

THE NAUTILUS PRIVATEERS



Born under the Raj in Delhi, Rani Nimue had a turbulent childhood. Her English-born father worked for the diplomatic service and moved across the country to wherever Her Majesty required him, his wife and only child dutifully following. At the height of the Indian Mutiny, Rani's mother was killed, and her father was faced with the difficult task of raising his daughter alone. Seeing to it that she was educated by a succession of governesses and tutors; her father proudly saw her grow into a beautiful and fiercely intelligent woman. Rani secretly harboured a wanderlust

and restlessness that, added to the stifling restrictions of Victorian society brewed within her until she was fit to either explode or run away and leave it all behind. Eventually her love for the swaggering Outlaw Broad Arrow Jack, after a chance encounter in the Port of Bombay, twisted her father's pride to shame when, at the age of sixteen, she ran away with the pirate and was not heard from again for nearly a decade.

Now master of a crew of her own, the self-styled Captain Nimue has earned a substantial bounty on her head for the audacious theft from the Barrow

Shipyards of a prototype Morgana class submersible. Nimue rapidly built a notoriety for using the stolen submarine, which she had christened 'The Nautilus', to make lightning raids on European shipping. While this brought down the ire of the Crown and their allies, her exotic looks, and penny-dreadful fuelled reputation made her popular with the press and the public.

In the space of three years, Nimue and her crew of highly efficient Chowkidar were reported in raids as far apart as Portsmouth and Kolkata Port in India. Agents for the Crown identified a common thread in many of these raids being linked to Nimue's apparent obsession with collecting antiquities from across the globe. What they could not know was that in her storied adventures, Nimue and her crew became aware of the Shadow war as the various forces in play often competed with her for artefacts and arcanum that she liberated from tombs and museums with equal ardour.

While captive of the Priory, Nimue underwent regression therapy at the hands of Professor Nathaniel Lazarus. She escaped, gripped by the revelation that she is the reincarnation of the Lady of the Lake from Arthurian legend. Fanciful as this might seem, in an age where werewolves and mechanical monstrosities prowl the Union Badlands, and ancient alien technologies and mega-fauna flourish in the Lost World of Antarctica, it cannot be discounted.

Mythical figure or not, when repeated attempts to apprehend Captain Nimue proved futile, the Right Honourable Jonathan Peel of Her Majesty's government brokered an alternative. Under Peel's bargain, Nimue was gifted copies of dozens of historical documents from the archives and granted access to restricted sites of special interest across the Crown Dominions. In

exchange for this consideration, as well as a generous charter, the fierce Pirate-Queen agreed to put her considerable skills in service to the secretive Crown ministry known only as The Circus.

Leading her rough but highly disciplined crew ashore in raiding parties, Nimue acts as a privateer on behalf of the British Crown, though none of her crew has much love for the English which has ensured that a further condition of her service to The Circus mandated her taking the solid and dependable Violet Smee as Nimue's first officer. Smee is a former Royal Marine and commands the Nautilus Chowkidar with ruthless efficiency.

The crew has changed over the years as some decide to take their share of the wealth and settle down, while others are lost to the depths. In the treacherous perils of the Shadow War it is good that there are a core that Nimue can rely on. Sardar Hardit Singh, the Nautilus' Boatswain is very protective of his Captain and is never far from her side in a fight. Erasmus Darwin is the resident engineering specialist and while he rarely speaks of his colourful past, his knowledge of esoteric engineering is clear to see in the power-chair he uses to move around in. Charlotte Anning is the ship's navigator and Mythos archivist, never short of the answer to any questions, given enough time to research it in the vessel's surprisingly extensive library. Neko Mei's role is a little harder to quantify but she has a number of skills including infiltration, stealth and close combat, this would then make her the Nautilus' 'acquisitions' specialist. Finally, there is Drum, a mechanical marvel built for mechanised labour, it was clear that he exhibited a sense of self-awareness that Darwin and the other engineers had never seen in any Automata before. Fascinated as to the nature of this 'personality', Nimue offered the gentle giant the opportunity to join her crew