



The great sea walls were built of dragon bone millennia ago by the wizards whose statues still decorate Guildhall, even if their names've been lost to time. The walls could be seen glowing gently at dawn and dusk, miles from shore; far enough to give us plenty of water to fish and islands to farm, but close enough to keep the beasts at bay. For the ocean is ripe with monsters... titanic aberrations, swarms of sub-aquatic raiders, and watery demons with a taste for human flesh. A few slipped through the cracks, but by and large, we were safe.

And then the sea walls fell. It shouldn't've been a surprise... magic was fading, and all the old artifacts were growing weaker. Somehow, despite everyone knowing that the walls' days were numbered, nobody got around to making a backup plan. One day we were safe, and next, we weren't. The glow stopped, and the Guildmasters had to scramble.

And so, the Flintlock Society was established. The first and only line of defense against the things from below. That's where you come in. Congratulations.

FLINTLOCK

Flintlock is a game about fighting sea monsters as, essentially, magical pirates. It's not a tactical skirmish game or anything—there's no way to actually lose a fight beyond “getting tired and quitting the game.” Instead, think of it as an engine for dramatic snapshots; your goal is to describe epic showdowns full of big, dramatic moments that play out in flashes of action, as if lit by a lighting storm. Crystallized moments as the sailor swings from the rigging, cutlass drawn... the beast slams a tentacle the size of a tree into them, sending them flying out toward the water... while falling, the sailor draws their flintlock and takes aim at the creature's titanic eye and fires, causing the blinded beast to shriek in pain... and the sailor lands in the water momentarily, before using their magic to freeze it, conjuring a sheet of ice. They scramble on it, barely keeping their footing, and try to figure out their next move.

But now it's time for another sailor to take their shot at that horror from below.

ABOUT:

In a past age, the great wizards build the Guild of Magic, in a hidden archipelago miles from the shore, far from politics and war and those who sought to take advantage of magic-users. Originally a gathering place for the most powerful mages and their apprentices, it grew over time to become first a sprawling academy, then a nation that rivaled the great powers of the continent. But one day the magic started to fade away. Nobody knows why.

The archmages who ran the country all died when the spells that extended their lives failed simultaneously. The nation collapsed into anarchy more or less overnight... but the powers on the continent had their own problems, and the archipelago was far away, through monster-infested waters. The people survived the chaos, barely. **Guildhall** is the name of the fledgling nation that bounced back from the collapse. Life in Guildhall is difficult, the people reliant on waning magic and broken artifacts. The government is poorly-organized, and the islands are constantly fighting amongst themselves, but it is a functioning society, clinging to life in the sea.

The **Flintlock Society** does its part by keeping the monsters at bay. You might have come to the Society for the generous pension, or because you truly care about the people and their safety, or for the thrill of the hunt, or because the alternative was prison. Whatever your reason, you're bound to the ship. Quite literally... during your tour of duty, your soul is meshed with the spirit of the ship. It means you'll die if you leave the ship for more than a day or so, but in return you are granted shocking resilience and a magical boon to help you survive your encounters with the sea creatures. It might not be a fair trade, but it's the one you get.

YOU WILL NEED:

- * Players. 3-5 is the general sweet spot.
- * Dice. A d4, a d6, a d8, a d10, a d12, and a d20. It's more convenient if every player has their own set, but not necessary.
- * Character sheets. You can print and cut out the one with this document, or just use index cards or scraps of paper to jot down the relevant information.

CHARACTER CREATION:

Your character is made of three basic elements, their Background, their Boon, and their Weapon.

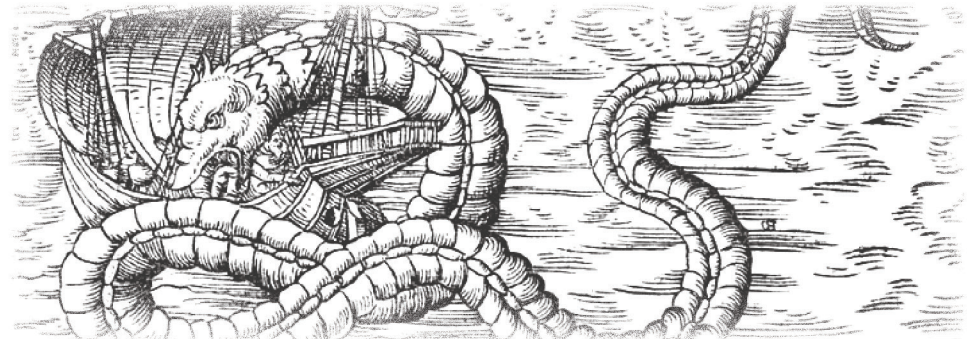
Background is what you were before you joined the Flintlock Society. A pirate? A blacksmith? A naval captain? A novelist? Guildhall is about in the 1700s in terms of technological sophistication—think the Golden Age of Piracy—but its magical background means that there are many scholars and historians, who might learn the unrecorded history of the nation. Think about what you gave up to be stuck on a ship, risking your life.

Boon is a supernatural power granted to you by binding your soul to the ship. Boons are obviously magical, but they reflect a weak, struggling magic, just on the far side of possible... you won't be able to fly, but you might jump higher and further than any human. You might be able to speak to animals or summon fire, but there are constraints... you'll still need to convince animals to listen to you, or the fire will have to spread on its own once you start it. Think about why the ship granted you this ability; what does it say about your personality that this is the power you manifested?

Weapon is, well, the weapon you got. It's usually not magical, just a damn fine weapon. Perhaps obviously, the earliest members of the Society were armed with flintlock pistols, but those rules have relaxed over time, and many arm themselves with cutlasses or bows as they see fit. More esoteric soldiers get more esoteric weapons—spear, shield, cleaver, cannon... what's yours?

Give your character a name, and tell the others what they look like.

Finally, as a group, think about the ship. Is it a tiny sloop, crewed only by the players? An immense galleon captained by a ghost and crewed by the dead? A magical ship wrought from coral and whalebone? Most importantly, what's it called? Name it together.



MONSTER CREATION:

Somewhere on the sea, there is a creature from that dank abyss, rising from the depths to wreak untold damage on the people. Draw it on the back of the character sheet. It doesn't have to be a huge or great drawing, just something to fix the creature in your mind and that of the other players. A thunderous kraken, a swarm of aggressive crabs with human faces, or a necromancer's soul bound to sea-foam bearing a driftwood staff... the ocean is a weird place, and produces weird monsters.

Feel free to put in a lighthouse or ship for scale, or some stick-figure people fleeing in terror. If it helps to label each of the creature's venomous tentacles, then by all means, do so. Just make it horrifying and watery.

Don't show it to the others just yet. Don't worry, you will soon!



Need inspiration for a horrible monster? Roll on any or all of the following charts, combining the results into a unique adversary!

d12	Nature of the Creature
1	Shark
2	Squid/Octopus
3	Angler Fish
4	Lobster/Crab
5	Eel
6	Turtle
7	Jellyfish
8	Humanoid/Merfolk
9	Whale
10	Sea Serpent
11	Animate Water
12	Frog/Toad

d6	Special Powers
1	Elemental Attacks
2	Scores of Minions
3	Ambush/Sneak Attacks
4	Uncanny Magic
5	Hostile Seas and Storms
6	Well-Defended Location

d8	Creature's Driving Goal
1	Mindless Destruction
2	Boundless Hunger
3	Take Over an Island
4	War with Humanity
5	Profit/Resources
6	Wicked Ritual
7	Revenge/Retaliation
8	Misguided Friendliness

d4	Size of the Creature
1	Island-Sized
2	Boat-Sized
3	Human-Sized
4	Tiny (but Swarming)

d10	Location of the Creature
1	A Small Farming Island
2	A Fleet of Pirate Ships
3	Continental Trade Ship
4	Lone Lighthouse
5	Remnant of a Sea Wall
6	Near Guildhall's Capitol
7	Uncharted Island
8	The Open Ocean
9	Your Very Own Ship
10	A Major City

GAMEPLAY:

The player closest to the ocean will be the first Monster Player.

Revealing the Monster

Monster Player, set the scene by which a watery monster arises, as you show the other players the picture you drew. This is a show-off moment... be grandiose. Have the monster destroy a building, obliterate a blockade, consume an entire island... set the scene for the Flintlock Society.

Fighting the Monster

The other players each get an opportunity to describe how their characters take on the monster. Players can go in any order, so long as everyone gets a chance to attack. (The current Monster Player's character is below decks right now doing, uh, bilging. Don't worry about them.)

To attack the monster, set the scene as your character approaches it. Then **roll the dice**, all six of them at once. Arrange them in number order, from low to high; if any of the dice have a matching value, discard the matches. In the unlikely situation that all of the dice match, leaving you with nothing at all, re-roll the entire set.

Use the dice to describe the action, as explained on the next page. Events happen in order, from low to high, which will effect how this action snapshot looks; often, the monster die will have the highest roll, meaning it gets the final hit. Sometimes, your weapon die will match something else and be removed, meaning you aren't actually able to get a strike in.

Example: I'm a former pirate with limited wind control and a damn fine cutlass, facing an aquatic humanoid... a Dankdweller. I roll my dice: the d4 gets 2, the d6 gets 6, the d8 gets 2, the d10 gets 4, the d12 gets 9, and the d20 gets 15. The d4 and d8 match, so I don't use the Weather or my Background. Putting them in order, the scene will have my Boon, the Ship, my Weapon, and the Monster acting. I narrate the scene:

"I race to the bow, and raise my hands to summon a gust of wind to knock the Dankdweller over. The wind pushes the ship forward, forcing us to ram into the Dankdweller's coral tower... in the chaos, as the tower shakes, it doesn't see me leap ashore and plunge my cutlass through its chest!" The Monster Player then adds: "The Dankdweller laughs its hideous, gurgling laugh... you didn't hit any of its hearts. With a shout, it uses its dark magic to direct the tower's crumbling coral pieces toward you, crushing you!"

If the wizard is still around next turn, I'll have to figure out how escape that trap.

* The d4 is the Weather. Heavy winds, a crash of lightning, an immense wave... something that knocks both you and the monster around, causing chaos.

* The d6 is the Ship. Your ship does something to get you into position... does it sail aside the monster, hang back and bathe it in cannon-fire, or narrowly evade a flailing tentacle? What does it do to get you into position?

* The d8 is your Background. The skills and knowledge you gained in your real life comes to your aid. If you were a pirate, you do something piratey, like swinging from the rigging. If you were a chef, you might defend yourself with a convenient cleaver. A naval officer might command an underling to fight bravely.

* The d10 is your Boon. You use the power that being bound to the ship has granted you, whether it's moving impossibly fast, summoning a storm, or phasing through the ship's hull.

* The d12 is your Weapon. This is when you actually make an impact on the monster drawing blood (or ichor, or whatever it has).

* The d20 is the Monster. For this die only, you **don't** get to describe what happens! The Monster Player describes the monster's response to your attack. Does it attempt to evade, lash back, take a hostage, or continue wreaking havoc without noticing your efforts?

The Monster Reacts

Once every player has had an opportunity to attack the monster, the Monster Player describes the outcome. If the monster didn't take many hits, have it redouble its efforts, and give the Flintlock Society another chance to take on the beast by playing another round. When it feels right, allow the monster to be defeated, either fleeing or dying outright... choose based on how the action went.

The player to the Monster Player's left gets to be the next Monster Player: days or weeks or months later, another monster has come to the surface, and the Flintlock Society is back in action. **Continue until everyone has had a chance to be the monster.**

If the sea has been cleared of eldritch beasts, bringing a temporary peace to the tiny archipelago nation of Guildhall, then **you have won!**

If not... well, have the players draw another group of monsters, and fight another round. That's what the Flintlock Society does, after all.

Flintlock

Name: _____

Ship Name: _____

Background: _____

Boon: _____

Weapon: _____

When you face the monster, roll all six dice. Put the dice in number order, discarding all matches, and describe the results.

- * D4: Weather
- * D6: Ship
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