

FABLES

PIRATES OF THE AETHERIAL EXPANSE



LOST TO THE AETHER
EPISODE 4 OF 6



GHOSTFIRE
GAMING

5E
COMPATIBLE





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EPISODE 4

LOST TO THE AETHER



GHSTFIRE
GAMING

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WELCOME TO FABLES!

You hold in your hands the third episode of *Pirates of the Aetherial Expanse*, a story of pirates and empires seeking fortune, glory, and freedom upon the starlit seas of the Astral Plane. Each episode of this Fable contains about four game sessions' worth of thrilling fifth edition adventure, enough to entertain a weekly group of roleplaying game (RPG) players until the next episode arrives a month later.

YOU ARE A GAME MASTER

As Game Master (GM) of a Fable, you have the power of a storyteller, telling tales of heroism and adventure to a rapt audience. Imagine yourself dressed in the clothes of a traveling bard, your face cast in glowing firelight as you weave a tapestry of words. Your words draw those who sit around the fire with you into another world, a world where they aren't just the audience of a tale, but actors and storytellers themselves.

The GM's role is to establish the setting of each scene in this Fable, introduce and roleplay its nonplayer characters (NPCs), and play monsters and villains that long to bring a swift end to the heroes' adventures. The players at your table are storytellers in their own right. Though they embody a single character each while you embody many, the players have the power to make decisions that will change the world forever. The best GMs are willing to improvise, even ignoring the text of a Fable when necessary, to ensure the characters' actions have consequences—for both good and ill.

If you don't plan to run this Fable, stop reading now. What follows is for the Game Master's eyes only.

RUNNING THIS FABLE

Fables is an episodic adventure series using the fifth edition of the world's first roleplaying game. To play, you need the free fifth edition System Reference Document, or the books that make up the fifth edition core rules. This Fable takes place upon the Aetherial Expanse, a sea of shimmering starlight home to strange creatures and unpredictable magic. This expanse is a small corner of the Astral Plane, the plane which connects all other planes of existence. Powerful magic is usually required to travel great distances through the zero-gravity reaches of the Astral Plane, but the Aetherial Expanse is unique: a substance called aether forms a sea of roiling magical power that allows conventional seacraft from the Material Plane to sail through this magical realm.

This new setting is described in the *Aetherial Expanse Setting Guide*, included with episode 1 of this Fable. Before beginning this Fable, you should familiarize yourself with the locations, NPCs, and lore of the setting, as well as the new nautical rules found in the setting guide.

Additionally, the following information will help you run this Fable as GM.

EPISODES AND CHAPTERS

A Fable is a complete story, released in six monthly episodes. Each episode is an arc of this overall story that presents a miniature sandbox environment. An episode is designed for a specific range of levels. As the GM, you're empowered to run an episode for characters of a higher or lower level than recommended, but be prepared for a more challenging or easier session unless you alter the challenges and monsters the characters face.

The characters can explore each episode's region at their leisure. An episode typically has three to four chapters, which each contain enough game content to fill one or two game sessions. Each chapter describes a specific location within an episode's sandbox environment, or it could represent a linear series of encounters that drive the plot forward.

MONSTERS, MAGIC, AND MORE

When you see text in **bold**, that's the Fable's way of telling you a scene or location contains a monster or NPC that's ready to fight. New monsters and NPCs in Fables are usually found in appendix A: New Monsters of the episode in which they appear. If a monster's name appears in bold but isn't followed by "(see appendix A)" or a similar pointer, then that monster's game statistics are found in the fifth edition core rules.

When you see text in italics, that's the Fable's way of telling you that you're looking at the name of a spell (like *hideous laughter*) or a magic item (like *winged boots*). Most spells and magic items are found in the fifth edition core rules. New spells and magic items are described in an episode's appendixes as well, indicated by a "(see appendix B)" pointer.

When you see boxed text like this, the characters have likely entered a new area or triggered an event such as an NPC entering the scene. This text is meant for the GM to read or paraphrase aloud to the players to set the scene.



RUNNING A PIRATE CAMPAIGN

Pirates of the Aetherial Expanse is a story about larger-than-life piratical heroes in a realm where magic is a daily fact of life. Magic pervades the Astral Plane, and in the Expanse, waves of aether, a substance sometimes called "liquid magic," washes upon the shore of every island.

As the GM, you can consider it your role to communicate the tone of this campaign to your players. Because this is an RPG campaign, you don't need to be tonally consistent the way a book or a movie does, but playing this story as a dark fantasy dirge when its tone is intentionally high action and swashbuckling might make players feel awkward or confused.

Three major elements in this story inform its tone, and you and your players will probably have more fun if you keep these elements in mind while prepping and running each chapter of this Fable:

Heroic Piracy. The characters are the heroes of this story. They're pirates, meaning they plunder and kill, but the fact that they do bad things as a matter of course doesn't make them any less the heroes when they save a civilization or defeat an evil empire at the end of the day. The thing that separates heroic pirates from villainous ones is a moral code. If your players are having a hard time feeling like heroes, having their captain devise a code of honor that dictates who they slay, who they spare, and who they steal from could be a way to establish a more heroic tone without losing the moral ambiguity that makes pirates so fun to play.

Supernatural Drama. Magic pervades the Aetherial Expanse, affecting every part of life on the sea. As GM, your NPCs and custom story hooks (if you want to create adventures beyond the episodes of this Fable) should consider what it's like to live in a world that frequently and chaotically defies what you know about it, and where supernatural mystery fills every corner of the map. Likewise, players should consider what their character's relationship to magic is; do they take comfort in its all-encompassing power, or is the unexplainable a constant threat?

Emotional Grounding. The danger of stories that engage in high-action heroism is that they can feel hollow or unmotivated. The best way to keep your story grounded is to include moments of heavy emotions to ground your heroes and villains. The best villains don't just twirl their mustaches seeking to cause capital-E evil. In this adventure, the villains are power-hungry colonialists seeking to expand their empire for the betterment of people that look and act like them. Heroic pirates aren't pirates just because they want a merry life of rum and adventure, but because something about their life was painful enough to set them on this challenging path. Find moments to allow your NPCs and player characters to express these real emotions and motivations.



THIS FABLE'S STORY

This primer on the story and backstory of *Pirates of the Aetherial Expanse* will help you tell a compelling and cohesive narrative from episode to episode.

OVERVIEW

In this Fable, a group of castaways band together to form a ragtag pirate crew after a devastating ship battle in a distant corner of the Aetherial Expanse. The characters likely come from a variety of backgrounds, factions, and statuses within their former ships' hierarchies. A character may have been a pirate to begin with, but could just as easily have been an officer aboard a brigantine of the mighty Karelagne Empire, or a privateer flying the flag of the mercantile Kingdom of Ayris.

Separated from their former factions, these characters begin a new life of piracy aboard a salvaged ship, lured by the promise of adventure, fabulous wealth, and possibly even revenge against the faction that lured them into a doomed battle in the first place.

BACKSTORY

Long ago, in an age lost to all record or living recollection, aether began to form in a corner of the Astral Plane.

Aethergenesis

A group of planeфарers traveling between realms were killed by the tempestuous forces of the Astral Plane. However, their defiant spirits refused to die. Lost in space, these spirits coagulated into a silvery mass that drifted across the plane. Over the aeons, more and more lost souls were absorbed by this gestalt of spirits, until it grew so large that its individual spirits lost their sense of self, and became a mass of impotent thoughts and desires. The gestalt became less like a spirit or a being, and more like the sea; shimmering, placid, and occasionally wracked by furious storms.

Other planeфарers named this sea of magical, spiritual energy "aether." Hurtling comets lodged in its aetherial surface and formed islands, which sank to the depths. The magical power of these planar comets caused liquid aether to crystallize into a solid form, which people would come to call aetherium. Solid aetherium crystal buoyed these comets back to the surface, and islands began to grow and form in the Aetherial Expanse.



Astrium and the Cosmic Turtles

Creatures of the Astral Plane, as well as creatures from other planes banished to the Astral by magical mishap or experimentation, found their way to the Aetherial Expanse. Over centuries, the magic of this realm caused them to mutate and adapt to their new home. The greatest of these creatures were the cosmic turtles. Tales of the earliest surviving plane-faring civilizations say the cosmic turtles were once ordinary beasts no larger than a human fist, but that over centuries of exposure to aether, they gained the capacity for great wisdom and grew so large that islands could form upon their backs. Nevertheless, cosmic turtles are now believed extinct, for no sailor of the Expanse has seen one for a century.

These scant surviving myths come from records of a civilization of Astrium, a great city inhabited by plane-faring giants that was lost many centuries ago. Legend says the giants made their home in the center of the Aetherial Expanse—but the center of this realm holds only the Maelstrom, an immense aetherstorm which rages without end. If Astrium ever existed, its magical secrets, and the astral titans that discovered them, have been lost forever.

Arrival of the Kingdom of Ayris

As the plane between the planes, the Astral Plane is an easy realm for mages to create highly stable portals to. It's also a place where enterprising plane-farers can most easily find new portals to hitherto unknown worlds. Controlling a liminal plane such as the Astral has been the giddy dream of countless empires across history.

About a century before this Fable begins, two mighty nations from different worlds on the Material Plane discovered the secret to creating stable portals to the Aetherial Expanse, the only part of the Astral Plane they could explore by using their naval ships (with mild arcane adjustments) to sail through the aether. Of these two nations, the first to enter the Expanse was the Kingdom of Ayris, a tiny coastal nation on its home world, which prospered as a realm of traders that its warlike neighbors maintained good relations with.

Ayris kept a small naval fleet at home, but protected its homeland with a well-paid mercenary army and an equally well-off navy of privateers. The boldest of these warriors for hire were offered huge sums to enter the Ayrisian mages' portal to the Astral Plane and go on the adventure of a lifetime, guarding Ayrisian settlers, botanists, geologists, and explorers as they hunted for new, valuable resources across the Expanse.



They found this resource in the form of aetherium. Though the aether itself was overflowing with magical power, actually immersing oneself in it for long caused horrific poisoning and quick death. Crystallized aether, however, was stable, nonpoisonous, and easily transportable. Ayrissian mages longed for the substance to advance their experiments, and the kingdom's warlike neighbors all but salivated at its destructive potential.

Invasion by the Empire of Karel

A scant decade after the Kingdom of Ayris began colonizing the Aetherial Expanse, a new contender entered the scene: the Karelagne Empire. Hailing from another world on the Material Plane, the vast Empire of Karel had likewise discovered the potential of aetherium to enhance its military capabilities and catapult its technology centuries into the future in an instant.

Equipped with a navy that, if mustered in full, could stretch across the horizon uninterrupted, the Karelagne Empire swept across the Astral Plane, and engaged the Ayrissian colonists and their privateer navy in a bitter war that raged for decades—one that ended in a stalemate driven by both war-weary nations' desire to return to hunting for aetherium.

Rise of the Drakes

The Astral Plane is hostile to mortal life, and no humanoid creature is native to the Expanse. Over the centuries, however, countless people have been lost on its deserted islands, and the spirits of those who die at sea are claimed by the roiling consciousness of the aether. Bodies lost at sea have been known to rise again, inhabited by a restless spirit broken off from the aether's gestalt consciousness. These astral emergents (see the *Aetherial Expanse Setting Guide*) are few in number and have only scattered communities, but they call the Expanse their home—and no one has more right to do so than them.

Defectors were common during the War of the Invaders, as the emergents called it. Many of these defectors took their ships and settled on islands where a handful of emergents had already made their settlements. Defectors and emergents banded together to form pirate crews that harried imperial and kingdom vessels alike for wealth and the resources they needed to survive.

Of these pirates, the most feared was Captain Teruko the Drake, and her ship, the *Drake*, which shared her epithet. The *Drake's* crew settled on an island cluster far from the military encampments of the Kingdom of Ayris and the Karelagne Empire, and declared it a free haven for pirates across the Expanse. Following Captain Teruko's death, her islands were named the Isle of Drakes. And in the decade since the War of the Invaders ended, jobless sailors have flocked to the Isle of Drakes in search of fortune and glory in the only way they know how; sowing death across the sea.

PIRATES OF THE AETHERIAL EXPANSE

This is a brief summary of the six episodes of this Fable.

Episode 1: Treasure of Shipgrave Reef

A group of shipwrecked sailors must band together to form a makeshift crew, and test their nascent bonds of fellowship against the allure of treasure within Shipgrave Reef.

Episode 2: Come Sail Away

The characters depart Shipgrave Reef and travel to the Isle of Drakes, a pirate haven in the Aetherial Expanse. They can explore its inhabited islands before settling on its citied central isle and using it as a base of operations.

Episode 3: The Lost Constellation

Tensions between the Kingdom of Ayris and the Karelagne Empire heat up as zealots are discovered kidnapping astral emergents for devious experimentation. Gather allies, gather tools from dangerous outposts, and save the day!

Episode 4: Lost to the Aether

The characters become involved in the affairs of the Sistren of the Constellation Isles, and must swim, climb, and cut their way through the Fallen Isles on the hunt for an ancient merfolk palace that contains a world-changing artifact. But not before they tread water with trouble like merrow, angry merfolk, a double-crossing swashbuckler, and more.

Episode 5: For Whom the Stars Toll

The characters learn of an impending apocalypse as the Reaper, an ancient sea witch, starts harvesting souls from across the Aetherial Expanse. After developing symptoms of reaper's curse, the characters must stop her and defeat the true evil behind the scenes.

Episode 6: Legends of the Seas

The Reaper's actions in episode 5 have goaded the power-hungry Karelagne Empire to hunt down a superweapon lost beneath the aether and launch a final assault against the pirates. To stop the empire, the pirates must ally themselves with the Kingdom of Ayris, or all will be lost!



INTRODUCTION

The Constellation Isles are an archipelago rumored to have been the home of astral merfolk and merrow. It is now the base of operations for the Sistren of the Isles, a group of female privateers who are either astral merfolk themselves or descended from them. Their headquarters are kept secret, for the Constellation Isles are enchanted and cannot be landed upon without a special artifact or a guide to lead a ship directly there.

This episode is a loose sequel to the story introduced in the previous episode, in which the characters met the Sistren of the Isles and performed privateering work for this reclusive pirate crew.

Now that the characters have met and built a rapport with the Sistren, this episode delves into their origin—and their dark secrets. The characters travel to the Constellation Isles, their piratical headquarters. Deep beneath the surface of the Constellation Isles are ancient ruins that hint at one of the civilizations that ruled the Astral Plane in a time long past—and the terrible power that it once controlled.



CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In this episode, the characters navigate the dangerous waters protecting the Constellation Isles. They must then rescue the Warden of the Isles before descending into the Sunken Palace to acquire a powerful artifact.

Characters gain a level each time they complete one of the following objectives. They can't rise to higher than 9th-level before the start of the next episode in this Fable.

- The characters return Teagan to their ship after freeing her from captivity in chapter 2 of this episode.
- The characters escape the Sunken Palace with the Mermaid's Tears at the end of this Episode

THE SISTREN OF THE CONSTELLATION ISLES

Though the pirate faction known as the Sistren of the Constellation Isles is present all over the Aetherial Expanse, even maintaining outposts on several islands, the Constellation Isles is their one true home. The recorded history of the Sistren starts 500 years ago, when female humanoids descended from merfolk within the Isles built a home base on the local island of Kesforth. Their purpose was to protect the seas around the Constellation Isles, keeping them safe and healthy. In the years since their foundation, the preservation of a free and healthy ocean has become one of the faction's core tenets, one that each member of the Sistren does their best to uphold. The symbol of the Sistren is an indigo flag with white points evoking the Constellation Isles they call home.

A few things set the Sistren apart, making them easy to spot. For one, the Sistren are all women; in addition, each Sistren vessel has a cat aboard, and all Sistren members wear their identifying star sign necklace.

Sistren Star Signs

All members carry a "sign" on their person to signify their allegiance. This sign is a necklace made from a unique material called motherpearl molded to look like a constellation of stars. Each member of the Sistren has a unique sign made from the material. This way, the necklace serves both as a symbol of membership to the Sistren and as a personal identifier should their body be found washed up on shore.

Allies of the Sistren are sometimes given an *honorary sign* (see appendix B), to show that they are considered a friend of the faction. This sign, not exclusive to women, is also made from motherpearl and is always in the shape of the Constellation Isles.

Motherpearl

The Sistren are especially fond of the unique metal called motherpearl. Most of their weapons and tools are made from the material, and though the Sistren have access to it in abundance, it is rarely found outside of their faction. More information about the properties of motherpearl can be found in the “Motherpearl” sidebar.

Sistren Titles and Admittance

The pirate faction has its own rules and tenets that each member is expected to follow. Included in this are titles granted to different members depending on their responsibilities within the faction, as well as rules about becoming a member of the faction.

The Sistren only accepts women and those with ancestry tying them back to the Constellation Isles in some way. This means most applicants have some degree of merfolk ancestry. To become a full member, an applicant must work as crew aboard a Sistren vessel for at least five years. Following this service and with the recommendation of the vessel’s Starlet, the applicant may be given a motherpearl sign and be considered a full member of the Sistren of the Constellation Isles. With the membership comes a title from among the following.

Astronomer. Astronomers are historians and scientists whose research focuses on bettering the health of the oceans, especially around the Constellation Isles. It was their research that made the motherpearl material such a staple of the Sistren identity.

Warden. If a member’s talents lean more toward strategy and combat, they are given the title of Warden. These are battle specialists, often charged with security details for Sistren expeditions, as well as training applicants with using weaponry.

Wayfinder. These are members of the Sistren who serve various roles within the faction pertaining to exploration. Most Sistren travelers are Wayfinders.

Starlet. A Starlet is a Sistren member, be they Astronomer, Warden, or Wayfinder, who is given command of a Sistren sea vessel and its crew. Their full title would be Starlet as a prefix in front of their previous title, for instance Starlet Warden or Starlet Wayfinder. While on the ship, only the term “Starlet” is used, as it is faster to say in an emergency. The term “Starlet” is often exchanged for “Captain” if the vessel has non-Sistren crew on board.

Brightstar Commander. Sistren members who lead a Sistren of the Isles headquarters are called Brightstar Commanders, or just Commanders. They oversee greenlighting expeditions made by the Sistren, as well as approving the ascension of members within the faction.

MOTHERPEARL

A common crafting material within the Constellation Isles is motherpearl, an opalescent material visually akin to mother of pearl. It is as hard as steel but much lighter, making it ideal in crafting weapons and armor. The material is only found in abundance in the Constellation Isles, as the pearls come from giant oysters who nest on the dormant bodies of feathered stars (see appendix A). Due to the close ties of motherpearl to the Constellation Isles and the Sistren of the Isles based there, Sistren signs are always made of the material.

Motherpearl Armor. Any armor made of motherpearl is half the weight of its steel counterpart. Medium and heavy armor made of motherpearl no longer gives disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Motherpearl Weaponry. Weapons made from motherpearl are easier to wield in aether. Characters wielding melee motherpearl weapons while submerged no longer have disadvantage on attack rolls. Likewise, ranged weapon attacks that use motherpearl ammunition no longer automatically miss beyond the weapons normal range and can be used just as they would on land.



LEGEND OF THE MERMAID'S TEARS

In days gone by, astral merfolk were said to be so powerful that they could command the currents of the Aetherial Expanse itself. Alas, they were forbidden to do so by the Constellation God known as the Empress, who frowned upon their whimsical misuse of her powers.

One curious mermaid was enamored by the seafarers who traveled in small wooden vessels, often trading crafts with those onboard. She formed a deep friendship with one of these travelers. When a violent storm capsized her companion's vessel and threatened to drown the sailors, the mermaid used her powers to save them.

The Empress punished the mermaid and banished her to the depths of the astral sea where she was imprisoned and unable to surface ever again. Her tears coalesced into aether pearls, taking with it all her former powers. She collected the pearls and set them into a necklace that she wore until she passed on as a reminder of the sacrifice she had made to save the lives of those she loved.

In the time since, the mermaid of the story has come to represent alliances and friendships developed between such different peoples. Though only few still know of the mermaid and her sacrifice, those who do preserve her memory through song and story.



The Mermaid's Tears Sea Shanty

All sailors should hear of her story
Of the love and the glee that she felt
Even when amidst of a quarry
We remember the hand she was dealt

Dealt to a brave maid!
A mermaid who gave aid
Whose memory won't fade
As long as we chant
Who acted so daring,
So selfless and sharing
For all those seafaring
Shall not her story recant

All sailors should listen for music
When seizing the wave of the day
It's her you can hear, so melodic
It makes us all want to say

Oh, what a brave maid!
A mermaid who gave aid
Whose memory won't fade
As long as we chant
Who acted so daring,
So selfless and sharing
For all those seafaring
Shall not her story recant

Should someone reclaim her weeping
Now that would be quite the tale
Seize her tears and the power you're reaping
Why, you'd be almost as strong as this ale!

Now praise the brave maid!
A mermaid who gave aid
Whose memory won't fade
As long as we chant
Who acted so daring,
So selfless and sharing
For all those seafaring
Shall not her story recant

CALL TO ADVENTURE

This episode can begin in a number of ways. Regardless of where you set the beginning of this episode, the characters are approached by a member of the Sistren named Nadia—who they traveled with in episode 3 of this Fable—and requested to travel to the Constellation Isles and help them on another dangerous adventure (in exchange for a good reward, of course).

After Other Adventures

Since the Aetherial Expanse is a sandbox environment in which the players are encouraged to set their own adventures, it's possible that they spent time marauding or pursuing personal goals after the end of episode 3 of this Fable.

In this case, the characters are called to the Constellation Isles when they hear a ballad known as the “Legend of the Mermaid’s Tears” sung in the Seven Stars Tavern, on Velstarron Island of the infamous Isle of Drakes. This famous tavern is a gathering place for sea dogs of all kinds, and a member of the Sistren approaches the characters after the song has been sung. What appears at first to be a simple treasure hunt will soon plunge the characters into a game of deadly magic.







CHAPTER 1: HELL OR HIGH AETHER

Following what was likely a tumultuous bout of political intrigue, a moment of relaxation might be in order. Based on recommendations by the locals, the characters find themselves entertained by food, drink, and song in the Seven Stars Tavern on Velstarron Island of the Isle of Drakes.

Though its reputation is far from reputable, as you are all but certain to leave the establishment with a shirt stained from wine, it is a place steeped with infamy. Notorious sailors have found both drink and adventure within the tavern. Depending on their motivations, the heroes of this episode are likely to find the same within the walls of the Seven Stars.

As the musical entertainment for the day starts a ballad about the infamous Mermaid's Tears, a powerful artifact of immense power and value, the characters are pulled into a wild treasure hunt that could change the very landscape of the nearby Constellation Isles.

AN INVITATION

After the characters have gotten comfortable with the party mood of the Seven Stars Tavern and perhaps ordered some food and drink for their table, read the following aloud.

The patrons of the Seven Stars Tavern are loud and cheerful. The tables that usually take up most of the space have been pushed against the walls to make room for dancing, and a jovial medley of sea shanties spawns rowdy cheers throughout the tavern.

However, a familiar face among the crowd does not share the merry tune. Nadia stands against the far wall, staring at the performers who have just started singing about a mermaid, and looks lost in thought. As the song ends, she glances about the room, as if to gauge the crowd's reaction, when she locks eyes with you. She smiles widely and moves toward your table.

Nadia, the human mage who assisted the characters in the previous episode, is excited to see the party here in the tavern. She is grateful for the party's aid and offers to pay for a round of drinks as a meager way to show her gratitude.

Nadia's excitement is quick to fade however, as she glances around the tavern to confirm no one is near enough to overhear her. Read the following aloud.

Nadia leans in over the table and says, "I know you have already done so much to help me, and the Sistren. I don't know how I could ever properly repay you, but I have a job offer that may be a start." She offers a sly smile. "There's both gold and glory involved, hence why I thought of you first thing."

Nadia explains to the party that the Sistren of the Isles have started looking for an ancient artifact called the Mermaid's Tears. Knowledge about it used to be confined to the Constellation Isles, but now legends of it have spread and Nadia fears it will be only a matter of time before someone travels to the Constellation Isles looking for it. Worse yet, they may successfully find the artifact before the Sistren do, the consequences of which would be catastrophic.

Based on the party's actions in episode 3, Nadia and by extension the Sistren are confident in the characters' ability to assist them in finding the artifact. They offer the party a reward of 5,000 gp for their service.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Nadia answers any of the party's questions to the best of her ability, based on the information listed below.

What is the Artifact?

The Mermaid's Tears is a pearl necklace supposedly made from the shed tears of a mermaid who grew fond of a group of sailors. It is said to contain an essence of godly power, granting its wearer control of the archipelago that makes up the Constellation Isles. It is also an item of wrath and despair, and anyone that would wear it runs the risk of succumbing to anguish so intense that they would not survive it. This is as much as Nadia knows, but the GM can read more about the magic item the *Mermaid's Tears* in appendix B.

Why Does the Sistren Want the Tears?

The artifact has been spoken of in legends around the Constellation Isles for centuries but has never been given much concern, as it was a local story known only by the residents of the Constellation Isles. That has changed, as the tale of the Mermaid's Tears has spread beyond the Isles and is now a popular story around the Aetherial Expanse. The Sistren fears that these stories will summon treasure seekers or pirate-hunters to the Constellation Isles. This puts the Sistren at risk, should the Karelagne Empire choose to investigate the area in earnest looking for the artifact. It also places the entire region in danger, as the consequences of someone with ill intentions getting their hands on the Mermaid's Tears would spell doom for the Constellation Isles that the Sistren call home.

The Sistren seek to find the artifact and protect it from outsiders by keeping it secure within their base. They have no desire to use it for themselves. Alternatively, the Sistren would be willing to destroy the artifact to ensure its power remains out of the hands of mortals.

Where is the Artifact?

The few expeditions that were made to locate the artifact were unsuccessful, bringing the seekers to either dead or dangerous ends. Nadia has heard stories of a Sistren member named Teagan who knew the location of the Tears, a location known only as the "Sunken Palace." Nadia suggests they talk to Eldari, the Constellation Isles Commander of the Sistren, who may know more of Teagan's current whereabouts. Eldari is currently on the isle of Kesforth within the Constellation Isles.

JOURNEY FOR THE CONSTELLATION ISLES

The Constellation Isles are not friendly to outsiders, nor to anyone not at home in the aether sea in which they are based. Solid ground is scarce, as most islands are made up of sand dunes that shrink and grow based on the tides. One day, an island may be a mile in diameter only to have most of its shore washed away by the following morning.

Most residents of the Isles are either more or as comfortable living beneath the waves as above them, and permanent, ground-based structures are hard to find within the Isles. The main harbors within the Isles are not built for strangers, as these are the headquarters of the Sistren and a home base for the local astral merfolk population. Finding these harbors without a guide requires a degree of luck found only in fate, and if one were to settle their vessel at one of these harbors with no invitation, the locals would be more likely to respond with violence and bloodshed than patience and understanding.



The area surrounding the Isles is treacherous with many hidden dangers. Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recalls rumors of sea monsters as well as corrupted merrow dwelling nearby. The seas are also teeming with aetherbeasts who may attack sea vessels on a whim, so it pays to come prepared for the dangers offered from the Isles.

Travel Duration. Getting to the borders of the Constellation Isles from the Isle of Drakes is not a hard feat. The Isles are four legs away, using well-traveled wind routes through generally safe civilian territory (see the “Travel” section of the *Aetherial Expanse Setting Guide* for more information on the duration of seafaring journeys).

ARCHIPELAGO FEATURES

The Constellation Isles is an archipelago made up of a series of “living” islands with a diverse underseas ecosystem. Though it is not widely known, the islands are the calcified remains of ancient creatures called **feathered stars** (see appendix A). These stars were celestial guardians of a sea god, and they perished here while serving him. The entire Constellation Isles rests upon these feathered stars and their bodies are the foundation for several permanent structures within the archipelago.

The feathered stars are not hostile, nor do they care for the affairs mortal beings may be conducting on or around them. However, the spark of divinity that once gave them life can be restored with powerful enough magic, such as that found in the Mermaid’s Tears. Legends from the Constellation Isles suggest that the one who wakes the feathered stars would earn their servitude, just as the feathered stars served a god in the past.

THE SOUL CAGES

When the characters arrive at the Constellation Isles, they enter an area where chains of barrier islands have formed.

The islands are protected by sea with many dunes forming barriers around them. Waves splash in the narrows beckoning vessels to navigate their labyrinthine passageways.

The coastal landforms are made up of sand from waves crashing over a ring of sunken ships that surrounds the archipelago. Hundreds of shipwrecks form a broken barrier below the surface of the astral waters between 15 to 30 miles from the coastline. They emerge at low tide to partially reveal an eerie ghost fleet.

At times, ancient masts loom out of the mists, some overgrown with vegetation. Others have become small islands, sprouting gnarled trees. Birds build nests on the outcroppings of some wrecks while aetherbeasts live within unnatural reefs fully colonized by shrimp, seaweed, sea anemones, and other sea creatures.

The area is considered difficult terrain for Medium and larger ships.

NAVIGATING TREACHEROUS AETHER

Medium or larger ships are at risk of running afoul of the rocks and reefs of the Soul Cages. In order to pass through the Soul Cages and reach the Constellation Isles within, the ship's captain or navigator must make three successful DC 18 Intelligence (Navigation) checks. (See the "New Mechanics" chapter of the *Aetherial Expanse Setting Guide* for more information on this new skill, and for crew roles like navigator that grant bonuses to making these checks.) Making this check takes 1d4 hours.

If this check fails, the hull of the characters' ship takes 1 damage. After each check, regardless of whether or not it was a success or a failure, roll on the Ship Encounters table. Once the characters achieve three successes, proceed to the "Reaching the Constellation Isles" section at the end of this chapter.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE CAGES

Roll on the Ship Encounters table each time the characters make an Intelligence (Navigation) check to maneuver through the Soul Cages. Reroll duplicates.

Use the Aether Reef battle map included with episode 1 of this Fable to run these encounters. If an encounter tells you to roll on the Random Treasure table after completing it, see the "Soul Cages Treasure" section, later in this chapter.

SHIP ENCOUNTERS

D20	ENCOUNTER
1	Aetherkelp
2	Aether elemental
3	Bed of giant oysters
4	Buried treasure
5	Rust monsters
6	Dragon turtle
7	Ghosts
8	Harpies
9	Hermit
10	Illusory aboleth
11	Invisible stalker
12	Merfolk salvager
13	Message in a bottle
14	Wights
15	Whirlpool
16–20	No Encounter



Aetherkelp

Beneath the waves, a vast forest of aetherkelp dances in rhythm to the current. A large, sunken galleon can be seen among the tendrils of kelp, glittering gold and metals strewn along its overgrown hull.

The aetherkelp bed is riddled with life, both aggressive and passive. When the characters' vessel enters the kelp bed, 2d4 **hunter aethersharks** (see appendix A) start trailing them. They follow until the vessel exits the kelp bed, staying passive if the characters and their companions remain aboard their ship.

Treasure

The sunken galleon in the area contains treasure left when the vessel sank. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the characters to discover lost treasure if they dive down to examine the ship. Roll once the Random Treasure table to determine what is hidden in the kelp bed.

Aether Elemental

On a small dune, a lone statue stands partially buried in the sand. The head protrudes, with the rest of the statue's body hidden within the dune.

Characters who dig around the partially buried statue discover an 8-foot-tall statue of aetherium crystal. It is carved in the shape of a merfolk carrying a large shield. Closer inspection reveals that it is in fact hollow and filled with aether.

Characters who succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notice a barely audible whisper emanating from the statue. The sound is too faint to understand. A *detect thoughts* spell reveals the presence of creature trapped within the statue.

If the statue is touched or attacked, it explodes in a hail of aetherium shrapnel. Each creature within 20 feet of the statue must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) piercing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Aether flows out and takes the form of an **aether elemental** (see appendix A) under the command of the one who released it by shattering the statue. The elemental understands Common but only speaks Aetherian. It disappears 1 hour after being set free.

Treasure

A character who spends an hour sifting aetherium shards from the sand comes away with 5 ounces of aetherium nibs (see the "Aetherium as a Currency" section of the Aetherial Expanse Setting Guide for more information).

Bed of Giant Oysters

Receding tides reveal a bed of giant oysters clinging to a rock face. The oysters are still wet from being submerged.

Characters who use a dagger, crowbar, or similar tool can pry open a giant oyster. In 10 minutes, a character can open a number of oysters equal to the result of a Strength (Athletics) check. For each opened oyster, roll a d20. If a 20 is rolled, that oyster contains a large pearl worth 1,000 gp. There are a total of 150 giant oysters on the rock face.

Buried Treasure

A narrow sand dune has partially engulfed a capsized sea vessel, now weathered by winds and waves. Where the ship meets the sand, several chests lie open and broken. Glittering coins litter the sand, strewn about the broken chests.

The broken chests and piles of coins are actually a mimic colony consisting of five **mimics** waiting for prey. As they are ambush predators, the mimics wait to attack until a creature touches them and becomes adhered, or until one of the members of the colony takes damage.

Treasure

The mimics buried the original treasure 5 feet below them and assumed the shape of the treasure afterward. Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine what the chests contained.



Rust Monsters

A grand galleon, clearly once a staple of wealth and power, sits ruined and capsized on a gnarled cliffside. Within the remains of the vessel, scurrying forms dart between the shadows, sometimes pausing to gaze out at your advancing ship.

The galleon, called the Golden Cleaver, ran aground just three days. During a bout of thick fog, the captain insisted on advancing blindly and capsized the vessel. Most of the crew perished in the accident, and the wreck became home to a colony of twelve rust monsters. The **rust monsters** corrode and feed on the metal of the ship, as well as the weapons and armor of the crew, and intend on spending the next several hours devouring their meal.

With a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Nature) check, a character determines that these rust monsters are coated in an aether mucus that can be applied to a slashing or piercing weapon as an action. A creature that takes slashing or piercing damage from such a weapon must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A creature poisoned in this way is also paralyzed. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Each rust monster produces enough mucus to coat one weapon. Once applied, the mucus stays effective for 10 minutes before drying and flaking off.

Treasure

Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine what was stashed here.

Dragon Turtle

As your vessel cuts through the waves, a frigate previously obscured by a steep sand dune comes into view. The ship's crew paces the deck, clearly distraught, as an enormous dragon turtle has settled alongside the frigate. The dragon turtle doesn't appear hostile, though the writhing of its body and the churning of the aether around its shell suggests that could change at any moment.

A neutral evil **dragon turtle** named Seadog patrols the narrows in search of treasure to add to his hoard. Seadog is often mistaken for a legendary cosmic turtle, despite being an "ordinary" dragon turtle. He tumbled into the Astral Plane from the Elemental Plane of Water long ago.

Seadog grew up in the pirate-infested aether of the Expanse, so thinks himself a pirate and acts accordingly. He speaks Draconic but is accompanied by his first mate and travel companion, Seafoam, an **aether elemental** (see appendix A). Acting as a translator, Seafoam speaks Common and Draconic. Together, they harass seafarers in the region.

When the characters encounter Seadog, he attempts to extort money from passengers of the vessel in exchange for safe passage. With a shake of his shell, the aether churns violently and makes it clear that he can easily sink the ship. If Seadog attacks, he can attack the ship on his turn (see "Creatures versus Ships" in the New Mechanics chapter of the *Aetherial Expanse Setting Guide*).

With a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, a character can negotiate other terms of payment with either of the monstrous pirates. Seadog requires payment to have a monetary value, but Seafoam is interested in less tangible valuables such as sea shanties and epic stories. Any treasure handed over must be worth at least 100 gp to appease Seadog.



Ghosts

Apparitions clamber over the sides of the ship. One rasps, “Let the wind blow ‘cross the planes— tonight our souls take their destined domain.”

Many spirits haunt the islands, including this group of 2d4 angry **ghosts**. They are all that remain of an expedition that had been sent to survey the islands for mineral exploration. They either drowned or were killed by astral merrow in their attempt to reach the mainland when their ship ran aground on a barrier island.

These vengeful ghosts are bound to the reef where they died and attack immediately in the hopes of completing their unfinished business. If a ghost succeeds in possessing a character, it leads its host to the site of the sunken ship to retrieve its navigator’s tools.

With a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, a character can convince the ghosts to cease their attack long enough for a parley. The ghosts relay their unfinished business to the party, allowing an opportunity to assist in putting them to rest.

The shipwreck can be located with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. The only items of value left aboard the vessel are a locked chest containing some valuables and the navigator’s tools (see the Treasure section of this encounter for details).

Once the navigator’s tools are returned to the ghosts, a spectral vessel rises from the aether and the crew safely sets sail for home. When they part ways with the characters, they offer a half-remembered chorus from a sailors’ ballad:

*“Then in her thrall, the stars will all fall
In fury, all remnants they’ll mark
And thus, for the last, all waiting is past;
Our solace awaits in the dark.”*

This ominous verse foreshadows the apocalyptic arrival of the reaper Desdemona, events which happen in episode 5 of this Fable.

Treasure

Recovering the navigator’s tools sets the spirits to rest, causing the ghosts to vanish. Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine what else is in the stash.



Harpies

Two massive shipwrecks connect at the top with a series of ropes, boards, and other debris pulled from smaller wrecks below. Humanoid corpses in various stages of decay hang from the rigging of the ships, and large roosts made of clothing and driftwood have been placed around the structure. From within the hulls of the broken vessels, the sound of soothing humming mixes with haunting screeches.

The ship graveyard is a large **harpy** colony whose size is constantly added to as the harpies lure new vessels to capsize at the base of the cliffs. Two harpies per character is a good challenge for this encounter. Any living creatures on these vessels are promptly hunted for food, as are any intruders found skulking around the structure. When not resting, the harpies hunt within 5 miles of the nest.

The wrecks form solid ground but, in most places, they are difficult terrain and slick with blood where there aren’t missing planks. A character who moves more than half their speed, or takes the Dash or Disengage action, must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall from the wreckage.

The ships lean on their sides to form a single building, albeit one that lies in shambles. At your discretion, the ships can have multiple levels, toppled masts, and torn sails which the characters can climb or use as walkways.

Treasure

Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine what was stashed here.



Illusory Aboleth

Hermit

A flat, sandy dune acts as a base for a wooden building propped up on driftwood. It is hexagonally shaped and has a wood-shingled roof with stained glass windows on each side. Though its outside is weathered, the house is well maintained, and the windows shine from a recent cleaning. From the chimney, a thin line of smoke snakes toward the sky.

Inside the home dwells a human male named Einar (**commoner**), dressed like a druid. He sits at a small table, wearing reading glasses and poring over a large tome entitled, “The Herbalist’s Guide to Magical Botany.” A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check notes the book has a false cover. If a character pursues the subject, Einar changes the conversation and attempts to expel the characters from the hermitage. The real book is a serialized romance called “The Fabulous Fate of Franny Farthington.”

Einar is an ornamental hermit hired for the sole purpose of inhabiting a small structure and functioning as any other garden ornament. As such, he plays a role as an enigmatic druid and does not break character. His employer is Lord Fairbairn, a wealthy privateer who visits on a whim but sends a supply ship once every calendar year along with a stipend.

A grand trading vessel, now more driftwood than ship, has run aground on a cliffy dune. The vessel looks long abandoned, though faint movement can be spotted inside the captain’s quarters at the stern of the ship—almost as if something living has taken up residence within.

Inside the captain’s cabin of the shipwreck is a sleeping aboleth—or the image of one, anyway. This aboleth is a magical projection created by a mage aboard the sinking vessel. She spitefully created an illusion to discourage scavengers from stripping her ship for treasure.

The illusory aboleth was created using the *major image* spell cast at 6th level, making the spell permanent. The illusion does not react to sounds from the characters entering the ship and remains in its set sleeping position. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check or who physically touches the aboleth discerns that it is an illusion. To remove the illusion, the *dispel magic* spell must be cast on it at 6th level or higher. If *dispel magic* is cast at a lower level, the caster must make a DC 16 ability check using their spellcasting ability. On a success, the illusion is dispelled. On a failure, the illusion remains.

Treasure

Inside the illusion of the aboleth’s body is a compartment in the floorboards. Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine what was stashed here by the mage.

Invisible Stalker

Lying face down in the sand, a cleanly picked skeleton lies motionless on the beach of a sandy dune. Its clothes and equipment are in tatters, save the bag hanging from its shoulder which seems mostly untouched by the environment.

The skeleton is that of a human wearing the tattered remains of a diver's outfit. The bag it clutches is a *bag of holding* cinched shut. Inside the bag is an **invisible stalker** and ten shards of motherpearl. The invisible stalker is bound to the holder of the bag to hunt down anyone who attempts to steal content from the bag.

If the characters open or empty the *bag of holding*, the invisible stalker remains motionless and nonhostile. It is only if a character tries to take the items within the bag that the invisible stalker attacks, and then it only attacks whoever took some of the bag's contents.

Treasure

Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine what was stashed in the *bag of holding*.

Merfolk Salvager

A derelict frigate is caught upon the rocks. A gentle purple glow emanates from its portholes.

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices torn sails and blood staining on the deck. Below deck, an **astral merfolk** (see appendix A) named Ariadne works to strip the ship of any useful materials. The salvager knows the crew was slain by astral merrow.

Merfolk salvagers pick through shipwrecks after merrow hunters have slain those aboard. If a vessel hasn't sunk and there are no survivors, the salvagers take practical items that can assist in their innovations and leave behind what is considered by others to be valuable gems and treasure. They then scuttle the ship, thus adding to the protective barrier that makes up the Soul Cages.

The salvager is skittish, not wanting to draw the attention of merrow. However, a character who succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces the salvager to reveal details about the area. The salvager, Sheridan, is fascinated by technology and fixates on anything they have not encountered before to understand how to reverse engineer the item. They do not freely disclose the location of the merfolk but offers information



about navigating through the area and how best to avoid the merrow. With this information, checks to navigate the narrows of Soul Cages are made with advantage. In addition, Sheridan gives tips on avoiding detection by the astral merrow in Scamallath, which gives advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks while navigating Scamallath.

If conversations with the characters go well, the salvager shares that he seeks his old adventuring crew. A fortune-teller had told him that his friends were still alive but lost at sea, and they would only return when the time was right by whispering “Ahoy” while holding the sea in his hands. (see “Message in a Bottle” below).

Treasure

There are still some valuables left on the frigate that the salvager didn’t collect. Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine what riches were left on the ship.



Message in a Bottle

Floating on the surface of the aether, a small bottle containing a scale model of a ship bobs gently over the waves.

A model schooner is contained in a corked glass bottle. The bottle measures 4 inches high, 12 inches wide, and 3 inches deep, and the schooner measures 3 inches high, 5 inches long, and 1 inch wide. Inside, the schooner floats on aether like a calm sea. No matter how the bottle is handled, the conditions inside the bottle remain the same. A *detect magic* spell reveals an aura of transmutation magic around the ship and bottle, as the schooner was magically reduced in size. Aboard is an adventuring party and a ship’s captain hired by them. An astral merfolk archmage reduced the size of their keelship when the adventurers breached Larmeath’s defenses. To restore the ship to its actual size (120 feet by 40 feet), a character must hold the bottle while speaking the command phrase: “Ahoy!” Once the ship enlarges to normal size, it becomes an ordinary schooner.

Wights

Partially impaled by a spiky cliff, a grand man o’ war sits as evidence of a long-passed conflict. Though the ship itself is no longer operational, it is still crewed. Several figures, their skin deadly pale and their bodies gaunt, can be seen pacing within the ship.

The old man o’ war was once a powerful battle asset for the Karelagne Empire, as were the host of ten **wights** now left aboard the ship. These undead soldiers still wear their tattered uniforms and remain loyal to the Empire. They normally remain inside the man o’ war, only exiting for short periods of time.

If the characters move quietly through the area, they can attempt to hide from the wights by succeeding on a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check. In doing so, they can explore the man o’ war for resources deemed worthless by the undead soldiers, but which may still have monetary value for the living.

Should the characters be discovered, the wights attack with intent to kill. They move in pairs and call for reinforcements should a fight turn against them, summoning another pair of patrolling wights. There are a total of five pairs of wights aboard the ship.

Treasure

The wights brandish longswords with the symbol of the Karelagne Empire engraved in the hilt. Each wight also carries a coin pouch containing 20 gp of Karelagne origin. Roll once on the Random Treasure table to determine other spoils aboard the ship.

Whirlpool

The sea suddenly churns ahead of the ship as wild aether energy from deep below the surface generates a whirlpool. With a mighty heave, the vessel is yanked ahead toward the whirling aether, with seafoam and salt spray cascading over the deck.

The sudden arrival of the whirlpool could spell disaster for the integrity of the characters' vessel. Each creature standing on the ship must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone as the ship is violently pulled toward the whirlpool.

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check knows that the sudden arrival of the whirlpool means that it is weak in strength. Based on its size, it will be impossible for it to sink a Medium or larger seafaring vessel, assuming that vessel is largely undamaged. However, the whirlpool can still cause considerable damage.

Each crewmember serving a role on the ship (not including unranked crew) must make an ability check to help the ship escape this whirlpool. Each character can propose which combination of ability score and skill proficiency they wish to use. The DC of this check is 15. If at least five crewmembers succeed on this check, the ship escapes the whirlpool unharmed. A character can use their action to cast a spell or take the Help action to aid another character, but this means they can't make a check themselves.

If the GM thinks that a check is particularly useful to aiding the ship, the character makes the check with advantage. Likewise, if the check won't do much to help the ship, it's made with disadvantage.

Failure

If fewer than five crewmembers succeed on this check, the ship takes 2d4 damage to its hull as it's dashed against the rocks—but ultimately manages to escape the whirlpool and keep moving.





SOUL CAGES TREASURE

Roll once on the Random Treasure table whenever the Treasure section of an encounter guides you to do so.

RANDOM TREASURE

D20	TREASURE
1	A magical cutlass (+1 <i>scimitar</i>); 1,200 gp; a diamond (5,000 gp); and two small rubies (1,000 gp each)
2	<i>potion of swift fins</i>
3	2d10 gp worth of stone jewelry and art objects (carved figurines, talismans, etc.), as well as 1d4 uncut gemstones (10 gp each)
4	An aetherproof leather pouch containing 15 gp, 6 pp, five delicately carved coral gemstones (80 gp each), and a <i>potion of healing</i>
5	140 sp, 70 gp, a drafting compass, and a piece of coal
6	190 sp, 40 gp, a fish skull, and an empty vial
7	1,600 cp; 40 ep; a flask of oil; a ring of iron keys; and a vial of sand
8	270 sp, 60 gp, a small tin cup, and an ivory game piece
9	1,700 cp; 20 ep; a brass bell; and an empty vial
10	180 sp, 40 gp, a cloth game board with wooden tokens, a contract for services, and a small tin cup
11	40 gp, 7 pp, a signet ring (5 gp), seashells
12	1,900 cp; 30 ep; a carved bone whistle; and spectacles (100 gp)
13	110 ep, 90 gp, a traveler's journal, and some hardtack
14	110 gp, a pouch of red powder, a set of merchant's weights, and an apple
15	1,600 cp; 30 ep; a glass sphere; a small hammer and chisel; and a smoking pipe
16	1,300 cp; 10 ep; a pair of tarot cards (The Hanged Man and Ace of Coins); a vial of perfume (5 gp)
17	150 gp, a flask of oil, and the deed to a small property
18	210 sp, 60 gp, a handkerchief, a mysterious clockwork device, and several tin coins
19	110 ep, 80 gp, a small steel mirror (5 gp), and a page torn from a spellbook
20	200 gp, salted herring, and a signet ring (5 gp)

REACHING THE CONSTELLATION ISLES

Once the characters successfully complete their Intelligence (Navigation) checks and emerge from the Soul Cages, they arrive within the Constellation Isles proper.

CONCLUSION

After emerging from the Soul Cages, the characters first spy Kesforth, home of the Sistren of the Constellation Isles. Though the Sistren have several outposts scattered across the Aetherial Expanse—such as the base they visited in episode 3 of this Fable. Kesforth is their home base, one they hope will never be breached by Karelagne pirate-hunters.

Once upon Kesforth, Nadia reminds the characters that they need a guide to help them find the Sunken Palace. She says that the leader of the Sistren, Eldari, told her that there was once a member of the Sistren named Teagan who knew, but that she has been lost. Nadia recommends the characters speak to the Sistren's leader in Kesforth to gather more information.

Meeting with the leader of the Sistren is outlined in the beginning of chapter 2 of this episode. If the characters want to go elsewhere in the Constellation Isles before meeting with Eldari, use the information in “Locations of the Constellation Isles,” also in chapter 2, to describe the three main locations of the Constellation Isles.

REPUTATION ADVANCEMENT

This section explains impacts on the characters reputation following their actions and performance during this chapter.

Dragon Turtle Negotiations

If the characters encountered the dragon turtle Seadog and successfully negotiated terms of payment, the characters gain 1 lawful reputation.

Dragon Turtle Violence

If the characters refuse to negotiate with the dragon turtle Seadog and then defeat him in combat, the characters gain 1 chaotic reputation.

Ghosts At Peace

If the characters recover the angry ghosts' navigator's tools, granting them a final rest, the characters gain 1 good reputation.

Hermit's End

If the characters meet Elnar the Hermit and the encounter ends with his death, the characters gain 1 evil reputation.





CHAPTER 2: THE LOST WARDEN

Now landed upon the shores of Kesforth, the characters continue their hunt for the Sunken Palace and the treasure sequestered within. Their hunt leads them to Eldari, leader of the Sistren of the Isles, who in turn asks them to seek out Teagan, the lost Warden of the Isles. Teagan is the only member of the Sistren who knows where to find the Sunken Palace, which contains the legendary Mermaid's Tears.



The following “Locations of the Constellation Isles” section is keyed to the map of the Constellation Isles. Read that section before running this chapter to learn the politics and geography of the region. Use this information as reference when the party start exploring the islands in earnest.

The adventure itself begins later in this chapter, in the “Meeting on Kesforth” section. This section describes the characters meeting Eldari, leader of the Sistren of the Isles. This story section is optional—the players don’t strictly need the information Eldari provides to find Teagan or the entrance to the Sunken Palace, but it can save them time spent aimlessly scouring the islands for information. Nadia supports the characters’ decision to explore the Isles on their own, but she continues to advise they speak to Eldari.

LOCATIONS OF THE CONSTELLATION ISLES

The Constellation Isles are made up of several locations both in the astral seas and on land. There are three inhabitable islands within the Constellation, each of which are home to a different faction. Dozens of other islands exist beyond these three isles, but no humanoids reside on them. The three main locations are:

- Kesforth, headquarters of the Sistren
- Scamallath, home of the astral merrow
- Larmeath, home of the astral merfolk

The characters are free to explore the Constellation Isles as they wish, though not all areas are equally welcoming to outsiders. The two main isles of Kesforth and Larmeath are safe to travel, but vessels nearing Scamallath are likely to meet hostilities from the **astral merrow** (see appendix B) who live there.

EXPLORING THE ISLES

The Constellation Isles are relatively peaceful, thanks to the Sistren and merfolk working to make it so. Most conflicts stem from tension between the predatory merrow and the other denizens of the islands, as they battle for dominion over the islands within the archipelago. Use the Constellation Isles: Random Encounters table to add risk to the exploration, ignoring repeated encounters. Some of these random encounters may direct you back to chapter 1.

CONSTELLATION ISLES: RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d10	ENCOUNTER
1	A group of six sirens (use harpy statistics; has a 40 ft. swim speed instead of fly speed) lurk on the cliffs. They sing toward the party’s ship, trying to lure it onto the rocks.
2	2d4 astral merrow (see appendix A) leap from the aether and land on deck, immediately attacking. If half the merrow are incapacitated or killed, those remaining retreat.
3	A school of flying fish with pink and teal fins (use quipper statistics) skid across the waves. Three hunter aethersharks (see appendix A) pursue them.
4	Three astral merrow (see appendix A) appear at the stern of the ship. Characters watching the stern notice the merrow with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. The merrow tie a net containing a brownish mass to the vessel before swimming away. If not removed, the net draws a giant aethershark (see appendix A) after 10 minutes.
5	A group of young humanoid scouts with merfolk ancestry race using giant aether horses (see appendix A). When they spot the party’s ship, they jeer and challenge them to join the race.
6–8	Choose or roll for a random encounter from the Ship Encounters table in chapter 1 (ignoring repeated encounters).
9–10	No encounter.

KESFORTH

The island of Kesforth and the neighboring smaller isle of Keslith are inhabited by the Sistren of the Constellation Isles, along with their humanoid charges. The smaller of the two islands, Keslith, houses many humanoid civilians who support the Sistren, and much of the faction’s food production is kept to this smaller island.

Kesforth itself functions more as a holdfast for the Sistren. A final defensive position where they can be safe from outsiders—at least, that is the intention. The island has seen better days, as has the Sistren fortress built near the island’s center. The fort, called the Castles of Stars by the locals, is constructed from coral and enormous turtle shells harvested from the cosmic dragon turtles known to patrol the aether around the islands. Its entrance is draped in embroidered silks, and its center hall has a large domed ceiling made of glass, as to better see the stars above. The fort would be an impressive sight, but it has crumbled and deteriorated, now more ruin than castle. Its once grand exterior is now a patchwork of hasty repairs with driftwood and salvaged ships.

The Sistren of the Constellation Isles maintains outposts all over the Aetherial Expanse, but their Kesforth base is what most Sistren consider home. It is at the heart of their faction, the first ever constructed to house the Sistren.

Kesforth Infrastructure

The smaller island of Keslith hosts food production in the form of farms, fishing, and brewing. This makes the island a frequent target of piracy from other locals of the Isles, and it is heavily guarded as a result. If the harbor aether around Kesforth are heavily occupied, Sistren vessels are directed to anchor outside Keslith, both to act as a deterrence from would-be thieves and to act as defenders should the island be attacked.

On Kesforth, the area around the Castle of Stars bustles with activity. Cobbled roads with coral bricks comprise streets between artisan shops, ship builders, and training areas for Sistren members. It is more city than island, and palisade walls made from old shipwrecks have been erected in places to offer defense to the civilians residing on Kesforth.

Life on Kesforth

Kesforth is led by the local faction leader of the Sistren, a half-merfolk woman in her fifties named Eldari (LG half-merfolk female **knight**). She oversees both Sistren operations, as well as keeping order on Kesforth and Keslith.

The islands are mostly known for being the home of the Sistren, but many civilians live here as well. Kesforth welcomes non-merfolk humanoids, as most of their infrastructure is on land. Families of Sistren members live and work on the islands, and civilians respect the Sistren's ability to protect them from outside dangers.

There is a general distrust of outsiders from the local populace, but only to the extent of seeing them as a potential threat. Those bearing an *honorary sign* (see appendix B) or who travel with a Sistren detail are welcomed as allies of the isles with little hesitation.

SCAMALLATH

The aether between the Soul Cages and the isles are overrun by astral merrow. These predatory creatures lurk beneath the surface of the astral sea, eager for their next meal. While they can survive off aetherbeasts, they crave more substantial fodder like the humanoids aboard ships, which they attack without second thought. If any shred of compassion exists in the merrow prowling this aether, it is buried deep in their core.

Travel through Scamalleth is treacherous. The larger the vessel, the more likely it attracts the deadliest of merrow shivers. Smaller vessels are left for lone merrow or smaller shivers. Scouts patrol the area and, unless spotted, return to the larger group after identifying the characters to organize an ambush.

Scathiss Splinter Faction

The smaller island of Scathiss south of Scamallath is also considered astral merrow territory, but it is of a different degree than what is found on the main island. The smaller island is inhabited by an unusually large shiver of astral merrow led by Ronen. Ronen uses **astral merrow** statistics (see appendix A) but has an Intelligence score of 14 (+2). Her use of humanoid weapons has caused confusion and ire among her kind, but it has given her clear advantage in her bid to maintain hold on power.

The astral merrow of Scathiss hoard items of value, such as gemstones and weapons, and have started taming the local aetherbeasts to join them in battle and on hunts.

Ronen's Plan and Possible Alliances. Ronen is an aggressive, violent leader—but she isn't stupid. Right now, her only strength is her numbers and cunning, and with a focused attack from an outside force that could all change quickly.

If the characters ever encounter a shiver of astral merrow and some manage to flee the encounter alive, word about their battle prowess and vessel comes back to Ronen. If the characters ever come near Scathiss, Ronen and her shiver of four **astral merrow** (see appendix A) and four **hunter aethersharks** (see appendix A) approach the ship to parley.

With a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, a character can convince Ronen to a truce. Although she does not have any information on the whereabouts of the Mermaid's Tears, she is interested in the astral merfolk who reside in Larameath as a curiosity. There are vestiges of empathy in Ronen that emerge on occasion, and she has had visions of a past life before the emergence of astral merrow.

An alliance with the astral merrow ensures the astral merfolk in Larameath treat the characters as hostile. In exchange, Ronen keeps the astral merrow closer to Scamallath, ensuring that the characters won't have any run-ins with them in the future.

This means that any random encounters featuring astral merrow after this alliance can be ignored.

Ronen also offers the characters a *coral cloud ring* (see appendix B) as a sign of goodwill.



Teagan's
Sign

LARMEATH

Larmeath and Larmeath Minor are the home islands of the astral merfolk within the Constellation Isles, though the islands themselves are inhabited only by animals. With the exception of a small harbor side only large enough to shore one Large ship at a time, the entirety of the merfolk civilization is beneath the aether. Here, the astral merfolk reside in a many-layered city, with buildings made of coral and with natural defenses acting as their protectors. Larmeath is rumored to be home to the last of the astral merfolk who know of and protect the Mermaid's Tears.

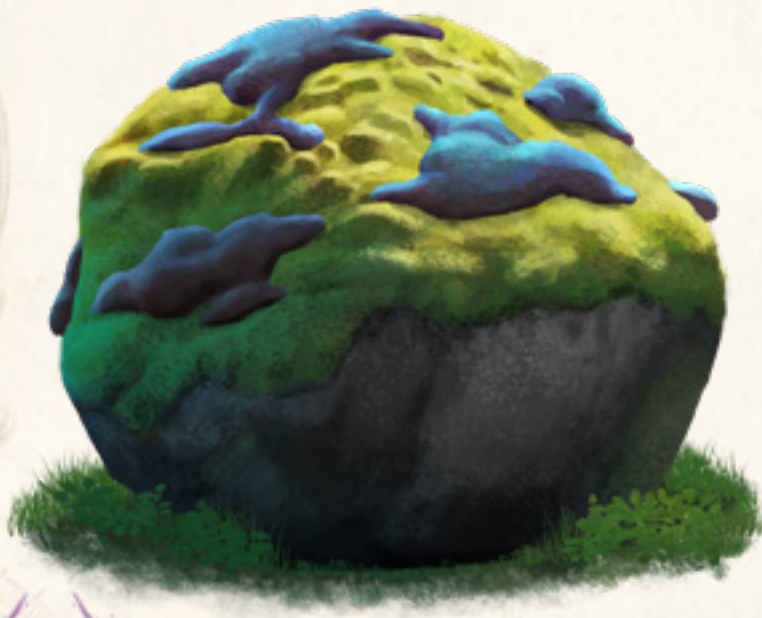
Their only defense against the local merrow is their ability to outsmart predators and keep them at bay with technology and magic. Salvagers and tinkerers, merfolk constantly innovate to stay ahead. Because they can change form, they also have scouts who walk on land.

Larmeath Landing

Neither Larmeath nor Larmeath Minor are inviting to outsiders. The merfolk of the isles remain neutral in all things related to politics of the region and prefer to be left to their own devices. Despite this, they have a harbor designed for stranger vessels to dock at. Most of the time, these vessels are crewed by a partial merfolk crew, be they emissaries from a different region of the Aetherial Expanse or traders bringing luxury items such as spices and steel to the merfolk.

Sistren members have been known to use Larmeath Landing on occasion for diplomacy reasons, though this happens rarely. The factions tend to keep a respectful distance to one another, and usually meet up in neutral aether rather than at either faction's home base.

Captured vessels convicted of violent crimes within merfolk territory are also brought to the harbor. Partially to process and try the criminals on board, but also to strip the captured ships for useful wood and equipment.



Larmeath Law and Defenses

The isles are surrounded by an underaether kelp forest that acts as a defensive barrier and prevents Medium or larger vessels from approaching within a mile radius. The kelp forest has several defensive properties, ones that have been tended carefully throughout the generations of the merfolk living near the islands. These defenses apply to the entire kelp forest, as well the islands they surround, and include the following effects.

- Sensors created by divination spells can't appear inside the area.
- Creatures in the area can't be targeted by divination spells.
- Teleportation and planar travel spells cast, or whose destination is inside the area, automatically fail.
- Ships entering the kelp forest are grappled by the aethereal kelp and ripped apart over the course of 1d10 minutes (for a Small or Medium vessel; add 1d10 minutes for each size larger than Medium).

To further protect the islands from threats, a series of astral coral constructs were created by the mages of Larmeath to protect their home. Characters in Larmeath without merfolk escort are in danger of being attacked. Every 10 minutes, a patrolling **coral guardian** (see appendix A) passes. The party must make a special group DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check; if at least half of the characters fail this check, the construct spots the party and attacks. It fights until destroyed and pursues until the characters have been out of its sight for 1 minute. The coral guardian can also be shut down by an astral merfolk speaking a specific command word. The command for "stop" are the words "white star" spoken in Aetherian.

Merfolk Matriarchy. The astral merfolk of Larmeath are neutral in all dealings with outsiders. They are ruled by a matriarchal triumvirate called a trident that is representative of senior, middle, and young ages. The roles oversee merfolk history, present day concerns, and future plans, respectively.

Mira Starbinder (LN female astral merfolk **mage**) is the eldest member of the trident and knows the location of an artifact called the Mermaid's Tears. Dillan Kelpcloak (LG female **astral merfolk**) is the middle-aged member of the trident, and Eydis Pearlsheen (CG female **astral merfolk**) is the youngest member of the trident.

The trident has some interest in trade or bartering if it advances merfolk technology but are outright aggressive against anyone they suspect would endanger their home, especially if they are near their city at the base of the Larmeath islands.

THE MERFOLK AND THE MERROW

Merfolk adhere to an ancient tradition when it comes to punishment. Those found guilty of jeopardizing the safety of the community are magically banished far beneath the ancient palace on which their home city is based, where it is believed a monstrosity lives. They are never seen nor heard from again, eventually reincarnated as merrow.

This transformation occurs because of the Mermaid's Tears and its wrathful influence, changing the physiology of the merfolk and transforming them completely. Some cleverer merrow, such as Ronen, are astral merfolk who were charged with betraying their people in some way and then forcibly transformed into monsters.

Undoing the Transformation. Though the transformation of the merrow is permanent, the cause of it could be removed to make sure no other merrow can be created this way in the future. By undoing the magic of the Mermaid's Tears, the aether around the Constellation Isles would be purified and the merrow would cease their aggressive behavior. The information on completing such a ritual is detailed in appendix B.



UNINHABITABLE ISLANDS

There are several island groups within the Constellation Isles, but few are large enough to have been mapped out. Between the landmasses, small sand dunes form islands less than 30 feet in diameter.

Should the party decide to explore these islands, the following section provides details.

Atakora and Diyan

The Atakora and Diyan islands are named after the parasitic plants growing on them: atakora grass and diyan moss. On Atakora, red grass covers the entirety of the landmass. The grass is dagger-sharp and whips around erratically if approached. On Diyan, black moss completely shrouds the islands. The moss is a tar-like material, acidic to the touch.

Traveling to either Atakora or Diyan is forbidden, as the chance of bringing the plants to an inhabited island is too great a risk.

A creature that comes within 5 feet of a tuft of atakora grass must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d4 slashing damage as the grass swipes at them. A creature that touches the grass takes 1d4 slashing damage.

Touching black diyan moss has the same effect as touching a **black pudding**, but it is unmoving.

Centaris

Powerful geysers spew boiling aether from vents in the island's surface. **Aether elementals** (see appendix A) patrol the island and rest within these vents. The iridescent island should be admired from afar.

Equino Duo

As the most hospitable of the unclaimed islands, several humanoids have attempted to settle on Equino and Equino Minor. However, due to the proximity with Scamallath and the hostile merrow living there, no expedition to settle on the islands has been successful.

Nimbus Islands

Consisting of Nimbus Prime, Nimbus Major, and Nimbus Minor, the Nimbus Islands are aptly named as the aether around them gleams due to the glowing jellyfish congregated around them. These thousands of jellyfish (uses **violet fungus** statistic with a swim speed of 5 feet) are generally passive, but climb aboard vessels that stray too close.

Vitates, Vinan, and Vianti

Also called the "Victory Islands," these islands were the first line of defense when the merfolk of Larmeath were attacked by an advancing army of merrow several hundred years ago. The islands were used to fortify the merfolk's position, but the carnage of the battle made the islands inhospitable to land dwellers.

MEETING ON KESFORTH

Before the party makes land on Kesforth, Nadia tells the characters they should fly the symbol of the Sistren. Though the Sistren do not attack ships, they assume outsiders have hostile intent and meet them on shore with weapons drawn.

Having been made aware of the party's arrival from Kesforth scouts, Eldari (LN half-merfolk female **knight**) stands ready to meet the characters and Nadia as they come ashore. Eldari is a half-merfolk woman in her fifties, with silver-blue hair and matching eyes, and she carries herself like a trained warrior. As the party approaches, Eldari offers a light bow of respect and thanks the characters for assisting the Sistren. The faction has few allies, and they are not unlikely to forget the party's role in keeping them safe anytime soon.

If asked about the Mermaid's Tears, Eldari's expression turns serious. It has been a longtime mission of the Sistren to find the lost artifact, but without the assistance of the local merfolk, the treasure hunt is proving difficult. The merfolk of Larmeath are too set in their neutrality to offer the Sistren any aid. Eldari believes that the best chance of finding the artifact would be to find Teagan, the Warden of the Isles. She was tasked with finding the Mermaid's Tears. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Long have I hoped to find Teagan, our long-lost Warden. Yet also I know that she is a skilled ranger, capable of escaping discovery if that is what she wishes. If you still must seek her ... I will tell you all I recall.

"I last saw her a few months past. Teagan has striking blue-gray eyes like the sea on a stormy day. Her hair falls in loose curls of black and silver. I trust that this last detail has not changed since then: she is human, with tanned skin and a scar across the bridge of her nose. She would be about thirty years old. Her patrol boat is a small, red-sailed sloop with the name Duskwinder.

"Oh, and most important of all, she wears a constellation amulet, like all of the Sistren. It is her personal sign, one that no other sailor possesses. I remember it well and shall draw it for you."

To find Teagan, Eldari suggests asking the local merfolk if they have seen a Sistren pirate with an amulet bearing her unique symbol (see the "Teagan's Sign" handout). They could also ask local sailors if Teagan's ship, the *Duskwinder*, has been seen.

WHAT TO ASK

Most Sistren members are notoriously slow to trust, and Teagan is no exception. To gain her trust, Eldari explains that the Warden will likely have questions for the party. Eldari lists the following questions Teagan could pose, and their respective answers. The party can also pose these questions to Teagan to confirm her identity.

- What is the color of the roof of the Kesforth Sistren headquarters? Answer: It has no color, as it is made of glass.
- What is the proper way to address a Sistren captain? Answer: Starlet.
- What was the name and sign of the first Sistren member you met? Answer: Nadia; a star-shaped amulet made of motherpearl.
- What titles are bestowed on new members of the Sistren? Answer: Astronomer, Warden, or Wayfinder.

WHERE TO LOOK

Eldari suggests the party keeps their investigation to the smaller islands of the archipelago, as well as Larmeath. The residents of Kesforth have been questioned about Teagan's disappearance before and don't know anything they wouldn't have already told the local Sistren.

The smaller settlements of the islands may have seen something they have yet to report. However, advancing on Scamallath is a surefire way of being deemed lost at sea. The merrow who reside there have no interest in keeping relations with their neighbors, nor in keeping prisoners.

Gift from Eldari. If the characters agree to look for Teagan, Eldari gives each member of the party an *honorary sign* (see appendix B). This marks them as allies of the Sistren should they need that as assurance going forward, and it also makes exploration of submerged locations easier to accomplish.

Nadia Leaves the Party. Nadia is confident in leaving the characters to finish the adventure on their own. Unless the party makes a good case for her to stay with them, she decides to stay on Kesforth.

GETTING SUPPLIES

Though Kesforth is secluded, it bustles with activity. Should the party require weapons or provisions, the locals on Kesforth are happy to supply them—in exchange for coin, of course.

The characters can only purchase items made of motherpearl if they are given *honorary signs* (see appendix B) by Eldari. Otherwise, they'll have to make do with whatever equipment the Sistren have procured while out on raids or crafted for themselves.

FINDING TEAGAN

To find this Warden of the Isles, the crew must navigate the Constellation Isles, looking for clues as to her whereabouts. Currently, Teagan is imprisoned on Larmeath by the merfolk, and the characters must find a way to free her, either through diplomacy or through breaking her out.

If the characters sail around the Isles talking to local sailors, proceed to the “Duskwinder Wreck” section. If they decide to investigate the small, inhabited islands of the Isles, proceed to the “Stolen Sign” section. If they decide to go directly to the merfolk home of Larmeath, proceed to the “Merfolk Patrol” section. If the party stalls in their investigation, proceed to the “Merfolk Patrol” section.

Sailing between the islands of the Constellation Isles takes one travel leg. In the middle of each travel leg, roll on the Constellation Isles: Random Encounters table.

DUSKWINDER WRECK

By hailing down a nearby sailing vessel, and giving a description of Teagan’s ship, the Duskwinder, the characters are pointed toward a small island named Equino Minor. The sailors say they’ve seen a vessel matching the Duskwinder’s description wrecked there, but they haven’t dared approach on account of the astral merrow who patrol there.

Equino Minor is a small island inhabited in the past but is long abandoned at this point. The most recent addition to the island is the wreck of a small sloop with red sails, resting a few dozen feet up the shore.

Approaching the Island

The aether in a 500-foot radius around the island is treacherous and only small vessels or rowboats can approach without running aground. Cliffs and coral below the surface make it difficult to see more than a few feet under the aether, and even harder to spot the astral merrow hiding in the area.

If the characters approach the island, they are attacked by four **astral merrow** (see appendix A) 200 feet from shore. If the characters are in a boat, the merrow try to pull them into the aether before attacking them. When two or more merrow are killed, the rest flee.

Investigating the Duskwinder

The sloop is more wreck than vessel, having clearly been ashore for a long time. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check estimates the vessel has been on the island for a month at least.

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check while looking over the wreck sees that it has been completely stripped, likely by scavengers, but there are no bodies or corpses found anywhere near the sloop. Spears and tridents protrude from the starboard side of the ship. Their handles are made of coral, marking them as merfolk make.

THE SISTREN AND THE MERMAID’S TEARS

The Sistren of the Constellation Isles have heard the legends of the Mermaid’s Tears and how the artifact can grant someone complete control over the Isles. Because of this, the Sistren wish to keep the Mermaid’s Tears safe in their headquarters, where outsiders and treasure hunters can’t get to it. They have no intention of using the artifact unless necessary.

The Sistren would rather see the artifact destroyed than in the hands of someone who would use it to endanger their home. Though they hope that the artifact could be brought safely to Kesforth, the Sistren understand that some power is too great for mortals to safely wield.



STOLEN SIGN

Investigating the secluded islands of the Constellation Isles points the characters in the direction of a human woman who vaguely matches Teagan's description. She is described to be a member of the Sistren, on account of the sign necklace she wears, with black hair and tan skin, but with no facial scars.

Visiting the woman on a tiny, unnamed island near Keslith, the characters find her lounging by the beach drinking chilled wine. Her name is Varna, and she is a retired **commoner** whose only motivation is to be left alone to relax. Currently, she is posing as a member of the Sistren, and she wears a Sistren sign around her neck matching the same pattern as Teagan's.

If questioned, Varna explains that she's with the Sistren and has been tasked with overseeing the island to ensure no harm comes to it. A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that she's lying and spinning a story to get the characters to leave her alone.

She is reluctant to share any information about herself or her sign. If questioned about the Sistren, she knows nothing about how the faction operates.

If a character succeeds on a DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check, or if any character threatens physical violence, Varna concedes and admits she's not with the Sistren. She bought the sign from a merfolk trader a few weeks back, thinking it would help sell her Sistren persona better.

Should the characters ask for the sign to be handed over, Varna protests briefly before giving them Teagan's sign.

MERFOLK PATROL

As the party's ship cuts through the waves, a crew of ten **astral merfolk** (see appendix A) come up alongside the vessel. They are light on equipment, fit for a scouting party, and each merfolk rides a **giant aether horse** (see appendix A). The merfolk are nonhostile but suspicious of the characters, and ask what brings them to this territory.

Teagan's Location

If the characters describe Teagan to the merfolk, they mumble among themselves in Aetherian for a few moments before answering the party. They say that a woman bearing Teagan's description is currently imprisoned at Larmeath Landing for attacking one of their scouting parties. The woman imprisoned doesn't carry a Sistren sign though. If the characters ask to be taken to the woman's location, the scouting party offers them escort to the island. This escort is rescinded if the characters are allied with the merrow of the Isles or if the party press the scouts on information about the Mermaid's Tears.

The Mermaid's Tears

Should the characters ask about the Mermaid's Tears, the merfolk insist they know nothing about such an item. A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that they know more than they let on. If pressed on the matter, the merfolk continue to insist their lack of knowledge and eventually leave the area with a crude remark in Aetherian.

TEAGAN'S STORY

Commander Eldari charged Teagan to find the Mermaid's Tears and ensure its safe transport to Kesforth. Teagan is loyal to the Sistren in all things, except for when it comes to what to do with the Mermaid's Tears. With threats like the astral merrow at the Sistren's doorstep, and Karelagne agents making the aether treacherous, something as powerful as the Mermaid's Tears could change everything for the Sistren.

While searching for the Sunken Palace near Equino Minor, the location of the Mermaid's Tears, Teagan was accosted by a group of astral merrow who attacked her ship. She got away alive, in no small part due to the arrival of a merfolk scouting party who came to her assistance. Mistaking them for another group of merrow, Teagan attacked and severely injured one of the scouts. The merfolk promptly capsized her vessel and brought her back to Larmeath as a prisoner. Her ship was left to wash up on the shore of Equino Minor, and her sign and motherpearl equipment was confiscated and eventually sold off by the merfolk of Larmeath.

Teagan sees it as her duty to find and use the Mermaid's Tears to protect the Sistren of the Isles, even if this goes against her orders. She believes the current command of the Sistren is too passive and would refuse to use the artifact, even in dire circumstances, which could mean the end of the Sistren of the Constellation Isles—something that Teagan cannot accept.

Traits. What I do is no one else's business, and they should stop asking questions.

Ideals. Protection. I will protect that which I find precious, no matter the cost (Chaotic).

Flaws. If betraying someone puts me closer to my goal, I have no qualms doing so.

Bonds. The Sistren is everything to me. I would kill to ensure its safety.

VISITING LARMEATH

Upon approaching the Larmeath islands, the protective aetherkelp forest surrounding the home of the merfolk becomes apparent. The kelp is long enough to touch the surface of the aether.

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check knows about the defenses set up around the islands. A character with merfolk ancestry makes this check with advantage. Go to the Larmeath section earlier in this chapter for more information about the defenses around the island.

APPROACHING LARMEATH LANDING

If the characters have a merfolk escort, they can proceed in their ship to Larmeath Landing uninterrupted. However, the characters should understand that their vessel would be trapped at the Landing if the merfolk turn hostile against them, as the kelp forest keeps them from leaving.

Alternatively, the characters can attempt to approach the island unseen, moving beneath the aether and hiding in the kelp forest. The journey is 1 mile to the Landing, and the characters must succeed on three successive group Dexterity (Stealth) checks. The DC of the first check is 5, and the DC is raised by 5 cumulatively with the latter two checks. If at least half of the characters fail any of these checks, a nearby merfolk patrol consisting of three **astral merfolk** (see appendix A) riding **giant aether horses** (see appendix A) spots them and attacks.

Arriving at the Landing

The Landing is borderline spartan in its design, with almost no buildings or decorations. When the characters arrive at the Landing, read or paraphrase the following.

A basic dockside built from driftwood and pale coral acts as the harbor of Larmeath Landing. A single, warehouse-like building stands beside the dock, and beneath a large tent pavilion, five merfolk in humanoid shape wearing guard attire relax in the shade. A guard rifles through a large chest containing an assortment of random weapons and equipment. Behind the merfolk, a large coral figure sits hunched and unmoving next to a series of coral cages, likewise stowed beneath tent pavilions. The cages are all empty, save for one holding a black-haired woman.

The five guards watching the Landing are **astral merfolk** (see appendix A) wearing studded leather armor (giving each an AC of 15). The guards have shapechanged with legs so they can patrol the Landing, but haven't moved from their spot in the shade for the entirety of their shift. Behind them, a **coral guardian** (see appendix A) sits unmoving. It has been tasked with watching over the prisoners and remains in its set position unless someone approaches the cages.

After being presented with the scene, the characters have two options of how they can proceed. They can try to approach the guards and convince them to release Teagan, or they can try to bust the Sistren member out themselves.



Interesting Contraband. The chest watched over by the guards contains an assortment of equipment taken from prisoners. Inside are ten darts and two daggers with coral hilts, a greatsword of motherpearl, several pouches of coins (120 gp, 330 sp, and 256 cp), and a *dagger of diving* (see appendix B).

The Prisoner. The sole prisoner is Teagan, Warden of the Isles (CN female human **mage** who also has the *water breathing* spell prepared), looking a little worse for wear. She wears traveler's clothes and is unarmed, and many days stuck outside with little protection from the elements has left her haggard. Teagan has one level of exhaustion.

Negotiating Teagan's Freedom

The characters can attempt to convince the merfolk guards at Larmeath Landing to release Teagan into their custody. To attempt this, the characters must have arrived by ship with a merfolk escort and must not be considered allies of the astral merrow of the area.

To release Teagan into the characters' custody, the merfolk guards demand she receives an apt punishment, and that Teagan won't show herself in their territory again for at least five years. If she does, the responsibility will be with the party, and they would be considered culpable for Teagan's actions. Succeeding on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check convinces the guards that the characters will follow these directions, and Teagan is released into their care.

Threatening the Guards.

Attempting to threaten the guards in any way results in the party being forcibly escorted back to their ship. Teagan is not released, and the party must find another way to get her out of prison.

Busting Teagan Out

Breaking Teagan out of prison is a straightforward if dangerous affair. Teagan's cage is locked, and the key is carried by one of the guards. The lock can also be opened by succeeding on a DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or by attacking the lock. The lock has an AC of 19 and has 5 hit points.

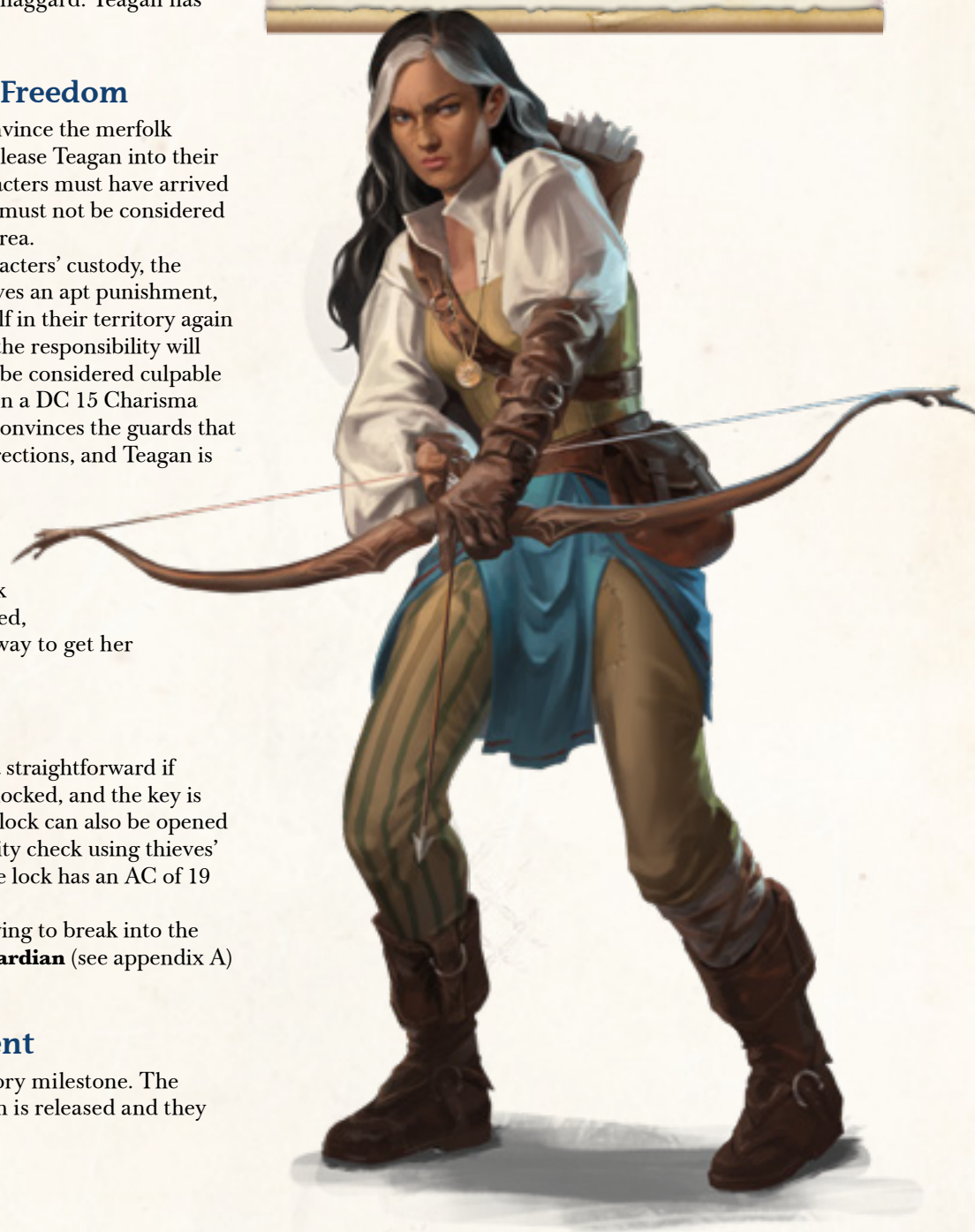
If the characters are spotted trying to break into the cage, the guards and the **coral guardian** (see appendix A) attack them.

Character Advancement

Freeing Teagan is an important story milestone. The characters gain a level once Teagan is released and they return to their ship.

MENTIONING THE MERMAID'S TEARS

If any of the characters mention the Mermaid's Tears to the merfolk guards, or any merfolk living on Larmeath, the character is regarded with suspicion. The merfolk tell the party they are better off not asking questions about things they could never understand, or fix. The knowledge of how to safely use the Mermaid's Tears—and how to remove the painful wrath that exists within the artifact—was lost to their people long ago.



GAINING TEAGAN'S TRUST

Once Teagan confirms the identity of the crew, who challenged (and possibly beat) the Karelagne Zealots, she is more than willing to help with the search for the Mermaid's Tears. Assuming the characters have spent some time confirming Teagan's identity, she wants to do the same. See the "Meeting on Kesforth" section earlier in this chapter for the questions Teagan asks the characters.

If asked about the Mermaid's Tears, Teagan is hesitant in confirming that she knows anything, as she doesn't fully trust them. However, Teagan learned that a splinter faction of Karelagne zealots were recently defeated by a ragtag pirate crew. Should the characters reveal that they are that crew, Teagan is grateful and shares all she knows. She does the same if the party returns her motherpearl sign, expressing genuine gratitude that they returned it to her.

Hidden Intentions. Teagan wants the Mermaid's Tears and has no qualms about using the party to get the artifact. The reason she knows so much about the artifact is because she has hurt people in the past to get to it. She'll betray the party at a moment's notice if it means she can get the Tears for herself.

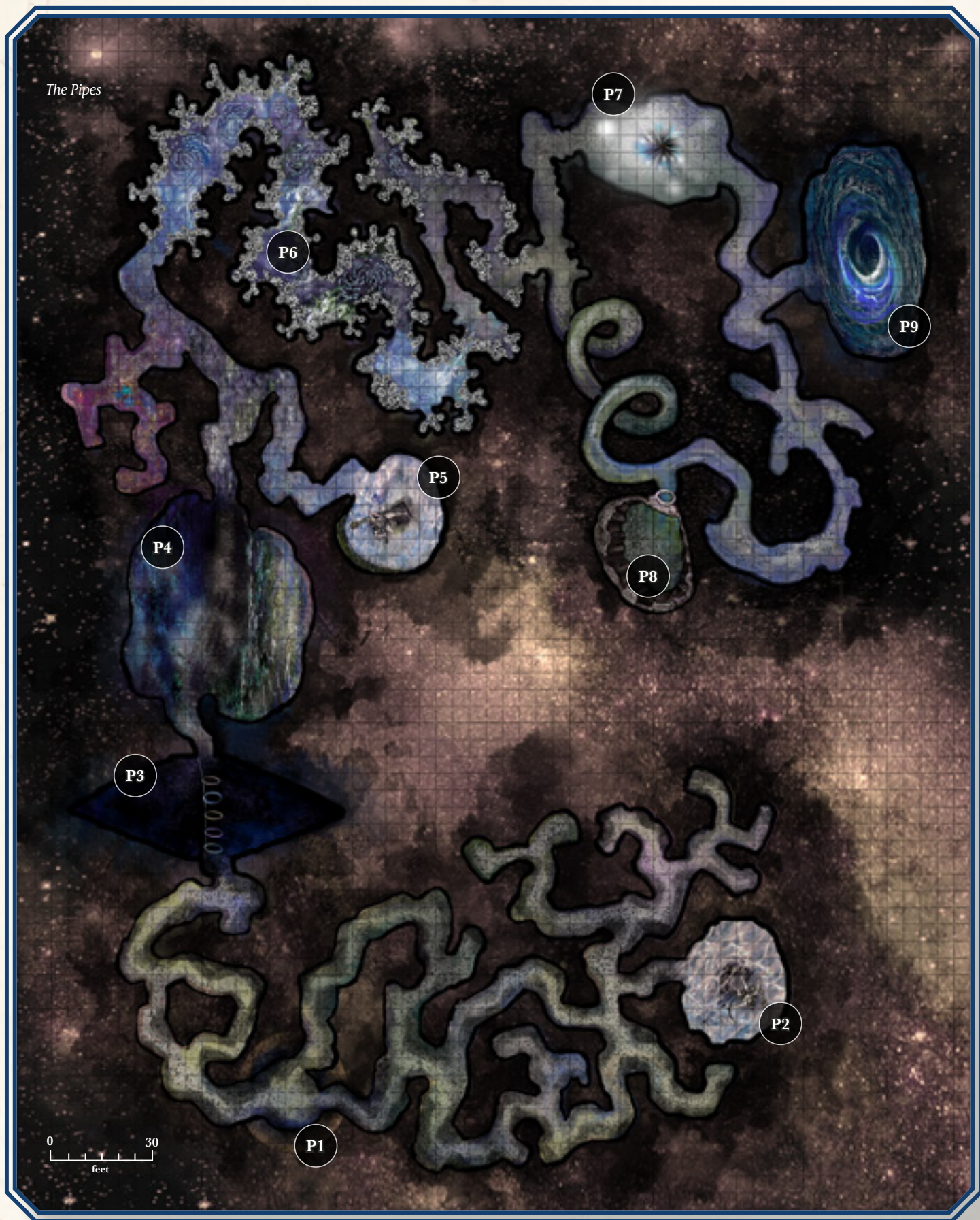
PATH TO THE TEARS

Once safely out of Larmeath captivity, Teagan reveals that her search for the Mermaid's Tears led her to a location called the Sunken Palace. The Sunken Palace was built within an island that mysteriously sank beneath the surface of the aether centuries ago. Part of this island still lingers above the surface on Equino Minor.

Teagan had just located the entrance to the Sunken Palace when she was captured by the merfolk of Larmeath and can direct the party to it easily. She refers to the area as "The Pipes." However, the descent into the Palace will likely be dangerous. Teagan suspects that the Sunken Palace is akin to a vault built to protect the Tears, so getting to the artifact will prove challenging.

Getting into the Sunken Palace requires the party to be submerged in aether for several hours at a time. They must find a way to safely circumvent the effects of the aether, such as procuring *honorary signs* (see appendix B) from the Sistren.





LANDING ON EQUINO MINOR

The entrance to the Pipes is at the center of Equino Minor, in an area called the Bog Graves. These desolate, mucky lands are thick with necromantic murk and lurking creatures.

To get to the Bog Graves, the party must travel a mile from the shore to Equino Minor's center, but the journey is not an easy one. The island is more bog than earth, and the abandoned homes of previous settlers are partially sinking into the mud. The entire island is considered difficult terrain, and the mud sucks in anyone who tries to move through it too quickly. A creature who takes the Dash action while on the surface of Equino Minor must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone in the mud.

Minor is not heavily populated by fauna, but several floats of **aether crocodiles** (see appendix A) rest in the mud much of the time. The crocodiles leave the party alone unless provoked, or if a character comes within 15 feet of them. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the crocodiles are actively avoiding the center of the island, keeping a distance of at least 300 feet from the Bog Graves.

Getting into the Pipes

When nearing the center of the island, Teagan explains that the entrance to the Pipes is hidden at the bottom of the Bog Graves. The entrance is a 10-foot-wide seal with a lever on each side. These levers must be activated at the same time. Doing so causes the pipe beneath the seal to extend upward to the surface of the Bog Graves, allowing the party entry into the Pipes and eventually the Sunken Palace.

The seal to the Pipes is at the bottom of the Bog Graves, which is 120 feet in diameter and 60 feet deep. The muddy aether of the Bog Graves is heavily obscured, meaning divers can't see anything around them in the murky depths. Finding the seal requires a character to reach the bottom of the bog and then succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Bloodtooth the Crocodile. The reason the crocodiles on Equino Minor avoid the Bog Graves is due to Bloodtooth, the giant crocodile who lives within the bog. Bloodtooth uses the statistics of a **giant aether crocodile** (see appendix A). Bloodtooth is territorial and attacks anyone who ventures into its bog, but it won't leave the Bog Graves willingly. Divers going into the Bog Graves are attacked by Bloodtooth when they get 10 feet below the surface. If Bloodtooth is killed, a group of eight **skeletons** bursts from its belly.

Opening the Pipes

Once the levers of the seal to the Pipes are pulled, read or paraphrase the following.

A great rumbling starts from below, as ancient machinery is made to move once again. The murky aether bubbles and churns as a massive coral pipe slowly emerges upward through the bog. Once it reaches the surface, the ancient seal protecting its entrance opens with a loud groan.

The entrance pipe is 80 feet deep and has a ladder carved into its side, making the descent an easy task. Proceeding down the entrance pipe brings the party one step closer to the Sunken Palace and the treasure within.

PLUMBING THE PIPES

Spelunking deep into the Pipes' underaether cavern, the characters find themselves in a tight, claustrophobic network of tunnels.

Once the characters descend the ladder, read or paraphrase the following.

From crudely drawn anatomical figures to cursive script poetry, the large, rocky entrance to the Pipes is an unforgettable canvas of piecemeal art.

The gray and purple rocks shine with silver marbling, beckoning the characters in contrast to their messages, many either warnings or near-nonsense. One scrawled message says to "Avoid the Blue Vault, swimming is not advised," while another gives the recipe for a good stew. Teagan smiles thoughtfully, "Doesn't sound half-bad, that."

The freshest graffiti appears to be written in a red, viscous paint that smells of copper.

"So, say no farewells, for we'll none go alone, when sweet lady death calls us all to her home."

Teagan's smile drops at the sight of that limerick.

Some messages written on the wall are of adventuring parties who give their name and "number in, number out." Too many, if not nearly all, lost someone inside the Pipes.

If a character decides to write down the adventuring party's name, they feel the effects of the bless spell and can cast it once within the next hour without expending a spell slot.

FEATURES OF THE PIPES

The area known as the Pipes is a series of carved stone tunnels that were once the homes of a vast merfolk colony. Time eroded the civilization however, leaving the Pipes as little more than an overgrown ruin.

Some areas within the Pipes have obvious signs of repairs, as patches of coral have been used to fill holes, make decorations, and build doors. The rooms themselves, sparse as they are, are all either partially or entirely filled with aether.

AREAS OF THE PIPES

The areas below are keyed to the map of the Pipes.

P1: Maze Entrance

The twisting and often tight tunnels of the entrance are enough to throw off any adventurer who can already feel the walls closing in on them.

With a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Investigation or Perception) check, a character notes that the deeper the aether, the more obvious the descent.

One of the throughway tunnels leads to a small circular room, see “Lady of the Puddle.” Another throughway leads to the Deepest End.

P2: Lady of the Puddle

While this room is a dead-end, there is much to see.

Inside the circular room, with three-foot-high aether, stands a regal stone statue of a tiefling on a plinth. On the body of the figure, a constellation is etched to signify the model was astral emergent. The constellation is a different color than the rest of the stone. The tiefling holds a bow and the arrow is in mid-flight, hovering in the air by a sculptor’s magic.

The figure’s plinth is almost level with the aether, so it appears to be standing atop the surface.

A *detect magic* spell reveals auras of conjuration and transmutation magic on the statue.

There is a second circular room with a tiefling statue inside the Pipes (see “P5: The Spinning Lady”). These two rooms are connected through the statues. When a creature runs their finger along the constellation on the statue, each creature within a 10-foot radius of the statue is transported to the room with the other statue.



P3: The Deepest End

A 100-foot-wide, 30-foot-long chamber extends to the left and right of the walkway. The room is filled with aether so deep it looks black. Even submerging your face reveals nothing but darkness.

A row of five circular rings hang by rope 10 feet above the aether, swaying gently. The distance between each set of rings is 5 feet. An exit stands 30 feet from the entrance to this room.

With a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, a character can swing from one handhold to the next to make the journey from one side to the other. A character who attempts to swim or float across must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check to glide quietly over to the other side of the room.

A failed check results in a lank of hair rising from the depths to wrap around the boat or waist of the person crossing. A coven of three **sea hags** lives within the depths of the Deepest End surrounded by their forest of sentient hair and pack of four **giant aetherwolves** (see appendix A).

The sea hags let the characters go if they promise to bring back an ancient weapon from the Sunken Palace. To convince the coven, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check.

If the characters refuse or fail the check, the sea hags and aetherwolves attack, fully lifting their bodies from the depths. The aetherwolves attempt to grapple the characters and pull them under the aether.

P4: Swan Boat Ride

The floor of this room is completely submerged. A group of five swan boats slowly glide across the aether on a figure-eight track, never leaving their path.

Feathery and finned swans slide across a crystalline track. The ceiling is 20 feet high, with the swans' heads almost brushing the top.

On the back of one swan in makeshift seats perch are two humanoid skeletons, hugging each other.

Aboard the swan, there are tiny finger sandwiches made of sea cucumber and kelp bread. If consumed, a character regains 4 hit points.

If a character boards a swan by themselves, they reach the other side of the track and can exit. If a character boards a swan with another character, each must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a success, they can each exit the swan on the other side of the track. On a failure, the character is charmed by the swan and refuses to leave their seat before it has finished another round of the track. After completing a round, the character must repeat the Constitution save, this time with disadvantage.

A character can swim the track, but must make two successful DC 16 Dexterity checks, one for each portion of the track to avoid a swan boat. A failed check results in the character receiving 2d8 bludgeoning damage from the swan.

Removing Someone from the Swans. To remove a creature from a swan, a character must make an opposed grapple check against the creature in the swan to pull them from their seat. Once removed from the swan, the creature ceases being charmed.

If a character attempts to pull a creature from a swan, the swan attacks until the character backs off. The swan uses the statistics of a **stone golem**, but it can only move forward on the track and its slam attack has a reach of 15 feet.

P5: The Spinning Lady

This section has waist-deep aether, the floor rising several feet above the highway.

Inside this circular room with three-foot-high water stands a regal stone statue of a tiefling on a plinth. On the body of the figure, a constellation is etched to signify the model was astral emergent. The constellation is a different color than the rest of the stone. The tiefling appears mid-leap, holding an arrow, a look of absolute joy on her face.

The figure's plinth is almost level with the aether, so it appears to be standing atop the surface.

A *detect magic* spell reveals auras of conjuration and transmutation magic on the statue.

There is a second circular room with a tiefling statue inside the Pipes (see "P2: Lady of the Puddle"). These two rooms are connected through the statues. When a creature runs their finger along the constellation on the statue, each creature within a 10-foot radius of the statue is transported to the room with the other statue.

P6: Spawning Grounds

Also fully underwater, the spawning grounds are a short diagonal tunnel sloping for 500 feet with coral surrounding the tunnel.

Wriggling and undulating, the spawning grounds are thick and murky. A swarm of frenzied silver fish dart back and forth in a kinetic metal cloud.

Creatures who are not fish or merfolk are not affected by the rich, algae-infused water. A merfolk, merrow, or creature with similar aetherbound ancestry must make a DC 15 Constitution check or become stunned.

While traveling the tunnel, each creature must make a DC 13 Dexterity check every 100 feet to avoid stepping on fish or amphibious creatures. On a failure, a creature takes 2d4 piercing damage from being nipped by fish or by stepping on pointy marine life.



P7: Aetherwolves' Pass

The aether is 20-feet-deep here and is substantially hotter as a hot steam vent comes into view. Five **aetherwolves** (see appendix A) are closing in on Harmon, a LN male **astral merfolk** explorer (see appendix A).

If the characters decide to venture forward through the water, each must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check or attract the attention of the giant aetherwolves, which attack them on sight.

Rescuing Harmon. Harmon is the last survivor of his adventuring party, and he has no interest in pressing farther into the Pipes. If rescued, he thanks the characters and gives them a potion of greater healing and *three potions of swift fins* (see appendix B) as thanks. He also tells them about the teleportation statues in areas P2 and P5, as well as how to use them.

P8: Aboleth Abyss

The tunnel twists and turns in a corkscrew pattern.

The passage is tight, but the walls are slippery, allowing creatures to wriggle through. Moving through the area, the characters spot a trap door leading to a chamber containing a sleeping, wounded **aboleth**. This aboleth is at half its maximum hit points, having been injured.

If curious, with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check, a character recognizes bite marks and weapon gouges in the aboleth consistent with those of merrow.

In order to leave the chamber quietly, each character must make a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check or wake the aboleth. If the aboleth discovers them, it attacks, but doesn't pursue the party beyond the chamber. Though the aboleth has a general knowledge of nearby areas, it is in no mood to talk and violently asserts its wish to be left alone.

P9: Ancient Cavern

This ancient cave dives down about 30 feet with a few pockets and alcoves visible from the surface of the aether.

Trussed with vines and flowering lichen, this cavern houses ancient mosaics of sepia, umber, and red depicting astral titans building a seafaring vessel. However, the piece has large portions missing. Within the missing wallscape, merfolk have added their own tiling system and story. These tiles glitter in blue, purple, green, and pink, much like scales of a fish.

A long stone pier juts out into the aether in the middle of the cavern. From the pier, the cavern leads down into a glowing, swirling pool of aether.

The cavern walls are home to many small creatures, anemone, a dizzying display of coral, and more. Colors from fushia to puce, gilded gold to alizarin crimson dance with the light. With a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Nature) check, the unnatural fluttering of a humanoid-made object catches the character's eye. Stuck in the coral and kelp is a scroll of *control water*.

A character who comes within 60 feet of the aether swirl feels a gentle pull from a current drawing them closer. The aether is thick, and nothing can be seen within other than bright light.

Should a character approach closer, coming within 30 feet of the aether, the character must make a DC 20 Strength saving throw, as the current suddenly yanks them forward. On a successful save, the character can pull back. On a failed save, the character slides into the center of the swirl and vanishes from sight in the glowing, frothing aether, brought to the entrance of the Sunken Palace.

The Entrance to the Palace. The swirling aether is the last passage before arriving at the gates of the Sunken Palace. If a character passes through the aether swirl, it spits them out 35 feet from where the aether swirls, safely out of range of being sucked back into it.



CONCLUSION

Once the characters arrive on the other side of the swirling ether, proceed to chapter 3.

REPUTATION ADVANCEMENT

This section explains impacts on the characters reputation following their actions and performance during this chapter.

Merrow Truce

If the characters negotiate a truce with the astral merrow Ronen, the characters gain 2 lawful reputation.

Negotiating Teagan's Freedom

If the characters successfully negotiate with the merfolk guards and convince them to release Teagan, the characters gain 1 lawful reputation

Busting Teagan Out

If the characters successfully free Teagan by force, the characters gain 1 chaotic reputation.

Rescuing Harmon

If Harmon thanks the characters for saving him from the aetherwolves attack, the characters gain 1 good reputation.



CHAPTER 3: FALLEN AFOUL

The characters have reached the gate of the Sunken Palace—all they must do is knock! Getting inside the Sunken Palace to locate the Mermaid's Tears is a test itself and the creatures around the Sunken Palace are not as easygoing as they seem.

A circular-style palace, this once beloved home of the merfolk is now isolated from them. Accessible only via the ancient cavern and blocked in via rubble and chunks of rock, it slowly became the home to creatures looking for a lair of their own. The palace appears to be a coral structure overburdened by rock debris and the ever-pervasive kelp.

The entire structure is fully submerged in aether, meaning the party must swim through the halls to progress. If Teagan hasn't been given her sign, or is given an *honorary sign*, she casts *water breathing* on herself so she can proceed with the party.



ENTERING THE SUNKEN PALACE

A large, calcified door stands at the base of a coral mansion. It is decorated with carvings evoking a whirlpool, and it has a hole in its center roughly the size of a human fist.

Around the door, several openings have been overgrown by coral and pulsating anemones. The coral is all translucent and gooey to the touch, making it possible to see past the coral into the openings beyond. In these holes, characters spy several items, including keys, dead fish, coral spear heads, and two holes that are entirely black due to their depth.

Opening the Door. The two dark holes are the key to opening the door to the palace. There is one on either side of the door. Two creatures must simultaneously slip their hands past the coral inside the openings. A handle waits inside each of the dark holes. By turning both toward each other, the handles activate the locking mechanism.

Investigating the Other Holes. If a character sticks their hand into one of the other openings, roll or choose what happens based on the Dark Hole Happenings table.

DARK HOLE HAPPENINGS

D10	ENCOUNTER
1-2	There's a sharp pain as the character's hand is nipped by a crustacean hiding in the hole. The character takes 1d4 piercing damage.
3	The character pulls out a large iron key. But what does it open?
4	Ink squirts from the hole—the character startled an octopus hiding inside.
5	The character pulls an <i>honorary sign</i> (see appendix B), the previous owner unknown, out of the hole.
6	The character finds a <i>potion of superior healing</i> partially hidden beneath a dead fish.
7	The character pulls out an arrowhead of aetherium crystal (150 gp).
8	The character pulls out a pearl (100 gp) hidden in gunk.
9-10	Other than bits of coral and debris, the hole is empty.

N1: The Entry Hall

As the round door telescopes open, the light from the aether swirl shines on a round hallway tiled with shimmering scales. Three shimmering pedestals stand in a line leading toward an opening directly ahead.

In the center of this room stand three pedestals bearing ornate magic items. The pedestals are encased in resin, and upon the pedestals are engraved these words in Aetherian: "Offer up like for like."

Making an Offering. The three items in the resin, described in "Items Encased in Resin," are a helm, a staff, and a trident. If another helm, staff, or trident is offered to the pedestals, an unseen force yanks it from the offeror's hands. The item glides toward the pedestal and moves through the resin as if it were water, swapping places with the magic item, which then appears in the offeror's hands.

Chipping Away the Resin. The resin is magical and designed to thwart thieves, but a character that carefully chips away at it with mason's tools, jeweler's tools, or smith's tools and a successful DC 18 Strength or Dexterity check can crack the resin enough to retrieve the item inside. On a failure, the resin is smashed.

Smashing the Resin. Using a weapon or another less precise tool to smash the resin activates a magical trap. The resin around that pedestal explodes, destroying the item within and forcing each creature within 5 feet of it to make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) force damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

Items Encased in Resin. There are three magic items within the resin: a *staff of submerged flame* (see appendix B), a *helm of telepathy*, and a *vicious trident*.

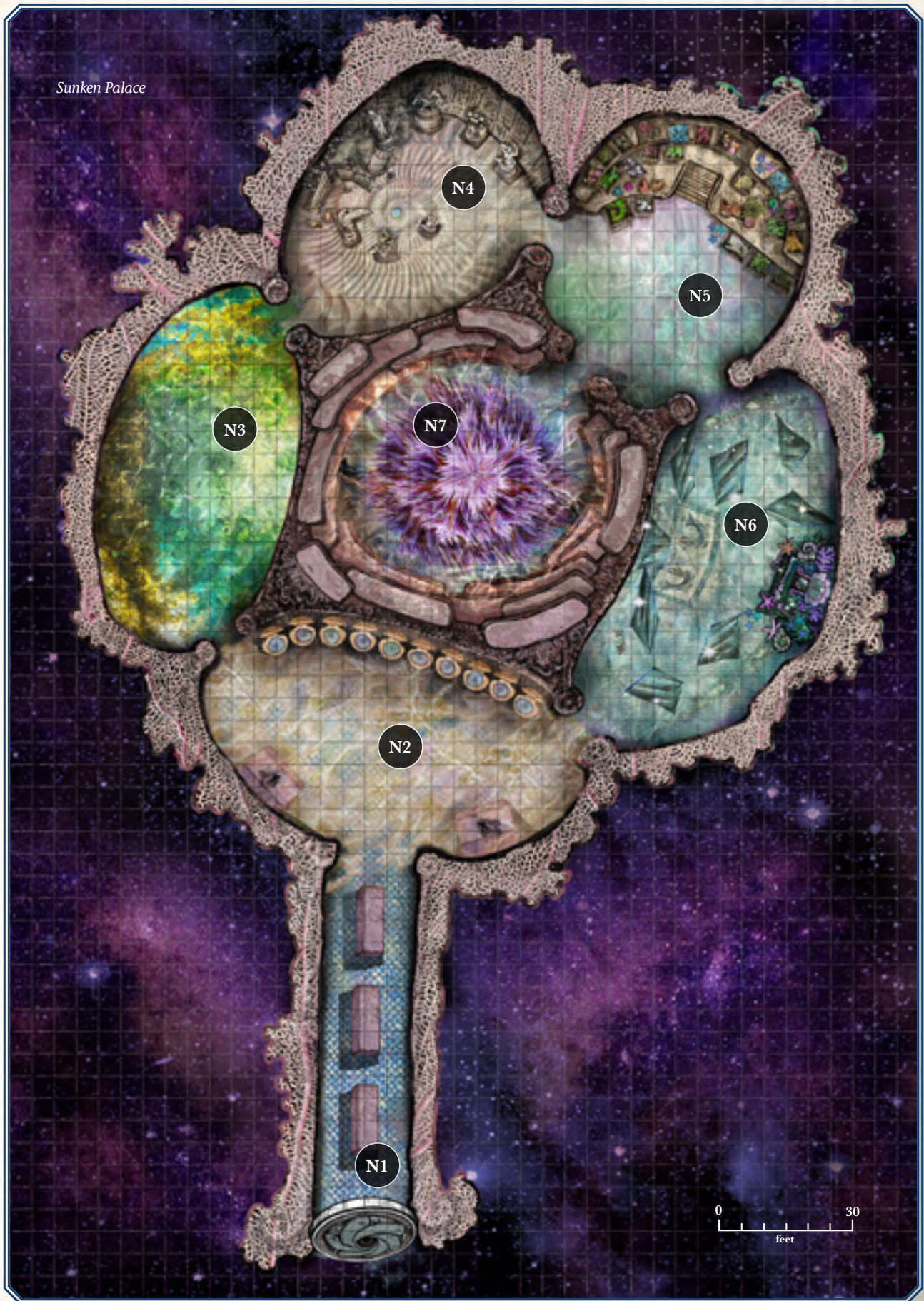
N2: The Chamber Lobby

The grand hall leads to a shimmering chamber of coral seats backed by high, cocoa-colored scallop and sunray venus shells. Despite the grandeur, the aether is thick with algae and dust.

Flanking the lobby are two pedestals extending from the sides of the room. On the smooth surface of each lies a helm encrusted with coral horns.

The lobby is empty, save for a few schools of small fish swimming by with dazzling colors.

A character who makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check while examining the guard pedestals finds a soiled and battered old map of the palace under the helms (see appendix C for the Sunken Palace map handout). A character who makes a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) check while examining the pedestals notices a small string attached to one of the helmets, which snaps if the map is disturbed.



This trap, when triggered, fires arrows from holes in the ground. Each character within 5 feet of the pedestal must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d6 piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

N3: Library

The room undulates with kelp and seawater growing from the floor and ceiling. Twisted into knots and decorated with etched coral beads, the forest resembles a painting more than something that would occur in nature.

A voice rumbles from within the moving lush ropes. "What knowledge do you seek?"

The speaker is a **gynosphinx** who resides in the library and who casts *minor illusion* to make it seem as if a human skeleton among the kelp is speaking. Around the base of the kelp, along with dirt, sand, coral, and shells are several bones swaying side to side in the slight current. The librarian goes by the name of Akora, but they will not reveal the purpose of the room—the characters must guess.

A DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the skeleton to be an illusion. Should a character detect the illusion, the gynosphinx reveals itself. It is a blue and black dappled lion with a merfolk face and brilliant fins rippling in the current. The kelp forest parts in deference as the gynosphinx moves.

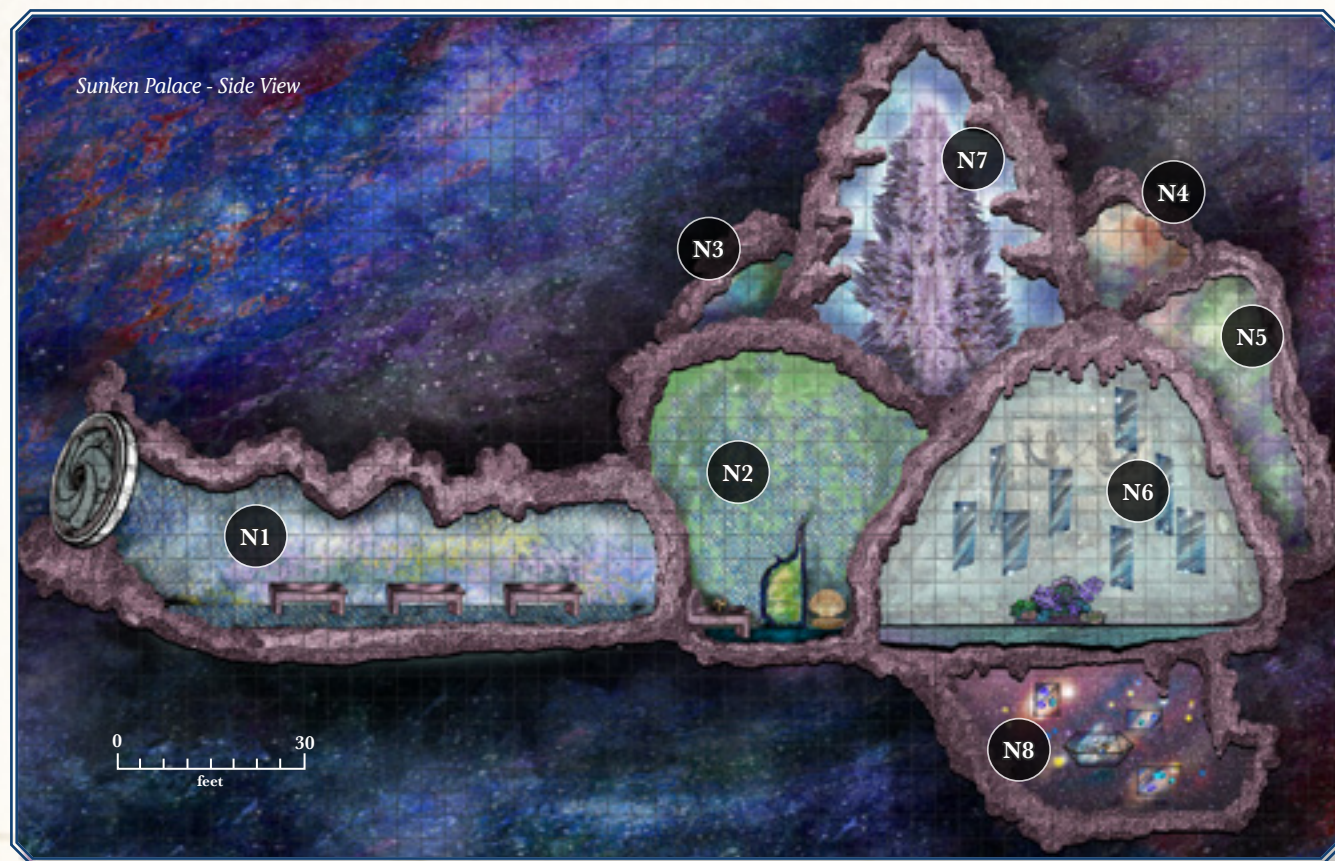
With a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a character notices blank beads and etching tools attached to a wall. They also see etching along the ceiling and floor of the room that say things like "Mystery, Science-Fantasy, Politics" and more.

Stories from Akora. Akora loves to speak with library visitors, but no one has been by in decades. They offer to tell the characters stories about the Sunken Palace and its history, but to gain the stories the characters must first answer the gynosphinx's riddles.

Story about the Sunken Palace. For Akora to tell the party about the Sunken Palace, the party must first answer the following riddle: "I have seas without water, coast without sand, towns without people, mountains without land. What am I?" The answer is a map.

If given the right answer, Akora explains the following:

- The Sunken Palace was once a bastion of merfolk culture. It served as a gallery of the finest art pieces created by the merfolk, as well as a way to protect the history, legends, and knowledge gathered by the merfolk.
- Among these items in need of protection were several powerful artifacts deemed either too dangerous or destructive to be used by mortal beings.
- These items are hidden within the Sunken Palace, and legends say they can only be found when the Palace falls entirely to an enemy force, or by those trusted entirely by the merfolk.



Story about the Mermaid's Tears. For Akora to tell the party about the Mermaid's Tears, the party must first answer the following riddle: "I am a tiny house that you will find on the shore. Sometimes I hide a treasure. What am I?" The answer is an oyster.

If given the right answer, Akora explains the following:

- The Mermaid's Tears was made by a mermaid who made a deep emotional connection to a group of sailors that had no ties to merfolk culture.
- For this connection, and her decision to protect them from danger, the mermaid was ostracized by her community. Overcome with sadness and anger at being turned away from her people, her tears coalesced into pearls that made the Mermaid's Tears.
- It is an item made from wrath and despair, and for the merfolk it represents the dangers of mingling with outsiders. However, those with only partial merfolk ancestry or those who prefer life on the surface tend to see it as a grim reminder of what can happen if you step out of line.

Story About the Merrow's Corruption. For Akora to tell the party about the astral merrow and the corruption that made them, the party must first answer the following riddle: "I have a floor but I'm not a room. I wave but have no hand. I'm wet but I'm not a towel. What am I?" The answer is the sea.

If given the right answer, Akora explains the following:

- The power of the Mermaid's Tears makes it possible to change a merfolk into a merrow. This is done as punishment if a merfolk endangers their people in any way, such as fraternizing with enemy factions, damaging ancient culture or traditions, or bringing destruction to their homes.
- This corruption is irreversible once enacted, but its source can be stopped to avoid any future transformation. To do so, the magic of the Mermaid's Tears must be sequestered to expulse the wrath contained within.
- Akora also shares how to expulse this wrathful curse, the details of which are listed with the Mermaid's Tears entry in appendix B.

REN THE COUATL AND AKORA THE SPHINX

The only permanent residents of the Sunken Palace are Ren and Akora, a couatl and gynosphinx who stick to their roles even when there is no one to perform them for.

Mentioning one to the other reveals that the two tend to avoid each other's locations. Ren is tired of listening to Akora's stagnant riddles and Akora hates that Ren knows the answers to all Akora's riddles.



N4: Art Gallery

A series of statues and objects are arranged in a swirl pattern originating from the center point of the floor. Many of the sculptures are of humans captured in marble. Wooden mastheads stand on display. In addition, there are several merfolk statues, recognizable with their intricate pattern work.

In one section, several statues look like they have been smashed. One area has scorch marks around a pile of rubble, while another has clumps of dirt. One statue continues to shake, rocking back and forth on its pedestal.

The art gallery's collection half consists of sculptures and mastheads pilfered from the ocean floor. The other half are masterworks made by merfolk artisans.

The statue rocking back and forth looks like a statue of a sea elf, wailing and clutching a piece of waterproof parchment in their hand. With a successful DC 14 Strength (Sleight of Hand) check, a character can finagle the parchment out of the statue's hands without breaking or tearing it.

The parchment states, "Break in case of emergencies."

If the characters break open the statue, either by bashing it with weapons or knocking it from its pedestal, they face an **aether elemental** (see appendix A) looking for the quickest way out of the palace, and that considers the party to be enemies standing in the way of its escape.



N5: Algae Room

Racked like fruits and vegetables at an open-air market, terraced rock shelves boast a variety of algae from typical green weedy algae, to fuzzy moss balls, to gathered fists of glass like sea lettuce, to the bronzy shine of globular-leaved bladderwrack. Dozens upon dozens of varieties appear along the walls: pink to green to blue to silver to something that changes color depending on the angle from which it is viewed.

Alongside the one flat wall, a series of words are etched into the wall.

The following words are on the wall in Aquan: Point, Enter, Door, Throne, Shark, Mess, Kitchen, Fruit, Bakery, Pantry, Open, Liege, Drift, Garden.

Characters who examine the words and succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check recognize that two of the words ("open" and "door") have more algae growth on them than the others. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check suggests that words with less algae were physically disturbed in some way, perhaps by touching.

The characters must cover all the words except "open" and "door." They can use their hands, the algae, etc. If they cover up all the words except for "enter" and "shark," a **hunter aethershark** (see appendix A) swims into the room and attacks.

N6: Throne Room

The throne room contains semi-translucent panes of glass. The light filtering down hits several suspended panes to amplify the brightn

Above the mosaic is a small strip of an art frieze in relief. Several underwater creatures are carved into the wall.

Most of the light is focused on a gray-green, barnacle-encrusted throne with a worn seating cushion and a gold and green scale above it.

If a character investigates the mosaic with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check, they notice that many of the mosaic tiles are cracked.

The art frieze features several creatures in its stony glory, such as a marid, plesiosaurus, a crab, a shark, a dragon turtle, a water couatl, quipper, kraken, and a sahuagin.

Anyone with a passive Perception of 15 or higher hears a slight bubbly, shuffling echo in the throne room. Characters who succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover the water **couatl** along the art frieze is alive and not stone. If addressed directly, or if a character attempts to take or break anything within the room, the couatl emerges from its hiding place and addresses the party.

Throne Room Guardian. The water couatl is a guardian of the Sunken Palace, willingly bound to protect the throne room and its treasures from thieves and destruction. Ren feels they have failed their duties due to the decrepit state of the throne room, as time and lack of maintenance has taken its toll on the once beautiful room.

Ren is suspicious of strangers but imparts some information to the party if a character succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Ren also speaks with the party if they mention having met Akora as either a skeleton or a gynosphinx.

According to Ren, the palace has been abandoned for several hundred years and was built to protect pieces of merfolk culture, including powerful artifacts. If asked about the Mermaid's Tears, Ren shares that they don't know much about the item other than stories that Akora has told them. These stories include that the way to find the Tears is through the Garden of Sleep within the Palace, and the entrance is found only through dreams.

N7: The Garden of Sleep

In this large grotto, the adventurers find a large, furry cone several stories high growing from the middle of the room, and with fur-like tendrils growing from its exterior. The structure is about 70 feet in diameter and 100 feet tall. The walls of the cavern extend another 30 feet up with ridges to accommodate for special sleep needs for the horizontal sleepers.

Beneath the Garden of Sleep lies the Drift Away, a special room that can only be accessed while sleeping, and is attached to the garden's tendrils at the very base of the structure. There are some broken mosaics scattered along the walls showing merfolk asleep, lying on the steps of an amphitheater-like structure.

Entering the Drift Away. To get into the Drift Away that holds the Mermaid's Tears, the characters must be asleep or otherwise unconscious, such as by entering a trance or being stabilized below 0 hit points. The characters must be in this state while lying in one of the wall ridges, after which the wall closes around them, and they wake up below the garden within the Drift Away.

Using spells such as sleep is also a valid way of entering the Drift Away. Teagan suggests this if no one else in the party does. Otherwise, completing a long rest sees the characters wake safely in the Drift Away.



N8: The Drift Away

The Drift Away is a room 50 feet in diameter and 30 feet high, with calcified walls and several glass boxes holding small trinkets and items of power floating around the aether filling the room.

The room is bathed in a soft glow. Treasures in glass boxes float about the aether, all of which are giving off a faint light.

In the center of the room, a large glass box radiates a blue-black shadow. Within the box, a necklace with a teal band draped with black and indigo gems drifts calmly in the aether. A feminine voice quietly hums a beautiful melody.

The necklace in the center of the room is the infamous Mermaid's Tears, and the humming is slow rendition of the sea shanty of the same name.

Teagan's Betrayal. Having made it to the Mermaid's Tears, Teagan has no more use for the party and only wants to go for the necklace. She suggests that the party not do anything rash as the necklace might be protected with traps, but a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check notices that Teagan is agitated and keeps glancing hungrily at the necklace.

When the party moves closer to one another or hint that they notice she's up to something, Teagan casts misty step to teleport as close to the Mermaid's Tears as possible, moves up to the glass box holding the artifact, and breaks it open. Read or paraphrase the following.

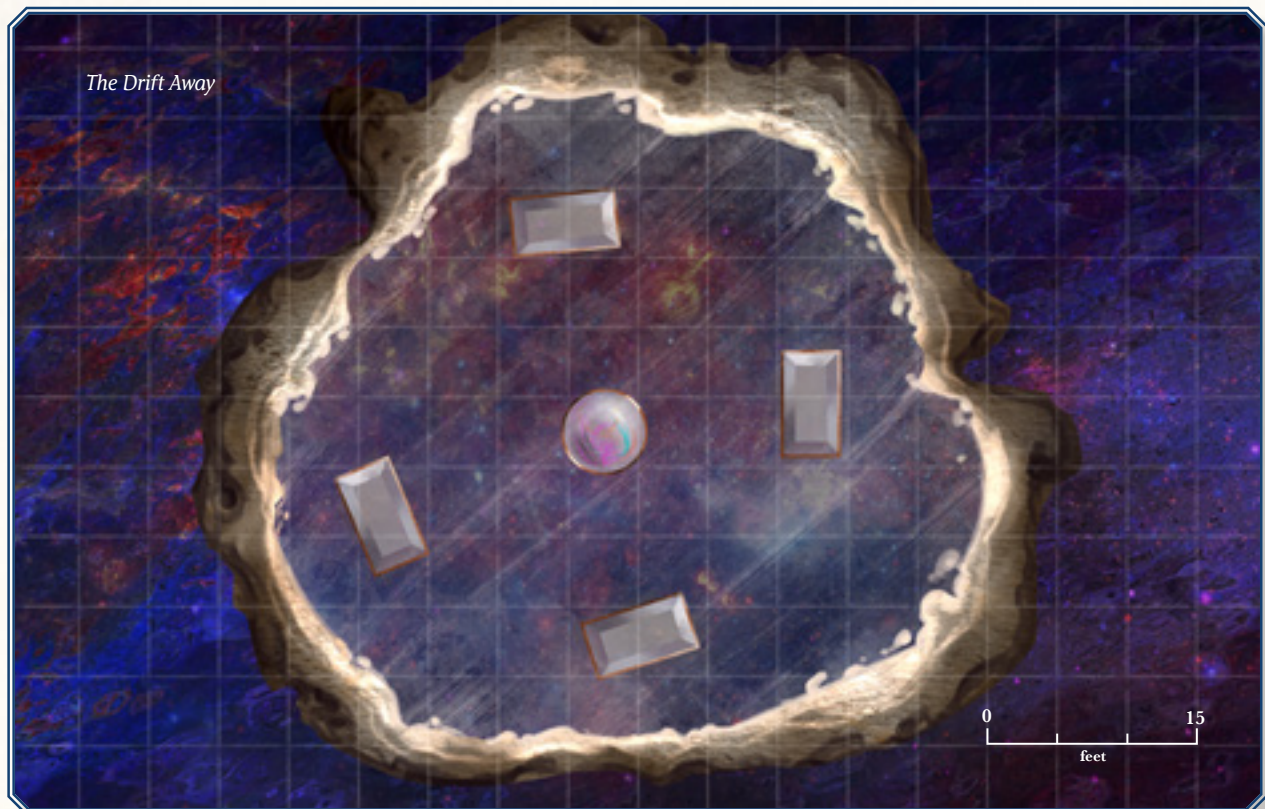
Red streaks of blood color the aether as Teagan shatters the glass container holding the Mermaid's Tears. As she grasps it, she looks up with a woeful smile and with a reluctance in her eyes overshadowed only by determination.

"You have been valuable allies to the Sistren, and I thank you for that," she says. "But I cannot let this become just another treasure stored away in a vault somewhere, when it could be used to protect thousands of lives. I'm sorry. I'll be sure to remember your names."

Teagan holds up the necklace, hesitating only for an instant before putting it on. As she does, a wave of force pulses from her body, rolling through the aether like a tide. The calcified walls of the room groan and large cracks web up toward the ceiling. In the center of the room, clutching the necklace, Teagan stands, mouth open in a silent scream and her eyes aglow with a new fury. Above you, the ceiling undulates as if suddenly given life.

As Teagan puts on the necklace, a pulse emanates from her. Each creature in the room other than Teagan must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is pushed 30 feet away from Teagan. If an affected creature strikes a solid surface, the creature takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was pushed. If the creature is pushed into another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage.

As the characters orient themselves, move to the "Rising Star" section of this chapter for the final showdown against Teagan.



RISEING STAR

Teagan has equipped the Mermaid's Tears (see appendix B), granting herself all the power and wrath held within the artifact. Though her intention was to use the necklace to protect the Sistren, she is overcome with the anger inlaid in the Tears and has all but forgotten her original intent for using the artifact.

Teagan first awakens the **feathered star** (see appendix A) resting just above the Drift Away. The large, furry cone the characters saw in the Garden of Sleep was actually a feathered star lying dormant within the Sunken Palace, now awakened with the magic from the Mermaid's Tears.

FACING TEAGAN AND THE STAR

The movement of the feathered star sends waves of ruination through the entirety of the palace, causing the walls to crack and debris to tumble down on the Drift Away. At initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) each creature within the Drift Away must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage from falling debris. Teagan and the feathered star automatically succeed on these saves.

Teagan's Tactics. Teagan focuses on defending herself using greater invisibility and shield if she's targeted by the characters. If three or more characters stand within 10 feet of one another, she casts cone of cold if able. Otherwise, she keeps her distance and pelts the characters with fire bolt from the corners of the room.

Feathered Star Tactics. The feathered star behaves like a rabid animal, attacking whatever is closest and with the intent to kill. The exception to this is Teagan, whom the feathered star protects with its life while she wears the Mermaid's Tears.

ASCENT TO THE SURFACE

Once the feathered star reaches 62 hit points, it attacks the wall to the Drift Away and starts swimming for the surface. If Teagan is still alive and still possesses the Mermaid's Tears, the feathered star brings her with it as it ascends.

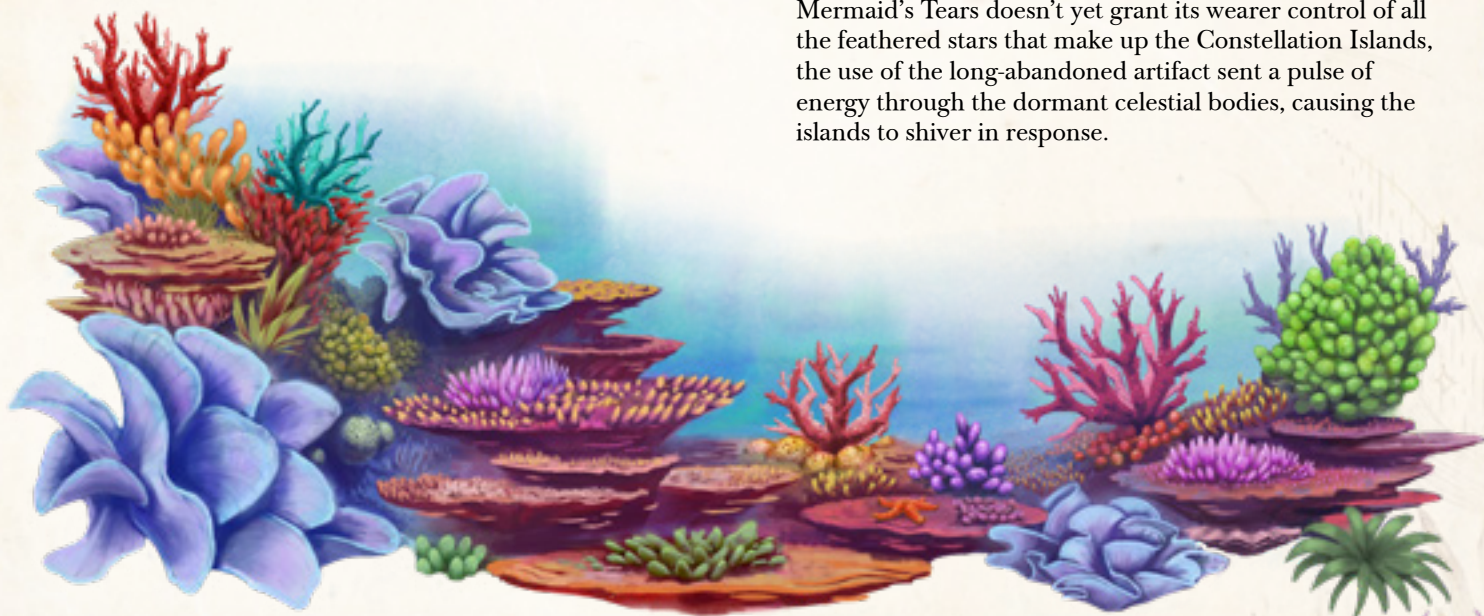
The Drift Away is 350 feet below the surface of the aether, and the characters must leave the area quickly or be crushed by the rapidly collapsing Sunken Palace. The characters have one round to leave the Drift Away after the feathered star breaks the wall. Each creature within the Drift Away after that round must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. If a character fails the save by 5 or more, they are pinned beneath the rubble and they or another creature must succeed on a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check to free themselves.

At the Surface

The feathered star appears on the surface of the aether 500 feet north from shore of Equino Minor. It immediately starts wreaking havoc against anything humanoid-made it can see, including against the party's ship, should the vessel still be in the area. Read or paraphrase the following.

The many frilled arms of the black and red feathered star move violently in the aether. It shrieks with a primal fury, whipping the aether sea into froth and creating tall waves rise from where its body writhes in the aether. Along the shores of nearby islands, the aether moves as if in a storm, the greenish liquid becoming more foam than sea. It almost feels as if the islands themselves are moving.

At the surface, the ocean has been ripped into a frenzy, especially around the shores of nearby islands. Though the Mermaid's Tears doesn't yet grant its wearer control of all the feathered stars that make up the Constellation Islands, the use of the long-abandoned artifact sent a pulse of energy through the dormant celestial bodies, causing the islands to shiver in response.



Stopping the Destruction

The only way to stop the feathered star from continuing its path of destruction is to kill it or control it using the Mermaid's Tears. While wearing the necklace, Teagan is unable to be convinced to do anything of the sort and refuses to assist, no matter how much she is threatened or begged. However, if Teagan is captured and the necklace pulled off her, she gasps in horror at the destruction she commanded the feathered star to commit. She says she thought she was strong enough to control it, but that it took away her agency as soon as she equipped the Tears. She didn't have the mental strength to control the star.

Killing the Star. Killing the star results in the aether around its body becoming poisonous over the course of 1 hour. After 1 hour, creatures that swim in the aether within 300 feet of the star's body take 14 (4d6) poison damage when they end their turn in the area or when they enter the area for the first time. This pollution lasts 5d10 years, or until magic is used to purify the aether around the decaying star.

Controlling the Star. Someone wearing the Mermaid's Tears can command the feathered star to cease its aggressions. Doing so causes the feathered star to withdraw from the surface and return to the now ruined Garden of Sleep where it becomes dormant once again.



CONCLUSION

After dealing with the threat of the feathered star, the characters have options on what to do with their newly gained artifact.

If the characters end this adventure on good terms with the Nadia, Nadia welcomes them back happily and asks if she can join their crew. She proudly hands them a wanted poster issued by the Ayrissian government on Windcrown, for crimes she committed with the Sistren, and says she could be of help to the characters on future adventures. Nadia has 3 ranks as a first mate, and 2 ranks as a boatswain.

DEALING WITH THE TEARS

The characters can hand over the Mermaid's Tears to the Sistren in exchange for the agreed upon reward of 5,000 gp, keep it for themselves, or remove the magic of the artifact and thereby the corruption clinging to it.

DEALING WITH TEAGAN

Should Teagan survive the encounter, she is ashamed of herself. Not because of the destruction she caused, but because she was unable to bend the feathered star to her will. She fears that the Mermaid's Tears will become another trinket hidden away in a vault somewhere, instead of the protective tool it was meant to be.

Teagan asks for mercy, as she will surely be imprisoned for her crimes if she's returned to the Sistren. She argues that though she may have caused some destruction here, it was all in the service of protecting the sea from tyrants. She offers to join the characters crew and work against their foes—in exchange for her freedom. She shows them a wanted poster issued by the Karelagne government on Port Majeure to prove that she has a vendetta against the enemies of piracy. Teagan has 3 ranks as a carpenter and 2 ranks as ship's cook.

If Teagan perished in the fighting, Eldari and the other Sistren members of Kesforth are saddened by the loss, but also angry that a fellow Sister would place her ideals before the collective goals of the faction.

UNDOING THE TEARS' CORRUPTION

Should the characters have spoken to Akora and Ren while exploring the Sunken Palace, they may have learned of a ritual to cleanse the wrath from the Mermaid's Tears. Should the party complete this ritual, the wrathful essence within the artifact is replaced by a cleansing one. See areas N3 and N6 in chapter 3 of this episode for the details on how to complete the ritual.

REPUTATION ADVANCEMENT

This section explains impacts on the characters reputation following their actions and performance during this chapter.

Giving the Tears to the Sistren

If the characters hand over the Mermaid's Tears to the Sistren as agreed for a reward, the characters gain 1 lawful reputation.

Keeping the Tears

If the characters keep the Mermaid's Tears for themselves, the characters gain their choice of either 1 evil or 1 chaotic reputation.

Removing the Corruption

If the characters successfully remove the Mermaid's Tears curse, the characters gain 1 good reputation.

Letting Teagan Go

If Teagan survived the episode and is allowed to go free, the characters gain 1 chaotic reputation.

Giving Teagan to the Sistren

If Teagan survived the episode and is handed to the Sistren to be dealt with, the characters gain 1 lawful reputation.

APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

This appendix details the new creatures that appear in this episode of *Pirates of the Aetherial Expanse*.

AETHERBEASTS

Aetherbeasts are creatures that swim within the seas of the Aetherial Expanse. They are beautifully nightmarish sea creatures, and countless theories abound as to their origin. Some scholars believe them to be native creatures of the Astral Plane adapted to the oceanic environment of the Aetherial Expanse. Others believe that they are beasts brought to the Expanse from the Material Plane that have been mutated over the centuries of exposure to the aether.

Regardless of their origin, aetherbeasts were given names by people from the Material Plane familiar with the beasts of their homelands. A creature called an aetherwolf, for example, is called a wolf not because it particularly resembles a wolf—it more closely resembles a voracious, technicolor sea serpent—but because it behaves similarly to a wolf. It is a carnivorous predator that hunts in packs, and uses vicious claws and fangs to tear its prey apart, while somehow manipulating the aether to dazzling attackers with bursts of magical power.

AETHER CROCODILE

These fearsome beasts infest the still bog-like aether pools found on many unpopulated islands across the Aetherial Expanse. Their tough hides carry a muted prismatic sheen allowing them to hide in their native habitat effectively. Often appearing in lethargic floats, groups of these creatures can burst into a frenzy when prey comes near.





AETHER CROCODILE

Large beast (aetherbeast), unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d10+8)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	5 (–3)

Skills Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages understands Aetherian but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Aetheric Adaption. The aether crocodile can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

ACTIONS

Aethercasting (1/Day). The aether crocodile casts the *bane* spell.

GIANT AETHER CROCODILE

Huge beast (aetherbeast), unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d12+40)

Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (–1)	18 (+4)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Aetherian but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Aetheric Adaption. The aether crocodile can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crocodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Aethercasting (1/Day). The giant aether crocodile casts the *hold monster* spell.



AETHER HORSE

Resembling the common sea horse, aether horses roam the shallower depths of the Aether Expanse. Their colorations vary greatly from herd to herd, though invariably, colors are vibrant, and their elongated tails glow with a pale shimmering light. Astral merfolk frequently tame giant aether horses, using them to patrol the aethereal depths of their territory.

GIANT AETHER HORSE

Large beast (aetherbeast), unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d10+4)

Speed swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	5 (−3)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages understands Aetherian but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Aetheric Adaption. The aethershark can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

Charge. If the aether horse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Aethercasting (1/Day). The aether horse casts the *thunderwave* spell.



AETHERSHARKS

Though aethersharks are among the aetherbeasts that most resemble their common cousins, they are still wholly alien in comparison.

Most common shark hide comes in shades of gray and brown. Aethersharks have fins and backs in colors that shift through prismatic waves, not unlike an oil slick would appear, with bellies a golden, sandy color. This way, they are camouflaged from below against the light above the surface and camouflaged from above to mingle with the varied coral forest of the aether sea. Green, bioluminescent secretion flows from its orifices, including its gills, leaving a trail of light wherever it goes.

Territorial Hunters. Aethersharks are more aggressive than common sharks and have established territories from which they rarely stray. The current territory of an aethershark is recognizable by the color of its hide, as it alters to better match the fauna of its home. For instance, an aethershark living in a kelp bed would be shades of fluorescent green, whereas a reef-dwelling aethershark would be rainbow colored.

GIANT AETHERSHARK

Huge beast (aetherbeast), unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (11d12 + 55)

Speed swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	1 (–5)	10 (+0)	5 (–3)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands Aetherian but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Aetheric Adaption. The aethershark can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

Blood Frenzy. The aethershark has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) piercing damage.

Aethercasting (1/Day). The aethershark casts the *chain lightning* spell.

HUNTER AETHERSHARK

Large beast (aetherbeast), unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	1 (–5)	10 (+0)	4 (–3)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Immunities acid

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages understands Aetherian but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Aetheric Adaption. The aethershark can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

Blood Frenzy. The aethershark has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Aethercasting (1/Day). The aethershark casts the *invisibility* spell.

AETHERWOLVES

Aetherwolves bear little resemblance to terrestrial wolves, due to the adaptations their bodies have undergone to survive near the surface of the aether. They swim in deadly packs through shallow aether, preying upon small ships and other aetherbeasts.

Giant Aetherwolves. Aetherwolves which consume sapient creatures touched by the aether—such as astral merfolk, astral merrow, or astral emergent—undergo a transformation. They gain increased intelligence and cunning, and double in size, making them ferocious and bloodthirsty predators, and feared leaders of aetherwolf packs.

VARIANT: AETHERCASTING

As Aetherbeasts draw their power directly from the aether, they have the ability to cast unexpected spells. You can replace the spell listed in this creature's stat block with another spell that would be suitable for its challenge rating. (See the "Aetherbeasts" section of the *Aetherial Expanse Setting Guide*.)

AETHERWOLF

Medium Beast (Aetherbeast), Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages understands Aetherian but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Aetheric Adaptation. The aetherwolf can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The aetherwolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Aethercasting (1/Day). The aetherwolf casts *magic missile*.





GIANT AETHERWOLF

Large Beast (Aetherbeast), Unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)

Speed 10 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	3 (–4)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities cold

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Aetherian

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Aetheric Adaptation. The aetherwolf can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The aetherwolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 14).

Aethercasting (1/Day). The aetherwolf casts *magic missile* (at 3rd level).

Prismatic Breath (Recharge 5–6). The aetherwolf exhales a blast of dazzling radiation in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

AETHER ELEMENTAL

Aether elementals is pure aether given form, often through a spell or other arcane ritual. They are often found in service to powerful spellcasters, either as assistants or bodyguards. Sometimes, mages conjure aether elementals to defend specific areas or items. This is not uncommon, as the elemental requires no nourishment or rest and can watch over their charge for centuries.

AETHER ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)

Speed 30 ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Aetherian

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Proficiency Bonus + 3

Magic Weapons. The elemental's weapon attacks are magical.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Aether Spray (Recharge 4–6). The elemental creates a 40-foot-diameter sphere of aether spray within 60 feet of it (the fog spreads around corners). When a creature enters the spray for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (2d8 + 4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The spray moves 10 feet away from the elemental at the start of each of its turns, rolling along the ground and through openings. The spray lasts for 10 minutes or until the elemental's concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).



ASTRAL MERFOLK

The merfolk of the Aetherial Expanse make their home in the Constellation Isles, where they're locked in eternal enmity with their age-old foes, the astral merrow. The merfolk of the Constellation Isles tell tales of tumbling into this world of eternal, starlit twilight long ago. And though many of their kind died—or worse, mutated into merrow—over time, they became at home in the aether.

The magic of the expanse has made their skin bright with shining colors, and given them the uncommon ability to shapechange their long tailfins into legs with webbed feet, which allow them to walk comfortably on land. Though astral merfolk are most at home in the aether, and try to steer clear of the greed of land dwellers, the allure of those who walk on land and sail on wooden ships often proves too great to resist.

The astral merfolk have built a society in the Constellation Isles and try to live a peaceful life despite the constant predation of their fallen kin, the merrow. Nevertheless, some merfolk dream of more than a placid life in Larmeath disrupted by vicious merrow attacks. Longing for more from their charmed life, these merfolk seek out pirate ships, and the glory and danger those ships chase.



ASTRAL MERFOLK

Medium humanoid, lawful neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 0 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5

Skills Nature +2, Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Aetherian, Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Aetheric Adaption. The merfolk can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.

Camouflage. The merfolk has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide from creatures above the surface of the aether while the merfolk is lightly obscured within the aether.

Shapechanger. The merfolk can use its action to polymorph into a humanoid with legs, or back into its true form. It gains a walking speed of 30 feet in this form, and its swim speed is reduced to 0 feet. Other than this, its game statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

ACTIONS

Tail Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Sea Star. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

ASTRAL MERROW

Leadership among the merrow of the Aetherial Expanse is hard-won through animalistic dominance and shared between mates in a monogamous or polygamous relationship.

A group of merrow is called a shiver and their social structure changes from year to year as individuals move up and down in the hierarchy. A merrow lower down in the ladder may challenge an alpha merrow for leadership. If the alpha merrow loses, they leave the shiver to find another mate, and start a new shiver. Merrow low in the pecking order (constantly harassed by the other members) may also leave the shiver. They become forsaken until they either form their own shiver or, on rare occasions, join an existing shiver.



ASTRAL MERROW

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Aetherian, Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Blood Frenzy. The merrow has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Limited Amphibiousness. The merrow can breathe aether and water, but it needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The merrow makes one Bite attack and one Bone Mace attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Bone Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Venomous Spines. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, the target is also paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

CORAL GUARDIAN

A sign of merfolk ingenuity is the coral guardian. Granted sentience through an elemental aether spirit, the coral guardian is made from the reefs and flora surrounding the astral merfolk's Constellation Isles home. They are peaceful guardians unless faced with an outsider to their community.

CORAL GUARDIAN

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10 + 42)

Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	3 (−4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +4

Berserk. Whenever the coral guardian starts its turn with 60 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the guardian goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the guardian attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the guardian attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the guardian goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

False Appearance. While the guardian remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from coral.

Immutable Form. The guardian is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The guardian has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The guardian's weapon attacks are magical.

Regeneration. The guardian regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guardian makes one bite and two tendril attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 10 (1d10 + 5) poison damage.

Polyp Spawn (Recharge 5–6). The coral guardian emits a 60-foot cone of polyps. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 35 (10d6) poison damage and be restrained as it begins to turn to coral. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the effect ends on the target. On a failed save, the target is petrified.



FEATHERED STAR

Once a powerful guardian and servant of a sea god, feathered stars are celestial creatures that are as powerful as they are rare. The few that have been found are either young or lie dormant, unable to summon the power they once possessed without the aid of magic.

FEATHERED STAR

Gargantuan celestial, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 124 (8d20 + 40)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +10, Wis +8

Skills Athletics +10, Insight +8, Perception +8

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities frightened, exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +5

Innate Spellcasting. The star's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *greater restoration*

3/day each: *freedom of movement*, *move earth*

1/day each: *earthquake*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the star fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The star has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The star's weapon attacks are magical.

Siege Monster. The star deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The star makes four radiant feather attacks.

Radiant Feather. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) radiant damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The star can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The star regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Radiant Feather. The star makes one radiant feather attack.

Spellcasting. The star casts a spell. This is limited to a spell the star can cast at will.

Star Swarm (Costs 2 Actions). The star summons six tiny stars, each of which can strike a target the star can see within 120 feet of it. A target must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

APPENDIX B: NEW ITEMS

This appendix details the new items that appear in this episode of *Pirates of the Aetherial Expanse*.

Coral Cloud Ring

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

As an action, you summon razor-sharp coral blades and hurl them from you in a 30-foot cone. Each creature within the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 8d4 slashing damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. The creature automatically fails the save if it is an aetherbeast. Once you have used this feature, you cannot do so again until the next dawn.

In addition, all successful weapon attacks you make against aetherbeasts while wearing the ring deal an additional 1d4 of the weapon's damage.



Dagger of Diving

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

While you are submerged and holding this weapon, and you take the Dash action you shoot swiftly through the water or aether. Opportunity attacks made against you when dashing in this way are made with disadvantage.

In addition, if you attack a creature immediately after using the Dash action, the dagger does one additional die of damage.



Honorary Sign

Wondrous item, uncommon

This pendant is made from motherpearl and is set to look like the Constellation Isles as if seen from above. When worn, the wearer is under the effects of the water breathing spell, can breathe aether, and is immune to the effects of aether poisoning.



Mermaid's Tears

Wondrous item, legendary

While wearing this necklace of dark teardrop pearls, you have a swim speed of 60 feet; you can breathe water, air, and aether; and you are immune to aether poisoning. You are also immune to being frightened and charmed, and you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage while you are completely submerged.

Siren's Lure. As an action, you can target a creature within 120 feet that can see and hear you and hum a sweet melody. The creature must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by you for the next hour. The creature turns hostile against anyone who damages you, even its own allies. The creature makes the saving throw again at the end of every hour or whenever it takes damage, becoming immune to the luring effect of the necklace for 24 hours on a success.

Feathered Star Command. As an action, you can target a feathered star that you can see within 500 feet of you. For the next 24 hours, the feathered star is charmed by the wearer of the necklace. While the creature is charmed, you have a telepathic link with it as long as the two of you are on the same plane of existence. You can use this telepathic link to issue commands to the creature while you are conscious (no action required), which it does its best to obey. You can specify a simple and general course of action, such as "Attack that creature," "Move over there," or "Fetch that object." If the creature completes the order and doesn't receive further direction from you, it defends and preserves itself to the best of its ability. Once used, the feathered star command property can't be used again until the next dawn.

Curse. When you first put on the necklace, you must immediately make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, you maintain control of the necklace's power. On a failed save, you succumb to it. Your singular focus becomes to destroy anything that has no natural place in aether or water, such as ships, buildings, and humanoids.

MERMAID'S TEARS: REMOVING THE CURSE

The curse on the Mermaid's Tears can be removed through a ritual. The ritual involves the artifact being fully submerged in purified sea water, not aether, while being clasped by two willing humanoids. One of these humanoids must have merfolk ancestry and the other must have no merfolk ancestry. The Tears must be submerged and held in this way for 8 hours. If at any point during the 8 hours the two willing humanoids let go of the artifact or become hostile toward each other, the ritual fails.

At the end of the 8 hours, the spell *remove curse* must be cast on the Tears, after which the curse property of the item is removed. Once the curse is removed, the item also requires attunement to use.



Potion of Swift Fins

Potion, uncommon

This potion has the consistency of jelly and has small flakes in it that look like fish scales. When you drink it, your swim speed is doubled for 1 hour.

Staff of Submerged Flame

Staff, very rare (requires attunement by a bard, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

The staff has 4 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *burning hands* (cast at 3rd level), *fireball*, or *flaming sphere* (cast at 3rd level).

Spells cast from this staff ignore resistances to fire damage if the resistance is due to the creature being submerged.

The staff regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff blackens, crumbles into cinders, and is destroyed.



APPENDIX C: HANDOUTS

This appendix contains handouts that the GM can give the players at certain points in the adventure.

The Mermaid's Tears Sea Shanty (Prologue)

The Mermaid's Tears Sea Shanty

All sailors should hear of her story
Of the love and the glee that she felt
Even when amidst of a quarry
We remember the hand she was dealt

Dealt to a brave maid!
A mermaid who gave aid
Whose memory won't fade
As long as we chant
Who acted so daring,
So selfless and sharing
For all those seafaring
Shall not her story recant

All sailors should listen for music
When seizing the wave of the day
It's her you can hear, so melodic
It makes us all want to say

Oh, what a brave maid!
A mermaid who gave aid
Whose memory won't fade
As long as we chant
Who acted so daring,
So selfless and sharing
For all those seafaring
Shall not her story recant

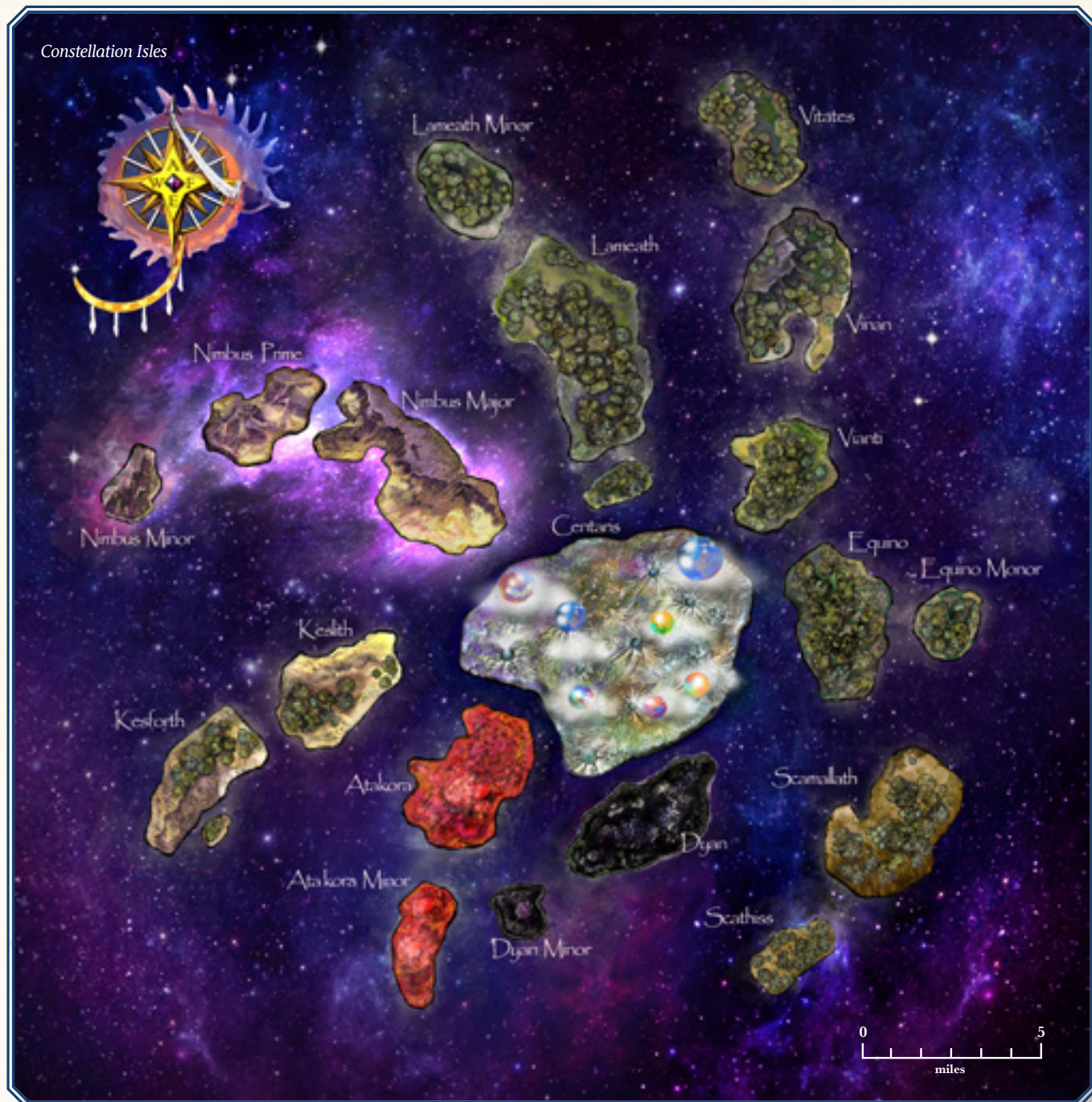
Should someone reclaim her weeping
Now that would be quite the tale
Seize her tears and the power you're reaping
Why, you'd be almost as strong as this ale!

Now praise the brave maid!
A mermaid who gave aid
Whose memory won't fade
As long as we chant
Who acted so daring,
So selfless and sharing
For all those seafaring
Shall not her story recant

Teagan's Sign (Chapter 2)



Constellation Isles



APPENDIX E: PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

This guide suggests pronunciations for many of the non-English names found in this Fable, along with a reference to the first episode it was referenced.

NAME	PRONUNCIATION	DESCRIPTION	REF
Abrexta Kathinel	ah-BRECKS-tuh KATH-in-el	Tiefling Karelagne admiral commanding the INS <i>Thunderchild</i>	E6
Adumbral End	AH-dum-brawl	Desdemona's spectral galleon	E5
Aesphodel	AS-foh-dell	Pirate crew based on Maladell Island	E2
Aether	EE-ther (or AY-ther)	The magical substance making up the seas of the Aetherial Expanse.	E1
Aetherium	ee-THEER-ee-um (or ay-THEER-ee-um)	The rare crystalline form of aether	E1
Ailing Grog	Ay-LING	Retired astral emergent pirate owning a tavern of the same name	E6
Akaste	ah-KAHS-tay	An ancient storm giant sea-witch who acts in secret	E5
Akora	ay-KOR-uh	A gynosphinx librarian in the Sunken Palace	E4
Alaric Concord	al-uh-RICK	Infamous half-orc Karelagne privateer captain	E6
Alfonce Arvide	AL-fahns ahr-VID	Starblade crewmember on the <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5
Algol	AL-gohl	An eldritch beast from the deep aether	E5
Amil Markhoff	ah-MEEL MARK-ov	Once a renowned merfolk captain, now transformed into a merrow haunting Shipgrave Reef	E1
Anka	ANK-uh	Dragonborn shipwright on Velstarrón Island	E2
Areyca	uh-RAY-kuh	Wood elf wizard leader of Fosfior Town	E2
Ariadne	AWR-ee-ad-nay	Astral merfolk scavenger	E4
Asteth, the Empress	AS-teth	Fiery goddess from the Aetherial Expanse	SG
Astrium	AS-tri-um	Mythical civilization of plane-faring giants	E1
Atakora	a-ta-KOR-uh	An island named after the sharp bladed grass that covers it	E4
Ayris	EY-riss	A powerful material plane kingdom vying for control of the Aetherial Expanse	E1
Bathyal Chariot	BATH-yawl	Akaste's grotto lair	E5
Beliene Delaney	bel-EEN del-a-NAY	True captain of the Fanged Stallion pretending to belong to the Sistren of the Isle	E3
Belnorae	bel-NOR-ay	Dragonborn child of Karelagne officer Zrafarn Sheccac	E5
Brighid	BRIG-id	Captain of the INS <i>Loyalty</i>	E6
Bulwark Island	BULL-wark	Jungle covered island in Shipgrave Reef	E1
Calderé Island	cawl-duh-RAY	A volcanic island in the Isle of Drakes	E2
Calladin Thorn	KAL-a-din	Half-elf captain of the <i>Knight's Corsair</i>	E5
Centaris	Sen-TAWR-is	An island with powerful aether geysers in the Constellation Isles	E4

(SG = Setting Guide)

NAME	PRONUNCIATION	DESCRIPTION	REF
Cindra	SIN-druh	Elf starspeaker crewmember on the <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5
Cozmara	coz-MAW-ruh	Drow Aesphodel pirate	E2
Cyrill the Hierophant	SEER-ill	God of the Aetherial expanse and legendary creator of the aether.	SG
Dagodurne Gad	DAG-o-dern GAD	The dwarven Lord High Admiral commanding Karelagne's military defense of Port Majeure	SG
Dameria Jules	da-MAIR-ee-uh	Dwarf cook on Nth Degree Island	E3
Darissa	da-RIS-uh	Powerful Ayris merchant guildmaster secretly working with the Karelagne Empire. Mother of Ori.	E5
Desdemona	DES-duh-mow-nuh	The immortal storm giant captain of <i>Adumbral End</i> .	E5
Diego Madrix	dee-AY-go MAD-ricks	Inexperienced gnome Karelagne officer	E6
Diyan	dee-YAN	An island named after the tar-like moss growing there.	E4
Eldari	el-DAW-ri	Half-merfolk Sistren leader on Kesforth island	E4
Eolicos Island	ee-OH-lick-ohs	A desolate wind-swept island in the Isle of Drakes	SG
Equino Duo	eh-KWEE-no	A pair of islands in the Constellation Isles	E4
Erinaronda	AIR-rin-a-RON-duh	Astral emergent leader of the Keepers on the Blinking Island	E3
Estamuel Chemelthary	es-TAM-yoo-el KEM-el-there-ee	Ayrisian Governor of Windcrown	E6
Eydis Pearlsheen	AY-dis	Youngest member of the astral merfolk Trident leadership	E4
Fearghal	FEER-gull	Elf garrison commander of Fort Bantor	E6
Ferryn Jassan	FAIR-in ja-SAHN	Imprisoned Karelagne rogue on the <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5
Floe Island	FLOW	A small island in Shipgrave Reef	E1
Forge of Arganok	AR-gan-ok	A magical forge in Astrium	E6
Fosfior Island	FAHS-fee-or	A jungle-covered island in the Isle of Drakes	E2
Gemma	JEM-muh	The <i>Fanged Stallion's</i> gnome quartermaster pretending to be the first-mate	E3
Gruup Meistercut	GROOP	Dwarf astral emergent butcher at Bester's Ring in Windcrown	SG
Hamelyn Ferralon	HAM-el-in FER-ral-on	Gunnery Chief Hamelyn. Half-elf proprietor of Steel for a Steal weapon shop	SG
Hikaru Davies	hee-KAW-roo	Human mage smuggler in Windcrown.	SG
Imayn	IM-ayn	Human wife of Ayrisian officer Phryne Soulette	
Inzeh Ahime	in-ZEH aw-HEEM-eh	Dragonborn navigator of <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5
Ithas	EE-thas	Last king of Astrium	E6
Jarobe	JAW-row-bae	Human chef on the <i>Fanged Stallion</i>	E3
Jem Aediobra	JEM ee-di-OH-bra	Astral emergent lightkeeper on the Blinking Island	E3
Johilde Blackbone	joe-HILL-duh	Dwarf master gunner on the <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5

(SG = Setting Guide)

NAME	PRONUNCIATION	DESCRIPTION	REF
Karabell	KAIR-uh-bel	Half-elf owner of the Treehouse Inn	E2
Karel	kuh-REL	The capital city of the Karelagne Empire on its homeworld in the Material Plane.	E1
Karelagne Empire	KAIR-el-ayn	A powerful material plane empire vying for control of the Aetherial Expanse	E1
Kellis	KEL-lis	Half-orc gunsmith and owner of The Steel Barrel	E2
Kesforth	KES-forth	Island home of the Sistren of the Constellation Isles	E4
Kinsey Silt	KIN-see	An astral emergent citizen of the Blinking Isle	E3
Larmeath	LAR-meeth	An island in the Constellation Isles home to astral merfolk	E4
Leuca Albiones	LOO-kah AL-bee-onz	A human astral emergent citizen of the Blinking Isle	E3
Liloyassa	LEE-loh-yas-sa	Dragonborn child of Karelagne officer Zrafarn Sheccac	E5
Madam Sebria	SEB-ree-uh	Astral emergent mage owner of an upscale hostelry in Port Kaylo	E6
Madame Isabeau's	iz-uh-BOH	A bar and gambling establishment in Port Kaylo	E3
Makagul	MAK-uh-gawl	Half-orc quartermaster on the <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5
Maladell Island	MAL-uh-dell	An island in the Isle of Drakes home to the Aesphodel pirate crew.	E2
Maledonna Ackles	mal-eh-DON-na AK-les	Leader of the Children of Asteth and pirate captain of the <i>Avenging Angel</i>	E6
Manta "Seabear" Gunthorpe	MAN-ta	Karelagne governor overseeing Port Kaylo	E6
Master Archifelt Spitz	ARCH-ih-felt	Human apothecary owner of Spitz's Remedies in the Isle of Drakes	SG
Merhild van Dien	MUR-hild VAN DEY-en	Reckless human gunner on the <i>Knight's Corsair's</i>	E5
Monstera Cluster	Mon-STAIR-ah	Set of islands many Ayrissians call home	SG
Nethiri	neh-THEE-ri	Tiefling mage first-mate on <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5
Nyxaltil Eshwyn ("Nyx")	NIKS-al-thil ESH-win	Dragonborn prisoner in Bathyal Chariot	E5
Oceane the Bard	oh-SEEN	A human astral emergent and double agent selling information to Ayris and Karel	E6
Olyran Bogbagin	oh-LEE-ran BOG-bagin	A halfling astral emergent citizen of the Blinking Isle	E3
Oona Lyresmyth	OO-nuh	A half-elf astral emergent citizen of the Blinking Isle	E3
Orabella Hylde	or-uh-BELL-uh HILD	Half-elf quartermaster on the <i>Knight's Corsair's</i>	E5
Orglix	OR-gliks	Ancient kraken lurking in Astrium	E6
Orivari ("Ori")	OR-ee-VAHR-ee	Tiefling stowaway and daughter of guildmaster Darissa of Ayris	E5
Parnetty	PAR-net-ee	Doctor Parnetty, gnome mage experimenting on astral emergents.	E3
Phryne Soulette	FRIN SOO-let	Elf Ayrissian officer	E5
Port Kaylo	KAY-low	Ayrissian merchant port under Karelagne control.	E3
Port Majeure	mawj-OOR	Karelagne Empires main base in the Etherial Expanse	SG
Qoz, the Hermit	KOHZ	The destructive feather star god of the Aetherial Expanse said to sleep at the bottom of the aether	SG
Quoiya	KOI-uh	Dryad Aesphodel pirate	E2

(SG = Setting Guide)

NAME	PRONUNCIATION	DESCRIPTION	REF
Reiz	RAYS	Dragonborn foreman overseeing Fire Crystal Mining's operations	E2
Ronen	ROW-nin	Astral merrow leader on Scathiss.	E4
Sartreus, Master of Knowledge	sar-TREE-us	Ghostly astral titan within Astrium	E6
Scamallath	SKA-mal-lath	An island in the Constellation Isles home of the astral merrow	E4
Scathiss	SKA-this	An smaller islands south of Scamallath, home to an astral merrow splinter faction	E4
Shaenah	SHAY-naw	Dragonborn in charge of Fosfior Island docks	E2
Tektite Island	TEK-tight	Jungle covered island in Shipgrave Reef covered by black glass objects of the same name	E1
Terrol	TER-rol	Astral emergent tiefling, hired by Ayrissia to spy on Beliene.	E3
Teruko	TEH-roo-koh	Pirate captain Teruko the Drake, deceased founder of the Isle of Drakes	E1
Threx Starmine	th-WRECKS	Dwarven astral emergent leader of Starmine Key	E6
Tortugon	TOR-too-gon	A legendary slumbering cosmic turtle said to watch over pirates in the Isle of Drakes.	E6
Ugkin	UCK-in	Doctor Ugkin, a half-orc mage experimenting on astral emergent.	E3
Unammon, the Chariot	oo-NAM-awn	God of wind in the Aetherial Expanse	SG
Vea Plumeria	VAY-uh ploo-MAIR-ee-a	The material plane capital of the Kingdom of Ayris	SG
Velstarrón Island	vel-stuh-ROHN	The bustling central island of the Isle of Drakes.	E2
Viceroy Caturix	CAT-yoor-icks	Cruel half-elf commander of the Karelagne Navy from Port Majeure.	SG
Vicktir Hartlein	VICK-teer HART-line	Zilro Rikter's forgotten identity.	E5
Vitates, Vinan, and Vianti	vi-TAY-tes, vi-NAHN, vi-an-TI	An inhospitable line of islands in the Constellation Isles	E4
Xivaine "the Sorrow" Sax	zi-VAYN	Wood-elf captain of the <i>Dolor</i>	E5
Yaskara Dumik	yas-KAW-ruh DOO-mik	Half-orc first mate of the <i>Knight's Corsair's</i>	E5
Zheng Yang Shi	CHEN YAWNG SHIH	Retired human pirate captain owner of the Sparrow's Flight gambling den	E1
Zilro Rikter	ZIL-roh	Ship surgeon on <i>Adumbral End</i>	E5
Zrafarn Sheccac	zra-FARN she-KAK	Karelagne officer	E5

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