The Gray Papers

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aGOne

A compendium for the Twilight Realms

Credits

AGONE

An epic role-playing game in the Twillight Realms. Adapted from the novels by Mathieu Gaborit

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Table of contents

Short story : The hunched soul 06

Rules of a Domain 08

1 ~ Laeghdoved (Princely Communes) 15

2 ~ Brightskies (Janrenia) 26

3 ~ Suleïdin's Seraglio (Empire of Neshe) 36

4 ~ Holy Post (Liturgical Province) 48

5 ~ Abhorrent Peaks (Mercenary Republic) 58

6 ~ Scarletstone (Widowlands) 68

7 ~ Lightning-Dragon Crest (Wild Reaches) 77

8 ~ Arboline (Urgamand) 86

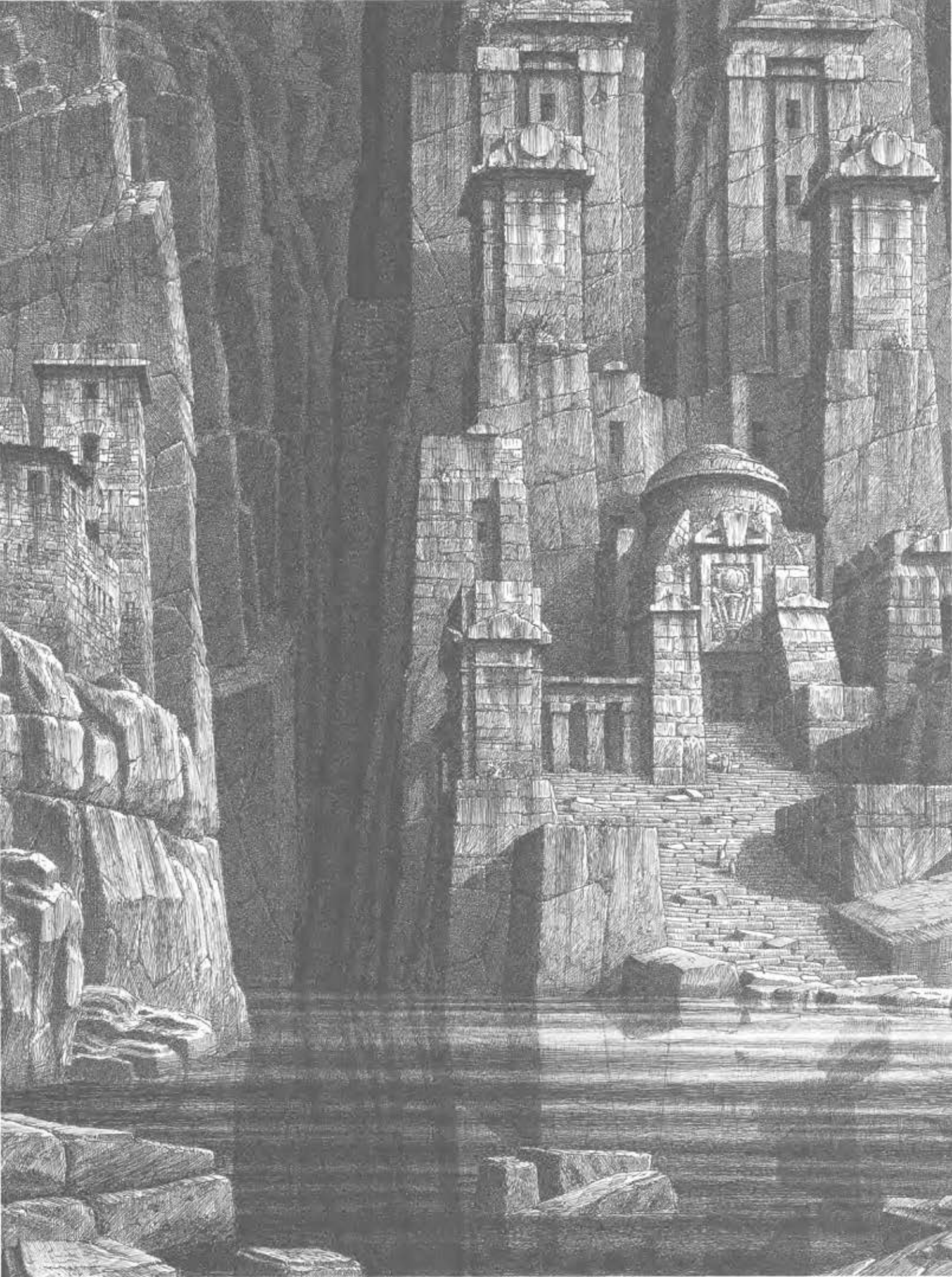
9 ~ The Horde (Lyphan) 95

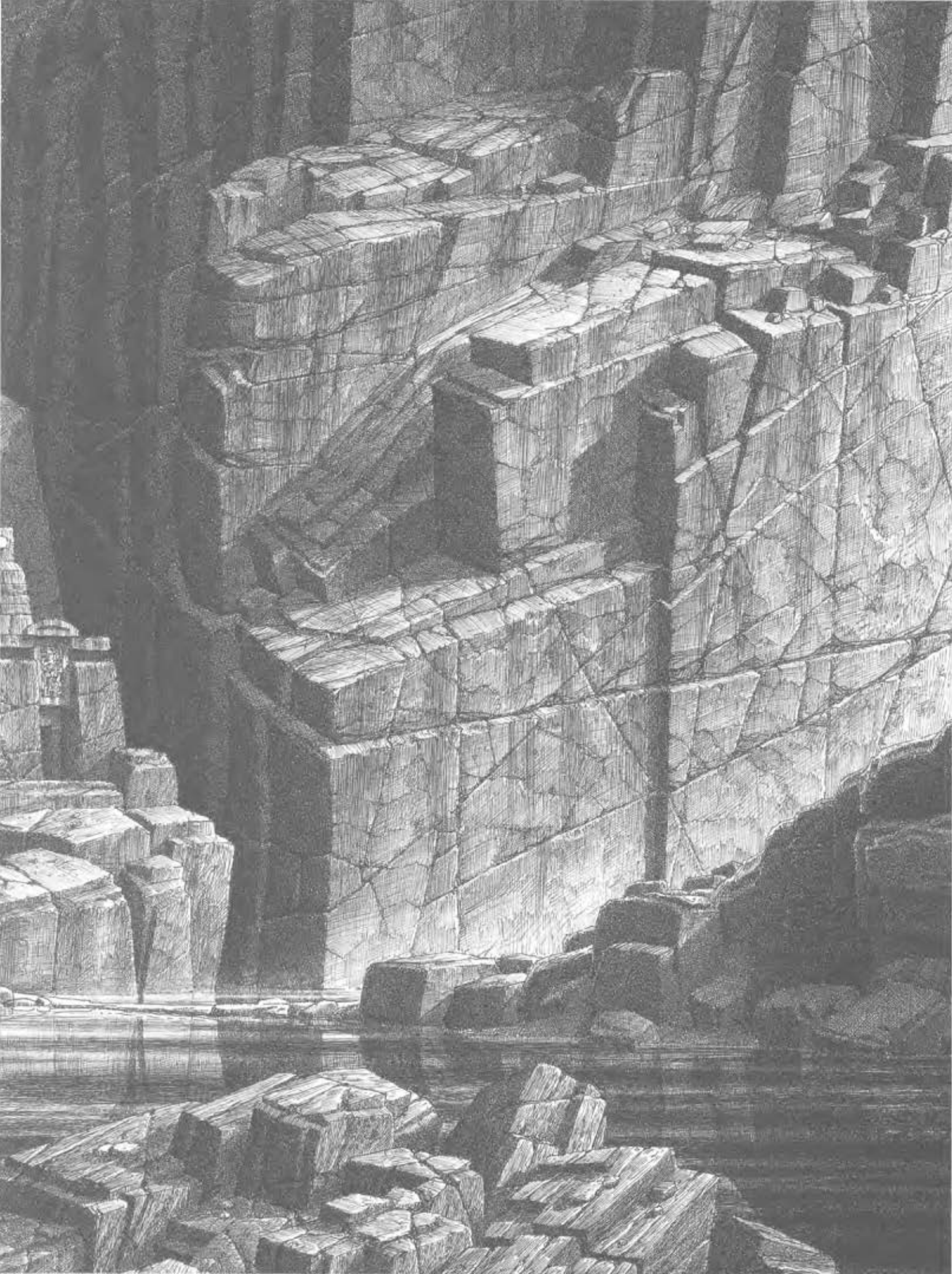
10 ~ Et Han Rawk (Modehan Marches) 104

Map 114

Drama : Ophidian Tragedy 116

Denizens of Harmundia 131





The Hunched Soul

A freezing rain fell over Darkdream, city of the mages. Jed's heavy cloak of black wool was soaked and dripping as he walked down the alleys, apace with the lady that was his most faithful companion. He took one slow step after the other, his hand clasping that of Ashais, the black fey who had brought him up during the long years since his infancy. Ashais had cried all night, for yesterday she had felt in her heart the first stirrings of the Call, this summons no black fey could hope to escape. She had no idea why the Eternals had condemned her to the sleep of forgetfulness, but she would submit to it, for she was a black fey and no black fey had ever failed in the face of duty.

At dawn she made arrangements with a solicitor to ensure that the crypt where she was about to enclose herself remain inviolate until her next awakening. She had also taken care to bequeath her fortune to Jed, so that he would never be troubled by money as long as he lived. But she still had one thing to do before she could let her spirit leave Harmundia. A confession... a secret the members of the brotherhood would reveal only as a very last resort. The time had come for Jed to know, and this more than anything else filled her heart with anguish.

It took an hour to cross this district of Darkdream, built like all the others on the back of a manatee. This district consisted only of mansions, where old mages bent over antique tomes of the Flamboyance. When the sun was at its zenith, Ashais and Jed came to a thin rampart of dark wood that separated the district proper from the gigantic creature's face. Beyond lived the Helmsmen, charged with steering the manatee through the river maze of the Mercenary Republic. Five ogres in black armor and a young Obscurantist with waxy skin kept watch by the main door. The presence of a black fey dissuaded them from performing the mandatory search. Even here, in the heart of a city devoted to the arts of magic, the mysterious black fey remained untouchable. The young Obscurantist applied the Helmsmen's seal to the scroll Jed handed over, then stepped aside to let them in.

Small square towers stood on the animal's head, deeply anchored in its bone structure. They passed them and a few minutes later came upon an outlandish narrow pyramid erected on the jaw's extremity. Designed to remain underwater while the manatee swam along the river, it allowed access to the Ivory Necropolis. Several dwarves of the Square in black livery bade them enter. Ashais knew the manatee couldn't keep its head above water indefinitely. Before dusk, the necropolis dug inside the animal's teeth would be in the depths and theoretically unreachable.

Others waited within the pyramid. They were burying a relative and mourning silently. A dwarf quietly approached Ashais and respectfully took the scroll.

"Please follow me."

They fell into step behind him, descending a spiral staircase that led into the creature's jaw. A moment later, it opened into the beast's mouth, a huge and pleasantly warm cavity. Despite Ashais' forewarnings, Jed shivered when he glimpsed the manatee's tongue swaying gently in the darkness, at the back of the necropolis. A Modehan shaman was standing close by, a Dancer perched on either shoulder. Each of the animal's teeth held three to five crypts, resting places for the most illustrious denizens of its district. The dwarf showed Ashais to hers and opened a small silvery door allowing entrance.

"It's all yours, Lady Ashais," he said while showing them in. "You will see we have met your demands to the letter. I will return in an hour to seal the crypt."

He bowed and left the room. With a heavy heart, Jed let his eyes take in the narrow room where Ashais was to slumber through the next decades. She had asked for a comfortable bed, a desk, writing materials, and a Modehan shrub whose roots sank into the manatee's flesh. The bush's berries would provide enough for her subsistence until the Call closed her eyes. She also had a jug enchanted by a Shaper that would give her an endless supply of fresh water to staunch her thirst.

Jed didn't dare move as she checked the contents of the desk. She intended to put to good use what little time she had left to tell her story, to commit to the rolls of paper this memory the Call would erase from

her mind forever. Once she was satisfied with her inspection, she sat on the edge of the bed and bade Jed do the same. The adolescent shyly complied.

"You must not be sad, my child", she said while stroking his cheek with her gnarled hand.

"I cannot help it," confessed Jed who was holding back tears. "For me, it is as if you were about to die."

"Life and death are one," she whispered. "Like river and ocean are one. The secret of death is hidden in the heart of life. If you achieve your destiny, I will live by you and in you."

Ashais' soft voice broke through the dam that held back his grief. Jed closed his eyes and let the tears roll down his cheeks.

"Cry, my child, but let those tears water your soul and make it strong. Once my lids close to the Call, my soul will fly away without regrets. I want to be proud of you, to know that you will stay on the path I have prepared for you."

"What am I to do?" He asked, wiping his tears with his sleeve.

"Take off your shirt, my child. I would like to behold you one last time."

Jed did so and showed his back to Ashais. Five years ago it was only a small bump. Today strangers thought Jed a hunchback. He felt the black fey's hands linger on the outline of the creature growing inside his body. At first the presence terrified him. He was only eleven and often took refuge in Ashais' bed as she caressed his back and mumbled comforting words. Now he was sixteen and accepted this mystery of life. He was no longer afraid and was sometimes even moved by an almost motherly emotion.

"We have talked about it so often," she said, lowering the shirt on her protegé's back. "I know not whether you will survive its birth, but that day you will not be alone."

Jed turned back to her:

"What do you mean?"

She had never hinted there might be someone else. And for the first time, he saw remorse in her eyes.

"The secret is shared by a brotherhood. The Brotherhood of the Hunch."

Jed thought his heart had suddenly stopped beating. So others were sharing the same experience. He didn't know whether to weep or shout for the deep joy he felt.

"Forgive me, my child. I could not risk speaking of it before. The Brotherhood of the Hunch must not draw attention to itself, and its members do their utmost to ensure nobody discovers its existence."

"I have to meet them!" Jed exclaimed.

The black fey's ashen wings flapped weakly in the half-light of the crypt.

"In all likelihood, yes. But soothe your eagerness, or it will expose you to danger."

"Other hunchbacks..." Jed whispered.

"Yes. Children like you. Young people, seasonlings and humans, impregnated by the Shard of the Flamboyance."

"Why?" Jed protested weakly. "Why do you tell me all this now, when you go away?"

"Do not be angry. I had no choice. In order to bring forth this... this creature, I had to protect you, to make you the eternal stroller, the symbol of this city."

The memories of their countless walks throughout the districts of Darkdream whirled through Jed's mind. The way Ashais insisted on showing him all the nooks and crannies of the moving city so that he would feel it, know it as intimately as his own body.

"For now, the Brotherhood is stumbling in the dark. We do not yet know what the hunchbacks will deliver on the day of birth. Jed, there are only half a score of you throughout Harmundia. And before you, the brotherhood made sacrifices that would send shivers down even the Corruptor's spine."

"Sacrifices?"

"Yes. Children like you, submitted to magical experiments... that failed. They became monsters, uncontrollable creatures the brotherhood had to lock away in Pictureworlds of Winter."

"But me," Jed moaned. "Am I not like them?"

"A monster? Oh no, my child, you are... you are the most beautiful of what Harmundia has to offer. You are the vessel of the future, the crucible of a new Flamboyance."

She suddenly stiffened and gave out a muffled whimper.

"Ashais!" Jed said, grabbing her shoulders.

"The Call," she whispered. "It torments me. I feel it spreading into my body. Listen carefully," she added in a hurried voice. "You will leave Darkdream and go to Koffer to meet someone named Moontooth, a thief who assists the Brotherhood. He will guide you. He will help you understand... to carry out the experiment."

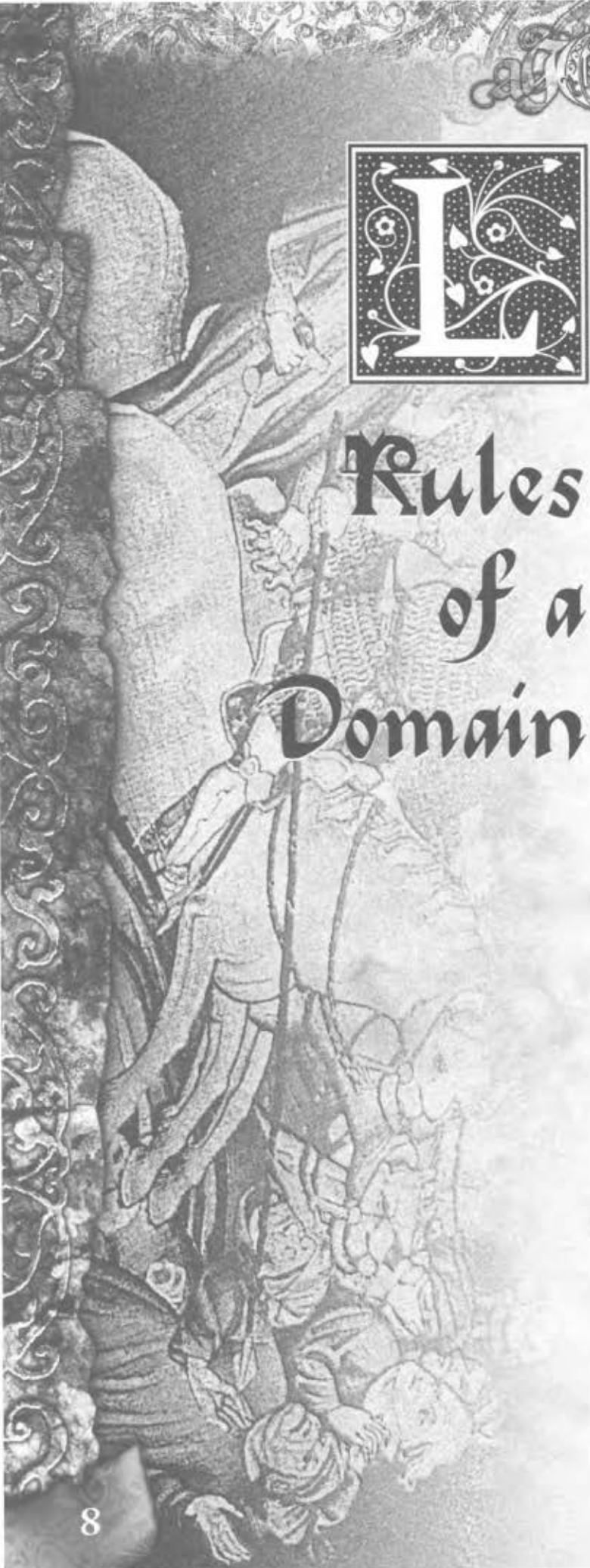
The words seemed to trouble her. Panting, she lay on the bed.

"I do not even have time to save our memories," she confessed feebly pointing at the desk. "Go away now. Keep our house. You will probably have to come back to this city one day."

"But why?" Jed muttered as the black fey's eyelids were slowly closing.

"Because... because you carry its soul within you."

To be continued...



Rules of a Domain

Like an Inspired, a Domain is defined by a number of aspects and attributes. These measurements record general statistical information, such as its wealth, its power, the organization of its military, and the number of its inhabitants. In addition, they record qualitative information such as a Domain's political instability, its denizens' discontentment, or impending uprisings and peasant revolts.

A Domain's aspects are recorded in three pairs of numbers: Body/Dark Body, Spirit/Dark Spirit, and Soul/Dark Soul.

Body/Dark Body

Body indicates the Domain's physical power. It is reflects its population, territory, the number and quality of its troops, the amount and worth of its fortifications, the span and maintenance of its roads, etc. A Domain with a low Body may be poorly organized, badly defended, have a declining birth rate, or any combination of these factors.

As for Dark Body, it is a representation of a Domain's troubles, notably the amount of sedition and revolt that has to be dealt with. A high rating in Dark Body indicates the lands are prone to peasant uprisings and vassals ceaselessly vying for independence. This aspect is used as a penalty against all of the Domain's Body attributes. Should the Dark Body become higher than the Body, the Domain would fall into civil war.

Four attributes are derived from Body. Like character attributes, they are rated from 1 to 10.

Army

This is the Domain's military strength. A high rating indicates a powerful and efficient military, while a low rating suggests weak or disorganized forces.

Defense

Defense indicates the Domain's resistance to invasion. It includes natural obstacles (mountain range, impassable river, etc.) and man-made ones (fortresses and keeps at strategic vantage points). A Domain with a high rating would be heavily fortified. A Domain with a low Defense attribute would be open on many fronts, and ripe for plucking by any ambitious neighbor.

Denizens

Its denizens are the living strength of a Domain. They ensure its maintenance and its productivity. In short, they perform all that is needed to keep it alive and well. Without them, the best Domain would soon become little more than an inhospitable wasteland. A high rating

is the mark of a densely populated Domain, where you can hardly travel for ten minutes without coming upon a hamlet or a village. A low rating indicates a depleted and sparse population.

Organization

The Organization attribute gives an overall rating to many items: the extensiveness and condition of roads, the number of messengers that use them on a regular basis, the distribution and quantity of watchtowers, the coordination of the governing powers, etc. A high Organization rating indicates a widespread and well-maintained network of roads, with regular patrols, and a well-structured system of government whose different branches function harmoniously. A low attribute, on the other hand, indicates that the Domain has few roads, and each settlement manages itself independently and is unresponsive to the lord's commands.

Spirit/Dark Spirit

Spirit represents a Domain's power and influence beyond the physical sphere. It includes financial capacity (the Domain's resources), and information and intelligence about its neighbors and the world at large.

A Domain with a high Spirit is rich and possesses good networks of handsomely paid informants and spies, who can provide military intelligence and blackmail material. On the contrary, a Domain with a low Spirit has limited means and cannot afford to gather information about its neighbors.

Dark spirit is the reverse of Spirit: it gauges the scale of betrayal, spying, and potential coup d'états inside the Domain. A high Dark Spirit might indicate succession problems (different heirs fighting for the right to rule), or it could mean there are many traitors and spies abroad, looking for ways to profit at the expense of their homeland. This aspect is used as a penalty against all of the Domain's Spirit attributes. Should the Dark Spirit become higher than the Spirit, the Domain would fall prey to a coup d'état.

Two attributes fall under the Spirit Aspect.

Finance

Finance is a measure of the Domain's economic resources. It includes the quantity of valuable materials that can be produced (a Domain containing gold or silver mines would have a high Finance rating). It also represents the lord's ability to develop its value, for example by setting up trade routes, organizing fairs, and attracting merchants and their riches. A high Finance indicates intense and profitable commercial activity, while a low Finance indicates serious money problems.

Information

Information appraises the Domain's capacity to gather intelligence about its foes (and its friends, for that matter). It provides knowledge of the precise movements of hostile armies, the schemes of neighboring lords, and local criminal activities. A high Information rating is typical of a Domain with an efficient network of deeply entrenched spies. A low one means the Domain has no news about the outside world, and often indicates a lack of interest among the people about events beyond their borders.

Soul/Dark Soul

Soul is the most impalpable of the three aspects. It gives an account of the Domain's potential for magic, and its capacity for successful diplomacy. A Domain with a high Soul rating will probably have a school of the Cipher-sorcerer, and may be home to practitioners of the Magical Arts willing to impart their knowledge. It also implies a good working relationship with the neighboring Domains. (They may not all be outright friendly, but at least their representatives maintain a veneer of cordiality and politeness towards the lord.) A low Soul rating reveals a land barren of all magic, to the point where many people mistrust it or doubt its existence. For the rulers of such a land, diplomacy is a word whose meaning is drowned out by the sounds of battle.

Dark Soul quantifies the magical threats to the Domain. When this aspect is high, demons run rampant, and the Masque has sent numerous minions to haunt the Domain and spread misery with their unearthly powers. It is used as a penalty against all of the Domain's Soul attributes. If Dark Soul becomes higher than Soul, the Domain fall prey to magical mayhem.

The Soul Aspect consists of two attributes.

Magical Ability

Magical Ability measures the supernatural resources of the Domain.

If this attribute is high, the presence of a school of magic and a good understanding with its mages will give the lord powerful support and allow him to keep even the most frightening supernatural threats at bay. It might indicate an agreement with an Obscurantist school whose members sometimes offer their help. It might also indicate Remains of the Flamboyance whose magical properties are known and used. If the attribute is low, however, nothing stands between the Domain's denizens and supernatural threats.

Diplomatic Relations

The Diplomatic Relations attribute evaluates the ties a Domain maintains with its neighbors. A high rating means there are treaties between neighboring Domains

ensuring defense and mutual assistance. The surrounding lords respect the Domain and have enough trust in the lord's good reputation to turn to him or her to settle quarrels. A low attribute implies a tense relationship, or even an ongoing war.

Domain Creation

A Domain's history, from its creation and through all the events that alter it, cannot be summarized by a few numbers jotted on a slip of paper. The players must confer with the Eminence Grise in order to decide on at least a few guidelines and anecdotes that will turn the numbers representing their Domain into a consistent and living place.

As for determining the numbers themselves, the procedure is quite simple.

Based on the Domain's size, all its aspects start at a given level. A land managed by a simple knight would have a rating of 1 in all aspects. The lands of a baron would be worth ratings of 5, and a whole kingdom could well start with ratings of 10 in all aspects.

Attributes derived from each aspect start with the same ratings as the parent aspect, unless the EG or the player creating the Domain choose otherwise. In this case one extra attribute point can be added to an attribute for each point lowered from another attribute derived from the same aspect. In the same way, for each point by which an aspect is lowered, any other may be increased by one point. Such changes must be given a rationale.

Furthermore, every Domain gains one point in Dark Aspect for each point transferred in this way. Imbalances and weaknesses are beacons for the covetousness of the Darken and the Masque.

Example: *The Molnodav barony starts with aspect ratings of 5. The EG decides that the flat and barren lands that make up most of the barony's territory are unfavorable to trade, more so since they do not yield anything even remotely valuable. So the Spirit Aspect is lowered to 4.*

This point is reallocated to Body, allowing the barony to maintain a good-sized army and to have a large population.

But the low Spirit rating will generate a low income and scanty intelligence for the lord. To counter the latter, the player decides that the army and the maintenance of the fortresses are so costly that they further lower the Finance attribute to 3, increasing the Information attribute to an average 5.

Having been subjected to two modifications (one point transferred from Spirit to Body and one from Finance

ATTRIBUTES VALUE

	Army	Defense	Denizens	Organization	Finance	Information	Magical Ability	Diplomatic relations
1	5 uncouth peasants	Simple earthen wall	20 inhabitants	Utter chaos	No income	No outside news	Magic is a legend	Neighbors unknown
3	10 worn-out soldiers	A stone tower	100 inhabitants	A few roads and an annual visit from the lord	Continuous money problems	Hear about major events	Dislike magic	At war with the neighbors
5	50 trained soldiers	A fortress	500 to 1,000 inhabitants	A representative of the lord in every village	Make ends meet	Embryonic network	One resident Mage	Tense relationships but no war
7	2,000 to 5,000 men, and many well-trained knights	A network of small forts	10,000 inhabitants	Efficient bureaucracy	Two yearly fairs:money is not a problem	Extensive and renowned network	A school of magic	Maintain ambassadors
10	10,000 to 50,000 men, highly organized	Fortresses in all sensitive spots, strong keeps everywhere else	100,000 or more	Complex bureaucracy	Major trade center	Nothing escapes its spies	Mages numerous and well-integrated in society	Makes its neighbors' laws

Note: This table lists examples of features of a barony-like Domain.

to Information), the Domain starts with two Dark Aspects points that the player decides to assign to Dark Soul.

Keep in mind that this system has been designed for the players, to allow them to design barony-like Domains. For whole kingdoms or small tracts of land, defining their parameters is left to the EG, who is in no way compelled to proceed according to these rules. The Domains described later in the present volume, for example, have been given aspects and attributes fitting their descriptions and often unrelated to this creation process.

Domain Management

Once it has been created, a Domain still needs its master's guiding hand to prosper, or at least to survive its enemies.

To this end, the skills of Strategy, Stewardship, and Diplomacy will come in handy.

In most situations, the Domain manages itself more or less automatically. As long as nothing out of the ordinary happens, no skill roll or special care is required from its lord. But when something extraordinary occurs, the master of the Domain will have to act.

Each time a roll is called for, it is made using the attributes of the Domain and the skills of the character tending to the crisis. So a diplomatic problem would be solved with a roll based on the Domain's Diplomatic Relations attribute, added to the skill of the individual sent to deal with it.

Die Rolls and Adventures

There are two ways to solve a Domain-related problem. Either the lord wants to play its resolution, in which case the EG has a good opportunity to launch the Inspired into a battle or intrigue-oriented scenario, depending the problem's nature.

Or the players cannot or do not want to play the situation to its outcome. The lord may be absent when the difficulty arises, and the chamberlain has to face the problem. Or the problem itself may be devoid of enough interest to justify role-playing. In such cases, it can be resolved with a simple roll.

Strategy, Stewardship, and Diplomacy

Military affairs (peasant revolts, invasions, wars, army exercises) all call for Strategy. It is the skill most practiced by the barons of Urgamand, who like to solve all problems with brute force.

Internal affairs requiring management (bad harvests, negotiating for raw materials, natural disasters) are resolved with the Stewardship skill. The Liturgists are experts

Examples of Difficulty

Strategy

Organizing army maneuvers to impress the neighbors	15
Same as above, but with the possibility of an attack	20
Same as above, but allowing a surprise attack	25
Quelling a small peasant revolt	10
Quelling a major uprising	15
Quelling a rebellion of one's vassals	20
Quelling a well-prepared rebellion backed by an ambitious neighbor	25
Leading a war against an adversary	opposed roll

Stewardship

Bad harvest	15
Food shortage (series of bad harvests)	20
Outright famine (harvest entirely destroyed)	25
Minor disaster (landslide)	10
Potentially dangerous disaster (animal plague)	15
Major disaster (small earthquake, plague)	20
Extraordinary disaster (volcanic eruption, endemic plague)	25

Diplomacy

Resolving a border incident	15
Negotiating peace with a half-hearted enemy	20
Negotiating a ceasefire with a hereditary enemy	25
Obtaining neutrality in a faraway war involving an ally	10
Obtaining an agreement for peace and establishing borders with a passive neighbor	15
Negotiating an alliance	20
Negotiating a treaty for mutual help and eternal friendship	25

Modifiers

Proxy (sending a representative rather than going in person)	+2
Unfavorable situation (important interests at stake, the other party is at war and resents the meddling)	+3
Deplorable situation (major interests at stakes, the war is going badly)	+4
Desperate situation (vital interests, war lost)	+5
Other party a hereditary enemy willing to risk all	+5
Other party well-known (old-time ally, foreseeable reactions)	-2
Strong position (negotiating a peace treaty with a weaker opponent already at war elsewhere)	-3
Dominating position (negotiating a ceasefire with a defeated enemy)	-4
Crushing position (sovereign against own vassals)	-5

in this field, where their flair for bureaucracy and hierarchy comes in handy.

Finally, when the time has come to negotiate with one's enemies, diplomats enter the fray. Whether it is to negotiate rebellious peasants' surrender with limited bloodshed, or to petition a neighbor for a loan, a peace treaty, or a pact of eternal friendship, Diplomacy is the skill of the day.

Any one of the eight attributes can be used with these three skills. A Domain can decide to launch economic warfare, combining Strategy with Finance, or to pressure its allies to have them attack a troublesome neighbor, mixing Strategy with Diplomatic Relations.

Consequences for succeeding or failing these rolls are discussed later, under 'Domain Evolution'.

Dark Aspects

There are three ways to increase a Domain's Dark Aspects: 1) by a roll resulting in a fumble, 2) by a pathetic failure in a scenario that could affect them, or 3) by falling prey to the diabolical schemes of the Darken or, worse yet, the Masque.

Fumbles, beyond their usual catastrophic consequences (see the AGONE rulebook, p. 153), automatically raise the dark side of the Domain's implied aspect by one point. Thus a fumble on a roll of Body + Diplomacy in a crisis situation involving the Body aspect would raise the Domain's Dark Body by one point.

When either or both of the aforementioned Eternals intervene, things get really serious. If the Domain's lord is conscious of the menace, he can try to oppose it by making a roll with the involved attribute and the appropriate skill against a difficulty of 30. Success means the plans of these powers are thwarted for the time being. A failure on this roll means a rise in the involved Dark aspect to the necessary level. So if the Masque had decided to throw the Domain into the throes of civil war, the Dark Body would receive as many points as needed to rise 1 point above its Body rating. Eternals always have the deck stacked in their favor.

Example: *the first crisis for the Molnodav Domain, the result of a botched connivance, is a portal linked to the Abyss, which spew forth hordes of demons. The baron decides to solve the problem by gathering his troops and physically destroying the portal. He would have to roll Army + Strategy, but since strategy is not his forte he resolves to send his war leader.*

The roll is against a basic difficulty of 15 (the demons are hard to kill, but not so numerous yet, so the situation is serious but not desperate) + 2 (the lord is not personally present to boost up the army's morale) + 5 (the demons will fight to the last) - 4 (the soldiers have hugely superior numbers) - 2 (the demons have no choice but to defend the portal, which makes the strategist's work much easier). All this makes for a final difficulty of 16. The general's base is 6 (Domain's Army) + 7 (Strategy skill) = 13. He rolls a 1 followed by 10 followed in turn by 3, for a final result of 1. This is a fumble. Not only are the troops defeated in a shameful and ridiculous manner, but also the Domain gains a point in the relevant Dark aspect, in this case Dark Soul.

If the Darken itself had been behind this appearance of demons, the difficulty of the roll would have been raised to 30. And what's more, if the general had failed (even without a fumble), the Domain would have reaped not 1 but 4 points of Dark Soul, which would have been enough (with the 2 points acquired during the Domain's creation) to plunge it into magical mayhem.

Civil Wars, Coups, and Magical Mayhem

From the moment when one of the Domain's Dark aspects rises above its counterpart, its lord is no longer in control. The EG takes over its management and decides what happens next. In a civil war, the fighting and massacres usually take on such proportions that the lord is forced to leave his Domain. In the case of a coup d'état, his throne is taken over by an ambitious pretender. As for magical mayhem... it is better not to speak too openly of this possibility. Suffice to say, the lands taken over by the minions of the Masque or the Darken tend to become uninhabitable.

The Domain may or may not be reclaimed by its previous owner, depending on the EG's assessment of the situation and whether the Inspired finds a way to reverse the effects. This could be the objective of multiple playing sessions.

Domain Evolution

Usually, an Inspired whose Office involves the management of a Domain, whether great or small, wishes to see it grow in strength and influence. This necessitates increasing the population, acquiring more riches, and all else that is necessary to have it find its place among the great powers, be it politically, militarily, economically, or magically.

On the other hand, a Domain can decline, its population can be decimated, and its resources used up.

Rise...

There are two ways to make a Domain grow: opportunity and personal involvement.

Opportunity

Adventures create relationships between the Troupe and many NPCs. Some will be of good will or have valuables the Inspired can appropriate. These are opportunities. When one encounters an Office-bearing Inspired, one can seize the opportunity to directly make the Domain

grow. There are no precise rules for this. The EG is free to evaluate what advantages can be obtained from a given situation.

The scale of a Domain's attributes must be kept in mind, however. If the Domain's Body is 1, for instance, taking in a hundred survivors from the destruction of a powerful caravan may allow for a rise in its Denizens attribute by 2 points. But if the Domain is already heavily inhabited (with a rating of 7 in Denizens, for example), this added population would be negligible and would not provide additional attribute points.

Prompting an Opportunity

It is also possible to create an opportunity for the Domain's growth, for instance by attacking one's neighbor. This can be resolved by making opposed rolls, using Strategy along with the Domain's appropriate attribute (depending on the kind of attack) against the target's. Success on this roll means the victim loses a point in that attribute, which is snatched by the winner. The main risk is that, in the case of a failure, the attacker has made an unexpectedly strong enemy, on top of having his own Domain lose an attribute point to the enemy.

If either party rolls a fumble, two points of said attribute are "stolen" (in addition to the usual repercussion on the Dark Aspects).

If any of a Domain's attributes fall to 0 (or lower) through this process, the winner annexes the loser's Domain, in addition to all the appropriate attribute bonuses.

COST OF DOMAIN PROGRESSION

Change	Cost
Attribute increase	Next rating x 20
Dark Aspect decrease	Previous rating x 15

An aspect can increase only if all related attributes have ratings higher than the aspect. In such a case, the aspect is adjusted according to the lowest rating, at no cost.

Again, it is essential to bear in mind the exponential scale of a Domain's attribute values. To annex a small barony is nothing for a kingdom. For a Domain with a Finance rating of 9, for instance, the defunct barony's rating of 2 would add nothing to its wealth or income. In order to reap a benefit, you must pick on somebody your own size.

Personal Involvement

The way to make a Domain grow is by devoting time and effort to its upkeep. This option is handled by spending Inspiration points.

Having an Office and being in charge of a Domain allow the Inspired additional opportunities to earn Inspiration. There is no difference between IPs gained by playing scenarios and those gained through Domain management. All points may be allotted either to the Inspired's parameters or to the Domain's, regardless of their origin.

The points needed to augment a Domain's aspects or attribute are found in the table below.

The EG is free to allow or disallow the allotment of IPs to a Domain. We even urge the EG not to allow it without some rationale from the players. Have them explain how they will go about making their lands grow and prosper. If they want population growth, for instance (and have the IP to increase Denizens by one point), how will they encourage the arrival of immigrants? By giving away free tracts of lands? By lowering taxes? By cleansing the area of bandits? These actions might have different results and side effects, and set the stage for future adventures. If there is no logical way to allow a lord's wishes of expansion, the EG is advised not to allow the IP expenditure.

...and Fall

Mismanagement

A Domain may not always prosper. Its soldiers can be killed, its mines used up, and so on. This kind of misfortune tends to happen when the lord mismanages or completely ignores his Office and responsibilities.

The rule system that simulates the fall of a Domain is based on this assumption. Managing lands is a serious

INSPIRATION POINTS GAINED THROUGH DOMAIN MANAGEMENT

Circumstances	Number of Inspiration points earned
Devoting a whole year to the Domain (no more than 2 months without personal management)	5
Solving a crisis of Strategy, Diplomacy, or Stewardship, depending on DIF:	
DIF 10	1
DIF 15	2
DIF 20	5
DIF 25	10
Problem was solved extraordinarily well (brilliant idea, critical success)	+ 2

TIME AND DIFFICULTY

A roll must be made at the end of each time increment.

Time Away	Roll DIF*
6 months	12
9 months	12
12 months	12
14 months	14
16 months	14
18 months	16
20 months	18
22 months	20

(and so on, with a roll every two months)
DIF is increased by 2 points every other roll.

*the -2 modifier due to delegated responsibilities is already factored in.

business that cannot be handled without proper consideration. A lord must care about his wife and children's safety, set aside the supervision of the men responsible for the defense, etc. Treating an office as momentous as the management of a land and its inhabitants in an careless way paves a path toward general discontent, if not an outright upheaval or betrayal. What surprise can be as unpleasant as finding that your own wife, after you went adventuring for "only two years", thought you dead and married one of the neighboring lords, who now runs your Domain?

So when a lord is absent, problems come up which need the steward in charge to make a roll with the appropriate skill. The longer the lord's absence, the more tangled the problems become until something goes beyond repair (consequences for failing a roll are dealt with below).

In the following table, the 'Time Away' column states the length of time since the lord last stayed on his land. Should the lord come back and leave again in short order, the clock keeps ticking. He must spend at least two weeks tending to his obligations (dispensing justice, ratifying treaties, seeing his vassals or liege, etc.) for the reckonings of time and difficulty to start over from the top of the table.

Bad Luck

Each time a crisis comes up that is not correctly handled by the lord, either due to a failure to complete a scenario or through a bad roll (whether made by the lord himself or a representative), the Domain can weaken. The method is as follows. A normal failure means the implied attribute (the one the problem was about, not necessarily the one used for the roll) is lowered by one point. The exact consequences are left to the EG's discretion, who might decide that the Domain's attributes remain as they are or that more than one point is lost, in one or more attributes.

When an attribute drops to 0, the Domain is abandoned. The population leaves, the soldiers desert, the mines cave in, the merchants avoid it and find another trade road, etc. The Domain must be rebuilt, if possible.

Alternatively, the EG may decide that the Domain is annexed (see 'Prompting an Opportunity') or falls prey to a catastrophe (see 'Civil Wars, Coups, and Magical Mayhem').

1 ~ Laeghdoved

Princely Communes

Dear master,
You asked me for a brief report on the Hai Shul in Laeghdoved. Here it is: despite some similarities, Laeghdoved is not Borrowlight.
The complexities of Laeghdoved cannot be summed up in a few pages. Nothing here is simple. Even the smallest details are given importance.
Laeghdoved is a city-state isolated in a freezing valley, surrounded by hostile mountains. In spite of its seclusion, it bustles with life; it has opened its gates to the world and is famous throughout the Realms.
The Hai Shul is the largest learning center of the Princely Communes. It is the place to meet elites and scholars from around the world.
Imagine two opposed traditions: the imposing decadence of the princeans and the mystical pacifism of the Jio Min.
Imagine Borrowlight without its secrecy and magical protection.
Imagine an exceptional School open to everyone (provided they can afford the fees).
Imagine the most ancient libraries of Harmundia, accessible to all.
Imagine intrigues without end, spun by fraternities that view mystery as a way of life.
Here I have learned (and am learning still) that knowledge can be a commodity much fought over, a prize people live and die for.
I can offer but a glimpse of it...

History

Origin

During the War of the Seasons, the Eaglefine Mountains were a very important battlefield. The Doved Valley, despite its relative isolation, was the headquarters of a renegade Winter faction.

Under the leadership of Laeghon, these seasonlings refused to submit to the Lady of Winter's authority. From his fortress of Laeghdoved, Laeghon crowned himself King of Winter. They resisted for a very long time. The battle of Laeghdoved, which marked the end of this phase of the war, was an episode of unspeakable savagery and astounding violence. After many months of atrocities, Laeghon was defeated and Laeghdoved was razed, but Winter had scarred the place forever.

The Shul Kao

After the Flamboyance, Laeghdoved became a memorial to the war victims.

LAEGHDOVED

Realm : Princely Communes
Ruler : meritocracy ruled by the Sen Ido and the council of the seven Venerables
Strength: varies – on average half a score of Inspired and between 2,000 and 4,000 Dullen

BODY : 6/1
Army : 7
Defense : 6
Denizens : 6
Organization : 7

SPIRIT : 5/3
Finance : 5
Information : 7

SOUL : 7/7
Magical ability : 7
Diplomatic relations : 8

GLOSSARY

The School

- **Eldin :** senior teacher
- **Hai Shul:** "The Wisdom of the Eternal" – the school
- **Jio Taidu:** the administrative arm of the school
- **Jio Min:** an elite group inside the school
- Kao : a "way". Today, the Hai Shul teaches six Kao. These are the Way of War (Won Kao), the Way of Peace (Kati Kao), the Way of Science (Daeli Kao), the Way of Art (Atu Kao), the Way of Magic (Xios Kao) and the Way of Women (Qyn Kao).
- **Kedan:** apprentice (an advanced student)
- **Min Taidu:** the administration of the school
- **Sawall:** "companion" – a young teacher
- **Seng:** "venerable" – a "dean" of one of the Ways
- **Seng Ido:** the ruling council of the school
- **Shavem:** rank
- **Siba:** visitor
- **Sika:** the main office of a Kao
- **Won Taidu:** the police of the school
- **Zitos:** a student

The City

- **Liposk:** the militia of Prince Vladej
- **Tulev:** gate
- **Sotiumin:** "The Palace of the Circle" – the building that houses the administration of the school
- Uqi: district

During the rise of the Septentrion Empire, a handful of human settlers came to the Doved Valley and were imbued with a message of love and peace radiating from Laeghdoved. Opposed to all forms of violence, they were interested only in meditation and the search for ultimate wisdom. Thus was created the Shul Kao, or Way of the Wise. Slowly its teachings spread beyond Laeghdoved. A network of monasteries came into being, first on the fringes of the Empire, but eventually integrating with society. Preaching against violence, the brothers of the Shul Kao sometimes came out of their isolation to counsel the leaders and nobility.

The Jio Min

By cooperating with the Empire, the brothers of the Shul Kao became a target for the slaves' hatred. (The slaves of the Septentrion Empire, whose revolt, some time later, destroyed the Empire and gave brith to the Princely Communes and Lyphan.) Their message of universal peace and their willingness to arbitrate all conflicts eventually turned them into enemies of anyone with a reason to fight.

When the Empire fell, the Shul Kao monasteries were all destroyed during the ensuing uprisings. Only a few survivors, by renouncing their tradition of non-violence, were able to preserve a handful of their ancestors'secrets. They gathered in Laeghdoved, where the Shul Kao philosophy had been born. Its heirs created the Jio Min – the circle-cross.

Here, removed from the rest of the world, the Jio Min slowly rebuilt what had been destroyed. Under the guidance of their elders, the brothers of the Jio Min devoted themselves to study and the quest for perfection in the four Ways, symbolized by the four branches of their cross: the Won Kao (the Way of War), the Kati Kao (the Way of Peace), the Daeli Kao (the Way of Science), and the Atu Kao (the Way of Art).

For a long time, the Jio Min remained a closed and wary community. Only the brothers of the Kati Kao occasionally left Laeghdoved, but when they went down into the Doved Valley, they were greeted with some hostility by the princeans.

The Alliance with the Erzelski

In the year 834, Yevan Erzelski, Prince of Kilaia, decided to expand his territory by attacking his weakest neighbor. But as he was planning his conquest of Laeghdoved, the Prince received a visit from Siu Wan, the elder of the Jio Min. Nothing transpired at their meetings, but it marked the beginning of an alliance between the Erzelski family and the Jio Min.

In exchange for the independence of Laeghdoved, the Jio Min provided the Prince and his lineage with trustworthy and efficient counselors.

This cooperation was beneficial to the Principality of Kilaia, which in a few years became a major power.

The Tigonov

A dwarven community with links to the Square came to work for the Jio Min, at the Erzelskis' expense. These builders were dubbed the Tigonov, from the name of their founding master architect. Their first task was to build a reliable road between Kilaia and Laeghdoved. It took years to complete the Treli Skia ("straight road" in Kiemenite). This work, which includes no less than three viaducts, allows travel between Laeghdoved and Kilaia even during the worst conditions.

Afterwards, the Tigonov started working on the improvement of Laeghdoved, foremost by erecting the Sotiumin ("Palace of the Circle"), which today is the heart of the city.

The Noke Govlim

In 981, Osev Erzelski decided that the Jio Min had benefited enough from the current state of affairs, and that his principality had more to gain by annexing Laeghdoved than having free counselors. He broke the pact of 834 and sent troops toward Laeghdoved.

During the ensuing Noke Govlim ("Night of the Crater" in Kiemenite), Laeghdoved won its status as a major power.

All seemed lost as the army drew near, but as night fell, a freezing fog rose over the entire valley. In the cold darkness, the Kilaian army was decimated by avalanches, blizzards, lightning storms, and earthquakes. The forces of Winter were unleashed with a violence unseen for centuries, and only the works of the Tigonov remained standing.

In addition to routing the invaders, these phenomena provided Laeghdoved with an unexpected protection. In the morning, when the storm and the freezing mists had dissipated, a circular wall of stone surrounded the city, as if it had been built in the middle of a crater. This uneven rampart, over thirty feet high, was promptly fitted by the Tigonov with gates, towers, and a covered walkway. The Govlim (the wall) became the symbol of Laeghdoved's independence.

The Hai Shul

One week later, Ydan Takeno, elder of the Jio Min, paid a visit to Prince Osev. They negotiated bitterly for a month before signing a new treaty. Laeghdoved became an independent city-state whose purpose would be to shelter the Hai Shul (the Wisdom of the Eternal), a universal school devoted to teaching and research.

The Hai Shul took over the administration of the four Ways (the Jio Kao), each ruled by a Jio Seng. The Jio Min ceased being preeminent – dissolved in the hierarchical structure of the Hai Shul, it remained a caste reserved for the most prestigious teachers and the most promising sudents.

Under the guidance of the Seng Ido ("Council of the Venerables") Laeghdoved prospered. The Erzelski family was on the decline, and the Hai Shul became the training ground for the elite of the Princely Communes, establishing its reputation throughout the world.

Xios Kao, the Way of Magic

In 1130, thanks to its position with the Shining Star, the Scarlet Circle (cf. AGONE p. 27) was able to modify Laeghdoved's constitution. The Seng had to accept a new member in their council. Magic became the fifth way, led by the Xios Seng. The goal of the Scarlet Circle was to seize control of the Hai Shul, but the defeat of the Shining Star by the Wild-Reachers in Maechrak caused the wizards to lose most of their influence and they abandoned their plans to rule Laeghdoved.

Qyn Kao, the Way of the Woman

In 1431, the growing influence of the Widowlands in artistic and scientific matters imposed changes on the social hierarchy. So far, women (and female seasonlings) were forbidden from entering the Hai Shul, be it as students or teachers. Under outside pressure, Laeghdoved's constitution was once again modified. A new branch was created – the Way of the Woman – and a seventh Venerable, the Qyn Seng, has had a seat on the council ever since.

Recent Events

In 1441, the Kati Kao was involved in a serious scandal. It appeared that some of the artworks and the tomes belonging to the Hai Shul were being secretly sold to foreign scholars or collectors, and the Kati Kao grew rich at the expense of the Hai Shul's property. When the crime was uncovered, the Kati Seng Ganelkov Chipric killed himself to salvage his honor, but since then, the Kati Kao and its fascination with money has been frowned upon by the other Ways.

Geography

Getting to Laeghdoved

The steep-sided Doved Valley runs down from the Eaglefine Mountains to the plains of the Princely Communes in the west.

The town of Kilaia is located at the bottom of the valley, halfway between Lakmashi and Sasmiyana, a week's march from Tslarra. This city is in the hands of the Ylenov family.

The Treli Skia allows an easy journey from Kilaia to Laeghdoved in two days. The road is safe and much traveled. About an hour from Laeghdoved, the viaduct of Gorshk marks the end of the Erzelski lands.

Surroundings

Laeghdoved is surrounded by steep and forbidding mountains, the White Peaks. Except by going west on the Treli Skia, into the Domain of Prince Vladej Erzelski, it is impossible to get further than one and a half leagues away from the city without an experienced guide and proper equipment.

As the weather is very harsh, the subjects of Prince Vladej tend to live close to the city. During the fairer seasons, shepherds go up the mountain pastures, using some old ruins as shelter. Trappers sometimes venture into the White Peaks, even during the heart of winter.

Laeghdoved

A traveler approaching Laeghdoved cannot fail to notice that the community is split into two distinct cities: the surrounding town of Doveda, and Laeghan, the walled city.

This duality is reflected in a political division as well. Doveda is officially under the rule of Prince Vladej, while Laeghan, inside the Govlim, answers only to the authority of the Seng Ido.

The Govlim, standing high in the center of Doveda, conceals most of the Hai Shul's buildings. But the visible tops of the highest towers, like those of the Sotiumin, are enough to reveal the contrast between beautiful and wealthy Laeghan, and shabby and grimy Doveda.

Doveda

Divided by the Doved River, a temperamental stream unsuitable for navigation, Doveda is a strange town. It is populated mainly by those who have no place inside Laeghan. Women are not the only ones who have trouble getting into Laeghan. Peasants, trappers, and even some merchants are not welcome inside the Govlim without special permission. However, all the residents of Doveda (at least the male ones) usually have the opportunity to enter Laeghan at least once or twice a year to meet an employer, to fulfill a contract for the Hai Shul, or for some other reason.

The dwellings of Doveda are mostly small wooden chalets. None of the buildings are very large or tall, as anyone attaining a status high enough to warrant such accommodations finds a way to live inside Laeghan. As a result, Doveda has an unfinished appearance.

Officially, Doveda is ruled by the Erzelski family and its militia, the Liposk. But the Seng Ido doesn't always see it this way, and there are frequent interventions by the Won Taidu (the Hai Shul police) who often venture outside the Govlim.

The Govlim

The wall of the crater, thirty or more feet high and four to six feet thick, is roughly circular. Its top was fitted by the Tigonov with a crenellated covered walkway that encircles Laeghan.

Six gates have been drilled in the Govlim, one for each branch of the Kao. The original gates were the Won Tulev to the north, the Atu Tulev to the west, the Daeli Tulev to the east, and the Kati Tulev to the south.

Two additional gates were constructed later: the Xios Tulev to the southeast, then the Qyn Tulev to the southwest.

Entrance to Laeghon is carefully regulated by the Won Taidu. The guards are painstakingly punctilious in enforcing the regulations, for they know that their first misstep will have them replaced.

Passing the Govlim is a memorable experience. It is always colder (by three to five degrees) inside the enclosure. This is one of the signs of the mark of Winter on Laeghdoved. Though its intensity varies, the influence of Winter is permanent and pervasive.

Laeghan

Laeghan is divided into large districts (called Uqis), each corresponding to a Way of the Hai Shul. Four great avenues (Tien) lead from the Govlim to the Sotuimin, in the center of Laeghan. Each starts at one of the four original gates and runs through an Uqis. The Won Tien, for instance, goes from the Won Tulev, through the Won Uqis, to the Sotiumin.

The four Jio Uqis are the most developed, with luxurious stone buildings erected by the dwarves of the Atu Kao.

The Xios Uqis to the southeast and the Qyn Uqis to the southwest are each enclosed by a strong fence to limit access between these districts and the rest of the city. (Wizards and women are unwelcome in the other Uqis.)

Access to the Sotiumin is restricted. The Palace of the Circle is a true fortress, and it is also considered a holy shrine, where the most precious secrets of the Hai Shul are kept. The Sotiumin is in the hands of the Min Taidu, the powerful administrative branch of the Hai Shul.

Each way of the Hai Shul has a main office (called a Sika) located in its Uqis. This is where most of the les-

sons take place, and where the teachers meet. The Daeli Sika, center of science, holds the most important library of the Hai Shul (the largest in all the Princely Communes). However, the rarest and most precious volumes are kept inside the Sotiumin.

Laeghon

Beneath the Sotiumin, in a deep cave, rests Laeghon. Contrary to what people think, he was not killed, but magically preserved in ice, so he can mull over his misdeeds for eternity.

Laeghon's crypt overflows with Shards. The primary emotion they bear is humility, and the secondary emotions are loyalty and patience.

Shard's value in Laeghdoved is (on average) 1 inside the Govlim, 3 inside the Sotiumin, and 7 inside Laeghon's crypt.

During the winter solstice and the following few days, these values increase by about one point. They are usually a bit lower during the summer.

The existence of the crypt is a well-kept secret, and only a few members of the Shul Kao know how to get there. They use the aura of the place to test the loyalty of their new members during the winter rites.

Organization of the Hai Shul

The Kao

The Hai Shul is divided into six Ways according to the fields of study.

The **Won Kao** covers all the warrior arts, notably the use of weapons and military strategy. As it dates back to the time of the Shul Kao, ancestral martial arts are still taught to the most gifted students (who are usually members of the Jio Min).

The **Kati Kao** is the most varied branch. The Way of Peace concerns all that helps people live in harmony, including foreign languages, politics, diplomacy and trade. There are rivalries between the Kati Kao and the Daeli Kao over which Way should handle some of these fields.

The **Daeli Kao** is the bookish study of subjects as diverse as medicine, history, mathematics and botany. It is the Way that contributed most to Laeghdoved's reputation throughout the Realms, and so it has the largest body of students.

The **Atu Kao** involves the study and practice of the arts. Except for the teaching of architecture by the Tigonov, the Way of Art is relatively under-developed, mainly

because of competition from the Widowlands' wealthy medusa. In the last few decades, it has become increasingly difficult for the Hai Shul to obtain pieces (or artists) of significance.

The **Xios Kao** is the study of magic and Dancers. This branch is under the authority of the Cipher-Sorcerer (or more precisely the Scarlet Circle).

The **Qyn Kao** is the only Way that has no clear theme. It appeared as a means for women to enter the Hai Shul. The fields taught here are not restricted to any branch of studies. This is a motley gathering of subjects, for which the only limitation is the proficiency of the female teachers.

The Taidu

Three main groups support the Ways of the Hai Shul.

The first, the **Won Taidu**, is the Hai Shul militia. It ensures Laeghdoved's security.

The second, **the Min Taidu**, is the Hai Shul administration. It is in charge of coordination with the Kao.

Lastly, **the Jio Taidu** contains all the other employees of the Hai Shul, including the Tigonov dwarves who construct and maintain the school buildings.

Officially, the Taidu are in the service of all the Kao. In practice, the Won Taidu serves as the armed fist of the Won Seng, while the Min Taidu is the Min Seng's instrument.

As for the Jio Taidu, it answers, through the Tigonov, to the Atu Kao.

The Shavem

The Hai Shul is organized around six different ranks that make up the Shavem. They do not truly encapsulate all of the intricacies of the Hai Shul's hierarchy, as there can be important variations in salary, status, responsibility and prestige inside any one Shavem. But the ranks are the most visible feature of the power structure. When addressing a superior, one is supposed to mention his or her Shavem in addition to their name. The person's Way can also be appended to the name for additional specificity.

Some examples are "Siba Karl", "Daeli Zitos Tania of Olbec", "Min Kedan Sturim", and "Wueldin Akim Elgazar". These examples don't even take into account the various honorary functions and assorted titles borne by many who enjoy being reminded of their position. The art of conversation is no easy thing inside the Hai Shul!

The lowest Shavem is the *Siba* (visitor). They are usually people staying for only a short time who are issued temporary passes. They are not allowed to attend any lessons. Some merchants (and the families of important teachers) are granted the exceptional status of *Aransiba* (permanent visitor), which never expires. The Siba have almost no rights compared to the other Shavem.

The first school-related rank is *Zitos* (student). This is the most common status in the town. It is granted for up to six months and can be renewed depending on the student's results.

This status only allows attendance of classes. It is obtained by paying a registration fee that varies according to the student's merits. An entrance examination determines the amount to pay. The less talented the student, the more he or she will have to pay for his training.

The *Kedan* (apprentices) are split into two groups: the Bokedan and the Lirkedan.

The *Bokedan* are advanced students groomed for research and teaching. They are Zitos that have completed a curriculum of three years of advanced studies in a particular Way. The status of Kedan is given to them for two years, and can be renewed. The Bokedan serve a professor, for whom they perform menial tasks (get books from the library, copy texts, etc.). They are paid a small sum and must pledge not to leave Laeghdoved without special authorization. They specialize in one field of study, and are expected to produce an innovative and promising work during their term. A jury presided by the Seng of the Way decides whether the work has merit. In this case, the Bokedan is admitted into the next rank (Sawall).

The *Lirkedan* are students in the employ of the Hai Shul. They receive tutoring, but their lives do not revolve around their studies, as they use their skills to serve their masters. Some Lirkedan are directly hired as such, without going through the three-year cycle as a Zitos. They must however prove their expertise before they are admitted.

The *Sawall* (companion) is a young professor. From this rank on up, members of the Hai Shul belong to Laeghdoved's "nobility", and consequently renounce any titles they had borne before. This is why very few Princean nobles pursue their studies beyond the rank of Kedan.

Sawalls do most of the teaching, classify the subjects, and supervise the Zitos. They are well paid, and if they are zealous and establish themselves in their Way, they can earn even higher salaries through a system of honorary bonuses and research grants.

The *Sibsawall* rank is sometimes granted for a period of six months to a year to young teachers invited to Laeghdoved. The Hai Shul likes to boast that it has worldwide specialists in every field. In exchange for an impressive salary (and/or access to rare books), the Sibsawall give high-level classes and do research with the Hai Shul teams. Some foreigners discover Laeghdoved in this way and end up settling for good.

The *Eldin* (masters) are the highest-level professors. This status is granted for life and can be revoked only by the

Seng Ido. The Eldin only teach the most advanced classes (they instruct Kedan, never Zitos) and devote themselves mostly to research.

Some foreign professors may obtain the much sought after rank of *Wueldin*. They get the advantage of the status of master but are allowed to leave Laeghdoved on a regular basis without jeopardizing their position.

The *Sengs* (elders) are the directors of each Kao. They are elected for five years by all the Eldin of their Way. The seventh Seng, the Min Seng, is truly an elder, as this title falls to the oldest brother of the Jio Min still active in the Hai Shul. Each Seng carries one vote in the Seng Ido.

The Jio Min

The Jio Min is a Way outside the Ways – a sort of lodge that has lost its mystical aspect but still carries political clout and organizes an official system of favoritism.

Those that belong to the Jio Min bear the title of Min instead of the name of their Kao. This designation is the sign of many privileges.

For example, the brothers of the Jio Min have it easier with the administration for all they undertake. Min Zitos are the only students freely allowed to attend classes taught in another Kao. Min Sawall are paid better for fewer duties.

In short, obtaining the title of Min means rising above the fray of the Kao, under the direct tutelage of the Min Taidu.

This is an invaluable privilege. Barely 1% of the members of the Hai Shul belong to the Jio Min. To become a brother one must be chosen by a Jio Min cell and invited to a number of secret meetings. If the applicant is deemed worthy, he is initiated in a traditional ceremony.

People of Note

Prince Vladej Erzelski

The Prince is a bitter man. His family once had greatness, but the betrayal of Prince Osev was the beginning of their fall. Piece by piece, the Erzelski have lost everything. Nowadays, they survive only through the good graces of the Hai Shul, which lets them manage the lands around Laeghdoved. The Prince's militia, the Liposk, is a bunch of inefficient and corrupt bullies that can't even come close to the Won Taidu.

Living in his manor full of memorabilia, Vladej cannot help but reflect on the past. He would like to find a way to regain the upper hand, but he cannot see how to go about it. He has for now sent his five children (three boys and two girls) into the Hai Shul, hoping that their studies will provide them with the means to restore the family's power.

Ho Chide

Min Seng

The Min Seng is now 83 years old and even though he still has all his mental faculties, he is not ready for things to change. He fought against the creation of the Qyn Kao and the admission of women to the Hai Shul. He has fond memories of the "good old days". For him, progress is a form of perversion, a taint. In his own way, this reactionary old man is a great opponent of the Masque. But he is trapped in an outdated system of castes and traditions that no longer reflects the reality of Laeghdoved.

The Jio Min is now only the husk of its former self, an institution devoid of meaning that has fallen into the hands of ambitious and unscrupulous men. And Ho Chide, estranged by the enthusiasm for progress of the Qyn Seng, descends deeper every day into his closed-mindedness.

Bayud Oshram

Kati Seng

A native of Keshe, Bayud Osham has an innate flair for human relations. Depending on the situation, he knows how to make himself liked or feared. He is also unscrupulous enough to have become, at the age of 34, the youngest Kati Seng in the history of the Hai Shul. The scandal that led to the demise of his predecessor did not taint his reputation, but he understood the need for caution as he saw the Hai Shul did not yet understand its awesome commercial potential.

Bayud has developed a network of influence inside the Min Taidu, and he makes arrangements to control part of Laeghdoved's trade, mainly with the Keshite Empire. Though technically not illegal, these methods are clearly questionable. Fear of discovery has so far prevented him from taking them a step further.

Patril Leo

Daeli Seng

This highly skilled dwarf is not only an outstanding erudite, but also the secret head of the Shul Kao. This covert brotherhood knows about the crypt under the city and celebrates the ancient Shul Kao teachings. Patril tries to resolve the Hai Shul's underground conflicts.

Since the last Shul Kao ceremony, he has felt a threat gnawing at Laeghdoved and has realized that the wintry presence inside the crypt is in the process of freeing itself. Despite all the documents he has gathered, he still doesn't know what he's up against. He has considered sharing the secret with another Seng to help solve the problem, but hesitates between Drek Mordant and Esvam Ideritch.

Anoch Griess

Atu Seng

This elderly satyr has found a way to sublimate his sexual drive into artistic inspiration. He insists that to stir emotions, Art itself must spring from emotion. He is an accomplished sculptor, with also a few gifts for poetry and painting. Compared to the other Sengs, he is a bit eccentric, and too fickle to wield any real influence inside the Seng Ido. But he is extremely popular among the Tigonov who, knowing the city better than anybody, give him strong support.

Anoch Griess is also a deeply wounded individual. Some artists can create enchanted opuses, but he has been denied this talent. This has led him to a strong jealousy of the Concordists, bordering on hatred.

Esvam Iderich

Xios Seng

The bastard son of a prince from one of the southern city-states, Esvam Iderich found his calling in the Cipher-sorcerer. He is a commonplace Eclipcist, but has great skill as a diplomat and was able to ingratiate himself with the Obscurantists. His role in Laeghdoved is mainly to check that the orders from his superiors in the Scarlet Circle are duly obeyed. Monopolized as it is by various ceremonial duties, the Xios Seng serves more as a figurehead than as an actual decision-maker. This is the only reason why the position is not filled by an Obscurantist.

Magic retains a very somber appearance in Laeghdoved, and young princean nobles willing to study this art are rare indeed. On the other hand, many of the next

DREK MORDANT

Race: Ogre
Age: 41
Height: 6'4" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 207 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes

Flame: 2/0

Body: 4/0
Body bonus: +4
AGIlity: 9
PERception: 5
STAmina: 8
STRength: 9

Spirit: 2/0
Spirit bonus: +2
INTeligence: 5
WILlpower: 7

Soul: 2/0
Soul bonus: +2
CHArisma: 7
CREativity: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
MEL: 9
HP: 54
SWT: 18
CWT: 27
DB: +2

Fortune points: 4
Flame powers: Iron will
Darkness: 3
Perfidy: 8

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 5, Eloquence 5, Etiquette: Military 4, Stewardship 5, Traditions: Princely Communes 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 5, Geography 4, History & legends 3, Language: Kiemenite 6, Language: Keshite 2, Language: Mercerin 4, Law 6, Season: Summer 5, Strategy 9, Surgery 5
Rogue: Hunt 6, Intrigue 3, Gambling 5, Stealth 4
Trials: Alertness 8, Athletics 5, Climb 5, Dodge 6, First Aid 7, Ride 7, Survival 6, Swim 5, Weapon: Axe 10, Weapon: Brawl 7, Weapon: Crossbow 5, Weapon: Shield 9, Weapon: Sword 4

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Office (Won Seng), Artful thrusts (Fire under the River, Great Bucklery, the Light of Honor)

Fire under the River (Reaction) [Shield, 17]
Requirements: not carrying the initiative, opponent gets a SM of -5 (or worse) against the parry
In addition to deflecting the blow, the defender uses his shield to strike, rolling an immediate shield attack at -3

The Light of Honor (Action) [Ogre axe, 21]
Requirements: carrying the initiative, get a SM of 9 or more, opponent must be armed, and must be SIZ +1 or smaller.
Despite having the initiative, the fighter waits for his opponent to be ready and launches a surprisingly strong and precise attack inside the opponent's blow. This attack does normal damage in addition to being a Disarm maneuver.

Combat
Initiative: 18, Ogre axe 19, Knight shield 15
Melee attack: Ogre axe 23, Knight shield 22
Melee defense:
Dodge: 11
Parry: Ogre axe 21, Knight shield 26
Ranged defense: 5

Typical quote:
"Wretched stranger, you contravene the rules of the Hai Shul. I have no wish to shorten your life, but you are dishonoring your ancestors. Amend yourself or prepare to die."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Ogre axe	+1	0	-2	+8 (S)	0
Knight shield	-3	0	+4	+1 (C)	0

Armor: partial chain mail (penalty -8, prot. 11)

generation's rulers use the opportunity of their stay in the Hai Shul to meet and socialize with students that are on their way to becoming full-fledged mages.

Esvam sees beyond what his superiors expect of him. He doesn't want to be merely a tool of the Scarlet Circle. He is mindful of all that happens in the Hai Shul, and seeks allies with whom he can obtain power.

Drek Mordant

Won Seng

This ogre embodies one of the Hai Shul's successes. He came as a mercenary, rose through the ranks of the Won Taidu, and finally turned to teaching.

Though he is a seasonling of Summer, he has accustomed himself to the wintry atmosphere of Laeghdoved. He is an accomplished master-at-arms who arranges his life according to strict principles. Everything in him stems from his sense of duty and integrity. He obeys the Min Seng faithfully (but not blindly).

Drek Mordant is an Inspired and he has guessed part of the Masque's nature. Confronted with Perfidy, he tries to escape from all corruption by hiding behind his code of honor.

Olgreta Savansk

Qyn Seng

This energetic Princean woman is an ardent supporter of the Women's Revolt. Entering the Seng Ido in the wake of the creation of the Way of the Woman, she embodies the forces of progress in Laeghdoved. Her persuasiveness has won her the support of a number of professors. Her acknowledged enemy is the Min Seng, flabbily settled in his memories of the past. For almost twenty years, Olgreta has made the most of her opportunities to "make things change".

Her projects are so close to her heart that she has allied with the Masque to further them. She is ready to do anything to topple the present system: embezzlement, corruption, etc. She is actively studying every weakness in the Hai Shul in order to pry it open.

For example, it was she that, after having encouraged the activity, denounced the scandal of the Kati Kao.

Aktos Sunantelos

Atu Wueldin

This young man from Buccaneer Haven is a great traveler, and also a poet of renown, with a specialty in

OLGRETA SAVANSK

Race: human
Age: 47
Height: 5'9" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 150 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/1
Body bonus: -1
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 8
STAmina: 5
STRength: 4

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTeligence: 10
WILlpower: 9

Soul: 0/1
Soul bonus: -1
CHArisma: 9
CREativity: 7

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
MEL: 5
HP: 45
SWT: 15
CWT: 22
DB: 0

Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 22

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 9, Eloquence 6, Etiquette: Merchants 4, Etiquette: Nobility 4, Fast talk 8, Stewardship 6, Trade 6, Traditions: Princely Communes 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 6, Alphabet: Keshite 3, Geography 5, History & legends 5, Language: Kiemenite 7, Language: Keshite 2, Law 2, Plant lore 5, Season: Winter 2
Rogue: Intrigue 7, Poisons 4, Stealth 4
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Dodge 7, First Aid 4, Ride 3, Weapon: Rapier 8
Occult: Concord 2, Cipher lore 2, Demonology 2

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Office (Qyu Seng), Consummate Acting, Venomous blood, Hypocrisy

Combat
Initiative: 13, Rapier 15
Melee attack: Rapier 14
Melee defense:
Dodge: 8
Parry: Rapier 13
Ranged defense: 4

Typical quote:
"This cannot be allowed to continue. The time of privilege is over, my friends. Things must change and together we shall change them for the better. That doddering old fool we must put up with as Min Seng will not be able to stop the forces of progress forever."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Rapier	+2	+2	+1	+3 (I)	0

Armor: full leather (penalty -4, prot. 6)

legends and epics. Despite his disdain for the other arts, Aktos is a very popular professor, appreciated for his simplicity, clarity and passion.

He remains a stranger to the intrigues of the Hai Shul and travels for at least six months out of the year. He has a special mandate from the school, allowing him to buy opuses during his journeys. As well as searching for lost poems, he also uses his wandering months to seek new pupils. Aktos is an Inspired and a master Concordist of Scansion. He has taken notice of the Atu Seng's dislike of Concordists, so he doesn't show off his talents.

Plots

The Qyn Kao

The present situation cannot be maintained much longer.

The Qyn Kao, to do its work well and offer complete tuition to the female students, should be as large as the five other ways put together. This is of course impossible, but a few female students have obtained exemptions allowing them to attend classes in the other Kaos.

The Qyn Seng has also found a way to work around the rules. She hires medusa professors whose knowledge is of interest to other Kaos, and then negotiates a temporary exchange between the medusa and the male teachers. This way, the students of the Qyn Kao can obtain lessons in all branches.

This deal seems to benefit everyone, as it allows the other Kao to access the medusa's knowledge without directly hiring female teachers.

But it betrays how much the system and its constraints are slowly evolving from merely imperfect to outright ludicrous. Sooner or later, the constitution will have to be rewritten, and this time everything will not be solved by the addition of a new Kao.

AKTOS SUNANTELOS

Race: human
Age: 33
Height: 5'9" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 159 lbs
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 8
PERception: 9
STAmina: 7
STRength: 6

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTeligence: 6
WILlpower: 5

Soul: 2/0
Soul bonus: +2
CHArisma: 8
CREativity: 10

Secondary attributes
AIM: 8
MEL: 7
ART: 9
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 3
Perfidy: 0

Skills:

Courtly: Diplomacy 2, Eloquence 5, Etiquette: Artists 3, Poetry 10, Trade 4, Traditions: Buccaneers 5, Traditions: Princely Communes 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 10, Alphabet: Armgardic 5, Geography 5, History & legends 8, Language: Bucaneers' Cant 8, Language: Kiemenite 8, Language: Keshite 8, Language: Urgamish 4, Language: Mercerin 3, Language: Nordik 2, Law 3, Navigation 2
Rogue: Conceal 4, Hunt 2, Intrigue 3, Search 2
Trials: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Dodge 6, First Aid 3, Ride 2, Weapon: Sword 4, Weapon: Bow 4
Occult: Concord 4, Cipher lore 2, Demonology 2, Scansion 10

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Office (Eldin), Famous, Natural linguist, Keen, Insensitive (Painting, Music, Sculpture)

Magical Arts:
Scansion APT 21

Opuses
Erosion (10), Step ahead (15), Psychometrics (15), Perceive the past (20), Time slip (25)

Combat
Initiative: 18, Sword 19, Bow 22
Melee attack: Sword 13
Ranged attack: Bow 13
Melee defense:
Dodge: 11
Parry: Sword 13
Ranged defense: 5

Typical quote:
"I must admit this ode by Deolphus cost me a fortune. But it marked a turning point in that poet's career. It is an irreplaceable opus, and well worth the perils of my secret journey to Urgamand, not to mention the amount I had to pay for it."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+4 (IS)	0
Bow	+4	0	0	+7 (I)	0

Armor: partial scale mail (Penalty -4, Prot. 7)

Fraternities

In reaction to the privileged "lodge" that has become the Jio Min of today, a smattering of secret fraternities have been created in the Hai Shul. They are gatherings of students and professors that comprise an underground network.

The mysteries are proliferating and there is a shortage of secret meeting places. The Min Seng denounces this ridiculous vogue of conspiracy, but too many people benefit from the rise of the fraternities. The Shul Kao, for example, is delighted to be able to hide behind this smokescreen, without realizing that in the end, it is the Qyn Seng, and through her the Masque, who has the most to gain from this atmosphere of never-ending conspiracies, so adaptable to Perfidy...

Laeghon

Slowly, as Perfidy is spreads through the Hai Shul, the influence of Winter is faltering. Cracks are appearing in the Govlim, and the temperature always seems a bit warmer than it used to be. Laeghon is slowly waking from his eternal sleep. The Tigonov and the Shul Kao are for now the only ones to understand this phenomenon, but they do not know what to do about it.

It is hard to predict how Laeghon would react if he were freed.

This exceptional seasonling could well become a great sponsor for Laeghdoved. Or he might give in to a desire for revenge against those who trapped him, allying himself with the Masque. In any case, it would take some time for him to reclaim his title of Winter King.

If Laeghon's presence and nature were revealed, all the seasonlings of Winter - medusae, dwarves, and black feys - would view the even as the unearthing of their lost heritage, and a chance to reclaim ancient secrets.

Using this Domain with "King of Spring"

In this setting, Melif's request and the arrival of the sprites will be a godsend for all. Every faction will try to take advantage of the situation by welcoming new members or by increasing their fame. The Merry Holt will be a forest bordering the north side of the city. It will be provided to the sprites by prince Valdej Erzelski in order to look after his lands, and to counterbalance the power of the school in the region.

Playing in Laeghdoved

Assets

Rank in the Hai Shul — varies

The character has attended some classes in the Hai Shul. In addition to the connections he or she may have made, the character earns additional creation points (that can be spent only in a skill group matching his chosen Kao).

If a character chooses the rank of Seng, the EG must decide whether the previous Seng recently died or was demoted, and consider that the character is a new arrival in the Ido Seng. Of course, the character can always be relegated to the rank of Eldin after the next election.

HAI SHUL RANK

	Cost	Additional skill points
Zitos	1	4
Kedan	2	7
Sawall	3	10
Eldin	4	12
Seng	5	15

Jio Min — 1 (2 for a female)

The character has been selected by the Jio Min. It is necessary to possess a rank in the Hai Shul in order to choose this asset.

This results in a great many advantages within the Hai Shul. For starters, the additional skill points can be spent in any combination of skill groups.

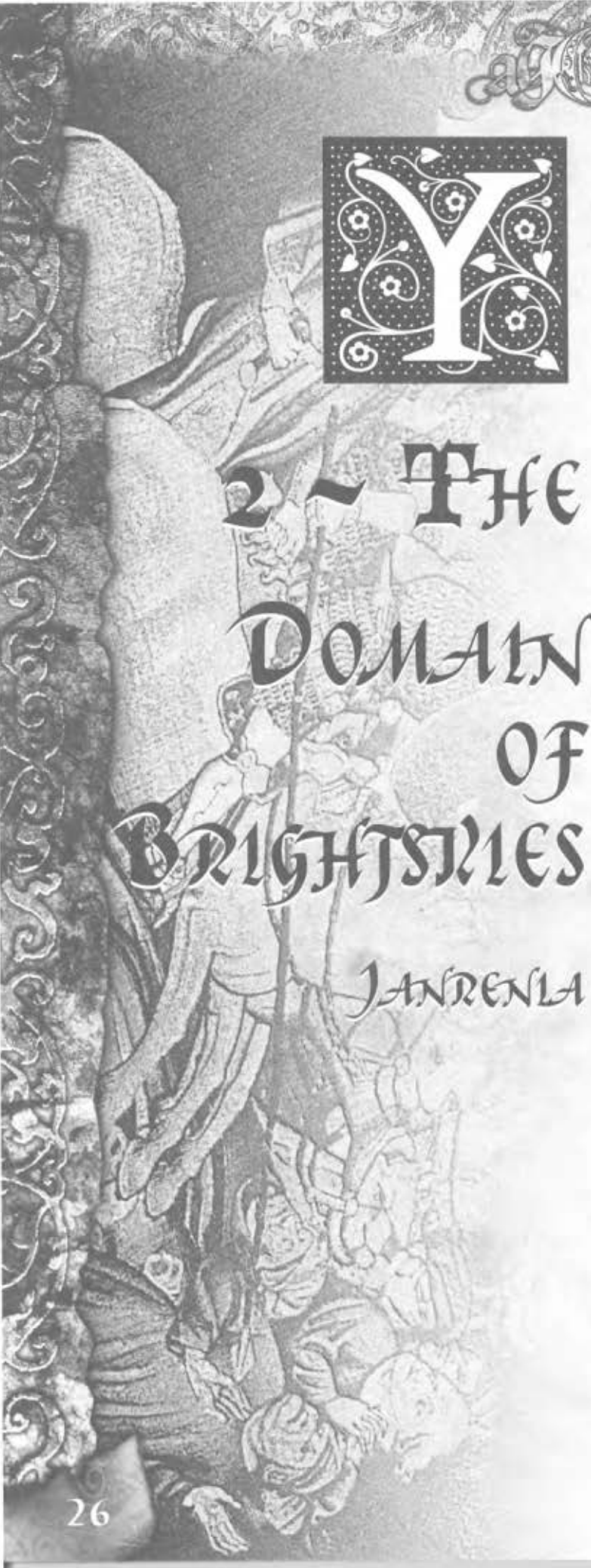
If the character has also taken the rank of Seng, he or she can become the Min Seng (but must be the eldest in the Jio Min).

Creation of the Qyn Kao — 1

One way or another, the character contributed to the modification of the constitution in 1431. He or she fought to allow women access to the teachings of the Hai Shul, and earned a progressive reputation with the fraternities. The Qyn Seng feels indebted to the character and will be willing to help him or her. The Min Seng will react the opposite way.

Kati Kao scandal — 1 or 3

The character was involved in the Kati Kao scandal of 1441. For 1 point, his connection was partly proved, and caused him many problems (if the EG deems it necessary he may have been demoted). His position in the Hai Shul is now compromised. On the plus side, he derived a benefit from it (either a huge sum of money or a priceless object - a minor relic, a precious book, or an enchanted opus). For 3 points, the character hasn't been suspected, and the only drawback is the risk of discovery later on.



2 ~ The Domain of Brightskies

Janrenla

our Majesty
Despite my profound loyalty to the crown and my deepest respect for your wisdom, I must take up my quill to inform you about a situation most troubling.
The Domain of Brightskies, which, having sent countless soldiers to its prestigious military academy, you well know, is the site of a disquieting disturbance. Lord Varl the Third seems, in the wake of his Urgamish campaign, to have abandoned his responsibilities and is completely neglecting the Domain's affairs. As per your majesty's injunction, a mayor was elected. But while not being utterly incompetent, Lady Horic seems dead-set against the academy and attempts by all means available to end its activities.
Given the increase in raids by the draaken, as well as the agitations of the anti-Lodge crowd, the closing of this academy, which ensures half the expeditions of surveillance, rescue and protection of the Domain, would be a grave loss for Brightskies.
I can but humbly request that your Majesty intervene to rectify the situation, either by sending soldiers to allow for better execution of Lady Horic's policies, or by pointing her in a direction more in accordance with the Domain's interests.
To give your Majesty a clear view of the situation, I respectfully add to this letter a brief summary of the state of the Domain.
Reverentially yours,

Marsovonus, eminence grise,
graduate of the Borrowlight School

History

Historians know little about the origins of this small Domain huddled at the foot of the Draaken Mountains. Legend has it that its first master was a great warrior by the name of Varl Paskarod, who succeeded after years of harsh fighting in pushing the Fallen back, deep inside the mountains. The king rewarded him with the authorization to create his own principality, but the hero chose only to make a simple Domain for himself, setting the boundaries by the shadows of two nearby peaks. This was the creation of Brightskies, whose name was probably chosen because, unlike many neighboring lands, the sun is visible all morning, and the shadows of the nearby mountains do not cover the land until the afternoon.

Given its past and the proximity of the draaken tribes, it is no surprise that the Domain has given birth to numerous warriors, some of whom were among the most illustrious of their generation. Eventually, the king decided to open a school for warriors, the Royal Military Academy. Despite its name, this school is not directly controlled by the crown of Janrenia. The academy has taught the most promising candidates from many of the surrounding realms.

Unfortunately, as the oldest archives of the Domain are kept by the academy, history is ignorant of the date this prestigious institution was founded. All that is known is that it was during the reign of Janren III, and Gonoldon IV was Lord of the Domain. From that time onward, Brightskies knew great prosperity. The royal patronage attracted prestigious students, who became fast friends, supporters in court, and at times defenders of the Domain.

Despite many attempts by its neighbors to seize control, this small valley remained independent, resisting its enemies against all odds. The academy's reputation grew, as did the number of students, and its influence spread far beyond the borders of the kingdom. In the year 1300, it reached the peak of its influence. It welcomed students from across the known world, and weapon-masters fought, sometimes to the death, for the privilege to teach their art inside its walls. It was known to train up to a thousand students at a time.

This period ended when Govolus the First took the crown of Janrenia. Expelled twice from the Academy (before being banned permanently following several sordid sexual affairs), the king made his displeasure felt rather heavily on Brightskies. He forbade foreign students from enlisting in the Academy, had a number of teachers ousted, and gave Brightskies the responsibility of keeping order in the surrounding mountains. Unexpectedly, this colossal and almost impossible assignment benefited the Academy. Indeed, Gonoldon VI, Lord of Brightskies, required the academy students to participate in this task. The training became harsher, but its quality improved, and the students gained valuable combat experience. There were heavy losses in the beginning, and even the teachers grew anxious, but after they established basic procedures, the draaken learned to fear these small scouting parties from the Domain.

Until the war with Urgamand, the situation remained secure. There were a few alarms, but the students always managed to overcome the troubles.

THE DOMAIN OF BRIGHTSKIES

Realm: Janrenia
Ruler: Varl the Third
Strength: 5 Inspired, 3,000 Dullen

BODY: 6/1
Army: 6
Defense: 7
Denizens: 6
Organization: 6

SPIRIT: 5/0
Finance: 5
Information: 5

SOUL: 5/1
Magical ability: 5
Diplomatic relations: 5

THE HUGE GREAT DRAAKEN

Fifty years ago, about thirty impulsive students organized a draaken hunting expedition. They headed deep into the mountains and managed to find one of their cave villages. The place was sacked and every draaken butchered. Unknowingly, this small party had precipitated the Academy's decline.

It turned out the most powerful draaken in the village had been absent when their community was slaughtered. Coming home to the smoking ruins, the collapsed grottoes, and the corpses of their friends and families, they vowed revenge. Thus, more than twenty of the fiercest draaken in the land agreed to undergo the dragon merge. Their number might easily have allowed them to become a black dragon, but, as they had no help from one of these creatures, they could only fuse into a Great Draaken (see AGONE rulebook p. 259 for details on the draaken merge). This beast immediately went hunting.

Stories describe this monstrosity as the most powerful Great Draaken ever seen. It was about one hundred and fifty feet long, with an oversized jaw that could gobble up a horseman and his mount in one gulp. These estimates are given credibility by the discovery of claw prints about three feet long in some of its favorite hunting grounds.

To this day, it continues to haunt the mountains, hunting unsuspecting academy students. The beast is credited with the disappearance of about a hundred students over the past fifty years. The situation is such that nowadays the teachers are becoming reluctant to organize expeditions.

Geography

Brightskies Fortress

This fortress stands on the lowest spurs of the Draaken Mountains, on a large mound of rock. It includes twenty-four towers, three successive forty-foot ramparts, ten barbicans, and an impressive system of double donjon. Each tower is almost two hundred feet high and allows a view of the plain that stretches hundreds of leagues. In fair weather, sentinels boast of seeing the smoke over the city of Ranne in the distance. Symbols are etched in many parts of the structures, both of the Square and of Vulborg of Ranne (the architect who designed Impregnable, the fortress which defends Janrenia's capital).

Inside the fortress are twenty-five wells, forty-two buildings, twelve trebuchets, twenty-four ballistae, and about two hundred cauldrons. The fortress' supplies of oil and lead amount to about sixty tons.

Soldiers, however, are scarce. Between the forays of the ever-bolder draaken, the desertions due to the anti-Lodge knights, and most of all the Mayor's campaign against the military, ranks are not being renewed. The younger generation avoids the fortress.

Worse, the women of the village have started to grow all kinds of creepers on the walls, and set up small gardens to decorate the bleak fortress. The ramparts have been transformed into romantic promenades, and the stoic towers into playgrounds for children. Some merchants have even petitioned the Lord Varl the Third for the right to use the towers as warehouses, offering tempting sums of money in exchange. Villagers have even asked permission to hollow out the thick walls in order to make dwellings inside them. The Lord has not authorized any of these schemes; nevertheless, the defensive capabilities of the edifice have been greatly reduced.

The Town Hall

Since the Women's Revolt reached Brightskies, this old building has become one of the meeting places for the Domain's female activists. When the king ordered that each Domain set aside a place for political debates (two words the old Lord couldn't imagine ever being associated) this old tannery was given by Varl the Third to the women after a few weeks of negotiations. Most of the Domain's women think it was a sign of his scorn to give them this building. For despite every effort, the smells of the tannery are so persistent that these politicians, especially the mayor, are nicknamed the "skunks" by their local adversaries. Adding fuel to the fire of these nascent political passions, Varl had the place renovated through a system of work duties, adding to the labors of a people already wary of the strange reforms from Ranne. Whether it was due to political shrewdness or simple blunder, the town hall is an inescapable symbol of the Domain's turmoil.

The Royal Military School

A town within the town, this fortified complex standing at the foot of Brightskies Fortress is only the shadow of what it was. Strangely, the quality of instruction has improved in recent years. The remaining professors have fewer students, and can devote more time and attention to each.

This enclave is divided into two clusters of buildings. The first half is made up of open-air stone amphitheaters, where scholarly lessons are given, rain or shine, by the teachers of strategy, military stewardship, geography, and tactics. The academy's philosophy is to have the students go through the harshest possible learning conditions (strategy courses are traditionally held in the coldest months of winter), as soldiers must learn to abide by the climate. This way, young strategists fresh from the academy are able to devise battle plans even when the ink is freezing at the ends of their quills. Between the stone semicircles are small-scale reconstructions of battlefields where students can practice their new skills.

The other half of this small village consists of jousting and combat fields, forges and armories. The best artisans come to teach how to evaluate a weapon's quality, show the latest developments in armor and siege engines, etc. The heart of this side of the academy is a small fort regularly used by the students to simulate sieges. This fort is fully functional and can serve as a last line of defense if the town is attacked.

Grond Heavy-Hammer's Workshop

Grond is both an exceptional smith and an exceptional warrior. His lessons are reputed among the wielders of the war hammer. Unfortunately, the master received a grievous wound to the leg in a battle with Liturgicals three years ago. The wound was infected in the swamps, and the surgeon was forced to amputate. Grond Heavy-Hammer retired to the academy, where he shares his comprehensive knowledge of the use of the war hammer, and fashions – "just for fun" – a variety of very high-quality weapons. His workshop, located at the entrance to the academy, is also open to outsiders.

Varl Paskarod's Tomb

Far from town, this stern stone edifice is a masterpiece of early Janrenian architecture. A simple (though more than thirty foot long) recumbent statue marks the spot where the hero is supposedly buried. Time has eroded most of the details, but it still exudes a certain majesty. The statue portrays a warrior with a great sword and a shield bearing Brightskies' coat of arms, wearing ancient metal armor and an open helmet revealing the remains of a face eroded by the weather.

There are many legends about this tomb, some of which mention that its dweller is still alive, just asleep,

GURPESS 99

and would come back if the Domain were in peril. One of the most entertaining legends asserts that a Concordist of the Shape once created the statue to hold Varl Paskarod's soul, and he would return, when the his extraordinary fighting prowess was needed. In these troubled times, there are many who claim to have seen the statue move.

Vulkum

This small, fortified town, located deep in the Draaken Mountains, is one of the most important economic centers of the Domain. It protects the iron mines that are the area's main source of wealth.

If Brightskies Fortress seems a bit stern, this village has the atmosphere of a fortified camp or a prison. Every house seems built to withstand a siege, with few openings, except for doors and arrow slits. Everything is built with massive blocks of stone, making no allowance for aesthetics. The roofs are crenellated, and streets are kept clear and barred with gates at night.

Since Varl the First pushed the Fallen deep into the mountains, Vulkum has not endured any attacks for several centuries, other than a few raids by isolated assailants that were easily neutralized. But traditions like the curfew and the upkeep a strong militia are deeply rooted. The Women's Revolt was flatly rejected, even by the local women.

Since the anti-Lodge knights have taken refuge in the Draaken Mountains, these paranoid traditions have begun to pay off. Raids have been stopped at the town wall, and the militia has had the opportunity to hang a few draaken spies that were on reconnaissance missions.

The Watchtowers on the Draaken Mountains

Regularly spaced and always in sight of Brightskies Fortress, these small towers stake out the Domain's borders. Symbols of the vigilance of the Lords who ruled them, each tower has a name and an amusing or tragic story associated with it. Each shelters a team of lookouts charged with warning the castle about trespassers. Each new Lord makes it his duty to have a new tower built when he comes into office.

One is reputed to have sheltered the trysts of a Lord with a princess from a faraway land; another is known to have witnessed the death of a Lord who jumped from its top. The sentinels can tell numerous tales about their towers, and are proud to keep their perpetual surveillance.

People of Note

Varl the Third

Varl the Third is an old and tired man. Though he is now sixty-two, he still has the immensely powerful muscles of his prime. His strong hands, crisscrossed with scars earned on Janrenia's battlefields, can break a man's neck like a twig. But his stark white hair and his weary gaze betray the broken spirit of a mortal who lives on only through habit, unable to die because even the effort required to end his days is beyond him.

Varl the Third's wife died bearing his third son (who did not survive either). Then, during the war with Urgamand, the catastrophe of Roundrock occurred. The Domain of Brightskies rallied unflinchingly behind Supreme General Amrod, a graduate of its academy. The finest knights and foot soldiers were sent to do battle, but only a handful of the 200 returned, hanging their heads in defeat. Varl's two brothers were not among the survivors, and his other sons died a few years later. Since then, the Lord has had no interest in the Domain's affairs. On rare occasions, traces of the hero he was can be discerned, but most of the time he is an apathetic man who spends his days in melancholic reveries.

Lady Horic

This tall, middle-aged lady has a face made for a plump woman – with a receding chin, a small nose, and large cheeks – perched atop a thin, emaciated and flat body that appears dangerously underfed. Despite her unprepossessing appearance, Lady Horic married a handsome knight, who later died during a skirmish with the draaken. Since then, her eyes have begun to shine with a sickly glow and she has devoted all her resources to upholding the pacifist cause. This fanatical attitude does not stem from her grief over her lost husband, but from an encounter with a Marionette of the Masque. She was approached during one of her trips to Ranne and persuaded of the righteousness of the women's movement.

She is one of the first extremists of this cause, and she had no trouble obtaining the post of mayor. She has now turned all her efforts toward removing the "soldierly rabble", as she refers those that carry weapons. Fundamentally ill-prepared to be mayor, and left alone with the difficult decisions needed to manage a Domain since Varl's defection, Lady Horic is desperately trying to cope. Unfortunately, the town hall meetings never last long enough (the smell...) and her own biases have led her to make some decisions that could have dire consequences. But she does try her best.

Master Philestas of Deadwater

Master Philestas is an old spriggan in the twilight of his life. A gifted Eclipcist, his only passions are magic and his

Dancers. He retains twenty-three Dancers, some of which have been in his company for more than forty years.

He is frail and thin, as if the years had drained his flesh away while bending his back. Only his eyes, sunk deep into a face reduced to a complex network of wrinkles, still shine with the vitality of youth. Yet his weak and raspy voice always finds attentive ears, as rumor has it that the master knows every spell ever devised. Some even whisper that he belongs to the mages' elite and knows the secrets of choreography...

Grond Heavy-Hammer

Grond is an Inspired half-ogre. He has settled in Brightskies to monitor the suspicious increase in draaken activity, but the soothing tranquility of this provincial town, and the long recovery necessitated by a terrible wound, have convinced him to take it easy for a year or two. What's more, though he doesn't realize it yet, he is not as young as he used to be.

Grond is a very brawny man, good-natured enough to be loquacious, but with a strangely hoarse, almost threatening voice. In spite of his missing leg, he has earned a widespread reputation as a womanizer.

VARL THE THIRD

Race: human
Age: 62
Height: 6'2" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 200 lbs
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGIlity: 9
PERception: 5
STAmina: 8
STRength: 10

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTeligence: 6
WILpower: 1 (7)

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHArisma: 8
CREativity: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
MEL: 9
HP: 59
SWT: 16
CWT: 29
DB: +4

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 3
Perfidy: 1

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 5, Eloquence 5, Etiquette: Janrenian nobility 7, Stewardship 6, Trade 3, Traditions: Janrenia 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 6, Astronomy 1, Geography 5, History & legends 5, Language: Janrenian 7, Language: Urgamish 2, Law 8, Strategy 7
Rogue: Hunt 4, Intrigue 5
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Dodge 6, First Aid 3, Ride 7, Weapon: Sword 8, Weapon: Shield 8, Weapon: Lance 7
Occult: Cipher lore 1

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Office (Janrenian Lord), Old

Combat
Melee attack: 14, Sword 15, Lance 19, Shield 11
Ranged attack: Sword 18, Shield 17, Lance 16
Melee defense:
Dodge: 0
Parry: Sword 18, Shield 21
Ranged defense: 0

Typical quote:

"What interest? Why? I'll think about it... One of these days..."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+6 (I/S)	0
Knight shield	-3	0	+4	+1 (C)	0
Horseman Lance	+6	0	-2	+9 (I)	+1

Armor: full plate (Penalty -14, Prot. 14)

LADY HORIC

Race: human
Age: 37
Height: 5' 10" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 101 lbs
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/1
Body bonus: -1
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 6
STAmina: 6
STRength: 5

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTeligence: 7
WILIpower: 7

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 5

Secondary attributes
AIM: 5
MEL: 5
HP: 45
SWT: 15
CWT: 22
DB: 0

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 11

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 1, Eloquence 6, Etiquette: Bourgeoisie 5, Fast talk 5, Music 3, Poetry (spe: political pamphlets) 6, Stewardship 1, Trade 1, Traditions: Brightskies 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 4, Beast lore 1, History & legends 4, Language: Urgamish 6, Law 1, Plant lore 6
Rogue: Intrigue 1

Trials: Alertness 7
Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Decay (Perfidy sorrow)

Combat
Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: -
Parry: -
Ranged defense: -

Weapon: none

Armor: none

Typical quote:
"How can you say that! You have seen what they did to our lands! They are monsters! Only a woman, with a woman's sensibility could... You're not listening to me! You really are like all men, nothing but... uch... rabble!"

MASTER PHILESTAS OF DEADWATER

Race: spriggan
Age: 71
Height: 2' 11" (SIZ -1)
Weight: 44 lbs.
MV: 2

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: + 1
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 8
STAmina: 1
STRength: 1

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: + 1
INTeligence: 10
WILIpower: 10

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: + 1
CHArisma: 7
CREativity: 8

Secondary attributes
AIM: 6
MEL: 3
ASC: 10
HP: 24
SWT: 8
CWT: 12
DB: -4

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 9
Perfidy: 9

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 3, Eloquence 6, Fast talk 5, Music 4, Trade (spe: Dancers) 7, Traditions: Janrenia 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 8, Astronomy 3, Geography (spe: Dancers) 7, History & legends (spe: Dancers) 7, Language: Janrenian 7, Season: Spring 6
Rogue: Acrobatics 8, Conceal 5, Disguise 2, Hunt (spe: Dancers) 10, Legerdemain 10, Locksmith 5, Search 3, Stealth 8
Trials: Alertness 8, Athletics 1, Climb 7, Dodge 10, First Aid 5
Occult: Concord (spe: Dancers) 10, Cipher lore 6, Dancer lore 10, Resonance 10

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Incredibly large collection of Dancers, very old

Combat
Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 15
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 7

Weapon: none (apart from his Dancers)

Armor: none

Ascendancy
ASC APT Eclipsist 27

21 Dancers, Total Stamina 145

Spells
The master really does know all the spells taught in the schools of magic, and many more he designed himself. In addition, he is a practitioner of choreography, though he doesn't want anyone to know about it – it would jeopardize his position with the order. Philestas wants only to end his days quietly in Brightskies.

Typical quote:
"Hum... Come here, you. Nice Dancer... See how every move is precise and graceful? How he creates magic so naturally? I will show you a funny spell... Hum? Where did he go? Ha! Here you are, tiny scoundrel! Look, this is very interesting... Impulse and coordination. Hmm..."

GROND HEAVY-HAMMER

Race: human
Age: 39
Height: 5' 8" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 209 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 7/1

Body: 9/1
Body bonus: +8
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 5
STAmina: 8
STRength: 9

Spirit: 7/1
Spirit bonus: +6
INTeligence: 5
WILpower: 7

Soul: 8/2
Soul bonus: +6
CHArisma: 8
CREativity: 8

Secondary attributes

AIM: 5
MEL: 7
ART: 8
HP: 54
SWT: 18
CWT: 27
DB: +2
Blackness: 1

Fortune points: 14
Flame powers: Insensibility (fire), Spitfire, Day shield, Flame prescience, Quick as fire, Immolation
Darkness: 12
Perfidy: 23

Skills:

Courtly: Craft: forge 10, Diplomacy 3, Eloquence 3, Fast talk 2, Sculpture 7, Trade (spe: weapons) 7, Traditions (from all over) 2
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 5, Alphabet: Septentrian 4, Geography 6, History & legends 5, Language: Janrenian 6, Language: Urgamish 4, Language: Kosaki 4, Language: Nordik 5, Language: Sacred tongue 3, Language: Mercerin 4, Language: Keshite 4, Medicine 3, Strategy 3, Surgery 3
Rogue: Acrobatics 4, Conceal 6, Disguise 1, Hunt 3, Intrigue 1, Gambling 3, Legerdemain 2, Locksmith 1, Poisons 2, Search 5, Stealth 7
Trials: Alertness 8, Athletics 7, Climb 6, Dodge 10, First Aid 8, Ride 7, Survival 5, Swim 4, Weapon: War hammer 10, Weapon: Shield 10, Weapon: Crossbow 8
Occult: Concord 2, Cipher lore 2, Dancer lore 1, Demonology 5, Shape 7

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows: Office: Master-at-arms, Famous, Artful thrust: musician's thrust, Artful thrust: the prickade, Dire Wisdom, Sensuousness, Missing limb, Trickster, Croaking voice, Evil readings, Grandiloquence

Combat
Initiative: 19, War hammer 19, Shield 15, Crossbow 24
Melee attack: War hammer 25, Shield 25
Ranged attack: Crossbow 22
Melee defense:
Dodge: 22
Parry: War hammer 25, Shield 29
Ranged defense: 11

Magical Arts
Shape APT 21

Opuses
Weakness (10), Alter condition (10), Remodel (10), Sharpen a blade (10), Alter state of matter (15)

Typical quote: "By the plague! This sumptuous, magnificent, extraordinary blade is an absolute wonder. It is a jewel, the flawless achievement of a quest long and hard; a ceaseless effort, fraught with dangers and overwhelming obstacles. The quest for the perfect weapon. I could never let you have it for such a scandalous, insulting price."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Warhammer	0	0	0	+7 (IC)	0
Tower shield	-4	-1	+5	+4 (C)	+1
Heavy crossbow	+5	+1	-	+12 (I)	+1
Range: 150 y.					

Armor: partial studded leather (penalty -2, prot. 5)

Intrigues

The Sleeping Lord

Varl served on Supreme General Amrod's staff during the war with Urgamand in 1415. He returned a victim of the intense magical torture and mind manipulation of the Obscurantists. Varl's mind has been damaged, and he also has developed a propensity to attract evil influences. He is currently the target of a powerful Shaper hidden in the Draaken Mountains, who is trying to make him go mad. This Damned has succeeded in having tapestries (which are actually tainted opuses) put up in the lord's chamber. These exude feelings of weariness and disgust during the Lord's sleep. Once Varl is dead, his heirs having already been slain on the battlefield, this Damned hopes that the chaos of the succession will permit him to rally the draaken and seize control of the valley.

Profaners

In the silence of the mountains, a small party is about to make a mistake that could shatter the political balance in the area. A team of professional tomb robbers has gathered to visit the grave of Varl Paskarod. The tomb is supposed to hide artifacts from the Flamboyance, including a sword with extraordinary powers.

Unfortunately, their plan means destroying the recumbent statue (see "Varl Paskarod Tomb" above). One of the main factors preventing a coordinated attack by the draaken is a legend that the statue would animate to defend the valley, becoming the downfall of the Fallen, pushing them even further into the mountain than did the living Varl Paskarod, slaughtering them without mercy and destroying all traces of draaken civilization on this side of the mountains. Most draaken villages are built on the opposite side of the mountains from Brightskies to protect them from the statue's curse.

Should the thieves destroy the hero's effigy, a draaken invasion would be inevitable, with terrible consequences for the whole region. Brightskies is a strategic center. If it falls, all the neighboring Domains are doomed.

Vulkum's Revolt

Vulkum's curt refusal to compromise with the feminist reformers indicates a rising tide of counter-revolution. The most extreme reactionaries have already joined with the anti-Lodge knights in their mountain haven. Others stayed in Vulkum, either because they didn't want to leave their families behind, or because they thought they would be more useful in the village.

This is how a small network sustaining the knights has come into existence, furnishing them with supplies and weapons. Unknowingly, the villagers also feed the draaken raiders who leave the knights alone in exchange for a handful of iron weapons and armor (more effective than what they are able to make themselves). When the people of Vulkum think they are helping to outfit an army, they are actually only supplying a few ragged men, and giving support to the draaken. For now, the secret is well kept and no one suspects the state of the so-called army of the anti-Lodge. But if the villagers learned the truth, the exiles would be promptly denounced or assassinated.

Playing in Brightskies

Assets

Took part in Roundrock battle (unique) 3

You are one of the rare survivors of the great battle of 1415. You came back and that is enough for most people to respect you. Also, this gave you valuable experience. You get a free specialization in Survival (swamp) and add one point to a Weapon skill. Your character must be at least 50 years old to take this Asset.

Pupil of the Royal Military Academy 3

You went through this prestigious school, where you learned a lot, especially about survival and the Fallen. You get a free additional point in the skills of Survival and Season: Fall.

In addition, you will always be welcome in the academy where, among other things, you can learn all the war-hammer artful thrusts and obtain weapons of superior quality.

Grond's masterpiece 3

Grond entrusted you with one of his masterpieces, a weapon of exceptional quality. One of its attributes (initiative, attack, defense, or damage) is raised by one point.

Confidante of Master Philestas 5

You know that Master Philestas is a choreographer. In fact, the old spriggan likes you enough to teach you, if you have the necessary abilities.

Female elite 1

You know Lady Horic well, and she appreciates your company. If you took the trouble to make her talk, you

USING THIS DOMAIN WITH "KING OF SPRING"

The Drama can be played in Brightskies without any changes.

would have access to many secrets about the Domain's management. In any case, you will always be welcome in Brightskies and may be invited to stay in the castle. (Not available to male characters.)

Faults

Broken in Roundrock battle (unique) 5

You came back from that battle in one piece, but the price was high. You are now a shadow of your old self and cannot stand being reminded of this horrible defeat.

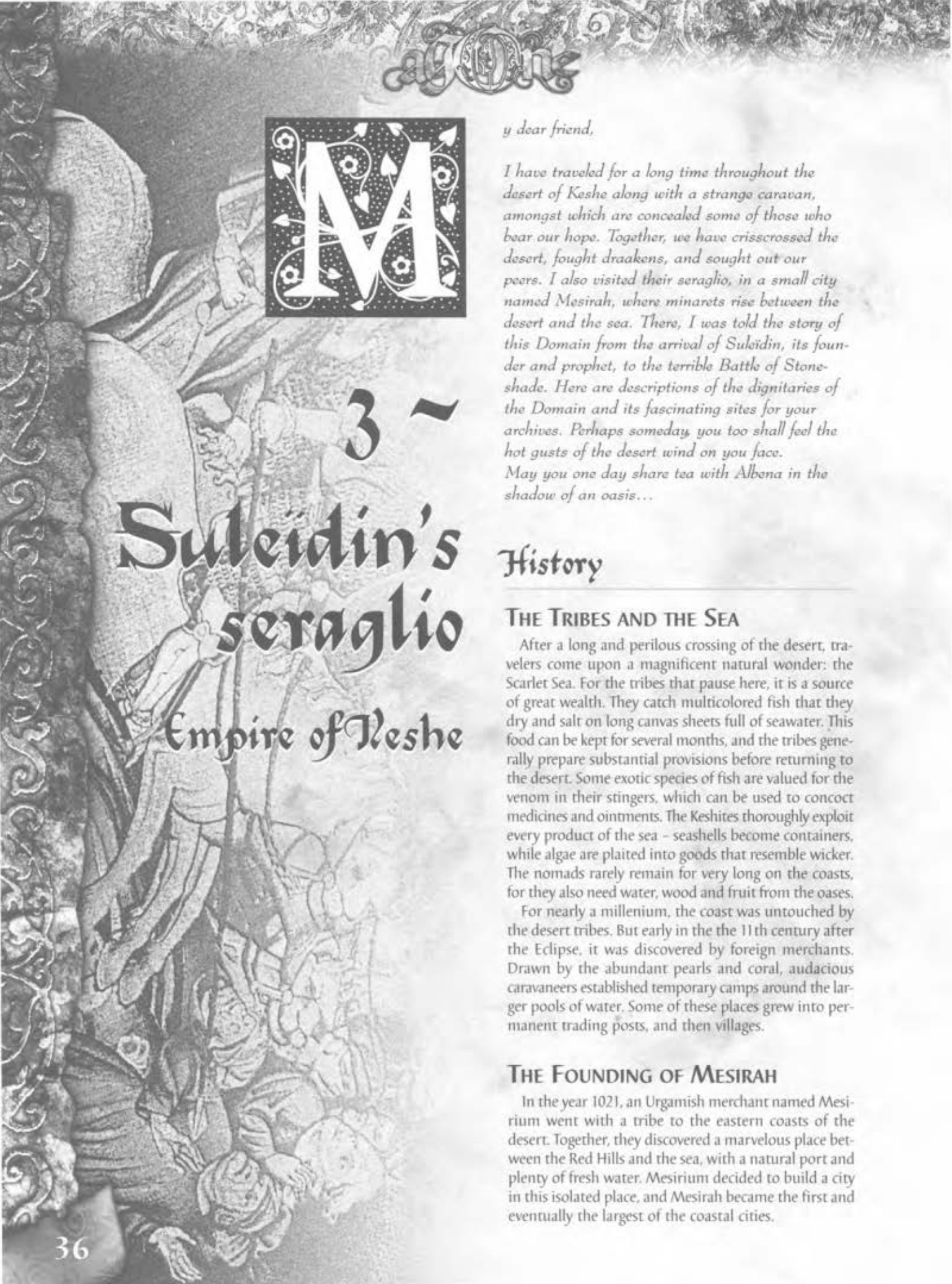
You get 10 Darkness points, which, instead of the normally associated Gifts and Sorrows, give you the Sorrow "Broken". You experience terrible flashbacks whenever someone talks about the battle. Your Dark Spirit is raised by one point. Optionally, the EG is free to choose a corresponding Gift for that Sorrow. Your character must be at least 50 years old to take this Fault.

Expelled from the Royal Military Academy 2

Your behavior was bad enough to have you expelled from the Academy. Never again will you be welcome there, and the locals scorn you. What's more, the incomplete teaching you received lowers by five the number of creation points your Inspired gets for buying skills.

Member of Vulkum's resistance network 2

You belong to the fringe element of the population that fights against the Lodge. Not only are you bound to help the anti-Lodge knights, which involves great risks, but you also have had enough contact with the draaken involved with them to gain 3 Perfidy points.



3 ~ Suleïdin's seraglio

Empire of Neshe

My dear friend,

I have traveled for a long time throughout the desert of Keshe along with a strange caravan, amongst which are concealed some of those who bear our hope. Together, we have crisscrossed the desert, fought draakens, and sought out our peers. I also visited their seraglio, in a small city named Mesirah, where minarets rise between the desert and the sea. There, I was told the story of this Domain from the arrival of Suleïdin, its founder and prophet, to the terrible Battle of Stoneshade. Here are descriptions of the dignitaries of the Domain and its fascinating sites for your archives. Perhaps someday you too shall feel the hot gusts of the desert wind on you face.
May you one day share tea with Albena in the shadow of an oasis...

History

The Tribes and the Sea

After a long and perilous crossing of the desert, travelers come upon a magnificent natural wonder: the Scarlet Sea. For the tribes that pause here, it is a source of great wealth. They catch multicolored fish that they dry and salt on long canvas sheets full of seawater. This food can be kept for several months, and the tribes generally prepare substantial provisions before returning to the desert. Some exotic species of fish are valued for the venom in their stingers, which can be used to concoct medicines and ointments. The Keshites thoroughly exploit every product of the sea – seashells become containers, while algae are plaited into goods that resemble wicker. The nomads rarely remain for very long on the coasts, for they also need water, wood and fruit from the oases.

For nearly a millenium, the coast was untouched by the desert tribes. But early in the the 11th century after the Eclipse, it was discovered by foreign merchants. Drawn by the abundant pearls and coral, audacious caravaneers established temporary camps around the larger pools of water. Some of these places grew into permanent trading posts, and then villages.

The Founding of Mesirah

In the year 1021, an Urgamish merchant named Mesirium went with a tribe to the eastern coasts of the desert. Together, they discovered a marvelous place between the Red Hills and the sea, with a natural port and plenty of fresh water. Mesirium decided to build a city in this isolated place, and Mesirah became the first and eventually the largest of the coastal cities.

On his second voyage, Mesirium came with many Urgamish dwarves of the Square, who dug wells to irrigate the dry soil and make the site fit for habitation. He also brought in a team of Keshite divers who retrieved beautiful pearls and corals from the ocean. After making his fortune, he purchased large quantities of raw materials that were transported by ship from the Modehan Marches. The buccaneers took notice of this new settlement and its wealthy trade. They sank several Modehan ships, but not enough to destroy Mesirah. Once, in 1045, they invaded, but Mesirium called upon fierce desert warriors who protected his caravans and the city. After this failure, the buccaneers decided to limit themselves to a naval blockade.

Attracted by these sunny new lands, some dwarves who had decided to stay with the merchant developed a form of architecture adapted to the desert. They built white palaces with bulbous minarets, featuring magnificent fountains and canals. Through their efforts, Mesirah was connected by aqueduct to an oasis that supplies water to its magnificent hanging gardens.

The city grew and Mesirium's dream was fulfilled. His caravans scoured the desert, trading pearl and coral jewels in Urgamand, Janrenia and the Modehan Marches. But his most important clients were without a doubt the medusae from the Widowlands.

Mesirium died in 1056. His most ambitious employees along with some newcomers established their own companies, and soon rivalries expanded into a full-fledged trade war. Mesirium's main palace and its outbuildings were badly damaged in the conflict. When the war ended, ten years later, each great family constructed a new palace (or "seraglio" in Keshite).

Business spread and Mesirah became a flourishing city, with craftsmen, taverns, a militia and numerous intrigues. Since this period, the city has been ruled by a council of the five wealthiest merchants: the "Fortunes".

Other cities were built on the same coast: Gebir, Allanah, Suafi and Harkesh. However, none of these is as grand (or as old) as Mesirah.

A Stranger

One day, in 1229, a stranger arrived in Mesirah. The Mesireans might have been curious about this man who had crossed the desert alone, surviving its myriad dangers, but the stranger was discreet and did not boast of his exploits. The Mesireans almost overlooked the gem set in his forehead, which revealed he was a mage of the Cipher-sorcerer. More than his Jornist abilities, it was his talent as a Summer Painter that enabled him to cross the desert. His name was Suleïdin, and his Flame was radiant.

He offered his services to one of the five Fortunes, Hekatum, and soon became, the second in command at Pearl Seraglio, Hekatum's flourishing trade company. All the employees were fond of the fair and generous stranger. They admired him for his talent as a caravaneer, a trader and a leader. His advice was wise and he always skillfully guided the caravans across the desert.

Suleïdin's Seraglio

Realm: Keshite Empire
Ruler: Sipsum the Sly
Strength: 14 Inspired, 200 Dullen

BODY: 3/1
Army: 5
Defense: 3
Denizens: 4
Organization: 6

SPIRIT: 6/1
Finance: 9
Intelligence: 6

SOUL: 7/2
Diplomatic relations: 7
Magic ability: 7

But Suleïdin had other concerns. He identified, and then inconspicuously hired, several Inspired from Mesirah and the desert tribes. He revealed the nature of their Flames to them and offered a shelter where they could rouse it. His first apprentices nicknamed him "the prophet". He never talked of his past life, though judging by the vividness of his Flame, it must have been extraordinary.

Upon the death of Hekatum, Suleïdin became the master of the seraglio.

His secret mission was to hire young Inspired, to protect them from the attacks of the Masque, and to give them a haven where they could improve their talents. The seraglio's regular trade activities continued and the majority of the Dullen who were employed there never suspected Suleïdin's true intentions.

The new master sent several Inspired to train at a secluded Jornist ribat (see 'The Ribats' below) in the middle of the desert, where he had lived for some time. He taught them Inspired Vista opuses, how to fight and all he knew of the Masque, the Darken, and the Lady of Fall.

Suleïdin's Seraglio

Even though Suleïdin was the master of the seraglio, he sometimes left the ogre Haktopek in charge, so that he could walk alone in the desert. One day, he did not return from one of his escapades, and the nine Inspired who lived in the seraglio at the time sought him in the desert. They returned empty-handed and held an emergency meeting. The Inspired decided to continue the prophet's work, and the Pearl Seraglio was renamed Suleïdin's Seraglio. The Inspired later discovered that their master had left two valuable posses-

sions behind: a strange mosaic and a Dancer capable of identifying Inspired.

Nearly two centuries later, Inspired, with the help a black fey, Gardeline, who was found by Suleïdin in the Widowlands, still protect these gifts. Today, Gardeline is the only one remaining from those "grand times" when the prophet guided them. She seems immune to the Call, and jealously protects Suleïdin's mosaic, the legacy of her mentor (see below).

The passing of the Dancer from one Jornist to another allowed the seraglio to continue Suleïdin's work of finding and uniting Inspired. Under the cover of trade missions, these quests led Suleïdin's heirs deep into neighboring realms. Occasionally, the missions of recruitment and protection gave way to a more aggressive stance against the creatures of the Masque.

The Battle of Stoneshade

The caravan of the seraglio began to help the Madjid tribes against the Mountaquims who were allied with the draakens. There were numerous skirmishes in the desert, and the sands were drenched with draaken and Inspired blood.

In 1441, a terrible battle took place between the two sides. The seraglio's troop was nearly decimated, and six Inspired were killed, but the Madjids won the battle. The survivors said they witnessed a hooded silhouette, mounted on a terrifying aal, emerging from a glowing halo. It was the legendary Prince of Mirages, a damned and a pawn of the Masque. This creature was engaged by the remaining forces, and Baltasim the giant succeeded in wounding it. After killing several more Inspired, the Prince vanished.

The after-effects of this battle still resonate in the history of the seraglio and of the region. It was named after Stoneshade, the huge spherical rock looming above the battlefield.

An Encounter in the Desert

The Inspired of the seraglio still hope to find some sign of Suleïdin. Several months ago, a small group of them gave an account of their encounter in the desert with a ghostly creature enveloped in a nimbus of blue light. They believed they had found a Luminary – Suleïdin's sublimated Flame. Unfortunately, Gardeline the fey was not with them, or she would have been able to identify her master...

Geography

Mesirah

Mesirah is a cosmopolitan city. Keshite is the most common language spoken there, but Ophidian, Urgamish or even Mercerin can often be heard.

Mesirah was built on a gentle slope leading down to the sea. Its center, on the top of a small hill, consists of the seraglios, built by the dwarves of the Square. The wealthiest merchants live here, and this is where the council meets. The rest of the city is a collection of small white houses, taverns, warehouses, and shops. High ramparts enclose the city. Outside, on the north and south sides, there are numerous tents set up by visiting caravans. The west side of the city features the hanging gardens, and the east side leads to the coast.

The Aqueduct and the Gardens

Mesirah is connected to a distant oasis by an aqueduct built by the dwarves of the Square. The aqueduct also supplies half of the houses with drinking water (wells supply the other half). It also provides fresh water for the hanging gardens on the west side of the city before flowing out into the sea.

The gardens consist of magnificent promenades, shaded by palm-trees, and reed bridges crossing numerous small canals. The gardens are a picturesque site for lovers on romantic walks, as well as merchants and diplomats discussing trade matters. Adjacent to the gardens, many orchards and plantations thrive.

The Encampments

Two encampments are permanently set up on the north and south sides of the city. The caravans pitch their tents here, next to huge caravanserais that provide food and lodging for travelers. Many thieves are grateful for these caravanserais because large quantities of unguarded money are plentiful. Nighttime in these camps is safe, as long as travelers stay in their tents. Indeed, it is best to not bump into a thief or a spy searching a newly arrived caravan.

The day breaks with the bellows of the onagers, which set the rhythm of the day. These animals are packed in pens alongside many desert mounts that the breeders

"The other day I snuck into Gardeline's retreat while she wasn't there. I know what you're going to say: I shouldn't have done it because they got me out of my village and offered me a new life. They revealed my true nature, so I should trust them. Listen, you do what you want, but I want to know more about all this. Yes, I know... Hey, why don't you let me finish my story? Once I entered the hideaway, I lifted the carpet. Guess what I found? A beautiful mosaic showing a rocky cirque jutting into the ground, and flying creatures resembling the legendary phoenixes. I could vaguely distinguish other creatures below. When I left the retreat through the trap door and ran up the stairs around the minaret, something really strange happened. I was on a mountain road, on the brink of a precipice. I was frightened by a bird that was diving toward me, so I ran back into Gardeline's room. I'm sure the mosaic is a Pictureworld created by our prophet Suleïdin! I'm going back there tonight. You coming?

sell to caravaneers: horses, mules, dromedaries, camels and even tame paranders. Most of the poor end up in this neighborhood as well, hoping to beg some dirhems from the merchants.

The Wall and the Barracks

Mesirah is protected by a wall, built by the dwarves on Mesirium's orders, designed to repel the Buccaneers. Today, the ramparts are equipped with modern trebuchets and ballistae, so the pirates no longer attack.

The council of the Five Fortunes requires that merchants contribute to the security of Mesirah, so the army is composed of troops drawn from the private militias of the merchants. A disorganized group of nomads, guides and watchmen, these conscripts are most at home with the caravans in the desert, but they have been chosen to serve a tour of duty in the city. They are led by professional officers, the Mardjuks.

The Bazaar

There are numerous shops throughout the labyrinthine streets of this district. The following places will be of interest to the Inspired:

• **The Djinn's Right Hand:** Old Ibn' Azar blows glass here, creating true works of art. He equipped the ramparts with three copper telescopes to watch the sea. He also sells smaller spyglasses to desert travelers.

• **Dance with Eternity:** Mudjekin, the shopkeeper, sells all sorts of potions, ointments and drugs, notably aphrodisiacs. The old satyr also sells spices, medicinal decoctions and poisons. Mudjekin creates the finest perfumes available on the Keshite coast.

• **Izelda's Weapons:** This large weapon shop is managed by Izelda, a temperamental ogress. She sells high-quality weapons forged by a team of obedient dwarves. The shop is only a sales outlet – the forge is located elsewhere in the district. This shop only offers melee weapons.

• **Fennec's Eye:** For those who swear by missile weapons, the best bows in the city can be found in this small workshop. The shopkeeper Arkum al Amraz, an old Madjid hunter, is an expert archer and his bows are unmatched – especially the short composite bows.

• **The Minaretists:** This office is always half-full of perfumed smoke, and there is a curious spriggan behind a desk, who spends his time smoking strange blends of tobacco in a water pipe. This is the only place where the minaretists can be contacted. A team of spriggans climbs the rounded minarets to hunt Dancers, who love to twirl among the spires. The Dancers are then here to be sold.

• **Al Afhrat's Pandemonium:** In his shop, overlooking the bazaar, al Afhrat sells inks and archives connivances. Since demonology is an uncommon practice in Mesirah, this advocatus diaboli manages all the connivances signed in the city, and he generally deals more with strangers than with Mesireans. He also possesses a small library of forbidden books, that he would be willing to lend to a Mesiran desiring to learn the ways of the Abyss.

Of course, there are many other shops in the bazaar. It is said that anything can be bartered in Mesirah.

The Port

Mesirah has a deep-water port, but the city doesn't use it because of the proximity of Buccaneer Haven and the threat of piracy (trading by land is customary, more profitable, and less dangerous). The coast is lined with small pontoons where barks and other small boats are moored. The barks are used by the coral and pearl divers. More solid boats are used for harpoon fishing. The local fishermen prize the whale-calves that gather near the coast for their delicious flesh and gray amber (used in perfumery).

Numerous taverns, where divers go to refresh themselves after a hard day's work, are located on the waterfront. The majority of the divers are Madjid nomads who left their tribes for obscure reasons. They are united by an incredibly strong solidarity that grows as they face the perils of the sea on daily basis. The Inspired should avoid getting into trouble with them lest they soon have an entire neighborhood up in arms.

The Seraglios

The dwarves of the Square built these small but luxurious palaces on a hill in the center of the city. They are usually covered with marble and mosaics. Paved streets lead up to the palaces, and the streets are broken up into long steps that even large mounts can ascend. Elegant fountains are interspersed between the buildings – the perfect meeting places for resident merchants to negotiate contracts with their clients.

Most seraglios are equipped with treasure rooms, usually fitted with devious booby-traps designed by the dwarves of the Square. They have minarets that look down onto the winding streets of Mesirah, enabling the merchants to monitor their employees and competitors through a few well-placed spyglasses. Certain merchants even issue their orders from their seraglio, sending commands down to their staff in the warehouse via a mechanical system of small cords on pulleys. Other methods, such as mirror codes and trained monkeys, are also used.

"Oh, yep, me friend: tha stone, 'tis full of emptiness. 'Tis tha fault of tha dwaves, ya can believ' El'Khanjar. Ya bet they didn't trust tha boss Mesirium. Hey! Pass the narghile over to me... So, tha lil' Square fellas dug loads o'tunnels that connect all the treasur' rooms. D'ya believe that? They're supposed t'have hopped it with the merchant's money at tha first threat. Cleva lil' guys! Well, not that much, 'cos they left a plan before leavin'. And d'ya know where? In the merchant council, of course! Ya know I worked there before? So? Why don't I use it? Well, 'cos my only leg ain't enough to allow me to go foolin' around in tunnels. Here's my deal: the plan for two hundred dirhems... What d'ya think?

In the center of this neighborhood, stands the Great Seraglio, a spectacular palace where the council of the Fortunes meets beneath a golden cupola, a symbol of the great power of money in Mesirah.

Suleïdin's Seraglio

The Outer Buildings

The main activity of the seraglio is the manufacture of coral and pearl goods. In order to accomplish this, the seraglio is composed of:

A warehouse on the waterfront where the rough coral is stocked. The seraglio employs many fishermen, pearl divers, and small groups of sailors who hunt coral.

A workshop in the bazaar quarter in which jewelers work. It is managed by a Dull named Mussa el' Sarkif, who supervises a dozen employees and apprentices.

A small shop in the bazaar. Only a fraction of their production is sold here; the majority of the seraglio's goods are exported. The shopkeeper, a satyr named Corallin, is a talented charmer who uses his gift on wealthy customers.

To accommodate the seraglio's caravan when it is in town, there are also many tents and a paddock in the encampment on the outskirts of the city.

The Great Seraglio

The palace is built around an interior courtyard from which huge palm-trees rise. It is composed of many rooms, including a refectory, a training room and a small library. Over fifty people live here when the caravan is in Mesirah, but only twenty when it is not.

One wing is reserved for the management of the Domain's wealth. The office of its present ruler, the spriggan Sipsum the Sly, is cluttered with poufs, carpets, cushions and curtains. The accounts of the seraglio, always carefully calculated, are hidden in this messy office. Several carpets veil a trap-door that leads to the treasure room, where a small quantity of pearls are stocked as well as a couple of coffers of dirhems. Today, the seraglio's finances are in rather good shape.

The most unusual place in the seraglio is the minaret's top floor. A long time ago, Suleïdin lived there alone. When he disappeared, his disciples discovered the mosaic he left on the floor. This room is now Gardeline's retreat, and she conceals the mosaic under a silken cloth.

Suleïdin's Caravan

Unlike most caravans, this one always changes destination. As the goods it conveys are rather light, it is very mobile, and its mission is always changing. It is generally composed of a hundred people, amongst whom there are fewer than ten Inspired. The present caravaneer is Albena, who is seconded by Helicius the mage and Baltasim the giant (see 'People of Note' for more information). As the goods they transport are priceless, all the employees must know how to fight. The staff is mainly composed of Madjid warriors who are completely devoted since the caravan helps their tribes against the Mountaquims. There are also four scouts (including three sprites), an accountant, and a cook.

The caravan regularly passes by the following sites:

Qaysaria

The caravan often halts in this city of tents that is raised once a year by the desert tribes. This is a great center of trade, and it is the best place in Keshe to talk with the nomad tribes, to negotiate agreements with others merchants... and to find and hire Inspired.

The Ribats

A ribat is a fortress built to enclose an oasis. Cipher-sorcerer academies have been established in some of these and Suleïdin's caravan often visits them. Some Inspired have chosen ribats to study or meditate, and the caravan picks them up or leaves them in their ribat as needed. The following examples describe several ribats:

The **Sirocco Ribat** is a Jornist academy located in a deep valley at the foot of the mountains. The wind blowing across the valley raises sandstorms that enclose the fortress. From the top of the watchtowers, the Jornists toss their Dancers into the wind and observe their acrobatics.

The **Mirage Court** is an Eclipsist ribat built on the ruins of a Flamboyant temple. Numerous heroes and prophets are buried beneath the sand. The mages here regularly see ghasts miming scenes from the past, reenacting their long-forgotten exploits. The ghasts are only mirages, but the mages have established this ribat to study them. Some even say that, on very hot days, one can see an ancient battle – an echo of the War of the Eternals.

The **Ribat of the Sun** is the only Obscurantist academy in the desert. The mages research the use of fire and heat for Dancer torture. Atop the minarets, small groups of students study Dancers they have attached to burning hot copper plates. In the caves of the ribat, Dancers are frequently branded or thrown into furnaces.

People of Note

Gardeline

Gardeline is an extremely old black fey. She is the only surviving apprentice of Suleïdin, and she bears the memory of the seraglio.

Gardeline lives as a recluse at the top of the minaret, from which she studies the rays of the sun that shine on her master's mosaic. When she discovered the mosaic, she became obsessed with it. Two hundred years later, she is still meditating on it. For brief periods, she sometimes disappears into the Pictureworld. When she returns, her speech is incoherent for a short time.

Even though the other Inspired respect her, they know her old age has made her go mad. However, certain apprentices still come to her to study the Art, and their patience is always rewarded because Gardeline is an expert.

Sipsum the Sly

This spriggan rules the seraglio and is one of the five Fortunes who govern the city. He only rarely travels to the desert for he prefers the busy streets of Mesirah, and he loves to listen to the latest rumors. Even though he can seem extravagant, and is a ruthless negotiator, he is a high-minded person who loathes brutality and always helps the poor.

A native of Mesirah, in his youth Sipsum was placed by his parents in the Mirage Court. Here he studied the mirages of the Flamboyance and learned many useful spells. He was noticed by the caravan and his Inspired nature was revealed. Once he returned to Mesirah, his enthusiasm for urban life helped him rise to power amidst the palace schemers.

At night, Sipsum sometimes leaves for the rooftops to hunt Dancers with the minaretists. This is how he cap-

SIPSUM THE SLY

Race: spriggan
Origin: Mesirah (Keshite Empire)
Sex: male
Age: 58
Height: 4'2" (SIZ -1)
Weight: 103 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 9
PER: 10
STA: 3
STR: 5

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 7
WIL: 4

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHA: 8
CRE: 1

Secondary attributes
AIM: 9
ART: -
ASC: 5
DB: 0
HP: 39
SWT: 13
CWT: 19

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (main gauche) 4, Climb (spe.: walls) 6, Dodge 4
Rogue: Acrobatics 4, Disguise 9, Gambling 2, Hunt (spe.: Dancers) 5, Intrigue 7, Legerdemain 5, Locksmith 5, Stealth 6
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 5, Language: Keshite 7, Law 5, Season: spring 5
Courtly: Diplomacy 5, Etiquette (merchants) 5, Fast talk 8, Stewardship 8, Trade 5, Traditions: Keshite 7
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 2, Dancer lore 4, Resonance: Eclipsist 5

Assets & faults
Master of the seraglio (5); Eidetic memory (3); Insensitive: bad taste (-1); Soft-hearted (-2)

Combat
Initiative: 20
Melee attack: main gauche 12
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 14
Parry: main gauche 15
Distance defense: 7

Ascendancy:
Eclipsist Ascendancy APT: 12

Spells:
See through a wall (10); Bolt (10); False trail (10)

Typical quote:
"My dear friend, I am certain my last offer will satisfy you. Let's say 100 dirhems per cask of rough coral... this price includes, of course, the delivery. Believe me, the journey to your caliphate is long and dangerous. Oh, please sign right here..."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Main gauche	0	0	+3	+1 (I)	-1

Armor: none

tured his own Dancer. When he has to leave Mesirah on an adventure, he is seconded by Corallin, a satyr, who is also Inspired.

Albena

Mounted on her thoroughbred, Albena leads the hundred men of Suleïdin's caravan across the desert. She has long red hair and her white skin shines under the blazing sun. Unlike the others, who are always robed and turbaned, Albena's skin is strangely resistant to the sun.

This Inspired was born as a slave in Scarletstone manor, but was fortuitously freed by the caravan. Ever since, she tends to be antagonistic toward any medusa she encounters. Albena is an expert swashbuckler and archer, and she is known to frequent Arkum al Ramaz's shop.

Two years ago, Albena and some others saw a Luminary in the desert. This experience changed her deeply, and she decided to learn magic. She became Gardeline's apprentice.

Helicius

Helicius is a lugubrious young man, generally concealed within a dark-blue cloak. His large hood hides his face as well as his Dancer. His eyes seem to perceive much more than ordinary mortals.

A native of the Urgamish forests, he was spotted when the caravan passed by his woodcutter's village. As soon as the mages in the caravan realized his empathy with Dancers, they sent him to the Sirocco Ribat to train as a Jornist. He now takes care of Suleïdin's Dancer (the one capable of seeing Flames). His role is to spot any Inspired the caravan might encounter.

Helicius is secretive and gloomy, especially since he was cornered by a draaken ambush. Leaving the ribat to recover his Dancer after it had been carried far away by the wind, he was taken prisoner. An expedition from the seraglio, supported by a Nazir clan, rescued him from the cave in which he was imprisoned. Suleïdin's Dancer had already returned to the seraglio. Helicius was mar-

ALBENA

Race: human
Origin: Scarletstone Manor (Widowlands)
Sex: female
Age: 25
Height: 5'7" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 130 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 9
PER: 6
STA: 9
STR: 6

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 6
WIL: 5

Soul: 2/0
Soul bonus: +2
CHA: 7
CRE: 6

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
ART: 6
ASC: -
DB: 0
HP: 59
MEL: 8
SWT: 19
CWT: 29

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (bow) 10, Weapon (whip) 4, Weapon (saber) 6, Alertness 6, Athletics 4, Dodge 6, Ride 8,
Survival: desert 8
Rogue: Hunt 4
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 5, Astronomy 4, Language: Keshite 6, Language: Ophidian 5, Season: summer 5
Courtly: Painting 2, Stewardship 6, Trade 5, Traditions: Keshite 6
Occult: Vista 3

Assets & faults
Master caravaneer (4), Immunity to heat (2), Luminary encounter: Soul (5), Flaring temper (especially with medusae) (-2), Phobia: snakes (-4)

Combat
Initiative: 15
Melee attack: Saber 16, Whip 16
Distance attack: bow 18
Melee defense:
Dodge: 14
Parry: Saber 16
Distance defense: 7

Opus
Extend life

Mount
A magnificent white thoroughbred horse

Typical quote: "Wake up companions! A long journey awaits. Be brave, and tonight you'll be bathing in the shade of the Kalbar oasis palm-trees. Let's go!"

Weapons	Init.	Att.Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Composite bow	+4	0 -	+8 (I)	0	90 y.
Saber	+1	+1 +1	+4 (I/S)	0	-
Short composite bow (mounted)	+4	0 -	+4 (I)	-1	90 y.
Whip	-1	+3 0	+4 (I)	0	-

Armor: partial studded leather (penalty -2, protection 5)

ked by his imprisonment, and is planning his revenge. During his detention, he met his imp and is now quietly on his way to the Abyss (see 'Intrigues' for more information).

Baltasim

Nearly thirty years ago, the caravan stopped close to a clan of wild giants and the seraglio's previous Jornist perceived the Flame of an Inspired. Baltasim, a young fair-haired giant, was mesmerized by their story, and joined them after taking leave of his family.

Suleïdin's caravan found him at the right moment. For the past few months, he had been dreaming of an abject and threatening creature waiting for him in the north of the desert. Baltasim met the creature, the Prince of Mirages, some twenty years later at the Battle of Stoneshade. This exceptional fighter led a detachment against this Damned that was manipulating the draaken and the Mountaquims. There, he fought and even wounded (thanks to a Fortune point) the Prince of Mirages, who disappeared in his cloak. The giant, one of the few survivors of the battle, swore to kill him one day...

Baltasim is almost certainly the seraglio's most experienced warrior. He trains his companions and buys their weapons at Izelda's shop. His training sessions are quite odd for he does not fight with his smaller students but only assists them with his gigantic height.

Intrigues

The Seraglio's Activities

The seraglio's most lucrative activities are the pearl and coral trade. Most people are unaware of the caravan's true purpose.

The Quest of the Inspired

The seraglio's main quest has always been, with the assistance of Suleïdin's Dancer, to find and train Inspired.

The caravan seeks them in various places, including Mesirah, amongst the Madjid and giant tribes of the desert, in every oasis and ribat, amongst the Ophidian slaves, and at the Urgamish, Janrenian and Mercerin borders.

The Dullen whisper that Albena and Sipsum are planning to tour the Twilight Realms on an expedition that would last more than a year.

The Dancer Trade

The Mesirah minaretists do not have many customers for their Dancers in the desert city because most Keshite mages are cloistered in isolated academies. The friendship between the minaretists and Sipsum has engendered an entirely new trade.

HELICIUS

Race: human
Origin: Urgamand
Sex: male
Age: 38
Height: 5'5" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 128 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 6
PER: 8
STA: 5
STR: 4

Spirit: 1/2
Spirit bonus: -1
INT: 10
WIL: 8

Soul: 1/0
CHA: 6
CRE: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
ART: -
ASC: 10
DB: 0
HP: 50
MEL: 5
SWT: 16
CWT: 25

Fortune points: 2
Darkening: 23
Perfidy: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 5, Dodge 4, First aid 6, Ride 5, Survival 6
Rogue: Search 2
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 7, Astronomy 6, Language: Keshite 10, Language: Urgamish 5, Plant lore 4
Courtly: Traditions: Keshite 10
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 7, Dancer lore 9, Demonology 4, Resonance: Jornist 10

Assets & Gifts, Faults & Sorrows
Suleïdin's inheritor (4), Good schooling: Sirocco Ribat (3), Presumptuous (-1), Obsession: revenge (-1), Imp, Invoking Circle I, Nightmares, Experienced imp (demonic language)

Combat
Helicius never fights.
Dodge: 11

Armor: none

Ascendancy:
Ascendancy APT: 25
One Dancer (Suleïdin's), total endurance: 7

Spells
Discern the Flame (15), Wholesome sustenance (10), Vigor (10), Dancer consolation (10), Truth (20), Major healing (20), Repel a Damned (20), Protective aura (25)

Note: The Dancer's capacity to spot Inspired is not a spell, and cannot be learned by mages or Dancers.

Typical quote: "That wretched fellow is one of ours? We will surely not defeat the draakens with him!"

Suleïdin's caravan secretly transports Dancers to the academies. The minaretists trust the caravan's mages to sell their Dancers and do not leave Mesirah.

Other Domains

The nomadic nature of the caravan ensures frequent contact with other Domains. (Eminence, the caravan can be a convenient way for you to tie together isolated stories in this book.). Certain Inspired only stay briefly in the seraglio before leaving for other Domains. Eyhidiaz, for example, was rescued from an Ophidian manor by Izun, a Concordist spriggan, and trained in Ascendancy in an academy in the desert.

Recently, Albena was contacted by Melfinio, the Scarletstone bastard, who is soliciting her help against the twin medusae. The young woman has accepted. (See the Drama 'Ophidian Tragedy', p. 118, for more details.)

Pawns of the Masque

The Dim Claw

The Masque holds the entire northern region of the desert under his sway. His stronghold is Dim Claw, a peak rising in the middle of the desert near the Draaken Mountains.

Dim Claw is controlled by a Damned known as the Prince of Mirages (see 'The Prince of Mirages' below). This dreaded site was, for a long time, unexplored territory. Many adventurers who attempted to enter its labyrinthine underground have disappeared. Several years ago, the Prince of Mirages discovered that the disappearances were due to a dormant dragon whose stench and unconscious magic overpowered even the bravest adventurers.

A draaken horde joined the Prince and is working on awakening the Wonder. They live in the grottos of the peak and are immune to the beast's spell.

The second group in the peak is composed of a Mountaquim tribe. They live on the slopes of the mountain and are not aware of the dragon. The Prince has pro-

BALTASIM

Race: giant
Origin: Keshite Empire
Sex: male
Age: 68
Height: 13'6" (SIZ +3)
Weight: 1371 lbs.
MOV: 8

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 2/1
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 3
PER: 5
STA: 14
STR: 17

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 5
WIL: 8

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHA: 4
CRE: 5

Secondary attributes
AIM: 4
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: +31
HP: 149
MEL: 6
SWT: 49
CWT: 74

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 11

Skills
Trials: Weapon (boulder) 5, Weapon (giant sword) 9, Weapon (giant axe) 5, Weapon (ballista) 7, Weapon (shield) 6, Alertness 3, Athletics 7, Climb 4, Dodge 4, First aid 4, Survival (spe.: desert) 8
Rogue: Hunt 5
Knowledge: Geography 5, Language: Keshite 5, Season: summer 5, Strategy 9
Courtly: Traditions: Keshite 5

Assets, Faults & Sorrows

Master-at-arms (4), Stoneshade veteran (5), Heavy sleeper (-1), Savage (-3), Blinding (Perfidy sorrow)

Combat

Initiative: 9, giant sword 12, giant axe 11, tower 5, ballista 14, boulder 11
Melee attack: giant sword 17, giant axe 12, tower, 12
Distance attack: ballista 13, boulder 11
Melee defense:
Dodge: 5
Parry: giant sword 17, giant axe 11, tower 20
Distance defense 2

Typical quote:

"Hi lil'boy! Welcome to the burning desert. Beware, for under the brightest light lurk the deepest shadows..."

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Ballista	+5	+1	-	+16 (C)	+3	290 y.
Boulder	+2	+1	-	+37 (C)	+2	50 y.
Giant axe	+2	0	-1	+43 (S)	+2	-
Giant sword	+3	+1	+1	+39 (S/I)	+2	-
Tower	-4	-1	+5	+33 (C)	+1	-

Armor: leather vest (penalty -3, protection 5)

mised them a decisive victory over the Madjids, and they often attack the tribes with the support of the draakens.

Some pixies live on the ridge of the peak and deliver the Prince's messages throughout the Twilight Realms.

A Threat from the Sea

In Mesirah, the presence of the Masque is more subtle. On the open sea, a group of morganas lives on a large promontory emerging from the water. Though the site is far from port, it is ill-reputed and fishermen avoid it. When they dare to come close, the morganas appear to them as sirens and help them find good spots for fishing. They always threaten the fishermen to keep silent about their existence or they will not provide future assistance.

USING THIS DOMAIN WITH "KING OF SPRING"

The Drama will be centered on the city of Mesirah. Melif will be somewhere in the Draaken Mountains. When the sprites take power in Act Two, the caravan of the seraglio will be immobilized in the city. The Inspired will be forced to take action, for their way of life is threatened by the sprites. Meanwhile, the Princes of Mirages will certainly not appreciate Selent's wiles – they detest each other. The Prince of Mirages might even support the Inspired against his enemy with troops or information.

THE LEGEND OF THE PRINCE OF MIRAGES

In his mountain city, an ancient caliph, whose name is now forgotten, kept a large harem. One day, his men brought him a new concubine, Denarzade. She was beautiful and the caliph immediately fell in love with her. She refused him, and he would not oblige her for her favors because he loved her so much.
He summoned an old sage who offered to make a gruesome pact with him. The caliph would be able to seduce Denarzade provided that he eat the heart of a slave. The caliph did so and went to Denarzade's bedroom. The next morning, he did not remember anything from the night before. The old sage then showed him images of that night in a mirror: he had made love to her but then she had him drink from a Philter of Oblivion. The caliph killed another slave and compelled the sage to perform his magic once again. Again, he awoke without remembering the night before. This sequence of events went on a thousand and one nights.
This is how the caliph sold his Flame to the Masque, and became the Prince of Mirages. Denarzade disappeared, but some say she was a morgana illusionist enslaved by the Masque, and today she roams the Keshite Empire in the guise of an old man...

As they seem friendly, the fishermen share the latest rumors and gossip, and the morganas pass on important information to the Prince of Mirages. Thus the morganas have wormed themselves into the minds of all the Mesireans they meet, and they are now ready to manipulate these people. No one in the seraglio is aware of this plot.

Helicius

The most dangerous threat to the seraglio's Inspired will comes from within. The seraglio has always been protected from the influence of the Masque by Suleïdin's Dancer, which is able to discern the Flame, bright or dark, of an Inspired. When someone is tempted, the others help the victim resist.

But when Helicius was imprisoned and tortured by the draakens, his mind opened to some hideous truths, and so the mage who bears the Dancer has been beguiled by the Darken. Thanks to his imp and to Al Afhrat, Helicius has been developing his knowledge of demonology. He is torn between the power of his old art and the darkening within him. One thing is certain: if Helicius noticed another Inspired developing his dark Flame, he would not warn the rest of the seraglio...

SULEÏDIN

The Luminary that the Mesiran Inspired met two years ago is their founder and prophet, Suleïdin.

Since he left for the last time, he has been wandering Harmundia, searching for answers to mystical questions. He recently returned to the desert to see what became of his inheritors.

His main quest is to preserve the ephemeral Flames of the phoenixes. The mosaic he left behind is a Pictureworld connected with other Flamboyant elder art opuses. It is possible to travel from one to another, and encounter imprisoned Prodigies. However, these Pictureworlds are dangerous. Gardeline's madness is a consequence of her travels inside the mosaic. Suleïdin wants to guide new Inspired into these ancient worlds in order for the phoenixes to tell them the secret of their Flames.

He will then ask the Inspired to build a sanctuary in a specific location in the desert, where phoenixes come on the first days of summer. The Inspired will perform a complicated ritual where the Phoenixes are sacrificed for their flames.

Suleïdin will then tell them to go to the Council of the Decans so that they can present these incredibly powerful Flames to new Inspired.

The Masque will most certainly attempt to hinder Suleïdin's plans...

These events will be detailed in *The Bestiary*, to be published in November 2001.

Inside the Seraglio

The Mesiran Inspired are often novices whose nature was revealed by Suleïdin's Dancer. Four key characters listed above are suggested, but you are free to create your own Inspired. Here are several specific assets you can use for Mesiran Inspired.

Offices

Master of the seraglio (5, unique)

You are the ruler of the seraglio. You are in charge of its finances and the budget for the various needs of the seraglio: wages, equipment, goods, mounts, etc. You decide of the quantities and of the types of the goods the seraglio buys, sells and transports. However, you have enough work to let the caravaneers take care of the trade routes.

When the finances are good (Spirit bonus higher than 5), a representative of the seraglio has a seat among the Five Fortunes of Mesirah, and your advice is weighed on all decisions taken by the council. When you leave on an adventure, your second is in charge of the seraglio.

Several people may lay claim to this Office at once, and the seraglio must vote for its master. In such a case, the character with the highest Stewardship skill should be chosen.

Suleïdin's inheritor (4, unique)

You must be a talented Jornist to obtain this Office. (Perhaps you studied in the Sirocco Ribat.) You now bear the prophet's Dancer, through which you can discern Flames and Dark Flames. Your function is to spot new Inspired and to keep an eye on the Mesiran Inspired...

Caravaneer (4, unique)

You are at the head of Suleïdin's caravan. You plan the itineraries and the encampments. You have many contacts in the numerous places you have visited, especially among Keshite tribes and in Cipher ribats.

Events

Encounter with the Luminary (5)

You were among the small group of Inspired who saw a Luminary two years ago in the desert. You are convinced it was Suleïdin, even though the other members of the seraglio are skeptical. His presence deeply marked you. You gain 1 point in Body, Spirit or Soul.

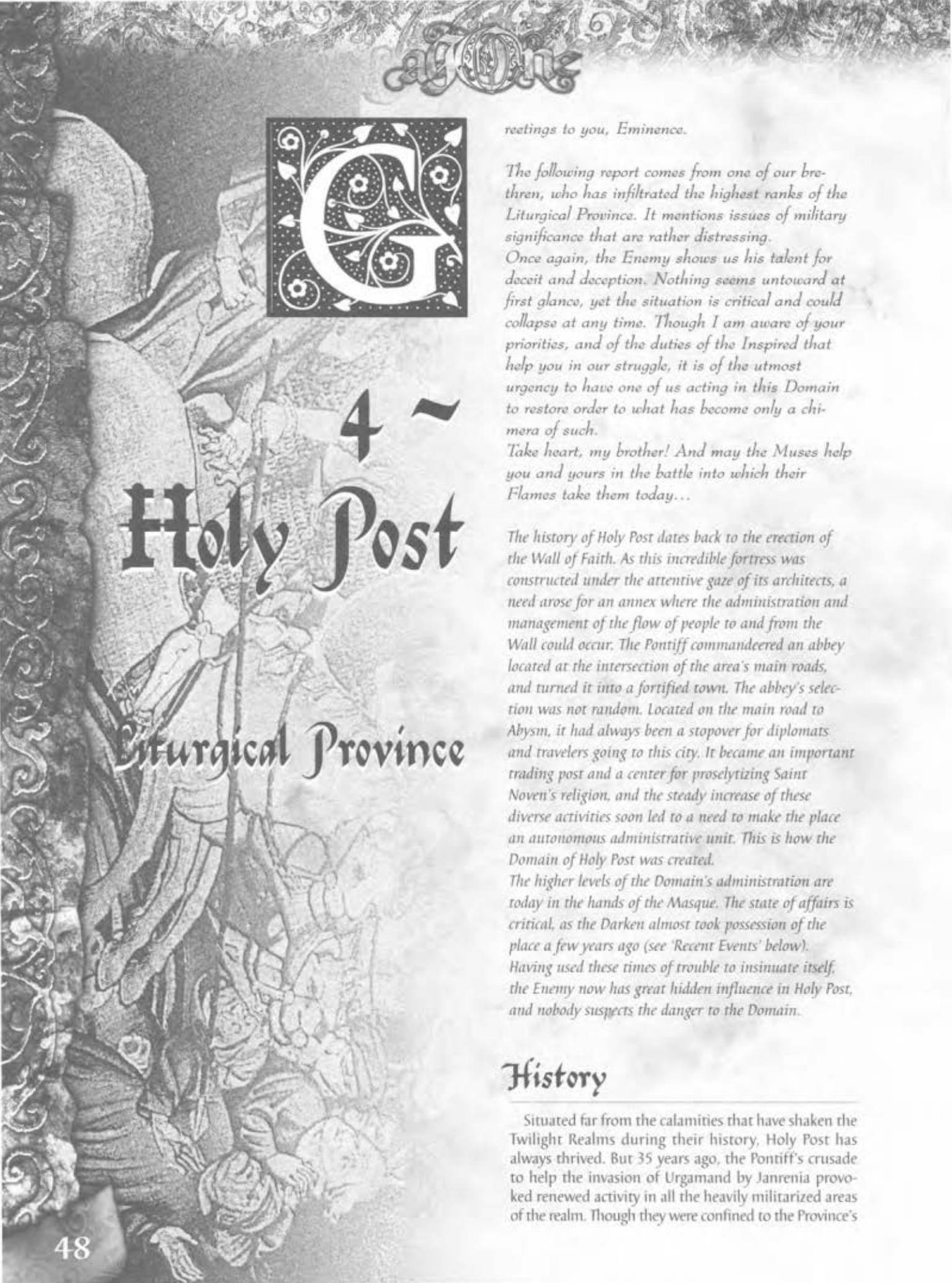
Stoneshade Veteran (5)

You are one of the few survivors of the Battle of Stoneshade. The entire seraglio admires you. You encountered the Prince of Mirages and the memory tortures you (WIL roll DIF 15 or else 1d10 Corruption with the associated Perfidy Sorrows). Nonetheless, you have learned much from the experience (5 IP to share between Trials and Aspects).

Note: *This asset is often counterbalanced with faults such as 'Missing limb', 'Phobia' or 'Lame'.*

Sojourn in the Mosaic (5)

You entered the prophet's mosaic, either secretly or with Gardeline's assent. Here you encountered a phoenix that grazed a part of your body with its wing. You gain 1 point in Spirit, Soul or Body.



4 ~ Holy Post

Liturgical Province

Greetings to you, Eminence.

The following report comes from one of our brethren, who has infiltrated the highest ranks of the Liturgical Province. It mentions issues of military significance that are rather distressing.
Once again, the Enemy shows us his talent for deceit and deception. Nothing seems untoward at first glance, yet the situation is critical and could collapse at any time. Though I am aware of your priorities, and of the duties of the Inspired that help you in our struggle, it is of the utmost urgency to have one of us acting in this Domain to restore order to what has become only a chimera of such.
Take heart, my brother! And may the Muses help you and yours in the battle into which their Flames take them today...

The history of Holy Post dates back to the erection of the Wall of Faith. As this incredible fortress was constructed under the attentive gaze of its architects, a need arose for an annex where the administration and management of the flow of people to and from the Wall could occur. The Pontiff commandeered an abbey located at the intersection of the area's main roads, and turned it into a fortified town. The abbey's selection was not random. Located on the main road to Abysm, it had always been a stopover for diplomats and travelers going to this city. It became an important trading post and a center for proselytizing Saint Noven's religion, and the steady increase of these diverse activities soon led to a need to make the place an autonomous administrative unit. This is how the Domain of Holy Post was created.
The higher levels of the Domain's administration are today in the hands of the Masque. The state of affairs is critical, as the Darken almost took possession of the place a few years ago (see 'Recent Events' below). Having used these times of trouble to insinuate itself, the Enemy now has great hidden influence in Holy Post, and nobody suspects the danger to the Domain.

History

Situated far from the calamities that have shaken the Twilight Realms during their history, Holy Post has always thrived. But 35 years ago, the Pontiff's crusade to help the invasion of Urgamand by Janrenia provoked renewed activity in all the heavily militarized areas of the realm. Though they were confined to the Province's

border, Holy Post did not escape the effects of the crusade. The crusaders' return after their defeat at the hand of Agone of Roundrock compelled the Pontiff to reorganize the military. Many commanding officers were dismissed and replaced with younger, more energetic rivals. This renewal was very beneficial to Holy Post, whose old prelate-abbot, the master of the Domain, left his office to a young vicar as ambitious as he was efficient: Corentin of Siamee. Under his leadership military administration was greatly improved, and a commercial infrastructure was built, including caravanserais and luxury inns to accommodate rich merchants on their way to Abysm.

A Tumultuous Prosperity

This optimization of the area's potential did not happen smoothly, as the young prelate-abbot began his career lacking experience. The quiet stupor that was the mark of his predecessor's rule pushed him to solidify his position by starting his reforms with a few colorful acts. With this in mind, he diverted, at great expense, the flow of an underground river to supply potable water to the town and turn its drained bed into a natural sewer system. Though this enterprise did much to sanitize Holy Post, it also turned the neighboring forest into a treacherous swamp, as the diverted river flowed unchecked through it. The Forest of Saint Matthieu, south of the town, is now a marshy and nearly impenetrable place, ruined by the unforseen side effects of this enterprise. Yet the works bore their fruits, and to this day the town enjoys running water and an effective sewer system.

As the disturbances caused by this affair were settling down at last, the most disastrous consequences of the recent invasion of Urgamand by Janrenia affected the province. Thousands of refugees who had fled the war a few years earlier were granted sanctuary in the realm (whose authorities were happy to get so many new souls to convert to Saint Noven's religion). But the crusade led by the Pontiff and its catastrophic results for the country relegated these unfortunates' problems behind more pressing matters. The excess population was heaped inside insalubrious camps throughout the Province. Within the next few years, these ramshackle shantytowns became hotbeds of famine. Revolts sporadically erupted, and the Liturgist army – in the throes of its own reforms – was hard pressed to stifle them. This situation degenerated further, when terrible epidemics spread through the camps, and from there brought plague to the whole country. As it lacked a camp, Holy Post was spared the disease. But Corentin of Siamee took it upon himself to help one camp located not too far from the Domain, in the backcountry. He skillfully seized the advantages this opportunity could bring. First, the survivors, mostly orphaned children, were raised inside the abbey. They received a strict military education that turned them into elite soldiers, many of whom became the abbot's personal guards, devoted to him body and soul. Second, the ruined camp was rebuilt and annexed to Holy Post with the Pontiff's authorization. Colossal work was done to convert the camp into a village called Woepass, whose purpose was to supply the abbey in the event of a siege. Most of the labor consisted of building an underground tunnel linking the village to the abbey. This daring project brought great honor to Holy Post, and occasioned a visit from the Pontiff himself, but it also stirred its neighbor's jealousy. Ronand of Emvernilles lost the portion of his lands where the camp used to be, and he was severely admonished by the Pontiff for failing to manage the crisis properly. Small wonder then that, five years later, he supported the vicars of Holy Post when they revolted against the prelate-abbot.

Emboldened by Emvernilles' promises, a small party of seditious vicars tried to assassinate Corentin of Siamee. He was caught completely unawares and had to retreat with his personal guard to the sewers and tunnels beneath his Domain. Having foreseen this, Ronand of Emvernilles attacked him from behind by entering the underground from the Woepass tunnel. The prelate-abbot escaped only by hiding in the farthest depths of the cavern network. His enemies held the town for a week. But as they were about to cut down Corentin's last men in the tunnels, they were betrayed by the population of Woepass, which revolted under the leadership of the local bourgeoisie. Corentin of Siamee's rule had so greatly improved the lot of the merchants and innkeepers that they led an uprising in his name and succeeded in throwing the traitors out of the Domain.

The unexpected turn of events put an end to this sad episode. Corentin's men executed most of the traitors, though a few escaped or were pardoned. The Prelate of Emvernilles returned to his Domain, where his son now rules under the devoted scrutiny of the Inquisition. Most of the bourgeoisie, who showed such faithfulness

HOLY POST

Realm: Liturgical Province
Ruler: Corentin of Siamee
Strength: 5 Inspired and 8,000 Dullen (only about half in residence)

BODY: 7/3
Army: 8
Defense: 8
Denizens: 7
Organization: 7

SPIRIT: 5/1
Finance: 8
Information: 5

SOUL: 4/6
Magical ability: 4
Diplomatic relations: 5

to the prelate-abbot, were rewarded with prizes and titles, and are now a force to be reckoned with when managing the town's civic affairs.

Recent Events

Since the vicars' revolt, six years of relative calm passed. Though they were not completely peaceful, no major troubles hindered the operations of Holy Post during this time.

The tranquility allowed the prelate-abbot to reaffirm his authority over the place. In order to do so, he set to work on the Forest of Saint Matthieu to the south of the Domain. This marshy area had a sinister reputation, and frightful stories abounded. He sent the local troops to, as he put it, "return to Matthieu the sanctity that belongs to him". The people's attention promptly shifted from the recent uprising, to focus on occurrences in the swamp. The parties that crisscrossed the forest came across an abandoned chapel dating back to the arrival of the Liturgists. As it now sheltered a small community of black feys, the place was deemed an evil den of witches. The soldiers ransacked it, slew all the black feys, and torched the buildings to let the fire purify the grounds.

This is when other seasonlings of the forest manifested themselves. A sprite by the name of Khewin and a few of his companions started harassing the travelers or the villagers who entered the forest unprotected. Today, this band of outlaws is still a thorn in Corentin's side, as they make the forest and surrounding roads more dangerous than they used to be.

Finally, less than two years ago, Evil (which means the Masque, of course) tried to invade. Using the sewers to insinuate themselves into the heart of the city, fiendish creatures wrought havoc in Holy Post so as to disorganize the military and allow their brethren from the Horns to fight their way over the Wall of Faith. Losses were heavy, but the vicious attack was repelled.

Despite these few unwelcome events, Holy Post, thanks to thirty years under Corentin of Siamee, is acknowledged as an exemplary Domain all over the Liturgical Province.

Geography

The Domain of Holy Post is roughly circular. The town built around the stronghold-abbey stands in its center. It is a short day's march (three to four leagues) to the borders on all sides. The Domain includes the woods to the south of the town, and fortified towers by every road running through the town mark the Domain's limits. Additionally, two dependencies are attached to Holy Post: the village of Woepass, located one league beyond the Domain's borders, and the Fort of the First Saints.

The Forest of Saint Matthieu, named after the crusader who converted this pagan area into a land devoted to Saint Noven, is little exploited by the Domain's denizens. Made impracticable by the swamps, it does however hold the convent of the Sisters of the Holy Threnodies, as well as a calvary dedicated to those who died protecting the Domain against the Evil from the Horns. It is also the haven of the Grass Flag, a seasonling community that strives against the Liturgist hegemony in the area. The stronghold-abbey is the center of Holy Post. The original building has often been expanded throughout its history and has evolved into a true fortress. The various inns, shops, and warehouses that were constructed around it have made a true town out of this refuge on the fringes of the civilized world.

The Town

Built on a hilltop, the buildings of Holy Post are packed close together. The underground network where the river used to flow has dried up and is today widely exploited by the town's authorities. These tunnels interconnect the entire Domain, but are not all accessible. Many are used for the sewer system that allows the citizens to remain relatively healthy despite overcrowding. Others were blocked off by thick stone walls and serve as extensions to the Abbey (dungeons, training rooms, etc.). The tunnel from Woepass opens into one of these extensions. Finally, most of the caves and tunnels, still largely unexplored, are not used by anyone and reach very deep and very far, probably well beyond the Domain's borders.

The high rampart protecting the town is a reminder to the inhabitants that they live in an unsafe land. From the outside, passing traveler can see only the massive cross of Noven crowning the Abbey's roof. Once they are past the great doors, the atmosphere in the town is surprisingly cosmopolitan. Close to the great doors are the caravanserais, similar to those found in the faraway Empire of Keshe, set up to accommodate caravans going to Abysm. Going up the main street that leads into the fortress, these enormous campsites feature a multitude of shops, inns, and taverns where all sorts of strange goods from every corner of the Twilight Realms may be found. The narrow streets of this quarter are interspersed with fountains and small plazas, and it is pleasing to stroll here in the evening. Half the population of Holy Post is made up of temporary residents (diplomats, travelers, pilgrims, etc.). The local Liturgicals, composed of the stationed military and the bourgeoisie, enforce a strict discipline. Any deviation from the proper behavior is punished by eviction, though money allows those who have it to bend many laws.

The many soldiers on leave make Holy Post a lively place.

Because of them, prostitution is tolerated (an exception in the Liturgical Province). Additionally, due to the many foreigners passing through, the town has become a showcase for Noven's religion. Priests that are masters in the art of rhetoric ceaselessly scour the streets with the sole purpose of gaining new converts. Muting some of the tenets of Noven's religion to achieve their goal is no problem for them. Every trick is arrayed to convert the unbelievers, though the essence of Liturgical philosophy is a bit lacking. Local merchants take advantage of this situation, hawking a host of holy relics (notably glass crosses) supposedly gifted with powers to repel Evil under its many guises, or to grant miraculous good fortune to their bearers.

The Stronghold-Abbey

This holy place is the administrative, religious, and military center of the town. The clergymen here live in seclusion under the tutelage of the prelate-abbot, Corentin of Siamee. The abbey is far from worldly thought, and the seclusion is only broken briefly every morning, when outsiders are granted access to the foyer for the holy rites. The rest of the complex is strictly reserved for the warrior-monks. In the internal organization, each component has access only to the places and information it needs. The prelate-abbot and his counselors are the only ones with a comprehensive overview of how the place is run. This state of affair, which is enforced for security reasons, is made possible by the compartmentalized architecture of the Abbey, full of entryways and corridors monitored by the prelate-abbot's personal guards.

In addition to its secular section, the abbey includes a military hospital that welcomes unfortunate soldiers from the Wall of Faith. The skirmishes on this sensitive front bring in an overwhelming number of wounded and, many chaplains have been traumatized by the horrors they have had to face. The rest of the building is devoted to the Domain's administration, and lodgings and training facilities for the military units stationed in Holy Post.

The Marsh-Forest and its Surroundings

It has now been almost thirty years since the river that once flowed in the underground caves started pouring out into the forest. The luxurious vegetation typical of the area's woods has slowly turned into a fecund swamp. This situation only gets worse as the years go by. The variety of animals in the forest has diminished, making room for (or fleeing from) pests and assorted vermin that carry a plethora of infectious diseases.

Unsafe for travellers, this swamp is the subject of scores of frightening legends and rumors, and is now deemed, mostly in error, to be the source of all the Domain's problems. For the majority, the forest is a cursed place. To allay paranoia, the Pontiff chose this place to build the nunnery of the Holy Threnodies. The nuns are in charge of Holy Post's hospital. But, sequestered behind the heavy walls of their convent, the sisters are up to an altogether different kind of activity...

The rest of the Domain is much more welcoming. The rolling green countryside is pleasant for travel. The roads are well-kept and designed for the passage of enormous caravans that supply Abysm year round. Still, winters can be harsh and the plains are blanketed with snow half the year. Local authorities keep the roads clear and organize hunting parties to keep famished predators away from travelers.

The Outposts

These towers stand at the Domain's border, by every road passing through Holy Post. Permanently occupied by at least six heavily armed soldiers and a few trained canores, tolls and customs duties are charged at these heavy-walled three-story edifices. Most have stables holding a few good steeds the guards can use to warn the town in case of an emergency. Should there be immediate danger, the sentinels atop the tower can drop heavy rocks to block the road.

In addition to the soldiers, the towers usually house a steward in charge of keeping a ledger of what goes in and out of the territory. Sometimes one or two Eclipsists provide additional protection, most notably on the road to Abysm, which is traversed by many shady characters who make the Liturgicals suspicious.

Khewin and the Troglodytes of the Grass Flag

This band of seasonlings is set up in the heart of the forest, inside a ninety-foot tall cliff riddled with useful grottoes. The place was formed by the draining of the

subterranean river, which used to exit the ground here in a series of waterfalls before its flow was diverted. The cliff has now been comfortably settled, and provides the sprites'crew with a safe and isolated lair, unknown to anyone else.

The fact that these grottoes are connected with the underground network has enabled the outlaws to get to know it quite well. They use the tunnels to grow deadly mushrooms to poison their weapons, and to move stealthily about the Domain.

The Nunnery of Holy Threnodies

Isolated in the depths of the Forest of Saint Matthieu, this convent is a fortified building entirely closed to the outside world. Only the nuns assigned to it can access it. Though there are a few wild rumors about the convent, the mystery it holds has not yet been discovered. The nuns are renowned by the people of Holy Post because of the hospice they maintain in the town.

The Nunnery of the Holy Threnodies actually has a serious military purpose. The Mother Superior, who founded the convent, is an Attuned. She has gathered a body of women sensitive to Scansion. Under her guidance, this group is developing a choir to perform a very peculiar kind of sacred music. The promising results obtained so far lead one to believe that in due time the Holy Threnodies will be able to grant boundless courage to the troops of the Liturgical army, and to strike fear into the hearts of their enemies on the battlefield.

The Ruins of the "Devil Chapel"

This building housed the black feys that were slaughtered by the local Inquisition a few years ago. They were locked in the cellar and burnt alive. The stone of the building, which had been given life by the black feys, also perished in the fire, and froze in strange postures that depict its suffering. The locals are terrified by the place, even though it was never used by evil powers. Isolated, discreet, and easy to defend, it would make a perfect Sanctuary for any Inspired bothering to investigate. They would have to defy local superstitions, but Sanctuaries are scarce in this area, where the forces of the Masque are more abundant than they seem.

What would become of such a stone if it were brought back to life today?

Corentin of Siamee

The Dependencies

The Fort of the First Saints

This is the administrative office of the Wall of Faith. Its workers are in charge of apportioning and coordinating the troops stationed along the wall, keeping an account of the troops going in or out, and reviewing the communications between that front and the rest of the Province. Holy Post directly supervises the office. This is also the place where explorers and adventurers, desiring to take on the Horns and unearth their treasures, can obtain an authorization to pass the wall.

The Village of Woepass

Directly linked to the town by the tunnel leading to the Abbey's cellar, Woepass is a small village typical of the Liturgical Province. It holds many huge granaries and barns containing an impressive amount of supplies. The peasants working here are in Holy Post's employ and have no ownership over what they till or herd.

People of Note

Corentin of Siamee, the Prelate-Abbot

As tall as he is lean, Corentin has an imperious gaze and a dark complexion. Constantly surrounded by four impressive bodyguards, he is domineering and charismatic. Hiding deep inside the caverns during the Vicar's revolt he became an agent of the Masque when he succumbed to the charms of the morgana, Analan. He has since been working discreetly for his new master, for example by organizing the invasion of evil creatures two years ago. Only his personal guards know of his sinister allegiance, and they assist him in his corrupt crusade.

Some of his chamberlains wonder about his nocturnal activities and the huge amounts of money that go missing from the abbey's accounts. But none have dared to investigate their suspicions.

Analan, the Dark Lover

A native of the Horns, Analan is a very busy creature of the Masque. This morgana lived in the subterranean grottoes long before the river changed its course. When the prelate-abbot fled the Vicars' revolt, she seduced him. Afterwards, as events shifted in her love slave's favor, she helped him set up the threat that now looms over Holy Post.

A creature of unsurpassable beauty, Analan never leaves the deepest reaches of the underground riverbed. She is as self-centered as she is beautiful, and believes only the Masque himself deserves to be her lover. She hopes to attract his attention by using Corentin to take control of the Domain. She is a very unstable and cruel creature. Her madness stems from the fact that she has never left the subterranean depths, and has been marked by Perfidy for countless years.

Khewin, Leader of the Grass Flag

This charismatic and revengeful sprite is full of himself. He is the kind of person who systematically confronts anything that resists him. He has sworn to avenge the

CORENTIN OF SIAMEE

Race: human
Age: 51
Height: 6'4" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 163 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/1
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 7
STAmina: 6
STRength: 6

Spirit: 0/8
Spirit bonus: +8
INTelligence: 10
WILIpower: 8

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHArisma: 9
CREativity: 7

Secondary attributes
AIM: 6
MEL: 5
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 3
Perfidy: 74

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 8, Eloquence 6, Etiquette: Liturgist nobility 8, Fast-talk 4, Stewardship 9, Traditions: Liturgical province 6
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 9, Cult: Saint Noven's religion 8, Geography 5, History & legends (spe: the Horns) 5, Language: Sacred tongue 8, Law 8, Strategy 9
Rogue: Intrigue (spe: corruption) 6
Trials: Dodge 5, Ride 6, Weapon: Sword 8, Weapon: Shield 8, Weapon: Rapier 7
Occult: Cipher lore 2, Demonology 4

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Famous (1), Lord (5), Doggedness (Perfidy gift), Dark secret (2), Cruelty (Perfidy sorrow), Lewdness (Perfidy sorrow), Venomous blood (Perfidy sorrow), Spiteful (Perfidy sorrow), Grandiloquence (Perfidy sorrow), Hypocrisy (Perfidy sorrow), Evil readings (Perfidy sorrow), Heart of stone (Perfidy sorrow), Bragging (Perfidy sorrow)

Combat
Initiative: 13, Sword 14, Shield 10, Rapier 15
Melee attack: Sword 15, Shield 14, Rapier 16
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 11
Parry: Sword 15, Shield 18, Rapier 15
Ranged defense: 5

Typical quote:
"Know that I am Holy Post. I shall never allow outsiders to meddle in matters that I deem personal."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+4 (S/I)	0
Knight shield	-3	0	+4	+1 (C)	0
Rapier	+2	+2	+1	+3 (I)	0

Armor: none

generation of seasonlings who were persecuted by the Liturgy. He suspects the dark designs of Corentin and is realizing he needs the help of other Inspired to tackle such an adversary. He is as hardheaded as he is short-tempered, but is nonetheless a skilled warrior. He may be an obstacle for anyone desiring to fight the Masque in the area who does not join his band and submit to his authority.

Still, he can be a good ally to have. The seasonlings he leads know enough about the area, its organization, and its denizens, to stand a chance against the prelate-abbot.

Other Residents of Holy Post

Octrase, seller of religious memorabilia

This converted Keshite is more or less crazy. Dressed in rags, he lives as a vagrant, wandering at length in the forest before coming back to town to rest. Known and respected by the natives, he has become an integral part of the local folklore. He peddles religious paraphernalia such as crosses and statuettes of Saint Noven. According to him, all these objects are incredibly precious and imbued with prodigious virtues. This has as of yet not been verified...

Aldebert, local innkeeper

Grinning under a thick moustache, Aldebert is the owner of an establishment prized by diplomats and other wealthy travelers. This former vicar is serious and rigorous in managing his inn, and the quality offered remains as high as the prices asked for. His wife and three sons help him keep "The Gates of Abysm" with an iron hand. His glorious military record as a defender of the Wall ensures a steady patronage of soldiers, who come to listen to his stories until late into the night.

Aldebert enjoys his work and performs his trade with a discipline drilled into him during years of service in the Pontiff's army. He is honest, welcoming, and friendly. But as he puts his honor as a patriot before all, he is sometimes hostile to travelers, refusing food and lodging to seasonlings or other dubious characters.

ALDEBERT

Race: human
Age: 49
Height: 5'9" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 212 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 5
STAmina: 7
STRength: 8

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 6
WILlpower: 5

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 2

Secondary attributes

AIM: 4
MEL: 6
HP: 48
SWT: 16
CWT: 24
DB: +1

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 0

Skills:

Courtly: Craft: Cooking 4, Etiquette 5, Stewardship 3, Trade 3, Traditions: Liturgical province 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 3, Cult: Saint Noven 3, Geography 3, History & legends 5, Law 2
Rogue: Gambling 5
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Dodge 6, First Aid 3, Ride 7, Weapon: Sword 8, Weapon: Shield 8, Weapon: Horseman lance 7

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows: -

Combat

Initiative: 9, Sword 10
Melee attack: Sword 14
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 9
Parry: Sword 14
Ranged defense: 4

Typical quote:

"Welcome, traveler. Come have a seat by the fire. The monsters in your service can spend the night in the stables out back... Your companions!? Good sir, I pray you, do not jest."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+5 (S/I)	0

Armor: leather, vest only (penalty -1, prot. 2)

ANALAN

Race: morgana
Age: 31
Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 115 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/2

Body: 0/2
Body bonus: +2
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 7
STAmina: 5
STRength: 5

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 6
WILpower: 8

Soul: 0/3
Soul bonus: +3
CHArisma: 13
CREativity: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 6
MEL: 5
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 58

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 6, Eloquence 9, Etiquette 5, Fast talk 8
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 2, Cult 2, Geography 3, Season: Fall 5, Strategy 3
Rogue: Conceal 4, Disguise 5, Intrigue 10, Poisons 6, Stealth 4
Trials: Alertness 7, Athletics 2, Dodge 7, Survival 4
Occult: Demonology 4

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Cruelty, Deformity (2 pairs of breasts), Venomous blood, Heart of stone, Hypocrisy (all Perfidy sorrows)

Combat
Her beauty is by far her best weapon.

Armor: none

KHEWIN

Race: sprite
Age: 54
Height: 4'3" (SIZ -1)
Weight: 73 lbs.
MV: 2

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 9
PERception: 7
STAmina: 5
STRength: 3

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTelligence: 8
WILpower: 8

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 5

Secondary attributes
AIM: 8
MEL: 7
HP: 41
SWT: 13
CWT: 20
DB: -1

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 4

Skills:
Courtly: Eloquence 5, Stewardship6, Traditions: Liturgical province 5
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 3, Astronomy 5, Geography 7, History & legends 2, Law 3, Plant lore (spe: mushrooms) 5, Season: Spring 5, Strategy 7
Rogue: Hunt 6, Stealth (spe: marsh) 5
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Dodge 6, First Aid 3, Ride 7, Weapon: Dagger 8, Weapon: Shield 8, Weapon: Sprite bow 9
Occult: Cipher lore 1, Demonology 3

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Famous (1), Ill-repute (1)

Combat
Initiative: 17, Dagger 17, Buckler 14, Sprite bow 21
Melee attack: Dagger 18, Buckler 16
Ranged attack: Sprite bow 17
Melee defense:
Dodge: 15
Parry: Dagger 16, Buckler 19
Ranged defense: 7

Typical quote:
"I will have no rest as long as I live, that's for sure. It will take more than a lifetime to do justice by the Children of the Seasons in the realm of Noven."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	0 (I)	-1
Buckler	-3	0	+3	-1 (C)	-1
Sprite bow	+4	0	-	+2 (I)	-2

Armor: leather, vest only (penalty -1, prot. 2)

OCTRASE

Race: human
Age: 64
Height: 5'3" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 128 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 6
STAmina: 5
STRength: 5

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 6
WILpower: 5

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 5
MEL: 4
HP: 44
SWT: 14
CWT: 22
DB: 0

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 7
Perfidy: 9

Skills:
Courtly: Eloquence 7, Fast talk 7, Trade 5, Traditions: Keshite 5

Knowledge: Cult: Saint Noven 3, Geography 4, History & legends 5, Language: Keshite 8
Trials: Alertness 3, First Aid 5, Survival (spe: cities) 5, Weapon: Sling 4

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows: -

Combat
In any fight, Octrase will flee if possible, or shout his prayers while waiting to be killed.

Typical quote:
"Woe and disgrace, stranger! The demons have their eyes set on you. That is why Noven put me on your path. Come, let me see if I have a relic to save your soul."

Intrigues

The Rot Sets In

With every passing day, Corentin of Siamee's love for Analan corrupts Holy Post a little further. Choosing his victims well, the prelate-abbot is slowly preparing to put the inhabitants of the Domain under the Masque's influence. His converts operate with a zealous belief in their imperviousness. This growing group gathers after dark in the sewers, where impious rituals are performed under Corentin's leadership. These allow him to cement his control and fanaticize these lost souls. The Eclipsists from his personal guard help turn these ceremonies into spectacular affairs.

The corrupted prelate-abbot also knows the deeper tunnels and used them, with the help of an advocatus diaboli from Abysm he had won over, as passages for the demons that attacked the town two years ago. The purpose behind this first assault was to test the potential of the forces he could bring to bear upon the town. The simultaneous attack from the Horns was only a diversion. The next attack will be much more severe, as he intends to array an entire army to seize the town from below.

Knowing he can strike a decisive blow against the Masque's enemies, he is committing everything to this project, and might even reveal his true nature if need be.

Khewin

Miserable, famished, and bitter, Khewin's gang is hostile to the Liturgy, most specifically to the town of Holy Post. While trying to undermine the town, they picked up on the trail of the prelate-abbot. From then on, their activities have quickly evolved, under the guidance of their leader's Flame.

The seasonlings of the Grass Flag know the town is menaced by an almost palpable threat, but they are ignorant of the Enemy's nature. They regularly investigate the town at night to find out what is happening. They cannot figure out how the creatures of the Masque invaded the Domain two years ago, since the subterranean tunnels do not reach the Horns. They have yet to discover the chambers occupied by Corentin's army of darkness, and those where he gathers his unholy worshippers.

Mushrooms of the Grass Flag

The years spent in the swamped forest have allowed the seasonlings to cultivate a rare and deadly variety of luminescent mushrooms. They use them to prepare a decoction for their weapons, which prevents a victims blood from coagulating. This glowing reddish paste covering their blades makes them very intimidating and gives them a strong advantage when confronting Liturgist soldiers during night raids.

When applied on an open wound, the mushroom paste causes a burning sensation and an additional point of damage. Healing a wound caused by a weapon coated with this substance takes twice as long as a normal wound.

The Nuns' Mass Grave

The Holy Threnodies' research in Tune unfortunately requires quite a number of sacrifices, as the wild power of their techniques can have devastating consequences on the minds of their recipients. This is why the nuns secretly turned some of the patients of the hospice into guinea pigs for their experiments. The bodies of their unlucky victims are dumped into a mass grave not far from the convent, after decapitation and the removal of any distinctive features have made identification impossible.

These morally questionable practices have been granted the Pontiff's blessing, as he sets great store by the success of the Holy Threnodies' work. Hence the prelate-abbot has been directly ordered to dispose swiftly of anyone who might discover the dark side of this research.

Playing in the Holy Post

Assets

Hero of the Wall of Faith 2

A brilliant action during one of the assaults on the Wall from the Horns earned you many honors. If you are still at the same position, it is with a superior rank. In Holy Post, you are listened to and respected by most citizens.

Orphaned survivor of Woepass 3

You are respected in the Domain. The strict military education you received in the stronghold-abbey turned you into an elite soldier, and the cost to purchase weapon skills is lowered by one point during character creation. You come and go as you please in many sectors of the fortress and know a lot of the residents, including some high-ranking stewards.

Participant in the black fey slaughter 1

This experience gave you some knowledge of the Forest of Saint Matthieu and its tortuous paths. You have the specialization Marshes in your Survival skill.

Member of Khewin's gang 2 (known member) or 4 (secret accomplice)

Whether or not you had any choice in the matter, you are involved in the forest seasonlings' revolt. Either a full-fledged member of their community or a sympathizer infiltrated in the town, you can count on the support of the children of the Seasons in times of trouble (and vice versa).

Supporter of Siamee against Emvernilles 3

Since the revolt of the vicars, you have been put in charge of part of the town's management. Your influence can be over any sector you want except for anything connected to the military. This Office gives you great status in the city, and you benefit from a good network of relations and substantial revenues.

Faults

Resident foreigner 1

As you are not a follower of Saint Noven's religion, and you have troubles fitting into local society. You are systematically kept at bay from the social life of the city's permanent residents. Though you are not excluded outright, people see you as a bloodsucking exploiter.

Felonious Vicar 5

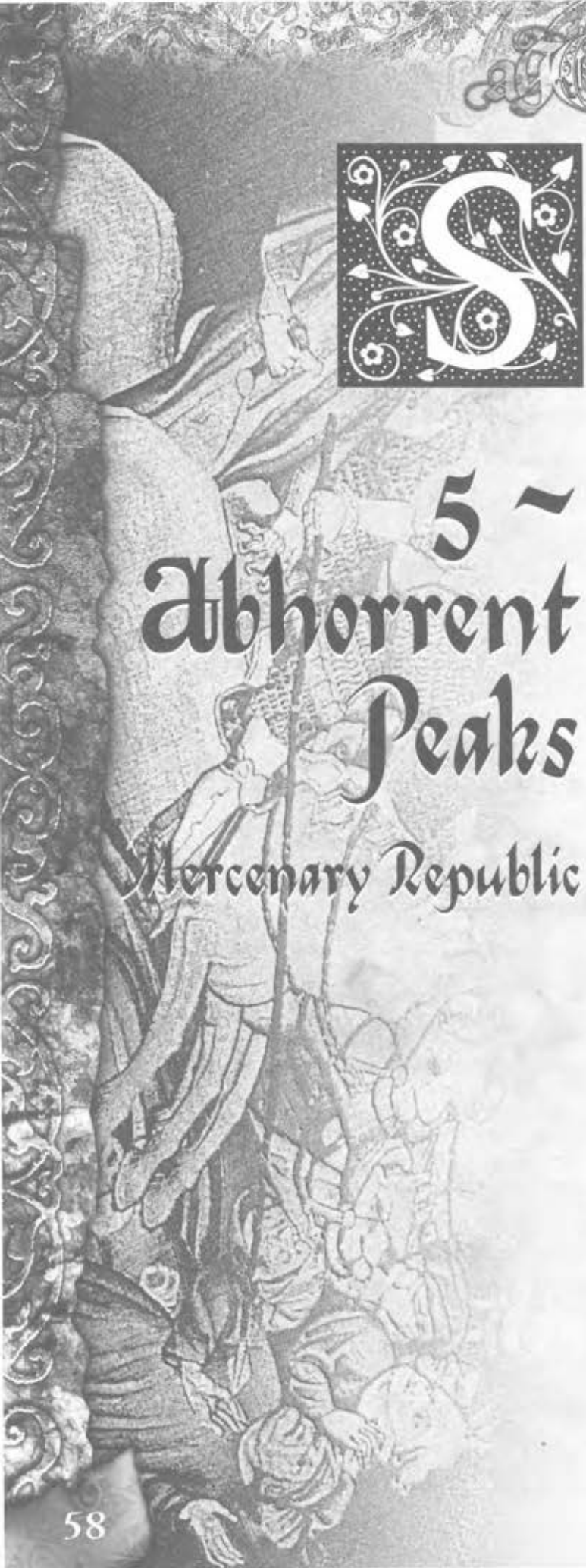
You lost faith in Siamee a few years ago. Since you haven't fled, that means the prelate-abbot has forgiven you, but most of Holy Post's inhabitants hate you, and you will never be truly safe here.

Wall of Faith veteran 2

The scars you inherited from fighting the horrors from the Horns have put a stop to your career. If you are still in the army, your wounds (-1 to AGI) or your mental trauma (+3 to Perfidy) prevent you from ever again being reinstated in any risky position (choose one or the other penalty).

USING THIS DOMAIN WITH "KING OF SPRING"

Culturally very close to Urgamand, Holy Post is easy to adapt. The Merry Holt will become a clearing in the Forest of Saint Matthieu, a couple of miles from the nunnery of Holy Threnodies. Their knowledge of Scansion and Tune will enable them to survive the attack of the sprites without having to leave the convent. One of them may even help the Inspired, if they get into trouble in the forest.



5 ~ Abhorrent Peaks

Mercenary Republic

ire,

I cannot stress enough the need to employ the Free Blades. They are a loyal and efficient unit, and their experience in the struggle against the demons has endowed them with many aptitudes that you would not find elsewhere. Moreover, the men have always had good contacts within the Cipher-sorcerer.

Ever since the death of their leader, the Free Blades have returned to their base in the peaks. We will probably have to designate a new leader for the troop.

The village of Abhorrent, with its superstitious inhabitants and its absolute calm, is not the ideal site for a troop of mercenaries. After already several months of idleness, I very much doubt that the Free Blades will consent to remain much longer with no contract.

Yours in the secret glory of the eminences,
Daldric Great-Sword

History

Leonard Algriess

In 1106, shortly after the foundation of the Mercenary Republic, a great warrior named Leonard Algriess took control of Abhorrent Peaks, a deep valley halfway between Orkhane and Darkdream. The region fascinated this mercenary with its strange charm and serenity. Leonard built a castellany next to a village perched on the back of a recumbent Rankchard (see AGONE rulebook, p. 50). He then married a young maiden of the region and took on the title of Lord of Abhorrent Peaks.

He had a single son, who succeeded him. The dynasty of the Abhorrents was founded.

From then on, each Lord of Abhorrent Peaks would marry a girl from the village and have a single son.

While the Lords of Abhorrent sought adventure and performed many feats that honored their line, the Ladies of Abhorrent stayed in the stronghold to raise the heirs.

The Free Blades

In 1213, George of Abhorrent disappeared for over a year in the Draaken Mountains. Upon his return, he had completely changed. He was the first Inspired of the Abhorrent line, and therefore aspired to be more than a mere Lord. He founded a troop of mercenaries, the Free Blades, composed of both men and women. Citizens of the republic and foreigners alike were chosen for their courage and loyalty.

The Free Blades became a powerful weapon for the Abhorrents. Thus, the lord could be involved in several intrigues at once, accept mercenary contracts and glorify his name.

The Afarvale Conspiracy

In 1320, the Free Blades were contracted by a group of invokers, the Afarvale Conspiracy, whose purpose was to take over Darkdream by controlling the manatees that keep the city afloat. Luke of Abhorrent, who had been informed of the situation by an eminence grise, found a way to betray his employers without breaking his contract. In so doing, Luke fell into the good graces of the Cipher-sorcerer order, but also became hated by invokers. Since then, the Free Blades have focused on the struggle against the demons. The Cipher-sorcerer has always supported them as much as possible, by providing a mage or a Censor when needed.

Siegr

Siegr of Abhorrent was the first Lord to break with the tradition of his ancestors. After a long stay in Urgamand, he returned to Abhorrent Peaks with a spouse, Lady Jeanne. She bore four children, two of whom died in their early childhood. Thus at his death, Siegr had two heirs – Michael, the elder, and Julie, the younger.

In 1438, a demonic raid on Abhorrent Peaks resulted in the death of Lady Jeanne. Siegr was grief-stricken. He wrapped himself in silence, and refused to leave the fortress from that time on.

At 24, Michael became the head of the Free Blades.

Recent Events

Eleven years later, during a mission in the Modehan marches, Michael was disemboweled by a mad alcheron. He had no wife, and no heir.

The Free Blades have now returned to Abhorrent Peaks. They have been recuperating and awaiting a new leader for the last three months.

Geography

The Valley

Surrounded by hills, the Abhorrent valley is divided by a river teeming with fish, the Ceruleate, and also by a road that connects Redmoon to the Modehan Marches. On the north bank of the Ceruleate, a Rankchard lying on his abdomen forms a hill, the sides of which are covered with vineyards.

The valley benefits from a mild climate, extremely rare in the Mercenary Republic. The fauna and flora are abundant and diversified.

ABHORRENT

Realm: Mercenary Republic
Ruler: Republic, Siegr of Abhorrent is officially "mayor" of Abhorrent Peaks.
Strength: 4 Inspired and 1,200 Dullen.

BODY: 5/2
Army: 5 (with the Blades)/3 (without them)
Defense: 5
Denizens: 5
Organization: 3

SPIRIT: 4/0
Finance: 5
Information: 4

SOUL: 3/0
Magical ability: 5
Diplomatic relations: 3

The Village

The village of Abhorrent Peaks was built on the back of the Rankchard. The village existed before the arrival of Leonard Algriess and the construction of the castle. On the main square, which is crossed by the main road, there is a well, a tavern and a general store (owned by an old couple of wealthy spriggans who were exiled from Redmoon).

In addition to the usual provisions, the village produces an excellent wine, abhorrence, its most precious commodity.

Officially, the Lord of Abhorrent is the "elected" mayor of the village. In reality, a secret pact has bound the inhabitants to the family of Abhorrent for centuries.

Traditionally, the Lady of Abhorrent is the Great Druidess, keeper of a pagan cult to which all in the Domain are devoted. She is the guardian of the Cornutus, an ancient artifact that is the driving force behind the story of the Abhorrent family. A druidess can only bear one male child who will survive until he reaches adulthood. She must choose a woman from among the villagers who will succeed her, and marry the next Lord.

The Cult of Nature is secretive. Only the inhabitants of the village are aware of the existence of the druidess and of the Cornutus. The villagers are simply reputed to have strange traditions. For example, they celebrate each solstice and equinox with festivals. They pin a different object on their door for each season: a piece of leather in spring, a flower in summer, a dead leaf in fall and a feather in winter. Passing foreigners usually consider these traditions groundless superstitions.

The Stronghold

On the east side of the village, between the Rankchard's shoulder blades, stands the stronghold of Abhorrent. It is a simple edifice consisting of an enceinte, an inner courtyard with a well, a main building, two outlying buildings and three towers. Usually, only the Abhorrent family and several servants live in the fortress. But it also houses the Free Blades when they are in the Domain. In the event of a conflict, all the villagers could find shelter in the stronghold; the problem would then be feeding everyone.

People of Note

Siegr of Abhorrent

The seventy-year-old Lord of Abhorrent is completely senile. He was the first to break the tradition of the Abhorrent family, and he paid dearly for it. His beloved is dead and his only surviving child is threatened. He lost his mind trying to save his wife from the demons. He has moments of lucidity during which he attempts to stand against Orchiel, but these are rare. He now awaits his death. His only reason to hold onto life is his daughter Julie, whom he dearly loves; occasionally, he believes she is his wife Jeanne. Officially, the Free Blades belong to him, and will become the property of his heir at his death. As Siegr refuses to leave the stronghold, he is supposed to designate someone to lead the mercenaries. Most of the time, he doesn't even seem to be aware of Michael's death, and the need to keep the Free Blades enthusiastic and ready to fight escapes him completely.

Orchiel

Officially, this old woman is the fortress housekeeper who keeps an eye on the servants of the Abhorrent family. In fact, because of her status as druidess, she rules over all the villagers. She should have married Siegr, but as he had already met a spouse during his wanderings, she indulged herself by seducing him one night and obtaining a child from him. In her desire for revenge against him, she turned to the Darkness. Ten years ago, she established contact with the current leadership of the Afarvale Conspiracy. Her dark intrigues conflict with her devotion to the Cult of Nature; as her mind is also affected by the Cornutus, she is afflicted by nervous breakdowns. This is why she only rarely performs invocation, and always in secret. She caused the death of the two infants, of Lady Jeanne (with the help of the conspirators) and of Michael (more or less directly). Instead of spending her time finding a villager worthy of becoming the new druidess, Orchiel, racked with vengefulness since Julie's return, is plotting to kill her.

The Cornutus

This object resembles a leather ball the size of a fist (quite like a withered heart) from which two small, sharp wooden horns emerge.

The Cornutus throbs when it comes in contact with any living being; moreover, it will immediately absorb any drop of blood that touches it.

Initially, it was a minor relic of the Flamboyance. It was later enchanted into a powerful artifact by a very potent Concordist who was enamored with one of the first druidesses. This double enchantment makes it unique.

The powers of the Cornutus can only be triggered by its keeper, the druidess, through rituals devoted to the Cult of Nature.

Aras

Aras is the son of Siegr and Orchiel, and heir of the Abhorrent line. But publicly, his father is Grandon, a villager who died ten years ago. Orchiel has neglected him, though she convinced herself that she is carrying out her reprisals for his sake.

Aras is completely unaware of his true origin and of his mother's demonic scheming. He considers her, as the druidess, Nature's vessel. He knows that she sometimes has fitful sleeps, but he thinks that these are caused by flashbacks to a demon attack twelve years ago. He stays up with her during her nightmares and sleepwalking fits.

In spite of his respect for his mother, Aras is eager to leave Abhorrent Peaks. He wishes to join the Free Blades,

ORCHIEL

Race: human
Age: 56
Height: 5'4" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 128 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/2
Body bonus: -2
AGI: 6
PER: 6
STA: 5
STR: 4

Spirit: 0/2
Spirit bonus: -2
INT: 6
WIL: 9

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHA: 6
CRE: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 5
DB: +0
HP: 46
SWT: 15
CWT: 23
Blackness: 4

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 42
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Knowledge: Alphabet (Mercerin) 2, Astronomy 2, Beast lore 4, Cult (the Cult of Nature; spe.: ceremonies) 10, Geography 3, History & legends 5, Language (Mercerin) 7, Language (Keshite) 3, Law 2, Medicine 4, Plant lore 6, Surgery 4
Trials: Weapon (cane) 4, Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Dodge 6, First aid 8
Courtly: Diplomacy 3, Eloquence 6, Etiquette (peasants) 5, Fast talk (spe.: pretend to be harmless) 7, Stewardship 5, Trade 2, Traditions (Mercerin) 5
Rogue: Conceal 2, Hunt 4, Intrigue 3, Poisons 5, Stealth 3
Occult: Concord 5, Demonology 6

Assets, Gifts
Experienced imp, Circle I & II Invoking, Office (druidess)

Faults, Sorrows
Mischievous demon, Nightmares, Sleepwalking, Trickster

Combat
Initiative: 14
Melee attack: cane 14
Distance attack: -
Melee defense: -
Dodge: 14
Parry: cane 12
Distance defense: 7

Blackness: 4
Invocation APTitude: 10

Typical quote:

"The Lord is not able to welcome you, for he is ill, but please follow me to the guest rooms. Call for me if ever you need anything. I will do my best to assist you."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam	SIZ
Cane	0	+1	+1	+2 (C)	0

Armor: none

Gorozss the Imp

AGI: 5 CHA: 1 CRE: 1 INT: 2 PER: 4 SIZ: -2 STA: 3 STR: 2 WIL: 2
Empathic link
Alertness 5, Stealth 5

THE CORNUTUS

Shard value: 2; Emotions: calmness/compassion & generosity.

Major powers
(effective throughout the Domain that is under the influence of the Cornutus)
Life: Nature is fertile as long as the rituals of blessing (of the earth, of the crops, etc.) are followed each season. Thanks to this power, Abhorrent Peaks enjoys a mild climate, the soil is fertile (even on the Rankchard), and game is abundant.
Peace: The denizens are peaceful and avoid conflicts. They must succeed in a WIL x 2 roll against DIF 12 in order to undertake an action that could harm someone who has not provoked them.
Secret: No one can reveal a secret the druidess wishes kept without making a WIL x 2 against DIF 15. This prohibition only concerns secrets the druidess knows of: the existence of the Cult of Nature, the Cornutus, her connection with demonists, the secret of Aras' birth, etc.
Protection: All the inhabitants of the Domain are more resistant because of their bond with nature. They gain an additional +2 armor and a +3 bonus to all their resistance rolls (magic, poison, disease, ageing, etc.).

Individual powers
Health: the druidess is never ill. The first time she makes love, she will conceive a boy and then becomes sterile. The child is also protected by this power until he comes of age.
Concord: The druidess' bond with nature is so strong that she is extremely resistant to magic. The results of her resistance rolls are doubled. The magical effect and duration of any spell or opus cast on her are divided by two.
Empathy: By shedding her blood on the Cornutus, the druidess can deduce the state of mind and the emotions of an individual. She must possess an object that belongs to the given person.
Compassion: By shedding someone else's blood on the Cornutus, the druidess can transfer to herself the effects of a spell (or opus) that affects that person.

ARAS

Race: human
Age: 26
Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 180 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 8
PER: 6
STA: 7
STR: 9

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 8
WIL: 5

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHA: 5
CRE: 8

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
DB: +2
HP: 52
MEL: 8
SWT: 17
CWT: 26

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 2
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Knowledge: Alphabet (Mercerin) 4, Cult (the Cult of Nature) 5, History & legends 2, Language (Mercerin) 5, Language (Keshite) 2, Plant lore 3
Trials: Weapon: mace (spe.: riposte) 7, Weapon: shield 7, Weapon: bow (spe.: night combat) 10, Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Climb 7, Craftsmanship: carpentry 3, Dodge (spe.: thrown weapons) 7, First aid 3, Ride 2, Sculpture 2, Survival 4, Swim 3
Courtly: Etiquette: peasants 3, Fast-talk 5, Trade 2, Traditions: Mercerin 5
Rogue: Conceal 2, Hunt 2, Legerdemain 3, Search 2, Stealth 5

Assets
Disciple of the Cult of Nature, Young, Descendant of Siegr, Lightning reflexes

Faults
Obsession (the health of the druidess), Soft spot (a knife that belonged to his father, Grandon), Neglectful master (for sculpture)

Combat
Initiative: 18, mace 18, shield 15, bow 22
Melee attack: mace 17, shield 16
Distance attack: bow 18
Dodge: 14
Parry: mace 15, shield 20

Typical quote:
"Soon, I will leave Abhorrent Peaks with the Free Blades in search of heroic deeds. My name will shine with glory in the songs of the troubadours."

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Bow	+4	0	0	+7 (I)	0	75 y.
Mace	0	+1	-1	+6 (C)	0	-
Shield	-3	0	+4	+3 (C)		-

Armor: studded leather, partial (penalty -2, prot. 5)

JULIE OF ABHORRENT

Race: human
Age: 24
Height: 5'8" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 143 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 9
PER: 7
STR: 6
STA: 6

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 6
WIL: 11

Soul: 1/1
Soul bonus: 0
CHA: 7
CRE: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 8
DB: +0
HP: 49
MEL: 8
SWT: 16
CWT: 24

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 1
Perfidy: 3

Skills:
Knowledge: Alphabet (Mercerin) 7, Alphabet (Keshite) 4, Geography 6, History & legends 5, Language (Mercerin) 7, Language (Kiemenite) 5, Language (Keshite) 4, Law 3, Strategy 2, Surgery 2
Trials: Weapon: rapier (spe.: thrust) 9, Weapon: bow 5, Alertness 4, Athletics 4, Dodge (spe.: swords) 9, First aid 4, Ride 5, Swim 3
Courtly: Eloquence 4, Etiquette: nobility 4, Fast-talk 5, Music: singing 5, Music: harp 5, Poetry 3, Trade 5, Traditions (Mercerin) 5, Traditions (Princean) 3
Rogue: Acrobatics 4, Gambling 2, Hunt 2, Intrigue 3, Stealth 2
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 2, Concord 2

Assets
Young, Known family, Attractive, Self-assured

Fault
Tempted

Combat
Initiative: 17, rapier 18, bow, 21
Melee attack: rapier 20
Distance attack: bow 14
Dodge: 18
Parry: rapier 19
Distance defense: 9

Typical quote:
"Nay, nay, I know what I want, and I shall not change my mind. I'm the one who gives the orders here. Those who don't agree are free to leave!"

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Bow	+4	0	0	+7 (I)	0	75 y.
Rapier	+1	+2	+1	+2 (I)	0	-

Armor: partial leather (penalty -1, prot. 3)

whom he considers his only prospect to experience true adventures.

Julie of Abhorrent

Siegr's daughter is endowed with her mother's breathtaking attractiveness and with her father's iron will. She is intelligent but often gives way to her emotions.

She is an Inspired, and she managed to be sent to Laeghdoved where she improved her fencing skills. There, she felt the sway of the Masque. She would have succumbed if her brother had not called for her.

Rimaldo Flassali

This young Jornist censor was Michael of Abhorrent's lover. This is why he wished to be assigned to the Free Blades by the Cipher-sorcerer. Now, in honor of Michael, he wants to take the reins of the mercenary troop. Not only has he all the necessary qualifications, but also the support of the group.

Pendor Chiaroscuro

Son of the two spriggans who own the general store, he is one of the rare Free Blades native to Abhorrent Peaks. At a young age, he left the Domain to learn from a master of Vista, with whom he eventually had a falling out. Seeking adventure, Pendor joined the Free Blades.

RIMALDO FLASSALI

Race: human
Age: 36
Height: 5'11" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 145 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 2/0

Body: 2/0
Body bonus: +2
AGI: 5
PER: 7
STA: 5
STR: 5

Spirit: 3/1
Spirit bonus: +2
INT: 10
WIL: 9

Soul: 2/0
Soul bonus: +2
CHA: 6
CRE: 6

Secondary attributes
AIM: 6
ART: 6
ASC: 10
DB: +0
HP: 48
MEL: 5
SWT: 16
CWT: 24

Blackness: 1
Fortune points: 4
Flame powers: Day shield
Darkening: 18
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Knowledge: Alphabet (Mercerin) 7, Alphabet (Keshite) 5, Astronomy 2, Geography 5, History & legends 3, Language (Mercerin) 7, Language (Keshite) 5, Language (Modehan) 3, Language (Urgamish) 2, Law (spe.: magic) 8, Medicine 3, Strategy 5, Surgery 2
Trials: Weapon: sword 6, Weapon: bow 5, Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Dodge 4, First aid 7, Ride 5
Courtly: Diplomacy 3, Eloquence 5, Etiquette: mages 5, Etiquette: mercenaries 5, Poetry 3, Trade 3, Traditions: Mercerin 5, Traditions: Urgamish 5
Rogue: Hunt 2, Stealth 4
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer (spe.: Ciphered laws) 8, Concord 7, Dancer lore (spe.: Dancer behavior) 9, Demonology 4, Resonance (jornist) 9, Scansion 3

Assets, Gifts
Censor, Natural linguist, Invoking Circle I

Faults, Sorrows
Lost love, Flaring temper, Trickster

Combat
Initiative: 14, sword 15, bow 18
Melee attack: sword 14
Distance attack: bow 13
Dodge: 5 (11)
Parry: sword 14
Distance defense: 2 (5)

Magical Arts:
Scansion APT: 11
Opuses:
Fast healing (15), Prophecy (15), Step ahead (15)

Ascendancy:
Ascendancy APT: 21
One Dancer: total endurance 5
Spells: Branding a Dancer (15), Impression of truth (10), Magic shield (15), Zone of silence (15), Invisible arm (15), Truth (20), Major healing (20), Clairvoyance (20), Protective aura (25)

Typical quote:

"Oh sure it is! A basic diversion is always effective. That reminds me of the day where Michael and I escorted the Countess of Riovanna..." (sighs nostalgically) "But, let's get back to our business. I will take care of the diversion if you can discreetly lead your men to this point..."

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Bow	+4	0	0	+7 (I)	0	75 y.
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+4 (I/S)	0	-

Armor: partial banded mail (penalty -6, prot. 9)

Pendor is a disciple of the Cult of Nature. He has guessed that Aras is Siegr's son, but he respects Orchiel enough to keep it a secret. However, he is worried because Orchiel is growing old, and hasn't yet named her successor.

Pendor's role within the Free Blades is to provide stealth and information. He is an essential member of the mercenary troop.

Okleef Dir' Salem

This Keshite warrior is a typical member of the Free Blades. He served under Michael's command, and he now serves Rimaldo's.

He loathes demonists and all those who work for them. He has already witnessed many deaths in the Free Blades caused by demon attacks. Therefore, he intensely appreciates his duty when it includes demon hunting.

If a chief other than Rimaldo were chosen, killing demons would be his only reason to remain with the Free Blades.

Intrigues

The Abhorrent family

The agreement between the druidesses and the Abhorrent family has been broken and no one can tell how the situation is going to develop. Who will rule Abhorrent Peaks after Siegr's death? Orchiel will do all she can to promote Aras as the next "mayor" of the Domain. But she would prefer that no one knew that Siegr was Aras' father (though most villagers already suspect this). Moreover, she would rather have the Free Blades dissolved, and the Abhorrent line terminated, so the villagers could fall under the control of the Cult of Nature.

PENDOR CHIAROSCURO

Race: spriggan
Age: 47
Height: 3'7" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 103 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 12
PER: 8
STA: 5
STR: 3

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 7
WIL: 4

Soul: 2/0
Soul bonus: +2
CHA: 9
CRE: 7

Secondary attributes
AIM: 10
ART: 8
ASC: -
DB: -1

HP: 42
MEL: 9
SWT: 14
CWT: 21

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 9
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Knowledge: Alphabet (Mercerin) 7, Alphabet (Keshite) 5, Cult: the Cult of Nature 5, Geography 2, History & legends 2, Language: Kiemenite 6, Language: Keshite 6, Law 3, Season: spring 5, Strategy 4
Trials: Weapon: glaive 5, Weapon: crossbow 6, Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Climb 6, Dodge 6, First aid 3, Ride 2
Courtly: Diplomacy 2, Eloquence 1, Etiquette: mercenaries 3, Fast-talk (spe.: to bluff) 9, Painting 5, Trade 4, Traditions: Mercerin 5, Traditions: Modehan 3, Traditions: Urgamish 3
Rogue: Conceal 2, Gambling 5, Hunt 5, Intrigue (spe.: rumors) 8, Legerdemain 5, Locksmith 6, Poison 5, Stealth (spe.: urban) 8
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 2, Concord 4, Demonology 3, Vista 5

Assets
Blackmail, Bourgeois, Disciple of the Cult of Nature

Fault
Hostile master, Tainted opus

Combat
Initiative: 21, short sword 21, crossbow 26
Melee attack: short sword 16
Distance attack: crossbow 17
Dodge: 19
Parry: short sword 15
Distance defense: 9

Magical Arts:
Vista APT: 15
Opuses: Fertility (10), Cure a wound (15), Blinding light (10), Toxin (15), Ice missile (15)

Typical quote:
"Yes, I know you all want a good fight. But listen to me for one moment. I've got an idea that could help us: if we ambushed them here and here, we could..."

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Short sword	0	+1	0	+3 (I/S)	-1	-
Crossbow	+5	0	0	+4 (I)	-1	35 y.

Armor: none

The Free Blades

Who will be the next leader of the Free Blades?

Julie has legitimate rights, but there are two small problems: she is young and she is a woman. Rimaldo has the necessary experience and the respect of the troop, but his connections with the Cipher-sorcerer and his lack of relation to the Abhorrent family do not grant him legitimacy. He is actually more suited to be second in command.

If the secret of Aras' birth were revealed, Aras would have more rights and be more respected by the troop than Julie.

Using this domain with "King of Spring"

As the Peaks are located in the Mercenary Republic, the barony of Melif will have to be situated in the Draaken Mountains, far enough from Murk. It should be located next to Koffer in order to keep the charm of the journey. As soon as the seed of the King of Spring is planted, Velius the morgana will use his connection with the King to influence the Cornutus. Therefore, the druidess will ask the Inspired's help. When the King awakes, the ivy tendrils will damage the Rankchard. It will then cause much damage to the buildings of the city by tossing and turning.

The Rankchard

The enchantment of Abhorrent Peaks by the Cornutus has affected the Rankchard. Soaked in magic, the golem is awakening little by little. Seismic activity is on the increase.

How much longer before the magical climate awakens this giant of stone? Only a thorough study of the Cornutus could answer this question, but Orchiel will not let anyone use her artifact...

Okleef dir Salem

Race: human
Age: 30
Height: 6'1" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 214 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGI: 7
PER: 7
STA: 9
STR: 8

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 5
WIL: 4

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHA: 5
CRE: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: +1
HP: 59
MEL: 7
SWT: 19
CWT: 29

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 5
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Knowledge: Alphabet (Mercerin) 3, Geography 2, History & legends 1, Language: Mercerin 5, Language: Keshite 3, Language: Modehan 2, Law 1
Trials: Weapon: brawl 7, Weapon: sword (spe.: charge) 8, Weapon: bow 4, Alertness 6, Athletics 6, Climb 6, Dodge 6, First aid 2, Ride 8
Courtly: Etiquette: mercenaries 3, Fast talk 2, Trade 2, Traditions: Mercerin 5, traditions: Modehan 2
Rogue: Conceal 2, Gambling 3, Hunt 5, Stealth 3
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 2, Demonology 2

Assets
Services rendered to the Cipher-sorcerer, Spartan

Faults
Obsession, Enemy of the demons

Combat
Initiative: 15, sword 15, bow 18, brawl 10
Melee attack: sword 16, brawl 15
Distance attack: bow 11
Dodge: 3
Parry: sword 16
Distance defense: 1

Typical quote:
"Hey! Chief! We've been resting here for too long. Let's go slaughter us a couple demons!"

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Bow	+4	0	0	+7 (I)	0	75 y.
Brawl	-4	+1	-	-2 (C)	-	-
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+5 (I/S)	0	-

Armor: full banded mail (penalty -10, prot. 10)

Playing in the Abhorrent Peaks

Assets

Disciple of The Cult of Nature 1

You have joined the cult and can ask for Orchiel's support. You benefit from the Protection of the Cornutus as long as you are in Abhorrent Peaks. You are granted 2 points in the skill Cult: the Cult of Nature.

Descendant of Siegr 1

You are an illegitimate descendant of Siegr. You have the lawful right to lead the Free Blades. The EG must determine under what circumstances you were conceived and who knows the secret of your birthright.

Services rendered to the Cipher-sorcerer 1

During a mission with the Free Blades, you found fame in the services of the Cipher-sorcerer order. You have many contacts within this organization of mages (one of your close friends is a mage or a censor). Your Cipher-sorcerer skill is raised by 1 point.

Faults

Enemy of the demons 2

During a mission with the Free Blades, you had an encounter with some ferocious demons. Your Demonology skill is raised by 1 point, and you gain 4 Darkening points as well as the fault "Obsession (demon hatred)".

Responsible for Michael's death (unique) 2

You drugged the alcheron that slaughtered Michael of Abhorrent. The EG must determine your exact motive, but Orchiel is part of the plot (she could have provided the drug). Did you want to take his place? Was it a reprisal? Or perhaps the Afarvale Conspiracy hired you?

Whatever the reason, this secret could soon be revealed. Indeed, Pendor seems to have understood everything and Rimaldo is trying to uncover the cause of Michael's death.

6 ~ Scarletstone

Widowlands

ear and valued colleague,

Once again, I write to enrich the archives of the Gray Papers. This letter concerns the Domain of Scarletstone, source of many of our preoccupations in recent years.
As I know experience and old age can burden you, I will take the liberty of briefing you on the situation.
The death of the former Mother Lahnah, as you will remember, brought about the current state of affairs. Irienalfah, her only daughter, was the unfortunate victim of severe schizophrenia, which split her mind in two. Sometimes she is Alfah, a sincere Jornist whose snakes are dormant; other times, Iriena, a cruel Obscurantist, whose plots and machinations are innumerable.
Scarletstone is blessed with prosperous trade, for they sell large quantities of their red rock as building material. They also produce korantra, a variety of mold with bizarre properties. Despite the Domain's apparent wealth, the political instability created by the two opposing personalities of the medusa, as well as a mounting rebellion, are leading the Domain to imminent collapse.
My dear colleague, I hope your wisdom will enable you to take action in this matter. Alas, I, must acknowledge my complete disarray. I await your instructions.
Cordially,

Ig'Sdread, eminence grise
Scarletstone delegate

History

Even back during the Flamboyance, medusae were drawn to the Domain of Scarletstone. Some say that before they lost their petrifaction power, they were capable of creating red statues that resembled the local stone. When the Widowlands separated from the Moden-Hen' Empire, the medusae obtained full control, and they elected one of their own to become Mother.

The privileged circumstances of Scarletstone made it the center of many plots. Some envied the impregnable location of the manor, while others coveted the strange mold that grows on korantra rocks. The Freihgn Museum has been admired for centuries, and now that Ardence is curator, its expansion has increased tenfold. Freihgn is a substantial prize for adjacent Domains desiring to annex Scarletstone. The main proponents of such

schemes are the Domains of Ros'endril and Fallaut, whose Mothers have tried repeatedly to prove the political failings of the twins Iriena and Alfah. While armed conflicts are extremely rare in the history of Scarletstone, intrigues and diplomatic maneuverings are frequent.

The confused and dark history of the last decades began when Lahnah, one of the most dictatorial Mothers of Scarletstone, came to power and instituted a policy of brutal slavery. After ten years in office, Lahnah gave birth to a daughter she named Irienalfah, who she raised by herself for four years. Lahnah hid her daughter in grottoes and stayed with her day and night at the expense of the management of the Domain. Some said the pain of childbirth drove her mad, but actually darker forces were at work...

When the young medusa was only five years old, her mother committed suicide. Irienalfah was left alone in the grottos for several months, and her schizophrenia developed. No one knows how she survived for so long without food or water. Shortly after her rescue, an incredible announcement was made: her rescuers had not discovered one medusa but two. One by one, the people who had taken part in the discovery died of unnatural causes. Within two years, the seven year-old twins had the reigns of the Domain and had replaced the manor's personnel.

Today, no one precisely remembers these events and everyone is convinced that Iriena and Alfah are both Mother Lahnah's daughters. Oddly, no one wonders how the seven year-old twins were able to rule a Domain by themselves, or who taught them Ascendancy (see the 'Intrigues' section for more information).

Scarletstone has become an influential and respected Domain in the Widowlands. The red stone, which is so useful in construction, is a major export. Recently, the interest in korantra has increased to such an extent that caravans from foreign lands have came to Scarletstone to learn more about its powers and to negotiate quarrying rights.

SCARLETSTONE

Realm: Widowlands
Ruler: Iriena/Alfah
Strength: 2 Inspired, 2,800 Dullen

BODY: 4/2
Army: 5
Defense: 6
Denizens: 6
Organization: 4

SPIRIT: 4/1
Finance: 6
Intelligence: 4

SOUL: 4/0
Diplomatic relations: 6
Magic ability: 4

Geography

Scarletstone is located near the Keshite frontier. The ground is red from numerous fragments of red rock mixed with the soil.

The Domain is a 25-mile long and 5-mile wide rectangle; its center is made up of a series of small canyons formed by gargantuan red boulders. As you leave the center, the terrain becomes more homogenous, with sparsely wooded plains of red soil.

The Manor

Situated in a secluded canyon, this is a strange building burrowed into a huge red rock. The only visible part of the manor is the facade, sculpted in bright white stone, which emerges from the red rock. From a distance, the manor resembles an enormous boulder.

The main entrance leads into a luxurious antechamber from which two large staircases, on each side of a vast hearth, ascend to the upper floors. In order to maintain harmony between the twins, the building was renovated so that each room has its double in the opposite wing of the manor.

The ground floor: This floor houses the servants and the slaves. Melfinio's room is on this floor, right under Iriena's, to which a hidden staircase leads. Also, all the rooms devoted to the manor's daily operation are located on the ground floor. The twin medusae only come down to the ground floor to enter or leave the manor.

The twin wings: When their mother died, the twins undertook the refurbishment of the entire manor, dividing it into two symmetrical parts. Iriena lives in the left wing and Alfah lives in the right wing. Each of them has

a main bedroom, guest suites, a large dining room and several sitting rooms. This manor is a true architectural achievement, designed by the dwarves of the Square. In spite of the solidity of the surrounding rock, all the walls are perfectly straight and some are ornate with many windows. The atmosphere is somber, so lanterns are used in the manor day and night. The interior is typical of the Widowlands, full of secret passages and concealed doors leading to key rooms.

The grottoes: Some of these secret passages end up in cavities burrowed in the red rock, some only lead to hidden vestibules, while others lead to underground caverns where occult rituals are performed. Eddrig, the Great Preparer, lives in a small underground network beneath the left wing. She is developing substances that will enable Iriena to attain her Paradisae (see 'Intrigues' below). The grottos under the right wing are generally used by Alfah to come and go in secret. Though the twins are actually one person, each personality is only aware of her own secret passages.

The Villages

Surrounding the manor, every practical site between the chaotic red boulders is occupied by villages enclosed by small stone ramparts. There are nine villages in Scarletstone. Five of these are distinctive, and deserve some mention here.

M'ethrane is the largest village in Scarletstone. Its narrow streets wind around the manor and are lined with red brick houses. The medusae live close to their rulers, whereas the slaves and their families are cast back to the outskirts of the village. Many Keshite caravans cross the village on their road to the south of the country. Therefore, there are numerous taverns in M'ethrane. In addition to the caravaneers, the inns also receive artists hoping to seduce one of the twins in order to obtain funding. Once they have spent all their savings, they usually end up – depending on their success – amongst the servants or in the house of a medusa that became their patron. The best artists live in the manor, like the famous spriggan sculptor Marblentes, who created a massive statue on the main square representing the twin sisters.

Bloodrock is situated north of the manor. Its natural rampart, which encircles the village, is composed of the red rock. The village owes its name to the peak that rises in the center of the village. There are approximately two hundred inhabitants in Bloodrock who earn their living by mining the rock and export it as building materials.

Korantra is a village that is almost entirely made up of medusae and their sprite and human slaves. The village is located in a humid area bordering a swamp. Its inhabitants harvest the mold that grows on the red rock in this damp environment. As this village is the only site where the mold grows, it was named Korantra. The mold is extremely valued by Chimerians, who combine it with their drugs in order to increase the subtlety of their effects.

Freihgn is a museum village. The few people who live here take care of the premises. The village consists of a large warehouse where the works of art are stored, a couple of houses where the personnel live, and the museum itself, which is composed of three one hundred-yard long galleries. Freihgn is, of course, very well guarded for it is considered by the twins to be the true heart of Scarletstone. The museum is managed by a Concordist medusa named Ardence, whose talent with the cittern is great.

The Surroundings

Ros'endril is a forested Domain located on Scarletsone's eastern border. The Domain is mainly a large city built at the intersection of several major trade routes. The manor, held by Mother Isslena, is located out of town. The politics of Ros'endril are rather volatile. Decisions must be taken quickly and Isslena uses this spontaneity to exert pressure on her neighbors.

Fallaut is a large territory that borders Scarletstone on its southern and western frontiers. The area is highly populated, and dotted with small fortresses. This Domain is devoted to magic, and it contains one of the legendary Black Towers, where the medusae attempt to rediscover the lost secret of petrifaction.

People of Note

The Schizophrenic Medusa

The Domain of Scarletstone is ruled by a medusa who has two distinct personalities. These are so clearly differentiated in her mind that they both have names, individual behaviors and specific capabilities. Iriena is a heartless and sly Obscurantist, whereas Alfah is a sensitive and righteous Jornist. The medusa's erratic behavior stems from the unique nature of her snakes, which fall asleep for days at a time. During these periods, the empathy between the snakes and the medusa is disrupted, and the personality changes from Iriena to Alfah. The division between the two personalities is so deep that they both loathe each other and strive to undermine each other's power. Iriena and Alfah are convinced they are two different people sharing the rule of the Domain. Iriena is far more vindictive than Alfah; indeed, she has already hired several assassins to kill her sister. The shift from one personality to another generally happens at night. The medusa is a victim of fits of somnambulism during which she goes to the other bedroom through a secret passage that she can only find while asleep. One

Dancer is abandoned while the other Dancer awaits the return of its mistress.

Note: *the case of Iriena/Alfah is unique in Harmundia. Medusa snakes falling asleep, and being a Jornist and an Obscurantist simultaneously are also unique.*

Iriena

Iriena is one of the two personalities of the medusa that rules Scarletstone. The 35-year-old woman is gloomy and aggressive, just like her snakes. Since the death of her mother, when she was only five years old, Iriena has assiduously practiced Obscurantism. This extremely talented student carries Torture to new extremes by keeping her Dancer on her head, amongst her snakes. The poor creature is terrified of the snakes but is also fascinated by their chaotic and languorous movements. As a result, Irieana's magic is subtle and perfidious.

When the medusa is Iriena, her behavior is unpredictable and fiery, to the extent that she is sometimes violent with her servants. Iriena has no respect whatsoever for life; she has reached the heights of medusa individualism and conceit. She is also familiar with the numerous drugs that Eddrig prepares for her so she can attain her Paradisae (see 'Intrigues' below).

Alfah

Alfah is the medusa's second personality. She is Iriena's complete opposite. Though they are one, their appearance is different. Alfah's snakes are asleep and rest nonchalantly on her head. Moreover, she has more joyful mannerisms and her face seems lighter. Alfah is a charismatic person who is always fair with everyone. When her mother died, she became a Jornist. Her empathic bond with her Dancer is very strong, for they spend much time wandering the Domain together.

Alfah is reasonable and serious concerning her rule of the Domain. She works hard for Scarletstone. Alfah does not consider herself like any other medusa, for her sleeping snakes do not affect her personality. The problem of slavery is an essential divergence between the twins. Alfah does not respect medusa traditions as Iriena would. She is much more humane than the average medusa aristocrat. The rebels know very well that Alfah would be susceptible to helping them. They are therefore determined to contact her.

Eddrig, the Great Preparer

Eddrig is a strange woman who lives as a recluse in the underground tunnels stretching out from the manor. This 60-year-old dark-skinned human is a true mystic. Iriena believes that she has the power to influence the spirit. Though Eddrig is not a medusa, she is exceptionally talented at poison making. The success of the Chimerian's concoctions is due to her thorough understanding of the korantra. The mold increases the duration and the reality of the effects of a given poison

(see the 'Intrigues' section for more information on korantra and Paradisae).

Eddrig never leaves her grottoes, and few inhabitants of Scarletstone are aware of her existence. Iriena contrives to supply her with all the ingredients she needs. The Chimerian is truly cherished by the medusa, who considers her an essential part of her life. Alfah doubts the existence of Eddrig.

Melfinio, bastard rebel

At the age of eighteen, Iriena felt the need to have a child to ensure the succession of her line. When her pregnancy became obvious, Alfah remained a recluse, and everyone thought she was jealous. Unfortunately for Iriena, she gave birth to a boy. Disappointed, she decided to keep her illegitimate son as her favorite slave. Alfah returned triumphantly after an absence of several months.

Melfinio is now seventeen years old. His appearance would be human if his eyes were not reptilian and if he did not have three dormant snakes hanging in a braid. His personality is an odd combination of detached medusa reserve and human compassion. Melfinio is Inspired, and has political plans of his own. He conceals his schemes of rebellion behind the outward appearance of a good slave. Though he is still young, Melifinio is the leader of the most recent uprising (see the 'Intrigues' section for more information).

Like the majority of the inhabitants of Scarletstone, Melifinio - though he lived in the manor all his life - does not know that Iriena and Alfah are the same person. If he did, the whole strategy of the rebels would change.

IRIENA/ALFAH

Race: medusa
Origin: Widowlands
Sex: female

Age: 35
Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 131 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGI: 8
PER: 8
STA: 7
STR: 5

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 7/9
WIL: 9/7

Soul: -1/0
Soul bonus: -1/0
CHA: 8/10
CRE: 9/7

Secondary attributes
AIM: 8
ART: -
ASC: 9/9
DB: 0
HP: 50
MEL: 7
SWT: 16
CWT: 25

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 5
Perfidy: 12/0

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (dagger) 6/3, Weapon (snakes) 6/5, Alertness 8, Dodge 6, Ride 7.
Rogue: Intrigue 8/4, Poison 7/4, Stealth 6
Courtly: Diplomacy 4/10, Eloquence 8/6, Etiquette: Carms 7, Painting 3/8, Sculpture 8/3, Stewardship 10, Trade 6, Traditions: Widowlands 9
Knowledge: Alphabet: Moden-Hen' 6, Language: Ophidian 8, Language: Keshite 6, Season: winter 5
Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Dancer lore 10, Resonance: obscurantist/jornist 10

Sorrow
Cruelty/nothing

Combat
Initiative: 16
Melee attack: dagger 15/12
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 14
Parry: dagger 13/10
Distance defense: 7

Ascendancy:
ASC APT obscurantist/jornist: 21/26
Dancer endurance: 7/4

Iriena's Obscurantist spells:
Strike Blind (10), Own shield (15), Cause pain (15), Inspire fear (15), Exacerbate emotion (20), Pyrokinesthesia (20)

Alfah's Jornist spells:
Body purification (15), Magic shield (15), Zone of silence (15), Invisible arm (15), Major healing (20), Protective aura (25)

Typical quote (Iriena):
"Do you have a clue who you are talking to? You are nothing but a larva that I would squash with my shoes, if they weren't so new..."
Typical quote (Alfah):
"I will not consider such a choice for it could imperil my subjects."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	+1	-1

Armor: none

EDDRIG

Race: human
Origin: Widowlands
Sex: female
Age: 64

Height: 5'4" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 128 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGI: 6
PER: 10
STA: 7
STR: 2

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 9
WIL: 5

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHA: 5
CRE: 5

Secondary attributes
AIM: 8
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: -1
HP: 47
MEL: 4
SWT: 15
CWT: 23

Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (cane) 1, Alertness 6, Dodge 4, Survival 4
Rogue: Poison 10
Courtly: Crafts: pottery 4
Knowledge: Alphabet: Moden-Hen' 6, Language: Ophidian 8, Language: Keshite 3, Plant lore (korantra) 10

Fault
Old-timer

Combat
Initiative: 16
Melee attack: cane 6
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 10
Parry: cane 6
Distance defense: 5

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Cane	0	+1	+1	1 (C)	-1

Armor: none

MELFINIO

Race: medusa bastard
Origin: Widowlands
Sex: male
Age: 17
Height: 5'7" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 128 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 2/0
Body bonus: +2
AGI: 9
PER: 5
STA: 7
STR: 7

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 4
WIL: 8

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHA: 10
CRE: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
ART: 7
ASC: -
DB: +1
HP: 55
MEL: 8
SWT: 18
CWT: 27

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 4

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (sword) 8, Weapon (sling) 7, Alertness 8, Athletics 7, Climb 6, Dodge 7, Ride 5
Rogue: Intrigue 7, Search 5, Stealth 6
Knowledge: Alphabet: Moden-Hen' 4, Language: Ophidian 6, Language: Keshite 5, Strategy 5
Courtly: Eloquence 8, Poetry 6

Combat
Initiative: 16, sword 17, sling 16
Melee attack: sword 19
Distance attack: sling 17
Melee defense:
Dodge: 18, Parry: sword 19
Distance defense: 9

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	Range
Sling	0	+1	-	+2 (C)	50 y.
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+5 (I/S)	-

Armor: none

Ardence, museum curator

Ardence was born in Scarletstone forty-five years ago. She knows all there is to know of the Domain. This medusa is temperamental and cold-blooded. She is so inquisitive that she is one of the few who suspects her rulers to not be twin sisters. She is the keeper of the Freihgn Museum, and she is considered by the artistic classes as a peerless specialist of the elder Vista, especially of Pictureworlds. With her substantial budget, Ardence has acquired many works of art from all over Harmundia. Moreover, she keeps an Ergastulum collection in a secure part of the museum (see 'Intrigues' below).

Intrigues

The Slaves

As in all Widowlands Domains, slavery is common in Scarletstone – a third of the population works as slaves for two thirds of free citizens. This very high proportion is due to the particular nature of work in the region: quarrying of the red rock and mold farming both require many menial laborers.

The life of the slaves completely changes depending on whether Iriena or Alfah is ruling. However, their general condition is slightly better than in other Widowlands Domains. They typically live in the villages and occasionally mingle with the medusae as equals. Only the tough work and the harsh punishments they suffer remind them of their place in medusa society.

The Rebellion

The political instability between the sisters is very disturbing for the population, forcing them to endure many injustices. Alfah's decisions are gentler than Iriena's, but

ARDENCE

Race: medusa
Origin: Widowlands
Sex: Female
Age: 45
Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 127 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 2/0
Body: 2/0
Body bonus: +2
AGI: 7
PER: 8
STA: 6
STR: 5

Spirit: 2/0
Spirit bonus: +2
INT: 8
WIL: 4

Soul: 4/0
Soul bonus: +4
CHA: 8
CRE: 11

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
ART: 9
ASC: -
DB: 0
HP: 45
MEL: 6
SWT: 15
CWT: 22

Fortune points: 4
Flame powers: Flame of inspiration
Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (dagger) 2, Weapon (snakes), Dodge 5
Rogue: Search 4
Knowledge: Alphabet: Moden-Hen' 6, History & legends (spe.: Flamboyance) 8, Language: Ophidian 6, Language: Keshite 4, Season: winter/summer 6

Courtly: Eloquence 5, Music: cittern 10, Painting 8, Sculpture 6, Stewardship 8
Occult: Concord 10, Tune 8, Vista 7

Combat

Initiative: 17
Melee attack: dagger 12
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 14
Parry: dagger 14
Distance defense: 7

Opuses:

All cittern and summer Vista opuses. Additionally, Ardence is capable of understanding and opening Pictureworlds, because her snakes inject her with a sedative that allows increased concentration.

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.
Dagger	0	+2	0	+1 (I)

Armor: none

the frequent fluctuations from one extreme to another makes punishments seem arbitrary.

Thanks to Melfinio's influence, a group of slaves has been able to organize itself to confront the schizophrenic medusa. The rebellion is composed of approximately fifty resolute slaves. Their headquarters is located in a tavern called "The Three Aspics" (a discreet reference to Melfinio) in M'ethrane. The innkeeper, a spriggan named Servisio, has espoused the rebel's cause. He shelters their meetings in the wine cellars of the inn. The slaves have also been storing weapons here for their uprising.

Iriena/Alfah

The nature of this medusa is unique in Harmundia. The intensity of her schizophrenia leads her to fits of somnambulism, during which she relocates from one wing of the manor to the other. She awakes in the new room, with new clothes and a new personality.

Melfinio is particularly vulnerable to her personality shifts for he is Iriena's favorite slave. When the young bastard was only six years old, he met the medusa during one of her sleepwalks. Even though he has consciously forgotten this, he often dreams of Alfah telling him she is his true mother.

The Drama and its Actors

The Masque has played an important role in Scarletstone. He set up the scene, placed the actors, and is now admiring the results of his direction. The Masque was involved in Irienalfah's birth and her mother's madness. He then caused the medusa's schizophrenia and obscured events so that everyone would believe she was two different medusae. In order to increase their opposition, the Masque found two mentors for the medusa – a Jornist for Alfah and an Obscurantist for Iriena. Once the twins were ready, the Master of Sham got rid of the two mages. Thus, the scene was set, the actors were rehearsed, and the Masque could enjoy the play. From time to time, he subtly influences Iriena's doings in order to redirect the drama.

The Paradisae

Eddrig's talents, combined with the properties of korantra, have allowed the creation of Paradisae. The Chimerian is now capable of creating drugs and poisons that allow interaction between the drug-taker and an imaginary world. The user first loses physical contact with his or her environment, taking refuge in an alternate reality created by the mingling of the drug with the user's memories. The Paradisae are not real worlds; they only exist in the mind of one person and only allow the user to escape reality for a couple of hours.

For the moment, Iriena is the only guinea pig for these experiments. Many Chimerians are, of course, very interested by the mystical properties of korantra, and will therefore use all means necessary to discover Eddrig's secret.

Freihgn Museum

Ardence is dedicated to her Ergastula, and is attempting to understand how they work. The secret room is composed of eight crystal cubes that each have different colors and shapes. Ardence is convinced these cubes must be arranged in a certain way in order to create a new opus that would free their true power.

Lately, the curator has been seeking a unique book, "The Forty-Eighth Conundrum", that is supposed to mention the eight cubes. This book belongs to a Janrenian collector, who will not sell it, for he too covets the cubes. Ardence is thinking about hiring a team of mercenaries to recover the book.

Playing in Scarletstone

Assets

Student at the Freihgn Museum 2

You were one of Ardence's students at the Freihgn museum. Consequently, you had the opportunity to experiment the Ergastula. Perhaps you are even seeking the book that could help Ardence understand the operation of the eight cubes. You benefit from specific knowledge concerning Ergastula and the way they work.

Lucrative trade in Bloodrock 3

You, or your family, established a very lucrative trade office in Bloodrock several generations ago. You exploit the local slaves to excavate the famous red rock of Scarletstone and you sell it all over the Widowlands. This asset is considered an Office.

Services rendered to the rebellion 3

In return for a service you rendered them, the rebellion is willing to help you. This can be a very useful asset if you play in the Widowlands because the local rebels are in contact with other similar insurgents throughout the kingdom. You could therefore benefit from a large information network.

Noticed by the Chimerians 4

You interest the Chimerians because you are involved in korantra production. Whether you are a medusa specialized in poisons or a smuggler who distributes the goods to the rest of the Widowlands, you are considered untouchable by the authorities of the kingdom.

Faults

Persona non grata in Ros'endril 2

After having recently run afoul of the law, you were banished from Ros'endril. Unfortunately, this Domain is an almost unavoidable to get to the rest of the Widowlands. You will have to face the danger or else stay where you are.

Victim of the Iriena/Alfah game 3

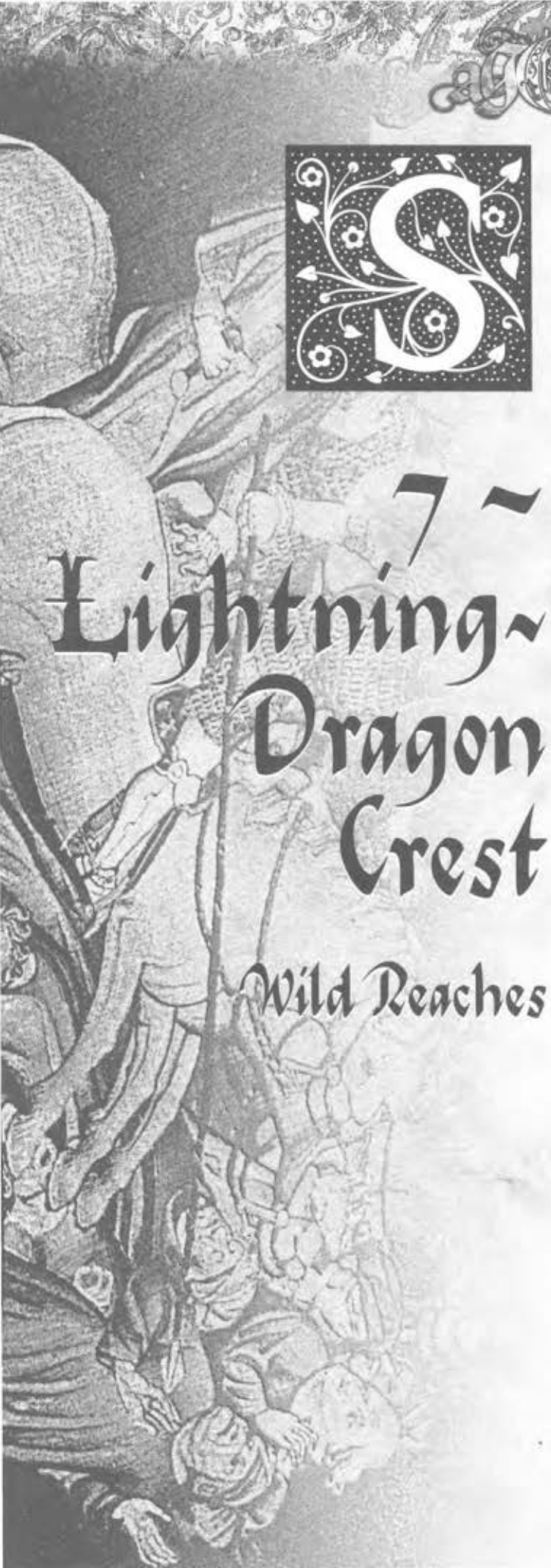
For a reason you will have to determine with your EG, you are in the middle of the twins' struggle. You suffer from this both personally and professionally. You do not prefer one or the other – they are both ruining your life!

Thought poorly of by the rebels 3

You are considered too close to the matriarchal power of Scarletstone, and the rebels want your head. Unfortunately, the rebels passed your name on to others. You are therefore known as a traitor and a supporter of slavery by all revolutionary movements in the kingdom.

Using this Domain with "King of Spring"

Melif will be located in the Draaken Mountains. The decision-making process will be paralyzed during the crisis. Indeed, Iriena and Alfah will have completely opposite intentions and will cancel out each other's decisions during the war against the sprites. They are powerful enough mages, however that they will be able to stay in their palace. Ardence will flee through one of her Pictureworlds. The liberation of the Domain will be an opportunity that Melfinio will pass up. Amidst all the confusion, Melfinio will attempt to take power.



7 ~ Lightning-Dragon Crest

Wild Reaches

Study the three laws. Retain them and apply them. The law of iron. The law of blood. The law of wrath.
Master these laws and you will become a warrior, a hero and a legend. Disregard them and you will be a feast for the vultures. Your wife will spit on your grave. Your children will curse your name.
Once I have taught you the three laws, you will know all you need to survive on the slopes of the Lightning-Dragon Crest.
Iron.
Blood.
Wrath.
Understand how these words have a life of their own, stirred by a spirit greater than your strength and deeper than your will. See the thousand warriors, heroes and legends that precede you. Do you understand your purpose beside them?
Take the iron, shed the blood and taste the wrath. Then you will live to be honored.

The Tale of the First Age

History

The Mythical Ages: The Legend of the Lightning-Dragon

"In the First Age...

There was iron. It throbbed in the earth, awaiting the hands of mortals to bring it to life.

There were mortals. They lived like beasts, clothed in clouds and armed with nature.

There was the Lightning-Dragon. He roared in the welkin, waiting for the iron to find its heart.

There was the mountain where the Lightning-Dragon rested. It sheltered the iron, waiting for the hands of the mortals that would forge it.

There was the giant Grolmak. This warrior clothed only in clouds wondered, *"How can I protect myself from the beasts? Their claws dig my flesh. Their fangs rake my bones."*

As Grolmak pondered, a flash of lightning tore the earth. He gazed skyward and saw a wonder. Within the clouds, a Prodigy of blue fire with huge wings, burning eyes and a frothing jaw unfurled its never-ending rings. Its wings flapped with a roar of wrath, and the Lightning-Dragon spat the fire of the sky.

Grolmak took a stone and threw it at the Prodigy. The dragon howled with fury and cast lightning upon Grolmak. The blood of the mortal was shed.

THE CLAN OF GRALMACH

Realm: Wild Reaches
Ruler: Gothmod
Strength: 4 Inspired, 88 Dullen

BODY: 2/1
Army: 8
Defense: 8
Denizens: 3
Organization: 2

SPIRIT: 1/1
Finance: 5
Intelligence: 1

SOUL: 2/0
Diplomatic relations: 2
Magic ability: 5

But mighty Grolmak rose again, and saw he was in a smoking crater washed in his blood. He saw the soft iron around him. The Lightning-Dragon had spared him so that he could bring this metal to life.

He tore the iron from the earth and placed it in a blazing fire. The iron became armor; the iron became a weapon. Thus, Grolmak was clad in iron.

Blood and iron having been satisfied, wrath rumbled. Had not the giant learned his lesson?

Grolmak forged a long iron lance, climbed the crest, and thrust his weapon deep into the Prodigy's heart.

The legend was born, and Grolmak departed having fulfilled his purpose as a warrior and a hero."

Recent Events

The known history of the Grolmak clan stretches back into the depths of time.

Once, a giant with incredible oratory skills and a great knowledge of local legends told his tribe of a Prodigy, a mythical creature guarding a great treasure of iron. The tribe resolved to hunt down the monster.

Thus, the Lightning-Dragon clan was born - a group of giants sworn to find this creature's lair and its iron horde. Natural wanderers, they offered their services to any tribe or clan they came across. Once in a while, they would plunder a village to better themselves or they would convince a young giant to join them. In the wastelands of the Wild Reaches, their way of life was sheer folly. Only their exceptional resistance enabled them to survive constant famine and glacial winters.

During their wanderings they accumulated knowledge from all the tribes in the region, and their skill at blacksmithing became formidable. Blacksmiths throughout the Twilight Realms came to them for advice, and used the giants' secrets in their own work.

After a dozen years, their dedication to what seemed a hopeless quest faded. In spite of the chieftain's exhortations, the desertions increased, until only a handful of giants remained. The largest communities in the region had been visited and none knew anything concerning the Lightning-Dragon beyond the legends. The clan now decided to investigate the smallest tribes, which they had initially overlooked.

Not only were these inquiries unsuccessful, but also they caused significant political shifts. In those days, life in the reaches was ruthless. Five additional swords, a couple of extra warriors, or even a good idea could tip the scales of fortune. A clan, who until then had always avoided confrontation with a larger rival, could, with the support of only a handful of new warriors, defeat it.

As long as the Lightning-Dragon Clan supported the mighty, they valued it and asked for its services. As soon as it began to support the weakest clans, the large tribes quickly sang another tune. They formed a league and led a short campaign against these idealistic wanderers. Little by little, they forced the clan far into the mountains, beyond where even the smallest tribes lived. The clan arrived in a place where there were no humans, no giants... nothing, except for the desolate rocks.

The giants were about to die from starvation when they discovered a small tribe of humans and dwarves. The tribe welcomed the wanderers and their secrets concerning the use of iron. The humans and the dwarves were interested for they possessed a large quantity of the metal. Their iron came from a crest, further up the mountain, where lightning always roared. The Lightning-Dragon clan realized that this was the end of their wanderings. How they used the iron and how they came to be called the "Grolmak Clan" are mysteries consigned to legends.

Geography

The Grolmak Clan lays claim to the land between the Den of the Predators, the Hundred-Nests, and the Great Draaken Mountain. They live in the center of their territory, on the Lightning-Dragon Crest. Their habitations are massed on the north face of the mountain, on the foothills to the heights of the thundering crest.

The Lightning-Dragon Crest Foothills

Lightning-Dragon Crest is a 9,000 foot-high mountain with extremely steep slopes.

The southern face is very smooth. The availability of numerous alluring veins of ore led several dwarves to try fastening scaffoldings onto the most accessible outcroppings in order to reach more remote spots. This project has not yet succeeded, for the strong winds tear away anything that is not dug deep in the rock, and the perpetual rain and cold combine to cover the few passable trails with sleet.

Moreover, since the principal mine tunnel, the Long Gallery, has reached this inaccessible face of the mountain, the few madmen who persist in working on the south face have now turned to a new project – building a southern entrance to the gallery. For the moment, these plans will have to wait for the new entrance to be constructed, and since the clan does not seem very enthusiastic about this project, the repairs be on hold for at least a couple of years.

The north face is much less treacherous. The base is covered with a dense coniferous forest that is used for the woodwork in the mine. As the slope becomes steeper, the face is rockier, and few plants are evident. This is where the habitations begin. They are usually built at the entrances of old mines that have been refurbished. The mines, which are usually divided by stone partitions (or wooden ones for the wealthiest), are used as living quarters. By the entrances, there is usually an edifice that houses the kitchen and the hearth. Living closest to the surface is a sign of prosperity. The wealthiest members of the clan (chief Gothmod, and the four dwarves in charge of the forge: Randa, Vinka, Klenka and Wona) have stone and wood houses built entirely on the surface. Even though certain traditionalists prefer underground life, depleted mines, often cold and damp, are difficult to light and heat.

Another sign of wealth is living as low as possible on the mountainside. Newcomers and younger members are forced to settle in the higher parts of the mountain, where they risk being struck or having their house blasted by the wrath of the sky.

The Great House

This is where Gothmod, the clan chieftain, lives. His huge house, approximately 30 yards long and 10 yards wide, was built on a giant scale. There is a forge in the middle of the house, which generates heat for the entire dwelling through an ingenious network of pipes. The bellows adjoining the forge, nicknamed "Whistler", can be filled with so much air that two giants are required to compress it. It makes a very loud wheezing noise that can be heard far away.

The house was once used as an assembly room, where the elder members of the clan could come to discuss trade and rumors, and "Whistler" was used to convene the assembly. Since the clan has grown, the Great House is too small to shelter all the giants. The Long Gallery is now used for assemblies. Gothmod dreamt of enlarging his house, unfortunately, his architectural knowledge was far from sufficient, so he called on the Square. He is now saving up money to pay their architects.

In the meantime, Gothmod is proud of his house, which is still the largest and the closest to the forest. Whistler is now used as a signal to help travelers find their way through dense fog (though pinpointing the sound amidst the mountain's echoes requires some practice).

Randa, Vinka, Klenka and Wona

Affectionately nicknamed "the quarter-giants", these four dwarves live in the second house built on the surface. Unlike the Great House, their dwelling is on a dwarven scale. Many giants covet it, even though they would have no use for it.

The hearth is in the center of the house, according to giant tradition, where it is used as a forge. The ground floor consists of a huge workshop full of metal ingots, half-built objects, leather laces, chains and tools. There are several series of rails running across the ceiling, on which slide many hooks, pliers, straps and harnesses. These tools allow the four dwarf blacksmiths to counterbalance their small size; otherwise, the production of giant-sized items would be impossible for them. There are always many new tools waiting to be placed on the rails.

The second floor contains living quarters, and the four sisters take pride in being "civilized". The rooms are furnished in the latest court fashion (with up to a ten year delay because of the trade disputes between the Wild Reaches and the rest of Harmundia). There are velvet curtains, wooden chests of drawers, four-poster beds, cabinets full of old-fashioned dresses and many other signs of womanliness scattered all over the first floor. Woe be

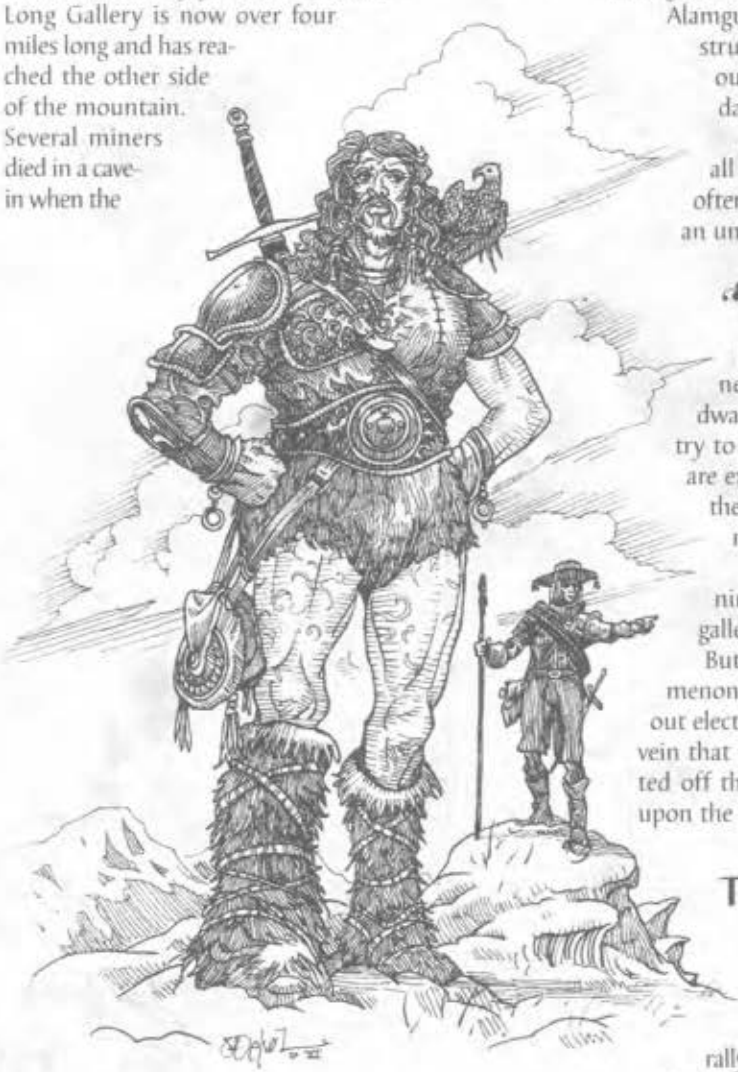
unto he that mocks this establishment! The dwarves have numerous friends, most of whom are giants. It is rarely a good idea to risk getting beat up by a couple of thirteen-foot tall ruffians.

The workshop produces high-quality items that established a strong reputation for them. But, in spite of their talents, the four sisters generally refuse to make weapons unless the clan has to supply an important client with many items or if they are paid large amounts of money. Ironically, these extremely high prices have attracted many new customers from abroad, who now seek out the sisters for all types of weaponry.

The Long Gallery

The oldest and the deepest mine gallery belongs to the entire community. In exchange for free quarrying of any veins discovered, all the members of the clan must participate in its maintenance. The richest veins are higher up the mountain, and the Long Gallery does not supply enough metal for everyone, but many miners do not own their own mines, and must work in this community mine. After many years of work, the Long Gallery is now over four miles long and has reached the other side of the mountain. Several miners died in a cave-in when the gallery reached the opposite face. Ever since then, the clan has been attempting to excavate the gallery's entrance on the south face of the mountain. Among giants too poor to possess their own mines, many hope that the south side will provide new veins, and they're hoping a way to reach it will be available soon.

The giants are already speculating on the fortunes awaiting them on the other side.



Alamgurk's Lair

Alamgurk is an elderly member of the clan, over 170 years old. He obtained the right from the clan to settle in a mine next to the Long Gallery, which he has dug out for over a century. His house, permanently filled with smoke because of the lack of ventilation, shelters all sorts of strange substances: dried herbs, glass jars full of turgid liquids, intestines and other unidentifiable parts of animals hanging from the ceiling, skins and furs, strange tools, and even several books the giant stole during the sack of Maechrak.

His "house" is built according to the traditional rules that governed the clan when life was more difficult. Alamgurk is a fervent defender of tradition, who struggles against the trend of building houses outdoors. He considers this idea radical and dangerous.

Alamgurk is the clan herbalist, he provides all sorts of decoctions (their usefulness is often questionable). Most notably, he possesses an unusual quantity of aster sap extract.

The Thundering Heights

Past the second third of the mountain begin the "Thundering Heights". The giants never venture here; only some foolhardy dwarves and humans are stubborn enough to try to maintain small mine workings, for there are exceptional amounts of iron in this part of the mountain. The galleries are small but extremely rich in ore, and danger is ever-present. Miners are regularly struck down by lightning, and the booming thunder can cause galleries to collapse.

But the oddest and most dangerous phenomenon comes from the metal veins, which shoot out electric bolts. One horrific tale tells of a metal vein that produced a ball of lightning that ricocheted off the walls until the whole gallery collapsed upon the miners.

The Den of the Predators

The clan's second geographical boundary is the Den of the Predators. This is a huge glacier on which live a large pack of aswal tigers. These ferocious predators are generally solitary creatures, but the tigers have gathered here for unknown reasons. (Such aberrations are

common in the Wild Reaches.) Rumors abound of a fertile valley beyond the ice field, served by hot springs, full of game and abundant vegetation. Though no one has corroborated these stories, it could explain how the tigers can survive in such a remorseless environment.

The Hundred Nests

Three hours walk from Gotmor's hour stands the Hundred Nests Peak. It is less steep than Lightning-Dragon Crest and it shelters a large community of Great Eagles. Several giant tribes have settled under the birds' nests. These tribes mainly consist of former miners who have grown weary of their underground work. They now spend their time training the Great Eagles. This is, of course, an extremely dangerous task, but the giants are talented. The power of such mounts is so extraordinary that the clan has never been attacked in spite of the wealth of their mines.

GOTHMOD

Race: giant
Sex: male
Age: 82
Height: 13'9" (SIZ +3)
Weight: 1371 lbs.
MOV: 8

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGI: 3
PER: 7
STA: 17
STR: 19

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 6
WIL: 7

Soul: 0/0
Soul bonus: 0
CHA: 6
CRE: 6

Secondary attributes
AIM: 5
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: +39
HP: 161
MEL: 8
SWT: 53
CWT: 80

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 5
Perfidy: 0

Skills
Trials: Weapon (giant sword) 9, Weapon (shield) 8, Weapon (boulder) 5, Alertness 5, Athletics 7, 8, Dodge 6, First aid 3, Ride: Great Eagle 5, Survival (spec.: mountains)
Rogue: Hunt 5, Intrigue 7, Stealth 6
Courtly: Diplomacy 3, Eloquence 5, Etiquette: Wild Reaches 7, Fast talk 4, Stewardship 6, Trade 3, Traditions: Wild Reaches 5
Knowledge: Astronomy 1, Beast lore 6, Geography 5, History & legends 5, Language: Nordik 7, Language: Kosaki 2, Law 5, Strategy 2, Surgery 4
Occult: Concord 1

Assets
Office (clan chieftain), Great Eagle, Giant armor

Faults
Unpleasant, Flaring temper

Combat
Initiative: 10, giant sword 13, tower 6, boulder 12
Melee attack: giant sword 18, tower 15
Distance attack: boulder attack 11
Melee defense:
Dodge: 6
Parry: giant sword 18, tower 21
Distance defense: 0

Typical quote:
« Go **** in the Abyss! Da clan come b'fore ev'ry'thin'! I'll kill all dose who don't agree! May the Lightnin'-Dragon strike me dead if I don'ts! »

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Boulder	+2	+1	-	+45 (C)	2	55 y.
Giant sword	+3	+1	+1	+47 (S/I)	2	-
Tower	-4	-1	+5	+41 (C)	1	-

Armor: full chain mail (penalty -20, prot. 22)

Great Draaken Mountain

This small rise, completely overshadowed by the surrounding mountains, was a draaken haunt. They lived beneath the mountain for centuries, until one day it collapsed from excessive digging, creating this huge hill of boulders. Erosion then molded the heap of boulders into a hill.

Even though there is no proof, rumor has it that draaken survivors still live within the mountain. The legend tells of some draaken who, buried alive only a couple of yards from the surface, blended into a Great Draaken in order to break their way out. Everyone avoids Great Draaken Mountain, for there have been many disappearances in the area as well as a pack of sheers (see AGONE rulebook, p. 31) living on the lowest slopes of the mountain that was decimated. Though perhaps these occurrences are only due to aswal tigers coming to hunt in the valley...

People of Note

Gothmod

Gothmod is a strong giant in his prime. His main fault is a lack of interest in blacksmithing. Only his chieftain status and his strength guarantee him the respect of the other clan members. He is considered a fierce warrior, and his reputation is deserved, but he lacks

RANDA, VINKA, KLENKA AND WONA

Race: dwarf
Sex: female
Age: 55
Height: 4'9" (SIZ – 1)
Weight: 184 lbs.
MOV: 2

Attributes
Flame: 2/0

Body: 3/0
Body bonus: +3
AGI: 5
PER: 7
STA: 11
STR: 9

Spirit: 2/0
Spirit bonus: +2
INT: 7
WIL: 6

Soul: 3/0
Soul bonus: +3
CHA: 5
CRE: 10

Secondary attributes
AIM: 6
ART: 7
ASC: -
DB: +2
HP: 60
MEL: 6
SWT: 20
CWT: 30

Fortune points: 4
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 2
Perfidy: 1

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (Morning star) 5, Alertness 7, Athletics 7, Climb 6, Dodge 6, Survival (spe.: mountains) 3
Rogue: Conceal 6, Intrigue 7
Courtly: Blacksmithing 10, Etiquette: Wild Reaches 5, Sculpture 6, Stewardship 8, Traditions: Wild Reaches 5
Knowledge: Astronomy 1, Geography 7, History & legends 5, Language: Nordik 7, Language: Kosaki 5, Season: winter 5

Occult: Concord (spe.: esoteric architecture) 5, Demonology 5, Magical art: Shape 6

Combat
Initiative: 15
Melee attack: morning star 13
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 12
Parry: morning star 12
Distance defense: 6

Magical Arts
Shape APT: 16

Opuses
Reinforce, Remodel, Sharpen a blade

Typical quote:
Randa: "Ahh, you want a weapon?"
Klenka: "Humm... you know our prices are..."
Vinka: "... not quite cheap..."
Wona: "...but, a good weapon is worth any price."

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Morning star	0	-1	-2	+8 (I/C)	1

Armor: partial leather & metal (penalty -2, prot. 5)

ALAMGURK

Race: giant
Sex: male
Age: 172
Height: 13'7" (SIZ +3)
Weight: 1286 lbs.
MOV: 8

Attributes
Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0
Body bonus: 0
AGI: 2
PER: 6
STA: 14
STR: 16

Spirit: 0/0
Spirit bonus: 0
INT: 7
WIL: 5

Soul: 0/-2
Soul bonus: -2
CHA: 6
CRE: 6

Secondary attributes
AIM: 4
ART: -
ASC: -
DB: +27
HP: 144
MEL: 6
SWT: 48
CWT: 72

Darkening: 7
Perfidy: 23

Skills:
Trials: Weapon (boulder) 5, Alertness 7, Athletics 3, Climb 3, Dodge 2, First aid 5, Survival (spe.: mountains) 9, Swim 3
Rogue: Hunt 5, Intrigue 5, Search 4
Courtly: Eloquence 5, Etiquette: Grolmak clan 7, Fast talk 5, Stewardship 4, Trade 2, traditions: Wild Reaches 5
Knowledge: Alphabet 1, Astronomy 1, Beast lore 6, Geography 5, History & legends 8, Language: Nordik 6, Law: 5, Medicine 6, Plant lore 3, Season: summer 7, Surgery 7

Occult: Concord 4

Assets
Secret hideout, Presence, Immunity

Faults
Old-timer, Grandiloquence, Bragging

Combat
Initiative: 8, boulder 12
Melee attack: -
Distance attack: boulder 10
Melee defense:
Dodge: 4
Parry: -
Distance defense: 2

Typical quote:
« The young don't know what's good no more. They're really stupid 'cos the rituals o'giants is important. They shouldn't forget that, nope. There are three laws to follow: the first one is... hum... traditions. The second is... ».

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Boulder	+2	+1	-	+33 (C)	2	30 y.

Armor: none

military experience. Fortunately for him, his clan is strong enough to dissuade potential attackers.

Randa, Vinka, Klenka and Wona

These four dwarves are twins. They prefer to use Shape in their forge, but they have enough raw talent to do without their opuses when necessary. When speaking, they always finish each other's thoughts. Their legendary bad temper is mainly a protection from the harsh environment in which they live. The four sisters are romantic, and they await a mortal soul who will see a need for love behind their harsh exterior. Be warned, the sisters consider themselves one whole person, and a potential lover would have to manage all four dwarves. Their nickname, "quarter-giants", has not only been attributed to them because of their size but because together they are capable of standing up to a giant!

Alamgurk

This is a very old giant whose face is grooved with deep wrinkles, but the frankness of his look is still awe-inspiring. He claims that the books he stole during the sack of Maechak contain much magic that he has mastered, but in reality he has no magical powers. In fact, he only brought back a cookbook and an erotic novel! He spent many years studying the cookbook in order to decipher it. Alas, he is not familiar with the ingredients, so has convinced himself that he possesses an occult book of power, and has decided to become an herbalist. His sole success with plants is his decoction of aster (see AGONE rulebook, p. 31). Alamgurk is sure that if he could obtain the other ingredients listed, he would then be able to perform many wonders. He hopes that, by becoming a miracle-worker, he will inspire the clan to return to more traditional beliefs.

USING THIS DOMAIN WITH "KING OF SPRING"

The Barony of Melif should become an enclave in the Eaglefine Mountains. Life there will be more difficult, and the court will be rougher than what is described in the Drama. Tharon will be a warlord from the Wild Reaches.

REINFORCE

This Shape opus was created by Klenka who immediately taught it to her sisters. It has enabled them to build giant-size armor and weapons. No one has yet dared to ask the sisters for a suit of plate armor. Soon perhaps...

Threshold: 25
Area of effect: no limit
Duration: permanent
Modeling: 1 hour

Effect: "Reinforce" allows the Shaper to strengthen a material. It could, for example, be used to create glass armor that had the durability of metal. Klenka sometimes uses this opus to strengthen her metal to the durability of stone. Unfortunately, she is not a talented enough Shaper to succeed every time with her opus, so she does not use it too often.

THE GREAT EAGLES

These masters of the sky are ferocious predators that could easily kill a giant. Their wingspan reaches 25 yards and they weigh up to 1,100 lbs. Their feathers are generally golden, though white or amber eagles have been seen from time to time. Unlike regular eagles, Great Eagles do not have particularly good eyesight. But their prey is usually large enough.

AGI 3
PER 7
STA 22
STR 22
SIZ +4
MOV +3 (on the ground)/+20 (in flight)
DB +57
HP 166
SWT 55
CWT 83

Skills
Weapon (beak) 7, Weapon (claws) 8, Athletics 7

Weapons		Init.	Att.	Def.
Dam.	SIZ			
Beak	0	+2	-	+64 (I/S) 2
Claws	-1	+1	-	+67 (I/C) 2

Intrigues

ALAMGURK'S SECRETS

The old giant has two secrets. The first concerns drachmas, the cursed gold of the Masque. Approximately ten years ago, a merchant who passed by paid Alamgurk a fortune for his aster decoction. Amongst the coins, he slipped in several drachmas. When Alamgurk finally discovered them, he told everyone he was going out to search for some new plants, but he actually followed the merchant and killed him. Since then, he has hidden his treasure in one of the mountain's numerous crevices.

Though it is dangerous, Alamgurk enjoys having an occasional look at his treasure, counting and recounting it. If his misdeed came to be known, the old giant would lose all his credibility.

His second secret concerns the aster and the valley that lies beyond the Den of the Predators. The old giant has discovered a hidden passage that leads all the way to the valley without coming close to the tigers. As he is a fervent defender of ancestral traditions, he decided not to tell anyone, for if the clan came to know this, they would surely settle in the valley. Moreover, he discovered a large amount of aster on the lower slopes of the den. How long before one of the clan members or an aswald tiger notices his wanderings?

THE HORDE'S WEAPONS

The clan's most important client is a troop from Lyphan, whose usual weapons are inferior to those forged by the dwarven sisters. The four sisters are now creating a light mobile siege weapon to be used by the nomadic horde. Unfortunately, some Princean spies have heard of the project. Therefore, one of these days, a group of mercenaries will probably attempt to destroy the weapon. The only thing that keeps the mercenaries at bay is the clan of the Hundred-Nests. But perhaps one day they will rise to the challenge...

Playing in Lightning-Dragon Crest

Assets

Giant armor (only for giants; 1, 3 or 5)

The "quarter-giants" made you (in exchange for a favor or a large amount of money) chain mail in your size. Then, with the help of enchantments, the four sisters imbued your armor with increased durability. This asset's cost depends on whether you choose a vest, partial armor or full armor. Here are the attributes of the armor:

Vest only: penalty -16, protection 16
Partial armor: penalty -18, protection 19
Full armor: penalty -20, protection 22

Great Eagle (3 or 5)

You possess one of these fabulous creatures and you can mount it! The cost depends on whether you are a giant (3) or a human (5).

8 – The Arboline Barony

Urgamand

Dearest friend,

In answer to your request you will find here a few notes regarding the barony of Arboline, where I carry out my work. Before going any further, allow me to focus your attention on the specifics of this case. Contrary to your expectations, the Enemy is almost absent from this area of Urgamand. However, this is the land of one of the oldest noble families of the country, and the burden of traditions drags along its share of plots and resentments. So the situation is not as secure as would be hoped.

This Domain took in the Liturgist deserters during the second crusade against Urgamand. Though the baron acknowledged them as his subjects, the local people are quite hostile towards them. This has caused several crises already, and the situation keeps getting worse.

An Inspired is now the ruler of this barony. But, though he involves himself wholeheartedly in the duties bestowed by his Flame, he shows more and more loathing for the responsibilities of his office and title. Having befriended an outlaw, he does not suspect the haste with which his own cousin is planning his downfall.

History

The origins of the Arboline family are inseparable from those of the Realm itself. This long line of barons has always ruled over Arboline's fertile lands, which are blessed with the fairest weather.

Defenders of Urgamish traditions, the Arbolines have always been staunch supporters of the First Baron. The family is renowned throughout Urgamand for its wisdom and decency.

The last famous name in their long line is Golwef. His rule was threatened by the Janrenian invasion and the Liturgist crusade, but Golwef proved himself worthy of his title and ancestors. He managed to spare his subjects many hardships, while energetically helping Agone of Roundrock save the Realm.

Frenolen of Arboline succeeded him ten years ago. Son and sole heir of Golwef, he shouldered the title of baron at an early age. Confronted today with a very demanding situation, his abilities are severely put to the test. He is following in the footsteps of his ancestors and seems, despite his youth, to have inherited all their wisdom.

Such a high opinion of Frenolen is not universally shared. His cousin Herles and others are actively scheming to depose him, and seize the reins of power.

Arrival of the Liturgists

The crusade organized by the Pontiff of the Liturgical Province against Agone of Roundrock stirred the discontent of many of the realms' denizens. Enlisted against their will, some crusaders deserted to join the Urgamish resistance.

Seeing these events unfold, Golwef was sensitive to the plight of the refugees and granted them sanctuary in his Domain. Enlisting the help of his subjects to feed and heal them, he gathered these potential allies in a camp built near his castle. His generous acts also enabled him to root out traitors and spies among the deserters.

After the defeat and departure of the Liturgists from Urgamand, these refugees settled permanently in Arboline. A few were able to coexist with the local population, but most were seen by the Urgamish people as remnants of the enemy that had plundered their country (even though they couldn't return to the Liturgical Province without being burnt at the stake). True to his pledge, the baron did all he could to help them and soothe the resentment of his people, but hatred slowly grew.

As a result, the Domain is overpopulated. The refugees suffer the most from the resulting troubles. Ostracized and excluded from the villages, they live in misery and squalor.

THE HERETICS

This is the name the Urgamish denizens of the Domain give to the refugees and their offspring, despite the fact that most of these poor people are still faithful to Saint Noven's teachings. They live in a camp located north of Lanarlion. This shantytown of insalubrious hovels shelters a sickly and famished population.

Most of the natives of Arboline despise the refugees, who, rejected and excluded, often have no choice but to resort to thievery and crime to survive. The Wreckers denounce this segregation and have become the refugees' local heroes.

THE ARBOLINE BARONY

Realm: Urgamand
Ruler: Frenolen of Arboline
Strength: 7 Inspired, 7,500 Dullen

BODY: 6/4
Army: 6
Defense: 5
Denizens: 7
Organization: 5

SPIRIT: 6/5
Finance: 6
Information: 6

SOUL: 5/4
Magical ability: 5
Diplomatic relations: 6

Frenolen and Lunelon

The years caught up with Golwef, who died during an exceptionally harsh winter. As Frenolen became baron, a group of refugees infuriated by their lot gathered themselves into a band of ship-wreckers. By the time the new baron was settled in his office, they were organized enough to protect themselves effectively. Frenolen had an arduous task waiting for him when he tried to put an end to their activities. He was hard-pressed by the legitimate demands of the residents of the harbor, and he had to spend large amounts of money to protect them and to pursue the troublesome outlaws.

While trying to bring them to justice, Frenolen couldn't help sympathizing with them. He resolved to try to negotiate with the Wreckers.

The group's leader, Lunelon, agreed to meet the baron and discuss a compromise. They parleyed a few times, and despite the circumstances, took a liking to each other. They eventually discovered they were both bearers of the Flame, and from then on became fast friends. This unexpected turn of event led Frenolen to keep his ties with Lunelon a secret, and the latter's activities became less conspicuous.

Recent Events

Herles knows nothing yet of his cousin's connection with the Wreckers. If he finds out, he will do everything he can to use this secret to overthrow Frenolen. The Wreckers still destroy ships, though less frequently than they used to, and with hardly any loss of life since they were joined by Permun, a Jornist mage close to the baron, who is skilled at incapacitating his foes. They live on the coast and spend their time exploring the many creeks and sea-caves on the Domain, some of which are in the hands of the Masque.

Frenolen sends food, weapons, and even trusted people to the Wreckers. He intends to turn them into an armed force able to contend with the Enemy in all its guises. Their first goal is to cleanse the Domain, but he envisions eventually using the group to cross the borders and help other Inspired in their struggles. This is still a distant prospect, though.

Geography

Arboline is an old coastal barony located only a few leagues from the border of the Liturgical Province. It is blessed with balmy weather, despite frequent showers and strong ocean winds. The area is mostly made up of green plains sprinkled with groves. The land is fertile and the peasants have no trouble feeding their families.

In the south of the Domain, the moor stretches to the horizon. In the southeast the hills are covered by a thick forest whose variety of flora is legendary, drawing herbalists in search of rare plants. The north border follows a river that turns into a muddy delta before flowing out to sea.

The castle where the baron lives is built in Lanarlion. This harbor is not big enough to be called a city, but it is an important center for trade that, like many Urgamish seaports, shelters a small fleet in the service of the First Baron. The quality of the Domain's products is gaining notoriety and the shipping business is giving rise to a local bourgeoisie. The earliest of Lanarlion's buildings are as old as Arboline Castle. These constructions are architectural marvels that give the place a good deal of cachet with tourists.

Arboline Castle

Facing the ocean in the center of the village is Arboline Castle, residence of about thirty nobles. Only Frenolen holds power over the Domain, but all have Arboline blood flowing through their veins. This doesn't necessarily entail wealth, but most have enough resources to live as befits a member of the Urgamish nobility. The castle itself is a curiosity. It is huge and designed in a very grandiose style of architecture. It purportedly dates back to the Flamboyance and was built above the ruins of one of that era's cities. No one has discovered any mystical properties of the castle, though specialists from the Square said the powers of such a building might be dormant and only reveal themselves in answer to a climatic event.

Shops and houses are scattered on either side of the castle, and the narrow canals that lead to the sea are devoted to fishing and the shipment of goods. Between great wooden warehouses, seamen busily load and unload cargo under the watchful gaze of merchants and their accountants. The place is busy all day long, but after dark, despite patrols of the baron's militia, it is not a safe place to be without a weapon.

The Coast

Swathed in mist, as darkness gives way to the first rosy glimmers of dawn, the granite cliffs overlooking the sea are a magnificent sight. They vary in height from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet. The coastline seems straight enough, but the cliffs are indented and dug up by the sea and the weather. As a result they are sprinkled with small grottoes and rivulets. A footpath on the cliffs follows the coast from one end of the Domain to the other. Used by the

A wrecker

Wreckers, it is reputedly dangerous and is taken less and less by the native people as time goes by.

The Wreckers

Lunelon gathered this bunch around him, and they view him as their savior and legitimate leader. Their small community is organized around principles of egalitarianism and a fair allotment of rewards, not unlike a pirate crew. Though few of them are aware of the implications of the struggle against the Enemy they are being led into, most are very happy about this turn of events. For them it is a way to feed their families while doing something useful and without resorting to criminal acts. They are mostly good and brave people that were driven over the edge by their desperate situation. They are aware of the risks taken by the baron in protecting them and view him as a holy man. Though letting their victims live seemed at first a dangerous idea, they eventually accepted Permun and his sleep spells with some relief.

The Villages

Three villages have been built on the Arboline lands: **Tanderl** in the east, **Polim** in the north (near the Mistelet Delta), and **Lomoc** at the foot of the hills to the southeast. The last makes use of the varied vegetation to produce all sorts of perfumed honeys. And the delta's meaty eels have established several cooks' reputations in Polim.

Give or take a few niceties, the three villages are almost identical. They are each fifty to sixty people strong, mostly from peasant families. The baron's militia maintains an outpost in each village, with three to five soldiers in residence. The villagers profit from the access to the sea provided by the harbor, exporting what they cannot sell locally. This allows them a standard of living other Urgamish peasants envy.

FRENOLEN

Race: human
Age: 31
Height: 6'1" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 198 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 5
STAmina: 6
STRength: 8

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTeligence: 8
WILlpower: 8

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 5
CREativity: 4

Secondary attributes
AIM: 5
MEL: 6
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: +1

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 6, Eloquence 6, Etiquette: Urgamish nobility 8, Fast-talk 7, Stewardship 6, Trade 4, Traditions: Urgamand 6
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 7, Geography 5, History & legends (spe: Arboline) 5, Language: Urgamish 7, Language: Keshite 3, Law 8, Strategy 7
Rogue: Hunt 5, Intrigue 5
Trials: Dodge 6, Ride 7, Weapon: Sword 8, Weapon: Shield 8, Weapon: Mace 6

Assets & Faults:

Lord (5), Remains of the Flamboyance (3), Dark secret (2)

Combat

Initiative: 11, Sword 12, Mace 11, Knight shield 8
Melee attack: Sword 16, Mace 14, Shield 15
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 2
Parry: Sword 16, Mace 12, Shield 19
Ranged defense: 1

Quote:

"The point is not what duty demands, but what can be done."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+5 (S/I)	0
Mace	0	+1	-1	+5 (C)	0
Knight shield	-3	0	+4	+2 (C)	0

Armor: partial plate (penalty -10, prot. 13)

LUNELON

Race: human
Age: 29
Height: 5'10" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 159 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 7
PERception: 7
STAmina: 6
STRength: 5

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTeligence: 6
WILlpower: 8

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 5

Secondary attributes
AIM: 7
MEL: 6
HP: 45
SWT: 15
CWT: 22
DB: 0

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 2

Skills:
Courtly: Diplomacy 5, Eloquence 9, Fast-talk 3
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 2, Cult: Liturgist 8, Geography 3, Language: Liturgic 8, Language: Urgamish 5, Navigation 6, Strategy 5
Rogue: Conceal 7, Disguise 4, 6, Intrigue 4, Poisons 6, Stealth 8
Trials: Alertness 7, Athletics 5, Dodge 7, Survival 6, Swim 5, Weapon: Sword 7, Weapon: Shield 5, Weapon: Bow 7
Occult: Dancer lore 3, Demonology 1

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Attractive (1), Ill-repute (1)

Combat
Initiative: 15, Sword 16, Knight shield 12, Bow 19
Melee attack: Sword 15, Shield 12
Ranged attack: Bow 15
Melee defense:
Dodge: 14
Parry: Sword 15, Shield 16
Ranged defense: 7

Quote:
"Speak then, friend. But keep in mind that my blade has no fondness for liars and spies."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+4 (S/I)	0
Knight shield	-3	0	+4	+1 (C)	0
Bow	+4	0	-	+7 (I)	0

Armor: leather, vest only (penalty -1, prot. 2)

People of Note

Frenolen, Baron of Arboline

As flaxen as his ancestors, Frenolen is a force of nature. His quiet, thoughtful, and sometimes dreamy disposition prevents him from being a good warrior, but he is nonetheless able to face adversity and welcomes his duties as baron of the Domain. He is an upright and eager man, worthy of the Arboline name.

He is also a tormented individual, obsessed with the secret of his friendship with Lunelon, and yearning to leave his office to fight the Enemy throughout the Twilight Realms. He feels he cannot abandon the Domain without dishonoring the memory of his father and those who ruled before him. This dilemma weighs heavily on his soul, and he is desperately looking for a way to alleviate the situation.

Lunelon, Chief Wrecker

Tall and lean, Lunelon has an intense and piercing stare that gives him a powerful presence, which he knows how to use to his best advantage.

He is insubordinate to the core, foolhardy and fascinating. He cannot conceive of leaving an injustice unpunished, and makes himself the champion of all causes. His friendship with Frenolen is genuine, and he has involved himself as deeply in fighting the Masque and its minions as he did in the rebellion that spawned the Wreckers.

Permun, Jornist Wrecker

This mage was taught in the Arboline School and was one of the most ardent pupils ever welcomed to the venerable institution. Being of Liturgist extraction, he was granted tuition only by hiding his true identity from the faculty and the other students. He was found out and expelled one year before the end of his studies, and therefore no gem adorns his forehead. His fascination with Dancers made him strive to finish his studies by himself.

His ambition has won him the esteem of Frenolen. When he was brought before the baron to be punished for some minor crimes, he was sentenced to spend a few years in the depths of the dungeon, but the next day, an

PERMUN

Race: human
Age: 24
Height: 5'7" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 143 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 5
STAmina: 6
STRength: 6

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTeligence: 8
WILpower: 7

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 7

Secondary attributes
AIM: 4
MEL: 5
ASC: 8
HP: 51
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 6

Skills:
Courtly: Eloquence 5, Stewardship 4, Traditions: Urgamand 5, Traditions: Liturgical province 2
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 6, Astronomy 5, Geography 7, History & legends 2, Language: Urgamish 6, Language: Lutirgic 3, Plant lore 5, Season: Winter 3, Season: Spring 4
Rogue: Poisons 4, Stealth 4
Trials: Alertness 5, Dodge 6, First Aid 5, Ride 4, Survival 4, Weapon: Dagger 8, Weapon: Mace 6
Occult: Cipher lore 5, Dancer lore 5, Demonology 3, Resonance: Jornist 6

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Gifted Dancer, Ill-repute

Combat
Initiative: 10
Melee attack: Mace 13, Dagger 15
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 10
Parry: Mace 9, Dagger 12
Ranged defense: 5

Ascendancy
ASC APT 21

1 Dancer, Total Stamina 6

Spells
Minor healing (15), Invisible arm (15), Protective aura (25), Sleep (25)

Quote:
"Permun the Mage! Do I have to jam a pebble in my forehead for you to acknowledge what I am?"

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	0 (I)	-1
Mace	0	+1	-1	+4 (C)	0

Armor: leather, vest only (Penalty -1, Prot. 2)

incredulous Permun found himself among the Wreckers. He has since settled in as Lunelon's lieutenant, and his magic allows them to put the survivors of wrecks to sleep, so the boats can be plundered without killing the crew.

A discovery they made about the area's Dancers unsettled him, and he now devotes all his abilities to finding an explanation and a solution to this grievous problem (see 'Grottoes and Creeks' below).

Cousin Herles of Arboline

A smooth talker with a handsome face, Herles is an inexorable charmer. Long and well-kept blond tresses fall over his broad shoulders. Always dressed according to the latest fashions, he grooms himself almost to excess.

Herles is extremely self-centered and wants at any cost to become baron. He is terribly jealous of Frenolen, but hides his animosity behind a veil of politeness. He is currently gathering his most influential relatives to overthrow the baron. He has an extensive network of contacts and informants, and is on the verge of becoming truly dangerous. Frenolen is not aware of the threat, occupied as he is with the Wreckers and the demands of his office. But Herles has spies all over the castle and it is only a matter of time before Frenolen's secret is revealed.

Intrigues

Herles' Conspiracy

Frenolen's cousin has built an extensive network of informants for himself. His spies are everywhere and information flows back to him in record time. Not unlike an eminence grise, he knows much about the family's secrets. At least he knows enough to blackmail many into serving his cause.

His brother and sister for instance are impossibly in love with one another and rallied to him after a" little chat". The chamberlain also chose Herles' side after his previous career as a cutpurse was unearthed. Willingly or not, many people close to the baron have begun plotting his demise.

Herles fears the birth of an heir. He knows he will sooner or later find a way to compel his cousin to abdi-

HERLES

Race: human
Age: 41
Height: 5'11" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 161 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1/0

Body: 1/0
Body bonus: +1
AGility: 7
PERception: 6
STAmina: 5
STRength: 6

Spirit: 1/0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTeligence: 7
WILlpower: 7

Soul: 1/0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 9
CREativity: 8

Secondary attributes
AIM: 6
MEL: 6
HP: 45
SWT: 15
CWT: 22
DB: 0

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkness: 0
Perfidy: 0

Skills:
Courtly: Eloquence 6, Etiquette: Nobility 5, Fast talk 5, Stewardship 2, Traditions: Urgamand 7
Knowledge: Alphabet: Armgardic 7, Astronomy 2, Geography 7, History & legends 4, Language: Urgamish 6, Language: Keshite 5, Law 6, Strategy 6
Rogue: Hunt 4, Stealth (spe: indoors) 6

Trials: Alertness 6, Athletics 4, Dodge 7, First Aid 3, Ride 6, Weapon: Rapier 8, Weapon: Shield 8, Weapon: Sword 7

Assets, Faults, Gifts, and Sorrows:
Attractive (1), Presumptuous (1)

Combat
Initiative: 14, Sword 15, Rapier 16, Knight shield 11
Melee attack: Sword 15, Shield 15, Rapier 17
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 15
Parry: Sword 15, Shield 19, Rapier 16
Ranged defense: 7

Quote:
"I am certain we can be of help to each other, my friend."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+4 (S/I)	0
Knight shield	-3	0	+4	+1 (C)	0
Rapier	+2	+2	+1	+3 (I)	0

Armor: None, but can easily obtain a full suit of plate armor if need be.

cate, but if Frenolen begets a son before surrendering his office, the child would become baron and Herles only a regent. This is what currently obsesses him. He may decide to push his luck by engineering an "unfortunate accident". If assassination turns out to be the only way to eliminate the baron, he will not shy from it.

Grottoes and Creeks

The Urgamish coastline conceals numerous mysterious creeks and caves.

The Wreckers know the coast better than anybody and have set up shelters in these isolated places. Lunelon and Permun are convinced some of them are hideouts for servants of the Masque. They have noticed that Dancers who leave the vicinity of Lanarlion to enjoy the cliffs' rocks tend to come back marked by the Masque. Perfidy and Darkness take hold of the Dancers, leading them to lose interest in the Dance and behave incoherently. This corruption is swift and the infected Dancer invariably dies within a fortnight after contamination.

The outlaws are actively seeking this corruption in some of the deepest and most inaccessible grottoes. They have yet to find anything of interest.

The Beast of the Hills

The southeastern hilly part of the Domain has lately been the stage for disquieting events. People from the Lomoc village have had their herds decimated during the night. They found carcasses eaten to the bone, others burnt to a crisp, and some beasts are still missing. Different herds were slaughtered within a few nights of each other. The peasants have organized a watch to monitor the remaining animals night and day. Rumors abound, and there is talk of a monstrous creature coming down from the forest in the southeast. Occupied elsewhere, the baron has not yet turned his attention to the matter, but three soldiers from an outpost who went to investigate have been missing for a few days.

These incidents have been caused by a fleeing group of Obscurantists. Wanted by the Cipher-sorcerer, they took refuge in the hills to shake the censors off their trail. They are escorted by half a score of combat-hardened mercenaries. They attacked the herds to get food, and the mages used their spells to cover their tracks. They are now hiding in the depths of the forest, waiting for the censors to abandon their pursuit.

A demon from the Abyss lives in a small hut deep inside the forest. Its advocatus, the owner of the place, lived as a hermit far from civilization. He is now dead, but the demon is still bound by the connivance and is enjoying its unexpected surcease on Harmundia. The connivance stipulated that the demon had to obey its invoker and tend to his house and his flock of sheep. Though the poor man is dead, the demon still cares for the house and survives on eating a sheep every month. Enjoying this quiet and peaceful life, the demon never attracted any attention in the years since its invoker's death.

The soldiers from the outpost came upon this forgotten hut and its bizarre occupant. Thinking they had found the elusive "beast of the hills", they attacked. The demon, befuddled and frightened by this lack of manners, had no choice but to slaughter them.

Using this Domain with "King of Spring"

As with most Urgamish Domains, this one can be adapted with only minor changes.

Playing in Arboline

Assets

Harbor merchant (counts as an Office) 2

Between the competition and the security problems caused by the Wreckers, the way was not easy. But you manage, and your little business now provides you with a hefty income.

You are respected by the citizens of Arborline.

Link with the Wreckers 1

Though perfectly integrated into the population, you have some connections with the coastal outlaws. Most likely, these relations are commercial, with heavy profits. Whatever the case, you benefit from a secret link with the "Plague of Arboline".

Fought under Golwef 1

It's been a while now, but you will never forget the glory of knowing the hero and faithfully serving his cause. (Maybe you have scars to show for it?) You are respected by all and embody a principle which many young people find inspiring. Your character must be over 40 years old to take this asset.

Family of Arboline (must be taken with Nobility) 1

You are one of the many members of the family. You aren't necessarily rich, but you have your own place in the castle and are welcome in the great hall to dine with your kin at the end of each week. Your name resonates with the history of Arboline, and many Urgamish nobles respect it. They listen to you and value your opinions. This is an asset that can be very useful if you know how to use it well.

Wrecker 2

You are one of the refugees who had the courage to rebel. The other Wreckers are now your only family. The baron himself secretly acknowledges the righteousness of your cause, and with his protection, you are above the law. You are part of this bonded band and you can count on them, and on the baron to some extent. Of course, you owe them the same support.

Faults

Criminal 1 to 4

You are wanted by the barony's authorities to answer for a crime. The value of this fault depends on the gravity of the charges against you (1 to 3 points) and on whether or not you are a refugee from the Liturgical Province (1 additional point).

The baron must render justice in his Domain, but perhaps the Wreckers will decide you can be put to better use without a rope around your neck...

Enemy of the baron 2

You are an accomplice to one of the many schemers conspiring against the baron. You may even be a pretender yourself. This has become public knowledge and people are suspicious of you. Traditions are deep-rooted in old Domains like Arboline, and for most of the villagers, overthrowing Golwef's son would be a travesty.

Victim of the Wreckers 4

You invested your entire fortune in a small business, and one evening Fate's finger pointed at your boat. They took everything and scuttled it.

You are now drowning in debts, and a deep hatred for those pirates gnaws at you. They will pay!

9 ~ The Horde

Lyphan

They are maniacs! I cannot believe that Inspiration would manifest itself in this way. From the looks of them, they are the Enemy's servants. Their potential for violence is immense, and they betray an utter lack of scruples. They plunder, they rape, and they kill shamelessly, spreading terror throughout the steppes of Lyphan and the Wild Reaches. Ask Prince Guildrik himself, whose city is so dangerously near the Great Wall, how he has learned to dread the Horde! And I, the greatest madman of all, infiltrated their ranks to gather information for our order about the threat these savages constitute.

Unlike most Lyphanians, they respect magicians, so my Art protects me for the moment. But should they discover these papers, I imagine they would tie me to their fastest steed and drag me for leagues across this broken ground.

Yet I have decided to stay with these barbarians. Call me a fool, but I am even beginning to wonder if they might be our greatest hope. They hunt down the servants of the Masque and the Darken relentlessly... mercilessly. And their hearts are incorruptible. Could they become champions of our cause?

I'll let you draw your own conclusions.

Malachine,
White Wolf Inn, Bukhrosha.

History

The Home

There is a name that strikes fear into the souls of all Lyphanians. It echoes in yurts when mothers threaten disobedient children, and even the most valiant warriors shudder at the thought of crossing paths with this fearsome being. She is Pantagrua.

Born in Ahalak´s clan forty-two years ago, the girl lost her parents at the age of fourteen. Young and insolent, she refused to marry even the clan's best warrior, and she departed for the vast steppes, with only her father's horse, a bow, and a sword. Some said she left after murdering a spurned suitor who had raped her. Others said the young girl was guided by a supernatural force. Her wanderings brought her to a strange place on Lyphan´s northern borders, where the tribes rarely ventured and the cold has enough bite to kill a man in his sleep. Here a ring of stones, erected by a lost tribe, in

THE HORDE

Realm: Lyphan
Ruler: Pantagrua
Strength: 10 Inspired, 500 Dullen

BODY: 2/0
Army: 7
Defense: 2
Denizens: 5
Organization: 2

SPIRIT: 4/0
Finance: 4 (pillage)
Information: 5

SOUL: 3/0
Magical ability: 5
Diplomatic relations: 3

the days of the Flamboyance, towers above the wilderness. For two years, Pantagrua lived here, in the cold, free from the hatred of her people. To survive, she became a predator of the steppe – sturdy and robust – a fearsome hunter. To forget her loneliness, she played drums made from the bones and skins of her prey. Her music resounded on the steppes and, guided by the place's Inspiration, she discovered the Magical Art of Tune by herself. She gained the power to control beasts with the rhythm of her music. During her exile, she only encountered one visitor from civilization, but he changed her life.

An ice giant, an inveterate traveler, arrived at the ring of stones on a crisp summer day. The young girl challenged him to a duel to defend her territory, but the giant defeated her easily. The next evening, he explained that he had been searching for her because she was Inspired. He confided everything he knew about the Flames' enemies – the Masque, the Darken and the Queen of Fall. Since he was the giants' representative at the Decan Council, he knew quite a bit.

The Birth of the Horde

After this encounter, Pantagrua left the Home and started off again for the steppe. She had a new purpose in life – to fight the Enemy – but she was in need of soldiers. One day she noticed a band of the "Wolves of the Steppes". She introduced herself to them as their new chief, but they merely laughed at this impetuous girl of sixteen. The chief mockingly offered her a place in the troop if she could to tame a mammoth of the steppes with her bare hands. Without a word, Pantagrua left her weapons at the chief's feet. She came back the next morning, perched on a mammoth's back. She dismounted and challenged the Wolves'chief to unarmed combat. He was a dead man. Half of the warriors left the troop, but the others swore loyalty to their new mistress.

Pantagrua sent her Horde out on the steppe in search of any sign of the Enemy. They slaughtered bands of Flayed (see AGONE rulebook p. 253) and battled tribes whose shamans had dealings with the Abyss. Thus a crusade was born.

The Horde has hunted for twenty-six years, and the blood of its enemies has flowed across Lyphan. Time has changed Pantagrua. She is now a goliath, weighing more than thirty stones! She is famous for decapitating enemies with a single punch. People secretly refer to Pantagrua's war band as the "Horde of the Mammoth" (and they're not necessarily referring to her mount).

New Companions

Pantagrua returns to the Home regularly. On several occasions, she has met Inspired, attracted as she was years ago by this vestige of the Flamboyance, eager to join her cause. The first two were the black feys, Galatea and Amaltea, experts in the Magical Arts, who became Pantagrua´s advisers. Since then, about ten Inspired have joined the Horde, which is now comprised of more than five hundred warriors.

Whenever Pantagrua feels that the Horde is too small (and this happens frequently) she orders raids on nearby farming villages. Boys and girls are abducted, bringing sorrow to their parents, and the Horde organizes cruel tests to select the hardiest, offering them the opportunity to become warriors. A tenth of the children die during these tests, whereas another tenth succeed. The rest are abandoned not far from their homes, and usually are able to rejoin their families.

Due to the temperament of the Horde´s mistress, girls are often favored in these brutal contests. The Horde has one woman for every two men in its ranks, an unheard-of ratio for a group of warriors like this. The women often prove more savage and bloodthirsty than men. Most of them try not to become pregnant, because a baby would be a hindrance on the Horde´s marches, though it still happens from time to time. Some women leave the Horde, but the bravest stay and bear the child under the harshest conditions. The newborns are abandoned at the door of a yurt.

Beyond the Border

Lyphan was not enough for Pantagrua. The Horde turned towards the Wild Reaches. It penetrated much farther than the typical Lyphanian raids, leaving a wake of bloody encounters. Pillages and skirmishes were not enough to unite the Wild Reaches' tribes against this threat, so the Horde crossed the area without difficulty. The native people even displayed some fascination and respect for these brave warriors.

One day, the Horde reached the Lightning-Dragon Crest. The meeting with the giants was friendly, and Pantagrua bartered all she had amassed during her raids for steel weapons. Since then, the Horde has undertaken this journey many times, spending lavishly to obtain some of the best arms in Harmundia. Metal armor has replaced leather and fur; steel has replaced bronze. The Horde still uses standard Lyphanian leather when traveling, but each warrior keeps a hidden armory in his or her saddlebags.

Today, the Horde patrols the Lyphanian steppes and plans to wage war much further... Pantagrua suspects the Masque of gathering his strength behind the Great Wall, but she has not succeeded in breaking through and entering the Princely Communes yet.

THE CHASM OF SHADOWS

Darkening: 5
Terror DIF: 0 most of the time, 15 when demons are present outside the Chasm
Darkening Points gain: +2 to +10 according to the type of demon present; maximum 10 points

Geography

During its countless hours of riding, the Horde has discovered many unique places in the steppes.

The Home

The Horde returns frequently to the place where Pantagrua first received her revelation. Inspired are drawn by this vestige of the Flamboyance, and it is not unusual for new recruits to be here awaiting the Horde.

The Home is situated in the far north, in a harsh and unforgiving land where the frosted terrain of the steppes crunches under boots and hooves. Herds of mammoths provide abundant game, and aswald tigers are common, but the Home itself seems to be a protected place, and animals instinctively avoid it.

The Home is composed of twelve twenty-foot-high stones, standing in a regular order around an enormous rock, at the foot of which one can see the ruins of Pantagrua´s hut. The twelve stones are covered with deeply etched runes that no member of the Horde can decipher. All around stands a chaotic field of oddly-shaped stone mounds, each less than a yard high.

No one remembers who build this place nor why, but the Horde respects it immensely.

The Chasm of Shadows

On the steppes, in a place the tribes avoid, an impassable chasm impedes unwary travelers. It looks like and ordinary crevice, but its walls sink deep into the Earth´s bowels. Many adventurers have tried to

climb down these walls, but none have returned. Legends say the Chasm of Shadows leads into the Abyss.

Indeed, each time it enters the region, the Horde discovers and eliminates demons hiding among the stones scattered around the chasm. Pantagrua has good reason to think that the chasm is the source of the wild demons she killed in the steppes and she would like to take more permanent measures to stop them.

Six years ago, the Horde met Devilar the minotaur in this place. He became one of their best warriors.

Makioul´s Grove

The Horde recently discovered a copse of trees hidden in the Tariander Mountains, west of the steppe, not far from Janrenian border. The place shelters a good-natured troll, who has been living there for centuries and rules over a small realm of trees and animals. Realizing that this creature is an ancient marvel, Pantagrua approached it with caution. She went alone into the grove, and was able to communicate, using a mixture of gestures and drum tunes.

Makioul the troll was happy to share his grove. Pantagrua stayed there several days, trying to persuade him

PANTAGRUA

Origin: Lyphan
Gender: Female
Race: Human
Age: 42
Height: 6'5" (SIZ +1)
Weight: 440 lbs.
MV: 2

Attributes
Flame: 4
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 8
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +8
AGIlity: 2
PERception: 5
STAmina: 9
STRength: 11

Spirit: 4
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: +4
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 8

Soul: 4
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +4

CHArisma: 8
CREativity: 4

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 3
ASC: -
ART: 6
HP: 81
SWT: 27
CWT: 40
DB: +8

Fortune points: 8
Flame Powers: Soul of Flame, Immolation, War Fury
Darkening Points: 8
Perfidy Points: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Beast Lore 10, Geography 4, Language (Kosaki) 6, Strategy 8
Trials: Alertness 6, Ride (Mammoth) 8, Survival (Steppe) 9, Weapons (Brawl) 10, Weapons (Bow) 9
Courtly: Eloquence 9, Music (Drum) 8, Stewardship 6, Trade 5, Traditions (Lyphan) 9

Occult: Concord 3, Tune 6
Rogue: Hunt 6

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows:
Huge (5), Obesity (-5), Insensitive to Cold (2), Rune (3, see p. 105)

Combat
Initiative 15, Punch 11
Melee attack: Punch 24
Ranged attack: Bow 20
Melee defense
Dodge: 6
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 3

Magical Arts
Tune APT (Drum) 16

Known Opuses
All Drum opuses, +5 bonus when the spell affects an animal

Typical quote:
"Noble warriors of Lyphan, the Enemy hides in these yurts. He lives in the mind of all these poor wretches. We shall liberate them. Chaaaaaarge!"

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam. +DB	SIZ	Range
Fist	-4	+1	-	+5 (C)	-	-
Long bow	+4	0	-	+6 (I)	+1	500 ft

Armor: furs (penalty -1, prot. 3)

Mount: War mammoth

Skills: Weapons (Trunk 7, Trampling 5, Tusk 5), Hunt 5

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam. +DB
Trunk	6	15	-	+43
Tusk	3	12	-	+46 (I)

The Mammoth can use the Charge maneuver with its tusks and Throwing Down with its trunk. Tusks are equivalent to horns.

to join the Horde to fight the Enemy. Makioul declined this invitation, but if confronted with a great problem – such as an attack on his grove – he would enlist the Horde´s help.

People of Note

Here are the Inspired who lead the Horde.

Pantagrua

This enormous woman is the sole and undisputed mistress of the Horde. Perched on her war mammoth, she plays the drum to boost the morale of her troops. After each victory, she gets off her mount and drags her 440 pounds to face the leader of the enemy forces, whom she challenges in a barehanded duel. Do not underestimate her because beneath her lumbering form lurks a mountain of muscles that could break your neck with a single blow...

Galatea and Amaltea

These two black feys would be sisters if such a concept existed for their race. A long time ago, they were drawn to the Home. Pantagrua found them while they were studying the standing stones, and they became the first Inspired to join the Horde. To this day, the feys have been unable to penetrate the secrets of the stones.

The sisters have mastered all the Concordist arts. Galatea plays flute and practices Shape, while Amaltea is an expert in Vista and Scansion.

Together, they try to merge their arts and have obtained interesting results. They can combine music with poetry to manipulate minds. They have also created works that unite Shape with Vista.

Because they have always lived together, their attributes are nearly identical and you can use the same statistics for both of them.

GALATEA AND AMALTEA

Origin: Lyphan
Gender: Female
Race: Black fey
Age: 421
Height: 2' 8" (SIZ -2)
Weight: 33 lbs.
MV: 1/9

Attributes
Flame: 1
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 1
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 8
PERception: 5
STAmina: 3
STRength: 2

Spirit: 1
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTelligence: 10
WILL: 9

Soul: 5
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +5
CHArisma: 5
CREativity: 13

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 6
AIM: 6
ASC: -
ART: 14
HP: 22
SWT: 7
CWT: 11
DB: -4

Fortune points: 2
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 6
Perfidy Points: 5

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 9, Astronomy 6, History 6, Language: Keshite 6, Language: Kosaki 8, Season: Winter 8
Trials: Alertness 9, Dodge 10, Weapons (Pin) 5
Courtly: Music (Flute) 8/-3, Painting 3/9, Poetry 2/10, Sculpture 9/5
Occult: Concord 9/2, Scansion 2/6, Shape 7/3, Tune 6, Vista 3/10
Rogue: Stealth 6

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows
Keen (3), Talented Sculpture/Poetry (2)

Combat

Initiative 14, Pin 12
Melee attack: Pin 11
Ranged attack: Bow 20
Melee defense
Dodge: 19
Parry: Pin 12
Ranged defense: 9

Magical Arts

Tune APT (Flute) 27/16, Scansion APT 21/26, Shape APT 27/22, Vista APT 16/27

Known Opuses

Galatea knows all Concordist flute and Shape opuses. Amaltea knows all Scansion and Winter Vista opuses.

Typical quote:

"Amaltea, what do you think of this gig I've composed?"
"Marvelous! Let me sing it for you..."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam. +DB	SIZ
Pin	-2	0	0	-4 (I)	-3

Armor: none

Devilar

Devilar is a renegade minotaur. He fled the Abyss through the Chasm of Shadows, and one day he hopes to close it. The Horde came across him while he was in a life or death struggle with three Vermillions. After the battle, the Horde took him to the Home, where his Inspired nature revealed itself.

Devilar hopes one day the Abyss should be cut off from the surface world. Left to themselves, its denizens would waste away. He knows that this event would deprive him of any chance to have offspring, but he accepts his lot. He is willing to see his race vanish forever, if it means that the demons disappear as well. He feels alone in the world, like a tragic hero. Thinking himself doomed, he fights with abandon – a true berserker.

Recently, the minotaur purchased some weapons and metal armor from the giants of Lightning-Dragon Crest.

DEVILAR

Origin: Lyphan
Gender: Male
Race: Minotaur
Age: 39
Height: 8' 3" (SIZ +1)
Weight: 456 lbs.
MV: 4

Attributes
Flame: 1
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 2
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +2
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 5
STAmina: 13
STRength: 12

Spirit: 1
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTelligence: 10
WILL: 9

Soul: 1
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 4
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 7
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 90
SWT: 30
CWT: 45
DB: +10

Fortune points: 2
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 17
Perfidy Points: 4

Skills
Knowledge: Language (Kosabi) 5, Season: Summer 5, Strategy 6, Surgery 4
Trials: Alertness 9, Dodge 8, First Aid 6, Weapons (Horns) 8, Weapons (great axe) 10
Courtly: -
Occult: Demonology 6
Rogue: Gambling 4, Hunt 6

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows:
Goring, Minor night vision, Blazing Flame (3), Spartan (2), Immunity to alcohol (1), Circle I Invoking (but Devilar does not care of it), Obsession (fight the creatures of the Abyss), Trickster (Devilar hacked his imp to pieces so many times, it finally decided to leave him alone)

Combat
Initiative 12, Horns 11, Big Axe 14
Melee attack: Axe 19, Horns 17
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 5
Parry: Axe 18
Ranged defense: 2

Mount:
Solid war horse, clad in leather

Typical quote:
"Leave them to me. You do not know whom you are dealing with. These worthless creatures should not have left their shadows. They will pay for their crimes."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam. +DB	SIZ
Axe	+2	0	-1	+22	+2
Horns	-1	0	-	+13	-

Armor: partial plate (penalty -10, prot. 13)

Yalgor

Yalgor is a true Wolf of the Steppes. He was ten years old when Pantagrua became the mistress of the Horde. Today, he is her loyal second. She awarded him this office when she discovered – during their last journey to the Home – that her old companion was an Inspired too. He told Pantagrua he was resting near the standing stones when he had visions of a giant from the Decan Council presenting him with a Flame.

Aside from the Flame, Yalgor´s attributes are typical of a Wolf of the Steppes. He prefers the lance and short bow, and he wears leather armor because it provides greater mobility. Like his companions, he hunts with a falcon.

Intrigues

The Kabala War

The members of the Horde do not keep kabalas (the isolated cemeteries where Lyphanians traditionally bury their heroes). Its members are perpetual wanderers, and exist outside the tribal system of their brethren. Self-indulgently, Pantagrua decided that all her warriors merited sepulchers and now shamelessly uses the kabalas of all the tribes of the steppes. Furthermore, she doesn't dismount to visit the kabalas, which is grossly improper for any Lyphanian.

Some tribes have made complaints to the Galmash, the Council of the Ancients at Bukhrosha, about the Horde's disdain for tradition, and the council consulted Yelala's Oracle about the Horde. The black fey cryptically answered that the Horde's Flames would rise again and

YALGOR

Origin: Lyphan
Gender: Male
Race: Human
Age: 36
Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 200 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 1
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +1
AGility: 9
PERception: 8
STAmina: 6
STRength: 7

Spirit: 1
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: +1
INTelligence: 6
WILL: 5

Soul: 1
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 2
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 8
AIM: 8
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 48
SWT: 16
CWT: 24
DB: +1

Fortune points: 2
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 8
Perfidy Points: 2

Skills
Knowledge: Language (Kosakl) 8, Strategy 7
Trials: Alertness 8, Dodge 6, First Aid 4, Weapons (Axe) 6, Weapons (Bow) 9, Weapons (Lance) 8, Weapons (Shield) 7
Courtly: Traditions: Lyphan 7
Rogue: Hunt 10

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows: Second Wind, Quick reflexes (2), Acute View (1)

Combat
Initiative 21, Lance 27, Axe 22, Targe 18
Melee attack: Axe 15, Lance 17, Targe 17
Ranged attack: Bow 18
Melee defense
Dodge: 14
Parry: Axe 14, Lance 15, Targe 19
Ranged defense: 7

Animals:

A fast charger and a falcon perched on his fist

Typical quote:

"Welcome to our troop, warrior. You have passed the tests, and you may join the Horde. Take this lance and this bow, and this horse is yours now."

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam. +DB	SIZ	Range
Axe	+1	0	-1	+7 (S)	0	
Mounted Lance	+6	0	-2	+8 (I)	+1	
Short Bow	+4	0	-	+4 (I)	-1	260 ft
Targe	-3	+1	+3	+1 (C)	-1	

Armor: full leather armor (penalty -2, prot. 4)

again, and the elders concluded that the Horde would perish in fire. They are currently organizing an expeditionary force, combining the Wolves of the Steppes from half-a-dozen tribes, to eliminate the Horde. The Masque may well have whispered this misinterpretation of the oracle's words to the ancients.

Dreams of Conquest

Except for a few bloody raids in the Wild Reaches, and infrequent visits to Lightning-Dragon Crest, the Horde never leaves the steppes.

But Pantagrua nourishes unbound ambition. She plans to open a breach in the Great Wall to allow the Horde and all Wolves of the Steppes to rush into the Princely Communes. She dreams that it would be easy to conquer some unsuspecting city-state and establish a base there. Then, she could attack the rest of the country, annihilating the Masque's minions.

Pantagrua plans to use a mammoth herd to open the breach. Guided by Tune, the beasts will charge the Great Wall. The edifice is very old and is neglected by the princes. Giants from Lightning-Dragon Crest are forging carapaces to cover the mammoths and protect them from Princean arrows. Once the breach is open, it will be easy to overwhelm the Wall's sentinels.

Pantagrua harbors a second scheme. She wishes to give to Amaltea and Galatea the lore of the libraries of the Liturgical Province. But the only way to get there is through Janrenia. By land, the Tariander Mountains block the way (their narrow passes are definitely not suited for an army), so Pantagrua seeks ships capable of carrying the Horde to Janrenia. From here, she could follow the coast up to the Liturgical Province. Janrenians do not worry her, but she is prepared to face a stiff resistance from the Liturgicals.

The Home's Awakening

The history of the Home is lost among the legends of the Flamboyance. At that time, it maintained a symbiotic link with the Spiritcore. Some Flames passed through the Home, casting a last nostalgic look at Harmundia before ascending to the mythical kingdom to await reincarnation.

Janus, the Great Regulator, often came to sit on the central rock to watch the Flames' ballet and to make sure that the Muses' inspiration would not degenerate into chaos. Other mythical creatures also came to watch the Flames approach the Spiritcore.

Back then Inspiration was exclusively for humanity. The Lady of Autumn had not yet betrayed the Seasons, and the twelve representative of the Decans sometimes met at the Home to meditate on how they might gain inspiration. The twelve standing stones are works of the seasonlings, who were jealous of the humans' gift.

Today, the Home still harbors some of this power, and Inspired feel attracted to the place though the link with the Spiritcore has disappeared. Still, the prophetic runes covering the standing stones suggest a hope of reconnecting with the Spiritcore.

In the first year of the Eclispse, twelve seasonlings made a daring plan to steal Flames. They had to capture a Luminary, link it to the central stone and unite their power in a ritual that would allow them to reach Inspiration's Kingdom. Their efforts ended in failure, and a few years later, Janus granted Inspiration to the seasonlings, so the spell was no longer needed. Harmundia has changed a lot since then. Autumn has become Fall and the Spiritcore is obscured by Twilight. But if twelve Inspired Seasonlings (with bright or dark Flames) brought a Luminary to the Home, they could use the ancient spell to merge into a being of pure light, with the power to rival the Muses and the Ladies of the Seasons.

Today, nobody remembers this spell, but the black feys, Galatea and Amaltea, have almost deciphered the runes. Finding a Luminary, nine Inspired Seasonlings and above all three accommodating (and Inspired) Fallen, all willing to sacrifice themselves, will take a long time.

The Masque

The Bleak Caravan has not crossed the Lyphanian steppes for a very long time. The Masque is worried. In this cold and barren region, he loses track of his creatures, allies, emissaries and spies frequently. The Enemy fears some plot from Janus or the Muses is evolving here. Soon, he will don his Lyphanian disguise and come himself to see what is happening on the steppes. Then, the bleak caravan will head north to destroy the Horde.

But if the Masque delays any further, he will be in for a nasty surprise because the Horde is close to finding a gateway to the Spiritcore that would bring boundless hope to Inspired – a touch of light in the Twilight...

Playing in the Horde

The Inspired in the Horde are Lyphanians. If the Horde meets a stranger at the Home, he (or she) will immediately have to demonstrate his Inspiration to prevent Pantagrua from breaking his neck. For the purposes of the game, performing an Opus or engaging in a thorough discussion about the Flame will suffice.

A Dullen stranger will never be accepted in the Horde, unless he is able to pass for a Lyphanian. He would have to be as cunning as a fox. There is already a stranger who has succeeded: the eminence grise Malachine. This Janrenian Eclipsist, well versed in Lyphanian language and traditions, convinced Pantagrua that he was a shaman exiled by his tribe. Though he has proven his usefulness by advising her on numerous arcane topics, if he were discovered, his life would be in jeopardy.

Here are some assets and faults specific to Inspired of the Horde.

Second (asset, 3, unique)

Pantagrua is unassailable, but you are her second and she is the only one who can countermand your orders. If she died, you would become the Horde's leader.

Runes (asset, variable)

You have studied the runes on the standing stones in the Home, and you are unraveling their secrets. According to the number of Assets Points spent, you can learn the following:

• **The runes inspire you (2):** You have 25 Threshold points to spend in one of the Magical Arts. You don't need a teacher to learn these opuses – the runes are your teacher. The first point in a relevant artistic skill (magical or otherwise) is free.

• **You have seen exceptional things while at the Home (3):** You dreamed scenes of the Flamboyance, of the Decan Council, of Wonders and Prodigies. On a roll against your WIL made by the EG, you are able to feel Inspired or Damned, but you cannot distinguish between them. The difficulty of the roll is 25 – (2 x Flame of the target or Dark Flame for a Damned).

• **You have discovered the secrets of the runes (5):** Your have understood the secret ritual to reconnect with the Spiritcore. Your Flame burns to follow this quest and you gain 1 point in Body, Spirit or Soul. One nagging question remains: where will you find a Luminary and twelve Inspired seasonlings?

USING THIS DOMAIN WITH "KING OF SPRING"

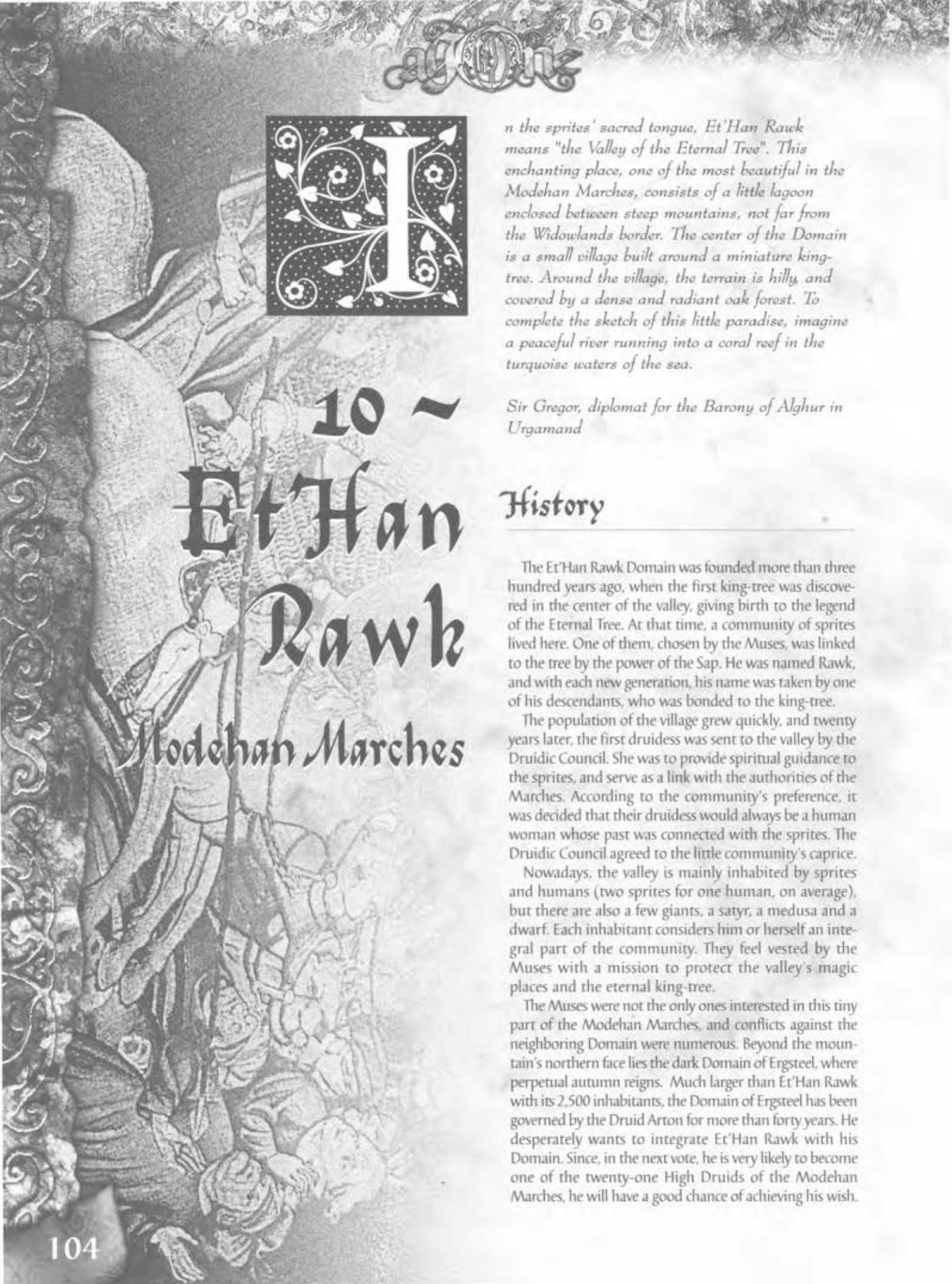
A major challenge will be to immobilize the Horde so it is susceptible to the Monarch's ivy. To do so, it will be necessary to endanger the Home. Upon the arrival of the sprites, Adeln will secretly introduce himself to Pantagrua as a messenger of the Decan Council who has come to protect the Home from a threat: a troop of darkened minotaurs from the Chasm of Shadows. During the combat against the Legion of Summer, Pantagrua will be imprisoned in one of the fruits of the ivy. Her strong Flame will allow her to resist Perfidy for a long time, so by the time the Inspired liberate her, she will have done a good deal of damage to the King.

These assets are not cumulative. Spending 5 points to know the secrets of the runes does not give you the 2 and 3-point assets, but you can take as many different variants of the Runes asset as you wish.

Infiltrator (fault, 3)

On a mission from one of its enemies – from Lyphan, from the Princely Communes or from the Wild Reaches – you entered the Horde surreptitiously. Your Flame was revealed to you at the Home, and you started to believe in the Horde's cause. However, if Pantagrua learns of your origins, she will kill you. To possess this Fault, you must be an expert in Kosaki and in Lyphian traditions (skill 7 or greater).

NB: While at the Home, a great number of other Assets could be gained as revelations (for example: Blazing Flame or Instinct for Perfection).



10 ~ Et'Han Rawk

Modehan Marches

In the sprites' sacred tongue, Et'Han Rawk means "the Valley of the Eternal Tree". This enchanting place, one of the most beautiful in the Modehan Marches, consists of a little lagoon enclosed between steep mountains, not far from the Widowlands border. The center of the Domain is a small village built around a miniature king-tree. Around the village, the terrain is hilly, and covered by a dense and radiant oak forest. To complete the sketch of this little paradise, imagine a peaceful river running into a coral reef in the turquoise waters of the sea.

Sir Gregor, diplomat for the Barony of Alghur in Urgamand

History

The Et'Han Rawk Domain was founded more than three hundred years ago, when the first king-tree was discovered in the center of the valley, giving birth to the legend of the Eternal Tree. At that time, a community of sprites lived here. One of them, chosen by the Muses, was linked to the tree by the power of the Sap. He was named Rawk, and with each new generation, his name was taken by one of his descendants, who was bonded to the king-tree.

The population of the village grew quickly, and twenty years later, the first druidess was sent to the valley by the Druidic Council. She was to provide spiritual guidance to the sprites, and serve as a link with the authorities of the Marches. According to the community's preference, it was decided that their druidess would always be a human woman whose past was connected with the sprites. The Druidic Council agreed to the little community's caprice.

Nowadays, the valley is mainly inhabited by sprites and humans (two sprites for one human, on average), but there are also a few giants, a satyr, a medusa and a dwarf. Each inhabitant considers him or herself an integral part of the community. They feel vested by the Muses with a mission to protect the valley's magic places and the eternal king-tree.

The Muses were not the only ones interested in this tiny part of the Modehan Marches, and conflicts against the neighboring Domain were numerous. Beyond the mountain's northern face lies the dark Domain of Ergsteel, where perpetual autumn reigns. Much larger than Et'Han Rawk with its 2,500 inhabitants, the Domain of Ergsteel has been governed by the Druid Arton for more than forty years. He desperately wants to integrate Et'Han Rawk with his Domain. Since, in the next vote, he is very likely to become one of the twenty-one High Druids of the Modehan Marches, he will have a good chance of achieving his wish.

Sites

The Village

Et'Han Rawk is a little village that shelters about a hundred souls. Essentially sprite and human, the people are extremely close to Rawk, the chief, and to the king-tree. From its founding, the spirit of the village has been defined by the Sap bond, which unites the village's chief to the king-tree (see below).

Like all Modehan architecture, Et'Han Rawk's buildings are constructed from a complex mix of mineral resources and vegetation. Situated between the beach, the forest, the mountain and the river, the village has access to a wide variety of materials for construction. Some dwellings are dug deep in the cliff, while others use sand and ivy for their walls. The central square is cobbled with pebbles that create a natural setting for the king-tree. Et'Han Rawk is a village of fishermen and craftsmen, and its inhabitants live in nearly complete autonomy. All people have the same social rank. A sprite that cultivates a patch of vegetables in his garden is treated with the same respect as a human in charge of trade with neighboring Domains. Everyone gladly follows the king-tree cult, and even humans revere Rawk. No one has ever doubted the authority of the chief nor the means of his ascension. Despite its small size, the village of Et'Han Rawk is the undisputed center of the Domain, and the entire valley has sworn allegiance to the Rawks, who have governed uninterrupted for three centuries. The exalted status of the eternal king-tree is unique, even in the Modehan Marches, and the unassuming Rawk possesses a powerful charisma that sometimes takes even him by surprise.

There is one school in town, where a giantess educates about twenty children. Some of them are selected to pursue their studies further, and are given an introduction to drawing and music (often viol) by the druid. This is just a glimpse, and few people from Rawk become Concordists (but the local Inspired are often predisposed to the Magical Arts). The population is satisfied with life's simple pleasures. Nature is sweet and bountiful, and they feel no need to change it by force. Magic is seen as sacred and is mainly practiced by Arthis the Druidess and Rawk himself.

Et'Han Rawk manages its own vineyard and extracts the metal it needs from the neighboring mountains. More than half of the population is composed of craftsmen who easily transition from one specialty to another, and exchange valuable knowledge about their jobs. The village is self-sufficient, thanks to regular harvests and a flock of sheep bred in the mountains by Elzeve the Satyr.

Et'Han Rawk

Realm: Modehan Marches
Ruler: Rawk
Strength: 3 Inspired, 200 Dullen

BODY: 4/0
Army: 6
Defense: 5 (natural defenses)
Denizens: 4
Organization: 5

SPIRIT: 3/0
Finance: 5
Information: 3

SOUL: 5/0
Magical ability: 10
Diplomatic relation: 5

The Eternal King-Tree

As long as anyone can remember, a king-tree has grown at the center of the valley. A young sprite is linked to it by the ritual of the Sap, and, despite his age, becomes the village's undisputed chief. The sprite is renamed Rawk to symbolize his oneness with the king-tree. Ten years pass before the sprite actually takes full command. In the meantime, the druid governs the town. When Rawk dies, the king-tree is uprooted by a new tree, which grows under it. The new king-tree always grows in exactly the same place and never reaches more than thirty-three feet in height.

The Mountains

The mountains that surround the valley are not very steep, but they reach a respectable five thousand feet. They form a "V", with the source of the river Salt' Eden at its base.

The mountainsides descend gradually toward the sea, where they end in a series of cliffs 1,330 feet above sea level. The mountains constitute a natural boundary and form the two longest sides of a triangle (around 6 miles each). The third side of the triangle, the coast, runs three miles from one cliff to the other.

The farm. Elzeve is the guardian of the mountains. He takes care of the flock that feeds Et'Han Rawk. Helped by two humans and a sprite, the satyr patrols the boundaries of the Domain and makes sure that the king-tree's peace is respected. Elzeve shepherds twenty goats and thirty sheep.

The Cascade. At the base of the mountain, the Salt' Eden flows into a cascade that is more than three hun-

dred and thirty feet high. The river's scanty waters converge and come crashing down with phenomenal force, producing a constant background noise throughout the Domain. During the Reminiscences, this cascade gives birth to elementals (see 'Intrigues' below).

The Caves. The center of the valley's northern side is riddled with caves which are connected in a complex network. These catacombs are constantly watched by Elzeve and also the sylds because brigands hoping to plunder Et'Han Rawk have taken up residence in them. Recently, a cave collapsed on a small army of mercenaries planning to raze the village and uproot the king-tree. It is likely that the sylds were responsible.

The Cliffs. The mountains end with two huge cliffs that overlook the sea. This is the perfect place to watch merchants approaching along the coast, and Elzeve visits it everyday to sing to the praises of Driade, the lighthouse keeper.

THE OGRE MERCENARIES

A war band of five ogre mercenaries have taken up residence in a cave on the northern mountain. Two of them serve the Masque and they recruited the others with false promises of abundant treasure. The Masque plans to uproot the king-tree in order to break the Muses' spell that protects this paradise. See 'Intrigues' for more about the Masque's activities in Et'Han Rawk.

THE FOREST

The forest covering the valley is mostly composed of oaks. It is very dense, but remains incredibly luminous. It feels as if each tree were perfectly equidistant from its neighbors. The sprites of Et'Han Rawk have no doubt that their forest has a soul.

The Stonepox Hospice: The druidess Arthis runs a hospice where unlucky sprites from the cities are treated for stonepox. She runs the hospice out of her hut, to which has been added a little dwelling specially made for sprites in a neighboring tree. Arthis has made some progress, but refuses to reveal the secret of her cures (see 'Arthis, Druidess' below).

The oak grove: Not far from the Cascade, at the heart of Et'Han Rawk's forest, where the vegetation is thickest, there is an oak grove inhabited by three sprite families. They swear allegiance to Rawk but even so feel independent. They have the right to live self-sufficiently as long as they provide the village with some essential commodities from the forest. In exchange Rawk lets them use the cascade. The sprites of the oak grove have set up huge wooden mills that power a complex lifting and pumping system.

The fields: There are many clearings around the village that were used for the common fields and are maintained by the villagers and the oak grove's inhabitants.

The ground is very fertile and these small cultivated areas suffice to feed the entire valley. Et'Han Rawk even exports foodstuffs when the harvest is good. The crops are varied to satisfy the ravenous appetite of the valley's sprites, renowned for their gluttony.

Salt' Eden: Past the cascade, the river meanders through the forest. It passes by the irrigated fields, assuring bountiful harvests. The village straddles the river, which is spanned by two bridges formed from natural vegetation. The river's depth never exceeds five feet.

The Island

The coral barrier surrounding the lagoon, and protecting the village against tides and waves, is overhung in the north by a large promontory. This round plate platform, called "The Island" by the valley's inhabitants, is a flat, unbroken rock a thousand feet in diameter. The Island provides a deep-water harbor for merchant ships. Most of the trade is export: the ships arrive empty and leave full of grain, vegetables and fruits. The village is also famous for its crafts, which are in great demand across the Twilight Realms. The Island would be a key strategic point in the event of an invasion, because it is the entry to the town of Et'Han Rawk.

The Harbormaster's Office. A lighthouse facing the open sea dominates the Island. It is surrounded by a natural wall, seven feet high. There are no other dwellings here besides the lighthouse, where Driade the medusa lives, but there are five wooden buildings used for storage. The people working here live in the village and use pirogues to reach the Island. When there are no ships scheduled, the place can be deserted for weeks at a time, leaving Driade to suffer in her loneliness.

The Lighthouse. Located at the center of the Island, the lighthouse is a hundred feet high and ten feet wide at its base. Before the coming of Driade, managing the harbor was a job every villager learned, and every sprite and human did three-day tours of duty running the lighthouse. Now Driade has chosen to live there all year long, and doesn't seem bored. She has a natural talent for guiding ships into the harbor. The lighthouse has a stairway running to the very top, but only contains three habitable floors: an office, a bedroom and a large kitchen.

People of Note

Rawk, village chief

Like his predecessors before him, Rawk is the most important citizen of Et'Han Rawk. Rawk was born thirty-four years ago at the king-tree's roots (to which he was immediately bonded by the Sap). Unlike his peers, this sprite is squat and grumpy. Despite this, Rawk enjoys an incredible popularity that stems from his levelheaded manner. He is the kind of sprite who would exasperate a spriggan – mild mannered and slow to act. According to custom (see 'The Eternal King-tree' above), Rawk was under Arthis' regency until he was ten, and then became the real leader of the Domain. Stories say that the king-tree injects its soul into the spirit of the sprites that share its Sap, and people say Rawk's personality has many similarities to his predecessor's.

The quiet sprite appears to have found a kind of inner peace and is mockingly compared to a tree because of his impassiveness. Rawk also puzzles the villagers with his bizarre living arrangements. In his childhood, he befriended a wild alcheron (see AGONE rulebook, p. 47) that terrorized the village. The enormous animal was tamed, and now carries the sprite's home – a ten foot-high tower of vegetation built on the back of this four-horned rhino. Rawk sits at the top of his strange tower and travels round his Domain. The only time the sprite comes down is for his birthday, when he goes to sleep on the roots of the king-tree.

Despite his apparent aloofness, Rawk is a true leader for the village. He knows how to talk to his people and keep them calm, and he is able to manage problems with serenity and efficiency. This sprite is respected by his peers and feared by his neighbors.

Arthis, druidess

Arthis is one of those humans whose age is indeterminable. Time seems to have stopped between her fortieth and fiftieth birthday, giving her radiant features and immaculate pale blond hair.

Arthis was born in Arnel, the capital of the Modehan Marches, over sixty years ago. Orphaned when she was a baby, she was welcomed into a sprite family. Throughout her childhood, the young girl learned the sprites' traditions and dreamed of the oak groves and the origins of these seasonlings.

As a teenager, Arthis helplessly witnessed her family's death by an epidemic of stonepox. Left alone, she studied to become a druid. When she arrived at Et'Han Rawk, she built her hospice. To this day, she searches for a cure to stonepox. Her current treatment is to help the afflicted rediscover their rural roots by planning frequent outdoor activities for them. This method has proven effective at fighting the symptoms, but it is not a true cure for the disease.

RAWK

Origin: Modehan Marches
Gender Male
Race: Sprite
Age: 34
Height: 3'7" (SIZ – 1)
Weight: 116 lbs.
MV: 2

Attributes
Flame: 2
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 2
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +2
AGIlity: 7
PERception: 8
STAmina: 3
STRength: 3

Spirit: 3
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: +3
INTelligence: 8
WILL: 9

Soul: 3
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +3
CHArisma: 10
CREativity: 5

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 7
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 30
SWT: 10
CWT: 15
DB: -1

Fortune points: 4
Flame Powers: Flame Soul
Darkening Points: 0
Perfidy Points: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet: Moden-Hen' 6, Astronomy 5, Beast Lore 6, Languages (Keshite) 4, Language (Modehan) 7, Plant Lore 7, Season (Spring) 8
Trials: Alertness 8, Dodge 5, First Aid 5, Ride 6, Survival 7
Courtly: Diplomacy 7, Eloquence 5, Stewardship 4
Rogue: Conceal 5, Hunt 7, Search 5, Stealth 7

Assets, Gifts, Faults and Sorrows
Village Chief, Bonded to a king-tree

Combat
Initiative 17
Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 14
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 7

Armor: none

Weapons: none

Typical quote:
"No. It is not a good idea. We prefer to do it this way..."
(Rawk loses his train of thought and wanders off.)

ARTHIS

Origin: Modehan Marches
Gender: Female
Race: Human
Age: 62
Height: 5'7" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 111 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 1
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 5
STAmina: 5
STRength: 4

Spirit: 2
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: +2
INTelligence: 7
WILL: 7

Soul: 1
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 8
CREativity: 8

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: 8
HP: 42
SWT: 14
CWT: 21
DB: 0

Fortune points: 2
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 0
Perfidy Points: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet (Moden-Hen') 9, Astronomy 5, Geography 5, History & Legends 6, Language (Keshite) 7, Language (Modehan) 7, Law 6, Medicine 9, Season (Spring) 4, Surgery 7
Trials: Alertness 6, First Aid 7, Survival 5
Courtly: Diplomacy 7, Etiquette 6, Painting 9, Stewardship 8
Occult: Magical Arts: Vista 8
Rogue: Intrigue 6, Poisons 6, Stealth 6

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows
Druid

Combat
Initiative 11
Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 3
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 1

Armor: none
Weapons: none

Magical Arts
Vista APT 17
Arthis knows numerous Vista Opuses; she specializes in Spring.

Typical quote: "Thank the Muses, it is not the stonepox. Let me show you what this illness really is so that you will be able to recognize it. Time is of the essence in treating this disease."

According to the laws of the Modehan Marches, the druidess, not the current Rawk, should be the ruler of this Domain. But all the druidesses have let the Rawk stay in power because of his links to the king-tree. All the druidesses have been human women.

Elzeve, satyr farmer

A satyr's life is not always easy. Human morality often conflicts with their nature. Five years ago, Elzeve was a Keshite nomad, a member of a caravan linking several oases on a trade route. The caravan was made of thirteen people, including ten humans, a spriggan and the satyr. The leader of the caravan was a charismatic ogre, who married the four human girls in the caravan, creating a harem for himself. Tensions arose from the attraction Elzeve exerted over these women, until one day he decided to leave the caravan with all four of them. Elzeve was pursued by the ogre across sixty miles of desert until the satyr thought he had lost his trail. The ogre found him in a Mercenary Republic tavern and slew his four disloyal wives before the satyr's eyes. Elzeve escaped by pure luck and decided to leave for the more civilized and more peaceful Modehan Marches.

Settling in Et'Han Rawk five years ago, Elzeve swore to control his sex drive so as not to have any more deaths on his conscience. Furthermore, getting to know Driade matured him, and he grew to be a sentimental and romantic satyr. The young medusa that maintains the harbor is the secret object of his boundless love. Each sunset, Elzeve climbs the north cliff and uses his Attuned talents with the Flute to charm the medusa. Alas, Driade remains insensate to the satyr's charm (though all the lagoon's fish liven up in a dance that lasts until the early hours of the morning).

Elzeve is in charge of Et'Han Rawk's flock and keeps an eye on the borders of the Domain. He assumes his duty with ardor and has succeeded in adapting his desert survival techniques to the mountains. If he is marginally involved in community affairs, it is by his own choice, for all consider him as an integral part of Et'Han Rawk.

ELZEVE

Origin: Empire of Keshe
Gender: Male
Race: Satyr
Age: 28
Height: 6'2" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 176 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 2
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +2
AGIlity: 8
PERception: 6
STAmina: 7
STRength: 7

Spirit: 1
Dark Spirit: 1
Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 7

Soul: 2
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +2
CHArisma: 11
CREativity: 8

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 7
AIM: 7
ASC: -
ART: 9
HP: 53
SWT: 17
CWT: 26
DB: +1

Fortune points: 2
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 12
Perfidy Points: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet (Septentrian) 4, Languages (Keshite) 7
Trials: Alertness 7, Athletics 8, Climb 8, Survival 6, Weapons (Hoof) 5, Weapons (Sword) 7
Courtly: Eloquence 5, Fast Talk 8, Music (Flute) 10, Poetry 7
Occult: Magical Arts: Tune 9
Rogue: Disguise 6, Hunt 8, Stealth 6

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows
Soft Spot (for Driade the medusa), Softhearted, Obsession (avoids contact with women), Trickster

Combat
Initiative 16, Hoof (kick) 16, Hoof (trampling) 14, Sword 17
Melee attack: Hoof (kick) 13, Hoof (trampling) 14, Sword 17
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 15
Parry: 17
Ranged defense: Dodge 7

Magical Arts:
Tune APT 20
Elzeve knows all Flute Tune Opuses.

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam. +DB
Hoof (kick)	0	-1	-	+5 (C)
The target must make a balance roll or fall.				
Hoof (trampling)	-2	0	-	+7 (C)
The target must be on the ground.				
Sword	+1	+1	+1	+5

Armor: padded clothes, partial (penalty 0, prot. 1)

DRIADE

Origin: Unknown (Widowlands)
Gender: Female
Race: Medusa
Age: 21
Height: 5'9" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 115 lbs.
MV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 1
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 1
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: +1
AGIlity: 9
PERception: 8
STAmina: 6
STRength: 6

Spirit: 2
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: +2
INTelligence: 9
WILL: 8

Soul: 1
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 9
CREativity: 6

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 8
AIM: 8
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 49
SWT: 16
CWT: 24
DB: 0

Fortune points: 2
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 0
Perfidy Points: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet (Moden-Hen') 8, Astronomy 5, Language (Keshite) 5, Language (Modehan) 6, Language (Ophidian) 1, Navigation 7, Season (Winter) 5
Trials: Alertness 9, Athletics 8, Dodge 8, Snakes 5, Swim 9
Courtly: Fast Talk 6, Eloquence 8, Etiquette 6, Trade 6, Stewardship 7
Rogue: Acrobatics 8, Intrigue 8, Poisons 6, Search 6, Stealth 5

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows: None. Driade's snakes inject a light coagulating venom that can close small wounds and ease pain (they restore 1 + SM HP).

Combat
Initiative 18
Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 18
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 9

Armor: none
Weapon (s): none

Typical Quote:
"I can't understand you. Why do you want to stay here? Nothing interesting ever happens!"

DRÖD

Origin: Urgamand
Gender: Male
Race: Dwarf
Age: 65
Height: 4'10" (SIZ-1)
Weight: 133 lbs.
MV: 0

Attributes
Flame: 0
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: 0
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 6
STAmina: 8
STRength: 7

Spirit: 0
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 7
WILL: 7

Soul: 0
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: 0
CHArisma: 4
CREativity: 8

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Fortune points: 0
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 0
Perfidy Points: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet (Armgardic) 4, Geography 5, Language (Keshite) 6, Language (Urgamish) 4, Season (Winter) 6
Trials: Alertness 6, Athletics 5, Climb 7, Swim 6
Courtly: Craft (Architecture) 8, Craft (Forge) 9, Craft (Mechanics) 9, Painting 4
Occult: Concord 5 (spe.: esoteric architecture), Demonology 5
Rogue: Disguise 6, Hunt 8, Stealth 6

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows
Enemy (the Square), Dark Secret (he has betrayed the Square)

Combat
Initiative 11
Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 10
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 5

Armor: leather, vest only (penalty -1, prot. 2)
Weapons: none

Typical Quote:
"So, my idea is to construct a dam to slow the current in this cove. Here we'll build the mill, and here the septic tank. Oh, I have made a washing machine. That's much better than manual labor... No? And the dam? Let me show you some of the advantages..."

Dröd, dwarf of the Square

Dröd has lived with the sprites of the oak grove for the last thirty years. This friendly, epicurean dwarf moved here with a sprite friend who contracted stonepox after a lengthy stay in Arnel. After his recovery at the hospice, the sprite swore allegiance to Rawk and decided to stay in Et'Han Rawk. Dröd did not hesitate one second when asked to join the oak grove community.

He put all his architectural knowledge to use in the creation of a complex machine that uses the cascade to ease the sprites' lives. The dwarf has set up a couple of lifts, a pumping system, and an automatic irrigation system for the crops. First reluctant to let the device control their lives, the sprites were soon convinced by the vegetal contraptions Dröd created, which showed great respect for the grove's environment.

Dröd is fully assimilated into the community and it would never occur to anyone to tell him he is not a sprite. The Dwarf hopes to end his days in the valley, far from his colleagues of the Square. Meanwhile, they are actively searching for him because he has sold the brotherhood's secrets to a Keshite merchant. No one in the Domain knows this, but maybe someday his past will come back to haunt him...

Driade, medusa harbormaster

Driade was found drowning in the hold of a merchant ship near the Island twenty years ago. The medusa was then a four months-old baby, abandoned by her mother. Interpreting this as a curse, the buccaneers who found her were happy to get rid of her, leaving her to Rawk to raise. Rawk accepted this mission as if he had been asked by the Muses themselves. He hoped to educate the young medusa so that her frigid temperament as a Winter seasonling would be replaced by a more sunny outlook. But eventually the sprite had to admit that Driade's nature was unchangeable. Even when she was a child, the medusa often took refuge on the cliffs, where she could contemplate the sea, cutting herself off from these people who seemed so unlike her. When she was sixteen, Driade decided on her own to move into the lighthouse and assume the duties of harbormaster. Charmed by the sea ever since, the medusa enjoys contemplating the waves for hours.

Driade is an Inspired who has a complex personality. She feels different, and does not take pleasure in this boring rural life. She dreams of cities – of the seediest parts of Lorgol perhaps – where she might lead a more adventurous existence. She knows Elzeve is in love with her, but the medusa would rather wait for the right moment to act. She knows he is also an Inspired and imagines she might use him to help her. She fantasizes that they might steal a ship and journey to Urgamand. There, she would abandon him to and begin her new life.

Intrigues

The Fire Snake

The Modehan Marches are famous for their wild Dancers, which freely travel the realm. In some regions, they are considered a part of the local fauna, and hunting them is restricted. Et'Han Rawk is frequented by a throng of wild Dancers that cross the Domain from west to east every winter solstice. The dance of dozens of tiny luminous bodies form the illusion of a long fiery snake, which emerges from the sea, runs through the forest and ends its journey behind the cascade.

The Dancers' journey always follows the same path, and lasts from dusk till dawn.

The fire snake has become a prized attraction for those who live near Et'Han Rawk, and many curious visitors come to spend the winter solstice here. It has become a tourist attraction and Et'Han Rawk's inhabitants have to manage hundreds of visitors every year.

Viewpoints are located near the lighthouse, over which the snake soars, and near the cascade, where you can see the final dive of the Dancers.

The Swans in the Lagoon

Elveze's nocturnal activities at the top of the north cliff have given him the opportunity to see a family of swans swimming in the peaceful waters of the lagoon. The satyr noticed that two of the five swans were magical creatures, and left trails of light behind them.

The swans remain extremely shy and only go out at night. A few months ago, Elzeve noticed a minotaur poacher searching for the swans' nest, and the satyr warned the druidess. The minotaur is Krios, a famed bounty hunter. He has already made a fortune hunting fugitives, so nobody can figure out why he is in Et'Han Rawk hunting swans.

The Syld Patrols

The Modehan Marches authorities took some measures to protect the valley, according to Arthis' counsel. She rightly thinks that Et'Han Rawk shelters magical resources too powerful to be guarded by just two hundred people. Ten times a year, a patrol of five sylds crosses the mountains and surveys Et'Han Rawk. They stay for one week and then depart. The aim of the tree-men is to intervene if there is trouble and to monitor the evolution of the valley's magical phenomena – the cascade elemental, the fire snake, the swans and the eternal king-tree. They try to remain as discreet as possible so as not to disturb Et'Han Rawk's denizens.

The Cascade Elemental

Several times a year, during the Reminiscence (see AGONE rulebook pg. 46), the churning of the water against the rocks at the Cascade generates an elemental. This extraordinary creature, embodying the Muses' will, takes on the form of translucent giant of pure water, about twenty feet high. The elemental sits for hours on the rocks, basking in the cascade. It throws rocks all day long at the waterfall, briefly diverting the flow of the river.

This little game annoys the oak grove's sprites because the devices set up by Dröd are often damaged. However, no one dares to disturb the creature. It disappears at dusk, melting into the river. Some skeptics argue that it is the Muses' will to destroy Dröd's unnatural devices.

Ergsteel and the Masque's Influence

The Domain of Ergsteel has always served the Masque, and the druid Arton has been plotting and scheming since he took power here. He aims to conquer Et'Han Rawk and the valley's magical places. He hopes to break the king-tree's bond with Rawk. But Arton is also in line to become a High Druid, and he is under the scrutiny of all the other High Druids, so he acts

A Typical Syld

Origin: Modehan Marches
Gender: Tree
Race: Syld
Age: 60 to 180
Height: 17'(SIZ 4)
Weight: 3 tons
MV: 12

Attributes
Flame: 0
Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0
Dark Body: 0
Body bonus: 0
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 10
STAmina: 20
STRength: 20

Spirit: 0
Dark Spirit: 0
Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 6
WILL: 10

Soul: 1
Dark Soul: 0
Soul bonus: +1
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 6

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 10
AIM: -
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 250
SWT: 60
CWT: - (sylds are immune to Critical Wounds)
DB: +47

Fortune points: 0
Flame Powers: none
Darkening Points: 0
Perfidy Points: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Geography (spe.: Modehan forests) 6, Season (all) 8
Trials: Alertness 9, Athletics 8, Dodge 8, Survival (spe.: forests) 10, Weapon (branches) 8
Courtly: Diplomacy 5
Rogue: Disguise 10, Hunt 8, Stealth 10

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows: none

Combat
Initiative 15, Branch 18
Melee attack: Branch 20
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 12
Parry: 17
Ranged defense: 6

Typical quote:
Chirping, followed by the noise of rustling branches.

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam. + DB
Branch	+3	+2	-1	+50

Armor: 15 points of thick bark and dense wood

(If a syld hits, the target takes DB points of damage each turn until he or she succeeds on an opposed STR roll.)

Sylds are sentient trees commonly found in the Modehan Marches. These particular ones look like willows. Their branches generate a magical wind that lets them move across the ground. Considered faithful allies of the Modehan Marches, they patrol the borders and have survived many battles. In combat, they use their thick branches to entrap their enemies and strangle them.

Modehan stories mention the courage of the slyds. When cornered on a battlefield, their branches ceaselessly sting and strangle their enemies, even when they have been set ablaze by flaming arrows. To send messages to their druid masters, the sylds uses birds living on their branches.

The sylds play good Samaritans to strangers and adventurers lost in the Modehan forests. They will always help Modehans, their friends, or anyone who lives in harmony with nature as they do. Giants and sylds are ancient allies.

with caution. Rash or premature action could jeopardize his reputation. He uses careful methods, such as sending the ogre mercenaries and the minotaur bounty hunter.

Playing in Et'Han Rawk

Assets

Bonded to a King-tree (sprites only) 5

You are bonded with a king-tree (not Rawk very special king-tree, but a "normal" one, somewhere in the forest) Though you do not challenge Rawk's majesty, the tree provides you with longevity and exceptional stamina. It can receive up to 20 Serious wounds and let you to live to be at least 120 (your only start making aging rolls on your hundredth birthday).

USING THIS DOMAIN WITH "KING OF SPRING"

Et'Han Rawk is a perfect setting for this Drama. Melif should be located in the Zephir Mountains. The great number of sprites in this Domain will make the integration of the refugees extremely smooth (their treason will therefore be devastating).

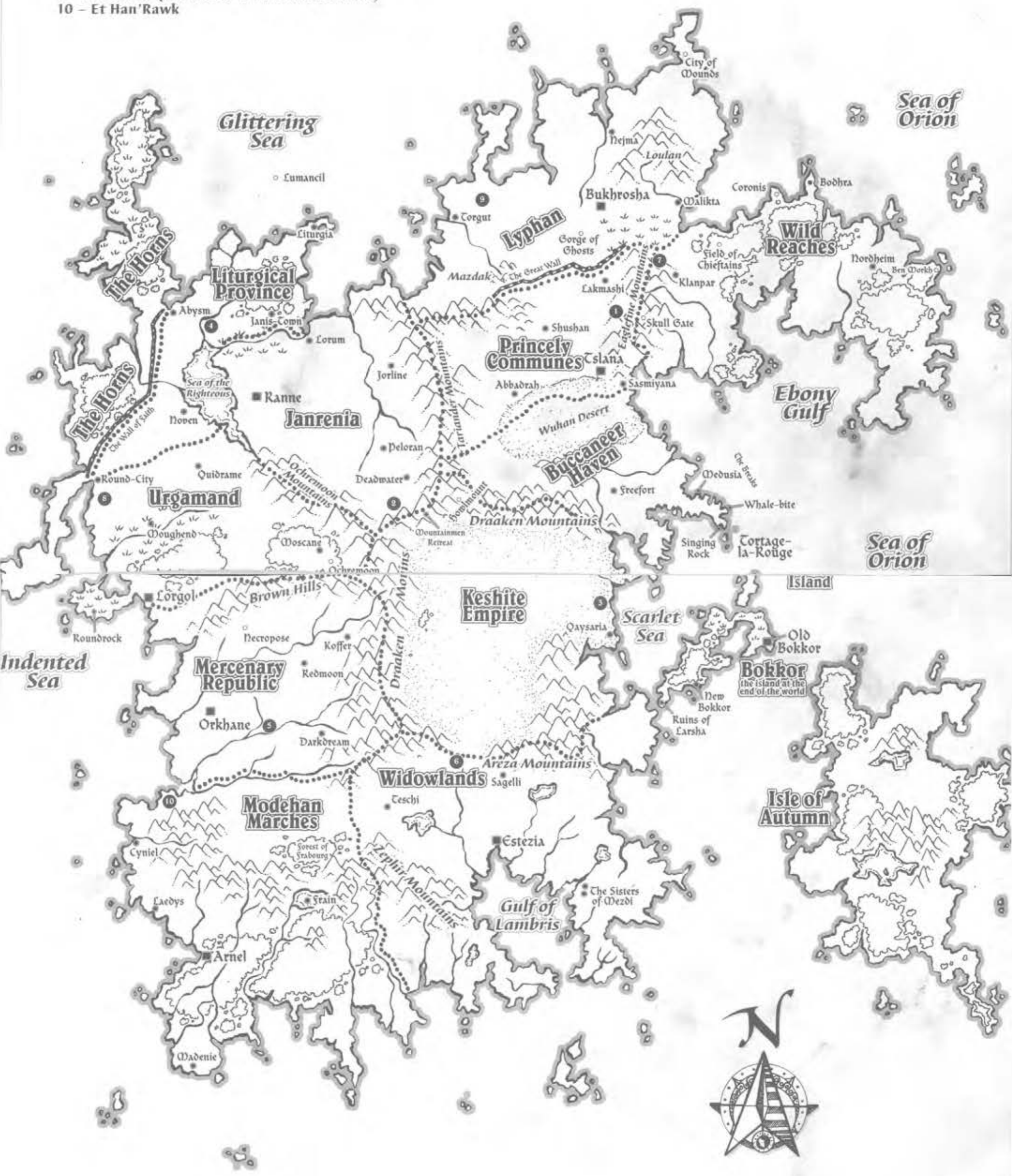
Bonded to a Syld (sprites only) 4

You are not linked with a normal tree, but with a syld. There is a greater risk that it will be killed, but it recovers quickly, and is a strong ally and a reliable friend.

Friend of a Syld 3

A syld is your friendly and helpful ally. It will be happy to help you as long as you respect nature. You can call on their patrols for assistance, which can be extremely convenient.

1 – Laeghdoved
2 – Brightskies
3 – Suleïdin's Serglio
4 – Holy Post
5 – Abhorrent Peaks
6 – Scarletstone
7 – Lightning-Dragon Crest
8 – Arboline
9 – The Horde (the Horde is a mobile Domain)
10 – Et Han'Rawk



Map of the Twilight Realms

minence,

This Drama in three acts will guide your Inspired from Suleïdin's seraglio to Scarletstone, and thence to Laeghdoved. I advise you read carefully through these pages before staging this adventure.

Drama: Ophidian Tragedy

Introduction

Melfinio, the bastard of Scarletstone, has decided to go into action. He wants to put an end to the dreadful yoke his mother, Iriena, has laid upon her slaves. He has secretly armed some slaves but he feels powerless against the medusa's Obscurantist magic. He would like to ally with Alfah, Iriena's twin sister, but she loathes him. In short, he needs help.

Melfinio thinks an event from the distant past may provide him with an opportunity. Five years ago, Suleïdin's caravan passed by Scarletstone, where Helicius spotted a pair of Inspired. The first, twelve-year-old Melfinio, refused to join the caravan, for he was already dreaming of the slaves' liberation. The second was a young woman who accepted the offer to join the travelers. Albena now leads the caravan. Though many years have passed, these two still cherish this enlightening moment they shared.

Albena remembers the young man very well and she fiercely hates medusae. She therefore has decided to help him.

Eminence, here are several possibilities for placing the Inspired in the center of this story:

Your Inspired are members of Suleïdin's Seraglio. They might be the characters described in this book (Albena, Sipsum, Helicius and Baltasim) or others. Albena will show the letter (see below) to her companions and they will agree to lead the caravan to the upcoming jubilee.

Your Inspired come from elsewhere. The jubilee will then take place several months after the receipt of the letter. Albena will wander throughout the Twilight Realms in search of Inspired who would help one of their peers. Thanks to Helicius, she locates the troupe and shows them the letter before asking them to join her. Your players accept, be it for Inspiration, for the desperate look in Albena's eyes, or just for the sake of adventure and profit. The caravan will then return to Mesirah with your Troupe.

Your Inspired are passing through Mesirah. They will be contacted by a representative of the seraglio, who will invite them to stay over. The members of the seraglio will show them the letter only after the murder, in Act One. The troupe should be curious, and therefore will join Albena to help Melfinio.

Albena is the key character of this introduction. If she is a player character, ignore the script. Her player will be free to do as he or she pleases. In this case, pass on some background information to the player concerning her former Domain. Albena knows a bit about the village of Bloodrock, but not much about Scarletstone Manor itself.

Act One:

Murder in the Seraglio

This first act takes place in Mesirah.

Tekirios the Messenger

Melfinio's letter is brought to Mesirah by a messenger who is supposed to guide the Inspired to Scarletstone and introduce them to Melfinio. If your Troupe is hired out of the seraglio, he already set a rendezvous with Albena, to provide her with the latest information. In any case, the Inspired will meet the messenger a couple of days before their departure from the seraglio.

The messenger is an Inspired satyr (Helicius can confirm this) named Tekirios, who is staying with them in a suite of comfortable rooms that look down on the city. He is extremely kind (especially to women) and the evening the Inspired spend with him is very enjoyable. He tells them about his Domain, and the museum of Freighn and its keeper, the medusa Ardence. Tekirios is an artist and a talented harpist, and thus is highly valued in the manor. Nevertheless, he is disgusted by Iriena's treatment of her slaves. He is one of Melfinio's closest friends and is utterly devoted to the rebellion. During their conversation, Tekirios will come off as a bit manic. He can be wildly enthusiastic about his home when talking about the veneration of the arts, but he will also shed tears when referring to the cruelty of some medusae.

After the satyr has played a final air on the harp, the Troupe will turn in. Later in the night (on a successful PER + Alertness against DIF 20) an alert or an insomniac character will hear that the satyr is not alone in bed...

A LETTER TO ALBENA

To Albena of Suleïdin's seraglio, or to any other loyal inheritor of the prophet:

Dear friend,

You must be wondering why I wrote this letter after so many years of silence. I have urgent news. Time is short, and I must put an end to my mother's tyranny soon. Strange things are happening in Scarletstone and I fear the Enemy is involved. I need your help and the help of all the Inspired you can rally. I have decided to go into action during her jubilee on the first day of Phoenix-tide. I pray you, be with me at this cheerless festivity... or I will die.

In the name of our shared memory,

Melfinio

Murder at the Seraglio

The next morning, the Inspired are awoken by a strident shriek. Hurrying out of their rooms, they will see a young seraglio clerk in front of Tekidios' room. She is breathless and panicked, leaning against the outside gallery rail that looks down on the garden. The Inspired will be the first to her side, but in a few minutes many members of the seraglio will have arrived. The young woman mumbles a few words and then faints:

"in this room... a satyr".

Inside, the satyr is lying naked on his bed and he is staring lifelessly at the ceiling. His hand clutches his harp. The Inspired (at least the members of the seraglio) are troubled - one of their own has been murdered in their Domain! The situation requires a Terror roll against DIF 12, and bestows 2 Darkening points to any character that fails (despair has awakened this character to the call of the Darkness).

Anyone not from the seraglio will be under suspicion by the Mesireans, especially Albena who will say so openly. Sipsum, who asked Helicius to check if their Flame was dark beforehand, is more prudent. He will even ask the Inspired to investigate the murder. The clever spriggan believes that keeping an eye on them is the best thing to do if they are guilty. He will monitor them during their investigation, shadowing them as necessary. Players must roll PER + Alertness against Sipsum's 15 (AGI + Stealth) to notice him, and against 19 (AGI + Disguise) to recognize him.

If they investigate, the Inspired will be able to discover the following clues:

- The door was open when the employee came in.

- Tekirios died from a heart attack during sexual intercourse (PER + Medicine against DIF 16).

- The only personal items in the room are scattered women's clothes: transparent silk veils that women wear in harems. A successful PER roll against DIF 28 will reveal a very subtle scent of seaweed mixed with a vanilla-based perfume.

- Sipsum can explain that all the members of the seraglio, Inspired and Dullen, have the right to stay in the dormitories. Moreover, as the caravan is in town, the dormitories are almost full. A guard controls access at nighttime.

- The Inspired can wake Melvil, the night watchman, in his small house in the labyrinthine bazaar quarter. He will tell the Inspired that no stranger, even accompanied, came in yesterday. A successful PER + Intrigue against DIF 18 will enable the Inspired to notice that Melvil seems uncomfortable. Could he be hiding something?

- If they search the guardroom, the Inspired will find a half-empty bottle of wine. On a successful PER + Poison against DIF 25, they will realize that the wine was mixed with endorine (see AGONE rulebook, p. 177). If they mention their discovery to Melvil, he will admit having slept for a long while that night, but will have no idea who could have drugged his wine.

- The Inspired can request a list of the members of the seraglio to question them. We advise you, Eminence, to stage at least a couple of conversations with the following witnesses: a cook, a maid, a caravaneer, a pearl diver, and an accountant. They might even decide to go to visit Gardeline (see below for more information). In the end though, the result is the same: no one saw or heard anything. If the Inspired search the seraglio for a naked woman, they will not find anyone.

The day comes to an end without any leads.

What Really Happened

This is for your eyes only, Eminence, but one day your Inspired may discover what follows.

Iriena had her agent, a demon devoted to the Masque, shadowing Tekirios, whom she suspected of belonging to the rebellion. Her agent was an Opalin who slept in the day and followed the satyr's trail at night. His connivance compelled it to report the satyr's location and to give a small mirror to any ally of the Masque it encountered.

The Opalin was successful, and Iriena was informed that Tekirios had contacted Suleïdin's caravan and a morgana named Luizel received the mirror. Through this

artifact of the Enemy, Luizel was asked by Irenia to find a satyr named Tekirios and kill him. Galdesh, the morgana's companion, works as a pearl diver for the seraglio. Therefore, it was not difficult for Luziel to obey the demon's injunction. Galdesh drugged the night watchman, then showed her in. They left at dawn, after killing the satyr.

A Light in the Darkness

The night following the murder, a scent of vanilla perfume still floats in the corridors of the seraglio. One of your Inspired (male or female) will dream of a visit from a beautiful young woman, clad only in transparent silk veils. She slowly takes them off, one by one, and joins the Inspired in bed. She is irresistible...

The Inspired will wake up screaming.

Instead of staging this scene as a dream, we advise you, Eminence, to stage it as reality to emphasize the dramatic tension. Your Inspired will have to succeed in a Terror roll DIF 20 or gain 3 Darkening points from this vision of Luziel. He or she wakes with a vague seaside odor in his nose.

The scream of the Inspired will wake the other members of your Troupe sleeping next door. After everyone realizes it was only a dream, an Inspired who succeeds in a PER + Alertness roll against DIF 15 will notice that the minaret's top floor is lit - Gardeline is awake in her den.

An Unexpected Witness

If the Inspired climb the stairs to the minaret, they will have to open a small trap door to enter the black fey's room. She has covered the mosaic with a large silk cloth and she is seated at the windowsill. When she notices the Inspired, she will fly around and examine them.

Gardeline is a very old black fey. She never stops mumbling about the return of a prophet, birds of fire, and flames in the desert. Even though she is mad, she will do her best to answer their questions. If they ask her whether she saw something odd last night, she will answer:

"Ha, the seraglio and its guard wer' snoring loud.
Suleïdin! Why did thee abandon them?
Ye mad, thee don't know of our treasure?
May the birds of fire eat the wet arm
Of the man who opened the drunkard's gate.
'Tis he who gave the autumnal harlot ingress,
But she was the one who laid the net,
And, o misfortune! A corpse found at dawn."

LUIZEL

Race: morgana
Origin: Keshite Empire
Sex: female
Age: 20
Height: 5'11" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 128 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Flame: 0/1

Body: 0/1
Body bonus: +1
AGI: 7
PER: 5
STA: 5
STR: 2

Spirit: 0/1
Spirit bonus: +1
INT: 6
WIL: 6

Soul: 0/3
Soul bonus: +3
CHA: 12
CRE: 6

Secondary attributes
AIM: 6
ART: 9
ASC: -
DB: -1
HP: 48
MEL: 5
SWT: 16
CWT: 24

Fortune points: 0
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 0
Perfidy: 25

Skills

Trials: Weapon (dagger) 4, Dodge 4, Swim 12
Rogue: Poison 8
Knowledge: Language: Keshite 6, Season: Fall 6
Courtly: Eloquence 5, Fast talk 8, Poetry 8
Occult: Concord 4, Tainted Scansion 6

Assets & Gifts, Faults & Sorrows
Tragic love, Trickster, Cruelty, Sensuousness, Lewdness, Stench (seaweed), Foresight

Tainted Scansion
Scansion APT 18

Opuses
Cerebral palsy, Tragic fate

Combat
Initiative: 12
Melee attack: dagger 11
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Parry: dagger 9
Dodge: 11
Distance defense: 4

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Dagger	0	+2	0	0 (I)	-1

Armor: none

This enigmatic verse contains several clues: the wet arm and the net hint that a fisherman opened the seraglio door for a prostitute. The "autumnal harlot" might refer to a morgana.

The Port

If the Inspired make further inquiries, they will obtain the name of a suspect, Galdesh the pearl diver, who rarely stays at the seraglio but was there the night of the murder. He has not yet returned. Another fisherman, named Aklush, can tell them that Galdesh was a constant caller at the Siren's Song, a tavern at the port.

If the Inspired are not extremely cautious, they will fall into a trap. The fraternity that bonds the Mesirean fishermen is strong, and Galdesh has already been warned of their arrival. He is waiting for them with some friends (twice as many as the Inspired) who do not appreciate their inquisitiveness. The innkeeper is also a former sailor and his tavern is the perfect place for an ambush.

The divers are cowards and will only attack the Inspired as a group; they will surrender when more than half of them have been incapacitated. The Inspired won't know which fisherman is Galdesh, but one of the divers will jump through the window and run away. If the Inspired succeed in following him (on an opposed STR + Athletics roll) or if they "convince" another diver to lead them, they will find Galdesh's hut.

Galdesh's Shed

This hut is extremely old and the floating platform on which it is built is squeaky, so reaching it inconspicuously is very difficult. Clever Inspired can reach the shed by the water, for it is only four feet deep. A small boat is secured to the dock, and a trap-door leads back into the hut. From the pontoon, the door can be easily broken down (STR + Athletics against DIF 12).

Inside, daylight pierces the old wooden boards of the hut. In the single room, there are a straw mattress, a table, some clothes in a heap, and a small purse that contains several pearls and a small mirror. Nets hang from the ceiling.

When Galdesh enters, he spends a few seconds explaining the situation to his lover, Luizel the morgana, who has been living with him for the past few months.

When the Inspired appear in the shed, Galdesh will step between them and his beloved. He will fight desperately while Luizel tries to bewitch them with Tainted Scansion. If the Inspired undertake a diplomatic approach, the diver and the morgana will try to jump in the water at the first opportunity (they are both excellent swimmers).

A Revelation

Galdesh will defend Luizel until his last drop of blood has been shed, and the two lovers will probably die together fighting the Inspired. Even though it seems clear that Luizel killed Tekirios, her motives remain a mystery.

An old fisherman, who is repairing his small boat next to Galdesh's shed, could help the Troupe. Once the combat is finished, he will approach, and tell them what he knows for a few dirhems.

A couple of days ago, he overheard a conversation between the gorgeous young woman who lived with Galdesh and another man with a croaking voice. This man asked Luizel to search and kill a satyr named Tekirios. The old fisherman swears Luizel was alone with this other man.

The only clue the Inspired will find in the shed (PER + Search against DIF 16) is a small mirror, gilded with interconnecting demons on its frame. The mirror is an artifact that the Masque hands out to his most zealous servants so they can communicate with each other. The Inspired cannot, of course, use it... unless one of them is a slave of the Masque.

Who is this mysterious man with the croaking voice? Why did they decide to kill Tekirios? What is the purpose of this mirror? The Inspired will find these answers in the Widowlands...

Divers and Fishermen

Divers and fishermen have the same attributes as sailors (see p. 141).

Act Two:

Jubilee for two Medusae

The Troupe will arrive at Scarletstone without Tekirios, their messenger, who was murdered in Mesirah. Moreover, the person who orchestrated the murder has escaped. The Inspired will have to watch their step in order to get in touch with Melfinio without drawing his mother's attention. Maybe they will be cautious by not coming into town with the caravan. Or maybe they will decide to hide amongst the numerous merchants and caravaneers. Eminence, your Inspired are relatively free in this act; you may have to stray from the main storyline.

Bloodrock

After a long and tiring journey, the caravan reaches Scarletstone, arriving by the north road, which passes through Bloodrock. Albena is a native of Bloodrock and she wants to visit her old aunt who raised her after the death of her parents. An old man lets her know that her aunt died last year from blood cough, the disease that kills underground workers. "All dis 'cos uv Iriena!" storms the old man. Albena is despondent; it is up to the Inspired to cheer her up. You should describe the misery that reigns here and hint that it is caused by Iriena. The caravan pitches its encampment in M'ethrane, the village at the foot of the manor. Everyone is exhausted from the journey and needs some rest. The following day, the Inspired have some free time to visit their new surroundings: the narrow streets, the famous taverns, the artist ateliers and the statue of the twin rulers. This is probably the best moment to inform the Troupe of the latest rumors concerning the sisters. Sooner or later, they will have to deal with the Drama's three main protagonists: Iriena, Alfah and Melfinio. (Attributes for these 3 NPCs are given in the Scarletstone Domain section pp. 74-75.)

CHRONOLOGY

D -5	Arrival of the Inspired observed by Iriena.
D -4	Alfah shows them the Freihgn Museum. Members of the caravan (controlled by Iriena) try to kill her.
D -3	Because of the attempted murder, Iriena expels the caravan from Scarletstone. Melfinio hides the Inspired.
D -2	Melfinio sends the Inspired into the manor to make inquiries.
D day	Iriena's jubilee

Iriena: a Plan is Hatched

Thanks to a traitor, the spriggan Egon Scampa, the Masque has been manipulating Iriena directly for the past few months. Egon brought her a Pictureworld through which he can visit her. They soon became lovers and the spriggan, even though he does not know the true nature of the medusa, is rousing Iriena's murderous hatred for Alfah. Under his sway, the medusa is acting even more cruel toward her slaves.

Ever since Egon's arrival, Iriena refuses to see her son Melfinio. Left to himself, he has set his plans in motion. But Iriena suspected him and his companion Tekirios of treachery. With Egon's help, she murdered the satyr and she now knows that Suleidin's Caravan is coming to support the uprising. Once again, Egon has helped her set a trap...

Iriena avoids any conversations with strangers, unless they have been recommended by a medusa from Scarletstone. The Inspired should only meet her two days after their arrival.

Alfah: Welcome to Scarletstone

In contrast, Alfah heartily welcomes the Inspired. The day after their arrival, in the afternoon, she invites all the members of the caravan on a tour of Freihgn Museum tomorrow afternoon. This is a good opportunity to make her acquaintance.

Quite surprisingly for a medusa, she is respectful of humans. Albena will be taken aback and try to provoke her. Alfah remains calm and courteous and, when the young Inspired finally tells her that she is a former slave, the medusa will display sincere compassion for her suffering.

Melfinio: Rebel in Need

Sooner or later, the Inspired will want to find Melfinio. If they inquire about him, they will be informed that he lives in the manor and that visitors have to be invited by one of the two rulers. However, a servant can deliver a message to him. If they ask to speak with him, Melfinio will discreetly meet them in town.

The Inspired can also make inquiries about Tekirios, who used to stay at the Three Aspics. The Inspired can meet its innkeeper, a spriggan named Servisio. He remembers Tekirios but denies knowing Melfinio. Actually, Servisio is a member of the rebellion and he will go to inform his chief as soon as the Inspired have left. Melfinio will then contact them.

Their first conversation with Melfinio takes place as follows:

A young man wearing a long cloak approaches the Troupe. He tells them his name is Melfinio and thanks them for coming. If Albena or Helicius are present, he will recognize them. He then tells them to meet him one hour later at the Three Aspics. He seems nervous.

At the tavern, Servisio seats them in an alcove behind a heavy curtain. Melfinio is already there. He takes his hood off and the Inspired can admire his three dead snakes. He immediately explains the situation and what he expects from the Inspired:

"My mother is becoming unbearably cruel. I have decided to kill her for the good of Scarletstone.

Ever since her last birthday, I noticed she has been killing more slaves than usual, and has tormented her servants excessively. Her behavior with me has also changed. Whereas I used to be her confidant, she now treats me as her toy. I can no longer enter her suite and I have overheard her whispering to strangers. I sense the Master of the Sham's presence...

In a couple of days, she will celebrate her jubilee and I think she will be vulnerable during the festivities, in the middle of the crowd. I have gathered and armed fifty resolute men who should be able to break through her guards.

Why haven't I ever been able to do it alone? When she comes to me, I wish I could take my dagger and stab her. But I can't. I think she's staying my hand in some way.

That's why I need your help. I know very little concerning magic and the powers of the Masque. We must find a way to get rid of her. I need you to help me face her magic. I believe Alfah could become our ally. Unfortunately, she hates me and has forbidden me from her wing of the manor. I have therefore never been able to contact her. Could you try?"

Melfinio sets all his hopes on the Troupe. Facing such a situation, your Inspired may feel quite put upon. They can question Melfinio for another couple of minutes before he must take his leave of them so his absence is

not noticed in the manor. If questioned about the medusae's magic, Melfinio answers that they have no known master, but that Alfah is a Jornist and Iriena is Obscurantist.

The Inspired are free to encourage or restrain his rebellious eagerness. They can even refuse to help him. Even though he will have his way in the end, he will respect the decision of the Inspired, whom he holds in high esteem.

The Museum

In the hot early afternoon, Alfah guides the Inspired to Freihgn in a palanquin supported by four horses (instead of slaves). The Inspired sit in the palanquin with the medusa while the rest of the caravan follows. The column must cross the rocky desert, under the scorching sun, to reach the museum village.

Once they arrive, the Inspired enter a surprisingly cool building. The magic of Ardence, the curator, preserves the works of art from heat and dampness. Ardence welcomes the Inspired and begins a short tour of the museum. Eminence, we advise you to improvise some legends of the Flamboyance to describe the works of art. The masterpiece of the collection is a statue of the barbarian chief Crookvile, who was petrified by the lost medusa power.

After her speech, Ardence lets the Inspired wander around by themselves. While the numerous visitors (Inspired, members of the caravan and others) are walking around the museum, Helicius informs the Inspired that Ardence is also an Inspired. The Troupe may decide to chat with her about Concord or some other legend she mentioned. Alfah is with her, but the Inspired are free to join their conversation...

Suddenly, three members of the caravan attempt to murder Alfah!

Have your players roll PER + Alertness against the AGI + Stealth of the caravaneers (12). Each Inspired who succeeds this roll can try to stop one of the assassins. Although Albena attempts to reason with them, the three men are extremely resolute. Their movements are jerky as if they were puppets, not in control of their actions. They will be difficult to subdue, so the combat will almost certainly end in their deaths.

Alfah must stay alive. If she is wounded, even seriously, she will be saved by Adrence or Albena's opuses. If the Inspired don't fight, the assassins will be killed by the other caravaneers. Alfah will thank her rescuers warmly, and invite them to dine with her in the manor.

The behavior of these three Keshite warriors is disquieting (WIL roll against 10 + 5 per each warrior killed for a 2 point Perfidy increase). They were clearly manipulated by a supernatural force. If the Inspired search their bodies, they will find one drachma on each dead warrior. This currency is quite probably unknown to the Inspired. As long as they do not buy something with the money, they are not at risk, but if they do, they will suffer a 1d10 point Perfidy increase and gain 1 Dark Soul point!

A short inquiry will reveal that the three assassins were seen last night accompanied by a cloaked silhouette the size of a sprite or a spriggan.

A Small Instigator?

There are several spriggans and sprites in Scarletstone and the Inspired can spend an entire evening following up this lead. Here are some likely suspects:

- A famous spriggan sculptor named Marblentes who stays at the manor. He sculpted the statue of the twin medusae on the main square of M'ethrane.
- Servisio, spriggan innkeeper of the 'Three Aspics', who is sympathetic to the slaves. The Inspired have maybe already met him.
- A spriggan was present during the visit to the museum, probably a foreign emissary. In fact, it was Egon Scampa who came to discreetly enjoy the drama he is orchestrating.
- Perverlio Mycosful, a sprite, who has been spotted several times in Korantra and at the manor.

Only Servisio does not live in the manor, and he can thus be shadowed or questioned the night after the assassination attempt. He usually stays at his inn to serve his customers, he does not know anything about the assassination attempt and denies having talked to the warriors.

THE CARAVANEERS

AGI: 7
PER: 5
STA: 8
STR: 7
AIM: 6
DB: +1
MEL: 7
MOV: 3
HP: 54
SWT: 18
CWT: 27

Combat
Initiative: 14, targe 10, saber 14
Melee attack: saber 14, targe 12
Distance attack: -
Melee attack: targe 15, dodge 10, saber 14
Distance defense: 5

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ
Saber	+1	+1	+1	+5 (I/S)	0
Targe	-5	+1	+5	0 (C)	-1

Armor: studded leather (penalty -2, protection 5)

Hunted!

The next morning, at dawn, a loud noise wakes the Inspired. The eunuchs, the manor's guards, have entered the encampment to bring all the witnesses of the attempted murder back to the manor. If the Inspired sneak away (AGI + Stealth against DIF 20), they will probably witness the procession of the guards through the crowd.

The members of the caravan are led to a large room in Iriena's wing of the manor, from which she co-rules the Domain. Her servants look at them spitefully while others spit out insults. The medusa is sitting on her throne; her snakes nervously hold a Dancer on her head. Melfinio stands right behind his mother.

Iriena accuses the caravan of attempting to kill her sister. Her sentence is final: the caravan must leave before mid-day with all its members. The Inspired can make the case that they are not responsible for every member of the caravan, that they are not even members of this caravan, or even that they actually saved Alfah. It is useless. Iriena is obstinate! If the Inspired ask to see Alfah, Iriena refuses on the pretext that her sister is resting.

Iriena's words drip with insincerity. The Inspired will probably notice that the medusa's servants seem surprised to see her caring about her sister. The motive is simple: she planned the murder and intended to accuse the Inspired of it, in order to kill two birds with one stone.

If the Inspired insist on seeing Alfah before leaving Scarletstone, a chamberlain will come to them as the caravan is departing. They will thus meet Alfah alone in the manor (see below).

The Three Aspics

The only choice for the caravan is to leave. The Inspired are quite probably packing their equipment in their camp when Servisio, the innkeeper, approaches them. The spriggan explains that Melfinio has sent him to ask the Inspired to stay in Scarletstone during the jubilee in spite of Iriena's judgment. Servisio offers to hide them in the inn's cellar, which is actually the headquarters of the rebellion.

Melfinio will come to see them to discuss the plan. The caravan must leave now, but the Inspired could sneak away from it and return to Scarletstone at nighttime. Albena sincerely regrets the fact that she cannot stay, but she must lead the caravan. Let your Inspired organize their return to Scarletstone, and then to the Three Aspics. The cellar is full of weapons beds, and food – everything is prepared for the rebellion. Shortly after their arrival, Melfinio enters the cellar to discuss the jubilee. The Inspired now should have good reason to hold a grudge against Iriena, and should be willing to go along with the plan. Melfinio offers to discreetly let them in the manor. The building is huge and there are many hiding places; as long as the Inspired are disguised as visitors or servants, they should be able to make their inquiries. As for Melfinio, he will be with his mother to alleviate her suspicions.

Inside the Manor

One way or another, Melfinio smuggles them into the manor. For example, they can come through the kitchen entrance with the morning delivery of flour. Melfinio will open the door and let them pass by the guards. There are many servants in the manor, so once the Inspired are inside, they can be virtually anonymous as long as they are careful. (Of course, a Troupe composed of seasonlings such as black feys, minotaurs or giants will have more difficulty sneaking around.)

The manor is a huge building with many unused rooms – a labyrinth in which the Inspired will certainly feel lost. Eminence, you should make the players feel very uncomfortable by staging several suspicious incidents. Eerie harpsichord music is playing from some unidentifiable place... Someone is following the Troupe... A servant is staring as if he recognizes one of the Inspired... You should improvise encounters with eccentric characters: artists, strange servants or a lost ambassador.

The manor is divided into two symmetrical wings, with rooms on both sides that are identical except for the furnishings. Iriena's wing is gloomy and disquieting, with dark red carpets and large bronze statues. Alfah's wing feels more spacious, with smooth marble statues and fountains. The slaves are treated differently depending on the wing in which they are. In Iriena's wing, they are supervised by an overseer armed with a whip, while those in Alfah's wing come and go freely.

The Inspired may make inquiries during the two days before the jubilee. The following paragraphs detail the events that will enable them to solve the Drama. Depending on what they discover, they will have to plan their course of action: killing Iriena before or during the jubilee, stopping Mefinio, etc.

Jubilee Preparations

A large part of Iriena's wing is devoted to the jubilee preparations. Many servants are working on the floats, the fireworks, the banners, the instruments and the decorations. If the Inspired inspect a particularly gloomy preparation room, they will find an old medusa apparently talking to herself: "But of course, little one, don't worry. You're for the black viper..." If the Inspired light the room, they will see numerous

metal cages holding slaves. The old medusa is one of Iriena's chamberlains and if the Inspired are persuasive, she informs them that her mistress is going to sacrifice one slave for each of her snakes at the jubilee. The chamberlain's task is to choose the best slaves and she would appreciate it if the Inspired did not let anyone know about this big surprise. It will be the main attraction!

Meeting Alfah

If the Inspired ask to see Alfah, she may agree to receive them (especially if they saved her in the museum). The meeting takes place during one of the rare moments when Iriena unconsciously lets Alfah take over. The Inspired will have to wait for her a long while in a small sitting room. Finally, the medusa receives them in her chambers. She is very kind to them and carefully listens to what they have to say. If they try to use her against her sister on the day of the jubilee, she will refuse because she is not attending the festivities, so as not to irritate her sister. If they want to intervene before the jubilee, Alfah could agree to let them meet Iriena. But she wants to be sure that they do not intend to harm her. If the Inspired tell her about her sister's macabre plans for the jubilee, she agrees to find her sister in order to reason with her.

After trying to make an appointment, which is refused by one of her sister's chamberlains, Alfah decides to go to see Iriena on her side of the manor. Obviously, Iriena is not there but the Inspired could search her room - even though Alfah is against it - and thus find the painting (see below).

The Mysterious Spriggan

Three suspects live in the manor:

Perverlio Mycosful: The Inspired can discreetly follow him to the manor's cellars from where he travels secretly to Eddrig's cave. If found, the old woman can be manipulated (CHA + Fast talk or CHA + Intrigue against DIF 18) to provide the Troupe with an extremely powerful drug to incapacitate Iriena...

Marblentes: The sculptor is busy carving a huge colossus that goes through three floors of the manor. Nothing else interests him.

Egon Scampa: If the Inspired question the servants concerning a mysterious spriggan, they find out that an emissary named Egon Scampa is staying in the manor even though he does not have a room. Some hint that he is Iriena's lover. He should become their suspect.

Entering Iriena's Room

The Inspired will first have to eliminate several eunuchs and pick a complex lock (DIF 24) in order to enter her room. They can also use Alfah's room, which is not guarded but is also locked, if they find the secret passage (either they saw Alfah use it, or they must succeed on a PER + Search roll against DIF 25).

If you can time it right, they should witness one of Iriena's somnambulism fits. The medusa gets out of her bed, naked, and goes to her sister's room through the secret passage. She then falls asleep in Alfah's bed and her snakes also fall asleep one after the other. The Inspired have discovered the secret of the two Scarletstone rulers!

The Painting

One way or another, the Inspired will probably have the opportunity to search Iriena's room. It is full of works of art, but the Inspired will immediately notice a large fresco representing a mountainous landscape. The bottom of the fresco is the beginning of a small path running along the side of a cliff. There is mud on the floor in front of the fresco, and slippers and a small dressing gown rest on a nearby stool. The gown looks about the size of a spriggan...

The Jubilee

The day of the jubilee has arrived. The celebration will be magnificent for many artists have come from all over the Widowlands. Several wooden stages have been set up on the main square.

If the Inspired have not yet solved the secret of the

EUNUCHS AND SLAVES

The eunuchs – guards of the manor
The eunuchs are loyal to both Iriena and Alfah. If your Inspired are not discreet in the manor, they will have to deal with them. They will also defend the medusa during the jubilee if she is attacked.
Their attributes are equivalent to those of soldiers (see p. 143) and they fight with sabarabahs (halberds with long curved blades). They wear no armor but have high endurance (60 HP).

The slave rebels
There are fifty armed slaves, totally devoted to Melfinio. Their attributes are equivalent to those of brigands (see p. 134). They have many different kinds of weapons.

fresco and of the twins, Melfinio will attack – with or without their help – and will succeed! While his henchmen create a diversion, he stabs his mother with his dagger. He then enters the manor to publicly offer the throne to Alfah. Unfortunately, she seems to have disappeared. Soon he finds the fresco in the manor and asks the Inspired for their advice.

If the Troupe has mentioned the fresco and the spriggan's influence on Melfinio's mother, he will agree to delay his revolution until the Inspired can catch the spriggan. (He may even join them in this quest.) The jubilee will then take place as planned, slave sacrifices and all.

If the Inspired have discovered the true nature of the Scarletstone rulers and if they tell Melfinio, he will believe them. He will tell them that he has dreamt that Alfah was his mother. His first reaction is to want to kill both of them, but the Inspired can easily reason with him. The chaos of the jubilee is then a good opportunity to study the fresco.

The Pictureworld

The spriggan has obviously escaped through the Pictureworld. Only one person in Scarletstone can help them use the fresco: Ardence.

After a thorough study of the picture, Ardence uses a paintbrush to draw invisible lines on the fresco. The pigments come to life and a passage is opened. Ardence warns the Inspired that she cannot help them return. She advises them to destroy the fresco once they arrive on the other side.

Timorous Inspired might prefer destroying the fresco instead of chasing the spriggan. In such a case, they will never play Act Three, but the spriggan will find another way to return to Scarletstone and take revenge on those who destroyed his fresco.

Egon Scampa

Race: spriggan
Origin: Princely communes
Sex: male
Age: 80
Height: 4'3" (SIZ – 1)
Weight: 69 lbs.
MOV: 2

Attributes
Flame: 1/3

Body: 1/5
Body bonus: +4
AGI: 12
PER: 10
STA: 6
STR: 4

Spirit: 1/3
Spirit bonus: +2
INT: 8
WIL: 3

Soul: 1/4
Soul bonus: +3
CHA: 8
CRE: 9

Secondary attributes
AIM: 11
ART: 8
ASC: -
DB: -1
HP: 45
MEL: 9
SWT: 15
CWT: 22

Fortune points: 2
Flame powers: none
Darkening: 42
Perfidy: 52

Powers of the Masque:
Masquerade, Curtain sorcery

Skills
Trials: Weapon (rapier) 6, Weapon (paintbrush) 5, Weapon (crossbow) 5, Dodge 5
Rogue: 8 in every skill
Knowledge: Alphabet: Septentrian 8, Language: Keshite 8, Language: Kiemenite 8, Language: Ophidian 4, Season: spring 5
Courtly: Painting 10, Sculpture 8
Occult: Concord 4, Demonology 6, Shape 3, Vista 9

Assets & Faults, Gifts & Sorrows
Consummate acting, Doggedness, Experienced imp, Invoking Circle I & II, Cruelty, Meanness, Venomous blood, Hypocrisy, Grandiloquence, Trickster, Nightmares, Mischievous demon, Sleepwalking

Combat
Initiative: 26, rapier 28, crossbow 31
Melee attack: rapier 21
Distance attack: crossbow 20
Melee defense: rapier 20
Dodge: 20
Distance defense: dodge 10

Magical arts
Vista APT: 20
Shape APT: 14

Opuses:
All Fall Vista and Tainted Shape. In combat, Egon only uses Torment and Trompe-l'oeil wound. For this last opus, Egon must touch his opponent with his paintbrush to inflict a Serious wound (with no HP loss).

Weapons	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.	SIZ	Range
Paintbrush	0	0	-5	special	-1	-
Rapier	+2	+2	+0	+3 (I)	0	-
Spriggan crossbow	+5	0	-	+4 (I)	-2	35 y.

Armor: none

Act Three:

Intruders at the University

The Confrontation

The Inspired are walking along a mountain path leading to a grotto that opens into a sumptuously furnished room. Going through, they find themselves back in the Twilight Realms.

The fresco from which they entered is a copy of the one they used in the Widowlands, but they are far from Iriena's room. Cold wind enters the room through an open window that looks down on a large city built at the foot of the tower containing the fresco. A beautiful palace is erected close to the tower, and the horizon is divided by crenellated ramparts. It is snowing outside, and it should be easy for the Troupe to deduce that they are far from the Keshite Empire and the Widowlands. The Inspired are actually in the Princely Communes, in the Atu Sika of Laeghdoved, the Hai Shul building devoted to the Arts.

More precisely, they are in a small but luxurious room, decorated with many works of art. Its usual occupant does not seem to be here. Searching the room allows the Inspired to discover notebooks devoted to specific paintings, and class schedules – they are in a teacher's room. One detail may interest the Troupe: a mirror, identical to the one they found in the shed in the Act One.

There are also many letters scattered about. If the Inspired read them (PER + Search against DIF 20), a series of incomprehensible poems from a certain "O" will catch their attention. In fact, these are coded messages from Olgreta Savansk (see p. 23), who is allied to Egon Scampa. On a successful INT + Intrigue roll against DIF 25, the Inspired will suspect the letters of being encrypted, but they will not be able to penetrate the code.

The only way out of the room is a door leading to a staircase that runs down to the bottom floor of the tower.

Downstairs there is a large artist's studio, full of easels, articulated wooden lay figures and canvases. The spriggan, Egon, is painting on a stool in the middle of the room. He paints as he would conduct an orchestra, with momentous strokes.

He looks up when the Inspired arrive. He has been waiting for them. As soon as he is off his stool, he raises his hand and his wooden mannequins come to life and attack the Inspired! Egon also joins the fight, but if he feels too threatened, during the combat, he will try to disappear in his cloak (a manifestation of Curtain Sorcery, see the AGONE rulebook, p. 252). If he gets away, make sure, Eminence, that one day he takes vengeance on the Inspired.

The Trial

The Inspired are arrested by the Won Taidu (the militia), who were drawn by the noise of the combat with Egon Scampa. They batter down the door, and at least a dozen soldiers enter the room. After asking them to explain their presence in the tower, they realize the Inspired are intruders, and throw them in jail.

WOODEN MANNEQUINS

These man-sized wooden mannequins can move like human beings. They are used as models for the painter. Egon has awoken two of them, and they serve him loyally.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 216 lbs.

AGI: 5
PER: 1
STA: 20
STR: 8
DB: +1
HP: 95
MEL: 6
MOV: 3
SWT: 31
CWT: 47

Perfidy: 5

Combat:
Initiative: 2
Melee attack: arm 15
Distance attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 10
Distance defense: 5

Weapon	Init.	Att.	Def.	Dam.
Wooden arm	-4	+1	0	+3 (C)

Armor: none

CONSEQUENCES

Supportive Sengs	The Inspired are...
0	Sentenced to death
1	Banished forever and stripped of their equipment.
2	Banished forever.
3	Banished for a year.
4	Authorized to stay.
5 and more	Welcomed, and they gain free tuition at the Hai Shul.

They will be judged by the Seng Ido, the council of the university deans. The Troupe is accused of clandestinely entering the Hai Shul and assaulting an Eldin (master). They will be questioned by each member of the council before defending themselves in an assembly composed of Sengs and Eldins. Thereafter, the council will gather to ponder its sentence.

Each of the seven members of the council will question them about their presence in the university, about the way they arrived there and how they know Egon Scampa. Depending on their answers, they can influence each Seng's decision. Below is each Seng's initial opinion as well as the arguments that can influence them. Indicating the difficulty of influencing the Sengs, there is a (DIF) next to each that can be opposed by Fast talk, Diplomacy, Eloquence or Intrigue rolls. Moreover, intelligent arguments presented by the players can apply modifiers to the rolls.

Ho Chide, Min Seng (30)

The dean cannot bear the idea that the Inspired got into the Hai Shul. He is conservative and seems impossible to convince. He trusts Egon and cannot imagine that the spriggan could be a traitor.

Drek Mordant, Won Seng (28)

This ogre warrior feels personally offended by the intrusion of the Inspired into the Hai Shul. However, if the Inspired mention the threat of the Enemy upon the Hai Shul, he will be willing to support them (-8). Moreover, Drek is an Inspired. If the Troupe understands this, and if they confide their Inspiration to him, he will join their side (-10).

Bayud Oshram, Kati Seng (20)

This young Keshite will carefully listen to the Inspired. He knows Suleïdin's Seraglio and if the Inspired mention it, he will be interested. Negotiating a trade deal with the seraglio could be extremely profitable, and the Inspired could provide a connection with the Keshite traders. If he considers this possible (-5), he will end the conversation thus: "I believe you and I will support your cause before the Seng Ido". If the Inspired are freed, he will come to see them again in order to discuss a preliminary deal.

Patril Leo, Daeli Seng (22)

This dwarf will be more willing to listen if there are one or several seasonlings among the Troupe (-4), especially if they are Winter seasonlings (-6). Furthermore, if he is convinced that the Inspired have accomplished magic or mystical deeds (-4), he will see them as a potential help regarding another problem: Laeghon's crypt (see p. 19). Patril is a pacifist who will appreciate characters who do not favor violence (-5). Conversely, he loathes quarrelsome people (+5).

Anoch Griess, Atu Seng (30)

This satyr, who is master of the artistic Way, will not support the Inspired for two reasons. First, he hates Concordists and the Inspired have arrived through a Pictureworld. Furthermore, Anoch was one of Egon's best friends. Egon never told Anoch he was a Concordist and he pretended to hate them also. He grieves for Egon and thus will not help the Inspired.

Esvam Ideritch, Xios Seng (18)

This Eclipsist is particularly interested in the Pictureworld and the dangers it may represent. If the Troupe included a member of the Cipher-sorcerer (- 4), Esvam will listen to him or her and could be convinced that Egon was a threat to the Hai Shul. If the Inspired seem powerful, he will vote for them in order to gain potential allies.

Olgreta Savansk, Qyn Seng (20)

This Princean, who is in charge of the university of women, has an ambiguous role. She was one of Egon's allies and she wants to know if the Inspired are aware of their alliance. She will question them about the spriggan. If the Inspired have seen her poems, they can try to blackmail her. If the Troupe seems mighty and incorruptible (+10), she will try to get rid of them. If the Inspired are freed, she will pretend having voted for them. But if she thinks she can corrupt them, she will accept their blackmail (-5). She will come up with a deal: she asks them to incriminate the Atu Seng in front of the assembly by telling the council that the spriggan was only a servant for the true instigator: Anoch Griess. If the Inspired accept her deal, they risk Perfidy (WIL roll against DIF 25, for a 5 Perfidy point increase), but Olgreta will support them (-10).

The Verdict

Once they have met all the Sengs, the Inspired are brought before the assembly to defend themselves. Unless the Inspired use radically different arguments, the Sengs will not change their decisions at this point. The assembly goes to deliberate, and returns shortly thereafter to read their sentence. The judgment depends on the number of Sengs the Inspired convinced (see the table below). If they are authorized to stay, they will become Sibas (foreigners). If they pay tuition they can become Zitos (students).

The Troupe will then be able to spend their Inspiration points in one of the most prominent universities of Harmundia.

Inspiration

In order to distribute IP to your Inspired, you should consider the three acts as three separate scenarios. For the number of IP to award per act, refer to the AGONE rulebook p. 180. In addition to the IP given to your Inspired based on their actions, here is a reward for their overall success:

Act I

Unmasking Galdesh: 3 IP
Getting rid of Luizel: 4 IP

Act II

Discovering the Iriena/Alfah duality: 5 IP
Finding the Pictureworld: 2 IP
Freeing Scarletstone; be it by destroying or using the fresco, or by killing Iriena/Alfah: 3 IP
Killing the medusa without having discovered her secret: 0 IP

Act III

Killing Egon: 5 IP
Being freed by the council: 1 IP per supportive Seng
If your Inspired enroll in the Hai Shul at the end of the third act, they can spend their IP in Knowledge or Occult by training with one of the many prestigious teachers.

GURROSES 91

Denizens of Harmundia

The Twilight Realms are home to countless Dullen. In this chapter, we have made a list of ready-to-play NPCs, ordered by profession, which you can use to populate your Dramas. Unlike the PC archetypes in the AGONE rulebook, these career profiles are for "young" characters (between 17 and 29 years old). To create older characters, subtract 1 point from all Body Attributes and add 1 point to all Spirit and Soul Attributes. To maintain consistency between age and experience, add 1 or 2 additional skills at level 4 or 5, and 1 point to all skills in the NPC profile.

All these NPCs are human. Changing them into seasonlings is easy: all you have to do is to take the "Racial attributes table" (AGONE rulebook, p. 101) and perform the necessary adjustments according to the desired race. Then, add the seasonling's special powers and innate skills.

Skills followed by an asterisk must have a definite sphere of influence based on the character's job and background.

LIST OF NPCS

1. ALDERMAN
2. BEGGAR
3. BRIGAND
4. BURGOMASTER
5. CAPTAIN
6. CHAMBERLAIN
7. CITY DWELLER
8. CRAFTSMAN
9. DOCTOR
10. FENCING MASTER
11. HERMIT
12. HUNTSMAN
13. INNKEEPER
14. INTRIGUER
15. KNIGHT
16. MERCHANT
17. MESSENGER
18. PAINTER
19. SAILOR
20. SENESCHAL
21. SENTINEL
22. SERVANT
23. SOLDIER
24. SPY
25. VICAR

ALDERMAN

A magistrate who assists a city's burgomaster. He is often one of the permanent court assessors.

Height: 5'5" (SIZ = 0)
Weight: 160 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 5
STAmina: 4
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILI: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 4
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 41
SWT: 13
CWT: 20
DB: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Language* 5, Law* 7
Trials: Ride 2
Courtly: Diplomacy 6, Eloquence 2, Etiquette 5, Music 3, Painting 3, Poetry 3, Stewardship 3, Traditions* 7

Combat: Aldermen never fight.

Armor: none

BEGGAR

Beggars ask for charity to live. Most of them belong to the mass of poor people who have left the country in search of a better life in a big city.

Height: 5'4" ft
Weight: 120 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 6
STAmina: 3
STRength: 3

Spirit:
INTelligence: 3
WILI: 3

Soul:
CHArisma: 1
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes

MEL: 5
AIM: 6
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 38
SWT: 12
CWT: 19
DB: -1

Skills
Knowledge: Language* 5
Trials: Alertness 5, Dodge 5, Survival 5, Weapons (Brawl) 4
Courtly: Traditions* 4
Rogue: Conceal 2, Disguise 2, Search 3, Stealth 3

Combat

Initiative 12, Brawl 8
Melee attack: Brawl 10
Ranged attack: -

Melee defense
Dodge: 11
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 5

Armor: none

Weapon
Brawl -4 +1 - -3 (C)

BRIGAND

In this age of Twilight, a sense of uncertainty has set in. Roads are unsafe and violent armed robberies have become common.

Height: 5'7" ft (SIZ 0)
Weight: 180 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 4
STAmina: 6
STRength: 5

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILI: 4

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Skills

Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Climb 2, Dodge 5, Ride 2, Weapons (Sword) 6
Knowledge: Language* 5, Strategy 3
Courtly: Fast Talk 3, Traditions* 3
Rogue: Conceal 5, Gambling 5, Search 3, Stealth 5

Combat
Initiative 10, Sword 11
Melee attack: Sword 12
Ranged attack: -

Melee defense
Dodge: 11
Parry: Sword 12
Ranged defense: 5

Armor: heavy clothes, single jacket (penalty -1, prot. 1)

Weapon
Sword +1 +1 +1 +4 (I/S)

BURGOMASTER

The burgomaster is an urban notable, often a rich merchant or a guild master, who advises the rulers of his city. In many respects, he can be considered a deputy mayor.

Height: 5'6" ft (SIZ 0)
Weight: 170 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 5
STAmina: 4
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 6
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 4
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 42
SWT: 14
CWT: 21
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Dodge 5, Ride 3, Weapons (Foil) 5
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Cult* 2, Language* 6, Law* 5
Courtly: Diplomacy 5, Etiquette 5, Music 2, Traditions* 7

Combat
Initiative 9, Foil 10
Melee attack: Foil 11
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 9
Parry: Foil 10
Ranged defense: 4

Armor: none

Weapon
Foil +1 +2 +1 +2 (I)

CAPTAIN

The captain commands an infantry company, a cavalry regiment, or a catapult battery.

Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 190 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 5
STAmina: 6
STRength: 6

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 6
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet* 4, Language* 5, Law* 4, Strategy 5
Trials: Alertness 6, Athletics 5, Dodge 5, Ride 5, Weapons (Sword) 7, Weapon (one chosen weapon as professional specialty) 8
Courtly: Diplomacy 2, Eloquence 2, Etiquette 2, Traditions* 3
Rogue: Gambling 3, Locksmith 3

Combat

Initiative: 11, Sword: 12
Melee attack: Sword 14
Ranged attack: -

Melee defense
Dodge: 5
Parry: Sword 14
Ranged defense: 2

Armor: partial banded mail (penalty -6, prot. 9)

Weapon
Sword +1 +1 +1 +4 (I/S)

CHAMBERLAIN

The chamberlain lives at court and knows quite a lot about what's going on. Usually he is a gentleman in charge of the lord's or king's room service. He oversees the servants and works diligently for the host's well being.

Height: 5'7" ft (SIZ 0)
Weight: 170 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 6
STAmina: 3
STRength: 3

Spirit:
INTelligence: 6
WILL: 4

Soul:
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 3
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 40
SWT: 13
CWT: 20
DB: -1

Skills
Trials: Alertness 6, Ride 2
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Language* 6, Law* 3
Courtly: Diplomacy 6, Etiquette 8, Music 3, Painting 2, Stewardship 5, Traditions* 5

Combat
Chamberlains do not generally fight.

Armor: none

CITY DWELLER

A typical inhabitant of a city.

Height: 5'5" ft (SIZ 0)
Weight: 155 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 5
STAmina: 4
STRength: 5

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 4
CREativity: 4

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 4
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 38
SWT: 12
CWT: 19
DB: 0

Skills

Trials: Athletics 2, Dodge 1, Weapons (Brawl 2)
Knowledge: Alphabet* 2, Cult* 4, Language* 5, Law* 1
Courtly: Etiquette 1, Traditions* 4

Combat
Initiative 9, Brawl 5
Melee attack: Brawl 7
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 5
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 2

Armor: none

Weapon

Brawl	-4	+1	-	-3 (C)

CRAFTSMAN

The craftsman can be a blacksmith, a candle-maker, a draper, a goldsmith, etc. The most successful craftsmen are quite rich, and have four or five apprentices. The poor ones have only their families to help them.

Height: 5'4" ft (SIZ 0)
Weight: 155 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGility: 4
PERception: 6
STAmina: 5
STRength: 6

Spirit:
INTelligence: 4
WILL: 3

Soul:
CHArisma: 5
CREativity: 7

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 42
SWT: 14
CWT: 21
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Athletics 3, Dodge 3, Weapons (Brawl 5)

Knowledge: Alphabet* 2, Cult* 2, Language* 5, Law* 1
Courtly: Crafts* 8, Etiquette 2, Fast Talk 2, Stewardship 2, Trade 2, Traditions* 6

Combat
Initiative 10, Brawl 6
Melee attack: Brawl 10
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 7
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 3

Armor: heavy clothes, single jacket (penalty 0, prot. 1)

Weapon
Brawl -4 +1 - -3 (C)

DOCTOR

The doctor treats wounds, bumps, blows and various common diseases. He practices in town and country, and is generally respected.

Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 165 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGility: 4
PERception: 7
STAmina: 6
STRength: 5

Spirit:
INTelligence: 6
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 4
CREativity: 4

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 48
SWT: 16
CWT: 24
DB: 0

Skills
Knowledge: Alphabet* 2, Beast Lore 3, Language* 5, Law* 2, Medicine 8, Plant Lore 2, Surgery 3
Courtly: Traditions* 5

Combat
Initiative: 10
Melee defense
Dodge: 1
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 0

Armor: none

FENCING MASTER

He has devoted his life to the absolute mastery of his weapon and has learned to use it with fearsome effectiveness.

Height: 6'1" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 180 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 7
PERception: 6
STAmina: 7
STRength: 7

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILI: 4

Soul:
CHArisma: 4
CREativity: 5

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 7
AIM: 6
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 55
SWT: 18
CWT: 27
DB: +2

Skills
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 6, Dodge 7 (specialty: 1 parade), Ride 4, Weapons (Rapier) 8 (specialty: 1 maneuver)
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Language* 5, Medicine 3, Strategy 6
Courtly: Traditions* 5

Combat
Initiative 13, Rapier 14

Melee attack: Rapier 17
Ranged attack: –

Melee defense
Dodge: 12
Parry: Rapier 16
Ranged defense: 6

Armor: leather and metal, partial (penalty -2, prot. 5)

Weapon
Rapier +2 +2 +1 +3 (I)

HERMIT

A hermit lives alone in a deserted place, usually for spiritual or ethical reasons (or because he is a leper, or because he has been exiled by his lord, etc.).

Height: 5'3" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 125 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 5
STAmina: 5
STRength: 5

Spirit:
INTelligence: 7
WILI: 7

Soul:
CHArisma: 4
CREativity: 4

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 46
SWT: 15
CWT: 23
DB: -1

Skills
Trials: Alertness 3, Athletics 6, Climb 3, Dodge 3, First Aid 5, Survival 5
Knowledge: Astronomy 6, Beast Lore 5, Language* 3, Medicine 5, Plant Lore 5, Seasons 5

Combat
Most hermits would rather die than engage an enemy.

Armor: none

HUNTSMAN

The huntsman is the officer in charge of the prince's venery. He manages all activities related to hunting with hounds.

Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 190 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 6
STAmina: 5
STRength: 5

Spirit:
INTelligence: 4
WILL: 4

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 6
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 48
SWT: 16
CWT: 24
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Dodge 5, Ride 7, Weapons (Cutlass) 6
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Astronomy 4, Beast Lore 5, Geography 3, Language* 5, Law* 5
Courtly: Etiquette 2, Stewardship 5, Traditions* 5
Rogue: Conceal 5, Hunt 6

Combat
Initiative 12, Cutlass 12
Melee attack: Cutlass 12
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 10
Parry: Cutlass 11
Ranged defense: 5

Armor: leather, partial (penalty -1, prot. 3)

Weapon
Cutlass 0 +1 0 +2 (I/S)

INNKEEPER

The innkeeper runs an inn – a house or a simple little hotel – where one can find a hot meal and accommodations, provided one has cash.

Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 190 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 4
STAmina: 6
STRength: 6

Spirit:
INTelligence: 4
WILL: 3

Soul:
CHArisma: 2
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 4
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 53
SWT: 17
CWT: 26
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 4, Athletics 5, Dodge 5, Weapons (Brawl) 5
Knowledge: Alphabet* 2, Language* 5, Law* 4
Courtly: Diplomacy 2, Fast Talk 2, Stewardship 3, Trade 2, Traditions* 5

Combat
Initiative 8, Brawl 4
Melee attack: Brawl 11
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 9
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 4

Armor: heavy clothes, single jacket (penalty 0, prot. 1)

Weapon
Brawl -4 +1 - -3 (C)

INTRIGUER

In every court, one can encounter schemers grasping at any scrap of power within reach. The intriguer is one of them.

Height: 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 170 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 6
STAmina: 4
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 40
SWT: 13
CWT: 20
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 2, Dodge 2, Ride 5, Weapons (Rapier) 3
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Language* 5, Law* 2
Courtly: Diplomacy 2, Eloquence 2, Etiquette 2, Fast Talk 2, Traditions* 5
Rogue: Disguise 3, Intrigue 6, Search 3, Stealth 5

Combat
Initiative 11, Rapier 13
Melee attack: Rapier 9
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 7
Parry: Rapier 8
Ranged defense: 3

Armor: heavy clothes, single jacket (penalty 0, prot. 1)

Weapon

Rapier	+2	+2	+1	+3 (I)

KNIGHT

A knight is a mounted warrior who wears plate armor and rides a warhorse. Most knights are also feudal lords, owning a fief.

Height: 6'3" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 200 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 5
STAmina: 7
STRength: 7

Spirit:
INTelligence: 4
WILL: 4

Soul:
CHArisma: 5
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 6
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 55
SWT: 18
CWT: 27
DB: +1

Skills
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Dodge 6, Ride 6, Weapons (Sword) 5, Weapons (Shield) 6, Weapons (Lance) 5
Knowledge: Alphabet* 4, Language* 5, Law* 3, Strategy 3
Courtly: Etiquette 2, Traditions* 4

Combat
Initiative 11, Lance 17, Sword 13, Shield 8
Melee attack: Sword 14, Shield 12, Lance 11
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 0
Parry: Sword 14, Shield 16, Lance 9
Ranged defense: 0

Armor: plate, complete (penalty -14, prot. 14)

Weapon (s)

Sword	+1	+1	+1	+4 (I/S)
Lance	+6	0	-2	+7 (I)
Shield	-3	0	+4	+1 (C)

Mount: Horse

Attributes
AGI 3, PER 7, STR 12, STA 12, MEL 7, ASC -, ART -, SIZ +1, MOV 6, MD +10, HP 82, SWT 27, CWT 41.

Skills
Athletics 7
Weapon: hoof (kick) 3

MERCHANT

A peaceful trader who works in a shop. (To create a caravaneer, increase the Ride and Stewardship skills. Give him Diplomacy 4 and one or two other languages at level 4.)
Height: 5'4" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 155 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 5
STAmina: 3
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 6
WILL: 5
Soul:
CHArisma: 6
CREativity: 4

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 4
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 39
SWT: 13
CWT: 19
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Dodge 1, Ride 2, Weapons (Brawl 3)
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Language* 5, Law* 2
Courtly: Fast Talk 5, Stewardship 6, Trade 6, Traditions* 5

Combat
Initiative 9, Brawl 5
Melee attack: Brawl 8
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 5
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 2

Armor: none

Weapon
Brawl -4 +1 - -3 (C)

MESSENGER

Messengers safely deliver missives and dispatches. They must be fast and close-mouthed. All major institutions in Harmundia (the nobility, the Cipher-sorcerer, city councils and trade guilds) employ messengers.

Height: 5'5" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 150 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 4
STAmina: 7
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 3
WILL: 3

Soul:
CHArisma: 2
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 54
SWT: 18
CWT: 27
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 4, Athletics 5, Ride 7, Weapons (Cutlass) 5
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Astronomy 4, Geography 6, Language* 5, Law* 2
Courtly: Traditions* 5

Combat
Initiative 10, Cutlass 11
Melee attack: Brawl 11
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 11
Parry: Cutlass 10
Ranged defense: 5

Armor: leather, single jacket (penalty -1, prot. 3)

Weapon
Cutlass 0 +1 +0 +2 (I/S)

PAINTER

The painter practices the art of painting (not the Magical Art of Vista!). He spends most of his time searching for a rich patron who could offer him employment for life. In the meantime, he paints portraits of nobles and bourgeois, or great frescoes for rich institutions. A few have architectural or engineering skills, and compete for clients with the dwarves of the Square.
Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 165 lbs.
MOV: 5

Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 6
STAmina: 4
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 4
Soul:
CHArisma: 5
CREativity: 7

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 6
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 41
SWT: 13
CWT: 20
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Athletics 2, Dodge 1, Weapons (Brawl) 2
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Language* 5
Courtly: Etiquette 3, Music 4, Painting 7, Poetry 3, Traditions* 3

Combat
Initiative 12, Brawl 8
Melee attack: Brawl 8
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 7
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 3

Armor: heavy clothes, single jacket (penalty 0, prot. 1)

Weapon
Brawl -4 +1 - -3 (C)

SAILOR

This sailor is more a pirate than a fisherman. He or she will feel at home in Buccaneer Haven.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 170 lbs.
MOV: 5

Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 4
STAmina: 6
STRength: 6

Spirit:
INTelligence: 4
WILL: 4
Soul:
CHArisma: 2
CREativity: 2

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 6
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 48
SWT: 16
CWT: 24
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Athletics 5, Climb 5, Dodge 5, Swim 7, Weapons (Saber 5)
Knowledge: Astronomy 5, Language* 5, Navigation 8
Courtly: Fast Talk 4, Traditions* 5
Rogue: Acrobatics 4, Gambling 4

Combat
Initiative 10, Saber 11
Melee attack: Saber 12
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 11
Parry: Saber 12
Ranged defense: 5

Armor: none

Weapon
Saber +1 +1 +1 +4 (I/S)

SENESCHAL

A seneschal manages the house, the business and the possessions of a wealthy person or institution.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 160 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 6
STAmina: 5
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 5
CREativity: 1

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 46
SWT: 15
CWT: 23
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Dodge 2, Ride 5, Weapons (Foil) 3

Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Language* 5, Law* 5
Courtly: Stewardship 7, Traditions* 5

Combat
Initiative 10, Foil 11
Melee attack: Foil 9
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 6
Parry: Foil 8
Ranged defense: 3

Armor: heavy clothes, single jacket (penalty 0, prot. 1)

Weapon
Foil +2 +2 +1 +3 (I)

SENTINEL

Palaces and other important buildings must have sentinels on guard duty. Depending on the current political conditions, they will either be in ceremonial uniforms (nice and shiny, but cumbersome) or in battle dress.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 175 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 6
STAmina: 5
STRength: 5

Spirit:
INTelligence: 2
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 50
SWT: 16
CWT: 25
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Dodge 3, Ride 3, Weapons (Bow) 5, Weapon (Lance) 5
Knowledge: Language* 5, Law* 1
Courtly: Traditions* 2

Combat
Initiative 11, Bow 15, Lance 15
Melee attack: Lance 10
Ranged attack: Bow 10
Melee defense
Dodge: 6
Parry: Lance 9
Ranged defense: 3

Armor: leather and metal, partial (penalty -2, prot. 5)

Weapons
Bow +4 0 - +7 (I)
(range 80 yds.)
Lance +4 0 -1 +4 (I)

SERVANT

Servants are found everywhere, from the poorest village inn to the king's palace. The servants of a great lord can live as well as wealthy bourgeois. Others live shoddier lives than peasants.

Height: 5'5" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 155 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes

Body:
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 4
STAmina: 4
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 3
WILL: 3

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 4
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 39
SWT: 13
CWT: 19
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Athletics 2, Dodge 2, Weapons (Brawl 4)
Knowledge: Language* 5
Courtly: Etiquette 5, Stewardship 3, Traditions* 5
Rogue: Stealth 5, Search 2

Combat
Initiative 9, Brawl 5
Melee attack: Brawl 9.
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 7
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 3

Armor: none

Weapon

Brawl	-4	+1	-	-3 (C)

SOLDIER

There are three kinds of soldiers: draftees, volunteers and mercenaries. Most draftees must follow their liege to war, but desperately want to be elsewhere. Volunteers are full of enthusiasm, but not very skillful. Mercenaries are professional soldiers, and are generally highly skilled. The profile below is for a volunteer with one or two years of experience. For a draftee, lower the weapon skills to 3 or 4. To create a mercenary, give him Alertness 4, Dodge 5, Ride 6-7, a melee weapon skill of 7, and Bow or Crossbow at 4.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 175 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 5
PERception: 5
STAmina: 5
STRength: 6

Spirit:
INTelligence: 2
WILL: 4

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 49
SWT: 16
CWT: 24
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 2, Athletics 5, Dodge 3, Ride 3, Weapons (Hammer) 5, Weapon (Shield) 5
Knowledge: Language* 4, Law 1
Courtly: Traditions* 4
Rogue: Gambling 2

Combat
Initiative 10, Hammer 10, Shield 7
Melee attack: Hammer 11, Shield 10
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 2
Parry: Hammer 9, Shield 14
Ranged defense: 1

Armor: banded mail, partial (penalty -6, prot. 9)
Weapon (s)

Hammer	0	+1	1	+4 (C)
Shield	-3	0	+4	0 (C)

SPY

Concealed in the shadows, he watches the moves of the mighty and powerful, and reports them to his master.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 155 lbs.
MOV: 3

Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 6
PERception: 5
STAmina: 4
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 5
WILL: 3

Soul:
CHArisma: 1
CREativity: 1

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 5
AIM: 5
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 39
SWT: 13
CWT: 19
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Climb 3, Dodge 2, Ride 4, Weapons (Dagger 5)
Knowledge: Alphabet 5, Language* 5
Courtly: Traditions* 4
Rogue: Disguise 5, Intrigue 2, Search 5, Stealth 7

Combat
Initiative 11, Dagger 11
Melee attack: Dagger 12
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 8
Parry: Dagger 10
Ranged defense: 4

Armor: heavy clothes, single jacket (penalty 0, prot. 1)

Weapon

Dagger	0	+2	0	+1 (I)

VICAR

In most parts of the Twilight Realms, a vicar (or deacon) is the assistant to a priest. They have religious duties, but can work another job as the side. Not to be confused with the vicars of the Liturgical Province, who are full-fledged priests with significant secular authority.
Height: 5'5" ft (SIZ 0)
Weight: 150 lbs.
MOV: 3
Attributes
Body:
AGIlity: 4
PERception: 5
STAmina: 4
STRength: 4

Spirit:
INTelligence: 6
WILL: 5

Soul:
CHArisma: 3
CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes
MEL: 4
AIM: 4
ASC: -
ART: -
HP: 40
SWT: 13
CWT: 20
DB: 0

Skills
Trials: Ride 4
Occult: Cipher-Sorcery 2
Knowledge: Alphabet* 5, Cult* 7, Language* 6, Law* 6
Courtly: Eloquence 5, Etiquette 5, Poetry 5, Stewardship 4, Traditions* 6
Combat
This is not the kind of job in which one finds ferocious warriors... or warriors of any sort.
Armor: none

OTHER AGONE TITLES

RULEBOOK

An epic role-playing game in the Twilight Realms

Agone: an epic role-playing game in the Twilight Realms

GAMEMASTER SCREEN + MAP OF THE TWILIGHT REALMS

A four-panel screen and a beautiful, full-color, map of Harmundia.

KING OF SPRING

A ready-to-play Drama for a Troupe of four to six Inspired.

With the coming of winter, all doors and shutters in Gloomwind are locked tight. The inhabitants live alone with their fear, as their baron suffers from his curse. The pall of death has fallen upon the Barony of Melif once again...

As the Troupe goes to the assistance of the Baron of Melif, the Inspired attract the attention of unexpected enemies. War is at their gates. The Legions of the Seasons begin to confront one another openly, and to target the members of the Troupe.

What did the Inspired do?
Are they victims of someone's sinister machinations?
Or of destiny itself?

COMING SOON

THE GRIMOIRE, VOL. 1:

THE MAGICAL ARTS & ASCENDANCY (november '01)

This guide contains all the necessary information for the players to perfect their knowledge and interpretation of mages of the Cipher-sorcerer and of all types of Concordists. It also presents to the gamemaster additional information on the nature of Harmundia, the Square and the Cipher-sorcerer.

Within the pages of this sourcebook, you will discover all the secrets of the mages, new spells and opuses as well as the arcana of Choreography, and even new occult practices for the most experienced Inspired.

THE BESTIARY (december '01)

This sourcebook presents the fauna and the flora of Harmundia, the creatures that inspire fear and wonder in the Twilight Realms. Animals, plants, Prodigies and other unknown servants of the Masque are detailed here.

This sourcebook also contains animal training and plant lore rules, as well as new ready-to-play archetypes and a long scenario that will lead the Troupe on the tracks of the Phoenix in the Desert of Keshe.

The Gray Papers

New intrigues abound!

Twin medusae rule together over the land of Scarletstone,
yet they are mortal enemies ...
Suleïdin's caravan relentlessly hunts Phoenix Flames
across the desert of Keshe...
Holy Post is threatened by the menacing shadow of the Liturgicals...
And who will stand in the way of the Lyphanian Horde?
Explore ten unique Domains, from Lightning-Dragon Crest
to the Barony of Arboline. In these exotic locales, players can find
many new manifestations of the Masque, and perhaps even
a little hope in their ongoing battle.

Domains are like mortals, they come to life, they
struggle from day to day, and eventually they die.

The Domains of Harmundia

The Gray Papers *contains secret reports from the eminences grise, who have traveled throughout Harmundia. Herein are detailed a wide variety of Domains: baronies, schools of war, a caravan and even a simple haven. Explore their histories, points of interest, important personalities and the secret plots that threaten to destroy them.*

These are ready-to-play lands, ideal for adventurous jaunts or long-term campaigns. Best of all, for each place you will find unique assets and faults to help you create a detailed background for your players' Troupe that is completely interwoven with the storyline!

The Gray Papers *includes Domain creation and management rules. This sourcebook also contains descriptions of numerous occupations that can be found throughout Harmundia. Finally, a lengthy Drama will lead your Inspired through three different Domains that are mysteriously connected...*

The shadowy path into the Domains and intrigues of the Twilight Realms begins here...

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