



Starfrost Island

An Adventure for Legendary Lives

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Background

Some years ago, off the coast of Tourmaline, a corsair vessel named The Starfrost robbed an elven trade ship of its treasures. Among the jewels was a beautiful silver tiara, a gift from the easterling kingdom to the Elf Queen. Set with seven magical stones, the headpiece was worth a fortune. After sinking the elven ship, the corsairs turned for home, but a freak wind storm (summoned, perhaps, by the curse of the elves) blew them off course. The waves battered the ship until it sank. Only two corsairs managed to swim to a small island; one of them had the tiara stuffed in his shirt. The rest of the treasure was lost.

The corsairs decided to build a skiff and sail to the mainland. Fearful that the tiara would be lost during the uncertain voyage, they agreed to bury it on the island and return for it when they were better equipped. Since neither trusted the other, they bent the fine filigree work, and broke the crown in two. Separately they went into the forest, where each hid half. The corsairs met on the beach at daybreak and sailed for the mainland. Many days later, they were found floating offshore, nearly dead from exposure. One of them had just enough strength to gasp out his story, and then they both died. From that day on the island has been called Starfrost, after the corsair ship that was destroyed on its rocky shore.

Involving the Players

The players may become involved for a variety of reasons. For new players, the lure of ready treasure may be enough. An elven character may wish to regain the tiara for his beloved queen. A corsair could be related to one of the crew members, and plans to claim the tiara as his rightful property. Mages might seek the tiara for its

magical properties, and jewelry collectors could be overcome by greed.

Whatever their individual motivations, the characters will converge at a small pier north of Tourmaline. It may surprise them that treasure seekers are so common to Starfrost that a ferry runs once a week to the island, carrying the hopeful to and the disappointed fro. The player characters may know each other to begin with, or they may meet for the first time at the ferry.

The Ferry

The ferry is a flat-bottomed boat captained by Malcom, a crippled corsair with a patch over one eye. He demands \$1 for every person who rides his ferry. The barge isn't large enough to carry horses; however he can stable any steeds at his coastal cottage for \$1 a week.

Malcom is a cranky fellow, who would rather smoke his pipe than talk, but he answers questions if asked civilly. It takes about four hours to reach the shore of Starfrost Island, during which time the players can become acquainted.

If asked, Malcom says that he's never set foot on the island, but he's taken a lot of adventurers to its shores. He emphasizes that only a few of them have ever come back, and they babble stories of horrendous beasts, winged demons, and awful creatures of nightmare. At the height of this spiel, he offers to sell the party the following healing herbs: 2 doses of Key flower (\$50 per dose), 2 doses Castor Beans (\$40 per dose) 3 doses Elf Root (\$30 per dose) and 1 dose Lung Wort (\$20 per dose).

Malcom carries \$35, a pipe with tobacco, flint and steel, and a large cutlass along with his herbs. He does Poor damage with his cutlass and has a Defense of Passable, Good, Great, Superior.

Harpies Attack

As the ferry draws near Starfrost island, a player who rolls Good on Alertness will notice three flying creatures coming towards them. They are an avian male obviously fleeing in terror, and two harpy pursuers (see Chapter 11 for information on harpies). One harpy carries a hooked net, and it appears as though they are trying to capture the avian rather than kill him. The avian yells for help, and players may try to assist by making bow or crossbow shots at the creatures at -2 columns.

During the struggle, the wounded avian will collapse on the ferry. If one of the harpies is killed, the other will fly away. If captured, they will prove to be wily and uncommunicative.

Hummer Talks

The avian will thank the party and introduce himself as Hummer. He has been badly injured, and is quite frantic. He's certain the island has been cursed. At night, the sky is filled with mysterious lights and terrible sounds. Food is scarce and springs have become tainted. Storms rise from clear skies and whirlwinds tear through the forests. Hummer and his family were preparing to leave the island when his nest was raided by three harpies. He managed to get away at the last minute, but his family was taken prisoner. Two of the harpies pursued him. Harpies are not indigenous to the island, and he's sure someone brought them here for some nefarious purpose.

Hummer pleads with the characters to help his family. He says he knows where half the tiara is hidden, and if they rescue his family, it can be theirs.

After speaking with Hummer for a short while, a massive storm rolls in from the sea. It tosses the ferry back and forth until it shatters, dumping everyone into the cold waves. Characters must roll Good on Swim to make it to the beaches of Starfrost island. Those who fail will be washed ashore half drowned; see the Swim skill in Chapter 6 for information on drowning. Both Malcom and Hummer will make it to shore. Hummer suffers a sprained wing in the turmoil.

On Shore

Hummer is in no condition to travel, but he continues to urge the others on. He tells them to head directly north, following the ocean, for there are no roads or paths through the forest. His family aviary is about a day's journey away, where they might be able to pick up the trail of his family. Malcom can't be induced to join the players. He immediately sets to felling small trees with his sword in order to build a raft. He's not about to stay on Starfrost Island a moment longer than he needs to! For a fee of \$50, he'll offer to watch after Hummer and wait until the players return before casting off.

The Journey North

Following Hummer's directions, the adventurers soon find themselves walking on rocky ground, then ascending cliffs. A Good Climb is necessary to successfully traverse this area. See Chapter 6 for details on Climbing.

Near the top of the cliffs the party finds the remains of an adventurer. Although his skin is parched and leathery, his elven features can still be discerned. He carries a case containing five arrows, and wears two leather gloves, leather boots, a chain hood and a heavy wool cloak. A long bow lies near his side; there are no rations or other supplies. A Superior Medical roll indicates that he died of a wasting disease. The nearby vegetation is dead and dying as well.

In his pouch is a small journal written in the elfish language. It requires a Good Literacy roll to read it. The journal relates a story of how he came to the island looking for the lost tiara of the Elf Queen. He was in the forest when he heard a dreadful creature crashing through the trees. The journal describes it as a skinless horse. The evil demon breathed on him and he lost consciousness. When he came to, he fought back his weakness and continued on his journey. His last entry reads, "My strength is giving out. I'll rest only a little while before going on."

If anyone takes one of his items, they must roll Passable on Stamina or contract a disease. Those who fail will begin to feel nauseous and sickly

within the hour. Soon sores will appear on their hands and faces. Each day afterwards, an ailing character must make a Stamina roll. On a Pathetic or Catastrophic roll, the character dies. On a Superior or Awesome roll, he recovers.

Merrows Play a Trick

On the other side of the cliff is a beautiful bay with a white sandy beach. It is very inviting, unlike the rest of the island. A lovely woman is sobbing at the edge of the water. Characters can descend to the beach easily.

This woman is really a merrow, but pretends to be human. Seeing the party, she runs up to them and ask them to help her. She accidentally dropped her comb in the water, she weeps, would one of them wade in and get it? She cannot swim herself. The comb can be seen resting at the bottom of the bay, a distance of about five feet. No matter how hard the party tries to fish it out with a stick or sword, they simply can't catch hold of it-the water distorts it. Someone must actually go into the water to fetch the comb.

If this happens, this person will find himself in the grasp of a male merrow (he can be spotted with an Awesome Alertness roll, lurking near the comb). The female merrow will shriek with delight, jump into the bay, and immediately form a fishy tail. Both will shout "We have a new playmate! We have a new playmate!" They will precede to dunk the poor adventurer in and out of the water. If attacked, the female merrow will chant her siren song. Those who hear it will be drawn to her for (Will vs Passable) x 10 minutes. After tiring of their victim, they will place him on a rock some fifty feet from shore. A Great Swim roll is needed to fight the treacherous tide back to land. The merrows may offer to bring the adventurer back in return for a more interesting toy.

If the party chooses to pass the merrow without helping her, she will grow angry and sing her siren song. If attacked, she will dive into the water, swim a safe distance, and sing her song, enticing the characters to drown themselves while her husband attacks with a mighty trident. See Chapter 11: Foes for more information on merrows.

To the Aviary

The other side of the bay is another rocky slope. Here, a Good Climb roll is needed to ascend the cliffs. At the top is Hummer's aviary. One of the tallest points on the island, the party can see that the island is greatly covered in trees and mist; however, those who make a Passable Nature roll will notice that great patches of the forest are suffering from a blight. Further to the north, the very top of a ruined lighthouse rises over the trees.

The aviary shows signs of a struggle. The inhabitants were obviously snatched during their daily routines: bedding is rumped, a basket of berries has been knocked over and the coals in the fire are still slightly warm. A quick search reveals only household goods-no tiara can be found.

It is dusk, and the party may safely stay here for the night. At midnight, horrible cries can be heard over the breaking of the waves against the shore. Ghostly green lights billow from the lighthouse, not as a guiding beam, but as an eerie, sparkling glow.

The Beyonie

The morning is misty and grey. Descending from the aviary, the party comes again to the beach. As the adventurers continue northward to the lighthouse (their most likely destination), they come across some odd-looking tracks, reminiscent of a goose, though man-sized. With a Passable Track roll, a character can easily follow the footprints to the edge of the ocean. As the party draws near, they can see the hunched figure of an old woman walking along the shore, carrying a large basket. A character who looks can spot her red webbed feet underneath her skirts. As they come closer, the characters will hear her words: "Ah, me! I've tried fresh water, now salt water, and nothing washes away the blood. Oh, woe!" At this point, characters who make a Great Legends roll will recognize the Beyonie. For more information, see Chapter 11: Foes.

If a character can walk between the Beyonie and the ocean, she will answer three of his questions truthfully, but she will also ask three questions that must be answered truthfully;

otherwise the character will be cursed. The Beyonie will try to prevent anyone from walking between her and the ocean. A character may try to sneak around her by making a Great Stealth roll or trust to speed by making a Superior Run roll.

The Beyonie takes a shine to the character who makes the highest Fate roll. The Beyonie will freely admit that she has come to Starfrost Island because “death is in the air.” She’ll give her favorite character a bloody garment from her basket. This is a cloak of Elemental protection, and will keep the wearer safe from the ravages of wind, including hurricanes and similar storms. She warns them to leave the island before they are lost, but disappears into the fog before they can question her further. If anyone tries to touch the Beyonie or hinder her, she will use her paralyzing touch to defend herself.

The Aughiska

The fog slowly lifts, but the day is still grey and damp. As the characters reach the top of a dune, they can see a stretch of beach, then a rocky jetty with the lighthouse perched on the far end. The tower is crumbling and appears empty. To their immediate right, the party can see great patches of parched earth. Below, a flock of 20 aughiska cavort on the sands. Numerous other aughiska lay dead or dying on the beach.

As long as they are inland, these horses make fantastic mounts, telepathically linked with its rider. However, if they manage to smell sea water, they will run swiftly towards it, devouring their rider once they’ve plunged into the waves. See Chapter 11: Foes for more information

As the characters watch, a great churning approaches from far out in the ocean. The aughiska caper to the edge in anticipation as a nuckelavee comes from the waves and walks on the beach.

The Nuckelavee

Characters can recognize the nuckelavee by rolling Great on Legends. A ghastly looking creature about 12 feet tall, it has the body of a horse with the torso of a man growing from its back. It’s skin is inside out, and it needs to bathe in salt water to soothe it’s pain. It is the bringer of the wasting disease, and glories in infecting living creatures. The nuckelavee spends some time

laughing and frolicking with the aughiska which carry his disease (they are immune), then he disappears into the forest.

If the aughiska spot the party, they will whinny, and draw the nuckelavee back to the beach. The nuckelavee carries a huge lance (Great damage) and can simultaneously attack with front hooves (Passable damage) and a bite (Good damage). He has a Defense of Great, Great, Superior, Superior, Awesome, Awesome. The nuckelavee fears fresh water more than anything else. It will not cross a fresh-water stream, and if fresh water is splashed on its skin, it will retreat. However, it will first try to kill or infect the party. See Chapter 11 for more information.

The Lighthouse

As the characters attempt to reach the lighthouse, they are swept back by magical whirlwinds which do Passable damage. Anyone wearing or holding onto the cloak of Elemental Protection is immune to the whirlwind. The whirlwinds will disappear once they’ve been breached.

The door to the lighthouse is marked with esoteric symbols, but is unlocked. The ground floor contains only dust, cobwebs and a worn stone staircase leading upwards in a spiral.

When the parties reach the second floor, three harpies will attack (see Chapter 11: Foes). The floor is covered with a squalor of rags the harpies use as bedding. On a Passable Search roll, the players find half a broken tiara hidden in the filth. The harpies stole it from Hummer’s aviary.

The silver crown setting is so tarnished by the elements that it’s worth only \$50. Each of the 3 gems it contains is worth \$100 and confer the following on its wearer: Agate: +1 Defense; Aquamarine: +1 Swim; Bloodstone: +1 Sword.

Titando the Mooly

The third floor of the lighthouse was once the fire pit which lit up the night sky. Shards of broken mirrors still cling to the walls. It is open to the elements, and a fierce breeze blows through it. In

the old fire pit sits a cauldron filled with a bubbling potion. Flames lick the underside of the pot.

Hummer's parents, grandmother, and younger sister are chained to the walls. His sister is an attractive avian in her late teens. Silver flashes from the throat of her torn blouse. Against her bosom hangs the other half of the tiara. The chained avians can be freed with a Good Strength roll or a blow from a sword or axe.

A hideous man holds a small avian boy over the pot, preparing to cut off his wings with a large knife. The man has a blue-black face, and one large eye set in the middle of it's forehead. This is Titando, a mooly. He uses a battle axe (Good damage) and has a Defense of Good, Great, Superior, Awesome. By stepping into the fire, Titando will double in size and ferocity. His damage is increased by +2 columns and his Defense is doubled to Good, Good, Great, Great, Superior, Superior, Awesome, Awesome. See Chapter 11: Foes for more information on moolies.

Titando is quite mad. As the party enters he shouts: "Don't come any nearer! My dream to poison the world is nearly accomplished, and I'll not let you ruin it. With this long lost spell of my people, I will spread the nuckelavee's plague across the world, and everyone shall know my power! All my brew needs now are avian wings to carry it over the sea. Stand back!" He'll then attempt to proceed with the spell.

The child can be grabbed away from Titando with a Great Strength roll. Such an attempt may cause him to drop the child in the cauldron, in which cause he will be scalded. Anyone fishing the boy out will suffer Poor damage to their arm.

If Titando is defeated, the avians will be grateful to the characters for their help. They are aware that key flower is an antidote for the wasting plague of the nuckelavee and they also how to correctly prepare and apply it.

Hummer's sister, Aerial, wears the second half of the tiara on a thong about her neck. She is reluctant to part with it, but will if her rescuers demand it as a reward. This half of the tiara is in much better shape than the other. Its setting is worth \$200 and its four gems are worth \$100 each. They grant the following skill adjustments: Pearl: +1 Medical; Turquoise: +1 Nature; Sapphire: +1 Charm, and Topaz: +1 Dodge.

Aerial will explain where she found the tiara. "Hummer and I were flying over the forest when

we spotted half the crown stuck in the topmost branches of a tree. It was pretty, so we kept it. We searched for the other half and found it sheltered in a crag high up on a steep cliff. Hummer thought the corsairs who hid the tiara must have been exceptional climbers. Hummer kept the first half, which was badly weathered, and made the second half into a pendant which he gave me for my eighteenth birthday. When the harpies attacked us, they found Hummer's fragment and kept it. I hid my pendant under my blouse in the hopes they wouldn't take it from me."

Returning to Hummer & Malcom

When the players return to where they washed ashore, they find Malcom has rigged together a seaworthy boat; he tells the party that he'll take them to the mainland for a share of the loot.

Hummer is overjoyed to see his family, and will not protest if the players keep both halves of the tiara.