
Any Port in a Storm

by Robert Douglas

An Entry in the 2013 Windhammer Prize for
Short Gamebook Fiction

ANY PORT IN A STORM

ADVENTURE SHEET

Character Background:

Drama Student

Boxer

Wrestler

Dexterity:

Strength:

Notes and Items:

Enemy Encounters

Combat Ratio:
Enemy Strength:

Combat Ratio:
Enemy Strength:

Combat Ratio:
Enemy Strength:

Combat Ratio:
Enemy Strength:

Combat Ratio:
Enemy Strength:

Combat Ratio:
Enemy Strength:

Your Character

You must first determine your character background that will have some bearing on the adventure ahead. Choose from *one* from the three listed below and note down the pre-determined attribute scores:

Drama Student – Both an outgoing personality and your keen interest in the academic arts have led to an acting vocation. Besides improving your confidence, it has also developed your peoples skills, linguistic talent, assertiveness, and a certain flair for persuasion when necessary.

Dexterity: 4

Strength: 22

Boxer – Having fought twenty lightweight bouts (and lost only three) you've achieved something of a professional reputation within the ring. Years of training have developed your muscle tone and sharpened reflexes. As an experienced fighter, you won't back down so easily in a scuffle.

Dexterity: 7

Strength: 28

Wrestler – You've put your body through a disciplined weight-lifting regimen and, over the years, learned most of the ingenious moves during tumbles within the wrestling ring. Your muscular physique can endure take a lot of punishment before (hopefully) you emerge victorious.

Dexterity: 6

Strength: 36

Combat

In this adventure, occasionally you'll come across hostile people. To survive such close quarter encounters, a favourable combat ratio and/or die roll is therefore desirable, while finding some kind of weapon will also prove advantageous. You must resolve such fights in the following way:

Calculate the *combat ratio* – for example, if your Dexterity is 6 and your opponent's 5, in this case it would be +1. Once having determined the combat ratio, roll one die and cross-reference this with the relevant combat ratio column. Again, for example, if you rolled a '5', +1 cross-referenced with row '5' = 3ES, so deduct 3 from the Enemy Strength. Consult the table below when conducting combat:

Die Roll	-3 (or less)	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3 (or higher)
1	ID	A3S	A3S	A2S	A2S	A1S	A1S
2	A4S	A3S	A2S	A1S	A1S	0S	E1S
3	A3S	A2S	A1S	0S	0S	E1S	E2S
4	A2S	A1S	0S	0S	E1S	E2S	E3S
5	A1S	0S	E1S	E1S	E2S	E3S	E4S
6	E1S	E1S	E2S	E2S	E3S	E3S	IK

Key: A = Alex, E=Enemy, S=Strength points, SD=Instant Death, IK=Instant Kill

Notes and Items

Throughout your perilous journey, you may discover curious objects and valuable information – both of which will prove essential to your survival. Write down all that you find, also recording any changes to your character scores, on the adventure sheet located at the beginning of this gamebook. It might also be worthwhile your mapping the treacherous island, in particular noting down enemy encounters, places of interest, and where aid can be found; it will require more than one attempt to survive this evil nightmare – so, if you dare, continue...

...*Into the Storm!*

Blown off-course by a sudden squall, now a raging tempest transforms the ocean into seven foot waves which mercilessly thrash the *Moonrunner*. You can barely see anything through the relentless spray, struggle to keep your feet on the turbulent deck - yet somehow endeavour to keep yourselves afloat in this maelstrom.

"Light to port-side!" Nick bellows above the roar.

"Where on earth are we?"

"Who cares, Alex!" Tess grins, pale, weary face regaining some of its beauty. "It's land - all that matters right now!"

"Yeah," you nod, "okay."

Decision unanimous - although there's really little choice - Nick pulls on the sail; *Moonrunner* painfully edges closer and closer. Now, even in this foul night of slashing rain, you can barely make out the familiar shape of a lighthouse. Yet the sheer relief of reaching salvation blinds you to the unnatural eerie glow from its beacon...

After what seems an eternity, you gain the jetty, tie off the sailing boat, then scramble ashore. However, that strange light has suddenly disappeared - and all the stone houses here are dark, silent, locked. Of course, nobody in their right mind would be around at this ungodly hour on such a terrible night. You reckon they must be fast asleep, unable to hear your frantic banging over the howling storm.

A sudden tug at your arm: Nick's found an unlocked outhouse. At least now you'll be able to shelter from the wind and rain, if not the perishing cold. The three of you sit there, huddled, frozen limbs and gloomy thoughts put a damper on any light-hearted conversation. Tess is particularly miserable but makes a valiant effort not to show it. "W-well..." she manages a grin through chattering teeth, "our chances of winning...the B-black Pearl trophy has g-gone for a...b-burton!"

Nick, her fiancé, at once recognises such humoured bravado as an attempt to raise flagging spirits, affectionately hugs her close. "Don't worry, hon," he pecks her cheek, "won't be long now 'til someone wakes up - say, Alex, what time is it?"

"Er...4:30, just gone."

By your waterproof, it's really only four minutes short of 2am, but you don't want to tell poor, shivering Tess that: there's such a thing as a 'white lie' in your book.

"Brill!" Nick's smile broadens and he rubs her shoulder in reassurance. "Not long to go then, eh?"

You try to settle on the hard earthen floor. "In the meantime I don't think it would hurt to grab some shut-eye..."

You awaken to someone prodding you with a hiker's cane. "What's this, what's this?" fusses an aged voice. "Trespassers, eh? Thieves, perhaps?"

"Wha-? Oh, God, sorry we...!"

"Heh, heh, heh, dorn't worry yeself, laddie. Ye bort - bonnie wee thing - there fer all yon port tae see."

"Moonrunner...right. Thank God she's safe - after that nightmare of a storm!"

"Aye, indeed a blessin', laddie. By the ware, nam's Roy," he offers a gnarled hand with a toothy grin. "Or 'Rob' Roy as they nicknam mae hereabouts. Heh, heh, we all must have oor fun, aye?"

"Right..." you agree nervously.

"Ah, an' I see thorse two sleeping booties yonder still snoring their bonnie heads off. Well, best not disturb them...but what *ye* say to a wee dram?"

Whiskey's not quite your thing, yet to refuse him would be downright rude. Besides, you haven't got any other plans and you want to let Nick and an exhausted Tess rest a bit longer.

Roy follows your gaze, nods understanding. "Aye, dorn't ye worry boot yer friends. We'll cam back out inna wee while, see hoo they're dooin'..."

-1-

Venturing outside, both the daylight and morning calm stun you for a brief moment – it's almost as if the previous night had been nothing more than a bad dream. Yet huge, knee-deep puddles and several broken branches are clear evidence to the storm's passing. Mud squelches beneath your feet soaked by water as you follow 'Rob' Roy to his cottage. It is only then that something odd intrudes on your sluggish thoughts: for the Pacific, these buildings seem very Scottish in origin....

"Roy," you can't help but ask, "this may sound a daft question but: where are we?"

"Ah, this blessed colony of oors is Noo Strathbeg."

"New Strathbeg...?"

"Aye, Pappy an' morst o' the croo hailed fram around the Loch of Strathbeg. They founded the place."

"Hmm, sorry to say but I've never heard of this place. Do you get many visitors?"

"Laird Hay's beard, laddie, nor! Noo Strathbeg is...cut oof fram the outside world...ach, wherre is that confooded key? Aha," he brandishes the iron key in triumph, "A've strook gold! Heh, heh, as Pappy oosed to sare!"

The cottage interior is like stepping back in time. The décor reminds you of mid-Victorian times. There doesn't seem to be a radio, no television, not even a telephone – so to expect an internet connection would be *too* hopeful. By now, the Black Pearl organisers will be concerned at the lack of your EPS signal on their computer system. You've a compass and charts so getting back to civilization shouldn't be a real problem – still, for the time being, there's nothing else to do but make yourself comfortable. Roy lights an old gas lamp while you sit in a rickety rocking chair. He regards you with some interest. "Yer knor," he says, "oor once jorlly place 'as fallen on hard times, laddie. The fork 'ere need...soostenance."

You frown at this last word, barely a whisper – and you've trouble understanding his broad accent as it is! "Pardon?"

"Ooh, Ah meant 'excitement'. Aye, almost same as 'soostenance'!" he cackles. "Whiskey to yoor taste, laddie?"

Truthfully, you don't like whiskey at all; drinking it might actually cause you to splutter or pull a tell-tale face. But, will you make a great effort to sample it (75), or simply *pretend* to drink it (37)?

-2-

Despite their being Immortal, these two can still feel pain. Without hesitation, you bring the gun up, pull the trigger. First shot is lucky, taking Richie between the eyes, and the second catches Peter in his shoulder, its force spins him around. Before he can recover, both you and Tess pounce, pummel, and kick him senseless. You can now reach the doors ahead. However, even with the Elders' demise along with their loss of control over the Lichs, those villagers outside still pose an armed and deadly threat. One which you simply can't fight through; your only hope is if you've made certain acquaintances during your adventure...have you noted down any 'LICH' words? If so, rearrange them to make sense and follow those instructions. If the words or resulting reference make no sense, turn to 92.

-3-

The sniper doesn't make the same mistake twice. He focuses on your struggling, limping form, concentrates, then squeezes the trigger. The bullet punches into your arm with the force of a mule kick – and this time you don't get up.

"Get 'im!" snarls a voice from the hill. "Ah'm gan after the lassie!"

Rough hands seize you, dragging you off to meet the Elders. Unfortunately, you survive the journey and bear witness to your own life-force sucked out your body – which then becomes an undead Lich enslaved to the Elders' whim. Right to the very end, you hope Tess made it to the yacht and escaped, but now you'll be one of many victims ordered to track her down...

-4-

Cautiously, with heart pounding and bated breath, you turn the door handle. The door opens into what appears to be some kind of workshop. The presence of an antiquated aga in one corner – now used as a workbench – betrays this used to be a kitchen. *Hang on, you frown, so where IS the kitchen? Front room, cellar, living room...don't tell me they put one somewhere upstairs!* Still, these folk are perhaps eccentric besides evil? Machine components are strewn about, broken down to spare parts, and some lie arranged neatly as if the engineer was examining how it worked. In one cupboard, you discover a polished beechwood box that seems to be locked. There are words beautifully engraved: *'Awarded to Cpt. Alistair Harding for 20 years in Her Majesty's service, 9th June, 1882.'* Gently, you shake the box, but there's no tell-tale rattle.

"What on earth could it be?"

"Whatever it is," you reply, "it must be valuable."

If you want to take this, be sure to note the date and year alongside it. There doesn't seem to be anything else of practical interest, so you leave and head for the front door. Turn to 30.

-5-

You and Tess run full-pelt into the trees, splash across a narrow stream, then climb the gentle bank, finally taking cover in the hollow of a large, outlandish tree. The sounds of pursuit get closer – then stop about thirty yards away.

"What's wrong wi' the hoonds?" snarls a frustrated villager.

"Not sure. Ah think wae lorst them."

"Lucifer's tongue!" he shouts. "Hoo are wae going tae find them innae this?"

"We dorn't. Let's hid back tae Strathie."

Your heartbeat slows with the sound of their footsteps fading away. The pair of you breathe a sigh of relief. Still, it's best to be cautious and wait a little longer, just in case they're lying in wait for you to emerge from hiding. It's an old trick the Gestapo used when rounding up unfortunate fugitives. However, it all seems clear, so you both continue northwards through the trees (turn to 47).

-6-

The ghost's eyes blaze with recognition of the precious ring upon your palm. "Lizzie," it whispers, "mae Lizzie. Tell mae, pilgrim, how ye came by this."

You describe your meeting with Lizzie and everything she told you. William Graham's cheeks glisten with tears, yet the slightest flicker of a smile passes his lips – most likely the first since his wretched spirit departed the flesh.

"Even after all this time," Graham wonders, "my wee lassie, she still thinks of mae. I thought her truly lorst, and yet..." Then, his face contorts with anger, hands bunch into fists. "And yet mae 'kin', mae flock who turned their backs on God noo coerce mae beloved! NO MORE! This evil curse ends noo!"

So saying, he lays a spectral hand over your fleshly palm holding the ring. It vibrates, seems to grow colder. Then, Graham steps back, points down to the treacherous rocks and crashing waves below.

"Yonder ah was thrown tae a watery grave," he explains, "fated tae a martyr's death. But rather than betray mae Laird God and redeemer! I begged God's forgiveness for mae failure and promised mae sool and spirit would linger, waiting fer the day when a saviour may come. Noo that day has come. But, as a mortal, ye'll be hard-pressed tae endure the hellish trials ahead. Mae bones still lie upon the sea floor, aye, weighted doon by the church bell. Mae Lizzie's ring was one of a pair, its twin still rests on mae finger – an' the two will glow when brought together. Seek the iron key within mae jacket, recover this, hid fer the church, then locate a wooden chest concealed within the storn altar."

"What's in the chest?"

"Find it!" Reverend Graham ignores your question. "And orpen it. What lies within, oos well 'gainst the evil infesting this island. Deliver oos all from an eternity of damnation!"

With that, William Graham fades from sight.

"I-I don't believe it," gasps Tess. "Those villagers...a pact with Satan? Immortality?"

"Yeah...but it does explain what happened back in the cellar. We didn't kill those men - simply: they *can't* die!"

"Well, now what?"

"Do as the good Reverend says. What else?"

She shakes her head. "Alex, that's suicide! Just look at those gigantic waves, those rocks...!"

"Yeah, don't remind me. I'm going to jump, dive, and rely on this," you wag the finger wearing Lizzie's ring, "to find that key. I have to do this, Tess - that chest, and whatever is inside, is essential to our survival."

"Oh God," she hugs you tight, "just be *careful*, Alex!"

Although a strong swimmer, those powerful waves and surging current require a tremendous amount of Strength....Roll five dice - if you are a Wrestler reduce this result by 2, but if you're a Boxer reduce it by 4. Now, if the total result is the same or less than your current Strength turn to **60**. If it is higher turn to **98**.

-7-

If you can overpower Richie with minimal fuss, his kinsmen would remain oblivious to your rescue attempt. However, your foot comes in contact with a stone that clatters deafeningly in the night air. Your heart stops, blood freezes. Richie whirls round, rifle pointed at your chest, bearded face twisted in a sneer. *That's torn it!* Without thinking, you rush headlong into him, wrestle for control of the gun...which accidentally goes off - well, the others will be alerted to your rescue attempt now! You must deal with Richie before you can enter the building:

Richie:

Dexterity 5 Strength 9

If you defeat him, turn to **84**.

-8-

This is a most exhausting trial of endurance that tests your aching limbs to their limit. Finally, somehow, you manage to haul yourself over the top, lie on your back letting the cold air blow over your sweat-streaked body, enjoying the moment of simply doing nothing.

"Alex, thank God you're safe!" an agitated Tess comes rushing over. "Did you get it?"

You nod. It requires great effort to lift your clenched hand, open it, revealing the key. She claps delightedly. "Now..." you catch your breath, "...we need to get back to the church and find that chest." Turn to **39**.

-9-

"Alex, where on earth are we going now?"

"There was something in Roy's study that mentioned a cave...Brimstone Cave, that's it! We should be able to take cover there."

"Brimstone? As in 'fire and brimstone'?"

"Yeah, I know: doesn't sound very inviting, eh? But we might find cover from those crazy villagers, give us time to rest and plan our next move."

The journey there proves a laborious one, the is ground strewn with slippery boulders and a curious bright orange seaweed constantly tripping you up. Towards the end, both of you are sweating

profusely despite the chill wind. One way to cool down is by plunging into the icy-cold water – which you'll have to do as the cave entrance is half-submerged by the incoming tide. Both being strong swimmers, you manage to reach and grab a ledge, haul yourselves up, exhausted and soon shivering.

"C-can't hang...a-around here...t-too l-long," you gasp through chattering teeth. "W-we'll get...pneumonia!"

"Y-yeah," is all she can say for now.

You rest for five minutes before forcing yourselves to move. "Crazy idea of yours, Alex," she sighs.

"Yeah, I agree. Still...better than getting shot at." *Only slightly!* your own mind growls. "Crikey, still quite worn out from that long swim. Best we rest up a bit longer before tackling the cave mouth..."

Tess offers a brave smile in reply. *God, you admire, she's a tough beauty.* After what's happened to Nick, after all she's been through, she's still hopeful, optimistic, refusing to allow the dreadful disease of despair from setting in and seizing up her motivation. Instead, her good nature basks in your daft humour – even the dark humour – that one normal, familiar thing in all this nightmare she can cling to, shield against the darkness of terror and uncertainty...

"Who are you?"

"Wha-?" you jolt awake to find a row-boat now parallel with the ledge. The dark-haired woman is of sturdy stock. In her muscular arms is an AK47 – pointed at you.

"Oh God," groans Tess. "Alex, they've found us-!"

But then, to your amazement, she lowers the gun and frowns. "Wait...you're not Immortals! Who are you? How did you get here? No – forgive me – it would be better for us to head inside, where it's warm. You poor people must be cold to the bone! Here, young lady, give me your hand."

Tess hesitates, then looks at you for guidance, you simply nod and give a reassuring smile. She complies, clasping the outstretched hand and jumps aboard the boat. You follow more readily; if the mysterious woman had meant you harm she could easily have overpowered you both while you slept, bundled like two chickens for the pot, and rowed back to New Strathbeg. Anyway, there isn't much more choice other than to trust and accept her invitation – you haven't anywhere else to go, nor many answers to your plight. But perhaps your mysterious host could help with *both* issues?

Turn to 69.

-10-

At twenty yards, the unknown person catches sight of you and gathers pace, eager to reach you. "Are you hurt?" Tess shouts above the wind. No reply comes forth yet still the humanoid jerks on in your direction. "Please, wait there, we'll come to...!"

By now you recognise the man's features...*Nick!* But such immense relief is short-lived, for his skin is sallow and taut over cheek-bones. Your friend was of a healthy, athletic stock – but now his limbs appear dreadfully thin. He's only been missing a day, yet poor Nick's body gives the impression he's been starved for two to three weeks. Impossible! Your mind shouts. And starvation doesn't cause erratic, twitching movements. Clearly, there's something very wrong here....

Tess screams, she cannot help but stare aghast at her fiancé. Finally, after what seems an eternity, she gasps through tears, "Nick...Oh God, wha-what have they done to you?"

"Tess..." he rasps – then snarls, "Undeath to all who venture here...! Grrrr, no, NO!" Nick clutches at his head with gnarled claws. "I-I won't...do...what you...*want!*"

"Tess," you grip her shoulder, "stay back! Those villagers, those scum must have brainwashed him somehow."

"Oh, Nick," she whimpers, removes her water-proof's hood, eyes pleading, desperate. "It's me, love. You remember me? Tess! Your Tessie!"

His vacant gaze falls upon her olive green woollen hat. And, for a tense moment, rest there. "I-I got you that last Christmas," he croaks, "yes...I *remember!*"

"Oh Nick!"

"Stay back!" he growls.

"Nick, please don't..."

"No, you don't...understand. They're....*inside*...my head!"

You step forward. "Who?"

"A-alex," he manages a fond smile, one that breaks your heart, "g-glad to see you...glad you...got away. Only th-thing is...I didn't."

"What do you mean?" despairs Tess. "You're here - you've escaped with your life!"

"My...body's here but...I'm n-not...alive."

A cold realization washes over you. Somehow, it all makes terrible sense. Yet he detects the incredulity in your eyes. "Y-yeah, mate...the Elders...the ones who settled here...now evil wr-wraiths...sucked the very life...*out!*"

"B-but," splutters Tess, "how is that possible-?"

Nick turns his dark, imploring eyes upon her, shakes his head, sadly. "Oh Tess," he sighs, "I'm...sorry. I'm a...*tool*, a wicked instrument of the...*devil!* Over decades...victims like me...their life-force drained to...sustain, feed...the Elders and their...children. Most of my soul...replaced by...torments of *hell!* Arrgh!" he clutches at his head once more. "Keep...out...you b-"

"Nick!" Tess shrieks. "What's wrong?"

"KEEP BACK!" he howls. "I...can't r-resist their...whims much...longer. Alex? *Alex!*"

"Y-yeah?"

"T-take her...my Tessie..." he's now whimpering, "take her...and escape this evil...place! *Please, mate.*"

You can only nod dumbly, fear and disbelief numbing your mind. Tears well in your eyes. "I promise."

Nick sighs again, a terrible sound similar to a death rattle. But Tess's scream is far worse. You physically have to hold her back from embracing her afflicted fiancé – who is not *actually dead*, yet not *truly living*, with only a morsel of his soul spitefully permitted to remain. Perhaps that's part of a Lich's cursed existence? Being haunted for eternity by fleeting memories of their former lives. Still, in some way, it might well have saved both your lives: Nick recognised her hat, triggering a memory, which in turn blocked interference of the Elders' dominant will.

For now, you'll have to mind the living. After half a mile of stumbling in the darkness, Tess rips free of your grasp, gives vent to a dreadful grief, clawing helplessly at the tussocky grass, wailing at a baleful sky that offers no consolation. Your heart breaks for her pain before plummeting to depths of despair it never knew existed. After a while, Tess simply sits and stares at the cliff's edge. You can guess her dark thoughts: *Just what is this hellish nightmare? When will it all end? And how can I bring Nick back to me?* She then climbs unsteadily to her feet, takes a deep breath, then slowly walks toward the yawning abyss. Somehow, you're there before she can perform the terrible deed to end her suffering. Tess regards you coldly, no feeling, yet beautiful even in total remorse. Right now, her sense of self-preservation is swamped by indescribable grief.

"Stand aside, Alex."

"No. Sorry. Can't do that."

"It's *my* life," she snarls.

"Right – and the last thing you should ever do is throw it away."

"I have to be with Nick!" she pleads. "*Now-stand-aside!*"

"Be with him'," you intone, then suddenly grab her shoulders, shake her. "Tess, he didn't die! His soul is trapped here! But even that small part of him still had thoughts for you. So this is how you'd repay him? By committing suicide?"

Her head lowers, shoulders slump, she sobs once more. Gently, you lift her face, those lovely eyes brimming with tears, searching desperately for an answer...and you do have one to give: "So, we carry on. Right? We owe it to Nick that we escape – even try to end this evil ourselves!"

Your optimism, it seems, proves infectious. "Agreed. But how on earth do we go about fighting wraiths and...and the undead, Alex?"

"Well, let's explore this island a bit more, try to learn something. Now, best come away from the

edge there," you offer a playful grin, "after all...you can't leave me all alone in a nasty place like this, eh?"

She sniffs a laugh, then steps in besides you. On your adventure sheet, note down 'LICH: Sixty.' You arrive back where the track splits. Mindful that vengeful villagers could be en-route to your position, will you now go north (turn to 93) or risk continuing east towards the church (turn to 70)?

-11-

You're just not fast enough. The two groups converge and quickly surround you. "Finally!" leers one of the villagers. "Noo there's nae escape for ye!" This is a dire situation. However, if you possess the Cross of Saint Fergus turn to 73, or a Flare – with at least 1 ammo remaining - turn to 53. Otherwise, turn to 32.

-12-

You wake to find yourself in what appears to be a cellar. It's cold, dirty, and scant light is provided by a gas lamp sputtering somewhere nearby. The sound of sobbing draws your attention; she is sat in one corner, knees drawn up to her chest, head bowed.

"Tess?"

At the sound of your voice, her head snaps up. Eyes reddened by tears widen upon sight of you. Next second, her arms are tight about your midriff, head buried in your chest. "Alex!" she wails. "Oh my god, oh my god...!"

"Shh," gently, you rub her back, trying to soothe away the renewed crying – although now you sense it's more relief mixed with fear. Once Tess has calmed a little, you ask: "What about Nick? Where is he?"

"They-they dragged him off," she sniffs, "I don't know where. The men who took him...they were brutes!"

"Right. Then we need to get out of here..."

"Easier said than done," she almost laughs, pointing at the thick iron bars which bisect the cellar in two.

"Ah."

"And they said they'd soon be back for me."

"Well," you nod grimly, "that'll be bad news for them."

"You-you mean we...?"

"Yeah, we kill those evil scum!"

"Oh, Alex, I-I don't know if I can--"

"We've no choice, Tess."

You gaze unwaveringly into her horror-stricken expression – then, her shoulders slump in resignation. "Okay, I'm with you on this. But some kind weapon would come in handy."

"Yeah," you grin, nudging her playfully, "I forgot to bring my AK-47 with me."

She feigns exasperation. "Alright, *Mr Sarcasm* – so how do we go about...killing them."

"I'll show you..." you sit, untie, then pull the laces from your boots. "A garrotte!" you grin wolfishly, snapping the makeshift weapon taut.

Tess regards you with aghast: "Where did you learn *that* from?"

"Heh, you know what I'm like for those documentaries! Now, come on, I'll show you what I've remembered..."

You've barely taught her a few tips - a crash course in Thuggee garrotting! - before the door slams open. However, it's three, not two men, who descend the tiled steps, last of whom is carrying a couple of fuel cans which he drops nearby. "Tell Robbie yon engine is short on fuel," he growls. "Wae need more brewin' up."

"Aye, Duncan" nods the first man, "after we tak care of the lassie here."

Instinctively, you make to block his way – although the second man is quick to countering your move. “Back door, laddie. Tangle wi' me and yool get hurt.”

You stare at him defiantly, then feign weakness, simply nod – it's best to use the garrotte once their backs are turned.

“Come here, lass,” sighs the first, “time for ye to meet the Elders.”

The second man is not only confident but also cautious; he continues to stand there, almost daring you to prevent Tess from being taken. But you're even smarter...

“One thing,” you smile, “what about our friend, *Nick*?”

The merest mention of her beloved fiancé's name transforms Tess into demon possessed. Screaming blood-lust, she wrenches free of the man's grip, digs her nails into his face. He howls in pain and staggers away from her ferocious onslaught. His friend half-turns at the sudden commotion....you take your chance, looping the shoe lace garrotte around his neck, pull tight. He gags, struggles, fumbling hands vainly try to grab and relieve the pressure that's digging into his neck. Then, he attempts to elbow and throw you off. However, he staggers, collapses, weakens – finally choking to death. Tess has done you proud by grabbing one of the nearby fuel cans – still a fair weight despite it being empty – dealt the first villain a mortal wound to the head. Chances are he won't survive such a terrible blow. She gasps for breath, now having regained her senses, shocked at her own ability to kill.

“Oh God,” she whispers, “I-I just saw red, Alex.”

You rub her arm in reassurance. “Yeah, it's called an instinct to survive. All of us have it, believe me. It just takes the right reason for it to surface, start pushing back. It was you or them, Tess. That's it.”

“Right,” she nods wearily, then sets her face affirm, drops the blood-spattered can that clangs on the floor. “Now that's done with – let's get out of here!”

Just as you head for the door, a heavy blow knocks you senseless, while Tess screams in shock. Somebody has attacked you from behind! *But who?*

“Like ah said: somebody wants ye, lass!” snarls a familiar voice.

Tess stumbles back in horror. “How-? You're still *alive!*”

There's no time for questions. All that matters now is mustering all your strength to save Tess before they drag her away and reinforcements arrive. If you are either a Wrestler or Boxer turn to **45**. Otherwise, roll four dice. If the result is the same or less than your current Strength turn to **45**. If it is higher turn to **67**.

-13-

You come across the dilapidated remains of a farmhouse. Strangely, this building actually has white sun-baked walls with a few red tiles stubbornly clinging to the rafters. *Hmm*, you muse, *a Mediterranean style* - yet the island's climate feels more like East Scotland in late Spring! And in the Pacific Ocean?! It just doesn't add up.

A cautious search of the place turns up some battered hand-made crates branded with the faded name:

**PHILLIP TRAVERS AND SONS CITRUS GROVES
QUALITY ORANGES AND LEMONS .**

Your puzzlement deepens: obviously, the climate was once tropical - yet somehow it changed drastically sometime after the colonists settled here. But how? What force powerful enough could bring it about? And why? If anything else, it's bound to be supernatural....

“This place gives me the creeps,” shudders Tess, “I'll bet it's haunted.”

“Yeah, I know. In fact, this whole island is....unnatural. Something is very wrong here.”

“Evil.”

“Right.”

All this goes much deeper than isolated villagers preying on shipwrecked sailors for spoils. But you

don't voice such concerns to an already edgy Tess. Will you investigate inside this farm (turn to 74) or head further north (turn to 35)?

-14-

Without hesitation, you pull the trigger, releasing a blinding burst of flame. As you'd suspected, the undead Lich cannot abide fire: it howls in fear, cowers, covering its head. "Come on!" you grab Tess and flee south - but remember to erase 1 ammo from your adventure sheet. Turn to 27.

-15-

Both you and Tess stride into the wind, eager to increase distance between yourselves and those vengeful villagers. You make good progress despite the pot-holed track – covering two miles – but then you stop dead. The sounds of barking, howling dogs. "Oh God," despairs Tess, "Alex, they've got..."

"Yeah, I hear them. Come on, let's pick up the pace. There might be some sort of building where we can hide." You glance up at the sickly, baleful sky. "And hopefully this rain might help cover our scent. But if we try to hide in the open, eventually they'll...find us."

A moment's hesitation over the right expression – but Tess is aware that recapture means doom for the pair of you; she shudders, but nods agreement. "Okay, then let's move."

You manage another mile before sounds of the hunt get too close for comfort. Those approaching yowls and growls raise hairs on the back of your neck. However, the darkness of a deep forested region looms ahead and your despairing heart now dares to rise in hope. Even so, you still need to reach it! Roll five dice, adding 2 to the roll if you're a Wrestler (as muscle adds extra weight). If it is the same or less than your current Strength turn to 5. If it is higher turn to 52.

-16-

After having to ditch in the sea – and a thousand storms later – the fighter-plane has seen better days. The tide has pushed it far up the beach....where it has remained, forgotten.

"The cockpit has been shut," you observe, "to protect the instruments and whatever else is inside."

"He planned on returning, then?"

"Yeah – and looks like he didn't."

Years of neglect to the unmerciful elements have virtually rusted the hatch in place. It takes some shifting, but eventually you manage to slide it open. It seems the pilot has taken everything of use...although you do spy a metallic object tucked beneath the seat. Curious, you reach down to pluck out a hip flask.

"I would have thought he'd taken *that*," Tess wonders.

"Hmm, strange. Perhaps it fell from his jacket when he clambered out?"

The flask has been engraved with the words, *'From a proud old soldier to his dutiful son - 3rd November 1942.'*

If you wish to take this Hip-flask, note it and the date down on your adventure sheet.

"Why didn't they salvage this?" ponders Tess. "Get it operational again."

"For what reason?" you point out: "These islanders are quite resourceful, restoring guns, learning about advanced ballistic technology drifting to their shores over the years. But I don't think they'd really comprehend diesel and fuel injection engines..."

The sun-flash on a lens in the dunes above distracts you. Your blood runs cold with dread realization. "Get down!" you shout, pulling Tess into cover of the stricken plane. A sharp *crack!* and something ricochets off the engine chassis with a deafening clang.

"Wha-!" yells a bewildered Tess.

"Sniper rifle. Looks like those villagers have some powerful additions to their arsenal."

"And it's all *your* fault."

"Me?"

"Mmm, tempting fate, going on about guns!"

"Yeah," you grin at her mock admonishment, "you're probably right. Still, we've got to get out of here!"

However, running for the yacht now presents a big risk: there's a 200 yard stretch of exposed beach with no cover; the sniper has a clear line of sight from his vantage point on the low hill above. Behind you, to the west, the coast is strewn with boulders and takes a sharp southward turn. That would be a more ideal route of escape than face this deadly gauntlet – *if* you wanted to go that way...yet perhaps there is somewhere you could hide out? Have you learned of such a location during your perilous journey? If so, you'd know the number of miles it is situated from the plane: multiply the distance by itself and turn to that reference now. Otherwise, you must brave the deadly fire by running in a zig-zag and hope this tactic disrupts the sniper's aim. Add together your current Dexterity and Strength scores, then roll five dice. If you're a Wrestler, add 2 to the die roll (due to your muscle weight), *and* for each item carried add 1 to the die roll. If the total result is the same or less than your scores combined turn to **42**. If it is higher turn to **82**.

-17-

"What the he-!"

The Lichs are suddenly transfixed by the young lady, then:

"That's...that's Kathy Hawkes!"

"Yeah, now I recall..."

"Whatta dame! Her movies..."

"Letters from Indiana!" one fondly remembers.

"Yeah, an' 'Dustbowl Angel'...heck, the *Depression* – how could I forget *that!*"

"Hey, took my gal to see 'Maple Leaves in December', it was in New York..."

This sudden revival of so many memories prove too much for the Lichs. They sag with a sudden remorse at thoughts of a beloved home, of close friends and family, myriad images of their former lives denied them so long ago. It's so huge a burden you can feel nothing but heartfelt sympathy for these blighted victims. Some of the Lichs whimper, others howl, a few even wail their terrible despair. Gradually, hardy sailors that they are, their distress subsides to a calm anger.

"Yeah," drawls the sergeant, "those Elders gotta lot to answer for! Say, Alex, did you ever find Jack...I mean, his remains...?"

"No, I'm sorry. He must have been ki....er, captured on the way here."

"Helluva guy," sighs one.

The Lich sergeant nods grimly. "Okay. He's gone. Leastways now we know."

"Can't you search for him," Tess suggests, "telepathically?"

"Sorry, hon, since the Elders've skedaddled from our noggins, it also cuts our communications with the other Lichs – but, sure as heck, we can still help you two!"

The dozen Lich American crew unanimously agree to march out and rendezvous with you once the Elders are banished or destroyed. "We can still sense 'em," he explains, "but they ain't top dog no more."

Note the words, 'LICH: Halved'. They accompany you outside – although the shore is by now deserted. "You guys better skedaddle," says Sergeant Pearce, "before they catch on what's happened." Without hesitation, you head for the forest by turning to **36**.

-18-

"THERE THEY ARE!" bellows a voice. "Knoo they'd hide in yon church like rats, prayin' tae a God who worn't listen."

"Tess, get back inside...!"

It is then you catch sight of dozen humanoids, moving fast yet clumsily through the shadows. As

they get closer you can discern their features...corpses. Animated corpses – undead! Tess screams in sheer terror as the lurching, howling, decomposed horrors close in. Your skin prickles with icicles of fear and shock, rooting you to the spot. A couple of the villagers are encouraging them on, anticipating an easy capture with relish. However, if you possess the Cross of Saint Fergus turn to **56**. If not turn to **32**.

-19-

It's not long after midnight, yet a sinister light lends the night clouds a sulphuric yellowish hue. *What a strange place this is!* you wonder as you track Lizzie back to her cottage.

"Stay close, Tess."

"Oh, I will, don't you worry about that."

"Lizzie!" you hiss, "Lizzie, please, we must talk."

She stops, then turns slowly, tries to scrutinize the darkness. "Who's there?" she challenges. "Shoo yourselves!"

Cautiously, you step from the shadows, hands in clear view to show that you're unarmed. "We mean you no harm – and I'm sure deep down the feeling's mutual."

"Wha-!" she staggers back in shock. "H-hoo did ye escape...?" Lizzie glances back to Roy's cottage, then back to you, obviously indecisive about what to do next; quickly, you must try to win her over. If you are a Drama Student turn to **58**. Otherwise, roll two dice. If the result is 7 or less turn to **86**. If it is 8 or higher turn to **58**.

-20-

"Well, that's enough chit-chat," he continues sternly, "and now, if both of you would be so kind as to accompany us..." he signals his men forward. *Damn!* You were so close to reasoning with this undead officer. Now what can you do? If you possess the Cross of Saint Fergus turn to **66**. Otherwise, turn to **32**.

-21-

Fatigue has dulled your reflexes and sapped your stamina; a careless slip is all it takes for you to gash your leg and head (lose 2 Strength points). In desperation, your flailing hand catches hold of a rocky outcrop, straining your arm in the process: lose 1 Dexterity point, which you may regain *after* the next combat. Cursing against the pain, you manage to recover and renew your efforts to climb this treacherous cliff (turn to **8**).

-22-

Polina gasps at the beautiful cross you had found in the ruined church. "How did you come by this?"

You relate the whole story: about Lizzie's ring, meeting with William Graham's ghost, how he guided you in recovering it.

"I've heard talk of this priest, a thorn in their side, and that they still fear his restless spirit. This can only mean good news for us."

"One thing puzzles me though: how can Lizzie possibly be William's lover? If she's an Immortal then she would only have been a child when the Elders threw their good reverend to his watery grave."

"Hmm, an interesting conundrum. Perhaps she was an adult but they *made* her Immortal to punish her feelings for a 'traitor'? Prevent her admission into the Elders' inner circle, limit her powers, keep an eye on her....who can say? Still, such a romance is encouraging, that there's no stronger bond than love." You pat the cross, further explaining what happened with the Lichs outside the church. "Ah,

then this is the key to ending the curse!" she pounds a fist into her palm. "The Elders won't be able to withstand such a divine power. However, even with their demise, something tells me that a greater evil would hold sway in Slains Court."

"Slains Court?"

"Named after some castle in Scotland that belonged to the Hay clan. Laird Samuel Gordon Hay was the one responsible and wealthy enough in organising their expedition - looks like he brought the name with him."

"What made him commit to such a venture?"

"From what Roy told me, Laird Hay returned from the Crimean War, constantly haunted by the horrors of war. His younger brother was also killed there; things didn't feel the same, he couldn't settle with constant reminders of his brother's memory. And so, he decided to make a fresh start."

"Yeah...although I don't think he planned on becoming a wraith! Hmm, Roy's father was also a military man - I'm assuming he served with Laird Hay in the Crimea?"

"Very likely," she nods agreement, "And now they've retired to a 'wraith club' for veteran soldiers."

"Slains Court is the place to go," you realize, "destroy those Elders, then free those souls - somehow."

"The lighthouse," she perks up, "it emits an unnatural light, a beautiful, electrical blue. Now, I wonder..." Return to 69.

-23-

You grab the latches, pull...they don't budge: locked! Cursing, hurriedly you cast about for something heavy, eyes fall on a beautiful walnut and red leather upholstered desk chair. One swing shatters the glass, another buckles the lead, while a third causes the whole mangled wreck to fall into a garden below. Just in time - for the front door is battered in, angry voices accompany a pounding of heavy feet on wooden stairs. Without hesitation, you dive through the gap, land, and roll to your feet which are already propelling you towards a low stone wall. Unless you're a Wrestler, roll one die: if you score a 1 or 2, lose 2 Strength points due to hurting your shoulder, and reduce your Dexterity by 1 until after the next combat. However, your escape is short-lived - the menacing, dark-haired man you spied earlier springs out of nowhere, lands upon your back!

"Noisy devil, ain't ye?" he chuckles in your ear whilst holding you in a vice-like headlock. "Aye, old Robbie Roy will be innae fearful rage about his windoo!"

By now, his friends have arrived on the scene, there is a blow to your head (lose 1 Strength point), and the world goes black...

Turn to 12.

-24-

Barely twenty yards from the tree-line, you spot a couple of flickering lights from ahead. You try to duck down behind a boulder - but one of the villagers has seen you: "There!" she shouts. "They've taken cover!"

"Flank 'em!" snarls the leader. "Henrietta, cover oor approach."

She flicks the safety switch from her rifle, stands her ground. "Aye, will do!"

"Jamie, ye gor left, I'll tak the right."

"Aye, Richie."

These evil folk seem most eager to capture you - which, over the years, is something they've practised to a deadly art. Henrietta's M1 Garand is testimony to this; even military men have fallen into their clutches! You can't risk she's a poor shot and miss if you suddenly rush in a bid to grab the rifle. Instead, you'll have to tackle both Jamie and Richard, incapacitate them, then sneak away from Henrietta's line of sight.

"Tess," you whisper, "same as last time, right? Make it appear as if we've given up, defeated....that'll

catch them off-guard. Wait for my signal.”

“Okay, Alex.”

The two villagers soon reach your hiding place, grinning triumphantly at such an easy capture. “Right then,” Richie beckons impatiently, “this ware – ye’ve kept the Elders waitin’ long enough!”

This time, there’s no need to mention her fiancé’s name to trigger a wrathful rage. Tess is fast developing a knack for this; she ‘trips’ over a rock, her captor stoops to pick her up – and you launch into the attack! Tess then grapples with the man trying to haul you off his friend.

Jamie Shaw:

Dexterity 6 Strength 11

If you manage to knock your opponent out, you then help overpower her opponent, before letting the night shadows swallow you up from Henrietta’s arrival. At a distance, you circle round back to the track and plunge into the foliage. Turn to 47.

-25-

The sensation of having your life-force consumed by the wraith-like Elders is oddly painless, almost a gradual exhaustion descending to an eternal sleep. Yet only a small part of your soul remains to animate your now undead body, a Lich to serve only the Elders by tracking down future shipwrecked victims, thus securing the future of this damned colony for many more years to come...

-26-

You run and pound your shoulder against the wood, then again, and a third time – finally the lock gives way (if you’re a Drama Student, lose 2 Strength points for bruising your shoulder). Lizzie gives a cry of alarm and runs into the living room.

“Wait,” you call out, “we don’t want hurt you Lizzie, just talk!”

Cautiously, you enter the living room to find her stood there, holding a semi-automatic pistol, pointed at your chest. It’s funny the little details you notice in a crisis – so this self-sufficient society also salvages post-Victorian technology from shipwrecks and utilizes it to their grim purpose.

“One moove and ye dead, I warn ye.”

“Please,” Tess implores, “we only want to know what’s going on here, why you people want to hurt us, and where my Nick is!”

She hesitates for a tense moment – then, steadily, lowers the gun. “Aye, all right then.”

“We’re sorry to barge in, Lizzie. But we overheard what went on in Roy’s place.”

She regards you carefully, then nods: “So, ye heard about William Graham. Aye, I’ll tell ye the whole story...”

Turn to 58.

-27-

After some progress, the ground begins to get marshy underfoot. A few miles to the south-west is the northern fringes of that foreboding forest you saw earlier. You glance at your watch: 1:16 pm. “About time for a rest,” you say to a relieved Tess. You must eat a Meal here, gaining only 2 Strength points – or *losing* 3 Strength points if you don’t.

“Oh look!” points Tess.

“What on earth...?”

It appears to be the rusted remnants of a battleship, listed to one side, lying in the shallows and half-submerged by decades of tidal sand. You can hardly make out the name: USS CHANTILLY BB-65, once boldly lettered, now barely legible.

“Crikey,” you whisper, “it can’t be!”

"What's wrong, Alex?"

"That ship's name, I've heard of it before – on a documentary about ships and planes simply disappearing from radar..."

"Chantilly?" she frowns. "Hmm, sounds familiar...from a song, maybe?"

A sudden, blood-curdling howl intrudes on your thoughts. A horde of Lichs, led by three villagers, have found you.

"Come on," you grab her arm, "this way-!"

But another group comprised of several Lichs are barring the way ahead; two routes left open are: south-west and gain cover of the forest (turn to 46) or swim out to the Chantilly and hide out in its wreckage (turn to 65).

-28-

"Captain Harding, you say? Hmm, then I have something of yours..."

You pull the beechwood box from your rucksack, throw it to his waiting, clawed hands. "Wha-? B-but this...is my...revolver. How did you come by it?"

"The villagers," you reply, "they took it from you."

"Yes...of course! *Now* I remember. The key – perhaps it's still in my pocket...? I say: so it is!"

Quickly, the Lich captain unlocks the box, then gazes down upon his prized possession, strokes it affectionately.

"May I look?" you ask.

"Hmm? Oh, of course, old boy."

Note down Captain Harding's Revolver, at which you marvel whilst talking further with the officer. Turn to 91.

-29-

Before they can seize you, however, the Lichs are overcome with a terrible affliction. The power of Saint Fergus is protecting you from their evil intentions. Using the torch, you run back upstairs and, once out in open air, dive into the sea. You swim, following the coast a little way before stumbling out of the surf, collapse exhausted on a golden beach. Before your pursuers realize what's happened you strike for cover of the forest. Turn to 36.

-30-

The folk gathered in the living room are particularly excited; they're talking loudly and raucous laughter breaks out occasionally. You'll have no problem whatsoever to eavesdrop (turn to 80), or if you'd rather not risk being discovered (turn to 49).

-31-

Well done! You have met and persuaded a sizeable force of Lichs to your side, with which to engage the Immortals in a brutal struggle. Although they cannot be killed, many Immortals are nevertheless rendered unconscious; momentarily neutralized and removed from your path to the lighthouse.

"Throw these guys in that fancy place of theirs," drawls Sergeant Pearce, "serve as a brig for the time being."

"{*Italian*} Good idea. Keep those damn Immortals from under our feet."

Hal Buchanan points towards some nearby boulders. "An' lodge a coupla those weights 'gainst the doors. Should keep those varmints busy awhile."

"I say, hello there Alex old boy!" Captain Harding salutes you with his rusted sword. "Good show, eh? Gave those Elder blackguards what for!"

"{*Italian*} Ah, man of the hour!" Destro raises his claws in triumph and addresses you in English:

"Our hero! Well done, my friend, you've done Ezio proud!"

"Oh God," Tess trembles, as Nick warily steps into view, head bowed as if ashamed of what he's become.

"Tess," he rasps, "blimey, to see you again....thank God you're safe!"

"Nick, I..."

Sergeant Pearce suddenly growls, "Cut it out, you two. We've got those darn Immortals on the run – let's get after them, dammit!"

"I say, steady on old chap! They are engaged, after all."

"*[Italian]* Ah, young love," Destro nods appreciatively, then sighs at the terrible affliction imposed on them both.

"I'd have tied the knot," nods Nick.

"And I with you," Tess replies, by now tears are streaming down her cheeks.

"Tess...listen, what you see is only a small part of me. The rest of my soul....it's held captive in the lighthouse. And all those souls light other sailors to their doom."

"Yeah," growls Buchanan, "those varmints ain't without a sick sense of humour."

Harding swings his sword in direction of the lighthouse. "Very well, ladies and gentlemen, I propose we march on the lighthouse with due haste, strike hard – and finish this grim business once and for all!"

There is a chorus of approval and, with a hearty (and somewhat raspy) cheer, as one you head off in direction of the lighthouse. "No doubt they've regrouped there to protect the soul beacon," you observe aloud.

"Yeah," Nick falls into step beside you, "and it's a last ditch attempt, mate. Listen, even with all this lot on-side, it's still heck of a risk. Don't forget: you and Tess are the only ones in our little army able to handle the cross. We're...." he struggles admitting the word, "...*undead*, you see, can't touch it."

Tess stares at the ground as she strides along. "So that's it," her tone of resignation is obvious, "you're already lost – even to yourself."

"Tess, pet...." he sighs, "I'm truly sorry. But this way, at least, I'll be free. And, if all goes well, so will you. It's just that....we'll be going our separate ways."

Her stare still scorches the rough ground, refusing to believe, refusing to give up. What can you say? Nothing. What comfort can you offer? None. However this turns out, one way or another Nick is already lost to you. For now, a numbing coldness blocks out the emotion – you're now responsible for the salvation of all those poor, imprisoned souls.

As you approach the lighthouse, the night cloud becomes increasingly baleful. Peering up, you're astonished to find it gathering into a single entity, forming the menacing image of a horned beast with malevolent red eyes which regard you with utter loathing and rage.

"Confounded mortal!" booms a deep voice, like the rumble of thunder that shakes the very earth. "You think to have thwarted my pact with New Strathbeg? Even now, my loyal servants are ready to receive your pathetic force of Lichs. And, once you're dead, they will revert back to my control. Meanwhile, some of those 'children' will take the place of their fallen Elders....so, in the end, your small victory shall prove insignificant, meaningless, *futile* in the grand scheme of things. Your bold plan is doomed to failure!"

An enraged Tess shakes a defiant fist at the bestial face. "We'll see about that!"

Before long, the lighthouse with its eerie, revolving beacon of souls looms ahead. Harding pauses to assess the situation. "They've taken position inside and posted sharpshooters upon the gantry," he explains, "chances are those cads have also blockaded the door."

"Alex, you and Tess better get behind us," Sergeant Pearce advises, "we can take a whole load o' hot lead, give you cover best we can from their snipers. Meanwhile, some of us can bash down the doors."

Buchanan sighs, "Geez, wish I had my bird right now – the old gal'd soon strafe that gantry clear of hostiles!"

"Good luck, my fellow condotteri!"

"Tess," Nick begins awkwardly.

"No," she frowns, "I'm not staying down there, cowering away from all this. What if Alex...?" she snatches a glance towards you, now her turn to be awkward, then adds hurriedly, "Just in case."

He regards her beautiful, stubborn features for a long moment, before rasping a fond laugh. "Yeah, right, that's my Tess: should have known better, eh?"

"You bet," she smiles.

"Remember," he points a bony hand at her heart, "I'll always be here."

As Sergeant Pearce predicted, snipers try to pick out you and Tess, their aim to eliminate source of their doom even before you reach the lighthouse; without the cross and a mortal touch, this assault would be nothing more than a pointless gesture. Bullets punch into the surrounding Lichs, a few lurch, stagger back against such high velocity force. "Close up!" barks Sergeant Pearce. "Protect the cross-bearers!"

Being huddled within a group of decomposed undead is truly nauseating – and only slightly more fun than the fear of being shot dead. Nevertheless, you're grateful for such protection from this deadly fire. You reach the heavy door to the lighthouse, where the Lichs set about wrenching it free. They soon achieve this.

"Come on, you guys!" Sergeant Pearce leads the charge – next moment, a massive *bang!* And you're thrown back, slightly concussed (lose 1 Strength point).

Buchanan's claw grabs hold of your shoulder, hauls you back. "Darn it! Those damn yellowbellies usin' mines. Hang back, Alex!"

The smoke clears to reveal a scene of terrible carnage: five Lichs are sprawled on the floor, still moving, yet each missing either legs, or arms, or both.

"Those devils have changed their strategy," says Harding, "now they're trying to disable *us* and get to you that way."

"You don't say Sherlock?"

"Sarcasm doesn't become you, Lieutenant Buchanan."

"*Flight LOO-tenant* Buchanan – yer dandy fool!"

"Come on, lads," Nick urges, "we're all on the same side here."

Sergeant Pearce is on the floor, but waves encouragingly with his one good arm. "Quit the bickerin', youse guys, an' head upstairs. Full steam ahead! Enemy's turnin' tail!"

Without further ado, the remaining Lichs pour inside, bound up the steel steps. Just as you set foot on the stairs, however, one of the Immortals leaps into view, brandishing a wickedly curved blade, in a gutting motion for your stomach....but Harding's sword blade cuts down across the assailant's forearm, half-severing it, then bring the hilt hard down on his skull. "Go to sleep, sir!" he admonishes. "Close call, old boy – come on, up and at 'em, eh?"

Suddenly enraged, you pound the metal steps, spiralling up towards the your goal. Then, something comes clattering down the stairs....Roll two dice, reduce it by 2 if you are a Boxer. If it is *higher* than your current Dexterity, Harding pulls you back, receiving most of the grenade's blast – but some shrapnel clips your arm (lose 3 Strength points). If it is less than your current Dexterity, without thinking you dive forward, snatch up the grenade, then fling it down the central aisle where it explodes far below.

Nearer to the top, gunfire and the sounds of savage fighting intensify as Lichs wrest for control of the soul beacon. The Immortals fight ferociously, but are obviously outmatched by the Lichs' combined strength. One by one, the enemy are unceremoniously ejected from the lighthouse and thrown to the rocky shore below. They won't be killed but knocked unconscious - thus effectively out of the fight. But, near to total victory, a blinding flash grips the place. You stagger back, dazzled by the intense flame. Before you can act, Roy has snatched the cross from your neck, keeping the Lichs at bay with the emergency flare clutched in his other hand. "So, noo ye see, laddie," he leers, "not tae underestimate us, eh? Oh, an' ah must thank ye good friend Nick," he strokes his face now younger by twenty years, "fer givin' mae....soostenance! Hee, hee!"

You move to prevent him from throwing the precious relic over the gantry rail and into the sea. But Duncan McPhee - the dark-haired thug you'd first encountered back in the cellar – is blocking your

path. Roy brings up his arm....but then, as if from nowhere, Tess, like an amazon possessed, leaps from the shadows and hauls him back. *Will they never learn not to boast about Nick in her presence?* you wonder. Duncan is momentarily distracted, so you can rush him if you are a Wrestler (turn to 38), or shoot him if you possess a Pistol (turn to 68). Otherwise, you must tackle him head on:

Duncan McPhee:

Dexterity 7 Strength 8

If you manage to defeat him, turn to 78.

-32-

Without the right weapon to fight them, you cannot hope to escape the foul clutches of these powerful Lichs. Recaptured, you are knocked unconscious then carried back to New Strathbeg. Perhaps it's some consolation you aren't awake when your life-force is devoured by the spectral Elders.

-33-

You visited Italy some years ago on a Shakespearian Company trip; the idea was to draw inspiration in preparation for an important stage play. Whilst there, you picked up some words of the language, recalling one particular line: "*{Italian}*'...Love is blind, and lovers cannot see the pretty follies that themselves commit..."

The Lich stops dead in its tracks. "*{Italian}* Wait....," it rasps, "Jessica....'The Merchant of Venice', yes, now I remember, the city....where I, Ambrosi Destro, was *born!*"

Then, the wretched husk of a man collapses into a sobbing heap at your feet. Turn to 94.

-34-

A little apprehensive, you venture towards the disturbance. It seems that people were not the only new inhabitants to this island: rats have also made this place their home. Your presence frightens them off. Their dark brown bodies go scurrying past Tess who squeals and promptly leaps on the pew, shuddering.

"Ugh! Horrible things!"

You laugh and, just before returning to her, find something tucked into the pulpit's shelf. Curious, you pull out a black and white photograph of a young blonde bombshell lying on the beach, waves lapping at her beautiful curves, giving you a coy, impish, but attractive smile, complemented by a mischievous wink. During the Second World War, actresses kept millions of lonely, devoted soldiers 'company' by such mass-produced autographed mementos - which then were kept safe in a locker or wallet.

On the back is written: '*Joined up in February of 1943*' and below this, scrawled in a hand obviously shaking with fear, '*I managed to get away from them - those DEVILS killed all my buddies I came ashore with, drained them of life! Now I know what their racket is, much good it does me. Came to this old ruined church to hide - perhaps pray. Heck knows where I'm headed for now. Can't live off the land - those murderers don't seem to eat, no livestock anywhere! And there isn't much in the way of fruit and vegetables. Reckon I'll try and make it back to the Chantilly, get some chow, rearm. REVENGE is the only course left. If any poor innocent finds this, I wish you all the best in escaping this hellish place! Jack Redland!*'

Your heart hangs heavy with the plight of that unfortunate sailor who, seventy years ago, came and went, alone, desolate, lost. Note the Pin-up Photograph along with the date and turn to 64.

-35-

It's getting to what passes for dawn in this strange, blighted land. By the time you reach a steep hill that overlooks a sandy beach below, your watch displays: '7:46'.

"Alex, please," pants Tess, "I'm ready to drop."

She's right. The poor woman's been up for twelve or so hours and in that time foot-slogged miles. "Okay," you nod, "but let's take cover in those dunes. Here, take a swig of water."

"Thanks," she gulps a little, sighs her relief. "Ah, better!"

You lie there, sheltered from the coastal wind, peering up at the baleful sky and pondering your fate. *Where to now?* Those vicious villagers won't give up the hunt - and there doesn't seem to be any place to go...

"Oh, look!"

You sit up to find Tess gazing at something beached on the sand below. It seems to be a plane - although a design you soon recognise: "A mustang!" you exclaim in awe.

"What?"

"An American fighter plane, from the Second World War."

"But how...?"

"Must have come down in one of those foul storms," you explain.

"Hey, there's something else."

You follow her pointing finger to the east: some kind of private luxury yacht is anchored, bobbing in the tide - and you can barely discern the solitary figure, staring back at you through binoculars.

Tess leaps to her feet. "A survivor!"

"Looks like it," you muse.

"Oh, Alex, is that all you have to say?" Tess grips your shoulders, excitedly shakes comprehension into your sluggish thoughts. "He's got a *boat*, it still *floats*, and he's *seen* us - he can take us *away* from here!"

"And what about Nick? What about stopping those scum who have taken him?"

Her optimism deflates like a slow-punctured balloon. "Oh, Alex..."

"Oh, God, Tess, I'm sorry, but...okay, great! We can probably bring that person on side and if- *once* we rescue Nick, we can arrange a rendezvous with them. Still, we can't let those damn villagers find him first."

"Right," she beams, "so come on! Let's hail him..."

Will you first inspect the mustang's cockpit (turn to 16) or ignore it and make straight for the yacht (turn to 99)?

-36-

Pushing through the foliage is laborious - but at least you're hidden from plain sight. Soon, you need to stop and rest. It's getting towards dusk; you can also eat a Meal if you wish. "Oops," Tess gets to her feet, "I need the loo."

"Heh, must be all the excitement, eh?"

"Oh yes," she grins, "nothing like being on an island of mad villagers and undead to loosen the bowels!"

Although you can't hear her, at least she's in earshot. The trickle of urine - then her scream pierces the night!

Heart pounding, you leap to your feet. "Tess!" you yell, "What happening?"

"Alex, they're-!" her voice is muffled, the sounds of struggling, then: "Go, Alex, get out of-!"

You've escaped one hunting party - but this island is infested by many more Lichs which are combing the forest right now. By ill-luck, one such undead sentinel has found Tess! And its howling will soon attract others to the area. Then, it goes silent; a crashing through the trees signals its hurried departure. You loathe to abandon your friend - but, even if you can fight her supernatural assailant,

there's no way you'll catch up with its powerful stride. The only thing you can do is flee the area, head back to New Strathbeg, and rescue Tess from there.

Before long, a couple of villagers hear your approach, try to spring an ambush – but somehow you evade capture. You almost run into another Lich, make a drastic swerve to hide...suddenly trip and fall headlong into a little gully covered with bushes. The Lich has given chase but its undead gaze cannot penetrate the natural concealment. You regain your senses, lying on your back, listening to voices from somewhere above:

"....gorn fer noo. Still, at least the Elders will be feedin' on the young lassie, eh?"

"Aye, ye right, man. You, Lich...confoond it, what's ye nam?"

"Hal," it growls, "Hal Buchanan."

"Aye, that's it! Well, stay here an' keep an eye oot fer that eloosive fellow."

"Yeah, okay, roger that."

You peer through the leaves as the motley group shamble past. "Aye, I remember him noo – that American in the....plane? Floo here, like a birdie!"

"Aye, 'fighter pilot', that was his profession. But who is this 'Roger' he keeps on aboot..?"

Do you possess a Hip-Flask? If so, add together all the digits in the *year* inscribed upon it then multiply it by the *date*. Otherwise, you'll have to sneak away and track the group at a distance (turn to 97).

-37-

"Hmm, nice!" you grin, then look around at some of the antiquated photographs on the wall. All are wearing old fashioned clothes (you've seen a similar wardrobe from old Charles Dickens TV adaptations) and none seem to be from more recent times. One is of a proud soldier with a pointed moustache, piercing eyes, steely gaze, uncompromising: '*Henry Matheson – 1851*'.

"Ah," Roy notices what's attracted your attention, "that'll be good auld Pappy. That bonnie phortograph was taken 'fore he went orf tae the Crimea Warr. Upon his return, he mad' plans for an expedition, a steamer from Aberdeen docks..."

Hang on...the Crimean War was 160 years ago. His father would have died around the 1890's, Roy is in his sixties; born around 1950? That's a big 60 year margin!

"Er, sorry, did you say your 'father'...not your 'great grandfather'?"

"Nor, nor..." he then frowns, squints at your face, then glances at the glass. "Ain't ye feelin' sleepy, laddie?"

"Oh no, a little worn out from the storm, but otherwise..."

Suddenly, he leaps to his feet, snatching up your dram, scrutinizes the rim for signs of moisture. This odd behaviour takes you aback – then, with a cold dread, you realize what's happening: the whiskey must have been drugged! Imminent danger jolts your weary limbs to action, you leap towards the door – but Roy, for a man of his age, is incredibly fast and grabs the scruff of your neck.

"In a hoory, laddie?" he snarls. "Nae escapin' me – Ah've bin doin' this fer years!"

Fear and desperation govern your next move, allowing him to pull you back so you can plant an elbow in his stomach. As he doubles up, winded, you spin to face him whilst a savage upper cut connects with his nose. Fear is now replaced by a grim resolve to deal with this trickster. Snatching up the small table, you defend yourself against his ferocious attack:

'Rob' Roy Matheson

Dexterity 5 Strength 10

When you have reduced his Strength to 0 turn to 54. If he reduces your own Strength to 8 turn to 96.

-38-

You crouch down, charge headlong, winding him whilst you grab his ankles – then give a mighty heave! Duncan's screams follow his crashing body down the stairs, to be warmly welcomed by those maimed, dismembered Lichs at the bottom. Turn to 78.

-39-

"And now," Tess sighs, "for the long walk back. Still, at least the church—"

"Wait...quiet!"

She frowns, then leans in close, whispering, "What is it?"

"Over there," you nod in direction of the hills north-west, "someone coming this way."

In the strange, dim yellowish darkness you can barely discern the person's features. But, whoever it is, they seem to be stumbling along, clumsily, as if severely hurt or confused. Apparently, they haven't seen you yet so as a precaution you duck down behind a granite boulder.

"Must be another escaped survivor," muses Tess, "injured or drugged?"

"Hmm, perhaps. But how could someone in such a state get this far without being recaptured?"

"You reckon it's some kind of ploy?"

"Who knows?" Yet what your mind is really asking: *those villagers far outnumber us; why go to the trouble of staging such a deception?* Still, you don't want to distress her more than necessary with such a realistically grim view.

"I don't know, Alex," she shakes her head, "I can't decide...friend or foe?"

But, *you* are going to decide whether to: risk approaching this individual (turn to 10) or sneak away before he or she discovers your hiding place and head back where the track splits. Mindful that vengeful villagers could be en-route to your position, will you now go north (turn to 93) or risk continuing east towards the church (turn to 70)?

-40-

Both your weight and the constant strain proves too much for the bough. Like a gunshot, it snaps and you plunge headlong into the quicksand. Panicked gasps become gurgles as it swallows Tess up. You soon follow her to a murky grave.

-41-

Note down the words, 'Danger Ahead'. Keen to put as much distance between yourselves and the wrathful villagers, you both make good headway despite the uneven terrain and smaller rocks constantly tripping you over. After an hour and a half, the trail makes a gradual bend to the south. Here, the wind intensifies as you approach the south-western tip of the island. Jagged sea-cliffs glistening with the thrashing surf reminds you of a rabid demon's maw, the howling gust its terrible cry, hurting your ears. Then, you can almost hear words forming...

"Alex!" Tess admonishes. "Stop trying to scare me."

"No, really! I could have sworn..."

"Oh God – Alex...you're *right!*"

You follow her pointing finger to something that is glowing, lingering by the cliff edge not twenty yards away. Warily, you approach what appears to be the apparition of a tall, young man with wild hair but a handsome face, pacing the spot, back and forth. The ghost moans: "Lorst, LORST! Mae kinsmen, mae flock, all lorst! Fell Satan has claimed their sools – Laird Almighty, I implore ye, shoo them thy blessed light of ye eternal existence. Lead them tae salvation, spare them the curse of a Devil's pact and immortality..." Suddenly, the spectral entity falls silent – then turns its piercing gaze upon you. Your blood runs cold. "Alas," the ghostly vicar despairs, "more hapless wanderers tae these dark shores, victims tae this hellish domain. And yet..." he sighs, tormented soul burdened by a sense

of pure duty and deepest remorse at the tragedy befallen New Strathbeg. "And yet...perhaps ye bring mae a sign? A sign that all is nae lost. Mortal traveller," implores the ghost, "I beg o' ye such a sign, a symbol of bonding, of oonity to confoond the very schemes of Lucifer himself!"

Do you possess such a symbol. If so, multiply the number of diamonds by the number of emeralds and turn to that reference. If you don't have such an item turn to 77.

-42-

Somehow, you survive the perilous flight across the beach. Angry, urgent voices echo a frustrated mood prevalent above. You fall besides Tess, exhausted, yet a relieved laugh emerges between the panting. "Come on," you guide her around the outcrop, "let's head for that yacht." Turn to 99.

-43-

Following Reverend Graham's instructions, you search the altar and soon locate a cavity concealed by loose stones. Tentatively, you reach inside the dark recess, fingers soon touching a wooden object and you pull it out. The key fits snugly in the lock. You turn, the lid clicks open...to reveal a magnificent silver crucifix embedded with sapphires hung on a chain.

"Oh my," gasps Tess, "it's beautiful!"

"There's a handwritten note tucked beneath," that you read aloud:

'To the innocent who finds this, I entrust the Cross of Saint Fergustian to your safekeeping, may it protect you in return. The villagers didn't heed my sermons and ignored my pleas not to evoke the powers of darkness. They struck a bargain with Satan; now they see me as a threat to their plans. But I must keep this holy relic beyond their evil grasp. I'm certain not to survive – yet, with the assistance of Saint Fergustian – YOU shall prevail. I wish you Godspeed in the crusade ahead. End the vile curse that afflicts New Strathbeg!'

Note down the Cross of Saint Fergus. Now, you must leave by turning to 18.

-44-

That Richie is alone in guarding the entrance gives you cause to wonder if this is all some set-up to capture you; opting to investigate the imposing hall for a secondary entrance, hoping to infiltrate, then sneak back out, hopefully without any fuss, seems much wiser. However, just as you try to scale the wall, two patrolling villagers spot you. "Over there," they yell, "come on!" You drop, try to run – but a rifle bullet smacks into your leg. There's no escape now. In an eye-blink, they have you surrounded and duly confiscate all your possessions. You'll soon join Tess inside Slains Hall... endure the terrible experience of your life-force being drained by the Elders, your soul one of many victims to sustain the evil of New Strathbeg.

-45-

With almost superhuman effort, you lift yourself up from the dirty floor, stagger to the empty can, then swing it at the thug's head. He goes down like a sack of potatoes. Tess gasps her surprise, then runs to steady you (deduct 2 Strength points). "It's okay," you sigh, "I've had worse. Caught me off-guard, that's all." Turn to 90.

-46-

"They're trying tae escape!"

"Get em, quickly!"

"The Elders will be furious if wae fail again!"

"We worn't! Wae'll soon catch 'em!"

"After them - to yon trees!"

Both Tess and yourself are footsore and travel-weary. But fear of being recaptured by such an evil multitude lends you wings. However, this damned marsh extends almost up to the forest – and any chance of sanctuary dwindles; to reach it will require tremendous effort. Roll four dice. If you are a Boxer *reduce* the roll by 2, if you're a Wrestler *add* 2. Now, if the result is the same or less than your current Strength turn to **87**. If it is higher turn to **11**.

-47-

The path meanders its way north. This forest may provide cover – although there's no telling what else inhabits this island. The surrounding shadows and creaking branches urge you onwards. After two miles, a sudden bleating – desperate and mournful – cuts through the night. Your heart almost stops dead with the shock. "Wh-what was that?" you whisper.

Tess frowns, listening carefully. "It sounds...like an animal."

"Poor thing," you sigh. "Come on, the sooner we get out of this creepy forest, the better."

At this, Tess regards you icily, hands on her hips. "Listen, Alex, I'm not about to abandon a helpless creature in distress!"

"Tess..." you rub your face in frustration, "look, we're in enough trouble ourselves – those villagers could be anywhere!"

She pouts, crosses her arms, looks away. Tess is a sweet thing, but her passion for animals (being an avid supporter of the RSPCA and Blue Cross) often gets the better of her good nature. It's likely a prowling enemy will have heard the same noise and come to investigate; this could land the two of you in hot water. Will you investigate the animal noise (turn to **95**) or continue north (turn to **61**)?

-48-

"Say Hal, fancy a drink on me?"

"What the-!" growls the Lich, turning to confront you. Then, it spies the familiar hip-flask in your hand. "That-that's mine! Where in tarnation...?"

"Your mustang. I found it beached some miles north of here. This," you waggle the flask, "was inside it."

The Lich's unnerving, undead gaze lingers there for a long, heart-pounding moment. "My Pa," Hal remembers, "gave me that when I joined up. Taught me everythin' I knew 'bout flying."

"He was in the First War?"

"Heck no – a stunt pilot! We toured the States....Say, any whiskey left in that, pal?"

In reply you shake it: a liquid sloshes around inside. You could swear even this Lich's decayed eyes light up in anticipation. "Hey, whaddya know – give it here, buddy!"

His decomposed claws pluck it from your grasp, unscrews the stopper, tips the contents down his throat. "Darn it," he growls, "damn tastebuds rotted away. Ah, well..." he looks longingly at the treasure from his past, "leastways I have this back. Say, thanks Alex, yer a real pal!"

Lightly (or light as a Lich's able) he slaps your back in gratitude. "Y-your welcome. So, what will you do now?"

"I tell yer what – I've a score to settle with those damned critters! Wait till I get my hands – heh, claws! - on those varmints! But I can't do anything to help yer while those pesky Elders are still kicking around. Take 'em out the picture, buddy, then I'll meet yer, okay?"

"I'll see what I can do," you promise.

"Yeah, now we're talkin'!" Buchanan mimes being at the controls of his faithful mustang. "Bandits at twelve high – let's go get 'em!"

"Roger that," you grin.

Note down the words, 'LICH: To' then turn to 97.

-49-

Half a mile uphill, the path splits into two rough tracks leading from this coastal village: one leads north-west while the other heads straight north. Both seem to have been deeply rutted by cart wheels over the many years.

"Must have brought them over," you think aloud.

"What?"

"Horses. The founding fathers of New Strathbeg, they brought horses and other livestock to start a breeding programme here. Including tools to quarry and construct. Telling you, those Victorians could build!"

You look back at the sturdy cottages, feeling oddly impressed of what such people were capable of – and your blood runs cold. The villagers are running about, lanterns and torches searching each and every building, the surrounding gardens. Angry shouts drift towards you.

"Hmm, I get the idea they realize we've gone."

"Again!" Tess growls. You realize her initial distress is now giving way to a weary anger. "Huh, shame those colonists didn't bring any sense with them!"

Dark humour aside, you know she has a point: trying to talk reason with such people would prove a tragic mistake on your part. And there's more to their vile behaviour than being isolated from the world for a hundred and forty years. For now, you're left with a choice of two paths onward with a murderous mob at your back. Will you head north-west (turn to 72) or north (turn to 15)?

-50-

Polina treats you to some deliciously hot seaweed soup and fish cooked over the fire, with a shot of brandy for good measure. Then, she treats any wounds with an old med-kit. All this restores 1 Dexterity point and 16 Strength points.

"Here," she pushes a small package into your hands, "salted fish – with four tins of peaches and a couple of bags of crisps I'd found a couple of months back."

"You're not coming with us?"

"I'll row you back to the plane, but no further. The Elders are getting edgy about my presence here; I can't risk them finding my hiding place. But listen: I've got a dinghy equipped with an outboard motor with a limited amount of petrol. Also, take this," she pushes into your hand a flare pistol. "Get to the lighthouse, fire once, and I'll pick you up. There's a little inlet where I can hide, not far from the port itself. I'll await your signal there."

Note down the Russian Flare Pistol (with 1 ammo) and three Meals – each meal restores 3 Strength points. However, *if* you are a Drama Student, your charm manages to persuade Polina in giving you 2 extra flares for the Pistol and she parts with a small Bottle of Brandy: each tot reduces each damage to Strength by 1, and may be taken quickly before combat. There's enough for 2 tots. The effects will wear off after that combat.

She rows you both back to the site of the battered mustang. Fortunately, it seems to be clear of snipers; they must have gone west, following the coast, doubtless overlooked the cave and still looking for you but in the wrong place. This is a small victory - there's bound to be other Immortals and their Lich lackeys hunting for you – although it makes your task a little easier.

"Good luck my friends!" Polina waves goodbye. "Don't forget: we'll meet again, at the lighthouse."

Tess shields her eyes against the tropical sun. "The yacht's still there," she observes.
 "Right, then let's head that way, then."
 Turn to 99.

-51-

You frown. "Hang on, that raspy voice....it's just like Nick's."
 "Oh no," she realizes, "another victim."
 "Yeah. Except here I'm not sure if we'll get this particular Lich to see reason. Last time it - oh God, sorry! - I meant *'he'* recognised something familiar from his...former life."
 "And we've no idea who this is," she nods.
 "Nor how predictable. My guess is he came here in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, so heck knows how jumbled his mind is, how much he's forgotten – *and* what he's allowed to remember."
 Bearing this in mind, will you risk approaching the Lich (turn to 85) or decide it's not worth the risk and hurry on northwards (turn to 13)?

-52-

The hounds are gaining, both you and Tess run harder, lungs near to bursting. You're about twenty yards from the tree-line when something heavy slams into your back. You collapse to the ground, winded, canine teeth bared, snarling, daring you to get up again. Tess tries to kick the brute off you – then gasps in horror: "Oh m-my God...it's a skeleton. A *living* skeleton, Alex!"
 "Go!" you shout, trying to ignore the claws digging into your back. "Before the others arrive!"
 Reluctantly, she does so, but...too late. Two more skeletal dogs chase her down just as she reaches the tree-line. A few villagers arrive on the scene, laughing triumphantly at your plight.
 "I told ye, Duncan," chuckles one, "thorse Lich hoonds are bonnie tae have!"
 "Aye," he nods agreement – before clunking you over the head. Flashing lights, then you black out, Duncan's words the last you ever hear: "An' they'll be the next ones tae meet the Elders..."

-53-

"Close your eyes!" you warn Tess. Purposefully, you aim low so the searing light drives back these undead Lichs. They howl in fear, the villagers curse their temporary blindness – however, both you and Tess remain unaffected, enabling you to strike for the tree-line. Turn to 87.

-54-

You bring the stool down hard on his skull. 'Rob' Roy sags to the floor like a rag-doll. Although relieved the immediate threat is over – despite his being a deceitful villain - deep down is the fear that you've killed someone. Warily, you check his pulse...still breathing, but knocked out cold. *Thank God, I'm no killer after all!* Then, you frown in puzzlement, certain he'd sustained a few cuts and one bruise to his cheek during the scuffle. Now, there's no sign of any wounds! Who – or *what* – is this fellow?
 A sudden banging at the door alerts you to trouble. "Robbie? Robbie 'Roy!'" comes a shout through the half-open window.
 A pause of uncertainty, then a woman's says in hushed tones, "Noise died doon – quiet as the grave, now."
 "Aye, *too* quiet. I dinnae like this. Oor thirrd visitoor is more trouble than we'd thought. Where are his friends?"
 "We've taken them from Roy's shed tae David's cellar. They worn't be goin' anywhere."
 "Aye, bonnie. Head on back there and return with a few of the others. Hurry, Grace, fast as ye can!"
 "Aye, I will Duncan!"
 Running footsteps, then you risk a peek through the lace curtains, spotting a tall fellow with black

curly hair and a dark face, arms folded, piercing blue eyes staring at the front door, waiting, ready for trouble. You'd rather not risk tackling a younger (perhaps stronger) man than Roy. But one thing's for certain: you need to find and rescue your friends, then return to *Moonrunner* and depart this dangerous place. Before Grace can return with reinforcements you must first escape Roy's cottage. There's no back door – *damn!* - so you tear upstairs and burst into a back room serving as some kind of study. More black and white photographs upon the walls here, although these appear to have been taken more recently and by using the same developing technique that captured the portrait downstairs. These pictures have captions beneath written in an eloquent hand-writing. *Curious...* Will you stop briefly to look over them (turn to **83**) or do you reckon there's little time to waste and escape through the window here (turn to **23**)?

-55-

Seizing the initiative, you point out his loss of memory from the moment they discovered New Strathbeg – and focus on what followed. “Drained us of life-force?” he repeats in astonishment. “Do you jest, sir? Or is this some kind of trick...?”

“Well, for proof, simply look at your hands.”

“My hands-?”

Captain Harding glances down – and staggers back in shock. “Wha-?” he wails. “What is this? I-I'm a corpse! A walking *corpse!*”

Turn to **91**.

-56-

As they get within five yards, however, the Lichs suddenly stagger to their knees, clamping foul claws upon their heads, moaning, whimpering their agony, repelled by the divine power of Saint Fergus. The two Immortals here witness this setback with shock and fear – which in turn fills you with hope; seizing the initiative, you grab Tess's hand and run through the sprawling, stumbling Lich mob. But the sharp stammer of a machine gun causes you to duck down behind a grassy knoll. Bullets punch into earth softened by rain.

“Where on earth did they get a machine gun from?” pants Tess.

“There's been so many shipwrecks over the years, supplying the Immortals with resources other than 'sustenance'. They've learned to breakdown and reverse engineer bits of technology over the decades.”

“I thought they wanted us alive?”

“Yeah, so logically they're aiming low, cripple but not kill us. Hmm, that might work to our advantage....”

Stealthily, you crawl across the damp grass, working your way around which (hopefully) will throw them off the scent. Then, you push Tess ahead, shouting instructions to zig-zag in your mad flight away from the fallen, forgotten church. With your body as the closest target, to some extent at least Tess is more protected. But you must roll six dice. If you are a Wrestler (albeit heavier) add 2 to the roll. Now, if the result is higher than your current Dexterity and Strength scores combined, lose 2 Strength points as a bullet clips your thigh. Although painful, the wound is superficial and does little to slow you down, spurred on by your minor victory over the Lichs. Once out of visual range, in the hope of avoiding further encounters with enemy groups who might double back, you must decide whether to head north east for cover of the forest (turn to **81**) or across grassland to the north west (turn to **93**).

-57-

The Lich wheezes an arrogant laugh and grabs you by the throat. You're suddenly fighting for breath. Tess, fearful for your life, tries to wrench free its vice-like grip. It snarls, whacks her around the face, stunning her. Your struggles weaken, then you black out – later regaining consciousness only to find wraiths of decayed green suck the life from your body; claiming one more soul - and another Lich - to help sustain the evil of New Strathbeg....

-58-

Lizzie invites you to sit down. As with Roy's place, a mid-Victorian décor dominates – although a couple of trophies taken from shipwrecks over decades since are dotted about: a few posters from the 1930's, photos (both colour, and black and white), an Asterix and Obelix salt and pepper set, a digital watch (long since defunct), a varied range of hats, helmets, and coats....a paraphernalia of the outside world washed up on these dark shores for the last hundred and forty years.

"Look," sighs Lizzie, "I dinnae like what's happening here. But Ah'm innae minority."

"Alright," you smile understanding, "that's good enough for me. But what's all this talk about William Graham? He was a priest...?"

"Aye: Reverend William Graham, once parish priest of Noo Strathbeg – and a man I've never stopped loving."

"He died?" Tess asks, aware this mirrors Nick's own dreadful absence.

"Aye, although his tormented sool still haunts yon cliffs west o' here, where he...." Lizzie clutches the ring at her chest. "From where *they* throo him!"

Tess turns to you, aghast. "Oh God...they killed their own minister."

"Aye, that they did! He-he pleaded wi' them to keep faith, not give in to temptation. But they did. He then damned them all – an'...an' innae fit of rage the Elders dragged him oot, throo him intae the ocean!"

"These Elders," you frown, "who-?"

But she waves away further questions. "I shall not sare more, Alex. Only that I wish borth of you Godspeed and tak this..." Lizzie removes the ring, "Gor tae see Father...Graham's ghorst. He has the answers you seek. Reveal to him yon ring, that should help his poor spirit tae focus."

All this talk of restless ghosts seems incredible to you – yet Lizzie is clearly serious. "And now, ye must hurry away; it worn't be long 'til they find you've escaped. There's nor time tae lose! Find Father Graham, then follow his advice. One more thing: beware the Lichs."

"Lichs?"

"They are...undead. Loochless victims, aye, who noo prowl the island," she falters, glances at Tess with a guilt-ridden expression, then places a tender hand on your friend's arm. "Ah'm sorry, hen, Ah really am."

"N-Nick," she gasps realization, tears welling in her eyes.

"Ornly by following William's advice can ye prevail 'gainst this foul curse. Ornly then may ye Nick find soome solace that, at least, borth ye survived."

You clench the ring in your fist, nod confirmation. "Thank you, Lizzie, we'll do that." You notice the Ring has two diamonds and three emeralds; quite an expensive trinket! Once outside, Tess is greatly troubled - although whether she disbelieves or doesn't *want* to believe, you're uncertain. "Alex, do you reckon what she said was true? About Nick, I mean?"

"Tess," you hug her close, "we'll find him."

"B-but what if they've...?"

"Now, hang on, we mustn't think that. You know Nick – so confident and determined, he'd find his way out of the Knossos maze clutching the minotaur's head as a trophy!"

"Yeah..." she sniffs a laugh, "you're probably right there."

"Course I am!"

Deep down, though, you're worried to the bone. This whole place, it's people, seem unnaturally evil. At first, you assumed they were cannibals – but, according to Lizzie, it's much worse than that: Restless ghosts? Satanic worship? Undead Liches?! One would be severely tempted to say she was crazy, but after what her 'kin' mentioned in the living room at least *confirmed* William Graham's incorporeal existence. Still, one thing kindles a spark of hope: '*...be rid o' that cursed ring from about yer neck, Lizzie! Not ornly is it an insoolt, but a real danger to oos all!*' Perhaps there's something more to this bond between Lizzie and the martyred Reverend Graham? Only time will tell...

Turn to **49**.

-59-

One of the Elders suddenly stops, her mouth drops in shock as she points at the glowing ring on your finger. "That...that ring," she gasps, "Ah gave it tae mae daughter, Lizzie!"

You frown – then realization hits you like a mailed fist. Of course! Reverend Graham had been killed prior to New Strathbeg's pact with the devil, but Lizzie is an Immortal; she could only have been a child at the time...Reverend Graham's child. So *that's* why young Lizzie's loyalties were divided. It all makes a tragic kind of sense now.

Laird Hay hisses a warning: "Stand with oos, Elizabeth!"

However, she pays him no heed; dormant memories of a long lost love and deep concern for her daughter are evoked, she graces you with a smile. "Alex," she whispers pleadingly, "end this evil madness."

You nod, open your jacket, revealing the sacred cross. In the face of such virtuous splendour, these malevolent Night Wraiths howl their fear, edging back, ethereal arms shielding masks of revulsion. Only Lizzie senior seems untroubled, head bowed in penitence, accepting a final end to this nightmare with sheer relief.

"Noooo!" wails Laird Hay. "Ye cannae do this! Noo Strathbeg – mae beloved colony...!"

"Has ended," you growl, "along with your wretched existence!"

As one, the portraits suddenly combust, flames lick greedily and unchecked at the paper, then smoulder the elaborate wooden frames. Eventually, their blood-curdling howls fade until nothing but smoky air surrounds you. At long last, the Elders have been destroyed!

Something grabs your arm – your heart leaps, hits the brain, plummets back to your stomach.

"Oh...h-heck," you gasp for breath, "Tess – you scared the living daylights out of me!"

"I scared you?" she grins, raises an eyebrow. "That horrible wailing was enough to wake the dead! Hey...what on earth's been going on? Smells like fifth of November in here!"

By way of explanation, you hold up the blessed cross. "And we're alive - all thanks to the divine power of Saint Fergus," you add. "Look, best we get out-"

Suddenly, the doors crash open. Richie and Peter Sinclair stop dead in their tracks, gazing around at the burnt embers where once their parents sought sanctuary.

"Y-ye..." stammers Peter, "the Elders....ye destroyed them!"

With that, they fly into a wild rage, knives at the ready. If you possess a Pistol turn to **2**. Otherwise – with Tess still pretty weak – you must fight them on your own:

Richie MacAlister and Peter Sinclair

Dexterity 7 Strength 14

If you win, you can now reach the doors ahead. However, even with the Elders' demise along with their loss of control over the Liches, those villagers outside still pose an armed and deadly threat. One which you simply can't fight through; you're only hope is if you've made certain acquaintances during your adventure...have you noted down any 'LICH' words? If so, rearrange them to make sense and follow those instructions. If the words or resulting reference make no sense, turn to **92**.

-60-

The ring glows a warm amber; you must be somewhere over its twin. You dive, powerful strokes propelling you towards a skeleton lying there on the pebble sea floor, still weighted down by an iron bell chained about its bones...Reverend William Graham, martyr of New Strathbeg. However, you can't afford to linger with such sympathies – you're running out of air fast! - so you fumble in his tattered coat pocket, fingers close around the key, then you pull for the surface, lungs close to bursting. Shivering against the cool wind on your wet skin, you cling to the craggy rocks, catching your breath before attempting the laborious climb back up to Tess. Roll five dice. Unless you are a Boxer or Wrestler, add 3 to the die rolled. If it is the same or less than your current Strength and Dexterity combined turn to 8. If it is higher turn to 21.

-61-

After another mile or so, the trees become more sparse as gradually the forest gives way to an expanse of heather-strewn moorland. Although feeling a little exposed to any hostile eyes that may be watching, it's something of relief to be free of the claustrophobic 'cover' of the trees. Nevertheless, both of you remain vigilant on your journey northwards. Turn to 13.

-62-

With the Elders' demise, your Lich allies arrive and engage the Immortals! The fighting is both fierce and brutal....yet the enemy far outnumbers your forces and several of them manage to get past your desperate defence, claiming your lives in a dreadful desire for revenge. Ultimately, the Immortals are overpowered by the physically supernatural powerful Lichs – yet they cannot be killed by normal means. And nor can the Cross of Saint Fergus cannot be handled by undead – even friendly ones – so the souls in New Strathbeg lighthouse shall remain imprisoned. Without their Elders, and the colony's pact with the devil broken, the Immortals shall gradually descend into Lichdom. Before doing so, however, it's likely they'll consign the precious cross to the waves of an ever-turbulent sea....

-63-

The bough strains yet holds under your weight as Tess grabs hold, gasping in fear as her head is almost submerged. You pull her out of the treacherous, nasty stuff and back on to solid ground.

"Oh God," she trembles in your protective embrace. "Oh God, Alex, oh God..."

"It's okay," you soothe, "you're safe now." Which is more than can be said for the unfortunate goat, you muse – but keep such thoughts from a sensitive Tess who almost met the same end. "Come on," you help her up, "let's go."

Turn to 61.

-64-

The rain has died off. Emerging from the sorry church, angry shouts and bellowing voices ride a night air across the distance. You stare down towards the village, bobbing lanterns are snaking up; you guess about a dozen villagers to each track.

"Great," you sigh, "just like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid."

"Lass," she corrects: "Sundance 'Lass'."

"Heh, yeah, okay – you don't have a pair of six shooters to your name, do you?"

"No, of course not...they're back home with the rest of my gun collection."

"Hmm," you grin, "Miss Sarcasm."

"Touche."

Still, some hardware wouldn't go amiss in this dire situation; you can't fight off such a determined posse, so for now you'll have to evade their clutches and then, hopefully, escape the island itself. A

mile or so further on, the track splits. Terrain to the north levels off to a plain of tall grass – which might conceal your progress from the pursuing villagers. Meanwhile, the trail west continues through tussocky hills and granite boulders, so the way ahead will be laborious and with little cover. Will you trust in the northerly path (turn to **93**) or head further west (turn to **41**)?

-65-

“This way,” you tug her arm and wade into the shallows, “to the wreck!”

You have to swim the last twenty yards before hauling yourselves over the rusted port-side rail.

“They aren't chasing us,” she frowns.

“Yeah,” you reply, equally as puzzled, and somewhat disturbed by their jeering laughter drifting across the waves. These otherwise relentless pursuers suddenly seem content to let you escape – *or have we?* Then, their perverted howls of delight increase...

“Hold it right there, pal!”

Two more Liches were already aboard this sorry hulk, lying in wait. Your heart sinks.

“Oh God,” gasps Tess, “what do we do now?”

You point out, “That steel door – hurry!”

Somehow, you manage to grind the heavy door open, haul it aside, plunge into the murky depths. Tess has a small pocket torch handy; you use it and descend to the crews quarters. Then, she lets out a small yelp: wan torchlight has revealed the skeletal remains of a sailor on his bunk. After all that's happened, you both hold your breath, half-expecting it to move – yet it remains quite still. Further examination reveals a bullet hole in the skull; a Colt 45 pistol fallen near the dead man's bony hand.

You shake your head. “Poor devil, he preferred suicide than share the fate of his mates.”

“And seeing them... 'transformed', that alone would have sent him over the edge-”

“WHO'S THERE!” demands a nearby voice, American accent obvious through the rasp. You were so preoccupied with the skeleton that you threw caution to the wind.

“Switch off that goddamn light, will yer!”

“Quick,” you instruct Tess in hushed tones, “it doesn't realize who we are - yet. We can still get out of here...”

However, it's much too late to do so now, for the Lich's outburst has attracted the attention of its fellows. A dozen or so come shambling out of their cabins, snarl upon seeing you. You are surrounded. Tess screams in horror, cowers beside you for protection, utter dread coursing through you both.

“Say,” drawls one, “what have we got here?”

“A couple o' turkeys fer the pluckin', looks o' it. Dropped in on our furlough.”

“Yeah, whatever. Grab 'em! The Elders been on their tail for hours.”....Do you possess a Pin-up Photograph? If so, add together all the digits in the year written on the back and turn to that reference. Otherwise, if you possess the Cross of Saint Fergus turn to **29**. If you possess neither object turn to **32**.

-66-

The Cross dutifully protects its bearer. At first sign of hostility, all six Liches are consumed by a surge of indescribable torment. They howl, stagger, collapse to their knees. Captain Harding is clutching clawed hands to his rotten scalp. “Sh-shoot...them!” he growls against the pain. “The...El-Elders' will...must be...carried out...! Argh!”

You don't hang about but run northwards before they can recover enough to fire (turn to **13**).

-67-

Lose 3 Strength points. Before you can help Tess, however, all this commotion has alerted Duncan who comes charging in to aid his kinsmen. As your senses are still reeling, reduce your Dexterity by 1 for this combat – although you do manage to snatch up the empty fuel can as a makeshift weapon

against his knife. You must defend yourself:

Duncan McPhee

Dexterity 6 Strength 11

If you win, you may claim his knife which adds 1 to your Dexterity during combat. Turn to **90**.

-68-

You point the Pistol at Duncan's chest and fire twice. He gasps at the pain, staggers back – then you tackle him by kicking his stomach, grab the scruff of the neck and throw him headlong downstairs to be greeted by those maimed, dismembered Lichs at the bottom. Turn to **78**.

-69-

Your host rows into the dark depths which soon opens out into a cavern of stalactites. The boat shores up and you clamber out, almost tripping in your eagerness to reach a crackling camp-fire fuelled by broken old planks.

"Wait, wait," she laughs, "it'll make more sense to strip off those wet clothes first. Here," she hands you each a blanket from her store of salvage, "these will do while your clothes dry."

"Er...thanks."

"Oh, don't be embarrassed! I'll be back soon – got to check on the outboard motor. In the meantime, you and your girlfriend get comfortable by the fire."

"But...she's not my..."

The woman disappears before you can explain. Tess begins to giggle at your awkwardness. *Ah well, you grin, I'm just glad she's happy – only let this warm moment last forever...*

In truth, you're annoyed with yourself for allowing yourself to fall asleep. Thank God you were discovered by a fellow survivor! And a survivor, it seems, who's more organised.

"She's got herself a nice little hide-out," you wonder, "and well-stocked it seems."

"Certainly been busy in her stay here," agrees Tess.

"Makes sense that she would have explored the island, just like all the others who came before her – except caution and a little luck played their part in her survival, it seems."

"Poor devils," sighs Tess, "all those poor people. Imagine being elated at finding signs of civilization, 'fellow' human beings, only...that they're not!" she suddenly snarls, beautiful features harden into a wrathful expression similar to the one you witnessed in the cellar.

This worries you. "Tess, please, it's okay-"

"Leave her."

You both turn, startled, to find your mysterious host behind you. She sits at the fire, stern gaze peers into your own eyes.

"Her anger's natural. And it's just what's needed to survive this evil place – with a little control, of course. We all need a sturdy backbone to endure....as my grandfather often said."

"Your grandfather?"

"He fought at Stalingrad. A hell that surely puts even this place to shame – if his stories are anything to go by. Ah yes, he couldn't resist even little Poli's inquisitive mind. That's me: Polina Matulik. Yet my memory of him inspired my own escape, helped me to survive these five months..."

"Five months!" you gape. "What do you live on?"

"Well, fish mainly. Plenty of those about! My father ran a small fishing business so," she shrugs, allows a rare smile, "it's my forte. The seaweed's a strange colour but quite edible. Still, it's nice for a change in diet...a private boat from Japan carried some treats, a Godsend for me, but not for that poor family."

You nod grim understanding. "Have you met any other survivors?"

"No. You're the first I've come in direct contact with. Oh, I've spotted others, tried to signal them –

but those Immortals always get there first. They're very prepared, always seem to know when a storm will strike."

"So the storms can't be natural," you deduce, "and they're caused by the same evil afflicting this island."

"It seems so."

"You mentioned 'Immortals'...is it really possible, Polina?"

"Sounds incredible – *impossible*, yes? And yet..."

"And yet, here they are. But how on earth did all this happen?"

"New Strathbeg started just like any other colony. From what Roy told me, the founding fathers set sail from Aberdeen in May of 1863, and discovered this island on 13th February the following year. It was uninhabited but bountiful farming country, and so they settled. Then, around October of 1870, a mysterious disease began to claim New Strathbeg's children below the age of fourteen. The doctor couldn't make sense of this new, lethal germ. No known remedies worked. Realising their entire colony would die by around 1920, the parents – now referred to as the 'Elders' – became desperate to save their beloved offspring, to secure the future of their precious colony. And so..."

"And so they made a pact with the devil," you nod.

"You guessed it. Although, the rest of the story is something I've pieced together from snippets of conversation, overheard when I myself was a prisoner and when I've spied on them."

"So, these 'Elders' are...still alive?"

"Oh no, not alive. They exist now as terrible spirits, wraiths capable of draining the life-force from shipwrecked innocents."

"To feed on?" Roy's words still haunt the memory of your arrival here.

"Yes – but the devil claims their souls. That was part of the pact: 'as long as you, the Elders, serve me then your children shall live forever.'"

"But what if they broke with the bargain?"

"Ah, then the Elders will be eternally damned to hell, while their children age normally...and beyond their hundredth birthday shall begin to decompose, become Lichs, cursed to a twilight existence. New Strathbeg would become a colony of the undead."

The three of you gaze into the flames, mulling over the tragic history of this colony's descent into darkness. But perhaps there might be way to stop all these evil deeds and save future innocents from Lichdom...

"Nevertheless," Polina holds up a finger, "we must always focus on the positive, as my grandfather used to say. Hmm, and to that end: perhaps you've learned something useful in your short time here?"

If you possess the Cross of Saint Fergus turn to **22**.

If you possess a music Cassette turn to **71**.

Once having turned to the relevant entries, continue by turning to **50**.

-70-

"Don't get too comfortable," you warn, "five minutes then we head back out. I want to put as much distance between those evil folk and ourselves as possible."

Tess gives a massive sigh, yet nods weary agreement. In one pocket of your water-proof jacket is a packet of peanuts and a bottle of water. Tess regards the provisions with a mixture of disbelief and hunger. "Now, where did *those* come from?"

"I stuffed them away before we came ashore – just in case we got stuck. Huh, must have forgotten all about them! Here," you tip some nuts in her hand, "we'll share these out. Go easy on the water! It has to last us."

However, even your discipline is severely tested at not gulping it down your parched throat. Although a little better, you may only gain 2 Strength points after the long trek you've endured. Now, if you have an Iron Key turn to **43**. If not turn to **18**.

-71-

"Say, Polina, you don't have any batteries for this old walkman, do you?"

"Hmm, no....but I *do* have a battered radio-cassette player somewhere – wait a moment...." She duly returns with a rectangular device. "A cheap design, but should serve its purpose."

You pop the tape in, press 'play'....frantic guitar riffs, crash of drums, and the vocalist who seems to be a banshee fills the cavern.

"Ow!" Tess instantly covers her ears and pulls a face. "If nothing else, this racket should drive away those Elders!"

"Well," you nudge her playfully, "in that case: it's music to my ears."

"Huh! Call that music?"

Polina has been deprived of new music for five months (having continuously played through a selection limited to nine salvaged tapes) and she mimes the rock guitar, her way of showing approval. Note the Cassette Player on your adventure sheet. To save the batteries, you click 'stop'.

"Finally!"

"Oh, go back to your folk music, Tess!"

"Hoy!" she growls, hands rest on her hips, lovable eyes burn into your own. "It seems I've got more in common with islanders when it comes to taste in music."

You waggle the player in her face. "Hah! Well, in that case, they're already doomed!"

Dramatically, Polina rolls her eyes heavenward. "Just as I was starting to miss even those awful soap operas..." and shakes her head. Return to 69.

-72-

The path cuts through low hills. It's a strange sort of place, with tussocky grass and thistles, yet also the occasional palm tree – almost as if the land itself began to transform and resemble the colonists' native land. *Impossible!* your mind shouts. True, planted crops and orchards may well take root, perhaps even do well in such a tropical climate...but that's the thing: the temperature is far below normal levels for the Pacific. *Very odd!*

Nevertheless, you make good progress – covering a good two miles – before arriving at what appears to be a church, reduced now to a ramshackle affair, yet solidly built of that same oppressive grey granite. Most of the tiled roof has disappeared, leaving wooden beams at the mercy of the elements.

"God, I'm tired!" gasps Tess.

"Okay, we'll take a breather."

Her step falters. "Creepy place, Alex."

"Yeah, it is that. All it needs is, oh, an entirely new roof, some of the beams replacing, a lick of paint and varnish....wonder if there's a DIY store nearby?"

"Now then, Alex..." she warns – but even so she's drawn into the humour and can't help but smile with having you and your light-hearted sarcasm for company.

On a more grim note, however, such an obvious state of disrepair is testimony to the people turning away from their faith. What they've embraced is clearly not good for both your sakes – and Nick's. Thought of him evokes a determined resolve to confound, perhaps even defeat the evil of New Strathbeg. You both shelter under what little roof remains from a drizzle that started just before you sighted the church. Although, you're both grateful for a well-deserved rest in one of the dusty pews, hidden from plain view at least.

Tess suddenly twitches. "I heard something!"

You frown with concentration...then detect a faint rustling. It's coming from somewhere near the pulpit, now lying on its side. Will you get up to investigate (turn to 34) or not (turn to 64)?

-73-

As the undead Lichs close in, however, suddenly they're afflicted with terrible torment, staggering about, collapsing to their knees, whimpering, howling their intense pain. Three villagers – unaffected by the Cross – push their way through the throng of helpless, foul-smelling wretches and try to wrest the cross from you. While Tess takes on the first, you must deal with the other two:

Duncan McPhee and Hector Munro:
Dexterity 6 Strength 16

If you win, turn to 36.

-74-

Wary of possible ambush, you both stick together in a cautious search of the ruined farm. Tess yelps, then nudges your arm, nodding at something lying across the kitchen table. It is the skeleton of an adult. From the ragged remnant of a t-shirt with the name of a well-known rock band emblazoned across the chest; must have been a young man. Several rusted food cans clutter the floor at his booted feet.

"He took refuge here," you deduce grimly, "and the villagers found him."

Tess sighs, shakes her head in sorrow. "Poor lad. But, why didn't they capture him alive?"

"They meant to..." you point at the axe still clutched in one bony hand, "...but somebody's aim was off that day." You examine the unfortunate rocker further. "Yeah, look at his shirt here: bullet holes in his chest, two right at the heart. Being sat here, he must have presented a smaller, much more difficult target to wound."

"Poor devil, he must have been scared out of his wits...wait, what's this?"

Tess spots something else on the floor: it's a cassette walkman, such things were all the rage back in the 1980's – until CDs gradually pushed tape and vinyl formats into obscurity. She picks it up, ejects the tape, looks it over... "Catch 22' by Bloodbeast."

"Never heard of 'em."

"Hmm, nor me."

"Does it still work, Tess?"

She presses the 'play' button – but the spools refuse to turn. "Nope, the batteries must be truly dead after all this time. Besides, it might have been damaged during the attack."

"Yeah...was a bit hopeful, wasn't it?"

If you want to hang on to this Cassette, also note down 'Catch 22'. With nothing else of interest here, you leave the rocker's remains to R.I.P (turn to 35).

-75-

Slowly, reluctantly, you raise the glass to your lips...*ugh!* You grimace as the strong bitter whiskey hits your taste buds, claws down your throat, into a stomach that instantly rebels. "A-ahem...hmm, nice," you manage to gasp.

"Bonnie stuff, aye!"

You lean to place the glass on a nearby table – and almost keel over on the floor. "Crikey..." you rub your brow.

"Ye all right, laddie?"

"I-I don't...feel so goo-"

Your eyelids droop as you begin to black out. Roy's words grow fainter, "Oh aye, that'll be the sleepin' draught. Potent stuff..."

Turn to 12.

-76-

The Lich suddenly staggers, falls to its knees before the divine power of Saint Fergus. There, it squirms at your feet, a fearsome undead monstrosity now reduced to a wretched, whimpering creature. Whilst it's helpless, you and Tess flee south (turn to 27).

-77-

The ghost sighs, shakes its head. "Alas, it seems Ah still await a sign. Yet mae faith is wearing thin, as is mae patience. Leave me, mortals. May God bless ye escape and spare thee from the hellish trials ahead. But now, ye must leave mae to my oon eternal fate..." So saying, the wretched spirit fades from sight. Turn to 39.

-78-

"Away wi' ye, banshee!" snarls Roy, and finally manages to shove her away. "An' noo...ugh!"

You've come up behind him, grasping both the flare and cross in a tight grip. He struggles – but against such rage he has no chance.

"You took my *friend's* soul," you snarl in his ear, then kick at the back of his knee joint. "Then you tried to claim the soul of his *fiancé*," second knee goes, Roy collapses, gasping with pain. "Lastly, you tried to take *mine*." The flare is snatched from his failing grasp, you simply toss it to the waiting sea. Finally, he loses grip on the precious cross itself. "And this..." You ram his head against the rail, blood bubbles from his nose and mouth, "...is my thanks for, oh, such a wonderful stay here."

Nick's clawed hand rests on your shoulder. "Come on, mate. He's done for. You've a job to do, remember?"

"Yeah," you nod, slowly releasing Roy who scrabbles for support of the rail.

You head for the beacon of souls. Their pleas intensify, as if they sense the very presence of Saint Fergus, his calling, for so long desiring to be free of torment.

Roy manages to stand, slowly draws a knife from his belt...

"Almost forgot!" Nick seizes the remaining Immortal, hisses in his ear, "this one is for *all* those souls you've taken!"

With one, effortless swing, Nick consigns Roy to the waves far below, whose scream of failure fades with his fall.

"Go on, mate," he nods encouragement.

"{*Italian*} God's blessing on you, Alex – our saviour!"

"This is it, pal," urges Buchanan, "toss it in."

Harding salutes you one final time. "It's been an honour, and a privilege, my good sir!"

"Hey, Alex!" Sergeant Pearce yells from below. "Sorry I can't come up to say my goodbyes. But listen....thanks, buddy!"

Tess puts one hand on the cross. "Nick," she smiles between the tears, "I love you."

"My lovely Tess," he sobs, "r-remember what I said?"

"The heart," her voice whispers, trembling.

"Yeah, that's where I'll be. Always!"

"Goodbye, my love."

You drop the cross into the beacon. A warm, golden glow instantly floods the lighthouse – doubtless to be seen for leagues all around. Gradually, it recedes....revealing only yourself and Tess, stood in a dark, desolate place with only a ghostly wind and thrashing sea for company. Well, that's not quite true. You hear the sound of solitary footsteps pacing the steps. But you're not at all concerned: you know who it is and merely await their arrival. Sure enough, Reverend Graham's daughter, young Lizzie, steps into view, astonishment clear upon her face. "Ye did it," she gasps, "an' they've gorne. All gorne – except fer mae. Hoo-?"

Tess places hands on Lizzie's arms. "God spared you," she smiles, "don't question it, just be thankful."

"Yes, we did it," you sigh, before sagging to the floor, exhausted. "The evil. It's finally over."

Now, there only remains the issue of departing this place. Do you possess a Russian Flare Pistol *and* 1 ammo? If so turn to **100**. If not turn to **89**.

-79-

The English officer marches into view – whereupon Tess screams in sheer terror. The very blood drains from your face, heart pounds, legs weaken, you almost faint from the terrible shock. For six decomposed *corpses* are now striding from out of the shadows! The stench of decay is overpowering and you gag (lose 1 Strength point). Tess can only scream again before running and clinging to your arm, burying her head in your chest, hiding from these approaching monstrosities. *This is impossible!* your reeling mind shouts – and yet, incredible or not, there they stand...

The leader of this undead group spots you, halts, momentarily taken aback by your sudden appearance. "I say, what...it's *them!* Enemy in sight, lads, stand by to attack...!"

"W-wait," somehow, you manage to overcome the initial horror, find your voice, "please...wait! We mean you no harm."

You notice this Lich is fairly tall and in quite an advanced state of decomposition. He, or it, is still wearing the tattered, faded scarlet of an officer's jacket, with most of the brass buttons missing. "Very well, sir, I accept your surrender. But I warn you: no tricks! Any aggression on your part will be met with severe force."

"Of course...but first, if I may ask your name?"

"Certainly..." the Lich comes to attention, "Captain Alistair Harding, once having served as part of Her Majesty's armed forces aboard a convict transport."

Tess has recovered some of her composure; she's by now listening intently and gasps. "To Australia?"

"That's correct, madam. Or, to be more precise, that was our *intended* destination. Yet a cruel fate saw fit to sink the 'Crimson Tide' steamer in a most fearsome storm. All hands were lost to the sea – save for myself and five others," he half turns, gesturing to the 'men' behind him, all wearing ragged convicts, "thus marooned, together we explored the place and came upon New Strathbeg...and then, er..."

Now is the time to try and jog his memory. It would help if you have something of his...if you possess a box bearing his name, add together *all* the numbers in the date and year inscribed upon it, and turn to that reference. If you lack such an item, you must resort to words alone and convince Captain Harding of the evil Elders who have brainwashed his mind. Have you a Drama Student background (turn to **55**) or not (turn to **20**)?

-80-

Hoping none of them suddenly comes out to use the loo, or whatever other reason, warily you both stand by the door and listen to what's been said:

"...Ah dorn't knor, but that Nick laddie was a tough cookie and nor mistake. Should keep the Elders happy for a wee while."

"Aye," laughs one, "we worn't need another sool fer months, ye never knor!"

"Still," interjects someone else, "we've two more to gor. Ah worn't rest easy until borth are given tae the Elders."

A chorus of laughter from the others (there must be a good dozen or so in there, you guess). Yet he dismisses their humoured protests: "Aye, laugh all ye want. But Graham's ghorst bothers mae somewhat. Should any o' thorse castaways stumble across his restless spirit an' discover the truth..."

"Ach, let yon traitor wonder the wilderness fer eternity," snarls a new voice, "that priest is nor

danger tae oos noo." A few others growl agreement. "Aye, the Elders threw him intae the sea, consigned him tae a watery grev, for his loyalties lay elsewhere!"

Somebody else puts in her two-pennies worth, "Aye, let his bornes lie heavy upon the ocean floor and his sool pine fer a peace that will nae ever come!"

"An' another thing," growls a voice vaguely familiar yet you can't quite place, "be rid o' that cursed ring from aboot yer neck, Lizzie! Not ornly is it an insoolt, but a real danger to oos all!"

Lizzie gasps (you can imagine her clutching the ring at her chest protectively). "What Father...Graham an' Ah had together," she despairs, "are ye tae condemn me noo fer fond memories...?"

"From another life – one o' hardship and loss! Did he think of ye, Lizzie, when the man defied oos? Left ye broken wi' despair, like the rest of oos?"

"Ah still remember him," she hisses.

"A foolish love fer a fool."

"An' ye should be grateful, lass!" snarls one of the women. "Ye also share in what the Elders did for oos!"

"Damn ye arrogance!" she snaps. "Ah'm leavin'."

Both you and Tess exchange a panicked look. Quickly, you scurry outside and – even though it's night-time once again – take cover in the garden. Sure enough, Lizzie comes storming out. *Very interesting*, you ponder, *this rift between Lizzie and her 'kinsmen'...* Will you follow Lizzie back home and try to learn more about this William Graham (turn to 19) or depart this village port of madmen (turn to 49)?

-81-

You decide that using the forest as cover is the best way to lose your pursuers. Do you have 'Danger Ahead' written down (turn to 24) or not (turn to 47)?

-82-

Roll one die. It it's a 1 or 2, the bullet lodges in your thigh: lose 1 Dexterity point and 4 Strength points. Otherwise, it creases your leg (lose 2 Strength points). Tess notices your predicament, hesitates, but you wave her away. "Go!" you yell. "Just go! Don't stop!"

For one terrible moment, she presents a tempting stationary target. Fortunately, this sniper doesn't seem quite so professional; he hesitates between your prone form and Tess. Too late, he opts to thwart her swift escape, evidently misses a few times as you don't hear a tell-tale cry of pain. Meanwhile, you half-run, half-limp onwards, fear and desperation pumps adrenalin into your veins in reaching the safety of an outcrop where the coast turns south-east, obscuring the sniper's line of sight. However, you must repeat the procedure of rolling four dice against your current Dexterity and Strength scores combined. If on this occasion the die roll proves *higher* turn to 3. If it is the same or less than your current score combined turn to 42.

-83-

These pictures seem to chronicle all shipwrecked 'visitors' over the years since 1873 (being the earliest record amongst them). Some have run aground, others half-sunk, by storms which frequent New Strathbeg. A Canadian freight ship, a Chinese junk, a luxury yacht from Australia...the macabre list goes on. There's even an American battleship from the Second World War: USS Chantilly...*hang on, didn't that feature on some documentary I watched a few years ago? Something about it disappearing from existence?* Moving on, evidently it seems even a US fighter-plane fell victim, the caption reads: '*One of two fascinating flying machines – first of which plummeted as a stone to the watery depths. However, the second pilot – namely Flight Lieutenant Hal Buchanan – ditched his 'Mustang' upon the waves only 3 miles north-north-east of Brimstone Cave, reaching us in what he called an 'inflatable dinghy'. A most remarkable fellow,*

one whom we deeply regretted feeding to our Elders.'

WHAT?! You read the last four words again: '...feeding to our Elders'. Your stomach churns as the terrible realization hits you: *cannibals!* This spurs you towards window and escape (turn to 23).

-84-

Leaping over Richie's sprawled body, you crash through the double doors. "Tess?" you yell. "Tess! Where-?"

The door slams shut behind you. Then, you hear a familiar voice come muffled through the wood: "Aye, Alex, nice of ye tae join oos, laddie," chuckles Roy. "The Elders are sor lookin' forward tae meeting ye!"

With the doors firmly locked and no windows to this place, one solitary light on the flag-stoned floor bathes a bundle lying there: *Tess!* Your heart leaps with joy at sight of your friend. However, before you can try to revive her, you detect movement out the corner of your eye...

Upon the oak-panelled walls are hung black and white photographic portraits of people in Victorian attire - New Strathbeg's founders, you realize, now referred to as the 'Elders'. However, these images now begin to glow an eerie green light. As one, all heads turn to peer down, at first regarding you with a mild curiosity - but then their eyes blaze with an unbridled greed. Slowly, these wraiths extricate themselves from their resting places.

"Ah," sighs one, "more lorst sools upon which tae feed!"

His whisper seems to come from the bottom of the grave itself. It chills the very blood.

"Who-what are you?" you snarl in defiance, hoping to mask the fear pounding in your heart.

At this, the twenty Elders gathering round suddenly shriek their laughter - it is a truly haunting sound that sends shivers along your spine. The fell spirit of Laird Samuel Gordon Hay approaches, resplendent in his officer's uniform of the 79th Highland Regiment - yet all trace of humanity in his face has eroded over these many years. He peers down upon you with amused contempt, then begins to speak:

"Ah, but ye already knor, Alex. And we must ensure the future of oor bonnie colony - ye sool shall be one of many tae help soostain oor existance fer millennia tae come..."

Oh heck! These warped, twisted wraiths won't listen to reason. Your life-force is only valued as a form of energy - like many others before you - to sustain the spectral Elders and ensure the Immortality of their children. The only way to stop this evil, age-old ritual is if you possess the Cross of Saint Fergus (turn to 59). Otherwise, turn to 25.

-85-

Lichs have the ability to see in the dark; this one soon spots you, halts, momentarily taken aback by your sudden appearance. "I say, what...it's *them!* Enemy in sight, lads, stand by to attack...!"

"Wait," you wave, "please wait! We mean you no harm."

Edging nearer, you notice this Lich is taller and in a more advanced state of decomposition than Nick. He, or it, is still wearing the tattered, faded scarlet of an officer's jacket, with most of the brass buttons missing. "Very well, sir, I accept your surrender. But I warn you: no tricks! Any aggression on your part will be met with severe force."

"Of course...but first, if I may ask your name?"

"Certainly..." the Lich comes to attention, "Captain Alistair Harding, once having served as part of Her Majesty's armed forces aboard a convict transport."

Tess gasps. "To Australia?"

"That's correct, madam. Or, to be more precise, that was our *intended* destination. Yet a cruel fate saw fit to sink the 'Crimson Tide' steamer in a most fearsome storm. All hands were lost to the sea -

save for myself and five others," he half turns, gesturing to the 'men' behind him, all wearing ragged convicts, "thus marooned, together we explored the place and came upon New Strathbeg...and then, er..."

Now is the time to try and jog his memory. It would help if you have something of his...if you possess a box bearing his name, add together *all* the numbers in the date inscribed upon it and turn to that reference. If you lack such an item, you must resort to words alone and convince Captain Harding of the evil Elders who have brainwashed his mind. Have you a Drama Student background (turn to 55) or not (turn to 20)?

-86-

"Nor," she shakes her head, backs away to her front door, "J-just leave mae be. Ah worn't alert the others – I oor that tae Father Graham, at least – b-but Ah can't help ye....Ah'm sorry," she fumbles for her key, pushes open the door. "Joost gor away, far from here!"

"But Nick," wails Tess, "what about my Nick?"

She regards Tess with look of pity. "Ah...Ah'm sorry, lass – but he's lorst tae ye now."

And, with that, she slams the door shut. *Damn – that went well!*

"Wha-what did she mean?" Tess sobs. "My Nick's 'lost'?"

It seems Lizzie has answers both of you want – but you'll never learn the truth by standing on her doorstep.

"We'd better go, Alex, before she changes her mind and rings the others for help."

"Don't panic: Roy's place didn't have a phone," you grin, "I'm betting all of these cottages don't – they haven't exactly progressed to a modern level of technology."

The door looks sturdy but weathered so you might be able to break it down. If you are a Wrestler turn to 26. If you are a Boxer, roll six dice. If the result is the same or less than your Dexterity and current Strength combined turn to 26. If it is higher, you cannot break it down, and decide to leave by turning to 49 before Lizzie's panicked cries alerts the others.

-87-

You manage to reach the tree-line before those two groups converge. The villagers, armed with rifles, open fire but can't get a bead on your hopping forms. Upon reaching the shadows, you delve further inside and do not stop – until Tess literally collapses from exhaustion. You half-support, half-drag her into cover of some bushes before the angry voices and snarls of Liches get uncomfortably close. They search for ten minutes – and, fortunately for you, without success. Once the voices have receded, you emerge from hiding and head further into the forest. Turn to 36.

-88-

Hurriedly, you fumble inside your rucksack for the cassette player, press the 'play' button...the effects are immediate. The Lich stops dead in its tracks. It staggers back, skeletal hands clamped over rotting ears.

"{*Italian*} Oh, God!" it howls. "Even now he continues to haunt me!"

Mercifully, you click the 'stop' button. "Ezio was your friend?"

"Wha-? Oh, thank God," it collapses, "please, no more."

"Who are you? Tell me what happened."

"I-I remember it all now. I'm Ambrosi Destro. My *nipote*....Ezio, and I had a....disagreement. As you can see, my yacht was undamaged, so I wanted to circumnavigate the island's coast, search for signs of life. But Ezio, on the other hand, wanted to strike inland. That young man was so impatient and stubborn! And so....you found him?" Gently as possible, you explain where and how he had died. Turn to 94.

-89-

For now, you'll have to stay at Lizzies place, exhausted, numb, and drained – but over the next few days you find time to grieve properly for Nick's passing. In a few days, you begin to search the island for a seaworthy craft to brave the ocean. Or perhaps you'll sight a passing ship that will pick you up? For the time being, however, it seems that New Strathbeg is your home....

-90-

You gaze upon the man who made the sneak attack. "He-he was dead," you stammer in disbelief.

"Are you sure?"

"I throttled the life out of him, Tess!"

"Well," she shrugs, "the people here must be hardier than we'd thought."

"Yeah, you're right. He must have pretended – huh, had me fooled good and proper!"

Nevertheless, this encounter has left you feeling unsettled. Something isn't quite right about these men – aside from their evil nature, that is.

"Anyway," you head towards the door, "we're still alive, so let's try to find Nick and escape this damned island of lunatics!"

Tentatively, you turn the door handle and find a narrow hall leading to the front door. There is a staircase on your left, a door tucked just beyond this from which you can hear the distinct sounds of conversation and laughter.

"Quite a crowd," Tess observes, "perhaps *all* of them are in the front room."

"Perhaps," you whisper back, "but we need to be careful here. Let's not assume anything, one or two of 'em could be lurking about elsewhere; all it takes is for one of them to raise the alarm..."

It might be best to quickly check the right hand door – an empty room would make a handy refuge should anybody come along. On the other hand, if it's occupied...Will you take the risk of investigating the room beyond (turn to 4), or head straight for the front door and escape this wretched cottage (turn to 30)?

-91-

Those deceitful Elders must have bound this officer and his charge to their service, then evoked some illusion so each Lich appeared normally human to each other. That leaves the interminable passage of time, the decades spent here; you can only guess as to some form of amnesia completing this act of cruelty. But now you've helped dispel such power, the convicts almost go crazy with despair – and rage. All these years, they've been blinded to the evil, obliviously marching around around a foreign, hellish island at the whim of a devilish thrall. Yet Captain Harding proves of stronger mettle and regains enough composure to bark an order: "SILENCE! Silence in the ranks, all of you! These....*Elders*," he spits the title with venom, "are to blame for this dreadful curse. But we've Alex here to thank for regaining our memory – and, Godwilling, we shall return the favour by marching on the tyrants of this island. Save your energy for them!"

They give a raucous cheer, then Captain Harding turns back to you. "The Elders...aha! *Now* I recall! They form some kind of commune in a building called Slains Court. That's where the men and I were dragged by other Lichs. Find a way to end their vile tyranny, Alex! Their destruction will result in loss of control over *all* Lichs across the island. However, even that won't be enough in bringing them over to your side: you'll need to establish some kind of emphatic link, as you did with us, enabling them to answer your call once the Elders are finished. Now, off you go – and best of luck, old boy!"

Commanding an invulnerable force of undead should prove useful against those Immortal villagers! For now, note down the words, 'LICH: Turn', and turn to 13.

-92-

Even if you'd noted down some words, they won't be enough to hold off and prevent the blood-

lusting Immortals from claiming revenge for their Elders' destruction. Both you and Tess go down fighting. So close to escaping this accursed island, your journey ultimately ends in death.

-93-

The path continues north through tall grass reaching up to your waist. "Phew!" Tess exclaims. "This wild growth makes it hard going, eh Alex?"

"Yeah," you laugh, "but still: at least we have somewhere to hide from those murderous villagers!"

"Well, let's hope we've lost..."

She is interrupted by a sudden shouting which seems to be coming from the west. Both of you stop and listen.

"...Left, right, left, right – come along, men, pick your feet up! The enemy's at large, they must be captured at all costs, so stay alert!"

"Who is that?" asks an astonished Tess.

"No idea – but it sounds like an old fashioned officer with a bad throat."

"One of the villagers?"

"I doubt it: for one thing he doesn't have a Scot's accent."

"So what's an eccentric English soldier doing here? The way he speaks sounds like something from a Dickens novel!"

Do you have the words 'LICH: Sixty' written down (turn to 51)? Otherwise: will you risk approaching this strange fellow (turn to 79) or hurry on northwards (turn to 13)?

-94-

"The Elders," snarls Ambrosi Destro, "they are the ones truly responsible for this. Their children, the Immortals...well, they were caught up in circumstances not of their own making. And, if they don't fulfil their end of the bargain, then they'll suffer the same undead existence as myself," he half sobs, "which I wouldn't wish on anybody – not even *them*."

Tess now looks upon the wretched creature with pity. "So: what will you do now?"

"Do, my beautiful lady? Why, I must *avenge* Ezio!"

"Of course," readily, you nod agreement, "which you can do by helping us and thwarting their plans in some way."

The Lich's vacant, yet calculating eyes stare at you for an unnerving moment. "How?" it finally rasps.

"Rendezvous with us in the port itself. There, we'll plan the next move to strike at those Elders."

"{*Italian*} Excellent idea, my friend – I'm with you!"

Make a note of the words, 'LICH: Two'. Turn to 27.

-95-

You have to push through thorny bushes and duck beneath moss-ridden overhanging branches. Your friend's concern has propelled her ahead of you. Then, Tess gives vent to a terrified shriek. "Tess!" you bellow in alarm. "What's happened? Where are you?"

"Here! Over here! Oh, my God, Alex...!"

You follow her panicked cries and soon find Tess stuck in the ground, buried up to her knees...quicksand! Hurriedly, you find a fallen deadwood branch, stretch out, while desperately she tries to grab hold. Tess flails but cannot reach – so you take a risk by putting your full weight on the overhanging bough you're clinging to. Roll six dice. If you're a Wrestler, add 2 to the roll (because of your muscle weight) or, if you're a Boxer, reduce it by 2 as you're more co-ordinated. If the result is the same or less than you current Dexterity *and* Strength combined turn to 63. If it is higher turn to 40.

-96-

The old man's age belies his tremendous agility. He manages to get past your last desperate blow and powerfully shoves you into the cupboard behind, causing you to bang your head, knocking you unconscious. Turn to **12**.

-97-

Warily, you trail this group back to the port, all the while keeping a concerned eye on Tess who is slumped unconscious over a Lich's shoulder throughout the entire journey. Eventually, they reach their destination: a hall of grey granite stood as some brooding sentinel upon a hill overlooking the deceptively peaceful settlement below.

"Keep watch," the leader instructs a fellow villager, "ye never knor – he could be oot there right noo, waitin' fer his morment tae strike!"

Instinctively, you duck down as he scans the surrounding darkness. "Aye, very well. He hasn't much time tae rescue her anyware; it's nearly midnight, man."

"Perhaps yoor right, Richie lad. Still, he's quite ah resourceful fellow."

Once the group disperse in their search for you, now you'll have to overpower this vigilant guard, and quicker the better – before they return to check on Richie. To this end, you'll have to attempt a sneak attack (turn to 7) or scout around to look for another way (turn to **44**).

-98-

The ring glows, betraying the proximity of its twin. However, before you can dive to retrieve Reverend Graham's key, a tremendous force dashes you against the jagged rocks. Your skull connects with a sickening *crunch!* and blood flows into the foamy sea. You have cheated the Elders of New Strathbeg – but not death itself.

-99-

The yacht seems to be anchored in the shallows off a shingle beach, its owner still tracking your progress through binoculars. As you get within fifty yards, however, suddenly he plunges into the waves and heads in your direction with powerful strokes.

"Wow!" exclaims an astonished Tess. "He's keen to meet us!"

"Yes..." you frown, wondering why fellow simply didn't await your arrival. He emerges from the surf at a run, arms spread wide, shouting in a foreign language unintelligible to yourself. "*Very keen.*"

But you sense something is wrong. As he approaches, you soon realize what: Tess stifles a shriek of horror at the decomposed state of his body – the 'man' is in fact a walking corpse...*undead!*

"*{Italian}* The Elders warned me you might come this way – how pleased they'll be at your recapture!"

"Tess! RUN!"

You block the hideous abomination's path to her, holding up both hands in an attempt to placate it; despite it being half-mad, if it's sentient then there may be a chance to reason with this undead creature. Yet it snarls and rasps, "*{Italian}* Bah! There's nothing to say. At least you won't cheat the Elders like my wretched nephew Ezio. Young idiot never heard them coming, what with all that infernal racket blasting in his ears! But at least his poor taste in music is something I'll *never* miss! Bloodbeast indeed!"

Hang on....did it mention 'Bloodbeast' in that string of Italian? If you possess a Cassette Player, multiply the number in the album name by four and turn to that reference now. Otherwise, if you're a Drama Student turn to **33**. Failing that, you'll have to try and drive it away; if you possess the Cross of Saint Fergus turn to **76**, or a Flare Gun turn to **14**, otherwise you'll have to resort using your bare hands by turning to **57**.

-100-

The flare shoots high into the starry night...for the first time noticing an absence of the baleful cloud. In due course, Polina Matulik comes into view, spots you on the gantry and returns your enthusiastic wave. A narrow trail leads down from the dark lighthouse to the rocky shore and the three of you clamber aboard. Polina seems initially surprised and somewhat mistrustful of Lizzie – but you explain about the former Immortal's parents and of her recent actions in destroying the evil. This seems to satisfy Polina, who simply shrugs then steers on a westerly course.

Lizzie peers up, then smiles: this is the place where you met her father's spirit. Following her gaze, somehow you're not surprised to find Reverend William Graham, hand in hand with his beloved Lizzie. His voice booms across the waves: "*Saint Fergus bless ye journey from here, bonnie pilgrim!*" Both spirits wave farewell before fading to an eternal peace, together.

"Goodbye mother, goodbye father," she sighs.

"How do we tell people what happened, Alex?" Tess shakes her head. "How can we even begin to explain...?"

"We don't, Tess. They'd never believe us."

"But Nick..."

"He died in a storm. That's all we can *ever* say. Sometimes, the truth doesn't do anybody any good."

What matters is that the four of you have endured, survived, and destroyed the evil of New Strathbeg; no more shipwrecked innocents shall have to endure such hellish torment ever again. Memories of a good friend kept forever in your heart mingled with the joy of simply being *alive*, tears well in your eyes, blurring the glorious sunrise that heralds a beautiful, new morning.