

DAGON'S DELIVERANCE

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 3RD TO 5TH LEVEL

PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE



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DAGON'S DELIVERANCE IS A PATHFINDER Second Edition adventure for three to six characters of 3rd to 5th level, optimized for a party of four 4th-level characters. The notorious smugglers known as the Duskshore Consortium have vanished, swallowed by the murky shadows of Eldwater Cove. Rumors tell of Captain Travus Bledroot's ambition turning to folly as he meddled with forces beyond his ken, awakening Dagon, Scion of Salt, a demon of the water. Now, the cove and its cavernous ruins pulse with a dark power, and the Consortium roam not as men, but as guardians of their own watery grave. Can the party brave the depths of the Consortium's hideout, unravel the story of its history, and quell the rising tide of Dagon's wrath? This adventure unfolds in Cartosia, though the names of people and places can be changed to set this adventure in any coastal or island environment across a variety of campaign settings.

BACKGROUND

Nestled within the treacherous cliffs of Eldwater Cove, the ruins of a long-forgotten cult have lain silent, submerged in shadow and sea lore. It was within this forsaken haven that the Duskshore Consortium, a feared band of smugglers led by the daring Captain Travus Bledroot, established a hideout of clandestine commerce. Theirs was a simple creed: profit and secrecy above all.

For months, the cavernous ruins served their purpose well. That was until the fateful evening when a pair of stone tablets were discovered among the rock, their surface etched with cryptic ruins that pulsed with a dark allure. Bledroot, driven more by avarice than wisdom, became obsessed with deciphering the tablets, convinced they held the key to treasures from the depths.

With each fumbling attempt by Bledroot to contact Dagon using the tablets, supernatural influence manifested further within the caverns. His efforts to unlock their secrets were a blind gambit, a reckless dance around the edges of a divine abyss. The smugglers whispered of changes within the cove; the sea grew restless, the catch turned foul, and shadows seemed to move with malice. Yet Bledroot, steered by dreams of power and wealth, pressed on, unaware he courted the attention of Dagon, Scion of Salt—not a deity, but a slumbering demon of the deep, ancient and malevolent, whose eminence was woven into the stone of the tablets. Soon, water pooled where it should not, and the crew suffered nightmares of a suffocating, inky void. Undeterred, Bledroot's final act of hubris—a rite performed in ignorance—was the last key turning in an unseen lock.

Dagon's wrath was consuming and merciless. The waters surged with vengeful fury, and as they receded, they left behind only the echo of the crew's final, gasping breaths. Now, members of the Duskshore Consortium roam their lair not as men, but as ghastly sentinels, ensnared by the will of the demon they unwittingly roused. The cove, once the lair of an ancient cult, then a den for smugglers, is now a domain of dread. Captain Travus Bledroot, his flesh warped by Dagon's cruel humor into a visage of the abyssal horror he sought to harness, presides over this damned congregation.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are numerous reasons the party may be interested in braving the caverns of Eldwater Cove. A few of these reasons are outlined below:

A Missing Delivery. A connection to the party, likely someone with criminal dealings, was waiting on a delivery of rare spices courtesy of the Duskshore Consortium. The delivery has not arrived, and members of the Consortium are nowhere to be found. The party is hired to investigate their hideout and check on the delivery, preferably coming to any diplomatic solutions, if necessary.

Echoes of the Deep. Local fishermen speak of an unnatural fog and haunting voices around Eldwater Cove, deterring fish and endangering vessels. A council of coastal villages has pooled resources to hire adventurers to investigate and put an end to whatever curse hangs over the area. They offer a reward not just in gold (20 gp per PC), but also in exclusive fishing rights, a valuable asset in these parts.

The Heirloom's Call. A mysterious, ornately carved conch shell that once belonged to a sailor of Eldwater Cove finds its way to a party member, perhaps as loot or a purchase. The shell emits haunting melodies at night, compelling its holder through potent visions to seek out its origins in the cove. The true source of the melody is a psychic echo, a byproduct of Dagon's awakening, intended to lure more souls to the cove.

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The interior of the cavern is damp and dripping and smells strongly of brine. The Duskshore Consortium has retrofitted its interior with platforms, walkways, and a small dock to make it more navigable. Its caves and tunnels have rough, 20-foot-high ceilings that slowly but steadily drip water onto the floors below. The floor itself is dimpled and uneven but is not considered difficult terrain. Though sconces have been fitted to the walls throughout, these have been snuffed out along with the lives of the smugglers, plunging the cavern into darkness. A channel of water flows through the middle of the cavern toward unseen and inaccessible depths beyond.

The following areas are keyed to the provided map of Dagon's cavern:

I. ENTRANCE

The embrace of the cave is cool and damp, a stark contrast to the open sea's wild expanse. Water flows through a central channel deeper into the caverns, past a pair of lock gates to facilitate the passage of small vessels. On the right, a broken statue is bisected at the waist, its torso partially submerged in the shallows of the channel. To the left, the floor of the cavern slopes upward toward a passageway, buttressed by a pair of barnacle-encrusted wooden platforms each sprouting a ballista pointed towards the cavern entrance. A humanoid form is slouched over each ballista, their unmoving weight supported by the weapons.

A lever on the upper platform opens and closes the lock doors, which are constructed of heavy iron and otherwise cannot be opened, though creatures of Medium size or smaller can swim under them. A character who inspects the fragmented remains of the statue can identify a solemn-faced robed figure, their skin carved with runic markings. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) or Intelligence (Arcana) Religion check can identify these runes as demonic in nature. A character who succeeds on this check by five or more critically succeeds can attribute them specifically to Dagon, Scion of Salt.

Encounter: Manned Ballistae. The figures slouched over the ballistas are **draugr** (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2*), fallen members of the Duskshore Consortium. A third lies behind the left ballista. They surge to life the moment that a living creature moves at least fifteen feet into the cave without Avoiding Notice and succeeding at a DC 15 Stealth check. A successful DC 19 Stealth check is required to Avoid Notice over the platforms and past the draugr without being detected. Their grey, slimy, rotted forms aim and fire the ballistas at any creatures beyond melee range, switching to melee when the party manages to close the gap. Each ballista has AC 20, Hardness 10, and 46 Hit Points (Break Threshold 23). It takes two actions to load the weapon and two actions to fire, with +10 to hit, range increment 90 feet, volley 20 feet, and dealing 3d10 piercing damage. Each draugr fights until it is destroyed or the party leaves the cavern.

Adjusting the Encounter. With three PCs, remove the draugr fallen behind the left ballista. For each PC beyond four, add another draugr by the right ballista. If the party is 3rd level, the creatures have **weak adjustments**. If the party is 5th level, the creatures have **elite adjustments**.

2. DOCK

A raised ledge along the west wall of this cave slopes downward and then flattens out, where an empty rowboat is tied to a small dock laden with containers and sailing gear. Between the dock and the raised

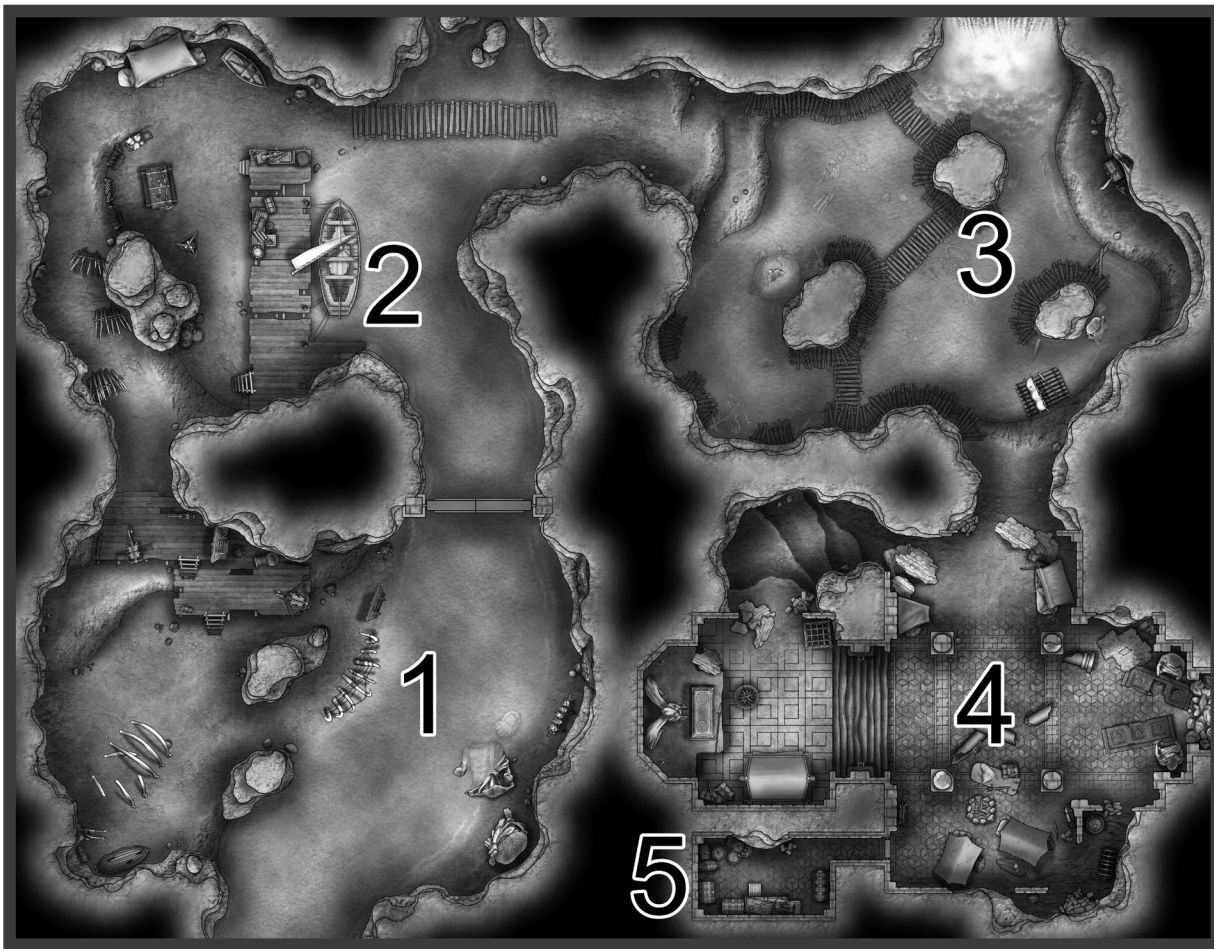
ledge, evidence of a card game that looks to have been abandoned mid-hand is scattered across a wooden table, its planks swollen with water damage. Nearby, a canvas flap has been suspended over two sleeping mats pushed up against the north wall. A wooden walkway extends over the central channel and leads to another cavern beyond.

In this chamber, the Duskshore Consortium would load and unload ships, which usually stopped here in between ports to temporarily store goods that couldn't immediately be smuggled into port. Most of the containers are empty, but a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals a single container amongst the others that contains 50 gp worth of small gems concealed under a false bottom.

Tucked into one of the bedrolls in this chamber is a leather-bound journal with a rusted iron clasp that no longer functions. A character who spends a few minutes leafing through the journal learns the following information:

- The journal belongs to a smuggler named Edric Shoreman, a member of the Duskshore Consortium.
- Initial entries are filled with boasts of profitable runs and narrow escapes from the law, a sense of camaraderie amongst the Consortium members palpable in the recounting.
- Descriptions of finding ancient, barnacle-covered stone tablets hidden in the cove are scribbled excitedly in the margins, marking a turning point in the tone of the entries.
- Subsequent passages recount Captain Bledroot's growing obsession with the tablets, his mood darkening as he deciphers fragments of their language.
- The entries become sporadic, noting unease among the crew as Bledroot makes repeated attempts at contacting

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a deity of unknown origins, amidst strange sights and sounds within the cove.

- The last dated entry speaks of Bledroots's preparations for a grand ritual at the ancient altar, a sense of foreboding hanging over the hastily written words.
- The final pages are erratic, filled with scribbles of terror about the crew turning on one another, water rising, and shadows moving just beyond the light of their torches, suggesting a swift descent into madness and chaos.

3. FLOODED CHAMBER

A waterfall, fed by an unseen source beyond the rock wall, surges into a pool of water that floods much of this chamber. Wooden walkways have been erected around portions of the chamber's perimeter as well as natural columns of stone that reach the ceiling to form a walkway allowing traversal to the opposite end of the room.

The pool in this room is approximately six feet deep. A soggy chest rests on a ledge near the east wall of this room. It is unlocked, and inside are several jars containing preserved sea creatures such as starfish, clams, and barnacles, some exhibiting unsettling mutations as a result of Dagon's

influence in the area. The specimens were being collected by a member of the Consortium who feared Bledroot was meddling with dangerous forces.

Moderate Encounter: Submerged Threats. Some of Dagon's minions (a living waterfall and two plague zombies, both *Pathfinder Bestiary*) lurk in the water of this cavern. They lie in wait until the party attempts to navigate across, and then attempt to surprise the party by surging upwards and destroying the walkway underneath the characters, plunging them into the water. Characters who make a successful DC 18 Perception check to Search the cavern or Seek in the water before they attempt to cross can spot subtle movement in the murky waters.

Adjusting the Encounter. With three PCs, replace the living waterfall with a mist stalker (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2). For each PC beyond four, add another zombie. If the party is 3rd level, the creatures have weak adjustments. If the party is 5th level, the creatures have elite adjustments.

4. CHAPEL

This crumbling ruin, half-consumed by the surrounding cavern, betrays signs of an old religious site now reclaimed by modern activity. Broken masonry and shattered pillars lie strewn about, covered in lichen and debris. At the far end of the room, a pair of tents are adjacent to a cold campfire. On the right, steps rise to a blood-stained altar atop a platform—behind it, a statue of a saintly figure overlooks the chamber. Four bloated and barnacled corpses are scattered about the room. One, wearing a tri-corner hat betraying some level of distinguishment, is slumped near the altar, its face a rictus of terror.

Several members of the Consortium kept quarters in this room, which became increasingly uncomfortable as Bledroot advanced his efforts to use the tablets. The tablets themselves lie atop the altar, stained sanguine by Bledroot's offering. A casting of read aura or similar magic reveals an aura of conjuration magic emanating from the stones, which bear a complex series of arcane inscriptions. A character who Investigates the tablets and makes a successful DC 15 Religion check can infer that they are Abyssal in nature, and refer to a specific demon with the title "Scion of Salt." A character who critically succeeds also determines that divine inscriptions on the tablets are consistent with similar inscriptions upon the altar in the room.

Investigation of the tents in this room reveal little more than mundane personal belongings.

Severe Encounter: The Aspect of Dagon. Some time after the party enters this chamber, but before they've had the chance to destroy or meaningfully disturb any of its elements (mainly the corpses or the tablets), there is a soft flash of light and then the appearance of a beautiful, youthful male figure, garbed in a flowing robe that mirrors the frothy whitecaps of waves, with piercing blue eyes and long, shimmering hair the colour of seaweed. This is an aspect of Dagon, who is disguising himself as an aspect of a minor, non-existent sea deity in an attempt to trick the party into reconsecrating his altar, which Bledroot unintentionally defiled. He greets the party warmly and introduces himself as an aspect of Pelogoros, the Gentle Tide, patron of calm waters and favourable currents. 'Pelogoros' can share all of the following information with the party:

- He admits that he is an obscure and relatively-unknown deity.
- This cavern was established as a place of worship to him nearly two centuries ago by a group of loyal followers. The story of its abandonment is uninteresting; the group simply deteriorated over the passage of time until none of its members were left.
- Several months ago, a group of smugglers discovered the cavern and established it as a base of operations. This, in itself, did not bother Pelogoros.

- The group's leader, however, brought with him stone tablets of infernal origin, and attempted to use Pelogoros' altar in cooperation with the tablets to contact a demonic entity.
- The entity responded, but not in the way the smugglers would have liked—it turned them all into foul, undead servants.
- Pelagoros wants the party's help in reconsecrating his altar after it has been defiled by the smugglers. The corpse of the defiler (the one wearing the tri-corner hat) must be placed upon the altar, and then Pelagoros can guide the party through a series of incantations.

A character who makes a successful DC 25 Perception check to Sense Motive or who has a Perception DC of at least 24 can determine that much of what this 'Pelogoros' says is lies. Alternatively, a successful DC 20 Religion check to Recall Knowledge is sufficient for a character to be reasonably sure that no such minor deity exists in the first place. Furthermore, inspection of the tablets and altar, or identification of the statue near the entrance to the cavern will provide strong evidence that Pelogoros is not who he says he is. If the party calls Pelogoros out on his lies, he comes clean, re-introducing himself as Dagon, tells the truth of the situation, and offers them an alternative: reconsecrate his altar and he will provide each of them with a powerful boon (additional Hit Points equal to their level, increasing to match their current level as they later gain levels). Should they reject this offer, Dagon in his aspect form attacks, animating the corpses in the room to aid him in his assault against the party. Dagon's aspect uses *invidiak* (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2*) statistics with **weak adjustments**, while Bledroot

is a **draugr** and the three other corpses in the room animate as **plague zombies**. Each fights until they are destroyed.

Adjusting the Encounter. With three PCs, remove the zombies. For each PC beyond four, add another zombie. If the party is 3rd level, replace the invidiak with a **ghost commoner** (*Pathfinder Bestiary*). If the party is 5th level, remove the **weak adjustments** from the invidiak and add **elite adjustments** to the draugr.

Treasure: Bledroot's Corpse. Investigation or Searching of Bledroot's corpse uncovers a coin purse filled with 20 gp and 50 sp as well as a rusty key which unlocks the storage room.

5. STORAGE

The door to this room is locked, and can be opened with two DC 15 Thievery checks, a DC 20 Athletics check to Force Open, or the key found on Bledroot's corpse. When the party enters, read aloud:

Crates, barrels, and other containers, all in respectable condition, line the walls of this small chamber.

Here, the Consortium stores the product due for nearby ports. Much of these containers hold items that are valuable only in larger quantities: crossbows, bolts, fine silks, and rare spices that would otherwise be subject to heavy taxes. One chest, however, contains 80 gp worth of rare ingots and a *demon mask*.

Adjusting the Treasure. If the party is 3rd level, there are no ingots. If the party is 5th level, there are enough bottled spices to be worth a further 150 gp.

AFTERMATH

Should the party succeed in quelling the malevolent tide of Dagon's wrath, the foul waters of Eldwater Cove begin to recede to normalcy. The cursed Consortium members, released from their watery servitude, find rest at last as their bodies disintegrate in the water, allowing the cove to become a mere shadow of its dark past. Yet, if the the aspect of Dagon remains or if his altar is reconsecrated, the cove's waters grow more restless, and the Scion of Slat's influence extends further into the sea and nearby lands, promising riches and power to those willing to whisper his name.

Dagon's bargain, if struck, ensures the party's safe departure, their health bolstered by the demon's abyssal boon. Yet, such gifts from a creature of the abyssal waters carry the weight of the sea's crushing depths, and those who bear them may find themselves drawn back to the water's embrace, haunted by dreams of ancient ruins and the eternal, cyclical song of the tide.

REFERENCES

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