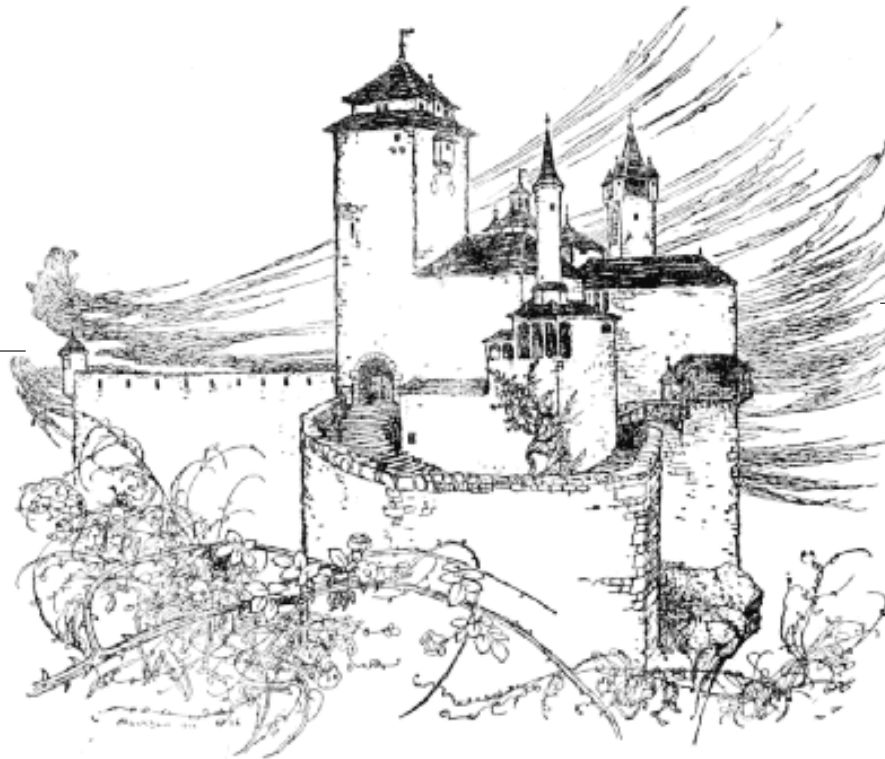

HEIRS OF SEA & SHADOW



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Illustrations by Andrew Rackham, courtesy of Project Gutenberg and the public domain.

Thank you to *Against the Wicked City*, for an in-depth and insightful series of posts about what exactly “romantic fantasy” is, and for many of the principles that inform this system.

And thank you to Ron Edwards (*Trollbabe*) and John Harper (*Stranger Things*) for the heart of this game.

Heirs of Sea & Shadow is a tabletop role-playing game inspired by *Trollbabe* and *Stranger Things*, as well as the many helpful design discussions by *lumpley games*.

It is primarily designed for solo play, but should be easily adaptable for groups that have good communication and who are willing to compromise.

It is strongly narrative, intended to facilitate writing a story while enjoying an ttrpg experience.

The PDF is designed to be printed in landscape on standard a4 or letter-sized paper.

The fonts used are Cantarell, Simonetta, and Cinzel Decorative.

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<https://exposit.github.io/katamoiran/rpglets.html>

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SIR VISSA TILTED HER HEAD, HER GOLDEN HAIR GLEAMING IN THE SUNLIGHT, HER MOUTH SET IN A SCOWL. THE NERVOUS EMISSARY COUGHED; HE WAS WELL AWARE OF THE DEMONSLAYER’S REPUTATION. “THE QUEEN REQUESTS THAT YOU RETURN TO NEVER AS CAPTAIN OF THE NEWLY FORMED DEMONSGUARD.” HE DIDN’T THINK IT WISE TO MENTION IT WAS LITERALLY A DETAIL FOR GUARDING DEMONS.



“WE NEED A GUIDE TO THE WASTES,” THE PALE YOUNG WOMAN SAID, AND GESTURED IMPERIOUSLY. HER MERCENARY DROPPED A BAG OF GOLD ON THE TABLE. “THEY SAY YOU’RE THE BEST.” ARION COCKED AN EYEBROW; HE WASN’T SURE WHERE THEY’D HEARD HE WAS FOR SALE, BUT THEY’D HEARD WRONG.



GAMBROM SPUN LOWER ON HIS WEB, SLIDING DOWN TO THE FOREST FLOOR WHERE A YOUNG HUMAN LAY, BLOOD STAINING HER TUNIC. “FOR THE QUEEN,” SHE MURMURED WITH HER LAST BREATH, THE SLENDER SCROLL CASE CLUTCHED IN HER HAND FALLING TO THE FOREST FLOOR. HE WOULD HAVE LEFT IT THERE IF THE TREES HADN’T ASKED HIM TO HELP.



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I THE DYING OF THE LIGHT

The cause is all but lost.

The demons have won.

The Light dies.

...Or so they would have you believe.

Across the last human kingdom, glittering Lunedd, shadows creep in search of the smallest foothold, the tiniest doubt or fear, to encourage greed and lies and deceit.

And in the crystal city of Never, the heart of Lunedd, the twilight lasts a little longer each dusk, and rumors whisper of dark pacts and darker deeds, done for the pettiest of reasons and the basest of coins.

...But all is not lost.

Heroes rise, answering the call of their hearts and driven by honor, however they define it.

They come in unlikely shapes.

A knight in gleaming armor, all but exiled for choosing action over her mother's politics.

A talking spider, in search of answers, met only with terror and hostility.

A shapeshifter, last carrier of a lost lore, seeking a hollow revenge and the oblivion of death.

These are the stories of those of good heart in the last hours after darkness falls. Stories of triumph against all odds, of tragic foolishness, or of brilliant failure that shines as a beacon to those who would follow.

You will play to find out which.

When heroes rise up and say, "This far, and no farther."

WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THIS?

Heirs of Sea & Shadow is a game of storytelling. The goal is simply that—to tell a story, to participate in the crafting of a legend, whether for good or for ill.

You create and control heroes who have chosen not to give in to despair, but to fight for what they believe in. The story may ultimately be a tragic one, or a happy one, or somewhere in between, but it will always be a **hopeful** one.

Unlike many tabletop roleplaying games, in *Heirs of Sea & Shadow* combat is not the first option, or even often a good idea. Violence begets more violence, and only empathy and love will truly change hearts and minds and make the future brighter.

Plus he who draws first often finds himself stabbed in the back by the guy he didn't see sneak up on him.

So parlay, when you can, and use trickery when you must, and lift your blade only when the most dire of needs arises.

Remember, the light shines brightest in the dark.



The Light shines in the darkness; the darkness has not overcome it.

2 PREPARE TO PLAY

Read the rules carefully and be sure you understand the order of play and the mechanics.

Pay special attention to the Principles below; they are not guidelines, but rules that must be followed for the game to work properly.

Collect some paper and pencils and one or more ten-sided dice (d10s). A d6 will be useful. Or use a computer program like Google Docs or Notepad and a dice roller.

How much you narrate and how detailed it is is up to you, but you will want a way to jot down your progress as you go.

PRINCIPLES

The fiction is the first rule. Every mechanic is informed by the fiction and compelled by it. Once a fact about the world is established in play, it is as relevant and restrictive as any rule. Ask the oracle questions frequently. Look for hard questions.

You are not your character. You are your character's author. Your mission is not to make your hero's life safe or to succeed; it is to test your hero's mettle and prove he deserves the title. Don't pull your punches, but root for the poor sap – he's going to need it.

Diplomacy is always an option. Remember that everyone wants *something*. You may not like the terms of the bargain or to be able to offer enough, but there's always a chance, however brief, to negotiate.

No one is irredeemably evil. It is up to you – and the fiction – whether that redemption is in reach. And if you want to reach for it.

Motives are personal and between people. No matter how grand the plan or far-reaching the plot, an actor ultimately wants something personal. To gain a parent's love, or prove worth of a mentor's respect, or earn a lover's regard; these are the forces that drive the game.

OVERVIEW OF PLAY

Create a character. You may use a Scenario, or one of the provided adventure hooks, or a world of your own devising.

Feel out the world, asking questions of the oracle as you go, until you reach a point when there is a chance of failure and something the hero cares about is in danger.

Declare your intent and stakes. Build a modifier, then roll. If you fail, reroll if you choose, or accept the failure.

Once you've resolved the roll, narrate the fallout and go back to feeling out the world using the oracle.

THE ORACLE

Roll 2d10 and read the face value; the first die as the tens and the second the ones.

If you roll higher than 50, the answer's "yes", otherwise it's "no".

If you roll 10– or 90+ add an 'and' qualifier, an intensifier that makes the answer more extreme.

If you roll between 40 and 60, add a "but" qualifier, a reducer that adds a drawback or caveat to the answer.

Add or subtract 10 from the roll if it's particularly likely or unlikely.

PLAYING WITH A GROUP

Share a hero or each make your own. Pick a GM or play GM-less.

Be considerate, empathetic, and respectful towards each other. Listen.

If you're playing without a GM, take turns framing the scene and declaring when it is over.

When a player triumphs, they narrate; when they fail, whoever is playing their foe does. If that's nobody, it's the player on their left.

3 CREATING A CHARACTER

DESCRIPTOR

Each character has at least one sentence of descriptive text that defines her.

Choose one:

I am a (blank) trying to be (blank) despite (blank).

I am a (blank) but I am (blank) and (blank).

I am a (blank), (blank) but (blank).

The “blanks” are your starting Tags; they describe the hero’s skills, abilities, heritage, or personality. Tags that are part of your starting sentence are fundamental to your character.

If you are using a Scenario, follow the instructions, otherwise, pick a starting sentence and three Tags to fill the blanks.

Pick two more Tags that appeal to you, for a starting total of five.

Honorable, Brave, Vengeful, Sullen, Greedy, Lustful, Demonspawn, Mage, Seer, Ranger, Silvertongue, Lover, Noble, Merchant, Royal, Doomed, Lucky, Gardener, Explorer, Sailor, Spy, Brawler, Orator

ATTRIBUTES

The five attributes are Combat, Exploration, Weird, Social, and Skill.

Each attribute is a sliding scale, from 1 to 10, with a number between 2 and 9. This number is the scale’s *long-term number*.

Each attribute also has a number, from 2 to 9, that is the scale’s *current number*. The current number begins equal to the long-term number.

Circle or mark one of each pair; this side of the scale’s range is inclusive of the current number.

COMBAT

fight or flee

Fight is when you physically or mentally engage in combat or attempt to resist damage. Flee is when you seek to avoid combat, or hide from it instead of facing it head on.

EXPLORE

bold or cautious

Exploration is your curiosity about the world, experience navigating it, and openness to new experiences while doing so.

A Bold approach is one that meets challenges head-on, kicking down the door, swaggering into the tavern, or cutting the Gordian knot.

A Cautious approach studies the runes before touching them, researches the lore before the journey, or tries all the options in the puzzle patiently to find the correct solution.

SOCIAL

aggressive or empathetic

Social is your ability to navigate society and interpersonal relationships.

With an Aggressive approach, you intimidate, demand, or impress with your force of personality.

With an Empathetic approach, you persuade, listen, and negotiate to get what you want.

SKILL

your choice or your choice

Your Skill reflects two things your hero knows how to do well, one better than the other. Try to choose items that overlap as little as possible with each other and with the core sliders, but don't overthink it.

You might be a Sailor first, a Merchant second. You might be a Farmer first, a Thief second. Or you might be a Scholar first, a Lover second.

Whatever you choose for your Skill, make it something you want to use in play.

Skills are unique in that you may add a second skill scale later.

WEIRD

demanding or sensitive

Weird is your connection to the arcane, the unseen forces that shape the world.

If you are Demanding, you force fire into existence with your will, you blast your foes with waves of mental energy, or you ward a door against passage with explosive consequences.

If you are Sensitive, you see the invisible, speak with plants, or whisper into the wind for a far off ally's ear to hear.

FINAL DETAILS

Choose a name for your hero.

Write "x2" next to a Resource; you may use this Resource twice before crossing it off.

SIR VISSA AU'BRINIAN

I am a knight trying to be honorable despite temptation.

Combat	[8]	Fight*	8	Flee
Explore	[6]	Bold*	6	Cautious
Social	[5]	Aggressive*	5	Empathetic
Skill	[5]	Knight*	5	Politician
Weird	[5]	Demanding*	5	Sensitive

Tags: knight, honorable, tempted, brave, aristocrat

Resources: carried item x2



GAMBROM MANYLEGS

I am a spider, feared but canny.

Combat	[2]	Fight	2	Flee*
Explore	[4]	Bold	4	Cautious*
Social	[3]	Aggressive	3	Empathetic*
Skill	[5]	Stealth	5	Weaving*
Weird	[3]	Demanding	3	Sensitive*

Tags: spider, feared, canny, large, kind

Resources: hidden knowledge x2



ARION OF FANWOOD

I am a shapeshifter, but I am vengeful and suicidal.

Combat	[5]	Fight*	5	Flee
Explore	[5]	Bold	5	Cautious*
Social	[8]	Aggressive*	8	Empathetic
Skill	[7]	Shapeshift*	7	Hunter
Weird	[5]	Demanding	5	Sensitive*

Tags: shapeshifter, vengeful, suicidal, ranger, scholar

Resources: supernatural power or ability x2

4 WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Vissa sat cross-legged on the warm rock overlooking the gleaming waters of Lake Meiron. Her eyes were closed as she meditated, focusing her mind on the blissfulness of nothing.

Since this is the first scene, I'll roll up a random event using the conflict consequences table. A 1, so Combat, and a 4, meaning a sneak attack.

I could roll Exploration, to see if she is aware enough of the world to react before it hits her. Or I could do Weird, to see if she senses it. Or Knight, if she relies on her training and experience to perceive it.

Whatever I choose, it will help define the threat. I decide to go with "Knight", on the Skill scale. It has a number of 5 and is inclusive, meaning I roll a 5- to succeed.

Then I define my intent and my stakes. The intent is to sense the attack so I can react first to get out of the way. Since I don't know quite what I'm facing yet, I'll roll to see what the stakes are. I get an 8, for "major". Whatever it is, it hits hard!

I assemble my modifier; a +1 for the knight tag. The roll is a 7, a failure, even with my modifier moving it in my favor to a 6.

I'm taking a major injury. So I narrate the failure and the injury, and add a Status Effect – "Poisoned" – that helps me define the creature.

The whoosh of air ruffled her hair and her eyes flew open as the wyvern swept past, the barb of its tail stinging her shoulder through her light summer dress.

There's no chance for a reroll, since the fictional circumstances have changed and my original intent no longer applies. So I accept the failure, and choose to move my number, to a 6. I get 1xp for using the "knight" tag from my descriptor.

This is a new roll; my intent is now to "drop behind the rock, out of harm's way, so I can grab my gear". The approach is Combat, Flee, which isn't

really my strong suit at a 9+. For the stakes, I choose minor.

My modifier is a +1 for knight and a -1 for poisoned, for a net of 0. I need to roll a 9 or better. I roll a 7, a failure. So I narrate taking the hit and add a status effect to reflect the injury – "grazed".

She threw herself flat, sliding behind the rock, and the wyvern's talons parted her hair and grazed her face.

And I'll reroll, same stakes, same intent, invoking a found item as a resource. The modifier is the same. Roll is a 10. I mark off "a found item" and add 1xp since I used "knight" for this series of rolls.

She scooped up a heavy rock and threw it, hard, at the creature. It hissed, wings stroking the air as it climbed. It almost disappeared against the bright sun as it circled around for another pass.

She felt a wave of dizziness as she scrambled for her sword and shield. *What's a wyvern doing this far south?* she wondered, as her fingers closed around the familiar hilt of the blade and she turned to face the foe streaking from the sky.



5 HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Heroes are capable individuals who can handle themselves against the world. Rolls should be called for when there is a risk of failure and something the hero cares about is put in danger.

Risk of failure applies when a situation is more difficult than someone competent with the hero's Tags and Skills could handle easily. A sailor can tie a knot without a roll; tying that same knot in a gale requires one.

The thing the hero cares about in danger might be his pride, or his sword arm, or his position in society, or simply the regard of the pretty lass he's been flirting with all evening. These are the *stakes*, the injury the hero risks if he fails.

Stakes fall into three categories, based on how much your hero cares – minor, a major, or yourself. These may be injuries, say, a slash across the ribs or a broken arm, or more abstract, like exile or being stripped of a cherished illusion or destruction of a long-term project.

A good *intent* has both an action – “I want to tie off the rope” – and a goal – “so the ship doesn't break free of its moorings”.

If your intent is vague or you need more details about a situation, ask an oracle question instead.

If you aren't sure what the stakes should be, roll a d10; on a 5–, the stakes are minor, on a 6–8, major, and on a 9+, the stakes are yourself.

You may only use a stake that has a corresponding unchecked injury box – if a rolled stake is invalid, choose a different level of risk.

You do not have to clarify what the stakes are exactly, just state the severity, though you're free to be more specific if the context suggests it.

It's up to you if your hero recognizes the danger or not.

Don't narrate anything yet! Choose the most appropriate scale and decide which approach matches the fiction and intent best. If the approach is hard to determine, pick the one with the best range.

Minor:

bruised, tired, look bad, small fine, flee with minor cost, hesitate

Major:

broken arm, exiled from court for a season, a difficult task, scarred face, flee at heavy cost, pause for exchange, poisoned

Yourself:

death, exiled from court forever, a seemingly impossible task, loss of limb, flee with nothing, pause for scene

Assemble a modifier; if you have any Tags or Status Effects that apply, add or subtract one from the modifier.

If you're not sure if a Tag or Status Effect applies, ask the oracle.

Roll a d10; if your approach is on the left side, roll under your current number, if on the right, roll over it. Include the current number in the success range for the marked side.

I WANT TO MAKE AN EXPLORE ROLL. BOLD IS MARKED, AND MY CURRENT NUMBER IS 6. WHEN I USE A BOLD APPROACH, I ROLL A 6 OR LESS TO SUCCEED. FOR A CAUTIOUS APPROACH, I ROLL A 7 OR GREATER TO SUCCEED.

If you roll your number exactly, roll on the “CONFLICT CONSEQUENCES” chart and use the result as part of your next narration, taking an extra Status Effect to reflect the new circumstances.

When you fail a roll, narrate how the failure and injury happens, then add any appropriate Status Effects, and mark off one of your injury boxes.

If you are still capable fictionally, have not checked off your last injury box or your “yourself” box, and have Resources left, you may opt to reroll.

When you have failed and can't or don't reroll, slide the scale's current number up or down by one, then decide if you will give up on the goal or try a new approach.

If you succeed, narrate the success. Move in the direction that increases your chances of success at the same roll again.

REROLLS

To reroll, first invoke a Resource; this is the force that gives you the will or ability to push forward, past defeat. Check the Resource off when you invoke it.

Choose or roll new stakes. Just as a primary roll, if you lack an unchecked injury box for the stake's level, raise the stakes until you have an unchecked box.

If the stakes are too high, you may give up and accept the original failure. If you do, the goal is unattainable unless circumstances change.

Otherwise, roll again, adjusting the modifiers for your current Status Effects and Tags.

If you succeed, you achieve your goal. Otherwise, you fail and suffer the injury. Mark off the injury box and add an appropriate Status Effect.

Narrate the result either way.

If you fail, you may reroll again as long as you have a Resource left to spend, are fictionally capable, and have unchecked wound boxes.

STATUS EFFECTS

Status Effects are the temporary version of Tags and may be lost, changed, or added in play as the fiction dictates without penalty.

It's not necessary to detail every last emotion or impairment a hero suffers, just the ones that are strong enough to affect his capabilities.

If you're not sure if something should be a Status Effect or not, ask the oracle.

Examples: Angry, Guilty, Tired, Exhausted, Euphoric, In Love, Desirous, Self-Satisfied, Hungry, Asleep, Afraid, Self-Hating, Vengeful, Moral, Hunted, High Ground, Unconscious, Petrified, Poisoned, Enchanted, Cursed, Exiled, Lost

Resources: Emotion • Found item • Supernatural effect or ability • Hidden or specialized knowledge • Geographical feature • Element like silver, fire, or iron • Carried item • Ally

FOE OR OBSTACLE?

A "foe" is a sentient creature who can be negotiated with, reasoned with, and empathized with. An "obstacle" is anything in your way that isn't a foe.

You may only demand of a foe a setback or change as severe as that which you are willing to wager yourself; if you don't risk yourself, neither do they.

Note that this doesn't mean the terms must be identical, but they must be commensurate in value.

INJURIES

Injuries reflect setbacks you've taken recently. They track how much fight your hero can bring to the table at the moment.

When you fill in your final injury box or your "yourself" box, your hero is out of the current conflict.

Finish any narration, then end the scene.

Decide if your hero is dead. This is your call, regardless of the fiction. If she is, narrate how the world is changed by her life and her passing.

Otherwise, before the next scene starts, roll a d10 for each injury; on an even result, erase the injury, on an odd, leave it.

Use which injuries remain to inform your fiction; was he tended while unconscious? Left to die of his wounds? Locked in the tallest tower? Stranded in the wilderness?

Status Effects may vanish with the injury (a tended wound no longer Bleeds) or linger as consequences (an exile is still Exiled, even if they find themselves on new shores).

SCENES

Scenes are units of game time, much like a scene in a movie or play. They begin when the action does and end when you, the player, say they do.

A game of *Heirs of Sea & Shadow* is divided into scenes, during which conflicts arise, dramas are played out, and the hero's life becomes ever more complicated.

You may want to follow a strict Scene Structure or to just go with your instincts. Either way is fine.

REPLENISHMENT

When you want to replenish your Resources, play a replenishment scene. Make rolls as usual.

At the end of the scene, if the fiction indicates you've recuperated, your Resources are all restored. Any Status Effects that would naturally end after a rest do. Any injuries that would be healed by the fiction are.

You may also return the current number of one scale of your choice to its long-term number.

ADVANCEMENT

Gain one point of experience when you use at least one Tag from your descriptor on a roll or series of rolls. Only take 1xp regardless of the number of rerolls.

You may spend 5xp to change the long-term number of one of your hero's scales to a new number, to add a new non-descriptor Tag, to change your marked scale, or to fill in a blank space in your descriptor.

You may spend 3xp to set one of your hero's scales to whatever current number you wish.

You may spend 1xp to restore a Resource on the spot, to change an oracle answer to one you like better, or to add one in your favor to a roll.

OVERVIEW OF PLAY

- 1 Generate fiction using the oracle until there's a risk of failure and there's a danger.
- 2 Make a statement of intent, including the goal and the stakes.
- 3 Assemble a modifier from Status Effects and Tags.
- 4 Roll the dice. Narrate the outcome. Assign Status Effects and injuries.
- 5 Determine if a reroll is possible and desired. If so, spend a Resource and name new stakes.
6. Repeat steps 3–5 until the fiction makes your approach invalid, you give up, succeed, or are too badly hurt to continue.

If the fiction demands that you lose a regular Tag and you agree, gain 5xp. Otherwise, narrate why you should keep it and gain 1xp.

If you do something that directly contravenes one of your hero's descriptor Tags, you may choose to drop the Tag, making it blank. If so, gain 10xp.

Once you have spent 15xp, level up. Add a new phrase with a single blank to your hero's descriptor and choose a new Tag, or add a second Skill scale. Return any of your scales you wish to their long-term numbers.

VISSA'S PLAYER HAS SPENT 15XP; SHE DECIDES TO ADD A NEW PHRASE, "AND CAPTAIN OF THE DEMONSGUARD", WITH THE TAG "DEMONSGUARD (CAPTAIN)", TO REFLECT HER INTEREST IN EXPLORING THAT ASPECT OF THE CHARACTER.

6 THE WORLD OF LUNEDD

The world is broken; the light is dying and there is no hope.

These are the words of the hopeless and the afraid. The farmers who huddle around fires as the shadows roam their fields and take their livestock in the night. The nobles in fine silks who listen just a moment longer than they should to the blandishments of merchants from the demon courts.

This is a world where terrible things have happened and continue to happen, but as long as heroes – ordinary men and women who choose not to surrender – rise to fight and to extend a hand, there is hope.

Two hundred years ago, the mad king of Anwy made a bargain that unleashed the demons across the isle. In the initial carnage, only the queen of Lunedd was able to rally her forces and the other survivors to beat back the demon hordes.

After nearly two centuries, formal rules of etiquette and diplomacy have been forged between various powers of the isle, including the primarily human Llundedd and the most stable and influential of the demon courts, in ruined Anwy.

The giantkin to the west squabble amongst themselves. The mainland has grown decadent and self-absorbed. And rumors grow of a warlord who seeks to unite the many petty demon fiefs scattered across the isles into a force capable of conquering not just Lunedd, but the world.

And every night lasts just a little bit longer...

LUNEDD

Lunedd is a forested kingdom along the south-western coast of the island, originally settled by refugees from the western isles, and rich in copper and demon-prized silver. It is bounded on the south and west by sea, and to the north and east by the Demon Wastes.

Luneddians are hardy and sensible, with a strong love of the sea and a tendency towards traditionalism. The culture is egalitarian and despises slavery; there are no rules about sexual preference, as long as those with familial obligations fulfill them.

The society does have strong gender roles, though they are often crossed in storms of gossip and scandal. Women are expected to care for the land, the people, and affairs of state as farmers, politicians, priests, and healers, while men serve as warriors, guards, and, most importantly, sailors.

ANWY

Anwy once rivaled Lunedd in stature and virtue, but now crumbles, buried under the weight of perpetual darkness. Wren, the City of Silver, gleams darkly in the center of a barren plain that once was rolling farmland.

None know what has become of her rightful king or his heirs, and no human has met face to face with the Lord of Anwy and lived to tell of it.

Some voices whisper that the trade and diplomacy is merely a diversion, a pastime for the demons as they wait for the night to fall for the final time. Others, louder, herald a new age of peace and understanding.

Only time will tell.

THE DEMON WASTES

With the demons came the strange and twisted forests that covered most of the isle overnight, now known as the Demon Wastes.

The demons who lurk within go by many names and have as many different powers; imps, devils, medusae, ogre, ghost, hobgoblin, banshee, vampire. Some scholars claim they have always been here, and that the mad king of Anwy merely gave them power.

Unfortunately, most of what the demons want out of existence is morally unpalatable to humans, if not downright destructive, and even the kindest, most benevolent demon has to eat...

DEMONSPAWN

Most unfortunate are those who are born with the blood of a demon in their veins. In Lunedd, those with demon heritage are only grudgingly tolerated, though a vocal contingent among the nobility advocates acceptance. Subtler voices whisper of the power to be had by embracing those of demonic lineage.

One thing is for certain; you cannot trust a demonspawn, for they are *Other*.

THE OTHERKIN

Deep within the Wastes live sentient animals, the spirits of nature given form. They reflect the spirits that they once were, spirits driven to the fringes of the now twisted forests they once stewarded. Some are cursed humans. Some are demons. Some just are, eternal and unchanging.

All are bad luck to cross paths with; things best avoided when they call out to you at dusk or dawn from the wild places.

THE AVERYNI

The Averyni, wild shapeshifters, have suffered the most at the hands of the demons, their ancestral groves engulfed by the Demon Wastes overnight. They hide, now, rarely seen by human or demon. Who knows what ancient lore is hidden with them?

MAGIC

Magic is rare, and may be fueled by strength of will or, more commonly, by pacts with spirits. Everyone knows a rhyme or gesture or two to propitiate the humble spirits of trees and wild game and chance; only a few stumble across or dare the unholy rites that bind greater demons to heel.

Magic is subtle, creating wrinkles in reality rather than tears. Jinxes, illusions, enchantments, curses – all of these are hinted at by the folklore of the people of the isles.

Silver has an affinity with magic, and is thus greatly in demand by demons and sorcerers. Iron, especially that forged by human hands, repels magic and is equally in demand by those who wish for protection from the ravages of magic.

NEVER

The glittering city of Never rises against the very edge of the sea, built along the mouth of the wide, placid Shikoru River. The palace at its center, shaped by some long-ago hand from glass as hard as diamond and from infused silver, is home to the Queen Regent Cairfyl and her urbane, educated court.

The city, like all cities, has a poor underclass, mostly centered around the wharfs that feed the city, and struggles with crime.

THE FISHING VILLAGE OF SAKO

Sako is a tiny town of nets and ramshackle but tidy houses, along the curve of the bay looking out to the west. It smells of tobacco smoke and campfires in the evening, and of fish and sea at all times. The fisherfolk are staunch traditionalists, and the town Burgher, a local farmer, runs things loosely but efficiently.

To the north lies the Eid Plains, and then the edge of the Demon Wastes, the dark forest that engulfs the island north and east of Lunedd. Nearby is Lake Meiron, long rumored to be the dwelling place of an ancient spirit.

ISA VERYS

On the northern edge of Lunedd, where the Demon Wastes begins and the trees become twisted and angry, the tiny hamlet of Isa Verys marks the safest road to Anwy – and one of the richest silver mines on the isles.

The foresters are a hard and surly folk, used to dealing with demons and treachery, and unused to civility. They keep well apart from the highly trained guard responsible for the safety of the miners.

7 SCENARIOS

DEMONSGUARD

Choose one Tag from each list. if a Tag is bracketed, specify what it is.

Choose a sentence from the Character Generation section and fill in the blanks with three of your chosen Tags.

noble • soldier • knight • royal • priest • guard

honorable • tough • clever • graceful • stubborn • grieving

demonspawn • shapeshifter • mage • cursed • haunted • pragmatic

well-educated • artist • cultured • <craft> • <profession> • dilettante

Finally, choose a relationship and a target, and add it as a Tag, as *Relationship-type(Person)*. For example, "Mother(Queen Cairfyl)" or "Rival(Captain Aeryn)", or more generally, "Friendship(Watch)".

Now choose your attributes, and your extra resource.

scholar/brawler • soldier/farmer • privateer/courtier • priest/lover • knight/noble • healer/warrior

THE BEGINNING

You're in Sako, at a wedding • the Demon Wastes, tracking an old enemy • the wharfs, in a brothel • the palace, someplace you shouldn't be • Isa Verys, at a funeral • Lake Meiron, meditating

*The Queen Regent has betrothed the young heir to the demonspawn heir of Anwy, who is to be fostered at court along with other heirs from across the isles. A new guard is being formed to protect the newly arrived fosterlings, and they want you to take the thankless, dangerous, career-ending job of leading it. **Why you? What do you do?***





THE LOST

Choose one Tag from each list. if a Tag is bracketed, specify what it is.

Choose a sentence from the Character Generation section and fill in the blanks with three of your chosen Tags.

ranger • captain • farmer • sailor • merchant • noble
 inquisitive • determined • connected • exiled • world-weary • bitter
 demonspawn • shapeshifter • mage • cursed • haunted • pragmatic
 educated • artistic • traditional • <craft> • <profession> • dilettante

Finally, choose a relationship and a target, and add it as a Tag, as *Relationship-type(Person)*. For example, "Sister(Gwen)" or "Rival(Mayor Chlona)", or even more generally, "Friendship(Miners)".

Now choose your attributes, and your extra resource.

ranger/noble • miner/farmer • merchant/pirate • soldier/artist •
 scout/fisher • healer/warrior

THE BEGINNING

*A group of mercenaries in the employ of a pale, ill-looking youth have arrived in Isa Verys, renting the entire inn and purchasing supplies for a long journey. They are seeking a guide to the Wastes, and have sought you out, in particular. Of course you told them no. **Why did you?***

They want you because you've been there before • you're the best • you have a reputation for success • everyone else said no • of something special about you • they won't say

*You don't expect your beer to be drugged or to wake up miles into the Wastes, tied to a horse, and you definitely don't expect the ambush that erupts from the trees. **What do you do?***

8 MAJOR HOOKS

NEVER

An attempt has been made on the life of the queen, and a good friend of yours stands accused of providing aid to the assassin.

A close relative has passed away, leaving you a business in the city, if you can just deal with his mysterious partner. Who, as it turns out, is secretive for a reason – they're not exactly human.

A veiled woman asks for your aid for her enclave, deep in the Wastes, and offers a healthy sum for a simple task – to travel to her home with a gift for her sister. She promises that she has information you would be very interested in if you accept the job.

In a run-down church in the poorest part of the wharf district, a stranger lies, delirious and ill, and his ravings are those of a madman – or a seer. The pastor begs you for help on the strength of your old friendship.

The tippling manservant of a feckless noble mistakes you for a scandalous author and demands that you return certain ill-advised and indiscreet letters from his employer. When he realizes his mistake he begs you to help.

You're standing, blinking against the light, on a pier over the Shikoru river. How did you get here? Where are your allies? What is this strange mark?

SAKO

A giant otter has been spotted nearby, on the edge of the lake, alternately begging for help and cursing passerby. The Burgher has posted a note on the town pillory offering a reward for someone to investigate.

A demon has been captured attempting to pass as human; a demon hunter is sought to interrogate it and to track down any allies that might lurk in the caves near Lake Meiron.

The wedding of your cousin to the heir of a rival family is tomorrow, and everything's going wrong. Start by figuring out where the priest wandered off to. And don't let a love-sick demon interfere or you'll catch hell from your aunt.

ISA VERYS

A traveling caravan was due through from Anwy four days ago, carrying much needed medicine and a good friend of yours. It's not like them to be this late.

Your sister, the idealistic teacher, has set up a school for the children of the miners and the rangers. The whole group's been snatched, just before lunch, and time's of the essence.

The big Moot is in full swing, the town flooded with anti-social fur trappers, demonspawn traders, and various other riff-raff camped around the moot-field. A valuable shipment of silver has gone missing, and everyone's pointing fingers at everyone else.



MINOR ENCOUNTERS

NEVER

- 1 Your scholarly uncle has vanished on a delve below the city.
- 2 A circus has transformed Riverside into a carnival.
- 3 Your cousin from the country is at your door.
- 4 The nightengale at your window pleads for help.
- 5 The walled garden is quiet save for the whisper of hauntingly beautiful voices.
- 6 A pack of drunk fops surrounds the actress, jeering.
- 7 The drunk young student's in more danger than he realizes.
- 8 An outraged merchant demands justice but is denied; the guards laugh at him.
- 9 A good friend has not returned from an expedition to the Wastes. His wife asks your aid.
- 10 The person you love asks you to rescue the one they love from captivity.

SAKO

- 1 You dream of an angry storm goddess blocking the sea.
- 2 Inside the fish is a gold ring shaped like a dragon devouring its own tail.
- 3 A great beast lairs in the sea caves, hunting fish and livestock in gluttonous amounts.
- 4 A storm is coming, and there's little time to prepare.
- 5 Some local children and a boat are missing.
- 6 Your brother flirts with a fisherman's wife; he notices.
- 7 A worried dignitary is in town to consult with the Lake.
- 8 An owl has taken up residence in the town green and watches passerby as if searching for someone.
- 9 The sirens' song has gone quiet and nobody knows why.
- 10 An emaciated troll has been spotted skulking around the sea caves.

ISA VERYS

- 1 A gambler's been accused of cheating by one of the miners.
- 2 A pale white spirit haunts the road to Anwy; her touch is ice and sorrow.
- 3 The guards are harrassing travelers with petty fines and beatings.
- 4 A flock of ravens, one with a ruby in its grasp, watches the road to Anwy.
- 5 An old hermit who raves about darkness and waves lives in a cave near the mines.
- 6 The rangers and miners are at odds over an assault.
- 7 The fashion in Never this season is for Kaptiauri leather boots.
- 8 A knight's corpse lies beneath a briar a few miles from town.
- 9 Travelers always need supplies, but too few merchants risk the journey as the mainland routes are safer.
- 10 The last letter-carrier went missing; the pay is poor, the job dangerous, but the need is there.

DEMON WASTES

- 1 A plaintive child's cries echo through the forest at night.
- 2 The campfire's flames twist in a suggestive, enticing way.
- 3 The water tastes odd, but you're sure it was harmless.
- 4 A white stag appears, bounding back and forth, inviting chase.
- 5 By a stone well, an old woman sits, too tired to draw water.
- 6 A girl in a once fine gown sits beneath a tree, sobbing.
- 7 A castle lies silent and still, overgrown with wild roses.
- 8 The trees whisper to each other of things seen far away, but the message is garbled.
- 9 A crumbling tower rises from a briar thicket, with a single dark window high above.
- 10 The fox begs you to free him from the trap.

NAMES

WOMEN OF LUNEDD

Quina, Chlona, Isabre, Gianna, Ivy, Gwen, Ayanana, Nilley, Meirona, Dila, Hely, Morgana, Caraiah, Meria, Vissa, Aeryn

MEN OF LUNEDD

Moah, Techam, Nolo, Arcan, Meylethafan, Elio, Caron, Eogath, Caredwyn, Nath, Isaph, Brandley

SURNAMES

Of <Place>, Au'Brinian, Myn Gaethytr, Traughn, Ar Hylirious, Rees, Brys-terch, Lackland, Aleistr, Eloque, y <parent's name>

AVERYNI WOMEN

Megumi, Sukiko, Perie, Miko, Alys, Sukasume, Zoeyke, Yui, Emikiko, Haruka

AVERYNI MEN

Ryo, Arion, Shi, Ise, Yeo, Mel, Fin, Cyn, Akaede, Caion

NICKNAMES & SOBRIQUETS

Redbeard, Longshanks, Walker, War-Rider, Bladebearer, Heir, Seer, Soul-took, Thrice-Bidden, Silvertongue, Blessed, Unlucky, the Unwelcome, Farseer, Seaborne, son or daughter of <person>

PLACES

Riaran, Palanden, Morvisti, Gla Wion, Brani, Gende, Layl, Mer, Gwyvael, Yokanori, Savelea, Giangwen Dunwen, Vice, Bolinno, Hyl, Gladwed, Treg-giana, Areiratto, Bridge, Harwood, Barnslow, Horne

NEVER DISTRICTS

Whitehall, Oldwitch, Archway, Goldgleam, Riverside, Greyfriars, Yeo Village, Mora Wharf, Blackhall, Laylea Hall, Palace, Dunwy Green, Heron, Shio Park, East Birch, Demon Hollow, Lilywalk, Gallows Corner, the West End, Trath, Meria-on-sea

DEMONS

Medusa, Imp, Shadow, Tempter, Hobgoblin, Night Hag, Ghost, Revenant, Vampire, Firesnake, Green Hag, Kelpie, Pixie, Meerbat

ANIMALS

Enne's Sea Allian, Kaptiauri, Giant Ant, Leopard, Wolf, Wyvern, Adjule, Auk, Woolly Rhinoceros, Giant Eagle, Snow Lizard, Crocodile

FISH CAUGHT IN SAKO

Plathead, Sniper, Ribalofish, Pilcat, Wartfish, Puffaloach, Garibbonnel, Arrowana, Sixgill, Coleye, Banjaray, Targazer, Pikefish, Wrymout, Ridgeon

RANDOM GENERATORS

CONFLICT CONSEQUENCES

Wise • Angelic • Impulsive • Decisive • Level-headed • Creative
Inventive • Educated • Trustworthy • Honorable • Spirited • Clever
Energetic • Hard-working • Curious • Suspicious • Lucky • Striking
Methodical • Haunted • Stubborn • Devilish • Arrogant • Perceptive
Deft • Two-fisted • Gutsy • Insensitive • Passionate • Experienced
Evasive • Provocative • Strong • Hot-headed • Tough • Independent

	Combat	Explore	Social	Skill	Weird	Random
1	Powerful enemy	Friendly encounter	Trust built	Exceptional quality	Unexpectedly powerful	Roll Combat
2	Hazard, flood, or fire	Gear fails	Secret revealed	Flawed product	Side effect	Roll Explore
3	Dirty trick	Illusion	Rival scores points	Flawed materials	Secret revealed	Roll Social
4	Enemy reinforcements	Unlucky injury	Made vulnerable	Unlucky slip	Bargain required	Roll Skill
5	Ally or item harmed	Supplies ruined	Ultrior motives	Actor interferes	Backlash	Roll Weird
6+	Sneak attack	Nothing happens	Nothing happens	Nothing happens	Nothing happens	Nothing happens

SCENE KEYWORDS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1-2	attack	resist	future	agent	secret	revenge	laugh	obsess	pride	pain
3-4	distance	anger	supplies	power	desire	choice	malice	plot	sword	shield
5-6	phobia	ice	lust	dirt	machinery	water	silver	gold	sky	sea
7-8	love	betrayal	honor	duty	mistake	debt	fear	guilt	purity	vice
9-10	fire	air	death	time	self	history	flaw	want	need	reason

RELATIONSHIPS

The first actor *relationship* the second actor and expresses it *overtly* [5-] or *covertly* [6+] and *actively* [5-] or *passively* [6+].

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1-2	craves contact with	was childhood friends with	wants to humiliate	was childhood rivals with	came to blows with	respects the opinion of	needs permission from	is being blackmailed by	wants to change to	wants to mentor
3-4	tolerates	took a blow for	grew up with	is trying to ruin	is resentful of	is a crutch for	has a crush on	hates and loves	has the dirt on	has cowed
5-6	was saved from harm by	is married to or trapped by	is afraid for	watches out for	sacrificed for	is afraid of	wants to hurt	is hostage to	wants recompense from	wants to show up
7-8	was humiliated by	wants to impress	wants the approval of	wants the love of	wants the forgiveness of	wants the understanding of	disregards the value of	has wronged	admires	seeks out the advice of
9-10	wants the respect of	opposes every goal of	is a crutch or linchpin for	is close blood kin of	is distant blood kin of	hates but can't escape from	was saved from social ruin by	is estranged from	wants to dominate	serves the same master as

SCENE STRUCTURE

SET THE SCENE

Roll or choose the Scene type, purpose, main event, and three scene keywords.

For the first scene, use locations from the Scenarios along with adventure hooks to get the ball rolling. If things seem slow, use a ?? as a twist or introduce an adventure hook.

SCENE TYPE

Roll the Act in d6s, keeping the highest: Montage • Flashback • Interlude/Replenishment • Straight • Interrupt • Obligatory/Justice

SCENE PURPOSE

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-2	Atmosphere	Introduce	Exposition	Transition	Prepare	Aftermath
3-4	Investigation	Revelation	Recognition	A Gift	Escape	Pursuit
5-6	Seduction	Unexpected Visitor	Roll twice	Roll twice	Roll twice	Roll twice

ACT ONE

STATUS QUO • PLOT POINT: INCIDENT

The same old grind, until a threat is made • someone gets into a fight • it is missing • a map is found • a body is discovered • a stranger arrives

PREDICAMENT • PLOT POINT: LOCK IN

Your goal is clear, but now you've got to save yourself • find the cure • clear your name • get it back • help a friend • find out why

ACT TWO

FIRST OBSTACLE • PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTH

Danger strikes as emotions run high • a lead is found • a target is acquired • someone wants something • someone seduces • a vice is tempted

HIGHER OBSTACLE • PLOT POINT: FIRST CULMINATION

The going gets tougher now as a connection is made • someone is seduced • the rival uses a resource • emotions lead to action • a victim is found • a threat worsens

SUBPLOT • COMPARE AND CONTRAST

You have an immediate, pressing problem. A resource is used up • danger looms • someone is sick • a secret must be dealt with • emotion flares • someone is gone

HIGHEST OBSTACLE • PLOT POINT: MAIN CULMINATION

Your usual methods have made things worse, and someone dies • someone is captured • something you care about is lost • a secret gambit succeeds • someone is tortured • the foe seizes the initiative

ACT THREE

NEW TENSION • PLOT POINT: TWIST

You know what you want, but you need a new approach. Add a new Tag. Discover it is deadly • it was a lie • you're the chosen one • the foe is in the right • it isn't real • an ally is not an ally

RESOLUTION • DON'T PULL YOUR PUNCHES

Fight! But it will take a sacrifice • means a hard choice • can't be stopped • has captured your allies • will take everything • requires your surrender

You discover someone thought lost • a weakness • an unexpected use • one of your allies knows • a blind spot • a bigger prize

EPILOGUE

Wrap things up, following the established fiction. Are you better off? Worse? Was the goal achieved, the task resolved, or is there still work to be done?

CHARACTER SHEET

NAME: _____

DESCRIPTOR: _____

Combat [] Fight [] Flee

Explore [] Bold [] Cautious

Social [] Aggressive [] Empathetic

Skill [] _____ [] _____

Weird [] Demanding [] Sensitive

TAGS: _____

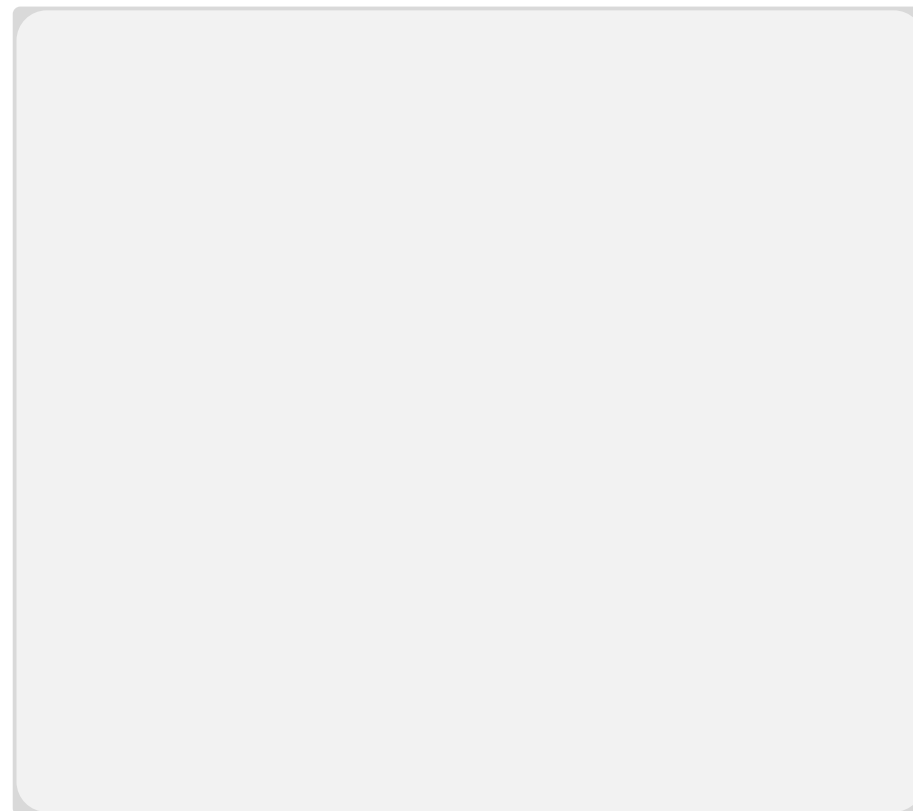
WOUNDS: Minor [] [] [] Major [] [] Yourself []

RESOURCES: An emotion [] A found item []

Hidden or specialized knowledge [] A supernatural effect or ability []

A geographical feature [] An element like iron, fire, or bone []

A carried item [] An ally []



TIPS FOR PLAYING HEIRS OF SEA & SHADOW

Listen to the fiction; the heart of the game is using the established fiction to push the story forward. Be true to the fiction.

You can always choose an option from a list instead of rolling it, or make up your own! Look for options that speak to you or feel like they “fit”.

Scenarios are suggestions, packages to create a certain “feel” to your game. Take options you like, even if they’re not part of the scenario. Make it yours.

Choose the Tags you want to use and explore in play, that define your hero, not that you think will be mechanically advantageous.

If a character option is almost right but not quite, change it.

Use the flavor text as part of the fiction. That’s what it’s there for, to provide impetus to the fiction and to inspire you. If it doesn’t inspire or doesn’t feel right, change it.

Ask the oracle questions that matter and choose interesting outcomes for those questions. If an outcome will end progress or halt the story, don’t bother asking. Just say “yes” to the most exciting option and move on.

In a solo game, balance is irrelevant. Build your hero as powerfully as you want; if the challenges seem too easy, look for harder challenges.

Don’t beat yourself up about the prose on the page. Don’t even think twice about it. It’s not about writing a novel on the first pass, it’s about having an exhilarating experience **right now**.

And finally... have fun with it!



THE END