

Robert E. Howard's

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SHINING KINGDOMS:  
FROST ON THE VILAYET

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## SHINING KINGDOMS: FROST ON THE VILAYET

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## ADVENTURE

# FROST ON THE VILAYET

*“I have seen the hoar-frost glittering in the sun,” she answered.  
“I have heard the wind whispering across the everlasting snows.”*

— Atali, “The Frost-Giant’s Daughter”

## INTRODUCTION

Playing pirates of the Red Brotherhood under an avaricious captain, the player characters voyage across lonely waters of the northern Vilayet Sea far from the usual haunts of man to a hidden cove that promises riches for the taking. But unseen horrors lurk beneath the ice of the lost shrine of Baba Mora. Can the motley sea-wolves of the Vilayet claim their treasure and escape to warmer waters, or will they join the frozen dead?

## PIRATES OF THE VILAYET

The player characters start the adventure as recent additions to the crew of the pirate ship *Alecto*, a captured Hyrkanian galley commanded by the ambitious Captain Zakynthos. Zakynthos and his crew have been harrying Hyrkanian and Turanian merchant vessels across the southern and central reaches of the Vilayet for some time without ever making a big score. But Zakynthos, ever optimistic, is adamant that the next ship they fall upon will lead to treasure beyond their wildest dreams.





## CAPTAIN ZAKYNTHOS (NEMESIS)

A charismatic but over-confident Corinthian pirate who speaks in somewhat flowery language and dreams of striking it rich. Ambitious but incautious, Zakynthos is as likely to lead his crew into disaster as he is to glory.

The gamemaster can choose to stage a mutiny against Zakynthos' high-risk leadership at a dramatic point, using an ambitious and ill-tempered challenger from among the crew to lead the revolt. Or the player characters themselves might decide that one of them would make a better captain of the *Alecto* than the foolhardy Corinthian, blindly and obediently.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	8	10	9
Agility	Brawn	Coordination	
10	9	9	




### FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	2
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	1	Social	2

### STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 11, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor 1 (Clothing), Courage 2



### ATTACKS

- **Cutlass (M):** Reach 2, 6 , Unbalanced, Fearsome, Vicious
- **Throwing Knife (R):** Range C, 3 , 1H, Hidden 1, Improvised, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **You Face Zakynthos! (T):** Range C, 3  mental, Persistent 1

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Born to the Sea:** Zakynthos never suffers penalties due to pitching decks or wet weather.
- **The Alecto is My Castle:** While aboard the *Alecto* and able to move, Zakynthos always has Light Cover, with 2  Cover Soak against ranged weapons.

### DOOM SPENDS

- **Deadly Reputation:** At any time, Zakynthos may spend 2 Doom (Repeatable) to add 3  to the mental damage inflicted by his You Face Zakynthos! Attack.
- **The Sea's Favored Son:** When an opponent rolls a Consequence while engaged in an Action Scene against Zakynthos and aboard any ship, the captain may immediately spend 3 Doom to inflict 4  with the Knockdown quality, from some combination of pitching decks, cargo cut loose, or other hazards of shipboard fighting.

## THE CREW OF THE ALECTO

The non-player character pirates described in this adventure are notable members of the *Alecto's* crew. Use some or all of them to lend color to the player characters' experience as part of a pirate crew, and to direct the plot where necessary.

## CHOOSING THE PIRATE'S LIFE

If playing this adventure as part of an ongoing campaign, the player characters may need a reason to be part of a pirate crew on the Vilayet. Should they be the sort likely to willingly become pirates given the opportunity, the gamemaster may read the following:

*"You have fallen in with a lusty band of rogues pirating the Vilayet under Captain Zakynthos. A motley crew of sea wolves, their love of life as free men and dreams of riches are matched by their fury in battle. Some you consider good shipmates, while others are low dogs to be watched warily."*

If they are not likely to have voluntarily chosen the life of a pirate, the gamemaster may read this instead:

*"When the avaricious Captain Zakynthos' pirate vessel overtook yours, he gave you the choice between joining his crew or immediate death. You chose the former. Better the life of a pirate than being cut to pieces by these cut-throats, though grim thoughts of revenge beat in your hearts."*

If the player characters have not fully embraced the avaricious life of a reaving pirate (see *Choosing the Pirate's Life*), the eager Captain Zakynthos be used to drive them toward the plot, in this case the misty cove. Likewise, the first mate Bolgerus can be used as a bully boy to get the player characters to "volunteer" for dangerous tasks, or to instigate an ill-timed mutiny if so desired. Other pirates are useful for voicing superstitious fears, merrily stealing forbidden treasures, cravenly abandoning their crewmates to a dreadful fate, or swearing allegiance to whoever proves themselves the most capable leader.

The adventure uses Zakynthos and Bolgerus as the primary non-player characters, but their roles can easily be played by non-player characters pirates from other *Conan* sources, or by some of the player characters themselves if they fit the profile of ambitious and greedy pirates.

The remainder of the ship's complement is made up predominantly of pirates (see *Conan* corebook, page 319) plus a few bandits and thugs (see *Conan* corebook, pages 312 and 321), all from various Hyborian nations. Four lieutenants, Tizgur the Cautious, Fair Gulbin, Good the Sly, and Nickolo the Cruel, lead the rest, and are the non-player pirates the player characters interact with most often. For each, use the game statistics for knights (see *Conan* corebook, page 318) and the armor, weapons, attacks, and special abilities of pirates.



## BOLGERUS OF TRINOVA (NEMESIS)

A portly, bullying Brythunian first mate. Bolgerus is biding his time to take control of this or another pirate ship and become captain. He would make a tough, brutal opponent or a truly horrible leader for the player characters.

The gamemaster can use the ambitious Bolgerus to challenge Zakynthos' right to captain the *Alecto* at a dramatic moment, in a brief but bloody mutiny attempt. The Brythunian is also more cold-bloodedly pragmatic than Zakynthos and is likely to be at the head of any faction of pirates who would rather flee the horrors of the misty cove with a little treasure than stand and fight to their deaths.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	9	9	9
Agility	Brawn	Coordination	
10	10	10	



### FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	2
Fortitude	3	Senses	2
Knowledge	1	Social	1

**STRESS & SOAK**

- **Stress:** Vigor 13, Resolve 8
- **Soak:** Armor 2 (Clothing), Courage 1

**ATTACKS**

- **Cutlass (M):** Reach 2, 5 , Unbalanced, Fearsome, Vicious 1
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 4 , mental, Stun

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

- **Brothers Aboard:** Bolgerus gains 1 Courage soak for every ally in any combat who is still alive and part of the fight.
- **Strength from the Sea:** Bolgerus is used to combat aboard ship and only suffers penalties in the fiercest of weather.

**DOOM SPEND**

- **Leadership:** Bolgerus may spend 2 Doom to grant an ally a single, immediate Standard action. If he is allied with the Player Characters, he may do so by spending 2 Momentum from the group pool.

**THE ICE HAG'S COVE**

Awaiting the player characters is a mist-shrouded cove among the mountainous northern coast of the Vilayet, where a forgotten, frozen shrine houses the slumbering form of the terrible ice hag Baba Mora.

A monstrous, ancient being of considerable power, Baba Mora was once worshipped by certain Hyperboreans as a goddess of winter and death. They built her a temple in a sacred cove and brought her gifts and treasures. All but forgotten, she lies quiet and undisturbed, encased in the thick, protective ice of her frosty shrine where she slumbers through the years, patiently guarded by her monstrous servitors — a degenerate, amphibious tribe of vodyani and hulking moroznek ice corpses.

Only the occasional arrival of outsiders by sea — such as the recent intrusion by a lost Turanian merchant

ship— disturbs her rest. Though Baba Mora herself never leaves her icy tomb, the vodyani and moroznek are quite capable of making short, savage work of any trespassers and claiming their cargoes, substantially adding to the accumulated piles of trinkets and treasures within the shrine. Baba Mora considers all such goods to be hers and uses all her powers to retrieve any that have been stolen.

**WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO THE TURANIANS**

Very little, if any, of the information in this section is readily available to the players, unless they are able to get it out of one half-mad survivor somehow (see *The Lone Survivor*) or use arcane means to deduce the Turanians' recent history.

The Turanians did indeed have to outrun a great storm, driving their vessel to an obscure northern corner of the Vilayet, where they chanced upon a mist-shrouded cove in the mountainous coast. They navigated the narrow, misty channel into the cove and discovered the lost shrine of the ice hag Baba Mora, though they knew not what it was.

Discovering fine treasures in the shrine, the Turanians had only just helped themselves to a few trinkets when Baba Mora's monstrous brood awoke and fell upon them. A few Turanians managed to fight their way to their ship and fled for their lives, pursued by the long, freezing reach of Baba Mora's ice phantom, the ruzalak.

Burning what they could for warmth and barely resting, the surviving Turanians — beset by terror, injury, frostbite, and madness — steered their stricken ship as far south as they could until it was sighted by the *Alecto*.

But Baba Mora is a jealous creature and wants her treasure — all of it — brought back to her shrine.





## THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

The adventure starts with the *Alecto* encountering a stricken Turanian vessel, a bloody encounter with its half-mad crew, and the discovery of a logbook which leads them north to a mysterious misty cove in search of treasure.

### THE TURANIAN SHIP

The gamemaster may begin the adventure proper by reading or paraphrasing the following:

*"Days after a great storm, you find yourselves in the northern waters of the Vilayet. A call from the crow's nest announces that a ship has been sighted. Around you, your fellow sea wolves ready their weapons, eager to plunder another vessel. What do you do?"*

Even from a distance, the ship shows signs of damage — smashed oars, gouges in the wood, bloodstains on the timbers (see *What Really Happened*). Zakyntos brings the *Alecto* closer, and the rest of the pirates prepare to board the stricken vessel, their weapons drawn. The player

characters can make a Challenging (D2) Lore or Sailing test to recognize the ship as the cog *Pride of Isfapur*, a medium sized merchant vessel of Turanian origin.

Skulking about the Turanian ship's top deck and lurking below deck, six ragged members of the merchant crew survive, but they are in a bad way. Half-mad and frantic with terror and exhaustion, this handful of the ship's original complement have barely escaped one horror only to now fall foul of the bloodthirsty crew of the *Alecto*, who swarm aboard and begin violently subduing everyone they find.

Even if the pirates are restrained by cooler heads among the player characters, the maddened Turanians respond to any contact with desperate violence. During the battle, the gamemaster or player characters may spend Momentum or Doom as follows:

- **Swashbuckling!** For 2 Momentum, a player character or ally may grab a dangling rope from the damaged mast of the Turanian ship and swing up to 2 Zones away, bypassing all opponents. For 2 Doom, any adversary may do the same.
- **Man Overboard!** The gamemaster may spend 2 Doom for a player character to slip on a patch of ice and slide over the broken rails into the water below.

### Searching the Ship

The Turanians all show signs of frostbite and some carry small items of treasure about their person which a Challenging (D2) Lore test finds bear the hallmarks of Hyperborean manufacture. The treasures are mainly old coins, brooch pins, and earrings, but there is also a small statuette of a beautiful maiden which Captain Zakyntos instantly claims. The treasures themselves have no special

### THE LONE SURVIVOR

If the player characters manage to spare one of the Turanian crew from the ferocious attack of their fellow pirates, they find the exhausted, terrified sailor to be half-mad and more than a little drunk on rum from the merchant ship's hold. The twitching, slurring, and frostbitten sailor is of little use as a source of information, but an astute listener using a Challenging (D2) Observation test may be able to make out a few words among his gibbering.

*"Gold, and silver, there for the taking! All ours. Secret, hidden. Oh but the gold, the gold, the cold..."*

The sailor is found dead the next morning, mysteriously frozen to death during the night (a victim of the ruzalak's freezing kiss).

properties other than being fairly valuable (and fatally precious to Baba Mora — see *What Really Happened*).

On deck there are the charred remains of spare timbers, sails, oars, and barrels. It is clear that the Turanians have burnt much of what could be burnt on the ship to stay warm, as if they were caught in the chill of an unseasonable winter. Among the ashes and embers are the charred fragments of a logbook — see *The Ship's Log*.

There is little else of interest or value left on board, but in the hold the pirates find some unburnt half-full barrels of rum, which may come in useful later.

### The Ship's Log

The charred, fragmentary remains of the ship's log are extremely delicate and likely crumble to powder when touched. The fragile scraps of paper show that the Turanians were driven north, far from their usual routes, to outrun a great storm. The pirates themselves all remember this storm recently — it was indeed fearsome, though not unusual or supernatural.

The log then mentions that they sighted a mist-shrouded cove none had seen, or spotted on charts. Scrawled notes accompany this entry, indicating water currents, prevailing wind patterns, and a rough description of the mountainous coastline, sufficient to enable any competent seafarer to retrace the route of the *Pride of Isfapur* back north to the cove.

The log ends abruptly with the discovery of the cove and a cryptic, hastily jotted reference to “such treasures”. Nothing more can be gleaned from the fragments.

## ONWARD!

The indications of greater treasure to be had, such as they have found on the Turanians, are enough to spur Zakynthos, Bolgerus, and the rest of the pirates to set sail north in search of the cove mentioned in the ship's log.

If the player characters intervene and counsel against sailing north, the captain and a good portion of the rest of the crew soon catch sight of what they call a “mermaid” — a bewitching sea creature wearing priceless glittering jewels about her neck and hair. She remains out of reach, leading the *Alecto* far to the north to the mysterious mist-shrouded cove. This sea creature is a ruzalak, an illusion whose purpose is lead the pirates — and Baba Mora's stolen treasures — back to the shrine.

## THE VOYAGE TO THE COVE

It is cold as the *Alecto* sails north to the cove, perhaps unseasonably so, but not icy. The voyage takes some days but is uneventful — save perhaps for periodic appearances of the beguiling ruzalak drawing Zakynthos and the rest of the crew ever onward.



## THE MISTY COVE

In this part of the adventure, the *Alecto* reaches the mouth of the misty cove among the mountains that form the coastline of the Vilayet. Here they enter the cove, discover the shrine of Baba Mora, become iced in and finally face the wrath of the ice hag and her brood.

The dangers awaiting the player characters and their shipmates in the confines of the cove are formidable, including a tribe of amphibious vodyani, several lumbering, undead moroznek and the powerful ice hag herself. Depending on the strengths of the player characters and any preference for style of game, this climax can be run as either a bloody toe-to-toe battle between roughly equivalent forces with only one side left standing, an improvised delaying action against a superior force until Baba Mora's weaknesses can be deduced and exploited, or finally as a desperate race to escape an overwhelming, terrifying force and reach the relative safety of the open sea. All three styles of play are valid and in keeping with the tone of classic Conan tales.

## NAVIGATING THE MISTS

The *Alecto* floats just before the narrow mouth of the misty cove. Steep mountainous cliffs form a great unscalable wall





on either side of the mouth. Visibility within the mists is limited to a ship's length, and none on board can see what awaits them. A cautious crew member (such as Tizgur) counsels Zakynthos on the dangers of unseen rocks below the waterline holing the *Alecto's* hull.

Zakynthos tells Bolgerus to lower the jolly boat and lead the ship safely into the cove. With a sadistic grin, the first mate asks for volunteers, waits a couple of seconds, and then orders the player characters into the boat. Bolgerus requires a minimum of four to man the jolly boat and should any of the player characters choose to defy his orders (risking Bolgerus' brutal reprimand and the scorn of their shipmates), the remaining places are taken up by Gulbin, Tizgur, and Nickolo (in that order).

Once in the boat, with a lantern affixed to the prow and a stout rope trailing behind to the *Alecto*, they must probe ahead with long poles to find a safe passage through the narrow twisting channel and into the cove.

This is an eerie, tense scene, with the crew of the jolly boat venturing into unseen territory. Navigating through the mists should leave the player characters — whether they are braving the mists in the jolly boat or straining to listen and watch from the relative safety of the *Alecto* — unnerved and jumpy without actually encountering anything too fantastic or supernatural.

With an Average (D1) Awareness test, the pirates notice that it is getting colder as they navigate through the mists, their breath starting to steam.

There are indeed a few large, jagged rocks in the misty channel leading into the cove. The player characters onboard must make three Challenging (D2) Sailing or Daunting (D3) Coordination tests, using the highest skill of any character present in the jolly boat. For every test they fail, their boat crashes against a barely submerged rock, causing the equivalent of a Wound to the boat. Each such impact increases the difficulty of subsequent tests by one step. Should they roll any Consequences, the gamemaster may spend two doom to inflict another Wound on the boat. The boat sinks if it takes five such Wounds.

The passage of the jolly boat does not go undetected by the vodyani, who skulk in the waters below. Though the amphibious humanoids have orders not to attack the pirates just yet, or even to reveal themselves, they cannot help but mischievously unnerve the crew of the jolly boat by occasionally jerking one of the long poles, mimicking an unexpected water current, and on one occasion scraping the underside of the boat itself as if a jagged rock lies just beneath. The vodyani then dart back into the depths of the water to avoid being seen.

The gamemaster can choose to go further and have an unseen vodyani wrench a hapless non-player character out of the jolly boat while the player characters are focusing their attention elsewhere. In an instant, the pirate is dragged struggling down into the water and throttled by the blubbery amphibians. Perhaps the pirate's corpse bobs to the surface later on, tangled in an oar of the *Alecto* as it weighs anchor near the shrine. A Challenging (D2) Observation test shows strange inhuman strangulation marks about the pirate's throat.

## THE SHRINE OF BABA MORA

Once they get the jolly boat and the *Alecto* through the mists, the visibility improves a little and the pirates find themselves in an icy cove ringed by steep, inaccessible mountainous cliffs. The waters of the cove are grey and still, with a crust of frost at the water's edge in several stretches.

The air is cold in the cove itself, colder than in the misty channel and barely above freezing, causing pirates to shiver and teeth to chatter. Any character without sufficiently warm clothing or protection against the chill must take an increase in Difficulty by one step on all tests while here due to numb fingers and a cold-slowed mind. Zakynthos orders that warm clothes, torches, and tots of liquor are the order of the day. The surfaces of the *Alecto* begin to sparkle with a light dusting of frost.

With the jolly boat still guiding them — without further incident — Zakynthos orders the *Alecto* forward. The ship weighs anchor close to the grey rocky shore on the farthest side of the cove, where great glacial sheets of ice coat the cliffs from shore to sky. In the middle of the shore stands the

only permanent structure here: a strange wooden building (the shrine of Baba Mora). The captain is among the first to eagerly get off the *Alecto* and make for the shore, closely followed by many of the crew.

### Outside the Shrine

Even from a distance the shrine is a strange sight. Thirty feet high, it stands upon a great floe of ice which projects from the glacial cliff like a titanic frozen tongue. Huge steps were long ago hacked into the tongue, leading up to the roughly flat surface upon which the shrine itself sits.

The shrine seems to have been half swallowed by the encroaching ice of the glacial cliff and is evidently built from cannibalized longships (a Challenging (D2) Lore or Daunting (D3) Craft test deduces that they are of old Hyperborean origin). Old masts, spars, keels, and prows jut out, lending the whole structure a spiky appearance that is further accentuated by the large icicles that hang from every available outcrop.

The timbers of the shrine are rock-hard and frozen solid. Great iron-banded wooden doors, glistening with frost, stand open, exposing the darkly glittering interior of the shrine.

### Inside the Shrine

Venturing inside, the player characters and the rest of the pirates find themselves in a long dark hall with a curiously shaped raised section before them and something large squatting atop it (see *The Statue*). Ice-encrusted ship masts along the walls and in the center support the peaked roof above. The far end of the shrine — farthest from the daylight and swallowed by the glacial cliff outside — is even darker and seems to end in a solid wall of ice from floor to timbered ceiling (see *The Ice Wall*).

They quickly find a few small sparkling treasures (coins, perhaps some votive plates and goblets) lying on the most accessible surfaces under a thin layer of ice, but only a few. The rest of the easily-grabbed trinkets were chipped free by the Turanians in a rush. An Average (D1) Intelligence test identifies that the coins are from a variety of nations and vintages.

However, more solidly frozen into the alcoves around the shrine's walls are larger items which look valuable: statues, clay urns (which one of the non-player pirates claims contain treasures), and one or two jeweled wooden icons. Though large and frozen into place, each might be worth something if enough manpower could be spared to hack them free and carry them back to the ship (which the Turanians before them had neither time nor inclination to do). The prospect of greater treasures here fills Zakynthos and the majority of the pirates with glee and overcomes any superstitious fears they may harbor. It takes a Daunting (D3) Brawn test to hack free any of the larger items over the course of three rounds.

## THE LOST SHIPS

There may, if the gamemaster chooses, be a few wrecked ships lying beached further along the rocky shore of the cove, all victims of Baba Mora and her monsters over the years. They have various origins — Hyrkanian and Turanian galleys, small fishing vessels, merchant craft, perhaps even a well-known pirate ship that vanished decades ago.

The ships are fringed with ice, long abandoned and empty save for the odd frozen corpse lodged in an inaccessible crow's nest. All other corpses have been dragged down into the waters and gnawed down to their bones by the vodyani long ago.

The ships are all unseaworthy, though they may prove to be useful defensive positions or sources of timber (see both *Fighting* and *Fire*).

There are more supporting pillars in the shrine than is strictly required. Anyone making a Challenging (D2) Craft test realizes that the pillars surrounding the central area are actually great columns of ice rather than frost-encrusted wooden masts like the rest. These columns of ice are the resting places of the moroznek, Baba Mora's favored warriors, though their true forms and nature are all but undetectable save by a Dire (D4) Insight or Sorcery test.

There are no torch brackets or fire pits in the shrine itself, for Baba Mora abhors heat and fire, so some of the non-player pirates burn torches of their own to help them search. The frozen treasures gleam enticingly in the torchlight, though more than one pirate recoils with atavistic repulsion from the illuminated statue of Baba Mora (see *The Statue*). The extra light makes it possible to spot (with a Challenging (D2) Observation test) a few scraps of clothing caught on icy projections within the shrine. Any interested player characters can tell that the scraps are similar to the garb worn by some of the Turanians. One scrap is covered in blackened, frozen blood.

### The Statue

The center of the shrine is occupied by a large elliptical wooden platform, which is clearly the upturned hull of a shallow-bottomed boat, modified by long dead hands into a sort of high dais. Narrow steps at either end lead up to the gently rounded crown of the platform.

At the high point of the platform's crown squats a sinister, seven-foot-high statue of Baba Mora, though only a Dire (D4) Lore test reveals the name and nature of this long-forgotten entity. The figure depicted is rather more human and strangely maternal than Baba Mora's true, hideously mummified form, though the face and posture are still alien and unnerving. It is carved from some hard, blackened wood. Not worth much probably, it is otherwise completely harmless. A prayer to the ice hag is carved into the base of the statue, and though old, worn, and encrusted with ice, is decipherable to anyone who can translate the old Hyperborean script via a Challenging (D2) Linguistics test:

**O Baba Mora  
Gentle Crone  
Accept our gifts  
Let us frolic in rime**

Though large and heavy, it is possible to move the statue with a Dire (D4) Brawn test for each Zone. Consequences rolled on these tests could indicate dropping the statue or slipping to fall, circumstances which require an Average (D1) Athletics test to avoid suffering 3 damage. A more practical use of the statue later on may be to topple it on top of someone or something, or as source of firewood (see *Fire*).

### The Ice Wall

A great wall of ice makes up the entire darkened rear of the shrine, barring entry to the secret resting place of Baba Mora herself. The ice wall is exceedingly thick and resistant to physical damage, though sustained intense heat such as burning down the entire shrine is enough to melt it and disgorge Baba Mora (see *Fire*). Anyone who comes within Reach of the wall suffers 5 damage with the Vicious quality every round from the intense cold it projects unless they retreat immediately.

Her elongated, mummified body squats entirely immobile several feet deep in the ice, visible only as a tall, indistinct humanoid figure if someone gets within reach of the bitterly cold ice wall and specifically states that they are peering into the ice. They must spend at least one round doing so and take cold damage from the wall as described earlier. There may perhaps be a slight glow about the eyes of Baba Mora if all light sources in the shrine are extinguished.

As with the moroznek in the ice columns, Baba Mora herself is undetectable save by a Dire (D4) Insight or Sorcery test.

## THE ICE HAG WAKES

Do not allow the player characters to spend long exploring



or looting the shrine before initiating the climax of the adventure, in which Baba Mora stirs, trapping the *Alecto* in the cove and unleashing her monstrous brood to attack the pirates and retrieve her stolen treasures.

A good moment to move onto this stage is as soon as a group of pirates begin trying to free one of the larger items of treasure from the shrine with the intention of carrying it back to the *Alecto*. Bolgerus tells some of the player characters to carry out this task, but if they refuse or are busy elsewhere, any of the other pirates suffice.

### Iced In!


At Baba Mora's mental command, a freezing wind blows up out of nowhere. The waters of the cove rapidly ice over, immobilizing the *Alecto* and effectively trapping the pirates.

This short scene is not quite an action scene (see *Conan* corebook, page 107), but the gamemaster might find it useful to keep a quiet note of time passing until Baba Mora's monsters emerge, ending the scene after about six rounds.

Allow the player characters a Challenging (D2) Awareness test to spot the water's surface freezing over in a matter of seconds, or to hear the creaking sound of the ice forming. If they are all inside the shrine and do not notice, the shouts



of alarm from their fellow pirates outside on the shore and back on the ship alert them.

The rest of the pirates pause in the process of carrying treasures out of the shrine, cursing the sight of their ship trapped suddenly by this unnatural event. Player characters must make a Challenging (D2) Discipline test or suffer 3  Despair with the Persistent 1 quality.

Precious moments are lost in fearful speculation unless the player characters can galvanize the scattered crew into some sort of sensible action by making a Challenging (D2) Command or Daunting (D3) Personality test (see *Fighting* for suggested pre-emptive activity). If they do not address the rest of the crew themselves within two rounds after the ice forms, Zakynthos emerges from the shrine and barks some orders, commanding everyone to continue loading the ship with treasure.

Player characters can make an Average (D1) Coordination or Intelligence test to probe the ice that has formed across the surface of the water. The ice is quite thick, though it is possible to break through in a small area by inflicting 4 damage using any weapon with the Knockdown or Knockback quality. But to clear a path for the *Alecto* all the way to the mouth of the cove would be a herculean task taking several days. If none of the player characters probe the ice, Zakynthos does so himself after he has given his orders above and comes to the same conclusion.

Astute player characters may recognize that the captain has failed to fully grasp the dire urgency of the situation. If they react immediately and wisely, they have a little time to prepare to face whatever is afoot however they see fit. Regardless of whether the player characters act with speed and wisdom or not, Baba Mora's monsters emerge the round after someone probes the ice, to attack the pirates. See *Baba Mora's Wrath*.

### Baba Mora's Wrath

At this point, the ice hag's monsters start attacking the pirates and the atmosphere changes from eerie suspense to horror and fast-paced action as the crew of the *Alecto* start to fight, run, and die in the shrine, along the shore and on the ice.

Depending on the preferred style of game (see the earlier introduction to *The Misty Cove*) this action scene can either be a bloody battle to the death by force of arms, a defensive action to survive until the ice hag's power can be neutralized, or a frantic race to reach the open sea and escape.

Baba Mora has numerous and varied monstrous forces at her command: the amphibious tribe of vodyani, the hulking moroznek warriors, and the ghostly ruzalak. If forced out of her frozen resting place, the ice hag herself joins the battle and proves herself to be a terrifying killing machine.

The gamemaster can choose which of Baba Mora's monsters to deploy against the pirates initially, and which to hold

in reserve to provide more terrifying obstacles between the player characters and their goal, whether that be victory in battle, survival, or escape.

Each of her forces' likely actions in this scene are outlined in the following sections, followed by four suggested means by which the player characters can survive their encounter with the ice hag and her brood: **fighting**, **fleeing**, **fire**, and **forgiveness**.

### The Vodyani Attack

One of the pirates on the shore or onboard the *Alecto* cries out, pointing to several man-sized holes that suddenly open up in the ice, as if it was melting away.

Strange inhuman hands thrust out of the dark water, heaving pale, blubbery bodies out onto the ice, as several small groups of vodyani armed with spears assemble and charge toward the nearest pirates, barking and clicking in their debased Hyperborean tongue.

There are five packs of four vodyani. Each pack takes 2 Rounds to exit the ice, then attacks the nearest victim as a group.


The vodyani are the most numerous and organized of the foes the pirates must face, and attack in savage, cunning packs by:



- Swarming over individual pirates who have become separated from the rest of the crew.
- Encircling one or two pirates and taking turns to attack in the rear.
- Fanning out and herding outnumbered groups of pirates down onto the ice toward the man-size holes where more blubbery hands are outstretched, ready to pull them down into the dark chill waters.
- Chasing fleeing pirates across open ground towards larger packs of vodyani or other more terrible foes (see *The Moroznek Attack*, *The Ruzalak Attacks* and *Baba Mora Attacks*).

Though bestial and loyal to their goddess, the vodyani are still independent, living creatures. Of all Baba Mora's forces, these are the only ones that can possibly be cowed or driven away by a powerful blow to their morale.

Appropriate Momentum and Doom spends for conflict with the vodyani include:

- **Face My Wrath!** Upon slaying a vodyani, the conquering character may immediately spend 2 Momentum to perform a threat display that inflicts twice the normal .
- **Slippery Stuff.** The gamemaster may spend 2 Doom for a player character to slip on a patch of ice and fall prone.
- **Trapdoor!** For 4 Doom, the gamemaster may cause the ice beneath a player character to shatter, requiring a Challenging (D2) Athletics or Acrobatics test to avoid slipping into the frigid waters. It is a Daunting (D3) Athletics test to escape back onto the ice, with the unfortunate player character suffering 1 Fatigue for each round spent in the life-draining cold.

## VODYANI (MINION)

These "Children of the Sea" are the degenerate descendants of the remaining followers of Baba Mora, who took to the waters of the icy cove many lifespans ago, transformed by her will into a tribe of pale, amphibious humanoids. Vodyani are slightly blubbery, with large milky eyes and sharp needle teeth, communicating among themselves in a debased pidgin of Hyperborean interspersed with short clicks and barks.


They lurk on the bottom of the cove, eking out an animal existence by consuming fish and crustaceans, but are able to emerge onto dry land for short periods. Though they prefer their chill waters of their home in the cove, vodyani can briefly swim out at Baba Mora's command into the larger

Vilayet, until the warmer waters render them sluggish, and they must turn back.

ATTRIBUTES			
Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	5	8	7
Agility		Brawn	Coordination
7		10	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Combat	1	Movement	1
Fortitude	3	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK	
■ <b>Stress:</b> Vigor 10, Resolve 7	
■ <b>Soak:</b> Armor —, Courage 2 (Single-minded Fervor)	

ATTACK	
■ <b>Primitive Spear (M):</b> Reach 3, 3  , Unbalanced, Fragile, Piercing 1	

SPECIAL ABILITIES	
■ <b>Amphibious</b>	
■ <b>Bred to Cold:</b> Any attacks with fire against a vodyani gain the Vicious 2 quality. If they have the Incendiary quality, that quality gains one bonus level.	
■ <b>Fear 1</b>	
■ <b>Inured to Cold</b>	
■ <b>Hideous Pack:</b> Any vodyani making an attack against the same enemy as at least one other vodyani has a Combat Expertise of 3 for purposes of that attack.	

### The Moroznek Attack

One of the pirates still in the shrine, whether to continue looting or to take cover from the attacks outside, shouts in alarm and then is abruptly silenced by a heavy thud.

Several of the frozen pillars in the center of the shrine creak and splinter, the outer ice casing of each sloughing off to reveal the great lumbering form of a moroznek within.

There are three moroznek, though the gamemaster can add one or two more if the player characters number more than five or are especially powerful. One or two of the moroznek proceed to attack non-player pirates in the background, dispatching one every two Rounds unless stopped.

The moroznek, though but a handful in number are the most physically powerful of Baba Mora's monsters, and roam independently of each other, single-mindedly attacking the intruders by:

- Tearing a limb off an individual pirate and flinging them aside to die.
- Smashing shield walls and shattering weapons in their oversized fists of ice.
- Bear hugging a particularly tough opponent until they are crushed to death against their frosty chest.
- Battering at doors, hulls, and other defensive positions until they eventually break open.

As unliving servitors of the ice hag, the rime men cannot be intimidated, or their morale broken. They keep coming relentlessly — even in the face of their own certain destruction — until physically stopped or outdistanced.

Appropriate Momentum and Doom spends for conflict with the moroznek include:

- **Cut to the Bone!** Any player character may spend 2 Momentum after making an attack to shatter a section of a moroznek's ice armor, exposing the mummified flesh beneath. That area has an Armor of 0 for the remainder of this battle.
- **Knock, Knock!** The gamemaster may spend 3 Doom for a powerful, two-handed blow from a moroznek's powerful fists to splinter a door, pillar, mast, or section of wall or hull.

## MOROZNEK (NEMESIS)

Also called “Rime Men”, moroznek are the favored warriors of Baba Mora's old Hyperborean worshippers. Ritually sacrificed at the height of their physical prowess, their remains are submerged into the icy waters of the cove whereupon their bones are encased completely in giant ice bodies twice the height of a grown man. Mute and near mindless, they serve as lumbering engines of destruction capable of tearing a man apart or smashing a shield to splinters.

Unless activated by Baba Mora's will, they remain in hibernation as inert mounds of ice, their withered, skeletal forms barely visible beneath through foot-thick icy armor. Moroznek cannot function beyond the icy conditions of the cove and either stop at the boundary or rapidly melt into puddles of old bones if forced beyond that point.



### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	6	7	11
Agility	Brawn	Coordination	
8	12(1)	7	

### FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

### STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 15, Resolve 12
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Flesh Like Ice), Courage 2

### ATTACKS

- **Ice-Rimed Fists (M):** Reach 3, 6⚔, Stun, Knockdown
- **Thrown Stone (R):** Range M, 6⚔, Stun, Knockdown
- **Roar of the North (T):** Range M, 4⚔ mental, Area

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Bear Hug:** A moroznek who Stuns a target with its Ice-Rimed Fists attack may immediately Grapple the target.
- **Bred to Cold:** Any attacks with fire against a moroznek gain the Vicious 2 quality. If they have the Incendiary quality, that quality gains one bonus level.
- **Fear 1**
- **Icy Heart:** The cold radiating from a moroznek is so intense as to inflict 4 damage each round to any creature it is grappling.
- **Inhuman Brawn 1**
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Monstrous Creature**
- **Unliving**

## DOOM SPENDS

- **Fling the Unworthy:** For 3 Doom, a moroznek may use a grappled opponent as its ammunition for a Thrown Stone attack. If the attack strikes true, both the thrown opponent and the target are affected. If it misses, the target must make a Dire (D4) Acrobatics test or suffer 4 damage with the Stun and Knockdown qualities.
- **Shearing Ice:** If the moroznek is struck by an attack that would Wound it, it may spend 2 Doom immediately to avoid the Wound. Instead, the sheets of ice at the hit location shear off and offer no Armor Soak on that location for the remainder of the scene.

## The Ruzalak Attacks

Some of the pirates curse at a sudden bitterly cold wind blowing in across the cove as a comely mermaid figure forms in the air before them.

The ruzalak draws close to one hapless pirate who stands entranced before her and embraces him to bestow a deadly, freezing kiss, reducing him to a brittle frozen corpse in a matter of seconds.

The ruzalak is a unique creature, as Baba Mora can only sustain one such spectral projection at a time. After its initial victim, it targets notable pirates like the player characters, Zakynthos, and Bolgerus by:

- Unleashing a freezing wind in the form of Baba Mora's Breath to either exhaust its nearby opponents or (for example) to make the deck of the Alecto very slippery.
- Selecting a pirate to seduce with its bewitching Cool Charms before drawing in to bestow a Freezing Kiss.

- Flying swiftly in pursuit of any particularly elusive pirate who has managed to climb, run, or hide from the battle.

Being little more than a manifestation of the ice hag's will, the ruzalak has no real spirit of its own, and continues to carry out Baba Mora's bidding until it or she are defeated or fled from.

Appropriate Momentum and Doom spends for conflict with the ruzalak include:

- **Overextended!** A player character may spend 2 Momentum to lure the ruzalak far enough from the cove's frigid waters to exceed the limits of its movement. The sea wench gasps in alarm and withdraws back to the cove, an endeavor which takes 2 Rounds and gives it the Dazed condition.
- **Cold-Hearted Lover.** For 3 Doom, a casual brush with the ruzalak instantly coats a player character in a shell of ice, hampering their movement with the Hindered condition and inflicting 1 level of Fatigue. The victim may spend a standard action to clear the ice.





## RUZALAK (TOUGHENED)

Also known as a “Sea Wench”, this bewitching, bejeweled sea creature is an illusion conjured from tiny ice crystals by Baba Mora. It is little more than an insubstantial projection of the ice hag’s will, serving as her eyes and ears and able to travel far beyond the misty cove, so long as it remains in Medium range of the sea, whether it is frozen or not.

Baba Mora employs the beguiling ruzalak to occasionally draw unwary seafarers to the cove, and sometimes to track any that escape her clutches. Though it is little more than a cunningly wrought cloud of icy droplets in humanoid form, unable to pick up even the smallest of physical objects, the creature can cast the spell *Baba Mora’s Breath* and possesses a chilling kiss which has proven lethal to more than one lusty mariner.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	7	4	9
Agility	Brawn	Coordination	
10	7	9	




### FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	Movement	Fortitude	Senses	Knowledge	Social
1	2	3	2	—	—



### STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 7, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor 4 (Ethereal), Courage 4

### ATTACKS

- **Ice-Rimed Fists (M):** Reach 3, 6 , Stun, Knockdown
- **Thrown Stone (R):** Range M, 6 , Stun, Knockdown
- **Roar of the North (T):** Range M, 4  mental, Area

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Bred to Cold:** Any attacks with fire against a ruzalak gain the Vicious 2 quality. If they have the Incendiary quality, that quality gains one bonus level.
- **Cool Charms:** The ruzalak may add two additional d20s when attempting to distract, charm or seduce.
- **Flight**
- **Freezing Kiss:** If within Close range of a Stunned or otherwise unwary target, the ruzalak may attempt this kiss. The victim must succeed at a Daunting (D3) Resistance task or suffer 4  physical damage with the Piercing 3 quality, and 4  mental damage with the Stun quality.
- **Incorporeal 4**
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Unliving**

### DOOM SPENDS

- **Spirit of the Witch:** For 2 Doom, the ruzalak may connect with Baba Mora, drawing from the witch’s immense reserves of spirit. It immediately heals one Wound or Trauma, inflicting one point of Vigor or Resolve on the witch herself.

### Baba Mora Attacks

The ice hag herself only physically joins the fray if all her monsters have been defeated — at which point she eerily swims through the ice wall at the rear of the shrine and pulls herself out into the open air — or if she is forced from her resting place deep within the ice by the player characters somehow managing to shatter the ice by inflicting three successful hits using a weapon with the Knockdown or Knockback qualities, each of which inflicts a minimum of 6 damage, or starting a great blaze (see *Fire*). Baba Mora emerges as a great spindly mummified crone, eyes aglow and breath frosting the air.

She hisses in archaic Hyperborean drawing back her blackened dried lips in a scowl of alien displeasure.




A Daunting (D3) Linguistics test translates her words well enough.

Baba Mora then attacks by:

- Mentally commanding any remaining monsters in the cove to make haste into the shrine and defend her.
- Unleashing a freezing wind in the form of Baba Mora's Breath to either exhaust nearby opponents or coat her surroundings in ice.
- Striking out physically with long spindly fingers to shatter weapons and armor or inflict slashing wounds on unprotected flesh.
- Flinging or thrusting opponents into the icy walls of the shrine where they are held fast, half submerged into the thick frost, trapping them and inflicting 1 level of Fatigue. It takes a Daunting (D3) Brawn test to break free. For every round that a character remains trapped, the gamemaster gains 1 Doom.

The ice hag is intelligent and values her continued existence, so she fights desperately to cling to life every bit as hard as she fights to recover her treasures. If it looks like she is in imminent danger of her own destruction, Baba Mora does not hesitate to bargain, take a hostage, or even attempt to flee if it buys her a way out of the situation.

Appropriate Momentum and Doom spends for conflict with the Baba Mora include:

- **Making Mock!** A player character may spend 3 Momentum to draw Baba Mora toward them, regardless of intervening hazards, opponents, or obstacles.
- **The Very Air.** The gamemaster may spend 3 Doom for Baba Mora's mere presence to flash-freeze the air within Close range, inflicting an immediate 5  with the Persistent 1 quality from the supernatural cold.

## BABA MORA (NEMESIS)

The ice hag herself, whose name means "Crone of Death", was once worshipped by certain Hyperboreans as a wintry goddess who brought her offerings and sacrificed themselves for her glory. Her twelve-foot tall, elongated, mummified, cronelike body abhors all heat, so she habitually seals herself in a great block of soothing, protective ice.

Though highly reluctant to leave her icy resting place and come into physical contact with followers or foes, she can communicate with and control her monsters mentally and can cast spells like Baba Mora's Breath. If somehow removed from the ice, she is somewhat vulnerable to conventional weapons and especially heat and fire.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	10	12
Agility	Brawn	Coordination	
8	8	8	




### FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	2
Fortitude	3	Senses	3
Knowledge	3	Social	1


### STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 11, Resolve 14
- **Soak:** Armor 4 (Hide Like Ice), Courage 5

### ATTACKS

- **Fingers Like Talons (M):** Reach 1, 4 , Fearsome
- **Chill Breath (R):** Range M, 4 , Area, Grappling
- **Flee the Witch from the North (T):** Range C, 5  mental

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Dread Creature 5**
- **Brittle Flesh:** Any weapon that successfully strikes Baba Mora gains the Piercing 1 quality.
- **Eternal Ice:** Baba Mora may transform a living human into either a moroznek or a vodyani through a secret ritual requiring three days' time.
- **Fear 2**
- **Flame Dread:** As a being of ice, Baba Mora takes one extra damage from any fire attack, and treats all weapons with the Incendiary quality as if their level were twice that listed. If killed by fire, she burns away to leave only charred teeth.
- **Ice Witch:** Baba Mora may choose to treat ice as though it were insubstantial mist, or as a solid surface on which she never slips. She may make this choice at any time, even between two steps or differently between two parts of her body at the same time.
- **Icy Touch:** Any successful Fingers Like Talons attack that overcomes Soak inflicts an additional 3  cold damage with the Persistent 2 quality. As a minor action, she may coat any non-living object she touches with a thick rime of ice.
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Monstrous Creature**
- **Unliving**



### DOOM SPENDS

- **Baba Mora's Breath:** For 3 Doom, Baba Mora unleashes a freezing wind from her yawning mouth to either inflict 1 Fatigue on everyone within Close range who fails a Daunting (D3) Resistance test, or to immediately coat her current Zone with slippery ice, creating a hindrance across the entire zone. For 6 Doom, she does both.
- **Sacrifice:** If Baba Mora receives a Wound while within Close range of any allied creatures, she may spend 2 Doom for the ally to leap in front of the attack, suffering all its effects in her stead.

### FIGHTING

Unless the player characters are particularly tough or numerous, standing out on the open shore with the rest of the pirates to receive the onslaught of Baba Mora's forces is not a wise tactic. The ice hag probably has both numbers (in the form of the vodyani) and strength (in the form of the moroznek) on her side, not to mention the frigid powers of both the ruzalak and herself.

The gamemaster can impress on the player characters that they are in for a hard fight by describing how one or more of their fellow pirates are horribly killed in the first moments of the assault. See the introductory text of *The*

*Vodyani Attack*, *The Moroznek Attack*, and *The Ruzalak Attacks* for some instructive vignettes.

However, all is not hopeless, especially if the player characters seized the initiative during *Iced In!* and galvanized their crewmates into taking some defensive measures before the monsters emerge. But even once the fight proper has begun, there is plenty of scope for the pirates to use the terrain to their own advantage.

Some potential defensive measures the player characters might make, or that the pirates may suggest include:


- **Shield wall.** Any sort of defensive posture works well enough against the relatively weak vodyani, if the pirates' flanks and rear are protected. But the player characters' crewmates are not all trained soldiers, and sooner or later, someone is going to break...
- **Backs to the cliff.** The steep icy rocks of the mountains ringing the cove leave the pirates nowhere to run, but at least they can fight with no fear of a rear attack.
- **To the Alecto!** The pirate ship lies close to shore across the now frozen surface of the cove. Though it cannot yet sail, its height and sturdy construction affords the best protection available, especially against the vodyani who are poor climbers. The



*Alecto*'s hull, walls, and decks count as hard cover (see *Conan* corebook, page 112).

- **To a lost ship.** See *The Lost Ships*. The wrecked ships lying further along the shore do not provide the sort of effective protection of the *Alecto*, but they are better than being caught out in the open, though an old frozen corpse lodged up in a precarious crow's nest does not encourage the pirates of lasting out a long siege. The lost ships count as light cover (see *Conan* corebook, page 112).
- **Smash the ice!** While the pirates have little chance of totally freeing the *Alecto* from the ice whilst fighting off Baba Mora's monsters, they may be able to create a defensive ring of open water around the ship by making clearing away six sections of ice as described in *Iced In!* This proves no obstacle to the amphibious vodyani or floating ruzalak, but the ponderous moroznek are unable to cross.
- **Into the temple!** On the face of it, taking shelter in the heart of the ice hag's lair seems a foolish decision, yet its sturdy walls and great iron-banded wooden doors do provide substantial protection in the form of a defensible bottleneck. If the pirates do take shelter in the temple, give them a few rounds to repel enemies at the doors before Baba Mora's awakens the

lumbering moroznek encased in the shrine's pillars (see *The Moroznek Attack*).

- **Bring down the shrine.** Something of a classic Conan maneuver, it is possible to cause Baba Mora's frozen shrine to collapse on whoever and whatever is inside, give enough force in the right place. It takes a Daunting (D3) Craft test to identify a weak supporting pillar and an Epic (D5) Brawn test to dislodge it. Each creature caught inside takes 10  damage with the Grappling, Knockdown, and Vicious Qualities when several tons of ice and timber collapse on their heads.

## FLEEING

Running fast and far from Baba Mora's wrath is an option, but the pirates really need the *Alecto* to be free of ice to stand any chance of outpacing the ice hag's monsters.

As described in *Iced In!* it is the work of several days to physically hack a path through the ice for the *Alecto* to sail free of the cove and thus impossible to attempt while the attacks continue. But perhaps inventive or mystically adept player characters can find a way to speed that process up to mere rounds, or alternatively find some other means of rapidly propelling themselves beyond Baba Mora's reach.

Alternatively, the pirates can forget about freeing the *Alecto* and flee on foot across the ice and out of the cove



to the open waters of the Vilayet. But then they have no ship and are not likely to fare very well floating out to sea unless they have managed to haul the jolly boat out with them. This requires an Athletics test each round – Average (D1) with a Standard action, Daunting (D3) with a Minor Action – to keep up with the rest of the fleeing crowd. Any consequence rolled inflicts 1 level of Fatigue. See *Aftermath* for suggested outcomes to this desperate course of action.

## FIRE

Merely fighting the ice hag and her monsters is unlikely to be enough. The pirates may be doomed to cruel, unnatural deaths unless they manage to destroy Baba Mora with fire.

The player characters can be given clues that Baba Mora's monsters — and by extension the ice hag herself — are vulnerable to fire in several ways:

- One of her creatures shies away from a pirate's dropped torch as it gutters on the ground. Perhaps the monster gives out a little shriek or bellow of pain and even steams a little.
- A player character with some knowledge of the gods (a Dire (D4) Lore test) can be given a hint of this, perhaps in the form of a half-remembered line from a Hyperborean saga: "With steel and flint they struck the spark, and lo the Crone trembled'."
- A player character can be reminded that they saw absolutely no torch brackets or fire pits in the shrine.

Lighting more torches or generating small fires in other ways helps to temporarily drive the creatures back, or perhaps damage them or impair their effectiveness in attack. Baba Mora is no fool though, and aware of their vulnerability, she makes a priority of extinguishing any burning objects in the cove, perhaps with an intense freezing wind or by directing her monsters to drive the flame-bearing pirates out on to the frozen ice where the vodyani drag them down into the open ice holes.

But the most effective method of decisively destroying Baba Mora herself and neutralizing her monsters is to **burn the ice hag and her shrine with fire**.

It is very hard to set the shrine ablaze though, as the timbers of the shrine are rock hard and frozen solid. The best way to generate enough fire is to use some more combustible, available timber to get the blaze going, and that may mean using the jolly boat or *Alecto* herself as kindling, since the timbers of any old shipwrecks in the cove (see *The Lost Ships*) are as rock hard and frozen as the shrine itself.

The most easily portable source of timber is the jolly boat, preferably packed with something combustible like the half-full barrels of rum that were recovered from the *Pride of Isfapur* (if the adventure is played from *The Adventure*

*Begins*). But the *Alecto's* masts and booms, sails, oars, railings or decking planks can also be used to create sufficient fuel for a blaze, as can any books, blankets, linens or other flammable materials on board.

If the player characters spend 1 Momentum, they remember a barrel of black, tarry pitch on board the *Alecto* that burns nicely.

Zakynthos, Bolgerus, and the pirates are understandably reluctant to mutilate their ship (and part with the rum and any other combustible booty), and need to be convinced of the importance of this action with a Challenging (D2) Persuade or Daunting (D3) Personality test.

They need to heave that material up the shore with a Daunting (D3) Brawn test into the shrine and set it alight whilst fending off attacks from Baba Mora's monsters, a challenge that may require some pirates to stand and fight the icy creatures for several rounds while their crewmates see to building and lighting the fire.

Once the kindling is alight within the shrine, it quickly spreads up the walls and across the ceiling in an almighty blaze within two rounds. As the shrine burns, the great ice wall that houses the mummified Baba Mora melts. Once deprived of her icy tomb, her hideous, cronelike form stumbles forward, perhaps smoking a little, and begins shrieking in pain and outrage.

The ice hag's vulnerability to fire renders her a tempting target to some, and bold pirates can brave the inferno within the shrine to close in on her and deliver the killing blow, though they risk death from the flames (a Challenging (D2) Agility test each round or suffer the Incendiary 2 Quality) or at Baba Mora's hands (see *Baba Mora Attacks*). Smarter pirates can fire on her from a distance or keep well clear and let the flames do their job. Within two or three rounds, her dry mummified body burns to a blackened skeleton, turns to acrid smoke, and finally disappears as a shriek on the cold wind, leaving only a few charred, misshapen teeth scattered on the ground.

## FORGIVENESS

It may be possible to seek forgiveness from Baba Mora by making amends and returning the ice hag's stolen treasures. If the players need help to realize that the attacks are going to persist while they still have Baba Mora's treasures, the wispy ruzalak reaches out to curl and tug at any trinket about the person of a player character or another pirate, as if weakly trying to tug it back in the direction of the shrine.

The player characters can try to call a temporary halt to open hostilities by making a Dire (D4) Command or Persuade test and then hand the goods back to Baba Mora's monsters or replace them in the shrine itself.

But there is a very good chance that Zakynthos, Bolgerus, and other non-player character pirates manage to keep a

few small treasures secretly tucked away unless the players forcibly search their protesting shipmates. This has a strong chance of leading to pirate vs pirate combat — under the baleful gaze of Baba Mora's monsters — unless the player characters can make a Challenging (D2) Command or Persuade test to convince their avaricious fellows to hand over their booty.

## AFTERMATH

If Baba Mora dies, monsters sustained by her power such as the ruzalak and moroznek die with her, melting away to their constituent elements, whilst the vodyani flee into the cold depths of the waters. As the ice hag's influence in the cove melts away, the ice that froze the *Alecto* in place evaporates.

### THE BLOODY BATTLE WON

If the player characters defeated Baba Mora and her monsters without resorting to fire, the *Alecto* is still probably still intact and seaworthy. The surviving pirates are free to sail out of the cove and back to familiar waters of the Vilayet as soon as they like. Virtually all but the greediest non-player pirate expresses a very strong desire to leave this accursed place immediately.

### THE BETTER PART OF VALOR

If the player characters flee the cove somehow without bringing an end to Baba Mora and her monsters, then the situation remains perilous until they can outdistance the ice hag's supernatural reach.

However they manage to escape, the wrath of Baba Mora — in the form of the vodyani and the ruzalak — follows the pirates if the player characters or other survivors retain any treasure from the shrine, just as it did with the Turanians before them. The vodyani can pursue for a short distance beyond the misty cove mouth before having to turn back, but the spectral ruzalak can dog the pirates for many leagues south across open water until Baba Mora's power eventually wanes.

The gamemaster can make the player characters aware that someone is hanging onto some treasure and give them a chance to hand it back to the pursuing monsters, or at least throw their booty overboard in the hope that the attacks cease (see *Forgiveness*).

Surviving pirates who elude the wrath of Baba Mora and make it to southern waters may find themselves reduced to the same sorry state as the Turanians — exhausted, terrified, frostbitten, mad, or dead. These misfortunes can be represented by Wounds and Trauma, or simple roleplayed, leading to some much-needed Healing, Counsel, or Carousing.

## AMONG THE ASHES

If the player characters manage to destroy Baba Mora and her shrine with fire, it may be that the pirates are left without a working ship, depending on how much of the *Alecto*'s structure they stripped for firewood. It may be missing masts and other vital parts, or even be completely consumed by the flames if the inferno raged out of control or a blazing Baba Mora crawled aboard in her death throes.

The pirates then face a bitter time huddling down in the cove until they can figure a way out. Solutions include:

- Cannibalizing any old ships in the bay (see *The Lost Ships*) — no longer frozen solid — for parts, or patching up a nearly seaworthy one and sailing it out of the bay.
- Getting into the undamaged jolly boat and rowing out — though there may not be room for all survivors...
- Hunkering down until a sail is seen on the horizon which must have seen the smoke from the smoldering embers of the shrine and turned towards the cove — is it a merchant ship? Other, rival, pirates? Or a galley full of armed and hostile Turanians?
- Climbing the perilous mountains ringing the cove — something only a madman, or a Cimmerian, would choose.

### THE ICE HAG APPEASED

In the event that the player characters manage to convince their fellow pirates to hand over Baba Mora's treasures, the ice hag — her shrine and monsters intact — holds a great deal of power over the surviving pirates, their lives balanced on a frozen knife edge. What happens next depends on the player characters' actions immediately after hostilities cease.

Do they beg the ice hag's forgiveness and plead for the *Alecto* to be released from the ice that they may sail free, never to return?

Do they attempt to flatter her, hoping to discern her weakness that the pirates might put an end to the ice hag after all?

Or do they seek to find favor with the ice hag, making certain foul bargains with her — a sacrificial pirate or two to receive the dubious honor of becoming moroznek — in exchange for her granting them safe harbor in what could be an impregnable, hidden pirate's lair?

### TREASURE

The amount of treasure — if any — that the pirates finish the adventure with depends on how they survived their encounter with Baba Mora. Treasure may have been given back to the ice hag to appease her, thrown overboard whilst fleeing,



scattered across the rocky shore of the cove among the blood and ice, buried under a collapsed shrine, or even consumed by a raging fire. The player characters may emerge with a prince's ransom or nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Some suggested treasures and values are listed below.

FOUND TREASURE GOLD VALUE	
Treasure	Value
Items retrieved from the Turanian ship (old coins, brooch pins, earrings)	1 per player character
Small statuette of a beautiful maiden from the Turanian ship	3
Loose items from the shrine (coins, some votive plates and goblets)	2 per player character
Large item hacked free from ice in the shrine (statue, clay urn of coins, jeweled wooden icon)	5-10 per item
Hideous wooden statue of Baba Mora	5

In addition, the gamemaster can choose to assign special qualities to certain items that the player characters may retrieve from the misty cove, such as the hideous statue or even Baba Mora's teeth (see *Fire*). Such remnants may indeed hold a portion of the ice hag's icy power, or even a vestige of her indomitable mind, seething with fury but prepared to wait patiently for her chance to return to unlife and revenge herself.

