The Sunken Bell

A One-Shot Adventure for Four 3rd-Level Characters

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Part 1

Adventure

Chapter 1: The Sunken Bell

Getting the Party Involved

Any of the following gets the characters to Hallowmere:

- A letter from the harbourmaster, Osla Rennick, offering 40 gp and free lodging at the Anchor and Awl for whoever solves the wrecks.
- A travelling scholar hires the party to investigate reports of a bell ringing beneath the waves at low tide.
- One of the characters has kin among the missing crews.

The fishing village of Hallowmere has lost three boats to the reef in as many months, and the harbourmaster is offering forty gold pieces to anyone who can find out why. The truth is older and stranger than a rock shoal: a drowned shrine beneath the harbour has begun to ring again.

Hooks

Hallowmere sits on a narrow spit of land, its houses built from driftwood and the bones of older buildings. The village shrine to Selûne collapsed into the sea two centuries ago during the Long Tide, and locals have always sworn the old bell tolls on the anniversary of the flood. This year, it has not stopped.

> The tide is out further than it should be, exposing black stones slick with weed. From somewhere beneath the harbour, faint and metallic, comes the sound of a bell – once, twice, then silence, as if listening for an answer.

The Village of Hallowmere

1. Anchor and Awl Inn

The only inn in Hallowmere, run by a retired diver named Cobb Marrow. Cobb lost his brother to the reef eleven years ago and will talk at length about the old shrine if the characters buy him a drink.

1a. The Taproom

Low-ceilinged and smoky. A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the fishermen drinking here are frightened, not merely superstitious.

1b. Cobb's Study

A cluttered room of tide charts and diving gear. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check turns up Cobb's late brother's diary, which describes a "door of green glass" beneath the shrine.

2. The Harbourmaster's Office

Osla Rennick keeps meticulous shipping logs. She confirms three boats lost near the Tolling Rock and will lend the party her skiff.

Into the Depths

At low tide, a narrow stair of black basalt is exposed leading down from the Tolling Rock into a flooded passage. Characters need a way to breathe underwater or hold their breath for the two-minute swim to the shrine proper.

Running the Swim

If nobody in the party has *water breathing* or similar magic, let a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check get a character through the passage on one held breath. Failure means backing out and losing a turn, not drowning – this is a swim, not a trap.

Tide-Marked

Prerequisite: survives the swim to the shrine

You have breathed the black water of the Tolling Rock and something of it remains in you.

- You have advantage on saving throws against being frightened while within 30 feet of open water.
- You can hold your breath for twice the normal duration.

Chapter 2: The Drowned Shrine

Shrine Rooms

Room	Contents
Antechamber	Coral-crusted statue of Selûne, half-collapsed
The Bell Chamber	The bell itself, and what rings it
Reliquary	Sealed behind the door of green glass

The Bell Chamber

> The chamber is lit by nothing at all, and yet you can see: a pale green glow rises from a bronze bell as tall as a man, hung crooked from a beam gone soft with rot. Coiled around the bell's frame, mistaking your torches for another kind of light, something uncoils.

The bell is being rung by a DROWNED ACOLYTE bound to guard duty two hundred years past its death, too faithful and too far gone to recognise that its shrine has already fallen.

Silencing the Bell

The acolyte stops fighting and collapses into brine and bone if the bell is struck three times in the old rite: once for the drowned, once for the living, once for the sea that took both. Cobb's brother's diary describes the rite in full.

The Reliquary

Beyond the door of green glass – true glass, not illusion, grown somehow from the pressure of two hundred years underwater – lies Selûne's last offering.

Tolling Rock Amulet

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This tarnished silver amulet is shaped like a ship's bell. While wearing it, you have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened by undead, and you can cast *light* at will.

Selûne's Low Tide

2nd-level abjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Self (30-foot radius)
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of salt)
Duration: 8 hours

Water within range recedes to knee height for the duration, as if the tide had gone out, though the sea beyond the radius is unaffected. Creatures that rely on deep water to move or hide are exposed.

Drowned Acolyte

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (–1)	13 (+1)	6 (–2)

Damage Resistances cold
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages understands Aquan and Common but can't speak
Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Amphibious. The acolyte can breathe air and water.

Bell-Bound. While within 30 feet of the shrine's bell, the acolyte has advantage on all saving throws.

Actions

Corroded Censer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken.

Drowning Grasp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13) if the acolyte isn't already grappling a creature.

Part 2

Appendix

Chapter 3: Handouts

Cobb's Diary — Final Entry

"The bell rang twice tonight and I did not sleep. Marrow always said our family owed the sea a debt. If I don't come back, tell Osla it isn't the reef taking the boats. It's the shrine, calling in what's owed."

Random Debris (d6)

d6	Item
1	A waterlogged holy symbol of Selûne
2	A child's wooden boat, name carved on the hull
3	A brass diving bell, dented
4	A coil of rope, half-eaten by something
5	A sailor's log, pages fused shut with salt
6	A silver coin, minted before the Long Tide