

Cantrev Aithe and Vicinity

FOREST ENCOUNTER TABLE

This table can be used whenever the PCs are in wooded areas (the "Wild Wood" part of Demall Forest) during this adventure. The more extensive tables given in FR2/Moonshae are recommended for use in any long-term Moonshavian adventuring. "MC1" and "MC2" refer to volumes of the AD&D® *Monstrous Compendium*.

The DM should roll 1d20 and consult the table below, ignoring undesired or inappropriate results. The Subtable may serve for deliberately-chosen encounters, particularly if the PCs have grown cocky, careless, or overpowerful.

Die Roll Encounter

- 01 DM's Choice (or roll on Subtable)
- 02 Wolves, 2-20 (see MC1)
- 03 Skeletons, 3-30 (see MC1)
- 04 Wild Boars, 1-12 (see MC1, under "Boar")
- 05 Brigands, 10-40 (see MC1, under "Men")
- 06 Bear, Brown (black-masked), 1-6 (see MC1, under "Bear")
- 07 Zombies ("Common" variety), 3-24 (see MC1)
- 08 Animal (2-20) or Monster(1-6) Skeletons (see "Skeleton" in MC1)
- 09 DM's Choice (or roll on Subtable)
- 10 Brigands, 10-40

Die Roll Encounter

- 11 Stag, Giant, 1-4 (see Combined Monster Statistics Table)
- 12 Monster Zombies, 1-6 (see MC1, under "Zombie")
- 13 Zombies ("Common" variety), 3-24 (see MC1)
- 14 Wild Boars, 1-12 (see MC1, under "Boar")
- 15 Brigands, 10-40
- 16 Bear, Brown (black-masked), 1-6
- 17 Wolves, 2-20 (see MC1)
- 18 Shadows, 2-20 (see MC1)
- 19 Shambling Mounds, 1-3 (see MC2)
- 20 DM's Choice (or roll on Subtable)

Subtable

Roll 1d10 and consult the following table:

Die Roll Monster

- 01 Bugbears, 2-8 (see MC1)
- 02 Leucrotta, 1-4 (see MC1)
- 03 Toads, Giant, 1-12 (see MC1)
- 04 Ettercap, 1 (see MC2), and 2-8 "Large" Spiders (see MC1, under "Spider")

Die Roll Monster

- 05 Treants, 1-20 (see MC1)
- 06 Trolls, 1-12 (see MC1)
- 07 Stirges, a "thirst" of 3-30 (see MC2)
- 08 Doppelgangers, 3-12 (see MC2)
- 09 Owlbear, 1 (see MC1)
- 10 Dryad, 1 (see MC2)

FORGOTTEN REALMS[™]

Halls of The High King

Official Game Adventure

by Ed Greenwood

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Chapter 1: The Adventure Begins	3
Chapter 2: Danger In Aithe	10
Chapter 3: Against The Dark Druid	19
Chapter 4: The Halls Of The High King	25
Chapter 5: The House Of The Black Hand	27
Appendix 1: Harping By Firelight	37
Appendix 2: The Risen Cult of Bane	38
Appendix 3: Monsters of the Moonshaes	41
Appendix 4: New Magic Items	48
Appendix 5: New Spells	51
Appendix 6: Campaign Adventuring In The Moonshaes	55
Appendix 7: Sacred Groves & Moonwells	57
Appendix 8: Current Moonshae Rumors	62

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Dedication

To the memory of Eva French, who fought her battles with laughter,
whatever the odds—and won all the important ones anyway.

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INTRODUCTION

Our land is beautiful, the life it gives us good. How could it be otherwise? The land is the Goddess.

But the Goddess serves the Balance, and as goodness grows in power, so must evil have its day. Wherefore all who live in the Moonshaes have felt the bite of evil as it rises again and again to threaten us.

What can vanquish it, for a time? The forces of good. And what are they? They have a thousand faces and a thousand names. We call them—heroes.

—Andabbar Meihklann, Bard of the Snows

Ffolk Lore Year of the Hunting Hawk

The adventure you hold in your hands, *Halls of the High King*, takes place on the Moonshae Isles, in The Sea of Swords west of The Sword Coast of Faerun, the largest continent of The Forgotten Realms. The Time of Troubles (detailed in the recent "Avatar" novels and modules) is past, and Tristan Kendrick remains High King of the Ffolk, enthroned in Caer Callidyrr.

Tristan defeated a great evil, the Beast, and brought to the Moonshaes a greater period of peace, good harvests, and joy than had been known for years. Yet, as always, evil recovered swiftly, to return in strength to the Moonshaes.

First came a great chaos in both nature and the magical arts, a disruption of the Balance unheard of in the histories of even the eldest peoples amongst the elves and dwarves of Faerun. It brought less strife to the Moonshaes than it did to mainland Faerun—but in its wake there arose unease and tension. Nothing was as it had been, nothing could now be trusted; a time of unsettling changes and lurking danger had returned to the Realms.

In the Moonshaes, a new evil arose. Priests fled the chaos on the mainland and came to the Moonshaes to rebuild their strength. Dark, evil priests they were, who walked wilderness ways raising undead and hiring large, powerful bands of brigands to fight the druids and others who loved the land and were led by a Dark Druid—a man of great evil, whose aims remained hidden, but whose dark deeds set the land to rearming. Ffolk began again to fear

night and the stranger and the unseen.

Bards and sages alike sighed and warned. But they, like the other Ffolk, looked to the sharpness of their swords, and to the High King for leadership. It was a time, again, for heroes...

Before Play

To fully enjoy this adventure, the DM should have some familiarity with the Moonshae Isles. These are described in the "Moonshae Trilogy" of novels and *FR2/Moonshae*, a Realms sourcebook by Doug Niles. Knowledge of the Forgotten Realms as a whole and, in particular, the god Bane, will be useful as well. It is also essential that the DM have access to the AD&D® 2nd Edition rulebooks.

It is recommended that the DM have access to the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ boxed campaign set and the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Adventures hardcover rulebook. This adventure is to be used as part of an ongoing campaign set in the Realms, module *N4/Treasure Hunt*, the sourcebook *FR1/Waterdeep and the North*, and the third volume of the *Monstrous Compendium* should be acquired as reference material.

An adventure of this scope requires the DM to roleplay many Non-Player Characters (NPCs) colorfully, to bring the action to life around the Player Characters (PCs). Enthusiastically acting the roles of a few strong NPCs (developed beforehand), each with his own speech, manners, and habits, can help the novice DM carry this adventure without having to fill in a lot of the endless details that adorn any adventure spanning a large area and a lot of beings.

The DM should read through the entire module before play begins, particularly the appendices, in order to locate pertinent information, to decide upon changes that may be necessary to accommodate a particular campaign, and to sufficiently prepare to challenge the players during the adventure.

Gray-screened text in this module highlights reference lore (for ease of DM use during play) and should *not* be read to the players.

The appendices contain descriptions of monsters, spells, magic items, and suggested adventures that can be used in many other adventures. The DM needs to examine these suggestions to determine if they will conflict with the balance of his campaign and will, therefore, need to be replaced or modified.

If this adventure is not being used within a FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting, the DM should refer to *FR2—Moonshae* and any books on Celtic lore and times acquired in local libraries. These sources can aid in establishing a Celtic ambience for the campaign kingdom to be used as the adventure setting or will help create the DM's own version of the Moonshaes.

No pre-generated PCs have been provided in this module; it is suggested that existing characters from an ongoing AD&D campaign be used. Players will better enjoy untangling the mysteries of the Moonshaes if they can do it with familiar characters. The DM must modify the adventure, and will have a harder time surprising the players, if any of the PCs are residents or natives of the Moonshaes. The adventure should begin on the mainland, although it could be altered to start (less believably) on one isle with the party sailing to another isle.

This adventure is designed for a party of at least six—preferably eight or even ten—player characters, of most character classes. At least half of the party should be of 6th level or higher. Weaker or more powerful parties can easily be accommodated, however.

The DM will have opportunities to provide PCs with aid from Harpers and the mage Flamsterd throughout the adventure, and the presence of certain monsters (such as *Iyachtu Xvim*) should depend on the strength of the party. In this way, the adventure can be tailored to challenge the PCs without swiftly destroying them. But to do this, a DM *must* read and modify the adventure as necessary before play begins.

As you open this adventure to start play in the *Halls of the High King*, please bear in mind the words of wise old Elminster: "Why do any of us get up in the morning? Why, for the joy and fun the day might bring us, if we're awake to see it! Up, then, and find ye—fun!"

Chapter 1: The Adventure Begins

To Set Sail with Swords

This adventure can begin in any port city on the Sword Coast of the Realms (Waterdeep or Baldur's Gate are obvious choices). It is suggested the adventure begin when the PCs are restless, low on funds, or need to relocate quickly to avoid enemies, the authorities, or a heavy tax.

The PCs are approached by a short, fat, richly dressed merchant. "Your pardon, sirs," he says in a quiet, determined voice. "Could your services be had for hire? I am Panthras, of Panthras Procuring, and I'd like to do business with you."

Panthras has shrewd eyes set in a weather-beaten face. He is a street-smart, retired caravan master.

Panthras: AC 2 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12; F10; hp 79; THACO 11; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; S 16 (+1 on dmg.), D 14, C 16, I 15, W 17, Ch 14; ML 15; AL NG.

Panthras is armed with a long sword (1d8 dmg.), five throwing daggers (1d4 dmg each), and several magical defenses (see below), any or all of which he will use if the PCs are foolish enough to tangle with him. He is not interested in battling the PCs, however, but in hiring them. He will ask to meet the PCs somewhere private of their choosing—or, if they've no place to offer, in a back room of The Blunt Axe tavern.

Panthras will initially offer the PCs 30 gp and four *potions of healing* each to perform "a guard mission" for him. He will reveal more and, if necessary, offer up to 3,000 gp as he bargains.

Panthras needs a band of adventurers who command some magic and as much experience as possible to see a shipboard cargo of his safe to its destination. The cargo consists of sixty tarred and sealed wooden crates, each containing twenty new long swords of the finest make. The swords must reach the Cantrev of Aithe in Callidyrr, a kingdom on the Moonshae Isles. (If the PCs ask, Aithe lies on the western coast of the island of Alaron, northwest of Doncastle, where a cape —Moonfall

Ridge—juts out into the sea west of Dernal Forest.)

The PCs' mission, if they accept, will be to deliver the swords safely to the local lord, Haembar "Hawkenhound" Cauldyth. Panthras also produces a contract for the PCs to sign. It specifies how many swords the PCs are being hired to "...see safely into the hands of Lord Cauldyth of Aithe, or his successor in the lordship of Cantrev Aithe, to the best of their honor and abilities."

It is a standard Sword Coast contract, which Panthras will post with the rulers of the city. Any PC who has lived or traveled in the North or the Sword Coast lands will know that it merely prevents the unscrupulous from making off with a valuable cargo and selling it in the next port. All merchant guilds, companies, and rulers receive bundles of such contracts to prevent such deceit.

Panthras will turn away from the PCs for a moment, saying, "There is more. Read this, please." He produces a *portable hole* and draws from it a sealed parchment, slipping the hole back into the breast pocket from whence he drew it. Before proffering the parchment, he hesitantly adds, "I must warn you: Once you've unsealed this document, I cannot allow you to withdraw from the mission and live; this is a matter of state security. Consider your actions carefully, then. Upon my honor, the document contains no alteration in your agreed task."

The parchment is sealed with a wolf's head: the Lone Wolf of the Kendrick family. If the PCs open it, they will read:

To those who accept the bond of Panthras and with it the swordguard mission to Aithe:

My thanks and my debt. Dark days have come to the Moonshae Isles again, and we are in need of the strong and the valiant. Be it known that I personally shall award four thousand pieces of gold, above and beyond your pay, to each adventurer in your band who comes to Caer Callidyrr and asks for it, assuming the blades arrive safely in the hands of the Lord of Aithe. I will offer more,

at that time, to those among you who will give us substantial aid against the foes that beset us in the Moonshaes—dark men skulking behind witless pawns who may try to seize that which you guard.

Bring this letter to me in Caer Callidyrr, and accept the thanks, welcome, and hospitality of:

Tristan Kendrick
High King of the Ffolk

If any PCs attack Panthras during the encounter, or if they try to renounce their part in the agreement to his face after the document has been unsealed, the merchant's most powerful defense will act.

The mage Flamsterd, who has been eavesdropping invisibly on the negotiations, concealed against magical detection by his own personal magics, will cast a *forget* spell on the PCs. If hostilities erupt and he deems it necessary, a *time stop* will be cast first, after which he will remove the High King's letter and move all PC weapons, magic items, scrolls, potions, and the like into a pile in the center of the gathering.

In brief, Flamsterd is a powerful archmage (Wizard, 21st Level) who carries whatever magic items and spells a DM wishes to give him. He is a gentle man, firm but polite, with a kindly manner, but he has learned that the best response to those who attack him or thwart his will is a quick and heavy-handed magical attack. (He can ask the corpses questions later and apologize to the remains if he's made a mistake.)

Flamsterd is an eminent sage, his major field of expertise being the history, lore, and works of written magic. His minor interests include the history of human settlement and deeds in northwestern Faerun, and of the Ffolk of the Moonshaes in particular.

Flamsterd's eyes flash and his voice grows stern when he deems it necessary, and although he seems quick to anger, he has iron self-control. He will often act more angry than he really is in order to cow opponents or lure them into revealing their true attitudes or foolish battle strategies.

Chapter 1: The Adventure Begins

He is armed with a *dagger +2*, *longtooth* and also with six *darts of paralyzation*. These +1 darts cause their victim to save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 1 turn. They do not automatically return to the thrower, but neither do they lose their magic if they miss a target.

Flamsterd appears as a slim, distinguished-looking, long-bearded man of average height. His long, predominantly white beard, which still has some strands of black left, is often tucked into his belt or drawn up and flung over one shoulder to keep it out of the dirt. He customarily wears plain gray robes and (only when traveling outside his home) a red cloak. These continuously curl and flap around him, seemingly of their own volition, due to the cloak's power to emit a sudden *gust of wind* once every second round, at Flamsterd's will. This handy piece of magic serves to extinguish or dramatically heighten campfires where he appears, deflect arrows or other missiles, and so on.

Flamsterd is famous and well-thought of around the Isles, by Llewyr, dwarves, halflings and Ffolk alike. His appearances are news, and his kindnesses (such as magically rescuing livestock or people, mending broken fences or roofs that leak, repairing bridges and clearing spring ice to prevent floods) are legendary. A *teleport ring*, which he is never without, allows him to appear and depart suddenly and silently. Like his colleagues Khelben Arunsun and Elminster, Flamsterd is a friend to the Harpers and shares their aims of protecting the land, the weak and needy who dwell in it, and upholding honesty, fair dealing, and peace.

Flamsterd may appear from time to time during this adventure as desired. Long-term campaign play in the Moonshaes will require a DM to detail Flamsterd's spells, possessions, abode, and activities more extensively.

Flamsterd: AC -2 (plain robes plus a *cloak of protection +5*, a *ring of protection +3*, and his Dex bonus); MV 12; W21; hp 49; THACO 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 14, D 18, C 15, I 18, W 17, Ch 16; ML 15; AL NG).

If the PCs accept the mission, Panthras will produce his *portable hole* and

make the payment agreed upon—the spot. He will tell the PCs to report to the caravel *Mermaid Sword* at the docks three mornings hence (or whatever time the DM desires in order to allow the PCs to fully rest, heal and regain spells and gear or to have another, short adventure). After bidding the PCs good day, he leaves. If any PC rushes after him or tries to follow him “on the sly,” they will find that he has vanished. (In reality, Flamsterd has cast *invisibility* on the merchant and they both *teleport* away.)

If the PCs refuse the bargain and elect to go their own way, they will see Panthras seeking out adventurers wherever they go in the days that follow. If they get down on their luck, he will reappear and try them again, even finding his way into dungeons they've gotten lost in or prisons they've been incarcerated in (offer Ag, of course, to free them if they accept his job offer). Flamsterd will accompany Panthras as an invisible protector at all times. Oddly enough, PC attacks on Panthras will not diminish his enthusiasm to try to hire them.

If the PCs still seem reluctant to undertake the mission, introduce the next event.

A Visitor by Night

Whenever two or more PCs are together, after dark, a pale blue radiance will suddenly spring into being nearby, growing rapidly brighter. It expands as a whirling, pulsing ball to become the ghostly image of an upright, detached human hand, which turns to point into the darkness and fades away.

If the PCs look where the hand is pointing, they see a slim, distinguished-looking man, wearing gray robes and a red cloak that seem to swirl and shift by themselves, as if disturbed by an unseen, unfelt wind. The man's white beard is so long that he's tucked it into his belt to avoid treading on it. A few hairs as black as a raven's remain around his lower lip, among their snow-white brothers. The man regards them gravely, and says, “Well met. I come in peace, to speak of war and danger.”

It is the wizard Flamsterd who has ap-

peared via his *teleport ring* and created the hand. If the PCs don't look where the hand is pointing, Flamsterd will clear his throat loudly to get their attention. If that doesn't work, he will simply walk right in among the PCs, stepping on anyone who's sleeping.

Flamsterd slowly looks around at all of the PCs present, and says, “I understand you are adventurers.” He will wait for a reply, but whether or not one is given, will continue: “My land has need of adventurers. I am come from the Moonshae Isles, that men hereabouts sometimes call the “jewels on the hilts of The Sea of Swords.” My fair land has faced evil aplenty in recent years, and its folk are weary and sick of death and blood-magic and blades. A new evil has come to our shores; evil never grows tired. I need you, and others like you, to fight this evil. Are you willing?”

Flamsterd will quietly and politely answer PC queries. He will not bluster and cannot be pressured into bargains or admissions. He will say that the evil of which he speaks consists of “. . . brigands, undead, and darker creatures, all of them guided and goaded on by priests of the god Bane, The Lord of Tyranny.”

If PCs ask for payment for aiding the Moonshaes, Flamsterd will reply that the High King has already offered them “coins, and more.” (If the PCs did not read the letter that Panthras bore, Flamsterd will produce it now, offering it without the state security warning Panthras was obligated to offer.)

Flamsterd will tell the PCs he can offer them his friendship, aid at times when they are in the Moonshaes, and magical tutelage in a single spell of their choosing, when the evil is defeated. If any PCs are Harpers, Flamsterd will call on them as Harpers to do their duty and aid the Moonshaes, invoking the names of any powerful Harpers that may be known to the PCs.

If the PCs seem willing, Flamsterd will tell them to report to the *Mermaid Sword*, a caravel owned by the High King, at a particular dock three mornings hence. (Once again, the time period can be adjusted to suit the DM's purposes.)

If the PCs are unwilling, Flamsterd will shake his head sorrowfully, and

Chapter 1: The Adventure Begins

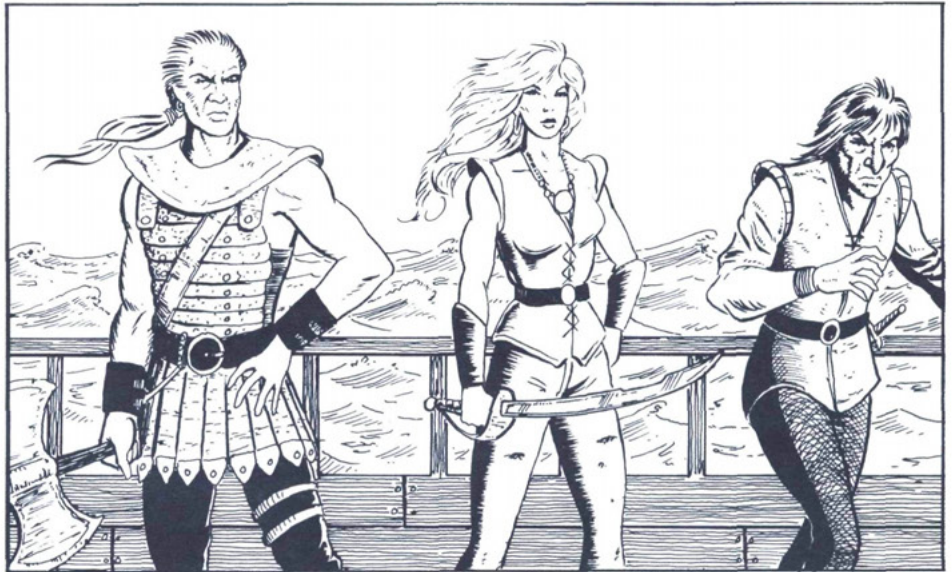
sigh. "I see no heroes here," he will announce. "Indeed, none of you can even strike true with a blade!" With these words, the wizard will vanish, using his ring to *teleport* away. If Flamsterd is attacked at any time during this encounter, he will utter these words and vanish.

Flamsterd has enacted a powerful *steel curse*, once widely used in the North. This type of curse prevents a victim from successfully attacking with any bladed weapon, from a bill to a belt-knife—and all PCs present at Flamsterd's visit are affected!! Attempts to use bladed weapons as clubs, or to strike them against walls, trees, and other immobile targets, will cause the blade to shatter into tiny shards with no damage to wielder or target (magical weapons also affected) at every attempt. Bladed weapons are simply useless to the cursed beings until a number of months equal to the level of the caster (in Flamsterd's case, 21 months) have passed, or until the curse is lifted. A *steel curse* can be lifted instantly by the caster or by the application of a *remove curse* by a wizard of fourteenth level or greater on each and every affected being. Flamsterd will lift it if the PCs undertake the mission. *Remove curse* spells cast by lesser wizards, and *dispel magic* spells, will have no effect.

One last method of tumbling reluctant PCs into the adventure is to have them run afoul of enemies or the authorities in a dockside area and start a chase, with the PCs fleeing from a trap or overwhelming force. Their flight leads them to the water, where a caravel, the *Mermaid Sword*, is just casting off. The captain waves the PCs aboard, face alight. "Are you the promised ones?," she cries. "Come on, then! We sail before the day's three breaths older!"

The Mermaid Sword

The PCs' first glimpse of the *Mermaid Sword* reveals a two-masted wooden ship of beautiful, slim lines. Its bow rises into a figurehead of a mermaid thrusting a long sword ahead of her (the bowsprit). Its stern rises into an ele-



vated captain's deck with a long steering oar used for navigating the rocky straits where sudden turns may be needed. (The *Sword* carries a spare oar plus three spare sails and a spare mast.)

The *Mermaid Sword* is 70' long and 20' wide, carries up to 160 tons of cargo, and requires a minimum crew of fourteen skilled sailors to handle. Her customary crew numbers 32. Its Base Movement is 4, its Emergency Move 5, and its Seaworthiness, due to careful construction and magical treatments, is a stout 74%.

During shipboard combat situations, the DM should consult the ship deck-plan maps.

The *Mermaid Sword* is as good as a Moonshavian merchant caravel gets. Flying under the Kendrick family banner, the Lone Wolf (a snarling gray wolf's head with red eyes, on a white field; the head snarls face-on to the viewer), the ship has two sky-blue square canvas sails and a brown double-thickness "storm sail" for the mainmast. Its crew are all expert sailors, who know The Sea of Swords between Neverwinter, Amn, and the Moonshaes well.

The ship is armed with two light sea-ballistae, mounted on pivots on the raised decks fore and aft. These giant crossbows are sturdily built and treated to resist fire and damp. Each requires a crew of one strong person to

load the ballista, crank the windlass up tight, aim and fire the weapon, and then repeat the process. The ballistae fire a normal, all-metal, or grappling (line-trailing) spear up to 2,000 yards (modified more or less by wind direction) at THACO 16.

A sea-ballista fires once every 2 rounds; two additional strong crew operating each ballista can raise that rate of fire to once every round. No additional gains are possible.

Ballista-bolts do damage as follows: normal spears do 2d4, all-metal bolts and normal heavy horse lances do 2d6, a normal javelin deals 1d6, and 1d4 + 1 is caused by an improvised missile (polearm, 10' pole, or metal rod).

A grappling-bolt is always metal and has a massive reinforced shank to which a greased line is attached. When fired, a grappling-bolt always wobbles in flight, traveling a maximum effective (striking and holding) distance of 1,000 yards. Whenever a grappling-bolt is fired, there is a 2 in 6 chance the attached line will break. Enemy action or high seas have a 3 in 6 chance per round thereafter of snapping any grappling line(s). Iceworm-grease on the line (made principally in Uttersea and Luskan) allows it to uncoil easily and does not readily ignite.

Grappled ships can be drawn together by a distance of twice the width of the larger ship every round, if the crew of one ship desires it, and at least 6