



# THE BELLS OF BLACKMIRE

A Stand Alone Threat for Jason Cordova's *The Between* by Ben Bisogno, Blaine Martin, Amanda Mullins, Levi Phipps, Tristan Real, and salty.

This Threat takes place on Blackmire Island, a remote insular community off of the Isle of Man. It is intended as a stand alone threat to be completed as a one-shot or double-tap (two sessions), separate from a campaign. However, you can use it mid-campaign as well. While *The Bells of Blackmire* is in play, no new Threats can be introduced, and Clues cannot be gathered for other active Threats. If you are playing a campaign, the hunters can still find Mastermind Clues, otherwise they get a second Clue instead of a Mastermind Clue. The Dusk Phase has a Paint-the-Scene question and there is a new Unscene to be presented during the first Night Phase. Of special note, this Threat has rules that encourage hunters to share intimacy with a cast of male side-characters.

*Dr. Simon Alden, a hunter retired to Blackmire Island, has sent a desperate plea for help. His grandchild Beth has vanished as well as several other villagers. This wouldn't normally draw the attention of Hargrave House, were it not for the strange and sudden appearance of so-called "miracles". The most dramatic of these: the revival of drowned sailor Jonah Whittaker, "reborn" at the hands of the local religious leader Reverend Mother Shauna Pickering, the island's spiritual leader. Dr. Simon Alden suspects that these disappearances and miracles are tied to her growing religious movement; the villagers are convinced a new age is dawning and won't cease preaching at his doorstep while he is just trying to enjoy a smoke. He fears something sinister and unnatural has taken hold of the island and offers a high-valued prize should you handle it: handmade cigars from his personal stash.*

**Pose the following to the hunter most closely associated with the sea, or Keeper's choice:** *You have been to Blackmire before—perhaps in childhood, perhaps for a past case. Why did you swear never to return?*

## Questions & Opportunities

**HOW DOES JONAH WHITTAKER'S REVIVAL CONNECT WITH THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE MISSING PERSONS?** (Complexity: 2)

Unlock the following questions by enlisting him to your cause. He won't lead you to the grave or nest of the missing (whatever fate they may have) until you take on the Reverend Mother.

**WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE REVEREND MOTHER?** (Complexity: 2)

Resolve the Threat by destroying her in a manner befitting her nature, and stopping her malevolence from spreading any farther.

**WHO WILL BE CROWNED IN SALT, SURRENDERING TO THE KISS OF THEIR SAVIOR?** (Complexity: 2)

Only one hunter can do the following, and the Clues must suggest that hunter has been chosen by the powers behind the Threat: Consent to be paraded naked through the village to the beach below, hair braided in fish hooks and shells, where you will be inserted into the whale's maw and, together, burned alive. The hunter's involvement in the Threat ends abruptly at this point and when you return to London, everything will appear as normal. The other hunters can continue to investigate. The hunter who is so "crowned", however, gains an additional reward: a new Custom Move, negotiated with the Keeper, reflecting the anointment they have undergone.

## Reverend Mother Shauna Pickering

The Mother Shauna Pickering wears a woman's face, yes, but only just. It's stretched tightly across. Her skin, once seemingly human, is now taut over an unnatural bulk.

**Quote:** *"I see you hunger for a miracle of your own, my child. And the sea—oh, the sea knows how to feast. Let it bless your mouth with salt. Let it open your lungs like lilies. Come now. Kneel in the surf. Let the waves bear you to Him. Let the tide take your name, and give you back something holier."*

**Special Rule:** If you share a bed with Mother Pickering, you immediately become her Servant. The Keeper will tell you how. You must retire your character or mark a Janus Mask.

## IF HARGRAVE HOUSE IGNORES MOTHER PICKERING...

Dr. Simon Alden is denounced as an apostate and drowned in the tide. The Mother's miracles ripple beyond the island: Coastal villages begin to disappear. Across the shore of England, bloodless saints are born with shark's teeth and salt in their veins, hungry for the warm blooded.

## The Mask of the Drowned

Each hunter narrates a memory of a time they were swept up in something—faith, love, belief—only to realize too late that they had been dragged into an undertow too strong to emerge from.

## Dangers

### MISS SUZANNAH SHARPE

One of Mother Pickering's most fervent devotees. Born in Blackmire and will be buried in Blackmire. Once worked at Borstal, the prison reform school that dominates the village of the same name. Treats the rest of the congregation like her students. Auburn hair that glints in the setting sun, lineless skin, a gorgeous sneer.

**Quote:** Discipline- discipline will do you good. I hear there's rather a lack of it of late in London... What a pity that Mother Pickering's words have landed on deaf ears when she leaves to preach to those sinners. Dens of sin and iniquity! Nothing like dear Blackmire. I hope you'll respect our customs, visitors."

### THE TRUE-BELIEVERS

A converted and ideological group amongst the island's community. They are individuals who fervently follow The Mother's teachings, seeing her as a divine messenger or even a god reborn. They do her bidding in the daylight.

### THE MISSING

Some say they've seen the lost. Child on rooftops. Slinking in the shadows. Swimming in the sea. These may be ghosts, hysteria, or depending on the nature of The Mother's entities like herself.

## Moments

A succession of three encounters with a cat:

A darting black shape across the wet sands of the beach- seizing a flopping silver fish from a net.

A fattened and young cat with dark fur cleans its bloodied paws, amber eyes watching the Hunters.

Now a limp bag of broken bones, the cat's body lies on the stoop of a public building.

Phosphorescent lights gleam on the flat, unbroken surface of a body of water, like jellyfish beneath the sea.

A group wedding: townsfolk, dressed in white robes, stand around a bonfire singing "Are You Washed in the Blood?" Without breaking song, they take turns thrusting their hands into the fire then pressing their bloody palms against the pure white fabric of their new spouse's robe.

A man and wife bring their lamb to church dressed in the clothes of the son that had recently disappeared, walking on hind-legs

A young couple performs a gruesome suicide by jumping off a cliff in front of the chapel

## Locations

### THE CLIFFS

Jagged and towering, they reach toward the sky like teeth, standing as grim sentinels facing the sea. The wind never stops here, and some say the souls of the lost still wander these edges.

**Paint the Scene:** The cliffs seem to invite you to jump. What about the environment here tempts you to do so? Why don't you?

### THE SCHOOLHOUSE

A weather-worn one-room cottage. The children began to scrawl strange scenes on walls here recently, even (somehow) on the ceiling, before they disappeared.

**Paint the Scene:** *What prophecies have the children scrawled and depicted, like cave drawings, across the room in paint and chalk? Do you believe they will come true or don't you?*

### SAINT CUTHBERT'S CHAPEL.

An ancient stone building carved into the rock, thick with the smell of incense. On the altar, a fishing net lies with fresh catch dressed and splayed open.

**Paint the Scene:** *This room has seen miracles happen here. Do you believe these are true or don't you? What about the space suggests that your opinion is true?*

### OLD DUN DANNAN'S LIGHTHOUSE

Leaning, almost as if it threatens to fall into the sea below. Its light is faint, but it still manages to cut through the night.

**Paint the Scene:** *The lighthouse is a beacon of protection. What about it makes you feel unusually at ease and at peace at the sight of it?*

### THE FISHERMAN'S WALK

A pier bustling with activity. Ships heading in and out. A nearby beach with a whale suffocating upon it.

**Paint the Scene:** *Strangely enough, commerce is busier than ever. What tells you that this town is on the precipice of a golden era?*

### THE FORGOTTEN CHAPEL

Its entrance is an ancient cave, nearly entirely submerged at the base of the cliffs. Only in strong storms and low tides, do the troughs of the waves reveal its barnacled entrance. A coo of wind breathing into it.

**Paint the Scene:** *This chapel was originally a pagan place of worship. The deeper you investigate the airpocketed space—isolated from the world outside—what makes you feel you have stumbled upon an entrance to an ancient world?*

### CAPTAIN CRAWFORD'S TRUELOVE, A WHALING SHIP

A full-rigged ship, with three masts and a square rig. Abrasions from her sides are currently under repair after a near-disastrous trek to the arctic.

**Paint the Scene:** *This ship is nearly a hundred years old and has felled entire communities of whales in its time. How do their souls still haunt the ship, eternally attempting revenge on its crew?*

## Side Characters

### JONAH WHITTAKER, A REBORN MAN.

They say fire runs in his veins. Intense eyes. Salted beard. His breathing is a labored, gurgling rasp, like something struggling to stay alive beneath the weight of drowning water. Yet he is stronger than ever, newly employed carry crates from the beach onto the shore.

**Quote:** *"The Lord pulled me from the depths, he did. But something was watching, grabbing from below."*

**Special Rule:** If you share a bed with Mr. Whittaker you will find that along his collar, stretching from either side of his neck, are gill slits. This is a Clue.

### DR. SIMON ALDEN, A LOCAL DOCTOR

Calloused hands, and sharp mind even at his age. Loves fine cigars and his grandchildren. Smells intensely of smoke and blackberry wine.

**Quote:** *"Miracles, my arse. Darling Beth is gone, all the children are gone, and that WOMAN has something to do with it. Knowing Beth she won't have died easy, if dead she be. I hate to indebt myself to Hargrave House again, but solve this and I'll owe you."*

**Special Rule:** If you share a bed with Dr. Simon Alden he will share a fine cigar with you, and you can call his debt in when confronting the Mastermind at the end of the campaign for plus one to Vitality in any action you take with him.

### HORACE INGRAM, A FISHERMAN.

Curly dark hair. walks with a swagger. A scar that fades throughout the day. He and his "brothers" Isaac and Joseph operate a fishing boat that feeds the town. He is secretly the boys' father, having undergone the same transformation as Whittaker.

**Quote:** *"The sea is often called a fickle and cruel mistress. But she never takes more than what she is owed. If you are kind to her, love her right, she will give you treasures weaker men must only pray for."*

**Special Rule:** If you share a bed with Horace, he will offer you the greatest catch he has ever made. Tell the Keeper what it is and add this to your Personal Quarters.

### AIDA GALLACHER, A WIDOW.

Devoutly religious, and still devoted to her lost husband. Can be caught praying, nodding, bending at her knees toward the sea.

**Quote:** *"The Lord will provide... but first, He will test you."*

### CORMAC FINNEGAN, A RETIRED SAILOR.

Deep scars from the sea. Strong, and salty. Now runs the only tavern on the island.

**Quote:** *"The sea doesn't forget its debts. Neither do I. You will pay, won't you?"*

**Special Rule:** If you share a bed with Cormac, he will tell you the stories of how he got his scars, and the lessons they taught him. The other hunters will tell you what they are. If you take an action in the Night Phase informed by one of them, act with Advantage on the roll.

### FIONA DEMPSEY, AN ARTIST.

An art student who returns to the island after the sudden disappearance of her parents. A cross tight at the throat, and chastity ring on her hand. Charcoal and sketchpad in hand.

**Quote:** *"I came back to find them, but I feel like I lost them years ago. Coming back, I feel I might be looking for myself."*

### SEAMUS MACALLISTER, THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER.

He wears a thick woolen sweater and trousers, his boots heavy with mud from his walks along the cliff.

**Quote:** *"I've been staring at these waves my whole life, but I swear I've seen strange things on the tide of late."*

**Special Rule:** If you share a bed with Seamus he will let you spend one night with him watching the ships and waves while he tends the flame. Tell the Keeper what you see out there in the night beside him. This is a Clue.

### CAPTAIN CRAWFORD, OWNER OF THE SHIP TRUELOVE

Short man, short beard, with a short temper. A parrot named Lucky sits on his shoulder. Smells of gangrene and lily perfume.

**Quote:** *"Once our ship is repaired we will be on our way, and none of these sycophants will stop us, unless they wish to answer to our cannons that is!"*

**Special Rule:** If you share a bed with Captain Crawford, he will offer you a life at sea, free from the worries of London. You can choose this and retire your hunter in peace and anonymity, even if you have the aspect of the Mask of the Future marked.

## Dusk Phase

**During the Dusk phase, pose the following Paint the Scene:**

The church bells of Blackmire toll at odd hours, their echoes lingering over the water. What unsettling reactions do you notice the islanders have towards the sound?

## The First Night Phase: Unscene

The Outsider, a whaling vessel, with fifty years at sea, has carried countless sailors, provisions, and beasts through its long journeys. On the night of its semicentennial, a storm erupts, throwing the deck into chaos.

- I Langston, a seasoned deckhand. As he rushes to the topdeck and scans his surroundings, how do we know that the ferocity of the storm is dangerous even to the veteran eyes of Langston?
- II Captain Warrick, captain of The Outsider. As Captain Warrick attempts to regain control of the ship, how do we know that the fury of the storm is prenatural as he wrestles with the helm?
- III Tommy, a cabin boy. Tommy is holding on for dear life in the crow's nest, strapped to the mast with ropes. As Tommy's eyes fearfully dart around taking in the storm's terrifying majesty, and the shadows darken his face, how do we know the malevolence of the storm is supernatural?
- IV Paint the Scene: As the Outsider is slowly dragged down beneath the waves, how do the crew desperately try to survive as they go down fighting?

## Mundane Clues

- A wax-stoppered vial holds a bright green substance.
- The wine in the sacristy carries the scent of blood.
- No one remembers the last time they saw a child on the island—only that there should be children.
- A compass that always points towards Reverend Mother Pickering.
- A web of secret passageways threads beneath the island.
- A deer that isn't a deer. It hangs crucified above the church's door, one hoof kicking.
- The thick omnipresent fog clears for a moment, and in the light of day, the town glistens, bright, more beautiful than anything you have ever seen.
- Seagulls stalk one of the hunters.
- Talk, leaky candles are eternally maintained in the town, though no one claims to tend to them.
- Garlic and mirrors are banned in the town charter.
- An intricate anatomical drawing of an anglerfish, covered in coded notes.
- As a Side Character speaks, an octopus writhes from their eye socket.
- A posted notice of a "lighthouse revival" tomorrow night. Eel-handling services are advertised.
- A Side Character is seen staring into the sea, speaking in tongues.
- A rumour that the Dean of Rochester cannot step foot on Blackmire Island.
- A nesting doll toy, but the smallest figure depicts a mermaid.
- A crown of salt is presented to a hunter.
- Rat poison in an unusual place.
- Cats of all kinds wash up on shore.
- A hymn can be heard echoing from the rocks at the base of the cliffs.

## Rewards

- A whale's heart. Thudding. If you put your ear to it you can hear the thrash of the surf.
- An unusually large shark. 15 rows of teeth.
- A boat, perfect for navigating a new-found network of underground causeways stretching across the underbelly London. A secret entrance from Hargrave house to boot
- Two-flue harpoon. Its barbed tips waiting patiently, like a good joke.
- A case of hand-crafted weapons and cigars.
- Doctor Simon Alden returns to Hargrave House, along with his granddaughter Beth if she still lives. Gain access to the move: 'Seen It All Before' - see details below.

### Seen It All Before

Once per threat, you may inquire after Doctor Simon's opinion. Roll Composure, as he recounts his long and storied hunting history. On a hit, he will give you a Clue. On a 7-9, he requests his pick of the rewards. The Keeper gets to choose a reward for him to take at the end of the threat. On a 12+, not only does he help with advice, he will aid you in resolving the Threat. On a miss his information is misremembered, or plain wrong.

## Miracles

Miracles can be introduced as Moments or Clues, Keeper's choice.

- A miracle: A jar with a fetus inside, squirming amongst the formaldehyde.
- A miracle: An algae spreads across the ocean, red and thick as blood, smelling of iron.
- A miracle: A tide of dead angler fish washed up on the shore, antennae still glowing.
- A miracle: A whale beached weeks ago. It's still there on the sand, and it doesn't rot. It's breathing, slow, deep. Eyes fixed. Watching.
- A miracle: A winter storm comes, hard wind and cold. But the ground it leaves behind is not white with frost. It's covered in petals. White petals. Fallen like snow.
- A miracle: Someone has a nearly exact duplicate, but their duplicate is younger and more beautiful.
- A miracle: Gills impossibly appear where they shouldn't. They open with a sharp sucking sound.
- A miracle: A forest of trees, each wide as a lighthouse. They stand where everyone knows there should only be wind and rock.
- A miracle: A local farmer's crops burst into bloom far too early in the year.
- A miracle: A fisherman catches the biggest fish of his life.

