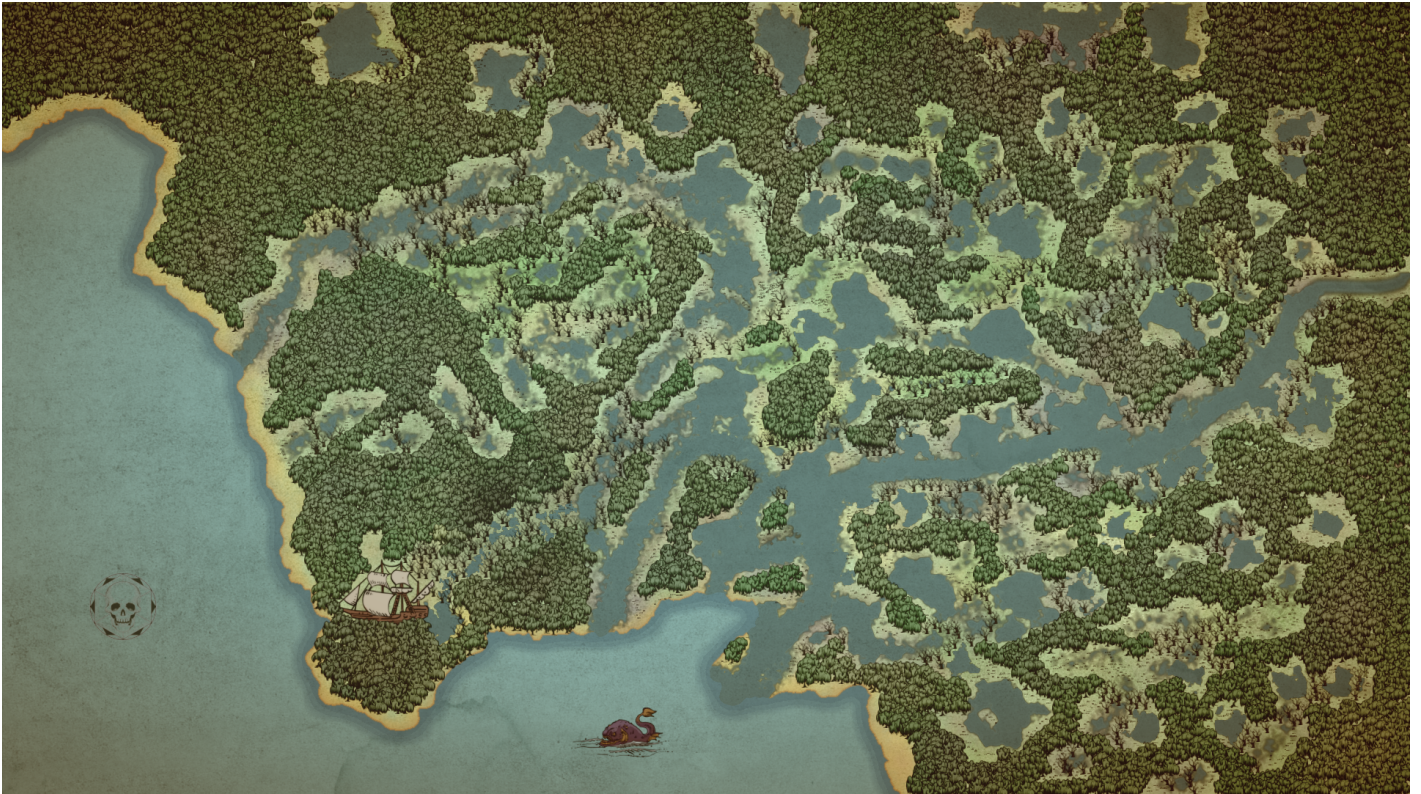


Scene 3: The Ship



The shipwreck in Brinestump Marsh

Scene 03 — The Kaijitsu Star

SITUATION

The coast. Dawn. The beach camp is behind them. Somewhere ahead, in a shallow swamp pool where the marsh meets the sea, a two-masted ship has been stuck in the mud for decades. They can smell it before they can see it.

NARRATION

The ship sits in its pool like something that gave up a long time ago and made peace with that decision.

Two masts, both still standing, which is surprising. The hull has gone the color of the marsh — dark and soft at the waterline, held up by mud as much as its own structure. The name on the bow is written in a script none of the eight can read.

It doesn't matter. They didn't come here to read.

They came here for whatever's inside.

[BEAT: first sight — the Kaijitsu Star, still and rotting in its swamp pool]

NARRATION

The horse sees them first.

It's in a fenced yard built off the ship's side — a full-grown stallion, dark gray, with the filthy look of an animal that has been here too long and knows it. It is not pleased about visitors.

Neither, presumably, is whoever built the fence. The horse belongs here — part of the same arrangement that put a dog named Cuddles in the galley.

[BEAT: the yard and Stomp — something is living here]

*[GAMEPLAY: Approach — the yard, the horse Stomp. The ship's condition, the entry points. Fenced pen with a gray stallion. Boarding the ship requires dealing with or bypassing the yard. Dogs chained to the masts — Scabtongue and Tickletooth, half-starved, feral. The galley holds a third dog (Cuddles,

larger, worse). Each disturbance increases the chance that what's sleeping inside wakes up.]*

NARRATION

The horse dies first.

This is how it goes in goblin stories involving horses, and they all involve horses, and the horse always dies first.

The ship makes no sound.

[BEAT: the horse is down — the ship is quiet — for now]

NARRATION

Below decks: the smell of old wood, old water, and something that has been cooking things for a long time and not always waiting for them to stop moving.

The ship has been occupied. The evidence is everywhere — bones arranged with opinion, scraps of cloth that were once people's clothing, a cauldron with ongoing projects. Someone lives here. Someone with a large mouth and smaller ideas about whose food is whose.

Among the bones: the remains of **Scribbleface** — a goblin outcast who had been banished from the Licktoad tribe for the crime of reading and writing. He came here. He did not leave.

Her name is Vorka.

The tribe knows the name. Every Licktoad goblin knows the name, which is why none of them were keen to volunteer for this particular mission. Vorka was Licktoad, once — the wife of a former chief. She ate him. Then a few more.

Then the tribe threw her out, which was honestly the minimum response. She

came here. She has been eating things that come to her ever since.

She is asleep when they find her.

[BEAT: the ship's interior — the cauldron, the evidence, the sleeping Vorka]

[GAMEPLAY: The ship interior — Vorka's lair across several areas. She is asleep; each encounter above decks (dogs, disturbances, noise) adds cumulative chance of her waking. Lord Longtung — her giant frog companion — patrols the lower areas. Vorka's cabin holds the red chest. She wakes, prepares (barkskin potion), and then the encounter begins. She does not retreat.]

NARRATION

She is awake.

She has a great many opinions about what she plans to do with specific parts of specific goblins, expressed at volume and with culinary specificity.

The eight have opinions back.

[BEAT: Vorka awake — the conversation before it stops being a conversation]

[GAMEPLAY: The Vorka encounter. Druid 3. Lord Longtung in melee. Her spells include produce flame, summon swarm, charm animal. Will not flee. Fights until one of them doesn't.]

NARRATION

Vorka loses.

She said a lot on the way down. None of it helped.

Lord Longtung, whose loyalty was real if nothing else was, flees into the marsh when it's done.

What's left of Vorka stays with the ship.

[BEAT: Vorka dead — Lord Longtung gone into the marsh]

NARRATION

The red chest is in the cabin.

It isn't locked. This is either a sign of confidence or a sign that no one has ever made it this far alive. The eight open it and find: fireworks.

Fourteen Desnan candles. Twenty paper candles. Seven skyrockets.

This is exactly what the Licktoad tribe sent them for. The chief wanted fireworks. Here are fireworks. Mission status: complete.

Screech Sagg looks at the skyrockets the way someone else might look at a sword.

[BEAT: the red chest — the fireworks cache — the mission objective, found]

[GAMEPLAY: Loot the ship. The red chest (fireworks: 14 Desnan candles, 20 paper candles, 7 skyrockets) is the primary objective. Optional: ivory fan with crude map on reverse found in the cabin — no goblin can read the script. Its significance is not yet apparent. Player may take or leave it.]

NARRATION

They take what matters and leave the rest.

The ship doesn't care. The ship is going to be here when they're dead.

[BEAT: leaving the ship — the marsh, the route back]

NARRATION

The marsh is the same going back. It doesn't hold grudges or offer easier passage as a reward for completing a mission. The same mud. The same roots.

The same quality of silence that means something noticed you.

[END OF SCENE — transitions to: Licktoad Village celebration / Part 2 opening]

Scene Notes for Downstream Agents

Art Director:

- First sight: the ship in its pool, shot from the beach side. Two masts visible above the marsh treeline first — the ship reveals slowly. The pool is shallow; the hull is half-buried in mud. Rot and age are the dominant visual, but the structure holds. It is bigger than goblins expect things to be.
- The fenced yard and Stomp: a dark gray horse against rotting wood. The fence is crude, goblin-built. The chained dogs at the masts are visible as shapes before they're audible.
- Below decks: cramped, dark, amber lantern light if any. The cauldron is the focal point — large, in use. Bones arranged with intention, not scattered. Vorka's trophies (scraps of cloth from victims) visible on her person and on the walls.
- Vorka herself: oversized mouth even by goblin standards, filed teeth, floppy leather hat stolen from a human and crudely resized. She is not small. She reads as dangerous before she reads as funny, even if the overall register is comedic.

- The red chest: unlocked, plain. The fireworks inside are the first genuinely bright color in the scene — Desnan candles, paper tubes, skyrockets. Brief color in a dark environment.

Composer:

- Approach to the ship: low ambient, the marsh sound continuing. A new texture underneath — something old and still. The ship has its own acoustic quality: water sounds, creaking wood, nothing moving.
- The yard and dogs: tension without resolution. Brief bursts of noise (horse, dogs) that spike and drop. The cumulative-disturbance structure should have a musical equivalent — each incident adds a layer that doesn't fully resolve.
- Below decks: the smell of the place should have a sonic equivalent. Close, layered, old. The cauldron drip. The comic register of the lore drop (Vorka's backstory) can sit on top of something that stays unsettling.
- Vorka awake: sudden shift. She talks before she fights — this is a comedic beat, the specificity of her threats ("those ears might taste fine stuffed with eyes"). Music can play this as absurd without undercutting what follows.
- The fight: chaotic, close quarters, tight spaces. Lord Longtung's tongue range (15 feet) should have an audio presence.
- The chest opening: a release. The fireworks cache is the payoff. Brief, bright, almost a fanfare — but comedy-register, not triumph.

Game Designer:

- This scene contains one primary encounter zone: Vorka's lair (multi-area, progressive alert system). Note: the Magical Maggie encounter occurs before this scene — after Cave of Darkfear, before the Kaijitsu Star mission.
- The progressive-alert mechanic (each disturbance = cumulative waking chance for Vorka) is a stealth-vs-noise system. Worth building as a visible pressure mechanic rather than a hidden roll.
- Lord Longtung operates as Vorka's primary melee threat. He flees on Vorka's death — the player does not need to fight him to resolution, but may.
- The dogs (Scabtongue, Tickletooth at masts; Cuddles in galley) are layered encounters that contribute to the alert system. Cuddles is substantially more dangerous than the chained pair.
- Stomp (the horse) is in the yard — effectively the opening encounter. He is not a complex fight but his death is narratively load-bearing (establishes tone for the whole ship).
- The red chest fireworks are the mission objective. Consider whether they function as usable items in combat — Desnan candles and skyrockets have mechanical stats (see [lore/items/notable-items.md](#)). This is a player-facing reward moment.
- The ivory fan is an optional find — flagged here for potential Jade Regent AP hook. No mechanical weight in Part 1. Consider as a collectible/lore item.
- Magical Maggie is the bridge to Part 2 — but her encounter precedes this scene (pre-story quest return). The farm hook comes from her looted map. This beat belongs in the Pre-Story Quest scene, not Scene 3.

- Pacing: this is a longer scene than 01 or 02. The multi-area ship interior warrants treating the below-decks section as its own gameplay chapter within the scene.

Lore Flag — Sword Hilt

The sword hilt does not appear in this scene.

Per `lore/items/notable-items.md` and `lore/sources/campaign/lore-conflicts.md` Beat 8: the hilt with the rolled paper inside is found during the **second ship expedition**, which takes place in Part 2 after the Squealy Nord recovery. It has no module source and is confirmed original GM content.

The task brief included the hilt as a key beat for Scene 03. This is a sequencing error — the hilt belongs in Part 2. A dedicated scene for the second ship expedition should be created as part of the Part 2 act, covering:

- The second ship (longer route than the first)
- The chest found on board
- The sword hilt — old iron, clearly part of something larger
- The rolled paper inside the hilt, unread by choice

Until that scene is written, the hilt's narrative introduction remains unscripted. Nothing in this scene has been altered or invented to accommodate the discrepancy.

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