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APL
15

Curse of the Sea Wraith is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for **three to five characters of 15th to 16th level** and optimized for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 15**. An undead kraken roams the oceans under the command of a cursed crew seeking souls to feed an immortal curse. The bones of hundreds of sailors who found their untimely demise inside the kraken are controlled by the necromantic powers of the lich captain. If they don't find a way to escape, the adventurers will find themselves added to the ever-growing pile.

This adventure fits into any existing campaign with a vast expanse of ocean with only a few modifications and name changes.

WRITTEN BY TJ PHOENIX
HEADER ART BY WENART GUNADI
INTERIOR ART BY JOE BROWN

BACKSTORY

All mariners hold a similar level of respect and apprehension towards the creatures below the waves. They know that the cold embrace of the ocean will most likely be their final resting place and are well aware of the hungry maws waiting below.

Whispered stories tell of monsters that tear through ships with ease, leaving no survivors behind. One such legend is well known to all sailors, but few speak of it for fear that it will bring their doom upon them even by whispering it aloud. Told only in hushed voices at night as a warning to new sailors, the legend tells the story of the Sea Wraith, a monstrous ghost ship that feasts upon the souls of those unfortunate to cross its path. Crewed by a host of undead, the Sea Wraith is more than just a ship; it is the most horrifying of all creatures that sailors fear on the open sea: a kraken. With only a strange blue fog upon the waves for warning, the kraken appears and swallows ships whole. Few have managed to see the sight and live to tell the tale, but all know to fear the blue fog that heralds their doom.

None know the true story of the courageous Captain Rogers and his crew of treasure hunters who once sailed the world searching for adventure. He and his companions were once renowned explorers, and tales of his exploits were told in taverns across every continent. During one of these adventures, they pulled a mysterious artifact from the bowels of an ancient ruin; it was that same day they met their doom. A kraken appeared from beneath the waves and swallowed the Sea Wraith and her crew. With the death of so many nearby, the artifact—a scepter containing the essence of a powerful lich—absorbed their souls and burst with necromantic power, releasing the spirit to curse the crew and kraken with undeath. The cursed Captain Rogers and crew have now transformed the undead kraken into a monstrous ship that searches for new souls to consume.

CURSE OF THE SEA WRAITH

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

An undead kraken attacks the characters while at sea and swallows them whole. They find an ancient shipwreck housed inside the creature and discover the kraken has been turned into a submersible controlled by a cursed undead crew. A mad doctor tells the tale of the *Sea Wraith* and urges the characters to defeat the cursed captain to save his wife from the curse. Battling their way through the gory, haunted chambers, the party eventually faces the captain and his cursed scepter.

◆ HORROR ADVENTURES

Horror adventures such as this one create environments of tension, suspense, and fear that may be overwhelming for some players. It is recommended that you read through the entire adventure, note the encounters and scenarios, and have an open discussion about the themes introduced with your players. We encourage these types of talks to ensure everyone at your table is comfortable running this type of horror adventure.

Unlike traditional dungeon crawl adventures where characters move from room to room and engage with the encounters therein, a horror adventure works best when utilizing the concepts of tension and release. The adventure text below includes instructions on creating an environment that will build tension throughout their exploration of the undead ship until they confront Captain Rogers at the climax.

AMBUSHED ON THE HIGH SEA

This adventure can occur anytime the characters are sailing across a vast expanse of ocean for any reason. Perhaps they are on a journey home from a previous exploit, escorting a merchant vessel to assist in protecting it from pirates, or traveling to parts unknown under the direction of a treasure map they recently found. Whatever the reason, they are sailing under a clear night sky with a moon that casts shimmering light across the dark waves when a strange blue fog forms around their ship.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following to kick off the adventure:

Your ocean journey has been quiet and mostly uneventful beyond the mild irritation of another passenger's noisy battle with seasickness. The crew has gathered to enjoy the evening with a bit of song, tell tall tales, and pass a pouch of pipe tobacco around. A warning bell rings out from above, silencing the laughter and conversation as all hands head to the top deck.

At this time, the blue fog rolls around the ship, and fear grips the crew as they begin to murmur in fear, “dear gods, the *Sea Wraith* comes for us.” They scramble into position at the captain’s orders to change course to move clear of the fog. The characters may attempt to assist the crew in changing course or take battle positions as they desire. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check knows the legend of the *Sea Wraith* and the meaning of the blue fog as described in the backstory. Otherwise, the terrified crew explains that “the ship of the dead comes to take our souls!”

Once the characters have determined their actions, read aloud the following:

The crew has turned silent after the captain snaps an order, each one white-knuckled at their station and peering into the thick fog that envelops the ship. All is silent except for the creak and groan of the hull as it cuts through the waves.

To build tension, allow the characters to have a moment to use spells or abilities that they may wish to use before the *Sea Wraith’s* attack, as described below. Abilities such as a paladin’s Divine Sense reveal the presence of an

immense evil emanating from the fog. Once actions have been taken, read aloud the following:

A dark shape looms from within the fog, moving directly toward the ship with an ear-splitting roar. Waves batter against the hull and crash over the deck as a massive tooth-filled maw bursts through the fog high above. Cries of terror rise from the crew as tentacles wrap around the ship, and you are engulfed in darkness as the jaws of a kraken crush down to split it in half!

After swallowing some chunks of the destroyed ship and the characters, the kraken dives under the surface to resume its hunt for further victims.

THE SEA WRAITH

The original *Sea Wraith* was a 60-foot-long single-masted sloop under the command of the famed adventurer Captain Wycombe Rogers. The ship's red and gold sails were well known in ports throughout the world, its angelic figurehead a welcome sight at any moorage. An elder kraken, more giant than the average, was drawn to the ship after the crew brought aboard a scepter found in an ancient ruin. After the ship was swallowed whole and the crew began to die, the scepter burst with a necromantic power from the essence hidden within and cursed the crew and kraken with undeath. With their ship destroyed and still inside the kraken's belly, Captain Rogers, under the scepter's influence, transformed the now undead kraken into his new vessel, crewed by the damned. The kraken's body forms the ship while its tentacles defend against and destroy enemies as necessary. The scepter pushes them to seek more souls to feed into it, and the new *Sea Wraith* hunts eternally trapped within the blue fog that announces its arrival.

The evil essence trapped within the scepter has possessed Captain Rogers, and the once heroic figure now enjoys the destruction of life and snatching of souls from his victims. He guards his treasure and controls the bones and flesh of the dead from his perch inside the ship's head. One of the captain's companions, Doctor Silas Thornton, partially managed to stave off the transformation and is trapped in a halfway state of life and

undeath. He works to find a way to break the scepter's power, but his current cursed state has left him with a split personality that oscillates between sanity and madness. His workshop is filled with failed experiments as he attempts to break the scepter's curse on his wife, Lorena. She sits in a cage within Silas' laboratory, breaking his mind and spirit with her endless taunting.

GENERAL FEATURES

These general features are prominent throughout the *Sea Wraith* unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The interior of the *Sea Wraith* consists of the kraken's rotten flesh and shards of bone with the occasional wooden platform built of flotsam and jetsam. The inconsistency of the floor's firmness, texture, and moisture make quick movement difficult. A creature attempting to use the Dash action across these surfaces must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or slip and fall prone.

Lights. The undead crew does not require light, and the location descriptions assume the characters have a light source or assisted vision.

Climate & Smells. The kraken's interior is cold, and everyone can feel the pressure of being deep under the sea. The smell of rotting flesh and death permeates the entire area, and creatures gain disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Air Bubble. As the only semi-living being on the ship needing to breathe, Doctor Silas uses a ritual spell that creates a massive air bubble within the ship's interior that extends everywhere except area 5. The ritual needs to be renewed every 24 hours, or else the bubble bursts, and the entire interior immediately floods with seawater through holes in the kraken's corpse.

Undead Kraken. If the characters use any ability or spell that affects Undead while inside the undead kraken, the creature roars, and its interior rumbles. This shaking causes a stream of necrotic gore and blood to burst from a surface, striking a random character that must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage, and becoming poisoned for 1 hour on a failed save or half as much damage and not being poisoned on a successful save.

GHOST SHIP

d10	Event
1	A haunting sea shanty is heard echoing from a distance, jaunty voices raised as if a tavern room is just around the corner. The music slowly fades to silence after just a moment.
2	One character suddenly notices a ghostly sailor standing in the shadows nearby, a haunted expression of accusatory anger on their face. In the blink of an eye, the ghost vanishes without anyone else seeing it before the character can bring attention to the rest of the party.
3	A character next to a wall is suddenly grabbed by a dozen skeletal hands that burst out to grapple them. The hands crumble to dust after 1 minute or after taking 1 point of damage. A character succeeding on a DC 13 Strength check can end the grapple for themselves or another.
4	A random character suddenly begins to choke and cannot breathe, feeling as if they were drowning. The character cannot speak for 1 minute while they cough up briny seawater.
5	A gust of foul-smelling wind extinguishes any open flames, and magical light sources are reduced to half of their range and sporadically flicker for 1 minute.
6	A chill runs up the characters' spines, and their breath mists as a light frost forms on the ground around their feet.
7	Captain Rogers' skeletal monkey familiar Tumbles (see Dark Waves, area 6) crawls out of a hole and begins to pelt the party with chunks of rotten kraken flesh torn off the walls or ceiling. He disappears into another hole after 1 minute or if the characters attempt to catch him.
8	A peal of thunder rumbles through the area as seawater begins to rain from the ceiling, filling the floor with a few inches of water. The characters must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be deafened for 1 minute, after which the "storm" ends.
9	The characters start to itch and feel squirming creatures under their clothing. Maggots begin to worm their way out and disappear into the floor. Characters concentrating on spells must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or lose concentration.
10	The sound of laughing children at play fills the area, softly at first and slowly growing louder. One character feels a tug on their arm from behind, but the instant they look, the laughter ceases with nothing in sight.

SHIP OF HORRORS

The scepter's necromantic power has altered the environment inside the *Sea Wraith* and the energy of the trapped spirits that have lingered. These energies lead to random sounds, smells, and sights that can be used to build tension inside the haunted ship. For every 20 minutes the characters spend within the kraken, roll a d10 and consult the Ghost Ship table to determine a random event or choose one that best fits the party's current location or situation.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided map of the *Sea Wraith*.

1. THE BELLY

This area is the largest open cavity within the kraken at over 100 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 50 feet deep. Most of the inner organs of the kraken rotted away, leaving this open hollow space. The bottom is filled with 20 feet of seawater and holds the broken remnants of the original *Sea Wraith* and bits of wreckage that float on the surface; a thick layer of bones blankets the bottom. The

bowsprit of the broken ship pierced through the fleshy wall and into area 3.

When the kraken swallows the characters, they are separated and deposited in random locations (suggested locations marked with a red X on the map). Those characters washed onto solid areas are prone while those in the water must swim to the surface or begin to drown. Read aloud the following:

The swirling and disorienting tumble through the water and debris of the destroyed ship eventually ends, and you find yourself in a massive hollow space inside the kraken. An ancient shipwreck sits in the center, snapped in half and partially embedded in a gory wall of rotting flesh to the south. A pale orange light flickers faintly from a doorway on a platform encircling the area. Bits of bones are poking out of the water, surrounded by pieces of wreckage.

The characters have just a moment to gain their bearings before Captain Rogers greets them. The captain steps



THE SEA WRAITH

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

onto the stern of the shipwreck near the ramp leading to his quarters. Read aloud the following:

A peal of rattling laughter rings out as a figure steps out onto the stern of the shipwreck. The hulking figure wears a long velvet coat with golden buttons, and a molding tricorn hat sits atop a skull with twin green flames burning in the eye sockets. A clockwork hand grips an ebony scepter topped with a green crystal orb, raising it high. "Welcome aboard the Sea Wraith, mateys! I'm Captain Rogers, and I'd like to introduce you to the rest of the crew ye'll be joining!" the figure cackles, lifting the scepter high as a blast of glowing energy bursts from the crystal orb. As the energy touches the water, the surface churns from movement below.

Encounter: Welcome Aboard. Captain Rogers (see Appendix) uses the scepter of the lich lord to raise eight **skeletons** that use **veteran** statistics with their creature Type as Undead. A **zombie shark** roams the water targeting the swimming characters. Captain Rogers leaves the area by walking up into the captain's quarters (area 6) with the spinal passage (area 1c) closing behind him with a shifting of bone and muscle, sealing off access.

Development. Doctor Silas (who was watching from outside his lab) invites the characters to talk with him after the hordes of skeletons are defeated. Read aloud the following:

As the bones of the final skeleton crumble, a slow clapping sound fills the air. Standing on the platform near the lit doorway is a man dressed in what was once fine clothing but is now ragged and filthy. The left half of his face appears to be rotting away, and you can see through a hole in his cheek as he grins down at you with a wild look in his one good eye. "Jolly good show! Come up for a chat when you have a moment, yes?" he calls down before retreating through the doorway.

ZOMBIE SHARK

Large undead, neutral evil

CR 7
2,900 XP

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 86 (9d10 + 36)
Speed 10 ft., swim 50 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +3

STR
23 (+6)

DEX
13 (+1)

CON
19 (+4)

INT
1 (-5)

WIS
10 (+0)

CHA
4 (-3)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie shark to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie shark drops to 1 hit point instead.

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

Offensive Armor. The zombie shark's body is littered with jagged pieces of broken harpoons and debris. Creatures making melee attacks against the zombie shark must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity check or take 3 (1d6) slashing damage.

Actions

Toxic Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) piercing damage plus (1d8) poison damage. The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

1A. SHIP'S STERN

The back half of the broken shipwreck is mainly underwater, with only a portion of the top deck still above water. A hastily constructed ramp is attached to the rear and leads to a matching platform ringing the chamber. At the stern is a jollyboat that can be used by the characters to escape (see Conclusion). The underwater portion is hollowed out and crumbling, the contents of the rooms destroyed long ago. The former navigator's quarters are intact and mostly above the waterline, and the swollen wooden door (15 AC and 18 HP) can be forced open with a successful DC 17 Strength check.

The walls of the flooded room hold molding navigation charts. A character looking them over who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes them as hundreds of years old and shows islands that sank into the sea long ago. A desk with a small cabinet hangs bolted to one wall. Most drawers hold crumbling writing supplies that are useless. One drawer is trapped

with a poison needle that can be found with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check and disarmed with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A creature triggering the trap takes 1 piercing damage—the poison wore off centuries ago. Inside the drawer is a journal detailing the travels and adventures of the *Sea Wraith*. A character that succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check knows that this ship was crewed by renowned explorers that vanished hundreds of years ago. Bards or characters that succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check know songs of the legendary Captain Wycombe Rogers' adventures, a supposed ancestor of the founder of the infamous Blood-bound mercenary company.

1B. SHIP'S BOW

The ship's bowsprit penetrates another cavity (area 3) accessible through the opening in the southeastern section of the area. A locked hatch in the bow can be opened with a successful DC 17 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It leads to the ship's former armory, where racks of rusted sabers and various weapons have deteriorated away over time. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher or who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the ship's hull has buckled oddly in one place. The section has been weakened, and a creature that succeeds on a DC 18 Strength check bursts through to reveal a small space. After the hole is opened, an armored skeleton of a former crew member drops right through the opening. Each character must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check or be surprised at the sudden appearance. The skeleton uses **knight** statistics with the following modifications:

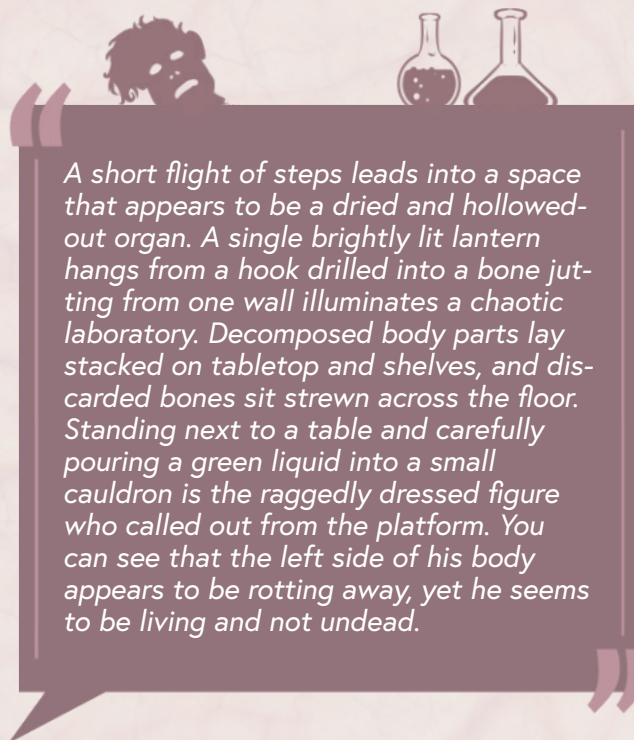
- Its Type is Undead.
- It understands Common but cannot speak.
- It has immunity to poison damage.
- It has immunity to the exhaustion and poisoned conditions.
- It has darkvision out to 60 feet.
- It wields a berserker axe as its only weapon.

1C. SPINAL PASSAGE

A 15-foot-long section of spinal column leads from the platform through the undead flesh and into the hollowed skull that makes up the captain's quarters (area 6). The possessed Captain Rogers controls the bones, making them flow together with undead flesh to create an impenetrable barrier that blocks off the passage. If the

scepter is destroyed, the spine reverts to its normal hollowed state, opening the route between areas.

2. SILAS' LABORATORY



A short flight of steps leads into a space that appears to be a dried and hollowed-out organ. A single brightly lit lantern hangs from a hook drilled into a bone jutting from one wall illuminates a chaotic laboratory. Decomposed body parts lay stacked on tabletop and shelves, and discarded bones sit strewn across the floor. Standing next to a table and carefully pouring a green liquid into a small cauldron is the raggedly dressed figure who called out from the platform. You can see that the left side of his body appears to be rotting away, yet he seems to be living and not undead.

ROLEPLAYING DOCTOR SILAS

One of the former adventuring companions of Captain Rogers, Silas Thornton, was once a cleric of the goddess of life and death. When the scepter cursed the ship's crew, he was in the process of frantically casting a *resurrection* spell on his wife Lorena, slain in the kraken's attack. The curse reacted with the spell and resulted in his current state of being trapped halfway between life and undeath. He regularly oscillates between logical sanity and rage-filled madness, compounded by the taunting of his undead wife, who he keeps caged in area 2a.

After losing connection to his goddess, Silas turned to alchemy and ritual magic. He experiments on the limbs of the sailors killed by the kraken to find a way to bring his wife back from undeath. So far, his experiments have met with abject failure. The doctor does not dare challenge Captain Rogers for control over the scepter and must keep Lorena locked in her cage to ensure she does not kill him. Captain Rogers ignores Doctor Silas' presence as he revels in watching his former companion fall into madness.

Silas speaks in a well-educated gentlemanly manner when lucid, and his true personality as a former hero

shines through. When the madness grips him, he devolves into a twisted, bestial nature, and his manner becomes vulgar and coarse. He is aware of the switch, referring to his split personality as “The Other,” and these personality changes happen sporadically. Silas shares the following helpful information:

- He relates the true story of the Sea Wraith’s demise as described in the Backstory.
- He explains how he uses a ritual to create an airy space within the kraken but warns that it does not extend to the entire ship.
- Beyond his laboratory and the main hold, he knows little about what lies in the ship; he is devoted to his wife and his efforts to free her of the curse.
- The captain is more than just a cursed undead creature like Lorena; there was something in that scepter that took hold of him. Something ancient and evil.
- The scepter must not be destroyed before Silas can study it and determine how to free the souls trapped within. He warns the characters not to attempt to use its powers, lest they also fall victim to whatever force is trapped within.

Development. If any survivors (see “Survivors” sidebar) are left in the care of Silas, he promises to take good care of them. As soon as he feels the characters are far enough away, he kills them all, and it takes him 1 hour to create a **flesh golem** from their bodies under his control. If any of the survivors were well known to the characters, they instantly recognize the face of the golem upon their return to the laboratory, and Silas proudly shows off his creation.

Encounter: The Good Bad Doctor. Silas Thornton (see Appendix) wishes only to bring his wife back to life. After seeing the characters’ capabilities, he attempts to manipulate them into fighting Captain Rogers to gain

possession of the scepter for himself. The doctor believes that he will still get their remains for his experiments even if they fail. While Silas is not initially hostile towards the characters, he attacks if they show hostility towards himself or his wife. **Lorena** (she uses **wight** statistics without weapons), a rotting undead human female with a rictus smile and an acerbic tongue, sits in a locked iron cage in area 2a. She mocks anyone within earshot and tells them all the horrifying things she will do to them while she gnaws on a rotting human arm that Silas tosses into her cage. If combat breaks out, she breaks free after 1 round, attacking the creature closest to her.

Treasure. The laboratory holds a complete set of alchemist’s supplies and two *potions of false life* that are found with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check amongst the otherwise poisonous concoctions on the table. Drinking a *potion of false life* grants 1d4+14 temporary Hit Points for 1 hour. Anyone drinking a poisonous concoction takes 11 (2d10) poison damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. Silas gives the *potions of false life* if the characters agree to bring him the scepter from Captain Rogers’ quarters. Silas’ journal sits on a table, it is bound in cured flesh taken off doomed sailors, and faint nautical tattoos can still be seen on some pages.



2A. CAGES AND RITUALS

This area holds the caged Lorena and a ritual spell form etched into the walls that powers the air bubble (see General Features). The ritual runes glow with a faint blue light, and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals their purpose and role in maintaining the breathable air.

3. DIGESTIVE TRACT

The smell of decay filling this fleshy cavity is overwhelming. The broken bowsprit of the shipwreck pierced through into what appears to be the organ that produced the kraken's stomach acid—a large yellow pool with chunks of rotting flesh floating on the surface bubbles beneath the bow.

There is a 15-foot gap between the end of the broken bowsprit and a thin ledge that leads to area 4. Walking along the slippery ridge requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 3 (1d6) falling damage and 22 (4d10) acid damage per round from the pool upon impact.

Encounter: Acid Oozes. There are four **acid oozes** (they use **black pudding** statistics) hiding in the pool. They attack only if the acid is disturbed by a creature falling from the ledge or sliding from the hall (area 3a).

3A. SLIDING HALL

This tubular hall was part of the kraken's intestine and inclines steeply towards area 4. Climbing the gunk-covered 20-foot-high section requires a successful DC 15 Strength check to maintain grip. This check can be done with advantage if climbing tools are used. Failing this check results in sliding down the tube. The character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to catch themselves before falling into acid, taking 22 (4d10) acid damage per round from the pool upon impact. A character can catch a sliding one with a successful DC 18 Dexterity check and a DC 18 Strength saving throw to maintain grip. Failing the Strength saving throw results in both characters falling.

4. THE BOSUN'S PARLOR

Yellowed bones blanket the floor of this dry chamber under an intricate web of old rigging affixed to the ceiling and walls. Sitting amidst the pile of bones is a dwarven corpse whittling at a femur while tunelessly whistling a sea shanty. It looks up as you enter, flashing a toothless grin above a rotting beard as it says, "Ahh, we have guests! Come to visit old Kilsreth, have ye?" As the dwarf speaks, the floor of bones shifts and skulls turn to look silently in your direction.

Kilsreth Blazeblasher was a dwarven fighter who acted as the *Sea Wraith* bosun. His body was torn in half during the kraken's attack on their ship, and when cursed with undeath, only his upper torso from the waist up remained. He was still partially alive when the curse struck, and he has retained a glimmer of his personality and enjoys playing with victims who make their way into his parlor. He has found a way to tap into the latent necromantic energy that empowers the undead kraken and spends his time creating tiny lesser bone golems. Bits of rigging are strung throughout the 15-foot-high chamber, enabling Kilsreth to traverse the entire room quickly. The entrance to the tunnel leading to area 5 is entirely hidden by bones but can easily be found by spending 10 minutes searching the area or by answering Kilsreth's riddle as described below.

The undead dwarf is a fanatic about puzzles. He offers the characters a chance to either sacrifice a living creature to his knife or answer a riddle for information on what lies ahead. As the last character enters the chamber, the bones on the floor flow upwards to block the way they came with a wall of bone (15 AC and 30 HP).

Kilsreth's Riddle

"A wealthy naval captain told his three sons he would die soon, and he needed to decide which one of them to bequeath his ship. He tells his sons, "Go to the port market and buy something large enough to fill my bedroom but small enough to fit in your pocket. From this, I will decide which of you is the wisest and worthy

enough to inherit my ship.” They all went to the market, and each returned with a different item. The father told his sons to come into his quarters one at a time and try to fill up his bedroom with their item. The first son came in and put some pieces of cloth he bought and laid them across the room, but it barely covered the floor. The second son came in and spread some hay on the floor, but there was only enough to cover half. The third son came in and showed his father what he had bought. He was instantly pronounced the new captain. What did the third son show his father?”

The Answer

A tinderbox. When the son lit the tinder, it filled the room with light.

Encounter: Bosun Buddies. Kilsreth the Bosun uses **wight** statistics and has a movement speed of 30 while walking on his hands, a climbing speed of 60 ft., and does not carry weapons, allowing his multiattack to make two Life Drain attacks. He has control of four **lesser bone golems** carved to resemble a small menagerie of skeletal animals: wolf, monkey, dragon, and owlbear. They are hidden among the room's bones and are indistinguishable from normal bones until they attack. Kilsreth honors his promise if the characters answer his riddle. As he opens the doorway to area 4a, he directs them to watch out for the following area's walls and the “captain's dogs.” Regardless of whether they answered the riddle or sacrificed a creature, he sends his golems to ambush them once they enter the hall. If they cannot answer his riddle and refuse to give him a sacrifice, Kilsreth cackles with glee and orders the golems to ambush the characters. He uses the rigging to traverse the room and attack characters he deems the weakest.

4A. HALL OF HANDS

The walls of this descending hallway are covered in slime and muck. Undead body parts are embedded in the walls and shift as the characters make their way through; skeletal hands reach out to grab at them and rotting heads snap their teeth to bite. The path directly down the hall's center is out of their reach and provides a safe route. A living creature that moves within 5 feet of either wall must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the reaching hands. A failure results in that creature becoming grappled by the many undead hands affixed to the walls. A creature can free themselves or a grappled creature with a successful DC 18 Strength

CR 5
1,800 XP

LESSER BONE GOLEM

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)
Speed 30 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +3

STR 18 (+4)	DEX 10 (+0)	CON 18 (+4)	INT 3 (-4)	WIS 8 (-1)	CHA 1 (-5)
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Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

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

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

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

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

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The target dies if this attack reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The reduction lasts until removed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the golem to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the golem drops to 1 hit point instead.

check or by dealing non-piercing damage to the hands (AC 15 and 20 HP), clearing that 5-foot section of wall. A grappled creature takes 13 (3d8) piercing damage from the skulls biting them at the start of their turn.

5. BONE HYDRA LAIR

This area is not covered by Doctor Silas' air bubble (see General Features) and is mainly flooded with seawater from holes in the kraken's corpse. The water is murky and reduces visibility to half of the normal distance.

Encounter: Captain's Dogs. Guarding this location are two **bone hydras** that use **hydra** statistics with the following modifications:

- Their Type is Undead.
- They have darkvision out to 120 ft.

- They have immunity to poison damage.
- They have immunity to the exhaustion and poisoned conditions.

The kraken ate these hydra before being cursed, and their skeletons were reanimated. Captain Rogers occasionally throws living victims to them to entertain himself.

Treasure. Among the many bones that litter the floor is a *Ring of the Mariner* that can be found by anyone who spends at least 10 minutes searching through the area and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

6. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The kraken's open skull houses a horrific recreation of Captain Roger's quarters from the original *Sea Wraith*. Ironbound wooden chests lay stacked against one wall, the glint of gold and gemstones peaking through cracks and holes. The characters find the captain brooding in his chair and holding the cursed scepter.

Once the party enters the chamber, read aloud the following:

A ship captain's quarters are contained within the hollow skull. Crushed red velvet curtains hang draped along the walls amidst dozens of hooked chains swinging from the ceiling. Ornate rugs with intricate patterns cover poorly constructed wooden flooring. In the center of the chamber, staring through the watery eyes of the undead kraken, sits the skeletal captain on his iron throne. He holds his scepter across his lap, held in the hand of an arm made of brass clockwork and spinning gears. He lurches to his feet with a rattle and turns to you with a fiery flash in his eyes. "This be no place for th' living. Ye reckon ye could challenge me on me own ship?" he rages, lifting his scepter high as he splits into three identical duplicates with a flash of magical energy.

RING OF THE MARINER

Ring, rare

This silver and brass ring holds a piece of highly polished teak wood running through the center. While attuned to this ring, you gain proficiency in water vehicles. You can also cast each of the following spells 3 times per day without the need for components: *create water*, *gust of wind*, and *purify food and drink*.

While under the effects of the lich's essence in the cursed scepter of the lich lord, Captain Rogers cannot be reasoned with, and any attempt to speak with him results only in returned insults. He uses the scepter to open the spinal tunnel leading to area 1, pulling a wave of the undead crew to his aid as described in the Dark Waves encounter below.

Hazard: Captain's Hooks. Dozens of rusted iron chains of various lengths ending in sharp hooks hang from the roof of the skull, making this space difficult terrain for flying creatures. Any creature larger than Tiny flying through the area must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained by hooks and take 3 (1d6) piercing damage. A creature can use its action to make a DC 17 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success, ending the restrained condition.

Encounter: Dark Waves. Captain Rogers is a **lich** with a clockwork arm (see "Clockwork Arm," sidebar) and he casts a *mirror image* spell on himself before starting combat. His skeletal monkey familiar Tumbles uses **baboon** statistics with the following modifications:

- Its creature Type is Undead.
- It gains advantage on all Athletics and Acrobatics checks.
- If reduced to 0 hit points and Captain Rogers has more than 1 hit point, Tumbles reanimates with full hit points at the start of Captain Rogers' next round.
- Targets hit by its attacks have disadvantage on saving throws to maintain concentration.

Tumbles roams the room by swinging through the hooked chains to avoid opportunity attacks and targets spell casters. The spinal tunnel (area 1c) opens at the end of round 1, revealing a horde of undead crew members. At the beginning of each round thereafter, three **skeletons** enter the room from the tunnel. This flow continues until Captain Rogers is defeated.

CLOCKWORK ARM

An engineer or other mechanically inclined professional can spend 1 hour affixing this brass and steel clockwork limb to replace an arm that was lost or removed. While the prosthetic is attached to you, it functions identically to the arm it is replacing. You can detach or reattach it as an action, and it can't be removed by anyone else. It detaches if you die. While this prosthetic is attached, you have advantage on checks made against being disarmed of any weapon held in this hand.

THE CURSED SCEPTER

The scepter contains the essence of an ancient lich that once used the crystal as its phylactery, absorbing souls to elongate its immortality. The artifact lay dormant for centuries, hidden away until discovered by Captain Rogers and his companions and later empowered by their deaths when the kraken attacked. The essence within has corrupted Captain Rogers and turned him into a semblance of the former lich, who now seeks to continue draining souls from the living.

Using a *dispel magic* spell or similar effect on the scepter suppresses the essence for a few seconds and allows Captain Rogers' personality to regain control of his body. He quickly explains that the crystal must be destroyed to free the souls trapped within before the lich takes over once more and becomes immune to being disrupted for the next 24 hours. The crystal can be destroyed with a successful DC 25 Strength check to smash the crystal or with a *disintegrate* spell or similar effect.

The scepter of the lich lord is a cursed magic item, and its true power can only be used by the evil presence trapped within the crystal. A *detect magic* spell or similar effect reveals an aura of necromancy from the item. A character attempting to use the scepter (such as trying to attune to it) must make a successful DC 25 Intelligence saving throw for each attempt. A successful save results in taking 21 (6d6) psychic damage, and a failure results in the lich's essence in the crystal taking over the character's mind and body, transforming into a **lich** and attempting to kill any living creature around them. Destroying the crystal obliterates the transformed lich, which can only be resurrected with a *wish* spell.



CONCLUSION

This adventure's conclusion depends on the characters' decision regarding the crystal or return the scepter to Dr. Silas.

RETURNING TO THE LABORATORY

Doctor Silas thanks them profusely if the characters return with the scepter without destroying the crystal after defeating Captain Rogers (see area 6). He takes the scepter if the characters offer it willingly, expressing anger if they are reluctant. Silas uses it in a ritual, freeing himself and Lorena from their cursed undead states and to normalcy. He proceeds to destroy the scepter and crystal, leading the characters to the lifeboat on the *Sea Wrath's* stern and using his magic to bring everyone safely out of the now sinking and completely dead kraken (see The Cursed Scepter, area 6).

DESTROYING THE CRYSTAL

Destroying the crystal releases all of the undead from their curse, and they begin to fade and crumble away. This includes the kraken and necessitates the characters to escape the sinking corpse via magic or the jollyboat on the *Sea Wraith's* stern. If Doctor Silas was left alive, he would be released from his undead state and returned to normal, but Lorena and the rest of the crew are destroyed. He escapes the kraken and swears vengeance against the characters who have now gained a powerful nemesis.



APPENDIX

CR 5
1,800 XP

DOCTOR SILAS

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +4

STR
20 (+5)

DEX
16 (+3)

CON
17 (+3)

INT
20 (+5)

WIS
14 (+2)

CHA
16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +13, History +9, Insight +6, Perception +6

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

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

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Infernal

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Silas fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Weapons. Silas' weapon attacks are magical.

Turn Immunity. Silas has immunity against any effect that turns undead.

Undead Rage (Mythic Trait: Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If Silas is reduced to 0 hit points, he doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, he completes his transformation into undead, regains 112 hit points, and moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Actions

Multiattack. Silas makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Legendary Actions

Silas 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. Silas regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. Silas makes a Slam attack.

Mad Dash (Costs 2 Action). Silas moves up to half his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Alchemical Bomb (Costs 2 Actions). Silas throws a flask of volatile chemicals at a point on the ground he can see within 20 feet. Each creature in a 15-foot-radius of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 14 (4d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Mythic Actions

If Silas' mythic trait is active, he can use the option below as a legendary action for 1 hour after using Undead Rage.

Necrotic Slam (Costs 2 Actions). Silas makes two Slam attacks. If both attacks hit the same creature, it takes an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

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