

Street of Dreams

(Not Dreaming Street!)

A good night out: the bloody eel

There are places that one only tends to hear about in legends and myths. Some of these are places of wonder and enlightenment, some are the sites of historic events and legendary deeds . . . and others are the places that your mother warned you about. The Bloody Eel is most definitely of the latter variety. It is a tavern hidden deep within the heart of Freeport's Scurvetytown, but which is whispered about on the lips of sailors aboard ships and harbored in ports the world over.

It is rumored to be the roughest, toughest dive there is and that only the heartiest pirates even know how to find the place. Of course, once you do, you'll wish you didn't. Folks are commonly known to step in just for a drink, never to return. It is a den of pirates, which few others dare brave – the law included. Of course, those tough enough to brave the danger will find it an excellent place for adventure and one of the best places about to pick up on good rumors. Just hope that no one challenges you to a game of Smack . . .

One obvious exception to the character of the Old City is the Street of Dreams. This road, wide by Freeport standards, cuts through the center of the district where shops catering to the refined tastes of Freeporters do brisk business. Along either side of the street, travelers can find just about every type of luxury

good and artisan. Jewelers, woodcarvers, furniture makers, painters, tailors, purveyors of gourmet meats and cheeses, wine merchants, and more are all thus clustered in a relatively small area.

The Street of Dreams is a rare thing in Freeport, an oasis of culture and

refinement. Of course, many visitors to the street wouldn't know true culture if it sat on them—but even a newly rich freebooter, just retired, wants the appearance of distinction and good taste. The craftsmen here are happy to take anyone's money.

The name similarity between the

Street of Dreams and Dreaming Street (the seedy red-light district in Scurvetytown) is a constant irritant to the upscale merchants and artisans. Getting the name of the street wrong is a famous and common faux pas, and many a city newcomer making the error has found the prices of an offended shopkeeper suddenly raised.

ANOTHER MUTILATED BODY FOUND IN DRAC'S END TENT TOWN! FANG AND CLAW SUSPECTED! OMAR NKOTA REFUSES TO COMMENT

Located on the northern rim of Drac's End, Fang and Claw is a business dealing in buying, selling, trapping, and training wild animals. The market for such creatures is variable, but Fang and Claw had managed to stay in operation for more than twenty years, and owner Omar Nkota sells animals to whoever needs them. One significant source of income is in training and selling watchdogs (or similar beasts) for other merchants. Another is in providing exotic pets and mascots to pirates. Sure, a captain can get a parrot or a monkey, but there's more prestige in a panther, jungle devil, or baby land shark—at least, until it eats you. From savage creatures to aristocratic pets, Nkota has sold them all.

Recently, though, a source reports, business has been lean— In an attempt to adapt to changing times, Nkota has taken on board a partner, the trader Sarien, and is focusing more on creatures from the Continent or other islands. Many of these beasts are even more exotic and unusual than the animals of AVa!—and more dangerous as well.

Tent Town isn't a place, exactly, or at least not a single place. The locals give the name to the pockets of tents, lean-tos, and squatter habitats that appear and disappear through the district. Scattered along the southern edge of Drac's End, the ever-changing territory of Tent Town plays home to transients, sailors, the homeless, and the very poor. These shanties are also the focus of Drac's End's criminal activities, a hideout for thieves, and a place where richer citizens can come to buy drugs, stolen goods, or information.

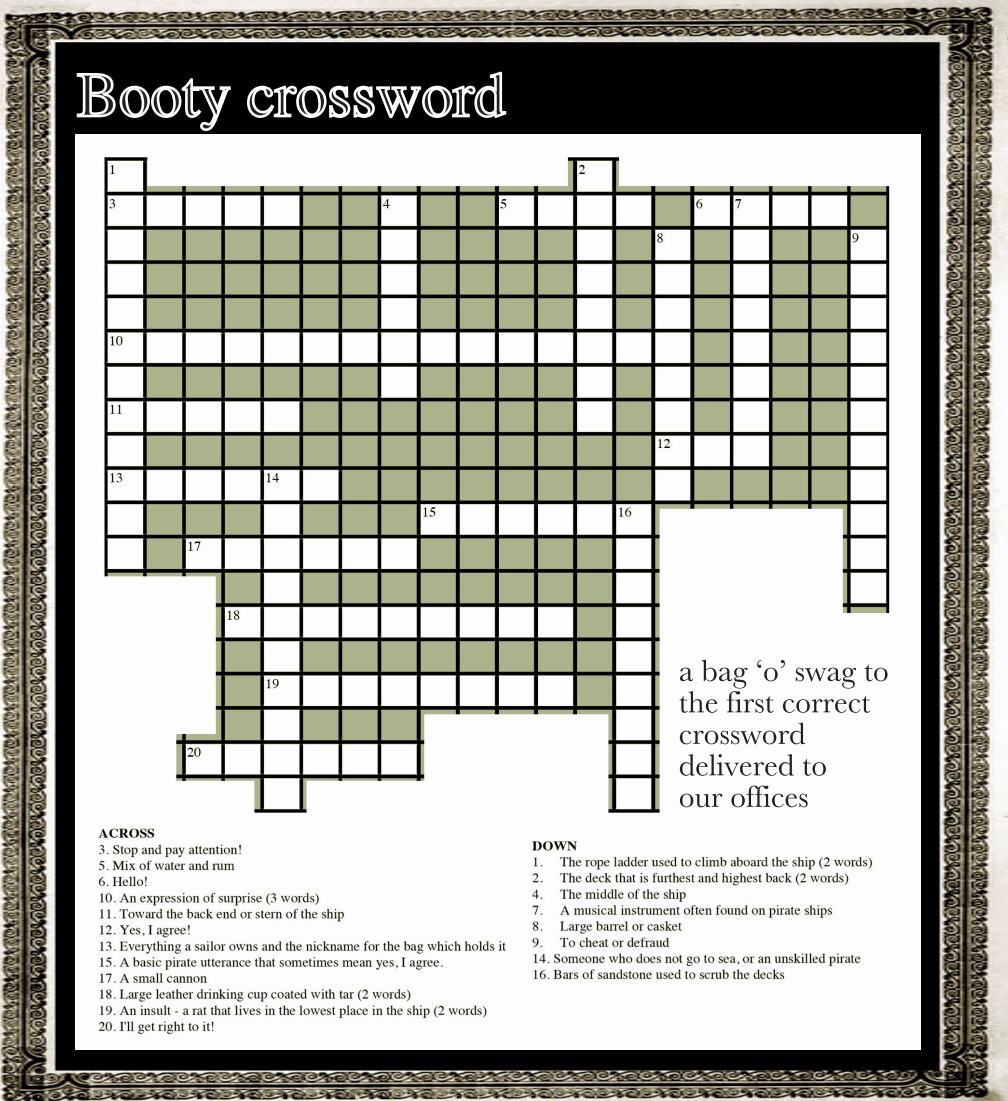
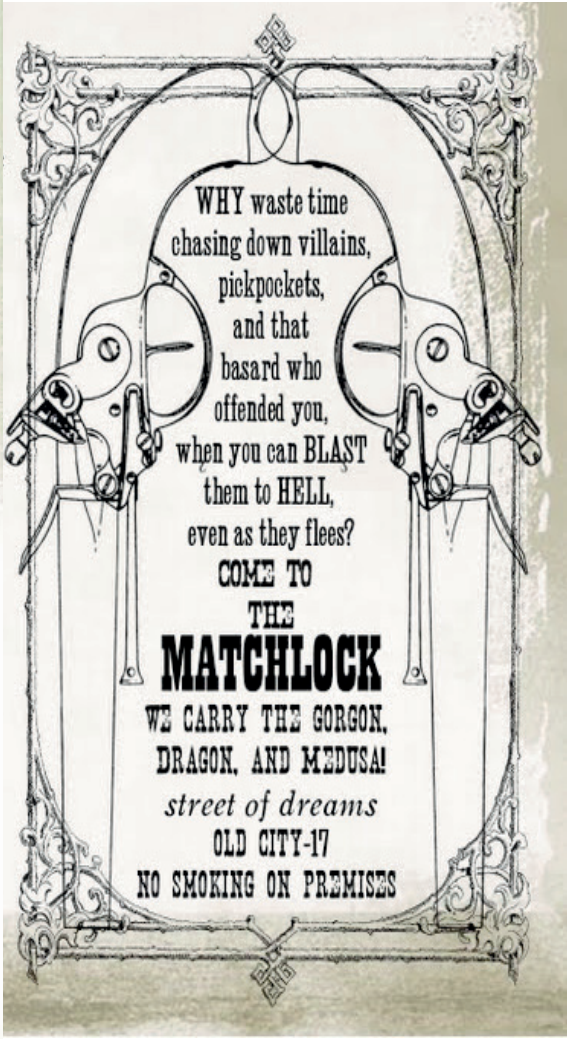
There have always been stretches of open space in Drac's End without any buildings at all, and squatters have claimed these areas over the years. They camp out there under the stars, right in the shadow of the walls of the Old City but afforded none of its protections. The Watch rarely patrols these areas, and the Captains' Council occasionally makes noises about

cleaning out the "transient problem," but for the most part Tent Town is left alone.

Many residents of Tent Town are sailors that abandoned their ships. Others are transients who came to Freeport and ran out of money, thieves in hiding, itinerant laborers doing their best to stay out of the sinkhole of Scurvetytown, residents left homeless, or anyone else down on their luck. A few rare souls are those who choose to live a bohemian, outdoors existence, but mostly, no one lives in Tent Town who doesn't have to do so.

Tents and makeshift buildings often appear overnight, only to disappear later. Crime is more common in Tent Town than anywhere in Drac's End; drug dealers, thieves, smugglers, and pirates set up shop in the roughest areas for a night or a week and then move on before the authorities catch them. Tents are hard to defend or lock up, so thefts and robberies are common. Fights—over territory, resources, or anything else—are not uncommon.

Walk around any corner in Drac's End, and you may find yourself in a Tent Town. Rough tents made of canvas or burlap are the most common "buildings," but there are other, less respectable accommodations—shacks assembled from driftwood, lean-tos made of packing crates and barrels, or simple mounds of blankets and refuse. There are definite "neighborhoods" within Tent Town, better or worse territories. Those in the less-desirable areas are usually dirty and equalid; the residents have few possessions and no luxuries, and the tents stink of unwashed bodies and abandoned hopes. Residents in better areas are still poor, for the most part, but may have retained some of their belongings from better days, along with some sense of domestic pride.



News in briefs

Robin Hood, Men in Scivies: Rumor has it that a sorcerer turned pirate has gone awol and is attacking other pirate ships in the waters about Freeport. This isn't odd, of course. What is, is that he is said to be taking his booty and giving it out to the poor and various charities. A captain like this goes against all that's good and sacred in pirate-dom, and something will surely be done about him soon.

The Royal Reception: A royal emissary from a nearby kingdom is said to be en route to Freeport to engage in some secret negotiations with Lord Drac. The rumors also say that a prince will be among those on board. A plan has been hatched to waylay the ship and kidnap the prince to see just what kind of a ransom he can fetch. Of course, if one were to pry those secrets away from the negotiating prince, then perhaps one could even blackmail Lord Drac as well. The royal fleet will be armed, but is completely unsuspecting. Unless some heroes step in, they are surely doomed. Of course, those less dubious listeners might hatch a scheme to kidnap the said prince before someone else does and fetch the reward for themselves . . .

Lost City: There are some that say that the current location of Freeport is not the original site, that there was another located further south, where the city was truly founded. Unfortunately, this island has

sunken beneath the waves, and the word is that a race of aquatic humanoids has taken up shelter down there. These creatures seemed peaceful at first, but lately there have been a lot of disappearances in that area and recently an entire ship went missing. There are whispers going about that these mer-folk are gearing up for something big, but who's to say what.

Call Me Ahab: There's a certain breed of sea serpent that comes to the waters of the Serpent's Teeth each year to mate and breed, known as Swabee Pluckers. They get the name for their knack for sneaking up on ships and nabbing mates right off of the deck while they're swabbing away, without there being hardly a notice until the mate starts screaming. The beasts are enormous, sporting massive tentacles, which love only to lead one down to a set of massive, tasked jaws. Until recently, these things were thought only a nuisance, but someone went and cut one open, only to find out that one of the beast's glands is filled with an extremely valuable oil. Now the rush is on to hunt these beasts down, and whoever kills the most stands to make themselves a nice little pile of gold.

A King's Coffer: Rumor has it that a royal vessel from one of the southern kingdoms was stricken with the plague, and all of the crew died. The lone survivor washed up on shore in a dingy and told the



tale with his dying breath. The rumor is that this ship was carrying some very precious cargo, and that the king is offering a substantial reward to any who return it. The ship was last seen adrift off of some islands on the tip of the Serpent's Teeth. It has surely run aground there, but there are rumors that about of a race of hideous subterranean creatures there who worship some dark idol. But they wouldn't have much use for a king's treasure, would they? Only the brave will find out.

Grimm Island: There are hundreds of smaller islands dotting the seas of the Serpent's Teeth around Freeport. There's one that folks call Grimm Island, and there's been rumors of some strange stuff going on there lately. A group of pirates calling themselves the Iron Flag have set up a slave smuggling operation on the island. The unusual thing is that slaves are constantly being smuggled to the island, but no shipments are ever seen leaving. Rumors abound as to what's going on, but the consensus is that no smart pirate would worry about it. Now a smart adventurer, that's another story . . .

Undead Invade City, Watch Invades Sanitarium

FREEPORT - As their comrades bravely battled the hordes of walking dead that invaded the city, four Watchmen crept off to break into the sanitarium on the outskirts of the Old City on an un-disclosed mission that cost one of them his life.

These Watchmen, led by notorious Watch trouble-makers Di'Fier and Drusilia Nailo, entered the grounds, where the 3rd Watchman, new recruit Paden Black-batel, used some form of necromantic ability to gain control of the undead outside of the building! If the Watch is now recruiting potential masters of the dark arts, it is a rather chilling prospect indeed, and one which does not bode well for our fair city.

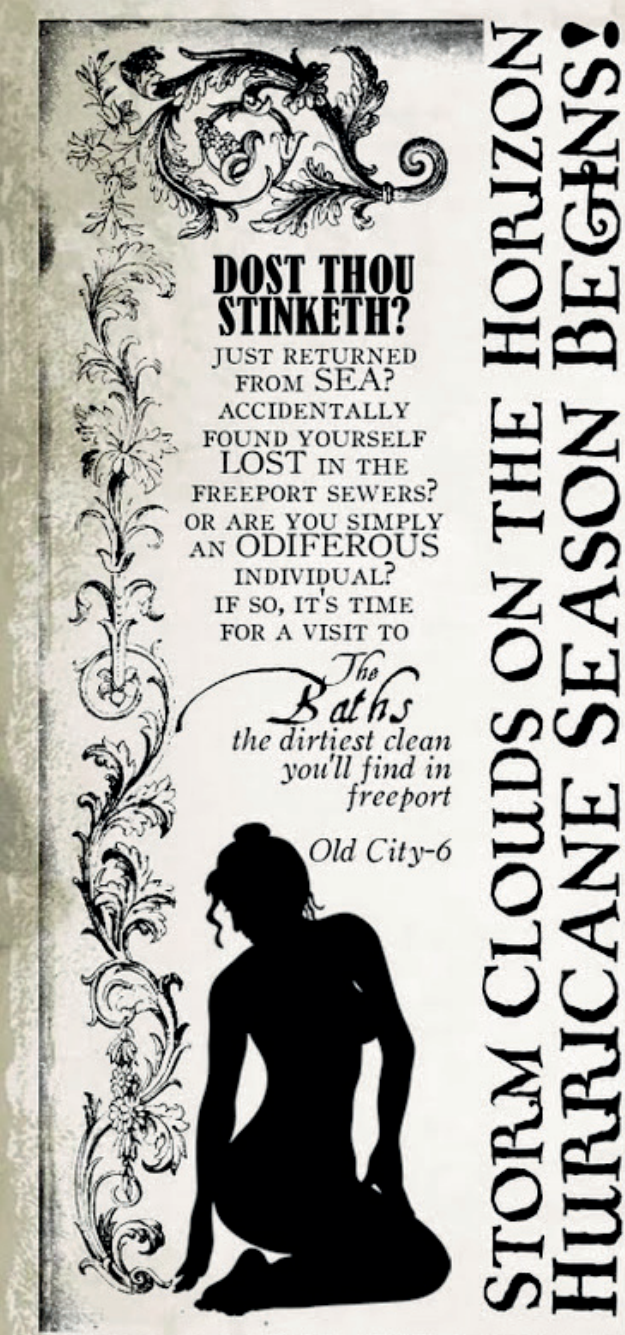
Their actions after entering the building are uncertain, but this reporter had the opportunity to visit the site of the carnage, where the Watch claims they battled legions of the walking dead, including ghostly manifestations that attacked their very soul, and some form of ghoulish ogre. Unfortunately, the physical evidence for their outlandish tale is lacking-of all of the alleged undead, not a single one could be produced.

It was clear that something occurred, however, as the residents of the asylum had been savagely butchered, and the fourth Watchman, one Hallfred by name, met his gory end in catacombs beneath the site. Watch-Lieutenants Nailo and Di'Fier are no strangers to either bizarre claims or unofficial so-called "investigations" based on their own paranoid delusions - witness their claims of a secret cult of snake-people operating unseen in our city, claims which led to the temporary suspension of their duties after a confrontation with High Priest Thuron of the Temple of Knowledge.

Sources say that in recent weeks the officers in question had been asking questions about one Amarylis Greenbottle, a noted hallfing brewer who had recently been admitted to the facility after a breakdown. Is it possible that the entire episode was engineered to gain access to Greenbottle?

Brother Norton of the city's Temple of Knowledge, had this to say about the pair: "Ah-ah-ah... kni ... knives. S-s-snakes." The traumatized brother was found in the basement of the sanitarium, where he was placed after the recent bloody attack on the Temple of Knowledge - an incident, we might add, that the Watchmen in question were also involved in. Brother Norton has since been transferred to the Temple on the mainland where he can receive the care and attention due someone in his unfortunate condition.

It is clear from the evidence that the City Watch is covering something up, and we may never know the truth behind their bloody foray unless a full and accurate accounting for their actions is demanded by the citizenry of this city.



Bad Body Business: City Morgue Found Mysteriously Empty

WEATHER
High More / 10
60 Low
35

"TELL THE PRINCE I'LL BE HAPPY TO CONSIDER HIS OFFER ONCE HE FACES ME BLADE TO BLADE. IF HE WINS, HE MAY COURT ME. IF I WIN, I CAN BLEED HIM. I EAGERLY AWAIT HIS ANSWER." - MARILISE MAEORGAN. SEA LORD OF FREEPORT

Word up

overheard on the streets

“Welcome to Freeport, friends! They say this is the City of Adventure, so who am I to argue? Before you set off and sample the thousand delights of our fine city, let me give you some advice. First, stick to the main streets. The Watch does a fine job, but they can’t be everywhere, you know? Those little alleys and side streets have other folks who like a bit of adventure, too. Tell you what, for that fat purse on your belt, I’ll make sure you stay nice and safe in this here city. Welcome to Freeport indeed.”
—**Pious Pete, Guide**

“Freeport is a wild town. Serpent men, buried temples, gates to Hell—you can’t walk into somebody’s basement without uncovering a Truth That Nobody Is Meant to Know. But for all that eldritch excitement, our city is still a port, which means somebody’s got to do the loading and unloading and make sure things keep chugging along. These days, nothing happens on the wharves without the Longshoremen.”
—**Sweet Gregor, Longshoreman**

“If the Docks are the door, the Seaside Market is the front hall.”
—**Aulvant Brine, Peddler**

“Freeport is the crossroads of the world, a meeting place for all manner of folk—and about as charming as a festering wart. The endless ebb and flow of ships is where there’s beauty. Their sails, how the wind fills them. Their hulls, how the water yields to them. Their crews, they become one with the ship, and by extension the sea. I will build the greatest ships. And with these ships, I will make Freeport my own.”
—**E’elruen Helkerna**

“Our job’s simple, it is. Aye. Find the rat and snare it good. But what people don’t understand is that we be in their homes, in their basements, out on the streets, and in the city’s sewers. We end up doin’ lots more than just catchin’ rats, mate. We see the city’s underbelly… and we knows every little wart.”
—**Marcher Quinlmy, Guild Master**

“It’s amazing that, given the extensive library of maps we possess, there is still so much of the world around us we know nothing about. Including the very city we live in.”
—**ZirZuard, Cartographer**

“I’ve heard some Freeporter’s believe soap causes sores to appear in the nether regions. Too bad, really. This city would be far nicer if it weren’t for the stink.”
—**Jeminy Splitz, Ruffian**

“Ever heard of a left-handed smoke sifter? Know where to go to find a glass orc eye in a hurry? Is there any place that still has copies of the first printing of Marten Drac’s Who’s That Behind You? The answer to these and many other odd questions can be found within Argyle McGill’s Curio Shop.”
—**T’lulmir Quent, Agent**

“Teach history? Dear boy, I’ve lived through history. And if you’ll sit down and stop looking around my office for anything worth stealing, I might even tell you something about it.”
—**Professor Mandarus Whitmi**

“Pirates are a superstitious lot. Theirs is a world of gods and monsters, fickle fortunes, and supernatural strangeness. It’s no wonder that, despite their proclivity for criminal violence, whenever they come to port, they fill the temples on holy days, clinging to any belief that might, next time, carry them back once again from the sea.”
—**Father Egil, High Priest of the Knowledge God**

“Pour another drink for the lady and myself, would you, Nang? And pass me my longbow; I’m sure I just saw a sea devil climb up the side of Roth’s schooner. Shall we investigate, my dear?”
—**Rex Nash**

“Yarr, I tell ye, there are days I think hard about shovelin’ all my stock onto a barge and moving over to Libertyville. Sure, they’re murderers and pirates, but that’s still a damned improvement over dealin’ with the soddin’ Merchants’ Guild.”
—**Argyle McGill**

“Hey! Either put the halling down and finish your drink or hurry up and throw him through the window! Make up your mind already—there’s other drinkers waiting to be served!”
—**Gizella**

STIFFNESS! ACHES! BRUISES! SPRAINS! Knorbertal's Herbs

322 Street of Dreams, Old City

For all your tooth pulling, remedy and linement needs: we carry Hostetter's Stomach Bitters

STIFFNESS! ACHES! BRUISES! SPRAINS! Knorbertal's Herbs

322 Street of Dreams, Old City

For all your tooth pulling, remedy and linement needs: we carry Hostetter's Stomach Bitters

In search of...

our roving reporters weekly column

Long ago, the mad alchemist Boutin Piddu commanded seven laboratories in the City. I have explored six of them; I count myself lucky enough to have accompanied the first attempts of breaking into two of the labs. This time it is different, I am on my own. Boutin Piddu lived the harried life of a sage. An alchemist of tremendous power, Boutin lost his lust for treasure hunting and began to research all sorts of mysteries from different locations in the City. The lure of discovering new solutions to old problems interested the old man more than finding trinkets guarded by deadly monsters. Though many citizens feared the man, they still profited from his research unknowingly. Boutin sold his creations to the various trading guilds to further his experiments.

I realized Boutin created simulacrum of himself to complete as much work as he did. Invading the icy cold conditions of his workspace gave me a clue if the simulacrum still lived. I have encountered only one of these facsimiles of Boutin, and that one met a quick destruction from the order of paladins I joined forces with when I infiltrated the fifth of Boutin’s laboratories. None of the labs had a theme. Each location served to explore several types of magic or alchemy and this one is no different. There is a chill in the air escaping from the exposed room. I cautiously creep through the broken wall, almost knocking over a huge stack of scrolls in the process. I was able to examine the remains of the creature that escaped the lab when the crewman’s pickaxe brought down the old weakened wall. The crystalline monster killed the crew and several others on the street before a mage in the employ of the City brought it down.

Several flickering light sources play over the disarray of half-completed experiments lying in the first room. As I investigate deeper into the chilly quarters, I find the telltale signs of a twisted genius. Copper tubes and frost-lined glassware weave a tangled web in one room, and a three-dimensional maze inside a cube shaped wall of force takes up space in another room. Two dozen or more rat skeletons fill the maze, along with a massively long snake skeleton wrapped through the maze.

The last laboratory found in the City offered up several advances in magic; including a slightly less-expensive way to manufacture tindertwigs and a cache of metamagic rods, but that was several years ago. I hope

Shorts

- and we don't mean halflings

Tattoo Leaps off Sailor, Attacks Local Inquisitor

Rotpick’s Goblin Carnival Back in Town, Casualties Low

Disease-Infested Morels Sold in City, Dozens Infected

Mysterious Smithy Fire Blamed on Rogue Elementals

Blackstone Mercenaries Blamed for Mysterious Murders

Scurvytown Merchant Dumps Inventory, Abandons Shop

Wreck of the Greene Rowneen Found West of Windward

Filth Fever Sweeps Through Dockside Establishments

some of the materials and notes I find in Boutin’s lost laboratory will finance my adventures for years to come.

As far as my exploration of the laboratory’s defenses, I avoided the floating crystalline shapes patrolling the outer rooms by luck (and a potion of invisibility). I heard clanking and grinding behind a massive metal door. The door resisted all my attempts to open it, and a fortune-teller warned me before my foray to the lab to take care around large metal objects.

Perhaps the most intriguing room in the complex—the forge, is the only place of warmth in the entire area. Boutin discovered a way to stuff copper bands a dozen feet long into very small cylinders, winding them tightly around a central axle. A pegged board behind a large wooden workbench held an array of intricate wrenches and tiny hammers. Boutin’s simulacrum laced these clockworks with magic to allow them to play out over several hours, rather than the few minutes a normal toy takes to wind down. I pocketed a few of these small machines and wondered what Boutin had used them for in the shatter past of the laboratory.

I also gathered a few files and books from a freezing library; packing them away in my haversack. Looking around, I noted the lack of decorations, and artwork, perceiving its former sterile nature. It was not inviting, not comfortable, but packed with scrolls and every flat surface had cryptic writings scrawled across the icy surface. Smudges marred the notes, but the books I retrieved looked promising. They appeared to detail some sort of gate to the Plane of Dreams. I am not sure if the tomes speak of one already built or instructions to complete one, it will take more research.

After all the frigid air, I fully expected to encounter Boutin’s simulacrum. However, I was unable to explore his seventh laboratory fully and found him not.

Perhaps he is still experimenting beneath the City, here or in another location; waiting for new visitors to subject to his whims all in the name of science.

Second Freeporter Found Petrified, Suspects Sought

Brackish Water Bubbles up through Eastern District Boardwalks

Haunting Question: Is the Old City Ghost Back?

New Squad of Witch Hunters Arrive from the Continent

Palace Intruder Captured, Raves About “Snake People”

Newest Continental Warship Vanishes Off Kizmir

Rabid gulls becoming a pest as pollution and rotting goods spawn new breeds - something has to be done



Legends of Freeport:

Ships of the Night
There are pirates aplenty roaming the seas around the Serpent’s Teeth—some rough but decent, some roughish, and others black-hearted as they come. Still, for all their infamy, the buccaneers of Freeport are but mortal men and women. There are stories of other ships, though, of supernatural frigates piloted by demons and manned by ghosts, of monsters that fly the black flag and prey upon the sea lanes.

Most dismiss these tales as fancy, told to scare the cabin boy late at night. Perhaps they are, perhaps they aren’t. Somewhere in Freeport, a sailor will swear blind he has encountered one of the following legendary horrors, and none can be sure that he is lying.

Kothar the Accursed
Captain Kothar was a vicious, arrogant pirate who plied the seas over a hundred years ago, caring nothing for the pirate code. One night at port, he and his men murdered a rival crew, claimed their ship Winds of Hell as their own, and then attempted to hide their misdeeds. When the crime was uncovered, the Sea Lord of the day sentenced them all to death for an abuse of the Pirate’s Code; Kothar and his men were trapped in the Winds of Hell, which was then soaked in fuel and set alight. But Kothar’s rage burned hotter than those flames, they say, stronger than death itself. Winds of Hell returned as a ship crewed by ghosts, fiery specters that existed only to destroy the living. It sails the deep seas outside the barrier reef, propelled by unholy winds even in a dead calm, a flaming sloop of blackened timbers and damned souls. Captain Kothar hunts the night, driven to punish those who put him to the flames a century ago—the pirates of Freeport and anyone who sails under the city’s colors—or anyone else, for that matter. Innocence is no defense against Kothar’s hate, and his spectral crew attacks any ship that crosses their spectral path.

Cuttleblack
Bad as the tale of Kothar and Porcelina might be (if there is indeed any truth to it), at least they were once human; at least one can empathize with them. The monster they call Cuttleblack was never a man, and its urges are beyond mortal comprehension. Those who say they have seen this creature describe it as a horror beyond reason, a rubber-fleshed monstrosity in the shape of a man, with twisted limbs, taloned hands, and squid-like tentacles that erupt from its face to latch upon victims. It possesses terrible supernatural mind powers, captains a rotting hulk crewed by eyeless freaks and degenerate toad-men, and hungers for human brains.

Cuttleblack’s origin remains a mystery; some suggest it may be an outcast from some hidden undersea race, but that’s no more than blind conjecture. As for what the creature wants, what drives it to pilot its black ship through the Serpent’s Teeth—well, that’s guesswork too, but most people assume it’s looking for something, some sunken city or blasphemous treasure from ancient days. But it also seeks food, in the form of captured human sailors and their living brains. The luckiest of those poor souls dies beneath the blows of its misshapen crew.

In the end, Cuttleblack’s motives are no more certain than its existence. And the rumor that it can take the shape of a deformed human in a black cloak, that it occasionally haunts the taverns of Freeport, seeking to buy slaves and forbidden arcane lore? That can’t possibly be true either.

The Hat
In serious tones, with plenty of anxious glances cast over hunched shoulders, locals sometimes mention that, throughout Freeport’s history, there have been powerful men and women who act secretly on the Sea Lord’s behalf. Having special authority to dispense justice in whatever manner they like, these secret agents follow their own conscience, acting as judge, jury, and executioner.

Such reports vary wildly. Some say there’s an entire squad whose sole purpose is to expose and destroy sinister cults, while others suggest there are just a few highly trained, singular agents who act alone. One such man is known only as “the Hat,” reputedly a master of disguise and deception, singlehandedly capable of ferreting out some of the darkest secrets in the city.

Whether or not such men still operate in Freeport is a matter of some debate, but every now and then a gang up and goes missing or a few highly placed

merchants suddenly leave, never to be heard from again. Is this the work of the Sea Lord’s secret police, vigilantes, or someone else?

Court of Skulls and Shadows
Every neighborhood in Freeport has its tall tales, tavern legends, and stories told to scare children into bed.

The hard part is working out which ones are fiction and which are based in truth. One story known by many residents of Drac’s End is that of Lord Bonewrack, King of the Hungry Shades. It’s a scary tale, but fortunately, everyone who hears it agrees that it must be fiction. Surely it’s fiction.

There are old stones on the jungle’s verge (so the story goes) that throw cold shadows day and night, gateways into darkness. Step into it that shadow and you step through, into a half-world of monochromatic madness.

Freeport still exists on the other side, but not as it was. Streets are distorted and bordered by crazily leaning houses. Everything is black and white. And no one stirs, not anywhere. In this Shadowrealm, light comes only from the Sea Lord’s palace. A path twists between warped buildings and through the drunkenly askew gates of the Old City. Crawling blots of darkness ooze across streets. Standing where the palace should be is a black tower, windowless and opalescent. Its angles disdain normal geometry, and shadows dance sinuously on its battlements.

Inside, eerie music fills numberless rooms and endless hallways. At its heart, two figures sit upon black glass thrones. One is Lord Bonewrack, a richly attired elf, softly playing a silver flute. The other, dressed in black silk, is the brittle skeleton of his sister, Ariadne. Shadows flit along the room’s walls, hungry for the living, held in check only by their master’s will. Lord Bonewrack—gaunt, ancient, skin dead white, eyes staring, and hair long and jet black—demands a suitor for his “sleeping” sister, an elf of perfect breeding and consummate beauty. If the visitor does not measure up, Bonewrack laughs madly and releases his shadows, who tear the intruder into bloody rags.

It’s a terrifying tale, but some listeners object. If Bonewrack always destroys those who find his realm, how does anyone know about the shadow world? And where are these evil stones now, since the jungle was decimated in the Great Green Fire? There aren’t any easy answers. But the rumor that one of the shadow stones was uprooted and used as the cornerstone for a boarding house built after the fire, and that shadows now prowl the streets of Drac’s End some nights searching for suitors and sacrifices to Lord Bonewrack’s madness? That’s a story that no one wants to hear. Not yet, anyway.

Pious Petes’

tourist tips

Ten Things You Should Know

If you’re thinking about visiting Freeport, there are a few things you should know if you value your coins, your life, and maybe even your soul. (Leave it to ol’ Pious Pete.)

- Put your purse near your jewels. Freeport is notorious for thievery, and many people lose their fortunes within ten steps of the boat that carried them here. Stick your valuables in places no thief would want to go reaching for them.

- Mind your manners. Don’t like ores? Keep it to yourself. Say the wrong thing, and you’re bound to lose a few teeth. Say it twice, and you’ll be lucky to escape with your life.

- Use small coins. You might have a lot of money now, but you won’t keep it for long if you’re not careful. Pay for everything in the smallest coin possible, within reason. Don’t pay for a sword in pennies, though: haul out a thousand copper bits and you’ll get kicked to the gutter, and rightly so.

- Keep your eyes on your shoes. Gaping about like a foreigner is a sure way to get yourself robbed, stabbed, and raped. Or maybe all three. Freeport isn’t a place for the witless.

- If you’re lost, look for the walls. Freeport doesn’t have any conveniences like signs. (Most folks can’t read anyway.) The best landmark is the Old City Walls. You can’t miss them. If they’re in front of you, you’re in the Docks; behind you, you’re in Drac’s End; if they’re to the east, you’re in the Merchant District; and to the west, well, you’re either in the Eastern District or about to enter a world of pain (that’s Scurvytown or Bloodsalt, if yer not paying attention).

- The Watch doesn’t give a damn. The Freeport Watch is a sorry excuse for law enforcement. You feel you’ve been wronged? Get over it. The Watch doesn’t care one whit for your troubles. In fact, they might just make more for you.

- The Sea Lord’s in charge. The current Sea Lord is a woman, but you don’t want to mess with her. Her word is law, and that’s all you need to know.

- Stay out of Bloodsalt. Unless you have orc or goblin blood in your veins—and maybe even then—don’t go here. You’re going to ignore this advice, but consider yourself warned.

- Avoid the Scurvytown prostitutes. The ones from the Docks aren’t much better, but odds are, aside from the few coins you spent on “entertainment” in the Docks, you’ll come away with everything you brought with you. You might also come away with something more, and it’ll itch like hell.

- Don’t trust anyone. Not even me.

Lost lairs -

BLACK DOG'S CAVES

Black Dog the pirate was the scourge of the seas around Freeport over fifty years ago, who hid his fortune in a secret cave network within Mount A’Val. Treasure hunters have searched for the caves over the years, but they are difficult to find, and only a few adventures have ever discovered them. Fewer still have returned, for Black Dog laid traps for the unwary and those traps are the least of the hideout’s dangers. For the pirate built his lair on a much older foundation, a sunken temple complex belonging to the serpent people.

Two large stones jut from the water at Mount A’Val’s westernmost side. At low tide, the sea draws back to reveal a cave large enough to admit a small boat; from the cave mouth a low tunnel full of turbulent seawater plunges into the mountain, leading to a large cave and a hidden lake. Multiple tunnels lead out from the cave; some lead to nothing but dead ends and dangerous traps, but one leads to Black Dog’s treasure vault. Another leads to a boarded-up cave, a great wall of jade, and a stone door guarded by ancient magic. Behind this door lies the sunken temple of Yig, a great spiral of jade descending into the bowels of the earth, lled with traps, treasures, and undead guardians. Several years ago, adventurers penetrated the caves in search of the Jade Serpent, an ancient artifact that could help foil the mad plans of Milton Drac and the Cult of the Unspeakable One.

Those adventurers entered the temple, found the Jade Serpent, and made of with many treasures, but they left many others behind in the twisting caves. Shortly after the Great Green Fire, a group of slave traders discovered the caves and used them as a prison for their human cargo. The traders were attacked by Libertyville’s Freedom Militia last year and wiped out to a man, their prisoners freed. The slavers didn’t discover the sunken temple, but they did leave treasures in the upper caves. Anyone looking to scavenge those treasures or brave the depths of the sunken temple, just needs to find the caves - perhaps by finding the freed slaves, some of whom now operate as pirates out of Libertyville.