

Dread Pirate Scrumtumbler

By M. Sechin Tower

This scenario is a distant sequel to “To the Earth’s Core!” (as featured in the *Hollow Earth Expedition Gamemaster’s Screen*), but this scenario is not meant to follow immediately after. This story assumes that the characters have been in the Hollow Earth for some time. It operates best if a few of the PC’s are from the surface world, but this isn’t necessary. The most suitable motivations for PCs are Escape and Greed, but most any motivation and archetype could be made to work out. It should go without saying that you should feel free to modify, mutate, or completely redo anything in here to suit your story needs and your gaming style.

BUT I HATE SCRUMTUMBLER!

No problem. This scenario was meant to be a little bit of “steampunk meets pirates in the Hollow Earth,” so you can easily replace Professor Scrumtumbler with any mad scientist of your creation. Or, if you want to be rid of the steampunk elements all together, you can allow the characters to find the map for themselves and perhaps commission their own ship to search for the treasure.

OVERVIEW:

Piracy + Mad Science = Crazy Destructive. Professor S. believes he’s finally found a way out of the Hollow Earth, but he’ll have to sail the high seas to get there. Have ye what it takes to join his crew of rascallions and ne’er-do-wells?

GM OUTLINE:

Scene	Action	Revelation
Blood Bay Brawl	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fistfight with pirates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Scrumtumbler has Flint’s treasure mapFlint no longer in charge of Blood BayIron Lung Pete wants the map
High Seas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pick lock to escape the shipOPTIONAL: pterosaur or plesiosaur attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Drilling machine is the shipTravel to distant landMutineers lock heroes inside ship
Treasure Hunt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leap of FaithGrid RiddleSarcosuchas attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New map coordinates: Sunken City, Purple Spire
The Sunken City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Talk to Silverscale (Gillman fisher)OPTIONAL: dinosaur hunt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ship is stolen!Deep End of Sunken City is controlled by the Deep GillmenAir Pockets permit divingScrumtumbler goes down with his captured ship
Treasures of the Deep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Dive & Fight!OPTIONAL: Showdown with Iron Lung Pete	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr. Covington awaits in the cave, invites heroes into Flint’s crew or through the gate to the surface world.

Scene I: Blood Bay Brawl

The scenario begins in a tavern at Blood Bay, where Professor Scrumtumbler has hired the player characters and fifteen other deckhands to accompany him on his voyage. Now that all hands have signed on, he explains the nature of his quest. He has acquired a ship and a map—or part of a map, as a piece has been torn off—which supposedly leads to the treasure of none other than the recently deposed pirate king, William Flint. The deal is simple: the S. S. Scrumtumbler’s officers (who consist of the Professor and the Player Characters) each get 3 shares of the treasure, and each hired hand (the NPCs) get one share. But there is one more item of importance: the professor has reason to believe that the trove includes a power crystal that contains enough energy to fuel the Scrumtumbler Drilling Machine to allow him (and any crew who might choose to accompany him) to get back to the surface world.

After only a short pause for questions, the tavern is intruded upon by a rather large gang of gruff buccaneers brandishing their fists, belaying pins, and the occasional set of brass knuckles. “Oi!” Cries the big one at front. “Iron Lung Pete wants the map. Give it here or we’ll see how your crew sails with broken legs.” If the players look to Scrumtumbler, he will explain that Iron Lung Pete is a pirate captain known for using devices to breath underwater (hence his name), and that all will be lost if he gets the map.

This is the chance for a little opening mayhem. Pacifistic characters might be able to talk their way out of a fight by offering a bribe or maybe a fake map (Iron Lung Pete’s gang doesn’t know what the real one looks like), but most players will probably want to jump in swinging. Improvised weapons such as bottles and chairs are readily available for anyone who wants them. Note that the enemy gang is brandishing only non-lethal weapons; if one of the players draws a lethal weapon, one of Iron Lung Pete’s gang will say “you sure you want to go there? It’ll get messy, and then the constable will get involved.” If the PC’s do insist on escalating to lethal force, Iron Lung Pete’s gang will do the same with knives and flintlocks, and the constable will come in with a small “peace-keeping” force five rounds later. Either way, the rest of Scrumtumbler’s crew will pitch in, so when the PC’s have defeated one or two pirates apiece, the rest will run away. It should be an easy fight, but if the players are overpowered they can always retreat through the back window (which is exactly what Scrumtumbler does).

The players know to meet the professor by the docks, but depending on the results of the fight they might take some time to move through Blood Bay to collect equipment, weapons, and so forth. When they are ready, they can meet up at the appointed spot... to find that Scrumtumbler’s ship has been sunk!

DESCRIBING FOR THE SENSES

Sight: The bar is grungy and poorly lit, with sunlight entering only through the gaps in the shuttered windows and the chinks in the wallboards. The surly bartender passes his time wiping down the counter with a rag that is so grimy it seems likely that the counter is getting dirtier rather than cleaner.

Sound: Scrumtumbler’s crewmen are drinking noisily, singing shanties, and playing raucous bar games. The PC’s must lean in closely to hear Scrumtumbler’s explanations.

Smell: The place reeks of spilled rum and the faint scent of burned wood. The burned smell actually comes from the several tables which were once ignited by the combination of open flame and overturned cups.

Taste: The rot-gut served here comes in two flavors: scorching and scorchingly spicy. The available food consists of skewered rodents and small lizards, but most would agree that the vittles are overcooked.

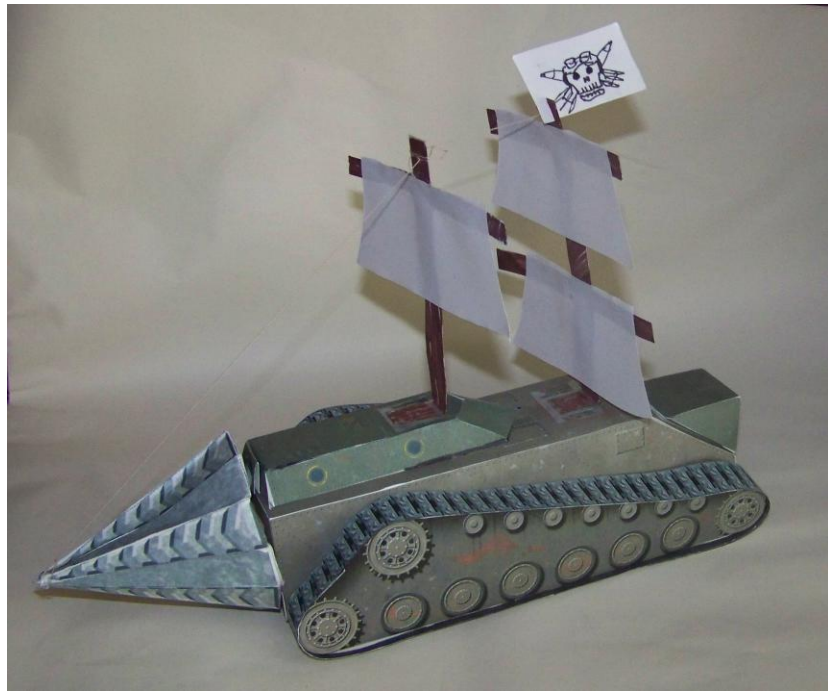
Touch: The floor is sticky and in places slimy. The chairs and tables are only a little better.

Scene II: High Seas

Professor Scrumtumbler is right on hand to beckon the assembled crew into a dockside warehouse, in which he has housed his drilling machine. He is in high spirits as he explains that Iron Lung Pete's crew were behind the sinking of the ship. "They took the bait!" he declares. "That ship out there was a decoy. The drilling machine is the real S. S. Scrumtumbler!"

Hustling everyone aboard, the professor fires up the engines (he will explain that there is enough energy in the power core for a short trip, just not enough to make it all the way back to the surface). The drilling machine proceeds to grind out onto the dock and into the sea, where—surprisingly—it floats like a cork. Scrumtumbler then hits a button and a pair of masts rise up from the drilling machine's hull, unfurling sails as they go.

As the drilling-machine-turned-sailing-vessel slides out of the harbor on a stout tailwind, Iron Lung Pete makes another play for it by sending three ships in pursuit. But before they can get too close, Scrumtumbler calmly walks to the aft deck of his ship, lines up several items that look like overgrown bottle-rockets, and fires them off at the pursuing pirates. The rockets burst into pyrotechnic displays right in the rigging of the enemy vessels, leaving their sails burning and rendering Iron Lung Pete unable to pursue.



"Unfortunately," Scrumtumbler says, "those were the last of my rockets."

Scrumtumbler then goes back below decks to work on several "unfinished projects" while the crew to guide the ship. At the Gamemaster's option, this would be a good spot to thin the ranks of the crew through an attack by a pterosaur or a plesiosaur. Aside from that, the ship's hands generally have it easy, as there are more of them than necessary. Several pass the time with games of chance, where the favored gambling commodities are rum rations. The PC's will be invited to join in the games, and this will lead one of the swabbies to propose more profitable action.

Tom McCreeg, the venturesome swabbie, proposes that one of the PC's unlocks the engine room where the rum casks are kept in order to provide an "advance on the rations—just to keep the games going." Being ship's officers, the PC's are the only people (besides the professor) who have the keys to the engine room. The Gamemaster is encouraged to play to the character's flaws and motivations, offering monetary bribes for characters who are hunting for money. While this is going on, the ship's cook, a shrunken, mumbling old man, approaches one of the more responsible characters to report that

Tom McCreeg has been talking mutiny with the crew, and has already recruited at least two followers who plan to dispose of the officers to keep their shares. If players are investigative, they will discover this is true. Allow the players to decide what they want to do about this in the name of justice and self defense.

As the ship approaches its destination, Scrumtumbler asks his officers to join him for a meal. As they dine, he gives each a photographic copy of the map, created by his Scrumtumbler Photochromatic Replicatron (patent pending), a small device which allows him to reproduce anything that can be set down on parchment. For this reason, he says, he could have handed over the map to Iron Lung Pete's goons, but he felt it best that the other pirate captain not know where they were going.

Then he offers the player characters several of his minor inventions and creations, which they may divide amongst themselves as they see fit. Depending on the needs of the players, you may wish to increase or decrease the numbers of items (for example, offering more hypostim if none of the characters have the medicine ability).

- **Scrumtumbler Dirigible (Uses: 1)** This device appears to be nearly identical to a parachute pack. However, pulling the ripcord opens a packet of sulfuric acid which mixes with iron filings to produce hydrogen gas, which then fills the balloon in the pack. When the balloon is inflated, the wearer may hover, move up to 10 feet horizontally, or ascend up to 5 feet per round.
- **Scrumtumbler Ammo (Uses: 12)** Using saltpeter, bat guano, charcoal, and nut shells, the professor was able to create ammunition that could be adjusted to fit any firearm ever invented.
- **Scrumtumbler Gun Bladder (Uses: Unlimited)** This rubber and dino-gut wrapping may be applied to any firearm. When applied, it keeps the gun dry and clean and holds enough oxygen to allow the weapon to fire, even underwater. This device takes 1 round to apply or remove. A weapon cannot be reloaded while this device is in place.
- **Hypostim (Uses: 2)** Invented by a colleague of Scrumtumbler. Each injection will instantly heal 1 lethal wound or 2 Non-lethal wounds.
- **Scrumtumbler X-Ray Specs (Uses: 2)** These goggles allow you to see up to a distance of 25 feet, even if your line of sight is obscured. Its vision can penetrate any substance other than lead. Unfortunately, the battery module is weak, allowing only two brief uses.
- **Blackbreath Root (1 dose)** Chewing this root allows you to double the amount of time you are able to hold your breath (see Hollow Earth Expedition, p. 229). Beware: repeated use of this product may lead to stained teeth

Unfortunately, the real mutiny was being led by the cook (who ratted out McCreeg in order to eliminate the competition) and includes every deckhand. He drugged the officer's food at this meal, rendering all the player characters unconscious while all the NPC's kidnap the professor and his treasure map and strike out to claim the treasure for themselves.

Scene III: Treasure Hunt

When the PC's come to, they find themselves unharmed but locked inside the hold of the drilling machine. They have all their equipment, which is good because they will need some way of forcing open the hatch to the deck, which is secured by a large padlock. They could bash it open (the metal hatch has Defense 8 and Structure 6). They could shoot a hole in it (Defense 8, Structure 1) and then reach through the hole to pick the padlock (extended action, difficulty 1, 5 successes needed, -4 penalty due to having to pick it through a hole in the door). They could also use the x-ray specs to target the lock itself and shoot it through the door (defense 8, but only Structure 2). Let them be inventive to get out, but if they're totally stuck and it's slowing things down, you can have a crewmember who has remains loyal to them return to open the hatch and tell the players what happened.

The PC's all have copies of their maps, although they don't even need them since they can track the band of pirates and the kidnapped professor through the jungle with a Tracking roll of 2 or better. At the Gamemaster's option, along the way they might get ambushed by a pack of raptors or other carnivore.

The map (and the crew's tracks) leads into a cave in the side of a hill. The cave stretches in and down out of the light, and after a twist in the bend a rock wall slams closed behind them, leading to the first deathtrap.

I'D PREFER A STRAIGHT FIGHT TO ALL THIS SNEAKING AROUND...

If your group would prefer more action and less puzzle-solving, you will probably want to skip Flint's Grid Puzzle and maybe also the Leap of Faith deathtraps. (Perhaps the mutineers already set off the traps as they came through.) Instead, throw in a few dinosaurs, irate natives, or pirates to guard the way to the treasure.

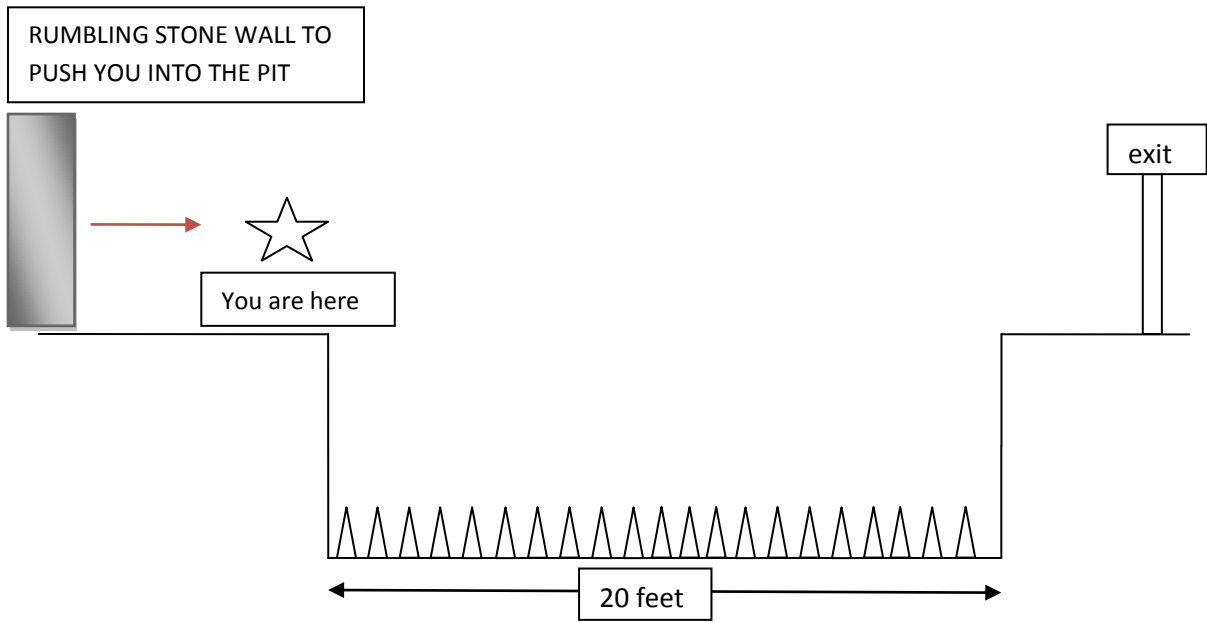
LEAP OF FAITH DEATHTRAP

In front of the PC's is a 20 foot long, 20 foot deep spike-lined pit. Behind them, the stone wall begins to rumble forward, threatening to sweep them all over the edge in about one minute. Falling into the pit inflicts 2 N for the fall and 4 L for the spikes (allow Active Defense against the spikes only if a PC intentionally dropped down to avoid the spikes, but not if the PC jumped or fell in). On the wall rumbling towards them is the PCs is the inscription: "A Leap of Faith is All ye Need, And I will Halfway Meet your Deed." Make a show of setting your watch so that players feel the time pressure.

(Give the players PLAYERS' HANDOUT I)

The solution is hidden: a glass floor extends exactly halfway across the pit from the other side, so any character of average speed (Move 4) and a running start will land on the glass instead of in the pit. When the exit door is opened, the stone wall will grind back into place and the way back will open up again. But who wants to go backward when treasure lies ahead?

PLAYERS' HANDOUT I



FLINT'S GRID DEATHTRAP

The next room contains another spiked pit of the same size, but this time there is no glass floor, only a thin beam stretching to the locked door at the far side. On the exit door is a strange grid and a clue carved into the wall. By the entrance door are nine iron poles that fit perfectly into holes in the grid. Ordinarily, the beam requires a balance roll (Dexterity reflex or Acrobatics) difficulty 6 to cross safely. Balancing with one or two poles grants +2 to the roll, but crossing with three or more poles imposes a -2. If the nine poles are inserted correctly, the exit door opens and the wobbly beam secures itself (reducing the balance check difficulty to 2). If even one of the nine poles was inserted into the wrong slot, the beam spins, automatically dumping anyone on it into the pit, and the poles fire back out across the room as if launched by crossbows (4 L to anyone standing in their way).

(distribute **PLAYERS' HANDOUT II** and **PLAYERS' HANDOUT III**)

If players want a hint, allow them to roll Investigation (Enigmas). If they score two or more successes, tell them that the first letter in each line is important. If they score four or more successes, tell them that the line numbers are important—and this should just about give away the answer:

T-1, F-2, P-3, N-4, L-5, A-6, N-7 (row 4 and 7 should both be in one or the other N column, but it doesn't matter which one), C-8, I-9.



PLAYERS' HANDOUT III

Inscribed on the wall next to the grid:

*Tend me now, seadogs,
For if yer desire be to
Plunder my loot
Never will ye live to tell the tale
Lest ye hear this message:
Alas for all who enter here!
Never shall ye come
Closer to my treasure
Instead shall ye find only death and despair!*

THE TREASURE ROOM

The next room is what the players have been waiting for: the treasure vault. Most of it is at least knee-deep in water (-2 Move), but the far end is elevated and sprinkled with what appears to be gold coins. There is a small opening in the ceiling which allows sunlight in (and could allow a character out). In the center of the raised area is a chest on a pedestal.

The coins only appear to be gold: they are actually painted brass, made to look valuable. The only thing of true value is the treasure chest, which is lined with real gold. As the PCs approach, however, they will notice that some of the fake coins are splattered with red, and a little way off there is the freshly severed arm of a pirate.

An **Investigation** roll will reveal the following (tracking will reveal the same, but raise the required successes by 1):

1 Success: There was a fight here very recently—almost assuredly involving the mutinous Pirate crew from the S. S. Scrumtumbler.

2 Successes: The fight must have happened after they opened the treasure chest and they must have departed quickly, because there are a few actual gold coins scattered around the base of the chest's pedestal.

3 Successes: The pirates weren't fighting each other: there was some kind of big creature. Judging by the enormous tooth marks on the severed arm, the creature was something big.

4 Successes: The creature came at them out of the water in the lower portion of the room.

5+ Successes: Professor Scrumtumbler and most of the pirates survived the attack, but they fled very hastily up through the hole in the ceiling.

If the players move the treasure chest or open the lid (the lock is difficulty 1 and requires 5 successes), then they will gain first-hand knowledge of what happened to the pirates. Inside the chest are a few gold dabloons and silver Pieces of Eight that the pirates were too rushed to take with them. More significantly, disturbing the chest opens two grates at the sides of the room with resounding clanks that alerts to the two awaiting Sarcosuchi that lunch has been served (for Sarcosuchus stats, see *Mysteries of the Hollow Earth* bestiary, p. 161). The first big creatures will dart out into the room on the second round following the opening of the grate, and its mate will appear 2 turns later. Even animals with walnut-sized brains don't like to fight to the death, so each will retreat if it loses more than half its health. This should be a very tough fight, especially since the players have no need to duke it out: they can retreat up the hole in the ceiling at any time (doing so is equivalent only to a 5 foot climb).

Once back under the light of the sun, the players can pick up the tracks of the pirates again. This time, they will find one of the little flags that Scrumtumbler uses to mark his territory. Evidently he dropped this flag with the intention that the PCs would be able to pick up

DESCRIBING FOR THE SENSES

Sight: Dark, but a column of daylight stands at the far end of the room

Sound: Eerily quiet, with a distant dripping

Smell: It smells of dank earth and slightly stagnant water. Characters with the Scent ability detect the residue of blood on the air.

Taste: The grime and the dirt stick in the teeth, giving an earthy taste.

Touch: Wet and muddy

the trail. Pinned to it is a copy of the missing portion of the map—copied by the Scrumtumbler Photochromatic Replicatron (patent pending), of course. The map indicates a second red “X” at the sight of the Sunken City, home realm of the gillmen. On this paper is a note scrawled in a flowing hand:

We have had yer taste of me treasure. But I'll keep the source safe in the sunken city, 'neath the Purple Spire - Flint."

Below this, in Professor Scrumtumbler's handwriting, is added:

Found this map in the treasure room chest. The loot can still be ours!



Scene IV: The Sunken City

The tracks of the mutineers lead back to the S. S. Scrumtumbler, but the players may be dismayed to find that the boat is long gone. They can follow the map to the distant shore where they can just see the high tip of the sunken city above the waves about a thousand feet offshore. They will need to make some kind of boat to get out there if they can (an extended Craft: Carpentry with a diff 2, successes 7 can make a decent dugout in a relatively short amount of time, or a Survival with a diff 3, successes 5 can produce a simple raft that will hold together long enough to get out there). If the players are totally at a loss, then they can also get a boat from Silverscale, a gillman from the Sunken City.

Silverscale is a simple fisherman who will approach the PC's looking to trade. He has fish, clams, and even a few pearls. In return, he is looking for land-based food, or any kind of durable good that could hold up against salt-water for a time. If the PC's have no boat, he will offer to tell them where he saw an abandoned rowboat tied up not far from here, provided that they will give him some yummy land-dino meat (let the brontosaur hunt begin!). If they have a boat, he will swim up to them and make conversation as they go.

Silverscale is an amiable fellow and he will gladly tell the PC's all about the Sunken City. He will tell them that they will have no trouble diving down to the depths, because the city is littered with pockets of breathable air, and there is a fair supply of blackbreath root throughout the area. The big danger, he warns, is the Deep Gillmen, who guard the depths and kill all intruders in the name of their dark god. Silverscale will even offer to take them to the Purple Spire, which is an oddly colored spike jutting from the deepest depths all the way up twenty feet above the waves. However, once the characters draw close to the sunken city they won't need any help locating it: the S. S. Scrumtumbler is already there, and Iron Lung Pete's corsairs are closing in fast.

As the PCs watch, Pete's ships open fire. Scrumtumbler's boat is rocked by several hits, and it begins to dip below the waves. All the mutineers begin jumping overboard, abandoning the ship as it goes down. Scrumtumbler himself appears above deck, but then pops back below just as the machine dips beneath the waves for good and all. It seems that the captain really did go down with the ship.

Scene V: The Treasures of the Deep

The player characters are much closer to the Purple Spire than Iron Lung Pete's ships, so when they dive down they can still see the S. S. Scrumtumbler as it sinks into the darkness beneath them.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Setting up the battlefield is important for this encounter, as the PCs will be skimming the slanted surface of the Sunken City down into the deepest depths. Lay out a map as large as you can or clear off the entire dining room table if you can spare it. Get a deck of regular playing cards and randomly scatter them over the gaming surface, face down, with each card between two to five inches (representing 10 to 25 feet in the game) away from the next card. The cards represent ruins, rocky outcroppings, and coral build-ups, any of which have potentially trapped air-pockets.

When a PC swims into a potential air-pocket, flip the card:

- **If the card is numbered 2 to 8**, it turns out there is no air there.
- **If the card is a 9, 10, or a face-card**, there is an air pocket big enough for several people to stand and breathe normally within it.

As an optional rule, each potential pocket may contain something else. When a card is revealed, roll 4 dice and consult below:

0-1 Success: a Deep Gillman waiting in ambush

2 successes: Nothing

3 Successes: Blackbreath Root

4 Successes: a treasure (coins, a jeweled sword, or maybe even an artifact such as a Diving Conch)

UNDERWATER ACTIONS

Before the scene gets started, go over with players a few rules about swimming and underwater actions (some of them custom for this encounter).

(Distribute **PLAYERS' HANDOUT IV**)

PLAYERS' HANDOUT IV

UNDERWATER ACTIONS

Below are a few rules about swimming and underwater actions (some of them custom for this encounter):

SUFFOCATION:

- Every turn (or every 6 segments if using continuous combat), any character underwater takes 1 SUFFOCATION TOKEN (I strongly recommend keeping track with tokens—otherwise, it's way too easy to lose track in this encounter!)
- If your quantity of tokens equals your BODY score, take a Nonlethal wound instead of a suffocation token.
- For each turn you spend one turn in an air pocket, discard half your current suffocation tokens, rounded up. *For example, if you had four tokens, you could discard two the first turn in an air pocket, one on your second turn, and the last one on your third turn in the air pocket.*

FIRING UNDER WATER:

- Projectiles (including bullets) suffer -2 for each 5 feet of water they pass through.
- All weapons may fire from air pockets normally (but they incur the penalty for shooting through water once the projectile leaves the air pocket). Archaic firearms will not operate after getting wet.
- Modern firearms (i.e. bullets with sealed casings) may fire while underwater, but the range is only 5 feet and automatic and semi-automatic firearms jam after each shot (requiring an action to clear the jam). Consult the Mythbusters TV show for more on firing underwater.

THE ADVERSARIES

As the PCs take their position at one end of the map, lay out a cordon of Deep Gillmen across the other end. For every two players, place two Gillmen (with nets and spears) and one trained .The Gillmen won't fight as a coordinated unit, but instead will form a line to hold out the intruders while sending in the sharks for hit-and-run attacks.

Three rounds after the players begin their dive, Iron Lung Pete's pirates enter the field, each equipped with a breathing apparatus from which their captain gets his name. They don't have to worry about air pockets any more than the Gillmen, but they move very slowly—only 10 feet per round, as they are limited in their swimming. What they lack for maneuverability they make up for in numbers, with three pirates per PC. They are armed with knives, but if the protagonists are particularly tough you might give them spearguns as well.

The good news is that the players don't need to combat all these enemies. They can just keep moving ahead of the pirates and break through a few Gillmen to get where they're going. What is more, the Gillmen intend to kill the pirates just as much as the PCs, and maybe more so, since there are more pirates and they seem like a bigger threat.

See *Mysteries of the Hollow Earth* to find stats for sharks (p. 186), Gillmen (p. 99), and Pirates (p. 85)

Iron Lung Pete

Archetype: *Pirate*

Motivation: *Greed*

Style: 3

Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3

Charisma: 3

Dexterity: 3

Intelligence: 2

Strength: 4

Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0

Initiative: 6

Move: 6

Defense: 5 (8)*

Perception: 5

Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Athletics	4	2	6	(3)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Melee	4	4	8	(4)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Archaic			7	(3+)
Intimidation	3	3	6	(2)
Orders			7	(3+)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)

Talents

Quick Reflexes (+2 Initiative)
Swim (move at double Swim rate)

Resources

Artifact 1 (Diving Conch)

Flaw

Callous

Weapons	Rating	Attack	Average	Notes
Cutlass	2 L	10 L	(5) L	
Flintlock	3 L	10 L	(5) L	

Armor	Armor	Str	Dex
* Coat-of-mail	+3	3	0

THE OUTCOME

When the players get through the map to the other side, they find the drilling machine has disappeared into an air-filled subterranean cave, where Professor Scrumtumbler awaits, along with a pile of treasure and an unexpected host.

When the PC's arrive, the professor is actually having tea with a man dressed in 18th century finery. In genteel language, this man introduces himself as Mr. Covington, the steward of this cave. Captain Flint himself assigned Mr. Covington to serve a term here in order to welcome any "guests" who successfully find this treasure. He invites the PC's to help themselves to all the gold they can carry (there is quite enough to buy a ship or two in Blood Bay, although the shares are not enough to permanently retire on). He also states that Flint cordially extends his offer to all those who succeeded in finding this treasure to become one of Flint's own officers, where they may earn even greater fame and wealth. Alternatively, at the back of the room is a fossilized megalodon jaw containing a swirling vortex of light large enough for the Drilling Machine to pass into. This is a portal of the mystical Atlantean type and serves as a one-way gate to the surface world. Mr. Covington invites his guests to set whatever course they like for themselves, and he will happily activate the portal if they chose to go that way.

Players may be surprised to discover that Mr. Covington has been down here for quite some time and is unaware of the coup d'état against Flint. Should any characters wish to enlist with Flint, Mr. Covington suggests that they may, with his help, might be able to find the Pirate King (wherever he may be) and return him to power.

Winning through the underwater battles in the Sunken City might be enough of a climax, but if you want to press your characters hard you can have Iron Lung Pete and his retinue burst into the cave with a retinue of pirates and a few pets in the shape of several archalons (giant sea turtles—see *Mysteries* bestiary) which he uses as attack dogs—really slow attack dogs—or his men use as mobile cover.

THE END...?

This scenario certainly doesn't need to be the end of the story. Here are a few of the places you can go from here:

- If the characters join Mr. Covington, they will quest to find Captain Flint and engage in all manner of skullduggery to get him back into power.
- If they take their treasure and go home, they might find it hard to hang onto, especially if they return to Blood Bay. However, such a fortune could set them up with a ship of their own, or put them into a position to play for a high-ranking position in Blood Bay... maybe even the Kingship itself.
- No matter where the characters go in the Hollow Earth, the vengeful Iron lung Pete can serve as a recurring nemesis (or his brother could, in case Pete didn't get away). The PCs might have to infiltrate his crew to spy on his activities, or they might get a hint as to where Pete buried his own treasure.
- If the characters go with Scrumtumbler, they might find that the portal doesn't lead to where it's supposed to (after all, Mr. Covington only knows what he's been told about it—he's never been through to see what's on the other side). They might end up in another area of the Hollow Earth (perhaps one of the other great cities, such as Atlantis or the Aerie), in the middle of a Thule society meeting in Berlin, or maybe even find themselves on another planet altogether.