

# THE RACKMA GAMBIT

## Part 5 – Where are these beasts coming from?

Dungeon Master: Ivan

Players: Andrew (Coral & Kelp), Sean (Harmony & Mystery). Absent: Grant (Jingo & Wasabi)

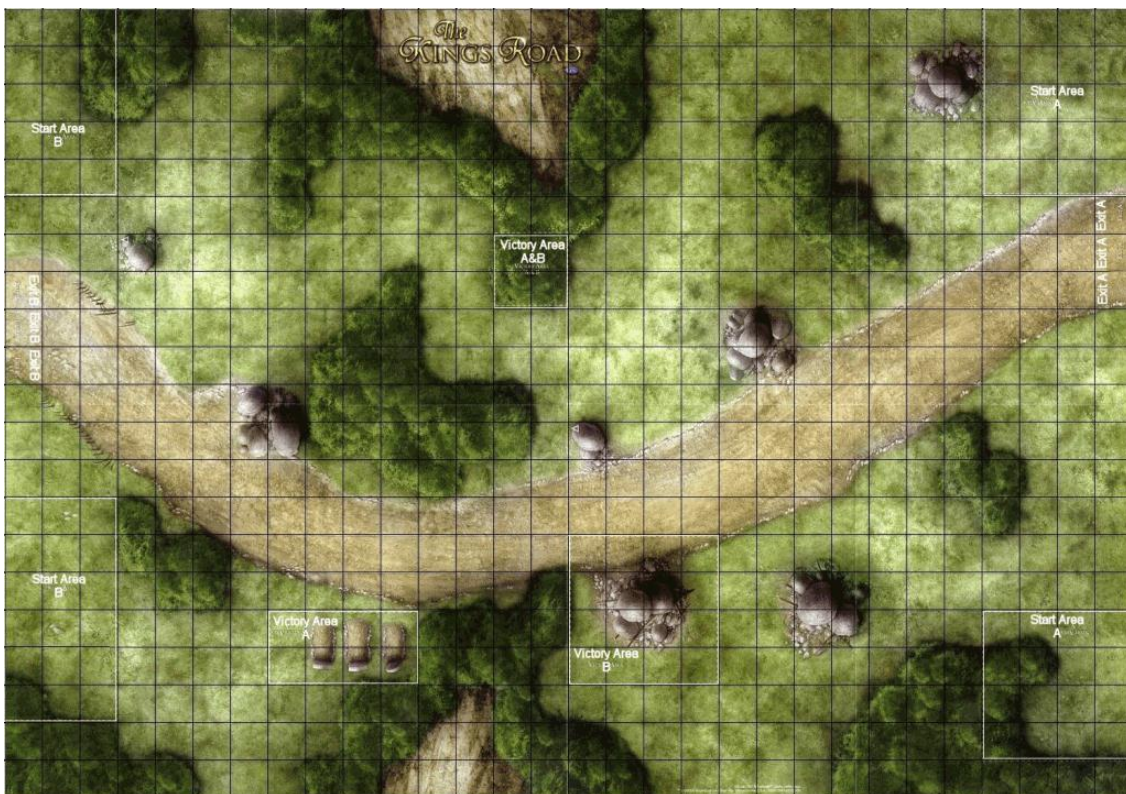
Written by: Sean

Version 1.2 (with edits from Andrew)

1. When we last left our heroines, the dangerous and beautiful Sea Princesses, they were mucking in muck, searching the dead bodies found in the ruins. We find nothing of interest and note that the bodies we found show no signs of any particular trade.
2. Mystery notices no indication of warm clothing and we wonder if the bodies are those of actual villages. We wrack our memories and Mystery and Wasabi recognise two of them were villages who travelled to and from Tonsberg. We also notice that there are signs that the villages had tried to defend themselves.
3. Jingo does some tracking and advises it looks like the villages were attacked on the path and had fled to the ruins. We cover the bodies with rubble to protect them from further degradation.
4. Spells currently in operations *Invigorate* (Coral and Harmony), *Cats Grace* (Wasabi) and *Strength* (Wasabi).
5. We decide to continue down the path until it joins a dry riverbed. We proceed cautiously along the path, wary of possible ambush. Harmony uses her psionic powers to *Heighten Senses*. She smells the stench of death, albeit from a distance. Using her spyglass she sights four dark skinned animals, 3 feasting upon their kill and the 4<sup>th</sup> pawing at a hole – *Displacer Beasts!*



*Illustration 1: Displacer Beast*



*Illustration 2: Encounter Area 1*

6. Harmony tells her comrades what she sighted and we decide to be cautious. Jingo informs us that he can tell us useful information about these fell creatures and proceeds to cast a spell. We wait – nothing! The spell failed – twice.
7. The party moves silently along the banks of the riverbed. A *bless* is cast and we burst from

our cover to engage the beasts. Kelp casts a *slow* with 3 of the 4 *Displacer Beasts* in the area of effect. The *Displacer Beasts* are surprised. Wasabi uses his *Kia* power on his *bow of strength* – thwack! (**Red flag – see appendix D**).

8. The *Displacer Beasts* are easily defeated by our superior tactics. We note that they had iron collars around their necks with a short length of chain hanging from it. We examine the bodies that the *Displacer Beasts* were devouring. We are horrified and disgusted to find that they are human.
9. We proceed to the hole where the *Displacer Beast* was digging and can see someone trembling in terror. Kelp casts a *Continual Light* on a piece of sting and pokes her staff into the hole. She looks in and sees a human female kicking at the light.
10. Jingo says he recognises her and calls out her name 'Barret'. She is still cautious and scared and refuses to come out from the hole. Coral drags a body of a slain *Displacer Beast* towards the hole to show Barret that it is safe and that we had killed all the beasts. Jingo says to Barret that it is fine if she stays where she is but asks her if she can tell us what happened. Barret asks about her friends? We tell her that they were not as lucky as her. We tell her that she is alive and we can make a difference in avenging their deaths. We offer her some water and try to coax her to come out.
11. Coral asks Barret if she can enter the hole. She climbs into the hole to speak with her. After about 2 turns, Barret has calmed down enough to come out. When she sees the dismembered bodies she once again becomes hysterical. This lasts for about 3 turns and when she eventually calms down she has developed an attachment to Coral, just like a lost child.
12. Barret tells us she was working at the Enclave performing her normal duties when she heard a huge crash and the ground shook. Barret said that she looked out of the building and saw that a large ship had ploughed into the dock and taken-out one of the buildings. She went on telling us that a fire had erupted and the alarm was raised. Barret said that she and the others working at the Enclave were about to help fight the fire when she saw *Ogres* and other creatures running about and attacking. She said people were screaming and trying to flee.
13. Barret told us that she had seen 4 purple robed and hooded 'people' who seemed to be unaffected in the middle of the chaos. She said she saw a *Unicorn* but that it was 'off-white' before being chased by the *Displacer Beasts*.
14. One of the party members uses a psionic power to deliver a message to the helm of the *Sea Pearl*. They intention that the message is passed onto Rolt and Myfinger. The message is that they are to get a cart and some men to come and collect dead creatures' bodies and a rescued villager.
15. After about 3 hours, Rolt, Myfinger and Father Ted and a number of other villagers arrived. We tell them what has happened. Two of the villagers are hunters and step up and say they will skin the *Displacer Beasts*. We warn them all that two *Gargoyles* are about and that if confronted to flee unless someone has magical weapons. (DM note: You have 4 *Displacer Beast* hides on your ship).
16. We then take our leave and continue towards the Enclave. As we travel along the dry creek bed we remain vigilant. Ahead we spied open fields and while we would normally expect



the pleasant smell of nature, the stench of death prevails. Again we are wary of ambush and progress cautiously and very alert to surprises. We hear what sounded like the whimpering of a woman (obviously not up to the calibre of the Sea Princesses!)



*Illustration 3: Leucrotta*

17. Harmony again uses her *Heighten Senses* ability to track the smell (phew that stinks!) and sounds. After several rounds we have pressed up to a bush and large rock. To gain access, Harmony *Phases* (got to love psionic!) and finds a *Leucrotta* – a 9-foot tall badger-headed creature with a tan coloured body, a demonic look and an almighty stink!
18. Harmony moves out of the bush and comes back into phase. She starts to say that there is a huge badger headed monster in hiding in the bush, when it leaps out straight at Wasabi, attacking with its snarling, snapping mouth. Instead of teeth, sharp jagged sickly grey bony ridges snarl releasing a foul decaying smell. Its eyes glow with a feral red light that focuses intently on our sweet flesh. Around its neck and head are the remains of what may have been a muzzle and about two feet of chain.
19. Wasabi is no slough and very quickly unleashes his two katana and deals some mighty damage. Kelp has been itching to unleash some of her newly learnt arcane arts and casts a *Colour Spray* directly at the hideous beast. She may need a little more practice as she caught Wasabi in the area of effect. The *Leucrotta* attempted to head-butt Wasabi.
20. After the initial flurry, our superior numbers quickly over-power the *Leucrotta*. Jingo, who had held back and studied the battle observed that he believed that the creature was semi-intelligent. We all think it must be of low intelligence as it tried to head-butt Wasabi's boulder-like head.

21. We search the area and discover a 10-foot by 10-foot 'cave' that the *Leucrotta* had dug out. Inside we find bones that had had every scrap of flesh gnawed off. We also discover a backpack. Coral steps forward and examines it. She declares that it is safe and opens it to reveal the contents. It contained:

- wine bottle (empty)
- pouch containing – 120 gp
- potion 1 – green, sludgy, smells like curry (healing)
- potion 2 – golden, sludgy, smells like musk (alteration magic, 2-3 times stronger than potion 1)
- potion 3 – green, watery, smells like skunk (alteration, slightly stronger)



*Illustration 4: Potion bottles*

22. Jingo places the potions in his backpack. We examine the body of the *Leucrotta* and note that there is evidence of scarring in a continuous line around the body, curious!?!

23. We travel on and soon come across what we thought was a boulder, but was in fact a marble statue of a man. He is on his hands and knees and the detail is remarkable. It is like someone froze a real man in time. His clothes are accurate down to the small thread from a missing button. The face is distorted in exhaustion and looks like he was gasping for air. Looking closely we see it is a petrified villager.
24. Charging from the undergrowth, a monstrous black bull like creature appears. Puffs of noxious steam jet out of its nostrils as it runs fiercely at us. Rays of light gleam of the black metal scales that is its hide. CRAP – Gorgon!



*Illustration 5: Gorgon*

25. Everyone scatters. None of us want to be a statue that the local teenage boys cum to visit!
26. Wasabi enters the nearby thick brush. Mystery goes off the path to shelter behind a boulder. Harmony goes off the path into thick brush. Jingo takes off up the path towards the Enclave. The twins leave the path but are unable to make it to cover.
27. The Gorgon charges to the end of the path between the brushes where Wasabi is taking cover and a large boulder. Mystery tries to create an illusion of a wall appearing in front of the *Gorgon* using a *Phantasmal Force*. Although most of the party believe that it is real, the *Gorgon* unleashes a deadly breath attack (a cone 60-foot long, 5-foot and the base and 20-foot at the end). The dreaded breath encompasses the twins...
28. ...luckily for us, both make their save against petrification. Kelp unleashes a magic missile from Marasotte's Staff into the *Gorgon* and then bolts looking for cover, followed by Coral.
29. Wasabi, moves out of his cover, directly behind the *Gorgon* and strikes with a well-placed katana enema up its jacksie! It spins and unleashes another breath, this time at Wasabi. Saved again! Wasabi is still super quick due to Kelp's *Strength* spell and takes the *Gorgon* down with a flurry of precise blows.
30. We are shaken but unhurt (or a garden ornament!) We decide to use a *Nap* from Mystery's staff. We make a bivouac in the brush as a place to sleep so as not to be in the open. Three hours later, with a full complement of spells, we head onwards again towards the Enclave. We estimate we have about an hour of light.
31. After a few rounds we discover drag marks into the trees. Jingo is asked to see if he can identify the footprints. He says that it looks as if it was caused by a box or chest. We go

into skirmish formation and head in. We find two statues and a stone chest. The statues have expressions of fear and desperation permanently etched onto the marble faces. They do not move or speak, but if they could they would be sure to tell a tale. It appears that they are two statues of two humans in peasant's garb. Again, the detail of these statues is uncanny, as you can see beard stubble etched into the ugly faces. They are caught in a pose of fleeing, yet they drag between them a stone chest. Twenty yards from the other statues is a lonesome marble statue of a young man sprinting. His face depicts a person in panic. Stone tears ran down its cheeks and towards the back as if caught in a non-existent wind. We surmise, once again, that they were villages that weren't as lucky with resisting the Gorgon.

32. After examining the chest we determine it is hollow, but the lid is fused shut. Unable to break it subtly, Kelp resorts to smashing a hole in the lid. Harmony uses her ever refining rogue skills and searches for traps. She spies coins and three potion bottles. After careful examination we relieve the chest of its contents:

- Potion 1 – gold coloured, sludgy, smells like dirt, tastes like pumpkin
- Potion 2 – gold coloured, sludgy, smells like dirt, tastes like pumpkin
- Potion 3 – gold coloured, sludgy, smells like dirt, tastes like pumpkin.

All are potions of extra healing.

- 150 gp and 50 pp
- Pair of boots, tan in colour
- A fine long sword in a scabbard, with the pommel carved into a clenched fist.
- A scroll that looks like a contract.

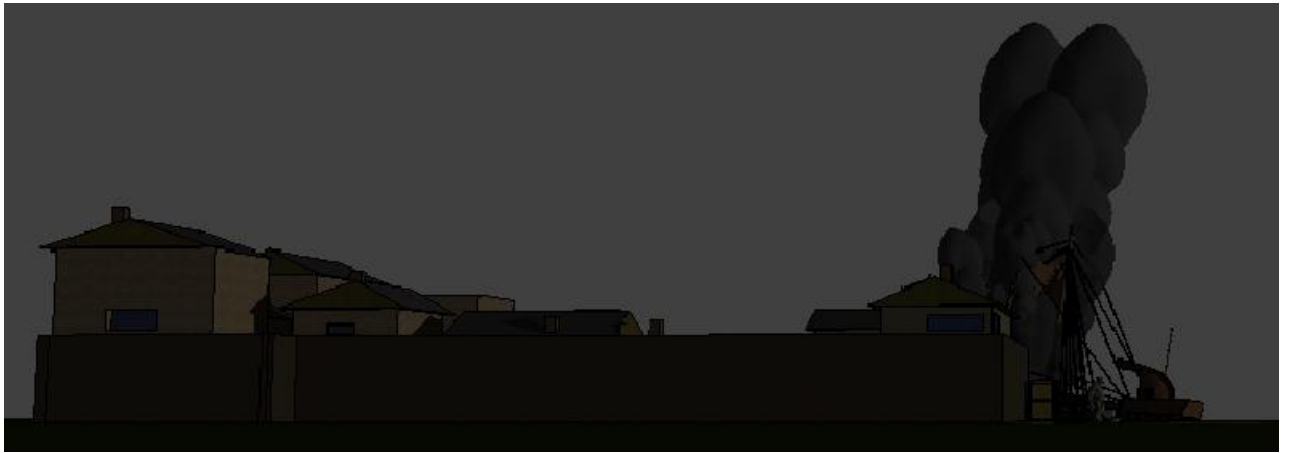
Everything is magical except the coins.

33. Harmony and Mystery experiment with the boots and deduct they are *Boots of Jumping*. Mystery takes them and puts them on as they increase her base movement rate up to 12. Harmony takes the magical long sword, Kelp separates the coins. Jingo place the scroll in his backpack and the potions are given to the fighters (Wasabi, Harmony and Kelp).

## Part 6 – The Sage's Enclave

34. It's getting dark so we decide we need to press on. After a short walk we sight in the distance what appears to be a fortified village that has a dock running out from its main entrance. A ship is 'docked' at the village with thick plumes of black smoke rising heavily from it.
35. From a hidden vantage point, the party try and make out as much detail as possible. The village is surrounded by a sturdy stone wall approximately 15 feet high. This only reveals the top part of the odd building.





*Illustration 6: The Sage's Enclave*

36. The ship is not docked but has rammed into the dock, destroying a large section of both the dock and ship. The ship has also ploughed into the nearest building near the dock. The ship is burning and is destroyed almost to the water line. The closest building is burnt and billowing smoke, but it appears that that fire has been extinguished.
37. The strange eerie silence of desertion is broken only by the breaking of burning ship beams. There must be casualties from this fire because the thick stink of tar cannot mask the fetid smell of burnt flesh.
38. We observe for about a turn whilst it grows dark. Jingo, using his glasses says he can see about five people in different buildings on the lookout. We decide to travel off the path towards the sea. We plan to approach from underwater; they wouldn't expect that would they!
39. Jingo asks 'what about me?' We look at him with raised eyebrows and say he may need to broaden his obscure knowledge to include 'common knowledge', because everyone know *Aquatic Elves* can confer water breathing!
40. Jingo, feeling slightly sheepish following his display of ignorance, tries to show his worth by saying he can see on the dock what looks like an ogre and a unicorn, but that the colour is not right – it's off-white. Just like Barret described.



*Illustration 7: The Sage's Enclave (what the party can see from the shore).*

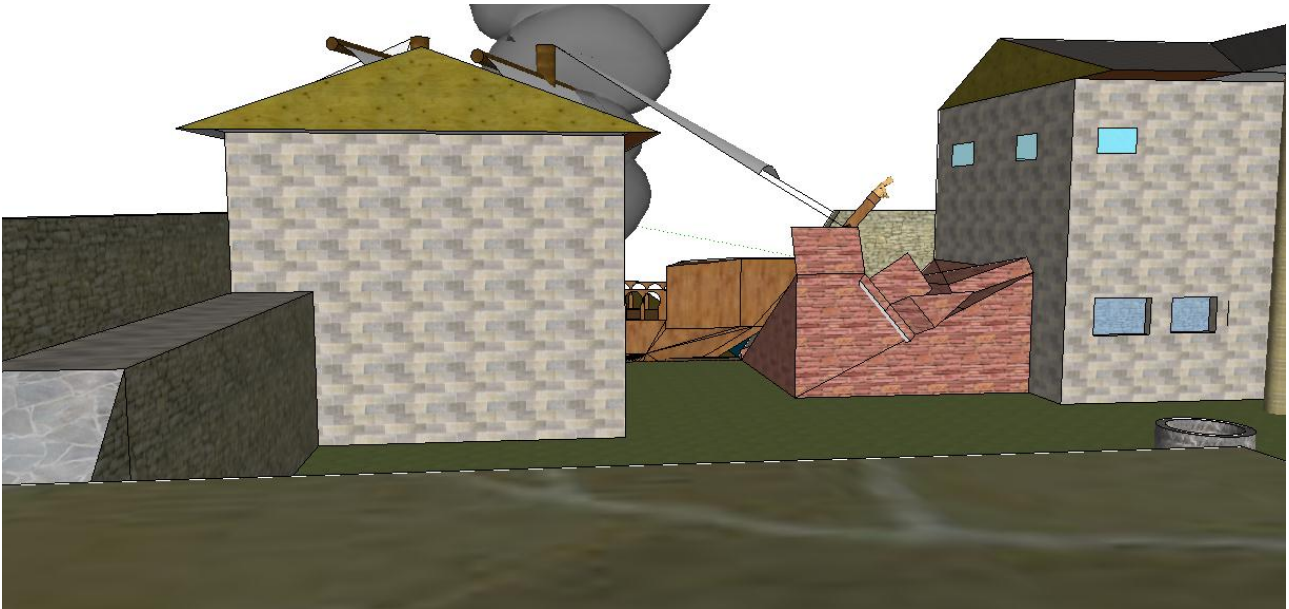




*Illustration 8: The Sage's Enclave (what Jingo can see from the shore).*

41. We quietly slip into the ocean about 500 yards from the dock and swim silently at a depth of about 10-foot. We think that it is always a welcome relief to be back in the open water. As we approach the Enclave the water becomes putrid. We have approach the Enclave were their sewage discharges into the sea (there is going to be a petition about this!)
42. About 30 feet from the seaward wall, one of Andrew's characters swims towards the surface to have a look. She confidently assumes that she is cloaked in darkness and any heat signature is dissipated by the seawater. As she pokes her head above the surface a bolt zings past into the water, shot from a crossbow being held by a vacant eyed dwarf in one of the windows. She ducks underwater again and signalling the danger. (DM notes: I do not recall who was fired at. I do recall Andrew and I arguing about what could be seen from under the water and the ability to cast spells while in water. We also argued about other things. Therefore as DM I **Red flag (see appendix D)** casting spells while in water).
43. Harmony goes out of phase (have I said how much I love this ability?). She passes through the wall and moves up to the room where the dwarf was stationed. Coral casts Silence 15'' radius aimed just inside the window. At the same time Mystery casts Etherealness and Kelp, Coral, Wasabi and Jingo all get to the room via the Ethereal plane. The guard is subdued. We have now breached the Enclave undetected (we think) and start to consider our options. There are two doors from the room and we decide it is best to do some scouting before deciding where we are going. Harmony says she will again go out of phase and head out to what is believed to be a second story stairwell/walkway. She does a quick scan and sees two dwarves heading for the door into the room we have entered.
44. We quickly arrange ourselves for combat and when the door opens we spring into action. Coral manages to get past the first dwarf and sees another dwarf heading for the stairs going down. Worried he will raise the alarm, Coral chase him down and dispatches him just before he reaches the bottom of the stairs.
45. She has a quick look in the room at the bottom of the stairs - it's empty except a couple of doors. Coral goes back upstairs and stands guard between the stairs and the door while the party dispatch the other guard.
46. The party check out the rest of the building. Downstairs they find a 15x20ft room. A large pile of refuse and offal fill the middle of the room. If you stood in the middle of the pile it would come up to your chest. Around the rest of the room is the broken wreckage of marble tubs, wash basins and shattered mirrors.
47. The next room is 10x15ft and is lined with bench-like seats on all the walls. The seats all have holes in their top, like a privy. Facing stones on the front of the benches prevent you from seeing how deep the holes go.

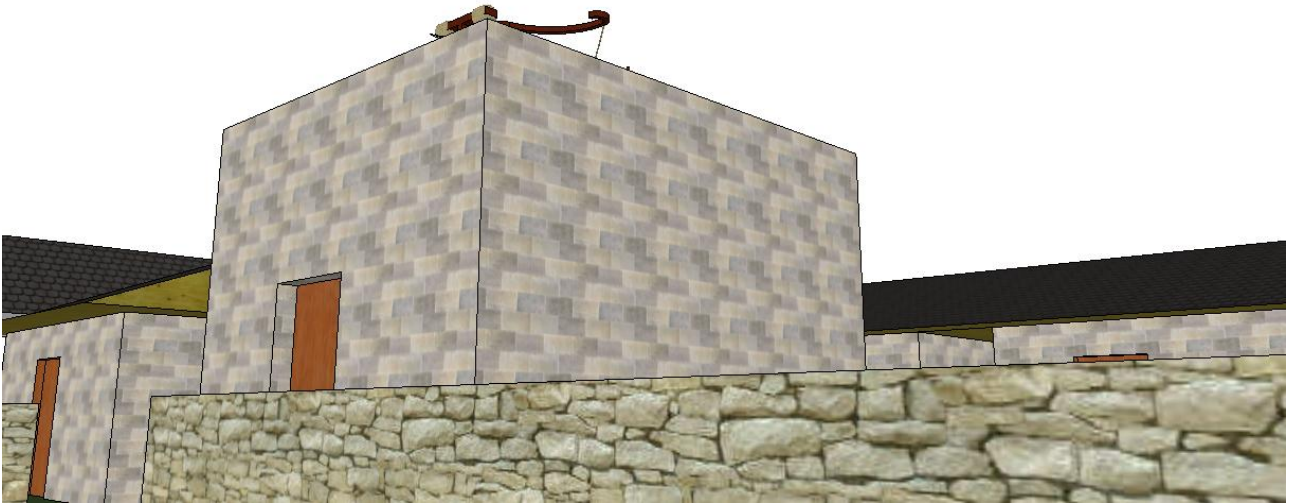
48. The next room is a 15x10 ft. cloak room. Furs line the wall, hanging of wooden hooks. Bunches of dried herbs are tied in small bundles and hang between the furs.
49. We question the prisoner with the following answers (he has glazed eyes & is charmed, but charming does not normally glaze the eyes). He speaks in a dazed trance like voice. The party learns the following information from the dwarf:
- I was a mercenary on the ship for a number of years
  - We were hunters of monsters & animals for trade
  - the sages enclave contains sages who make potions etc. (we assume for trade)
  - unicorn was supposed to be alive for sages, but they only had a dead one, it's off-white and standing next to ogre
  - 10 ogres rowed the boat and all survived the collision
  - 5 other "hunters" - this guy was 6th
  - CAPT Hunter is the captain of the ship
  - 4 purple cloaked "men" - he has never seen their faces though
  - there were grey elves on the ship, but they are all dead, they used to help the hunters
  - there are some prisoners from the village, but some have been eaten by ogres and other creatures
  - there was a special monster on the ship
  - the 4 purple robes went into the building in the middle of the courtyard, that is where the sages are
  - Since we crashed, I have only been instructed to guard this area and keep everything out, no new instructions since stationed here. Instructions were from CAPT Hunter.
  - the ogres are stationed around the perimeter
  - someone let the beasts go
50. Harmony goes ethereal and moves through a door and out onto a balcony. She looks around quickly and then heads back inside. She tells the party what she sees. Though it was dark, she can see large humanoids (she assumes they are Ogres) inside the grounds. There also appears to be a raised level that is guarded by a stone building with a ballista on top. The party thinks this may be where the 4 purple robed creatures went.



*Illustration 9: Inside the Sage's Enclave (as seen from the balcony) looking at the dock.*



*Illustration 10: Inside the Sage's Enclave (as seen from the balcony) across the courtyard.*



*Illustration 11: Inside the Sage's Enclave (as seen from the balcony) looking at the ballista.*



# Appendix A - Sea Pearl Treasury

All in gold pieces. Unchanged from previous game summary.

Income	Costs
5000 (party contributions)	20 (shore party @ Dropoff village)
300 (Inker items, fish @ Dropoff village)	4 (crew @ Dropoff village)
	300 (cargo @ other islands before Sift Island)
	200 (passage with Captain Hollis @ Sift Island)
	12 (crew at Sift Island)
	2700 (arcane powder @ Fishside)
	38 (crew @ Fishside)
	38 (existing crew - shore leave bonus @ Fishside)
	65 (marines @ Fishside)
	684 (sale of cargo @ Fishside) 50 (donation to St Cuthbert church @ Tonnsborg)
	8 (Tonnsborg long-house)

# Appendix B – Island Information

## Dropoff Island

Town: Drop Village  
Population: 100  
Village Leader: Musign  
Industry: Fishing, carpentry, blacksmithing  
Location: The Moonshae Isles. NNE of Mintarn Island in the Korinn Archipelago

## Sift Island

Town: Knuckle Ridge.  
Population: 200 permanent 400 during Calms.  
Industry: Timber, Fine Woodwork, Paper, Glass-blowers, small port a good place to join a small convoy.

# Appendix C – Current status of Sea Princesses' armour and weapons

## Arlotte's Trident (Mystery)

### Trident powers

- +1 *wisdom*
- +2 *trident*
- Shoot net from each prong once per day

### Staff powers

- Act as holy symbol
- *Reflecting pool* can be cast on liquid in container
- +2 to all saving throws
- wielder can communicate telepathically when in altered state
- all cure spells d4+4
- when on holy ground – minor access spheres become major
- *Nap* (1 charge)
- *Neutralise poison* (1 charge)
- *Heal* (2 charges)
- *Remove Fear* (1 charge)
- *Remove Paralysis* (1 charge)

## Fairwind of the Waves Rapier (Coral)

- +1 to charisma
- +1 to hit and damage
- 10% magic resistance
- Can change into any bladed weapon

## Farflown the Dagger (Harmony)

- +1 dexterity
- Exceptional weapon (+1 to hit and damage – not magical)
- Acts as a dagger of throwing
- Spider line

## Marasotte's Staff (Kelp) - 1 charge

- +1 intelligence
- Exceptional weapon (+1 to hit and damage – not magical)
- *Detect magic* once per day
- *Light* once per day
- *Identify* once per day
- Magic Missile 9th (1 charge)

## Sea Elf Scale Mail (Mystery)

+2  
30 PSP

## Sea Elf Scale Mail (Coral)

+2  
30 PSP

## Sea Elf Scale Mail (Harmony)

+2  
30 PSP

## Sea Elf Scale Mail (Kelp)

+2  
30 PSP

# Appendix D – Red Flags

Slow – does this slow phase for move or action?

## Slow (Alteration)

Range: 90 yds. + 10 yds./level  
Duration: 3 rds. + 1 rd./level  
Area of Effect: 40-ft. cube,  
1 creature/level

Components: V, S, M  
Casting Time: 3  
Saving Throw: Neg.

A *slow* spell causes affected creatures to move and attack at half their normal rates. It negates a *haste* spell or equivalent, but does not otherwise affect magically speeded or slowed creatures. Slowed creatures have an Armor Class penalty of +4 AC, an attack penalty of -4, and all Dexterity combat bonuses are negated. The magic affects a number of creatures equal to the spellcaster's level, if they are within the area of effect chosen by the wizard (i.e., a 40-foot cubic volume centered as called for by the caster). The creatures are affected from the center of the spell outward. Saving throws against the spell suffer a -4 penalty.

The material component of this spell is a drop of molasses.

When a *Slow* is cast movement and rates of attack are halved. This means that if you move at a rate of 12, you would now move at a rate of 6. *Combat and Tactics* state that a movement of 6 or less reduces your phase by 1. Therefore, a normal man-sized creature that moves in the fast would move to the average if its movement was 12 or less.

Therefore, for the ease of simplified game mechanics, **any slowed creature has their base phase reduced by one step.**

This would mean man-sized characters (all player characters), whose movement is between 7-17, would have their base initiative moved to the average. Slow does not slow casting speed; however, you cannot have an action that is faster than your base initiative. Therefore, spells that are fast would have to be cast in the average. Spells in the average phase or above are not affected. While slowed, you can still only cast 1 spell/2 rounds.

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Displacement first hit automatically misses. Is this the first attempt or the first successful hit?

What about magic missiles that 'automatically' strikes its target?

In the Monster Manual, the first attack on a Displacer Beast does not automatically miss; however, it does for a Cloak of Displacement. This appears to me to be an oversight as the Cloaks are made from the hide of Displacer Beasts. Since I can remember, the first attack has always missed when it comes to displacement. Therefore, for my game, the first attack on Displacer Beasts, whether it hits or misses, will always miss (see the Cloak description).

With regard to Magic Missiles, displaced creatures create an image separate from themselves. It is the image that is targeted, much the same as if targeting a "Mirror Image". Magic Missiles do not automatically hit a mage protected by a Mirror Image spell. Therefore, for my game, the first round of magic missiles targeted at a displaced creature will miss. If they are targeted again with the same spell, the Magic Missiles will automatically hit.



## Casting Spells Underwater.

At the beginning of this campaign, I let the players have Sea Elves on the understanding that this would not be an underwater based setting. The party could be sea elves that have to live above the waves. It was never my intention to have you adventuring underwater. I also allowed the party to take psionics. My reasoning was that psionics was a natural evolution as casting magic in water was difficult and psionic was easier. With that in mind, here is my ruling on casting underwater to create an easy game mechanic ...

As a rule of thumb, you need air and free movement to cast spells. If you have air around your face, you can cast spells with a vocal component. Water restricts movements and will restrict excessive gestures. Spells with somatic components and a casting time of 1 may be cast. Spells with material components will need to be assessed on a case by case basis. Reference material used will be *Of Ship and Seas*. If the spell can be cast this does not guarantee its effectiveness. This spells fit the above criteria. That does not guarantee their effectiveness. If in doubt, the spell cannot be cast.

1	Charm Person	1	Hornung's Guess
1	Chill Touch	2	Blindness
1	Conjure Spell Component	2	Knock
1	Detect Magic	2	Lock
1	Detect Phase	3	Far Reaching I
1	Detect Secret Passages and Portals	3	Minor Malison
1	Expeditious Retreat	4	Dilation I
1	Fist of Stone	4	Dimension Door
1	Gaze Reflection	4	Divination Enhancement
1	Hypnotism	4	Extension I
1	Lasting Breath	4	Far Reaching II
1	Magic Missile	4	Greater Malison
1	Ray of Fatigue	4	Lesser Geas
1	Shocking Grasp	4	Polymorph Self
1	Spook	5	Contact Other Plane
3	Blink	5	Extension II
3	Feign Death	5	Far Reaching III
5	Improved Blink	5	Leomund's Lamentable Belaborment
1	Copy	5	Teleport
1	Hold Portal		