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URESIA

The Grave of Heaven

Days by Caravel

Days by Road

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Introduction

WHEN I WAS a kid, I went with my Dad on one of his tennis-playing outings. A secret military tennis court, no less (who knew?) where the Vice President sometimes played.

Dad's good at tennis, but watching the game has never been a big charge for me. I exhaust what fun I can find in the building around us. The tennis court is in an ancient warehouse, one among dozens, and beyond the lit areas set aside for the game, it's all rusting ironwork, grimy old windows, catwalks to climb on, and people's names written, by fingertip, in layers of dust several years old. We'd been here before, though, and the rush of exploring in the dark is gone, so I get bored and wander further.

I head outside, and it's *snowing*. The scene is: huge black shapes of warehouses stretching into the distance in all directions, rows and rows, each spread with a layer of fresh white. The streets are entirely empty, except for me, and barely lit. I'm making the only footprints around. I stomp around in the darkness for a while. When I stand still, the silence is so complete that, all around me, I can hear the snow falling.

And then I see the ship.

There's a quayside in the distance, and it's so dark that I'd never know that, normally. But there's a tiny white ship anchored there, lit by floodlights. There doesn't seem to be anyone around, and yet here's this little ship, bathed in brilliant light, casting big shadows into the snow, and against the heavy clouds above. Fantastic.

Never a shy lad, I hike on over and walk up the gang-plank, and the captain himself meets me halfway. He's surprised to see me, and I, stupidly, am surprised to see him. The night continues to go better than it should: he adjusts quickly to my presence and invites me aboard.

I learn that the ship – a small NOAA survey vessel – will be a centerpiece for some kind of showy presentation tomorrow. The floodlights and all are just a dry run. Most of the crew are off in the city, now; they've been at sea for weeks, measuring minute differences in water density somewhere. The captain's all out of responsibilities for now, except staying aboard to oversee preparations. So, I get a guided tour: engines, cramped little corridors and companionways, navigation, tiny little galley, and that same display of a hundred different knots that seems to be everywhere mariners gather.

There are only a few other people around, including a pretty girl with a denim baseball cap and long hair (tied back for work), who gives me a cheery hello as she passes by, carrying some papers somewhere.

Meeting her is a preface, as it happens, for meeting the snow-woman.

The snow-woman stood on deck. She'd been assembled crudely from handfuls of snow at sea, a week before. Ample mounds, carefully sculpted, made it

plain that *she* wasn't a *he*. She wore a cap, just like the girl I'd just met. She also wore fragments of a similar uniform, and a huge, crooked smile. She wasn't due to survive the night; they'd be tearing her down prior to the public festivities.

The captain relaxed, then. The formal tour-guide became a friendly sailor telling stories. The small crew, I learned, had just one woman aboard (the one still working), so she suffered a lot of teasing when voyages ran long. The snow-woman was a good-natured collective flirt from her fan-club among the crew, and she'd donated the clothing to provide her icy *doppelgänger* with modesty and character.

The captain's story painted the ship I'd just toured in an entirely different light. I became aware that I'd been invited into this man's home, and I was, in a sense, hearing about his family.

That moment is one of many woven into *Caravel*, a look at a single ship sailing Uresia's Inner Sea, and the crew who live aboard her. There's just one woman aboard *Poison Pepper* ... and while *Caravel* doesn't mention snow-women constructed to bashfully express the crew's infatuation with her, you can be sure, when the ship sails north and there's snow on deck, some of the sailors will make one.

We can only hope that none of the ship's able-bodied hail from Yem ...

Welcome aboard!

About Uresia

Uresia: Grave of Heaven is a traditional fantasy world warped through an anime lens, inspired by both Western swords-and-sorcery and things like *Slayers*, *Record of Lodoss War*, and *Bastard!!*. It's got slimes, long-eared elves, and all the trappings you'd expect from an anime fantasy world, and quite a few twists and turns that you might not. Uresians sail caravels, and **Caravel** is a supplement for **Uresia**. You'll need a copy of **Uresia** (any flavor; there've been a few by now) to make the best use of **Caravel**, but it's adaptable to many other fantasy worlds, as well.

About Chun

Chun has been drawing *manga* style since she was 15. Her work appears weekly in a comic column for a major Chinese daily paper in Singapore, and her other art projects include a forthcoming graphic novel. When she isn't drawing, she enjoys digital photography (taking countless pictures of everyday things; especially food, flowers and pets). She enjoys experimenting with simple cuisines for her loved ones when she gets the chance to attempt blowing up the kitchen. Chun's illustrations for **Caravel** were her first for Cumberland Games; you can see more of her art in **Uresia: Grave of Heaven**. To learn more about Chun and her work, visit her website at www.puppy52.com.



About S. John Ross

S. John's been writing RPG stuff professionally since 1990, but he's been a cartophilic gamer a lot longer, skipping lots of high school to walk railroad tracks, explore the woods, drink schnapps with a waitress in her trailer park, get caught by the school principal while hitchhiking, run away to the beach, invent the world's smelliest pizza while airborne, practice stage-magic and comedy, and set things on fire. When he got tired, he'd spend time curled up in a chair with a purring kitten named Sergio, drawing floorplans, villages, dungeons and cities for his fantasy games. As he got older, some of those habits changed, and in addition to creating **Uresia: Grave of Heaven**, he's sold work to TSR, Wizards of the Coast, White Wolf, Steve Jackson Games, Flying Buffalo, Last Unicorn Games, West End Games, Avalon Hill and others before founding Cumberland Games to make the kind of stuff he'd been *itching* to all along (including **Risus: The Anything RPG**, **Sparks** paper miniatures, and Uresia's "sister" RPG, **Encounter Critical**). Since 1997, he's been happily married to Sandra Ross. They currently reside in Denver, Colorado.

S. John Ross

Wintergrave's Family Eatery
and Spaetzle House
Scutching, Dreed

Sailtender Vela Skylark

Even on a ship where the Chief Mate is a Swarming Bandit Slime and the Bosun is a metal golem, Vela Skylark stands out as something of an oddity; Aracor aren't common at sea. Aracor are *valued* at sea – their tremendous eyesight and their ability to fly grants any ship with an Aracor aboard an almost unbeatable advantage in defense and navigation. But, most Aracor don't enjoy sailing.

Vela Skylark isn't much different, really. He was drawn to sail not by the romance of the sea, but by the *whispers of the sails*. Like any good sailtender, Vela Skylark is haunted. Spirits seek his company; ghosts feel a kinship with him, the elements focus on him.

Vela's flight (his extended family) isn't from Helt proper, but rather from the highlands of Lochria – those hills and mountains now more famous for spawning dragons than for the noble centaurs and others who live there. Vela's people were hunters and simple craftsmen, almost barbaric by the standards of the more central islands. Vela himself is, now as he was in his youth, quiet, even brooding. He's haunted in more ways than one, really, and never did well at anything his family expected him to. He dreamed, and he sang, and he felt that, beyond his beautiful hills and cloudy skies, there was more for him. He left home with tears in his eyes, over the objections of his father, and traveled to Coatestown. In Coatestown, wandering by the quayside, he heard the sails of the ships anchored there. It was, to him, an almost deafening chorus

of whispers, a heady susurrations like a distant mountain avalanche.

When he realized that no one else seemed to *notice*, he investigated. It didn't take long for the sailors to recognize what he was referring to. Fingers pointed to the local house of the Sailtender's Guild, and Vela found his calling, among the ghost sails and those who care for them.

Or, at least, he found something closer to his calling than he'd known before. Truth be told, Vela still doesn't feel settled, but he's enjoying his life and he loves his friends aboard *Pepper*, even if he's still too quiet to express it. When others haul out the strong drink and dance, Vela ascends to his nest, to listen to the wind and sails. He watches the party from above, happy to see his friends having such a fine time, but unsure how to really join in, or even if he wants to. He joined Buckler's crew on their previous ship, the *Prince of Fogport*, just before it was destroyed smuggling slaves from Orgalt. He saved several lives that day, and no crewman doubts his affection or loyalty – they just wish they could guess what he's thinking about.

Every night, Vela sings as he ascends to sleep near his sails, and every night, Crux joins in (his deep, basso hooting split into a chorus of a dozen) resonating from the depths of the hold. On occasion (when he isn't in his cups) Perseus adds a tin whistle to the song, Soubrette hums sweetly as she sips her evening tea, and the Captain takes off his hat and squints at some distant star, smiling slightly. In those moments, *Poison Pepper* feels most like home to all aboard her.

companionway, coils of rope, hanging weapons, lamps and other miscellany the crew needs kept dry. There's enough room to hang a dozen or more hammocks in the cabin, and – aboard *Poison Pepper* – every crewman is welcome to sleep there (on some ships, only the principal officers are). Most mariners prefer to sleep on deck anyway, except in poor weather, when the cabin becomes warm with the stink of ale and wine, and heavy with the doubtful mass of mariners' tall-tales. A small hatch beneath the starboard companionway provides a secondary entrance to the hold, useful when the main hatch must remain closed to shield the cargo from rain.

The Maid's Cabin/ Forward Locker

Properly speaking, the Maid (see page 13) takes quarters in the ship's *locker*, the space beneath the foredeck. Soubrette's quarters are tiny and cramped, but she's worked hard to make it home, complete with tiny blue curtains, a hand-made quilt bundled into her hammock for cold nights, and a small locked sea-chest stocked with

personal comforts like stuffed animals, cookbooks (including the trendy *King Timberfell's Favorite Recipes*), and her maid arsenal.

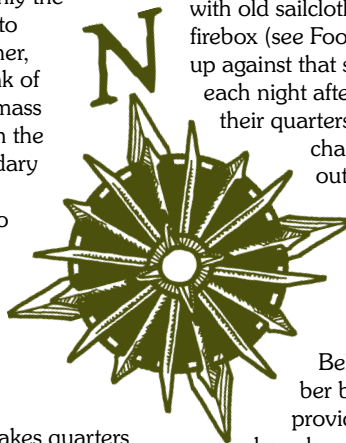
Mira, her kitten, sleeps in a small wooden box padded with old sailcloth. Mira's bed sits right next to Soubrette's firebox (see Food & Drink, page 11), and Mira snuggles up against that side, soaking up the lingering warmth, each night after mealtime. Soubrette and Mira share their quarters with several large coils of rope, and the chain for the ship's anchor, which hangs just outside on the starboard side of the hull.

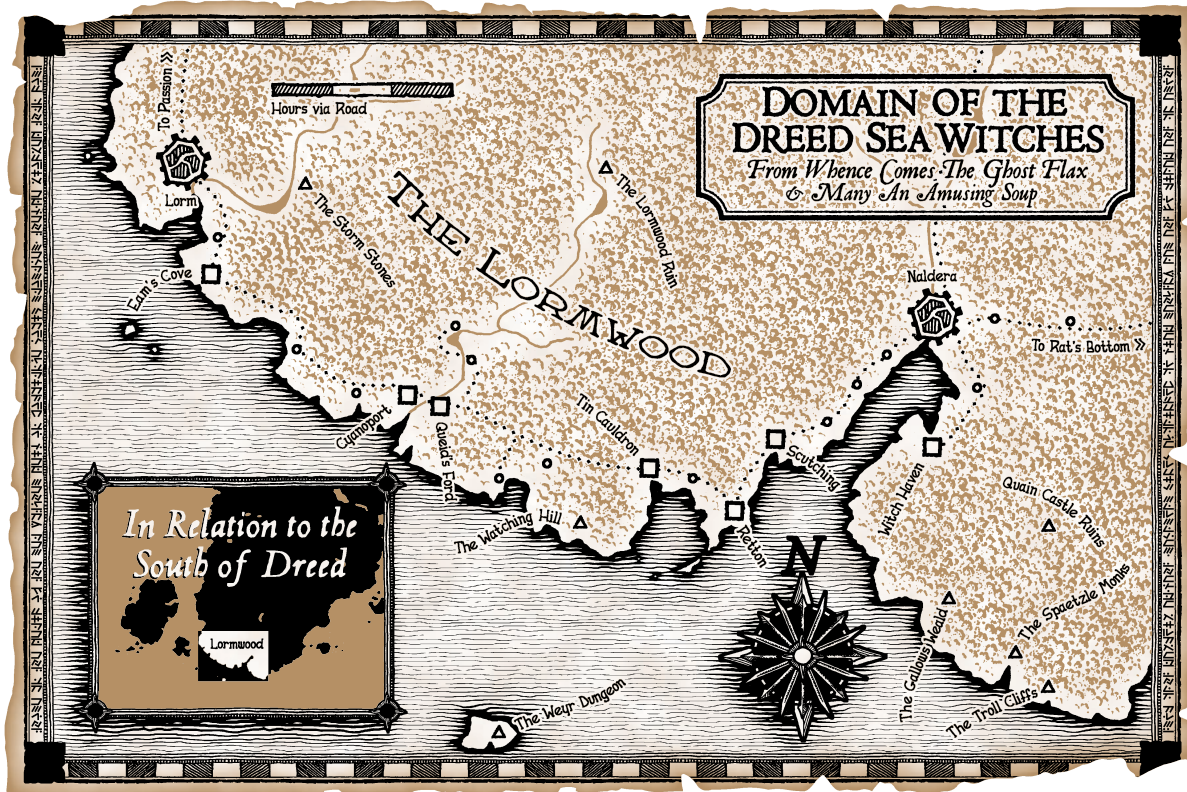
The ropes and chains rest beneath Soubrette's hammock.

The Cargo Hold

Belowdecks is the hold: a single large chamber braced with sturdy teak, with a plank floor providing a (usually) dry platform for bales, barrels, crates and the ship's Chief Mate, Crux.

Poison Pepper's pair of cannon, too, stays in the hold most of the time, in wooden braces designed for quick winching to the deck when the captain calls for the guns. While many caravels maintain more guns (and some keep





plant from the soil by hand (to cut it would ruin it). They stack the flax in great layers and keep it damp, to rot. It does so, fragrantly, for three weeks. Then, the villagers carry the flax to open hilltops overlooking the sea.

The sea witches are masters of the whispering flax. They watch it grow, command the villagers who harvest it, oversee its journey to the hilltops, and – as the flax dries in the open winds – the sea witches gather, and make spells over it, and commune with very old things. As the flax dries, the greatest of the air sprites – ghosts of dead winds drawn by the scent of the flax from the sea – slip down out of the sky, become one with the flax, and the whispering begins.

This would happen, some surmise, even without the witches' guidance. But they are an order dedicated to the *perfection* of the flax, and of what happens next: the fibers are drawn out, combed and spun. From the looms of the witches – and of the hundreds of villagers who answer to them – the sailcloth is woven into linen rich with ghosts. Whispering flax also makes fine hot-weather clothing prized in Boru (to wear a linen shirt made by a sea-witch is to cut an extra-dashing figure, sleeves flapping smartly in the fresh breeze). The flax-seed (linseed) renders fine oil used for oilcloth, inks, and even the paints on a caravel's hull.

The towns of Lorm and Naldera – and the string of smaller towns and villages between them – are the realm of the sea witches. They (both the towns and the witches) are dedicated to the cycles of the whispering flax, and to flax-craft of all kinds from harvest to loom to the intricate dyeing and painting of the finest sails. When the last of

For Starters, Jets of Flame Help Dry the Flax

The joke "Since this is Dreed, shouldn't they be called sand-witches?" was declared no longer funny in 1366, by formal proclamation of the Council of Passion (née Faithful Bay). The Governor was sick of hearing it when entertaining foreign emerald merchants aspiring to jesterhood. Uttering the joke in the presence of an actual Sea Witch is an excellent way to find out if they have any powers *apart* from haunted agronomy.

the designs are laid, the witches cast one final spell to ensure the benevolent favor of the spirits haunting the canvas, with secret rituals carried out in high towers riddled with holes and windows, moaning in the wind like great ghostly flutes.

Most visitors to southern Dreed lay anchor at Passion, to enjoy fine Dreed cooking and the playful decadence of Dreed city life. Only a few, drawn by curiosity, make the trip along rocky shores to the cliffs and hills of the sea witches and their towns, to smell the rotting flax in the summertime, and see hundreds of painted sails flapping gently as they dry in the breeze. Some adventurers come, too, seeking the many magical secrets locked in the region's ruins, and discovering, perhaps, if there is some tie between the magic of the flax and the secrets lurking in the dungeons.

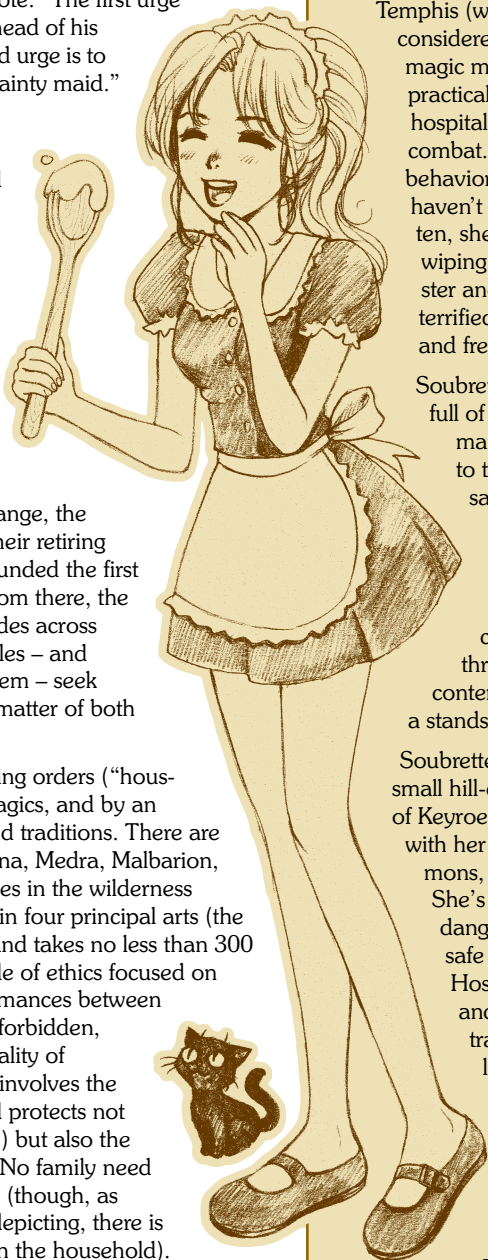
Maids

Maids as domestic servants to the wealthy are an old tradition. Winnow introduced the traditional uniform in 616, and the noble houses had certainly retained maids before then. Phuraxis of Koval once wrote: "The first urge of a powerful man is to see the head of his enemy on a plate, but the second urge is to have that plate served up by a dainty maid."

Maids as battle-ready, sorcerous defenders evolved more slowly. Most point to Batigua, fifth Lord of Localona and conqueror of the Brock Citadel, as the patron who would found the notion. Batigua employed a large corps of maids to look after his nine infant sons and – fearing assassins – he hired his maids from among a neighboring order of witches. He demanded both the defense of his family and uninterrupted domestic luxury, even in the heat of war. In exchange, the maids got land and wealth for their retiring years. Three of those witches founded the first order of magic maids in 876. From there, the history of the magic maid explodes across the inner islands, as foreign nobles – and those rich enough to emulate them – seek similar household services as a matter of both practicality and fashion.

There are today several competing orders ("houses"), each defined by unique magics, and by an identical body of formal laws and traditions. There are major training centers in Localona, Medra, Malbarion, and tucked away in hidden places in the wilderness across Uresia. Each maid trains in four principal arts (the "sacred services;" see sidebar) and takes no less than 300 oaths, binding her to a strict code of ethics focused on loyalty, personal boundaries (romances between maids and those they serve are forbidden, with dire consequences) and quality of service. One of the many oaths involves the sanctity of the employer: a maid protects not only her family's house (or ship!) but also the privacy of those who live there. No family need fear scandal from gossipy maids (though, as several Winnowite plays enjoy depicting, there is no oath prohibiting gossip within the household). Other vital oaths emphasize the secrets of maid skills and spells, including the use of maid battle techniques and unusual weapons, such as the Iron Feather Duster and the Forty Apron Blades.

Maid magic combines the practical with the martial; there are just as many spells for cleaning, cooking, and organizing as there are for burning, tossing and flattening. Maid battle magic makes good use of things maids will have ready access to – those attacking a maid should expect to



Ship's Maid Soubrette Lynx

To be sure, Captain Buckler is the soul of *Poison Pepper*, but just as surely, Soubrette is the heart. Her position among the crew is rare outside Temphis (women, maids or otherwise, are considered bad luck at sea). She's a certified magic maid, trained in both the magical and practical arts of the "four sacred services:" hospitality, housekeeping, childcare and combat. Given the sometimes-adolescent behavior of sailors, her skills at childcare haven't atrophied aboard *Pepper*. Very often, she amounts to the ship's den-mother, wiping bloody noses, bandaging sea-monster and cutlass wounds, and comforting a terrified crew with a warm pot of porridge and freshly-laundered blankets.

Soubrette is a young girl: gentle, delicate, full of laughter. Her caring smile and kind manner are genuine, and she tends to the ship in ways that no captain, sailtender or bosun ever could. But on those occasions where *Poison Pepper* is threatened, Soubrette's demeanor transforms. Her powers are thunderous and vast, and she can stir the ocean like a cauldron, throw soldiers flat to the ground with a contemptuous glance, and battle a troll to a standstill with her personal arsenal.

Soubrette is a Temphis native, raised in the small hill-country town of Waybrook, Duchy of Keyroe. She grew up playing in the woods with her brothers – games of tag with demons, games of hide-and-seek with ghosts. She's at ease in the face of supernatural dangers, and believes in the value of a safe home. A scout for the Malbarion Hospitality Guild spotted her at age 13 and offered her passage to Sindra for training. Eager to see what she might learn, she agreed, and the Guild paid her family a princely sum for the privilege of taking their daughter into the ranks. When she finished her training, three years later, she brushed aside offers from seven royal families, eager to ply her trade in a way that let her see the world. She found Captain

Buckler nailing a "Maid Needed" notice on the public board at Fogport, and dissolved the nail with a spark of fire before he could drive it in. On her first voyage with the crew, she saved the second mate from a sea serpent near Votus, and forcefully ended a tradition among the able-bodied of making underwear "lucky" by never washing it. She's been part of the crew for just over a year, now.

Kawai!

Soubrette's kitten, Mira, is a Toshish Tawny, just a year old. She's the newest member of the "crew" aboard, and as cats often will, she's already concluded that the ship belongs to her. Soubrette, clearly, is her feeder. The others, by process of logical elimination, are her toys and – at her whim – her scratching posts. The crew loves Mira; she's playful and energetic, and got her sea-legs after just a few days.

Mira does, however, have a problem that may soon mature into crisis.

Every time Mira begins a really *satisfying* yawn and stretch, Soubrette becomes so charmed by it that she tickles the cat in playful delight, telling her how cute a kitty she is. This interrupts the stretch, leaving Mira a little edgier each time. She's tried wandering out on deck, but the sailors do exactly the same thing.

She tried hiding in the damp shadows of the hold, but Crux thinks a stretching kitten is cute, too! The rats there snicker and taunt her in her torment.

The captain was Mira's last hope. So grim, that captain. So serious. So studious, so dignified. Mira slipped into his private cabin one evening, and let go a really big yawn.

Not only did the captain tickle ... not only did he coo and praise her cuteness ... but he made some very undignified googly expressions in the process. A captain's private space, it seems, is another world.

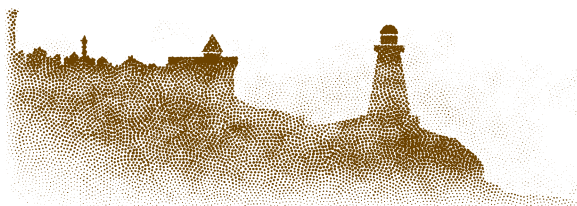
Mira twitches now, jittery. Her left eye darts this way and that, seeking private corners in vain. She hasn't enjoyed a satisfactory stretch in 26 days.

Just last night, one of the rats approached her, grinning knowingly, rubbing claws greedily. The rats have an offer: they'll act as defensive lookouts in exchange for "a little favor, later on." Mira is considering it.

face clouds of choking and blinding dust and flying furniture. There is a strong mutual respect between most maids and the more magical of the Cookery Gods of Dreed, and possibly even some exchange of trade secrets for mutual benefit. Some overlap is inevitable, since nearly a dozen of King Timberfell's most favored Food Gods are, or have been, trained as magic maids.

Many maids have distinguished themselves in action. Most of the eastern duchies of Temphis that fell to Koval's invasion lost *land* to the Koval forces, but *none* of them lost the private villas housing the noble children. The Koval armies were held at the door or left decorating the garden, unable to challenge the defending maids.

The Temphis notion of shipboard maids hasn't gained much favor in other lands. A few Sindran ships employ maids, and a few from Winnow and Boru, but the old notion that women are bad luck aboard a ship (except as passengers, or company at port) prevents the notion from becoming a fad. Temphis, a land priding itself on thumbing its collective nose at curses and things like them, celebrates the shipboard maids as both an emblem of national character and a powerful factor in the safety of her fleets. Most Temphis sailors are – like all sailors – still superstitious to the point of comic exaggeration, but the Temphisians have decided that, even if women are bad luck aboard a ship, women who can wield mighty magics and serve up clean, warm socks on chilly mornings are *more* than enough to make up for it.



Fogport

For years, now, Captain Buckler has called Fogport his home, and it's the home anchorage, too, of *Poison Pepper*. When *Pepper* lands at home, Captain and crew spend their days drinking and singing at the tavern of The Breeze and Trinket.

Fogport is the oldest city in Temphis, and the seat of the wealthiest Duke – Judac, the Duke of Emeralds. While Judac's dinner-party claim that Fogport is the original landing site of the Dreed colonists isn't true (and he knows it), it's near enough – they landed just a few leagues north along the coast, and Fogport was among the first handful of settlements.

Fogport is Temphis' second-largest city, with a population just over 24 thousand. It's wealthy, serving as the largest emerald marketplace outside Dreed, and as a center of international diplomacy since the days of the first emerald treaties. Duke Judac plays up his wealth heartily, and invites foreign knights from every kingdom he knows of, to share battle-tales and learn news. The Duchess is social, too, seeking the company of scholars, wizards and artists. She used a large chunk of her husband's wealth building the Judac Collection, a library of several thousand tomes and scrolls, housed in a vast, palatial structure on Hunting Avenue.

Quirks of geography prevent Fogport from growing much larger than it is now. This region features scores of sudden changes in elevation – huge vertical slopes of naked stone with tiny clumps of trees and vegetation hanging on for dear life. Many believe they can make out writing on some of the cliff faces – enormous runes each taller than a large Troll. Most of the rivers that find the sea, here, do so through the mouth of a steep gorge. Fogport rests in abrupt and difficult terrain, where roads snake inconveniently through narrow valleys and any river-traffic to the city must make an overland journey of several