

THE FOLIO

Mini-Module



WHITE SHIP CAMPAIGN

The Pearl of Madness

Mini-Adventure WS1.5

by Scott Taylor

The Pearl of Madness is a companion adventure made to go along with the events unfolding prior to the core adventure found in Folio #14. It is designed for 1E & 5E mechanics and is for characters levels 1-3. It contains the information needed to run a side adventure that will help characters gain a degree of experience before setting out into the interior of the Isle of Jade.

Thunder booms on the north of the isle and a dark rain falls on the inland swamps prompting the village chief to deny the characters canoes for their journey for another day. This respite offers the characters a chance to participate in a village tradition, the pearl dive. With whispers of great wealth at the bottom of a secluded cove, the players prepare for a dive that will provide more than the mundane.

THE PEARL OF MADNESS

A mini-adventure for use with The Isle of Jade

Characters Levels 1–3

Dungeon Master Notes

This mini-adventure is meant for use with Folio #14 as an introductory session before the combat events of the module take place. A DM who would like to get the characters some experience points before the journey begins, while also giving them a sense of trouble on the island, can put this mini-adventure to great use. The encounters herein all revolve around a pearl dive, and therefore the characters must be considered proficient in swimming, and they must also deal with encumbrance from any armor they would choose to wear beneath the surface (which is unlikely as this is just supposed to be a fun dive in tropical waters).

- 1. Primary Purpose:** Gain experience points before the start of the adventure, as well as some minor magic to help along the way.
- 2. Secondary Purpose:** Get to know the villagers while forming alliances and bonds before the beginning of the adventure series.
- 3. Time for running:** This mini-adventure is meant to be run **BEFORE** the events that take place in Folio #14.

All 'grey blocks' are for 5E conversions in this section.

The Secluded Cove

Known to the islanders as 'I'apa'newi', or the 'Cove of the Mother's Eye', this secluded lagoon lies on the Isle of Jade's southern coast, to the west of the fens. The long inlet is sheltered from most storms and has become the home of a vast amount of sea life, especially coral and crustaceans. There is also an underwater grotto used by a tribal collection of merfolk as a sacred shrine to the goddess Tefnut. Diving here can provide the opportunity to find precious pearls amid the clam groves on the seabed, and although pearls aren't of much value to the islanders, they are used in trade with outsiders. Thus, allowing sailors to dive here isn't forbidden, assuming they are in good standing with the village chief and elders.

Pearl Diving

Swimming in first edition isn't a skill, and thus it can be assumed that most characters have enough proficiency to take on the challenge of doing a dive. However, diving does require a successful roll of the average of a character's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution to successfully bring up clams during a dive [**DC 12 Athletics**]. Once a character has made a dive and come up with clams, they have a 1 in 6 chance of finding a pearl.

The value of the pearl is 01–75% (15 GP), 76–85% (50 GP), 86–99% (100 GP), 100% (1,000 GP black pearl). For the purposes of the adventure, players will be considered to have the time to do 6 dives before the events of the mini-module carry them away from the enjoyment of the afternoon.

Ma'Atu & She'Ana

These two islanders are brother and sister and will be the guides for the players who want to journey to the cove. They are kindred spirits, twins, and are both incredibly attractive (considered Charisma 16, and if using the UA Comeliness rules, have Comeliness of 17). They will teach the players basic canoe skills (which will be helpful in Folio #14) and will be playful and happy as they take the characters to the various dive zones around the cove. It should be important for the DM to make these two very important to the characters, because that will be needed to lure the characters to the grotto.

Necrotic Clouds

Necrotic Clouds are an aftereffect of the Necrotic Pearl being placed on the altar of the Amazons. This coalescence of dark energy has a corruptive power, and will seek out life in an attempt to turn it evil and maligned. It has no real persona or nature, save that it is a magical force, and therefore not subject to

mundane attacks. Its attacks drain Wisdom, and once Wisdom has been completely drained, the victim is considered an NPC with a Chaotic Evil alignment.

Minor Necrotic Cloud [AC 8, HD 2+1, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1–4 (Wisdom Drain), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

NONE

Minor Necrotic Cloud [AC 12, HD 2d10+4, HP 14, Initiative +1, #AT 1, Hit +3, Dam Necrotic Envelope 2 (1d4), Damage Resistance (non-magical weapons), Vulnerability (radiant), Corruption (DC 12 Constitution or take 2 (1d4) Wisdom damage)]

Running Combat

Running combat in this adventure will require you to brush up on your rules sections for underwater combat. Otherwise, it is a pretty straightforward adventure with combat being at first broken up into independent encounters, and then turning into a small 'dungeon crawl' in the grotto. Keep in mind you aren't looking to kill players here, just give them a sample of combat with corrupted creatures and gain some experience points.

Telling the Story

The story develops around a gathering darkness in the north and the rumble of distant volcanic activity. Once those signs occur, the village chief will not allow canoes or guides to be provided to Reld's company until the 'wrath of the gods' has been quelled with the sacrifice of a giant pig that requires a full night to roast beneath the earth. Thus, the company will be forced to stay another day in the village before departing for the inlands. During this time, one of the party members should meet one of the twins (DM's choice, depending on the nature of the players), and then be invited to a pearl dive. Understanding the value of pearls, it is likely that the players will jump at the chance to gain some easy wealth instead of sitting around watching the villagers prepare for a morning pork breakfast feast.

Set up from Folio #14

Be sure to get the players to feel that they are in the tropics, and that this is not any ordinary adventure. Something 'unnatural' is afoot, and even the local villagers can sense it.

'Amid the azure skies to the north a darkness has risen by the late morning, and several tremors shake the village. The locals begin to whisper of dark omens, and the chief calls a council with Reld before the sun has reached its zenith. Only after, amid the gathering of hunters, does a dour Reld come to tell you that your mission will be delayed another day, and that the afternoon and evening are yours to do with as you please.'

THE SECRET COVE

'Crystal clear water laps lightly against the side of the canoe as you absently dangle a hand below the cool surface. Around you, secluded from the eyes of the world, cliffs jut upward to tangles of jungle and a single white sand beach creates a shimmering crescent to the east. Your guides, both beautiful and tanned, smile as they drop hemp and stone anchors into the lagoon, tangles of multi-colored coral and fish inviting you to explore below the surface.'

1.

Giant Barracuda

A glimmering of scales flashes to your left as the long, spear-like, body of a toothed fish darts from behind a cluster of brain coral.

This should be the first attack of the day, a single giant barracuda, having succumbed to the corruption, has decided that the players are a perfect lunch. This attack can be used on a single player character or multiples, but after the attack, the twins will shake it off as the creature being drawn to the reflection of anything metal upon the character, most likely a dagger, or perhaps jewelry.

1 Giant Barracuda [AC 6, HD 3, HP 18, #AT 1, D 2–8 (Bite), Size M]

TREASURE

NONE

1 Giant Barracuda [AC 14, HD 3d10+6, HP 21, Initiative +2, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Bite 6 (1d8+2)]

2.

The Giant Clam Grotto

Beneath you, a plot of huge clams lie open, their milky insides exposed to the flowing waves.

This is the most dangerous and most lucrative part of the cove where pearls are concerned. If a party member chooses to dive into the giant clams and retrieve a pearl, add 50% to their pearl value percentage (with 100% still being a required roll). However, tangling with a giant clam can be dangerous, so keep that in mind.

1 Giant Clam [AC 8 (1)*, HD 4, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1–10 (Bite), If target is hit by more than 4 over the target number, they are held and cannot move until clam is dead. *AC when shell is closed.]

TREASURE

NONE* (POSSIBLE PEARL)

1 Giant Clam [AC 12 (20)*, HD 4d8+8, HP 24, Initiative +1, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Bite 9 (1d10+4), If target is hit by more than 4 over the target number, they are held (Strength DC 16) and cannot move until clam is dead. *AC when shell is closed.]

3.

The Tiger Shark

Sliding through the grotto comes a grey and white shape, fins sloped for attack and rows of razor teeth exposed.

This is a corrupted tiger shark. Once the defender of the merfolk, the creature has now been overtaken by the Necrotic Cloud and will attack anyone it sees.

Once it has been dealt with, She'Ana will call for the party to come back to the canoes, but her brother will delay, saying he has one more dive to make. He will dive, but not come back up, and She'Ana will be distraught, begging the party to find her brother.

1 Tiger Shark [AC 6, HD 6, HP 36, #AT 1, D 3–12 (Bite), Size L]

TREASURE

NONE

1 Tiger Shark [AC 14, HD 6d10+6, HP 36, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Bite 7 (1d10+2)]

4.

The Darkness in the Water

As you dive once more below the surface you see a cloud of darkness retreating toward the rocky shore. Within it, the still kicking legs of Ma'Atu speak of a man that must still be clinging to life.

The characters will need to follow the darkness to the cave grotto complex of Tefnut. It will take them about 10 rounds to get within sight of the underwater opening to the sea cave.

5.

The Waiting Darkness & the Hidden Mer-Child

The mouth of a large sea cave looms black in the light of the afternoon sun streaming into the waters from above. A glimmer, small and quickly diminished, flashes from somewhere within, and then is gone.

At the entrance of the cave, there are many dead corals and fallen volcanic rocks. Amid these, a small mer-child (a girl) is hiding, her parents having fallen victim to the Necrotic Cloud. She can be seen on a 1 in 6 **[DC 15 passive Perception]**, but it will be difficult for the characters to gain her trust without being able to speak her language. Still, she will point to the cave, then at a male and female character (assuming there are both

in the party), and then shake her head in despair. If the characters go in, she will remain in hiding, hoping her parents can be freed from the corruption.

6.

The Cave Mouth

A long tunnel extends into the rocks, a glimmer of light, possibly some bioluminescence, gives a vague outline of the rocks and also a strange shimmering farther in as though there is a pocket of air beyond.

7.

The Worshippers' Salon

This large open chamber is lit by bioluminescent algae that fans out over the ceiling. The water is warm, and the air pocket fresh with a salty tang. You would suspect, perhaps, that a large number of swimming people could be housed in this chamber at one time as you look east into the raised dais chamber that extends from the surface there.

As the characters swim in this chamber, a giant crab disguised as a part of the volcanic rock floor will detach from the bottom and try to pull characters under. Surprise 1 in 6 **[DC 15 Passive Perception]**.



1 Giant Crab [AC 3, HD 3+3, HP 24, #AT 2, D 2–8/2–8 (Claws), Size L]

TREASURE

NONE

1 Giant Crab [AC 18, HD 6d8+12, HP 36, Initiative +2, #AT 2, Hit +3, Dam Claws 4 (1d6+1) + Grapple (DC 11 Escape)]

8.

The Raised Sacrificial Dais

Up two long curving steps the water laps against the stone leaving a thin veil of algae. Ancient carvings, most now covered in bioluminescence, depict a goddess of lean form with the head of a plumed crane. A large fountain sits at the back of the wall, trickling water dripping down onto the stones below with a dulcet rhythm.

Upon the fountain are four coral and fish-bone arrows, each etched with runes. A single shark-tooth, coral-handled punch dagger lies beside the arrows. It too has runes upon it.

The arrows will work in a standard short bow, and are +1. The dagger is also a +1 weapon, but will cease to function if away from saltwater for more than a day. Once returned to the presence of the sea, it will regain its magical blessing. Note: as the Dark Fen is brackish, the dagger will continue to work there until taken into the Dragon's Back.

9.

The Anti-Chamber

This small alcove is half-filled with water and has a thin shelf at the waterline that is covered with small pieces of coral, polished rocks, and piles of multicolored sand.

This was once the offering chamber for the merfolk worshipers. The items are of little value other than trinkets of the journey here.

10.

The Coral Hall

A secondary small chamber opens up in the deep water, the bioluminescence from the main chamber not readily lighting it.

Here, the mer-child's parents are located, each driven mad by the Necrotic Cloud and ready to fight. They will attack anyone fully entering the chamber. The stats below are for both the father (spear) and the mother (pearl).

2 Corrupted Merfolk [AC 7, HD 4+4, HP 25, #AT 1, Hit +2, D (1-6)+2 (Spear) or (3-12) Enchanted Pearl]

TREASURE

PEARL OF THE DEEP SHELF (3D4 DAMAGE FROM SHOCK DARTS) [24 CHARGES], CORAL AND BONE SPEAR +1

2 Corrupted Merfolk [AC 13, HD 4d10+8, HP 28, Initiative +2, #AT 1, Hit +5, Dam Spear 6 (1d6+3) or Pearl 6 (3d4)]

11.

The Radiant Pool

This large chamber is shrouded in a darkness that no light seems to penetrate. Inside the inky dark, the chilling moans and whimpers of a man can be heard echoing off the volcanic walls.

Here, in what was once the most sacred part of the shrine, the Necrotic Cloud holds Ma'Atu, slowly whittling down his Wisdom. The party may attack the thing at will, but it has little form, and unless it can be made out in the darkness (by a Light spell, Farie Fire, or some other light magic), there will be a 50% miss chance (Disadvantage) on any attack made against it. As this cloud has been 'feeding', its energy is a bit higher than normal, and it is getting ready to transition to a standard Necrotic Cloud.

Minor Necrotic Cloud [AC 8, HD 4+1, HP 22, #AT 2, D 1-4 (Wisdom Drain), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

NONE

Minor Necrotic Cloud [AC 12, HD 4d10+8, HP 28, Initiative +2, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Necrotic Envelope 3 (1d6), Damage Resistance (non-magical weapons), Vulnerability (radiant), Corruption (DC 12 Constitution or take 2 (1d4) Wisdom damage]

Once attacked, it will turn its attention on the characters, trying to drive them back with its Wisdom attacks. If destroyed, the cloud will dissipate, but the damage it has caused is permanent to those who have lost all Wisdom.

However, if any Wisdom remained (as should be the case with Ma'Atu), then those ability score points will return at a rate of 1 per hour.

When Ma'Atu is freed, the party can return to the canoes. The mer-girl, once realizing her parents are dead, will flee into the ocean, but she will not forget the adventurers who braved the darkness and freed the shrine from evil.

Credits:

Author: Scott Taylor

Editing: G. Scott Swift

Cartography: G. Scott Swift & Scott Taylor

Design/Layout: Andrew Rodgers

Cover Art: 'Merfolk Attack' by Travis Hanson

B/W Interior Illustration: Travis Hanson

Playtesters: Sean Murphy, Mark Timm, Brent Blackwell, Joe Livesay, Shayne Hintz

Dungeons & Dragons ©, **Players Handbook** ©, and **Dungeon Masters Guide** © are the sole property of Wizards of the Coast and Art of the Genre makes no claims on these trademarks.



THE FOLIO

