DROWNED DEAD

BY VAIDENON OF HUSTAN, WARDEN OF THE INKHORN FELLOWSHIP

the Sea-Dead, Wreck-Walkers, the Bog-Dead

> "The sea keeps what it takes, and so does the millpond. This account is for those who must cross water at night, and for those who have lost someone to it and wonder where they are."
>
> — Vaidenon of Hustan, Warden of the Inkhorn Fellowship, Tashal, Morgat 720 TR

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Ghosts are disembodied souls that remain on Kethira after the death of their bodies (Ghosts 1). Those who die by water are more likely than most to linger. A drowned man's death is sudden, so he may not know that he is dead. His body is often never found, so no funeral is held. And the place where he died is water, which keeps what it takes. I have gathered here what I could learn of the drowned dead: the ghosts of the drowned, the revenants who walk the sea bed in their own sodden bodies, and the bog-dead of the fens.

THE WARDEN'S NOTE

I have sat with the families of men lost at sea in Thay and in Tashal's river-quarter, and I have learned that the kindest thing in this account is its last section, on laying the drowned to rest. Read that first. The rest is for the men who will go out after the bodies, and they should read it twice.

WHY THE DROWNED LINGER

A soul makes its death-journey best with the help of a funeral: the Passage of the Soul summons the god and gathers Piety from the mourners (Religion; Ghosts 1). Sailors lost at sea, fishermen taken by storms, and children who fall through river ice go without. Many become the **innocent dead**, who do not know they are dead (Ghosts 4). Others, murdered and sunk in ponds and wells, become **damned souls** or **revenants** bound to their wrongs (Ghosts 4). Ilvir's ethereal Ivashu and Morgath's agents both search the waters for such souls (Ghosts 1; Religion).

THE DROWNED (WATER GHOSTS)

A water ghost haunts within AUR × 5 feet of its death-site (Ghosts 2). At sea, its death-site is where its body lies. Ships passing over a reef where a wreck lies cross many haunts at once. The drowned manifest in the ways of all ghosts, with cold, sounds, smells, and apparitions (Ghosts 2), and in some ways of their own: wet footprints across a deck, water dripping from a dry ceiling, a bell under the waves, a pale light over the place where the body lies (the corpse-candle; see Will-o'-the-Wisp), and a hand closing on a swimmer's ankle.

WRECK-WALKERS

Any ghost may try to possess a body (Ghosts 1). A drowned revenant whose body lies whole in cold water sometimes enters it again. It then walks the sea bed, the harbour mud, or the bottom of the millpond in its own swollen corpse. Wreck-walkers are slow, cold, and tireless, and they cannot drown. They climb anchor cables at night, haunt the wrecks they died in, and seek the men who wronged them: the master who abandoned them, or the wrecker who lit the false light (Pilots' Almanac: Wreckers). A wreck-walker cut to pieces releases its ghost, which is then no less dangerous.

THE BOG-DEAD

Peat bogs preserve the dead. Skin turns to brown leather and bones soften, but the body remains, sometimes for a thousand years. In the Lost Years and after, some peoples of Hârn gave the condemned and the sacrificed to the fens, staked down with withies. *(Inkhorn)* Their souls, denied any passage, remained. A bog-dead is such a revenant in possession of its preserved body. It rises from the mire beneath anyone who wades or falls in, takes him by the legs, and draws him down. The bog-dead lie in the fens of the Anoth delta, the Kald and Thard valleys, the marshes about Lake Benath, and Kaldor's own fenlands, which I no longer cross on foot.

THE HOST OF NANDAR-TEM

The kingdom of Nandar-Tem lay between Hârn and Lythia in the Lost Years and sank beneath the waves after a great earthquake (Hârndex). Mariners crossing that water on still nights say they have heard bells under the keel and seen

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lights far below, and the oldest say a whole drowned people walks there still. The Fellowship leaves the host as legend, and as a gift to game masters; one who wants it real may use wreck-walkers in their hundreds, ruled by revenants who were once lords.

SENSES AND NATURE

Water ghosts perceive as all ghosts do, by Sensitivity (Ghosts 2). Wreck-walkers and bog-dead see and hear poorly through dead eyes and stopped ears. They find the living by their aura (Sensitivity at its ML, range AUR × 5 feet, Inkhorn). They feel no cold, need no breath, and do not tire.

NOT MORGATH'S

The drowned dead are ghosts, not morvrin. They have no Shadow of Bukrai and need no sacrifice (Morvrin). Morgathians nonetheless prize drowned corpses for making gulmorvrin (Morvrin 2), and a Morgathian cleric may be found at a wreck-site for that reason. Gulmorvrin are destroyed when slain (Morvrin 2); a wreck-walker's ghost goes on.

LAYING THE DROWNED

Most drowned can be laid to rest. Recovering the body and holding a Passage of the Soul over it usually suffices (Ghosts 1). The innocent dead must first be convinced that they are dead (Ghosts 4), sometimes by showing them their own body. Damned souls and revenants need what any ghost needs: a god who will accept them and the Piety to reach that god, or their mission fulfilled (Ghosts 1, 4). Burning a wreck-walker's or bog-dead's body ends the possession but not the ghost.

TREASURE

Wrecks hold cargo, coin, and arms. Salvaged assets become the property of the salvager under the Pilots' Almanac salvage customs, and the drowned may disagree. Bog-dead are often found with grave goods: torcs, brooches, and bronze blades of the Lost Years, valuable to collectors and to Earthmaster scholars (Inkhorn).

SPECIAL RULES

DROWNED MANIFESTATIONS (INKHORN)

Use the Ghosts 2–3 manifestation rules. The drowned add these manifestations to the Columbia list:

DROWNED MANIFESTATION	INTENSITY
Wet footprints, dripping	2
Cold water (a sudden chill in the water)	2
Corpse-candle (an ethereal light over the body)	3
Drowned bell or voice (sound)	3
Drag (as Shove, in water)	5

Drag: a subject who resists with a MF or CF makes a Swimming roll at −20 or sinks for a minute (Skills 10).

POSSESSION OF THE CORPSE (INKHORN)

A revenant may possess its own body if it lies whole within its haunt: Mental Conflict against the body's residual aura (treat it as AUR 5). If it succeeds, the corpse rises with the stats below. The possessed body has no fatigue and no shock (as zombies, Inkhorn), does not need air, and is destroyed when its injury levels exceed END. The ghost then returns to the ethereal and can possess the body again only if it is still whole.

MIRE GRIP (INKHORN)

A bog-dead that grapples someone in a mire draws him down. The victim rolls AGL × 3 each round to keep his head up; failing that, he is under (Skills 10: breath for END × 10 seconds). Companions can pull him free with a combined STR roll against the bog-dead's STR × 5.

RELIGIOUS VIEWS

- Every church holds Passage of the Soul and will lay a drowned soul that has a body to bury (Religion).
- Sarajin: Ivinians believe the drowned of a sea-battle go to Talagaad if they died sword in hand; the rest wait for Njehu (Inkhorn).
- Ilvir: Ilvirans say Ilvir's lanterns (see Will-o'-the-Wisp) gather the drowned, and that this is a mercy (Inkhorn).
- Morgath: Morgathians collect drowned corpses for gulmorvrin and hunt drowned souls for Bukrai (Ghosts 1; Morvrin).
- Naveh: Navehans sink their own betrayers in deep water, so that they cannot be found or laid (Inkhorn).

FOLK TALES

The Bells of Nandar-Tem

Old pilots of the Indatha Straits say that on still nights in Morgat you can hear bells ringing under the keel. A ship that answers with its own bell will be followed home, and its crew will hear knocking on the hull all winter.

The Ferryman's Wife

A ferryman drowned his wife in the millpond and told the reeve she had run off. Every night after, his ferry came in wet to the gunwales, though the river was calm. On the first night of winter they found him drowned in the pond, with weed knotted round his wrists like a woman's hands.

The Bog-Bride

Peat-cutters found a woman in the moss, brown as old leather, with a rope about her neck and a bronze torc on her breast. They took the torc and buried her in the churchyard.

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Every peat-cutter who touched the torc has since drowned in the fen (Inkhorn tale).

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A ship comes into port with every man aboard but none alive. Its log ends on the night it crossed the Nandar-Tem water.
- A salvage crew needs guards at a wreck in the Indatha Straits; the wreck is not empty.
- A peat-cutter has dug up a staked, leather-skinned body with a gold torc. The lord wants the torc; the village wants the stake put back.
- A drowned girl appears at her mother's door every night, dripping. She does not know she is dead.

ENCOUNTERS

Ethereals (Campaign 14, subtable 16): Shade/Ghost/Astral Entity. The Fellowship proposes that a result of "Shade/Ghost on or beside water" be resolved on this table:

D100	RESULT
01–50	Drowned ghost (innocent dead 60%, damned soul 30%, revenant 10%)
51–80	Other ghost (Ghosts)
81–00	Wreck-walker (1d3; at night, near a wreck)

Pilots' Almanac "Sea Monster (?)" 00: 01–70 Aquatics monster, 71–90 wreck-walkers (1d6, at night, near reefs), 91–00 the lights of Nandar-Tem (an omen). Ethereals "Possessed Entity/Golem/Zombie" in fen or marsh: a bog-dead.

RUMOURS

RUMOUR	TRUTH	WHERE
A wreck off the point is haunted; the drowned climb the anchor cables at night.	open	Indatha Straits, Gulf of Ederwyn, any reef coast
Bells ring under the sea where Nandar-Tem drowned.	open	Melderyn, Kanday, Orbaal ports
Peat-cutters found a body in the moss that was a thousand years old, and it moved.	partly	Kaldor, the Thard and Kald fens

ECONOMIC DATA

ITEM	PRICE	SOURCE
Grave goods of a bog-dead (torc, brooch, bronze blade)	2d6 × 20d each	Inkhorn
Wreck salvage	varies; salvage customs, Pilots' Almanac	Columbia

THE FELLOWSHIP'S ADDITIONS

- Wreck-walkers (possession of the corpse) and the bog-dead as kinds of revenant
- The drowned manifestations, including Drag, and Mire Grip
- Distribution, the Nandar-Tem legend as a hook, tales, and the encounter additions

Everything else follows HârnMaster 3 and the Columbia Games articles cited, which the Fellowship commends to every reader.

CREDITS

Writer: Vaidenon of Hustan. Set down by Lesli of Bifel and his homunculus, Claudin.

Sources cited: Columbia Games' *Bestiary* (Ghosts; Morvrin), *Religion* (#4401: the Passage of the Soul; Sarajin; Ilvir; Morgath; Naveh), *Pilots' Almanac* (wreckers and salvage), *Hârndex* (Nandar-Tem) and the HârnMaster 3 core rules (Skills 10; Campaign 14 encounters); Will-o'-the-Wisp, in this Physiologus.

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STAT BLOCKS

DROWNED (WATER GHOST)

Habitat: Death-site in water
Diet: None
Lifespan: Until laid
Group: Solitary or a crew

ATTRIBUTES

• Str	• Eye	11 Int	20 Move
• Sta	• Hrg	13 Aur	
• Dex	• Sml	13 Wil	
• Agl			

SKILLS

65 Initiative	65 Dodge
60 Manifestation	55 Mental Conflict
65 Telepathy	65 Sensitivity

ARMOUR

None (ethereal)

STRIKE LOCATIONS

None while ethereal. Only enchanted weapons, magic, psionics, and divine intervention affect it (Religion 17).

- As a damned soul or innocent dead (Ghosts 4), with the drowned manifestations.
- Haunts within AUR × 5 feet of its death-site (Ghosts 2).
- Can possess its own whole body: see Wreck-Walker.

BOG-DEAD

Habitat: Peat bogs, fens
Height: 5′ 4″
Weight: 90 lb
Diet: None
Lifespan: Centuries
Group: Solitary; sometimes a few
Size: Medium/d6

ATTRIBUTES

13 Str	06 Eye	09 Int	15 End
15 Sta	08 Hrg	12 Aur	06 Mov
05 Dex	10 Sml	16 Wil	06 Swim
05 Agl			

SKILLS

35 Initiative	25 Dodge
45 Awareness	70 Stealth[1]
60 Mental Conflict	50 Manifestation
60 Sensitivity	

50 Grapple 4b *(squeeze; Mire Grip)*
[1] Stealth: in the mire

ARMOUR

B4 E3 P3 F6 GAC 1

STRIKE LOCATIONS

Use standard strike location tables (Combat; as Lycanthropes and the Ivashu with humanoid tables).

- Moves through mire and peat water as on firm ground.
- No fatigue, no shock, no breath; destroyed when injury levels exceed END (Inkhorn).
- A withy stake through the body pins it while the stake stands.

WRECK-WALKER

Habitat: Wrecks, harbours, sea bed
Height: 5′ 8″
Weight: 200 lb (sodden)
Diet: None
Lifespan: Until laid
Group: 1d6
Size: Medium/d6

ATTRIBUTES

12 Str	08 Eye	11 Int	13 End
12 Sta	08 Hrg	13 Aur	08 Mov
06 Dex	06 Sml	15 Wil	04 Swim
06 Agl			

SKILLS

40 Initiative	30 Dodge
40 Awareness	50 Stealth[1]
65 Mental Conflict	55 Manifestation
65 Sensitivity	

45 Unarmed 3b *(grapple; drags under)*
45 Club 4b *(belaying pin, or weapons as in life)*
[1] Stealth: under water

ARMOUR

B3 E1 P1 F5 GAC 0

STRIKE LOCATIONS

Use standard strike location tables (Combat; as Lycanthropes and the Ivashu with humanoid tables).

- No fatigue, no shock, no breath; destroyed when injury levels exceed END; the ghost then goes free (Inkhorn, as CR-49).
- Walks the bottom; does not swim well.
- Laid by recovering the body and Passage of the Soul.

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