

maining) are trying to reach the captain but face twelve **zombies** in their way (or half that number if the hammer was abandoned). Defeating the zombies helps to unite the pirates, the characters, and the captain, so they can work more effectively against the horde.

Once they rally, the pirates and the captain working together destroy one zombie per round. The characters have advantage on attack rolls and ability checks, and the zombies have disadvantage on saving throws.

Aftermath. If the characters fought more than two groups of zombies but did not help the crew achieve victory, the party gains a failure point. If they stayed and helped the crew, Captain Torwyn thanks them effusively, and tells them that if they ever need a ship near Luskan, they can call on the *Kraken's Lament*. Once off the ship, the characters can easily reach the portal, then return to the portal nexus. If the characters ignored the pirates to head straight for the portal, remove one failure point from the party's total and have the characters think about their life choices.

Treasure. In thanks, Torwyn and her crew offer the party a *wand of magic missiles*, a *+1 vicious rapier*, and a *rope of entanglement*. The rope is seemingly made of seaweed.

PORTAL 6: RIVER BARGE CROSSING

This encounter brings the characters into direct contact with the operatives of the Six who are also traversing

the portal network. Map 4.3 shows the initial setup of the river barge crossing.

Read the following, making adjustments as necessary if the characters have already seen the Six operatives:

When you pull open the iron door, the view beyond shows another place—and you are suddenly there, the door disappearing behind you. A grassy slope leads down to the banks of a slow-moving river. A number of barges decorated in bright colors move up and down the river, bearing merchants crying out to attract customers. Those customers move from the river bank to the nearest barge, then carefully hop from barge to barge until they reach the merchant they want. On the opposite bank, you can see a small outhouse set with an oval iron door.

A flash of light draws your attention to the right, where some fifty feet away from you, another group exits a portal that vanishes behind them. The group consists of five humans and a tall, purple-skinned creature. That creature's face has tentacles where its mouth should be—with those tentacles oddly tied into a stylish handlebar mustache. The creature wordlessly looks at two archers accompanying it, who draw their bows. Its three other companions break into a run toward the riverbank as the creature vanishes with a popping sound.



MAP 4.3: RIVER BARGE CROSSING

Roll initiative. Having seen the characters (or having seen them again), the mind flayer has used its *plane shift* ability to get back to the portal nexus. There, it prepares for the assault on the Dran Enterprises headquarters, leaving its lackeys to try to get to the outhouse portal before the characters. Of the four human **scouts** among the Six operatives, two stay behind and fire arrows at the party, while the other two scouts and a human **cult fanatic** race toward the barges.

The intention of the Six operatives is to cross the river barges as quickly as possible and reach the portal before the characters. The running scouts focus on crossing, though they use their shortwords against any character who jumps into the same or an adjacent barge. The cult fanatic races across the barges as well, but casts *spiritual weapon* as soon as possible. He then uses spells such as *command* or *hold person* on any character who gets a commanding lead.

The river is 85 feet wide and filled with 10-foot-wide barges. At the start of each round, a barge moves either left or right 1d4 × 5 feet, either drifting with the current or being poled against it. The movement of the barges adds an unpredictable element to the characters' attempts to get across the river.

Each barge holds a merchant and 1d4 – 1 customers, and all its area counts as difficult terrain. Characters in one barge can jump to a barge within 5 feet without an ability check. However, each barge is filled with different wares, so that some of the barges require checks by both the characters and the Six operatives to