



VOYAGE TO STORMWRECK ISLE

Read this text to set the scene:

Your journey has been smooth sailing so far. You left the bustling port of Neverwinter a few days ago, heading for an island with the foreboding name of Stormwreck Isle and a peaceful cloister located there. But you woke this morning to a blood-red sunrise, and dark clouds overhead threaten a violent storm.

Show the players the illustration of their ship at sea.

Just as the first lightning flashes across the sky, the ship suddenly lurches to one side as an enormous monster hauls itself up onto the deck!

Show the players the illustration of the merrow and adopt a different voice for it (any voice you like, but try to sound intimidating!) as you read this text:

"These waters belong to the Scaled Queen. I'm here to collect her tribute."

EXPLAINING THE GAME

Read or paraphrase this boxed text:

Hi everyone. I'm going to be running you through a quick demo on how to play D&D. I'm the Dungeon Master, so it's my job to tell you what's happening in the world around you and rolling any dice for the monster. You're playing the heroes!

I've just told you the situation you're in. What happens next is up to you. You're all trained for combat, so if you want to fight this monster, I can help you do that. But you can also try to negotiate with the monster, or trick it, or anything else you can imagine.

Just about anything you can think of to try will require some combination of skill, natural ability, and luck to pull off. And the D&D game represents that by having you roll one of these 20-sided dice and add a number from your sheet. So ... what do you want to do?

RUN THE ENCOUNTER

Let the players take the lead! They can try anything they can imagine.

Encourage the players to let you know if they have any ideas. Ask them to let you know what they are thinking and then run with it!

Whatever the characters try and whatever their die rolls indicate, use vivid description to keep things exciting.

Here are some of the most likely approaches:

NEGOTIATE WITH THE MERROW

The players might take the merrow's statement at face value and agree to pay tribute to "the Scaled Queen." The merrow initially demands a payment of 400 gold pieces or its equivalent in goods. This represents about all of the goods in the hold. The characters can use Charisma checks (applying Persuasion, Intimidation, or perhaps Deception skills, as appropriate) to get it to accept a lower amount of tribute, reducing the amount by 100 gold pieces with each successful DC 15 check.

If the players ask about the Scaled Queen, the merrow says that she is a huge, two-headed merrow who carries the special blessing of the Prince of Demons, Demogorgon.

ATTACK THE MERROW

Lots of players will try this first, and it will often come up as a last resort when other approaches fail. When a character decides to attack, don't bother with rolling initiative. Start with the player who initiated combat, then pass the turn order to that player's right. Take the merrow's turn when it passes around to you.

On each player's turn, talk through the different ways that character can attack. Explain the character's different weapons and spell attacks.

The merrow is designed to look fearsome but not present too much of a threat to the characters. They should be able to take it down in 1–2 rounds.

SHENANIGANS

Can I try to maneuver the merrow so it gets hit by a swinging yardarm? Can I get it tangled up in a sail? Can I roll a barrel to push it overboard? Can I convince all the sailors to gang-tackle it? Can I ...

Whatever the players ask, the answer should (almost) always be something like, "You can try!" Follow that up with a request for some kind of ability check, unless a character has a specific spell or ability that will let them accomplish what they want to do.

WRAP UP

When the characters have dealt with the merrow, one way or another, read this text to wrap up:

With a splash, the merrow disappears into the ocean depths and the ship continues on its way. The sailors raise a cheer, and the storm brewing overhead seems not quite so threatening now.

And that brings us to the end of your first taste of adventure. Thanks for playing!

MERROW EXTORTIONIST

Large Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d10+8)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (–1)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Abyssal, Aquan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Amphibious. The merrow can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The merrow makes one Bite attack and one Claws attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.