

# (ANOTHER) NIGHT AT THE (WHALING) MUSEUM

**by Jason Cordova**

*This mystery features elements from the Brindlewood Bay mysteries “A Night at the (Whaling) Museum” by Calvin Johns, and “The Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soulless” by David Morrison.*

**Complexity: 5**

**Tone: PG-13**



# PRESENTING THE MYSTERY

The Brindlewood Bay Whaling Museum and Education Center, located in the nearby coastal vacation town of Brindlewood Bay, has recently acquired the figurehead and other artifacts from the wreckage of the 19th-century whaling ship, Lodestar. Patrons and staff report strange, possibly supernatural, occurrences ever since the Lodestar exhibit went up. Paranormal, Inc. could use a vacation, so the team has rented rooms at a local bed-and-breakfast, Snowdrop House. As soon as they sort out the paranormal business at the museum, it's a week of fishing tours and antique shopping!

**Establishing Question:** One of you has a great-aunt who lives in Brindlewood Bay. She loves a good mystery and is a member of the local Murder Mavens mystery book club. What's her name?

**Goal:** Identify the supernatural entities haunting the whaling museum and perform a cleansing ritual to get them to move on.

Begin the game with the Investigators checking into Snowdrop House. Your starting Location is "Snowdrop House."

**Paint the Scene:** You haven't been in Brindlewood Bay long, and already you have seen signs that the supernatural may extend beyond the whaling museum. What about Snowdrop House gives you the creeps?

After you settle in at the B&B, an NPC visits. Draw an NPC card.

The NPC knows why you are in town and shares a little-known fact: a museum staff member went missing around the time the Lodestar exhibit went up. Sheriff Wyman Dalrymple, hoping to quell rumors that might dissuade people from vacationing in Brindlewood Bay, has been keeping the disappearance out of the papers.

Begin play by heading to the Brindlewood Bay Whaling Museum; draw a Location prompt.



# LOCATION PROMPTS (HEARTS)

## A **LODESTAR EXHIBIT**

The exhibit is dimly lit and prominently displays a figurehead of a golden angel. Glass cases around the space contain documents and planks of wood.

**Paint the Scene:** The atmosphere changes in a subtle but noticeable way upon entering this room. Describe it.

## 2 **DEEP REAVER EXHIBIT**

Artifacts from the legendary whaling ship fill this space. Audio playing on a loop explains how funds from the Deep Reaver's final voyage helped build the town into what it is today. A metal plaque gives thanks to the Krause family of Boston for funding the Deep Reaver exhibit.

**Paint the Scene:** Detailed drawings on display show the unusual "whale" the Deep Reaver caught in 1877. What's so unusual about this beast?

## 3 **THE HISTORY OF BRINDLEWOOD BAY EXHIBIT**

A single projector plays a video about the history of Brindlewood Bay on a loop inside a small auditorium full of uncomfortable seats.

**Paint the Scene:** If you watch the video long enough, you notice things in the background that the narration doesn't cover but are unnerving or even terrifying to behold. What do you see?



## 4 MUSEUM LOBBY

The lobby is brightly lit and unusually warm. An animatronic 19th-century ship captain greets you.

**Paint the Scene:** As you enter the lobby, how can you tell that money is a little tight right now at the Whaling Museum?

## 5 THE SCRIMSHAW EXHIBIT

The scrimshaws found here are intricate and slender; the art of bored sailors on long voyages.

**Paint the Scene:** This room was the site of a murder several years ago. What subtle evidence of this is present even today?

## 6 THE WHALE ROOM

In the center of the room, suspended on the ceiling from wires, is the skeleton of a sperm whale.

**Paint the Scene:** How do you feel when standing below this titanic creature's remains?

## 7 THE GIFT SHOP

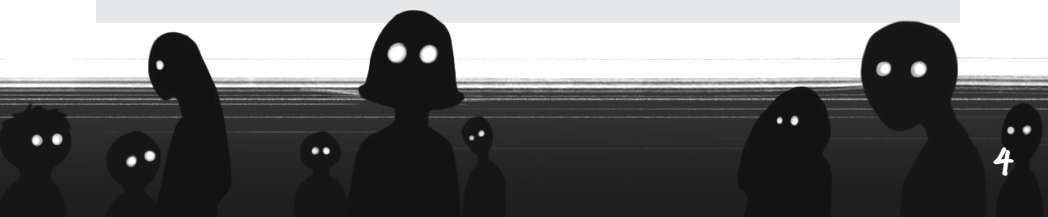
The gift shop is full of knickknacks and tchotchkes, with some local memorabilia and jigsaw puzzles shelved throughout.

**Paint the Scene:** A close friend or significant other back home will love something you find in the shop. What is it? Purchase it and add it to your Backpack.

## 8 STAFF AREA

This room is a break area and storage space with motivational posters featuring cute, imperiled animals lining the walls. A note on the refrigerator reminds employees about the upcoming staff picnic.

**Paint the Scene:** The employees love to make jokes about how much they actually hate whales and whaling history. What evidence in the staff area indicates that?



## 9 CURATOR'S OFFICE

This office contains a bookshelf with brass whale bookends, a sextant and octant paperweight, and beautifully framed star charts on one wall.

**Paint the Scene:** Dr. Berko is overqualified for her job. Looking around, how do you know this?

## 10 THE MAIDEN VOYAGE CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY AREA

This part of the museum is outdoors. It features a reduced-scale replica of a whaling ship, dubbed the Maiden Voyage, that kids can crawl around and explore.

**Paint the Scene:** You would have loved this as a kid. What's so freaking cool about the Maiden Voyage?



# PARANORMAL EVENT PROMPTS (DIAMONDS)

- A**
- You smell the sudden, overwhelming scent of seaspray.
  - You hear a bawdy sea shanty coming from a drain.
  - Someone ejects bilgewater from their mouth as they speak; they don't seem to notice.
- 2**
- An antique rapier floats from its exhibit stand and flies straight at you!
  - A room is briefly transported to the bottom of the ocean and then returns.
  - You hear low weeping coming from an exhibit piece.
- 3**
- A 200-year-old captain's log falls open; it has a perfectly rendered pencil illustration of you in its pages.
  - A shadowy figure appears in your peripheral vision.
  - Glowing eyes stare at you from a dark corner.
- 4**
- Hundreds of rats pour from a hatch.
  - You hear ghostly whalesong in the distance.
  - Enormous, squid-like tentacles appear from a swirling void.



- 5**
- A harpoon with a rusted tip; when you touch it, you feel the pain and fright of being hunted
  - Cold, wet fingers stroke the back of your neck
  - A sensation of intense tightening around your neck
- 6**
- You feel the sudden sensation of drowning.
  - You hear a rasping moan from the darkness.
  - Your arms are suddenly encrusted with barnacles.
- 7**
- Everything in the room becomes weightless as if drifting below the surface of the ocean.
  - A portrait of a 19th-century whaling ship captain speaks a single word: "void."
  - Everything you eat tastes intensely salty.
- 8**
- Surfaces become wet with seawater.
  - Skeletons invite you to dance a jig with them.
  - Your tongue has been replaced by a thick, bioluminescent sea cucumber.
- 9**
- You see a figure draped in seaweed creeping around in a hallway.
  - A pallid sailor with an octopus for a head stares at you from a distance.
  - A whale skeleton lets out a terrible, anguished cry.



10

- A historical video begins to say things that are dark, cryptic, and obviously untrue.
- You feel the sudden sensation of being on a rocking boat with your sea legs giving out beneath you.
- The lights go out and are replaced by floating candlelight.





# NPC PROMPTS (SPADES)

## **A GEORGE POLLARD, MUSEUM OWNER**

Anxious. Comb-over. Ill-fitting suit. George has owned the museum since the last owner couldn't make it work financially. He's not having much more luck.

**Quote:** "This place is a money pit. Don't get me wrong, we do really important work here, and my great-great-great-grandfather served aboard the Deep Reaver, so this is important to me, but the finances are tough, to say the least."

## **2 DR. KATHERINE BERKO, THE CURATOR**

Besppectacled. Tired. Easily annoyed by museum patrons. Dr. Berko is an expert in 19th-century industry whaling, but she considers this job beneath her.

**Quote:** "Of course, in a just world, I'd be making my name at the Smithsonian, or maybe even on a tenure track somewhere in the Ivy League. But this is not a just world, is it?"

## **3 CORNELIUS ABSALOM, A PHILANTHROPIST**

Warm smile. Well-dressed. Always a little distracted. Cornelius is a former finance lawyer and part of Brindlewood Bay's old money scene. He supports the museum, though he's never been particularly fond of how George runs it.

**Quote:** "As if George's mismanagement wasn't already doing a number on this place, now we have ghosts to worry about?"



#### 4 **PERCY UNDERWOOD, A DOCENT**

Young and good-looking. Always seen in a nautical-themed costume different from the one he just wore. Comically uninformed about whaling. Percy has lots of jobs around town and seems to know something about everyone.

**Quote:** “Whales? Yeah... whales. Really big, you know. I’m sure it was hard to catch them. You’d probably need a monstrous net, huh?”

#### 5 **LARA SANCHEZ, A PODCASTER**

Trendy. Gutsy. Lots of black clothing. Host of the Small Town: Big Crime! podcast. Lara was in town chasing the story of a murder at Snowdrop House when she was distracted by rumors of a missing museum staffer.

**Quote:** “The young man approached me, his gait measured and determined. He was after information, but what? Hi, before you say anything could you sign this waiver?”

#### 6 **ZAK THOMAS, A GHOST BRO**

Chiseled facial features. Oversized hoodie. Fuckboy haircut. Zak stars on the Ghost Bro Mystery Show, a mega-popular YouTube channel where pretty doofuses engage in hijinks while pretending to hunt ghosts.

**Quote (into his smartphone camera):** “Hey, guys! I’m here at the Brindlewood Bay Whaling Museum and Education Center, and I already have a chill running down my spine! The level of paranormal activity here is, like, so high, you guys. Seriously. This is going to be lit. Before you watch any further, be sure to like and subscribe!”



## 7 **ELEANOR RIPLEY, A CURATOR FROM ANOTHER MUSEUM**

Costume jewelry. Streak of gray. Colorful scarf. Eleanor runs the newly-established Lighthouse Museum in the nearby hamlet of Mucky Point. She's here to steal ideas.

**Quote:** "Oh, me? I'm from Mucky Point. I'm not surprised you've never heard of it—it's barely a town at all, but we have one of the oldest lighthouses on the Eastern Seaboard, so that's something. And you think Brindlewood Bay is creepy? Ha! You haven't seen anything until you've spent a night in our sunbleached little burg."

## 8 **WALLACE CODSWALLOP, A SECURITY GUARD**

Vacant eyes. Smells of the sea. Speaks in riddles and proclamations. No one can remember when or how Wallace came to work at the museum. George and Dr. Berko can't even recall a Wallace Codswallop unless you specifically point him out, at which point they will remember.

**Quote:** "I have traveled many places and seen many things. I have dined at the table of Lord Poseidon and made love to a forlorn siren. The ocean, she is my home, and she will someday be my watery grave. I long for the days when my body will nourish the creatures down below, and in that way, I shall live forever, eh?"



## 9 **MAGDALENA HAWTHORNE, A SPIRITUALIST**

Knowing smile. Constantly shuffling a deck of tarot cards. Ridiculously large silver cross around her neck. Magdalena is a spiritualist from Los Angeles, but she regularly visits her sister-in-law in Brindlewood Bay. She's here to help quiet the spirits in the museum.

**Quote:** "I arrived earlier today. I drew a card as soon as I crossed the threshold into the museum lobby: the Moon. Tonight will be about learning the deeper mysteries, I think. Who understands the dark ocean better than Lady Moon? Are you staying at Snowdrop House, too?"

## 10 **SHERIFF WYMAN DALRYMPLE, A LOCAL AUTHORITY**

Jowly. Paunchy. Speaks with a permanently exasperated tone. Sheriff Dalrymple is the most prominent member of "old Brindlewood Bay"—the people who have been around since before it was a tourist spot. He's very protective of its reputation.

**Quote:** "I've heard there are ghosts here at the museum. Well, at least it's not another murder, and that's something to be thankful for."



# CLUE PROMPTS (CLUBS)

**A**

- A love letter, never sent
- Stacks of unpaid bills
- A diary entry: "I just can't take it anymore."

**2**

- Money missing from the donation box
- A pile of bones in an unusual place
- A smear of blood

**3**

- A heated argument between two NPCs
- A hastily-discarded pirate costume
- Staff photo with someone's face drawn over with a skull

**4**

- A book about the "hidden history" of Brindlewood Bay, written in an unrecognizable language
- A harpoon covered in a slick substance (pick one: blood, fish oil, motor oil, or something else)
- A corner covered in occult symbols

**5**

- A performance review with the words "Final Warning!!!" in bright red ink
- An empty glass display case that used to contain the uniform the Lodestar captains uniform
- A note from a loan shark to George warning him to "pay up or else!"



- 6**
- A pirate's hook found among someone's personal effects
  - A stack of unopened correspondence from a British research university
  - A bottle of pills in an unusual place
- 7**
- Rumors about a museum staff Christmas party that got a little out of hand
  - A forged death certificate
  - A cease-and-desist letter
- 8**
- A shattered mirror
  - Rumors about the strange, untimely death of the previous museum owner
  - Rumors about the strange, untimely death of Dr. Berko's late husband
- 9**
- Dozens of unreturned phone calls from the Brindlewood Beacon newspaper
  - Evidence that an American history professor from Boston who went missing two years ago was last seen at the whaling museum
  - A book of folk magic written by Brindlewood Bay residents in 1888
- 10**
- A circle of half-burnt candles in an unusual place
  - A ship-in-a-bottle depicting the Lodestar, but with a key feature missing
  - A tarot card, The Devil, in an unusual place

