

Muc Mhara



a borough bound city



Where the Snámh Ura Can Breathe Litze Fae

SCAMHÓGA AND THE DEEP-SEA OUTPOST

Scamhóga used to bring good tidings. When the great gleaming sky whale chose to fly near your home, you knew that luck was in your favor. No one could predict where the titan of air would opt to fly, but when she was in sight, everyone cheered. Bathed in rainbow light, she seemed as close to a benevolent God as anyone knew, inscrutable though she was. Four titans have wandered this world, but none inspired such unambiguous reverence as Scamhóga.

Then one day, Scamhóga vanished. Gone from the skies. Nary a soul witnessed the moment she disappeared, but most assumed she had grown tired of humanity, choosing instead to blink off to a realm more befitting such a perfect wild creature.

The heavens wept for Scamhóga. Calm and predictable weather became torrential and chaotic. As the skies above became increasingly turbulent, the rate of shipwrecks increased dramatically. Curiously, debris from these wrecks would gradually drift to a seemingly

irrelevant expanse in the great Yartharen Sea. In fact, just about anything you threw into the sea (an unmanned dinghy, a message in a bottle, a bundle of rubbish) would eventually ride ocean currents to this same spot. Had these currents always acted like this?

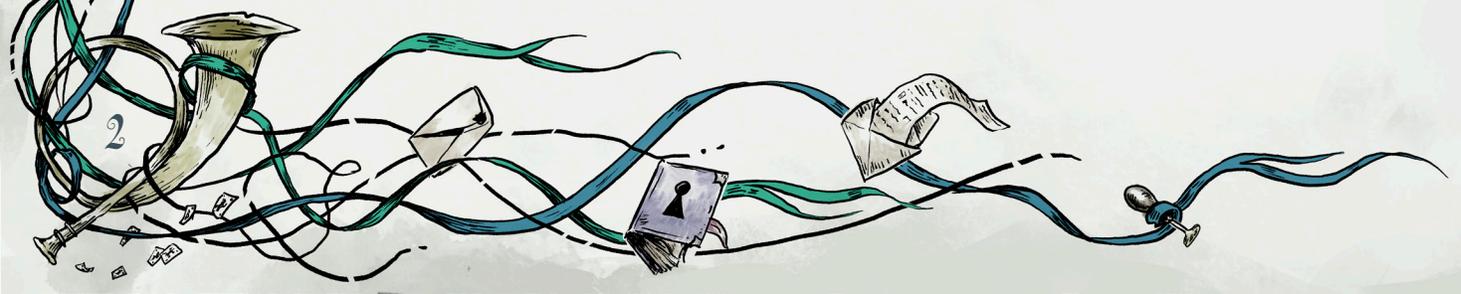
It wasn't long before intrepid voyagers began investigating this mysterious oceanic convergence. Exploratory ventures easily reached the epicenter of these currents; all they had to do was follow the waters. Upon reaching the nexus, travelers found both a massive accumulation of junk and an inexplicable concentration of the world's uncanniest beings: the sea fae. These magical tricksters were always thought to be nomadic loners, enigmatic scoundrels that would tease sailors or fishermen. And yet, here they were densely packed in a far corner of the ocean, beckoning sailors to join them.

The refrain of the sea fae was simple: come join us. Anchor your ship, swim below the waves, and breathe in deeply. It sounded like the classic fae tricks of childhood fairytales. These amoral pranksters wanted to dupe the curious explorers, and they didn't care if it meant actually hurting someone. After months of wavering though, eventually, a handful of sailors gave it a shot. The currents were strange and the newly tempestuous skies back home even stranger. No selkie or azure elf was going to keep them from seeing what was really redirecting the tides.

Deep below the roiling, refuse-filled surface was a great fae outpost, a bona fide undersea city of sea hags, coral spriggans, mer-satyrs, and dozens of other supernatural species. They congregated amongst sunken trash and treasures. Odder still, the human sailors who dove beneath the surface found they could breathe with ease. They inhaled through their nose or mouth, and their lungs filled with fresh, pristine air. At first, this seemed impossible, but they quickly discovered why...

At the bottom of the oceanic trench, a great titan gasped, pulling in waters from all across the sea. Half covered in sand and trash, slumbering Scamhóga pumped the depths with life-giving magic. No creature in this fae haven would drown so long as they stayed calm and inhaled the oxygenating waters of the sleeping sky whale.

Known to the fae as Muc-Mhara, it is said that all things and all people are eventually drawn to this place. Either the currents will take you, or the memories of those things you've lost, or maybe a yearning for the





days when Scamhóga would bring fortune and favor. Under the surface, you'll see reality through a different lens. Things aren't better or worse in Muc-Mhara, they're just transformed. And if you stay long enough, you just might find that you're transformed as well.

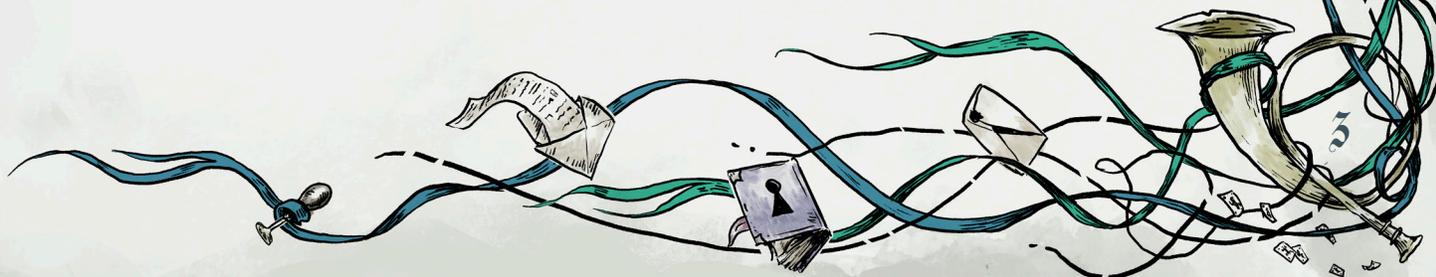
THE SEA FAE

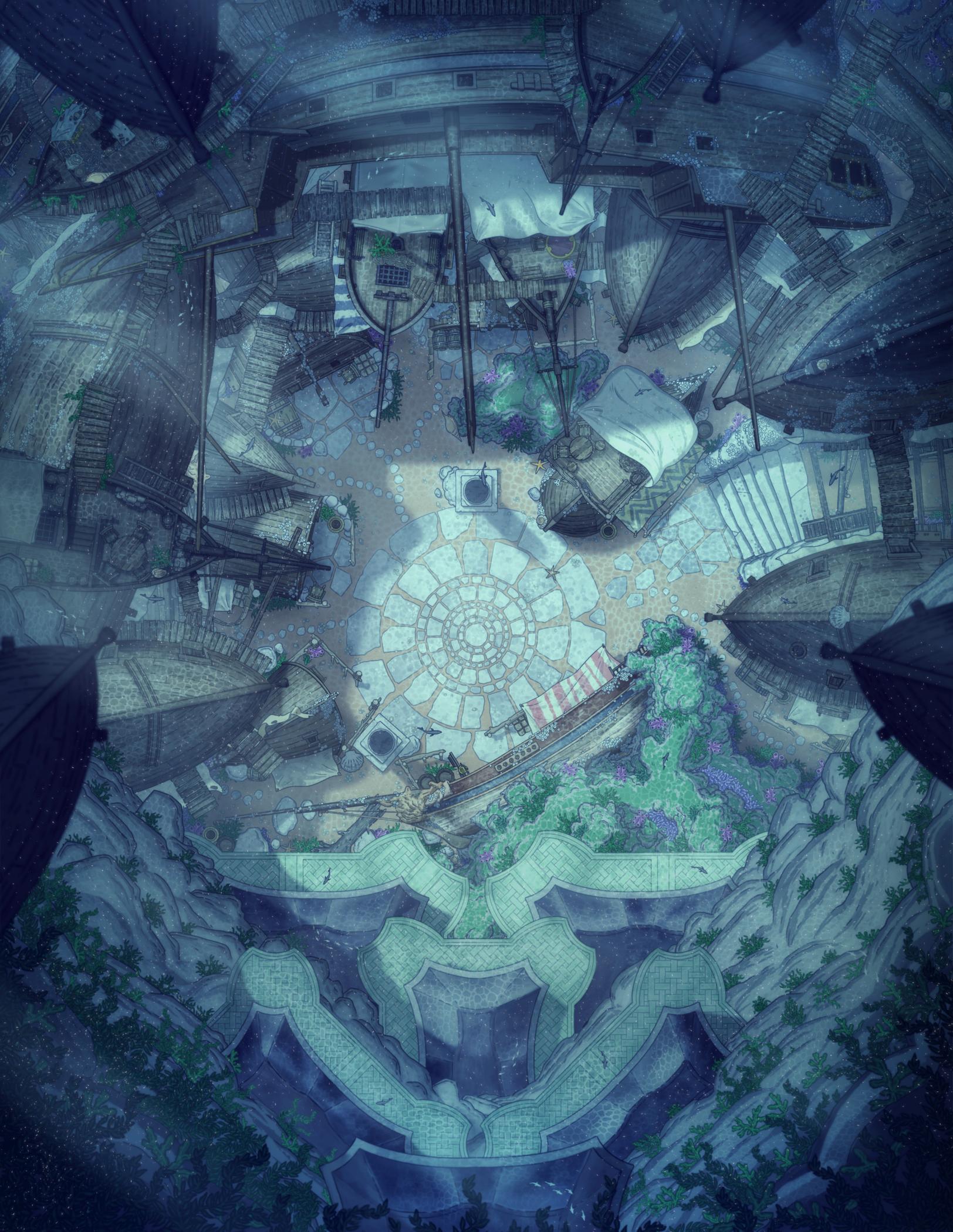
Magical tricksters are everywhere: within enchanted groves, under bridges, in cluttered wardrobes. These are the creatures of fairytales, alternately malevolent or benign beings of childlike wonder and terrifying power. Oft-forgotten are their aquatic kin, the equally magical and equally dangerous sea fae. When sailors encounter a sea fae, their first reaction is often surprise. "There are fairies out here as well?" they'll often ask. The fae will inevitably laugh in turn. After all, the ocean floor is a place of mystery, where light filters and warps, and any creature may deceive you.

For many cunning fairytale creatures spoken of topside, there is a sea fae equivalent. Child-eating forest witches have much in common with sea hags. The cryptic elves who rule the Principality—the otherworldly

home of all fae—are close relatives of the piscine azure elves. Even common sprites are clearly cousins to the aquatic shrixies. Sea fae are as diverse as the stories of their terrestrial counterparts. The defining feature of Muc-Mhara's fae population is not its dominant species but the breadth of its creatures. As such, it is difficult to speak in generalities about the fae creatures who have made their home in the domain of Scamhóga. However, there are some traits that are common to many, if not all.

- ◆ Much like their landbound relatives, most sea fae swear fealty to either the Seelie or the Unseelie Court, two opposing bodies of fae. In the waters of this realm, this distinction is mirrored by the depths at which sea fae tend to swim. Those sworn to the Seelie Court tend to stay near the surface, while Unseelie sea fae scour the depths. The distinction between the so-called "shallow" and "abyssal" fae will be explored in greater detail below.
- ◆ Though they do not cook, sea fae do have to eat. Most subsist off of algae and plankton, whereas others hunt local fish.





- ◆ Not all sea fae can cast spells in the same way that human mages might, but even the most mundane sea fae has a deep intrinsic connection to the magical fibers that tether the realm of men to the Principality. This might manifest itself as telepathy, a beguiling influence, or an aura that warps colors and scents.
- ◆ Fae engage in tricks. Though some opt not to trifle with each other, all will rejoice at the opportunity to toy with mortals. These tricks may be inconsequential, like proffering riddles (fair or otherwise) or exchanging gifts for secrets. However, they may also be devious, like striking magically binding bargains or trapping their prey in illusory mazes.

GM NOTE: The sea fae of Muc-Mhara are far more diverse than any of the populations found in other boroughs explored thus far. As such, it's no simple task to list shared naming conventions, magical traits, or commonalities in appearance. Instead, the types of creatures encountered will be discussed sporadically throughout the coming chapters.

If you want to flesh out Muc-Mhara with additional fae beings, it can be fun to twist existing fairytales through an underwater lens. Any dark and cunning mythical creature can be adapted to Muc-Mhara, as long as you tell your players something like “yeah, it's like a unicorn, but it has gills and fins and eats shrimp.” At the end of the day, a sea fae is just a fae... in the sea. It doesn't have to be more complicated than that.

ALL THINGS LOST

Once Muc-Mhara was discovered by the *snàmh ùra*—a fae term for those accustomed to living on dry land—a new legend began spreading amongst the realm of men, a belief reinforced by tales shared by the sea fae.

ALL THINGS LOST FIND THEIR WAY TO MUC-MHARA

Some interpret this literally. There's queer magic in the trench, both the whimsical trickery of the sea fae and the titanic divinity of Scamhóga. In these dark times, many have come to believe that *anything* that goes missing for long enough will reappear in the crowded outpost. A lost ring, a distant cousin, one's *joie de vivre*. It is as the legend says: *all* things lost.

Most *snàmh ùra* prefer a loose interpretation. Many *objects* (particularly those that float) will—on a long enough time frame—end up in the sea, float along the currents, and settle in Muc-Mhara. If that which is lost is a *person*, maybe they will head to Muc-Mhara of their own volition. In the time since the outpost's discovery, it has become a common trope in ballads for ill-fated once-lovers to meet beneath the sea, both seeking the other's hand.

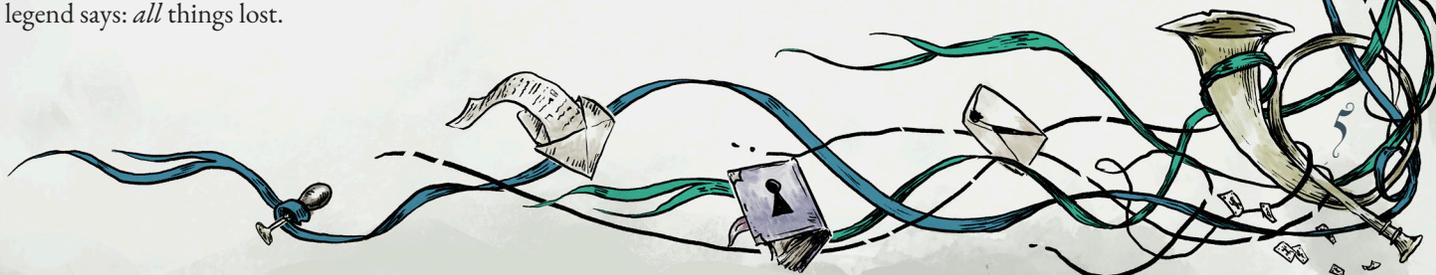
The metaphysical aspect of the legend is perhaps rationally suspect, but stories abound of listless wanderers who have lost their sense of wonder only to rediscover it while visiting the town. Separated travelers will use Muc-Mhara as a last-ditch meeting point. Are these mortal acts that merely reinforce fanciful notions of the enchanting waters? Or are the strings of fate pinched at this magical crossing?

WHAT THE SEA FAE LOST

These tricky creatures from around the ocean floor were once nomads, distant recluses who preferred to live on their own or within smaller schools. They did not congregate, and they certainly did not live in cities. They chose to live on the ocean floor beyond the shores of the realm of men, a bold decision to leave their true home amongst the Principality. Those who happened to make that choice were often those most prone to living outside of urban society.

After centuries of living apart as nomads and on their own, both the shallow and abyssal fae gradually converged on the mysterious trench over the course of a year, the first swimmers arriving just after Scamhóga initially disappeared. Though the reasons remained unspoken, the sea fae had independently decided to give up their freedom and independence to live in close quarters with other fae. In their own ways, each sea fae knew something intrinsically: they had each lost something. They had lost the part of themselves that allowed them to return home, and it seems the fall of Scamhóga is to blame.

The Principality is the realm of the fae, a mirror image of the realm of men. It is a shimmering, endless glade of distorting magic, a playground for tricksters, liars, and beings incapable of outgrowing their fatuous impulses. It is home to sparsely dotted communities of fae, as well as two denser cities home to the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. All fae are born in Principality, and though many choose to travel to the realm of men to pursue their capricious fancies, each holds the Principality near to their hearts.





Travel between the two realms is easy for anyone born of fae blood. When no one is watching, find a natural arch, the mouth of a sea cave, the door to a long-abandoned barn. Any mysterious threshold will do. As you pass, simply close your eyes and believe. Upon opening your eyes, you *should* find that you've pierced the veil, crossed through the looking-glass. For ages, it was something that sea fae rarely thought about. When they needed to return home, they just *did it*.

That all changed when Scamhóga disappeared. Now, it seems no one can transition from one realm to the other. The sea fae have been trapped. Satyrs, dryads, and the nymphs of queer forests seem to have no trouble returning to their ancestral home, but those beneath the waves have been sapped of a piece of their core magic. It is as though they've lost something...

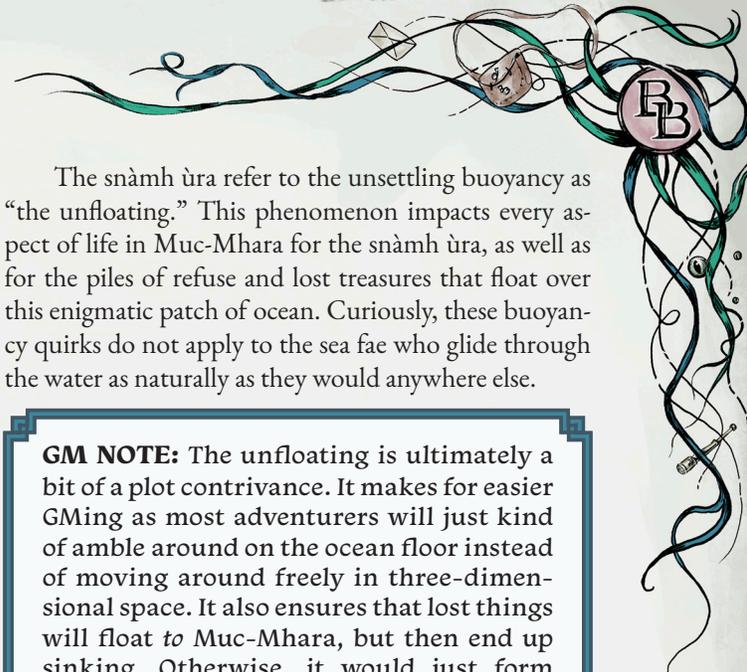
And so, hundreds of sea fae descended on Muc-Mhara, somehow innately aware that *this* was where one went if seeking something lost.

The sea fae are not shy about describing this quest of theirs. When the snàmh ùra ask why so many fairy-tale oddities have coalesced around the sleeping titan, the fae explain it as clearly as they can: they're searching for a piece of themselves. They don't know *what* they're looking for, but they believe they'll know it when they find it.

Undoubtedly there are still some holdouts. An azure elf here, a selkie there, each filled with self-doubt of their own, living apart from their fae kin at the edges of the ocean. Though there has been no comprehensive census, it would seem as though the majority of sea fae have all convened in this one spot, the outpost they call Muc-Mhara.

THE UNFLOATING

Strangely, objects that are normally buoyant enough to float across the surface of the Yartharen Sea will sink when they reach this specific stretch of ocean. Buoyancy works differently in Muc-Mhara from any other known waters; the magical aeration seems to play tricks on nature itself. Humans who find their way to the city discover that they sink much more quickly here than in the rest of the sea. Once on the ocean floor, it becomes easier to slowly walk around than to try to swim. Humans can only swim upwards with great effort, and most lack the swimming prowess to ascend more than a couple feet before the strange gravity drags them back down to the ocean floor.



The snàmh ùra refer to the unsettling buoyancy as "the unfloating." This phenomenon impacts every aspect of life in Muc-Mhara for the snàmh ùra, as well as for the piles of refuse and lost treasures that float over this enigmatic patch of ocean. Curiously, these buoyancy quirks do not apply to the sea fae who glide through the water as naturally as they would anywhere else.

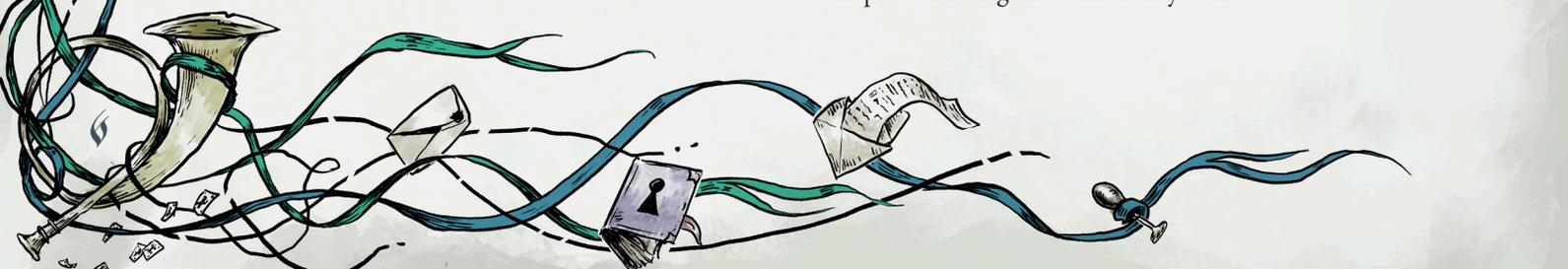
GM NOTE: The unfloating is ultimately a bit of a plot contrivance. It makes for easier GMing as most adventurers will just kind of amble around on the ocean floor instead of moving around freely in three-dimensional space. It also ensures that lost things will float to Muc-Mhara, but then end up sinking. Otherwise, it would just form one great big garbage patch in the ocean (y'know, like in real life). Unlike our other boroughs, this guide won't go into incredible detail about how or why this particular mechanic works. Like with all things fae and magical, it's usually easiest just to do a bit of hand-waving and say "ehh, it's some sort of trickery."

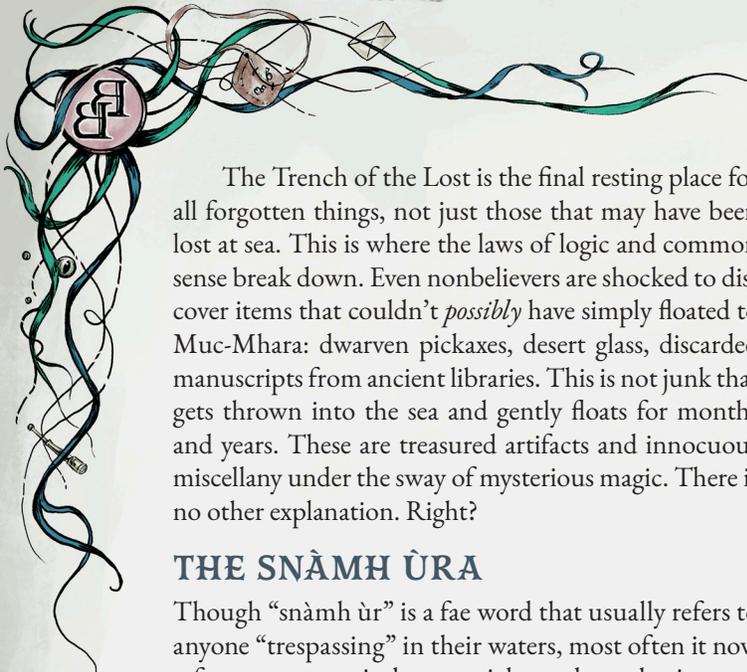
LEAVING MUC-MHARA

A sense of panic often sets in for snàmh ùra when they arrive on the ocean floor. Without the ability to swim *up*, one can feel trapped beneath the waves. Luckily, clever voyagers have set up extra-buoyant floats to bob along the surface above Muc-Mhara, affixed with ropes to keep them in place. When a snàmh ùr needs to leave, they simply climb one of these ropes. In a pinch, they can also grab a ride on a blink turtle, but most of these creatures are loath to act as glorified mounts.

FORGOTTEN TREASURES

Items that travel the ocean waves only to end up in Muc-Mhara typically sink into the Trench of the Lost. This lengthy corridor leads from the shallowest portion of the outpost down to the deepest depth of the trench where Scamhóga lies. This stretch of Muc-Mhara that connects the shallow and abyssal enclaves is the natural resting point of anything that spends enough time in the ocean. Visitors who come in search of something in particular—or those who feel comfortable digging through trash in the hopes of finding treasure—will spend their days rifling through the piles and piles of refuse, seaweed, sunken ships, and crustacean shells in hopes of finding that which they seek.





The Trench of the Lost is the final resting place for all forgotten things, not just those that may have been lost at sea. This is where the laws of logic and common sense break down. Even nonbelievers are shocked to discover items that couldn't *possibly* have simply floated to Muc-Mhara: dwarven pickaxes, desert glass, discarded manuscripts from ancient libraries. This is not junk that gets thrown into the sea and gently floats for months and years. These are treasured artifacts and innocuous miscellany under the sway of mysterious magic. There is no other explanation. Right?

THE SNÀMH ÙRA

Though “snàmh ùr” is a fae word that usually refers to anyone “trespassing” in their waters, most often it now refers to nonmagical terrestrial travelers who journey to Muc-Mhara. Snàmh ùra come for many reasons. Some chase dreams, hoping to find the things they’ve lost. Others are lured by the promise of a new start on the ocean floor. Still others simply want to see if the tall tales shared by sodden sailors are true. A few weary old mystics may just want to see if Scamhóga is really still here. She was such a boon in days of yore, a positive omen, a gift to the realm of men.

NOTE:

Snàmh ùr = singular

Snàmh ùra = plural

Like the sea fae, the snàmh ùra are not easily summarized. They are humans, dwarves, and goblins. They are sailors, researchers, and vagabonds. Some are enticed by the promise of fae enchantments, while others hope to avoid such trickery altogether.

It is a long journey from most ports to Muc-Mhara, and the ever-worsening storms since Scamhóga sank to the bottom of the sea have further complicated maritime travel. Nevertheless, finding Muc-Mhara is easy. Guided by swift currents, many trading vessels get quite near to the city, though most do not dare sail directly over Scamhóga for fear of the unfloating.

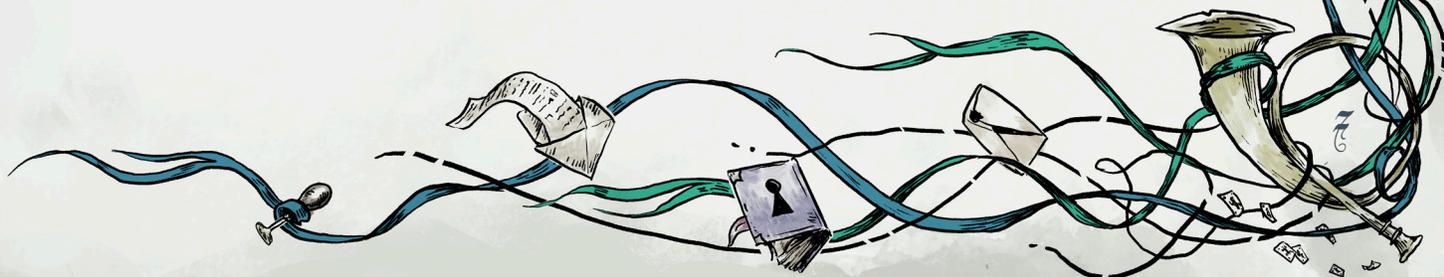
More interesting than the origins of the various snàmh ùra is what happens after they arrive. First, they sink. Some panic as they rapidly descend through the ethereal waters. They know it’s coming; legends of Muc-Mhara always speak of the unfloating. Nevertheless, it catches many off-guard.

Next, visitors gasp. Breathing water does not come naturally to any race from the realm of men. Even though it’s completely safe, some hyperventilate while others desperately hold their breath. Terrifying though it may be, the worst-case scenario is that someone briefly passes out. They will sink to the ocean floor all the same, and as soon as they go unconscious, even the most frantic snàmh ùr will begin breathing naturally.

NOTE: The same attributes of Muc-Mhara’s water that allow land-dwellers to breathe also limit the effects of deep-sea pressure. The shallowest portion of the city is the snàmh ùra enclave, a full 100 feet underwater. Normally, at such depths, humans would suffer great discomfort. Deeper than that, they would be at serious risk from the pressure. Due to Scamhóga’s invigorating breath, however, snàmh ùra are spared the worst effects of deep-sea pressure.

Once they’ve descended and acclimated, the snàmh ùra will find a society that is altogether more similar to the ones they left behind than they may have expected, for better or for worse. Many snàmh ùra choose to stay in Muc-Mhara for years or more and quickly settle into one of a few roles in the city.

- ◆ **FISHERMEN:** Unlike the sea fae, the snàmh ùra can’t subsist off of krill, towers of kelp, or sunlight alone. They must hunt for their food, a task made easier by the disorientation many speedier fish experience after drifting too close into Muc-Mhara’s waters. Spear fishermen take advantage of the sudden shock. Fatty trench tuna and nutrient-rich sailmar have yet to adapt to the unfloating, thus making them easy targets.
- ◆ **SCAVENGERS:** Rooting around through the Trench of the Lost is not a skill that comes easily to newbies. The more you dig through the debris, the more sand and biomass and sediment you kick up. The trick is to move as little as possible as you seek out lost treasures amongst the junk. Scavengers find the best loot amongst the piles and trade them with visitors who refuse to go home without a souvenir. Increasingly, scavengers are employed by massive corporations that make a considerable profit by reselling or recycling salvaged goods.





◆ **NESLA YASLAN-EL:** Even before migrating to Muc-Mhara, Nesla (she/her) was always a culinary innovator. She made a fortune in her homeland after figuring out how to make flavorful soups from the nearly inedible beans that grew on her family’s land. She came to Muc-Mhara in search of greater novelty and found it in spades. After a few months of work as a fisherman, she grew tired of eating endless raw fish meat. In a stroke of genius, Nesla began wrapping skinned fish in bound kelp wrappers, affixing these bundles to spears, and steaming them in nearby hydrothermal vents. Thus began Nesla’s new career as the snàmh ùra’s head chef. Further deep-sea culinary inventions followed: the twice-buried/thrice-aged clam pot, squid ink red algae jelly, and salicornia pickles.

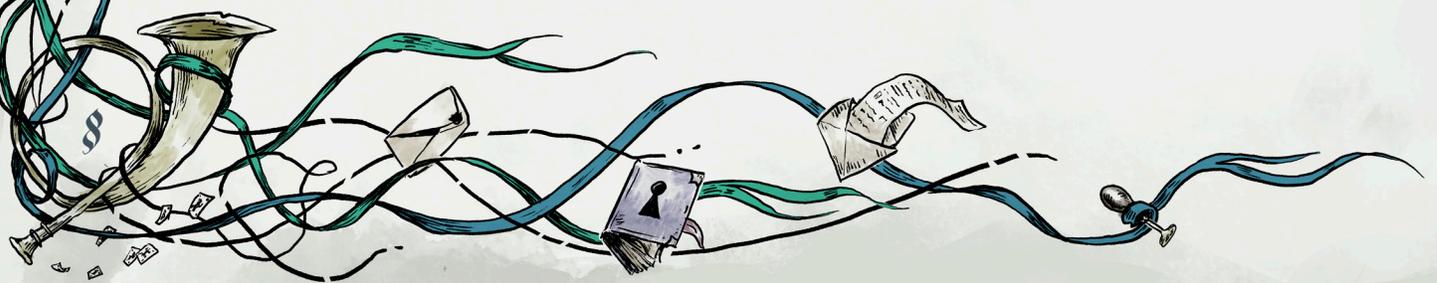
THE SNÀMH ÙRA ENCLAVE

Despite some efforts to integrate and assimilate, the three populations of Muc-Mhara are still incredibly segregated. In the shallowest depths, right beneath the buoys that mark the boundaries of Muc-Mhara, the snàmh ùra make their homes. In the repurposed wrecks of ships that sailed too close to the unfloating, snàmh ùra gather their few possessions worth keeping. Luckily, the enchanted waters of Scamhóga’s slumbering exhalations also have preservative properties. As such, books, clothing, instruments, and other personal effects don’t bleach and wither as they might in other waters.

The snàmh ùra enclave is not technically off-limits to the fae, though the high density of nonmagical riff-raff tends to intimidate all but the most extroverted of sea-dwellers. Despite their love of gags and charms, most sea fae are anxious in crowds of snàmh ùra. When toying with a human, they’d much prefer to engage one-on-one for maximum mischief potential. The larger the crowd, the more likely it is that some pesky smart aleck will poke holes in the fae’s offer, or some brute will attempt to bully the fae with sheer violence instead.

As such, the snàmh ùra enclave is the one part of Muc-Mhara that non-fae visitors and residents alike can truly feel is their own. Yes, fae do visit and one must always be careful not to invite their trickery, but generally, a watchful traveler or adventurer can enjoy a magical deep-sea lifestyle free from threats in this colorful neighborhood.

- ◆ **GUIDES:** Ultimately, most snàmh ùra are in Muc-Mhara for but a short while. Few become long-term residents. As such, a sort of fledgling “hospitality” industry has blossomed in the deep-sea community. As visitors arrive, they inevitably have dozens of questions. As word of the community spreads far and wide, so too do ludicrous rumors. Guides help show visitors the ropes, lead expeditions to the trench, and advise visitors on the customs of the strange land.
- ◆ **MEDIATORS:** Sea fae vastly outnumber the permanent snàmh ùra residents. Even the cockiest of human migrants will admit that their fae neighbors are the true rulers of the outpost. Mediators have become experts at communicating with the tricky fae. They know how best to avoid riddles, traps, bargains, and contracts, or at least how to mitigate potential magical aftershocks. Make no mistake: the mediators are not politicians or constables. They are simply the snàmh ùra most well equipped to handle disagreements, especially when nonlinear fae logic is involved.





THE LOST AND FOUND LODGE

The largest structure in the snàmh ùra enclave is the Lost and Found Lodge, a hotel of sorts for visitors hoping to find something in Muc-Mhara. Unlike most snàmh ùra homes that are built from the wood of shipwrecks, the Lost and Found Lodge is built directly into the sharp geological formation that forms a natural wall along the southern edge of the enclave. This placement was strategic: in addition to the aesthetic value of constructing a hotel in an underwater cliff face, the hotel acts as a buffer against visitors that would dare try to climb the dangerous stony outcropping.

The Lost and Found Lodge contains dozens of rooms for travelers to call home in between trips to the Trench of the Lost. The guides who run the Lost and Found Lodge are exceedingly deferential to the visitors, assuring them that they'll definitely find what it is that they're looking for. This couldn't be further from the truth. While visitors are sure to find *something* of interest, the trench is vast, and anything of value is likely to have been picked off already. The items most likely to be found by their rightful owner are those that 1) have a distinctive shape, 2) lack shine or luster, and 3) are between the size of a gold piece and a saddle. Anything else will either be too hard to find or will have already been snagged and sold by scavengers.

ON "FINDERS, KEEPERS"

The rules that dictate how society functions in Muc-Mhara are determined by the sea fae, and most boil down to simple pithy sayings. With regard to property ownership, the law of the land is "finders, keepers." But what constitutes "finding"? If you "find" a bar of silver in someone else's home, do you get to keep it? If you dig up an old painting beneath some rubbish only to find the family depicted in it visiting Muc-Mhara many tides later, had you ever really "found" it in the first place? If you rediscover the guilt of leaving your family while wandering Muc-Mhara, is that your responsibility to keep? As far as the sea fae are concerned, the answers to those questions would be "no, yes, yes" in that order. The ways of the sea fae are strange, but there is a sort of logic to it. Should there be a dispute, the Council of Contracts will have a say.

In Lost and Found Lodge, visiting snàmh ùra will get little tastes of everything Muc-Mhara has to offer. A small market in the front reception offers visitors a chance to purchase choice finds from the Trench, many of which are actually trinkets shipped to Muc-Mhara from the continents only to be resold at a steep mark-up. In the amphitheater, sirens sing their luring songs to an audience that can *finally* listen without fear. Beds of woven kelp and sea silk give wealthier visitors the chance to rest in luxury.

What is the purpose of any of this? Why expend all of this effort? Simply put: there is a lot of money to be made in hospitality. Opportunists from across the sea come to Muc-Mhara to work a stint on the ocean floor before heading back home with their earnings. A year or two of working in the Lodge, selling goods as a scavenger, or even just catching fish and selling to other residents is a great way to lay low and make a decent wage.

Plus, the more undersea tourists that snàmh ùra can attract, the less any one of them has to stay on guard for fae trickery. The fae have an endless desire to deceive and play games, but they also crave novelty. It's less fun for them to repeatedly pick on the same few permanent residents when they could instead beguile an ever-replenishing lodge full of naive or gullible travelers.

CHARNIE O'GREY: Most who work in Muc-Mhara hospitality aim to do so only temporarily, and Charnie (he/him) was no exception. After running afoul of the law in his hometown, he figured a couple years in the sea would yield enough coin for him to start a new life in a distant kingdom. Charnie quickly fell in love with the colorful depths, and eventually worked his way up to concierge of the Lost and Found Lodge. Visitors love Charnie for his endless patience, his positive temperament, and his "yes and" approach to hospitality. If a guest in his hotel wants to enjoy a shellfish dinner on the roof, Charnie says "yes, and why not also enjoy a blink turtle cruise right after?" He's amassed a healthy sum to live off of if he ever decides to leave, perhaps enough to stop working altogether. The longer he stays in Muc-Mhara, however, the more he thinks he might gradually move deeper into the trench. Life here is so good... and the deep calls... and Scamhóga awaits...



THE CALLING

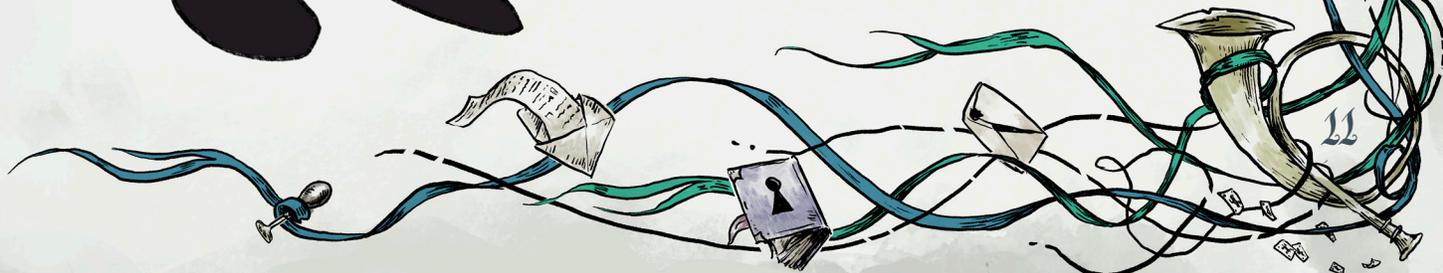
A snàmh ùr cannot live a carefree underwater life indefinitely. Eventually, any air-breather who chooses to remain in Muc-Mhara heeds “the Calling.” At first, it’s an ethereal notion. The water is nice, but wouldn’t it be nicer a bit deeper down? If Scamhóga is the source of the life-giving sea, then it would *behoove* any snàmh ùr to move closer to her titanic aura. She is like a god, and wouldn’t it be nice to be in her presence?

Sometimes, this vague impulse is all it takes. A bold loner leaves the enclave, descends past the Trench of the Lost, and slinks deeper into Muc-Mhara amongst the abyssal fae. Most are able to quell such notions. The shallow fae often speak of the treachery of their abyssal kin. In lieu of lighthearted japes and twee charades, the abyssal fae seal deadly contracts, pervert light and shadow, and twist the minds of well-intentioned snàmh ùra. Plus, a body unused to such depths can start to warp under the pressure of even Muc-Mhara’s delicate waters.

The Calling evolves. Next, the long-term resident hears voices, haunting melodies, and beguiling, twisting words. Even those who know what to expect have trouble determining the nature of these voices. Fae whispers? Sheer madness? A psychic onslaught from Scamhóga herself? They tell themselves it’s temporary, or that they’ve grown immune to trickery. They wait, they meditate, and they try in vain to stave it off.

After the voices, the visions begin: out-of-body experiences, violent shadows, and nearly invisible tethers pulling downward. Then begin the tactile hallucinations: feelings not of lightness but of profound weight. The snàmh ùr begins sinking, falling deeper down into the trench. Finally, if one is able to resist the pleas of the Calling long enough, the Calling will simply take direct command. A snàmh ùr who stays in Muc-Mhara long enough *will* plunge further. Zombified—or “seeing clearly for the first time” as they would say—the snàmh ùr walks along the seafloor to the deeper, darker, stranger parts of Muc-Mhara.

The Calling does not end when one relocates. Or rather, once a snàmh ùr heeds the otherworldly beckoning, the trance gets replaced with physical alterations. Time in the depths will change the snàmh ùra, and no one back in the enclave is quite sure why or how, nor what to do about it.



FAE DRUGS

The sea fae can offer a great many hallucinogens to daring snàmh ùra. There's lime nacre resin, nautilian hop, crestcurd, and so on. The shallow fae in particular don't mind sharing their kaleidoscopic substances with snàmh ùra. In fact, many fae

prefer interacting with hallucinating humans, dwarves, and so forth. A man perceiving vivid fractals and undergoing ego death while chewing crestcurd is experiencing the world in a manner not too dissimilar from how an azure elf might. As such, sea fae find the snàmh ùra far easier to relate to in these states. These hallucinogenic experiences, however, are never quite so dire or straightforward as the Calling. Taking drugs with shrixies and coral spriggans could never prepare one for the mesmerizing and threatening visions of the deep.

RESISTING THE CALLING

The Calling sets in for all snàmh ùra at different times. Some live in Muc-Mhara for years before it takes hold, while others feel its pull the moment they enter the unfloating waters. Onset may be gradual, progressing from voices to hallucinations and loss of agency over the course of a few months. It may be exceedingly drawn out or rapidly debilitating. Though there seems to be no pattern dictating who will be most quickly affected, scholars who visit Muc-Mhara surmise there must be some personal attributes that can be used to predict susceptibility.

Adventurers who arrive in Muc-Mhara may visit for only a brief time, perhaps just long enough to trade some wares, speak with a fae they've been tracking, or attempt to recover some lost artifact. In such instances, it is unlikely they will have to confront the Calling in earnest. For any lengthier stay, however, the Calling will be a constant threat, a looming psychological hindrance that may end their adventuring days for good. Travelers know by now that they ought to be wary of the first signs of the Calling. Though the voices seem innocuous, they are signs of dangers to come.

GM NOTE: While you may wish to use the Calling as a predetermined narrative device for one adventurer or another (e.g. "the bard is going to feel the Calling after two days"), you can also choose to add an element of chance to the affair. When doing so, consider using the following dice mechanic.

Upon arrival to Muc-Mhara, each player rolls a d20. On a roll of a 1, their adventurer begins hearing voices. If they roll anything else, they are safe for now, but tomorrow they succumb to the voices on a roll of 2 or lower. The next day, the number becomes a 3. This number maxes out at 10, but players must continue rolling each day nonetheless.

Once an adventurer is hearing voices, they must repeat this process to proceed to the visual hallucination phase. The rules work the same as before, but the necessary roll reverts to 1 if it had already gone higher. If necessary, repeat for a third and fourth phase, eventually removing control of the PC altogether if they succumb to the full extent of the Calling.

You may modify this in any number of ways: resetting the threshold after completing quests or exiting the water, lowering the die type for a greater challenge, or increasing the frequency of rolls. The key is to never make rolling below the threshold *impossible* and to always make each phase of the Calling narratively distinct (i.e. narrate the actual effects of the hallucinations).

THE NOT-UNFLOATING DOCKS

Above the snàmh ùra enclave, floating in the middle of the Yartharen Sea, Muc-Mhara scavengers have established a tradeport: the Not-Unfloating Docks. This small compound of wooden slats is tethered to the ocean floor such that they never *quite* drift into Muc-Mhara's waters. As such, they exist just beyond the range at which buoyancy begins to act unpredictably. The Docks are both a warning sign for ships ("go further, and your seaworthy vessel might sink to the ocean floor!") as well as a trading post. From a purely economic standpoint, Muc-Mhara is massively successful. Between the tourist revenue and the total value of goods scavenged, money flows through the underwater city at an incredible velocity.

Even the long-term residents who plan to someday return home with their earnings find plenty to spend money on without returning to the continents. Brothel ships routinely visit the Not-Unfloating Docks to provide their services to lonely scavengers who are wise



enough to resist the sexual temptations of the nearby sea fae. Trading vessels bring massive stocks of liquor and gourmet cuisine so that the snàmh ùra can take a break from their aquatic meals and fae drug habits. The Not-Unfloating Docks also provide a convenient space for scavengers to offload what valuables they find to merchants who can resell the goods back in distant lands. Finally, when a snàmh ùr decides it's time to return to dry land, they'll wait on the Not-Unfloating Docks for a passing ship on which to hitch a ride. In short: the Docks offer a convenient place for sailors and swimmers alike to engage in trade, logistics, and debauchery.

At first, the sea fae weren't too keen on so much new infrastructure and traffic in what they considered to be *their* waters. That gradually changed as they realized what prime targets many of these transient travelers were for sea fae intrigue. It's become a bit of a game for selkies, sirens, and rusalka to see how many sailors they can lure into Muc-Mhara from a single ship. On more than one occasion, an entire crew has been lured into the depths below. While the sailors experienced all of the

novelty Muc-Mhara has to offer, their ship was summarily plucked clean by scavengers who then sold anything of value to the next merchant who moored nearby.

DEE SAMOVAND

There are many reasons a person stays in Muc-Mhara. Some seek riches, others novelty, and some merely wish to escape a lifetime of drudgery. Dee (she/her) is a unique case. She's made two contracts with different sea fae, one intentional, the other not. Their combined effect is to keep her trapped in limbo, living in a tent she's erected on the Not-Unfloating Docks. She suspects she'll be here until the end of her days.

Years ago, Dee visited Muc-Mhara as a tourist. The trip was a graduation gift from her parents. Dee had just finished her degree in apothecary sciences and wanted a break after her years of rigorous study. While staying in the Lost and Found Lodge, Dee initiated a short but tempestuous tryst with a gorgeous nereid named Fodla (she/her). In the throes of lust, Dee promised drunkenly (and foolishly!) that they'd never be apart. Through

D4 PASSING SHIP NAME

PURPOSE

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | The Luzerain | This research vessel is full of alchemists hoping to acquire marine life samples from Muc-Mhara. They believe that corals and seagrasses growing in the unfloating waters may have unique arcane properties. Though they claim their venture is a hunt for medicinal herbs, their true intentions may be quite a bit more devious. Adventurers who investigate the parties funding this expedition may be able to piece together nefarious aims. |
| 2 | The Nalardi Express | Even deep-sea expats occasionally need to communicate with the outside world. The Nalardi Express is the premier intercontinental courier service. Due to the strong currents, it's now easier for courier ships to sail directly past Muc-Mhara when making deliveries. As such, roughly one in ten voyages will make a stop at the Not-Unfloating Docks to drop off letters and parcels addressed to snàmh ùra residents. |
| 3 | HMS Windbound | The potential strategic importance of Muc-Mhara has not eluded world governments. Weaponizing the sea fae or Scamhóga, studying the Calling for psychological warfare, or perhaps just recycling debris in the Trench of the Lost for ammunition are all potential strategic goals of the nation of Onotanie. The HMS Windbound is heading to Muc-Mhara <i>supposedly</i> just on a fact-finding mission. |
| 4 | Sir Collathew Maynarren's Private Pleasure Craft | Sir Collathew (he/him), a solicitor of some note, made a name for himself representing a variety of wealthy interests in his homeland. Many feared that disagreements between his clients would lead to large-scale bloodshed. Instead, Sir Collathew was able to resolve their matters in court, enriching himself in the process. Perhaps overconfident, he then made a troubling bargain with a sprite, and now he seeks an audience with the sea fae Council of Contracts to settle his perilous dispute. |



fae magic, this promise became unbreakable. Dee Samovand can now *never* leave Fodla's general vicinity. A bit of testing reveals that that radius is somewhere in the realm of 1,000 feet. Thankfully, Fodla is a shallow fae, and as their bright-burning romance fizzled, Dee was able to relocate to the snàmh ùra enclave without transgressing her promise. It would seem her career as an apothecary back on the mainland would have to wait.

Dee, however, was now single and forced to live one enclave over from her ex-lover. She was growing tired of life in Muc-Mhara and wanted terribly to return to dry land. She thus sought the aid of sea hag Oighrig Messmaker (she/her), an abyssal fae who occasionally stopped by the snàmh ùra enclave to gawk at travelers. Dee pleaded with Oighrig, a master of fae promises. Oighrig took pity on the poor girl—or so she said—and offered to make a second promise, one that would allow Dee to be free of Muc-Mhara for good.

Oighrig presented her new deal thusly: Dee would ask for Fodla's hand in marriage. Presumably, Fodla would decline, as nereids are endlessly fickle. However, so long as Fodla didn't take Dee's name, Dee would *have* to be released from her previous promise. Oighrig said that so long as Dee did exactly as Oighrig instructed, she would be ejected from Muc-Mhara and could never return.

This seemed like a foolproof plan to Dee. There was no chance Fodla wanted to *marry* her, and Dee herself had no intention of returning to Muc-Mhara anyway. An end to her strange exile seemed in sight! So long as Fodla rejected the proposal, Dee would be released from her promise and could return home at long last.

Oighrig was right about one thing: nereids are fickle. However, they're also playful and spiteful. Fodla resented that Dee had stopped showering her affection, and despite numerous romantic flings since, Fodla maintained a lover's quarrel with the apothecary-to-be. Oighrig surmised that Fodla might have such a grudge and opted to conspire with the nereid. The two schemed in secret and waited for Dee to make her proposal.

Dee came to Fodla and said everything she thought she ought to. "I made a mistake," "I'll always love you," "we should be together," and so on and so forth. Fodla—as expected—turned Dee down. "No, I will not wed you, Dee," Fodla said, "but I will take your name nonetheless. You can now call me 'Dee' as well." The nereid smiled a toothy grin.

Fodla had taken Dee's name, thus cementing their prior promise. Dee was still trapped to stay near the conniving nereid. Simultaneously, Dee had fulfilled her

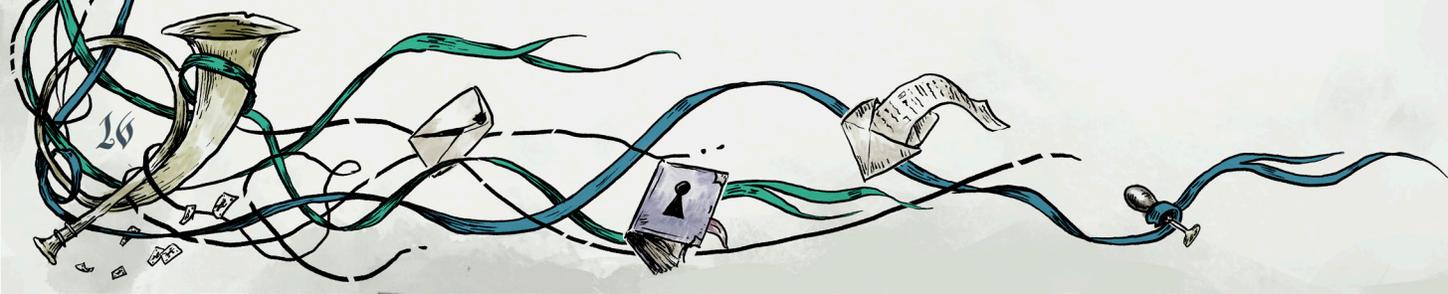
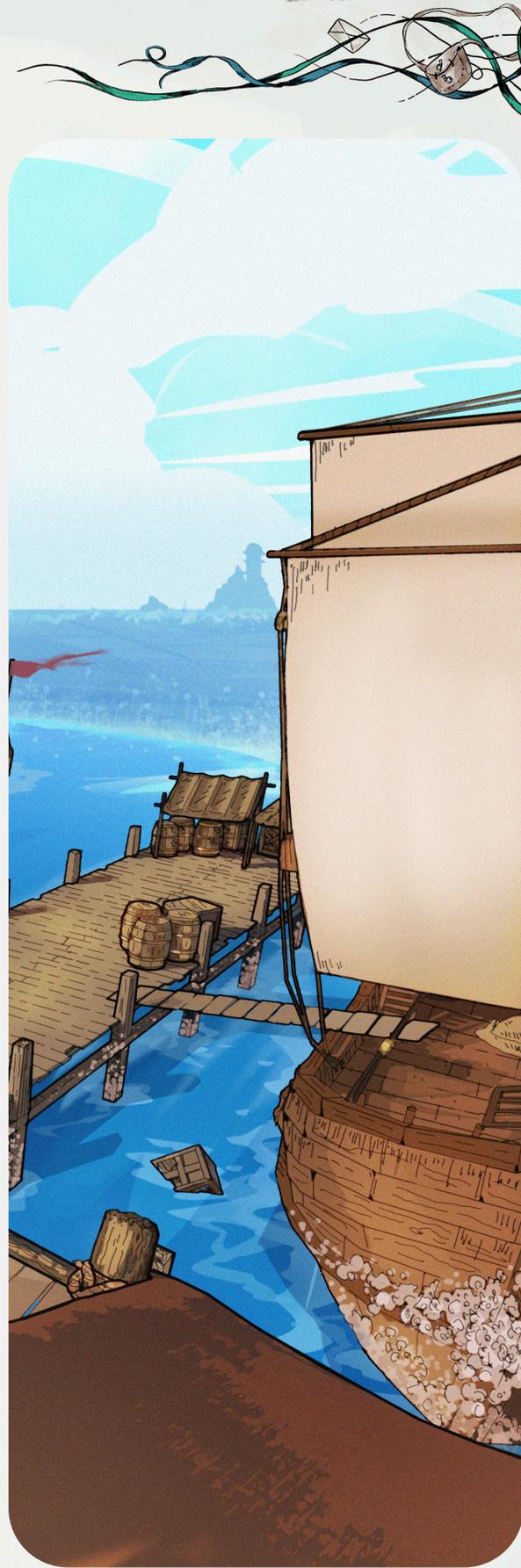
promise to the sea hag. As Dee's contract with Oighrig became fae law, Dee shot up and out of Muc-Mhara. Now she's stuck on the Not-Unfloating Docks, *technically* outside Muc-Mhara, but also *technically* not apart from Fodla (or "Dee" as the nereid is now confusingly known). This liminal space is now Dee's forever home. One must always be careful with what they promise a sea fae.

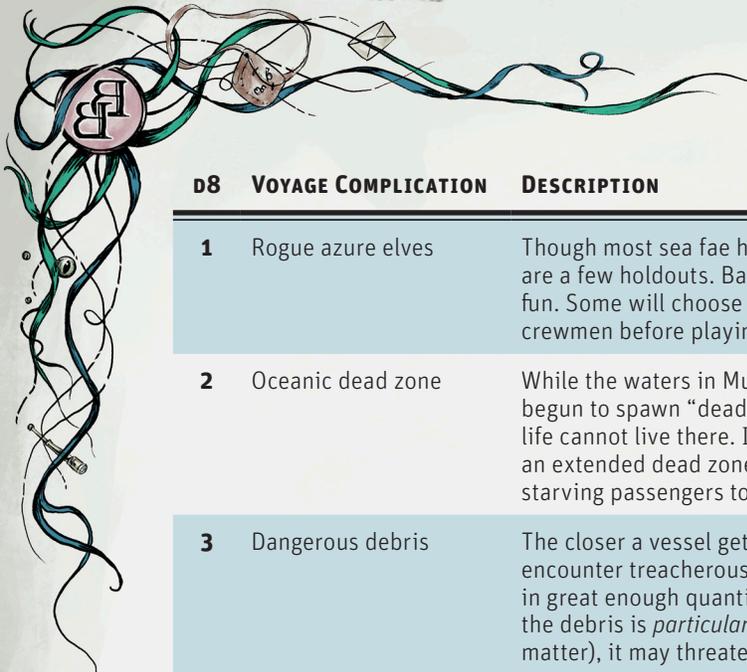
PLOT HOOK: TRAVEL TO MUC-MHARA

Sailing the Yotharen Sea and arriving in Muc-Mhara can be maddeningly difficult. The promise of riches earned from scavenging the great fae trench is alluring to laborers and farmers all the world over, but most never dare brave the troubled ocean. Especially now that Scamhóga—the one-time guardian angel of sailors—has abandoned the skies, the risks of sea travel seem too steep for many who would otherwise leap at the opportunity to earn some gold while exploring the ocean floor. Adventurers seeking passage to Muc-Mhara will not be immune to hardship during the voyage. When en route, consider rolling on the Voyage Complications table.

After braving the high seas, travelers should have no issue finding Muc-Mhara. They'll be able to spot the flags above the Not-Unfloating Docks, as well as scores of buoys that warn travelers of the unfloating waters. After arriving at the Docks, adventurers will have the option to chat with Dee—who is likely to warn the party of the arcane dangers below—or any of the scavengers peddling wares. Some will try to sell "must-have" goods that they swear "no voyager ought to be without in the depths." Charms, wards, talismans... some of them might actually hold some sway with the sea fae who abide by strange ancient etiquettes. Others are junk. The ability to discern between the two will be invaluable both here at the Docks and down below.

When the adventurers have had their fill of the Docks, only one task remains: taking the plunge. Panic is normal. Gasping is normal. It is dizzying and disturbing and staying calm is altogether antithetical to how a human ought to interact while quickly descending into the dark and colorful waters below. The adjustment period is temporary, and yet if the adventurers stay long enough, they may never be able to leave.





d8 VOYAGE COMPLICATION DESCRIPTION

1	Rogue azure elves	Though most sea fae have relocated from their previous haunts to Muc-Mhara, there are a few holdouts. Bands of azure elves still stalk shipping lanes in search of violent fun. Some will choose to ransack a ship, while others might disguise themselves as crewmen before playing mind-games with the passengers.
2	Oceanic dead zone	While the waters in Muc-Mhara are hyper-oxygenated, the seas elsewhere have now begun to spawn “dead zones,” patches of ocean with so little oxygen that aquatic life cannot live there. If the ship relies on fishing mid-voyage to maintain food stores, an extended dead zone (especially when partnered with a headwind) might drive starving passengers to cannibalism.
3	Dangerous debris	The closer a vessel gets to Muc-Mhara, the more likely it becomes that it will encounter treacherous masses of refuse in the ocean currents. If this trash gathers in great enough quantities, the crew may need to aid in scooping it out of the way. If the debris is <i>particularly</i> threatening (volatile oils, magical reagents, or corrosive bio-matter), it may threaten the integrity of the ship’s hull.
4	Fiaclan, the titan of water	Scamhóga is but one of four titans that roam the realm of men. Her antithesis is—or was—Fiaclan, a thrashing tentacled monstrosity with a zipper-like mouth that winds across its bulbous body. Rows and rows of teeth seem divinely designed to tear apart ships. A conflict with Fiaclan is tantamount to certain death.
5	Ball lightning	A storm at sea is always dangerous, but far more treacherous than high winds or hail are the now-infamous “ball lightning” squalls, a new meteorological phenomenon that has emerged in the aftermath of Scamhóga’s descent. As opposed to discrete flashes of lightning that strike and disappear, spheres of pure energy will oscillate unsettlingly far out at sea. Navigating through their unpredictable wavering patterns is the greatest nautical test a crew can face.
6	Crab storm	Allegedly the result of a witch’s peculiar hex, crab storms are more of a bizarre hindrance than a true impediment. For better or worse, crab storms are exactly what they sound like. Clouds cover the sky, thunder rolls, and then hundreds upon hundreds of small crabs fall from the heavens. Though unsettling and painful, a crab storm can actually be a boon for sailors short on food.
7	The blinding fog	The drastically different water temperatures in the currents that approach Muc-Mhara often produce fog. 90% of the time, this is no issue for sailors to navigate using their instruments and their nautical insight. Occasionally, however, a ship will pass through a “blinding fog.” After shrouding a ship in total darkness, crew and passengers alike will find that they cannot see even after they’ve passed the fog. Over the course of 1 to 12 hours, the voyagers slowly regain the sight, only to find that there’s no fog visible for miles in any direction. Gods forbid a blinding fog precedes one of the other potential dangers at sea.
8	Denny	Everyone hates Denny. The only thing worse than a leprechaun is a teleporting leprechaun. One moment your voyage is smooth sailing, the next, Denny is on the captain’s shoulders asking to take the wheel. Denny is technically not a <i>sea fae</i> , though he enjoys vexing sailors most of all. Frustratingly, Denny doesn’t seem to actually want anything in particular. There is no riddle to solve, nor quest to undergo. He’ll simply arrive on a ship and stick around until he grows bored.

