

Side Paths

Silver Rebels 2

Trials of the Drowned

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*Necromancers
of the Northwest*

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Credits

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Using This Adventure

This adventure is designed to take place during the second adventure of Paizo's official rebel-themed Adventure Path (volume #98). Near the beginning of that adventure, there is a small two-room shrine devoted to the drowned. This book is intended to expand that location, and all of the rooms presented here are designed to be inserted in between the first and last rooms of that shrine, in order to flesh it out and turn it into more of an adventure. For this reason, rooms 1 and 7, shown on the map, are not listed here, as they correspond to rooms already described in Paizo's adventure. That said, it can easily be incorporated as a stand-alone dungeon in nearly any adventure, and does not strictly require any of the information from the adventure on which it is based in order to function. The adventure is designed for a party of 4th-level characters.

The Shrine of the Drowned

This microdungeon is a shrine devoted to a deity or saint who shepherds the souls of the drowned. If you are using this product as a supplement to the official Paizo adventure path adventure on which it is based, refer to that adventure for more information about the shrine's location and purpose. If you are using this product in conjunction with another adventure, or simply on its own as a self-contained dungeon crawl, the following information is designed to provide some background about the shrine, its location, and its purpose. You should feel free to alter these details to suit your needs.

This small, out-of-the-way shrine is located in a swampy marshland, not far from a major port city. It does not attract very many visitors, and is, in fact, maintained entirely by a pair of reclusive priests, who make their homes in a caretaker's shack just outside the shrine itself. The interior of the shrine contains a series of trials, to test the worthiness of those who would pass through it, and was originally intended to induct new members into the clergy of the obscure deity that is worshipped there. Currently, however, the small chamber at the bottom of the shrine holds a very different prize for the PCs than mere enlightenment, and in order to reach it, they will need to brave the shrine's various trials.

A1: Gate Guardian

If you are using this product as a supplement to the official Paizo adventure path adventure on which it is based, refer to that adventure for more information about this room. If you are using this product in conjunction with a different adventure, or as a stand-alone adventure, simply do not include this room, and use area A2 as the first room of the dungeon, instead.

Sidebar: Dungeon Details

Many of the areas in this dungeon have specific descriptions with details about the rooms; however, unless otherwise specified in a room's descriptions, you can assume that the rooms have strong wooden doors, with flagstone floors, walls of worked stone, and 10-foot-high ceilings.

The other setting detail to keep in mind, as the GM, is the lighting in each room. You'll notice that the rooms start out brightly lit, but get progressively darker as the PCs proceed. Whatever mystical order first constructed this dungeon designed this purposefully, in order to recreate one aspect of drowning, sinking deeper and deeper under the waves. You may find it helpful to familiarize yourself with the lighting rules found in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook before starting this adventure.

A2: The Calm Before the Storm

This large room is brightly lit and has an open feeling. The floor is made from sturdy wooden planks, like those used in ship construction. The walls are a bright aquamarine color and feature a masterfully crafted fresco depicting an army of trident-wielding merfolk and tritons surrounding a three-masted ship that pitches violently on the waves. The fresco encircles the entire room, save for a single break in the carving for an opening leading to a dank staircase, winding down beyond view.

This large, brightly-light room serves as the entrance to the shrine's trials and features, and represents the earliest stages of a drowning sailor's last moments, the moments before the trauma starts, when all is well. As such, this room is relatively safe and should serve as a kind of sanctuary for the PCs, where they feel they can retreat and rest. While this room has no encounters of its own, it plays a key role in the trials, providing both a key to progress further along and a lock which must be undone in order to reach the final room of the trials.

Careful examination of the room's fresco reveals that it is quite complex and elaborate:

This elaborate marble carving features churning waves which stretch 10 feet up from the room's floor, halfway to the ceiling. Above the waves are scores of merfolk and triton warriors, each armed with a beautifully crafted trident, which seem focused on the piece's focal point: a massive, three-masted ship which pitches about on the waves, as if about to capsize. A number of human figures in surprising detail flail about the ship, one of which is about to fall into the churning sea below.

Treasure: Hidden among the tridents in the fresco is a single masterwork trident which can easily be detached, and which serves as the key to area A5. The trident in question is held by a lone human figure, who is intermingled amongst the merfolk and the tritons. Anyone specifically looking for a drowning figure is able to find this individual automatically with a few minutes of work, while anyone else can find him with a successful DC 18 Perception check.

Development: In addition to the trident, the fresco also contains a secret lock which must be opened in order to pass from area A5 to area A6. The lock is located near the top of the sailing ship that serves as the central focus of the fresco, and is situated in the open mouth of the sailor who is about to fall overboard. Spotting the lock itself is difficult from the ground, requiring a DC 22 Perception check, but characters who have been to area A4 can recognize this figure as being identical to the spirit in that room with only a DC 10 Wisdom check. Reaching the mechanism is a challenge as well, as it is situated 20 feet off the ground, but luckily the fresco provides solid handholds and footholds for climbing, so it is only a DC 15 Climb check to reach it.

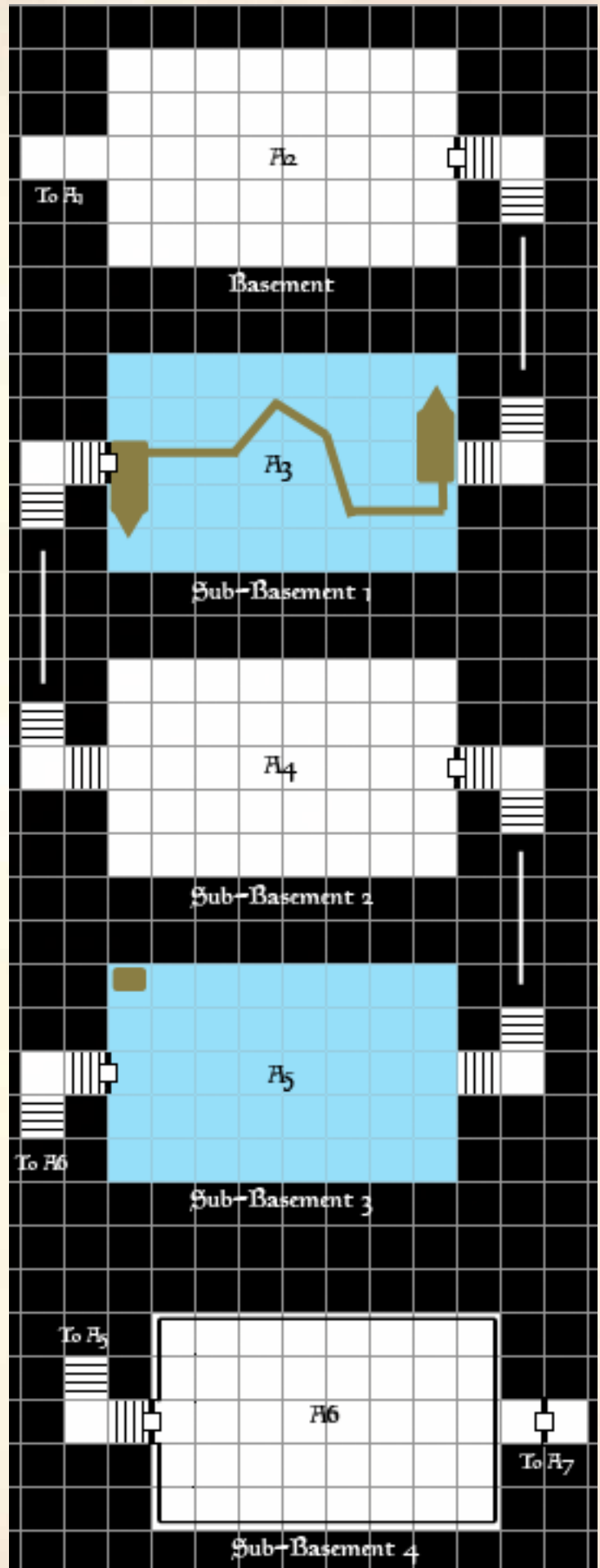
Once the mechanism is actually reached, there are several ways to disable it and unlock the secret door leading from area A5 to area A6. The simplest is to use any effect which could grant a person the ability to breathe water, such as casting *water breathing* on it, or pouring a potion of *water breathing* down the doomed sailor's open mouth and into the device. Failing this, a successful DC 20 Disable Device check will also suffice. Once the mechanism is triggered, the secret door in area A5 remains unlocked for 24 hours, after which time the door closes automatically and the lock resets.

A3: Hall of the Drowned

Though your vision is not compromised, this small room is somewhat dimmer than the room above, and water fills the entire chamber to a depth of five feet. Rickety and age-worn lifeboats, connected by narrow wooden beams, provide a questionable bridge across the chamber, where another doorway leads to further stairs down. Four skeletons, only their heads visible above the water, meander aimlessly throughout the room.

The stairs in room A2 lead the PCs on a short downward climb along a winding spiral, reminiscent of a whirlpool. At the bottom, the PCs find themselves in a somewhat smaller room made from weather-damaged wooden planks. Though the room is well lit (normal light), it has a gloomy feeling. Five feet of brackish water fill the room, with the only dry way across being a collection of wooden lifeboats connected by narrow gang planks.

This room is meant to remind those passing through of the terror and despair that is the last few moments of a drowning person's life, and as a reminder that the spirits of those who drowned, if left alone in the cold, dark, waters,



often turn hateful and resentful towards the living. The only challenge required to pass through the room is to make it to the other side. A DC 5 Acrobatics check is required to move across the small rowboats, which rock and sway in the water. The wooden planks are much more difficult to navigate, however: a foot in width, their precarious position attached to the boats causes them to move and sway underfoot as well, requiring a DC 15 Acrobatics check to move across the planks at half speed. Failure on this check causes the creature to fall into the water in an adjacent space. Due to the age of the wooden planks, they can support no more than 300 lbs. at any one time, and if more weight than this is put on them, they break, depositing everyone on them into the water.

The water itself is quite still, and characters too short to touch the bottom can swim with a DC 10 Swim check. Those who can reach the bottom can walk across it, albeit at half their normal speed. Characters in the water suffer the normal penalties on attack rolls and AC for underwater combat (typically -2 on attack rolls and half damage on damage rolls with bludgeoning or slashing weapons, and no penalty with piercing weapons). A character in the water can climb onto one of the boats with a successful DC 10 Climb check. Characters without firm footing suffer a -5 penalty on this check.

Creatures: Four undead known as drowned bones wander this room, with a pair flanking each boat at the time the PCs enter the room. These skeletal guardians are deliberately kept here by the priests that tend the temple, and serve as part of the challenge this room presents. The undead ignore characters in the room, provided that those characters remain outside of the water, and do not stay in the same place for an entire round. Though the skeletons have claw attacks, they initiate a grapple at the first opportunity, attempting to pin their foes and drag them under the water's surface, holding them there until they drown.

DROWNED BONES (4)		CR 3
XP 800		
CN Medium undead		
Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0		
DEFENSE		
AC 14; touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)		
hp 22 (3d8+9)		
Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +3		
DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune cold, undead traits		
OFFENSE		
Speed 30 ft.		
Melee 2 claws +7 (1d4+4 plus grab)		
Special Attacks grab		
STATISTICS		
Str 18, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 16		
Base Atk +2; CMB +6 (+12 grapple); CMD 18 (+20 vs. grapple)		
Feats Improved Grapple ^B , Weapon Focus (claw) ^B		
SQ watery guardian		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		

Watery Guardian: A drowned bones is treated as though it was under the affects of a *freedom of movement* spell for the purposes of moving and fighting while underwater.

A4: Chamber of Drowned Sorrows

This damp, dimly-lit natural cavern smells faintly of blood and saltwater, and is full of swirling white mists. Across the muddy-floored chamber is a large stone door, barring the way forward, has an unusual lock set into its center, which appears to have three keyholes. Spectral figures can be seen in the mist, if only for a second, leaving the impression that this dread chamber is haunted.

Another set of spiral stairs leads down from A3 to this chamber, a small, mist-filled stone room whose rough walls are reminiscent of a cavern. Though the mist itself does not obscure vision, the room is an area of dim light. The floor of this cavern is a natural, swampy peat, making getting around an uncomfortable process for those without closed shoes. A massive stone door provides an obvious barrier between this room and the next.

The door to area A5 bears an unusual lock. Close examination reveals that there seem to be three keyholes, each of which is unusually large and round. A DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check reveals that perhaps it is designed to be opened with some sort of ceremonial, three-pronged key, and characters who succeed on this check by 5 or more also immediately recall the presence of a great number of tridents in room A2. The door is quite sturdy and difficult to break down (break DC 30, hardness 8, 200 hit points), but, despite the unusual nature of the lock, it can be picked. However, doing so requires that at least two characters work in tandem (each needing their own set of thieves' tools), and between them they must succeed on at least three DC 20 Disable Device checks in a period of two rounds. A character that places the correct trident from area A2 (the one held by the only human in the water in the fresco) finds that it opens the door with ease.

Haunt: This room also plays host to the troubled spirits of drowned sailors, who so often turn from despair and loneliness to rage and envy, attempting to force other sailors to join in their fate. Powerful magic in the temple calls out to such souls within a hundred miles or so, causing them to congregate in this room, where the priests that tend to the temple help them to accept their fate. At any given time, though, there are always enough anguished spirits to form a haunt.

DROWNED HAUNT

CR 5

This haunt is created from the essence of those who perished while drowning, and takes the form of a male sailor who slowly drowns. All who witness the drowning feel as though their lungs are filled with water and suffer physical ailment, though the effects are not actually lethal, except in extreme circumstances.

XP 1,600

N persistent haunt (20-ft. radius)

Caster Level 5th

Notice *detect evil, detect undead*

hp 25; **Trigger** proximity; **Weakness** none; **Reset** 10 minutes

EFFECT

Once triggered, the drowned haunt remains in place for 2 rounds, after which it deals 1 point of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage each round for 1d6 rounds to characters who saw the haunt when it was triggered (regardless of whether or not they can still see it). Each round, a successful Fortitude save (DC 14) negates this damage.

DESTRUCTION

The drowned haunt can be defeated through damage or by offering to aid to the apparition. Any earnest offer or attempt to aid the haunt is sufficient to satisfy the spirits that comprise it, destroying the haunt, even if the character is not truly capable of doing so. It is, ultimately, the thought that counts.

Development: Once the haunt is either destroyed or has finished its effect, after one round, the spectral image of a young sailor appears before them (actually the result of a *programmed image* spell, DC 19 to disbelieve, which renews itself after each time it is triggered). A successful DC 10 Wisdom check allows any character that previously examined the fresco in room A2 to recognize this sailor as one of the ones depicted in the fresco. The sailor delivers the following message:

If you wish to follow my path into the cold and the dark, let the drowned be your guide. Rise towards the surface, struggling, as I did, to find your way. Find me there, up above, and spare me from my grisly fate. In the same chamber, find my mate who went before, alone amongst the riders of the waves. He holds the key, and will surrender it willingly.

If the PCs failed to offer aid to the haunt in this room, the image of the sailor adds the following, at the end of his speech:

As you heed my advice, think on the spirits you faced here, and what you might have wanted, in their place.

The image's cryptic message is advice on how to bypass the locked doors in both this room and the next. His reference to find him up above refers to the fresco in area A2 that contains the locking mechanism for the door leading from area A5 to A6, which is identical in appearance to the image. The statement to spare him from his grisly fate is a hint to the fact that the mechanism can be disabled by any

means that would grant the ability to breathe water, as the fresco of the sailor depicts him about to fall overboard. The reference to the mate who came before refers to the other important figure in the fresco in area A2, the lone human amongst the merfolk and tritons, whose trident can be detached and serves as the key to the door leading from this room to area A5. Finally, if the PCs failed to destroy the haunt by offering it aid, it is likely to have reset by the time they return, and the image's final message in this case provides a hint as the means to put the haunt to rest.

A5: Churning Grotto

The dim mists give way to utter darkness, and the spiraling stairwell plunges down to frigid, chest-high water, which carries the briny scent of the sea. A set of stairs rise up out of the water on the far side of the room, with the final step just barely jutting out above the still waters, against a bare and featureless wall. There is a chill menace in the air, as though something were watching and waiting.

The entire room is filled to a depth of four feet with cold saltwater, and is home to the shrine's most fearsome guardian, a benthic water elemental. This room is completely dark, without any source of light, although external light sources function normally. The water here counts as a deep bog, costing Medium creatures 4 squares of movement to move into a square, unless they choose to swim, instead. Small and smaller creatures have no choice but to swim to move through water this deep, and tumbling is impossible for characters of any size. The water also provides cover for Medium or larger creatures, and improved cover for creatures smaller than Medium (although Medium creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover). Creatures with this improved cover take a –10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't underwater. The water is not deep enough to allow the room's inhabitant to use its vortex ability.

Creatures: A large benthic water elemental makes its home in this room, and attacks any who enter, using its hide in water ability to take the party by surprise. It starts by attacking anyone holding a light source, attempting to use its drench ability on any flame-based light sources, or disarm the creature if their light source can't be extinguished. Once any light sources are gone, it attacks in earnest, using Power Attack to slam the nearest creature as hard as it can. The elemental was bound here by the priests that tend the shrine, in an ancient ritual passed down orally by their order for generations. Meant to symbolize the fact that the ocean waves are fickle and capricious, and that strength is always needed to keep oneself afloat, the elemental fights to the death. Should it be slain, the priests conjure a new one to replace it after three days.

LARGE BENTHIC WATER ELEMENTAL**CR 5****XP 1,600**

N Large outsider (elemental, extraplanar, water)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5**DEFENSE****AC** 19; touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+8 natural, -1 size)**hp** 38 (4d10+16)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1**Immune** elemental traits**Defensive Abilities** hide in water**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft., swim 90 ft.**Melee** slam +10 (2d6+10)**Special Attacks** drench, drown, vortex (DC 15, 10-30 ft.), water mastery**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**STATISTICS****Str** 24, **Dex** 10, **Con** 19, **Int** 4, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22**Feats** Cleave, Power Attack**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Escape Artist +5, Knowledge (planes) +2, Perception +5, Stealth +1, Swim +20**Language** Aquan**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Drench (Ex): The benthic water elemental's touch puts out non-magical flames of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* (caster level equals elemental's HD).

Drown (Sp): Whenever a benthic water elemental is in control of a grapple, in addition to doing damage, it can force its foe to hold his breath or drown. See the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for more information on drowning.

Hide in Water (Sp): Benthic water elementals can hide in the water, as the spell *invisibility*, but only while submerged in at least 2 feet of water. Benthic water elementals can use this ability at will.

Vortex (Su): A benthic water elemental can create a whirlpool as a standard action, at will. This ability functions identically to the whirlwind special attack, but can only form underwater and cannot leave the water.

Water Mastery (Ex): A benthic water elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its opponent are touching water. If the opponent or the elemental is touching the ground, the elemental takes a -4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. These modifiers apply to bull rush and overrun maneuvers, whether the elemental is initiating or resisting these kinds of attacks.

Treasure: Although it is not immediately obvious, a large, rusted iron chest sits in the northwest corner of the room, nearly, but not quite, reaching the surface of the water. A successful DC 15 Perception check allows a character to find the chest, which is unlocked. Opening it reveals three *potions*

of water breathing, which are restocked by the temple's priests, as necessary.

Development: In the middle of the room's eastern wall, immediately above the stairwell rising out of the water, is a secret door (Perception DC 20). Simply finding the secret door does little, however, as the mechanism for unlocking it is found in room A2, in the form of a sailor in that room's fresco. If this mechanism has been triggered, then simply touching the secret door causes it to slide open. Otherwise, a successful DC 30 Perception check is required to find a very well-concealed mechanism in the door which can be used to force it open (Disable Device DC 30). Alternatively, force can be used to open the door (break DC 30, hardness 8, 200 hit points).

A6: The Drowning Shaft

This cylindrical chamber is largely bare and featureless, except for the floor and ceiling. The chamber's floor bears a mosaic of beautiful glass tiles that depict a swirling vortex of churning ocean water, swallowed into a deep dark abyss. Up above, on the ceiling, sits a fresco of a beautiful woman, her arms outstretched, as though reaching out for those below, her mouth open wide as though calling out or singing, but the rest of her face cold and emotionless.

This chamber serves as the final trial offered by the shrine, and conceals a trap that is both insidious and, at the same time, merciful, as those who do not struggle against the trap are quite likely to survive it unharmed, if understandably shaken. The chamber described above is actually a stone elevator platform, inside a slightly larger cylindrical shaft. The elevator itself is about 12 feet tall, with a glass roof that allows those inside the elevator to see up into the rest of the chamber above them (including the fresco on the ceiling, which is actually in the larger elevator shaft), but the shaft is a full 250 feet deep. The elevator is set to descend automatically 1d3 rounds after a weight of at least 40 lbs. is placed on it.

DROWNING ELEVATOR TRAP**CR 4****XP 1,200****Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28**EFFECTS****Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

Effect The entry door to the elevator closes and locks (Disable Device DC 28 to open), and the elevator begins to descend at a rate of 20 feet per round. As soon as the elevator begins to descend, water begins to pour out of the mouth of the fresco on the ceiling, as well as numerous other frescoes that become visible as the elevator descends (see below), quickly filling the chamber above the elevator with water. The elevator reaches the bottom of the shaft after 12 rounds, and three rounds after that, when the entire chamber above them has filled with water, the glass ceiling of the elevator retracts

into the side of the chamber, causing thousands of gallons of water to come crashing down on the PCs, leaving them 240 feet beneath the water's surface.

Once the elevator begins to descend, read the following aloud.

With a shuddering jolt, the entire chamber begins to slowly descend, revealing that it is actually a massive stone elevator. As it does, water begins to pour from the mouth of the woman on the ceiling, releasing a torrent that, surprisingly, strikes an invisible barrier about 10 feet above the floor of the elevator, revealing a glass ceiling protecting the elevator's interior from the water, which quickly begins to form a pool above the elevator as it descends.

As the elevator lowers, it quickly becomes clear that the walls of the outer chamber are covered in a massive fresco, depicting hundreds, perhaps thousands, of drowning men, women, and children, each one gasping for breath and struggling to reach the top of the chamber. Shortly after the elevator passes by a figure in the fresco, and it becomes visible through the glass ceiling, water begins to pour from that figure's mouth as well, quickly beginning to fill the shaft above the elevator with thousands of gallons of water. A single ladder, which runs the entire height of the outer chamber, mars the fresco's macabre beauty.

A successful DC 15 Perception check on the first round of the elevator's descent allows a character to notice a door on the far side of the chamber, leading to area A7, which was previously blocked by the wall of the elevator. Should a character choose to try to break the glass ceiling as they descend, they find that it is magically reinforced, with hardness 5 and 50 hit points. While the rate at which the room fills with water increases as the elevator lowers, it is generally safe to assume that at any point prior to the 15th round when the glass ceiling retracts automatically, roughly 3/4 of the area between wherever the elevator is, and the exits from the room, roughly 10 feet from the top of the chamber, is filled with water, requiring anyone attempting to reach the top of the water to swim the distance in question. The water is rough and choppy, increasing the DC of Swim checks to 15.

Alternatively, 30 feet from the bottom of the elevator shaft, spaced equidistantly around the walls of the chamber, are a series of four valves, which can be turned to cause the water to stop pouring into the chamber, and open up several small drains in the floor to allow it to clear away. Each valve must be turned a total of three times, with each attempt to turn the valve being a move action. The character must succeed on a Strength check (DC 15) to turn the valve, and for every 5 points by which the result of her check exceeds the DC, the character can turn the valve an additional time. Once all four valves have been turned three times, the room begins to drain of water, with the water level lowering at a rate of 40 feet per round (completely draining after 6 rounds).



The easiest way to survive the trap, however, is to simply do nothing. Fourteen rounds after the glass ceiling retracts from the trap, the water begins to drain automatically (as though the valves had all been turned), causing the water to be completely drained from the room by the twentieth round after the ceiling retracted (or the thirty-fifth round after the elevator began descending). Once the water is drained, characters can simply climb the ladder back to the top of the chamber, where a 1-foot stone ledge encircling the chamber allows them easy access to both of the room's exits.

A7: Sanctum of Drowned Sailors

This room is listed as area A2 in the official adventure path this product is designed to enhance. Alternatively, if this product is being used as part of a different adventure, you should adjust the contents of this room accordingly. It could easily be a treasure chamber containing a water-themed relic (such as a magic trident, or perhaps even a suit of *plate armor of the deep*, if you are feeling generous). Alternatively, in the spirit of the adventure that this product is designed to enhance, the room could contain a private place of seclusion, wherein a potential ally of the party has been forced to seek shelter due to dangerous circumstances. Another option is an altar dedicated to whichever deity or saint seems appropriate as a patron for the shrine, which can grant a blessing or boon to characters that worship there.

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Descend into the Watery Depths

Adventure paths offer fantastic stories and sweeping campaign arcs that take characters on a ride from very low levels all the way up to the highest reaches of the game, and they can be incredibly fun and rewarding to play. But even though there's a lot packed into an adventure path, sometimes you find yourself wishing for more, whether there's a part of the adventure path that feels like it got a bit rushed or cut due to space issues, or just a fun little side trek to take a breather before jumping back into the action of the main story. *Side Paths* provides just this sort of content, with short adventures designed to fit into portions of existing official Paizo adventure paths, but which can easily stand on their own, or be inserted into other, similar campaigns.

This micro-dungeon for a party of 4th-level characters, is designed to expand an existing dungeon in the second volume (#98) of the rebellious adventure path from Paizo, Inc., turning that two-room dungeon into a more satisfying and rewarding trek by inserting additional challenges and puzzles between the two rooms presented in Paizo's version. Even though the micro-dungeon was designed with this specific placement in mind, it can easily be inserted into other dungeons, or stand on its own, and advice for running the adventure outside of the adventure path its intended for is included.

As the PCs delve deeper into this shrine dedicated to the spirits of the drowned, they must navigate narrow gang-planks while avoiding the attention of roving underwater dead, battle a fearsome benthic water elemental in total darkness, and survive a fearsome elevator trap that leaves them gasping for air under thousands of gallons of water, plus far more. Can they appease the spirits of the drowned, overcome the cunning puzzles, and claim the prize at the end?



*Necromancers
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