

The Singer from Dhol Character Sheets

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Oyster Island

Oyster Island is an island of two faces: a summer face for the holiday guests, and a winter face for the lonely. Mists shroud the willows in the marshes and mud-flats like a mourning cape that is held up by the trees' web of bare branches. Bewitched copses and solitary trees duck under the force of the gale; only beach grass offers proud resistance to the fierce winds.

Seagulls calling, solitude.

The island's other face.

Oyster Island, the Penobscot Bay island “where the wind is always in your face”, has a shape that is unpleasantly reminiscent of a skull, and in its history, it has fulfilled this omen more than just occasionally.

The name “Oyster Island” refers to the vast mounds of discarded oyster shells that can be found all over the island. These are the remains of pre-Columbian Indians’ hunter-gatherer activities during the summer.

Oyster Island was first discovered by Europeans by French navigator Samuel de Champlain in 1605. The island was settled by French settlers in 1668, part of the Arcadia colony, and was known as “Île de Crâne”. The French settlers continued to share their island with the migrant local Abernaki Indians who summered on the island – the settlers kept to the interior and the Indians to the coastline.

The arrival of English privateer Cord Wainwright in 1705 changed everything. Wainwright and his men forced the settlers to flee, and set-up shop, using the island as a base of operations against French and Spanish shipping. The following spring, the Abernaki arrived and had a hostile confrontation with Wainwright. The Indians were forced to leave but as they were allied with the French they swore bloody revenge. Return they did five months later: on All Hallows Eve they landed on Oyster Island by night, sneaked into Wainwright’s camp, seized him and then beheaded him. They then ran rampage through the entire island. Wainwright’s head was chucked into the sea, and never found, and it is said that his ghost still haunts the island.

The island wasn’t resettled until 1715 when survivors of Wainwright’s fleet led a settlement company there. The defeat of the Abernaki with their French allies during the various Anglo-French wars in the region removed the possibility of another confrontation between Indians and settlers occurring.

The second tragedy in Oyster Island’s history occurred during the American War of Independence in 1780 when the British hanged every able-bodied man on the island, charging them (rightly) with piracy, and burnt every farm on the island.

Oyster Island has two villages, Tanner’s Town and Trenton, and a multitude of isolated farms. There is no electricity, apart from the lighthouse (120 feet high), which has been powered by diesel engines since 1907.

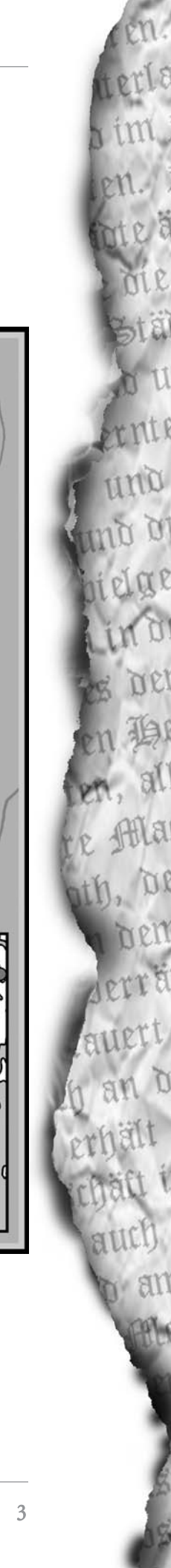
The island’s soil is well suited for grazing and crop farming, particularly potatoes. Apart from whaling and lobster fishing, trawler fishing was never among the island’s important industries, nor could it ever compete with wrecking (which was well-organized in the old days).

Tourists are Oyster Island’s most important industry in the summer but numbers aren’t as numerous as they could be – neighboring islands are far more popular as seaside resorts. The most prominent visitor to the island in recent years was David Schermerhorn, the famous nineteenth century society rake, who stayed on the island in 1882/3 and during this time started to write poetry, out of utter boredom. A number of clubs and associations provide some entertainment for Oyster Island locals, though – the oldest among being the Farmers’ Union, founded in 1855.

After the Great War, many young islanders were forced by poverty to emigrate to the mainland.

However, only those families with ancestors who lived on the island in the days of the second settlement are held to be true “Oyster Islanders” – everybody else is considered a stranger.

Note: every player should receive a copy of this text prior to play.



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Florence Gullson, farmer, age 30

STR 12	CON 15	SIZ 12	INT 10	POW 8
DEX 12	APP 13	EDU 9	SAN 40	HP 14

Damage Bonus: 0

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3; .Handgun 45%, damage depends on handgun used

Skills: Accounting 15%, Bargain 65%, Conceal 35%, Craft (Sheep Farmer) 35%, Craft (Spinning) 45%, Credit Rating 25%, Dog Training 60%, Fast Talk 45%, Locksmith 55%, Pharmacy 10%, Pilot (Boat) 15%, Prepare poison 35%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 55%, Swim 40%.

Languages: English (Own) [cannot read or write] 55%

Possessions:

- door key for the farm
- wallet
- dog whistle

Background:

You can neither read nor write. But you're really good at calculating. And money is very important. When your former fiancé, George, lost a leg, you had no difficulties to get his brother Thomas. And before anyone really noticed, you were the mistress of a whole farm. Only that the farm wasn't really worth a damn. And Ada, the nagging old hag, would not and would not leave it alone, either. But the special medicine that you had been administering to her for weeks has now finally had its effect. Well, it appears she wasn't all that demented – you'd bet that she found out in the end. But by that time, she was already too weak to offer any resistance. From now on, you are the only master of the farm, and if necessary, your slavishly subservient husband will undoubtedly make sure that you get your way. And there are also your sheepdogs that follow your every command. But still you are not really certain whether you want to stay on Oyster

Island for the rest of your life. It doesn't really feel like home, after all.

Harry is your lover. It is only because of you that he comes up with ever new excuses to stay on the farm for another year. You don't see any competition in Sarah – you know for sure that her marriage to Harry has never been consummated. For sure he is not the father of retarded little Wilma, who you'd love to be rid of as soon as possible.

You have found your mother-in-law's will (you had to ruin your best hairpin to pick the lock!), and immediately gave it to Harry to read it over. He only said that the two of you would be very rich, and very soon. The mere thought makes you tingle with pleasure. You're curious to hear his tale.

What you want to do in Tanner's Town:

Like most sheep farmers on Oyster Island, you have given lambs from your farm to the shopkeeper, old Widow Bramwell, commissioning her to sell them. You can hardly wait to get the money into your hands. And if you manage to have the others wait outside, you can keep a good part of it for yourself – and wouldn't that be a brilliant start for the first day of your new rule.

Your opinion about the others:

- George cannot accept that he is nothing but a useless mouth to feed. But if a man will not work, he will not have any rights, either.
- Thomas is a useful blockhead. Not once has he rebelled against you. He sleeps on the floor and looks the other way when you meet Harry.
- The nasty retard Wilma needs a strong hand. Occasionally, when you happen to be alone with her, you give her the good beating that she deserves even without any particular reason – it gives you a wonderful feeling of elation. The bruises and swellings might be ugly, but her parents complained not once. But those weird stares that Wilma occasionally throws at you, they give you an uncanny feeling... and so does the fact that she never cried.
- You respect Robert. He knows his job very well and keeps out of things that are none of his business.
- Sarah is a wretched creature, hardly better than dirt. Luckily she hardly ever says a word. But why does she keep sneaking away to Tanner's Town when she thinks nobody's looking?



George Gullson, disabled war veteran, age 32

STR 17	CON 17	SIZ 13	INT 8	POW 7
DEX 9	APP 7	EDU 11	SAN 35	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Move 4

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db; grapple 55%, damage special; Rifle 45%, damage depends on rifle used

Skills: Angling 40%, Art (Flute) 15%, Bargain 25%, Craft (Animal handling) 35%, Craft (Sheep Farmer) 55%, History 25%, Limp 60%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Pilot (Boat) 15%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 35%, Swim 35%, Throw 35%.

Languages: English (own) 85%, French 15%

Possessions:

- two crutches and a prosthetic leg
- pocket knife
- hipflask (full)

Background:

The horror! Chased, you flee through the undergrowth, thorns shred your skin – but your pursuer draws ever closer. Then, at last, the beast throws you down – you thrash about wildly but without any power, and the creature sinks its tearing teeth deep into your thigh. Bones crack, and you realize just who is that cannibal that devours your leg with a blood caked face – it is Thomas, your own brother!

You wake up screaming. Just a dream, you think with a sense of deep relief, just a dream! But your fingers grasp empty space. Where is your leg? Only now you recognize the dreadful nightmare that keeps returning ever since that night in Saint-Mihiel, when a bullet of the arch enemy tore away your leg, and only your brother saved you from bleeding to death amid the mud and entrails. Many months you cursed the fate that crippled you so shortly before the end of the war. This war – it destroyed your life. It took your leg away, and it took Florence away, the woman you had been engaged to. Now you are a cripple and a drunkard, your life was made a mess.

But the day before yesterday changed everything.

On the day before yesterday, Harry approached you with a pile of sketch papers that were full of strange signs that neither you nor he could read. He did not tell you where he had got them, but you could help him nevertheless: the floor plan with the big X in one corner was that of St. Savior, the Old Church. It could not be anything but a treasure map, and the two of you decided to go looking for the treasure on the day after the next.

But on that very same night, you went to the church on your own – the idiot must have believed you fool enough to content yourself only with a share. No doubt that the map was your mother's, you could recognize her handwriting on all these papers. Which means that Harry doesn't have any right to anything anyway. But there was a light in the church. Cautiously, you stole into it on all threes – Harry, that cheat, had levered open the floor of the confessional with a spade and had his unwashed hands on the silver that was yours! Surreptitiously you snatched the spade – Harry whirled around, but too late. You hit the thief right between the eyes – he simply passed out. You were sitting on the edge of the pit and hit him over and over again with the spade! You were a little afraid to be discovered, but your last visit to a church was such a long time ago that you said a short prayer anyway. Then you carefully covered the hole again with the heavy memorial slab and returned to the farm, your pockets full of silver coins. The spade went back into the barn, cleaned and polished, the silver could be hid in an unused bucket with some straw over it – and that was all it took! In the morning you told your sister Sarah, Harry's wife, that her beloved bastard husband had just gone out again to the meadows to have a quick last word with Newman, the day laborer. Finally you get some luck up your road, too. You are going to return to the church soon to retrieve the remaining silver. But you are not in a hurry: by now, you are not all that certain anymore whether Harry was really dead when you left him there.

Your opinion about the others:

- Thomas is the only one that you can always rely on.
- Florence always wants to have things her way, and she usually gets them like that, too. But this will change soon.
- Robert is your little brother. You envy him for his good looks and for his job away from the farm. No doubt he's having lots of women, whereas you never got a single one.
- Sarah is silent and depressive. Why did she have to marry that loser Harry Holmes, after all? Something makes you feel pretty certain that she and Robert are in on some secret.
- Wilma is your retarded niece. The way she is looks into your eyes sometimes is rather uncanny.
- Harry is a wretched loser who only got what he deserved anyway.

Note:

George lives in the terrible certainty that his life was over before it ever had a chance to begin. He tries desperately to appear strong and master of any situation, but his real helplessness turns these attempts into a ridiculous farce. If he were given a chance to start all over again, somewhere far away, he would be more than just glad to do so. Most of the time he stays on the farm, even though his prosthetic limb and the crutches would actually allow him to wander about more or less uninhibitedly. He avoids the villagers of Tanner's Town as far as he possibly can; just for one example, he would not ever set a single foot into the general store of old Widow Bramwell for anything in the world. George hates most people, but most of all he hates the Germans, for shooting away his leg. One day he will take revenge.


Robert Gullson, Lobsterman, age 25

STR 13	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 12	POW 10
DEX 12	APP 14	EDU 14	SAN 50	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Fist 65%, 1D3+db

Skills: Art (Flute) 35%, Climb 70%, Craft (Fishing) 55%, First Aid 40%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigate 40%, Pilot (Boat) 60%, Swim 45%, Throw 35%.

Languages: English (own) 55%

Possessions:

- pocket watch
- windproof lighter
- tobacco
- toy first-aid kit (a present for Wilma)

Background:

During the last two years of the war, you have served your country in the Merchant Marine, running convoys to Europe.

If it comes to the worst, you'd do it again the way you did it then: sneak to the lifeboat, and then play the Samaritan fishing out the scalded comrades who survived the torpedo or boiler explosions.

But you still have that itch in your feet – you still dream of faraway countries.

Now that your mother died, the future looks bright – the immediate future, at least. If everything runs smoothly with the splitting of the inheritance, you won't have to meet your sister Sarah in your Tanner's Town home in secrecy anymore – you'll be able to spend every night together, the way it used to be. In this way, you'll also be in a better position to protect your common daughter Wilma – you're convinced that Florence is responsible for all her bruises and grazes.

You don't perceive your sister's husband Harry as a competition of any kind. He'll simply have to find another woman for his pleasures.

Anyway, you get along with Harry fairly well. Drinking late one night, not only have you sworn eternal brotherhood to each other, but you have also made a bizarre pact, just for the hell of it: whichever of you dies first will do his very best to visit the survivor or send him a message from the Hereafter. The mere thought makes you smile: that doctor in Boston hardly mentioned your clap at all, but he went on and on about something else. Harry and you might find out much sooner than either of you had expected whether your agreement can be fulfilled or not: according to the doctors, cancer leaves you only about six months to live.

Your opinion about the others:

- You have never met a greedier person than Florence, and you have been around quite a bit! She has probably long pocketed every bit of wealth on the farm. If she is doing business in Tanner's Town, you are going to watch her hands – or else she'll steal half of the money again.
- Wilma is your joy and pleasure. You are going to protect her and will never allow any harm to come to her. And for her age, she is really intelligent – very often, her ideas are dead on.
- George is a bitter man, railing against his fate. He used to be your great example, your best friend. Together you explored the island, and once you even climbed up inside the collapsed steeple tower of St. Savior – he showed you the best path to get up. But now his spirit of adventure appears to be lost for good. Today, George is hardly more than a shadow of his former self.
- It used to be that Thomas, one year younger than his brother, had to back down for George. Funny how things change.

Note:

Robert's player should help Wilma to participate actively in the adventure, even though eight-year old girls are usually hardly given any right to have their say. If other players decide to send the "brat" to bed or leave her at home alone, Robert should stand up for her.


Thomas Gullson, farmer, age 31

STR 14	CON 16	SIZ 13	INT 9	POW 11
DEX 7	APP 7	EDU 10	SAN 55	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db; Club 55%, 1D6+db; Rifle 55%, damage depending on rifle used

Skills: Angling 25%, Bargain 15%, Climb 60%, Craft (Sheep Farmer) 45%, Craft (Sheep Molester) 60%, First Aid 50%, History 20%, Jump 35%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Swim 35%, Throw 45%, Track 35%.

Languages: English (own) 50%

Possessions:

- pocket knife
- lighter

Background:

You are an extraordinarily happy man. You have your own farm, and you have a wonderful wife who really loves you. Florence is your life, and your love for her is inordinate. Whatever she tells you to do, you will do it gladly, because her love means everything to you. You have always loved your cousin, even when you both were but children.

When she got engaged to George, jealousy very nearly drove you mad. You always knew that Florence was your destiny – that knowledge alone helped you to win over madness and replace it with cold, clear rationality. Yes – Florence may have acted as if she was happy, but deep in your heart you knew who it was that she really loved. So you managed to save her, in the last days of the war. It was a clear shot to the knee, even though you had aimed for your brother's head. Nobody ever suspected a thing, and when Florence saw her mutilated fiancé, you knew that you had won.

It was you who led her to the altar two weeks later, and you still love her like on the very first day. And she loves you. She definitely does.

Even though she has made you sleep on the floor ever since the wedding night. She loves you nevertheless. And it would be wrong to call her stingy just because she is thrifty. It doesn't matter that she keeps all the money for herself – love is the only thing that matters. You love her, and she loves you.

You're very, very certain of that.

Your opinion about the others:

- George is a poor sod who has no clue that it was you who destroyed his life. He even believes that you saved it.
- Robert is young and good-looking – and he volunteered for the navy. It's obvious: something must be wrong with that boy.
- Your sister Sarah is quiet. Too quiet. You wonder whether she can really be that naive.
- Wilma is a retarded brat talking utter gibberish. You don't like the way she stares at you.
- Harry lives on the farm as a farmhand. He has been talking about emigrating to California for years. There is hardly any way that you could care less about California, but the idea to travel to somewhere else and start all over is quite fascinating nevertheless.

Note:

Thomas is unconditionally captivated by Florence. He hardly ever leaves her side and is keen to anticipate her every wish. The idea that Florence might not love him in the same way would be intolerable to him, and he would suppress it immediately. Or crack up...


Wilma Holmes, little girl, age 8

STR 8	CON 17	SIZ 6	INT 18	POW 18
DEX 15	APP 12	EDU 8	SAN 90	HP 12

Damage Bonus: -1D4

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db

Skills: Art (Flute) 55%, Climb 60%, Dodge 70%, First Aid 10%, Hide 65%, Listen 60%, Night Vision 65%, Pharmacy 05%, Sneak 70%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stare 65%, Swim 50%.

Languages: English (own) 40%

Possessions:

- marbles
- rag doll of a musician (damaged)

Background:

You are a lonely child – on the farm, there are only your parents and Aunt Florence and Uncle George and Uncle Thomas. You have never played with other children, they all live somewhere else, and it's probably better that way – they certainly wouldn't like you.

Granny really liked you very much, and Mummy loves you, too. Dad and your uncles hardly seem to take any notice of you, and that's okay with you. But Aunt Florence is a witch; she always hits you when nobody is looking.

One week ago, however, you stared in her eyes very, very firmly, with those eyes of yours that are so strange, according to just about everybody. Since that day, she hasn't done anything to you. But still you might run away soon and go looking for another home, somewhere else. If only you knew where.

When you grow up you want to be a doctor. That's probably going to be difficult, because you are a little dumb. Except for Grandma, everybody has always called you "retarded" – and you know that means "dumb".

But if you keep up your diligent practicing, you're certain to become a doctor eventually despite all that. You have a practice room

in your hideaway (a walled-up room under the barn roof that you can reach by climbing up the chimney).

The farm cats are your patients, and they like to come to you, because you always start by cuddling them. It's so cute how they purr when you carry them to the water barrel. After that, you take the wet, limp bodies to your hideaway to dissect them carefully and fix the pieces on the wall with nails. And the chimney smoke preserves them.

Your opinion about the others:

- Robert is your best friend, he is cheerful and has taught you how to play the flute. And he brings great toys. With Grandma dead, Robert now is the only one you can always talk to – he really listens to what you are saying.
- Florence is a snake in the grass and keeps torturing you. You hate her.
- You are still a little sad that you didn't get to see how they cut off George's leg. Apart from that, you don't care about him at all – and he stinks of booze.
- Thomas is afraid of everybody and everything. Afraid of Aunt Florence leaving him for your dad. Afraid of her staying with him and spending all his money. Afraid of you when you stare at him. And afraid of George, in case he ever finds out that it wasn't the Germans who blew off his leg after all.
- Sarah is not quite as dumb as you, but very nearly. You really like her, but she speaks very little and cries a lot. In particular when uncle Robert is gone. But when he's there, she cries even more.
- Harry doesn't like you because you are simply so stupid.

Note:

Wilma is a goddam genius.

With an INT of 18, she is so extraordinarily superior to the other members of the family (who are close to mentally deficient) that nobody is able to understand her, and she believes herself to be incredibly stupid indeed. Whenever she has a brilliant idea, she can communicate it to Robert – this is how the character can influence the others.

However, Wilma does live in a sick dream world, and she does voice extremely weird thoughts ("I wonder whether the worms like Grandma as much as I do...").