

Aunty MacKassa's Coral Cave

Aunty MacKassa is a deep-sea hag, a particularly powerful form of more or less immortal, humanoid, faerie creature. Her Coral Cave home mapped here lies in and below the northern Hag Corals, an extensive range of cold-water coral reefs. It is about 340 miles (550 kilometres) from the nearest shores of Errynor in northwestern Alarius, on the sea-bed of the Equine or Frigid Ocean, below roughly 1,230 feet (375 metres) of seawater. The area outside the Cave is usually in perpetual deep-ocean darkness. Within the Cave though, things can be - different.

The heavy coral reef growth makes spotting, let alone accessing, the Cave entrance ("Front Door" on the map) difficult from outside, particularly for first-time visitors. However, since Aunty is always aware of anyone getting this close to her home, the actual difficulty in reaching the Door varies, as she manipulates the coral growths - which have an unusual claw-like growth pattern anyway - and may use illusions, or her servants, to further conceal or reveal just where it is.

Cold-water corals, sometimes, if misleadingly, known as deep-water corals, often occur in deep, dark, cool, high latitude seas. They form reefs on the seabed, averaging 50 ft high by 150 ft wide (15 by 50 m), though in places they can grow to be tens of miles/kilometres long and a couple of miles/kilometres wide. Sometimes, the corals can form separate mounds scattered over areas around 40 square miles (100 square km) in extent, each mound about 330 ft (100 m) in diameter and 15 ft (5 m) tall, with a "tail" of sand extending for 1,000 ft or more (300+ m) down-current, looking somewhat like a sand volcano. About 60% of all such reefs and mound-clusters occur beside or within seafloor pockmark craters caused by natural gas-escapes. They are found in water depths from around 660 to 9,800 ft or so (200 to 3,000 m). Individual giant corals within these structures can be equally impressive too, and the reefs may be home to many creatures.

Beings in the water outside the Cave up to half a mile (0.8 km) from the entrance, may have grown accustomed to a pale, sickly, yellow-blue "halo" around themselves whenever they move, surrounding the moving body parts especially, thanks to the profusion of bioluminous plankton in the water here. This halo cannot be cleared or prevented by any method. It vanishes as soon as the Cave is entered, however.

Patches of unpleasant, sickly yellow-green algal slime coat many surfaces outside the Cave, including the sea-bed and coral reefs in places, with more floating in the water. Coming into contact with the slime causes it to attach itself to the affected area. While harmless, it is slick and very difficult to fully remove until more than a mile (1.6 km) from Aunty's Cave. As ordinarily, this slime would need sunlight to exist, it should not even be here, of course. More such slime is present in the Cave, on the floors, walls and ceilings, though there is none in the water, at least. If touched in the Cave (only), it will attach to the touching object as normal, leaving a bare patch on the Cave surface. These bare spots disconcertingly quickly fill-in with fresh slime in a matter of moments.

The Caves themselves are partly natural, in gaps in the old, long-dead, compacted coral skeletons, partly crudely cut into both coral and the black basaltic bedrock. Floors and ceilings, unless noted, are typically rough and uneven, though the floors on which items stand tend to be flatter than those elsewhere. All the upper level Caves (right-hand side of the map) descend towards the north and west away from the Front Door entrance, albeit the transition from where the coral caves give way to the basalt bedrock is nowhere clearly apparent. The floor may be bedrock while parts of the ceiling are still coral even in the deeper areas of this level, for instance. The lower level (boxed area on the left side of

the map) is entirely cut into the bedrock, however. The more open areas of both levels have a floor to ceiling separation of no more than five feet (1.5 m), and in the narrower places mapped, have a more nearly circular form, with a height equivalent to the illustrated passage width.

In some areas, there are loose rocks on the floor, sometimes coated in slime, sometimes not, along with splash marks of often indeterminate type. Some of these splatters are distinctly paler in colour on the map. Close inspection of these shows them to be congealed candlewax splashes.

Most places are normally pitch-dark, except for both the Upper and Lower Levels of Home Cave.

More details follow, describing the labelled areas. First, there are some notes on Aunty MacKassa and her servants.

Aunty MacKassa

Typical of most hags, Aunty MacKassa delights in bringing low individuals and entire realms; collecting and remembering secrets, often ones better forgotten, along with news and gossip, especially about other hags and powerful, influential creatures; manipulating and corrupting others using treacherous bargains; and making use of things macabre and unsettling with which to decorate herself and her home, perceiving beauty as ugliness, and *vice-versa*. She gives no mind to what others think or want, and always has a hidden agenda, even when she strikes an apparently favourable bargain with someone. While she may seem small, old and frail by many humanoid standards - something she will play-up to grandly if seriously threatened, until she can counter the threat, or escape - she has many centuries of stored knowledge and magical power at her disposal, including unique magical objects and powers. While she would not use such one-off things lightly, she **would** always use them in great need. She is highly unpredictable, mysterious and dangerous. Those supposedly knowledgeable in such matters believe hags rank themselves as “ordinary” hags, “aunties” and “grandmothers” in order of increasing power, and that rarely they may band together in trios as a “coven”. Such an understanding derives chiefly from the land and coastal hags. The more powerful deep-sea hags, given the range of environments they can inhabit, for instance, stand outside any such simple categorisation (even assuming it to be approximately correct for other hags elsewhere in any case). Aunty MacKassa has abilities loosely equivalent to somewhere between the “grandmother” and “coven” hag levels just on her own, using this scale.

Aunty MacKassa is short, around 4 ft tall (1.2 m), emaciated but wiry, with very pale grey skin, lank hair like seaweed, a large, hooked nose, projecting lower fang-canines, and large, glassy, fish-like, staring eyes. She sometimes wears a battered pair of gold-framed, gold-tinted glasses, and has a large bone hairpin commonly stuck somewhere in her locks, which she also uses as a scratcher. An image of her is available separately in the Community Atlas, linked from her portrait on this map's top left. She can breathe freely in water or air, can see well in daylight to total darkness, and is naturally resistant to all kinds of magic. She can employ a range of innate illusory magics on herself and her surroundings, including mimicking noises and other sounds, and making herself invisible. She chuckles and cackles unpleasantly at her own, sometimes very dark, humour. She loves clever riddles, and has a particular penchant for acquiring holy relics, to prevent them being used for beneficent purposes. Her main project currently is slowly working out her revenge on the Kachaya (“Sea Devils”) of the Ellenge Province that lies west and north of her home. Centuries ago, when she was younger and

less powerful, she lived in the Peak Corals, another range of cold-water coral reefs about 90 miles (145 km) west of her present Cave. She was driven-out from there by Kachayan forces led by a great Kachayan leader, Zakra (who is detailed briefly in the notes to the ruined Monument in the separate Ellenge Town map). Zakra had the caves and corals of her former home destroyed utterly, so today the area where they were seems merely a normal, flattish region of sea-bed within the Peak Corals. She survived and escaped, and has been responsible for much of the ills that have befallen the Ellenge Kachaya in more recent generations, since she took-up residence here. Though many of her activities concentrate on continuing her vengeance, she was also at the root of the abandonment of the former, now ruined, Merfolk city of Samas, largely because it was too great a distraction for her, lying only some 15 miles or so (25 km) to the east.

Aunty can employ the same mechanisms she uses in the one-mile area outside her home within it, should she wish (see the separate “Aunty MacKassa’s Lair Environs” map for more information), such as having sea-life, including seaweed, carven or constructed figurines and mannikins, appear or disappear in parts of the Cave, and through these, she may see or sense whatever is near them. Such carven and constructed items may appear in temporary wall niches of suitably small size where no other surface is available, which hollows vanish when the objects do. She can also cause illusory duplicates of herself to appear elsewhere than she is within the Cave similarly, and can even interact with objects and others via such a double, although the illusion vanishes if anyone else makes physical contact with it. She can pass through the walls, ceilings or floors of the Cave as if the solid surfaces were not there whenever she chooses. She can also fill an area of the Cave up to 40 ft by 40 ft by 40 ft (12 m by 12 m by 12 m) with obscuring black ink at whim, which takes a minute or more to dissipate. She can see through the ink unimpaired. She can instantly create a simulacrum of any single humanoid currently in her Cave lair from dead scraps and slime. Although it soon falls apart, it obeys Aunty as long as it lasts. She can assemble from slime a ghostly figure resembling a dead family member or friend of anyone in her lair. If anyone other than Aunty MacKassa tries to interact with it, it dissolves away. She can cause all or any part of her Cave lair to be filled with seawater, fresh-water or air at whim, along with any appropriate pressure changes. This change is instantaneous, and scarcely noticeable, because it causes no harm to anyone or anything in the lair. It simply happens. When changing from water to air, surfaces may become unpleasantly clammy and moist - such as hair, clothes or skin - albeit not soaking wet, as might be expected. The slime retains its usual semi-liquid state in air, where it gains a particularly pungent dead-sea-creature smell. Aunty can cause passageways to temporarily open or close, or use her illusory powers to make it seem thus, should she choose.

Apart from her Cave lair, Aunty has two alternative mobile lairs she can switch to at whim as well, the *Naughty Lass*, a wrecked sailing ship which is still able to sail in or on the water through her magics when required, and *Scuttle*, a ramshackle shipwreck hut that can swim in or under water too, and move about on land, using its gigantic crab legs. These vehicles are detailed in separate Community Atlas maps, linked to the ghost ship and giant crab images on this map. Although Aunty can swap to either vehicle instantly whenever she chooses, and wherever either currently is (always within 50 miles, 80 km, of her home here, however), she likes to do so with any others only when in her Home Cave, because the change there is far more affective on others, as passing into rooms of similar shape and size, yet subtly - and not so subtly - different, with their wooden constructions and windows to the outside. This power to change her lair setting derives from Aunty’s innate faerie nature and magic, because all three versions of her home are really in a

faerie sense the same place, just at variant “power levels”, so essentially all Aunty does is “retune” her surroundings a little to reach her different lair version of choice. The fact the three places may be physically separated by many tens of miles/kilometres is irrelevant; the faerie connection circumvents that “reality”. Those with particular abilities to see hidden things or through illusions, especially those with faerie blood or ancestry, may be aware of this link when in the Home Cave, or occasionally elsewhere in Aunty’s lair. Such folk may also be able to tell momentarily which things in the caves are objectively real, and which are altered in some way by illusions. Any insights like this are unpredictable and often disconcerting, which can make it harder to be sure which version of a thing is genuinely “real”; Aunty MacKassa sets all the rules here.

Despite her Cave lair being cluttered with a vast array of items mundane, magical, odd, possibly magical, supernatural, curious or weird (only a sample of which are featured on the map), Aunty knows the location, nature and significance of every scrap. No one with sense would risk moving or taking anything away, as very little is likely to be quite what it seems, or indeed even safe to touch.

Aunty is thus not always present here physically, though the connected nature of her Cave, ship and hut lairs mean she is also never entirely absent either. One of the complexities of dealing with a faerie creature, whose disregard for many humanoid “norms”, such as linear time, time and distance dilation, and the reality of appearances, is legendary. Even when she is physically here, she sometimes spends decades dozing and plotting, during which she may be telepathically exploring and learning things much further afield. Few familiar with the workings of Faerie would be surprised to meet her one day walking in the Twilight Market of the Fae City of Embra (on Errynor Map 40), some 1,820 miles (2,930 km) to the east, a place around 700 miles (1,125 km) from the nearest sea, apparently.

[Aunty’s nature and abilities have been loosely quantified here using elements of the Green, Sea and Annis Hags as detailed in the 5e D&D “Monster Manual” and “Volo’s Guide to Monsters”, along with some of the additional Hag features from “Volo’s”. These sources could be used to define her statistics more numerically, if required.]

Aunty’s Cave Servants

Aunty MacKassa has seven Undersea Gargoyles and four Shadow Killer Rays in her Cave lair, when she is not active elsewhere (in the region outside her Cave, for example; see the separate “Aunty MacKassa’s Lair Environs” map and description for this). Their normal resting/guard spots are illustrated on this Coral Cave map. Each Gargoyle has a low stone plinth on which it normally sits, and the plinth remains even if the creature itself is absent elsewhere. Similarly, the Rays settle so regularly in one place, there is a Ray-shaped area cleared of slime where each ordinarily rests, visible still when they are not in their spot.

Underwater Gargoyles are similar to those encountered on land, except that instead of wings, they have propulsive fins, and a fish-like tail instead of legs, which allow them to swim at what would ordinarily be their flying speed in air. They have no need to breathe, eat or sleep, so their environment is a matter of indifference. They are used to remaining immobile and stone-like for years at a time. The nature of their stony skins lets them blend with the reefs outside and the rocks within the Cave here. (For RPG statistics, these can be treated as normal 5e D&D gargoyles, but with a swimming speed equal to, and instead of, their flying one. Once called kopoacincths in earlier versions of D&D.)

Shadow Killer Rays are creatures of shadow, with fluid forms that resemble large marine rays, with vertically-flattened shapes, ragged-edge fin-“wings”, and a snaking tail. Despite this, they have very sharp teeth, and can inflict a painfully damaging bite, as well as slamming against creatures with their “wings” or tail, which can inflict an oddly similar, bite-like, wound. They can blend in with shadows, and hide in darkness, as if they are invisible until they move or attack. They have very keen senses, and can detect invisible and incorporeal creatures. They are purely marine, and shun bright light, especially daylight. Aunty uses them much like savage watch-dogs. The pack’s leader, which usually occupies the spot at the west end of Footsteps Hall by Home Cave, is larger and stronger than the rest, and can emit a horrifying, penetrating shriek that stuns and terrifies hearing opponents within a couple of hundred feet (60 m or so). (Originally heavily influenced by my reworking of the creature in the 1953 short story “Slime” by Joseph Payne Brennan, these have been further adapted here, drawing on aspects of the 5e D&D Shadow Mastiff in “Volo’s Guide to Monsters”.)

Labelled Places

Notes on the labelled parts of the mapped caves follow. Aunty’s illusory powers mean all is not what it seems, of course.

Upper Level

- * **Bags:** The most southerly small cave extension with obvious objects in, a pile of filled and tied bags of cloth and leather have been left here with a variety of contents, mostly of small or easily-folded items, albeit not exclusively (one magically contains a 15 ft long (4.5 m) dragon-slaying lance, for instance).
- * **Bottles:** The more northerly small cave has a minor rockfall in its northern end, and there are what seem to be shards of glass and crystal from broken bottles showing under this. The array of intact bottles standing across the floor elsewhere contain a collection of different liquids, preserved specimens and small creatures. Some of the contents are illusory, some mobile, a few are apparently empty, and some have one or more eyeballs in them, with which to spot - or more accurately scare - intruders. None are labelled. Aunty has vast numbers of potions at her disposal. There is no guarantee any of them are here.
- * **Chests:** Scattered across three caves at the eastern end of the “East Wing” of this level, are a number of chests and boxes, some closed, some open. The open ones are seemingly empty, while the closed ones may be locked or just fastened shut, and their contents can be from nothing at all upwards. Whether the empty chests are genuinely so, or illusory, perhaps with invisible contents, can be safely left to GM’s discretion. In the larger of the three caves, several candlewax splatters are on the floor directly in front of the Undersea Gargoyle’s plinth. Also on the floor of this chamber south of the plinth and candlewax is a line of flat-soled shoeprints leading from the western wall as far as the open, empty (?) chest by the east wall. The prints are in the slime on the floor, yet any experimentation will show the slime should have long ago covered them over. If the slime and footprints are cleared away, when the slime regroups, the footprints will return exactly as they were. There is no return set from the chest, nor is the west wall anything except solid. It has some slime on it, but no sign of an entryway. The prints are apparently identical to those in the slime on the floor of Footsteps Hall, and facing in the same direction. The intervening passageway, south of

the “Bottles” cave and the smallest of the three “Chests” caves has no floor slime, or footprints, though one might reasonably expect there should be. Perhaps. Simply one of Aunty’s ideas of decoration in reality, if possibly also one laced with an ulterior, far from obvious, purpose.

- * **Footsteps Hall:** A broad passageway trending southwest-northeast linking both passages from the Front Door with the rest of this level. It contains two Undersea Gargoyles on plinths on its north side, and one of the Shadow Killer Rays lies on the floor in its larger northern alcove. A second Killer Ray, the pack’s leader, favours the open junction cave at the southwest end of the Hall to rest in. A line of footprints in the floor slime lead east along its eastern half, passing into the solid wall at the Hall’s eastern end. They are identical in form and behaviour to those in the larger “Chests” cave, as detailed above. Unaccompanied visitors coming here for the first time will hear the sound of booted footsteps on stone, pacing slowly east along the Hall, an auditory illusion designed to put such visitors more ill at ease.
- * **Front Door:** The primary entrance to Aunty’s home, particularly for visitors. Access is tricky due to the density of claw-like coral growths around the entryway from the exterior sea-floor, and liable to result in minor injury to any unprotected skin, without great care. One of the Shadow Killer Rays lies on the floor of the entrance cave. It is impossible to get past without alerting it. Two passages lead out from here into the rest of the level. The initially wider passage north leads to the east end of Footsteps Hall and the “East Wing”, while the narrower western tunnel winds around to the larger open cave at the southwest end of Footsteps Hall.
- * **Home Cave (Upper Level):** This, or the similar Home Cave on the Lower Level is where Aunty MacKassa is most likely to be found when in her lair. Both floor and ceiling are unusually flat and levelled, unlike the other caves here. A series of candlewax splatters are on the floor at the southern entrance, where the large cave at the end of Footsteps Hall is. An Undersea Gargoyle and the strongest of the pack of Shadow Killer Rays are within easy reach of this entrance at need. A narrow passageway winds further west to the southwestern part of the Level from this junction cave too. In the Home Cave, there is a large, rectangular floor opening, with a ladder at its southern end, which leads down to the floor of the Lower Level’s Home Cave. The ladder may seem incongruous to those who assume the Cave is only ever underwater. Home Cave is lit by several brightly-burning candles, and an open fire-pit on the northwestern side, over which a bubbling pot with a ladle in it hangs. The light is tricky, casting more shadows than true light, as the whole Cave is very cluttered with a great many tables, boxes, chests, vessels, barrels, chairs and sacks on the floor, hanging nets, bags, skeins of rope and fabric, often old, worn and stained in the latter case, suspended from hooks in the ceiling. Small items cover every available flat surface, while still more are stuffed into drawers, cupboards, chests, boxes and bags. Aunty favours greeting guests while sitting in one or other chair by the fire-pit, occasionally stirring the pot over the fire. It is a bone stew, the bones those of the Kachayan leader Zakra, taken from his ruined monumental tomb at Ellenge Town. She will typically offer some to new visitors; it would be very foolish to accept any. Much of this setting is wholly incongruous to its deep underwater location, yet things like the flames burn and behave much as they would if in air, while the fabric, paper, metal and other materials that seawater would ordinarily damage, corrode or destroy, are all perfectly fine and intact. Even so, mobile objects still sometimes move and sway as if they were indeed in deep water, not air. The impression given overall should be most unsettling. While the objects seen here might include anything shown on the map, and far beyond what is illustrated, some 5e

D&D items suggested as present somewhere in Aunty's lair - if not necessarily in this Cave - are noted at the end of this document.

- * **Junk:** Even Aunty calls this westernmost cave her "Junk Room", although much of its contents seem little different to what is in her Home Cave: boxes, many small items, tables, chairs, vessels, even a wooden bathtub. There is also a lot of broken wood, some of it heavily slime-obscured, rags, rope and sacking which looks enough like discarded materials to class it as "junk" to a casual inspection. Naturally, things are never so simple here, as the Undersea Gargoyle's presence might hint. The perceptive may also realise the sole entrance tunnel is much too small for some of the larger items here to have passed along it - including the large barrel, the hexagonal table and the largest chest, for example. Quite why some items are here and not elsewhere seems equally inexplicable, albeit only to those who are not Aunty MacKassa! As in the Home Cave, the theoretically hostile undersea environment does no harm to objects here that might ordinarily not survive, even if they still behave sometimes as if they definitely are underwater - moving slower when shifted, for instance.
- * **Statuettes:** Aunty seems to have a fondness for carved statuettes of numerous types and styles, carved in stone, wood and bone predominantly. At least one or two can be found in most places throughout her home where other things are stored, including those that appear temporarily and then vanish in equally impermanent wall niches, as noted earlier. There are a lot more here, all standing on the floor of this last cave in the "West Wing" of her lair, repeated multiples in different media of only five separate designs. A close check with a sufficiently practiced eye could show they were likely all carved by different hands at different times, while all seemingly drawing from one original item. Such an inspection might be rather unwise, however. The organisation seems oddly similar to the pattern in the Bottles cave further north, though perhaps only superficially.

Lower Level

- * **Home Cave (Lower Level):** A ladder leads down through a large, smartly-cut, rectangular hole in the ceiling from the Upper Level's Home Cave. The rock floor seems to be only a couple of inches thick (*circa* 5 cm) between the two Levels, with the floor and ceiling of the Lower Cave equally flat and levelled to those in the Upper Home Cave. The separation of floor and ceiling remains the typical five feet (1.5 m), as throughout much of this Lower Level and the rest of Aunty's Coral Cave more generally, excepting where it lowers to match the width of any narrower mapped tunnels. In addition, the contents of this room appear identical to those in the Upper Cave, but their positioning, with the exception of the fire-pit, its bubbling pot of bone stew and ladle - are at least slightly different. When Aunty is here (and she can seem to be in both rooms simultaneously, thanks to her illusory powers), her preferred spot is in the chair by the fire-pit. The area is lit by the pit and candles, giving the general appearance and identical conditions to those already outlined for the Upper Level's Home Cave. There is though an oddly clear area of floor all along the south part of this Cave, south of the ceiling opening. Two broad passages lead further south, that to the southwest blocked by an Undersea Gargoyle on its plinth, while that to the south has the resting-place for one of the Shadow Killer Rays.
- * **Treasure Caves:** The remaining three occupied caves on this Lower Level are filled with what many would probably take for "traditional" treasures, precious-metal coins, precious stones, magical objects and the like. This being Aunty MacKassa's home,

however, how much of that impression is correct - if any at all - is down to GM's choice. As with other caves here where there are objects which might be expected to be damaged or destroyed by prolonged exposure to seawater, none of the items here, beyond being battered and sometimes slime-coated in places, have taken any obvious harm from their current locations. Part of the southwestern passage is very narrow, and there are distinct splashes of candlewax on the floor by its inner opening. Three groups of items are here. To the east are piles of books surrounding a small rockfall. To the west are bags of loose gems, an open chest filled with more, and a scatter of further stones across the floor. A large lump of slime-coated fallen rock south of this collection separates it from that to its south, where coins, some in bags, some spilt, mingle with scroll tubes, a staff, a broadsword and other, possibly magical, items, along with a roll of iridescent blue fabric on top of part of these objects. At first glance, this fabric seems strikingly beautiful, but a closer view reveals it to be disconcerting, as the eye cannot quite properly visualise its surface - as if it is passing in and out of focus constantly in patches, with shifting colours and patterns, including ghostly, pained to terrified faces coming and going across it. The entrance to the more northerly of the two eastern caves is blocked by another Undersea Gargoyle on its plinth. Beyond this guardian are large piles of bags containing coins and gemstones, and an open chest filled with more gemstones spilling out onto the floor. Further loose piles of gems are on the floor alongside all this, as if someone had once begun partly sorting them, although using no identifiable criteria if so. The north end of this cave has yet more gemstone piles partly over, partly below a substantial rockfall, all of which is coated with slime. The southeasternmost cave hosts the seemingly richest collection of coins and gems anywhere in Aunty's home. Much is in bags or chests, albeit hard to tell, as the entire cave is stuffed full, with spilt coins and gems strewn about by the entrance. It would take days simply to extract all the contents from this *circa* 900-cubic-foot cave (25 cubic metres).

Nature of the Treasure

How much of Aunty's treasure is straightforwardly as valuable as it seems is open to interpretation by GMs as best-suits the occasion. Much is physically real, if tainted in a rich variety of ways. Small statuettes and figurines are scattered throughout all the "monetary" treasure containers, some plain, many elaborate to precious, for instance. Equally, some of the coins are foil-wrapped discs of food, such as preserved sliced meats and chocolate. These might be ordinary and tasty, or bland, or have a laxative effect, or be poisonous. In a similar fashion, gems might be gems, or paste and glass replicas, boiled sweets, gel-skinned pellets of blood (or other bodily fluids), or preserved glacé soft-tissue body fragments - bottled eyes occur frequently among Aunty's displayed items, for example. Even the bags might be preserved humanoid skin, or spun from materials such as intestines, while "wooden" containers might be of sliced humanoid long bone planks instead of wooden ones. Everything here should make non-hag viewers uncomfortable to queasy to scared, after all.

Of course, there are many genuine, if unsafe or cursed, items among Aunty's treasures too. In D&D terms, the random treasure and trinket tables, coupled with the special hag item tables and notes in "Volo's Guide...", or the many unofficial supplementary products available for free or paid-for download from places such as the OneBookShelf sites (e.g. DriveThru RPG), can be usefully employed to generate more specific pieces when required. Some sample items rolled-up this way are given next as examples, sometimes with suitable amendments.

Aunty MacKassa habitually carries a few smaller magic items about her person, including the following. In a pocket, she has three black pearls which are actually standard 5e D&D Beads of Force (“DM’s Guide”, 2014, pp. 154-155). In her belt-pouch, she carries three Figurines of Wondrous Power, a set of carved walrus-ivory sea-goats, essentially the set of Ivory Goats from pp. 169-170 of the *DMG* given a marine twist, with the form of the Capricorn of Classical myth. They can be used in identical ways to the normal Ivory Goats, but their game statistics should be those of the Giant Sea Horse (“Monster Manual”, 2014, p. 328), excepting that instead of Water Breathing, they have the Hold Breath ability like that of the Killer Whale (p. 331). Her battered gold-framed, gold-tinted spectacles are really Eyes of Charming (*DMG*, p. 160), while her long bone hairpin-cum-scratcher is really a Wand of Web (p. 212). This Wand has the additional property of Illusory Magic, which allows its owner to change the Wand’s appearance in a minor way without affecting its main powers. Its real form is a rather chipped and decrepit black wooden wand, with fine lines of worn gold inlay and filigree all across its surface, culminating in a chipped gold tip set with eight tiny blue-green aquamarine gems, formed like the head and eyes of a spider.

Somewhere among Aunty’s many things are four particularly interesting items. In no especial order, these are as follows.

A **Sword of Vengeance** (*DMG*, pp. 206-207), a fine-looking longsword with its attendant curse and embedded vengeful spirit. While it retains its curse, whenever it strikes a foe, or is itself struck, the attuned wielder hears a fragment of an ancient song. Each time it is drawn, the wielder experiences a momentary spasm of pain. The Sword is of Human work, albeit of an unknown provenance, with a series of symbols of equally unknown meaning running the length of one side of the blade. One of the symbols is that of an ancient order of spellcasters, for whom the weapon was made, and there is a chance that the symbol might be recognised by someone sufficiently knowledgeable. Perhaps because of its curse, the weapon attunes very quickly to a fresh wielder, requiring no more than a few trial testing moves to feel its balance, lasting no more than a minute.

A pair of **Gauntlets of Ogre Power** (*DMG*, p. 171). Created for a beneficent Elven religious order, these are richly embroidered with golden leaves, vine scrolls and stars, including religious symbols that would be easily recognisable to those familiar with the order. Those who wear and use them when not of a similarly beneficent nature, feel a continuous sense of distaste regarding the Gauntlets, until they are removed. They have two additional properties. The wearer is protected against all temperatures between -20 degrees F (-30 deg C) and 120 deg F (50 deg C), and as a deliberate act, the wearer can cause their voice to carry clearly up to 300 ft away (90 m) when desired.

An especially well-made, very durable **Cloak of the Bat** (*DMG*, p. 159). It was made by the Arctic Dwarfs of Archlaround in southwestern Errynor (Errynor Map 32), and has a series of their runes carefully embroidered into its inner lining. It has apparently adopted some of the legendary Dwarfen possessiveness, as the Cloak will not allow its wearer to attune to any other magic items once they have become attuned to it. The Cloak features in an obscure Archlaround prophecy that suggests its bearer is destined to play a key role in future events there, or somewhere nearby.

A **Vicious Weapon** (*DMG*, p. 209) of short-sword form, and elemental water affinity, whose grip is made of lustrous, iridescent fish scales. What would ordinarily be metal on a more commonplace weapon is here constructed from seashells and worked coral, yet retaining the equivalent power, hardness and strength of best-quality metals. Should its bearer perform, or even contemplate, a malevolent act, the Weapon generates and enhances their pangs of conscience. It is of Thalassan (Fish-Folk) manufacture, and was

once part of the royal regalia for one of their greater dynasties, now long-since departed and forgotten, however.

Of the special supernatural to mildly magical hag object suggestions in “Volo’s Guide...”, p. 62, the undead-detecting Cleric’s Eye in its liquid-filled jar, the convincing First-Ever Human Gold Piece, and the distracting, oval, metal Flying Disc with its tiny flashing lights would seem more apt for Aunty MacKassa to have readily to-hand, wherever she may be.