

# The 2017 Gongfarmer's Almanac:

## A Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG Zine

Written, Illustrated, Edited and Produced by  
the DCC RPG G+ Community



### PANDEMONIUM SETTING: DARK SEAS

#### VOLUME 4 OF EIGHT BOOKLETS

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# DARK SEAS

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{A DCC RPG RIP OF SUNLESS SEA}

BY PAUL WOLFE



*The Undersea.* Far beneath a shattered world lies an underground ocean of unfathomable depths in perpetual night and crawling with ancient beasts. You are not heroes — you are sailors on a wine-dark sea, chasing the secrets of the past scribbled on ancient pages or scattered across a thousand fragments and running from the constant threat of madness. Captains of iron steamships cut across the Undersea armed with powerful carbide lamps, deck guns, and other weapons to ward off the night, as well as the creatures and pirates that lurk there. Beings of Stone, Salt, and Storm aid or hinder you, or laugh as your vessel sinks below the black waves. Out there somewhere — in the ports, ruins and wilds that cling to small rocky islands — are the formulae that could save humanity. Or doom them to lives of gibbering insanity.

## OPTIONAL CHARACTER CREATION

Characters in a Dark Seas campaign look very similar to those in a standard DCC RPG game. They begin as o-level nobodies, either fed up with their nothing lives or pushed into adventure through political circumstance or the will of the Beings.

Instead of the standard DCC character creation, consider these options more in tune with the Undersea and its culture. Refer to *Appendix C: Creating Characters* for additional details.

1. **Roll ability scores** – no change, but see the sections on saving throws and replacing lucky rolls.
2. **Determine o-level occupation** – see the abbreviated occupation chart.  
**NOTE:** unlike regular DCC RPG players can choose their race.
3. **Choose alignment** – characters are either aligned with one of the entities – Salt, Stone, or Storm – or they are aloof...i.e. neutral... though rarely for long.
4. **Purchase equipment** – a o-level character in Dark Seas starts with almost no possessions, and is generally penniless.
5. **Survive** – characters advance to 1st level when they attain 10 XP, but the only way to gain XP is to gather and disclose secrets – see the section on the secrets of the Dark Seas.
6. **Classes** – the standard DCC classes remain, though they have different names. Warriors and dwarves are called soldiers. Wizards and elves are known as obscure. Thieves and halflings are called brokers, while clerics, devotees to the Beings, are referred to as the mad.



*Editor's Note:* Dark Seas is a rich standalone environment for DCC RPG included in this year's Gongfarmer's Almanac that provides judges with an alternative, otherworldly, setting for their campaigns. Judges wishing to do so can also use the Dark Sea setting as a basis for campaigns that take place among the myriad worlds of Pandemonium. For example, as the players explore the Undersea, perhaps they encounter one of the Pandemonium hexes listed in the other volumes of this year's almanac, or possibly discover portals that take them to one of those other strange lands. It is left to the individual judge on how to best use the presented material, but see the Introduction to Pandemonium in volume I of this year's almanac for more ideas on other locations within Pandemonium that can be integrated as part of the Undersea.

# BETRAYAL *at the* ADMIRALTY

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Betrayal at the Admiralty is a o-level DCC RPG adventure set in the Dark Seas campaign environment. Characters begin play press-ganged into service, but quickly assume greater responsibility on the steamship *Queen's Sword*. Secrets lurk in every cranny of the ship and on every darkened rock that clings to uncertainty. Will the characters find out who threatens the Admiralty and Londonia's sovereignty?

## *BACKGROUND*

The admiral of Londonia sits in her stone tower overlooking Bonny Bay and its sizable steamship works. To the "north" lies darkness and water, but also secrets. Her agents bring them to her on a daily basis. The Theocrat of Salt, ruler of the Reavers, launched a decisive strike against the Ratmen traders on Uluni Rock, cutting off coal to the Fate Archipelago — a Londonia ally. The Iron League, their forge fires burning like the forgotten sun of the surface world, build heavily armored dreadnaughts. Soon they will be seen in Bonny Bay. Soon.

But today, the admiral's eyes are turned inwards. There's a spy in the admiralty. Possibly here at headquarters — but likely among the Londonian vassal islands spread out several days sailing from Bonny Bay. She has drafted one of her most trusted brokers, Madame Thurgrim, to gather a crew and ruffle some feathers on the islands. Thurgrim, a steely captain of the Undersea, sends her press gangs into every teahouse, brothel and marketplace on the waterfront, turning out "sailors" green and seasoned.

## *BEGINNING*

*Three days out from Londonia on the Queen's Sword, you rest easy — the rumors of monster crabs, feral storms, and the dead that trail a ship's wake, remain just that. It is then that tragedy from within strikes! The bosun calls the crew to quarters. Feet pound the steel decks, as you rush to guns, the carbide guide lamp, engine room and other stations. More experienced crewman inform you that the bosun's tone means to assemble on the deck!*

*The carbide lamp mounted to the bridge only makes the darkness around the ship more oppressive. Your crewmates press in on the main deck, murmuring rumors and doom. Finally, the ranking crewman, bosun Franks, steps from the bridge and all eyes turn up in anticipation. The squat, walleyed halfman rubs at the ridges of bone that show along his jaw before spitting onto the deck.*

*"Attention!" he says, his voice booming in the perpetual night, echoing across the thankfully still water. "The captain was found in her quarters. Dead. The doctor, such as she is, has declared the captain poisoned."*

*A dismayed cry goes up from the assembled sailors, rising to a cacophony of fear, threats and theories.*

*"Quiet, the lot of you!" Franks shouts. "By law of the Dark Sea and the Londonian fleet, we are to elect a new captain and continue the mission set forth by the Admiralty. None of us is 'officer material,' but by the shivering Jack, I'll serve the one you choose. Only don't go choosing me. Old Salt I be," he spits again on the deck to ward off spirits, "But captaining material, I ain't neither."*

**NOTE:** After his speech, the terror level of the ship rises to 5. See the terror section in the *Appendix*.

## THE VOTE

There are thirty crewmembers on the ship, including bosun Franks and the PCs. The “doctor” he referred to was just a crewperson with some experience with bandages and wounds. Depending on the size of the o-level party, the characters likely outnumber the crew by a wide margin. Franks only votes to break a tie — in this case, PCs that are in the running may make a DC 12 Personality check to sway his vote.

To run the vote, have the players decided amongst themselves who will be a candidate. The rest of the crew puts forward their own. Judges may decide to add a little intrigue – perhaps one of the crew is a spy from the Iron League (marked with a hidden tattoo of the anchor and grain motif of that nation), but otherwise, the vote should go in a routine fashion.

Until the characters level up, there is no benefit to being a captain — other than the selected PC can direct the ship. All o-level characters still count toward the minimum/maximum crew for the ship.

**NOTE:** Each station of the ship also has a maximum and minimum crew requirement. At the minimum crew level, the ship is at -1d for that particular function (or moves at half speed, if the engine room is minimally staffed). At less than the minimum, that station cannot operate effectively. Additionally, with only o-level characters and crew aboard, all ship’s action dice are penalized -1d. See the *Steamship* section in the appendix for more information.

***Queen’s Sword*, aging Undersea steamship:** Init +0; Atk deck gun +0 ranged (2d6H); AC 14; HD 4d12H; hp 32H; MV 2 hexes (cruise), 4 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SP homing bat; SV Stone +1, Storm +0, Salt +0. Cargo: max 40/current 24 (food 17, fuel 7); crew: max 30/min 8 (bridge: max 3/min 1, deck: gun max 10/min 3, engines: max 10/min 3, deck duty: max 7/min 1).

Though older and a bit rusty, the *Queen’s Sword* is a fine steamship. All cargo is measured in abstract units, including food and fuel. The *Queen’s Sword* can carry 40 units of cargo.

As the ship navigates, the captain and crew can send out a homing bat — a bat specifically trained to seek out nearby islands or other features. The bat



flies out to a 2 hex radius of the ship, returning at the beginning of the next day with a report — essentially a heading and general location of the feature discovered.

## *INVESTIGATING THE MURDER*

Characters may wish to investigate the murder of their captain. The captain's quarters have been secured, and bosun Franks claims that none have entered since the discovery, save him and the doctor. Within her cabin, aside from personal effects, are two pistols, a saber, and a fine, slim stiletto (+1 to attack, 1d3+1 damage) along with a number of clues:

**NOTE:** Fragments are divided between the PCs. Ten fragments make up a secret, and secrets are used to gain XP. See the *Secrets of the Dark Seas* section in the appendix for information on using secrets.

- ♦ **Body (1d3+3 fragments)** – bloody froth on the captain's lips. Breath smells like sherry. Glass of it spilled on her uniform. Checking the body reveals several pin pricks in the back of her neck (DC 10 Intelligence check if looking under her hair). This is a red herring – one of her metal hairpins has a burr in it and has pricked her neck. No other wounds or evidence can be found upon her body.
- ♦ **Jeweled hairpins (3) (1d5+5 fragments)** – no poison apparent, but the burr on one can be detected (DC 10 Intelligence check if examined). The red-bejeweled pin has minute writing on the pin (DC 10 Luck check to detect). The writing is a cypher for the coded letter (see below).
- ♦ **Half a bottle of sherry, vintage 1881** – testing the sherry reveals it to be not poisoned. Likewise, the glass seems fine.
- ♦ **Half-penned coded letter (1d10+5 fragments)** – the coded message is not completed, but if deciphered (DC 25 Intelligence check; or DC 9 with the cypher) it is addressed to an agent of the crown called Lace, who is currently somewhere on Sainy Rock. The portion of the letter completed simply alerts the agent to the impending arrival of the *Queen's Sword*.

♦ **Charts (1d8+3 fragments)** – the ship’s route is marked out on a chart, showing the days estimated, dangers expected and the ports to be visited. This is essentially all the characters know of the “mission” given to captain Thurgrim by the admiralty. A notation near a point labeled “the Waystation” may draw the character’s curiosity. Examination reveals it to be a minute drawing of a bird. Note that reality does not match the map. Other than Londonia and Stever’s Hold, the sea “changes” each time a new captain takes the helm (see the *Locations on the Charts* section and the player’s map).

- ♦ **Gloves** – a pair of new kid gloves lies within her writing desk. The inside of the gloves have been treated with an insidious contact poison (DC 15 Stone save or paralysis and death in 1d3 turns; on a successful save, lose 1d3 Stamina instead — cannot be healed naturally). The poison can be detected if smelled — botanist or similar can figure out that it’s derived from redcap, a poisonous mushroom that is used in distilled quantity to treat ague.
- ♦ **Sea trunk** – within the trunk are personal effects, including the captain’s rutter (1d4 fragments), personal letters (1d5+5 fragments), clothing and a locket and chain made of iron (orange rust covers it). Inside the locket are the dried petals of a flower (DC 10 Intelligence check to recognize the deep flower — a symbol of unrequited love; also used to treat black lion...syphilis). The back wall of the locket is carved with the initials MT. Finally, at the bottom of the trunk is a glove box and note: *For the success of your voyage and mission. Love MT.* Inside the box, under the silk bottom is the crafter’s mark for the gloves: Lakes Tannery and Silk. Those with knowledge of leather, paper, or trade can recognize that all three (box, note, and gloves) originated from the Sainy Rock markets where they produce spidergoat leather and a special paper produced from greencrap, massive woody mushrooms found on the island (see *Sainy Rock*). There is also a locked cash box with 1,300 gp, 2,000 sp, and three small rubies worth 300 gp each.



## *LOCATIONS ON THE CHARTS*

There are four destinations laid out on the charts: Stever's Hold, Sainy Rock, the Waystation, and the Hyalite Temple of Stone. A strange squiggly black line, almost like foreign writing, splits the chart with Stever's Hold and Londonia on one side, and the other locations on the other. This is labeled the Murmuring Straits.

The chart, however, is inaccurate. Though Londonia and Stever's Hold seem to always remain in the same position, the Undersea "changes" each time a new captain takes the helm. Keep this in mind as the o-level characters begin to die. The current player's map shows the position of the islands when captain Thurgrim died. The judge's map shows them when the first o-level character takes the helm. How they change further is up to the judge, but the Undersea is a strange and fluid place. This is why secrets, such as rutters, port reports, charts, and stories are valued almost more than gold.

**NOTE:** Stever's Hold and the Waystation are always on the opposite side of the Murmuring Straits from each other.

# THE DARK SEAS

Each day spent sailing, there is a chance for an encounter as described in the tables below. While using the ship's carbide guide lamp, there are two chances for an encounter per day as the light attracts creatures living in the darkness.

ROLL 2D4	ENCOUNTER	NOTES
2	Megathere	A giant sea monster attacks the ship! Roll 1d5: (1) dark fluke. A beast of Storm stalks the ship!; (2) giant crab. Crabs of the deep love to devour unwary sailors; (3) giant jellyfish. Hiding below the surface, giant jellyfish entangle the ship's engines and snatch its crew; (4) bat swarm. Descending from the utter darkness, swarms of sea bats feast on blood; (5) steelshark. A giant of the waters attacks!
3	Hazard	A navigable hazard delays progress. Roll 1d5: (1) falling stone; (2) engine fire; (3) unholy light; (4) the drowned; (5) grasping fronds.
4-6	No event	Smooth sailing.
7	Pirates	Roll 1d6: (1-4) steamship; (5) corvette; (6) frigate.
8	Odd occurrence	The Beings of Stone, Salt and Storm take notice. Roll 1d5: (1) recurring nightmare; (2) the slithering star; (3) the monolith; (4) the white bat; (5) lurking horror .

**NOTE:** Steamships and Megathere are so large that typical hand-held weapons do not affect them. Steamship deck guns, megathere attacks, and the like deal heavy damage (hit dice, hit points, and damage marked with an "H"). When dealt against an individual combatant, this damage is tripled. See the section on equipment for more information.

**Pirate steamship:** Init +0; Atk deck gun +0 ranged (1d6H); AC 14; HD 4d12H; MV 4 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SV Stone +0, Storm +0, Salt +0; Fragments 1d5+5; Treasure: 1d3, roll 1d6: (1-2) 1d10x10 gold; (3-4) 1d10x10 food; (5-6) 1d10x10 coal.

**Pirate corvette:** Init +2; Atk deck gun +2 ranged (1d6+2H); AC 16; HD 6d12H; MV 4 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SV Stone +1, Storm +2, Salt +2; Fragments 1d5+5; Treasure: 1d3, roll 1d6: (1-2) 1d10x10 gold; (3-4) 1d10x10 food; (5) 1d10x10 coal; (6) special.

**Pirate frigate:** Init +2; Atk deck gun +4 ranged (2d6H); AC 16; HD 8d12H; MV 6 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SV Stone +2, Storm +3, Salt +3; Fragments 1d5+5; Treasure: 1d6, roll 1d6: (1-2) 1d10x20 gold; (3-4) 1d10x20 food; (5) 1d10x20 coal; (6) special.

Special treasure: roll 1d3 times on the items table (see Items in the Appendix). Each result has 1d4 cargo slots worth of the item.

**Dark fluke:** Init +2; Atk ridged spines +2 melee (1d4H) or ridged spines +0 ranged (1d4L, range 2 hexes); AC 12; HD 4d8H; MV 2 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SP eye of fear (1/day, range 4 combat hexes, DC 14 Salt save or ship terror +1, 1d3 Personality damage); SV Stone +3, Storm +1, Salt +4; Fragments 2d10.

Dark flukes are a miasma of glowing green spines that meet in a wide, staring fish-like eye. Sailors that survive swear there's a diamond beneath that eye, but who would be brave enough to dig it out? Typically dark flukes stay submerged and trail a ship, feeding on the fear wafting off of the ship. They can use their eye of fear ability once per day.

**Giant crab:** Init +0; Atk giant claws +4 melee (1d6H); AC 16; HD 3d12H; MV 4 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SP on a natural 20, snatch additional 1d3 crew from the deck; SV Stone +6, Storm +2, Salt +0; Fragments 1d10.

Giant crabs use their mighty claws to tear into a ship's hull-like paper. Occasionally, they snatch a few choice morsels off of the deck – which may satiate them for a time (DC 14 Salt save or the crab submerges with its meal).

**Giant jellyfish:** Init +2; Atk electric tendrils +4 melee (1d4H) or smash +4 melee (1d6H); AC 12; HD 5d12H; MV 2 or 6 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SP electric tendrils (1d6 damage to all on the deck, DC 12 Storm save to avoid), submerge, sprint; SV Stone +0, Storm +4, Salt +2; Fragments 2d6.

Giant jellyfish use the sea as their defense, sliding up to a ship underwater (and making attack impossible). On a successful tendril attack, the ship must make a DC 12 Storm save or ship movement is reduced to half until the save is made. These attacks also electrify the ship, sending St. Cuthbeir's fire along the rails and decks. All creatures on the outside of the ship must make a DC 12 Storm save or suffer 1d6 damage. A giant jellyfish can sprint through the water 6 hexes, but then can only move at 2 hexes for the next 1d4+1 rounds. These sprints are usually to deliver a bash with its bony skull.

**Bat swarm:** Init +4; Atk bite +1 melee (1d4); AC 12; HD 6d8; MV 4 hexes (attack, fly); Act 1d20; SP swarm damage; SV Stone +1, Storm +3, Salt +1; Fragments 2d4.

Swarms of savage sea bats cannot damage the ship, but fly down and attack crewmembers. Everyone engaged in combat takes 1d4 damage per round until the swarm is dispersed. The ship's weapons are perfectly effective against the swarm, as are hand-held weapons.

**Steelshark:** Init +2; Atk steel head +3 melee (2d6H) or bite +3 melee (2d6H); AC 18; HD 3d12H; MV 3 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SP steel head attack knocks crew from ship; SV Stone +7, Storm +4, Salt +3; Fragments 2d10.

Steelsharks are the brainchild of some arcanist who welded a steel "helmet" and armor onto a giant shark. When they slam into a ship, the ship must make a DC 13 Storm save or 1d3 crew fall overboard. Characters on deck must make a DC 10 Storm save or suffer the same fate. Thus distracted, the steelshark typically feeds on the castaways and ignores the ship in further rounds.

**Falling stone:** Rocks fall from the ceiling far above. Terror increases by 1. Storm save (DC 13) or the ship suffers 1d4H damage and 1d3 crew are lost.

**Engine fire:** Fire erupts from the engine room. Terror increases by 1. Stone save (DC 12) or lose 1d10 crew and stop for the day; any crew stationed in the engine room must make a Stone save (DC 12) or take 1d4 damage.

**Unholy light:** The carbide lamp sputters and sparks and its light turns a ghostly blue for the rest of the day. NOTE: this occurs even if the ship was “running dark”. Roll a second encounter. Ship consumes double fuel. Salt save (DC 12) or terror increases by 1.

**The drowned:** The glowing bodies of the drowned surround the ship and their unnatural energies cause the engine to flag and race. Terror increases by 1. Storm save (DC 15) or the ship moves at high speed for the rest of the day.

**Grasping fronds:** The ship runs into a patch of black, grasping seagrass. Roll a second encounter. Storm save (DC 18) or the ship is immobilized for the day (save 1/day). Ship uses 1 fuel each day an escape attempt is made.

**Recurring nightmare:** Each night your cries echo through the ship... the same dread repeatedly plagues you. Terror increases by 1 each day until resolved. **Captain:** confess your dream to a likely source (judge’s discretion) in port to gain 1d3 secrets and resolve.

**The slithering star:** The false stars far above dim, while one brightens and begins to move across the “sky”. Terror increases by 1. **Make a Sacrifice:** -1 food; Storm save (DC 15) and gain Storm’s favor. **Ignore:** Storm save (DC 12) or gain Storm’s curse.

**The monolith:** A monolith composed of cloud, glowing blue suddenly appears standing above the water. Terror increases by 1. **Make a Sacrifice:** -100 gold; Stone save (DC 15) to gain Stone’s favor. **Ignore:** Stone save (DC 12) or gain Stone’s curse.

**The white bat:** A white sea bat hovers over the deck, flitting this way and that. Terror increases by 1. **Feed the bat:** -1 food; Salt save (DC 15) to gain Salt’s favor. **Ignore:** terror increases by 1. **Kill the bat:** Salt save (DC 20) or gain Salt’s curse.

**Lurking horror:** Something huge and faintly glowing moves under the ship. Terror increases by 1. **Attempt to Catch:** Salt save (DC 20). **Success:** a strange catch (1d4 secrets), terror decreases by 1d3; **Failure:** lose 1d3 crew, terror increases by 1. **Ignore:** terror increases by 1.

### **Favor & Curse of the Beings of Salt, Storm, & Stone**

When a favor or a curse of Salt, Storm or Stone is indicated, this affects the ship, the crew, officers, PCs, and any NPCs on the ship.

When a favor is gained, terror decreases by 1d3. In addition, the party is granted a pool of 15 points that may be spent like Luck for any check related to a given save. So for instance, if the PCs gain Storm's favor, the favor pool may be spent on any Storm save. This may also affect other rolls related to Storm at the judge's discretion. For example, if the PCs receive Storm's blessing and interact with a priest of Storm, they may spend pool points to affect Personality checks. If used with a priest of Stone, though, the tactic may backfire! When the pool of points runs out, the favor does too.

A curse from one of the Beings is doom. The terror score on the ship may never go below 5 while under a curse. All saves related to the cursing Being are penalized by -1d, including the ship, crew, officers, PCs, and NPCs present when the curse occurs. Interactions with agents or spirits of the Being are penalized -1d to all action rolls. The curse lasts until lifted, either by gaining the being's favor or through some penance or quest devised by the judge.



## *LOCATIONS ON THE UNDERSEA*

The Undersea is a dangerous place, with only a few ports of refuge.

**note:** when dealing with NPCs, the “lead” character makes a Salt save at the indicated DC to make the contact friendly. Delivering the NPCs indicated wants bypasses the need for this check. PCs can divulge secrets to any named NPC made friendly. Some provide additional XP per secret divulged.

### **Steвер’s Hold**

Steвер’s Hold is a ramshackle and poor trading village that barely subsists on passing ships. A collection of shanties and a rickety dock cling to a bare rock beach about half a mile long and a quarter mile wide. Most of the island comprises cliffs and slopes that sharply rise to the almost 1,200’ peak near the center, leaving most of its surface unnavigable and uninhabited.

On the northern side of the island, hidden within a sea cave, is the lair of the pirate called Shark and his crew. Without prior knowledge, the cave can be detected with a Luck check, if searching the island. Otherwise, if the party’s ship passes the cave, there’s a 1 in 4 chance they are detected and attacked by Shark and his pirates. See Shark’s Hideout below.

**Docks:** 1d3-1 ships. Steвер’s Hold is a common stop before braving the Murmuring Straits.

**Market:** coal (x3 price, 2d20 units); foodstuffs (x3 price, 1d10 units); sailors (x3 price, 1d4+2), 1 in 10 chance of one officer, stranded here for whatever reason, roll 1d3: (1-2) engineer (+1d to Storm); (3) doctor (heals 1d6 damage/day); 1 in 10 chance of random goods (see the goods table, 1d3 goods, 1d10 units of each, x3 price). Selling goods: Salt check (DC 15) standard price +1d10%, otherwise -1d10%. For every 100 gp spent in the market, the party receives 1d3+3 fragments (max 20 total) from general rumors and stories.

**Overseer’s hut:** Blaine Worga is a young man, but bent of back. A bright purple wen covers the left side of his face obscuring his eye and affecting his speech (reaction DC 14 Salt save; wants: cherry bulb coffee, vudka).



HEXMAP OF THE  
✧ **DARK SEAS** ✧

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If made friendly, Blaine knows the following, roll 1d6: (1-4) standard rumor (1d3+2 fragments; 20 fragments total); (5) location of the Shark's hideout (1d3+1 fragments); (6) a letter to captain Thurgrim (50 gp; 1d5+5 fragments). In addition, Worga provides a port report (1 secret) if asked, though he charges 20 gp. Worga can be used to divulge secrets. His favorite method is sea stories, which nets the party 11.5 XP per secret divulged.

The letter that Worga may sell the party makes proclamations against the late captain Thurgrim, though a DC 12 Intelligence check by one familiar with official documents and the like reveals it to be a forgery (2d5+5 fragments). Further examination of the handwriting (DC 18) reveals it to likely be the same person that wrote the note found in the glove box (2d5+10 fragments) (see *Investigating the Body*).

*To Whom It May Concern,*

*Captain Langania Thurgrim is declared by the Admiralty of the Crown to be an Enemy of the State. She was executed for her crimes and her very soul stands in Purgatory. Actions against agents that may or may not have been involved in her death will be viewed as High Treason by the Crown and Appropriate Action will be taken by the Admiralty for such transgressions.*

*Sincerely,  
The Admiralty*

**Shark's hideout:** Shark is a small-time pirate with three rickety steamships. He keeps them in a large cave on the back side of Stever's Hold. Overseer Worga sends a runner when a particularly fat ship is in port, and Shark sends two of his ships to attack. Lately Shark has been extorting Stever's Hold for choice cargo and outright shakedowns for gold, as pickings in the area have been thin (which is why Worga might divulge the location of the hideout to the party). If Worga has not disclosed Shark's hideout to the party, the pirates attack when the *Queen's Sword* leaves Stever's Hold.

Shark keeps 10 pirates (of 30 total) and himself in the cave at all times. If he is somehow captured, he reveals his arrangement with Worga. Otherwise, there's a 1 in 6 chance that Worga's messenger is still in the cave.

Within the cave are a number of chambers — most disused — though

his band keeps kip in several. A locked room behind Shark's quarters contains the pirate's booty: 350 gp, 20 units of foodstuffs (standard), 5 units of foodstuffs (fine) 1d10+4 units of random goods, and a chest containing a packet of logs (10d5+10 fragments; DC 15 Storm save — fixes one location on the map) and several crates: green stalk (1 unit; fine), red stalk (3 units; fine), ebony flowers (2 units; fine).

**Pirates (30):** Init +0; Atk clubs +0 melee (1d4) or jury-rigged pistol +1 ranged (1d6; range 50/100/150, 2 rounds to reload); AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP pistol damage explodes; SV Stone +0, Storm +0, Salt +0.

**Shark:** Init +1; Atk sabre +1 melee (2d4) or fine pistol +2 ranged (2d4+1; range 50/100/150, 2 rounds to reload); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 12; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP pistol damage explodes; SV Stone +0, Storm +0, Salt +0. Possessions: fine pistol (+1 attack/damage) with 10 shots, sabre, thick leathers (+4 AC), 250 gp, journal, charts and personal letters (1d10+10 fragments).

**Pirate cruisers (3):** Init +0; Atk deck gun -1 ranged (1d4H); AC 12; HD 2d12H; hp 9, 6, 7; MV 4 hexes (attack); Act 1d20; SV Stone -1, Storm +0, Salt +1; Treasure: 1d3, roll 1d6: (1) 1d10x10 gold; (2-3) 1d10 food; (4-5) 1d10 coal; (6) 1d3 units of random goods.

## The Murmuring Straits

Composed of black stone polished by the constant grind of the sea, the Murmuring Straits stand as a barrier between Londonia's "southern" and "northern" vassal islands. Stone arches, columns, shoals, and jagged islands, some that disappear and reappear as the waves rise and fall, produce a navigation nightmare. Ships must move at ½ speed through straits and make a Storm save (DC 13) each day. A failure indicates the ship takes 1d10 damage and loses 1d3 crew that day. On a success, the ship takes 1d4 damage and loses 1 crewmember. Moving faster than half cruise speed raises the daily save to DC 20, and the ship suffers 2d8 damage and loses 2d4 crew on a failure.

Time and distance are hard to gauge in the twisting straits. Each day, the captain must make a Salt save (DC 15; may also use the ship's Salt bonus

if the carbide lamp is used) or fail to find a path through. It requires three successful Salt saves to pass through the straits.

The place is inhabited by the jagged, the pupae stage of gorach — giant water strider beetles found elsewhere on the Undersea. Each day spent in the straits there is a 2 in 5 chance that a group of 2d4 jagged have climbed out of their watery nests and are poised to leap upon the ship (snatching crewmembers and diving into the water). The jagged attack the crew, officers and PCs of the ship rather than the ship itself. No other encounters occur within the murmuring straits.

**Jagged (2d4):** Init +3; Atk claws +3 melee (1d4) or barbed tongue +3 ranged (1d6 plus seize, range 20'); AC 13; HD 1d6; MV 20' or swim 40' or leap 40'; Act 2d16; SP hide +5, seize (if struck, DC 14 Strength check or free bite each round for 1d4 damage); SV Stone +2, Storm +0, Salt +2.

In addition to the creatures, the curious nature of the stones and sea produce a sing-song murmuring just within the auditory range. The effect is maddening — Salt save DC 13 each day or terror rises on the ship by 1d3. Characters must make the save, as well, losing one point of Personality (cannot be naturally healed until leaving the Murmuring Straits) on a failure.

Successfully passing through the Murmuring Straits nets the party 2d10 fragments.

## The Waystation

The Brothers Urich patched up a first generation steamship and moored it against a black stone column. Two beacons provide light and guidance to incoming ships. The Waystation is a meeting point for captains moving through the Murmuring Straits — either bolstering their crew for travel through the straits or recovering from recent passage.

**NOTE:** arriving at the Waystation reduces the ship's Terror by 1d6+1.

**Docks:** 1d3-1 other ships in dock.

**The bridge:** The Brothers Urich (Tomfool and Reichart) run the Waystation. They often meet with captains, especially those that spend

a lot in the markets and groghouse (reaction DC 15 Salt save; Tomfool wants: love, gold, secrets; Reichart wants: black vudka, pirate killers, a doctor). Anyone with a sufficiently high Personality may draw Tomfool's amorous attentions — he isn't picky about his partners. Other than drink, Reichart responds most favorably to stories of pirate killers. If a doctor (or sufficiently obvious mad) is in the meeting with him, he discloses that he has a wasting disease. He will pay up to 300 gp for each cargo unit of velstalk — the stalk of the velcap mushroom, though unless it's delivered within 45 days, Reichart is dead. Attempts to cure the disease prove futile. A result of 20 or higher on a *lay on hands* roll reveals it to be a curse (DC 33+ spell check to remove).

Either brother also knows the following, roll 1d6: (1-4) standard rumor (1d4+2 fragments; 20 max); (5) most efficient heading from the Waystation to Londonia (+1 secret; +1 to Storm and Salt saves in the Murmuring Straits); (6) secret hold within the Murmuring Straits (+2 secrets; +1d Salt save while in the straits, see the Brothers' Bolt Hold below). PCs can disclose secrets to the brothers. Though they'll take anything, Tomfool desires racy love stories (1.5 XP per secret) while Reichart loves exciting sea tales (1.5 XP per secret).

**Market:** coal (x1.5 price, 2d20+10); foodstuffs (x2 price, 1d20+2); 1d10 random goods (normal variable price); sailors (x.5 price, 1d5+2), 1 in 8 chance of an officer, roll 1d6: (1-2) cook (+1d to Stone saves); (3-5) navigator (+2 to Salt saves); (6) first mate (coal consumption 1/2); 1 in 6 chance of rumor per 50 gp spent (1d3 fragments; 10 max).

**Shipworks:** The shipworks here is primitive, but the rat-men engineers can repair 1d10 hit points (max 15) for 100 gp per hit point. Spending more than 300 gp nets the party 1d5+5 fragments (max 10).

**The swap bunks:** 1 gp/rest period (8 hours); 5 gp (24 hours — max 2 days) — up to 4 bunks at a time.

**The groghouse:** 10 gp/hour of drinking and food (up to 10 characters); 1 in 10 chance of rumor per hour (1d4+1 fragments, 15 max). 1 in 6 chance of a brawl per hour (use pirate stats, all damage is subdual).

**Granite shrine:** A priest of Stone, Bixbite, maintains a shrine to all three Beings and lives on the Waystation with the Brothers (reaction DC 18 Salt save; wants: proselytize, stormflower tea, living stone).

Allowing Bixbite to proselytize for an hour provides the party with 1d5+5 fragments (10 max). This doubles if the priest is provided with stormflower tea (technically a sin for the Stone priest). Otherwise, Bixbite knows the following, roll 1d6: (1-4) standard rumor (1d3+1 fragments; 10 max); (5) captain Thurgrim's last lover (1 secret, Merric Trask); (6) a minor ritual of Stone (spell check 12, provides +4 AC and +1d all actions against beings of Storm for 1 turn, requires a sacrifice of 100 gp [gold or goods] to the sea for each use, 1 secret). If the party comes to Bixbite with living stone, he impresses upon the party that they must deliver it to the Hyalite Temple on Opal Rock.

## The Brothers' Bolt Hold

In their younger days, the Brothers Urich were accomplished smugglers. To avoid the Londonian tax skiffs, they often moved their goods through the Murmuring Straits and established a hold within a sea cave there.

If the party has been made aware of the hold by one of the brothers, they must spend a day searching the area indicated on the map and make a Salt save (DC 18), in addition to other navigation saves related to the straits to find it. A standard steamship can fit within the cave, though it's a tight fit (Salt save DC 15). A failure of 5 or more indicates that the ship has slammed into an obsidian obstruction, dealing 1d10 damage to the ship. The crew must spend another day getting the ship into position, as the unsteady currents of the straits have dragged the ship off course. A failure within 5 points indicates the ship slammed into the edge of the cave (1d6 damage) but ends up inside and safely moored. Finding the hold and successfully docking nets the party 1d10+10 fragments.

Within is a series of dry, empty caves where the brothers once held up awaiting better sailing conditions and storing their booty for better markets. A secret door in the back of one of the caves leads to a stairway down deep into the heart of the obsidian column next to where the cave resides. Here lies a secret basement where the brothers' left a single chest

carved and inlaid with the golden symbol of Nesish, the Beauty (a spirit of Storm). A spell check (DC 12) or a broker's read languages skill can decipher the rune. The chest is locked with a complex lock (DC 18) and trapped (DC 13 to find/disable, poisonous gas, DC 15 or lose 2d4 Strength per round until dead) and worth 100gp. Within are seven bars composed of living stone and a scroll with *patron bond* (Nesish), *invoke patron* (Nesish), and *cull the herd* (patron spell of Nesish). This discovery nets the party 2d10+10 fragments.

## Sainy Rock

Sainy Rock is a sprawling stone island that rises to Mount Sainy — said to nearly touch the false stars. The island holds a variety of features, many beyond the scope of this adventure. The town of Thuber, the shrine of Storm's Gaze, along with a few locations are detailed below.

## Thuber Bay

The bay in which the town of Thuber rests is clogged with black sea grass that glows greenish-blue in the light of a carbide lamp, requiring a guide to make it through the winding and treacherous path. Captains can chance passage without a guide, but it requires four successful Salt saves (DC 15) to reach Thuber's docks. On a failure, the ship is held fast and the seagrass begins to digest the metal of the ship's hull (2d4 damage per hour; ship Stone save DC 15 for half damage). Each hour, the captain may attempt to free the ship by burning 1 unit of coal and making a Storm save (DC 15). While the ship is held by the sea grass, the terror level rises by 1 per hour.

Several small tugs, slips, and other small vessels float near the entrance to the bay, signaling ships with their carbide lamps advertising guide rates. A guide can be hired with 2d100+50 gp (gold or goods). With a guide, the PCs ship arrives unharmed at the docks within an hour.



## Thuber

Thuber is a sizeable town on a cliff overlooking a sheltered, but rocky bay. Docks: There are 1d5+3 other captains in the harbor, as well as Thuber's small navy (2 frigates, 4 corvettes, 10 steamships, and innumerable smaller vessels). The harbormaster's men exact a toll of 50 gp for docking and another 10 gp per person who enters the town. Inspectors accompany the men and confiscate any contraband, though they can be bribed (Reaction DC 15 Salt save; wants: intoxicants, gold, artifacts of salt).

**Markets:** coal (x3 price, 2d100+50); foodstuffs (x0.5 price, 2d100+50); 3d100 units of random goods (any, normal variable price); 1 in 6 chance of 1d6+1 mercenary marines with breastplates and spears (DC 9 Personality check; 5 gp each to hire); rumors are gathered per 50 gp spent in the market (1d3 fragments up to 30 total).

**Lakes tannery and silk:** Orlo Vain, a prim young dwarf, runs this establishment, specializing in leather and silk goods harvested from the concern's spidergoat ranches located outside of town. The finest leather goods may be obtained here — gloves, hats, boots, etc. For every 300 gp spent on goods, the PC gains a +1 to Personality checks (up to +3) while wearing the items purchased.

Orlo is a discreet vendor, rarely sharing information about his customers, though he can be persuaded (reaction DC 16 Salt save; wants: love stories, gold, demon's orchid). If a PC succeeds in sharing secrets in the form of a love story, Orlo is immediately made friendly, though up to 300 gp in coin or demon's orchid achieves the same result. Once done, he may reveal the following, roll 1d6: (1-4) general rumors (1d3+1 fragments; 10 max); (5) ritual requirements for Mother Luchea (see *Storm's Gaze* temple; 1d5+5 fragments); (6) the desires of the Harbormaster (1d4+4 fragments). If specifically requesting information about the gloves found in captain Thurgrim's cabin, he reveals that a cloaked figure purchased the gloves, refused to speak, and paid three times their value for the privilege (1d4+2 fragments) (see *NPCs or... So, What's the Mystery?*).

**Quiescent teahouse:** 18 gp/hour of drinking and food (up to 10 characters, 1d6+2 fragments per hour, 20 max). Each hour spent in the

teahouse, characters may make a Salt save (DC 15) to heal 1 point of Personality damage. 1 in 6 chance per day of encountering an NPC.

**Sanctuary (inn):** 4 gp/rest period (8 hours); 6 gp (24 hours); Accommodation includes food. 5 gp/hour of drinking and food; (1d3 fragments/hour; 6 max). 1 in 6 chance per day of encountering an NPC.

**Sailors guild:** Sailors (x2 price, 3d10+10), 1 in 4 chance of 1d3+1 officers, roll 1d6: (1) cook (+1d terror saves); (3) navigator (fix one location on the map if captain dies); (4) doctor (-1 crew lost per incident); (5) engineer (cruise/attack speed +1, burns extra half a fuel per day/encounter if used); (6) first mate (+2 to Storm saves); 1 in 10 chance per day of encountering an NPC.

Harbormaster Unctilious Pergeron runs both the harbor and the town. He is an irascible and suspicious old Salt that values his time and has little regard for foolishness. Once a tax collector for Londonia, he was many times thwarted by the Urich brothers and hates them with an abiding passion. He knows they kept a secret kip in the Murmuring Straits and becomes most pliable if provided with its location (reaction DC 20 Salt save; wants: intelligence on Londonia, location of the brother's bolt hold, secrets about the Waystation).

Pergeron controls access to the shipyards in Thuber. The party must complete some significant task for him before he'll allow them to shop there. Current desires:

- ♦ Bring back a scout from the Shale Shore, and be discreet about it. The rat-men are up to something and I must know what it is!
- ♦ Within the Greencap Forest it is rumored that a grove of true elm grows. It's true! A living fossil from the days above. I require a map to the grove. Bring back a sapling or two for confirmation, but do not, under any circumstances, harm any of the other trees.
- ♦ Within a thorn-choked canyon on the slopes of Mount Sainy lies the Cave of Salt — a shrine to one of Salt's spirits from ancient times, when only explorers plied these waters before we all had to flee here. One of these explorers, Jane Pim, disappeared seeking the shrine. I believe she found it! Bring back evidence and a map to the shrine.

Pergeron can provide the following information, if made friendly, and if specifically asked:

- Merric Trask is an agent of Thuber. He plies the seas in the Faint Heart, a peerless corvette. He docks in Thuber regularly, running cargo and passengers from somewhere far to the east (1d5+5 fragments).
- Lace, the agent of Londonia, is kept under careful observation. She typically is found in the Quiescent Teahouse, though she often travels to the Shale Shore in her secret dealings with the rat-men (1d10+10 fragments).
- A split between factions of Salt occurred a few months ago. Sister Marquet and Mother Ptarmin, both leaders within the cult here on Sainy Rock, argued and their adherents came to blows in the market. Both fled Thuber's justice. It's believed that Marquet found an artifact of Storm that threw her beliefs into disarray – something that Ptarmin called heresy. Marquet is believed to have retired with her few believers to the Greencap Forest, in Sainy Rock's interior. Ptarmin similarly disappeared, but none know where she went (3d10 fragments).

Pergeron accepts divulged secrets. He most values tales of terror (1.5 XP per secret divulged). He also purchases port reports: Waystation (100 gp), Stever's Hold (10 gp), Londonia (250 gp), Opal Rock (50 gp), Others (1d30+5 gp).

**Shipyards (requires a writ from the harbormaster):** Repair (50 gp/hit point; 1 day per hit point + 1d3 days); installation of components (200 gp; 1d4+1 days); deckgun, fine (x1.3; 1d3); carbide lamp, fine (x1.5; 1d6); torpedo nets (x1; 1d3-1); torpedo tube (x2; 1d3); torpedos (x1; 1d16 available); purchases used ship components for 10% of listed value.

## Storm's Gaze

An open stone platform halfway down the cliff from Thuber houses the local temple of Storm. Luchea Madonarar, the high priestess, resides here with twenty odd priestesses dedicated to Rombard, the Sky Fire — a spirit of Storm (reaction DC 14 Salt save, -1d for obvious devotees of Stone; wants: living stone, captives, a rousing Storm tale, gold). Luchea is suspicious and greedy, but can be swayed with a rousing story where some spirit of Storm triumphs over hapless devotees of Stone. She wants living stone to perform a special ritual she's devised to summon servants of Rombard to do her bidding, though she also requires a few humanoid sacrifices to complete the spell. If made friendly, she offers lodging in the temple caverns for 2gp/day (maximum 4 days) including food and drink. In addition, her and her priestess may reveal the following (Personality DC 10 each day), roll 1d6: (1-4) standard rumor (1d3+1 fragments; 10 max); (5) Merric Trask's next stop in Thuber (1d4+4 fragments; 1d3+1 weeks); (6) the true identity of the Londonian agent, Lace (Mara Thurgrim, heir to captain Thurgrim's sizable fortune; 1d3+1 secrets).

Interaction with the lay priestesses of the temple may allow the PCs to recruit one, Latana Whitecloud. She is disillusioned by Mother Luchea's hardline policies and wishes to travel the Undersea to find other opinions. She can be recruited as a chaplain (a ship's officer) or as a henchwoman to one of the PCs (reaction DC 15 Salt save; wants: 150 gold, equal share of treasure; level 1 mad).

## Greencap Forest

Greencap Forest clusters along the lower slopes of Mount Sainy and is named for the tall, woody greencap mushrooms that are prized as a substitute for wood, pulp, and other such products. Harvesting greencap is Thuber's chief industry — one that faces competition from the rat-men of Shale Shore. Becoming a greencap cutter is dangerous business, though — the forest crawls with funnel worms, tigerants, and the nearly invisible blue geckos. Redcap patches, sometimes miles wide, claim many a wanderer in the forest with their hallucinogenic and soporific spores. Finally, a few clans of painted men, savages that once inhabited many of the islands of the Undersea, call the Greencap Forest home.

**Other secrets:** sister Avela Marquet, a priestess of Salt, and a handful of her followers have come to the Greencap to set up a commune where they can explore connections to a spirit they call Anger — a being said to be most favored of Salt. Rumors persist that a grove of True Elm grows within the Greencap Forest. Should they be found, secrets regarding the fall from the surface and paths to return might be found.

## Mount Sainy

The mountain rises thousands of feet above the rest of Sainy Rock and the surrounding dark sea. Faint traces of glowstone can be seen from miles away seemingly tracing the outline of the mountain. Its slopes, draws, and canyons are choked with thorny brush, and within it roam giant rock ferrets, thorn lizards, and the great hunting phoracus — a man-sized flightless bird and apex predator.

**Secrets:** rumored to be hidden in one of Mount Sainy's thorn-choked canyons, the Cave of Salt holds a shrine to an obscure Salt spirit. The remains of the ancient explorer Jane Pim is said to lie somewhere near the shrine.

## The Shale Shore

The rat-men of Shale Shore have built a village on the tidal flats where they are said to offer ship repairs, exotica, and coal...lots of coal — their only trade with Thuber. In the hills above Shale Shore, the rat-men dig deep into the earth to extract the energy that drives what's left of civilization. Some say that the rat-men are also building an army underground and when completed, will sweep across the Undersea in an orgy of destruction and conquest.

## The Ebon Plateau

On the northern reaches of Sainy Rock stands the miles wide and long Ebon Plateau. Said to be the home of salt demons — creatures that spend most of their lives beneath the Undersea, only to emerge for mating rituals that last for years — the plateau is also rumored to be the place

where lies the Shattered Temple, dedicated to the Great Warrior, an ancient god from man's time on the surface.

**Other secrets:** mother Lena Ptarmin, a high priestess of Salt is said to have commissioned an expedition to the plateau in order to locate the Shattered Temple. Why? None can say.

## Opal Rock

Days from any other island and dangerously close to the Murmuring Straits, Opal Rock has long been an outpost of those dedicated to Stone. The island itself is composed of black stone embedded with raw opals that gleam, seemingly with their own fell light. Hyalite Temple, a cathedral dedicated to the Being of Stone, stands as ominous as a cadaver.

Galen Druthers, an ancient elven priest, oversees the temple along with innumerable children of various origins. Druthers is a tall, cadaverous creature, his left arm missing at the elbow and replaced with an opalescent stone forearm and hand (reaction N/A; wants: adult conversation, food supplies, current news). Anyone spending an hour with Druthers, typically at tea, discussing current news, or any topic of interest, find him pleasant and, frankly, starved for interaction. Anyone delivering living stone to Hyalite Temple gain a constant ally (see *The Brothers' Bolt Hold*). Characters wishing to share secrets with him must do it in the form of current news (2 XP per current news shared).

Though he's lived in this remote place since before memory, Druthers knows the following:

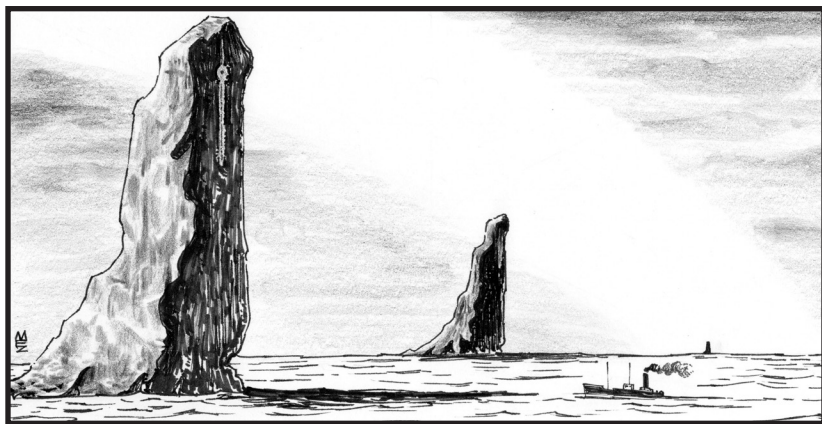
- ✦ Merric Trask recently confessed his continued love of captain Thurgrim. He sat with Druthers for an evening at tea, weeping for the way that they parted (1d10+10 fragments).
- ✦ The harbormaster on Sainy Rock is preparing for war. He's building a navy and recruiting rat-men soldiers to first take the Waystation, and then Londonia, itself! (1 secret; strategic information: Thuber).

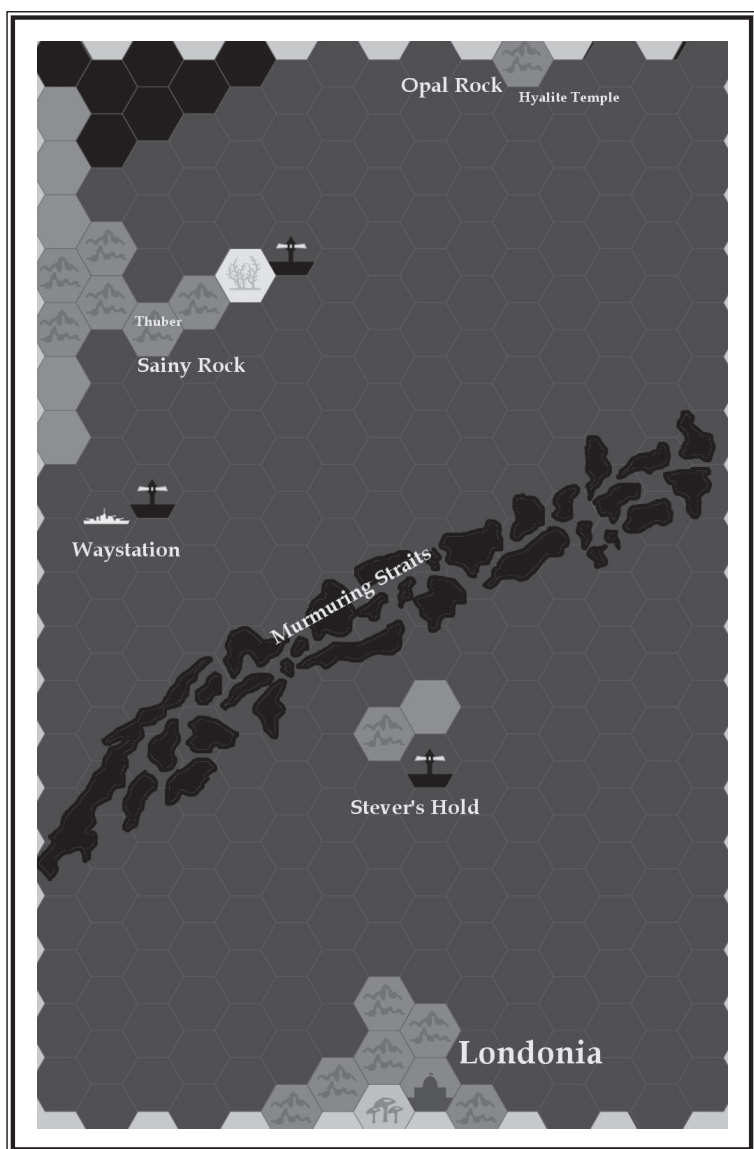
If living stone in any quantity is delivered to Hyalite Temple, the priest grants the party safe refuge any time they need it, a full coal bin and as much foodstuffs as they can carry (each time they request it), along with

1,500 gp (one time). Otherwise, Druthers offers neither lodgings nor units of food or fuel – those not resident at the temple must sleep on their ships.

The children raised here are orphans collected from across the Undersea, and each leaves Opal Rock upon reaching adulthood. There is a 1 in 10 chance per month that 1d3 of the resident children reaches adulthood and wishes to travel. They can be recruited as sailors or o-level hirelings (reaction DC 13 Salt save; wants: adventure, food and lodging).

**NOTE:** attempting to harvest opals from Opal Rock immediately brings the Curse of Stone (no save).





PLAYERS' MAP OF THE  
✧ **DARK SEAS** ✧

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## APPENDIX M:

### *NPCS OR... SO, WHAT'S THE MYSTERY?*

The mystery is that there's no set mystery. The judge has the con as far as who killed captain Thurgrim and who's the spy that's feeding Londonia false information. Is the Thuber Harbormaster building a navy to attack Londonia? Is he working with the Iron League? Are the rat-men of Sainy Rock selling inferior coal to the humans, while keeping the best coal for themselves, all in a plot to take over the Undersea?

Or is the Admiralty of Londonia consumed by paranoia? Motives, plots and players are up to the judge. Roll on the NPC and motive table to determine who killed the captain and who's spying against Londonia. And for continuing plots and motives, roll 1d14 three times and combine — then you can sprinkle clues however you wish.

ROLL	CRIME	NPC	MOTIVE
1	Assassination	Blain Worga	Greed
2	Espionage	The Admiralty	Fame
3	Murder	Lace	Revenge
4	Theft	Unctilious Pergeron	Will of the Beings
5	Sabotage	Merric Trask	Personal Power
6	Sedition	Sister Avela Marquet	Love
7	Treason	Galen Druthers	Protection of Life/Liberty
8	Anarchy	Mother Luchea Madonarat	Political Idealism
9	Corruption	Mother Lena Ptarmen	Protecting a Secret
10	Piracy	Orlo Vain	Pure Unadulterated Hate
11	Smuggling	Brother Bixbite	Personal Vendetta
12	Extortion	Tomfool Urich	Madness
13	Kidnapping	Reichart Urich	Jealousy
14	Robbery	Shark the Pirate Chief	Political Maneuvering

APPENDIX C:

CREATING CHARACTERS

Character creation for the Dark Seas campaign is generally the same as any DCC RPG game. The player starts with four o-level characters, that, after gaining 10 XP can level up to a character class. There are additional rules to add a Dark Seas flavor to the character and its experience in the Undersea.

o-Level Characters

Characters in Dark Seas gain the following:

- + 1d4 hit points, modified by Stamina.
- + A secret — this is a special secret, rolled on the secret table.
- + A contact.

At o-level, characters begin with a background occupation, but have neither trade goods, nor weapons. They begin play press-ganged into the service of an Undersea captain at the behest of the Londonia Admiralty, striking out on some mission for the Crown. If necessity dictates, characters can scrounge knives, belaying pins, wrenches, and the like on any ship to defend themselves (1d4 damage max) or loot the bodies of their foes for additional weapons and equipment. They could trade their secret for a weapon or other equipment, as well.

**NOTE:** players choose their character's race.

ROLL 1D14	BACKGROUND
1	Street Urchin
2	Poet
3	Veteran
4	Priest
5	Natural Philosopher
6	Nurse
7	Night Mail Carrier
8	Pipefitter
9	Coal miner
10	Alchemist
11	Investigator
12	Boiler Mechanic
13	Officer
14	Mushroom Farmer

# Replacing Lucky Rolls

Characters make two lucky rolls in Dark Seas using a d14 — one for a contact and one for a secret.

## Contacts

Contacts are NPCs located somewhere in the Undersea. Once found, they provide certain benefits, such as a market for contraband, further contacts with other factions, and the like — essentially roleplaying opportunities. The character’s Luck modifier applies to all interactions with the contact. If a contact joins the PC as a henchman, the PC gains the bonus listed (unaffected by Luck score/bonus). The bonus remains even if the contact dies or leaves the character’s service. Contacts will not join a PC until she has reached 1st level. Should the character die, the contact could be inherited by another character, though not the bonus.

ROLL	IDI4	CONTACT	JOIN BONUS
1		Burly protector	AC +1
2		Sly scout	Awareness +1
3		Simpering sycophant	Personality +1
4		Fierce beadle	Salt +1
5		Self-important political hack	Initiative +1
6		Aging scholar	Intelligence +1
7		Creepy puppeteer	Hit points +1d4
8		Disgruntled pimp	Stone +1
9		Laconic guard dog	Stamina +1
10		Weepy novelist	Terror checks +1
11		Rattled survivor	Luck +1
12		Fanatical defender	Storm +1
13		Ne’er-do-well sibling	Hide/sneak +1
14		Flatulent domestic servant	Strength +1

## Initial Secrets

A secret is just that — something that the character knows that drives them to seek out more dangerous knowledge. The secret gained by a 0-level character is special. Like secrets found while exploring, the character must divulge it in order to gain an experience point. In addition, divulging the secret grants the character an additional boon, as described on the table below. When 0-level characters die, their unused secrets may be passed on to other characters, though the inheriting character gains no additional benefit. Other than an alternate method for character advancement, secrets may be used to advance stories, divulged for advantage or coin, or hoarded and used to fuel powerful magicks (see *Secrets of the Dark Seas*).

ROLL	SECRET	BENEFIT
1	Map fragment	One location is fixed on the map.
2	Arcane journal	Gain one randomly selected 1st level spell.
3	Political pamphlet	Gain a second contact.
4	Memory of a distant shore	One random port is known to the character. +2 to checks while in this port.
5	Recurring nightmare	Terror saves +2.
6	Disturbing relic	All saves vs spells +2.
7	Strategic plan	Gain +2 to all ship actions.
8	Horrifying story	Character knows the location of a great treasure.
9	Pedantic guidebook	Gain +2 to one skill or ability (judge's discretion).
10	Last will and testament	Gain 1d100 gp.
11	Questionable deed & title	Character has lodging in a random port for free.
12	Damning legacy	Gain +2 to all saves vs poison and disease.
13	Racy novel	Gain +2 to Personality checks and Salt saves.
14	Dangerous manifesto	Gain +2 to all checks with shady NPCs.

## Saving Throws

The Beings of Stone, Salt and Storm control everyone's fate, whether the PCs accept them or not. Skill, health, and luck are reflected in different sets of saving throws: Stone, Salt and Storm.

- ♦ **Stone (Fortitude)** – Stalwart physical characteristics allow sailors of the Undersea to resist disease, poisons, deprivation and other physical ailments. In addition to bonuses gained due to character classes, a character gains a bonus equal to their Stamina or Strength bonus (whichever is higher).
- ♦ **Salt (Will)** – Iron mental fortitude provides characters with the ability to survive the intense pressure of unending darkness and waters that hide lurking things. Salt is modified by a character's Intelligence or Personality modifier, whichever is higher.
- ♦ **Storm (Reflex)** – The rage of the Undersea strikes without warning. Quickness and luck aid a character in avoiding the attention of these entities, and in dodging other hazards the dark sea throws at them. The Storm save is modified by either Agility or Luck (whichever is higher).
- ♦ **Terror** – The Undersea is a place of darkness, isolation, and unfathomable depths that eat on its inhabitants' minds, bodies, and spirits. Certain situations require characters to make a terror save – which may be affected by Stone, Salt or Storm. On a failure (generally), the terror has overcome the character, usually draining Personality. Healing, rest, triumphs, and achieving certain goals erase the effects of terror – but still it lurks out there in the darkness and depths (see the *Terror* section under appendix S below).

## Secrets of the Dark Sea

In a Dark Seas game, secrets are the equivalent of experience points, but also more. Characters gather fragments — notes, half-understood dreams, stories by a dying fire, knowledge from fighting a great beast and the like — which when collected, form a secret. It takes 10 fragments to form a secret. Characters gain fragments (and sometimes secrets) through exploration and interaction with the world. This could include combat, but more often, fragments are gained by discovering new islands, examining artifacts, speaking with sailors, officers, contacts, and other NPCs. Generally the characters in the party must split the fragments obtained, though at the judge's discretion, the discoverer may gain more.

Fragments, when compiled into a secret, take a specific form — typically physical objects, such as journals, rutters, charts, reports, artwork, or the like. Some NPCs prefer certain types of secrets which may grant PCs more than 1 XP per secret divulged. Additionally, certain secrets, when divulged to the wrong person, may get the PC in trouble — for instance, divulging intelligence on Londonia to the Iron League could get the PC hunted as a spy by the Londonian Admiralty. Additionally, in some cases, secrets divulged may earn the PC gold, favor, goods, or other benefits, as described in an NPC's entry.

Judges can roll a d14 on the chart on the following page, or choose the form of secret that assembled fragments take, depending on the PCs actions to obtain them.

ROLL	SECRET	NOTES
1	Port report	Basic report of the comings and goings, markets, and other mundane information. Applies to a specific, visited port. Some NPCs provide port reports for certain actions.
2	Strategic information/ intelligence	Specific report on a given place, person, faction, or other military significant subject. Applies to a specific subject. Some NPCs provide intelligence for certain actions.
3	Memory of distant shores	Memory is hazy, but for those stuck in a port, they love a good remembrance of the places visited faraway.
4	Charts and rutters	Though never completely accurate, captains hunger for knowledge about the Undersea, its beasts, and sanctuaries.
5	Haunting tale	A harrowing story of ghosts, beasts, and the uncertainty of the Undersea.
6	Love story	Sometimes, even in this hell, love finds a way.
7	Recent news	The scuttlebutt of ports and ships. Isolation drives a hunger for what's going on in the dark world.
8	Rousing sea tale	The life of an Undersea sailor is one of high adventure. Or at least, that's what the folks in port want to believe.
9	Memoir	A personal account of adventure, enlightenment, or sheer boredom. The port folk eat this up.
10	Memento	Crafted from the emotion of an event, interaction with a person or other being, mementos are carved, painted, forged trinkets that spark the imagination.
11	Trophy	The bone from a boneless whale, leather from a carnivorous porpoise, a missing ear, a scar... some trophy from a great fight to tell a tale over.
12	Uncertain treatments	Sailors on the Undersea find odd processes and cures – and everyone hungers for relief.
13	A move in the great game	The nation-states of the Undersea are locked in a dangerous game. Those on the sidelines often trade their knowledge of the latest moves...or speculation in the next.
14	Puzzling enigmas	Not all secrets have a revelation. Sometimes it's enough to try and puzzle it out with friends.

To divulge secrets to an NPC, the character makes a Personality check modified by the character's Salt bonus (DC 14). On a failure, the character gains 1 XP per secret divulged, but the NPC is generally unimpressed with the character (must re-engage the NPC for future interactions). On a success, the character gains 1 XP per secret divulged and the NPC grants a one-time boon (as per the judge — could be gold, ship's supplies, information, etc.). If a natural 20 is rolled, the character gains 1.5 XP per secret divulged and the NPC becomes a trusted ally. This may include some form of sponsorship, regular correspondence or other long-lasting benefit, at the judge's discretion.

**NOTE:** some NPCs grant more than 1 XP for specific types of secrets. For instance, the Admiralty of Londonia may grant 2 XP for strategic information on the Iron League.

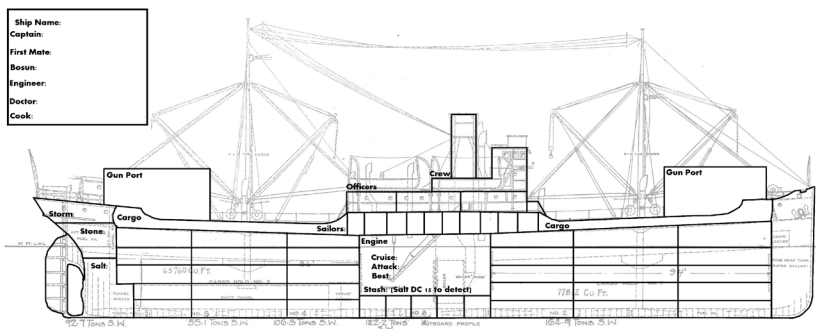
Secrets may also be used to fuel spells — including arcane or idol magic. When used in this way, each secret provides +1 to spell checks. When a spellcaster uses secrets to fuel a spell, however, they must make a Salt save (DC 10 + Secrets used + Spell Level). On a failure, the caster gains no experience from the action. On a success, 1 XP is gained for every 2 secrets spent. Judges may rule that the caster gains more or less depending on the situation.

## Character Classes

The classes in a Dark Seas campaign are unchanged from those of a standard DCC RPG game. Wizards and elves (called the obscure) make deals with otherworldly entities in order to break reality in specific ways. Warriors and dwarves (called soldiers) charge the lines of the enemy, breaking their will and bodies. Thieves and halflings (called brokers) skulk and deal, avoiding direct confrontation in order to snatch secrets from those who would keep them. Finally clerics (called the mad) serve the very entities that all revere and fear.

At the judge's discretion, certain character classes may perform special abilities while aboard ship. For instance, a soldier may fire the deck gun with a deed die or the mad may perform spells to calm the crew's terror.





## APPENDIX S:

# STEAMSHIPS

More than a rusty conveyance, steamships are also characters in their own right within a Dark Seas campaign. Though o-level characters start out as simple crew — often attempting to survive their first mission to uncover secrets for someone more powerful than they — upon gaining 1st level, the party receives its own steamship.

**NOTE:** o-level characters suffer a -1d to all ship action dice. This includes saves, gunnery, and the like. Once characters reaches 1st level, they are proficient in the operation of the ship. An officer NPC manning a station removes the penalty.

Steamships have the following statistics:

- ♦ **Armor Class** – representing the plating and armor of the hardy steamship. Only heavy weapons can damage a steamship. All other attacks bounce off.
- ♦ **Hit Dice** – each steamship rolls its hit dice (d12) to generate hit points. When hit points are depleted, the ship is destroyed. Each time the ship loses hit points, it also loses 1d3 crew in one of its stations.
- ♦ **Movement** – ships have two types of move: cruise and attack. Cruise movement is measured in 50 mile hexes. Combat movement is measured in 50' hexes. Note that ship's also have a facing — which determines firing arcs for weapons.

- ♦ **Crew** – all steamships require a crew to run its various systems (see below for details).
- ♦ **Stone** – this value is used to modify skill checks and saving throws related to the physical composition and hardiness of the ship. Instances such as fire, explosions, collisions and the like use this bonus.
- ♦ **Storm** – the steamship barks fire and death upon its enemies while it churns through the dark waters of the Undersea. This value is used to modify skill checks and saving throws related to the weapons and engine (maneuverability and speed). The bonus is applied directly to attack rolls and damage with ship's weapons.
- ♦ **Salt** – plying the Undersea requires awareness and spiritual fortitude. Salt modifies skills and saving throws related to spotting, listening, and the ability to resist terror of the crew.

Steamships may be modified at any shipyard to increase its statistics, add additional weapons, armor, and the like, in addition to repairing damage.

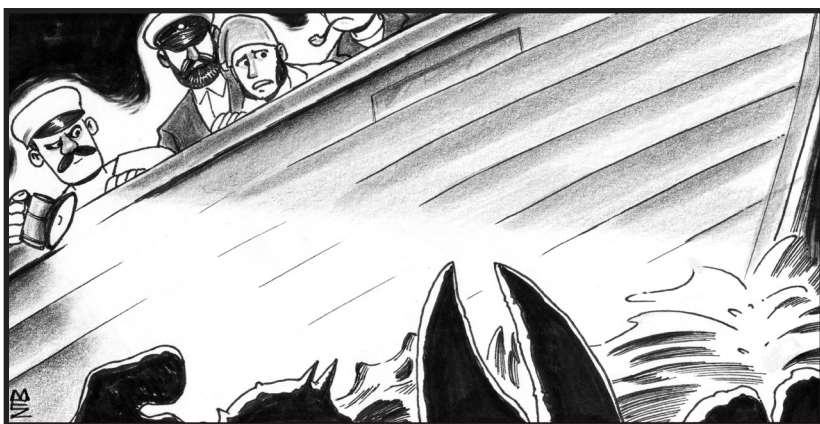
## Crew

Crew are essential to the operation of the ship, and each of the ship's systems have a maximum and minimum crew value, as well as a maximum crew value for the whole ship. At minimum crew, a ship's system suffers -1d to all checks. For instance, if a ship's deck gun requires a minimum of 3 crew, it suffers a -1d to attacks when 3 crewmembers man this station. Additionally, a minimum crew in the engine room reduces the ship's speed (cruise and attack) to half. If a station does not have minimum crew, that system is disabled. Each time the steamship takes hit point damage, the ship also loses 1d3 crew in one of the stations.

Officers are crewmembers, but do not count toward the minimum/maximum to operate the ship. Most ships can have up to three officers. Typical officers, such as engineers and doctors, provide a +1d bonus to the respective steamship attribute — Stone, Storm or Salt. Others provide bonuses to other aspects, such as terror, armor class, or the like. When the ship falls below the minimum crew level, an officer is killed each time the ship takes further damage. Officers and crew never leave the ship.

## Example Crew Types and Cost

CREW	ROLE	BASE PRICE
Sailor	General ship crew used to man stations.	20
Engineer	+1d to Storm saves.	200
Engineer	Cruise/attack speed +1; burns extra half a fuel per day/encounter if used.	250
Doctor	Heals 1d6 damage/day.	200
Doctor	-1 crew lost per incident.	300
Cook	+1d to Stone saves.	200
Cook	+1d terror saves.	150
Navigator	+2 to Salt saves.	300
Navigator	Fix one location on the map if captain dies.	400
First mate	Coal consumption 1/2.	350
First mate	+2 to Storm saves.	300

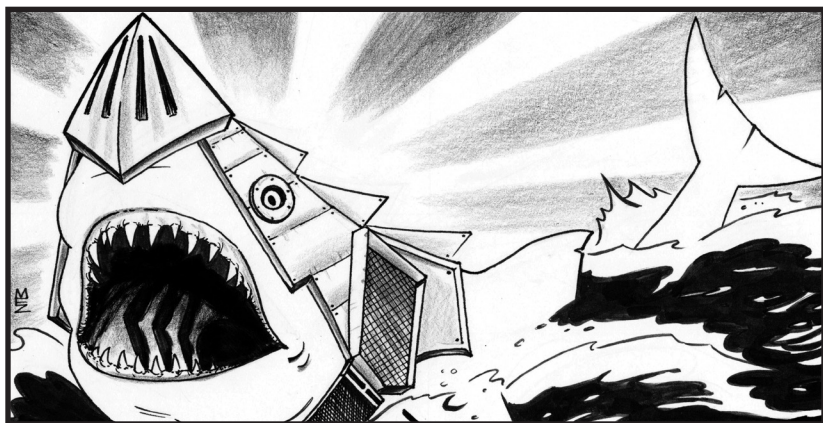


# Steamship Terror

Terror is not just a character mechanic. On a steamship, this represents the terror of the crew. Many things may raise the Terror level on a steamship — running from a fight, shortages of fuel or food, encounters with entities of Stone, Salt, and Storm (though some of these may *reduce* terror). Terror runs from 0 - 10, with causes and effects broken down as below.

TERROR LEVEL	STATE OF CREW	EFFECT
1	Serene	Consume 1 supplies/day.
2	Wary	Consume 2 supplies/day.
3	Wary	As above.
4	Nervous	As above; ship Storm saves at -1d.
5	Nervous	As above; ship Stone saves at -1d.
6	Fearful	As above; ship Salt saves at -1d.
7	Fearful	As above; ship speed halved.
8	Haunted	As above; crewman lost each day.
9	Haunted	As above; officer lost each day.
10	Crazed	The crew mutinies.

TERROR CHANGE	CONDITION
reset to 5	Within 1 hex of Londonia.
-1	Landing in a safe port; each day spent in port.
-1	Casting blessing on the ship with a result of 20+.
-1	Defeating an enemy at sea.
-1	Fed fancy rations.
-1	Given grog/vudka/spirits.
1	Run from an enemy at sea.
+1/hex	Running without a carbide lamp.
+1	Any damage/crew loss taken during battle.
+1	Each day spent in the Murmuring Straits.
+1	Each day spent immobile at sea.
variable	Each "weird" event.



## Resources and Movement

When a ship is at sea, running at normal speed and using its carbide lamp, it uses 1 unit of coal per hex. Ships can run without their carbide lamp — when doing so, the ship only consumes  $\frac{1}{2}$  a coal unit per hex, but there are terror effects on the crew. Each time a ship engages in combat, it uses an additional unit of coal.

A ship can run at high speed, either when cruising or attacking. In such cases, it consumes 2 units of coal (per day for cruise speed, per combat encounter for attack speed), and travels  $1\frac{1}{2}$  its normal speed. Doing so is dangerous, however. Each day that a ship travels at high cruise speed, or each round that it travels at high attack speed, the ship must make a Storm save (DC 10+1 per day/round). On a failure, the ship's engines overheat, and the ship cannot move. When cruising, this lasts for an entire day. When in a combat encounter, the ship is immobilized each round until the save is made, however the ship can make no further progress that day when the combat encounter is over.

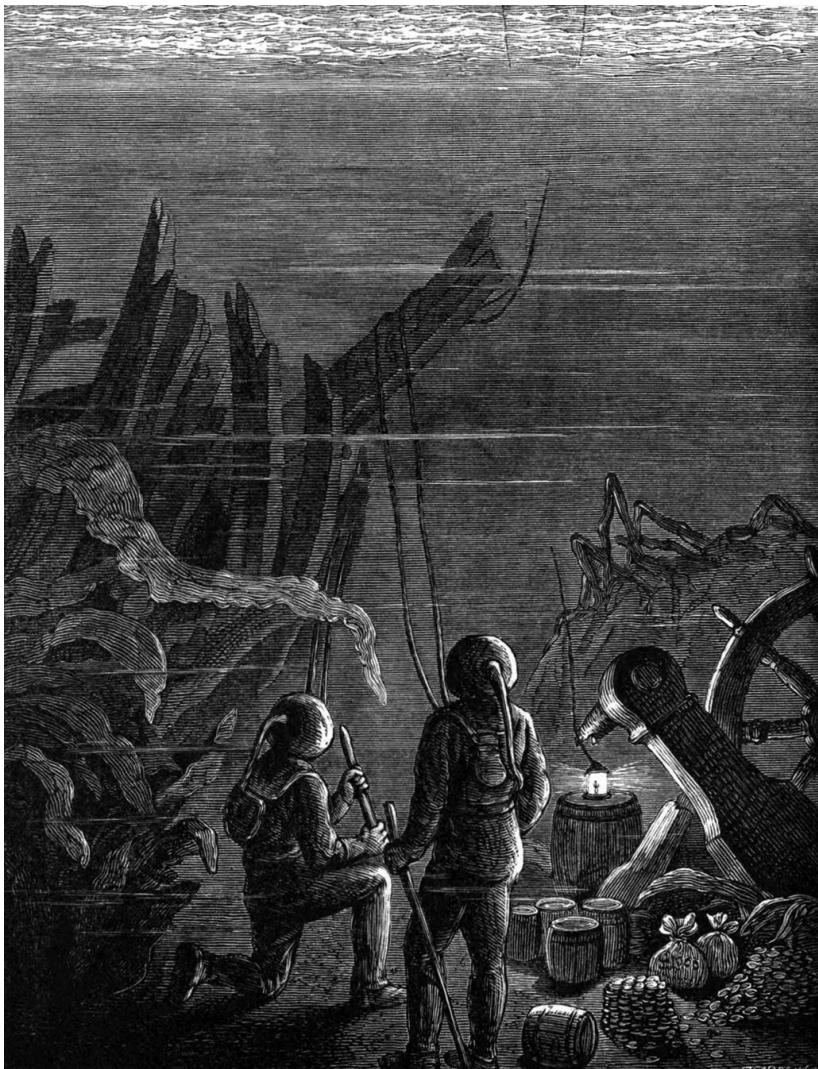
A ship's crew (including the PCs) consume 1 unit of food each day, under normal conditions.

**NOTE:** Ship terror levels can affect food consumption.

APPENDIX W&E:

*WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT*

Dark Seas is set in a fantasy Victorian/Lovecraftian post-apocalyptic place where society has retreated underground to a vast, unfathomable sea. Equip accordingly.





ROLL	WEAPON	DAMAGE	RANGE	NOTES	BASE COST
1	Carbide lamp, common	2d6	50/100/300	Damage dice explode.	300
2	Carbide lamp, fine	2d6	25/50/100	Damage dice explode.	150
3	Deck gun, common	2d6H	100/250/500	Large damage; damage dice explode.	1,500
4	Deck gun, fine	N/A	250		800
5	Engine, common	3d6H	200/400/800	Heavy damage; damage dice explode.	3,000
6	Engine, fine	N/A	600	Initiative and attack +1.	1,600
7	Musket	1d6H	100/200/400	Heavy damage; damage dice explode.	1,000
8	Pistol	2d4H	200/350/600	Heavy damage; damage dice explode.	1,400
9	Rear gun, common	N/A	N/A	Requires torpedos.	1,800
10	Rear gun, fine	3d6H	300/500/1000	Seeking; heavy damage; damage dice explode; +1d4 crew killed on successful hit.	500
11	Rear gun, flensing	N/A	N/A	Deflect up to 50 points of torpedo damage; ablative.	1,100
12	Torpedo, common	N/A	4 hexes	Consumes 1 fuel.	3,000
13	Torpedo gun	N/a	6 hexes	Consumes 2 fuel.	6,000
14	Torpedo nets	2d4H	50/150/300	Only damages living targets; kills +1d4 crew per successful hit.	900

## Weapon Damage

Firearm damage, including explosive damage from ship's guns and torpedoes, "explodes," meaning that if the highest result on a die is rolled, the die is rolled again and the totals are added to the previous roll(s).

Some targets such as ships, giant creatures, and the like, can only be damaged by heavy damage. If a character or other relatively normal-sized creature is struck by a weapon that deals heavy damage, the damage dice are trebled. Normal firearms may harm creatures that can only be injured by heavy damage — each 10 points of normal damage deals 1 point of damage to a giant sea creature. Ships and other vehicles may not be harmed by normal firearms.

## Ship Weapons and Equipment

Ship weapons require 1 full round to reload each time they are fired with any number of crew above the minimum at the weapon station. With minimum crew, reload requires 1d4 rounds. Torpedo launchers require ammunition (torpedoes) in order to properly function — the launcher system and all ammunition carried takes up 4 cargo space units. Other weapons' ammunition are considered included in ship's supplies. A weapon that lacks a crew may not be reloaded.

Deck guns and rear guns have a firing arc — 180 degrees. Outside of this arc, targets may not be engaged. Torpedoes will home on their targets regardless of the arc fired from — though most torpedo launchers face front.

## Goods and Cargo

Cargo is measured in cargo units, consisting of enough weight, bags, crates, etc to fill one cargo space on the ship. Prices of goods vary according to the port and the PC that's attempting to deal for them.



## Goods Table

ROLL 2D5	TYPE
2	Contraband
3	Luxury goods
4	Medicinal goods
5	Commodity
6	Commodity
7	Commodity
8	Medicinal goods
9	Luxury goods
10	Arcane goods

## Commodities

Everyday materials for building, food, and general convenience. Officers cost 10x the price of regular sailors.

ROLL 2D6	COMMODITY	USES	BASE PRICE
2	Alkaline grass cakes	Food base; commodity.	5
3	Blubber	Used for lamp oil.	10
4	Saltwood	Building commodity.	10
5	Greenstalk	Building, paper commodity.	10
6	Coal	Fuel the ship.	10
7	Food	Fuel the crew.	20
8	Vudka	Distilled spirit of seven petal.	10
9	Cherry bulb Coffee	Food commodity.	20
10	Greencap	Food commodity.	10
11	Icestalk	Food commodity.	10
12	Seven petal	Mild intoxicant; used to make vudka.	20

# Luxury Goods Table

Luxury goods are rare and valued by those of the Undersea. Note that carrying more than one cargo unit of Abovegrass is considered contraband by most port authorities, due to its unstable arcane applications (see the *Arcane Goods and Contraband* sections below).

ROLL 2D5	LUXURY GOOD	USES	BASE PRICE
2	Furs	A luxury.	100
3	Ice	A luxury; must be delivered in 1d4+1 days or lost.	100
4	Wobble thrush feathers	Women’s fashion.	50
5	Icecap	Luxury food.	30
6	Saint’s grain	Luxury food; mild intoxicant.	50
7	Ebonwood	Luxury building/crafting material.	80
8	Stormflower	Heavy intoxicant; typically distilled with alcohol.	60
9	Ambergris	Perfumes; incense.	150
10	Abovegrass	Luxury food; also arcane applications.	150

# Medicinal Goods Table

Medicinal goods are bulk items used to create potions, medicines and other tinctures. Creating these items requires knowledge, equipment, and at least 1 cargo unit of the substance — which when created grants the bonus listed.

ROLL 2D4	MEDICINAL GOOD	USES	BASE PRICE
2	Yellowcap	+1d to Stone saves.	200
3	Brightgrass	Reroll Storm save 1/day.	100
4	Ebony flowers	+2 to lay on hands.	50
5	Saint's grass	+2 to Salt saves.	50
6	Icecap	+2 to idol magic spell checks.	50
7	Ivory flowers	Relieves ongoing ailments (1d4 days).	100
8	Saint's flower	+1d to any save against disease.	200

# Arcane Goods Table

These substances are used to create certain potions that boost arcane spell abilities. The raw substance has little effect on the user. All arcane goods are considered contraband (see *Contraband* below).

ROLL 2D3	ARCANE GOOD	USES	BASE PRICE
2	Abovegrass	+1d to spell checks.	150
3	Sight stone	+1d to scrying and far seeing spell checks.	100
4	Soulwood	+2 to spell checks.	100
5	Deepflower	+1d to mind-affecting spell checks.	100
6	Singing kelp	+2d to any spell check.	200

# Contraband Table

Outlawed in most ports, contraband is likely to be seized and the ship’s captain and crew jailed or fined for possessing it.

ROLL IDIO	CONTRABAND	USES	BASE PRICE
1	Singing kelp	Mild luxury intoxicant; arcane applications.	200
2	Abovegrass	Arcane applications.	150
3	Sight stone	Arcane applications.	100
4	Soulwood	Arcane applications.	100
5	Deepflower	Arcane applications.	100
6	Bright Salt	A mild luxury intoxicant.	100
7	Redcap	Mushroom cap (poison).	100
8	Velstalk	Highly addictive drug; typically dried and smoked.	100
9	Velcap	Highly addictive drug; typically dried and smoked.	150
10	Demon’s orchid	Highly addictive drug; typically distilled with other compounds and injected.	200

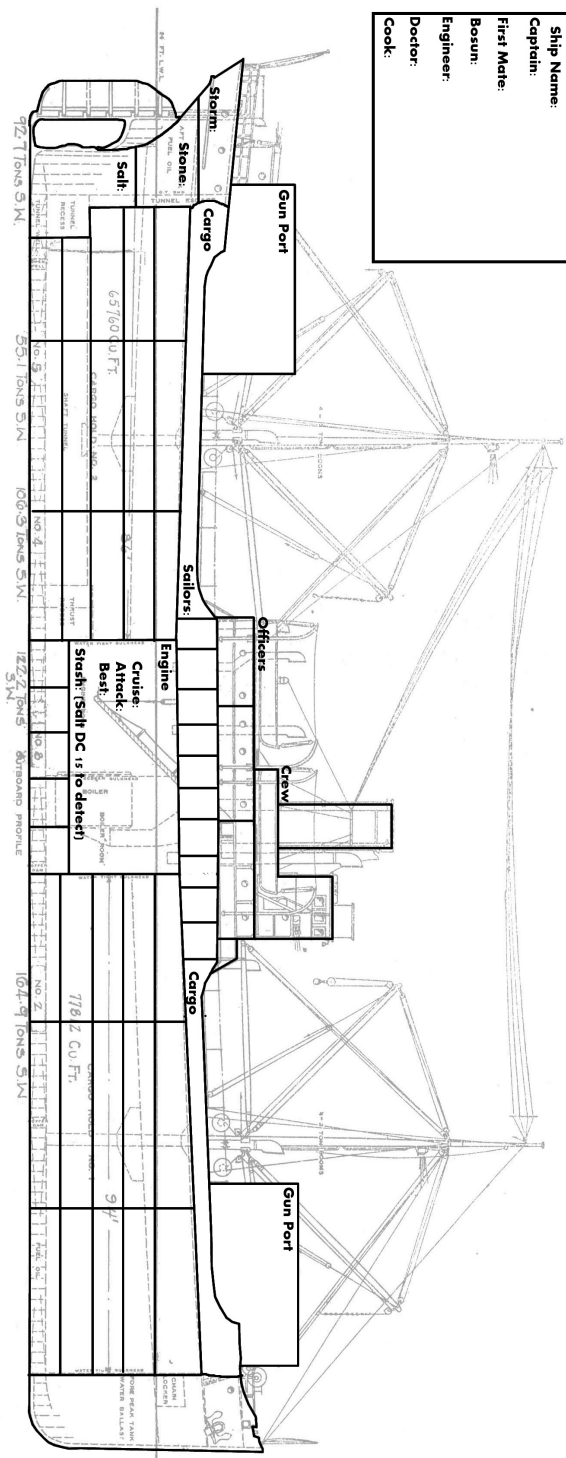
Ship Name:	
Captain:	
First Mate:	
Bosun:	
Engineer:	
Doctor:	
Cook:	

**First Mate:**

**Engineer:**

**Doctor:**

**Cook:**



✠ STEAMSHIP ✠

DARK  
SEAS

Name:

AC

HP

*mod*

Strength

Agility

Stamina

Personality

Intelligence

Luck

NOTES

RACE

OCCUPATION

ALIGNMENT

SECRET

CONTACT

SPEED

INIT

EXP

*Saves*

STONE

STORM

SALT

TERROR

WEAPONS

EQUIPMENT

DARK  
SEAS

Name:

AC

HP

*mod*

Strength

Agility

Stamina

Personality

Intelligence

Luck

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RACE

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*Saves*

STONE

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RACE

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WEAPONS

EQUIPMENT

NOTES

# Credits

## Contributing Authors – VOLUME 4

Paul Wolfe

## Contributing Illustrators – VOLUME 4

Mez Toons, Paul Wolfe, Bottom of the Sea illustration courtesy

<https://www.oldbookillustrations.com/illustrations/bottom-sea/>

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### GFA 2017 Cover Art

Doug Kovacs

### GFA 2017 Title Page Art

Marc Radle

### GFA 2017 Editors and Proofreaders

Forrest Aguirre, Rob Brennan, Aron Clark, Jarrett Crader,  
Keith Garrett, Jeff Goad, Tony Hogard, Gajus Miknaitis,  
Patrick Munkacsy, James Pozenel, SGT Dave, Jim Skach,  
Dan Steeby, Shyloh Wideman, Clayton Williams, Dak Ultimak

### GFA 2017 Printing Offset Contributors

Jason Abdin, David Baity, Steven Bean, Julian Bernick, Eric Betts,  
Michael Bolam, Patrick Bramble, Scott Charlton, Aron Clark,  
Hector Cruz, John Fiala, Guy Fullerton, John Hess, Mark Hughes,  
Michael Jones, Jacob Jorgensen, Aaron Koelman, Daniel Lofton,  
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Kevin Searle, Dan Steeby, Matthew Weeks, Mark Woolsey,  
and the anonymous patrons of the GFA community

### GFA 2017 Creative Vision & Direction, Layout, and Graphic Design

Doug Kovacs, Jon Hershberger, Harley Stroh,  
Marc Bruner, Matt Hildebrand, Michael Jones