

LANKHMAR

SAVAGE SEAS OF NEHWON



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INTRODUCTION

The dank, twisting streets of Lankhmar were brought so vividly to life by Fritz Leiber that it's easy to forget Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser weren't always prowling the fabled City of the Black Togas. Many of their adventures took place beyond its walls, and in a fair number the Twain are out on the waves, seeking either adventure or solace.

Leiber wrote just as skillfully of sea travel as he did of Lankhmar's back alleys, drenching each voyage in atmosphere and detail that conjured the salt spray and the immensity, the beauty, and the terror. Those who want to send their characters adventuring upon the seas of Nehwon should soak up a little of his fiction set there: at least "The Sunken Land" and "When the Sea-King's Away."

While it's certainly possible to run a sea campaign set in Nehwon, the real point of setting anything in the world of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser is to adventure in and around Lankhmar, that sultry queen of cities. Leiber sent his heroes into numerous wastelands and even into different settlements, like Quarmall or Rime Isle, but it is Lankhmar where he lavished most of his attention, and it is Lankhmar that is most fully realized. All other destinations are mere stopping points and diversions. When the characters head out to the sea, they are inevitably drawn back to Lankhmar's lodestone because it is, quite simply, the most interesting place in the world and one

of the most beguiling destinations in all fantasy literature.

To emulate Leiber's own approach, most of the Savage Tales included in this book are designed for insertion between adventures, while characters are traveling to distant lands, or are standalone missions that begin or end near Lankhmar's waterfront.

We round out the book with a selection of beasts and information about the seas of Nehwon and the ships that ply them. Leiber often wrote of monsters and the supernatural, of course, but he also wrote about characters, and it should never be forgotten that one of the secrets of the enduring success of Lankhmar was the way his characters contrasted against the setting. There is grime and grit and darkness, yes, but there is also good fellowship and uproarious humor. To evoke the feel of a Lankhmar story a Game Master should shy away from one-note tones and provide the players with plenty of opportunities to survive by cleverness, to make witty asides, to feel the breath of horror without being dragged down by its claws — in short, to escape headlong into adventure.

Of course, the most important thing to remember is that adventures on the seas of Nehwon should be fun — for both Game Master and players. If everyone at the table is having a good time you're probably doing it just right.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SEAS OF NEHWON

Although Nehwon is expressly a smaller world than our own, it is still less populated. There are vast sections of land where there's nary a soul, living or otherwise, to be encountered. The same holds true for the seas of Nehwon, the sole exception being the Inner Sea itself, a body of water through which most of the world's trading ships pass. Some merchants venture farther afield, hugging the western coast on voyages north, up toward Ool Krunt or No Ombrulsk or even to fabled Rime Isle, and some sail south and west to Earth's end or Quar mall, or south and east to Tovilyis or Tislinet, but it is the Inner Sea where the city-states crouch like travelers around a campfire, and it is the Inner Sea where characters are more likely to venture.

For the most part Nehwon is a world of city-states. There are no vast nations, no vast armies, nor vast navies. Ship-to-ship combat in the Inner Sea is almost never a conflict between armadas, but a chase between a pirate vessel and its victim, or a patrol ship and a smuggler, or even a trio of dragon-prowed longships venturing south on a raid. Naval technology has developed to a level much like our own late Roman or Medieval periods, so that there are galleys and cogs, but no mighty four-masted man-of-wars, bristling with weapons.

In the stories of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, most conflicts are between a handful of characters and the opposition,

even if that opposition is the open sea. The Twain frequently are on the ocean with only themselves and perhaps a few followers, daring the ocean in tiny craft and managing quite well, thank you, navigating by sun and star more often than with more sophisticated instruments. To evoke a truly Lankhmaran feel, Game Masters should keep challenges small enough they can be overcome by small groups of individuals, so that when they face truly huge, terrible challenges (as the Twain faced in "The Sunken Land") it's clear that fleeing is the only sane course of action.

That's not to say that larger ships or even fleets aren't ever to be encountered. It's possible that some eastern overlord has dispatched a flotilla of trading ships up through the Sea of the East to sell their wonders in Lankhmar, and it's possible that some mad Northern barbarian could send a dozen longships on a massive raid, but these should be remarkable exceptions. For a truly Lankhmaran feel, adventurers should encounter individual ships amid lonely expanses of waves, unless they are very close to mighty harbors or rich fishing beds.

THE INNER SEA

The Inner Sea has the most populated coastal regions in all Nehwon. Here great cargo ships ply their ways from city to city, many never venturing far from the coast and most

never leaving familiar waters or established trade routes.

The Inner Sea is roughly equivalent in size to Earth's Mediterranean from north coast to south, though it is scarcely half the length east to west, and its climate differs as well, resembling Earth's English Channel much more than our own Mediterranean, for ice and frost come to Lankhmar, and cool forests of pine line much of the Inner Sea's northern coast.

It's the most well-traveled of all of Nehwon's seas, and centuries of ships lie rotting on its bed, where sea serpents lair and gods and goddesses sometimes make their homes.

The Inner Sea is bounded to the southeast by The Sinking Land, which rises and falls at uncertain times. When it drops below the surface, it sinks far enough that even deep-hulled ships can cross safely. Unfortunately, its rising and falling doesn't occur in any sort of regular pattern, so weeks may pass before it rises or falls again, making it inconvenient for traders headed south. Providing they're

willing to pay the appropriate fees, travelers seeking to journey between The Sea of the East and The Inner Sea sail the river Hlal and the southern canal.

The waters in and around Lankhmar proper are fairly safe, as far as such things go, and there are public areas with beachfront as well as vast private estates bordering the water. There's no Lankhmaran cultural tradition of days at the beach or swimsuits, but children and young people like to splash in the surf, and young adults sometimes swim around their vessels while they're boating in the harbor, something you'd never see in Ilthmar, which is notoriously rife with sharks.

The Lankhmaran navy takes its job seriously, and is always on the lookout for pirates, thieves, and smugglers. Reefs, shoals, and sandbars are well known, and particularly dangerous ones are even identified by lighthouses. Strange and deadly sea beasts are uncommon in the waters around Lankhmar owing to the simple fact that they're hunted when they appear (their presence discourages shipping).



No other city-states have taken quite as much care with their ocean safeguards. Ilthmar maintains some lighthouses, but many have fallen into disrepair, and its navy is as corrupt and rotten as its government. The other ports on the Inner Sea can ill afford luxuries like patrol fleets and even lighthouses, though the nominally allied cities along the north coast maintain small patrols based out of each settlement. Unlike Lankhmar and Ilthmar ships, patrol vessels from other nations rarely venture far beyond their harbors unless they're on some specific duty — chasing down a known pirate, for instance, or escorting an important trade ship.

THE OUTER SEA

Few venture far into the Outer Sea, a vast region mostly bereft of islands or any useful points of call. Most who voyage there hug the coast north to a few city-states and smaller settlements or even on to Rime Isle, so distant to the folk of Lankhmar its existence is half myth. Others travel along the coastline south. Only the very foolish brave the deep blue to the west, where it's whispered there's another continent, weeks away, but one lacking large settlements or trade goods.

THE FROZEN SEA

There's little reason to venture into the far north. Rime Isle is a tiny bastion of civilization, a sub-arctic port eager for many trade goods, always ready to ship or sell quantities of salt. Beyond it lies a cold seascape drifting with great mountains of ice, and beyond even that lies a great sheet of ice that never melts, though some say that on days when the fog and mist blow free

you can see ships trapped in great blocks of frozen sea, some dating back to ancient days, and some resembling no known vessels.

THE SEA OF STARS

South of the island continent of Lankhmar, The Outer Sea and The Sea of the East give way to the strangest body of water upon Nehwon, the Sea of Stars. Only a handful of ships visit The Sea of Stars routinely: traders seeking routes to Klesh, Tovilyis, or even far Tisinilit. None venture far from the coasts, for once out of sight of land the sea grows very strange. Dangerous entities are said to drift there, half-dream, half-nightmare, to lure men to their dooms. Few who dare to voyage farther south return, and those who do declare the sea impassable because of a vast field of shifting, towering waterspouts.

THE SEA OF THE EAST

While The Sea of the East is warm temperate to sub-tropical, few settlements dot its shores, for most of the surrounding territory is arid wasteland, and The Sinking Land to the north is frequently a barrier to travel. Travelers usually tighten their belts and instead use the southern canal that links to the southern end of the River Hlal and head north upon it to Lankhmar.

Fewer traders means fewer pirates, and fewer sea traffic in general. The area is home to tales of lost islands, tiny paradises forgotten by men or impassable to all those incapable of braving mighty reef chains. Typically such tales feature man-eating monsters and lost pirate gold as well, and the typical Lankhmaran doesn't put much stock in them.

But chiefly they talked of their mistress, the sea, whose curving motions they loved again, and to whose moods they now felt preternaturally attuned, particularly in darkness. They spoke of her rages and caressings, her coolths and undending dancings, sometimes lightly footing a minuet, some times furiously a-stamp, and her infinitude of secret parts.

"Their Mistress, The Sea"

CHAPTER TWO: LANKHMAR AND THE SEA

From time immemorial the people of Nehwon have found a way to earn their living from the sea. There are naturally the sailors, and the merchants buying and selling anything imaginable, some of whom own a single ship that they captain, and others who own a dozen they rarely even see. There are the dockside laborers and the people who serve them food and wine and other entertainments. And there are other professionals as well, detailed in the following sections.

THE HARBOR PATROL

Every trade good that reaches Lankhmar via ship receives at least a cursory examination from inspectors of the harbor patrol. Papers are stamped, fees are paid to the wharf or warehouse, or to laborers, or to all of these and more.

While corruption is rampant in the harbor patrol, it's considered bad form to bribe inspectors outright — instead, fees are imposed for extra documentation, or sample products are provided for thorough inspection, and so on. Inspectors well know who has the money to spare, though they sometimes arbitrarily invent fees for people to whom they take a disliking, or invent fines for first-time traders.

Perhaps fishermen are the only seafaring profession that doesn't have a contentious relationship with the harbor inspectors. By longstanding tradition the captains of fishing vessels roll a few choice fish for inspectors from every catch. Neither the fisherman nor inspectors even look on the exchange as a bribe anymore, and some are fast friends.

Inspectors aren't primarily looking for hazardous or illegal goods because nearly anything is for sale in Lankhmar. Their job is mostly to ensure that everything coming through the port is properly taxed. That's not to say harbor inspectors have no other cares; should they find something truly alarming or dangerous, they can and do act. For instance, all but the most corrupt of inspectors would refuse to allow dangerous animals off a ship if they weren't properly caged.

Working beside the inspectors are teams of patrolmen. Mostly they accompany inspectors, but they do make passes through the harbor. There are very few of them for the vast number of wharves and warehouses, so most ships with anything of value are expected to police themselves. Berthing fees at some wharves support a fee for private watchmen to check on the vessels there at least once a day.

They were sailors, he judged from their pitgails and shuffling tait, although they were both naked, and they were indisputably dead—by token of their unhealthy color, their carelessness of the thick slime streaking them, the way their bulging eyes showed only whites and the bottom crescent of the irises, and the fact that their hair, ears, and other portions of their anatomies looked somewhat fish-chewed.

—When the Sea-King's Away

FISHING

The fishing industry is a crucial facet of life in Lankhmar and all seaside city-states of Nehwon. Frequently these are small, family-owned boats, but larger cities also have small fishing fleets owned by merchant princes. Most of these fishing boats can be found near the cities where their fisher-folk live, or within a few hours' travel, although they can also be found in more distant places if they're seeking a particular kind of game.

SMUGGLING

Nearly everything is available in Lankhmar, but some items are still smuggled through criminal channels, usually to avoid the sometimes exorbitant taxes and fees levied by harbor inspectors, or various docking and transport fees. Smugglers can and do make their way to quiet berths, or row silently in late at night, hopefully out of sight of the harbor patrols or even watchmen on other ships, who don't take kindly to those skipping out on paying the same fees everyone else must suffer.

LANKHMARAN NAVY

Although corruption is rampant throughout many Lankhmar institutions, it doesn't currently have solid footing in the Lankhmaran navy, whose sailors and officers are well-trained, fairly well paid, and have excellent esprit d'corps. This small but capable force patrols the coast for pirates, occasionally lends aid to those in need, and generally takes pride in keeping the Lankhmar sea lanes and coastal regions safe. Ilthmar sometimes

complains that the Lankhmar navy extends their patrol into territories that aren't their own, but Ilthmar has never invested in enough ships of its own to follow up with any threats.

Lankhmaran navy ships can sometimes be spotted very far afield if they're hunting a pirate or if they've been dispatched on some errand for the overlord, sometimes venturing even into the Outer Sea.

PIRACY

Owing to the startling effectiveness of the Lankhmaran navy and a recent campaign waged by the Eight Cities, pirates in the Inner Sea are fairly rare.

Most pirates are the dregs and discards from a dozen lands, hunting the sea lanes for easy prey. More dangerous are raiders from the north sailing down in longships, although they're more apt to try their luck against smaller settlements or towns along the northern coast than to challenge other vessels.

Mingol hordes from the steppes have long since mastered the craft of seamanship and are among the finest sailors in Nehwon, and some of these, too, have taken to piracy. Disciplined and fearless, well-known for the blistering arrow fire they launch from their decks, they're probably the most feared of Nehwon's pirates.

Most Nehwon pirates aren't any more violent than necessary—they're more interested in goods than bloodshed, and often leave the surviving crew and even the ship unharmed. Some pirates, though, are in league with slavers, or are interested in the ships themselves, in which case everything they've won is sold for profit.

THE COMMON FOLK

Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, as well as many other ordinary citizens of Lankhmar, have boats tucked away in small berths, which are plentiful enough that the monthly storage fees aren't particularly dire. A Game Master might encourage her players to have a vessel of their own, to design characters with Boating and Navigation skills, or even to give them an initial die of Boating or Swimming for free when they create their characters.

Native Lankhmarans grow up near the water, and many of them earn money in trades related to it even if they're not world class navigators or sail masters. It may be they earned tiks one summer rowing a harbor inspector on his rounds, or poling cargo out to a deepwater vessel.

It could be that for a few years they regularly made the trip back and forth to Ilthmar and learned a little about sailcraft and tides. And if they grew up in the city, they probably spent some time splashing along the river front in the summer when they were very young, a luxury all Lankhmarans can afford.

BERTHING COSTS

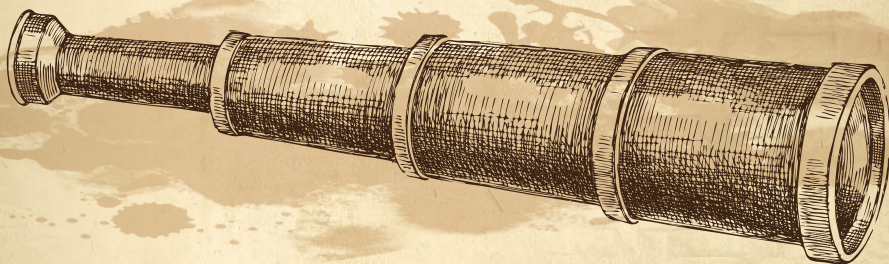
A wide variety of berths are available in the city of Lankhmar, from rotten jetties where no one goes without keeping their hand on their knife hilt, to expensive wharfs maintained for the aristocracy with 'round-the-clock watchmen.

These are average prices. It's perfectly conceivable there might be some ordinary docks with mooring posts that run a little less expensive, or that are a little more pricey owing to a pair of night watchmen.

Cheap	Daily/Monthly
Boat	3b/5s
Small Ship	1s/12g
Med Ship	1g/25g

Ordinary	Daily/Monthly
Boat	1s/12g
Small Ship	1g/25g
Med Ship	5g/125g
Large Ship	15g/200g

Expensive	Daily/Monthly
Boat	1g/25g
Small Ship	15 g/200g
Med Ship	40g/1400 g
Large Ship	150 g/2000g



CHAPTER THREE CHARACTERS

NEW HINDRANCE

SEASICK (MINOR)

The character must make a Vigor check each time he boards a ship. On a success, the character manages to control his sickness. With a failure he suffers a -2 penalty to all Trait rolls until he spends an hour on dry land.

Woe betide the character when caught in a storm! He must make a Vigor roll at the start of each round until the storm abates or his seasickness kicks in. He still rolls if already suffering seasickness: a second failed Vigor roll increases the penalty to -4.

NEW EDGES

BACKGROUND EDGES

NATURAL SWIMMER

Requirements: Novice

Your hero takes to water like a fish and can hold his breath longer than most others. Natural swimmers add +2 to their Swimming rolls, and +1 to their Swimming Pace, and can hold their breath 50% longer than others of their species.

COMBAT EDGES

RAMMING SPEED!

Requirements: Seasoned, Boating d8+

When all else fails, a ship can be used as a weapon. The captain receives a +2 bonus to perform a Ram maneuver if he is steering the vessel. In addition, the ship takes only half damage from ramming attacks it delivers (one-quarter if the ship is fitted with a ram).

LEADERSHIP EDGES

BOARD 'EM

Requirements: Novice, Command, Throwing d8+

The character is a master at judging when to launch grapples against enemy vessels. When he leads the boarding party, group Throwing rolls to grapple an enemy vessel receive a +4 bonus.

MASTER AND COMMANDER

Requirements: Seasoned, Command, Smarts d8+, Boating d10+, Intimidation d8+, must be sole Captain of the vessel when the Edge is used.

Crews who serve under these skilled leaders add +2 to their Boating rolls.

PROFESSIONAL EDGES

BOARDER

Requirements: Novice, Boating d6+, Climbing d8+, Throwing d8+

Many captains instill courage in their men by offering additional rewards to the first man to board an enemy vessel. Few survive to claim their prize. Through skill and luck this character has survived dozens of boarding actions and feels empowered by the adrenaline rush. All Climbing and Throwing rolls involving ropes are made at +2. Anytime he is the first allied character to board an enemy vessel he receives a Benny.

WEIRD EDGES

STORM CHASER

Requirements: Novice, Boating d8+

When the weather is at its worst the character is at his best, seeming to read the storm like he would a book. Such characters are respected for their skill but feared for their love of a good storm.

The character receives +2 to all Boating rolls made during a storm. In addition, the character may draw two Action Cards each round during a storm and keep the best card. If the character has the Wind Sense Edge as well he draws three cards total.

WIND SENSE

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Boating d8+

The character has an almost supernatural knowledge of air and wind. He can sense changes in the weather and wind direction long before they actually happen.

If the character is piloting a ship he gains +2 to Boating rolls during Contact, using his knowledge of the winds to outrun and catch prey.

In addition, the character may draw two Action Cards each round during a storm and keep the best. If the character has the Storm Chaser Edge as well he draws three cards.

NEW POWERS

BECALM

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: Special

Range: Sight

Duration: 15 minutes/Rank

Trappings: A gesture of the arms

Becalm affects a single ship of any size, halving its Top Speed and Acceleration for the duration. A ship may be affected by multiple castings of this spell, though neither Top Speed nor Acceleration may ever be reduced below 1.

Becalm also adds +2 to a ship's Boating totals in a storm, whether magical or natural. The Casting Modifier is equal to one-tenth of the vessel's base Toughness (ignore Armor). A ship with a base Toughness of 16, for example, has a Casting Modifier of -2 to *becalm*. The spell can also be cast on an individual (-1 Casting Modifier for Medium size or lower, -2 for Large, and -4 for Huge) who counts any water they are in as calm.

MEND

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: Special

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

Trappings: The caster must stand on the deck of the ship and concentrate as the wood knits together.

Mages with this spell can actually *mend* damage done to a vessel's hull within the last hour.

The Casting Modifier is equal to half the ship's base Toughness (ignore Armor and magical bonuses) plus the ship's Wounds.

A success repairs one wound, a raise *mends* two. The spell has no effect on critical hits. Those must be repaired by the crew by normal methods.

NEW POWERS SUMMARY

Power	Rank	Modifier	Range	Duration
Becalm	Novice	Special	Sight	15 min/Rank
Mend	Mend	Special	Touch	Instant

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SHIPS OF NEHWON

The largest ships of Nehwon aren't the tall ships from the age of sail, but broad-beamed tubs, galleys, and longships. Most city-states stick with familiar technologies that have served them well for centuries. Real innovation is only seen in some smaller vessels, including sloops with experimental rigging and sail distribution.

Given the available ships, many captains prefer to sail fairly close to the coastline, for large waves can easily swamp broad ships. This keeps the older-style galleys in business, for they can reach high speeds for the short distances required to shoot out of some hidden cove and overtake passing ships.

All ships, regardless of size or point of origin, use a standard template to describe them.

GALLEY TACTICS

Galleys are capable of great speed in short bursts, owing to their dependence upon the muscle power of their oarsmen. Pirate ships usually lurk along the coast in hidden coves, waiting for their prey to sail close and then advancing before the wind can change. They're especially dangerous when sailing ships have no wind, or don't have the room to tack into an escape course.

Acceleration: This lists the vessel's Acceleration in inches per turn, based on tactical tabletop rates.

Top Speed: This is the maximum number of inches a ship may move per turn on the tabletop.

Handling: Some vessels are more maneuverable because of their rigging, the ship's design, or the skill of those who built it. A ship's Handling adds directly to the captain's Boating rolls, as well as the crew's if making a group Boating roll.

Toughness: This is the ship's ability to withstand damage. The number that follows in parentheses is the ship's armor, which is already figured into the listed Toughness. A ship's base Toughness is equal to its listed Toughness minus the armor.

Crew: The first score is the number of crew required to operate the ship's sails, rigging, and so on. Having less than this number subtracts 2 from the crew's Boating rolls, and having less than half the required number subtracts 4. Sailors must have a minimum Boating skill of d6 to count as crew.

The number after the plus is the number of passengers the vessel can easily accommodate, including places to eat, sleep, and linger. Up to twice this number can travel for short distances (a day or less). If the crew stat is altered for any reason, this doesn't affect the number of passengers the ship can carry.

Cost: The cost of a ship, in gold rilks.

FISHING SMACK

Many fishermen venture forth in rowboats. These larger vessels venture into deeper water with nets, and are sometimes away from home for days at a time.

Acc/TS: 1/7, **Toughness:** 10 (2), **Crew:** 3+5, **Handling:** 0, **Cost:** 750

GALLEY

Galleys are long, open ships used primarily for warfare. Galleys have sails, but are propelled by oars when becalmed or when in combat. Most are also equipped with large rams. Some are outfitted with ballista or catapults, particularly if they are part of a siege operation. Captains of galleys almost always have the Ramming Speed! Edge.

Acc/TS: 2/8, **Toughness:** 19 (4), **Crew:** 80+16, **Handling:** -2, **Heavy Weapons:** 2, **Cost:** 3,000

Notes: Acc/Top Speed is 1/3 with sail; Heavy Armor; Ram (AP 4 and halves damage sustained when ramming).

LONGBOAT

These large rowboats are designed to haul small quantities of cargo between ship and shore, and some are used by short-range family fishing crews.

Acc/TS: 1/2, **Toughness:** 10 (2), **Crew:** 2+4, **Handling:** +1, **Cost:** 75

Notes: May mount a sail (Crew: 1+5).

LONGSHIP

Long, sleek, maneuverable, and sturdy, these swift open ships from the north are powered both by sail and oar, and have shallow drafts to beach on shores.

Acc/TS: 3/12, **Toughness:** 15 (2), **Crew:** 20+6, **Handling:** +1, **Cost:** 2,000

MERCHANT, LARGE

A tubby vessel that wallows through the waves, large merchant ships usually hug the coastline rather than venturing into deeper waters. They handle poorly during



ROWBOAT



inclement weather unless they can retreat to shallow waters or protected coves. A large merchant ship offers plenty of room for cargo and passengers.

Acc/TS: 1/10, **Toughness:** 13 (2), **Crew:** 25+10, **Handling:** -1 (-3 during in storms), **Cost:** 2,500

MERCHANT, SMALL

Like the larger merchant, this vessel wallows more than it ploughs through waves. It, too, handles poorly during inclement weather unless it can retreat to shallow waters or protected coves. A small merchant ship has room for cargo and a few passengers.

Acc/TS: 1/9, **Toughness:** 10 (2), **Crew:** 10+4, **Handling:** 0 (-1 in heavy storms), **Cost:** 1,200

ROWBOAT

These small boats are common throughout the Inner Sea and coastal regions of Nehwon. Ship crews use them to travel from their ship to shore and back.

A rowboat that takes a single wound from a Heavy Weapon is wrecked.

Acc/TS: 1/1, **Toughness:** 8 (2), **Crew:** 1+2, **Handling:** 0, **Cost:** 50

SLOOP

Sloops are small, swift, two-masted vessels with shallow draft. They are favored by smugglers as they can easily slip up rivers and channels where larger ships cannot pursue.

Acc/TS: 3/10, **Toughness:** 13 (2), **Crew:** 1+11, **Handling:** +1, **Cost:** 2,000

SLOOP, SMALL

An even smaller two-masted ship frequently found on the Inner Seas, the small sloop is swift and maneuverable like its larger cousin. Small sloops have a tendency to heel over in stormy weather, and some mariners have taken to attaching an outrigger to one side of the ship, making it capable of enduring even long ocean voyages.

Acc/TS: 2/8, **Toughness:** 10 (2), **Crew:** 1+5, **Handling:** +1 (+2 with outrigger), **Cost:** 500

SLOOP



YACHT

The pleasure boats of the wealthy, yachts are small galleys with substantial crews. Some crew are traditional officers and sailors, others are chefs and entertainers, and an unfortunate number are oar slaves, although they're hosed down more frequently than regular galley slaves so that the wealthy don't have to smell anything unpleasant.

Most yachts rarely venture far from their home cities or coasts.

Acc/TS: 2/8, **Toughness:** 10 (2), **Crew:** 60+10, **Handling:** -2, **Cost:** 2,500

SAILS OF NEHWON

In *The Swords of Lankhmar*, Fritz Leiber writes that nations of the Inner Sea are identifiable by their sails, and he names some of them:

White Sails: Lankhmar

Green Sails: The Eight Cities

Red Sails: Pirates

Black Sails: Funeral Barges (long ago, Lankhmar sails were black)

The GM is encouraged to devise standard sail colors for other travelers of the Inner Sea — purple for Ilthmar, say, and yellow for Sarheenmar. Orange pennants might flap from the masts of the massive vessels of the monarch of the Lands of the East, and perhaps merchants from Klesh prefer blue striped sails and those from Quarmall a sedate brown.

Although there was yet little real danger of that, the Mouser stood by the tiller, Fafhrd looked to the mainsheet. Then Slinoor, hurrying back aft followed by a few pale sailors, sprang to the taffrail with a cry.

The fogbank was slowly rolling eastward. Clear water stretched to the western horizon. Two bowshots north of Squid, four other ships were emerging in a disordered cluster from the white wall: the war galley Shark and the grain ships Tunny, Carp, and Grouper. The galley, moving rapidly under oars, was headed toward Squid.

But Slinoor was staring south. There, a scant bowshot away, were two ships, the one standing clear of the fog-bank, the other half hid in it.

—Swords of Lankhmar

CHAPTER FIVE: SETTING RULES

ARMOR AND SWIMMING

It is particularly difficult to swim while wearing armor. Characters subtract any Encumbrance penalties as usual from Swimming rolls, but also subtract the natural bonus of any armor worn as well. Ignore magical bonuses, considering only the bonus of a basic suit of that type.

A suit of leather, for example, adds +1 to the user's Toughness, and so subtracts -1 from his Swimming rolls. (Leather also weighs twice as much when wet.)

FIGHTING BELOW DECK

It's cramped below the decks of a ship where boxes, bottles, and kegs are stored in every nook and cranny and the ceiling forces a man to stoop. Any weapon longer than a knife, hook, or other short weapon (less than 6") inflicts a -2 penalty to the user's Fighting rolls when using the weapon below deck.

SHIP COMBAT

Some large ships carry ballista and even catapults, but it should not be imagined that they're used like cannons. Ballista and catapults require a great deal of deck space,

fire slowly, and are extremely difficult to control from a moving platform. No one but the most desperate or gifted attempt to use one while a ship is in motion.

Ship combat, then, is not usually a contest between dueling ballista batteries, and instead involves one ship closing upon another. Pirate ships and warships maintain batteries of archers, and galleys mount heavy rams. When they *are* used, catapults and ballista rock the entire frame of even large vessels.

CONTACT

On a clear day, ships often spy each other at tremendous ranges. Catching a foe at such ranges and with relatively slow-moving craft can sometimes take days.

If one ship is attempting to catch another, the captains make opposed Boating rolls. The crew can help by making a group Boating roll (see **Cooperative Rolls** in *Savage Worlds*). Each attempt takes about eight hours. If the pursuer wins with a raise, he has brought his foe to Close Quarters (see below). If the target wins with a raise, he has escaped. All other results mean the chase continues.

Once the ships are in Close Quarters, use the **Chases** system in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook.

SHIP'S WEAPONS

Ballista and catapult rates of fire and crew complements are discussed in the **Gear** section of *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*. Successful chances to hit are further modified by speed and weather conditions. Modifiers are cumulative, along with modifiers for medium (-2) and long (-4) range.

Condition	Modifier
Choppy seas	-1
Stormy seas	-2
Firing ship in motion	-2
Firing ship at full speed	-4

CONTROLLING A SHIP

When making Boating rolls, the GM should allow the players to roll for the ship's crew, as if they were controlling Allied Extras in combat. Of course any character working on the ship is making her own rolls.

RANKS OF ARCHERS

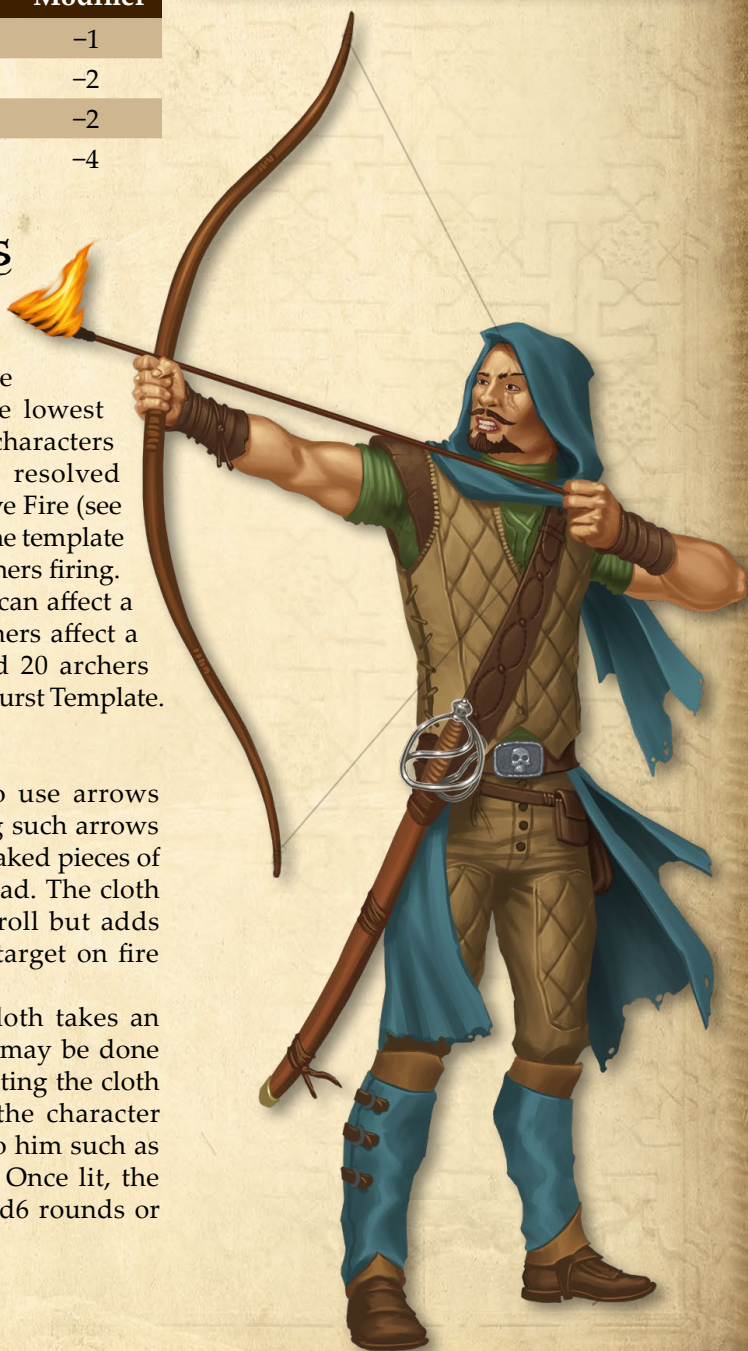
Instead of firing individually, archers may fire in ranks. When using this option make a single attack roll using the lowest Shooting die type of all the characters involved. Firing in ranks is resolved exactly the same as Suppressive Fire (see *Savage Worlds*), but the size of the template depends on the number of archers firing.

A minimum of five archers can affect a Small Burst Template, 10 archers affect a Medium Burst Template, and 20 archers (the maximum) affect a Large Burst Template.

FLAMING ARROWS

Some attackers may wish to use arrows which are set on fire. Creating such arrows simply requires tying pitch-soaked pieces of cloth just behind the arrowhead. The cloth inflicts a -1 to the Shooting roll but adds +2 damage and may set the target on fire (see *Savage Worlds*).

Tying (or removing) the cloth takes an action if done in combat but may be done before combat if desired. Lighting the cloth also takes an action unless the character has a source of fire adjacent to him such as a torch, brazier, or campfire. Once lit, the arrow must be used within 2d6 rounds or the fire destroys the arrow.



When used by a rank of archers, flaming arrows may only set individual targets on fire if they take damage from rolling a 1 on their Spirit die (see **Suppressive Fire** in *Savage Worlds*). If the location under the template is flammable (a wooden building or ship for instance), it may also catch on fire. Make one roll for a SBT, two rolls for a MBT, and four rolls for a LBT to see if the structure catches fire. Most wooden buildings are very flammable (catching fire on a 4–6), but if soaked in water, they are just considered flammable (catching fire on a 6).

Flaming arrows are useless in any rain heavier than a light sprinkle.

Fighting Fires: Crews can put out fires, but they can perform no other duties while doing so. A team equal to half the ship's base Toughness (ignore Armor bonuses) is required. The team must assemble one round, and in the next may make a group Boating roll at –2 for one fire. With success, the team extinguishes the fire.

Fire Ships: If a burning ship strikes another vessel, there is a chance the fire spreads from one ship to the other. Roll 1d6 and add +1 if the burning vessel is fully ablaze. On a 5 or 6, the fire spreads to the other vessel. Roll each round during which the ships remain in contact.

BOARDING

If one ship wants to board another, it must maneuver itself to be on the same initiative card as its foe and perform a successful Force maneuver.

If successful, the boarders make an immediate group Throwing roll for the crew. Success means the target is grappled and drawn close enough to board. An opponent's crew can attempt to sever the grapples with an opposed Fighting roll with at least an equal amount of crew. The roll should be modified as follows:

Modifier	Event
+4	Enemy ship is stationary
–1	Per 1" difference in Speed
+2	Boarders have larger crew
–2	Boarders have smaller crew
–2	Rough weather
–4	Full-blown storm

Difference in Speed: This is the relative difference. Subtract the lower speed from the higher speed if the ships are traveling in the same direction. Add the speeds if the vessels are sailing toward each other.

DAMAGE

Damage that equals or exceeds a ship's Toughness rating forces the captain to make a Boating roll or go Out of Control (roll on the **Out of Control Table**, below). Each raise on the damage roll also inflicts a wound. Each wound caused to the ship inflicts a –1 penalty to the captain's Boating skill rolls until someone repairs the damage. The attacker scores a Critical Hit for each wound inflicted, and rolls on the **Critical Hits Table** to find out exactly what happened.

When a ship takes its fourth wound, it is automatically wrecked and the ship begins to sink. A wrecked ship cannot move, only drift.

COLLISIONS

Ship collisions are dangerous. The damage to the ship is 1d6 for every 5" of its current speed (calculated as half its Top Speed, unless deliberately ramming). If a ship moving at 6" per turn suffers a collision, for instance, it takes 1d6 damage, as does anything it rams into.

Heavy Armor: Ships with Heavy Armor add their Armor rating as an AP value to their damage. Also, ships with Heavy Armor

Fafhrd half turned his head and muttered gravely, "Mark me, Mouser, there's magic in this somewhere!" The Mouser thought he had never in his life heard a less necessary remark.

—When the Sea-King's Away

OUT OF CONTROL TABLE

2d6	Effect
2	Dip: The prow of the ship disappears beneath the waves, covering the decks in water. Roll 1d6 to determine how many random crewmen must make Agility rolls or be washed overboard.
3–9	Slip: Be it due to bad orders or confusion in the heat of battle, the captain temporarily loses control of the ship. This results in a –2 penalty to Boating rolls on the captain's next action.
10–11	Major Slip: Worse than a slip, the captain's next boating action is at –4.
12	Roll: The ship rolls to one side, nearly capsizing. Roll 2d6 to determine how many random crewmen must make Agility rolls (–2) or be washed overboard.

CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2d6	Effect
2	Scratch and Dent: The attack merely dents the ship or splinters rails. There is no permanent damage.
3	Mast: A mast is hit and snapped. A single-masted ship is dead in the water apart from current, unless it has oars. If the ship has two masts, Acceleration and Top Speed drop by one-half.
4	Rudder: The rudder or steering column is hit. The ship may only turn to the left or only to the right, and suffers –2 to its Handling.
5–8	Hull: Count damage normally but roll 1d6 as well. If the result is a 6, part of the damage fell below the waterline and the ship begins to sink.
9	Weapon: A ship weapon or group of archers is hit. If the ship has neither, then this is another Hull hit.
10–11	Crew: Crew Critical Hits inflict 2d6 casualties scattered randomly among all crewmen. Remove that many Extras immediately. They may recover after the fight (see Healing in <i>Savage Worlds</i>). If the 2d6 roll comes up a 12, a Wild Card character or other named personality was hit as well. Subtract the Armor value of the ship from the damage if the victim was belowdecks.
12	Wrecked: A "Wrecked" Critical Hit is bad news for the ship and its crew as well. The ship begins to sink.

Damage against ships works as usual but with a few additional details to any Critical Hits suffered.

halve damage they take from colliding with other obstacles (including ships) that don't have Heavy Armor.

Relative Speeds: Increase the damage if a ship hits another object moving toward it. If two ships ram into each other head on at a speed of 10", for instance, their relative speed is actually 20" and each ship suffers 4d6 damage. Similarly, a ship moving away from an attacker subtracts its speed from that of the ramming ship.

SINKING

A wrecked boat begins to sink. Unless the vessel is cracked wide open and sinks instantly, this generally takes a little time. Use the guidelines below should it become important.

- Small craft (rowboats, canoes) sink at the end of the round in which they're wrecked.
- Medium craft, such as galleys, sink in 1d6 minutes.
- Large craft, such as a trade ship of the monarch of the East, sink in 4d6 minutes.

Any ships grappled to the unfortunate vessel must release their grappling lines or be dragged down along with it.

A sinking ship becomes a hazard to other ships still involved in combat.

DRIFTING

A wrecked boat that hasn't sunk drifts with the current (if any). This is typically 2d6" per round for fast-moving rivers, and 1d6" for most other rivers or in strong seas. In the ocean, the GM can roll 1d12 to determine which direction a vessel drifts, reading the die result like a clock face.

REPAIRS

Damage suffered in combat may only be repaired at dry dock. There are dry docks in all major ports. Ship repairs typically take 1d4 days per wound or Critical Hit, and both wounds and Critical Hits must be repaired separately.

SHIP MANEUVERS

If the battle is taking place on the tabletop, clever or experienced characters can experiment with a variety of tactics to try to escape damage, or engage in pursuit.

Club Hauling (-4): By dropping the anchor and having all the crew rush to one side of the ship the captain can attempt to turn his ship tightly in a very narrow circle. The captain makes a Boating roll. If successful he turns his ship up to 180 degrees. On a failure the ship goes Out of Control.

Hard Brake (0): The pilot decelerates up to two times the ship's Acceleration, whether by dropping the sails, rowing backward suddenly, or dropping an anchor.

Obstacle or Stunt (-2 or more): Sailing through a really tight obstacle looks easy enough on the tabletop since a ship is simply moved however the player wants. But in reality, the ship is pitching and tossing at the mercy of the wind and is much more difficult to hold steady than the battle mat shows.

For this reason, pilots trying to pass through tight obstacles — narrow reefs, between a harbor wall and a ship moving to block progress — must make Boating rolls. The standard difficulty is -2, but really tight spots might call for a -4 or greater penalty. If the roll is failed, the ship hits the obstacle and suffers collision damage as usual.

Shearing (-2): Shearing involves drawing close alongside a vessel powered by oars in an attempt to smash its oars. The attacking captain must maneuver his ship into parallel contact with the enemy ship and make a successful Boating roll. If using the Chase rules, the attacking ship must be on the same position as the target and the captain must make a Force maneuver.

On a success, the target ship suffers 3d6 damage applied against its base Toughness (no Armor). If the damage results in a wound the oars are sheared — the vessel suffers no actual wound. The target's Top Speed is halved and it can only turn to the left or right as applicable, while using oars.

Tight Turn (0): The ship can turn between 70 and 90 degrees.

STORMS

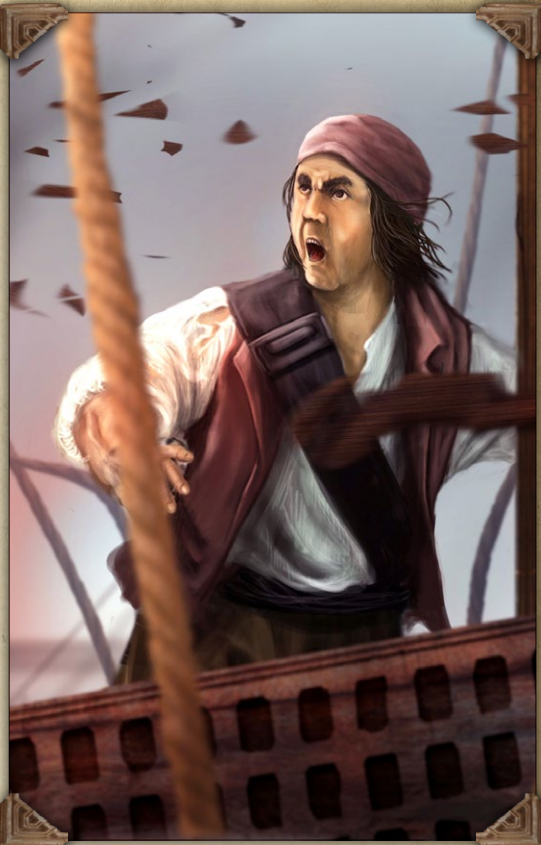
Nehwon's storms are legendary and unpredictable. Riding them out is a true test of a ship's pilot and crew's mettle.

Once per week, while the crew is at sea the Game Master draws a card from the Action Deck. When a Club face card is drawn, a storm hits the area in 1d4 hours. To push the heroes to the limit this could be in addition to any other encounter they may face.

First roll 1d6+3. This determines how the long the ship is under serious distress from the storm, in 30-minute increments. The Game Master draws another card to determine how rough the storm is that particular half-hour.

The pilot makes a Boating roll each half-hour, subtracting the penalty shown on the table below. Storm damage is applied against the ship's base Toughness, ignoring all but magical armor.

Every half-hour the Boating roll is failed, each character must make an Agility roll (add +2 if tethered). The Game Master can roll for crewmen as well (use groups of 10 for large ships). Those who fail are washed overboard and must make Swimming rolls to avoid drowning (see *Savage Worlds*). A critical failure indicates the character has also been hit by driftwood for 2d6 damage. Aquatic and semi-aquatic creatures must roll to see if they're hit by storm-tossed debris, but cannot drown.



Storm Severity		
Card Draw	Penalty	Damage
2	-4	5d6
3-10	-2	4d6
Jack-Ace	-0	3d6
Joker	+2	3d6

Out of the surging wall of darkness emerged the dragon-headed prow of a galley. He saw the black wood of the sides, the light wood of the oars, the glint of wet metal. The deck was at a perilous tilt. Water gushed up through the opposite oarholes. In the confusion, he realized, the galley had gotten into the troughs, and was beginning to take the seas broadside. Gradually the ripples became wavelets, the wavelets became smacking waves. Then they slipped past a black, foam-edged sword of rock and were in the open sea. Then the sloop began to climb; up, up, up until it reached the top, overbalanced and plummeted down on the opposite side. The first wave was followed by a second and a third, and a fourth, each almost as high.

—The Sunken Land

CHAPTER SIX: ADVENTURE GENERATOR

Generate your own Savage Tales of the Nehwon seas with the tables in this chapter! Use the results as rolled, tweak those results as the story take shape, or simply scan the text for ideas. Don't feel as if you have to follow the results, or even the steps, verbatim. For instance, you may not want to worry about complications, or you may want several of them, or you may already have a location or patron or target in mind and just need some additional details to bring the story together.

You should always keep the preferences of your players in mind, of course. If their

characters are far too upright to participate in assassination attempts, even against evil targets, or aren't interested in owning their own ship, some adventures just aren't a good fit for them, no matter how attractive they might be to conceive or run.

All you need to use the generator are some dice and a deck of cards. Sometimes the results might not make obvious sense, and you may always re-roll, but if you sit and think for a moment you might cook up some surprising connections that will catch your players completely unawares...and hopefully delight them.



GENERATING ADVENTURES

There are several branching steps involved in generating adventures.

1. Roll on the **Involvement Table** to see how the characters got wind of the adventure. Maybe they've stumbled into the tale, maybe it's a plan of their own, or more likely they've been hired by a patron of some kind.
 - If they've been hired by a patron, roll on the **Relationship Table** to learn the pre-existing relationship between the characters and the patron.
 - A patron might be an institution, or a seemingly ordinary person, in which case you pull a card and consult the **People Table** to learn the identity of that person or group of people.
2. If the characters have a patron, roll on the **Motivation Table** to see why the patron wants the Objective.
3. Roll on the **Objective Table** to see what the characters seek.
 - If the Objective is a location, roll on the **Location Table**.
 - If the Objective involves a person, consult the **People Table** and draw a card to learn their identity
 - If the Objective involves an object, roll on the **Object Table**. If the Object is an animal, roll on the **Animal Table** to learn more about the creature involved.
4. Roll on the **Location Table** to see where the main part of the adventure takes place. You might want to roll multiple times if you foresee a series of important scenes in different places.
5. Who's against the characters? Roll on the **Opposition Table**. It might be a single person or a group, or even an entire guild or nation. If their motivation isn't obvious roll on the **Motivation Table**.
6. If things aren't already complicated enough, roll on the **Complications Table**. Matters just don't always go as

planned for heroes, particularly in the world of Nehwon.

7. There may well be supernatural elements involved in this Savage Tale if none have already been suggested during adventure generation. Consult the **Supernatural Elements Table** to add one.
8. Lastly, these are sea voyages, so weather and environmental conditions are always front and center. Roll on the **Weather Table** to see what the prevailing conditions are at the adventure location.

INVOLVEMENT

Start by rolling here to see how the characters get involved in the Savage Tale. What sets them on the path to adventure?

d20	Means of Involvement
1	Characters
2–3	Happenstance
4–5	Guild
6–7	Noble
8–9	Merchant
10–11	Temple
12	Government
13–20	Individual

Characters: The characters have no patron for this adventure. They own a treasure map or find one, have heard what's happening and want to get in on it, or have instigated the entire thing.

Government: Oddly enough, the government wants the characters, and not for prosecution or fines.

Guild: A Lankhmaran guild has a little something they need taken care of, and it's right in line with the characters' special skills.

Happenstance: The characters stumble into the situation by accident and end up in the right — or wrong — time and place as events unfold.

Individual: A fairly ordinary person needs to hire the characters for a venture. Shuffle the deck, pull a card, and consult the **People Table** to see who they are.

Merchant: A merchant requires the special skills of the characters, probably to take care of something in a subtle fashion.

Noble: An important noble must be in desperate straits because he or she turns to the characters for assistance.

Temple: A religious institution has to address something outside official channels, and turns to the characters for aid.

RELATIONSHIP

If your Savage Tale hinges on contact with a patron, you can get a lot of roleplay out of the relationship between that patron and the characters. It may be there's no relationship at all, but suppose there is? There's a big difference between hunting down a strange scroll to sell off as treasure, and trying to find an important document that proves an old friend is the rightful owner of a ship. Personal stakes almost always create better opportunities for roleplay.

d20	Relationship
1–7	No prior relation
8–11	Employer
12–15	Friend
16–17	Relative
18	Lover
19	Rival
20	Enemy

Employer: Of course there's a relationship — the characters are either currently working for the employer or have worked for that employer in the past and parted at least on neutral grounds.

Enemy: An old enemy needs assistance. They've never gotten along with the characters, but the enemy has always respected them, or knows they have the skills required for this particular task. At least that's what the enemy claims.

Friend: The patron is a friend of the characters or their extended family.

Lover: One of the characters has a current or former romantic interest who wants to hire them.

No Prior Relation: The characters have never worked with this individual or group before, and the patron either picked them at random, was referred to them, or has heard of them by reputation.

Relative: It looks like one of the characters has a relative who needs help, or wants help getting rich...

Rival: A rival is in very desperate straits. He or she (or they) need help, and can't take it on themselves. They call on the characters.

OBJECTIVE

What is it the characters are after? What do their patrons want them to do? Roll here to find out.

d20	Objective
1	Mapping
2	Contact person or institution
3	Information
4–6	Treasure
7	Secrets
8	Pleasure cruise
9–10	Steal
11–12	Rescue
13–14	Transport
15–16	Guard
17–18	Find
19	Destroy/slay
20	Roll twice

Contact person or institution: The characters are hired to make contact with a person or institution. They may be delivering a simple message or an object, or even a person or creature of some kind.

If an institution's already the patron, the characters are probably dispatched to contact another member of the institution, although generating a result on the **People Table** might inspire something different (you might wonder why a temple wants an artist contacted, but maybe they want to hire him to paint a huge mural and haven't been able to locate him — or his rivals have been keeping the job offers from reaching him). If it's an individual person wanting the heroes

to contact someone, roll on the **People Table** to find out who.

Destroy/Slay: The heroes must kill something or destroy an object.

Find: The characters have to locate a person, place, or thing.

Guard: The heroes have to shepherd a person or object, or stand watch over something.

Information: The characters are sent forth to discover information. They might be scouting out an enemy fleet, or accompanying a naturalist studying the migration of birds, or escorting an astronomer who wants to see the stars in the southron sky.

Mapping: The characters are hired to take a journey and make a map. It might be to improve upon an out-of-date map or chart, to scout a foreign enemy's fortifications or rival business's holdings, or even to find a fabled island. Rolling on the **Location Table** should serve as further inspiration.

Pleasure Cruise: Either the characters or their patrons want to escape for a while and take their ease on the waves. They might be sport fishing, or taking in the sights, or off to visit relatives or a famed tourist spot.

Rescue: The characters must rescue an imperiled creature or object.

Roll Twice: This Savage Tale's a little more complicated than usual. Generate two results by ignoring additional occurrences of "roll twice."

Secrets: Similar to information, except the secrets aren't in plain sight. Rather than just examining an enemy fleet at a safe distance and counting their prowls to see how many ships there are, characters unearthing secrets might have to sneak aboard an enemy vessel and study its secret rapid-fire ballista technology. Characters might have

PEOPLE, OBJECTS, AND CREATURES

Many results call on the characters to perform actions related to an object, person, or creature — such as stealing, rescuing, or hunting. When you need a random person, object, or creature, draw a card and read the result as follows:

- Red numbered cards and Aces are *people*. If you draw one of them, reshuffle the cards, draw again, and consult the **People Table**.
- Black numbered cards and Aces are *objects*. Choose whether it's ordinary treasure or some other object, and if the latter, roll on the **Object Table**. Alternately, select another card. Red cards are treasure, black cards are objects.
- Face cards are *creatures*. The creature could be an ordinary animal that's particularly valuable, or some rare creature, or even a monster. Roll on the **Animal Table** to learn the answer.

to learn how rival traders circumnavigate the rim islands without smashing upon the trailing reefs.

Steal: The characters must abscond with an object that doesn't belong to them; it might well be a person or creature.

Transport: The heroes have to take a person, creature, or item from one place to another, safeguarding it along the way.

"My people, the legends say, went raiding against them one summer, and none of the boats returned, save one, which came back after hope had been lost, its men almost dead from thirst. They told of sailing on and on, and never reaching Simorgya, never sighting its rocky coast and squat, many-windowed towers. Only the empty sea."

—Fafhrd, "The Bleak Shore"

Treasure: There's a great treasure involved, likely of gold, jewels, and pearls, although you might want to roll on the **Object Table** if your players have seen enough "ordinary" treasure before. Alternately, select a card. Red cards are treasure, black cards are objects.

MOTIVATION

Sometimes a patron's motivation is patently obvious: Usually they're after riches or power. But sometimes things are a little more complicated. Maybe they want that ancient curio for something entirely different than what they claim.

You also can use this table to determine why the opposition is actively trying to thwart the characters.

d20	Motivation
1–4	Wealth
5–6	Vengeance
7	Desire
8	Hidden motives
9	Hunger
10	Collection
11	Protection
12	Discredit/Frame
13	Demonstrate power
14	Create catastrophe
15	Curry favor
16	Accumulate power
17	Conceal
18	Destroy
19	Multiple motives
20	Secret motive

Accumulate Power: The person desires the objective because it will improve their personal hold upon power.

Collection: The person is a collector and desires the objective, or wants it restored, or wants it destroyed before someone else can collect it.

Conceal: The person is trying to hide some past wrong or incriminating evidence about herself, or something they hold dear.

Create Catastrophe: The person may be a full-blown super villain, or a do-gooder trying to halt the evil machinations of a death cult, or one masquerading as the other.

Curry Favor: The person is trying to impress someone to raise his social or political status.

Demonstrate Power: By fulfilling this objective, the person intends to demonstrate her power to enemies.

Desire: Something about the objective is related to the person's love life. Perhaps someone the person loves wants the objective (or thinks they do). Alternately, taking, finding, or destroying this objective eliminates a rival's chances for romance.

Destroy: The person means to utterly eliminate some other group, or that group's power or influence, by obtaining the objective.

Discredit/Frame: The person wants to sow dissent among enemies.

Hidden Motives: Roll twice. The person pretends one motive while secretly wanting another. Perhaps she's pretending she wishes to destroy what she says is an evil artifact, but really wants to demonstrate her power.

Hunger: Something about the objective is connected to the person's need to feed either himself or his followers. Perhaps he seeks the ingredients for a special potion, or a person who knows how to make it, or needs ingredients for a special ritual involving food.

Multiple Motives: Roll twice, ignoring other results of 19. The person has multiple motives. Perhaps she means both to frame an old enemy *and* protect her shipping firm.

Protection: Everything the person is doing is motivated by a desire to protect something he holds dear, even if it involves the destruction or death of someone else.

Secret Motive: The person says he means to do one thing, but really plans to do another. Roll twice. The most likely is the real motive, which the person lies about by pretending the other motive.

Vengeance: The person wishes revenge on a person or group.

Wealth: This person simply wants more money. Hey, who doesn't?

LOCATION

This table is for determining the central setting of the Savage Tale, or a possible objective.

d20	Location
1–2	Remote coast
3–4	Harbor
5–6	Deep ocean
7	Lost island
8	Well-traveled area
9	Underwater
10	Derelect ship
11–12	Player/passenger ship
13–14	Another ship
15	Reef
16	Narrows
17	Docks
18	Structure
19	Strange phenomenon
20	Roll twice

Another Ship: The major events take place on another ship, or the characters are seeking or pursuing or fleeing from one.

Deep Ocean: Far out of sight of land.

Derelect Ship: The characters find an abandoned or helpless vessel.

Docks: The wharf and piers of a city, settlement, or ruin.

Harbor: The characters must adventure within sight of a port and all its shipping.

Lost Island: A lost, forgotten, or uninhabited land mass.

Narrows: In or around a narrow passage between reefs, islands, or rocky coastline.

Player/Passenger Ship: The major events take place on the ship owned by the characters or the vessel they're traveling on.

Reef: On or near a dangerous reef.

Remote Coast: A coastline in the wilds, far from civilization.

Roll Twice: Two locales appear in this tale.

Strange Phenomenon: Something peculiar at sea, like a migration of whales, or sargassum, or a hole in the ocean, or a floating island. It could be a rare natural element or a supernatural occurrence.



Structure: This is a structure near the water or in it — a lighthouse, monument, temple, primitive diving bell, half-sunken statue holding a torch aloft...basically anything apart from some kind of ship.

Underwater: What the characters seek lies beneath the waves. If it doesn't lie in the shallows they must have special gear to reach it.

Well-Traveled Area: Far out at sea or near a coastline close to a major travel lane, likely in sight of passing ships.

PEOPLE

It might be that you have a contact, passenger, patron, or even a target who's a human. If so, draw a card and see what you get. Note that the result doesn't have to be an individual; it might be a group.

Red Joker: Entity in disguise. A supernatural being or other entity masquerading as a normal human. Draw again to determine their cover identity.

Black Joker: Mysterious figure. An individual known only by their name, code name, or activities.

People — Hearts

Card	Result
2	Con Artist: An individual making a living running scams.
3	Criminal: A forger, counterfeiter, or gangster.
4	Gambler: Someone who makes their living gambling.
5	Hunter: A professional animal trapper or hunter.
6	Mercenary: A sellsword or guard.
7	Pirate: A current or former pirate.
8	Smuggler: A trafficker in stolen or illegal goods.
9	Spy: An informant for a government or institution.
10	Thief: A professional safecracker or heist artist.
Jack	Ghoul: A Nehwon ghoul.
Queen	Killer: A madman or sociopath who lives to kill.
King	Assassin: A paid killer.
Ace	Bounty Hunter: Someone bringing back wanted men or women, dead or alive.

People — Spades

Card	Result
2	Farmer: Someone who lives by growing produce or husbanding animals.
3	Courier: A transporter of information or objects.
4	Craftsman: A carpenter, sculptor, potter, etc., or their apprentice.
5	Tradesman: A baker, chef, tailor, shoemaker, cart driver, etc., or an apprentice.
6	Healer: A specialist in one or more fields of medicine.
7	Scholar: An expert in one or more learned fields.
8	Ship Captain: A professional sailor, leader, and possible ship owner.
9	Soldier/Military Official: A soldier or someone affiliated with the military.
10	Student: Someone studying to become a scholar, healer, priest, etc.
Jack	Child: A young human.
Queen	Collector: Someone who collects objects, creatures, or stranger things.
King	Merchant: A trader and seller of goods, possibly a powerful one.
Ace	Ambassador: A representative of a country, city, tribe, or institution.

People — Diamonds

Card	Result
2	Acrobat: A professional tumbler, tightrope walker, etc.
3	Actor: A trained thespian.
4	Artist: A sculptor or painter.
5	Courtesan: A lover for hire.
6	Beggar: Someone who lives by begging for food or money.
7	Dancer: A professional dancer or choreographer.
8	Fortune-Teller: Someone who earns their money by reading fortunes, or an astrologer.
9	Musician: A singer, percussionist, or instrumentalist.
10	Poet: A writer of verse, possibly an orator as well.
Jack	Priest: A recognized clergyman and performer of sacred rites, or monk.
Queen	Priestess: A woman of the clergy.
King	Religious Figure: A powerful and respected religious leader, possibly a prophet.
Ace	Celebrity: Someone known locally, nationally, or even internationally.

People — Clubs

Card	Result
2	Fisherman: A professional who catches and sells fish. May own or captain a boat.
3	Foreigner: Someone from another city-state or region.
4	Drunk/Addict: Someone whose chief goal in life is to get their next dose.
5	Barbarian: An uncivilized individual from another area.
6	Inventor: An intellectual who devises new objects or techniques.
7	Kleshite: A foreigner from the tropical jungles south of Lankhmar.
8	Mingol: A foreigner from the steppe lands or seas.
9	Pilgrim: Someone on a religious journey to a shrine or temple.
10	Vendor: A professional seller of goods or foodstuffs.
Jack	Cultist: A member of a strange and possibly irrational religious group.
Queen	Lovers: Someone (or more) who is hopelessly in love, possibly newlyweds.
King	Wizard: A sorcerer, necromancer, witch, or other magic worker.
Ace	Adventurer: Someone much like the characters, earning a living by daring and occasional dirty dealing.

OBJECT

While many fine sword-and-sorcery adventures center around the search for or discovery of glittering mounds of treasure, other objects can make interesting goals as well. And if the characters are transporting or intercepting cargo, or a passenger with such, this table generates a little more variety.

Remember that a mundane-sounding result doesn't necessarily mean a mundane item. It might be lumber, but perhaps it's extremely valuable oak intended for the overlord's shipyards. Maybe it's fruit, but it's the sorcerously engineered frost grape, a secret for which the ruler of No-Ombrulsk is willing to pay his weight in gold!

d20	Object
1	Ancient architecture/art
2	Animal/creature
3	Building materials/lumber
4	Clothing/fabrics
5	Foodstuff/fruits
6	Furniture
7	Gems
8	Item of religious significance
9	Magical gewgaw
10	Necromantic object
11	Ore/metals
12	Paintings
13	Plants/herbs
14	Sculpture
15	Technology
16	Tools
17	Weapons
18	Wine/liquor
19	Writing/documents
20	Not what it seems

Ancient Architecture/Art: Stone inscriptions, arches, pottery, or art that's not necessarily attractive or obviously valuable.

Animal/Creature: Roll 1d10 and consult the following table.

- 1-6 Ordinary animal.
- 7-8 Extraordinary animal — a rare specimen of some kind, a highly trained animal, someone's pet, or an ordinary animal that is for some reason important. For example, a small herd of oxen intended for a new settlement are hardly rare, but they're extremely valuable to those waiting on them.
- 9-10 An extremely exotic animal or monster.

Building Materials/Lumber: Bricks, nails, ropes, or the raw components to produce them, or that ever-important commodity: wood. Oak might be required for ships, cedar for temple doors, mahogany for special religious sculptures, and so on.

Clothing/Fabrics: Imported garments or the raw material to manufacture them can be immensely valuable, depending upon demand and scarcity.

Foodstuff/Fruits: Sometimes the locals just can't lay hands on that delicate kind of melon from the hills that they crave, or have to purchase their grains abroad, or need ostrich eggs for a special ritual.

Furniture: The nobility or upper class is extremely attached to their furnishings and insist on taking them with them on their move, or sometimes furniture has been ordered from afar.

Gems: Usually found in small bundles, gems might be transported for sale, or they might be in raw condition before being cut and polished by a master craftsman.

Item of Religious Significance: This might be anything from a selection of

"...it blew stronger and stronger, smiting the water into great seething waves; crags and gullies piled mast-high with foam. No other men have seen such waves nor should see them; they are not churned for us or for our oceans."

—Ourph the Mingol, "The Bleak Shore"

cheap talismans to a dismantled shrine to a martyr's remains.

Magical Gewgaw: An item of interest to a wizard or government. Perhaps its magical power is obvious, or perhaps it's hidden, only detectable by those in the know. It's likely to leave anyone around it with an unpleasant sensation. And it might be a fake.

Necromantic Object: Something related to the dead: a sarcophagus, death mask, skull, gravestone, mummy, etc.

Not What It Seems: The item is either broken or poorly made, or is in truth one commodity masquerading as another, in which case roll a second time to see what the item truly is. You might end up with lumber that hides the eggs of some carnivorous beast, alcohol that's actually a magical weapon when imbibed, or a normal sheep that has a map tattoo only visible when it's sheared.

Ore/Metals: Either raw material for smelting, or prepared metal that's being shipped prior to it being converted into tools and weapons.

Paintings: Carefully packaged artwork kept in watertight containers on the upper decks of a ship, or even on display in the cabins of the wealthy.

Plants/Herbs: Plants or herbs useful for medical, alchemical, or recreational purposes, or simply for cooking.

Sculpture: Statues or reliefs of creatures, groups, or individuals. Perhaps it's been looted from some ancient place, or being moved legally from one temple to another, or perhaps it's a newly commissioned work.

Technology: This might include a shipment of sextants or spyglasses, or whatever wheels, or pulleys, or locks, or other, stranger items appropriate to Nehwon.

Tools: Plows, hammers, rakes, tridents, and other items.

Weapons: These might be anything from cheap daggers to spears intended for some distant front line to swords or even larger weapons, like dismantled trebuchets.

Wine/Liquor: The rarer the alcohol, the more carefully it's packaged and guarded, but alcohol is *always* carefully protected aboard ship, as sailors are infamous for finding their way into it.

Writing/Documents: Books, papers, or scrolls.

OPPOSITION

Likely there's some person, group, or creature standing between the characters and their goal. Roll here to see who or what they are.

d20	Opposition
1–2	Creature
3	Cult
4	Entity
5	Foreign power
6	Guild
7	Lankhmar navy
8	Mercenaries
9	Temple
10	Merchant
11	Noble
12	Pirates
13	Slavers
14	Wizard
15	Not as it seems
16–20	Multiple opponents (Roll twice. If you roll between 16–20 again, roll a third time)

Creature: There may be an intelligent monster behind everything that's underway, or there may simply be a monster that bars entrance to the underwater grotto, like a huge man-eating shark.

Cult: Turns out an evil cult is involved! Naturally. Nehwon seems stuffed with them.

Entity: A strange being, possibly god-like, is toying with the characters, perhaps via a minor curse or geas. Perhaps it more directly bars their search for their objective.

Foreign Power: An enemy city-state or tribal group is interested in the same objective, or happens to be in the same area looking for something entirely different, but still bars access to whatever it is the characters seek.

Guild: An entire guild is interested in the same objective. They might have agents in the field seeking it, or they might simply be guarding it at one of their safehouses.

Lankhmar Navy: It just so happens the navy is conducting maneuvers or patrols

right where your characters need to be, or has become extremely interested in the characters or their patron.

Mercenaries: A group of mercenaries has either been hired by the opposition (roll again on the **Opposition Table** to determine their employer) or have struck out for their own and want a piece of what the characters are involved in.

Merchant: A covetous merchant is desperate to get his or her hands on whatever it is the characters seek, possibly to destroy it themselves, or to protect it.

Multiple Opponents: Whatever's going on, a whole lot of people (or things) want in on it. Matters just got a whole lot more complicated. Note that while the opposition is likely to have similar motives, you might want to generate different motivations just to check. Perhaps the mercenaries want it for money but the creature needs it to feed and the wizard wants to destroy it.

Noble: An aristocrat, likely one from Lankhmar, either owns the object, desires it, or wishes it destroyed and will stop at nothing.

Not as It Seems: Roll twice. The first result is the outer semblance or disguise of the opposition, but they're really something else, the second result. A pirate masquerading as a creepy wizard to be more intimidating, or a malevolent splinter cult pretending to be upstanding members of an unremarkable Lankhmaran temple.

Pirates: It could be the objective is unnoticed amid some pirate swag at their hidden island lair, or the pirates are after the same objective, or they're well aware of the worth of the object or even in the employ of some other opposing force.

Slavers: Nehwon has slavers, and they're eager to get their hands on whatever it is the characters seek. A person might fetch a high price or have done something to anger them, and an object or creature might be useful to their ventures.

Temple: A Nehwon religious institution or group of priests is desperate for the objective.

Wizard: Unfortunately, Nehwon wizards seem always to be involved in evil doings, searching for hidden lore or tools for furthering their ambitions, or even individuals who might have one or the

other. Most are incredibly ruthless and not entirely sane.

COMPLICATIONS

It might be your adventure is already complicated enough. On the other hand, sword-and-sorcery tales are chock full of surprises or other difficulties. Roll here to see what they are.

d20	Complication
1	Led astray
2	Not the only ones
3	Innocent
4	Not what it seems
5	Unexpected foe
6	Unexpected ally
7	Tag along
8	Double-cross
9	Decoy
10	False/flawed information
11	Shock revelation
12	Discovery
13–14	Supernatural incident
15	Ambush
16	Lovestruck
17	No violence
18	Reluctant allies
19	Incognito
20	Roll twice, ignoring rolls of 20.

Ambush: Something or someone is lying in wait for the characters. It's a trap!

Decoy: It turns out that the characters were sent to distract the opposition while someone else went after the real objective. They may or may not have been hung out to dry or framed.

Discovery: Maybe one of the characters learns a secret about their past, or stumbles upon a map to some other site, or gets proof of the villain's evil plan. Discoveries build on a Savage Tale but don't necessarily twist it, as with a Shock Revelation.

Double-Cross: At some point, a key figure in the adventure switches sides. This can work either for or against the heroes.

False/Flawed Information: An important detail the heroes were given or learned is blatantly wrong. This may be a purposeful deception, or a bad coincidence; the choice is left up to the Game Master.

Incognito: The characters must pretend to practice professions or to be people they're not.

Innocent: There's someone (or something) innocent smack dab in the thick of it all needing protection and or rescuing.

Led Astray: The heroes find or are offered the services of a guide, but unfortunately, he seems to lead them into one spot of trouble after another. Whether he is incompetent or has evil intentions is up to the Game Master.

Lovestruck: Someone or something has fallen for one of the characters. It could be the patron, or their intended target, or their intended target's son. Or maybe it's the enemy pirate's pet parrot, or the strange dog-like creature they're taking back for that sorcerer...

Natural Hazard: At some point during the adventure, the characters are hampered by the forces of nature. This could be a severe storm, dense fog, lack of wind, reefs, etc.

Not the Only Ones: Another group has been hired to do the same job, or just happens to be looking for the same thing. They are approximately the same level of experience and martial prowess as the heroes, and might be on the side of right as the group is. If thwarted, they can become recurring villains in the campaign.

Not What It Seems: The "trouble" is actually in need of help, while the real threat is from another source, usually the individual who hired the heroes!

No Violence: For whatever reason, the characters have to be completely subtle this time. No killing, even when faced with deadly opposition. Maybe their patron won't pay them if anyone gets hurt even a tiny little bit...

Reluctant Allies: The only way out alive is to team up with something or someone who'd rather see the characters dead.

Shock Revelation: Something important is revealed during the adventure. The

characters could learn that the villain's plan is far more elaborate and might result in the death of thousands. A revelation doesn't have to be bad — an Extra might declare undying love for a character, or a character learns that his brother didn't actually die when that ship sank all those years ago.

Supernatural Incident: It turns out that something truly disturbing is underway — that cult the characters are robbing has summoned something from the fog, or the undead roam the hallways of the guild hall at night...

Tag Along: Someone tags along with the heroes whether they like it or not. It could be a patron who wants to make sure the heroes do the job right, or a young kid who aspires to be just like one of the heroes and stows away aboard ship. No amount of dissuading causes the person to leave.

Unexpected Ally: Maybe the natives rise up against the villain and join the heroes, or perhaps the old pirate they met earlier in the adventure just can't sit back and watch the villain get away with his foul plot. Either way, someone comes to the characters' aid at a crucial moment.

Unexpected Foe: The villain is actually someone the heroes weren't expecting ("It's my sister!"), an enemy ship appears out of the fog, or a harmless-looking animal turns out to be a vicious beast.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

If it's not already evident from results produced by previous steps in the Adventure Generator, there's a good chance supernatural elements figure into the Savage Tale. This is Nehwon, after all. To find out if the supernatural is involved, draw a card and compare it to the list below for inspiration. The kinds of cards you end up with determine not only the strength of the supernatural force, but how the supernatural appears in the tale.

- **Black Number Card:** No supernatural elements.
- **Red Number:** Subtle supernatural elements.
- **Black Face Card:** Moderate supernatural elements.

CONNECTIONS

Although it's not necessary, supernatural element can be tied into pre-existing features of the Savage Tale you've generated. For instance, if the characters have been sent to find information about a baker and you learn there's a supernatural person involved, it might be that the baker has extraordinary powers, probably sinister ones. If the characters are looking for special building material and the supernatural component is an object, then maybe the timber is cursed to summon ghosts.

- **Red Face Card:** The supernatural manifests as a person.
- **Black Ace:** The supernatural manifests as a creature.
- **Red Ace:** The supernatural manifests as an object.
- **Black Joker:** Powerful supernatural forces are at work; draw another card until you get a red one.
- **Red Joker:** Powerful supernatural forces are at work, including a god-like entity or astonishing event.

SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATION

If the Savage Tale hasn't already suggested how the supernatural is involved, you can roll to see how or when it manifests, or who has it.

d20	Manifestation
1-3	Opposition: The other side has supernatural backing!
4-6	Patron: The patron's involved with supernatural forces, or is one.
7-9	Objective: The objective itself is connected with the supernatural.
10-12	Location: The spot where the objective is located is supernatural.

d20 Manifestation

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 13-15 | Journey: The characters encounter something supernatural upon the journey. |
| 16-18 | Involvement: The characters get pulled into the adventure because of something supernatural. |
| 19-20 | Additional Obstacle: An additional wrinkle is thrown into the Savage Tale owing to something supernatural. |

SUPERNATURAL MOTIVATIONS

While a supernatural object may not have any motivation, it might have one suggested by the plot, or it may have some strange motivation of its own, in which case you should roll on the **Motivation Table**.

WEATHER AND NAVIGATIONAL HAZARDS

When your characters reach a destination, what are the prevailing conditions? Alternatively, what are the conditions like while the characters are seeking their goal or fleeing their pursuers?

d20	Weather Condition
1	Cloud cover
2	Heavy storm
3	Moderate storm
4	Light rain
5	Calm
6	Light mist
7	Heavy fog
8	Wind from the wrong direction
9	Wind from the right direction
10	Dangerous reefs
11	Sargassum
12	Local flora
13	Heavy activity
14	Strange phenomena
15	Night

d20	Weather Condition
16	Day
17	Dusk
18	Dawn
19	Narrow channel/shallows
20	Roll twice

Calm: There just isn't any wind, which means the ship better have oars or some other way to generate movement, because at this rate it will take the characters a year to drift to their destination.

Cloud Cover: By night, the moon and stars are invisible, making navigation far more challenging. By day, clouds conceal the sun, or fog hides the features of the coast.

Dangerous Reefs: This area of ocean is chock full of sandbars and reefs, so the crew must be constantly on the alert.

Dawn: The characters reach their objective at dawn. If they're trying to be stealthy they have only a short while to act before they're spotted.

Day: The characters arrive in broad daylight.

Dusk: The characters reach their objective at dusk, during a time of reduced visibility.

Heavy Activity: A local power is patrolling the area, or a small fleet of fishing smacks is hard at work.

Heavy Fog: Weather conditions have produced a fog so heavy that the characters can't see much beyond the prow of their own vessel.

Heavy Storm: Severe storms lash the ship, severely reducing visibility and all but ruining searches, chances of flight or pursuit, and possibly endangering the entire crew.

Light Mist: There's a light mist on the water, reducing visibility and possibly endangering the ship, especially if the characters are searching for low-riding vessels, land masses, or reefs.

Light Rain: A light rain (or snow) continually falls, reducing visibility.

Local Flora: The characters blunder into a whole school of flying fish, or a region of ocean frequented by man-eating sharks, or an entire pod of dolphins, or something similar.

Moderate Storm: A moderate storm reduces visibility. Under capable hands the

ship's in no real danger, but the crew will have their hands full just seeing to the ship, let alone fleeing, pursuing, or searching for anything.

Narrow Channel/Shallows: The characters' ship has to contend with a narrow passage, barely wide enough for the ship to pass, or waters so shallow they almost scrape the bottom of the vessel.

Night: The characters must maneuver their ship by night.

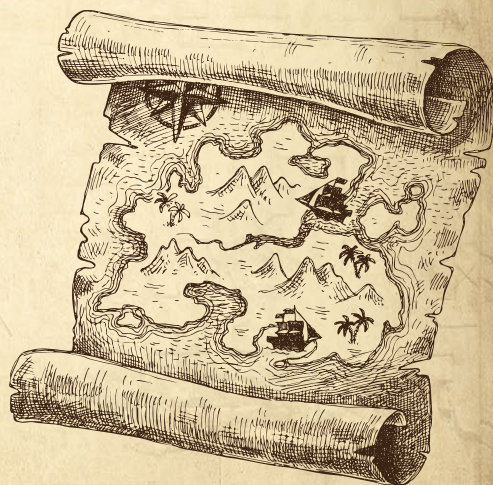
Roll Twice: Roll twice on this table, combining results and discarding nonsensical ones (such as night and day, unless you're inspired by an interesting twist like an eclipse).

Sargassum: There is thick vegetation in this area, slowing movement and possibly entangling the ship.

Strange Phenomena: Something strange or supernatural is at work. Perhaps there's a terrible whirlpool nearby, or a jet of water, or the entire surface of the sea glows strangely, making stealth impossible even by night.

Wind from the Right Direction: The Sea-King is in a benevolent mood and the winds and currents are flowing so smoothly that the characters reach their goal far sooner than expected. If there's no real journey involved, then the weather is ideal.

Wind from the Wrong Direction: The gods of Nehwon just aren't working in the characters' favor. The wind is constantly blowing from the wrong direction and the ship is significantly slowed.



EXAMPLE ADVENTURE

Harry has just finished running an adventure in Quarmall. His players traveled overland to get there, and he doesn't want to repeat that journey, so he decides to tell the characters they've found a cheaper, faster way back to Lankhmar.

He sits down with the Adventure Generator for inspiration. First, he rolls to see how the characters get involved, and with a 15 on the **Involvement Table**, determines that it was an individual. An 18 on the **Relationship Table** tells him this person used to be a lover of one of the characters.

Harry's group is small but he isn't sure yet whose love this woman used to be. Maybe it will be obvious as he continues. He decides to find out a little more about this individual before he goes further, so he draws a card and consults the **People Table**. A Seven of Diamonds — she's a dancer. And consulting the **Motivation Table**, a 14 determines that she wants to create a disaster or catastrophe.

Harry scratches his head. Maybe she's a villain, but he just had a hidden villain last adventure. He decides to keep rolling to see what happens. What is it that this dancer wants to do? He consults the **Objective Table** and with a roll of 13 learns that she wants to transport something. When he generates Transport (along with steal, rescue, guard, find, destroy, slay, or seek information or secrets) he knows he has to draw a card for suggestions about what's being transported, and he draws a Six of spades. An object.

He could draw again to learn whether it's treasure or another object, but because the characters just sought treasure the last two adventures, he decides it's an object, and consults the **Object Table**. He rolls an Eight and learns it's an item of religious significance. Now he's starting to feel inspired. Maybe this old lover, Jenna, is transporting this religious item to stop something terrible from happening. But where, and what?

Rolling on the **Location Table**, Harry gets a Two, and learns that Jenna wants to take them to a remote coast, and the opposition is 14, a wizard. Well, evil wizards are rampant in Nehwon, but the characters have faced off against a lot of them, so Harry rolls again and gets a cult. Perfect. The adventure is becoming more and more clear.

Harry decides to consult the **Complications Table** and learns that there's going to be an ambush — it seems the cult's gotten wind of what Jenna and the characters plan to do.

This being Nehwon, there's a good chance that something magical or eerie is involved. It hasn't reared its head so far, so Harry checks the **Supernatural Manifestation Table**. He draws an Eight of Hearts, which means that the supernatural manifests as a creature.

Harry could stop here — he could stop anywhere in the process once inspired — but he wants to see when or how this creature makes its appearance. He rolls on the **Involvement Table**. It seems that the characters are pulled into the adventure because of the creature. He could roll to see what the creature's motivation is, but Harry decides he knows enough, now, and makes one final roll to learn weather and navigational hazards along that remote coast and turns up a light mist.

Here's what he comes up with: While the characters are relaxing in a dockside tavern one evening, an old lover comes running, pursued by a shambling, humanoid sea thing with glowing eyes. Jenna's sister got involved with a cult that means to summon these things en masse from another plane of existence. Jenna stole a powerful diadem the cult needs to complete their terrible spell, and needs to get to a remote spot on the coast where it can be destroyed by the sacred Sisters of the Sea at a midnight ceremony. The only problem is that Jenna's sister told the cult what Jenna intends, so that they've set up an ambush. Worse, that shambling creature regenerates. It can't be killed until the diadem is destroyed, and every time it falls, it rises again with greater power (an attribute increases a die type). The heroes had better move fast!

CHAPTER SEVEN: SAVAGE TALES

JEWEL OF THE DEEP

The characters are sailing through the Inner Sea when they chance upon a floating derelict. A terrible monster lurks aboard. But the treasure it guards is far more dangerous, for concealed within it is an entity that hungers to control men like puppets.

BACKGROUND

Sixty years before, *The Wayfarer* left Lankhmar for Kvarch Nar. Aboard was the Overlord of Lankhmar's youngest daughter and all her worldly goods, for she and her dowry had been promised to the ruler of Kvarch Nar. Unfortunately, *The Wayfarer* was separated from its escort during a great storm and never made port. Many assume she sank with all hands, though others have long speculated that she was attacked and scuttled by pirates.

Many Lankhmarans know the name of *The Wayfarer* and the great treasure lost along with the lovely young woman, although her beauty and the amount of wealth she carried with her have likely grown in the intervening years. Allegedly she carried chests gleaming with a riot of gems and gold, and great heaps of pearls. What no one knows is that

there was yet another passenger aboard *The Wayfarer*, an ancient entity who feeds upon the minds of men.

At rest, with its illusion fully in place, the death jewel resembles a golden chest about two feet long, set with cloudy jewels. Lankhmar's Overlord of two generations ago was well-acquainted with its power, having drawn it from the sealed vaults deep in Lankhmar where ancient spells held it in thrall. He intended to unleash it upon the aristocracy of Kvarch Nar.

Fortunately for the people of Kvarch Nar, *The Wayfarer* sank with all hands, and after a long while the case housing the creature rotted enough that its sorcerous wards failed and the being crept free. Now it hungers.

A sapphire ring mixed in with the treasures remaining aboard ship grants immunity to the creature's assaults — it was intended to have been worn by the Overlord's daughter, who would have used her immunity to assume command of the kingdom and welcome Lankhmaran wizards from across the Inner Sea to quell "the sorcerous plague" — in reality the attacks unleashed by the entity.

As the adventure begins, the entity has just depleted decades worth of stored sorcerous strength to raise the derelict from where it rests, so it can enter the world of men and feed. It is particularly eager to wreak vengeance on the people of Lankhmar.



Note: This particular tale can be set in nearly any of Lankhmar's seas so long as the history is changed slightly — if your characters are in the Outer Sea perhaps *The Wayfarer* was lost on the way to Quarmall, or even Ool Kront.

This tale works best when there are more lives at stake, perhaps while the characters are aboard a passenger ship or hired on as mercenaries for some merchant vessel.

THE DERELICT

As their ship crosses the Inner Sea one misty morning the characters spy the masts of another vessel looming through the fog. As the characters draw closer they notice that the ship lacks canvas, and many of the spars are broken and hang at odd angles. Moreover, the ship is absolutely silent — there's no one talking or moving aboard, and certainly no one there answers hails.

If the characters draw within a few hundred feet, the fog's thin enough to see there's no one aboard. Seaweed and other vegetable matter clings to the listing vessel, and portions of the rail and prow are broken

away. She rides low, as though she's taken on water, but she doesn't seem to be sinking.

A Knowledge (Naval history) or Boating (–2) roll reveals that the ship appears of an older make, a Lankhmaran merchant with a high prow and forecastle of a sort that was popular generations ago.

The name on the prow is partly obscured by grime and muck, but astute characters can make out the name *The Wayfarer* after a little bit of study, and any Lankhmaran who makes a Common Knowledge roll is aware of the vessel's sad history and reputed treasure.

Characters who wish to board should probably take a rowboat over. A soggy ladder is built into *The Wayfarer's* starboard side, on the other side of the vessel from the characters. If they don't circle the ship before boarding they have to toss over lines, or climb up themselves.

If the characters do circle the ship, with a successful Notice (–2) they see there's a long rent in the ship above the waterline near the prow, right about where the forward cargo bay would be. The detail is hidden by the fog and draped seaweed.

BOARDING THE WAYFARER

The deck is hidden under a coat of seaweed and other detritus, where expiring fish lay goggle-eyed and twitching. The timbers of the ship itself are soggy and the planks creak, though they are sturdy enough to support the characters. The ship's boats are aboard and rotting, so whatever happened didn't give anyone a chance to get away. Worse, a character who succeeds on a Notice roll hears an occasional scrabbling sound from belowdecks. Something down there is moving, although the sound stops before they can get a clear fix on where it is.

There's nothing on the main deck that's remotely worth salvaging. There are rotten barrels and moldering rope and rusted winches and gyves, and a whole lot of smelly, dying sea life.

There's not much to see above decks. Now that the characters are aboard they can better tell that the deck house is badly damaged and missing most of its roof. Only the captain's cabin is relatively intact.

THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN

The door hangs ajar, and creaks as it's opened wide enough for the characters to investigate the fish-scented darkness. The moment they step in farther or shine light within, a tentacle sways up from behind the shattered wreck of the captain's table. An octopus lies dying behind the furniture, and perishes before it can do much more than frighten the characters.

The cabin is a complete shambles, but there are chests to open. Two are waterlogged and contain moldy rags that were once clothing. A third contains half-a-dozen bottles of wine, still sealed, each worth 50 gold rilks, white wine of the famed Ketner and Mohr vineyards.

There's a wreck of a desk built into one bulkhead. Rolled-up maps shoved into cubbyholes above the desk have long since disintegrated to all but useless pulp. Hidden in the desk drawers in a locked drawer is an eelskin pouch, tightly sealed. The lock itself is not especially complex, but it's rusty and the wood is swollen, so characters must either succeed at Lockpicking (-2) or break in with brute force (the desk has a Toughness of 6).

Characters familiar with sea travel can make Common Knowledge rolls to be aware of expensive eelskin pouches, which are designed to keep important documents watertight.

The captain's log book is within. A few generations of submersion have managed to get through even the fine eelskin and the log book's quite moist. It remains intact, though, and if carefully dried, the final pages, midway through the journal, can be read. A successful Smarts roll should suggest this if the players themselves don't realize this. Trying to read the information now will simply destroy it.

All else within the captain's cabin is sodden and rotting.

THE MAIN HOLD

A ladderless hole leads down to the main hold, so characters must either drop a rope and climb down, or make an Agility roll to land safely. Within is more dead sea, mostly smaller fish, although there's one struggling sea turtle. A few crabs crawl here and there when light is shone upon them. Up near the prow is a metal door with a complex lock.

The characters hear the clatter of a large thing on the other side of the door, clumping around on the deck planks. It sounds like nothing they've ever heard before — unless they've ever seen an eight-legged horse with a limp ridden by someone playing castanets.

THE VAULT

There are three ways into the vault.

1. On the starboard side of the ship, opposite the character's vessel, is a man-sized gash that opens up to the chamber. The characters had a chance to Notice this if they inspected the ship before boarding.
2. The wood on either side of the door can be chopped through fairly easily (Toughness 8). Being at the bottom of the ocean has softened it.
3. The lock can be picked, although this isn't easy. In addition to having multiple tumblers it's also rusty. Lockpicking attempts are made at -6.

Once the characters can see inside, they spy dozens of large chests and cabinets and dressers lashed to the walls or lying on the deck. Their ruined contents lie strewn upon the planking. Perhaps those rotting clumps used to be silken finery or draperies or bedroom linens.

Your attention is held by the clacking monstrosity that looms out of the darkness, a monstrous crab that stands half again as tall as a man. It scuttles toward you, reaching with both its claws.

- **Giant Crab:** See page 89.

Once the giant crab is defeated the treasure can be examined. The cases were once enormously expensive wood carvings, gilt with gold and silver, but they're quite ruined. So are all the furniture and a fortune in what probably was clothing and linens.

However, one chest contains gold gilt dinnerware and another, smaller chest holds fine jewelry. A third thick wooden chest is covered with detailed symbols. Anyone with Knowledge (Arcana) can, with a successful roll, recognize these symbols as magical sigils, and tell that the rot and wet has eaten through the sigils so they're no longer effective. A raise on the roll enables a character to recognize those sigils for particularly potent warding spells.

Breaking through this chest requires three Lockpicking rolls to avoid three jabbing needles — which will frighten rather than harm, for the once deadly poison has been soaked up by the wood surrounding the needle. More observant characters can Notice by the state of the chest that it's rotten and that it's probably possible to pry, hack, or even kick it open.

Inside on long rotted cloth is a very small chest that's a work of art in itself, studded with rubies and sapphires. It has no obvious lock or hinges, and on closer examination you wonder if it's no chest, but solid gold.

It's likely far more valuable as is than it would be melted down and pried apart. A successful Streetwise (-1) roll determines it could fetch upward of 3,000 gold rilks or more.

This is the death jewel, and it has nearly exhausted its sorcerous ability to keep the

derelict afloat. Once it's picked up, the ship begins to list. From below is a loud pop and the ship promptly sinks into the water. If the characters climbed down (or up, through the gash) a rope, they can reach the top deck in four rounds; the water reaches the weather deck in six rounds, and the ship is completely submerged in eight.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to escape with the entirety of the treasure glimpsed in the vault. It requires two sailors to carry either chest at a slow walking pace owing to their weight, and with the ship taking on water most characters are liable to simply grab a few handfuls of gold or necklaces or a gem-studded goblet.

Roll 2d6 for every character to determine the overall worth of whatever they managed to lay hands on, then multiply by 100. The result is the value of the object in rilks. Don't skimp on the description. For instance: A diamond ring patterned with fish scales, an emerald studded goblet, a gold chalice, a gold dinner plate with the Overlord's family crest stamped along the rim, a pearl necklace, a slim gold chain hung with a gleaming ruby, a tarnished beaker gilt with exquisite gold leaf showing swimming mermaids, etc.

One of the characters should acquire a sapphire ring, the shanks of which are decorated with the image of a tower shield. It has been specially crafted to shield its wearer from mental assaults of the creature.

THE LOG BOOK

Extremely careful examination of the log book enables those reading it to get to the material in the middle. The opening pages and the blank back pages are too sodden to pry apart. Ideally, the characters should discover the information at the log book as the death jewel's plans get underway — perhaps they feel the ship lurching under their feet as the controlled crew alters the vessel's course.

Most of the journal entries are mundane discussions of weather, but the captain writes occasional cryptic references about the cargo and how he was told he should clear away from the city if he valued his own safety. He seems fond of the Overlord's daughter and asked her if she were in any danger, and she

reported to him that all would be well so long as she wore the sapphire ring.

The last entry reads almost like a confessional. The captain spent a heady night with the Overlord's daughter and she told him the entire plot—how the entity controlled the minds of men, how the Overlord intended it to wreak havoc upon the aristocracy of Kvarch Nar, and how she promised to make him her consort once she ruled the city. She also made mention of the ring's power.

THE CREATURE MOVES

Once it's safely aboard the heroes' ship and attention is diverted from it, the creature's gemstones clear and it begins to work its will. It means to return to Lankhmar as swiftly as possible and lay its eggs within the Overlord. It has little conception of or interest in the lifespan of humanity and is perfectly happy to take its vengeance upon the dead Overlord's descendants.

It's first concern is to be free, having developed a strong distaste for enclosed spaces after long years, so it controls the nearest human and has it carry it about so it can see what's happening. It does not like being stored in a chest or other container and definitely prefers to be carted around in someone's arms.

If there are Extras aboard the death jewel immediately sets them to raising full sails and altering course. It can control up to two dozen characters at a time, although owing to their sapped will and delayed movement any skill or attribute checks function at -4. Extras are assumed to fail.

Characters can resist the creature's control by making a successful Spirit roll once per day. Unless they're aware of the creature, they are unlikely to know what's going on, and may assume that they've simply had a mild dizzy spell. The death jewel can control someone within 100 feet, even outside of sight range.

Once ensorcelled, characters can attempt to break free of its spell with another Spirit roll if they have harmed someone they care about or are actively engaged in something suicidal, or if the creature itself has taken damage.

The entity communicates only through the humans it controls and doesn't articulate well. If questioned or challenged, the humans only say things like the following, which sound very strange coming from the lips of friend and colleagues.

"You will never imprison me again! Lankhmar will pay, and my younglings will be birthed from the Overlord's flesh!"

"The Overlord meant to send me away, but I will have my vengeance!"

"You humans are nothing but cattle. I shall steer you all and my children shall feed upon you."

It is rather blunt in its machinations, and attempts to kill those it cannot control. It tries to use those it can to protect itself. Those who resist the creature face a greater challenge in avoiding hurting their friends and allies than actually killing the terrible thing.

AFTERMATH

Once the creature is killed, all affected characters recover their own will. Those who were controlled by the creature only have a hazy, dream-like memory of actions they performed under its power.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

DEATH JEWEL

A sorcerous construct, the death jewel in its natural state is a sickly gray creature the approximate size of a large bread loaf. Its true appearance is completely concealed by a masterful illusion spell: the eyes appear to be jewels, the legs and cilia decorative gold fringe and support struts for a masterpiece of gold and silver.

Inside it's a mass of reeking, writhing black and blue organs some of which glow feebly for a few moments before they expire completely and dissolve into a stinking cloud. One of the organs is stuffed with dozens of tiny death jewels which scuttle wildly for freedom. Fortunately they do not yet have the powers of their mother. They can be squished as simply as baby spiders, but one or two might well escape through cracks in the deck if characters don't stamp quickly.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Swimming d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** The death jewel has a thick skeletal casing under a thin layer of sickly gray skin.
- **Enthrall:** The death jewel can use the *puppet* power, with a Range of Spirit $\times$ 2", using its Spirit as the arcane skill. The death jewel can cast and maintain the power indefinitely but may only affect a number of targets equal to $2 \times$ Spirit.
- **Invulnerability:** The death jewel's bony casing is resistant to mundane damage. It can only be Shaken, never wounded except by its weakness.
- **Size -1:** This creature is the size of a bread loaf.
- **Weakness (Gem Stone Eyes):** The death jewel's eyes are susceptible to damage but require a called shot (-4) to hit.

QUEEN OF THE SUNKEN REALM

The characters are summoned to a rendezvous with the new favorite of the Sea-King's wives, who tasks them with the recovery of a token bestowed upon a lover from the surface world. What they don't know is that the Sea-King's primary wife, eager to regain favored status, is out to find the surface dweller herself and prove to her husband that the new favorite cheated on him. And the favorite may not hold up the bargain she promises the characters...

BACKGROUND

Tsilabet, lovely new wife of the Sea-King, lord of the Nehwon seas, has cheated on him. This isn't anything new, for the Sea-King has so many wives that the lonely women frequently cuckold him. What's different is the fact that Tsilabet is not only one of his primary wives, but his favorite, and the former favorite, Lokla, is incensed not only that she has been displaced but that Tsilabet

should be so brazen as to cheat on the Sea-King who so clearly dotes on her.

Tsilabet is charming but narcissistic, though she's bright enough to conceal her tremendous sense of self worth. The man she cheated with is a surface dweller who has returned to the sea lanes, so she needs surface dwellers to retrieve the ring she gave him before Lokla can. She's perfectly willing to pay a small fee for the service, but if she's pushed in any way she vindictively not only holds back promised treasure, but attempts to slay the characters.

BECALMED AT SEA

While on a journey through the Inner Sea the ship is becalmed. No wind stirs the sails, no current surges below. The sky is wide and clear and streaming with lovely clouds.

Characters may make a Common Knowledge roll to remember that on such days legend tells the Sea-King has left his abode for his palace on the far side of Nehwon — and his wives extend invitations to handsome surface dwellers to come courting.

A great hole in the water opens beside the characters' ship, though neither the ship or nearby water is drawn toward it, as though an invisible barrier holds back the water.

Characters who drop a rope into the hole find it dark at first, though there is a source of illumination from somewhere far below. The drop is probably close to 100 feet, but there is surely enough spare rope on board an oceangoing vessel for the curious to go over the side. Climbing rolls are required, with failures resulting in rope burns or plunges into the muddy sea floor below.

Descending the tube is a little harrowing, for creatures of the deep swim beside it, distorted by the water. None of the creatures attack, but they are curious, and tension can be raised by a curious tiger shark wandering by, or a large school of poisonous, glowing jellyfish whose stingers look as if they can intrude into the confined space. They can't, but the characters don't know that.

Once through the tube the characters are in a large chamber at the bottom of the sea, filled with air and glowing with various phosphorescent sea life. They're

also surrounded by the muck at the bottom of the sea, including crawling shellfish, a dying swordfish, coral, and the like. Curious explorers who spend a little time looking around can spot a sunken treasure chest covered in barnacles.

The chest's lock has rusted open and the lid raises easily to reveal a small cache of gold. Unfortunately, those who reach for it are liable to get a bite from a temperamental juvenile sea snake.

If bitten, characters must make a Vigor roll against the poison or experience swelling in the affected area for 1d4 days, as well as an overall mild numbness (suffering the All Thumbs Hindrance from *Savage Worlds*). The gold is stamped with the seal of Ilthmar, with a ship on the obverse and a stern, bearded ruler on the front, and there's 78 pieces of it.

- **Juvenile Sea Snake (1):** Use the stats for Snake, Venomous in *Savage Worlds*.

THE PATH BENEATH

Once the characters' eyes adjust, a path of phosphorescent green growth is apparent along the sodden sea floor, and it leads out

of the vaulted dome of air and into a tent-like corridor, which winds around before extending in a straight line for hundreds of feet into a large cave. The path leads up over what may be natural stone or wide stairs, their clean carved lines long since worn down, and from there up into a great undersea grotto where the characters can breathe clean, salty air.

THE UNDERSEA GROTTO

Within the vast space are terrace upon terrace, each illuminated by silvery mist cascading from the ceiling, lost in the darkness above. Various entryways lead off into darkness. The floor is littered with shining stones of varied color — though none are actual jewels — and tiny octopi and mollusks and dying fish.

Those expecting a romantic tryst are likely to be disappointed by the crone-like figure hunched and mumbling over a stone table on one of the upper terraces, her hands webbed, her hair red and ropey. Her face is concealed by a mask of sea-darkened bronze, her form clothed in a dark, formless dress. She is intent on whipping small oval



objects spinning upon the table, which the characters are too far away to observe clearly.

As you advance, a tall, shapely woman steps out from an upper passageway. Her graceful form is clothed in a diaphanous gown of violet, alternately swaying and caressing her amber flesh. All but her ruby lips and chin line are concealed by a silvery mask about which her rich brown hair spills in luxuriant curls.

She raises one slim hand and regally beckons you forward. As you advance, other figures shift from dark doorways behind her. They remain mostly in shadow, but you can see powerful male forms clothed in shell-like breastplates. Their green-shaded hands clasp tridents and you catch the outline of spiraling helms atop their heads.

These are Tsilabet's brothers, dressed like sea hoplites with greaves, armored skirts, breastplates and helms fashioned from decorative and protective shells. Like their sister, they wear masks, though theirs are built into their visors.

The queenly woman speaks. Her voice is clear, lilting, and high yet somehow soothing.

"Folk of the surface, I offer a great boon for small risk. You have but to retrieve a single item for me from the shoreline and I will open the vaults of the deep where my husband hoards all that has ever sunk to his lands from the beginning of time."

How much money are you offering?

She's royalty, and, moreover, doesn't know a thing about the value of human currency.

"I know nothing of your amounts, but I shall award you with a chest brimming with gold and jewels gathered from wrecks that litter the ocean floor."

Can you offer us anything else?

The queen's in enough trouble for dallying with a surface dweller and wouldn't plan such assignations in front of her brothers in any case. If pressed for some other award she can promise the blessings of the sea upon their vessel.

If they still seem reluctant, the Game Master has other options, outlined below.

What do we have to do?

"Somewhere in Lankhmar is a man named Karick, captain of the Sea Dragon. He possesses an earring of mine identical to this one. You may examine it, but be careful approaching me."

She beckons them forward. If the characters come too quickly or threateningly, her brothers immediately step forward to protect her.

The queen presents the characters with a highly ornamental earring on a small spiraling shell inlaid with extremely tiny but masterful carvings of fish and leaping dolphins, and touched here and there with tiny, perfect gemstones.

"You must find Karick within four nights."

It's possible the heroes are already familiar with Karick, and they can roll Common Knowledge (with minuses of -2 to -4 unless they are frequent visitors to the Lankhmar waterfront) to see if they have heard of him.

He's captained his father's main cargo ship for the last three years and honestly loves the seafaring life. For a smarmy rich boy, he's actually a decent sort and a capable enough captain that his crew likes him. Of course, anyone likes a winner, even if they're a little full of themselves.

What do you want us to do with Karick?

"It matters not."

It really doesn't. She just needs the earring back.

What do we do once we have the earring?

"I shall give you a means of summoning my brothers. You must call them."

How did Karick get the earring?

"He is a clever thief."

She's unwilling to say anything more on the subject. This is a lie, naturally. Tsilabet lured him down here last month for a torrid afternoon of love, and she was so taken with him that she gave him a memento to remember her by. A bad mistake, since this earring was a gift of the Sea-King. Once this gift was given, Lokla, the former favorite wife, eventually learned it was missing

and through spies and informants has ascertained where it may be. She now has to “accidentally” bring its owner and the earring in range of the Sea-King, something she plans to do by joining her husband on an extended tour of the kingdoms adjacent to the shoreline in the next several days.

Tsilabet insists that they agree to the compact before she provides them with any more information.

“Do you agree?”

While playing the part of the queen, remember that Tsilabet holds herself above the surface dwellers. She needs them, but she treasures her dignity more and is affronted by lewd suggestions, overfamiliarity, and the like. Particularly egregious comments or actions are certain to anger her and her brothers both, at which point she may order the surface dwellers slain. She regrets it later when she has no one to do her bidding on the shore, but she’s not very good about reining in her temper.

- **Tsilabet’s Brothers (1 per hero):**
See page 49.

ADDITIONAL TREASURES AND SECRETS

If the characters turn down Tsilabet’s offer she doubles the amount, and a note of fear is evident in her voice if the characters are particularly perceptive (Notice -4). She’s willing to go as high as three times the promised amount, though she fears this, for the more that goes missing from her covetous husband’s vaults, the greater the chance that he notices.

It’s just possible that the characters can get more information out of her about what’s really happened through clever roleplay. She’s extremely reluctant to admit her affair and prefers to lie and declare Karick a thief.

REFUSAL

If the characters outright refuse, Tsilabet sadly sends them on their way and then, once they have left the tunnel and walked into the tent-like chamber beneath their boat, it collapses and the characters are suddenly drowning a hundred feet below. They must

immediately make Swimming rolls at -6 to reach the surface!

Should the characters reach the surface they find the boat already rocking because of waves agitating the ship. The sea-queen rages and the storm clouds rise along with the wind. Before long a great storm rolls along, lashing the ship with rain and lightning and requiring Boating rolls both to survive and to reach safe harbor. The storm ends after six hours.

ACCEPTANCE

When the characters accept the mission the queen presents them with a small conch shell fitted with a mouthpiece of black porcelain.

“Once you have retrieved the earring, journey to a secluded spot along the seashore and blow this horn. My brothers will hear it, for its sounds transmit magically to those attuned to its music. They will reach you within one hour to obtain the earring and deliver your promised treasures.”

If the characters want a down payment, she informs them there is a chest of gold waiting for them near the point where they descended to the ocean floor. The characters may already have recovered the gold, described above. She says,

“Much more awaits.”

THE RETURN VOYAGE

The characters begin their voyage back to Lankhmar under clear skies with a gentle breeze blowing the most advantageous direction. Working for the sea-queen clearly comes with some perks!

Unfortunately for the heroes, Lokla has gotten wind of their mission. She doesn’t want them to succeed, but doesn’t want to draw too much attention, thus she can’t unleash a large storm or an important monster. But she *can* unleash a few giant sea snakes.

- **Sea Snake, Giant (2):** See page 94.

FINDING KARICK

Finding Karick's not too difficult so long as the characters aren't too nosy when they search along the Lankhmar seafront. Most seaside taverns have heard of him, and many Lankhmaran sailors can point the characters toward the berth where his ship, the *Sea Dragon*, sits.

Karick isn't currently aboard the *Sea Dragon* himself—he's at The Emerald Lotus, a tavern frequented by sea captains, officers, and those who work with them, meaning shipping agents, merchants, and so on. His crew is unlikely to provide his whereabouts to anyone who walks up and asks, but a few clever lies about wanting to hire him or his ship or deliver an important message leads the characters directly to him.

The Emerald Lotus is a little more upscale than some taverns, though it's hardly awash in gold and silver plates and hung with oil paintings. It's just not a dive. It's also pretty full, and quite loud.

Salty sailor types sit on the worn, scored chairs and raise drinking jacks. Some talk quietly, hunched over tables, and others sit six to a table and roar with laughter. The scent of cooked fish wafts through the inn and a trio of serving wenches move back and forth among the tables delivering drinks and food or retrieving empties. A muscular barkeep is serving ale behind the bar and occasionally calls orders back to the cooks through a wall opening.

Fare here is good, if lacking variety. Today they have haddock, served boiled, with cabbage and potato. There's also meat pie left over from lunch, along with some bread rolls, a variety of ales and a few wines, ranging from middling to expensive.

There are a few open seats at the bar, and one small group is just departing as the characters enter, leaving a single table open near the back. From either vantage point the characters can look around and spot Karick.

He sits at a table with some friends of a similar age, talking and laughing together,



RETURN TO THE SEA

though not especially raucously. He's a broad-shouldered, good-looking fellow with a smarmy grin. He carries the earring in a shirt pocket which astute characters might occasionally observe him patting.

Characters who lean in close or have exceptional hearing hear him describe his very own recent journey into the arms of a lovely sea-queen, though his tale is suitably dressed with legions of underwater monsters he had to fight, along with other great perils. If the characters wait long enough, they even see Karick produce the earring as proof of his exploits, eliciting *oohs* and *ahs* from his companions. If the characters only heard that he was a thief, this version of events is certainly a surprise.

The simplest way to get the earring is probably to follow Karick and approach him alone as he stamps, a little worse for the ale, back to his ship. He's unwilling to sell the earring. It might be necessary to steal the jewelry from him.

Just as the characters are readying to move against Karick he's suddenly assaulted by two cloaked fellows. These are retainers from Lokla, and they're under orders to bring Karick back alive, which they happily tell him. They don't necessarily have to bring him in conscious, and they don't care what happens to anyone else who's interested in assaulting him.

They retreat once their numbers have been reduced by half or when more than half of them have been Shaken.

Karick is alarmed, since even drunk it's clear the undersea invaders wanted to capture, not kill him. The more he thinks about it the paler he gets, because he's worried the Sea-King himself is out for vengeance for being cuckolded! If Karick can be convinced turning over the earring spares him more attacks, he hands it over without a fuss. The Game Master may use either a Persuasion (-4) roll or the **Social Conflict** rules in *Savage Worlds*.

- **Lokla's Guards (2, plus 1 per hero):**
See page 49.

When the characters journey at last to the seashore and sound the horn, Lokla and her guards step out of the shadows. With a Notice roll, heroes see that survivors from the previous encounter with Lokla's guards are among them, and those guards look like they're eager for a rematch. Lokla, however, wishes to parley.

If Lokla was cast aside for some flaw or blemish, the characters certainly can't see one, and through her clinging shift there's much to see. She's a lovely emerald-tressed woman.

You have something I want. How does Tsilabet have your loyalty?

Lokla is willing to offer a glistening chest of baubles for their trouble, and a blessing upon any vessel that they own. (In game terms this equates to their ship adding +2 to their boating rolls for a year.) All she wants is the earring.

She claims, rightly, that Tsilabet is a manipulative schemer and plans to give them a chest filled mostly with trash. She has one of her guards haul forth a chest that certainly looks like one of the chests Tsilabet showed them, saying that they liberated it from one of the brothers. Careful inspection shows that it's a sprinkling of gold coins and jewels strewn over the top of colorful rocks and shining trash.

As the heroes consider their options, Tsilabet's brothers arrive. They are backed by a pair of giant crabs bearing treasure chests upon their shelled backs. The brothers immediately ask for the earring.

The heroes must choose whom to believe. Whomever they choose can be operated as allied Extras, as the second group quickly attacks.

SIDING WITH LOKLA

Lokla is telling the truth. If they aid her she is grateful and gives over a treasure chest glimmering with numerous exotic baubles — golden goblets, a riot of gems, pearl earrings, the worth of which probably approaches 3,000 rilks.

Once the brothers are defeated, Lokla promises swift justice for any survivors, and she thanks the characters for their help.

She says she owes them a favor above and beyond the payment she gives them. One time, while at sea, the characters can pray to her to ask for aid. Once she has what she came for, Lokla retreats into the sea.

They have made an enemy of Tsilabet, however, who thereafter seeks to drown them or wreck their vessel when they venture onto the waves... although she's usually so self-involved she doesn't pay attention very often.

KEEPING FAITH WITH TSILABET

Tsilabet's brothers give over the chests once Lokla and her guards are driven away or defeated, filled with trash salted with treasure, amounting to only 150 gold rilks. If the battle begins to go against her, Lokla vanishes in a spray of foam.

Tsilabet and her brothers aren't particularly grateful and don't remember the heroes' names. Lokla, however, sends creatures to hunt them whenever they venture upon the sea. Appeasing her wrath requires the completion of a dangerous quest to retrieve a treasure of the sea located far inland.

✧ **Lokla:** See page 48.

• **Crab, Giant (2):** See page 89.

• **Lokla's Guards (2 per hero):** See page 49.

• **Tsilabet's Brothers (1 per hero):** See page 49.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

KARICK

Captain Karick isn't exactly a celebrity, but he's not unknown along the Lankhmar seafront. He's a handsome fellow with wavy brown hair, a crooked smile, and a whole lot of charm, the lucky son of a prosperous merchant lord who's never really wanted for anything.

He's currently a few sheets to the wind, and makes all rolls at -2.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d8

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (to father and ship)

Edges: Block, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Inspire

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), cutlass (Str+d6).

✧ TSILABET

Beautiful Tsilabet has only the best interests of her most beloved at heart. Unfortunately, the only person she truly loves is herself. She's maneuvered herself into power and then promptly jeopardized her family's elevation by having a fling with Karick. She'll sacrifice anyone, including her brothers, to return things to normal.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Swimming d8

Cha: +6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Quirk (Thin-skinned), Stubborn

Edges: Command, Connections, Noble, Very Attractive

Gear: Knife (Str+d4).

✧ LOKLA

Lokla was the (fairly) devoted first wife to Nehwon's Sea-King, until displaced by his new favorite, Tsilabet. Now she's determined to bring down her rival and rise again to her former place of prestige and power.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

"The legends, I think, told that the men of far Simorgya were mighty magicians, claiming power over wind and waves and the creatures below. Yet the sea gulped them down for all that."

—Fafhrd, "The Skunken Land"

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Swimming d8
Cha: +6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Vengeful (Minor)
Edges: Command, Connections, Noble, Very Attractive
Gear: Knife (Str+d4).

TSILABET'S BROTHERS

These grim, muscular warriors are human only at first glance, for their fingers are webbed and their pale blue skin reveals traces of fish-like scales. What little hair they have hangs below their helmets and ranges from blue to black. Their visored helmets show the grim, impassive face of a human warrior.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d10
Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Loyal, Overconfident, Vengeful
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Hardened shell corselet (+3), masked helm (+3), long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4).
Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Dependency (Salt Water):** The mer-people must immerse in salt water at least one hour out of every 24 or suffer Fatigue each day until they perish.

LOKLA'S GUARDS

These mer warriors have greenish-blue skin and appear human only at first glance, for their fingers are webbed and their pale skin reveals traces of fish-like scales. Their faces are mostly human, though their lips are large and thin and their eyes glistening and protuberant.

Lokla's guards are determined to capture Karick and his ring to present to their mistress.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d10
Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Hardened shell corselet (+3), cone helm (+3), Trident (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands), dagger (Str+d4).

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Dependency (Salt Water):** The mer-people must immerse in salt water at least one hour out of every 24 or suffer Fatigue each day until they perish.



Cat lover Torig Miral covets an immense oil painting by famed artist Larten Terush, valued at 10,000 rilks. The problem is that it's housed on his second cousin's island, just beyond the Lankhmar harbor, and cousin Oranto Vanar hates Miral so much that he's refused to sell him the painting, even though it's going to be auctioned away at the end of a three-day party now underway on the island.

To succeed, the characters have to find a way in and out without harming anyone of quality and without hurting the painting in the slightest.

PAINTING IN DEMAND

Torig Miral approaches the characters at a seaside tavern, dressing "incognito" in an expensive, voluminous, black hooded cloak, accompanied by a massive, sullen bodyguard. Astute characters may Notice plentiful white fur clinging to his clothing. He offers to buy them drinks and to discuss a business proposition in a private, back room.

Torig's willing to pay the characters up to 3,000 gold rilks for the successful theft of the painting, *Sea Tiger*, although he starts much lower, at 200. He has maps of his cousin's estate to pinpoint exactly where the exits and entrances are, the location of the painting, and even where he's seen guards — which is a lot more thorough scouting than the characters might usually get.

No one of quality is to be harmed, Torig insists, and the theft must be discreet, and in no way traceable back to him. It must

take place within the next three days before his cousin, Oranto Vanar, sells the painting. Most important, the canvas itself must not be damaged in any way. The bodyguard, Stonn, has a stiff eelskin tube that the painting is to be carried in once it is cut — carefully — from its frame.

What does the painting look like?

"It's of a lovely little cat just like my Philandibus, and my cousin refuses to let me purchase it from him out of nothing but spite. He's such a lovely creature, and the cat in the painting could be his twin, don't you think, Stonn?"

"Identical." Stonn cracks his knuckles.

How do we know what your cat looks like?

"He's the most precious cat in all Nehwon, but if you have trouble telling, Stonn will be with you."

Stonn eyes the characters and cracks his knuckles.

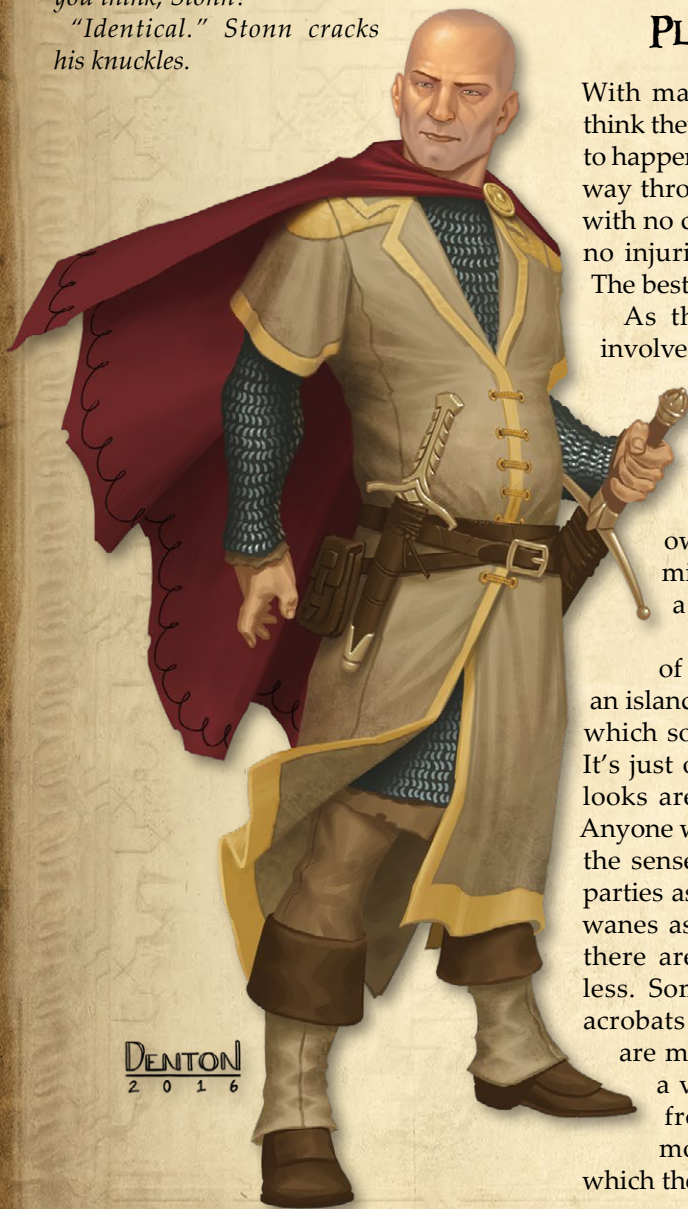
Torig doesn't negotiate long — he grows more and more impatient if the meeting continues for any length of time because he has to return to feed his bevy of white cats, a task he prides himself upon handling personally. The more impatient he becomes the more he's willing to promise to pay.

PLANNING THE HEIST

With maps in hand, the characters might think they have a real leg up on what's going to happen. All they need to do is plot the best way through to get the painting in and out, with no clues left about who they were, and no injuries done to any people of quality. The best laid plans...

As they talk, Stonn insists on being involved, grunting skeptically and cracking his knuckles. He accurately, if a little truculently, points out features on the map and supplies additional details. Wise characters probably seek out their own information about the island, or might want to eye it themselves from a distance.

Torig's cousin is hosting a series of grand parties on what is technically an island, but is really a patch of rocks over which someone has built a small mansion. It's just observable from the coast — closer looks are only possible from ships at sea. Anyone watching for any length of time gets the sense that it's not so much a series of parties as one endless party that waxes and wanes as guests come and go. Sometimes there are more and sometimes there are less. Sometimes there are storytellers or acrobats or dancers and sometimes there are musicians, and sometimes there are a variety all at the same time. Apart from the very early hours of the morning there's no point at night at which there are no activities or visitors.



DENTON
2 0 1 6

Little seems to take place during the brightest hours of the morning until the afternoon (presumably the cousin and his guests are sleeping off their hangovers) but of course it's much harder to sneak onto the island in broad daylight.

At night the place is alive with lights and music and the noise of hardworking entertainers. Servants scurry back and forth with platters of food — shrimp and chicken and pastries and livers and caviar and all manner of odd delicacies like pickled octopus eyes and fried duck eggs. And lots of expensive wine, naturally.

THE OPPOSITION

There are twice as many guards as there are heroes regularly circulating among the guests. Two keep a close watch on those entering the private rooms; these need to be distracted if entry is to be attempted through the main door.

Six additional guards are posted as lookouts, watching for ruffraff, although many can be counted upon to be distracted by the carrying-on, particularly if there's lascivious dancing underway.

- **Circulating Guards (twice the number of heroes):** See Guard/Soldier profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.
- **Lookout Guards (6):** See Guard/Soldier profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

THE PAINTING

The painting is a wide, rectangular seascape under roiling skies. In its dead center is a rowboat, and upon a red cushion on the central seat of the rowboat is a flat-faced white cat wearing an unpleasant expression.

It's stored in the cousin's vast, private bedchamber, which drips luxury. It has lofty ceilings, chandeliers dripping in diamonds, paintings of heroes and damsels and hunting scenes in gilded frames, expensive wooden detailing, silk hangings, and other bric-a-brac. It's been decorated by someone with far more money than taste.

The door is locked, although the great windows overlooking the sea are wide open, and inside there are two drunken fat men, party guests, loudly snoring. One lies sprawled by a plate of oysters on a messy

STONN

Torig's bodyguard is just there to get the painting and, seemingly, to crack his knuckles. He seems bored by minute details, but shoots down anything problematic with incisive comments like, "That'll never work." He's of the mind that he could have handled the job himself, and it comes out in both his comments and attitude.

He's there to make sure everything succeeds unless you decide upon one of the complications involving him. If he remains true to Torig, then once the painting is recovered he's determined to get all the characters off the island with the painting so there's no way to trace the theft back to his master. This means he actually puts himself in harm's way to help them, though he has no intentions of sacrificing himself for them. He's so tough he thinks of himself as fairly indestructible.

banquet table. The other lies face up on a rug, clutching a red ribbon in a death grip (he intends to give it to his daughter).

Both make enough racket to drown out other smaller noises. Nothing short of falling or tripping across them, or a truly loud noise — for instance, a fight in the room or a blast of trumpets from the party — can rouse them. (Roll their Vigor at -2 except for loud sounds.) If awakened, they're bleary and disoriented for two rounds before they become suspicious. Once fully awake they shout for guards.

THE THEFT

Clever characters should have no trouble devising a method to reach the place. They can try to sidle along at night via a rowboat with muffled oars, or even to swim out on air bladders — although sharks are rumored to feed on leftovers tossed into the ocean here, so that's probably not the safest course. The best approach might be to pay someone off and blend in with circus acrobats, dancers, or something of the kind.



If characters try to reach the outside unnoticed, they have to get past the lookout guards, who each get a chance to spot the heroes once they draw close. Providing a distraction for these guards is a sound plan and modifies their Notice checks to spot the heroes accordingly.

Once past the lookout guards, the heroes need to either scale the outside wall (requiring two Climbing rolls) or infiltrate the interior of the home using Persuasion or Stealth checks as needed.

DIVERSIONS

Enterprising characters may seize the chance for some additional theft. Any of the aristocrats present carries valuables worth $1d10 \times 10$ gold rilks, in the form of jewelry, and there are other expensive items simply lying around. For instance, the silverware might be worth at least a few rilks, other paintings of value, and so on. Professional characters may need to be reminded that they're going to have to travel light and may need to move fast, so should be discouraged from trying to cart off that expensive bronze fish head ornamented with silver that sits on a column near the bed.

Other bedrooms have peculiar paintings and sculptures as well, all garish and overdone, but enough should be going on that the characters have little time to do much else but get in and out with the painting. And even that may get more complicated than they hoped.

COMPLICATIONS

Nothing should go quite as easily as planned. It's possible the situation is challenging enough as it is, but more experienced players might want more diversions and challenges, including some of the following:

1. One of the characters is accosted, loudly, by a musician to whom he owes a sum of money. This is especially problematic if the character is pretending to be someone else, for the musician knows him by name and refers to the character as "the well-known" bravo or sneak-thief or second-story man, or whatever shady skill the character is best known for. Unless dealt with quickly his squawking draws guards, and he's unlikely to be silenced for the promise of the 10 tiks he's owed. He's been promised them before, after all!
2. In the halls off the main corridor a half-naked young woman runs suddenly into the path of the characters. She's frightened and weeping and running from Oranto Vanar (Torig's cousin) because the poor young thing honestly thought they were going to look at some etchings and escaped just as she realized there wasn't to be any art.
3. Vanar is bloated, arrogant, loud, and too drunk to be afraid of the characters. The young woman is eager to be reunited with her aunt, a minor shipping magnate watching the dancers on the deck above. Both are grateful to the characters and are

- happy to assist them in departing the barge so long as undue attention isn't brought upon them, and either could become a patron or love interest.
4. Of course, decking Torig's cousin violates the "no harm done to anyone of importance" rule...
 5. Stonn plans to doublecross the characters and his boss just as soon as he gets the painting. He's not particularly smart, but he's wily, and waits for his chance — pushing a character overboard, shouting for the guards, or whatever's convenient. He plans to rendezvous with his lover and sell the painting on his own. If he escapes, the painting's recovery could be the start of a new scenario.
 6. Stonn's been paid by a Quarmallan lord to recover a small, strange sculpture of a serpent constricting a goose that's displayed in the cousin's bedroom. It's trapped with a poisoned needle, so moments after Stonn touches the thing he staggers and falls over dead from the virulent poison, crushing the eel-skin pouch in the process. (Alternatively, Stonn isn't dead from Lethal Poison, simply drugged for hours by Knockout Poison, and revives later in the adventure — whenever it's most entertaining.) From here on out, some poor character must guard that painting with his life, meaning splashing waves, popping champagne, and vomiting party guests are close at hand. In any case, the characters now have to transport the painting *and* the mighty Stonn, because he's easily traceable back to Torig.
 7. A group of art thieves arrives just ahead of the characters, dressed for an approach the characters considered and discarded. They're being well-paid to recover the painting for their master, a greedy Ilthmaran grain merchant lounging at the party above. They don't fight to the death, but they certainly fight hard to obtain the painting and the noise of the battle may well attract attention. It certainly rouses the snoring guests passed out in the cabin, who then shout for guards.
 8. The characters are inescapably swept into a group of guests who emerge suddenly from below (they were being given a tour). The characters are assumed to be guests because most everyone is half-drunk and everyone's in some kind of costume. They are herded by the crowd and the guards that follow into a game of charades presided over by the Overlord's zany nephew. The winning team gets a stunning golden goblet flashing with rubies. Divide the characters into a guessing and performance team, assigning some of them terrible charade descriptions like "a drunken octopus" and "a storm cloud" and the others unfairly simple ones like "a pirate" or "a musician." Have the characters describe how they simulate their choices. If you want to broaden the moment, have them partner with rich, drunken louts who insist on guessing loudly and wrongly about the most obvious answers.
- **Partygoers:** See Merchant or Noble profiles in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*, and consider penalizing their rolls by -1 or -2 due to drunkenness.
 - **Rival Adventurers:** See the Adventurer profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*, and consider making one or more of them Wild Cards.

CONCLUSION

When the characters return with the canvas in perfect shape, Torig meets them once more at the tavern's back room, and pays them the promised amount. He departs happily with his painting. If his cousin was injured he pretends to be irritated and declares his desire to penalize the heroes by 25% of the promised rilk — but he doesn't press it because he's actually pleased the bully got his just desserts. With either of those results, he's kindly disposed toward the characters and might hire them again, or recommend them to other aristocrats in need of favors.

Torig rewards no money for a ruined or damaged painting, and if the characters have left a trail that leads to him he has to flee the

city, which means he's out for vengeance. An ordinary rich man would hire thugs from the Slayer's Brotherhood, but keeping with the broad comic possibilities of this adventure, if Torig has to seek vengeance he hires an inept cut-rate group of assassins who specialize in outlandish and overcomplicated tactics.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

✧ TORIG MIRAL

Pampered and wealthy, Torig's a harmless collector of cats and cat-related merchandise. When not caring for felines, commissioning cat-related artwork, or purchasing the same, he's probably involved in a fund drive to house and care for the street cats of Lankhmar. He's been frustrated in many of his efforts by his cousin Oranto, who's bought the land where Torig hoped to build his first cat hospital, and then outbid Torig for the *Sea Tiger* merely to be cruel.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Appraisal) d6, Knowledge (Cats) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d8

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Quirk (Cat Devotee)

Edges: Connections, Noble

Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), Knife (Str+d4).

✧ STONN

Stonn is Torig's right-hand man and chief household guard. He's not especially fond of Torig or his cats, but he's well-paid for rather simple duties (until now) and he wants to hold onto his job. Unless, of course, the Game Master decides to use one of the complications where Stonn betrays the mission!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: —

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes

Gear: Chain mail (+2), long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4).

ORANTO VANAR

Spoiled rotten, filthy rich, possessed of a terrible taste in decoration, Oranto's so drunk tonight he may not realize any he challenges aren't necessarily ready to obey his orders. He's petulant and thinks himself far more capable than he has ever been.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy, Mean, Obese, Overconfident

Edges: Connections, Noble

Gear: Knife (Str+d4).



An old friend's niece has been abducted by a cult determined to use her in a grim ceremony to return drowned Simorgya to the surface of Nehwon.

BACKGROUND

Dolren was one of those men always eager to impress. He pretended to know more than he did, and to be chummy with powerful people he barely knew. He wished to appear prosperous even if he wasn't successful, and dashed desperately from one new scheme to another. Finally he fell in with a cult frequented by some powerful and wealthy folk, the cult of the Golden Isle. It promised riches to those who supported it, and Dolren believed the promises.

What he didn't know until he'd shelled out enough money to reach the upper echelons of the organization is that the Golden Isle was actually sunken Simorgya, and that the expensive rituals were all in preparation for a once-in-a-century event — the opportunity to restore the lost island to the surface. All the cult needed was a young woman to join in the ceremony. Not to be sacrificed

or even harmed, but to be involved, for that feminine touch. Dolren foolishly believed what he was told, realizing only after he turned over his daughter she was not going to become a priestess, but the pride of some undersea thing.

Simorgya itself rises from the ocean every seven years, under the light of the full moon, but once in a hundred years the sorcerous curse that sank the island can be reversed, if a surface dweller descended of Simorgyan stock marries a Simorgyan prince. Given the rarity of both the event and of living Simorgyan surface dwellers, this opportunity doesn't happen often. The leaders of the Golden Isle cult deliberately cultivated Dolren so they could get to his wife or daughter.

With his wife dead, the cult turned to Dolren's daughter, and once she willingly pledged herself to the cult — at her father's insistence — they had no more need for him. Once he was told what was really going to happen his pleas to release her fell on deaf ears, and he hanged himself in despair.

Now the cult, led by the sorcerer priest Valsont, is headed for the site of sunken

THE SUNKEN LAND

Game Master Note: If you haven't already read Fritz Leiber's "The Sunken Land," you should definitely get around to that before you run this Savage Tale. It gives you a sense of the dread history of the island, and the atmosphere you should strive for when you bring this adventure to life.

Simorgya, with poor Tess aboard, pledged to serve the cult and the island, never having dreamt that she was pledging troth to an undersea thing.

Only her Uncle Malven, an old friend of the characters, knows of her plight, and he's desperate to help her.

GRIM FRUIT

Late one night the characters are interrupted in their doings by a panting messenger, so out of breath it takes a moment for the

Malven,

I deserve whatever awaits me, and I cannot wait long for the punishment is just. I have been a coward the whole of my life, desperate for recognition and approval. You always told me I should cherish what I have. You were right. You were so right. Now, because of me, it's gone.

The men of The Golden Isle have taken my Tess. They are sailing this night to the Golden Isle. I thought they wanted to raise her in status to become a priestess — but they told me she was to be an offering. They laughed when I begged them not to take her and told me I'd never been worthy, that I would be swept away with all the others.

I'm a fool and too weak to stop them, but I know that you can. Take these golden sigils, which I stole from their storehouse. They're supposed to protect those who set foot upon the isle's shores. And save my Tess. I know you loved her as much as I. Tell her I'm sorry.

Dolren

THE GUEST EXTRA

If your characters are already interacting with an important and appropriate Extra whom they've grown fond of, substitute him or her for Malven. If you're planning to run this tale eventually, you can always introduce him in bit parts earlier before having him call in this favor.

Malven took over his grandfather's blacksmith shop 10 years ago and has run it ever since. His skill hasn't given him city-wide fame, but he's respected by those who know him, and all of his customers return. He takes only a few apprentices at a time because the shop is small and he wants to be able to monitor their work.

He's a huge, calm, quiet fellow. He's stolid and dependable and far from flashy, so he may not have much in common with the characters, although they are likely to respect both his craftsmanship and simple good nature. With this man, what you see is what you get — a rare commodity in Lankhmar.

young man to recover. He explains he was promised a tip from his sender if he found them quickly.

Their friend Malven is desperate for their help. He's asked that they come immediately, and the messenger stresses that Malven seemed extremely agitated.

That such a powerful, well-composed man could be so troubled is concerning in itself.

Malven's home and workshop are only a few minutes away. He lives in a moderate neighborhood with a decent-sized workshop and attached house close down a side street.

When you pound on the door, Malven cracks it open only a small degree and the eyes that stare out at you show their whites.

You scarcely recognize the almost panicked man as he ushers you inside. He quickly shuts the door behind you.

Within, only a pair of lanterns are lit, throwing long shadows of the counter and anvils upon the walls. The ovens and coals are long since cooled, and farm implements

and horseshoes and iron bars are stored in organized racks. All of this you notice only in passing because grisly fruit hangs from the rafter above the primary anvil.

A man in a hooded black cloak dangles from a rope, his neck twisted at a terrible angle. A look at the body shows you he's quite dead, of which Malven assures you.

Who is he?

"That's my wife's brother. He's done something terrible. Before he killed himself, I mean. I need your help."

Malven lifts a note. "He left this for me. It rambles a bit, but..."

Tess is Malven's niece, an 18-year-old on whom he's lavished all his love, for he and his own wife (sister to the hanged man) never had children. There are as many golden sigils as there are characters, plus two. Each is a coin threaded through a silver chain, and upon the coin is the stylized image of a tentacled sea-monster dragging down a ship.

A Knowledge (Arcana) roll reveals the Golden Isle is an ancient name for sunken Simorgya. And there is, indeed, a temple along the Street of the Gods that pays worship to the drowned gods of the ancient island, and it has somehow retained members through the years. A raise reveals the cult has recently prospered under a charismatic new leader, and it's grown both in numbers and in power.

What's Simorgya?

A Common Knowledge roll reveals Simorgya is a sunken island beyond the Inner Sea. Once it was the seat of a powerful empire that grasped hungrily at other lands, but its inhabitants' arrogance grew too great and it sank far beneath the waves.

In recent times it's rumored that Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser actually walked its shores, but they had nothing to prove their tale, and few but the truly credulous believed them.

While the characters ask how to find the temple or the cultists' ship, there's another knock on the door. This time it's Malven's two apprentices, who announce themselves as Llarn and Hurok. Malven opens the door and the two young men hurry in. They too

are breathless. They're leaner than Malven but built on the same powerful lines. They've grown up near Tess and are fond of her themselves, Llarn as a brother and Hurok more romantically.

Llarn reports that the temple's deserted. They broke in but found nothing in the creepy old building.

Just then the door smashes open. Some of the cultists spotted the two apprentices skulking around the temple and trailed them here. Now they're going to put a stop to any who dare meddle in the affairs of the Golden Isle!

- **Cultists (3, plus 1 per hero):** Use the Thug profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

If the characters don't think to question the cultists, Malven keeps one alive and demands to know where his Tess has been taken.

Spittle flying, the cultist answers. "She's gone to her glorious destiny as the new queen of the Golden Isle! When the moon rides high she'll be wed to a Simorgyan prince, and lead the isle and its people to new glories!"

Malven begs the characters to pursue the cultists' ship. If they don't own one themselves, then his family owns a small, swift sloop and Llarn and Hurok are skilled sailors. They intend to accompany the characters despite their lack of protective gear and inexperience as fighters. (They may sometimes forge weapons, and they're powerful men, but they spend long hours at perfecting their craft, not wielding what they build.)

If the characters are particularly mercenary, or terrible friends, Malven can offer 325 gold rilks, a small savings he's accumulated, much of which he was going to give Tess on the eve of her wedding.

INTO THE WAVES

By the time the characters arrive at their ship and arrange for foodstuffs — they're going to be at sea for several days and can't just leave — *The Golden Isle* has a good four-hour lead on them. Fortunately its heading isn't much of a mystery, because old charts are pretty clear about where Simorgya used to be.

The characters' ship, or the blacksmith's, has a good wind at its back and it's easy to hold course. They strain for sight of *The Golden Isle* but spot only slow-moving trade ships the first day, bound for Ool Hrusp.

As the characters sleep at night they dream of a land with a rocky shore and "squat, many-windowed towers" alight with eerie green flame. Tall, proud ships surge out from its quays, their sheets belled by the wind.

On the fourth day out, travelers glimpse the triangular sails of a small, swift sloop (if the characters are on a ship that outclasses a sloop, then make *The Golden Isle* a larger vessel). It seems clear they're gaining on it over the course of the day, although they can only close to within 15 miles before storm clouds gather.

Storm waves roll against the ship, requiring Boating rolls to keep the ship on course, and later, to keep her from heeling over! The Game Master should feel free to devise other challenges, but here are some more ordinary ones:

- During an onslaught of waves, characters must pool Strength at the rudder to keep her meeting them head on. If the ship is

REVEALING THE TRUTH

The characters should find out what's really going on, eventually. They may question a cultist who's on sentry duty, overhear the sorcerer shout something about the woman being chosen by the gods, or hear the mer-prince hiss in a hoarse voice that she is to be his bride and salvation of his people.

But the real truth may not come out until the characters have rescued Tess and are sailing away aboard the ship. She tells of the great "honor" she was to have been given, and the truth of what was underway: Simorgya rises once every seven years, but once in a hundred the stars are right. If a surface woman descended of the royal bloodline is wed to a prince of the bloodline, then Simorgya will be restored to the surface lands, and breed a new, conquering race.

hit broadside she heels over and they are all be swept overboard!

- Winds lash at the ship and Hurok is blown off his feet — he's barely clinging to the side, and someone must make an Agility roll to keep their feet and a Strength roll to pull him aboard.
- Lighting forks down and blasts a spar — the characters have to roll Boating to get a replacement rigged.

Eventually the storm clears, but there's no longer any sight of *The Golden Isle*.

THE FIFTH NIGHT

On this night, the characters dream of the same island with its towers lying far beneath the waves, while fish swim its halls. Eerie flames still light the windows, and strange shapes move behind them — things half-glimpsed that shamble. Great serpentine shapes stir in the muck.

Come morning Llarn worries that the expedition sails to face something more than they're capable of defeating, and urges the heroes to turn back. Shortly after his discussion, something bumps the underside of the ship. Valsont, the sorcerer-priest aboard *The Golden Isle*, has pleaded with the gods of Simorgya to stop those who pursue him, and they have sent a giant sea snake to confront the ship.

It proves more interested in trying to eat the characters and Extras than the ship! The sea snake fights until it takes two or more wounds, then flees.

- **Giant Sea Snake:** See page 94.

THE BROKEN SHORE

Under the silvered moon, a craggy shoreline of broken rocks is visible where none should be, and dark towers thrust up toward the cheerless stars. *The Golden Isle* has settled into a cracked stone quay, every foot covered with seaweed and dying fish. Crabs wander aimlessly in the wet muck that serves as the island's surface.

Broken towers rise against the skyline, some shining with the emerald flame of your dreams. Closer at hand, only a few hundred

yards in, is a long, crumbling building upon an upthrust promontory, looking rather like a temple.

Two cultists have been posted outside the crumbling stone building, and raise the alarm unless the heroes approach with Stealth. Their calls summon the mer-prince and twice as many guards as there are heroes. Fortunately, they're hampered while using legs, which they're unused to, and can be outdistanced. Provided heroes can defeat these few, Tess is under guard by the cultists and the sorcerer-priest inside the temple, along with a half-dozen cloaklers (though these cause no harm to any character carrying one of the sigils left by Dolren).

If the characters manage to get past the sentries, then the ceremony is already underway. Various glistening mer-things sit in the crumbled stone pews, all on the groom's side. A couple dozen cultists sit nervously in the pews on the left.

Fortunately for the characters, there are actually very few guests in attendance. Only a handful of surviving Simorgyans retain both sanity and an interest in returning their gloomy island to the surface.

Valsont, the sorcerer-priest, stands at the place where a bridesmaid might stand, hand to the shoulder of a tall, slim young woman with dark hair crowned in something glistening gold and shifting — like a veil of starlight. Beside her is a man-like shape with slumped shoulders shifting awkwardly, as if it is something wearing a human shape and unfamiliar with how to go about it.

Before the half-cracked pedestal is a hunched form that looks like a decaying fish crossed with a mummy, wearing a sodden black robe. This, it seems, is the head priest, chanting in a low, weird tongue.

The wedding is underway.

THE RESCUE

Exactly how the heroes accomplish the task is up to them, but it's bound to be a challenge.

The characters have their hands full, particularly if they haven't brought their sigils. Those who don't have any are sought out by the cloaklers hidden behind the pillars



closest to the ceremony itself. Those who wear the sigils are invisible to them.

The numbers are intimidating, but aren't as bad as they seem:

- There are twice as many cultists as there are characters and allied Extras.
- There are two dozen Simorgyans, unused to walking in changed form. They're dangerous if they corner the characters, but they can be outrun.
- There are as many cloakakers as there are characters and allied Extras. They don't attack anyone wearing one of the sacred sigils, no matter who orders it.
- The most dangerous problems are the mer-prince himself, who is violent, strong, and determined that nothing should stop the ceremony, and Valsont, who's full of religious zeal and the belief he is to be rewarded for his help in this whole affair.
- As hideous as the priest is, he's an Extra, although his gibbering and wild gestures are used for atmosphere.

TESS

Tess is tired but furious and just waiting for an opportunity. Once things start to go badly

for her captors, she waits for an ideal moment and then makes herself as useful as possible. She might drive a knife into the mer-prince's back, or stab the sorcerer just before he can unleash a terrible spell against the characters, or bash in the priest's head with a wet stone.

- **Tess:** See below.

ESCAPE

If things seem too simple, then as the characters race away, more mer-folk can shamle up. But things aren't easy afterward, because moments after reaching the ship, Simorgya sinks beneath the water once more and the characters must battle a whirlpool that forms as the island vanishes from the surface world. They begin in the outer ring.

- **Whirlpool:** See page 95.

Once the heroes are finally free and clear, they've made loyal friends for life. If Hurok has survived, then he likely huddles with Tess, unless one of the characters wishes to contend for the plucky young woman. The golden veil is worth 400 rilks, and Tess wishes it sold to buy a reward for all those who rescued her.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

✧ MALVEN

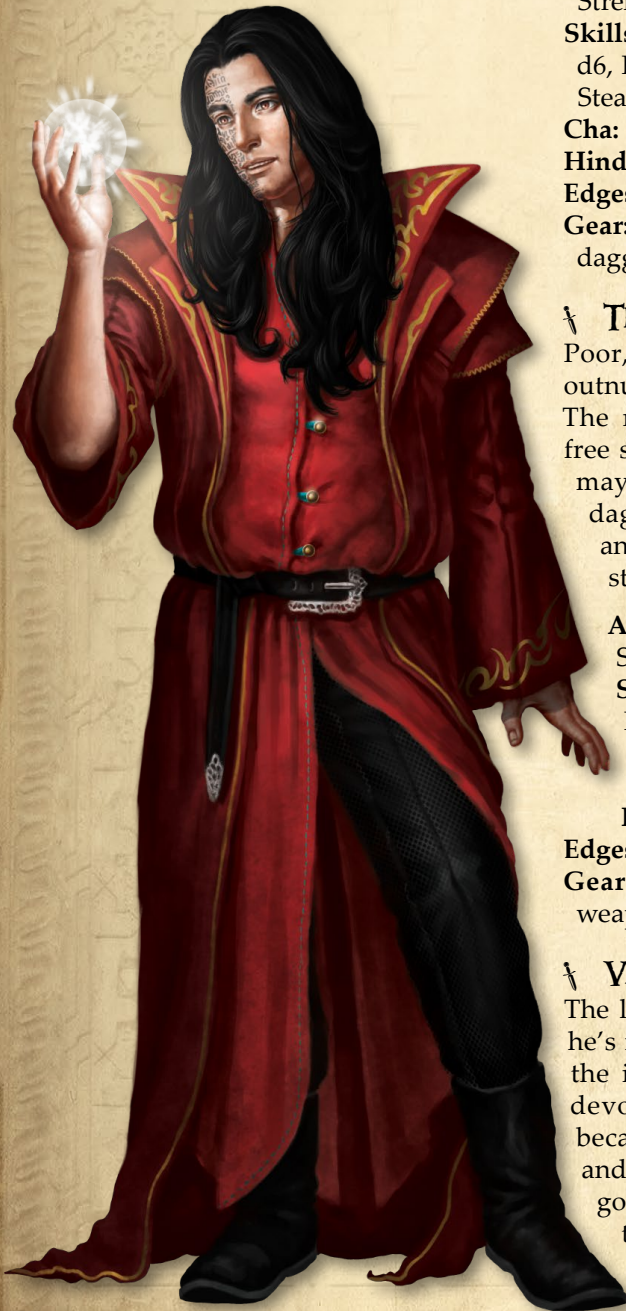
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Blacksmith) d10, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Swimming d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: —

Edges: Hard to Kill, Nerves of Steel



Gear: Chain mail (+2), long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4).

✧ LLARN E HUOK

Malven's two apprentices are loyal friends and followers. Llarn is the better boatman but more frightened about the supernatural. Huok's in love with Tess and stops at nothing to save her, even if he must sacrifice his life.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Blacksmith) d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Swimming d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: —

Edges: Block, Luck

Gear: Chain mail (+2), long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4).

✧ TESS

Poor, brave Tess has been drugged and outnumbered and frightened for too long. The moment she has a chance to break free she does so, aiming to cause as much mayhem as possible. She has a "shank" dagger she made by smashing a mirror, and is willing to pick up any old piece of stone and wield it like a club.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Swimming d6

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: —

Edges: Attractive, Brave, Dodge

Gear: Dress, shank (Str+d4, improvised weapon).

✧ VALSONT

The leader of the cultists, Valsont realizes he's in over his head and, once he reaches the island, secretly questions what he's devoted the last few years to achieve because the Simorgyans are so repulsive and frightening. On the other hand, he's gone too far to give up now and hopes that everything he was promised is going to come true.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Notice d6, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Minor), Mean

Edges: Arcane Background (Black Magic), New Powers, Rapid Recovery, Sorcerer, Strong Caster

Powers: *Armor, detect/conceal arcana, environmental protection, farsight, fear, wall walker*

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), robes, Simorgyan sigil, components.

CULTISTS

The cultists were chosen for their brawn more than their sense, and fight until the end, thinking that they have the protection of their strange gods. They are garbed in brown robes with gold-trimmed hoods. They come, for the most part, from the pampered upper crust so they are clean and well-garbed beneath their robes.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d4, Fighting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor), Loyal

Edges: Brawny

Gear: Short Sword (Str+d6).

PRINCE LESHLETOC

Some Simorgyans are adept shapechangers. Most, however, have no interest in interacting with surface dwellers and have little practice at being anything other than undersea beings. Such is Prince Leshletoc. He's taken a more human shape so he can walk on the surface of Simorgya, but he's unused to walking or wearing human clothing, and it shows. He drags his feet as he strides, slump-shouldered. His face is fish-eyed and expressionless. Uncomfortable with dry skin, he has partially obscured his pale features in sea slime.

He's inbred, vicious, and more than a little mad, but determined to go through with the ritual that is supposed to restore the island.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: Trident (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Armor +1:** Simorgyans have tough, scaly skin.
- **Low Light Vision:** Simorgyans suffer no penalties from dim or dark lighting.
- **Sea Lords:** Noble Simorgyans possess the *beast friend* and *summon beast* powers, using Spirit as the arcane skill. Both powers only affect aquatic animals. The Simorgyan.
- **Weakness (Light):** Simorgyans disdain bright light, preferring the darkness of the sea. When exposed to bright light (daylight or brighter), the Simorgyan suffers a -2 to all Trait rolls.

SIMORGYANS

Like their prince, these Simorgyans aren't experienced shapechangers. They've shifted for the first time in years to a form that can survive above the water. They do their best to obey their prince and kill any interlopers, but they're far more hideous and frightening looking than they are actually dangerous and skilled. All of them are quite fishy in appearance in different ways — webbed hands, bulging eyes, scale-like skin, rounded, fish-like shoulders, and long faces.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Stealth d4, Swimming d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: Trident (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Armor +1:** Simorgyans have tough, scaly skin.
- **Low Light Vision:** Simorgyans suffer no penalties from dim or dark lighting.
- **Weakness (Light):** Simorgyans disdain bright light, preferring the darkness of the sea. When exposed bright light (daylight or brighter), the Simorgyan suffers a -2 to all Trait rolls.

CLOAKERS

These sinister manta-ray-like beings stand guard in the wedding temple, ready to engulf and devour any who dare intrude upon the wedding ceremony. Prince Leshletoc, knowing the insatiable hunger of these beings, passed protective sigils along to the cultists of the Golden Isle so that the creatures would not attack them. Anyone wearing the sigils are free from attack as well, no matter who orders it, for the cloak-ers are confused by contrary instruction.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Armor +1:** Simorgyan cloak-ers have tough, rubbery skin.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Envelop:** Simorgyan cloak-ers attack by enfolding a target in their huge, rubbery wings. These creatures gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls against a target they have entangled. Simorgyan cloak-ers automatically inflict Bite damage on an entangled target (no opposed roll is necessary).



- **Low Light Vision:** Simorgyan cloak-ers suffer no penalties from dim or dark lighting.

SLAYER ON THE SEA

The characters are tasked with locating a missing killer — not to avenge anyone, but because she's the only witness who can exonerate an innocent woman of a terrible crime.

BACKGROUND

Ostra Vlenos is a contract killer who works for the Assassins' arm of the Slayer's Brotherhood. She reasons that once she gets a contract the man or woman on the other end of it is already dead, because someone's going to get them even if it's not her. Ostra's otherwise a law-abiding citizen, and contrary to expectations is neither a sadist nor a psychopath. She is cold-blooded, however, and completely separates her job from her other interests.

When not recovering from the demands of her position or training to stay in shape, Ostra can usually be found on her small pleasure boat, for there is nothing she likes more than being out on the waves, deep-sea fishing. That, she feels, is a true test of strength. Her only other vice is gambling, in which she occasionally indulges under carefully controlled limits.

Last week she was on her way back from killing a garrulous priest of Mog spreading vicious (true) gossip about the merchant prince Oranto Vanar. After dropping down from a window into a back alley she happened to see a woman and an old man being assaulted by a pair of bravos. The old man was already bleeding out and the woman's fate was almost sealed as the two men crept up on her with knives.

Vlenos would normally have wandered past, like any wise Lankhmaran, but something about the girl's build and hair reminded her of her long-dead sister, one of the few pleasant memories she had of her childhood. Before she knew it she'd tossed daggers at both men.

They fled, both wounded, one mortally. Vlenos stopped to check on the woman, who'd fainted, and the woman saw her face by moonlight.

Vlenos walked her half a block to a pool of lamplight then departed. What Vlenos couldn't know is that the young woman has since been blamed as the killer of both the older gentlemen, an eccentric moneylender out to peer at the stars, and the very priest Vlenos herself slew that night.

AN INNOCENT IN NEED

The characters are in a dockside tavern when they learn of an innocent young woman being executed for an assassination. Her father, a fisherman, is spreading his tale of woe. He tells what he knows of the story: that a mysterious woman with a blade-like nose and a dark blue cloak saved his daughter Myria from murder, and now the crazy judge Mulk has sentenced Myria to death.

If anyone could find this do-gooder who aided his daughter to testify in her defense, he'd give them the small nest egg he's earned as recompense. But the mystery woman must be located soon, for his daughter Myria is slated to be executed in three days' time, with other riff-raff in the usual end-of-week execution jail clearing.

Captain Sulma's nest egg amounts to very little, in the grand scheme of things — a measly 450 rilks — but he swears he can get more if need be. He puts his fishing rig up for sale if he must, and it's worth 700 rilks — though he won't promise all of that to the characters.

TRACKING VLENOS

The characters have only a description of a small, slim woman, out at night, with a narrow face and a blade of a nose, wearing a dark blue cloak. Apparently she's good with daggers, and silent. Once they assemble all the clues and make some inquiries and some Streetwise (-4) rolls, they find a contact who can help them.

Unless the characters already have a good underworld contact in play, they're acquainted with a shift gambler with Thieves' Guild ties by the name of Talik. He

listens, nodding blankly and then suddenly blanches, goggle-eyed, before pretending he doesn't know anything.

He must be coaxed or very well bribed (20 rilks or more) to reveal the truth. He thinks it sounds like one of the elite killers of the Slayer's Brotherhood, and provides a false name, "Syra Gisred."

"Sometimes she comes in here and gambles."

Talik has to be coaxed (Persuasion -4) or very well rewarded before divulging her true name, Ostra Vlenos. She doesn't talk much, he says, but once when she won a big pool of cash she talked about buying a bigger boat.

"But it couldn't be her helping someone, could it? I mean, she's a cold-blooded killer!"

Now that the characters know their quarry's real name, they can search for information about her. If they're wise, they do so carefully, making inquiries about where she might live, or even if she owns a boat.

They learn the location of her small but pleasant home, looked after by a pair of elderly servants. Normal folks who are out fetching groceries and tidying up the walk, they have no idea of their employer's true nature but are wary of her privacy. They're aware that she's out boating and may be gone for several days.

Dockside inquiries lead the characters to the information that Ostra has a pretty nice little boat and that she likes to head out with friends for deep-sea fishing.

Really clever or charming characters can learn from a dockside source that Ostra was overheard talking with her friends about working the Fin Rot, a small line of reefs about 25 miles east of Lankhmar, just beyond sight of land.

THE BROTHERHOOD

Unfortunately for the characters, any inquiries about "Syra" or Ostra swiftly get back to the Slayers' Brotherhood, and they send some boys to look into things. If they don't like what they hear then they're liable to start cutting throats. They're quite efficient at tracking down leads and arrive to question the characters at the most inconvenient moment — after they speak to a contact who

tells them where Vlenos is headed, as they're getting ready to hire a boat, or while they're waiting on the characters' own boat.

There is one slayer for every hero, plus their leader, Kolk, who's an assassin himself. He distracts the characters by confronting them face to face, while half his forces approach from behind to surround them.

"We hear you've been asking a lot of questions about one of our friends. People who bother our friends bother us. And you really don't want to bother us. Isn't that right, Tarn?"

"That's right."

"So start talking." Kolk picks his nails with a large knife.

Kolk's inclined to beat some people up and even kill them, but he's pretty sure someone's hired the characters to hunt down a fellow assassin. He wants to know who before he finishes them off.

If the characters handle themselves well, though, Kolk may be convinced they're telling the truth. He then asks further questions.

"What's in this for you?"

He snorts if they mention the small amount of gold, then guesses that one of them is the lover of the accused girl, which makes a lot more sense to him.

"So you think you can just head out there and talk to Ostra and she'll help you? Out of the goodness of her heart?"

"What are you going to do if she says no?"

He isn't impressed by whatever the characters say, and shakes his head.

"I tell you what. Me and the boys want to make sure this goes smooth. Likes glass. Right, boys?"

"Right, Kolk."

"So we'll come with you. Otherwise she's apt to kill you on sight. Me and the boys, we don't like harm coming to the wrong people. It's bad for business."

If combat breaks out, Kolk orders the characters subdued. He and the slayers fight until half their number are wounded, then retreat.

If the characters lose, Kolk takes them with him, bandaged against dying and hands tied, as he sails to confront Ostra. If the characters

win, Kolk waits to confront them again with Ostra when they return to shore. On the outside chance he's killed in this fight, another brother with similar features awaits the party on their return to shore, with many questions and the same backup numbers his brother had.

\ Kolk (or his brother Ermot): See the Master Assassin profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

• **Slayers' Brotherhood Men (2, plus 1 per hero):** See the Guard/Soldier profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

MEETING ON THE WAVES

Once off toward the Fin Rot reefs, the heroes spot several vessels, more than two dozen visible in a 10-mile radius. Sixteen are too large to be private fishing vessels. That leaves a 1 in 8 chance of locating the ship unless Kolk and his boys are along to identify it. All the rest are regular fishermen or sport fishermen from Lankhmar and are apprehensive and suspicious about being approached.

Ostra's ship is blue and gray, a little sloop with a minimum of extra amenities (there are two small cabins aboard) and she and her friend are on deck, watching the heroes' ship as it draws near.

She's suspicious and ready to fight if the characters approach her without Kolk. If Kolk's along she's still wary, but more readily hears them out. She may invite the visitors aboard, although things start getting a little cramped.

Ostra's still wondering if she should have gotten involved, and once she hears the story of what happened she's certain she shouldn't have. And she's not altogether certain that coming in to testify is a viable choice for someone in her line of work. On the other hand, she also feels she put in a fair amount of energy just to see this innocent girl get chewed up by the system. She puts on a hard front, but she can be convinced with good roleplay. Game Masters may want to use the **Social Conflict** rules (see *Savage Worlds*).

"What am I supposed to tell this judge I was out doing?"



Hopefully the characters have a good answer for that!

"Won't he be suspicious that someone so good with knives was out running around at night right after that priest was killed?"

If the characters aren't able to convince her, her friend Dalvik sounds off, reminding her she always finishes what she starts. At this point her indecision may inspire the characters to press their case further.

✧ **Dalvik:** See the Master Thief profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

✧ **Ostra Vlenos:** See page 67.

KOLK'S ATTACK

If Kolk and the boys don't accompany the characters to the fishing boat, they wait until Ostra and the characters get back to shore and confront them as they dock. (If the characters killed Kolk, his brother turns up to do the exact same thing).

If Kolk and his men from the Slayer's Brotherhood are along for the boat journey, he waits until Ostra confirms the story. When it's clear either that Ostra's convinced

or that she's certain not to come, Kolk makes his move. Kolk may be in the same guild, but he's tired of Ostra being in the limelight, and he's lied to his companions about his orders.

"Seems like you're drawing too much attention to yourself, Ostra. We can't have that. And we can't have people going soft, either. Bad for business."

Kolk and the boys attack Ostra. Naturally they attack the characters as well, this time with intent to kill. Hand Ostra and Dalvik over to the characters to control as allied Extras.

Kolk fights to the death. Once he goes down any surviving members of the Slayer's Brotherhood ask for quarter, and confirm their boss just told them to go with Kolk.

Ostra is livid, and openly wonders whether Kolk was gunning for her or if the guild really did want her dead. In any case, if she was undecided before she is decided now, and agrees to come in to testify.

✧ **Dalvik:** See the Master Thief profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

SUBTERFUGE

It might occur to clever rogues to simply disguise themselves as the mystery savior and then speak to the judge, or to hire someone to do that, but the judge and his grim guardsmen — twin brothers — are well-used to the ways of Lankhmar and have no patience for those who practice its schemes. They have a +2 to Notice checks against disguise and acting.

✧ **Kolk (or his brother Ermot):** See the Master Assassin profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

✧ **Ostra Vlenos:** See page 67.

• **Slayers' Brotherhood Men (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use the Guard/Soldier profile in *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

MEETING THE JUDGE

Back on dry land, Ostra and the characters go to the Temple of Law and into the court. Even now Mulk is passing down a death sentence for a man accused of poisoning cats. The wild-haired fellow is taken away in chains, babbling about how they're plotting, always plotting, waiting for their chance.

The courtroom is a dank, dark room lit by braziers and torches. From behind, a single shaft of sunlight streams from a grimy window onto the judge's desk.

Mulk himself is a hatchet-faced middle-aged man with a sallow complexion. His two private guards stand to either side of the bench. Four others are employed by the temple, including the two who've just left with the cat poisoner. The other two stand to either side of the door.

There are about a dozen bored or miserable-looking people waiting for the next judgment to be handed down. Mulk is in communication with a robed court functionary over a sheaf of papers the man's waving about.

APPROACHING THE BENCH

Mulk's bodyguards tense and step forward as Ostra and the characters draw close. Ostra seems reluctant and wary, so it's up to the characters to make the introductions and explanations.

The functionary starts to object, saying that they have a full docket, but Mulk cuts him off. He has a high, menacing voice.

"No, no. I shall hear what this 'witness' has to say. The rest of you, take your seats. Step forward, woman."

Ostra says, "I saved Myria's life. She was being attacked in the street by two thieves."

She goes on to describe the entire incident in great detail.

Mulk steeples his fingers and leans forward across the bench. "That is extremely well-detailed and convincing."

"I wonder if you could tell me what you were doing there. Given your own acknowledged skills, I can't help wondering if you yourself are a hired killer. Perhaps the very one who slew the priest."

Clever heroes may have devised an explanation for Ostra. If not, she has, on her own, come up with the following, though she has not shared her decision with the characters because she improvised it in the last few moments.

Ostra says that she knew nothing about the priest, but that she trailed another man, a hired killer responsible for the death of a dear friend. For evidence she presents Kolk's (or Ermot's) identifying insignia badge, looted from the body. "I couldn't catch up to him that night, because I stopped to assist the young woman. But I killed him today."

An evil smile twitches the judge's face. "So you admit to me that you slew a man within the city gates?"

She didn't, of course. She killed him at sea, to which the characters can testify. This means that it was outside of Mulk's jurisdiction. Mulk doesn't look especially happy about any of this. He says,

"I sense that there's more here than I'm not being told. But it is clear to me that justice has been done. Guards, release the girl."

He warns Ostra that she'd best keep her nose clean and peers suspiciously at the characters before dismissing them all.

- **Judge Mulk:** Use the Noble profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.
- **Mulk's Guards (2):** Use the Veteran Watch profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.
- **Court Guards (4):** Use the Guard/Soldier profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

AFTERMATH

Myria's father rewards the heroes as promised, though he's naturally far more grateful to them if he hasn't been forced to sell his boat on their account. If he's beggared himself to free his daughter's name, any good will the heroes have from Ostra is effectively neutralized, and she offers the loan of her own boat to him.

Myria, a round-faced girl with a dark shock of hair, has a sweet, heart-melting smile. She personally thanks all involved, especially Ostra, to whom she gives a deep, warm embrace, startling the assassin.

If the characters have proven magnanimous and self-reliant, Ostra becomes a contact just slightly on the plus side of neutral. She doesn't undermine her career or risk her life to help anyone, but if she gets wind of a contract against the characters she gets them word, and if they occasionally seek her out she's a guarded source of information.

Myria and her father remain grateful, particularly if the characters didn't impoverish them. And the characters are now aware of an honest judge, perhaps one of the only judges in Lankhmar who's not on the take. He's draconian and eager to pass death sentences, but he's committed to justice, which might occasionally be useful to the characters.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

✦ OSTRALYENOS

Ostra is a cold-blooded professional who isn't as entirely divorced from warmer human

instincts as she would like to think. She's capable of compassion and even friendship of a sort, so long as it doesn't occur during business hours and especially so long as it doesn't interfere with a contract.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Gambling d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d12, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6

Cha: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Habit (Minor), Vengeful (Major), Vow (Major—always finish the job)

Edges: Acrobat, Alertness, Dodge, Improved First Strike, Improvisational Fighter, Level Headed, Marksman, Quick Draw, Real Dirty Fighter, Steady Hands, Thief

Gear: Leather armor (+1), dagger (Str+d4), short sword (Str+d6), crossbow (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2).

SONG FROM THE SEA

A mysterious patron wants the characters to steal a musician for a one-night engagement. The catch? The musician is a priestess of the Sea-King dwelling at a remote, well-guarded island temple. And the priestess doesn't know she has a secret admirer, a young merman who happens to be one of the Sea-King's sons. He doesn't take kindly to anyone who removes his favorite singer.

BACKGROUND

Melanthar is something of a rebel, at least musically, who routinely conjures soaring melodies and complex harmonies. Some love him and some despise him, but anyone who follows modern music in Lankhmar is aware of his influence. What they may not know is that in his constant search for the new and the different Melanthar's not afraid to take all manner of risks. A nobleman, Melanthar owns seaside property, and one morning he was up early composing when he heard the most astonishing voice from across the waters.



THE MYSTERY MAN'S IDENTITY

The easiest way to learn Melanthar's identity is to look into the yacht at pier 27. It's registered under the name of Yelar Yilzanis, but only a little poking around reveals that the true owner is the composer Melanthar. Those who have ships on neighboring berths know it, and so do almost all nearby laborers, because of the music always being played on the vessel.

Melanthar is a reputed madman and patron of the arts, said to play a dozen instruments himself, the least of which he plays adequately, and his string playing is said to be able to make grown men weep. But he never, ever, plays in public. He leaves that to the musicians he conducts.

This was the priestess Iria, a coloratura soprano with an astonishingly clear, sweet, powerful voice. Melanthar was inspired to write music for her and determined to meet her, even after he realized she was a priestess forbidden from contact with the outside world. Melanthar found a way to contact her and discovered Iria longed to leave the island, if only for a little while. And so a scheme was hatched. She plans to sing for him in an upcoming concert so long as no one is harmed during her extrication.

Melanthar doesn't know that Iria does *not* want to get back to the island once she leaves, and hasn't really thought through how he is to accomplish that miracle; he's too obsessed with having this amazing instrument sing his music.

Iria has more than one admirer. The guards, most of her fellow

priestesses, the crews of passing ships, and a young merman all thrill to her amazing talent. The young merman comes once a week at dawn to hear her sing the prayer to his father, and he means one day to wed her.

A SINGER FOR THE SONG

Summoned to the backroom of a posh Lankhmar seaside establishment, the characters are greeted by an elegant aristocrat. He wears an elaborate white face mask of a smiling man, with a pearl for a facial mole. With him are two burly attendants, all in black, with frowning devil face masks.

The smiling mask wearer bids them to sit and waves back his guards before speaking to them.

"Your special talents have become known to me. I wish to enlist your aid for an extremely private matter, one which you'll find amply rewarding.

"You are no doubt aware of the temple to the Sea-King that sits just beyond the main shipping lines in the harbor of Lankmar?" He turns and points, and there, through the dusk, you can see the distant slim lines of that narrow structure, rising to the stars. A bright glow burns on its shell-like height.

"The temple is tended by a small number of young women devoted to the Sea-King. It's said that the very blessed are sometimes taken below the sea to consort with him, although I can't say as that strikes me as particularly blessed, because I'm not sure they return.

"One of those maidens has the most exquisite voice. A high, coloratura soprano, the likes of which I have never heard. I've placed multiple requests at the temple, but they refuse to let me meet her, no matter my financial outlay.

"So. Here is what you must do. Find a way to bring the girl, Iria, to me. Unharméd. Neither she nor any of the other members of the temple are to be harmed, and none of the treasures are to be removed. I wish to make that absolutely clear. If they are, you will not be paid. The girl is expecting you, and is extremely excited to be able to leave the tower. I have managed to smuggle a series of messages to her, courtesy of an expensive messenger bird."

How much will we be paid?

The mystery man slides across a bag of pearls easily worth 100 rilks. "Two bags of these. For each of you."

He tells them that the young woman, Iria, must be brought to the yacht at pier 27 within three evenings.

If the characters settle on a plan and wish to inform Iria of any directions, the mystery man promises to send her that information by the same messenger bird. If the characters don't think of this, he does, and suggests that they contact him in the morning with their plan so he can inform her. He is once more at the same inn.

Who are you?

"I would rather remain anonymous."

This is a romantic notion. The characters can easily deduce his identity with a minimum of legwork (see sidebar above), but Melanthar doesn't know enough about crime to realize how simple this is.

How is the priestess getting back?

"Leave the details of that to me. You need only to worry about the extraction."

✧ **Melanthar:** See page 75.

- **Melanthar's Guards (2):** Use the Guard/Soldier profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

THE TOWER OF THE SEA-KING

It's common knowledge that the tower where the Sea-King's priestesses greet the morning tide is "manned" by a contingent of two dozen tough female guards, there to stave off would-be abductors. The tower stands atop a rocky island that's at most a quarter-mile wide. There's barely space for a couple of outbuildings, the tower, a green space, and the wall that surrounds it all. There's only one jackknife of a trail all the way up. In addition, treacherous currents surround the island.

The rest of this information may be obtained by talking with various contacts:

- Only once has anyone dared assault the island — the Overlord's son, 100 years back. He hired two dozen sea Mingols to take the tower and carry away the maidens. Though they were doughty bowmen and rowed silently, they were cut down on the switchback stairs by the famed female guards.
- Twice a week supplies, including fresh water, are brought to the island. It's the only time, apart from monthly visits of a high priestess of the Sea-King from the mainland temple, that outsiders are allowed near the island. Every week the female guard staff switch out: They serve one week on duty, one week off.
- As it happens, this is the week of the priestess's visit. A revictualing boat is shipping out in one day, and the guards are being changed a day after. The day following, the high priestess arrives to inspect the temple, bless the priestesses, and, it's said, listen to the hymns they sing in praise of the sea. (The priestesses who serve in the temple are renowned for their excellent voices.)
- Two longboats are kept moored at an enclosed jetty at the foot of the cliff, should the tower ever need to be evacuated for some reason. The guards break these out to chase heroes should it be discovered someone has kidnapped one of the sacred priestesses, although they are hard put to row hard enough to catch up to a sailing vessel.

From this information it should be clear that there are four possible ways to the tower.

THE REVICTUALING BOAT

The weekly supply boat is manned by a dozen sailors, eight of whom unload the week's supplies: an ox, three pigs, lots of flour bags, barrels of fresh water and ale, a huge parcel of new chairs and a table, squawking chickens in cages, and some barrels full of pickled fish. All goods have to be carried up the long flight of stairs, which means a whole lot of back and forth trips carrying heavy things.

The guards keep close watch on the sailors while they unload, although they're familiar enough with the ones they know that they

don't watch them as closely as they once did. It *might* be possible to find a way to replace some of the unloading crew, but the guards certainly notice if some of the characters show up and then don't return. It's possible that some of the empty barrels they remove might be used to sneak someone away. Woe betide a character trapped in a barrel that is dropped during the steep climb.

It might be possible to sneak in, concealed inside a barrel. All are carried to the store room under the main building. Alcohol is rolled into a different cellar and then locked up.

VISITING PRIESTESS

The high priestess plans to visit the same day Melanthar plans his concert, so waiting for her arrival may be the riskiest time to approach the tower, in some ways. However, security aboard this ship is more lax because no one pays much attention to the identity of the sellswords hired to guard the elderly priestess on her way to the island. Any and all male visitors are watched closely by the Tower Watch staff, but during the scheduled prayer and following concert there may be opportunities for someone to arrange for something to happen, or to sneak off into the shadows. Getting the priestess *out*, though, is another matter entirely.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

It might be possible to join the crew of the relief ship that's transporting a dozen replacement female guards. Replacing the guards is out of the question, as they all know one another. They're used to seeing the same boatmen haul them out, too, on a small boat, and the crew never lingers, but such a trip might enable the heroes to get a good lay of the land.

INDEPENDENT APPROACH

A perfectly viable solution is to row out to the tower and scale the cliff. The characters must make Boating rolls to navigate the dangerous currents. And they must approach under the watchful eyes of the guards. At the very least the characters need to travel at night, but they may also muffle oars and wear dark clothing to further reduce the chance of being seen.

Once at the island there's the small matter of the treacherous climb up a very sheer cliffside, one considered nigh impossible. It

requires three Climbing rolls at -4. After the cliff is scaled, the walls of the facility must be scaled as well (Climbing roll -2).

THE TOWER WATCH

By day and night there are always three sentinels making the rounds of the wall. If they see anything out of the ordinary they're to alert the rest of the watch by cries of alarm, or, if they're at one of the five corner towers, by ringing the handily available bell.

The guards are merciless to anyone on the approach, dropping rocks into boats or firing arrows. Anyone caught within the facility is attacked first and questioned later, although it's just possible someone immediately surrendering and throwing down their arms is merely kicked a few times. Then they're thrown into a cell for transport back to Lankhmar for a long prison sentence.

- **The Tower Watch (24; half on active duty):** Use the Veteran Watch profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

THE YOUNG PRIESTESS

Iria's a pretty young woman of 16, naïve and sweet and determined to leave the island, permanently, although she hasn't said that. She doesn't want to live out here for 10 more years — it's boring! She doesn't have the first idea about the likelihood of any plans presented to her, and puts complete faith in the characters so long as they make sure no one gets hurt. She's friendly with everyone, even the grimmest of guards.

✧ **Iria:** See page 75.

THE OTHER PRIESTESSES

The priestesses range in age from 15–25. There are seven in all, and they are devoted to their duties. One, pretty Leilara, has fallen in love with lieutenant Losla of the Tower Guard, and they hope to run away together.

Another thinks she's in love with the gruffly handsome first mate of the revictual boat, who has winked at her a few times as he supervises his men moving cargo around. He's just being friendly, but the 15-year-old sees in him the embodiment of all the princes



and heroes she's ever read about. If Game Masters wish to complicate matters this young priestess (Kerula) insists on accompanying them when they leave with Iria so she can be united with her first officer. In reality, he's happily married and has no interest in entanglements with an under-aged priestess.

THE REST OF THE STAFF

Five other women live on the island — a head cook, two assistants, and two others who assist with cleaning and sewing and mending, the setting of tables, and a variety of other odd jobs. The priestesses are expected to do much of this themselves when they aren't at prayer, so these servants mostly assist the women of the guard. On the whole they're simple souls who only get a few days off every month.

- **Staff (5):** Use the Servant profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

THE MER PRINCE

Unbeknownst to everyone, a young mer prince, a child of the Sea-King, has taken a fancy to the voice of the priestess and imagines himself her protector. He's watched her singing to the sea from her balcony, and has fallen in love with her. Well, as much love as an 11-year-old mer-boy can muster. Once he sees that the characters are leaving the island with her, he pursues on his dolphin, yelling for them to stop.

"Unhand her! Let her go!"

He's easily scared away by threat or use of force. If either he or his dolphin is actually harmed it is much more challenging to convince him that the characters are working in the priestesses best interests later.

- **Pelushta the Mer Prince:** See page 74.
- **Dolphin:** See page 73.

THE PERFORMANCE

Provided that the characters deliver the priestess as promised, Melanthar fulfills his contract by paying them, then asks if they're interested in further service. He wants them to stand watch while the concert's underway, and offers to pay the generous fee of one gold rilk each for what amounts to two hours

work listening to music they're probably already curious about.

Come the evening of the concert, the sun is sinking over the waters and the evening fog is light, for a fresh wind blows from the sea. The attendance is sparse, for the yacht's not that large. Only three dozen upper/middle-class folks and aristocrats mix around the food tables before they take their seats, barely outnumbering the orchestra of two dozen (mostly strings) and the eight members of the choir.

The song begins with a flourish of strings that reminds you of the rising and falling sea, then striking, discordant sounds before a sweeping, haunting melody begins. Above it all soars the wordless plaintive melody sung by Iria, whose voice is even more amazing than you imagined. Even if the music's a little odd, or you're more into folksy music on traditional instruments, you can't help noting the quality in the piece.

Unfortunately, two-thirds of the way into the music the young mer prince arrives on a dolphin at the side of the boat. This time an elder sister sits on a dolphin beside him, and two hideous shapes rise out of the water nearby — giant octopi! If the characters don't notice the mer prince first, he raises a conch shell and sounds a blast to disrupt the ceremony.

"Release her to me, immediately, or face my wrath! Do not dare harm her!"

The moment the crowd notices him — more precisely, the octopi — pandemonium sweeps through their ranks and they run like madmen and women for the dock. This naturally alarms the mer prince, who fears his beloved is going to be trampled in the commotion, and he has his sister send in the octopi to knock people out of the way (which naturally frightens the crowd even more).

- **Giant Octopus (2):** See page 94.

Clever characters may roll Notice to see it's the sister directing the monsters with mystic gestures. If the mer princess is slain, the monsters depart in an instant, although the young prince is certain to vow vengeance against the characters.

Hopefully the heroes aren't in the habit of making war against children, even if they're children of the sea, but it may be that they aren't sure what course of action to take. If so, they see Melanthar wringing his hands, wishing aloud that someone could reason with the child and explain Iria's not been harmed at all. This is most effective if the characters can convince Iria to talk to the prince.

She's quite frightened and has to be coached, but if the characters manage to get her to explain that she's fine, that she's here to sing, the attacks cease. The mer prince says that he is her protector, and that he comes to hear her sing each night and morning, for she has the loveliest voice above the waves.

Melanthar smoothly invites him and his sister aboard to attend the concert, and after a hushed discussion they graciously accept and dismiss the octopi. The remaining guests return to their seats, and the musicians return to the stage.

Just when it seems that all's well that ends well, a dozen of the tower guards arrive, led by the angry High Priestess, the aged Sprahna. The guards charge in, brandishing weapons and looking for a fight. They menace everyone, and if they recognize any of the characters, then they make a beeline for them and give no quarter.

The mer princess, meanwhile, asserts her royal authority, telling them to desist, and is herself menaced by guards.

The High Priestess loudly announces her intent to imprison Melanthar and punish any who were involved in Iria's abduction.

✧ **Shoslaris, the Mer Princess:** See page 74.

- **High Priestess:** Use the Priest profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.
- **Tower Watch (12):** Use the Veteran Watch profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

THE OUTCOME

Several outcomes are possible. The characters may be interested in protecting the royalty and the young priestess and possibly Melanthar, in which case there are boats to jump into, or another pier to swim for.

Enterprising characters may realize that the tower is dedicated to the reverence of the father of the two mer-beings who are with them, meaning that anyone who can get through to the guard captain and the angry priestess leading them might be able to patch everything up, including the ability of the young priestess to come and go from the tower as she pleases. Characters who think to pull that off are aided in their efforts by Melanthar.

If they choose this route they have important connections in the city thereafter (with the composer) and the young priestess, and end up with 50 extra gold rilks per character in various strange gifts Melanthar gives them in gratitude: a golden harp, a collection of pearls, or the sculpture of a triton's face by a famed artist.

The mer prince's crush fades over time, but he remains fond of Iria and continues to give her gifts each year, and looks kindly upon those who helped clear matters up for him. And if the heroes have been gentlemanly to the mer princess, or helped defend her, she might well look favorably upon charming overtures from a surface dweller, though she's unlikely to look on a relationship as anything more than a diversion.

More mercenary characters might just take the opportunity to escape in the confusion. There's a lot of expensive bric-a-brac on the yacht to escape with, and lots of rich folk to pickpocket besides. If the characters don't intervene, the mer folk flee, the priestess is locked away in her tower, and the composer is arrested. His estates and instruments are given over to a miserly tin-eared cousin whose only hobby is raising rent on the slums he owns.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

DOLPHIN

In addition to being one of the smarter animals on Nehwon, this air-breathing water mammal is sometimes the loyal mount to royals of the Sea-King.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d12, Swimming d10

Pace: 0; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Acrobat, Dodge

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.

✦ PELUSHTA THE MER PRINCE

The 11-year-old mer prince is brave and daring, but completely smitten with his love for Iria. He's a handsome, faintly blue-skinned boy with long dark hair.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Trident (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

Hindrances: Loyal, Young

Edges: Command, Connections, Noble

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Sea Lords:** The mer prince possesses the *beast friend* and *summon beast* powers, but has little practice at using them in combat. He is only comfortable riding his pet dolphin, which he uses to chase any boat carrying Iria.

✦ SHOSLARIS, THE MER PRINCESS

The 18-year-old mer princess isn't particularly interested in anything that's going on, although she's devoted to her favorite younger brother and quickly grows angry if he is threatened or harmed. She loves fine music and, given the chance, enjoys the music of Melanthar. She's a pretty, faintly blue-skinned woman with long green hair, dressed in a gossamer dress that appears threaded randomly with tiny sparkling gems.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal, Young
Edges: Command, Connections, Noble
Gear: Trident (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Sea Lords:** The mer princess has the *beast friend* and *summon beast* powers; she rides a dolphin like her brother, and if menaced has a Blade Octopus close by.

✧ **IRIA**

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Knowledge (Music Performance) d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Swimming d6

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal, Pacifist (Minor), Quirk (Dramtic Flair)

Edges: Attractive, Connections

Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), Knife (Str+d4).

✧ **MELANTHAR**

The eccentric Melanthar is a talented performer and one of the most gifted composers in generations. He is rather singleminded in his pursuit of artistic excellence and has dramatic tendencies. For all that he's a man of his word, and loyal to friends and hirelings. He's always interested in talking about music or listening to a talented performer. He's rarely comfortable personally performing his own work before more than a handful of people, but he doesn't mind conducting an ensemble of other musicians playing his work.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Music composition) d12, Knowledge (Music performance) d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d8

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal, Quirk (Dramatic Flair)

Edges: Command, Connections, Noble

Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), Knife (Str+d4).

THE THING FROM BELOW

This tale is meant to take place when the characters must make a long sea voyage to get from point A to point B. How they come aboard the ship is deliberately flexible: If they have money they can pay fare, or they can work their way as sailors or mercenaries.

However it happens, they find themselves aboard *Sea Lion* and soon discover that something aboard is slaying other passengers. A host of suspects present themselves. Worse, a ghost ship is sighted aft of *Sea Lion*, and it's slowly gaining...

BACKGROUND

By far the largest amount of cargo carried aboard *Sea Lion* is lumber: rare, straight oak headed for Lankhmar if the characters are returning home, or straight cedar if the characters are heading for some far port. It's carefully stowed in the hold, only roughly cut and tied in huge square bundles. What no one knows, not even Stilrin the lumber owner, is that an undead sorcerer king was imprisoned upright in the hollow of one of those trees, and sea-air has "awakened" him. The deadly Culvak needs life force so his power can grow, and he soon begins to feed on the crew and passengers to do just that.

Once Culvak's power has strengthened, he summons his undead followers from the depths of the sea so that they, too, may feed upon the crew and passengers of *Sea Lion*.

Even when Culvak slumbered, the sorcerer king's power was detectable by those sensitive to magic. The witch Elisin, turned away from *Sea Lion* because the cabins were full, has stowed away, hoping to find the source of the power she senses. She knows that it is dark, necromantic energy and longs to get her hands on it.

THE SEA LION

The characters find passage aboard *Sea Lion*, a ship heading their way in just the right amount of time. It's a cargo and passenger rig. It's affordable if the heroes want to buy

passage because another passenger just cancelled at the last minute and the captain's desperate to fill space.

More likely, the characters are low on funds as usual. Fortunately, Captain Nelthus is eager to hire experienced men-at-arms, and he's delighted if any of them claim familiarity with the ballista he recently purchased. Alternatively, he's a little short-handed sailor-wise, and characters with sailing experience can hire on.

If the heroes book as passengers, shortly into the voyage Captain Nelthus discovers the people he hired as mercenaries barely know which end of the sword is pointy. Disgusted, he confines them to pumping bilge water. He turns to the characters for help, refunds their fare, and starts by offering them one silver smerduk a week (although he can be negotiated up to two).

Characters who hire on as sailors get free passage, including room and board. Mercenaries are paid a silver smerduk a week. There are three other mercenaries already signed on, but they have no captain, and the characters are put in charge of them.

- **Captain Nelthus:** Use the Ship Captain profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.
- **Mercenaries (3):** Use the Warrior profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

THE LION'S CREW

Captain Nelthus is a decent sort, but he operates in narrow profit margins. If he's not generous, he's at least fair. He's also pious and superstitious about things on the sea, but isn't likely to believe wild tales of the supernatural, magic, and the walking dead until such a thing is staring him in the face.

First mate Aldren puts the characters through their paces. If they sign on as sailors, he sends them into the top gallants in rough weather and gives them the worst shifts. If they're mercenaries, he rides them mercilessly to keep watch, shine their

weapons, practice the ballista, and exercise and drill the off-duty crew.

Aldren comes off as a colossal ass until the characters prove themselves, at which point he backs off. If he finds they're not what they were cracked up to be, he reports to the captain, who either reduces their pay or changes their duties to the worst available (manning the bilge pumps, cleaning the pumps, sanding the deck, cleaning animal manure off the deck, etc.).

The rest of the crew of two dozen are fairly typical sailors, grumbling a little about the captain and first mate but actually respecting them and liking their ship. They're good gamblers and canny at finding drink and full of dirty stories. They're usually quite busy tending the ship or seeing to its cargo and livestock. Here are the most likely to interact with the characters:

Tepet: Sweet-souled Tepet has a strong tenor and leads the men in song when they're doing routine work.

Seram: Tepet's best friend has a wicked sense of humor. He's liable to set up practical jokes at newcomers' expense that can get them in trouble with the first mate — for instance, dirtying the ship's boarding pikes after the characters clean them.

Hux: Young Hux is ridiculously good looking, quiet, and capable. If none of the characters get lured into an embroglio with the female passengers (see below), the women go to Hux, who may come creeping in through the characters' porthole at night to escape the ladies' Mingol guards.

Twitch: So named because he is constantly shifting to keep everything in sight. He's the best top-man and lookout, and is extremely superstitious.

Ostren: If the characters sign on as sailors, Ostren is foremost of the three mercenaries on board. Otherwise he's a grizzled old sailor, second mate, scarred and capable, veteran of a dozen sea fights (to hear the rest

The small and lubberty-sailing merchant ship they approached most subtly at dawn suddenly bristled with brown-helmeted pikemen and slingers. It was a Lankhmar bait-ship, designed to trap pirates.

"Their Mistress, the Sea"

of the men tell it) and master of cutlass and fist. He's missing a lot of the teeth on the left side of his mouth.

- **Sailors (25):** Use the Crew Member profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

THE PASSENGERS

The *Sea Lion* carries a number of additional passengers, and every one of them is a potential complication once events start to unfold.

Kilsha: A pretty but retiring woman who is perpetually well-clothed, including gloves and a hood, even on warm days. She has some valuable alchemical goods she's transporting to sell so she can afford others (or has just purchased them, depending upon whether the characters are heading toward or away from Lankhmar). She's actually a ghoulish who wears body paint so that she doesn't frighten "the mud people" when she goes among them to buy ingredients for her alchemy.

The Three Harem Girls: The large, luxurious main passenger cabin is populated by three lovely young veiled women, wives of the Duke Ipsperio, an important senator in a city the characters are bound for. He left ahead of these wives, who have fallen out of favor because, just like all his other wives,

they haven't managed to produce an heir. The fault is Ipsperio's sterility, but the three women, in an effort to curry favor, have each claimed they're pregnant with his child.

The problem is that none of them are. **Rana, Tara, and Vemeena** are guarded by three eagle-eyed Mingols, but the women make eyes at any likely male targets. One of the male characters has the exact same sort of chin as Ipsperio, and another has a similar nose, which means that the three ladies do their utmost to lure these characters into their cabin. They use their lithesome bodies to incite interest, sashaying on the deck and stretching, or dropping things and bending over, etc. They can't venture too much with the Mingols ever watching with suspicious eyes, but they try to pass on notes, either dropping them while wiggling or sending letters via their giggling servant girl, Vasha.

Normally they wouldn't be able to contemplate any kind of amorous activity at all, but their three Mingol eunuch guards end up terribly seasick after the first day out. While the Mingols are a little queasy, the girls have helped with the judicious application of some low-level poisons. By necessity, all three ladies are in on the scheme together and there's no overt conflict between them... except there are only so many men aboard



the ship who have any kind of resemblance to their husband, and they have limited time. They do anything they can to achieve their ends, even if it means lying about a character committing theft, the idea being that they can bargain to have the character released from irons in the hold if the character agrees to a romantic get-together.

If the Game Master wishes to use this complication, any amorous activities should be timed to be interrupted by the first mate's duties, or Seram's pranks, or, eventually, the recovery of the Mingols, who chase characters from bow to stern if they're caught in the cabin of the master's wives. Only death or Incapacitation will stop them, and after the latter they still wait for their chance to thrash the characters.

- **Harem Girls (3):** Use the Courtesan profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

Autras, a master thief, pretends to be a minor official interested in boring people about agricultural programs of Lankhmar, a patter he's mastered so well he can get people's eyes glazing in just a few moments. He has his sights set on the rich furnishings and belongings of the three harem girls, and

schemes to sneak into their master cabin to steal them. The matter's complicated by the fact the Mingols keep close watch on the cabin as well.

- **Autras:** Use the Master Thief profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

Stilrin the lumber merchant is a stolid, unimaginative fellow worried about his cargo of lumber and fruit trees, and with good reason. He's mortgaged his home to buy this expensive wood. If he can get it from point A to point B he will make a killing, but he worries constantly that something is going to go wrong. Once things *do* go wrong he's apt to be the one to jump to conclusions so that any perceived threat — be it a ghoul, or a sorceress — is eliminated before his precious lumber is destroyed, and his livelihood along with it.

- **Stilrin:** Use the Merchant profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

Elisin the lovely sorceress has magically masked a tiny cot in a crawlspace under the prow while she tries to find the powerful emanations she senses mixed in with the cargo of lumber. She would have figured



things out already save that there are frequently sailors down here, and her sorcery is time-consuming to boot. To work it, she needs long uninterrupted moments when those around can't hear the noise, and she hasn't had that. When found out she claims to be an escaped dancing girl fleeing from an abusive owner, pretending to be a wide-eyed innocent. She's actually a scheming viper eager for unclean magical power.

✧ **Elisin:** See page 80.

THE CARGO

Apart from the lumber, the *Sea Lion* carries a dozen sheep, four pigs, and several chicken cages. All produce a multitude of smells which recur every day. Additionally the ship is transporting crates of tin wares, farm implements, a plentitude of seed corn in barrels, and a dozen young fruit trees which Stilrin frets over constantly, sometimes removing the shade, sometimes scrambling to cover them, always afraid that they're going to shift and have their roots damaged. He's particularly concerned about clever pigs breaking free of their pen and destroying the trees — he claims they've been snuffling toward them.

UNDERWAY

This Savage Tale is composed of a variety of moving parts and its success depends upon how well the Game Master sets wheels in motion. Some players prefer to get right to the action and aren't interested in interacting with various passengers. Others enjoy interacting with them so much a Game Master could be tempted to let the tension spin down. The best approach is to combine the different aspects and set them simmering until the whole thing explodes, never quite letting one issue resolve before new complications are introduced.

A Game Master probably realizes what best motivates her players, and may need to highlight or diminish aspects of the tale to give them what they find most exciting. That said, here is a broad outline of events to use as a guideline. They may happen almost back to back, or the Game Master may spread them over several days.

1. The characters board the ship. They're alternately tormented by the first mate, persecuted by practical joker Seram, and lured by the women at the worst possible times.
2. A sailor (or the mercenary captain if the characters aren't in charge of the ship guard) is found missing one morning. In truth he is tossed overboard by Culvak after he is drained of life energy. Captain Nelthus orders the ship searched stem to stern.
3. Searching the ship takes several hours. One of the pigs breaks free and runs belowdecks to get as far away from the creepy lumber as it can. Someone chasing it (preferably a hero) sees it blunder through what seems like a black bulkhead — it's the magically hidden cubbyhole where Elisin hides.
4. Stilrin is ready to have her thrown overboard, Nelthus rages, and Elisin swears it wasn't her killing anyone. She begs the characters to protect her. Even if the heroes don't help, the captain and first mate don't throw her overboard, but put her to work cleaning things.
5. The next night there's another fatality, and this time it's one of the Mingol bodyguards, lying desiccated. Twitch reports he saw someone moving around on deck, all hunched-like. Rana reports that someone has been in their cabin stealing things.
6. Everyone has an alibi for the murder and theft and was either visible or with another character...except the master thief, whom no one remembers seeing. Stilrin points this out, and if Autras feels threatened he tries to pin blame on the magic worker, right there in their midst — Kilsha the ghoul. He manages to rip off her cloak so everyone can see her true form.
7. While Kilsha tries to explain she's no danger and Stilrin screams that she needs to be thrown overboard, a ship with tattered black sails closes in...

BLACK SAILS

Long ago, black was the color of all Lankhmaran sails, though it is now reserved for funeral ships. When the characters spot the vessel, skies are cloudy and a storm brews, and it's hard to get a good look at it over the swells — but anyone who stares long and hard and makes a Notice roll at -2 can tell it's an old-fashioned war galley. It's gaining — rapidly. With a raise, viewers discern that parts of it seem transparent.

Elisin does her best to break free and search belowdecks for the artifact she's sensed. She no longer cares whether she's spotted because she knows time is running out.

"It's not me or any other passenger aboard, fools. It's the black heart of Culvak, still in his breast!"

Who's Culvak?

"The ancient sorcerer king of Lankhmar! Don't you know anything?"

Long ago Lankhmar was a power that dominated the Inner Sea, and Culvak was its wizard king. Characters with a scholarly or sorcerous bent may be familiar with him, and how he disappeared, reputedly killed or trapped by some magic ritual before he drove Lankhmar to ruin. Elisin claims that she came aboard to stop him. She says that as the ancient king grows stronger with life, so too does his power, and he's probably summoned one of the ancient ships of his black fleet, long since rotting at the bottom of the ocean.

The captain doesn't believe a word of it, but as a lightning blast flares, the ship looms only a few cable lengths aft, and there's no missing the skeletal figures standing at the prow.

"He needed life for himself. Now he needs life for his crew. Where are all your men, captain? Do they yet live? If he is slaying now, he's drawing power to turn over to his crew —"

GRAND FINALE

It's no longer challenging to find Culvak, because the undead king lurches onto the deck, laughing. He's been driven even more

mad than he already was by long centuries of undeath sealed inside a tree bole.

This is an ideal time for animals to escape and run madly, constantly getting in the way, and for the lovely harem girls to get trapped at the wrong end of the ship. Meanwhile, the black ship of pirates looms closer and closer.

If Kilsha remains alive and free, she uses alchemical weapons against the black ship. The Game Master can either have the players run her and the other sailors as allied Extras as they strive to keep Culvak's crew from boarding, or narrate the madness in the background as the characters face off against Culvak and Elisin, who has a few tricks of her own.

✂ **Culvak:** See below.

✂ **Elisin:** See below.

• **Culvak's Crew (6, plus 3 per hero):** See page 81.

AFTERMATH

Assuming all ends well, the captain is grateful to the characters and Kilsha for helping him save his ship. Any and all other crew members and passengers look on them well and might seek them out in the future.

Elisin does her best to recover Culvak's black heart. She throws a screaming fit if she's frustrated, which almost surely happens if some character slices Culvak in half, sets him on fire, or pushes him over the side. On the outside chance Elisin manages to take the heart, she's quiet about the matter, though Kilsha warns the characters what Elisin has done and that she surely plans nothing good with it.

In a direct confrontation on the sea, Elisin must turn the heart over to heroes, but she plans vengeance. If confronted while nearing Lankhmar, she throws herself overboard rather than giving up the heart, and may or may not become a recurring threat.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

✂ ELISIN

A sorceress grown more and more interested in necromancy, Elisin is loyal to only one person — herself. She was once a lovely woman and with effort can still assume

the semblance of one, although her mouth quickly twists into an arrogant smirk unless she's careful.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d6, Swimming d6, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Overconfident, Vengeful

Edges: Arcane Background (Black Magic), New Powers, Rapid Recovery, Sorcerer, Strong Caster

Powers: *Armor, bolt, detect/conceal arcana, environmental protection, light/obscure, wall walker*

Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), dancing girl disguise, gold talismans, spell components, mysterious tomes.

✦ CULVAK

Culvak awoke as black bones sheathed in leathery skin fragments. He's gotten "better." Now he's a muscular, pale man with a shock of black hair, a death's-head grin, and glowing red eyes. He's clothed in black-lacquered chest armor encrusted with ebon opals and caked in grime, and a rotted leather legionary skirt. He carries a sword the color of midnight. Its hilt glistens with black gems.

When the wards housing him failed, the undead sorcerer king was too weak to move until a curious ship's rat crept close. For days Culvak fed on rats until he had enough strength to slay a human. His power's grown since.

Long centuries of confinement have driven Culvak mad. He hungers for life force and violence. It may be that some sanity returns when he's sated, but characters who hope to reason with him now are in for disappointment. Fortunately, that means his more subtle powers — his eldritch sorceries — are beyond him. If Culvak somehow survives, the Game Master should add to his skills and give him appropriate powers or abilities. In his current form he's dangerous enough already, especially at close range...

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d12, Throwing d8

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (3)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Overconfident, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Florentine, Improved Block, Improved Counterattack, Improved Frenzy

Gear: Black longsword (Str+d8, Parry +1), armored corselet (+3).

Special Abilities:

- **Darkvision:** Culvak does not suffer illumination penalties.
- **Fast Regeneration:** If Culvak has spilled the blood of a foe, he can make a Vigor roll once per round to heal a wound or level of Fatigue he sustained.
- **Fear (-2):** Culvak radiates an aura of supernatural menace. Anyone seeing him must make a Fear check at -2.
- **Fearless:** Culvak is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from called shots; immune to disease and poison; does not suffer wound penalties.

CULVAK'S CREW

Culvak's crew are mollusk-encrusted skeletons with glowing red eyes. They begin play sluggish and weak, but as they draw blood they move faster, their eyes blaze, and they cackle with mad laughter.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Throwing d8

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Gear: Longsword (Str+d8), ghostly black bows strung from the hair of long dead maidens (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Skeletons are fragile, but Culvak's Crew is layered with lime, mollusks, and other sea encrustations that strengthen their bones.
- **Fearless:** Culvak's crew is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Life Transfer:** Sea skeletons drain life energy from anyone they damage and transfer it to the creatures coating their bodies. For each wound they cause a foe,

all the crew in the combat gain +1 Armor (to a maximum of +4) until the end of the battle as barnacles and other mollusks grow across the bones protecting them. Damage caused by them is harder to resist due to their life-draining ability, inflicting a -2 penalty to Soak rolls.

- **Shuffling Gait:** Culvak's crew roll a d4 running die.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to disease and poison.

KILSHA

Kilsha's just an alchemist trying to make a few rilks, and take in the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the rest of the world doesn't take kindly to ghouls.

She's manufactured a powder that covers her translucent skin so it appears normal — even lovely — but she's running low on supplies and has only enough left to maintain her face.

Kilsha keeps herself wrapped in uncomfortably warm clothes unless she's in her cabin, and even then she keeps most garments close at hand, knowing the fear most folk of Nehwon have toward ghouls.

She has a number of vials that she can either attach to her specially modified crossbow, or hurl them at foes.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Alchemy) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Quirk (Cannibalism)

Edges: Arcane Background (Black Magic), Disguise, New Powers, Rapid Recovery, Strong Caster

Powers: Bolt, boost/lower Trait, darksight, quickness (alchemical vials)

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4), crossbow (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2), disguise powder, alchemical powders, cases, and tools.

Special Abilities:

- **Living Skeleton:** Ghouls are unsettling to humans, granting a +2 bonus to Intimidation rolls but suffering a -4

to Charisma. Kilsha is quite pretty in disguise, so this ability is only in effect if her true nature is revealed.

- **Transparent Flesh:** Because of their translucent bodies, ghouls are more difficult to effectively strike in combat, gaining +2 Parry if wearing no armor or any covering more than a cloak.

THE HAND OF FATE

Their ship sunk after a titanic storm, the characters drift in a leaky longboat. To begin this tale, they're pulled from the water by an Ilthmar merchant vessel. The heroes are treated like honored guests but the captain's cargo bay hides a grisly secret. He plans to sell the characters for use in a dark ritual to summon an ancient, malevolent deity of earth and fire to scorch the world of Nehwon.

BACKGROUND

Nehwon is home to many ancient secrets and forgotten gods. One of the strangest is Mokrath, first worshiped by priests in tropical Klesh. Mokrath's followers believe that with blood they can fuel the power of their god and one day bring his return. Unfortunately, that means the extermination of all lifeforms, for Mokrath is a god of pre-human existence, when the only liquid flowing upon the surface was molten lava and the air was heavy with steam and sulfur fumes.

Captain Jerdan has some legitimate cargo on his vessel, *The Hand of Fate*, but the most important items he carries are barrel on barrel of pickled human corpses carefully preserved to feed the molten fires of Mokrath upon the Isle of Clouds, a remote volcanic island in the Inner Sea. The blood of the dead is a paltry meal; Jerdan knows living blood pleases the priests of the god far better, most specifically the blood of heroes. Jerdan thinks the priests and their religion are complete hokum but they pay him well to deliver victims. When Jerdan encounters the castaway characters he realizes he can present them as heroes for greater financial

reward. He plans to transport them to dry land and a fiery doom.

SHIPWRECK

The characters are the only survivors of a storm at sea, far from land, low on food, and have only two wineskins between them. The sun blazes down throughout the day and supplies dwindle. Successful Notice rolls spot a distant ship just after noon but it does not respond to any signals. Clever players can improvise methods for catching fish to supplement the meager supplies aboard. Otherwise they function at -1 to Trait rolls due to Fatigue until they are fed.

Come twilight, a high-prowed Ilthmaran merchant ship sails out of the gloom. When the players signal, it diverts to investigate and halts a cable-length out from their longboat. A tall, balding man appears at the prow and asks the heroes who they are and where they're bound. He identifies his ship as *The Hand of Fate*, a vessel out of Ilthmar, bound for Lankhmar. After consulting with someone the characters can't see, he offers assistance and transport and instructs the characters to row their boat to the ship's side.

The Hand of Fate is a wide, two-masted vessel, broad across the beam, crewed by 35. Most of these are lean, hard-eyed Ilthmarans, but there are a sprinkling of Mingols as well.

The balding man introduces himself as first mate Berl. He's tall and powerfully built. Neither he nor the rest of the sailors are particularly warm, but Captain Jerdan is all smiles. Middle-aged, prosperous, with handsome, aquiline features, he is very solicitous of their care. If the characters have not yet described the ordeal of the storm and the sinking of their ship, Jerdan asks them for details. If they've already discussed it in detail, he merely sympathizes.

"Terrible, terrible. I can't imagine what you must have been through. Only true heroes could have survived an experience

like that. I was just sitting down for supper. I'll have cook delay for a half-hour so you have time to freshen up and join me."

Jerdan orders Berl to see that the characters are made comfortable with fresh clothing, and they're led to the ward room to wash up, Berl accompanying them. Heroes might Notice that there are always a few extra sailors watching them.

If Berl or any of the others are asked what they're hauling, the first answer is grain. A sailor with a red kerchief jests: "Pickles!" which provokes hoots of laughter, quickly silenced by dark looks from Berl. The subject is dropped and passed off as a rude Ilthmar joke.

Though stone-faced, Berl still does as instructed and the characters are left to change and wash — via the narrow ward room with the door closed.

Characters who attempt to wander are quickly directed back to the ward room and watched even more closely. Characters who provoke a fight are divested of weapons and locked in manacles in the dark, rat-infested forward hold.

✂ **Captain Jerdan:** See page 87.

✂ **First Mate Berl:** See page 87.

• **Sailors (25):** Use the Sailor profile from *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*.

DINNER GUESTS

Captain Jerdan's cabin is crowded, but there is enough room for the characters and Berl to join him. They are waited on throughout by a small, graying Mingol, Kalja. Jerdan keeps him hopping: "Kalja, more wine for our guests." Or "Kalja, bring up some more fresh bread, if you please."

• **Kalja:** See page 88.

The meal itself is quite fine. The bread is freshly baked, the sole well-seasoned, and the white wine over-sweet, typical of many Ilthmar beverages.

Soon a salty, coldly refreshing wind on their starboard beam was driving them directly away from the land and Lankhmar.

—Lean Times in Lankhmar

Jerdan is a model host. His goal is to learn just how heroic the characters truly are, so he pumps them for information about their exploits. He encourages them not to be modest, and comments upon anything he especially likes to Berl.

"Fascinating! How brave you were. Don't you think, Berl?"

The first mate is a terrible actor and not especially interested, but he nods and gives monosyllabic answers, all the while looking either disinterested or suspicious.

If asked directly why Berl is so sour, Jerdan passes his behavior off with a laugh.

"Oh, pay no mind to my mate. He's always worried about shipboard things, and is probably too embarrassed to admit he's been suffering from some indigestion. All better now though, isn't it, Berl?"

"Yes, sir."

"Just some lingering aftereffects, I wager?"

"Yes."

The Hand of Fate is on course for Lankhmar, but Jerdan informs the characters they are diverting briefly to a small island to the north and should arrive there come morning. After that, he promises, he'll be happy to take them on to the City of the Black Togas.

If the characters ask about the island, Jerdan names it the Isle of Clouds. Unless they are well-versed in information about the Inner Sea the characters are unlikely to have heard of it, but if they make a Common Knowledge roll at -2 they know it's a volcanic island, formed only in the last 10 years, and still steaming. It's hard to believe anyone lives on it.

Jerdan laughs. "There are mad folk everywhere. A group of priests has set up a temple amid the steam."

After dinner Jerdan tells the characters about their accommodations.

"I'm afraid we have no real passenger quarters, but Berl's found extra bedding for you on the main deck, where you'll be as comfortable as the crew. More comfortable, actually, for I'm turning over some pillows I was delivering to a Lankhmar merchant. Keep them wrapped in sheets, if you please, to minimize soiling."

WHISPERS IN THE NIGHT

For the first several hours two sailors keep surreptitious watch on the characters. The heroes are meant to be watched carefully through the night, but in the early hours, long after midnight, attention slackens as the sentinels grow tired. One of them drifts off to sleep and the other is very close. Even though they are surrounded by almost two dozen snoring sailors, clever characters can probably find a way to sneak clear, though they need to succeed at Stealth rolls.

A failed roll gets the attention of the dozing guard, who shouts for attention within one round unless quickly silenced. Any loud noises have a chance to waken surrounding sailors.

If the characters are discovered in the midst of violence, Berl orders them clapped in irons and locked in the forecastle hold. If the characters are quick-witted and, for instance, claim they were simply looking for the privy the explanation is accepted, but they are watched far more carefully.

THE DREAD SECRET

Characters who prowl around the cargo area need a light source belowdecks. Assuming they light a lantern or candle, they find three dozen barrels lashed together and secured to the bulkheads. Each is stamped with the legend "PICKLES." Prying them open with a crowbar or hammer requires a Strength roll, and to do it without being noticed requires Stealth rolls. Locating the tools is quite simple, as they're strapped against a bulkhead near the cargo.

Once the characters open the barrel they find themselves looking down into heavily salted water and peering into the dead, preserved, waterlogged face of a human packed within. Fear checks may be in order here.

OTHER SHIPBOARD EVENTS

Characters have a way of wandering into trouble, and it's possible they learn the wrong things and decide to act. A number of outcomes are possible.

CAPTURE

If the characters are captured at some point, they're slapped in arm manacles and locked in the forecastle hold until dawn, when *The Hand of Fate* reaches the Isle of Clouds.

The characters probably won't wait for that, though, and it is possible, though difficult, to escape beforehand.

If the characters have cleverly concealed lockpicks upon their person or have a good explanation about improvising some, they can attempt to free themselves from the manacles with a Lockpicking roll at -2. They must then break out through the door lock, which is sturdy but unsophisticated.

ESCAPING THE SHIP

If the characters learn what's going on and decide to leave before arriving at the island, they must find a way to break into ship's stores for supplies, sneak past sailors, and put those supplies on a ship's boat and lower it into the water, all without raising alarm. It's a tall order, and unlikely to work without a distraction. Players, though, are excellent at distractions, and with some clever roleplaying, Stealth rolls, and a couple of quiet combats in the dark they could conceivably succeed. Kalja aids them if the plan is underway and things look to succeed, because he wants off this cursed ship.



CONFRONTING A SAILOR

There are few sailors belowdecks in the cargo hold — a section of the ship they scrupulously avoid, given the grisly cargo — but there are always some on the deck keeping watch, manning the wheel, and on hand for any minor changes required to better catch the wind. Once every watch two men go below to pump and remain there for an hour — *The Hand of Fate* doesn't leak much, but like many old ships it leaks a little. And occasionally someone needs to go to the privy.

Berl stands watch through second shift, then turns over the watch to grumpy, one-eyed Starden, who's much less interested in watching the heroes or doing anything out of the ordinary.

Neither Starden nor any other sailor talk about what's really going on. They deny there's anything strange, insist they're just a grain ship, and remind heroes how hospitable the captain's been to them. "The very gentleman. The soul of kindness."

If isolated and surrounded the sailors are still reluctant to change their tune, given their fear of mate Berl, but they can be cowed into admitting they don't like visiting the Isle of Clouds, or delivering pickle barrels. A little more prodding gets one to reveal what's actually kept in those barrels. They don't know what the priests on the island need them for, and don't care to find out.

KALJA

Kalja is the one potential friend aboard the ship. If the characters lack initiative, Kalja seeks them out and tells them what is really being transported, although he doesn't know why the captain is being so kind to them. If the characters plan to escape on a rowboat he points out to them that they're far from land and that they need supplies.

CONFRONTING BERL

Berl is a terrible liar. Characters foolish enough to confront him about the contents of the barrels are told they're pickles and anything else is nonsense. Any confrontation that continues ends quickly in violence, with Berl aiming to subdue the characters by calling in additional help.

If Berl himself feels threatened he does not hesitate to fight to the death.

CONFRONTING THE CAPTAIN

Jerdan is wily and resourceful. An excellent actor, he pretends he has no knowledge of any bodies transported aboard his vessel and claims it must be the doing of the ship's cargo master, Tuke, or Berl. He pledges to help the characters put a stop to whatever unholy plan is underway and marches with them to confront Berl. As soon as he's in a place with multiple exits, like the deck, the captain drops a smoke-powder bomb and scrambles to safety before calling for the characters to be captured.

THE ISLE OF CLOUDS

The Hand of Fate reaches the island in the mid-morning hours.

The Isle of Clouds consists of a relatively small cone volcano and its dried outflow only recently born from the sea. The cone looms only a few hundred feet above the ocean and spews smoke in a desultory fashion even now. Only jungle grasses and a few weed trees have rooted in the rich volcanic soil so far, and without other building materials the small settlement has been constructed from blocks of lava. So too has the quay, at which a sailing ship is docked, one small enough to be manned by the characters.

Depending upon how they have conducted themselves the characters are led to the island either as manacled prisoners, or at Jerdan's invitation for a feast that he promises puts his own small efforts to shame. Characters who refuse the invitation are cajoled before a capture attempt is made.

The characters are led down the quay of lava stone past the ship. They step onto a rocky path toward a circle of a half-dozen buildings crudely crafted of dark lava stone. Jerdan walks before them with two sailors and Berl follows with several more. Two of the sailors, meanwhile, are rolling "pickle barrels" down the quay.

What happens next is entirely up to the characters, but the captain plans the following.

1. He tells the head priest, Mukatar, he has brought heroes from afar. He says he has promised *very* special treatment.

2. Jerdan tells the characters to speak of their heroics.
3. Mukatar invites them to dine at his special ceremony and they are led to a small hut.
4. A priest takes a blowpipe to a back wall and sprays the powder of *sleep* across the characters, who must resist with a Vigor roll at -2. If they succumb, they awaken at dusk to sounds of chanting from nearby. Eerie red light shines throughout, radiating from the lava pool around which the priests are chanting.
5. If the characters are unable to free themselves, Kalja sneaks in and cuts one of them free. Before a second character is freed, Berl arrives with sailors to drag them to the ceremony.

ESCAPE

The sailors and priests pursue escaped characters, although the sailors retreat if more than three are killed or half are injured, unless Jerdan or Berl are directing them. The priests pursue to the death. If the Game Master wishes to prolong the chase, the following obstacles can be introduced:

- Field of sharp, slippery lava (-2 to Agility to stay afoot, falls accrue damage).
- Field of boulders (-1 to Pace).
- Descend cliff face (moving at full speed requires Climbing or Strength rolls).
- **Kleshite Priests (1 per hero):** See page 88.

STOPPING THE CEREMONY

Brave or exceptionally foolish characters may decide to put a stop to the ceremony and the worship of the evil god. The trick is destroying the gem-like eye glowing at the top of the pile of boulders in the midst of the lava pool.

But the eye is exceptionally perceptive, especially in the midst of a ceremony, and each round the characters are maneuvering it gets a chance to Notice them. This alerts the priests, who break off the ceremony and, maneuvered by the intelligence of the gem, do their best to flank them. Worse, the gem shines an eerie red beam upon the characters, making their escape that much more difficult.

- **The Eye of Morkath:** See page 88.

AFTERMATH

If the eye is destroyed, the volcano stops smoking in an instant. A hot waterspout blasts up through the lava, burning nearby priests and sailors and miraculously missing the characters. This provides a brief respite for the heroes that gives them a few rounds' head start before other priests rush after, screaming in anger. If the characters flee without destroying the eye, the sailors assist the priest in hunting them.

Once the eye is destroyed, Jerdan and any survivors from *The Hand of Fate* are interested only in getting off the island; they have no interest in pursuing the characters. If Captain Jerdan survives, he could easily become a recurring villain, particularly if he's been injured.

If no one destroys the eye at the center of the mound, then the island is still there, hungry for victims. The characters could conceivably be hired by a wizard or priests out to stop the worship of the god. Upon the heroes' return, the priests on the island have improved defenses and additional allies.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

✧ BERL

A toughened, humorless sailor, Berl is Jerdan's right-hand flunky, loyal so long as Jerdan keeps him supplied with gold

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Greedy

Edges: Block, Brawler, Brawny, Bruiser, Combat Reflexes, Mighty Blow

Gear: Cutlass (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4).

✧ JERDAN

This charismatic, wily captain would sell his own mother if he could turn a modest profit. His languid manner conceals an agile body and mind.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

Cha: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Greedy

Edges: Alertness, Attractive, Block, Command, Danger Sense, Dodge, Extraction, Honeyed Tongue

Gear: Cutlass (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4), two vials of blinding powder. When dropped, it emits a cloud of smoke that acts as the *blind* power, affecting everyone in a Medium Burst Template.

KALJA

This toughened old Mingol is eager to get off of what he knows is a cursed ship and away from its crew. He recognizes the characters as his best chance for help.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d10, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Riding d4, Shooting d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious

Edges: Steady Hands

Gear: Bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), dagger (Str+d4), cutlass (Str+d6).

KLESHITE PRIEST

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Religion) d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Throwing d6

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Small

Edges: Acrobat, Brutal, Priest, Woodsman

Gear: Knife (Str+d4), blowgun (1d4, Venomous -1).

Special Abilities:

- **Fast:** Kleshites are quick and lithe, granting them +2 Pace.

THE EYE OF MOKRATH

Mokrath's eye is a glowing red crystal the size of a pomegranate.

Attributes: Agility —, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength —, Vigor —

Skills: Notice d10

Cha: -4; **Pace:** —; **Parry:** —; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Special Abilities:

- **Tracker:** When the Eye of Mokrath Notices a character, it uses a blood-red beam of light to track him or her, granting +4 to attempts to Notice the target. Anyone who looks into the light must make an Agility roll at -2 to avoid the *blind* power (see *Savage Worlds*).
- **Tiny:** Attack rolls against Mokrath's eye are made at -4.

*All around about, the Inner Sea lay calm as a lake
of mercury in the cellar of a wizard's castle.*

*He also saw into the golden bowl. It held no store of green
wine, but was filled almost to the brim with a crystal fluid that
might or might not have been water. On the fluid floated a
model, hardly a finger long, of the hull of a black boat.*

*Fafhrd half turned his head and muttered gravely, "Mark
me, Mouser, there's magic in this somewhere!"*

—When the Sea-King's Away

CHAPTER EIGHT: DENIZENS OF THE NEHWON SEAS

There are hazards aplenty to be found within the waters of Nehwon, be they reefs or sharks or whales. Pirates and dangerous sea and water creatures are detailed in the bestiaries of *Lankhmar: City of Thieves*, *Lankhmar: Savage Foes of Nehwon*, and *Savage Worlds*. This chapter introduces a handful of additional deadly beasts to be encountered occasionally in remote portions of Nehwon—or even dark corners of Lankhmar's harbor.

AIR JELLY

Certain breeds of giant, luminescent jellyfish leave the oceans of Nehwon during their mating cycle. Twice each year, in spring and fall, a special gas bladder of the so-called air jelly inflates, and the creature leaves the ocean at night. Those who witness the event from afar are treated to an astonishing light show as dozens, even hundreds of these large creatures rise hundreds of feet above the water, shimmering with a rainbow cascade of color as they seek mates and entwine tentacles.

Those who happen to be close, however, are in danger from the long, scintillant tentacles trailing from the airborne jellies, for these tentacles can tangle in rigging and, worse, sting. Someone hit by multiple stings may be mortally injured.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Jelly Sting:** Each air jelly tentacle inflicts 1d6 damage. Afflicted prey must succeed at a Vigor check or be Shaken and convulse in pain for 1d4 rounds.
- **Large:** Anyone attacking a jelly gains +2 to his attack roll. (This bonus does not apply to its tentacles.)
- **Size +4:** Air jellies out of the water are as big as a large rowboat.
- **Tentacles:** Reach 3. Air jellies don't deliberately seek out prey (they seek mates) but they sting creatures that blunder into their trailing tentacles. If a tentacle is damaged, they lash out with their others. An air jelly has 5+1d10 tentacles.

CRAB, GIANT

This monstrosity scuttled into a sunken ship while it was below the waves and doesn't recognize the slit through which sunlight spills as an exit. Any people who wander into its lair are seen as a tasty treat.



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Stealth d10, Swim d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +3:** Giant crabs have thick shells.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Size +1:** These creatures weigh over 400 pounds.

DROWNER FROM THE DEEP

A drowner appears as a comely youth in flimsy garments who seeks out lonely individuals along the seashore or dock, beckoning for help. Once their prey comes close, the drowner uses powers of seduction to lure them into their embrace, then kisses them. At first the kiss is like the sweetest wine, but then the prey feels his or her lungs filling with water. Unless the victim breaks free, their life force is consumed by the drowner. Those killed by a drowner are usually found with a trickle of water escaped from their lungs.

When slain, the drowner transforms into a pool of sweet-smelling water prized by sorcerers.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8

Cha: +4; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: Very Attractive

Special Abilities:

- **Death Grip:** Though slim and lovely, the drowner's arms are far more powerful than they appear, and a trapped victim must break free from a Grapple to escape.
- **Drowning Kiss:** The kiss of a drowner inflicts 2d10 damage each round until the victim is Incapacitated. The prey may make a Spirit roll at -2 each round to awake to danger and break the spell.
- **Haunting Eyes:** The drowner's gaze is hypnotic and alluring. Those who experience it must make a Spirit roll or succumb to the desire to taste the drowner's lips.

- **Pain Resistant:** A supernatural being, the drowner is made mostly of water and doesn't suffer additional damage from called shots.

FRENZY

Frenzies are blue-shelled creatures resembling a cross between a scorpion and lobster, though they lack mouth parts. Rare, magical creations, frenzies live off feelings of hate and fear. Typically they find their way aboard a ship bound for a long voyage. Then, somewhere far out of sight of land, they spray their venom to incite simmering hatreds. They do their best to start small, hoping the violence they cause spreads through the ship so that they can feast well.

While they are ideally suited to hiding in some dark nook, frenzies prefer to see violence in action — it's more delicious that way — and strive to find a way to watch it from some safe hidey-hole, with just their eyestalks projecting, or from deep shadow.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Armor +2:** Armored shell.
- **Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Poison (-2):** Frenzies spray a hatred-inducing venom in a fine mist generated by a sac near their scorpion-like tail. Targets in a Cone Template must make a Spirit roll at -2 or launch into a hate-spewing assault against anyone they dislike, or even against a perceived slight from a friend, using whatever weapons are at hand. The hatred fades after five rounds. Characters who've harmed someone they care about may make a second Spirit check at -4 to recover.
- **Size -2:** Frenzies are only one foot in length.
- **Small:** Anyone attacking a frenzy subtracts 2 from his attack rolls.
- **Wall Walker:** Frenzies can walk on vertical surfaces at Pace 6.

GNAWER

One gnawer is an annoyance. A school of these arm-length fish, though, can be disastrous. They attach to the sides of oceangoing vessels, much like lampreys latch on to fish, but chewing on the brine-soaked wood. A school of the creatures can chew a small hole through the side of a ship in 20 rounds, far sooner than sailors are likely to detect them, for they usually strike below the waterline.

Gnawers are relatively slow-moving, but they like to congregate in shipping lanes. They can be distracted by dropping specially waterlogged lumber, or discouraged by dumping oil over the side. Some Nehwon seafarers have taken to coating their hulls in oil, although gnawers are still relatively rare enough that most find this precaution unnecessarily expensive.

When encountered they can usually be found in schools of between 10 and 40, and some man-eating sharks have taken to following them into shipping lanes, having seen men jump over the side to fight them, or whole ships founder because of them.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** Str.
- **Size -2:** Gnawers are two feet in length.
- **Small:** Anyone attacking a gnawer must subtract 2 from his attack rolls.

KILLER WHALE

Spanning the breadth of the seas of Nehwon, these large whales are very intelligent and often hunt in packs, much like wolves.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d12, Swimming d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6.

- **Large:** Foes add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking killer whales due to their large size.
- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 10. Killer whales can stay submerged for about five minutes.
- **Size +4:** Killer whales can grow up to 30 feet in length.

MERMAIDS

Sailors often whisper tall tales of singing mermaids, who appear to be beautiful, naked young women from the waist up, but have glistening fish tails for their lower bodies.

Most consider these stories little more than the fancies of men who've been too long at sea. Few realize the stories are true. Once she's dragged her victim beneath the waves, the mermaid's true form is revealed. They are hideous monsters with jagged teeth, and green scaly skin covered in slime. They attempt to lure their victims beneath the waves and drown the poor souls.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Swimming d6, Taunt d8

Cha: +4; **Pace:** —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6. (Against ships it has Acc, Top Speed, and Pace of 1.)
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Siren Song:** The mermaid's song is like a narcotic for men. When first heard, male characters must make Spirit rolls. Those who fail stumble obliviously into the sea, believing they're cavorting with beautiful sea nymphs. In truth, they are drowning.

If a mermaid's victim suffers a wound or a Fatigue level from any source, he must make a Spirit roll at -2 (in addition to any Fatigue penalty from drowning) to realize his peril and break the spell. Success means he is free to act as he wishes, but he is then set upon by circling mermaids.

- **Very Attractive:** The beautiful mermaid (when in her alluring form) has +4 Charisma.

OCEAN SLIME

Appearing as nothing more than a layer of slime, these dangerous predators hunger for any flesh that blunders into their seemingly innocuous-looking form.

Slime is sometimes found deep at sea, clinging to the edges of flotsam, or in great colonies hidden among sargassum (which exudes a toxin that renders it immune to the slime). More often it is encountered in stagnant tidal pools, beside reefs, or alongside decaying wharfs.

Ocean slime looks to be nothing more than a collection of glistening green goo floating on the surface of the water. Those who drift closer discover it's both grasping and hungry, as it reaches with pseudopods to envelop prey in its acidic main body. A hit from a pseudopod stings. Envelopment means a swift and painful death.

A pseudopod arm can be severed if it takes the slime's Toughness in damage in one shot from an edged weapon. Damaging the body is a different matter. Slimes take half-damage from flame but little damage from other physical weapons unless an attacker swims beneath the slime to hack into the protected seed pod — a tricky proposition because the pseudopods can strike underwater as well.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Swimming d6

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4 (pseudopod), 6 (seed case)

Special Abilities:

- **Acidic Touch:** The slime inflicts 1d4 damage per pseudopod touching the victim.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Arms:** Reach 2. A standard-sized slime (MBT) can manage six pseudopods at once and may attack up to two targets simultaneously with no penalty. Larger (LBT) slimes, or colonies, have no restrictions on attacks. On a raise, the creature has Grappled the victim. Grappled victims may attempt an opposed Strength or Agility roll each round to escape. Once Grappled, the slime automatically does its Acidic

Touch damage and drags victims toward the quivering central body. Victims dragged underwater must make a Vigor roll each round or start to drown, although they should be more concerned with Envelopment (see below).

- **Envelopment:** A character Grappled by a pseudopod is Enveloped by slime after two rounds. Once Enveloped a character takes 2d6 damage per round from acid digesting them, and must make Vigor rolls each round or begin to drown as well. Characters may make an opposed Strength roll each round to escape.

OCTOPUS

OCTOPUS, BLADE

A minion of underwater beings, like the mer-people of the Sea-King or the cursed denizens of Simorgya, a blade octopus is a large octopus magically melded with the spirits of drowned swordsmen. It lives

only to follow its master's orders, which are usually to attack with as many arms as possible, each one wielding a bladed weapon.

An arm is severed if it takes the creature's Toughness in damage in one shot from an edged weapon.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Cutlass (Str+d6), axe (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Arms:** Reach 1. A blade octopus may attack up to four targets simultaneously with no penalty, and can wield as many as six bladed weapons at once when partially surfaced (or eight if submerged).
- **Beak:** Str+d6.
- **Large:** Anyone attacking a blade octopus gains +1 to his attack roll.



- **Water Jet:** A blade octopus may “run” underwater by using its water jet, which gives it a d12 running die.

OCTOPUS, GIANT

These terrors of the deep are aggressive and always hungry. Alone, they are quite cowardly and attack only what they consider easy prey. Wounded beasts typically emit an ink cloud and attempt to escape.

An arm can be severed if it takes the creature's Toughness in damage in one shot from an edged weapon. Attacking an arm that has entangled a friend is risky — a roll of 1 on the attack die (regardless of the Wild Die) means the ally is hit instead.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10. (Against ships it has Acc, Top Speed, and Pace of 2.)
- **Beak:** Str+d6.
- **Ink Cloud:** A giant octopus can release a cloud of dark ink the size of a Large Burst Template. Any Notice or attack rolls into or through it are at -4.
- **Large:** Anyone attacking a giant octopus gains +2 to his attack roll.
- **Size +5:** The body of a giant octopus is as big as a sloop, while each tentacle is over 20 feet long.
- **Tentacles:** Reach 3. A giant octopus may attack up to four targets simultaneously with no penalty (it does not harm ships, but can make attacks against crew on deck). On a raise, the creature has grappled the victim. Grappled victims may attempt an opposed Strength or Agility roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the octopus automatically does Str+d6+4 damage by crushing with its tentacles. Victims dragged underwater must make a Vigor roll each round or start to drown.
- **Water Jet:** A giant octopus may “run” underwater by using its water jet, which gives it a d12 running die.

SEA SNAKE, GIANT

This sea serpent may not have the length to wrap a ship, but it's apt to view any passing vessel as a roving buffet. It likes to rear up to snatch sailors from the deck, with either its mouth or its constricting tail.

They rarely fight to the death, preferring to flee if seriously challenged.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Swimming d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14 (1)

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 12.
- **Armor +1:** Scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking a giant sea snake due to its massive size.
- **Quick:** Sea snakes possess fast reflexes, able to turn in an instant and whip their long necks to attack passing prey. They redraw Action Cards of 5 or lower.
- **Size +5:** Sea snakes are large creatures. This one is about 20 feet long from nose to tail.
- **Tail Constriction:** A sea snake uses its tail to constrict targets of size +2 or smaller. It must first score a raise on a Fighting roll. On each of the snake's actions, the victim may make an opposed Strength or Agility roll or gain a Fatigue level. Breaking free requires an action and an opposed Strength roll. Once Incapacitated, the victim is unconscious for 1d6 hours. Fatigue recovers at a rate of one level every 15 minutes.

SEA SPIDER

While sea spiders are capable swimmers, they aren't found in the open ocean. They prefer to lair dockside in minor ports along the Inner Sea. Extremely rare in well-traveled Lankhmar, they occasionally hitch rides aboard ships while juvenile and take up residence in out-of-the-way wharves.

Sea spiders spin such fine webs that they double as diving bells, anchored to dock pylons or the sides of ships. They themselves

are air breathers, but trap air pockets against a thick layer of specialized hairs coating their abdomen.

The size of a jungle cat, they normally prey upon rats, large crabs, and fish, although they show no compunction in attacking dogs, cats, children, or even inattentive adult humans if they're particularly hungry. They lie in the darkness of the docks, or in the water near their lairs, waiting for their next meal.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Poison (-2):** Sea spiders have a nausea-inducing venom. Targets Shaken by a sea spider's bite must make a Vigor roll at -2 or suffer a -2 on all Trait rolls for the next hour, due to stomach cramps. A victim cannot be Incapacitated by the poison.
- **Size -2:** Sea spiders are only two to three feet in length.
- **Small:** Anyone attacking a sea spider subtracts 2 from his rolls.
- **Wall Walker:** Sea spiders walk on vertical surfaces at Pace 6.

WHIRLPOOLS

Whirlpools are divided into three areas — the outer edge, the turbulent waters, and the maelstrom.

Have the ship's lookout make a Notice roll. On a failed roll, the ship enters the outer edge of the whirlpool. The captain must make a Boating roll at -2. On a success, he steers the ship clear.

With a failure, the ship is pulled into the turbulent waters and takes 4d6 damage. The captain must make a second Boating roll, this time at -4. On a success, the ship is back in the outer edge.

With a failure, the ship is sucked into the maelstrom at the center and takes 6d6 damage. The captain has one last chance to save his ship. He must make a Boating roll at -6. With success, the ship is back in the turbulent waters. On a failure, the ship is sucked under and torn apart. The crew take 4d6 damage and must make Swimming rolls at -6 or begin drowning.

Swimming in the turbulent water requires two successful Swimming rolls at -6. Escaping to the outer edge requires another two rolls, this time at -4. Reaching still water means yet another two rolls, but only at -2.



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GLITTERING SEAS AND DARKLING DEPTHS...

Command the helm of your own ship as you set sail across the thrashing waves of Nehwon. From the icy waters of the Frozen Sea to the mysterious Sea of the East, adventure awaits the brave and bold. Seek lost treasure of myth and battle creatures of legend, creating tales as great as those of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser!

***Lankhmar: Savage Seas of Nehwon* contains new options to expand your campaign with seafaring related gear, Edges, Magic, Setting Rules, and denizens. Also included are eight exciting Savage Tales spanning the breadth of Nehwon and a sea themed Adventure Generator for sparking ideas to create your own tales.**

This book requires the *Savage Worlds*core rules and *Lankhmar: City of Thieves* to play.

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