

The Ballad of The Bonny Bards Booty

By Alex Hitchen

A poem has come into your possession that would seem leads the way to treasure, hidden on a distant island. On your journey you find you are not the only one on the hunt and were soon set upon by PIRATES that blew your ship out of the water, leaving you and your companions adrift in the ocean...

Clinging to the wreckage of their ship by the Gods' graces the group see land, once their eyes look upon the black ash beaches it doesn't take long for them to realise this is the island they were looking for! From the distance they see three beaches on which to swim to; a crescent shaped cove, a long stretch of beach along the coast and a small peninsula jutting out into the sea. It would appear that the Pirates have already arrived and made camp on each beach preparing for the expedition in search of the Bard's Treasure!

The groups' journey begins on the crescent/horseshoe shaped beach but they will have to contend with Pirates on each beach they visit. With the bodies of their crew in the water acting as shark bait dallying too long might make this a very short adventure indeed!

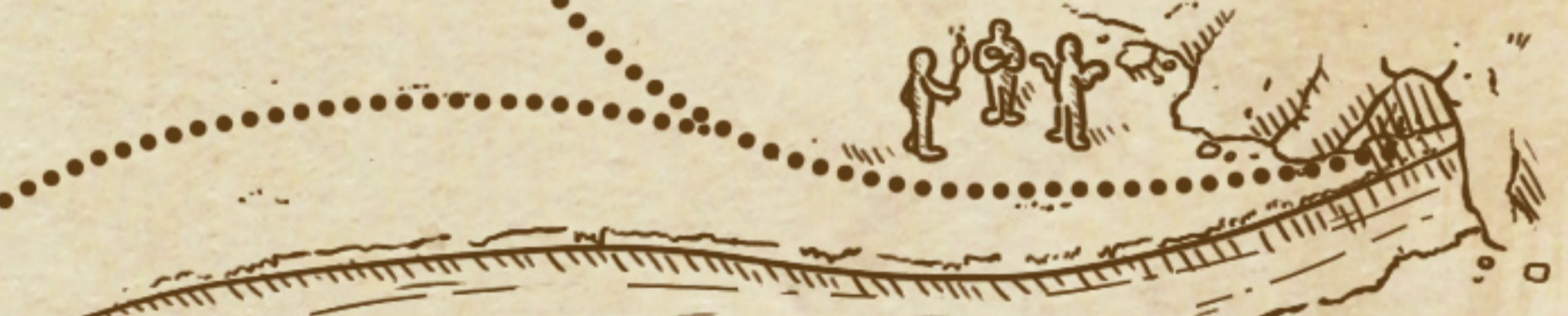
The players can locate a thin trail leading into the jungle that leads them to a fork that heads off into two different directions. At the fork is a magical column with two faces carved into it that can talk. One face always lies and wants adventurers to head to the ravine, the other only tells the truth and will guide them to the caves. The players can ask only one question to one of the faces to determine which is the right way to head. The question:



"Which path would the other face tell me to take?"

If they ask the lying face he will say that the other face would guide them down the path that leads to danger (which is a lie). If they ask the honest face he would also say that the other face would tell them to head down the path that will lead to danger (which is true). So the group simply take the other path!

In a world of magic players may also try other methods to get the right answer, but it



The players will reach a cave complex, either following the right path which leads into it, or following the river from the ravine. The river is large and roars loudly, thunderous some might say!

Following alongside the river via a path that leads through the dark caves the players will reach a place where it goes into the rock and they cannot follow it. At this location are dozens of tunnels forking off into different directions. Heading into the wrong one will lead to terrible cave dwelling creatures that hunt in the dark.

If the group look around they may find the old small stub of candle used to guide the bards way, that burned so low it burnt his fingers. With no light source they will see a tunnel is lit up by mould that glows in the dark that the cave dwellers keep out of; but they should move quickly once their lights are out!

The tunnel leads down to a Witch doctor savage hut, bones hanging from his clothing. For payment he will allow the group to continue unhindered, but he is not interested in gold, only "werewolves bane" (silver) will allow the group to pass unharmed and uncursed..



Cut out and give to your players!

*Mutiny in mind is where I started
With captains spoils I quickly departed
Though my character was revealed to be craven
It was in a rowboat heavily laden!
With a sinking ship I reached shores of soot
That put me to mind of a stallions boot*

*At the fork I came to two stone faces,
Glancing off toward different places
One lead to a place to hide my prize
The other only promises of my demise
To one a question I was allowed to utter
"If asked," said I, "what sayeth your brother?"*

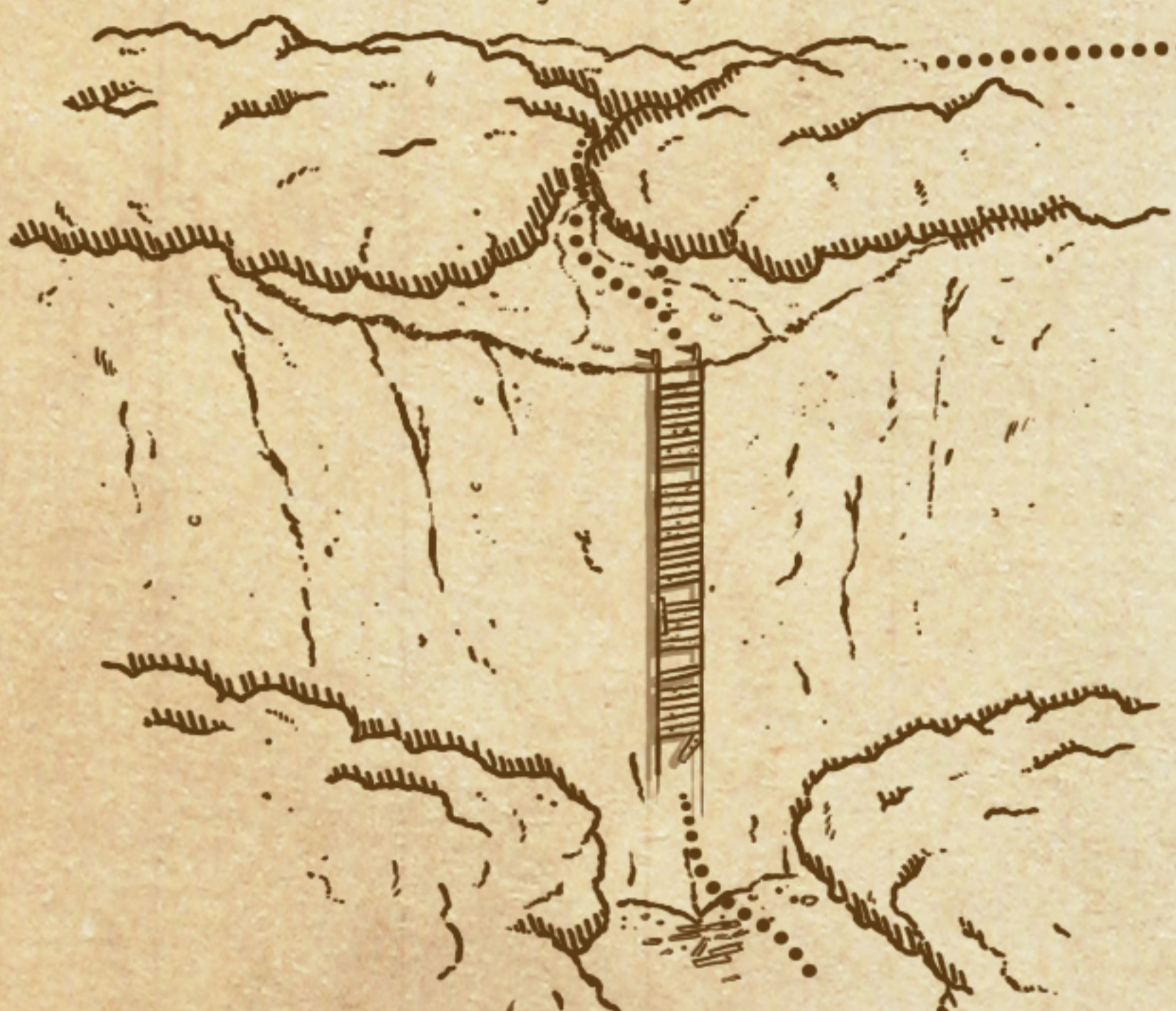
*On to darkest caves of hidden wonder
Lead to the very end by rolling thunder
At once struck down by blinding malady
With burnt fingers I could no longer see
And tho' my blindness was most frightening
Now I was guided by fork of lightning*

*The path lead me on to meet a physician
Or did he say he was a magician?
Witch one he said I cannot remember
Unnerved by hanging corpses dismembered
He wasn't impressed with trinkets yellow
Where wolfsbane did seem to please the fellow*

*Out onto a cliff didst I stumble
Treading carefully lest I should tumble
One wrong step here would spell the end
Then surely this sonnet would not be penned
Toward the giant rock I headed next
And hid my treasures beneath the X!*

*As I put message to bottle I now see my folly
Whilst this caper at first had seemed quite jolly
I hope that my words will soon be discovered
And within days my person recovered
So my tale is of a Bard who came out on top
Not of one stranded on an island to rot...*

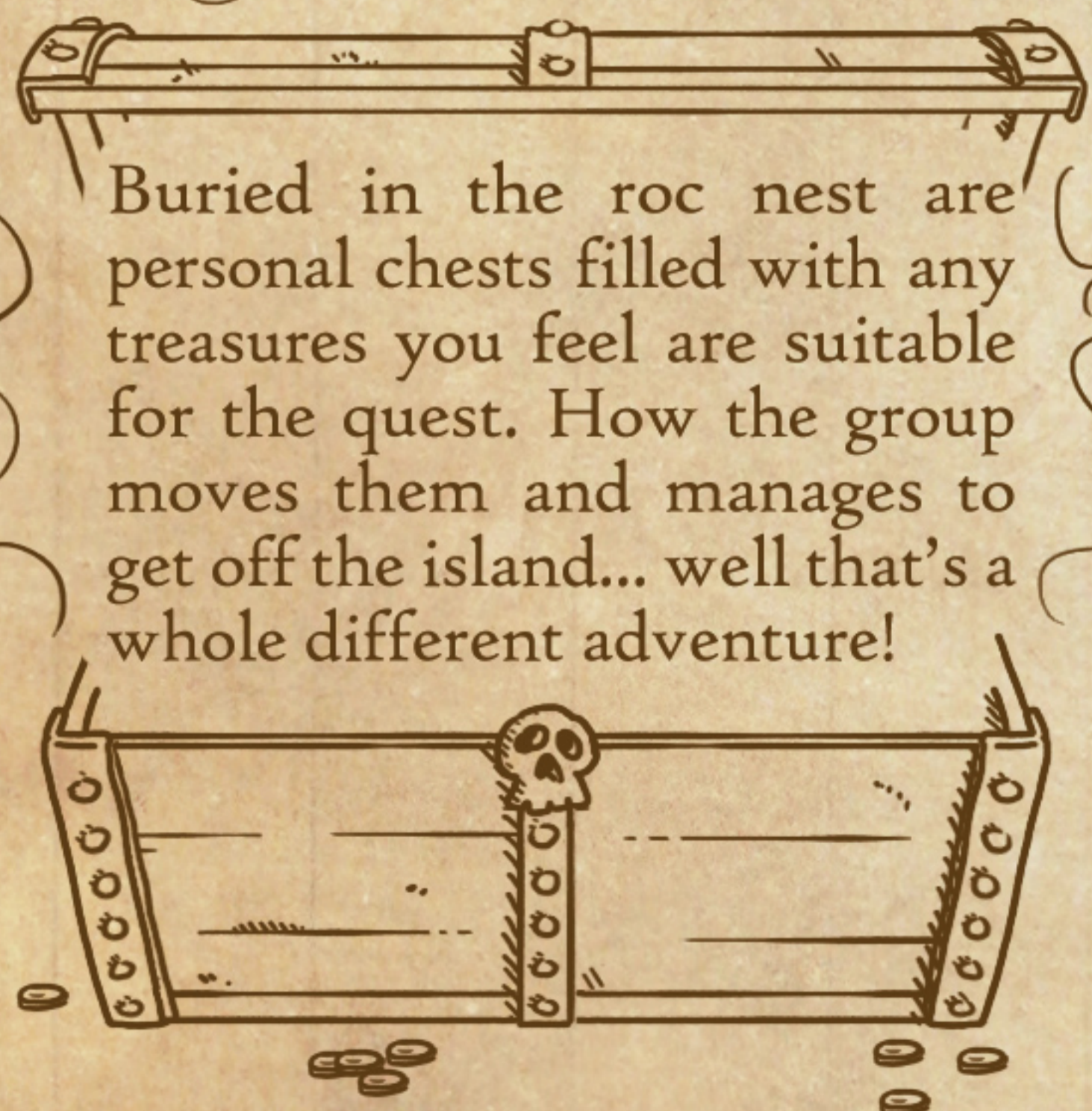
The group follows the path which ends at a ravine overlooking a jungle below, the bridge that once allowed safe crossing is broken and the only way is down...



The group may climb down the bridge easy enough, but at the bottom is 20ft of difficult to climb rock. Once the first person hits the floor, roll a d6 on the table to see what attacks them!

d6	RESULT
1	Pack of Jaguars
2	King Kong
3	Pygmy Cannibals
4	T-Rex
5	Black Smoke
6	Man Eating Plant

Beyond, the group may follow a river that leads to the cave complex reached by taking the other path.



Buried in the roc nest are personal chests filled with any treasures you feel are suitable for the quest. How the group moves them and manages to get off the island... well that's a whole different adventure!

15 feet

The cave leads out onto an open cliff overlooking the southern part of the island. High above is a giant birds' nest supported from a large branch growing out of the cliff face.

Up ahead circles a huge bird that the group may identify as a Roc. The Roc will attack anyone scaling the cliff, which the group must do to find the treasure hid "beneath the <eggs>".