The Eighth Sea

Book 1 – A Guide to Th’ High Seas

1. Th’ High Seas  pages 5-19
   A description of the brave souls who explore the Eighth Sea, how they do this and what the encounter in their travels.

2. Learnin’ the Ropes  pages 20-36
   The basic rules of the game, including the core mechanics, conflict resolution and other concepts.

Book 2 – Notes for the Crew

3. Crusty Sea Dogs  pages 38-62
   Creating characters to explore the realm of the Eighth Sea whether temporal treasure hunters, paradox privateers or Integrity Marines.

4. Th’ Rest o’ the Scurvy Crew  pages 63-80
   Creating non-player characters among the crew and some rules for resolving conflicts and scuffles between large groups of characters.

Book 3 – Notes for the Narrators and the Captain

5. Ports, Landlubber’s and Sea Dogs of Note  pages 82-100
   Dramatis Personae from the various factions of the Eighth Sea, along with some of the places they frequent.

6. Sea Shanties and Tales of Woe  pages 102-138
   Everything a Captain needs to known when leading a crew across the islands of adventure in the Eighth Sea.

Appendix

7. Character Sheet and Quick Play Sheets  pages 139-160
   Quick references for the Captain and the crew while playing a game of the Eighth Sea.
All sailors are familiar with the seven seas. They may argue which seven bodies of water make up the seven, but the common term of “Seven Seas” has come to describe all the oceans and interconnected water passages of the world.

But there is another great depth that exists beyond the world we know. Few know the truth of this Eighth Sea, but many have heard tales that can be linked back to this mysterious realm. The Eighth Sea is home to legends such as ghost ships and mermaids, sirens and krakens, great vortexes that suck ship to their doom.

It is no more a part of our world than the oceans are a part of the land, but just like the great oceans surrounding the land, the Eighth Sea connects to the edges of our world and those who know how to navigate it’s currents can travel to almost any place and visit almost any time. All it takes is a vessel capable of withstanding the rigours of a world beyond our understanding, a belief in things beyond the understanding of mortal minds and a degree of bravery (or lack of common sense) far beyond that of the average person.
1. Th’ High Seas

Throughout all history, there are tales of adventurers who have stepped beyond the mortal world to explore times and places that simply cannot exist in ways that most people understand. Tales of the ancient Greeks speak of travelling to the underworld across the great River Styx, or returning home across time and space after great wars. Gulliver travelled across the seas to reach realms beyond imagining and was considered mad when he brought his insights back to the world of his home. Scientists of the twentieth century opened breakthroughs in quantum physics and sought to explore the energies beyond time and space, often developing technologies like “flux capacitors”. Adventurous and suicidal explorers of the deep space ages delved into black holes, to comprehend what lay beyond.

Every voyage into the realms beyond starts with a step of adventure, and every adventurer returns changed by the things they have encountered. Many return to new worlds, and many spend an eternity trying to reach the home they once knew.

This book is a way to tell the stories of these great adventurers and the lives they lead.

The Eighth Sea

This book makes no attempt to describe the way that time works and how it interacts with the world of energy and matter. Dozens of textbooks have been written on the subject and few of them agree with one another on all the points. Ask any temporal traveller about the time-space continuum and you’ll get a different answer about how the universe works. In fact if you ask most scientists you’ll get different responses as well.

Most temporal travellers and explorers have given up trying to explain it, they just know that their ships are able to enter a dimension outside of time and space; they often say things about black holes, wormholes and the realm beyond all time and space. It’s a place that’s different, but it’s connected to everywhere and every part of history. Some of the darker ships with Voodoo chaplains claim that this place is the spirit world, ships from the high tech eras of history call it “hyperspace”. Religious types have been known to call the realm outside time and space by the names that they find familiar, such as “Stygia”, “Purgatory” or even “Hell”.

No-one ever spends long there, just long enough to travel between parts of the mortal world and eras of the mortal timestream. It just isn’t healthy spending too much time in the shadows outside reality.
The Era of Temporal Piracy

As far as people know, time travel simply cannot be. The Integrity Marines have spent generations ensuring that this is what the masses of humanity believe. But there are those who have been cast adrift on the oceans of time and have learnt that time travel is in fact just as easy as travelling from home to a neighbouring city.

No one knows who the first time traveller was, and given the nature of the question, it’s a bit like trying to work out the chicken and the egg. Were the first time travellers sorcerers and spirit guides from the past who learnt ways to mystically transcend time and space, or were the first travellers scientists from the most advanced technological societies ever known. It doesn’t matter because once the first time traveller made their journey, a ripple spread throughout the continuum.

For every journey made, a ripple spread at the beginning and end of the voyage, and those ripples set into motion new travellers who saw the possibilities available. These ripples became waves, and the waves became storms that threatened to wipe out the entire universe. Travellers made changes in timelines and new realities diverted based on those changes, other explorers tried to set reality straight by controlling the damage done.

The entire time-stream could never be reforged to its original continuity, but many of those who had begun the journey of time and space didn’t want to it return. They had seen a glimpse of infinite power and began to understand the nature of the gods.

Those who chose to exploit their powers invoked havoc throughout the entire time-stream, bringing genetically developed creatures from the realms of high technology to primitive societies who saw them as monsters. The monsters caused stories and legends to develop which remained in folklore until the scientists were able to generate these creatures using their genetic manipulation. Thus the cycle was born anew. Self-fulfilling prophecies cascaded through the time-stream and realities collided. As reality continued to rewrite itself, new versions came into being and old versions faded away. Sometimes reality wrote itself into nightmarish realms of demonic monsters and savagery, other times it became utopian. Nothing was known and nothing was certain. Truth could be changed with a simple voyage back in time. Power could no longer be measured by wealth, mortal connections or industrial influence.

Yet those who held the power of time travel would lose their immortality and power if such a secret became known to the general world. Two types of temporal explorers developed; those who kept the secrets of time-travel safe to prevent humanity from destroying itself, and those who kept the secrets of time-travel safe to maintain their own power.
The Integrity Marines

Those who sought to keep humanity safe formed the Integrity Marines. The first archived mission of the Integrity Marines was to find the first time traveller and prevent them from reaching their breakthrough.

It seemed that this mission was accomplished, but for every time they stopped the revelation, another point of the timeline gave birth to the phenomenon. It seemed that once the Pandora’s Box of time travel had been opened, there was no way to close it again.

The second mission of the Integrity Marines was to ensure the time-stream did not deviate so far that humanity wiped itself out in a quantum catastrophe. To these ends they established a central timeline that would be used as the measure of deviation. If they set foot on a part of the time-stream that didn’t look right, they would compare it to their benchmark history and work to restore the balance by orchestrating events that would balance things back to the history the desired.

Throughout all time and space, they work to restore the balance from behind the scenes. They may be responsible for assassinations or donations to charitable organizations. Their moral imperative is absolute, even if their actions may seem questionable at the times when they occur.

The Integrity Marines are ruthless, but then again they need to be. Because when reality gets out of control, all of existence is at stake.

"We the Order of Integrity swear to uphold the true history of the world and restore it. Wherever deviations from the true path may be found we have always existed, and as long as there are those who seek to disrupt the natural order of things we will always serve a purpose and continue to exist."

Section 4 of the Vows of the Integrity Marines
Chrono-Pirates

There are many who have stepped beyond the bounds of reality and have instantly seen the opportunity for immense power. Deposit some spare change in a bank, take a quick trip forward a few centuries and suddenly there is a healthy balance of resources in the bank. Repeat the trip a few times and wealth is no obstacle anymore. Read some documents from the future and seek out a few nobodies who are going to become famous in a few years, give them some money and make them friends and suddenly you become an A-list celebrity. Go back in time and dig up an ancient treasure or a huge diamond before it is meant to be found, and suddenly you become wealthy and famous. A little ingenuity, imagination and a bit of effort and nearly infinite power is within anyone’s reach.

There are those who take this idea to extremes though.

If a person is able to gain wealth through a bit of history manipulation, couldn’t they gain even more power by eliminating the other wealthy people of the time-period. If they can gain some friends by knowing what is going to happen in a few years time, couldn’t they become gods by applying the concepts of science and genetics during the periods when the ancient empires were forming? How would the Americas have developed if the Mayan empire had mastered gunpowder or even mechanical devices such as the clock and steam engine before the Spanish had arrived? What if the dinosaurs were not wiped out because a traveller from the future brought some forward past the time when a great asteroid hit?

The vast majority of time-stream manipulations are accidental, or oversights that weren’t meant to have caused problems, but in various parts of the time-stream, these manipulations have occurred deliberately, and there are some very different worlds that have been spawned due to these changes.

At the helm of these changes are the Chrono-Pirates who deliberately make changes to reap the benefits of their work. Often these changes are obvious and these are short lived. If Time-travellers visit a version of history where Europe had been completely wiped out by the black plague, the Integrity Marines wouldn’t be far away. Some changes are more subtle, or know to hide themselves. For these reasons it is said that leviathans and krakens still roam the ocean depths through the genetic manipulations of the distant past. Secretive societies shrouded in mystery may or may not exist; it all depends which manipulations of history are currently at work.

As long as there is profit, power or reputation to gain, a Chrono-Pirate is probably at work.

"Those without vision cling to their simple ways, they fail to understand the potential in the world. These unimaginative fishermen sail through a dreary ocean of purgatory and claim that this is how things should always be. I would much rather sail through hellish storms and seas of nightmare for the chance to glimpse a paradise realm that might have never existed otherwise. Treasure lies in wait for those willing to take risks, and fortune favours the brave."

Blood Diary of Xibalba Ronquillo