

exception, bringing the characters back automatically.) Eventually, the characters find the portal leading to Dran Enterprises' headquarters in this way.

As an advanced security measure, the magic of the portal network prevents a creature from gaining access to the headquarters on board *The Maverick* without a certain amount of experience traversing the network. As such, the first three portals the characters access will never lead to the headquarters.

The current destinations of the portals are noted on the Portals table. You can choose encounters you favor, or roll on the table to see where the characters end up, rerolling any locations already visited. For the first three destinations, roll a d6 to prevent the characters from reaching *The Maverick*. For subsequent destinations, roll a d8. Alternatively, you can allow the characters to reach the headquarters ship (see "On Board *The Maverick*" below) any time after they've returned from three other destinations.

With the exception of the Far Realm horror, the specific locations of portal encounters are not detailed here. If the characters ask about where they are in any given encounter, or if they're inclined to venture outside the encounter area, the choice of location is up to you.

## PORTALS

d6 or d8	Portal
1	Far Realm horror
2	Guarded warehouse
3	Raging storm
4	Amid the rigging
5	Pirates versus zombies
6	River barge crossing
7–8	<i>The Maverick</i>

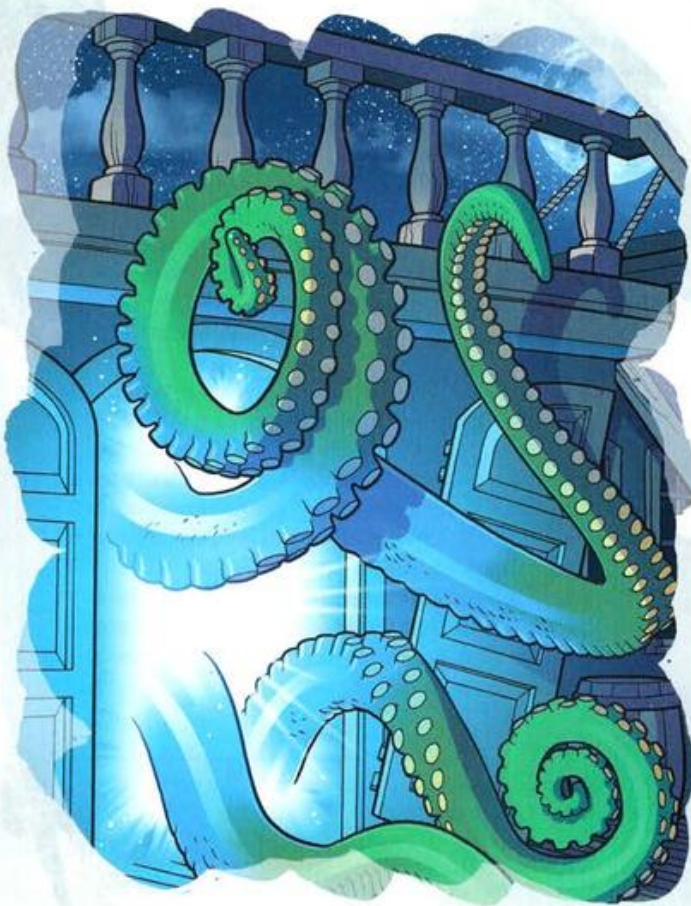
## JUST CUT TO THE END

If the players are particularly clever, they might come up with novel ways to shortcut the search for the headquarters portal. Perhaps they use *detect thoughts* on a Dran Enterprises operative who knows which stone currently marks the headquarters portal. Maybe exceptional role-playing allows them to talk an operative into using that portal while the characters watch. If this happens, the first time the characters try to use the headquarters portal, they are shunted back into the portal nexus.

Any Intelligence (Arcana) check made to read the portal's magic reveals that the way forward is blocked except to those with experience using the portal network. The characters must pass through three other portals first, but you can say that their attempts to access the headquarters portal have locked it down temporarily, preventing the Six from accessing it. Remove one failure point from the party's total.

## PORTAL 1: FAR REALM HORROR

A month ago, an encounter with operatives of the Six led Dran Enterprises to try to fight that group using its own dark magic. Sadly, that attempt failed, and this portal now remains tied to a pocket dimension channeling the power of the Far Realm. Danger lurks on the other side of the door, whose stone has been marked as off limits



for Dran Enterprises employees. If a character opens this door, read:

As the portal opens, a pulse of magic draws you forward. The door vanishes and you stand within an impossible scene. The deck of a ship opens up around you, but the shifting sea to all sides is the color of bruised flesh, roiling beneath a clear sky filled with unfamiliar constellations. Suddenly the door to the ship's main cabin explodes out in a pulse of sickly ethereal light. With a horrid slurping sound, writhing tentacles spill forth through the open doorway and lash toward you.

This self-contained dimension is fueled by the power of the Far Realm. Planar instability prevents characters from moving beyond the immediate area of the deck (including jumping off the ship or fleeing belowdecks).

**Creature.** The mass of writhing tentacles is a Far Realm horror known as a **chaos quadrapod** (see appendix B). It uses its Chaos Cloud at the start of combat, then surges forward to lay into stunned characters. Each round, it focuses its grappling ability on whichever characters dealt it the most damage in the previous round.

If any part of the chaos quadrapod is pushed back through the door, it can be forced to return to its void of origin if the door is closed with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. If this happens, any creatures it has grappled are automatically released.