

Seed: A *serious* mission for a steampunk game.

HYPERBOREAN PASSAGE

"Hyperborean Passage" is a mission acquired via coded wireless telegraphy in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

HOOK

The player character receives the following message:

WIRELESS MESSAGE DIALOG BOX

MESSAGE • 8/30/1871 • 09:00 AM
Urgent. Meet Drake/Blavatsky at Spouter Inn.
Unique opportunity.

Message recorded in your journal.

INT. SPOUTER INN

Carlton Drake, American captain of the airship Golden Hind, waits inside the inn. Seated with him is Russian medium Helena Blavatsky.

DRAKE

(smiles)

Splendid, you made it. The cabal has a rare opportunity, my friend.

BLAVATSKY

We can unlock the path to a hidden world. Perhaps rid that world of its evil. Yes?

DRAKE

You see, a pirate clipper, the Hell Cat, was crippled in an air battle over the Gulf of Maine. She escaped.

Now, the navy thinks she made the transmigration to Hyperborea. They aren't looking for her. Madame Blavatsky says otherwise.

BLAVATSKY

Dah. Spirits say, this ship, she has made forced landing on Nova Scotia, just northeast of Yarmouth. Her ether coils, they are damaged. She cannot break the veil between worlds.

DRAKE

Right! I want to take the Golden Hind, fly her out over the Hell Cat, high and hidden.

That's where you come in, my friend. You'll make the jump to the clipper from above. Board her, then recover her charts and logs.

BLAVATSKY

We hope, these documents, they have the key to Hyperborean Cartel codes, as well as the transmigration pattern.

DRAKE

(grins)

It's also imperative that ship doesn't make it back to any pirate haven. If she does, they'll know we know. So, you'll need to sabotage the ether engine or gunnery to make sure the ship burns. Then, take one of their aeronefs back to the Hind.

We'll pay, of course, and give you the key to pirate ciphers when we have it. What's more, the Hind should be able to make the Hyperborean Passage thereafter.

We go tonight. Are you willing?

On player acceptance, Drake continues.

DRAKE

(smiles)

Good, my friend. Very good.

Given the circumstances, the pirates are likely down more than a few able bodies. That said, stealth is key, and you'll still need to be ready for a fight.

Here's the information we have on the Hell Cat and her captain.

Drake hands the player character a leather document wallet.

DRAKE

We'll have your null suit ready. Blavatsky can give you the hypnosis map of the standard pirate clipper. See you as soon as you ready yourself.

JOURNAL TARGET PROFILE

HELL CAT

Class: Pirate Air Clipper
Drive: Gravity-shielded balloon, ether engine
Length: 135 feet
Captain: Abigail "the Goat" Mags
Minimum Crew: Twelve
Affiliation: Hyperborean Cartel
Operation Area: North Atlantic

ABIGAIL (SARAH) "THE GOAT" MAGS

A former mugger and bouncer from New York City, Sarah Abigail Mags is a 6-foot-tall bruiser known for head butting during fisticuffs. She lost her right ear a bar fight she went on to win. Wanted for countless robberies in the city, Ms. Mags's last criminal act in New York City was the theft of the merchant air sloop Virginia. This vessel served as Abigail's first pirating craft in the Hudson River Valley. There, Ms. Mags engaged in kidnapping schemes, home robberies, and murder, including making several men walk the plank from altitude. After her initial successes, Sarah joined and rose in the ranks of the Hyperborean Cartel, earning a captainship and a clipper.

JOURNAL MISSION OBJECTIVES

HYPERBOREAN PASSAGE

- Jump from the Golden Hind.
- Board the Hell Cat.
- Recover the captain's charts and logs.
- Sabotage the ship.
- Escape the Hell Cat.
- Rendezvous with Golden Hind.

FADE IN:

INT. GOLDEN HIND'S BRIDGE - NIGHT

Thin fog flows around the view port. Airship crewmembers work the ship. Drake stands behind the ship's pilot, while the player character point of view is behind Drake.

PILOT

We're in position, sir.

DRAKE

(turning and grinning)

The information we're after is likely to be in the captain's quarters. With any luck, she and most of her crew are asleep at this hour.

Ready? Then it's through the aperture, my friend. Aim for her balloon. There's a hatch on the upper superstructure. If you miss, well, climb the anchor chain and squeeze in. Better, don't miss.

Drake smiles and claps the player character on the shoulder.

EXT. NOVA SCOTIA - SAME

The player character jumps through a hatch in the Golden Hind's floor and skydives through the light fog toward the Hell Cat. On the game HUD, an ether altimeter that looks like a wristwatch shows distance. (Ideally, the player controls the fall.)

EXT. HELL CAT MAIN DECK - SAME

The player character has to go on deck to reach objectives. There, two pirates are overheard.

PIRATE 1

I don't want to run under the Goat no more. We should sneak down to the brig, talk to Cort, turn Micky loose, and take the ship.

PIRATE 2

How do you think we'll do that? Bosun Absalom tried. You want to follow him down the plank? We shouldn't even be talking about this. Someone'll hear. Then the Goat'll hear.

PIRATE 1

You're right. Damn. I hate it when you're right.

The player character has to deal with sky pirates, many who are asleep in crew quarters. They speak rarely unless they hear or fight the player character. Pirates have barks such as those that follow:

IDLE

(coughs)
(cracks knuckles)
(hums)
(smokes)
(sniffs)

SUSPICIOUS

What was that?
Who goes there?
Something moving over there?

ALERTED

Intruder!
To arms!
You die here!

ATTACKING

(enraged bellow)

HEALTH LOW

Quarter! Please!
Son of a whore!
See you in Hell!

EXT. AND INT. HELL CAT - SAME

Signage indicates ship areas that correspond with the map in the player's journal. The remaining signs also indicate the Hell Cat was once named the River Pixie. Some signs are damaged and have the new name sloppily painted on.

Aeronef 1
Aeronef 2
Bridge
Brig
Boiler Room
Captain
Engine Room
Gunnery Deck
Medical
Mess Hall
Quarters
Stores
The Plank

INT. HELL CAT CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - SAME

The messy quarters contain the mission objective logs and charts, as well as Captain Mags working at her desk. If she spots the player character, she attacks bare fisted.

MAGS

(happily)

Who have we here? Agent of the Ascension Cabal?
Angel, fiend, or mortal, let's see if you bleed.

Mags uses some pirate barks, especially idle ones, along with the following lines:

ATTACKING

The Devil sticks by his own!
I'll see you walk the plank!
No quarter!

HEALTH LOW

No quarter. None asked.

OBJECT DIALOG BOXES - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

CHARTS AND LOGS

The Hell Cat's charts and logs are encrypted, but the cipher's key is likely among these documents. Nevertheless, the cabal can decipher them to find the Hyperborean Passage.

ABIGAIL "THE GOAT" MAGS

She's a big woman. That rumor about the missing ear was true.

If searched, Abigail has the following object:

OBJECT DIALOG BOX (AND JOURNAL ENTRY) - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

CAPTAIN MAGS'S LOCKET

The captain's oversized gold chain is outdone by the size of the attached locket. Inside is a mummified human ear.

INT. HELL CAT BRIG - SAME

A guard nearby has the keys to the brig cell door. (Game play might allow lock picking.)

OBJECT DIALOG BOXES - BRIG

CELL DOOR (LOCKED)

PIRATE

He's still warm, but he's dead. Someone crushed his nose.

INT. HELL CAT ENGINE ROOM - SAME

The clipper's engine room can be sabotaged. Two coils, one bent and sparking, tower over the ether engine. A pair of automata stands ready near the boiler, one occasionally shoveling coal into the furnace.

OBJECT DIALOG BOXES - ENGINE ROOM

AUTOMATA OVERRIDE SWITCH

This switch overrides shoveling automata to keep feeding fuel to the boiler when the power control is set too high.

OBJECT DIALOG BOXES - ENGINE ROOM(continued)

POWER CONTROL LEVER

Pushing this lever into the red can increase boiler pressure to grant the ship bursts of power. Leaving the system in the red can cause critical damage and even an explosion.

ETHER ENGINE TEST SWITCH

This switch powers up the ether engine to idle for testing. Doing so for prolonged periods can damage the engine and, if the coils are damaged, lead to electrical fire.

PIPE-FITTER'S WRENCH

An outsized tool, this wrench could make an effective bludgeon.

The wrench is a weapon. It can also break the levers and switches after they're set to overload.

INT. HELL CAT GUNNERY DECK - SAME

The clipper's gunnery deck can be sabotaged.

OBJECT DIALOG BOX - GUNNERY DECK

AIR MINES

These magnetic, winged air-to-air mines have a timer that can be set for up to 1 hour.

INT. HELL CAT AERONEF 1

The aeronef is missing. This location still has two decoupling levers, both flipped.

OBJECT DIALOG BOX - AERONEF 1

DECOUPLING LEVER

Flipping this lever decouples the aeronef from the Hell Cat, readying it for launch.

INT. HELL CAT AERONEF 2

The second aeronef is in place, two levers keeping it coupled to the airship.

OBJECT DIALOG BOXES - AERONEF 2

DECOUPLING LEVER

Flipping this lever decouples the aeronef from the Hell Cat, readying it for launch.

CONTROLS

These controls allow for launching and piloting.

If the player character has completed all objectives aboard the Hell Cat, the controls offer the option to launch or remain aboard. When aeronef 2 launches, the mission ends.

CONCLUSION

Drake speaks as the mission statistics display.

DRAKE (VO)

Great work, my friend. As soon as the cabal has decrypted the documents you recovered, we'll be in touch. That is assuming you want to be part of the expedition to Hyperborea.