

LAI OF THE SEA HAG

by Maryśka Connolly

CREATURE(S): *Hags* | **LEVEL(S):** 2-3

SYNOPSIS

The busy port city of Jute's Landing is built into the white cliffs of a deep, protected harbor. It is an important trade stop for many ships and merchants, but this was not always so. Long ago this quiet harbor was home to a coven of hags. Jute Windbrow killed two of the three when he and his crew claimed the harbor for themselves. Evanore, the surviving hag, has lived for more than 100 years in disguise while the city grew up around her. The legend of the heroic Jute Windbrow defeating the wicked monsters has grown as great as her bitterness and desire for vengeance.

Lai of the Sea Hag is an adventure for 4-5 level 2 characters, but can still be enjoyable, though less of a challenge, for a party of level 3 characters.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Characters arrive in the city by ship, though their reason for being there can vary. The party may have been hired to investigate criminal activity, agreed to offer protection to a ship traversing dangerous waters, or someone could have a connection to an NPCs and have been invited.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The characters enter this busy seaside port of Jute's Landing after a long voyage to find a street play in progress in the dockside market. While watching, they are pickpocketed and must embark on an adventure that leads them to one of the hags in hiding.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **EVANORE VANDRUM:** A **sea hag** who escaped the slaughter of her coven and has lived under an illusion as an elven woman in the city for many years with the descendants of Dasha Reuter helping her. Hearing her story twisted every day by the residents of the city deeply hurts and angers her. She has grown impatient, especially since the current Reuter lord wants to sever their association.
- **REMI "THE FALCON" FALCO:** Remi would rather talk than fight. She's a woman who has worked hard to get where she is at the head of the Dock Rats.
- **MERRICK STONEHAMMER:** A middle-aged dwarf who is proprietor of the Sunken Alehouse. He offers lodging to the characters in exchange for their help.
- **BREETINA GEARHEART:** An absent-minded gnomish engineer in charge of the city waterworks.
- **GERWIN REUTER:** A noble whose family has been allied with the sea hag Evanore since his ancestor Dasha Reuter (companion of Jute Windbrow) took pity on her and helped her hide among the humanoid residents of the newly founded city. Gerwin is unaware of her true nature. He is served by two orc butlers that he has raised from children.

CHAPTER 1 – FRESH OFF THE BOAT

The oak gangplank creaks gently as you make your way, blinking in the mid-afternoon sun, down from the deck of the Far Horizon. Even for those of you accustomed to ocean travel, this voyage has been a rough one. Storms harried your route, forcing adjustments to navigation that significantly lengthened the voyage and requiring non-essential crew and passengers to remain below deck where they would be safe from the punishing winds and rain.

Before you rises the port city of Jute's Landing. A large town straddling a deep, sheltered bay that makes it an important trading stop. As you and the other passengers make your way down the dock, you begin to hear the unmistakable sound of a busy market just ahead. The narrow road from the harbor happens to lead in this direction so you let the reassuring sounds of merchants and street vendors guide you.

The party finds themselves caught up in an enthusiastic crowd watching a street play that tells the story of the founding of the city of Jute's Landing when Jute Windbrow and his crew defeated the sea hags that inhabited the harbor. The crowd cheers mightily as the hags – actors in green body paint, wrapped in green ribbons – fall one-by-one in combat with Captain Windbrow. As the last hag flees, the crowd applauds. A colorfully dressed halfling performer begins to collect donations.

HAVE THE ENTIRE PARTY MAKE A PERCEPTION CHECK (DC 18).

If a party member succeeds

You feel something brush against you and glance down to see a small child bump into your side. He appears startled. Before you can speak — to apologize or admonish him — he dashes off into the crowd

(See *Catching Jost*.)

On a failed roll:

As the halfling approaches you reach down to retrieve a coin or two from your pouch only to find it gone. At that moment, you realize that several other people in the audience are making a similar discovery and are not happy about it.

(See *A Criminal Happening*.)

Note: The party may split here with some following the thief and some questioning other victims.

A CRIMINAL HAPPENING

If the characters ask around, they discover that several other audience members are also victims of the pick-pockets. The following people should engage with the party:

- **MERRICK STONEHAMMER** (dwarven proprietor, **commoner**, of the Sunken Alehouse): he offers the party lodging and food in exchange for their retrieving the 200 gp he had in his purse that was intended to buy ale for his business.
- **BREETINA GEARHEART** (gnomish engineer, **commoner**): the thieves have taken her key to the City Waterworks. She expresses distress that someone might gain access to the drinking supply and offers a cash reward of 150 gp for their help and discretion, and an extra 50 gp if they get the key back before sunset tomorrow.
- None of the performers were robbed but were not involved. Performers include: Selwin (elf; leader); Yan, Olva, Quintin (halfling); Winnie (halfling; Quintin's wife); and Soren. (Note: these NPCs all have the stats of a **commoner**.)

Questioning the audience members reveals that the thieves guild, the Dock Rats, are the likely culprits. They are rumored to have a safehouse located in warehouse district. If asked, someone can draw a rough map.

CATCHING JOST

No matter how many succeed, they lose all but one child in the crowd. He flees into an ally and hides in an ash pit for an unused chimney. On a DC 12 Investigation/Perception check, the party notices the small hatch and finds him squeezed inside. Jost bursts into tears and admits to taking the money and key but has already passed the loot off to another child.

He's heard the Dock Rat's lair can be entered through an abandoned warehouse. If pressed for more information, he insists he's too low in the ranks to know anything else.

DEVELOPMENT

Breetina Gearheart hears the commotion and follows the party in their search for Jost if she's not already engaged talking to a PC (see *A Criminal Happening*).

CHAPTER 2 — MEET THE DOCK RATS

You follow the directions and easily find the deserted warehouse. It's the only one on the street that doesn't have workers bustling around outside and carts coming and going.

Thieves Cant on the back door depicts symbols for “*keep out*,” “*property*,” and “*rats*.” Characters can enter from either the front or back door on a lockpicking check (DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)) or by forcing the door (DC 12 Strength). The warehouse contains trash and an office with an empty desk.

Wisdom (Investigation) OR (Perception) DC 15:

Some dirt in front of the desk has been scrapped like it has recently been moved. Under the desk is a clear outline of a trap door.

TRAP: A DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) discovers a fine wire attached to the handle that releases a dart from the wall when lifted or jolted; a DC 15 Dexterity successfully disarms it.

If characters don't disarm the trap, the character lifting the door makes a DC 15 Dexterity save or takes 1d4+1 piercing damage.

The trap door swings open and rests against the desk as if it had been designed to do just that. Stone steps descend into the darkness below you.

ENTERING THE FALCON'S NEST

There are brackets on the walls for torches, but none are lit. The steps are evenly spaced and only slightly worn. The spiral stair emerges into a hallway that extends for 75 ft. Ahead you can make out a faint light and two shapes leaning against the walls facing each other.

Unless the characters are loud coming down the stairs, the guards don't immediately notice their arrival.

THE GUARDS AT THE GATE

The guards (**bandits** named Ambert and Don) are lounging against the walls on either side of the doorway at the end of the hall. Characters may attempt to intimidate or persuade (DC 15 Charisma) the guards into taking them to see the Falcon.

IF THEY FIGHT: On the guards they find a key that opens the door and a letter to Ambert's love interest. It's largely illegible, but a clear phrase printed in the margin reads, “I drink. I die. I eat. I thrive.”

THE FALCON

A long table with benches takes up most of the center of the room. On the walls are hooks holding cloaks, a straw hat, and bundled herbs. Shelves hold bottles of ale. There's a pair of muddy boots by door. There are two doors on the right and one across from the entrance.

- **If escorted by the guards, Ambert and Don:**

The players are taken to the door directly across from the entrance, where a flame wall springs up, barring the door. One of them speaks a pass phrase to dispel it (“I drink. I die. I eat. I thrive”).

- **If they explore without the guards:**

First door on the right: The characters find a small kitchen full of cooking supplies and assorted foodstuff. A small box hidden behind a basket of beets contains 12 gp and 52 sp.

Second door on the right: A large room with a dozen beds and trunks containing personal items. One of the trunks has “I drink. I die. I eat.”

- I thrive” written in chalk on the inside of the lid. A search yields 14 gp and 10 sp, a jade hair comb, and a map with the Reuter Manor marked.

Door across from the entrance: When they touch the door a wall of fire appears. Any party member who touches it takes 1d4 fire damage every round they remain in contact. Water doesn’t put it out. The door doesn’t burn. The phrase “I drink. I die. I eat. I thrive” dispels the flames. It’s locked (DC 12 Dexterity) or can be forced (DC 12 Strength).

AUDIENCE WITH THE FALCON

The door opens into a room with a single carved chair in the center on a dais. An image of a soaring falcon is woven into a massive tapestry on the wall behind the chair. In the chair is a dark-haired man in glasses.

He claims to be the Falcon, although a Wisdom (Insight) (DC 15) reveals otherwise. He’ll refuse to talk about any of his “business ventures” and demand they leave.

- **If the character are not hostile toward the NPCs:** Remi “the Falcon” Falco steps out from behind the tapestry after a few minutes and introduces herself. She’ll share that she was hired to steal the waterworks key and is concerned that her client, Gerwin Reuter, might have something nefarious in mind. She’ll offer 50gp each to get it back discreetly.
- **If characters are hostile toward the NPCs:**
- The Falcon and her bodyguards attack from an alcove behind the tapestry (see creature stats on pg. 36). Her bodyguards, Blade and Nettie, have the stats of a **bandit**.
- **LOOT:** 48 gp and a letter signed “G. Reuter” promising the second half of the payment upon delivery of the “item.”

CHAPTER 3 – NOBLE IS AS NOBLE DOES

The Reuter estate is not as impressive as others on the street. The wrought iron fence along the front is rusting, and the gate is missing.

- **If they knock:** An orc in an embroidered waistcoat answers and agree to let them speak to his master. He brings the party to Gerwin Rueter. Another orc is pouring Gerwin’s wine.
- **If the party attacks or breaks in:** The two guards (**orcs**) and Gerwin (**noble**) respond to the attack.

GERWIN’S BEHAVIOR AND MOTIVATIONS:

Gerwin locks himself in the closest room when threatened. The orcs fight to protect him. Gerwin surrenders if one of the orcs are harmed.

Gerwin is a coward and quickly confesses everything (DC 10 Charisma). Evanore took his son, San’s, spirit when he tried to end their relationship. The Rueter family has been involved with Vandrum since his ancestor, Dasha Reuter, came here with Jute Windbrow. Gerwin does not realize that the Vandrum “family” has always been the same women who just changes her appearance every few years.

Although San died from an illness, Gerwin claims Evanore killed him to convince the party to help rid him of her. Evanore *does* have his spirit, and the rest is true.

Gerwin gives the party a *cap of water breathing* (DMG) if the characters promise to kill Evanore. If the characters kill him instead, the cap can be found on his body. A letter in his desk begs Evanore to release his son’s spirit so he can be at peace. Either Gerwin or a random townspeople can direct them to the Vandrum Estate.

CHAPTER 4 – LAI OF THE SEA HAG

The Vandrum Estate looms before you, large and impressive. A steel portcullis stands open at the entrance to a stone courtyard with a large fountain.

As the party enters, the portcullis slams shut behind them and two **kuo-toa** emerge from the fountain.

- **TACTICS:** The party eventually face six **kuo-toa** who attempt to surround them.
- **LOOT:** The leader is wearing a golden circlet with the words “Be thee not afraid” engraved in elvish on the inside (see *Circlet of Courage*).

GAINING ENTRY

The front door requires DC 25 strength check to force inward. There’s no visible locking mechanism. There’s a door on the balcony (unlocked) and several second-floor windows; a Dexterity (Athletics) can be made with advantage if assisted. Investigating (DC 10 Wisdom) the exterior reveals a trellis under one window that can be easily climbed.

If they explore the fountain, they find an underwater tunnel with alcoves containing seaweed beds, cages of fish, assorted clothing, two rusty spears, and shell jewelry worth 10 gp.

Inside, the party finds an estate with vaulted ceilings and marble floors but little furniture or decorations aside from a large, underwater scene painted in the main hall. The kitchen contains wine, salted fish, cheese, and bread. A search reveals only two other locations of note: an upstairs bedroom and a secret door leading to the basement.

THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM:

Unlike the other rooms in the manor, this contains some sign of being lived in. A four-poster bed dominates the room. There are two bowls near the wall. One contains water.

If the party investigates, they find a **worg puppy** under the bed. The party can lure it out with *Speak with Animals*, an offering of food, or a Nature (Animal Handling) check (DC 10). The puppy takes them to Evanore (via the secret door).

The secret door can be discovered without the worg’s help if the characters pass a DC 15 Wisdom (Investigation) OR (Perception).

EVANORE VANDRUM

A sunken rectangular pool of water dominates the room, with pillars at each corner. Standing beside the pool is Evanore Vandrum, a slender elven woman wearing a seafoam green gown. She calmly turns to you as you enter.

[If the worg puppy is present] The strange little dog breaks away and runs to the woman. She reaches down absently to scratch its ear.

If the party is respectful, Evanore reveals that she was one of the three hags in the coven Jute Windbrow defeated. Evanore often considered punishing the people responsible but her friendship with Dasha Reuter’s family stayed her hand. Between Gerwin’s betrayal of that trust and the increasing viciousness of the stories, she’s lost patience. The popularity of the play was the final straw. She intends to poison the water supply.

Evanore is angry, but more so hurt and betrayed. If the characters offer a convincing argument for preserving the city or propose a plan to improve her situation, she accepts it, return the key, and release San’s spirit.

Possible resolutions include but are not limited to:

- Finding her another home.
- Appealing to her affection for the previous Reuters.
- Retelling her story using either the theater company or the thieves guild (depending on the party’s relationship with those entities). Be open to creative suggestions from the players.

If they fail, she takes on her true form and attacks.

Unless wearing the *Circlet of Courage* or averting their gaze, each party member should make a fright check per the “Horrific Appearance” trait (see Evanore’s stat block on pg. 37).

TACTICS: Evanore will not be reasoned with once she has decided that the party members are enemies. She won’t hurt the worg, Percy, or attack anyone near him.

Upon Evanore’s death (if this occurs):

As the sea hag collapses to the ground, she seems to shrivel and desiccate before your eyes. In moments all that’s left is a dried husk that hardly resembles anything that once lived. Amid the remains you catch sight of a glint that could only be one thing: Breetina’s key. Your heart swells with sudden dread... were you too late?

LOOT: There is a chest found 5-feet-deep in the pool. It contains four jars of potent poison and a swirling blue mist in a bottle (San, Gerwin’s son). Opening the bottle releases his spirit, allowing him to finally rest.

REWARDS

Characters who complete this adventure may earn the following rewards:

XP REWARDS

XP should can be given for successful resolution and friendship, not just defeats.

OBSTACLE	XP
Dock Rats guards (Don and Ambert)	25 each
Remi Falco	250
Remi’s bodyguards (Blade and Nettie)	25 each
Gerwin Reuter	25
Orc	100 each
Kuo-toa	50 each
Commoner	10 each
Worg puppy	75
Evanore	450
(elder sea hag)	
Flaming door puzzle	100

TREASURE REWARDS

(Note that the key can only be returned to one person)

ITEM	VALUE
Return the key to Beertina Gearheart	150 gp (+50 gp for completing in 1 day)
Return the key to Remi Falco	50 gp each

REMI "THE FALCON" FALCO

Medium humanoid, true neutral

Armor Class	14 (leather)
Hit points	27
Speed	30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws	Dex +5, Int +4
Skills	Acrobatics +5, Athletics +2, Intimidation +5, Stealth _5
Senses	passive Perception 11
Languages	Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Halfling

ACTIONS

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

FEATURES AND TRAITS

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Remi can deal extra 1d6 piercing damage to one creature if an ally is within 5 ft. of the target.

Cunning Action. Once per turn, Remi can use a bonus action to dash, disengage, or attempt to hide.

CIRCLET OF COURAGE

Rare, Requires attunement

A gold circlet with elvish script that reads: *be thee not afraid*. Renders the wearer immune to frighten and fear effects.

CAP OF WATER BREATHING

Dungeon Masters Guide, pg. 157.

PERCY (WORG PUPPY)

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class	10 (natural armor)
Hit points	15
Speed	40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+0)	6 (-2)	10 (0)	10 (0)

Skills	Perception +2
Senses	darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Additional traits found under **adult worg** (MM).

EVANORE VALDRUM

(ELDER SEA HAG)

Medium fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class	15 (natural armor)
Hit points	105
Speed	30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+0)	6 (-2)	10 (0)	10 (0)

Additional traits found under **sea hag** (MM).

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The idea for this adventure arose from a conversation about the erasure of women's stories and perspectives in history. The character of Jute Windbrow embodies men such as Christopher Columbus who are portrayed as heroes but often built their reputation on the backs of disenfranchised peoples. Evanore Valdrum, the namesake sea hag of this story, is a tragic figure in that everything has been taken from her, even her dignity and her story. Her rage is all too sympathetic.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maryska Connolly is a writer, librarian, and game designer in central Virginia. She spends much of her time designing escape rooms, hosting murder mysteries, and running *D&D* campaigns for college students and friends. You can follow her on Facebook @queenofthegoblins and on Twitter @maryskaconnolly.