



# Sydon's Grotto



*This Heroic Maps Patreon Adventure Supplement uses the maps Sydon's Grotto and the interior The Pirate's Den (left).*

## Setting

The people who travelled to this small island and built this once grand tomb complex are long gone. The grand steps that once held offerings and tokens of remembrance, lie empty. Where once they lifted barefoot mourners and worshippers to the door of the tombs, now they crumble under the stomping boots of the pirate captain, Sach Sydon, and his gang who have made their hideout among the ruins. But the island hasn't let the unholy pirates get away with their irreverence. In disturbing the tombs they brought an ancient curse upon themselves and now live with its consequences. Despite this, they have stayed here in this prime position on the seaway. Beyond the first innocuous-looking corridor of tombs, the pirates have developed a comfortable hideout, and the Sydon's personal chambers are almost charming. Yet the old ghosts remain and the pirates are unsure if they have won their favour and protection or their patient revenge.

## Story Ideas

### 1. Playing the Longpants Game

Old Davy Longpants hasn't been to sea since Sach Sydon took his eyes and ears for treachery. Holed up in Port St Iffrin, he has spent nine years scraping together funds to pay for someone to go and kill his old captain. Now, as he nods and raises a glass from the other end of the bar, he's wondering if that someone could be you?

### 2. Curse of the Kiss

They say *The Limpet's Kiss* has been terrorizing ships in the area, plundering and murdering. They're desperate for someone to hunt that dread ship down. And you will, not because you care for the safety of local ships, but because you need something Captain Sach's rumoured to have. What you don't know is, he also has a curse and he's not handing over what you need until you help him lift it.

### 3. The Secret of the Sydon's Tombs

You've travelled many weeks to get to the small island you read about in a centuries old explorer's diary. You're desperate to read the inscription on the old tomb and learn the location of the fabled treasure. You didn't guess pirates might have moved into the caves. They're pretty interested in this treasure you're talking about...

#### Curses that have befallen the pirates for disturbing the old tombs

- 1 Every night the pirate's dreams are haunted by the bodies in the tombs. The pirates are forced to relive the last moments of the dead — their deaths, regrets and entombment. The nightmares leave them reeling.
- 2 The pirates are each cursed to live for 500 days or 500 years, but they cannot know which until the moment of their death.
- 3 Black teardrop spots cover the pirate's bodies, sore and weeping brine.
- 4 The pirates may seem normal if you meet them during the day, but at night they are gruesomely transformed, sprouting crustacean legs, chaotic growths of shell and claw, yet retaining their sad human faces.
- 5 At night the pirates are visited by the shades of those they murdered, screaming for mercy and begging they fulfil their final requests.

## Characters

**Captain Sach Sydon**, the rakish, glossy-haired Captain of *The Limpet's Kiss*, naturally commands fierce loyalty from his crew. Sydon claims he was born on the high seas to a mutineer lascar and the murderer bandit his ship had been transporting and that he learned the ways of the buccaneer life before he learned to walk. All who sail with him respect Sydon's strict code of honour and accept his harsh, violent punishments for transgressions. The crew know he treats them fairly and no one blames Sydon for what happened to them at the Grotto. Who could have known? They also know they're not likely to find a captain who'll line their pockets so richly. Since the curse befell the pirates, life has been harder at Sydon's Grotto, but Captain Sach is a riot to be around and life on *The Limpet's Kiss* is never dull.

**Doc Henstooth** is the mumbling, toothless, ship's surgeon. His former life in the Navy prepared him for the wild injuries the pirates take in the course of their duties, but not so much for those meted out by their Captain or the horrors of the curse. Still, the old fella wouldn't turn back to the side of the Law; there's just not enough gold there. Despite his love of the shiny stuff, his love of the bottled stuff is greater, and the pirates say he lost his gnashers mistaking gold nuggets for cheese.

**Scarlett Scarlips** is a nifty shot and while at the Grotto often finds herself on lookout duty, hiding in one of the trees by the great stairs. Famed among pirates for her terrifying grin, she was gifted it by Captain Sach when he neatly sliced off the flesh around her mouth for lying about a bribe she'd taken. Fiercely loyal to her Captain, she'd take an arrow to the eye for him.

**Nitbeard** doesn't seem old enough to have grown such long facial hair. He knits his filthy, infested beard into a mess of braids that fall from his chin like a fistful of wild yellow snakes. A reckless swordsman, he has an inaccurate, swinging style that still wins him every fight. Not very bright, he easily falls for every pirate ruse in the book and he regularly resolves never again to play dice or bones with his shipmates.

#### Dangerous flora and fauna on the island

- 1 The Snagfish - a large barb-toothed fish that punctures the skin of its prey before dragging it into the water.
- 2 Coconut Ants - named for their size, not their diet. These large predatory ants travel in armies of hundreds, consuming anything in their path.
- 3 Sandbear - a burrowing creature, it usually buries itself in the sand with only its eyes visible, waiting for prey to stumble into their trap.
- 4 Bloodgulls - carrion birds that fly above the coastline, looking for the recently deceased. Usually scavengers, they have been known to encourage weak creatures along to an early grave.
- 5 Lesser Foottrap - a low growing plant, the stems of which twist to form snares that close tight upon contact. It injects a seed beneath the skin of the ensnared creature - a novel method of seed dispersal.
- 6 Blindroot - a plant with delicious and nutritious leaves. However, if the roots are exposed to sunlight, they shoot thousands of tiny sharp barbs into the air, causing agony and blindness if they go in the eyes.

#### Interesting items in Sach Sydon's treasure haul

- 1 A tiny flute that heals the musician when unintentionally played badly.
- 2 A golden, coiled snake idol holding an ice-cold gemstone in its jaw.
- 3 A cutlass with an obsidian blade forged in the Underworld.
- 4 A spyglass that sees the dead.