What are Voyages?

Voyages represent any interval of time where a group of players are out and adventuring in the *Secrets of Old Pandora* game. They begin when the party leaves a settlement for which they have a 'Writ' that entitles them to do business in that settlement, and ends when the party enters such a settlement and elects to end it. They can also end through abandonment, as individual players elect to drop out of the voyage, accepting no share of the spoils, if all players have abandoned the Voyage is just over. The GM for the Voyage may also elect to either force an end when the players reach such a settlement, or force the players to abandon the Voyage. No Player Character may begin a Voyage while a Voyage they are a part of is still active.

Before beginning a Voyage, the players need, in any order-- to assemble a crew approved by the GM, have a Lead approved by the GM, and to establish a collective and voluntary agreement on the distribution of spoils which doesn't have to be equal, but that the GM will enforce regardless of its terms provided the participants have consented.

What are Leads?

A Lead in *Secrets of Old Pandora*, put simply, is the basic goal of a Voyage and assigned a task level by a GM. Leads may be provided by GMs with pre-existing Task Levels, or Leads may be proposed by a player based on things they've discovered in their adventures and assigned a Task Level by an accepting GM, or utilizing goals inspired by the Player Character's backstory. A Lead is to be designed for a party of four players of its Task Level (although GMs can and should add greater dangers than the Player Characters can fight directly) and to determine the level of the treasure bundles used to make up the rewards, although how large or small the total rewards are is intended to vary greatly between leads.

Leads ultimately bound the Voyage, if your Lead is to chart the eastern side of a particular island, the GM is within rights to refuse to allow you to sail in the opposite direction and ignore your goal entirely. Nevertheless, the sandbox nature of the game demands some leeway in how players approach their goals, causing them to potentially take 'the scenic route' or to investigate something they find in the course of searching for their Lead, this can lead to small tangents, different encounters, or new Leads entirely when the content is too big to include in the current Voyage.

Where can I get Leads?

Some leads will seek out the player characters and are presented directly on the 'current events' table until they are addressed or they expire after a time designated by its creator. Others spring organically from things players observe in their exploration of the game world and propose to a GM to return to and explore later.

Other leads can be found by Gathering Information in Downtime, to do this the player takes a day to Gather Information-- since each Gather Information takes 2 hours by default, the adjudicating GM should abstract this over an 8 hour 'shift' that represents their efforts for the day and offer them the chance to roll for a lead four times. Feats and other means of reducing the time it takes to Gather Information add to the number of rolls the player gets to make over the course of downtime day accordingly. The DC of the Gather Information roll should be set

according to the level of the Leads the player is interested in, and adjusted to be hard or very hard based on how specific the player is about the kind of lead they're looking for.

Still other leads can be found by using the Research Exploration Activity as Downtime, using a library easily accessible from a settlement they have a Writ for. The adjudicating GM will simply set thresholds for the information the player is seeking as normal, culminating in the lead.

There may be other ways of gaining leads, talk to your GMs about Downtime activities that seem like a reasonable source of leads.

How does Hexcrawling Work?

Each day, the players receive a number of Hexploration Activities based off their speed (or the speed of their vessel, when hexcrawling across the ocean), as listed on our Expanded Hexploration Activities Per Day chart below. They can spend these Activities on the Hexploration Activities listed in the GMG, or any homebrew ones we create.

As players explore, the GM will refer to the hex key to discover what is in each Hex, and describe their surroundings accordingly. At least once per day, the GM should roll on our special event tables to see if anything of interest befalls the players during their travels, these can include monster attacks, encounters with NPCs, and other curious happenings. When the players discover something interesting, the game transitions into Exploration Mode to investigate anything from a particular scene to an entire dungeon complex. While players can't see the Hex Key, they are welcome to document their experiences and findings for other players, sell one another potentially valuable information for ingame gold, or otherwise turn their hard earned information to their advantage.

If a Dungeon Entrance is keyed onto the map (being any larger adventuring location with its own maps and such) it should be claimed by a GM or GMs (usually but not always its creator) who are responsible for fielding leads to explore the dungeon, with other GMs refusing to do more than allow the players to uncover entrances. Such Dungeon Entrances should always be treated as leads in their own right so that it is explored with the correct GM and has time to be prepped. Cleared hexes can be restocked, put to a purpose by enterprising players, or serve a completely different role later.

How does traveling through the Pandoran Isles Work?

In order to make things easier on the GM team, the Pandoran Islands are being split up into regions. Each region includes Island and Ocean Hexes and can be hexcrawled with a pre-built key, but in order to travel to another region, a sea chart demonstrating a safe route is required and will be provided as treasure or as a special event when a new region is prepared for players to visit and explore it. Using such a chart requires moving to a certain location on the starting map to begin the journey between maps, and cause you to appear in a designated place on the new map. It is in the player's best interest to acquire a writ for settlement in a new part of the Pandoran Islands to reliably launch Voyages from. Players who have made the journey once can create their own sea chart without difficulty.

Different regions will have differing climates, themes, and explore different plot lines. Our first region, will encompass the Island upon which the Merchant City of Crosstaine, and the Smuggler's Outpost of Scoundrel's Key is situated. Because the early part of the game will

heavily feature the acquisition of the first seaworthy vessels our loose network of pirates will have access to, it takes place on a larger landmass and primarily features inland exploration. Other regions will likely be less centralized and feature smaller landmasses and more ocean exploration.

How do I design Adventures?

Because this is a Hexcrawling West Marches, we as GMs have no control over where the players ultimately go and what they do when they get there. The Lead and Voyage system is meant to lend structure to this process and help the GM prep the content players will interact with. The Hex Key and Random Tables are meant to provide short, easily prepared and improvised content for the participants. For larger Adventuring Locations, such as Dungeons, the GM should bear a few things in mind.

The first is that the ultimate object of this game is to gain treasure, this is because the goal of gaining treasure naturally facilitates open ended exploration. So dungeons shouldn't be structured around a singular goal, instead they should be relatively non-linear, and run with the expectation that the players are likely to grab some of the loot, and then leave, potentially returning to the same dungeon many times within the same campaign. Such locations are living things and they are likely to evolve and restock themselves with new creatures as time passes-- consider using the system described under 'What about the passage of time?' heading below. Consider interconnecting these locations and creating content that can be interacted with by different characters in a plethora of ways, including hidden and optional content that reward the players for preparation and diligence.

If a Lead involves a specific piece of content such as a Dungeon, or a particular named NPC or some such, the GM is expected to assume a generic party of four adventurers of the level of the Lead when designing challenges and DCs, players be warned that the GMs are not bound to that and will likely include elements that aren't meant to be won against in a fair fight, or are meant to be avoided, play carefully and utilize our retreat system when necessary!

How does time pass?

We will not be tracking the ingame date, instead, the passage of time will be tracked by the advance of seasons. **Every few real world months, on dates set by the GMs (this section to be edited once we've agreed on when) the season in game will change and time will be acknowledged to have passed**. Time limited events are valid for the entire season (or seasons) they have been designated to run for, and anytime (barring specific conditions, like night time) the players interact with them can be taken for granted as 'the right time' for the events described in the lead or mechanic to take place.

Voyages take place in the season in which they begin, and the characters remain in that season until the Voyage ends or is abandoned. We recognize that it may be possible to create seeming plot holes by using more days in adventures and downtime than should theoretically exist in the season, players should consider themselves obligated to suspend their disbelief on this point for the sake of keeping time management simple and fun for everyone involved.

How do I level up?

Leveling in *Secrets of Old Pandora* involves spending treasure, the amounts you must spend at each level to go to the next are listed on the table below and utilize the Wealth by Level values from the core game. What your character spends the gold on isn't important, so long as it doesn't provide them any mechanical benefit beyond leveling.

Players might pay for the very best tutors to sharpen their skills, might waste it on booze, sex work, and other forms of carousel, might spend it building lavish temples to their god or supporting orphanages, fund a better life for impoverished villages, or any other activity that isn't expected to yield another benefit. Once they have elected to do so, the gold vanishes into the aether of the fiction of the game world and the Player Character levels up. Such things can appear in Voyages and in our roleplaying of course, but shouldn't provide a material benefit.

This system is meant to place the acquisition of treasure as the core of the game, and to offer players interesting choices in setting the pace of their own progress-- decisions will have to be made regarding how many magic items to buy, whether to equip oneself with useful commodities like ships and hirelings, whether one wants to buy or sell their services and equipment, or even if one wants to invest in their fellow players by giving them gold to level up faster than they might otherwise, players are to be considered free to make these decisions!

Level	Total Value
1	175 gp
2	300 gp
3	500 gp
4	860 gp
5	1,350 gp
6	2,000 gp
7	2,900 gp
8	4,000 gp
9	5,700 gp
10	8,000 gp
11	11,500 gp
12	16,500 gp
13	25,000 gp
14	36,500 gp
15	54,500 gp
16	82,500 gp
17	128,000 gp
18	208,000 gp
19	355,000 gp
20	490,000 gp

What about Settlements?

There are many Settlements of varying levels throughout the Pandoran Isles. We will be a little stricter than the base rules by making settlement level a hard limit on the level of item and earn income activities available at that settlement, with special abilities in the settlement stat block providing the only exceptions. This alteration to the crafting and settlement rules provides a significant buff to crafting, and makes access to settlements of increasing level a priority for the players. In order to use a settlement to buy goods, earn income, or perform other downtime activities a 'Writ' to do business there is required, these can be variously earned, bought, or stolen with differing requirements for different settlements, some settlements may even require a recurring fee to be paid each season!

The Writ also allows the settlement to be used as a staging point for voyages, only one member of the group needs the Writ for the group to use a settlement in this way, even if the ship being used is owned by another player's character. Your downtime can be performed at

any settlement for which you have a writ, we do not track your position in the Pandoran Islands between voyages.

What about Character Death?

Secrets of Old Pandora is a game that spotlights exploration and decision making over any sense of plot or the expectations of a 'good story.' So if the consequences of the player's choices would lead to the death of their player character, they are expected to handle that gracefully. Resurrection magic is available at a cost and at higher levels, most likely through other player characters who have earned it, but even that is usually contingent on retrieving the late player character's body. The most important thing is that the death of Player Characters doesn't take away from the story, it enhances it by making the dangers feel more real for the surviving characters, and by the roleplaying and character depth, the death of their compatriot engenders. In the end, the surviving characters will remember their fallen friends, who will be forever memorialized in their hearts, toast to them after a successful voyage, and we as players will speak of them fondly around the table when we remember the crazy adventures, and the deaths, both epic and ridiculous, that play out at the table.

Players who lose characters can always create new ones, and the exponential scaling of gold can make it easy to get back up to a similar level. **Players should consider establishing the existence of favorite hirelings and NPCs who might inherit the possessions of the character by creating a 'Will,' approved by a GM**-- a process which will approve them to become a player character in the event of the current Player Character's death, the Will is capable of passing on any possessions that haven't been lost in the course of adventuring, for example if the player has a flaming sword with them when they die and their body isn't retrieved, neither is the flaming sword and it can't be passed on, but gold and magic items that aren't brought along on the Voyage absolutely will be. The will could also be passed to another existing player character. Even if there is no will and the gold vanishes into the aether, other players might be willing to help a friend with a loan or gift of gold, in the interests of ensuring they have fellow pirates to watch their back on future voyages. Any agreement between players should be approved by a GM, if the players would like for it to be enforced (repayment of a loan for instance.)

How do I retreat?

When the party is either engaged in encounter mode or about to roll initiative to enter encounter mode, any player may motion for the party to retreat and the group votes on whether to execute the retreat, if the motion passes the GM immediately transitions from encounter mode to the chase subsystem outlined in the GMG. The first obstacle that the party must contend with in such situations is the challenge of disengaging with the creatures they are retreating from. Remember that NPCs can also conduct such retreats, and that even creatures with a rudimentary intelligence should display survival instincts rather than fight to the death. Big Critical Hits and the bloodied condition (half hp, this is from 4e and something we've unofficially included in the past) are good triggers for a creature to consider retreating.

From there the chase proceeds normally until the pursuing creatures give up, catch the PCs (forcing a return to encounter mode) or have their pursuit cut off by action taken by the PCs

(making the way behind them impassable for instance, or entering a space too small for the creatures to follow.) If the space doesn't create natural obstacles, the PCs can create 'obstacles' that reflect their attempts to speed up, or slow down their pursuers, existing obstacles posed by the GM take precedence however.

Because the retreat potentially takes place through the actual space of a dungeon, this can lead to the party ending up in a very different part of the dungeon, or encountering other creatures, potentially worsening the encounter. That being said, many monsters will refuse to enter a situation that is potentially dangerous for them, such as being outnumbered by other creatures who aren't necessarily friendly to them, creating a natural limitation to their pursuit of the PCs. Pursuing creatures should advance through the chase obstacles at a steady rate, [GMs we should agree on what this rate is, and if there is any variation] to facilitate retreat as a practical solution to higher level foes who might otherwise catch lower level PCs without meaningful difficulty.

Creatures may or may not return to their previous position after failing to catch the PCs according to the creature's nature, moving creatures in this way might even be a viable strategy to overcome some obstacles and get to the treasure!