

THE JOURNEY TO THE SHADOW ISLES

A DUNGEON WORLD ADVENTURE BY EDEN SZOPA



VERSION 2.0



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PROLOGUE

The waves were calm, rocking the ship slowly as it drifted through the water under the night sky, lulling the crew into a deep sleep. The captain stood at the helm, peering out into the darkness. There was no moon to light their way, and sleeping wasn't safe even with the calm waters. The black void hid many dangers, sea stacks that would shred the sides of his ship or sea creatures drifting deep under the surface, disturbed from their sleep as they passed over them. Even the lights of another ship posed risks if they decided to board them. Even with his fears, he couldn't help but succumb to that same rocking that brought the rest of his crew to sleep, drifting off with a kerosene lamp knocking against the mast illuminating the desk he stood on.

The lamps on the ship swayed with the waves, knocking against the wood they hung on, creating an ominous rhythm that brought a chill to the air. As the wind picked up, the lamps swing harder, thrashing against the walls, and with every thud, they began to go out. First, with the lamps on the deck extinguished one by one. Next, came the lights in the cabin; the lamps went out, drifting past the rows of swaying hammocks until they reached the last one. Within minutes the boat was as black as the sea, drowning in the darkness.

The darkness wrapped around them, shadows caressing their faces as they slipped through their mouths and down their throats, invading their dreams. It whispered their guilt and showed their fears. Threatened to reveal what they each desperately wanted to keep hidden.

When they began to stir, eyes wide with fear and mouths suppressing screams, the darkness ebbed away, lamps flickering on as if they had never gone out, each one by one. Starting from the cabin and up to the deck as they woke, and once again, the waves had calmed.

This was not the first time they had woken up this way. It had started a month ago, these nightmares. They weren't the only ones, the dreams were a plague on the land, infecting cities to cities, and countries to countries. The dreams were causing death, crime, and war. Many had decided to succumb to their fear, doing anything to keep them secret.

ADDITIONAL BACKSTORY

The crew is on Arkadiusz's Ship, traveling to the Northern capital - Otzard, where the dreams first made their appearance.

They had been at sea for over a month, making frequent stops at different countries, looking for the source.

Over time the dreams would have stronger and stronger effect. The longer someone is infected the more likely they are to succumb to a coma and not wake. After the crew's village succumbed to this plague they started tracking down the infected, looking for where it started and how to stop it.

The player's journey eventually leads them to the Oracle where they discover that the cause is a

creature called Despair, a twin of the Oracle. They must defeat Despair and return him to the Oracle in order to stop the dreams.

QUESTIONS TO ESTABLISH THE BACKSTORY AND SCENARIO

- What are you hiding from the rest of the crew?
- What are your greatest fears?
- What do you feel guilty about?
- How does your act under pressure and exhaustion?
- If this curse didn't start, where would you be and what would you be doing?
- What might you expect to find at the Northern Capital?
- Do you trust your crewmates? Why and why not?

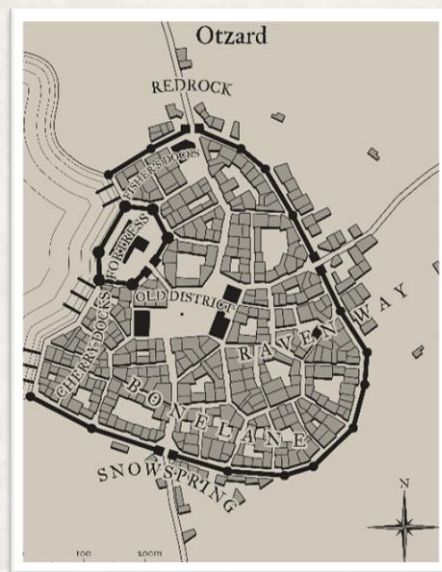
STARTING SCENARIO

Upon waking the crew stumbled its way wearily up out of the cabin and into the captain's quarters. The captain was waiting for them standing over a round table filled with maps and documents.

The crew made their way to their designated seats and the table. The captain looked up as the final member sat down, he observed each and every one of them, noting how the dreams had affected each member. He stared at them for a couple of minutes before sighing and sitting down.

"We'll be at Otzard by morning, I suggest that you start to pack and pick a partner to explore the town with. Before you leave make sure to grab a copy of the town map and choose an area to investigate"

NORTHERN CAPITAL – OTZARD



Otzard is the Northern Capital, an old city, unreachable except by sea. It borders the Olympian Sea and the Arch mountains

CHERRY DOCKS

The Cherry Docks are the second richest area in Otzard, it's where military ships often dock as well as many

merchant ships. The builds around belong to the families of these merchants; their ability to bring luxury goods like spices and silks are the major contributors to their wealth.

OLD DISTRICT

The Old District is where the wealthiest class live, this part of the city is one of the oldest, built when Ozark was once a small village. The houses here are old, though they are very large do to expansions over time. They are composed of a variety of woods and bricks depending on which century they were added on. The people who live here are descendants of some of the first settlers.

BONELANE

Bonelane is poorest area of Ozark, named after the bones that collect in the streets, the remains of those who had no one left to burry them. The homes are squished together, some even built on top of each other to sustain the population of this district.

RAVENWAY

Ravenway is where the middle class live, this is where most of the shops can be found as well as restaurants and bars. It's a good area to find out information, but the people here aren't susceptible to bribes.

FISHER'S DOCK

The Fisher's dock is where many of the fisherman, farmers, and blacksmiths live. It's named after the dock it borders, one often used by the fisherman who reside there. It is also the location where many ship repairs are built and where the carpenters build on new ships.

FORTRESS

The mayor of the town lives at the Fortress, the entrance is guarded, but it's easy to gain an audience with the mayor as long as you send in a meeting request a couple of weeks in advance.

REDROCK

Redrock is the northern road, it's gate can be found at the Fisher's Docks. The road past the gates is surrounded by the farms of the residents of this district. The road borders the Olympian sea.

SNOWSPRING

Snowspring is the southern road, it's gate lies in Bonelance. This gate is often closed and guarded, preventing from more settlers to enter the town. Small Campsites surround this wall of people who hope that they will be admitted entry before the winter. The road leads deeper into the mountains.

GRIM PORTENTS

- The crew is starting to show signs of sleep deprivations, the mistakes they make due to exhaustion could be detrimental.
- The nightmares are spreading, infecting more and more people, as the infection rate increases so does the rate of mortality.
- The dreams start seeping into reality for the crew as they pass through Odysseus's Passage as they attempt to reach the Oracle. Monsters they dreamed off or coming to life, their fears and guilt materializing in front of them into physical forms.

STAKES QUESTIONS

- Will the crew's exhaustion lead to someone's death? Potentially one of the crew members?
- Will they pass the Oracle's trials?
- Will they be able to defeat Despair in a weakened state?
- Will one of the crew members fall into a coma?
- Will someone attack the crew, potentially even one of the members to preserve their secrets?
- Will one of the crew members betray others to prevent the rest of the crew members from discovering what they are hiding?

MONSTER: SORROWSEEKER



SORROWSEEKER

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

The Sorrowseeker is a monster that resides deep in the Odysseus's Passage. It gained the name Sorrowseeker due to being a creature that would emerge from the depths once sailors were halfway through the passage, already exhausted and terrified by the previous attacks. It would eat people when they were at their greatest sorrow, given up on the hope that they'll pass through safely.

MOVES

- Unleashing a loud noise from deep in the depths of the ocean, causing massive waves.
- Creates a whirlpool when opening it's mouth underwater

LEGENDARY MOVE

- Swallows the ship – escape is only possible if one of the players role a nat 20, or if all the players roll their dice and the total is 30 and above.

MONSTER: ASHWRAITH



ASHWRAITH

Armor Class 5

Hit Points 7 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

The Ashwraith is a monster found on the Shadow Isles. It hunts in packs devouring anything live it comes in contact with. It consumes it's victims by wrapping around them until they can't move and then swallowing them whole.

MOVES

- **Strangulation:** Strangles it's prey by wrapping around them.
- **Bites:** Takes 1-3 hits, it does low damage but in a pack of three or more they deal 3 every single time.

LEGENDARY MOVE

- When hunting in packs they assist each other, focusing on a singular prey and each wrapping around a different limb until the prey is fully immobilized.

NPC: ORACLE

The Oracle resides in the Elder Tree that can be found in the Lucid Forest, a dangerous place that some never leave - they fall asleep and never wake, and it is said that each tree was once someone's body. Many people who visit the Oracle do not get to see her; instead, they hear her prophecies in their dreams, and many cannot handle their fate... Only a few can claim to have met the Oracle, lost souls she took pity on and decided to provide with guidance - saving them from the madness that overtook many in her forest.

APPEARANCE

The Oracle resembles a young girl; her hair often starts moving and floating around her like a pool of water. She has runes painted all over her body in a reddish brown (resembling blood). Her pointed ears make her look elf-like - long brown hair and golden eyes. She has glass vials filled with a glowing wisp - when asked, she says these are lost futures - ones people abandoned out of fear.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Oracle and the entity are connected - two sides of one coin, like life and death. The Oracle cannot tell the crew what their fate is - not with them infected by the other - but she can briefly calm their nightmares since the entity's power is not as strong in her dominion. The party wishes to learn more about their lives and if they can succeed in their goals, but she can no longer see their futures (almost as if they no longer have one).

INSTINCT AND KNACK

Instinct To: Preserve Balance
Knack: A Tie to a Monster

NPC: DESPAIR

Despair is the entity plaguing the Players. While the entity's dominion is the Shadow Isles - a place it rarely leaves. At night it can travel into the dreams of others just like the Oracle, but when it does, it leaves a mark on its victim. Attaching itself to their soul and their future. Despair thrives off of stealing futures, forcing people to confront themselves and destroy themselves (something that the Oracle does too, only those who have her favor can know their fate, the rest she relishes when they die of madness)

APPEARANCE

It appears as itself (12 HP, 2 Armor, d10+2 damage), human-like (a sibling to the Oracle - they look very similar in appearance). Despair struggles to hold its form - it's not as tethered to the Earth and often dissolves into shadows.

MOVES

- Fade in and out of shadows - allowing them to "teleport."
- Lashing out with their shadows as a whip
- Briefly making them experience their nightmares and confusing them in a fight

INSTINCT AND KNACK

Instinct To: Preserve Balance
Knack: A Tie to a NPC

PROCEDURAL GENERATORS

- Trap Generator:
<https://dndcampaignplanner.com/tools/random-trap-generator>
-
- NPC: https://www.mythweavers.com/generate_npc.php
-
- City Generator:
<https://watabou.itch.io/medieval-fantasy-city-generator>