

THE INCURSION EGG

AN ADVENTURE LOCATION BY MICHAEL PRESCOTT

THE SITUATION

Far out to sea, an indestructible **glass dome** encloses an island. Placed there by the gods, its ancient machinery keeps a deadly alien incursion at bay.

BUBBLING WATERS

Near the **dome**, the sea bubbles with air drawn from inside it through the shaft in the top of the **mesa**.

THE GLASS DOME

A flat-topped dome rises twelve hundred paces out of the sea. Its walls are only a pace thick, but the god-made **dark glass** has endured the elements for thousands of years. Except in calm seas, boats that approach risk being smashed against it by the waves.

The waterline inside is five paces higher than the surrounding sea. Shimmering fish can sometimes be seen through the thick, barnacle-encrusted glass.

The dome floats magically, unconnected to the sea floor. It extends only five paces underwater, an easy dive for swimmers. Returning is harder.

WRECK OF THE ARBALEST

A cog commanded by Puila of Birevia arrived here three years ago. An underwater **chain** anchors it to the shore of West Rise, and the waves are slowly grinding it to pieces against the dome. It is abandoned and has been almost entirely stripped by the **Jarret**.

All that remains is the captain's **strongbox**, sealed by a silver lock. Engravings declare that thieves will be cursed with the flesh-peeling fever. Inside are two **sephus masks**, a sack of silver coins, and sketches of the islands.

POLYP FOREST

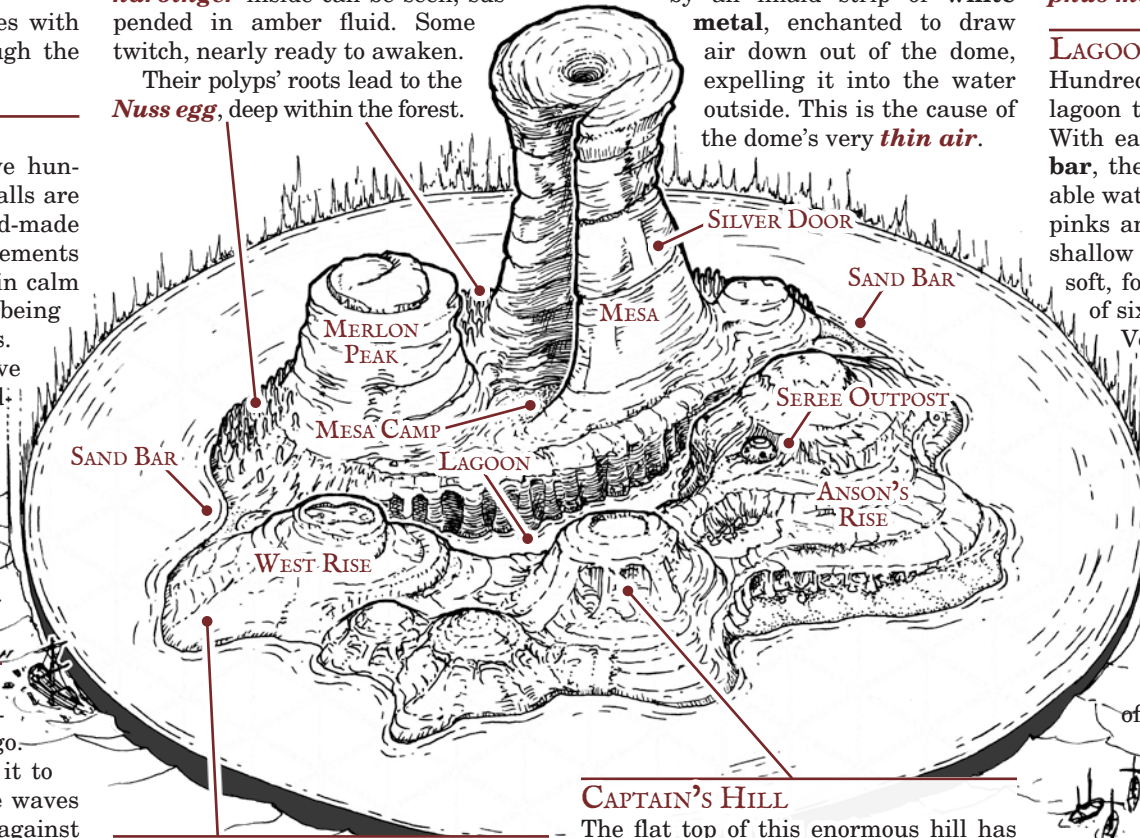
The entire northern shore of the island is completely covered in tall, translucent polyps: rubbery ovals on fibrous stalks the size of small trees. When the sun strikes them, the dormant **Nuss harbinger** inside can be seen, suspended in amber fluid. Some twitch, nearly ready to awaken.

Their polyps' roots lead to the **Nuss egg**, deep within the forest.

THE MESA

The eroded mesa is three hundred paces tall, and an easy climb for properly equipped climbers, were it not for the **thin air**. The huge crack on the south western side offers an ascent with many ledges and handholds. Halfway up the southern face is the **silver door**.

At the top is the roost of two **Menaka**. The **deep shaft** there is encircled by an inlaid strip of **white metal**, enchanted to draw air down out of the dome, expelling it into the water outside. This is the cause of the dome's very **thin air**.



SHORE CAMP

A once-tidy stack of oilskin food parcels has been scattered on the rocky beach by orange crabs. Four **erupted** Arbalist crew members have been buried in shallow, unmarked **graves**. Nearby are the **expedition notes**. A line of stones marks a **trail** to **Captain's Hill**.

CAPTAIN'S HILL

The flat top of this enormous hill has been crudely fortified by a **dry stone wall** three paces high. Within the wall are the distorted **skeletons** of eight **erupted** crew members, two still impaled by **harbinger** spears. The defenders appear to have been armed only with long knives and slings. Marked **trails** lead away to the adjacent hills.

MESA CAMP

In the shadow of the mesa is the Arbalist expedition's final camp. A **buried cache** was placed to support the ascent: an oilskin tarp holds a rundlet of wine, and expedition rations, bricks of lard, dried fruit and meat.

The bodies of two **fallen crew members** lie at the base of the mesa wall, covered in coiled rope. Each wears a **sephus mask**.

LAGOON OF FRESH WATER

Hundreds of rivulets converge on a long lagoon that divides the island in two. With each end capped by a low **sand bar**, the lagoon contains fresh, drinkable water. Strange **lily pads** in white, pinks and reds are clustered near the shallow middle. They are veiny and soft, for they are transformed bodies of six fully **erupted** crew members.

Vestigial human limbs dangle underwater. A dying **harbinger** is slumped in a rocky alcove, leaking ichor.

SERREE OUTPOST

This perfect, wizard-made **dome** predates the expedition by centuries. Outside is the sprawled **skeleton** of a crew member, felled by a heavy axe blow from behind. Inside are three **automatons** of wood and bone, unaffected by the **thin air**, ready to defend the outpost with axes. A **cot** holds the corpse of a long-dead sorcerer, clutching a bejewelled wand of command (d6 uses) and the **sorcerer's notes**.

A dozen **jars** hold **harbinger** parts.

ANSON'S RISE

From the top of the rise, observers might spot the sparkling of the **silver door** high up on the side of the mesa.

d8	Random Encounter (Hourly)
1	a shower of droplets from above
2	a Menaka drifts high above
3	the captain's pet sea otter , a silver key hanging on its collar
4	windy droning noise from the mesa shaft echoes in the dome
5	d3 Jarret tracking the party
6	armless Seree automaton blunders aimlessly nearby
7	mutated or deformed lizard or sea bird , acting normally
8	cliff or hill side collapses , 1 in 6 chance it's immediately nearby

THE JARRET "CHIPPERS"

Six youths fish from skiffs while patrolling the dome's perimeter. They represent three clans of the Jarret people, who have agreed to share the benefit of flakes of dark glass that fall from the dome every few years. Jarret elders instructed them not to enter the dome, but the youths are spoiling for a change of pace. They are excellent swimmers, keen to impress, but take foolish risks and will thoughtlessly endanger others.

THE THIN AIR

Under the dome, the air pressure is extremely low. It is intensely humid, and sweltering during the day. The air is completely still, and the only sound is the water lapping gently at the shoreline. Condensed water drips constantly from the domed ceiling, high above.

Uphill hikes must be taken very slowly, and heavy exertion like swimming or climbing causes dizziness and exhaustion in mere minutes.

Rests must be three times as long to have the normal benefit. Staying awake while on watch is very difficult. Anyone sleeping will not awaken on their own for d3 days. This does not reduce food

needs, so sleepers may wake to find themselves desperately hungry.

SLOW GOING

The rock of the island is treacherous, crumbling, and uneven. The waterline is barren, but tough, waist-high plants (reddish succulents and prickly bushes) grow all over, forcing hikers to take twisting paths. In these difficult conditions, it takes an hour or two to move between most adjacent landmarks. Tumbles and falls are common, especially as travelers tire or if they hurry.

EXPEDITION NOTES CASE

A leather folio case containing: a **sketch of the island**, with named landmarks (including the silver door); the **names** of 25 crew members, 20 of whom (plus the captain) came to the island with Puila; rough **plans** for a rope-and-hook ascent of the mesa, indicating caches of supplies at the mesa and shore camps.

SORCERER'S NOTES

Badly mildewed vellum, diagrams, and writing in old Seree. If studied at length they reveal: the dome was created by the gods to thwart the Nuss; the low pressure keeps them dormant; the white metal ring atop the mesa is priceless; diagrams of Nuss **harbingers** in various stages of growth; that Nuss do not tolerate salt water; that the har-binger spear venom causes **eruption**; diagrams of a rat in various stages of eruption; that prayers within the dome are heard only by Nuss gods.

THE NUSS EGG

Nestled at the center of the polyp forest is a glistening oval the size of a cottage, half buried in the soil. Placed here by the Powers of the Void, it is the origin of the Nuss incursion. It grew and feeds the polyps, awaiting suitable conditions for them to awaken and **erupt** all of

humanity. It is defenseless other than its tough outer husk, which contains a thousand tuns' volume of nutritious, healing yolk that feeds the dormant **harbingers**.

Breaking it open delivers a fatal wound to the polyp forest, which will be doomed to starve. d6 **harbingers** awaken if this happens.

NUSS HARBINGERS

Tall and spindly, alien bats with tri-lateral symmetry: three arms, legs, and three bat-like wings. They seem ungainly on the ground, but can travel longer distances rapidly, flying like invisible, deafening lightning bolts. Each carries a long, hollow spear that deliver up to d3 doses of Nussan essence, a toxin that causes flesh to **erupt**.

Harbingers move at full speed despite the thin air, but survive only d6 hours before their metabolisms are wrecked, they collapse, and start dying.

ERUPTION

Nussan essence rewrites flesh into new shapes, expressing the latent desire of countless incorporeal Nuss to have flesh express their true forms. The "erupting" sprout asymmetric limbs, tentacles, spines, and other shapes before being transforming completely over a period of several days into Nuss eruptions: joyful, writhing masses.

MENAKA

A pair of these many-eyed floating gas-bag creatures drift lazily through the upper reaches of the dome, watching.

Each is a potent sorcerer, able to briefly freeze enemies in time, and to learn spells cast in their presence.

As observers from the distant future; they refer to everything in the past tense. They hope to observe the start of a great war between Nuss and humanity, something they consider inevitable.

d20	Dead Crew Member Item
1-4	sling, d8 lead sling bullets
5-7	diver's knife, forearm sheath
8-11	sailor's brass ring w/ family sigil, worth a silver bounty
12	crystal-lensed water goggles
13	fine spirits in a silver flask
14	a shrill, whalebone flute
15	waterproof pouch, pipe weed
16	crystal "wizard flower" from an automaton skull, subtly magical and valuable
17	Panurian sooth's gold amulet
18	Birevian silver spyglass
19	false eye, a silver-chased garnet
20	the deed of the Arbalest, and a writ entitling bearer to repairs at the shipyards of Birevia

SEPHUS MASKS

These rare, wattle-like masks of pale leather produce just enough oxygen fumes for the wearer to function normally if they avoid heavy exertion.

THE SILVER DOOR

The mesa's air shaft has a bypass valve, a great cylindrical "door" the height of a person bored into the mountainside. It is made of from sixty talents of pure silver, badly tarnished. Touching it causes it to open, revealing the dark, vertical air shaft. While open, a steady breeze blows out of it, and the air pressure gradually rises inside the dome.

This immediately awakens a har-binger in the polyp forest. Another one awakens every hour that it is open.

TRILEMMA ADVENTURES