

“When the gale finally ended, we found ourselves approximately seven days normal sailing distance due south out of Specularum, in the Thanegioth Archipelago. We replenished our supplies, patched up the ship, and traded our remaining goods at native villages along the shores of several islands. Some villages were friendly, but others were hostile and the natives attacked on sight. I suspect the hostile villages were filled with cannibals.

“We skirted the coastlines of several islands, sailing south by west until we reached a small peninsula cut off from the main island by a massive stone wall. We were well received by the natives of Tanoroa, the small village that guards this wall. The villagers have no name for the large island other than the ‘Isle of Dread’. Their own small peninsula is known simply as ‘Home’.

“The villagers told us a tale about an ancient city in the central highland of the isle that was built by the same people who built the wall. The villagers call the builders ‘the gods’, but I noticed that the names of the gods and the personal names of the clan ancestors were often the same, so I suspect that their ancestors and the builders were one and the same. I believe that the natives once possessed a much more advanced culture and that the descendants of the builders have returned to a more primitive state.

“The inland city is rumored to be filled with treasure beyond imagining. In particular, I heard persistent tales concerning a great black pearl of ‘the gods’ that still remains in the inland city. The island waters abound with excellent pearl beds, so the rumor of the black pearl may well be true.

“The village contains a number of huge life-like statues of iron, bronze, and stone. Since no villager currently has the skill or the craft to make such statues, the tale of a lost city built by the ‘gods’ seems reasonable. I would have liked to explore inland to verify the rumors, but too many crewmen died in the storm or by cannibal spears. Only five of us are left. I am the only professional adventurer, the others are only sailors. We can sail the small ship well enough but on land, in hostile territory, we would be helpless. Once back in Specularum I should be able to recruit a new crew and a party of professional adventurers, then I will return to claim the great black pearl.

“One thing I managed to do before leaving: we sailed around the island and made the best map we could. We were afraid to land, since village fishermen had warned us that it was extremely dangerous to land anywhere on the main island and the coasts were rocky with no beaches. As a result, the map only shows the coastal areas we could chart from the ship, but it is better than nothing.”

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