

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



Signs & Portents

32

Roleplayer

Ranger Renegades

LEGEND OF THE RANGERS GETS THE S&P TREATMENT

Aghrapur

THE TURANIAN CAPITAL IN CONAN'S TIME

Born of Madness - The Paressi

EVIL DRUNE TRIBESMEN FOR SLAINE!

Plus... Masters of the Macabre, Boompowder, Treason and Plot,
Tales From Mongoose Hall, and lots, lots more!

S&P Roleplayer 32

April 2006

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Extract from the Big Book of Interesting Dave, Chapter XXII, Verse IXX:

...and so it came to pass that the Five Followers of Interesting Dave didst meet as arranged previously on the Great Locomotive and didst spend many a happy moment listening in polite attention as Dave did spout forth a great sermon on the many and diverse Interesting Facts that he had uncovered about the workings of the Great Locomotive and all the travels he had made aboard it, yea, he had travelled as far to the North as Slough and beyond Basingstoke aboard the vessel, and he had seen with his own eyes the mysterious Station of Micheldever, the place where No Locomotive Had Ever Paused in its journey. Dave didst recite the many and diverse Train Numbers he had gathered upon the way, and the Followers knew it to be good.

And so it came to pass that the journey had been long and hadst taxed the Followers sorely and many were parched as a desert and a few complained that they were as though spitting feathers. But though the Great Buffet Car was but a short distance away, all present knew that the magnificent splendour of even a Small Coffee was beyond their means, as each would cost more than a quid and they had no quids betwixt them, and all knew that they should not partake of caffeinated beverages after three o'clock in any case. But lo! Interesting Dave didst reach into the Army Surplus Rucksack thatst he always carried on his many and diverse journeys and didst bring forth the Tartan Thermos Flask and the Weak Lemon Drink didst issue forth, lo, enough for all present and more! And the followers knew it to be good, as although the wondrous Tartan Thermos Flask could keep hot liquids hot and cold liquids cold, the Weak Lemon Drink retained a temperature that was not hot and not cold, which all present knew to be the correct temperature for Weak Lemon Drink...

Matt

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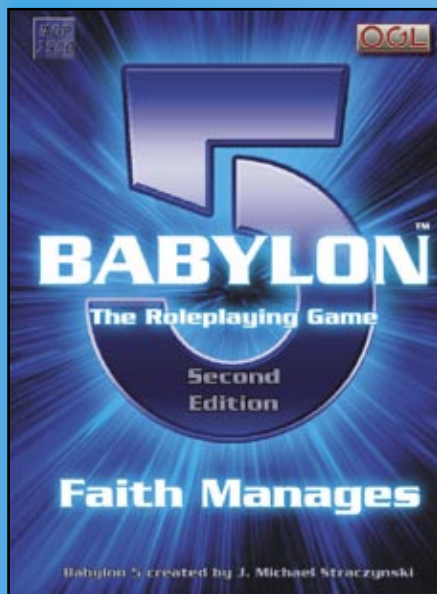
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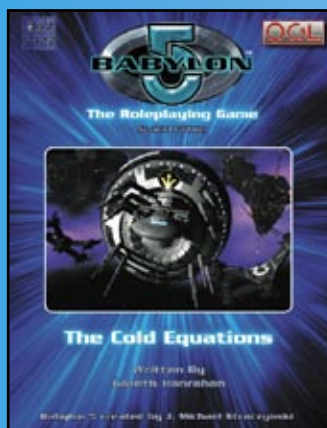
The Babylon 5 RPG explodes back into your gaming store with the all new 2nd Edition.

With feedback garnered from thousands of gamers since the release of the first rulebook three years ago, the Babylon 5 RPG has been refined and focussed by writer Gareth Hanrahan.

Now 'timeline neutral', the 2nd Edition allows you to play in any era of Babylon 5, from the Earth/Minbari War, through to the Crusade era and beyond. Space combat has been completely overhauled with a faster flowing system that nevertheless squeezes in more detail. New character classes have been added, including the Trader and Ranger, meaning you no longer have to 'qualify' to play one of the most iconic characters of the TV series, as well as new player races - yes, the Pak'ma'ra can now be used by players!

On top of all that, there are copious new notes on the universe of Babylon 5, the station itself and the alien races that can be found throughout the galaxy.

Best of all, the 2nd Edition Babylon 5 RPG is fully compatible with all the supplements printed during the first edition of the game, from the Earth Alliance Fact Book, right up to Merchants, Traders and Raiders!



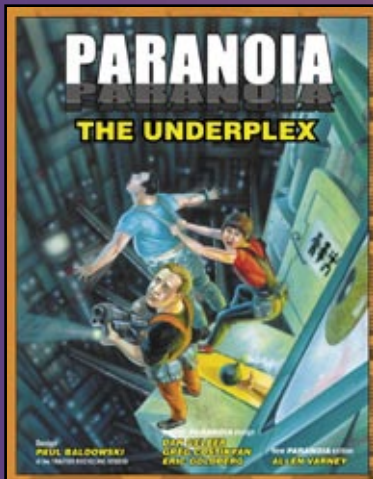
Just like the ancient mariners of Earth, spacefarers have their own brand of legends. One of the most prevalent and widely told is that of the Cold Equations. It is told in gloomy bars and freighter holds throughout the galaxy. It is always about a different ship - the Erasmus, the Lord Cheka, the Sha-Mak - yet it always involves the same dire choices for the two crewmen, trapped in an impossible situation.

The Cold Equations is an introductory scenario for the Babylon 5 RPG: 2nd Edition. It is set at the start of 2259, in the second season of the TV series, and is designed for 1st level characters.

The Cold Equations can be run as a stand alone scenario or as an introduction to The Ragged Edge.

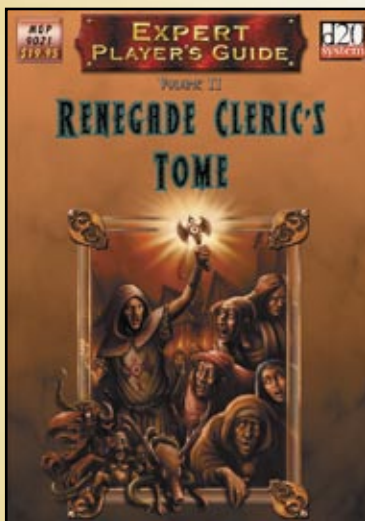


Packed with all the information a Games Master needs for easy reference during a session of Babylon 5 RPG 2nd Edition, this is the first of Mongoose's new 'deluxe' GM Screens. Made from thick card stock, this screen will last many years of play in the Babylon 5 universe as your players fight against ancient evils and build their own empires.



Attention, Troubleshooter! Your friend The Computer has just discovered a previously unsuspected network of hidden rooms, tunnels and access vents that interpenetrates all inhabited sectors of our beloved Alpha Complex. This is perfectly normal and nothing to worry about. Do not be alarmed by those sirens.

In these dark, sprawling tunnel networks, traitorous secret societies hide their most dangerous evidence. Intrepid 'urban infiltrators' defend it to the death. Good thing the Troubleshooters have the new equipment, specialties and contacts introduced in this 48-page sourcebook. . .



The second of the Expert Player's Guides, the Renegade Cleric's Tome provides 256 hardbound pages jam-packed with variant spellcasting methods and a huge array of divine spells for the low, low price of just \$19.95.

This tome is the perfect companion to other magic compendiums - after all, who wants to play a Cleric or Druid who only has access to 'standard' spells that everyone else has. With spells and spellcasting rules drawn from the very best of Open Content sources, the Renegade Cleric's Tome is your one-stop shop for ultimate divine power!

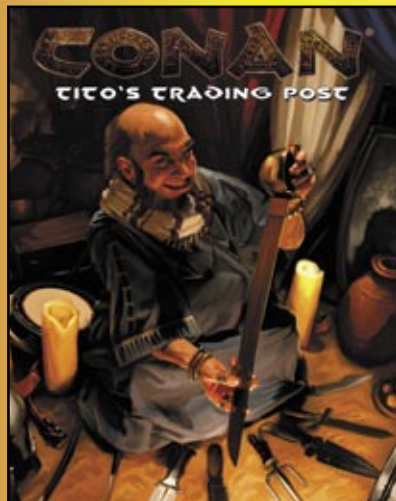
The Renegade Cleric's Tome features 100% Open Game Content.



Armoured in a power suit and equipped with the best weapons in existence, a Mobile Infantry trooper is a match for any Arachnid. When the power suit's batteries flicker and die, however, when the mighty weapons run dry of ammunition, the tables are turned.

In Ambush at Altair, the troopers face an Arachnid menace made all the more terrible by the troopers' own isolation. They are the one and only line of defence facing a sudden and unexpected Arachnid assault on Federation space, on the Altair colony of Tango Urilla, fighting with extremely limited resources against a seemingly endless flood of enemies.

Ambush at Altair, a 32-page scenario for the Starship Troopers Roleplaying Game, pits a handful of troopers, running low on weapons, ammunition and armour, against a hostile world brimming with Arachnids. If they fail, the colony will fall. If they survive, they will be heroes of the Federation.



'Welcome to Tito's Trading Post. Here you will find all that is both mundane and wondrous to satisfy your equipment needs, collected from around the globe – although I warn you, I will have no truck with sorcery; go to the Stygians or Zamorians if that be what you are after, but I may be able to find some Lotus around here somewhere...'

Tito's Trading Post is a 96 page hardback book designed to bring you the very best of equipment, weapons and luxuries from across the Hyborian Kingdoms. With rules for crafting, merchant guilds and hiring retainers, if it is not in this book, your character won't want it!

Tales from Mongoose Hall

Star Wars IIIa – A Lost Hope

Matthew Sprange

We had a short break of the office campaign over the Christmas holidays, and a tight schedule meant we were a couple of weeks delayed in getting back into the swing of things. Unfortunately, I had one of my Big Ideas during that time and, as Ian was busy preparing the new 2nd Edition of the Babylon 5 RPG, I valiantly stepped into the breach to Games Master a brand new campaign, giving us a break from the Drow War saga – it will return!

I polled the chaps to see what sort of game they wanted but though various ideas were bandied about, it was decided that I should run what *I* wanted. So, as I was currently on a Star Wars high (and a Clone Wars one at that), that was my choice!

Over Christmas, you see, I had imagined a Grand Campaign, a real epic struggle of good versus evil, with the fate of millions in the balance. So, I sketched a few things out and told the guys to roll up Jedi characters, plus give me a few details on their Masters.

The plan was this: The Kothlis system in the Bothan Sector was in danger of falling to the Separatists and the Republic had dispatched a bunch of Jedi with an entire Legion of clone troopers to defend it. They were ambushed while landing, leaving the Legion stranded in the capital city of Botha'qui with the fist company of droids closing fast. Start campaign...

Doghouse chose to play a human, known as Doji Windslicer, David took a human (Itchigo Lenoan), Alex a Kel Dor (Jain Rha – there is something 40k in that, I swear...) and Ian had Ya Muda (sounds like a Hindu Book of Love), a Cerean. David's Master, another Cerean, was to be the General in overall charge of the Republic's forces.

So, the first battle starts in the clearing outside Botha'qui – oh, and I have been collecting Star Wars miniatures like a real addict, so the floorplan went down (from the Starship Troopers set), along with a huge bunch of droids. The Masters ran forward to do battle, their Padawans trailing. Battle droids are no match for even 1st level Jedi, and so the first few combats were predictable. However, a plan was in operation – the Jedi were hoping to trace the droid's command signals, then launch a strike at the Big Bad, one General Syphus.

The signal was traced and a gunship touched down to speed the Jedi away with a couple of squads of clone troopers. Two hours later, they are outside a bunker in the middle of the jungle, battling droids of all types as they try to get in before the doors seal shut. Once inside, a trooper dials into the computer systems (while under continuous droid fire) and finds out that there are also Bothan prisoners kept there, somewhere near the reactor. The Padawans are instructed to free the prisoners while the Masters track down General Syphus (the Padawans are only 1st level after all). They get to take a squad of troopers with them for safe-keeping.

So, the Padawans have their first command and first solo mission. Predictably, this is where things start to go wrong...

Descending a maintenance lift to the lower levels, they are greeted by more battle droids, which they carve through. They then start meeting tougher resistance in the shape of super battle droids, which is where Ian gets the idea of 'send the clones in first'.

Being 6th level, the clones actually start doing quite well, until they reach a junction and have the option of battling droids (including a destroyer), or running into a much clearer area around the reactor core. They run, leaving an enemy at their back (and missing a few clues that lay behind the droids, such as stacks of explosives positioned to channel a blast in a certain direction...)

Undaunted, a fight breaks out around the reactor as more battle droids move up to engage them, while the destroyer and his friends tighten the noose. It is at this point that Ian starts spending clones like money and, when the destroyer finally lumbers into position, the clones get culled. The Padawans are not doing so well either, with Doghouse falling unconscious to a wound and the others getting through their vitality points in very short order. The problem here, you see, was that Ian started relying on the clones' multifire ability to hammer the battle droids while ignoring the destroyer completely. Granted, the clones could

not get through its shield, but it would have been easy prey to a concerted Jedi attack – something that did not happen until all but one clone was dead and a recovered Doghouse and Alex saw they could either charge or get hosed down.

As they dealt with the destroyer, Ian and David had wandered off – of course, this is exactly what you want to do when you are bleeding, unsupported by clones and in the middle of an enemy fortress. Still, they discover the reactor control room and learn that its controls have all been bypassed. After a long succession of failed Computer Use checks, they do not learn that the controls are now in the hands of the main command centre above, where their Masters are still fighting. But still, missing clues is what our group does best.

Looping round the reactor, they find more droids waiting for them. Now, this was the typical 'last room of the dungeon, the prisoners are bound to be here' type place. However, they take a look at ten super battle droids, one destroyer and what they presumed was a Dark Jedi (actually Tainted, but let us not split hairs). They are told to hand over their lightsabres.

And they run.

Actually, Ian ran first, with David in hot pursuit, taking the last clone with them. Doghouse and Alex, to their credit, show a bit more backbone, with the former trying to talk to the Dark Jedi, the latter having the presence of mind to ignite his lightsabre.

Seeing this, Ian comes back (David does not!), and charges straight into a super battle droids. Now, up to this point, there had been no combat. But a battle certainly started now! Heroically (stupidly?), Ian told them all to run, shouting it was a trap and that there *were* no prisoners (there were, a dozen of them, just out of sight).

David did not need telling twice – he was already half way to the maintenance lift. Alex and Doghouse needed a lot of persuading, swaying between wanting to fight, knowing they *should* fight, and the thought that certain death awaited them. Doghouse finally convinced them by saying that if there were no prisoners, it meant that *they* were supposed to be captured – which was actually quite a cool idea and I wish I had thought of it while writing the scenario!

They ran, Alex avoiding a Force Grip for his trouble, while super battle droids swept past Ian after them (to be fair, he trashed one with an attack of opportunity). Then the Dark Jedi advanced and, with one swipe, turned Ian into an ex-Padawan.

With the head start bought by Ian, the rest of the Padawans escape to the surface and are told to wait in the gunship while their Masters break through General Syphus' last line of defence. It takes just a minute or so waiting on the gunship for them to realise that something has started jamming their comms to the Masters. No time to worry about that though, as there are three vulture droids approaching at full speed. The gunship blasts off, with the Padawans manning the turrets and a dogfight breaks out over the jungle. It culminates with one vulture being shot down and the gunship being chased back over the bunker.

BOOM!!!!

The bunker blows, destroying another vulture and sending the gunship crashing into the jungle. The two remaining clones (the sergeant who survived in their squad and the pilot) are both dead. Doghouse is unconscious (again). And a vulture droid is still circling...

Heaving themselves out of the wreckage, they avoid the vulture, which eventually gives up its search and make their way back to the bunker – to find it is gone. Just a big, honking crater remains though, happily, their communications are no longer being jammed.

Yes, General Syphus laid a trap for their Masters and the Padawans only narrowly escaped it. But the best bit was yet to come.

They radioed back to the capital for a new gunship to pick them up and, on returning, explain themselves to the Bothan Senator and the clone Legion commander. The Bothan is terrified and believes all is lost now the Jedi are dead. The commander takes the news with usual clone stoicism, and informs them that the Separatists have two more entire companies of droids on their way to Botha'qui. He then turns round to David and asks:

'So, what are your orders, General?'

The look on David's face was absolutely priceless – think rabbit in front of headlights. However, as his Master was the previous General, he was in the natural line of progression. It slowly began to dawn on all of them that they were 1st level characters (still), now put in charge of the defences of an entire planet. With an entire Legion of clones to command, no less. The campaign begins...

Next time: David takes on the mantle of General while two non-Jedi join the group to create their own particular brand of mayhem.

BORN OF MADNESS - THE PARESSI

THE DRUNES TRIBES FOR SLÁINE THE ROLEPLAYING GAME OF CELTIC HEROES

TIM HITCHCOCK

Along the north western fringes of the Drune territory that borders against the desecrated lands of the Fir Bolg, the powerful currents of the Sarn River loll southward, cradling the large island city of Lucotetia in its wake. The city juts from the island like a smashed bonfire, stilt houses of warped construction rise in haphazard piles precariously balanced in a twisted architectural dance. Beneath the houses the soil is rich and black, fertile from annual floods and ripe for planting grain. Far enough from the central authority of the slough lords and in such a prime location for both trade and defence, it would seem a paradise, even among the Drune lands. Still, the chaotic structures adorning it tell otherwise and these are but a hint of the perpetual madness and delusion of its people: the Paressi.

Lucotetia was founded over a century ago by migrant tribes of farmers forced into relocation following the souring of their lands. Under the guidance of Slough Pares, they set forth to help establish a self-sufficient defensible fortification from where they could launch incursions into the northern lands. Following along the banks of the Sarn, they stumbled upon a large island that appeared to them the ideal location for their outpost, and with little effort they were able to establish minimal fortifications and living accommodations. The deep dark soil proved perfect for growing grains, especially rye, which flourished in the river-dampened earth. For several years, the settlement grew rapidly. Troops under Slough Pares beat back the bagmen of the north, expanding their territory and were able to



mark a safe enough river route to begin exporting their grain for profit. News of their success travelled swiftly, and more migrants flocked to the ever-expanding city. Then all began to change, slowly at first, but with profound and determined result.

With the rapid growth and harvest of grain, farmers were forced to construct large silos to hold their crops before processing and distribution. However, the climate was too moist for proper storage and much of their crop contracted the

black sticky ergot fungus. Slough Parse was particularly enthused with the substance and after testing the infested grain upon multiple subjects he determined it possessed mystical qualities that would imbue his people with mental powers greater than all others in all of Tir Nan Og. The people of Lucotetia followed the edict of the Slough Lord, consuming the mouldered rye and subsequently suffered from its mystic effects. Generations later, the Paressi people remain lost in a hallucinogenic haze of paranoia and delusion.



THE PARESSI RACE

The Paressi are of human descent; however, prolonged and habitual consumption of ergot has invariably reconstructed their cognition into something undeniably both alien and unique. While outsiders fail to question their insanity, they have nonetheless survived for hundreds of years in their current condition. Beyond their native lands, the Paressi are virtually nonexistent and certainly none are born anywhere else in Tir Nan Og. It is speculated that, perhaps, the racial characteristics are less than hereditary and largely the result of chemical alteration. Still, their perceptions and traits are significant enough to denote them as a separate race.

Personality: Paressi are paranoid and superstitious, over perceptive and extremely

sensitive. They are prone to fits of moodiness, but generally come across as unnervingly detached. Their conversation is often scattered and unfocused, breaking off mid-sentence in awkward pauses only to resume on a different topic or to suddenly dismiss themselves.

Physical Description: The Paressi look like most other human tribes. They are of average height and build with hair ranging from deep chestnut to coal black. Their mannerisms and gestures are noticeably erratic and skittish, and they seem grounded in a pathological state of agitation. Many also have stained feet from farming in the black river soil. Still, it is the Paressis' eyes that are their most striking feature. Their pupils are huge, dilated ebon pools limned with grey-green irises that scream with madness, darting frantically and refusing to focus on a single target for more than a few seconds.

Relations: Most find Paressi difficult to deal with, including others of their race. While most might not identify their symptoms as symbolic of their adaptations, they are almost immediately aware of a disjunction in their ability to communicate. Those familiar with Paressi find them disconcerting at best, and outside of Lucotetia they are treated with trepidation. Still, their uncanny connection to things unseen and unheard draws them the respect of all who live within the doctrines of a primal world. While it is unlikely that they leave the city and form bonds with outsiders, when they do this respect brings them tolerance and occasionally true friendship.

Names: The roots of Paressi culture are entirely human; therefore they choose human names typical to those of other southern cultures.

PARESSI TRAITS

All Paressi share the following racial traits:

- +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma: Paressi paranoia attunes their perceptions to an almost instinctual level of response, though as intense as their focus can be, they have difficulty directing and controlling it and their thoughts are often scattered. This quality also makes it difficult for them to create and maintain good social rapport. Years of eating ergot have also made them somewhat infamous for their resistance to certain toxins and diseases.
- Ergot Immunity: In essence, Paressi suffer from permanent ergot intoxication, therefore eating ergot-infested grains causes them no additional effect.
- Iron Stomach: Paressi are resistant to all sorts of ingested toxins. They gain a +2 bonus to all Fortitude saves against ingested poisons and diseased or bacteria ridden food.
- Paranoia: Due to extreme paranoia, Paressi suffer a -4 on all Sense Motive Checks and can never take 10 on Listen, Search, Sense Motive and Spot checks. Conversely, it grants them a +2 inherent bonus to all Listen, Search, Sense Motive and Spot checks; however, if they fail the check, they must make a second check (DC 10). If the second check fails, they suffer a delusion (see below).
- Uncanny Dodge: A Paressi's heightened suspicions allow him react to danger moments before it strikes. He retains his Dexterity bonus to his AC (if he has one) if he is caught flatfooted or struck by an invisible attacker; however, he still loses the bonus if he is immobilised.
- Prescience: Paressi insanity taps them into

the paranormal allowing them to perform sorcerous-like divinations through self-interpreted responses of their hallucinations. By expending 2 EP a Paressi can attempt either a Listen or Spot check (DC 18) and receive insight on a sound or vision. If the skill check is successful, the effect produced is identical to the *astronomy-short term prediction* spell (see *Sláine: The Role Playing Game of Celtic Heroes*, page 83). If the attempt fails, the Paressi suffers from a delusion (see below).

- Delusions: Not all of what a Paressi sees, hears, feels, or tastes is real and their ergot-riddled brains plague them with waking dreams and nightmares. At constant odds with their own thoughts, they occasionally cave and submit to the altered reality of their delusions. Delusions are negative reactions triggered by failed Listen and Spot checks. Critically failed Skill checks (roll of 1) produce severe effects with doubled durations. Roll 1d20 on the table below to determine the type of a delusion that occurs.

PARESSI CHARACTER CONCEPTS

DRUID CONCEPT: DELUSION SLOUGH

Few can deny the influence the slough lords have had upon the Drune lands. They are a pervasive entity that sculpts the daily reality of the people, even those such as the Paressi people who dwell on the fringes of their authority. While, truth be told, they have little interest in the city of delusions, they occasionally pass through to collect tithes and slaves and shore up the city's defences against their northern enemies. On this rare occasion,

most know to stay clear of the slough lords and their mystic odours. Still there are always those who learn the hard way, and these quickly fall prey to their own delusions as the foul scent of slough triggers within them a most profound delusion. These unfortunate madmen believe themselves

blessed by the slough lords and suffer repeated visions of sloughing their own flesh, replenishing their odour by rolling in offal.

Adventurers: Delusion Slough are almost exclusively adventurers attempting to pose as the lords they believe themselves to be. They wander

1d20	DELUSION EFFECT
1-3	<i>Hostility:</i> For no apparent reason, the character becomes infuriated with an ally over a supposed wrongdoing or personal slight. He argues and shoves the ally for the next 1d4 rounds.
4-6	<i>Reacquainted:</i> The character suffers from the delusional belief that they are conversing with the ghost of a passed friend or loved one. They are overwhelmed with grief and joy and refuse to break from the conversation for any reason until the entity says its goodbyes and departs 1d4 minutes later. If the delusion occurs during combat, the Paressi defends the apparition to the best of his ability and refuses to leave its side until it departs.
7-9	<i>Déjà vu:</i> The character remains stuck on his previous action and repeats it 1d4 times.
8-11	<i>Amnesia:</i> The character cannot remember any of his friends and cannot tell the difference between allies and foes for the next 2d4 rounds. Neither is he aware of who he is and his surroundings seem foreign and unfamiliar.
12-14	<i>Fear:</i> The character becomes terrified, drops all items and flees in a random direction for 1d4 rounds. During the episodic fear, he can take no actions other than fleeing or defending himself.
15-18	<i>Distraction:</i> The character is completely distracted by his delusion and attempts to focus on it, causing him to suffer a -2 penalty to all attacks, skill checks and saving throws for 1d4 rounds.
19	<i>Insomnia:</i> The character refuses to sleep for 1d4 days out of a delusional anxiety, thus suffering the appropriate penalties for sleeplessness and fatigue. Fatigued characters suffer a -2 penalty to both Strength and Dexterity; this can only be cured by 8 hours of rest. Fatigued characters who suffer from something that would normal cause their current condition, become exhausted (Str and Dex penalty increases to -6 though 1 hour of rest cures the condition).
20	<i>Starvation:</i> The character refuses to eat for 1d4 days out of fear he is to be poisoned or sickened. During this time he suffers the effects of starvation (see <i>Sláine: The Role Playing Game of Celtic Heroes</i> , page 127).

the lands in search of mystic secrets, apocalyptic signs and gathering their own forces for the day of Ragnarok.

Roleplaying: Delusion Slough believe that they have either undergone, or are in the process of undergoing, the mystic shedding of their skin. They dress in similar fashion to slough lords, wearing horned helms stitched from animal flesh and performing grizzly ceremonies to Crom Cruach and Carnun. They believe that power has been passed to them and often accuse true slough lords of being impostors who in turn, persecute them. However, one should not consider them any less of a threat for their insanity, and more than a few who have suffered from this delusion have eventually achieved the rank of slough lord despite their madness.

Bonuses: A delusion slough starts working on a mystic stench before they slough their skin. They achieve their state by such tactics as rolling in entrails, painting themselves with filth and refusing to bathe. Any creature of 3 Hit Dice or less standing in an adjacent square must make a Fortitude save (DC 11) or be nauseated for 1 round. Those who successfully save against this effect remain immune to it for one day.

Additionally, a delusion slough can attain his ultimate desires more rapidly than the Drune druids of other tribes. The prerequisite for the Slough Skin feat is reduced to only 10 ranks in the Sorcery Skill.

Penalties: The stench of the delusion slough gives them a –2 penalty to all Charisma based checks.

In addition, a delusion slough is always too scattered and delusional to gain full benefits from the slough template. His template acquired Magic Attack Bonus only increases by +2 and his Earth power only increases by +3.

WITCH CONCEPT: SOOTHSAYER

There are those who are plagued by their delusions and others who understand them for the gifts they bear. The soothsayer recognises the value of such gifts and uses them to unlock the deeper meanings of the universe.

Adventurers: Although they typically practice their arts in Lucotetia, soothsayers occasionally travel in order to expand their knowledge, procure mystic herbs and rare unguents, and to consult with the slough lords. Paressi soothsayers often go into the whisperheeder prestige class.

Roleplaying: Soothsayer personalities have little in the way of consistency though when they converse, they do so cryptically. In addition, unlike most Paressi they seem more curious about outsiders, even while maintaining an overall standoffish demeanour. Nonetheless, they are Paressi and can often come across of reticent, especially following a delusion.

Bonuses: Due to the importance they place on their hallucinations, soothsayers gain Improved Prescience as a bonus feat.

Penalties: Because their focus is so intense, they do not gain the Hexer class abilities at 1st level, although they may choose to take it as a feat at any time.



NOBLE WARRIOR CONCEPT: PARESSI SKULLSWORD

The slough lords of the western lands maintain solid encampment of skullswords in Lucotetia. Serving among these troops is a considered a great honour and privilege among the mad citizens, especially since they perceive far more threats than actually exist.

Adventurers: Those who join the ranks of the Paressi skullswords have the responsibility of clearing the lands around the city and keeping them safe from foes, both real and imagined. They often travel on reconnaissance missions and are infamous for becoming separated from their core groups. At such times one could easily ally himself to an adventuring group, provided he perceives them as acceptable adversaries to the Drune Empire.

A second character option is that paranoid delusions have forced the skullsword to have a change of heart, perceiving the Drones forced occupants of the Paressi lands. This option works best if the rest of the game group is from the Northern Lands.

Roleplaying: Though they are mentally deluded, Paressi skullswords have the advantage of solid military training and martial discipline lacking in the rest of their brethren. In this regard they often become both overconfident and hyper-vigilant. Though they are eager combatants, they appreciate a certain amount of strategy, as they always believe themselves facing overwhelming odds. They are also extremely adept at slaying 'invisible attackers' who seem to plague them regularly.

Bonuses: Due to paranoid hyper-vigilance a Paressi skullsword gains Alertness as a bonus feat.

Penalties: Paressi skullswords suffer from an additional delusion triggered exclusively from failed Spot and Listen checks while guarding, and critical misses in combat. Should either occur, the Paressi believes himself under the attack of an invisible opponent and spends the next 1d4 rounds fully engaged in combat with an empty adjacent square.

NOBLE WARRIOR CONCEPT: MARTYRED SAVIOUR

Even nobles who are relatively sane fall prey to delusions of grandeur, thus one can only imagine the extent to which the Paressi nobility can take this affliction. In a similar fashion to the Delusion Slough, the Martyred Saviour believes he has undergone a physical metamorphosis - in this case he has suffered from what he believes to have been a fatal injury and has returned from the worlds beyond to defend a sacred cause. The most common cause is the defence of his people; however, he may also desire to champion a deity, protect an unknown individual or perform a fated task.

Adventurers: Martyred Saviours are unadulterated adventurers whose sole existence becomes the completion of what he perceives as his fated destiny.

Roleplaying: A martyred saviour does not believe that he is dead, rather he believes he has either returned from the death or near death after suffering from an intense hallucination caused by injury. He is extremely proud of his noble blood, believing that it is responsible for saving him for his righteous task. The martyred saviour prefers to travel in polite company, however if it furthers his cause he is not adverse to fell travelling companions.

Bonuses: Before facing an opponent a martyred saviour fills himself with fervour allowing him to deal a devastating blow with his initial attack. This manoeuvre requires a full round action and provokes an attack of opportunity. If he scores a hit against his opponent on his first attack against a new opponent, he can apply half his Enech score rounded down to the damage. He can only attempt this once per opponent regardless of whether he hits his mark. If used in conjunction with a Cleave feat, adjacent opponents affected are considered part of the same attack and are not considered a new opponent for purposes of determining damage.

Penalties: Though they are highly trained in combat, they are slightly reckless, as they believe themselves to have divine favour and that the gods are not willing to let them die. The recklessness causes them to suffer a -2 penalty to AC on the first round they initiate any combat.



THIEF CONCEPT: MAD ARCHITECT

Outsiders viewing the architectural design of Lucotetia find it maddeningly disorienting, but to its citizenry the city is a thing of majestic beauty. Still, for those who have lived their years within its whispering shadows and leering faces, it becomes even more. Its seemingly anarchic design holds deeper and more precise meanings, and the longer one concentrates upon these the more it takes on a sort of sentience. Mad Architects see Lucotetia as a living entity and exist to serve whatever needs it asks of them.

Adventurers: Mad Architects adventurer frequently, either searching for new ideas to incorporate into the structure of their city or to seek answers to riddles it has posed them. A few have even been encountered travelling as far north as Midgard and Lochlann on their quests.

Roleplaying: Mad Architects have singular motives, often given to them by the city itself, or at least their interpretations of the city. They are notorious obsessive-compulsives and superstitious of every shape and shadow cast within the city, all off which they hope will provide them with the key to uncovering a lifelong quest for revelation.

Bonuses: Mad Architects possess great understanding of structure and the supernatural. They gain Knowledge (architecture) as a class skill plus two other Knowledge skills (player's choice).

Penalties: Mad architects are less adept at the more ignoble thief skills and lose Pick Pockets and Read Lips as class skills.

THIEF CONCEPT: PARANOID OUTCAST

Sometimes delusion and paranoia becomes so intense that one feels the world is against them.

To the innocent man, these feelings can raise shame and insecurity, but for the guilty they are overwhelmingly debilitating. Those who have lived outside the law begin to feel hunted and enter into an almost primal state where they live in a constant struggle which forces them to act the role of pre-emptive predator lest they themselves fall prey. They live in those places forgotten by others- attics and abandoned buildings, lonely alleyways and under the docks - preying on whatever comes their way.

Adventurers: Paranoid Outcasts adventure out of habit and have difficulty remaining in the same spot for too long (even if they never leave the city). Their constant feeling of being hunted keeps them mobile and active, and they rely on adventuring techniques for their daily survival.

Roleplaying: Paranoid Outcasts are skittish, barely trustworthy individuals who more often than not view their companions as tools for their own survival. They associate with others who they feel are strong and protective. Nevertheless, they can be extremely loyal and helpful to those they believe able to defend their own interests, though this often shifts should the outcast's feeling change.

Bonuses: Paranoid Outcasts spend a great deal of their lives exploring and wandering the city and its surrounding lands consequently picking up a plethora of stray tidbits of information. As such they gain Knowledge (local) as a class skill.

Penalties: Paranoid Outcasts have a great deal of difficulty dealing with authorities and suffer a -4 penalty to and Charisma-based skill checks when they must deal with them.

TRIBAL WARRIOR CONCEPT: RYE FARMER

Lucotetia was built on the backs of humble grain farmers and to this day, they make up the majority of its population. They are deceptively strong individuals capable of putting in long hours of fieldwork and hauling and bailing hundreds of pounds of wet grain. Like most Paressi, grain farmers do not stray far from their homes; still they have been known to travel up and down the Sarn attempting to sell their grain to buyers outside the city. It is from these new experiences that some become disillusioned with their simple lives and dream for themselves bigger dreams of the world beyond Lucotetia.

Adventurers: More often than not, a Rye Farmer finds himself adventuring as a result of circumstance rather than deliberation. Situations



arise that turn the humble into the hero such as flash floods, wild beast attacks, or even war. These moments become the catalyst for transformation, elevating him to see his true potential and initiating the character to seek more from the world and its challenges.

Roleplaying: Farmers tend to be simple and straightforward. They do not get bogged down with speculation and conjecture but rather seek practical solutions. As is typical of Paressi, they are often quiet and somewhat detached. Many are accepting of the new realities they face, and behave as if a spectator passing through a dream. Others find themselves at odds with surrounding tribes who often treat them with hostility due to prejudices or become hostile themselves again from suffering delusions.

Bonuses: Having spent a great deal of time outdoors in the fields, Rye Farmers have become physically acclimated to harsh weather. They gain a +2 inherent bonus to all Fortitude save verse the negative effects of natural weather.

Penalties: Rye Farmers tend to find even their own city claustrophobic and suffer more delusions when they leave the fields and enter a large settlement or board a ship. Spending more than an hour within an enclosed space other than one with which they are highly familiar (such as their own dwelling) triggers a delusion which can only be resisted by a Will save (DC 14).

TRIBAL WARRIOR CONCEPT: SHADOW HUNTER

Shadow Hunters are self-appointed vigilantes that strive to keep shadow demons and other El-creatures from plaguing the citizens of Lucotetia.



While Pash the headwoman and others within the city counsel have publicly denounced their acts, the group continues to gain at least minimal support from those who have been plagued themselves by haunting spirits or who fearfully plot against the headwoman's position. As a result, some have recently come to suspect Pash may even be behind the shadows and is poisoning the city's grain supplies. Some have even stopped eating grain; though they remain hereditarily ergot-influenced the effect of this tactic of future generations has yet to be seen.

Adventurers: By in large, shadow hunters work within the city, though they are not adverse to running messages to outsiders or seeking to form alliances with neighbouring tribes in order to procure supplies, weapons and food. They have also been known to take up quests to recover artefacts and charms needed in their humble fight against the supernatural. Recent speculations have

also inspired many of them to leave the city and form small encampments as they strive to become more organised in their actions.

Roleplaying: Shadow Hunters very much care for their city and its people, regardless of its response to them. They make decisions based on what they feel is right to ensure liberation, even if it means overstepping tribal law. They are not afraid to speak their minds, though they would never willingly endanger any who share their beliefs or support their actions.

Bonuses: Shadow hunters that live outside the city and have altered their diets; consequently, they have become slightly less insane. They only suffer delusions if they fail a Listen or Spot skill check by -5 or more.

Penalties: Though they suffer fewer delusions, they also lose their natural tolerance to ergot and lose the *ergot immunity* special ability. They also have a more difficult time attaining a state of supernatural insight and they must spend double the amount of Earth Power as their brethren to use their prescience racial ability.

PARESSI PRESTIGE CLASS WHISPERHEEDER

Whisperheederers are the sacred conscious of the Paressi drunes. Born with a profound connection

to the universe, they possess the gift of interpreting the obscured words that slip through the winds - words that have slipped from the voices of the fallen spirits, El-creatures and even the gods.

Many of Lucotetia's citizenry come to them to seek their counsel and interpretations for those things for which they cannot account, but they are just as important to the slough lords who wish to glean new insights into lost lore of their alien driven thoughts.

CLASS SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

The whisperheeder's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Divination (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (herbalist)(Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sorcery (none) and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

THE WHISPERHEEDER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Magic Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	Whispers of Emotion
2	+1	+1	+0	+0	+3	Sky Whispers
3	+1	+1	+1	+1	+3	Whispers of Intent
4	+2	+2	+1	+1	+4	Season Whispers, Heightened Prescience
5	+2	+2	+1	+1	+4	El Sense (30ft), Increased Maximum Earth Power
6	+3	+3	+2	+2	+5	Dead Whispers
7	+3	+3	+2	+2	+5	Object Whispers
8	+4	+4	+2	+2	+6	El Sense (60ft), Greater Heightened Prescience
9	+4	+4	+3	+3	+6	Whispers of Power
10	+5	+5	+3	+3	+7	Earth Whispers, Increased Maximum Earth Power

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

Skills: Divination +6 ranks, Concentration +6 ranks

Feat: Improved Prescience

Race: Paressi

Enech: 4 or higher

Special: Must be called by the El-spirits into week long ergot hallucination during which the whisperheeder's mind is permanently linked to the El-world

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the whisperheeder.

Armour and Weapon Proficiency:

Whisperheeder's are proficient with all simple weapons and light armour. Note that armour and weapon penalties for medium and heavy armour apply to the Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, Swim and Tumble skills.

Whispers of Emotion: At 1st level, the whisperheeder can make himself sensitive to the emotions of others, particularly when they are strong. By expending 2 EP, concentrating for a full round and making an opposing Divination skill check against a target's Will save he can attempt to read a target's base emotional state (i.e.: anger, fear, hatred, joy, sorrow and so on). Failure simply indicates the target's emotion as unreadable.

Sky Whispers: At 2nd level the whisperheeder can expend some of his earth power to attune himself to the whispers of the wind and clouds, allowing him to predict inclement weather. Attuning himself requires absolute concentration during which time he cannot be disturbed, following which he must make a successful Divination skill check (DC 10) to correctly predict the weather. For each day he wishes to forecast, he must expend 2 EP, concentrate for a half hour and make a successful Divination skill check. Thus predicting the weather for three days requires the expenditure of 6 EP, one and a half hours of absolute concentration and three separate Divination skill checks. Failed checks only result in inaccuracy for one day, thus given the previous example the whisperheeder may inaccurately predict the weather for the first day, but successfully predict it for the following two days. The information received includes the average temperatures for day and evening, relative humidity and precipitation, wind speeds, cloud coverage and possible weather threats for each day.

Whispers of Intent: At 3rd level, the whisperheeder can make himself sensitive to the intentions of others, particularly when they are strong. By expending 3 EP, concentrating for a full round, and making an opposing Divination skill check against a target's Will save he can attempt to read a target's base intentions toward the whisperheeder (i.e.: friendliness, hostility, indifference and so on). Failure simply indicates the target's intent as unreadable.

Seasonal Whispers: At 4th level the whisperheeder can make long-term weather predictions. This ability is similar to sky whispers except that it gives the whisperheeder insight into the weather for the upcoming seasons. The information is less specific than that received from sky whispers. Examples of what seasonal descriptors help predict can be how plentiful a growing season might be, if the winter will be particularly long and cold, if the floods will be dangerously high in the coming spring. Making a prediction for the weather of the upcoming season costs 8 EP and requires 6 hours of undisturbed concentration following which the whisperheeder must make a successful Divination skill check (DC 14).

Heightened Prescience: By 4th-level whisperheeder gains even greater control over her prescience ability and can use it to duplicate the effects of an *astronomy* (medium-term prediction) spell.

Increased Maximum Earth Power: As the Whisperheeder spends more time in contact with the spirit worlds; he learns to hold more Earth Power in his body. At 5th level the Whisperheeder can hold three times his Base EP score. Again at 10th level, his maximum earth power increases to four times his base EP score.

El Sense: By 5th level, the whisperheeder is so attuned to the spirit world that he gains

a heightened awareness to the presence of supernatural creatures. Should he come within a 30-foot radius of a creature with the Fey or El creature subtype, he can make a Listen skill check (DC 10 + the creature's HD) to sense its presence. The radius of his El-sense increases again at 8th level.

Dead Whispers: At 6th level, whisperheeder can attempt to converse with the spirits of the deceased. The task is difficult and requires the expenditure of both earth power and Constitution. To contact a spirit, the whisperheeder requires a focus object to which it is attracted. This is usually the individual's body, however it could also be one of its personal items (such as a named weapon) or the presence of its loved ones (such as a wife or child). After expending 5 EP, the whisperheeder concentrates on the focus for 15 + 1d20 minutes and then must succeed at a Divination skill check (DC = 10 + deceased spirit's Enech score) to engage it in conversation. For each round the whisperheeder remains in contact

with a deceased spirit he must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) or suffer the temporary loss of 1 point of Constitution. The spirit converses with the whisperheeder as it would have in life, and provides responses as would be consistent with its personality. The spirit is under no obligation to aid the whisperheeder, though malicious spirits tend to toy with them in order to keep them engaged for longer durations, as they are well aware of the negative side effects of deadspeaking.



Object Whispers: At 7th level the whisperheeder learns to tap into the whispers of crafted objects. Through intense concentration, he receives whispers detailing the general history of an object, highlighting events of significance. Using this power requires 1 hour of concentration and costs 1 EP per decade starting from the most recent and going back through time. Thus reading back 100 years into object's history would cost the whisperheeder 10 EP.

Greater Heightened Prescience: By 8th-level whisperheeder gains maximum control over her prescience ability and can use it to duplicate the effects of an *astronomy* (long-term prediction) spell.

Whispers of Power: At 9th level the whisperheeder learns to channel the energy of the whispers to replenish his own Earth Power. Once per day, as an act that requires full concentration, the whisperheeder can enter a mindstate such that his thoughts create a mental temple. For as long as he concentrates, his mind is considered a temple for purposes of recovering lost EP. Tuning into the El-worlds in this fashion is also dangerous and stresses the mortal mind, causing the temporary sacrifice of 1 point of Wisdom per every 10 minutes he remains in this state.

Earth Whispers: At 10th level the whisperheeder learns to tap into the whispers of the land itself. Through intense concentration, he receives whispers detailing the general history of a location, highlighting events of significance. Using this power requires 1 hour of concentration and costs 1 EP per decade starting from the most recent and going back through time. Thus reading back 100 years into location's history would cost the whisperheeder 10 EP.



NEW SUBSTANCE

ERGOT

Ergot is an inky coloured fungus that grows on mouldered grains. In wet or moist conditions, ergot growth flourishes in the springtime especially when preceded by a particularly cold winter season. When consumed ergot is a potent toxin and those not acclimated to it to suffer from a variety of physical and mental side effects or even death. The variant effects of consuming ergot (as determined by the consumer's saving throw) are listed below. As with diseases, a successful save indicates that the character's immune system has successfully dealt with the contaminant and he suffers no ill effect.

Ergot consumption is also a component for the activation certain feats and spells, while the risk is insignificant to Paressi, it can be quite considerable to outsiders attempting to practice Paressi magic. In order for a non-Paressi to use ergot in this way he must voluntarily fail his saving throw by foregoing his Will save bonus and determining the final result with the unmodified roll.

After two generations, offspring of habitual ergot eaters become Paressi and gain all the characteristics of the Paressi race.

NEW FEATS

The following Feats are specific to the Paressi regions and require that those who take them either be born mad or be under the effects of ergot.

IMPROVED

PRESCIENCE (PARESSI)

It is easier for you to attain a state of Prescience.

Prerequisite: Must be a Paressi

Benefit: The DC of your Listen and Spot checks to attain prescience is reduced to 14.

Normal: A Paressi's Prescience checks have a DC 18.

SUPPRESS DELUSION (PARESSI)

You are capable of occasionally suppressing your delusions.

Prerequisite: Must suffer from delusions.

Benefit: Whenever you would normally suffer a delusion, you may attempt a Will save DC 25 to suppress it. Delusions that occur from critically failed skill checks cannot be suppressed, however you are allowed to take the additional saving throw to reduce its duration to normal.

Normal: A Paressi suffers from a delusion every time they fail a Listen or Spot check.

HALLUCINATORY FOCUS (SPECIAL)

Consuming ergot allows you to create a hallucinatory focus.

Prerequisite: You must consume ergot immediately prior to using this feat.

Benefit: Your hallucinations become so intense you can use them to create a mental focus for your spells. Hallucinatory focus can be used to replace a corn dolly as a focus when required by spell.

MENTAL EYE (SPECIAL)

Consuming ergot allows you to establish a magical link to an opponent's mind.

Prerequisite: Hallucinatory Focus feat. Sorcery 5 ranks. You must consume ergot immediately prior to using this feat.

Benefit: You do not need to meet an opponent's gaze to target them with your evil eye spells; instead you use ergot to project your mind into your opponent's thoughts. This feat effectively works for any spells requiring the evil eye as a magical link. Spells cast in this manner even target opponents shielded by concealment, darkness, or wearing blindfolds (provided they are within the caster's 30-foot range).

EFFECTS OF ERGOT CONSUMPTION

Fortitude Save	Ability Score Damage	Conditions Effects
DC 5	2d6 Dex, Con and Wis	Suffers from a delusion every 1d4 rounds for the next 16 + 1d8 hours. Secondary Fortitude save DC 12 or permanently gain the Paressi delusion racial ability.
DC 10	1d6 Dex, 1d4 Con and 1d6 Wis	Suffers from a delusion every 1d8 rounds for the next 8 + 1d4 hours days. Secondary Fort save DC 10 or temporarily gain the Paressi delusion racial ability for a year.
DC 12	1d4 Dex, 1Con and 1d4 Wis	Suffers from a delusion every 2d8 rounds for the next 4 + 1d2 hours. Secondary Fort save DC 8 or permanently gain the Paressi delusion racial ability.
DC 14	1d2 Dex and 1d4 Wis	Suffers from a delusion every 10 + 2d4 rounds for the next 3 hours. Secondary Fort save DC 12 or temporarily gain the Paressi delusion racial ability for one month.
DC 18	1 Dex and 1d2Wis	Suffers from a delusion every 1d4 minutes for the next 2 hours days. Secondary Fort save DC 10 or temporarily gain the Paressi delusion racial ability for two weeks.
DC 20	1 Wis	Suffers from a delusion every 6 + 1d4 minutes for the next hour. Secondary Fort save DC 10 or temporarily gain the Paressi delusion racial ability for one week.

SPEW BABBLE (SPECIAL)

You can string together a sentence comprised entirely of nonsensical words and syllables so befuddling that it completely confuses anyone you have successfully engaged in conversation.

Prerequisite: Must suffer from delusions or have consumed ergot immediately prior to the use of this feat.

Benefit: You can opt to use this feat following the successful engagement of another individual in a civil conversation. Successful engagement requires you succeed in an opposing Diplomacy check. The following round you spew forth such

confusing babble that the unfortunate victim must make a Will save (DC 10 + your Wisdom bonus) or become horribly confused for one round. In his state of confusion, he loses his initiative, refuses to leave his five-foot square and suffers a -2 penalty to all d20 checks (combat, skills, or saves). You can only target one opponent at a time with this feat. Targets who make their Will saves and previously affected targets are immune to your babble for 24 hours.

Special: Spew Babble is both language and sonic dependant. It has no effect on those unable to hear or understand the language you speak.

PARESSI SPELLS

The following spells are entirely of Paressi origin and due to the risk involved in their casting; sane individuals are not likely to partake in their study. Occasionally, the Drones of neighbouring tribes may attempt to master their arts; however, they often go mad in the process. Though reputation precedes it, Paressi magic is virtually unseen in lands of the north.

DENY STIMULUS

Glamour

EP Cost: 1 point per hour

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: Concentration/Earth Power

By placing yourself in a hallucinatory trance you can temporarily ignore the negative effects of natural conditions such as sleeplessness, starvation, thirst, cold weather or heat exhaustion. For as long as you concentrate you suffer no negative penalties from such circumstances; however, as soon as you break your concentration you suffer their full cumulative effect.

Material Component: ergot soaked rye that must be consumed at the time of casting

DENY PAIN

Glamour

EP Cost: See description

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: Concentration/Earth Power

By placing yourself in a hallucinatory trance you can temporarily ignore the negative effects of hit point loss. As long as you maintain concentration, for every Earth Point you spend you can ignore the loss of 1 hit point of damage. The sedative effect lasts for one hour. For as long as you concentrate you do not suffer from the loss of the hit points you have sustained with Earth Power, however as soon as you break your concentration or run out of Earth Power, you suffer the full cumulative effect of the hit point loss.

Material Component: ergot soaked rye that must be consumed at the time of casting.

SHARE DELUSION (LESSER)

Glamour

EP Cost: 3+* see description

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Mental Eye

Target: One Creature

Duration: Concentration/Earth Power

Saving Throw: Will Negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Prerequisites: Hallucinatory Focus, Mental Eye, Magic Attack Bonus +3

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for target's saving throw.

By mentally contacting your opponent, you can inflict upon him the delusion of your choice. Unlike those delusions suffered naturally, you determine the length of your opponent's afflictions as determined by your concentration and expenditure of Earth Points as listed on the table below.

Delusion	Concentration Cost
Hostility	+2 EP per round
Reacquainted	+2 EP per minute
Déjà vu	+1 EP per round
Amnesia	+2 EP per round
Fear	+3 EP per round
Distraction	+3 EP per round

The game effects of specific delusions are described in the Paressi Race section.

Material Component: ergot soaked rye that must be consumed at the time of casting

SHARE DELUSION (GREATER)

Glamour

EP Cost: 8* see description

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Mental Eye

Target: One Creature

Duration: One day* see description

Saving Throw: Will Negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Prerequisites: Hallucinatory Focus, Mental Eye, *share delusion (lesser)*, Magic Attack Bonus +6

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for target's saving throw.

Similar to *share delusion (lesser)* you are able to target an opponent with one of your own twisted delusions that can last for days. At the cost of 8 Earth Points per day your victim suffers from your choice of either insomnia or starvation. Unlike *share delusion (lesser)*, this spell does not require concentration, instead you determine how many days the affliction will last and pay the cost up front.

The game effects of specific delusions are described in the Paressi Race section.

Material Component: ergot soaked rye that must be consumed at the time of casting

PASH

To those not familiar with its chaotic structure, Lucotetia is an inhospitably terrifying place. The people are cold and difficult to talk to, often carrying on with themselves out-loud and suffering erratic mood swings. The frenzied architecture of the city appears to mirror the mental state of its citizenry. Despite such first impressions, the Paressi are ultimately a civilisation in decline. Their frail mental states keep them from unifying and their once potent economic power has been devastated as even their fellow Drune nations refuse to purchase their ergot-ridden crops. Pash, the current headwoman, has done little to help their position, as the paranoia that couples her ambition



causes her to execute even her most devoted followers to the glory of Carnun.

Pash is both extremely ambitious and zealously paranoid. Strives to raise her city to the reigning splendour of the region, she believes that the majority of her citizens plot to take her position and habitually sacrifices those who show the slightest interest in local politics. She is doubly paranoid of out-of-towners, all of whom she believes to be sent by jealous slough lords seeking to dominate her mind.

Female Paressi Witch 6/

Whisperheeder 10: Medium-sized humanoid (5' 3", W 108 lb.), HD 6d8+18 plus 10d6+30; hp 116; Init (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Speed 30ft.; AC 13 (+1 leather tunic, +2 Dex); Attacks +10/+5 melee (1d4+1 iron dagger); SA Hexer; SQ Bleed Dry (+1), Dead Whispers, Delusions, Earth Whispers, Ergot Immunity, El Sense 60ft., Greater Heightened Prescience, Iron Stomach, Object Whispers, Prescience, Paranoia, Seasonal Whispers, Sky Whispers, Uncanny Dodge, Whispers of Emotion, Whispers of Intent, Whispers of Power; Magic Attack Bonus +9, Base EP 13 (maximum 52); SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +19; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 13; Enech 23.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Concentration +16, Diplomacy +11, Divination +16, Gather Information +11, Heal +15, Intimidate +11, Listen +22, Perform +11, Profession +17 (herbalist), Search +13, Sense Motive +11, Sorcery 10, Spot +21; Blood Eagle, Hallucinatory Focus, Improved Initiative, Improved Prescience, Iron Will, Mental Eye, Ritual Sacrifice, Spew Babble, Suppress Delusion.

Spells: *bull's feast, control water, divination by entrails, imprisonment circle, lesser ill luck, protective circle, torment of the slain, scrying flames, share delusion (lesser), share delusion (greater).*

Possessions: Iron dagger, leather tunic



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The Ranger Renegades

The crew of the Liandra, from
Legend of the Rangers

Christopher
Blackmoor

Three years into Sheridan's new alliance, the galaxy is thrown into turmoil as the Psi-Corps make a play for power. That conflict is won, and so the Interstellar Alliance continues to expand at an exponential rate.

On Minbar, at the headquarters of the Anla'shok, a Ranger faces a disciplinary hearing, his crime simply ordering the crew of his vessel to stand down from a combat situation. As he answers for his misdeeds, an ex-ambassador to Babylon 5 lurks in the shadows, the threat posed by a former giant in the galactic playground weighing on his mind. The role that this dishonoured Ranger and his crew are destined to play will, in time, reveal an ancient and insidious threat to this fragile new Alliance.

This, the first article in a short series, will look at the main players in the *Legend of the Rangers* TV movie, including Citizen G'Kar as of 2265. The second will cover the support ships within the Rangers, including the Liandra and the doomed Valen class cruiser. A third article closing this series will present the ruling body of the Rangers, the Miri'zha, as well as the history and statistics of some noted members of the High Council including Sindell, who appeared in Legend of the Rangers.

For now, let us look at the core group of Rangers that defied the standing orders of the Anla'shok, near-renegades who were given a chance to redeem themselves. To use these characters, possession of a copy of the Rangers book is recommended.



The Ranger Renegades

Captain David Martel

'Not everybody plays by the same rules. You should try something new once in awhile.'

David Martel enjoyed a happy go-lucky life until the tragic death of his parents when he was aged just 12. Shipped between different foster-families until his sixteenth birthday, the young David Martel found that life was harsh.

An element of notoriety would come David's way. Obsessed with ancient cultures and myths, David's life intersected with one particular legend early in the August of 2260, when the young man encountered a member of the Anla'shok. David's compassion had put him in a position where he was in a group of refugees fleeing from the random Shadow attacks that had thrown the galaxy into turmoil. Their transport ship was damaged, and they were forced to set down on a recently populated world. David earned a little responsibility during this time, and learned how he could care for others when they could not do the same themselves. David also realised that,

despite his admitted irrationalities, he could bring people together and help them work for a greater good. Whilst not in charge of the colony by any means, he found his niche as a facilitator, getting those more skilled than he in different areas to work together for a common goal.

The Ranger who had been with them observed David's attitude and recommended that David joined the Anla'shok at the first opportunity. David, with his interest in legends and stories of old, found someone to work for and, perhaps more important, a cause to devote himself to. His initial training went without a hitch, and his practical life as a Ranger began with an assignment as general crewman under Captain Bartholomew Gregg, a former EarthForce officer from Washington D.C. The Captain was a good teacher and mentor, having left EarthForce after his wife, a reporter of some note within ISN, died under mysterious circumstances whilst investigating links between a high-ranking government official and an unknown alien government.

David's position under Captain Gregg was on board one of the precious White Stars, in the first few months of 2262. White Star 19 was tragically lost in a strike by Raiders equipped with alien

tech; the White Star was left drifting in space, with only six crewmembers left alive. Seeing so many of his colleagues dead would colour David's decision later in his career to stand down against the Raiders when on board the damaged *Enfili*; he had seen what he considered to be needless death before.

With Captain Gregg temporarily reassigned, David was placed in the ranks of security duty for a brief period, which is where he met Dulann for the first time. The two became friends instantly, with Durlann seeing a true honesty in the soul of his new acquaintance. They participated in several missions where discretion was required; David picked up some of Dulann's focus, and in turn the Minbari learned how to banter with his new friend.

In the closing months of 2264 Captain Gregg was assigned a new vessel, the *Enfili*, and was given the position of First Officer. The ship was an old patrol cruiser, refitted for Anla'shok use. Two Ranger trainees, who David had fought alongside before, were also appointed to the *Enfili*. Malcolm Bridges and Sarah Cantrell had very different life experiences to David, but they too soon regarded him as a close friend and ally. This loyalty would be repaid the next year, when they would choose to risk being expelled from the Anla'shok alongside their friend.

David often goes on his gut feelings; sometimes they are right, but at times very wrong. The unpredictability in his character, borne out a natural creative and independent flair, causes his seniors in the Anla'shok no end of concern. David is very much both a flawed and gifted character, but one who needs to rely on those around him. This fact endears himself to his friends, and the loyalty between them goes both ways.



Captain David Martel

2nd Level Human Lurker / 4th Level ISA Ranger

Hit Points: 17

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 20 (+10 Reflex)

Attacks: +6/+1 melee, +5 ranged

Special Qualities: A Ranger's Authority, Code of the Anla'shok, Fearless, Garb of Honour, Lurker's Knowledge, Survivor's Luck, White Star Assignment*

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +8, Computer Use +4, Concentration +3, Diplomat +5, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +3, Gather Information +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +9, Jump +3, Knowledge (Legends) +4, Knowledge (Military) +3, Knowledge (Astrophysics) +3, Medical +3, Move Silently +5, Pilot +3, Profession (Facilitator) +5, Search +5, Sense Motive +9, Spot +7, Tumble +6, Technical (Electronics) +6, Technical (Engineering) +3 and Technical (Space Travel) +8

Feats: Alertness^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Denn'bok)^B, Exploit Weaknesses**, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Iron Will, Natural Leader, Spacecraft Proficiency

Had *Legend of the Rangers* gone to a full television series, then the story of the Liandra would have intersected with the story of Crusade. The link between David Martel, Bart Gregg and Matthew Gideon here illustrates how the Liandra could have participated in the storyline of Crusade, and the dark path it would have travelled down.

*Given that the White Star's are a precious commodity until several years into the development of the WSC-2, Rangers in this time period are often given whatever vessel is available. David's first command after gaining this ability was the *Liandra*.

** Exploit Weaknesses is a new feat, introduced at the end of this article.

First Officer Dulann

'They are not at peace here, David. Something here is disturbing them - something is wrong.'

Life is not easy; that truth is accepted across a thousand worlds and races. Life is especially hard when you are born different to a society that has not embraced differences for over a thousand years. Dulann, Ranger and best friend of David Martel, falls into this category.

Dulann had few friends for the first twenty or so years of his Minbari childhood - differences are taught to be wrong; adherence to what is known is encouraged and preferred. He was a solitary child, surrounded by learning materials that were his playmates and instructors who were the closest thing he had to friends.

As a member of the religious caste, Dulann was expected to serve. He did so as a humble acolyte, but felt alone - his calling was elsewhere, but as yet undefined. The arrival of Jeffrey Sinclair, and the opening up of the Anla'shok to non-Warrior caste Minbari and Humans alike, felt right in his heart. Unfortunately for Dulann, his family objected to his enrolment for two whole years. They felt that his uniqueness and gift, of conversing with the departed, would bring dishonour to the Anla'shok, never telling him the true reason in the typical Minbari manner.

When he was finally allowed to join, he became fast and firm friends with a Human trainee, the first of that race he had ever met. David seemed to Dulann to be the prodigy of order and chaos, a proponent of co-operation and integrity, challenged by an incorrigible independent and creative streak. Their friendship allowed Dulann to see the Minbari through the perspective of an outsider, consolidating how Dulann felt about being a Minbari. They served together on the Enfil; David as First Officer, Dulann in charge of the helm.

Dulann is sharp, intelligent and possesses a comic timing surprising for a Minbari. He is loyal without question to his fellows, for his unusual psychic gift allows him to feel the honest intentions of those around him. Dulann is 46 years old, which makes him still a youngster in Minbari culture.

First Officer Dulann

4th Level Minbari ISA Ranger

Hit Points: 14

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Racial)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 12

Attacks: +5 Melee or +4 Ranged

Special Qualities: A Ranger's Authority, Code of the Anla'shok, Fearless, Garb of Honour, Religious Caste, White Star Assignment*

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4

Skills: Balance +3, Bluff +3, Climb +4, Diplomacy +6, Computer Use +8, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Knowledge (Astrophysics) +6, Knowledge (History) +6, Knowledge (Military) +6, Listen +6, Medical +4, Pick Pocket +3, Pilot +3, Sense Motive +8, Technical (Electronics) +8, Technical (Space Travel) +8 and Tumble +3



Feats: Alternate Perceptions**, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Denn'bok)^B, Great Fortitude^B, Improved Unarmed Strike^B and Spacecraft Proficiency

* As with David Martel, White Star's are a precious commodity and thus he is assigned to the command staff of the *Liandra*.

** Alternate Perceptions is a new feat, introduced at the end of this article.

Sarah Cantrell

'I live to serve, and I serve to live.'

When Earth's colonies declared their independence, President Clarke ordered a vicious clampdown. Mars bore the brunt of an attack, with EarthForce Thunderbolts using missiles. One of those struck the dome in which Sarah's parents had lived for all of her life; the dome was breached and her devoted parents were killed, slowly suffocating in the Martian



atmosphere. Her boyfriend Eugene was killed outright, whom she had met in her job as a hotel clerk, a lowly position that would have nothing in common with what life would throw at her in the next few years.

Sarah spent some of her early years with the Martian underground; she was no fighter and there was not much that she could do. Nevertheless, she did mundane work, fetching and carrying mostly, whilst others planned operations, living and dying. She fell off the radar, many Martian agencies believed that she was also dead, and prepared herself to learn the ways of the resistance fighter. Her group, headed up by a freedom fighter called Tessa Halloran, was making real inroads, and to all intents and purposes they *were* the Martian resistance.

Two visitors came to their group, from the renegade outpost Babylon 5. One of them was a doctor; the other was an apparent ruffian who

had seemingly thrown his lot in with the Minbari. This individual she believed to be some form of thug, or bodyguard, had a demeanour that she did not entirely understand, but it intrigued her nevertheless. Whilst she never knew their names, as she was only at the periphery of the discussions and conversations the two visitors had with her group, Sarah was later told that Babylon 5 was on their side, and that everyone in the group would believe it when they saw it. The next year, the Army of Light would come to Mars, disabling all of the EarthForce vessels in orbit and allowing Mars to declare itself independent.

After the declaration, Sarah spent some time on Mars but there was little there to hold her interests, only memories and ghosts. At the age of 23, Sarah left to join up with the Anla'shok, of whom she had worked out that the visitor from Babylon 5 had sworn his allegiance to. Although Sarah adapted to the physical aspects of the position as a new Ranger easily enough, she found the Minbari way of thinking quite hard to adapt to. She displayed a knack for ship-based combat, despite having no real military experience, with her instructors noting that she had 'a gunner's eye'. Unfortunately, there was little call for her unique talents, and Sarah spent almost a year on guard duty and support tasks, until she received her orders. Her first proper assignment was to the *Enfli* under Captain Gregg, as a weapons officer on watch rotation. Whilst there, her aptitude for combat was noted, and she received additional instruction from some of the best military tutors in Tuzanor.

Sarah can come across as an empty vessel, the only contents audible being the sound of her repressed anger. Those who dare to dip beneath the surface, and pass down through the dark waters of her soul, could still perhaps find a pearl of innocence at the bottom, not destroyed by the actions of Clarke's administration.

Sarah Cantrell

3rd Level Human ISA Ranger / 1st Level Officer

Hit Points: 16

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +5 melee, +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Code of the Anla'shok (Veshii, Tunalla, Tuvor), Garb of Honour, ISA Authority, Weapons Training

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 9

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +1, Climb +6, Computer Use +3, Concentration +9, Disguise +0, Gather Information +0, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Knowledge (Military) +5, Knowledge (Mars) +2, Knowledge (Law) +2, Move Silently +5, Pilot +4, Pick Pocket +4, Search +5, Spot +4, Survival +1, Technical (Electronics) +11 and Technical (Space Travel) +6

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Denn'bok)^B, Fire Control, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Skill Focus (Technical (Electronics)), Weapon Focus (Fusion Cannons)^B and Weapon Proficiency (starship weapons)

Malcolm Bridges

'In my dreams, I never see my face.'

Born to a hard-up family on Beta colony, the young Malcolm Bridges would have ended up as a confidence trickster and shyster had he not entered into the service of the Anla'shok.

By the time he was sixteen, the juvenile Malcolm Bridges had become an accomplished thief, stealing to help him family out; but still stealing nevertheless. It was largely petty crimes, never violent in nature, but that did not matter when his sole surviving parent, his mother, found out. She threw him out of the family abode, a move she would bitterly regret; she never saw Malcolm again.



Bluffing his way off Beta colony courtesy of a passing trader, Malcolm had a universe of opportunity waiting for him. On every world, at every waypoint and space station he had a new identity, able to pass himself as someone different. Where bluff and chicanery failed, breaking and entering sufficed. He was aware of a war being fought, against a race called the Shadows. Malcolm did not care - all that mattered was the next con. Members of the Thieves Guild started to keep track of his movements, and consideration was given to approaching him with an offer that could not be refused.

His final scam, posing as a disgraced EarthForce officer, succeeded in separating a widow named Francesca from her husband's Minbari war pension, went tragically wrong. She died a week later, from medical complications but Malcolm believed it was from a broken heart. He could not keep hold of the gains from his scam; the money that he acquired from her paid for the funeral, a situation made worse by the fact that, because she had no friends or relatives still living, he was the only one there.

Joining the Anla'shok in 2262, the ex-criminal needed absolution, but as his instructors explained forgiveness was not theirs to give. He

found peace in himself, after many hours sat in quiet contemplation. With such a flair for impersonation and natural charisma, not to mention his past misdeeds that his instructors felt he had come to terms with, Malcolm was perfect for infiltrator and covert actions duties. He received additional training in the use of the Holo-suit, a new technology allowing the wearer to appear and sound as someone else.

As Malcolm revealed during the naming ceremony he never sees his own face in dreams. He did not say that these faces are sometimes of people he has never met, but often those he has stolen from, his crimes magnified in his subconscious by the tragic death of his final victim. Malcolm is 31 years old.

Malcolm Bridges

1st Level Human Agent / 3rd Level ISA Ranger

Hit Points: 16

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13

Attacks: +2 Melee or +3 Ranged

Special Qualities: Code of the Anla'shok (Veshii, Tunalla, Tuvor), Garb of Honour, ISA Authority, Security Systems

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 17

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2

Skills: Bluff +9, Climb +1, Computer Use +2, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +2, Gather Information +7, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Jump +1, Knowledge (Covert Operations) +3, Knowledge (Law) +2, Knowledge (Military) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Pick Pocket +3, Search +4, Sense Motive +2, Spot +4, Technical (Electronics) +11 and Tumble +2

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Denn'bok)^B, Holo-suit Operation, Improved Unarmed Strike^B, Skill Focus (Technical (Electronics)) and Stealthy.

Citizen G'Kar

'Love to stay. Can't, have to go. Kiss kiss, love love, bye.'

An enigma to many on Babylon 5, the former Narn ambassador took off at the end of 2262, taking the telepath Lyta Alexander with him. Leaving behind his experiences under Centauri occupation, seeing his homeworld bombed to near-oblivion and a moment of revelation courtesy of a particular Vorlon, G'Kar and Lyta left for regions unknown.

His return to known space, and the fate of Lyta, is something that G'Kar is reluctant to talk about, although it is known that she died during the Telepath Crisis. In the time that they spent together, they travelled to the fringes of known space, seeing things that no one had ever seen. The things that they had seen would die with them; when pressed on this matter G'Kar simply replies that there is no reason to pass on what he has seen.

G'Kar's involvement in the situation regarding David Martel and the Hand was crucial; had a different captain been selected for the command of the Liandra, the diplomats would in all probability be dead and the Interstellar Alliance none the wiser on the potential threat posed by the Hand. Although taking no direct part in the armed conflict, and indeed no part in the Anla'shok, G'Kar helped facilitate the victory by revealing to David the truth about the Hand, and the stakes that were being fought for.

At the end of the drama above Beta Durani 7, G'Kar was ferried to a security conference on Babylon 5, where he would chair a discussion on combating the security threat posed by the Hand.

Citizen G'Kar

11th Level Narn Diplomat / 3rd Level Officer
(ground forces) / 4th Level Soldier

Hit Points: 33

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 15 (+5 Reflex)

Attacks: +16/+11 melee or +13/+8 ranged

Special Qualities: Branch Specialisation (ground forces), Contact x6, Covering Fire, Enlightened*, Government Resources, Improved Diplomacy +2, Low-Light Vision, Rallying Call

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +12

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 15

Skills: Appraise +3, Bluff +5, Climb +8, Computer Use +8, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (Alien Life) +7, Knowledge (Star Systems) +7, Listen +11, Perform +5, Pilot +7, Sense Motive +9, Spot +8, Survival +8

Feats: Alien Empathy (Humans), Blood Oath, Blood Rage, Hobby (Perform), Liturgies of the

Heart, Point Blank Shot, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Focus (PPG Rifle) and Weapon Proficiency (Heavy Weapons)

*Enlightened: G'Kar's trials push him through the final stages of letting go of the self. He is enlightened in a way that few beings will ever manage to be. For now, this enlightenment manifests itself as an almost legendary physical toughness to do what is necessary. Once per day, he may use his Will save bonus instead of his Strength modifier for a single Strength check, or in place of Fortitude for a Fortitude Save.

New Feats**Alternate Perceptions**

Prerequisite: Minbari (any Caste), feat must be taken at 1st Level

Benefit: A Minbari who benefits from Alternate Perceptions is able to perceive what some may



consider as otherworldly currents around them. The Minbari with this feat feels the impact of souls around them, sometimes if these souls have departed long before. Some Minbari believe that these souls, if they are Minbari, have not returned to be reborn again, and thus diminish the whole.

At the Games Master's option, the echo of a departed individual may speak to the Minbari concerned. The echo of the departed individual has no knowledge other than what he witnessed during his time alive or the immediate locale to where the deceased character departed, although the echo may respond to current events surrounding the locale. The Player Character with this feat may not initiate questions directly to the echo; the flow of information is generally one-way with the echo speaking telepathically to the holder of this feat. Minbari with this feat are usually treated with a little scepticism by other Minbari, but not in the same league as the distrust which exists between members of the Psi-Corps and mundanes.

As a secondary bonus, the possessor of the Alternate Perceptions feat gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Sense Motive checks to detect whether a target is telling the truth.



Exploit Weaknesses

Prerequisite: Intelligence 14, Wisdom 13

Benefit: To gain the benefit of this feat, the holder must have observed an opponent, or have been directly engaged in combat with their opponent, for 2 or more rounds. The Player Character may then sacrifice an attack action to discover the best way to use their smarts against their opponent, and instead makes an Intelligence check against a DC equal to the Will save of the target + 10.

If the check succeeds, the holder of this feat gains one of the following feats *temporarily*, even if the feat selected is not normally available within games of Babylon 5 (see *The Player's Handbook* for details). This temporary feat may only be used once in the next combat (if the character is not yet engaged in combat) or the current combat if the character is engaged in combat, and may only be used against the studied target.

- Improved Disarm
- Improved Grapple
- Improved Trip
- Improved Initiative

After the combat ends or the feat is used, the temporarily gained feat is lost. A character fighting an alien opponent with several legs, for example, may cause the Games Master to rule out the selection of the 'Improved Trip' feat. If a feat has pre-requisites that have not been met, the Games Master may rule that the holder of the feat may still use the bonus feat concerned.

If the holder is on a starship or other vessel, then this temporary feat may be applied to the craft that the holder of the feat is travelling in. The following feats may be selected, again temporary



using the conditions outlined above. The holder must be in the nominated command position of the vessel to use this feat, as the actual carrying out of the order is usually conducted via another person or computer system. As for non-vehicular combats, the Games Master may rule certain selections as unavailable.

- Dogfighter
- Improved Fire Control
- Weapon Focus (Select weapon)

The character actually carrying out the order may possess the feats already, by virtue of training or instinct rather than being ordered. In this case, no further benefit is gained.

Example: David Martel is studying Tannier's fighting technique against some lesser-skilled opponents. He notices that the Minbari Ranger often leaves his right side exposed during his attacks, which would open Tannier up to a successful trip attempt. David selects the Improved Trip feat, to be gained temporarily.

When the two fight moments later, David uses his +4 bonus from the temporary feat to assist his trip attempt, sending Tannier crashing down to the floor. As the temporary feat has been used, it is now lost.

Holo-suit Operation

Prerequisite: Wisdom +13, Charisma 13+, Bluff 4 ranks, Disguise 4 ranks, ISA Ranger 2nd level

Benefit: The holder of this feat may use the rare and expensive Holo-suit, as used exclusively within the Anla'shok. They may use this device to create false images and impressions, disguising themselves as others. The holder of this feat needs to be able to portray the target well – appearing as a Narn freedom fighter for a Human Ranger is all well and good, but a certain dramatic flair is required to impersonate another human being despite the benefits the Holo-suit provides.

Normal: A Holo-suit may not be used untrained under any circumstances. In addition, any non-Ranger in possession of a Holo-suit can be expected to be hunted down.

New Equipment

The Holo-suit

The Holo-suit, when activated, provides a powerful utility to certain Rangers in infiltrating hostile situations. Similar to a changeling net, the Holo-suit needs to capture an image of the person to be impersonated; the longer the period of analysis the better the impersonation attempt will be, especially if differing emotional states are exhibited by the target. The reason for this range is because the Holo-suit's internal computers find it easier to decipher strong emotional states and translate them than passive images. When the Holo-suit is attempting to match the emotional state of the user with a real-time rendered hologram, the less data that the Holo-suit has to extrapolate the more convincing the image will be.

To 'steal' the image of a person, the character using a changeling net must observe a target for a period of time, uploading data surreptitiously into the Holo-suit's internal computers. The DC for the Technical (Electronics) is reduced by 1, to a maximum reduction of 5, for every hour past the first that the target is studied. The DC for this check ranges from 15 for a target that has exhibited a mixture of emotional responses to 30 for images of a target that is in a single emotional state, such as sleeping or constant extreme emotions, such as anger.

If the roll is passed, then the target can use the Holo-suit to represent the personage they are impersonating. If the roll is failed, then all opposed skill attempts against the wearer of the suit to detect the Holo-suit gain a bonus equal to the amount the roll was failed by.



The Holo-suit provides a +10 bonus to all Disguise checks; those who know the person being impersonated skill receive the usual bonus to realise that the wearer of the Holo-suit is not the person they know. For every hour of operation, those who make Spot checks to identify that the wearer of the Holo-suit is disguised gain a +1 cumulative bonus to their Spot checks. Unlike the changeling net, Holo-suits have no known long-term medical effects short of a mild headache after using the suit for a lengthy period of time.

Possession of a Holo-suit is a matter of trust – a Ranger who does not take care of his Holo-suit can expect for the item to be taken away from him. Equally, a Ranger who loses his Holo-suit will expect to wait a long time before it is replaced. If a Holo-suit falls into non-Ranger hands, the damage it could do is horrific, and for this reason extreme sanction is exercised to reclaim the device. Such retrieval efforts, and the retribution dished

out, are never reported. The actual number of Holo-suits owned by the Anla'shok is not known, although it is expected to only be in double figures, such is the cost of producing the device.

Well, that's it for now. The core crew of the Liandra are a competent group, ably assisted by other members of the crew such as Kitaro Sasaki, Nafeel, Tafeek and Firell. Next time, we will be looking at the fleet ships used by the Rangers in 2265 (before the deployment and mass roll-out of the White Star 2 class). We will also see where these ships would have fitted unto the fleet structures of the Anla'shok.



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Masters of the Macabre

Four New Prestige Classes For All d20 Fantasy Settings

Richard Farrese

There are two kinds of people in the world: the living and the dead. Among the living are those who are compelled to study and understand death; those who draw upon the life forces of the deceased, reshaping their raw powers into energies they can wield; and those who are so fascinated by the Spirit World that they spend their entire lifetime seeking to uncover its countless mysteries. Among the living are those whose arts and crafts - and indeed whose very existences - are defined by death and the dead.

Morthendar the Wise

No one wants to die - at least no one who has enjoyed, even for the briefest moment, life. No one wants his essence to be lost in the eternal void - certainly no one who has loved or has ever been loved. No one wants his consciousness to end - especially no one who is afraid of what might lay beyond what we mortal call life.

For many, death means the end of their existence; and the end of all things - at least from their perspectives. For others, death is an essential part of the cycle of life; one final destination all beings



must one day reach. Throughout the countless civilisations in the world, there are those who fight death, those who cause it, those who seek to cheat it and those who study it. Among them are those rare individuals who can be rightfully called the *Masters of the Macabre*.

The Archfiend

An archfiend is fanatically dedicated to evil. Obsessed with understanding the intricacies behind evil in all its aspects, the archfiend seeks knowledge and glory, and he is willing to go

through any means necessary to carry out his goals. An archfiend seeks to achieve greatness by carrying out acts of the utmost evil.

A champion of the evil cause committed to oppose good and eradicate the meek, the unworthy and the weak, this unholy defender is a menace to all decent folk. In some regions, priests and paladins of good deities actively seek out archfiends in order to put a stop to the evil they bring into the world.

Although they might belong to the church of an evil deity and follow their god's will, most archfiends consider themselves above the ties of any cult created by mortal men. Instead, they are highly independent evildoers who seek to tip the fragile universal balance in favour of evil. To do so, they hunt down and destroy good creatures of all kind.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To become an archfiend, a character must fulfil all the following criteria:

Race: Any

Alignment: Any evil

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Feats: Endurance, Leadership and either Skill Focus (Bluff) or Skill Focus (Intimidate)

Skills: Bluff 4 ranks, Intimidate 4 ranks and either Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks

Spellcasting: The ability to cast either arcane or divine 1st level spells.

Class Skills

The archfiend's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Intimidate

(Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features

All the following are class features of the archfiend prestige class:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Archfiends are proficient with all simple and martial weapons as well as in the use of light and medium armour.

Spells per Day: Beginning at 1st level, the archfiend can cast a small amount of divine spells. His spells are based on Wisdom, so casting any given spell requires a Wisdom score of at least 10 + the spell's level. The DC for the saving throws against these spells is 10 + the spell's level + the archfiend's Wisdom modifier.

Like a cleric, an archfiend can prepare one domain spell at each spell level in addition to his regular allotment. An archfiend has access to two domains: Evil and Trickery. He thus can choose between two domain spells at each spell level and may prepare one or the other each day in his domain spell slot.

An archfiend must spend one hour each night in quiet contemplation and supplication to an evil deity, or to the cause of evil in general, in order to regain his daily allotment of spells. Time spent resting has no effect on whether he can prepare spells.

Note that an archfiend need not be loyal to a particular god but he must be dedicated to the worship of evil and spend one quiet hour each night to

contemplate how to further its cause. Although he may not be loyal to any deity (or even acknowledge this deity's blessings), an archfiend spells are gained through the favour of one evil god (sometimes two or three) who has taken a particular interest in the evil individual.

Archfiend Spell List: 1st - *bane, cause fear, command, doom, inflict light wounds, magic weapon, protection from good*; 2nd - *darkness, death knell, desecrate, endurance, inflict moderate wounds, silence, undetectable alignment*; 3rd - *bestow curse, blindness/deafness, contagion, deeper darkness, inflict serious wounds, magic circle against good, magic vestment*; 4th - *deathward, dismissal, greater magic weapon, inflict critical wounds, poison and spell immunity*.



Detect Good (Su): At 1st level, the archfiend gains the ability to detect good, as per the spell of the same name, a number of times per day equal to his archfiend class level.

Evil Aura (Su): Also at 1st level, the archfiend's evilness begins to emanate a supernatural aura that all living creatures can sense. This *evil aura* bestows the archfiend with a +4 bonus to Intimidate checks as well as a +2 bonus to his Leadership score. However, because of his dedication to evil, he may only attract evil henchmen and followers.

Protection from Good (Su): This ability grants the archfiend with a permanent aura of *protection from good*. As per the spell of the same name, the archfiend benefits from a +2 deflection bonus to Armour Class when fighting good creatures as well as a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws made against such creatures. This supernatural ability is always in effect.

Strike Good (Su): From 3rd level and onward, the archfiend gains the supernatural ability to *strike good*, gaining temporary insight to a single attack roll. When this ability is triggered, the archfiend gains a +20 insight bonus to one attack roll made against a good aligned opponent. Furthermore, this attack is not affected by the mischance that applies to attacks against concealed targets. If this ability is used against a non-good creature, no special benefits are gained and one use of the *strike good* ability is wasted for the day. Strike good may be used once per day for every three levels of the archfiend's prestige class.

Smite Good (Su): By the time he reaches 4th level, the archfiend is so

The Archfiend Advancement Table

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+2	Detect Good, Evil Aura
2	+2	+0	+0	+3	Protection from Good
3	+3	+1	+1	+3	Strike Good (1/day)
4	+4	+1	+1	+4	Smite Good (1/day)
5	+5	+1	+1	+4	Circle of Protection Against Good
6	+6	+2	+2	+5	Strike Good (2/day)
7	+7	+2	+2	+5	Dominate Evil
8	+8	+2	+2	+6	Smite Good (2/day)
9	+9	+3	+3	+6	Strike Good (3/day), Unholy Aura
10	+10	+3	+3	+7	Slay Good



The Archfiend's Spells Per Day Table

Level	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1	0+1	—	—	—
2	1+1	—	—	—
3	1+1	0+1	—	—
4	1+1	1+1	—	—
5	1+1	1+1	0+1	—
6	1+1	1+1	1+1	—
7	2+1	1+1	1+1	0+1
8	2+1	1+1	1+1	1+1
9	2+1	2+1	1+1	1+1
10	2+1	2+1	2+1	1+1

imbued with evil he gains further blessings from a dark deity. Once per day, he may attempt to *smite good*, delivering additional damage to good aligned creatures in combat. The amount of damage delivered is equal to twice the archfiend's class level. At 8th level, he may use this supernatural ability twice per day. If this ability is used against a non-good opponent, one daily use is lost.

Circle of Protection Against Good (Su): When he attains 5th level, the strong malevolence surrounding the archfiend expands, protecting all evil creatures within 30 feet of him against good. This supernatural ability, which is always in effect, bestows a +2 deflection bonus to Armour Class as well as a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws of evil allies within range against good aligned creatures.

Dominate Evil (Su): When he attains 7th level, the archfiend's power is so strong he can dominate his evil peers. This supernatural ability functions as the *dominate person* spell as cast by a sorcerer of twice the archfiend's class level. It can be used on a Small or Medium sized evil creature loyal to the archfiend or dedicated to some evil cause he is defending. This ability may be used once per day.

Unholy Aura (Su): At 9th level, the archfiend's unnatural aura increases further and he gains an addition +2 deflection bonus to Armour Class and another +2 resistance bonus to all saves made against good aligned creatures (combined with his *protection from good* ability, this brings the bonuses to +4 each). Furthermore, whenever a good creature successfully strikes the archfiend in melee combat, the offending attacker takes 1 points of temporary Strength damage unless he succeeds at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20). This temporary damage dissipates after 24 hours have elapsed.

Slay Good (Su): Once per day, the 10th level archfiend can attempt to instantly slay one good creature. To do so, he must succeed at a melee touch attack against a good aligned subject. The

subject must attempt a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20 + archfiend's Wisdom modifier). A failed saving throw results in the target's death. Even with a successful save, the subject still takes 5d6 points of damage (which is sometimes enough to kill it). Only good aligned living creatures can be target with this supernatural ability.

The Deathlord

Completely fascinated with death, the deathlord studies, manipulates and experiments with the dead in an effort to master unlife. A deathlord's ultimate goal is to achieve immortality through undeath. As his knowledge and abilities develop, his body undergoes a series of gradual mutations that eventually transforms him into an undead creature of unfathomable potency.

The deathlord is a vile necromantic specialist who progressively becomes more appalling as he gains new levels. Bound to death in a way no other mortal is, a deathlord is often dreaded, loathed and cursed by most living people, who simply do not share the deathlord's fascination with unlife. A high level deathlord, in fact, feels more at home among the undead than he does among mortals.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To become a deathlord, a character must fulfil all the following criteria:

Race: Any

Alignment: Any non-good

Feats: Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge (arcana))



Skills: Craft (alchemy) 8 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks

Spellcasting: The ability to cast a minimum of five Necromancy spells of 3rd level or above

Special: The character must study under a deathlord of at least 2nd level in order to learn the intricate arts associated with this prestige class.

Class Skills

The deathlord's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int) and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level:
2 + Int modifier

Class

Features

All the following are class features of the deathlord prestige class:

Weapon and Armour

Proficiency: The deathlord gains no new proficiency in weapons or armour.

Spells per Day: Every time a new deathlord level is gained, the character acquires new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting



The Deathlord Advancement Table

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Immunities (+2)	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Darkvision Metamagic Feat	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Immunities (+4), Sleeplessness	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Death's Will	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Immunities (+6)	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Metamagic Feat, Negative Energy	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Immunities (+8)	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Frightful Presence	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Undeath, Immunities (total)	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Lichdom	+1 level of existing class

class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (metamagic feat, hit points beyond those he receives from the prestige class, and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a deathlord, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for the purpose of determining spells per day.

Immunities (Su): At 1st level, the deathlord learns to resist ailments, toxins, sleep and other effects. He gains a +2 insight bonus to all saving throws against poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects and necromantic effects. This bonus increases to +4 at 3rd level, +6 at 5th level and +8 at 7th. When he reaches 9th level, the deathlord becomes totally immune to the aforementioned effects.

Darkvision (Su): By the time he attains 2nd level, the deathlord vision improves. He gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Metamagic Feat: Also at 2nd level, the deathlord gains one extra metamagic feat. This feat can be chosen among any available metamagic feat as long as the deathlord meets all its requirements. At 6th level, the deathlord gains an additional metamagic feat.

Sleeplessness (Su): When reaching 3rd level, the deathlord's body does not require any sleep and may go on without rest for as long as he wishes. In order to acquire new spells each day, however, the deathlord needs to meditate and study for at least two hours.

Death's Will (Su): At 4th level, the deathlord ignores the effect of all mind influencing effects, such as charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects, whether they are beneficial or harmful.

Negative Energy: Once he attains 6th level, the deathlord's body is so accustomed to negative energies that spells such as *inflict wounds* cure him. Although his transcended unto the undeath stage is not yet complete, positive energy spells, such as *cure wounds*, harm him. Therefore, the only way to cure the deathlord's body is by using negative energy.

Frightful Presence (Ex): When he attains 8th level, the deathlord's transformation is almost complete. His body begins to rot, as if it was dead, but a closer examination reveals the character is still alive - even if barely. The deathlord gains the extraordinary ability to unsettle foes.

This ability takes effect automatically when the deathlord perform some kind of threatening action, such as attacking or unsbtly casting a spell. All living creatures with fewer Hit Dice than the deathlord and standing within 30 feet of him must make a Will save (DC 10 + deathlord's class level + deathlord's Charisma modifier) to resist the effect of the *frightful presence*. A failed saving throw results in the character suffering from a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls, damage rolls and Will saving throws for a number of rounds equal to the deathlord's character level.

Undead and creatures with more Hit Dice or levels than the deathlord are immune to this effect. There is no limit to the number of times this ability can be triggered on any given day but once a creature has successfully saved against its effect, it is immune to any deathlord's *frightful presence* for a 24-hour period.

Undeath (Su): At 9th level, the deathlord's body finally dies and he is transformed into an undead creature. He has no Constitution score (and loses bonus hit points granted by a high Constitution score) and he is immune to any effect requiring

a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects). Furthermore, his Hit Dice increases to d12 but if he is ever brought down to 0 hit points he is, like all undead, automatically destroyed.

Lichdom (Su): The deathlord's transformation into a higher form of undead is complete when he attains 10th level. By this time, the character enters lichdom and he gains the lich template, as described in *Core Book III*.

The Head Collector

The head collector is a fearsome hunter who accumulates the heads of the creatures he defeats in battle. By tapping into the essence of his victims, he draws upon their power and redirects it to himself, gaining great insight in the process. Although most people believe the head collector to be nothing more than a cruel, degenerate and sadistic killer, the truth is he is a calculating and often wise individual who learned to manipulate the life essences of the creatures he kills.

Dreaded and hated by most civilised individuals, the head collector is revered as a great hero among some barbarian tribes. In certain clans, he is elevated to the rank of wise elder and often takes on leadership responsibilities. The people of such barbarian tribes might mourn the death of a head collector for years, unless another person as skilled as the departed hero is able to step up and take his place.

Proud of his skills and accomplishments, a head collector always displays the trophies he collected from his victims, often attaching the heads upon girdles,

sashes or straps so he does not have to carry them in his hands. The head collector is a gruesome sight to behold because of this custom. It also makes him easily recognisable for what he truly is.

Hit Die: d12

Requirements

To become a head collector, a character must fulfil all the following criteria:

Race: Any

Alignment: Any non-lawful

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Feats: Combat Expertise, Iron Will, Track and Weapon Focus (any)

Skills: Craft (alchemy), 4 ranks, Survival 6 ranks



Class Skills

The head collector's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Climb (Str), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

All the following are class features of the head collector prestige class:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Head collectors are proficient with all simple and martial weapons as well as in the use of light and medium armour. Note that armour check penalties for



armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Climb, Hide, Jump and Move Silently.

Fresh Spoils (Su): At 1st level, the head collector learns how to tap into his victim's essence and draw upon their life stuff. In order for this supernatural ability to function, the head collector must deliver the final blow to a creature that has a head and behead it in the following round. Creatures who have no actual heads, such as oozes, for instance, may not be targeted by this ability.

For every creature killed and beheaded by the head collector, he gains a +1 insight bonus to his attack rolls, damage rolls or one type of saving throw. The character must decide which bonus each of the heads provides him at the time he severs it. This ability lasts for the duration of combat. If the head collector chooses to keep the decapitated head and attach it to his body for all to see, the duration is extended to a 24-hour period after the kill was made.

A maximum insight bonus of +1 for each of the head collector's class level may be attained in each type. A 1st level head collector, for instance, could accumulate a maximum +1 insight bonus to his attack rolls, damage rolls and each of his saving throws if he killed and beheaded five creatures but he would not gain other bonuses even if he had cut the heads of more victims. A 5th level head collector who killed eight target could, for instance, max out his insight bonus to attack rolls to +5 (with five heads) and assign the three other heads to boost his Fortitude saving throw, giving it a +3 bonus.

Clean Cut (Ex): At 2nd level, the head collector learns how to cut the head from a creature more efficiently. He may automatically sever the head of a victim he has just killed as a move action, as long as the target is of the same size category, or smaller, than he is. No rolls are necessary for this extraordinary ability to function.

Intimidating Aura (Su): Also at 2nd level, the head collector's supernatural ability to tap into the life force of the victims he beheads gives him a supernatural aura. He gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Intimidate checks. This bonus rises to +4 at 5th level and +6 at 8th level.

Prized Trophy (Su): Once every month, the 3rd level head collector may perform a special ritual to imbue one of the heads he has severed with special powers. The head in question must have belonged to a creature the head collector killed and beheaded in the last 24 hours. By pouring a special alchemical substance over the head and performing a special ritual, the head collector reduces the head in question by up to two size categories (Diminutive size minimum). At the end of the 8-hour long ritual, the head is magically enhanced and bestows the character with a +1 insight bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls against creatures of the same type as the head (aberration, goblinoid, magical beast, undead and so on), as well as a +1 insight bonus on all saving throws made to resist the special abilities or spells of such creatures. This bonus rises by +1 at 6th level and again at 9th level. A maximum of one *prized trophy* for every three head collector levels, plus his Wisdom modifier, may be carried at all times. A head collector who loses a *prized trophy* also loses its special abilities. He may choose to destroy any trophy he already created at any time (in order to create a new one, for instance).

Savage Wisdom (Ex): By the time he attains 4th level, the head collector absorbs part of the

insight and wisdom shared by his many victims. Unfortunately, the brutal practices associated with his art also render him more savage and his body begins to develop subtle feral features, such as long fangs, more body hair, pointed ears, or yellowish eyes. At 4th level, the head collector gains a +2 enhancement bonus to his Wisdom score and a –2 enhancement penalty to Charisma. At 7th level, an additional +2 Wisdom is gained and another –2 Charisma is lost, making the total bonus and penalty +4 and –4 respectively.

Improved Clean Cut (Ex): At 5th level, the head collector becomes so used to sever heads he may cut the head of any creature he just executed as a free action, as long as the creature is of an equal or smaller size category than he is. He can also behead a dead creature of up to one size category larger than himself as a move action, or cut off the head of a creature he has murdered of up to two size categories bigger than he is as a full round action.

Superior Clean Cut (Ex): By the time he attains 8th level, the head collector's skills are so honed he can amputate the head of a creature he just slew of up to one size category larger than himself as a free action. He can also separate the head of a creature he killed of up to two size categories bigger than he is as move action.

Beheading (Su): Upon attaining 10th level, the head collector gains the supernatural ability to behead an opponent in melee combat. The use of this ability must be declared before the head collector's attack roll is made. A successful hit results in the target losing his head and dying instantly. The target is allowed a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + head collector's class level + head collector's Strength modifier) to negate this ability. *Beheading* may be used a maximum of once each day.

The Head Collector Advancement Table

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+2	Fresh Spoils
2	+2	+0	+0	+3	Clean Cut, Intimidating Aura +2
3	+3	+1	+1	+3	Prized Trophy (+1)
4	+4	+1	+1	+4	Savage Wisdom (+2/–2)
5	+5	+1	+1	+4	Improved Clean Cut, Intimidating Aura +4
6	+6	+2	+2	+5	Prized Trophy (+2)
7	+7	+2	+2	+5	Savage Wisdom (+4/–4)
8	+8	+2	+2	+6	Intimidating Aura +6, Superior Clean Cut
9	+9	+3	+3	+6	Prized Trophy (+3)
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Beheading

The Spirit Chaser

Spirit chasers are obsessed with ghosts, spectres, wraiths and all other undead creatures that take on incorporeal form. In their search for understanding of the Spirit World, as well as what some people call the Land Beyond or the Underworld, they strive to comprehend what happens to the spirit when its body dies.

A spirit chaser is neither dedicated to good nor evil but rather to the understanding of all things spiritual. Although individuals who take on this prestige class may be of any alignment and thus could seem driven by goodness, evil, neutrality, law or chaos, the only real drive behind most spirit chaser's actions is his ambition to further his knowledge of incorporeal undead creatures, to learn insights from ghosts and other spirits, and to eventually learn to manipulate the unfathomably potent energies of such beings.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To become a spirit chaser, a character must fulfil all the following criteria:

Race: Any

Alignment: Any

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight and Dodge

Skills: Listen 6 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 6 ranks, and Spot 6 ranks

Special: The character must have had a significant experience with a ghost, spectre, shadow, wraith, allip or any other incorporeal undead creature. The experience could include a life or death event, a meaningful exchange or a guardian spirit that guided the character through an especially excruciating period in his life. Alternatively, the character could be blessed (or cursed) with attracting or seeing spirits.

Class Skills

The spirit chaser's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

Class Features

All the following are class features of the spirit chaser prestige class:

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Spirit chasers gain no new proficiency in weapons or armour. Note that armour check penalties apply to the skill Jump, Hide, Move Silently and Tumble.

Spells per Day: Beginning at 1st level, a spirit chaser can cast arcane spells just as a sorcerer does. To cast a particular spell, the spirit chaser must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level. The character gains bonus spells based on his Charisma score and the DC for the saving throws against his spells is 10 + the spell's level + the spirit chaser's Charisma modifier. Like a bard or sorcerer, a spirit chaser does not need to prepare his spells ahead of time.

For every level a spirit chaser attains, he gains new arcane spells per day as shown in the 'Spirit chaser's Spells Per Day' table. At 1st through 10th levels, a spirit chaser learns more spells as indicated in the 'Spirit chaser's Known Spells' table. These new spells must be spirit chaser spells the character can cast.

Spirit chaser Spell List: 1st - *comprehend languages, detect chaos/evil, endure elements, expeditious retreat, invisibility to undead, jump,*

magic weapon, protection from chaos/evil, true strike; 2nd - blur, detect thoughts, ghoul's touch, remove paralysis, resist elements, see invisibility, spectral hand, tongues, undetectable alignment; 3rd - clairaudience/clairvoyance, displacement, gaseous form, halt undead, magic circle against chaos/evil, protection from elements, remove disease, remove curse; 4th - airwalk, dimension door, dimensional anchor, greater magic weapon, restoration and vampiric touch.

Locate Spirit (Su): When the first level of this prestige class is taken, the character learns how to locate spirits such as ghosts, spectres, shadows, wraiths and other incorporeal undead creatures. This supernatural ability may be used once per day per spirit chaser level and the character can locate specific spirits, as per the *locate creature* spell (which only works on spirits) cast at twice the spirit chaser's class level.

Sense Spirit (Su): Also 1st level, the spirit chaser's awareness of the Spiritual World is so attuned he may automatically sense all spirits within a radius of 10 feet per spirit chaser class level. This ability also prevents him from ever being surprised and caught flatfooted by a spirit.

Spiritual Armour (Su): When he attains 2nd level, the spirit chaser learns how to protect his body, mind and soul against the attacks of incorporeal undead creatures. This supernatural ability grants him a luck bonus to his AC as well as to all saving throws made against the attacks of spirits. This bonus is equal to

+2 initially but increases by +2 every other spirit chaser level (4th, 6th, 8th and 10th).

Spiritual Awareness (Su): Also at 2nd level, the spirit chaser becomes even more aware of the Spiritual World. This connection sharpens his instincts and warns him of impending danger. The spirit chaser gains a +2 insight bonus to all Listen and Spot checks. These bonuses augment to +4 at 5th level and +6 at 9th level.

Draw On The Spirit World (Su): At 3rd level, the spirit chaser gains the ability to focus on the surrounding essence of the Spiritual World and use its potent energies as his own. By concentrating for a full round, the spirit chaser draws upon the boundless vitality of the Spirit World, thus increasing his own. He gains a bonus to his Strength, Dexterity or Constitution score (character's choice) equal to half his spirit chaser



level (round down) + his Charisma modifier. This ability lasts a number of rounds equal to his spirit chaser level + his Charisma modifier. It can be used up to once per day at 3rd level, twice at 6th level and three times each day at 9th level.

Sense Undead (Su): The 4th level spirit chaser's ability to *sense spirit* is extended to all manner of undead creatures.

Spiritual Favour (Su): At 5th level, the spirit chaser is so much in touch with the Spiritual World he may request the assistance of any non-malign spirit. This ability functions as the *less geas* spell cast at twice the spirit chaser's level, with the exception that it can only affect incorporeal undead (even though they would normally be immune to mind affecting effects).

Locate Undead (Su): At 7th level, the spirit chaser's awareness is increased and he may now detect all kind of undead monsters. This supernatural ability functions as per the *locate creature* spell but is limited to undead creatures. It may be used up to once a day for every two spirit chaser levels. The spirit chaser's class level is used to determine the duration.

Bind Spirit (Su): This supernatural ability, gained at 8th level, works as the spell *binding* cast by a spellcaster of twice the spirit chaser's class level. Like most of the spirit chaser's ability, *bind spirit* only works on incorporeal undead creatures.

Incorporeal (Su): The spirit chaser gains the ability to become incorporeal at will. While in this state, he can only be harmed by incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons and magic. Furthermore, there is a 50% chance the incorporeal spirit chaser ignores damage from a corporeal source.

The Spirit Chaser Advancement Table

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Locate Spirit, Sense Spirit
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Spiritual Armour (+2), Spiritual Awareness (+2)
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Draw On The Sprit World (1/day)
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	Sense Undead, Spiritual Armour (+4)
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	Spiritual Awareness (+4), Spiritual Favour
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	Draw On the Sprit World (2/day), Spiritual Armour (+6)
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	Locate Undead
8	+6	+2	+6	+6	Bind Spirit, Spiritual Armour (+8)
9	+6	+3	+6	+6	Draw On the Sprit World (3/day), Spiritual Awareness (+6)
10	+7	+3	+7	+7	Incorporeal, Spiritual Armour (+10)

The Spirit Chaser's Known Spells Table

Level	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1	2	—	—	—
2	2	—	—	—
3	3	1	—	—
4	3	2	—	—
5	4	2	1	—
6	4	3	2	—
7	5	3	2	1
8	5	4	3	2
9	5	5	4	2
10	5	5	4	3

The Spirit Chaser's Spells Per Day Table

Level	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1	0	—	—	—
2	1	—	—	—
3	1	0	—	—
4	1	1	—	—
5	1	1	0	—
6	2	1	1	—
7	2	1	1	0
8	2	2	1	1
9	2	2	2	1
10	3	2	2	2





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AGHRAPUR

MANY-TOWERED,
GLITTERING
CAPITAL OF TURAN

Yezdigerd, king of Turan, was the mightiest monarch in the world. In his palace in the great port city of Aghrapur was heaped the plunder of empires. His fleets of purple-sailed war galleys had made Vilayet an Hyrkanian lake. The dark-skinned people of Zamora paid him tribute, as did the eastern provinces of Koth. The Shemites bowed to his rule as far west as Shushan. His armies ravaged the borders of Stygia in the south and the snowy lands of the Hyperboreans in the north. His riders bore torch and sword westward into Brythunia and Ophir and Corinthia, even to the borders of Nemediia. His gilt-helmeted swordsmen had trampled hosts under their horses' hoofs, and walled cities went up in flames at his command.

Robert E. Howard, The Devil in Iron

Aghrapur is the many-towered, glittering capital of Turan, a massive seaport on the Vilayet, probably the largest and most glorious of all cities of this age, the epitome of the opulent East. Aghrapur is the most populous city west of the Vilayet, home to 160,000 people. No city of the world is more luxurious. Originally a Zamorian city before the Hyrkanians came, Aghrapur is now a glittering Turanian city of haggling merchants creating a din of barter, slant-eyed wenches brazenly posturing, canopied litters bearing wealthy, discreetly veiled princesses and conquering slavers presenting nude slave-girls on the block.

Population: 160,000 (79% Turanian/Hyrkanian, 9% Zamorian, 5% Hyborian, 3% Vendhyan, 2% Khitan, 1% Black Kingdom, 1% Other)

Size: Metropolis (853 acres of land)

Average Population Density: 188 adults per acre

Average Number of Structures: 64 buildings per acre (approx. 54,288 buildings total)

Wealth Limit: 1,000,000 silver coins

Ready Cash: 8,000,000,000 silver coins

Government: Sultanate/Caliphate

Income for the King: 4,000,000 silver coins per year

Religion: Tarim, Erlik and other Hyrkanian gods

Imports: Trade Goods

Exports: Trade Goods, especially carpets

Code of Honour: Civilised

FORTIFICATIONS AND MILITARY STRENGTH

Aghrapur is a walled city with many fortresses. The *Bakire Ikuli*, known as the Maiden's Tower, is a tall stone tower which serves both as prison and lighthouse. Many horrible legends are whispered about this black tower in the coffeehouses and bazaars of Aghrapur. The *Siyah Istihkam* is a fortress built by Zamorians in only four months in response to an ancient siege when the Hyrkanians conquered the city. *Kurtbeyaz Ikuli* is a tall tower (slightly over 170 feet tall) that is used to survey the Harbour and to detect fires in the city. The *Eskihazne Istihkam* is a seven-towered castle that once housed the royal treasury. The treasury was

VINCENEN DARLAGE

later moved to the Grand Palace, so the *Eskihazne Istihkam* is now an imposing prison for diplomats, ambassadors and political prisoners. *Yangin Ikuli* is a massive tower measuring well over 264 feet tall, with four floors and is used to keep an eye on the city for fires or other alarming situations.

Approximately 1,600 soldiers (700 archers and 900 cavalymen) work on a full-time basis but 8,000 conscripted soldiers can be brought to bear in a few short hours if needed. The cavalymen are separated into three main groups: the Spahis, who are the elite cavalry (equivalent to a knight in many respects), the raiders, who are scouts and advance terrorists (sent ahead to scout and pillage), and the mounted archers, who travel fast and light (they fight along the flanks, harrying the enemy). Aghrapur also maintains an additional allotment of 1,600 mercenary soldiers. In addition, Aghrapur always has at least three war ships in its harbour with full crews of marines. Aghrapur can also recall troops from all over Turan if necessary (and if time allows). These numbers do not include the 500-man Imperial Guard stationed at whichever palace the king is occupying.

CULTURE

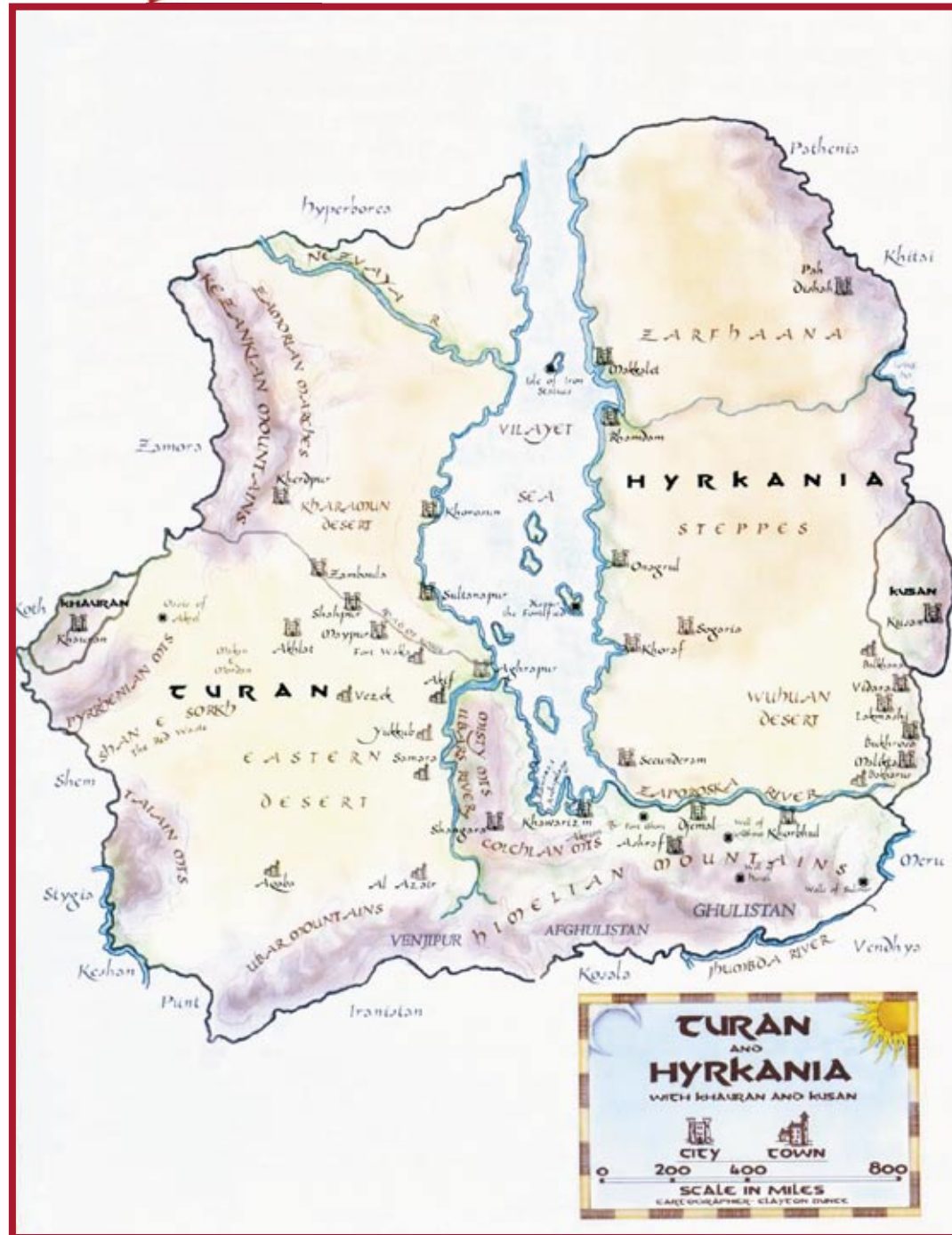
The Turanian Way: Turanians believe their civilisation is superior and that only by doing things their way can one advance in society. They teach particular protocols to be practised in court, in the baths, in the street and in almost every aspect of their lives. Most Turanians have a civilised Code of Honour to reflect this trust in their civilisation and their protocols.

Clothing (male): Turanian males are typically bearded; wear turbans, kaftans, sashes and loose-fitting trousers suited for horse riding. The warriors wear gold-spined helmets, white silk shirts, sleeveless mail, baggy trousers and tiger-skin cloaks. A kaftan is a robe that reaches to the ankles, buttoned in the front and is secured with a sash.

Clothing (female, traditional): The Turanian women are veiled. In more conservative circles, usually the upper classes, the women favour the khalat, a long costume that conceals the entire body. In less conservative areas, the women may wear embroidered kaftans, sashes and the same loose-fitting trousers worn by the men (in Turan, even the women ride horses). Urban Turanian women may also wear a *ferace*, which is a loose-fitting robe without a collar. In winter or in the far north, male and female garments have fur lining. Boots for both sexes are often of leather or felt. Women may also wear embroidered cloths on their heads or a diadem adorned with a gem in the centre of the forehead (the gem is usually tear-drop shaped). Hair is usually worn in braids down to their ankles.

Clothing (female, casual): In Aghrapur, however, due to the general warmth of the climate, many women forgo the traditional clothing and wear little more than a vest (or halter-top) and a slim belt with two strips of silk depending from the centre in front and back. Turanian women still wear a veil, even when wearing this abbreviated outfit. For formal occasions, the traditional wear (with ornamentation) is still commonly worn. The women will often wear silk or felt slippers. Women opting for the more casual look tend to let their hair flow freely. It is combed neatly but not usually braided.

When Entering a House: When entering houses, Turanians remove their shoes and put on slippers that are only worn inside homes. This protects the carpets, keeping them clean. Turanians tend to rest on the floor and babies move around freely in homes, so carpets are kept clean.





Foreigners: Aghrapur employs skilled Akbitanan smiths, enigmatic Khitan sword-masters, slinky Zamorian thieves, nude Zamboulan dancers and alien Vendhyan artisans to create the beauty and extravagance of this jewelled city.

Marriage: Throughout Turan, men may only have one wife (but he can divorce freely) but in Aghrapur men are allowed more than one wife. However, this is usually only done to strengthen business or diplomatic ties.

Dogs in the Streets: Dogs are used to keep Aghrapur clean. Hundreds, if not thousands, of dogs prowl and fight amid the streets. Although Turanians consider dogs to be unclean animals, the beasts consume the rubbish of the city, keeping it fairly clean. Tanners' men and servants of alchemists scoop up the droppings of the animals for use in their own noxious processes. The dogs are never referred to as strays and they tend to be loyal to the area they live in. No one owns the dogs as pets, but the people of a given street usually leave out a bit of food for the animals.

Turanian Baths: Turanian baths are essential for urban life for the Turanians and used almost as a ritual at certain times. Cleaning at the baths are

undertaken after any long journey, at a newborn's fortieth day, at marriages (especially for the bride), any sort of oath-taking, mourning, the joining of the military and many other moments in life. People of any rank or wealth may enter freely, although men and women are separated by time; men and women may not take public baths at the same time, and different times during the day are allotted each for men and women. Upon entering the bath, two servants (usually of the same sex as the bather, but occasionally, for an additional fee, servants of the opposite sex, might be available) help the bather out of his or her clothes, then lead the bather to a hot bath and help the bather into the extremely hot water. The servants leave the bather for fifteen minutes. Upon returning, the bather is wrapped in a linen sheet and led to a marble room with a huge dome and indirect lighting. The bather is directed to lie face down on a warm marble slab and the towel is removed. A Turanian bath person (again, usually of the same sex unless another additional fee is offered) dressed only in a linen sarong, pours cool water over the bather, a welcome respite from the heat. Using special gloves and soap, every square inch of the bather is scrubbed (leaving *no* crevices unscrubbed). The bather is asked to sit up and more cool water is poured over the bather. The

bather is asked to stand, and the bath person sluices off the dirt with his or her hands from the entire body. Then the bather is asked to lie down again and the entire body is scrubbed and massaged, creating a sensation of bonelessness. Then the bather rolls over and the process begins with the front of the body (again, leaving no crevices unscrubbed). The hair is also washed. After the final massage, the bather is stood up again (sometimes requiring aid due to the intense massage relaxing the muscles so much) and doused in cold water (the water gets cooler and cooler with each application). Lush towels are applied and the two servants from before lead the bather to a resting room so the bather can slowly return to the world (in a mental sense). The servants return after a time and help the bather dress. The bather's skin will be quite rosy upon leaving the baths.

Justice: The people of Aghrapur look to the Sultan for justice. King Yezdigerd's authority rests on his perceived commitment to justice. He is expected to wield distributive justice, which is centred around concepts of fairness and equity, and he is expected to wield protective justice, which is centred around pre-emptive protections for the helpless from corrupt officials. The king is expected to protect the peasants from unfair taxation, corrupt officials, unfair courts or any other excesses practised by those with authority. King Yezdigerd may delegate his distributive justice to other officials, but the Turanian people see his protective justice as his primary duty. He is granted absolute power in order to guarantee this justice – he is not above the law but he is allowed all things in order to ensure a just government.

Recreation: Oil wrestling is a common sport in Turan. The wrestlers, dressed in a pair of water buffalo hide pants, douse each other with olive oil. Since the skin is oiled, matches are often determined by holds on the pants. Many try to

get their arm into the pants to get the opponent down, so tying the pants correctly is important to keep that from happening. The matches have no set duration and it is not unknown for one to last up to two days. The wrestlers are not just physical athletes but are spiritually inclined as well, learning the art of wrestling from a master who also teaches that man is not just matter but also spirit. The training emphasises harmony of matter and spirit as essential to good character (the training emphasises all of the ability score characteristics equally). All skilled wrestlers have an apprentice to train with and teach.

Entertainer Troupes: Turanian nobles love troupes of entertainers. These troupes, known as



köçeks but named after their leaders, are groups of young males who practise music, flirting, dancing and erotic pleasures; they wear gaudy but elegant costumes and usually have long, curly hair. The average troupe has thirty members although a few number in the hundreds. When not performing, they work in coffeehouses and taverns, making themselves available for trysts with the customers. Nobles of all ranks seek these entertainers out as they are highly regarded.

Meddah Storytellers: Turanians love storytellers, especially in the coffee shops and taverns. The Meddah is a storyteller that functions as a single-person show, playing all the roles in the story. The Meddah uses different props to indicate a change of character, as well as a change in voice (voice control is essential in a Meddah performance). A good Meddah can adjust the story and the timing according to audience feedback as needed. Most Meddah are travelling artists, performing in different cities on a circuit. Meddahs originating from Aghrapur are noted for integrating musical instruments into their performances, a trait that makes the Aghrapur Meddahs especially popular around Turan.

Socialisation & Coffee: Turanians like to socialise, so coffeehouses are popular spots in Aghrapur. Turanians use coffee as an excuse to leave their homes and go where people are.

Women: As for women, most of them remain close to her house regardless of her stature in the society, where she either performs household chores or supervises those who do the chores. Women do get out on special occasions, and also to do the household shopping, to visit relatives and neighbours, to visit cemeteries or to bathe in the public baths. Women are free

to work and to keep any money they earn; there are no laws that specifically limit the rights of women. Women often work out of the home and sell any products they make there, although well-to-do women often work as bath attendants or as entertainers. Women may also engage in house-to-house selling. Medicine and healing is a field dominated by women in Turan. Women, in some respects, are better off than the men because women are exempt from taxes on income. Turanian women can own land, can receive inheritances and can work at any job a man can. Women can also renounce marriages just as Turanian men can. Women can also demand additional money in addition to the divorce. Just as Turanian women are protected from taxation, Turanian women also have laws on their side protecting anything they own; male relatives cannot sell their property from underneath them. For this reason, many wealthy families entrust their properties to their women because there is no law protecting men from the same thing.

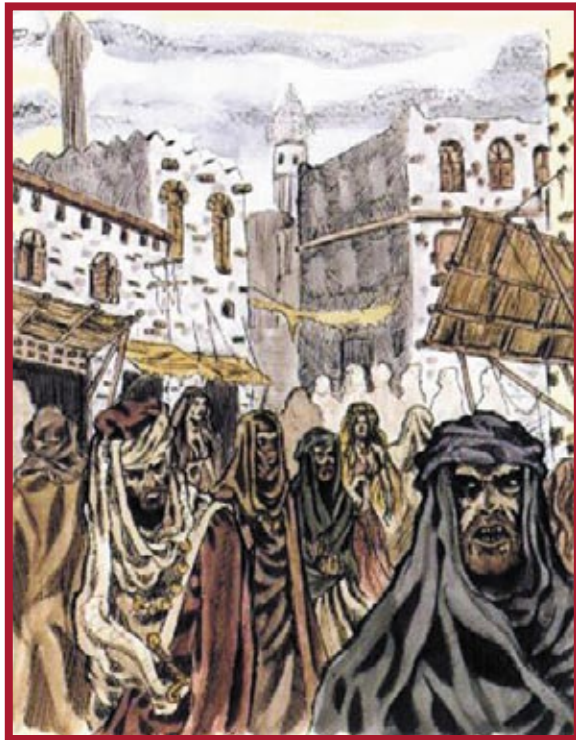
Carpets: Carpets and the art of carpet weaving impacts the Turanians environmentally, economically, religiously and sociologically. Carpets are used on the floors, the walls and doorways, protecting the homes from temperature fluctuations. Young women often take up carpet weaving as a means to earning additional money. The decorative designs on the carpets almost always have significance, either socially or religiously.

Slaves: The Turanians are only allowed to keep slaves if that slave does not believe in the Turanian theology. If a slave converts to worshipping the Living Tarim, for example, he may no longer be kept as a slave (although he can become a paid servant). The Turanians are not generally fools, however, so giving lip service to their gods does not help one escape from slavery.

ADMINISTRATION AND POWER CENTRES

There are many political factions vying for dominance in this Hyrkanian city. Promotion is through merit and nepotism is frowned upon as inefficient and corrupt.

Ruler: King Yezdigerd took over the throne from his father, Yildiz and now reigns as sultan and caliph over the Turanian Empire. As Sultan, the king has authority over secular matters and as Caliph, the king has authority over spiritual matters. He wields absolute power. He is expected to spy upon his courts, his viziers, and on every governmental office and officer. He is expected to travel in disguise to see how things really are if he doubts the word he receives from his advisors.



The Viziers: Led by the Grand Vizier, the viziers are the closest advisors to the king. The Grand Vizier leads the Imperial Council, which is comprised by the viziers, their kahye, important gazi and a a and selected nazir.

The Kahye: The Kahye are the advisors to the viziers and are the basis for nobility in Turan.

Administrative Nazir: The administrators of Aghrapur, the nazir, are slaves that various rulers have appointed as magistrates, officials and administrators of the Empire. They control the ministries and are an important part of the bureaucracy. King Yildiz's grandfather instituted this practice in order to weaken the nobles and to provide an alternative voice in Imperial politics. King Yezdigerd continues this practice, playing the governmental administrators off the nobles and vice versa as needed to achieve his own ends.

The Harem: The harem are the concubines of the sultan and his favoured concubines have his ear and can often manage political clout. Yezdigerd's mother rules the Harem and has a powerful presence in court.

Military Officers: The military elite, including the gazi (those who have been decorated for valour) and the a a (those who lead the mercenary forces), also advise King Yezdigerd. They are responsible for planning out the practical matters of any given conflict or war, such as feeding the troops (Turanian soldiers are not allowed to take food from peasants) and movement routes.

Foreign Ambassadors: Foreign ambassadors surround the king like a flock of hens, always begging for favours and attention, promising him whatever is needed to secure good will.

Religious Leaders: The leaders of the Living Tarim, Erlik and other religions often ply for the king's attentions, especially in his role as Caliph. Many of these religious leaders are actually spies for the Black Circle in Vendhya.

LAYOUT OF AGHRAPUR

Located on the Ilbars River and at the eastern terminus of the Road of Kings, Aghrapur is the primary trading city of Turan. Caravan routes enter the city from the north, the west and the south. Shipping routes head toward the east. Filled with monuments, palaces, statues, temples and fountains, Aghrapur is a beautiful city, displaying the wealth of many kingdoms. Domed temples, white zikkurats, people with turbans and spired helms chased with gold, wearing flowing robes of silk and satin, tall minarets and arabesque spires that gleam in the sunlight like small suns are but a hint of the splendour a visitor experiences.

For most construction, the Turanians generally use brick and wood; however, their greatest works use dressed stone. Turanians make a lot of use out of stalactite vaulting and minarets. The inner and outer walls are decorated in a material made by mixing marble, powder, lime and plaster. In addition, mosaics and domes include exotic materials such as coloured stone, fancy woods, gold and mother-of-pearl. Their monumental buildings (generally temples, caravansaries, tombs and palaces) are elegantly simple and harmoniously proportioned. An imposing central dome dominates these monumental buildings. Descending half domes, vaults and ascending buttresses aesthetically lead the viewer's eye up and down the building. Monumental buildings are framed with slender minarets of brick. These monumental buildings are always surrounded by open courts to keep the monument from being devoured and obscured by the surrounding city sprawl.

Early Turanian designs are severely plain with elaborate decorations only around doorways. Later designs are more elaborately decorated all over. Turanian buildings are logical and clear in design, and each part of a building is considered relative to the whole building. There is nothing unnecessary in a Turanian building, largely because Turanian architects receive their training as military engineers.

DISTRICTS OF AGHRAPUR

In the glutted slave markets of Aghrapur, Sultanapur, Khawarizm, Shahpur, and Khorusun, women were sold for three small silver coins – blond Brythunians, tawny Stygians, dark-haired Zamorians, ebon Kushites, olive-skinned Shemites.

Robert E. Howard, The Devil in Iron

Aghrapur is segregated into sprawling wards and districts to separate the city into manageable social units and neighbourhoods. People in these wards and districts know each other, vouch for each other, celebrate with each other and work with each other. People native to a particular ward with Knowledge (local) of at least one rank know everyone else in the ward, so Reputation bonuses always apply when a character is in his home ward and dealing with other natives of that same ward. Most ward or district information is based on the acre, which is 43,560 square feet or a roughly 210-foot by 210-foot square. Also given is a statistic on how many structures are in each district. Structures can include pavilions, stalls, barns, sheds, houses, wells, fountains, temples, civic buildings, coffee shops, barracks, cemeteries, cisterns, coliseums, corrals, granaries, inns, libraries, mills, offices, plazas, shops, stables, taverns, tenements, theatres, warehouses and workshops.

Su'barindir (The Harbour): The harbour of Aghrapur is one of the great ports of the world. Su'barindir has its own suq, craftsman ward, gate ward, slum area and even a small sliver of palaces built overlooking the Vilayet. The harbour is a Class 4 dock (see *Pirate Isles*) and can handle multiple gargantuan ship hulls. The docks have an elaborate network of stone pylons driven into the sea floor along with riverside and harbour access. Any size ship can be dry-docked here and is the only Class 4 dock on the Vilayet. Members of the Red Brotherhood (or any other non-naval craft) must make a Diplomacy check (DC 25) to gain access to the port (one attempt may be made per month, and one cannot take 10 or 20 with the check) according to rules published in *Pirate Isles*.

- The *Bakire Ikuli*, known as the Sorrowful Tower, is a tall stone tower which serves both as prison and lighthouse.
- *Kurtbeyaz Ikuli* is a tall tower (slightly over 170 feet tall) that is used to survey the Harbour and to detect fires in the city.

The Suq (Market District):

The suq of Aghrapur is a central structure in the city. Although most of Aghrapur's neighbourhoods have their own small suqs, this main suq is the commercial draw for most visitors to the city. The Suq is a huge market area underneath a massive collection of domes, columns and minarets. Most of the markets of similar natures are kept together on common squares, forming little markets within the larger bazaar district. Thus there is a slave bazaar, a livestock

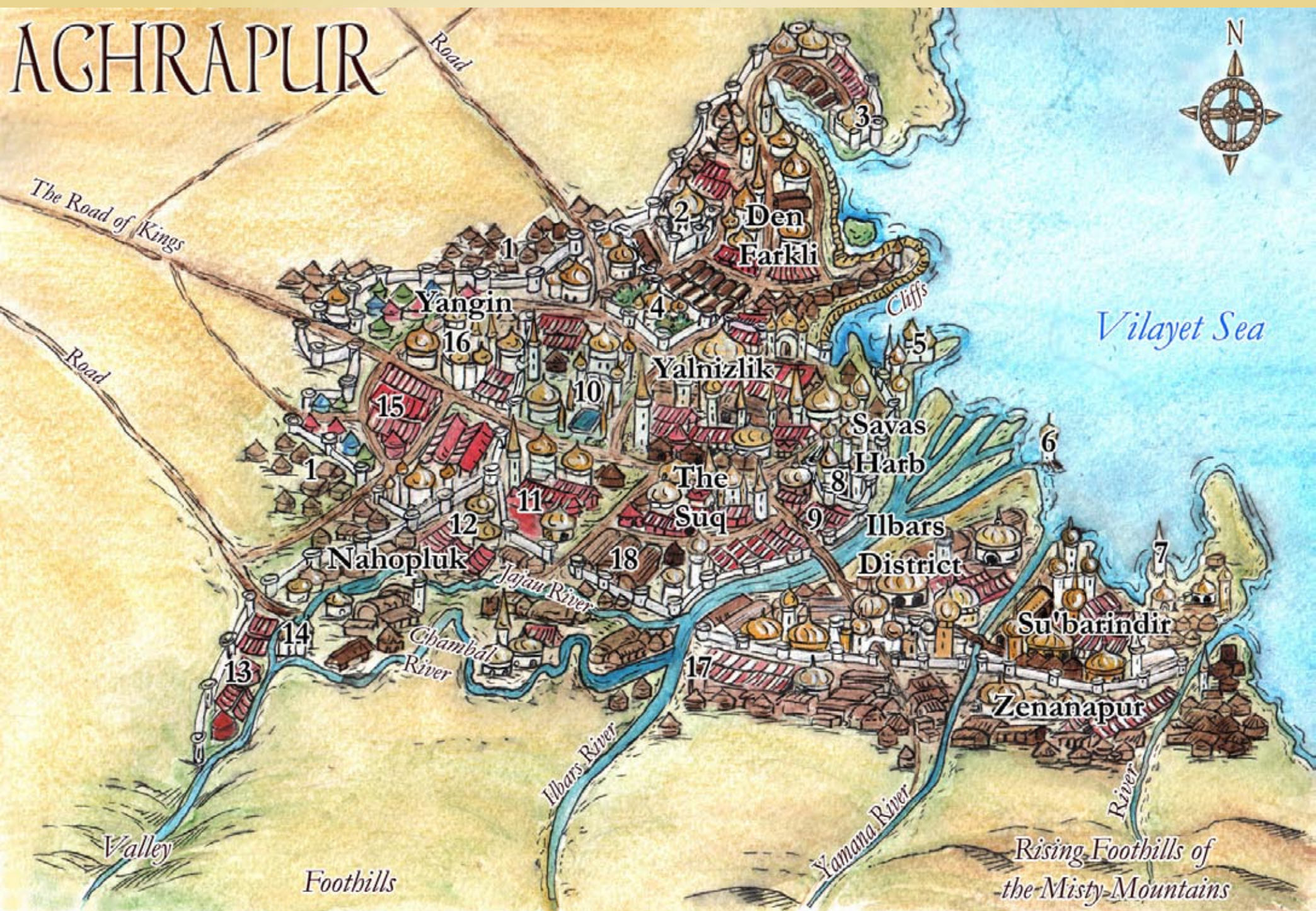
bazaar and so on. There is a huge gold and silver district in this part of the city. The haggling here is sharply intense.

Den Farkli: Den Farkli is on the northern side of the city and has its own beautiful harbour (with Class 3 docks as defined in *Pirate Isles*) and its own wall. This is a financial district mostly, where merchants live and store merchandise. It has its own bazaars and suqs where merchants deal with other merchants and buying is done in bulk (most sales are done in *cargoes*, as defined in *Pirate Isles*). The *Ticaret Gemisi Palace* is located here, the palace of an ancient merchant-king. That palace is now owned by a retired naval commander who received the property as a grant by the Sultan for meritorious service. Den Farkli is also the primary entertainment district for the mercenary forces of Aghrapur. A powerful Khitan sword-master also retains a school in this district. Another school is maintained by a small group of Nemedian scholars studying the history of the area. Many merchants apprentice younger merchants here, and teach Turanian children how to read, write and perform

AGHRAPUR KEY

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Slum | 10. Gercerli Anlapma |
| 2. Eskihazne Istikam | 11. Bazaar & small Suq |
| 3. Ticaret Gemisi Palace | 12. Silah Suq |
| 4. Sultan's Hunting Lodge | 13. Bazaar |
| 5. The Grand Palace | 14. Tantpur Castle |
| 6. Bakire Ikuli | 15. The Grand Bazaar |
| 7. Kurtbeyaz Ikuli | 16. Yangin Ikuli |
| 8. Siyah Istihkam | 17. City Sprawl |
| 9. Atlar Bazaar | 18. Suq Living Area |

ACHRAPUR





simple mathematics. Most of the foreign embassies are located in Den Farkli, as are most of the taverns. Over 12 thousand people live in this district.

- The *Eskihazne Istihkam* is a seven-towered castle that once housed the royal treasury. The treasury was later moved to the Grand Palace, so the *Eskihazne Istihkam* is now an imposing prison for diplomats, ambassadors and political prisoners.

The Grand Palace: The grand palace of the sultan, King Yezdigerd, is built on a crag overlooking the Vilayet Sea and is probably the most magnificent palace to ever be built since the Cataclysm sank Atlantis. Endless rooms, perfumed gardens, gold-worked doors, Vendhyan tapestries, Iranistani rugs and, of course, the legendary throne room of the King of the Empire of Turan. This vast chamber with fifty-foot tall doors worked in glorious gold, fantastically carved pillars that reach so high the keenest eye cannot see the tops from the polished

marble floor and enough lamps and candles to rival the sun. Imperial guards, resplendent in scarlet cloaks and white turbans mounted with peacock feathers, stand ever at the ready to protect the grand sultan of the Empire.

Nahopluk: Nahopluk has a smoky odour caused by the many kilns, foundries and odorous industries here; most of this district is located in a low-lying area of Aghrapur, keeping most of the smell in its walls. Eight thousand people work the tanneries and forges, creating weapons and other metallic tools. This area is noted for the *Silah Suq*, a labyrinthine market of covered streets, domed towers and enclosed halls. Here weapons from all over the world are sold and the produce of Nahopluk is offered at bargain prices. This suq is also where many illicit deals can be made, if one can find the most notorious of its shadowed streets. The two gates of Nahopluk feature large open-air bazaars where leather goods and sturdy clothing are sold, along with more general Turanian goods needed in the district. The Jajau and Chambal rivers (more like streams) run through this district, draining into the Ilbars.

- **Tantpur Castle:** Originally an outpost built by the Hyrkanians when Aghrapur was first captured, it now serves as a garrison for soldiers assigned to protect Nahopluk.

Zenanapur: Zenanapur district is mostly geared toward trading with the hillmen of the Misty Mountains and includes many bazaars, temples and suqs for this purpose. Also, a lot of foreigners settle here, and the area is a slum close to the walls of Su'Barindir, straggling out to small shanties toward the rising foothills. Zenana slopes upward away from Su'Barindir.

Ilbars District: Build along the Ilbars River, this district is designed to accommodate river trade and is functionally similar to Su'Barindir. The

walls on the northwest side of the river are built high to prevent flooding and the Ilbars District is built high for the same reason.

Yangin: Yangin is a massive trade district devoted to caravans. Caravansaries, suqs and bazaars fill this district to the brimming, all geared for outfitting a caravan or allowing for the rest of a caravan. Although filled with its own suqs, the district also connects to The Suq, the massive market in the centre of the city.

- *Yangin Ikuli* is a massive tower measuring well over 264 feet tall, with four floors and is used to keep an eye on the city for fires or other alarming situations.
- *The Grand Bazaar* is a massive open-air market used for buying and selling the cargoes carried by the caravans.

Yalnizlik: Yalnizlik is the location of the famed *Geçerli Anlapma*, the Temple of the Living Tarim, one of the largest temples in the Hyborian age. It has 18 marble and gold domes, 18 shining minarets and inlays of gold and silver throughout. Great archives, elaborate cloisters, exquisite living areas and several hundred smaller temples fill out the rest of this division. The suqs and bazaars in Yalnizlik tend to focus on religious artefacts, scrolls, tablets and books from all over the world.

- **The Sultan's Hunting Lodge:** King Yezdigerd and his forefathers have never been content to have just one palace, so he also has a hunting lodge that is far more palace than it is a lodge in Yalnizlik.

Savas Harb: Savas Harb is a soldier's district, where Turanians train and live. The great stables are also located here. Grand temples, shrines and bazaars serve the needs of the soldiers.

- The *Siyah Istihkam* is a fortress built by ancient Zamorians in only four months in response to the ancient siege when the Hyrkanians conquered the city. It is the oldest extant building in Aghrapur.
- **Atlar Bazaar:** This open-air market is where the best horses and horse-related items can be found.

TURANIAN SOLDIERS

Medium Humanoid (Turanian Soldier 3); Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (21 hp); **Initiative:** +3 (+2 Dex, +1 Reflex); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 13 (+1 level, +2 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 18 (+2 level, +2 Str, +4 shield); **DR:** 6 (sleeveless mail shirt and gold-spined helmet with turban); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +3/+5; **Attack:** Scimitar +5 melee; or Light Lance +5 melee; or Hyrkanian bow +6 ranged ; **Full Attack:** Scimitar +5 melee; or Light Lance +5 melee; or Hyrkanian bow +6 ranged ; **Damage:** Scimitar 1d8+2 /18-20 x2 /AP 4; Light Lance 1d10+2 /x3 /AP 4; or Hyrkanian bow (+2) 1d10+2 /19-20 x2 /AP 5; **Special Attacks:** Formation Combat (*Light Cavalry*); **Special Qualities:** Turanian traits; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8; **Skills:** Craft (bowyer) +3, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +2, Ride +8, Spot +6, Survival +2; **Feats:** Mounted Combat, Far Shot, Mounted Archery, Weapon Focus (Hyrkanian bow); **Reputation:** 1 (Cruel); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Jungir Khan, Turan, Zamboula; **Possessions:** Sash, loose-fitting trousers, gold-spined helmet with turban, white silk shirt over sleeveless mail, tiger-skin cloak, scimitar, Hyrkanian bow (+2), quiver of 40 arrows

Medium Humanoid (Turanian Nomad 2/ Soldier 4); Hit Dice: 6d10+6 (42 hp); **Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Reflex); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 17 (+3 level, +3 Dex, +1 favoured

terrain); **Parry Defence:** 21 (+4 level, +3 Str, +4 shield); **DR:** 6 (sleeveless mail shirt and gold-spined helmet with turban); **Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +6/+9; **Attack:** Scimitar +9 melee; or Light Lance +9 melee; or Hyrkanian bow +10 ranged ; **Full Attack:** Scimitar +9/+4 melee; or Light Lance +9/+4 melee; or Hyrkanian bow +10/+5 ranged; **Damage:** Scimitar 1d8+3 /18-20 x2 /AP 5; Light Lance 1d10+3 /x3 /AP 5; or Hyrkanian bow (+3) 1d10+5 /19-20 x2 /AP 6; **Special Attacks:** Formation Combat (*Light Cavalry*); **Special Qualities:** Turanian traits, favoured terrain +1, born to the saddle; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1); **Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +1; **Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 9; **Skills:** Craft (bowyer) +4, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Ride +12, Search +4, Spot +9, Survival +4; **Feats:** Mounted Combat, Far Shot, Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Ride-by Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (Hyrkanian bow), Weapon Specialisation (Hyrkanian bow); **Reputation:** 5 (Cruel); **Leadership:** –; **Code of Honour:** None; **Allegiances:** Jungir Khan, Turan, Zamboula; **Possessions:** Sash, loose-fitting trousers, gold-spined helmet with turban, white silk shirt over sleeveless mail, tiger-skin cloak, scimitar, Hyrkanian bow (+3), quiver of 40 arrows

TURANIAN MERCHANTS

Apprentice Merchant: Medium Turanian 1st level **Commoner**; **Hit Dice:** 1d4-1 (2 hit points); **Initiative:** -1 (+0 level, -1 Dex); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 9 (+0 level, -1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 10 (+0 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +0/+0; **Attack:** Hatchet +0 melee ; **Damage:** Hatchet 1d6/ x3 / AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1); **Special Qualities:** Illiteracy, Turanian traits, weapon familiarity (tulwar, Hyrkanian bow); **Saves:** Fort -1, Ref -1, Will +4 (+7 vs. corruption, +2 vs. Hypnotism); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 8, Con 9, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 11; **Skills:** Appraise +3, Bluff +4, Craft (bowyer) +3, Diplomacy +3,



Gather Information +2, Knowledge (local) +3, Profession (merchant) +8, Ride +1, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Survival +3; **Feats:** Negotiator, Skill Focus (profession); **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Reputation:** 4 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Allegiances:** As needed by Games Master

(spent 2 skill points on literacy); **Feats:** Diligent, Negotiator, Skill Focus (profession); **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Reputation:** 5 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Allegiances:** As needed by Games Master

Average Merchant: Medium Turanian 3rd level **Commoner**; **Hit Dice:** 3d4-3 (4 hit points); **Initiative:** +0 (+1 level, -1 Dex); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 10 (+1 level, -1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 11 (+1 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +1/+1; **Attack:** Dagger +1 melee; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4/19-20 x2 / AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1); **Special Qualities:** Turanian traits, weapon familiarity (tulwar, Hyrkanian bow); **Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +5 (+8 vs. corruption, +3 vs. Hypnotism); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 8, Con 9, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 11; **Skills:** Appraise +6, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (local) +3, Profession (merchant) +10, Ride +1, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Survival +3

Experienced Merchant: Medium Turanian 5th level **Commoner**; **Hit Dice:** 5d4-5 (7 hit points); **Initiative:** +0 (+1 level, -1 Dex); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 11 (+2 level, -1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 12 (+2 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +2/+2; **Attack:** Dagger +2 melee; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4/19-20 x2 / AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1); **Special Qualities:** Turanian traits, weapon familiarity (tulwar, Hyrkanian bow), skill focus (see feats); **Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +5 (+8 vs. corruption, +3 vs. Hypnotism); **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 8, Con 9, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12; **Skills:** Appraise +9, Bluff +10, Craft (bowyer) +3, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (local) +5, Profession (merchant) +12, Ride +1, Sense Motive +6, Spot +5, Survival +3 (spent 2 skill points on literacy); **Feats:** Diligent, Negotiator, Skill Focus (appraise), Skill Focus (bluff), Skill Focus (profession); **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Reputation:** 8 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Allegiances:** As needed by Games Master

Master Merchant: Medium Turanian 7th level **Commoner**; **Hit Dice:** 7d4 (17 hit points); **Initiative:** +1 (+2 level, -1 Dex); **Speed:** 30 ft.; **Dodge Defence:** 12 (+3 level, -1 Dex); **Parry Defence:** 13 (+3 level, +0 Str); **BAB/Grapple:** +3/+3; **Attack:** Dagger +3 melee; **Damage:** Dagger 1d4/19-20 x2 / AP 1; **Space/Reach:** 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1); **Special Qualities:** Turanian traits, weapon familiarity (tulwar, Hyrkanian bow), skill focus (see feats); **Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6 (+9 vs. corruption, +4 vs. Hypnotism); **Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13; **Skills:** Appraise +12, Bluff +12, Craft (bowyer) +4, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (local) +7, Profession (merchant) +14, Ride +1, Sense Motive +9, Spot +5, Survival +3 (spent 2 skill points on literacy); **Feats:** Diligent, Negotiator, Skill Focus (appraise), Skill Focus (bluff), Skill Focus (profession), Skill Focus (sense motive); **Code of Honour:** Civilised; **Reputation:** 10 (Talented); **Leadership:** –; **Allegiances:** As needed by Games Master



Power Classes: The Savage

An errata for Signs & Portents Roleplayer issue 31

A stute readers will have noticed the omission of a vital table from last month's Power Class article. This was to do with a fiendish conspiracy between evil gremlins and the dark demon Typos, who regularly demands great tribute from your favourite gaming magazine, and is nothing whatsoever to do with absent minded editors getting distracted at crucial moments and forgetting to put the table in the right place, nosir. The table is included here, and as I have a few lines left I shall now sing the theme tune from the 1960's TV version of Batman: Batman, Batman, Batman, Batman, Batman, Batman, Batman, Batman, Batman, BATMAN!

Divine Power Point Costs

Spell Description	Enhancement	1 st level spell	2 nd level spell	3 rd level spell	4 th level spell
Range:					
Close	+5 ft.	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Medium	+10 ft.	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Long	+40 ft.	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Duration:					
1 round	+1 round	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
1 minute	+1 minute	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
1 hour	+1 hour	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
1 day	+1 day	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
1 week	+1 week	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Effect:					
Attack bonus	+1 attack bonus	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Damage	+1 damage	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Save bonus	+1 bonus	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Skill bonus	+2 bonus	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Saving Throw	+1 to DC	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Spell Resistance	+1 to caster level check	2 points	4 points	6 points	8 points





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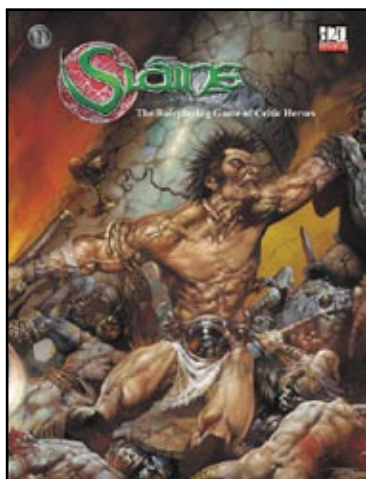
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Boompowder, Treason and Plot

A scenario for the Lone Wolf Roleplaying Game for 4 to 6 characters of 3rd - 4th level

Greg Smith

Background

Like the Kai Lords, the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star is a major impediment to any invasion of Sommerlund by the Darklords.

Over a year ago, Faludar, a Brother of the Crystal Star, was captured while scouting the Darklands. He was taken to Kaag and his mind was broken through torture and magic. He has become a pawn of the Darklords.

Faludar believes that his guild let him down and so has hatched a plot to blow up the guildhall during the feast of Maesmarn, when many of the Brotherhood are present. He has mentally prompted a Sommlending merchant, named Dassinar (Dass for short), to travel to Bor to buy a wagonload of Bor Brew. He shadowed Dass to Bor and arranged for Dass to pick up his cargo, which, unbeknownst to the merchant, is actually boompowder.

Faludar followed Dass back as far as Ruanon and then rode ahead to the Pass of Moytura for the second phase of his plan. Here, with the help of some Giaks, he will appear to have just escaped from the Darklords' grasp. It is his intention to gain the help of passing travellers to return to Toran with them so that they might corroborate his story. There, he plans to steal Dass' cargo and plant it in the cellar of the Mage's Guild.

The Feast of Maesmarn

Maesmarn takes place on the last day of summer and is a celebration giving thanks to Kai for the summer season and a bountiful harvest. It is a tradition that dates back to the arrival of the Sommlendings in northern Magnamund. The feast is symbolic of the last good meal before the austerity of winter and is usually served late in the evening. It is considered bad luck for anyone to still be eating after midnight.

Unlike the solemn Fehmarn, Maesmarn is a festal occasion. Houses are decorated with bunting; people wear brightly coloured clothing and ale and wine flow freely. In the cities, in recent years, it has become a custom to celebrate on the streets before the feast. Dancers, travelling theatres, jugglers and other street entertainers often perform for city folk.

Most Sommlendings dine with their families on Maesmarn but in Toran it is done a little differently. The city's many guilds organise huge banquets for their members and their families. Those who do not belong to a guild often choose to celebrate in an inn amongst a crowd of people.

In Ruanon, Dass was mugged and had all of his money stolen. He is anxious to reach Toran before Maesmarn to sell his brew but he needs protection for his journey, which is where the Player Characters come in.

Ruanon

The characters are preparing to head north following the successful outcome of their last mission. They have been hunting bandits in the caves below the Maaken range, unless a previous game brought the characters to Ruanon. Kai Lords are returning to their monastery, Knights of the Realm are going to Holmgard or to report to their barons, Brothers of the Crystal Star are

returning to their guild in Toran and so on. If other character classes lack a reason for travelling northwards, then Dass' offer of payment should tempt them.

It is a bright sunny morning in Ruanon. As the characters approach the north gate, they pass a merchant seated on a wagon. He looks up as they pass and calls to them, 'Good morning to you. Would you by any chance be heading northwards?' After they answer he will explain that he was brutally attacked last night and had all of his money stolen and so he has no money to hire a guard for his valuable cargo of brew. Several bruises and a bloody cut on his forehead attest



to the veracity of his tale. He tells them he is afraid that he will be attacked by bandits, Giaks or worse. 'They call it 'Raiders' Road', you know.'

If the characters include a Kai Lord, Knight of the Realm or Brother of the Crystal Star he asks if he can beg a favour of them and travel under their protection. Otherwise he will offer to pay the characters 6 Silver Plates per day, double the standard rate for a guard, when they reach Toran and he sells his brew.

The Wildlands

On the fifth day of travel, the group enters the barren landscape of the Wildlands. Little grows here and few animals live among the dust and rocks. On their left the foreboding peaks of the Durncraggs loom above them. Dass warns them that bandits or Giaks often attacks travellers along this road.

A bandit scout is watching the road, waiting for suitable prey. Sharp-eyed characters will spot him hiding in a rocky outcrop with a successful Perception check (DC 15). He will have seen the group and will attempt to sneak away to alert his comrades. He is 100 yards away and uses the cover of the rocky terrain. If the characters wish to shoot at him, he is considered to be behind cover and concealed. If he is pursued he will break cover and flee and the characters will not catch him before he reaches the bandits' camp. Should mounted characters chase him, they will need to make a Riding check (DC 12) because of the rough ground, otherwise the horse moves at quarter speed.

If the scout escapes, the bandits will lay an ambush a mile or so up the road. There will be a number of bandits equal to the characters, including Dass. They will be concealed amongst the rocks on

either side of the road, with crossbows ready, and can be spotted on a Perception check (DC 15). They hope to surprise the characters with a volley of bow fire before charging in, swords drawn. Should the crossbow fire prove ineffective or the characters appear to be well armed and armoured, they will beat a hasty retreat. Otherwise they will fight until half of their number are defeated. In the unlikely event the bandits defeat the characters, they will leave them without possessions, food and water in the middle of the Wildlands.

Bandits

2nd Level Human Warrior; End 17; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13; +3 melee, +3 ranged (+4 with crossbow); SQ Weapon of Choice (crossbow); Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Wis 10, Int 11, Cha 12

Skills: Athletics +2, Climb +3, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (nature) +1, Perception +1, Ride +3, Survival +4

Allegiance: Balance

Equipment: Leather armour, sword, crossbow (damage 1d10+1), 20 bolts

The Pass of Moytura

The next few days pass uneventfully and the sight of the Pass of Moytura and the greenery of Sommerlund beyond are welcome indeed. To the east, above the foothills of the Durncraggs the characters will spot vultures circling. The scavengers are only about half a mile away. When the characters investigate, they will find a dead horse.

The horse is Faludar's but there is no way for the characters to know this. It is a piece of the jigsaw that they will not be able to fit into place until much later.



Closer examination will reveal that the horse has not been dead long. Anyone with knowledge of animals will be able to estimate that it died of a broken neck within the last day. A set of clothes is scattered around and a pair of boots is close by. In the saddlebags are several days' rations and a pouch of mixed coinage – Ain, Lune and Gold Crowns.

Before the characters can take further action, they hear the cry, 'Koga nart gaj!' They turn to see a man in tattered blue robes being chased by Giaks. He sees the characters, turns in their direction and calls for help in weak voice. He is 150 feet away and there are seven Giaks in pursuit. The characters will recognise the robes of a Brother of the Crystal Star as they get closer. The Giaks will fight to the death (statistics for Giaks are on page 273 of the *Lone Wolf Roleplaying Game*).

After the battle, the mage will thank them and introduce himself as Faludar. He is obviously exhausted and has a sword wound on his left arm as well as cuts and abrasions from climbing through the mountains. Once his wounds are treated and he is given food and water, he will explain that he was captured over a year ago while scouting the Darklands. He escaped from Kaag and made it this far, but could not evade pursuit. It is essential that he get back to Toran. He asks that the characters help.

When Faludar sees Dass and his wagon, he will be unable to conceal his surprise. If challenged, he will say that he had not expected such illustrious folk to lower themselves to be guards for a merchant. In fact, he thought he would reach Toran before Dass.

Holmgard

It is early afternoon of the 30th day of their journey when the white spires of Holmgard come into view. As the group approaches the magnificent city that is Sommerlund's capital, Dass says that he knows a good coaching inn – The Merchant's Rest.

The guards on the gate welcome them to the city. One of them gives Dass a nod of recognition. They conduct a perfunctory search of the wagon before letting the group pass.

The Merchant's Rest is just a short way inside Holmgard's stout walls. Dass' recommendation was a good one, for the food and ale are good, the beds are soft and the barmaids are comely. The inn's stable yard is large and has double gates. Dass parks his wagon under a flat roof beside two other wagons and a carriage. A stable-boy stables the horses.

The characters now have a couple of hours to spend before nightfall. They could go shopping for equipment but will not have time to find anything out of the ordinary. If they are enterprising enough to try and learn more about either Faludar or Dass, have them make a Gather Information check. Questioning either the barman at the Merchant's Rest or a soldier at the gate, along with successful check (DC 12) will tell them that Dass is exactly what he says he is, although he has not been to Holmgard for several months. Finding a Brother of the Crystal Star is difficult and will require a check (DC 20) to locate Brendir, a Wanderlore who will recall that Faludar was indeed a member of the brotherhood who was believed to have died in the Darklands. Brendir is delighted to hear of Faludar's return but he has business for the king that prevents him helping any further.

After a splendid evening meal, Dass and Faludar both turn in early, claiming tiredness. When the characters decide to sleep, the Games Master should allocate half of them rooms overlooking the street and the remainder rooms overlooking the stable yard.

During the night, four thieves try and steal cargo and luggage from the stable yard. The characters whose rooms overlook the yard must make Perception checks to hear the thieves and awaken. If a character has chosen to keep watch, the DC of this test is reduced by 5. A small wagon draws up by the gate and a single thief climbs over the gate (Perception check at DC 17 to hear him), unbars the gate and opens it (Perception check, DC 20). His three accomplices enter the stable yard and begin to search through the luggage and cargo on the wagons and carriages (Perception check, DC 15).



The characters will no doubt raise the alarm and prepare to confront the villains. Faludar will be up, dressed and already on his way downstairs. If the characters all fail to wake, Faludar will bang on their doors and call out. Remember that it takes time to put on armour, so the characters will have to make a choice between protection and haste.

In the stable yard the characters catch the crooks by surprise. One pair of thieves is carrying a barrel from Dass' wagon while the other two have a luggage chest. Faludar is visibly angry and will cast *electric pulse* at one of the thieves carrying the barrel. The thieves will drop the stolen goods and if they are outnumbered they will run, otherwise they will stand and fight. Once one of their number falls in combat they will flee. Faludar will cast a last *electric pulse* at their backs.

The whole inn will have been woken by the commotion. The stable-boy will be despatched to summon the watch and a doctor if there are any wounded characters. The innkeeper will offer free drinks to the characters involved in stopping the theft and the merchants and passengers whose belongings were saved will be grateful.

If the characters question Faludar about his anger, he will say that he had suffered nightmares and was awake when he heard the thieves. His vivid dreams of the tortures inflicted upon him in the Darklands gave rise to his anger. He confesses that he lost control, which he regrets.

Faludar had, of course, been watching over his boompowder and was desperate that the thieves should not steal it or expose his plot.

Thieves

3rd Level Human Vagabond (see *Signs & Portents* issue 22); End 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; +3 melee, +4 ranged; SQ Sneak Attack 1d6, Steal; Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Wis 12, Int 10, Cha 12

Skills: Appraise +2, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Disable Device +3, Perception +4, Stealth +8, Sleight of Hand +9

Allegiance: Balance

Equipment: Dagger

The Road to Toran

Should the characters decide that they could leave Dass in Holmgard so that they can make better time to Toran, Faludar will disagree. He will say that he sees no reason the merchant should not come along. After the event with the thieves, he has decided the boompowder is better under his watchful eye.

The sky is grey and spots of rain begin to fall as the group passes through the streets of Holmgard to the west gate. Heavy rain falls all day, making their northward travel miserable. The road becomes muddier and Dass' horses find the going difficult. It is after dark when the group reaches an inn for the night.

It continues to rain the following day. Dass will insist on continuing despite the weather because he is anxious to get to Toran in time for Maesmarn. The pace of the wagon has slowed to a crawl and shortly after they cross the River Unoram it becomes stuck in the mud.

The characters will be unable to shift the fully laden wagon. Dass tells them they must unload it before they can move it. Faludar starts to look anxious. He does not help unload the barrels but he watches very closely and gasps as one almost slips from Dass' grasp. If asked, he says that he is eager to reach Toran and curses the weather for slowing them down.

Later that day the rain stops and the sun peers weakly between the clouds. The rest of the journey is blessed with warm weather and the going is easier.

Toran

It is the afternoon before the feast of Maesmarn when the group arrives in Toran. They pass into the tunnel through the massive 40 feet thick walls and out into a city decorated with bunting. Everyone in Toran is ready to celebrate.

Dass says that he has to deliver his Bor Brew to the Old Dragon inn. He will suggest the characters meet him later at the Baron's Arms inn, so that he can pay them anything he owes and buy them a drink in thanks. He explains that the Old Dragon is an overpriced hostelry frequented by the wealthy, while the Baron's Arms is cheap, friendly and serves good beer. He will be quite happy if any characters wish to accompany him.

Faludar will ask the characters to accompany him to the Mages' Guild. The guild is housed in an assemblage of buildings situated in immaculately kept grounds. At the centre is a spire, topped with a glowing crystal star. A stream runs through the grounds that the mages use to heal others with their *mend* spells.

As they approach the main gate, they are met by Allana, a pretty, young Brotherhood Initiate, who ushers them into the main courtyard on seeing Faludar and the state of his robes. On hearing Faludar's story she bids the characters to wait while she rushes the mage inside.

If one of the characters is a Brother of the Crystal Star, he may want to accompany them. Allana escorts Faludar to the Great Hall for an audience with the Guildmaster, to whom he briefly recounts his capture and torture by the forces of the Darklords. He then feigns fatigue and asks to be excused. Allana takes him to a cell where he can sleep undisturbed.

Once he is alone, Faludar leaves his cell and begins to prepare his plan. He locates the cellar and then finds several guards and exerts magical control over them so they will assist him.

Allana returns to the characters and tells them the Brotherhood Elders would like to offer their thanks tomorrow. She asks that they return then, 'but not too early, for the Elders often over imbibe at the feast!' She regrets that she cannot offer them lodgings at the guildhall because many of the Brotherhood have returned to spend the winter here. She is however authorised to pay for their lodgings at any inn they may choose.

The streets of the city are beginning to fill with brightly dressed revellers. The crowds watching fire-eaters, clowns and jugglers make travel through the streets slow. When the characters reach their inn of choice they will find it crowded and noisy. Once they find the harassed innkeeper, he will be able to provide lodgings for them.

At the Old Dragon, Dass must wait an hour until Thelli, the sharp-faced matriarch that runs the inn, returns from an errand. Then he negotiates

a good price for his cargo and afterwards offers to buy a drink for any characters that have accompanied him while he goes into the stable yard to unload the brew.

While Dass is unloading, four city guardsmen enter the yard and accost him. They announce that they are confiscating his 'contraband'. Dass begins to object but the lead guard stabs the merchant through the chest with his sword and kills him. The guards will then drive Dass' wagon away. If any Player Characters witness this they will probably try and stop them. The guards will not respond to any verbal challenge and will fight if the characters try and stop them. Faludar will be hiding just outside the gate and he will use *quiet footfalls* to catch the characters by surprise in order to cast *webcasting* and allow the guards to take the wagon unhindered and him to escape unseen. If this fails, he will use *instant friendship* to assure the characters that the guards are doing the right thing. At this stage, Faludar will only use violence as a last resort but he *will* take the wagon.

At some point the characters will realise Dass is missing. Whether they are having a drink in the Old Dragon and he does not return from his unloading or whether they are waiting for him at the Baron's Arms, his absence should be noted. Prompt the Players if necessary.

At the Old Dragon, Thelli will point them in the direction of the stable yard, where they will discover Dass' body. His wagon is gone, much to Thelli's concern. However, as it was driven out of the yard a barrel fell from the back of it. The characters will find broken staves and, where they would have expected to find



spilled brew, a fine grey powder. A Dwarven Gunner of Bor will immediately recognise it as boompowder as will anyone with Craft (alchemy) skill. Otherwise characters will recognise it on a successful Knowledge (warfare) check (DC 12) or a Wisdom check (DC 15).

The Players should now be able to connect Faludar's anxiety about the wagon being stuck in the mud and his actions during the attempted theft with the missing wagon. Whether they suspect him of any wrongdoing or simply believe he knows more that he is letting on, they should seek out the mage. If they have not connected the dots, give them a gentle reminder. Do not let them go off on a wild goose chase.



The Mage's Guild

Again they will meet Allana at the gate. Upon hearing their story, whatever they suspect, she will escort them to Faludar's cell. He is not there and the bed has not been slept in.

As they are gathered around the entrance to the small room, an elderly mage approaches them. He introduces himself as Malindo and asks what they are doing. Allana explains they are looking for Faludar. Malindo says he saw Faludar earlier and tried to talk to him, for he was an old friend. He did not seem to recognise Malindo and asked directions to the kitchen, saying that he must eat. Then he set off as though his life depended on it.

The kitchen is absolute bedlam as the cooks prepare to feed the entire Mage's Guild for Maesmarn. If they try to speak to anyone, the chief cook - a woman the size of a bear, will drive them off while brandishing a ladle. She insists that no one in *her* kitchen has time to be bothered by their inconsequential questions.

A scullion named Darios will have overheard their questions and will come to their aid. The boy is overawed by the Kai Lords, Knights of the Realm, Dwarven Gunners or other strange looking characters and pesters them with many questions. The characters must satisfy his starry-eyed curiosity before he will tell them that he saw Faludar earlier and the mage asked about the cook about the cellars. When the characters show interest, the boy realises he may be able to get a little more from them. He asks for a ride on a knight's horse, for a Kai Lord to teach him to fight or a similar treat, before he tells them that a short while later, a guard came and stood by the cellar door. He points and the characters can dimly see a man-at-arms through the steam and chaos of the kitchen.

If the characters inquire further about the cellar, they will learn it is used to store wine, meat and other foodstuffs as well as firewood. They will also be told that there is an outside entrance to the cellar in the east courtyard.

The guard on the cellar door in the kitchen is under Faludar's influence and will not let them pass without a fight. Should the characters choose this option, Allana will point out that the guard is innocent and they should try not to harm him. The cellar door is wedged shut from the inside and requires a Strength check (DC 19) to open. Only one additional character can co-operate on this check.

Dass' wagon is by the cellar door in the east courtyard. The wagon is empty. The door to the cellar is a double one and is barred inside. A Strength check (DC 21) is needed to open it but four characters can combine their efforts on this one.

The cellar is gloomy, lit by only a handful of torches. In the main room of the cellar there are wine racks, hanging carcasses of cows and sheep, and piles of sacks of corn. Through an archway is the firewood store. It is here that the characters will find Faludar.

Faludar is standing with a torch raised high. Behind him is a stack of barrels. Several guards are between him and the characters. When he sees the characters he will proclaim, 'It is time to cleanse Magnamund of this so-called Brotherhood! They could not save *one* of their brothers from the clutch of the Darklords, how can they expect to save the whole of Sommerlund? I suffered unendurable pain for them! Did they come for me? No! Let them die!'

Before the characters can reach him, he lights the fuse. The fuse is slow burning and is timed to burn down in two hours – at the height of the Maesmarn feast in the Great Hall above. Of course the characters will not know this.

They must fight the guards and Faludar. If Allana is with them she will assist. There is the same number of guards as characters. Faludar casts *bulwark of force* on the first round of combat. Then he will use *webcasting* on any characters in clear line of sight, followed by *arstorm* or *electric pulse* on the entangled characters. Once his guards begin to lose, he will try casting *binding blast* to entrap the characters and then burning the web with his torch. Once he is on the verge of defeat he will cast *armistice* and move to the barrels of boompowder. The characters then have one round to stop him thrusting the torch into the explosive and detonating it.

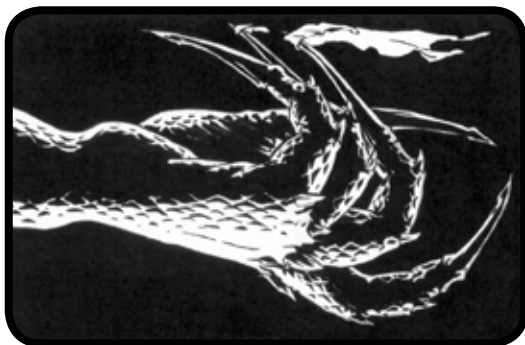
Toran City Guardsmen

2nd Level Human (Sommlending) Warrior; End 19; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; +4 melee (+6 with sword), +3 ranged; SQ Weapon of Choice (sword); Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills: Climb +3, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (warfare) +2, Perception +2, Ride +3, Survival +1

Allegiance: Balance

Equipment: Studded leather armour, mastercrafted sword (damage d8+4)



Aftermath

Once the fight is over, several mages and guards arrive. They will treat the characters' wounds as well as those of any surviving guards. If Faludar is alive, he will be taken into custody.

The characters will be escorted to the Great Hall and the Guildmaster thanks them warmly. He is a shrewd, elderly man with a baldpate and silver hair. He will take off his Crystal Star Pendant and offer it to the most valiant character. He invites them to sit at the high table with him for the feast.

Before the feast begins he announces their names to the assembled guild and bids the mages to remember their names as friends of the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star. Allana will also be included at the high table. She will have taken a fancy to one of the characters and will sit by him. Later, she will shyly offer him her pendant, although it is not a Crystal Star one. She will explain the tradition but admits that she has not yet earned the proper one.

Should any of the characters be mercenary enough to mention payment or a reward, the Guildmaster will agree to pay them whatever they would have earned from Dass plus 100 Gold Crowns. If a Kai Lord, a Sommlending Knight or Brother of the Crystal Star asks for money he will not grant it, instead he gives them a lecture about their duty to Sommerlund.

The Guildmaster requests their presence the following afternoon, to discuss Faludar's treachery. He wants to hear the characters' full story, so that he can understand the renegade mage's actions. He will question the characters on the details of events. If the characters believe Faludar was acting alone, the Guildmaster will agree. Should they believe that the Darklords were involved in the plot, the Guildmaster becomes greatly concerned.

He will summon the Elders of the guild and have the characters recount their opinion to them.

The Elders spend some time in consideration behind closed doors before they are convinced that they need to learn more. The characters are called back and the Guildmaster will announce that they intend to send a scouting party to the Darklands. He asks if the characters would be willing to go. But that's another story...

Non-Player Characters

Dassinar

Dass is a friendly and chatty man who has travelled throughout northern Magnamund. He will regale the characters with tales of his travels. He will be somewhat in awe of the characters, especially if they are Kai Lords, magicians or Knights among the party. He is apologetic about needing the characters' help and he will refuse any further kindness, such as offers of healing his wound or payments for nights in inns. However, it is not difficult to persuade him to accept such things, although he will insist that he will repay the loan.

4th Level Human (Sommlending)

Commoner

Endurance: 17

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 feet

Armour Class: 10

Attacks: +3 melee or +3 ranged

Special Qualities: Common Role (Profession (merchant)), Weapon Proficiency (Longbow, all melee weapons)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +3, Diplomacy +5,

Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (geography) +6, Perception +2, Profession (merchant) +6, Survival +3

Allegiance: Balance

Equipment: Dass has had his equipment stolen

Faludar

The mage has the appearance of being somewhat worse for wear. He is thin with long, dark, straggly hair. He pretends tiredness and slight insanity – muttering to himself, staring into the air and sometimes seeming not to understand conversation. His façade will slip when the boompowder is under threat. He speaks little but when he does he is respectful to the characters and will go along with anything they suggest. Once he reaches Toran and begins to put his plan into action, he will be focused solely on his task and will brook no interference.

The taint of the Darklands lingers on him and this corruption prevents the wound on his arm from healing fully.

8th Level Brother of the Crystal Star / 1st Level Dark Cultist

Endurance: 49

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 feet

Armour Class: 11

Attacks: +4 melee or +5 ranged

Base Magical Combat Skill: +9/+4

Base Magical Damage: 1d10

Special Qualities: Brotherhood Spells (*counterspell*, *invisible shield*, *lightning hand*, *mind charm*, *net*, *sense evil*, *silence*, *vigour*), Dark Alliance (Naar), Magical Combat, Mystic Expertise (*invisible shield*, *lightning hand*, *mind charm*, *net*)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +10

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 14, Corruption 2



Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Heal +4, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (Darklands) +5, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (history) +6, Occult +16, Perception +5, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Giak, Southernath, Vaderish), Stealth +5

Allegiance: Evil but believes otherwise

Equipment: Giak dagger

Note: The Dark Alliance ability and the Corruption statistic are described in *The Darklands* supplement. If you do not have this book, it does not matter. The Dark Alliance ability is what Faludar uses to control the city guards.

Allana

She is an Initiate of the Brotherhood of the Crystal Star. She is studious but a little lonely. She dislikes the rowdiness of the feast of Maesmarn, so she has volunteered for duty on the gate. She will be polite and helpful to the characters. She will become attracted to one of the male characters, either a good looking one, anyone who is particularly gallant towards her or is especially heroic in the final battle.

If one of the Player Characters were killed, Allana would be a good replacement character. Otherwise she can be a good recurring character. She will gain an experience level after this adventure.

2nd Level Brother of the Crystal Star

Endurance: 9

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 feet

Armour Class: 11

Attacks: +1 melee or +2 ranged

Base Magical Combat Skill: +2

Base Magical Damage: 1d6

Special Qualities: Brotherhood Spells (*counterspell*, *vigour*), Magical Combat, Mystic Expertise (*counterspell*), Wizard's Oath

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Concentration +4, Diplomacy +4, Heal +5, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (geography) +3, Occult +8, Perception +4, Ride +3, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Vassan)

Equipment: Dagger



Games Master's Notes

Travel

A large part of this adventure involves travelling. Dass' wagon travels only 16 miles per day and it will take 30 days to travel from Ruanon to Holmgard and a further six days to Toran. I would suggest that you gloss over the travelling part of the scenario – it will quickly get boring if you role-play every day on the road and every night spent in and inn along the way. Keep it simple - remind the Players that they need meals when travelling through the Wildlands and they spend the night in inns after that.

Should you wish to keep track of every mile the characters travel, every Silver Plate they spend on food and every rabbit they kill, then do so. Some Players and Games Masters thrive on this level of detail. You may find you need to add encounters

every few days or so, whether it is a pack of wild dogs or fellow travellers with gossip.

Troubleshooting

There are only two major Non-Player Characters in this scenario and the Players may easily figure out that Faludar is a bad guy. Try and keep them guessing. Do not roll for either character's Bluff checks if the Players want to try Sense Motive skill on them. Write some dice results down earlier or pick a number in your head.

If the Players do become especially suspicious of Faludar, have Dass do something that will make the Players think again. He could be caught stealing from a sleeping character or turn out to have had money with him all the time and his mugging was just a ruse to get guards for nothing.

There are several abilities and spells that detect evil but they will not work on Faludar because he truly believes that he acting for the best. They will be able to sense his corruption but will show that he himself is not evil. Point out to the Players that corruption can occur simply by being in the Darklands.

If all of the Player Characters accompany Dass to the Old Dragon once they reach Toran, the scenario is likely to end prematurely when the characters try and stop Faludar and the guards from stealing Dass' wagon. While there is nothing wrong with this but it lacks the drama and tension of the climax as written. So change the events at the Old Dragon – Dass should successfully unload the wagon and pay the characters before they all go to the Baron's Arms. There, Allana will come to find them. She was sent to get Faludar from his cell but he was missing. She has searched the guild from top to bottom before coming see if he has come to join the Player Characters. She is desperate to find him and begs that they come back with her to the guild and help.

During the last stage of the adventure, in the Mage's Guild, the Players may want to enlist the help of powerful guild mages. Do not let them; the Players' characters are the heroes of this story. Have Allana hurry them on, telling them that is no time to waste – Faludar and his explosives must be found. The Players may be determined, however, so have any mage they find either so deep in meditation that he cannot be roused or having started celebrating Maesmarn early and so too drunk to help.

Experience Awards

Stopping the bandit scout from reporting to his comrades and so avoiding attack by bandits: 300 per character¹.

Defeating the bandits after being ambushed: 200 per character¹.

Outsmarting the bandits, either by ambushing them or avoiding them altogether: 300 per character¹.

Defeating the Giaks: 350 per character.

Stopping the thieves: 150 per character.

Defeating the guardsmen and Faludar and stopping the explosion: 1000 per character.

Figuring out that Faludar is somehow involved with the murder of Dass and the theft of the gunpowder: 500 split between the Players who actually work it out.

Figuring out that Faludar's actions were part of a Darklord plot: 750 split between the Players who actually work it out.

1: These three awards are mutually exclusive.



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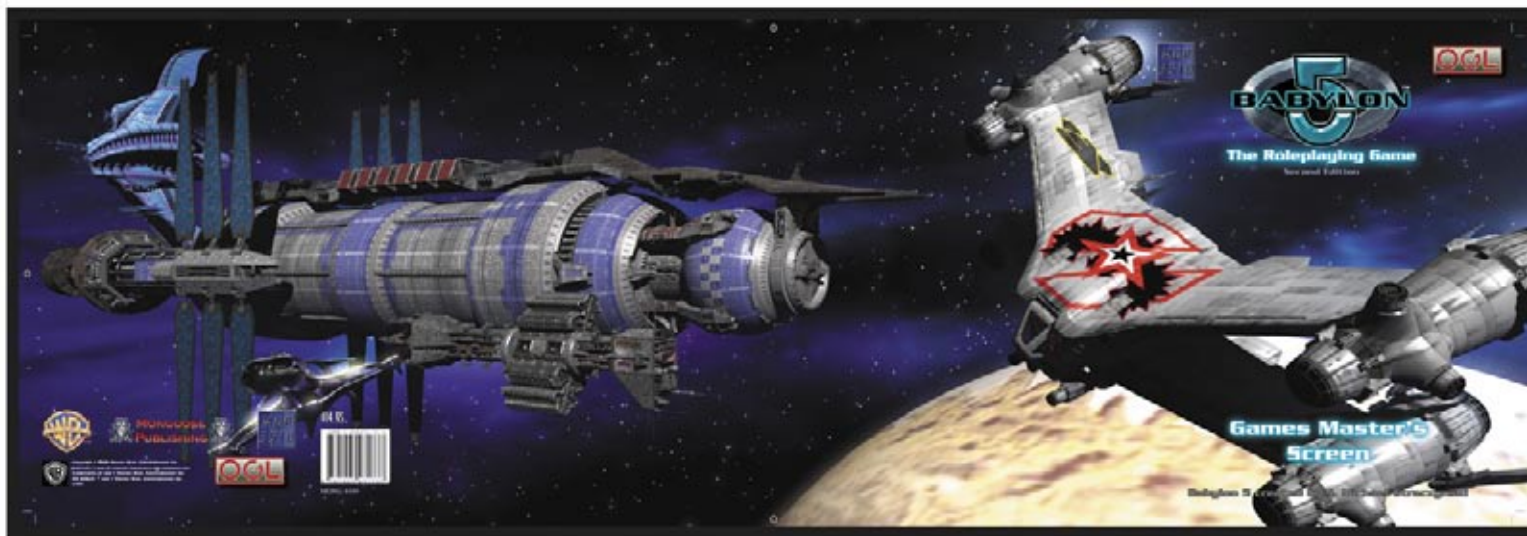
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