



Bones Deep

Let Your Skeleton Hatch
and Explore the Ocean Floor

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and Explore the Ocean Floor

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- Playtesters Maya, Rachel, Jason, Becca, Henry, Kyle, Ian, Corey, Kacie, Mary Elizabeth, Ben, Shane, Michael and Faith.

The contents of this book are more real than you might imagine. We hope you will look them up yourself and marvel at the wonders of our oceans.

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TechnicalGrimoire.com/bones-deep

You are a Skeleton.

You cannot swim.

You do not belong.

After you die, your skeleton hatches and wanders away from its fleshy shell. It takes many years for a skeleton to figure itself out—sadly, most perish before they're fully conscious:

- Shattered before they can hatch.
- Killed by a fearful crowd.
- Enthralled by a necromancer.
- Crushed by a large beast.
- Buried too deep to escape.

Some lucky few survive long enough to discover their Drive—their purpose in life. Every skeleton pursues a different purpose: knowledge, fame, power, kinship.

In *Bones Deep*, you play as a group of skeletons who adventure beneath the waves to explore the ocean floor.

This is an alien world filled with dangers and treasure in equal measure. No longer limited by vulnerable flesh, you are free to walk this strange land—walk, not swim.

As humans, we are used to the buoyancy our flesh offers us. But a skeleton has none, just a pile of heavy bones. Most creatures swim above you and can move freely in any direction. A fight ends when the opponent swims away.

Trenches and mountains are huge obstacles for bottom-bound skeletons. Leaping, jumping, climbing, and riding are key parts of travel and combat underwater.

Water resistance slows missile weapons (bows, guns, etc). Missile weapons can still deal damage, but only within melee range. Magical Spells are the only reliable long range weapons.

Oh! And it's dark. Very dark.

1d6 Underwater Light Sources

1. **Biolumen** is a common glowing algae, about as bright as a candle. It requires very little maintenance, but spreads quickly, and can be difficult to remove.
2. **Flares** burn extremely bright for a short time.
3. **Light Spells** are reliable and adjustable, but cost Stamina to use. The magic may also attract unwanted attention.
4. **Crystal Shrooms** glow a soft light but are extremely fragile. A slight nudge can shatter them.
5. **Flowlamps** are powered by the current. They glow as bright as a torch, so long as they have a steady flow of water moving through them.
6. **Glowlife** is a general term for any kind of living light source.



1 Newborn

Recently hatched, you are still disoriented and confused. Bits of flesh still cling to your bones. It will take years to adjust to this new skeletal existence—many, many years of inept failure and stumbling growth.

Luckily for you, failure is an excellent teacher, and you're a dedicated student. You'll succeed eventually, but for now you embrace your failure, and let it mold you.

Possessions

- A rotting heart.
- Something metallic rattling around inside your skull.
- A dozen pictures with all the faces scratched out.
- A shoe with a hidden knife in the sole.

Skills

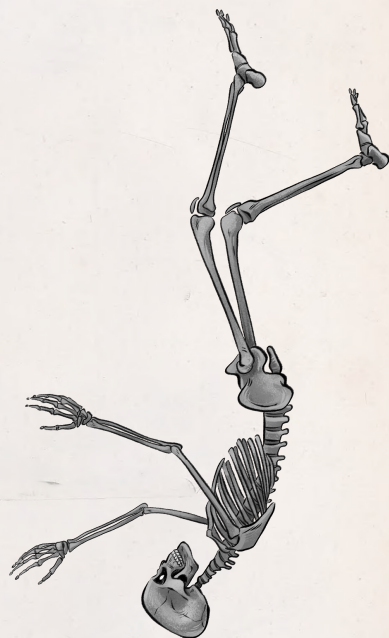
- 3 Squid Wrangling
- 3 Spell – Unexpected
- 2 Spell – Accelerated Memory
- 2 Trench Leaping
- 1 Language – Crab
- 1 Outdated Drylander Knowledge

Special

All skeletons can Test their Luck to absorb memories of an object, creature, or location they are touching.

Whenever you fail a roll using your Base Skill, gain a new Advanced Skill related to that action at rank 1. New Advanced Skills should be specific rather than generic. For example, if you are trying to climb an iceberg and fail the roll, gain the Advanced Skill "1 Berg Scaling" instead of "1 Climbing."

DRIVE: To fail often. After you gain a new Advanced Skill, recover 1d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.

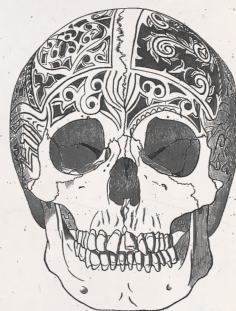


2 Carver

In the past your flesh was a hindrance, always demanding food and sleep and joy. Now you pursue the deepest arcane secrets unimpeded. You channel magic through Spells carved directly onto your bones. There's only so much bone to carve. "A deadly shortcut," your peers say. But a shortcut to what?

Possessions

- A selection of small, fine blades.
- Carved Spell – Eject Bone.
- Random carved Spell.
- Random carved Spell.
- A carved tattoo of a young woman with one eye.



Advanced Skills

2 Calligraphy

2 Tattooing

1 Knife Throwing



Special

All skeletons can Test their Luck to absorb memories of an object, creature, or location they are touching.

As an action you can cast a Spell carved onto your bones. After paying the Stamina cost, the carved Spell automatically succeeds, then disappears from your bones.

If you spend one hour in a carving trance, Test your Luck. If successful, gain a **random Spell** carved onto your bones. If the trance fails, reduce your Max Stamina by 1.

DRIVE: To make room for new Carved Spells. Erase a Carved Spell at any time to recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.

3 Keeper

You miss it—the sensation of touch, the pleasure of eating, even the void of sleep. Perhaps that's why you care so deeply for these adopted creatures.

You've turned your frame into a home for your creatures. They live in your ribcage, in the coral of your skull, around the kelp growing from your arms. You know them better than you knew your old flesh and can always count on their loyalty.

Possessions

- Fish food (+1 Command Creature, 2 uses).
- Two **random creatures** following you as henchmen.
- The Book of Names.
- Whip (Damage as Staff).
- Small box of shiny things.
- A spiked collar with the name "Ori" etched onto it.

Advanced Skills

3 Spell – Command Creature

2 Soothing Voice

2 Spell – Empathize

1 Foraging

1 Cuddling

Special

All skeletons can Test their Luck to absorb memories of an object, creature, or location they are touching.

After you successfully command a creature, it follows you as a henchmen until it runs out of Stamina and flees.

DRIVE: To command. Whenever you successfully command a creature, both you and the creature recover 1d6 Stamina, and you recover 1d6 Luck.





4 Junker

Though you shed your flesh, your desire for mortal tools and trinkets persists. Detritus from all eras make their way to the briny deep—you see their value where others don't.



Possessions

- Tinkering tools.
- Flowlantern.
- 3 flares.
- Old coat rack.
- Umbrella.
- Gadget – Bounding Shield.
- Gadget – Charged Wrench.

Skills

5 Taking Things Apart

2 Inventing

2 Spell – Torpedo Throw

2 Spell – Protection from Rain

1 Gadget Fighting

Special

All skeletons can Test their Luck to absorb memories of an object, creature, or location they are touching.

You have gadgets embedded in your bones. You can use a gadget to do anything related to its name.

DRIVE: To salvage. When you spend an hour working to turn something worthless into a gadget, roll under your Inventing. Whenever you successfully invent a new gadget, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.

Gadget Generator

d66 Adjectives

11. Flaming
12. Freezing
13. Charged
14. Melting
15. Acidic
16. CrabBlessed
21. Blasting
22. Blinding
23. Silent
24. Shifting
25. Void-touched
26. Digested
31. Guiding
32. Lost
33. Comforting
34. Familiar
35. Hexed
36. Glowing
41. Bounding
42. Swimming
43. Muttering
44. Screaming
45. Bubbling
46. Buried
51. Rusted
52. Gilded
53. Crystalized
54. Broken
55. Reforged
56. Overgrown
- 61-66. Flip to a random page and use the first adjective you see.

d66 Objects

11. Shard
12. Spike
13. Club
14. Sword
15. Axe
16. Gauntlet
21. Dryhander
22. Flail
23. Hammer
24. Pike
25. Shield
26. Anvil
31. Crossbow
32. Speargun
33. Dartlauncher
34. Mine
35. Sandblaster
36. Bomb
41. Shovel
42. Crowbar
43. Wrench
44. Drill
45. Rope
46. Chain
51. Reel
52. Wheel
53. Spring
54. Lamp
55. Compass
56. Pocketwatch
- 61-66. Flip to a random page and use the first object you see.

Rules Changes

Bones Deep is a toolkit of [locations](#), [creatures](#), [spells](#), and [random tables](#) written for [Troika!](#) There are a few minor changes to reflect the realities of being an underwater skeleton.

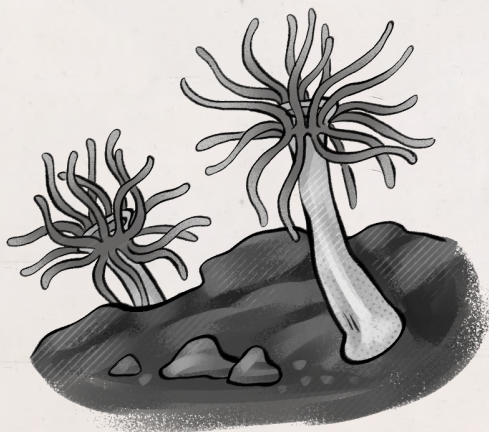
Stamina & Drives

Stamina represents your energy, your motivation, and your will to keep going. When you run out of Stamina, you stop being a skeleton. No one is sure what happens after that.

You are impervious to anything that might affect organs or souls. Of course, your bones can be broken, burned, crushed, or split. You're also susceptible to necromancy.

You require neither oxygen, nor sleep, nor food, nor love. You do, however, have a **Drive** that must be sated. Each skeleton background comes with a suggested Drive.

Drives replace the standard Stamina healing and Luck recovery in Troika. See the [Skeleton Generator](#) for more Drive examples. On average, a Drive should restore 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck per session.



Skeletons can Absorb Memories

Since skeletons lose their memories upon hatching, they have a deep hunger for more.

All skeletons can Test their Luck to absorb memories from an object, creature, or location they are touching.

They can learn about an object's past, a creature's emotions, or recent changes to an environment. These impressions are hard to interpret—the longer the contact, the more impressions gained.

Skeletons can also communicate ideas/emotions/images via touch. This allows them to “talk to fish” in a way.

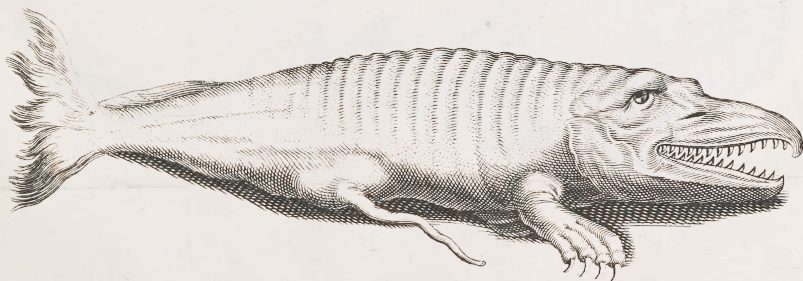
Don't feel pressured to come up with thousands of years of history for every object and creature. Something as simple as “This creature is often afraid,” or “This object was used by a warrior,” is appropriate. Encourage players to ask specific questions about memories and come up with the answers together.

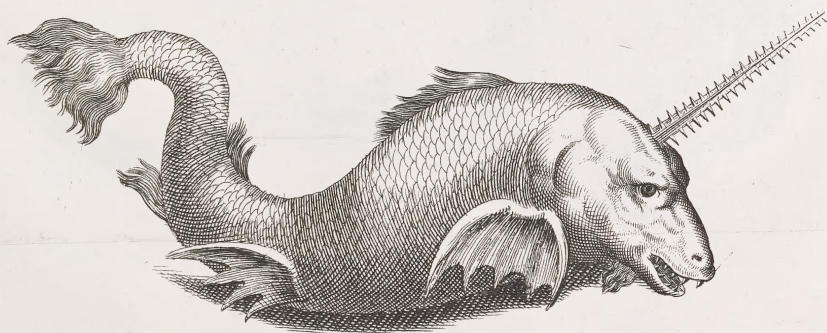
- “I've carried this rusty blade for a while. Has it passed through the Kelp Forest? Does it know where it's owner's ship sank?”
- “Now that we've got the octopus pinned, I want to see if I can absorb some of its memories and see what it's buddies are trying to build here.”
- “I think she's lying to us. I'd like to request a memory exchange—just enough to tell if she has hidden motives.” (Anyone who knows about skeletons will be wary of trading memories.)
- “This is just a smattering of coins. Do any of them remember being part of a larger treasure horde? Can they remember what took their fellow coins away?”
- “This sea turtle must be a hundred years old. Does it remember encountering a skeleton with a clamshell head?”
- “Does this sword know if it was the legendary blade that cut off Old Davey Bones's head, or is it just a cheap knockoff?”

3d6 Memory Mishaps

Whenever a skeleton fails to absorb memories they roll 3d6 on the table below:

3. The target steals one of your memories. Lose an Advanced Skill of your choice.
4. Reduce your highest ranked Skill by 1.
5. Your Drive changes (roll on the [Alternate Drives](#) table).
6. Stuck in a memory trance. Test your Luck again to break it. Repeat until you succeed or you run out of Luck.
7. Learn a [Random Spell](#) from the latent energy of the sea. Starts at Rank 1.
8. Gain a Skill from your previous fleshy life. It starts at rank 1.
9. Gain a vision of a random encounter from your current location. It will never occur.
10. Learn something useful that wasn't what you were looking for.
11. Learn a Skill or Spell from the target, starts at rank 1.
12. You may choose to turn your failure into success at the cost of losing ALL of your remaining Luck.
13. One of your bones becomes sentient.
14. Learn the capabilities or weaknesses of a [random creature](#).
15. A [random Spell](#) is cast targeting you.
16. Learn the location of [Flotsam](#) nearby.
17. Somehow your Crab Credit balance is reduced by 1d6, potentially dropping into the negatives.
18. Receive a clue to [one of the stories](#).





Spells

Accelerated Memory (3) – Absorb all the memories of an object or creature at once. Can grant valuable secrets or teach a new Advanced Skill (gained at rank 1). If this spell fails, roll 3 times on the [Memory Mishap Table](#).

Air Bubble (2) – Creates a skull-sized bubble of fresh air attached to a target. It can choke a water-breather (as Drowning), or drag them up towards the surface with its buoyancy. Ends just before a target would die, or until they breach the surface. Large creatures may require multiple bubbles to choke completely.

Brinicle Strike (1) – The wizard extends their pinky, and a thin finger of ice dozens of feet long instantly forms, piercing the target (Damage as Spear) and possibly immobilizing them.

Bubble Net (2) – Plug your nose and blow a 30'-wide cylinder of protective bubbles from your ears. The cylinder extends up to the surface and absorbs 10 Damage before bursting.

Command Creature (2) – A willing creature obeys a single command. This spell is rolled versus the creature's Skill. If failed, the creature refuses and you roll 1d6 on the table below:

1. The creature loses 1d6 Stamina out of pure frustration.
2. The creature nips at you, dealing damage.
3. The creature breaks a fragile object nearby.
4. The creature draws attention with its refusal.
5. The creature flees to another location.
6. The creature simply refuses to obey. Nothing more.

Consultation (1) – Snap your wizard fingers and immediately summon a small pea crab. Perfect for urgent purchases.

Coral Shaping (1) – You can mold coral with your bare hands as if it were wet clay. Lasts 10 minutes.

Disrupting Pulse (1) – Continually clap your hands to displace a group of small creatures, scattering them. Against larger creatures, it disables an ability instead. Lasts for as long as you keep clapping your hands together.

Drift (2) – You give a strong shove, and an object drifts away in the direction of your choosing (anything smaller than yourself). The object drifts until it bumps into something.

Eject Bone (3) – You make a sudden yanking motion, and a bone is ejected from the target's body. Damage as Maul. This spell cannot kill a creature, but may disable a limb or ability.

Empathize (1) – You look into the target's eyes until you both feel uncomfortable. After, you can understand each other without speaking. Lasts until either of you communicates something upsetting.

Fire Bolt (1) – Underwater it's less like a gout of flames and more like an explosion of steam and heat centered on the caster. The bolt doesn't travel far, but it is extremely hot and bright. Damage: [3, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 16]. Above the surface, it works like a normal Fire Bolt.

Forced Hatching (7) – Make a wrenching motion with your wizard hands to force the skeleton inside the target to hatch. The newly-hatched skeleton will seek safety however it can.

Frozen Weapon (1) – Reach into your pelvis and pull out a weapon of your choice made from ice. This ice weapon is permanently bonded to your limb until the weapon deals 6 or more damage and breaks.

Ground (4) – You supercharge the surrounding saltwater to disable magical effects. Until you leave the area, all spells fail.

Halocline (2) – Fall to your wizard knees and summon a pool of toxic heavy water that's deep enough to cover your head. Fleishy creatures take damage as poison while they are submerged in the pool.

Hand Sun (3) – Clench your fist and slowly open it to reveal a small, stationary ball of burning energy. It blinds all nearby, melts metal, burns bone, and illuminates a wide area. It also creates a furious stream of bubbles, visible for miles around. Lasts until the moon next rises in the sky.

Healthy Light (1) – Slap your head until it glows bright as a torch. The light lasts until you lose any amount of Stamina.

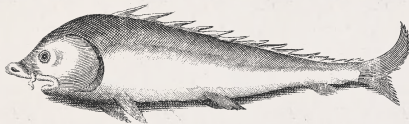
Creatures

Arapaima, *Arapaima gigas*

Arapaima hate boats. Evolution has encouraged their hatred and granted them a thick skull that can shatter thick wooden hulls and warp metal ones. They will reluctantly attack other threats as well, but their heart just isn't in it.

- **Ponderous Charge.** Circles languidly for a ramming charge (+2 to Damage rolls).

	Mien
Skill 6	1. Aggressive Machismo
Stamina 8	2. Smashing Boats
Initiative 2	3. Smashing You
Armour 0	4. Busy Eating
Damage as Large Beast	5. "You see any boats?"
	6. Humming to a Mouthful of Babies



Anglerfish, *Lasiognathus amphirhamphus*

The glowing mines of the sea. Their luring movement attracts predators and prey alike. When the anglerfish is close enough it strikes with one huge bite. Should its food prove troublesome, the anglerfish goes dark and retreats.

- **First Strike.** Makes its first attack with Skill 10 and +1 to the Damage roll. Flees immediately after.

	Mien
Skill 5	1. Mesmerizing Light—then, BITE!
Stamina 4	2. Dark, Depressed, Upside-Down
Initiative 1	3. Cooing at Attached Lover
Armour 0	4. Swallowing a Big Meal
Damage as Knife	5. Arguing with Attached Lover
	6. Impatiently Ravenous

Balloon Puffer, *Sphoeroides spengleri*

If the ocean were infested with mean children, they would play a game of scaring puffers and watching them inflate and rise. A skeleton could use one as a quick elevator to the surface on the off chance they felt like a mean child.

Skill 5

Stamina 3

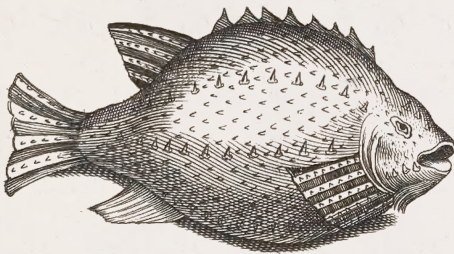
Initiative 1

Armour 0

Damage: None

Mien

1. Nervous
2. Anxiously Hiding
3. Eager to Please
4. Mindlessly Munching Mollusks
5. "Yelp!" *Ploomp!* Float Away...
6. Fed Up with Bullies



Barreleye, *Opisthoproctus soleatus*

It's large, transparent brain and eyes aren't just for looks...but they are for looking. Packed with detailed memories of the surrounding area, barreleye are invaluable tools to spies and scouts. For their part, barreleyes seek new experiences to add to their memories.

Skill 6

Stamina 4

Initiative 1

Armour 0

Damage: None

Mien

1. Oblivious
2. Bored
3. Annoyingly Curious
4. Hungry for New Experiences
5. Hungry for Food
6. Amenable but Clingy

Bawitius , *Bawitius bartheli*

Not content with camouflage scales, powerful fins, and their massive size; Bichir have evolved to breathe air and walk on land. No prey is safe from their hunger. Wizards have an ongoing bet as to what the next evolutionary leap might be for these creatures (most agree that laser eyes are likely).

- **Drywalk.** Can strike from below the water or from above the surface. Its camouflage scales make it undetectable until it moves.

Skill 6
Stamina 9
Initiative 3
Armour 0
Damage as Sword

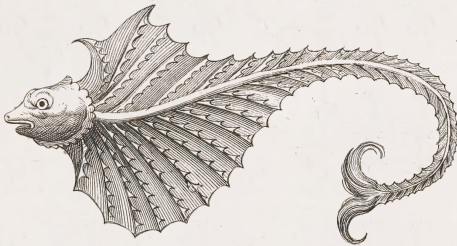
- Mien
1. Hunting
 2. Hunting You
 3. Eating Dangerous Prey
 4. Contemplating Deep Time
 5. Offering a Sporting Headstart
 6. Attacking Immediately



Blade Eel, *Nemichthys scolopaceus*

Created by the Necromancer “as a living pun,” these creatures can stiffen their bodies into bladed weapons. They like to imagine themselves as skilled duelists, but their attacks are more of a flailing stabbing motion. This does not make them any less dangerous, only less impressive.

	Mien
Skill 5	1. Practicing Swordplay
Stamina 5	2. Practicing Pacifism (Poorly)
Initiative 1	3. Swordfighting (Angry)
Armour 0	4. Swordfighting (Mating)
Damage as Sword	5. Swordfighting (You)
	6. “You talkin’ to me!?”



Bloody Belly Comb Jelly, *Lampocteis cruentiventer*

The most unremarkable creature in the depths. They taste terrible, have neither beauty nor grace, and aren’t particularly scary. Their true value is a tightly guarded skeleton secret. The Bloody Belly Comb Jelly emits a strong reddish light that only skeletons can see. Most bloody bellies are happy to see a skeleton, if only so they can be appreciated for a short while.

	Mien
Skill 3	1. Chatty (Knows Area)
Stamina 4	2. Chatty (Entirely Banal)
Initiative 1	3. Eager to Please
Armour 0	4. “What are we doing today?”
Damage: None	5. Oblivious
	6. Depressed

Bobbit Worm, *Eunice aphroditois*

Bobbit worms extend out of their burrow lightning fast, biting with two sharp, venomous jaws. Their jaws are of a bioorganic metal (lined with zinc and manganese), one of the sharpest and strongest natural materials on the planet. They drag any captured prey into their den to be consumed. Despite evidence to the contrary, no wizards were involved in the evolution of this bio-organic killing machine.

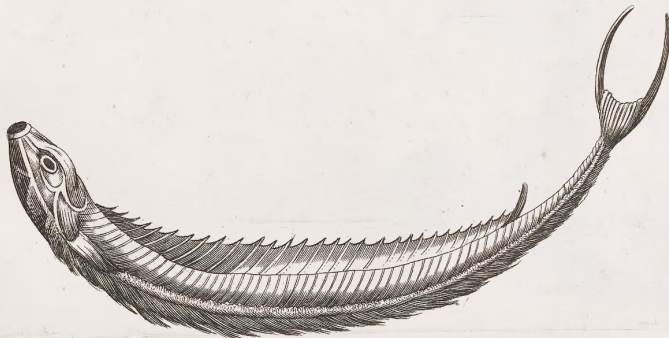
- **Ambush.** Strikes from its lair. If successful, it Drags.
- **Drag.** Drags target into its lair. If successful, it Consumes.
- **Consume.** Damage as Gigantic Beast. If successful, find something else to Ambush.

Mien

Skill 5	1. <i>Ambush!</i>
Stamina 17	2. <i>Well-Hidden Ambush!</i>
Initiative 2	3. <i>Very Well-hidden Ambush!</i>
Armour 0	4. <i>Obvious Ambush!</i>
Damage as Maul	5. Contemplatively Rearranging Treasures
	6. Mating Swarm (<i>Run!</i>)

Den Treasure

1. The Everflow Pearl. While held, you can stop or strengthen ocean currents.
2. Soggy spellbook (containing one [random Spell](#)).
3. [Random creature](#), kept as a pet.
4. Bobbit Jaw (Damage as Spear +1).
5. [Hatched skeleton](#) of a previous victim.
6. 4 flares.



CamoRay, *Dasyatidae urogymnus*

A well-meaning Witch named them “Devil Fish” long ago and they’ve been trying to live up to that name ever since. Working with the Necromancer has certainly helped solidify their reputation as terrifying hunters. The invisibility cloak on their back doesn’t hurt either.

- **Enwrap.** The CamoRay pretends to be a carpet, section of wall, or a painting. When something gets close, it envelops them, turns invisible, and darts away with its prize.
- **Grapple Bite.** After Enwrapping and escaping, it bites with bone-crushing force (Damage as Modest Beast).

	Mien
Skill 6	1. Impatient
Stamina 14	2. On Necromancer Business
Initiative 2	3. Childishly Mean
Armour 0	4. “Boo! HAAAAH!!”
Damage as Small Beast	5. On a Coordinated Ambush
	6. Talking Trash

Cornish Jack, *Mormyrops anguilloides*

Over 12’ long, Cornish Jack travel in hunting packs. They use concussive attacks and disorienting electrical blasts to batter their prey to death. Even in total darkness, they can coordinate their attacks through pulses of subtle energy. The echoing clicks of their approach is the last thing victims hear.

- **Electric Blast:** Oh hit, target has -2 Base Skill. If hit again, target cannot act. Wears off after 2 turns.

	Mien
Skill 4	1. Munching Bones
Stamina 6	2. Hunting
Initiative 1	3. Posturing to Intimidate
Armour 0	4. Resting
Damage as Small Beast	5. Congratulating Each Other
	6. FRENZY!

Croc, *Crocodylus niloticus*
Gator, *Alligator mississippiensis*

Crocodiles usually prefer saltwater, while alligators prefer freshwater. Both of them are in dire need of dental care.

The massive force of their bite allows them to hold onto any prey. Thick scutes in their hide provide adequate protection from most physical attacks.

- **Tail Swipe.** After successfully attacking a target, all other nearby creatures are knocked back 10'.
- **Twisting Bite.** If the Croc or Gator successfully strikes the same target twice in one round, it twists around with them between its jaws, dealing additional Damage as Modest Beast.

Skill 6

Stamina 12

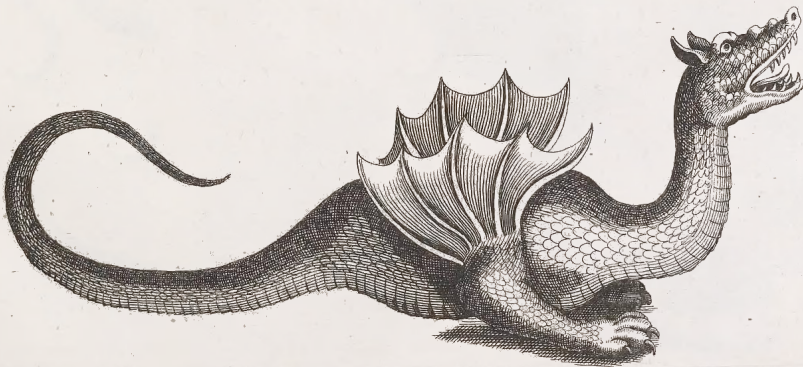
Initiative 2

Armour 2

Damage as Large Beast

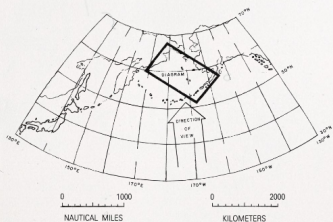
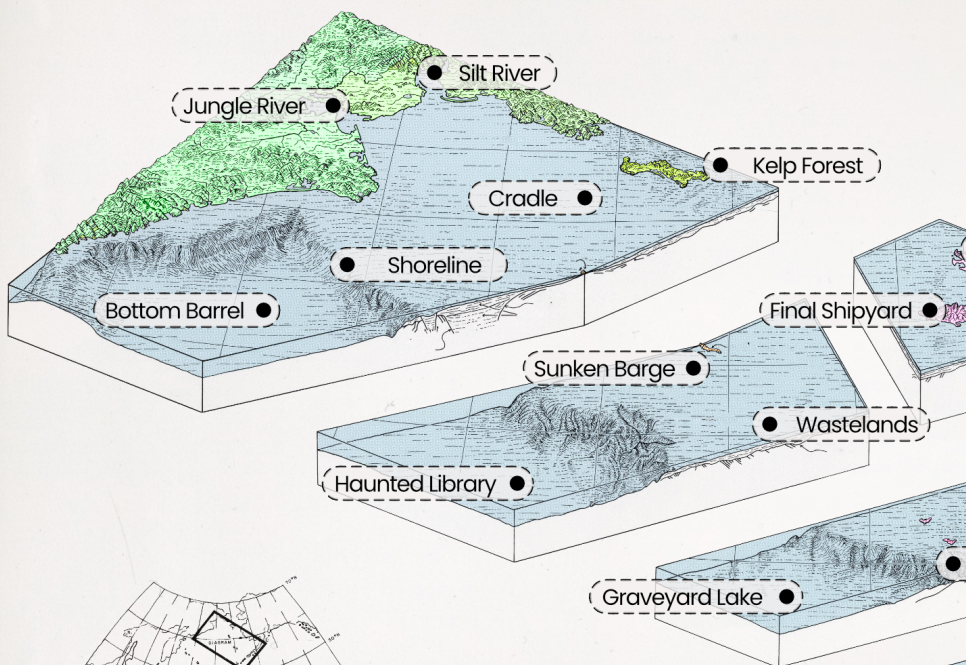
Mien

1. Chilling
2. Vibing
3. Lazing
4. Hungry!
5. Mad (Can't Find Toothbrush)
6. Crocodile Tears



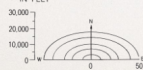
Locations

A larger version of this map is available at
technicalgrimoire.com/bones-deep



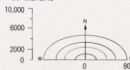
INDEX MAP

VERTICAL SCALE,
IN FEET



HORIZONTAL SCALE,
IN NAUTICAL MILES

VERTICAL SCALE,
IN METERS

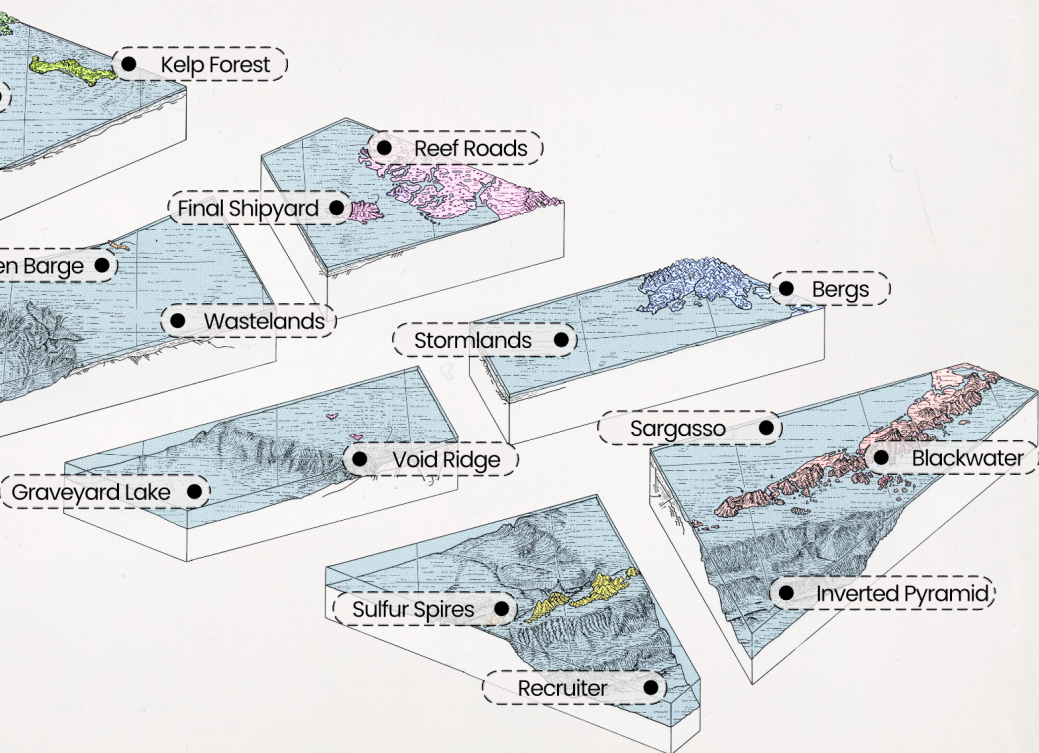


HORIZONTAL SCALE,
IN KILOMETERS

VERTICAL EXAGGERATION X10

Bones Deep

Approximate Locations



Jungle River

10'–60' under the surface, well-lit even in moonlight. A strong current carries you towards the ocean.

The most common gateway to the sea runs through a coastal jungle, a luscious tropical rainforest. Beneath the river lies a sun-washed riverbed roughly 60' deep. Many animals make their homes among the grasses and rhizome plants that cling to sunken logs and forgotten ruins there.

Here is where land and water mix and mingle. Birds divebomb the surface to hunt, alligators emerge from the waters to crawl upon land, and a wandering skeleton may find themselves trapped between the treasures and dangers of both worlds.

Skeletons who are used to traveling on land can use this opportunity to grow accustomed to their new environment.

2d6 Things Being Washed Downriver

2. A group of several **Bawitius Bichir** unexpectedly descend from above the surface to snatch a bone or object from the skeletons before fleeing.
3. An injured **Goliath Tigerfish** drifts on the surface. The thin trail of blood behind it attracts a **Gator**.
4. A group of **Paddlefish** dart about, making their way downriver.
5. A **Goliath Tigerfish** rushes past, dragging a screaming **skeleton** behind it.



6. A group of 3 [Gators](#) battle a [Hippopotamus](#). It's a fury of sound and splashing—getting too close to the melee might draw you into it.
7. A [Red-Legged Cormorant](#) dives into the water and snatches something shiny before returning to the air.
8. Several [Cornish Jack](#) attack a [Balloon Puffer](#) without much success. The puffer glows slightly—it swallowed a mote from the Silt River.
9. You see a satchel snagged on a root along the riverbed. It's dry—sealed with some sort of spell. It only opens with the assistance of a [wizard](#). The satchel contains a book of 3 random Spells and a detailed map of two random locations.
10. An [Arapaima](#) is blundering about in the swift current. Test your Luck or it slams into you (Damage as Modest Beast).
11. A troupe of Black Scylla crabs ask if anyone has seen a rogue Octopus wandering the banks. They offer a reward of 1 Credit in exchange for useful info. These crabs are happy to explain more about the Crab Cabal, and offer their services as scouts.
12. A corpse, recently killed. Its [skeleton](#) is hatching.

Nearby Locations

- Let the current carry you down towards the [Silt River](#).
- Climb overland to the [Shoreline](#).
- Follow the faint trail of crabs down to the [Bottom of the Barrel](#).

Silt River

60'–100' under the surface. Light still penetrates the upper layers, but in the depths, a layer of silt obscures vision and diffuses any light source. At night, glowing motes shine dimly through the silt connected by occasional flashes of underwater lightning.

Currents and eddies are calmer down here. After walking along the bottom of the Jungle River for several miles, it grows wide and deep enough to reveal a second river, made chiefly of silt, in the Jungle River's bed.

A sharp halocline delineates the clear water of the Jungle River from the dark and murky depths of the Silt River—up to 100' in some places. At many points, trees long-dead and petrified pierce the surface of the murk, creating a subsurface forest. Vision is limited, and dangerous creatures lie in wait amidst the heavy, silted waters.

At night, flashes of lightning arc between glowing motes suspended in the halocline. Faint heat and the hum of magical power emanates from the flashes.

Explore the Silt

Roll 1d6 during the day, or 2d6 at night.

1. A **Red-Legged Cormorant** enters the water with a splash, stirring up silt and obscuring vision for hundreds of feet in every direction.
2. A hatchet buried in the muck—the last relic of one who loved a mermaid, but could never be with them. It absorbs memories, and releases them into the wielder. Kept and carried through 6 different locations, you absorb enough memories to gain Mermaid Dances as an Advanced Skill at rank 1.
3. A school of **Paddlefish** feed on grasses below the waterline. If approached, they turn to feed on the latent magic of the skeletons.
4. Scraps of half-finished letters, preserved with a Protection from Rain Spell. They're from the **Green Wizard**, and give hints about the other wizards.

5. A flurry of butterflyfish alerts you of an incoming **swarm** of **Cornish Jack**.
6. A boat's hull lingers on the surface, and fishing lines drop into the water. In retaliation, an **Arapaima** slams against the hull of the boat, threatening to sink it.
7. 2d6 glowing motes, each about as bright as the end of a lit cigarette. They absorb sunlight and glow for weeks after only a few minutes in the sun.
8. A mote trap. Built by the **Green Wizard**, this trap detonates any motes the skeletons are carrying—each deals Damage as Small Beast to any nearby.
9. A particularly clever **Cornish Jack** uses its electric pulse to avoid the heat lightning, dashing in and out of the Silt River to grab motes.
10. Underwater lightning strikes! Damage as Small Beast to all skeletons in the Silt River. It arcs between the motes.
11. A terrified **Bawitius Bichir** launches itself out of the glowing halocline directly towards you! It is charged with electricity, and uncontrollably casts Jolt each Round.
12. The **Green Wizard** has made a home here to study the glowing motes. He offers more glowing motes in exchange for delivering a letter to the Red Wizard in the Sulfur Spires requesting help.

Nearby Locations

- Head to the **Shoreline**, and follow it toward the true ocean.
- Fight the current and make your way upstream to the **Jungle River**.
- Stay near the surface until you enter the canopy of the **Kelp Forest**.

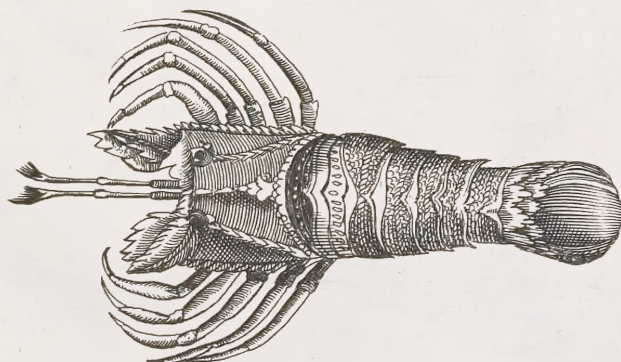
Shoreline

5'-100' under the surface. The waves crash above, and rip currents pull in various directions. Sunlight shines brightly, making the depths below seem even darker.

The ground slopes down for a mile before dropping off like a cliff. The true ocean bottom lies hundreds of feet below, barely visible through the dark sea waters. It will take some time to descend down to the true depths.

Climb Carefully Down

1. A **Ripsaw Catfish** chases a small crab into a crevice. The crab calls for help with a furious stream of bubbles.
2. A group of **Balloon Puffers** drift past. Grab on for a ride?
3. An inquisitive lobster approaches, wanting to know about the skeletons, and happy to talk about the **Crab Cabal**.
4. A **Goliath Tigerfish** attacks a vulnerable player.
5. A **Paddlefish** follows along, snacking on nearby detritus loosened from the cliff face.
6. A sunken clipper ship dangles down along the rocky wall, its sails and lines tangled on outcroppings. The ship contains several boxes of fragile treasures, but watch out—if jostled, the entire ship crashes onto the ocean floor far below.



Take a Wild Leap

1. A mesmerized [Hippo](#) charges a skeleton, trying to knock them off the cliff. A small [Cuttlefish](#) nearby enrages the hippo with its mesmerizing ability.
2. A blue-metal warhammer floats suspended in the water. While held, it is buoyant enough to lift a skeleton. When dropped, it is twice as heavy as expected.
3. Damage as Small Beast from the fall, and a random inventory item breaks upon landing.
4. A rip current extends their descent. They glimpse a few nearby locations during their fall. Damage as Modest Beast upon landing.
5. Their life flashes before their eyes—they pick up an Advanced Skill from their previous fleshy days, at rank 2.
6. A pod of [Balloon Puffers](#) drift nearby—riding them could be a safe way to slowly drift to the bottom.

Nearby Locations

- Climb your way back up and head to the [Silt River](#).
- Walk over to the soft, welcoming light of the [Bottom of the Barrel](#).
- Follow the musical vibrations towards the caves and coves of the [Cradle](#).



The Bottom of the Barrel

500' under the surface. A meeting place for undersea creatures. This tavern was built by Vert, a skeleton who lost the bottom half of his torso. Vert lives behind the bar now, mounted to a track. The tracks run all around the edges of the tavern so Vert can serve drinks and food.

The Barrel is uniquely constructed to accommodate crabs, fish, wizards, witches, skeletons, and any other kind of creature that may wish to meet in a safe place.

The top half is kept dry in a bubble of air; perfect for tall humanoid surface folk. The bottom half remains wet for underwater denizens.

Chances are you'll find what you're looking for at the Barrel.

2d6 Barrel Patrons

2. Vert is the only one here. However, he's heard rumors of a parasite that can regrow bones—there's an infested skeleton near the [Graveyard Lake](#). Vert offers ownership of the bar to anyone who brings him the parasite.
3. A [spider crab](#) laments the loss of their limb. If you bring them a replacement, they reward you with a Credit.
4. A small hermit crab seeks to apprentice under the [Hull Crab](#). They claim the Hull Crab will reward anyone bringing them such a talented apprentice (it won't).
5. A spiny lobster seeks the lost suit of Nemo Armor. They offer a reward of 2 Credits for each piece you bring them.

Helm - Shipyard	Shield - Bergs
Gauntlets - Spire	Boots - Stormlands
Chestpiece - Vents	Trident - Inverted Pyramid
6. Four stone crabs argue with each other. Each one seeks a different [light source](#), arguing the merits of each. Each awards 1 Credit to anyone who provides their preferred light, and if they can all be convinced to agree on a single source, they award 5 Credits total.
7. An enormous lobster barely fits through the door. She wants to eat a [random creature](#).

8. A [Pistol Shrimp](#) says that [crocodile](#) tears can cure any ailment. They offer 7 Credits to anyone who can produce them—but if the tears don't cure their ailment, they won't pay.
9. Two squat lobsters carry a big leatherbound book on their heads. They want to donate the book to the [Haunted Library](#). They offer 2 Credits up front to anyone who agrees to carry it there. The book is hollow and filled with pea crabs hoping to explore the library. When the librarians discover the truth of the book's contents, they'll be cross with whoever delivered it.
10. A nervous candy crab requests memories for their [Dolphin](#) friend. "I think he's ready to... you know... EVOLVE!" the crab says excitedly. After successfully exchanging 12 memories, the dolphin is the first of their kind to achieve sentience.
11. A horseshoe crab wanders inside, and a hushed awe falls over the tavern. She heard rumors of a long-lost royal line wandering the [Graveyard Lake](#). She laments that her fellow crabs are content with trading Credits and acquiring subtle power. They were meant to rule! Perhaps finding this outcast royalty will help her cause. She wants to go there herself, and offers 10 Credits for safe passage and the rescue of her target.
12. An old yeti crab carries with it a tiny stone spiral carving. It offers 2 Credits to anyone who can identify it. The carving is so old that it must be carried for weeks before the memories of its true history can be absorbed.

Nearby Locations

- After leaving the lights of the Barrel, players see the eerie glow of the [Haunted Library](#).
- Ascend up the [Shoreline](#) towards the sunlight.
- A trail of junk and flotsam leads to the [Sunken Barge](#).

Stories

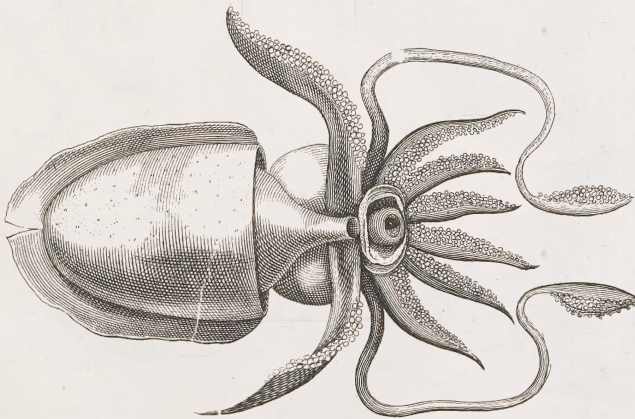
Cephalopod Invasion

The **Cephalopods** have 3 different plans (Plans A, B, and C) to infiltrate the Drylands above the surface. Each plan starts at Stage 1. When players foil one plan, the remaining plans each progress to their next stage.

Plan A: Zed Landing Craft

The octopuses intend to load up the Inverted Pyramid with eggs and cast the Spell "Zed" on it. They expect that this will transport the Pyramid onto land and mutate the eggs so their children breathe air.

- **Stage 1.** The octopuses move their egg stores into the Inverted Pyramid. Stop this plan by locating two egg caches and destroying them. Cache locations: **Crab Cabal**, **Inverted Pyramid**, **Kelp Forest**, and **Final Shipyard**.
- **Stage 2.** The octopuses open negotiation with the Crab Cabal, seeking an ancient spell known as Zed. The crabs put the spellbook up for auction. Stop this plan by winning the Zed auction.
- **Stage 3.** The **Inverted Pyramid** is nearly finished. Stop them by sabotaging the final construction phase.



Plan B: Squid Flesh Puppets

The **Puppetmaster** is amassing an army of squids, intending to train them to control fleshy creatures. They will capture ships and sailors, spreading from host to host.

- **Stage 1.** A **Blackwater Vent** leads to an invisible pool. Anything that immerses itself in this pool can turn invisible, even above the waves. Stop this plan by neutralizing the pool, or closing its entrance, before the squids can make use of its power.
- **Stage 2.** The squids need to learn to breathe air, and the **Witches** know how to grow lungs. The squids pretend to be innocent creatures asking for help. Stop this plan by proving to the Ottermother that the squids' motives are nefarious.
- **Stage 3.** The Puppetmaster gathers a host of squid for training. Stop this plan by defeating the Puppetmaster.

Plan C: Cuttlefish Spies

Acting through third parties, the cuttlefish intend to manipulate the drylander kingdoms into worshiping them.

- **Stage 1.** The cuttlefish work through skeleton go-betweens. Stop this plan by helping three **skeletons** find other ways to pursue their Drives (instead of working for the cuttlefish), or by paying off their debts (3 Crab Credits each).
- **Stage 2.** Leveraging their massive accumulated Credits, the cuttlefish coerce dryland crabs into sending messages and doing reconnaissance. Stop this by intercepting crab messengers, or by providing false intelligence to the crabs.
- **Stage 3.** Several of the dryland kingdoms and cults have developed an interest in cuttlefish—kept as pets, worshiped as gods, or something in between. To stop them at this point requires lifelong travels to the drylands, forming competing cults and ideologies. You are now anti-cuttlefish prophets.

Random Skeleton Generator

Written by [John Gregory](#). Flip a coin and roll a d4, d6, d8, d10, d10, d12, d20, and d100 to generate a Skeleton. Or use the tables to inspire player Skeletons.

Coin – Spooky or Scary?

H. Spooky T. Scary

1d4 Allegiances (if any)

1. Indebted to the Crab Cabal.
2. Cephalopod agent.
3. An emissary to the Mermaids.
4. Indebted to a Wizard.

1d6 Conditions

1. Died at sea, freshly hatched
2. Chipped and Scored, Traveled many miles to reach the Sea
3. Blackened, a victim of a Bone-Fire who barely made it to the Sea
4. Current-Smoothed, has been in the sea long enough to be polished
5. Disarticulated, held together now by rotting rope, wire and seaweed
6. Ancient and Osedax Infested, has wandered the deep for centuries

1d8 Senses

1. Monochrome Vision
2. TRACE
3. POWER
4. MEMORY
5. CURRENT
6. Spectre-tating: Can ride on the senses of a small sea animal.
7. Bits of memory from fleshy days.
8. Roll Twice

1d10 Past Life Memories

1. Was a hero of some sort or another in life, did them little good in death
2. Is fairly certain they might have destroyed a number of skeletons in life, deeply regrets this now
3. Still remembers their last meal in minute detail, savors it
4. That jerkface Gary still owes me five dollars!
5. Wants to believe they were a great entertainer in life but knows they were a second rate clown
6. Was royalty or some kind of aristocrat, but Death is the great equalizer

1d10 Past Life (cont'd)

7. Was a criminal, their head still has trouble staying on from where it was guillotined off
8. Was a grave digger who is now lauded by their fellow skeletons for digging such shallow graves
9. Remembers fire and little else
10. Blissfully ignorant of former life

1d10 Clothing

1. Nothing
2. Absurd amount of gold and jewelry, grave goods they'll say
3. The suit/dress/finery they were buried in
4. A military or sailor uniform
5. Tatters and rags
6. Seaweed Toga
7. Highly corroded metal armor
8. A dramatic, billowing cape and little else
9. A colorful array of corals, urchins, and anemones
10. A horned helmet and loincloth

1d12 Fleshy Life Skills

1. Melee
2. Ranged
3. Arithmetic
4. Etiquette
5. Sneak
6. Strength (You drank your Milk)
7. Art (Sculpting, Painting, Dancing, Metalworking, etc)
8. Second Sight
9. Run
10. Vehicles
11. Awareness
12. Mortuary Science

1d20 Drives

1. **To Acquire.** Whenever you add a valuable object to your possessions, recover 1d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
2. **To Build Community.** After you help a stranger, recover 1d6, 2d6, or 3d6 Stamina and 1d6, 2d6, or 3d6 Luck, depending on how thankful they are.
3. **To Explore.** Whenever you see a new creature, area, or special event, recover 1d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
4. **To Be Free.** Freed from all Drives, you recover 1d6 Stamina and 1d3 Luck after every real-time hour of play.
5. **To Find Peace.** Whenever you take a few moments to meditate, recover 1d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck. If either of those rolls is 1 you cannot meditate any more today.
6. **To Bring Violence.** After you survive a valiant battle, recover 2d6 Stamina.
7. **Chart the world ocean current.** After absorbing the memories of an area, recover 1d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
8. **Find and raise the ship they perished on.** If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
9. **Have one last taste of wine.** If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.

1d20 Drives (cont'd)

10. **Find the person who killed them** and free their skeleton because this is the best thing ever. If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
11. **Digging the Hole** down to the Bottom of the Everything. Every time you descend 100 ft, recover 1d6 Stamina. Every time you descend 500ft, recover 1d6 Luck.
12. **Recover all 206 bones** of their lost sibling. If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
13. **Escaping to SPACE.** If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
14. **Finding a Sea-Witch** who could grant them one more day among the living. If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
15. **Become the Head Librarian.** If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
16. **Collecting and mastering the art of every blade**, a lot harder underwater. If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
17. **Meeting and becoming the disciple of Jetsam**, embracing the way of trash. If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.

18. **Return the Sleeping Guardian** to their original resting place. If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
19. **Stand atop the Inverted Pyramid.** If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.
20. **Becoming a safe habitat** for an endangered sea creature. If you made progress this session, recover 2d6 Stamina and 1d6 Luck.

1d100 Quirks

1. Is both Spooky AND Scary
2. Lost their head in a bet gone wrong, wears a giant pearl as a replacement
3. Has two heads from a won bet, regrets it because the other head won't shut up
4. Has an anchor lodged in their ribcage, its chain extends to something on the surface
5. Has been to The Trench and returned, they're half the size of what they once were and will speak little of the experience
6. Has carved a number of driftwood masks for expressions they wish they still had
7. Exchanges rib bones with their close friends as a sign of their connection
8. Replaced all their teeth with shark teeth, because they could
9. "Sky-dives" by breaking open veins of Methane and riding the bubbles to the surface

1d100 Quirks (cont'd)

95. Their bones are exceptionally porous and light, needs to be weighed down as to not float to the surface.
96. Has an intense phobia of creatures without skeletons, such as sea slugs.
97. Has spent decades among the hydrothermal vents and has obtained a sulfide crust and a few tube worms.
98. Their bones are considered Holy on the surface, it took them long enough to escape from that reliquary.
99. Their body was too well embalmed and was never able to hatch, so still has their cocoon around them.
100. Name as many bones (the scientific name not Funny bone) and roll that many times

d66 Random Creatures

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 11. Arapaima | 41. Humboldt Squid |
| 12. Anglerfish | 42. Lion's Mane Jellyfish |
| 13. Balloon Puffer | 43. Lionfish |
| 14. Barreleye | 44. Orca Hunters |
| 15. Bawitius Bichir | 45. Otter |
| 16. Bloody Belly Comb Jelly | 46. Paddlefish |
| 21. Bobbit Worm | 51. Pistol Shrimp |
| 22. Cornish Jack | 52. Ripsaw Catfish |
| 23. Croc or Gator | 53. Sargassum Fish |
| 24. Dolphin | 54. Sea Angel |
| 25. Dusky Damselfish | 55. Sea Pig |
| 26. Enteroctopus | 56. Sevengill Runt |
| 31. Giant Cuttlefish | 61. Spinster Squid |
| 32. Goldentail Moray | 62. Spider Crab |
| 33. Gulper | 63. Stargazer |
| 34. Goliath Tigerfish | 64. Stingray |
| 35. Greenland Shark | 65. Loggerhead Turtle |
| 36. Heptapus | 66. Wizard |

d66 Random Spells

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11. Accelerated Memory | 41. Imitate |
| 12. Air Bubble | 42. Imperceptible |
| 13. Brinicle Strike | 43. Infested Burst |
| 14. Bubble Net | 44. Infested Spike |
| 15. Command Creature | 45. Jolt |
| 16. Consultation | 46. Julia |
| 21. Coral Shaping | 51. Launching Leap |
| 22. Disrupting Pulse | 52. Maelstrom |
| 23. Drift | 53. Marked Scent |
| 24. Eject Bone | 54. Protection from Rain |
| 25. Empathize | 55. Red Tide |
| 26. Fire Bolt | 56. Spectral Sea Pig |
| 31. Forced Hatching | 61. Torpedo Throw |
| 32. Frozen Weapon | 62. Teleport |
| 33. Ground | 63. Thunder |
| 34. Halocline | 64. Undertow |
| 35. Hand Sun | 65. Unexpected |
| 36. Healthy Light | 66. Wishbone |

1d6 Places to Find a Spell

1. In an airtight Spellbook. The Spell can be cast directly from the book without being opened, but if the book is lost, the Spell is forgotten.
2. Carved into a Shell. Must be translated with the help of a True Crab.
3. A magical bubble. Touching the bubble teaches the spell, but also pops it, and immediately casts the spell on a random nearby target.
4. Stored as a memory in an object. Will be learned slowly over time as it is carried and handled.
5. Magic Seed. This coral, algae, kelp, or fungus will teach the Spell as it grows.
6. Manifests as a Ghostly Instructor:
Skill 9 | **Damage** as Modest Beast | **Stamina** 16
Drive To teach only the worthy.

FIN