

## Marbletooth Island

The sailors or “old salts” of Kingsport have always told wild stories chock full of maritime legend and superstition—a night at the local Rope & Anchor proves that—but yarns spun involving Marbletooth Island tend to have a darker bent. Located a few miles out of Kingsport Harbor, Marbletooth’s rocky and mist-shrouded shore has a reputation for loneliness, isolation, and mystery. Many sailors won’t even sail close to the isle, despite its rich schools of fish and marine life. No one has even been able to live on the deserted island, although it seems some have bravely tried—sometimes seemingly against their will.

Years of wrecked fishing vessels cling to the island’s tall, jagged rocks making Marbletooth synonymous with shipwrecks, disasters, and lost causes. Most notably, the *SS Atherton* decays along the northeast side of the island, identified by historical enthusiasts from the sharp angle of its deck jutting toward the sky. Those who remember the steamer’s wreck thirty years ago might also recall the unsolved disappearance of the majority of its passengers. Only one lifeboat escaped the wreck and the fate of the others remains unknown to this day. Many archaeologists, scholars, and mystery hunters have declared brave plans to investigate the reason for the wreck, but the perilous position of the steamer’s tenuous resting place leaves such plans as just that: bravado.

The flotsam from these numerous shipwrecks have created a feature unique to Marbletooth Island, with uncertain origins. Discovered in 1879, “The Fishmonger’s Palace” appears to be constructed from the remains of shipwrecks and driftwood, cobbled together into a bizarre shelter full of numerous winding chambers that one cannot help but identify as rooms. But who built it? As with all things on Marbletooth Island, the Fishmonger’s Palace has become the subject of countless sailor’s yarns, ranging from a settlement of castaways to a group of mystics cursing nearby ships. Regardless of the truth to these tall tales, as with everything on Marbletooth, Kingsport’s sailors still tend to steer clear.

Of course, Marbletooth Island is not all shipwrecks. Its geological strangeness creates striking formations, most notably one known as “Neptune’s Throne,” a massive rock formation on the island’s western side, vaguely resembling a chair fit for a giant. Intrepid explorers claim strange carvings and symbols cover the throne’s surface, although the symbols’ meanings have not yet been discerned. Visitors interested in geological history might be amazed at the many theories for the island’s dark, rough marble core—including that it could very well be an ancient, preserved mountain of the supercontinent, Pangea.

