

Escape the Prison Airship!

by Amina Omari, with illustrations by Ken Christopher Hill

On the wind-swept main deck of the **HMS Mercy**, a prison airship a mile above the city of **New Penance**, you are dragged before a bewigged judge. “You have been arrested on charges of resisting arrest. You are hereby judged guilty. The penalty for your crime is death. However, by mercy of the court, your sentence is hereby commuted to a mere 63 and a half years in custody of the state. Next!”

Inside the Cell:

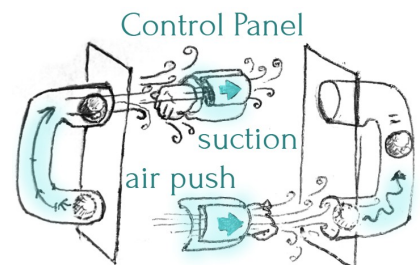
- Picking any lock on the ship triggers impregnable **Air Barriers** that seal off all cells and the stairs up to the main deck, unless PCs notice & cut a thin silver wire set around the lock on the *outside* of each door. Once triggered, Air Barriers can only be deactivated from **Main Deck**. Breaking down a door does not activate barriers.
- The PCs’ cellmate, **Geoff**, is an annoying poet/revolutionary secretly working with a kind-hearted guard, **Aishlynn**, to plan a prison break. If he trusts them, Aishlynn will bring the PCs’ weapons & unlock the cell door.

The Prison Deck:

- Guard post with several **Lawkeepers** (shortsword) & an **Elite Lawkeeper** (shortsword & **Air Gauntlets**). If alerted to the escape, they will trigger the Air Barriers, preventing PCs from reaching the Main Deck or unlocking other cells. A search reveals **Rope**, **Cell Keys** and any weapons the PCs failed to hide from the guards.
- The cells are strangely underpopulated. With such unjust laws, shouldn’t this ship be crowded full?

Headed Up? The Main Deck:

- Captain’s Quarters - In a hidden drawer, PCs find **Gold**, not quite enough **Scrolls of Gentle Falling** for their party, and an **Ominous Letter** from Dr. Salixer (“Captain: My research requires another dozen prisoners for extraction. Please deliver them to the lower deck at once.”).
- Maproom - Holds the **Judge** (not very hardy, equipped with Sleep and Fear spells), an **Elite Lawkeeper** with **Air Gauntlets**, & several **Lawkeepers** who have barricaded themselves inside. Given time, they will find the captain’s spell scrolls and escape the ship.
- An unlabeled Air Barrier Control Panel is connected to circuits of silver wire that thread through the ship’s inner walls. Use Air Gauntlets to suction or push air, moving the silver ball from the bottom to the top of a hidden track behind the panel. This breaks the circuit and lowers the barriers.
- A massive anchor chain - Attached is a large round platform with a hole in the center, which can be ridden down if controlled by 3 pairs of Air Gauntlets. The ship is buffeted by heavy winds; climbing the chain or the outer hull will be deadly for all but the strongest PCs, unless anchored by rope.



Headed Down? The Lower Deck:

- Gnome laboratory, secured behind an Air Barrier. Led by **Dr. Wixim Salixer** (physically weak, with powerful Shield and Electric Shock spells), who taunts the PCs from behind the barrier as his lab assistants titter. He may lower the barrier if he needs to escape — for instance, if the PCs set the ship on fire or free the Air Elementals. He keeps a gnome-sized **Flying Carpet** as his personal escape insurance.
- Air Elemental cages all around the hull of the ship, made from near-unbreakable silvery mesh, each containing angry, powerful **Air Elementals** who are shocked and prodded by Dr. Salixer to keep the ship aloft. If pried free and dropped out of the **Oculus**, the cages will shatter on the ground below; a few minutes later, any uncaged Elementals will return to free their brethren and tear apart Dr. Salixer and his assistants with hurricane-force wind attacks. If PCs attack the Elementals, they will respond in kind; otherwise, they will ignore the party.
- Oculus controlled by Dr. Salixer. Opens on a dizzying fall.

Whether they head up or down, the PCs will face an aerial assault by **Captain Weatherbee** (a tough tactician) and his **Lawkeepers**, all mounted on flying **Hippogriffs** and armed with crossbows and **Air Gauntlets**. Hippogriffs are powerful, with deadly beak & claw attacks. They can be tamed by a skilled animal handler if their previous master is dead, but can only carry one large and one small rider. Only one can fit through the Oculus at a time.

Air Gauntlets

- > Control 5x5' cube of air for an hour; 5 uses per day; takes concentration
- > Push enemy 10' or suck air from lungs
- > May depower after a week without being charged by an Air Elemental

As the Air Elementals escape...

- > The Mercy will begin to lurch and sink. **At the top of each combat round**, roll 1d4 to decide if the ship lurches to bow, port, stern, or starboard. All combatants slide 1d4 squares, falling prone if they are pushed into an immovable object.
- > Good luck finding a way down before the ship falls out of the sky!

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

