

# *Nocturnal Sea Report*

*(a teaser... that is a few excerpts to make you wait!)*

# Credits

## *Authors:*

### **The Fraternity of Shadows**

*While we all heavily commented, edited, and made suggestions on each other's parts, the lead writers for particular sections were:*

*David – Liffe\*, Easan's stats & new maps*

*Joël – Introduction, Vechor (the land), Île de la Tempête\*, both Interlude*

*Nathan – Vechor (the people), Isle of Ravens\**

*Sharon – Vechor (fauna & flora, sidebars) & Nebligtode\* (Graben and Todstein)*

*\* and this domain's related material in the DM's appendix*

### **Chris Nichols**

*Somnanbulism spells, numerous ideas and suggestions throughout*

And no, nobody wanted to convert the giant starfish from *Ship of Horror* to 3rd Edition!

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The Fraternity of Shadows

*Joel – First document assembly & project coordination*

*Stephen – The amazing PDF formatting you have in your hands*

## *Thanks to :*

In April 2007, we held a submissions contest on the FoS forums for "sayings, rumors, adventure hooks and Dread Possibilities" of the Nocturnal Sea. The contest entries were very interesting and most were selected for this book. Bravo to the author of the winning entry, Robert "Cure" Elliott, who chose the WotC book *Heroes of Horror* as his prize. His winning entry can be found in the Deep's "As Heard in a Port" sidebar.

Shipwreck ideas on Île de la Tempête came from these ENWorlders: Agent Oracle; Ambros; Grymar; DJCupboard; Imagicka; ivocaliban; TheAuldGrump; Tonguez; Varianor Abroad; Whizbang Dustyboots.

Updated and "Ravenloft-ized" Mystaran monsters appear in the Appendix, courtesy of: Jamison Baty, Xavier Cattarinich, and Simone "Zendrolion" Neri. Additional source materials for Nebligtode's Mystaran connections were recommended by Geoff "Seer of Yhog" Gander and Andrew "Cthulhudrew" Thesien.

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Kudos from Sharon / Rotipher to the online Mystara community and Shawn Stanley's Vaults of Pandius site. It's been too long!

# *Introduction to this report*

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 760

To the Revered Fathers of the Fraternity:

I am writing this letter from the Darkonian coast, in Nevuchar Springs. Brother Viktor Hazan left this morning for the rustic island of Liffe aboard the *Black Pelican*, in the care of Captain Howe, and I'll be setting sail before dawn for the strange land of Vechor aboard Captain Arberlsson's *Valiant Explorer*. Hazan and I met yesterday to settle the details of our journeys. We've split the workload of this report into two equal shares, the better to finish in summer, before the southern Nocturnal Sea's colder climate can turn for the worse.

Hazan will first visit Liffe, then the Île de la Tempête (infamous for its treacherous lighthouse), and lastly, isolated Graben Island. I'll begin with the strange land known as Vechor, after which I pay my second visit to the fascinating Isle of Ravens. My own survey will conclude with freezing Todstein, from whence I will meet Hazan in the port of Graben-town, at or near September's end. At that time we will compare notes, correlate their contents, and prepare our finished report. If the winds are favorable, our respective explorations should take a little more than eight weeks.

Our journeys will be coordinated by *Sending* spells' messages between myself, Brother Hazan, and Father Tarnos Shadowcloak. We expect for one message to be exchanged every three days at the most. The Brother receiving a message from another will contact the third, passing on the first sender's news as well as his own. Encoding and privacy-wards will be enabled, as per usual. This method should keep us all up-to-date on each others' whereabouts, and allow for a quick response should one of us require help. Knowing that the Watchers enable some of the land-sovereigns to block access – or egress – to their territories, we want to make sure we are fully prepared to assist one another if need be.

Tonight, I take a last sip of wine from the terrace of the Riverview Rest Inn, and watch the sunset over the Mistlands' hills. Its magnificent colors will not be mirrored by the bleak eastern waves, come dawn. I've sailed on the Nocturnal Sea before, but never on a mission of such exhaustive geographic research. I knew that this was the last time I'd see the sun for weeks: violent lightning storms and gloomy, clouded skies would overshadow my whole trip. This depressing sea bears its name well. Hazan and I know that perilous shoals underlie its waters in many places, but we trust our hired captains to keep us clear of such hazards.

Professor Hazan has asked that I include a short historical recap of the Nocturnal Sea in this introduction. As most Brothers will know, this vast body of saltwater to the east of the continent did not even exist until the closing hours of Barovian year 750, at which point both the sea and its islands were set into their present place. It will be interesting to investigate the history of these isles as their residents understand it, as Fraternity records identify several as having already been in existence – isolated in the Mists – for far longer. Now, the Watchers have collected them into this single region ... for what weird and hidden purpose, I can but speculate. Perhaps our travels will uncover some common thread that links these islands, beyond their geographic connection. And what of the sea, itself? Turning to gaze across the inky waves, now that the sun has bidden me adieu behind the inland horizon, I cannot help but wonder what dark secrets they may hide.

Residents of the Darkonian town of Nevuchar Springs have been quite put out to see their sleepy village become a busy port, in the decade since the Mists first revealed the Nocturnal Sea. Before then, this corner of Darkon faced naught but a wall of vapor, and was a remote place, much to the contentment of its insular elven inhabitants. The chaos which beset this nation following the II

Aluk disaster delayed their community's growth for a time, but soon, refugees from the suffering west judged the Nocturnal Sea to be less ominous than home, by far. Some of those newcomers who took refuge here *did* fear this sea's appearance might constitute another manifestation of the Shrouded Years' horrors – it emerged from the Mists mere days after the City's demise – yet they found the waves navigable enough, despite perpetual darkness and foul weather.

The transition was less abrupt farther south, along the coast of Nova Vaasa. When the Nightmare Lands (assuming the elusive, legendary place ever truly existed) were blown off the Nova Vaasan coasts during the Great Upheaval of 740, the now-coastal city of Egertus found itself prematurely abutting a body of seawater. However, this nascent Nocturnal Sea tapered off into the Mists only a few miles out, leaving barely enough leeway for inshore trawling by Vaasi fishing-boats.

For the next decade, travel on this thin strip of coastline was restricted to the most courageous of captains. Most vessels that strayed too far offshore were never heard from again, but a few bold seamen did win great fortunes, driving their ships ever-deeper into the Mists to seek uncharted Mistways. A few of the islands now found in the Nocturnal Sea were actually reachable by these Vaasi explorers, although the transit-times were erratic and prolonged, and one's arrival point for such forays was very difficult to predict.

At sunset on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 750 BC, when the Mists receded further still, the ebon waters of the present Nocturnal Sea were exposed. Cautious exploration in years to follow, by both mainland navigators and natives of the "new" isles, soon mapped out this sea's land masses, and tentative trade routes have since been charted to the populated realms of Liffe, Vechor, and Graben Island. Whether still *more* isles lie beyond the Mists, yet to be revealed, is anyone's guess.

The Nocturnal Sea truly is a captivating and mysterious place. While our foremost objective is, of course, to seek clues to the traitor Erik van Rijn's locale and intentions, I find myself looking ahead with excitement to the many discoveries which its benighted, beckoning waves promise.

Yours in Shadow,

*Paul Dirac*

Brother of the Fraternity of Shadows



Brother Viktor Hazan

Brother Paul Dirac

# *Part I - Liffe survey*

*By Viktor Hazan, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 760*

It was early spring when I departed from Souragne and the beginning of summer when I finally reached the Nocturnal Sea. Despite the later season the weather was much cooler and the sea breezes seemed brisk, even frigid. I had not thought my time in the swampland would acclimatize me to warmth so quickly and yet the sudden shift sent my frame into mild shock. The vessel I was aboard did not help matters.

The boat, even in the barely capable hands of her captain, easily sailed through the Sound of Liffe –the waterway separating Liffe from Vechor– and into Hordum Bay. Wrapped around a small inlet was Armeikos, my destination.

I had prepared for my arrival and sent word to the small University in the city. I knew several students in the facility and had arranged for them to begin my research. I received their preliminary findings within hours, before I had even settled at the inn. I wasted no time tasking the students with varied assignments, all labouring under false pretences of course. With their assistance I completed my survey much faster than expected; a welcome surprise given the sheer number of lands I must investigate.

While initially trepidatious, I am now thankful for Brother Dirac's assistance on scouring these seas. Having to visit so many foreign lands would be taxing to say the least: just researching a single island, Souragne, proved to be almost maddening. Spending an entire year traversing the seas for barren rock to ignorable port would push the most stable of men into insanity.

BRB

## *Liffe in Short*

*Location:* Nocturnal Sea

*Ecology:* Full Ecology      *Environment:* Temperate

*Darklord:* Baron Evensong (demilord)

*Year of formation:* 736-738 BC (as small domains), 741 BC (as single island), 750 revealed to the Core

*Cultural level:* Medieval (7)

*Population:* 11,000 (75% human, 8% Halflings, 5% half-elves, 4% elves, 3% dwarves, 3% gnomes, 2% other)

*Main settlements:* Aferdale (pop. 850), Armeikos (3,000), Claveria (400), Moondale (1,600).

*Religion:* The Thousand Gods

*Language:* Sithican\*, Darkonese, Elven, Grabenite.

*Government:* Confederation of baronies

*Money:* Typically Darkonian or Nova Vassan currency

(...)

## *Part II- Vechor survey*

*By Paul Dirac, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 760*

As I write this, it's been a few days already since I have started my field investigations in Vechor. But even after giving the matter long thoughts, I can't think of a more fitting introduction than state candidly that this land is truly the strangest place I've ever had the pleasure to visit.

As many people of my generation, when I was young I had read the fictitious tale *My Travel in the Land of the Mad*, a book that had my imagination sparkled for Vechor. Later in life, I found out that many things written about Vechor were false and wildly exaggerated. It seems the inherent strangeness of the land has been multiplied by a thousand fold in people's imagination. I hope this report will set things straight. It is a strange land, but thousands people live here without much problems with it.

But really, this place is majestic! I'm having a ball! Half-naked women! Free booze! Dude, that's the place where our Fraternity should move. Forget Souragne!

(...)

This is my costume at the last ball at Easan's place.

What a groovy guy, this Easan, by the way! Party on!



# Interlude #1

*An interlude by Viktor Hazan, early August 760*

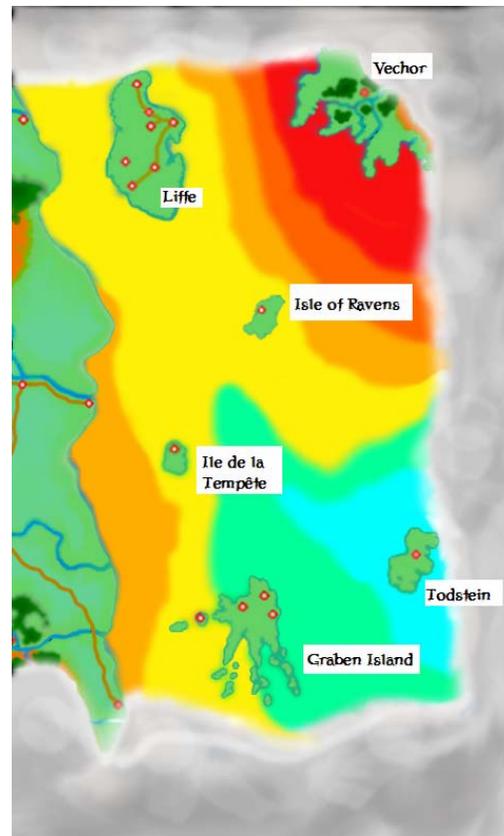
Leaving Liffe for Île de la Tempête, I didn't realize it was going to turn so much colder as the *Black Pelican* headed south. I should certainly have brought a few more layers of Mordentish wool for this trip. From what I have read about Île de la Tempête, there will be no tailors' shops in that barren place.

While important local weather concerns will be addressed in each section of this report, here's a little guidance for climate-conscious Brethren. Depending on where you intend to sail, you could need clothes for hot, mild, or very cold weather. Bring protection from the near-constant drizzle and winds, and against flies and mosquitoes in wetter areas.

It's curious that despite the modest distance and lack of intervening land masses between Vechor and Todstein, their temperatures are so different. Vechor and its environs are hot to the point of being tropical, while Todstein stays frozen almost year-round. The weather becomes temperate as one moves away from these two extremes.

Drawing on resources from the University of Liffe's cartography department, I compiled a map of average Nocturnal Sea temperatures, color-coded as follows:

Color zone	Summer	Winter
	(averages, °F)	
Red	85° +	60-65°
Orange (dark)	75-80°	50-55°
Orange (light)	70-75°	40-45°
Yellow	60-65°	30-35°
Green	50-60°	25-30°
Blue	<50°	20-30°



(...)

## *Part III – Île de la Tempête survey*

*By Viktor Hazan, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 760*

After a fairly quiet night of sailing, I was finishing breakfast when I was called to the bridge of the *Black Pelican* by Paulo, a young crew member. He was sent by Captain Howe to inform me that our ship was arriving soon at our next destination island. I took up my traveling rucksack and went on deck. The wind was strong and the surprisingly-cold damp air struck me hard. I tightened my coat. August was much colder here than in Souragne!

The teenage lad was waving over the rail, as if directing me to look. But I already saw the rocky island and its infamous lighthouse. It was early morning, so no light beam reached in the dark, but I espied something in the watch room of the small tower that flickered, with clocklike regularity.

So, this was the infamous Île de la Tempête. At first glance, it seemed remote and barren, perhaps too drab and quiet to accord with its notoriety. Boy, I was wrong!

Because after the lighthouse, the next thing I noted when we came nearer was the tall buildings along what seemed to be a large boulevard! Excessively long black carriages were drawn along this wide road. Then I noticed one of the tall buildings was imitating the shape of Castle Ravenloft! And another was build like a make-believe Paridon! Large fountains everywhere! There is even a large pyramid from Har' Akir!

We have to revise our notions about Ile de la Tempête, it is no longuer a deserted island... but a strange place of vice and excess! My report will be very short, since “what happens in Tempête stays in Tempête”.



(...)

## *Part IV - Isle of Ravens survey*

*By Brother Paul Dirac, Isle of Ravens, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 760*

For the record, I'm still wearing my fish-hat. I love it. All the crew on the boat thinks it's funny, especially when I make bubbles with my mouth.

I plan to meet the Lady of Ravens wearing this superb hat.

This is, of course, my second visit to the Isle of Ravens. In keeping with the recommendation of Father Scott, I will endeavor to provide a more analytical view of the island and introduce fewer subjective impressions into this report than I allowed myself previously.

I will therefore note only that the Isle came into sight on August 12th, 760. Captain Arberlsson was naturally reluctant to approach the island any more closely than was necessary, but he was willing on this occasion to provide me with two sailors to row me to the small white-sand beach at the southeast extreme of the island: the only point which even so small a craft as our longboat can safely approach.

Armed with the letters provided me by the Fathers of the Fraternity, I made bold to approach the home of that famous sorceress, the Lady of Ravens, for the second time.

✠

(...)

### *The Isle of Ravens in short*

*Current location:* The Nocturnal Sea, roughly 30 miles east-southeast of Egertus.

(...)

*Darklord:* Lady of Ravens. Her real name is Bertha Matilda Burgoss III.

*Ecology:* Half full, or half empty, depends.

(...)

## *Interlude #2*

*An interlude by Viktor Hazan, mid-August 760*

When Île de la Tempête was finally behind us, (thankfully, I could not drink another yard of pina colada), Captain Howe announced our current route: we were to sail to the Darkonese coast for about a day. Noting my surprise (for it's hardly the quickest route between Île de la Tempête and Graben-town), he explained that the sea between these two isles is very dangerous, "especially at night". The *Black Pelican* would skirt along the Vaasi coast, then head out again once Graben Island lay due east of us.

(...)

### *Dread Possibility: Rookhausen is alive and well*

Announcement : the FoS plans to soon host the famous Rookhausen chat board. Before the Scourge annihilated the traffic there, it was pretty lively, we thought. Well, that is what we heard. Good place to meet women when you had a good intro line.

**Rookhausen (large city):** Delusional; AL LG; CL 1; 4 gp limit; Assets 26 dollars when all pockets are picked; Population 1 or 2 each day; Mixed (nerds 25%, nostalgics 10%, found the page while lost on the Internet 65%)

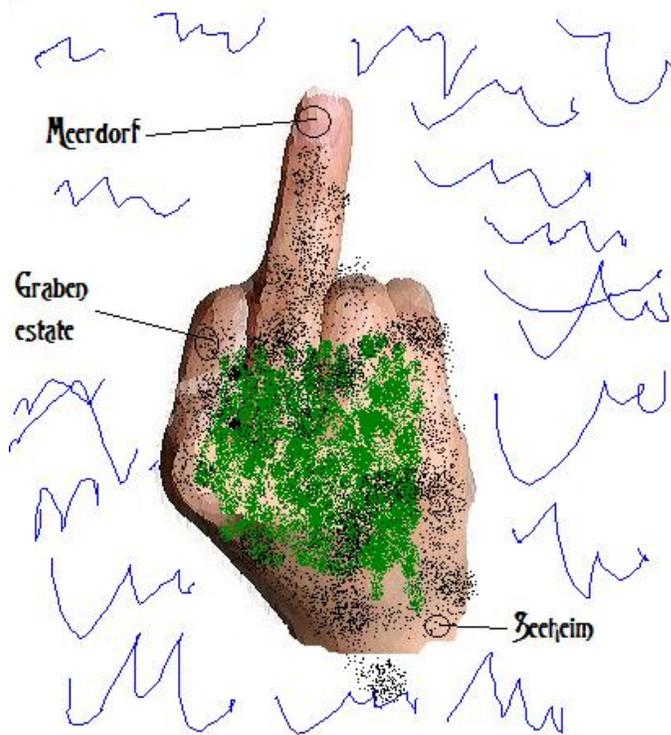
## Part V - Graben Island survey

By Viktor Hazan, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 760

Our approach to Graben Island's sole town worthy of the title was slow – cautious – and not solely on account of the persistent overcast's gloom. Erratic, chill winds pose a challenge for sailors near this odd-shaped isle (One of the Watchers' idiosyncrasies? A *clawed hand*, of all things? Really now!)

Was here a secret message in this shape? Nobody here knows the mute&deaf hand speech, so we couldn't say...

(...)



(a fine example of David's map you will be able to see in the final report)

# *Part VIJ - Todstein survey*

*By Viktor Hazan, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 760*

Way too cold, I'm not going there.

End of report on Todstein.

*DM complement information*

*Who's who in the Nocturnal Sea*

*BARON LYRON EVENSONG* CR 1/4

*(Demilord of Liffe)*



Baron Evensong, in his hilarious imitation of Count Strahd.

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# Easan the Mad

(Darklord of Vechor)



## EASAN THE MAD

MALE WOOD ELF

LEVEL BOSS WIZARD

Str 10, Dex 18, Con 9, Int 1A, Wis -, Cha  
Tea

AL capone

HP dell

THACO 37

init pentium

SR 25

DR 10

SPF 15

BBQ no thanks I just ate

Wizard Spells: 4/6/5/5/5/4/2/1

motes: 13

**Skills:** Alchemy +16, Flimsy  
Rationalization +20, Jump 6k2, Knowledge  
(Arcana) +16, Knowledge (The Planes) +16,  
Knowledge (Your Character Sheet),  
Knowledge (Alanik Ray Stories) +7,

Knowledge (Any Game System Other than  
D&D, but maybe Second Ed., and a Few 3rd  
party splatbooks but not the Ravenloft ones,  
probably) +14, Technobabble +16

**Feats:** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Useless  
Item, Craft Disturbing Mental Image, Craft  
Monty Python Reference, Craft Golem,  
Craft Sandwich, Craft Macaroni and Cheese

### Special Attacks:

**Arcane Mastery? (Ex):** Easan may ready  
his spells as a sorcerer and does not need a  
spellbook to prepare his spells. Anytime  
Easan casts a spell he did not prepare with a  
spellbook, roll on the Rod of Wonder chart.  
The effect rolled occurs in addition to the  
spell cast.

**I totally saw this cool thing in this other  
book (Su):** Once per day, Easan may grant  
himself an ability from any other game  
system. This ability functions as written,  
regardless of whether it is compatible with  
D&D. Easan retains the granted ability for  
24 hours.

**No, I'm pretty sure this is how that works  
(Ex):** Once per day, Easan may ignore the  
rules.

**Railroad (SP):** Once per day, Easan may  
force any number of people in his domain to  
make a DC 25 will save. If they fail, they are  
Dominated until they follow the damn plot.

**Stupid Plot Twist (Su):** Once per  
encounter, Easan may target a creature  
within 155 ft with a +17 Charisma vs. Will  
attack. On hit, the creature's alignment is  
forcibly changed to CE and is revealed to  
have been working for Easan all along. If  
this would make absolutely no sense, the  
ability becomes a +20 Charisma vs. Will  
attack.

**Special Qualities:**

**Are You Sure That's How That Works?**

**(Ex):** Whenever a character within 30 ft. of Easan attempts to take an action, they must make a DC 20 will save. If they fail, they instead do nothing and lose the rest of their turn while they look up the action in the rulebooks.

**Of course he was prepared for that, he knew you were going to do that (Su):**

Easan totally knew you were going to do that.

**You guys can't do that! That screws up my entire plot! (Ex):**

Easan cannot be killed.



# Capitaine Alain Monette

*(Île de la Tempête's Darklord)*

**MALE BISCUIT AFFLICTED WEREBAT EXP1/4 CR 1/3**



**Languages** Nobody knows, as nobody cares talking to Monette. Just shoot to kill.

**OR** 786

**AC** 6, touch 4, flat-footed 4

(+2 Dex, -6 natural)

(...)

**Blindsense (Ex)** In any form, Monette is blind and can't see a damn thing.

**Landlocked (Su)** Monette's curse is to get trapped in the washrooms every time he gets there. That explains his funky body odor.

**Modified Curse of Lycanthropy (Su)**

Monette is an afflicted werebat, but he transmit only bad breath.

**Tide-influenced lycanthrope (Su)** Monette is an afflicted werebat who does not control his transformation into hybrid form. At high tide, Monette assumes his hybrid form for two hour. (...)

*The Tides of Tempête*

The tides on Île de la Tempête rise and fall amazingly often, that is 12 times a day.

**Undying Soul (Su)** This bugger is so nasty he just can't be killed. If Monette is killed, he dies, get over it...

*Monette's hybrid form*

When in his hybrid form, Monette has the following altered statistics:

Large humanoid (biscuit, shapechanger)

**Init** +8

**OR:** 787

(...)

**Very bad breath weapon** (12d6 + all the dices on the players side of the table; reflex 30 or half)



# *Meredoth*

*(Darklord of Nebhigtode)*



*We hope this excerpt will make you wait  
for the real thing ...*