

# THE HOUNDS OF LOW TIDE

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## THE SITUATION

A tavern on the tropical Caribbean coast isn't what it seems to be. Its kind and lordly European proprietors are secretly sea-monsters who've assumed human identities in order to stay close to fresh humans to exploit and kill. Their tavern is filled with riches, secrets, and terrors.

This adventure assumes a pseudo-historical setting of the Caribbean islands in 1655 during the rise of buccaneers, just prior to the golden age of piracy.

## THE FRIGATE & BARREL

On the coastline of English occupied Hispaniola is an open-air tavern. Built from the parapet-lined stone towers of a once ruined fortification (formerly Spanish), the three-story structure opens its lowest level to the public to drink and eat in.

The tavern is owned by **Lord Barnabus Stoten**, an Englishman and retired sailor. Stoten is a shrivelled, wrinkled man of few words who prefers fine drink to company. Most days he sits alone at a corner table in his tavern, drinking in silence. He smells strongly of salt and brine.

Despite Stoten's impressive title, it's his wife that truly owns and operates the tavern. **Edna Von Böhm**, known to locals as 'Goodwife Böhm' or 'the Fräulein', keeps the tavern stocked and well-managed. She serves high proof rum, stout imported from Europe, and "seafood" stew: its fishy, tentacle-filled contents are unrecognizable, but tasty. Their prices are high, but their goods are worth every piece of eight they cost.

- Shot of rum 1sp
- Bottle of rum 3sp

- Mug of stout 1sp
- Bowl of seafood stew 2sp

The Frigate and Barrel is a place where reputable sailors and privateers of all stripes can drink and enjoy the sea breeze off of the

coast. Edna Von Böhm is even said to rent the room above the tavern, but only to those she takes a fancy to, or those travelling alone.

## WHAT IS UNKNOWN

Edna Von Böhm isn't human. In truth she is a vicious sea-lycanthrope and ocean witch who masquerades as a human woman. Beneath the tav-

ern is her undersea lair, home to her monstrous children the **kelpups**: a vile mixture of ocean slug and canid creature that feasts on human flesh and blood.

Her husband, the late **Barnabus Stoten**, is a lifeless puppet. She hollowed out the English lord's body and filled his insides with a salt-water elemental that is bound to her will. Stoten's insides, his bones and muscle and organs, are kept on a table in the **Corpse Attic**, where Edna experiments upon them.

Those who rent the tavern's sole room from Edna are killed by her and her husband in the night. Their bodies are taken underground into their briny lair to be transformed into another of Edna's many **kelpup** children.

## EDNA VON BÖHM

If pressed, the tough old sea witch will reveal her magical powers. Once per day she can use each of: sleep, charm, spider climb, giant spider web, choking fog, ray of weakness, and invisibility. Edna can also vomit up a **kelpup** from inside her stomach out to aid her.

## BARNABUS STOTEN

In human form, Barnabus is slow moving, but tough and stubbornly persistent. The salt water elemental wearing Barnabus' skin can violently erupt from his mouth to move and attack in its liquid form.

It takes half damage from ordinary weapons. It can absorb and drown other creatures inside its body. Treat it as a non-acidic gelatinous cube or similar monster for attacks.

## I. DOCKS & TAVERN

The open-air tavern area has eight tables and chairs, filled at any one time by 2d4+1 scurvy sailors, prickly privateers, and leering locals.



Stoten doesn't leave the tavern area unless instructed to by Edna. During business hours (from midday til midnight) Edna is in the tavern area with Stoten. At night, or during breaks or interruptions, roll for her location:

d6 Edna's Location	
1-3	Killing Bedroom (rm 9)
4	Edna's Bedroom (rm 4)
5	Corpse Attic (rm 5)
6	Kelpup Warren (rm 11)

Behind the bar there are 5 barrels of German stout, 3d6 bottles of rum, and plenty of cups and glasses.

The docks are big enough to receive row boats and skiffs, and there is usually at least one row boat moored here.

Secrets: Set into the stone floor of the tavern is a grate. Beneath this grate is a 25-foot-deep shaft of stone masonry. Metal ladder rungs are built into the shaft, leading down to the **Underground Pathway** (room 10).

## 2. TAVERN ENTRYWAY

The front door to the covered part of the tavern. It is unnoteworthy save for a locked door to the stairs up to the **Study**.

## 3. STUDY

Maps of the Caribbean islands litter the wooden table here. Investigating them reveals they are all at least 20 years out of date.

Treasure: A locked, magically trapped chest lies in the corner of the room. Edna has the key that unlocks it on her person. Failing to disarm the trap or failing at picking the lock triggers the trap, releasing a violent burst of salt water.

Characters who fail to avoid the full force of the blast are soaked by the water and are mutated into human-sized prawn people over 1d4+5 minutes. Prawn people need to breathe water to live, and are vulnerable to fire, but otherwise function the same way normal characters do.

Within the chest is 500sp, an emerald encrusted sheathe

with a silver dagger inside (75sp), and a treasure map leading to a nearby island.

Secrets: A small secret door leads to the Secret Hearth (Room 6).

## 4. EDNA'S BEDROOM

A simple bedroom with everything you'd expect.

A crystal ball lays on a table. There's a spirit trapped inside. This spirit knows much about Edna Von Böhm's true nature and all the areas of the tavern. If asked, the crystal ball answers any question it is asked with 'Yes' or 'No' or 'Unsure'. Its responses are truthful. Touching the crystal ball or attempting to take it out of the room triggers its defenses, causing it deliver a crippling or possibly fatal electric shock to whomever holds it.

## 5. CORPSE ATTIC

A simple room with a grisly addition. Atop a table is the skinless corpse of the real Barnabus Stoten. He has had mollusks and small flesh-eating, shelled creatures embedded into his body.

The corpse wears a gilded shell charm (50sp) around his neck. The charm detects as magical. Removing or disturbing the charm causes the corpse to animate. It attacks wildly and randomly.

### BARNABUS SHELL CORPSE

The corpse flails at first, but then seizes the nearest target and bites into them with mollusc-shell "teeth".

Treasure: A locked chest in the corner of the room contains rare

magical reagents and salves worth 100gp to a chemist or a witch. If the reagents are mixed with alcohol, they can be made into a magical molotov cocktail. Upon impact it unleashes a colorful magical explosion; anyone in range who fails to resist its power are afflicted with a random magical effect.

## 6. SECRET HEARTH

A fireplace roars and heats the room.

Treasure: The painting above the hearth depicts Sir Henry Morgan at sea. It is one of the only known depictions of the man early in life. The painting is worth 250sp intact (half as much if cut out of its frame and rolled).

## 7. SUPPLY ROOM

Filled with mundane tavern running supplies, staples, and ingredients.

## 8. SPANISH ARMORY

A collection of weapon racks from when the tavern was part of a Spanish fort. Laid out on the racks are four spears and two steel cutlasses (longswords). One of cutlasses is charcoal black in colour, but otherwise ordinary.

## 9. KILLING BEDROOM

The 'guest room' Edna invites weary travellers up to. It's decorated with regal English decor. The four-poster bed smells strongly of blood.

Treasure: A nearby locked chest contains assorted fine wom-

en's garments (35gp total), as well as a translucent magical rod. The rod is wet to the touch and appears to be made out of solid salt water. It can be used to create 1d4 gallons of salt water a day.

## 10. UNDERGROUND PATH

This cold, dark, wet stone chamber is at the bottom of a 25-foot-deep shaft from the Docks and Tavern (Room 1).

At the end of the chamber is a magical portal that keeps this area airtight. On the other side of the rippling portal is an underwater tunnel. If more than two medium-sized creatures try to pass through the portal at once, the pressure of the room is disrupted and this chamber floods with water.

## 11. KELPUP WARREN

Six **kelpups** rest in this underwater cave. Their hearing is sensitive, allowing them to easily detect anyone who ventures in through the magical portal. They attack anyone who isn't Edna or Stoten.

### KELPUPS

Dog-sized slug creatures with mouths full of angular fangs. Natural swimmers, kelpups can still flop on land at surprising speed. Their venomous saliva carries the curse of their lycanthropy. Anyone bitten must resist the disease or contract the it, becoming an aquatic werewolf on the next full moon.

## 12. UNDERWATER BURIAL

This is where Edna the Sea Witch keeps corpses of those she cannot transform into kelpups. There are a dozen human and demihuman corpses here, weighed down with rocks.

Treasure: searching the bodies reveals a few coin purses (50sp total), an airtight scroll tube containing an unsigned Letter of Marque to become a privateer under the King of England, and an ivory elephant statuette (75sp).

