

WHAT LURKS BENEATH TIDEWATCH TOWER

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A coastal adventure site for D&D 5th Edition
For 3-5 characters of level 3

BACKGROUND

Despite its benign appearance, Tidewatch Tower has an interesting history. A few months ago it served as the hideout for a group of unscrupulous seafaring adventurers led by a rogue named **Mad Karli**. After a particularly lucrative and dangerous outing they hid their booty in the caverns under the tower. Mad Karli then betrayed, poisoned and murdered what remained of her crew. Unfortunately this was the same day that the sea harpies decided to move in and she was drowned and eaten in short order, her remains cast into the sea.

Most recently, a group of merfolk also used the caverns below the tower to rid themselves of a **Cursed Idol** they had discovered in the sunken temple of a forgotten sea god. When submerged in seawater, the idol has two effects:

- Everything within 50' that is wet with seawater will be rapidly covered in a luminescent algae that glows sea green when wet.
- Any dead sea creatures that are covered in the algae will rise as undead within one hour of being covered or of dying, if already covered.
- Undead within 50' have advantage on savings throws vs Turn Undead.

RUMORS

- "I heard that ol' scoundrel Mad Karli hid her treasure in the tower. Her crew hasn't been seen on these shores in months, but some other strangers have been asking after her."
- "Have you noticed the rocks around Tidewatch Tower have been glowing lately? Little strange, innit?"

- "I pulled in a pot of crabs from the beach near Tidewatch Tower. Was looking forward to a nice dinner but those buggers refused to die!"

RESTING

The PCs should be allowed one short rest unperturbed. Attempts to take a second short rest or a long rest will trigger the encounter **One More Thing** outlined at the end of this adventure. After that, roll a D6 every hour. An encounter from the table in Appendix 1 occurs on a 6.

ACCESSING THE TOWER

The watchtower cuts a stark silhouette against the sea sky, standing on a small rock mound 50 yards from shore when the tide is in, and half that when the tide is out. Looking from the beach, the weathered building could almost pass for a natural formation.

When the tide is out, the rock formation on which the tower stands is accessible by wading through waste deep water. Otherwise the PCs must cross by swimming or by boat.

Two Sea Harpies (see Appendix 1) have made their nest at the top of the tower. They have feathers the color of stormy skies with black-tipped wings and their feet are webbed with stubby black talons. One wields a rusty cutlass instead of a club (1d6+1 dmg) and the other wears a jaunty blue tricorne hat. Both items were looted from Mad Karli.

The harpies wait until the PCs are mid-way through the water to attack, taking advantage of their victims' reduced mobility. When one of the harpies is reduced to ¼ hp or fewer, they will both

retreat to their nest, hiding behind what remains of the battlements.

THE ISLAND

As the waves lap against the rocks, a **mostly-eaten and algae-covered fish flops helplessly**. A cold firepit is littered with the cast-off shells of countless crab feasts.

A cursory examination reveals that the **fish** should be dead and even the seagulls won't go near it.

The island itself is about 40' across, made of black basalt and covered in bunchgrass near the center around the tower. There is currently no door on the tower, only an open archway.

AREA 1

The echoey interior of the tower is empty save for the first three steps of a winding staircase whose remnants are now scattered on the floor. All that remains of the intermediate floor above is a precarious-looking wooden skeleton through which an opening in the ceiling can be seen.

The opening in the ceiling leads to **Area 2**. An open hatch in the floor leads down a rope ladder to **Area 3**.

The intermediate floor and the opening in the ceiling are 20' and 40' above the ground, respectively. The walls are dry and can be climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check every 20'. Anyone weighing more than a halfling will fall through the intermediate floor for 2d6 damage.

If the **Sea Harpies** fled to the top of the tower, they will use *Song of the Sea* if anyone attempts to reach their nest.

AREA 2

The top of the tower is whitewashed with seagull poop. There is a haphazard harpy nest of dried

grass, crab shells and fish bones that gives off the strong salty stench of rancid sea creatures.

If still alive, the **two Sea Harpies** that nest here will take flight if anyone nears their nest, relying on their *Song of the Sea* to repel any invaders. If outnumbered they will fly to shore and away from harm.

Loot:

- 7 gp, 25 sp, 46 cp
- The **key to the chest in Area 9**
- Lots of useless and broken fishing gear
- A **Fisherman's Charm** in the form of a large, scrimshawed bone hook on a thin hemp necklace. The charm provides advantage on Survival checks made for catching fish.

AREA 3

The room below the tower has low ceilings and stale, salty air. The squared-off walls are a strange mix of natural basalt and worked stone. There are a couple of chairs and a table still set with utensils and rotted food. Three pairs of boots are against the wall, caked with dried mud and blood. A couple of crab pots rest on the floor.

A rope ladder leads up to **Area 2**. An unlocked wooden door leads to **Area 4**.

AREA 4

A strong stench of death and decay fills this unadorned sleeping area. Four bedrolls are on the ground - three are occupied by corpses. They are clothed in tatters and the flesh has nearly been picked clean by the dozens of decayed, **algae covered-crabs** laying on and around them.

The crabs are **three Zombie Crab Swarms** (see Appendix 1). They will remain motionless until one is disturbed, and then they attack at once.

The wooden **door to Area 5** is not locked but it is stuck. Anyone trying the handle will be poked with a hidden **poisoned fishing hook**. They take 2d10 poison damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution save or be poisoned for one hour.

Anyone forcing the door will succeed on a DC 12 Strength check, but will also stumble into a **pit trap** covered by the rug immediately behind the door and fall into **Area 7**. If the tide is out, they take 1d6 damage and splash into waste-high water below. A DC 15 Dexterity save will avoid the fall. If the tide is in, **Area 7** will be filled with water. Either way, the **Giant Octopus** in that area will immediately attack.

Both the poisoned hook and the pit will be noticed by anyone searching those specific places for traps.

Loot:

- Four backpacks near the bedrolls - all contain spoiled foodstuffs, cooking utensils, and clothing. One has a **tinderbox**, another **has one set of thieves' tools**, three empty vials and **two full vials of paralytic poison** (DC 13 Constitution save or paralyzed for one minute).
- One skeleton lays on a **curved dagger with elaborate engraving and a mother of pearl handle worth 25 gp**.
- One skeleton wears a **brass holy symbol of Caradmara**, the local patron saint to sailors and fishermen. It is shaped like an orca encircling a crescent moon and two stars.

AREA 5

An eclectic collection of **stolen trinkets and valuables** amongst burlap sacks and crates. Air wafts up from a jagged hole in the back wall that smells like a week-old beached whale. A table sits against another wall, covered in a **map** pinned down with rusty knives.

A hole under a rug in front of the entrance leads down to **Area 7** (see **Area 4**).

Most of the **trinkets** in this room are impressive-looking but largely worthless - decorative vases, brass candelabras, costume jewelry, etc. Each of these **25 objects is worth 2d10 silver**. The crates and sacks are full of spoiled food or empty.

There is a beautiful 3' x 4' impressionistic **painting of the coast at sunrise worth 800 gp** leaning against the wall behind some crates. The artist is a gnomish woman of some renown named Jinky Wildwander. The painting must be handled with great care.

The **map on the table** shows a few locations in the area where treasure may be found. Some are crossed off, but a few are not.

The hole opens to a tunnel that slopes down and around to **Area 6**.

AREAS 6-8 WILL HAVE WASTE-DEEP WATER WHEN THE TIDE IS OUT. THEY ARE FULL OF WATER WHEN THE TIDE IS IN.

AREA 6

Walls and floor glow with a dim light that eerily illuminates the bones and seaweed floating in the water. Barnacles crunch underfoot. A **small, strangely shaped cairn** rises from the center of the floor.

Three merfolk were killed and dismembered by crabs here. Only their bones remain and their **skeletal arms will try to trip, grapple and drown the PCs**.

If the tide is out, any one moving through the room must make a **DC 12 Dexterity Saving throw every 10'** or be tripped by the arms. A tripped PC is Prone and takes 1d6 damage.

If the tide is in, any one moving through the room must make a **DC 12 Dexterity or Strength saving throw every 10'** or be **Restrained by the arms**. A Restrained PC may attempt to escape each round with a DC 12 Athletics or Acrobatics check made at disadvantage.

There are six arms - they have AC 13 and 3 hp each.

The **small cairn** is actually a shrine to Caradmara and bears her symbol. Although it is covered in algae and barnacles from the top to the floor, anyone examining it will notice that it is man-made. If the shrine is cleaned and a prayer is offered to it while wearing the **holy symbol from Area 4**, the following benefits are granted:

- Swim speed of 30' for 24 hours.
- Advantage on any skill checks involving navigation or sailing for 24 hours.

AREA 7

Water choked with kelp, bits of crabshell and schools of sculpin darting about. The algae's glow is dimmed by the murky water.

A **Giant Octopus** (see Appendix 1) lurks here and will attack the first person to enter. Unlike its close cousin from the MM, **this one can hide as a bonus action**. It retreats to the open sea through a 1' diameter hole in the wall at ¼ hp or fewer.

If the Giant Octopus is slain, it will rise as a zombie in one hour. It will use the same stats but will gain *Undead Fortitude* (see Ancient Crab Zombie statblock in Appendix 1) and immunity to poison. It will be accompanied by **1d4 Giant Crab Exoskeletons** (see Appendix 1).

A hole in the ceiling leads up to **Area 5**.

AREA 8

The algae-covered skeletons of dead fish move disturbingly but harmlessly through the water.

The rocks are larger and more jagged here, making movement difficult. **Five Giant Crab Exoskeletons** (see Appendix 1) lurk in the water. At the center of the room sits an **Ancient Zombie Crab** (see Appendix 1).

This entire room is Difficult Terrain.

The **Giant Crab Exoskeletons** are barely distinguishable from rocks - dark purple shells crusted with barnacles and topped with a luxuriant coil of glowing algae.

The **Ancient Zombie Crab** is similar in appearance to the others but twice as large. Perched on the top of her shell is the **Cursed Idol** - a smoky gray crystal whale, shot through with wisps of black that resemble its skeleton, roughly the size of a beer keg. No algae grows on it. **The Ancient Zombie Crab does not move**, and completely covers the entrance to **Area 9**.

Anyone searching around the Ancient Crab Zombie will notice an opening beneath her that is inaccessible, being almost completely blocked by her corpse. Said corpse weighs about 600 lbs and the PCs will find it difficult to move when the tide is out. When the tide is in, her corpse is buoyant enough that the entrance to Area 9 will be opened.

AREA 9

A short, claustrophobic tunnel leads down to a small cavern only 6' in diameter. Everything is covered in glowing algae. This area is completely submerged regardless of the tide.

Mad Karli's treasure is hidden here in a small strongbox. It is completely covered in algae and very difficult to spot, requiring a DC 15 Perception check. If the PC fails they may make another check for each minute spent searching. It is also locked (DC 20 to pick) and the key can be found in **Area 2**.

The box is small but lavishly ornate and reassuringly heavy. It contains:

- 200 pp and 350 gp
- A diamond worth 500 gp,
- 2 x pearls worth 100 gp each
- 2 x emeralds worth 300 gp each
- A gold **Necklace of Fireballs** with 7 beads that look like small glass balls filled with a swirling red glittery liquid.
- An engraved platinum ring shaped like a starfish that functions as a **Periapt of Wound Closure**.

ONE MORE THING

As soon as the PCs leave the tower, or if they take a rest anywhere on the island after the battle in **Area 8**, Mad Karli's intermittent paramour **Dirk Wavestone** (human male) will arrive by skiff with a couple of companions. Dirk's youthful good looks are tempered by a lack of hygiene. He is just smart enough to be frustrated by his own stupidity, but his formidable skill with a sword covers this deficiency well.

Dirk is joined by the two **Notchwood Brothers** (half-orc males), Bur and Baryl. They lack Dirk's beauty and his self-awareness, but trade them for generous battle scars and a low cunning.

Mad Karli missed her last rendezvous with Dirk and he has come looking for her. He is aware of the treasure but not sure where it was hidden. He will assume the PCs know what happened to Mad Karli. Unless they have a very convincing (or true!) story and tell it very quickly, Dirk and the Notchwood brothers will attack.

Loot:

- (Dirk) An identical cutlass to the one held by the Sea Harpy
- (Dirk) A love letter to Karli with remarkably poor spelling and lewd content
- (Dirk) 20 gp, gold earring worth 5 gp
- (Dirk) Greater Healing Potion
- (Notchwood Bros) 11 gp, 15 sp each
- (Baryl Notchwood) A love letter to Karli with even worse spelling and lewder content than Dirk's
- (Bur Notchwood) Necklace with 2d10 lizardman teeth

This ends What Lurks Beneath Tidewatch Tower.

APPENDIX 1: BESTIARY

Wandering Monsters (roll 1d4 or choose):

1	(1d4) Zombie Crab Swarms, hostile
2	(1d4) Giant Crab Exoskeletons, hostile
3	(1) Giant Octopus, hostile, flees at ½ hp or with a grappled PC. Can access anywhere but Area 2 .
4	(5) Merfolk, cautious but friendly, hoping to locate their companions that were slain in Area 6 .

Sea Harpy - Medium Monstrosity - CR 2 (Encountered in Accessing the Tower or Area 2)

AC: 13 **HP:** 50 **Speed:** 30, fly 30
Str: +1 **Dex:** +1 **Con:** +1 **Int:** -2 **Wis:** +0 **Cha:** +2

Multiaattack. One club & two claw attacks

Claws. Melee Atk: **+3 to hit, 2d4+1** slashing

Club. Melee Atk: **+3 to hit, 1d4+1** bludgeoning or **Cutlass.** Melee Atk: **+3 to hit, 1d6+1** slashing

Song of the Sea. DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or charmed until the song ends. Bonus action to continue the song. While charmed, a creature will take no actions except to move on its turn toward the nearest body of water by the most direct route and cast themselves into it. The creature will not attempt to swim. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. A target that successfully saves is immune for the next 24 hours.

Zombie Crab Swarm - Medium Undead - CR 1/2 (Encountered in Area 4)

AC: 13 **HP:** 22 **Speed:** 20
Str: -3 **Dex:** +1 **Con:** +0 **Int:** -5 **Wis:** -2 **Cha:** -5

Cond. Imm.: Charmed, Frightened, Paralyzed, Petrified, Prone, Restrained, Stunned

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect.

Claws (swarm has more than half HP). Melee Atk: **+3 to hit, 4d4** piercing

Claws (swarm has less than half HP). Melee Atk: **+3 to hit, 2d4** piercing

Giant Octopus - Large Beast - CR 1 (Found in Area 7)

AC: 11 **HP:** 52 **Speed:** 10, Swim 20
Str: +3 **Dex:** +1 **Con:** +1 **Int:** -3 **Wis:** +0 **Cha:** -3

Skills: Perception +4, Stealth +5 **Senses:** Darkvision 60', passive Perception 14

Hold Breath. While out of water, the octopus can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Underwater Camouflage. The octopus has advantage on Stealth checks made while underwater.

Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is Restrained, and the octopus can't use its tentacles on another target.

Ink Cloud (Recharge 6). A 20-foot-radius cloud of ink extends all around the octopus if it is underwater. The area is heavily obscured for 1 minute, although a significant current can disperse the ink. After releasing the ink, the octopus can use the Dash action as a bonus action.

Hide. The octopus can hide as a bonus action.

Giant Crab Exoskeleton - Medium Undead - CR 1/2 (Encountered in Area 8)

AC: 15 **HP:** 13 **Speed:** 30, swim 30
Str: +1 **Dex:** +2 **Con:** +0 **Int:** -5 **Wis:** -2 **Cha:** -5

Condition Immunity: Exhausted, Poisoned **Damage Immunity:** Poisoned

Skills: Stealth +4 **Senses:** Blindsight 30', passive Perception 8

Claw. Melee Atk: +3 to hit, 1d6+1 piercing. The target is grappled (escape DC 11) The crab has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Ancient Crab Zombie - Large Undead - CR 5 (Encountered in Area 8)

AC: 15 **HP:** 85 **Speed:** 0
Str: +4 **Dex:** -2 **Con:** +4 **Int:** -5 **Wis:** 0 **Cha:** -5

Condition Immunity: Exhausted, Poisoned **Damage Immunity:** Poisoned

Senses: Blindsight 30', passive Perception 10

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie crab to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5+the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie crab drops to 1 hit point instead.

Multiattack. Two claw attacks.

Claw. Melee Atk: +6 to hit, 2d8+4 piercing. The target is grappled (escape DC 14) The crab has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Dirk Wavestone - Medium Humanoid (Human) - CR 3 (Encountered during One More Thing)

AC: 16 (Studded Leather) **HP:** 66 **Speed:** 30
Str: +1 **Dex:** +4 **Con:** +1 **Int:** -1 **Wis:** -1 **Cha:** +2

Skills: Acrobatics +4, Athletics +5, Persuasion +6 **Senses:** passive Perception 9

Multiattack. Two scimitar & one dagger attack

Scimitar. Melee Atk: +6 to hit, 1d6+4 slashing

Dagger. Melee Atk: +6 to hit, 1d4+4 piercing

Cunning Action. Dirk can Hide, Dash or Disengage as a bonus action,

Notchwood Brother - Medium Humanoid (Half-Orc) - CR 1/2 (Encountered during One More Thing)

AC: 14 (Chain Shirt) **HP:** 32 **Speed:** 30

Str: +2 **Dex:** +1 **Con:** +2 **Int:** -2 **Wis:** +1 **Cha:** +0

Skills: Intimidation +2 **Senses:** passive Perception 10

Bro Tactics: The Notchwood Brother has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if the other brother is within 5 feet of the creature and isn't incapacitated. Also, when a creature that a brother can see attacks the other brother within 5 feet of him, he can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

Relentless Endurance (1/day): When a Notchwood Brother is reduced to 0 Hit Points but not killed outright, it drops to 1 hit point instead.

Muiltiattack. Two battleaxe attacks or one crossbow attack

Battleaxe. Melee Atk: **+4 to hit, 1d8+2** slashing

Crossbow. Ranged Atk. 100'/400', **+2 to hit, 1d8** piercing

Merfolk - Medium Humanoid - CR 1/8 (Random Encounter)

AC: 11 **HP:** 11 **Speed:** 10, swim 40

Str: +0 **Dex:** +1 **Con:** +1 **Int:** +0 **Wis:** +0 **Cha:** +1

Skills: Perception +2 **Senses:** passive Perception 12

Amphibious: *The merfolk can breathe air and water.*

Spear. Melee or Ranged Atk.: 20'/60', **+2 to hit, 1d6** piercing

APPENDIX 2: MAPS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



