sharn and Stormreach four times a year under my command. The men you've seen roaming this vessel are my responsibility, icons of my failure to keep them safe.

"Forgive me for asking this, but I must beg for your indulgence while I relay my tale. You are the first living souls to board my ship since we came to ground, so this is hardly a practiced speech, nor am I much of a storyteller. If I ramble, my apologies. 'Tis hard for half a man to keep his whole mind on anything for very long, I'm afraid.

"We came upon a wall of storms the likes of which I've never seen while crossing the Straits. I pulled in sails and had my men batten down all they could to weather the tempest, praying the Flame would see us safely through it. For more than a day, we were battered by winds like blades and sheets of water like fists of iron. Through it all, the Lady stood tall and endured. When the storm eased, we counted ourselves lucky to be alive.

"Our revelry was premature. To make up the time we'd lost, I had my men drop oars and move with all speed on our course. 'Twas day, you see, and there was naught to chart our way save for a mean path southerly. We did not know how far we'd been sent towards sunset.

"We also did not know we'd only been sailing in the maelstrom's eye. When the storm descended again, it hit with fury and without warning. We were carried on waves so tall they could speak to clouds by name. Thrice we crashed to the water's floor, our timbers shaking with each landing. Even through this abuse, the Lady held us close and kept us safe.

"On the third crash, my forward shouted that the bow of the Lady was cracking. 'Tis there we have our secret vault, the place we carry things that never see declaration on a manifest, if you catch my meaning. Only my First Mate and I even knew of the vault, so one of us had to go secure its cargo. We threw fists for the 'honor,' and I lost so down I went in the midst of the raging seas around. Little did I know I'd never see good Brellin again, nor rise to greet the sun alive for that matter.

"The vault rests behind one of the ship's pillars, the one at the fore in a wall that looks like the bow but is truly just a falsie. I managed to wedge the secret door open long enough to move inside despite the ship pitching like a dry bean on a glowing griddle. There was but one chest in the vault that voyage, but in the tumult of the storm, it had nearly staved in and its holy seal broken.

"What happened next was so sudden, I still do not recall it clearly. The column behind the vault door split asunder and its iron support slashed down upon me like a headsman's axe. In a heartbeat, it split me in twain and ended me before I even knew I was ended. That should have been the last word of me, but the contents of the chest had other ideas, 'twould seem.

"As I died, so too did my ship and my crew, borne on a great wave that crossed the land for miles, the Twilight Lady came to ground so hard all aboard her died at once. My brave First Mate was lost overboard before we crashed, surely killed by the terrible great fall. Dead we are, but there is no peace for us as long as the darkness in the Lady's vault remains with her. We were carrying something foul, that much I know now, and while it remains unbound in its chest of iron, it now carries us in a grip unbreakable.

"Good folk, I pray you, will you descend into my doomed ship and take the cargo that binds us to this unforgiving dark?"

A Sense Motive (DC 15) can determine that he is being as truthful as he can be, recalling everything as best his sundered mind allows. Another check, if the PCs wish to make one, at DC 20, reveals that he is keeping something back, something he has not yet mentioned. He only adds the next part if he is entreated to do so; he does not wish to mislead the PCs, but recalling the following information hurts him and he avoids the subject if he can.

"The decay that lingers here is only a symptom of the disease that haunts my lovely Lady. That disease bears... It bears the face I've lost. When I was split in 'twain, it was not just my body that severed. My soul is also asunder, friends.

"There are two Tayvors on this vessel. I am all that I was and yet so little of what I could be. The other Tayvor is every part of me that I kept from the Light. Every dark thought, every sinful moment in my life is brought to foul life in Tayvor the Black, the grim ghost that haunts the hold of my ship. He never surfaces and I can never descend; we are captains of our own crews, both doomed to remain here for as long as the curse allows us no other fate."

The PCs may wish to know what Tayvor means by his "other" having its own crew. He can tell them, but again, he has to be asked specifically to do so. It literally causes him pain to remember these things, a fact you could communicate through your roleplaying. Wince when you speak, and pause to catch your breath as if each word is difficult for you to continue saying. Captain Tayvor is essentially torturing himself to provide the PCs with this information, something the PCs can determine just by asking. No Sense Motive is required.

"The ghosts of my men rest here with me, good folk, and what dim minds they still have recall me as their captain. I've... I've done the best I can for them, and for their part they obey me still. I have commanded them to never go below the middle deck, to never venture into the hold. They have followed my orders to the letter, remaining here with me and never wavering in their loyalty.

"And 'tis good that they do, because if they were to see what waits in the hold, they would surely go mad from it. You see, their ghosts are here with me, their souls as it were, but their bodies belong to Tayvor the Black, and he has given them a dark form of unlife as well. I know not what they are, but they still lurk below, obeying him as these fine men follow me. If you agree to aid us, you will surely have to deal with the dead that walk. There be nothing else for it."

There isn't much else the good captain can offer by way of explanation or advice. He has no attachment to anything regarding the ship itself and does not object to any actions taken by the PCs regarding it. If they succeed, his wretched unlife ends and he knows it. He welcomes the fate, in fact, and cares nothing for the trappings of his former life.

In fact, if any of the PCs have been particularly kind or responsive to him, he tells them about the Three Dragon Ante deck hidden in the First Mate's Room. He would like to know that the cards went to someone else who might enjoy them the way he and Brellin did during their long nights together.

Additionally, the good Captain can provide another, tangible benefit to the PCs if they deal peacefully with him. By not attacking him and agreeing to risk their lives for him and his crew, Captain Tayvor is moved by their generosity and is willing to sacrifice some of himself for them. Read the following:

Tayvor reaches into the part of himself that is just roiling mist, drawing forth a shadowy radiance that pools in the palm of his single hand. "This be a small connection between myself and the dead that move below the decks. I can use this to bolster you and yours for a time, if you wish."

Accepting this offer gains the PCs a special form of *bless* spell. This effect has all the properties of the *bless* spell, lasts until the PCs leave the *Twilight Lady*, and also forces the Aghast to roll a 50% failure chance every time they use their *paralysis* attack. This effect is called Captain Tayvor's Blessing.

If the PCs are not Cooperative

All the text above makes the assumption that the PCs are following the basic track of the adventure and either came to this room at the crew's behest or arrived here themselves and spoke to the good captain. Players being what they are, that is an assumption indeed. The PCs may well be aggressive and attack anything that even resembles an enemy, unloading on Tayvor the moment he manifests (assuming he even does, since some PCs might be so abrasive that he chooses to remain hidden).

It is quite possible that the PCs never hear the background of the *Twilight Lady's* plight and consequently never hear about the secret door, the vault, or be forewarned about Tayvor the Black and his undead crew. This turn of events does not "break the module," as the PCs can still succeed at their goals without ever communicating with a single creature in the scenario.

It can be argued that talking with Captain Tayvor and following the chain of events given here is the more "interesting" way to play through Mere of Shattered Souls. That said, the point of any scenario is to provide entertainment. If the players are having fun, the adventure is being run exactly the way it should be; there is no one **right** way. As DM, just be reactive to the PCs and present the challenges of the scenario as they occur.

Also, the speech above is a long one. Typically, spoken text is never that verbose. Watch your players and make sure the length of the captain's tale is not boring them or causing their attention to wander. It is perfectly acceptable to paraphrase the background and the captain's plea. Tailor the adventure to the players and their interests.

Creatures: The beings encountered in this room are Captain Tayvor and the ghosts of his crew (12, 16, or 22 in total as per the average level of the party). They are listed here because there is a chance combat occurs, *though this would be a **very** unwise thing for the PCs to do*. Fighting Tayvor alone might be too much for most groups of PCs; with his ghost crew as allies, a fight here is most likely suicide for any group insane enough to initiate it.

Spectral Sailors, Ghosts (16); male human rogue 1; hp 6; Combat Statistics.

Captain Tayvor, Ghost (1); male human fighter 5; hp 40; Combat Statistics.

It should be noted again that combat in this room, against these foes, is very likely to be brief, deadly, and weighted heavily against the PCs. It is certainly possible that through strong tactics, preparation, combat specialization, and raw luck the PCs might prevail, but even if they do, they are certainly in a badly weakened state before they enter the Hold and have to face Tayvor the Black and the Aghast.

That said, if the PCs want to handle this room aggressively, do not pull any punches. Tayvor constantly implores them to cease attacking and listen to him, even if they are proving victorious against him and his crew. If the PCs relent, all combat stops and Tayvor tries to reason with them as mentioned in the preceding area description. Otherwise, if the PCs insist on a battle to the death, there is just enough left in Captain Tayvor that he uses every ability and crewman at his disposal to destroy them!

Note that all of Captain Tayvor's equipment disappears with him if he is "destroyed" or fades away at the end of the scenario. In truth, the items were destroyed two years ago in the crash that claimed Tayvor's life; what he wields and wears now are just images drawn from the ether by his memories and the residual magical traces left behind when they were shattered.

(The total number of ghosts aboard the *Twilight Lady* is dependent on the average level of the PCs – 12 for play at 3rd level, 16 for standard play at 4th, and 22 for advanced play at 5th level. These numbers match the Aghast enemies in the Primary Hold listed below in the Hold section of the vessel.)

Scaling the Encounter

2nd-Level Characters: There are 12 ghost crewmen and no matter how the combat goes, Tayvor and his crew will vanish and not return after three rounds. The PCs are on their own.

3rd-Level Characters: There are 12 ghost crewmen.

5th-Level Characters: There are 22 ghost crewmen.

THE GHOST OF CAPTAIN TAYVOR CR 7

Human ghost fighter 5

Neutral Medium undead (Augmented Humanoid) (Incorporeal)

Init +5; Senses darkvision ; Listen +11, Spot +11

Languages Common (barely)

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (*manifested*: AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20)

hp 40 (5 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2;

Immune Undead immunities, incorporeal

Speed Fly 30 ft. (perfect) (6 squares)

Melee cutlass +10(1d6+6/18-20) or incorporeal touch +6 (+8 against ethereal opponents (1d6/x2 or 1d6+3 against ethereal foes)

Base Atk +5; Grp +8

Atk Options Corrupting touch, malevolence (DC 16 to resist), manifestation, horrific appearance (this ability will only function if the PCs force Tayvor into combat).

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con -, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12

SQ Undead special qualities, rejuvenation (while the Dark Six relics remain in the hold of the Twilight Lady, ghost crewmen will always reform), turn resistance +4, incorporeal

Feats Blind Fight, Cleave, Weapon Focus (cutlass), Weapon

Specialization (cutlass), Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Climb +11, Hide -1, Listen +11, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +6, Spot +11

Possessions +5 studded leather armor, +3 buckler, +1 keen cutlass

5) First Mate's Quarters

Beyond the waterlogged door, there is little but a broken section of floor planking and a gaping hole. The mists rising off the mere below obscure the ragged gap in the side of the ship, offering no view of the swamp outside. Only the tortured timbers of the room remain along with some nearly unidentifiable furniture. A moldy bed rests precariously at the edge of the shorn chamber, and an old sea chest sits against one wall, its lock covered in rust.

The only things of use in this room are hidden in the chest (Open Lock, DC 26 because of the rusted condition of the clasp, Break DC 20 due to iron banding) under piles of rotted clothing. A masterwork cutlass rests on the bottom of the sea chest, and a deck of Three Dragon Ante cards can be found in a hidden compartment (Search, DC 20). Both items are detailed in Treasure below.

Note that Captain Tayvor may have informed PCs of the card deck. If he told the PCs about the deck, his instructions negate the need for a Search check to find and open the secret compartment.

Treasure: The masterwork cutlass (1d6 slashing martial weapon, +2 circumstance bonus to resist being disarmed, *Stormwrack* page 107) needs a little cleaning but is perfectly intact, as is its steel scabbard. The belt attached to it is a complete loss; mold claimed it months ago. The weapon's bronze hilt is engraved with a carving of the *Twilight Lady's* figurehead, her outstretched hands holding the blade in place.

The secret compartment in the bottom of the chest holds a deck of ivory Three Dragon Ante cards and a bag with 150 copper pieces. The bag is rotted and useless but the coins are still serviceable and the deck is in fine shape. The deck has a value of 50 gold pieces.

Both of these items are considered Event Treasure and must be recorded PCs' Adventure Journals if they are to be used in other sessions at this event.

6) Chartroom

A musty scent escapes this room when the door is opened. Inside, kept somewhat safe from the ravages of the mere by a pine storage rack, dozens of maps and rest against the far wall. A navigator's desk, broken in

half and lying in the middle of the room, dominates most of the chamber's floor space. Beneath one edge of the heavy desk, a crushed sextant lies embedded in the wooden planks.

The maps and charts in this room are too faded and mildewed to be of any use. Similarly, the sextant is no longer in working or even repairable order. Its crystal sighting lens is shattered and can be found in scattered fragments around the room. There is nothing of salvage in this entire room except a small icon of the Traveler tucked into a cubbyhole on the eastern wall.

The desk used to cover the little compartment, keeping the religious icon a secret from captain and crew alike. The ship's navigator was both a member of the Crimson Codex and a follower of the Traveler. Sadly, his faith and devotion to both callings were not enough to save his life or keep the boat from suffering its tragic fate. Killed when the ship crashed, his bones are still in the room, mostly buried under the desk where he died. It might be a testament to his god that unlike the rest of the crew, the navigator is not in the hold, serving Tayvor the Black as a ravaging ghast.

Crimson Codex players can find the glyphbook they seek in one of the broken drawers of the desk. If none of the PCs belong to this faction, the book is of no use to anyone present.

7) Front Stowage

A large room with a sagging ceiling and moss-covered walls, this chamber is filled with rotting piles of cloth and wood. Arranged in stacks, the majority of the piles are either listing to one side or completely collapsed, spilling their soiled contents all over the lichen-coated floor. The smell in this room is atrocious.

Dimly visible at the far end of the room, a half score of crates can be seen. Still sealed, they do not seem to have suffered the ravages of the mold on this vessel as badly as everything else.

There are no other ways out of the chamber as it was once used for stowage and doubled as a transport room when the ship carried troops and bulk passengers as part of its duties for the Covenant of Light. The goods in this room would not have been worth much even when they were in good repair. Now that they are corrupted by rot and exposure, they are without value.

Any PC braving the back depths of the room have an unpleasant surprise waiting for him or her. The crates against the east wall of the chamber once held surplus foodstuffs (apples, cheese, dried legumes, and the like). The decomposition of the last two years has turned these still-sealed crates into boxes of truly unholy stench. Any PC opening one of these ten crates must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or become *nauseated* instantly. In addition, anyone within 5 feet of the crate when it is opened become automatically *sickened* regardless of their precautions, remaining that way until they move more than 5 feet away from the chest in question.

8) Observation / Bow Deck

At one time, the high wooden railing of this observation deck held mooring points for dozens of ropes leading to the bow sail high above. Now the sail is in tatters, most of the ropes lie coiled and scattered all around, and the fine wooden planks of the floor are nearly caved in near the center of the deck. The railing is broken in places and completely gone from the front ten feet of the ship over where the figurehead once rested. Shorn timbers and rusting iron joiners are all that remains of the bowsprit now.

The deck is impassible, as hinted at by the sagging planks in the middle. Any PC venturing onto the Bow Deck can only proceed at a 5 feet per round pace or automatically plunge through the floor. In addition, any PC failing their Reflex save from the *grease* effect on the deck will automatically break through and fall.

PCs that plummet through the deck land in the Front Stowage room and suffer 1d6 falling damage. If they fall at the eastern end of the deck, they also smash through one of the food crates stored there and must deal with the listed effects of opening one (as noted above in Area 7, Front Stowage).

Middle Deck

Once the PCs reach the middle deck of the *Twilight Lady*, they have left enough of the stench and rot behind them that neither the *sickened* condition or the *grease* effect apply while they are in this part of the map.

The *sickened* effect returns when they reach the hold, and the air does not smell particularly pleasant on the middle deck, but at least the PCs have a brief respite.

The PCs may also hear strange sounds coming from the hold while they are in this part of the ship. When they first reach the middle deck, call for a Listen check from each PC. Achieving a DC 15 lets the PC in question hear a slight moaning sound emanating from beneath his feet. This unsettling noise is coming from the ghastrs under Tayvor the Black's command. While they lie in their "crypts," they occasionally moan and howl as fragments of their lost humanity torment their unliving minds.

To punctuate this constant lament, occasionally moan or growl while the PCs are exploring the middle deck. Do so without explanation and if the PCs try to discover the source of the sounds you make, they can

attempt the listed Listen check. Try to be as haunting and creepy as you can be with these noises. The PCs should be terrified of what they might find in the hold long before they actually get there.

1) Middle Landing

The fungus clinging to every exposed surface on the Twilight Lady's upper deck seems to ease down the creaking stairs. Reaching the bottom, you find only occasional patches of rot and fungus on the walls; the floor of this landing is relatively clear. The planks all seem aged but look far more stable than the nigh disintegrating deck above.

There are no notable features to the landing save for the handles of every door leading out of the area. They are all polished and bright; no tarnish or mildew is present on any of the bronze knobs and hinges. This is all due to the *unseen servant* spell still in effect on the Middle Deck. For more information on this magical trait of the area, see Room 5: The Galley below.

2) Stern Cabins

A mostly destroyed room with pieces of furniture scattered all over the floor, this was once a finely appointed stateroom. The rank scent of the mere pervades the air, but a closed door and sections of now-decayed cedar wood keep the stench from being overwhelming.

Use this description for the first cabin the PCs visit and paraphrase it for the second. Neither room has anything of interest in it; both were unused during the *Twilight Lady's* final voyage. This is evident by folded linens, sheets tucked into a battered drawer several feet from the shattered dresser it was once a part of, and the moldered remains of a lavender sachet still hanging from what remains of the four-poster bed frame.

The only thing of value in this room is present only if one or more of the PCs is a member of the Cabal of Shadows. Then, the southernmost room's bed has a small hollow compartment in its headboard. Inside is a black silk bag containing a blood-red dragonshard. This two-inch crystal radiates a faint alteration magic and, if *identified* or otherwise has its properties discerned, contains a complex spell unlike anything the PCs have been exposed to before.

This is the crystal Cabal players need to complete their secret agenda in this adventure; no Search roll is needed to find the dragonshard. If Cabal PCs try to find it, they so.

3) Rowing Room

A large chamber with more than a dozen overturned benches haphazardly scattered over the floor, this room must have housed the ship's oars. Several empty racks line the walls; only a few still hold the long, wide-ended wooden poles needed to move a vessel of this size. All the oars have been warped by moisture and decay, with some splitting along their lengths and others draped in rotting, linen bindings hanging from their narrow halves.

PCs examining this mostly empty room discover stains in the wood and obvious signs of a struggle near the western exit. A successful Tracking Survival check (DC 15) or use of the Investigate feat show that the struggle was simply a stampede of people trying to leave at the same time. The signs come from when the crew had their oars torn from them by the violence of the ocean and panicked, fleeing in fear for the upper deck.

4) Crew Quarters

The door to this area was heavily reinforced and bears a crossbar lock on the western side. Beyond it lies a large room divided by two narrow walls and a door on the far side. Large swathes of canvas lie on the floor, a few tied on one end to the walls. All are stained by the moss that seems to grow everywhere on this ship, some worse than others.

The eastern end of the room is filled with broken wood, pieces of twisted metal, and the glitter of shattered glass.

The pieces of cloth are crew hammocks; this room was where the ship's crew spent off hours. None of the hammocks are useful as cloth; most are so thread-worn that they crumble if touched. The rest are soggy and molded.

A thorough search of the room requires moving to where the jumbles of wood and glass clog the east walls. This mess is what remains of the small tables, barrels and other furnishings in the Crew Quarter smashing together from the impact of the *Twilight Lady*. It takes great skill at sifting through wreckage and rubble to come up with anything of use in this morass; a DC 25 Search check uncovers the only item of any value: a large, uncut emerald one of the crew was using as a good luck charm during dice games. This emerald is accounted for in the scenario questions at the end of the adventure.

5) Galley

This room has a strange cacophony of smells emanating from the mass of metal imbedded in its far wall. The bulk of the metal looks to be the remains of a stove and several pots; the rest is a collection of flatware and iron implements.

Every inch of exposed metal is polished, gleaming as best old iron and pitted copper can after such a long period of exposure. Some of the items have wooden handles covered in black mold, but wherever there is metal, there is an almost mirror-like gleam.

This room was once the ship's galley. It suffered badly when the *Twilight Lady* crashed; all the heavy equipment smashed into the bow wall, and what few items survived got crushed under the falling cabinetry. The ship's cook is still physically in the room; his nearly-powdered body is wedged between the stove and the reinforced wall. Like the navigator, his brutal demise at least spared him the indignity of undeath as a flesh-hungering ghast.

There is another presence in the room, but not one that is visible to PCs without magical help. Around the cook's two-dimensional neck is an amulet with a broken jewel containing a permanent *unseen servant* spell. The amulet cannot survive any attempt to retrieve it, but while it remains where it is, the spell is still active and ongoing.

The *unseen servant's* last order from its master was to "polish" and that is what it has been doing for two years. The *servant* itself is in the Galley when the PCs arrive, momentarily dormant until tarnish starts to build up on the metal surfaces of the middle deck. For amusement's sake, you can have the *unseen servant* start polishing a PC's metal armor or metal weapon with a dingy piece of threadbare burlap!

The *unseen servant* cannot be given new orders and its controlling crystal cannot be taken from where it rests in the eastern wall of the room. If the PCs try the latter (assuming they even find it), the spell immediately ends and the amulet dissolves instantly into powder.

Hold

This is the climax of the adventure, the setting for the PCs' final showdown with the enemies guarding their reason for being here – the containment chest with the two Dark Six relics. Tayvor the Black and his "ghastly" crew are not to be taken lightly; they are more than capable of slaughtering an unprepared group of heroes. Be certain the PCs have had every chance at the warnings presented in this scenario, namely the conversation with Captain Tayvor in his quarters and the sounds audible through the floor of the Middle Deck. If the PCs rush into the Hold blithely, they should have only themselves to blame for what befalls them.

The Hold of Horrors

The *Twilight Lady's* hold has been exposed to the corruptive power of the Dark Six relics in its vault for a long time. This evil taint shows in many ways, all of which are forces the PCs must contend with if they hope to retrieve the Covenant of Light's containment chest and end the curse plaguing this vessel.

Once the PCs come out of the Stern Hold into the Primary Hold, the following effects are constantly active. These effects are only suspended if the area text below specifically mentions their absence.

Putrid Slime: Both the *grease* and *sickening* properties of the Mere are present on this level. Fortunately, the PCs have been dealing with this slime for so long that once they succeed at their first Reflex save while in the Hold, they no longer need to make one and may move normally. The Aghast have long since become accustomed to the slime and need not make Reflex saves to avoid it.

Aura of Darkness: Mundane and alchemical light sources do not function in the Hold. Torches and lanterns burn normally but literally shed no light at all. Magical light functions out to 10 feet (20 feet shadowy illumination). Instant light-based effects cast outside an area illuminated by magical light (i.e. 20 feet away or farther) fail automatically.

Foul Presence: *Detect evil* and similar magic receives an "overwhelming" result anywhere in the Hold.

Desecration: The entire area of the Hold is under the effect of an *unhallow*, penalizing Turn Undead attempts by -4 and granting Tayvor the Black and his Aghast crew a +2 deflection bonus to Armor Class and a +2 resistance bonus to saving throws against good-aligned PCs. Non-evil summoned creatures cannot enter or be called into the Hold.

The descriptions below assume the PCs have a light source capable of shedding 10 feet or more of radiance (though a maximum of only 10 feet is possible in the Hold). If this is not the case, be sure to paraphrase accordingly.

1) Stern Hold

The shadows consume the walls of this room, strange shapes dancing at the edges of your light like misshapen horrors – glimpsed only for a moment, then gone. The chamber is filled with mold-covered

crates and barrels, ship's stores now completely consumed by the corruption of the Mere. In the distance, past the doors to the east, a strange sound can be heard. Like the keening of distant wolves, it is low, feral, and utterly inhuman.

There is nothing in the stern hold of interest to the PCs. This room is their last bastion before the deadly battle about to occur. If they do not take the howling of the Aghast as a warning and use this time to prepare themselves, they have wasted their final chance to do so.

If you have reason to anticipate the PCs having difficulty in the Hold, it is perfectly acceptable to suspend the *grease* and *sickening* effects from this room and give them a break before letting the forces of Tayvor the Black descend on them in the room beyond. Especially for PCs playing at an average level of 3rd, this part of the scenario can be very rough. Giving them a breather here might be the advantage they need to survive the scenario and emerge victorious.

2) Stowage Rooms

This is a small cell, no larger than roughly six feet or so wide and equally shallow. Aside from a busted, overgrown crate or two, there is nothing else in the small room.

These small closets were private storage, set aside for carrying goods that for some reason could not be mixed with the general cargo kept in the main hold. Just large enough for a single inhabitant, they could also double as uncomfortable but serviceable guest quarters when the ship's passenger load was heavier than its accommodations above could handle.

Tayvor the Black, acting with his dark and vile sense of humor, has turned these private stowage rooms into "crypts" for his undead crew. Each room is home to a single member of the Aghast, his ravenous ghost minions. They rest in these rooms, brooding on the dim images of their fading memories and growing ever more twisted by the evil lurking in the Vault. The number of occupied rooms depends on the level of play for the scenario. If the group of PCs is around 3rd level, only twelve rooms have ghosts in them. At 4th level, sixteen rooms are filled and at 5th level, all 22 rooms have a flesh-hungry resident.

3) Primary Hold

Though your light only extends a dozen feet or so, it is enough to reveal that this room is vast. The shadow of a support column can be seen at the edge of your feeble radiance, keeping the decayed ceiling above you from collapsing. The planks at your feet are coated in pestilent slime, greasy and black as decay and fungus pool together to form a rancid sea all over the deck.

The moaning is louder here. Whatever is howling down here is very close now. Very close indeed...

This is where the climactic battle of the module is fought unless PC actions dictate otherwise. The combat is described below, but do not feel tied to its timeline. Run the fight as you see fit, making sure it is both challenging for the PCs and imparts a sense of constant malice and the threat of becoming outnumbered as more foes lurch out of their "graves" each round.

Foes: The battle plan is laid out in the Tactics section. The PCs have to fight several waves of ghosts before Tayvor the Black leaves his lair in the Vault to assault them personally. Another "enemy" to keep in mind here is the slick flooring and the constant stench. The ghosts are immune to the slime coating the deck because of long experience at moving through it, and Tayvor simply flies as an insubstantial wraith; the PCs are not so fortunate (at least, not until they succeed at a Reflex save while here).

The Aghast, Ghosts (16): hp 20; *Monster Manual* 119.

Tayvor the Black, Wraith: hp 36; *Monster Manual* 258.

Tayvor the Black and His Crew, the Aghast

Technically speaking, these foes do not differ from their listed creature types in the *Monster Manual*. They have all the same statistics, attack forms, and special abilities. The Aghast are just ghosts with a special name and Tayvor, for all of his fearsome appearance and build-up through the scenario, is "merely" a wraith.

There are only two changes to the standard ghost worth noting. First, because of the constant foul odor of the Mere of Shattered Souls, the ghost's *Stench* special attack does not function. It's actually still present; it just can't overpower the terrible reek already in the air. Second, their *paralysis* ability has a 50% failure rate if the PCs have Captain Tayvor's Blessing as noted above.

For descriptions, use these text sections as inspiration for what you describe to the players:

The Aghast: *Lurching towards you, the broken bodies of slain crewmen appear from out of the shadows. Rotted hands, fingers barren and tipped in claw-like bones, rake at the air viciously. Time has long since claimed their eyes yet the howling crew stare at you with empty sockets, their gaunt faces twisted in an unholy rage!*

Tayvor the Black: *Clad in a black long coat that flares into the darkness like a living shadow, the figure of a man hisses through the air. His face a half-mask of murder and fury, only the left side of him really seems to exist. The rest is just a whisper and a fading streak of nothingness. On his one intact hand, a dark outline of a cutlass bleeds into visibility as he approaches. "This be Tayvor the Black's domain. All you've found here is death!"*

Tactics: The order of combat, assuming the PCs entered through one of the doors from the Stern Hold, is listed here. Keep in mind that you can vary this in any way you wish, but be **very** careful about overwhelming the PCs with too many foes at once. Also, because of the conditions of combat, there is little chance either side can claim a surprise round.

If the PCs move back through the door into the Stern Hold, the attacks stop and the Aghast (if any) run back to their crypts. Even Tayvor the Black will not chase PCs or attack them while they are in the Stern Hold. Essentially, the Aghast and their fell leader cannot stray or affect anything outside the *aura of darkness*. This will be an invaluable benefit to the PCs, especially at lower tiers, and if the players do not think to use this ability to retreat, allow a Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (arcane) skill check (DC 18) to figure out that the darkness might make the undead here stronger. Bardic Knowledge would also suffice.

Keep in mind that the Aghast have a 50% failure rate on their Paralyzing Touch ability if the PCs have received Captain Tayvor's Blessing. See the Captain's Quarters entry above for more details.

- **Before the First Round:** Read the following once the PCs move more than five feet into the Primary Hold.
 - i. *"The sound of the creaking timbers is followed immediately by total silence. For a few seconds, no noise comes from the chamber around you. Even the moaning has stopped... but not for long. Suddenly, the quiet is shattered by a chorus of savage screams and the pounding of flesh against heavy wood!"* (This is the sound of the Aghast battering open the doors to their "crypts".
- **Round One:** The four doors closest to the PCs open to release four ghosts. They move at full speed to attack, using no tactics other than to assault the first PC they reach and then remaining on him or her in subsequent rounds.
- **Rounds Two and Three:** The Aghast attacking the PCs continue to do so unless their targets have retreated into the Stern Hold where they cannot follow. No new ghosts appear to attack.
- **Round Four:** The next two closest doors, one on the north side of the room and one directly opposite, open and two more Aghast join the fray. These try to attack already embattled PCs but their hunger and chaotic minds do not allow them to flank with their fellow Aghast.
- **Rounds Five and Six:** The Aghast present continue their assault but receive no reinforcements. Again, if the PCs retreat into the Stern Hold, the Aghast cannot follow.
- **Round Seven:** Two more doors open, releasing ghosts as before. These act just like the ones from Round Two, offering flanking bonuses only if their shortest route to a PC opponent provides one. They do not flank intentionally.
- **Rounds Eight and Nine:** As with Rounds Five and Six above.
- **Round Ten:** Another pair of doors opens, disgorging Aghast to attack the PCs. This pattern continues, round after round, until all the ghosts have been released.
- **Round Eleven:** In addition to ghosts leaving their rooms to attack, Tayvor the Black steps out of the Vault. This round, all he does is shriek at the PCs incoherently. He is utterly mad and his howl of bloodcurdling rage should clearly communicate this. Even when he speaks (see above), his voice should be a snarl of anger and malice.
- **Round Twelve:** Tayvor the Black will double move to the closest PC. Though he is described as wielding a cutlass, he has the normal attacks listed for a wraith. The blade is just an image, part of his twisted, evil soul.
- **Subsequent Rounds:** Any remaining Aghast start fighting intelligently. If they can, they move to provide flanking bonuses, especially for Tayvor himself. Nothing here flees; this battle is to the death (or undeath, as the case may be).

Scaling the Encounter

The only scaling to be done for this final fight involves numbers and timing. Tayvor the Black is the same regardless of the level of the PCs; if they remember their holy water and haven't used it up during the battle with the Aghast (or against the innocent ghosts above), they can defeat him no matter how "weak" they are by comparison.

2nd-Level Characters: The Aghast appear only one at a time instead of in pairs and when Tayvor the Black appears, he is instantly dropped to half hit points by interference coming from Captain Tayvor above.

3rd-Level Characters: There are only twelve Aghast - one per room for the six chambers on the north and south sides of the Primary Hold. If the PCs are seriously outmatched, stagger the appearance of each pair after the first four to every two rounds instead of every round.

5th-Level Characters: For PCs of this level, fill the entire block of stowage rooms. This puts the total number of Aghast at 22.

Regardless of tier, the PCs may simply be too wounded, disabled, or simply incapable of winning the scenario as written. If this is the case, feel free to use the following Deus ex Machina to provide a way for the PCs to face Tayvor the Black and try to win the adventure even if the Aghast are too much for them. Save this "scene" until it looks like the PCs have no chance on their own. It is definitely a "darkest hour" kind of rescue:

The hold behind you suddenly fills with a blast of ghostly light, banishing the vile darkness that clings to every corner of the chamber. The ghostly crewmen are beset on all sides by the shades of the sailors from above, fighting for their bestial lives against the glowing blade of their better selves!

Captain Tayvor is with them, charging past you all to clash weapons with his darker side, the spectre of Tayvor the Black. With an echoing, ephemeral ring of ethereal steel, they lock their cutlasses and spiral through the air in a vicious, violent dance.

"Strike quickly, my friends! I cannot hold him long!"

If this scene occurs, the PCs will only have to fight Tayvor the Black himself. The Aghast are completely preoccupied with their ghost opponents and will not even take attacks of opportunity if the PCs move past them. Captain Tayvor is fighting using Full Defense; he won't be hurting Tayvor the Black but he will be distracting him; every PC gets a +2 to their attack rolls against Tayvor the Black.

Captain Tayvor was not kidding, however. This cannot last long. The Aghast and spectral sailors disrupt each other after four rounds, vanishing completely. After five rounds, Captain Tayvor is rendered too weak to remain and disappears back to his quarters. That will leave an undistracted, furious Tayvor the Black to deal with if the PCs cannot defeat him in that time.

Destroying the Aghast leave molding corpses behind. Killing Tayvor the Black causes him to vanish, an echoing scream cutting through the stinking air of the Hold as he fades. He rises again in 24 hours unless the relics in the Vault are removed from the ship; the PCs do not likely know this, however, and may think him permanently defeated.

Once the waves of seemingly endless undead are cut down, the PCs are free to enter the last room of the ship and secure their prize.

4) Vault

The secret door to this room opens with a rough grind of metal, the wood grating against a long shard of metal running the length of the chamber. On one side of the ruined compartment, a metal chest lies halfway open, its contents obscured by the pool of black water around it. Under the steel spar, a rotted corpse can be seen beneath the misty waves of the pool, cut completely in half.

The corpse is Captain Tayvor, and the pool is from the Mere outside seeping in through the deep crack in the outer hull. This entire room is below the water line and in another year or two, the vault would have been completely flooded. As it is, there is only enough water to bring the lake into contact with the loose relics inside the containment chest. Unfortunately, that is all the terrible items need to slowly poison all of Xen'drik and wreak untold havoc in the future.

Getting the relics out of the Vault is quite easy. As foul as they are, the Price of Avarice and Tempest cannot actually harm anyone touching them because of the silver bands around them (as described in the text below). The PCs should take precautions anyway; let them do whatever they feel they must to protect themselves while collecting the relics and locking them away in the chest.

The silver seal given to the PCs by Grave fits perfect in the chest's lock plate, closing it and containing the dark artifacts as soon as it is in place. The effects of sealing the relics away are immediately felt, as relayed by this descriptive text.

The moment the chest is sealed again, the mist rising off the black pool of water billows away. The ship itself shudders all around you, as if breathing a sigh of long-needed relief. The oppressive darkness all around you fades and the air grows warmer.

Something foul has been lifted from this place. The evil that surrounded you is gone.

Icons of Darkness (or, Just What's IN that Chest, anyway?!?)

XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS Campaign Secret

The Covenant of Light was founded for many reasons, some of which are known to the general public, a few of which are only revealed to newly inducted Scions of the faction, and one grave duty that only a handful of people have ever been told. This last secret is only hinted at in this scenario, but there are a few methods of magically learning Campaign Secrets; thus, the truth is revealed here.

Do **not** reveal the following to the PCs unless they have legitimate ways of gaining this information. Let them come up with their own theories and leave the scenario with unanswered questions. Half of the thrill in discovering things lies in the effort required to do so. Just handing this secret out cheapens that victory.

That said, there are four logical ways the PCs could learn what is revealed here. One is the Stormrider's Chapbook (D&D Campaign Cards, Set One, Card Nine). Another lies in the *glyphbook* recovered by Crimson Codex PCs in this adventure (if they choose to read it). A third occurs if Covenant of Light PCs play this adventure and return home successfully; they are deemed worthy of the secret by their superiors and informed of it as part of the Conclusion.

The last way to learn the information below is making physical contact with either of the artifacts in the containment chest. This requires flesh-to-item contact; any cloth or material between skin and relic keeps the mental communication from happening. (Details of this contact are summarized in the Story Object: Touched by Shadow.)

The Secret

Since its founding, the Covenant of Light has been collecting historical items and magical treasures dedicated to dark powers all over Khorvaire. This collection has been guided by clues in the *Caldyn Fragments*, passages that mention these items and the important roles they may someday play in the foretold fate of Eberron. This gathering of foul power has been done in secret, the items locked in containment chests of light-treated iron and brought to Radiant Hold for safe keeping.

The Dark Relics in the Mere of Shattered Souls

The broken containment chest in the *Twilight Lady's* hold was made to carry and conceal two items dedicated to the Keeper and the Fury, powerful gods in the pantheon of the Dark Six. These relics, respectively, are called the *Price of Avarice* and the *Tempest*.

The *Price of Avarice* is actually four items, a platinum clamshell eight inches wide and three pearls inset on a bed of yellow gold inside. A crystal window in the upper shell of the clam allows the pearls to be seen without opening it. The pearls, one red, one black, and one blue, are known as *Vhesst (Murder)*, *Vhalat (Betrayal)*, and *Vhoon (Sorrow)* in the ancient tongue of the Dhakaani goblins that originally discovered it.

Tempest is a pale, ash and oak composite longbow with a braided, storm grey string that cannot be removed. Both ends of the bow are stained black; supposedly every living creature killed by *Tempest* makes these stains a little darker and a little larger. They already cover five inches of the bow on either end. When drawn and fires, *Tempest* makes a soft thundering noise.

Neither relic has any apparent powers; both are "sealed" by means of silver bands clamped around them. Of course, these powerful clasps have not been able to completely neutralize the evil energies of the relics; witness the vile state of the Mere of Shattered Souls...

Once the PCs have secured the items (and Cabal of Shadows PCs have had a chance to touch each of the relics with the dragonshard taken from the Stern Cabin earlier), move to Ending the Adventure, the conclusion of the Mere of Shattered Souls. The adventure is at an end, the curse of the *Twilight Lady* has been broken, and the PCs have emerged victorious!

(As a note, PCs that contract Ghoul Fever will have the disease cured by their faction free of charge upon their return to Stormreach.)

Ending the Adventure

There is one last thing to take care of before the scenario ends; the redemption of Captain Tayvor and his crew. There is a section of descriptive text given here to handle that, but feel free to do this in your own words if you wish.

As long as the feeling of accomplishment the PCs have earned is given to them along with the important information from the restored Tayvor, you have wrapped up Mere of Shattered Souls admirably. Go through the Adventure Questions below, hand out experience/gold rewards, list Event Treasure if applicable, and congratulate yourself for a job well done!

Beams of soft, grey light shine through cracks in the rotted timbers above you. The moaning sound that has been your constant companion throughout your ordeal aboard the Twilight Lady slowly changes into a

chorus of sighs. Throughout the ship, the bound souls of the restless dead are finding their rest at last. One by one, they are fading from this world, slipping quietly into the beyond.

All but one, it would seem. In the middle of the vessel's hold, two shapes flow into view. One light, the other dark, they teem into each other and swirl wildly: a vortex of radiance and shadow. When a figure emerges from the confluence, it is one you recognize. Captain Tayvor, both halves restored, floats slowly toward you with a look of indescribable peace on his spectral face.

"Thank you, my friends. What none other could do, you have done, and for this you have earned more than a man's meager thanks can provide. Had I worldly goods, they would all be yours and rightly so, but instead all I can offer is my gratitude and the last few moments of my existence here."

With a warm smile, he looks at each of you in turn. "My mind is once more my own, and things lost to me before have returned. In my mind's eye, I see what lies beyond Death. It goes far beyond words... I wish I could tell you what I see. The truth of all things, my friends. It is just beyond my reach..."

"Please, let me tell you what I see within the Light. It will be my final gift to you."

Captain Tayvor first tells the PCs what little he knows about the containment chest and the relics they have recovered. He often carried chests like the one in their possession for the Covenant, sailing them from Sharn's docks to Stormreach and seeing them safely to Radiant Hold west of the city. He does not know why he was never told of their dark contents, but he suspects that if the faction is collecting such items, there must be a very good reason for doing so under such secrecy.

After this revelation, he gives each PC a much grander one. Leaning close (assuming they let him), Tayvor whispers a sentence into their right ear. The words he speaks are not in Common; he is murmuring something in a language that sounds like Celestial. The effects of these Words of Creation are as follows:

- **Good-aligned PCs:** *The words fill you with a warmth unlike any you have ever felt before. It is as if an archon has wrapped you in her wings and kissed your brow. All is right with the world. There is nothing you cannot face with the power of those beautiful sounds echoing in your soul.*
- **Neutral-aligned PCs:** *The words are strange, a kind of exalted speech that warms you for a moment before cooling again to leave you just as you were before you heard them. Even now, the memory of what was said slips from your mind. Moments later, you can only recall a few sounds of that bizarre language.*
- **Evil-aligned PCs:** *From the first word, you feel ill. Some greater power has flowed into your mind at the touch of that insidious language – a power that wholly does not approve what it finds there. Through sheer will, you have kept the words from doing you any real harm. Even better, though you are trembling and harrowed from the experience, you have managed to retain one of the lesser sounds before it could slip away. This power could be useful someday...*

The words spoken by Captain Tayvor grant each PC the Story Object: The Choir Celestial.

Note that **ALL** of this assumes the PCs have treated peacefully with Tayvor. If they "destroyed" him and never agreed to help him and his crew, he still appears as described before but feels like he owes them nothing. He fades away with an enigmatic smile, knowing full well the glorious gift of Light they have managed to deny themselves.

Conclusion

Once the PCs have received their gift and bid Tayvor farewell, they have a long journey back to Stormreach. The Mere's horrible stench fades with the coming of the next dawn, and while it takes months for the terrible rot to subside, the land here *will* begin to heal. Xen'drik is safe from another dire threat, thanks to the bravery and strength of the PCs.

Wrap up any last questions the PCs might have and proceed to the next step, Adventure Questions. If time remains in the round and the players would like to roleplay returning home and turning in what they have recovered, feel free to do so. Otherwise, just summarize for them that the chest is commandeered by the Covenant of Light as soon as the PCs arrive in Stormreach, their factions are all well-pleased with their work, and each is congratulated in their own way for another job well done.

Adventure Questions

Questions:

1. Did any of the PCs try to help Vennit during the Introduction?
 - a) Yes, all of them did. (200 xp, 0 gp)
 - b) Yes, some of them did. (100 xp, 0 gp)
 - c) No, none of them offered any help at all. (0 xp, 0 gp)
2. Which best describes how the PCs interacted and negotiated with Grave during the introduction, especially when he was discussing their mission and their rewards for completing it?
 - a) Very alert, interactive, and involved. Involvement can actually mean being abrasive and rude, as long as they were part of the discussion in some way. Grave is very thick-skinned and actually enjoys insult games, after all. (200 xp, 500 gp)
 - b) Mixed involvement; some PCs discussed the mission with Grave but most seemed disinterested or just accepted what was offered without discussion. (100 xp, 250 gp)
 - c) Little involvement; the PCs did not really ask questions or try to interact with Grave. They seemed more interested in just getting started and did not seem concerned with the details. (50 xp, 100 gp)
 - d) Abrasive. If Grave was not under orders to use this group of fools and miscreants, he'd have offered the job to someone more deserving... like a kobold street sweeper. (0 xp, 50 gp)
3. Did the PCs explore the route between the sheltered cove and the *Twilight Lady* carefully?
 - a) Yes. They reached every mission waypoint and were diligent about remaining organized and informed of their surroundings. They even managed to collect something for Grave as requested. (200 xp, 300 gp)
 - b) Sort of. They got to every encounter but did not really examine the areas except for what was presented to them directly. They did get something for Grave though. (100 xp, 100 gp)
 - c) No. They only muddled through every encounter because there was no real way to miss them. If the snakes hadn't bit them, the PCs probably would never have seen them. Grave got nothing. (50 xp, 0 gp)
4. Did the PCs defeat the *animated* Twilight Lady and the ravid responsible for her "life"?
 - a) Completely. They defeated the figurehead, put down the ravid, and even found the treasure in her silver star. (200 xp, 200 gp)
 - b) Partially. The ravid managed to flee away and/or the aggressive animated object(s) was more than they could handle. (100 xp, 0 gp)
 - c) The PCs were defeated or had to flee without bringing down a single opponent. (0 xp, 0 gp)
5. Were the PCs able to overcome some of the challenges presented by the environment of the Mere?
 - a) Yes. They thought to cover their noses in some way and did what they could to make the terrain passable. They were also smart enough **not** to try swimming in the Mere. (200 xp, 0 gp)
 - b) Sort of. They took some precautions but were either unable to think of some way to move more easily through the slime **or** tried to swim in the Mere. (100 xp, 0 gp)
 - c) No. They are only lucky there were monsters in the Mere; they would have been creature-chow with how foolishly they were stumbling around. (0 xp, 0 gp)
6. Did the PCs loot the ship of its more salable commodities?
 - a) Yes. They found the golden chair, the uncut emerald, and other items of basic value. The worth of these items is summarized here. (200 xp, 500 gp)
 - b) Yes. Either the gold chair pieces or the uncut emerald were located but not both. (100 xp, 250 gp)
 - c) No. The PCs were lucky to find the ship itself. (50 xp, 50 gp)
7. How did the PCs fare during the battle with Tayvor the Black and the Aghast?
 - a) The wraith and his ghosts were soundly defeated. Every one of them dropped before the might of the PCs. (200 xp, 0 gp)
 - b) One or more of the PCs fell to the terrible power of Tayvor the Black's undead crew before they managed to win their way into the Vault. (150 xp, 0 gp)
 - c) It was a victory. Pyrrhic, but a victory nonetheless; half or less of the PCs were standing when the smoke cleared. (100 xp, 0 gp)
 - d) Ouch. Just... ouch. Tayvor the Black's got some fresh recruits. (0 xp, 0 gp)
8. How would you rate the group's roleplaying?
 - a) Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways. (100 xp, 0 gp)
 - b) Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways. (50 xp, 0 gp)
 - c) Okay. There was some roleplaying. (25 xp, 0 gp)
 - d) None. They treated the adventure as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying. (0 xp, 0 gp)

Story Objects

Story Object One is titled "The Choir Celestial" with the following text:
You have heard the Words of Creation whispered into your ear, a sound that will stay with you forever. Once per adventure, you can recall this song of light, the Choir Celestial, as a full-round action. Doing so grants you the effects of the Inspire Courage Barding Music ability, beginning as soon as the full round action is finished.

This effect will last six rounds if you have a Good alignment, four rounds if you are Neutral (lawful neutral, true neutral, or chaotic neutral), or two rounds if you are of Evil alignment.

Story Object Code: EXMS01

Story Object Two is titled "Touched by Shadow" with the following text:
*You touched one of the terrible relics in the Twilight Lady's hold directly, making contact with something **dark**. Though nothing happened at the time, over the next few days your rest has been troubled and you have suffered through strange and foreboding dreams.*

In these night terrors, you have learned that for unknown reasons, the Covenant of Light has been collecting many relics similar to the one you touched over the last few years.

You have also felt the presence of a being called the Riven Prince, a demonic entity whose way into the world of Eberron involves a ritual performed with the two relics the Twilight Lady was holding. You are certain the Riven Prince knows of you as well; the moment's contact seems to have gone both ways.

(From now on, one half of the PC's face is always cast in a faint shadow regardless of the amount of light present. The side affected is the player's choice and this constant shadow has no apparent game effect.)

Story Object Code: EXMS02

Appendix: NPCs

Combat Statistics

Grave, Necrology Consultant

CR 8

Half-elf dread necromancer 8

CN Medium humanoid (half-elf)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +2, Search +3, Spot +2

Languages Common, Abyssal, Draconic

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 10; **DR** 4/bludgeoning and magic

hp 35 (8 HD)

Resist +2 to saves against *sleep*, stunning, *paralysis*, poison, and disease.

Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

Action Points: 8 (d8)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +4 unarmed (1d3 nonlethal) or

Melee +4 charnel touch, once per round, touch attack (1d8+1) or

Melee +4 scabrous touch, once per day, touch attack as per *contagion* spell, DC 14)

Range +6 dagger (1d4)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Special Actions rebuke undead (5/day; +1; 2d6+10), negative energy burst (2/day, 7d4 negative energy damage to all living creatures within 5 feet), *fear* aura (DC 18 to resist or be *shaken*)

Dread Necromancer Spells Prepared (CL 8th):

4th (3): Any from Dread Necromancer spell list

3rd (5): Any from Dread Necromancer spell list

2nd (6): Any from Dread Necromancer spell list

1st (6): Any from Dread Necromancer spell list

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 18

SQ: lich body, advanced learning x 2, summon familiar (though Grave qualifies for a familiar, he has not yet had time to perform the ritual involved), undead mastery.

Feats Spell Focus (necromancy), Action Boost, Action Surge

Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +5, Concentration +10, Gather Information +8, Heal +6, Knowledge (arcane) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Profession (mortician) +6, Spellcraft +8.

Grave is quite an enigma in the city of Stormreach, a necromancer with a desire to be of service to his community. His quirky sense of humor comes from many long years serving as a House mortician in Karnath before coming to Xen'drik as an adjunct to an Emerald Claw troop. The soldiers died in the jungles, victims of "their own stupidity" in his words, and Grave never felt the need to go home.

Now he provides a public service to Stormreach by using his powers over death and the deceased. He has made something of a name for himself as a "corpse talker", though people who attend his readings rarely wish to discuss what occurred at those events.

Grave is not an evil man but his pastimes and vocation make it difficult for anyone to fully trust him or feel comfortable in his presence. He does not mind this reaction in people; indeed, he thrives on it.

It amuses Grave to make people squeamish and nervous. To this end he does things like miss important appointments because he was off gambling, walk around town with a flesh golem, and other "odd" activities.

DREAD NECROMANCER SPELL LIST

Grave's spell list appears below.

1st Level: Bane, bestow wound*, cause fear, chill touch, detect magic, detect undead, doom, hide from undead, inflict light wounds, ray of enfeeblement, summon undead I*, undetectable alignment

2nd Level: Blindness/deafness, command undead, darkness, death knell, false life, gentle repose, ghoul touch, inflict moderate wounds, scare, spectral hand, summon swarm, summon undead II*

3rd Level: Crushing despair, death ward, halt undead, inflict serious wounds, ray of exhaustion, speak with dead, summon undead III*, vampiric touch, wrack ** #

4th Level: Animate dead, bestow curse, contagion, death ward, dispel magic, enervation, Evard's black tentacles, fear, giant vermin, inflict critical wounds, liquid pain ** #, phantasmal killer, poison, summon undead IV*

*New spell (see *Heroes of Horror*, Dread Magic chapter, starting page 125).

** Spell added through Advanced Learning

Book of Vile Darkness

Appendix: Player Handout One – Faction’s Orders

Faction: Blackwheel Company

Your orders are to travel to the Mere, reconnoiter the area, and return with as much information about the site, the disposition of the *Twilight Lady*, and her cargo as possible. Recover the ship’s cargo if possible but do not come into conflict with the Covenant of Light by doing so. If the items are recovered by the Covenant, return with intelligence on the items themselves.

Your mission will be credited with additional success if you are able to identify the “regent divided” mentioned in the Caldyn Fragment.

Those are your orders. That is all.

Faction: Cabal of Shadows

If the Covenant of Light wants this ship so badly, we want it even more. Get to the *Twilight Lady*, neutralize any opposition you find there, and obtain the relics we know to be secreted in its hold. The Covenant will stop at nothing to get those items back, and we want them to do so on our terms. Only bring them back to us if there is no one from the Covenant with you. We will arrange for the item’s safe return to our “friends” in the Light afterwards.

When the *Twilight Lady* originally left port, we arranged for a special dragonshard to be secreted in the hollow post of a guest room’s bed’s headboard. Retrieve it in secret once you reach the ship. When the items are recovered, make sure you touch all of them with the shard before they are removed from the ship’s hold. Any length of contact is sufficient, but be certain you do this without being observed.

No one, especially any member of the Covenant, must know of the shard or its use. If you are discovered before or after the act, destroy the shard and disavow all knowledge of these orders. Return the shard to us after your mission.

You know better than to fail.

Faction: Covenant of Light

Many brave souls were lost when the *Twilight Lady* disappeared. This is a priceless chance to put them to rest or, at the least, ensure their sacrifice was not in vain. Gather the items in the engraved iron chest in the *Lady*’s hold, reseal the chest with the medallion you’ve been given, and return it to Radiant Hold as quickly as you can. More rests on this mission’s success than you know, and great honor will be yours by completing it swiftly.

Light be with you.

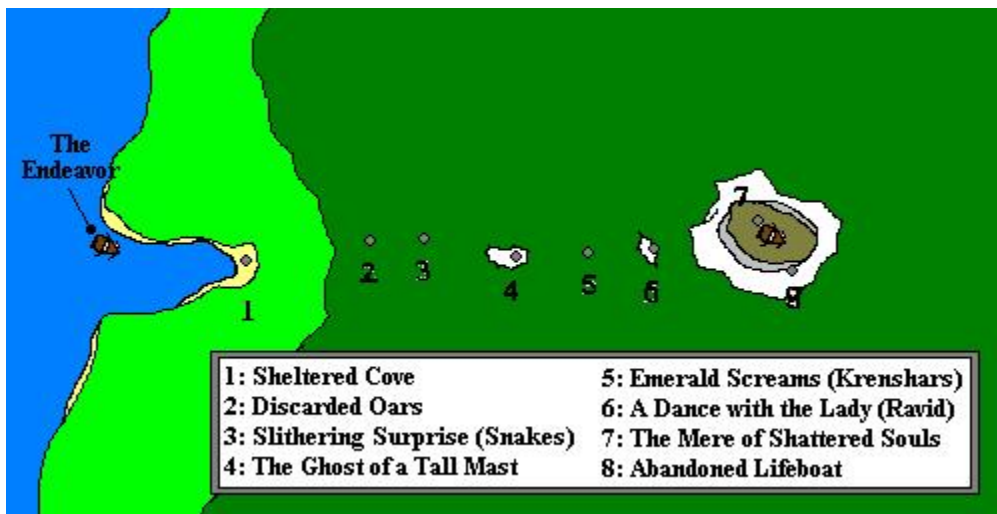
Faction: Crimson Codex

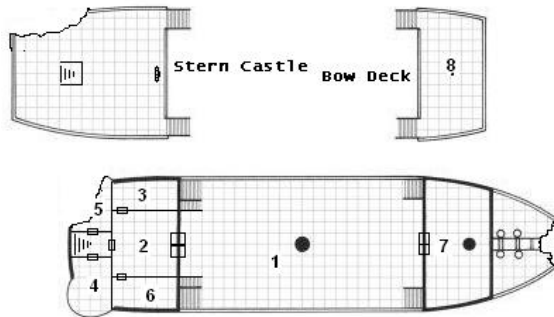
The fate of the *Twilight Lady* is one of the most enduring seafaring legends in recent memory. While she was only lost to the waves a scant two years ago, much debate as to her whereabouts and cargo has been held within our ranks. This mission gives us a chance to lay these questions to rest.

In addition to this chance at chronicling history, we have a more practical task for you. One of the *Twilight Lady*’s crew was a Serpent in the Crimson Codex and had been recording valuable information on the Covenant of Light and its inner workings for some time before the ship went missing. Locate the navigator’s glyphbook and return it to Stormreach.

If you can secure the ship’s treasures for us, so much the better. Do not interfere with the Covenant in this matter, however. We do not want to come into conflict with them at this time.

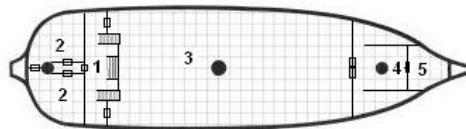
Appendix: Maps





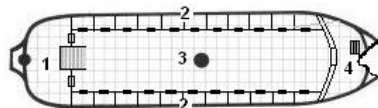
Upper Deck

- 1: Main Deck
- 2: Entryway
- 3: Captain's Mess
- 4: Captain's Quarters
- 5: First Mate's Quarters
- 6: Chartroom
- 7: Front Stowage
- 8: Observation / Bow Deck



Middle Deck

- 1: Mid Landing
- 2: Stern Cabin
- 3: Rowing Room
- 4: Crew Quarters
- 5: Galley



Hold

- 1: Stern Hold
- 2: Stowage Rooms
- 3: Primary Hold
- 4: Vault

Deckplan of the Twilight Lady

