

AX&X: THE SKYSHIP IN THE HOLLOW PEAK

A fantasy adventure for AX&X, for 4 to 6 characters of levels 2 to 3

THE HOOK

For three nights a green star has hung over the mountains, and each dawn it sits lower in the sky. In the village of Brackenford, the old mapmaker Orla Venn knows it for what it is. No star at all, but a signal lantern, shining from the lost skyship *Gale's Promise*.

The ship vanished thirty years ago while carrying a sealed brass coffer to the wizard's observatory at Hollow Peak. Orla offers the party **500 GP** to find it and bring the coffer back. She warns them the captain was a proud man, and that he would sooner burn his vessel than hand it over.

ACT I: THE JOURNEY

The mountain trail climbs through pine forest, then narrows along sheer cliffs. Strange gusts sweep up from below, carrying whispers in a tongue no one knows.

- **The Gargoyles:** On the second night, lights move among the rocks: gargoyles, once the ship's carved figureheads, now stirred to life by the coffer's leaking magic. They shadow the party and attack anyone who climbs toward their perch.
- **The Wind-Bridge:** At dawn a thunderstorm rolls in under a clear sky. The wind will carry a character across a broken ravine on a **DEX Check, 12+**. Fight the gust and you find another way over or risk a fall into the mist.
- **Hollow Peak:** A stone arch opens into the mountain's hollow heart. The *Gale's Promise* hangs above an underground lake, held by a cracked crystal engine, its hull wedged between two spires and a green lantern at the mast. Three ways aboard: narrow ledges, a fraying rope bridge, or a skiff tied beneath the stern.

ACT II: ABOARD THE GALE'S PROMISE

The ship is quiet. Dust lies thick on the decks, yet fresh footprints lead toward the captain's cabin.

- **Main Deck:** Animated rigging snaps at intruders. A half-starved pseudodragon named Wick hides in the ropes and warms to anyone who offers food.
- **Crew Quarters:** The ghosts of two sailors stand their last watch. They won't harm the party unless disturbed, and they can tell that the captain sealed himself in the engine room.
- **Captain's Cabin:** A journal names the cargo: a small cloud caught in a glass sphere, meant to be loosed at the observatory to break a drought.
- **Engine Room:** The crystal engine is splitting. The captain's skeleton still grips the controls, and a gargoyle keeps watch beside it.

ACT III: THE OPENED COFFER

The brass coffer rests in the engine room. Open it and a storm the size of a fist spills out: the cloud swells, thunder shakes the ship, and the engine begins to fail. The captain's ghost appears at once, begging them to save his ship, though he can no longer remember whether his orders were to deliver the cloud or keep it sealed. Then the engine ruptures. The *Gale's Promise* tears free of the spires, ropes part, the engine's gargoyle lunges, and the deck tilts underfoot.

THE CHOICE

With the hull dropping toward the lake, the party has three ways to go.

- 1 Steady the engine with the captain's notes and an **INT Check, 12+**, then fly the ship out.
- 2 Loose the cloud through a cracked vent. The engine weakens, but rain rolls toward the dry valley. Make for the skiff as it falls.
- 3 Take the coffer and run, leaving the *Gale's Promise* to the lake.

REWARDS

Orla pays the promised **500 GP**. Bring back the cloud and the valley's wells fill within days. Save the ship and the party gains an airship of their own, slow to answer and quick to complain. Wick may sign on as a companion if they treated him kindly.

The coffer's brass lining holds a map to the observatory, and a second green signal, blinking from somewhere past the clouds.

THREATS

HD Hit Dice, **AC** Armor Class, **Atk** attack bonus and damage. Attack bonus equals HD.

- **Gargoyle:** HD 4, HP 18, AC 16, Atk +4 (1d6 claws). Flies. A Mindless construct. Resistant to all but magic weapons.
- **Engine Guardian:** HD 5, HP 24, AC 16, Atk +5 (1d8 claws). A gargoyle grown fat on the coffer's magic. Won't leave the engine room.
- **Restless Sailor:** HD 2, HP 9, AC 13, Atk +2 (1d6 chilling touch). Harmed only by magic or silver. Passive unless the party disturbs the watch.
- **Animated Rigging:** HD 2, HP 10, AC 12, Atk +2 (Dodge save or stuck 1d4 rounds). A Mindless construct. Fire frees anyone caught.
- **Wick the Pseudodragon:** HD 1, HP 4, AC 15, Atk +1 (1d3 sting, Body save or Asleep). Flies. A friend, not a fight, once fed.