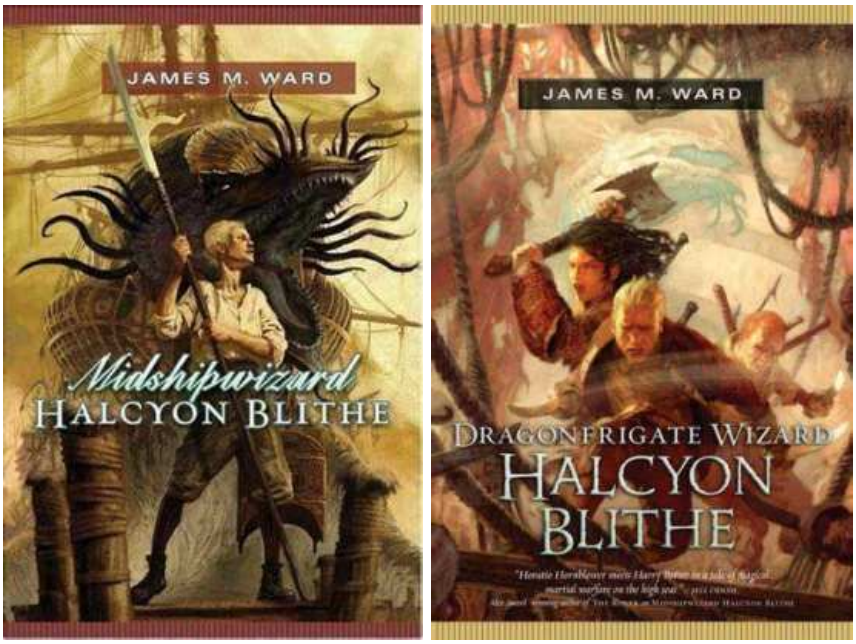
Halcyon Blithe



Books by James M. Ward, Jump by Aehriman

The use of High Magic is expressly forbidden on any of His Majesty's ships. If any officer, mariner, or soldier or other aforesaid uses High Magic on board His Majesty's ship, every such person so offending , and being convicted thereof by the sentence of a court-martial, shall be punished with death, or such other punishment as the nature and degree of the offense shall deserve and the court-martial shall impose.

-His Majesty's Articles of War

Halcyon Blithe is descended from a long line of successful, magic-wielding officers of the Arcanian Navy. Growing into his magical powers at age sixteen, he enters the service amidst high expectations, and receives his first posting as Midshipwizard aboard the *Sanguine*, a speedy frigate built - as all the best ships are - upon the back of a sea dragon.

These are the tales of the life and adventures of perhaps the most famous naval wizard in the world. Have 1,000 choice points (cp) to get you started.

ORIGINS

People change, or have complex histories. Take one origin for free, a second for -200 cp.

Midshipman - You're just a teen, an apprentice officer with much to learn.

Officer - A gentleman or lady, who had the means to do anything in life but chose to lead and organize.

Rating - A common sailor. Maybe you grew up at sea, or took the king's silver from desperation. Maybe you were press-ganged. But you're here now.

Marine - Not a sailor, but a soldier. You keep the ship safe from boarding, and can fight ashore if needed.

Noble - You come from a long, proven and trusted lineage. Your name and wealth can open a lot of doors in non-naval circles.

AGE, SEX, ETC.

Women serve in the Arcanian navy, and among the Maleen. So this is mostly about which part of the ship you berth in.

RACE

Pick one.

Human - Hairless apes, mostly harmless.

Hybrid - One thing about humans, they seem to be able to breed with just about anything, creating hybrids with some of the strengths of their inhuman parent. Perhaps as a half-giant you'd be eight feet tall with the strength of ten men and corresponding durability? A half-troll would be a bit strong, with a green-tinged hide tougher than leather armor and the ability to recover in a day or two from what would be mortal wounds to a

pure human. Half-elves and half-dwarves can wield the strange magics of their inhuman parent, as can demon-bloods.
Hybrids are widely accepted in Arcania, though there is some prejudice against demon-bloods. This is not the case in most places.

Giant - Humans, but thirty feet tall. Born at human scale, and go through an enormous growth spurt in adolescence.

Dwarf - Mountain folk, short but powerful. Not seen at sea much, they tend to sink like stones. Have powerful magic wielded via special drums.

Elf - Pointy-eared and long-lived. Haven't really appeared in the story, but there's a half elf. Have strange nature magic, which includes the elf-pocket, or hammerspace.

Troll- A barbaric people, it is reckoned, with great strength and tough hides like leather armor. They also heal fast.

Pixie (-300 cp) Tiny winged people, skilled in High Magic, but can't usually cast it on a whim. There aren't generally pixies in the Navy, and High Magic is forbidden aboard ship.

Demon (-200 cp) Terrifying figures who eat souls. We only really see Tock demons, which are laid as eggs inside people and devour them from the inside out, gaining their knowledge and memories. Surprisingly, not fireproof.

LOCATION

Pick a starting locale or roll for +100 cp.

Sanguine - Plotbound are we? Hal's first posting, just preparing now to put out to sea.

Arcania - A maritime nation famous for trade and magic and the war-braids of its sailors.

Maleen - The vile enemy of Acania, of whom we know basically nothing.

Drusa - A nation recently conquered by Maleen, but still restive, full of guerillas.

Dwarven Empire - Strong, proud, ancient and not terribly naval.

FRIENDS

Who can put a price on friendship? No one.

Old Friends: Bring any Companions from previous adventures, or your world of Origin, here. Companions have 700 cp to spend but cannot take drawbacks for more points.

New Friends: Anyone you meet and want to take on future Jumps? Go right ahead. It's your life, and a gaggle of friends having multiversal adventures is more entertaining than a lone wanderer.

Halcyon "Hal" Blithe: A scion of the highly regarded warrior clan, whose uncle is the Navy's Exchequer (finance guy/second in command), and the son of a legendary captain who went down with his ship. Specifically the seventh son of a seventh son, giving him immense magical power as a Wind/Water wizard, a ropespeaker and dragonspeaker. Came into his gifts late though, and was preparing for a career in the army so he's still regularly surprised by routine naval things. Technically the Squire of Lankshire following his father's death.

Denna Darkwater: A half-troll Marine corporal, a fierce fighter who has slain thirty-two enemy officers in battle.

Chief Ashe Fallows: A grizzled old sailor with lots of experience in questionable activities. Habitually carries lockpicks and smudges his blades with dark oil so they don't gleam.

SKILLS

Articles (free)
There are 99 Articles of War which must be followed on His Arcanian Majesty's Ships, and one of them is the full reading of the Articles on every fourth Harvestday, that no rating

may plead ignorance of the regulations. You have memorized the Articles and in future Jumps will be able to quote the chapter, verse and subsection of the rules, regulations and bylaws of any organization you are a member of. You will also always be aware if something you are contemplating or about to do would be against the regs with the specific rule coming readily to mind.

Iron Men (free)
Arcania stands or falls based on the quality of their sailors and marines. You are extremely physically fit, never get seasick, and are generally strongly and easily adapted to the rigors of life at sea. You will not suffer scurvy or malnutrition from a limited diet.

Sea-Legs (free)
You can walk and fight effectively on a heaving deck, even in the worst of storms, though it still helps that Arcanians spell the deck so water sloughs off without actually touching it.

Sign of the Times (free)
You are fully fluent and literate in at least five local languages, including that of your starting location and the most commonly spoken. This knowledge updates in future Jumps. You are immune to all nonmagical diseases, and will spread no diseases from your home world or those of previous Jumps. You can digest local foods without health issues, though in the case of naval rations perhaps not entirely without complaint.

Navigation (-100 cp)
By the sun and moon and stars you can find North, and hit a small island from a thousand miles away without a chart to guide you.

Seamanship (-100 cp)
You are an able sailor, whether on a merchantmen, a man-o-war, or an improvised raft. You know how to maneuver, how to tie knots, when to roll up the sails and all the essential skills.

Seventh Son of a Seventh Son (-400 cp)

A rare, and thus mystically significant, occurrence. The seventh son of a seventh son (or daughter, should you prefer) makes an astonishingly powerful wizard, with incredible reserves of magical energy, an intuitive aptitude for spellwork and usually a bundle of secondary talents. They are also the only wizards skilled in two elements, though one generally takes primacy.

Shapechanger (-400 cp)
Maleen's not-so-secret weapon. Shapechangers can, as implied, alter their appearance to impersonate any individual person and hold such a shape for over a year without strain. You can regenerate, not vital organs but a hacked off limb or even head can come back in a few minutes. You have a 'true form' which is a hulking, bestial eight-foot tall humanoid figure bulging with muscles, with claws that can kill a man in one swipe and four eyes.
If caught by the Arcanian Navy, you will be assumed to be a spy, they have quite an issue with Shapechanger infiltration.

Midshipman

Fast Friend (-100 cp, free Midshipman)
When you're a newcomer on a ship, everything can be scary. That's alright, wherever you go you find yourself quickly and easily making good friends who will help you along.

Shipshape (-100 cp, free Midshipman)
Arcanican midshipmen(women/wizards) are regularly inspected. Their bunks, chests, outfits and journals. Fortunately, all your stuff is in order, the trivial details seeing to themselves without you needing to waste time.

Fast Learner (-200 cp, discount Midshipman)
A middie is here first and foremost to learn. You do so with alacrity, five times faster than your peers. Good thing too, because there's ever so much to learn.

Promising Young Officer (-400 cp, discount Midshipman)

You are good at subtle self-promotion, letting your superiors see your good qualities without getting obnoxious. Your hard work and results are actually noticed, it's near impossible for someone else to steal the credit for your work. As your reputation grows, you will find yourself more and more often the first name on a shortlist for challenging jobs and chances for glory.

Fortune Favors the Bold (-600 cp, discount Midshipman)
You're really quite lucky, landing plum postings and jobs and opportunities for advancement, dodging disaster by the skin of your teeth, stumbling over saboteurs at the precise best moment to ruin their day. However, where this perk really shines is in letting you pull off absolutely insane plans that shouldn't work, the bolder you act, the better your luck papers over the gaps where reality would cause you to fail, as if the spirits themselves were looking on and chanting "do it, do it!"

Officer

Command (-100 cp, free Officer)
You know how to lead on an instinctual level, when to gently coach a young midshipwizard through an unfamiliar task, and when to shout down an angry rating. People tend to respect your judgement.

Decorum (-100 cp, free Officer)
You know how to conduct yourself as an officer and a gentleman, or lady as the case may be. You do not hesitate or freeze in combat, nor show gross displays of emotion before the men. Your poker face could not be ruffled by being sentenced to die.

Mental Math (-200 cp, discount Officer)
You can quickly and accurately do the sums needed for logistics and supplies, navigation, and ballistics and gunnery in your head. You can tell immediately when something is off.

Father/Mother to the Men (-400 cp, discount Officer)

You command respect with your very being. Where you walk, discipline holds and panic dies as your people buckle in to give their all to the task at hand. With very little work, you inspire real loyalty and devotion from your subordinates.

Rising Tempest (-600 cp, discount Officer)
Like Lord Tempest (the Arcanian version of Lord Nelson) you have a once-in-a-century genius for all aspects of naval warfare, from tactics and strategy to managing your supplies, finding talented people for the right jobs, and surviving the bitter political rivalries that attend all real success. Your spot in naval history is all but assured if you don't die first.

Rating

Beaufort's Understudy (-100 cp, free Rating)
You have absorbed all the latest science and old nursery rhymes for predicting the weather, can quote the twelve forces of wind, and are never surprised by a sudden squall - unless it was conjured by magic.

Trippin' Through the Tops (-100 cp, free Rating)
You're a topman, through and through, able to scale up a ladder, tree or many a wall with a speed and ease akin to a mountain goat. You can pretty much dance on a beam and will not fall from the mast without outside interference.

Chanter (-200 cp, discount Rating)
You know all the working songs, which tell the men what to do and magically speed their progress, enhancing teamwork. You can stretch out a chant or cut it off, so it always seems to end organically as the job does. Your voice carries loud and clear over surprising distances.

Old Salt (-400 cp, discount Rating)
Junior officers are often paired with old sea hands who can instruct them in the practicalities, often without appearing to. You are a master of training people, not just in

skills, but to become the best version of themselves. Your pupils flourish and come to equal you in just a few months.

Rules and Rules (-600 cp, discount Rating)
You are one sneaky person. Not just in actual stealth, though you'll find men die as easily when stabbed from behind as the front and it's easy to get around behind them. You are a master of pushing decorum and regulations to the breaking point, and never getting called on it, as well as speaking truth to power in a way that gets you a fair hearing instead of a flogging.

Marine

Accuracy (-100 cp, free Marine)
The loading drill isn't really a thing with blasting pikes, which just means more time on the range! You are an expert marksman and fire accurately even from a heaving deck.

Training (-100 cp, free Marine)
When battle is joined, there is no room for fear or doubt. You never freeze, hesitate or panic in a crisis or fight, but react with instinctive training and ice-cold clarity of thought.

Funny Feeling (-200 cp, discount Marine)
You are never caught flat-footed by a trap or ambush, when something is wrong your instincts scream at you, even without evidence.

This is My Weapon (-400 cp, discount Marine)
You're highly gifted in melee combat, but more than that, you excel at the rhythm and flow of battle, reading the tides of steel at a glance, seeing where you can insert yourself into a chaotic brawl for maximum impact. You are particularly good at drawing your opponents into your rhythm, forcing them to react to you. You become a terror in battle that men flinch back from, then flee.

Hold the Line (-600 cp, discount Marine)

Love isn't always on time- no. A Marine is a protector, you have a very firmly developed understanding of how to keep any charges safe, little things like concealment or choke points seem to work out so much better, you can really lock down a section of deck. Your presence is a steadying comfort to the men and women you fight besides, so when it's time to make a stand, the line will hold come hell or high water.

Noble

Don't You Know Who I Am? (-100 cp, free Noble)
You're an important person, others can sense this, even if you don't have a fine suit or your card on you, and tend to give more weight to your presence, dignity and opinions. Enemies are more likely to take you captive for a ransom, bureaucrats move you to the head of the line.

Etiquette (-100 cp, free Noble)
You are intimately familiar with the culture and etiquette of all the many peoples of this world, and any others you visit, knowing when you can spit tobacco and in which courts it is rude to discuss spouses. You are very good at making people feel seen and respected, which is at the end of the day what good manners are about. As long as you remain courteous, most people would be embarrassed to behave disrespectfully towards you.

Parlay (-200 cp, discount Noble)
When you call for a truce, people listen. Anyone can be brought to the table, and you excel at coming up with a compromise that works for everyone… and benefits you and your side just a bit more. Consistently you walk away having secured the better deal, whether its a concession whose value wasn't obvious, or valuable insight and intelligence about the other party.

Conspiracy (-400 cp, discount Noble)
You understand how plots, schemes and conspiracies work on an instinctive level. Within hours of arriving at court, you have at least a broad picture of who the major players are,

what they want, and roughly how they go about getting it. Your own plans are inscrutable and double-layered, so even if they fail you generally minimize risk and profit in some way.

Permanent Embassy (-600 cp, discount Noble)
It's all about getting your foot in the door. Once you have obtained a position of power, it's virtually impossible to dig you out. You make vital friends and connections wherever you go, until you become part of the infrastructure, synonymous with the office, everyone's pal and confidante.

MAGIC

Wizard (free)
Magic is... unusual in this world. There are some spells that are universal, like the basic energy blast or shield, or summoning. Magic works on an odd Newtonian balance. To summon something, you must throw something away of equal or greater mass, to repair or heal you must destroy, and *vice versa*. You can overpay magic's price, but must never short. You can also make this payment hours or days before or after casting the spell, your strength as a wizard determining both the power of your spells and how long you can defer settling accounts. If you don't square, you'll face increasing strain and eventually death - mages have done this deliberately to suicide when captured. If you get too clever like trying to make your price someone else's problem, the elemental fey spirits who manage this system of debt will get *creative.*
Besides universal spells, each wizard has a talent in one of the four classical elements (earth, air, water, fire, pick one) and can do virtually anything that might be spun as related to that element, like a Fire Wizard can freeze water by stealing the heat away, there's an Earth Wizard spell for opening locks by manipulating the metal tumblers directly, and an Air one for forming a shifting key of wind. But no Earth mage can affect the weather or the sea, and none can swim, just sinking like a stone. Only the seventh son of a seventh son can wield two elements.

Dragonspeaker (-100 cp)
You can speak on the same telepathic 'channel' as dragons and, apparently, the Leviathans they hunt. No dragonship sets out without two to three dragonspeakers, and if they are all slain, the ship must put into port immediately until replacements are found.

Ropespeaker (-200 cp)
You can command rope to do your bidding, and see a blue glow wherever cord is frayed or rotted or weak. Ropespeakers are rare, and can pretty much write their ticket in the Navy.

Elf Magic (-100 cp, free Elf)
Elves have their own nature magic that doesn't broadly play well with others, but you have mastered their most versatile charm, folding space into a convenient little elfpocket to hold all your things in stasis, ready to be summoned with a bit of will and the flick of a wrist. You can also speed and direct plant growth and heal others.

Dwarf Magic (-100 cp, free Dwarf)
Dwarven magic is focused using special drums called *tonga*, and are great at sharing courage, strength, and general buffs. The drumbeats can also reveal hidden things, like veins of precious metals, mages, or foes.

Demon Magic (-200 cp, free Demon)
Similarly vague, includes blood magic, necromancy, soul-devouring and portal magic. All the most effective spells for defending against and combatting demons are here as well.

High Magic (-600 cp, free Pixie)
Where other magic is like ritualized, consistent arrangements with the nature spirits who govern such things, High Magic is... freer. You make a wish and it is granted if it lies within the magic you have to contribute. This is highly dangerous magic, as you can kill yourself trying for too much, and often grants you what you asked for at a price you wouldn't have paid or with unintended consequences. You are less bothered by these issues, as you have a

good sense of your limits and, like the wishing potion of Hal's, the spirits will make a good faith effort to fulfil your wish as you meant.
Be advised that, due to its whimsical and unpredictable nature, the use of High Magic aboard any Royal Arcanian vessel is punishable by death.

POSSESSIONS

Discount one Item at each price tier.
Discounted 100 cp items are free.

Uniform(s) (free)
You have four sets of finely tailored uniforms, and similar civilian dress, all of the quality expected from Chaucey, the royal tailor of Arcania.

Rank (variable)
You can be any common rank in the Navy or Army of your choosing for free, even a warrant officer. For 100 cp, free for the officer origin, you may get a commission as a Lt. Each 100 cp you put in after bumps your rank. For 100 cp flat, you may be a specialized officer like a surgeon or ship's wizard.
In the Navy: Lieutenant < Lieutenant Commander < Commander < Captain < Commodore < Rear Admiral < Vice Admiral < Admiral < Admiral of the Fleet.
For Marines: 2nd Lt < Lieutenant < Captain < Major < Lt. Col < Colonel.

Blast Pike (-100 cp)
A stout pike that, like the Saber above, can catch and disperse most spells. A Blast Pike can also enhance a wizard's magic, letting them get off an extra blast or three per combat, but it takes some training and getting used to.

Healing Salve (-100 cp)

An elven specialty, gets rid of bruises and superficial cuts in an instant, and makes other wounds disinfected and healing ten times as fast. You have a small jar that refills monthly.

Lankshire Saber (-100 cp)
A well-crafted steel sword that is particularly handy at grounding out magical discharges, letting you catch all kinds of bolts, even magically generated lightning, unharmed if you can only parry in time. The edge is magically honed and kept at a razor's edge no conventional sharpening would allow.

Letter of Introduction (-100 cp)
Just how things are done around here. You have a letter from a powerful patron establishing your identity and vouching for your good character and work ethic.

Manacles of Iben (-100 cp)
Silver fetters that prevent a wizard from using magic.

Tannin Oil (-100 cp)
A replenishing keg of smelly tannin oil. Its main use aboard a dragonship is to add nutrition to the dragon's meals, but it has two other virtues. Tannin oil enhances telepathy, particularly as used by dragonspeakers, and a blade oiled in the stuff can penetrate magical shields.

Money (-100/200 cp)
An officer is expected to be a self-sufficient gentleman, and even a common sailor can find wealth through prize money, if a lot less than the officers. For simplicity's sake, we'll just say you own various businesses and investments that, absent any input from you, bring in the equivalent of around $150,000 modern (2026) dollars. For 200 cp, we'll call it half a million.

Belt of Strength (-200 cp)
A magic belt that gives you the strength of five men, where the man is yourself. It multiplies your strength five times.

Luck Ring (-200 cp)
We can all use a little luck sometimes. This ring protects from disaster, nudging probability to turn a mortal blow into a glancing hit. Don't rely exclusively on luck, it has a bit of a cooldown, recharging from ambient fortune and is unlikely to save you more than two or three times in a single fight. Normally, these rings flash brightly when used, to prevent their use in gambling, but you can mentally toggle that feature at will.

War Bracers (-200 cp)
Somewhat out of fashion in the modern navy, these enchanted armguards can stop a pike if used defensively, but the main purpose are three spells. The first renders the wearer of these bracers impervious to mind control in all forms. The second reflects curses, subtle spells of ill intent, back on the caster. The third provides added courage and strength, not enough to bend steel bars, but usually enough to climb to your feet one more time.

Water Ring (-200 cp)
A magic ring that lets the wearer breathe underwater. Greatly treasured by sailors.

Dragonfrigate (-400 cp)
A sea-dragon that has been captured and…. Tamed is a very strong word. Put to service, perhaps. It's shedding skin raised to make the crude shape of a ship, which also prevents it diving lest it get seawater in its exposed back, then sails and decks added, and chained hooks to fins for steering. There are many advantages, dragonhide is quite tough and doesn't splinter like wood when struck with cannonballs, a dragonship can always make at least four knots by paddling even if becalmed and can match the speed of a frigate with the crew and guns of a significantly larger ship.
The downsides are that dragonships don't handle freezing cold waters very well, need feeding with mostly hay and the occasional animal, and may someday slip their bonds and return to the wild.

Leviathan (-400 cp)

A deep sea creature, like a giant squid's much bigger, meaner and more tentacled cousin. Regularly fights sea dragons on an even footing, and is even better at attacking ones that can't dive. This one has a space inside for one or two people to live and command the beast mentally, if not exactly in great comfort. Still, it's one way of getting around unseen and a very efficient ship-killer.

Airship (-600 cp)
There are exactly five of these first-rate flying ships in the world, each the masterwork of a dual wind/water seventh son. Now there are six. You can experience true freedom, the ability to fly anywhere in the world, far faster than any pursuit. Or to rain blast-tube fire from the heavens, whatever suits.

Crown (-600 cp)
You are the ruler, or next-in-line if you prefer to shun the spotlight, of a major nation. In future Jumps you may decide which local nation/empire, if you choose to import this item at all.

Wish Potion (-600 cp)
High Magic, a rare gift from the fairies. You must think of a single wish and smash this tiny green phial and if possible it will be done. The wish draws on your own reserves of magical strength, and will probably knock you out for a couple hours. A wish cannot change the past. Your phial, once used, is replaced each fresh Jump or decade, whichever comes sooner.

PERILS

Stranger Tides (+0 cp)
You may supplement this Jump to any setting based primarily on sailing, or featuring magic and/or dragons. Even, especially, if this setting lacks a Jump.

A Life At Sea (+100 cp)

Surely by now you must know the drill? You may take this drawback up to five times, and for each purchase, spend another decade in this war-torn world.

Demonic Birthright (+100 cp)
Your eyes turn red and start glowing when you're angry or really upset. It can be intimidating in some circumstances, but mostly serves as a really obvious sign to people when they're getting to you which no poker face can hide. Also, there's a bunch of prejudice and superstition swirling around the demon-blooded.

Fled From Shore (+100 cp)
Some men seek glory in the navy, some are pressed, others are running from the law or a checkered past. You have such a history, and it's guaranteed to come up and complicate your life at least once.

Illiterate (+100 CP)
You forget how to read. You can sign your name, but that's about it. Nor can you do any arithmetic involving greater sums than your fingers and toes. You can learn anew, but it will take a significant time and effort.

Curiosity (+100 cp)
A quality renowned for getting felines and sailors killed. You simply can't leave a puzzle or mystery alone, or keep from sticking your nose in your shipmates' business, lest it drive you mad.

One-Eyed (+100 cp)
You are down one eyeball, making it harder to see things on one side, and really messing with your ability to judge distances accurately after the first fifteen feet or so.

Rival (+100/200 cp)
You have a rival within the service, who will do their best to spike your career and ruin your life. For 100 cp, they are the same rank, maybe a little seniority and a committed bully.

When you get promoted, so do they. For 200 cp, they will always be one rank higher and consider breaking you their highest priority.

Cabin Boy (+200 cp)
If you want to be a sailor, you really need to start at age seven or eight. You are now such a young child, and instead of starting with skills and items, you will be issued them at the appropriate time or have the opportunity to develop those skills, given enough time.

Marooned (+200 cp)
You start on an island, or other remote godforsaken wilderness. Someone will be by in a month or so to find you, but in the meantime, how good are your wilderness survival skills?

Seasick (+200 cp)
It's not that you're seasick all the time, but the first few days at sea or on land will be rough as your body makes the transition to or from the rocking motion of the waves. Sailors will probably lose a lot of respect for you.

Thin-Skinned (+200 cp)
Words hurt, especially for you. You can't take insults or criticism gracefully, and will likely be up for hours wondering if they're right, maybe even cry. Or spend weeks plotting petty revenge. Or challenge them to a duel.

Demon Mark (+400 cp)
Sometimes appearing in those who have demon blood or have made an unwise pact, this birthmark shaped like a demon head marks you as someone bound for possession, growing more detailed over time. In moments of stress there's a risk that you'll turn into a demon and lash out at everyone around you.
For this reason, it is absolutely forbidden for a demon-marked man or woman to serve aboard His Majesty's warships.

Equal & Opposite Reaction (+400 cp)

It seems your powers and perks from previous Jumps now operate on local rules. To heal, you must destroy something else. To be super smart for an hour means being equally dumb for another, sunny skies and fair winds today mean a storm tomorrow. You can pay the cost of your powers in advance or up to ten days afterwards, though you will feel a growing tension and strain until you do settle up and going too long without may kill you. Further, the price you pay may compound interest.
To help you, all perks and powers that were previously passive, or always 'on' may now be toggled and adjusted in strength as you will, a benefit you may retain after this Jump.

Here There Be Dragons (+400 cp)
In this world, there really are sea serpents, sea dragons, giant leviathans and stranger things. Expect to meet them all, as you'll be attacked by a sea monster at least once on any sea voyage of significant length.

Where Are My Boots? (+400 cp)
Your things are constantly getting lost and/or stolen by your shipmates and sold off for beer and tobacco money. No, fiat-backing and hiding them in your Warehouse won't help. This overrides any fiat-backing that would see your property returned, but you'll get them all back at the end of the Jump when drawbacks all fall away. At least it won't apply to your ship?

END

What now, sailor? To your own home, make a new one here, or sail stranger seas abroad?

Midshipwizard Halcyon Blithe:

Halcyon Blithe, Midshipwizard Fifth Class, comes into his magic late in life at 16 and so has catching up to do. After a quick class on naval custom and magic to fill out a lifetime in a naval family, he is posted aboard the dragonship *Sanguine*, one of just thirty ships built into the back of a captive sea dragon serving the Arcanian Navy.

He quickly befriends a fellow Midshipwizard, Dart Surehand,who is fourth in line to the throne and equally allergic to favoritism and his family's efforts to find him a safe posting and a nice girl to marry. The first officer, Lt. Cmdr Dire Wily, attempts to frighten Hal with stories of five dragonships he's had shot out from under him and the terrifying power of Arcania's enemies, the Maleen. He forms a more antagonistic relationship with Lt. JG Hackle, the most junior officer and thus in charge of the wardroom and the Midshipmen's training, and a shameless bully who among other things dumps out Hal's sea chest and assigns him four hours of night watch for having it messy. Hackle is delighted to learn Hal is part demon, a family shame, and his eyes glow red uncontrollably when he's angry.

Hal excels in sword practice and on his first watch Seaman Hunter teaches him all about predicting the weather and the ten point scale used for wind.

This is also when we learn Hal is keeping a good weather charm up to ease his first cruise. He is not unaware that the moment the spell lifts there will be a storm to balance it out, but figures he can maintain the effect until they make a port they can ride it out in.

Oiling the dragon's feed awakens Hal's ability to communicate telepathically with the dragon, though at first he can only do so when slathered in the foul-smelling tannin oil, and he conceals this information, not wanting to stand out more.
Hal has blast tube practice so the readers and he can be filled in on how cannons work a bit differently in this world.

Hal excels in combat and is by a stroke of luck able to overcome the ship's melee champ, a half-troll Marine corporal, Denna Darkwater, who adopts him as an altogether more friendly rival. Commander WIly is also able to demonstrate several tricks for fighting dirty and overcomes chief Ashe Fallow.

Wily later throws Halcyon off the ship for a man overboard drill. He is rescued, but afterwards the seniormost (and female) Midshipwizard, Alvena Merand, takes him aside, having noticed a mark on his thigh like a birthmark, in the shape of a demon's head. Merand explains to Hal, shocked his family didn't, that the mark pops up sometimes in demon-bloods and is a sign that he may become possessed by or transform into a demon under stress. The more detailed the mark, the closer he gets. This isn't a certain thing, or even illegal, but it

does handily disqualify him from service aboard a warship or anywhere he is likely to see combat. Anyways, she advises him to wrap a cloth or some bandages around it so his secret doesn't come out the next time he takes an unexpected dip. When Hal asks why she'd help him, she reveals her own carefully concealed demon mark.

Later while feeding the dragon, it complains of wanting more meat, Hal asks the officer of the watch, Lt. Solvalson, who decides as a prank to send Hal to requisition a pig from the ship's drunk and surly purser. After some initial difficulties, Hal is able to use his height and glowing demon eyes to intimidate the man into signing off on it.

Following a lesson in naval tactics, with a historic battle by Captain Olden, Hal overhears Midshipman Third Class Elan Swordson loudly telling the other middies how demon-bloods have no place in the navy, or civilized society. The sequel reveals Mr. Swordson comes from a long line of demon hunters. Hal invites the fellow middie to inspect ammunition with him on the orlop deck, the one room accessible to the middies where they won't be supervised, and pounds him into unconsciousness. Elan says the drubbing hasn't changed his opinion any, but he'll keep a civil tongue about Hal and his family. The fight is a secret, so naturally the whole crew knows and much coin exchanges hands.

Nine days into the *Sanguine's* voyage to join the blockade at Ordune, Lt. Cmndr Daton Giantson, the ship's wizard, is giving a magic lesson when he finally realizes Hal is feeling the strain of an overactive spell and is behind the unusually fair weather, and the terrible storm coming for the ship once the spell fails. Giantson brings this to the captain, saying the storm will only get stronger the longer it's held back, so their only hope is to release it once they secure for ill weather.

During the storm, Hal is able to use his ropespeaking talent to catch a loose cannon before it can hurt anyone. Three hours in a hatch is ripped loose and Lt. Solvalson sends him below to inspect the heart and liver chambers - the dragon is captured while shedding skin, during which they surface and the heart and liver are exposed to the air as the seawater would pain them greatly. Wizards actually expand the heart and heal the still living skin as they stretch it over a frame. The short of which is, if one or both organs are splashed with seawater, *Sanguine* may dive anyways with predictable results for everyone on his back.

Hal spies an officer leaving the heart chamber, and when he enters sees the heart has been slathered with blasting gel (their gunpowder equivalent) and is moments from detonating. With no way to safely remove the gel, and no time to run for help, Hal summons a hitherto unmentioned wishing potion from his sea chest and shatters the bottle, wishing to save the ship, and passes out.

Hal spends several days in a coma, fighting for his life against a curse by the saboteur, sometimes partially aware of his surroundings until he's able to reach the dragon mentally who demands Halcyon be drenched in tannin oil.

Hal wakes in the brig, in anti-magic manacles. The use of dangerously unpredictable High Magic, like his wish, aboard ship is a hanging offense far more dangerous and severe than even the storm he called down on them all. The dragon's heart is encased in a ton of ice they cannot melt or chip, with some kind of healing magic that's keeping the ice from damaging the heart.

A court martial is held with the ship's three seniormost officers - Captain Olden, and Lt. Cmndrs Wily and Giantson. Under a truth spell he tells his story which Giantson is able to confirm once he knows what to look for. The ship's wizard testifies there was truly no other option and Halcyon saved the ship. His sentence is commuted to a fine, exactly as much gold as the navy would owe him for the use of a wish.

Soon after, Halcyon is summoned to have dinner with the captain and officers. He regales them with the tale of how an ancestor of his saved a fairy princess and since that time every woman in his family has received a wishing potion the night before their sons or husbands first leave for war or sea, and they have been used for the good of others and never gone awry as so many wishes do. He also mentions a concern that the quickest way for an enemy ship to sink them would be to ram the dragon's head, a tactic no officer present has heard of, but after some discussion they conclude would probably work.

Captain Olden asks him to remain after a minute. He tells Halcyon he is deeply distressed by this mysterious saboteur, and Hal's battle station until further notice will be the heart chamber, to guard against future mischief.

Soon after, they sight a ship on the horizon, Maleen second-rater *Migol*, though as they close two smaller ships try to flank the *Sanguine.* Hal dutifully reports to the heart chamber. Commander Wily enters after some time and gives him permission to join the battle. Hal starts to go… before recalling the exact regulation forbidding him from leaving his duty station. Wily turns into a combat form, a Maleen shapeshifter all along. He claims to have sabotaged five dragonships before and never had this much trouble. Wily plays with his food too long, though, and chief Fallow is able to sneak up and attack him from behind, having learned from Lt. Cmndr Giantson that slathering tannin oil on his blade will let it penetrate most magical shields.

After reporting all this to Captain Olden, the Captain singles out Hal and Denna Darkwater for praise before the crew, him for saving the ship a second time, and her for overcoming the *Migol's* captain in a duel. He asks what boon, within reasonable limits, he can grant. All Denna wants is a rematch with Hal.

Dragonfrigate Wizard Halcyon Blithe:

We open to a great battle at Ordune, as a Maleen fleet attempts to punch through the blockading Arcanian fleet, led by Fleet Commander Tempest (the Arcanian version of Lord Nelson). Halcyon is eager, as one of the ships in range is the *Durand*, one of four ships that sank his late father's last command. By holding when ordered to fire and placing his shot with extreme care, he is able to land a critical blow.

Hal is sent as part of a prize crew to take a mortar ketch, the *Salamander* back to the Arcanian capital and great port of Illumin, under Lt.-now-captain Jordan, and Midshipman first class Elan Swordson. Hal overcomes the captain of the Salamander, who was weighing down and throwing out his papers.

En route, they encounter a demon ship, an ironclad monstrosity, with a tall smokestack, that moves without sail or oar. Acting Captain Jordan panics, but Halcyon knows some demonic blood magic defensive spells and crowds the crew amidships while he shields them. This does lead to him taking some damage from the ship, though, and also temporarily growing nine feet tall with horns and cloven hooves. Elan Swordson prepares to murder Hal

on the assumption he is turning into a demon, but is stopped by Chief Fallow. With Hal shielding the *Salamander* from skull projectiles, the ketch is able to sink the enemy with their mortar, Captain Jordan the sole casualty.

Hal does pass out, and again wakes in an improvised brig with magic-inhibiting shackles. Acting Captain Swordson insisted. But since he can speak rationally, he is released for the final day of their trip back to the Arcanian capital and chief port of Illumin.

Hal is sent to deliver his and Swordson's reports, along with Captain Olden's dispatches and letters seized with the *Salamander,* to the Admiralty. Chief Fallow advises him to avoid spending days waiting to be seen and for someone to read his reports and use his noble status to skip to the head of the line, so he introduces himself as Lord Blithe. His lack of a card poses a challenge soon fixed by namedropping his uncle Jack Blithe, the Navy's Exchequer (financier/second in command). Indeed, Hal has to wait only an hour or so in a VIP lounge for his uncle to find time to catch up. He's told to report back the next day after they've gone through the documentation.

The next day, Hal is informed he's to face a Board of Inquiry, and three Admirals grill him about the storm he inadvertently created, the wish he used against regs, and the fight with the demon ship. Jack Blithe testifies that the Blithe family has quite the volumes of anti-demon spells, utilizing their shameful heritage to act as a shield for the realm. Hal is ultimately promoted to Midshipwizard First Class.

As it is considered good luck to buy a newly-promoted midshipman/wizard a drink, and rude for them to refuse, Halcyon gets his first experience in getting blackout drunk, and his first hangover! He gets woken, none too gently, by his friend Dart Surehand, who came over on a prize crew for the *Migol*.

Dart has a personal invitation from his uncle, King Artur Surehand, to a soiree in the evening and takes him to the royal tailor, Chaucey, to replace all the uniforms in his sea chest still on *Sanguine* and get him an outfit fit for a state event, all while lamenting his family's efforts to get him to take a nice safe posting in the capital. Hal reassures him the two of them are destined for command.

The two attend the ball, where a newly promoted - yet drunk and bitter? - Lt. Elan Swordson tries to make a scene over Hal's demonic heritage yet again. However, early in his gesticulations he knocks over a lady and is embarrassed enough to fall back. Hal helps Lady Teagan Delesanor of the House of Et to her feet and is instantly smitten. The two take to the dance floor while Elan mutters darkly that he'll see that man broken from the service if it's the last thing he does. Dart says that's a mighty peculiar thing to say about the king's personal guest.

Hal could have danced all night, but is summoned for an informal royal audience. Very informal, in his study the king asks Hal and Dart to help him explain to his heir why a ceasefire with Maleen isn't worth considering. Both parties take it for granted that everyone will use the peace to rearm and resume the war in a couple years, the prince believes they need that time more than the Maleen. The middies and the king say they're treading water while the Maleen are fighting a war on like five different fronts, ducking out of the war would murder all their work at coalition-building, and give the Maleen the opportunity to punch out one or two of their weaker opponents besides. Arcania would resume the war entirely sans allies when Maleen could finally afford to turn their undivided attention to them. The king awards both middies the Golden Star of Arcania, the Navy's second-highest award for valor, and spends the night dissecting what Hal saw of the battle at Ordune.

The next morning, Hal reports to his new ship, the dragonfrigate *Rage*, less than half the size of *Sanguine.* Teagan meets him first and gives him an expensive pocketwatch she admits has a tracking charm so she can know where he is. So the invasion of privacy isn't entirely one sided, there's a portrait of her in the lid that periodically updates to reflect her dress, hairstyle, environment and mood.

Aboard the *Rage*, Hal is surprised to find almost half the crew are dwarves, or half-dwarves, such as Captain Gord-un (the -un is a common suffix in dwarven names). *Rage*'s first mission is to convey an ambassador, a half-elf dandy by the name of Abernathy, to the Crystal Cave, capital of the Dwarven Empire, in an attempt to open a permanent embassy to King-Under-The-Mountain. They have learned from papers seized on the *Salamander* that the Maleen are attempting diplomacy with the famously aloof dwarves.

Arcania has a small but significant dwarven population, their ally Dominal has a substantial one, all of whom might develop some awkward divided loyalties if King-Under-The-Mountain declares for Maleen.

Hal is pleased to see he's still sailing with Denna Darkwater and Chief Fallow. Less pleased that Lt. Swordson is on this voyage.

Various preparations are made while they await the ambassador. Hal retrieves cannonballs from a quartermaster and wins some points by agreeing to take the new pointy shells off his hands. Captain Gord-un shows how to inspect food and water and explains he always keeps a bar of silver in each water barrel to keep the water pure.

Captain Gord-un gives up his quarters to the ambassador, all the officers get bumped down one, landing Lt. JG Swordson with the midshipmen. This makes Swordson furious and he takes it out by belting two of the middies for not having completed a daily journal entry, though Hal is able to discreetly shield the second one.

Finally the ship departs.

The crew drill relentlessly. Hal participates in a lesson on spotting frayed or rotted rope, though with his ropespeaking talent he can spot the bad ones instantly. Hal continues to excel in combat, though he notices Swordson letting the ambassador win. The officers divide into two teams and the rookie ones try to storm the quarterdeck, Hal is defeated when Captain Gord-un menacingly charges his battleax with crackling energy… as a distraction while his off hand grasps a throwing axe and launches it at Halcyon's head.

Hal takes up practicing picking locks and slipping from the anti-magic Manacle of Iben, saying he doesn't want to be helpless again. Chief Fallow gives him a lockpick, the ambassador some fancier restraints, and Denna shows him how to use the pick with his toes.

One day, Halcyon is standing watch in a thick fog when the dragon says he can smell approaching ships. Passing the word to quietly make ready for action and waiting for identification, he puts a double-broadside into a Maleen second-rater before they vanish into the fog. After it's clear the danger has passed, Captain Gord-un uses his family's magic

drum, a *tonga* to enchant green berets for the crew, marking them as auxiliaries to his clan and letting them benefit from several buff spells the *tonga* can be used in.

That night, Hal 'hears' telepathically a voice urging 'my beauty' to 'kill the dragon.' He wakes and sounds the alarm as a Leviathan, an enormous squid from the deep, attacks and attempts to choke *Rage* who cannot dive to fight back properly. As the captain and marines frantically hack at tentacles, Hal gets a guncrew to bring a blast tube to bear, cracking the carapace and revealing the enemy wizard inside, whom Halcyon instantly kills with a lightning bolt spell.

Some days later, they find a trio of dwarven ships being attacked by pirates. The ambassador insists their mission is too important to risk a delay or harm, but Captain Gord-un insists on rendering aid, having the crew wear their berets and chant 'Komarr!' ('Ally' in dwarvish) to minimize friendly fire. During the combat, Halcyon saves a young dwarf fighting with a relic battleax, and confronts a powerful sorcerer draining the life from his men. He can't penetrate the enemy's shields, nor can even the tannin-dipped pike of Chief Fallow, but together they manage, driving the pike far enough in for Hal to use it as a conduit to blast and kill the enemy - in the process charring the chief's hands into uselessness.

After the battle, the dwarf Halcyon saved reveals himself to be Prince Theon Earthstone, and that he owes Hal a randory, a dwarven debt of blood and honor. Per tradition, he lays his most prized possession, the enchanted axe of his fathers, at Hal's feet. The ambassador explains that Halcyon can take the axe, or any other item or service the Prince would rather part with, to settle the debt. Halcyon tries to insist no such debt is owed between comrades in arms, nearly giving the ambassador a fit, but Theon denies this. Then he thinks of Chief Fallow's ruined hands and asks if anything can be done. Now the ambassador nearly does keel over, as Theon Earthstone uses up an irreplaceable wish bracelet - one of only three in the Dwarven Empire - to heal up a mere petty officer.

Captain Gord-un is shocked by the dwarves' rudeness, having been raised in Arcania and never realizing how much disdain his distant kin have for ex-pats and half-breeds. Ambassador Abernathy orders them to fly a red flag - quarantine in Arcania, randory in

Dwarven lands, explaining the dwarven navy still owes them a debt which should at least get them into harbor and maybe an audience with the King-Under-the-Mountain. Randory between organizations seems to work a bit differently, the ambassador says the dwarves will offer to throw them a banquet, then a minor gift or favor, to discharge the debt sneakily so they can tell them to piss off. They must decline all offers and gifts and kindnesses until his audience with the King.

In the Crystal Cavern, port and capital of the Dwarven Empire, there are three Maleen second-raters already tied up at the docks. A coach comes to pick up the ambassador a day sooner than he expected, and he brings three chests, Halcyon, Elan Swordson, Chief Fallow and Denna Darkwater as an escort. However, the coach instead takes them to a small castle, the Maleen embassy, and the coachman punches Hal out.

Hal wakes in a dungeon with the others, with the commander of the Maleen embassy, one Duval Kingmaker, taunting him. Kingmaker plans to implant each of the party with the wormlike spawn of a Tock demon, which will devour them from the insides and gain their memories - he doubts they know anything particularly important, but you never know. But it will take a couple hours before they're ready.

Once he leaves, Hal is able to get out of his restraints with the pick hidden in his boot. He quickly frees the others and Abernathy reveals under all the clothes in his chest and false bottoms are three enchanted dwarven battleaxes he meant as gifts, and a healing salve. They overcome the guards and Halcyon duels Kingmaker, who hears a rescue party arriving from the *Rage* and magics up a quick escape portal.

The Dwarven Army appears and arrests everyone, hauling them in chains before King-Under-The-Mountain. Things look grim for a minute, but the Prince vouches for them and the permanent embassy is set. Theon wishes to join the Arcanian Navy to sail with Halcyon, which is granted. Elan Swordson remains in Crystal Cave as aide to Ambassador Abernathy, and is promoted to full Lieutenant, to his glee.

We end with Hal writing his uncle, summarizing the events of the book.