

## Tales of the Wide Blue Yonder: Chapter 2

# Darkening Skies

*over the planet of Haven. An Imperial warship, half-a-kilometre long and heavily armed, lies still and unresponsive. Her shadow falls across continents.*

*The Trade Union are spooked. They'll blow the ship to pieces; try to forget it ever existed. But there were people on that ship, soldiers and prisoners, and enough weaponry to equip an army.*

*So a rag-tag band approaches the ship in a cheap and collapsing boat. One searches for friends, another for adventure. One looks for love and one looks for profit.*

*One looks for answers.*

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# The Wide Blue

Petty worlds circling a brooding star.

## Life in the Blue

### Adrift in the Blue

The rocks of the Wild Blue float in a sky of breathable gases circling a small, cold star. Priests and mystics believe that the star is the still-beating heart of the father of the gods, cut from Him during the Blue's creation. To cross from one side of the solar system to another takes six weeks in a standard sky ship. The Imperial mail makes it in a fortnight.

### The Depths

The heavier gases form a dense layer of fog below the 'sky' of the Wild Blue. This fog is corrosive — people need to wear gas-masks to breathe and most airship hulls will start to corrode after a single exposure. Pirates and other criminals sometimes use the Depths to evade Imperial patrols and launch raids from hiding. Unfortunately, the Depths are home to sky squid and monstrous things not dead but sleeping...

### Names

**Male:** Adil, Apollo, Caspian, Claudian, Dmitri, Ender, Ernest, Gezim, Howell, Isaac, Julius, Harrison, Mercury, Michael, Mervyn, Obadiah, Oliver, Percival, Thomas, William, Zachariah.

**Female:** Adina, Atarah, Camila, Courtesy, Danaka, Emma, Hadassa, Indigo, Jodina, Liberty, Lydia, Makensi, May, Modesty, Nina, Orelia, Peach, Rachel, Sabina, Tara, Zusana.

**Surnames:** Aniston, Book, Carter, Chandler, Chess, Faber, Forrest, Hart, Hathaway, Haul, Holmes, Jenkins, Jhereg, Mosby, Noir, Summer, Voce.

**Noble Houses:** Ash, Blackbird, Chant, Memory, Serenity, Twilight, Whitethorn.

## Rocks in the Blue

### Haven

The most prominent of the Free Worlds. Here, in the sprawling city hubs, the Trade Union tries to impose some order on the bickering clans and factions of the Free Peoples.

Haven's heart is its marketplaces, the stock exchange its brain and roads and rivers its arteries. Any good or pleasure can be bought here, except slaves. Never slaves.

### Ilysium

The capitol rock of the Empire, home to the great noble houses and their bickering Parliaments. Ilysium's art is rich and varied, but decadent and extravagant. Rarely does it impress the servants, slaves and bodyguards of the nobility who make Ilysium their home.

### Olympia

The staging rock of the Imperial Sky Fleet. From here, expeditions are launched into the colonial expanse and all across the Wild Blue. This is also the centre of the bureaucratic apparatus that governs the colonies, as well as the finest academies and universities.

### Nightport

Nightport does not rotate; one face is always in darkness. On this side, pirates, goblins and smugglers built their hidden port city. This hive of scum and villainy is a dangerous place.

### The Remnants

A swirling maelstrom of spinning world-shards. They say that the pirate king's vast treasure is buried somewhere deep within the Remnants.

# Elizabeth Whitethorn

**Noble turned pirate whose crew is prisoner on the Hammer**

## Traits and Secrets

### Crew

Maintenance, Damage Control, Observation, Signals, [Cargo], [Supplies], [First Aid], [Boarding Action].

### Explorer

Curious, Aware, Nimble, Hardy, [Languages], [Ruins], [Monsters], [Maps].

### Ghostblood

Dominate, Terrify, Sneak, Overload, [Fly], [Possess], [Insubstantial], [Control Technology].

### Sky Pirate

Vicious, Hack & Slash, Cutlass, Knife, [Loot], [Capture], [Drink], [Intimidating].

### Secret of the True Course

You know how to navigate the Remnants.

### Secret of the Sky Song

You know how to call sky squid.

## Keys

### Key of the Broker

You like to make deals and trade favors. Hit your key when you bargain, make a new contact, or exchange a favor.

**Buyoff:** Cut yourself off from your network of contacts.

### Key of the Pirate

You pillage, raid, and terrorise the Wild Blue. Hit your key when you impress someone with your piratical nature or do something to add to your reputation.

**Buyoff:** Turn over a new leaf and go straight.

### Key of Conscience

You don't like to see anyone suffer, even enemies. Hit your key when you help someone who is in trouble or when you change someone's life for the better.

**Buyoff:** Ignore a request for help.

## Conditions

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Hunted</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dead</b>	<b>Shaken</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tired</b>	<b>Infected</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Trapped</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Malachai Bell • Sir Whitethorn

An Imperial spy ordered to rescue the ship, or at least its crew

## Traits and Secrets

### Whispblood (one spell tag at a time)

Float spell, Thin spell, Whisper spell, Pale spell, [Spellcasting], [Channelling], [Hypnotism spell], [Spark spell].

### Aristocrat

Command, Charm, Etiquette, Heraldry, [Soldiers], [Impeccable], [Politics], [Connections]

### Veteran

Combat Tested, Brutal, Patrol, Rifle, Fast, [Hard], [Bone-Breaking], [First Aid].

### Spy

Deception, Disguise, Codes, Sneak, [Hide], [Misdirection], [Assassinate], [Impersonate].

### Secret of Concealment

No matter how thoroughly you're searched, you always have a few key items with you. You can produce any common, simple item at a moment's notice.

### Secret of Throwing

Anything is a dangerous missile in your hands.

## Keys

### Key of the Imposter

You are in disguise, passing yourself off as a Haven native. Hit your key when you perform well enough to fool someone with your disguise.

**Buyoff:** Reveal your true identity to someone you fooled.

### Key of the Empire

You are an Imperial. Vivat Caesar! Hit your key when you serve the Empire's interests, make contact with other Imperials, or reveal your Imperial medals.

**Buyoff:** Betray the Empire.

### Key of Hidden Family

You are Elizabeth's long-lost brother, though she doesn't know it yet. Hit your key when you protect or nurture her.

**Buyoff:** Disown or betray Elizabeth.

## Conditions

<input type="checkbox"/>	Injured	Hunted	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dead	Shaken	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tired	Infected	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Angry	Trapped	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Jezebel

**A camp follower turned society girl, whose child was fathered by a soldier on this ship.**

## Traits and Secrets

### Companion

Charm, Trickery, Seduction, Manners, Misdirection, [Connections], [Command], [Gather Information]

### Keen-Eyed

Insightful, Aware, Coiled, Liars, [Traps], [Danger], [Listen], [Sense Motives]

### Tricky

Quick, Dirty Fighting, Find Weakness, Tumbler, [Escape], [Acrobatics], [Dagger]

### Bold

Brave, Daring, Rescue, Underdog, [Fire], [Reckless], [Explosions], [Outnumbered].

### Secret of Womanhood

Once per session, you can re-roll a failure on any social action.

### Secret of the Lucky Break

Once per session, you can keep your pool dice when you succeed. So go ahead, roll 'em all.

## Keys

### Key of the Poet

You have a way with words and a romantic soul. Hit your key when Jezebel says something that moves the other players at the table.

**Buyoff:** You realise life is nasty, brutal and short.

### Key of the Mission

You must find your son's father and bring him back alive. Hit your key when you take action to complete the mission.

**Buyoff:** Give up on or fail your mission.

### Key of the Vow

After Lord Firefly lifted you from poverty, you swore never to lie with a man again. Hit your key when you resist your lust or the lust of others.

**Buyoff:** Lie with a man.

## Conditions

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Hunted</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dead</b>	<b>Shaken</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tired</b>	<b>Infected</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Trapped</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Lord Gareth Firefly

An adventurer and would-be PI planning to solve the mystery of the Pirate's Hammer.

## Traits and Secrets

### Master Sorcerer

Spellcasting, Channeling, Dustblood, Hex, Strain, [Haunt], [Winnow], [Terrify].

### Hunter

Curious, Aware, Nimble, Hardy, [Backworlds], [Trapping], [Birds & Beasts], [Rifle].

### Private Investigator

Careful, Deduction, Connections, [Sense Motives], [Gather Information], [Informants], [Careful Listener], [Slippery Tongue].

### Reputation

Reckless, Trustworthy, Honorable, Reliable, [Ruthless], [Fearless], [Dangerous], [Heroic].

### Secret of the Shootist

You're deadly with a firearm (or two). Once per session, you can re-roll a failure when you're shooting.

### Secret of the Explorer

You've been all over the frontier, seen a lot of strange things. Once per session, you can re-roll a failure when you're dealing with local customs or strange places.

## Keys

### Key of the Coward

Despite your dreadful reputation, fighting secretly terrifies you. Hit your key when you avoid a potentially dangerous situation, or when you stop a combat using other means besides violence.

**Buyoff:** Leap into combat.

### Key of Swagger

As a nobleman adventurer, you're a cut above the common man. Hit your key when you demonstrate your superiority or when your noble traits overcome a problem.

**Buyoff:** Disown your House Firefly heritage.

### Key of Love (Jezebel)

You have a deep and unrequited love for Jezebel. Hit your key when you are near her, or when you make a decision that is influenced by her.

**Buyoff:** Sever the relationship with Jezebel.

## Conditions

<input type="checkbox"/>	Injured	Hunted	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dead	Shaken	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tired	Infected	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Angry	Trapped	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Rarg

**A goblin tinker and smuggler looking for Imperial military tech.**

## Traits and Secrets

### Athletic

Run, Endurance, Sneak, Hide, [Acrobatics], [Contortion], [Boxing], [Dodge]

### Goblin

Warp shape, Nightvision, Connections, [Glide], [Spines], [Gills], [Mimic Shape], [Reckless].

### Weapon Scrounger

Improvise, Imperial, Gunnery, Pistols, Axes, [Search], [Swords], [Explosives].

### Smuggler

Haggle, Deception, Camouflage, Repair, [Bribes], [Contacts], [Bruisers], [Forgery].

### Secret of Shape Warping

As a goblin, you can change your shape, growing shorter, taller, fatter, thinner, or changing your skin color, at will.

### Secret of Taking a Beating

Years of hard living have made you tough. You can replace the "Injured" or "Dead" condition with "Angry" if it comes up.

## Keys

### Key of Greed

You like the shiny things. Hit your key when you steal something cool or score a big payoff.

**Buyoff:** Swear off stealing forever.

### Key of Bloodlust

You have a passionate disposition and love a good scrap.

**Buyoff:** Avoid a fight.

### Key of the Tinkerer

You just can't leave it alone. Hit your key when you modify, improve, repair, or patch some tech.

**Buyoff:** Pass up the opportunity to mess around with technology.

## Conditions

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Hunted</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dead</b>	<b>Shaken</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tired</b>	<b>Infected</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Trapped</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Pirate's Hammer

*An Imperial battleship suddenly still and silent.*

A battleship manned by a thousand sailors and soldiers, five hundred metres long and armed with cannons, ballistas and sorcerers. The Pirate's Hammer scours the Remnants and destroys all it finds there.

## Statistics

**Length:** 550 meters

**Crew:** 250-450

**Berths:** 1,050 (450 crew, 600 soldier, 50 officer)

**Cargo Capacity:** 900 tonnes (45 cargo pods)

## Powerplant:

- (8) Switch-Coiled Starmatter Engines
- (24) Four-Set Expulsion Thrusters

**Cruise Speed:** 50 knots

**Flank Speed:** 110 knots under boost

## Weapons:

- (4) Top-mounted external gun turrets
- (8) 15-inch side-mounted external gun turrets
- (24) 2-kilo serpentine guns
- (4) Side-mounted grabbler ballistas

**Wireless:** Long-range Double-Band

## Sensors:

- Half-Range Sonar
- Difference Engine (Astrolabe, Calculator and Planetfall Analysis functions)
- Atmosphere/Pressure Analyzer

**Hull:** Not treated to resist corrosion in the Depths.

[GM: You can inflict conditions on the Pirate's Hammer as events warrant. It begins play with the Crippled and Sinking conditions marked. Potential conditions are Need Fuel, Need Supplies, Busted & Leaking, Slowed, Crippled, Sinking (into the the Depths)]

## Cutter One-Seven-Nine

*A small and decrepit vessel, rented cheap*

This is a simple transport ship, rented in Elizabeth's name from a seedy merchant who would be just as happy to never see it again. The game begins with the characters on board as the cutter's brakes fail and it falls towards the Pirate's Hammer.

[Existing Conditions: Busted & Leaking.  
Potential Conditions: Need Fuel, Need Supplies, Busted & Leaking, Slowed, Crippled, Sinking]



# The Rules

## How to play the game.

### Rolling the Dice

When you try to overcome an obstacle, you roll dice. Start with one die. Add a die if you have a trait that can help you. If that trait has any tags that apply, add another die for each tag. Finally, add any number of dice from your personal pool of dice (your pool starts with 7 dice).

Roll all the dice you've gathered. Each die that shows 4 or higher is a hit. You need hits equal to the difficulty level (usually 3) to pass the obstacle.

**Levels:** 2 easy—3 difficult—4 challenging—5 extreme

If you pass, discard all the dice you rolled (including any pool dice you used). Don't worry, you can get your pool dice back.

If you don't pass, you don't yet achieve your goal. But, you get to keep the pool dice you rolled and add another die to your pool. The GM will escalate the situation in some way and you might be able to try again.

### Conditions

When events warrant or especially when you fail a roll, the GM may impose a condition on your character: Injured, Dead, Tired, Angry, Lost, Hunted, Shaken, Infected or Trapped. When you take a condition, mark its box and say how it comes about. [Note: Dead is "presumed dead" unless you say otherwise.]

Conditions are a cue for the GM and players to develop the fiction in a certain way. For example, the captain is Angry and snaps at her crew. Or the void spiders, who can smell blood, rush the Injured character.

Conditions also act like Keys that you can't choose. You get XP or pool dice for hitting them. You don't get any XP or pool dice when you lose them, though.

### Helping

If your character helps another character, say what your character does and give the player a die from your pool. If the roll fails, you get your pool die back. If it succeeds, your die is lost.

### Keys and Experience

When you hit a Key, you can do one of two things:

- Take an experience point (XP)
- Add a die to your pool (up to a max of 10)

If you go into danger because of your key, you get 2 XP or 2 pool dice (or 1 XP and 1 pool die). When you have accumulated 5 XP, you earn an advance. You can spend an advance on one of the following:

- Add a new Trait (based on something you learned during play or on some past experience that has come to light)
- Add a tag to an existing trait
- Add a new Key
- Learn a Secret (if you have the means to)

Save or spend advances whenever you want.

Each key also has a buyoff. If the buyoff condition occurs, you have the option of removing the Key and earning two advances.

### Refresh

You can refresh your pool back to 7 dice by having a refreshment scene with another character. You may also remove a condition or regain the use of a Secret, depending on the details of the scene. A refreshment scene is a good time to ask questions (in character) so the other player can show off aspects of his or her PC—"Why did you choose this life?"—"What do you think of the Lady?"—"Why did you take this job?" etc. Refreshment scenes can be flashbacks, too.

# Running the Game

## Tips, tricks and advice for the GM.

### **Listen and Ask Questions, Don't Plan**

When you're the GM, don't try to plan what will happen. Instead, ask questions—lots and lots and make them pointed toward the things you're interested in. For example, Jezebel gives Lord Firefly an order, which he goes to obey. So I ask Lord Gareth's player, "How do you react when Jezebel orders you around? Is that okay with you?" And then, when it's totally not okay, "What do you say to her?" and a few more like that and everyone is yelling at each other and rolling dice to impose their will.

Also ask questions like:

- "Does anything break when you do this crazy maneuver?"
- "The fire probably spreads out of control doesn't it?"
- "That sounds like a bold plan. What's the first step?"
- "Do the two of you end up somewhere quiet together? Does something happen between you?"
- "Do you know anything about the Crimson Sky rebels? What are they like? Is it normal for them to be this far into the Empire?"

Keep that going at a steady pace and the game flies along pretty well. Part of the job of the GM is listening to what the players say, catching it, turning it around and looking at it, and seeing if there's anything else to be done with it.

The GM's jobs: listen and reincorporate, play the NPCs with gusto, create interesting obstacles, and impose conditions as events warrant (especially when rolls fail).

### **Say Yes, Look for the Obstacles**

By default, characters can accomplish anything covered by their traits. They're

competent and effective people, in other words. It's no fun to ask for a roll when there's no cool obstacle in the way. Just say yes to the action, listen, and ask questions as usual. But also, be on the look out for the opportunity to create obstacles as the action develops. Because you're asking leading questions and listening closely, they'll be all over the place, so it won't be too hard to spot them.

Obstacles can be people (pirates, goblins, imperials, citizens, nobles), weather, monsters (sky squid, flying eels), situations (fires, falling, being shot at, chases, escapes) or anything else you can imagine.

If a character tries something not covered by their traits, that's an obstacle right there: lack of experience and training. Lots of fun things can go wrong when you don't know what you're doing! So go ahead and call for rolls there. Also, players will sometimes try things they're bad at so they can fail and add dice to their pool. It's a fine move for them and it gives you the chance to create more trouble, so everyone wins.

### **Limits**

Some people feel better when there are hard limits. If you need them, you can use these.

- **Maximum tags on one trait:** 12
- **Maximum keys per character:** 5
- **Maximum secrets per character:** 4

Using limits will naturally give players some harder choices to make, so only use them if you encounter an issue that will be solved with limits or if the players request them.

# Obstacles & Difficulties

## Challenges for the characters.

### Crash Gently

The cutter's brakes have failed and the Pirate's Hammer looms closer and closer.

**Obstacles:** Fix the brakes: 4. Manually trigger the escape pod: 4. Brace yourself: 2. Shield another: 3.

**Escalation:** Cutter crashes. Cutter is damaged beyond repair. Escape pod lands on a different part of the Hammer to the cutter.

### Waxwing Ambush

Bat-like monsters attached to the Hammer by long wires.

**Obstacles:** Fight back when ambushed: 5. Flee: 3. Remind them they were human: 4. Spook them: 3.

**Escalation:** Someone is grabbed and carried back to their nest (Trapped).

### Engine Birth

The starmatter in the engines is the spawn of an entity brooding outside of space and time. It hatches.

**Obstacles:** Destroy a hatchling: 4. Frighten it off with fire: 2. Avoid slipping on its blood: 3.

**Escalation:** The bursts of energy cause the Hammer's engines to fire. Someone is Infected. There are hatchlings loose on the ship.

### Parley with Survivors

The pirates and the soldiers keep to themselves abiding by an uneasy peace. To convince them to assist or join you will be difficult.

**Obstacles:** Find the pirate's base: 3. Breakthrough the barricade around the Marine's HQ: 4. Show you're not someone to mess with: 3. Recruit the pirates: 4. Recruit the soldiers: 4. Convince the pirates and soldiers to serve together: 5.

**Escalation:** The pirates demand your money or your life. The soldiers arrest you. The pirates and soldiers brawl. One faction has been infiltrated by monsters in disguise.

### Trade Union Attack

The Trade Union, spooked by the Hammer and its armaments, have sent a team to blow the ship into the Blue.

**Obstacles:** Talk the team down: 5. Disarm a bomb: 3. Run from an exploding section of a ship: 4. Subdue or kill a grenadier: 3.

**Escalation:** Team calls for backup. Monsters enraged, attack blindly. Fall further into the depths (Lost). Half the ship explodes (Busted & Leaking or Crippled).

### Destroy the Ship's Bridge

The ship itself is possessed by a sentience from beyond the stars. It controls the electronics, the wireless and its monstrous brood.

**Obstacles:** Dodge through rapidly closing and shutting doors: 3. Fight off a hatchling: 4. Cut the cord attaching a Waxwing to the ship: 3. Hack into the ship's Difference Engine: 5. Trigger the engines' self-destruct sequence: 5. Endure the sparks and debris: 3.

**Escalation:** The ship plunges into the Depths. Infected. The soldiers die to a man. The pirates run away. Go mad. Ship starts to explode.

# The Strangeness

## A creeping infection.

There is something not right on this ship. The ichor of monsters stains the decks and tortured bays and howls echo throughout.

The looming horror strains the mind, forcing it to consider alien geometries and creatures with an all-consuming hatred of life.

Any open wound that makes contact with the ichor or blood of these monsters risks infection, making those infected Strange.

The Strangeness is a canker, a rot and a blessing from the stars. It nourishes and strengthens its host, but drains something of their humanity. They receive curious powers and talents, but once marked as Strange they are forever cursed.

### Becoming Strange

If you have the Infected condition, you may select Strange keys, secrets and traits. Once you do this, you are marked as Strange forever more. You can still interact, to love and feel emotion, but less and less powerfully as the Strangeness grows within you.

The Strange cast shadows, but not their own.

**Refresh:** When you adopt a Strange key, secret, trait or tag ('Strange talents'), your pool is refreshed to 5 dice plus the number of Strange talents you have. Your maximum pool is 10 plus your Strange talents.

This is the only way Strange characters can refresh their pools (it also allows them to remove conditions or regain the use of secrets, as normal). Strange characters can participate in the refresh scenes of non-Strange characters, but receive no personal benefit.

### Dangling Eye

This Strangeness causes your eye to grow, popping it out of its socket so it dangles down your face.

### Key of the Distorted Eye [Strange]

Your eye has perfect vision both in this dimension and all others. While normally this works to your advantage, it sometimes plays images or scenes from dimensions beyond. Hit this key when such phantasms distract or hinder you.

**Buyoff:** Poke it out.

### Eye Trait [Strange]

See, Search, Sense Motives, Predict, Spook, Frightening Stare, Assess, Appraise.

### Secret of the Visionary Eye [Strange]

Your eye stares unrelentingly into the future. Once a session, you can declare that a scene that just occurred was a vision from the future rather than what actually happened. You may use your new knowledge to approach the scene differently or avoid it altogether.

### Swishing Tail

This Strangeness is a long and sinuous tail, perhaps topped with a venomous stinger.

### Tail Trait [Strange]

Climb, Entangle, Trip, Seize, Sting, Strangle, Sleight of Hand, Manipulate.

### Secret of Venom [Strange]

Those you harm with your tail become Infected.

## Passing Strange.

### Demonic Arm

This Strangeness is a single grossly-muscled arm, either sprouting from the character's chest or replacing an existing arm or leg. Its veins throb with green blood and the fingers clench and unclench involuntarily.

### Key of the Rogue Arm [Strange]

You have only partial control over your arm. Hit this key when its rogue behaviour leads you into trouble.

**Buyoff:** Cut it off.

### Arm Trait [Strange]

Bash, Punch, Wrestle, Strangle, Climb, Throw, Block, Sharp Nails, Poisoned Nails.

### Secret of the Autonomous Arm [Strange]

Your arm is independent of the rest of your body. It has its own heart and blood, keeping it alive and active even after you are stunned, unconscious or die. Also, once a session you may take two actions where others take one, as long as one of those actions involves your Arm trait.

# The Second Tale

## For paramours of Lady Blackbird.

If you've played and enjoyed *Lady Blackbird*, you might want to place those characters in this setting instead of the pre-generated characters. In that case, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- **The characters will need a motive.** Perhaps Cyrus Vance heard of the Hammer's breakdown and – knowing his estranged brother is on the ship – sought it out. Maybe Lady Blackbird wants to present Uriah Heap with a functioning Imperial battleship.
- **The Hammer could be the Hand of Sorrow.** This depends on what your characters did to the Hand before they left it. If they made their escape to Haven, they might want to investigate why the Hand followed them and what made it suddenly stop. If some of them were lost or imprisoned on the Hand they might return to rescue them.

- **The characters are too powerful.** The pre-generated characters (Elizabeth Whitethorn and others) are considerably weaker than the characters from the first tale (even ignoring advances). That's because I tried to create a sense of horror and (some) powerlessness. You'll want to scale up the challenges if you use Lady Blackbird and her companions.

- **A link to Uriah Flint.** Or whatever other goal the group is pursuing now. Perhaps the Hammer has maps of the Remnants (that would give another reason to seize the ship – to get the maps out of Imperial hands). Maybe the pirates kept captive on the Hammer are members of Uriah's crew.

- **The Bad Guys:** A final option is that Lady Blackbird and her crew were hired by the Trade Union to destroy the ship. That would pit the *Darkening Skies* characters against the *Lady Blackbird* ones.

# Creating a Character

## A Remedy for Too Many Guests, Deaths and Exiles

### Traits

Choose four traits. You have 16 tags to distribute among those four traits. Some examples are given below.

#### Pilot

Stay Awake, Wireless, Repair, Modifications, Cargo, Warp Drive, Stunts, Navigation.

#### Athlete

Acrobatics, Run, Brawn, Strategy, Endurance, Tough, Wrestling, Contortion, Barge.

#### Kind

Gentle, Smile, Sense of Humour, Listen, Calm, Negotiate, Haggle.

#### Sheriff

Badge, Honourable, Law, Disarm, Arrest, Protect, Serve, Calm, Undercover.

#### Priest

Prayer, Evangelise, Defender of the Faith, Comfort, Condemn, Rouse.

#### Charm

Fast Talk, Deception, Lies, Snake Oil, Misdirection, Seduce, Enchant, Sweet Talk.

#### Free Person

Haven Knowledge, Pride, Connections, Law, Trade, Liberty, Commerce.

#### Blacksmith

Craft, Cold Iron, Endure Heat, Muscles, Bellowing Voice, Mastercraft, Starmetal.

#### Redsmith

Craft, Haggle, Copper, Amber, Ambrionics, Wires, Jewellery, Beauty.

#### Printer's Devil

Script, Ink, Propaganda, Machinery, Deadlines, Scramble, Contracts.

### Secrets

Choose two. Some examples are given below.

#### Secret of Rank

You hold a rank in an organization, military, or guild and have the associated responsibilities and privileges.

**Requires:** Promotion in the organization or excellent forgeries of papers indicating the same.

#### Secret of the Crimson Sky

You know and are known to the Crimson Sky rebels, and you can reach them under any circumstance.

**Requires:** Fighting with the Crimson Sky.

#### Secret of Disarmament

Your attacks, if successful, always disarm your opponents.

**Requires:** Study with a master duellist.

#### Secret of the Hound

You speak the language of wolves and dogs.

**Requires:** Acceptance into a dog pack.

#### Secret of Family

Once per session, you may call on assistance from one of your relatives.

**Requires:** A large family.

#### Secret of Teamwork

When assisting an ally, you may give more than one pool die.

**Requires:** None.

#### Secret of the Flying Leap

You can jump three times as far as an ordinary man, and never lose your balance.

**Requires:** Training with the monks at the Roof of the World.

## This weighty topic continued.

### Keys

Choose three. Some examples are given below.

#### Key of the Traveler

You love exploring new places and meeting new people. Hit your key when you share an interesting detail about a person, place, or thing or when you go somewhere exciting and new.

**Buyoff:** Pass up the opportunity to see something new.

#### Key of the Destined

You are fated for great things. Hit your key when you act like a hero.

**Buyoff:** Give up on a quest or act craven.

#### Key of the Law

You obey and respect the law. Hit your key when you uphold the law.

**Buyoff:** Break the law.

#### Key of Kindness

You are a compassionate person, however much you might try to hide it. Hit your key whenever you show kindness.

**Buyoff:** Hurt someone you didn't have to.

#### Key of the Rake

You are a lover. Hit your key when you turn your charm on someone.

**Buyoff:** Fall in love.

#### Key of Curiosity

Hit your key when you try to learn more about the world.

**Buyoff:** Ignore an opportunity to find out something new.

#### Key of the Exile

The Empire exiled you for high treason. Hit your key when you are threatened by or defy the Empire.

**Buyoff:** Return to Ilysium.

#### Key of the Naif

Hit this key whenever you are taken advantage of.

**Buyoff:** Get the better of someone.

#### Key of the Amnesiac

You have lost your memories. Hit your key when you learn more of your past.

**Buyoff:** Regain your memories.

#### Key of Cleverness

Hit your key when you realise something everyone else missed or you have a cunning plan.

**Buyoff:** Your plan fails.

#### Key of the Brokenhearted

You no longer form bonds of love or friendship. Hit this key when you succumb to nostalgia or rebuff the affection of others.

**Buyoff:** Fall in love.

#### Key of the Outcast

You have been disowned from or exiled by an organisation. Hit this key when the organisation acts against you.

**Buyoff:** Be readmitted into the organisation.

#### Key of Fame

You long to be better-known. Hit this key when your bragging causes problems.

**Buyoff:** Pass up the opportunity to boast.

*An example new character is given on the next page.*

# Silas Vance

A Marine and survivor of the massacre on the Hammer.

## Traits and Secrets

### Scholar

Literacy, History, Culture, [Cosmology], [Science], [Mathematics], [Haven], [Heraldry].

### Soldier

Discipline, Rifle, Pistol, Sabre, [Command], [Tactics], [Fraternity], [Strategy].

### Survivor

Trap, Cunning, Bravery, Keen, [Hunt], [Axe], [Endure], [First Aid].

### Secret of Destruction

You can break things with your bare hands as if you were swinging a sledgehammer. It's scary.

### Secret of the Warp [Strange]

Once per session, you can teleport yourself or someone you're touching.

## Keys

### Key of the Shuddering [Strange]

You have stared into the Beyond. Your eyes are a uniform black. Hit this key when you are overwhelmed by the horror of it all.

**Buyoff:** Confront your fears.

### Key of the Reluctant Leader

As the highest ranking survivor, you were obliged to take command. Hit this key when your orders are obeyed and when you risk your life for your men.

**Buyoff:** Leave your men to die.

### Key of the Father

Hit this key when you protect Jezebel or move closer to seeing your daughter.

**Buyoff:** Leave Jezebel to Lord Firefly.

## Conditions

<input type="checkbox"/>	Injured	Hunted	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dead	Shaken	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tired	Infected	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Angry	Trapped	<input type="checkbox"/>