

DEIDRE'S GHOST

It was but ten years past that the infamous pirate brigantine Deidre's Ghost was pulled into the briny depths by a massive sea creature, most of its crew and the trove of plundered treasure in the ship's hold dragged away by enormous tentacles—yet the vessel has suddenly reappeared wrecked upon a rocky beach!

This article provides GMs with an interesting location to drop into play at a moment's notice, with location descriptions and plot hooks that could serve as an interesting side quest or be used as catalysts for further adventures.



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HISTORY OF DEIDRE'S GHOST

A decade ago *Deidre's Ghost* sank into the ocean in the tentacled grasp of the ancient kraken Bstal Nknok. The ship's captain, Esperanza "Esper Dark" Solis, was a notable pirate and smuggler but since her demise historians have learned that she was in truth an agent of the crown. Although many tales of Captain Esper Dark's royal espionage have been uncovered since her ship's disappearance, no one knows what mission she pursued on the voyage that saw her boat drawn beneath the waves.

Recently the wreck of the *Deidre's Ghost* appeared on the rocky shore of a somewhat secluded cove. If the PCs are nearby or passing the area, the shipwreck can provide an interesting location for random encounters and exploration—perhaps word of the wreck has traveled and the adventurers are sent there to explore and reclaim what treasure might have been lost in the mysterious captain's hold.

APPROACHING DEIDRE'S GHOST

The small quiet cove is ringed by high cliffs and a shore covered in slick, cyclopean boulders that create dozens of tidal pools and a labyrinth of sandy passages that are submerged during the high tide. Impaled on the largest of these rocks and supported by several others is *Deidre's Ghost*. From a distance the ship looks dark, covered in kelp and barnacles, but on closer examination adventurers can make out the remnants of crimson paint that once highlighted the sides of the hull.

THE DECK

With *Deidre's Ghost* stranded ashore the deck of the ship is over 20 feet off the ground. The easiest way to board is to throw a rope or grappling hook to the rear deck. The deck is almost entirely covered in barnacles except for a couple of places where they have been scraped away—a large circle around the main mast and a section of railing near the steering wheel. It is difficult to walk quietly across the barnacled deck and Dexterity (Stealth) checks are made at disadvantage.

Two stretches of broken deck and shattered railings reveal where the kraken grabbed the ship years ago. Strips of kelp hang from the mast and boom, giving the appearance of sails, even though any true canvas rotted away many years ago. Tiny crabs scuttle all over the deck.

On the starboard railing, a weapon rack is intact with a trio of barnacle-covered cutlasses stuck in place. One of these could be valuable or magical, such as a silvered cutlass with filigreed stock, or a *+1 cutlass* that hums an accelerating pattern of low tones whenever an aquatic creature of CR 1 or higher is nearby.

TRAVERSING THE BEACH

The rocky beach can serve as an interesting space for a skill challenge if it suits the style of game and pacing of the session. Encourage players to provide creative ways their skills are contributing to traversing the beach, for example:

- **Strength (Athletics) DC 13.** Scale a slick rock face to secure a piton so the rest of the party can scale the rock with ease.
- **Intelligence (Nature) DC 13.** Identify a passage between the rocks that intermittently gets flooded with surf and lead the party around.
- **Wisdom (Perception) DC 13.** While climbing, spot a handhold that has a sea urchin within it and point out a better path.

Each time an adventurer fails an ability check describe the surf coursing through the rocky labyrinth catching the party unaware and dealing a single hit dice of damage as they struggle to stay upright (if a PC has more than one type of hit dice, use the highest value hit dice).

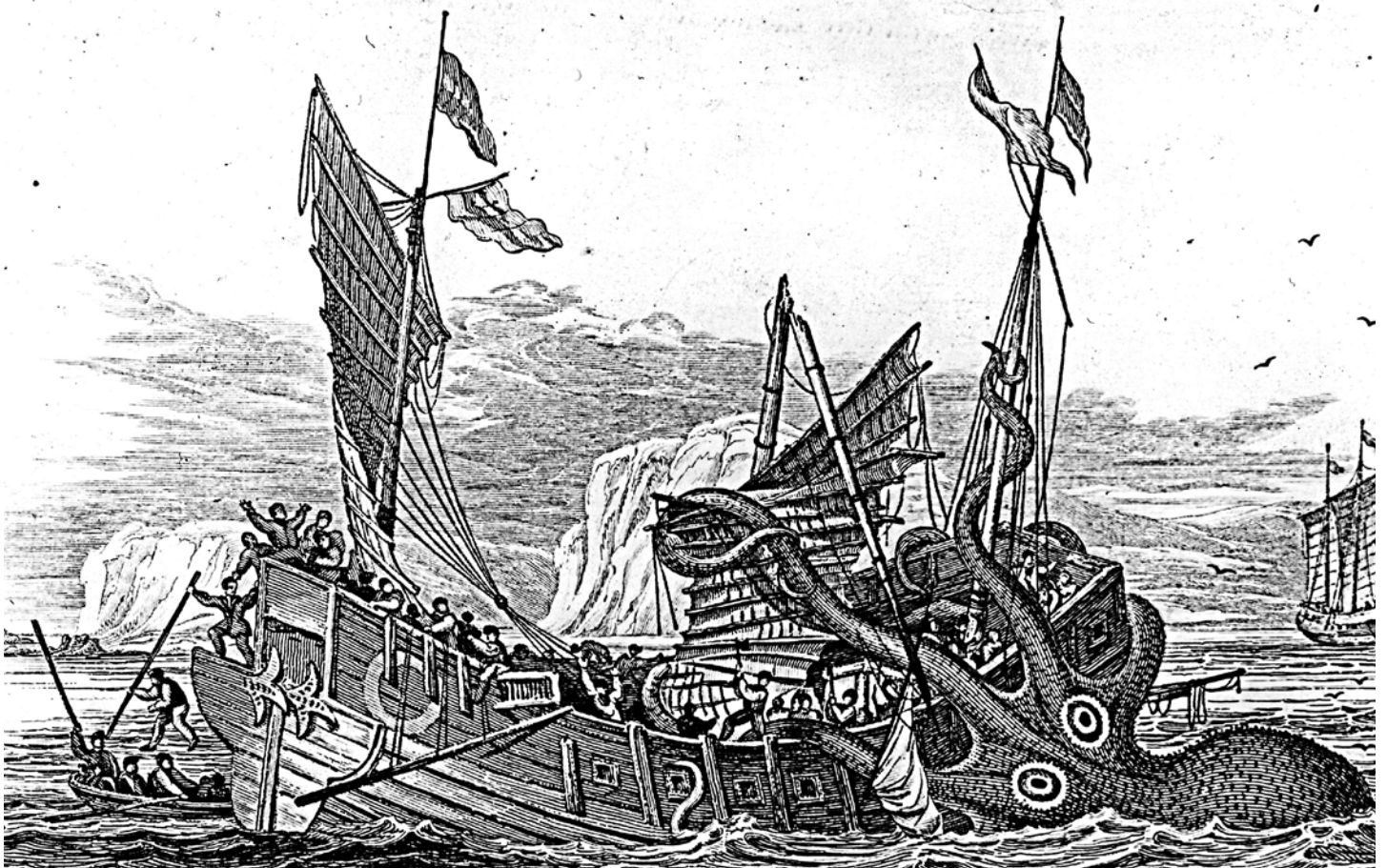
In addition, a combat encounter could be placed on the beach where the boulders provide precarious high ground for ranged attackers and deep tidal pools can be used as an ambush point for aquatic foes.

The doorway that leads to the hold is encrusted by more barnacles than anywhere else on the deck and it takes an hour of labor from one person to clear enough barnacles off the door for it to be opened. Even then it is rusted to its casing and requires two PCs to succeed on a simultaneous DC 16 Strength check to force open.

PLOT HOOKS ON THE DECK

Research Expedition. When the party reaches the deck of *Deidre's Ghost* they find that they aren't the first to discover the shipwreck. A group of seven robed academics are milling about the deck taking notes and collecting samples, a pair of them closely examining the door to the hold. When the scholars notice the party they are suspicious and their leader immediately tries to convince the PCs to depart. The scholars are possibly part of a private business venture that is trying to claim, restore, and sell the antique brigantine, or perhaps they're cultists obsessed with kraken lore and trying to use the ship as a focus to contact Bstal Nknok.

Rusted Golem. Sitting cross-legged at the prow of the *Deidre's Ghost* is Matthew, a rust covered automaton who once served as Captain Esper Dark's first mate. He is unable to move due to the corrosion covering his metal form but he can recount the harrowing encounter with Bstal Nknok. Matthew's last memory was of sinking into darkness before he woke up on the ship stuck looking out to sea. If the party is friendly, Matthew admits that since he woke he has been haunted by malicious whispers in his head—he believes something terrible is coming.



The door to the captain's chamber is closed but free of barnacles, remarkable too for the remnants of red and black paint and a tarnished copper knocker in the shape of an octopus. There is a tiny, venomous sea urchin on the reverse side of the knocker. Any creature touching the knocker without first succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check takes 1 point of damage as it is pricked by the urchin. In addition, the creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. While poisoned, the creature has disadvantage on saving throws.

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Although the room smells like mold and seaweed, Captain Esper Dark's quarters are surprisingly in almost perfect condition. A large canopied bed is built directly into one wall of the cabin upon which hang tattered black curtains. Several once-fine rugs cover the floor, sodden with water, but everything else in the room is dry.

Lifting the mattress reveals a panel with a small steel lock built into it. The lock isn't overly complex

but corrosion has made it fragile. A DC 15 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check opens it but failure by 5 or more breaks the lock. Opening the panel reveals a smuggler's hold beneath the bed—two or three people could lay down within it albeit with very little room to move around. The compartment could contain one or more interesting items of the GM's choice (for example, someone's skeletal remains, a coffer full of pewter soldiers, or a minor magic item).

A large maritime map is built into the wall of the cabin opposite the bed. Viewing the map with *detect magic* reveals auras of divination and illusion magic. The current location of *Deidre's Ghost* is marked on the map. Three other ships are marked on the map—all of which are at sea. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that the three ships at sea are slowly moving.

THE HOLD

The smell of seaweed is overpowering in this area. All the interior walls of the hold have crumbled, turning it into one long chamber littered with soggy wood and other debris. Seaweed hangs from the ceiling throughout, hindering vision. A Medium-sized or larger creature within the curtains of seaweed is lightly obscured, although this penalty can be avoided by sitting, crawling, or ducking beneath the kelp.

Light filters into the hold around the broken hull where the jagged rock upon which *Deidre's Ghost* juts inside.

Digging through the detritus on the floor is likely to uncover something of interest. For every 5 minutes of searching, an adventurer might find an art object worth 30 gp but for every thing of value discovered, something disturbing—such as the skeletal remains of a rat clutching an intact human eyeball, a leather-bound journal of indecipherable text that begins smoking when touched, or a porcelain doll with a second face beneath its wig—is uncovered as well.

PLOT HOOKS IN ESPER DARK'S CABIN

The Royal Family. Opening the smuggler's hold beneath the bed reveals three well preserved skeletons in the remnants of fine clothes and adorned in 1,750 gp worth of jewelry. An adventurer trained in History immediately recognizes that the corpses were once nobility, and success on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check identifies sigils and heraldry that imply these corpses belonged to the royal family that ruled when Esper Dark operated. However, the royal family never disappeared and the same lineage rules today—if this was the royal family, who is currently in possession of the crown?

Esper's Ghost. After the party has investigated the room for several minutes the ghost of Captain Esper Dark floats up through the floor. She wears fine, rakish clothing and a large feathered hat perched jauntily on her head. She is a [ghost](#) and initially challenges the PCs, accusing them of rifling through her things. If an adventurer talks to Esper and succeeds a DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the dead captain reveals why her spirit has lingered all these years. One possibility is that she never completed her mission delivering a blessed shield to the royal family (if this is so, the party can locate the shield in the smuggler's hold beneath the bed). Another is that Captain Esper Dark was lured to Bstal Nknok's territory by supposed allies and she wants revenge on the descendants of those who betrayed her. Whatever the case may be, should the party complete the task to put her spirit to rest Captain Esper Dark appears shortly after they are done and thanks them, gifting the PCs with a map to her "retirement plan" before her spirit departs.



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PLOT HOOKS IN THE HOLD

Demonic Tablets. Carved into the face of the rock puncturing the side of the hull are three flat tablet-shaped sections that are covered in demonic writing. A DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the tablets comprise three parts of a summoning ritual. *Identify* reveals that the first tablet has been already activated and that the entire ship is bound to the stone magically. A [sea hag](#) that inhabits the cove scribed these tablets and should she complete her ritual, she will turn *Deidre's Ghost* into a spectral airship, raise the crew as ghostly servants, and make a mystic contract with Bstal Nknok herself.

Kraken Eggs. A deep crashing sound, like surf slamming against a wavebreak, echoes from the stern where the floor of the hold has been broken in a 5-foot radius hole. Despite the fact that *Deidre's Ghost* is completely run aground, the hole opens into a pool of seawater that emanates cold and has pale spherical lights glimmering within it. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check reveals that the lights could be kraken eggs, slowly rising to the surface where they will hatch and the baby monsters will initiate a frenzy of feeding and growth. Along with this realization comes with the suspicion that the kraken would not have sent its young to hatch without protection of some kind...

