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VILLAGE BACKDROP:
ECHO HARBOUR



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VILLAGE BACKDROP: ECHO HARBOUR

Under the protection of the dragon turtle, Bonesong, Echo Harbour has flourished. The port teems with people: sailors dock their ships at the harbour and load them with supplies and trade goods, merchants haggle with merfolk on the foreshore and men in market stalls, workers toil in the busy shipyards and travellers crowd the taverns, making boasts and bets as they play games to pass the time. Over the bustle and chatter sound the shouts and songs of the orcs as they direct ships and caravans to their proper places.

Recently though, Bonesong vanished. Echo Harbour has prospered under her protection, but it remains to be seen if the village has the strength to stand on its own. Only time will tell if their guardian will return or if the villagers must find another way to safeguard their future.

Designed for use with the 5th edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game.

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ECHO HARBOUR AT A GLANCE

Ruler: The Recognised

Government: Council

Alignments: NG, LN, N

Population: 199 (57 humans, 18 half-orcs, 65 merfolk, 59 orcs)

Notable Folk: Caller Deepway (Echo Harbour), Crower Ouwei (Kelp Farms), Spellwright Lightguide (Treeshell Shipyard), Trademaster Broadsail (Silver Scale), Zephyr Broadsail (Broadsail Outfitters)

Languages: Aquan, Common, Draconic, Orc

Resources & Industry: Mariculture, pearl diving, shipbuilding

Echo Harbour teems with people: sailors dock their ships in the harbour and load them with supplies and trade goods, merchants haggle with merfolk on the foreshore and men in market stalls, workers toil in the busy shipyards and travellers crowd the taverns, making boasts and bets as they play games to pass the time. Over the bustle and chatter sound the shouts and songs of the orcs as they direct ships and caravans to their proper places.

In the not too distant past, Echo Harbour didn't exist. Only merfolk lived in the bay, quietly tending their farms beneath the waves. Few merchants dared to brave the region's pirates and bandits, even for the rare pearls the merfolk gathered.

The change began when Bonesong, a battle-scarred dragon turtle with an attendant tribe of orcs, entered the bay. Exhausted and injured from fighting and weary for their nomadic lifestyle, Bonesong and her followers struck a deal with the merfolk: they would protect the bay and its trade routes, and in exchange, they would call it their home. Their presence deterred outlaws and as the area became safer, trade became increasingly common; a few human merchants even settled there, sensing opportunity. Over time the different cultures blended and the community leaders banded together into a single ruling council: The Recognised.

Recently, though, Bonesong vanished. Echo Harbour has grown prosperous under her protection, but it remains to be seen if it has the strength to stand on its own. Only time will tell if she will return, or if the villagers must find another way to safeguard their future.

VILLAGERS

Appearance: The villagers are a diverse lot, but tanned skin, dark hair and dark eyes are common. Humans are slender and short, the orcs have a faint green tint to their skin and broad chests, and the merfolk are pale and have distinctive turquoise hair.

Dress: Sturdy trousers of canvas or leather are favoured in Echo Harbour, accompanied by woven sandals. Most villagers eschew shirts and other garments. Jewellery of bone, obsidian and pearls is common, especially in the form of piercings.

Nomenclature: *family* Broadsail, Deepway, Lightguide, Ouwei; *personal* most villagers use a title rather than a personal name, though children and young adults are named after animals, plants and weather until they earn their adult title.

VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Echo Harbour, its history and surrounds. A PC making a DC 10 Intelligence check knows one or more pieces of information from the list below. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: Echo Harbour is a prosperous port with abundant food supplies and valuable trade goods. It is a good starting place for an ocean voyage and a safe harbour.

DC 15: An old dragon turtle, Bonesong, dwells near Echo Harbour and is allied with the villagers. She leaves most vessels alone, but savages pirate ships.

DC 20: A sizable portion of Echo Harbour is underwater; much of its wealth stems from vast aquatic farms maintained by its merfolk citizens.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Echo Harbour, a PC may hear one or more rumours. A PC making a DC 10 Charisma check learns one rumour from the table below. A PC exceeding this check learns an additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10.

D6	RUMOUR
1	The dragon turtle that protects the harbour hasn't been seen in a while, and might be gone (or dead).
2*	A well-hidden and protected sea cave contains a secret treasure hoard! This hoard is the real source of Echo Harbour's wealth.
3	Shouts from the village bard and his workers resound easily in the harbour and are the source of its name.
4	A pirate with a vicious history hides in the village.
5	Merchants from remote lands stop and sell rare and exotic goods in the marketplace.
6*	The local shipbuilder has acquired a broken underwater craft, and has been trying to fix it.

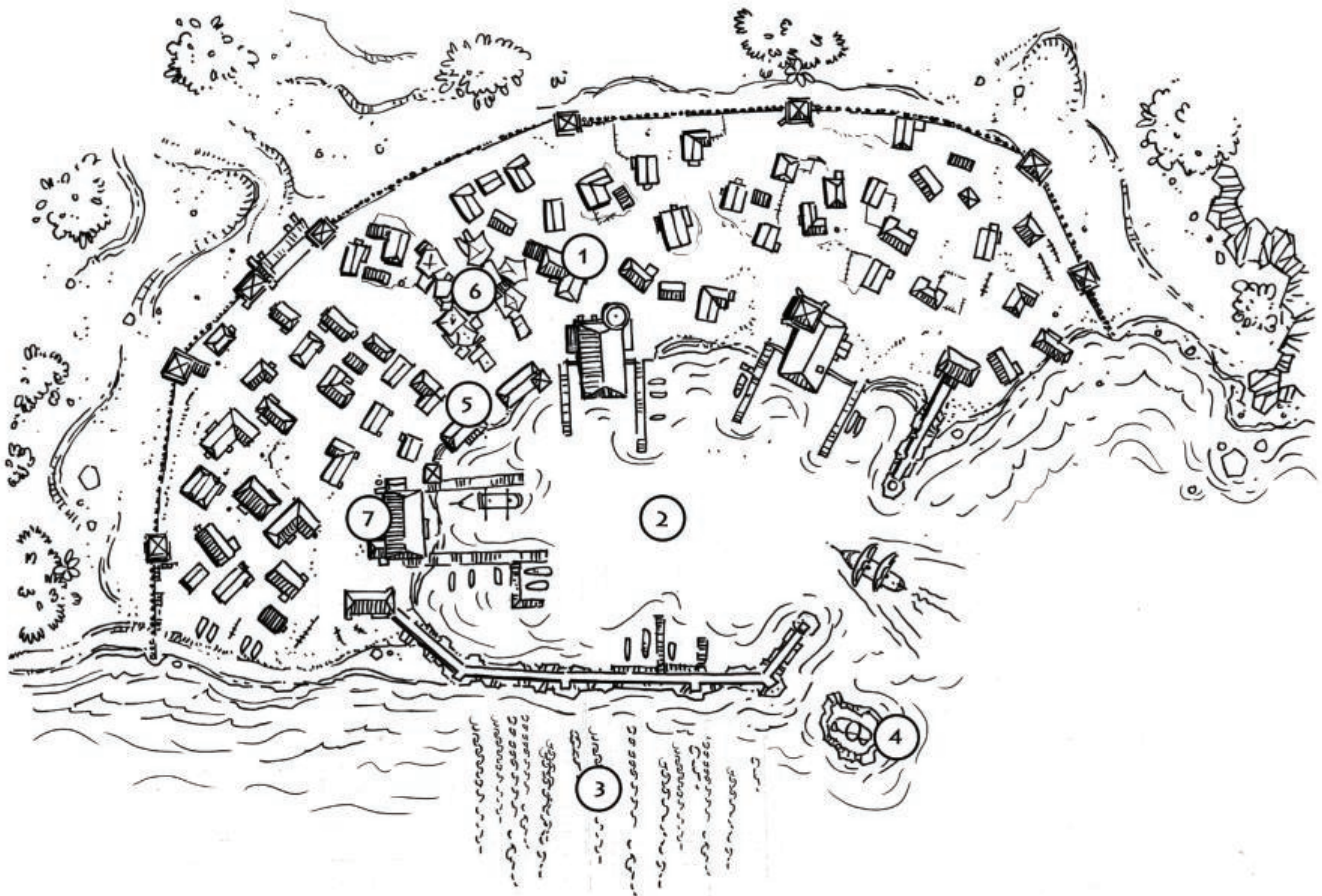
*False rumour



NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Broadsail Outfitters:** The Broadsail family shop sells quality supplies to sailors and adventurers. Zephyr Broadsail runs the shop and frequently offers bounties on rare sea creatures.
2. **Echo Harbour:** The village takes its name from this busy harbour. It has several long docks, two warehouses for handling cargo and protective concrete walls that shelter it from the open ocean. Caller Deepway is normally on the docks, telling stories and managing workers.
3. **Kelp Farms:** Outside the harbour walls are the village farms, which comprise giant kelp forests and organised rows of cultivated oysters. The merfolk farmers also catch schools of fish. All together the bounty allows them to provide for the entire village and still have surplus to trade. Grower Ouwei tends to the farms during daylight hours.
4. **Origin Cave:** Icy blue light radiates from a vaguely humanoid statue sculpted from a rocky outcrop off the coast. The light guides ships safely into the harbour, but unknown to most it also marks the entrance to an underwater sea cave. The cave is sacred to the village. In addition to the rites they perform there they use it as an ossuary.
5. **Silver Scale:** A popular tavern, the Silver Scale appeals to its customers with games of chance and skill as well as its menu. It is a common gathering place for villagers, and the Recognised even use it for council meetings. Trademaster Broadsail has permanently reserved a quiet table here, and occupies it near constantly.
6. **Sun Market:** Nothing is ever the same twice in the Sun Market. Stalls and canvas canopies can be rented for a small fee, and countless merchants, adventurers and wandering mystics set up shop here for a day or two before moving on.
7. **Treeshell Shipyard:** At least one boat is being built in the shipyard at any given time, and it is a good place to make repairs. Spellwright Lightguide toils here, overseeing her numerous apprentices.



LIFE IN ECHO HARBOUR

Echo Harbour is vibrant and cosmopolitan, the product of three merging cultures and their interaction with travellers of all sorts. Music is everywhere, from the cadent calls of orc watchmen to the ponderous drums of the merfolk; wind chimes are scattered among the buildings and carved bone flutes are popular with the villagers. Newcomers receive friendly welcomes, directions to the taverns and shops, and enticing descriptions of mouth-watering food or desirable trade goods on offer.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Trade is lively in the village. Merchants come to Echo Harbour for the pearls pulled from the sea by merfolk gatherers and to sell goods in the Sun Market, while seafarers of all kinds stop for supplies and repairs. Almost all merfolk in the village occupy themselves with a form of maricultural work such as ranching fish, farming kelp or raising abalones.

LAW & ORDER

Echo Harbour is governed by the Recognised, a council of its most respected citizens. Currently the council comprises Caller, Grower and Trademaster, who meet regularly in the Silver Scale tavern to discuss business and current affairs. Caller acts as spokesman and Grower as judge and mediator while Trademaster works in the background to handle logistics and bureaucracy.

Protection and law enforcement are handled by village guards, who man the watch posts along the timber fence at the village boundary, keep the peace and patrol the surrounding ocean in catamarans. Every member of the guard learns vocal techniques from Caller, allowing them to shout commands in Draconic audible over tremendous distances.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Games and competitions are a major part of Echo Harbour's culture. Warriors spar, friends race and merchants play cards as they discuss trade deals. Travellers, merchants and adventurers alike can expect to be invited to some sort of contest to evaluate their character. This custom originated from Bonesong's attendant orc tribe, who used a rite of challenges to determine status among themselves. These days, people are measured more by their attitude and style than success, though sometimes contests of skill are used to settle disputes or assert superiority.

The quieter, sacred traditions of Echo Harbour involve the Origin Cave. Children and outsiders are brought to the cave when they formally join the village, and return later in life to receive the titles that serve as their names. When a villager dies, their bones are stored within the cave. Great lengths are taken to return the bones of deceased villager to the cave.

VILLAGE DRESSING

Use this table to generate the minor sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about Echo Harbour.

D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	A sudden wind blows, heralding the arrival of a sorcerer-merchant. He rents a stall in the Sun Market to sell <i>ioun stones</i> and magical trinkets.
2	The rhythm of a drum competes with a flute's trills as two villagers engage in a musical contest.
3	A young man swims into the harbour and is helped onto the docks by Caller, who announces that the young man has earned the title "Carver."
4	Though the sun still shines in the sky, a light rain falls on the village.
5	An off-duty guard challenges one of the PCs to a friendly competition of their choosing.
6	Arcane spellcasters (including Spellwright and Zephyr) gather in one of the taverns to discuss and share their knowledge and craft.
7	Shrill screaming breaks out in a tavern, but the cause is only a traveller who severely underestimated the spice of the local Dragonfire kelp.
8	Raised voices from a disgruntled customer and a defensive merchant draw attention, and Grower steps in to mediate.
9	Recent battle scars mark a ship making its way to the shipyards for repair.
10	A palanquin carries a merfolk architect out to the village fence, where he discusses plans for a wall.
11	Clouds roll over and thunder rumbles as a heavy rainstorm arrives, driving everyone indoors.
12	Two guards engage in a sparring match. A loose circle of onlookers forms around them.
13	Merfolk farmers bring up the latest harvest of kelp and take it into one of the warehouses.
14	An orc and a merfolk play a game of chance on the docks, using pearls as stakes.
15	Guards return from a failed search at sea for Bonesong. They are grim and reluctant to speak of their errand.
16	Caller's voice sounds from the docks as he recites an old folk story to an attentive audience.
17	Four old men play a card game on a tavern porch and swap stories of local pirates, including one named Scarhands.
18	A caravan enters the village to make deliveries to the village. A thick stack of letters is handed over to Zephyr Broadsail.
19	One of the villagers brings out a set of landscape paintings to sell in the Sun Market.
20	Shouts resound as guards gather at the northern fence to scare off marauding bandits. Sighting bandits so close to the village provokes a tense discussion.

THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

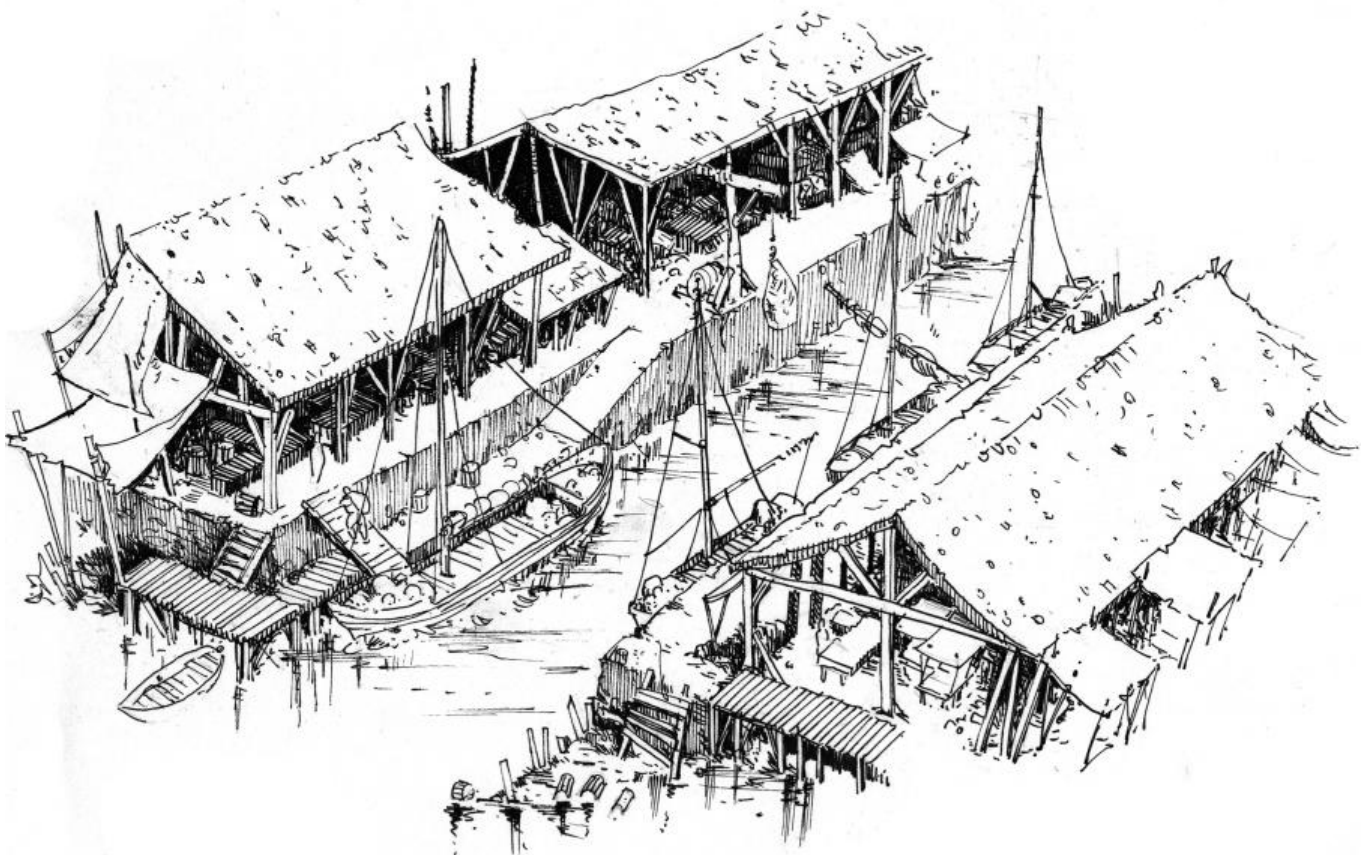
Echo Harbour stands on a tropical coastline; bright blue ocean stretches to the horizon on one side while wide swaths of dense palm tree groves sprawl across the surrounding land.

Reliable trade winds blow across the region, leading right to the village and passed it to far flung regions. An increasingly well-travelled road leads to the village, providing ample landward to the port. These burgeoning connections place Echo Harbour right along major trade routes, which has contributed greatly to the village's prosperity. Its reputation is slowly spreading through the locality, but many folk do not believe orcs, humans and merfolk can live together in peace and prosperity. This is the greatest challenge for the village—convincing traders who have not previously visited the village it is safe to do so.

Volcanic activity has shaped the land around Echo Harbour. Extinct volcanoes form rocky peaks and nearby islands, and volcanic vents and submarine volcanoes lie beneath the ocean surface. While the village is not close enough to be directly endangered by most eruptions—which are now rare—it sometimes suffers the effects of drifting volcanic fogs. Locals derive resources from the volcanoes, gathering obsidian for art and blades, or volcanic ash used to make concrete.

Beneath the warm ocean waves are massive kelp forests and coral reefs that host a wide variety of marine wildlife, such as sea otters and colourful tropical fish. The area is more known for its rare but exceptional species such as, dragon turtles, sea serpents and aquatic dragons. Dragon turtles are the dominant species, and the specimens living in the region reach exceptional sizes and enjoy extreme longevity. Prominent dragon turtles frequently stake claims to specific territories and aggressively defend them. Well established dragon turtle territories are often noted on maps so they can be avoided, but vessels sometimes stray accidentally into recent expansions or new claims and earn the ire of its territorial master. A ship can often leave unscathed by appeasing the dragon turtle with a tithe, but attempts to argue or escape usually anger them further and may even provoke (extremely one-sided) violence.

Pirates takes advantage of the area's dangers, making bases and hiding stashes in overlooked nooks between monster claimed territories and active volcanoes. They sail from their hideaways to prey on vulnerable trading vessels before slinking away. Bonesong once hunted down their hidden coves and patrolled the trade routes to discourage pirate activity, but in her absence, a few crews have returned.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN ECHO HARBOUR

1: BROADSAIL OUTFITTERS

A clean-lined stone and timber building stands at the edge of Sun Market and the docks. Within, the shop is clean and tidy, products lining its organized shelves.

Demand for supplies is high in Echo Harbour, and Broadsail Outfitters was founded to meet it. The shop's shelves have everything a ship or traveller might need, from standards like rope, food and fishing line to weatherproof clothing and alchemical goods. Adventurers, however, are usually drawn to the magical equipment kept locked in a glass counter up front. Even if a customer wants something the store doesn't stock, the Broadsail family is willing to import it for the right price. Trademaster Broadsail owns the store and manages it, but his daughter, Zephyr, manages its daily operation.

- **For Sale:** *cloak of the manta ray* (500 gp), *feather token: anchor* (500 gp), *feather token: bird* (500 gp), *feather token: fan* (500 gp), *feather token: swan boat* (3,000 gp), *handy haversack* (5,000 gp), *potion of water breathing* (500 gp), *scroll of water breathing* (400 gp)

Bounties: The ocean around Echo Harbour is home to numerous beasts and rarities. Bounties for dangerous monsters, requests for live specimens and similar items are listed on the store's bulletin board, provided by merchants, alchemists and researchers in contact with the Broadsail family.

CALLER DEEPWAY

LN male orc bard 5

Even at a glance, this orc's importance is obvious; he stands proud, wearing authority like a cloak, and his thick arms are covered with sea serpent tattoos, ivory bracelets and golden armbands. When he speaks, the power of his voice resonates.

Mannerisms: Rhythm comes naturally to Caller. His deep voice is cadent, and when he thinks his fingers drum and tap on the nearest surface.

Personality: Caller is intense and compelling, experienced and possessed of unshakeable certainty. He naturally takes charge and establishes order, generating the momentum he and his village need to thrive.

Background: A native, Caller was marked from an early age as an orc with an exceptional voice. His ascension to the Recognised surprised no-one.

Deliveries: Zephyr Broadsail's dream of scholarship is supported by her communication with notable researchers and wizards in out of the way locations and distant lands. Sometimes she asks for travellers heading in the right direction to deliver a letter or parcel for her in exchange for a small sum of gold or a shop discount.

2: ECHO HARBOUR

Activity is constant in the harbour. Ships load and unload cargo or manoeuvre around the docks, and workers stream in and out of the warehouses, all guided by loud, sonorous chanting.

The harbour is the heart of the village, where goods and trade flow with the rhythm of the tide. Its sturdy wooden docks normally host one or two visiting vessels, a few local ships designed to sail along the coast and the orcish catamarans used to patrol the local waters. Two substantial warehouses stand alongside the docks and extend down into the water, keeping a section flooded for goods best kept submerged (and as access for merfolk workers).

Caller Deepway (LN male orc bard 5) works on the docks, shouting to direct ships to their berths and to stir idle workers to action. When the harbour is calm he entertains the villagers with storytelling, and when it is busy he leads songs to help the dockworkers find their rhythm. Rarely, he silently stares off into the distance, distracted by worry.

ZEPHYR BROADSAIL

NG female human wizard 2

The shopkeeper of Broadsail Outfitters is a young woman with shoulder length brown hair, dark brown eyes and a friendly smile.

Mannerisms: Zephyr's lack of self-confidence causes her to hedge statements and frequently use filler words such as "uh" and "um."

Personality: Friendly and curious, Zephyr easily engages with customers and eagerly asks them about their adventures. She aspires to scholarship, and holds experienced spellcasters in high regard.

Background: The only daughter of Trademaster Broadsail, Zephyr has lived in the village all her life. She still hasn't achieved her adult title, but is self-educated and in recent years has made connections with notable scholars and spellcasters, with whom she frequently exchanges ideas and assistance. She takes lessons with the Spellwright to learn magic and mathematics, but isn't formally apprenticed to her.

3: KELP FARMS

The merfolk farms stretch far beneath the waves, beginning with beds of oysters that run right up to the harbour walls and ending with rows of kelp. The green kelp strands rise taller than trees, vast forests through which fish and sea otters swim.

The kelp farms are a miniature world all on their own, a carefully wrought ecosystem that feeds Echo Harbour. Giant kelp is the primary product of the farms, but it is supplemented with clams and oysters as well as ranches fish, crabs and abalones. Thin maroon strands of Dragonfire kelp, an exceptionally spicy kelp variety that deters pests and is harvested for culinary uses, grow throughout the forest. Grower Ouwei (LN female merfolk **druid**) directs the merfolk farmers and layers the farm in magic to stimulate growth. Trained sea otters hunt down sea urchins and other threats to the farm.

4: ORIGIN CAVE

Just off the coast stands a glowing statue that guides ships into the harbour.

On a rocky outcrop, not too far outside Echo Harbour, a statue is cut into the stone. Though its details are smoothed and indistinct, it appears to be a seated humanoid figure of indeterminate race, its hands pressed close to its chest. Icy blue light seeps through its fingers, a chill brilliance that illuminates the coastline even during the darkest nights.

GROWER OUWEI

LN female merfolk **druid**

Scintillating green, yellow and blue scales and luxurious jade hair give this merfolk woman a naturally regal appearance. She moves with solemn grace.

Mannerisms: Almost nothing can get Grower to break her carefully cultivated calm. At most, she bends from sombre to a slight smile or disapproving glare.

Personality: Grower is endlessly patient and contemplative, content to wait until she has everything planned before acting. She is an excellent judge of character and a mediator with years of experience. When there is a serious dispute in the village, she usually puts it to rest.

Background: The title "Grower" is unique in Echo Harbour. It existed when only merfolk lived in the area, and it is the only title passed from mentor to apprentice. Grower Ouwei was apprenticed to the previous Grower when she was a child, and committed all the druidic secrets, farming techniques and cultural heritage associated with the title to memory before her mentor passed. She is still young, but has held her title for over a decade now.

Well below the surface and hidden beneath wave-worn rock lies the entrance to a sea cave of great importance to the village. To them the cave is a hallowed place, a symbol of the primordial origin of the world and the cycle of life, death and rebirth. One of the labyrinthine cave passages leads to an airy cavern decorated with ancient paintings and hundreds of carved alcoves filled with the bones of dead villagers.

5: SILVER SCALE

A burnished piece of copper in the shape of a fish scale serves as the sign for this busy tavern.

This small tavern is the village's social centre, a place to share a good meal and pleasant pastimes. The building extends into the harbour itself, and has a moon pool on its lowest floor for merfolk, who take seats on the edge of the pool and meet with surface-side friends. Part of what makes the place popular is its unique menu of games, ranging from card decks (on water-resistant tiles) to chess sets, all of which are freely available to paying customers. Meals, business and talk are all done over games in the Silver Scale, and even the Recognised take up a set of tiles when they meet to discuss village affairs.

Trademaster Broadsail (N male human **spy**) is a fixture of the establishment, and he has a poolside table in one corner reserved solely for his use at which he conducts all his business.

- **Food & Drink** meal (spicy Dragonfire kelp salad, fresh bread and grilled seafood) 5 sp, coffee (one cup) 1 cp, pineapple wine (pitcher) 2 sp.

TRADEMASTER BROADSAIL

N male human **spy**

This man is well attired, but he has a stiff posture and dark eyes watchful. Whenever he gestures he draws attention to his thickly scarred weathered hands.

Mannerisms: Broadsail often clasps his hands together, in front of him while he sits or behind his back when he stands. He listens attentively and always keeps his back to a wall.

Personality: Quiet and withdrawn, the Trademaster constantly toils to grow Echo Harbour's economy. He handles countless trade deals and does the bureaucratic work few villagers care to do. When he isn't working he is with his daughter, Zephyr.

Background: Years ago, Broadsail was an infamous pirate and went by the name "Scarhands." His ship was wrecked during a violent storm, and after he recovered in Echo Harbour he set aside his old life and started over. He vividly remembers an inhuman eye watching him while he sank, and suspects Bonesong attacked his ship but gave him a second chance for some unfathomable reason.

6: SUN MARKET

A line of canopy-covered market stalls runs all the way down to the docks, and bustles with the trade of villagers and foreign merchants alike.

The Sun Market is a communal marketplace that rents out stalls for a few silver coins a day. Locals sell their own goods here, hawking carvings, jewellery, locally grown coffee, dried Dragonfire kelp and most importantly, pearls. Stalls near the docks are reserved for merfolk pearl gatherers, who sort their wares by size and colour and display them in gleaming piles to entice the countless traders who come to buy them. Other traders set up in the market for a time before passing on, selling more unusual products than the local staples.

WHAT'S ON SALE?

While the PCs are here, they may find one or more of the following market stalls. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A bookseller has alchemical treatises, philosophical tomes and storybooks stacked in her stall along with a small selection of scrolls and short spellbooks.
2	An apothecary set up in a booth sells potions and fragrant alchemical reagents in glass jars.
3	Curtains shroud this market stall, and a fortune teller within offers to answer mysteries and reveal the future.

SPELLWRIGHT LIGHTGUIDE

N female half-orc **mage**

Tall, confident and well-muscled, the Spellwright stands out from other villagers. Her long, braided hair is tied together with glowing charms of wood and bone, and even more charms hang from her pierced ears.

Mannerisms: "Let me show you what I mean," is the Spellwright's favourite phrase. When explaining something she always gives examples, draws diagrams or begins hands-on demonstrations.

Personality: The Spellwright is an excellent craftswoman, innovative and enthusiastic about her work. She does her best to encourage her interests around the village, and takes on apprentices who show promise at wizardry or shipbuilding. She is very busy.

Background: Born and raised in Echo Harbour, Spellwright started learning traditional orc shipbuilding at an early age. The potential of wizardry caught her imagination later, and she taught herself the craft from books and experimentation, before applying it to her work as a shipwright.

4	Metal ingots are arranged in a display by value, starting at copper and iron and ending with gold and mithral.
5	Three adventurers have purchased a stall to sell odds and ends scavenged from a ghost-infested shipwreck.
6	A bored warlock manages a barebones stall only stocked with polished stone discs. He explains each stone grants good luck on a specific task or job.

7: TREESHELL SHIPYARD

The local shipyards comprise two docks and a warehouse on the far side of the harbour. Orcs and men chant as they work under the approving eye of the Spellwright.

Work is constant in the shipyards. The Spellwright isn't shy about selling ships or offering services, so there is always a project underway, whether repairs to a merchant vessel, construction of a new fishing boat or alterations to a visiting ship. Even when jobs are scarce, the Spellwright has her apprentices prepare materials in advance and stow them in the warehouse's racks.

The docks here are built differently than the rest of the harbour, constructed of thick wooden slabs and resting on solid stone pilings. Each dock has a gradual ramp that leads directly into the water and a variety of lock and pulley systems to help secure and reposition ships, or even to bring them fully ashore.

Rumour has it that the Spellwright recovered some kind of strange underwater craft from the surrounding waters with Bonesong's help (before the dragon turtle went missing). Certainly, one part of her shipyard is now protected by high screens of woven palm fronds; rumours of what lies beyond circulate through the Sun Market.



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