

Crimson Bay

As you approach the rugged coastline, Crimson Bay reveals itself—a town perched on steep cliffs, encircled by a formidable stone wall and watchtowers. Entering the harbor, you notice fewer ships than expected, with wary locals whispering about a toll-demanding sea serpent.

Cobblestone streets and tension-filled air greet you. Hushed conversations cease as you pass, and the once-thriving fishing industry appears stifled. Makeshift stalls offer scant goods, hinting at recent hardship.

In the bay, a fleet of tattered, ominous ships lurks, signaling an unsettling presence. Despite the town's impressive defenses, it's clear that Crimson Bay's peace and prosperity have been disrupted. Unraveling its secrets and deciding its fate now falls to your party.

Crimson Bay is a coastal town built on a rocky, windswept coastline teeming with dangerous sea creatures. The town's harbor is home to a giant, sentient sea serpent that demands a toll for safe passage. Recently, a fleet of pirate ships led by Captain Mordekai Rotbeard seized control of the bay, blockading the town and demanding tribute from its inhabitants. Under Rotbeard's rule, the once-thriving fishing industry has suffered. With trade routes stifled, the local economy is in decline, forcing many to turn to smuggling for survival. Despite the pirate occupation, a secret resistance movement, led by former captain of the guard Lysander Ironfoot, seeks to restore order and regain control of Crimson Bay's defenses.

Basic Information

Population: 7,500

Government: Crimson Bay's government is now overseen by the pirate lord, Captain Mordekai Rotbeard, who usurped control from the previous mayor, Elara Thorne. Though a council of influential citizens still exists, they're mere puppets under Rotbeard's rule. Dorian Blackwater, leader of the Fisherman's Guild, is reluctantly cooperating with the pirates, while the town's former captain of the guard, Lysander Ironfoot, leads a secret resistance movement, seeking to reclaim power and restore order.

Defense: Crimson Bay's defense relies on a combination of natural barriers and man-made fortifications. Steep cliffs and treacherous rocks protect the shoreline, while a robust stone wall encircles the town. A network of watchtowers ensures constant vigilance. The local militia, once led by Lysander Ironfoot, is now under pirate control. With Captain Mordekai Rotbeard's fleet blockading the bay, the town's defenses have grown stronger, yet its inhabitants are more vulnerable than ever to pirate rule.

Commerce: Crimson Bay's commerce is primarily maritime, with a thriving fishing industry overseen by the Fisherman's Guild and Dorian Blackwater. Trade routes connect the town to nearby settlements, bringing in goods and crafts. However, the recent pirate blockade led by Captain Mordekai Rotbeard has stifled trade, causing economic hardship and forcing many locals to engage in smuggling activities to survive.



Notable Locations

The following locations are keyed to the map of Crimson Bay as seen on page [x].

1 - Thorne Manor. This grand estate once housed the mayor but is now under the control of pirate lord Captain Mordekai Rotbeard, with former mayor Elara Thorne held captive within its walls. The lavish interior is now tainted by the pirate crew's presence.

2 - Fisherman's Guild Hall. This ornate headquarters is led by Dorian Blackwater, who grudgingly cooperates with pirates, and showcases trophies of legendary catches. Members gather to discuss fishing strategies and voice their concerns.

3 - Ironfoot's Hideout. Hidden in a derelict warehouse, this secret resistance base is where former captain of the guard Lysander Ironfoot strategizes with loyal allies to overthrow pirate rule. The dimly-lit space buzzes with whispered plans and maps.

4 - The Serpent's Toll. This boathouse, perched on the rocky shore, is managed by Sylas Whittle, who collects the sea serpent's toll for Captain Rotbeard while secretly aiding smugglers. Suspicious travelers often linger, hoping for safe passage.

5 - Crimson Market. Once a bustling market square, it now suffers under the blockade; resourceful merchant Helia Copperwind sells rare goods, including artifacts retrieved from shipwrecks. The tense atmosphere reflects the town's economic struggles.

6 - The Windy Anchor Tavern. Known for its signature spiced rum, this lively gathering place for locals and pirates is run by the charismatic barkeep Annabelle Seabreeze, who hears many secrets. Boisterous laughter and brawls are common

here.

7 - The Rocky Lighthouse. An ancient, towering structure, this lighthouse guides ships safely to the harbor, maintained by the reclusive Keeper Silas Gray, who knows the coastline's secrets like no other. The breathtaking view from the top attracts the curious.

8 - The Sunken Grotto. A hidden smuggler's cove with a network of underwater tunnels, this location is where illicit goods change hands, overseen by the elusive smuggler queen Isla Quickfoot, who knows every nook of the bay. Submerged treasures await the daring.

9 - Seawatch Barracks. Once the town's militia headquarters, it is now controlled by pirates, with Lieutenant Mira Stonehart leading the pirate forces ashore and maintaining a tense order. The barracks hold a mix of weary locals and ruthless pirates.

10 - Siren's Song Apothecary. An enigmatic shop with shelves lined with potions and remedies, this store is owned by the mysterious herbalist Lila Nightshade, who is rumored to possess a hidden trove of arcane knowledge. The air is heavy with exotic scents.

11 - Bayview Inn. A cozy inn offering shelter to weary travelers, it is operated by the warm and friendly innkeeper Maris Shorelight, who shares local legends and stories with her guests. Hand-carved wooden furnishings provide a homely atmosphere.

12 - The Whispering Library. An ancient repository of knowledge and lore, this location is guarded by the wise and enigmatic librarian Master Eldric Moonshadow, who can often be found reading by candlelight among the dusty tomes.

Notable Organizations

The three most important organizations in Crimson Bay are detailed below.

Fisherman's Guild. Led by Dorian Blackwater, the Fisherman's Guild is an influential organization central to Crimson Bay's economy. The guild unites fishermen, maintains the harbor, and ensures fair prices. With the pirate blockade, the guild struggles, and Dorian reluctantly cooperates with the pirates for the fishermen's survival. His cooperation creates tension within the guild, as some members view him as a traitor, while others understand the need for diplomacy.

Ironfoot's Resistance. Formed by Lysander Ironfoot, this underground resistance opposes the pirate occupation of Crimson Bay. Comprised of loyalists, ex-militia, and concerned citizens, the group uses guerrilla tactics and intelligence gathering to undermine the pirates' authority. Their covert operations symbolize defiance and hope for a liberated Crimson Bay, but they have not yet significantly threatened Captain Mordekai Rotbeard's control.

Rotbeard's Pirate Crew. Led by Captain Mordekai Rotbeard, this pirate crew has taken control of Crimson Bay, imposing a blockade and demanding tribute. Lieutenant Mira Stonehart oversees the pirate forces ashore, maintaining their authority. The crew's presence creates a tense atmosphere, with locals resenting their control. However, some citizens profit from the situation, such as smugglers and black market merchants. The pirates' rule disrupts the traditional political balance, making them an unwanted yet powerful force in Crimson Bay's politics.

Notable NPCs

The following NPCs are important and influential people in Darklake.

Elara Thorne, the former mayor. Held captive in her own home, Thorne is seeking ways to secretly communicate with loyalists. She possesses a hidden stash of valuable relics that may aid the resistance.

Dorian Blackwater, the Fisherman's Guild leader. Struggling to protect fishermen during the blockade, he cooperates with pirates while secretly aiding the resistance.

Lysander Ironfoot, the resistance leader. Courageously opposing the pirate occupation, he strategizes with allies in his hideout. Ironfoot has an extensive network of spies, including some among the pirates, and is skilled in sword fighting and espionage.

Sylas Whittle, the boathouse manager. He collects the sea serpent's toll for Captain Rotbeard but also aids smugglers. Whittle knows the location of a rare artifact that can control the sea serpent.

Helia Copperwind, the merchant. Selling rare goods at the struggling Crimson Market, including shipwreck artifacts, she secretly funds Ironfoot's Resistance with her sales profits.

Annabelle Seabreeze, the barkeep. Charismatic and knowledgeable, she hears secrets from both locals and pirates. Annabelle's past as a renowned pirate herself remains hidden, and she possesses a collection of secret treasure maps.

Silas Gray, the lighthouse keeper. He maintains the Rocky Lighthouse and knows the coastline's secrets like no other. Gray possesses an enchanted spyglass revealing

hidden dangers at sea, making him an adept sailor and navigator.

Isla Quickfoot, the smuggler. She oversees illicit goods trading at the Sunken Grotto and is an expert in ancient languages, which she uses to decipher maps and texts. Additionally, Quickfoot was once a notorious thief in a far-off land and has many enemies.

Mira Stonehart, the pirate lieutenant. Ensuring pirate authority in Crimson Bay, she leads forces ashore. Unknown to most, Stonehart secretly sympathizes with the townspeople and contemplates defection.

Lila Nightshade, the herbalist. She owns Siren's Song Apothecary and is rumored to have arcane knowledge. Nightshade brews a powerful potion that grants her the ability to speak with plants, and her mysterious past is linked to a druidic order.

Maris Shorelight, the innkeeper. She operates Bayview Inn and shares local legends with guests. Maris has a hidden talent as a skilled cartographer, having mapped the entire coastline.

Master Eldric Moonshadow, the librarian. Guarding the Whispering Library, he often reads by candlelight. Moonshadow is a member of a secret arcane society, protecting ancient magical knowledge, and is skilled in various forms of divination.

Captain Mordekai Rotbeard, the pirate captain. A ruthless leader of the pirates occupying Crimson Bay, he imposes a blockade and demands tribute. Despite his brutal reputation, Rotbeard is a skilled tactician and sailor, but he harbors a deep-seated fear of the giant sea serpent lurking in the bay, stemming from a traumatic childhood encounter.

Adventure Hooks

Below is a list of twelve adventure hooks for the characters to partake in while they are in Crimson Bay. Each is tied to one of the aforementioned NPCs, but can easily be adjusted to fit another questgiver of your choice.

Serpent's Toll. Elara Thorne seeks the party's help to retrieve her stash of valuable relics, which may aid the resistance. However, they must first bypass the giant sea serpent guarding the harbor, which has taken the side of Rotbeard's pirates.

Guild Rebellion. Dorian Blackwater, torn between loyalty to his guild and cooperation with the pirates, needs the party to sabotage pirate operations discreetly, without implicating the Fisherman's Guild.

Resistance Recruitment. Lysander Ironfoot believes the party's skills can strengthen his resistance. He tasks them with infiltrating the pirate crew to gather intelligence on their plans and weaknesses.

Sea Serpent's Secret. Sylas Whittle asks the party to find a rare artifact, rumored to control the sea serpent, hidden in a dangerous underwater cavern. Whittle believes that if they can control the serpent, that the resistance can defeat the pirates.

Artifact Retrieval. Helia Copperwind receives a tip about a valuable shipwreck containing powerful artifacts. She enlists the party to recover the artifacts before the pirates do.

Seabreeze's Maps. Annabelle Seabreeze shares a secret treasure map with the party, pointing to a hidden cache of pirate loot, but reaching it requires solving dangerous riddles and puzzles.

Lighthouse Intrigue. Silas Gray needs

the party to investigate suspicious activity near the Rocky Lighthouse, uncovering a pirate plot to sabotage the town's last line of defense.

Smuggler's Deal. Isla Quickfoot enlists the party to transport a shipment of illicit goods while evading pirate patrols and navigating treacherous waters filled with dangerous sea creatures.

Stonehart's Dilemma. Mira Stonehart secretly contacts the party, offering crucial information on the pirate crew in exchange for assistance in defecting and finding refuge away from Crimson Bay.

Nightshade's Potion. Lila Nightshade tasks the party with gathering rare ingredients for a potion that could turn the tide against the pirates. The ingredients are hidden deep within a treacherous coastal cave.

Shorelight's Secret. Maris Shorelight shares a tale of a hidden cove, revealing a lost ship full of treasure. However, the cove is guarded by an ancient and powerful entity.

Arcane Discovery. Master Eldric Moonshadow uncovers a prophecy suggesting a powerful magical artifact is hidden in Crimson Bay. He asks the party to find it before it falls into the pirates' hands.

Random Encounters

Every eight hours the characters are wandering through Crimson Bay, roll a d20. On a result of 18 or higher, an encounter occurs. Roll on or choose from the table on the right to determine the nature of the encounter.

d12	Encounter
1	A seagull steals food from an unsuspecting party member.
2	The party witnesses a heated argument between two fishermen.
3	A pickpocket attempts to snatch a party member's coin purse.
4	The sea serpent unexpectedly breaches near the shore, startling everyone.
5	A drunken pirate challenges a party member to an arm-wrestling match.
6	A street performer amazes the crowd with impressive acrobatics.
7	A sudden squall sweeps through the town, drenching the party.
8	A stray cat befriends the party and follows them around.
9	A local child accidentally knocks over a party member's drink.
10	A hidden message in a bottle washes up on the beach.
11	The party encounters a mysterious cloaked figure watching them.
12	A magical surge briefly causes objects around the party to levitate.