



## PIRATE FORT

This small tropical island appears unassuming on the map, showing up as barely a speck, but its location along a key shipping route combined with its large, protected bay has made it incredibly valuable.

In a matter of only a few years a thriving town has appeared, as well as several large estates, farmland and perhaps most importantly of all, the Fort that overlooks the bay entrance, protecting it from rival political factions and pirates. Whoever controls the island controls all the trade that passes through, and the commission that comes with it.

However, a few weeks ago, a well-trained group of pirates took the fort in a sudden, unexpected skirmish. They are currently holed up inside, firing at any who approach by land or sea. They have sent their demands, effectively holding the bay to ransom. Unless all current and future trade fees are handed over to them, they will sink any ships attempting to enter the bay. Negotiations are at a stalemate, with neither side

willing to give ground, and trade ships are waiting out of range until peace is made, unable to offload their cargo.

The trade council is desperately seeking aid from outsiders. Their military force was greatly reduced during the initial raid on the fort, while the trade ships were unwilling to risk their soldiers and happy to wait out the situation to deal with the victors. There is also a growing fear that sending in a large-scale attack would cause the pirates to start firing on the town itself.

### ADVENTURE LEVEL

This **Fifth Edition/Black Flag Roleplaying** compatible adventure is designed for three to five players with an average party level (APL) of 2. However, you may scale the adventure to fit parties of 1st level to 10th level.

## ADVENTURE HOOK

This adventure is designed to be used as a one-shot or placed into an ongoing campaign. You may use it as a random encounter for characters as they travel through a coastal area. Alternatively, the **Pirate Fort Adventure Hooks** table offers quest goals that will have the characters seek the fort out.

### PIRATE FORT ADVENTURE HOOKS

D8	HOOK
1	<b>The Trade Council's Plea:</b> The trade council, desperate to regain control of the bay and save the town's economy, sends an urgent message to the characters, offering a significant reward for clearing out the pirates and rescuing Captain Rios. The situation is growing dire as negotiations have stalled, and the threat of the pirates turning their cannons on the town looms ever closer.
2	<b>A Missing Shipment:</b> One of the ships stranded just outside the bay is carrying a valuable cargo belonging to a powerful noble or merchant who personally seeks out the characters. They're willing to pay handsomely for the party to break the pirate blockade and ensure their goods are safely delivered.
3	<b>Old Rivalries:</b> The characters have crossed paths with Captain Varro Bloodtide before, and this is a chance for them to settle old scores. Whether it's a personal vendetta or unfinished business, taking down the pirate captain is the perfect opportunity for revenge.
4	<b>The Promise of Treasure:</b> Rumors spread that the pirates have amassed a hidden cache of wealth in the fortress, plundering from trade ships and raiding coastal settlements. Adventurers eager for riches are lured in by the promise of gold and loot if they can wrest it from the pirate's stronghold.
5	<b>Rescue Mission:</b> The family of Captain Rios, desperate for her safe return, seeks out the party. They offer not just gold but valuable connections within the island's power structure if the characters can rescue her from captivity before it's too late.
6	<b>The Merchant's Guild:</b> The island's influential merchant guild hires the characters as mercenaries, fearing that a prolonged standoff will devastate their trade networks. They're less concerned with the council's politics and more focused on keeping their business intact, offering a hefty payment to anyone who can resolve the situation—by any means necessary.
7	<b>Secret Orders:</b> A rival faction sends a covert agent to contact the party, offering a deal to destabilize the island further by sabotaging any negotiations and taking out both the pirates and the council's forces. They believe the chaos will benefit their own interests, and they're willing to offer the characters a significant reward for their role in the scheme.
8	<b>The Pirate's Bounty:</b> An ambitious bounty hunter tracks down the party with a proposal: join forces to bring in Captain Bloodtide dead or alive. The bounty is substantial, and splitting it could be profitable, but it's up to the characters to decide if they're willing to work with a ruthless hunter who has their own agenda.

## RESEARCHING THE FORTRESS

Although time is of the essence, the characters can spend up to five days of downtime researching the fortress and its current inhabitants. At the end of the duration, a character makes an INT (History) check to discover what they learned (see the Researching Downtime section on page 237 of the Tales of the Valiant Player's Guide). A character receives a -1 to their check for each day less than five they spend researching the fortress (minimum of 1 day) but receives a +1 bonus for each additional character with an INT score of 12 or better that helps with the check. After referencing the Researching Resolution table, roll on the **Pirate Fort Clues** table below to determine what the characters learn.

### PIRATE FORT CLUES

#### D8 CLUE

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | The fortress has two main entrances, a gate at the north and a passage in its western side. Both are heavily guarded.                           |
| 2 | Captian Bloodtide is no mere pirate—he's also a trained magic-user.   |
| 3 | Bloodtide and his crew are holding the fortress' leader, Captain Allessandra Rios, in the brig in the southeastern corner of the tower.         |
| 4 | Captain Bloodtide often uses undead as his servants. In fact, his own brother, James Bloodtide, is a ghost that works with the pirates.         |
| 5 | Captain Bloodtide is a prideful person. He is likely holed up in Captain Allessandra Rios' quarters in the northwestern corner of the fortress. |
| 6 | The pirates are well-trained. If one of them spots an intruder, they will sound the alarm, and the rest will come running to their aid.         |
| 7 | Captain Bloodtide and his crew have raided countless ships and coastal settlements. Likely, he has a sizable stash of booty somewhere near him. |
| 8 | There are at least seven pirate guards on the beach plus another six or seven watching the battlements.   |

## PIRATE FORT

The fort, officially named Fort San Dario, was constructed by the Free Merchants' League trade council just a few years ago as part of their plan to secure dominance over the lucrative shipping routes passing through the bay. Built with the finest stonework and defensive design borrowed from the southern realms, its construction was overseen by Captain Alessandra Rios, a legendary naval commander turned fortmaster. The fort quickly became a linchpin in the League's control of the region, its walls guarding trade and keeping pirates and rival factions at bay. However, everything changed when the Black Sail Corsairs, a notorious pirate clan led by the cunning and ruthless Admiral Varro Bloodtide, executed a bold and deadly assault on the fort. With a mix of treachery and precision strikes, they seized the stronghold in a matter of hours. Now holed up within its walls, the Black Sail Corsairs hold the fort as a bargaining chip, daring anyone to challenge their control over the bay.

### GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, the pirate fort's areas all have the following features in common.

**Alarm.** All of the pirates here know better than to take on a well-armed party alone. Unless the alarm has already been sounded, at least one pirate per encounter breaks away from their group to reach the next closest group of pirates, shouting an alarm as they go. If the alarm is sounded, all creatures with the pirate suffix (see below) gain the following benefits:

- They can't be surprised so long as they are conscious.
- They gain a +5 bonus to initiative.
- Other creatures don't gain advantage on attack rolls against a pirate as a result of being unseen by the pirate.
- When possible, a pirate takes cover, aiming their ranged weapons at the most obvious entrances to their area.

The **Pirate Locations** table gives the starting location for every pirate in the fort.

## PIRATE LOCATIONS

AREA	ENCOUNTER
1	2 PIRATE THUGS
2	3 PIRATE BANDITS, 2 PIRATE MASTIFFS, 1 PIRATE OGRE
3	2 PIRATE THUGS
6	Ghost Jim
7	3 PIRATE BANDITS
10	Captain Bloodtide
11	1 AWAKENED PARROT, 1 PIRATE BANDIT, 3 PIRATE GOBLINS, the Zombie Man

**Architecture.** The fortress features a classic colonial design, with thick, sun-bleached stone walls and low, angular bastions optimized for defense. The surrounding battlements rise 20 feet high, offering strategic sightlines across the bay and coastline. Its triangular platforms and cannon posts are positioned to cover multiple approaches, while narrow slits and arched windows offer protection without compromising visibility, giving the fort an imposing yet functional presence amidst the tropical landscape.

**Locked Doors and Chests.** A locked door or chest requires a successful DC 15 DEX check using proficiency in thieves' tools to unlock it. Breaking open a locked door or chest requires a successful DC 15 STR check.

- Locked doors are made of wood banded with iron, and have AC 15, 18 HP, are vulnerable to fire damage, and are immune to poison and psychic damage.
- Locked chests have AC 15, 10 HP, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

**Monsters and NPCs.** All of the monsters and NPCs featured in this adventure are pulled from the **Tales of the Valiant Monster Vault** from Kobold Press. However, their challenge ratings are equal to similarly-named creatures from the Fifth Edition Monster Manual.

**Pirates.** Many of the creatures in this adventure have the pirate prefix. This prefix is only so you know that the pirate creature is allied with the other pirates in this adventure and dresses accordingly. All humanoids with the pirate

prefix can use their bonus action on each of their turns to load or aim a siege weapon (see below). Otherwise, no change is made to the pirate creature's stat block.

**Siege Weapons.** The map of the Pirate Fort shows numerous siege weapons—ballistae and cannons—positioned all around. It takes three actions to fire a siege weapon—one to load it, one to aim it, and one to fire it. A humanoid with the pirate prefix can use its bonus action to load or aim a siege weapon.

- **Ballista.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* The aimer's proficiency bonus plus their DEX modifier to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d10) piercing damage.
- **Cannon.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* The aimer's proficiency bonus plus their DEX modifier to hit, range 600/2,400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage.

## ARRIVAL

The first time the characters reach the fortress, read the following aloud.

The fort looms above you, a squat yet imposing structure of sun-bleached stone perched atop a rugged cliff. The triangular cannon posts jut outward like jagged teeth, their barrels trained ominously on the waters below and the narrow strip of coastline that leads up to the stronghold. Despite its modest height—just a single level—the fortress dominates the landscape, its thick walls built to withstand both the relentless ocean winds and the blast of rival artillery. At its heart lies a wide, open bailey, now crawling with movement as pirates reinforce their defenses, flags snapping in the salty breeze. The fort's weathered stone façade, once a symbol of security and control, now bears signs of recent battle—scorch marks, hastily patched breaches, and banners of conquest fluttering where once flew the insignias of the town's rulers. From this vantage, it's clear why the fort has become such a strategic nightmare; its commanding position offers the pirates a near-perfect view of any approach by sea or land.



## SNEAKING INTO THE FORT

Expertly trained pirates heavily guard the fort. If the characters aren't careful, they could alert the entire fortress to their presence. Plus, the pirates atop the battlements aren't afraid to use the siege weapons they have at their disposal (see Siege Weapons in General Features).

Approaching the fortress from the west will almost certainly lead to disaster. Sneaking up either earthen ramp (areas 1 and 3) without being seen or heard requires a successful DC 18 DEX (Stealth) check from at least half of the party.

Because the fortress sits atop a tall cliff overlooking a violent sea, approaching from the east only requires a successful DC 8 DEX (Stealth) check. However, the cliff faces aren't easy to climb, requiring a successful DC 13 STR (Athletics) check. From there, the characters must climb the battlements, requiring another successful DC 15 STR (Athletics) check.

## KEYED LOCATIONS

The following areas are keyed to the map of the Pirate Fort, as shown on the next page.

### OVERWATCH

The pirates in area 11c keep a watch over the north and west sides of the fortress.

### 1 - NATURAL RAMP

A natural earthen ramp winds its way up the rocky hillside, cutting back and forth through clusters of swaying palm trees and dense tropical foliage. The path is well-trodden, with exposed roots and patches of packed dirt showing signs of frequent use. Despite the lush surroundings, there's an air of tension as armed guards patrol the switchbacks, their weapons gleaming in the dappled sunlight filtering through the palm fronds.

**1a—Encounter: Pirate Guards.** A pair of PIRATE THUGS patrol the ramp here. Both pirates carry coin purses with 5 sp each.

### AREA 1A ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	2 PIRATE THUGS
3–4	2 PIRATE VETERANS
5–7	3 PIRATE VETERANS
8–10	4 PIRATE VETERANS

**1b—Trap: Tripwire Alarm.** A tripwire is hidden in the sand at this point of the ramp. Spotting the tripwire requires a successful DC 13 WIS (Perception) check. Removing the tripwire without setting the alarm off requires a successful DC 15 DEX (Sleight of Hand) check. If a character passes the tripwire without disarming it, the tripwire tugs on bells hidden in the trees that flank the ramp. This sounds the alarm (see General Features).

# PIRATE FORT

ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



TOM CARTOS



TOM CARTOS

## 2 - MAIN ENTRANCE

The main entrance on the north side of the fort is marked by a massive iron-bound gate set within thick, arched stone walls. Flanked by weathered bastions, the gate is formidable, its surface pitted with age and reinforced by heavy wooden beams. Above, guards pace along the battlements, eyes sharp for any sign of approach, with the occasional glint of steel catching the sun as they shift their weapons. Just to the left of the gate, a small outdoor encampment has been set up, its canvas tents clustered beneath the shadow of the fortress walls. Here, a trio of cannon posts sits positioned on the cliffside, their barrels pointed eastward over the ocean, ready to rain fire on any incoming ships.

**2a—Encounter: Pirate Dogs.** A pair of **MASTIFFS** fight over a bone right before the gate. They are trained to bark at anyone who isn't a member of the Black Sail Corsairs. Their barks will sound the alarm.

**2a—Obstacle: Barred Gate.** The gate is barred from within the bailey. A successful DC 22 STR check breaks the gate down. Otherwise, the gate has AC 16, 30 HP, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

**2a—Feature: Crane.** A rope from the crane on the battlements above the gate dangles above the grounds directly in front of the gate. If the characters can't get into the fortress through one of its two entrances, they may be able to climb this rope to reach the battlements.

**2b—Encounter: Rogre the Ogre's Tent.** A **PIRATE OGRE** named Rogre (pronounced Roger) uses this small tent (relative to his size, at least) to laze away the days. Only the sound of the alarm will wake him from his siesta.

### AREA 2A ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	1 <b>PIRATE OGRE</b>
3–4	1 <b>PIRATE TROLL</b>
5–7	1 <b>PIRATE ASSASSIN</b>
8–10	4 <b>PIRATE YOUNG RED DRAGON</b> polymorphed into an ogre

**2b—Treasure: Rogre's Chest.** A thorough search of Rogre's tent and a successful DC 15 INT (Investigation) check reveal a small locked chest (see Picking Locks in General Features). There are 15 gp, 30 sp, and a silver medallion set with a bloodstone worth 100 gp inside.

### AREA 2B TREASURE

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	15 gp, 30 sp, and a silver medallion set with a bloodstone worth 100 gp
3–4	150 gp, 300 sp, and an <i>amulet of proof against detection and location</i>
5–7	150 pp, 300 gp, and an <i>amulet of health</i>
8–10	300 pp, 600 gp, and an <i>amulet of health</i>

**2c—Encounter: Rats.** A **SWARM OF RATS** crawls through the filth and rubbish of this tent.

**2d—Encounter: Pirate Guards.** A trio of **PIRATE BANDITS** use this tent while they're stationed here. In addition to the alarm, loud noises in area 2 will draw their attention.

### AREA 2D ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	3 <b>PIRATE BANDITS</b>
3–4	2 <b>PIRATE SCOUTS</b>
5–7	3 <b>PIRATE SPIES</b>
8–10	3 <b>PIRATE BANDIT CAPTAINS</b>

**2d—Treasure: Pirate Booty.** There is a small locked chest in the tent. The chest contains 20 gp, 50 sp, and a silvered dagger worth 100 gp.

### AREA 2D TREASURE

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	20 gp, 50 sp, and a silvered dagger worth 100 gp
3–4	200 gp, 500 sp, and a +1 <i>dagger</i>
5–7	200 pp, 500 gp, and a <i>dagger of venom</i>
8–10	300 pp, 750 gp, and a <i>dagger of venom</i>

### 3 - EASTERN ENTRANCE

A steep earthen ramp approaches the eastern entrance to the fortress, its surface uneven and slick with moss, making each step treacherous. The ramp leads to a weathered stone staircase, climbing sharply to a raised platform just beneath the looming battlements. The narrow entrance here is more of a side access, reinforced with thick wooden beams and iron hinges, built for defense. A heavy ballista is mounted on the platform, its massive spear-like bolt aimed directly toward the western beach.

**3a—Encounter: Pirate Guards.** A pair of **PIRATE THUGS** patrol the ramp here. Both pirates carry coin purses with 5 sp each.

#### AREA 3A ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	2 pirate <b>THUGS</b>
3–4	2 pirate <b>VETERANS</b>
5–7	3 pirate <b>VETERANS</b>
8–10	4 pirate <b>VETERANS</b>

**3b—Obstacle: Locked Doors.** Both doors leading to the bailey (Area 4) are locked.

### 4 - BAILEY

The bailey is a sprawling, open courtyard ringed by thick stone walls and dotted with numerous doorways leading into the inner sections of the fortress. The ground is packed dirt, worn down by the heavy foot traffic of the pirates now occupying the space. Against the eastern wall stands a large tent, its canvas flapping lazily in the breeze; inside, you can see crates, maps, and other supplies, suggesting it serves as a command center or war room. To the south, a makeshift common area has been set up with rough wooden tables surrounding a large spit, where something slowly turns over an open flame. Barrels and crates are stacked nearby, holding provisions, weaponry, and the spoils of recent raids. A sturdy stone staircase winds up toward the southeastern tower, offering access to the battlements above.



**Obstacle: Locked Door.** The door that leads to areas 7 and 10 are locked.

**4a—Trick: Something in the Crate.** The small tent right inside the gate has a pair of stools and a crate of crossbow bolts. The first time the characters approach this tent, the bolt crate starts rattling. If the characters open it, they discover a harmless **RAT**.

**4a—Treasure: Arrows.** The arrow crate contains 100 crossbow bolts.

**4b—Trick: Supply Sergeant's Tent.** The large tent against the eastern wall was the supply sergeants. When the pirates invaded, they took the sergeant hostage and chained him to a post inside the tent. The first time the characters approach this tent, they see someone standing inside it. A successful DC 15 WIS (Perception) or INT (Investigation) check made outside the tent reveals the nature of the person inside the tent. The sergeant is a guard with only 1 HP left. If the characters free him, he asks for aid. Somewhat craven, he would prefer to run away from the fortress rather than join the characters.

Besides the captured sergeant, this tent has nothing of value.

**4c—Feature: Common Area.** When the pirates aren't at their stations, they gather around the tables and fire pits at the sound end of the encampment.

**4c—Treasure: Storage Crates.** The crates and barrels against the south wall hold building supplies.





## 5 - STORAGE

The storage room is shrouded in darkness, with only the faintest sliver of light creeping under the doors, casting long, thin shadows across the floor. Stacked crates and barrels clutter the space, their rough surfaces barely visible in the gloom.

**Encounter: Bone Bags.** Three **SKELETONS**—brought to unlife by Bloodtide’s dark magic—stand vigilant in the center of this supply room. Failure to speak the password, “Blood is thicker than water,” causes the skeletons to immediately attack any creature who passes through this area.

### AREA 5 ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	3 <b>SKELETONS</b>
3–4	2 <b>SPECTERS</b>
5–7	3 <b>WILL-O’-WISPS</b>
8–10	3 <b>PIRATE WIGHTS</b>

**Treasure: Trade Goods.** Twenty containers are stored here, each filled with valuable trade goods (whatever you feel appropriate to your campaign). Each container is worth 100 gp and weighs 50 lb.

## 6 - BRIG

The brig in the southeastern tower is a grim, suffocating place where the stench of waste and sweat clings to the air like a thick, greasy film. Two barred cells stand at the chamber’s far end, their iron doors rusted and creaking with disuse. The space leading to the cells is lined with crude torture devices—rusted manacles, a blood-stained rack, and twisted implements that gleam faintly in the dim light from a single, flickering lantern.

**Encounter: Ghost Jim.** Bloodtide’s deceased brother, James, died a few years ago and returned as a **GHOST**. Now “Ghost Jim” acts as the pirates’ torturer and jailer, using his ability to terrify to get much-needed information out of the pirates’ captives.

**Obstacle: Locked Doors.** The doors to the two cells are locked. Ghost Jim keeps the keys hidden on a hook under the torture rack in the southwestern corner of the room. Finding the keys requires a successful DC 13 INT (Investigation) check. Each cell door has AC 19, 15 hp, resistance to slashing damage, and immunity to piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

**6a—Encounter: Captives.** Two of the fort’s original **GUARDS** are kept locked up. Ghost Jim’s

Horrify attack has turned their hair gray. If the characters free them, they quickly join in the fight to recover the captured fortress. Unfortunately, they have no weapons or armor.

**6b—Encounter: Captain Alessandra Rios.** This cell holds the fort's leader, Captain Alessandra Rios (**VETERAN**). If Ghost Jim is hiding when the characters arrive, she quickly shouts a warning that he's probably here somewhere but invisible (ethereal). Once freed, she eagerly joins the fight. Unfortunately, she has no weapons or armor.

## 7 - ARMORY

**Obstacle: Locked Door.** The door that connects this room to area 4 is locked.

The armory is dimly lit by a lone flickering torch and the thin beam of light from a narrow, grated window set high in the wall. Shadows dance across the rough stone, revealing a sturdy shelf stocked with dented helmets and tarnished breastplates, each bearing the scars of past battles. In the center of the room, rows of spears and crossbows stand ready on wooden racks, their points gleaming ominously in the faint light. The southern wall is lined with swords and shortbows, neatly arranged yet showing signs of frequent use, their grips worn smooth. A heavy wooden door leads south, its iron hinges slightly rusted, adding to the room's atmosphere of quiet tension.

**Encounter: Pirates.** Three **PIRATE BANDITS** are here, taking inventory of the stolen weapons stored within.

### AREA 7 ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	3 <b>PIRATE BANDITS</b>
3–4	2 <b>PIRATE SCOUTS</b>
5–7	3 <b>PIRATE SPIES</b>
8–10	3 <b>PIRATE BANDIT CAPTAINS</b>

**Treasure: Arms and Armor.** This room contains four suits of breastplate armor, seven spears, three crossbows, four longswords, and six shortbows.

## 8 - POWDER ROOM

**Obstacle: Locked Door.** The door that connects this room to area 7 is locked.

The powder room is pitch-black; the only sound is the faint creak of wood as the door swings shut behind you. Shelves along the southern wall are stacked with cannonballs, their shapes barely discernible in the darkness. In the northeastern corner, two large, ornate iron trunks sit silently.

**Treasure: Powder Kegs.** The two locked chests are magically fireproof. The larger chest holds six gunpowder kegs and the smaller chest holds four.

Setting fire to a container full of gunpowder can cause it to explode, dealing 24 (7d6) fire damage to creatures within 10 feet of it. A successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage. Setting fire to an ounce of gunpowder causes it to flare for 1 round, shedding bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

Each powder keg is worth 250 gp and weighs 20 lb.

## 9 - BARRACKS

The barracks are dimly lit, with only a sputtering torch in a wall sconce and faint light filtering in through a pair of narrow windows. The room feels cramped and oppressive, with four rough-hewn beds lining the walls, each accompanied by a scuffed foot locker at its base. The air carries the scent of sweat and worn leather, mingled with the faint tang of salt from the sea breeze that sneaks in through cracks in the stone. Beneath the eastern window, a short dresser stands unevenly on the stone floor, its drawers half-open and cluttered with rumpled clothing and tarnished buckles.

**Treasure: Footlockers.** All four of the footlockers are locked. Each footlocker contains the contents of an explorer's pack minus the food and rations.

## 10 - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

**Obstacle: Locked Door.** The door that connects this room to area 4 is locked.

The captain's quarters are spacious and surprisingly well-lit, a stark contrast to the gloom of the rest of the fortress. A grand four-poster bed dominates the room, its dark wood polished and draped with richly embroidered curtains. Against the north wall, a dresser holds a finely crafted torch that casts a warm glow across the space, while a scabbarded longsword rests atop it, ready for use. A tall, impressive armoire stands nearby, its carved doors slightly ajar, revealing neatly hung clothes of fine quality. Under the window in the southwestern corner, a cluttered desk is surrounded by stacks of books spilling off a jam-packed bookshelf, hinting at a mind busy with both strategy and study. The wooden floor is mostly hidden beneath a large, white-furred dire wolf rug, its glassy eyes staring lifelessly into the room. The scent of leather, paper, and faintly of pipe smoke lingers in the air, giving this space an air of command and quiet luxury amidst the chaos outside.

**Encounter: Captain Bloodtide.** The leader of the Black Sail Corsairs, Captain Bloodtide, resides here. Captain Bloodtide is a pirate **MAGE APPRENTICE** and is joined by three **SKELETONS** who obey his every command. Bloodtide can use his Reckless Show-off feature without seeing a fellow apprentice or his magical teacher at the start of his turn. A megalomaniac through and through, Captain Bloodtide fights to the death.

### AREA 10 ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	1 <b>PIRATE MAGE APPRENTICE</b> and 3 <b>SKELETONS</b>
3–4	1 <b>PIRATE PRIEST</b> and 3 <b>SKELETONS</b>
5–7	1 <b>PIRATE MAGE</b> and 3 <b>SKELETONS</b>
8–10	1 <b>PIRATE MAGE</b> and 2 <b>PIRATE WIGHTS</b>

**Trap and Treasure: Bloodtide's Booty.** A chest at the foot of Bloodtide's bed is wide



open, revealing an array of coins and gems. A pressure plate at the bottom of the chest “zeroes out” the current weight of the chest; if anything is removed from the chest without first disabling the pressure plate, a trap is triggered. Spotting the pressure plate requires a successful DC 16 INT (Investigation) check. Disarming it requires a successful DC 16 DEX check using proficiency in thieves' tools. Once triggered, the trap creates a 10-foot cube of fire directly in front of it. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 DEX save, taking 3d6 fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful one.

The chest contains 50 pp, 1,000 gp, 3,000 sp, and six bloodstones worth 50 gp each.

### AREA 10 TREASURE

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	50 pp, 1,000 gp, 3,000 sp, and six bloodstones worth 50 gp each
3–4	100 pp, 1,500 gp, 5,000 sp, and five red garnets worth 100 gp each
5–7	500 pp, 3,000 gp, 10,000 sp, and 2 fire opals worth 1,000 gp each
8–10	500 pp, 6,000 gp, 15,000 sp, and a ruby worth 5,000 gp

**Development: Bloodtide's Undead Allies.** If Bloodtide dies, all undead creatures in the fortress immediately collapse into piles of bones or fade away.

## 11 - BATTLEMENTS

These battlements are an impressive sight, paved with smooth white tile stonework, giving the fort a striking contrast against the rough, gray stone of the surrounding walls. The three triangular corners bristle with ballistae and cannons aimed out toward any approaching threats. A sturdy crane is mounted along the northern wall, directly above the gate, its thick rope coiled and ready to haul supplies and goods up from below. At the eastern side of the fortress, a narrow walkway offers access to a lone tower overlooking the water—it is equipped with a lone ballista. The southeastern corner, raised five feet higher than the rest, is round and fortified with six heavy cannons trained on the sea, ready to unleash a devastating barrage. The air is thick with the scent of salt and oil, and the creak of ropes and wood mingles with the distant crash of waves below.

**11a—Encounter: Goblin Cannoneers.** A trio of **PIRATE GOBLINS** maintain the cannons on the round, southeastern corner of the battlements. So long as there are at least two standing, the goblins use one of the cannons to make attacks. If two goblins die, the third surrenders.

### AREA 11A ENCOUNTERS

APL	ENCOUNTER
1–2	3 <b>PIRATE GOBLINS</b>
3–4	3 <b>PIRATE HOBGBOLINS</b>
5–7	3 <b>PIRATE BUGBEARS</b>
8–10	3 <b>BUGBEAR CHAMPIONS</b>

**11b—Encounter: Awakened Parrot.** An awakened parrot (use the **RAVEN** stat block) keeps watch on the southwestern tower. Too small to fight, the intelligent bird will flee or surrender if threatened with violence.

**11c—Encounter: Pirate Lookout.** A pirate bandit keeps watch over the northwestern end of the battlements. Equipped with a spyglass, her job is to ensure no intruders make their way up the earthen ramp at the north end of the fort.

**11d—Feature: Crane.** The crane's rope dangles above the grounds directly in front of the gate.

If the characters can't into the fortress through one of its two entrances, they may be able to climb this rope to reach the battlements.

**11e—Encounter: The Zombie Man.** A pirate **FANATICAL CULTIST** named the **Zombie Man** stands at the northeastern corner of the battlements, watching the sea. The **Zombie Man** uses his magic to weaken the characters. His **Unholy Brand** feature grants an advantage on attack rolls made by creatures with the pirate prefix as well as fiends and cultists.

**11f—Feature: Climbing the Tower.** One of the best ways to sneak into the fortress without being noticed is to climb the eastern ballista tower. Doing so without a rope requires a successful DC 15 **STR** (Athletics) check. Sneaking over the walkway without being seen requires a successful DC 12 **DEX** (Stealth) check.

## AFTERMATH

Retaking the fort is no simple task. The defenses are formidable, and the pirates are both ruthless and well-prepared. Should the characters succeed in storming the stronghold and rescuing Captain Rios, they are richly rewarded by the island's trade council with 2,000 gold pieces and the enduring gratitude of the wealthy merchants and landowners who rely on the bay's prosperity. Control of the island is restored, and trade flows freely once more. However, if Captain Varro Bloodtide manages to escape, he swears a bitter oath of vengeance, vowing to hunt the party until the end of their days, turning every future sea voyage into a perilous venture. Should Bloodtide fall, his brother—a pirate equally cunning and vengeful—steps forward to continue the vendetta.

On the other hand, if the characters fail to take back the fort, the consequences are dire. The trade council loses control of this crucial outpost, leaving the bay and surrounding town at the mercy of the pirates. Trade grinds to a halt, the once-thriving town begins to wither, and political factions from rival ports move in to exploit the weakened control of the island. The characters might find themselves haunted by their failure as the island descends into chaos, with the pirates growing bolder and the town's fate hanging by a thread. Ω