

Pirate Cove

Written by JKW

Pirate Cove is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3, 5, 8, or 11**. This document offers a general guideline on scaling the adventure for each level. The characters must explore the Crimson Cove to track down a damaged pirate vessel—the Corsair’s Fury—and put an end to its crew.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

Average Party Level	Recommended Adventure Version	Relative Difficulty
3	3rd-Level	Hard
4	3rd-Level	Medium
5	5th-Level	Hard
6	5th-Level	Medium
7	5th-Level	Easy
8	8th-Level	Hard
9	8th-Level	Medium
10	8th-Level	Easy
11	11th-Level	Hard
12	11th-Level	Medium
13	11th-Level	Easy

Adventure Hooks

The *Pirate Cove* Adventure Hooks table offers some ideas if you don’t have a reason for the characters to investigate the Crimson Cove. Roll a d8 or choose the one you like best. If you need to motivate the party with a monetary reward, their patrons offer 500 gp per level of the adventure.

Background

Captain Ashthorn, the pirate lord of the Corsair’s Fury, was recently ambushed by Admiral Nera of Port Haven; though the crew survived, the ship itself was badly damaged. The pirates found themselves adrift at sea, in desperate need of shelter and supplies.

It was in this crisis that Captain Ashthorn began receiving whispers from an entity

called Xar’ath, who claimed to be an ancient god of the sea that could grant Captain Ashthorn and his crew power enough to overcome any rival. Xar’ath guided the Corsair’s Fury into the Crimson Cove, wherein the pirates’ souls became forfeit in exchange for unnatural abilities.

Though the Corsair’s Fury remains crippled, it won’t be long before Captain Ashthorn and his crew—now augmented by Xar’ath’s demonic magic—take to the sea and begin terrorizing the region once again.

The Crimson Cove

The Crimson Cove is a cavernous rock formation in the middle of the ocean. Despite its innocuous appearance, the Crimson Cove is anything but a natural occurrence: it was created by a demon called Xar’ath to serve as its lair. Now, the demon rests at the bottom of a black lake, luring dark-hearted mortals like Captain Ashthorn into subservience with promises of power and wealth.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the Crimson Cove has the following features.

Size and Dimensions. The ceilings within each area of the Crimson Cove are roughly 30 feet high unless stated otherwise.

Illumination. Treat each area as being dimly lit by torch light unless stated otherwise.

Surface Detail. The cavernous interior of the area is composed of sharp rock covered in slick seawater. The ground is soft beach sand.

High and Low Tide. Certain features in areas of the Crimson Cove will change with the tide. At the beginning of the adventure, roll a d20. On a 1–10, the adventure begins at low tide. On an 11–20, the adventure begins at high tide.

Xar’ath, the demon in area 6, can change the tide in the Crimson Cove at will one time

PIRATE COVE ADVENTURE HOOKS

d8	Patron	Adventure Hook
1	Academy	The Corsair's Fury recently raided a vessel that was transporting a handful of ancient scrolls; these scrolls are magical in nature and have not yet been translated, making them highly dangerous in the wrong hands. The head of the archaeological team asks the characters to find the scrolls and return them—they belong in a museum! The scrolls are currently in the possession of Chuckles, the ship's pet monkey (see area 5).
2	Adventurer's Guild	Hadden Whitmore, a young woman living in Port Haven, asks the Adventurer's Guild for help in finding her brother, Lee Whitmore, whom she suspects has joined the crew of the Corsair's Fury. Hadden promises that Lee isn't dangerous, just that he's "prone to flights of fancy" (see area 7).
3	Ancient Being	A mysterious deep-sea entity appears to the characters in their dreams and reveals that the crew of the Corsair's Fury has made a pact with a powerful demon. The crew and their demon patron must be put to the sword (see area 6).
4	Aristocrat	Alyssa Hargrove, the daughter of a wealthy noble, was kidnapped by the Corsair's Fury during a daring port raid. The noble will pay the characters handsomely for the child's return (see area 7).
5	Criminal Syndicate	Bones McGillicuddy (bandit captain), the former first mate of the Corsair's Fury, was tossed overboard for mutiny. He promises to share the ship's fortune with the characters if they agree to help him wrest control from Captain Ashthorn (see area 8). Bones accompanies the characters on the adventure.
6	Military Force	The Corsair's Fury was recently damaged in a skirmish with Admiral Nera, the military commander of Port Haven. Unfortunately, Nera's ship was also damaged and could not pursue. She asks the characters to find where the pirates are hiding and put an end to their captain (see area 8).
7	Religious Order	Nami, the head of the Sunken Temple in Port Haven, senses that unnatural forces are at play with the Corsair's Fury. She warns the characters that the crew are no ordinary pirates (see area 6).
8	Sovereign	The Aquatic Assembly, the governing body of Port Haven, asks the characters to track down the Corsair's Fury and put a permanent end to its operation. They warn the characters that the ship's crew has developed "unnatural abilities" (see area 8).

per area, allowing you to rapidly change the characters' circumstances as they progress through the cove.

The tide changes naturally every 6 hours; changes in water level are noticeable from the 4th hour onward. Features that change with the tide will be prefaced by either "High Tide" or "Low Tide."

Creature Template: Demon Pirate. Certain creatures in this adventure are tagged with the "demon pirate" template (for example, a **bandit** might become a **demon pirate bandit**). A creature using this template gains the following benefits:

- **Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Damage Immunities** poison
- **Condition Immunities** poisoned
- **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.
- **Languages** Abyssal, telepathy 60 ft.
- **Corrupted Weapons.** The creature's melee weapons are morphed into organic

appendages with the same function, except the creature can't be disarmed.

(For example, a **bandit's** scimitar becomes a slashing appendage that can't be disarmed.)

- **Magic Resistance.** The creature has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the maps of the Crimson Cove on page 8.

1 – Entrance

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

The cavernous opening of the cove swallows you in darkness. Ocean water laps gently against rock. There's an acrid taste to the air here—like blood.

High Tide Encounter: Sharks. During high tide, the waters in this area are infested with sharks. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 1 Encounter (High Tide) table.

Low Tide Encounter: Lookout. During low tide, one or more members of the Corsair's Fury are stationed here as lookouts. As the tide changes to high tide, they migrate to area 7 to drink and play cards. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 1 Encounter (Low Tide) table.

AREA 1 ENCOUNTER (HIGH TIDE)

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	1 hunter shark
5th	2 hunter sharks
8th	1 giant shark
11th	2 giant sharks

AREA 1 ENCOUNTER (LOW TIDE)

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	2 thugs and 1 bandit
5th	2 bandit captains
8th	2 bandit captains and 2 scouts
11th	3 veterans

Exits. A passage to the southwest leads to area 3. A passage to the southeast leads to area 2.

2 – East Tunnel

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

Torchlight flickers along the cavern walls. From deeper within the cove, you hear muffled voices.

Low Tide Hazard: Net Trap. A strip of rudimentary pressure plates has been installed beneath the sand in the center of this area. During low tide, the trap activates when 50 pounds or more are placed on a pressure plate. The DC to spot the pressure plates and netting is 15 during low tide or 20 during high tide.

When the trap is triggered, the barbed net springs up, covering a 10-foot-square area. Creatures in this area become trapped in the net: they're suspended 10 feet in the air and become restrained. Creatures restrained in this way take 7 (2d6) piercing damage from the barbs. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. The net has AC 10 and 20 hit points. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) destroys a 5-foot-square section of it, freeing any creature trapped in that section. A creature that falls from the net takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

High Tide: Submerged. During high tide, this area is completely submerged in muddy, murky water. The characters must swim through the area, which is difficult terrain; visibility in the water is reduced to 10 feet.

Hazard: Chasm. A 5-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep chasm separates this area from area 4. During high tide, creatures can simply swim across the chasm. During low tide, a creature can attempt to jump across the chasm to area 4. In order to make the jump, the creature must be able to jump at least 6 feet horizontally. (With a 10-foot running start, a creature can long jump a number of feet up to its Strength score, or half that distance without a running start.)

A creature that fails to make the jump falls into the chasm, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and landing prone. Creatures inside the chasm can climb out during low tide by succeeding on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Conversation. Creatures in this area can hear muffled conversation coming from area 7.

Exits. A passage to the northwest leads to area 1. A passage to the south leads to area 5.

3 – West Tunnel

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

This tunnel is completely dark. That acrid blood smell is stronger here; you taste iron on your tongue.

Illumination. Treat this area as having no light.

Hazard: Xar'ath's Whispers. Creatures in this area can hear Xar'ath whispering its alien language in their mind. When the characters enter the area, they must roll initiative. On initiative count 20 each round, each character must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw against Xar'ath's whispers or become afflicted with a form of short-term madness; a character that is immune to being charmed or frightened has advantage on this saving throw. If a character that is already afflicted with three or more forms of short-term madness fails this saving throw, they instead become afflicted with a form of long-term madness.

Once Xar'ath is defeated (see area 6), the whispers stop.

High Tide: Submerged. During high tide, this area is completely submerged in muddy, murky water. The characters must swim through the area, which is difficult terrain; visibility in the water is reduced to 10 feet.

Exits. A passage to the northeast leads to area 1. A passage to the southeast leads to area 4.

4 – Bloodied Cavern

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

All along the cavern walls are sigils written in blood. The language is unknowable. It hurts to look upon them.

Illumination. Treat this area as having no light.

Hazard: Xar'ath's Whispers. Creatures in this area can hear Xar'ath whispering its alien language in their mind. Refer to the Xar'ath's Whispers section in area 3 for more details.

Hazard: Maddening Sigils. A creature that attempts to read the sigils along the cavern wall must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or become afflicted with a form of short-term madness. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to the sigils' effects for 24 hours.

High Tide: Submerged. During high tide, this area is completely submerged in muddy, murky water. The characters must swim through the area, which is difficult terrain; visibility in the water is reduced to 10 feet.

Encounter: Drowned Sailors. The servants of Xar'ath who willingly sacrificed themselves to their demon master stir to life once the characters enter the area. Captain Ashthorn has tied heavy everyday objects to the creatures' feet in an attempt to immobilize them. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 4 Encounter table.

AREA 4 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	4 demon pirate zombies
5th	4 demon pirate ghouls
8th	2 demon pirate wights and 1 demon pirate ghoul
11th	4 demon pirate wights

During high tide, the undead creatures are stuck in the sand, allowing other creatures to swim over them. Whenever a character passes over an undead creature in this manner, they must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the undead gets a hold of the character, causing them to be restrained until freed.

During low tide, the undead creatures have their movement speeds reduced by 10 feet.

Hazard: Chasm. A 5-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep chasm separates this area from area 2. Refer to page 5 for more details.

Exits. A passage to the northwest leads to area 3. A passage to the southwest leads to area 6.

5 – Chuckles' Perch

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

Entering the area, you see a wooden perch fastened to the cavern wall. Atop the perch is a giant, demonically warped monkey. It appears to be reading from some sort of scroll, muttering to itself.

Conversation. Creatures in this area can hear rowdy conversation coming from area 7.

Low Tide: Skeletal Remains. During low tide, the sand washes back out to sea, revealing skeletal remains. The pirates have picked everything clean; nothing of value remains.

Encounter: Chuckles. Chuckles, Captain Ashthorn's pet monkey, has been awakened by Xar'ath.

- At all adventure levels, treat Chuckles as a **demon pirate giant ape**.
- Chuckles is fully sentient, can speak and understand Common and Abyssal, and desires nothing more than to be left alone to read his collection of magical scrolls.
- In the 3rd-level version of the adventure, Chuckles doesn't care to fight the characters and will only attack if provoked. In the 5th-, 8th-, and 11th-level versions of the adventure, though Chuckles is still loyal to Captain Ashthorn, he is willing to negotiate for passage, especially if magic items are involved. Before attacking and raising the alarm, he gives the characters a chance to offer him something interesting. If Chuckles is successfully persuaded, he allows the characters to pass and informs them that he doesn't have the key to the door to area 8, but suggests that the pirates partying in area 7 might be drunk enough to be tricked into helping.
- If Chuckles is engaged in combat, he can use one of the four *spell scrolls* he's holding as an action: *scroll of charm person*, *scroll of enlarge/reduce*, *scroll of fear*, *scroll of greater invisibility*.

Hazard: Chasm. A 5-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep chasm separates this area from area 6. Refer to page 5 for more details.

Obstacle: Locked Door. A locked and barred door separates this area from area 8. The wooden door is reinforced with metal and has AC 20, 35 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The lock can be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity

check made using thieves' tools, or the door can be forced open with a successful DC 25 Strength check.

Exits. A passage to the north leads to area 2; a passage to the south leads to area 8. A passage to the southeast leads to area 7.

6 – Xar'ath's Black Lake

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you is a massive lake of blackened water; nothing reflects off its surface.

Illumination. Treat this area as having no light.

Submerged. This area is completely submerged in muddy, murky water. The characters must swim through the area, which is difficult terrain; visibility in the water is reduced to 10 feet.

Tide Change: Strong Currents. Whenever Xar'ath changes the tide, the water in this area rushes in or out accordingly in strong currents. Characters occupying the black lake must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed 20 feet in a direction of Xar'ath's choosing. Xar'ath can only change the tide once per area.

Hazard: Xar'ath's Whispers. Creatures in this area can hear Xar'ath whispering its alien language in their mind. Refer to page 6 for more details.

Encounter: Xar'ath. The demon of Crimson Cove will first attempt to entice the characters with promises of power before attacking. If the characters accept Xar'ath's terms, they're transformed into demon pirates, but must fulfill Xar'ath's every desire.

If Xar'ath is engaged in combat, he has the statistics of a demon depending on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 6 Encounter table. Xar'ath also has the Amphibious trait (meaning he can breathe air and water), and he has a swimming speed equal to his walking speed or flying speed (whichever is higher).

AREA 6 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	Xar'ath (vrock)
5th	Xar'ath (glabrezu)
8th	Xar'ath (nalfeshnee)
11th	Xar'ath (marilith)

AREA 6 TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
3rd	30 pp, 300 gp, 270 sp, 240 cp, 4 art objects worth 50 gp each, 1d4 potions of healing, and a waterlogged broom of flying that won't work until it's dried
5th	50 pp, 500 gp, 450 sp, 400 cp, 8 art objects worth 50 gp each, 2d4 potions of healing, and a barnacle-encrusted +2 scimitar
8th	90 pp, 700 gp, 720 sp, 640 cp, 12 art objects worth 50 gp each, 1d4 potions of greater healing, and 1d4 + 4 beads of force
11th	130 pp, 900 gp, 990 sp, 880 cp, 16 art objects worth 50 gp each, 1d4 potions of greater healing, and a cube of force with heavily clouded faces (the user must determine which face does what by trial and error)

Treasure: Xar'ath's Hoard. If Xar'ath is destroyed, the waters of the black lake become clear, and the characters are free to claim the demon's hoard scattered at the lake's bottom. The hoard's contents depend on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 6 Treasure table.

Hazard: Chasm. A 5-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep chasm separates this area from area 5. Refer to page 5 for more details.

Exits. A passage to the northeast leads to area 4.

7 – The Crimson Tavern

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter what appears to be a makeshift tavern in the middle of the cove; the pirates here are drunk, rowdy, and happy about something. Everyone is celebrating—except for a young woman tied up and gagged at the far end of the tavern.

Illumination. Treat this area as being well lit by torch light.

Drunk Pirates. The tavern is occupied by a dozen drunk pirates (**bandits**). During high tide, the sentries in area 1 can be found here playing cards (see page 4 for more details). As long as the characters don't do anything overly suspicious, the pirates will mistake them for senior members of Captain Ashthorn's crew; if the sentries are present, however, they'll grill the characters for information. The sentries can be convinced that the characters belong in the cove with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the characters have taken steps to disguise themselves or mention Xar'ath's name in conversation, this check is made with advantage.

Kidnapped Noble's Daughter. Alyssa Hargrove (**noble**) was recently kidnapped by the pirates in a daring port raid. She is unharmed. Several pirates (**bandits**) are guarding her; they explain that her ransom is going to make them all rich. If freed, she insists on killing Captain Ashthorn—and any other pirate that gets in her way.

The Reluctant Pirate. Lee Whitmore (**commoner**) joined Captain Ashthorn's crew on a whim, but has since regretted his choice. He's currently scrubbing the floor of the tavern with a small brush. If he suspects the characters aren't part of the crew, he asks them to return him home to his sister, Hadden Whitmore, in Port Haven.

Opening the Door to Fury's Rest. The door to area 8 is locked, but the characters might be able to find a solution while talking to the pirates in the Crimson Tavern.

- The key to the door is hidden behind a wood panel under the bar. A character searching the bar can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they find the foldaway panel. The pirate serving drinks behind the bar must be distracted, bribed, or otherwise convinced to stand aside before it can be searched.
- A few of the pirates are idly joking about blowing the door apart with a cannon.

They can be convinced to go through with their plan with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

- If Bones McGillicuddy (see the Criminal Syndicate adventure hook) is accompanying the characters, he attempts to rally the drunk pirates to his cause. Unless the characters help him out with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, the pirates laugh him out of the tavern.

Exits. A passage to the west leads to area 5.

8 – Fury’s Rest

As the characters enter the area, read or paraphrase the following:

Upon a lake of seawater lies your quarry: the pirate vessel, Corsair’s Fury. It’s been heavily damaged. Wooden scaffolding surrounds the ship.

Size and Dimensions. The ceiling in this area is 60 feet high.

Hazard: Scaffolding. The scaffolding surrounding the ship rises 40 feet in the air. Climbing the scaffolding is a simple task that does not require an ability check. Whenever a character dashes on the scaffolding or is struck by a weapon or spell while standing or climbing on the scaffolding, they must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the lake below, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet fallen and landing prone. During low tide, the water level is 20 feet lower, causing an additional 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Encounter: Captain Ashthorn. If the characters entered the area quietly (for example, by unlocking the door), they see Captain Ashthorn directing his crew along the scaffolding surrounding the ship, giving the characters an opportunity to climb the scaffolding without being noticed. If they entered the area noisily (for example, by blowing the door apart with a cannon), then Captain Ashthorn commands his crew to begin firing their ranged weapons (if available) from their vantage point.

The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 8 Encounter table.

The Corsair’s Fury. Repairing the Corsair’s Fury requires 5,000 gp in raw materials and 2d4 weeks of downtime. If the characters don’t wish to claim the ship for themselves, Admiral Nera of Port Haven will retrieve it and press it into service (see Aftermath). If Bones McGillicuddy (see the Criminal Syndicate adventure hook) is accompanying the characters, he assumes command of the ship himself.

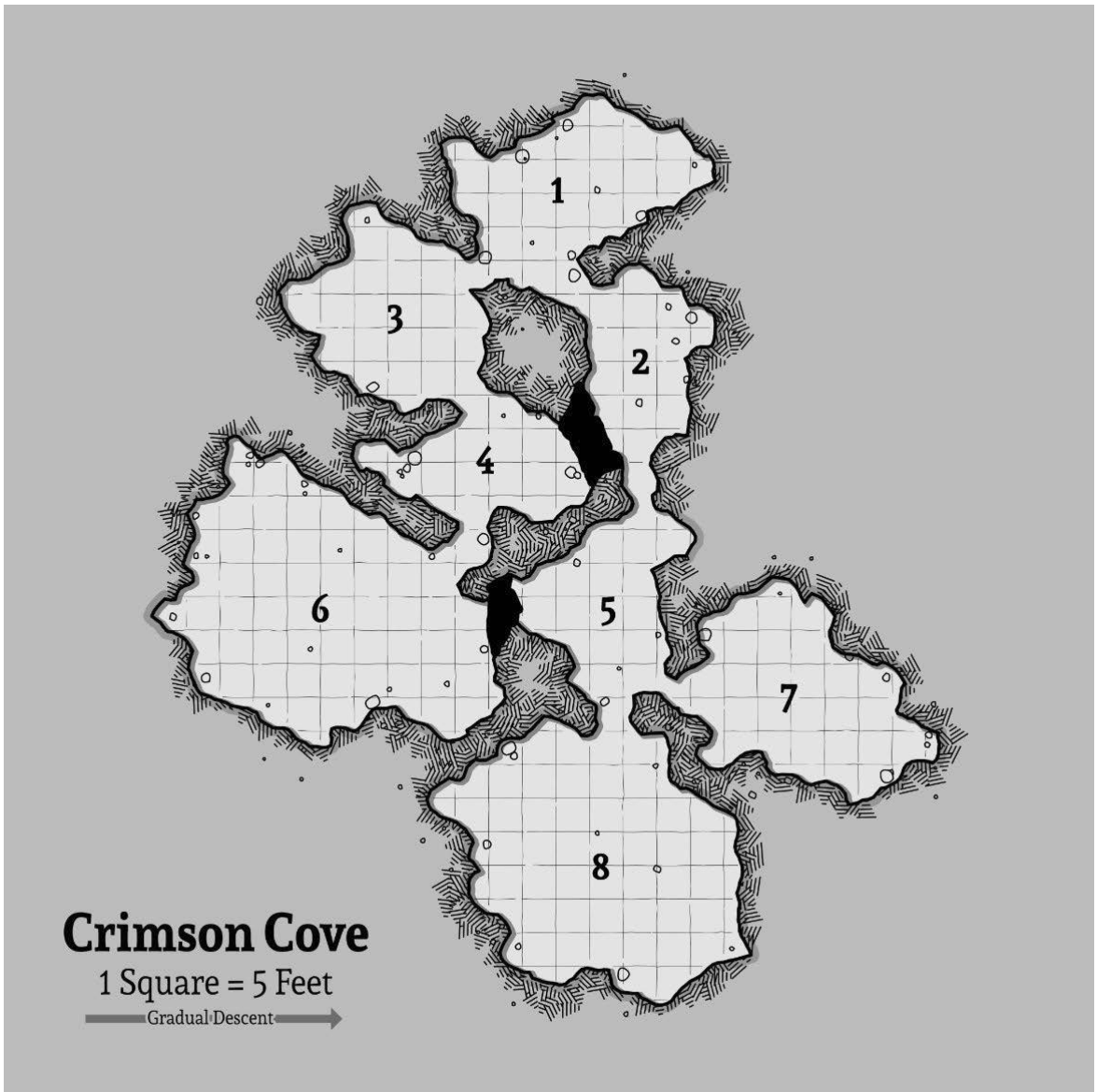
Treasure: Corsair’s Fury Hoard. Once Captain Ashthorn is defeated, the characters are free to claim the pirate’s hoard in the bowels of the ship. The hoard’s contents depend on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 8 Treasure table.

AREA 8 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
3rd	Captain Ashthorn (demon pirate bandit captain) and 4 demon pirate bandits
5th	Captain Ashthorn (demon pirate bandit captain), 2 demon pirate bandit captains , and 4 demon pirate bandits
8th	Captain Ashthorn (demon pirate gladiator), 2 demon pirate bandit captains , and 4 demon pirate bandits
11th	Captain Ashthorn (demon pirate gladiator), 3 demon pirate veterans , and 4 demon pirate bandits

AREA 8 TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
3rd	15 pp, 240 gp, 210 sp, 180 cp, 4 art objects worth 50 gp each, and a grimy set of <i>pipes of the sewers</i> that can never be cleaned, even magically
5th	25 pp, 400 gp, 350 sp, 300 cp, 8 art objects worth 50 gp each, and a <i>portable hole</i>
8th	40 pp, 640 gp, 560 sp, 480 cp, 12 art objects worth 50 gp each, and a cursed <i>handy haversack</i> that causes items placed in it to randomly go missing (at the GM’s discretion)
11th	55 pp, 880 gp, 770 sp, 660 cp, 16 art objects worth 50 gp each, and an <i>obsidian steed figurine of wondrous power</i>



Exits. A passage to the north leads to area 5.

Aftermath

If the characters successfully defeat Captain Ashthorn and his demon patron, Xar'ath, the Corsair's Fury remains inoperable; Admiral Nera of Port Haven retrieves the ship and presses it into the city's service. If the characters were forced to retreat from the Crimson Cove, however, then the ship

vanishes at the next high tide. 3d4 weeks later, its crew begins raiding shipping vessels and coastal towns once again.

If Captain Ashthorn was defeated but Xar'ath was left alive, then the crew is resurrected as undead servants.

Regardless of what happens with Captain Ashthorn, as long as the characters complete their patron's objective, they're paid as promised. Ω