SELKIE

BY VAIDENON OF HUSTAN, WARDEN OF THE INKHORN FELLOWSHIP

the Wereseal, Seal-Wife, Njehu's Kin

> "The seal-wife of the old songs leaves her husband for the sea. The selkie of the sealing coasts takes the husband with her. I have heard both told, and I know which one the sealers believe."
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> — Vaidenon of Hustan, Warden of the Inkhorn Fellowship, Tashal, Morgat 720 TR

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Lycanthropes are people cursed to change, against their will and usually at the full moon, into a creature half human and half beast. Besides the werewolf, werebear and werecat, Columbia Games' *Lycanthropes* allows for "other" strains (Lycanthropes 3). The Fellowship holds that the selkie, or wereseal, is the strain of the northern coasts. *(Inkhorn)* Its victims are drowned, not mauled, and its human form is drawn all its life to the sea.

Everything *Lycanthropes* says of lycanthropy holds for the selkie: the disease, its spread, the transformation, Yael's pull, the second profile, healing and remedies (Lycanthropes 1–3). I will not repeat what that article tells so well. This account gives only what is peculiar to the strain.

THE WARDEN'S NOTE

I sat a night with a sealer's widow at Arathel who swore her husband came home every Yaelah for a year after he was lost on the ice, and scratched at the door, and that she never opened it. Her son has fine webs between his fingers. She has never let him near a boat, and he has never asked.

ORIGIN

Ivinian skalds tell it this way, after the legend of Jarlak in *Lycanthropes* (Lycanthropes 1). *(Inkhorn)*

And Njehu, Lord of Whales, was much grieved by the cruel ways of the sealers of Skivaal's Bight, who clubbed the white pups on the ice before their mothers' eyes. He laid a curse on Hroald the Sealer, that he should become seal and know the club. But Sarajin would not have a son of Ivinia so shamed, and bade that Hroald be seal only under Yaelah, and that he might drown his enemies in the sea he loved. And so it is; and the curse passes by the bite.

In truth, lycanthropy is a rare disease that probably came from Yashain (Lycanthropes 1). The selkie strain spreads along sealing coasts. Sealers are bitten more than any other folk, and infected seals carry it without changing (Lycanthropes 3). A few selkies are made by Morivian Skins of seal hide (Treasure 20); these are the true "seal-skins" of the old songs, which let the wearer put on the seal at will. *(Inkhorn)*

THE SEAL FORM

The selkie is a hybrid: a heavy, sleek-furred body, longer than a man's, with a bullet-shaped seal head, a mouth of conical teeth, and arms that end in flippered, black-clawed hands. Its legs are fused nearly to the knee, and it moves ashore with a lurching, sliding gait (MOV 5). In the water it is a seal, fast and graceful. Its eyes are large and dark and, men say, still human.

PECULIARITIES OF THE STRAIN

The sea-call. Besides Yael's pull (Lycanthropes 3), a selkie in sea water at night on the three nights of Yaelah changes even when awake unless it passes the 3d6 WIL test for that hour. Selkies therefore drown men in the shallows of harbours as well as on lonely beaches.

The drowner. A selkie's bloodlust (Lycanthropes 1) takes the form of drowning. It hunts solitary folk on beaches, sealers on the ice, and men in small boats at anchor, drags them into the sea, holds them under (Pulled Under, Fish, Inkhorn), and then savages the body. Victims wash ashore drowned and bitten.

The sea-longing. In human form, the afflicted are restless away from the coast. They take work as fishermen, sealers, and seamen; they are excellent swimmers (Swimming +10 in human form, Inkhorn). They are rarely found more than a day from salt water. Some families have the seal-curse in

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the mother's line (Lycanthropes 3, Hereditary); their children are born with fine webs between the fingers.

Salt. Unlike werewolves (Lycanthropes 4), selkies have no aversion to salt. A village that tests a suspect with salt learns nothing.

DISTRIBUTION

Where seals are hunted, selkies follow. They are known on the coasts of Orbaal, where Arathel, Geldeheim, Keiren, and Sherwyn are sealing centres (Seals 3); in the Ivinian kingdoms, especially Menglana and its sealing thrans Inlevik and Wulfenheim and the whelping grounds of Skivaal's Bight (Seals 3); on the Balakas Islands and the Afarezirs; and among the sealing tribes of northern Hârn (Seals 3). A few reach the Gulf of Ederwyn with the Chymak seal hunts and Rethemi sealers (Inkhorn).

FIGHTING SELKIES

As other lycanthropes, a selkie heals one injury level per wound each combat turn unless wounded by an enchanted weapon or by magic; Peleahn spells do double damage; ordinary fire keeps it at bay; and it flees if badly wounded (Lycanthropes 2). Slain, it becomes its dead human self within a minute. On land it is slow and awkward. Wise sealers drive a suspected selkie away from the water and fight it with torches.

SPECIAL RULES

CONTAGION AND TRANSFORMATION

How the disease is caught, how Yael's pull works and how long the change lasts are given in Columbia Games' *Lycanthropes* (Lycanthropes 2–3). A selkie follows them exactly, except as below.

SEA-CALL (INKHORN)

In sea water at night on any of the three nights of Yaelah: the 3d6 WIL test above, each hour, even when awake.

DROWNER (INKHORN)

Drag (a grapple) in water deeper than the victim's height: see Pulled Under (Fish). On land, a selkie drags a grappled victim towards the water at MOV 5.

SECOND PROFILE

Build the seal form from the character's own attributes with the modifiers below; the stat block is for an average specimen (11 in every human attribute), as Lycanthropes 3–4. The Seal-Form Modifiers table is printed beside the stat block.

RELIGIOUS VIEWS

- For each church's view of lycanthropes, see Lycanthropes 2.
- Sarajin: Ivinians call selkies Njehu's Kin, divinely touched but with no place among men; killing one at sea is said to bring a storm (Inkhorn).
- Peoni: the Irreproachable Order collects selkie cases with its other lycanthropy lore (Lycanthropes 2).

FOLK TALES

The Widow of Keiren

A sealer's widow of Keiren swims in the cold harbour on the nights of the full moon and says it eases her grief. Three of the sealers who left her husband to drown on the ice have since been found drowned and bitten in that harbour. No one has asked her about it.

The Seal-Skin of Inlevik

A young Menglanan found a sealskin on the shore at Inlevik that was warm to the touch, and he put it on. His clan hunted the great grey seal that came to the shore every full moon after, and when they killed it, it was him. The skin was never found (Morivian Skin; Inkhorn tale).

Webbed Hands

In northern Orbaal they say a child born with webbed fingers will be lucky at sea. They also say the webs must be cut before the child is a year old, and no one will say why.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A sealing expedition out of Thay loses a man every full moon. The killer is the cheerful young harpooner who joined at the last port.
- A PC is bitten by a seal while sealing (Animal Transmission, Lycanthropes 3) and begins to dream of the sea.
- A Peonian of the Irreproachable Order asks the PCs to capture, not kill, a selkie on the Balakas Islands; the islanders want it dead.
- A merchant offers a "selkie skin" (a Morivian Skin) to a rich buyer as a curiosity.

ENCOUNTERS

lycanthrope type (Lycanthropes 3), 91–00 Other. The Fellowship proposes that a result of "Other" be resolved on this table:

D100	RESULT
01–40	Selkie (wereseal): coastal realms and northern Hârn only; else roll below
41–70	Wererat (towns)
71–00	Wereboar (forest)

Aquatics "Seal/Sea Lion/Walrus" on a Yaelah night in northern waters (Itikir, Ivae, the Orbaal coast): 1 in 20 a selkie hunts among them.

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RUMOURS

RUMOUR	TRUTH	WHERE
Sealers keep dying at the full moon off the Orbaal coast, drowned and bitten.	true	Orbaal (Arathel, Geldeheim, Keiren, Sherwyn)
If you find a sealskin on the beach, burn it.	partly	Ivinia, Orbaal
A selkie cannot abide salt.	false	anywhere coastal

ECONOMIC DATA

ITEM	PRICE	SOURCE
Morivian Skin (seal)	artifact; see Treasure 20	Columbia
Sealskin (ordinary)	24–30d each	Seals 4

THE FELLOWSHIP'S ADDITIONS

- The selkie strain itself: the legend, the sea-call, drowning, sea-longing, no salt aversion, and the seal-form modifiers
- Distribution, tales, and the subdivision of "Other" on the lycanthrope type table

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' *Lycanthropes* (Bestiary #4637), *Seals* (#4623), *Ivinia*, *Menglana*, *Orbaal*, *Religion* (#4401: Njehu; Sarajin) and the HârnMaster 3 core rules (Skills 10; Treasure 20: Morivian Skins); Lycanthropes and Fish, in this Physiologus.

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STAT BLOCKS

SELKIE (SEAL FORM)

Habitat: Northern coasts
Height: 6′ 0″
Weight: 240 lb
Diet: Carnivore
Lifespan: As human
Group: Solitary
Size: Medium/d6

ATTRIBUTES

16 Str	14 Eye	11 Int	15 End
15 Sta	15 Hrg	11 Aur	05 Mov
06 Dex	18 Sml	13 Wil	22 Swim
08 Agl*			

**Agl 17 in water*

SKILLS

65/75 Initiative	60/90 Dodge
80 Awareness	65 Stealth[1]
65 Tracking	95 Swimming
60 Drag[1]	

75 Bite 7p *(infectious)*
55 Flipper 5b
[1] Stealth: 85 in water; Drag: grapple; Pulled Under
Second figures are in water.

ARMOUR

B5 E3 P2 F4 GAC 1

STRIKE LOCATIONS

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

- Intimidate: forces opponents to test Initiative (Combat 18; Lycanthropes 4).
- Healing: one injury level per wound per combat turn unless from enchanted weapons or magic; Peleahn spells double (Lycanthropes 2).
- Infectious bite: END × 1 per bite wound.
- Values for an average specimen; build from the human form with the modifiers.

SEAL-FORM MODIFIERS

Add these to the character's own attributes and skills to build the second profile (Lycanthropes 3). The GM may vary them.

ATTRIBUTE/SKILL	SELKIE (SEAL FORM)
Str	+5
Sta	+4
Dex	−5
Agl	−3 (in water +6)
Eye	+3
Hrg	+4
Sml	+7
Int	+0
Aur	+0
Wil	+2
End	+3
Mov	−6 (Swim 22)
Initiative	+10 (+20 in water)
Dodge	+5 (+35 in water)
Awareness	+25
Stealth	+10 (+30 in water)
Tracking	+10
Swimming	+50 (max 95)
Jumping	−30

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