

Even as your group reaches the aft portal, you see another group appear through the foredeck portal. Five humans surround a tall, purple-skinned creature in black and purple robes—and which has four tentacles where its mouth should be. Oddly, those tentacles are tied together into a stylish handlebar mustache. The creature's companions fire arrows and swing down the rigging to do battle below. As your portal begins to close, the tentacled creature looks up to coldly watch you.

Choose one of the characters to receive a telepathic message from the mind flayer: "I will consume you and your companions. Your end comes soon." More information on this Six agent can be found in "On Board *The Maverick*" below.

#### PORTAL 5: PIRATES VERSUS ZOMBIES

Opening this door brings the characters into the middle of a battle with undead. Map 4.2 shows the setup of the dockside pirate fight.

As you open the iron door, the magic of the portal wraps around you, pulling you onto the stern of a large galleon. The door behind you vanishes as the noise of a raging battle rises. A horde of zombies surrounds a dozen Dran Enterprises pirates, who are fighting for their lives. The ship is moored at an old and decaying dock, with a single building visible against a forest of thick trees. In the trees beyond the building, you can see a freestanding iron door with the oval shape of a portal entrance.

No zombies are present on the land, though they swarm every part of the ship. One group of undead turns in unison in your direction as they spot you. Then a strong voice calls out as the ship's captain, wearing a flamboyant feathered hat and wielding a hammer decorated with seaweed, shouts to be heard. "Rally to me side, me crew! We fight still! Fight for our lives! No curse shall bring us down!"

The captain smashes a zombie with her hammer, then pulls a scroll from a satchel and reads words of power. A thunderous boom shatters the zombies around her, though more quickly press in. Several pirates call out: "Rally to Captain Torwyn!"

The ship's hard-fighting captain is Aela Torwyn (LN female dwarf **priest** with no remaining spell slots and the iconic documancer feature; see "Iconic Faction Features" in appendix B). She brought a curse down on her ship, the *Kraken's Lament*, when she found the hammer she wields. (That hammer uses the statistics for the priest's mace attack.) Dedicated to a dark god, the weapon causes those it slays to eventually rise as undead that seek their killer. Torwyn does not realize this, merely believing that some dark curse affects the ship.



MAP 4.2: PIRATE FIGHT

**Creatures.** The characters have an immediate problem with the group of six **zombies** that initially engage them in battle. Once those are defeated, other options present themselves.

**Quell the Curse.** Any character caught up in the zombie attack who succeeds on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check sees that the undead are drawn to the dark glow of the captain's magic hammer. If Torwyn throws the hammer overboard into the sea, half the zombies follow it, reducing the forces the characters must face and ensuring the pirates gain the upper hand. However, convincing the captain requires a compelling argument and a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

**Keep a Low Profile.** The characters can ignore the plight of the crew and work their way toward the docks and to the portal. This requires moving past three **zombies** and one **ogre zombie**, which are facing off against a lone pirate named Davena (N female human **bandit captain** with 12 hit points remaining). The characters can help Davena or they can sneak past and leave her to her doom with a successful DC 10 group Dexterity (Stealth) check. If the characters haven't made the connection between the hammer and the zombie attack, Davena can be overheard muttering about the curse, and how she's sure it's caused by the hammer Torwyn recovered from an old shipwreck.

**Join In.** The characters can rally to the captain while helping the crew. Pirates Fallinoor, Goldie, Whiskey, and Wemp (all human **berserkers** with 8 hit points re-